Magic and Impotence in the Middle Ages

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the widely held medieval belief that magic could cause sexual dysfunction. It focuses on the period 1150-1450, but also surveys the evidence from the ancient world and the early Middle Ages (up to c.1100). Most of the evidence comes from academic texts that were used for teaching in medieval universities: confessors' manuals; commentaries on canon law; commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard; and medical compendia. There are also magical texts, trial records from the late Middle Ages, and a body of anecdotes, in which people claimed that they had witnessed cases of impotence magic. The thesis analyses how far the academic sources reflect magical practices that existed outside the universities. It also assesses the impact of wider social and intellectual changes on these sources. These changes were: firstly, the growing interest of the church in regulating the spiritual lives of the laity from the late twelfth century onwards; secondly, the translation of magical texts into Latin; and thirdly, the development of the idea that there existed a sect of devil-worshipping witches.

My research indicates that learned discussions of magic and impotence began in response to popular concerns. The first authors to discuss the problem in detail did not draw significantly on surviving earlier sources, and claimed instead to have encountered cases of impotence magic. This pattern of learned writer drawing on popular magical practices continued in the later Middle Ages, especially in periods when the authorities tried to regulate what the rest of the population was doing. In canon law and theology, the key period was the thirteenth century, coinciding with the church's drive to reform lay religious beliefs and practices. In medicine, the key period was the early fifteenth century, a time of increased concern about magic in general, which saw the first large-scale witch trials.

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I have checked most of the references in chapters 1 and 2, and some in later chapters; however, I will check all references before publishing any part of the thesis.

Abbreviations

AASS: *Acta Sanctorum* (Antwerp, 1643-, repr. Brussels, 1965-)

CCCM: *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, Continuatio Mediaevalis* (Turnhout, 1953-)

EETS: Early English Text Society

MGH: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*

PL: *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1878-90)

Citations of the *Decretum* of Gratian and the *Liber Extra* are from Emil Friedberg, ed., *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, 2 vols., (Leipzig, 1879). Citations of the *Quinque Compilationes Antiquae* are from Emil Friedberg, *Quinque Compilationes Antiquae* (Leipzig, 1882). I have followed the method of citing these texts outlined by James Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, (London, 1995) pp. 190-7:

- In Gratian's *Decretum*: C. 33 q. 1 c. 4 for Causa 33, question 1, chapter 4. Gratian's own comments on the texts he quotes are referred to as d. a. (dictum ante) and d. p. (dictum post).
- In the *Quinque Compilationes*: 1 Comp. 4.16.4 for Compilatio Prima, Book 4, Titulus 16, Chapter 4.
- In the *Liber Extra*: X 4.15.1 for *Liber Extra* Book 4, Title 15, Chapter 1.
- Canon law commentaries were usually attached to specific words or phrases in the text: for example, Johannes Faventinus, gloss to C. 33 q. 1 c. 4, *reconciliari nequibunt*.

I have followed the method of citing commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard outlined in Pierre J. Payer, *The Bridling of Desire* (Toronto, 1993), p. 17: thus *In 4 Sent.* for a commentary on the fourth book of the *Sentences*. The commentaries are subdivided into distinctions, then into questions and articles (or articles, and then questions), although individual commentators vary. The numerical references refer to the distinction first, and then to the various subdivisions of the work. For example:

- Albertus Magnus, *In 4 Sent.* 34.5 for Commentary on the Fourth Book of the *Sentences*, Distinction 34, Article 5.
- Thomas Aquinas, *In 4 Sent.* 34.1.2 for Commentary on the Fourth Book of the *Sentences*, Distinction 34, Question 1, Article 2

Introduction

‘It happened once in Paris that a certain sorceress impeded a man who had left her so that he could not have intercourse with another woman whom he had married. So she made an incantation over a closed lock and threw that lock into a well, and the key into another well, and the man was made impotent. But afterwards, when the sorceress was forced to acknowledge the truth, the lock was retrieved from the one well and the key from the other, and as soon as the lock was opened, the man became able to have intercourse with his wife.’¹

This anecdote, told by Thomas of Chobham in around 1216, illustrates the link between magic and impotence as it was most commonly presented in the Middle Ages. The belief that magic could make a man impotent was ancient, appearing in the works of several classical authors. Nor did it end with the medieval period: the famous witch-hunting manual *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), which said a great deal about both sex and magic, included a story similar to Thomas’s,² and thereafter, magic impotence appeared in literature describing witches throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although magically caused impotence rarely featured in the witch trials of at least some areas in this period,³ in other regions it appears to have been widely feared,⁴ and the belief in it has survived into modern times.⁵ The belief in magic impotence is also found outside Western Europe. In seventeenth-century Russia, Samuel Collins, physician to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, observed at a wedding, ‘a fellow coming out of the bride-chamber, tearing his hair as though he had been mad, and being demanded the reason why he did so, he cry’d out: I am undone: I

¹ ‘contigit quandoque Parisius quod quedam sorciaria impedivit virum qui eam reliquerat ne posset coire cum aliqua quam superduxerat. Fecerat enim incantationem super quamdam seram clausam et miserat illam seram in unum puteum et clavem in alium puteum, et factus est vir ille impotens coire. Postea vero cum coacta esset sorciaria cognoscere veritatem, extracta fuit sera de puteo uno et clavis de alio, et statim cum aperta esset sera, factus est vir ille potens coire cum uxore sua.’ Thomas of Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, ed. F. Broomfield (Louvain, 1968), p. 184

² Heinrich Kramer, *Malleus Maleficarum* (Speyer, 1487, repr. Göppingen, 1991), Part 2, Qu. 1, Ch. 1

³ E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland* (Ithaca, 1976), p. 165.

⁴ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, ‘The Aiguillette: Castration by Magic’, in *The Mind and Method of the Historian* (English edn., Brighton, 1981), pp. 84-96 and Kevin Robbins, ‘Magical Emasculation, Popular Anticlericalism and the Limits of the Reformation in Western France c.1590’, *Journal of Social History* 31, 1997, pp. 65-6, both describe areas where impotence magic was widely feared. Robbins suggests that in the area around La Rochelle, where priests were often blamed for causing impotence, the position of the priest as often the lone male left in the village while most men worked as sailors or migrated for work made him a target for the men’s anxieties about leaving their wives alone and vulnerable for long periods, pp. 67-8.

⁵ Accusations of both love and impotence magic were observed on a Greek island village in 1970-2 by Regina Dionisopoulos-Mass, ‘The Evil Eye and Bewitchment in a Peasant Village’, in Clarence Maloney, ed., *The Evil Eye* (New York, 1976), pp. 58-60

am bewitched.⁶ Anthropologists have found similar ideas in Sudan, Ethiopia and the Middle East.⁷

The commonness of the link between magic and impotence is not surprising, given that many cases of impotence have psychological causes.⁸ It is a mysterious complaint. It can come and go for no obvious reason; a man can be impotent with one woman but not with another; and in cultures with a strong belief in magic, a man who thought that he had been, or was likely to be, bewitched, could well have been affected by his own anxiety. Impotence also had serious social implications because in many periods and places, including medieval Europe, sexual potency has been central to notions of masculinity.⁹ Therefore impotence magic, especially when done by women, could be seen as a threat to male power, a theme that emerges clearly in the ancient Greek literature and curse tablets recently studied by Christopher Faraone.¹⁰ A further social consequence of impotence in the Middle Ages and later was that it was one of the few grounds in canon law for annulling a marriage. This required public proof in a church court, a subject discussed by Pierre Darmon.¹¹

Although the belief that magic can cause impotence is widespread across both time and space, the sources are exceptionally rich for Western Europe in the period 1150-1450, because in this period the subject found a place in three university disciplines: canon law, theology and medicine. First, a short ninth-century discussion of magic impotence was incorporated into the *Decretum* of Gratian in around 1140, a work that became one of the universities' basic canon law text-books. From there, it was taken by the theologian Peter Lombard for his *Sentences* (c.1155-7), which became the set text for teaching theology in medieval universities. Both of these texts were commented on for the rest of the Middle Ages, thus forcing generations of students to tackle the issue of magic impotence, alongside many other questions. The canonists' and theologians' conclusions were also summarized in numerous confession manuals produced from the late twelfth century onwards to instruct priests and friars in the

⁶ Quoted in W. F. Ryan, *The Bathhouse at Midnight: an Historical Survey of Magic and Divination in Russia* (Stroud, 1999), p. 79

⁷ Gwen J. Broude, *Marriage, Family and Relationships: a Cross-Cultural Encyclopaedia* (Santa Barbara, 1994), pp. 147-8

⁸ Information published by the Impotence Association, www.impotence.org.uk.

⁹ Vern L. Bullough, 'On Being a Male in the Middle Ages', in Clare Lees, ed., *Medieval Masculinities* (Minneapolis, 1994), p. 41

¹⁰ Christopher Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge, MA., 1999)

¹¹ Pierre Darmon, *Le Tribunal de l'Impuissance: Virilité et Défaillances Conjugales dans l'Ancienne France* (Paris, 1979)

pastoral care of the laity. In medicine, magic impotence was first discussed in detail in the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African, a medical compendium of the late eleventh century (although, as Monica Green has shown, several sections of this work, including the chapter on magic impotence, may have been added in the twelfth century¹²). The *Pantegni* did not receive commentaries in the same way as the *Decretum* and the *Sentences*, but it circulated widely and inspired increasing numbers of medical writers to discuss magic impotence from the twelfth century onwards. The chapter from the *Pantegni* also formed the basis of a short text describing various ways of causing and curing magic impotence, sometimes entitled *Remedies Against Magic*. This was partially edited and discussed in detail by Gerda Hoffmann in 1933,¹³ and I have produced a fuller edition and list of manuscripts in Appendix 1.

In addition to these works that were produced by the teaching methods of medieval universities, other sources survive which are more closely linked to practice. A number of rituals to cause impotence or hatred between couples can be found in the magical texts which were being translated from Arabic into Latin from the twelfth century onwards.¹⁴ In addition to these, several court records where people were tried for causing impotence survive from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; the earliest is that of Ragnhildr Tregagás in Bergen, Norway, in 1324-5.¹⁵ There are also anecdotes recounted in, for example, the autobiography of Guibert of Nogent (c.1115) and the *History of the Bohemians* by Cosmas of Prague (c.1125), which described what their authors claimed were real cases of impotence magic; and a few instances in literature, such as in the late twelfth-century *chansons de geste*, *Raoul de Cambrai* and *Orson de Beauvais*, and the thirteenth-century Icelandic *Njal's Saga*.¹⁶ These cases, both real and fictional, give a different perspective on impotence magic from that of

¹² Monica Green, 'The Re-creation of *Pantegni*, Practica, Book 8', in Charles Burnett and Danielle Jacquart, ed., *Constantine the African and Alī ibn al-Abbās al-Mağūsī: the Pantegni and Related Texts* (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1994), pp. 121-60

¹³ Gerda Hoffmann, 'Beiträge zur Lehre von der durch Zauber verursachten Krankheit und ihrer Behandlung in der Medizin des Mittelalters', *Janus* 37, 1933, pp. 129-44, 179-92, 211-20

¹⁴ On the transmission and spread of the Arabic magical texts, see David Pingree, 'The Diffusion of Arabic Magical Texts in Western Europe', in *La Diffusione delle Scienze Islamiche nel Medio Evo Europeo* (Rome, 1987), pp. 57-102

¹⁵ Stephen A. Mitchell, 'Nordic Witchcraft in Transition: Impotence, Heresy and Diabolism in Fourteenth-Century Bergen', *Scandia* 63, 1997, pp. 17-33

¹⁶ Paul J. Archambault, trans., *A Monk's Confession: the Memoirs of Guibert of Nogent* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1996), pp. 35-7; Cosmas Pragensis, *Chronica Bohemorum*, MGH Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum NS II, 1923, pp. 127-9; *Raoul de Cambrai*, ed. and trans. Sarah Kay (Oxford, 1992), pp. 401-3; *Orson de Beauvais*, ed. Gaston Paris (Paris, 1899), pp. 20-1; *Njal's Saga*, trans. Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson (London, 1960), p. 49

the academic sources: they often say more about the circumstances behind accusations of impotence magic, as well as about ways of causing or curing the problem.

Definitions of Magic

One question that will arise from time to time in my thesis is an old and thorny one: how to define magic. Few people would dispute that throwing a lock down a well to make someone impotent, as in Thomas of Chobham's story, is a magical action. However, many cures for magically caused impotence are less easily labelled. The thirteenth-century physician Gilbertus Anglicus claimed to have cured many people with a charm made up of a biblical verse plus the words 'Uthihoth. Thabechay. Amath.', which had to be written out using the sap of two specially-gathered plants (see Appendix 2). He described this as an 'empirical' cure (one that could not be explained by the theory of the humours, which was the basis of medieval science); but he did not indicate that there was anything magical about it. By contrast, his contemporary, the theologian Thomas Aquinas, denounced the use of 'strange words we do not understand' as magic.¹⁷ Medieval intellectuals like Aquinas certainly knew what magic was.¹⁸ Their definition focused on the source of power that was deemed to be behind any given phenomenon. If an action relied on the power of God or on clearly understood natural causes like the theory of the humours, it was not magic. Outside divine or natural causation, two kinds of magic were recognized from the thirteenth century onwards: natural and demonic magic. Natural magic worked by means of hidden or 'occult' forces in the natural world, that is, those that could not be explained by the physical structure of an object, which medieval writers conceptualized in terms of the four humours, hot, cold, wet and dry. Demonic magic relied on the aid of demons.

In addition to this, modern writers have come up with a variety of definitions of magic based on other criteria: for example, magic is assumed to work automatically, in contrast to religion which supplicates a supernatural being; or it is a label for deviant religious beliefs; or it has individual rather than communal goals.¹⁹ Other writers have

¹⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* trans. by the Dominican Friars from the English-Speaking Provinces vol. 40, (London, 1968), 2a 2ae, q. 96, art. 4, pp. 82-3

¹⁸ What follows is based on Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 9-14

¹⁹ Definitions summarized in H. S. Versnel, 'Some Reflections on the Relationship Magic-Religion', *Numen* 38, 1991, pp. 177-97, and David E. Aune, 'Magic in Early Christianity', in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II.23.2 (Berlin, 1980), pp. 1510-15

attacked the whole concept of magic, either by denying that any definition of magic can be applied universally to all societies, or by arguing that magic cannot be distinguished from religion at all.²⁰ One attractive definition was proposed recently by the ancient historian Einar Thomassen: 'Magic is the appropriation of ritual power for personal ends, offsetting the balance between the individual and the collective which forms the sanctioned norm of ritual practice in societies.'²¹ In Thomassen's argument, not every ritual act performed by an individual is magical; the crucial factor is whether the power appears to be concentrated in the magician, or whether it is shared and absorbed by the community,²² as would be for example the power of the priest who conducts a mass. I do not intend to discuss the arguments about what magic is in detail, but the question will recur, especially in the context of magical cures for impotence. In this context, the most useful definition is probably that of the medieval theologians who, as set out above, focused on where the power for a given phenomenon came from, and divided magic into natural and demonic varieties. This definition provides a good starting point with which to approach medieval magical practices, and within it, there was plenty of room to argue about whether individual phenomena relied on God, manifest natural forces, occult forces, or demons. However, it is helpful to remember that this is not the only way of defining magic.

In addition to 'magic', I will use the term 'witchcraft' to describe the crime which became the focus of witch trials and witchcraft literature in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries. Witchcraft was more than just magic. Witches were believed to perform harmful magic through a pact with the devil, to whom they were supposed to have dedicated their souls. A complex mythology grew up around the figure of the witch: witches flew to nocturnal meetings or sabbaths in remote places, where they worshipped the devil, indulged in orgies, and sacrificed children to make the substances that they used for magic. The roots of this image are very old, but it was only put together in its full form in the early fifteenth century.²³ There is also a second crucial difference between magic and witchcraft: magical practices were real, but witchcraft was an imaginary crime. Although people might occasionally try to

²⁰ Dorothy Hammond, 'Magic: A Problem in Semantics', *American Anthropologist* 72, 1970, pp. 1349-56; Naomi Janowitz, *Icons of Power: Ritual Practices in Late Antiquity* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2002), pp. 1-2

²¹ Einar Thomassen, 'Is Magic a Subclass of Ritual?', in David R. Jordan, Hugo Montgomery and Einar Thomassen, ed., *The World of Ancient Magic* (Bergen, 1999), p. 65

²² Thomassen, p. 63

²³ Martine Ostorero, Agostino Paravicini Bagliani and Kathrin Utz Tremp, *L'Imaginaire du Sabbat: Edition Critique des Textes les Plus Anciens (c. 1430-c. 1440)* (Lausanne, 1999), pp. 9-11

make a pact with the devil,²⁴ no one accused of witchcraft really flew to sabbaths at night.

Plan of the Thesis

This thesis will explore how medieval discussions of impotence magic changed over time, and examine what prompted these changes. In particular, to what extent were the academic sources that provide most of the information driven by concerns about magical practices existing outside the universities?²⁵ Was impotence magic a rare occurrence that medieval academics discussed simply because it appeared in their set texts, or was it a widespread reality? I would argue that many of the academic sources do point to widespread concerns. The first authors to discuss the problem in detail, in the ninth to eleventh centuries, did not draw significantly on surviving earlier sources, and claimed instead to have encountered cases of impotence magic. Real practices remained an important source of information in the later Middle Ages, especially in the thirteenth century, when the church began a drive to educate the laity about the Christian faith. This pastoral movement led writers of confession manuals, canon law commentaries and, to a lesser extent, theological commentaries, to record information about impotence magic that their colleagues had heard in confession or in the church courts. Many medical writers also mentioned practice when discussing impotence magic. This flow of information from the pastoral movement tailed off in the

²⁴ In 1590, Andrea Meri, a Venetian apprentice, tried to sell his soul to the devil in exchange for the love of his master's wife, and was brought before the inquisition when neighbours found the written contract with the devil that he had thrown into the canal: Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (New York, 1993), pp. 88-90

²⁵ There is much debate about how great the differences were between learned and popular culture in the Middle Ages, and how far sources which are produced by learned writers can tell us about popular culture. This is surveyed by Peter Biller, 'Popular Religion in the Central and Later Middle Ages', in Michael Bentley, ed., *Companion to Historiography* (London, 1997), pp. 227-33. On the one hand, Eamon Duffy argues that 'no substantial gulf existed between the religion of the clergy and the educated elite on the one hand and that of the people at large on the other': *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven and London, 1992), p. 2, and John Bossy agrees that popular culture was not radically different from elite culture: *Christianity in the West 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1985), p. viii. Other writers present the relationship as more complex: Peter Burke argues that up to the eighteenth century, learned writers shared the culture of the rest of the population, but also had another, learned cultural tradition which most people could not access: *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1978), pp. 27-8. Alan Bernstein suggests that learned and popular culture are different ends of a spectrum, along which different sources can be situated in different places: 'Teaching and Preaching Confession in Thirteenth-Century Paris', in Alberto Ferreiro, ed., *The Devil, Heresy and Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, Boston and Cologne, 1998), p. 111. Aron Gurevich and Alexander Murray argue that pastoral literature was designed to address popular concerns: Aron Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception* (English edn., Cambridge, 1988), pp. 5-6; Alexander Murray, 'Confession as a Historical Source in the Thirteenth Century', in R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, ed., *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1981), p. 308.

fourteenth century, but in the fifteenth, a further drive towards pastoral reform, combined with rising concerns about witchcraft, brought a new wave of information about practice into learned discussions of magic impotence, and especially into medical texts.

After surveying the sources for magic and impotence from the ancient world in chapter 1, I will discuss the early medieval sources that became the basis of later discussions of impotence magic in chapter 2. In chapter 3, I will describe how magic impotence was incorporated into academic works of canon law, theology and medicine in the twelfth century, arguing that twelfth-century discussions of the subject were often dominated more by the need to harmonize conflicting authoritative texts than by concerns about magical practices. Chapter 4 will survey what the newly translated magical texts said about impotence, because these had an important influence on certain writers, notably the theologian Albertus Magnus, and ultimately the existence of rituals that openly called on demons in some of these texts contributed to the image of the devil-worshipping witch.²⁶ Moving into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, I will assess the impact of the pastoral movement, and other sources of information, on confession manuals, canon law, theology and medicine. By this time, the different genres of source were distinct from one another and followed their own paths of development, so I will treat each separately (Chapters 5-8). Finally, I will discuss the evidence from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when new concerns about witchcraft affected all four genres of source (Chapter 9).

The interaction between learned and popular culture is a favourite theme of some historians of late medieval magic, who have looked at the Middle Ages in order to find the origins of the belief in witchcraft. The position favoured by most historians is that the image of the witch was invented by learned lawyers, inquisitors and theologians during the later Middle Ages, as they gradually came to see all magic as devil-worship because of the existence of some magical texts which really did call on demons. Once magic was seen as devil-worship, it became a form of heresy, and existing stereotypes of heretics were then applied to magicians (such as secret meetings, orgies and sacrificing children). The image thus created was imposed on defendants during witch trials by propaganda, torture, and the use of leading

²⁶ Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: the Demonisation of Christians in Medieval Christendom* (3rd edn., London, 1993), p. 102

questions. This argument was set out in the 1970s in two very influential books, Norman Cohn's *Europe's Inner Demons* and Richard Kieckhefer's *European Witch Trials*.²⁷ However, some historians have argued that in creating the image of the witch, learned writers sometimes misinterpreted real popular practices or beliefs. This view is often associated with the anthropologist Margaret Murray, who argued in 1921 that what judges interpreted as the witches' sabbath was in fact the meeting of a surviving pagan fertility cult.²⁸ Murray's arguments have been totally discredited, notably by Norman Cohn,²⁹ but although historians have abandoned the idea of a surviving pagan cult, some argue that popular beliefs with pre-Christian origins were incorporated into ideas about witchcraft. Carlo Ginzburg has suggested that the witches' sabbath originated not in learned culture, but in popular shamanistic beliefs that certain people had ecstatic experiences in which they flew and talked to the dead, although his view is not shared by most historians.³⁰ Gabor Klaniczay, Gustav Henningsen and Wolfgang Behringer have explored the possible links between witchcraft and popular beliefs about nocturnal gatherings more cautiously, and their works indicate that the relationship between popular and learned ideas in the creation of the image of the witch was both complex and geographically variable.³¹

My thesis deals with the same issue, the interaction between popular and learned culture, but in focusing on the pastoral movement of the thirteenth century rather than on witchcraft, my emphasis is different from that of the historians looking for the origins of witchcraft. Although the rise of witchcraft did affect discussions of magic impotence in the fifteenth century, before then, the driving force behind most discussions was the pastoral movement. Before the fifteenth century, only a few theologians brought ideas that later became part of the image of the witch into discussions of magic and impotence. The authors of confession manuals, canonists, medical writers and even many theologians were more interested in the questions that

²⁷ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons* (first published in 1975); Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: their Foundations in Popular and Learned Culture* (London, 1976)

²⁸ Margaret Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (Oxford, 1921)

²⁹ Cohn, pp. 154-61

³⁰ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles* (English edn., London, 1983); *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath* (English edn., London, 1990)

³¹ Gustav Henningsen, 'The Ladies from Outside: an Archaic Pattern of the Witches' Sabbath', in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, ed., *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 191-215; Gabor Klaniczay, 'Shamanistic Elements in Central European Witchcraft', in *The Uses of Supernatural Power* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 129-50; Wolfgang Behringer, *Shaman of Oberstdorf: Chonrad Stoecklin and the Phantoms of the Night* (English edn., Charlottesville, VA, 1998)

arose from the world around them. Most often their information came from popular magical practices, encountered through the pastoral movement or the church courts, although a few writers did draw on the rituals described in the newly translated Arabic magical texts. The many university-trained writers who discussed magic impotence in a variety of genres thus reveal how academic authors learned about popular culture, and how they adapted that information to fit their own concerns. In doing so, they show how complex the relationship between popular magic and academic writing about it was, even before the rise of witchcraft.

Chapter 1

‘My Girl Uses the Black Arts’: Impotence Magic in the Ancient World

The idea that magic spells or practices can make a man impotent is an old one. Mesopotamian incantations from the seventh century BC and earlier give prescriptions for a man to regain his potency when he has been bewitched.¹ The idea also appeared in literary works as far back as the fifth century BC, when Herodotus told of how the Egyptian pharaoh Amasis suspected that his wife Ladice had bewitched him when he found that he could not have sex with her. He was cured when Ladice made a vow to Aphrodite.² In addition to the literary sources, a number of surviving magic spells from the ancient world also mention impotence. Many of these date from the Roman period and survive on lead tablets from all over the empire, and on papyri from Egypt. Some of the papyri are in the form of spell books, and although some of these may be literary works as well as practical manuals, their existence indicates that impotence magic was not just a literary theme.

In both the spells and the literature, impotence magic is often bound up with other forms of erotic magic. There are several tales in Greek literature of wives who used magic to keep their husbands faithful, sometimes with disastrous consequences: for example, the hero Heracles was said to have been killed by a magical shirt sent by his wife Deianeira to break up his relationship with his new concubine.³ Roman writers such as the poets Tibullus and Ovid, and the satirist Petronius, echoed these themes.⁴ Unlike in the Middle Ages, where impotence magic was usually discussed separately from other forms of erotic magic, in the ancient sources, love and impotence magic often amounted to the same thing: it is impossible to distinguish between Deianeira's desire to make Heracles love her and her wish to stop him sleeping with someone else. Christopher Faraone argues that the ancient Greeks distinguished not between love magic and impotence magic, but between magic which provoked affection (usually used by an insider within an existing relationship), and magic which caused uncontrollable lust (usually intended to seduce someone away from their existing

¹ Robert D. Biggs, *Šà.Zi.Ga: Ancient Mesopotamian Potency Incantations* (New York, 1967), p. 7

² Herodotus, *Histories* 2.181, trans. A. D. Godfrey (Cambridge, MA, 1966), vol. 1, pp. 494-7.

³ Examples in Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: a Sourcebook* (Oxford, 2002), p. 102-5

⁴ John McMahon, *Paralysin Cave: Impotence, Perception and Text in the 'Satyricon' of Petronius*, (Leiden, 1998), pp. 75-81

family ties).⁵ Both kinds of magic might involve making the victim, male or female, unwilling or unable to have sex with other partners.

As these distinctions between the different types of erotic magic indicate, attitudes to magic in the Greco-Roman world were in some ways very different from attitudes in the Middle Ages. Most medieval writing on magic was based on the church fathers, who condemned all forms of magic because they believed that they were performed by demons. Christians were not alone in their condemnation of magic: some pagan writers, such as Pliny the Elder, also denounced it, although Pliny criticized it for being fraudulent rather than demonic. The pagan civil authorities, however, unlike the medieval church, legislated against the use of magic for harmful ends, rather than the magical act itself.⁶ Some forms of magic even gained philosophical justification in the Roman period. There seems to have been an increased interest in the subject during the first centuries AD, when rituals such as love magic and exorcism, which had already existed, underwent much development.⁷ In the same period, a body of works known as Hermetic literature were written down in their final form. These texts were very diverse, but were all ascribed to the god Hermes Trismegistus. They are often divided into philosophical hermetica, which dealt with religion and mysticism, and technical hermetica, which discussed subjects like alchemy and the properties of plants, stones and animals.⁸ From the late second century AD, certain branches of philosophy also began to draw close to magic, as some neo-Platonist philosophers developed rituals which were aimed at making contact with the gods, a procedure known as theurgy.⁹ St Augustine denounced theurgy as a form of magic because he believed that, like magic, it relied on demons,¹⁰ but not everyone shared his opinion. Some neo-Platonists, notably Iamblichus (d. c. 325), presented theurgic rituals as a legitimate and effective way of contacting the divine.¹¹

⁵ Christopher Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), p. 27

⁶ Naomi Janowitz, *Magic in the Roman World: Pagans, Jews and Christians* (London, 2001), p. 11

⁷ Janowitz, *Magic*, p. 98

⁸ Brian P. Copenhaver, *Hermetica* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. xxxii-xxxiii

⁹ Matthew W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London, 2001), p. 202

¹⁰ 'spells and charms composed according to the rules of criminal superstition, the craft which is called magic, or sorcery... or by the more honourable title of "theurgy".' Augustine, *City of God*, X.9, trans. H. Bettenson (London, 1984), p. 383

¹¹ Carine van Liefferinge, 'Magie et Théurgie chez Jamblique', in Alain Moreau and Jean-Claude Turpin, ed., *La Magic: Actes du Colloque International de Montpellier* vol. 2 (Montpellier, 2000), pp. 115-25; Naomi Janowitz, *Icons of Power: Ritual Practices in Late Antiquity* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2002), p. 10

The sources for impotence magic in the ancient world are also different from those surviving from the Middle Ages. References to impotence magic in ancient literature are relatively common, compared with few in medieval literature. Large numbers of curse tablets also survive from the ancient world.¹² Often found in graves or wells, these tablets ask certain gods, goddesses, ghosts or demons to perform tasks on behalf of the magician or his/her client. Manuals also survive which give instructions on how to make these tablets.¹³ Although magical manuals do survive from the Middle Ages, especially from the thirteenth century onwards, there is no medieval equivalent to the curse tablets which record actual spells that were cast. On the other hand, impotence magic appears both rarely and late in ancient medical texts, and does not seem to appear in law – both places where it was discussed at length in the Middle Ages. The absence of impotence magic in legal works is explained by that fact that impotence does not seem to have been singled out as a ground for divorce before Justinian (though it would still have been possible for impotent couples to divorce, because divorce by mutual consent was allowed),¹⁴ so there was no need for jurists to comment on it as they did in the central and later Middle Ages.

However, there are continuities as well as differences between ancient and medieval ideas about impotence magic. The situations in which it might be deployed or feared seem to have remained constant. In ancient Greek literature, ‘aggressive’ love magic (which could include causing impotence) was often associated with prostitutes,¹⁵ and in the fourth century AD, St John Chrysostom was still warning married men that prostitutes used love philtres and other sorceries to separate them from their wives.¹⁶ Throughout the Middle Ages, impotence magic continued to be associated with ex-mistresses who were sometimes described as prostitutes, and the association between prostitutes and love magic appears again in the inquisition records of late sixteenth-century Venice.¹⁷ Accusations of magic could also arise in similar circumstances from the ancient world up to the Renaissance. For example, love magic could be used to explain overly passionate love affairs, and marriages that were seen as socially

¹² Examples are edited and discussed in John G. Gager, ed., *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford, 1992)

¹³ Examples are translated in Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (Chicago, 1986)

¹⁴ James Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago, 1987), p. 115

¹⁵ Faraone, pp. 153-5

¹⁶ Dickie, p. 303

¹⁷ Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1993), p. 30

inappropriate. The philosopher Apuleius was tried for magic in Alexandria in the 150s because he married a wealthy widow, and her relatives claimed that he must have bewitched her.¹⁸ Similarly, in 1375, a woman named Caterina was accused by the Florentine merchant Vieri di Michele Rondinelli of bewitching his brother Paolo so completely that he neglected his wife, children and business affairs, and in 1581, a marriage between the Venetian aristocrat Marco Dandolo and the courtesan Andriana Savorgnan was attributed to Andriana's magic.¹⁹ Accusations of magic in general could also be made against political enemies: the fourth-century historian Ammianus Marcellinus described persecutions of magical practitioners which took place for political reasons in 357-9 and 371,²⁰ and the early fourteenth century likewise witnessed a series of politically motivated trials for magic.²¹ Some magical practices and texts were also transmitted from the ancient world to the Middle Ages. For example, Constantine the African (d. before 1099), who wrote the first substantial medical discussion of magic impotence (see below, ch. 2), took some of his recipes from the fifth-century medical writer Sextus Placitus.

Comparisons with the ancient world thus reveal both continuities and changes which can be helpful in approaching medieval magic. Comparing the two periods raises interesting questions about how impotence magic came to be discussed in the way that it was in the Middle Ages. If some of the ideas about impotence magic which existed in the Middle Ages go back to the ancient world, then why did ancient writers discuss the subject in such different ways and contexts from their medieval counterparts? Neither ancient nor medieval writers reflected the beliefs of their time uncritically; to some extent, both raised the issue of impotence magic because it fitted in with their interest in other topics.

Literature

Two detailed literary treatments of magic and impotence were written in the early Roman Empire, Ovid's *Amores* 3.7 (written c. 25-15 BC), and the *Satyricon* of Petronius (c. 63-5 AD). Ovid's poem tells of how the poet finds himself impotent

¹⁸ Ramsay MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest and Alienation in the Empire* (2nd edn, London, 1992), pp. 122-3

¹⁹ Gene A. Brucker, 'Sorcery in Early Renaissance Florence', *Studies in the Renaissance* 10, 1963, p. 9; Ruggiero, p. 28

²⁰ Peter Brown, 'Sorcery, Demons and the Rise of Christianity from Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages', in Mary Douglas, ed., *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations* (London, 1970), p. 21

²¹ Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials* (London, 1976), pp. 10-14

when he tries to have sex with a beautiful girl. He cannot think of any explanation for this: he finds her attractive, and he is potent with other partners, so he starts to wonder if he has been bewitched:

‘Was my body listless under the spell of Thessalian drugs? Was I the wretched victim of charms and herbs, or did a witch curse my name upon a red wax image and stick fine pins into the middle of the liver? When damned by charms the corn withers on the sterile stalk... What prevents the cessation of my energy being due to magical practices?’²²

This poem, like many others in the *Amores*, takes up the themes of earlier Latin love poetry. In this case, Ovid’s inspiration was a passage in a poem of Tibullus (d. 19/18 BC), where the poet is so obsessed with his beloved Delia that he is impotent with other women: ‘[I have] often embraced another, but Venus on joy’s brink, reminding me of Delia, forsook me. Then calling me bewitched the woman left and to my shame spread rumours that my girl uses the black arts.’²³ Both Tibullus and Ovid made it clear that magic was not the only possible explanation for this sudden impotence. Tibullus explicitly rejected the suggestion that Delia had bewitched him: ‘What need has she of spells, with that bewitching face, soft arms and yellow hair...?’²⁴ Ovid had the woman in his poem suggest that if he was not bewitched, then he must have exhausted himself with another woman.²⁵ However, both poets were aware that magic was one explanation for mysterious impotence, and Ovid indicated some ways in which it might be done: by magical herbs, or spoken charms, or sticking needles in a wax figure.

Petronius envisaged a similar situation. The *Satyricon* is a long story about, among other things, the sexual adventures of Encolpius and his companions, of which only fragments survive. One section tells of how Encolpius finds himself impotent when he tries to have sex with the beautiful Circe (Petronius parodies the *Odyssey* at many points in the *Satyricon*,²⁶ so Circe’s name is probably meant to recall the enchantress who turned Odysseus’s men into pigs). Encolpius’s explanation for his impotence is

²² Ovid, *Amores*, 3:7, lines 27-31, 35, trans. Grant Showerman (Cambridge, MA, 2nd edn 1977), p. 477

²³ ‘saepe aliam tenui: sed iam cum gaudia adirem admonuit dominae deseruitque Venus. Tunc me, discedens, deuotum femina dixit – a pudet! – et narrat scire nefanda meam.’ Tibullus, *Elegies*, I.5, lines 39-42, trans. Guy Lee (Liverpool, 2nd edn 1982), pp. 46-7. I. M. le M. du Quesnay, ‘The Amores’ in J. W. Binns, ed., *Ovid* (London, 1973), p. 22.

²⁴ ‘non facit hoc uerbis; facie tenerisque lacertis deuouet et flauis nostra puella comis.’ Tibullus I.5, lines 43-4, trans. Lee, p. 47

²⁵ *Amores* 3.7, lines 79-80, p. 481

²⁶ Amy Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humour* (New Haven, 1983), p. 162

that ‘Witchcraft has got the better of me.’²⁷ Petronius then goes on to describe Encolpius’s attempts to get his potency back. First he rests and eats the right foods: ‘I... rubbed myself down with a little perfumed oil, and had a filling meal of onions and snails’ heads without gravy, accompanied by a modest glass of wine. I then settled myself for sleep...’ He also abstains from sex, for, he says, ‘I feared that my brother [Encolpius’s male lover Giton is meant] would impair my strength.’²⁸ These cures resemble the advice of ancient medical texts: the foods Encolpius eats were believed to be aphrodisiacs,²⁹ and it was also believed that too much sex could be exhausting, so his three-day abstinence would have fitted with learned medical advice. However, Encolpius combines this regime with more magical cures. The next day he visits a ‘little old woman’ who gives him ‘a twisted coil of different-coloured threads’ as an amulet, signs his forehead with a mixture of dust and saliva, and pronounces an incantation. This cure works, but only temporarily.³⁰ Finally, Encolpius prays at the shrine of Priapus and appeals to its elderly priestess, Oenothea. The scene with Oenothea descends rapidly into farce when Encolpius is attacked by one of her sacred geese and kills it with a table-leg, but Oenothea does try some unpleasant treatments, including whipping Encolpius with stinging-nettles. However, this does not work either, and Encolpius is eventually cured by the god Mercury.

Ovid and Petronius were probably not reflecting real beliefs about impotence magic uncritically. In both works, the characters’ impotence can be seen as symbolizing other concerns. It has been suggested that Ovid used his literary persona’s impotence, as well as the other difficulties described in book 3 of the *Amores*, as metaphors for the fact that he was becoming less interested in writing love elegies.³¹ Petronius was parodying epic situations and values (such as those of the *Odyssey*) to show the decline of contemporary epic poetry, and Encolpius’s lost potency is one aspect of this.³² Moreover, Petronius drew heavily on Ovid’s poem about impotence.³³ It has also been suggested that the impotence episode in the *Satyricon* was intended to satirize the belief in superstition by showing how ridiculous magical cures were, and

²⁷ ‘veneficio contactus sum.’ Petronius, *The Satyricon*, ed. Michael Heseltine (London, 1913), p. 284; *The Satyricon*, trans P. G. Walsh (Oxford, 1996), p. 128

²⁸ ‘timerem, ne latus meum frater convelleret.’ *Satyricon*, p. 290; trans. Walsh, p.131

²⁹ Edward Courtney, *A Companion to Petronius* (Oxford, 2001), p. 196

³⁰ *Satyricon*, p. 290; trans. Walsh, p.131

³¹ du Quesnay, pp. 6- 8

³² Richlin, p. 162

³³ Courtney, p. 198

how repulsive the old women who administered them.³⁴ However, the fact that impotence magic featured in literature, even as a metaphor or a target of ridicule, indicates that magic was well known as a cause of impotence.

Ovid and Petronius also conceptualized impotence caused by magic in a certain way. As in the Middle Ages, magic was the explanation brought in when other explanations failed, when there seemed to be no reason for the impotence: there is nothing physically wrong with the men in either work. Linked to this is the fact that magical impotence does not apply to every partner. (This was its defining feature in the Middle Ages.) Just before Ovid mentions magic in *Amores* 3.7, he considers how in the past he has had sex with his girlfriend Corinna nine times in one night. Encolpius's impotence is similarly mysterious: although he is always impotent with Circe, he manages to get an erection when the old woman pronounces a spell over him. Also striking is that there is no obvious cure. Ovid's poem does not suggest what the poet can do to cure himself. Petronius lists various cures – diet, rest, abstinence, magic and religious rituals – but none is effective. The cure by Mercury seems to come out of nowhere, although it is hard to tell because only fragments survive of the end of the *Satyricon*. Encolpius says that Mercury cured him, but does not say why: 'There are gods with greater power who have restored me to full health; for Mercury, whose regular role is to escort souls in both directions, has by his kindness restored to me what an angry hand had removed.'³⁵

Magic is thus the way in which these characters explain the fact that their sex drives are unpredictable and not under rational control. Both Ovid and Encolpius complain about this. Ovid describes how, when he does not want it, he has no trouble getting an erection: 'Now, too late, just look at it, it is well and strong, now clamouring for business and the fray.'³⁶ Encolpius, too, explains to Circe that 'the fault lay not in my person, but in my equipment.'³⁷ This way of viewing impotence was to have a long future. It recurs in a very different and more serious context, in the works of St Augustine, although without the suggestion of magic. Augustine argued that

³⁴ J. Adamietz, 'Circe in den Satyrica Petrons und das Wesen dieses Werkes', *Hermes* 123, 1995, p. 321; McMahon, p. 207

³⁵ 'Dii maiores sunt, qui me restituerunt in integrum. Mercurius enim, qui animas ducere et reducere solet, suis beneficiis reddidit mihi, quod manus irata praeciderat.' *Satyricon*, p. 318; trans. Walsh, p. 146

³⁶ 'quae nunc, ecce, vigent, intempestiva valentque, nunc opus exposcunt militiam suam.' *Amores* 3.7, lines 67-8, pp. 478-9

³⁷ 'non me sed instrumenta peccasse.' *Satyricon*, p. 288; trans. Walsh, p. 130

humanity's sexual desires were outside rational control as a punishment for Adam and Eve's sin of disobedience in the Garden of Eden. For Augustine, as in Ovid's poem, both involuntary erections and impotence were signs of the unpredictability of desire: 'Sometimes the [sexual] impulse is an unwanted intruder, but sometimes, it abandons the eager lover, and desire cools off in the body while it is at boiling heat in the mind... although on the whole it is totally opposed to the mind's control, it is quite often divided against itself.'³⁸ Augustine's view of sexual desire as God-given but rendered irrational and uncontrollable by the Fall, seems to be a new idea in Christian writing on sex. Earlier writers, such as Gregory of Nyssa, Jerome and Ambrose had claimed that sexuality was itself a consequence of the Fall,³⁹ and Peter Brown argues that Augustine's view arose out of the difficulties that he personally experienced in giving up sex.⁴⁰ However, Ovid and Petronius played on the unpredictability of desire in the same way. The difference between them and Augustine lies not in their view of impotence, but in the fact that Augustine substituted an entire cosmological framework for the magical and other explanations offered by the two earlier writers.

Although Augustine did not mention magic as a cause of impotence, it does appear in one early Christian literary source. The *Arabic Gospel of the Infancy*, one of several apocryphal scriptures that tell of Christ's childhood, mentions how the presence of the holy family at an inn cured a man who was 'recently married, but who, affected by magic, could not enjoy his wife.'⁴¹ This gospel survives in Arabic and Syriac versions, and in its present form dates back to perhaps the fifth century.⁴² It does not seem to have been translated into Latin until 1697, so is unlikely to have influenced medieval discussions of impotence magic, but it shows that it was not only pagan Latin literature that mentioned the subject.

³⁸ Peter Brown, *The Body and Society* (New York, 1988), p. 417. Michael Müller, *Die Lehre des Hl. Augustinus von der Paradiesesehe und ihre Auswirkung in der Sexualethik des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts bis Thomas von Aquin* (Regensburg, 1954), pp. 22-4. Quote from Kate Cooper and Conrad Leyser, 'The Gender of Grace: Impotence, Servitude and Manliness in the Fifth-Century West', *Gender and History* 12, 2000, p. 541

³⁹ Brown, *Body*, pp. 399-400

⁴⁰ Brown, *Body*, p. 406

⁴¹ 'recenti matrimonio devinctum, sed qui veneficio tactus uxore frui non poterat.' *Evangelium Infantiae Arabicum*, ed. Constantinus Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha* (Leipzig, 1853), ch. 19, p. 181

⁴² E. Amann, 'Apocryphes du Nouveau Testament', *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, suppl. 1, (Paris, 1928), cols. 485-6

Curse Tablets

As noted above, curse tablets surviving from the ancient world show that impotence magic was not just a literary theme. Many of these seem to have been written by professionals, on behalf of their clients. One, written in Greek in the second or third century AD, and found in a grave, reads as follows:

‘Just as you, Theonnastos [the dead person in whose grave the tablet was found], are powerless in any act or exercise of (your) hands, feet, body... to love and see maidens... so too may Zôilos remain powerless to screw Antheira and Antheira (remain powerless toward) Zôilos in the same way...’⁴³

A Christian spell in Coptic, of uncertain date, asks ‘May that binding be upon the male organ of Pharaouo and his flesh; may you dry it up like wood and make it like a rag upon the manure pile.’⁴⁴ Causing impotence does not seem to have been one of the main uses to which curse tablets were put, however: more often they were used to harm one’s enemies, influence chariot races or court cases, or win a person’s love, but the examples above show that they could be used in this way. The spell relating to Antheira and Zôilos is likely to have been commissioned by a rival for one of the partners, but some impotence spells may also have been designed to protect a woman from unwanted sexual advances. For example, a set of Coptic instructions for another spell have been interpreted by their recent translators as designed to protect a woman’s virginity, although they may simply be an attempt to prevent a particular relationship: ‘N. must not be able to release the virginity [of another named person] until the virginity of the Holy Virgin [Mary] is released.’⁴⁵ Magical technology could also be used to cure impotence: a papyrus magical book containing six spells, from the period of the Empire, includes one ‘For an erection.’⁴⁶

These spells indicate that literature did have some connection with real practices, even if it distorted them. Figures with needles stuck in them do survive from the ancient world, so Ovid’s remarks about this did have some basis in actual magical practice. Armand Delatte has made the same point about the magical practices which Ovid describes Medea doing in *Metamorphoses* book 7. Although Ovid’s description

⁴³ Gager, p. 88

⁴⁴ Marvin W. Meyer and Richard Smith, ed., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (2nd edn., Princeton, 1999), pp. 178-9

⁴⁵ Meyer/Smith, p. 180

⁴⁶ William Brashear and Roy Kotansky, ‘A New Magical Formulary’, in Paul Mirecki and Marvin Meyer, ed., *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World* (Leiden, 2002), p. 10

of Medea is fictional, parallels for some of the ways in which she gathers magical herbs can be found in ancient and medieval herbals.⁴⁷ The rituals for love magic described in literary texts also have parallels in Greek magical papyri, but there is one important difference: in literature, it is usually women who bewitch men, whereas the majority of magical papyri and curse tablets are designed for men who want to bewitch women.⁴⁸ However, the references to prostitutes doing love magic, quoted earlier, indicates that certain magical practices were strongly associated with women, even if the use of curse tablets was not.

Medicine

Impotence is discussed in ancient medical literature, but unlike in the Middle Ages, academic medical texts did not usually include magic as one of its causes. This is likely to be because the academic medicine of the ancient world, which first appeared in the treatises ascribed to Hippocrates (5th-4th centuries BC), did not trace any illnesses to magic or demons.⁴⁹ Indeed, the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease* (epilepsy, the illness perhaps most frequently blamed on supernatural causes) begins with the words 'I do not believe that the "Sacred Disease" is any more divine or sacred than any other disease but, on the contrary, has specific characteristics and a definite cause.'⁵⁰ Ancient authors of medical texts tended to follow this view of illness. By contrast, although medieval academic medical writers did not usually trace illnesses to magic and demons either, they made an exception for impotence.

Despite the views of academic medical writers, however, it is clear that at least some people in the ancient world did believe that illnesses could have supernatural causes. The author of *On the Sacred Disease* criticized the 'witch-doctors, faith-healers, quacks and charlatans' who called epilepsy 'sacred.'⁵¹ Much later, in the first century AD, Plutarch stated that 'in the estimation of a superstitious man, [all the indispositions] of his body... are classed as afflictions of God or attacks of an evil spirit'.⁵² The Gnostics, a set of religious groups with a strongly dualist view of the

⁴⁷ A. Delatte, *Herbarius: Recherches sur le cérémonial usité chez les anciens pour la cueillette des simples et des plantes magiques* (3rd edn., Paris, 1961), pp. 6-7

⁴⁸ John J. Winkler, 'The Constraints of Eros', in Christopher Faraone and Dirk Obbink, ed., *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (Oxford, 1991), p. 227

⁴⁹ Ludwig Edelstein, *Ancient Medicine* (2nd edn., Baltimore, 1987), p. 222

⁵⁰ *The Sacred Disease*, in G. E. R. Lloyd, ed., *Hippocratic Writings* (London, 1978), p. 237

⁵¹ *Sacred Disease*, p. 237

⁵² Quoted in Edelstein, p. 223

world, acted on this belief, at least according to their critics. According to the neo-Platonist philosopher Plotinus (d. 270),

‘they assert diseases to be Spirit-Beings and boast of being able to expel them by formulae: this pretension may enhance their importance with the crowd, gaping upon the powers of magicians; but they can never persuade the intelligent that disease arises otherwise than from such causes as overstrain, excess, deficiency, putrid decay, in a word some variation whether from within or from without.’⁵³

Thus, non-belief in supernatural illness was one way in which the learned distinguished themselves from everyone else, in the same way as Cicero and other classical writers criticized the superstition of the masses.⁵⁴ Dioscorides, the author of an encyclopaedia of medicinal substances compiled in the first century AD, likewise put a distance between himself and magical cures, often by introducing them with the words ‘They say...’⁵⁵ However, learned doctors did not reject everything that would now be called supernatural: the second-century AD doctor Galen, who criticized his fellow doctor Pamphilus for being too reliant on magic, admitted that amulets could sometimes be effective, and also believed that the god Asclepius could give medical advice in dreams.⁵⁶ There was also a trend in even elite Roman thought that praised traditional Roman folk medicine, which had magical aspects, against the medicine being imported by the Greeks.⁵⁷ For example, Pliny the Elder, in his influential *Natural History*, denounced Greek medicine, as well as superstition and magic, but he also included magical remedies of exactly the same kind as he denounced; it is not always clear whether he was being sarcastic, endorsing them, or simply repeating his sources.⁵⁸

Despite the fact that elite writers accepted certain remedies that could be seen as magical, the general tendency among intellectuals to criticize the belief in magically induced illness probably explains why I have not found any references to magic as a cause of impotence in ancient Greek academic medical texts. Latin medical literature is different in some respects. Much of it was written in the first to the fifth centuries

⁵³ Quoted in Edelstein, p. 221

⁵⁴ John Scarborough, *Roman Medicine* (London, 1969), p. 147

⁵⁵ John M. Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine* (Austin, Texas, 1985), p. 84

⁵⁶ Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. 1 (New York, 1923), p. 173; Fridolf Kudlien, ‘Galen’s Religious Belief’ in Vivian Nutton, ed., *Galen: Problems and Prospects* (London, 1981), p. 119

⁵⁷ Scarborough, pp. 52-3

⁵⁸ Thorndike, vol. 1, pp. 62-3; Janowitz, *Magic*, pp. 13-14

AD, with the aim of compiling and condensing the medical thought of the time, often focusing on practical medicine rather than theory.⁵⁹ The authors of these medical texts were not necessarily practising physicians: some were, but others were simply recording the kind of medicine which any *paterfamilias* or landowner was expected to know.⁶⁰ These Latin compendia did not usually ascribe illnesses to supernatural causes, but they did so a little more often than did the older Greek medical texts. One writer, Quintus Serenus, writing in the third or fourth century, referred to the *strix* found in Latin literature, a supernatural being that was believed to attack young children, and suggested tying garlic round the child for protection. Significantly, the source he cited was not a medical text, but a poet, Titinus.⁶¹ By late antiquity, it also seems to have become more acceptable than it was in the time of Pliny to include remedies such as amulets and charms in medical compendia.⁶² However, the majority of cures were still medicines and ointments made of herbs and animal parts; magic was not a major feature.

I have found two references to magically caused impotence in the Latin medical compendia, in the *De Medicamentis* of Marcellus 'Empiricus' of Bordeaux (written between 395 and 410), and the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* of Sextus Placitus Papyrensis (fifth century). Marcellus dedicated his treatise to the sons of the emperor Theodosius (d. 395), and intended it to provide medical information for his own sons in the absence of trained physicians.⁶³ He gave a list of written sources in his introduction, but he also claimed to have taken some proven recipes from popular practice: 'from rustics and the common people [I have taken] some simple remedies which happen to work, which they have proved by experience.'⁶⁴ The content of some of Marcellus's remedies also reflects their non-written origins. He gives the Gaulish names of some plants and animals, and his magic formulas are also in

⁵⁹ Scarborough, pp. 52-3; Owsei Temkin, 'History of Hippocratism in Late Antiquity: the Third Century and the Latin West', in *The Double Face of Janus* (Baltimore, 1977), p. 174; Vivian Nutton, 'From Galen to Alexander: Aspects of Medicine and Medical Practice in Late Antiquity', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38, 1984, repr. in *From Democedes to Harvey: Studies in the History of Medicine* (London, 1988), p. 2

⁶⁰ Scarborough, pp. 62-3

⁶¹ Quintus Serenus, *Liber Medicinalis*, ed. and trans. R. Pépin (Paris, 1950), p. 53

⁶² Nutton, p. 8

⁶³ Jerry Stannard, 'Marcellus of Bordeaux and the Beginnings of Medieval Materia Medica', *Pharmacy in History* 15, 1973, repr. in *Pristina Medicamenta* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 47-8

⁶⁴ 'ab agrestibus et plebeis remedia fortuita atque simplicia, quae experimentis probaverant.' Marcellus Empiricus, *De Medicamentis Liber*, ed. Maximilian Niedermann, trans. Jutta Kollesch and Diethard Nickel, *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum* vol. 5 (Berlin, 2nd edn 1968), p. 2

Gaulish, even though they are written in Greek characters.⁶⁵ Marcellus referred to magical causes for several ailments: he believed that magic could make a person's hair fall out, for example.⁶⁶ He also gave ways of making someone impotent:

'If you want someone to be unable to have intercourse, fix a board, that is a barrier [or bolt] wherever he has urinated, over his urine... If you do not want someone to have sex and want him to be rather slow in intercourse, take the growths formed on the wick of a lamp which has spontaneously gone out, while they are still glowing, and extinguish them in his drink, and give it to him to drink, without his knowing; he will quickly be weakened. If you wish someone to be unable to have sex with a woman at night, put a garlanded pestle [sic] under their bed.'⁶⁷

Marcellus did not call these processes magic (unlike in his reference to making a person's hair fall out, where he referred explicitly to *maleficia*) but they were clearly designed to be used on someone else, one of them explicitly without the victim's knowledge. They also used magical techniques. A lamp that had gone out spontaneously had supernatural connections: one love spell dating from the third or fourth centuries AD involved writing on seven lamp-wicks and allowing them to go out in an attempt to find out how close the woman was to coming to her lover.⁶⁸ Tampering with the spot where a person had urinated was believed to be a cause of magic impotence in the early modern period.⁶⁹ Marcellus's sources for these recipes are not clear; they may be the 'rustics and common people' whom he refers to in his preface, as the recipes do not seem to occur in any of the written sources he lists; however, since not all of Marcellus's written sources have survived for comparison, it is impossible to be sure.

Sextus Placitus used Marcellus as a source, which probably dates his text to the fifth century, but little else is known about him.⁷⁰ However, he did not quote Marcellus's

⁶⁵ Aline Rousselle, 'Du sanctuaire au thaumaturge: la guérison en Gaule au IV^e siècle', *Annales* 31:6, 1976, p. 1090

⁶⁶ 'Si quis maleficiis capillos perdiderit...' Marcellus Empiricus, p. 98

⁶⁷ 'Si quem ad usum venerium infirmum volueris esse, ubicumque minxerit, supra lotium eius obicem, id est axedonem, ex usu figes... Si quem coire noles fierique cupies in usu venerio tardiozem, de lucerna, quae sponte extinguetur, fungos adhuc viventes in potione eius extingue bibendamque inscio trade; confestim enervabitur. Si quem voles per noctem cum femina coire non posse, pistillum coronatum sub lecto illius pone.' Marcellus Empiricus, p. 570

⁶⁸ Ogden, pp. 234-5

⁶⁹ 'Sunt adhuc aliae fascinationum species, quae viro, aut feminae, per Satanae herbas et ligna in urinam calidam inferuntur; unde coeundi potentia adimitur.' Bartholomaeus Carrichter, *Certa et Genuina Ratio Medendi Morbis ab Incantatione dependentibus*, in *Sylloge Physico-Medicinalium Casuum*, ed. D. Georg. Abraham Mercklinus (Nuremberg, 1698), p. 200. *On carrichter, see below, p. 205.*

⁷⁰ Hans Diller, 'Placitus (3)', in G. Wissowa, *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 20:2 (Waldsee, 1950), col. 1945

recipes for causing impotence, so he is unlikely to have got the idea that magic could cause impotence from him. Instead, he took his statement about magic impotence from Pliny: 'To stimulate sex: the testicle of a cock, with goose fat in a ram's skin, hung on the arm, stimulates sex. Put under a bed with its blood, they bring it about that those who lie in the bed will not have sex.'⁷¹ Sextus was even more reluctant than Marcellus to define these procedures: the suggestion that a cock's testicles and blood, placed under the bed, could prevent anyone in the bed from having sex appeared almost as an afterthought, an opposite of the main point of the process, which was to stimulate sex. Here, he differed from Pliny, who had said that both recipes were anaphrodisiacs.⁷² Pliny also dropped slightly clearer hints that these processes were magic, since he opened this book of the *Natural History* with a history of magic, and qualified these recipes with the words 'they say', which he often does for the dubious remedies of the 'magi'. Moreover, like Marcellus's recipes, putting a cock's testicles and blood under the bed could very easily be used aggressively against someone else; and in the eleventh century, the medical writer and translator Constantine the African listed it as a kind of magic (*maleficium*) that could cause impotence.⁷³

By the seventh century, the date of the earliest surviving manuscripts of Sextus Placitus, the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* was preceded by an anonymous book on the medical uses of the badger (*De Taxone*). This text stated explicitly that magic could cause impotence: 'If someone is bewitched and cannot have intercourse...', the victim should cook a badger's testicles in honey and drink them with water from a spring on an empty stomach for three days. If he did this, he would be cured 'so that he cannot fail.'⁷⁴ *De Taxone* is the first medical text that openly linked magic and impotence, even if the link was very likely there in Pliny, Marcellus and Sextus. The use of cocks' and badgers' testicles in these texts relied on a force that is now seen as magical, the principle of sympathy, which was based on symbolic connections between objects. Thus a phallic-looking plant, or the testicles of an animal associated

⁷¹ 'Ad concubitum excitandum: Galli testiculum cum adipe anserino in arietis pelle brachio suspensum concubitum excitat. Subpositi lecto cum ipsius sanguine efficiunt, ne concumbant hi qui iacent.' Sextus Placitus, *Liber Medicinae*, ed. Ernest Howald and Henry Sigerist, *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum* IV (Leipzig, 1927), p. 282

⁷² 'inhiberi venerem pugnatoris galli testiculis anserino adipe inlitis adalligatisque pelle arietina tradunt, item cuiuscumque galli, si cum sanguine gallinacei lecto subiciantur.' Pliny, *Natural History*, XXX.49, ed. W. H. S. Jones (Cambridge, MA., 1963), p. 369

⁷³ Constantine the African, *Pantegni* 'Practica' book 8, chapter 29: See Appendix 1

⁷⁴ 'Si cui malefactum fuerit et non potuerit rebus venereis uti... remediatur, sic ut deficere non possit.' *De taxone*, ed. Ernest Howald and Henry Sigerist, *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum* IV (Leipzig, 1927), p. 231

with sex and fertility, might be used to cure impotence. Both ancient and medieval physicians probably saw these sympathetic influences as a part of the natural world, rather than reliant on gods or spirits for their power in the way that a curse tablet was.⁷⁵

The Hermetic literature on the occult properties of natural objects used animal parts in a similar way, and used them much more extensively for love and impotence magic. One of these works was the *Kyranides*, a guide to making amulets, which consists of several separate texts put together between the fourth and the eighth centuries. The first of the four texts was compiled in the third century AD or earlier.⁷⁶ This first book set out how to make amulets from a plant, a fish, a stone and a bird with similar names (representing earth, water, fire and air),⁷⁷ and also included information on the properties of individual plants, stones, birds and fish. For example, a married couple would love each other for their whole lives, if the man wore a male crow's heart as an amulet, and the woman a female crow's heart. This was linked to the text's assertion that crows mated for life. If the plant vervain was put under the mattress, any man in the bed would be impotent until it was taken away.⁷⁸ The *Kyranides* is important for the later history of magic impotence because it was translated into Latin in 1169, and its recipes, including those quoted above, were incorporated into medieval medical discussions of magic impotence and its cures.

Conclusion

Although the sources for impotence magic in the ancient world are not numerous, compared with the number surviving from the Middle Ages, a few conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the sources indicate that impotence caused by magic was well known, but it does not seem to have been a major concern. Ovid and Petronius treat it in humorous contexts; other kinds of curse tablet are more common; medical texts ignore the problem until the fifth century; and the laws against magic do not mention it. St

⁷⁵ Edelstein, p. 232

⁷⁶ A.-J. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, vol. 1, *L'Astrologie et les Sciences Occultes* (2nd edn. Paris, 1950), pp. 201-6

⁷⁷ Maryse Waegeman, *Amulet and Alphabet: Magical Amulets in the First Book of the Cyranides* (Amsterdam, 1987), p. 8

⁷⁸ 'nam si femina moritur, masculus cum alia non iungitur, similiter et femina facit. Ad amorem viri et coniugis suae: si vir gestaverit cor masculi et uxor cor feminae, convenient inter se toto tempore vitae suae.' 'Ut membrum virile non erigatur, donec positum auferatur: si quis autem sub pulvinario posuerit herbam, iacens non eriget.' Louis Delatte, ed., *Textes latins et vieux français relatifs aux Cyranides* (Liège, 1942), pp. 32, 57

Augustine presented impotence in general as a consequence of the Fall, a graphic symptom of how the hierarchy of mind and body had been broken, but he did not mention magic in this context. Unlike some medieval writers about magic impotence, such as St Bonaventure, he did not take the link between sexuality and the Fall further, and state that the devil had any special power over the sexual organs, and that therefore they were the part of the body most susceptible to being bewitched.⁷⁹

This reticence in ancient sources is interesting when compared with the amount that central and late medieval writers had to say about magic impotence. Was impotence magic much more common in the Middle Ages? It seems unlikely, unless some bewitchers tried to take advantage of laws that allowed divorce and remarriage in some impotence magic cases, but in few other circumstances. It is more likely that impotence magic was discussed much more in the Middle Ages because the learned culture of the time encouraged and even forced certain groups of writers to discuss it. Because medieval students studied theology and law by commenting on set texts, once impotence magic appeared in these texts, every commentator had to say something about it. Medieval medical texts also copied from each other, so once impotence magic appeared in one, it could appear in others. We should thus be wary of taking the explosion of sources in the later Middle Ages as signs that impotence magic was happening on a larger scale than before.

The ancient sources may also point to a pattern that continued into the early Middle Ages: that learned writers about magic and impotence took much of their information from popular culture rather than written sources. Many ideas about magic were shared by all classes in the ancient world, such as the idea of depositing substances to harm or influence someone by magic. The fourth-century orator Libanius of Antioch believed that he had been attacked by magic when he found a mutilated chameleon in his classroom;⁸⁰ and lower down the social scale, the 130 tablets found in the well of Sulis in Bath, dating from between the second and fourth centuries AD, often sought the recovery of small sums of money.⁸¹ Marcellus Empiricus claimed to have taken

⁷⁹ 'sicut diabolo permissa est a Deo potestas super serpentes magis quam super alia animalia in prioris facti memoriam... sic, quia actus ille vitiosus est et quodam modo foetens, et ut plurimum coniunguntur homines ad illum actum libidinose: ideo diabolus plus habet ibi posse, et plus ei permittitur.'

Bonaventure, *In Quartum Sententiarum* 34.2, in *Opera Omnia* vol. 4 (Quaracchi, 1889), p. 773

⁸⁰ Libanius, *Autobiography*, ed. and trans. A. F. Norman (Oxford, 1965), pp. 127-9

⁸¹ R. S. O. Tomlin, 'The Curse Tablets', in Barry Cunliffe, ed., *The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath*, vol. 2: *The Finds from the Sacred Spring* (Oxford, 1988), p. 80

some of his information from rustics, and Pliny, too, may have drawn on folk medicine. It is a vexed question how far elite writers like Ovid and Petronius can tell us about non-elite culture, but Petronius's scathing characterisation of the impoverished old ladies who administered magical cures for impotence may have some truth in it. This suggestion is necessarily tenuous, but would fit what seems to be the situation in the early Middle Ages.

Some recipes for inflicting and curing magic impotence were transmitted directly from ancient sources to those of the Middle Ages: Pliny's *Natural History*, the *Kyranides*, Sextus Placitus, and Marcellus Empiricus were still read many centuries later. Their recipes were also copied by other writers. Constantine the African, the first medieval medical writer to discuss magic impotence in detail, took the idea of putting a cock's testicles under the bed from Sextus Placitus. Another medical writer, Peter of Spain (d. 1277) included aphrodisiacs from the *Kyranides* in his compendium, the *Thesaurus Pauperum*. These practices may have been used as well as passed on in written medical texts, and other practices may have continued without being recorded. It is suggestive, for example, that Marcellus Empiricus's method of causing impotence by tampering with the spot where a man had urinated was recorded once again in the sixteenth century. However, the importance of ancient sources in medieval discussions of magic impotence should not be exaggerated. Medieval medical writers also recommended many remedies that cannot be traced to ancient texts, and the references to magic impotence in ancient literature seem to have had little effect on medieval writers. The *Satyricon* did not circulate much in the Middle Ages;⁸² and although the *Amores* were being read from the twelfth century onwards,⁸³ I have found no references to them in discussions of magic and impotence. Magical beliefs and practices also changed between antiquity and the Middle Ages. Curse tablets disappeared after the eighth century, although they did reappear in early modern England.⁸⁴ The spread of Christianity, and its stigmatization of all forms of magic as demonic, also changed attitudes, especially among the clerics who were responsible for almost all of the surviving medieval sources for impotence magic. However, there was also continuity, and thus the sources of the ancient world throw interesting light on what happened in the Middle Ages.

⁸² *Satyricon*, p. xxxv

⁸³ M. L. Stapleton, *Harmful Eloquence: Ovid's 'Amores' from Antiquity to Shakespeare* (Ann Arbor, 1996), p. 56

⁸⁴ Gager, pp. 27-8

Chapter 2

‘What Adulterous Women Do’: the Early Middle Ages, c.800-c.1100

The sources for magic in the early Middle Ages are very different from those of the ancient world. The curse tablets which are found in large numbers from the ancient world disappear after the eighth century,¹ so we know far less about actual spells that were cast. In addition, the sources that discussed magic were all produced by Christian clerics, and are dominated by their desire to stamp out the practices that they described. Magic came to be associated with paganism because, following St Augustine, Christian writers believed that both involved collaborating with demons; thus criticisms of the use of magic to cause love or death were often put alongside denunciations of pagan rites performed at trees and wells.² Many of the early medieval sources for impotence magic do not put it in the context of paganism, however. Some cures for magic impotence relied on Christian rituals such as confession and the mass, but much impotence magic seems to have been religiously neutral, relying instead on sympathetic processes such as tying knots and putting items under the bed.

Some of the most valuable sources for early medieval magic are the penitentials, lists of penances that priests should administer for given offences. These list a wide variety of magical practices, including magic to cause love or hate, but they are problematic sources because information was copied from penitential to penitential down the centuries. It is therefore difficult to know if practices first referred to in the sixth century were still happening in the tenth, or if older texts were simply copied blindly. Dieter Harmening has argued that most early medieval discussions of superstition draw on the sermons of Caesarius of Arles (d. 542) and therefore do not reflect later realities;³ but other historians have suggested that if the authors of penitentials continued to copy old information, then it must still have been relevant.⁴ Despite their interest in magic, however, the surviving penitentials did not specifically mention the use of magic to cause impotence until the tenth or eleventh century. It is

¹ John G. Gager, ed., *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford, 1992), p. 27

² H. J. Schmitz, ed., *Die Bußbücher und die Bußdisciplin der Kirche*, vol. I (Mainz, 1883), pp. 80-90, 411, 478-80; F. W. H. Wasserschleben, ed., *Die Bußordnungen der abendländischen Kirche* (Halle, 1851), pp. 312, 392, 596-8.

³ Dieter Harmening, *Superstitio: Überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1979), pp. 318-9

likely that impotence magic was covered by the penitentials' general prohibitions of doing magic to arouse hate.

I have found no new references to impotence magic between 500 and 800, although some of the ancient texts which mentioned the subject were circulating in this period: the earliest surviving manuscript of the late antique medical compendia the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* of Sextus Placitus and *De Taxone* is seventh-century, for example. That these two texts were seen as useful is indicated by the fact that they were translated into Old English before the eleventh century, and were probably used in medical practice.⁵ Between 800 and 1100, however, a handful of writers did discuss impotence magic at length. Each went into detail, but there is little evidence that they influenced each other. Their discussions are significantly different from the antique evidence, and between them, they established most of the basic assumptions and facts used by later writers on magic and impotence.

Hincmar of Rheims

The first medieval discussions of impotence magic occur in the works of Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims from 845 to 882. Hincmar was very interested in the subject of marriage, and advised bishops and lay rulers in several high-profile marriage cases. His writings have been seen by Georges Duby as representing a key stage in the history of marriage, when the church began to promote a 'clerical' model of marriage which was monogamous and indissoluble, in opposition to a 'lay' model which permitted divorce and remarriage much more freely.⁶ In 860, Hincmar gave opinions on two marriage disputes in the Frankish nobility. The first of these concerned Count Stephen of Auvergne, who was betrothed to the daughter of Count Raymond of Toulouse. Stephen was worried because he had previously slept with a relative of his fiancée, which under the canon law of the time would have rendered the proposed marriage incestuous. Under pressure from Raymond, he had gone through with the wedding ceremony, but was refusing to consummate the marriage. Raymond appealed to a synod of bishops, who in turn asked Hincmar for advice.

⁴ The debate is summarized by Sarah Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance 900-1050* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 44-6

⁵ Hubert Jan de Vriend, *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina de Quadrupedibus* Early English Texts Society 286 (Oxford, 1984), pp. 238-9; Linda E. Voigts, 'Anglo-Saxon Plant Remedies and the Anglo-Saxons', *Isis* 70, 1979, p. 257

⁶ Georges Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest: the Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France* (London, 1983), p. xix

Hincmar responded with a letter *On the Marriage of Stephen and Count Raymond's Daughter*, in which he supported Stephen. He claimed that Stephen's marriage to Count Raymond's daughter could not be a true marriage because the couple could not have sex without committing the sin of incest. If a marriage could not be consummated, Hincmar argued, then it was incomplete because it could not symbolize the union of Christ with the Church: 'a marriage does not contain the sacrament of Christ and the Church, as blessed Augustine says, if it is not used in a way appropriate to marriage, that is, if sexual intercourse does not follow it.'⁷ In fact, Augustine had said no such thing. The source was a letter of Pope Leo I (d. 461), which had become corrupted during its transmission, and Hincmar was in fact the first clerical writer on marriage to state that an unconsummated marriage was incomplete and therefore dissoluble under certain circumstances.⁸

Hincmar went on to argue that since Stephen could not have sex with his wife without committing the sin of incest, he had a form of impotence. This brought him to the subject of impotence in general, and he discussed magic impotence in a short paragraph beginning *Si per sortiarias...* (If by sorceresses...). This passage was crucial for later discussions of impotence magic:

'If by sorceresses and [female] magicians, with the permission of the hidden but never or nowhere unjust judgement of God, and through the working of the Devil, it happens [that a couple cannot have intercourse], [the couple] to whom this happens should be encouraged to make a pure confession of all their sins to God and a priest with a contrite heart and humble spirit. With many tears and very generous alms-giving, and prayers and fasting, they should make satisfaction to the Lord, by whose judgement, at their own deserving^{and unwillingly} they have deserved to be deprived of that blessing which the Lord gave to our first parents in paradise before sin, and even after sin he does not wish to deprive the whole human race of it. The ministers of the church should attend to their healing in so far as God (who healed Abimelech and his house by the prayers of Abraham) grants, through exorcisms and the other offices of ecclesiastical medicine. Those who by chance cannot be healed,

⁷ 'Nec habent nuptiae in se Christi et Ecclesiae sacramentum, sicut beatus Augustinus dicit, si se nuptialiter non utuntur, id est, si eas non subsequitur commistio sexuum.' Hincmar of Rheims, *De nuptiis Stephani et filiae Regimundi comitis*, MGH *Epistolae* 8, (Berlin, 1939), no. 136, p. 93

⁸ On the significance of this text for the canon law of marriage, see: Jean Gaudemet, 'Recherche sur les origines historiques de la faculté de rompre le mariage non consommé', in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law*, ed. Stephan Kuttner and Kenneth Pennington (Vatican City, 1980), pp. 316-8; Gérard Fransen, 'La lettre de Hincmar de Reims au sujet du mariage d'Étienne' in R. Lievens, E. van Mingroot and W. Verbeke, ed., *Pascua Mediaevalia: Studies voor Prof. J. M. de Smet* (Louvain, 1983), pp. 133-146; Philip Lyndon Reynolds, *Marriage in the Western Church* (Leiden, 1994), pp. 353-61

can be separated; but after they have sought other marriages, while those to whom they are married are still living, they cannot be reconciled with their former partners whom they have left, even if the ability to have intercourse has returned to them.⁹

Four points about this text were taken up by later writers: the fact that God permits impotence magic; the female gender of the magician; the ecclesiastical cures (I will come back to what is meant by ‘ecclesiastical medicine’); and, most important of all, the conclusion that if ecclesiastical cures fail, the couple can separate and both parties can remarry. Moreover, if the magic later goes away, the second marriages should stand. This paragraph gained an importance out of all proportion to the role it played in Hincmar’s argument, because it was excerpted and incorporated into later canon law collections, and became the source of the canon law on impotence magic. In the twelfth century, it was incorporated into the *Decretum* of Gratian (c.1140), which became the standard reference work in canon law, and into the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (c.1155-7), which became the standard teaching work for theology. Both of these texts were commented on in universities for the rest of the Middle Ages.

Although *Si per sortiarias* was so important for later discussions of impotence magic, Hincmar actually said much more about the subject in relation to the other case that he discussed in 860: the ongoing attempts of King Lothar II of Lotharingia to divorce his wife Theutberga and marry his concubine Waldrada. Theutberga strongly resisted this, with the support of Pope Nicholas I, and the case, which began in 857, was still unresolved when Lothar died in 869.¹⁰ Magic enters the story because according to Hincmar, rumours were circulating that Lothar’s hatred of his wife was caused by Waldrada’s magic. Once again, Hincmar was asked for advice, this time by a group of Lotharingian bishops, and he responded with a treatise, *On the Divorce of King Lothar and Queen Theutberga*, which argued that Lothar and Theutberga’s marriage should stand. Hincmar’s response may not have been entirely disinterested, because

⁹ ‘Si per sortiarias atque maleficas occulto, sed numquam vel nusquam iniusto, Dei iudicio permittente et diabolo operante accidit, hortandi sunt quibus ista eveniunt, ut corde contrito et spiritu humiliato Deo et sacerdoti de omnibus peccatis suis puram confessionem faciant, et profusis lacrimis, ac largioribus elemosinis, et orationibus atque ieiuniis Domino satisfaciant, cuius iudicio pro suo merito, ab illa benedictione privari inviti meruerunt, quam Dominus primis parentibus ante peccatum in paradiso donavit, et etiam post peccatum humanum genus in totum privari non voluit, et per exorcismos ac cetera medicinae ecclesiasticae munia ministri ecclesiae tales, quantum annuerit Dominus, qui Abimelech ac domum eius Abrahae orationibus sanavit, sanare procurent. Qui forte si sanari non poterunt, separari valebunt. Sed postquam alias nuptias expetierint, illis in carne viventibus, quibus iunctae fuerint, prioribus, quos reliquerant, etiamsi possibilitas concumbendi eis reddita fuerit, reconciliari nequibunt.’ *De nuptiis Stephani*, p. 105

his own king was Lothar's uncle, Charles the Bald, who stood to inherit part of Lotharingia if Lothar produced no legitimate sons. It was therefore in Charles's interest to keep Lothar in his childless marriage to Theutberga.¹¹ However, other historians have argued that Hincmar was not just reflecting Charles the Bald's interests.¹² Even if there was political bias involved, Hincmar said a great deal about magic, far more than was needed to support his argument. Unlike the paragraph *Si per sortiarias* (which circulated independently of the work in which it occurs), the passages on impotence magic in the *Divorce* were not excerpted, and the treatise itself did not circulate widely. It survives in only one manuscript, which was preserved in Hincmar's own church at Rheims,¹³ and is therefore unlikely to have influenced later discussions of impotence magic.

In the *Divorce*, Hincmar discussed three questions relating to magic: whether magic could cause love or hatred between a man and a woman; why God would permit this to happen; and what should be done with the perpetrators of such magic.¹⁴ Much of his reply to the question of whether magic could cause love or hate consisted of general discussions of magic quoted from earlier Christian writers like Augustine, Isidore of Seville and Bede. He also repeated a story from the *Life of St Basil* about how a man used love magic to seduce a girl who had vowed virginity. However, in addition to this material, Hincmar included some information that does not have a traceable written source. First he described how one of the bishops in his archdiocese had had to deal with a case of impotence magic. A young man of noble birth fell in love with a woman and obtained her father's consent to the marriage, but the girl's mother opposed the match, and on the wedding night the bridegroom found himself impotent. After two years of living together in this situation, the man sought a divorce from the local bishop, threatening that if the marriage was not dissolved, he would solve the problem himself by murdering his wife. The bishop recognized the work of the Devil because the man could still sleep with his former concubine, and eventually, after penance and 'ecclesiastical medicine' (*medicina ecclesiastica*, as in *Si per*

¹⁰ The case is discussed in detail by Stuart Airlie, 'Private Bodies and the Body Politic in the Divorce Case of Lothar II', *Past and Present* 161, 1998, pp. 3-38

¹¹ Janet L. Nelson, 'The Annals of St Bertin', in Janet Nelson and Margaret Gibson, ed., *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom* (Aldershot, 2nd edn 1990), p. 38

¹² Jean Devisse, *Hincmar, Archevêque de Reims 845-882*, vol. 1 (Geneva, 1975), p. 384; Airlie, p. 12

¹³ Hincmar of Rheims, *De Divortio Lotharii Regis et Theutbergae Reginae*, ed. Letha Böhringer, *MGH Concilia* 4, Supplement 1, (Hannover, 1992), p. 31

¹⁴ Hincmar, *De Divortio*, pp. 205-217

sortiarias), the young man regained his potency, and diabolical hate was replaced by conjugal love.¹⁵

This is the earliest medieval account of a case of impotence magic that I have found. Hincmar gives no names or places, and is vague about some details (was the groom's mother-in-law supposed to have bewitched him, or was it the former concubine?), but there is no reason to suppose that he made the story up. He also claimed to have encountered similar cases himself: 'There are also others, which necessity has compelled us to discern and judge, which we do not want to speak of because of their abominable disgustingness.'¹⁶ Hincmar went on to list the ways in which love and hate magic could be performed: using the bones of the dead, ashes, coals, pubic hairs, coloured threads, herbs, parts of serpents, and *clocleolis* (possibly either little bells (*clocculis*) or small snails (*cocleolis*)); the magic could be administered in food or drink, or by means of incantations or enchanted clothing.¹⁷ This section is the only part of Hincmar's chapters on magic where he does not quote from earlier sources. Some of it resembles the discussions of magic in the penitentials, which Hincmar quoted in his chapter on what should be done with magicians: for example, the penitentials mentioned love potions and singing incantations over herbs.¹⁸ The penitential of Halitgar of Cambrai, written for Hincmar's predecessor Archbishop Ebbo of Rheims (817-31), included a penance for women who practised 'vanity' in their woollen work under the section on magic,¹⁹ which may refer to the threads and enchanted garments mentioned by Hincmar. However, Hincmar included far more detail than is found in surviving penitentials, and also discussed impotence magic, which they did not mention explicitly in this period. Even if he drew some information from the penitentials, Hincmar still put the discussion together around the subject of impotence and added new magical techniques.

¹⁵ Hincmar, *De Divortio*, pp. 205-6

¹⁶ 'sunt et alia, quae nos dirimere ac iudicare necessitas compulit, quae propter nefariam turpitudinem dicere nolumus.' Hincmar, *De Divortio*, p. 206

¹⁷ 'Turpe est fabulas nobis notas referre et longum est sacrilegia computare, quae ex huiusmodi de ossibus mortuorum atque cineribus carbonibusque extinctis et de capillis atque pilis locorum genitalium virorum ac feminarum cum filulis colorum multiplicum et herbis variis ac clocleolis et serpentium particulis composita cum carminibus incantata... Quidam etiam vestibus carminatis induebantur vel cooperiebantur, alii potu, alii autem cibo a sorciariis dementati, alii vero tantum carminibus a strigis fascinati...' Hincmar, *De Divortio*, p. 206

¹⁸ For example, Wasserschleben, p. 356; Schmitz, p. 413

¹⁹ 'Non liceat mulieres christianas vanitatem in suis lanificiis observare, sed Deum invocent adiutorem, qui eis sapientiam texendi donavit.' Schmitz I, p. 727

Because he believed that impotence magic could only happen with God's permission, Hincmar assumed that it was often curable. In neither of his discussions of impotence magic did he specify exactly what he meant by 'ecclesiastical medicine': he implied that it was different from confession, prayer and exorcism, which were listed separately in *Si per sortiarias*, so it may refer to further ecclesiastical ceremonies, such as the use of holy water and bells. Valerie Flint has suggested that the binding nature of Christian marriage, which was supposed to be indissoluble, could in itself be seen as a counter to the binding magic that caused impotence.²⁰ This does not seem very likely: although Christian blessings of the marriage bed, which are found as early as the eighth century,²¹ may have been partly seen as protective against magic, it does not follow that simply because Christian marriage was supposed to be indissoluble, its bond had a magical force. However, even if Christian marriage did not have a magical binding force, Flint is right to stress that Hincmar's prognosis in impotence-magic cases was optimistic: the implication of the case that he described is that ecclesiastical medicine is so effective that in most cases, a separation will be unnecessary.²²

Hincmar may even have extended his idea of 'ecclesiastical medicine' to include amulets: the Lothar crystal in the British Museum, which dates from the mid ninth century and is engraved with scenes from the biblical story of Susannah, may be connected to the divorce of Lothar and Theutberga. Not only does it depict the vindication of a wife wrongly accused of a sexual crime (Lothar had accused Theutberga of incest and abortion), but the rock crystal from which it was made is found in Frankish graves as an amulet. Charlemagne was said to have had a Christian equivalent, a reliquary amulet made of crystal. Valerie Flint therefore argues that the crystal was designed by Hincmar for Lothar and Theutberga's temporary reconciliation in 865, and can be seen as both a reproach to Lothar for his conduct and a protection for the couple against further magic.²³ Hincmar's connection with the Lothar crystal, and the crystal's purpose, could never be proved conclusively, and other interpretations have been put forward: Rosamund McKitterick argues that it was

²⁰ Valerie Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1991), p. 295

²¹ Jean-Baptiste Molin and Protais Mutembe, *Le Rituel du Mariage en France du XIIIe au XVIe siècle* (Paris, 1974), p. 27

²² Flint, *Rise*, p. 296

²³ Valerie Flint, 'Magic and Marriage in Ninth-Century Francia: Lothar, Hincmar – and Susanna', in Marc Anthony Meyer, ed., *The Culture of Christendom: Essays in Medieval History in*

produced by Lothar's father Lothar I, who had accused his stepmother Judith of adultery but was reconciled with her in 849, while Genevra Kornbluth agrees with Flint that the crystal was produced by Lothar II, but argues that it was designed to present him as a just ruler, rather than reproach him for his lack of justice to Theutberga.²⁴ However, Flint's suggestion is plausible: Hincmar was well informed about magic, and was also interested in the story of Susannah.²⁵

The length and detail of Hincmar's discussion of impotence magic in the *Divorce* reflects his own interest in both sex and magic. He was an acknowledged expert on marriage law, and his interest in sexual matters is also evident in his treatise on the vices and virtues, where, as in the *Divorce*, passages with no apparent sources are found in the middle of an otherwise unoriginal discussion. Several of these passages are again about sexual sins.²⁶ The interest in marriage and magic may also be linked to Hincmar's pastoral interests as an archbishop. His episcopal statutes of 857 stressed how important it was for priests to get first-hand information about what the laypeople under their charge were doing, and refer serious crimes (such as homicide, adultery and perjury) to the bishop.²⁷ It therefore seems likely that Hincmar took some of his information from what he himself, or his subordinates, had observed, and that his discussion was fuller than most because he was interested in sexual matters. He saw this as a necessary part of his role as archbishop: 'We bishops say this not because we want knowingly to reveal or ignorantly to make known the secret places of girls and women, which we know nothing of by experience, but... so that if anyone caught at such things comes to us, asking in penitence for the judgement of just judges, we can judge her without error.'²⁸

Hincmar's interest in magic was not necessarily typical. Many writers discussed the case of Lothar and Theutberga without mentioning the rumours of magic: a collection of letters on the case compiled by Lothar's supporter, Bishop Adventius of Metz, did

Commemoration of Denis L. T. Bethell (London, 1993), pp. 61-74; 'Susanna and the Lothar Crystal: a Liturgical Perspective', *Early Medieval Europe* 4, 1995, pp. 61-86

²⁴ Rosamund McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians* (London, 1983), p. 174; Genevra Kornbluth, 'The Susanna Crystal of Lothar II: Chastity, the Church, and Royal Justice', *Gesta* 31, 1992, pp. 25-39

²⁵ Flint, 'Magic,' p. 68

²⁶ Hincmar of Rheims, *De cavendis vitiis et virtutibus exercendis*, ed. Doris Nachtmann MGH, 1998, pp. 122-3, 168-9. I am grateful to Janet Nelson for suggesting these parallels to me.

²⁷ Hincmar's statutes: PL 125:793-4; Devisse, vol. 2, p. 881

²⁸ Quoted in Jane Bishop, 'Bishops as Marital Advisors in the Ninth Century', in Julius Kirshner and Suzanne F. Wemple, ed., *Women of the Medieval World* (Oxford, 1985), p. 55

not mention them, and nor did Regino of Prüm, writing a chronicle at the end of the ninth century.²⁹ Some contemporaries seem to have seen Waldrada's relationship with Lothar as legitimate, and so are unlikely to have seen her as a sorceress who broke up his marriage. For example, Waldrada appears in the commemoration book of the Lotharingian monastery of Remiremont, as does the mistress of Lothar I, Doda, which indicates that both women were seen as worthy of being recorded alongside the Carolingian kings.³⁰ However, the idea that Waldrada had bewitched Lothar does not seem to have been unique to Hincmar. In his chronicle, the *Annals of St Bertin*, Hincmar claimed that rumours were circulating about it: 'Lothar, demented, as it was said, by the magic arts...' and he said in the *Divorce* that 'many people' believed that magic could cause love or hate between a man and a woman.³¹

The rumours also resurfaced much later in another source with no known connection to Hincmar of Rheims. The *Life of St Deicolus*, written in the monastery of Lure in around 965, had no qualms about presenting Waldrada as a sorceress. The author says that 'suddenly [Lothar] was burned with the brand of the ancient enemy and led into such headstrong and headlong insanity that he repudiated his pious wife Queen Bertsinda [sic], and took instead a certain she-wolf named Waldrada. Because she was very widely supposed to be a sorceress, she so bewitched the king's mind by many kinds of magic, that everything she asked of him, she easily obtained.'³² The author of the *Life* had a grudge against Waldrada, because he went on to report how she drove the monks out of Lure.³³ The rumours that Hincmar reported have here become a full accusation of magic: Waldrada is described as a sorceress (*prestigiatrix* and *maga*), as well as a she-wolf, a 'very evil woman' (*femina nequissima*) and a whore (*meretrix*). Both Hincmar and the *Life* seem to be claiming that Waldrada worked love magic on Lothar, rather than impotence magic specifically, but

²⁹ E. Dümmler, ed., *Epistolae ad Divortium Lotharii Regis Pertinentes* MGH *Epistolae* VI, *Epistolae Karolini Aevi* IV; Regino of Prüm, *Chronicon* ed. Friedrich Kurze, MGH *SS Rerum Germanicarum* 50 (Hannover, 1890), pp. 77, 80, 85-6

³⁰ Airlie, p. 15

³¹ 'Hlotharius... maleficus, ut ferebatur, artibus dementatus...' *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, ed. Félix Grat, Jeanne Viellard and Suzanne Clémencet (Paris, 1964), p. 93; 'quod plures homines dicunt...' Hincmar, *De Divortio* p. 205

³² 'repente antiqui hostis cauterio inustus est et in tantam precipitate mentis insaniam perductus, ut uxorem suam religiosam reginam Bertsindam dimitteret et lupam quandam nomine Walderadam duceret. Quae quia *prestigiatrix* erat opinatissima, ita maleficiis multigenis regis animum fascinavit, ut omnia que ab illo peteret facile impetravit.' *Vita S. Deicoli*, ed. G. Waitz, MGH *Scriptores* 15, (Hannover, 1888), p. 678

³³ *Vita Deicoli*, p. 678

Hincmar's story of the bewitched man in his archdiocese shows how closely the two were linked in his mind.

Aimoin of Fleury

The next mention of impotence magic is in Aimoin of Fleury's *History of the Franks*. Aimoin (d. after 1008) was a monk at Fleury, and his history chronicles the deeds of the Franks up to 654. Aimoin claimed that the Frankish queen Brunhild (d. 613) had used magic to break up the marriage of her grandson Theuderic II to Ermenberga, the daughter of King Witteric of Visigothic Spain:

'Theuderic received her happily and at first loved her above all others; however, because of Brunhild's magic, she did not have intercourse with her husband. Then, at the instigation of his grandmother, Theuderic robbed Ermenberga (for that was the girl's name) of her treasures and ordered her to leave for Spain.'³⁴

Aimoin's statement that Ermenberga did not have intercourse with her husband, rather than vice versa, may indicate that Brunhild had made her unable to have sex, rather than Theuderic; but the result was the same. Brunhild, Aimoin said elsewhere, did not want Theuderic to marry anyone because she did not want another queen to rival her own power. His source for this episode was the chronicle of Fredegar, who lived through this period. Fredegar had made the point that Brunhild feared the presence of another queen, but his view of Theuderic's marriage was rather different:

'he received her [Ermenberga] delightedly. But his grandmother saw to it that Theuderic's marriage was never consummated: the talk of Brunhild his grandmother and of his sister Theudila poisoned him against his bride.'³⁵

Thus in Fredegar's account, Brunhild opposed the marriage by persuasion rather than by magic. However, Aimoin may possibly have taken Brunhild and Theudila's 'talk' (*instigantibus verbis*) to mean the use of incantations, especially in the light of Brunhild's posthumous reputation. This originated in the *Life of Columbanus* by Jonas of Bobbio, which portrayed her as a villain. Like Fredegar, Columbanus blamed Brunhild for Theuderic's reluctance to marry; and when the saint clashed with

³⁴ 'Quam Theodoricus letus accipiens primum unice dilexit; que tamen maleficiis Brunechildis virum non cognovit. Deinde, faciente eadem avia sua, Theodoricus Hermembergum (id quippe nomen virgini), thesauris exspoliata abire praecepit ad Hispaniam.' Aimoin of Fleury, *Historia Francorum*, ch. 94, PL 139:759

³⁵ 'quem ille gaudens diligenter suscepit. Eadem factionem auiae suae Brunechilde uirile coitum non cognovit. Instigantibus uerbis Brunechilde aua et Teudilane germana efficitur odiosa.' Fredegar, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar*, trans J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (London, 1960), p. 20

her over this, she had him exiled. For this, Jonas labelled Brunhild a 'second Jezebel',³⁶ and although he did not accuse her of magic, Jezebel is described in the Bible as given to 'obscene idol-worship and monstrous sorceries (*veneficia*)' (2 Kings 9:22). Thus once Brunhild had been associated with Jezebel, it became that much easier to associate her with magic as well. Nor was it only Aimoin who associated Brunhild with magic: the *Book of the History of the Franks*, finished near Paris in 727, which is very hostile to Brunhild, also refers to her '*maleficia*'. It does not mention Theuderic's marriage to Ermenberga, but it states that after Theuderic quarrelled with Brunhild, she gave him a poison, also referred to as '*maleficium*'.³⁷ Perhaps Aimoin had heard stories like these, and assumed that Brunhild's influence over her grandson was also due to magic. Aimoin's view of Brunhild later became established as a historical fact, because in the thirteenth century his history formed the basis of the influential *Grandes Chroniques de France*.³⁸

The Life of St Bertha

Another case of impotence magic recorded long after the event appears in the *Life* of St Bertha, an aristocratic Frankish widow who founded a monastery at Blangy-sur-Ternoise, in the Pas-de-Calais. Bertha died in around 725, but the *Life* was written in the tenth century. It tells of how the Anglo-Saxon king Waraclinus, passing through Francia on his way back from a pilgrimage to Rome, married Bertha's daughter Emma. Waraclinus was initially happy with his new wife, but this did not last: 'There was among the king's maidservants a certain enchantress named Theida, who fascinated her lord and turned him away from his legitimate marriage, so that he loved her more, and cursed and hated Emma. This she did by magic incantations. For the lady Emma was often beaten with cruel blows, but the maidservant was loved by the king.'³⁹ Bertha eventually found out that her

³⁶ Janet L. Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels: the Careers of Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History', in Derek Baker, ed., *Medieval Women* (Oxford, 1978), p. 59

³⁷ *Liber Historiae Francorum*, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SSRM 2, 1888, pp. 298, 309-10; Richard A. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the 'Liber Historiae Francorum'* (Oxford, 1987), p. 1

³⁸ 'Li rois Theoderis la [Ermenberga] recut volentiers, et moult en fut liez; une piece dou tens l'ama moult, mais la desloiaus Brunchout fist tant par ses sorceries que il ne la cognut ainques charnement; plus fist li deables, car ele mena le roi a ce qu'il li toli tout son tresor et ses joiaus et la renvoia en Espagne.' *Grandes Chroniques de France*, ed. Jules Viard, vol. 2 (Paris, 1822), book 4, ch. 14, p. 53. I am grateful to Marigold Norbye for this reference.

³⁹ 'Fuit autem cum predictis ancillis regis quedam fascinatrix, nomine Theida, que fascinatione sua avertit dominum suum a recto coniugio: ut magis illam adamaret: ac dominam Emmam odiosam execraret: quod et maleficiorum incantationibus actum est. Nam domina Emma sepius acribus verberibus flagellata; ancilla vero a rege est adamata.' *Vita S. Bertae* ch. 2, *Acta Sanctorum* July 2, p. 53

daughter was being abused and arranged for her to return to Francia, but during the voyage home, Emma fell ill and died.

The *Life of St Bertha* has not been much discussed by historians, but those who do mention it do not put much faith in its factual accuracy. Not only was it written around two hundred years after Bertha's death, but the monastery at Blangy was destroyed by the Normans in 895, so it is unclear what, if any, documents the author of the *Life* had access to.⁴⁰ The story of Waraclinus and Emma is not found in any other Merovingian or Anglo-Saxon source that covers the period, and the name 'Waraclinus' does not correspond with any known Anglo-Saxon king. On the other hand, the story may be based on some knowledge of dealings between Francia and England in the seventh century: there were links between the Frankish aristocracy and some of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms,⁴¹ and Anglo-Saxon kings occasionally travelled to Rome, as Bede records of Cadwalla of Wessex in 688 and Coenred of Mercia in 709, although both of these kings remained there and became monks.⁴² Perhaps the clearest parallel for Waraclinus is Eadbald, king of Kent, who did marry a Frankish woman called Emma, probably the daughter of the powerful Neustrian mayor of the palace, Erchinoald.⁴³ Since Eadbald died in 640, this Emma could not be a daughter of Bertha, but the hagiographer may have confused her with Bertha's daughter of the same name. Because the evidence for early seventh-century Francia and England is very thin, the story is not entirely impossible, but it is unlikely to be true.

Even if it is fictional, the case of Emma and Waraclinus is very similar to the rumours that Hincmar of Rheims says were circulating about Lothar and Theutberga, and Aimoin of Fleury's account of Theuderic's marriage to Ermenberga. The anonymous author implies that the maidservant Theida was a concubine of the king, when he talks about how she wanted Waraclinus to love her instead of Emma. Magic is thus used to explain why a king might behave irrationally, suddenly repudiating or ill-treating a wife who in the eyes of the source had nothing wrong with her. In all three cases, the marriage could be seen as advantageous for the man: Theutberga came

⁴⁰ L. van der Essen, *Étude Critique et Littéraire sur les Vitae des Saints Mérovingiens de l'ancienne Belgique* (Louvain, 1907), pp. 420-1

⁴¹ Paul Fouracre and Richard Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography 640-720* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 102-4

⁴² Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* trans. Leo Sherley-Price, book 5, chs. 7 and 19 (London, 1990), pp. 275-6, 299-300

⁴³ Fouracre/Gerberding, p. 104

from an important Lotharingian family whose political support Lothar had needed, Ermenberga was a king's daughter who brought treasures to Theuderic II, and Waraclinus had to seek permission to marry Emma from the king of the Franks. For both Hincmar and the anonymous author of the *Life of Deicolus*, Lothar's behaviour seemed irrational: he is described as 'demented' or in a state of 'headlong and headstrong insanity'.⁴⁴ Likewise, Theuderic's actions put him in a dangerous situation: both Aimoin and Fredegar described how Ermenberga's father was so outraged that he allied with Theuderic's brothers Clothar and Theudebert and the king of the Lombards to attack him, although the plan came to nothing.⁴⁵ At a time when, compared with the late Middle Ages, it was relatively easy for kings to repudiate wives, the accusation of magic absolved the king from the blame for these rash actions. Instead, it transferred the responsibility to a woman in a powerful but precarious position, who was threatened by the arrival of a new bride. Even if no magic really occurred in any of these cases, they show how rumours and accusations could arise, and some of the functions they served.

The *Liber Alchandreï*

Another tenth-century source mentions magic impotence in a different way. The *Liber Alchandreï*⁴⁶ is one of a collection of astrological texts, of which the earliest surviving manuscript is dated to the end of the tenth century, and may have been copied at or near the abbey of Fleury. The *Liber* contains elements of astrological theory, and then lists predictions of what a person will be like and what will happen to them, based on various astrological features at the time of their birth, including which lunar mansion they were born under. There are twenty-eight lunar mansions, and they refer to the position of the moon against the fixed stars, which varies over the course of the year. One of the predictions reads as follows:

'Whoever [was born] in [the lunar mansion of] Scadbola is moderate; judicious in eating; occasionally he gets angry with his parents; he falls into the hands of an enemy; his end is better than his beginning. He will love women, but he is impeded by a magic art and is not able to have intercourse. He shows his teeth and his mouth will be open when he speaks. He has joined-up eyebrows. He will suffer from stomach pains. If he recovers, he

= pale / 107

⁴⁴ *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, p. 93; *Vita Deicoli*, p. 678

⁴⁵ Aimoin, col. 759-60; Fredegar, pp. 20-1

⁴⁶ On this text, see David Juste, 'Les doctrines astrologiques du *Liber Alchandreï*', in Isabelle Draelants, Anne Tihon and Baudouin van den Abeele, ed., *Occident et Proche-Orient: Contacts Scientifiques au Temps des Croisades* (Louvain, 2000), pp. 277-311

will live for 21 or 44 years. He drinks, buys goats, and has spots on his face.⁴⁷

The origins and sources of the *Liber Alchandreï* are complex and debated. The text contains some elements of Arabic astrology, such as the Arabic names for the lunar mansions, and the spelling of these names indicates that they came to the Latin world through Spain. At some point, Hebrew elements were also added to the text, as was at least one Latin astrological treatise. The text was put together in its present form in the West, perhaps at or near the monastery of Fleury. In all of this, the source of the predictions based on the lunar mansions, like the one above, is unclear.⁴⁸ The idea of making predictions based on the lunar mansions comes from Arabic astrology, but the particular predictions found in the *Liber Alchandreï* do not have parallels in Arabic sources, or in other Latin astrological texts that survive in ninth- and tenth-century manuscripts.⁴⁹

Whatever the source of the predictions, they took it for granted that magic could make a man impotent, just as it was assumed that those born in other lunar mansions could be killed or made ill by magic.⁵⁰ The rest of the predictions, as in the example above, were all quite commonplace: how many wives a man would have or women he would sleep with, whether he would be harmed by an enemy, what illnesses he would have. The appearance of impotence magic here indicates that it was seen as a possible and even likely occurrence; likely enough to be included in a general prediction of this sort.

The Arundel Penitential and Burchard of Worms

The first reference to impotence magic in a penitential comes from the Arundel Penitential (named from its only surviving manuscript, British Library MS Arundel 201), probably composed in the tenth or eleventh century: 'A woman who by a magic art takes away the ability to have intercourse from men, so that they cannot make use

⁴⁷ 'Qui autem in Scadbola modestus, in summendo cibo iustus, parentibus interdum irascetur. In manum inimici cadet. Finis eius melior initio. Amabit feminas, sed magica arte impeditur et non potest coire. Dentes ostendet et os patebit cum loquitur. Superciliis coniunctis. Ventris dolor illi nocebit. Si convalescet vivet annis xxi aut xliiii. Potator, emptor caprarum, maculatus in facie.' *Liber Alchandreï*, BL MS Add. 17808, ff. 93v-94r. I am grateful to Charles Burnett for this reference.

⁴⁸ Juste, pp. 284-6

⁴⁹ Juste, pp. 294-5

⁵⁰ 'Machinationibus magicis artibus [sic] morietur.' 'In tribulationem et angustiam et in manu potentis cadet, aut magicis machinationibus interibit,' f. 91r; 'Machinatio magica contra salutem eius parabitur,' f. 92r

of legitimate marriage, should do penance for seven years, three very heavily and four lightly.⁵¹ As in the cases described by Hincmar, Aimoin and the *Life of St Bertha*, women are the perpetrators. This canon was not transmitted into other surviving penitentials, probably because the Arundel penitential seems not to have been very influential.⁵² By contrast, the other early medieval penitential to mention impotence magic, the *Corrector* of Burchard of Worms, circulated very widely. Burchard was bishop of Worms 1000-1025, and the *Corrector* was book 19 of his 20-book canon law collection, the *Decretum*, compiled in c.1020.⁵³ Among the questions that a priest should ask women in confession, Burchard included the following:

‘Have you done what some adulterous women are accustomed to do? When first they learn that their lovers want to take legitimate wives, then they extinguish the men’s desire by some magic art, so that they cannot be of use to their legitimate wives, or have intercourse with them. If you have done this or taught others, you should do penance for forty days on bread and water.’⁵⁴

Here, as in the earlier cases described, it was the rejected ex-lover who was believed to work impotence magic. However, Burchard believed that wives could also cause impotence. He described a process which he claimed that married women used to make their husbands ‘wither and grow weak’: the woman covered herself in honey, rolled in wheat, and then made bread from the wheat that stuck to her and fed it to her husband.⁵⁵

No source has been identified for either of these passages, as for around ten percent of the canons in the *Decretum*.⁵⁶ Burchard had a wide knowledge of canon law sources (papal letters, local and papal church councils, and the works of the Church fathers),

⁵¹ ‘Femina, que arte maleficii possibilitatem coeundi viris aufert, ut non possint legitima exercere connubia, VII annos, III gravissime et IIII levis peniteat.’ Schmitz I, p. 460. On this penitential, see Paul Fournier, ‘Études sur les pénitentiels’, *Revue d’histoire et de littérature religieuses* 9, 1904, p. 98

⁵² Fournier, ‘Études’, p. 98

⁵³ R. W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe* vol. 1 (Oxford, 1995), p. 244

⁵⁴ ‘Fecisti quod quedam mulieres adultere facere solent? Cum primum intellexerint quod amatores earum legitimas uxores vulerint accipere, tunc quadam arte malefica libidinem virorum extinguunt, ut legitimis prodesse non possint, neque cum eis coire. Si fecisti aut alios docuisti, XL dies in pane et aqua penitere debes.’ Burchard of Worms, *Corrector*, book 19, ch. 5, PL 140:975

⁵⁵ ‘Fecisti quod quaedam mulieres facere solent? Deponunt vestimenta sua et totum corpus nudum melle inungunt, et sic mellito suo corpore supra triticum in quodam linteo in terra deposito, sese hac atque illac saepius revolvunt, et cuncta tritici grana, quae humido corpori adhaerent, cautissime colligunt, et in molam mittunt, et retrorsum contra solē molam circuire faciunt et sic in farinam redigunt, et de illa farina panem conficiunt, et sic maritis suis ad comedendum trahunt, ut comesto pane marcescant et deficiant? Si fecisti, quadraginta dies in pane et aqua poeniteas.’ PL 140:976

⁵⁶ Paul Fournier, ‘Études Critiques sur le Décret de Burchard de Worms’, *Nouvelle Revue Historique de Droit Français et Étranger*, 3rd ser. 34, 1910, p. 101 ; Hartmut Hoffmann and Rudolf Pokorny, *Das Dekret des Bischofs Burchard von Worms: Textstufen, Frühe Verbreitung, Vorlagen* (Munich, 1991), p. 233

but he is unlikely to have been drawing on Hincmar of Rheims for his mention of impotence magic. He did not include *Si per sortiaras* in his canon law collection, and he probably had not read Hincmar's *On the Divorce of Lothar and Theutberga* because it seems not to have circulated. He may have drawn on a passage similar to that in the Arundel Penitential, but if so, he elaborated what he found there. In this regard, Burchard's approach to impotence magic is consistent with his treatment of magic and superstition in general. He describes several magical practices which have not been identified in earlier sources, often in great detail.⁵⁷ Many of these are to do with love magic. The detail and the originality of Burchard's canons on magic indicate that he was not simply copying earlier discussions. As in the works of Hincmar of Rheims, the canons which do not seem to have a written source are likely to be describing practices which Burchard himself had encountered in his role as bishop, especially as, like Hincmar, he was keen to educate his clergy about the hearing of confessions.⁵⁸

The *Decretum* circulated widely in the eleventh century, and the *Corrector* also circulated independently of it, until they were superseded by Gratian's *Decretum* and by newer confession manuals in the twelfth century.⁵⁹ Burchard's works would thus have spread the idea that magic could make a man impotent in clerical circles much more widely than any earlier source had. Moreover, the *Corrector* firmly established the rejected ex-mistress as the most likely suspect, although this suspicion was already likely to occur, if the *Annals of St Bertin* and the *Lives* of saints Deicolus and Bertha reflect reality. In later cases of impotence magic, too, it was often an ex-lover of the groom, or more rarely of the bride, who was accused.⁶⁰ This accusation may partly have been the result of texts like Burchard's, which pointed the finger at ex-lovers when a man found himself impotent; however, an ex-lover is also an obvious enemy of a marriage, and as such, is quite likely to be accused of, or to actually attempt, impotence magic, especially in a society where informal marriages could still be broken off relatively easily (as the nobility were still doing in the eleventh

⁵⁷ Cyrille Vogel, 'Pratiques Superstitieuses au début du XIe siècle d'après le 'Corrector sive Medicus' de Burchard, évêque de Worms (965-1025)', *Mélanges E-R. Labande* (Poitiers, 1974), repr. in *En rémission des péchés* (Aldershot, 1994), p. 752

⁵⁸ Hamilton, p. 31

⁵⁹ Fournier, 'Études Critiques', p. 44.

⁶⁰ For example, the case described by Thomas of Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, ed. F. Broomfield (Louvain, 1968), p. 184, and discussed below, ch. 5

century⁶¹). The *Corrector* probably gave impotence magic a higher profile than it had previously enjoyed, likely as a result of Burchard's observation of actual practice.

Constantine the African

The final early medieval discussion of impotence magic is found in the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African, a medical text that dealt with magically caused impotence as an illness that needed to be cured. Very little is known for certain about Constantine. According to Peter the Deacon, the mid twelfth-century chronicler of the monastery of Monte Cassino, he was a Muslim who had studied medicine in North Africa, perhaps at Qairoun, in Tunisia.⁶² In later life, he travelled to Salerno and became a monk at Monte Cassino. There he produced a large body of medical texts, mostly translations of Arabic works, because he thought that the medical learning available in Latin was inadequate. As he said in one of his prologues, 'Therefore I, Constantine, considering how useful this art is, and scanning the books of the Latins, saw that although there were many, they were not even sufficient as introductions, so I returned to our books, old and new.'⁶³ Constantine was one of the first translators to bring Arabic learning to the west. He died as an old man some time before 1098/9, when his name appears in the calendar of Monte Cassino's dead.⁶⁴

The *Pantegni* was a translation of a medical encyclopaedia by the tenth-century Arab physician Alī ibn al-Abbās al-Mağūsī, known in the West as Haly Abbas, and it became an influential text in medieval medical teaching. It was divided into two parts, the 'Theorica', which discussed medical theory, and the 'Practica', which outlined treatments for specific ailments, and in 'Practica' book 8, chapter 29, there occurs a lengthy discussion of magically-induced impotence. In addition to being copied with the *Pantegni*, this chapter became the basis of a short text outlining various causes of and cures for magic impotence, which will be discussed more fully

⁶¹ Duby, *Knight*, p. 87-92

⁶² Herbert Bloch, *Monte Cassino in the Middle Ages*, vol. 1 (Rome, 1986), p. 127

⁶³ 'Unde ego Constantinus tantam huius artis utilitatem perpendens Latinorumque volumina percurrens, cum licet multa essent non tamen introducendis etiam sufficere viderem, recurri ad nostros veteres sive modernos.' Quoted in Danielle Jacquart, 'Le sens donné par Constantin l'Africain à son oeuvre', in Charles Burnett and Danielle Jacquart, ed., *Constantine the African and Alī ibn al-Abbās al-Mağūsī: the Pantegni and Related Texts* (Leiden, 1994), p. 84

⁶⁴ Francis Newton, 'Constantine the African and Monte Cassino: New Elements and the Text of the 'Isagoge'', in Burnett/Jacquart, pp. 20-3

in chapter 8. It was partially edited by Gerda Hoffmann in 1933,⁶⁵ and I have produced a fuller edition and list of manuscripts in Appendix 1.

As well as forming the basis for many medieval medical discussions of impotence magic, the *Pantegni* chapter is interesting because there is no corresponding section on magic impotence in Haly Abbas's original. This discrepancy is connected with the way in which the whole of book 8 of the 'Practica' came to be written, which has been studied in detail by Monica Green.⁶⁶ She has shown that this entire book of the *Pantegni* was put together from other sources (mostly Constantine's other translations), following the basic outline of Haly Abbas's work. The mid twelfth-century physician Mattheus Ferrarius claimed that Constantine lost part of his manuscript of Haly Abbas in a storm on the journey from North Africa to Italy, and this may in fact be true; it would explain why he compiled book 8 from existing works. A further complication is that no manuscripts of this part of the *Pantegni* survive from earlier than the thirteenth century (unlike the 'Theorica', and 'Practica' books 1, 2 and 9, which were widely diffused by the mid twelfth century), so it may have been added by someone else a long while after Constantine's death. However, Green argues that since all of book 8's sources were available by 1100, and since the compiler had a very detailed knowledge of Constantine's other works and also knew Arabic, the book was probably compiled either by Constantine himself, or by his pupil Johannes Afflacijs, at the end of the eleventh century.⁶⁷

Sources of the *Pantegni* Chapter

The absence of impotence magic in Haly Abbas's original text means that there was no reason for Constantine (or Johannes Afflacijs) to discuss the subject in his Latin version unless he already knew of it from other sources. One source that he could have learned about it from is one of the few late antique medical works to mention the subject, the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* of Sextus Placitus, discussed in chapter 1. Constantine copied Sextus's statement that the blood and testicles of a cock, placed under the bed, can prevent anyone in it from having sex.⁶⁸ He also took another

⁶⁵ Constantine the African, *Pantegni Practica* Book 8, Ch. 29, ed. Gerda Hoffmann, 'Beiträge zur Lehre von der durch Zauber verursachten Krankheit und ihrer Behandlung in der Medizin des Mittelalters', *Janus* 37, 1933, pp. 129-44.

⁶⁶ Monica Green, 'The Re-creation of *Pantegni*, Practica, Book 8', in Burnett/Jacquart, pp. 121-60

⁶⁷ Green, pp. 148-50

⁶⁸ Sextus Placitus, *Liber Medicinæ*, ed. Ernest Howald and Henry Sigerist, *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum* IV (Leipzig, 1927), p. 282. All citations of the *Pantegni* chapter are from Appendix 1.

remedy from Sextus Placitus, adapting it to make it relevant to impotence magic. Sextus, drawing on Pliny, had included two methods of protecting the home from evil spells by using parts of a dog: ‘the bile of a black male dog cleanses the house and brings it about that no evil medicine is brought in... if the blood of a dog is sprinkled on the walls of a house, it will be freed from all evils.’⁶⁹ In the *Pantegni*, Constantine suggested these as cures for magically caused impotence.

The rest of the chapter does not seem to be drawn from surviving ancient or early medieval medical texts.⁷⁰ However, some of the cures do have parallels outside medical literature. Richard Kieckhefer has suggested that one may come from the Bible.⁷¹ This is Constantine’s recommendation that the couple burn fish bile on coals in their bedroom: ‘If the bride and groom keep with them the bile of some fish, and especially *zangarinus*, in a box of juniper wood, and if when they go to bed they put it on hot coals so that they are fumigated by it, all of the above-mentioned spells will vanish.’⁷² I have not been able to identify *zangarinus*, and the term is not rendered consistently in the manuscripts, so it seems that medieval scribes could not identify it either. One fifteenth-century manuscript glosses it *lucius*, pike. This process resembles a passage from the Bible, in the Book of Tobit, where the angel Raphael tells Tobias how to consummate his marriage to Sarah, without being killed by the demon who has killed her previous seven husbands: ‘When you enter the bridal chamber, take some of the fish’s liver and its heart, and put them on the smoking incense. The smell will spread, and when the demon smells it he will make off and never be seen near her any more.’ (Tobit 6:16-17) Although I have found no other reference to the use of the book of Tobit to cure magic impotence, it was occasionally used as a source of medical information in the early Middle Ages. Gregory of Tours, in the sixth century, recalled how he was told in a dream to cure his father’s gout by using a cure from the book of Tobit:

‘there was a blind man whose son had an angel as a companion while he journeyed. The son caught a fish in the river, and with his angel as guide he took out the heart and liver. He burned these beneath his father’s eyes;

⁶⁹ ‘canis fel masculi nigri perpurgat domum et efficit, ne ullum malum medicamentum inferatur... canis sanguis parietibus domus aspersus, ab omnibus malis liberabitur.’ Sextus Placitus, pp. 263-4

⁷⁰ Green, p. 141; Hoffmann, p. 212

⁷¹ Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 85

⁷² ‘Fel alicuius piscis et maxime zangarini si sponsus et sponsa secum habuerint in pixide iuniperi et eant dormitum et ponatur super carbones vivos, ut inde fumigentur, omnia supradicta maleficia evanescent.’ See Appendix 1, Part 1.

immediately the blindness vanished and the father regained his sight. Go therefore and do likewise, and your father will receive relief from his pains.’⁷³

Gregory’s story refers to the other cure in the book of Tobit, that of Tobit’s blindness, but it is a precedent for the use of this book of the Bible as a source of medical information.

Other cures in the *Pantegni* chapter have parallels in contemporary anecdotes or folklore. For example, Constantine recommended checking the bed and removing any magical items that were hidden in or under it. The idea that impotence could be caused in this way is also found in the *Chronicle of the Bohemians* of Cosmas of Prague (1125). When he described the unsuccessful marriage of Countess Matilda of Tuscany to Duke Welf of Bavaria, which took place in 1089, Cosmas had Welf accuse Matilda of hiding something in the bed or in her clothing to make him impotent.⁷⁴ This probably does not reflect actual fact, as the story does not appear in other sources that discuss the marriage, but presumably it sounded credible to Cosmas. Similarly, Constantine suggested putting mercury in a hollow reed and keeping this near the couple. There was a widespread medieval and later tradition that mercury protected against the evil eye, spells and misfortunes.⁷⁵ A few cures have no parallels at all that I have been able to find, for example separating a nut, putting the two halves on opposite sides of the road, and having the couple put them back together; although the symbolism of this is clear.

A final cure involving the Bible appears in some, but not all, manuscripts of the *Pantegni*.⁷⁶

‘But if the above methods do not work because the couple’s sins are hanging over them, they should go to a priest or bishop and confess. And if no remedy is found, after they have confessed, they should take communion from the bishop or a devout priest on the day of the Resurrection or the Ascension of the Lord, or Pentecost. When they have taken the body and blood of Christ,

⁷³ Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Confessors*, trans. Raymond Van Dam (Liverpool, 1988), pp. 51-2

⁷⁴ ‘aliquod maleficium vel in tuis vestimentis vel in lectisterniis latet.’ Cosmas Pragensis, *Chronica Bohemorum*, ed. Berthold Bretholz, MGH Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum NS II, (Berlin, 1923), p. 129

⁷⁵ Leonard J. Goldwater, *Mercury: a History of Quicksilver* (Baltimore, 1972), p. 26. William of Auvergne (d. 1249) referred to the power of mercury to protect against demons: William of Auvergne, *De Universo* II.3.22, in *Opera Omnia* vol. 1 (Paris, 1674), p. 1060, quoted below, ch. 4.

⁷⁶ Gerda Hoffmann’s manuscripts B and D finish here, as do BL MS Sloane 2946, London Royal College of Physicians MS 397, and Paris BN MS lat. 6887A. Hoffmann’s manuscripts A and C, plus BL MS Sloane 3481, Montpellier MS 187, Oxford Oriel College MS 55, and Paris BN MSS lat. 6886 and 14393 add this section.

the bride and groom should give each other the kiss of peace. When they have received the blessing from the bishop or priest, the bishop or priest should give them this verse of the prophet, written on a slip of parchment: 'The voice of the Lord is upon the waters' etc (Psalm 28:3). Then they should go home and abstain from intercourse for three days and nights, and afterwards do the deed, that is, have intercourse. And thus all diabolical actions are destroyed.'⁷⁷

This cure has parallels with the prayer, confession, masses and 'ecclesiastical medicine' advised by Hincmar of Rheims, and the thinking behind it is the same: to appease God so that he will not permit the enchantment to happen any more. Elements from the Bible and Christian ritual are manipulated to create a liturgical solution to impotence magic. The kiss of peace is part of the mass, but here, given between the man and woman, it symbolizes the affection between husband and wife that the ritual is designed to achieve. The three-day period of abstinence probably comes from the Vulgate version of the book of Tobit, in which Tobias and Sarah wait for three nights before consummating their marriage. It is not clear what the couple were supposed to do with the verse from the Psalms written on the slip of parchment. Perhaps it was meant to keep away evil: the whole psalm is a description of God's power, which would be appropriate for repelling demons. The idea that certain scriptural passages could be protective was current in the early Middle Ages: at the end of the eighth century the Anglo-Saxon reformer at the Carolingian court, Alcuin, condemned Englishmen who wore relics or words of scripture around their necks as amulets 'even when they render the [marriage] debt to their wives,'⁷⁸ which may have been a form of protection against magic.

The tone of this cure is rather different from that of the rest of the chapter, which does not mention the couple's sins as a cause of impotence, except to say that that impotence magic is 'diabolical'. Since it does not appear in all of the manuscripts of the *Pantegni*, it may be a later addition, added in the twelfth century when canon lawyers and theologians had begun to take an interest in marriage and its impediments, and thus the link between impotence magic and the couple's sins may have been made clearer. Monica Green has pointed out that the chapter's concerns are all compatible with twelfth-century discussions of impotence magic,⁷⁹ and that would apply especially to this last section, but there is little evidence of such interest

⁷⁷ For Latin see below, Appendix 1, Part 2.

⁷⁸ 'cum... etiam uxoribus debitum solvunt.' Alcuin, letter 291, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epistolae IV, Epistolae Karolini Aevi II*, p. 449

among theologians and canonists in the late eleventh century, when the rest of the chapter was probably written. However, it is also possible that the manuscripts that omit the passage are all derived from one erroneous copy of the text. Unless twelfth-century manuscripts of book 8 come to light, when and why this last cure was added to the chapter must remain unknown.

Purpose of the Chapter

The *Pantegni* was the first text to treat magically induced impotence as a medical problem in any detail. From the way he adapted his sources, it seems that Constantine the African (or the pupil who wrote this chapter) had an existing idea of impotence magic, and then went looking for the information to fit it. Sextus Placitus, with his lack of theory and his amulets and charms, was very different from the naturalistic Arabic sources Constantine usually preferred: in fact, Constantine only used him in this chapter, and in Book 8, chapters 2 and 3, on promoting and inhibiting conception.⁸⁰ Constantine may have used Sextus here because he was the only medical source to mention magic impotence; but because Sextus did not discuss the subject in detail, Constantine had to elaborate what little there was, by taking Sextus Placitus's remedies against magic in general, and applying them to impotence magic in particular. He also borrowed from non-medical sources like the Bible, both for the fish-bile recipe and for the suggestion that the bishop read certain verses from the Psalms over the couple (if this was not added later). Many of the cures, however, have no identifiable sources at all. They could have come from medical texts now lost or, like Hincmar of Rheims's list of magical practices, they could have come from his own observation.

Why then did Constantine write this chapter? It is possible that he had learned about impotence magic from Sextus Placitus and wished to elaborate, but it seems unlikely that Constantine would use Sextus when he did not elsewhere, unless he was already concerned about the subject. Apart from the continued copying of Marcellus Empiricus and Sextus Placitus, there seems to be no mention of impotence magic in those early medieval medical texts and recipe collections that have been edited.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Green, p. 141

⁸⁰ Green, pp. 141-2; Constantinus Africanus, *Pantegni*, in Isaac Israeli, *Opera Omnia* (Lyon, 1515) Practica, Book 8, Ch. 2 and 3.

⁸¹ I looked in: Julius Jörimann, ed., *Frühmittelalterliche Rezeptarien* (repr. Liechtenstein, 1977); Henry Sigerist, 'Studien und Texte zur frühmittelalterlichen Rezeptliteratur', *Studien zur Geschichte der*

These recipe collections do contain charms, but not for impotence: the most common magically cured ailment seems to have been the nosebleed. On the other hand, there is one Arabic source which may have suggested impotence magic to Constantine: this is *Physical Ligatures*, a treatise on amulets ascribed to a ninth-century Christian physician working in Baghdad and Armenia, Qustā ibn Lūqā, known in the Latin West as Costa ben Luca. Costa described the case of a nobleman who thought that he was impotent because of magic:

‘I remember a great nobleman of this country who complained of being in a ligature that prevented him from having intercourse with women. I helped him by changing this thought of his and I did this with a very clever device, but I never could distract him, and accordingly I began to assure for myself what he had on his mind. [I brought] him the *Book of Cleopatra*, the one she devoted to enhancing women’s beauty, and [read] the passage where it says that one so ligated should take raven’s gall mixed with sesame oil and apply it by smearing it all over the body. Upon hearing that, he had confidence in the words of the book and did it, and as soon as he was delivered [from the ligature] his desire for intercourse increased.’⁸²

Constantine may have been aware of this case, as he had read some of Costa’s other works, and may even have translated *Physical Ligatures* into Latin;⁸³ but if so, he did not quote the cure given there. His attitude was also completely different from Costa’s: he believed that magic really could cause impotence, and treated it accordingly.

Gerda Hoffmann argued that as a monk, Constantine would have come across discussions of impotence magic like that of Hincmar of Rheims, and so included it in his survey of ailments. She also argued that Constantine’s particular association of women with impotence magic (‘especially done by women’) suggests an ecclesiastical source.⁸⁴ Monte Cassino had a strong interest in canon law at the end of the eleventh century, possessing several manuscripts of canons, so it is possible that Constantine had encountered *Si per sortiarias* directly. However, marriage law was not a major concern of the monastery’s canonists: the *Collection in 74 Titles*, a collection of canons disseminated by Monte Cassino at this time, is mainly concerned with papal

Medizin 13, 1923; Ulrich Stoll, ed., *Das Lorscher Arzneibuch*, Sudhoffs Archiv Beiheft 28, 1992; Oswald Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England*, 3 vols. (London, 1864–6); and at the extracts in Ernest Wickersheimer, *Manuscrits Latins de Médecine du haut moyen âge dans les bibliothèques de France* (Paris, 1966)

⁸² ed. and trans. Judith Wilcox and John M. Riddle, ‘Qustā ibn Lūqā’s “Physical Ligatures” and the Recognition of the Placebo Effect’, *Medieval Encounters* 1, 1995, p. 42

⁸³ Wilcox/Riddle, p. 21

power and privileges.⁸⁵ Monte Cassino did possess a copy of Burchard of Worms's *Decretum*, presumably including the penitential with its reference to impotence magic,⁸⁶ so this may be a source. If so, it is still not clear why Constantine should pick up on it in a medical treatise, when most of his sources had not.

On the other hand, Constantine may simply have been referring to a current belief. Taken as a whole, the specific interest in magic impotence and the long list of remedies displayed in the *Pantegni* does not seem to have a precedent in ancient or early medieval medical sources, and has not been traced to the Arabic texts that Constantine usually used, either. On the other hand, several of the methods of causing and curing impotence have parallels in early medieval ideas about healing and magic outside the medical tradition, referred to in places as diverse as the book of Tobit, the *Chronicle* of Cosmas of Prague, and Alcuin's letter about scriptural amulets. Apart from the references to Sextus Placitus, it would not have required specialized medical knowledge to know about these. Several of the cures would have required education, as with the use of the book of Tobit, but this is not true of all of them (such as the cure that required the couple to separate a nut and then put it back together). Constantine probably thus combined his knowledge of contemporary magical practices with his own medical and biblical education.

Conclusion

A pattern is starting to emerge. Rumours about impotence magic, or magic to cause hatred more generally, tended to arise under certain conditions, when a man rejected a wife for seemingly no good reason, although occasionally husbands . . . blamed their wives for making them impotent, as in Cosmas of Prague's account of Welf and Matilda. Hincmar of Rheims, Burchard of Worms and Constantine the African treated the subject in detail, showing an interest in and information about impotence magic that does not seem to come from their written sources. Burchard of Worms has long been recognized as a valuable source for the magic and superstitions of his time, but I would argue that Hincmar and Constantine the African were acting in a similar way. Between them, these three writers set out the basic 'facts' about impotence magic

⁸⁴ 'maxime fiunt mulieribus.' See Hoffmann, p. 142

⁸⁵ John T. Gilchrist, ed., *Diversorum Patrum Sententie Sive Collectio in LXXIV Titulos Digesta Monumenta Iuris Canonici B:1* (Vatican City, 1973)

⁸⁶ Francis Newton, *The Scriptorium and Library at Monte Cassino 1058-1105* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 273

which were known in the Middle Ages: the association with ex-lovers, especially women; the list of methods; and the eclectic cures which combined medicine, sympathetic magic and religious ritual. Some of this information had been present in ancient sources: Ovid was already suspicious of women, suggesting a '*saga*' or '*Aeaea venefica*', both in the feminine, as responsible for his fictional case of impotence magic, while Petronius listed a combination of magical, medical and religious cures.⁸⁷ However, this image of impotence magic ^{was} not as fixed in the ancient sources as it became in the early Middle Ages. However, neither Ovid nor Petronius stated conclusively that magic was responsible for their characters' impotence, and they offered few solutions. Marcellus Empiricus and Sextus Placitus listed a few magical methods and cures, but they did not suggest who might use them or why. Compared with the ancient sources, the early medieval writers were extremely concrete, and the information that they gave was much more detailed.

Much of this information seems to have come from what the authors had observed in the world around them, but they did not just record what they had seen; they also elaborated the subject and discussed it in new contexts. Hincmar of Rheims brought it into a discussion of the indissolubility of marriage, while Constantine treated it as a medical problem. These two approaches determined the way impotence magic was discussed for the rest of the Middle Ages. *Si per sortiarias* was copied into the influential canon law collection of Ivo of Chartres in the early twelfth century, and from there into the *Decretum* of Gratian and the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, and so became the basis of all later discussions of impotence magic in canon law and theology. Medical discussions of impotence magic drew heavily on the *Pantegni*, although other sources were also used. Thus Hincmar of Rheims and Constantine the African took the subject of impotence magic out of its setting in classical literature, rumours and popular superstitions, and brought it to the attention of theologians, canonists and physicians, laying the foundation for its discussion in the later Middle Ages.

⁸⁷ Ovid, *Amores* 3.7, trans Grant Showerman (Cambridge, MA, 2nd edn 1977), pp. 476, 480; Petronius, *The Satyricon* trans. P. G. Walsh (Oxford, 1996), pp. 131, 135-6, 141-2

Chapter 3

Impotence Magic Enters the Academic World: 1100-1190

In the twelfth century, the number of sources for magic and impotence increased significantly. Stories of people who believed that they had been bewitched appeared in greater numbers than in the early Middle Ages. The autobiography of Guibert of Nogent, a Benedictine abbot, written in around 1115, describes how Guibert's father was impotent with his wife for seven years because of a spell,¹ and the historian Cosmas of Prague told how Duke Welf of Bavaria accused the famous supporter of Gregory VII, Matilda of Tuscany, of bewitching him on their wedding night, in his *Chronicle of the Bohemians* (c.1125).² Probably in the 1160s, Master Odo, a Paris theologian, mentioned a case of impotence magic that he claimed to have heard about, which will be discussed below.³ The best documented case is that of King Philip Augustus of France at the end of the century, who cited bewitchment as one of several reasons why his marriage to Ingeborg of Denmark was invalid, and this case will be discussed in more detail at the end of the chapter. There also survive a number of papal decretals (rulings on individual cases) referring to impotence, some of which include references to magic.

These cases are all interesting, but the most significant developments in the history of magic and impotence took place elsewhere. Of the many changes taking place in the twelfth century, several had important effects on the way in which magic impotence was discussed. Firstly, in the wake of the Gregorian reform of the previous century, the church was asserting its right to judge marriage disputes, and the papacy was beginning to make good its claim that cases should be referred to Rome if the local bishop was in doubt. The growing stream of cases which came to the papacy's attention as a result, made the twelfth century, especially the pontificate of Alexander III (1159-81), a very significant period in the development of canon law, including marriage law.⁴ Secondly, theologians were producing systematic treatises on many subjects, including the sacraments (which included marriage). Their interest in these

¹ Guibert of Nogent, *Autobiographie*, ed. Edmond-René Labande (Paris, 1981), pp. 76-8. Trans. Paul J. Archambault, *A Monk's Confession: the Memoirs of Guibert of Nogent* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1996), pp. 35-7

² Cosmas Pragensis, *Chronica Bohemorum*, MGH Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum NS II, 1923, pp. 127-9

³ Artur Landgraf, 'Zwei Gelehrte aus der Umgebung des Petrus Lombardus', *Divus Thomas* 3rd Ser. 11, 1933, p. 162

⁴ James Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago, 1987), p. 332

topics was partly stimulated by the development of canon law which touched on some of the same questions (relating to penance and marriage, for example),⁵ but there were other factors too. Most importantly, the Cathars in southern France and northern Italy questioned the church's teachings on marriage, the Eucharist, and many other subjects, and by the end of the century, some churchmen were attempting to refute their views.⁶

Thirdly, these changes in canon law and theology in the twelfth century both encouraged, and were made possible by, the development of a systematic way of approaching the authoritative texts of these and other subjects, known as the scholastic method. First, the relevant texts were assembled: the early part of the century witnessed a series of attempts to produce systematic collections of canon law and theological teachings (or 'sentences'), which culminated in two text-books, the *Decretum* of Gratian (first version completed shortly after 1139)⁷ on canon law, and the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (c.1155-8) on theology.⁸ At the same time, a new way of analysing all this data was developed by the theologians who studied at Laon under Anselm of Laon (d. 1117) and his brother Ralph,⁹ and was refined and made famous by Abelard in his *Sic et Non*, probably compiled in 1122.¹⁰ These theologians set authoritative passages on a given subject side by side, and then tried to resolve any contradictions between them.¹¹ This method was useful in both canon law and theology, since both disciplines relied on an authoritative body of texts which were not supposed to disagree with each other. Fourthly, alongside these intellectual changes came institutional ones. The law schools of Bologna and the theology schools of Paris organized themselves into the first universities and became pre-eminent in their respective subjects. In the same period, the long-established medical school at Salerno went through a very creative phase, inspired by the translation of

⁵ Martin Brett, 'Canon Law and Litigation: the Century Before Gratian', in M. J. Franklin and Christopher Harper-Bill, ed., *Medieval Ecclesiastical Studies in Honour of Dorothy M. Owen* (Woodbridge, 1995), p. 27

⁶ Malcolm Lambert, *The Cathars* (Oxford, 1998), p. 80

⁷ Anders Winroth, *The Making of Gratian's Decretum* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 136

⁸ Described in detail by Marcia Colish, *Peter Lombard* (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1994), vol. 1, pp. 44-78

⁹ R. W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe* vol. 2 (Oxford, 2001), p. 29

¹⁰ Michael Clanchy, *Abelard: a Medieval Life* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 81, 88

¹¹ Marcia Colish, 'Another Look at the School of Laon', *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 53, 1986, p. 13

new medical works from Arabic into Latin.¹² These changes took discussions of magic and impotence, and many other subjects, in new directions.

The discussions of impotence magic that Hincmar of Rheims and Constantine the African had produced in the early medieval period were transformed by the changes outlined above. Hincmar of Rheims's passage on impotence magic, *Si per sortiarias* (which had said that a bewitched couple who could not be cured by prayer and confession could separate and marry other people), was included in Gratian's *Decretum* and the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, and so was commented on by canonists and, to a lesser extent, theologians. The first references to the chapter on magic impotence in Constantine the African's *Pantegni* also appeared in the twelfth century, although the medical writers in this period showed less interest in the subject than did the canonists and theologians. The discussion of impotence magic in canon law and theology developed very fast, and these developments made the relationship between the written sources and the realities of magic and impotence much more complex than in the early Middle Ages. It is often difficult to know whether writers were thinking about real situations, or following the logic of their own arguments without reference to the wider world.

Early Theology and Canon Law Collections

The new discussions of magic and impotence began with two canon law collections assembled by Ivo, bishop of Chartres (d. 1115), the *Decretum* and the *Panormia*. The *Decretum* was a huge collection of 3760 passages from papal letters, church councils, penitentials and the church fathers, which drew heavily on Burchard of Worms's *Decretum* (discussed above, ch. 2). Its length may be one reason why it was not very widely diffused, but the *Panormia*, an abridgement, was extremely popular.¹³ In both of these collections, Ivo included *Si per sortiarias*. For the *Decretum*, he took a long series of canons on marriage from Burchard's *Decretum* (Burchard's book 9, chapters 53-82) and put them in the same order into his own work (book 8, chapters 188-218), except that he added *Si per sortiarias*, which was not in Burchard.¹⁴ Ivo clearly thought that magic impotence was worth adding to a series of canons that he was

¹² Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'The School of Salerno: its Development and its Contribution to the History of Learning', *Bulletin for the History of Medicine* 17, 1945, pp. 154-7

¹³ R. W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism* vol. 1 (Oxford, 1995), p. 260

¹⁴ Paul Fournier, 'Les collections canoniques attribuées à Yves de Chartres', *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes* 58, 1897, p. 32

otherwise content to copy verbatim, although this may not necessarily have been because it was a well-known problem; he could simply have wanted to be as comprehensive as possible. However, Ivo was a bishop who in his letters took an interest in marriage cases,¹⁵ so he may have believed that the canon might have a practical use. Cases where men believed that they had been made impotent by magic did exist, after all, as recorded in the autobiography of Guibert of Nogent.

When Ivo revised the *Decretum* to write the *Panormia*, he made an important innovation in his treatment of impotence magic. In the *Decretum*, *Si per sortiarias* was sandwiched between canons dealing with a man who had returned from captivity, and with a non-Christian who had divorced his wife and then converted to Christianity. However, in the *Panormia*, Ivo added *Si per sortiarias* to a string of canons dealing with impotence. This meant that magic impotence could be seen alongside other varieties of sexual dysfunction, and Hincmar's text could be compared with the rules set out by other writers. The most important of these texts was the passage *De his requisisti*, a ruling by Pope Gregory II on a case where the wife was unable to have sex, in 726.¹⁶ Ivo did not make any comparisons between Hincmar's ruling and the other canons on impotence, but later writers found discrepancies that they tried to reconcile. The most important of these was that Gregory II had not permitted the impotent spouse to remarry, whereas Hincmar allowed both spouses to do so.

The *Panormia* was a major source for the sentence collections associated with the school of Anselm of Laon.¹⁷ The earliest of these were simply lists of quotations from contemporary masters and the church fathers, in no particular order, but over time, the collections were put in a more logical order and came to include the authors' own views. Drawing on the *Panormia*, the Laon sentence collections that discussed magic impotence took their information from *Si per sortiarias*, such as the suggestion that tears, prayers, fasting and almsgiving were the best way to solve the problem.¹⁸

¹⁵ Georges Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest: the Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France* (English edn., London, 1983), p. 167

¹⁶ Gratian, *Decretum* C. 33 q. 1 c. 2. This passage and its possible interpretations are discussed in detail in William Kelly, *Pope Gregory II on Divorce and Remarriage* (Rome, 1976)

¹⁷ Heinrich J. F. Reinhardt, *Die Ehelehre der Schule des Anselm von Laon* (Münster, 1974), p. 2

¹⁸ 'interim fuis lacrimis, orationibus vacet, ieiuniis et elemosinis Deo supplicet.' *Decretum Dei fuit*, ed. in Heinrich Weisweiler, *Das Schrifttum der Schule Anselms von Laon und Wilhelms von Champeaux in deutschen Bibliotheken* (Münster, 1936), p. 373; 'debet orationibus et elemosinis flagitare ut possit.' *Coniugium est secundum Ysidorum*, ed. in Franz Bliemetzrieder, 'Théologie et Théologiens de l'Ecole

However, one sentence collection, the *Sententie Berolinenses*, departed from Hincmar's text over whether the couple who were victims of magic impotence should be allowed to separate and remarry. The anonymous compiler flatly disagreed with Hincmar: 'Item: it is asked about those on whom spells have been cast, and who cannot have intercourse because of this: whether they can be separated. We say that they cannot.' The reason for this was that the canons specified prayer, fasting, vigils and almsgiving as remedies, 'so that God may free them from these spells.' If God did not lift the spell on the couple, then 'he should keep her as a sister, and she him as a brother.'¹⁹ This final phrase came from Gregory II's ruling, but Gregory had presented it as an ideal, not a command. He had permitted the healthy partner to remarry as a concession to the weakness of the flesh, and possibly also so that the newly converted Saxons, to whom the passage was addressed, should not be put off Christianity altogether by a strict enforcement of the marriage rules.²⁰ Unlike the earliest sentence compilers, then, the author of the *Sententie Berolinenses* took information from the whole body of canons on impotence, and put it together to produce his own view.

The different views of the Laon sentence compilers on the issue of remarriage probably reflect the fact that there seems to have been no agreed procedure if and when cases of impotence occurred in practice.²¹ Two sentence collections stated that the French church allowed a separation in these cases, but the Roman church did not.²² These regional differences persisted throughout the twelfth century. In 1170-1, Pope Alexander III acknowledged the custom of the French church: 'If, however, it is the general custom of the French church to dissolve marriages of this kind [where one

Episcopale de Paris avant Pierre Lombard' *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 3, 1931, p. 280. Sentence collections also survive from the school of Abelard (d. 1142), but they only mention naturally-caused impotence: *Epitome Theologiae Christianae*, PL 178:1746; Artur Landgraf, ed., *Ecrits Théologiques de l'Ecole d'Abélard* (Louvain, 1934), p. 46; Sandro Buzzetti, ed., *Sententie Magistri Petri Abelardi* (Florence, 1983), p. 137.

¹⁹ 'Item queritur de illis, quibus fiunt maleficia et propter hoc coire non possunt: utrum possunt separari. Dicimus, quia non possunt, quia sancti dicunt, quod debent orationibus et ieiuniis et vigillis vacare et larga manu pro Deo elemosinas facere, quatenus Deus eos liberet ab his maleficiis. Quod si liberari non potuerint, ille habeat eam ut sororem et illa eum ut fratrem.' F. Stegmüller, ed., 'Sententie Berolinenses: eine neugefundene Sentenzensammlung aus der Schule des Anselm von Laon', *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 11, 1939, pp. 59-60

²⁰ Kelly, p. 34

²¹ Brundage, *Law*, p. 292

²² 'secundum morem Gallicane ecclesie separari potest... Romana autem ecclesia tales numquam patitur separari.' *Coniugium est secundum Ysidorum*, p. 280; 'matrimonium talium decreta sanctorum non dissolvent, nec Romana ecclesia, et tamen condescendendo fragilitati quorundam hominum permittit dissolutionem talium fieri in Gallicana ecclesia et in quibusdam aliis.' *Sententie Atrebatenses*, ed. Odon Lottin, *Psychologie et Morale au XIIe et XIIIe Siècles* vol. 5 (Gembloux, 1959), p. 437

partner is impotent], we will patiently tolerate it.’²³ By contrast, in 1190-1, Clement III forbade a separation in a case where the man claimed that he was bewitched, because ‘it was not the custom of the Roman church to dissolve such marriages.’²⁴

More references to the diverse customs surrounding annulments for impotence are found in the sentence collections *Decretum Dei fuit* and *Coniugium est secundum Ysidorum*, which stated that the couple could only separate if they had tried unsuccessfully to consummate their marriage for five years.²⁵ It is not clear where the figure of five years came from: later canonists believed that the canons gave no information about how long a couple should stay together, and so followed Roman law, which specified three years.²⁶ The few records of cases indicate that there was confusion about this in practice too. The couple in the decretal of Clement III had been married for five years before seeking an annulment, although they had only actually lived together for three months; in the 1160s, Master Odo mentioned a couple who had been bewitched for thirteen years; and another couple whose case went to the pope had been together for seven years.²⁷

The references to divergent French and Roman practices, as well as the accounts of Guibert of Nogent and Cosmas of Prague, strongly suggest that magic impotence was not just a problem known in theory from *Si per sortiaris* and included in canon law and sentence collections for the sake of completeness. Guibert even said that it happened often: ‘these arts ^{so} are frequently practised among the people, that they are known by all uneducated people.’²⁸ Naturally caused impotence was also discussed using the context and vocabulary of early canons, but this does not mean that the problem did not exist in reality. However, without *Si per sortiaris* magic impotence might not have received much discussion, because there are no other canons referring to it: perhaps it would simply have been dealt with according to the rules for natural impotence.

²³ ‘si tamen consuetudo generalis Gallicane ecclesie habet, ut huiusmodi matrimonia dissolvantur, nos patienter tolerabimus...’ X 4.15.2

²⁴ ‘de Romane ecclesie consuetudine non erat talium matrimonium separandum.’ 1 Comp. 4.16.4

²⁵ ‘minus ad quinque annos maneat cum ipsa’. Weisweiler, p. 373; ‘usque ad quinque annos expectaverit.’ *Coniugium est secundum Ysidorum*, p. 280

²⁶ ‘in canonibus hoc determinatum non invenitur, leges itaque sequende sunt.’ Johan Friedrich von Schulte, ed., *Die Summa Magistri Rufini zum Decretum Gratiani* (Giessen, 1892), p. 433

²⁷ 1 Comp. 4.16.4; Landgraf, ‘Zwei Gelehrte’, p. 162; Charles Duggan, *Decretals and the Creation of ‘New Law’ in the Twelfth Century* (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 447-8

²⁸ ‘Ita enim populariter actitatur, ut iam ab rudibus quibusque sciatur.’ Guibert of Nogent, p. 84

Gratian and the Decretists

The appearance of Gratian's *Decretum* began a new series of discussions of magic and impotence, because it became one of the standard canon law text-books on which all later canonists commented. Like the authors of the earlier sentence collections, the commentators on Gratian mostly drew on written sources, but occasionally they also included comments that do not seem to come from earlier texts. Gratian was a Bolognese teacher of law about whom little is known. The *Decretum* was first composed around 1139, and later revised and extensively augmented by c.1155, possibly by two or more different people.²⁹ Gratian's stated aim was to harmonize the conflicting texts of canon law, and so he pointed out the contradiction between the views of Hincmar and Gregory II: 'But in this [*Si per sortiarias*] seems to be contrary to the abovementioned chapter of Gregory. For there, after the possibility [of intercourse] returns, she is ordered to separate from the man whom she married second, and return to her first husband.'³⁰

In the half century after the appearance of the *Decretum*, the commentators on Gratian in Bologna, Paris and elsewhere, known as decretists, usually focused on this contradiction between the rulings of Hincmar and Gregory, rather than on the reality of impotence magic. Gratian's statement might indicate that he favoured Gregory's position, but if so, the hint was not clear enough: one early commentator, Rufinus (c.1164), noted that he failed to explain the contradiction.³¹ Like the author of the *Sententie Berolinenses* earlier in the century, many decretists were uneasy that Hincmar had allowed both spouses to remarry after an annulment for magic impotence. Johannes Faventinus (c.1171) reported that some writers claimed that the authority of Pope Gregory outweighed that of Hincmar, who was only an archbishop.³² The bluntest condemnation of Hincmar came from the glossator Cardinalis (possibly Cardinal Raymond des Arènes, who died in 1177 or 1178³³): 'Hence he should rather have been called "ignorant" [ignarus] than Hincmar

²⁹ Winroth, pp. 3-4

³⁰ 'Sed in hoc videtur contrarius premissio capitulo Gregorii. Ibi enim post possibilitatem redditam iubetur separari ab eo, cui secundo nupserat, et redire ad primum.' C.33, q. 1, d. p. c. 4

³¹ 'obiectioem hanc magister... suscitatur, sed non explicatur.' Rufinus, p. 433

³² 'quidam tamen dicunt quod decretum apostolici ~~de p. q. 1~~ decreto archiepiscopi.' Johannes Faventinus, gloss to C.33 q. 1 c.4, *nequibunt*, BL MS Royal 9.E.VII, f. 146r

³³ Rudolf Weigand, 'Die Glossen des Cardinalis – Raimundus de (H)arenis – zu C.16', in Klaus Lüdicke et al., ed., *Recht in Dienste des Menschen* (Graz, 1986), repr. in Weigand, *Glossatoren des Dekrets Gratians* (Goldbach, 1997), p. 149

[Igmarius].³⁴ Perhaps helped by this catchy pun, Cardinalis's comment was preserved, although not explicitly supported, in the ordinary gloss (standard commentary) on the *Decretum* by Johannes Teutonicus (written between 1210 and 1218).³⁵ On the other hand, another anonymous glossator said that even though Hincmar was ignorant, the church followed his advice.³⁶

What became the definitive solution was presented by the *Summa Parisiensis*, written in Paris, perhaps around 1160. The *Summa* attributed it to a 'Master G.', possibly the canonist and theologian Gandulph of Bologna, although it does not appear in Gandulph's sentence collection.³⁷ The *Summa Parisiensis* presented natural impotence and impotence caused by castration, on the one hand, and impotence caused by magic on the other, as separate cases requiring different rules. If a man was naturally impotent or castrated, the argument went, then he would always be impotent with any woman. Therefore, if he subsequently had sex with another woman, he could presumably have done so with his first wife, so the church had clearly been deceived and the first marriage should be reinstated. On the other hand, if a man was bewitched and the bewitchment turned out to be permanent, he was not impotent with everyone but only with one particular woman. Therefore, he could remarry and should not be forced to return to his first wife if he did so successfully.³⁸ This solution was followed not only by the author of the *Summa Parisiensis*, but also by many other commentators including Rufinus, Johannes Faventinus and Sicard of Cremona.³⁹

³⁴ 'Hinc potius ignarus quam Igmarius dicendus esset.' Cardinalis, gloss to C.33 q. 1 c.4, *nequibunt*, printed in Rudolf Weigand, *Die Glossen zum Dekret Gratians, Studia Gratiana* 25-6, 1991, p. 556

³⁵ 'hic potius ignarus dicendus est quam Gnarus: ... alii dicunt contra': Johannes Teutonicus, Ordinary Gloss to C.33 q. 1 c.4, *nequibunt*; *Decretum Gratiani, Glossis domini Johannis Teutonici* (Basel, 1512), f. 343v

³⁶ 'Igmarius fuit et non Igmarius, set tamen ita tenet ecclesia.' Gloss to C.33 q. 1 c.4, *Igmarius*: Weigand, *Glossen*, p. 555

³⁷ *Summa Parisiensis*, ed. Terence P. McLaughlin (Toronto, 1952), p. 249. McLaughlin suggests that Master G. was Gandulph, p. xxv. Gandulphus Bononiensis, *Sententiarum Libri Quatuor*, ed. J. de Walter (Vienna, 1924), pp. 582-5

³⁸ 'Ratio autem diversitatis secundum magistrum G. hec est, quoniam quando testes super impossibilitate naturali iurant, iurant eum qui naturali impossibilitate laborat, illegitimam esse personam ad contrahendum cum aliqua. Unde, si postea contraxerit cum aliqua eamque cognoverit, revocabitur... Quando autem iurant aliquem per maleficas vel sortiaros impediri, iurant non eum esse personam illegitimam ad contrahendum cum aliqua, sed cum illa determinata persona.' *Summa Parisiensis*, p. 249

³⁹ Rufinus, pp. 433-4; Johannes Faventinus, C.33, q. 1, f. 146r; Sicard of Cremona, C.33, q. 1, BL MS Add. 18367, f. 161r

It was not only the decretists who were divided about how to deal with impotence cases in practice.⁴⁰ Bishops and their representatives still felt the need to appeal to the pope, which gave rise to several new decretals dealing with impotence. In one decretal of Alexander III (1159-81), which refers to an English knight who apparently had no genitals (*membris genitalibus destitutum*), the knight's family forbade him from marrying anyone, but the vice-archdeacon of Bedford, to whom they applied for confirmation, referred the case to the pope, and another cleric was willing to conduct a marriage for the knight.⁴¹ The papal decretals themselves were not always consistent: as discussed above, Alexander III had tolerated the custom of the French church and allowed annulments in impotence cases, whereas Clement III did not. It is no wonder that differences in the rules are reflected in the canonists' commentaries.

Whether they agreed with *Si per sortiaris* on the question of annulments or not, the decretists' other main interest in this period was in procedure. If a case of impotence, natural or magical, came before the church, how could it be proved? If the husband and wife agreed that the man was impotent, could their word be trusted? No: seven neighbours were required to swear that the couple were not lying. If the man later successfully remarried, should the seven witnesses be charged with perjury? Yes, said most canonists, although Johannes Faventinus conceded that the situation was a difficult one because the witnesses had only sworn to the couple's sincerity, not to the facts of the case.⁴² If a wife claimed that her husband was impotent but he denied it, who should be believed? The husband, because 'the man is the head of the woman'; but it was still possible for the wife to get an annulment. If she produced supporters to swear that she was telling the truth and the husband could not, she won the case. Simon of Bisignano (c.1177-9) suggested that the wife could also win the case if a physical inspection proved that she was still a virgin,⁴³ and this suggestion was also taken up by Johannes Teutonicus in the Ordinary Gloss on the *Decretum*, who specified that the women who performed the inspection had to be midwives, and said

⁴⁰ James Brundage, 'Impotence, Frigidity and Marital Nullity in the Decretists and the Early Decretalists', in *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Medieval Canon Law*, ed. Peter Linehan (Vatican City, 1988), p. 415

⁴¹ Walther Holzmann, *Decretales Ineditae saeculi XII*, ed. Stanley Chodorow and Charles Duggan, *Monumenta Iuris Canonici* B.4 (Vatican City, 1982), p. 107

⁴² 'non sunt facile iudicandi periuri, quia non iuraverunt de facto ita esse, sed sic se credere ut principales persone iuraverunt.' Johannes Faventinus, gloss to C.33, q. 1, c.2, *periurii* f. 146r

⁴³ 'illa vero per aspectum corporis.' Simon of Bisignano, *Summa*, ed. P. V. Aimoiné, Daniel Schwenzer, Gerhard Eichhorn and Georg Schmidt, <http://unifr.ch/sdc/simon1.html>, C.33

that they must also be ‘very skilled’ if this method of proof was to be more reliable than the husband’s oath.⁴⁴

It is difficult to tell how far the decretists’ discussions reflect their experiences with real cases of impotence magic. Some canonists became bishops later in their careers, and so would have had to deal with marriage cases, but if they had encountered cases of magic impotence earlier than this, they did not mention them in their commentaries. Some arguments were passed from one writer to another without any reference to the wider world: for example, much of Johannes Faventinus’s commentary was copied from Rufinus’s. However, a few decretists did refer to what might happen in the world outside. Paucapalea, one of Gratian’s earliest commentators (between 1146 and the early 1150s), said that the discussions of impotence magic were prompted by real concerns: ‘since some people, impeded by magic, cannot render the marriage debt to their wives, it should be asked, whether they should be separated.’⁴⁵ Paucapalea also envisaged one situation in which impotence magic might take place: ‘say if I am burning strongly with love for a woman, whom you have taken as a wife. I arrange by some skill that you cannot have intercourse with her for a year, so that perhaps she will separate from you and I will be embraced by her as if she were my wife.’⁴⁶ Paucapalea’s hypothetical culprit was thus a jealous rival for the hand of one of the spouses. Even if he did not have a case in mind, the situation that he imagined corresponds to many cases of impotence magic, such as those described in chapter 2, and the case recounted by the theologian Master Odo (see below).

Simon of Bisignano’s statement that the woman could undergo a physical inspection to prove her virginity also corresponded with reality: the physical inspection has been found in church court records as early as 1241.⁴⁷ The canonists may also have been reflecting reality when they criticized other methods of proof. Rufinus stated that the

⁴⁴ ‘Si esset virgo, tunc sufficeret verum iudicium per obstetrices,’ Johannes Teutonicus, Ordinary Gloss to C. 33 q. 1 c. 2, *septima manu*, f. 343r; ‘nisi mulieres essent peritissime potius esset credendum viri sacramento.’ Ordinary Gloss to C. 33 q. 1 c. 3, *tempore*, f. 343r

⁴⁵ ‘quia nonnulli maleficio impediti nequeunt quidem debitum reddere uxori, utrum sint separandi, solet queri.’ Johan Friedrich von Schulte, ed., *Die Summa des Paucapalea über das Decretum Gratiani* (Giessen, 1890), p. 130

⁴⁶ ‘puta vehementer ego exardesco in quendam, quam in uxorem copulas tibi. Artem compono, ut usque ad annum eam non possis cognoscere, ut, sic forsitan a te separatam veniam in amplexus illius uxoris quasi affectu.’ Paucapalea, p. 131

⁴⁷ Jacqueline Murray, ‘On the Origins and Role of ‘Wise Women’ in Causes for Annulment on the grounds of Male Impotence’, *Journal of Medieval History* 16, 1990, p. 239

‘just judgement’ referred to in the first of the canons on impotence did not mean the ordeal: “by just judgement”: at least, not by glowing iron or boiling water or something of that sort, which is prohibited, but by a band of seven witnesses.”⁴⁸ This statement suggests that Rufinus was aware that people might resort to a variety of methods of proof not sanctioned by the church. However, his comment was then passed on by other commentators, and it is not so clear whether they were also referring to real cases.

The first fifty years of *Decretum* scholarship were summed up in the late 1180s, in a long commentary by Huguccio (d. 1210),⁴⁹ a teacher of law at Bologna and later bishop of Ferrara. Huguccio took much from earlier writers, but he also had his own views about magic and impotence. His rigorous stand on many issues was well known to his contemporaries,⁵⁰ so it is not surprising that he took a strict view of when a separation could be granted for magic impotence. Huguccio reduced the potential number of annulments by stating that if there was uncertainty about when the bewitchment took place, ‘it should always be presumed that [the magic] follows marriage.’⁵¹ He did not specify whether by ‘marriage’ he meant the exchange of consent or the consummation, but if he meant the exchange of consent, this could have drastically reduced the number of separations because many cases of impotence might not have been discovered until the wedding night, after consent had been exchanged, and so no one would know whether the impotence preceded the exchange of consent or not.

Huguccio was also reluctant to grant a bewitched couple an annulment, because he was aware of how impotence magic might work in practice. He claimed that few cases of bewitchment were permanent: ‘hardly ever is someone so bewitched that he cannot be released, especially by the person behind the magic, that is, the person who did it.’⁵² Huguccio’s understanding of how magic worked is supported by the much more abundant witch trial records of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which

⁴⁸ ‘per iustum iudicium: non utique candentis ferri vel ferventis aque aut huiusmodi, quod prohibetur, sed septima manu propinquorum.’ Rufinus, p. 434

⁴⁹ Wolfgang P. Müller, *Huguccio: the Life, Works, and Thought of a Twelfth-Century Jurist* (Washington, D. C., 1994), p. 6. Huguccio’s discussion of impotence is summarized in Brundage, ‘Impotence’, pp. 415-6.

⁵⁰ Johannes Teutonicus referred to the ‘rigor Huguccionis’: Müller, p. 137

⁵¹ ‘semper presumitur esse secutum post matrimonium.’ Huguccio, *Summa*, Paris BN MS lat. 3892, f. 320r

⁵² ‘vix est aliquis ita maleficiatus quin possit solvi presertim per actorem maleficii, scilicet qui fecit illum.’ Huguccio, f. 320r

show that the first resort in cases of supposed bewitchment was often for the victim to approach the person they suspected of bewitching them. Robin Briggs argues that persuading the suspect to perform a cure could have resolved the fears of the victim and relieved tensions between the two parties, and that this process probably really did make people feel better.⁵³ This may have been especially true in cases of impotence, which often has a psychological cause. Men who thought that they had been bewitched probably responded in the same way in the Middle Ages, although the evidence is less good. An anecdote about impotence magic told by Thomas of Chobham in a confession manual of c.1216 describes how the victim went to the woman who had bewitched him and ‘forced’ her to lift the spell;⁵⁴ and in another, told by the theologian Master Odo, the sorceress was only unable to lift the spell because the magical object that she had put under the bed was lost.

By the time Huguccio was writing, much of the basic canon law on impotence had been worked out. Most canonists agreed that *Si per sortiarias* was valid as law although there were still dissenters in the early thirteenth century, and they justified this by emphasizing that natural and magic impotence were different situations that required different rules. The law was also being used in practice, at least among the upper classes. By the end of the century, King Philip Augustus of France (or his lawyers) knew the law well enough to claim magic impotence as a reason why his marriage to Ingeborg of Denmark was invalid. Once the basic rules had been decided on, Huguccio elaborated, thinking about further complications that might arise in practice. This elaboration continued into the thirteenth century, especially as the continuing development of ecclesiastical jurisdiction over marriage made it increasingly likely that churchmen would encounter the beliefs about impotence magic held by the laity.

Theology after the School of Laon

In contrast to the decretists, theologians after around 1130 did not discuss magic impotence regularly. The reason for this lies in the difference between the way theologians and canonists chose subjects to discuss. Following the appearance of Gratian’s *Decretum*, which gave the canonists their own set text, theology and canon

⁵³ Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: the Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (Oxford, 2nd edn. 2002), pp. 97, 63

⁵⁴ Thomas of Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, ed. F. Broomfield (Louvain, 1968), p. 184; see below, ch. 5

law were for the first time becoming separate disciplines.⁵⁵ While the decretists commented on the whole of the *Decretum*, the theologians were freer to focus only on the topics that interested them, and for many, this did not include magic impotence. Of the theologians working in Paris in the 1140s, only Robert Pullen mentioned it.⁵⁶ As in canon law, impotence magic only found a regular place in theological discussions when it was mentioned by a work that became a standard text-book, the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, compiled in 1155-8. Peter (d. 1160) was a master at Paris by c.1142, and in 1159 he was made bishop of Paris.⁵⁷ The *Sentences* did not give rise to a formal commentary tradition equivalent to that on the *Decretum* until the 1220s, but they did receive some interesting glosses in the second half of the twelfth century.

Peter Lombard included *Si per sortiaras* along with the other canons on impotence in book 4, distinction 34 of the *Sentences*, taking his material from Gratian.⁵⁸ Like Gratian and his commentators, Peter was concerned about what *Si per sortiaras* said about remarriage. He did not mention the apparent contradiction between Hincmar's ruling and Gregory II's, although, having read Gratian, he must have been aware of it. Instead, he was concerned about Hincmar's final statement that a couple who had been separated for magic impotence and had both remarried successfully, not only did not have to return to their first marriage, but could not do so (*'reconciliari nequibunt'*). Peter saw this as too strict: 'What is contained in the end of the chapter is to be understood more as rigour than as canonical equity.'⁵⁹ 'Canonical equity' focused on doing what would be fair in a given case, rather than on obeying the exact letter of the law. It would presumably have allowed the couple to return to their first marriage in some cases, or even have insisted on it, as Gregory II had for cases of natural impotence.⁶⁰ Alternatively, Peter suggested, perhaps the canon meant that

⁵⁵ Brundage, *Law*, p. 233; John van Engen, 'From Practical Theology to Divine Law: the Work and Mind of Medieval Canonists', in *Proceedings of the 9th International Congress of Medieval Canon Law*, ed. Peter Landau and Joers Mueller (Vatican City, 1997), p. 876

⁵⁶ Robertus Pullus, *Sententiae*, ch. 38, PL 186:956. On Robert, see F. Courtney, *Cardinal Robert Pullen: an English Theologian of the Twelfth Century* (Rome, 1964), p. 4-14

⁵⁷ Colish, *Peter Lombard*, vol. 1, pp. 15-23

⁵⁸ Colish, *Peter Lombard*, vol. 1, p. 82

⁵⁹ 'Quod in fine huius capituli continetur, ex rigore magis dictum intelligendum est quam ex canonica equitate.' Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*, no editors specified, vol. 2 (Grottaferrata, 1981), book 4, dist. 34, p. 465

⁶⁰ Colish, *Peter Lombard*, vol. 2, p. 685, assumes that Peter is criticizing Hincmar for saying that people who have been separated for magic impotence should automatically be forced to return to their first marriage if they remarry successfully; however, Hincmar's ruling is that the second marriages should stand. Peter seems to be referring to this.

the couple could not be reconciled without the permission of the church: 'Or it should be understood that they cannot be reconciled to their first marriages except by the judgement of the church, which made the separation.'⁶¹ This would have appealed to twelfth-century churchmen who were trying to establish the church's control over marriage, but it was a rather tenuous interpretation of Hincmar's text.

Like Gratian, Peter Lombard left plenty of scope for discussion. One early glossator, Master Odo (who may have been chancellor of the university of Paris in 1164-8), was particularly baffled by the Lombard's remarks on remarriage: why, he wondered, was it especially rigorous to refuse to allow a couple who had remarried to return to their previous marriage? 'Master Odo says this, that Master Peter, with all due respect to him, did not consider this very well, because canonical equity demands that they not be reconciled to their first partners while their later ones are living. For who knows whether they will be able to have intercourse together again? Therefore it is not rigour, but equity, if they are not returned to their first spouses.'⁶² Odo did not dispute the validity of Hincmar's ruling (as had Cardinalis the decretist); he was merely confused about the Lombard's comments on it. Another anonymous glossator suggested that there were good reasons why a once-separated couple should not be allowed to remarry. In a gloss which survives in at least two manuscripts, he stated that if the couple were reunited, they might simply find themselves bewitched again: "'they cannot be reconciled", that is, so that sorceresses and magicians are not given a chance to work evil again.'⁶³ This indicates some thinking about what might happen in an actual case.

Master Odo also claimed to have encountered a real-life case of impotence magic:

in a similar case, a certain monk came to Master Odo, saying that his sister had married a certain knight thirteen years ago, and he had never had intercourse with her. The knight was impeded by the magic of a certain prostitute, whom he had ill-treated before he married. Then the prostitute went to the lady and after they had come to an understanding as long as she could release those impediments, she said to the lady, 'Go and *dig* under

⁶¹ 'Vel intelligendum est non posse reconciliari prioribus nisi iudicio Ecclesie, quo divisio facta fuerit.' Peter Lombard, *Sentences*, p. 465

⁶² 'Hic dixit magister Odo, quod magister Petrus salva pace hoc minus circumspecte apposuit, quod canonica equitas exigit, ne viventibus ultimis non reconcilientur prioribus. Quis enim scit, an illi iterum possint invicem convenire. Non est ergo rigor, sed equitas, si non iterum coniungantur.' Landgraf, 'Zwei Gelehrte', p. 170

⁶³ "'Reconciliari nequibunt", scilicet ne sortiariis ac maleficis detur iterum occasio malignandi.' Landgraf, 'Zwei Gelehrte', p. 170; BL MS Royal 7.F.XIII, f. 54r

your bed and bring back what you find.' She [the knight's wife] went and found the head of a child. Amazed, she returned and left the head where it was. She went back again and did not find it, and so the sorceress could not destroy her own magic. And thus the man and his bride could not have intercourse thereafter. Master Odo advised that if they wished, they could marry other people in Christ.'⁶⁴

It is difficult to tell how much of this story is true. The gruesome detail of the child's head found under the bed resembles the stories which emerged in later witch trials about the use of children's body parts for evil magic, as well as a first-century BC literary description by Horace of witches killing a child to use its liver for magic.⁶⁵ However, the use of a child's head is not impossible, even though the image of the baby-killing witch is part of the wider witch stereotype that did not have much basis in fact. A fifteenth-century Parisian midwife, Perrette, was charged with obtaining the body of a stillborn baby, whose fat would be used to make an unguent to cure a nobleman of leprosy.⁶⁶ Odo's ending is also rather unsatisfying if the story is entirely fictional, since the magic was lost and the couple could not be cured. This, and the circumstantial detail about how Odo was approached by the wife's brother, indicate that there may be some truth behind the story, even if the details were elaborated.

Even if it is not wholly true, Odo's story has features in common with other accounts of impotence magic. The fact that the knight's ex-lover is responsible adds to the impression given by many other sources that this was one situation which might really lead to tensions resulting in accusations of magic – or in genuine attempts at bewitchment.⁶⁷ The story also testifies to the confusion about what to do in cases of impotence magic. This couple stayed together for thirteen years, far longer than the three required by canon law, or even the five referred to by some early twelfth-century theologians. Odo's anecdote thus indicates how writers might find out about cases, and also the informal way in which those cases might be dealt with. Odo did

⁶⁴ 'Simili casu convenit quidam monachus m[agistrum] Odonem dicens, quod soror sua nupserat cuidam militi et per XIII annos iam fuerant, nec iste (?) eam cognoverat impediendo veneficio cuiusdam meretricis, qua miles abutebatur, antequam convenirent. Tunc accessit meretrix ad dominam (?) et facta conventionem, si posset impedimenta illa separare, dixit domine [Landgraf's text reads 'domina']: "Vade et fode sub lecto tuo et quod inveneris, affer." Ivit et invenit caput pueri. Illa stupefacta recessit et dimisit caput. Iterum rediit nec invenit, et sic venefica non potuit veneficium suum adnichilare. Et sic non post potuerunt vir et nupta convenire. Consuluit magister Odo, quod, si vellent, in Christo alii nuberent.' Quoted in Landgraf, 'Zwei Gelehrte', p. 162. The question marks are Landgraf's.

⁶⁵ Quoted in Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: a Sourcebook* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 117-8

⁶⁶ Kieckhefer, *Magic*, pp. 62-3

⁶⁷ See also Richard Kieckhefer, 'Erotic Magic in Medieval Europe', in Joyce E. Salisbury, ed., *Sex in the Middle Ages: a Book of Essays* (New York, 1991), p. 44

not say that he advised the couple to go to their bishop for an annulment; he simply said they could remarry.

The other theologians who mentioned magic and impotence were influenced by canon law, such as Master Roland (who has sometimes been identified, erroneously, as Roland Bandinelli, who became Pope Alexander III), a Bolognese master who wrote both a commentary on the *Decretum* and a theological sentence collection in the late 1150s.⁶⁸ In his sentence collection, Roland followed the canonists who claimed that natural and magic impotence were different cases requiring different rules, but he also added a hint of experience, 'because it happens many times that the ability to have sex, if impeded by magic, returns, and because he cannot have intercourse with one woman but can with another – which hardly ever happens with a naturally impotent man.'⁶⁹ Robert Paululus, the late twelfth-century author of a *Treatise on the Ceremonies, Sacraments and Offices of the Church*, was also heavily influenced by canon law. He divided impotence into natural and magical in the same way as canonists, and like them his main interest was in the process of annulment, the proof, and the possibility of remarriage.⁷⁰

Medicine

Magic impotence did not arouse much interest in twelfth-century medical writers. Although many physicians listed aphrodisiacs, I have found only three writers who mentioned that magic might be a cause of impotence. The lack of interest is probably explained by the fact that the Arabic and ancient medical texts which were being translated and incorporated into the medicine of the Latin West in the twelfth century did not focus on magic as a cause of impotence, apart from Costa ben Luca's *Physical Ligatures*, which described how some people attributed impotence caused by psychological factors to magic. The chapter on impotence magic in the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African ('Practica', book 8, chapter 29) also did not provoke much comment in the twelfth century, although other parts of the *Pantegni* had spread with Constantine's other works to monastic and cathedral libraries all over Europe by the

⁶⁸ On Roland's identity, see James Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (London and New York, 1995), p. 224

⁶⁹ 'quia multociens accidit, quod maleficio impedita redditur coeundi facultas, et quod non potest cum una, potest cum alia – quod de frigido minime solet accidere.' Ambrosius M. Gietl, ed., *Die Sentenzen Rolands nachmals Papstes Alexander III* (Freiburg, 1891), p. 282

⁷⁰ Robertus Paululus, *De ceremoniis, sacramentis, officiis et observationibus ecclesiasticis* PL 177:397-8; E. Amann, 'Robert Paululus', in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* 13.2 (Paris, 1937), col. 2753

mid twelfth century,⁷¹ and were influencing the writings of the medical school at Salerno.⁷² This disparity is odd and, as discussed above in chapter 2, it is possible that the part of the *Pantegni* containing the chapter on magic impotence was not written until well into the twelfth century. However, Monica Green, who has investigated the manuscript transmission of 'Practica' book 8, suggests the late eleventh or early twelfth century as the most likely date,⁷³ and this suggestion is substantiated by the fact that a few writers do seem to have encountered the *Pantegni's* chapter on magic and impotence in the twelfth century. They did not automatically follow what it said, however. Although it provided information, the chapter did not dominate the discussion of magic impotence to the exclusion of other written and perhaps non-written sources.

The first reference to magic impotence that I have found in a twelfth-century medical text is in a passage attributed to Bartholomew of Salerno in *On Curing Illnesses*, a collection of extracts from various Salernitan medical writers. Bartholomew was a master at Salerno, probably in the third quarter of the twelfth century, who wrote a medical encyclopaedia, and he was probably also the author of letters giving medical advice to Peter the Venerable and King Louis VII of France.⁷⁴ Like the author of the *Pantegni*, he referred to the use of mercury to cure impotence:

'If someone cannot have intercourse with a woman, let him take mercury and put it inside a reed, in the entrance of a door; and let him be called so that he crosses across the reed, but does not know it, and afterwards let the reed with the mercury be given to him, and when he wants to have intercourse, he should have it with him at once. And take care that she does not wear anything above her ears or in her hair, and let her be washed so that she should not be tainted by any incantation. It also works for the woman if she crosses over the reed and has it with her in the same way.'⁷⁵ *completely*

⁷¹ Florence Eliza Glaze, *The Perforated Wall: the Ownership and Circulation of Medical Books in Medieval Europe, c.800-1200*, PhD thesis, Duke University, 1999, p. 188

⁷² Kristeller, 'School of Salerno', p. 154

⁷³ Monica Green, 'The Re-creation of *Pantegni*, Practica, Book 8', in Charles Burnett and Danielle Jacquart, ed., *Constantine the African and Alī ibn al-Abbās al-Mağūsī: the Pantegni and Related Texts* (Leiden, 1994), p. 147

⁷⁴ Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'Bartholomaeus, Musandinus and Maurus of Salerno, and other early commentators of the "Articella", with a tentative list of texts and manuscripts', *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica* 19, 1976, pp. 62-4

⁷⁵ 'Si quis non potest concumbere cum muliere accipiat argentum vivum et in penna [de Renzi's text: panno] ponat, in introitu hostii, et ille vocetur ut transeat supra pennam, eo tamen nesciente, et postea detur ei penna cum argento vivo, et quum concumbere voluerit, statim habeat secum. Et provideat ne illa ferat aliquid super aures vel in capillis, et tota lavetur ne intincta [de Renzi's text: intencta] sit aliqua incantatione. Mulieri iterum valet si super pennam transeat et habeat secum predicto modo.' Salvatore de Renzi, ed., *Collectio Salernitana* (Naples, 1853, repr. Bologna, 1967), vol. 2 p. 329,

There is some confusion in the text, in the form that it was published by Salvatore de Renzi, about whether the mercury is put into a piece of cloth (*pannus*) or reed (*penna*), but the latter is more likely, because it has parallels with one of the *Pantegni*'s cures for magic impotence: 'Similarly, if mercury is put into a reed sealed with wax, and is put in that place without the knowledge of the bride and groom, in the place where it is put, no magic will harm them.'⁷⁶ Although Bartholomew went into more detail, the essential features are common to both cures: the mercury in the reed, put in a certain place without the knowledge of the couple. The two writers are likely to be referring to the same practice. The *Pantegni* chapter is more likely to be Bartholomew's source than vice versa, because the *Pantegni* does not cite any surviving sources from later than the eleventh century;⁷⁷ but it is also possible that the compiler of the chapter drew the cure from Bartholomew and simplified it. Whichever passage came first, Bartholomew was able to produce a more elaborate description than the *Pantegni*'s, perhaps from what he had observed in practice.

Another writer to mention impotence magic was Roger de Barone, from the south of France, who wrote a medical compendium, the *Practica*, probably in the second half of the twelfth century.⁷⁸ After listing various causes of impotence and how they could be recognized, Roger said 'If it is because of magic, it is known through the absence of other signs.'⁷⁹ Magic here is a way of explaining the inexplicable, a perspective similar to that of the canonists, who were only willing to allow a magical explanation when there seemed to be nothing physically wrong with the man. Several later medical writers adopted Roger's phrase 'through the absence of other signs' to describe how to distinguish magic impotence from other forms.⁸⁰ Once magic impotence was diagnosed, Roger's prognosis was pessimistic: 'If it happens by magic, it is not cured.'⁸¹ This is a very unusual view: those medical texts that mentioned magic, like the *Pantegni* and Bartholomew of Salerno, generally also

emended by Gerda Hoffmann, 'Beiträge zur Lehre von der durch Zauber verursachten Krankheit und ihrer Behandlung in der Medizin des Mittelalters' *Janus* 37, 1933, p. 180

⁷⁶ 'Similiter, si argentum vivum accipiatur in calamo cum cera cooperto et nesciente sponso et sponsa in loco ponatur, nullum maleficium eis obest.' See Appendix 1

⁷⁷ Green, p. 147

⁷⁸ Hoffmann, p. 180

⁷⁹ 'Si ex maleficio per exclusionem aliorum signorum cognoscitur.' Roger de Barone, *Practica*, in *Chirurgia Guidonis de Cauliaco* (Venice, 1499), f. 156r; Hoffmann, p. 180

⁸⁰ For example, Gilbertus Anglicus, *Compendium Medicine* (Lyon, 1510), Book 7, Ch. 1, f. 286r; Joannes Michael Savonarola, *Practica* (Venice, 1497), Tractatus 6, Rubric 32, f. 238v

⁸¹ 'Si autem fiat [edition reads 'fiant'] ex maleficio non curatur.' Roger de Barone, f. 156v

suggested cures. Canonists and theologians also believed that the spell could be lifted by prayers and fasting, following *Si per sortiarias*, and some, like Huguccio, thought that few cases of magic impotence were permanent. Roger's attitude is thus something of a mystery, and suggests that the *Pantegni* did not yet dominate the medical discussion of magical impotence cures. It was possible to write about magic impotence without citing it, perhaps an indication that its circulation was limited at this time.

Urso of Salerno also mentioned magic impotence in a set of aphorisms and a commentary on them that he wrote in the late twelfth century. Urso wrote several medical works, and was an early western reader of Aristotle.⁸² His works have a strong philosophical emphasis, and the editor of his *Aphorisms and Commentary*, Rudolf Creutz, suggested that Urso was also a theologian, because he quoted St Augustine, and was interested in mysticism.⁸³ Urso mentioned magic and impotence in his commentary on aphorism 24, which discussed how a person's imagination could affect them physically. He gave several examples: if someone is told that the food they are eating is bad, they will feel ill even if there is nothing actually wrong with the food; and if a person crosses a spot where they know that someone has been killed, they will feel afraid. Urso then went on to describe how the imagination itself could be affected by its environment. For example, if someone crosses a spot where a corpse has been hidden, they will feel afraid, even if they do not smell anything, because they subconsciously sense the change in the atmosphere caused by the presence of the cadaver: 'from the spirit, which undergoes a slight change because of the infected air and which makes this present to the soul, the soul immediately senses something horrible from the spirit which has been thus disturbed, and stirs up the faculty of the imagination to bring horrible things to mind.'⁸⁴ The 'spirits' in this context were material substances that existed in the body, which were believed to

⁸² Danielle Jacquart, 'Aristotelian Thought in Salerno', in Peter Dronke, ed., *A History of Twelfth-Century Western Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 408

⁸³ Rudolf Creutz, 'Urso, der Letzte des Hochsalerno: Arzt, Philosoph, Theologe', *Abhandlung zur Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften* 5, 1934, p. 7

⁸⁴ 'ex spiritu quantulumcunque immutationem exire infecto suscipiente eandemque anime representante, statim horribilitatem sentiens per eundem spiritum sic turbatum [Creutz reads 'turbatam', but 'turbatum' makes more sense] virtutem ymaginariam ad horribilium excitat ymaginationem.' Rudolf Creutz, 'Die medizinisch-naturphilosophischen Aphorismen und Kommentare des Magister Urso Salernitanus', *Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften und der Medizin* 5, 1936, p. 50

perform functions for which ordinary matter was too heavy and sluggish, such as those associated with the senses and nerves.⁸⁵

In the same way, Urso went on,

IF some woman carries a needle which has been infected by the fume, however small, released by a corpse while sewing it up, it impedes or cuts off the ability to have intercourse of a man lying on top of it. When he breathes in the infected air, infected by the needle, the infection disturbs his vital and animal spirits. The soul perceives this infection and excites the power of the imagination to terrible things, and thus stunned, the shaken animal trembles, and by thinking about the unknown horror, the spirits are directed from the extremities to the principal organs, so that when the spirit has been carried from the extremities, the penis is unstretched and relaxed, and in this as in other members, movement fails and is cut off.⁸⁶

This passage has parallels with one in the *Pantegni*: 'There are also other [spells] which are made of metal, such as those that are made of iron or lead. The iron ones are, for instance, made from a needle with which a dead man or woman has been sewn.'⁸⁷ Like Bartholomew, Urso was probably drawing on the *Pantegni*, but his attitude was entirely different. He argued that this magical process 'worked' not because of any supernatural force, but for purely natural reasons. Unlike in theology, canon law, and even the *Pantegni*, there is no suggestion here that impotence magic is supernatural or diabolical. Urso's discussion also indicates that impotence magic was not a particularly unusual or surprising event. He included this passage as one of a series of examples to prove his point – bad food, a concealed corpse – and they were concrete examples that could actually happen.

For Urso, as for the author of the *Pantegni* chapter, it was a woman who performed impotence magic, but Urso did not suggest why she might do so, because he was not interested in impotence magic as such, but only in using it as an example of how the imagination could be affected. His attempt to explain the

⁸⁵ James J. Bono, 'Medical Spirits and the Medieval Language of Life', *Traditio* 40, 1984, p. 92

⁸⁶ 'Si aliqua mulier acum ex quantulocunque fumo resoluto a cadavere per suturam infectam portaverit, superiacentis viri veneriam impedit actionem vel amputat, dum per infectus ex acu infecta inspiratus animale spiritum et vitalem inficiendo perturbat; quam infectionem anima percipiens virtutem excitat ad terribilium ymaginationem, sicque stupefactione animal tremefactum tremit et cogitatione inscii horroris spiritus ab extremis ad principia diriguntur, unde spiritu ab extremis sublato virga detenditur et laxatur et tam ipsius quam aliorum membrorum motus deficit et amputatur.' *ibid*, p. 51

⁸⁷ See Appendix 1 for Latin.

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action of the needle in terms of natural causes was not taken up by later writers, although Arnold of Villanova argued in the 1290s that objects with the power to cause impotence worked primarily through the natural influence of heavenly bodies on the earth, and Peter of Abano in 1310 saw impotence magic as a kind of fascination (the evil eye), the influence of one person's mind on another (see below, chapter 8). Urso's natural explanation is, however, part of a wider tendency in medical and scientific writing from the twelfth century onwards to reduce the area of human experience attributable to the supernatural, by looking for natural explanations first.⁸⁸ The *Prose Salernitan Questions*, a series of questions-and-answers on scientific and medical topics used for teaching, and much influenced by Urso, gave a similarly naturalistic explanation of the evil eye, in terms of fumes subconsciously noticed.⁸⁹ The same approach later gave rise to the fourteenth-century surgeon Henri de Mondeville's critical attitude to miracles, and Nicolas Oresme's *On the Causes of Marvels*, which aimed to explain marvels in natural rather than supernatural terms.⁹⁰

The few medical sources for impotence magic in the twelfth century thus present a varied picture. Although the *Pantegni* chapter was probably circulating before the end of the century, it did not dominate all subsequent discussion in the way that *Si per sortiarias* did in canon law and theology. Thus Urso could offer an alternative explanation for why impotence spells might work, and Roger de Barone could believe that magic impotence was incurable. Unlike Hincmar's ruling, the *Pantegni* chapter was not an authoritative text that had to be made to fit into a coherent body of law; it was simply a source of information that medical writers could use if they wished.

Philip Augustus

The long-running divorce case of Philip Augustus, King of France 1180-1223, illustrates the developments that took place in marriage law during the twelfth century, as well as some of the events which might surround accusations of impotence magic.⁹¹ Philip married Ingeborg, sister of the king of Denmark, in 1193, but the day

⁸⁸ M. D. Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century* (Chicago, 1968), p. 14

⁸⁹ Brian Lawn, ed., *The Prose Salernitan Questions* (London, 1979), p. 63

⁹⁰ Simone C. Macdougall, 'The Surgeon and the Saints: Henri de Mondeville on Divine Healing', *Journal of Medieval History* 26, 2000, p. 261; Bert Hansen, *Nicole Oresme and the Marvels of Nature: the 'De causis mirabilium'* (Toronto, 1985), p. 50

⁹¹ On the case, see Jean Gaudemet, 'Le Dossier Canonique du Mariage de Philippe Auguste et d'Ingeburge de Danemark (1193-1213)', *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* 62, 1984, repr.

after the wedding, he announced that he wished to separate on the grounds of affinity, claiming that Ingeborg was related to his first wife, Isabelle of Hainaut. Ingeborg, however, resisted all attempts to annul the marriage, with the support of Pope Innocent III. Innocent's insistence on the indissolubility of the marriage was far stricter than that of earlier popes, and Philip complained that he was being treated more harshly than his father Louis VII, Frederick Barbarossa, and King John of England, who had all repudiated wives.⁹² Philip's sudden aversion to Ingeborg remains a mystery, although contemporary English chroniclers offered several explanations: had he found that she was not a virgin, or had some hidden deformity? Did she have bad breath?⁹³

On one level, the case shows how the aristocracy, at least, knew canon law and were prepared to manipulate it. The only impediments which would annul the marriage and permit Philip to remarry were consanguinity or affinity, and impotence caused by magic. When Philip's claims of affinity were disproved, he changed ground and said that the marriage had never been consummated because he had been bewitched, a claim that Ingeborg denied. A letter of 1208 from Philip to Innocent III made it clear that the king wanted a divorce on any grounds: 'We seek... that you grant the power to separate our marriage without possibility of appeal, whether for affinity, or for magic, or because [Ingeborg] has entered religion, or for any other reasonable ground for which marriages are separated...' Innocent replied that if Philip wanted to claim that he was bewitched, he should follow the correct legal procedure: 'if you wish to pursue the claim of magic, you should follow the process attached to it.'⁹⁴ This would have meant trying to have sex with Ingeborg for three years, which did not suit Philip at all. Unsurprisingly, no more is heard after this about magic.

Philip's claim that the marriage was unconsummated was probably false, although some historians have accepted his claim that he was impotent on the wedding night, and suggested that he initially sought an annulment on grounds of affinity because

in *Droit de l'Eglise et Vie Sociale au Moyen Age* (Northampton, 1989), p. 23, and George Conkin, 'Ingeborg of Denmark, Queen of France 1193-1223', in Anne Duggan, ed., *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 39-52.

⁹² Duby, p. 206

⁹³ John W. Baldwin, 'La vie sexuelle de Philippe-Auguste' in Michel Rouche, ed., *Mariage et Sexualité au Moyen Age: Accord ou Crise?* (Paris, 2000), p. 220

⁹⁴ 'porrigimus... detis potestatem separandi matrimonium nostrum appellatione remota, sive per affinitatem, sive per maleficium, sive intrando religionem, sive alio quocunque modo rationabili per quem solet separari matrimonium...' 'si vero causam volueris prosequi maleficii, formam sequatur sibi prefixam.' Register of Innocent III for 1208, PL 214:1493 and 1498

this was less embarrassing.⁹⁵ Even if Philip's claim was untrue, however, the case still tells us about how accusations of impotence magic might arise. According to an earlier letter of Innocent, it was not only Philip's lawyers who were thinking of magic: 'Therefore he thinks, and many people are also saying, that he is impeded perpetually by magic.'⁹⁶ The monk Rigord, the historian of Philip's reign, also said that people were saying that Philip was bewitched: 'But how strange! On the same day, at the devil's prompting, the king himself, impeded, it is said, by certain sorceresses' spells, began to see the wife he had so long desired as hateful.'⁹⁷ Neither of these are unbiased sources: Innocent may have been relying on information provided by Philip's lawyers, and Rigord is extremely favourable to Philip, but there may be some truth in their claims that magic was widely rumoured.

Rigord, in particular, presented magic as the most logical solution to the otherwise baffling problem of why Philip came to hate Ingeborg so suddenly. Unlike the English chroniclers, Rigord described Ingeborg as 'very beautiful, a girl who was pious and endowed with good morals' - no question of deformity or lack of virginity. Moreover, Philip had long desired her.⁹⁸ How else to explain his behaviour? According to the *Gesta Innocentii*, a detailed and favourable history of Innocent III's pontificate, Philip began to behave oddly on the very day of the wedding, at Ingeborg's coronation: 'at the suggestion of the devil, he began to be strongly horrified at her appearance, and tremble and go pale, so that he was extremely disturbed and could hardly bear to finish the ceremony that he had begun.'⁹⁹ The author of the *Gesta* did not mention magic, but when Alfred the Great had fallen ill at his wedding some three hundred years before, magic was also suspected.¹⁰⁰ Philip's claim of bewitchment may have been cynical, but it could also have been seen as a genuine possibility by people who could not understand what had gone wrong.

⁹⁵ For example, Régine Pernoud and Geneviève de Cant, *Isambour: la reine captive* (Paris, 1987), p. 27

⁹⁶ 'Putat igitur ipse rex et multi etiam opinantur, quod perpetuo sit maleficio impeditus.' Register of Innocent III for 1205, PL 215:680

⁹⁷ 'Sed mirum! Eodem die, instigante diabolo, ipse rex, quibusdam, ut dicitur, maleficiis per sorciarias impeditus, uxorem tam longo tempore cupitam, exosam habere cepit.' H. François Delaborde, ed., *Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton* (Paris, 1882), vol. 1, p. 124

⁹⁸ 'pulcherrimam, puellam sanctam et bonis moribus ornatam.' 'Ingeburgem diu desideratam.' Rigord, p. 124

⁹⁹ 'suggerente diabolo, ad aspectum ipsius coepit vehementer horrescere, tremere ac pallere, ut nimium perturbatus, vix sustinere posset finem solemnitatis incoepte.' *Gesta Innocentii*, PL 214:94

¹⁰⁰ Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, in Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge, *Alfred the Great* (London, 1983), p. 89

Conclusion

The most creative discussions of magic impotence in the twelfth century occurred in canon law, because the canonists were faced with the need to create a system that would work in real cases of impotence magic. They began by exploring the problems raised by *Si per sortiarias*: was it valid, did it agree with the other canons on impotence and, if not, why not? Then there were questions about how the rules could be applied. How did you prove allegations of magic impotence, for example? The canonists were realistic to some extent: they suspected that couples might lie in order to get an annulment, and Huguccio knew that some cases of impotence magic were curable. However, despite this general awareness of the need to be realistic, the canonists of the twelfth century do not provide a window onto real life. With the possible exception of Paucapalea, they do not tell us about cases of magic impotence that they encountered, or how likely any of the possibilities they envisaged was to arise in practice. Most of their discussion spun off from *Si per sortiarias* and the need to make it agree with the other canons on impotence. There was a reality behind all of this, as indicated by the decretals relating to impotence, and accounts like that of Guibert of Nogent, but most of the time we do not see it in the canonists' works.

Twelfth-century medical and theological works also give only occasional glimpses of the reality of impotence magic. Because the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard were not yet a set university text, theologians were not obliged to discuss the subject, and many did not. Where they did, they generally relied on canon law, with only brief hints of practice. Master Odo, who claimed to have encountered a case, was an exception to this, as was the other early glossator on Peter Lombard who worried that if a couple were cured and returned to their first marriage, they might simply be bewitched again. Likewise, the medical writers were not very interested in magic impotence as a medical problem, again probably because the subject did not come up in the texts being translated into Latin at this time. Roger de Barone mentioned the subject briefly, and Urso of Salerno used it to talk about something else. However, Bartholomew of Salerno's elaboration of the cure in the *Pantegni* suggests that he was not just getting his information from this text; he may also have observed impotence cures going on around him.

Thus although impotence magic did exist, it cannot have been seen as a problem that merited much discussion: many writers ignored it, in contexts where they could have discussed it if they had wished to. The existence, or not, of a tradition of commenting on a set text which included magic impotence was a key factor in determining whether or not writers discussed the subject. This situation would change in the early thirteenth century, because of two factors. Firstly, the church became more interested in regulating what the laity were doing, so writers on the duties of parish priests emphasized how the priest had to both educate his flock about marriage and its impediments, and combat their 'superstitious' practices. Secondly, magical texts translated from Arabic began to circulate in the universities, giving rise to new concerns about magic in the same circles where canon law and theology commentaries and medical texts were being written. Both of these developments prompted writers on impotence magic to introduce new information and ask new questions. However, these later developments would have been impossible without the foundations laid in the twelfth century. Twelfth-century canonists and theologians were more often driven by the problems and implications of the texts they were studying than by real practices, but they enabled later writers to build on a sophisticated and coherent body of scholarship.

Chapter 4

How to Bind a Man or Woman: Impotence in the Magical Texts

Before moving on to assess the academic sources that discussed magic impotence, and the various factors that affected them in the thirteenth century, it is necessary to look at another development which began in the twelfth century and profoundly influenced learned attitudes to magic in the later Middle Ages. This was the translation of magical texts from Arabic into Latin, which was associated with Toledo in the twelfth century, and continued in the thirteenth, notably at the court of Alfonso the Wise of Castile (ruled 1252-84).¹ Although some ancient Greco-Roman magic was known in the early Middle Ages,² the arrival of these new texts in the Latin West changed learned views of magic considerably, because they caused some churchmen to worry more than before that all magic was demonic.³

By the thirteenth century, these magical texts were circulating among students at the university of Paris,⁴ and they provoked a mixture of interest and horror. The theologian William of Auvergne, bishop of Paris 1228-49, described how he had once been interested in them: ‘and we remember having looked at all these things in the books of astronomical judgements, and in the books of the *magi* and *malefici*, in our youth.’ However, in William’s case, interest had given way to condemnation: ‘we not only repress the horrific memory of them, but also flee from it.’⁵ In the 1240s, another theologian, Albertus Magnus, quoted magical texts as sources of information about magic and impotence although, as will be seen in chapter 7, he usually rejected what they said, in favour of the Bible and hagiography. On the other hand, Michael Scot (d. c.1235), the astrologer and translator of Arabic scientific texts, took a more positive attitude. Although he admitted that some forms of magic were condemned by

¹ David Pingree, ‘The Diffusion of Arabic Magical Texts in Western Europe’, in *La Diffusione delle Scienze Islamiche nel Medio Evo Europeo* (Rome, 1987), p. 57

² Marie-Thérèse d’Alverny, ‘Survivance de la Magie Antique’, in Paul Wilpert, ed., *Antike und Orient im Mittelalter* (Berlin, 1962), pp. 154-78

³ Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 200; Norman Cohn, *Europe’s Inner Demons: the Demonisation of Christians in Medieval Christendom* (London, 3rd edn. 1993), ch. 6; Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Law* (Hassocks, 1978), pp. 88-9; Michael Bailey, ‘From Sorcery to Witchcraft: Clerical Conceptions of Magic in the Later Middle Ages’, *Speculum* 76, 2001, pp. 964-5

⁴ Pingree, ‘Diffusion’, p. 57

⁵ ‘et hec omnia in libris iudiciorum astronomie, et in libris magorum atque maleficiorum tempore adolescentie nostre nos meminimus inspexisse.’ William of Auvergne, *De Legibus* ch. 25, in *Opera Omnia* vol. 1 (Paris, 1674), p. 78; ‘nos istorum memoriam horrificam non tam perstringimus, quam etiam fugimus.’ *De Legibus* ch. 27, p. 89

the church, he nevertheless described magic as ‘the science of secrets which raises a man up among the great, and almost gives him the beginning of paradise already, as far as his body is concerned.’⁶

Impotence in the Magical Texts

What was in these magical texts that was so disturbing but fascinating? Most relevant to discussions of magic impotence were the texts of image magic. Image magic was developed in ninth-century Syria, especially in the city of Harran,⁷ and although it may have drawn on late antique neo-Platonism, it also included elements of Indian, Iranian and Syrian magic.⁸ It was based on the belief that power flowed from the stars and planets to earth and produced material effects, and it aimed to channel this power for particular purposes by using natural substances, names, written characters and images that had an affinity with a certain star or planet. Sometimes, image magic also invoked the spirits who were believed to rule over the various planets. The typical procedure was to engrave an image on the correct material at the appropriate astrological moment, and then subject it to various processes, including inscribing it with names and characters, fumigating it with certain substances, and burying it. The texts that described these rituals recommended images for a variety of goals, but causing impotence was not a major feature. Some works did not mention it at all, such as those attributed to Thābit ibn Qurra⁹ and Toz Grecus.¹⁰ However, other texts did contain a few images that were explicitly designed to cause impotence. There is one (out of a total of 45 images) in a work on images attributed to Ptolemy,¹¹ and there are several in *Picatrix*, a large magical compilation translated in Castile after 1256 (although they form a very small part of the 235 pages of text in the modern edition).¹² Some examples of these magical operations designed to cause impotence are:

⁶ ‘scientia secretorum que exaltat hominem inter magnates et facit, eius quantum ad corpus, quasi habere iam principium paradisi’ quoted in Paolo Lucentini, ‘L’ermetismo magico nel secolo XIII’, in Menso Folkerts and Richard Lorch, ed., *Sic Itur ad Astra: Studien zur Geschichte der Mathematik und Naturwissenschaften* (Wiesbaden, 2000), p. 421

⁷ Pingree, ‘Diffusion’, pp. 58-9

⁸ Charles Burnett, ‘Arabic, Greek and Latin Works on Astrological Magic Attributed to Aristotle’, in J. Kraye, W. F. Ryan and C. B. Schmitt, ed., *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages* (London, 1987), repr. in *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 1996), p. 87; David Pingree, ‘Some of the Sources of the Ghāyat al-Hakīm’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 43, 1980, p. 2

⁹ Francis J. Carmody, ed., *The Astronomical Works of Thābit b. Qurra*, (Berkeley, 1960)

¹⁰ BL MS Sloane 3883, ff. 96r-99

¹¹ BL MS Harley 80, ff. 76r-77v, and Paris BN MS lat. 17178, ff. 33r-35v

¹² *Picatrix: the Latin Version of the Ghayat Al-Hakim*, ed. David Pingree (London, 1986), pp. 11, 13, 80, 155, 231

‘When you wish to bind a man or woman, make an image of a man whose feet are raised to the heavens and whose head is in the ground. This should be made of wax, saying “I have bound N. son of such-and-such a woman, and all his veins, until he does not have a man’s desire.” [This is the formula given by BN MS lat. 17178. BL MS Harley 80 substitutes ‘daughter’ for ‘son’, and so reads: “I have bound N. daughter of such-and-such a woman, and all her veins, until she does not have desire for a man.”] After that, bury the image in his path, and he will not use a woman for as long as the image lasts. And it is said by some that this image is made under the second decan of Aries.’¹³ Pseudo-Ptolemy, *Opus Imaginum*

‘So that a man does not desire a woman. When you want to do this, take half a drachm each of the brain of a black cat and mandrake seed. Mix these two together and blend them very well. Afterwards make an image of wax, and make a hole in the top of the head, through which you force the abovementioned mixture. Then make an iron needle, and push that needle into the image, in the place where he enjoys a woman. Then take four drachms of pig’s blood, two drachms of hare’s rennet and swallow’s brain, and a pound each of sheep’s milk and myrtle sap. Mix all of the above together, and give as a drink it to him whose desire for a woman you wish to take away, and fumigate him [his image] with two drachms each of incense and galbanum mixed together. And what you wish will happen.’ *Picatrix*.¹⁴

Another work, the *Book of Angels, Rings, Characters and Images of the Planets*, which survives in a fifteenth-century manuscript, invokes both celestial spirits and angels. It contains two long spells that can be used to inflict various kinds of harm on an enemy, including impotence. The first involves fumigating and burying a wax image after invoking the ‘wrathful and unquiet’ spirits of Saturn. The second requires the practitioner to write out a numerical magic square on lead on a Monday, fumigate it, and bury it in a grave.¹⁵

¹³ ‘Cum volueris ligare virum aut mulierem fiat omaga viri cuius pedes erigantur ad celum et capud sit in terra. Hec autem sit de cera [BN MS: terra], dicendo “Ligavi N filium [BL MS: filiam] huius mulieris et universas venas eius quousque non habeat voluntatem viri.” Post hec abhumetur omaga in itinere eius et non utetur muliere quamdiu duraverit omaga. Et dicitur a quibusdam [BL MS: quoddam] quod hec omaga fit sub secunda facie Alhamel.’ Paris BN MS lat. 17178, f. 35v, and London BL MS Harley 80, f. 77v. I am grateful to Charles Burnett for this reference.

¹⁴ ‘Ut vir non habeat desiderium mulieris. Cum autem hoc facere volueris, recipe cerebri catti nigri et granorum mandragore ana 3 β. Ista duo simul misce et optime incorpora. Postea facias ymaginem de cera, et in summitate ipsius capitis foramen facias, per quod predictam confectionem proicias. Deinde facias unam acum ferream, et in ymagine (videlicet in loco ubi delectacio mulieris est), ipsum acum imprime. Deinde recipe sanguinis porci 3 iiii, coaguli leporis, cerebri hirundinum ana 3 ii, lactis pecudis et succi myrti ana libram unam. Omnia vero supradicta insimul misce; et cui desiderium mulieris auferre volueris, dabis sibi in potu, et ipsum cum incensi et galbani ana 3 ii simul mixtis suffumiga. Et fiet quod volueris.’ *Picatrix*, p. 155

¹⁵ Juris G. Lidaka, ‘The *Book of Angels, Rings, Characters, and Images of the Planets* Attributed to Osbert Bokenham’, in Claire Fanger, ed., *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic* (Stroud, 1998), pp. 58-60 and 72

In addition to these examples where impotence is mentioned specifically, the image-magic texts refer more often to causing separation, hate or discord, which might include impotence. For example, the book of images attributed to Thâbit ibn Qurra notes that doing the opposite of a love spell will separate lovers.¹⁶ In a text attributed to Hermes, an 'image of separation and binding and sickness and destruction' can be made under the influence of the eleventh mansion of the moon.¹⁷ The *Book of Images of the Moon*, included by Michael Scot in his beginners' guide to astrology, the *Liber Introductorius*, often contrasts 'every good thing, such as love and concord' with 'every bad thing, such as hate and discord' as the two possible results of a magical process, depending on the position of the moon at the time.¹⁸

Some image-magic texts also suggested ways of curing magically caused impotence. *Picatrix* contains a magical process for this purpose, which involves making images of a man in red wax and a woman in white wax, bearing the names of the couple you want to reunite, at the right astrological moment. The images are then joined together in an embrace, fumigated and bathed in rose water. 'If someone who is bound so that he cannot act with a woman carries the images with him, he will be freed and will be able to lie with a woman.'¹⁹ Another impotence cure is found in a manuscript of magical recipes and works on images copied in around 1510.²⁰

Other magical texts translated from Arabic worked on slightly different principles from image magic. One of these was the *Liber Antimaquis* attributed to Aristotle, a text which survives in only one manuscript in an incomplete version, but which was translated from a longer Arabic original. The magic in this text relies on the principle that man is a microcosm of the universe, and so has the power to manipulate nature and, like the image-magic texts, it uses natural objects to channel celestial powers.²¹ It contains one procedure to cause impotence:

¹⁶ 'Cum volueris separare duos, facies econtrario precedentis operis compositionem.' Carmody, p. 191

¹⁷ 'fac ymaginem separacionis et alligacionis et infirmitatis et destructionis.' Ps-Hermes, *Liber Imaginum translatus ab Hermete*, BL MS Harley 80, f. 78r

¹⁸ 'omnis boni, ut ad amorem et concordiam' ; 'omnis mali, ut ad odium et discordiam.' Lucentini, p. 445

¹⁹ 'Quod si aliquis ligatus, qui non possit cum muliere agere, secum dictas ymagines portaverit, dissolvetur et cum muliere iacere poterit.' *Picatrix*, p. 231

²⁰ Charles Burnett, 'The Conte de Sarzana Magical Manuscript', in *Magic and Divination* article IX, p. 6.

²¹ Charles Burnett, ed., *Liber Antimaquis*, in *Hermes Latinus 4.4, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 144C* (Turnhout, 2001), pp. 179-83

‘In the climate of Saturn, to bind someone take the blood of a wolf, the brain of a cow, and the blood of a black cat, and mix them in equal amounts. And if you give it to a man or woman, they will not be able to have sex. The cure is made through the help of Venus or Mars. Take equal amounts of the castor-oil plant, the bile of a black cat, a wolf’s eye and also a female gazelle’s, [there may be a lacuna in the text here] and mix in ^{the} same amount of bats’ blood.’²²

Not surprisingly, magical rituals such as the examples quoted above were problematic for many medieval writers. Certain twelfth-century writers, and later Michael Scot, and Albertus Magnus in his *De Mineralibus*, believed that at least some inscribed images drew on purely natural powers put into the cosmos by God, and therefore that it was legitimate to use them.²³ However, other writers, like Thomas Aquinas, claimed that engraved images had no power to produce effects in themselves, and merely acted as signs for demons, who then produced the desired effect.²⁴ The difficulty of assessing whether image magic was legitimate or not was compounded by the differences between individual texts. The *Speculum Astronomiae*, written before 1270,²⁵ attempted to divide the acceptable from the unacceptable. It was often attributed to Albertus Magnus in the Middle Ages, but this attribution only seems to date from the early fourteenth century,²⁶ and Roger Bacon and Richard de Fournival have also been suggested as its authors.²⁷

Whoever the author was, he divided image magic into three categories. The first was ‘abominable’, and ‘demands suffumigations and invocations.’ An example of this would be the ritual in the *Book of Angels* that called on the spirits of Saturn. For the author of the *Speculum* these rituals were idolatry, because they showed reverence to demons which should be shown only to God. The second was ‘somewhat less

²² ‘In climate Saturni ad ligandum recipe sanguinem lupi, cerebrum uacce, sanguinem mureligi nigri, commisce equaliter. Et si dederis uiro uel mulieri non poterit coire. Remedium fiat per Veneris auxilium uel Martis. Item accipe palmam Christi, mureligi nigri fel, lupi oculum, buffale <...> ana et tantumdem sanguinem uespertilionis commisce.’ *Liber Antimaquis*, p. 213

²³ On twelfth-century writers: Charles Burnett, ‘Talismans: Magic as Science? Necromancy among the Seven Liberal Arts’, in *Magic and Divination* article I; on Albertus: Nicolas Weill-Parot, *Les ‘Images Astrologiques’ au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance: Spéculations Intellectuelles et Pratiques Magiques* (Paris, 2002), pp. 264-72; on Michael Scot: Lucentini, pp. 422-3

²⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* trans. by the Dominican Friars from the English-Speaking Provinces (London, 1968), vol. 40, 2a2ae, qu. 96, art. 2. The opinions of various medieval writers on the subject are summarized by Brian Copenhaver, ‘Scholastic Philosophy and Renaissance Magic in the *De Vita* of Marsilio Ficino’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 37, 1984, pp. 531-8

²⁵ The date of the *Speculum* is much debated: Weill-Parot, pp. 27-33, 39

²⁶ For two different views, see Paola Zambelli, *The ‘Speculum Astronomiae’ and its Enigma* (Boston, 1992), and Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, *Le ‘Speculum Astronomiae’, une énigme? Enquête sur les manuscrits* (Turnhout, 2001), p. 60

unsuitable ([but it is] nevertheless detestable), which is effected by means of inscribing characters which are to be exorcized with certain names.' These inscribed characters and names were not necessarily idolatrous, but there was always a risk that the names in question might be the names of demons.²⁸ An example of this might be the cure for magically-caused impotence found in one manuscript of the treatise *Remedies Against Magic*, which will be discussed more fully in chapter 8, which involved writing the 'characters' 'ha. ha. at.' on a sword.²⁹ The third category consisted of acceptable astronomical images, which relied solely on natural powers and did not involve invocations or inscribed characters.³⁰ Paolo Lucentini has suggested recently that the *Speculum* marks a new development in the categorization of image magic. While earlier authors like William of Auvergne and Michael Scot had not attempted to distinguish between the different types of image magic, the author of the *Speculum* distinguished natural images from demonic ones for the first time, in an attempt to save the 'science of images' as a whole from accusations of being demonic.³¹ However, as Nicolas Weill-Parot has pointed out, the categories are not watertight: the two image-magic texts that the author of the *Speculum* concedes are licit, are not fundamentally different from those he condemns.³²

The goals of image magic also caused some writers concern. These included destroying enemies, or a city or region, causing love or hate between people, seeing wonders, finding hidden treasure, keeping away snakes and other pests, and gaining hidden knowledge. While not all of these goals were intrinsically bad, and some could be seen as beneficial, others could be seen as indicating image magic's demonic nature. William of Auvergne certainly took the goals of the processes found in books of magic as evidence that the magic was performed by demons, and among these goals he included causing impotence:

'For who, unless he was lost and wholly given to vices and sins, would listen to someone who asked him to inflame a chaste man or woman to lust? Who would not avert his ears from someone who asked him to kill an innocent

²⁷ Bruno Roy, 'Richard de Fournival, auteur du *Speculum Astronomiae*?' *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 67, 2000, pp. 159-180

²⁸ *Speculum Astronomiae*, ed. Stefano Caroti, Michela Pereira, Stefano Zamponi and Paola Zambelli (Pisa, 1977), pp. 27-8. Translation from Zambelli, *The 'Speculum Astronomiae'*, p. 241

²⁹ 'Accipe ensem incidentem ex utroque latere, et scribe in puncto ex utroque latere hos karateres: ha. ha. at.' See Appendix 1, Part 4.

³⁰ *Speculum Astronomiae*, p. 32; trans. in Zambelli, p. 247

³¹ Lucentini, p. 428

³² Weill-Parot, p. 85

man, or bind him so that he could not walk, or kill the animals of another man by force, or make his fields barren, *or bind the husband of some woman, or a wife?* What person, even the worst, would listen to someone who asked for such things? But it is clear from their books that they [magicians] perform their prayers and commands and abominable sacrifices in order to obtain these things from such spirits.³³

William argued that since most people would not do these things, then heavenly spirits certainly would not. Only a demon would be willing to grant such requests.

As well as magic derived from Arabic sources, there also existed magical works that were produced in a Christian context. A group of works known as the *Ars Notoria* promised the operator knowledge of all the liberal arts and certain intellectual skills such as eloquence if he followed an elaborate system of prayers and meditations on certain diagrams.³⁴ A variant was the *Sworn Book* of Honorius, perhaps written in the first half of the thirteenth century.³⁵ Although none of the surviving manuscripts of this text is complete, the contents list survives.³⁶ Neither the *Ars Notoria* nor the *Sworn Book* mentioned causing impotence, however. In addition to these texts, which offered the practitioner knowledge or mystical experiences, there were also works of necromancy that used procedures based on Christian ritual to invoke demons to do the magician's bidding. One of these, surviving in a fifteenth-century manuscript, has been edited by Richard Kieckhefer.³⁷ This work contains rituals for a wide variety of goals, including love magic, but it only contains one brief reference to causing impotence, in a section on astral image magic, where it says that the eleventh hour of

³³ 'Quis enim, nisi perditus et vitiis atque peccatis totus deditus, audiret aliquem petentem ab eo, ut inflammaret castum virum, vel castam mulierem, ad libidinem? Quis aures non averteret a poscente se, ut occideret unum hominem innocentem, vel ligaret, ne ambulare posset, vel vi animalia alterius hominis occideret aut agros eius steriles faceret, aut maritum mulieris alicuius, vel uxorem ligaret? Quis etiam pessimus petentem talia exaudiret? Manifestum est autem ex libris eorum, quia preces et adiurationes et nephanda eorum sacrificia pro huiusmodi rebus a talibus impetrandis spiritibus fiunt. Si autem in eis qui terram inhabitant, bonis hominibus, iste nequitie locum non habent, quanto minus in eis qui celos inhabitant, et nomine deorum isti honorandos putant, talia inveniri impossibile est?'

William of Auvergne, *De Universo* 2.3.6, in *Opera* vol. 1, p. 1026

³⁴ Claire Fanger, 'Plundering the Egyptian Treasure: John the Monk's *Book of Visions* and its Relation to the *Ars Notoria* of Solomon', in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits*, p. 216. Jean-Patrice Boudet argues that the *Ars notoria* emerged in western Europe in the twelfth century: 'L'*Ars Notoria* au Moyen Age: une résurgence de la théurgie antique?', in Alain Moreau and Jean-Claude Turpin, ed., *La Magie: Actes du Colloque International de Montpellier* vol. 3 (Montpellier, 2000), pp. 173-91.

³⁵ On this text, see Robert Mathiesen, 'A Thirteenth-Century Ritual to Attain the Beatific Vision from the *Sworn Book* of Honorius of Thebes', in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits*, pp. 143-50

³⁶ BL MS Sloane 3854, ff. 113r-v.

³⁷ Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: a Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (Stroud, 1997)

the day is the time 'to bind a man with a woman or vice versa'.³⁸ However, it is quite possible that other similar works might say more about impotence magic.

Natural Magic

At the same time as the magical texts were being translated, some medieval writers were developing a new category of magic: 'natural magic'. Natural magic was not performed by demons, but instead relied on hidden or 'occult' forces in objects. These forces did not work according to the usual categories of medieval science, which explained the properties of an object according to the four qualities: heat, cold, moisture and dryness. Hidden or occult properties might derive from celestial influences (in which they resembled image magic),³⁹ but they could also rely on symbolic connections between objects, which is known as sympathetic magic.⁴⁰ Thus the testicles of an animal associated with sex or fertility, such as a deer or hare, might be used to cure impotence. In its use of the occult properties of natural objects, natural magic overlapped with medicine, which also used natural substances to affect the human body,⁴¹ especially as some medical texts, such as Peter of Spain's *Thesaurus Pauperum*, recommended sympathetic remedies to cure impotence (see below, ch. 8). Even the power of words to affect the world around them could sometimes be classed as natural magic (for example, by Roger Bacon), although many writers, following St Augustine, saw this as a form of demonic magic.⁴² Many readers of image-magic texts seem to have viewed them as natural rather than demonic magic: those texts which do not explicitly invoke demons are usually found bound with works on medicine and the natural world, rather than with texts of demonic magic.⁴³

Several works containing information on the occult properties of natural objects were translated into Latin in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, such as Costa ben Luca's *Physical Ligatures*, which discussed the medical uses of amulets, and the *Kyranides*, the ancient treatise on amulets and the properties of plants, stones and birds and fish

³⁸ 'Undecima hora diei dicitur Nathalon. In ea operari poteris... ad ligandum virum cum muliere vel e contrario.' Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, p. 307

³⁹ Copenhaver, p. 539

⁴⁰ Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 13

⁴¹ Sophie Page, *Magic at St Augustine's, Canterbury, in the Late Middle Ages*, PhD Thesis, Warburg Institute, University of London, 2000, p. 46

⁴² Claire Fanger, 'Things Done Wisely by a Wise Enchanter: Negotiating the Power of Words in the Thirteenth Century', *Esoterica* (Electronic Journal, <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/main.html>), 1, 1999, p. 111

discussed in chapter 1, which was translated from Greek in 1169. Like the image-magic texts, these works could be used as sources of information about magic and impotence: the theologian John Quidort or John of Paris (c.1295) quoted a passage from *Physical Ligatures* where Costa claimed to have cured a case of supposedly magical impotence,⁴⁴ and the medical writer Peter of Spain included many aphrodisiacs from the *Kyranides* in his compendium, the *Thesaurus Pauperum*.

Despite the acceptance of amulets in the *Thesaurus Pauperum* and other medical texts, however, natural magic was potentially problematic, because there was no foolproof way of distinguishing a legitimate use of an occult but natural power from a sign to demons.⁴⁵ As will be discussed in chapter 5, several pastoral writers and theologians thought that the occult powers in stones and herbs were demonic. William of Auvergne was similarly suspicious of the marvellous power of mercury to keep away demons: 'But in the case of mercury, what power can be thought of, by which it prevents the incantations and illusions of evil spirits?... It does not seem to be able to do anything against evil spirits, or against the things which are done in this way by incantations.'⁴⁶ He was especially suspicious because these marvels came from Hermetic literature and Hermes, he said, was known to have been deceived by demons.⁴⁷ Elsewhere in his works, however, William explicitly used the term 'natural magic', and gave it a positive sense, arguing that some occult virtues in plants, stones and animals were natural. The example that he chose to illustrate this point is one that appeared as an impotence cure in the *Pantegni* (discussed in ch. 2): 'For in one of the books of the Hebrews, it is expressly written that one of the holy angels said that the smoke of the heart of a certain fish, put on coals, drives away all kinds of demon, either from a man or a woman. And it is clear that this book is as authoritative for the Jewish people as for the Christian people.'⁴⁸

⁴³ Frank Klaasen, 'English Manuscripts of Magic, 1300-1500: a Preliminary Survey', in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits*, p. 4

⁴⁴ John Quidort's passage is discussed below, ch. 7. Costa's description of the case is quoted above, ch. 2.

⁴⁵ Steven P. Marrone, 'William of Auvergne on Magic in Natural Philosophy and Theology', in Jan A. Aertsen and Andreas Speer, ed., *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?* (Berlin, 1998), p. 747

⁴⁶ 'De argento vero vivo, que virtus cogitari potest, per quam incantationes, et prestigia spirituum malignorum prohibeat? ...nec in malignos spiritus, nec in res, que huiusmodi incantationibus adhibentur, quicquam posse videatur.' William of Auvergne, *De Universo* II.3.22, p. 1060

⁴⁷ 'quem constat deceptum fuisse mirabiliter ab ipsis malignis spiritibus.' *ibid*, p. 1060

⁴⁸ 'In uno namque ex libris Hebreorum expresse legitur, dixisse quendam ex sanctis angelis: quia fumus cordis cuiusdam piscis positi super carbones exterminat omne genus demoniorum, sive a viro, sive a muliere. Et manifestum est, quod liber iste authenticus est tam apud gentem Hebreorum, quam apud gentem Christianorum.' *ibid*, p. 1060

Albertus Magnus also gave a positive view of natural magic in his non-theological works. As well as giving a natural explanation for the power of engraved gems in *De Mineralibus*, in his *De Animalibus*, Albertus listed some remedies based on animal parts which relied on their hidden powers. For example, ‘if someone carries with him the teeth, skin and eyes of a wolf, he will be victorious at court if he has a lawyer and he will be rich among all nations.’ It was also possible to use these powers to cause impotence: ‘If the penis of a wolf has the name of a man or woman tied to it, he or she will not be able to have intercourse until the knot is undone.’⁴⁹ I have not been able to identify a source for this prescription, but it is not unique to Albertus: the *Book of Medical Experiences* attributed to the twelfth-century Jewish physician Abraham ibn Ezra, attributed the same process to ‘the wise Solomon’, perhaps the title of a book.⁵⁰ Did these count as demonic magic, or did they rely on some natural but occult power inherent in the wolf? Albertus did not say, but he did not condemn them as he condemned necromancy (*necromantia*) and the making of images (*de factis imaginum*) in his theological sentence commentary, even allowing for the fact that Albertus sometimes expressed different views in his scientific works and in his theological ones.⁵¹ For Albertus, image-magic and necromancy were likely to involve demons, whereas carrying animal parts and even engraving gems was simply harnessing the God-given powers of nature.

The Influence of the Magical Texts on Thirteenth-Century Discussions of Magic and Impotence

Although impotence was not a major concern of the newly translated magical texts, Albertus Magnus found enough information about impotence in them to include them in his theological discussion of impotence magic (see chapter 7). In applying the kinds of magic found in the magical texts to traditional discussions of impotence magic, Albertus seems to have been conflating existing forms of popular magic with

⁴⁹ Albertus Magnus, *On Animals* vol. 2, trans. Kenneth F. Kitchell Jr. and Irvn Michael Resnick (Baltimore, 1999), pp. 1519-20

⁵⁰ ‘And he [the wise Solomon] said: if you take the penis of a wolf and bind it in [or to] the name of the woman, then no man will be able to copulate with her until this knot is unbound from the male organs of a bear or wolf.’ J. O. Leibowitz and S. Marcus, ed. and trans., *Sefer Hanisyonot: the Book of Medical Experiences Attributed to Abraham ibn Ezra* (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 247-9. Leibowitz and Marcus suggest that ‘the wise Solomon’ is in fact the name of a book, p. 74.

⁵¹ ‘For if, perchance, we should have any opinion of our own, this would be proffered by us (God willing), in the theological works rather than in those on physics.’ Quoted in Edward Synan, ‘Introduction’, in James A. Weisheipl, ed., *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences: Commemorative Essays 1980* (Toronto, 1980), p. 10

the new procedures found in the magical texts, despite the fact that these two forms of magical practice were not entirely the same. This conflation of new texts and traditional magic can also be seen in the works of William of Auvergne, although not with regard to impotence. William named old women as the people most likely to make magical images. This was not impossible, because making images was part of non-learned as well as learned magic, and a woman and her son were tried for driving stakes into the image of an enemy in tenth-century England.⁵² However, William seems to have conflated this kind of image-magic with the sort that he had read about in the Arabic image-magic texts, where images were infused with heavenly power by a series of rituals:

‘The third kind of idols or images was, according to their opinion, the “factitious” god, that is, [images] in which a certain godly splendour and numinous power is infused or imprinted; and this either by heavenly spirits, or by the heavens themselves, and the stars, and the heavenly bodies, when according to their observations they are melted or sculpted or constructed under [the influence of] certain times and constellations. The remains of this error survive still among many old women, even Christians.’⁵³

Old women might make images, and even make them at particular astrological times, but the idea that spirits or the heavens infused those images with power came from the newly translated Arabic texts. It was not a remnant of paganism which had hung on among the uneducated, as William implies here.

William of Auvergne and Albertus Magnus’s application of their knowledge of Arabic image magic to impotence was not entirely unfounded, because impotence was mentioned in image-magic texts; but there were also real differences between the contents of the magical texts and the little that can be known of the reality of impotence magic. Firstly, the new magical texts would only have been accessible to those who were literate in Latin, which would rule out most of the old women and jealous ex-mistresses who were associated with causing and curing impotence. It is possible that those who wished to make their ex-lovers impotent could have gone to a learned magician: the author of a Franciscan sermon-collection of around 1300 described how a fellow friar, before he entered the order, was approached by a peasant

⁵² Jane Crawford, ‘Evidences for Witchcraft in Anglo-Saxon England’, *Medium Aevum* 23, 1963, p. 113

⁵³ ‘Tertium genus idolorum, seu imaginum erat secundum opinionem eorum Deus factitius, hoc est, cui velut splendor quidam deitatis, et virtus numinis infundebatur, seu imprimebatur; et hoc vel a spiritibus celestibus, vel ab ipsis celis, et stellis, ac luminaribus, et hoc cum iuxta observationes eorum sub certis

who asked him to do love magic involving demons and magic circles.⁵⁴ However, the two ‘professionals’ who appear in impotence-magic trials, Margot de la Barre in 1390 and Matteuccia di Francesco in 1428, were not accused of using astral images or magic circles. Margot was accused of gathering herbs on St John’s Eve, making them into garlands, and throwing them under the afflicted couple’s feet as they danced at their wedding. Matteuccia told the young man who wanted to make his lover’s new husband impotent to extinguish a candle at their wedding and say an incantation.⁵⁵

Secondly, as the cases of Margot de la Barre and Matteuccia di Francesco indicate, the processes in the image-magic texts have little in common with the accounts of impotence magic found in other sources. The image-magic texts describe complex operations. They often take into account the positions of the stars, and require the writing of certain characters, and fumigations with sometimes exotic ingredients (*Picatrix*’s galbanum, for instance, came from the Middle East). Non-learned magical practitioners could and did use incantations and written charms, but what we know of impotence spells from anecdotes and case records is different from what is found in the image-magic texts. They are much simpler, and the materials they used were easily available. In addition to the 1390 and 1428 cases, the pastoral writer Thomas of Chobham referred to a lock being thrown down a well, and several Scandinavian trials that mention magic impotence describe the use of bread, peas, a sword, urine, an ox-horn and a cat’s head.⁵⁶ Even the child’s head allegedly buried under the couple’s bed in the story told by Master Odo (see above, ch. 3) was not impossible to obtain, especially given high rates of infant mortality.

There were thus important differences between the new Arabic magic, and the more widespread magic already existing in Western Europe. However, the two kinds of magic were linked by three factors, which meant that they could be conflated, and that magical texts could be applied to discussions of impotence magic. Firstly, drawing on

horis, et constellationibus, vel fundebatur, vel sculpebatur, vel fabricabatur, cuius erroris velut reliquie adhuc apud vetulas multas etiam Christianas extant.’ William of Auvergne, *De Legibus* ch. 23, p. 65

⁵⁴ ‘Ad idem facit quod retulit quidam frater noster qui cum esset in seculo quidam rusticus venit ad eum rogans ut faceret suis incantationibus quod haberet quandam aliam rusticam in uxorem...’ Birmingham University Library MS 6/iii/19, f. 13v. I am grateful to David d’Avray for this reference.

⁵⁵ H. Duplès-Agier, ed., *Registre Criminel du Châtelet de Paris de 6 Septembre 1389 au 18 Mai 1392*, vol. 1, (Paris, 1861), pp. 341-2; Domenico Mammoli, ‘The Record of the Trial and Condemnation of a Witch, Matteuccia di Francesco, at Todi, 20 March 1428’, *Res Tudertinae* 14, 1972, pp. 16-17

⁵⁶ Thomas of Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, ed. F. Broomfield (Louvain, 1968), p. 184, quoted below, ch. 5; Stephen A. Mitchell, ‘Anaphrodisiac Charms in the Nordic Middle Ages: Impotence, Infertility, and Magic’, *Norveg: Tidsskrift for Folkloristikk* 41, 1998, pp. 22-4

St Augustine, theologians who wrote about magic insisted that all magic was performed by demons, whether or not it invoked them explicitly. Thus the invocation of celestial spirits was on a fundamental level the same as throwing a lock down a well: both were signs to demons to bring about the desired result. Secondly, the two kinds of magic sought many of the same ends, such as love, success, information, and harm to enemies. Thirdly, some of the techniques used were superficially similar: both learned and popular magic employed images, incantations and writing, but the magic of the magical texts usually used these in more complicated ways. Perhaps because they thought that the similarities outweighed the differences, Albertus and William did not distinguish between the two kinds of magic. In the later Middle Ages, some theologians and canonists conflated the two more and more, and this conflation contributed to the development of witch persecutions in the later Middle Ages.⁵⁷

Albertus Magnus and William of Auvergne were profoundly influenced by their reading of magical texts, but they do not seem to have been representative of thirteenth-century theologians in general. As will be seen in chapter 7, the information from magical texts which Albertus Magnus included in his sentence commentary in the section on magic impotence was only taken up by one later author, whose sentence commentary survives in BN MS lat. 10640, who mentioned some learned magical techniques like invocation, sacrifices and the use of characters. One explanation for this relative lack of interest might be that the magical texts did not circulate widely. Few theologians cited the newly translated magical texts attributed to Hermes, for example.⁵⁸ However, limited circulation is unlikely to be the only explanation for the lack of references to magical texts in theological works, because some image-magic texts had a relatively wide circulation. Although very few manuscripts survive from earlier than the fourteenth century, some works survive in relatively large numbers of manuscripts thereafter: the book of images of the moon attributed to Belenus survives in seventeen manuscripts, for example, and the work on the images of the twenty-four hours of the day in eighteen manuscripts.⁵⁹ In a survey

⁵⁷ Bailey, 'From Sorcery', p. 965

⁵⁸ I am grateful to David Porreca for showing me his database (in progress) of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century citations of Hermetic literature.

⁵⁹ Paolo Lucentini and Vittoria Perrone Compagni, *I Testi e I Codici di Ermete nel Medioevo* (Florence, 2001), pp. 72-3, 75-6

of British manuscripts, Frank Klaasen identified 28 codices dating from before 1500 containing texts on magical images.⁶⁰

It seems more likely that many theologians did not see the magical texts as relevant to their discussions of impotence magic, even if they had read them. As will be seen in chapter 7, Thomas Aquinas knew something about image magic and the *Ars Notoria* because he discussed them in his *Summa Theologica*; but he did not refer to them in the context of magic impotence (although since his sentence commentary is an earlier work than the *Summa Theologica*, it is possible that he only encountered them later). The same seems to be true of the medical writers: quite a few physicians were interested in magical images, as is shown by the debates about the legitimacy of astrological seals, which occurred among Jewish and Christian physicians at Montpellier around 1300.⁶¹ However, apart from the remedies that Peter of Spain copied from the *Kyranides*, the newly translated magical texts seem to have had little influence on medical discussions of how to cure impotence magic. These discussions relied heavily on just three sources: the *Pantegni*, Gilbertus Anglicus, and Peter of Spain. Thus not all writers were prepared to conflate popular and learned forms of magic in the way that Albertus Magnus and William of Auvergne did.

Conclusion

The translation of magical texts in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries vastly increased the amount of information that writers about magic and impotence could draw on if they wished. Most of them did not use this information, but a few did. As will be argued in chapter 7, these magical texts led Albertus Magnus to break away from the theologians' traditional, canon-law-dominated approach to impotence magic and ask new questions. The magical texts also stimulated new concerns that all magic was demonic, which contributed to the development of the image of the witch during the later Middle Ages. In turn, this image eventually came to be reflected in discussions of magic and impotence: the theologian John Major, writing shortly after 1500, drew on witchcraft theory to argue that all magic was demonic. However, witchcraft theory was several times removed from the texts that arrived in the Latin west in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and it incorporated information from a variety of sources.

⁶⁰ Klaasen, p. 26, n. 4

⁶¹ Joseph Shatzmiller, 'In Search of the "Book of Figures": Medicine and Astrology in Montpellier at the Turn of the Fourteenth Century', *Association of Jewish Studies Review* 8, 1983, pp. 383-407

Although the magical texts eventually contributed to ideas about witchcraft, the use of the texts themselves among writers about magic and impotence was limited. It is possible that many authors had not read magical texts, but they may also not have found their contents useful when discussing magic impotence. It is also interesting that pastoral literature and canon law, which were designed to influence laypeople's lives more directly, did not mention learned magic at all in the context of magic and impotence. Perhaps authors in these disciplines were aware that this was not what most of the laity were doing. Moreover, as pastoral literature and canon law show clearly, writers about impotence magic had an alternative source of information in the pastoral movement. Pastoral information was probably easy to come by, whereas authors would have to make a special effort to procure and read a magical text. Stories about learned demonic magic did circulate in Paris,⁶² but so did stories about what fellow clerics had heard in confession.⁶³ Moreover, reading magical texts was a suspect activity, which a theologian, canonist or pastoral writer might not want to admit to, while information heard in confession did not have the same problems attached. Magical texts had a crucial influence on Albertus Magnus, and the questions they prompted him to ask became part of theological discussions of magic and impotence. However, it is not surprising that the pastoral movement was usually the preferred source of information.

⁶² David d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 198-202

⁶³ Alexander Murray, 'Confession as a Historical Source in the Thirteenth Century', in R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, ed., *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1981), p. 285

Chapter 5

‘Everywhere on Earth, Certain Idolatries Reign’: Pastoral Literature, 1200-1400

The driving force behind most thirteenth-century discussions of magic and impotence was not the newly translated magical texts, but the church's growing interest in pastoral care. Some churchmen had always been interested in regulating the conduct of the laity, including two early writers on impotence magic, Hincmar of Rheims and Burchard of Worms, but in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the need to reform the system of pastoral care came to seem more pressing. There were several reasons for this. One was the demographic and economic expansion of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Population growth and the development of towns put new strains on the parish system and forced the church to tailor its message to increasingly distinct social groups.¹ Secondly, political, social and cultural changes followed on from the economic ones. The development of ecclesiastical as well as secular governmental machinery increased the church's power to influence the lives of the faithful, and the Gregorian reform of the eleventh century gave churchmen the confidence to develop and use this power. Canon law was intensively studied and refined, and during the twelfth and later centuries, successive popes tried to make people follow it, in areas like marriage.² There were also other reasons why the church was becoming increasingly concerned about lay beliefs and morals. The loss of Jerusalem to the Muslims in 1187 was widely blamed on the sins of Christendom; heresy had broken out on a larger scale than before, in the form of the Cathars and the Waldensians; and religious movements run by laypeople were on the rise.³ Once the pastoral movement began, it also brought home to some clerics that even orthodox laypeople could come up with distinctly unorthodox ideas. A famous case is that recounted by the thirteenth-century Dominican Stephen of Bourbon, who encountered villagers in the Auvergne who venerated a dog as a saint.⁴

By the end of the twelfth century, these factors had created a climate right for concerns about pastoral care, and these concerns found some of their earliest spokesmen in a group of theologians at the University of Paris. Led by Peter the

¹ André Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages* (English edn., Notre Dame and London, 1993), p. 103

² James Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1987), p. 332

³ Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy* (Oxford, 1989), p. 490

⁴ Jean-Claude Schmitt, *The Holy Greyhound* (English edn., Cambridge, 1983)

Chanter (d. 1197), they applied moral theology to what people actually did. The Chanter's works were full of individual case studies which referred to practical, contemporary issues, such as marriage, trade and usury.⁵ Many of the writers who discussed magic and impotence in the early thirteenth century came *L from* Peter the Chanter's circle, including Robert of Flamborough and Thomas of Chobham, who wrote confession manuals, and the theologians Robert of Courson and Geoffrey of Poitiers. Several members of Peter's circle also went on to promote their reforming ideas from influential positions in the church. These included Robert of Courson, who became a cardinal and papal legate; the archbishop of Canterbury Stephen Langton; the preachers Fulk of Neuilly, Jacques de Vitry and Raoul Ardent;⁶ and probably Pope Innocent III,⁷ who put some of Peter's ideas into practice when he set out a programme of church reform and pastoral education at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.

The Fourth Lateran Council did not transform the church overnight, but it did re-emphasize that one of the church's main priorities was the pastoral care of the laity.⁸ First, priests had to be given the opportunity to reach their flocks, so the Council ruled that all laypeople had to go to confession at least once a year, and enforced this with strict sanctions which had an impact.⁹ Secondly, the priests had to be educated, if they were to exercise their pastoral responsibilities effectively. The Council instructed bishops to provide competent men to preach and hear confessions, and to appoint someone to teach the Bible to priests, with a special emphasis on the cure of souls,¹⁰ but it was not particularly successful in enforcing this. In practice, much preaching and hearing of confessions was done by the new orders of friars (who were not mentioned by the Council), especially in the towns,¹¹ and pastoral writers continued to complain about the parish clergy's ignorance for the rest of the Middle Ages.¹²

⁵ John W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants: the Social Views of Peter the Chanter and his Circle*, vol. 1 (Princeton, 1970), p. xi

⁶ Baldwin, pp. 17-18

⁷ Morris, p. 436

⁸ Morris, p. 438

⁹ Morris, p. 437; Alexander Murray, 'Piety and Impiety in Thirteenth-Century Italy', *Studies in Church History* 8, 1972, p. 94

¹⁰ Morris, p. 437

¹¹ Morris, p. 460

¹² Vauchez, p. 101; Joseph Goering, *William de Montibus (c.1140-1213): the Schools and the Literature of Pastoral Care* (Toronto, 1992), p. 61; Leonard Boyle, 'The Oculus Sacerdotis and Some Other Works of William of Pagula', reprinted in *Pastoral Care, Clerical Education and Canon Law, 1200-1400* (London, 1981), p. 86

Another solution to the problem of clerical education was to provide text-books. After the twelfth century's advances in theology and canon law, the early medieval manuals aimed at instructing the clergy, such as Hrabanus Maurus's ninth-century *De Institutione Clericorum*, now seemed out of date. This need gave rise to a new genre of literature to summarize theology and canon law, which one recent historian, Leonard Boyle, has termed *pastoralia*. These began to appear in the late twelfth century,¹³ and usually took the form of guides to the hearing of confessions, setting out what priests should ask about, how they should give advice, and what penances they should give. The manuals might also include examples of cases, drawn from the author's own experience, or from what he had read or heard. Although they were aimed at the parish clergy as a whole, these manuals were probably initially read by friars, and by students in the cathedral schools, who knew enough Latin to follow them.¹⁴

Although they devoted much of their space to summarizing contemporary canon law and theology (which will be covered in detail in the next two chapters), the *pastoralia* are potentially valuable sources for magic and impotence, because they focused on the problems that priests or friars might encounter in the course of their pastoral duties. Some thirteenth-century authors of confession and preaching manuals stated explicitly that they had heard a particular anecdote or fact in confession,¹⁵ and others tailored their works to appeal to a wide audience.¹⁶ Despite this strong pastoral focus, however, their coverage of magic and impotence is patchy. Many of the pre-1215 *pastoralia* do not mention it at all, for example the confession manuals of Alan of Lille, Peter of Poitiers of St Victor, and Robert de Sorbon, and the *Summa de sacramentis et animae consiliis* of Peter the Chanter himself.¹⁷ Magic impotence was clearly not a major concern, despite the publicity furnished by Philip Augustus of

¹³ Leonard E. Boyle, 'The Inter-Conciliar Period 1179-1215 and the Beginnings of Pastoral Manuals', in Filippo Liotta, ed., *Miscellanea Rolando Bandinelli, Papa Alessandro III* (Siena, 1986), p. 47; Pierre Michaud-Quantin, *Sommes de Casuistique et Manuels de Confession au Moyen Age* (Louvain, 1962), p. 9

¹⁴ Goering, *William de Montibus*, p. 63

¹⁵ Alexander Murray, 'Confession as a Historical Source in the Thirteenth Century', in R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, ed., *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1981), p. 286

¹⁶ Alan E. Bernstein, 'Teaching and Preaching Confession in Thirteenth-Century Paris', in Alberto Ferreiro, ed., *The Devil, Heresy and Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, Boston and Cologne, 1998), p. 119

¹⁷ Alan of Lille, *Liber Poenitentialis*, ed. Jean Longère (Louvain, 1965); Peter of Poitiers of St Victor, *Summa de Confessione*, ed. Jean Longère *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 51, 1980; Robert de Sorbon, *De confessione*, ed. M. de la Bigne, *Maxima Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum* vol. 25 (Lyon and Geneva, 1677), pp. 352-8; Petrus Cantor, *Summa de sacramentis et animae consiliis*, ed. Jean-Albert Dugauquier, *Analecta Mediaevalia Namurcensia* 4, 7, 11, 16, 21 (Louvain, 1954-67)

France's claim that he had been bewitched on his wedding night with Ingeborg of Denmark (discussed in ch. 3), which must have been well known in Paris at the time these authors were writing. One pastoral writer, Robert of Courson, even visited Ingeborg in 1210 in his capacity as a papal legate.¹⁸ On the other hand, several authors did go into interesting details about magic impotence, both in their discussions of impediments to marriage and in their chapters on magic and superstition in general.

Peter the Chanter's Circle

The earliest pastoral writers to discuss magic and impotence came from the circle of Peter the Chanter. Like other early pastoral writers, they drew heavily on what the canonists said about marriage:¹⁹ for example, Robert of Flamborough based his discussion of magic and impotence on the *Summa* of the canonist Huguccio, written in c.1190.²⁰ Robert was a canon at St Victor in Paris, and was also the abbey's *penitentiarius*, a priest with special authority over penance. He wrote his confession manual between 1207 and 1213.²¹ Following Huguccio, Robert argued that in practice, few marriages would be annulled because of magic impotence because 'hardly ever is someone so bewitched that he cannot be freed sometime'.²² He also clarified Huguccio's statement that if there was uncertainty about when the bewitching took place, it should be presumed to follow the marriage. Huguccio had not said whether by 'marriage' he meant the exchange of consent or the consummation, but Robert specified that 'marriage' meant the exchange of consent alone: 'to favour the marriage, it should always be presumed that the magic occurred after the marriage was contracted.'²³ As many cases of impotence may not have been discovered until the wedding night, after the marriage had been contracted, a strict interpretation of this rule could have drastically reduced the number of separations. Robert was thus in line with most canonists in allowing annulments, but in practice, couples following his guidelines would have found it very difficult to get one.

¹⁸ Régine Pernoud and Geneviève de Cant, *Isambour: la reine captive* (Paris, 1987), p. 142

¹⁹ Josef Georg Ziegler, *Die Ehelehre der Pönitentialsommen von 1200-1350* (Regensburg, 1956), p. 19

²⁰ Robert of Flamborough, *Liber Poenitentialis*, ed. J. J. F. Firth (Toronto, 1971), p. 14

²¹ Robert of Flamborough, pp. 3-6

²² 'et vix est aliquis ita maleficiatus quin aliquando possit resolvi.' Robert of Flamborough, p. 65

²³ 'in favorem matrimonii semper presumendum est maleficium fuisse post contractum matrimonium.' Robert of Flamborough, p. 65

Robert of Courson (probably writing between 1204 and 1208, before he visited Queen Ingeborg),²⁴ and his student Geoffrey of Poitiers (writing around 1215),²⁵ were also influenced by both canon law and the pastoral movement in the discussions of magic and impotence found in their treatises on pastoral theology. They described the same categories of bewitchment as the canonists: temporary and permanent, with respect to all women or just one, occurring from the beginning of the marriage or starting later.²⁶ However, they also added a new question: what would happen if a man were to be cured of impotence by a miracle after his marriage had been annulled? Would his wife have to return to him, or could her second marriage stand? Both writers illustrated this with the biblical example of Lazarus: if Lazarus's wife had remarried during the three days that Lazarus was dead, would her second marriage be valid? Robert concluded that if the man was cured by a miracle, as Lazarus was raised from the dead by a miracle, then the second marriage should stand.²⁷ This question was not as theoretical as it might sound, because a few contemporary writers suggested that certain cures for impotence, and especially magic impotence, might be miraculous. The canonist John of Wales suggested this for some cures that relied on natural objects or spoken charms: 'perhaps [magic impotence] is not caused or dissolved without a miracle, that is, without a certain secret force carried from God into herbs or words or other things.'²⁸ Although John studied at Bologna rather than Paris,²⁹ his, Robert's and Geoffrey's comments may all reflect the same debate about how to categorize certain cures. Indisputably miraculous cures also happened occasionally: in 1345, the Franciscan saint Gerard Cagnoli of Pisa (d. 1342) was believed to have cured a young Pisan nobleman and his thirteen-year-old bride who could not consummate their marriage and suspected that they were bewitched.³⁰

²⁴ V. L. Kennedy, 'Robert Courson on Penance', *Medieval Studies* 7, 1945, p. 292

²⁵ Baldwin, *Masters*, pp. 31-2

²⁶ Robert of Courson, *Summa*, BL MS Royal 9.E.XIV, ff. 39v-40r; Geoffrey of Poitiers, *Summa*, BN MS lat. 3143, f. 109v

²⁷ 'Item si post triennium naturaliter frigidus dividatur ab uxore sua, que contrahat cum secundo viro, et ille naturaliter frigidus per miraculum fiat fervidus, *h* an cum effectu possit petere uxorem suam *h* queritur que contraxit cum secundo viro? Dicitur quod potest, eadem ratione Lazarus cum effectu potest repetere uxorem alii copulatam post mortem eius. Eadem ratione maleficiatus si eius uxor contraxit cum secundo viro post triennium, curatus a maleficio cum effectu potest repetere uxorem suam. Solutio: ubi miraculosa est reparatio de naturali frigiditate ad fervorem, vel de morte ad vitam, non debet uxor reddi primo viro, ut *h* de uxore Lazari.' Robert of Courson, f. 40r. 'Dico esse *h* diximus respondendum simili de Lazaro et uxore sua.' Geoffrey of Poitiers, f. 109v.

²⁸ 'Set forte nec inducitur nec dissolvitur sine miraculo i. e. sine secreta quadam vi a deo collata herbis aut verbis vel aliis rebus.' printed in Franz Gillmann, *Des Johannes Galensis Apparatus zur Compilatio III in der Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen* (Mainz, 1938), p. 51

²⁹ James Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (London and New York, 1995), p. 219

³⁰ 'Cuidam notabili iuveni in Civitate Pisana, anno Domini 1345, de mense Februarii, accidit quod cum uxor, quam noviter duxerat, annorum tredecim, nullo modo poterat secum iungi siquidem ipsam tenere

Robert of Courson and Geoffrey of Poitiers were also interested in how impotence cases might work in the world around them. Geoffrey expressed concerns about the difficulty of proving bewitchment: 'they should be judged similarly to the naturally impotent. However, it cannot be so easily known, because magic cannot be so easily proved.'³¹ Robert went further and described the sad case of a woman with a narrow vagina that he himself had encountered: 'A tearful case of this was set before us, of a marriage where the woman had lived with her husband for seven years and was still a virgin. She was so narrow that she could not be known by her husband. And because of this she had had herself operated on three times, but the flesh always grew together as it would in another wound, and each incision was as hard for her as another death.'³² Thus although they followed canon law, Geoffrey of Poitiers and especially Robert of Courson also brought in their own concerns – about proof, and miraculous cures, and the question of when exactly the impotence was discovered – and their own experience.

Thomas of Chobham, writing a confession manual in around 1216,³³ went even further than Huguccio and Robert of Flamborough in restricting the number of cases where an annulment was possible. He saw not just most but all cases of magic impotence as temporary, and therefore argued that magic was never a valid reason for an annulment: 'For if he is impeded by sorceresses, which can be judged if before that marriage he had sex with that woman or another, then the marriage should not be separated, but he should fast and pray that God will absolve him from that kind of magic spell.'³⁴ Thomas's opposition to an annulment under any circumstances was strict but acceptable in canon law, since there was a strain of canonistic thought going back to the twelfth-century glossator *Cardinalis* which held this view, and although

diligebat et e converso ipsa ipsum, et tamen cum secum vellent copulari in lecto, incipiebant se mutuo fastidire, propter quod, reputantes se maleficiis et incantationibus occupatos, petunt divinum auxilium...' Filippo Rotolo, ed., 'Il Trattato dei Miracoli del B. Gerardo Cagnoli, O. Min. (1267-1342), di Fra Bartolomeo Albizi, O. Min. (d.1351)', *Miscellanea Francescana* 66, 1966, p. 153

³¹ 'iudicandum simili de naturaliter frigidis. Tamen non ita de facili sciendum, quia non potest ita de facili probare maleficium.' Geoffrey of Poitiers, f. 109v

³² 'de hoc lacrimabilis propositus est casus nobis matrimonii, ubi mulier, adhuc virgo, que habitaverat cum viro suo per septennium [MS: septimum], adeo fuit arcta quod cognosci non poterat a viro suo. Et ideo se incidi fecit ter, sed semper tanquam in alio vulnere coaluit caro, et quelibet incisio [MS: inscio] fuit ei adeo dura, ut mors altera.' Robert of Courson, f. 39v

³³ Thomas of Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, ed. F. Broomfield (Louvain, 1968), p. lxi

³⁴ 'Si enim per sorcarias fuerit impeditus, quod potest perpendi si ante matrimonium illud cognoverit illam mulierem vel aliam, tunc non debet separari matrimonium, sed debet ieunare et orare ut deus absolvat virum illum a tali maleficio.' Thomas of Chobham, p. 184

most canonists allowed an annulment in cases of magic impotence, there were still some in the early thirteenth century who did not (see below, chapter 6).

Like Peter the Chanter, who had included many anecdotes in his works, Thomas backed up his discussion of magic and impotence with an example.

‘For it is well known that often, when men deserve it, the devil binds some man in his members so that he may not have intercourse, as it happened once in Paris that a certain sorceress impeded a man who had left her so that he could not have intercourse with another woman whom he had married. So she made an incantation over a closed lock and threw that lock into a well, and the key into another well, and the man was made impotent. But afterwards, when the sorceress was forced to acknowledge the truth, the lock was retrieved from the one well and the key from the other, and as soon as the lock was opened, the man became able to have intercourse with his wife.’³⁶

I have not been able to identify a source for Thomas’s story. Even if it was not a real case, the story was probably intended to be credible: most of the similar cases of conscience described by Peter the Chanter were at least designed to fit contemporary concerns. Thomas’s detailed description of the magic also adds verisimilitude. The lock has an obvious symbolism: the metaphor of a lock was used by Innocent III in a decretal of 1206 to describe a case of (natural) female impotence.³⁷ Much later, locks and impotence were still linked: one early modern cure for magic impotence was for the man to urinate through the keyhole of the church where he was married.³⁸ Thomas may therefore have been referring to real practices that he had heard about, and possibly even a real case. This would also be in keeping with the interest in magical practices that he shows in another work, a *Summa on the Art of Preaching*. In this, he expressed concerns about how widely magic was practised: ‘Item, it should be noted that in almost every region and everywhere on earth, certain idolatries reign, against which preachers and priests should be armed. For there are many men and

³⁶ ‘Constat enim quod sepe meritis hominum exigentibus diabolus ligavit aliquem hominem in membris suis quod non poterat coire, sicut contigit quandoque Parisius quod quedam sorciaria impedivit virum qui eam reliquerat ne posset coire cum aliqua quam superduxerat. Fecerat enim incantationem super quamdam seram clausam et miserat illam seram in unum puteum et clavem in alium puteum, et factus est vir ille impotens coire. Postea vero cum coacta esset sorciaria cognoscere veritatem, extracta fuit sera de puteo uno et clavis de alio, et statim cum aperta esset sera, factus est vir ille potens coire cum uxore sua.’ Thomas of Chobham, p. 184

³⁷ ‘Contingit autem postea, quod mulier eadem invenit qui seras huiusmodi reseravit...’ X 4.16.6

³⁸ Stephen Wilson, *The Magical Universe: Everyday Ritual and Magic in Pre-Modern Europe* (London, 2000), p. 142

women who are given to magic and sorcery, and do not believe this to be idolatry.³⁸ Although the anecdote about impotence magic occurs in Thomas's confession manual rather than in his work on preaching, Thomas's more general interest in combating magic further supports the view that his story about magic and impotence corresponded with contemporary practices.

Thomas's story also illustrates why many writers doubted that magic could ever be a permanent impediment to marriage. It shows that there were other ways of tackling the problem than by going to a church court, with the advantage that the couple did not have to wait three years. These alternatives can be seen clearly in the more abundant sources of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which, as mentioned in chapter 3, show that for many people who suspected that they had been bewitched, the first step was to approach the suspect in the hope of a cure.³⁹ Robert of Flamborough and Thomas of Chobham, like the canonist Huguccio, may thus have been reluctant to allow separations for magic impotence not simply because they took a strict view of the indissolubility of marriage, but also because they were aware that there were often alternatives to separation. However, several cases from the French National Archives show that things did not always go as smoothly as Robert and Thomas implied. In 1447, a man from Maine who believed that he had been made impotent by one Guillemette tied her to a tree, and was surprised (he said) to find her dead the next day. Another man in a similar situation broke down the suspect's door and beat her until she agreed to undo the spell, but she too died the next day. Both men were convicted of murder, and are recorded petitioning for the punishment to be remitted.⁴⁰ In this context, Thomas's statement that the sorceress was 'forced' to tell the truth becomes clearer.

Even if they played down the difficulties, however, Robert of Flamborough and Thomas of Chobham's focus on preaching and educating the laity led them to adopt Huguccio's rigorous attitude to magic impotence, rather than the attitude of many canonists of the period, that permitted annulments more widely. Later in the

³⁸ 'Item, notandum quod fere in omni regione et ubique terrarum, regnant quedam ydolatrie contra quas oportet predicatorum et sacerdotum armari. Multi sunt enim, et multe, qui dediti sunt ueneficiis et sortilegiis, et non credunt esse ydolatrium.' Thomas of Chobham, *Summa de Arte Praedicandi*, ed. Franco Marenzoni (Turnhout, 1988), p. 166

³⁹ Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: the Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (Oxford, 2nd edition 2002), pp. 62-3

⁴⁰ Roger Vaultier, *Le Folklore pendant la Guerre de Cent Ans, d'après les Lettres de Rémission du Trésor des Chartes* (Paris, 1965), p. 39

thirteenth century, the canonists and other writers began to reflect the same broader list of concerns (for example, about the use of magical cures). They also began to take information from the pastoral movement to support their own positions, arguing for example that not every spell could be lifted. However, the trend seems to have begun in the pastoral literature, which in turn was written with an eye on practice and communication.

Pastoralia After 1215

As well as ruling that every Christian had to confess at least once a year, the Fourth Lateran Council defined the role of the confessor for the first time not only as a giver of penances, but also as a counsellor who should advise the penitent according to his or her character and background. This ruling stimulated the writing of a great many pastoral handbooks, of varying degrees of difficulty, in Latin and also, later, in the vernacular.⁴¹ Like the earlier *pastoralia*, these were mixed in their treatment of magic impotence. The widely copied *Liber Penitentiarius* by the canonist Joannes de Deo, written in 1245-6, did not mention the subject at all.⁴² Richard of Wetheringsett, writing in the early thirteenth century, was keen to educate the laity about the canon law of marriage in his *Summa* '*Qui bene presunt*' ('and these things are especially to be made known and explained to the laity'⁴³), but he did not mention magic impotence in this context.⁴⁴ Other thirteenth-century confession manuals did discuss impotence magic, however. Around 1215, John of Kent quoted the canon law on the subject, citing the contemporary canonists John of Wales and Tancred of Bologna.⁴⁵ A few writers also referred to impotence in their general discussions of magic: it was here that Master Serlo, the English author of a confessor's manual writing after 1234, mentioned women who made their ex-lovers impotent, in a canon which was probably inspired by the eleventh-century *Corrector* of Burchard of Worms, since he

⁴¹ Leonard E. Boyle, 'The Fourth Lateran Council and Manuals of Popular Theology', in Thomas J. Heffernan, ed., *The Popular Literature of Medieval England* (Knoxville, Tennessee, 1985), p. 32

⁴² Joannes de Deo, *Liber Penitentiarius*, BL MS Royal 5.A.I, ff. 165r-205r; on the date of the *Liber* see Johan Friedrich von Schulte, *Die Geschichte der Quellen und Literatur des Canonischen Rechts* vol. 2 (Stuttgart, 1857, repr. Graz 1956), p. 102

⁴³ 'Et sunt hec specialiter laycis notificanda et exprimenda.' Richard of Wetheringsett, *Summa*, BL MS Royal 9.A.XIV, f. 86r. On Richard, see Fritz Kemmler, '*Exempla*' in *Context: a Historical and Critical Study of Robert Mannyng of Brunne's 'Handlyng Synne'* (Tübingen, 1984), pp. 46-9

⁴⁴ Richard of Wetheringsett, ff. 107r-v

⁴⁵ 'Potest enim quis maleficiari cum una et non cum altera et hoc secundum Galensem et Tancred.' John of Kent, *Summa de Penitentia*, BL MS Royal 9.A.XIV, f. 204r; on John, see Joseph Goering, 'The "Summa de Penitentia" of John of Kent', *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* 18, 1988, pp. 13-31

recommended the same penance of forty days on bread and water.⁴⁶ Brother Laurent, a Dominican writing a vernacular treatise on the virtues and vices for Philip III of France in 1280, in his general discussion of magic, which he classified under the sin of avarice, mentioned magic that caused married couples to hate each other, or be unable ‘to have marital company the one with the other’.⁴⁷

Of the many pastoral manuals written in the thirteenth century, the most influential were the *Summa on Penance and Marriage* of Raymond of Peñafort (produced in its final form after 1234), and the *Summa for Confessors* of John of Freiburg (c.1290).⁴⁸ In discussing magic and impotence, Raymond followed the canonist Tancred’s *Summa on Marriage* (see below, ch. 6) very closely.⁴⁹ In addition, he made some recommendations about how a woman should be inspected to see if she was still a virgin: ‘however, in an inspection of this kind, the great precaution should be taken that it is performed by two or more matrons who are respectable and skilled in the work of marriage.’⁵⁰ William of Rennes, another Dominican who glossed Raymond’s *Summa* in 1240-5, stated explicitly that this passage was Raymond’s invention and not found in earlier writers,⁵¹ but Raymond may have got the idea from the canonist Bernard of Parma, who likewise recommended that the matrons should be ‘respectable and skilled in that art’.⁵² Thus although Raymond followed Tancred very closely, he also considered some additional problems that might arise in proving allegations of impotence.

⁴⁶ ‘Item si qua fornicaria mulier in tantum fornicatorem dilexerit ut arte sortilega eum corrumpere velit ut nec uxorem ducere posset nec cum ea commiscere, xl dies in pane et aqua peniteat et semper sit in penitentia.’ Joseph Goering, ed., ‘The “Summa de Penitentia” of Magister Serlo’, *Medieval Studies* 38, 1976, p. 26

⁴⁷ ‘que personnes qui sont en mariage sentre hayent ou ne pevent avoir compaignie lun a lautre par mariage.’ Laurentius Gallus, *La Somme des Vices et Vertus* (Paris, 1488), Avarice, Branch 7. On the date of the *Somme* see Edith Brayer, ‘Contenu, Structure et Combinaisons du *Miroir du Monde* et de la *Somme le Roi*’, *Romania* 79, 1958, pp. 1-2

⁴⁸ Michaud-Quantin, p. 40

⁴⁹ Raymond of Peñafort, *Summa de Penitentia et Matrimonio* (Rome, 1603, repr. Farnborough, 1967), pp. 558-64; Tancred, *Summa de Matrimonio*, ed. Agathon Wunderlich (Göttingen, 1841), pp. 60-8

⁵⁰ ‘cautela tamen magna est adhibenda in huiusmodi inspectione, ut fiat per duas vel plures matronas honestas, et peritas in opere maritali.’ Raymond of Peñafort, p. 563

⁵¹ ‘“cautela tamen: quidam libri non habent hoc... sed de novo additum est a magistro.” William of Rennes, gloss, in Raymond, p. 563. On the date of William’s gloss, see Michaud-Quantin, p. 40.

⁵² ‘talibus credendum est si honeste sint et perite in arte illa.’ Bernard of Parma, Ordinary Gloss to X 4.15.6, *matronas*, in *Decretales Gregorii IX* (Venice, 1489), f. 327r

John of Freiburg updated Raymond's *Summa*, making it easier to use by adding an alphabetical index, more illustrative cases, and rubrics analysing each topic.⁵³ This was necessary, he said, because new questions and cases were arising 'every day'.⁵⁴ John's section on magic and impotence was much longer than Raymond's, and used a variety of new sources: he cited the canonists Hostiensis and Innocent IV, and the theologians Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Tarentaise, as well as Raymond, to create a new kind of confession manual that mixed canon law with moral theology.⁵⁵ Much of the time, John simply summarized these writers. He covered the different forms of impotence: natural (an inborn defect) and accidental (magic or castration), temporary and permanent. He mentioned that some writers had argued that *Si per sortiarias* was no longer valid, but he himself agreed with Tancred (whose opinion was preserved by both Raymond and Hostiensis) that this view was too harsh.⁵⁶ He then went on to describe how the separation should be carried out, summarizing the canonists' disagreements over whether or not a bewitched couple should be made to return to their original marriage if the magic ceased.⁵⁷ John also discussed some of the questions raised by the theologians, such as what would happen if a man was potent with a beautiful woman but impotent with an ugly one, and whether magic should be used to cure magic.⁵⁸ On the subject of magical cures, he quoted both the theologians who said they should never be used, and the view of Hostiensis that the 'frivolous' cures recommended in the medical encyclopaedia, the *Pantegni*, could be tolerated. He was careful to point out, however, that Hostiensis did not condone anything illicit: 'Note that he says "frivolous", not "illicit", so you should not stretch this statement any further, except perhaps to certain neutral practices; however, prayers should be more meritorious'.⁵⁹

John's treatment of impotence magic was thus a synthesis of thirteenth-century canon law and theology on the subject, to which he added little of his own, except a concern

⁵³ Michaud-Quantin, p. 44; Leonard Boyle, 'The "Summa Confessorum" of John of Freiburg and the Popularisation of the Moral Teaching of St Thomas and Some of his Contemporaries', repr. in *Pastoral Care*, p. 247

⁵⁴ 'Quoniam dubiorum nova cotidie difficultas emergit casuum...' John of Freiburg, *Summa Confessorum* (Augsburg, 1476), Prologue

⁵⁵ Boyle, "'Summa Confessorum'", p. 249; Ziegler, *Ehelehre*, p. 26

⁵⁶ 'Quidam tamen doctorum sentiunt in contrarium dicentes quod nullum maleficium separat matrimonium contractum... Sed eorum opinio est omnino abiicienda tanquam dura et nimium onerosa...' John of Freiburg, book 4, tit. 16, q. 14

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, qu. 15

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, qus. 23-24

⁵⁹ 'Nota quod dicit vana non illicita ut ulterius hoc dictum non extendas, sed forte ad quedam quasi indifferentia. Tamen orationes deberent [text: deberet] merito prevalere.' *ibid.*, q. 24

that Hostiensis might be seen to condone illicit remedies. This concern probably reflects the condemnations of magical cures found in pastoral writers like Thomas of Chobham, as well as the opinions of theologians like Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, who were strongly opposed to the use of magical cures. John's discussion of magic in general proceeded in the same way, quoting Raymond of Peñafort's collection of canon law texts and adding Thomas Aquinas's discussion of the *Ars Notoria* and other superstitions, from the *Summa Theologica*.⁶⁰ The *Summa for Confessors* would thus have been a useful one-volume reference work summarizing authoritative views on various different kinds of magic, and mirroring the academic concerns of the time, but it does not tell us much that is new about the actual practice of impotence magic.

By contrast, some less widely read thirteenth-century writers did refer to magical practices, even if they did not mention impotence magic in particular. The anonymous Dominican *Summa Penitentie Fratrum Predicatorium* (1220s) mentioned conjurations 'for women', and to find lost items.⁶¹ Robert Grosseteste, who as bishop of Lincoln was interested in pastoral care, said in his treatise on confession that there were more superstitions than he could count, and advised confessors to ask women about them.⁶² Concerns about the use of magical cures also persisted. John of Kent criticized the use of charms to cure illness with the unusual argument that 'conjuring is like wishing impose violence on him who is being conjured, and coercing God to do what he previously did not want to do.'⁶³ The Franciscan Clarus of Florence, writing a collection of cases of conscience in the 1240s, also discussed the subject of 'On dissolving magic by magic'.⁶⁴ Although he was writing later than John of Kent, Clarus pre-dated those theologians and canonists who voiced concerns about magical cures. He cited Raymond of Peñafort, William of Auxerre and Geoffrey of Trani (none of whom discussed whether it was legitimate to use magic to cure magic

⁶⁰ 'Utrum uti arte notoria sit illicitum?' *ibid.*, book 1, tit. 11, q. 10, citing Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, translated by the Dominican Friars from the English-Speaking Provinces vol. 40, (London, 1968), 2a 2ae q. 96, art. 1, pp. 70-1

⁶¹ Joseph Goering and Pierre J. Payer, ed., 'The "Summa Penitencie Fratrum Predicatorium": a Thirteenth-Century Confessional Formulary', *Medieval Studies* 55, 1993, p. 35

⁶² 'quorum non est numerus nec scribi debent. Huius quidem peccati reatus frequenter invenitur in mulieribus. Ideo diligentius examinande.' Siegfried Wenzel, 'Robert Grosseteste's Treatise on Confession, "Deus Est"', *Franciscan Studies* 30, 1970, p. 253

⁶³ 'coniurare est quasi velle violentiam irrogare quantum in eo est qui coniurat, et cogere ut deus faceret quod ante nolebat.' John of Kent, f. 230r

⁶⁴ François-Marie Henquinet, 'Clair de Florence, OFM, canoniste et pénitencier pontifical vers le milieu du XIIIe siècle', *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 32, 1939, p. 31

impotence), but not to Albertus Magnus, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas or Hostiensis (who did).⁶⁵ I have not seen the contents of Clarus's discussion, so it is not clear whether he took his information about magical cures from written sources, as did Albertus, or from popular practice like the civil lawyer Roffredus of Benevento, or both, as did Hostiensis; but he clearly considered that the subject was worth including in a work of practical cases of conscience.

Synodal Statutes

The records of church councils also indicate that impotence magic was not just an academic concern. Provincial and diocesan synods proliferated in the thirteenth century, because they were required by the Fourth Lateran Council as a means of educating the clergy and spreading pastoral reform,⁶⁶ and one of their concerns was superstitious practices. Synodal statutes contain repeated warnings to the clergy to keep the host, holy water and chrism locked up, for fear that they will be used in magic.⁶⁷ Some statutes also linked magic with weddings. The statutes attributed to Eudes de Sully, bishop of Paris, dating from shortly before 1215, said, 'Let it often be forbidden on pain of excommunication to do magic at weddings...'⁶⁸ These statutes arose directly from the late twelfth-century climate of pastoral reform, since they were a response to Innocent III's request to the archbishop of Sens (in whose province Paris was) to reform his clergy.⁶⁹

Eudes was not necessarily talking about impotence magic, since other forms of magic were also linked to weddings. In early fourteenth-century Montaillo, for example, Béatrice de Planissoles collected her daughter Philippa's first menstrual blood in order to make a potion to make her future husband love her.⁷⁰ However, impotence magic could be performed at weddings. In 1390, Margot de la Barre and Marion la Droiturière were accused of bewitching Marion's ex-lover at his wedding,⁷¹ and a sixteenth-century doctor, Thomas Platter, noted that it was the custom in Languedoc

⁶⁵ Henquinet, p. 35

⁶⁶ R. N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c. 1215-c. 1515* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 47-8

⁶⁷ F. M. Powicke and C. R. Cheney, ed., *Councils and Synods with other Documents Relating to the English Church* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 68, 210, 440, 635; Odette Pontal, ed., *Les Statuts Synodaux Français du XIIIe Siècle* (Paris, 1971), vol. 1, p. 56; vol. 2, p. 47.

⁶⁸ 'Sepe in nuptiis prohibeantur per excommunicationem sortilegia fieri ...' *Statuts Synodaux* 1, p. 66

⁶⁹ *Statuts Synodaux* 1, p. lxxv

⁷⁰ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillo* (English edn., London, 1978), p. 32

⁷¹ H. Duplès-Agier, ed., *Registre Criminel du Châtelet de Paris de 6 Septembre 1389 au 18 Mai 1392*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1861) p. 341

to marry in secret, to avoid being bewitched.⁷² The statutes of Bordeaux (1234) were more specific. They forbade ‘some sorceries when marriages and betrothals are being contracted,’ and added that all ‘doubts about marriage’ should be referred to the archbishop or his representative.⁷³ Again, this does not necessarily refer to impotence magic, but the link between magic and doubts about a marriage strengthens this impression, since impotence magic could render a marriage invalid. By saying that cases should be referred to the archbishop, the statute attempted to make people use the proper canonical channels to resolve the situation rather than, perhaps, simply separating informally.

Eudes de Sully’s statutes were very influential, and his statute about magic at weddings spread. It was repeated in England in the statutes of Salisbury (1217-9), which were in turn widely borrowed by other bishops,⁷⁴ and is also found in the statutes of Chichester (1245-52), London (1245-59) and Noyon (1285-95).⁷⁵ These warnings were passed from one statute book to another, but they probably still reflected real concerns. Some of the other statutes on magic and superstition clearly referred to current practices, such as those of Worcester (1240), which condemned the ‘superstitious worshipping of springs and gatherings of people at *Cernei* and at the spring of the village near Gloucester and in other similar places, since we know that many dangers to the souls of the faithful have arisen from this’.⁷⁶ References to superstitious activities at springs go back to the early Middle Ages, but the mention of particular places indicates that this synod was not simply copying an older canon. The warning to keep the Host, chrism and holy water locked up for fear that they would be used in magic was likewise passed from one set of statutes to another, but these items were actually used in magical practices.⁷⁷ The same probably applies to the references to doing magic at weddings.

⁷² Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, ‘The Aiguillette: Castration by Magic’, in *The Mind and Method of the Historian* (English edn., Brighton, 1981), p. 91

⁷³ ‘Sub pena etiam excommunicationis prohibetur districe ne fiant aliqua sortilegia in matrimoniis contrahendis seu sponsalibus. Omnes vero dubias matrimonii semper ad archiepiscopum questiones mandamus vel ad eius vicarium refferendas.’ *Statuts Synodaux* vol. 2 (Paris, 1983), p. 68

⁷⁴ Powicke/Cheney, pp. 57, 88

⁷⁵ Powicke/Cheney, pp. 457, 644; Joseph Avril ed., *Les Statuts Synodaux Français du XIIIe Siècle* vol. 3 (Paris, 1988), p. 266

⁷⁶ ‘superstitiosas etiam fontium adorationes et populorum collectiones apud Cernei et apud fontem ville iuxta Gloverniam et in aliis locis similibus, quoniam ex hoc animabus fidelium multa novimus pericula provenisse.’ Powicke/Cheney, p. 303. They suggest that ‘Cernei’ is Calmsden, in North Cerney, Gloucestershire, and that the ‘villa’ near Gloucester is either Robinswood Hill or Matson (note 2).

⁷⁷ Peter Browe, ‘Die Eucharistie als Zaubermittel im Mittelalter’, *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 20, 1930, pp. 134-54

The Fourteenth Century

Magic and impotence continued to appear in pastoral literature in the fourteenth century. One of the most influential works from this period was that by the Franciscan Astesanus of Asti, written in around 1317, which became known as the *Summa Astesana*.⁷⁸ Like John of Freiburg, Astesanus combined canon law and theology, and among his authorities were Raymond of Peñafort, the canonists Hostiensis and Geoffrey of Trani, and the theologians Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure. Much of his discussion followed theirs although, like Robert of Flamborough, he took the view that magic impotence was not a ground for annulment once the marriage had been contracted, even if it had not been consummated.⁷⁹ Astesanus also argued that a couple who had been separated because of magic impotence should be made to return to the marriage if the man later proved able to sleep with other women, as was the case with naturally caused impotence: 'For the sentence of annulment was pronounced on them in error, because the impediment that was judged to be permanent does not annul the marriage unless it really is permanent... Nor does what is said about such cases in [*Decretum*] C. 33, q. 1, *Si per sortiarias*, contradict this... because that was decreed by Hincmar archbishop of Rheims, which is not held in the above mentioned case. Hence the gloss says there that he should rather be called "ignorant" than Hincmar.'⁸⁰ This was a minority view, but a few theologians and canonists shared it (see below, chapters 6 and 7).

In addition to impotence magic, Astesanus also discussed other sex-related uses of magic: 'But some people say that there is not only magic to prevent a person from having intercourse, but also sometimes to prevent a woman from conceiving or cause abortion. But whoever in order to fulfil a lust for revenge or because of hate does something to a man or woman on account of which they cannot beget children or

⁷⁸ Michaud-Quantin, p. 57

⁷⁹ 'Communis etiam opinio tenet quod si certum esset quod esset secutum matrimonium contractum non tamen consummatum non propter hic dirimeretur vinculum matrimonii.' *Summa Astesana* (Basel, 1477), book 8, tit. 29, *Utrum maleficio impediatur matrimonium*.

⁸⁰ 'Nam sententia divorcii lata fuit inter eos per errorem, quia impedimentum quod fuit iudicatum perpetuum non dirimit matrimonium nisi secundum rei veritatem sit perpetuum... Nec obstat quod dicitur de talibus 33 q. 1. *Si per sortiarias*... quia illud decretum fuit Gnari Remensis archiepiscopi, quod non tenetur in casu predicto. Unde dicit ibi glossa hoc potius dicendus est Ignarus quam Gnarus.' *ibid*, book 8, tit. 29, *Utrum separati propter maleficio si postquam alia matrimonia contraxerint carnaliter se cognoscant sunt ad matrimonium primum revocandi*.

conceive, shall be counted as a murderer.’⁸¹ Unlike the canonists and theologians, who stuck carefully to the magic that caused impotence, Astesanus recognized that other forms of reproductive magic existed. He was not alone in this. A penitential by Brother Rudolf, a Franciscan, discovered by Adolph Franz in a German manuscript of the mid-fourteenth century, provides a fascinating list of magical practices related to love, marriage, contraception and childbirth. Although Rudolf did not mention impotence magic explicitly, he did describe other ‘wonders’ (*mirabilia*) that women did at their weddings: ‘They do not enter the house through the door through which the dead are carried out. They walk on the pillows. They bite bread and cheese and throw them over their heads, so that they will prosper, and many other things; seek, *cherubyn* [his usual term for the reader], and you will find them.’⁸² Rudolf repeatedly told his readers that they would hear all of these superstitions and more if they asked diligently in confession, and claimed to have seen a woman teaching magical practices.⁸³ As Franz observed, Rudolf’s comments bear little resemblance to literary traditions of writing about superstition, but have many parallels in later folklore.⁸⁴ Both Rudolf and Astesanus’s views of reproductive magic probably had their origins in what the friars had observed going on around them, rather than in learned theology and canon law, which tended to focus just on impotence, because that was the only form of magic that was a ground for annulling a marriage.

As well as discussing various uses of magic, Astesanus stated that it was the devil who made people impotent: ‘And this by his own power or by a herb or by a stone or by some occult nature.’⁸⁵ Unlike the theologian William of Auvergne, or the canonist John of Kent, he did not suggest that some occult powers in nature worked through natural means or the power of God: for Astesanus, the occult properties in stones, herbs and other substances were demonic, just like the devil’s own power. Astesanus

⁸¹ ‘Dicunt autem aliqui quod non solum sit maleficium ne quis coire valeat sed etiam aliquando sit ne mulier concipiat vel ut abortum faciat. Quicumque autem propter vindictae libidinem explendam vel propter odium aliquid fecerit viro vel mulieri propter quod non posset generare vel concipere reputatur homicida.’ *ibid.*, book 8, tit. 29, *Utrum maleficio impediatur matrimonium*

⁸² ‘Non intrant per hostium domus, per quod mortuus exportatur. Super pulvinaria incedunt. Panem mordent et caseum et ultra caput proiciunt, ut habundent, et alia multa, que quere, cherubyn, et inuenies.’ Adolph Franz, ‘Des Frater Rudolfus Buch “De Officio Cherubyn”’, *Theologische Quartalschrift* 88, 1906, p. 430

⁸³ ‘Quas si investigare volueris...’ p. 418; ‘Quere diligenter... et inuenies multa ammiracione digna.’ *ibid.*, p. 420; ‘Has abhominaciones de tali materia et multo plures inuenies, o cherubyn, si inquirendo discrete parietem in confessione fodis diligenter,’ p. 427; ‘Vidi feminam doctricem huiusmodi fantasie’ p. 431

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. 436

⁸⁵ ‘Et hoc per virtutem propriam vel per herbam vel per lapidem vel per aliquam naturam occultam.’ *Summa Astesana* book 8, tit. 29, *Sed quomodo dyabolus hoc facit*.

probably took this view from contemporary theology, rather than from more widespread views of magic. St Bonaventure, a theologian who was particularly interested in the demons who lurked behind the occult powers in nature (see below, chapter 7), had said something very similar in the 1250s.⁸⁶ The view was also shared by Guilelmus Peraldus, a Dominican author of an influential work on the vices and virtues, writing between 1236 and 1249. Peraldus divided superstitious remedies into ‘frivolous’ (*nugatoria*) and ‘noxious’ (*noxia*). However, despite the distinction, ‘all the arts of this kind of superstition, whether frivolous or noxious, come from a baneful association of demons and men, like a faithless pact and deceitful friendship set up inwardly, and a Christian should repudiate and flee from them.’⁸⁷ For Peraldus, Bonaventure and Astesanus, there was no such thing as natural magic that did not rely on demons, and they intended their readers to pass this message on to anyone who used magic or magical cures.

Other fourteenth-century confession manuals relied heavily on earlier works, perhaps because the canon law and theology of magic impotence were not developing so quickly in this period as in the thirteenth century. Bartholomew of Pisa, writing around 1328, cited a great many canonists, including Hostiensis, Innocent IV, Geoffrey of Trani and Huguccio, and took his theology from Thomas Aquinas.⁸⁸ However, a possible link between impotence magic and lay practice occurs in a translation of Brother Laurent’s 1280 *Summa* on the vices and virtues into English, which was probably made in 1340 by Michael Northgate, a monk at St Augustine’s, Canterbury, who was also a collector of Latin magical texts.⁸⁹ Translating the passage in the section on avarice where Laurent had condemned impotence magic alongside other forms of magic, Michael added ‘These are the boughs of avarice: there are enough others. But they are more for clerks than for laymen. And this book is made more for laymen than for clerks...’⁹⁰ This passage is not found in Laurent’s original,

⁸⁶ ‘vel propria virtute, vel per herbam, vel lapidem, vel naturam occultam,’ Bonaventure, *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum*, vol. 4, in *Opera Omnia* 4 (Quaracchi, 1889) 34.2.2, p. 773

⁸⁷ ‘omnes artes huiusmodi vel nugatorie vel noxie superstitionis ex quadam pestifera societate demonum et hominum quasi pacta infidelis et dolose amicitie constituta penitus sunt repudiande et fugiende Christiano.’ Guilelmus Peraldus, *Summa de Virtutibus et Vitiis* (Brescia, 1494), book 6, ch. 49

⁸⁸ Bartholomaeus de Sancto Concordio, *Summa Pisani cum Supplemento* (Cologne, 1483), ‘Impedimentum’ 15. On Bartholomew see Michaud-Quantin, pp. 60-2, Ziegler p. 29.

⁸⁹ On Michael and his magical interests, see Sophie Page, *Magic at St Augustine’s, Canterbury, in the Late Middle Ages*, PhD Thesis, Warburg Institute, University of London, 2000, pp. 30-3

⁹⁰ ‘Þise byeþ þe boðes of auarice; yno3 þer byeþ oþre. Ac hy byeþ more to clerekes þanne to þe leawede. And þis boc is more ymad uor þe leawede þanne uor þe clerkes þet conneth þe writings.’

and it could suggest that Northgate thought that causing impotence, and the other forms of magic listed here, were lay superstitions different from the magical texts in which he himself was interested.

Conclusion

Much pastoral literature was heavily dependent on the canon law and theology of impotence magic developed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This is not surprising in a genre that was designed to educate clerics about the basics of theology and canon law, rather than to innovate. However, those writers who went beyond what the canonists and theologians said, such as Thomas of Chobham, who described a case of impotence magic, and Astesanus of Asti and Brother Rudolf who discussed the various forms of reproductive magic, have very interesting things to say about magical practices in the world around them.

Following Thomas of Chobham, many pastoral writers were interested in the morality of magical cures, either generally or in relation to magic impotence. Their interest in this topic seems to predate that of the canonists and theologians who discussed it (except for the canonist John of Wales): Thomas of Chobham, John of Kent and Clarus of Florence were writing earlier than Roffredus of Benevento, Hostiensis and Albertus Magnus, who discussed the problem in theology and canon law. Robert of Courson and Geoffrey of Poitiers seem to have been concerned about the effect that these cures might have on the annulment rules, even if they did not discuss the cures themselves in any detail. Like later theologians, the pastoral writers condemned these cures far more consistently than did the canonists John of Wales and Hostiensis, who tolerated some doubtful cures, and the medical writers Gilbertus Anglicus and Peter of Spain, who (as will be seen in chapter 8) actively recommended them. John of Freiburg worried that Hostiensis's tolerance of 'frivolous' cures might be interpreted as condoning illicit practices. In contrast to Albertus Magnus, who seems to have been moved to discuss the subject of magical cures after reading about them in magical texts (see below, chapter 7), the pastoral writers' inspiration seems to have been the widespread popular use of these cures. Thomas of Chobham claimed that many people did not think that it was a sin to use magical cures, and Robert

Grosseteste and Brother Rudolf listed magical cures among the superstitions that a priest could hear about in confession.

As in the other genres of source, the extent to which magic impotence was discussed in pastoral literature was always dependent on the interests of individual writers. It was quite possible to write a pastoral manual without mentioning the subject, or by relying entirely on earlier sources. However, there was a steady stream of authors who wrote about impotence magic and its cures with an interest in and knowledge of current practices. The information about impotence magic in the pastoral literature is thus sporadic, but can be exceptionally detailed. Pastoral writers' discussions of magic in general also show an awareness of what the laity were doing, and of the need to tailor what was said in preaching and confession to real situations. This concern with practice is also reflected in some of the synodal statutes on magic. The influence of popular practice on the literature of the pastoral movement was thus inconsistent but strong.

Chapter 6

Annulment Procedures and Frivolous Cures: Canon Law, 1200-1400

Building on the work of the twelfth-century commentators on Gratian, canon lawyers continued to discuss magic and impotence creatively in the thirteenth century. The twelfth-century debates about whether annulments should be permitted in cases of magic impotence continued, but gradually a consensus emerged that they should. Thirteenth-century canonists did not just content themselves with repeating the debates of their predecessors, however. They were also more interested than their twelfth-century counterparts in discussing the reality of impotence magic in the world around them. There are several possible reasons for this. Firstly, the pastoral movement which had begun in the late twelfth century and had stimulated the production of confession manuals, also provided canonists with information about popular practices. Secondly, a high proportion of cases that came before the church courts in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were marriage cases,¹ so the canonists were probably encountering more real cases of impotence magic than they had earlier. In the surviving church court records that have been studied, impotence was not a particularly common ground for seeking an annulment, and magic impotence was very uncommon,² but a few cases did occur. In 1341, Johann of Luxembourg, younger son of the King of Bohemia, married Margaretha, heiress of Count Henry VI of Kärnten and Tirol, but when the marriage was not consummated, Johann was rumoured to have been bewitched many years before by Margaretha's stepmother, Beatrix of Savoy (d. 1331). Margaretha then caused a scandal by remarrying without waiting for an annulment, which was only granted in 1349.³ There are also several cases in Polish church court records. In 1418, when Gregorius de Dzedzicze's wife Margaretha sought an annulment because he was impotent, Gregorius claimed that he had always been potent before and so must be bewitched. In Krakow in 1457, two women are recorded as pleading that their husbands were 'impotent and bewitched'.⁴

¹ Richard Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1974), p. 166

² Helmholz describes a few cases of impotence in English episcopal registers, none of which involved magic, pp. 87-8. Andrew Finch found two impotence cases in the fourteenth-century episcopal registers of Hereford and Cerisy, but no magic: "'Repulsa Uxore Sua': Marital Difficulties and Separation in the Later Middle Ages', *Continuity and Change* 8, 1993, p. 15

³ Dieter Veldtrup, 'Johann Propst von Vyšehrad: Illegitimer Sohn eines "impotenten" Luxemburgers', in F. B. Fahlbusch and P. Johanek, ed., *Studia Luxemburgensia: Festschrift Heinz Stoob zum 70. Geburtstag* (Warendorf, 1989), pp. 51-60. I am grateful to Erik Ründal for this reference.

⁴ Gregorius: 'dicens se fuisse semper potentem, sed nunc temporis maleficiatum...' Boleslaw Ulanowski, ed., 'Acta Capitulum nec non iudiciorum ecclesiasticorum selecta', vol. 2, *Monumenta Medii Aevi Historica* 16, (Krakow, 1902), p. 41. 1457 cases: 'propter sui impotentiam et maleficium';

In addition to the pastoral movement and the church courts, cases of impotence continued to be referred to the papacy in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, giving the canonists new papal rulings (decretals) to comment on. Five principal collections of decretals were produced between 1190 and 1226, known collectively as the *Quinque Compilationes Antiquae*. These collections contain eight decretals relating to impotence, seven of which were included in the *Liber Extra*, the official decretal collection promulgated by Pope Gregory IX in 1234. One decretal mentioned magic explicitly, *Litteras* (1190-1), the ruling of Clement III discussed in chapter 3, which denied an annulment to an impotent man who accused his wife of bewitching him, because it was against the custom of the Roman church.⁵ Discussions of magic also arose in the commentaries on two other decretals, *Fraternitatis* and *Littere vestre* (X 4.15.6 and 7). *Fraternitatis* (1206) dealt with the case of a woman who had a very narrow vagina. Because of this, she was judged to be unable to have sex with any man, and her marriage was annulled. However, the woman subsequently remarried successfully, and the local bishop was unclear about whether she should be made to return to her first husband. The bishop's original judgement had found that the woman was incurable, 'except by a divine miracle', and several commentators used this opportunity to discuss what exactly counted as a divine miracle, and whether such a miracle was needed to cure magic impotence.⁶ In *Littere vestre* (1216-27), the husband was impotent, but claimed that he was able to sleep with women other than his wife (although his parish priest was unable to locate any other women who had slept with him). As in the case of Gregorius de Dzedzicze, many commentators considered that this might be a case of magic.⁷

Canon Law Before 1234

The early thirteenth-century commentators on the *Quinque Compilationes Antiquae* discussed possible realities of impotence magic more than had the twelfth-century decretists. They also produced a new way of classifying impotence, dividing it into 'natural' (an inborn defect) and 'accidental' (impotence that happened later, as a result

'impotens et maleficiatus': Bolesław Ulanowski, ed., 'Praktyka w Sprawach Małżeńskich w sądach duchownych dyjecezyi Krakowskiej w wieku XV', *Scriptores Rerum Polonicarum* 13, 1889, pp. 134-5. I am grateful to Martha Brożyna for these references.

⁵ 1. Comp. 4.16.4, *Quinque Compilationes Antiquae*, ed. Emil Friedberg (Leipzig, 1882), p. 51

⁶ 'Arguitur quod nullum maleficium est perpetuum, cum possit removeri preter divinum miraculum...' Bernard of Parma, Ordinary Gloss to X 4.15.6, *divinum miraculum*, in *Decretales Gregorii IX* (Venice, 1489)

⁷ 'et ita allegabat iste maleficium quantum ad istam et non quantum ad alias, et non frigiditatem...' Bernard of Parma, gloss to X 4.15.7, *cognoscendi alias*

of castration or magic), and this scheme was followed by many later canonists.⁸ Some of the best known glossators who wrote on one or more of the compilations in the period between the compilation of the *Compilatio Prima* in 1188-92, and 1234 are Tancred of Bologna, Laurentius Hispanus, Vincentius Hispanus, Alanus Anglicus, John of Wales, and Johannes Teutonicus (who also wrote the ordinary gloss, or standard commentary, on Gratian's *Decretum*). There are also some separate commentaries, such as Tancred's *Summa on Marriage*, the *Summa* of Damasus of Hungary, and the *Summa of Decretals* of Bernard of Pavia.⁹

There was still some debate about the validity of *Si per sortiarias*, the ninth-century ruling by Hincmar of Rheims that said that magic impotence was a ground for annulling a marriage, and that even if the man successfully remarried, he should not have to return to his first wife. Like the twelfth-century decretists, the early thirteenth-century glossators came to no consensus about whether a separation should be granted for magic impotence or not. Tancred concluded that 'all permanent magic impedes marriage,'¹⁰ whereas Damasus followed Huguccio in arguing that 'no magic spell is permanent because it can at least be dissolved by the person who did it. Therefore it is not a permanent impediment since it can be lifted by human effort without a divine miracle... so it should be said that magic does not impede a marriage.'¹¹ Alanus Anglicus, glossing the *Decretum*, went so far as to state that 'everyone says that [*Si per sortiarias*] is not valid; some people distinguish magic [as a separate case], but the distinction is not valid'.¹²

Slowly, however, the canonists reached an agreement. What came to be the definitive answer was presented by Tancred in his *Summa*, where he argued that it was too harsh to deny a bewitched couple an annulment: 'Some doctors feel, however... that no

⁸ Some of the earliest writers to use this scheme seem to have been the early thirteenth-century canonists Alanus Anglicus, BN MS lat. 3909, f. 49r; Damasus of Hungary, *Summa*, BL MS Royal 6.B.X, f. 135v; and Johannes Teutonicus, *Decretum Gratiani, Glossis domini Johannis Teutonici* (Basel, 1512), Ordinary Gloss to C. 33, q. 1, d. a. c. 1, f. 342v

⁹ On these writers, see James Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (London and New York, 1995), pp. 206-28, and Johan Friedrich von Schulte, *Die Geschichte der Quellen und Literatur des Canonischen Rechts* vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1875, repr. Graz, 1956), pp. 172-5, 188-93, 199-205

¹⁰ 'Nostra tamen est opinio quod omne perpetuum maleficium impedit matrimonium.' Tancred, gloss to 1 Comp. 4.16.4, *habitare*, quoted in James Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago, 1987), p. 378 n. 264.

¹¹ 'Verius tamen est quod nullum maleficium sit perpetuum, quia saltem per auctorem potest dissolvi. Ergo non est perpetuum impedimentum, cum absque miraculo divino per opus humanum tolli possit... Unde dicendum est maleficium matrimonium non impedire.' Damasus, f. 135va

¹² '*Si per sortiarias*, quod omnes dicunt non tenere. Distingunt tamen quidam in maleficio, sed non valet distinctio.' Alanus Anglicus, gloss to C. 33 q. 1 d. a. c. 1, f. 49r

magic should annul a marriage that is already contracted. Referring to the custom of the Roman church they say that that chapter, *Si per sortiarias*, is not valid. But their opinion should be wholly cast aside, as harsh and too heavy. For it would give cause for murder, if a man stayed with his wife and could not have intercourse with her, when he was potent and suitable with other women.’¹³ Tancred’s argument was new: it was not based on how magic was supposed to work, but on what the practical consequences of the rules might be. An awareness of how people might behave can also be found in Tancred’s comments on the separation process. If the man claimed that he was impotent and the woman denied it, Tancred argued that even though the man’s word was usually believed over the woman’s, this should not apply in this situation: ‘for, if the man’s word was believed, many men would not fear to commit perjury, so that they could be separated from their wife.’¹⁴ He may perhaps have been thinking of Philip Augustus of France, who had recently claimed that he was bewitched in an attempt to annul his marriage to Ingeborg of Denmark.

Many canonists’ discussions of whether or not magic impotence was permanent also displayed a new interest in how magic worked. Already in the late 1180s, Huguccio had said that few cases of bewitchment were permanent, and in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries Damasus, like the pastoral writer Thomas of Chobham, went further still, and said that magic impotence was never permanent. However, other canonists did not agree that magic worked like this. Tancred took the practical view that any magic which could not be cured after three years should be assumed to be permanent,¹⁵ and Bernard of Pavia referred explicitly to his own experience to show that some spells were permanent: ‘however, the canons seem to say that such things [impotence spells] should not be believed in... On the other hand, very many experiences force us to believe.’¹⁶

¹³ ‘Quidam tamen doctorum sentiunt... quod nullum maleficium separat matrimonium iam contractum: alludentes consuetudini Romane ecclesie dicunt, quod c. illud *Si per sortiarias* non tenet. Sed opinio ipsorum omnino est abiicenda tanquam dura et nimis onerosa, quoniam prestaret materiam homicidio, si homo staret cum uxore et eam cognoscere non posset, cum aliis mulieribus potens et idoneus esset.’ Tancred, *Summa de Matrimonio*, ed. Agathon Wunderlich (Göttingen, 1841), p. 63

¹⁴ ‘quia si crederetur verbo viri, multi non formidarent incurrere periurium, ut possent dividi ab uxore.’ Tancred, p. 67

¹⁵ ‘Item nota quod omne maleficium a principio presumitur temporale, sed post triennium presumitur perpetuum.’ Tancred, quoted in Brundage, *Law*, p. 378, n. 264

¹⁶ ‘videntur tamen canones dicere, talia non esse credenda... ceterum plurima nos ad credendum experimenta compellunt.’ Bernard of Pavia, *Summa Decretalium*, ed. E. A. T. Laspeyres (Ratisbon, 1860), p. 176

Some of the glossators who commented on *Fraternitatis*, when they discussed what being cured by a 'divine miracle' actually meant, also brought in new information about whether magic impotence was curable and, if so, how. The canonist John of Wales explained the connection: 'hence certain people infer that no magic is permanent because, as they say, whoever caused it by their skills, can also dissolve it themselves. But perhaps it is not caused or dissolved without a miracle, that is, without a certain secret force carried from God into herbs or words or other things, and so that work is not entirely human.'¹⁷ Therefore, presumably (although John did not spell this out) a person who was cured by these 'not entirely human' methods would not have to return to their first marriage. An anonymous gloss on the same passage agreed with John: 'And they say that that chapter, C. 33 q. 1, *Si per sortiarias*, does not hold, if it can be said that [the magic] is lifted by a divine miracle when it is lifted either by prayers or by some secret force in words.'¹⁸

John of Wales and the anonymous glossator went further than the theologians Robert of Courson and Geoffrey of Poitiers who, as discussed in chapter 5, were also thinking about miraculous impotence cures at the same time, but did not try to define a miraculous cure. For John and the anonymous glossator, magical impotence cures worked not by means of demons, but by occult powers in words and the natural world, which had been put there by God, and so resembled miracles. These two commentators thus seem to be early writers about natural magic, a category of magic relying on just these powers, which was beginning to be discussed by theologians and writers on the natural world in the early thirteenth century (see above, chapter 4).¹⁹ There is also an interesting parallel with the chapter on magic impotence in the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African, where the cures are similarly divided into 'divine' and 'human',²⁰ although the parallel is not close enough to tell if either writer had actually read the *Pantegni*. Their comments may also reflect a concern with the morality of magical cures which was shared by the contemporary pastoral writers Thomas of Chobham and John of Kent. An interesting feature of the two canonists'

¹⁷ 'Hinc colligunt quidam, quod nullum maleficium est perpetuum, quia, ut dicunt, qui illud suo induxit artificio, suo potest dissolvere. Set forte nec inducitur nec dissolvitur sine miraculo i. e. sine secreta quadam vi a deo collata herbis aut verbis vel aliis rebus, unde illud opus non est omnino humanum.' Franz Gillmann, *Des Johannes Galensis Apparatus zur Compilatio III in der Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen* (Mainz, 1938), p. 51

¹⁸ 'Et dicunt illud capitulum non tenere, xxxiii q. i [MS: ii] *Si per sortiarias*, si potest dici quod per divinum miraculum tollere, quando tollere vel per orationes vel per aliquam secretam vim verborum.' Anon. gloss to 3 Comp. 4.11.1, *preter divinum miraculum*, BL MS Royal 11.C.VII, f. 190v

¹⁹ Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 12

²⁰ See Appendix 1.

comments is that, unlike the pastoral writers and theologians who referred to the hidden powers of words and other substances to cure magic impotence, neither glossator recorded any doubts about whether it was legitimate to use them.

Commentaries on the *Liber Extra*

In 1234, Pope Gregory IX published a definitive collection of the decretals issued since the time of Gratian, the *Liber Extra*, which was edited by the celebrated canonist and pastoral writer, Raymond of Peñafort. This collection was designed to replace all the previous ones, and Gregory gave Raymond permission to alter or omit any decretal that contradicted the others. Raymond often made these changes in the light of what earlier canonists had said about papal decisions,²¹ and it is probably for this reason that he omitted *Litteras*, the decretal of Clement III that had denied a bewitched couple an annulment. Tancred's view that such a judgement was too harsh had won out. The *Liber Extra* stimulated a new wave of voluminous commentaries, which often drew on Tancred's *Summa* when they discussed marriage,²² but also brought in new information. Most influential of the new commentaries were the ordinary gloss on the *Liber Extra* by Bernard of Parma (d. 1266), which summarized much earlier discussion of the individual decretals, and the commentaries of Geoffrey of Trani (d. 1245), Sinibaldo dei Fieschi, who became Pope Innocent IV (d. 1254), Henry of Susa (usually known as Hostiensis, d. 1271), William Durandus (d. 1296), and Bernard of Montemirat (also known as Abbas Antiquus, d. 1296).²³ A civil lawyer who had spent time at the papal curia, Roffredus of Benevento (d. after 1243), also produced an interesting summary of canon law.²⁴ These works continued to be read for the rest of the Middle Ages, and were printed in the early modern period. Many of these commentaries were written around the mid thirteenth century, but after that, later canonists discussed marriage much more briefly. Perhaps they believed that the thirteenth-century writers had covered the questions adequately; or perhaps they were simply more interested in issues other than marriage, as were fourteenth-century theologians.

²¹ Stephan Kuttner, 'Raymond of Peñafort as Editor: the "Decretales" and "Constitutiones" of Gregory IX', *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* 12, 1982, p. 66

²² Brundage, *Law*, p. 328.

²³ On these writers, see Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* pp. 206-29, von Schulte, vol. 2, pp. 88-94, 123-32, 144-56, and Kenneth Pennington, 'Henricus de Segusio (Hostiensis)', in *Popes, Canonists and Texts 1150-1550* (Aldershot, 1993), pp. 1-10

²⁴ Ingrid Baumgärtner, 'Was muss ein Legist vom Kirchenrecht wissen? Roffredus Beneventanus und seine "Libelli de iure Canonico"', in *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Medieval Canon Law*, ed. Peter Linehan (Vatican City, 1988), p. 226

In general, the canon law commentaries of the mid thirteenth century went into more detail than their earlier counterparts, but they often took it for granted that earlier debates had been resolved. For example, they rarely debated the rules about when annulments could be allowed and how cases could be proved, whereas these questions had been the main concern of the twelfth- and early thirteenth-century canonists. By the mid thirteenth century, many of the common problems had been resolved, and there was little new law to discuss: after 1234 there were no new decretals on impotence. Linked to this, James Brundage has noted that the canon law of marriage in general after 1234 becomes increasingly elaborate, but displays few new ideas.²⁵ Precisely because the basic issues had been resolved, however, the canonists of this period were often able to reflect more deeply than earlier commentators on how the rules for magic and impotence might work in real cases.

The question of whether *Si per sortiarias* was valid or not still surfaced occasionally, but the majority of canonists in this period followed Tancred's view that to deny a bewitched couple an annulment was too harsh.²⁶ In this connection, Hostiensis raised a more general point about the need to follow the law. He argued that canonists who declared *Si per sortiarias* invalid set a dangerous precedent: 'laws should not be corrected by the gloss... great error would follow from this.'²⁷ Innocent IV was one of the few canonists to dispute the view that magic impotence could be a ground for annulment, but his statements were rather ambiguous. He said at one point that 'We say that marriages are never separated because of magic.'²⁸ However, later, in his gloss to *Littere Vestre*, he assumed that magic could render a marriage null, although he acknowledged that some writers did not agree: 'a distinction must be made, because if the magic is temporary, it does not annul the marriage. But if it is permanent, it does: [*Decretum*] C. 33, q. 1, *Si per sortiarias*. And we say that it is permanent if it is not stopped by exorcisms and prayers within three years, C. 33 q. 1. *Si per sortiarias*. But it does not seem to be permanent to others, since the magician can destroy it.'²⁹ Innocent was exceptional, however; most commentators on the

²⁵ Brundage, *Law*, p. 485

²⁶ For example, Hostiensis used almost the same words as Tancred: *Summa Aurea* (Lyons, 1548), 4.15, ch. 9, f. 214v

²⁷ 'nec per glossam deberent iura corrigi... magnus inde sequeretur error.' Hostiensis, *Lectura* to X 4.15.7, *cognoscendi alias*, BL MS Arundel 471, f. 173v

²⁸ 'Nos dicimus quod propter maleficium nunquam separatur matrimonium.' Innocent IV, *Apparatus Decretalium* (Venice, 1491) gloss to X 4.15.5, *triennium*.

²⁹ 'Distinguendum est, quod si maleficium est temporale, non dirimit matrimonium. Si vero est perpetuum, dirimit: xxxiii, q. i. Si per sortiarias. Et dicimus perpetuum quod infra triennium per

Liber Extra did not dispute *Si per sortiarias*. One later writer, Johannes de Garzionibus, took Innocent's comments to mean that he was not in favour of annulments for magic impotence, but Johannes also stated that all the other canonists disagreed with him.³⁰

Geoffrey of Trani brought in another reason to support the view that an annulment could be granted in some cases of magic impotence, this time focusing on how magic worked in practice. Unlike the earlier canonists and pastoral writers who claimed that most or even all impotence spells could be lifted, Geoffrey stated that some spells could not be lifted, even by the person who cast them: 'say if something has been given to eat or drink, or the magician has died, or the magic [object] has been lost, or the magician does not know how to destroy it.'³¹ Geoffrey's list reflects a new level of information about magical practices: where the previous generation of writers had noticed that some spells could be lifted, Geoffrey, like the theologians Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas, gave a more detailed and nuanced picture. As will be seen below, in chapter 7, Bonaventure and Aquinas referred explicitly to magicians' confessions, and Geoffrey's information probably also came from practice, because his statement mirrors concerns of some anecdotes about impotence magic. For example, in the case described in the 1160s by Master Odo, the magic object was lost and so the couple could not be cured (see above, ch. 3).³² The reference to magic being given in food or drink may also reflect current magical practices. Early medieval penitentials were full of references to men being bewitched by food or drink, although these were usually designed to stimulate love rather than cause impotence, and in early fourteenth-century Montaillou, Béatrice de Planissoles had kept her daughter's first menses to make a love potion when the daughter got married.³³ People may well have tried to reduce sexual desire in the same way.

exorcismos et orationes non cessat: ut hic xxxiii, q. i. Si per sortiarias. Aliis enim non videtur esse perpetuum cum maleficator illud destruere posset.' Innocent IV, gloss to X 4.15.7; 'aliter' corrected to 'aliis' from manuscripts BL Arundel 461, f. 178r and BL Arundel 470, f. 168v

³⁰ 'Innocens dixerit propter maleficium nullum matrimonium esse separandum; cuius oppositio communiter reprobatur per capitulum Si per sortiarias. xxxiii. q. i... concordant Tancredus, Vincentius, Goffredus, Bn [I have not been able to identify this canonist] et Ioannes Andreae.' Johannes de Garzionibus, gloss to X 4.15.6, BL MS Arundel 423, f. 19r

³¹ 'puta aliquid datum est edendum vel bibendum, vel mortuus est maleficus, vel perditum est maleficium, vel maleficus nescit delere.' Goffredus Tranensis (Geoffrey of Trani), *Summa Super Titulis Decretalium* (Lyon, 1519), to X 4.15, f. 187r

³² Artur Landgraf, 'Zwei Gelehrte aus der Umgebung des Petrus Lombardus', *Divus Thomas* 3rd Ser. 11, 1933, p. 162

³³ F. W. H. Wasserschleben, ed., *Die Bussordnungen der abendländischen Kirche* (Halle, 1851), pp. 153, 180; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou*, (English edn. London, 1978), p. 32

Roffredus of Benevento, the civil lawyer, was also interested in what seem to be real magical practices. He was willing to include anecdotes about daily life in several places in his summary of canon law,³⁴ and he had certainly observed cases of impotence in the church courts, because he described one that came before Roger of San Severino, archbishop of Benevento. The archbishop had cured a physician of natural impotence by having a tonsure shaved on his head. Archbishop Roger, who had clearly heard the many medieval jokes about clerics' sexual appetites, reasoned that clerics never had problems with impotence, and therefore that impotence was caused by the hair on laymen's heads, which prevented dangerous fumes from escaping.³⁵ On a more serious note, Roffredus also used his own observation to criticize victims of magic impotence who sought magical cures:

‘The bewitched man should not run to enchanters or diviners, so that they can use their medicines or incantations. And I have heard that many women do this. They make their bewitched husband hold his trousers on his head for a whole day and night; or they take a piece of cheese and perforate it with a bore and they give the husband what they collect from the perforation to eat; or each of them takes a strap and ties it and puts it in the open air overnight; or they make the poor man stand naked all night under a stole, when the weather is fair, or similar things.’³⁶

Roffredus told couples instead to follow the advice of *Si per sortiarias* and confess, pray, give alms and fast. None of the magical cures that Roffredus describes is paralleled in written sources, but there are parallels for several of them in later folklore. Wearing clothing upside down or inside out was a common way of warding

³⁴ Baumgärtner, p. 230

³⁵ ‘In clericis autem ista frigiditas, seu ligamen, seu maleficium, locum non habet. Nunquam enim vidi aliquem clericum super hoc conquerentem, immo ultra quam credi posset potentes sunt in opere et sermone. Unde cum dominus Rogerius bone memorie de Sancto Severino archiepiscopus meus Beneventanus, dum semel quidam laicus venisset coram eo et diceret se ligatum ita quod non posset uxorem suam cognoscere, fecit venire suum barberium et clericam magnam seu coronam illi laico fieri fecit, et sic laicus in nocte uxorem suam cognovit cum gratiarum actionibus. Et cum maximo exennio ad archiepiscopum rediit, et dum ab eo quereretur ratio, quia phisicus erat, unde posset hoc contingere. Ipse ludendo respondit laici habent capillos in capitis vertice unde fumositatis exalare non potest et sic pori constringuntur quod in clericis non est, quia habent maximam aream, unde nulla fumositatis retinetur.’ Roffredus Beneventanus, *Libelli Iuris Canonici* (Avignon, 1500), repr. in *Corpus Glossatorum Juris Civilis* 6 (Turin, 1968), p. 352

³⁶ ‘non currat maleficiatus ad incantatores seu divinatores ut faciant medicinas suas sive incantationes. Et audiui multas sic facientes, que faciunt illum maritellum sic maleficiatum tenere serabulas suas per totam diem et noctem in capite; vel habent peciam casei et cum terebello [printed edn: trebello] perforant caseum et quod colligitur ex illa perforatura dant sibi comedere; vel accipiunt corrigiam utriusque et ligant illos et ponunt in nocte sub divo; vel faciunt illum miserum stare nudum tota nocte sub stola [printed edn: stella] aliqua quando tempus est serenum; vel faciunt similia.’ Roffredus, p. 352; ‘trebello’ corrected to ‘tere-bello’ and ‘stella’ to ‘stola’ on the basis of manuscripts Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale 456, f. 91v and Paris BN lat. 4248, f. 9v.

off evil.³⁷ The piercing of the cheese may also be linked to longstanding associations between cheese, sexuality, female power and magic, going back as far as Apuleius and St Augustine. Drawing on these associations, cheese was linked with both fertility and protection against magic. In early modern England, for example, keeping a cheese near a woman in childbirth was supposed to ward off evil.³⁸ The German Franciscan Rudolf, who wrote a penitential in the fourteenth century, said that women bit bread and cheese and then threw them over their heads to ensure fertility.³⁹ The action of piercing the cheese, that Roffredus describes, also has an obvious phallic symbolism, as do many protective measures against the evil eye.⁴⁰ The parallels in folklore indicate that Roffredus had observed or heard about these cures, just as he said. Like the story about the physician cured by a tonsure, this information probably came from the church courts.

It is interesting to compare Roffredus's discussion of magical cures with that of Hostiensis. Hostiensis wrote two very influential commentaries on the *Liber Extra*, the *Summa in Titulis Decretalium* or *Summa Aurea* (finished c.1253), and the *Lectura*. Kenneth Pennington has shown that the *Lectura* survives in two versions, the earlier of which was completed in c.1262 and survives in only one manuscript, Oxford, New College MS 205. The later version was finished shortly before Hostiensis's death in 1271.⁴¹ Hostiensis's various commentaries show that he became more interested in magical cures during the course of his career. In the *Summa Aurea* he did not mention how impotence could be cured, except to recommend that the couple should confess their sins, 'because sometimes illness arises from sin.'⁴² In the earlier version of his *Lectura*, he suggested a cure for female impotence ('make her bathe in warm water and stay there a long time'), but he did not mention how magic impotence might be cured.⁴³

³⁷ Caroline Oates, personal communication

³⁸ Caroline Oates, 'Cheese Gives you Nightmares: Old Hags and Heartburn', *Folklore* 114.2, 2003, pp. 205-25

³⁹ 'Panem mordent et caseum et ultra caput proiciunt, ut habundent.' Adolf Franz, 'Des Frater Rudolfus Buch "De Officio Cherubyn"', *Theologische Quartalschrift* 88, 1906, p. 430

⁴⁰ Alan Dundes, 'Wet and Dry, the Evil Eye: an Essay in Indo-European and Semitic World-View', in Alan Dundes, ed., *The Evil Eye: a Casebook* (New York, 1981), p. 276

⁴¹ Kenneth Pennington, 'An Earlier Recension of Hostiensis's *Lectura* on the Decretals', *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* 17, 1987, pp. 77-90

⁴² 'quia aliquando infirmitas ex peccato provenit.' Hostiensis, *Summa*, 4.15, ch. 12, f. 214v

⁴³ 'facias ipsam in aqua calida balneari et diu morari.' Hostiensis, *Lectura*, to X 4.15.6, Oxford, New College MS 205, f. 185r

Between this version of the *Lectura* and the final one, however, Hostiensis's interest in cures soared, thanks to an encounter with the chapter on magic impotence in the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African. In a new gloss he cited this text by name: 'and in the *Practica* of Constantine is found a rubric *On those who, impeded by magic, cannot have sex with their wives*, where Constantine treats of various spells and their remedies,' and quoted Constantine's comment about magic done with beans, in order to strengthen his argument that some forms of magic were permanent: 'and among other things, he says that magic with beans is the worst, and afterwards he continues that it can be cured more by divine methods than human ones – which means that it cannot be cured except by a miracle. Therefore magic is judged to be a permanent impediment by the church.'⁴⁴ Later, Hostiensis also recommended Constantine's other cures: 'and I advise that you go back to those things which are found there, and the physicians' other remedies. For although some of them seem frivolous or superstitious, each author should be believed in his specialism, but also the church can tolerate driving away frivolous things with frivolous things.'⁴⁵ The *Pantegni* thus became an authority for an entirely new way of approaching cures for magic. Roffredus might have dismissed them as something done by women and enchanters; but Hostiensis had a professional, written authority which said that they were acceptable, even if they seemed superstitious.

However, although the *Pantegni* was a crucial inspiration for Hostiensis's discussion of magic impotence, it was not the only one. Even if he took some cures for magic impotence from the *Pantegni*, he did not take all of his information from there. He told his readers that they would learn about counter-magic when they were hearing confessions: 'it is argued that no magic is a permanent impediment, because it can be dissolved without a divine miracle by that person who did the magic, as you can often hear in confession from those same people, if you search diligently'.⁴⁶ Moreover,

⁴⁴ 'et in Practica Constantini ponitur, rubrica "De hiis qui maleficiis impediti cum uxoribus suis coire non possunt", ubi tractat Constantinus de diversis maleficiis et remediis eorum. Et inter cetera dicit quod maleficium fabarum pessimum est, et postea sequitur quod magis divinis quam humanis curari potest - quod dicit ipsum non nisi miraculose curari posse. Censetur ergo maleficium impedimentum perpetuum per ecclesiam.' Hostiensis, *Lectura* to X 4.15.7, *ut agerent penitentiam*, BL Arundel 471, f. 178v

⁴⁵ 'et consulo quod in hac materia recurras ad illa que ibi ponuntur, et alia remedia medicorum. Licet enim quedam vana seu superstitiosa videantur tamen cuilibet auctori in sua credendum est facultate, sed et satis potest tollerare ecclesia retundere vana vanis.' *ibid.*, to X 4.15.7, *ut agerent penitentiam*, f. 178v

⁴⁶ 'arguitur quod nullum maleficium est perpetuum impedimentum, quia solvi potest sine divino miraculo per illam personam que maleficium fecit, sicut et sepe audire poteris in foro penitenciali ab eisdem si diligentur scruteris.' Hostiensis, *Lectura* to X 4.15.6, *divinum miraculum* BL Arundel 471, f. 177v

Hostiensis's view of magic was complex even before he wrote the final version of the *Lectura*, because he was unique among the canonists in envisaging a situation where impotence magic could actually be a good thing. In his *Summa*, he told the story, which he claimed to have heard 'from those who knew the truth', of a count (whose name was given in at least two manuscripts as 'The~') who was bewitched so that for thirty years he could have sex with no one but his wife. Hostiensis's verdict on this is surprising: 'and if it is the wife [doing the magic], then the magic seems to be good, since adultery is avoided.'⁴⁷ For Hostiensis, then, the ends of magic could sometimes justify the means, a very unusual attitude among ecclesiastical writers. As with Roffredus, at least part of Hostiensis's information came from real practices, even if his attitude was also shaped by a written source.

Bernard of Montemirat, also known as Abbas Antiquus, wrote a *Lectura* on the decretals between 1259 and 1266. This was briefer than the works of Geoffrey of Trani and Hostiensis, but it also had a practical slant. As well as discussing the usual procedures for separation, Bernard raised a new scenario: what if a woman who had not been a virgin at the time of her marriage wanted to claim that her husband was impotent? Obviously a physical inspection of her would reveal nothing. This situation actually arose in a case heard in Paris in 1385.⁴⁸ Bernard recommended that the man be inspected.⁴⁹ He also mentioned a case of impotence which he said had happened to his teacher's brother: the brother consummated his marriage, but was then impotent for seven years before being able to have sex again. For this reason, Bernard said, it was dangerous to assume that impotence was permanent.⁵⁰ Bernard also included some very detailed descriptions of male impotence, suggesting that the man's penis might be '*desiccata*' or '*paraliticata*'. He probably did not draw on medical texts for these terms, since he did not mention the theory of the humours,

⁴⁷ 'Et si illa uxor sit, bonum videtur tunc sortilegium, cum adulterium vitetur. Unde hoc modo fuit maleficiatus comes quidam quia, ut fertur, et ut ego intellexi ab his qui veritatem noverant, per xxx annos stetit et amplius quod non poterat cognoscere nisi uxorem suam, sed postea evanuit.' *Summa*, 4.15, ch. 8, f. 214r; 'videtur' corrected to 'vitetur' from two manuscripts, BL Royal 10.D.IV, f. 249r and Royal 10.E.VIII, f. 180r. 'exemplum comitis The.' BL Royal 10.D.IV, f. 249r, and Royal 10.E.VIII, f. 180r.

⁴⁸ Jacqueline Murray, 'On the Origins and Role of 'Wise Women' in Causes for Annulment on the Grounds of Male Impotence', *Journal of Medieval History* 16, 1990, p. 239

⁴⁹ 'Si gerebat se pro corrupta, quia erat vidua vel ab alio ante matrimonium corrupta, et de hoc constabat, in hoc casu est vir inspiciendus.' Bernardus de Montemirato, *Lectura Aurea super Quinque Libris Decretalium* (Strasbourg, 1510) to X 4.15.5, f. 191v

⁵⁰ 'unde magnum periculum, quia frater magistri mei consummato matrimonio stetit cum uxore per septem annos, quod non cognovit eam nec cognoscere potuit. Postea vero cognovit eam.' *ibid.*, to X 4.15.6, f. 192r

which the physicians used most often to describe impotence; he referred instead to ‘*naturales*’, writers about the natural world more generally.⁵¹

Bernard also added some new information about magic impotence. He took up the question of whether magic could ever be permanent: while Innocent IV said that it never was, many other commentators disagreed with him. Bernard, however, thought that Innocent’s view was appropriate, if the magician could undo their spell, or if the magic object affecting the couple could be retrieved and neutralized: ‘his opinion, however, can be justified if the magician were still alive, or if the magic was done in a place where it was not consumed. To put it another way, [the marriage] is believed to be indissoluble, if [the magic object] has been cast into the earth. But if it has been cast into water or fire, [the marriage] is believed to be dissoluble [because the object cannot be retrieved and destroyed].’⁵² The information about hiding magic items in the earth or casting them into fire or water is new in canon law commentaries, but there are parallels in other sources, such as the lock cast into a well, mentioned in the confession manual of Thomas of Chobham. The *Pantegni* referred to items being placed under the door in the couple’s house, and the theologian Henry of Ghent referred in 1280 to a person being bewitched by a tile ‘placed in a certain place’.⁵³ In the fifteenth century, Matteuccia di Francesco was accused of telling women to burn various items as love spells, including their own hair and the hoof of a she-mule.⁵⁴ Thus Bernard’s methods of magic may well reflect practice, although he gave no indication of where he had heard about them.

Although the works of Hostiensis were very widely read, and Geoffrey of Trani, Bernard of Montemirat and Roffredus also influenced later canonists,⁵⁵ not all writers were as interested as they were in magical cures and practices. Innocent IV did not mention cures for magic in his commentary, and stuck to traditional questions of when

⁵¹ *ibid.*, to X 4.15.5, f. 191v

⁵² ‘dicit Innocens quod pretextu maleficii numquam potest matrimonium dissolvi... Alii glossatores omnes contrarium dicunt. Ipsius autem opinio locum habere posset si viveret maleficus, vel si maleficium esset factum in loco quo non consumetur ipsum. Alias indissolubile creditur, ut si proiectum fuerit [edition: fuerit] in terra. Sed si in aqua vel igne proiectum fuerit, dissolubile [edition: indissolubile] creditur.’ *ibid.*, 4.15.6, f. 192r

⁵³ *Pantegni* see Appendix 1. ‘Utrum tegulam positam in certo loco per quam aliquis dicitur fascinatus aut maleficiatus...’ Henricus de Gandavo, *Quodlibeta* (Paris, 1518, repr. Louvain, 1961), quodlibet 5, question 33, f. 208r

⁵⁴ Domenico Mammoli, ‘The Record of the Trial and Condemnation of a Witch, Matteuccia di Francesco, at Todi, 20 March 1428’, *Res Tudertinae* 14, 1972, pp. 17, 20

⁵⁵ Brundage, *Law*, p. 417; Baumgärtner, p. 241

impotence could lead to an annulment, and how it could be proved. Later writers were also less interested in magic impotence and its cures. William Durandus, a pupil of Hostiensis who wrote the influential *Speculum Iudiciale* in 1271, was very brief and practical, simply listing the pleas that each party should make in court in various situations involving impotence.⁵⁶ Guido de Baysio (d. 1313), writing the *Rosarium*, a commentary on the *Decretum*, in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, was content to quote Tancred, Vincentius Hispanus and Geoffrey of Trani, without adding anything of his own.⁵⁷ William of Pagula, the probable author of the *Summa Summarum*, an early fourteenth-century English compendium of canon law, did the same, quoting Innocent IV, Raymond of Peñafort and Hostiensis as well as some theologians (he mentioned that a man can be impotent with an ugly woman but not with a beautiful one, a point raised by Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas).⁵⁸ Another brief, anonymous commentary, perhaps dating from the early fourteenth century, did not mention magic impotence at all.⁵⁹

The Fourteenth Century

Like their late thirteenth-century counterparts, fourteenth-century canonists said little that was new about magic impotence. The celebrated canonist Joannes Andreae (d. 1348),⁶⁰ in his commentary on the *Liber Extra*, the *Novella*, wrote only two sentences on magic impotence at the end of the chapter on impotence in general: 'It is the same for a bewitched man as regards cohabitation and the oath... But they differ in this, that once the marriage has been dissolved in the same way, both can marry, because magic can be permanent with one woman and not with another, [*Decretum*] C. 33, qu. 1, *Si per sortiaras*.'⁶¹ Joannes went into a little more detail in his additions to William Durandus's *Speculum Iudiciale*, mentioning Roffredus's account of how a man was cured of impotence by being tonsured, and another case of natural impotence

⁵⁶ Gulielmus Durandus, *Speculum Iudiciale* (Basel, 1563), book 4, part 4, 'De frigidis et maleficiatis', p. 428

⁵⁷ Guido de Baysio, *Rosarium* (Venice, 1495), C. 33, q. 1

⁵⁸ *Summa Summarum*, BL MS Royal 10.D.X, 4.15, ff. 200v-202r; see Leonard E. Boyle, 'The *Summa Summarum* and Some Other English Works of Canon Law', reprinted in his *Pastoral Care, Clerical Education and Canon Law, 1200-1400* (London, 1981)

⁵⁹ BL MS Arundel 199, ff. 157r-v; J. Forshall, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, *The Arundel Manuscripts* (London, 1834), p. 52, dates the manuscript to the early fourteenth century.

⁶⁰ See Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, pp. 216-7

⁶¹ 'Idem in maleficiato quoad cohabitationem et iuramentum... Sed in hoc differunt quia eodem modo soluto matrimonio uterque contrahit quia maleficium potest esse perpetuum cum una et non cum alia. xxxiii. q. i. si per sortiaras.' Joannes Andreae, *Summa super Quarto Decretalium* (Cologne, 1507), ch.

reported by the canonist Egidius Fuscariis.⁶² However, far from adding any more information, Joannes was dismissive of the rest of Roffredus's comments: 'Roffredus insists enough on this rubric, and inserts trivial things, of which I will touch on some elsewhere, and omit most.' Later, he quoted Roffredus's trousers-on-head cure in a disapproving tone: 'but Roffredus puts down some enchanters' advice, among which is that they make the bewitched man hold his trousers on his head for an entire day and night. The rest you may see for yourself.'⁶³

Some fourteenth-century canonists went into more detail, but they too were heavily influenced by earlier writers. Franciscus de Zabarella (d. 1417), who taught at Padua and became bishop of Florence in 1410, quoted Geoffrey of Trani on how magic could be permanent if it was given in food or drink, and Hostiensis's citation of Constantine the African.⁶⁴ He also raised a question first discussed at the beginning of the thirteenth century by the theologians Robert of Courson and Geoffrey of Poitiers, that of a man who is cured of impotence by a miracle. Like them, he illustrated the hypothetical case with the example of Lazarus: if Lazarus's wife had remarried in the three days following her husband's death, would she have had to return to Lazarus following his return from the dead?⁶⁵ The commentary of Antonius de Butrio (d. 1408)⁶⁶ was extremely long, but again much of it came from Hostiensis, Innocent IV and other earlier canonists. Antonius asked the same questions as they had about magic impotence: how do you prove it, can the spell ever be lifted, how do you tell if it precedes the marriage or not, and he quoted Hostiensis's recommendation of the frivolous cures in the medical texts.⁶⁷ However, he was also concerned about how these discussions of magic and impotence would be useful in practice. For this

⁶² 'secundum Roffredus, qui dicit... quod quidam archiepiscopus beneventanus quendam qui de frigiditate coram eo libelli dare volebat, fecit ut clericum radi cum clerica valde magna...' 'Egidius, ubi supra dicit casum se habuisse de facto, quia vir ad cohabitationem triennii petebat sibi uxorem restitui...' Joannes Andreae, *Additiones ad Speculum Gulielmi Durandi* (Strasbourg, 1475), 4.15, f. 285r

⁶³ 'Roffredus satis instat huic rubrice, et truffas inseruit, quarum aliquas tangam, et plures obmittam'; 'sed Roffredus ponit de conciliis incantatorum inter que est quod faciunt maleficiatum tenere serrabulas suas in capite integris die et nocte. Reliqua per te videas.' *ibid.*, 4.15, f. 284v-5r.

⁶⁴ 'et dicit Goffredus quod maleficium est perpetuum si datur in cibo vel in potu...' Franciscus de Zabarella, commentary on X 4.15.6, BL MS Arundel 432, f. 116r. 'dicit autem Hostiensis quod Constantinus in Practica in rubrica de hiis qui maleficiis impediti cum uxoribus coire non possunt, dicit quod maleficium favarum pessimum est...' commentary on X 4.15.7, f. 120v. On Franciscus, see von Schulte, vol. 2, pp. 283-4

⁶⁵ 'Queritur si Lazarus resuscitatus repeterit uxorem vel alia bona?' Franciscus de Zabarella, commentary on X 4.15.6, f. 117r

⁶⁶ Antonius de Butrio, *Lectura super Quarto Decretalium* (Rome, 1474), to X 4.15, no foliation

⁶⁷ 'Et consuluit hic Hostiensis quod recurratur ad illa que ibi ponuntur ad alia remedia medicorum, licet etiam quedam ex illis videantur superstitiosa, tamen credendum est auctori in facultate sua.' *ibid.*, gloss to X 4.15.7

reason, he did not have much patience with the question of Lazarus's wife: 'For this case will never happen to you, therefore you should not tire your understanding out on it.'⁶⁸

Conclusion

Apart from the decretist Paucapalea, who had said that cases of magic impotence happened in practice, the canonists' interest in how the law of magic and impotence related to the real world began in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, in the works of Huguccio, Bernard of Pavia, John of Wales and Tancred, coinciding with the beginning of the pastoral movement. The canonists' use of information derived from practice peaked in the mid thirteenth century, with Geoffrey of Trani, Roffredus of Benevento, Hostiensis and Bernard of Montemirat. As a result of the pastoral movement and the increasing numbers of cases coming before the church courts, these canonists were hearing more than their earlier counterparts about what the laity were actually doing. After the mid thirteenth century, however, the canonists' interest in popular practice wore off to a large extent: they continued to copy what earlier writers had said, but they no longer brought in new information. At least some fourteenth-century writers still wanted their commentaries to have a practical use, as Antonius de Butrio's comment on the question of Lazarus's wife shows, but the pastoral interest which had caused some thirteenth-century canonists to add new information to their discussions of magic impotence and its cures seems to have gone.

It is unlikely that the lack of new information about magical practices in canon law commentaries after the mid thirteenth century means that there was less impotence magic actually happening after this time. The medical texts, by contrast, became more interested in impotence magic from the fourteenth century onwards. The number of marriage cases coming to the church courts also remained high in the fourteenth century, although it declined sharply, in England at least, in the fifteenth.⁶⁹ Moreover, prosecutions for all kinds of magic began to rise in the late fourteenth century, raising awareness of magic in general.⁷⁰ Thus there seems to be no reason in the outside world why the canonists should lose interest in magical practices. The explanation probably lies instead in the canonists themselves. It is likely that the thirteenth-

⁶⁸ 'dum Lazarus resurrexit an petere potuisset uxorem... Hic enim casus nunquam tibi eveniet, ideo non fatiges in hoc tuum intellectum.' *ibid.*, gloss to X 4.15.6

⁶⁹ Helmholz, pp. 166-7

⁷⁰ Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials* (London, 1976), p. 18

century writers were deemed to have said it all. How many lists of bizarre impotence cures were really necessary? Joannes Andreae, for one, referred his readers to earlier discussions of magical cures. The mid thirteenth-century canonists were still being widely copied and read in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: of the nine manuscripts of Innocent IV's commentary in the British Library, for example, eight are dated by their cataloguers to the fourteenth century;⁷¹ and of the twenty-nine manuscripts of Hostiensis's *Summa* which also contain an additional question on excommunication, listed by Martin Bertram, sixteen date from the fourteenth century or later.⁷² The fact that Geoffrey of Trani, Hostiensis, Innocent IV and Roffredus were all printed and, presumably, read in the early modern period also corroborates the argument that their discussions were seen as in some way conclusive.

The very fact that the canon law commentaries on magic and impotence were driven by the pastoral movement probably also played a part in the decline in interest after the mid thirteenth century. It is likely that over time, the novelty of lay magical practices simply wore off. The canonists knew what the laity were doing, and were no longer surprised by it. Once they had recorded the basic 'facts' about impotence magic, canonists continued to work with these and assumed that they were still true a hundred years later. This approach contrasts with that of some (but not all) pastoral writers, such as Brother Rudolf, discussed in chapter 5, and also the medical writers, who continued to base their discussions of magical practices on observation. The canonists' reliance on earlier discussions of magical practices continued to some extent into the fifteenth century but, as will be seen in chapter 9, at least some canonists adjusted their commentaries to deal with the new 'fact' of witchcraft.

⁷¹ Arundel 461, Arundel 447, Royal 9.C.IX, Royal 9.C.X, Royal 9.F.III, Royal 10.D.III, Royal 11.C.IX and Royal 11.E.II. The Arundel manuscripts are catalogued by Forshall; the Royal ones by George F. Warner, and Julius P. Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collections* vol. 1 (London, 1921).

⁷² Martin Bertram, 'Handschriften der Summe Hostiensis mit der "Quaestio" am Ende', *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* 16, 1986, pp. 96-7

Chapter 7

Necromancers, Confessions and the Power of Demons: Theology, 1220-1400

Impotence magic entered thirteenth- and fourteenth-century theology because *Si per sortiaris* (the ninth-century ruling by Hincmar of Rheims which permitted a bewitched couple to separate and remarry if they could not be cured) was included in the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard in book 4, distinction 34.¹ In the 1220s, Alexander of Hales adopted the *Sentences* as a set text for the theology degree at the University of Paris, on which all students had to comment,² and so generations of students were forced to discuss Hincmar's passage, alongside many other subjects. From Paris, the practice of commenting on the *Sentences* spread to the University of Oxford, where the Dominican Richard Fishacre wrote the earliest surviving Oxford commentary in the 1240s.³ The sentence commentators' view of magic and impotence is more complex than that of the canonists, pastoral writers or medical writers. At first, they followed the canonists very closely, but from the 1240s, they began to ask new questions and brought in other sources of information. The first writer to do this was Albertus Magnus, who was prompted by image-magic texts like those described in chapter 4 to ask questions about how impotence magic worked, and how it could be cured. Magical texts soon gave way to other sources of information, however, including debates about the powers of demons, and the pastoral movement, in the form of what the friars had heard in confession.

Although the *Sentences* had received glosses like those of Master Odo in the twelfth century, the first full-length commentaries were written at Paris in the 1220s by William of Auxerre and Alexander of Hales.⁴ In the early 1230s, Hugh of St Cher made an important innovation when he structured his commentary around a series of questions raised by each topic, rather than following the exact structure of Peter Lombard's text, and his approach was followed by later commentators.⁵ Thereafter,

¹ Petrus Lombardus, *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*, ed. Ignatius Brady, vol. 2 (Grottaferrata, 1981), p. 465

² Ignatius Brady, 'The Distinctions of Lombard's Book of Sentences and Alexander of Hales', *Franciscan Studies* 25, 1965, p. 98

³ R. James Long and Maura O'Carroll, *The Life and Works of Richard Fishacre, OP: Prolegomena to the Edition of his Commentary on the Sentences* (Munich, 1999), p. 39

⁴ Alexander of Hales, *Glossa in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, no editors named, vol. 4 (Quaracchi, 1957), p. 18

⁵ John Fisher, 'Hugh of St Cher and the Development of Medieval Theology', *Speculum* 31, 1956, p. 60

until the early fourteenth century, sentence commentaries became ever longer and more sophisticated, and soon began to discuss issues that Peter Lombard had never raised. The most influential commentators in this period were Sts Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas, both writing at Paris in the 1250s, but also notable were the Dominican Peter of Tarentaise (1250s), who went on to become Pope Innocent V;⁶ Richard of Middleton, a Franciscan who taught at Oxford and wrote his commentary shortly after 1281;⁷ and John Quidort (or John of Paris), who wrote at Paris between 1292 and 1296.⁸ The Franciscan theologian Duns Scotus, who probably wrote the longer version of his commentary at Oxford shortly after 1300,⁹ also had a profound influence on subsequent commentators, including the Franciscans Joannes de Bassolis (between 1313 and 1347) and Petrus Aureolus (1316-20), and the Dominican Durand of Saint-Pourçain (1325-7).¹⁰

Another Dominican, Pierre de la Palud (1311-15),¹¹ developed his discussion of impotence magic along different lines from any of the writers mentioned above. Pierre listed five different ways in which impotence magic could work: putting a demon physically between the couple; using the occult properties of natural objects to decrease a man's libido; making the man hate the woman in question; paralysing the penis; and blocking the channels by which medieval medical writers believed that semen was transported from the brain to the penis.¹² However, Pierre was one of the last fourteenth-century commentators to discuss every section of Peter Lombard's text. Many sentence commentators after around 1320 concentrated on the more abstract philosophical issues in Book 1 of the *Sentences*, and said little or nothing

⁶ J. N. D. Kelly, *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 198-9

⁷ Josef Lechner, *Die Sakramentenlehre des Richard von Mediavilla* (Munich, 1925), p. 11

⁸ John Quidort, 'Commentaire sur les Sentences', ed. Jean-Pierre Muller, *Studia Anselmiana* 47, 1961, p. x

⁹ C. R. S. Harris, *Duns Scotus*, vol. 1 (New York, 1959), p. 8

¹⁰ See Friedrich Stegmüller, *Repertorium Commentariorum in Sententias Petri Lombardi* (Würzburg, 1947), vol. 1.1, pp. 194-6 and 84-92, vol. 2, pp. 314-8

¹¹ On Pierre, see Jean Dunbabin, *A Hound of God: Pierre de la Palud and the Fourteenth-Century Church* (Oxford, 1991)

¹² 'Habet enim ex hoc, quod est spiritus, potestatem super creaturam corporalem ad motum localem prohibendum, vel faciendum: unde potest corpora impedire ne sibi etiam mutuo appropinquent, vel directe, vel indirecte, interponendo se inter eos in corpore assumpto: sicut accidit sponso, qui desponsaverat idolum, et nihilominus contraxit cum quadam iuvenula, nec potuit eam cognoscere propter hoc. Secundo modo potest hominem inflammare ad actum illum, vel refrigerare ab actu illo, adhibendo occulte virtutes rerum, quas optime novit ad hoc validas. Tertio, turbando imaginationem, et estimationem, que reddit mulierem exosam, quia potest imaginationem imprimere. Quarto, prohibendo directe rigorem membri, sicut et motum localem cuiuscunque organi. Quinto, prohibendo immissionem spirituum ad membra, in quibus est virtus motiva, quasi intercludendo vias seminis, ne ad vasa generationis descendat, vel ne ab eis recedat, vel ne excidatur, vel ne emittatur, et multis aliis modis.' Petrus de Palude, *In quartum sententiarum* (Salamanca, 1552), 34.2, p. 388

about impotence magic, or about marriage in general.¹³ Commentators who did this included Robert Holcot and William of Ockham at Oxford,¹⁴ and Hugolinus of Orvieto at Paris.¹⁵ Those writers who did mention impotence magic often just summarized the rules very briefly.¹⁶ One exception to this trend was Thomas of Strasbourg, an Augustinian canon who became a master of theology at Paris in 1341, and commented on Book 4 of the *Sentences* in full.¹⁷

I will begin by looking at how theological discussions of impotence magic developed in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and some of the sources that influenced them, before moving on to some of the particular questions that they discussed. The theologians shared some of these questions with contemporary canonists, pastoral writers and medical writers, such as an interest in the legitimacy of using magical cures, but they also considered more abstract issues that the writers in other genres did not raise. Did magic actually exist? What was the role of demons in causing or curing magic impotence, and how did this relate to the role of human magicians? These questions about the powers and nature of demons first seem to have arisen in the mid thirteenth century, and corresponded with a new interest in angels, which peaked at the same time. Theological discussions of both demons and angels were probably prompted by the works of Aristotle, which were being translated from Greek and Arabic into Latin, and provided new and more precise categories with which to study the nature of spiritual beings.¹⁸ The works of Aristotle also gave theologians a narrower model of causation to work with than had been the case earlier, making it more likely that inexplicable events were seen as supernatural and therefore demonic.¹⁹ It was this interest in demons that most set theological discussions of impotence magic apart from those of other disciplines, and it was here that theologians

¹³ William J. Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth-Century England* (Princeton, 1987), pp. 275, 303; J. Catto, 'Theology and Theologians 1220-1330', in *The History of the University of Oxford* vol. 1 (Oxford, 1984), p. 477; Pierre J. Payer, *The Bridling of Desire: Views of Sex in the Later Middle Ages* (Toronto, 1993), p. 10

¹⁴ Robert Holcot, *Super Quattuor Libros Sententiarum Questiones* (Lyons, 1497); Guillelmus de Ockham, *Quaestiones in Librum Quartum Sententiarum* ed. R. Wood and G. Gál (St Bonaventure, NY, 1984)

¹⁵ Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius in 4 Libros Sententiarum* ed. W. Eckermann, *Cassiciacum*, Suppl. 11, 1998

¹⁶ For example, Michael Aiguani of Bologna in 1362-3: BN MS lat. 14534, f. 179v; and Conrad of Ebrach in 1369-70: BN MS lat. 3070, f. 132v. On these writers, see Stegmüller, vol. 1, pp. 262-6 and 71-3.

¹⁷ Thomas of Strasbourg (de Argentina), *Commentaria in IIII Libros Sententiarum* (Venice, 1564, repr. Ridgewood, NJ, 1965), f. 157r-158r

¹⁸ David Keck, *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1998), p. 73

¹⁹ Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London, 1972), pp. 142-4

began to develop the image of the devil-worshipping witch, which did not appear in canon law, pastoral literature or medicine until the fifteenth century.

The Sentence Commentators and their Sources (1): Canon Law and Magic Texts

William of Auxerre, Alexander of Hales, Roland of Cremona (c.1230), and Hugh of St Cher were the most prominent of the few sentence commentators whose work can be definitely dated to before the 1240s.²⁰ They were all based in Paris, but the Oxford theologian Richard Fishacre drew heavily on them in the 1240s. All of these writers relied on canon law when they discussed magic and impotence. Alexander, Hugh and Richard took much of their material from the canonist Tancred of Bologna's *Summa on Marriage*, via the theologian Guy of Orchelles's *Summa on the Sacraments* (c.1216), which followed Tancred very closely.²¹ All three commentators divided impotence into natural and 'accidental' (a term that encompassed both castration and magic), temporary and permanent, preceding and following marriage, just as Tancred and the other canonists did. Then they discussed the process of annulment: the three-year trial period, the methods of proof, and who could remarry. Like the canon law commentaries, they also cited Gratian's *Decretum* and, after 1234, the *Liber Extra*.

William of Auxerre's discussion was a little different. Followed by Roland of Cremona, William adopted the view expressed by a minority of canonists that magic impotence could never be a permanent impediment to marriage, 'because God permits some people to be bewitched because of the smallness of their faith, so magic can be lifted by great faith, and destroyed by the prayers of the church, and by the same art through which it was made.'²² As in canon law, this view was going out of fashion, and William and Roland seem to have been the last theologians to hold it. Albertus Magnus, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, and Peter of Tarentaise, by contrast, all stated that 'some people say' that no magic is permanent - and then argued against

²⁰ William of Auxerre, *Summa Aurea*, ed. Jean Ribailier (Paris and Grottaferrata, 1985), vol. 4, pp. 442-5; Alexander of Hales, pp. 537-64; Roland of Cremona, *In 4 Sent.* 34, Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, MS 795, f. 137v; Hugh of St Cher, *In 4 Sent.* 34, Evreux Bibliothèque Municipale MS 15L, ff. 113r-114v. Additionally, on Roland, see Ephrem Filthaut, *Roland von Cremona OP und die Anfänge der Scholastik im Predigerorden* (Vechta, 1936).

²¹ Alexander of Hales, p. 538, footnote. Guy of Orchelles, *Tractatus de Sacramentis*, ed. Damian and Odulph van den Eynde (Louvain, 1953), p. 211, footnote.

²² 'quia propter parvitatem fidei permittit Deus aliquos maleficiari, unde maleficia possunt dissolvi per magnitudinem fidei, et per orationes ecclesie, et per eandem artem per quam facta sunt destrui.' William of Auxerre, p. 443. Roland of Cremona uses the same words, f. 137v.

them.²³ Even when they took a different view from most writers, however, William and Roland remained largely dependent on canon law for their material and the questions they asked.

In the 1240s, the place of canon law in the theological discussions of magic impotence changed. The most influential writers of this period were the Franciscan Eudes Rigaud, later archbishop of Rouen, and the Dominican Albertus Magnus, who later wrote many scientific works and commentaries on Aristotle. Albertus completed his sentence commentary in 1249, after a period of studying and teaching theology in Paris.²⁴ Eudes seems not to have written a commentary on book 4 of the *Sentences*: although several manuscripts of his commentary on books 1-3 (written in c.1242-5) have fourth books attached, they are not thought to be authentic.²⁵ However, several commentaries have been attributed to Eudes's students, including two in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale manuscripts lat. 3424 and 10640.²⁶ These writers of the 1240s continued to summarize the canon law on magic impotence, such as the distinctions between natural and magical impotence and the rules for annulment,²⁷ but they also asked new questions, and these questions were taken up by later commentators.

Albertus Magnus was the first writer to talk about magic impotence independently of the canonists, and he focused on how the magic involved might work. The early sentence commentators had included some information on this subject, taken from canon law. Following the ordinary gloss on the *Decretum* and the *Summa* of Huguccio, William of Auxerre said that the person who had performed the magic could also cure it,²⁸ and Alexander of Hales followed the canonist John of Wales in

²³ Bonaventure, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2.2, in *Opera Omnia* 4 (Quaracchi, 1889), pp. 772-3; Thomas Aquinas, *In 4 Sent.* 34.3 in *Opera Omnia* 11, ed. Luis Vivès (Paris, 1874), pp. 167-8; Peter of Tarantaise, *In IV Libros Sententiarum Commentaria*, vol. 4 (Toulouse, 1651, repr. Ridgewood, NJ, 1964), 34.4, p. 343

²⁴ James A. Weisheipl, 'The Life and Works of St Albert the Great', in James A. Weisheipl, ed., *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences: Commemorative Essays 1980* (Toronto, 1980), p. 22

²⁵ Kilian F. Lynch, 'The Alleged Fourth Book on the Sentences of Odo Rigaud and Related Documents', *Franciscan Studies* 9, 1949, pp. 87-145

²⁶ Stegmüller, pp. 294-6

²⁷ Albertus Magnus, *In 4 Sent.* 34.4-7 and 10, in *Opera Omnia* 30, ed. Auguste Borgnet (Paris, 1894), pp. 331-5, 338; BN MS lat. 3424 f. 223r; BN MS lat. 10640 ff. 70r-v

²⁸ 'nam dixit Cardinalis quod iste finis non tenet; quia ut dixit, nullum maleficium est perpetuum, quin saltem per ipsum actorem tolli potest' *Decretum Gratiani cum Glossis Johanni Teutonicis* (Basel, 1512), gloss to C.33, q. 1, c.4, *nequibunt*; 'vix est aliquis ita maleficiatus quin possit solvi presertim per actorem maleficii, scilicet qui fecit illum.' Huguccio, *Summa*, BN MS lat. 3892, f. 320r

saying that cures might work by the secret force of words or herbs.²⁹ Albertus, however, said far more on the subject, and his view was based not on the concerns about popular practices that had influenced the canonists and pastoral writers, but on magical texts like those discussed in chapter 4. This interest in magical texts is also evident in Albertus's other works: when discussing the powers of engraved gems in *De Mineralibus*, he mentioned many of the alleged authors of the image-magic texts recently translated from Arabic, including Germa of Babylon, Hermes, Ptolemy and Thâbit ibn Qurra. In his *De Anima*, discussing how demons could take on visible appearances, he said that 'we ourselves have also experienced the truth of this from magicians.'³⁰

When he discussed magic impotence, Albertus cited magical texts by name. For example, he described a magical image that caused impotence: 'in the *Book of Images* it is taught how to make an image which bewitches a person straightforwardly: for it makes them love chastity, and it cuts off all intercourse. Therefore it seems that someone can be bewitched with respect to everyone.'³¹ He was probably thinking of an image similar to those described in the image-magic texts quoted in chapter 4, which likewise claimed to make a man or woman impotent with every partner. Albertus also mentioned a 'book of Hermes, which is entitled *The Secrets of Aristotle*.' This name does not fit any one known text, but it corresponds to the titles and attributed authors of several works. Many astrological and magical works were attributed to Hermes,³² and the *Speculum Astronomiae*, a mid thirteenth-century work categorizing magical texts, mentioned a book attributed to Aristotle called the *Death of the Soul*.³³ Aristotle was also believed to be the author of the *Secret of Secrets*, a book on kingship that in some manuscripts included a section on talismans.³⁴

²⁹ 'per vim secretam verborum vel herbarum' Alexander of Hales, p. 544; 'secreta quadam vi a deo collata herbis aut verbis vel aliis rebus.' Franz Gillmann, *Des Johannes Galensis Apparatus zur Compilatio III in der Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen* (Mainz, 1938), p. 51

³⁰ Albertus Magnus, *De Mineralibus*, trans. Dorothy Wyckoff (Oxford, 1967), p. 134; 'cuius veritatem etiam nos ipsi sumus experti in magicis', quoted in Loris Sturlese, 'Saints et Magiciens: Albert le Grand en face d'Hermès Trismégiste', *Archives de Philosophie* 43, 1980, p. 617

³¹ 'in libro *Imaginum* docetur fieri imago que maleficiat simpliciter: facit enim amare castitatem, et universaliter abscindit coitum: ergo videtur, quod aliquis potest esse maleficiatus ad omnes.' Albertus, *In 4 Sent.* 34.10, p. 338

³² Charles Burnett, 'The Establishment of Medieval Hermeticism', in Peter Linehan and Janet Nelson, ed., *The Medieval World* (London, 2001), p. 121

³³ 'Mors Animae': Paola Zambelli, *The 'Speculum Astronomiae' and its Enigma* (Boston, 1992), p. 247

³⁴ Steven J. Williams, *The Scholarly Career of the Pseudo-Aristotelian 'Secretum Secretorum' in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Century*, PhD Thesis, Northwestern University, 1991, p. 80.

These magical texts prompted Albertus to ask new questions about magic and impotence. Whereas earlier sentence commentators and canonists had taken it for granted that magic could cause impotence, Albertus seems to have been the first theologian to debate ‘whether someone can be impeded from sexual potency by the impediment of magic?’³⁵, and he answered that the church fathers and canon law said so, but also that ‘this is also clear to all those who know something about necromancy and making images.’³⁶ Albertus also seems to have been the first sentence commentator to discuss whether it was legitimate to use magical cures, and again he was prompted by what he had read in a magical text: ‘the necromancers teach that one magic is kept away by another, as is clear in the book of Hermes, which is entitled *The Secrets of Aristotle*.’³⁷ He then answered this objection by saying that ‘it should be said that they [the necromancers] are harmful teachers when they teach this knowledge: and when demons cease from harming [someone], then they seem to cure, as it is said in the *Life of St Bartholomew*.’³⁸ This is typical of Albertus’s use of magical texts. He usually cited them as objections to the point he wished to make, and then argued against them using the Bible and saints’ lives. Only once did he not argue against what the magical texts said, and this was when they agreed with canon law and the church fathers that magic could cause impotence. However, even though he usually argued against them, it is clear that Albertus’s reading of the magical texts encouraged him to move away from the earlier sentence commentators’ canon-law-dominated approach to magic impotence.

Although Albertus’s interest in magical texts was extremely important, it was also unusual. Only one other writer seems to have referred to them when he discussed magic impotence: an anonymous student of Eudes Rigaud, whose commentary survives in Paris, BN MS lat. 10640.³⁹ This author copied Albertus’s reference to the book of images that taught how to make a man impotent with respect to all women,⁴⁰

³⁵ ‘An maleficii impedimento aliquis potest impediri a potentia coeundi?’ Albertus, *In 4 Sent.* 34.8, p. 336

³⁶ ‘nulli dubium esse debet multos esse maleficiatos vi et potestate demonum: quia hoc sancti patres dicunt, et ecclesia super hoc iura promulgavit: hoc patet etiam omnibus illis qui de necromantia et de factis imaginum aliquid noverunt.’ *ibid.*, 34.8, p. 336

³⁷ ‘Necromantici enim docent unum maleficium per aliud excludi: sicut patet in libro Hermetis, qui *de secretis Aristotelis* intitulatur.’ *ibid.*, 34.9, p. 337

³⁸ ‘dicendum, quod illi ut pestiferi docent noscere: et cum cessant demones a lesione, tunc curare videntur, sicut dicitur in vita S. Bartholomei.’ *ibid.*, 34.9, p. 337

³⁹ Stegmüller, p. 296

⁴⁰ ‘hoc habetur ex libro Ymaginum, ubi docetur fieri [MS: filius] ymago que maleficiat simpliciter, et facit perpetuo amare castitatem.’ Paris BN MS lat. 10640, f. 70r

but he also talked about magic in ways that Albertus did not. He came up with a complex scheme that categorized several different kinds of impotence magic. First, the magic could be done in several ways: ‘Thus it is called magic of one sort in itself [*per se*], of another through an object [*per accidens*]’, but the first was more common.⁴¹ In magic *per se*, several factors were combined. The passage is hard to decipher, but may read as follows:

‘The first is divine permission, by a just, even if hidden, judgement. The second is a diabolical operation (for demons thrive on bitter emotions) and by the knowledge of the times of things, the virtue of herbs and occult characters. The third is a suitable material, like a stone or herbs that have an occult virtue or seem to have, and I say this on account of the evidence (?), because there is no reason why they produce their effects. The fourth is some manifest or hidden friendship between demons and men, and so through characters, invocations, conjurations, sacrifices, diagrams (?) and cuts, [a demon] has men invoke him so that he appears to be coerced. And then he teaches how to make some mixture, or find a herb or stone so that when a man prepares to have intercourse with his wife, it impedes him.’⁴²

Thus the anonymous author listed a whole range of factors which converge in making someone impotent: demons provide the power behind the spell, but they work with the permission of God and through the occult properties of written characters, herbs and other substances. Moreover, in order to learn about these substances, the magician must consciously invoke the demons using the techniques of learned magic, such as invocations, written characters and sacrifices. For this author, then, there seems to have been no such thing as natural magic; it was all demonic. Magic *per accidens* could also be demonic, and was performed in similar ways, but it was potentially curable: ‘But permanent [impotence] *per accidens* is what is done by giving some potion, or by the invocation of demons, which can be lifted by something opposite. However, when the Lord does not permit it to be lifted, or the person who knows how to lift it has died, or even when they do not know how to destroy what they have done,

⁴¹ ‘Sic [MS: Fit] autem hoc maleficium dicitur quiddam per se, quiddam per accidens. Si per se, ut frequenter ibi concurrunt...’ BN lat. 10640, f. 70r

⁴² ‘Primum est permissio divina, iusto iudicio etsi latente. Secundum est operatio diabolica (nam demones vigent acrimonia sensus) et cognitione rerum temporalium, virtute [MS: virtutem] herbarum et occulorum caratorum. Tercium est materia congrua, ut lapis vel herbe, que habent virtutem occultam, vel habere videntur, et hoc dico propter ?evidentiam, quia [MS: que] nullam rationem habent [MS: habere] ad productionem effectuum suorum. Quartam est familiaritas aliqua manifesta vel occulta inter demones et homines, et ideo per caracteres, invocationes, coniurationes, sacrificia, ?scemata [MS: ?sterimata], cissuras facit se invocari ab hominibus ut videatur cogi. Et tunc docet compositionem aliquam facere, vel herbam vel lapidem invenire ut cum iste se preparat ad cognoscendum suam impediatur eum.’ *ibid*, ff. 70r-v

and it is not taken away, magic *per accidens* becomes permanent.’⁴³ The author then added a third type of magic, which was called ‘transitory’ or ‘remedial’, which was ‘quickly done and quickly lifted.’⁴⁴

The anonymous author of this commentary gave no indication of where he learned any of this information, but his reference to magic *per se* being the most common suggests that he thought that these kinds of magic were really happening. Only the initial reference to the book of images can be traced to Albertus Magnus, although elsewhere in his sentence commentary, Albertus provided a similar list of ways of doing magic: ‘invocations, conjurations, sacrifices, suffumigations and adorations.’⁴⁵ Like Albertus, the anonymous author may have been drawing on magical texts for his reference to the occult properties of objects, invocations, characters and sacrifices, since they include all of these things. However, the case records and anecdotes about impotence magic, and medical compendia like that of Gilbertus Anglicus (see below, ch. 8, and Appendix 2), also mention the use of certain objects and writings outside the context of learned magic, so the author could equally have been referring to these sorts of practices, and interpreting them as demonic. This could even be the case with the reference to sacrifices: leaving a child’s head under the bed, for example, as in the story told by Master Odo (see ch. 3), could easily be interpreted as a sacrifice to demons. It is also possible that the author was, like William of Auvergne and sometimes Albertus Magnus, conflating new and traditional forms of magic to make a single picture. At the very least, this anonymous commentary shows how difficult it could be, and still can be, to distinguish between learned and popular, natural and demonic magic in some medieval sources.

The questions that the magical texts prompted Albertus Magnus to ask did not replace the use of canon law altogether. Indeed, some later sentence commentators still discussed canon law at length. Pierre de la Palud quoted the canonists Raymond of Peñafort and Hostiensis, and Roman law, but he was not typical of most theologians, because he had trained in canon law before joining the Dominican order.⁴⁶ Richard of

⁴³ ‘Perpetuum vero per accidens est quod fit per dationem alicuius potionis, vel invocationis demonum, que per contrarium aliquod tolli potest. Tamen quando dominus non permittit tolli, vel aliquis scit tollere qui moritur vel etiam quando nescit ipse idem qui fecit destruere, non sublato eo, perpetuatur maleficium per accidens.’ *ibid.*, f. 70v

⁴⁴ ‘Transitorium vero vel remediale est quando cito fit et cito tollitur.’ *ibid.*, f. 70v

⁴⁵ ‘invocationes, coniurationes, sacrificia, suffumigationes et adorationes’ Albertus, *In 2 Sent.* 7.9, in *Opera Omnia* 27, ed. Auguste Borgnet (Paris, 1894), p. 164

⁴⁶ Dunbabin, pp. 42-3

Middleton discussed whether magic that followed the couple's wedding vows but preceded the consummation of the marriage was an impediment to marriage, an issue raised by several canonists and pastoral writers. He concluded that 'the general opinion holds that if it is certain that [the magic] followed the exchange of consent, but not the consummation, the bond of marriage is not annulled because of this.'⁴⁷ Duns Scotus, who may have been taught by Richard at Oxford,⁴⁸ agreed, although he admitted that a case like this would be difficult to judge.⁴⁹

Some theologians also continued to discuss the rules for annulment. Richard of Middleton argued that if a couple who had been separated because of magic impotence later regained the ability to have sex with each other, they should return to their marriage, as was the rule for natural impotence: 'such people should be called back to their first marriage, because the sentence of annulment was pronounced on them in error.'⁵⁰ William Rothwell, a Dominican writing at Oxford in the early fourteenth century, agreed that the church had mistaken a temporary impediment for a permanent one,⁵¹ and this view was also shared by the fourteenth-century pastoral writer Astesanus of Asti (see above, ch. 5). On the other hand, Joannes de Bassolis was willing to differ from the canonists entirely over the issue of female impotence. In the case of a woman whose vagina is too narrow for her to have sex with her first husband, but not with her second, Joannes recommended that the first marriage should not be reinstated if the second was successful,⁵² a judgement which was contrary to the decretal *Fraternitatis* (X 4.15.6).

Thus canon law was always important in theological discussions of magic and impotence, because it defined the different kinds of impotence and how they should be

⁴⁷ 'Communis opinio etiam tenet quod si certum esset quod esset secutum matrimonium ratum, non tamen consummatum, non propter hoc dirimeretur vinculum matrimonii.' Richard of Middleton, *Super Quartum Sententiarum* (Venice, 1499), 34.3.1, f. 218v

⁴⁸ Harris, p. 165

⁴⁹ 'iam data est potestas, et si impedimentum usus accidat, non propter hoc rescindere potest datio prior, licet difficile esset iudicare...' Duns Scotus, *In 4 Sent.* 34, in *Opera Omnia* 19 (Paris, 1894, repr. Farnborough, 1969), p. 401

⁵⁰ 'tales sunt ad primum matrimonium revocandi, quia sententia divortii super eos lata fuit per errorem' Richard of Middleton, *In 4 Sent.* 34.3.2, f. 219r; Peter of Tarentaise *In 4 Sent.* 34.4, p. 343

⁵¹ 'si autem post separationem redit potentia priorem cognoscendi, debet ei reddi quia temporale fuit impedimentum.' William Rothwell, *In 4 Sent.* 34, BL MS Harley 3211, f. 132r

⁵² Joannes de Bassolis, *In III et IV Sententiarum Opus* (Paris, 1517), 34, f. 115r

dealt with,⁵³ but the commentary of Albertus Magnus nonetheless represents a watershed. Before Albertus, canon law was the driving force behind the handful of sentence commentaries that can be definitely assigned to this period. Afterwards, the situation changed. Richard of Middleton was interested in legal questions, and Pierre de la Palud had read Hostiensis, but many writers simply summarized the rules for separation without referring to contemporary canonists. Canon law remained an important feature of the discussions after the 1240s, but it was no longer the only one.

The Sentence Commentators and their Sources (2): The Pastoral Movement

In the 1250s, Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas took up Albertus Magnus's discussions of whether magic could make people impotent, and whether magical cures should be used, but they did not include Albertus's references to magical texts. Aquinas knew about some forms of learned magic, since he later discussed image magic and the *Ars Notoria*, a procedure for gaining knowledge by meditating on a set of figures, in his *Summa Theologica*.⁵⁴ His sentence commentary is an early work, and it is possible that he had not encountered magical texts at that stage, but if he had, he did not see them as relevant to the question of magic impotence. Bonaventure likewise did not mention magical texts in this part of his sentence commentary. There is one possible exception to this statement, however. Both writers stated that enchanters had more power over snakes than other animals, in the same way as the devil had more power over the sexual organs than other parts of the body.⁵⁵ They may have been thinking of the procedures to keep away snakes which are found in some magical texts,⁵⁶ but on the other hand, Aquinas gave a reference from Psalm 58,4-5 to 'the deaf asp which stops its ears and will not listen to the sound of the charmer'.⁵⁷ There was thus no need for Bonaventure and Aquinas to turn to magical texts to find the idea that snakes could be controlled by magic, although they may have done.

Instead of citing magical texts, Aquinas and Bonaventure took their information about magic impotence from the pastoral movement described in chapter 5. Both writers

⁵³ Josef Löffler, 'Die Störungen des geschlechtlichen Vermögens in der Literatur der autoritativen Theologie des Mittelalters', *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse* 6, 1958, pp. 314-7

⁵⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, translated by the Dominican Friars from the English-Speaking Provinces vol. 40, (London, 1968), 2a 2ae q. 96, art 1 and 2, pp. 70-77.

⁵⁵ 'unde plus per incantationes serpentes quam aves capiuntur' Bonaventure, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2, p. 773

⁵⁶ For example, 'Cum volueris ut non impedian te serpentes', 'Cum volueris ligare serpentes' BL MS Harley 80, ff. 76r-v

⁵⁷ *Summa Theologica*, 2a 2ae q. 96, art. 4, pp. 80-1

cited magical practitioners' confessions as proof that not every form of magic could be lifted: 'but not every [spell] can be dissolved by magic, or human aid, because the magicians, as is known from their confession, know how to do some spells, which they themselves, once they have been converted to penance, cannot destroy.'⁵⁸ Like the canonist Hostiensis, Bonaventure and Aquinas could have heard these confessions themselves, or been told about them by fellow friars. There is evidence that friars shared information that they had learned in confession within the order.⁵⁹ They may also have been referring to magicians encountered by the inquisition. Although thirteenth-century inquisitors were much more interested in heresy than magic, they did sometimes turn up magical practitioners. The Toulouse inquisition records of 1270-3, for example, record that Isambard of Saint-Antonin employed a female diviner to cure his wife's barrenness, which he attributed to magic.⁶⁰ Bonaventure's reference to the magicians being moved to penitence may imply that he had heard about them through the confessional, but the two sources of information were not mutually exclusive. Nor were Aquinas and Bonaventure the only theologians to refer to real practices in their chapters on magic impotence: the author of an anonymous early fourteenth-century commentary said at one point that 'this and things much greater occur and happen every day.'⁶¹

Duns Scotus also knew about magical practices, although he did not mention the source of his information. He disagreed with Bonaventure and Aquinas, and the canonist Geoffrey of Trani, who had all argued that even the person who cast a magic spell could not always lift it. In contrast to these writers, Duns stated that a demon would only make someone impotent while the sign of its pact with the bewitcher lasted, 'and the destruction of the sign puts an end to the vexation.'⁶² Therefore destroying the magical object that caused the bewitchment would cure the impotence. Duns was the first theologian to say this, but destroying the magical object had been

⁵⁸ 'sed non omne dissolvi potest per maleficium, vel humanum consilium, quia malefici, sicut per confessionem eorum scitur, aliqua maleficia sciunt facere, que ipsi, ad penitentiam conversi, non possunt destruere'. Bonaventure, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2, p. 773; 'ut ipsi malefici confitentur,' Aquinas *In 4 Sent.* 34.3, p. 168

⁵⁹ Alexander Murray, 'Confession as a Historical Source in the Thirteenth Century', in R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, ed., *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1981), p. 285

⁶⁰ Walter Wakefield, 'Some Unorthodox Popular Ideas of the Thirteenth Century', *Medievalia et Humanistica* 4, 1973, p.28. I am also grateful to Shelagh Sneddon for sending me a copy of her unpublished edition of this testimony.

⁶¹ 'hoc et multo maiora cotidie eveniunt et contingunt.' Oxford, Balliol College MS 230, f. 198v; Stegmüller, p. 482

⁶² 'et destructio talis signi imponet finem tali vexationi.' Duns Scotus, *In 4 Sent.* 34, Reply, p. 403

presented as an effective solution much earlier in the anecdotes told by Master Odo and Thomas of Chobham, and in the *Pantegni*, which advised bewitched couples to look under the bed and take away any magical items.

Duns also suggested that impotence magic might be done by a woman who wanted the man for herself, or by a matchmaker who had other plans for him: ‘say if she does not want him to marry this woman, but herself, or someone else.’⁶³ This seems to be the first time that these scenarios appear in a commentary on the *Sentences*, but they were common in the anecdotes and case records. In 1115, Guibert of Nogent recorded that his father was thought to have been bewitched by ‘a stepmother, who had nieces both beautiful and well-born, and who would have liked to slip one of them into my father’s bed.’⁶⁴ The stories told by Master Odo, Thomas of Chobham, the penitentials of Burchard of Worms and Master Serlo, and the thirteenth-century Icelandic *Njal’s Saga*, all refer to men being bewitched by their former lovers.⁶⁵ Trial records in which ex-lovers were accused of causing impotence, such as the cases of Ragnhildr Tregagás in Bergen in 1324-5, and Margot de la Barre and Marion la Droiturière in Paris in 1390, confirm that the stereotype reflected real suspicions.⁶⁶

Duns Scotus also suggested how impotence magic might be performed: the magician might use ‘say, a bent needle, or something of this kind.’⁶⁷ One of his followers, Petrus Aureolus, went further and stated that ‘magic is a corporeal thing, such as a wax image’, and later described how piercing such an image could kill someone.⁶⁸ It is difficult to know whether these statements reflect written sources, current magical practices, or both, because needles and images were very widely associated with magic at both learned and popular levels. Magical texts employed wax images stuck

⁶³ ‘puta si nollet quod istam duceret, sed se, vel aliam.’ *ibid.*, p. 403

⁶⁴ ‘Novercalis... que plurime speciei et generis cum neptes haberet, ex iis aliquam paterno thoro moliebatur immergere.’ Guibert de Nogent, *Autobiographie*, ed. Edmond-René Labande (Paris, 1981), p. 76; trans. Paul J. Archambault, *A Monk’s Confession: the Memoirs of Guibert of Nogent* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1996), p. 35

⁶⁵ Artur Landgraf, ‘Zwei Gelehrte aus der Umgebung des Petrus Lombardus’, *Divus Thomas* 3rd Ser. 11, 1933, p. 162; Thomas of Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, ed. F. Broomfield (Louvain, 1968), p. 184; Burchard of Worms, *Corrector sive Medicus*, book 19, ch. 5, PL 140:975; Joseph Goering, ed., ‘The “Summa de Penitentia” of Magister Serlo’, *Medieval Studies* 38, 1976, p. 26; *Njal’s Saga*, trans. Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson (Penguin, 1960), p. 49

⁶⁶ Stephen A. Mitchell, ‘Nordic Witchcraft in Transition: Impotence, Heresy and Diabolism in Fourteenth-Century Bergen’, *Scandia* 63, 1997, p. 18; H. Duplès-Agier, ed., *Registre Criminel du Châtelet de Paris de 6 Septembre 1389 au 18 Mai 1392*, vol. 1, (Paris, 1861), p. 331

⁶⁷ ‘puta acus curvata, vel aliqua huiusmodi.’ Duns Scotus *In 4 Sent.* 34, p. 403

⁶⁸ ‘maleficium est res corporalis, puta imago de cera’; ‘illud est valde mirabile, et stupendum, quod si pungatur imago aliqua alicubi, possit aliquis ad mortem deduci.’ Petrus Aureolus *In Librum Sententiarum*, vol. 2 (Rome, 1605), book 4, 34.2, p. 181

with needles in impotence spells;⁶⁹ the medical encyclopaedia the *Pantegni* said that a needle which had been used to sew up the shroud of a dead person could cause impotence;⁷⁰ and early modern folklore associated needles with procedures to cause impotence, lameness or death.⁷¹ Duns Scotus's earlier references to ex-mistresses and matchmakers may suggest that he was not just thinking of learned magic, however. Unlike Albertus Magnus, who derived his knowledge of magic from books, Duns Scotus and Petrus Aureolus described practices that anyone could do, and that Duns referred to certain groups of women doing particularly.

However, some commentators included information about impotence magic and how it might be done that looks as if it came from practice, but in fact came from written sources. John Quidort described a case of magic impotence, which will be discussed below, that he took from a treatise on amulets, Costa ben Luca's *Physical Ligatures*. Pierre de la Palud referred to a kind of magic where the man and woman were separated from each other by a demon, 'as happened to a bridegroom who betrothed himself to an idol, and nonetheless married a young woman, and could not have intercourse with her because of this.'⁷² Pierre told this story as if it were true, but in fact it was first told by William of Malmesbury in the twelfth century. It concerned a reckless bridegroom who put his wedding ring on a statue of Venus (or, in some versions, the Virgin Mary), and found that on his wedding night, Venus placed herself between him and his wife.⁷³ Pierre also gave information about how magic might be performed, but again his source was a written one: 'but when women do sorceries with beans [or] cocks' testicles, it should not be believed that the man is rendered impotent by the power of those things, but by the hidden power of demons, who deceive the sorceresses by those physical objects.'⁷⁴ The reference to cocks' testicles

⁶⁹ For example, one in *Picatrix*, ed. David Pingree, (London, 1986), p. 155, quoted above, ch. 4

⁷⁰ *Pantegni*: see Appendix 1; Rudolf Creutz, 'Die medizinisch-naturphilosophischen Aphorismen und Kommentare des Magister Urso Salernitanus', *Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften und der Medizin* 5, 1936, p. 51; John of Gaddesden, *Rosa Anglica* (Venice, 1516), ch. 17, f. 94r

⁷¹ Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours* (Oxford, 2nd edn 2002), p. 54; W. F. Ryan, *The Bathhouse at Midnight: Magic in Russia* (Stroud, 1999), p. 80

⁷² 'sicut accidit sponso, qui desponsaverat idolum, et nihilominus contraxit cum quadam iuvenula, nec potuit eam cognoscere propter hoc.' Petrus de Palude, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2, p. 388

⁷³ The various versions of this story are discussed by Paul Franklin Baum, 'The Young Man Betrothed to a Statue', *Proceedings of the Modern Languages Association of America* 34, 1919, pp. 523-79

⁷⁴ 'Cum autem faciunt mulieres sortilegia cum fabis, gallorum testiculis, non est credendum, quod virtute illarum rerum vir impotens reddatur, sed occulta virtute demonum illudente sortiarias per illa corporalia.' Petrus de Palude *In 4 Sent.* 34.2, p. 388

and beans shows that Pierre's source was the *Pantegni*, and not necessarily any practice that he had encountered.

Other aspects of the sentence commentators' discussions of magic and impotence did not resemble widespread magical practices or beliefs at all. For example, Aquinas and Bonaventure stated that magicians could not impede every bodily function, because if they could prevent people from eating or walking, 'thus they would destroy the whole world'. Bonaventure even said that it was sacrilege to believe this.⁷⁵ Impotence magic was thus a special case, because the devil had more power over the sex organs than over other parts of the body. This view does not correspond with the views of bewitchment that appear in trial records from the late medieval and early modern periods, where a wide range of illnesses and other problems were blamed on magic. Magical texts likewise included spells to inflict all kinds of physical harm, not just impotence, such as the following from the fifteenth-century *Book of Angels*: 'If you wish to inflict disease upon some member, bind the member of this image in the funeral cloth and thrust a needle along the spine, and name the disease.'⁷⁶ The idea that magic could only cause impotence seems to reflect the contents of Peter Lombard's text (where magic is only discussed as a cause of impotence, not of other diseases), rather than more widely held conceptions of magic.

The commentaries of the later fourteenth century were generally too brief to say much about how magic might be done, let alone say where they got their information from. Thomas of Strasbourg was an exception, however, and he emphasized that experience lay behind his comments on the use of magic to cure magic impotence: 'Even given that someone should expose himself to mortal sin in this way, by testing one magic with another, still he is deceived in his intention, *as sometimes some people have experienced*. On account of this, *sometimes even magicians say that* not every magic spell can be lifted by another magic spell. Also, *it has often been seen that* when God permits it, the exorcisms and conjurations of the church do not always work to take

⁷⁵ 'Sed demones non habent potestatem impediendi matrimonii actum magis quam alios corporales actus, quos impedire non possunt; quia sic totum mundum perimerent, si comestionem et gressum et alia huiusmodi impedirent.' Aquinas *In 4 Sent.* 34.3, p. 167; 'si per maleficia possunt impedire coitum, ita possent comestionem et gressum, et sic perimere totum mundum per suum sortilegium; quod credere est sacrilegium.' Bonaventure, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2.2, p. 772

⁷⁶ Juris Lidaka, 'The Book of Angels, Rings, Characters and Images of the Planets, attributed to Osbern Bokenham', in Claire Fanger, ed., *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic* (Stroud, 1998), p. 61

away attacks on the body which are brought against men by the demons themselves.’⁷⁷ Bonaventure and Aquinas had said over a century before that magicians admitted that sometimes a spell could not be lifted, and Bonaventure had also mentioned that exorcisms did not always work if God willed otherwise, so Thomas was not necessarily recording his own experience. However, he clearly wished to establish that there was some basis in experience for his discussion.

The sentence commentators’ sources were thus more mixed than those of the canonists and pastoral writers, and like contemporary physicians (as will be seen in chapter 8), they drew on both written and oral sources. Albertus Magnus and the anonymous author of BN lat. 10640 were greatly influenced by the newly translated magical texts. Occasionally, writers quoted medical texts: John Quidort quoted Costa ben Luca’s *Physical Ligatures*, and Pierre de la Palud had read the *Pantegni*, but they are isolated references. On the other hand, more theologians were influenced by the pastoral movement: this can be seen in Aquinas and Bonaventure’s references to magicians’ confessions, and probably also in Duns Scotus and Petrus Aureolus’s mentions of would-be wives, failed matchmakers and wax images. Moreover, both John Quidort and Pierre de la Palud presented the anecdotes that they took from written sources as records of cases that had really happened, again emphasizing the importance of experience. Information from written sources was something that sentence commentators could introduce if they were interested, but it was not a regular feature of discussions. More writers between the 1250s and the early fourteenth century thought that experience was important, even if they took their evidence of that experience from other writers.

Magical Remedies

The balance between written sources and pastoral information can be seen most clearly in the theologians’ discussions of whether it was legitimate to use magic to cure magic impotence. As shown above, Albertus Magnus seems to have been the first commentator to ask this question, inspired by a magical text which taught that

⁷⁷ ‘Etiam dato quod aliquis se exponat huiusmodi mortali peccato, tentando unum maleficium per alterum, adhuc sua intentione frustratur, prout quandoque aliqui sunt experti: Propter quod etiam quandoque aliqui malefici dicunt, quod non quodlibet maleficium potest tolli per alterum maleficium. Etiam, Deo permittente, sepe visum est, quod exorcismi et coniurationes ecclesie non valent semper ad tollendum corporales molestias, illatas hominibus ab ipsis demonibus.’ Thomas of Strasbourg, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2, f. 158r

one spell could be countered by another. He replied that rather than appeal to a magician, one should always put up with being impotent.⁷⁸ Thomas Aquinas, Peter of Tarentaise and Richard of Middleton agreed that magical cures were illicit, even though they were potentially effective: 'if magic can offer a remedy, nevertheless [the impotence] should be considered permanent, because in no way should someone invoke the help of a demon by magic.'⁷⁹

Duns Scotus took a slightly different view. As mentioned above, although he did not suggest that the victim resort to magic himself, he believed that it was perfectly legitimate to destroy the magical object that was causing the bewitchment: 'this question, whether it is licit to take away the magic with the intention of curing the bewitched person, is frivolous; it is not only licit but meritorious to destroy the works of the devil.'⁸⁰ This distinction between actively doing magic and simply destroying an existing magical object does not seem to have been raised by earlier sentence commentators on magic impotence, but the Paris theologian Henry of Ghent had said the same, in a quodlibet debate in 1280: 'And therefore I say that it is licit simply to take the magical object away, in the same way as it is licit to throw pagan sacrifices into the sewer, and also so that the sick, bewitched person will be cured; but without believing that the illness happened to him by virtue of that magical object.'⁸¹ It is hard to tell whether the earlier commentators would have agreed with Duns and Henry that it was legitimate to take away magical objects in this fashion. Albertus Magnus referred to appealing to a magician, and Thomas Aquinas to invoking a demon, both of which suggest active magic, but Albertus's references to demons only seeming to cure when they cease to harm, and Aquinas and Bonaventure's comments that even magicians could not always lift their own spells, may suggest that they were also thinking of removing magical objects.

⁷⁸ 'nullo modo querenda est per incantatorem medicina: sed potius semper tolerandum est maleficium' Albertus, *In 4 Sent.* 34.9, p. 337

⁷⁹ 'si posset per maleficium remedium adhiberi, nihilominus perpetuum reputatur: quia nullo modo debet aliquis demonis auxilium per maleficia invocare.' Aquinas, *In 4 Sent.* 34.3, p. 168; Peter of Tarentaise, *In 4 Sent.* 34.4, p. 344; Richard of Middleton, *In 4 Sent.* 34.3, f. 218r

⁸⁰ 'trufatica est illa questio, an licet tollere maleficium intentione curandi maleficiatum; non solum licet, sed est meritorium destruere opera diaboli.' Duns Scotus, *In 4 Sent.* 34, Reply, p. 403

⁸¹ 'Et sic dico quod licitum est maleficium deponere simpliciter: quemadmodum licitum est idolothytum in cloacam proicere: et etiam ut curetur infirmus maleficiatus: non credendo quod virtute illius malefici morbus ille contingat.' Henry of Ghent, Quodlibet 5, Qu. 33, in *Quodlibeta* vol. 1 (Paris, 1518, repr. Louvain, 1961), f. 211r. See P. Glorieux, *La Littérature Quodlibetique de 1260 à 1320*, vol. 1, *Bibliothèque Thomiste* 5, 1925, p. 184

Duns Scotus's followers were more cautious, perhaps because they thought that his comments could be understood to mean that he tolerated the active use of magic. Joannes de Bassolis specified, as Duns had not, that while it was permissible to destroy magical objects that had been deposited, the bewitched person should not resort to magic of their own: 'Sometimes taking away the magical objects can act as a remedy. And I say that these are licit in the sense of breaking the sign [to the demons] as long as, however, a magic object is not put down for the purpose of bewitching.'⁸² Petrus Aureolus agreed: 'either the magic [object] is taken away by the victim, or by him who did it; or it is arranged – which would be by the power of another magician, or the same one – that a magician should destroy the magic. This last method is completely illicit.'⁸³ Petrus also referred to 'some doctors who seem to hold the opposite view,'⁸⁴ perhaps a hint that there were writers who went further than Duns and argued that it was permissible to use magic for a good purpose like curing a bewitched person. I have not found any sentence commentators who argued this, but if they existed, it would explain why Joannes and Petrus felt the need to clarify Duns's statements. The thirteenth-century writer who came closest to permitting magical cures was the canonist Hostiensis, who said that 'frivolous' remedies could be tolerated, another statement which a later author, John of Freiburg, felt obliged to clarify.

The theologians' discussions of magical cures were also complicated by the fact that there was no consensus about what constituted a magical cure, and whether it was acceptable to use natural objects with occult powers. Like the canonist John of Wales, Alexander of Hales had classified cures that worked by the 'secret force of words or herbs' as 'divine', 'because men do not know [these things] except by divine revelation.'⁸⁵ However, many theologians suspected that it was not God concealed behind the machinery of natural magic, but demons. The author of BN lat. 10640 described in the passage quoted above how some of the occult powers in objects relied on demonic power, or at least that demons taught men how to use them. Bonaventure

⁸² 'Aliquando depositiones maleficiorum sunt in remedium. Et dico quod sunt licite ut fractio talis signi, qui inveniret ipsum vel alterius: dum tamen maleficiendo non deponatur maleficium' Joannes de Bassolis *In 4 Sent.* 34, f. 114v

⁸³ 'aut tollitur maleficium a patiente, aut ab eo qui egit illud; aut procuratur, quod esset in virtute alterius malefici, vel eiusdem, ut maleficus destruat maleficium. Hoc ultimo modo omnino est illicitum.' Petrus Aureolus *In 4 Sent.* 34.3, p. 181

⁸⁴ 'alii autem Doctores, qui videntur tenere oppositum.' Petrus Aureolus, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2, p. 182

⁸⁵ 'Divinum autem est, quando per vim secretam verborum vel herbarum curatur; quoniam non noverunt homines nisi ex revelatione divina.' Alexander of Hales, p. 544

also believed that demons could work through the hidden powers in nature: 'And then by his own power, or by a herb, or a stone, or an occult force of nature, [the devil] impedes him [the impotent man].'⁸⁶

Thomas Aquinas took a more nuanced view of natural magic, not in his sentence commentary, but in his later *Summa Theologica*. Following St Augustine in *De Doctrina Christiana*, Aquinas considered a practice to be magical if it could not produce its result through natural cause and effect, and must therefore rely on demons: 'if they seem unable to produce the effects in question naturally, it follows that they are being used for the purpose of producing them, not as causes but only as signs, so that they come under the head of a compact entered into with the demonic.'⁸⁷ Unlike Bonaventure and the author of BN lat. 10640, however, Aquinas did not consider that the occult powers of stones or herbs were necessarily demonic. He was more concerned with the use of words and written characters, because these could never work through natural cause and effect: 'There is nothing superstitious or wrong in using natural things for the purpose of causing effects which are thought natural to them. But if in addition there be employed certain characters, words or other vain observances, which clearly have no efficacy by nature, then this is superstitious and wrong.'⁸⁸ Thus Aquinas warned against astrological images that had characters inscribed on them; scriptural amulets which contained 'strange words we do not understand', which might be the names of demons, or 'emblems of vanity' such as signs other than the sign of the cross; and amulets which had to be written or worn in a particular way.⁸⁹

John Quidort of Paris presented a different view of the power of certain objects to cure magic impotence. In his commentary on book 2, distinction 7 of the *Sentences*, which dealt with the powers of demons, he argued that some so-called magical cures for

⁸⁶ 'et tunc vel propria virtute, vel per herbam, vel lapidem, vel naturam occultam vim impedit.' Bonaventure, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2.2, p. 773

⁸⁷ 'Si autem naturaliter non videantur posse tales effectus causare, consequens est quod non adhibeantur ad hos effectus causandos tanquam cause, sed solum quasi signa.' *Summa Theologiae*, 2a 2ae, q. 96, art. 2, pp. 74-5

⁸⁸ 'si simpliciter adhibeantur res naturales ad aliquos effectus producendos ad quos putantur naturalem habere virtutem, non est superstitiosum neque illicitum. Si vero adiungantur vel characteres aliqui, vel aliqua nomina, vel alie quecumque varie observationes, que manifestum est naturaliter efficaciam non habere, erit superstitiosum et illicitum.' *ibid.*, pp. 76-7. On Aquinas's view of the occult properties of natural objects, see Brian Copenhaver, 'Scholastic Philosophy and Renaissance Magic in the *De Vita* of Marsilio Ficino', *Renaissance Quarterly* 37, 1984, pp. 541-4.

⁸⁹ 'ignota nomina', 'aliqua vana: puta aliqui characteres inscripti, preter signum crucis. Aut si spes habeatur in modo scribendi aut ligandi.' *Summa Theologiae* 2a 2ae, qu. 96, art. 4, pp. 82-3

impotence might in fact work because of the placebo effect. He took this idea from a passage of Costa ben Luca's *Physical Ligatures*, a text on the medicinal uses of amulets, which may have been translated into Latin by Constantine the African:⁹⁰

'Item, [amulets] have power from the person wearing them, as is clear in [the case of] a certain soldier, about whom someone tells that he was so bound by his imagination alone, that he could not approach his wife or any other woman. At last a certain physician, who had laboured to distract him from this imagining, and could not, showed him the book of Cleopatra. He read the place where it said that whoever wore such-and-such an herb round their neck, would be freed from this binding. Therefore the soldier believed this and when he wore it he was freed. And things like this often work in this way. And when it is said that such things are done by magic, I say that according to the standards I have said, they are not done by magic. But if they are done otherwise, that is magic and such things are superstitious.'⁹¹

John's reference to the placebo effect, inspired by Costa's text, is unusual, and at least one later reader may have been worried by his designation of some 'magical' cures as natural placebos. In one manuscript, the copyist has left out the phrase 'I say ... they are not done by magic.'⁹² This may simply be a copying error, but it may be a deliberate omission.

Therefore although all of the sentence commentators who discussed the issue agreed that it was wrong to do magic to cure magically caused impotence, other questions surrounding magical cures were open to argument. Duns Scotus's distinction between taking away magical objects and performing magic oneself was probably the point that owed most to popular magical practices. The stories told by Master Odo and Thomas of Chobham, where taking the magic object away was presented as effective, indicate that this attitude was closer to popular approaches to bewitchment than were earlier theologians' blanket prohibitions of magical cures. In fact, the popular attitude to magical cures was probably more tolerant still. Thomas of Chobham had said in

⁹⁰ Judith Wilcox and John Riddle, ed., 'Qustā ibn Lūqā's "Physical Ligatures" and the Recognition of the Placebo Effect', *Medieval Encounters* 1, 1995, pp. 33-4. Quoted above, ch. 2

⁹¹ 'Item, habent virtutem a specie portantis, sicut patet de quodam milite, de quo narrat quidam, quod sola imaginatione erat ita ligatus, quod non poterat accedere ad suam uxorem, nec ad aliam, et tandem ostendit sibi quidam medicus, qui ad avertendum eum ab illa imaginatione laboraverat, nec poterat, librum Cleopatre. Ille legens locum, ubi dixit, quod quicumque ad collum talem herbam portaret, solveretur tale vinculum. Unde miles hoc credens et herbam portans liberatus est. Et ita sepe valent talia. Et cum dicitur quod talia fiunt arte magica, dico quod secundum modos iam dictos, non fiunt arte magica. Si autem aliter fiant, hoc est arte magica et sunt talia superstitiosa.' John Quidort, 'Commentaire sur les Sentences', book 2, distinction 7, qu. 2, ed. Jean-Pierre Muller, *Studia Anselmiana* 52, 1964, p. 101

⁹² *ibid.*, p. 101

the early thirteenth century that many people did not believe that using magical cures was a form of idolatry, and he was echoed in the early sixteenth century by the sentence commentator John Major, who said that women sometimes used magical cures because they did not know that it was wrong to do so.⁹³ Similarly, records of witch trials from early modern Lorraine show that many people could not be persuaded that it was wrong to seek magical healing, whether from the local cunning man or woman, or from the suspected witch.⁹⁴

Nor were most people as rigorous as the theologians in categorizing cures as magical. Many of the healers accused of superstitious practices by the inquisition in sixteenth-century Modena claimed that their prayers and charms, criticized by the inquisitors as 'incantations', were 'a good thing' or 'a matter of religion'.⁹⁵ Even learned writers did not all share Aquinas's definition of magic. The physician Gilbertus Anglicus recommended an amulet that mixed scriptural words with strange ones, and which had to be written in a specially prepared ink to cure magically-caused impotence and sterility (see below, chapter 8 and Appendix 2), and did not imply that there was anything illicit about it. Duns Scotus and his followers, and Henry of Ghent, may have been closer to popular approaches to magical cures, but they still operated on the assumption that all magic was demonic and therefore evil, even if it was used for a good end such as curing a victim of bewitchment. This assumption was probably not shared by most people outside the universities.

Magic Theory (1): Reason and Experience

The sentence commentators shared their interest in magical cures with the canonists and pastoral writers, even though they went into more detail about exactly what counted as demonic. However, they also asked theoretical questions about how magic worked that were not shared by writers in other genres. The first of these questions was whether magic existed at all. According to Thomas Aquinas:

⁹³ 'Multi sunt enim, et multe, qui dediti sunt ueneficiis et sortilegiis, et non credunt esse ydolatrium.' Thomas of Chobham, *Summa de Arte Praedicandi*, ed. Franco Morenzoni (Turnhout, 1988), p. 166. 'Licet mulieres aliquae interdum ex simplicitate talia facientes, ubi non docentur de opposito, non videantur peccare.' John Major, *In Quartum Sententiarum* 34 (Paris, 1519), f. 288r

⁹⁴ Briggs, p. 159

⁹⁵ Mary O'Neil, 'Magical Healing, Love Magic and the Inquisition in Late Sixteenth-Century Modena' in S. Haliczar, ed., *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1987), repr. in Brian P. Levak, ed., *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology* vol. 5 (New York, 2001), p. 175

‘Certain people said that there was no magic in the world, except in the opinion of men, who ascribed natural effects to magic when their causes were unknown. But this is contrary to the authority of the saints, who say that demons have power over bodies, and over the imagination of men, when they are permitted to by God; hence through them, magicians can act, using signs. Moreover, this opinion proceeds from the root of infidelity or incredulity, for they do not believe demons exist except in the minds of the masses, so that the terrors which a man makes for himself from his own mind can be ascribed to a demon; and also [they believe] that certain figures appear to the senses through the strength of the imagination, in the same forms as a man has thought of them, and so men think that they are seeing demons.’⁹⁶

Bonaventure likewise criticized people who did not believe in magic, saying that ‘this position is contrary to the law and the opinion of the masses and, what is more, experience; and therefore it does not have any basis.’⁹⁷ Scepticism of this nature had long roots: ever since antiquity, some writers about the natural world had offered natural explanations for events that seemed magical or miraculous, and this way of thinking had been revived in the twelfth century.⁹⁸ Aquinas and Bonaventure were probably arguing against a radical version of this opinion. One target of their criticism may have been Siger of Brabant (d. between 1281 and 1284), a controversial master of arts at Paris, who used Aristotle to argue that according to reason, there were no such things as demons (although Siger claimed that he nonetheless believed in demons because they were in the Bible, and faith took precedence over reason).⁹⁹ Siger had also disdained popular opinion: ‘In those matters in which the truth is well hidden, the common man should not be believed... And if you say that it is common knowledge, that does not prove anything, for many false things are common knowledge.’¹⁰⁰ Bonaventure and Aquinas, by contrast, explicitly supported the opinion of the masses in this instance, emphasizing the role that both common knowledge and experience had to play in proving the reality of magic.

⁹⁶ ‘Quidam dixerunt, quod maleficium nihil erat in mundo, nisi in estimatione hominum, qui effectus naturales, quorum cause sunt occulte, maleficiis imputabant. Sed hoc est contra auctoritates sanctorum, qui dicunt, quod demones habent potestatem supra corpora, et supra imaginationem hominum, quando a Deo permittuntur; unde per eos malefici signa aliqua facere possunt. Procedit autem hec opinio ex radice infidelitatis, sive incredulitatis, quia non credunt esse demones nisi in estimatione vulgi tantum, ut terrores quos homo sibi ipsi facit ex sua estimatione, imputet demoni; et quia etiam ex imaginatione vehementi aliquae figure apparent in sensu tales quales homo cogitat, et tunc creduntur demones videri.’ Aquinas, *In 4 Sent.* 34.3, p. 167

⁹⁷ ‘Sed ista positio derogat iuri et derogat opinioni vulgi, et quod maius est, experimento; et ideo istud non habet aliquam stabilitatem.’ Bonaventure, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2.2, p. 772

⁹⁸ M. D. Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century* (Chicago, 1986), pp. 11-13; Bert Hansen, *Nicole Oresme and the Marvels of Nature* (Toronto, 1985), p. 53

⁹⁹ Armand Maurer, ‘Between Reason and Faith: Siger of Brabant and Pomponazzi on the Magic Arts’, *Medieval Studies* 18, 1956, pp. 6-8

¹⁰⁰ ‘In his in quibus veritas valde occulta est, non est vulgo credendum... Et si dicas quod vulgatum est, hoc non probat. Multa enim falsa vulgata sunt.’ Quoted in Maurer, p. 9

The citing of experience to overcome doubts about the supernatural was not new in the 1250s. In the early eleventh century, the chronicler Thietmar of Merseburg told a series of ghost stories to persuade Christians not to doubt that the dead would be resurrected at the end of time; and Caesarius of Heisterbach, collecting exempla in the early thirteenth century, likewise claimed to be recording ‘true miracles that occur in our time and every day’.¹⁰¹ In the context of the pastoral movement, these ‘true stories’ could be an effective way of persuading people of the seriousness of demons and magic. The importance of experience also fitted another intellectual trend of the thirteenth century, the study of Aristotle’s works on natural science, which emphasized the need for observation. Albertus Magnus was influenced by these, arguing that only observation held the key to understanding the natural sciences.¹⁰² Experience and the confessions of magicians could thus be seen as useful sources of information.

Later sentence commentators did not expand on Aquinas and Bonaventure’s statements about experience proving the existence of magic. However, two centuries later, another branch of writing, witchcraft theory, did. Heinrich Kramer, the inquisitor who wrote *Malleus Maleficarum* (published in 1487), devoted a great deal of energy to arguing that witches’ confessions of their experiences with demons proved that witchcraft was real; and he began with Aquinas’s statements about those who believed that magic did not exist.¹⁰³ In turn, sixteenth-century sentence commentators borrowed arguments from the witchcraft theorists, linking doubt about impotence magic even more closely with a more general unwillingness to believe in demons and witchcraft. For example, Domingo de Soto (d. 1560) criticized those who did not believe in impotence magic, stating that ‘their opinion arose from those people who denied the existence of demonic spirits, which are invisible.’¹⁰⁴ John Major (d. 1550) quoted the canon *Episcopi*, a ninth-century ruling which stated that women who thought they flew at night with the goddess Diana were in fact dreaming, in his discussion of magic and impotence, and then argued against it.¹⁰⁵ Similar refutations

¹⁰¹ Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1998), pp. 36, 128

¹⁰² Edward A. Synan ‘Introduction’, in Weisheipl, *Albertus Magnus*, pp. 6-8

¹⁰³ Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago, 2002), pp. 319-20

¹⁰⁴ ‘Istorum tamen opinio inde illis oriebatur, quod demoniacos spiritus, qui invisibiles sunt, fateri renuebant.’ Domingo de Soto, *In Sententias* book 4, 34.3 (Salamanca, 1579), p. 236

¹⁰⁵ ‘Quare ergo angelus bonus vel malus non poterit movere homines, lupos, equos, vel alia corpora?... Sed vult illud capitulum dicere, quod non omnis qui putat se deferri localiter, sic deferitur.’ John Major, *In 4 Sent.* 34, ff. 285v-286r

of the canon *Episcopi* are found in many works on witchcraft from the fifteenth century onwards, because witchcraft theory relied on the belief that witches' night flights were real, and not dreams.¹⁰⁶ These late sentence commentators show how an idea that began when Aquinas and Bonaventure cited common knowledge to answer a theoretical objection to the concept of magic impotence, had by the sixteenth century become bound up with arguments for the existence of witchcraft. The emphasis on experience which had begun with the pastoral movement had become part of the discourse about an imaginary crime.

These discussions of whether or not magic was real may also be linked to witchcraft theory in another way. Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure and other writers debated the question of how marriage, which was a sacrament instituted by God, could be impeded by magic, which was the work of the devil, if God was stronger than the devil. Walter Stephens has argued recently that Aquinas elaborated his answer to this question in response to the debate about whether or not magic existed that has been described above. Stephens's argument runs as follows: if magic was nothing but imagination then, presumably, 'magic' impotence was also caused by the imagination; but surely the sacrament of marriage, with its emphasis on fertility, should be able to overcome mere imagination. Therefore, demons were brought in to explain how the sacrament could 'fail': 'Aquinas tacitly admits that if demons do not exist and yet matrimony can be impeded, then its sacramental efficacy is imaginary.'¹⁰⁷

However, it is unlikely that Aquinas really feared that the sacramental status of marriage would be threatened if 'magic' impotence turned out to be caused by the imagination. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, theologians were discussing why God allowed demons to cause impotence before they raised questions about the reality of magic. In the 1240s Albertus Magnus and the student of Eudes Rigaud in Paris BN MS lat. 3424 had both asked the same question as Aquinas: how, if the works of God were greater than the works of the devil, marriage could be impeded by magic.¹⁰⁸ Neither of these authors referred to anyone saying that magic did not exist.

¹⁰⁶ Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, pp. 134-7

¹⁰⁷ Walter Stephens, 'Witches Who Steal Penises: Impotence and Illusion in *Malleus Maleficarum*', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 28, 1998, p. 504. See also *Demon Lovers*, pp. 318-21.

¹⁰⁸ 'Item, opus diaboli non potest nec debet destruere opus Dei: sed maleficium est opus diaboli, matrimonium autem opus Dei: ergo maleficium non potest impedire vel destruere matrimonium.' Albertus, *In 4 Sent.* 34.8, p. 336; 'maleficia sunt arte et potestate demonum, sed matrimonium est remedium et beneficium divinum... non videtur quod matrimonium per maleficium dissolvatur' BN lat.

Secondly, these same writers were able to explain how the devil could impede a work of God. Eudes's student stated that the sacrament of marriage was designed not to cure impotence, but to cancel out the sin involved in sexual intercourse (and in this it did overcome the devil). Albertus simply said that it was possible with divine permission.¹⁰⁹ Thus anxiety about the efficacy of the marriage sacrament was not the main reason for discussing the role of demons in causing impotence. It is more likely that the thirteenth-century sentence commentators simply wanted to fit magic impotence into the growing interest in the position of angels and demons in the universe,¹¹⁰ and so wished to clarify exactly how and why the devil intervened in people's marriages.

Magic Theory (2): the Sorceress and the Devil

The second theoretical question that the sentence commentators asked also influenced later witchcraft theory. This was about the relationship between human magicians and the demons who provided the power behind magic. The image of the witch who dedicated her (or, less often, his) soul to the devil in exchange for maleficent power, had sex with demons, flew at night to the witches' sabbath and killed babies, only emerged in the fifteenth century, but it was made up of much older elements.¹¹¹ From the mid thirteenth century onwards, sentence commentators were making comments about impotence magic which resemble certain aspects of the later witch stereotype.

Albertus Magnus and the author of BN lat. 10640 had both mentioned demons openly in their chapters on impotence magic, in contrast to the earlier commentators who had drawn on canon law and did not emphasize the power of demons. In his discussion of the powers of demons (in his commentary on book 2, distinction 7 of the *Sentences*), Albertus stated that any process that involved incantations, conjurations, sacrifices, suffumigations and worship was an open pact with a demon, and therefore apostasy.

3424, f. 223r. Odon Lottin dated the commentary in BN 3424 to the 1240s or early 1250s: 'Un commentaire sur les Sentences tribulaire d'Odon Rigaud', *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale* 7, 1935, p. 404.

¹⁰⁹ 'beneficium autem divinum potius est verum, quantum ad illud contra quod ordinatur.' Eudes's follower, BN lat. 3424, f. 223r; 'opus demonis propria auctoritate non destruit opus Dei, sed Deo permittente, et homine hoc pati merente' Albertus, *In 4 Sent.* 34.8, p. 337

¹¹⁰ Keck, p. 73

¹¹¹ For various views on how the sabbath emerged out of older elements, see Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons* (London, 3rd edn 1993); Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath* (English edn., London, 1990); Edward Peters, 'The Medieval Church and State on Superstition, Magic and Witchcraft', in Stuart Clark and Bengt Ankarloo, ed., *A History of Magic and Witchcraft in Europe: the Middle Ages* (London, 2002), p. 231

Other practices which could not bring about their effects naturally were also apostasy, even if no explicit invocation of demons was involved.¹¹² Thomas Aquinas later drew a clearer distinction between the explicit pact, which invoked demons to do magic directly, and the tacit one, by which magicians did not invoke demons explicitly, but performed actions that could not work naturally, and so must be carried out by demons. Like Albertus, Aquinas used the term ‘apostasy’ to describe both of these.¹¹³ Although these two writers were probably basing their comments on the rituals prescribed in magical texts, over time the same arguments were extended to other forms of magic.

Bonaventure took these ideas a step further. In discussing how magic could make a man impotent with one woman but not with another, he drew an interesting parallel between magic and miracles. ‘But because [the impotent man] is impeded by a demon (who is present and attacking him according to the request of a sorceress, *who obtains this by the merit of her infidelity, just as faith brings it about that God is present to do miracles*), when the sorceress does her magic with respect to a specified person, the devil shows himself in that act and not in others.’¹¹⁴ Several historians have noted that other late medieval sources present evil spells as a type of inverted miracle, and that there are parallels between witches and female saints.¹¹⁵ The idea that the sorceress’s relationship with the devil was on some level the same as a devout person’s with God also reflects the beginning of a tendency to see magic as a form of devil-worship, which became the basis of witchcraft theory. Norman Cohn and Michael Bailey have pointed out that one of key shifts in perception which contributed to the stereotype of the witch was the shift from the image of the clerical magician who commanded demons using the power of God, to that of the witch who

¹¹² ‘Si enim per invocationes, coniurationes, sacrificia, suffumigationes et adorationes fiunt, tunc aperte pactum initur cum demone, et tunc est apostasia oris ibi. Si autem non fit nisi opere simplici, tunc est apostasia operis: quia illud opus exspectatur a demone’ Albertus, *In 2 Sent.* 7.9, p. 164

¹¹³ Cohn, pp. 113–4

¹¹⁴ ‘sed quia *demoniaci* impeditur – qui assistit et se obicit secundum petitionem sortilege mulieris, impetrante hoc merito infidelitatis, sicut fides impetrat, ut Deus assistat ad facienda miracula – cum sortitaria respectu persone *determinate* facit sortilegium, diabolus in actu illo presto est et non in aliis; et tunc vel propria virtute, vel per herbam, vel lapidem, vel naturam occultam vim impedit.’ Bonaventura, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2.2, p. 773

¹¹⁵ Peter Dinzelbacher, ‘Heilige oder Hexen?’, in Dieter Simon, ed., *Religiöse Devianz* (Frankfurt, 1990), pp. 41–60; Gábor Klaniczay, ‘Hungary: the Accusations and the Universe of Popular Magic’, in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, ed., *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford, 1990), p. 241. On the other hand, Richard Kieckhefer argues that sainthood and witchcraft did not mirror each other in any systematic way: ‘The Holy and the Unholy: Sainthood, Witchcraft and Magic in Late Medieval Europe’ in Scott L. Waugh and Peter D. Diehl, ed., *Christendom and its Discontents* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 323

worshipped demons.¹¹⁶ This shift in perception is usually dated to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but it seems that it was beginning in the work of Bonaventure, long before the witch-hunts began.

Bonaventure also specified that the bewitcher was a woman (*sortilega mulier*). Earlier sentence commentators had not discussed who might perform magic, but writers as early as Hincmar of Rheims and Burchard of Worms had stated that impotence magic was performed by women, a suspicion shared by at least one medical text, the *Pantegni*. Those taken to court for making men impotent were also women, although one, Matteuccia di Francesco, was acting on behalf of a man who wanted to marry the bride himself.¹¹⁷ Magic and superstition in general were often presented as female crimes in moral literature,¹¹⁸ but impotence magic seems to have been associated particularly strongly with women, in a variety of learned texts and also in practice. Thus Bonaventure's statement probably reflects real situations and fears but, like his comments on the relationship between the magician and the devil, it also moves one step closer to the witch stereotype of the early modern period, where the witch was usually female.

Bonaventure's views on the nature of magic and magicians influenced several later sentence commentators, especially among the Franciscans. The author of an anonymous commentary in Paris BN MS lat. 14308 repeated his statements about how the sorceress's relationship with the devil mirrored that of the faithful Christian with God.¹¹⁹ Duns Scotus followed Bonaventure in describing how a specifically female magician caused impotence through her personal relationship with the devil: 'a sorceress who has a pact with a demon procures from him that he should impede a given man from such-and-such an act, with such-and-such a woman, for as long as the magic lasts.'¹²⁰ Joannes de Bassolis and Petrus Aureolus in turn followed Duns Scotus, although Joannes was less sure that the culprit was always female: 'the devil

¹¹⁶ Cohn, p. 114; Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 194; Michael Bailey, 'From Sorcery to Witchcraft: Clerical Conceptions of Magic in the Later Middle Ages', *Speculum* 76, 2001, p. 977

¹¹⁷ Domenico Mammoli, 'The Record of the Trial and Condemnation of a Witch, Matteuccia di Francesco, at Todi, 20 March 1428', *Res Tudertinae* 14, 1972, p. 16

¹¹⁸ Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 187

¹¹⁹ 'sicut fides credentis aliquando impetrat miraculum, ita infidelitas sortilege a demone sortilegium...' BN MS lat. 14308, f. 277v. On this MS, see Valens Heynck, 'Studien zu Johannes von Erfurt', *Franziskanische Studien* 40, 1958, pp. 331, 347

¹²⁰ 'maga habens pactum cum demone procurat ab eo ut istum impediat a tali actu, cum tali muliere, quamdiu tale maleficium perseverat.' Duns Scotus *In 4 Sent.* 34, Reply, p. 403

or evil spirits frequently have pacts with certain men or women...'¹²¹ Dominican sentence commentators put less emphasis on the magician's relationship with the devil, probably because they followed Thomas Aquinas, who did not talk about it in the context of magic and impotence, instead of Bonaventure.

From the mid thirteenth century onwards, then, the sentence commentators were beginning to develop ideas in their discussions of magic and impotence which eventually fed into the witchcraft literature of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. These ideas are not found in contemporary canon law commentaries, pastoral works or medical compendia until the fifteenth century.¹²² They also bear little relation to the reality of impotence magic, except for the emphasis on women. Nor do they reflect the reality of Latin magical texts (which very few writers cited when discussing impotence magic), except perhaps in their general emphasis that all magic was demonic, which seems to have been inspired by magical texts that mentioned demons or could be interpreted as demonic. Instead, the discussions seem to have emerged out of theoretical questions about the power of demons. This is perhaps why they appeared much earlier in theology than in canon law, medicine and pastoral literature, where the ideas that featured in academic texts ultimately had to be used in practice.

Conclusion

After the 1240s, when they ceased to be dominated by canon law, the theologians asked a variety of questions about impotence magic: about the reality of magic, the role of demons and the morality of magical cures. Many of these questions were prompted by newly translated magical texts, which had a profound influence on Albertus Magnus. Apart from the author of the commentary in BN lat. 10640, Albertus seems to have been isolated in his interest in the texts themselves, but the questions that these texts prompted him to ask were taken up by Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure, and passed by them onto later generations of sentence commentators. Unlike Albertus, however, they claimed to take their information from the confessions of magicians. They had probably heard about these through the friars' pastoral activities, but they did not go into details in the way that some canonists and pastoral writers did. More detail is found in some commentaries of the early fourteenth

¹²¹ 'diabolus vel spiritus maligni frequenter habent pactiones cum aliquibus hominibus vel mulieribus...' Joannes de Bassolis, *In 4 Sent.* 34, f. 114v

¹²² For canon law: Peters, *Magician*, pp. 149-50; for medicine, see ch. 9

century, such as those of Duns Scotus and Petrus Aureolus, but other writers like John Quidort and Pierre de la Palud used written sources instead. However, after the 1320s, when the theological climate turned towards more abstract questions, many commentators lost interest in magic impotence. Perhaps, like some fourteenth-century canonists, they believed that since the basic issues had been worked out, there was little more to say.

The sentence commentators showed the influence of pastoral movement several decades later than the canonists and the pastoral writers. While information began to filter into canon law and pastoral literature in the early thirteenth century, and peaked in canon law in the mid thirteenth century, the theologians' use of pastoral material began in the 1250s, and peaked in the early fourteenth century. For example, Thomas of Chobham and John of Kent had discussed magical cures in the early thirteenth century, whereas the first mention in sentence commentaries seems to have been that of Albertus Magnus in the 1240s, and he was inspired by magical texts, rather than the pastoral movement. Similarly, Geoffrey of Trani had said before 1244 that some spells could not be lifted even by the person who cast them, an idea which only appeared in sentence commentaries with Aquinas and Bonaventure in the 1250s. One reason for this delay may be the age at which the sentence commentators were writing. Commenting on the *Sentences* was a stage in the theology degree, and so sentence commentaries tended to be written early in a theologian's career, before they had held major ecclesiastical offices.¹²³ Eudes Rigaud and Albertus Magnus, commenting on the *Sentences* in the 1240s, died in 1275 and 1280 respectively, and Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure, writing in the 1250s, both died in 1274. By contrast, the canonists Geoffrey of Trani, Hostiensis and Innocent IV all completed or revised their commentaries on the *Liber Extra* shortly before their deaths, by which time Hostiensis was a cardinal and Innocent IV was pope. Roffredus of Benevento wrote his summary of canon law while he was working at the papal curia. In all of these capacities the canonists would have had to deal with real legal cases. The situation changed in the early fourteenth century (at Oxford, at least), when theologians began to complete their sentence commentaries later in their careers, making the commentaries the vehicle for a theologian's mature teaching, rather than

¹²³ Courtenay, *Schools*, pp. 25-7

his early thoughts.¹²⁴ This may explain why the commentaries of Duns Scotus and his followers said more about the world around them than earlier writers.

Another important reason for the difference between theology on the one hand, and canon law and pastoral literature on the other, is that theology was a more abstract genre. Canonists and especially pastoral writers dealt with systems of thought that were designed to be used in practice, and their comments on impotence often reflected the need to be pragmatic. This focus on the world outside the universities encouraged some writers to mention their own experience. Theologians, by contrast, were freer to turn to abstract issues. They wanted to discuss how the universe worked, and this included questions about demons' powers and their relationship with human magicians that would not have been relevant in canon law or pastoral literature. Thus although drives for pastoral reform did have an effect, theologians had more scope than either canonists or pastoral writers to follow their own interests and tackle less concrete questions.

¹²⁴ Catto, 'Theology', p. 477

Chapter 8

Herbs Against Magic: Medicine, 1240-1400

The medical texts that discussed magic impotence in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries provide a different perspective on the subject from that of the pastoral literature, canon law and theology, all of which were affected to some extent by the church's pastoral movement. Medical writers did not have the same need to regulate behaviour, and so did not record magical practices with a view to moral education in the same way as the other genres of source. Yet, like canon law and pastoral literature, medicine was a system ultimately designed to be used on real people, and so medical discussions of magic impotence had a practical as well as a theoretical side. Their main source was the chapter on magic impotence and its cures in the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African, 'Practica', Book 8, Chapter 29. The earliest surviving manuscripts of this chapter date from the thirteenth century¹ but, as argued in chapter 3, it was probably circulating earlier, since it seems likely that Bartholomew of Salerno and Urso of Salerno had read it in the twelfth century.

In addition to using written sources, physicians also learned about impotence from their medical practice, as they were sometimes called in to treat cases. For example, a twelfth-century decretal of Alexander III concerns an impotent man who consulted both physicians (*medici*) and 'enchantresses' (*incantatrices mulierculas*); and in 1206, Innocent III mentioned the possibility of a woman's narrow vagina being cured by medical intervention.² Around 1300, physicians began to testify in the church courts in annulment cases for impotence, and these experiences began to influence some writers.³ Some medical writers also claimed to have used particular remedies in real cases.

¹ Monica Green, 'The Re-creation of *Pantegni*, Practica, Book 8', in Charles Burnett and Danielle Jacquart, ed., *Constantine the African and Alī ibn al-Abbās al-Mağūsī: the Pantegni and Related Texts* (Leiden, 1994), p. 146

² Charles Duggan, 'Italian Marriage Decretals in English Collections: with special reference to the Peterhouse Collection', in Cesare Alzati, ed., *Cristianità ed Europa* (Rome, 1994), repr. in *Decretals and the Creation of 'New Law' in the Twelfth Century* (Aldershot, 1998), p. 448; 'artificio medici', X 4.15.6

³ Jacqueline Murray, 'On the Origins and Role of "Wise Women" in Causes for Annulment on the Grounds of Male Impotence' *Journal of Medieval History* 16, 1990, p. 243; Michael McVaugh, *Medicine Before the Plague: Practitioners and their Patients in the Crown of Aragon, 1285-1345* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 203

The context in which discussions of magic impotence are found in medical literature is also a relatively practical one: in the large medical compendia, sometimes called *practicae*, which dealt with many illnesses in a head-to-toe order. Although they were written by university-educated authors, and contain medical theory as well as recipes for cures, these works can be seen as intermediaries between academic medicine and medical practice.⁴ This interpretation of the role of the medical compendia is part of a wider attempt by recent historians of medieval medicine to counter an older view that saw scholastic medical texts as academic exercises cut off from practice. It now seems that there was much interchange between learned and popular medicine.⁵ Many academic medical writers were willing to quote remedies that were used by non-learned practitioners, even if they sometimes apologized for them;⁶ and equally, some of the medical compendia were translated into the vernacular or had their prescriptions incorporated into recipe collections, and so reached a wider audience.⁷ Despite this interchange, however, there were differences. Academic medicine had its own language (Latin) and authoritative texts, and university-trained physicians sometimes jealously guarded their pre-eminence by suing unlicensed medical practitioners.⁸ Medical writers might also be keener than most people to look for natural explanations for so-called supernatural phenomena.⁹

The medical writers who discussed magic impotence in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were not as numerous as the pastoral writers, canonists and theologians (I have only found three in the thirteenth century, for example), but they are interesting. They also situate themselves in a variety of places between learned and popular medicine, using both earlier texts, and information with no traceable source in many different combinations. This can be seen both in the medical compendia, and in an

⁴ Jole Agrimi and Chiara Crisciani, *Edocere Medicos: Medicina scolastica nei secoli XIII-XV* (Naples, 1988), pp. 163-7; Luke Demaitre, 'Theory and Practice in Medical Education at the University of Montpellier in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 30, 1975, p. 115

⁵ Michael McVaugh and Nancy Siraisi, 'Introduction', and Chiara Crisciani, 'History, Novelty and Progress in Scholastic Medicine', in Michael McVaugh and Nancy Siraisi, ed., *Renaissance Medical Learning: the Evolution of a Tradition*, *Osiris* 2:6, 1990; Demaitre, 'Theory', and 'Scholasticism in Compendia of Practical Medicine' *Manuscripta* 20, 1976

⁶ Tony Hunt, *Popular Medicine in Thirteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 25-40; Linda M. Paterson, *The World of the Troubadours: Medieval Occitan Society c. 1100-c. 1300* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 202-6

⁷ Faye Getz, *Healing and Society in Medieval England* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1991), p. xv

⁸ Pearl Kibre, 'The Faculty of Medicine at Paris, Charlatanism, and Unlicensed Medical Practice in the Later Middle Ages', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 27, 1953, repr. in *Studies in Medieval Science* (London, 1984)

independent treatise that discussed causes of and cures for magic impotence, *Remedies Against Magic*, which was probably first put together in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, and is edited in Appendix 1.

Gilbertus Anglicus

The first medical writer since the author of the *Pantegni* to discuss magic impotence in detail was Gilbertus Anglicus in his *Compendium Medicine*. Gilbertus is a shadowy figure. The earliest manuscript of the *Compendium* calls him ‘Gilbertus de Aquila, Anglicus’, and he has sometimes been identified with another Gilbertus de Aquila, who was physician to the king of England in 1207, although it has also been argued that the two Gilbertuses were different people.¹⁰ Another manuscript of the *Compendium* identifies him with a Gillibertus who was chancellor of the University of Montpellier in 1250.¹¹ The *Compendium* was probably written in around 1240: it quotes the Arab philosopher Averroes, whose works only began to be discussed in major study centres in the 1230s,¹² and it was certainly written before c.1267, when it was used by the surgeon Theoderic of Lucca in his *Surgery*. The earliest manuscript is dated 1271.¹³ The *Compendium* was influential: it was quoted by many later medical writers, and Gilbertus was named as one of the medical authorities known to Chaucer’s fictional physician.¹⁴

Gilbertus discussed impotence in book 7, chapter 1 of the *Compendium*. He began with a detailed discussion of its natural causes, such as problems with various organs, or an excess of hot or cold humours. For these he prescribed special diets and medicines, or plasters over the kidneys. He discussed magic impotence at the end of the chapter (see Appendix 2 for text), and first recommended a medicine of theriac and the sap of St John’s wort, or a plaster of St John’s wort placed over the kidneys. Theriac was believed to be a universal antidote for poisons; recipes varied, but the

⁹ Simone C. Macdougall, ‘The Surgeon and the Saints: Henri de Mondeville on Divine Healing’, *Journal of Medieval History* 26, 2000, p. 262

¹⁰ C. H. Talbot and E. A. Hammond, *The Medical Practitioners in Medieval England* (London, 1965), p. 59

¹¹ Ortrun Riha, ‘Gilbertus Anglicus und sein “Compendium Medicinæ”: Arbeitstechnik und Wissenorganisation’ *Sudhoffs Archiv* 78, 1994, p. 63

¹² On the dating of the *Compendium*, see Henry Handerson, *Gilbertus Anglicus: Medicine of the Thirteenth Century* (Cleveland, 1918), pp. 22-3, and the review of Talbot and Hammond by Marie-Thérèse d’Alverny, *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 13, 1970, p. 393

¹³ Getz, *Healing and Society* p. lv

¹⁴ ‘Gilbertyn’: *General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, ed. F. N. Robinson, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Oxford, 2nd edn 1966), p. 21, line 434

main ingredient was usually vipers' flesh.¹⁵ These cures were similar in principle to those that Gilbertus had prescribed for natural impotence, but he went on to acknowledge that they might not work: 'if medicines are of no use, use empirical remedies.'¹⁶ There followed a procedure which Gilbertus said he had used to cure many women who were thought to be sterile, whether the impediment to conception was in the man or the woman:

'On the eve of St John the Baptist [23rd June], let a man aged 20 years or more take from the ground with their roots first comfrey, then daisy, before the third hour, saying the Lord's Prayer three times. Let him not speak to anyone or say anything on the way there or on the way back. And thus silent, let him extract the sap from the abovementioned herbs. And with that sap let him write on as many slips of parchment as he needs, these words: "The Lord said increase. + uthihoth. + and multiply. + thabechay. + and fill the earth. + amath. +." If the man has the slip written with the sap and those same words round his neck when he knows the woman, the woman will conceive a male, and conversely if the woman [wears the slip she will conceive] a female.'¹⁷

Gilbertus then added a few other cures: fumigate (presumably the woman's vagina, which was recommended for some gynaecological problems), with a dead man's tooth, or with a eunuch's shoes, or drink a herb which grows through a hole in a stone. However, there was a danger that these remedies might be too effective and cause satyriasis.¹⁸ Later, when discussing female sterility, Gilbertus also mentioned that mercury could cure a woman whose vagina had been made too narrow by magic, a rare reference to magic as a cause of female impotence.¹⁹ Some of these remedies have affinities with those suggested in the *Pantegni*, such as the use of the Bible, writing, mercury, and objects associated with death, but the use of these objects is different in every case, and in the *Pantegni* the last of these (in the shape of a needle used to sew up a dead person's shroud) is a cause of magical impotence, rather than a cure.

Gilbertus signalled that these remedies were different from those that he recommended for natural impotence, and also from the use of theriac and St John's wort, by calling them 'empirica', and distinguishing them from the 'medicines'. Most

¹⁵ Michael McVaugh, 'Theriac at Montpellier 1285-1325', *Sudhoffs Archiv* 8, 1972, p. 116

¹⁶ 'si medicine non conferant, fiant empirica,' Gilbertus Anglicus, *Compendium Medicine* (Lyon, 1510), Bk 7, Ch. 1, f. 287r

¹⁷ See Appendix 2 for Latin.

¹⁸ 'Si autem propter predicta accidat satyriasis, curetur ut satyriasis.' Gilbertus, f. 287r

¹⁹ 'Et dicunt quod argentum vivum delatum aufert maleficia in coitu si ipsa fit nimis stricta maleficio' Gilbertus, Book 7, De impedimento conceptionis, f. 312r

medieval medicines were believed to work according to the theory of the humours. Illnesses were believed to arise when the four humours in a person's body became unbalanced, and medicines aimed to treat this imbalance: a 'hot' plant would be used to cure an illness brought on by an excess of cold humours, for example. Empirical remedies were ones that did not work in this way. They relied on the unexplained properties of natural objects, and so occupied the same conceptual space as natural magic, a subject which had greatly interested some medical writers, including Galen and Avicenna.²⁰ A further difference between medical and empirical remedies was sometimes their sources. Medical writers took some empirical remedies from written sources, but others came from 'empirics', medical practitioners who had not had a formal academic training. The remedies that empirics recommended might work, but there was no theory behind them, and they might rely on charms as well as on medicines.²¹ Female practitioners were particularly put into the category of empirics, and were often referred to contemptuously as *vetulae* ('little old women') by both medical and ecclesiastical writers.²²

Some physicians saw 'empirical' remedies as fundamentally different from academic ones. Gilbertus himself apologized for describing an empirical cure for gout, even though it came from a written source, the Arab physician Rhazes (d. 925): 'Empirical Remedies: Although I deviate a little in [describing] these things, nonetheless it is good to write them in our book, so that the treatise will not be without what the ancients have said.'²³ An anonymous treatise on sterility, written in Montpellier in the early fourteenth century and sometimes printed with the works of Arnold of Villanova, was even more dismissive of empirical remedies. On the subject of magic impotence, it said: 'the cure of them [bewitched people] should be left to God, who roots out or calls off [the magic] through the magicians themselves; although some books of medicine include some empirical remedies, such as carrying mercury round the neck in the shell of a hazelnut, and suspending mugwort inside the threshold of the house where the man and woman are lying.'²⁴ Both carrying mercury in a nut and

²⁰ Brian Copenhaver, 'Scholastic Philosophy and Renaissance Magic in the *De Vita* of Marsilio Ficino', *Renaissance Quarterly* 37, 1984, pp. 539-43

²¹ Macdougall, p. 260

²² Jole Agrimi and Chiara Crisciani, 'Savoir Médical et Anthropologie Religieuse: les Représentations et les Fonctions de la "Vetula" (13e-15e siècle)', *Annales* 48:5, 1993, p. 1286

²³ 'Emperica: Quamvis ego declino ad has res parum, tamen est bonum scribere in libro nostro, ut non remaneat tractatus sine eis quas dixerunt antiqui.' Gilbertus, f. 327v, quoted in Handerson, p. 27

²⁴ 'sicut in maleficiatis, quorum cura deo dimittenda est per ipsos maleficiares extirpando vel revocando, quamquam aliqui libri medicine ponant aliqua remedia empirica, sicut est portacio argenti

suspending mugwort in the house come from the *Thesaurus Pauperum* of Peter of Spain, which is discussed below.²⁵ Despite the existence of a written source, however, the author distanced himself from these remedies, and in the rest of his text he avoided discussing magic as a cause of or cure for impotence: each form of impotence had a physical cause, and a cure that addressed that cause.

The distinction between academic and empirical remedies was also made by one of the latter's few defenders, the late thirteenth-century Dominican friar, Nicholas of Poland. Nicholas seems to have studied medicine at Montpellier, but later, back in Poland, he rejected academic medicine in favour of eating snakes, lizards and frogs – remedies which horrified the local people, but seem to have gained him a following among his Dominican confreres at Krakow, and some of the local aristocracy. Nicholas distinguished sharply between academic and empirical medicine, even though his own remedies were probably influenced by the academic discussions of theriac at Montpellier: 'the people love empirical things, because they do no one any harm; but the physicians are ashamed because great works have a preference for the villages, where the marketplaces resound in their praises of empirical remedies.'²⁶ However, the distinction between empirics and physicians was not always so clear in practice as in theory: the 'empiric' Gueraula de Codines from Barcelona had learned how to diagnose from urines from a travelling physician (*medicus*), for example.²⁷ Nor did all physicians distinguish strongly between empirical and medical remedies. Niccolo Bertucci (d. 1348) included a section of 'empirica' for each ailment in his *Compendium Artis Medice*: here, the term denoted simply a list of recipes for medicines, drawn from written sources like the twelfth-century *Antidotarium Nicolai* and the *Antidotarium* of Moses Maimonides (d. 1204). For impotence, these included familiar aphrodisiacs like orchids, onions, nettle seed and ginger; there was no mention of empirical remedies being particularly needed in cases of magic.²⁸

vivi ad collum in testa avellane et suspensio arthemisie intra liminari domus ubi iacent vir et mulier.' Enrique Montero Cartelle, ed., *Tractatus de Sterilitate* (Valladolid, 1983), p. 126

²⁵ Peter of Spain, *Thesaurus Pauperum*, in Maria Helena da Rocha Pereira, ed., *Obras Médicas de Pedro Hispano* (Coimbra, 1973), pp. 236, 238

²⁶ Quoted in William Eamon and Gundolf Keil, "'Plebs amat empirica': Nicholas of Poland and his Critique of the Medieval Medical Establishment' *Sudhoffs Archiv* 71, 1987, p. 189

²⁷ McVaugh, *Medicine*, pp. 104, 162-4

²⁸ Niccolo Bertucci, *Compendium sive Collectorium Artis Medice* (Cologne, 1537), Section 3, Tractatus 8, Ch. 1, f.172v

Where did Gilbertus's empirical impotence cures come from? I have found no parallels for them in the learned medicine of the later Middle Ages, and the few similarities to the *Pantegni* are not close enough for this to have been Gilbertus's only source. On the other hand, some aspects of the cures have affinities with early medieval medicine, before learned medicine was transformed by the influx of the more sophisticated and theoretical medical texts translated from Arabic. In the cure performed on St John's Eve, the instructions to be silent while gathering herbs, and the formulas mixing scripture with nonsense words have parallels in eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon leechbooks,²⁹ while the suspension of these words round the neck recalls the eighth-century reformer Alcuin's criticism of the English men who wore holy words as amulets even while having sex.³⁰ Reciting the Lord's Prayer over herbs was also referred to in the early Middle Ages: penitentials stated that nothing should be recited over medicinal herbs *except* the Lord's Prayer or the Creed, and these prohibitions were repeated into the late Middle Ages, for example in the thirteenth-century summary of canon law compiled by the Franciscan Monaldus (d. 1285).³¹ It is likely that this ruling was originally an attempt to Christianize a pagan prayer like the one addressed to the plant betony in the late antique treatise on betony attributed to Antonius Musa.³² The continued repetition of the canon suggests that healers were still being encouraged to recite the Lord's Prayer over herbs in Gilbertus's day, as part of a ritual that would otherwise be seen as magical.

This overlap between magic and medicine is also found in other parts of the cure. Gathering herbs on St John's Eve later featured in witch trials,³³ and even if the confessions made at the trials were not true, they show that gathering herbs on this

²⁹ Oswald Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England* vol. 2 (London, 1865), pp. 346-7

³⁰ 'cum illis Dei verbis sanctissimis vel reliquiis sanctorum ... etiam uxoribus debitum solvunt.' Alcuin, letter 291, ed. E. Dümmel, MGH *Epistolae* IV, *Epistolae Karolini Aevi* II, p. 449. See above, ch. 2.

³¹ 'Non licet in collectione herbarum que medicinales sunt, aliquas observationes vel incantationes adtendere, nisi tantum cum symbolo divino et oratione dominica.' H. J. Schmitz, ed., *Die Bussbücher und die Bussdisciplin der Kirche, nach handschriftlichen Quellen dargestellt*, vol. 1 (Mainz, 1883), p. 727. 'Item in collectionibus herbarum medicinalium nulla incantatio seu superstitio fieri debet. Possunt tamen colligi cum symbolo et oratione dominica.' Monaldus, *Summa de Iure Canonico* (Lyon, 1516), f. 249r. On Monaldus, see Josef Ziegler, *Die Ehelehre der Pönitentialsummen von 1200-1350* (Regensburg, 1956), p. 24.

³² 'Herba vettonica, que prima inventa es ab Aesculapio vel a Cirone centauro, his precibus adesto ...' Ps-Antonius Musa, *De Herba Vettonica*, in Ernest Howald and Henry Sigerist, ed., *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum* 4 (Leipzig, 1927), p. 11

³³ Pierrette Agavy, *De la Chrétienté Romaine à la Reforme en Dauphiné* vol. 2, (Rome, 1993), p. 775; H. Duplès-Agier, ed., *Registre Criminel du Châtelet de Paris de 6 Septembre 1389 au 18 Mai 1392*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1861) p. 338; Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: a Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (Stroud, 1997), p. 32

night was associated with magic. Gilbertus's shorter empirical cures have similarly mixed parallels in pre-twelfth-century medical learning and popular techniques: Pliny had suggested fumigation with a person's tooth as a cure, although for toothache, not impotence, and nineteenth-century folklorists referred to the use of perforated stones in England and elsewhere as amulets against bad luck.³⁴ Mercury appears very widely in folklore as protective against evil,³⁵ and the theologian William of Auvergne (d. 1249) testified to the existence of this belief in the Middle Ages.³⁶

Even Gilbertus's first, 'medicinal', cures, theriac and St John's wort, seem to show a mixture of learned and popular knowledge, magic and medicine. Theriac was described in many treatises as early as Galen. The demon-repelling properties of St John's wort, on the other hand, were known outside written medicine: the *Life of St Hugh of Lincoln* (c.1212) claimed that a woman was protected from demonic attacks by keeping St John's wort in the house.³⁷ The *Life's* author, Adam of Eynsham, was aware that the herb was mentioned in medical texts, but as he only mentioned that in medical texts it was a remedy against poison, these texts may not have been the only source for the woman's use of it.³⁸ A little later than Gilbertus, another medical writer, Peter of Spain, also hinted at popular awareness of the properties of St John's wort: 'If St John's wort is kept in the house demons flee; therefore it is called by many, "demons' bane".'³⁹ I have not been able to find a source for this remark, although it may go back to earlier works on the properties of herbs. Overall, it seems that Gilbertus was drawing on cures from outside the new academic medicine of the universities, which had been recorded in early medieval medical texts and had persisted in medical practice.

³⁴ Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 28.11, trans. W. H. S. Jones (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), p. 35; Charles Godfrey Leland, *Etruscan Magic and Occult Remedies* (1891, repr. New York, 1963), p. 335

³⁵ Leonard J. Goldwater, *Mercury: a History of Quicksilver* (Baltimore, 1972), pp. 26-7

³⁶ 'De argento vero vivo, que virtus cogitari potest, per quam incantationes, et prestigia spirituum malignorum prohibeat?' William of Auvergne, *De Universo* II.3.22, in *Opera Omnia* vol. 1 (Paris, 1674), p. 1060

³⁷ *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis*, ed. and trans. Decima L. Douie and David H. Farmer (Oxford, 2nd edn 1985), pp. 119-23

³⁸ 'Amongst other properties ascribed to it by the doctors (*physici*) it is alleged to be a sovereign remedy against poison.' *ibid*, pp. 122-3

³⁹ 'ypericon si teneatur in domo fugantur demones; ideo dicitur a multis fuga demonum.' Peter of Spain, p. 236-7

Peter of Spain

Much more is known about Peter of Spain than about Gilbertus Anglicus. Peter lectured in arts at Paris, producing several treatises on logic, and then studied and taught medicine at Montpellier and Siena, where he wrote commentaries on several key medical texts. He later acted as physician to the papal court, became pope as John XXI in 1276, and died in 1277.⁴⁰ His *Thesaurus Pauperum* was designed to be a guide to simple medicines for medical practitioners who did not have access to many books, and it proved very popular, surviving in seventy manuscripts, as well as being translated into several vernaculars.⁴¹ In his chapter on aphrodisiacs, Peter gave no theory and did not discuss the causes of impotence, but simply listed remedies, usually with the source from which he had learned them. Some of these were herbal remedies, for example ‘crush laurel berries and mix them with orchid sap and anoint the kidneys and genitals; it powerfully excites sex.’⁴² Laurel and orchids both occur regularly in medical texts as cures for non-magical impotence, as do some of Peter’s other recommendations, such as ginger, nettle seed and pepper, and the compound medicine *diasatyrion*. Peter then moved on to animal parts: wolves’, bulls’, stags’ and badgers’ testicles, and also ‘the stone which is found in the right breast of a *salpax* [unidentified, possibly a kind of snake].’⁴³ He went on to quote both Gilbertus Anglicus and the *Pantegni* for, for example, sprinkling a dog’s blood round the house, or making a plaster of St John’s wort. Another of Peter’s main sources was the *De Materia Medica* of Dioscorides, a first-century AD encyclopaedia of medical substances, from which he took several suggestions including keeping coral in the house, or suspending a whole squill plant in the doorway.⁴⁴

Peter also quoted a source named ‘Kyrannus’ a number of times, for such cures as keeping buckthorn in the house, or wearing the heart of a crow as an amulet.⁴⁵ This refers to the *Kyranides*, the Greek guide to making amulets from the third century AD or earlier, discussed in chapter 1, which was translated into Latin in 1169.⁴⁶ The

⁴⁰ On Peter, see J. N. D. Kelly, *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 200-1

⁴¹ Peter of Spain, p. 15

⁴² ‘bacce lauri terantur et conficiantur cum suco satirionis et ungantur inde renes et genitalia; potenter excitat coitum.’ Peter of Spain, p. 235

⁴³ ‘lapis qui invenitur in dextra mamilla salpaxis’ Peter of Spain, p. 237; da Rocha Pereira suggests that ‘salpaxis’ may be related to the ‘salpuga’ mentioned by Isidore of Seville, a kind of snake, p. 21

⁴⁴ Peter of Spain, p. 237. On Dioscorides, see John M. Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine* (Austin, Texas, 1985)

⁴⁵ Peter of Spain, pp. 236, 238

⁴⁶ Louis Delatte, ed., *Textes latins et vieux français relatifs aux Cyranides* (Liège, 1942), p. 5

amulets in the *Kyranides* involved a bird, a fish, a plant and a stone, and had both medicinal and magical uses: for example, the amulet depicting a crow cured several illnesses but also ‘makes the wearer happy and rich.’⁴⁷ Peter did not cite the full descriptions of how to make an amulet, but instead used the *Kyranides* as a source of information about the properties of individual birds, plants or fish in the same way as his other sources. For example, he quoted the recommendation that a man and woman should wear the hearts of a male and female crow respectively to cure impotence, but not the full amulet, which was equally good ‘for conjugal love.’⁴⁸

This survey of Peter of Spain’s cures for impotence shows how a variety of healing practices could be listed together. Like some of the authors of medical recipes studied by Richard Kieckhefer, Peter may not have thought too hard about whether any or all of these cures were magical: the important thing was whether they worked.⁴⁹ Moreover, all were guaranteed by named medical authorities. Some of the cures would probably have been identifiable as natural, such as *diasatyrion*, which appeared in an influential twelfth-century guide to medicines, the *Antidotarium Nicolai*.⁵⁰ The animal-part cures could have been considered as natural magic, relying on some property in the animal concerned to bring about a cure, rather than on the theory of the humours. The animals which were used tended to be those associated with sex and fertility, such as the bull and the stag, so there is a suggestion of sympathetic magic.⁵¹ The medical uses of animal parts were described in a variety of contexts, from the *De Animalibus* of Albertus Magnus, which was designed to be an extension of Aristotle’s books on animals, to the bestiaries, which interpreted animals’ properties allegorically, to works which focused on marvels and magic. Thus the animal-part cures can be seen as a bridge between magical and medical remedies.⁵² Other cures again, such as the instructions to manipulate the couple’s environment by keeping certain substances in the house or sprinkling dog’s blood around seem to be designed to repel demons in the same manner as the St John’s wort in the *Life of Hugh of Lincoln*. Like Gilbertus, Peter was willing to mix medical and magical techniques in the search for a cure.

⁴⁷ ‘portantem autem facit letum et divitem.’ Delatte, p. 32

⁴⁸ ‘ad coniugalem amorem.’ Delatte, p. 32

⁴⁹ Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 66

⁵⁰ W. S. van den Berg, *Eene Middelnederlandsche Vertaling van het Antidotarium Nicolai* (Leiden, 1917), p. 27

⁵¹ Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 67

At the end of the chapter, however, Peter went further than Gilbertus and included a more explicitly magical process under Kyrannus's name: 'If you behead a hoopoe at full moon, at sunrise, and eat its still-beating heart, you will know everything that is in the minds of men, and also heavenly things.'⁵³ This might still arguably be natural magic, relying on some hidden power inherent in the hoopoe, but several factors indicate that this process was different from wearing a crow's heart as an amulet. Firstly, according to Albertus Magnus, 'wizards... seek out the hoopoe and its members, especially the brain, tongue and heart,'⁵⁴ and the magical text the *Liber Vacce*, circulating from the thirteenth century onwards, included the eye of a hoopoe in a recipe designed to make a person see demons or the devil.⁵⁵ Thus eating bits of hoopoes was associated with learned magical practices, and particularly those that, like Peter's recipe, aimed at allowing a person to see or know 'heavenly things' beyond ordinary perception. Wanting to know heavenly things could also be seen as an attempt at divination. Moreover, killing the bird could be seen as a magical sacrifice, as described in the *De Radiis* (*On Rays*) ascribed to al-Kindi, a text which discussed why magic worked. *De Radiis* claimed that sacrifice was powerful because when an animal was killed, rather than dying naturally, the course of nature was interrupted, and so the world was more susceptible to being changed by human desires and actions.⁵⁶ If the recipe with the hoopoe's heart could reveal why a man was impotent or who was bewitching him (which would explain its appearance in this chapter), Peter may still have thought that this was a legitimate use of a natural phenomenon. But it had associations with a potentially more demonic kind of magic that the use of animal parts in amulets and medicines did not have.

Unlike Gilbertus Anglicus, Peter of Spain did not draw on popular medicine, except perhaps in his reference to 'many people' calling St John's wort 'demons' bane'. On

⁵² Sophie Page, *Magic at St Augustine's, Canterbury, in the Late Middle Ages*, PhD Thesis, Warburg Institute, University of London, 2000, pp. 44, 50-3

⁵³ 'si in luna nova, in ortu solis, decollaveris upupam, et cor eius palpitans transglutias, scies omnia que fuerint in mente hominum et etiam celestia.' Peter of Spain, pp. 238-9

⁵⁴ Albertus Magnus, *De Animalibus*, trans. Kenneth F. Kitchell Jr. and Irvn Michael Resnick (Baltimore, 1999), book 23, ch. 112, p. 1653

⁵⁵ David Pingree, 'Plato's Hermetic "Book of the Cow"', in Pietro Prini, ed., *Il Neoplatonismo nel Rinascimento* (Rome, 1993), p. 142

⁵⁶ 'Cum vero morietur actione hominis, contra nature cursum, mundi materia contra naturam mutationem incurrit propter quod ipsa, taliter alterata, habilis redditur in aliqua sui parte ad receptionem motus et forme quam per nature cursum proprium recipere non deberet. Unde ymaginatio hominis et intentio et desiderium, concurrans cum opere mortificationis animalis, effectum thematis sortitur, cum exacta sollempnitas adhibetur.' Al-Kindi, *De Radiis*, ed. M.-T. d'Alverny and F. Hudry, *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 41, 1974, p. 255

the contrary, all his recipes came from named written sources, although in the case of the cures he took from Gilbertus, these may only have been one step away from a non-written tradition. However, even if they were not derived from popular medicine, Peter thought that these cures were worth including in a book explicitly aimed at a wide audience. Thus in these two thirteenth-century writers we have a mix of learned and popular, medical and magical information.

Arnold of Villanova and Peter of Abano

Arnold of Villanova (c.1240-1311) studied and then taught medicine at Montpellier, and also served as court physician to the kings of Aragon. He wrote many medical texts, including the *Breviarium Practice*, a treatise on practical medicine; the *Speculum Medicine*, a more theoretical synthesis; and the widely read *Regimen Sanitatis*. He also wrote spiritual texts predicting the imminent coming of Antichrist, one of which was condemned by the theology faculty of the University of Paris in 1300, but he was protected by a position at the papal court, after successfully curing Boniface VIII of kidney stones.⁵⁷ Arnold said little about magic as a cause of impotence: he did not mention it in his treatises on coitus and conception, or in the *Breviarium* or the *Speculum Medicine*,⁵⁸ but he did mention the subject in another context. In *De Parte Operativa*, which was probably written in the 1290s while Arnold was teaching at Montpellier,⁵⁹ he discussed the power of the heavenly bodies to affect people and objects on earth:

‘Hence whoever knows the powers of the world and is acquainted with materials and their dispositions which prepare them to take on the impression of those powers, can bring about marvellous and great-seeming changes in lower things. Nor can any actor short of the First [i. e. God] bring them about in another way, except by the mediation of bodies infused with the powers of the higher bodies, or of the parts of the heavens. Hence the illusions of magicians, and the delusions of enchanters, and the irritations of the sorcerers and even the influences of those who cast the evil eye have no other efficacy, even though demons help.’⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Joseph Ziegler, *Medicine and Religion c. 1300: the Case of Arnau de Villanova* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 21-7

⁵⁸ *De Coitu, De Conceptione* and the *Breviarium Practice* are all in Arnold of Villanova, *Opera Omnia* (Basel, 1585)

⁵⁹ Ziegler, *Medicine*, p. 24

⁶⁰ ‘Unde quicumque sciret virtutes orbis, et materias cognosceret cum dispositionibus, que preparant eas ad suscipiendam illarum virtutum impressionem, miras, et velut magnas faceret immutationes in rebus inferioribus, nec aliquod agens citra primum potest eas aliter facere, nisi mediantibus corporibus informatis virtutibus corporum superiorum, vel partium celi, unde et magorum prestigia, et incantatorum delusiones, et maleficiorum vexationes, ac etiam fascinantium impressiones non aliter efficaciam habent, licet demones subministrant.’ Arnold of Villanova, *De Parte Operativa*, in *Opera*

For Arnold, demons might be involved in producing marvellous effects, but he plays down their role. Instead, he emphasizes that the forces involved are a natural part of the universe, and can be channelled by anyone with the right knowledge.⁶¹

After giving some examples of objects which had been made powerful by being imprinted with heavenly powers, like the gold seal depicting a lion which had to be worn over the kidneys which he used to cure Boniface VIII of kidney stones, Arnold mentioned impotence magic: 'Similarly the presence of certain plants, or even animal parts, and also of certain stones tied to the body or suspended or sewn into clothes, prevent the generative organs from performing their function.'⁶² These forms of impotence magic are similar to those described by several medieval writers. The author of the *Pantegni* and Peter of Spain both mentioned using plants, stones and animal parts as amulets, or keeping them close by and, as quoted in chapter 2, Cosmas of Prague claimed in around 1125 that Welf of Bavaria had accused Matilda of Tuscany of putting something in her clothes or in the bedclothes to make him impotent.⁶³ Arnold knew about magical texts, since he said in his treatise *De Improbatione Maleficiorum* (1276-88) that 'we remember having read the whole doctrine of foolish necromancy in the Arabic language.'⁶⁴ However, like Thomas Aquinas, he did not use this knowledge when he discussed magic impotence. For Arnold, impotence magic was primarily natural magic, relying on the powers of heavenly forces and natural objects.

Peter of Abano, who taught medicine and astronomy at Paris and Padua in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, also suggested that impotence magic worked through natural means. In his incomplete astrological work, the *Lucidator* (1310), he described it as a form of fascination (the evil eye). For Peter, as for earlier writers like the anonymous author of the *Prose Salernitan Questions*, a series of questions-and-

Omnia, col. 274. All the early modern editions of this text that I have seen read 'festinantes' for 'fascinantium', but the phrase 'fascinantium impressiones' appears later in the text, col. 275.

⁶¹ Ziegler, *Medicine*, p. 246

⁶² 'Similiter presentia quarundam plantarum, aut etiam particularium animalium, ac etiam quorundam lapidum alligatorum corpori, vel suspensorum, aut vestibus consutorum, prohibent organa generationis suum officium exercere.' *De Parte Operativa*, col. 275

⁶³ 'aliquod maleficium vel in tuis vestimentis vel in lectisterniis latet.' Cosmas Pragensis, *Chronica Bohemorum*, ed. Berthold Bretholz, MGH Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum NS II, (Berlin, 1923), p. 129

⁶⁴ 'nos in lingua Arabum legisse recolimus totam nigromantie fatuitatis doctrinam.' Quoted in Paul Diepgen, 'Studien zu Arnald von Villanova IV: Arnalds Stellung zur Magie, Astrologie und Oneiromantie' *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 5, 1912, p. 93

answers on scientific and medical topics used for teaching compiled around 1200,⁶⁵ fascination worked by natural but invisible means, by which the soul of the person who cast the evil eye could affect the world around them. Peter stated that fascination affected the victim's soul, 'taking possession of one's powers so that one loses self-control', and 'impeding sexual intercourse'.⁶⁶ This idea that impotence magic worked through natural means is closer to that of Arnold of Villanova (or Urso of Salerno in the twelfth century) than to that of the medical compendia, which did not discuss exactly how impotence magic worked or whether it could in fact have a natural explanation.

Fourteenth Century

In the fourteenth century, the *Pantegni* and the compendia of Gilbertus Anglicus and Peter of Spain continued to be copied, and some of their cures were mentioned in new compendia, such as that of William of Brescia (d. 1326).⁶⁷ Bernard of Gordon, who wrote an influential compendium, the *Lilium Medicine*, in 1305, noted at the head of his chapter on impotence that 'this chapter can be entitled *On Frigid and Bewitched People*,'⁶⁸ the same title that was used for the relevant chapter in contemporary canon law texts. However, in the chapter itself, Bernard listed only natural causes of impotence: sleeping with women who were under-age, too old, or ill; if the man was too young, or drunk, or ill; or if his humours were unbalanced. In 1355, Jacobus de Dondis listed cures from Pliny and the *Kyranides*.⁶⁹ These writers were brief, and none said anything new about magic impotence. However, some authors of medical compendia did discuss magic impotence in detail. They gave few new cures for it, but they show how ideas continued to develop during the fourteenth century.

John of Gaddesden

John of Gaddesden, who wrote a compendium known as the *Rosa Anglica* in 1311, was a fellow of Merton College, Oxford, and seems to have spent time in the south of France. He was a bachelor of theology as well as a doctor of medicine.⁷⁰ Unlike

⁶⁵ Brian Lawn, ed., *The Prose Salernitan Questions* (London, 1979), pp. 63, 98

⁶⁶ Quoted in Lynn Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. 2 (New York, 1923), p. 901

⁶⁷ Gulielmus Brixiensis, *Practica* (Venice, 1508), ch. 111, f. 139r

⁶⁸ 'istud capitulum posset intitulari de frigidis et maleficiatis.' Bernard of Gordon, *Lilium Medicine* (Ferrara, 1486), Part 7, ch.1, f. 138r

⁶⁹ Jacobus de Dondis, *Aggregator* (Venice, 1481), ff. 256r-v

⁷⁰ H. P. Cholmeley, *John of Gaddesden and the Rosa Medicinae* (Oxford, 1912), p.4

Bernard of Gordon, John included magic as a cause of impotence, mixing it in with natural causes like an imbalance of humours. He also described how the needle used to sew a dead man into his shroud could make a man impotent, citing both the *Pantegni* and Urso of Salerno by name.⁷¹ John's cures were not just drawn from these sources, however. Another cure, for which I have not found a source, is listed among the aphrodisiacs: 'and a confection made of figs and nuts and hazelnuts and almonds and ginger is good even against poisons and against magic with *herba icanis* [I have not been able to identify this; it may be a corruption of *hypericonis*, St John's wort].'⁷² Nuts were referred to as cures for magic in the *Pantegni*, although they were not eaten, but here they were put with the well-known aphrodisiacs ginger and almonds into a medicine that also treated magic.

John also claimed to have cured a man who had been impotent for three years: 'he drank St John's wort in aqua vitae every day in winter against magic, and I gave him agaric [a kind of fungus], and *diaturbit*⁷³ once a week for his problem with phlegm. And this completed the remedy against magic.'⁷⁴ As in Peter of Spain and the *Life of Hugh of Lincoln*, St John's wort is explicitly used here as a protector against magic, although in this case it is drunk like a medicine, rather than kept in the house. First-person accounts of cures in medieval medical texts can sometimes turn out to have been copied from earlier writers, but John refers to his own experience elsewhere,⁷⁵ and I have found no earlier references to this cure. If it truly was John's experience, the anecdote indicates that at least some learned physicians took magic into account when dealing with cases of impotence. It also shows that a physician might try to cure magic in the same way as he would a natural ailment, with medicines to be taken. However, like Gilbertus Anglicus, John acknowledged that natural methods might not work, and referred the reader to the *Pantegni*: 'Next, if he is still prevented from having sex by a lack of erection caused by magic, then Constantine says in the eighth

⁷¹ 'Similiter acus cum qua suebatur homo mortuus fix in lecto vel in pannis... ut dicit Constantinus 8o Practice sue, tractatu de maleficiis, et Urso in Afforismis suis commentario 24o [text: 34o] dat causam istius.' John of Gaddesden, *Rosa Anglica* (Pavia, 1517), ch. 17, f. 94r

⁷² 'et confectio facta de ficibus et nucibus et avellanis et amigdalibus et zinziber valet etiam contra venena et contra maleficia cum herba icanis.' John of Gaddesden, f. 96v

⁷³ Possibly a compound medicine, as these often begin with the prefix 'dia-', as in 'diasatyron'.

⁷⁴ 'et isto modo curavi unum qui non habuit erectionem virge per triennium, et potavit herbam sancti Ioannis quotidie contra maleficia in aqua vite in hieme, et dedi sibi agaricum, et diaturbit semel in hebdomada pro flegmate peccante in eo. Et sic patet contra maleficia,' John of Gaddesden, f. 98v

⁷⁵ Hunt, *Popular Medicine*, p. 27

book of his *Practica...*⁷⁶ Not all of the cures that follow come from the *Pantegni*, however. John quoted some from Peter of Spain's *Thesaurus Pauperum*, such as 'and let the entire plant of St John's wort, which is called "demons' bane", be put in the house.'⁷⁷

John also modified the final cure for magic impotence that is found in some but not all manuscripts of the *Pantegni*, where 'if the above methods do not work because the couple's sins are hanging over them,'⁷⁸ the couple had to confess to a priest, who would then give them a slip of parchment with a biblical verse on it. John's version was slightly different. Like the author of the *Pantegni*, he believed that the couple's sins might be responsible for the other cures' lack of success, and he reiterated this in stronger terms than the earlier writer: 'But because these things come from bad belief and bad faith, therefore such things should be feared.'⁷⁹ He then made the original cure more complex by prescribing not one but two slips of parchment, inscribed with three biblical verses:

'And so the man and the woman should confess well, and take communion on the day of Pentecost or Easter or the Ascension, and then the priest should bless them and give this written verse to the husband: *the voice of the Lord thunders the majesty of God over the waters, God is over the mighty waters* (Psalm 28,3). And to the woman [he should give] this verse: *Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all peoples praise you. All the earth has given its fruit* (Psalm 66,6-7) and this one: *You bless the year with the dew of your blessing, and your fields are filled with fruitfulness* (Psalm 64,12). And then they should go home and abstain from intercourse for three days and nights. Then they should have intercourse and ask God if it pleases him to give them many good children and offspring.'⁸⁰

John's willingness to modify a cure from an older authority suggests that he was really using some of these methods.

⁷⁶ 'Deinde si adhuc prohibeatur coitus propter non erectionem ratione maleficii, tunc dicit Constantinus 80 Practice sue...' John of Gaddesden, f. 98v

⁷⁷ 'et tota domus ponatur plena herba ipericon que vocatur fuga demonum.' John of Gaddesden, f. 98v.

⁷⁸ See Appendix 1, Part 2 for Latin

⁷⁹ 'Quia tamen ista veniunt a mala credentia et [edition: ut] fide mala, ideo oportet timere talia.' John of Gaddesden, f. 98v

⁸⁰ 'Et ideo vir et mulier bene confiteantur, et in die . Pentecostes vel Pasche vel Ascensionis communicentur, et tunc sacerdos benedicat eos et det marito hunc versum scriptum: *Vox domini supra aquas Deus maiestatis intonuit, Deus super aquas multas.* Et mulieri istum versum: *Confiteantur tibi populi deus confiteantur tibi populi omnes. Omnis terra dedit fructum suum, et illum: Benedices tu rore anni benignitatis tue et campi tui implebuntur ubertate.* Et tunc vadant domum et sint in abstinentia a coitu per tres dies et noctes. Deinde coeant et rogent deum si placet sibi quod det eis prolem et generationem multam et bonam.' John of Gaddesden, f. 98v

Guy de Chauliac

The *Chirurgia* of Guy de Chauliac, completed in 1363, discussed magic impotence in different terms from those of the earlier medical compendia. Despite the fact that he wrote a surgical text, Guy worked as a physician, and argued that a surgeon had to know the theoretical principles of medicine.⁸¹ This explains why he discussed magic impotence when earlier surgical texts did not mention impotence at all. Guy drew an original distinction between natural and magic impotence: ‘frigidity differs from magic because in reality frigidity concerns the complexion, but magic the mind and the combination [of humours] – although it is commonly said that frigidity happens because of the nature of the body, but magic because of a divine thing, as when some evil deeds are done, or there is bad feeling between the man and the woman.’⁸² Guy thus rejected the commonly held view that ‘magic’ impotence resulted from a harmful magical act, instead choosing a definition that made it a problem of the victim’s mind. In arguing this, he went further than Urso of Salerno (discussed in ch. 3), who had suggested a natural explanation for ‘magic’ impotence, but still believed that the magical act was responsible for the impotence, even if it worked through natural rather than supernatural means. Guy’s definition does not seem to have influenced later writers, but it is interesting because it seems to be the first attempt to explain ‘magic’ impotence in terms of psychological causes.

As well as developing his own views on magic impotence, Guy de Chauliac also seems to have been influenced by canon law. Like Roger de Barone in the twelfth century, and Gilbertus Anglicus in the thirteenth, he stated that magic could be diagnosed when there was nothing obviously wrong with the man, a definition compatible with canon law. Then he went further and added the example of when a man could sleep with women apart from his wife (the canonists’ definition), or if he could trace the impotence to a specific act of magic.⁸³ Like many canonists, Guy also warned the physician to be on his guard against fraud, which he said was common in

⁸¹ Guy de Chauliac, *Inventarium sive Chirurgia Magna*, vol. 1, ed. Michael R. McVaugh, (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1997), p. xii

⁸² ‘differt autem infrigidacio a malefaccione quia realiter infrigidacio concernit complexionem, malefaccio animum et compositionem – licet vulgariter dicatur quod infrigidacio fiat propter naturam corporis, malefaccio vero propter rem divinam, ut quando aliqua facinora sunt facta aut mala fuerit cogitacio inter virum et mulierem.’ Guy de Chauliac, p. 386

⁸³ ‘Signa autem quando est propter rem divinam aut malum animum sunt quando omnia stant bene et tamen non potest exire in actum debitum coeundi, precipue cum uxore, licet possit cum aliis, et quod reducitur ad actum per oraciones et remociones maleficiorum et malarum cogitacionum.’ Guy de Chauliac, p. 386

these cases. He also used the vocabulary of ecclesiastical writing on marriage: 'it is a great danger to separate what God has joined, unless it is required by a most just cause.'⁸⁴ This phrase echoes the Bible's teaching on divorce, which is that 'what God had joined,' man should not separate (Matthew 19,6; Mark 10,9). Guy had probably picked up these ideas in the church courts, since he also included a long section describing how to diagnose impotence in court, 'because it is the custom of justice to entrust the examination to physicians,'⁸⁵ and cases where physicians were called in to diagnose impotence are documented from the late thirteenth century onwards.⁸⁶ The church court was thus a channel that could mediate between medicine, canon law and theology outside the university.

Remedies Against Magic

At some point, the discussion of magic impotence from the *Pantegni*, sometimes with those of Gilbertus Anglicus and Peter of Spain as well, was excerpted to form a separate treatise on the causes of and cures for magic impotence, which is sometimes entitled *Remedia Contra Maleficia* ('*Remedies Against Magic*').⁸⁷ The *Remedies* was sometimes ascribed to Arnold of Villanova, and appears in the editions of his works printed in 1504, 1509, 1520, 1527, 1541 and 1585, but one of Arnold's editors, Juan Paniagua, has contrasted the *Remedies*' 'credulity' towards magic with the scepticism shown in Arnold's other works, and concluded that it is 'undoubtedly' apocryphal.⁸⁸ Even if the text was not compiled by Arnold, it may have been put together at the time that he was writing, in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. The sources would all have been available by then, and the subject matter would fit the increased interest in fertility which many medical writers displayed in the early fourteenth century, which had been noted by Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, and Joan Cadden.⁸⁹ Several treatises on sterility were written then, especially at Montpellier, and the medical compendia also began to discuss signs of sterility or impotence at

⁸⁴ 'Caveat tamen ut non sit deceptus, quia multe fraudes in talibus consueverunt committi, et maximum periculum est separare quod Deus coniunxerat, nisi iustissima causa requirente.' Guy de Chauliac, p. 386

⁸⁵ 'quia iusticia consuevit committere examen medicis.' Guy de Chauliac, p. 386

⁸⁶ McVaugh, *Medicine*, p. 104

⁸⁷ This text was partially edited and discussed in detail by Gerda Hoffmann, 'Beiträge zur Lehre von der durch Zauber verursachten Krankheit und ihrer Behandlung in der Medizin des Mittelalters', *Janus* 37, 1933, pp. 129-44, 179-92, 211-20. See Appendix 1 for a fuller edition.

⁸⁸ 'Su condición de texto apócrifo es indudable.' Juan Paniagua, 'El Maestro Arnau de Vilanova, médico', 2nd edn. in *Studia Arnaldiana* (Barcelona, 1994), pp. 73-4

greater length than they had previously done. This interest in fertility extended beyond the medical writers. Peter Biller has noted the same rise in discussions of fertility and contraception in canon law, theology and pastoral writing around 1300,⁹⁰ and fourteenth-century miracle collections also focused more on cases of infertility and child mortality than their thirteenth-century counterparts had.⁹¹

On the other hand, the known surviving manuscripts of the *Remedies* have almost all been dated to the fifteenth century or later (see list in Appendix 1), although the *Remedies* is a short text and there are probably other manuscripts which have not yet been found. The only exception is Bruges, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 470, which is dated by its cataloguer to the thirteenth century.⁹² It is possible that the text was written in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century but was then copied more widely in the fifteenth, because at that time physicians were more interested than earlier writers in magical illnesses and cures. This new interest in magic and magical cures is shown in the comments on magic impotence in the fifteenth-century medical compendia (see below, ch. 9).

The *Remedies* was a fluid text, and several copyists added extra passages, but it is possible to discern broadly two versions. The first is found in Bruges MS 470,⁹³ British Library MS Sloane 3529, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale MS II.iii.214, and Montpellier, Ecole de Médecine MS 277.⁹⁴ These manuscripts contain the chapter from the *Pantegni*, in its full version including the final cure where the couple are blessed by a priest or bishop, although the Florence manuscript then adds some more cures which are not found in the other manuscripts. The second version, in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS 321 and the printed editions of Arnold of Villanova's works, omit this final cure (as indeed do some manuscripts of the *Pantegni*), but add other remedies from Peter of Spain's *Thesaurus Pauperum* and, in the printed editions, from Gilbertus Anglicus's *Compendium Medicine* as well. The two versions

⁸⁹ Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages* (English edn., Oxford, 1988), p. 170; Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 237

⁹⁰ Peter Biller, *The Measure of Multitude: Population in Medieval Thought* (Oxford, 2000), p. 208

⁹¹ Michael Goodich, 'Sexuality, Family, and the Supernatural in the Fourteenth Century', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4, 1994, p. 500

⁹² A. de Poorter, *Catalogue des Manuscrits de Médecine Médiévale de la Bibliothèque de Bruges* (Paris, 1924), p. 24

⁹³ Text transcribed in full by de Poorter, pp. 20-2

⁹⁴ Text transcribed in full by Henry Sigerist, 'Impotence as a Result of Witchcraft', in *Essays in Biology in Honour of Herbert M. Evans* (Berkeley, 1943), pp. 541-3

of this text may in fact represent two independent uses of the *Pantegni* chapter: if the authors of Munich 321 and the printed versions were building on the version of the text found in the Bruges, Montpellier and London manuscripts, it seems strange that they would have omitted the final cure.

The text could also be adapted. Most of the cures from the *Pantegni*, and Gilbertus and Peter where they were used, were copied word for word, but the compiler or copyist of Munich 321 left out many of the cures from Peter of Spain that are found in the sixteenth-century printed versions of the *Remedies*, and changed the order of the remaining ones. Also, in both the Munich manuscript and the sixteenth-century printed versions, one of Peter's recipes was altered to make it more relevant to impotence. The *Remedies* reads: 'Item if someone has been bewitched so that they do not love some man or woman, let the faeces of the person they love be put into the lover's right shoe and let [the lover] tread on it, and as soon as they sense its smell, the magic will be loosed.' Peter's version was different: 'Item if someone has been bewitched so that they *love some man or woman too much*...' ⁹⁵ The compiler of the *Remedies* thus altered a cure for love magic to a cure for impotence magic.

Additions were also made to the text, as was done in the Florence Biblioteca Nazionale manuscript and the 1509 edition of Arnold of Villanova's works (which was a reprint of the 1504 edition, and was itself reprinted in 1520). In the 1509 edition, several cures were added, including one that was designed to cure a bride and bridegroom who were both virgins (see Appendix 1, Part 5). This included the following advice: 'take a dish or a cup. In the middle of it write a cross and these four names on the four sides of the cross: *avis, gravis, seps, sipa*, and on the inside rim of the cup write the entire gospel of St John.' The words were then washed off into a cup of holy water, or wine, which the couple had to drink 'with devotion'. Gerda Hoffmann suggested that since the whole of the Gospel of John would never fit into a cup, only the first verse was meant, 'In the beginning was the word...' ⁹⁶ Despite the fact that this process first seems to appear in the *Remedies* in the sixteenth century, it has parallels with older practices. Washing words from the Gospel of John into water appeared in Anglo-Saxon medicine as a cure for fever, and a similar process was used as a remedy for demonic possession in a collection of magical recipes dating from the

⁹⁵ 'item si quis maleficiatus fuerit *ad nimis amandum* aliquem vel aliquam...' Peter of Spain, pp. 236-9

⁹⁶ Hoffmann, p. 138, n. 2

late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.⁹⁷ This passage was also seen as powerful more generally: it was used in healing charms, and there was a belief that anyone who crossed themselves while it was recited at mass would come to no harm that day.⁹⁸ Thus this seemingly magical process had strong affinities with orthodox piety as well as with long-established medical practice.

The manuscripts of the *Remedies* further suggest that the text was usually, although not invariably, classed as medicine or natural magic. Of the eight surviving manuscripts of the *Remedies* which I have identified, I have been able to find information about the other contents of the manuscript for seven. Of these, four contain recipes and works on medicine: Bruges 470; Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ashburnham 143; BL Sloane 3529; and Munich 321.⁹⁹ In Vienna, Österreichisches Nationalbibliothek MS 5315, the *Remedies* is copied with Costa ben Luca's *Physical Ligatures* on amulets, and works on medicine and poisons, several of which were by Arnold of Villanova.¹⁰⁰ Montpellier 277 contains works on the properties of herbs, stones and animals, the *Kyranides*, and a work on obstetrics. Thus the *Remedies* seems to have been mainly copied by people interested in medicine, especially practical medicine such as recipes, or in the properties of natural objects more broadly. This manuscript context is typical of other works which could be seen as dealing with natural magic: for example, many texts of non-demonic image magic are likewise found bound with works on medicine and the wonders of nature.¹⁰¹

There is one exception to this pattern, however: Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale MS II.iii.214, described by David Pingree.¹⁰² Here the *Remedies* is found alongside many explicitly magical texts. This manuscript does not just contain works on image magic that could be part of an interest in the natural world, but also angel names and rituals

⁹⁷ Felix Grendon, 'The Anglo-Saxon Charms', *Journal of American Folklore* 22, 1909, p. 153; Richard Kieckhefer, 'The Devil's Contemplatives: the *Liber Iuratus*, the *Liber Visionum* and Christian Appropriation of Jewish Occultism', in Fanger, ed., *Conjuring Spirits*, p. 251

⁹⁸ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven and London, 1992), p. 215-6

⁹⁹ De Poorter lists the contents of Bruges 470, pp. 19-22. For Munich 321: C. Halm and G. Laubmann, *Catalogus Codicum Latinorum Bibliothecae Regiae Monacensis* vol. 1, part 1 (Munich, 1868), p. 59. For Florence, Ashburnham 143: *Indici e Cataloghi 8: I Codici Ashburnhamiani della Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana di Firenze* vol. 1 (Rome, 1887), pp. 231-5. BL Sloane 3529 also contains a treatise by Arnold of Villanova on 'cautela', and some surgical works and recipes for unguents.

¹⁰⁰ *Tabulae Codicum Manuscriptum in Bibliotheca Palatina Vindobonensi Asservatorum*, vol. 4 (Vienna, 1870), pp. 100-1

¹⁰¹ Frank Klaasen, 'English Manuscripts of Magic, 1300-1500: a Preliminary Survey', in Claire Fanger, ed., *Conjuring Spirits* (Stroud, 1998), p. 4

involving demons. Thus it was possible, but not usual, to read the *Remedies* as a magical text. It may be significant that the extra cures added to the text in this manuscript, unlike those added in the 1509 printed edition, do not all have affinities with orthodox religious or medical practices. Although one of these cures is to write mysterious words on parchment, which is then used as an amulet similar to that recommended by Gilbertus Anglicus (but without the biblical quotation), another involves writing the characters ‘*ha. ha. at.*’ on a sword, which is then put in the couple’s bed. I have not found any other references to swords being used to cure magic impotence, but they were a feature of some necromantic spells which invoked demons.¹⁰³

Conclusion

The number of medical discussions of magic and impotence gradually increased in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The influence of the *Pantegni* chapter also became evident at this time, as it was cited by name for the first time by the canonist Hostiensis, and Peter of Spain. Unlike in pastoral literature, canon law and to a lesser extent theology, there was no pastoral movement in medicine to motivate physicians to record lay beliefs and practices, and remedies were passed from one text to another, but despite this situation, many of the medical writers who discussed magic impotence seem to have been aware that it was a real problem. Firstly, magic impotence is usually found in the medical compendia that represented the practical end of scholastic medicine. In fact, the proliferation of these compendia as a genre of medical writing from the thirteenth century onwards may be partly responsible for the increasing number of discussions of magic impotence in the same period, because authors now had an established place in which to talk about it. Some authors also included suggestions based on practice. Gilbertus Anglicus probably drew extensively on popular medicine, and Peter of Spain included cures for specifically magic impotence in a work designed for a wide audience. John of Gaddesden modified one of the *Pantegni*’s cures and claimed to have treated a man for magical as well as natural impotence, and Guy de Chauliac expected physicians to come across cases of impotence in the church courts.

¹⁰² David Pingree, ‘Learned Magic in the Time of Frederick II’, *Micrologus* 2, 1994, pp. 44-53

¹⁰³ Examples in Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, pp. 47-50, 59, 62, 117

The physicians differed from the pastoral writers, canonists and theologians in that they were the only writers on magic and impotence to provide details of cures. They were also more tolerant of cures which authors who took a more rigorous view of magic might condemn. Both Gilbertus Anglicus and Peter of Spain included cures with elements that theologians and canonists would probably have interpreted as demonic, such as Gilbertus's nonsense-words written with the biblical quotation, and Peter's suggestion of killing a hoopoe to learn heavenly things. Unsurprisingly, writers in other academic disciplines sometimes had doubts about the cures allowed by medical texts: Hostiensis admitted that the cures found in the *Pantegni* were 'frivolous', and John of Freiburg emphasized that although frivolous cures were permitted, illicit ones were not. It seems likely, however, that the physicians' attitude was more typical of wider attitudes to magical cures, and that many people were willing to mix natural cures with some that theologians saw as magical.

One example of this is the case of Francesco Datini, an Italian merchant of the late fourteenth century, and his wife Margherita, who tried a variety of practices to help Margherita conceive, including academic medicine, the suggestions of a female empiric, incantations, and prayer, with no suggestion that these practices were incompatible.¹⁰⁴ Another is Master Antonius Imbert, a healer prosecuted in Manosque, Provence, in 1326, who offered sterility and impotence cures and love magic. His methods included both 'medicines, baths and drinks' and a 'false and magic art'.¹⁰⁵ For example, he told one woman to boil a flower and then bathe her stomach with the water in order to conceive, while another was given a 'wineskin made from silk in which she was to make thirteen letters of gold and sky-blue. And they were to be made on a Friday, and they were of such power that every lady who wore them on her person would never lose a child and would always be happy with her husband.'¹⁰⁶ Imbert's customers do not seem to have had a problem with buying these cures. In fact, they were willing to pay gold for them, and only complained to the authorities when the cures did not work and Imbert fled in the night to avoid refunding their money.

¹⁰⁴ Katharine Park, 'Medicine and Magic: the Healing Arts', in Judith C. Brown and Robert C. Davis, ed., *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy* (London, 1998), p. 130

¹⁰⁵ 'arte falsa et magica, et medicinis, balneis et potationibus et aliis dolose utendo.' Joseph Shatzmiller, *Médecine et Justice en Provence Médiévale* (Aix-en-Provence, 1989), p. 177

¹⁰⁶ 'I bussam de seda in qua debebat facere XIII litteras auri et asuris. Et debebant fieri in die veneris, et essent tante virtutis quod omnis domina que ea portaret super se nunquam perderet infantem et esset bene semper cum viro suo.' Shatzmiller, p. 178

The medical discussions of magic and impotence therefore indicate that academic interest in the subject was not solely a result of the pastoral movement within the church. This movement led some pastoral writers, canonists and theologians to discuss magic impotence in more detail than before, but it did not create the problem. Physicians with an eye on medical practice thought that it was worth discussing, and most of them seem to have done so independently of the pastoral movement. Only in the fourteenth century did the church's interest in magic impotence come to influence writers like Bernard of Gordon, who took his chapter title from canon law, and Guy de Chauliac, who described the procedure for annulment. This interaction between the pastoral concerns of the church and medical writing increased in the fifteenth century, when the first witch trials took place and several physicians discussed magic impotence and its cures in more detail than ever before. Some fifteenth-century medical writers' attitudes to magic were much closer to those of the canonists and theologians than had been the case in earlier centuries, reflecting the spread of the concerns about the demonic nature of magic that had begun in theological circles in the thirteenth century. The medical writers on magic impotence thus provide an important alternative perspective to that of the other sources, and illustrate the gradual spread of the church's pastoral concerns.

Chapter 9

Impotence Magic and the Rise of Witchcraft in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries

The fifteenth century witnessed important changes in learned attitudes to magic, which affected discussions of magic and impotence. Belief in harmful magic was widespread throughout the Middle Ages, but during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, many people gradually came to believe in the broader crime of witchcraft as well. Witches did not just do harmful magic; they were believed to be members of a secret sect who had renounced God and worshipped the devil. Periodically they were believed to fly to meetings called sabbaths where they met the devil, indulged in orgies, and murdered babies. Impotence magic featured regularly in witchcraft literature as one of the many spells which witches were believed to cast,¹ because as well as being a widespread belief, the notion that witches attacked fertility fitted in with the idea that they opposed whatever was central to Christian society. For example, the judge Claude Tholosan, writing in the Dauphiné in the 1430s, claimed to have come across cases of men who had been bewitched: 'and sometimes, with the permission of divine judgement, by the action of the devil, [witches] impede marriages and the devil says such things as they take away a man's strength and heat and ability to have intercourse and especially, as I have found, in men who are without faith and are ^{in their desires} like the horse and the mule", as it is read in the book of Tobit.'² The reference to the book of Tobit conveyed that the men most likely to be bewitched were those who were lustful, as were the seven husbands of Sarah who were killed by the demon. Heinrich Kramer, author of the famous witch-hunting manual *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), also claimed to have encountered or heard about real cases of impotence magic, although many of them were actually exempla that he retold.³

¹ Martine Ostorero, Agostino Paravicini Bagliani and Kathrin Utz Tremp, *L'Imaginaire du Sabbat: Edition Critique des Textes les Plus Anciens (c. 1430-c. 1440)* (Lausanne, 1999), pp. 35, 148, 279, 370

² 'aliquandoque divino permittente iudicio, ministerio diaboli, impediunt matrimonia et diabolus talibus dicit quod vires et calores hominis coitus subtrahit et maxime, ut reperi, hominibus sine fide et qui libidini sunt "sicut equus et mulus", ut in Thobia legitur.' Claude Tholosan, *Ut magorum et maleficiorum*, ed. Pierrette Paravy, 'A propos de la genèse médiévale des chasses aux sorcières: le traité de Claude Tholosan, juge dauphinois (vers 1436)', *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome* 91:1, 1979, p. 358; repr. in Ostorero/Paravicini Bagliani/Utz Tremp, p. 370

³ Examples in Heinrich Kramer, *Malleus Maleficarum* (Speyer, 1487, repr. Göppingen, 1991), Part 2, Qu. 1, Chs. 1 and 7. Moira Smith questions whether Kramer took all of these stories seriously: 'The Flying Phallus and the Laughing Inquisitor: Penis Theft in the *Malleus Maleficarum*', *Journal of Folklore Research* 39, 2002, p. 104

The origins of this image of the witch are much debated.⁴ The idea of a secret sect that had orgies and murdered babies goes back to Roman images of the Christians, and was also applied in the Middle Ages to heretics and Jews,⁵ but other elements had parallels in folk beliefs, such as the idea that people flew to meet supernatural beings in remote places.⁶ However, although the elements from which it was created were often very old, the image of a sect of witches seems to have taken on its full shape in the 1430s. At this time, the chronicler Hans Fründ described a witch-hunt that took place in the Valais, Switzerland, in 1428. The Dominican reformer and preacher Johannes Nider described witches in his exemplum-collection, the *Formicarius*, in around 1437. At the same time, the anonymous *Errores Gazariorum* and the treatise *Ut magorum et maleficiorum* by Claude Tholosan, quoted above, described the crime of witchcraft systematically for the first time.⁷

All these works took their information from a relatively limited geographical area, the Alps and their neighbouring regions, south-east France and northern Italy, and the first large-scale witch-hunts took place in the same area at the same time.⁸ Many different explanations have been put forward as to why the concept of witchcraft crystallized in this particular time and place, focusing on the role of the dukes of Savoy, who controlled much of this area, in prosecuting witches; jurisdictional conflicts between church and secular authorities; economic crises; and the interest of church reformers in prosecuting heresy in the same area.⁹ More general explanations as to why witchcraft appeared to be a genuine and urgent threat to Christian society in the early fifteenth century have variously pointed to a sense of crisis and insecurity after the upheavals of the fourteenth century; the attempts of nation-states to consolidate their power; the extension of inquisitorial judicial procedures which made magical crimes

⁴ Summarized in Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 194-200. For two different views, see Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: the Demonisation of Christians in Medieval Christendom*, 3rd edn. (London, 1993), and Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath* (English edn., London, 1990)

⁵ Cohn, ch. 1

⁶ Wolfgang Behringer, *Shaman of Oberstdorf: Chonrad Stoecklin and the Phantoms of the Night* (Charlottesville, 1998), pp. 33-4

⁷ Ostorero/Paravicini Bagliani/Utz Tremp, pp. 9-10

⁸ E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland* (Ithaca, 1976), p. 22; Ostorero/Paravicini Bagliani/Utz Tremp, p. 11

⁹ Arno Borst, 'The Origins of the Witch-Craze in the Alps' in *Medieval Worlds: Barbarians, Heretics and Artists in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 109; Pierrette Paravy, *De la Chrétienté Romaine à la Réforme en Dauphiné* vol. 2 (Rome, 1993), p. 785; Andreas Blauert, *Frühe Hexenverfolgungen: Ketzer-, Zauberei- und Hexenprozesse des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg, 1989), p. 38; Ostorero/Paravicini Bagliani/Utz Tremp, p. 11

for which there was no physical evidence easier to prosecute; and the existence of genuinely demonic magical texts.¹⁰

These factors probably all contributed to increased anxieties about witchcraft, and none can be taken in isolation. Recently, historians have also pointed to the links between witchcraft and wider reform movements in the fifteenth-century church.¹¹ The Great Schism had called attention to abuses within the organization of the church to a greater extent than before.¹² The Council of Constance (1414-8), which ended the schism, planned to reform the church 'in head and members', and the Council of Basel (1431-49) also raised issues of reform. In practice, the reforms passed by the councils concentrated on abuses in church organization, such as simony, or clerical morals, rather than on pastoral care,¹³ but reform initiatives were not confined to the councils. Within several religious orders, observant movements aimed to restore a more rigorous observance, and some of the supporters of these movements also attempted to bring the message of reform to Christendom as a whole, including the preaching friars Bernardino of Siena and Vincent Ferrier, and the author of the *Formicarius*, Johannes Nider.¹⁴ There were also reformers outside the religious orders who wanted to improve the pastoral care of the laity. The most influential of these was Jean Gerson (d. 1429), theologian and chancellor of the university of Paris.¹⁵ Gerson played a key role in the Council of Constance, and his ideas influenced many later writers on reform.

This climate of reform affected attitudes to magic in several ways. Firstly, in addition to raising expectations of how both clergy and laity ought to behave, some reformers attacked magic specifically: Jean Gerson wrote a treatise denouncing magical

¹⁰ A great deal has been written on this question. Borst, p. 121; Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch and the Law* (Philadelphia, 1978), p. 123; Martine Ostorero, *Folâtrer avec les Démons: Sabbat et Chasse aux Sorcières à Vevey (1448)* (Lausanne, 1995), p. 184; Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials* (London, 1976), pp. 18-19

¹¹ Blauert, p. 30; Kieckhefer, *Magic*, pp. 199-200; Michael Bailey, *Battling Demons: Witchcraft, Heresy and Reform in the Late Middle Ages* (University Park, PA, 2003), p. 8; Werner Tschacher, *Der Formicarius des Johannes Nider von 1437/8: Studien zu den Anfängen der europäischen Hexenverfolgungen im Spätmittelalter* (Aachen, 2000), p. 269

¹² Francis Oakley, *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London, 1979), pp. 222-3

¹³ Philip H. Stump, *The Reforms of the Council of Constance (1414-1418)*, (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1994), pp. 139-40; Johannes Helmrath, *Das Basler Konzil 1431-1449: Forschungsstand und Probleme* (Cologne, 1987), pp. 334-7

¹⁴ Bailey, *Battling Demons*, p. 99

¹⁵ On Gerson's reform ideas, see Louis B. Pascoe, *Jean Gerson: Principles of Church Reform* (Leiden, 1973), pp. 135-54

practices, and encouraged bishops to investigate superstitions among their flocks.¹⁶ Some preachers went further in spreading fears of magic and magical practitioners. Vincent Ferrier and other mendicants spread what one recent historian has termed an 'obsession with the devil' in the Dauphiné,¹⁷ and Bernardino of Siena started several witch-hunts in Italy by persuading his initially sceptical listeners to denounce magical practitioners.¹⁸ Secondly, the new ideas about witchcraft were developed and circulated at the Council of Basel.¹⁹ This council was the largest international gathering that western Christendom had ever seen, with over 3200 participants between 1432 and 1443. As such, it provided new opportunities to exchange texts and ideas that had previously remained within closed circles of readers.²⁰ Johannes Nider gathered much of the material for his *Formicarius* there, especially from his conversations with a secular judge, Peter of Bern, who claimed to have tried many witches earlier in the century. Also writing at Basel was Martin le Franc, the secretary of Duke Amadeus of Savoy, who included an early description of witchcraft in his *Champion des Dames* (1441-2).²¹

Several aspects of reform also encouraged anxieties about the power of demons and their agents, witches. For example, witches could be used to illustrate the dangers of neglecting religious duties: Johannes Nider told of how they had made the judge Peter of Bern fall down the stairs when he got out of bed one night without making the sign of the cross.²² Monastic reform, too, could be aided by emphasising the power of demons to harm monks who did not follow the rules.²³ In pastoral works, a growing emphasis on the Ten Commandments as the basis of moral teaching focused attention on sins against God, such as idolatry (which included magic and witchcraft), in contrast to many older pastoral works, which had been organized on the basis of the Seven Deadly Sins, a scheme that tended instead to emphasize sins against one's neighbour. The transition from the Seven Sins to the Ten Commandments was a slow process, beginning in the thirteenth century and not completed until the sixteenth, but

¹⁶ Pascoe, p. 143

¹⁷ 'l'obsession du Diable' Paravy, p. 903

¹⁸ Franco Mormando, *The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 1999), pp. 56, 72-4

¹⁹ Monter, p. 21; Blauert, p. 30

²⁰ Jürgen Miethke, 'Die Konzilien als Forum der öffentlichen Meinung im 15. Jahrhundert', *Deutsches Archiv* 37, 1981, pp. 749, 763

²¹ Ostorero, p. 27

²² Bailey, *Battling Demons*, p. 123

²³ Noel L. Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology* (New York, 1999), p. 34

the pastoral treatises of Jean Gerson were important in spreading the new scheme in Germany and, later, France.²⁴

Fears of demons and witchcraft also fed to some extent on a growing interest in real magic. The number of surviving manuscripts of magical texts increases in the fifteenth century, and a few authors began openly to describe their own or named contemporaries' experiences with magic.²⁵ Magic and divination also seem to have become more common at some courts: in the fourteenth century, Charles V of France had encouraged astrologers, and in the early fifteenth century, the insanity of Charles VI led to accusations that he was bewitched, and attracted magicians who claimed to be able to cure him. Moralists were concerned about this proliferation of magical practices, as indicated by several attacks on magic and divination written at this time.²⁶ In England too, astrology had established itself in the court and the universities by the late fourteenth century, and was closely associated with political intrigue, scandal and magic.²⁷ The rediscovery of many Greek hermetic texts by western scholars in the second half of the fifteenth century also encouraged some writers, such as Marsilio Ficino (d. 1499) to advocate natural magic openly.²⁸ Some of these Renaissance magicians, such as Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (d. 1494), and the Benedictine abbot Johannes Trithemius (d. 1516), tried to defend themselves against accusations of demonic magic by denouncing witchcraft as something completely different from what they were doing.²⁹ However, by the early sixteenth century, other writers like Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus were even admitting to explicitly demonic magic.³⁰

Theology and Canon Law in the Early Fifteenth Century

The theologians, canonists and medical writers who discussed magic and impotence responded to the rise of witchcraft in different ways. After the tendency in the

²⁴ John Bossy, 'Moral Arithmetic: Seven Sins into Ten Commandments', in Edmund Leites, ed., *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 214-234

²⁵ Nicolas Weill-Parot, *Les 'Images Astrologiques' au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance: Spéculations Intellectuelles et Pratiques Magiques* (Paris, 2002), pp. 603-6

²⁶ Jan Veenstra, *Magic and Divination at the Courts of Burgundy and France: Text and Context of Laurens Pignon's 'Contre les Devineurs' (1411)* (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1998), p. 8

²⁷ Hilary Carey, *Courting Disaster: Astrology at the English Court and University in the Later Middle Ages* (London, 1992), p. 17

²⁸ Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 146; Brian Copenhaver, 'Scholastic Philosophy and Renaissance Magic in the *De Vita* of Marsilio Ficino', *Renaissance Quarterly* 37, 1984, pp. 523-54

²⁹ Brann, pp. 29, 57

fourteenth century for theologians commenting on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard to only discuss the subjects that interested them, some fifteenth-century theologians went back to writing full-length sentence commentaries, but despite the fact that the authors of witchcraft literature were often lawyers or theologians, these commentators did not reflect the new interest in witchcraft. The Cologne theologian Henry of Gorkum, for example, said little about magic impotence in his sentence commentary, even though he was interested in magic and wrote a treatise on superstitions in 1425.³¹ However, some sentence commentators did broaden out their discussions of impotence magic to include magic in general. Guillaume de Vorillon, writing at Paris in 1429-30, included a section on the various kinds of divination, some of which was taken from Isidore of Seville.³² Fifteenth-century canonists also remained very conservative in their discussions of magic impotence,³³ although Nicholas de Tudeschis (also known as Panormitanus, d. 1453) advised his readers at one point in his remarks on the subject to 'note this gloss well up to the end, because the material is everyday.'³⁴

The pastoral writers of the early fifteenth century also remained very dependent on earlier works, perhaps because the canon law and theology of magic impotence had not developed significantly, so there was no need for updating.³⁵ However, a few did deviate from the usual discussion. The most influential pastoral writer of the period, Jean Gerson,³⁶ remarked in passing in *On the Knowledge of Chastity* that impotent and bewitched people might resort to 'heinous and most vile' measures in order to restore their potency – by which he meant masturbation.³⁷ Gerson's treatise was written with practice in mind, and he said that he had talked to experienced confessors and

³⁰ D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (London, 1958, repr. Stroud, 2000), pp. 96, 104

³¹ Henricus de Gorinchem, *Conclusiones in Sententias* (Lyons, 1489), 4.34; *Tractatus de Superstitiosis Quibusdam Causis* in Joseph Hansen, *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns und der Hexenverfolgung im Mittelalter* (Bonn, 1901), pp. 87-8

³² Guillelmus de Vorillon, *In Sententias* (Venice, 1496), 4.34, ff. 283-6; On Guillaume, see Friedrich Stegmüller, *Repertorium Commentariorum in Sententias Petri Lombardi* vol. 1, (Würzburg, 1947), p. 139

³³ Peters, *Magician*, p. 150

³⁴ 'Nota bene istam glosam usque ad finem quia materia quotidiana.' Nicholas de Tudeschis, *Super Quarto Decretalium Libro* (Basel, 1477), gloss to X 4.15.6, *divinum miraculum*. On Nicholas, see J. F. von Schulte, *Die Geschichte der Quellen und Literatur des Canonischen Rechts* (Stuttgart, 1875, repr. Graz, 1956), vol. 2. pp. 312-3.

³⁵ Pierre Michaud-Quantin, *Sommes de Casuistique et Manuels de Confession au Moyen Age (XII-XVI siècles)* (Louvain, 1962), p. 68

³⁶ Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton, 1977), p. 45

³⁷ 'Dicuntur etiam frigidi et maleficiati non potentes seminare, nefariis nequissimisque nonnunquam illecebris semet inquinare.' Jean Gerson, 'De Cognitione Castitatis' in *Oeuvres Complètes* 9, ed. Palémon Glorieux (Paris, 1973), p. 59; Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1999), p. 52

physicians about it.³⁸ Nicholas of Ausimo, who wrote a supplement to Bartholomew of Pisa's *Summa Pisanella* in the early part of the century, was affected by heightened concerns about magic. He was uneasy about Bartholomew's statement (quoted from Hostiensis) that 'frivolous' cures could be tolerated. Nicholas added, 'but certainly all frivolous remedies that are not natural are illicit and harmful,'³⁹ thereby polarizing the vaguely defined category of 'frivolous' remedies into natural medicine or illicit magic. On the other hand, two extremely popular confession manuals did not mention magic impotence at all, probably because they were very brief: the *Summa for Confessors* of Antoninus of Florence (d. 1459), and the *Manner of Confessing* of Andreas de Escobar (d. 1427).⁴⁰ Antoninus did, however, refer his readers to the longer *summas* for information about impotence.⁴¹

However, although legal, pastoral and theological ideas about impotence magic did not themselves change much in the early fifteenth century, they did cause changes in several contemporary medical texts. Theological and legal ideas probably spread to medical writers via the church courts, where physicians are recorded as testifying in cases of impotence from around 1300.⁴² In 1363, Guy de Chauliac had given instructions on how to examine impotent men for the courts, and a manuscript copied in 1464-6 by the physician Hartmann Schedel while he was studying medicine at Padua did the same.⁴³ In addition to these explicit references to the church courts, Peter of Argellata (d. 1423), who taught logic, astrology and medicine at Bologna,⁴⁴ commented in his *Chirurgia* that impotence magic happened 'especially when a virgin first goes to a man', a piece of information which may have come from the same

³⁸ 'sed etiam colloquium habui cum exercitatis et discretis in materia confessionis, et a medicis causas huiusmodi multiplicis et varie pollutionis inquisivi.' Gerson, 'De Cognitione Castitatis' p. 51

³⁹ 'Sed certe omnia vana remedia non naturalia sunt illicita et pernicioso', Bartholomaeus de Sancto Concordio, *Summa Pisani cum Supplemento* (Cologne, 1483), 'Impedimentum' 15

⁴⁰ Antoninus of Florence, *Summa Confessorum* (Cologne, 1486); Andreas de Escobar, *Modus Confitendi* (Augsburg, 1475). See Tentler, pp. 39-40; Michaud-Quantin, pp. 71-4

⁴¹ 'De hiis autem omnibus impedimentis habes plene in summis.' Antoninus, ch. 30

⁴² Michael McVaugh, *Medicine Before the Plague: Practitioners and their Patients in the Crown of Aragon, 1285-1345* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 204; Jacqueline Murray, 'On the Origins and Role of "Wise Women" in Causes for Annulment on the Grounds of Male Impotence', *Journal of Medieval History* 16, 1990, p. 243

⁴³ Guy de Chauliac, *Inventarium sive Chirurgia Magna*, vol. 1, ed. Michael R. McVaugh, (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1997), p. 386; Karl Sudhoff, 'Ein Regulativ zur gerichtsarztlichen Begutachtung männlicher Impotenz bei Ehescheidungsklagen aus der Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts', *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 8, 1914, pp. 89-97

⁴⁴ K. F. Russell, 'The "Cirurgia" of Pietro d'Argellata' *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Surgery* 21, 1952, 230-2; Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* vol. 4 (New York, 1934), pp. 132-3. Peter's passage on magic and impotence is printed in Gerda Hoffmann, 'Beiträge zur Lehre von der durch Zauber verursachten Krankheit und ihrer Behandlung in der Medizin des Mittelalters', *Janus* 37, 1933, pp. 187-8.

source. If a man became impotent after consummating the marriage, this was not a ground for annulment, and so brides who appeared in the courts were likely to be (or claim to be) virgins.

Peter of Argellata had also absorbed some theological ideas about marriage, either directly from theological works, or via preaching, the church courts and the pastoral movement. He denounced impotence magic because it subverted marital love: ‘but it is a diabolical work, and against divine law. For it takes away the natural love which ought naturally to exist between husband and wife, which is discussed in the previous chapter [on aphrodisiacs].’⁴⁵ The author of the chapter on magic impotence in the *Pantegni* had said centuries before that impotence spells were ‘diabolical’, but Peter elaborated this with the idea that husband and wife should love each other. This idea was common in theological discussions of marriage, and in sermons,⁴⁶ but it was not usually found in medical texts. The same goes for Peter’s justification of aphrodisiacs: most medical texts suggested them to treat impotence, but they were not usually presented as aids to the love which should exist between husband and wife. Peter of Argellata, like Guy de Chauliac and Hartmann Schedel, thus showed an increased consciousness of the role of medicine in relation to marriage more generally. This may always have existed, but it was now being made more explicit.

The canonist Joannes Antonius de Sancto Georgio (d. 1509)⁴⁷ provided another example of interaction between physicians and canonists. In his commentary on the *Liber Extra*, he claimed to have educated a ‘very famous physician’ about women whose vaginas were too narrow for sex:

‘Hostiensis says that this happened in the region of Piedmont, in the diocese of Turin, to a certain very beautiful lady named Caracosa who, trying to please her husband, so medicated her genitals that her husband could have intercourse with her thereafter... I heard from a very famous physician that in that city there was a certain very beautiful lady (by love for whom I know some of you have been captivated), who had had intercourse with her husband for over ten years. Recently when her husband has intercourse with her she weeps, and wails and shouts as if she is suffering great pain. I asked the

and no
other
man

⁴⁵ ‘Est autem hoc opus diabolicum et contra legem divinam. Subtrahit enim naturalem amorem, qui inter virum et uxorem naturaliter esse debet, de quo in precedenti capitulo dictum est.’ Quoted in Hoffmann, p. 187

⁴⁶ Jean Leclercq, *Monks on Marriage* (New York, 1982), pp. 15, 25, 53; David d’Avray, *Medieval Marriage Sermons* (Oxford, 2001), p. 8

⁴⁷ Joannes Antonius de Sancto Georgio, *Commentarium super Quarto Libro Decretalium*, on X 4.15.4 (Venice, 1493). See von Schulte, vol. 2, pp. 338–41

reason. He [the physician] replied to me that he judged that it was quite likely to be a fiction so that she could deceive her husband, and so could secretly entertain lovers without her husband suspecting anything of the kind, since he saw that she had such pain in love-making. I told him about this example from Hostiensis and said that a similar thing could have happened to this lady, that she could not bear to have sex with her husband now because of new medicines. He confessed that this was possible.⁴⁸

This anecdote does not say much for the physician's sympathy for the woman's sexual difficulties, but it does show how ideas could circulate between disciplines, through casual conversation as well as by reading. The physician could have found a similar medicine to make a vagina narrow in the *Compendium Medicine* of Gilbertus Anglicus,⁴⁹ but if he had not seen this, he may genuinely have learned from the canonist about a cause of impotence that he had not previously considered.

Medicine

As well as absorbing information from canon law and theology, the early fifteenth-century physicians responded quickly and strikingly to the new concerns about witchcraft. The number of medical writers who discussed magic impotence increased in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, as did the amount of information they gave. Moreover, several writers claimed to have encountered cases themselves. It was not only discussions of impotence that were affected: the physicians' considerations of *incubus*, a sleep disorder that was sometimes attributed to demons, began to show the influence of witchcraft theory at the same time.⁵⁰ The changes in the medical discussions of magic impotence were probably not just the result of the rise of witchcraft, however. They are also likely to reflect a growing interest in practical medicine among medical writers in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Fifteenth-century physicians approached even older texts with practice in mind: in the

⁴⁸ 'dicit Hostiensis hoc evenisse in partibus Pedemontium in diocesi Taurinensi: de quadam domina pulcherrima nomine Caracosa, que nitens placere viro instrumentum suum ita medicavit quod vir nec alius postea potuit eam cognoscere... Audivi ego a celeberrimo medico quod in ista civitate quedam domina pulcherrima (cuius amore scio aliquos ex vobis captos), cognita a marito plusquam decem annis, nuper cum maritus eam cognoscit, flet et quasi gravi dolore oppressa eiulat immo exclamat. Interrogavi rationem. Is mihi respondit arbitrari se potius hanc esse fictionem, ut decipiat maritum, et sic secreto possit adulteros admittere, marito nil tale suspiciante, dum videt eam in rebus veneris tam dolere. Ego allegavi sibi hoc exemplum Hostiensis et dixit quod similiter poterat evenire huic domine, ut propter nova medicamenta non possit nunc viri copulam sustinere. Quod ipse est confessus esse possibile.' Joannes Antonius de Sancto Georgio, commentary on X 4.15.4

⁴⁹ 'Mulier autem nolens cognosci ab aliquo: ut quidam dicunt, deferat secum cornua limacie. Habent enim virtutem specificam coitum impediendi.' Gilbertus Anglicus, *Compendium Medicine* (Lyon, 1510), f. 312r

⁵⁰ Maaïke van der Lugt, 'The Incubus in Scholastic Debate: Medicine, Theology and Popular Belief', in Peter Biller and Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages* (York, 2001), p. 199

first half of the fifteenth century, Antonio Cermisone collected a series of *consilia* (consultations regarding individual cases) to illustrate Avicenna's classic *Canon of Medicine*, and the Parisian physician Jacques Despars (d. 1458), included many anecdotes about his own experience in his commentary on the *Canon*, written between 1422 and 1453.⁵¹

Peter of Argellata illustrates the same shift towards practice and experience. Many of his remedies for magic impotence came from Peter of Spain, and he claimed to have drawn on other sources too: 'many old writers say,' 'according to some,' 'some of the ancients say...'⁵² However, he also indicated that experience was important although, like the fourteenth-century theologian Thomas of Strasbourg, the experience he referred to was not his own. Peter took his reference to experience from a fourteenth-century medical writer, Guilelmus de Varignana: 'Guilelmus de Varignana says: I have experienced that if a bewitched man urinates through the ring with which he married his wife, the magic will immediately be lifted and he can have intercourse with her.'⁵³ Gerda Hoffmann was unable to find this reference in Guilelmus de Varignana's surviving works, but the idea of the man urinating through his wedding ring to cure magic impotence is recorded in the early modern period.⁵⁴ In addition to these borrowings from earlier sources, Peter also drew on what was probably his own experience. His comment that impotence magic happens 'especially when a virgin first goes to a man' does not appear in earlier medical texts and, as well as reflecting the procedures of the church courts, it may reflect how impotence magic worked in practice, because impotence spells were often believed to be performed during the wedding itself.⁵⁵

Other writers went further and mentioned cases that they claimed to have encountered. Sometimes, medieval medical authors cited cases as if they had encountered them,

⁵¹ Danielle Jacquart, 'Theory, Everyday Practice and Three Fifteenth-Century Physicians', *Osiris* 2:6, 1990, p. 140; 'Le regard d'un médecin sur son temps: Jacques Despars (1380?-1458)', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 138, 1980, pp. 35-86

⁵² 'multi veteres posuerunt,' 'secundum aliquos,' 'dixerunt aliqui antiqui...' Hoffmann, p. 187

⁵³ 'Guilelmo de Varignana dixit: Ego autem expertus sum, quod si maleficiatus mingat per annulum, cum quo uxorem suam desponsavit, statim solvitur maleficium et potest cum ea concumbere.' Hoffmann, p. 188

⁵⁴ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, 'The Aiguillette: Castration by Magic', in *The Mind and Method of the Historian* (English edn., Brighton, 1981), p. 94

⁵⁵ Le Roy Ladurie, p. 91; Stephen A. Mitchell, 'Nordic Witchcraft in Transition: Impotence, Heresy and Diabolism in Fourteenth-Century Bergen', *Scandia* 63, 1997, p. 19; H. Duplès-Agier, ed., *Registre Criminel du Châtelet de Paris du 6 Septembre 1389 au 18 Mai 1392*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1861), p. 341

when in fact they were taken from earlier written sources,⁵⁶ but the cases looked at here do not seem to fall into this category. The authors were specific, mentioning where they encountered the case, and sometimes other details such as how the magic was done. Moreover, none of the anecdotes recorded how the physician treated the impotence, so they would not have been useful examples of treatment to pass on to later generations, in the way that the ‘experience’ of Guilelmus de Varignana, cited by Peter of Argellata, would have been. The first author to record a case was Niccolo Falcucci (d. 1412), a physician who worked in Florence in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries:⁵⁷ ‘and see Constantine in the *Pantegni*, on those who cannot have sex with their wives, as I saw in lord Honoratus, the honourable count of *Fundorum* [I have not been able to identify this].’⁵⁸ Antonio Guaineri (d. after 1448), professor of medicine at Pavia from 1412, and from 1427 physician to the duke of Savoy,⁵⁹ gave a few more details: ‘men and women are often bewitched; moreover, because of this, they are often never able to produce offspring, as I saw and experienced in Pinerolo. They were so enchanted by certain cursed old sorcerers that from then on they could never conceive again.’⁶⁰ The victims in this case were women (*fuerunt... precantate*) and so the magic presumably caused infertility rather than impotence, but Guaineri’s reference to a real case of bewitchment is still interesting, as is his comment that both men and women could be bewitched.

Jacques Despars said much more, in an anecdote that definitely refers to impotence: ‘I know a certain count, who said to a newly-married knight, “You see this strap?” He replied that he did. The count said to him, “I will tie it and until I untie it, you will not be able to have intercourse with your wife properly.” This happened, as the knight swore to me and to others, although he was sexually very potent and his wife was beautiful and full of energy and twenty years old.’⁶¹ The tying of knots at the couple’s

⁵⁶ For example, Gilbertus Anglicus did this with a cure for gout that in fact came from the Arabic physician Rhazes: C. H. Talbot, *Medicine in Medieval England* (London, 1967), p. 75

⁵⁷ Katharine Park, *Doctors and Medicine in Early Renaissance Florence* (Princeton, 1985), pp. 210-1

⁵⁸ ‘et vide a Constantino in Pantegni de his qui cum uxoribus coire non possunt, sicut vidi in domino Honorato honorabili fundorum comiti.’ Niccolo Falcucci, *Sermones Medicales* (Pavia, 1484) Sermo 6, Tr. 2, Ch. 6

⁵⁹ Thorndike, *History* 4, pp. 215-6; Jacquart, ‘Theory’, p. 141

⁶⁰ ‘Viri ac mulieres fascinantur. Preterea sepe que ob hoc producere sibi similem valent numquam, ut Pinaroli ad experientiam vidi. A quibusdam vero maledictis vetulis sortilegiis fuerunt taliter precantate ab inde post concipere potuerunt numquam.’ Antonio Guaineri, *Practica* (Lyons, 1525), bk 11, ch. 19, f. 149r

⁶¹ ‘Novi quemdam comitem qui militi noviter uxorato dixit, “Vides istam ligulam?” Respondit quod sic. Ait ei comes: “Ego nodabo eam, et donec solvero non poteris coitum cum uxore tua perfectum adimplere.” Quod ita contingit, ut miles iuravit et mihi et aliis, licet esset potens multum in venereis, et

wedding, a process known as tying the *aiguillette*, was widely feared in parts of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France,⁶² and this seems to be an early reference to the same process. It is possible that Despars encountered this case in a church court, since the knight 'swore' that he had been bewitched. The definition of magic impotence shared by medicine and canon law is also taken into account: not only does the knight's impotence have no physical cause, but his wife is young and beautiful, so there is no reason why he should not be attracted to her. Seemingly irrational feelings like this often figured in cases where sex magic was suspected: for example, when Edward IV of England married Elizabeth Woodville, a widow five years his senior and socially below him, her enemies said that she had bewitched him.⁶³

Unlike the other medical writers, Jacques Despars included this anecdote about the count in his chapter on homosexuality, rather than in the one on impotence. He did not explain why he included the story at this point, but given his generally sceptical attitude to magic, Danielle Jacquart has suggested that Despars may have seen the knight's impotence with his wife as being due to the fact that he was homosexual, and not bewitched.⁶⁴ However, since the knight is described as very potent, this does not seem likely. It seems more likely that the count and the knight had had a relationship, and that the count was trying to disrupt the knight's marriage in the same way as the female ex-lovers who were usually blamed for doing impotence magic. It is possible that Despars himself did not believe that knotting the lace was responsible for the knight's impotence since, as will be seen below, he often preferred to attribute 'magical' illnesses to physical or psychological causes, but he does not express this scepticism here. Moreover, even if he did not believe in magic himself, the facts that Despars described were those of an impotence spell: the lace was tied, and the knight was then impotent with his wife for no physical reason.

uxor ipsius pulchra et succi plena et annorum 20.' Jacobus de Partibus (Jacques Despars), commentary on Avicenna's *Liber Canonis* (Lyon, 1498), fen. 20, tr. 1, c. 36 (quoted in Jacquart, 'Regard', p. 63)

⁶² Le Roy Ladurie, pp. 84-96; Kevin C. Robbins, 'Magical Emasculation, Popular Anticlericalism, and the Limits of the Reformation in Western France c.1590', *Journal of Social History* 31, 1997, p. 65

⁶³ William R. Jones, 'Political Uses of Sorcery in Medieval Europe', *The Historian* 34, 1972, p. 685. See also Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1993), p. 32

⁶⁴ Jacquart, 'Regard' p. 63

Another physician, Michele Savonarola, did not mention encountering a case; on the contrary, he said 'I have heard many things, and seen few.'⁶⁵ Savonarola (d. after 1466, grandfather of the famous Florentine preacher Girolamo), studied and taught at Padua, but in 1440 he moved to Ferrara to serve as physician to the city's rulers, the Este family. He wrote most of his *Practica* at Padua, but wrote the sixth and final book in Ferrara, before 1446. He later wrote a treatise on obstetrics in the vernacular, dedicated to the women of Ferrara, and he was also interested in religious reform, writing treatises on history, politics and asceticism.⁶⁶ Initially, Savonarola appears to be sceptical about the reality of impotence magic. As well as stating that rumours of impotence magic were more common than the real thing, he recommended that doctors exhaust natural explanations first: 'know that if anyone wants to make bread, he has to have flour: and therefore first seek to increase the sperm and remove weakness [*discrasia*] of the members, as the canons lay down.'⁶⁷

However, Savonarola may have known more about magic impotence than these statements indicate. Despite his claim to have seen little, he recorded that many of the common people in his own time offered magical cures for impotence, 'as if they were better trained than natural doctors'.⁶⁸ He also listed several of the cures for magic impotence found in Peter of Spain and the *Remedies Against Magic*: carrying a magnet, eating a herb that grows in the hole in a stone, and carrying (rather than eating, as Peter suggested) a hoopoe heart. He did not rule these cures out, but merely stated that natural remedies be tried first, an attitude that was implicit in the many writers who argued that magic impotence could be diagnosed when natural causes were exhausted. In one case, he even added to a treatment suggested by Gilbertus Anglicus and Peter of Spain. The physician should search for the herb that grows

⁶⁵ 'multa audiui et pauca vidi' Joannes Michael Savonarola, *Practica Major* (Venice, 1497), tr. 6, ch. 20, rubr. 32, f. 238v

⁶⁶ Ynez Violé O'Neill, 'Giovanni Michele Savonarola: an Atypical Renaissance Practitioner' *Clio Medica* 10, 1975, pp. 77-93; Tiziana Pesenti Marangon, 'Michele Savonarola a Padova: l'Ambiente, le Opere, la Cultura Medica' *Quaderni per la Storia dell'Università di Padova* 9-10, 1976-7, pp. 45-102. On Savonarola's religious writings, see Antonio Samaritani, *Michele Savonarola: Riformatore Cattolico nella Corte Estense a metà del sec. XV* (Ferrara, 1976).

⁶⁷ 'scito quod si quis vult facere panem, oportet quod farinam habeat, et ideo stude in primis ad augmentandum spermatis materiam, et ad removendam discrasiam membrorum secundum canones positos.' Savonarola, tr. 6, ch. 20, rubr. 32, f. 239v

⁶⁸ 'et hanc curam plurimi vulgarium incantationibus et fascinationibus ita meo tempore tractaverunt ut magis perfecti sint quam medici naturales'. Savonarola, tr. 6, ch. 20, rubr. 32, f. 238r

through a hole in a stone first in the mountains, because there he would find many of them that were useful.⁶⁹

Despite the emphasis on experience in their references to cases of magic impotence, the vast majority of the cures offered by the fifteenth-century medical writers came from written sources, usually the *Remedies Against Magic*, or one or more of the texts that comprised it: the *Pantegni*, Gilbertus Anglicus and Peter of Spain. Occasionally they added other cures, like the one from Guilelmus de Varignana mentioned by Peter of Argellata. However, they discussed these cures in a different way from earlier writers. Antonio Guaineri, Jacques Despars and Michele Savonarola all expressed doubts about the legitimacy of using magical cures to cure magic impotence, but they came to different conclusions. Guaineri stated that it was not a doctor's business to cure bewitchment: 'It is not your part to know about the bewitched, but it is a sorcerer's, to whom they can go if they want;' again, in discussing cures for magically-caused sterility, he said that 'enchantments and fascinations are cured by counter-enchantments, for which you should go back to the old sorceresses.'⁷⁰ Guaineri also stressed that he himself did not believe in the sorceresses' remedies, even though many people took them very seriously indeed: 'But although I put no faith in these, nonetheless I hear unbelievable things every day in those parts, where in that year many women were burned on account of it.'⁷¹ Guaineri did not say where or when these burnings took place, but he was physician to the duke of Savoy from 1427, in whose territory some of the earliest witch trials took place.

However, despite his unwillingness to believe in sorceresses' remedies, Guaineri acknowledged that they might work. Citing the astronomer Ptolemy, he admitted that certain people could command demons, if they were born under the right astrological signs. Therefore it followed that the women who offered gifts to demons might really be able to do incredible things. Guaineri suspected, however, citing Avicenna, that their marvellous powers were more likely to be due to the power of their souls over

⁶⁹ Item herba que crevit per medium lapidis perforati bibita aut comesta, sed ipsam prius consideres in montibus. Multas et utiles ex dictis invenies.' Savonarola, tr. 6, ch. 20, rubrica 32, f. 239v

⁷⁰ 'De fascinatis tua noscere [edition: nascere] non interest, sed sortilegi ad quem si velint recursum habeant.' ch. 20, f. 149v; 'precantationes quoque fascinationes per contrarias precantationes curentur, de quibus ad vetulas sortilegias recursum habeas.' Guaineri, ch. 21, f. 150v

⁷¹ 'verum etsi his fidem nullam adhibeam, non credenda tamen quotidie istis in partibus audio, ubi anno isto ob hoc cremate sunt plurime.' Guaineri, ch. 21, f. 150v

the elements around them than to any pact that they had made with the demons.⁷² This view of the power behind ‘magical’ cures made Guaineri relatively tolerant of their purveyors. Since he was reluctant to believe that there was anything demonic about the old women’s cures, he said that the bewitched person could use them if they wished.⁷³ Here, Guaineri was consciously taking a more sceptical approach to magical cures than those of his contemporaries who were burning women for them. Indeed, in another part of his treatise, he criticized the friars for spreading beliefs about magic.⁷⁴ This approach corresponds with the more general tendency that several historians have identified in Guaineri’s works to seek natural explanations for extraordinary phenomena.⁷⁵

Guaineri also extended his scepticism to a cure that had been recommended by Gilbertus Anglicus for magically caused sterility or impotence in the thirteenth century. This was the one that required the physician to gather herbs on St John’s Eve and make an amulet (see above, ch. 8, and appendix 2). Guaineri copied this in his section on cures for female sterility, but he introduced it as ‘another empirical remedy that in my own mind I put no faith in, even though [Gilbertus] claims that innumerable women who were reputed to be sterile have conceived because of it.’ Guaineri admitted that this remedy might just work for people who believed in it, but added that it had never worked when he prescribed it, and that he was only copying it because Gilbertus was such a great authority. He concluded by remarking, probably not entirely seriously, that ‘the English are the greatest sorcerers in Christendom,’ although since they had been unsuccessful in France, he should end the discussion.⁷⁶ Guaineri died after 1448, and so was probably referring to the closing years of the Hundred Years’ War, during which England lost most of its lands in France.

⁷² ‘Ecce ergo secundum Ptolomei sententiam qualiter sub tali contellatione natis demones obediunt. Nimirum igitur si ille maledicte vetule demonibus tributa prebentes non credenda faciant, Avicenna tamen vehementi affectioni in quarta *Sexti Naturalium* hoc attribuit.’ Guaineri, ch. 21, f. 150v. On Avicenna’s views on the power of souls, see Dag Hasse, *Avicenna’s ‘De Anima’ in the Latin West* (London, 2000), p. 155

⁷³ ‘Et tu precantatus ad tales recursum habeas si libet.’ Guaineri, ch. 21, f. 150v

⁷⁴ Jacquart, ‘Theory’, p. 152

⁷⁵ Weill-Parot, p. 581; Helen Rodnite Lemay, ‘Anthonius Guainerius and Medieval Gynaecology’, in Julius Kirshner and Suzanne Wemple, ed., *Women of the Medieval World* (Oxford, 1985), p. 328; Thorndike, *History* 4, p. 229

⁷⁶ ‘Recitat item aliud empiricum cui nullam fidem adhibeo penitus, etsi innumeras steriles reputatas concepisse ob hoc affirmet... Adhibenti forsitan fidem hoc accideret; mihi nequaquam, quia esto verum esset, et cum hec viderem, illusionem esse putarem potius. Hic quare hoc annotaverim queris. Viri tanti auctoritas hoc effecit, nam experimentum hoc effectum semper consecutum esse asserit. Anglici enim inter christianos sortilegi sunt maximi, sed ipsis in Francia derelictis huic capitulo finem impono.’ Guaineri, ch. 23, ff. 152r-v

Gilbertus himself had given no indication that this cure had anything to do with sorcery, although it would have counted as magical according to Thomas Aquinas's definition of magic, because it contained unknown words which could be the names of demons (see above, chapter 8). Thus although Guaineri was unwilling to believe that 'magical' remedies had any demonic power behind them, he was more conscious of magic than earlier medical writers had been, and more anxious to define what was or was not magical. This awareness is likely to be related to the rise of ideas of witchcraft, which Guaineri, working for the dukes of Savoy in northern Italy, would have observed at first hand. In addition to worrying about witchcraft, Guaineri may also have been trying to distinguish his medicine from what other practitioners were doing. Elsewhere in his treatise, he was keen to differentiate himself from the 'vulgar practitioners'.⁷⁷

Jacques Despars took scepticism about magic even further. In his commentary on Avicenna, he rejected all practices that he saw as irrational, including astrology and magic, and even some aspects of the cult of the saints. Although he did not deny that in theory, demons could alter people's physical or mental health, he argued that demonic illnesses still had specific secondary causes that the physician could treat. Moreover, he said that he had never met a person claiming to be bewitched whose condition could not be traced to the 'imagination' (psychological causes) or to natural processes.⁷⁸ Like Antonio Guaineri, Despars argued consciously against those who gave demons a wider role in illness, and he too criticized the friars for spreading belief in the intervention of the supernatural in people's health problems.⁷⁹ He also criticized those who attributed melancholy to demons, and said that it was not only the uneducated who did this, but also certain theologians. Here he may have been arguing against a theologian who was, like himself, a cathedral canon at Tournai, Gilles Carlier, who wrote treatises on exorcism.⁸⁰

Michele Savonarola, on the other hand, took a very different view of how magical cures for impotence worked. He warned his readers that they relied on demonic power: 'and I am amazed at their effects and ascribe them to a diabolical rather than a

⁷⁷ Lemay, p. 327

⁷⁸ Jacquart, 'Regard', p. 71

⁷⁹ Jacquart, 'Theory', p. 152

⁸⁰ Jacquart, 'Regard', p. 72

divine thing.’⁸¹ He also condemned the ‘fascinations and machinations of bad women or men who, despising nature and God, serve the devil.’⁸² Although these remarks do not necessarily refer to the explicit pact with the devil which was being elaborated in witchcraft literature at this time, they highlight the demonic nature of magic far more than earlier medical writers had, and in this Savonarola is likely to have been influenced by the changing conceptions of magic which were part of the rise of witchcraft. This is especially likely because he was interested in religious reform, and the stereotype of the witch, complete with her pact with the devil, was being elaborated and spread in reforming circles in particular at this time.

Thus the physicians’ comments on magic and impotence show that the growing tendency among witchcraft writers from the early fifteenth century onwards to see all magic as demonic was having an impact. However, only Savonarola came close to describing the stereotypical witch who renounced God to serve the devil. Peter of Argellata described impotence magic as ‘diabolical’, but did not elaborate, and Jacques Despars and Antonio Guaineri were openly sceptical about the demonic nature of magic, even though they acknowledged that others disagreed with them. Despars and Guaineri also shed some light on how the belief in magic could be diffused when they criticized the friars for spreading belief in ‘superstition’.⁸³ The variety of attitudes adopted by these writers show that ideas about witchcraft were still open to debate, and this situation continued well into the second half of the fifteenth century, with witch hunters meeting resistance from local authorities.⁸⁴ Indeed, there were many positions available between absolute belief and total scepticism throughout the period of the witch-hunts,⁸⁵ and the early fifteenth-century medical writers illustrate this very clearly.

The Sixteenth Century

The concerns about witchcraft that first surfaced in the early fifteenth century increased in the following centuries, with the number of witch trials peaking in many

⁸¹ ‘et ego de eorum effectibus miratus rei diabolice magis quam divine ascripsi.’ Savonarola, tr. 6, ch. 20, rubr 32, f. 238r

⁸² ‘fascinationes et machinamenta malarum mulierum aut virorum, qui naturam et deum despicientes diabolo serviunt’. Savonarola ch. 20, rubr 32, f. 239r

⁸³ Jacquart, ‘Theory’, p. 152

⁸⁴ Wolfgang Behringer, *Witchcraft Persecutions in Bavaria: Popular Magic, Religious Zealotry and Reason of State in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 71

parts of Western Europe in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.⁸⁶ In at least some areas, impotence magic did not feature much in witch trials,⁸⁷ but this does not necessarily mean that it did not happen. Only a tiny minority of witchcraft suspicions ever resulted in legal action, and many cases of impotence may not have led to formal accusations if they improved of their own accord, or were helped by solutions which relieved the victim's anxiety, such as approaching the suspected witch or procuring magical cures. Despite the lack of trial records, impotence magic appears to have been widely feared in at least some areas of northern Europe. Fears about the tying of the *aiguillette* were commonly reported in some areas of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France, and it is in the early sixteenth century that a votive mass to cure victims of magic impotence first seems to have appeared, although it may have existed earlier.⁸⁸ Impotence magic also appeared relatively often in the inquisition records of the Italian cities, Spain, and later Mexico, where inquisitors were very interested in love magic in general.⁸⁹

Sixteenth-century medical writers also continued to be interested in magic and impotence. At least one manuscript of the treatise on the causes of and cures for magic impotence, *Remedies Against Magic*, was copied in the sixteenth century (BL MS Sloane 3529), and the text was printed in Arnold of Villanova's collected works from 1504 to 1585,⁹⁰ with new passages. It was well enough known to be condemned by the Spanish Inquisition in 1584, along with several other magical, astrological and alchemical works attributed to Arnold.⁹¹ The early printed copies of the *Practicae* of William of Brescia, Antonio Guaineri and Michele Savonarola now in the British Library had pen marks made against their discussions of impotence magic (BL

⁸⁵ Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: the Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997), p. 210

⁸⁶ Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: the Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (2nd edn., Oxford, 2002), p. 253

⁸⁷ Monter, p. 165

⁸⁸ The only examples that I have found were printed in 1519 and 1558: Adolph Franz, *Die Kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter* vol. 2 (Freiburg, 1909), pp. 184-5; Robert Lippe, ed., *Missale Romanum Mediolani, 1474* (London, 1907), pp. 326-7

⁸⁹ Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice 1550-1650* (Oxford, 1989), p. 103; Mary O'Neil, 'Magical Healing, Love Magic and the Inquisition in Late Sixteenth-Century Modena' in S. Haliczer, ed., *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1987), repr. in Brian P. Levack, ed., *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology* (New York, 2001), vol. 5, p. 188; Ruth Behar, 'Sexual Witchcraft, Colonialism and Women's Powers: Views from the Mexican Inquisition', reprinted in Levack, vol. 4, p. 222

⁹⁰ Juan Paniagua, 'El Maestro Arnau de Vilanova, médico', 2nd edn. in *Studia Arnaldiana* (Barcelona, 1994), p. 72

⁹¹ Paniagua, p. 26

545.h.2, f. 139r 545.e.1, f. 152r-v, and IC.22962, ff. 239v, 254v), which implies an interested reader.

Some early modern writers also recorded additional cures for magic impotence. The sixteenth-century Swiss doctor Bartholomew Carrichter wrote a treatise in German on cures for magical illnesses, including impotence, in 1551, which was printed several times in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and translated into Latin, French and English.⁹² Carrichter listed various plant-based remedies alongside practices like sticking a plough-handle in the ground at sunrise, taking it out again, and urinating three times in the hole.⁹³ Some of the ways of causing magic impotence that Carrichter recorded may have been extremely old. For example, he stated that impotence could be caused by tampering with the place where a man had urinated, an idea first found in the *De Medicamentis* of Marcellus Empiricus, written in around 400 AD.⁹⁴ Nor was Carrichter the only early modern physician interested in magical illness and its cures: the Latin translation of his work was included in a compendium of treatises about magical illnesses, first published in 1698.⁹⁵ These treatises confirm the evidence from witch trial records that, despite the criticism of ‘magical’ cures by numerous physicians, theologians and pastoral writers, many people continued to use these practices.⁹⁶ The literate public seems finally to have abandoned the use of magical remedies only at the end of the seventeenth century, when they were replaced with commercially produced and mass-advertised medicines.⁹⁷

I have not studied the discussions of impotence magic in sixteenth-century pastoral literature and theology as fully as those of earlier periods, and have not looked at

⁹² Joachim Telle and Julian Paulus, ‘Bartholomäus Carrichter: zu Leben und Werk eines deutschen Fachschriftstellers des 16. Jahrhunderts’, in Heinz Schott and Ilana Zinguer, ed., *Paracelsus und seine internationale Rezeption in der frühen Neuzeit* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 58-95. The English translation not listed by Telle and Paulus is in BL MS Sloane 1783, ff. 69r-75v.

⁹³ ‘nempe iube, ut aeger versus ortum Solis aratrum erigat, tuncque ex eo baculum extrahat, et per vacuum eius locum ter mingat; et mox cum Hygeia redibit in gratiam.’ Bartholomaeus Carrichter, *Certa et Genuina Ratio Medendi Morbis ab Incantatione Dependentibus*, in *Sylloge Physico Medicinalium Casuum Incantationi Vulgo Adscribi Solitorum*, ed. D. Georg. Abraham Mercklinus (Nuremberg, 1698), p. 200

⁹⁴ ‘maledicti hujusmodi homines ramum quercinum crescendo recta assurgentem versus solem sursum acuminant, eumque postea illi humi spatiolo, quod vir urina sua perfundit, cuspidem tenus immittunt, et urinam adhuc calentem pedibus suis fortiter terrae imprimunt.’ Carrichter, p. 200. ‘Si quem ad usum venerium infirmum volueris esse, ubicumque minxerit, supra lotium eius obicem, id est axedonem, ex usu figes.’ Marcellus Empiricus, *De Medicamentis Liber*, ed. Maximilian Niedermann, trans. Jutta Kollesch and Diethard Nickel, *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum* vol. 5 (Berlin, 2nd edn 1968), p. 570

⁹⁵ Mercklinus, ed., *Sylloge Physico Medicinalium*, pp. 193-214

⁹⁶ Briggs, p. 159

⁹⁷ Roy Porter, ‘Medicine and the Decline of Magic’, *Cheiron Newsletter* 1988, p. 45

sixteenth-century canon law, but it seems that at least some pastoral writers' discussions of the subject remained conservative. Angelus de Clavasio, whose *Summa* was first published in 1486,⁹⁸ based his long discussions of both impotence and 'superstition' largely on earlier writers, especially Aquinas. For example, he said of magical cures for impotence that 'I reply following St Bonaventure, in book 4, distinction 34, and St Thomas in the same distinction that man cannot invoke demons by magic for any reason.'⁹⁹ However, some pastoral writers did mention witchcraft in their works, although not necessarily in their chapters on magic impotence. The Dominican theologian Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio, writing a *Summa* for confessors in 1506 (not published until around 1515),¹⁰⁰ also wrote a traditional discussion of magic impotence, quoting Raymond of Peñafort, Hostiensis and Thomas Aquinas without adding anything new.¹⁰¹ Despite the lack of interest here, however, he had a strong interest in witchcraft, which he described in his *Summa* under the heading of heresy. Later in his career, he wrote a treatise on witchcraft, and he was himself an inquisitor from 1508.¹⁰²

By contrast, several sixteenth-century sentence commentators did mention witchcraft in their discussions of magic impotence. Like the medical writers of the fifteenth century, they were influenced by witchcraft literature, but they also recorded what they claimed was their own experience. As mentioned in chapter 7, the Scottish theologian John Major (d. 1550), writing at Paris around 1509,¹⁰³ discussed the canon *Episcopi*, a ninth-century canon law ruling which stated that women who thought that they flew at night were in fact dreaming, and like many witchcraft writers, he argued that it did not apply to the new crime of witchcraft. Another theologian and canonist, Thomas Sanchez (d. 1610), quoted the demonologist Martin Delrio.¹⁰⁴ When it came

⁹⁸ Tentler, p. 34

⁹⁹ 'Respondeo secundum sanctum Bonaventuram in iii. di. xxxiiii. et sanctum Thomam eadem di. quod non potest homo per maleficium invocare demones pro aliquo casu.' Angelus de Clavasio, *Summa Angelica* (Venice, 1487), f. 232v

¹⁰⁰ Michael Tavuzzi, *Prierias: the Life and Works of Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio, 1456-1527* (Durham and London, 1997), p. 59

¹⁰¹ Silvester Mazzolini da Prierio, *Summa Summarum que Silvestrina Dicitur* (Bologna, 1515), 'Matrimonium', impediment 16, ff. 457v-59r

¹⁰² Tavuzzi, pp. 123-4

¹⁰³ John Major, *In Quartum Sententiarum* (Paris, 1519), 34.2, ff. 285v-288r; E. Amann, 'Mair ou Major, John', in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* 9,2 (Paris, 1927), cols. 1661-2

¹⁰⁴ Josef Löffler, 'Die Störungen des geschlechtlichen Vermögens in der Literatur der autoritativen Theologie des Mittelalters', *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse* 6, 1958, p. 324

to recording their own or others' experience, Domingo de Soto (d. 1560)¹⁰⁵ referred several times to how common impotence magic was: 'it is possible, or rather, frequent, that magic impedes sexual intercourse, using the power and cunning of demons;' 'and similarly, experience shows that a woman can be compatible with other men [but not her husband]...' 'women often suffer from...'¹⁰⁶ Domingo also listed ways in which impotence magic could be done, not all of which appear in earlier commentaries: 'but the magicians and sorcerers seem, to themselves, to do it by certain incantations, or by written characters, or by other things which are bound together and burned, or buried in the earth, or hung from a tree.'¹⁰⁷ John Major did not mention any experience of impotence magic in particular, but in his chapter on the subject he included other superstitions that he himself had seen: 'there still exists the most common custom among our people, that if you praise a horse, they quickly speak a blessing over it. For they think that your praise will be the cause of its death.' He also referred to a way of catching a thief by turning a key between your fingers and saying a charm.¹⁰⁸

John Major was also interested in the legitimacy of using magical cures for impotence. Like the earlier medical writer Urso of Salerno, he conceded that some mysterious events could have natural but hidden causes, referring to fascination, the destructive properties of a menstruating woman's gaze, epidemics that infect the air, and the corpse which bleeds in the presence of its murderer.¹⁰⁹ These examples were all well known: the power of a menstruating woman's gaze goes back to Pliny, and fascination

¹⁰⁵ V. Beltran de Heredia, 'Soto, Dominique de', *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* 14,2 (Paris, 1941), cols. 2423-31

¹⁰⁶ 'possibile est, imo frequenti usu contingens, ut demonum astu et ope maleficium carnalem copulam impediatur' 'et simili experimento constat feminam aliis viris idoneam...' 'femine sepe patiuntur...' Domingo de Soto, *In Sententias* (Salamanca, 1579), 4.34.3, pp. 236-7

¹⁰⁷ 'Magici vero et malefici id facere sibi videntur aut incantamentis quibusdam, aut characteribus conscriptis, aut rebus aliis colligatis exustisque, aut in terram suffossis, aut de arbore suspensis.' *ibid*, p. 237

¹⁰⁸ 'Apud nostrates adhuc vulgatissimus est mos, si equum laudaveris, eum subito verbo benedicunt. Existimant enim laudem tuam fore eius mortis causam.' 'Similiter vertere clavem inter duos digitos pro furto deprehendendo, dicendo "Si videbas furem, et currebas cum eo, et cetera."' John Major, 4.34, f. 287v

¹⁰⁹ 'Sic in fascinatione, ubi aliqua mulier malis humoribus plena odio vel ira agitata, humores ad oculos dirigit: et teneros oculos parvulorum inficit per aerem infectum intermedium: parvuli enim facile leduntur. Et sicut Aristoteles recitat de oculo menstruate quod speculum mundum inficit... Sic epidimia infectus aerem inficit, quo infecto alius susceptivus inficitur... Et egreditur sanguis a vulnere recenter occisi ob humores ab occisoris commoto organo ad vulnus usque egredientes.' John Major, 4.34, f. 287v

and the bleeding corpse featured in scientific problem literature.¹¹⁰ Although John was thus willing to admit that some ‘magical’ cures might in fact be natural, he treated cures involving rituals as ‘suspect’, which for him meant that they contained rituals that were not part of orthodox religious practice:

‘I call them suspect methods when they are outside the common custom of the church or use ambiguous words, like touching the earth three times, and then touching a swollen chin the same number of times, with prayers. For that touching is useless, as are the other characters. And many other things which are permissible in themselves are omitted, because they appear to be evil, so that simple people will not be given an excuse to use them.’¹¹¹

Earlier writers would probably not have disagreed with this – for Aquinas, ‘superstition’ was the inappropriate use of holy rituals¹¹² – but they did not spell it out. John’s increased sensitivity, like that of the earlier medical writers Antonio Guaineri and Michele Savonarola, was probably the result of the intensification of concerns about magic during the fifteenth century.

Conclusion

The rise of witchcraft in the fifteenth century changed attitudes to impotence magic considerably. It brought cases of magic to the attention of learned writers more often than had previously been the case and, once the idea of witchcraft began to spread, it affected attitudes to magic more generally, especially in medical writing. Suddenly, cures that had seemed harmless, if reliant on mysterious forces, began to look potentially demonic. The medical writers responded first. Sensitized by the new concerns about witchcraft, they mentioned cases of impotence magic that they had encountered. They did not focus on new cures, instead repeating the ones recorded in the *Pantegni*, Gilbertus Anglicus and Peter of Spain, but they did discuss magic in much more detail than these earlier writers. In this, they reflected the changing ideas about magic and witchcraft earlier than did writers on magic impotence in other genres, perhaps because their awareness was combined with an emphasis on practical

¹¹⁰ Pliny, *Natural History*, XXVIII.23, ed. W. H. S. Jones (Cambridge, MA., 1963), p. 58 (menstruating women). Brian Lawn, *The Prose Salernitan Questions* (London, 1979), pp. 63, 98 (fascination); Brian Lawn, *The Salernitan Questions* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 162-3 (bleeding corpse).

¹¹¹ ‘Suspectos modos voco qui sunt preter communem ecclesie consuetudinem; vel verba ambigua imponentes, ut tangendo ter terram, et tangendo toties genam inflatam cum orationibus. Illa enim tactio est inutilis, sicut alii characteres. Et propter speciem mali ne simplicibus detur occasio sic faciendi, multa alia in se licita sunt omittenda.’ John Major, 4.34, f. 287v

¹¹² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. by the Dominican Friars of the English Speaking Provinces, 2a 2ae, qu. 92, art. 1, pp. 4-5

medicine. Like the thirteenth-century canonists, theologians and pastoral writers, the fifteenth-century physicians were more open to including information from outside the written tradition.

The same does not seem to have been true of fifteenth-century canonists, theologians or authors of pastoral literature, who tended to follow earlier sources when they discussed magic and impotence. Perhaps they felt that they had enough information about the reality of magic impotence in the writings of their predecessors, whereas the physicians had not absorbed so much information about practice in earlier centuries. It is also possible that many people were not yet convinced that witchcraft was a real problem. The mixed attitudes of the physicians indicate this, and Heinrich Kramer, author of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, claimed to have encountered opposition in his attempts to prosecute witches. He wrote the *Malleus* partly to refute those who believed that there was no such thing as witchcraft,¹¹³ and the need to refute sceptics remained an important element of witchcraft literature thereafter.¹¹⁴ Another reason for the absence of witchcraft in many fifteenth-century discussions of magic impotence by ecclesiastical writers may be that because witchcraft was a new subject, many commentators did not feel that it had a place in existing discussions of magic impotence. A few theologians and canonists did write about witchcraft in the early fifteenth century, but they did so in special treatises, as did Henry of Gorkum. On the other hand, at least some physicians were able to integrate it into the relatively simple structure of the medical compendium. The situation began to change in the sixteenth century, however, when some sentence commentators did discuss witchcraft in their chapters on magic impotence.

Thus the ways in which learned and popular ideas about magic interacted in discussions of magic and impotence were different in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries from how they were earlier. There was an influx of popular information into the medical compendia in the early fifteenth century, and into some sentence commentaries in the sixteenth. The rise of witchcraft gave this information a different colouring from the information absorbed by pastoral writers, canonists and

¹¹³ Behringer, *Witchcraft*, pp. 71-2

¹¹⁴ Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago, 2002), p. 27, characterizes witchcraft theory as 'resistance to scepticism' about the existence of witches, and this holds, even if one does not accept Stephens's argument that witchcraft theorists were trying to overcome their own inward scepticism, rather than that of other people.

theologians in the thirteenth century. The thirteenth-century writers had made passing references to confessions, and occasionally included anecdotes about cases they had heard about, and these were significant parts of their discussions, but they never gave the impression that impotence magic was a very serious problem. It was sinful to do it, and cases did occur, but it was something within ordinary experience. Only the theologians discussed the demonic causation behind magic at length. In the fifteenth century, by contrast, impotence magic and its magical cures were very serious business indeed. Not all of the medical writers cited here believed that demons were behind every instance of magic, but many of them felt obliged to address the question, whereas earlier physicians like Gilbertus Anglicus and Peter of Spain had simply listed the same cures, apparently without considering the power behind them. The idea that magic was always demonic had escaped from theological commentaries into the world at large. This change had a profound impact on how magic impotence was seen, and the medical writers were the first to react to it.

Conclusion

Concerns about magic impotence persisted long after the Middle Ages. A famous case from the sixteenth century is that of Martin Guerre, who remained impotent with his wife for about eight years before being cured by an old woman, who suggested that the couple have four masses said and eat sacred hosts and special cakes.¹ In fact, the social and cultural climate that permitted large-scale witch-hunts in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries probably intensified concerns about magic impotence, and theologians and medical writers continued to be interested in the subject. Nor did the belief in impotence magic disappear when the witch-hunts ended in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: nineteenth-century folklorists in Italy and Ireland mentioned that impotence could be caused by locking a padlock or tying a knot during the wedding ceremony, practices which were also described in the Middle Ages,² and as recently as 1970-2, accusations of love and impotence magic were observed in a Greek island village by the anthropologist Regina Dionisopoulos-Mass.³ However, the early modern and modern manifestations of the belief in impotence magic fall outside the scope of this study.

The medieval sources dealing with magic and impotence that I have surveyed show a pattern of learned writers drawing on popular practices. This began in the early Middle Ages. Hincmar of Rheims, Burchard of Worms and the author of the chapter on magic impotence in Constantine the African's *Pantegni*, who were the first medieval authors to discuss the problem in detail, did not draw significantly on surviving earlier sources, and Hincmar and Burchard claimed instead that cases of impotence magic really happened in the world around them. The pattern broke down temporarily in the twelfth century, when impotence magic first became the subject of academic discussions in canon law, theology and, to a lesser extent, medicine. At this time, many writers preferred to focus on the interpretative problems raised by Hincmar of Rheims's ruling, *Si per sortiarias*, rather than on the reality of impotence magic. However, popular practices appeared once more in learned texts in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, because at this time many churchmen were trying to

¹ Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, MA., 1983), pp. 19-21

² Charles Godfrey Leland, *Etruscan Magic and Occult Remedies* (London, 1891, repr. New York, 1963), p. 364. Although the book claims to discuss ancient Etruscan magic, Leland took much of his information from nineteenth-century folklore and projected it backwards in time. W. G. Wood-Martin, *Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland* (London, 1902, repr. New York, 1970), vol. 2, p. 39

³ Regina Dionisopoulos-Mass, 'The Evil Eye and Bewitchment in a Peasant Village', in Clarence Maloney, ed., *The Evil Eye* (New York, 1976), pp. 58-60

regulate lay beliefs and practices. While Hincmar and Burchard had been isolated in their interest in magical practices, the pastoral movement of the thirteenth century brought greater numbers of clerics face to face with popular magic to a greater extent than had been the case earlier. The influence of the pastoral movement can first be seen in the late twelfth century, when the canonists Huguccio and Bernard of Pavia made passing references to how impotence magic worked in the real world, but it reached its height in the thirteenth century, when authors of confession manuals like Thomas of Chobham, canonists like Geoffrey of Trani and Hostiensis, and theologians like Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure, included detailed information that they or their colleagues had heard about in confession or in the church courts.

Many of the physicians who discussed magic impotence were also influenced by practice. Some claimed to have treated cases of impotence magic, as did Gilbertus Anglicus and John of Gaddesden. Peter of Spain took his information from earlier writers, including a newly translated work on natural magic, the *Kyranides*, but he nonetheless thought that this information was worth including in a work explicitly aimed at a wide audience. However, unlike the canonists, pastoral writers and, to a lesser extent, the theologians, the medical writers do not seem to have been influenced by the church's pastoral movement until the second half of the fourteenth century, when Guy de Chauliac and Peter of Argellata discussed annulments in a way that suggested that they had been involved with these cases in the church courts. The thirteenth- and fourteenth-century physicians were also unaffected by pastoral concerns about magical cures, and recommended cures that the theologians would have defined as magical.

The situation in theology was more complex than in pastoral literature, canon law and medicine, where those writers who took information about magic impotence from practice did so in a fairly straightforward way, mentioning that they had encountered a certain case, or telling their readers that they would learn about a particular practice when hearing confessions. Some theologians did refer to what their colleagues had learned in confession, but a few others, notably Albertus Magnus and the anonymous author of the sentence commentary in Paris BN MS 10640, drew on the magical texts newly translated from Arabic. These texts prompted Albertus to ask new questions which were then taken up by many later sentence commentators. A decade after Albertus, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure raised theoretical questions about how

magic worked. These led them into more abstract discussions about the relationship between the person who worked impotence magic and the devil, a subject in which Bonaventure was particularly interested.

After a lull in interest in the fourteenth century (except among the physicians), information about practice appeared once more in discussions of magic and impotence in the early fifteenth century, when another church reform movement, combined with the development of the image of the witch and the first witch trials, brought popular magical practices to the attention of learned writers once again. However, this time, the situation was more complex than in the thirteenth century, because learned writers were now being influenced not only by popular magical practices, but also by witchcraft literature that did not usually reflect reality. Unlike in the thirteenth century, the first writers to respond this time were the physicians, notably Antonio Guaineri, Michele Savonarola and Jacques Despars in the early fifteenth century. However, by the early sixteenth century, the concerns about witchcraft had affected some theologians, pastoral writers and perhaps canonists as well.

The pastoral movement, the translation of Arabic magical texts into Latin and, later, the rise of witchcraft: these were the factors that drove academic discussions of magic impotence from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. Within these parameters, however, individual writers had a great deal of freedom. These three sources of information were there if authors wished to use them, but all that was really needed was to summarize the basics of canon law, and many writers simply did this, all through the period. Broadly, two factors affected how much medieval authors said about magic impotence. The first was the interest of the individual writer: the works of the canonists Hostiensis and Roffredus of Benevento show that they were interested in cases and practice generally, and Albertus Magnus used magical texts in his other works. The second was the genre of the source: overall, canonists, the authors of confession manuals and, to a lesser extent, medical writers, were more likely to include details about real practices than were the theologians. Because the canonists, pastoral writers and physicians were recording a system that was ultimately designed to be used on the laity, there was more incentive for them to be practical, and not include information that their audiences would reject as impossible, whereas the theologians were freer to focus on more abstract issues.

The pattern that I have outlined, of learned writers taking much of their information from popular practice, differs from the model of late medieval magic that has been developed by many historians investigating the medieval origins of the early modern witch-hunts. According to this model, learned writers, inquisitors and judges created the image of the witch in the late Middle Ages, and then imposed it on the rest of the population by propaganda, torture and the use of leading questions. When these elite figures looked at popular magical practices, they interpreted them as demonic witchcraft. Thus many studies of the origins of witchcraft, whether they trace elements of the witches' sabbath back to popular beliefs or not, assume that learned writers were more interested in imposing their own ideas about magic on the people around them, than in recording what people actually did. There is much truth in this model as regards the development of the image of the witch and the witches' sabbath, but in the case of impotence magic, the sources suggest a different pattern. When learned writers discussed impotence magic, they often had a relatively accurate idea of what the people around them did and believed, and this is reflected in many academic discussions of magic and impotence. This was because the interest in magic impotence arose from the pastoral movement and a desire to reform the laity, which forced clerical writers to come to terms with what the laity were actually doing. Thus although the development of the image of the witch undoubtedly was built on misunderstandings between popular magic and learned fears of demonic witchcraft, this was not the only way in which learned writers engaged with widespread magical practices in the later Middle Ages.

Appendix 1

De his qui maleficiis impediti coire non possunt: ***Pantegni* ‘Practica’ Book 8, Ch. 29, and the *Remedies Against Magic*: Text and Translation**

Manuscripts of *Pantegni*, ‘Practica’, Book 8, Ch. 29, Used in this Edition

Charles Burnett and Danielle Jacquart list 17 manuscripts of the *Pantegni* containing this chapter, in *Constantine the African and Alī ibn al-Abbās al-Mağūsī: the Pantegni and Related Texts* (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1994), pp. 316-51. In addition to these, I found one other, in London Royal College of Physicians, MS 397.

- Sl* London, British Library MS Sloane 2946, f. 67v, 13th century
- Se* London, British Library MS Sloane 3481, f. 157v, 13th century
- Rc* London, Royal College of Physicians MS 397, ff. 77r-v, 13th century
- Mf* Montpellier, Université, Faculté de Médecine 187, ff. 112v-113r, 13th century
- Ox* Oxford, Oriel College MS 55, f. 116v, 14th century
- Ps* Paris, BN MS lat. 6887A, ff. 94r-v, 13th century
- Pa* Paris, BN MS lat. 6886, ff. 178r-v, 13th century
- Pr* Paris, BN MS lat. 14393, f. 113v, 14th century
- A† Berlin, Staatsbibl. lat. fol. 618, f. 189v, 13th century ,
- B† Leipzig, Universitätsbibl. 1147, f. 171r, 13th century
- C† Leipzig, Universitätsbibl. 1125, f. 205r, 13th century
- D† Würzburg, Universitätsbibl. M.p.med.f.3, f. 81, 13th century

Manuscripts of the *Remedies Against Magic*

Lynn Thorndike and Pearl Kibre listed 5 manuscripts of the *Remedies Against Magic* in *A Catalogue of Incipits of Medieval Scientific Writings in Latin* (2nd edn., London, 1963), col. 1542, but others have been found since.

Manuscripts Consulted:

- Br* Bruges, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 370, 13th century: text published by A. de Poorter, *Catalogue des Manuscrits de Médecine Médiévale de la Bibliothèque de Bruges* (Paris, 1924) pp. 20-2

- Fl* Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale MS II.iii.214, 15th century: described in David Pingree, 'Learned Magic in the Time of Frederick II' *Micrologus* 2, 1994, pp. 39-56.
- Mp* Montpellier, Université, Faculté de Médecine MS 277, ff. 60r-v, 15th century: text published by Henry Sigerist, 'Impotence as a Result of Witchcraft', in *Essays in Biology in Honour of Herbert M. Evans* (Los Angeles, 1943), pp. 539-46. I have also consulted a microfilm of the manuscript.
- Mu* Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibl. MS 321, ff. 256r-v, 15th century, mentioned in Thorndike/Kibre.
- So* London, British Library MS Sloane 3529, ff. 12r-v, 16th century

Manuscripts not consulted:

- Erfurt, Codex Amplonianus 4o 217, f. 97v, 15th century, mentioned in Hoffmann, p. 132, n. 4.
- Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana MS Ashburnham 143, 15th century, mentioned by Lynn Thorndike, in *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. 2 (New York, 1923), p. 851.
- Vatican, Bibl. Ap. Vat. MS lat. 2403, f. 85, 15th century, mentioned in Thorndike/Kibre.
- Vienna, Österreichisches Nationalbibliothek MS 5315, ff. 76v-78r, 15th century, mentioned in Thorndike/Kibre.

Sixteenth-Century Printed Editions, in the *Opera Omnia* of Arnold of Villanova

- 1509*: (Lyon, 1509), f. 215v
- 1520†: (Lyon, 1520), f. 215v: a reprint of the 1509 edition.
- 1585*†: (Basel, 1585), columns 1529-32

* Manuscripts and editions I have collated, from the manuscript, microfilm or, in the case of Bruges 470, the published text of de Poorter.

† Manuscripts and editions collated by Gerda Hoffmann, in 'Beiträge zur Lehre von der durch Zauber verursachten Krankheit und ihrer Behandlung in der Medizin des Mittelalters', *Janus* 37, 1933, pp. 129-44

Summary: Which Parts of the Text are in which Manuscripts and Printed Editions

[illegible]

Text

Variants which modify the meaning of the text are listed in bold lettering, others in ordinary type.

Part 1

Base Manuscript: *Sl*

1. Sunt quidam qui maleficiis impediti cum uxoribus suis coire non possunt, de quorum suffragio librum nostrum nolumus denudare, quod medicamentum (nisi fallor) est sanctissimum. 2. Igitur si cui hoc contigerit, speret in deo, et ipse dabit benignitatem. 3. Sed quia maleficia sunt multimoda, oportet ut de eis disputemus.

1. maleficiis] maleficiis diabolicis *Mp* || librum] libellum *Mu* || nolumus] volumus *Rc+* || denudare] *Se+*: enudare *Sl, Rc, Ps, Mp*: enodare *Pr, Fl* || quod...est] quo ad medicamentum quo usi sumus: *Mu* || medicamentum] medicamenta *Rc* 2. all] *om. Mu* || si cui hoc] *Rc+*: cum hoc *Sl*: si tibi hoc *So*: si tibi 1509, 1585 || contingerit] convenit 1509 || speret] speres *So, 1509, 1585* || deo] domino *Pr+* || benignitatem] bonitatem *Pr+* 3. maleficia sunt multimoda] est maleficiorum multitudo *So*: maleficia sunt multiplicia: 1509, 1585 || oportet ut] primo 1509, 1585

4. Maleficiorum itaque quedam de animatis fiunt, ut testiculi galli, qui superpositi lecto cum ipsius sanguine efficiunt ne concumbant in lecto iacentes. 5. Quedam de characteribus scriptis ex sanguine vespertilionis. 6. Quedam vero de inanimatis sicut si nux vel glans separetur, quarum medietas ex una parte vie ponatur, et alia ex alia parte, unde sponsus et sponsa pergere debent. 7. Sunt et alia que de granis fabarum conficiuntur, que nec aqua calida mollificantur, nec igne coquantur, quod maleficium est pessimum, 8. si iiii. illarum vel in tecto, vel in via, vel supra hostium, vel infra ponantur. 9. Sunt et alia que sunt metallica sicut que fiunt ex ferro vel plumbo. Ex ferro sicut ex acu cum qua mortui vel mortue suuntur.

4. all] Maleficiorum quedam de animatis fiunt, quedam de inanimatis. De animatis ut testiculi galli lecto supra positi *Mu* || animatis] animalibus *Ps, Pr, Fl* || fiunt] fiunt, quedam de inanimatis *Mu* || ut] de animatis ut *Mu* || testiculi] de testiculis *Ps+* || galli] gallorum *Se+* || superpositi] *superpositi* *Se+* || lecto¹] recto *Rc*: tecto *Ps, Fl* || efficiunt] *Se+*: *om. Sl* || concumbant] coeant *Se+* || lecto²] loco *Se+* 5. Quedam] Quem ad modum *Fl* || characteribus] karactibus *Rc*: caractis *Pr*: catharactis: *Fl, So* || vespertilionis] vespertilionum *So* 6. inanimatis] animatis *So*: terrae nascentibus 1509, 1585 || nux] nucibus *Ps* || glans] glandis *Rc, Fl*: glandes *Pr*: glandibus *Ps* || separetur] *Pa+*: separentur *Sl+* || ex¹] ab *Se+* || vie... ex alia] *om. Mu* || alia²] *Se+*: altera *Sl+* || pergere debent] debet venire 1509, 1585 7. conficiuntur] confecta *Mu* || coquantur] *Rc+*: coquantur *Sl+*: conburentur *Mu*: decoquantur *So* || quod] *Se+*: quia *Sl* 8. vel in tecto] vel in lecto *Se+*: vel in toto *So*: vel tres sub lecto 1509, 1585 || infra] circa 1509, 1585 9. vel plumbo] vel plumbo et ferro 1509: *om. Mu* || Ex ferro sicut] Sed que fiunt 1509, 1585 || sicut²] *Se+*: sicut que fiunt *Sl+* || suuntur] sumuntur *Pr*: suuntur. Sufficit bene intelligentibus *Ox, Mu*: suuntur in sudariis 1509, 1585

10. Sed quia hec sunt diabolica et maxime fiunt a mulieribus, aliquando divinis, aliquando humanis auxiliis curantur. 11. Item si sponsus et sponsa supradictis maleficiis conturbentur, sanctius est de his disserere quam silere, 12. quia si non succurrantur, separantur et sic deiciuntur. 13. Et hoc maleficium exercentes non solum in proximis, sed etiam in creatore peccare videntur. 14. Si enim maleficium recte extirpare volumus, videndum est si supradictum maleficium supersit lectum; auferatur.

10. hec] *Rc+*: hec sunt *Se+*: *om. Sl* || et maxime sunt in mulieribus] *om. Mu* || fiunt a mulieribus] *Pa*: mulieribus sunt assueta *Mf*: in mulieribus fiunt 1509: sunt in mulieribus *other MSS* || aliquando divinis...curantur] aliquando a uiris divinis quandoque curantur *Pr, Fl* || divinis] divinis auxiliis *Mp* || aliquando²] *Se+*: quandoque: *Sl, Rc* || aliquando humanis auxiliis] *om. Ps* || auxiliis] *Se+*: consiliis *A*: *om. Sl+* 11. Item] Item sciendum est quod *Mu* || sponsus et sponsa] sponsus vel sponsa *Pr+* || conturbentur] non turbantur *So* || supradictis maleficiis conturbentur] curantur *Fl*: huiusmodi contrahuntur maleficiis 1509, 1585 || disserere] dicere *Rc+*: speculari 1509, 1585 || quam silere] quam tacere *Ps+*: quam celare *Mu*: *om. 1509* 12. succurrantur] *Se+*: succuratur *Sl+* || deiciuntur] *Se+*: deviant *Sl+*: deiceant *Rc+*: deicianur *Mf*: deierant *Pa*: deierantur *Pr*: deiactantur *Fl*: degenerantur *Mp*: est malum *So* 13. Et hoc...videntur] Et per hoc maleficium non solum exercetur in paroxismis, sed etiam in curatione 1509, 1585 || maleficium] malum *Mp* || exercentes] *Se+*: facientes *Sl, Mu* || in creatore] in curatione *A*: in spiritu sancto *Mp*: in creatione *So* || peccare] *Se+*: spectare *A*: pectare *So*: *om. Sl* 14. recte] *Se+*: tecti *Sl+*: tectum *So*: lecti 1509, 1585: *om. Mu* || extirpare] curare vel extirpare *Br* || supersit lectum] *Se+*: supersit *Sl+*: lecto superponatur vel subsit vel supersit lecto *Mf*: subsit lecto *Mp*: lecto non supersit *Mu* || auferatur] et auferatur *Se+*: ut auferatur *Mu*

15. Sed si auctor istius maleficii in die auferat, et in nocte ponat, vel econverso, aliam domum acquirant sponsus et sponsa ibique iaceant. 16. Si caracteribus hoc maleficium fiat, quod cognoscitur, quia sponsus et sponsa non diligunt se adinvicem, 17. queratur si supra limen hostii vel infra sit, et si quid inveniatur, deferatur ad sacerdotem, sed, si non, faciant ea, que inferius ponuntur. 18. Si nux vel glans sit causa huius maleficii, accipiat mulier quamlibet nucem vel glandem, separetque eam, 19. et cum una medietate pergat vir ex una parte alicuius vie vel illius per quam venerunt, et ibi ponat medietatem suam. 20. Mulier vero ex altera parte ponat alteram partem nucis. 21. Deinde sponsus et sponsa accipiant ambas partes nucis, testa non extracta, et sic tota nux reintegretur, et servetur per vii. dies. Hoc facto coeant.

15. auctor] actor *Se+* || et in nocte] *Se+*: vel in nocte *Sl+* || ponat] reponat *Mu* || vel econverso] vel contrario *D*: et econverso 1509, 1585: vel econtrario *Br*: *om. Mu* || acquirant] querant: 1509, 1585 || ibique] ubi *So*: in qua sponsa et vir 1509, 1585 16. caracteribus] *Se+*: cataractis *Sl, Rc, Ps*: cataractas *Pr*: caractis *So* 17. queratur] quere *Pr, Fl* || si¹] *om. Pa+* || supra] super: *Mf+* || infra] in ferra *So* || sint] *Se+*: sit *Br+*: *om. Sl+* || sacerdotem] sacerdotem vel episcopum *Pr, C*: sacerdotem vel ad episcopum *Fl*: episcopum vel ad sacerdotem *Mp* 18. glans] glandes *C*: glandis *Fl* || causa] cura *A* || accipiat] accipe *So* || accipiat...eam] accipiant venenum quilibet vel glandem eam, quae separat: 1509, 1585 || mulier] *om. Se+*: manu *E* || quamlibet] *Ps+*: quelibet *Sl+*: quilibet *Se+*: quandam *Mp*: quelibet maleficium secundum *Mu* 19. all] Et cum illa parte immediate pergat vir ex una

parte et ibi ponat 1509, 1585 || pergat] spargat *So* || vel... suam] *Se+*: et ibi ponat *Sl+*: per quam venerunt, et ibi ponat medietatem suam *Mf* 20. altera] alia *Se+* || parte] *Se+*: parte vie *Sl+* || alteram] aliam *Se+* || partem nucis] nucis vel glandis partem *Mu* 21. Deinde...nucis] *om. Se+* || non extracta] non extracta intus redeant vero *C*: vero extracta intus redeant *Pr, Fl*: non extracta redeant *Ps*: vero detracta *Br*: deposita *Mu*: vero extracta 1509, 1585 || et sic] et postea *Se+* || tota] testa *Mu*: cocta *Ox* || reintegretur] integretur *Mu*, 1509, 1585 || et servetur] et sic servetur *Se+*: et sic sunt necesse *So*: et firmetur 1509, 1585 || per vii] per vi 1509, 1585 || coeant] comedat *A*: comedant 1509, 1585

22. Si autem sit propter fabas, magis divinis quam humanis curari potest. 23. Si sit propter acus mortuorum, querantur maleficia in culcitra vel pulvinari. Si non inveniuntur, in alia domo et lecto concubant. 24. Fel canis masculi nigri domui aspersum domum purgat et efficit ne ullum maleficium domui inferatur. 25. Canino sanguine domus parietes asperge: ab omni maleficio liberabitur.

22. sit] fit *Mf*: fiat *Pr, Fl*: fiunt *Mu*: *om. Se+* || magis] tunc tam *Mu* || humanis] humanis auxiliis *Mu*: humanis medicinis *So* || curari potest] potest adiutoriis *Mf* || potest] debet vel potest *Pr, Fl* 23. Si sit] *Se+*: Si vero sit *Sl* || sit propter] super 1509, 1585 || in culcitra] in cultra *Fl* vel in fulon *Mp* || pulvinari] pulvinari quere 1509, 1585 || et lecto] *Se+*: et lecto alio *Sl*: et culcitru vel lecto *Br* || concubant] cubent *Se+* 24. Title: Experimenta Contra Daemones et Maleficia 1509, 1585 || Fel canis] Vel canis *Mu* || Fel canis masculi nigri] Canis nigri masculi fel valet *Fl* || domum] demonium *A* || maleficium] malum medicamentum *Mp* || domum... inferatur] demonem pugnatur, ne maleficium damnum inferat 1509, 1585 25. domus] *Rc+*: demus *Sl, Se* || domus parietes asperge] asperso parietes: *So* || asperge] aspersi 1509, 1585 || maleficio] malo *Ps* || maleficio liberabitur] purgat maleficio 1509, 1585 || liberabitur] liberatur *Se+*

Mu does not contain the rest of Part 1.

26. Fel alicuius piscis et maxime zangarini si sponsus et sponsa secum habuerint in pixide iuniperi, 27. et eant dormitum et ponatur super carbones vivos ut inde fumigentur, omnia supradicta maleficia evanescunt. 28. Similiter si argentum vivum accipiat et in calamo canne mittatur cum cera cooperto nesciente sponso et sponsa in loco ponatur nullum maleficium eis obest.

26. zangarini] *Se+*: zangari ursi *Sl, B*: zuagiri *C*: angarici *Mf*: zacarini *Pa*: zingarini *Br*: zancharini id est lucii parni *Fl*: zangarini [id est lucii] *Mp*: sagarici *So*: lausularum 1509, 1585 || si] *Se+*: *om. Sl* || habuerint] *Se+*: habeant *Sl+* || in pixide iuniperi] *om. 1509* 27. eant] *Se+*: eunt *Sl, Rc*: essent *Ps*: esset *Pr*: cum eunt *Mp*: dum sunt *Fl*: dum eant 1509, 1585 || dormitum] cubitum dormitum *So* || et²] *Se+*: *om. Sl+* || et ponatur...maleficia] *om. So* || carbones vivos] *Se+*: carbonem vivum *Sl, Rc, Fl*: carbones viventes *C*: carbones vivum *Mf, D*: carbones *Ps, Br*: carbone vivum *Pr* || fumigentur] suffumigentur 1509, 1585 28. argentum vivum] argentum alias argentum vivum 1509 || accipiat] accipiant *Ps+* || in] *Se+*: *om. Sl+* || canne] *om. Se+*: vel canna: 1509, 1585 || mittatur] *Rc+*: *om. Sl+*: mutatur *So*: immittatur 1509, 1585 || cum cera cooperto] *Se+*: calamo cum cera cooperto *Sl, Rc*: cum plumbo et cera cooperto *Fl*: in calamo cum plumbo et cera cooperto *Pr, Mp* || cera...obest] *om. C* || sponso et sponsa] sponso vel sponsa *Mf* || loco] in lecto *Mf, Br*: in aliquo loco *Pa* || in loco ponatur] *Se+*: *om. Sl+* || obest] nocebit *Mp*

B, D, Sl, Rc and Ps finish here. Mu, 1509 and 1585 omit the following passage. A, C, Se, Mf, Pa, Pr, Ox, Br, Fl, Mp and So continue:

Part 2

Base Manuscript: *Se*

1. Sed si peccatis imminentibus, predicta non profuerint, accedant ad sacerdotem vel episcopum et confiteantur. 2. Et si nullum remedium invenitur, facta confessione, ab episcopo vel aliquo religioso sacerdote in die resurrectionis vel ascensionis domini vel pentecostes, communicent. 3. Corpore et sanguine domini accepto, sponsus et sponsa dent inter se osculum pacis, 4. et accepta benedictione ab episcopo vel sacerdote, det sibi episcopus vel sacerdos hunc versum propheticum in carta scriptum: 5. *Vox domini super aquas* etc. 6. Deinde veniant domum, a copulatione per tres dies et noctes abstineant, postea rem agant, id est coeant. 7. Et sic omnis diabolica actio destruetur.

1. Sed si... profuerint] Sed si peccatis supradicta non imminentibus profuerit *C* || imminentibus] existentibus *Mf*: eminentibus *Pa* || predicta] supradicta *Pr, A, Mp* || non] minime *Mp* || et confiteantur] *om. Pr, Mp, Fl* 2. et si... invenitur] et si episcopus hoc non concesserit, nullum remedium invenitur: *Pr, C, Fl*: et si episcopus hoc concesserit et nullum remedium invenitur *Mp* || et si] et sic adhuc *Mf* || resurrectionis] sancte resurrectionis *Mp* || domini] *om. Mf*+ 4. sacerdote] aliquo religioso sacerdote *Mf* || det sibi] dicat ipse *Pa* || sibi] eis *Fl* vel sacerdos] *Pr*+: *om. Se* 5. aquas] aquas multas *So* || etc] deus magnus super aquas multas *Mp*: a. I. t. d. s. a. m. *Fl* 6. per tres... abstineant] per tres dies abstineant et tot noctes: *So* || et noctes] et tres noctes *Pr* || abstineant] se custodiant *Mp* || id est coeant] *om. Pr*+ 7. actio] virtus *Pr, Fl*

8. (*Mp* only): Expletus est libellus de maleficiis. Deo gratias Amen.

All remaining manuscripts of the *Pantegni*, and *Br, Mp* and *So* end here.

Part 3a (*Mu* only):

1. Item nota quod squilla integra est radix quedam oblonga que infra limen ostii suspensa tollit omne maleficium domus in quacumque.
2. Quicumque radicem brionie secum portaverit vel in hospicio habuerit, omnia maleficia ab eo et hospicio suo fugient.
3. Item si arthemisia super limen hostii fuerit suspensa, facit ut nullum maleficium noceat domui.

4. Item sciendum secundum experimentationes si masculus secum portaverit cor cornicis masculi et uxor cor femelle semper bene inter se convenient.
5. Sciendum quod si aliqui fuerint maleficiati non potentes coire in lecto et hospicio proprio, mutant autem lectum et hospicium et si ibi coire possunt signum est malefici in lecto vel hospicio proprio existentis.
6. Sed si in aliquo coire non possunt quemadmodum nec in proprio, signum est quod illud maleficium est perpetratum per potentias spirituales et in illo casu valet tyriaca cum succo ypericon.
7. Et valet etiam ad illud herba ypericon apud mulierem vel virum in domo vel in pera.
8. Et ideo ista herba vocatur fuga demonum. Hec etiam herba alio nomine dicitur herba sancti Johannis et herba perforata.
9. Et est finis huius opusculi laus deo. Explicit opusculum de remediis sortilegiorum Constantini etc.

Part 3b (1509 and 1585 only):

1. Si fel caprinum in domo tua posueris, omnia demonia fugient. Gilbertus.
2. Item cor vulturis portatum fugat et omnia demonia a peccante et omnes feras et facit hominem gratiosum omnibus hominibus et mulieribus et abundantem et intentiosum. Gilbertus.
3. Item avis pica vel assata vel elixata comesta sanitatem reddit velociter infirmantibus et incantatione trufatos solvit et sanat et asperitatem tribuit. Gilbertus.
4. Ad tollendum maleficium: Recipe de tyriaca magna cum succo ypericon et emplastra renibus. Gilbertus.
5. Item in calamo vel avellana concava ponatur argentum vivum et supponatur cervicali maleficiati vel ponatur sub limine hostii, per quod intrat; solvitur maleficium.
6. Item corallus si teneatur in domo, solvit omnia maleficia. Dioscorides.
7. Item sanguis canis nigri linitis parietibus omnibus domus, in qua est, tollit maleficium. Sextus ab octo.
8. Item si quis maleficiatus fuerit ad non amandum aliquem vel aliquam, merda illius, quem vel quam diligit, ponatur in sotulari dextro amantis et calciat, quam cito sentiet fetorem, solvetur maleficium. Expertum est.
9. Item arthemisia, id est matricaria super limine domus posita vel supposita, facit ut nullum maleficium noceat illi domui.

10. Item si luna nova decollaveris upupam et cor eius palpitans transglutias, scies omnia que fiunt, et mentes hominum, et multa celestia.
11. Item ypericon, si teneatur in domo, demones fugantur. Ideo dicitur a multis fuga demonis.
12. Item lapis qui magnes dicitur, portatus, discordiam inter virum et mulierum vel uxorem sedat omnino.
13. Item fumigentur cum dente hominis mortui trito.
14. Item bibat herbam que transiverit per medium lapidis perforati.
15. Item squilla integra suspensa in limine domus tollit maleficium.
16. Item radix brioniae, si tecum portaveris, omnia maleficia fugient.
17. Item si vir portaverit cor cornicis, et uxor femine semper bene coeunt.
18. Item si quis portaverit radicem yringi numquam insidias alicuius demonis sustinebit.
19. Item si sub vestibus demoniaci ponatur dicta radix, demoniacus confitebitur, quis est, quod est, et unde est, et effugiet.

1. fel] *om.* 1509 4. renibus] *renes* 1585 5. maleficiati] *maleficiorum* 1509 8. calciet] *calciet se* 1585
10. scies] *sciens* 1509 et... et] *etiam... etiam* 1509, 1585 13. fumigentur] *fumigetur* 1509

Part 4 (*Fl* only):

1. Item suspende ad collum viri et mulieris hec scripta in carta virginea: *astea. astia. assa. assa. alnab. liberate.*
2. Aliud: accipe ensem incidentem ex utroque latere, et scribe in puncto ex utroque latere hos karateres: *ha. ha. at.* 3. Postea vade sub lecto ipsis nescientibus et pone punctum ensis super fillaturam asidis prope caput lecti 4. ita ut sit quasi ex opposito dorsi. Et non facias punctum transire nisi assides cum literis. Et omnia maleficia destruantur.
5. Item facias hominem se expoliare ex recto et facias pannos directe ponere ita quod sarrabula sit inferius et epytogium superius. 6. Postea facias eum evaginare gladium et percutere pannos ter, ita quod cutellus transeat omnes. Et tertia vice dimittat cutellum infixum in asside et pannis. 7. Postea concubat cum sponsa.

2. puncto] MS reads *puncta* 3. punctum] MS reads *punctam* 4. punctum] MS reads *punctam*

Part 5: (1509 only):

1. Item si fiat maleficium contra sponsum et sponsam virgines, ut sponsum sponsam carnaliter cognoscere non possit, suscipe unam parapsidem vel unam taceam, 2. in cuius medio scribas crucem et hec quattuor nomina in quattuor crucis lateribus: 3. *avis, gravis, seps, sipa*, et in circuitu tacee interius scribas evangelium sancti Joannis totum completum, 4. post sumas aquam benedictam, si potes, vel vinum vel aliam aquam si non potes habere aquam benedictam, 5. et pone in tacea illa. Cum digito totam litteram illam in illa ablue et cum devotione ambo bibant et in dei nomine coeant. Probatum est.

2. crucis] edition reads 'certis' 5. coeant] Hoffmann's emendation; edition reads 'capiant'.

6. Item facias scribendo in quattuor crucis lateribus hoc nomen tetragramaton servata forma supradicta, si scires tu scribere. 7. Dic quid significatur per hoc nomen tetragramaton, quod est scriptum. 8. Si habet litteras hebraicas, efficacissimum est. Post facies predicta scilicet evangelium etiam et omnia dicta scribat unus infans virgo coronatus.

6. crucis] Hoffmann's emendation; editions read 'certis' 8. coronatus] edition reads 'coronat'; Hoffmann emends to 'coronatur'.

9. Item sume infantem virginem et in die veneris vel sabbati vel dominico in hora ante ortum solis stet ante rubum et salutet virginem Mariam, que per rubum fuit figurata. 10. Postea dicat ter paternoster et ter signet rubum in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti, amen. 11. Et tunc colliget de foliis eius et floribus, si sint, et fructibus vel de foliis tantum, si alia desint, tres pugnos et recede, 12. et cum fueris in domo, sponsus et sponsa claudant se in camera, in qua ponatur focarium plenum carbonibus incensis et unusquisque eorum ad partem oret deum, quod deus ministret fructum matrimonii usque ad sui servitium. 13. Quo facto sumant folia rubi et flores, si sint, et ponant supra carbones incensos et perfumabant totam cameram et serpens fugiet et signatis de signo crucis coeant in dei nomine.

14. Item aliter de eodem: ad frangendum omne maleficium confiteatur utrumque de peccatis suis fideliter et audiant ambo missam et communicent dividendo corpus Christi per medium facta monitione, ne ipsi coeant propter luxuriam, sed propter

fructum matrimonii. **15.** Credo etiam quod si maleficium esset solum in una persona et confiteretur fideliter et communicaret solverentur omnia maleficia.

16. Item, si maleficia fiant in campis vel vineis, fiat quod supra dixi de evangelio sancti Johannis scriptum per manum infantis virginis et illa aqua spergatur in quattuor angulis campi illius et in medio fiat una crux dicendo: **17.** ‘Exorcizo te, immunde spiritus, ut hunc locum deo dedicatum egrediaris et ad locum tue sempiternae damnationis pergas.’ **18.** Hoc dicto spergas aquam faciendo crucem in quattuor angulis in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti amen. **19.** Expliciunt remedia contra maleficia.

Translation: ‘On Those Who, Impeded by Magic, Cannot Have Sexual Intercourse’

Part 1

1. There are some people who, impeded by spells, cannot have intercourse with their wives. We do not want to deprive our book of their *help*, because the remedy (if I am not wrong) is most sacred. **2.** Therefore if this happens to someone, he should put his hope in God, and he will show him kindness. **3.** But because there are many kinds of magic, we ought to discuss them.

4. For some spells are made from animated substances, such as the testicles of a cock which, when put under a bed with the cock’s blood, bring it about that those who lie in the bed will not have intercourse. **5.** Some [spells] are made of characters written in bat’s blood. **6.** Some are made of inanimate substances, for instance if a nut or acorn is separated, and one half is put on one side of the road where the bride and groom must pass, and the other on the other side. **7.** There are also others which are made from beans, which have not been softened in hot water, nor cooked on the fire; **8.** this spell is worst if four of them are put on the roof, or in the road, or above or below the door. **9.** There are also others which are made of metal, such as those that are made of iron or lead. The iron ones are, for instance, made from a needle with which dead men or women have been sewn. **10.** But because these spells are diabolical, and are

especially done by women, they can sometimes be cured by divine methods, sometimes by human ones.

11. If the bride and groom are thrown into confusion by the abovementioned spells, it is holier to discuss them than to keep silent, **12.** because if they are not helped, they will be separated and thus cast down. **13.** And those who do such magic seem to sin not only against their neighbours, but also against the Creator. **14.** If we wish to eradicate the spell correctly, we should see whether the abovementioned spell is above the bed, and take it away. **15.** But if the doer of this spell takes it away in the day and puts it back at night, or vice versa, the bride and groom should acquire another home and lie there.

16. If the spell is done by characters, which is known if the bride and groom do not love each other, **17.** search for it above the threshold of the door, or below, and if you find something, take it to the priest, and if not, do what is set out below. **18.** If a nut or acorn is the cause of this spell, the woman should take any nut or acorn, and separate it. **19.** With one half, the man should proceed on one side of some road, or of that road along which [the bride and groom] went, and put his half there; **20.** ~~but~~ the woman should put the other part of the nut on the other side of the road. **21.** Then the bride and groom should take both parts of the nut, without taking the shell off, and thus put the whole nut back together and keep it for seven days. Having done this, they should have intercourse. **22.** But if it happens because of beans, it can be cured with divine rather than human methods. **23.** If it is because of the dead people's needles, the spells should be sought in the mattress or pillow. If they are not found, they should have intercourse in another home and bed.

24. The bile of a black dog, sprinkled around the house, purifies it and brings it about that no spell can be brought in. **25.** Sprinkle the walls of the house with dog's blood; it will be freed from all spells. **26.** If the bride and groom keep with them the bile of some fish, and especially *zangarinus* [I have been unable to translate this], in a box of juniper wood **27.** and if, when they go to bed, they put it on hot coals so that they are fumigated by it, all of the abovementioned spells will vanish. **28.** Similarly, if mercury is taken and put into a reed sealed with wax without the bride and groom's knowledge, no spell will harm them in the place where it is put.

Part 2

1. But if the above methods do not work because the couple's sins are hanging over them, they should go to a priest or bishop and confess. 2. And if no remedy is found, after they have confessed, they should take communion from the bishop or a devout priest on the day of the Resurrection or the Ascension of the Lord, or Pentecost. 3. When they have taken the body and blood of Christ, the bride and groom should give each other the kiss of peace. 4. When they have received the blessing from the bishop or priest, the bishop or priest should give them this verse of the prophet, written on a slip of parchment: 5. 'The voice of the Lord is upon the waters' etc (Psalm 28:3). 6. Then they should go home and abstain from intercourse for three days and nights, and afterwards do the deed, that is, have intercourse. 7. And thus all diabolical actions are destroyed. 8. The little book on spells is completed. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Part 3a

1. Note that a whole squill is a certain oblong root that, when it is suspended inside the doorway, takes away all magic from any house.

2. Anyone who carries with him a briony root or has one in his home will expel every magic from himself and his home.

3. If mugwort is suspended above the doorway, it brings it about that no magic can harm the house.

4. It should be known that according to experience, if a man carries with him the heart of a male crow, and his wife the heart of a female [crow] they will always come together well.

5. It should be known that if some people are bewitched and unable to have intercourse in their own bed and home, but they change their bed and home and if they are able to have intercourse, it is a sign that there is magic in their own bed or home.

6. But if they cannot have intercourse in another [bed and home] just as in their own, it is a sign that the magic is accomplished through spiritual powers, and in that case theriac with the sap of hypericon works.

7. And the herb hypericon also works [if kept] in the home with the woman or man, or in a bag.

8. And therefore this herb is called demons' bane. This herb is also called by another name St John's wort, and the perforated herb.

9. And this is the end of this little work, praise be to God. Here ends Constantine's little work on remedies for sorcerers etc.

Part 3b

1. If you put a goat's bile in your home, all demonic influences will flee. Gilbertus.
2. Wearing a vulture's heart both makes all demonic influences flee and all wild beasts, and it makes a man pleasing to all men and women, and rich and potent. ^{from the sinner} Gilbertus.
3. The jay bird, either roasted or boiled, if eaten, quickly bring health back to the sick and free those who are deceived by incantations, and heals, and gives fierceness. Gilbertus.
4. To take away magic: take theriac with the sap of St John's wort, and put them in a plaster on the kidneys. Gilbertus.
5. Put mercury in a reed or a hollow hazelnut, and put it in the pillow of the bewitched person, or put it under the threshold of the door, through which he enters; the spell will be dissolved.
6. Coral dissolves all spells, if it is kept in the home. Dioscorides.
7. The blood of a black dog, smeared on the walls, takes the spell away from the home where it is done. Sextus to Octavian [Sextus Placitus's *Medicina de Quadrupedibus*].
8. If someone is bewitched so that they do not love some man or woman, the faeces of the person they love should be put in the lover's right shoe when they put it on. As soon as he smells the odour, the magic will be dissolved. It has been tried.
9. Mugwort, that is *matricaria*, put on or buried under the threshold of the house, brings it about that no spell will harm that home.
10. If you behead a hoopoe at full moon and swallow its still-beating heart, you will know everything that is happening, and the minds of men, and many heavenly things.
11. St John's wort, if it is kept in the home, drives away demons. Therefore many people call it demons' bane.
12. If the stone which is called magnet is worn, it lays to rest every discord between a man and his woman or wife.
13. Let them be fumigated three times with the tooth of a dead man.
14. Let him drink the herb which grows through the middle of a stone with a hole in it.
15. A whole squill, suspended in the doorway, takes away magic.

all

16. If you carry briony root with you, all spells will be driven away.
17. If a man carries the heart of a crow, and the wife the heart of a female [crow], they will always have intercourse happily.
18. If someone carries the root of *yringus* [I have not been able to identify this], they will never suffer the attacks of a demon.
19. If the same root is put under the clothes of a demoniac, the demoniac [i. e. the demon inside them] will confess who he is, and what he is, and where he is from, and flee.

Part 4

1. Suspend round the necks of the man and the woman, these words written on virgin parchment: *astea. astia. assa. assa. alnab. liberate.*
2. Another: take a sword with a cutting edge on both sides and write on the point, on both sides, these characters: *ha. ha. at.* 3. Afterwards, go under the bed without the couple's knowledge and put the point of the sword on the fringe of the bedspread [*fillatura asidis*] near the head of the bed, 4. so that it is resting on the back. And do not let the point cross anything except the bedspread with the letters. And all spells will be destroyed.
5. Make the man undress on the right hand side, and put his clothes [on the bed] in order, so that the trousers are underneath and the coat on top. 6. Afterwards make him unsheathe the sword and hit the clothes three times, so that the blade goes through all of them. And on the third time let him leave the blade fixed in the bedspread and the clothes. 7. Afterwards, let him have intercourse with his bride.

Part 5

1. If magic has been done against a virgin bride and groom, so that the groom cannot have sexual intercourse with the bride, take a dish or a cup. 2. In the middle of it write a cross and these four names on the four sides of the cross: 3. *avis, gravis, seps, sipa*, and on the inside rim of the cup write the entire gospel of St John. 4. Afterwards take holy water, if you can, or wine or other water if you cannot get holy water, 5. and put it in the cup. With your finger wash all the letters in it, and both [the bride

and groom] should drink it devotedly, and in God's name they should have intercourse. It has been proved.

6. Write in the four sides of the cross this name, the tetragrammaton, following the abovementioned shape, if you know how to write it. 7. Say what is meant by that name, the tetragrammaton, which is written. 8. If it is in Hebrew letters, it is most effective. Afterwards do the above, with the gospel, and also let a garlanded virgin child write all the abovementioned things.

9. Take a virgin child, and on a Friday or Saturday or Sunday, in the hour before sunrise, have him stand in front of a bramble bush and hail the Virgin Mary, who is symbolised by the bramble. 10. Afterwards, let him say three Paternosters, and sign the bramble three times in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen. 11. And then have him collect three handfuls of its leaves and flowers, if it has them, and the fruits; or just the leaves, if the others are not there, and leave, 12. and when you are at home, the bride and groom should shut themselves in their chamber, in which is placed a brazier full of burning coals and each of them for their part should pray to God, that God should provide the fruit of marriage so that it [children] can serve him. 13. Having done that, take the leaves of the bramble and the flowers, if you have them, and put them on the burning coals and perfume the whole chamber and the serpent will flee and, having signed themselves with the sign of the cross, let them have intercourse in God's name.

14. Another recipe for the same: to break all magic, each should confess their sins faithfully, and both should hear mass and take communion, dividing the body of Christ in the middle, having been warned not to have intercourse because of lust, but because of the fruits of marriage.

15. I also believe that if the spell is only on one person, and he/she confesses faithfully and takes communion, all the spells will be dissolved.

16. If there is a spell on the fields or vines, do what I have said above about the gospel of St John written by the hand of a virgin child, and let that water be sprinkled in the four corners of the field, and in the middle make a cross, saying: 17. 'I exorcise you, unclean spirit, so that you leave this place that is dedicated to God, and proceed

to the place of your eternal damnation.’ **18.** Having said this, sprinkle the water in the shape of the cross in the four corners of the field, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen. **19.** Here end the remedies against magic

Appendix 2

Empirical Remedies from Gilbertus Anglicus, *Compendium Medicine*, Book 7, Ch. 1 'De Approximeron': Text and Translation

Base Manuscript:

Lr: London, British Library MS Royal 12.G.IV (c. 1300), f. 102v

Other Manuscripts Consulted:

Ls: London, British Library MS Sloane 272, 14th century, f. 229r

Ob: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 720, early 14th century, f. 127r

On: Oxford, New College MS 165, 14th century, f. 191v

Pr: printed edition of *Compendium Medicine* (Lyon, 1510), f. 287r

1. Si autem sit ex maleficio, detur tyriaca cum succo ypericon. Et ypericon emplastretur renibus. 2. Maleficia enim solvit. Quod si medicine non conferant, fiant emperica.

3. Emperica. Empericum quod numquam fallit et hoc quando dubitatio fit, cuius culpa an viri an uxoris proveniat impedimentum. 4. Per hoc enim in manu nostra multe que steriles putabantur, conceperunt. 5. Masculus XX annorum et supra in vigilia beati Johannis baptiste consolidam maiorem primo, postea consolidam minorem 6. cum radice extrahat de terra ante horam tertiam dicendo ter orationem domenicam. 7. Nec eundo nec redeundo nemini respondeat, nec aliquid dicat. Et sic tacendo, succum extrahat de predictis herbis. 8. Et cum illo succo scribat in tot cartis, quot indiguerit, ista verba: 9. 'Dixit Dominus crescite. +. Uthihoth. +. et multiplicamini. +. thabechay. +. et replete terram. +. amath. +.' 10. Si mas cartam tali succo et ipsismet verbis scriptam circa collum habeat dum feminam cognoscit, marem femina concipiet, 11. et e converso si femina feminam.

12. Aliud empericum: suffumigetur cum dente hominis mortui vel soleis castrati, vel bibat herbam crescentem per medium lapidis perforati. 13. Fiant cetera quae noveris experta ad hoc.

1. sit] fit *On*. 2. enim] autem *Ob* || conferant] conferunt *On* 3. Emperica] *Ls+*: *om. Lr* || an viri an uxoris] aut viri aut uxoris *On, Pr*: an viri aut uxoris: *Ob*. 4. in] *om. On* || putabantur] utebantur *On*. 6. ter] *om. Ob*. 7. Nec'] Non *On* || herbis] *om.*: *Pr*. 8. Et cum illo succo] *om.*: *On* || quot] quod *Ob*. 9. Uthihoth] Uthiboth *Pr* || thabechay] thabechahy *Ls* || Cross after 'thabechay' omitted *On* || Cross after 'amath' omitted *On* 10. femina] feminam *Pr*. 11. e converso] econtrario *On*. 12. cum dente] de dente *On*

Translation

But if it is because of magic, theriac should be given with the sap of St John's wort, and St John's wort should be put on the kidneys as a plaster, for it dissolves magic. If medicines do not work for this, use empirical remedies.

Empirical Remedies. An empirical remedy which never fails, and when there is doubt as to whether the impediment comes from the man or the woman; for through this many women in our care who were thought to be sterile, have conceived. On the eve of St John the Baptist [23rd June], let a man aged 20 years or more take from the ground with their roots first comfrey, then daisy, before the third hour, saying the Lord's Prayer three times. Let him not speak to anyone or say anything on the way there or on the way back. And thus silent, let him extract the sap from the abovementioned herbs. And with that sap let him write on as many slips of parchment as he needs, these words: 'The Lord said increase. + Uthihoth. + and multiply. + thabechay. + and fill the earth. + amath. +.' [Genesis 9,1] If the man has the slip written with the sap and those same words round his neck when he knows the woman, the woman will conceive a male, and conversely if the woman [wears the slip she will conceive] a female.'

Another empirical remedy: let him [or: her] be fumigated with the tooth of a dead man, or the shoes of a eunuch; or let him [or her] drink an herb which grows through the middle of a perforated stone. Do the other things which you know have been tested for this.

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