



THE DEVIL'S CLERGY

Demonology and Sorcery in Medieval Iberia

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Magic in the Medieval World

Literacy

New culture of literacy inadvertently created perfect conditions for new anxieties about reading

1. Spread of literacy
 - a. Wider reading public
 - b. Both clerical and lay
2. Availability of paper
 - a. Books more readily accessible
 - b. Larger supply of reading material
3. Silent reading
 - a. Replaces reading aloud
 - b. Creates privacy but also suspicion

Circa 14th c. : possession & use of magical writings becomes recurring theme in records of prosecution across Europe

- 1318: Pope John XXII commissions Bishop of Fréjus to investigate group of clerics and laymen accused of using books of necromancy, geomancy, and other magical arts (Kieckhefer 1)
- 1319: Bernard Délicieux accused of using necromancy against the Pope

Types and Areas of Magic

Artes magicae:

1. Aeromancy
2. Chiromancy
3. Geomancy
4. Hydromancy
5. Nigromancy/necromancy
6. Pyromancy
7. Scapulomancy

Scholastic Demonology

Scholasticism:

- a. Medieval school of philosophy - critical method of philosophical analysis predicated on Latin Catholic curriculum predominant in university system (1100-1700)
- b. Method of learning - emphasizes dialectical reasoning to expand knowledge by inference
- c. Attempt to reconcile various Christian theological authorities, as well as reconciling classical thinkers with Christian theology

Existence of demons = basic assumption of medieval Christianity

- Considered preternatural rather than supernatural - operate within the bounds of nature
 - Only God is supernatural, thus only God could work miracles
- Act only with permission from God
 - Allows demons to work in the world to test the faithful and punish the wicked
- Demons = fallen angels
 - All the same powers as angels, but power used to hinder rather than help
- Live not in Hell, but in the lower atmosphere
 - Easier to carry out business of tempting and deceiving humans
- Can appear in physical form
 - Augustine: demons have bodies of air, but also might be incorporeal
 - Aquinas: demons are incorporeal, but assume bodies of air

Demons & nigromancy considered dangerous because they could deceive the faithful into believing false miracles

- Divination: while demons appear to predict the future, they actually don't
 - Aquinas: demons only predict the future through revelations from God, knowledge of external causes, or "when they predict the things they themselves are about to do."
- Transmutation: demons cannot change something or cause something to appear out of thin air

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- Can only change objects through natural processes like putrefaction
 - Control: demons can only control certain processes or functions
 - Deceptive illusions
 - Sense deception
 - Motion control
 - Possession
 - Temptation

Necromancers and Necromancy

Necromancy became widespread & fully developed in 11th-13th centuries alongside expansion of education

- Majority of practitioners were clerics
 - Necromancy required literacy & knowledge of Latin
 - Had confidence, piety, and enough knowledge of Christian ritual to contend with demons
- Most Christian doctrine teaches that pious humans can compel demons using divine power through Christian ritual - mostly for exorcism
 - Necromancers considered necromancy a broad extension of orthodox Christian exorcism (along with a generous amount of Islamic astral magic)

However, most necromancers **summoned** demons instead of **exorcising** them - still considered their activities within the scope of pious Christianity

The Foundations of Spanish Necromancy

According to Benno, after entering into a pact with a demon that was to become his familiar [*suo daemone*], Gerbert was tricked into believing that the time of his death would not come before his celebration of mass in Jerusalem. Thinking the demon meant Jerusalem in Palestine, Gerbert did not object to celebrating mass in the church of Jerusalem in Rome, but not long afterwards he was assailed by disease.

Gerbert d'Aurillac (c. 946-1003) AKA Pope Sylvester II

- Endorsed & promoted study of Arabic & Greco-Roman mathematics, arithmetic & astronomy, reintroduced the abacus & the armillary sphere to Europe, and introduced the Hindu-Arabic numeral and decimal system to Europe, and invented the first mechanical clock in 996
- Born c. 946 in modern-day France
- 963 - entered the Monastery of St. Gerald of Aurillac
- 967 - fostered to Count Borrell II of Barcelona; taken to Catalonia to study mathematics and Arabic
- 969 - accompanied Borrell on pilgrimage to Rome; met Pope John XIII and Emperor Otto I - employed as tutor to Otto II
- 973 - Otto II appointed him abbot of monastery of Bobbio
- 983-989 - returned to France; became involved with politics as supporter of Hugh Capet
- 991 - elected Archbishop of Rheims - removed in 995, became tutor to Otto III
- 998- Archbishop of Ravenna
- 999 - elected Pope Sylvester II

The Black Legend of Gerbert d'Aurillac

967-970 - Gerbert studied the *quadrivium* in Catalonia - exposed to Arabic math and astrology

- Maintained correspondence with Spanish and Catalonian intellectuals for the rest of his life - kept up with developments in translation, mathematics, etc.

Black Legend evolved after Gerbert's death in several stages from the 11th to the 16th centuries. In short, the Black Legend claims that Gerbert traveled to Spain to study magic with a Saracen sorcerer, stole a magic book from his teacher, escaped with the assistance of demons, made a pact with the Devil for the knowledge of the future, and owned a talking head that could tell the future.

1. 1065: Hugh de Flavigny (*Chronicum Viridunense siue Flaviniacense*) - alleged that Gerbert became Pope due to *praestigia* (trickery & magic)

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- a. Hugh of Saint Victor's *Didascalicon de studio legendi* (Didascalicon, or, on the Study of Reading) defines *praestigia*: "prestigia occurs when, through their art, demons mock the senses of human beings by appearing to transmute into something else"
 2. 1098: Benno of Osnabrück (*Vita et Gesta Hildebrandi*) - foundation of the Black Legend
 - a. Accuses Gerbert of necromancy due to
 - i. Success of career in church
 - ii. Timeliness of his death
 - iii. Rumor that Gerbert requested his hands and tongue be "severed from his body" after death due to their use in consorting with demons (disrespect to God)
 - b. The *Vita* was a screed against reforms proposed by Gergory VII and attacking the papacy by demonstrating how Gerbert corrupted the papacy by use of necromancy
 - c. Story references popular stories of Pharoah's magicians and of Simon Magus
 - d. Primary messages:
 - i. Illusory nature of magical acts
 - ii. Concern for the salvation of the soul
 - iii. Treacherous nature of demons
 3. 1112: Sigbert of Gembloux (*Chronicon siue Chronographia*) - first explicit link between figure of Gerbert and necromancy
 - a. First evidence of total erasure of Gerbert's intellectual pursuits from the story
 - b. Primarily concerned with demonic practices and necromancy
 4. 1125: William of Malmesbury (*Gesta regum anglorum*) - first author to connect Gerbert's astrological expertise to necromancy
 - a. Link established between G's time in Catalonia with knowledge of magic
 - b. Basic skills of magic acquired in Spain:
 - i. Augury
 - ii. Astrology
 - iii. Necromancy
 - c. Claimed that G was able to summons spirits from hell (reference to Witch of Endor [I Samuel 28:3-25])
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- d. Claimed that G fled his monastery to learn “astrology and other such arts from the Saracens”

HOWEVER - W of M also admits that envious or ignorant people can mistake the knowledge of learned men and thus accuse them of using the dark arts - “what certain people may perceive as magic is to others no more than applied knowledge and expertise”

The Toledo School of Translators

Toledo under Moorish rule until May 25, 1085

- Traditional center of multilingual culture
- Ancient works of philosophy & science accessible that were not in Western Europe
 - Neoplatonism, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen, Ptolemy
 - Works from India, China, Persia
 - Arabic works from Ibn Sina, al-Kindi, al-Razi
- Some works also translated into Latin, Hebrew, Ladino
 - Maimonides, Ibn Khaldun, Constantine the African

Toledo School of Translation established at Cathedral of Toledo in 12th century - Primary purpose: translate Classical works of philosophy and science

1. First phase: 12th century under Archbishop Raymond of Toledo
 - a. Primarily philosophy/religion
 - b. Classical Arabic, Hebrew/Aramaic, Greek > Latin
 - c. Translation team included Mozarabic Toledans, Jewish scholars, madrassah teachers, monks from Order of Cluny
2. Second phase: 13th century under Alfonso X el Sabio
 - a. Classical Arabic, Hebrew/Aramaic/Greek > Castilian
 - b. Sephardic Jewish translators and scientists gained prominence - highly valued for skills in Arabic and Castilian
 - c. Translated works were disseminated throughout Europe by visiting scholars from Italy, Germany, England, Netherlands
 - d. Among works translated were books of Moorish and Arabic astrology, Jewish theology and Kabbalah, and magic

The Iberian Grimoire Tradition

The *Picatrix*

c. 10th-11th century

- Originally written in Arabic - Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm (غاية الحكيم)
- Attributed to Abu 'l-Qāsim Maslama ibn Aḥmad al-Faraḍī al-Ḥāsib al-Majrīṭī al-Qurṭubī al-Andalusī
- 1256-1258 Translated into Spanish - Spanish edition requisitioned by Afonso X (El Sabio)

Contents:

1. Book I: "Of the heavens and the effects they cause through images made under them"
2. Book II: "Of the figures of the heavens in general, and of the general motion of the sphere, and of their effects in this world"
3. Book III: "Of the properties of the planets and signs, and of their figures and forms made in their colors, and how one may speak with the spirits of the planets, and of many other magical workings"
4. Book IV: "Of the properties of spirits, and of those things that are necessary to observe in this most excellent art, and how they may be summoned with images, suffumigations and other things"

Liber Razielis Archangeli

c. 13th century

- Originally written in Hebrew & Aramaic - Sefer Raziel HaMalakh
- Probably originated with Ashkenazi Hasidim
- Grimoire of Practical Kabbalah
- 13th century Translated into Latin - Latin edition requisitioned by Afonso X (El Sabio)
- Printed version = five books

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- Topics: angelology, magical uses of the zodiac, gematria, names of God, protective spells, and method for writing magical healing amulets

Johannes Hartlieb - *Das Puch aller verboten Kunst, Nngelaubens, und der Zaubrey* 1456 (Book of all forbidden arts, superstition, and sorcery) - *The Picatrix* and *Liber Razielis* were among most abominable works of necromancy

Libro infernal: The Grimoire of St. Cyprian

The Spanish *Clavis inferni* AKA The Book of St. Cyprian

- attributed to "Jonas Sulphurino" (Sulphury Jones)
- Attested to 14th century, but first solid evidence is printed version from 19th century
- Combines elements of the *Key of Solomon*, the *Grand Grimoire*, *Grand et Petit Albert*, and a book on the Gallician Inquisition

Libro de San Cypriano

The Portuguese Cyprian grimoire AKA The Sorcerer's Treasure

- The Book of St. Cyprian is less of a book and more of a tradition of Portuguese Cyprianic literature - no printed version exists prior to the 18th century, although there is a long lineage of folk magic and lore attributed to or connected with St. Cyprian
- Now largely consists of folk Catholicism augmented with oral traditions and legends of St. Cyprian, and African traditional religion acquired via colonialism and conquest

Glossary

Augures: in Antiquity, *augures* were high-status authorities who interpreted the calls and flights of birds

Diuinationes: the illicit practice of divination and prognostication. From *Gesta regum anglorum* by William of Malmesbury

Heresy: learning or teaching against Church doctrine

Heretic: a person who acts against Church doctrine, is taught how to behave correctly, and continues to behave against doctrine - heresy involves a *choice* made after correction/guidance

Incantationes: the use of enchantments, spells, and incantations. From *Gesta regum anglorum* by William of Malmesbury

Maleficium: an act of witchcraft performed with the intention of causing harm; sorcery or baneful magic

Necromancy (*necromantia*): elite - but also dangerous and sinister - form of magic practiced by learned men involving the use of magic to talk to spirits and the dead

Nigromancy (*nigromantia*): black magic or black divination - term eventually replaced by necromancy

Praestigia: trickery and magic - negative connotations connected to ideas of forbidden magical practices. Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* uses *praestigia* to describe the tricks performed by Pharaoh's magicians and the Roman god Mercury.

Quadrivium

Sorcery: suspicious, harmful, possible criminal use of magic

Sorcerer: magic user who has been tempted/lied to by Satan rather than a practitioner of evil

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