

# Magic and Impotence in the Middle Ages

CATHERINE RIDER

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## Preface

I first began to wonder about the relationship between sex and magic in the Middle Ages while reading Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan* as an undergraduate. However, it was only when I began to examine the canon law relating to magic as a cause of impotence (at the suggestion of David d'Avray), that I thought of turning my initial curiosity into a serious research project. This eventually became a Ph.D. thesis (*Magic and Impotence in the Middle Ages*, University of London, 2004). As I worked through this material, and later through the theological and medical texts and confession manuals that discussed the subject, I noticed that they contained a surprising amount of information about what looked like popular magical practices. Moreover, most of this information had not previously been noticed by historians of medieval magic, and could only be found in manuscripts or in early modern printed books.

Much work on medieval magic has tended to focus either on the origins of the early modern witch-hunts or, more recently, on the transmission and impact of the Arabic magical texts that were being translated into Latin in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Popular magic, by contrast, has been relatively neglected, and the sources for it are scanty and often difficult to interpret. In this book, I have tried to add to this body of sources by publishing the information about popular magic that can be found in legal, theological, and medical discussions of magically-caused impotence. I have also examined how much the academically-trained authors who wrote about impotence magic can really tell us about popular magical practices, and I argue that they can tell us a great deal. Although they also had other concerns, for example about Arabic magical texts and about the powers of demons, many writers recorded popular magical practices relatively accurately. This was especially true in the thirteenth century, when a wider interest in the pastoral care of the laity brought many churchmen into contact with popular beliefs to a greater extent than in earlier periods.

C.R.

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I have accumulated many debts of gratitude both while writing the original thesis and while rewriting it as a book. David d'Avray supervised my thesis, and also provided numerous helpful suggestions during the rewriting process. The task of writing it would not have been nearly so enjoyable without his many stimulating thoughts and continuous enthusiasm. Peter Biller and Charles Burnett examined the thesis and made many valuable comments both about points of detail and about overall presentation. Two anonymous readers for OUP made further perceptive comments. I am also grateful to Peter Heather, Lea Olsan, Sophie Page, Miri Rubin, and Sam Worby for commenting on various chapters of the thesis or book. Janet Nelson and Caroline Oates gave advice on specific points, and audiences at the Institute of Historical Research in London provided helpful feedback. My fellow Ph.D. students at UCL and elsewhere, in particular Emma Beddoe, Sally Dixon-Smith, Marigold Norbye, and Theo Riches listened and offered much advice. Chris Jones offered hospitality in Paris.

Librarians at several institutions have been invaluable to my research, in particular at the British Library, UCL Library, and the Warburg Institute.

The Arts and Humanities Research Board funded my Ph.D. research at University College London and provided extra resources for a research trip to Paris. The Graduate School and the History Department at UCL provided funds to attend the International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds in July 2003. The charity Grain d'Espoir provided accommodation in Paris at short notice. I am also grateful to the Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte, the Mission Historique Française en Allemagne, and the British Centre for Historical Research in Germany, who jointly organized a British-French-German summer school on 'The Construction of Identities in Medieval Society', held in Göttingen in September 2000; and to the Volkswagen Foundation who financed it. Most recently, much of the rewriting of the thesis was done during a Research Fellowship at Christ's College, Cambridge, and I am grateful to my colleagues there for providing a stimulating and supportive environment.

Some of the legal history material in Chapters 4 and 7 appears in a different form in 'Between Theology and Popular Practice: Medieval Canonists on Magic and Impotence', in *Boundaries of the Law: Gender, Geography and Jurisdiction in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Musson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

Finally, I am also very grateful to several non-historians for their continued interest and support: Laurence Bassett (who always managed a good-humoured answer to the question, 'Your girlfriend's studying *what?*'); Emma Crowhurst and Louise Ellis; and my family, especially my parents.

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## *Abbreviations and Citations*

AHDLMA	<i>Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age</i>
BL	London, British Library
BMCL	<i>Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law</i>
BN	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale
Boyle, <i>Pastoral Care</i>	Leonard E. Boyle, <i>Pastoral Care, Clerical Education and Canon Law, 1200–1400</i> (London: Variorum, 1981)
Brundage, <i>Law</i>	James Brundage, <i>Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe</i> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987)
Burnett, <i>Magic</i>	Charles Burnett, <i>Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages: Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds</i> (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996)
CCCM	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, Continuatio Mediaevalis</i> (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953– )
Cohn, <i>Demons</i>	Norman Cohn, <i>Europe's Inner Demons: the Demonization of Christians in Medieval Christendom</i> , 3rd edn. (London: Pimlico, 1993)
DDC	<i>Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique</i> , ed. R. Naz, 7 vols. (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1935–65)
Fanger, <i>Conjuring Spirits</i>	Claire Fanger (ed.), <i>Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic</i> (Stroud: Sutton, 1998)
Green, 'Re-creation'	Monica Green, 'The Re-creation of <i>Pantegni</i> , Practica, Book 8', in Charles Burnett and Danielle Jacquart (eds.), <i>Constantine the African and Alī ibn al-Abbās al-Mağūsī: the Pantegni and Related Texts</i> (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: Brill, 1994), 121–60

Hoffmann, 'Beiträge'	Gerda Hoffmann, 'Beiträge zur Lehre von der durch Zauber verursachten Krankheit und ihrer Behandlung in der Medizin des Mittelalters', <i>Janus</i> 37 (1933), 129–44, 179–92, 211–20
Kieckhefer, <i>Magic</i>	Richard Kieckhefer, <i>Magic in the Middle Ages</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
Murray, 'Origins'	Jacqueline Murray, 'On the Origins and Role of "Wise Women" in Causes for Annulment on the Grounds of Male Impotence', <i>Journal of Medieval History</i> 16 (1990), 235–49
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> , ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1878–90)
RTAM	<i>Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale</i>

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 (ed.), *Quinque Compilationes Antiquae* (Leipzig, 1882). I have followed the method of citing these texts outlined by James Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (London: Longman, 1995), 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: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 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. If there is a final number, after



a comma, this refers to the page or folio number of the edition that I have used. For example:

Albertus Magnus, *In 4 Sent.* 34.5, 773 for Commentary on the Fourth Book of the *Sentences*, Distinction 34, Article 5; p. 773 in the edition that I used.

Richard de Mediavilla, *In 4 Sent.* 34.3, 218r, for Commentary on the Fourth Book of the *Sentences*, Distinction 34, Article 3; f. 218r in the edition that I used.

I have followed a similar pattern for the sources in other genres that are subdivided several times. Again, numerical references refer to the subdivisions of a work (which may bear various names including 'book', 'tractatus', 'distinction', 'article', 'chapter', etc.). For example:

John of Freiburg, *Summa Confessorum*, 4.16.14, for *Summa Confessorum*, Book 4, Article 16, Chapter 14 (the edition that I used contains no page or folio numbers).

Giovanni Michele Savonarola, *Practica*, 6.20.32, 238v for *Practica*, Tractatus 6, Chapter 20, Rubric 32. f. 238v in the edition that I used.

# 1

## Introduction

### MAGIC AND IMPOTENCE

‘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.’<sup>1</sup>

This story, told in around 1216, illustrates the link between magic and impotence as it was most commonly presented in the Middle Ages. The belief that magic can make a man impotent in this way has existed in many societies and many periods of history. It appeared in ancient literature, was widely feared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in places as far apart as France and Russia, and in some areas has persisted into modern times.<sup>2</sup> Anthropologists have also found similar ideas in Sudan, Ethiopia and the Middle East.<sup>3</sup> It is not surprising that the belief is so widespread,

<sup>1</sup> See Ch. 6, n. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, ‘The Aiguillette: Castration by Magic’, in *The Mind and Method of the Historian*, trans. Siân and Ben Reynolds (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1981), 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), 61–83; W. F. Ryan, *The Bathhouse at Midnight: an Historical Survey of Magic and Divination in Russia* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), 79; Regina Dionisopoulos-Mass, ‘The Evil Eye and Bewitchment in a Peasant Village’, in Clarence Maloney (ed.), *The Evil Eye* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 58–60.

<sup>3</sup> Gwen J. Broude, *Marriage, Family and Relationships: a Cross-Cultural Encyclopaedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 1994), 147–8.

because impotence is a mysterious complaint which can come and go for no obvious reason. It also has a psychological component, so that 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 bewitched could well have been affected by his own anxiety.

Although the belief that magic can cause impotence is widespread, the sources are exceptionally rich for late medieval western Europe because in this period the subject found a place in three university disciplines: canon law, theology, and medicine. In the years around 1150, magically-caused impotence was mentioned in the *Decretum* of Gratian, a work that became a basic canon law textbook, and in the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, which became the set text for teaching theology in medieval universities. Canon lawyers and theologians wrote commentaries on these texts for the rest of the Middle Ages, and so were forced to discuss magically-caused impotence, alongside many other questions. In medicine, magically-caused impotence was first discussed in detail in the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African, a medical compendium of the late eleventh century that was mostly translated from Arabic. The *Pantegni* did not receive commentaries in the same way as the *Decretum* and the *Sentences* did, but it circulated widely and was imitated by later medical writers. The *Pantegni* was also the main source of a short text describing various ways of causing impotence by magic and curing it, sometimes entitled *Remedies Against Magic*. Both works were edited from four manuscripts and two sixteenth-century printed editions, and discussed in detail by Gerda Hoffmann in 1933,<sup>4</sup> but more manuscripts have been found since so I have produced a fuller edition and list of manuscripts in Appendix 1.

These works were produced in medieval universities or by authors who had been educated there, but magically-caused impotence also appears in other sources that reflect the concerns of a wider range of people. Narrative works such as histories and saints' lives occasionally contain information about what their authors claimed were real cases of impotence magic, and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries records survive of several court cases in which people were accused of causing impotence. These cases are listed in Appendix 2. Pastoral manuals summarize the canonists' and theologians' conclusions for priests and friars engaged in the pastoral

<sup>4</sup> Hoffmann, 'Beiträge'.

care of the laity, and so can tell us which information was deemed to be useful for this audience. Surviving magical texts contain a number of rituals that they claim will cause impotence. Finally, there are a few examples of impotence magic in fiction, such as in the late twelfth-century *chansons de geste*, *Raoul de Cambrai* and *Orson de Beauvais*, and the thirteenth-century Icelandic works *Njal's Saga* and *Kormak's Saga*.<sup>5</sup> All of these sources give a different perspective on impotence magic from that of the university sources. They often say more about the circumstances behind accusations of impotence magic, and about ways of causing or curing the problem.

Taken together, these sources contain a substantial body of information relating to magically-caused impotence. They tell us about magical practices and who might be thought to use them, and about learned attitudes to these practices. In each of the three academic disciplines, it is possible to trace in detail how ideas about magically-caused impotence developed over time, and to examine the reasons for these developments. However, the existence of the other sources that refer to cases and practices makes it possible to do more than simply write an intellectual history of the subject. By comparing the academic sources with the more practical ones, it is possible to analyse the relationship between academic writing on magically-caused impotence and the world outside the universities. Was impotence magic a rare occurrence that medieval academics discussed simply because it appeared in their set texts, or was it a widespread reality? Did magical practices affect academic discussions of magically-caused impotence and, if so, how?

Magically-caused impotence can thus be used as a case study to explore the relationship between 'popular' and 'learned' culture. The questions asked above fit into a wider debate among historians of the Middle Ages, especially historians of medieval religion, about how great the differences were between learned and popular culture, and how far sources which were produced by learned writers can tell us about popular culture.<sup>6</sup> On the

<sup>5</sup> *Raoul de Cambrai*, ed. and trans. Sarah Kay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 400–3; *Orson de Beauvais: Chanson de geste du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Jean-Pierre Martin (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002), 86–7; *Njal's Saga*, trans. Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson (London: Penguin, 1960), 49; *The Sagas of Kormák and the Sworn Brothers*, trans. Lee M. Hollander (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), 24.

<sup>6</sup> On this debate see Peter Biller, 'Popular Religion in the Central and Later Middle Ages', in Michael Bentley (ed.), *Companion to Historiography* (London: Routledge, 1997), 227–33.

one hand, Eamon Duffy and John Bossy focus on the beliefs and practices that were shared by medieval people of all social levels to argue that popular religion was not radically different from the elite variety.<sup>7</sup> For other historians, the relationship between the two is more complex. Peter Burke argues that until 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.<sup>8</sup> Alan Bernstein describes learned and popular culture as different ends of a spectrum, along which different sources can be situated in different places.<sup>9</sup> Aron Gurevich and Alexander Murray agree that some sources are more 'popular' than others, arguing that because works like sermons and pastoral manuals were designed to address popular concerns, they can tell us about those concerns.<sup>10</sup>

Questions about the relationship between learned and popular culture have also dominated much recent work on late medieval magic, because historians have looked at the Middle Ages in order to find the origins of the early modern witch trials. They have shown that the early modern image of the witch who flew on a broomstick, worshipped the devil at meetings called sabbaths, and inflicted all kinds of magical harm on her (or, less often, his) neighbours had deep roots in both learned and popular culture. Norman Cohn and Richard Kieckhefer argued persuasively in the 1970s that the image of the sabbath and the devil-worshipping witch was developed gradually by learned lawyers, inquisitors, and theologians during the later Middle Ages, as these writers responded to changing ideas about demonic power and to the existence of magical texts which really did call on demons. Once magic was seen as devil-worship, it became associated with heresy, and existing stereotypes of heretics were then

<sup>7</sup> Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 2; John Bossy, *Christianity in the West 1400–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. viii.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1978), 27–8.

<sup>9</sup> Alan 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: Brill, 1998), 111.

<sup>10</sup> Aron Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. János M. Bak and Paul A. Hollingsworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 3–6; Alexander Murray, 'Confession as a Historical Source in the Thirteenth Century', in R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (eds.), *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 286.

applied to magicians (such as the idea that they held secret meetings and orgies, and sacrificed children).<sup>11</sup>

Cohn and Kieckhefer were arguing against an earlier view popularized by the Egyptologist Margaret Murray, who argued that what judges interpreted as devil-worship was in fact a surviving pagan fertility cult, and they did so very successfully. However, historians remain interested in the relationship between witchcraft and popular beliefs, and have recently emphasized how the confessions of suspected witches resulted from a process of 'negotiation': 'The question indicated the kind of answers required, but the details were supplied by the accused, drawing on a common stock of stereotypes.'<sup>12</sup> Carlo Ginzburg has taken this idea furthest, arguing that the image of the witches' sabbath originated not only in learned fears of a secret sect, but also in a very widespread popular belief that certain people acted as shamans, and had ecstatic experiences during which they flew and talked to the dead.<sup>13</sup> Most historians do not go this far, however. Gabor Klaniczay, Gustav Henningsen and Wolfgang Behringer have explored the possible links between witchcraft and shamanism more cautiously, and their works suggest that the relationship between the two was both complex and geographically variable.<sup>14</sup> Recently, Hans Peter Broedel has approached the question of interaction between popular and learned ideas about magic in a different way, by focusing on the issue of magical harm. He argues that one of the best-known witchcraft texts, *Malleus Maleficarum*, was successful precisely because it drew heavily on popular beliefs about harmful magic.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Cohn, *Demons* (first published 1975); Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: their Foundations in Popular and Learned Culture* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976).

<sup>12</sup> Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: the Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), 17.

<sup>13</sup> *The Night Battles*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983); *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1991).

<sup>14</sup> Gustav Henningsen, 'The Ladies from Outside: an Archaic Pattern of the Witches' Sabbath', in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (eds.), *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 191–215; Gabor Klaniczay, 'Shamanistic Elements in Central European Witchcraft', in *The Uses of Supernatural Power*, trans. Susan Singerman (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 129–50; Wolfgang Behringer, *Shaman of Oberstdorf: Chonrad Stoeckhlin and the Phantoms of the Night*, trans. Erik Midelfort (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998).

<sup>15</sup> Hans Peter Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum and the Construction of Witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

The question of harmful magic points to another historiographical debate that is relevant to magically-caused impotence: the relationship between medicine, magic, and religion. In the early modern period, a wide range of healing techniques might be used to combat illnesses that were believed to have been caused by magic, and medieval medical discussions of magically-caused impotence offer a similar picture. Some of these techniques might look ‘religious’ or ‘magical’ by modern standards, but historians have recently begun to ask how medieval people viewed practices that to us seem irrational. For example, Lea Olsan and Michael McVaugh have recently examined the use of prayers and charms in medieval medical texts.<sup>16</sup>

The sources that discuss magically-caused impotence thus add a new dimension to the history of interactions between popular and learned culture in several fields. They present a body of sources that have for the most part not been studied in detail before. They also span a number of genres so that, for example, the way in which theologians interacted with popular beliefs can be compared with the way in which medical writers did. Taken together, these sources show us how interactions between popular and learned culture varied between disciplines, over time, and according to the interests of particular writers. In some cases concerns about magically-caused impotence arose from the intellectual climate of the time and the books that individual authors had been reading: for example, some theologians cited magical texts when they discussed metaphysical questions about demons. More often, however, writers were interested in how the belief in impotence magic functioned in the world around them. Many discussions were driven by the legal problems posed by cases of impotence magic and, above all, by the interest of certain churchmen in reforming popular beliefs and religious practices.

This link between reforming churchmen and learned discussions of impotence magic meant that many authors mentioned magical practices that they thought their readers might encounter in the world around them. As early as the ninth and eleventh centuries, many of the first

<sup>16</sup> Michael McVaugh, ‘*Incantationes* in Late Medieval Surgery’, in Giancarlo Marchetti, Orsola Rignani and Valeria Sorge (eds.), *Ratio et Superstitio: Essays in Honor of Graziella Federici Vescovini* (Louvain: Fédération internationale des instituts d’études médiévales, 2003), 319–45; Lea Olsan, ‘Charms and Prayers in Medieval Medical Theory and Practice’, *Social History of Medicine* 16 (2003), 343–66.

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. Real practices again became an important source of information in the thirteenth century, when the church began a drive to teach the laity more about the Christian faith and enforce orthodox practices. This pastoral movement led writers of confession manuals, canon lawyers and, to a lesser extent, theologians to record information about impotence magic that they or their colleagues had heard in confession or in the church courts. This flow of information from the pastoral movement tailed off in the fourteenth century, but in the fifteenth, a further drive towards pastoral reform, combined with new fears of devil-worshipping witches, brought a new wave of information about practice into learned discussions of magically-caused impotence. This is especially true in medical texts, which had not previously shared the other sources' interest in reforming lay magical practices.

## DEFINITIONS OF MAGIC

So far I have talked about 'magic' and 'magically-caused impotence' in general terms. However, the question of what these terms mean is central to many of the issues in this book. For a modern historian the question is doubly complicated because the term 'magic' can refer either to the various medieval concepts of magic, or to the modern analytical concepts which have been debated by anthropologists, historians, and sociologists of religion since the nineteenth century. At some points medieval and modern concepts overlap, but at others they do not. It is therefore necessary to disentangle some of these concepts, in order to establish which phenomena are covered by a history of 'magic and impotence'.

I will begin with the medieval concepts. Most medieval writers from the twelfth century onwards had a very clear concept of the phenomenon that I have termed 'magically-caused impotence'. This concept was originally formulated by canon lawyers, and was followed by the theologians and authors of confession manuals. The term that they used was usually *maleficium*, a Latin word that could refer to any kind of crime, but that often denoted the causing of harm by deliberate but mysterious means. The influential *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville (d. 636) spelled out that these mysterious means involved the invocation of demons. Thus Isidore's



*malefici*, so-called ‘because of the magnitude of their crimes’, ‘shake up even the elements, disturb human minds, and without any drink of poison kill merely by the violence of a spell . . . For, by summoning demons, they dare to set them in motion in order that each one might destroy his enemies by evil arts. They also use blood and sacrifices, and often touch the bodies of the dead.’<sup>17</sup>

When they discussed *maleficium* in the context of impotence, however, medieval canon lawyers were concerned with something more specific. They began with what they called ‘natural impotence’, *impotentia naturalis*. This kind of impotence had an inborn, physical cause such as a deformity of the genitals or an imbalance in the body’s constitution. Opposed to this was ‘accidental impotence’, *impotentia accidentalis*, which was inflicted on a person later in life. This category was subdivided into castration and *maleficium*. *Maleficium* was thus used to denote impotence that was caused not by an inborn defect, nor by a subsequent physical injury, but by a non-physical means such as locking a lock and throwing it down a well, as in the example quoted above. Consequently, non-physical methods might be required to solve the problem, and most canonists recommended prayer, almsgiving and other devotional exercises. The earliest medical discussion of the subject, in the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African, used the term *maleficium* in a similar way, to denote impotence that was inflicted by non-physical means like putting substances under the couple’s bed, in their house, or by a road where they would walk.

This concept was used very consistently by late medieval authors but, as will be seen in Chapters 2 to 4, it was not fully articulated before the twelfth century. The Church Fathers, whose views of both marriage and magic influenced medieval writers profoundly, do not seem to mention that *maleficium* can cause impotence. As will be seen in Chapter 2, St Augustine admitted that impotence might come and go mysteriously, but he saw this as a punishment for Adam and Eve’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden and did not mention any other cause. By contrast, some early medieval writers do mention that impotence could be caused by non-physical, mysterious means, but they do not clearly distinguish this

<sup>17</sup> Trans. in William E. Klingshirn, ‘Isidore of Seville’s Taxonomy of Magicians and Diviners’, *Traditio* 58 (2003), 85.

condition from related phenomena such as love- or hate-magic. Chapters 3 and 4 will discuss how a few writers between the ninth and the eleventh centuries began to make that distinction, and how their views became accepted in law, theology, and medicine.

Although the concept of 'impotence caused by *maleficium*' was very widely accepted from the twelfth century onwards, a number of writers did depart from it in one of two ways. Firstly, a few medical writers offered alternative, physical explanations for forms of impotence that most writers termed *maleficium*. Secondly, writers in all disciplines sometimes used alternative terms to describe what most canonists termed *maleficium*. Most common was *sortilegium*, which had originally referred to lot-casting but by the twelfth century included a much wider range of practices; the section on 'Sortilegium' in Gratian's *Decretum* included divination, amulets, incantations, and more.<sup>18</sup> Other terms were *factura*, which could refer to any man-made object, but could also refer particularly to magic, and *veneficium*, which had originally meant poisoning, but as early as Roman times had come to mean causing death by any clandestine means and from there was extended to any form of magic.<sup>19</sup> However, when medieval writers used these terms in relation to impotence, they referred to the same phenomenon as *maleficium*, that is, impotence caused by non-physical means. Some writers admitted that the terms were interchangeable: for example, the thirteenth-century canonist Hostiensis said when discussing impotence that 'this *maleficium* is called *sortilegium* or *factura*'.<sup>20</sup> Thus, despite these variations, medieval concepts of magically-caused impotence were remarkably consistent.

When it came to cures for magically-caused impotence, however, things were more complicated.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, from the late twelfth century onwards, writers in many academic disciplines were engaged in a lively debate about how certain kinds of cures worked and whether it was legitimate to use them. Unlike the concept of magically-caused impotence, which began with a specific phenomenon and then attributed this

<sup>18</sup> C. 26, q. 1–5.

<sup>19</sup> Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. Franklin Philip (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 47.

<sup>20</sup> 'Hoc maleficium vocatur sortilegium sive factura.' Hostiensis, *Summa Aurea* (Lyons, 1548), 4.15.8, 214r.

<sup>21</sup> What follows is based on Kieckhefer, *Magic*, 9–14, and Robert Markus, 'Augustine on Magic: a Neglected Semiotic Theory', *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 40 (1994), 375–88.

phenomenon to occult causes, definitions of magical cures were based on a general definition of magic that went back to St Augustine. This definition focused on the source of power that was believed to make a given practice work. A practice might rely on natural causes (however the writer defined these), or on the power of God (which would make it a miracle). If it did not rely on either of these causes, medieval theologians argued, then the power behind it must come from demons. In a section of his *De Doctrina Christiana* that was widely quoted in the Middle Ages, Augustine described these demonic practices using the terms *superstitio* and *magicae artes*.<sup>22</sup> However, from the thirteenth century onwards, some writers also recognized another kind of magic: natural magic. This worked by means of hidden or 'occult' forces, which could not be explained but were nonetheless believed to be natural; the classic example was the power of the magnet to attract iron.

The definitions of magic summarized above dominated medieval discussions of cures for magically-caused impotence, and of other subjects connected to magic. They had the advantage of being clear and comprehensive, but they also had weaknesses. In particular, they did little to help churchmen decide whether any particular practice relied on God, manifest natural causes, occult but still natural forces, or demons. Nonetheless, they provide a good starting point with which to approach the subject, because they focus attention on what medieval writers thought was important.

In addition to these medieval concepts, it can also be helpful to consider some of the definitions of magic used by modern writers. A wide variety of these have been put forward since the nineteenth century, often contrasting magic with religion. According to these definitions, magic is sometimes assumed to work automatically, in contrast to religion which supplicates a supernatural being; or it is thought to have individual rather than communal goals; or it can be seen simply as a pejorative term used to label certain religious beliefs and actions as deviant.<sup>23</sup> Other modern writers have attacked the whole concept of magic, either by denying that any universal definition of magic can be applied to all societies, or by arguing that magic

<sup>22</sup> Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* ii.20–3, ed. and trans. R. P. H. Green (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 90–100.

<sup>23</sup> Summarized in H. S. Versnel, 'Some Reflections on the Relationship Magic-Religion', *Numen* 38 (1991), 177–97 and David E. Aune, 'Magic in Early Christianity', in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II.23.2 (1980), 1510–16.

cannot be distinguished from religion at all.<sup>24</sup> These definitions are useful because they can offer new ways of thinking about historical sources, and suggest patterns that may not have been obvious to the authors of those sources, but seem to have existed nonetheless. For example David Gentilcore, in a study of religion in early modern southern Italy, has argued that despite the ecclesiastical authorities' conviction that there was a strong distinction between magic and religion, the evidence of popular practices can be better understood if both are seen as part of a single ritual system.<sup>25</sup>

In this study, I will use the term 'magically-caused impotence' to refer to the phenomenon described above that medieval canonists called 'impotence caused by *maleficium*'. When discussing medieval attitudes to cures, however, it is useful to bear in mind both medieval definitions of magic and the modern ones that draw attention to the characteristics that procedures on the borderline between magic, miracle, and nature might share. For example, the argument that 'magic' is a pejorative term that is used to criticize the rituals recommended by certain groups of people, can help us to understand why some canonists defined certain cures as 'magical'. Gentilcore's idea that both magic and religion can be seen as a single system can also shed light on some of the cures for impotence that draw on Christian rituals and scriptures, which can be found in medical texts. In addition to 'magic', I will use the term 'witchcraft' to describe the crime which became the focus of witch trials in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries. As outlined above, although many witch trials began with allegations of harmful magic, witchcraft in its full sense was more than this, involving devil-worship and flight to the sabbath.

## PLAN OF THE BOOK

The subject matter of this book falls into three parts. The first, dealing with the period up to the end of the twelfth century, is discussed in Chapters 2 to 4. This period saw the emergence of a concept of 'magically-caused

<sup>24</sup> e.g. Dorothy Hammond, 'Magic: A Problem in Semantics', *American Anthropologist* 72 (1970), 1349–56; Naomi Janowitz, *Icons of Power: Ritual Practices in Late Antiquity* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), xiii–xiv.

<sup>25</sup> David Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch: the System of the Sacred in Early Modern Terra d'Otranto* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 15–16.

impotence' that was distinct both from other forms of impotence and from other kinds of magic. In the ancient world, magic that caused impotence featured in literature but except in these literary works, it does not usually seem to have been clearly distinguished from other forms of magic that caused love or hate. During the early Middle Ages a handful of writers, prompted by their observation of magical practices and by the gradual development of marriage law and medicine, singled out impotence magic for special discussion. This concept of impotence magic was developed further in the twelfth century, when it was incorporated into academic works of canon law, theology, and medicine. These twelfth-century works were often driven more by the need to harmonize contradictory statements found in earlier texts than by concerns about magical practices, but they determined where and how impotence magic would be discussed for the rest of the Middle Ages.

Chapters 5 to 9 form the main focus of the book, covering the period from the late twelfth century to the end of the fourteenth. In this period academic discussions of impotence magic reached new levels of sophistication, thanks to two wider developments in the intellectual and religious history of the time. The first of these was the translation of magical texts from Arabic into Latin, and Chapter 5 will outline what these texts said about causing or curing impotence, and discuss their impact on learned attitudes to magically-caused impotence. The second development was the pastoral movement of the thirteenth century. This had an impact on confession manuals, canon law, and theology, and I will discuss this in Chapters 6 to 8. In Chapter 9 I will compare these sources with contemporary medical texts, which also discussed magically-caused impotence but were not affected by the other sources' pastoral concerns.

The third and final part of the book (Chapter 10) covers the first half of the fifteenth century, when new concerns about witchcraft affected writers in many genres, but especially in medicine. Although the belief in magically-caused impotence persisted after that date, I have decided to finish the study there because the history of magic in the late fifteenth to eighteenth centuries is very different from that of earlier periods. The records of witch trials and the inquisition, and learned writing about witchcraft and magic, provide a great deal of evidence and have attracted a correspondingly high number of historians. It would require a second book to do justice to what this material says about magically-caused impotence, but the articles by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie and

Kevin Robbins cited in note 2, above, and a recent book on witchcraft and sex by Walter Stephens<sup>26</sup> suggest some of the interesting ways in which it can be used. Other sixteenth-century sources might include the famous case of Martin Guerre, who remained impotent with his wife for about eight years before being cured by having four masses said and eating sacred hosts and special cakes, or the votive mass to cure victims of magically-caused impotence that seems to have appeared at this time.<sup>27</sup>

Other questions could also be asked about the medieval evidence for magically-caused impotence. For example, I have only touched on its implications for the history of gender and masculinity, and these could be discussed in more detail, as they have been for other periods by Christopher Faraone and Pierre Darmon.<sup>28</sup> Instead, the story told here is about the interaction between learned and popular views of magic, and about the various factors which determined that interaction. In focusing on the pastoral movement of the thirteenth century, my emphasis is different from that of the historians who look to the Middle Ages for the origins of witchcraft. Although the rise of witchcraft did affect discussions of magic and impotence in the fifteenth century, much of the information used by learned writers before that date came from popular magical practices. The sources thus reveal how academic authors learned about popular culture, and how they adapted what they learned to fit their own concerns, without necessarily interpreting it as demonic witchcraft.

<sup>26</sup> Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

<sup>27</sup> The only examples that I have found were printed in 1519 and 1558: Adolph Franz, *Die Kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter* (Freiburg: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1909), ii.184–5; Robert Lippe (ed.), *Missale Romanum Mediolani, 1474* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society 33, 1907), 326–7.

<sup>28</sup> Christopher A. Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Pierre Darmon, *Trial by Impotence: Virility and Marriage in pre-Revolutionary France*, trans. Paul Keegan (London: Hogarth Press, 1985).

## 2

# ‘My lady knows impious things’: Impotence Magic in the Ancient World

The idea that magic could make a man impotent is an old one. As early as the seventh century BC, Mesopotamian incantations give prescriptions for a man to regain his potency after being bewitched.<sup>1</sup> In the fifth century BC, the Greek historian Herodotus described how the Egyptian pharaoh Amasis suspected that his wife Ladice had bewitched him when he found that he could not have sex with her, and how he was cured when Ladice made a vow to Aphrodite.<sup>2</sup> Before discussing the medieval evidence relating to magically-caused impotence, it is useful to look at some of these ancient sources in more detail. This is partly because some ancient texts were read in the Middle Ages, and so directly influenced medieval ideas about impotence magic. But another reason is that, although some ideas about impotence magic remained constant, ancient writers discussed the subject very differently from their medieval counterparts. Comparing the two periods thus offers interesting insights into how impotence magic came to be discussed in the way that it was in the Middle Ages.

In the ancient world, impotence magic was often discussed in different kinds of sources from those that mentioned it in the medieval period. Although the subject appears occasionally in literary works in both periods, it also appears in ancient sources that have no medieval equivalent, and vice

<sup>1</sup> Robert D. Biggs, *Šà.Zi. Ga: Ancient Mesopotamian Potency Incantations* (Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustin, 1967), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* 2.181, trans. A. D. Godley, revised edn. (London: Heinemann, 1990), i.494–7.

versa. For example, a number of surviving ancient curse tablets mention impotence, and from Egypt, papyrus books survive which describe how to make these tablets. In the Middle Ages, by contrast, although magical texts survive from the thirteenth century onwards, there is no equivalent to the curse tablets which record actual spells that were cast. On the other hand, impotence magic is uncommon in ancient medical texts, and does not seem to appear in legal works—both places where it was discussed at length in the Middle Ages. The absence of legal writing about impotence magic can probably be explained by the fact that impotence was not specified as a ground for divorce before Justinian (though it would still have been possible for afflicted couples to divorce, because divorce by mutual consent was allowed),<sup>3</sup> so there was no need for lawyers to discuss it separately as they did in the Middle Ages.

As well as writing about impotence magic in different contexts, ancient writers also often conceptualized it in different ways from their medieval counterparts. In particular, ancient literature and curse tablets do not always clearly distinguish impotence magic from love magic. 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,<sup>4</sup> but 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 has recently argued on the basis of similar stories and curse tablets that the ancient Greeks distinguished not between 'love magic' and 'impotence magic', but between what he calls 'affection magic', which was usually used by someone in a relationship, in order to preserve that relationship, and 'seduction magic', which caused uncontrollable lust and was intended to seduce the victim away from their existing family ties.<sup>5</sup> Either kind of magic might render the victim unable or unwilling to have sex with other partners. As will be argued in Chapter 3, this view of erotic magic can help us to understand the views of some early medieval writers, who only distinguished impotence magic from affection magic in contexts where it was useful to do so. Comparing the ancient sources with the medieval ones

<sup>3</sup> Brundage, *Law*, 115.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: a Sourcebook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 102–5.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher A. Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 27.



thus suggests ways in which discussions of impotence magic might vary according to the intellectual contexts in which they occurred.

## LITERATURE AND CURSE TABLETS

Although literary texts did not always distinguish impotence magic clearly from love magic, three writers of the first centuries BC and AD did link magic to impotence in particular. These writers use a variety of words to describe the phenomenon, from general terms like *magicas artes*, *veneficium*, and *nefanda* (which refers more generally to impious deeds), to references to particular practices: a ‘Thessalian poison’, charms, herbs, and sticking a needle in a wax doll. As is also visible in the other sources discussed in this chapter, there seems to be no agreed term for the phenomenon that medieval writers consistently called ‘impotence caused by *maleficium*’. The first detailed description comes in Ovid, *Amores* 3.7, written between 25 and 15 BC. Here, Ovid tells of how he finds himself impotent when he tries to have sex with a beautiful girl. He cannot think of any explanation for this, so he wonders 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?<sup>6</sup>

Like the other poems in the *Amores*, this poem takes its theme from an earlier Latin work. 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 woman, but when I was approaching joy, Venus reminded me of my lady and abandoned me. Then as she left me, the woman said that I was cursed—for shame!—and reports that my lady knows impious

<sup>6</sup> ‘Num mea Thessalico languent devota veneno | corpora? num misero carmen et herba nocent, | sagave poenicea defixit nomina cera | et medium tenuis in iecur egit acus? | carmine laesa Ceres sterilem vanescit in herbam . . . quid vetat et nervos magicas torpere per artes?’ Ovid, *Amores*, 3.7, lines 27–31, 35, trans. Grant Showerman, 2nd edn. (London: Heinemann, 1977), 477.

things.<sup>7</sup> Both Tibullus and Ovid made it clear that magic was not the only possible explanation for this sudden impotence. In fact, Tibullus explicitly rejected the suggestion that Delia had bewitched him: ‘She has not done this with words; our girl curses me with her face and soft arms and golden hair.’<sup>8</sup> Ovid had the woman in his poem suggest that if he was not bewitched, then he must have exhausted himself with another woman.<sup>9</sup> However, both poets were aware that magic was one explanation for mysterious impotence, and mentioned some ways in which it might be done: by a potion, or powerful words, or sticking needles in a wax figure.

Petronius envisaged a similar situation in his *Satyricon*, written in AD 63–5. The *Satyricon* is a long story which describes, among other things, the 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 a beautiful lady called Circe (after the enchantress in the *Odyssey*). Encolpius’ explanation is that ‘I have been touched by *veneficium*.’<sup>10</sup> Petronius then goes on to describe Encolpius’ 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’ male lover Giton is meant] would impair my strength.’<sup>11</sup> These cures resemble the advice of ancient medical texts:<sup>12</sup> the foods Encolpius eats were believed to be aphrodisiacs and it was believed that too much sex could be exhausting, so his three-day abstinence would also have corresponded with medical advice.

<sup>7</sup> ‘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, ed. Guy Lee, 2nd edn. (Liverpool: Cairns Press, 1982), 46–7; my translation. See also I. M. le M. du Quesnay, ‘The Amores’, in J. W. Binns (ed.), *Ovid* (London: Routledge, 1973), 22.

<sup>8</sup> ‘non facit hoc uerbis; facie tenerisque lacertis deuouet et flauis nostra puella comis.’ Tibullus, *Elegies*, I.5, lines 43–4; my translation.

<sup>9</sup> *Amores* 3.7, lines 79–80, p. 481.

<sup>10</sup> ‘veneficio contactus sum.’ Petronius, *The Satyricon*, ed. and trans. Michael Heseltine, 2nd edn. (London: Heinemann, 1975), 284; my translation.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 290; *The Satyricon*, trans. P. G. Walsh (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 131.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Courtney, *A Companion to Petronius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 196.

However, Encolpius combines this regime with other kinds of cure. 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.<sup>13</sup> 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. This does not work either, and Encolpius is eventually cured by the god Mercury.

How realistic were these literary depictions of mysterious, possibly magical impotence and its cures? The relationship between fictional depictions of magic and ancient magical practices is complex. Some literary depictions of magic seem to have been entirely fictitious, such as the witch described by Horace in the first century BC, who kills a child as part of her spell.<sup>14</sup> However, other fictional works may include more realistic magical practices. For example, Armand Delatte has pointed out that when Ovid describes Medea in the *Metamorphoses*, he shows her gathering herbs with rituals which are similar to those found in ancient and medieval herbals.<sup>15</sup> The rituals for love magic described in literary texts also have parallels in magical papyri and curse tablets, but this time there is an 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.<sup>16</sup>

There seems to be a similar blending of fiction and reality in the works of Ovid, Tibullus, and Petronius. References to causing harm with words survive from the ancient world, as do figures with needles stuck in them.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Satyricon*, ed. and trans. Heseltine, 290; *Satyricon*, trans. Walsh, 131.

<sup>14</sup> Ogden, *Magic*, 117–18.

<sup>15</sup> A. Delatte, *Herbarius: Recherches sur le Cérémonial Usité chez les Anciens pour la Cueillette des Simples et des Plantes Magiques*, 3rd edn. (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1961), 6–7.

<sup>16</sup> John J. Winkler, 'The Constraints of Eros', in Christopher Faraone and Dirk Obbink (eds.), *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 227.

<sup>17</sup> John G. Gager (ed.), *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 15.

Surviving curse tablets also show that a real belief lay behind literary depictions of impotence magic. Causing impotence was not one of the main uses to which curse tablets were put—more often they were used to harm one’s enemies, influence chariot races or court cases, or win a person’s love—but several examples show that they could be used in this way. 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 . . .’<sup>18</sup> A Coptic spell 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.’<sup>19</sup>

The existence of these curses suggests that literature did have some connection with real practices. However, our writers did not reflect these practices uncritically. Both Ovid and Petronius also use their characters’ impotence to represent other concerns. It has been suggested that Ovid used his literary persona’s impotence, as well as the other difficulties described in Book Three of the *Amores*, to symbolize his declining interest in writing love elegies.<sup>20</sup> Petronius parodied epic poetry and its values in many places, and Encolpius’ lost potency is one aspect of this.<sup>21</sup> It has also been suggested that the impotence episode in the *Satyricon* was intended to satirize magical cures by showing how ridiculous they were, and how repulsive the old women who administered them.<sup>22</sup> But impotence caused by magic nonetheless featured in these works, suggesting that the phenomenon was known even if it was sometimes ridiculed or used as a metaphor.

Ovid, Tibullus, and Petronius also conceptualized magically-caused impotence in an interesting way. As in the Middle Ages, magic was the explanation brought in when other explanations failed, when there seemed

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>19</sup> Marvin W. Meyer and Richard Smith (eds.), *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 178–9.

<sup>20</sup> du Quesnay, ‘The Amores’, 6–8.

<sup>21</sup> Amy Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humour* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 162.

<sup>22</sup> J. Adamietz, ‘Circe in den Satyrica Petrons und das Wesen dieses Werkes’, *Hermes* 123 (1995), 321.

to be no reason for the impotence. All three works emphasize that there is nothing physically wrong with the men. Linked to this, magically-caused impotence does not apply to every partner. Just before Ovid mentions magic, he considers how potent he is with other girlfriends. Similarly, Encolpius is always impotent with Circe, but manages to get erections at other times. Magic is thus a way of explaining the fact that sexual desire can be unpredictable and irrational. Ovid and Petronius, in particular, play on this theme. 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.' Encolpius, too, explains to Circe that 'the fault lay not in my person, but in my equipment.'<sup>23</sup>

This way of viewing impotence was to have a long future. It recurs in a very different context, in the works of St Augustine, although without the suggestion of magic. Augustine argued that mankind had lost control of their sexual desires as a punishment for Adam and Eve's sin of disobedience in the Garden of Eden. For Augustine, as for Ovid and Petronius, 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.'<sup>24</sup> This view of sexual desire seems to be new in Christian writing on the subject, and Peter Brown argues that it arose out of the difficulties that Augustine himself experienced in giving up sex,<sup>25</sup> but centuries earlier, Ovid and Petronius had described the unpredictability of desire in similar terms. The difference between them and Augustine lies not in their view of impotence, but in Augustine's substitution of a divine punishment for the magical and other explanations offered by the two earlier writers. Augustine's view of desire also explains why he did not

<sup>23</sup> 'quae nunc, ecce, vident, intempestiva valentque, nunc opus exposcunt militiam suam.' *Amores* 3.7, lines 67–8, pp. 478–9; 'non me sed instrumenta peccasse.' *Satyricon*, ed. Heseltine, 288; *Satyricon*, trans. Walsh, 130.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Brown, *The Body and Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 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: Friedrich Pustet, 1954), 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), 541.

<sup>25</sup> Brown, *Body*, 406.

suggest that magic could cause impotence, even though he wrote in detail about both magic and marriage. If desire was by nature uncontrollable, then there was no need to seek any further explanation for mysterious cases of impotence.

## MEDICINE

While Ovid and Petronius wrote humorously about the unpredictability of sexual desire, and Augustine interpreted impotence as a symptom of mankind's fallen condition, ancient medical writers took a more pragmatic view. For them, it was an illness to be cured. Many medical texts did not mention that impotence could be caused by magic, probably because the influential medical treatises ascribed to Hippocrates (fifth-fourth centuries BC) made a point of not tracing illnesses to magic or demons.<sup>26</sup> However, ancient medicine was very diverse, and Latin medical writers were a little more willing than their Greek counterparts to ascribe illnesses to supernatural causes, though they still suggested natural causes most of the time. For example, Quintus Serenus, writing in the third or fourth century AD, referred to the *strix* of Latin literature, a supernatural being that was believed to attack young children, and suggested tying garlic round the child for protection.<sup>27</sup> This slightly greater openness to supernatural explanations may be a product of broader differences between Latin and Greek medical literature. Much Latin medical literature focused on practical medicine rather than theory. The authors of these medical texts were not necessarily practising physicians: some were, but others were simply recording the kind of medicine which any head of household was expected to know.<sup>28</sup> Their view of the causes of illness may thus have been closer to that of most people than was the view of most Greek medical writers. It was also closer to the attitude of most medieval medical writers, who similarly did not usually ascribe illnesses to magic or demons, but were willing to do so in the case of impotence.

<sup>26</sup> Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 65.

<sup>27</sup> Quintus Serenus, *Liber Medicinalis*, ed. and trans. R. Pépin (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1950), 53.

<sup>28</sup> Vivian Nutton, 'Roman Medicine 250 BC to AD 200', in Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter and Andrew Wear, *The Western Medical Tradition 800 BC to AD 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 40.

There is a similar diversity in attitudes to certain sorts of cures, especially amulets and incantations. Medieval theologians suspected that these might involve demons, and so often called them *maleficium*. Some ancient medical writers, most notably Galen, also objected to certain kinds of remedy (including amulets) on the grounds that they were ineffective, or disgusting, or both. However, many writers did not share Galen's concerns, and Galen himself sometimes recommended remedies similar to those that he had elsewhere denounced as magical.<sup>29</sup> It is also possible to detect a change in attitudes over time. By late antiquity, it seems to have become more acceptable than it was in the first century AD to include remedies such as amulets and charms in medical compendia.<sup>30</sup>

This diversity in ancient medicine means that although many medical texts do not mention magically-caused impotence, and although some writers expressed reservations about amulets, other ancient texts mention that keeping substances close by or wearing them as amulets will cause or cure impotence. Medieval writers who copied these recipes labelled them as *maleficium* or as cures for *maleficium*, but the ancient writers who originally mentioned these recipes do not label them in this way. Their attitude to them often seems ambivalent. For example, two writers who discussed the medical properties of natural substances in the first century AD, Pliny the Elder and Dioscorides, mentioned substances that could cause or cure impotence just by being close to a person. However, Dioscorides, who compiled an encyclopaedia of medicinal substances in the first century AD, often distanced himself from these recipes by introducing them with the words 'They say',<sup>31</sup> and Pliny attributed his recipes to the 'Magi', whom he criticized elsewhere in his work for offering disgusting and 'magical' cures.

Among Pliny's recipes were three prescriptions involving the testicles of a cock that were to have a long future in medieval medical texts. If a cock's right testicle was wrapped in a piece of ram's skin and worn as an amulet, it stimulated desire; but, rather confusingly, Pliny later listed almost the same recipe as a way of inhibiting desire: 'they say that... desire on

<sup>29</sup> Paul T. Keyser, 'Science and Magic in Galen's Recipes (Sympathy and Efficacy)', in Armelle Debru (ed.), *Galen on Pharmacology: Philosophy, History and Medicine* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: Brill, 1997), 188.

<sup>30</sup> Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, 293.

<sup>31</sup> John M. Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 84.

the contrary is inhibited if a fighting cock's testicles are rubbed with goose grease and worn as an amulet in a ram's skin, as it also is if with a cock's blood any cock's testicles are placed under the bed.<sup>32</sup>

Another work that discussed the use of natural substances to cause impotence was the *Kyranides*, a guide to making amulets which consists of several texts put together between the fourth and the eighth centuries AD. The first text describes how to make amulets from a plant, a fish, a stone, and a bird whose names begin with the same letter (representing earth, water, fire, and air),<sup>33</sup> but it also includes information on the properties of individual plants, stones, birds, and fish. For example, it states that a married couple will love each other for their whole lives if the man wears a male crow's heart as an amulet, and the woman a female crow's heart. This was probably linked to the text's assertion that crows mated for life. Likewise, if the plant vervain is put under the mattress, any man in the bed will be impotent until it is taken away.<sup>34</sup> The *Kyranides* does not describe these procedures as *maleficium*, but they are nonetheless significant for the later history of magically-caused impotence because when the *Kyranides* was translated into Latin in 1169, these recipes were incorporated into medieval medical texts as cures for impotence caused by *maleficium*.

At the very end of the ancient period, two Latin medical compendia took up some of these ways of causing or curing impotence and transmitted them into the Middle Ages. These are the *De Medicamentis* of Marcellus 'Empiricus' of Bordeaux and the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* of Sextus Placitus. Marcellus, who wrote between AD 395 and 410, intended his treatise to provide medical information for his own sons in the absence of trained physicians. He gave a list of written sources in his introduction, but he also claimed to have taken 'from rustics and the common people some simple remedies which happen to work, which

<sup>32</sup> 'venerem concitant...gallinacei dexter testis arietina pelle adalligatus...contra inhiberi venerem pugnatoris galli testiculis anserino adipe inlitis adalligatisque pelle arietina tradunt, item cuiuscumque galli, si cum sanguine gallinacei lecto subiciantur.' Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. W. H. S. Jones, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 368–9.

<sup>33</sup> A.-J. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, 2nd edn. (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1950), i.201–6; Maryse Waegeman, *Amulet and Alphabet: Magical Amulets in the First Book of the Kyranides* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1987), 8.

<sup>34</sup> Louis Delatte (ed.), *Textes Latins et Vieux français relatifs aux Cyranides* (Liège: Faculté de philosophie et lettres, 1942), 32, 57.



they have proved by experience.<sup>35</sup> Some of Marcellus' remedies also reflect these non-written origins, since he gives the Gaulish names of some plants and animals, and also records some Gaulish charms, written in Greek characters.<sup>36</sup>

Marcellus was willing to admit that some illnesses might be caused by *maleficium*: unexpected hair loss, for example.<sup>37</sup> He also recorded a number of ways of making someone impotent:

If you want someone to be unable to have intercourse, fix a board, that is, a barrier, wherever he has urinated, over his urine . . . If you do not want someone to have intercourse and want him to be rather slow in sex, 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 intercourse with a woman at night, put a garlanded pestle under his bed.<sup>38</sup>

Marcellus' sources for these recipes are unknown. Not all of his written sources have survived for comparison, so it is impossible to be certain, but it is possible that Marcellus took them from the 'rustics and common people' whom he refers to in his preface.

Sextus Placitus, on the other hand, drew on a surviving written source: Pliny's *Natural History*. His text probably dates from the fifth century, since he used Marcellus as a source, but little else is known about him.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> '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 V*, 2nd edn. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), 2. On Marcellus see Jerry Stannard, 'Marcellus of Bordeaux and the Beginnings of Medieval Materia Medica', *Pharmacy in History* 15 (1973), repr. in *Pristina Medicamenta* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 47–8.

<sup>36</sup> Aline Rousselle, 'Du Sanctuaire au Thaumaturge: la Guérison en Gaule au IV<sup>e</sup> Siècle', *Annales* 31 (1976), 1090.

<sup>37</sup> 'Si quis maleficiis capillos perdiderit . . .' Marcellus Empiricus, *De Medicamentis Liber*, 98.

<sup>38</sup> '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.' *Ibid.*, 570.

<sup>39</sup> Alain Touwaide, 'Placitus Papyriensis', in Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider (eds.), *Der Neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2000), 1060.

Sextus did not mention Marcellus' recipes for causing impotence, instead copying some of the statements from Pliny, quoted above: 'To stimulate intercourse: the testicle of a cock, with goose fat in a ram's skin, hung on the arm, stimulates intercourse. Put under a bed with its blood, they bring it about that those who lie in the bed will not have intercourse.'<sup>40</sup> Here, Sextus has conflated the two amulets involving a testicle wrapped in a ram's skin, to produce one aphrodisiac and one method of reducing desire.

Neither Marcellus nor Sextus defined these procedures as *maleficium*, even though Marcellus was willing to state elsewhere that *maleficia* could make a person's hair fall out. Sextus' 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. However, as with the recipes in the *Kyranides*, later medical writers did explicitly describe these techniques as magical. In the eleventh century, Constantine the African listed Sextus' recipes under the heading of *maleficium*.<sup>41</sup> Bartholomaeus Carrichter, a sixteenth-century physician, believed that impotence caused by tampering with the spot where a person had urinated, just as Marcellus had suggested, was a form of magic: 'There are also other spells [*zaubereyen*] by which, through sticking plants and wood under the influence of Saturn in a man's still-warm urine, they [witches] take away someone's manhood.'<sup>42</sup>

Pliny, the *Kyranides*, Marcellus, and Sextus thus represent a different view of impotence from that taken by learned Greek medicine. They were willing to suggest that impotence could be caused or cured with amulets or other means that the known Hippocratic medical texts did not mention. Galen criticized amulets, and Pliny and Dioscorides also seem to have had doubts about them, but by the time of Marcellus and Sextus, these doubts seem to have vanished. However, unlike in the Middle Ages, no known

<sup>40</sup> '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 and Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1927), 282.

<sup>41</sup> See Ch. 3 and Appendix 1.

<sup>42</sup> 'Es seind auch andere zaubereyen, welche durch Saturnische kreutter und holz einem in den warmen harnen besteckt warden, damit sie einem die Mannheit nemen.' Bartholomaeus Carrichter, *Practica* (Strasbourg, 1575), 2.13, p. 37.

writer defined these procedures as *maleficium*, probably because the word had negative connotations: for example, Marcellus Empiricus suggested cures for *maleficia*, but is unlikely to have thought of procedures that he recommended as the same thing. The final step towards linking impotence and *maleficium* was left to another, anonymous, writer who produced a treatise on the medical uses of the badger, *De Taxone*, which is found copied with Sextus Placitus' text by the seventh century. For the first time, this author offers a recipe explicitly designed to cure impotence caused by *maleficium*. 'If someone is bewitched and cannot have intercourse . . .', the text says, then 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 does this, he will be cured 'so that he cannot fail'.<sup>43</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The continuities and changes that can be seen in a comparison of ancient and medieval discussions of magically-caused impotence are revealing. Some continuities were the result of direct textual transmission: Pliny, Dioscorides, the *Kyranides*, Sextus Placitus, and Marcellus Empiricus were still being read (sometimes in abridged forms) many centuries later, and their recipes were copied by medieval writers. Other practices may have continued without being recorded: it is suggestive that Marcellus Empiricus' method of causing impotence by sticking wood into the place where a man has urinated reappears in the sixteenth century. However, the direct influence of ancient sources on medieval discussions of magic and impotence should not be exaggerated. Medieval medical writers recommended many remedies that have not been traced to surviving ancient texts, and the references to magically-caused impotence in ancient literature do not seem to have affected medieval writers. The *Satyricon* did not circulate much in the Middle Ages, and although Ovid's *Amores* were read from the twelfth century onwards,<sup>44</sup> I have

<sup>43</sup> 'Si cui malefactum fuerit et non potuerit rebus veneris uti . . . remediatur, sic ut deficere non possit.' *De taxone*, ed. Ernest Howald and Henry Sigerist, *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum IV* (Leipzig and Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1927), 231.

<sup>44</sup> *Satyricon*, trans. Walsh, p. xxxv; M. L. Stapleton, *Harmful Eloquence: Ovid's 'Amores' from Antiquity to Shakespeare* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 56.

found no references to Ovid in medieval discussions of magically-caused impotence.

More significant are the insights that this very different set of sources can offer into the way in which impotence magic was discussed in the Middle Ages. Firstly, they suggest that it was widely believed that certain practices could cause impotence, but that there was as yet no clearly articulated concept of 'impotence caused by *maleficium*'. Literature and curse tablets did not always distinguish impotence magic clearly from other forms of love- and hate-magic, while medical texts and texts like the *Kyranides* that dealt with the marvellous powers of natural objects did not use words such as *maleficium*, *veneficium*, or *ars magica* to define the methods of causing impotence that they described. As I will argue in Chapters 3 and 4, this situation persisted for much of the early Middle Ages, but gradually, from the ninth century onwards, writers on medicine and marriage law began to separate 'magically-caused impotence' from other forms of love- and hate-magic.

The ancient sources also suggest that although impotence magic was known about, it did not cause enough widespread anxiety to be worth singling out very often. Ovid and Petronius treat it humorously; other kinds of curse tablet are more common; medical texts do not say much about it; and laws against magic do not mention it. This reticence is interesting when compared with the pages that medieval writers devoted to the subject from the twelfth century onwards. Was impotence magic much more common in the Middle Ages? It seems unlikely, although it is possible that accusations were made more often because under medieval canon law a marriage could be annulled and both partners could remarry in some cases of bewitchment, but in few other circumstances. It is more likely that impotence magic was discussed more in the Middle Ages because its status as a ground for annulment 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 of these, it was likely to reappear in others. We should thus be wary of taking the explosion of sources in the later Middle Ages as a sign that impotence magic was happening on a larger scale than before.

However, the ancient sources also hint at a pattern that continued into the Middle Ages: that learned writers about magic and impotence took

some of their information from popular culture rather than from written sources. Marcellus Empiricus claimed to be recording cures recommended by 'rustics' as well as by medical texts, and although it is difficult to tell how far elite writers like Ovid and Petronius can tell us about non-elite culture, Petronius' scathing characterization of the impoverished old ladies who offered cures for impotence may have some truth in it. This suggestion is necessarily tenuous, but would correspond with what seems to be the situation in later periods. Thus the ancient sources suggest that while medieval discussions of impotence magic took place in a framework shaped by learned concerns, there also existed an ancient, real, and probably widespread belief that impotence could be induced in ways which later became defined as *maleficium*. The next two chapters will outline how a succession of medieval writers slowly drew the category of 'magically-caused impotence' out of these wider, vaguely defined ancient beliefs.

### 3

## ‘What adulterous women do’: The Early Middle Ages, c.800–c.1100

Although the belief that magic could cause impotence was known in the ancient world, the sources analysed in Chapter 2 did not dominate medieval writing about the subject. Instead, the medieval tradition of writing about impotence magic began with a handful of new texts written between the ninth and the eleventh centuries. These new texts were written in a society very different from the ancient world, one in which attitudes to magic had undergone profound changes as a result of the spread of Christianity. Christian writers associated magic very strongly with demons. For example, in a section of his *De Doctrina Christiana* that was widely quoted in the Middle Ages, St Augustine argued that divination, amulets, incantations, the belief in omens, and the use of astrology to predict the future were all forms of idolatry because they derived their efficacy not from natural causes but from demons. He concluded that ‘all the specialists in this kind of futile and harmful superstition, and the contracts, as it were, of an untrustworthy and treacherous partnership established by this disastrous alliance of men and devils, must be totally rejected and avoided by the Christian.’<sup>1</sup> This association of magic with demons and idolatry became ever stronger as Christianity spread and Christian missionaries denounced pagan beliefs as ‘magic’. This climate prompted several writers who discussed impotence magic between the ninth and the eleventh centuries to mention that demons were involved in causing impotence.

The spread of Christianity also gives us new sources that mention magic. Although ancient texts continued to be copied, among them the

<sup>1</sup> Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, II.20–3, ed. and trans. R. P. H. Green (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 99.

medical works of Sextus Placitus and Marcellus Empiricus, these are now supplemented by law-codes, the canons of church councils, saints' lives, and penitentials (lists of penances that priests should administer for given offences).<sup>2</sup> These sources list a wide variety of magical practices, but it is often difficult to tell how accurately these lists reflect what existed in the world around them, because information was copied from one text to another for centuries. Dieter Harmening has argued that most early medieval writing on superstition is derived from the sermons of Caesarius of Arles (d. 542) and does not reflect later realities, but other historians have suggested in relation to the penitentials that if old information continued to be copied, then it was probably still seen as relevant.<sup>3</sup> This second point of view seems to fit the evidence for magically-caused impotence better than the first. It seems that many early medieval writers who discussed the subject were aware of magical practices in the world around them, although so much has been lost from this period that it is possible that instead they drew on written sources that have not survived.

Although they seem to have been aware of magical practices, the early medieval writers who discussed magically-caused impotence also conceptualized the subject in a new way. Except for the examples discussed below, many early medieval sources which discuss magic do not mention magic that causes impotence in particular. The closest that many come is to denounce magic 'for love',<sup>4</sup> although the works of Hincmar of Rheims discussed below suggest that this may have included magic that caused impotence. As in the ancient Greek material discussed by Christopher Faraone,<sup>5</sup> it seems that magic that caused impotence was not normally clearly distinguished from other forms of love- or hate-magic. From the ninth century onwards, however, a few writers began to single out impotence magic and discuss it separately. This happened especially in two contexts which were not particularly concerned with magic, but in which

<sup>2</sup> Valerie Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 36–51.

<sup>3</sup> Dieter Harmening, *Superstitio: Überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters* (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1979), 318–19. Debate summarized in Sarah Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance 900–1050* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), 44–6.

<sup>4</sup> e.g. 'Si quis pro amore ueneficus sit . . .' Raymund Kottje (ed.), *Paenitentia Minora Franciae et Italiae Saeculi VIII–IX*, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 156 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1994), 63.

<sup>5</sup> See Ch. 2, n. 5.

sexual impotence and its implications were important: the canon law of marriage in the ninth century, and medicine in the eleventh. By adapting information about popular magic so that it would fit these two learned frameworks, a handful of early medieval writers established most of the basic assumptions and facts used by later writers on magic and impotence.

The first surviving medieval discussions of impotence magic occur in the works of Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims from 845 to 882. Hincmar was very interested in marriage law and advised bishops and rulers in several high-profile cases, including two in 860 that led him to say that magic could cause impotence. When writing about both of these cases, Hincmar seems to have taken his information from the world around him, and mentioned impotence magic because he was genuinely concerned about it. The way in which Hincmar discussed these cases can also tell us about how impotence magic came to be singled out separately from other forms of love- and hate-magic. In his first discussion of the subject, which revolved around allegations made in a particular case, Hincmar did not single it out in this way because it did not matter in that context whether the magic had caused impotence, or hatred more generally. In his second discussion, however, Hincmar considered the subject from the point of view of marriage law, and here for the first time it became necessary to discuss impotence magic in particular. This second discussion, of impotence magic alone, became the basis of much later medieval writing on the subject.

## HINCMAR OF RHEIMS (1): MAGIC AND A ROYAL DIVORCE

Hincmar first mentioned impotence magic in relation to the ongoing attempts of King Lothar II of Lotharingia to divorce his wife Theutberga and marry his concubine Waldrada. The case had begun in 857 but because Theutberga strongly resisted the divorce, with the support of Pope Nicholas I, the matter was still unresolved when Lothar died in 869.<sup>6</sup> Georges Duby has argued that this case represents an important transition point in the history of marriage, since it is one of the first times that the church attempted

<sup>6</sup> On this case see Stuart Airlie, 'Private Bodies and the Body Politic in the Divorce Case of Lothar II', *Past and Present* 161 (1998), 3–38.



to enforce its conception of marriage as a monogamous, indissoluble union, against the usual practice of kings to divorce and remarry as it suited them.<sup>7</sup> When Hincmar was asked for advice, he responded with a treatise *On the Divorce of King Lothar and Queen Theutberga*, in which he argued that Lothar and Theutberga's marriage should stand. This judgement was not entirely disinterested, because Hincmar was close to Lothar's uncle, Charles the Bald, who stood to inherit part of Lotharingia if Lothar produced no legitimate sons. Hincmar was therefore probably, at least in part, supporting Charles's wish to keep Lothar in his childless marriage.<sup>8</sup>

Magic enters the story because Hincmar suggested that Waldrada had bewitched Lothar and caused him to hate his wife. Hincmar then went on to discuss love- and hate-magic at great length, in far more detail than was needed to support his argument. He 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.<sup>9</sup> His answers to these questions consisted mostly of general discussions of magic quoted from earlier Christian writers like Augustine, Isidore of Seville, and Bede, and from the penitentials. Hincmar 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 two paragraphs that the text's recent editor was not able to trace to a written source. The first paragraph describes a case of impotence magic that came before one of the bishops in Hincmar's archdiocese. 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 asked the local bishop to dissolve the marriage, threatening that he would murder his wife otherwise. The bishop recognized the work of the Devil because the man could still sleep with his former lover, and eventually,

<sup>7</sup> Georges Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest: the Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France*, trans. Barbara Bray (London: Allen Lane, 1983), p. xix.

<sup>8</sup> Janet L. Nelson, 'The Annals of St Bertin', in Janet Nelson and Margaret Gibson (eds.), *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom*, 2nd edn. (Aldershot: Variorum, 1990), 38; Jean Devisse, *Hincmar, Archevêque de Reims 845–882* (Geneva: Droz, 1975), i.384; Airlie, 'Private Bodies', 12.

<sup>9</sup> Hincmar of Rheims, *De Divortio Lotharii Regis et Theutbergae Reginae*, ed. Letha Böhringer, MGH Concilia 4, Suppl. 1 (Hannover: MGH, 1992), 205–17.

after penance and ‘ecclesiastical medicine’ (*medicina ecclesiastica*, a phrase that will be discussed in more detail below), the young man regained his potency, and ‘diabolical hate’ was replaced by ‘conjugal love’.<sup>10</sup>

Two points are interesting about this story. Firstly, Hincmar makes no distinction between impotence magic and other forms of love- and hate-magic: he includes this story as part of his answer to the question ‘if it can be true, what many men say, that there are women who by their magic can send irreconcilable hatred between husband and wife and sow unspeakable love again between a man and a woman’.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, he says that this was a real case, and he also claims to have encountered similar cases himself which, he says, are too disgusting to talk about.<sup>12</sup> In the paragraph that follows, Hincmar goes on to give a detailed list of ways in which this sort of magic can be performed: using the bones of the dead, ashes, coals, pubic hairs, coloured threads, herbs, parts of serpents, and *clocleolis*, which might be small snails (*coacleolis*); the magic can be administered in food or drink, or by means of incantations or enchanted clothing.<sup>13</sup> Some of this section resembles statements made in certain penitentials. Many penitentials mentioned love potions and incantations,<sup>14</sup> and 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,<sup>15</sup> which may imply something similar to Hincmar’s threads and enchanted garments. However, Hincmar included far more detail than is found in surviving penitentials.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 205–6.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Si hoc verum esse possit, quod plures homines dicunt, quia sunt feminae, quae maleficio suo inter virum et uxorem odium inreconciliabile possint mittere et inenarrabilem amorem iterum inter virum et feminam serere . . .’ *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>12</sup> ‘sunt et alia, quae nos dirimere ac iudicare necessitas compulit, quae propter nefariam turpitudinem dicere nolumus.’ *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>13</sup> ‘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 multiplicium 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 . . .’ *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>14</sup> e.g. F. W. H. Wasserschleben (ed.), *Die Bussordnungen der abendländischen Kirche* (Halle, 1851), 312; H. J. Schmitz (ed.), *Die Bussbücher und die Bussdisciplin der Kirche* (Mainz, 1883), i.413.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Non liceat mulieres christianas vanitatem in suis lanificiis observare, sed Deum invocent adiutorem, qui eis sapientiam texendi donavit.’ *Ibid.*, i.727.

The length and detail of Hincmar's discussion of love- and hate-magic in the *Divorce* suggests that he was interested in magical practices as well as marriage law. It is possible that he took his information from a source which has not survived, but in his treatise on the vices and virtues, he employs a similar technique, including passages with no known sources in the middle of an otherwise unoriginal discussion of sexual sins.<sup>16</sup> Hincmar's interest in magical practices may also be linked to his pastoral work in his archdiocese. His episcopal statutes of 857 stressed that priests should get first-hand information about what the laity in their dioceses were doing and refer serious crimes to the bishop.<sup>17</sup> 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 both magic and sexual matters. He saw the latter 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.'<sup>18</sup>

Hincmar also emphasized that magic that caused hatred or impotence was often curable. As Valerie Flint has pointed out, the implication of the story that he tells is that in most cases, 'ecclesiastical medicine' will be effective and a separation will be unnecessary.<sup>19</sup> In neither the *Divorce* nor his other discussion of impotence magic quoted below, however, did Hincmar specify exactly what he meant by 'ecclesiastical medicine'. In his other discussion he listed confession, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and exorcism separately, so the term may refer to the use of additional rites (perhaps blessings of the marriage bed) or to the use of holy water or salt, or perhaps to a procedure like one eleventh-century cure, quoted below, in which the afflicted couple were blessed by the priest and given a slip of parchment to wear, on which was written a biblical quotation. Flint has

<sup>16</sup> Hincmar of Rheims, *De Cavendis Vitiis et Virtutibus Exercendis*, ed. Doris Nachtmann, MGH Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 16 (Munich: MGH, 1998), 122–3, 168–9. I am grateful to Janet Nelson for this reference.

<sup>17</sup> Hincmar's statutes: PL 125:793–4; Devisse, *Hincmar*, ii.881.

<sup>18</sup> Jane Bishop, 'Bishops as Marital Advisors in the Ninth Century', in Julius Kirshner and Suzanne F. Wemple (eds.), *Women of the Medieval World* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 55.

<sup>19</sup> Flint, *Rise*, 295.

suggested that the binding nature of an indissoluble Christian marriage could in itself be seen as a counter to the binding magic that caused impotence,<sup>20</sup> but this does not necessarily follow. Simply because Christian marriage was supposed to be indissoluble, this does not mean that its bond had a magical force.

Flint has also suggested that Hincmar's idea of 'ecclesiastical medicine' may have included something more tangible. She argues that 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, is 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. Flint therefore suggests that the crystal was designed by Hincmar in 865, when Lothar and Theutberga had a temporary reconciliation, both as a reproach to Lothar for his conduct and as an amulet to protect the couple against further magic.<sup>21</sup> This theory cannot be proved conclusively and other interpretations have been put forward,<sup>22</sup> but Flint's suggestion is plausible, since Hincmar was well informed about magic, and was also interested in the story of Susannah.<sup>23</sup>

Hincmar was not necessarily typical of his contemporaries in suspecting that Lothar was bewitched. Some contemporaries saw Waldrada's relationship with Lothar as legitimate, and so are unlikely to have accused her of bewitching him. For example, Waldrada appears in the commemoration book of the Lotharingian monastery of Remiremont, as does Lothar I's mistress Doda, which indicates that both women were seen as worthy of being recorded alongside the Carolingian kings.<sup>24</sup> A collection of letters relating to the case compiled by Lothar's supporter, Bishop Adventius of Metz, also did not mention magic, for obvious reasons. Nor did Regino of Prüm,

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

<sup>21</sup> 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 Commemoration of Denis L. T. Bethell* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), 71–2; 'Susanna and the Lothar Crystal: a Liturgical Perspective', *Early Medieval Europe* 4 (1995), 61–86.

<sup>22</sup> Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians* (London: Longman, 1983), 174; Geneva Kornbluth, 'The Susanna Crystal of Lothar II: Chastity, the Church, and Royal Justice', *Gesta* 31 (1992), 25–39.

<sup>23</sup> Flint, 'Magic', 68.

<sup>24</sup> Airlie, 'Private Bodies', 15.

who described the case in his chronicle at the end of the ninth century.<sup>25</sup> However, the idea that Waldrada had bewitched Lothar may not have been unique to Hincmar. In his *Annals of St Bertin*, Hincmar claimed that rumours were circulating to this effect: ‘Lothar, demented, as it was said, by the magic arts . . .’<sup>26</sup> This was Hincmar’s view of popular opinion, of course, but a later source suggests that he was not the only one to have heard these rumours. The *Life of St Deicolus*, which was written in the monastery of Lure in eastern France in the tenth century, and has no known connection to Hincmar, also presents 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.’<sup>27</sup> The author of the *Life* had a grudge against Waldrada, because he went on to report how she drove the monks out of Lure, but his reference to Waldrada as a sorceress shows that it was not only Hincmar who could think of magic in a case like Lothar’s.

Like Hincmar in the *Divorce*, the *Life of Deicolus* suggests that Waldrada worked love magic rather than impotence magic on Lothar. The important point was that she broke up Lothar’s marriage by magic, not whether she did this by making him love her, making him hate his wife, or making him impotent. This same lack of distinction between love- or hate-magic and impotence magic can also be seen in accounts of another case that has several parallels with that of Lothar. In his *History of the Franks*, Aimoin, a monk at Fleury (d. after 1008), claimed that the Merovingian queen Brunhild (d. 613) had used magic to break up the marriage of her grandson Theuderic II to Ermenberga, the daughter of

<sup>25</sup> E. Dümmler (ed.), *Epistolae ad Divortium Lotharii Regis Pertinentes*, MGH Epistolae VI, Epistolae Karolini Aevi IV (Hannover: MGH, 1925), 207–40; Regino of Prüm, *Chronicon*, ed. Friedrich Kurze, MGH SS Rerum Germanicarum 50 (Hannover: MGH, 1890), 77, 80, 85–6.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Hlotharius . . . maleficis, ut ferebatur, artibus dementatus . . .’ *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, ed. Félix Grat, Jeanne Viellard, and Suzanne Clémencet (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1964), 93.

<sup>27</sup> ‘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 maleficis multigenis regis animum fascinavit, ut omnia que ab illo peteret facile impetravit.’ *Vita S. Deicoli*, ed. G. Waitz, MGH Scriptores 15 (Hannover: MGH, 1888), 678.

King Witteric of Visigothic Spain. This was because she did not want another queen to rival her own power: ‘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.’<sup>28</sup>

Aimoin’s statement that Ermenberga did not have intercourse with her husband does not necessarily mean that Theuderic was made impotent, but as in the case of Lothar, it did not really matter as long as the marriage was broken up. This lack of precision becomes even more interesting when we compare Aimoin’s account with the one found in his source for this episode, the chronicle of Fredegar. According to Fredegar, Theuderic ‘received her happily and lovingly. But she did not experience intercourse with a man due to the action of his grandmother Brunhild. She was made hateful [to him] by the words and incitements of his grandmother Brunhild and his sister Theudila.’<sup>29</sup>

The Latin of the passage is difficult to decipher, but here Brunhild opposed the marriage by persuasion rather than by magic. Aimoin’s use of the word *maleficium*, by contrast, refers particularly to magic: elsewhere in his history, he uses the word in conjunction with terms such as *incantationes* and *precantationes*.<sup>30</sup> However, it is possible that Aimoin understood Brunhild and Theudila’s ‘words’ (*uerbis*) to mean the use of incantations, especially in the light of Brunhild’s posthumous reputation, which originated in the *Life* of St Columbanus.<sup>31</sup> Like Fredegar, Columbanus blamed Brunhild for Theuderic’s reluctance to marry, and when the saint clashed with her over this, Brunhild had him exiled. For this, the *Life* labelled Brunhild a ‘second Jezebel’, and although it did not accuse her of magic, Jezebel is described in the Bible as given to idolatry and *veneficia*

<sup>28</sup> ‘Quam Theodoricus letus accipiens primum unice dilexit; que tamen maleficiis Brunehildis virum non cognovit. Deinde, faciente eadem avia sua, Theodoricus Hermembergam (id quippe nomen virgini), thesauris exspoliata abire praecepit ad Hispaniam.’ Aimoin of Fleury, *Historia Francorum*, PL 139:759.

<sup>29</sup> ‘quem ille gaudens diligenter suscepit. Eadem factionem aviae suae Brunehilde uirile coitum non cognouit. Instigantibus uerbis Brunehilde aua et Teudilane germana efficitur odiosa.’ Fredegar, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar*, ed. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1960), 19; my translation.

<sup>30</sup> PL 139:680, 728.

<sup>31</sup> Janet L. Nelson, ‘Queens as Jezebels: the Careers of Brunhild and Balhild in Merovingian History’, in Derek Baker (ed.), *Medieval Women* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), 59.

(2 Kings: 9, 22). Nor was Aimoin the only later writer to associate Brunhild with magic: the *Book of the History of the Franks*, finished near Paris in 727, also refers to her *maleficia*.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps Aimoin had heard stories like these and assumed that Brunhild's words were also magical. Aimoin's version of the story also influenced later medieval perceptions of Brunhild, because in the thirteenth century his history formed the basis of the influential *Grandes Chroniques de France*.<sup>33</sup>

In both Aimoin's account of Theuderic's marriage to Ermenberga and the case of Lothar and Theutberga, magic is used to explain why a king might behave irrationally, suddenly repudiating a wife who in the eyes of the source had nothing wrong with her. Both marriages could be seen as advantageous for the man: Theutberga came from an important Lotharingian family whose political support Lothar had once needed, and Ermenberga was a king's daughter who brought treasures to Theuderic II. Although Lothar probably repudiated Theutberga partly for political reasons,<sup>34</sup> Hincmar and the anonymous author of the *Life of St Deicolus* described his behaviour as 'demented', or even as a state of 'headlong and headstrong insanity'. Theuderic's actions are not explicitly presented as irrational, but they put him in a dangerous situation: both Aimoin and Fredegar tell 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.<sup>35</sup> These cases show how rumours and accusations could arise, and some of the functions they could serve. In a period when kings could repudiate wives relatively easily, rumours of magic might arise to explain why a king would do this rashly, and they could also be used to oppose the repudiation by presenting the king as maddened by a woman's magical influence. In both cases, the rumours also transferred the responsibility to a woman in a powerful but precarious position, who was threatened by the arrival of a new bride.

<sup>32</sup> *Liber Historiae Francorum*, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH *Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum* 2 (Hannover: MGH, 1888), 298, 309–10. On this text see Richard A. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the 'Liber Historiae Francorum'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Grandes Chroniques de France*, ed. Jules Viard (Paris: Société de l'Histoire de France, 1822), ii.53. I am grateful to Marigold Norbye for this reference.

<sup>34</sup> Airlie, 'Private Bodies', 11.

<sup>35</sup> Aimoin of Fleury, *Historia Francorum*, 759–60; Fredegar, *Fourth Book*, 20–1.

## HINCMAR OF RHEIMS (2): IMPOTENCE MAGIC AND MARRIAGE LAW

In the cases described above, it was not particularly important to distinguish impotence magic clearly from love- or hate-magic. As long as it remained relatively easy for kings to repudiate wives who no longer suited their purposes, either kind of magic could explain this equally well. However, in situations where it was difficult to repudiate wives, it became useful to single out impotence magic. This was because in both Roman and ecclesiastical law, impotence was recognized as a ground for annulling a marriage,<sup>36</sup> but other forms of bewitchment were not. In practice, kings continued to repudiate wives into the eleventh century,<sup>37</sup> but sometimes assertive churchmen might make difficulties for high-profile men who acted without regard for the canon law of marriage, as they did in ninth-century Francia.<sup>38</sup> It is in this context that a medieval writer first singled out magically-caused impotence as a topic worth discussing separately from other forms of love magic. It also comes as little surprise that the man to do this was that expert on both magic and marriage law, Hincmar of Rheims.

Hincmar singled out impotence magic when he discussed another case that was also referred to him in 860. This case concerned an Aquitainian count called Stephen, who was betrothed to the daughter of another Aquitainian count, Raymond. Stephen was eager to break off the betrothal for reasons that were probably political,<sup>39</sup> but under pressure from Raymond, he had gone through with the wedding ceremony. However, Stephen subsequently claimed that he had not consummated the marriage because he had previously slept with a relative of his fiancée, which in canon law would have rendered the marriage incestuous. Hincmar supported Stephen, probably on the instructions of Charles the Bald who was seeking Stephen's support at the time.<sup>40</sup> He argued that since Stephen and Raymond's daughter could not consummate their marriage without

<sup>36</sup> Brundage, *Law*, 115, 144.

<sup>37</sup> Pauline Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: the King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (London: Batsford Academic and Educational, 1983), 74.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>39</sup> Janet L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London: Longman, 1992), 185.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 196–7.



committing incest, then the marriage was invalid. Hincmar backed this up with the argument that if a marriage could not be consummated, then it was incomplete because it could not symbolize the union of Christ with the Church. Hincmar claimed that this view went back to Augustine, but his source was in fact a letter of the fifth-century pope Leo I which had become corrupted during its transmission. Hincmar thus became the first clerical writer on marriage to state that an unconsummated marriage was incomplete and therefore dissoluble under certain circumstances.<sup>41</sup>

Hincmar went on to argue that if Stephen could not legitimately have sex with Raymond's daughter, then he had a form of impotence. Then he discussed magically-caused impotence as a subsection of this in a short paragraph beginning with the words *Si per sortiaras*:

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 almsgiving, 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, 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.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> On this text 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, Monumenta Iuris Canonici C.6 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1980), 316–18; Gérard Fransen, 'La Lettre de Hincmar de Reims au Sujet du Mariage d'Étienne', in R. Lievens, E. van Mingroot, and W. Verbeke (eds.), *Pascua Mediaevalia: Studies voor Prof. J. M. de Smet* (Louvain: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 1983), 133–46; Philip Lyndon Reynolds, *Marriage in the Western Church* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 353–61; and D. L. d'Avray, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 86–7, 176–9.

<sup>42</sup> 'Si per sortiaras 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

Unlike Hincmar's treatise on the *Divorce of Lothar and Theutberga*, which survives in only one manuscript<sup>43</sup> and does not seem to have influenced later discussions of impotence magic, *Si per sortiaris* was very widely read. It was excerpted and copied into later canon law collections, and became the source of all subsequent canon law on magically-caused impotence. Later writers often singled out four main points for comment: firstly, the fact that God permits impotence magic; secondly, the female gender of the magician; thirdly, the ecclesiastical cures, which Hincmar had also mentioned in the *Divorce*; and finally, and most important of all, the conclusion that if ecclesiastical cures failed, the couple could separate and both partners could remarry. Moreover, if the man later remarried successfully, this second marriage should stand and he should not be forced to return to his first marriage. The historians James Brundage and Marcia Colish interpret Hincmar's text differently from how the medieval canonists did, Brundage as saying that neither partner can remarry, and Colish as saying that the first marriage should be reinstated if the couple remarry successfully.<sup>44</sup> However, Hincmar says explicitly that the couple *cannot* be reconciled to their first partners.

In the middle of a legal justification for annulling a marriage on grounds of impotence, Hincmar's interest in magic, which he displayed in the *Divorce*, led him to include magically-caused impotence as a separate case, probably for the first time. Hincmar's discussions of these two cases in 860 thus illustrate how magical practices interacted with the concept of magically-caused impotence. It was known that magic could cause impotence, but the separation of this kind of magic from love- or hate-magic only became necessary when men began to seek legal grounds for annulling their

faciant, et profusis lacrimis, ac largioribus elemosinis, et orationibus atque ieiuniis Domino satisfaciant, cuius iudicio pro suo merito, ab illa benedictione privari invitū meruerunt, quam Dominus primis parentibus ante peccatum in paradyso 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 procurant. 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.' Hincmar of Rheims, *De Nuptiis Stephani et Filiae Regimundi Comitis*, MGH Epistolae 8 (Berlin: MGH, 1939), no. 136, p.105.

<sup>43</sup> Hincmar, *De Divortio*, 31.

<sup>44</sup> Brundage, *Law*, 145; Marcia Colish, *Peter Lombard* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: Brill, 1994), ii.685.

marriages. On the other hand, although popular belief probably did not distinguish impotence magic from other forms of erotic magic in this way, the information that Hincmar gave about impotence magic seems to have come from his own observation of magical practices. The phenomenon of impotence magic existed in popular culture; Hincmar merely introduced a setting which distinguished it from related phenomena and made it relevant in a new context.

### THE *LIBER ALCHANDREI*, THE ARUNDEL PENITENTIAL, AND BURCHARD OF WORMS

The existence of impotence magic in popular culture, even if it was not normally distinguished from other forms of love magic, is indicated by its appearance in a number of other sources which were not concerned with marriage law. One is the *Liber Alchandreï*, an astrological text, the earliest manuscript of which dates from the tenth century.<sup>45</sup> Among other things, the *Liber* contains a set of 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 will live for 21 or 44 years. He drinks, buys goats, and has spots on his face.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> See David Juste, 'Les Doctrines Astrologiques du *Liber Alchandreï*', in Isabelle Draelants, Anne Tihon, and Baudouin van den Abeele (eds.), *Occident et Proche-Orient: Contacts Scientifiques au Temps des Croisades* (Louvain: Brepols, 2000), 277–311.

<sup>46</sup> '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. Supercilliis coniunctis. Ventris dolor illi nocebit. Si convalescet vivet annis xxi aut xliiii. Potator, emptor caprarum, maculatus in facie.' *Liber Alchandreï*, BL MS Add. 17808, 93v–94r. I am grateful to Charles Burnett for this reference.

The sources of the *Liber Alchandreii* are difficult to identify.<sup>47</sup> The text was put together in its present form in western Europe, perhaps at the monastery of Fleury. It contains elements of Arabic, Hebrew, and western astrology, but the source of the predictions based on the lunar mansions, like the one above, is unclear. The idea of making predictions based on the lunar mansions comes from Arabic astrology, but the particular predictions found in the *Liber Alchandreii* do not seem to have parallels in surviving Arabic sources or in Latin astrological texts. Whatever the source, however, the *Liber Alchandreii* took it for granted that magic could make a man impotent. 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 perhaps even a likely occurrence; likely enough to be included in a general prediction of this sort.

Two penitentials also suggest that it was known that magic could cause impotence. As mentioned above, many penitentials did not discuss impotence magic, and it is likely that, like Hincmar of Rheims in the *Divorce of Lothar and Theutberga*, they considered that it was covered by prohibitions of magic that caused love or hate. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, however, two penitentials did make the distinction. The first is the Arundel Penitential (named from its only surviving manuscript, British Library MS Arundel 201): ‘A woman who by some magic art takes away the ability to have intercourse from men so that they cannot make use of legitimate marriage, should do penance for seven years, three very heavily and four more lightly.’<sup>48</sup> The author may have borrowed this canon from an earlier penitential that has not survived, but if he did not, it is difficult to know why the Arundel penitential singled out impotence magic in this way when earlier works did not. It is possible that Hincmar of Rheims’s separation of impotence magic from love magic in *Si per sortiaris* had influenced other writers. It is also possible, however, that the author of the Arundel penitential just wished to be thorough in his

<sup>47</sup> What follows is based on Juste, ‘Les Doctrines Astrologiques’, 284–7 and 294–6.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Femina, quae arte aliqua maleficii possibilitatem coeundi viris aufert, ut non possint legitima exercere connubia, VII annos, III gravissime et IIII levius peniteat.’ Schmitz (ed.), *Die Bussbücher*, i.460. See Paul Fournier, ‘Études sur les pénitentiels V’, *Revue d’Histoire et de Littérature Religieuses* 9 (1904), 97–8.

description of magic. He includes a longer list of canons dealing with the subject than most earlier penitentials, including some others that have no known source.<sup>49</sup>

The second penitential that mentions impotence magic supports this hypothesis that the subject might be singled out by writers who had a strong interest in magic and wished to be comprehensive. This is the *Decretum* of Burchard, bishop of Worms, a canon law collection compiled in around 1020.<sup>50</sup> Part of the *Decretum* consisted of a penitential, the *Corrector*, and 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, 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.<sup>51</sup>

Here, as in the case of Lothar, it was the man's rejected ex-lover who was thought to work impotence magic, but Burchard believed that wives were dangerous too. He described a process which he claimed that married women used to make their husbands 'wither and grow weak', which may have included impotence: 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.<sup>52</sup>

No source has been identified for either of these passages, as for around ten percent of the canons in the *Decretum*.<sup>53</sup> It is unlikely that Burchard took the idea that magic could cause impotence from *Si per sortiarias*, since he did not include it in his canon law collection. He may have drawn on a source similar to the Arundel Penitential, but if so, he elaborated what he found there. Moreover, the detail and the originality of Burchard's reference

<sup>49</sup> Schmitz (ed.), *Die Bussbücher*, i.435.

<sup>50</sup> R. W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), i.244.

<sup>51</sup> 'Fecisti quod quedam mulieres adultere facere solent? Cum primum intellexerint quod amatores earum legitimas uxores voluerint 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*, PL 140:975.

<sup>52</sup> PL 140:976.

<sup>53</sup> Hartmut Hoffmann and Rudolf Pokorny, *Das Dekret des Bischofs Burchard von Worms: Textstufen, Frühe Verbreitung, Vorlagen* (Munich: MGH, 1991), 233.

to impotence magic are consistent with his treatment of magic in general. He describes a number of magical practices which have not been identified in earlier sources, often in great detail.<sup>54</sup> 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 or heard about in his diocese, especially as both writers in their roles as bishops encouraged their clergy to find out what the laity were doing.<sup>55</sup>

These passages from the *Liber Alchandreii*, the Arundel penitential, and Burchard's *Decretum*, none of which seem to have drawn on surviving written sources, suggest that there existed a popular belief that magic could cause impotence, even if it was not always distinguished this clearly from other forms of erotic magic. Burchard's references to the culprit being a rejected ex-mistress probably also reflect a belief that had already existed in the case of Lothar and Theutberga. Impotence magic may not have been believed to happen very often, since it does not appear in many other sources that might record a widespread problem, but it seems to have been known about. Moreover, Burchard also gave these popular beliefs a higher profile than the other written sources, as both the full *Decretum* and the much smaller *Corrector* circulated widely in the eleventh century.

## CONSTANTINE THE AFRICAN

The final early medieval source to mention magically-caused impotence is very different from those that have been discussed so far. The *Pantegni* of Constantine the African was a medical text that dealt with magically-caused impotence as an illness that could be cured. Like Hincmar of Rheims, who singled out magically-caused impotence in the context of marriage law, Constantine separated impotence magic from other forms of love magic which did not cause an identifiable physical problem (although he did concede that one form of impotence magic might also cause the bride and

<sup>54</sup> Cyrille Vogel, 'Pratiques Superstitieuses au début du XIe Siècle d'après le "Corrector sive Medicus" de Burchard, évêque de Worms (965–1025)', repr. in *En Rémission des Péchés* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1994), 752.

<sup>55</sup> Hamilton, 'Practice of Penance', 31.

groom not to love each other). Very little is known for certain about Constantine. According to the mid twelfth-century chronicler of the monastery of Monte Cassino, Peter the Deacon, he was a Muslim who studied medicine in North Africa, but later converted to Christianity and became a monk at Monte Cassino, where he died as an old man some time before 1099.<sup>56</sup> He was one of the first translators to bring Arabic learning to the West, translating a number of medical texts into Latin. One of these was the *Pantegni*, 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). The *Pantegni* 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 impotence caused by *maleficiūm*. This chapter was edited from four manuscripts by Gerda Hoffmann in 1933,<sup>57</sup> and I have produced an edition from more manuscripts in Appendix 1.

This chapter of the *Pantegni* became the foundation of many later medical discussions of magically-caused impotence, but it is especially interesting because there is no corresponding section in Haly Abbas’ original text. This discrepancy is connected with the way in which the whole of Book 8 of the ‘Practica’ was written. Monica Green has shown<sup>58</sup> that this book of the *Pantegni* was put together from other sources (mostly Constantine’s other translations), following the basic outline of Haly Abbas’ work. A later physician 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 be true; it would explain why he compiled Book 8 from existing works. A further complication is that no manuscripts of Books 3 to 8 of the ‘Practica’ 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 they 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

<sup>56</sup> Francis Newton, ‘Constantine the African and Monte Cassino: New Elements and the Text of the “Isagoge”’, in Charles Burnett and Danielle Jacquart (eds.), *Constantine the African and Ali ibn al-Abbās al-Mağūsī: the Pantegni and Related Texts* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: Brill, 1994), 20–3; Herbert Bloch, *Monte Cassino in the Middle Ages* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1986).

<sup>57</sup> Hoffmann, ‘Beiträge’, 129–44.

<sup>58</sup> What follows is based on Green, ‘Re-creation’, 121–60.

since the compiler had a detailed knowledge of Constantine's other works and also knew Arabic, this book was probably compiled at the end of the eleventh century, either by Constantine himself or by his pupil Johannes Afflacijs.

The absence of impotence magic in Haly Abbas' original text means that there was no need for Constantine (or Johannes Afflacijs) to discuss the subject in his Latin version unless he already knew of it from other sources. He may have learned about it from an ancient medical text, the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* of Sextus Placitus, discussed in Chapter 2, because he copied Sextus' comments that the blood and testicles of a cock, placed under the bed, could prevent anyone in the bed from having sex.<sup>59</sup> He also took another remedy against any form of magic from Sextus Placitus. Sextus, drawing on Pliny, had included two methods of protecting the home from evil influences 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.'<sup>60</sup> In the *Pantegni*, Constantine suggested these as cures for magically-caused impotence.

So far, no parallels have been found in surviving ancient or early medieval medical texts for the other recipes in the chapter,<sup>61</sup> although they may exist. On the other hand, Richard Kieckhefer has suggested that one recipe is based on the Bible: '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 abovementioned spells will vanish.'<sup>62</sup> This process resembles a passage from the Bible, in the Book of Tobit (now in the Apocrypha), 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. Tobias is told to take a fish's liver and heart and

<sup>59</sup> Sextus: see Ch. 2, n. 40. All citations of the *Pantegni* are from Appendix 1.

<sup>60</sup> 'Canis fel masculi nigri perpurgat domum et efficit, ne ullum malum medicamentum inferatur . . . Canis sanguis parietibus domus aspersus, ab omnibus malis liberabitur.' Sextus Placitus, *Liber Medicinae*, ed. Ernest Howald and Henry Sigerist, *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum IV* (Leipzig and Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1927), 263–4.

<sup>61</sup> Green, 'Re-creation', 141; Hoffmann, 'Beiträge', 212.

<sup>62</sup> Kieckhefer, *Magic*, 85. 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.



burn them over incense in the bridal chamber. The smell repels the demon, and thereafter he never troubles Sarah again (Tobit 6:16–17).

Some other cures have parallels in medieval and later folklore. For example, Constantine recommended checking the bed and removing any magical items that had been hidden in or under it, and this idea can also be found in a narrative source describing impotence magic. This was the *Chronicle of the Bohemians* of Cosmas of Prague, written in 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.<sup>63</sup> This story does not appear in other sources that discuss the marriage, but presumably it sounded credible to Cosmas. The appearance of the same idea in both Cosmas and Constantine suggests that this may have been a widespread belief. A few of Constantine's other cures may also reflect widespread beliefs, such as when Constantine suggested putting mercury in a hollow reed and keeping this near the couple. This corresponds with a belief that mercury could protect people against magic and the evil eye, which existed in the Middle Ages and later.<sup>64</sup> However, a few cures have no known parallels at all, 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.

Most, but not all, manuscripts of the *Pantegni* also list a final cure involving the Bible:

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, 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 29:3). 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.

<sup>63</sup> 'aliquod maleficium vel in tuis vestimentis vel in lectisterniis latet.' See Appendix 2 for reference.

<sup>64</sup> See Ch. 9, n. 20.

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 continue. 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. Added to this are elements from Scripture and church rituals, such as the kiss of peace from the mass, which when put together create a ritual solution to impotence magic. This cure is particularly interesting because its tone is different from that of the rest of the chapter, which does not mention the couple’s sins or suggest church rituals. Indeed, it is different from the rest of the *Pantegni*. Since it does not appear in all of the manuscripts of the *Pantegni*, it may be a later addition, added by someone who was more interested in the theological implications of impotence magic, perhaps in the twelfth century when canon lawyers and theologians had begun to take an interest in marriage and its impediments. 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, the date and purpose of this last cure must remain uncertain.

Throughout this chapter of the *Pantegni*, the use of sources suggests that Constantine (or Johannes Afflacijs) had an existing idea that magic could cause impotence, and then looked for information to fit it. Sextus Placitus was very different from the naturalistic Arabic sources that are usually cited: in fact, Constantine only quotes him in this chapter, and in the chapters in Book 8 on promoting and inhibiting conception.<sup>65</sup> Constantine may have used Sextus here because he was the only medical source to mention a kind of impotence that Constantine defined as *maleficium*; but because Sextus did not discuss the subject in detail, Constantine had to elaborate by taking some of Sextus’ remedies against evil influences in general and applying them to impotence magic in particular. He also borrowed from non-medical sources like the Bible and (if the final cure was not added later) church ritual. The remaining cures could have come from medical texts now lost, but the parallels with Cosmas of Prague’s history and with medieval folklore suggest that, like Hincmar of Rheims, Constantine may have learned about some of these cures from the world around him.

<sup>65</sup> Green, ‘Re-creation’, 141–2.

But why should Constantine include magically-caused impotence in his medical treatise, when most of his sources had not? It is possible that he was inspired by the passage on causing impotence in Sextus Placitus, although the question would remain why he decided to use Sextus, when he did not normally do so. The idea may also have come from another Latin or Arabic medical text, now lost. Although the academic medicine of the Arabic world, like much ancient Greek medicine, did not normally ascribe illnesses to magical causes, the idea that magic could cause impotence was nonetheless known in some Arabic writing. There was even a tradition that Muhammad had been bewitched ‘so that he was made to imagine that he had had intercourse with his wives yet he had not done so’, but that when he found the objects causing the bewitchment hidden down a well and removed them, the spell was broken.<sup>66</sup> Constantine, too, had suggested that the victim of bewitchment should find and remove any magical objects.

Another surviving Arabic source that may have suggested impotence magic to Constantine is *Physical Ligatures*, a treatise on amulets ascribed to a ninth-century Christian physician working in Baghdad and Armenia, known in the West as Costa ben Luca. Costa claimed that:

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.<sup>67</sup>

Constantine knew several of Costa’s works and may even have translated *Physical Ligatures* into Latin,<sup>68</sup> so he may have known of this story. However, Constantine did not quote the cure mentioned by Costa, and indeed his attitude was completely different from Costa’s: he believed that magic really could cause impotence, and treated it accordingly.

<sup>66</sup> Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Medicine of the Prophet*, trans. Penelope Johnstone (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1998), 95–6.

<sup>67</sup> Quote from Judith Wilcox and John M. Riddle, ‘Qusta ibn Luqa’s “Physical Ligatures” and the Recognition of the Placebo Effect’, *Medieval Encounters* 1 (1995), 42.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

If he was not relying on Arabic sources, Constantine may have encountered the belief that magic could cause impotence while he was living at Monte Cassino. Gerda Hoffmann suggested that as a monk, he would have come across discussions of impotence magic like that of Hincmar of Rheims. She also argued that Constantine's association of women with impotence magic ('especially found among women') suggests an ecclesiastical source.<sup>69</sup> This is possible: Monte Cassino had a strong interest in canon law at the end of the eleventh century, and owned several manuscripts of canons, so Constantine might have encountered *Si per sortiarias* there. The monastery also possessed a copy of Burchard of Worms's *Decretum*, presumably including its reference to impotence magic,<sup>70</sup> so Constantine may have taken the idea that magic could cause impotence from there. It is also possible, however, that Constantine was referring to the same popular belief that is also reflected in the other sources discussed in this chapter. It is perhaps most likely that he was inspired by a combination of these sources, perhaps combining his knowledge of magical practices and cures with his own medical and biblical education. He may even have had a personal concern for bewitched couples, as he states that he does not wish to deprive them of advice in case they separate and become 'cast down'.

## CONCLUSION

Like the sources discussed in Chapter 2, the early medieval sources for magically-caused impotence are fragmentary, but some patterns can be detected. Rumours about magic that caused impotence or hatred seem to have arisen in particular circumstances, especially when a man rejected a wife for no apparent reason. Occasionally husbands might also blame their wives for making them impotent, as in Cosmas of Prague's account of Welf and Matilda. Many sources that discuss magic do not mention the belief that magic could cause impotence or hatred, so it may not have been seen as a common problem, but the belief nonetheless existed in popular consciousness, and could lead to rumours if the circumstances were right.

<sup>69</sup> Hoffmann, 'Beiträge', 142.

<sup>70</sup> Francis Newton, *The Scriptorium and Library at Monte Cassino 1058–1105* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 273.

The early medieval writers about impotence magic distilled this popular belief into several key ‘facts’ which were known in later centuries: the association with women, especially ex-lovers; the rules for annulling a marriage; and the eclectic cures which combined medicine, sympathetic magic, and religious ritual. Not all of these ‘facts’ came from popular belief (the annulment rules, for example, did not), but most of the time, the writers discussed in this chapter do seem to have drawn on popular beliefs, rather than on earlier written sources. Since so many early medieval texts have been lost, it is possible that instead of drawing on popular beliefs, the isolated examples quoted here may simply be what has survived from a body of sources that was once far greater. However, the absence of earlier written sources for most of the writers discussed here, combined with the explicit references of Hincmar and Burchard to popular beliefs, suggest that some of their information about impotence magic does reflect the wider world. Burchard of Worms has long been recognized as a valuable source for early medieval magic, but it seems that the other writers in this chapter, particularly Hincmar of Rheims and Constantine the African, acted in a similar way.

In popular belief, however, it was not particularly important to distinguish impotence magic from other forms of love- or hate-magic: either could explain why a marriage broke up mysteriously. Indeed, throughout the Middle Ages and beyond, the distinction does not seem to have been made clearly in situations where magic was used to explain a man’s irrational actions in love. The sixteenth-century Venetian courtesan Andriana Savorgnan, for example, was accused of using magic both to secure the love of a client and to make him impotent with other women.<sup>71</sup> Magic that caused impotence in particular was only an issue in certain contexts. Hincmar of Rheims brought it into a discussion of the indissolubility of marriage, while Constantine the African treated it as a medical problem. In doing so, these two writers took the subject of impotence magic out of its setting in classical literature, rumours and popular superstitions, separated it from related phenomena, and brought it to the attention of theologians, canonists, and physicians. In this way they determined the way in which impotence magic was discussed for the rest of the Middle Ages.

<sup>71</sup> Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 31.

## 4

# Impotence Magic Enters the Academic World, 1100–1190

We have seen how a handful of writers had, by 1100, established ways of thinking about magically-caused impotence that were to prove very influential. Hincmar of Rheims had isolated it from other forms of love magic and made a place for it in the canon law of marriage. Constantine the African had similarly isolated it from other forms of impotence and presented it as an illness to be cured. Hincmar, Constantine and other authors had also established that impotence magic was associated with women, particularly with former lovers, and used it to explain why men might repudiate wives for no apparent reason. They had also listed a variety of magical practices that could cause impotence, and suggested a wide range of cures. But these early medieval writers are isolated figures. Each seems to have written independently of the others, discussing magically-caused impotence because it interested him, and bringing in information that may have come from his own observation. In the twelfth century, however, impotence magic changed from being a curiosity discussed by the few authors who were interested, to an issue that had a recognized place in the canon law and theology of marriage and so was discussed by a larger number of learned writers than ever before.

This change was a product of several wider intellectual developments that took place in the twelfth century. In the wake of the Gregorian reform of the previous century, the church was asserting its authority over marriage, and the papacy was beginning to make good its claim that local bishops should refer cases to Rome if they were 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 the canon law of marriage.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, theologians were also becoming interested in marriage. Their interest was partly stimulated by the development of canon law, on which they drew heavily, but there were other factors too. Most importantly, by the end of the century the Cathars in southern France and northern Italy were questioning the church's teachings on marriage and many other subjects, and in response Catholic writers were beginning to take a more positive view of marriage.<sup>2</sup>

Ideas about magically-caused impotence were also changed by the new way of thinking about the key texts of canon law and theology known as the scholastic method.<sup>3</sup> First, excerpts from many legal and theological texts were put together to produce collections of important passages (or 'sentences'). This process culminated in two textbooks, the *Decretum* of Gratian on canon law, and the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard on theology. At the same time, a new way of analysing these collections of sentences was developed by the theologians who studied at Laon under Anselm of Laon and his brother Ralph, although it was refined and made famous by Abelard in his *Sic et Non*. These theologians set authoritative passages on a given subject side by side, and then tried to resolve any contradictions between them. This method was useful in both canon law and theology, because both disciplines relied on an authoritative body of texts which were not supposed to disagree with each other, and it stimulated a great many works in both disciplines, as writers gradually turned disparate collections of sentences into coherent systems of thought.

Alongside these intellectual changes came institutional ones.<sup>4</sup> In the first half of the twelfth century, the cathedral schools of northern France and Bologna replaced the monasteries as the settings for new developments in theology and law respectively, and in Paris and Bologna these schools gradually became universities run by a self-governing academic guild of either masters (in Paris) or students (in Bologna). Paris and Bologna were joined in the thirteenth century by universities at Montpellier (already a medical school in the twelfth century), Oxford, Naples, Padua and elsewhere.

<sup>1</sup> Brundage, *Law*, 332.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 431.

<sup>3</sup> See R. W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995–2001), ii.27 and Marcia Colish, 'Another Look at the School of Laon', *AHDLMA* 53 (1986), 12–13.

<sup>4</sup> See Marcia L. Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition 400–1400* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 266–70.

The long-established medical school at Salerno also went through a very creative phase in the twelfth century, inspired by the translation of new medical works from Arabic into Latin.<sup>5</sup>

These changes transformed the way in which learned writers wrote about magically-caused impotence. Hincmar of Rheims' paragraph *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 so received many commentaries from twelfth-century canon lawyers. As the commentaries built on one another, ideas about impotence magic (and many other subjects) developed very fast. Therefore, by the end of the century, the canonists had a clear idea of what magically-caused impotence was and how it differed from naturally-caused impotence. Developments were not so rapid in theology or medicine, but a number of writers in both disciplines discussed magically-caused impotence in interesting ways. The theologian Peter Lombard included *Si per sortiarias* in his *Sentences*, and although the *Sentences* only began to receive systematic commentaries in the 1220s, several theologians wrote glosses on it in the second half of the twelfth century. In medicine, the first references to the chapter on magically-caused impotence in Constantine the African's *Pantegni* also appeared in the same period.

The changes that took place in the twelfth century increased the volume of discussion of magically-caused impotence dramatically, but they also made the relationship between written sources and popular practices more complex than it had been in the early Middle Ages. It is often difficult to know whether twelfth-century writers were thinking about real situations or simply copying earlier texts. One way of assessing this is to read a series of commentaries carefully, identifying what each writer has borrowed from his predecessors, and what seems to be new. Another is to compare the commentaries with other contemporary sources that mention what their authors claim are real cases of bewitchment. Several of these survive from the twelfth century. 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. As discussed in Chapter 3, in around

<sup>5</sup> Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'La Scuola di Salerno: il suo Sviluppo e il suo Contributo alla Storia della Scienza', in *Studi sulla Scuola medica salernitana* (Naples: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, 1986), 32.



1125 the historian Cosmas of Prague told how Welf of Bavaria accused Matilda of Tuscany of bewitching him on their wedding night.<sup>6</sup> There are also a number of twelfth-century papal decretals (rulings on individual cases) referring to impotence, and some of these mention magic. Best documented of all is the case 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.

## EARLY THEOLOGY AND CANON LAW COLLECTIONS

The transformation of discussions of magically-caused impotence began with two canon law collections assembled by Ivo, bishop of Chartres (d. 1115). The first of these was the *Decretum*, a huge collection of over three thousand passages from papal letters, church councils, penitentials, and the church fathers, which drew heavily on the eleventh-century *Decretum* of Burchard of Worms. It did not circulate very widely, perhaps because of its length, but Ivo later produced an abridged version called the *Panormia*, which proved extremely popular.<sup>7</sup> In both of these collections Ivo included *Si per sortiarias*.<sup>8</sup> In the *Decretum*, he took a long series of canons on marriage from Burchard's *Decretum* and put them in the same order into his own work, except that he added *Si per sortiarias*, which was not in Burchard.<sup>9</sup> Ivo clearly thought that magically-caused impotence was worth adding to a series of canons that he was otherwise content to copy verbatim, but this does not necessarily mean that it was a common problem; he may simply have wanted to be as comprehensive as possible. On the other hand, Ivo was a bishop and his letters show that he took an interest in marriage cases,<sup>10</sup> so he may have believed that the canon had a practical use.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 2. <sup>7</sup> Southern, *Scholastic Humanism*, i.260.

<sup>8</sup> *Decretum*: PL 161:624–5; *Panormia*: PL 161:1275–6.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Fournier, 'Les Collections Canoniques Attribuées à Yves de Chartres', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 58 (1897), 32.

<sup>10</sup> Georges Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest: the Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France*, trans. Barbara Bray (London: Allen Lane, 1983), 167.

When Ivo compiled the *Panormia*, he made an important innovation in his treatment of magically-caused impotence. In the *Decretum*, he had sandwiched *Si per sortiarias* between a canon that dealt with a man who had returned from captivity, and another concerning 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, and so for the first time Hincmar's text could be compared with the rules set out by other writers for other kinds of impotence. The most important of these were the passages *Quod autem interrogasti* and *De his requisisti* from a letter of Pope Gregory II (d. 731) which stated that if a husband or wife was unable to have sex, then it would be best if the couple remained together like brother and sister, but if they were unwilling to do this, they could separate and the healthy partner could remarry.<sup>11</sup> Ivo did not make any comparisons between Hincmar's ruling and Gregory's, but there were discrepancies between the two. The most important of these was that Gregory had not permitted the impotent spouse to remarry, whereas Hincmar allowed both spouses to do so. Moreover, Gregory had stated that if the impotent spouse later proved able to have sex, then the first marriage should be reinstated, whereas Hincmar said specifically that it should not.

The first attempts to reconcile these contradictory rulings came in the collections of sentences associated with the school of Anselm of Laon. Drawing on the *Panormia*, the Laon sentence collections took their information about magically-caused impotence from *Si per sortiarias*, such as the suggestion that tears, prayers, fasting and almsgiving were the best way to solve the problem.<sup>12</sup> However, one collection flatly disagreed with Hincmar over whether the bewitched couple should be allowed to separate and remarry: '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. But if they cannot be freed, he should keep her as a sister,

<sup>11</sup> PL 161:1274–5.

<sup>12</sup> Heinrich Weisweiler, *Das Schrifttum der Schule Anselms von Laon und Wilhelms von Champeaux in deutschen Bibliotheken* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1936), 373.

and she him as a brother.<sup>13</sup> This final phrase came from Gregory II's ruling, but Gregory had presented it as an ideal, not a command. Unlike many of the Laon sentence collectors, this anonymous author took information from all of the canons on impotence that could be found in the *Panormia*, and put it together to produce his own view.

As well as highlighting the discrepancies between different canons, some Laon sentence collectors also mention regional differences in the law regarding separation and remarriage in impotence cases. Two sentence collections stated that the French church allowed annulments in cases of *maleficium*, but the Roman church did not.<sup>14</sup> These references to divergent customs suggest that magically-caused impotence was not just a problem known in theory from *Si per sortiarias* and included in canon law and sentence collections for the sake of completeness. The few surviving references to cases of impotence magic, such as the case of Guibert of Nogent's parents, also suggest this. Guibert even said that it happened often: 'these arts are so frequently practised among the populace, that they are known by all uneducated people.'<sup>15</sup> However, without *Si per sortiarias*, magically-caused 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 naturally-caused impotence.

## GRATIAN AND THE DECRETISTS

In the mid twelfth century the sentence collections of the school of Laon were superseded by newer, more comprehensive works. In canon law, their place was taken by the *Decretum* of Gratian. Little is known about

<sup>13</sup> 'Item quaeritur 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.), 'Sententiae Berolinenses: eine neugefundene Sentenzensammlung aus der Schule des Anselm von Laon', *RTAM* 11 (1939), 59–60.

<sup>14</sup> Franz Bliemetzrieder, 'Théologie et Théologiens de l'École Episcopale de Paris avant Pierre Lombard', *RTAM* 3 (1931), 280; Odon Lottin, *Psychologie et Morale au XIIe et XIIIe Siècles* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1959), v.437.

<sup>15</sup> 'Ita enim populariter actitatur, ut jam ab rudibus quibusque sciatur.' Guibert de Nogent, *Autobiographie*, ed. Edmond-René Labande (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1981), 84.

Gratian, except that he taught law at Bologna, but it seems that he first composed the *Decretum* in around 1139, and that it was later revised and augmented, either by Gratian or by someone else, before 1155.<sup>16</sup> The *Decretum* was swiftly adopted as a textbook in the law schools of Bologna and Paris, and once canonists began to use it as a set text in this way, theology and canon law began for the first time to separate into different disciplines.<sup>17</sup> In the *Decretum*, Gratian attempted to resolve the conflicts between the various canon law texts on each subject. With this in mind, he pointed out the contradiction between the rulings of Hincmar of Rheims and Gregory II on impotence: 'But in this, [*Si per sortiaris*] 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.'<sup>18</sup> Gratian's statement that *Si per sortiaris* was contrary to Gregory's ruling, rather than the other way round, might indicate that he favoured Gregory's position. But if so, the hint was not clear enough, and one later commentator noted that he failed to explain the discrepancy.<sup>19</sup>

In the half century after Gratian, many commentators on the *Decretum* (known as 'decretists') tried to resolve this contradiction. Like certain theologians of the school of Laon earlier in the century, some were uneasy that Hincmar had allowed both spouses to remarry in cases of magically-caused impotence. For example, Johannes Faventinus reported that some canonists claimed that since Gregory II was a pope, his authority outweighed that of Hincmar, who was only an archbishop.<sup>20</sup> The glossator

<sup>16</sup> Anders Winroth, *The Making of Gratian's Decretum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 136–42.

<sup>17</sup> John van Engen, 'From Practical Theology to Divine Law: the Work and Mind of Medieval Canonists', in *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law*, ed. Peter Landau and Joers Mueller, Monumenta Iuris Canonici C.10 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1997), 876.

<sup>18</sup> 'Sed in hoc videtur contrarius premissis 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.

<sup>19</sup> 'Obiectionem hanc magister . . . suscitavit, sed non explicuit.' Rufinus, *Die Summa Magistri Rufini zum Decretum Gratiani*, ed. Johan Friedrich von Schulte (Giessen: Emil Roth, 1892), 433.

<sup>20</sup> 'Quidam tamen dicunt quod decretum apostolici derogabat decreto archiepiscopi.' Johannes Faventinus, gloss to C.33 q. 1 c. 4, *nequibunt*, BL MS Royal 9.E.VII, 146r. On Johannes see A. Stickler, 'Jean de Faenza', *DDC* vi.99–102.

Cardinalis (possibly Raymond des Arènes, who died in 1177 or 1178) was blunter: ‘Hence he should rather have been called “ignarus” [Ignorant] than “Igmarius” [Hincmar].’<sup>21</sup> However, other decretists believed that the contradiction could be explained away. The *Summa Parisiensis*, written in Paris in around 1160, attributed the solution to a ‘Master G.’, possibly the canonist and theologian Gandulph of Bologna. According to Master G., impotence caused by magic was different from other forms of impotence, and so required different rules. If a man was naturally impotent or castrated, then Master G. argued that 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, which meant that the church had been deceived and the first marriage should be reinstated. On the other hand, if a man was bewitched, he was not rendered impotent with everyone but only with one particular woman. Therefore if he married another woman and was able to consummate the second marriage, he should not be forced to return to his first wife.<sup>22</sup>

Both of these attitudes to *Si per sortiarias* persisted for the rest of the century. The Ordinary Gloss (standard commentary) on the *Decretum*, compiled by Johannes Teutonicus between 1210 and 1215, sat on the fence, repeating Cardinalis’s catchy pun without explicitly supporting or condemning it: ‘He should rather be called “Ignarus” than “Igmarius” . . . Others say the opposite.’<sup>23</sup> The persistence of these divergent attitudes is not surprising, because there remained no consensus about how to deal with impotence cases in practice.<sup>24</sup> Regional differences persisted, and even papal rulings were not consistent. In 1170–1, Pope Alexander III recognized the French church’s custom of allowing annulments in cases of

<sup>21</sup> ‘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), 556. On Cardinalis see Rudolf Weigand, ‘Die Glossen des Cardinalis—Raimundus de (H)arenis—zu C.16’, repr. in Weigand, *Glossatoren des Dekrets Gratians* (Goldbach: Keip Verlag, 1997), 149.

<sup>22</sup> *Summa Parisiensis*, ed. Terence P. McLaughlin (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1952), 249. McLaughlin suggests that Master G. was Gandulph, p. xxv.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Hic potius ignarus dicendus est quam Gnarus: . . . Alii dicunt contra.’ Johannes Teutonicus, gloss to C.33 q. 1 c. 4, *nequibunt*, in *Decretum Gratiani Glossis domini Johannis Teutonici* (Basel, 1512), 343v.

<sup>24</sup> 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, *Monumenta Iuris Canonici* C.8 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1988), 415.

impotence, but in 1190–1, Clement III forbade a separation in a case where an impotent man claimed that he was bewitched, on the grounds that this was against the custom of the Roman church.<sup>25</sup> The question of whether marriages should be annulled on grounds of impotence also touched on another important issue in marriage law, which was equally slow to be resolved. This was the question of whether a marriage had to be consummated in order to be complete and indissoluble. Gratian and the canonists of Bologna believed that consummation was vital, but the canonists of Paris argued that even an unconsummated marriage was indissoluble once consent had been exchanged.<sup>26</sup> As long as the canonists disagreed about whether an unconsummated marriage was indissoluble, they were unlikely to agree on how to deal with impotence cases.

As well as discussing how the rules should be interpreted, the decretists were also interested in how allegations of impotence, natural or magical, could be proved. How long should a couple remain together before seeking an annulment? Three years, said most canonists, drawing on Roman law.<sup>27</sup> If a woman claimed that her husband was impotent and he agreed, 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 Rufinus thought not, because the witnesses had only sworn to the couple's sincerity, not to the facts of the case.<sup>28</sup> If a woman claimed that her husband was impotent but he denied it, which of them 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 could produce supporters to swear that she was telling the truth, and the husband could not. Simon of Bisignano suggested that the wife could also win the case if a physical inspection proved that she was still a virgin,<sup>29</sup> and this suggestion was taken up by Johannes Teutonicus, who specified that the women who performed the inspection should be midwives, and said that they must also be 'very

<sup>25</sup> X 4.15.2; I Comp. 4.16.4.

<sup>26</sup> Brundage, 'Impotence', 407–16.

<sup>27</sup> e.g. Rufinus, *Die Summa*, 433.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 434.

<sup>29</sup> 'uel per iuramentum uel per inspectionem corporis.' Simon of Bisignano, *Summa*, ed. P. V. Aimoiné, Daniel Schwenzer, Georg Schmidt, and J. Werckmeister, C.33, [http://www.unifr.ch/cdc/summa\\_simonis\\_fr.php](http://www.unifr.ch/cdc/summa_simonis_fr.php). See also BL MS Add. 24659, 33r.

skilled' if this method of proof was to be believed in preference to the husband's oath.<sup>30</sup>

When they discussed these questions about annulment rules and proof, it is difficult to tell how far the decretists were thinking of real cases of impotence magic. Much was copied from one commentary to another: for example, Johannes Faventinus drew heavily on Rufinus. However, a few decretists did mention what might happen in practice. Paucapalea, who wrote one of the earliest commentaries on the *Decretum* between 1146 and the early 1150s, implied that the law regarding impotence magic was 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.'<sup>31</sup> Paucapalea also described 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.'<sup>32</sup> Paucapalea's hypothetical culprit was thus a jealous rival for the hand of one of the spouses, as in many real cases where impotence magic was alleged—although unusually, Paucapalea implies that this jealous rival is a man. The closest parallel comes from a trial in 1428, in which it was claimed that a man had employed Matteuccia di Francesco, a specialist in love magic, to make the husband of the woman he loved impotent.<sup>33</sup>

The canonists' remarks about methods of proving impotence may also reflect what went on in real cases. Church court records from as early as 1241 show that the woman could indeed undergo a physical inspection to prove her virginity, just as in Simon of Bisignano's commentary.<sup>34</sup> Rufinus also criticized the use of the ordeal to prove impotence, and this too may reflect a real practice: "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

<sup>30</sup> 'Si esset virgo, tunc sufficeret verum iudicium per obstetrices', Johannes Teutonicus, gloss to C. 33 q. 1 c. 2, *septima manu*, 343r; 'nisi mulieres essent peritissime, potius esset credendum viri sacramento.' gloss to C. 33 q. 1 c. 3, *tempore*, 343r.

<sup>31</sup> '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), 130.

<sup>32</sup> 'puta vehementer ego exardesco in quandam, 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.' *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>33</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>34</sup> Murray, 'Origins', 239.

neighbours.<sup>35</sup> This statement suggests that Rufinus was aware that people might resort to methods of proof not sanctioned by the church, but his comment was then passed on by other commentators, and it is less clear whether they too were thinking of real cases, or simply copying him.

The first fifty years of *Decretum* scholarship were summed up in the late 1180s by Huguccio, who taught law at Bologna and later became bishop of Ferrara.<sup>36</sup> Huguccio had read many earlier canonists, but he also had his own ideas, which were famously rigorous.<sup>37</sup> It is therefore not surprising that he took a strict view of when a separation could be granted in cases of magically-caused impotence, but his argument was a new one. Instead of focusing on the contradiction between *Si per sortiaris* and the other texts that discussed impotence, Huguccio stated that if there was uncertainty about when the bewitchment took place, then 'it should always be presumed that [the magic] follows the marriage.'<sup>38</sup> He did not specify here whether by 'marriage' he meant the exchange of consent or the consummation, but elsewhere in his commentary he supported the view of the Parisian canonists that consent alone was sufficient to make a marriage indissoluble,<sup>39</sup> so he probably meant the exchange of consent. This could have made it very difficult for couples to get an annulment, since many cases of impotence might not have been discovered until the wedding night, after consent had been exchanged.

Huguccio was even reluctant to allow annulments in cases where the bewitchment preceded the exchange of consent, and he offered a new 'fact' to justify his position: '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.'<sup>40</sup> This idea that whoever cast a spell could also lift it is also found in the much more abundant witch trial records of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which 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 this process

<sup>35</sup> 'per iustum iudicium, non utique candentis ferri vel ferventis aquae aut huiusmodi, quod prohibetur, sed septima manu propinquorum.' Rufinus, *Die Summa*, 434.

<sup>36</sup> Wolfgang P. Müller, *Huguccio: the Life, Works, and Thought of a Twelfth-Century Jurist* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 6. On Huguccio's view of impotence see Brundage, 'Impotence', 415–16.

<sup>37</sup> Müller, *Huguccio*, 137.

<sup>38</sup> 'semper presumitur esse secutum post matrimonium.' Huguccio, *Summa*, Paris BN MS lat. 3892, 320r.

<sup>39</sup> Brundage, *Law*, 268.

<sup>40</sup> 'vix est aliquis ita maleficiatus quin possit solvi presertim per actorem malefici, scilicet qui fecit illum.' Huguccio, *Summa*, 320r.



could really have made people feel better if it resolved the victim's fears and relieved tensions between the two parties.<sup>41</sup> The evidence is not so good for the Middle Ages, but Huguccio's remarks suggest that men who thought that they had been bewitched probably responded in the same way. The same idea is found in a case described by Thomas of Chobham in around 1216, in which the victim went to the woman who he thought had bewitched him and 'forced' her to lift the spell.<sup>42</sup>

In this way, Huguccio combined technical questions about what to do if there was doubt about when the magic occurred with information about how magic worked in the world around him. Although the earlier canonists had discussed methods of proving impotence in concrete terms, with the exception of Paucapalea they were not interested in who might cause impotence, or why, or how the magic operated. Compared with these earlier writers, Huguccio shows a new level of interest in magical practices and the ways in which people responded to them. In this respect, he anticipates the developments that took place in canon law in the thirteenth century, when the questions about the validity of *Si per sortiarias* were finally resolved and commentators began to say more about cases that they had heard about and magical practices.

## THEOLOGY AFTER THE SCHOOL OF LAON

Twelfth-century theologians did not discuss magically-caused impotence as regularly as the canonists because they were not yet writing commentaries on a set text in the way that the canonists wrote commentaries on Gratian's *Decretum*. However, a few writers did mention the subject in collections of sentences or works on the sacraments, often in terms that were strongly influenced by canon law.<sup>43</sup> The most important of these collections of sentences was the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, a master at Paris, written between 1155 and 1157.<sup>44</sup> In Book Four, Distinction 34 of the *Sentences*,

<sup>41</sup> Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: the Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), 63.

<sup>42</sup> See Ch. 6, n. 21.

<sup>43</sup> e.g. Robertus Pullus, *Sententiae*, PL 186:956; Robertus Paululus, *De Ceremoniis, Sacramentis, Officiis et Observationibus Ecclesiasticis*, PL 177:397–8; Ambrosius M. Gietl (ed.), *Die Sentenzen Rolands nachmals Papstes Alexander III* (Freiburg: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1891), 282.

<sup>44</sup> Marcia Colish, *Peter Lombard* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: Brill, 1994), i.15–23.

where he discussed impediments to marriage, Peter included *Si per sortiaris* along with several other texts on impotence, taking his material from Gratian.<sup>45</sup>

Like the canonists, Peter Lombard was uneasy about Hincmar of Rheims's final statement that a couple who had been separated on grounds of magic and had both remarried successfully, not only did not have to return to their first marriage, but could not do so. Instead of pointing out the apparent contradiction between this view and the rulings of Gregory II, Peter argued that this was simply too strict: 'What is contained in the end of the chapter should be understood more as rigour than as canonical equity.'<sup>46</sup> The concept of 'equity' focused on doing what would be fair in a given case, rather than on necessarily obeying the exact letter of the law.<sup>47</sup> It would presumably have allowed the couple to return to their first marriage in some cases, or perhaps even have insisted on it, as contemporary canonists did in cases of natural impotence. Alternatively, Peter suggested, perhaps Hincmar meant that the couple 'cannot be reconciled to their first marriages except by the judgement of the church, which made the separation.'<sup>48</sup> This was not what Hincmar's text said, but it would have appealed to twelfth-century churchmen who were trying to establish ecclesiastical control over marriage.

Like Gratian, Peter Lombard left later commentators plenty of scope for discussion. Although the *Sentences* did not give rise to a formal commentary tradition equivalent to that on the *Decretum* until the 1220s, it did receive glosses in the twelfth century. The authors of these glosses did not dispute the validity of Hincmar of Rheims's ruling, as some canonists did, but they were baffled by Peter Lombard's remarks about remarriage. Master Odo (who may have been chancellor of the university of Paris in 1164–8) suggested that it would be fairer, not more rigorous, to let the couple remain in their second, successful marriages rather than reinstating the first marriage. 'Master Odo says this, that

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, i.82.

<sup>46</sup> 'Quod in fine huius capituli continetur, ex rigore magis dictum intelligendum est quam ex canonica aequitate.' Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*, ed. I. Brady (Grottaferrata: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1981), ii.465.

<sup>47</sup> G. R. Evans, *Law and Theology in the Middle Ages* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 85–7.

<sup>48</sup> 'Vel intelligendum est non posse reconciliari prioribus nisi iudicio Ecclesie, quo divisio facta fuerit.' Peter Lombard, *Sentences*, 465.

Master Peter, with respect, 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.<sup>49</sup> Another anonymous glossator suggested that if a once-bewitched couple were reunited, they might simply find themselves bewitched again: “they cannot be reconciled”: that is, so that the sorceresses and magicians are not given a chance to work evil again.<sup>50</sup>

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 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 so the man and his bride could not have intercourse thereafter. Master Odo advised that if they wished, they could marry other people in Christ.<sup>51</sup>

The Latin is hard to decipher at some points, and it is difficult to tell how much of this story is true. The gruesome detail of the child’s head

<sup>49</sup> ‘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.’ Artur Landgraf, ‘Zwei Gelehrte aus der Umgebung des Petrus Lombardus’, *Divus Thomas*, 3rd ser. 11 (1933), 170.

<sup>50</sup> ‘“Reconciliari nequibunt”, scilicet ne sortiariis ac maleficis detur iterum occasio malignandi.’ *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>51</sup> ‘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 impediende 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.’ *Ibid.*, 162. The question marks are Landgraf’s.

found under the bed resembles the stories which emerged in later witch trials about the use of children's body parts for evil purposes, and which had been told about the Christians in Roman times and about heretics since the early eleventh century.<sup>52</sup> However, even if the image of the baby-killing witch is a very old stereotype, the use of a child's head is not impossible because people might occasionally try to use body parts in magic. In 1326, for example, two men were accused of taking two heads and an arm from men who had been hanged, and using them for magical purposes.<sup>53</sup> Odo's ending is also rather unsatisfying if the story is entirely fictional, since the head mysteriously disappeared and the couple could not be cured. This, and the circumstantial detail about how Odo was approached by the wife's brother, suggest 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 situation could lead to tensions resulting in accusations of magic—and probably also to genuine attempts at bewitchment. 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. Moreover, Odo did not say that he advised the couple to seek a formal annulment; he simply said they could remarry. His anecdote thus points to how writers might find out about cases, and also the informal way in which those cases might be dealt with. It also suggests, like the less detailed remarks of some canonists, that even if academic writers were prompted to discuss magically-caused impotence because *Si per sortiarias* appeared in a textbook, they could still write with an eye on the world around them.

## MEDICINE

Like the theologians, twelfth-century medical writers did not have a set place where they were forced to discuss magically-caused impotence, and

<sup>52</sup> Cohn, *Demons*, 1–4, 39, 68, 205.

<sup>53</sup> Alain Boureau, *Satan Hérétique: Histoire de la Démonologie (1280–1330)* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2004), 37.

so discussions were sporadic. The chapter on *maleficium* in the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African did not provoke much comment, probably because, as discussed in Chapter 3, the part of the *Pantegni* containing this chapter was not circulating widely in the twelfth century. However, by the end of the century, a few writers do seem to have encountered this text, at the medical school of Salerno, at least. The first possible reference to the *Pantegni* occurs 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, and was probably the author of letters giving medical advice to Peter the Venerable and King Louis VII of France.<sup>54</sup> When discussing impotence, Bartholomew stated that:

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 steps over 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 he should take care that the woman does not wear anything above her ears or in her hair, and she should be completely washed so that she is not 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.<sup>55</sup>

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 a reed (*penna*), but the latter seems more likely because it has parallels with one of the *Pantegni's* cures for *maleficium*: '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.' Although Bartholomew's description is more detailed, the essential features are common to both cures: the mercury in the reed, put in a certain

<sup>54</sup> 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), 62–4.

<sup>55</sup> 'Si quis non potest concumbere cum muliere accipiat argentum vivum et in penna 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 sit aliqua incantatione. Mulieri iterum valet si super pennam transeat et habeat secum predicto modo.' Salvatore de Renzi (ed.), *Collectio Salernitana* (Naples: Dalla tipografia del Filiatre-Sebezio, 1853, repr. Bologna: Forni, 1967), ii.329, emended by Hoffmann, 'Beiträge', 180.

place without the knowledge of the couple. The *Pantegni* chapter is more likely to be Bartholomew's source than vice versa, because it does not cite any surviving sources from later than the eleventh century.<sup>56</sup> However, Bartholomew did not simply copy the *Pantegni*; he produced a more elaborate description of what seems to be the same practice.

Bartholomew did not use the *Pantegni*'s word *maleficium* explicitly, but another twelfth-century medical writer, Roger de Barone, did. Roger seems to have been based in the south of France and wrote a medical compendium, the *Practica*. After listing various causes of impotence and how they could be recognized, he added 'If it is because of *maleficium*, it is known through the absence of other signs.' Magic is thus a way of explaining the inexplicable, a perspective similar to that of many writers in other disciplines who likewise suggested a magical explanation when a man's impotence seemed to have no physical cause. However, Roger differed from the *Pantegni* in his prognosis, which was pessimistic: 'If it happens by magic, it is not cured.'<sup>57</sup> This is a very unusual view, since the other medical texts that mentioned *maleficium* also suggested cures. Roger may simply have meant that magically-caused impotence could not be cured by ordinary medicine, an attitude shared by at least one later medical writer, who said that cases of *maleficium* should be 'left to God',<sup>58</sup> but his view is still very different from that offered by the *Pantegni*. In fact, apart from Roger's use of the word *maleficium*, there is no sign that he had read the *Pantegni* chapter on magically-caused impotence at all, and he may have taken the word *maleficium* from elsewhere: the canonists used it, for example. Roger's text thus suggests that not all medical writers who discussed magically-caused impotence did so purely because it was in the *Pantegni*; some may have been referring to an illness that they knew existed in the world around them.

Our third medical writer, Urso of Salerno, does seem to have read the *Pantegni* chapter on *maleficium*, but like Roger he approached the subject in a completely different way from Constantine the African. Urso was an early Western reader of Aristotle who wrote several medical works in the

<sup>56</sup> Green, 'Re-creation', 147.

<sup>57</sup> 'Si ex maleficio, per exclusionem aliorum signorum cognoscitur... Si autem fiat [edition reads 'fiant'] ex maleficio non curatur.' Roger de Barone, *Practica*, tr. 1, ch. 60, in *Cirurgia Guidonis de Cauliaco* (Venice, 1499), 156v; quoted in Hoffmann, 'Beiträge', 180.

<sup>58</sup> See Ch. 9, n. 54.

late twelfth century, including a set of aphorisms and a commentary on them.<sup>59</sup> In his commentary on Aphorism 24, Urso discussed the power of the imagination to affect the body, describing how 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; or if a person crosses a spot where they know that someone has been killed, they will feel afraid. He then went on to explore 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.<sup>60</sup> As another example, Urso mentioned one of the methods of causing impotence found in the *Pantegni*:

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.<sup>61</sup>

The *Pantegni* had also stated that 'a needle with which dead men or women have been sewn' could be used to cause impotence, but Urso's attitude is entirely different. Where the *Pantegni* classed the action of the needle as a form of *maleficium* and as 'diabolical', and where *Si per sortiarias* had also mentioned the devil, for Urso this process could be explained in purely physical terms without reference to the devil.

<sup>59</sup> Danielle Jacquart, 'Aristotelian Thought in Salerno', in Peter Dronke (ed.), *A History of Twelfth-Century Western Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 408.

<sup>60</sup> Rudolf Creutz (ed.), 'Die Medizinisch-Naturphilosophischen Aphorismen und Kommentare des Magister Urso Salernitanus', *Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften und der Medizin* 5 (1936), 50.

<sup>61</sup> 'Si aliqua mulier acum ex quantulocunque fumo resoluto a cadavere per suturam infectam portaverit, superjacentis viri veneriam impedit actionem vel amputat, dum aer infectus ex acu infecta inspiratus animalem 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.*, 51.

This explanation was not taken up by later medical writers, but as will be seen in Chapter 9, the later physicians Arnold of Villanova and Peter of Abano also explained some causes of impotence that most writers called *maleficium* in terms of natural causes. This attempt to offer a physical explanation also fits into 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.<sup>62</sup> The *Prose Salernitan Questions*, a series of questions-and-answers on scientific and medical topics much influenced by Urso, gave a similar explanation of the evil eye in terms of fumes subconsciously noticed.<sup>63</sup>

The few twelfth-century medical sources that mention impotence magic thus present a varied picture. Although the *Pantegni* chapter seems to have been known by the end of the century, at least in Salerno, it did not dominate all subsequent discussion of the subject. Its relationship to subsequent medical writing on magically-caused impotence is thus different from the relationship of *Si per sortiarias* to subsequent theology and canon law. The *Pantegni* did not have *Si per sortiarias*' status as an authoritative legal text; it was simply a source of information that medical writers could use if they wished. This meant that Urso could offer an alternative explanation for how a needle might cause impotence, and Roger de Barone could believe that magically-caused impotence was incurable. Bartholomew and Roger also included information not found in the *Pantegni*: Bartholomew fleshed out Constantine's recipe, and Roger said that magic could be diagnosed when the impotence seemed to have no other cause. This additional information suggests that these two medical writers were aware of beliefs about magically-caused impotence in the world around them. This is also suggested by Urso's discussion of the subject. Urso implied that the use of a needle to cause impotence was not a particularly unusual or surprising event. It was simply one of several examples that proved his point, and the others—such as bad food or a concealed corpse—were concrete examples that could actually happen.

<sup>62</sup> M. D. Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century*, trans. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 14.

<sup>63</sup> Brian Lawn (ed.), *The Prose Salernitan Questions* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 63.



## PHILIP AUGUSTUS

The unhappy marriage of Philip Augustus, King of France 1180–1223, and Ingeborg of Denmark<sup>64</sup> illustrates the effect of the changes in learned attitudes to magically-caused impotence that have been outlined in this chapter, but also shows how some ideas about magically-caused impotence remained unchanged from earlier periods. Philip married Ingeborg in 1193, but the day after the wedding he declared that the marriage was invalid on grounds of affinity, because Ingeborg was related to his first wife, Isabelle of Hainaut. Ingeborg, supported by Pope Innocent III from 1198 onwards, resisted all attempts to annul the marriage, but Philip was determined. When his claim of affinity was disproved, he claimed instead that he had never consummated the marriage because he had been bewitched. On one level, the case shows how by this time the aristocracy knew canon law and were prepared to manipulate it: like affinity, a claim of magically-caused impotence would render the initial marriage invalid, while still leaving Philip free to remarry. Philip's claim that he was bewitched was thus probably an attempt to exploit the law. Ingeborg always maintained that the marriage had been consummated, and a letter of 1208 from Philip to Innocent III made it clear that the king simply wanted an annulment 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.'<sup>65</sup>

However, the case can still tell us about how accusations of impotence magic might arise. Philip's sudden, mysterious aversion to Ingeborg attracted rumours of magic, just as Lothar II's attempts to repudiate his wife Theutberga had in the ninth century. According to an earlier letter of Innocent, 'Therefore the king himself thinks, and many people are also

<sup>64</sup> 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 Etranger* 62 (1984), repr. in *Droit de l'Eglise et Vie Sociale au Moyen Age* (Northampton: Variorum, 1989), 23 and John W. Baldwin, 'La Vie Sexuelle de Philippe-Auguste', in Michel Rouche (ed.), *Mariage et Sexualité au Moyen Age: Accord ou Crise?* (Paris: Presses de l'université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2000), 217–29.

<sup>65</sup> '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 . . .' PL 215:1493.

saying, that he is impeded perpetually by magic.<sup>66</sup> The monk Rigord, the historian of Philip's reign, also stated 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.'<sup>67</sup> Innocent may have been relying on information provided by Philip's lawyers, and Rigord is extremely favourable to Philip, but there may still be some truth in their claims that magic was widely rumoured.

As in the case of Lothar and Theutberga in the ninth century, magic was not the only explanation offered for Philip's behaviour. Contemporary English chroniclers suggested that perhaps Philip had found that Ingeborg was not a virgin, or had some hidden deformity, or even that she had bad breath.<sup>68</sup> However, Rigord 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, he 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.<sup>69</sup> How else to explain his behaviour? According to the *Gesta Innocentii*, a detailed history of Innocent III's pontificate, Philip had begun to behave oddly on the very day of the wedding, at Ingeborg's coronation: '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.'<sup>70</sup> Philip's claim of bewitchment, although probably untrue, could be made to seem plausible because it fitted existing beliefs.

This case thus illustrates an important point about the way in which impotence magic came to be discussed by the end of the twelfth century. The circumstances that gave rise to concerns about bewitchment do not seem to have changed significantly from earlier periods. Even though it

<sup>66</sup> 'Putat igitur ipse rex et multi etiam opinantur, quod perpetuo sit maleficio impeditus.' PL 215:680.

<sup>67</sup> '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: Renouard, 1882), i.124–5.

<sup>68</sup> Baldwin, 'Vie Sexuelle', 220.

<sup>69</sup> 'pulcherrimam, puellam sanctam et bonis moribus ornatam.' 'Ingeburgem diu desideratam.' Rigord, *Oeuvres*, 124.

<sup>70</sup> 'ad aspectum ipsius coepit vehementer horrescere, tremere ac pallere, ut nimium perturbatus, vix sustinere posset finem solemnitatis incoepte.' *Gesta Innocentii*, PL 214:XCIV.

was now more difficult to repudiate wives than it had been in the early Middle Ages, rumours of magic still tended to arise in cases where men came to hate their wives for no apparent reason even if, like Philip, these men were no longer able to separate and remarry as they wished. In fact, since magically-caused impotence was one of the few grounds for annulment which permitted both partners to remarry, it is perhaps surprising that more allegations were not made by men who were unable to get rid of unwanted wives in other ways. This does not seem to have happened, however, probably because canon law required couples who sought an annulment on grounds of impotence to stay together and try to have sex for three years. Certainly this is what Innocent told Philip Augustus to do,<sup>71</sup> and it seems to have discouraged Philip, because after this no more is heard about Philip's supposed impotence.

## CONCLUSION

The intellectual developments of the twelfth century radically changed the way in which learned writers thought about magically-caused impotence. It was no longer the preserve of isolated individuals with a particular interest in magic or marriage, but had found a place in three academic disciplines. As these disciplines developed, so too did discussions of magically-caused impotence. More writers than before began to think harder about how to define the problem, about how it might be cured, and about how cases should be dealt with. Thus by the end of the twelfth century, the learned elite of western Europe had a relatively clear idea of what magically-caused impotence was and how it fitted into their understanding of the world. However, even as they became more precise, discussions of magically-caused impotence also became more abstract. Many twelfth-century writers were interested in fitting magically-caused impotence into wider bodies of knowledge (medical, legal, or theological), in contrast to the authors discussed in Chapter 3, who seem to have been responding more directly to what they had observed in the world around them.

The change is most evident in canon law, where *Si per sortiaras* attracted a large number of commentaries which attempted to resolve the discrepancies between Hincmar's ruling and the other canons dealing

<sup>71</sup> PL 214:1498.

with impotence. With a few notable exceptions, however, these commentaries do not say much about what might happen in real cases. This is not surprising: in an age when marriage law was developing rapidly, and more and more cases were coming to bishops and the papacy, the first priority was to establish what the law was. There was a reality behind all of this, as indicated by the papal rulings 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. The situation in theology and medicine was different because theologians and medical writers were not commenting regularly on a set text that mentioned magically-caused impotence. Here, writers might still mention the subject because they were interested, rather than simply because it was part of a textbook. Some of their comments, and the evidence of other cases like that of Philip Augustus, suggest that although magically-caused impotence was now being written about in new ways, popular beliefs about the subject had not changed significantly.

As will be seen in the following chapters, discussions of magically-caused impotence changed again in the thirteenth century, as the church became more interested in regulating lay piety and as magical texts translated from Arabic gave rise to new concerns about magic. Both of these developments prompted writers on impotence magic to introduce new information and ask new questions. However, these later developments would not have been possible without the foundations laid in the twelfth century. Twelfth-century canonists, theologians, and medical writers may have been less interested in the reality of impotence magic than writers either before or afterwards, but they enabled later writers to build on a sophisticated and coherent body of scholarship.

## 5

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

Before assessing the changes that took place in learned attitudes to magically-caused impotence in the thirteenth century, it is necessary to look at another development which began in the twelfth century and profoundly influenced perceptions of magic in the later Middle Ages. This was the translation of magical and astrological texts from Arabic into Latin, which was associated with Toledo in the twelfth century and continued into the thirteenth century, notably at the court of Alfonso the Wise of Castile (d. 1284).<sup>1</sup> It has long been recognized that the presence of these texts in the Latin West changed learned views of magic considerably, causing some churchmen to worry more than before about the way in which magic involved demons.<sup>2</sup> Recently, however, historians have begun to study the contents and transmission of the magical texts in more detail, so it is becoming possible to gain a clearer idea of their impact on learned views of magic.<sup>3</sup>

By the thirteenth century, magical texts were circulating among students in Paris,<sup>4</sup> where the theologian William of Auvergne, bishop of Paris

<sup>1</sup> On this process see David Pingree, 'The Diffusion of Arabic Magical Texts in Western Europe', in *La Diffusione delle Scienze Islamiche nel Medio Evo Europeo* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1987), 57–102.

<sup>2</sup> Cohn, *Demons*, 110; Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), 88–9.

<sup>3</sup> e.g., the works of David Pingree, Richard Kieckhefer, Claire Fanger, Paolo Lucentini, and Nicolas Weill-Parot cited in the notes to this chapter.

<sup>4</sup> Pingree, 'Diffusion', 57.

1228–49, remembered reading 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, William had come to believe that the rituals in these texts invoked demons, and interest gave way to condemnation: ‘we do not so much repress the horrific memory of them, as flee from it.’<sup>5</sup> William’s younger contemporary Albertus Magnus had also read magical texts and, as will be seen in Chapter 8, he used them as sources of information about magically-caused impotence. Like William, Albertus usually condemned the magical texts as demonic (in his theological works, at least), but Michael Scot (d. c. 1235), the astrologer and translator of Arabic scientific texts, took a more positive view. Although he admitted that some forms of magic were condemned by the church, Michael 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’.<sup>6</sup>

## IMPOTENCE IN THE MAGICAL TEXTS

What was in these texts that was so disturbing but fascinating? And how did they relate to beliefs about magically-caused impotence? Most relevant in this context were the texts of ‘image magic’, a kind of magic that seems to have been developed in ninth-century Syria, especially in the city of Harran, which blended elements of late antique neo-Platonism with Indian, Iranian, and Syrian magic.<sup>7</sup> It was based on the belief that power

<sup>5</sup> ‘et haec omnia in libris judiciorum astronomiae, et in libris magorum atque maleficorum tempore adolescentiae nostrae nos meminimus inspexisse.’ William of Auvergne, *De Legibus*, ch. 25; ‘nos istorum memoriam horrificam non tam perstringimus, quam etiam fugimus.’ *De Legibus*, ch. 27, in *Opera Omnia* (Paris, 1674), i.78a and 89b. On William and magic see Steven P. Marrone, ‘William of Auvergne on Magic in Natural Philosophy and Theology’, in Jan A. Aertsen and Andreas Speer (eds.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 741–8.

<sup>6</sup> ‘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 (eds.), *Sic Itur ad Astra: Studien zur Geschichte der Mathematik und Naturwissenschaften* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), 421.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Burnett, ‘Arabic, Greek and Latin Works on Astrological Magic Attributed to Aristotle’, in J. Kraye, W. F. Ryan, and C. B. Schmitt (eds.), *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages* (London: Warburg Institute, 1987), repr. in Burnett, *Magic*, 87; David Pingree, ‘Some of the Sources of the Ghāyat al-Hakīm’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 43 (1980), 2.

flowed from the stars and planets to earth, where it could produce material effects. Image magic sought 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 the spirits who were believed to rule over the various planets were also invoked. 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 image-magic texts included rituals to achieve a variety of goals, but causing impotence was relatively uncommon. Some works did not mention it at all, such as those attributed to Thâbit ibn Qurra and Toz Grecus,<sup>8</sup> but other texts did contain a few images that were explicitly designed to cause impotence. There is one (out of a total of forty-two images) in a work on images attributed to Ptolemy:

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.' 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.<sup>9</sup>

There are also several images that cause impotence in *Picatrix*, a large compilation of magical procedures translated in Castile after 1256 (although they form a very small part of the 235 pages of text in the modern edition).<sup>10</sup> For example:

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

<sup>8</sup> Francis J. Carmody (ed.), *The Astronomical Works of Thâbit b. Qurra* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960), 180–97; Toz Grecus, *Liber Veneris* and *Liber de Lapidibus Veneris*, BL MS Sloane 3883, 96r–99v.

<sup>9</sup> 'Cum voleris ligare virum aut mulierem fiat omaga viri cuius pedes erigantur ad celum et capud sit in terra. Hec autem sit de cera [BN MS lat. 17178 reads: 'terra'], dicendo "Ligavi N filium [BL MS Harley 80 reads: 'filiam'] huius mulieris et universas venas eius quousque non habeat voluntatem viri." Post hec abhumeretur 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.' BN MS lat. 17178, 35v, and BL MS Harley 80, 77v. I am grateful to Charles Burnett for this reference.

<sup>10</sup> *Picatrix: the Latin Version of the Ghayat Al-Hakim*, ed. David Pingree (London: Warburg Institute, 1986), 11, 13, 80, 155, 231.

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 it as a drink to him whose desire for a woman you wish to take away, and fumigate it [the image] with two drachms each of incense and galbanum mixed together. And what you wish will happen.<sup>11</sup>

*Picatrix* also suggested a way of curing magically-caused impotence. The magician should make images of a man in red wax and a woman in white wax, bearing the names of the couple he wishes to cure, at the right astrological moment. The images are then joined together in an embrace, fumigated and bathed in rose water, and '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.'<sup>12</sup>

Another work, the *Book of Angels, Rings, Characters and Images of the Planets*, which survives in a fifteenth-century manuscript, contains two rituals 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.<sup>13</sup>

Other magical texts translated from Arabic relied on slightly different principles. The *Liber Antimaquis* attributed to Aristotle worked on the theory that man is a microcosm of the universe, and so has the power to manipulate nature, but like the image-magic texts quoted above, it uses natural objects to channel celestial powers.<sup>14</sup> It also contains one procedure to cause impotence:

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

<sup>11</sup> For Latin see *Picatrix*, ed. Pingree, 155.

<sup>12</sup> 'Quod si aliquis ligatus, qui non possit cum muliere agere, secum dictas ymagines portaverit, dissolvetur et cum muliere iacere poterit.' *Ibid.*, 231.

<sup>13</sup> Juris G. Lidaka, 'The *Book of Angels, Rings, Characters, and Images of the Planets* Attributed to Osbern Bokenham', in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits*, 58–60, 72.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Burnett (ed.), *Liber Antimaquis*, in *Astrologia et Divinatoria*, CCCM 144C, 179–83.



it to a man or woman, they will not be able to have intercourse. 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 bat's blood.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to these examples where impotence is mentioned specifically, the image-magic texts refer more often to causing separation, hate or discord. The book of images attributed to Thâbit ibn Qurra notes that doing the opposite of a love spell will separate lovers, and another book of images attributed to Hermes mentions an 'image of separation and binding and sickness and destruction'.<sup>16</sup> The 'separation' that these texts referred to might have included impotence, although the two did not have to go together. It is also possible that the authors of the image-magic texts, like the early medieval western writers about magically-caused impotence discussed in Chapter 3, were not very interested in distinguishing between hate magic and impotence magic. As long as the relationship was broken up, either would do.

Not surprisingly, many medieval writers found procedures like those quoted above problematic. The main reason for this was that it was not clear what made them work. Certain twelfth-century writers, and in the thirteenth century Michael Scot, and Albertus Magnus in his discussion of the powers of stones, believed that some inscribed images drew on natural powers put into the cosmos by God, and therefore that it was legitimate to use them.<sup>17</sup> However, other writers, like Thomas Aquinas, claimed that engraved images could never produce effects in themselves, and simply acted as signs for demons. The demons then produced the desired effects in order to deceive the magician.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> 'In climate Saturni ad ligandum recipe sanguinem lupi, cerebrum uacae, 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 tantundem sanguinem uespertilionis commisce.' *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>16</sup> Carmody (ed.), *Astronomical Works*, 191; 'fac ymaginem separacionis et alligacionis et infirmitatis et destructionis.' Ps-Hermes, *Liber Imaginum translatus ab Hermete*, BL MS Harley 80, 78r.

<sup>17</sup> Charles Burnett, 'Talismans: Magic as Science? Necromancy among the Seven Liberal Arts', in Burnett, *Magic*; Nicolas Weill-Parot, *Les 'Images Astrologiques' au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance: Spéculations Intellectuelles et Pratiques Magiques* (Paris: Champion, 2002), 268–72; Lucentini, 'L'Ermetismo Magico', 422–3.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 40, ed. and trans. Thomas Franklin O'Meara and Michael John Duffy (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1958), 2a2ae, 96.2, 74–7.

The difficulty of assessing what made these procedures work was compounded by the differences between individual texts. Some rituals looked more demonic than others: for example, the *Book of Angels* invoked the 'spirits of Saturn' directly, whereas the surviving parts of the procedure in the *Liber Antimaquis* make no direct references to the invocation of spiritual beings.

These anxieties led to the writing of the *Speculum Astronomiae*, a work which attempted to separate texts that dealt with acceptable, natural processes from those that were demonic. The authorship and date of the *Speculum* are much debated: it was probably written before 1270 and is often attributed to Albertus Magnus, but this attribution only seems to date from the early fourteenth century.<sup>19</sup> Whoever the author was, he divided image magic into three categories. The first was 'abominable', and 'demands suffumigations and invocations'. An example of this might 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 unsuitable ([but it is] nevertheless detestable), which is effected by means of inscribing characters which are to be exorcised 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. Here the author may have been thinking of a procedure like the cure for magically-caused impotence found in one manuscript of the treatise *Remedies Against Magic* (see Chapter 9 and Appendix 1, Part 4), which involved writing the words 'ha. ha. at.' on a sword. The third category consisted of astronomical images that did not involve invocations or inscribed characters, and so were deemed to rely solely on natural powers.<sup>20</sup>

Paolo Lucentini has argued that this was an important new way of categorizing image magic. While earlier authors had not attempted to

<sup>19</sup> On the date: Weill-Parot, *Les 'Images Astrologiques'*, 27–32. On the authorship: Paola Zambelli, *The 'Speculum Astronomiae' and its Enigma* (Boston: Kluwer Academic, 1992), 45; Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, *Le 'Speculum Astronomiae', une Enigme? Enquête sur les Manuscrits* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 60; and Bruno Roy, 'Richard de Fournival, Auteur du *Speculum Astronomiae*?' *AHDLMA* 67 (2000), 159–80.

<sup>20</sup> *Speculum Astronomiae*, ed. Stefano Caroti, Michela Pereira, Stefano Zamponi, and Paola Zambelli (Pisa: Domus Galilaeanae, 1977), 27–8, 32, trans. in Zambelli, *The 'Speculum Astronomiae'*, 240–1, 247.

distinguish between different types of image magic, the author of the *Speculum* separated natural images from demonic or potentially demonic ones for the first time, in an attempt to save the 'science of images' as a whole from accusations of being demonic.<sup>21</sup> However, as Nicolas Weill-Parot has pointed out, the categories are not watertight: the two texts that the author of the *Speculum* concedes are licit, do not contain fundamentally different rituals from those in the texts that he condemns.<sup>22</sup>

The goals of the rituals in the magical texts 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 necessarily bad, most could be seen as frivolous and some were taken as evidence that demons were involved in image magic. William of Auvergne certainly thought that the goals of the processes found in magical texts were 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 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* [my emphasis]? What person, even the worst, would listen to someone who asked for such things?' William argued that most people would not do these things and angels certainly would not; therefore, any being willing to grant such requests must be a demon.<sup>23</sup>

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

<sup>21</sup> Lucentini, 'L' Ermetismo Magico', 428.

<sup>22</sup> Weill-Parot, *Les 'Images Astrologiques'*, 85.

<sup>23</sup> '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 ejus steriles faceret, aut maritum mulieris alicuius, vel uxorem ligaret? Quis etiam pessimus petentem talia exaudiret? . . . Si autem in eis qui terram inhabitant, bonis hominibus, istae nequitiae locum non habent, quanto minus in eis qui coelos inhabitant, et nomine deorum isti honorandos putant, talia inveniri impossibile est?' William of Auvergne, *De Universo* II.3.6, in *Opera* i.1026b.

an elaborate system of prayers and meditations on certain diagrams. Some works even went further and promised operators the beatific vision.<sup>24</sup> A variant of the *Ars Notoria* was the *Sworn Book of Honorius*, which promised knowledge but also gave instructions for achieving concrete goals.<sup>25</sup> Neither of these works mentioned causing impotence, however. There were also works of necromancy that used procedures based on Christian ritual to invoke demons to do the magician's bidding, such as one surviving in a fifteenth-century manuscript that has been edited by Richard Kieckhefer. This work contains rituals for a wide variety of goals, but only one brief reference to causing impotence. In a section on image magic, it says that the eleventh hour of the day is the time 'to bind a man with a woman or vice versa'.<sup>26</sup> However, it is possible that other similar works might say more about causing impotence.

## NATURAL MAGIC

At the same time as the magical texts were being translated, some medieval writers were developing a new category of magic, *magia naturalis* or 'natural magic'. This relied not on demons but on the hidden or 'occult' forces inherent in natural substances. Occult forces were forces that 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. Instead, they might be deemed to be completely inexplicable, arising somehow from the 'whole substance' of the object rather than from its combination of qualities; or, like image magic, they might be thought to rely on the power of the stars.<sup>27</sup> Natural magic could

<sup>24</sup> See 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*, 216, and Jean-Patrice Boudet, 'L' *Ars Notoria* au Moyen Age: une Résurgence de la Théurgie Antique?', in Alain Moreau and Jean-Claude Turpin (eds.), *La Magie: Actes du Colloque International de Montpellier* (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 2000), iii.173–96.

<sup>25</sup> Gösta Hedegård (ed.), *Liber Iuratus Honorii: a Critical Edition of the Latin Version of the Sworn Book of Honorius* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 2002).

<sup>26</sup> 'Undecima hora diei dicitur Nathalon. In ea operari poteris . . . ad ligandum virum cum muliere vel e contrario.' *Forbidden Rites: a Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), 307.

<sup>27</sup> Brian P. Copenhaver, 'Scholastic Philosophy and Renaissance Magic in the *De vita* of Marsilio Ficino', *Renaissance Quarterly* 37 (1984), 525, 536.

also make use of symbolic connections between objects, a phenomenon which nineteenth-century anthropologists dubbed 'sympathetic magic': for example, the testicles of an animal associated with sex or fertility, such as a deer or hare, might be used to cure impotence.<sup>28</sup> Even the use of words to affect the material world could sometimes be classed as natural magic, although many writers, following St Augustine, suspected that this was demonic.<sup>29</sup> In its use of the occult properties of natural objects, natural magic overlapped with medicine, which (as will be seen in Chapter 9) also recognized the existence of remedies that could not be explained by the four qualities, although medical writers called these 'empirical' remedies rather than natural magic.

Several works containing information on the occult properties of natural objects were translated into Latin in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, including Costa ben Luca's *Physical Ligatures*, which discussed the medical uses of amulets (see Chapter 3), and the *Kyranides*, the Greek treatise on amulets and the properties of plants, stones, birds, and fish discussed in Chapter 2. As with the image-magic texts, a few writers on magically-caused impotence used these works as sources of information. For example, the theologian John Quidort of Paris quoted the passage from *Physical Ligatures* in which Costa claimed to have cured a case of supposedly magical impotence, and the medical writer Petrus Hispanus included many aphrodisiacs from the *Kyranides* in his compendium, the *Thesaurus Pauperum*.<sup>30</sup>

Despite Petrus Hispanus' use of the *Kyranides* and the acceptance of 'empirical remedies' in other medical texts, however, natural magic remained potentially problematic because there was no foolproof way of distinguishing a legitimate use of an occult but natural power from a sign to demons. For example, William of Auvergne was 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 incantations and the illusions of evil spirits?'<sup>31</sup> The chapter on magically-caused impotence in the *Pantegni*, by

<sup>28</sup> Kieckhefer, *Magic*, 13.

<sup>29</sup> Claire Fanger, 'Things Done Wisely by a Wise Enchanter: Negotiating the Power of Words in the Thirteenth Century', *Esoterica* (Electronic Journal) 1 (1999), 111.

<sup>30</sup> John: see Ch. 8, n. 49. Costa: see Ch. 3, n. 67. Petrus: see Ch. 9, n. 27.

<sup>31</sup> 'De argento vero vivo, quae virtus cogitari potest, per quam incantationes, et praestigia spirituum malignorum prohibeat?' William of Auvergne, *De Universo* II.3.22, 1060a.

contrast, recommended mercury as a cure, probably because of this same belief that it could repel incantations and evil spirits. However, William used the term 'natural magic' in a positive sense elsewhere in his works, arguing that some occult virtues were indeed natural.<sup>32</sup> In this context, he explicitly recommended another process that featured as a cure for *maleficium* in the *Pantegni*:

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.<sup>33</sup>

Albertus Magnus went further and suggested how the hidden powers of parts of animals could be used to cause impotence. In his *De Animalibus* he stated that '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.'<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup> Did this count as demonic magic, or did it rely on some natural but occult power inherent in the wolf? Albertus did not say, but he did not condemn it as he condemned 'necromancy' and 'making images' in his theological discussion of magically-caused impotence, which will be discussed in Chapter 8. Even allowing for the fact that Albertus sometimes expressed different views in his scientific works and in his theological ones,<sup>36</sup> it seems that he saw image magic and necromancy as different from carrying animal parts. The first two were likely to

<sup>32</sup> Marrone, 'William of Auvergne', 745–6.

<sup>33</sup> 'In uno namque ex libris Hebraeorum expresse legitur, dixisse quendam ex sanctis angelis: quia fumus cordis cujusdam piscis positi super carbones exterminat omne genus daemoniorum, sive a viro, sive a muliere. Et manifestum est, quod liber iste authenticus est tam apud gentem Hebraeorum, quam apud gentem Christianorum.' William of Auvergne, *De Universo* II.3.22, 1060b.

<sup>34</sup> Albertus Magnus, *On Animals*, trans. Kenneth F. Kitchell Jr. and Irven Michael Resnick, 2 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), ii. 1519–20.

<sup>35</sup> *Sefer Hanisyonot: the Book of Medical Experiences Attributed to Abraham ibn Ezra*, ed. and trans. J. O. Leibowitz and S. Marcus (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984), 247–9. On 'the wise Solomon', *ibid.*, 74.

<sup>36</sup> Edward Synan, 'Introduction', in James A. Weisheipl (ed.), *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences: Commemorative Essays 1980* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1980), 10.

involve demons, whereas the last was simply harnessing the God-given powers of nature.

## CONCLUSION: THE INFLUENCE OF THE MAGICAL TEXTS ON MEDIEVAL DISCUSSIONS OF MAGICALLY-CAUSED IMPOTENCE

The translation of magical texts in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries vastly increased the amount of information that writers about magically-caused impotence could draw on if they wished. Although impotence was not a major concern of the newly translated magical texts, Albertus Magnus cited them several times in his theological discussion of impotence magic. Moreover, as will be seen in Chapter 8, they prompted him to break away from earlier theological discussions of impotence magic and ask new questions. In doing this, Albertus seems to have assumed that the image-magic texts were referring to the same phenomenon as the classic ninth-century text on magically-caused impotence, *Si per sortiarias*, on which he was commenting. Albertus was not alone in conflating the existing magic of western Europe with what he found in the magical texts in this way. Michael Bailey has recently argued that from the early fourteenth century onwards, certain writers on magic, notably the inquisitors Bernard Gui and Nicholas Eymeric and the preacher Johannes Nider, similarly failed to recognize that the text-based forms of magic practised by clerics were very different from popular magic.<sup>37</sup> The parallels that Albertus drew between the magical texts and *Si per sortiarias* were not entirely unfounded, because impotence was mentioned in a few image-magic texts; but there were also real differences between the contents of the magical texts and the little that other sources suggest about 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 impotence. It is possible that those who wished to make their ex-lovers impotent

<sup>37</sup> Michael Bailey, 'From Sorcery to Witchcraft: Clerical Conceptions of Magic in the Later Middle Ages', *Speculum* 76 (2001), 960–90.

could have gone to a magician who used these magical texts, but 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 astrological 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 a young man who wanted to make his lover's new husband impotent to extinguish a candle at their wedding and say an incantation.<sup>38</sup>

Secondly, as these two examples suggest, the rituals in the image-magic texts are very different from the accounts of impotence magic found in other sources. The image-magic texts describe complex operations which take into account the positions of the stars and require the writing of certain characters, and fumigations with exotic ingredients (such as *Picatrix's* galbanum). What we know of popular impotence spells from anecdotes and case records is different. Although non-learned magical practitioners could and did use incantations and written charms, they are unlikely to have used the lists of names and characters found in the magical texts, and the materials that they used were easily available. In addition to the cases of Matteuccia di Francesco and Margot de la Barre mentioned above, the pastoral writer Thomas of Chobham referred to a lock being thrown down a well, and several Scandinavian trials that mention magically-caused impotence describe the use of bread, peas, a sword, urine, an ox-horn, and a cat's head.<sup>39</sup>

Despite these important differences, there are several reasons why Albertus probably believed that the magic of the magical texts and traditional impotence magic were the same, and why the later writers discussed by Bailey also conflated learned with popular magic. Firstly, drawing on 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

<sup>38</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas of Chobham: see Ch. 6, n. 21; Stephen A. Mitchell, 'Anaphrodisiac Charms in the Nordic Middle Ages: Impotence, Infertility, and Magic', *Norveg 41* (1998), 22–4.



harm to enemies. Thirdly, some of the techniques used looked similar: both learned and popular magic employed images, incantations, and writing, although the magical texts usually used these in more complicated ways. Perhaps because they thought that the similarities outweighed the differences, Albertus and the writers discussed by Bailey did not distinguish between the two kinds of magic.

Interestingly, however, many thirteenth- and fourteenth-century theologians who wrote about magically-caused impotence did not mention the information found in the magical texts. Thus they seem unaffected by the tendency to conflate learned and popular magic that is evident in Albertus and in the writers discussed by Bailey, even though (as will be seen in Chapter 8) many of them were interested in how magic worked. In fact, only one later theologian seems to have copied one of the references to magical texts found in Albertus' discussion of *Si per sortiarias*. One explanation for this might be that the magical texts did not circulate widely. However, this is unlikely to be the only explanation, because some thirteenth-century collections of *exempla* (short moral tales used in preaching) suggest that magical texts were at least known about at the University of Paris.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, some image-magic texts did have a relatively wide circulation. Although very few manuscripts survive from before the fourteenth century, some works survive in relatively large numbers of manuscripts thereafter: the book of images of the moon attributed to Belenus survives complete in seventeen manuscripts, for example, and the work on the images of the twenty-four hours of the day in eighteen manuscripts.<sup>41</sup>

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 or heard of them. This was probably because, unlike Albertus, they thought that the differences between the two outweighed the similarities. This hypothesis is also suggested by the fact that pastoral literature and canon law, which were designed to influence laypeople's lives more directly than theology, did not mention magical texts at all when they discussed magically-caused impotence. Instead, writers in these disciplines used information that came from their own or their colleagues' contacts with

<sup>40</sup> D. L. d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 198–202.

<sup>41</sup> Paolo Lucentini and Vittoria Perrone Compagni, *I Testi e i Codici di Ermete nel Medioevo* (Florence: Polistampa, 2001), 72–3, 75–6.

the laity. Information of this sort was probably easy to come by, whereas authors would have to make a special effort to procure and read a magical text. Moreover, a theologian, canonist or pastoral writer might not want to admit to reading magical texts, while information heard in confession did not have the same problems attached. Magical texts thus had a crucial influence on Albertus Magnus, and the questions they prompted him to ask became part of theological discussions of magically-caused impotence. They also contributed to general anxieties about the role of demons in magic which are reflected in learned discussions of magically-caused impotence in the fifteenth century. However, it seems that most writers who discussed magically-caused impotence before the fifteenth century did not find the magical texts useful in this context. Instead they preferred to quote confessions and other sources of information about popular magical practices.

## 6

# ‘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 magically-caused impotence, Hincmar of Rheims and Burchard of Worms. However, in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the need to reform the system of pastoral care came to seem more pressing than before, in the wake of the changes that had taken place in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Population growth, economic expansion, and urbanization had triggered the set of far-reaching political, social, and cultural changes known as the ‘twelfth-century renaissance’, and these changes had affected the way in which many churchmen saw their relationship with the laity. The rising population put new strains on the existing system of pastoral care and urbanization and economic growth created new social groups, to which the church had to tailor its message. The Gregorian reform of the eleventh century had also left the church keen to extend its influence over the laity, and the development of increasingly sophisticated systems of law and administration in the twelfth century provided a means of doing this. Events in the late twelfth century in particular also prompted concerns about lay beliefs and morals. The loss of Jerusalem to Saladin in 1187 was widely blamed on the sins of Christendom; religious movements run by

<sup>1</sup> What follows is based on André Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, trans. Margery J. Schneider (Notre Dame, IN, and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 95–106, and Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 489–96.

laypeople were on the rise; and heresy had broken out on a larger scale than before, in the form of the Cathars and Waldensians in southern France and northern Italy.

By the end of the twelfth century, these factors had created a climate right for concerns about lay behaviour and 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 Chanter, these theologians applied moral theology to practical, contemporary issues such as marriage, trade, and usury, and often based their conclusions on individual case studies.<sup>2</sup> Several members of Peter's circle also went on to hold influential positions in the church, from which they promoted their reforming ideas. These included Robert Courson, who became a cardinal and papal legate; the archbishop of Canterbury Stephen Langton; the preachers Jacques de Vitry, Fulk of Neuilly, and Raoul Ardent; and probably Pope Innocent III,<sup>3</sup> 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 dealt with a great many matters, but among its rulings were several that focused on the pastoral care of the laity.<sup>4</sup> The most important of these was that all laypeople were required to go to confession at least once a year, and Innocent accompanied this rule with strict sanctions that seem to have had an impact in at least some areas.<sup>5</sup> The Council also recognized that priests had to be educated if they were to exercise their pastoral responsibilities effectively, and so it instructed bishops to appoint someone to teach the Bible to priests, with a special emphasis on pastoral care, but it was less successful in enforcing this. In practice, a great deal of preaching and hearing of confessions was done by the new orders of friars (who were not mentioned by the Council), especially in the towns, and most parish priests do not seem to have been expected to have or need much formal education.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> John W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants: the Social Views of Peter the Chanter and his Circle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), i. p. xi.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 17–18; Morris, *Papal Monarchy*, 436.

<sup>4</sup> On the Fourth Lateran Council see *ibid.*, 436–8.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Murray, 'Piety and Impiety in Thirteenth-Century Italy', *Studies in Church History* 8 (1972), 94.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Goering, *William de Montibus (c.1140–1213): the Schools and the Literature of Pastoral Care* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1992), 61.

Once the pastoral movement began, it also gained its own momentum, as some of the clerics who went among the laity to preach and hear confessions uncovered distinctly unorthodox beliefs. A famous case is that of the Dominican friar Stephen of Bourbon (d. 1262), who found villagers in the Auvergne venerating a dog as a saint.<sup>7</sup> This case shows clearly how the pastoral movement brought clerics who were engaged in pastoral care into contact with popular beliefs and practices on a larger scale than before. The fact that Stephen recorded what had happened also shows how the pastoral movement encouraged clerics to write about their experiences so that other preachers and confessors could learn from them. Historians have long recognized that the works of men like Stephen are valuable sources for medieval popular religion,<sup>8</sup> but the impact of the pastoral movement on more academic kinds of writing, such as canon law and theology, has received little attention. Little work has also been done on how the pastoral movement affected clerical attitudes to popular magic.

In the following chapters, I will examine how the pastoral movement changed the way in which learned writers wrote about magically-caused impotence, looking both at works which dealt directly with pastoral care, and at the more academic genres of canon law and theology. In the thirteenth century, each of these genres began to reflect concerns that seem to have arisen from the pastoral movement. Although much information spread between genres, each kind of writing developed in a different way and had its own interests, so it is appropriate to consider them separately. I will begin in this chapter with confession manuals and other sources that were the direct products of the pastoral movement, before moving on in Chapters 7 and 8 to consider how the university-based authors of canon law and theological works reacted to the information that the pastoral movement provided and the questions that it raised. Finally, in Chapter 9 I will look at a fourth genre that was not affected by the pastoral movement: medical literature. Because

<sup>7</sup> Jean-Claude Schmitt, *The Holy Greyhound: Guinefort, Healer of Children since the Thirteenth Century*, trans. Martin Thom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Murray, 'Confession as a Historical Source in the Thirteenth Century', in R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (eds.), *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 285–6; 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: Brill, 1998), 119. See also Schmitt, *Holy Greyhound* and Murray, 'Piety', cited above.

medical writers were not interested in reforming lay beliefs or practices, they offer a valuable alternative perspective on magically-caused impotence and its cures, enabling us to see more clearly how the other genres were influenced by their pastoral concerns.

## THE LITERATURE OF PASTORAL CARE

The pastoral movement stimulated the writing of many new works aimed at educating clerics. These began to appear in the late twelfth century, but they appeared in greater numbers after the Fourth Lateran Council. This was because, in addition to prescribing annual confession, the Council also defined the role of the confessor for the first time as a counsellor who should advise the penitent according to his or her character and background, thereby creating a market for handbooks that would tell confessors how to do this.<sup>9</sup> Although they were aimed at the parish clergy as a whole, these pastoral manuals were probably initially read by students in the cathedral schools, who knew enough Latin to follow them.<sup>10</sup> They took many forms, including collections of sermons and *exempla* (short moral stories for use in preaching), treatises on the vices and virtues, and confession manuals which set out what priests should ask penitents about in confession. All of these works summarized recent developments in canon law and theology for clerics who had not spent years at university, and so the information that they include can tell us what was deemed to be relevant in a pastoral context. Some pastoral works also contain details about magical practices which churchmen might be expected to encounter.

The thirteenth century also saw the proliferation of another kind of source closely associated with pastoral reform: the statutes of church councils. The Fourth Lateran Council promoted provincial and diocesan synods as a means of educating the clergy and, like the pastoral manuals, synodal statutes can tell us about problems that reforming churchmen were

<sup>9</sup> 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: Accademia senese degli intronati, 1986), 47, and 'The Fourth Lateran Council and Manuals of Popular Theology', in Thomas J. Heffernan (ed.), *The Popular Literature of Medieval England* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 32.

<sup>10</sup> Goering, *William de Montibus*, 63.

worried about. One of these problems seems to have been unorthodox ritual practices: for example, the 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.<sup>11</sup> Some statutes also refer to magic in conjunction with marriage, and this can shed interesting light on popular beliefs about impotence magic.

As this survey shows, a wide range of works can be termed ‘pastoral literature’ and they do not form a single, clearly defined genre in the way that commentaries on Gratian’s *Decretum* or on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard do. There was also much scope for regional variation: although some pastoral works and synodal statutes circulated very widely, others referred to local practices. More than in any other chapter, therefore, the sources quoted here represent a very small sample of the material that exists. In selecting from this mass of material, I will look primarily at confession manuals and, to a lesser extent, at synodal statutes. This is partly because contemporary canonists and theologians often claimed to have heard particular facts about magically-caused impotence from confessions. However, confession manuals (and, to a lesser extent, synodal statutes) also seem to have mentioned magically-caused impotence more often than other kinds of pastoral writing because they often include a section on ‘impediments to marriage’ (conditions that rendered a marriage invalid, such as consanguinity, holy orders, and, of course, impotence). By contrast, it seems that sermons did not include many details about magical practices, although the subject has received little attention from historians.<sup>12</sup> This lack of detail may mean that magical practices were so well known that they did not need to be described, or it may be that preachers were afraid of giving their audiences ideas. On the other hand, *exempla* do talk about magical practices, but they do not tend to mention magic as a cause of impotence.

In discussing the confession manuals, I have focused on three periods: the appearance of the first manuals in the years around 1215; the thirteenth

<sup>11</sup> F. M. Powicke and C. R. Cheney (eds.), *Councils and Synods with other Documents Relating to the English Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 68, 210, 440, 635; Odette Pontal (ed.), *Les Statuts Synodaux Français du XIIIe Siècle* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1971–83), i.56, ii.47.

<sup>12</sup> Michel Zink, *La Prédication en Langue Romane avant 1300* (Paris: Champion, 1976), 342–6; Madeleine Jay, ‘The “Savage Mind” of Medieval Preachers’, *Medieval Folklore* 2 (1992), 49–66.

century, which saw the production of two very influential long confession manuals, and dozens of shorter ones which give a rather different picture of magically-caused impotence; and the fourteenth century, when authors tended to draw heavily on earlier works, but still evaluated them critically and introduced their own concerns, for example about other forms of reproductive magic. This consistent focus on what a priest might encounter in the world around him is different from the situation in canon law and theology. As will be seen in the next two chapters, writers in these genres displayed a marked interest in magical practices between the late twelfth and the early fourteenth centuries, but then tended to repeat earlier works in the fourteenth century. Comparing the pastoral manuals with canon law and theology thus shows how important the pastoral movement was in challenging learned attitudes to magically-caused impotence, but it also shows how the existence of real magical practices continued to interest the pastoral writers, even after the more academic genres of canon law and theology had turned to other topics.

### THE PASTORAL EXPLOSION: THE EARLY THIRTEENTH CENTURY

The pastoral writers who discussed magically-caused impotence in the period before 1215 were based at Paris and connected to the circle of Peter the Chanter. Not every member of the Chanter's circle mentioned the subject: it makes no appearance in the confession manuals of Alan of Lille or Peter of Poitiers of St Victor, or in the *Summa on the Sacraments* of Peter the Chanter himself.<sup>13</sup> Although these writers mentioned such subjects as divination and healing incantations, the use of magic to cause impotence was clearly not such a major issue that every writer had to mention it separately. This is in spite of the publicity furnished by Philip Augustus' claim that he had been bewitched on his wedding night with Ingeborg of Denmark (discussed in Chapter 4), which must have been

<sup>13</sup> Alain de Lille, *Liber Poenitentialis*, ed. Jean Longère, *Analecta Mediaevalia Namurcensia* 17–18 (Louvain: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1965); Petrus Pictaviensis, *Summa de Confessione*, ed. Jean Longère, *CCCM* 51; Pierre le Chantre, *Summa de Sacramentis et Animae Consiliis*, ed. Jean-Albert Dugauquier, *Analecta Mediaevalia Namurcensia* 4, 7, 11, 16, 21 (Louvain: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1954–67).



well known in Paris at the time these authors were writing. However, a number of Peter the Chanter's followers did discuss magically-caused impotence, and they did so in very interesting ways.

These early pastoral writers often based their discussions of impotence, and of marriage in general, on the *Summa* of the canonist Huguccio, written in the later 1180s.<sup>14</sup> For example Robert of Flamborough, who wrote a *Penitential Book* between 1208 and 1215, followed Huguccio when he argued that in practice few cases of magically-caused impotence were permanent because 'hardly ever is someone so bewitched that he cannot be freed sometime'.<sup>15</sup> Robert 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 explicitly whether by 'marriage' he meant the exchange of words of consent or the consummation, but Robert specified that 'marriage' meant 'contracted marriage', that is, the exchange of consent alone.<sup>16</sup> Since many cases of impotence may not have been discovered until the wedding night, a strict interpretation of this rule could have made it very difficult for couples to get an annulment.

Another member of Peter the Chanter's circle, Robert Courson, also took a strict view of the annulment rules, but he approached the problem from a different angle. He argued that 'if someone is bewitched so that he can never have intercourse with any woman, then the spell on him causes a permanent impediment to marriage; but if he is bewitched for a time, or is bewitched with one woman and not with all women, then the magic is a temporary impediment to marriage'.<sup>17</sup> In other words, Robert only recognized magic as a permanent impediment to marriage (and thus a ground for annulment) if it rendered a man impotent with all women. Moreover, if a marriage was

<sup>14</sup> Josef Georg Ziegler, *Die Ehelehre der Pönitentialsommen von 1200–1350* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1956), 19.

<sup>15</sup> 'et vix est aliquis ita maleficiatus quin aliquando possit resolvi.' Robert of Flamborough, *Liber Poenitentialis*, ed. J. J. F. Firth (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1971), 65. On the date see 3, 8–9.

<sup>16</sup> 'in favorem matrimonii semper praesumendum est maleficium fuisse post contractum matrimonium.' Robert of Flamborough, 65. Cf. Huguccio, Ch. 4, n. 38.

<sup>17</sup> 'Si aliquis maleficiatus sit ita quod nullam in perpetuum cognoscere possit, tunc maleficium in eo est perpetua causa impedimenti matrimonii. Si autem ad horam sit maleficiatus uel ita ad unam sit maleficiatus quod non ad omnes mulieres, tunc maleficium temporale est impedimentum matrimonii.' Robert Courson, *Summa*, BL MS Royal 9.E.XIV, 39v.

annulled on grounds of bewitchment, Robert only permitted the woman to remarry: ‘if he was bewitched from the beginning [of the marriage] the bishop should wait for three years, so that in the meantime he can test whether the spell is of this kind [i.e. permanent], and then if he decides that it is, he should separate a marriage of this sort, and give the wife permission to marry a second man if she wishes.’<sup>18</sup> This was exactly the rule for cases where the impotence was believed to have a natural cause, but it was stricter than the rules given by many canonists for magically-caused impotence. Most canonists believed that magically-caused impotence only made a man permanently impotent with one partner, and therefore they allowed the bewitched man, as well as his wife, to remarry.

Thomas of Chobham, who probably completed his *Summa for Confessors* before 1217,<sup>19</sup> went even further than Robert of Flamborough or Robert Courson in restricting the number of cases in which an annulment was possible. He 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 intercourse 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.’<sup>20</sup> As will be seen in Chapter 7, this view was shared by some canonists, but Thomas himself seems to have based his argument less on canon law than on a belief that the person who cast an impotence spell could also lift it. Moreover, Thomas also justified his position by describing a case of magically-caused impotence that he claimed had really happened:

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

<sup>18</sup> ‘Si ab initio fuit maleficiatus, episcopus debet expectare triennium, ut interim probet an tale sit maleficium, et tunc si hoc constituerit, debet dividere matrimonium tale et dare licentiam uxori ut contrahat si velit cum secundo viro.’ *Ibid.*, 40r.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas of Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, ed. F. Broomfield, *Analecta Mediaevalia Namurcensia* 25 (Louvain: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1968), p. lx.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Si enim per sorciarias fuerit impeditus, quod potest perpendi si ante matrimonium illud cognoverit illam mulierem vel aliam, tunc non debet separari matrimonium, sed debet ieiunare et orare ut deus absolvat virum illum a tali maleficio.’ *Ibid.*, 184.

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.<sup>21</sup>

I have not been able to identify a source for this story. If it was not a real case, it was probably intended to be credible, just as the similar case studies used by Peter the Chanter were designed to reflect contemporary concerns. The idea that impotence magic was performed by the man's former lover also seems to reflect a widespread belief. The same idea featured in the anecdote told by Master Odo in around 1160, and in the later trials of Ragnhildr Trégagas in Bergen in 1324–5, and Margot de la Barre and Marion la Droiturière in Paris in 1390.<sup>22</sup> Thomas's detailed description of the magic also adds verisimilitude. The lock has an obvious symbolism, and locks and impotence were still linked in the early modern period, when one cure for magically-caused impotence was for the man to urinate through the keyhole of the church where he was married.<sup>23</sup> Thomas is therefore probably referring to real beliefs and practices. This would also fit in with the interest in magical practices that he shows in another work, a *Summa on the Art of Preaching*: '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 women who are given to *ueneficia* and *sortilegia* and do not believe this to be idolatry.'<sup>24</sup>

Thomas of Chobham's story also suggests that he and the two Roberts, like Huguccio, were reluctant to allow annulments in cases of magically-caused impotence because they were aware that there were other ways to solve the problem than by seeking an annulment in the church courts. As suggested in Chapter 4, it may have been common practice for people who

<sup>21</sup> '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.' Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> See Ch. 4, n. 51, and Appendix 2. Stephen Wilson, *The Magical Universe: Everyday Ritual and Magic in Pre-Modern Europe* (London: Hambledon Press, 2000), 142.

<sup>24</sup> 'Item, notandum quod fere in omni regione et ubique terrarum, regnant quedam ydolatrie contra quas oportet predicatores et sacerdotes 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 Morenzoni CCCM 82, 166.

thought that they had been bewitched to confront the suspect. However, things might not go as smoothly as Thomas's story implied. Master Odo had described how a sorceress could not lift her own spell, and several cases from the French National Archives show what 'forcing' the suspect to tell the truth might actually mean. In 1447, a man who believed that he had been made impotent by a certain 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 are recorded petitioning for their punishments for these killings to be remitted.<sup>25</sup>

As well as offering a strict view of the annulment rules, Robert Courson also asked a new question: what 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? He illustrated this with the biblical example of Lazarus: if Lazarus's wife had remarried during the three days that he was dead, would her second marriage be valid? Robert concluded that in cases where the cure was miraculous, the second marriage should stand.<sup>26</sup> This question was not as theoretical as it sounded, because a few contemporary canonists and theologians suggested that certain cures for impotence, and especially magically-caused impotence, might be 'divine' or 'miraculous', as will be seen in Chapters 7 and 8. Indisputably miraculous cures also happened occasionally: in 1345, the Franciscan holy man Gerard Cagnoli of Pisa (d. 1342) was believed to have cured a young nobleman and his thirteen-year-old bride who could not consummate their marriage and suspected that they were bewitched.<sup>27</sup>

Some other pastoral manuals of this period also expressed another concern in their discussions of sorcery in general that later came to be linked to magically-caused impotence. This was over the use of magical cures. Thomas of Chobham said that old women offered healing charms,<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>26</sup> 'Item si post triennium naturaliter frigidus diuidatur ab uxore sua, que contrahat cum secundo uiro, et ille naturaliter frigidus per miraculum fiat feruidus, queritur an cum effectu possit petere uxorem suam que contraxit cum secundo uiro? Dicitur quod potest, eadem ratione Lazarus cum effectu potest repetere uxorem alium copulatam post mortem eius. Eadem ratione maleficiatus si eius uxor contraxit cum secundo uiro post triennium, curatus a maleficio cum effectu potest repetere uxorem suam. Solutio: ubi miraculosa est reperatio de naturali frigiditate ad feruorem, vel de morte ad uitam, non debet uxor reddi primo uiro, ut dixit de uxore Lazari.' Robert Courson, *Summa*, 40r.

<sup>27</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas of Chobham, *Summa de Arte Praedicandi*, 167.

and John of Kent, writing in around 1215, also criticized verbal cures 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.’<sup>29</sup> The Franciscan Clarus of Florence, writing in the 1240s, considered whether it was legitimate to use magic (*maleficium*) to lift a magic spell (*maleficium* again).<sup>30</sup> Although canonists and theologians later became interested in magical cures for magically-caused impotence, Thomas, John, and Clarus had raised the issue earlier. This suggests that a concern about magical cures first arose among pastoral writers in response to what they saw as a widespread problem, and was passed from them to the theologians and canonists.

## THE MID THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Following the surge of confession manuals written around 1215, two authors came to dominate the genre in the thirteenth century: the Dominican Raymond of Peñafort, a celebrated canonist who completed a *Summa on Penance and Marriage* after 1234, and John of Freiburg, another Dominican whose *Summa for Confessors*, written shortly before 1298, updated Raymond’s *Summa* and made it easier to use.<sup>31</sup> John also produced a much shorter manual, the *Confessionale*. The *Summas* of Raymond and John, especially John’s, were read for the rest of the Middle Ages and had a profound influence on later pastoral writers. They did not say much that was new about magically-caused impotence, but they summarized and popularized contemporary canon law and, in John’s case, contemporary theology as well. Thus they can tell us about which

<sup>29</sup> ‘coniurare est quasi velle violentiam irrogare quantum in eo est qui coniurat, et cogere ut deus faceret quod ante nolebat.’ John of Kent, *Summa de Penitentia*, BL MS Royal 9.A.XIV, 230r. On John see Joseph Goering, ‘The *Summa de Penitentia* of John of Kent’, *BMCL* 18 (1988), 13–31.

<sup>30</sup> François-Marie Henquinet, ‘Clair de Florence, OFM, Canoniste et Pénitencier Pontifical vers le milieu du XIIIe Siècle’, *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 32 (1939), 29.

<sup>31</sup> Pierre Michaud-Quantin, *Sommes de Casuistique et Manuels de Confession au Moyen Age: XII–XVI Siècles*, *Analecta Mediaevalia Namurcensia* 13 (Louvain: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1962), 34; Leonard Boyle, ‘The “Summa Confessorum” of John of Freiburg and the Popularization of the Moral Teaching of St Thomas and Some of his Contemporaries’, repr. in Boyle, *Pastoral Care*, 247–8.

parts of the more academic legal and theological discussions were thought to be relevant to confessors.

When Raymond of Peñafort discussed magically-caused impotence, he followed the *Summa on Marriage* by the early thirteenth-century canonist Tancred of Bologna very closely. Like Tancred he rejected the view of some canonists and pastoral writers that magically-caused impotence was never a ground for annulment, arguing that this was too harsh.<sup>32</sup> As will be seen in Chapter 7, Tancred's *Summa* was a practical work that considered how the annulment rules might work in real situations, but Raymond made a few additions that rendered his *Summa* more practical still. For example, he discussed how a woman should be inspected to see if she was still a virgin, warning that '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.'<sup>33</sup> William of Rennes, who glossed Raymond's *Summa* in 1240–5, stated explicitly that this passage was added by Raymond,<sup>34</sup> but Raymond may have taken the idea from the canonist Bernard of Parma, who likewise recommended that the matrons should be 'respectable and skilled in that art'.<sup>35</sup> Thus Raymond seems to have been thinking about real situations, and probably chose Tancred's *Summa* as his source because he thought that it was the most relevant for this.

John of Freiburg began his *Summa for Confessors* by saying that Raymond's *Summa* needed updating because new questions and cases were arising 'every day'.<sup>36</sup> As might be expected after this statement, his section on magic and impotence was much longer than Raymond's, and used a variety of new sources. John cited the recent canonists Hostiensis and Innocent IV, but he also combined their views with those of the theologians Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, and Peter of Tarentaise to create a confession manual that mixed canon law with moral theology.<sup>37</sup> Much of

<sup>32</sup> Raymond of Peñafort, *Summa de Penitentia et Matrimonio* (Rome, 1603, repr. Farnborough: Gregg Press, 1967), 561; for Tancred see Ch. 7, n. 20.

<sup>33</sup> 'cautela tamen magna est adhibenda in huiusmodi inspectione, ut fiat per duas vel plures matronas honestas, et peritas in opere maritali.' Raymond, *Summa*, 563.

<sup>34</sup> 'quidam libri non habent hoc . . . sed de novo additum est a magistro.' William of Rennes, gloss, in *ibid.*, 563. On William see Michaud-Quantin, *Sommes de Casuistique*, 40.

<sup>35</sup> 'talibus credendum est si honeste sint et perite in arte illa.' Bernard of Parma, gloss to X 4.15.6, *matronas*, in *Decretales Gregorii IX* (Venice, 1489), 327r.

<sup>36</sup> 'Quoniam dubiorum nova cotidie difficultas emergit casuum.' John of Freiburg, *Summa Confessorum* (Augsburg, 1476), Prologue.

<sup>37</sup> Boyle, "Summa Confessorum", 249.

the time John simply summarized these writers. Firstly, he followed the canonists in distinguishing ‘natural’ impotence (an inborn defect) from ‘accidental’ (magic or castration), and temporary impotence from permanent. He also followed Raymond of Peñafort in arguing that it would be too harsh to deny bewitched couples an annulment, and then went on to describe how the separation should be carried out, summarizing the various views held by the canonists over whether or not a bewitched couple should be made to return to their original marriage if the magic ceased.<sup>38</sup>

When it came to the theologians, John discussed some questions raised by Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, 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 magically-caused impotence.<sup>39</sup> As discussed above, magical cures had interested pastoral writers for some time, but John simply quoted the canonists and theologians. From Albertus and Aquinas he took the blanket statement that *maleficium* should never be used to cure *maleficium*, but he also quoted the canonist Hostiensis, who had suggested that the ‘frivolous’ cures recommended in the medical encyclopaedia, the *Pantegni*, could be tolerated. However, when he quoted Hostiensis’ statement, John emphasized that frivolous cures were not the same as illicit ones: ‘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.’<sup>40</sup>

John’s treatment of magically-caused impotence was thus a synthesis of canon law and theology on the subject, to which he added little of his own, except a concern that Hostiensis might be interpreted as condoning illicit remedies. This concern probably reflects the condemnation of magical cures found in earlier pastoral writers like Thomas of Chobham, as well as the opinions of theologians like Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas. The *Summa for Confessors* was thus a useful reference work that summarized various authoritative discussions of impotence magic and mirrored both the academic concerns of the time and the pastoral concern about magical cures. However, apart from this anxiety about illicit remedies, it does not tell us about John’s own concerns or his observation of magical practices.

<sup>38</sup> John of Freiburg, *Summa*, 4.16.14–15.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.16.23–4.

<sup>40</sup> ‘Nota quod dicit vana non illicita ut ulterius hoc dictum non extendas, sed forte ad quaedam quasi indifferentia. Tamen orationes deberent [text: deberet] merito prevalere.’ *Ibid.*, 4.16.24. For Hostiensis see Ch. 7, n. 58.

The *summas* of Raymond and John were large and detailed books, designed to cover every case that the confessor might encounter, whether common or uncommon. To assess which situations priests might be expected to encounter on a regular basis, it is useful to compare these works with some of the other sources relating to pastoral care, a method recently used by Peter Biller to examine the pastoral literature relating to contraception and abortion.<sup>41</sup> These sources include short confession manuals that were cheap, portable, and covered only the essential information. These survive in very large numbers from the thirteenth century. The statutes of church councils can also tell us about what was deemed to be essential information, because they often mention the problems that bishops thought were particularly pressing in their own dioceses. These sources indicate that impotence magic was less important than its presence in the longer confession manuals might suggest.

Unlike the long *summas*, which discussed impotence magic as one of many impediments to marriage, the shorter confession manuals often do not list marriage impediments and so do not single out impotence magic for special attention. Occasionally these writers might mention magic that caused impotence in their general discussions of magic. For example, Master Serlo, an English author writing after 1234, mentioned women who made their ex-lovers impotent, in a canon copied from the eleventh-century *Corrector* of Burchard of Worms.<sup>42</sup> Brother Laurent, a Dominican who wrote a vernacular treatise on the virtues and vices for Philip III of France in 1280, mentioned magic that caused married couples to ‘hate each other or be unable to have marital company the one with the other’.<sup>43</sup> More often, however, the shorter confession manuals discussed other forms of magic instead. The anonymous Dominican *Summa Penitentiae Fratrum Predicatorum* (1220s) mentioned

<sup>41</sup> Peter Biller, *The Measure of Multitude: Population in Medieval Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 178–212.

<sup>42</sup> Joseph Goering (ed.), ‘The “Summa de Penitentia” of Magister Serlo’, *Medieval Studies* 38 (1976), 26.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Et de ceulz aussi qui font ou pourchassent par charmeries ou par malefice quel que il soit que personnes qui sont en mariage sentre hayent ou ne peuvent avoir compaignie lun a l’autre par mariage.’ Laurentius Gallus, *La Somme des Vices et Vertus* (Paris, 1488), Avarice, Branch 7. See Edith Brayer, ‘Contenu, Structure et Combinaisons du *Miroir du Monde* et de la *Somme le Roi*’, *Romania* 79 (1958), 1–2.



conjurations ‘for women’ and to find lost items, but not impotence magic.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, John of Freiburg did not mention impotence magic in his short *Confessionale*, even though he discussed written charms, divination, and the misuse of sacred objects.<sup>45</sup> Thus although magically-caused impotence was important as an impediment to marriage, priests in the field were expected to be more concerned about other magical practices.

The records of church councils suggest a similar picture. Again, magic that caused impotence might be mentioned as an impediment to marriage, but otherwise it was not usually singled out in condemnations of magical practices. The earliest ruling that links magic to marriage seems to come from the statutes attributed to Eudes de Sully, bishop of Paris, dating from shortly before 1215. Among the statutes on marriage, Eudes said ‘Let it often be forbidden on pain of excommunication to do sorceries at weddings; also [forbidden are] magicians and those who conceal consanguinity and other impediments to marriage . . .’<sup>46</sup> This statute was repeated in England in the statutes of Salisbury (1217–19), which were in turn widely borrowed by other thirteenth-century bishops.<sup>47</sup> The statutes of Bordeaux (1234) were more specific. They forbade ‘some sorceries when marriages or betrothals are being contracted’, and added that all ‘doubts about marriage’ should be referred to the archbishop or his representative.<sup>48</sup> These statutes were not necessarily talking about magic that caused impotence, since other forms of magic were also linked to weddings. In early fourteenth-century Montaignou, for example, Béatrice de Planissoles collected her daughter Philippa’s first menstrual blood in order to make a potion to make

<sup>44</sup> Joseph Goering and Pierre J. Payer (eds.), ‘The “Summa Penitentiae Fratrum Predicatorum”: a Thirteenth-Century Confessional Formulary’, *Medieval Studies* 55 (1993), 35.

<sup>45</sup> John of Freiburg, *Confessionale*, BL MS Add. 19581, *De sortilegiis*, 187va.

<sup>46</sup> ‘Sepe in nuptiis prohibeantur per excommunicationem sortilegia fieri; malefici quoque et celantes consanguinitatem et alia impedimenta matrimonii . . .’ Pontal (ed.), *Statuts Synodaux* i. 66.

<sup>47</sup> Powicke and Cheney (eds.), *Councils and Synods* 57, 88, 457, 644; Joseph Avril (ed.), *Les Statuts Synodaux Français du XIIIe Siècle* (Paris: Comité des Travaux historiques et scientifiques, 1995), iii.266.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Sub pena etiam excommunicationis prohibeatur districte ne fiant aliqua sortilegia in matrimoniis contrahendis seu sponsalibus. Omnes vero dubias matrimonii semper ad archiepiscopum questiones mandamus vel ad ejus vicarium referendas.’ Pontal (ed.), *Statuts Synodaux* ii.68.

Philippa's future husband love her.<sup>49</sup> However, the link between magic and other impediments to marriage such as consanguinity suggests that impotence might be involved.

These warnings were passed from one statute book to another, but they probably still reflected real concerns. The statutes of Eudes de Sully, which first mentioned the subject, arose directly from the late twelfth-century concern with 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. The Franciscan friar Konrad Holtznicker von Sachsen also complained in a sermon that 'alas, now the magic arts . . . are practised at marriages.'<sup>50</sup> Some other synodal statutes on magic and superstition also suggest that real concerns lay behind the bishops' rulings, because they refer to current practices. For example, in 1240 the synod of Worcester 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'.<sup>51</sup> References to superstitious activities at springs go back to the early Middle Ages, but the mention of particular places suggests that this synod was not simply copying an older canon. The same probably applies to the references to doing magic at weddings. Thus the synodal statutes and the short confession manuals suggest that the pastoral movement brought magical practices, including magic that caused impotence, to churchmen's attention, but often pastoral writers only singled out impotence magic in summaries of marriage law. Other forms of magic seem to have been seen as a greater problem.

## THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

We will see in the next two chapters that a significant shift in the way that canonists and theologians wrote about magically-caused impotence took

<sup>49</sup> Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou*, trans. Barbara Bray (London: Scholar Press, 1978), 32.

<sup>50</sup> David L. d'Avray, 'Some Franciscan Ideas About the Body', *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 84 (1991), 352.

<sup>51</sup> '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 and Cheney (eds.), *Councils and Synods*, 303.

place in the years around 1300. Many thirteenth-century writers in these genres mentioned magical practices that caused or cured impotence, but their fourteenth-century successors often simply copied earlier works or did not mention magically-caused impotence at all. In pastoral literature, however, there is no sharp division of this kind. Some new manuals, such as the *Summa* of Bartholomew of Pisa written in around 1328,<sup>52</sup> did simply copy earlier writers, but others took a more critical approach to earlier works. This is especially evident in the pastoral writers' discussions of the rules to be followed in annulment cases. By 1300, the canonists had reached a consensus on this subject, but the pastoral writers were still choosing alternative interpretations from earlier legal works, and asking 'what if' questions about particular cases. A few pastoral writers also added information about other forms of reproductive magic to their discussions of magic and impotence. These developments all suggest that the pastoral writers continued to judge the ideas that they found in theology and canon law in the light of what they believed was relevant to their readers.

Of the pastoral writers who did not follow the canonists' consensus about the annulment rules in cases of magically-caused impotence, the most rigorous was William of Pagula, an English penitentiary who wrote an influential pastoral manual called the *Oculus Sacerdotis* (*Priest's Eye*) in around 1320.<sup>53</sup> Like the canonists, William described how the couple must wait for three years to tell whether the man's impotence was permanent or not, but he also added, following the mid thirteenth-century canonist Innocent IV (and some earlier writers), that magic could never cause permanent impotence: 'Frigidity [inborn impotence] is a permanent impediment, because frigidity, which is a natural property, is not changed by accidental qualities. And no magic [is] permanent because [the victim] can at least be saved by the person who did the magic themselves. And Innocent says that a marriage should not be separated because of magic.'<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Bartholomaeus de Sancto Concordio, *Summa Pisani cum Supplemento* (Cologne, 1483), 'Impedimentum' 15, pp. cl–clii. On Bartholomew see Michaud-Quantin, *Sommes de Casuistique*, 60–2.

<sup>53</sup> Leonard Boyle, 'The *Oculus Sacerdotis* and Some Other Works of William of Pagula', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Ser., 5 (1955), repr. in Boyle, *Pastoral Care*, 83.

<sup>54</sup> 'Frigiditas est in perpetuum [MS reads: imperpetuum] impedimentum. Nam frigiditas quae est naturalis proprietas per accidentia non mutatur. Et nullum maleficium perpetuum cum saltem per ipsum auctorem maleficii [MS reads: salutis] poterit salvari. Et dicit Innoc. quod propter maleficium non separatur matrimonium.' William of Pagula, *Oculus Sacerdotis*, 3.25, BL MS Royal 6.E.I, 72vb. Cf. Innocent, Ch. 7, n. 26.

We know that William was familiar with what other writers had said on the subject, because he also wrote a canon law compendium, the *Summa Summarum*, in which he quotes Raymond of Peñafort, Hostiensis, Thomas Aquinas, and Peter of Tarentaise in his section on impotence, all of whom had argued that some forms of magic were indeed permanent.<sup>55</sup> In his pastoral work, however, William deliberately chose the stricter view, as had Thomas of Chobham over a century earlier. William may indeed have been influenced by Thomas, since Thomas was one of the sources of the *Oculus*,<sup>56</sup> although he does not quote Thomas's discussion of impotence. Thomas seems to have made his decision because he believed that in practice magic spells could always be lifted, and it is possible that William, too, based his choice on how he believed that magic worked in the real world.

Other pastoral writers were more cautious. In 1384, John de Burgo produced the *Pupilla Oculi*, an abbreviated and reorganized version of the *Oculus Sacerdotis*. When he came to talk about magically-caused impotence, John did not follow William's argument that no magic was permanent, but favoured instead the more pragmatic position that most canonists shared by this time: 'in the beginning the magic is presumed to be temporary, but after the couple have lived together for three years, making an effort to have intercourse, if the impediment still lasts, then the magic is presumed to be permanent.'<sup>57</sup> Ralph Higden, whose *Speculum Curatorum*, written in 1340, also drew on William, mentioned both the rules for annulling a marriage on grounds of magic, and Innocent IV's view that no magic was permanent, without explicitly supporting either.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup> *Summa Summarum*, 4.15, BL MS Royal 10.D.X, 200v–202r. See also Leonard Boyle, 'The *Summa Summarum* and Some Other English Works of Canon Law', repr. in Boyle, *Pastoral Care*.

<sup>56</sup> Michael Haren, *Sin and Society in Fourteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 66–7.

<sup>57</sup> 'Et a principio quidem quodlibet maleficium presumitur temporale sed postquam coniuges simul per triennium cohabitaverint dantes operam carnali copule si adhuc durat impedimentum presumitur maleficium esse perpetuum.' John de Burgo, *Pupilla Oculi* (Paris, 1518), 8.12.P.

<sup>58</sup> 'Idem dicas in maleficiato quoad cohabitationem et iuramentum cum septima manu . . . Sed in hoc casu differentia est quod soluto matrimonio propter maleficium uterque potest alibi contrahere.' verumptamen secundum Innocens propter maleficium non separatur matrimonium cum nullum maleficium sit perpetuum secundum eum.' Ralph Higden, *Speculum Curatorum*, Cambridge University Library MS Mm.i.20, ch. 61, 155r.

Several writers also considered whether a couple whose marriage had been annulled on grounds of magic should be forced to resume the marriage if the man later proved able to sleep with other women, as was the case with naturally-caused impotence. The Italian Franciscan Astesanus of Asti, writing in around 1317, argued that in this situation the first marriage should be reinstated:

For the sentence of annulment was pronounced on them in error, because an impediment that was judged to be permanent does not annul a 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 does not apply in the abovementioned case. Hence the gloss says there that he should rather be called ‘ignarus’ [ignorant] than ‘Gnarus’ [Hincmar].<sup>59</sup>

This idea that *Si per sortiarias* was not valid was preserved in the ordinary gloss on Gratian’s *Decretum*, along with the pun first coined by the canonist Cardinalis in the twelfth century, but most canonists no longer believed this. Like William of Pagula, Astesanus thus chose an older, stricter version of canon law in preference to the views of most contemporary canonists. Again, John de Burgo and Ralph Higden took a more nuanced position. John stated that it depended on whether the original spell had made the man impotent with all women or just one; if the man had only been bewitched with one woman, then he could remarry. Higden said that the problem was only likely to arise if the man subsequently slept with his first wife.<sup>60</sup>

Astesanus also mentioned other forms of reproductive magic alongside impotence magic: ‘But some people say that magic is not only done to prevent a person from having intercourse, but is also sometimes done to prevent

<sup>59</sup> ‘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. i. *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.’ *Summa Astesana* (Basel, 1477), 8.29. On Astesanus, see Michaud-Quantin, *Sommes de Casuistique*, 57.

<sup>60</sup> ‘si maleficium fuit universale id est respectu cuiuscunque persone, et si alteri immiscuerit et nupserit et eam cognoverit ostenditur impedimentum non fuisse perpetuum . . . Si vero fuit particulare scilicet respectu specialis persone: tunc cum utrique detur licentia contrahendi cum alio non potest redire ad primum cum matrimonium primum nullum fuit.’ John de Burgo, *Pupilla Oculi* 8.12.Q. ‘Non autem sic de maleficiato quia quia [sic] sicut ille secundam cognoverit, non restituetur ad primam nisi forsitan aliquotiens cognoverit primam post.’ Higden, *Speculum*, ch. 61, 155r.

a woman from conceiving or to make her miscarry. But whoever to satisfy lust or because of hate does something to a man or woman on account of which they cannot beget children or conceive, shall be counted as a murderer.<sup>61</sup> Alvaro Pelayo, another Franciscan and a papal penitentiary writing in 1330–2, also mentioned that magic could cause sterility in women. In a discussion of sins that women were prone to, he criticized women who ‘with their magical songs and diabolical art [*arte zabolon*, probably from *zabolus*, a variant of *diabolus*] impede others from having intercourse or generating offspring’.<sup>62</sup> A pupil of Duns Scotus, Pelayo agreed with Duns that it was legitimate to destroy the magical object that was causing the impotence, as long as this did not involve actively doing any magic.<sup>63</sup>

The same tendency to see impotence magic as one of many forms of reproductive magic can also be seen in a set of synodal statutes written for Lucca in 1308, which like Astesanus and Pelayo criticized the use of incantations to cause abortion, sterility, and impotence.<sup>64</sup> In contrast to the canonists and theologians, who stuck carefully to magic that caused impotence, these pastoral writers recognized that other forms of reproductive magic existed. This broader interest in reproductive magic, which does not seem to be shared by earlier pastoral writers on magically-caused impotence, may be linked to a more widespread interest in questions relating to fertility in the years around 1300. This has been identified by Peter Biller in pastoral literature and by Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset in medicine. Biller argues that this new interest in fertility may in turn be a response to the high population levels that seem to have existed in this period.<sup>65</sup>

Except for Alvaro Pelayo, all of the fourteenth-century writers mentioned above discussed magically-caused impotence in lists of impediments

<sup>61</sup> ‘Dicunt autem aliqui quod non solum fit maleficium ne quis coire valeat sed etiam aliquando fit ne mulier concipiat vel ut aborsum faciat. Quicumque autem propter vindictae libidinem explendam vel propter odium aliquid fecerit viro vel mulieri propter quod non posset generare vel concipere reputatur homicida.’ *Summa Astesana*, 8.29.

<sup>62</sup> ‘que cum suis carminibus maleficiis et arte zabolon concubitus impediunt aliorum, vel generationem prolis.’ Alvarus Pelagius, *De Planctu Ecclesiae* (Venice, 1560), 2.45, 85v.

<sup>63</sup> ‘Sed pone sortiaria venit ad penitentiam: nunquid imponet ei sacerdos penitentiam quod destruat maleficium? Dico quod sic, si destructio illa potest fieri absque alio maleficio, absque peccato.’ *Ibid.*, 85v. Cf. Duns Scotus, Ch. 8, n. 31.

<sup>64</sup> Alain Boureau, *Satan Hérétique: Histoire de la Démonologie (1280–1330)* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2004), 66.

<sup>65</sup> Biller, *Measure of Multitude*, 208; Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, trans. Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), 170.

to marriage. As in the thirteenth century, many authors who were not interested in impediments to marriage did not single out impotence magic in this way. For example, John Bromyard, who completed an influential manual for preachers before 1352, included a long section on *sortilegium* but did not mention impotence in it, and did not discuss impediments to marriage either.<sup>66</sup> The same is true of the *Memoriale Presbyterum*, an English confession manual written in around 1337–8 and revised in 1344, even though it listed contraception, abortion, and magic as sins that women were prone to.<sup>67</sup> These fourteenth-century works confirm that, as in the thirteenth century, priests were expected to hear about magical practices in confession, but that impotence magic was not the most important of these. Only those works that listed the legal impediments to marriage singled it out for special discussion. As in the thirteenth century, these were often the longer manuals, but not invariably: John Bromyard and the *Memoriale Presbyterum* did not list impediments to marriage despite their length, but a short manual by Guido of Monte Roterio, completed in 1333, did.<sup>68</sup> Impotence magic was thus discussed as a legal case, not because it was necessarily seen as a common problem. However, Astesanus and Pelayo's references to other forms of reproductive magic suggest that these writers were not just summarizing marriage law, but also had an eye on magical practices more broadly. They may thus have thought that magically-caused impotence was relevant to their readers, as well as being a legal impediment to marriage.

## CONCLUSION

The confession manuals of this period show how important the pastoral impulse of the thirteenth century was in bringing magical practices,

<sup>66</sup> John Bromyard, *Summa Praedicatorum* (Nuremberg, 1518), 'Sortilegium', 355v–58r; see Leonard Boyle, 'The Date of the *Summa Praedicatorum* of John Bromyard', *Speculum* 48 (1973), repr. in Boyle, *Pastoral Care*, 533–7, and G. R. Owst, 'Sortilegium in English Homiletic Literature of the Fourteenth Century', in J. Conway Davies (ed.), *Studies Presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 289–96.

<sup>67</sup> Michael Haren, 'The Interrogatories for Officials, Lawyers and Secular Estates of the *Memoriale Presbyterum*', in Peter Biller and A. J. Minnis (eds.), *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages* (York: York Medieval Press, 1998), 160. On the date of the *Memoriale* see Haren, *Sin*, 27–38.

<sup>68</sup> Guido de Monte Rocherii, *Manipulus Curatorum* (Strasbourg, 1483), part 1, tr. 7. On Guido see Biller, *Measure of Multitude*, 206.

including those that caused impotence, to the attention of learned writers. Several of the first pastoral writers to mention the subject included information about the world around them as well as summarizing the basics of canon law, especially Thomas of Chobham, who described a case that he claimed had really happened. The pastoral writers of the early thirteenth century also first raised the concerns about magical cures which, as we will see in Chapters 7 and 8, became important parts of the discussion of magically-caused impotence in canon law and theology.

Perhaps more than in the other genres of source, the amount that pastoral writers said about magically-caused impotence was dependent on the interests of the individual writer. Some authors simply followed the canonists and theologians without adding anything of their own, and this is not surprising in a genre that was designed to summarize basic information for priests, rather than to innovate. Many authors of short confession manuals did not mention magically-caused impotence at all. This suggests that impotence magic did not concern churchmen as much as some other unorthodox practices did, such as divination, charms, and the misuse of holy objects like the host, which all appear more often in pastoral writing about magic. This may have been because it was relatively easy to convince the laity that it was wrong to make someone impotent, but harder to persuade them that it was wrong to use healing charms or divination. The pastoral manuals thus demonstrate how magically-caused impotence gained attention because it was singled out in canon law as a ground for annulling a marriage. However, the occasional case like that described by Thomas of Chobham, and the synodal statutes' references to magic at weddings, suggest that magic that caused impotence did exist, even if many writers did not feel the need to single it out. The continued concern of some pastoral writers about how the rules for annulment might work in practice, and about how impotence magic might relate to other forms of reproductive magic, also suggests this.

This interest in magical practices also encouraged many of the pastoral writers who wrote about magically-caused impotence to approach the theological and legal texts that discussed the subject in a critical fashion. Their willingness to borrow from canon law suggests that the rules for annulment that the canonists developed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were generally thought to be realistic, but in the fourteenth century, especially, the pastoral writers' picture of magic and impotence was often more complicated than the clear-cut schemes that the canonists were offering by this time. Because pastoral literature was so closely linked with



the realities of pastoral care, the pastoral writers seem to have been conscious that real cases might not fit easily into general rules. They emphasized that magic could cause impotence with either one partner or all, or could interfere with the reproductive process in other ways, and that there were ways of lifting many spells. The pastoral writers' lack of consensus on these issues also shows that experience did not provide clear answers. Experience might lead a writer to focus either on the many spells that could be lifted, or on the few that could not. It also led writers to offer different views about what should be done when a man's potency later returned. Pastoral literature thus reminds us that real cases could be messier than the canonists' and theologians' neat sets of rules, practical though these were. In doing so, it shows how complex the relationship was between learned discourses about magically-caused impotence, and magical practices.

# 7

## Annulment Procedures and Frivolous Cures: Canon Law, 1200–1400

We have seen how the pastoral movement of the thirteenth century brought magical practices to the attention of educated churchmen to a greater extent than before, and encouraged some of those churchmen to write about them. The next two chapters will examine how these magical practices affected discussions of magically-caused impotence in two academic disciplines: canon law and theology. The influence of the pastoral movement is particularly clear in the case of canon law. Some thirteenth-century canonists said that they had heard certain facts about magically-caused impotence in confessions or in the church courts, and others may have taken information from similar sources without saying so explicitly. The pastoral movement also prompted a number of canonists to ask new questions about how magical practices might work and whether it was ever legitimate to use them—and they gave a wide range of answers to these questions, some of them surprisingly tolerant. No doubt the canonists included this information about magical practices partly to liven up dry legal discussions, but it also served a purpose. Following the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, a system of regular church courts developed,<sup>1</sup> and one of their concerns was marriage. Information about who might inflict impotence on someone and why, about which spells could be lifted and which could not, and about potential cures, could help canon lawyers make decisions when they were faced with real cases.

The twelfth-century canonists had based their discussions of magically-caused impotence on *Si per sortiarias*, the ruling by the ninth-century

<sup>1</sup> Frederik Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon Press, 2000), 8.

archbishop Hincmar of Rheims that permitted a marriage to be annulled if the man had been made impotent by magic, and allowed both spouses to remarry. *Si per sortiarias* remained important in the thirteenth century, but by this time, the canonists also had newer sources to work with. Several cases involving impotence were referred to the papacy in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, and these gave rise to new papal rulings known as decretals. Only one of these mentioned magic explicitly. This was *Litteras* (1190–1), the ruling of Clement III discussed in Chapter 4, which denied an annulment to an impotent man who accused his wife of bewitching him, on the grounds that this would be against the custom of the Roman church.<sup>2</sup> However, discussions of magically-caused impotence also arose in the commentaries on two other decretals, *Fraternitatis* (1206) and *Littere Vestre* (between 1216 and 1227). *Fraternitatis* 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, although she later remarried successfully. Several commentators discussed magic in relation to this case because the bishop who annulled the woman's first marriage had described her as incurable 'except by a divine miracle'. They wondered which kinds of cures counted as miraculous, and whether a similar miracle was necessary to cure magically-caused impotence.<sup>3</sup> In *Littere Vestre*, the husband was impotent but claimed that he was able to sleep with women other than his wife. Several commentators considered that this might be a case of magic.<sup>4</sup>

These new decretals were collected and glossed in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, until in 1234 Pope Gregory IX published a definitive collection, the *Liber Extra*, edited by the celebrated canonist and pastoral writer Raymond of Peñafort. The *Liber Extra* took its place alongside Gratian's *Decretum* as a university canon law textbook, and stimulated a wave of new commentaries. Bernard of Parma (d. 1266) summarized much earlier discussion of the individual decretals when he wrote the Ordinary Gloss, or standard commentary, on the text, but many writers also produced long commentaries. Among the most influential were those of Geoffrey of

<sup>2</sup> 1. Comp. 4.16.4.

<sup>3</sup> 'Arguitur quod nullum maleficium est perpetuum, cum possit removeri preter divinum miraculum . . .' Bernard of Parma, gloss to X 4.15.6, *divinum miraculum*, in *Decretales Gregorii IX* (Venice, 1489), 327r.

<sup>4</sup> '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*, 327v.

Trani (d. 1245), Sinibaldo dei Fieschi, who became Pope Innocent IV (d. 1254), Henry of Susa, usually known as Hostiensis (d. 1271), and Bernard of Montemirat, also known as Abbas Antiquus (d. 1296).<sup>5</sup> Roffredus of Benevento (d. after 1243), a civil lawyer who had worked at the papal curia, produced an interesting summary of canon law which listed the pleas that each party should make in court, and William Durandus, a pupil of Hostiensis, also listed pleas in his influential *Speculum Iudiciale* in 1271.<sup>6</sup> These works were read for the rest of the Middle Ages and their influence continued into the sixteenth century when they were printed.

These mid thirteenth-century commentaries represent the peak of canonistic discussions of magically-caused impotence. They were so influential that many later canonists simply summarized them, without adding any new information. For example Guido de Baysio (d. 1313), who wrote a commentary on the *Decretum* in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, quoted the earlier canonists Tancred of Bologna, Vincentius Hispanus, and Geoffrey of Trani without adding anything of his own.<sup>7</sup> Franciscus de Zabarella (d. 1417) and Antonius de Butrio (d. 1408) asked many of the same questions as Geoffrey of Trani, Innocent IV, and Hostiensis, and drew much of their commentaries from them.<sup>8</sup> Other canonists seem to have lost interest in magically-caused impotence altogether: the most eminent canonist of the fourteenth century, Joannes Andreae (d. 1349), wrote only two sentences about magically-caused impotence in his commentary on the *Liber Extra*,<sup>9</sup> and

<sup>5</sup> See James Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 206–29; Johan Friedrich von Schulte, *Die Geschichte der Quellen und Literatur des Canonischen Rechts* (Stuttgart, 1875–7, repr. Graz: Akademische Druck- U. Verlagsanstalt, 1956), ii.88–94, 123–32, 144–56.

<sup>6</sup> 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, Monumenta Iuris Canonici C.8 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1988), 226; Gulielmus Durandus, *Speculum Iudiciale* (Basel, 1563), 4.4, 429.

<sup>7</sup> Guido de Baysio, *Rosarium* (Venice, 1495), C. 33, q. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Franciscus de Zabarella, commentary on X 4.15.6, BL MS Arundel 432; Antonius de Butrio, *Lectura super Quarto Decretalium* (Rome, 1474), commentary on X 4.15. On these writers see A. Amanieu, ‘Antoine de Butrio’, *DDC* i.630–1 and R. Naz, ‘François Zabarella’, *DDC* v.901.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Idem in maleficiato quo ad cohabitationem et iuramentum, eo. ti. c. fi. 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), ‘De frigiditate et artatione et maleficio’.

another anonymous early fourteenth-century commentary on the *Liber Extra* did not mention it at all.<sup>10</sup>

Wider trends in canon law scholarship in the fourteenth century also made it less likely that canonists would say much about magically-caused impotence. After 1317, there were no new collections of decretals to comment on, and instead of writing commentaries on the *Liber Extra*, where most of the problems had been solved, many canonists turned to writing *consilia*, legal opinions concerning individual cases.<sup>11</sup> These *consilia* might mention magic: for example, Oldradus da Ponte gave his opinion on a case involving love magic between 1323 and 1327.<sup>12</sup> However, Oldradus did not mention magically-caused impotence, perhaps because the law was straightforward enough that there was no need to ask an eminent canonist to give an opinion on the subject. Unlike commentaries on the *Liber Extra*, which had to mention every subject that the textbook discussed, *consilia* focused only on problematic cases, and so there was little need for them to discuss magically-caused impotence.

The lack of academic interest in magically-caused impotence in the fourteenth century may also reflect the fact that canonists did not come across cases very often. The surviving church court records that have been studied suggest that impotence was not a very common ground for seeking an annulment, and impotence caused by magic was extremely rare. In his study of English episcopal registers, Richard Helmholz came across only a few cases of impotence, none of which involved magic. Andrew Finch and Frederik Pedersen have found similar patterns in the fourteenth-century records of Cerisy and York, respectively.<sup>13</sup> This apparent absence of cases of magically-caused impotence may be due to the three-year waiting period required by canon law, before a couple could seek an annulment on grounds of impotence. It is possible that, if the impotence was not caused

<sup>10</sup> BL MS Arundel 199, 157r–158r; J. Forshall, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the British Museum I: the Arundel Manuscripts* (London, 1834), 52, dates the manuscript to the early fourteenth century.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Kay, 'Canon Law in the Age of Bartolus', *Res Publica Litterarum* 14 (1991), repr. in *Councils and Clerical Culture in the Medieval West* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 91–9.

<sup>12</sup> Printed in Joseph Hansen, *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns und der Hexenverfolgung im Mittelalter* (Bonn: C. Georgi, 1901), 55–9.

<sup>13</sup> R. H. Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 87–90; Andrew Finch, 'Repulsa Uxore Sua: marital difficulties and separation in the later middle ages', *Continuity and Change* 8 (1993), 15; Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes*, 137.

by a physical problem (as it seems to have been in the York cases discussed by Pedersen), many couples were able to consummate their marriages within the three years. Pastoral manuals also suggest that couples might employ magical cures or ask the person they suspected of bewitching them to lift the spell, and these solutions might have helped in some cases by reducing anxiety.

However, cases did occasionally occur. In 1341 Johann of Luxembourg, the younger son of the King of Bohemia, married Margaretha, heiress of Count Henry VI of Carinthia and Tirol, but when the marriage was not consummated, Johann was rumoured to have been bewitched by Margaretha's stepmother. Margaretha then caused a scandal by remarrying without waiting for an annulment, which was only granted in 1349.<sup>14</sup> There also survives a Polish case from 1418, in which another Margaretha sought an annulment because she claimed that her husband, Gregorius de Dzedzicze was impotent, and Gregorius claimed in return (like the man in *Littere Vestre*) that he had always been potent before and so he must be bewitched.<sup>15</sup>

In this chapter I will focus on three themes that particularly interested the canonists who wrote about magically-caused impotence in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The first of these was the question of whether *Si per sortiarias* was valid. As described in Chapter 4, some twelfth-century canonists had argued that *Si per sortiarias* was not valid and that marriages should not be annulled on grounds of magic. This debate continued into the early thirteenth century, but gradually the canonists resolved the issue by thinking about magical practices and about how the annulment rules might work in real cases. The second section of the chapter focuses on the canonists' attitudes to magical practices more broadly, examining what they said about these and where they may have taken their information from. The third section examines the canonists' view of so-called 'magical' cures for magically-caused impotence, a subject which also interested

<sup>14</sup> Dieter Veldtrup, 'Johann Propst von Vyšehrad: Illegitimer Sohn eines "impotenten" Luxemburgers', in Friedrich Bernward Fahlbusch and Peter Johanek (eds.), *Studia Luxemburgensia: Festschrift Heinz Stöb zum 70. Geburtstag* (Warendorf: Fahlbusch/Hölscher/Rieger, 1989), 51–60. I am grateful to Erik Ründal for this reference.

<sup>15</sup> 'asserens et dicens se fuisse semper potentem, sed nunc temporis maleficiatum.' B. Ulanowski (ed.), *Acta Capitulorum nec non Iudiciorum Ecclesiasticorum Selecta II*, *Monumenta Medii Aevi Historica* 16 (1902), 41. I am grateful to Martha Brozyna for this reference.

pastoral writers and theologians. In each of these three sections, we can see a new interest in how magically-caused impotence might function in the world outside the university, which probably came both from the pastoral movement and from cases that came before the church courts.

### WHAT IS THE LAW? THE VALIDITY OF *SI PER SORTIARIAS*

The thirteenth-century canonists did not start their discussions of magically-caused impotence from a point of consensus. Although many writers believed that marriages could be annulled if the man was made impotent by magic, the view of certain twelfth-century writers that *Si per sortiarias* was invalid persisted. Doubts therefore remained about whether marriages really could be annulled in cases of magically-caused impotence. Alanus Anglicus, glossing the *Decretum*, went so far as to say that ‘everyone says that *Si per sortiarias* is not valid. Some people make a distinction in [cases of] magic, but the distinction is not valid’.<sup>16</sup> Alanus did not say why he took such a strong view, but some other writers brought in arguments based on how they believed that magic worked. Huguccio seems to have been the first to do this in the late 1180s, when he argued that most cases of magically-caused impotence were not permanent, because the person who cast the spell could also lift it. Because annulments could only be granted if the impotence was permanent, for Huguccio, magic would rarely be a ground for annulment. In the early thirteenth century, Damasus of Hungary stretched Huguccio’s remarks even further and argued that all cases of magically-caused impotence were temporary, and therefore that magic could never be a ground for annulling a marriage.<sup>17</sup>

However, as the thirteenth century went on, some canonists became less sure that magic worked in this way. Geoffrey of Trani, writing before 1244, stated that ‘A certain spell can be permanent, in the sense that it

<sup>16</sup> ‘*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, BN MS lat. 3909, 49r.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Varius 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, *Summa*, BL MS Royal 6.B.X, 135va. Cf. Huguccio, ch. 4, n. 40.

cannot be destroyed, 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.<sup>18</sup> Arguments based on magical practices could thus work both ways, depending on whether a writer chose to emphasize the many spells that could be lifted or the few that could not. This is also evident in the pastoral literature discussed in Chapter 6, where the pastoral writers' consistent interest in experience did not lead to a consensus about what the rules should be in cases of magically-caused impotence. The canonists therefore had to find another way of determining what the law should be.

The solution was provided by another early thirteenth-century canonist, Tancred of Bologna, in his *Summa on Marriage*.<sup>19</sup> Instead of arguing about the validity of *Si per sortiarias* or about whether magic could ever cause permanent impotence, Tancred stated that it was too harsh to deny a bewitched couple an annulment:

Some doctors feel, however . . . that no 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 compatible with other women.<sup>20</sup>

Tancred therefore argued that any magic which could not be cured after three years should be assumed to be permanent.<sup>21</sup> Tancred's decision to permit annulments in cases of magic was not new, but the reason he gave was, with its emphasis on what the practical consequences of the rules might be. The same awareness of how people might behave can also be found in his comments on the separation process. If a man claimed that

<sup>18</sup> 'Potest enim aliquod maleficium esse perpetuum, ut deleri non possit, puta aliquod 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), 4.15, 187r.

<sup>19</sup> On Tancred see Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, 227–8.

<sup>20</sup> 'Quidam tamen doctorum sentiunt . . . quod nullum maleficium separat matrimonium iam contractum: alludentes consuetudini Romanae ecclesiae dicunt, quod c. illud *Si per sortiarias* 33, 1.4 non tenet. Sed opinio ipsorum omnino est abjicenda tanquam dura et nimis onerosa, quoniam praestaret 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), 63.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Brundage, *Law*, 378 n. 264.



he was impotent but his wife denied it, Tancred argued that even though the man's word was usually believed over the woman's, this should not be the case here: 'for, if the man's word was believed, many men would not fear to commit perjury, so that they could be separated from their wives.'<sup>22</sup> 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.

Two factors helped Tancred's solution to become the preferred one. Firstly, none of the arguments against allowing annulments for magically-caused impotence was insurmountable. Writers like Geoffrey of Trani could provide counter-examples to prove that not all spells could be lifted. It was also possible to get around the contradiction between *Si per sortiarias* and the other laws regarding impotence as many twelfth-century canonists had done, by arguing that natural and magical impotence were separate cases requiring different rules. Secondly, Tancred's solution gained the support of two important later writers, Raymond of Peñafort and Hostiensis. When Raymond compiled the *Liber Extra* for Pope Gregory IX in 1234, Gregory gave him 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,<sup>23</sup> and following Tancred's view he omitted *Litteras*, the decretal of Clement III that had denied a bewitched couple an annulment. In future, the textbook would say unambiguously that annulments could be granted in cases of magically-caused impotence. Then, in around 1253, Hostiensis promoted Tancred's defence of *Si per sortiarias* in his influential *Summa*.<sup>24</sup> In the discussion of magically-caused impotence in his later *Lectura*, Hostiensis also made the more general point that commentators should not attempt to change the law: 'laws should not be corrected by the gloss . . . great error would follow from this.'<sup>25</sup>

Swayed by the arguments of Tancred, Raymond, and Hostiensis, most later commentators accepted the validity of *Si per sortiarias*. The only

<sup>22</sup> 'quia, si crederetur verbo viri, multi non formidarent incurrere perjurium, ut possent dividi ab uxore.' Tancred, *Summa*, 67.

<sup>23</sup> Stephan Kuttner, 'Raymond of Peñafort as Editor: the "Decretales" and "Constitutiones" of Gregory IX', *BMCL* 12 (1982), 66.

<sup>24</sup> Hostiensis, *Summa Aurea* (Lyons, 1548), 4.15.9, 214v.

<sup>25</sup> 'nec per glossam deberent iura corrigi . . . magno inde sequeretur error.' Hostiensis, *Lectura* to X 4.15.7, *gognoscendi alias*, BL MS Arundel 471, 178v.

significant canonist who did not do so was Innocent IV, who argued for the old view in his academic canon law commentary (although he did not attempt to change the law when he became pope). Innocent summarized the rules for annulment but then added ‘It seems better that no marriage should be separated because of magic, and [*Decretum*] C. 33 q. i, *Si per sortiarias*, is not valid.’<sup>26</sup> However, Innocent was unusual, and most commentators by this date did not dispute the validity of *Si per sortiarias*. Only Bernard of Montemirat conceded that Innocent’s view might be appropriate in some cases:

Innocent says that no marriage should be dissolved on grounds of magic... All the other glossators say the opposite. But his [Innocent’s] opinion can have a place if the magician is 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. Hence there is great danger, because my teacher’s brother consummated his marriage and then stayed with his wife for seven years, in which he neither had intercourse with her nor could have intercourse. But afterwards he did have intercourse with her.<sup>27</sup>

The magical practices that Bernard describes will be discussed in more detail later. Here it is simply worth noting that like the earlier writers who had argued in favour of granting annulments in cases of magic, Bernard based his argument on how he believed that magic worked in the world around him. However, most canonists thought that experience proved Innocent wrong, and Johannes de Garzionibus of Venice, who lectured on the decretals in 1403, gave a list of canonists who disagreed

<sup>26</sup> ‘melius videtur quod propter maleficium nullum matrimonium separandum sit, et c. xxxiii. q. i. *Si per sortiarias* non tenet.’ Innocent IV, *Apparatus Decretalium* (Venice, 1491), gloss to X 4.15.7.

<sup>27</sup> ‘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. 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.’ Bernardus de Montemirato, *Lectura Aurea super Quinque Libris Decretalium* (Strasbourg, 1510), to X 4.15.6, 192r.

with him.<sup>28</sup> Thus from the mid thirteenth century onwards, the vast majority of canonists, unlike some of the pastoral writers discussed in Chapter 6, took it for granted that magically-caused impotence was a ground for annulment, and one reason why they agreed on this was that it was seen to be a kinder and more practical solution than the alternative.

## MAGICAL PRACTICES

At the same time as the canonists reached a consensus about the annulment rules, they also began to give increasingly detailed descriptions of magical practices. These two developments went hand in hand: information about magical practices helped the canonists to decide on the rules, but equally, once this basic issue had been resolved, the canonists were freer to add more information about what might happen in real cases. James Brundage has noted that this pattern, of fewer fundamental innovations in the law but more elaborate discussions, is true of the canon law of marriage as a whole after 1234.<sup>29</sup> This is only a partial explanation, however. Certainly the most detailed references occurred after 1234, but some canonists had been interested in magical practices well before this date. Huguccio had said in the late 1180s that most spells could be lifted, and in around 1190, Bernard of Pavia used his own experience to argue that some spells were not simply illusions: ‘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.’<sup>30</sup> These first references to magical practices coincide with the beginnings of the pastoral movement and the emergence of the new genre of confession manuals described in Chapter 6, and it seems to have been this intellectual climate that first aroused the canonists’ interest in magical practices.

<sup>28</sup> ‘Licet Innocens dixerit propter maleficium nullum matrimonium esse separandum; cuius oppositio communiter reprobat per capitulum Si per sortiaras, xxxiii. q. i. Et contra eum concordant Tancredus, Vincentius, Goffredus, Vn [I have not been able to identify this canonist] et Ioannes Andree.’ Johannes de Garzationibus, gloss to X 4.15.6, BL MS Arundel 423, 19ra–b. On the date of this commentary see Forshall, *Catalogue*, 120.

<sup>29</sup> Brundage, *Law*, 485.

<sup>30</sup> ‘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), 176.

As described above, many references to magical practices occurred when canonists discussed whether magic could ever cause permanent impotence. Huguccio had made a general statement that most spells could be lifted, but this gradually gave way to a more detailed and nuanced picture. Geoffrey of Trani's statement, quoted above, that an impotence spell could not be lifted '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' reflects a new awareness that not all magical practices worked in the same way, or had the same results. Geoffrey's list also seems to reflect what he knew of real magical practices, because it agrees with other sources that claim to be describing real cases of magic. In the 1160s, the theologian Master Odo told of a case where the magic object was lost and so the couple could not be cured.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, in the 1250s the theologians Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure also said that not all impotence spells could be lifted, and they claimed that they had learned this from the confessions of the magicians themselves. The reference to magic being given in food or drink also corresponds with magical practices found in other sources. Early medieval penitentials contained many references to men being bewitched by food or drink, and although these were usually designed to stimulate love rather than cause impotence, people may have tried to reduce sexual desire in similar ways. In this instance, the penitentials seem to be reflecting real practices: in early fourteenth-century Montailou, Béatrice de Planissoles confessed to keeping her daughter's first menses to make a love potion when the daughter got married.<sup>32</sup>

In another passage quoted above, Bernard of Montemirat agreed with Geoffrey that some magical practices could cause permanent impotence, but he mentioned a different set of practices to make his point. His references to hiding magical items in the earth or casting them into fire or water do not seem to feature in earlier canon law commentaries, but parallels for them exist in other sources, such as the lock cast into a well mentioned in the confession manual of Thomas of Chobham. The *Pantegni* said that items might be hidden under the door in the couple's house, and the theologian Henry of Ghent agreed in 1280 that people could be bewitched by a tile

<sup>31</sup> See Ch. 4, n. 51.

<sup>32</sup> F. W. H. Wasserschleben (ed.), *Die Bussordnungen der abendländischen Kirche* (Halle, 1851), 153, 180; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montailou*, trans. Barbara Bray (London: Scholar Press, 1978), 32.

‘placed in a certain place’.<sup>33</sup> Thus Geoffrey and Bernard’s lists are likely to reflect real magical practices, although neither writer indicated where he had heard about them.

Roffredus of Benevento also listed what seem to be real practices, but they were designed to cure impotence rather than cause it:

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 may take their belts and tie them and put them 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.<sup>34</sup>

Instead of these practices, Roffredus told couples to follow the advice of *Si per sortiarias* and go to confession, pray, give alms, and fast. I have found no parallels for these cures in contemporary written sources, but several of them appear in later folklore. The trousers-on-head cure was not quite as ridiculous as it sounds, since in later folklore wearing clothing inside out was a common way of curing illness, on the principle that inverting the normal way of doing things would produce a special effect.<sup>35</sup> Piercing the cheese has an obvious phallic symbolism, as do many protective measures against the evil eye.<sup>36</sup> The use of the cheese may also be linked to long-standing associations in folklore between cheese, fertility, and protection

<sup>33</sup> *Pantegni*: see Appendix 1. Henry of Ghent: see Ch. 8, n. 52.

<sup>34</sup> ‘non currat maleficiatus ad incantatores seu divinatores ut faciant medicinas suas sive incantationes. Et audivi 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 [edition: 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 [edition: stella] aliqua quando tempus est serenum; vel faciunt similia.’ Roffredus Beneventanus, *Libelli Iuris Canonici* (Avignon, 1500), repr. in *Corpus Glossatorum Juris Civilis* 6 (Turin: Ex Officina Erasiana, 1968), 352; ‘trebello’ corrected to ‘terebello’ and ‘stella’ to ‘stola’ from manuscripts Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale 456, 91v and BN MS lat. 4248, 9v.

<sup>35</sup> Stephen Wilson, *The Magical Universe: Everyday Ritual and Magic in Pre-Modern Europe* (London: Hambledon Press, 2000), 347.

<sup>36</sup> 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: Garland, 1981), 264.

against magic,<sup>37</sup> all of which would be useful in a cure for magically-caused impotence. A similar practice is found in a fourteenth-century penitential by a German Franciscan named Rudolf, who claimed that women bit bread and cheese and then threw them over their heads to ensure fertility.<sup>38</sup> These parallels in folklore suggest that Roffredus' cures were popular practices that he had observed or heard about.

This is particularly likely because Roffredus also includes information about cases and everyday life elsewhere in his commentary.<sup>39</sup> We also know that Roffredus had observed cases of impotence in the church courts because he described one that came before Roger of San Severino, archbishop of Benevento. Roffredus describes how the archbishop cured a physician of (presumably non-magical) impotence by having a tonsure shaved on his head. Roger, who had clearly heard the many medieval jokes about lustful clerics, reasoned that since clerics never had problems with impotence, the problem must be caused by the hair on laymen's heads, which prevented dangerous fumes from escaping.<sup>40</sup> Roffredus admits that the archbishop was joking and so probably did not expect his readers to take this story too seriously, but he also reports that the physician's impotence was cured.

Many of the magical techniques mentioned by Geoffrey of Trani, Bernard of Montemirat and Roffredus were not just used in spells relating to impotence, but instead form part of what Richard Kieckhefer has called the 'common tradition' of medieval magic: basic techniques that were widely known.<sup>41</sup> Many are relatively simple and involve ingredients that were easy to come by, although some items might have to be borrowed or stolen from a priest, such as the stole. These techniques are often attested over a long time span, from the early Middle Ages to the early modern

<sup>37</sup> Caroline Oates, 'Cheese Gives you Nightmares: Old Hags and Heartburn', *Folklore* 114 (2003), 205–25.

<sup>38</sup> 'Panem mordent et caseum et ultra caput proiciunt, ut habundent.' Adolph Franz, 'Des Frater Rudolphus Buch "De Officio Cherubyn"', *Theologische Quartalschrift* 88 (1906), 430.

<sup>39</sup> Baumgärtner, 'Was muss ein Legist', 230.

<sup>40</sup> '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 fumositas exalare non potest et sic pori constringuntur quod in clericis non est, quia habent maximam aream, unde nulla fumositas retinetur.' Roffredus, *Libelli*, 352.

<sup>41</sup> Kieckhefer, *Magic*, 56.

period. Moreover, they do not bear much resemblance to the procedures found in the newly-translated Arabic magical texts described in Chapter 5. All of these factors suggest that the canonists' inspiration when they recorded these practices was their knowledge of magic in the world around them, rather than the concerns about magical texts that (as we will see in Chapter 8) motivated some contemporary theologians.

Two other canonists did not mention particular magical practices, but offered other information about how magic might function in the world around them. Hostiensis described a situation in which he claimed that impotence magic was often performed:

But if the magic precedes and the marriage comes afterwards, for example when a concubine has bewitched the man she loves so that he is rendered impotent with other women, as is found many times; or if the magic was performed specifically so that for some period he could not have intercourse with her whom he wanted to marry, then it is important [to know] whether the impediment is temporary or permanent.<sup>42</sup>

The statement that a man's lover might resort to magic to prevent him from marrying another woman reflects a common belief about impotence magic, which appears in the anecdotes of Master Odo and Thomas of Chobham, as well as in later case records. Hostiensis even states that it happened 'many times'. His pupil William Durandus also made the point at the start of his chapter on impotence that 'this material is useful and everyday.'<sup>43</sup> These statements suggest that, even though cases are not often found in church court records, the belief that magic could cause impotence may have been widespread. Many cases just did not lead to formal annulments.

This upsurge of references to what look like widespread magical practices in the mid thirteenth century coincides with the period when the pastoral movement was gaining momentum, and many confession manuals and synodal statutes were trying to regulate lay religious behaviour. It seems likely that the canonists learned about these magical practices both from

<sup>42</sup> 'Si vero maleficium precedit et matrimonium sequatur, ut quia concubina sua maleficiaverat virum amasium suum ita quod aliis impotens reddebatur, sicut multe inveniuntur; vel quia specialiter fuit factum maleficium ne cum illa cum qua volebat contrahere posset aliquatenus rem habere; refert utrum impedimentum sit temporale vel perpetuum.' Hostiensis, *Summa*, 4.15.9, 214v.

<sup>43</sup> 'Haec materia utilis est et quotidiana.' Durandus, *Speculum*, 4.4, 429.

the church courts and from their own or their colleagues' involvement in pastoral work. Roffredus mentioned a case that came before an archbishop, and in a passage quoted below, Hostiensis referred to information learned in confession. However, once the initial novelty had worn off, references to magical practices diminish, unlike in the pastoral literature where some writers continued to think about the world around them. Indeed, Joannes Andreae (d. 1349) was positively dismissive of Roffredus' list of illicit cures: 'Roffredus insists enough on this rubric, and inserts trivial things, of which I will touch on some elsewhere, and omit most.'<sup>44</sup> 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, they continued to work with these and assumed that they were still true a hundred years later.

## MAGICAL CURES

The canonists' interest in magical practices often went hand in hand with another concern: could it ever be legitimate to use magic? This question crystallized around the issue of magical cures for impotence. As argued in Chapter 6, concerns about the legitimacy of certain cures seem to have begun in pastoral literature, but they were soon picked up by canon law and theology. Attitudes varied widely, however, both between the different genres of source, and between individual writers within each genre. The vocabulary that was used to describe these practices bears this out. Writers in all three genres used the term *maleficium*, which meant harmful magic, to describe magic that caused impotence. Theologians like Albertus Magnus also used *maleficium* to describe certain ways of curing impotence, and this terminology was taken up by some pastoral writers, such as John of Freiburg.<sup>45</sup> Different writers might disagree about which cures fell into this category, but their use of the term signified at once that certain cures were not legitimate. The canonists, on the other hand, did not describe cures for impotence as *maleficium*. Instead they focused on a particular cure or group of cures, and discussed whether those particular

<sup>44</sup> 'Roffredus satis instat huic rubrice, et truffas inseruit, quarum aliquas tangam, et plures obmittam', Joannes Andreae, *Additiones ad Speculum Gulielmi Durandi* (Strasbourg, 1475), 4.15, 284v.

<sup>45</sup> See Ch. 8, n. 42 and Ch. 6, n. 39.



practices were legitimate. This approach allowed them to be more flexible about which cures were acceptable and which were not. Much depended on how each writer defined a ‘magical’ cure, and where their information about it came from.

The first canonists to discuss this issue were two early thirteenth-century commentators on the decretal *Fraternitatis*, John of Wales and another anonymous writer. *Fraternitatis* had described how a certain woman with a very narrow vagina could only be cured by a ‘divine miracle’, and John and the anonymous glossator took this opportunity to discuss miraculous cures for magically-caused impotence. John 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.’<sup>46</sup> The anonymous glossator agreed: ‘But 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.’<sup>47</sup> There is an interesting parallel here with the chapter on magically-caused impotence in the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African, where the cures are similarly divided into ‘divine’ and ‘human’ (see Appendix 1), but the parallel is not close enough to tell if either writer had actually read the *Pantegni*.

For John and the anonymous glossator, then, the term ‘miracle’ covered a wide range of cures. The mention of prayers suggests what most medieval writers meant by a miracle: a direct intervention by God which did not make use of any physical means but which could be a response to prayer. However, for John and the other glossator, other words and herbs that had been given special powers by God were also miraculous. This idea that certain substances had inexplicable, special powers was an old one, but it was becoming newly fashionable in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, as the opening of trade routes with the east fed a courtly

<sup>46</sup> ‘Hinc colligunt quidam, quod nullum malefictium 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), 51.

<sup>47</sup> ‘sed 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, 190v.

fascination for exotic wonders that was reflected both in Latin literature and in the vernacular romances.<sup>48</sup> At the same time, as discussed in Chapter 5, the theologian William of Auvergne termed the use of these powers ‘natural magic’ and debated where they came from and whether it was legitimate to use them.

These natural wonders were sometimes described as ‘miracula’, the same word that was used for the direct interventions by God that we would now think of as miracles. What linked the two phenomena was the emotion that they evoked: ‘admiratio’, a blend of reverence, pleasure, bewilderment, and fear.<sup>49</sup> Thus the line between an inexplicable property of a natural object, which had ultimately been set there by God, and a direct intervention by God in the natural world, was not fixed, and some practices could be placed on either side of it. Some writers even suggested that just as natural objects could have special powers to affect the physical world, so too could certain words, but most found this idea problematic, because the words concerned might be the names of demons.<sup>50</sup> It was therefore possible, although probably not usual, for John and his anonymous colleague to describe the unexplained properties of certain words and substances as ‘divine’.

Unlike most pastoral writers and theologians who referred to cures that worked by the unexplained powers of words and other substances, these two canonists expressed no doubts that it was quite legitimate to use them. However, their reasoning would be difficult to apply to real cases. As William of Auvergne suggested when he discussed natural magic, it was difficult to distinguish between ‘divine’ uses of words and herbs, and demonic ones. Each observer would have to decide for himself whether a particular cure was legitimate. Therefore it is perhaps not surprising that later canonists did not take up this radical view of impotence cures. Indeed, at the end of the fourteenth century Antonius de Butrio dismissed the whole question of miraculous cures for impotence as a waste of time: ‘For this case will never happen to you, therefore you should not tire your understanding out on it.’<sup>51</sup> Roffredus of Benevento and Hostiensis, who devoted space to magical cures in the thirteenth

<sup>48</sup> Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 24–32. <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 16. <sup>50</sup> See Ch. 5, n. 29.

<sup>51</sup> ‘Hic enim casus nunquam tibi eveniet, ideo non fatiges in hoc tuum intellectum.’ Antonius de Butrio, gloss to X 4.15.6.

century, ignored the question of miracles altogether and adopted a more cautious approach to the subject.

In the passage quoted above, Roffredus of Benevento condemned certain cures for magically-caused impotence outright. The vocabulary that he uses for these is interesting. The cures themselves are *incantationes* or *medicinae*, two terms with very different meanings. *Incantationes* were associated with magic; they appear in the section of Gratian's *Decretum* which deals with *sortilegium*, and are criticized in this context by pastoral manuals.<sup>52</sup> *Medicina*, by contrast, was used primarily for cures that worked by explicable, natural means. In this passage, however, Roffredus labels both incantations and medicines as illicit, and this is closely linked to his statement that they are offered by *incantatores* or *divinatores*. These terms both refer to magical practitioners. Worse still, these cures are often sought and implemented by women. One criterion which marked a cure as illicit thus seems to have been the status of the person offering and using it. However, the cures also have other common features that Roffredus does not draw attention to but which may have been in his mind. None of them works by explicable, physical means. Instead they have parallels with folkloric methods of promoting fertility or averting evil, and Roffredus contrasts them with the prayer, confession, almsgiving, and fasting listed in *Si per sortiarias*, which appeal directly to God. Certain cures for magically-caused impotence are thus illicit partly because they are supplied by magical practitioners, but also probably because of certain characteristics of the cures themselves.

It is interesting to compare Roffredus' attitude to magical cures for impotence with that of Hostiensis. Hostiensis' ideas about magical cures evolved during the course of his career, and their development can be traced in the two commentaries that he wrote on the *Liber Extra*, the *Summa*, completed in around 1253, and the later *Lectura*. Kenneth Pennington has shown that the *Lectura* survives in two versions: the first was completed in around 1262 and survives in Oxford, New College manuscript 205, while the second was finished shortly before Hostiensis' death in 1271.<sup>53</sup> In the *Summa*, Hostiensis did not mention how

<sup>52</sup> C. 26 q. v c. xi; Michael Haren, 'The Interrogatories for Officials, Lawyers and Secular Estates of the *Memoriale presbyterum*', in Peter Biller and A. J. Minnis (eds.), *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages* (York: York Medieval Press, 1998), 160.

<sup>53</sup> Kenneth Pennington, 'An Earlier Recension of Hostiensis's *Lectura* on the Decretals', *BMCL* 17 (1987), 77–90.

impotence could be cured, except to recommend that the couple should confess their sins, ‘because sometimes illness arises from sin’.<sup>54</sup> In the first version of the *Lectura*, again, he did not say how impotence might be cured.<sup>55</sup> However, by the time he wrote the second version, Hostiensis thought it worth mentioning that the person who cast a spell could often lift it. He seems to have learned this either from his own work as a priest and bishop, or from his conversations with other confessors: ‘it is argued that no magic is a permanent impediment, because it can be dissolved without a divine miracle by the person who did the magic, as you can often hear in confession from those same people, if you search diligently.’<sup>56</sup>

It was not information learned in confession, however, that had the greatest impact on Hostiensis’ attitude to magical cures. Between the earlier and later versions of the *Lectura*, Hostiensis also read the discussion of magically-caused impotence in the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African. In a new gloss he became one of the first writers to cite this text by name: ‘and in the *Practica* of Constantine is placed a rubric “On those who, impeded by magic, cannot have intercourse with their wives”, where Constantine discusses various spells and their remedies.’ Hostiensis also 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.’<sup>57</sup> Most interestingly of all, Hostiensis also recommended Constantine’s other cures, even though he admitted that these might appear strange to his readers: ‘and I advise that you go back to those things which are found

<sup>54</sup> ‘quia aliquando infirmitas ex peccato provenit.’ Hostiensis, *Summa*, 4.15.12, 214v.

<sup>55</sup> Hostiensis, *Lectura* to X 4.15.1–7, Oxford, New College MS 205, 185r–186r.

<sup>56</sup> ‘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 diligenter scruteris.’ Hostiensis, *Lectura* to X 4.15.6, *divinum miraculum*, BL MS Arundel 471, 177v.

<sup>57</sup> ‘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 eorundem. 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.’ *Ibid.*, to X 4.15.7, *ut agerent penitentiam*, 178v.

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.<sup>58</sup> The *Pantegni* thus became an authority for an entirely new way of approaching cures for magically-caused impotence. For Roffredus, a magical cure was performed by a magical practitioner and worked in a mysterious way. Hostiensis was also suspicious of certain sorts of cure, but for him as for Roffredus, the source of the cure was crucially important. Even a superstitious-looking cure could be tolerated if it had the approval of a professional, written authority.

When he said that frivolous things could be driven away by frivolous things, Hostiensis also implied that the purpose of a frivolous practice should be considered when deciding whether it was legitimate—an idea that seems to be unique among learned writers on magically-caused impotence. In his earlier *Summa* he had taken this idea even further, when he claimed to have encountered a case in which impotence magic might actually be a good thing: 'And if it is the wife [doing the magic], then the *sortilegium* seems to be good, because adultery is avoided. In this way a certain count was bewitched so that, as it is told and as I learned from those who knew the truth, for thirty years and more he was not able to have intercourse except with his wife; but afterwards [the impotence] vanished.' At least two manuscripts give the count's name as 'The—', but I have not been able to identify him further.<sup>59</sup> Although this statement seems to be unique among learned writers, there is some evidence that Hostiensis was not the only person who thought that it was acceptable to use magic to prevent adultery. Caesarius of Heisterbach, an early thirteenth-century Cistercian, tells a story that seems designed to persuade a sceptical public that it was sinful to use magic for this purpose. The story concerns a knight's wife, a respectable woman, who to her husband's surprise ended

<sup>58</sup> '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*, 178v.

<sup>59</sup> '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*, 4.15.8, 214r; 'videtur' corrected to 'vitetur' from BL MS Royal 10.D.IV, 249rb and BL MS Royal 10.E.VIII, 180rb. These manuscripts also give the count's name as 'The.'

up in purgatory because she had used love magic to keep him faithful to her. Caesarius comments that ‘It is a terrible thing that God so severely punishes faults that in our judgement are so very slight.’<sup>60</sup> This final comment suggests that although Caesarius thought that it was sinful to use magic to prevent adultery, he expected that other people might not agree.

The canonists discussed here took a much more complex view of magical cures than did the pastoral writers or theologians. Although Roffredus condemned magical cures strongly, John of Wales and Hostiensis were willing to permit them under some circumstances. This approach was similar to that of contemporary medical writers who also did not use the term *maleficium* to describe cures, and suggested remedies which might appear superstitious. Writers in different genres may have taken such different approaches to the same question because of the purpose for which they expected their texts to be used. The pastoral writers wanted to persuade the laity not to use illicit cures, so they were more interested in stressing how wrong it was to use them, than in discussing whether they could ever be legitimate. As will be seen in Chapter 8, the theologians arrived at a similar position from the opposite side. Instead of thinking about pastoral care, they were interested in the role of demons in making magic work; and if magic was demonic, then there was no room to argue that certain ‘superstitious’ cures might be legitimate. Canonists and physicians, by contrast, dealt with systems of thought that were designed to be used in practice, but they were not primarily interested in reforming lay attitudes to magic. Therefore they may reflect popular ideas about magical cures more accurately than either the theologians or the pastoral writers.

## CONCLUSION

Canon law was at the root of much writing about magically-caused impotence because it provided the basic rules for dealing with cases. It underwent fundamental changes in the thirteenth century, and these changes reverberated into both theology and pastoral literature. One key reason for these changes was the pastoral movement. This is suggested by Hostiensis’ references to confessions, and by the times at which some of

<sup>60</sup> Caesarius of Heisterbach, *The Dialogue on Miracles*, trans. H. von E. Scott and C. C. Swinton Bland (London: Routledge, 1929), ii.316–17.

the changes in canon law took place. The canonists started to discuss magical practices in the late twelfth century, at about the same time as the pastoral movement began, and they began to discuss magical cures shortly after the subject first appeared in pastoral literature. The pastoral movement was not the only reason for these changes, however. The canonists' experiences in the church courts also found their way into commentaries, such as the case of the impotent physician who Roffredus says was cured by the archbishop of Benevento. The canonists' interest in cases and magical practices also came at a time when a consensus had been reached about the annulment rules, and so writers were freer to turn to other issues. Nevertheless, the pastoral movement probably made it more acceptable to discuss magical practices in an academic context. A similar pattern can also be seen in theology and pastoral literature, which suggests that the canonists' interest in magical practices was prompted not just by increasing numbers of cases in the church courts, but also by wider changes that affected writers in more than one discipline.

Information about magical practices contributed to the debate over the validity of *Si per sortiarias* by helping canonists to argue, first, that most spells could be lifted and, later, that some could not. Some canonists were also willing to use information about magical practices to draw their own conclusions about whether and when it was legitimate to use magic. In some cases, their views seem relatively close to popular beliefs. Hostiensis provides the most extreme example of this, with his suggestions that 'superstitious'-looking cures and even magic that caused impotence might be acceptable under certain circumstances. John of Wales and another anonymous early thirteenth-century writer were also willing to permit certain cures that other writers saw as magical, although it is not clear where their information came from. This relatively relaxed attitude to cures that theologians might define as 'magical' is also visible in medical literature. On the other hand, Roffredus of Benevento took a much dimmer view of magical cures. Thus the canonists show that, despite the general statements made in theology and pastoral literature, there was as yet no consensus among learned writers about whether and when it might be legitimate to use certain practices that others labelled 'magic'. They also highlight how the pastoral writers' concern with reforming lay behaviour, and the theologians' interest in demons, caused writers in these genres to take a much stricter attitude to magic than most people probably did.

## 8

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

Thirteenth-century theologians discussed magically-caused impotence because, like the canon lawyers, they wrote commentaries on a textbook which contained *Si per sortiarias*, the ninth-century ruling by Hincmar of Rheims which permitted a bewitched couple to separate and remarry if they could not be cured. This textbook was the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard discussed in Chapter 4, in which *Si per sortiarias* could be found in Book 4, Distinction 34. In the 1220s, the theologian Alexander of Hales adopted the *Sentences* as a set textbook for theologians at the University of Paris, and thereafter everyone who studied theology had to write a commentary on the text. Commentaries on the *Sentences* are exceptionally rich sources for magically-caused impotence. One reason for this is that their authors used a wider range of sources than writers in any other genre. Two theologians referred to magical texts like those described in Chapter 5—the only writers on magically-caused impotence in any genre to do so. One of these writers, Albertus Magnus, is well known for his interest in these texts, but the other anonymous author has not previously been noticed by historians. A number of *Sentences* commentators were also influenced by the pastoral movement, slipping references to confessions and magical practices into otherwise general discussions of magically-caused impotence.

In addition to using a wide range of sources, theologians who discussed magically-caused impotence also asked many questions about the subject, some of which were not mentioned by writers in other genres. The first, as in many other sources, was the question of magical cures. The theologians'



attitude to these was influenced both by the pastoral movement and by a variety of written sources and, as in canon law, different writers took different views. The second issue that interested theologians, by contrast, was not raised at all by writers in other genres. This was a theoretical concern with how magic worked. Did magic actually exist? What was the role of demons in causing or curing impotence, and how did this relate to the role of human magicians? When theologians discussed these questions, they discussed the demonic nature of impotence magic openly, which writers in other genres did not. It was this interest in demons that set theological discussions of impotence magic apart from those of other disciplines, and led some theologians to develop ideas which later fed into the image of the devil-worshipping witch, which did not appear in canon law, pastoral literature or medicine until the fifteenth century.

Before looking at these issues, however, it is helpful to outline briefly how theological commentaries on the *Sentences* developed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. As mentioned above, Alexander of Hales made the *Sentences* a textbook for students of theology at Paris in the 1220s, and wrote the first full-length commentary on the text. In the 1240s the practice spread to Oxford, and the first Oxford commentary was written by the Dominican Richard Fishacre.<sup>1</sup> Only a handful of other *Sentences* commentaries have been identified from this early period between the 1220s and the early 1240s, but these works comment on *Si per sortiarias* in very similar terms to contemporary canonists. For example, Alexander of Hales, Hugh of St Cher, and Richard Fishacre took much of their material from the *Summa on the Sacraments* written by the theologian Guy of Orchelles in around 1216, which in turn followed the canonist Tancred of Bologna's *Summa on Marriage*.<sup>2</sup> Two other Parisian theologians, William of Auxerre (whose *Summa Aurea* drew heavily on the *Sentences* even though it predated Alexander of Hales's commentary) and Roland of Cremona,

<sup>1</sup> On *Sentences* commentaries see Peter Biller, *The Measure of Multitude: Population in Medieval Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 33–7, and Russell L. Friedman, 'The "Sentences" Commentary, 1250–1320: General Trends, the Impact of the Religious Orders, and the Test Case of Predestination', in G. R. Evans (ed.), *Medieval Commentaries on the 'Sentences' of Peter Lombard* (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2002), 41–128.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander of Hales, *Glossa in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, ed. by the Collegium S. Bonaventurae (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1957), iv.538, n. 3; Hugh of St Cher, Evreux Bibliothèque Municipale MS 15L, 113r–114v, Richard Fishacre, BL MS Royal 10.B.VII, 358v–359v; Guy of Orchelles, *Tractatus de Sacramentis*, ed. Damian and Odulph van den Eynde (St Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1953), 211.

took a different view. Probably influenced by canonists like Damasus of Hungary, they argued that no magic was permanent ‘because God permits some people to be bewitched because of the smallness of their faith. Therefore spells can be lifted by great faith, and destroyed by prayers, and by the same art through which they were made.’<sup>3</sup> As in canon law, however, this view was going out of fashion and was not adopted by later theologians.

After this initial period of dependence on canon law, a change took place in the later 1240s. From this time onwards, although the *Sentences* commentators continued to summarize the legal rules regarding annulments, their commentaries became ever longer and more sophisticated. It is in this period that they began to include information from a variety of new sources and ask new questions about how magic worked. The first theologian to do this seems to have been Albertus Magnus, who completed his *Sentences* commentary in 1249 after a period of study and teaching at Paris, and who later went on to produce many scientific writings.<sup>4</sup> The 1250s saw the writing of two extremely influential commentaries, by Saints Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas. The other commentaries from the late thirteenth century have not been much studied, but it seems were heavily influenced by Aquinas and Bonaventure.<sup>5</sup> However, also notable were Peter of Tarentaise, a Dominican who lectured at Paris in 1257–9 and later became Pope Innocent V, and Richard de Mediavilla, a Franciscan who taught at Oxford and probably revised his commentary during the 1280s and 1290s.<sup>6</sup>

Aquinas and Bonaventure’s *Sentences* commentaries remained important for the rest of the Middle Ages, but by the early fourteenth century, many commentators had begun to branch out again and include more details about impotence magic. Duns Scotus, who lectured on the *Sentences* at Oxford and published the first version of his commentary shortly after 1304, included details about who might perform impotence magic and how, and his approach had a profound influence on many later commentators,

<sup>3</sup> ‘quia propter parvitatem fidei permittit Deus aliquos maleficiari. Unde maleficia possunt dissolvi per magnitudinem fidei et per orationes, et per eandem artem per quam facta <sunt> destrui.’ William of Auxerre, *Summa Aurea*, ed. Jean Ribailier (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1985), iv.443. Roland of Cremona uses almost the same words: Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, MS 795, 137v. Cf. Damasus, Ch. 7, n. 17.

<sup>4</sup> 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: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1980), 22.

<sup>5</sup> Friedman, ‘“Sentences” Commentary’, 47.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 48, 53.

especially the Franciscans Joannes de Bassolis and Peter Auriol.<sup>7</sup> In the same period a Dominican commentator, Pierre de la Palud, also wrote a lengthy and original discussion of the subject, listing five ways in which demons could prevent the consummation of a marriage.<sup>8</sup> However, these writers were among the last to discuss magically-caused impotence in detail. After around 1320 many *Sentences* commentators did not comment on every section of Peter Lombard's text, instead concentrating on abstract philosophical issues and saying little or nothing about marriage.<sup>9</sup> Such important fourteenth-century figures as William of Ockham, Robert Holcot, and Hugolinus of Orvieto do not mention magically-caused impotence at all.<sup>10</sup> This pattern, of increasing interest in magically-caused impotence in the thirteenth century, followed by a decline in the fourteenth, is similar to that found in canon law, although in theology both the increase and the decline occurred a little later. Much of this chapter will therefore focus on the very detailed commentaries on *Si per sortiarias* produced between the late 1240s and around 1320.

## THE *SENTENCES* COMMENTATORS AND THEIR SOURCES (1): MAGICAL TEXTS

Albertus Magnus seems to have been inspired to break away from the canon-law-dominated approach of early *Sentences* commentaries by an encounter with a number of magical texts. He seems to have been the first

<sup>7</sup> On Duns see Thomas Williams, 'Introduction', in Thomas Williams (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1–11. On Joannes see Friedrich Stegmüller, *Repertorium Commentariorum in Sententias Petri Lombardi* (Würzburg: Schöningh, 1947), i.194–6; on Peter, Laue O. Nielsen, 'Peter Auriol's Way with Words: the Genesis of Peter Auriol's Commentaries on Peter Lombard's First and Fourth Books of the *Sentences*', in Evans, *Medieval Commentaries*, 149.

<sup>8</sup> Petrus de Palude, *In Quartum Sententiarum* (Salamanca, 1552), 34.2, 388. See Jean Dunbabin, *A Hound of God: Pierre de la Palud and the Fourteenth-Century Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

<sup>9</sup> William J. Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 303; Pierre J. Payer, *The Bridling of Desire: Views of Sex in the Later Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 10.

<sup>10</sup> Guillelmus de Ockham, *Quaestiones in Librum Quartum Sententiarum*, ed. Rega Wood and Gedeon Gál (St Bonaventure, NY: St Bonaventure University, 1984); Robert Holcot, *Super Quattuor Libros Sententiarum Quaestiones* (Lyons, 1497); Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius in Quattuor Libros Sententiarum* iv, ed. W. Eckermann (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1988).

theologian to ask several new questions about magically-caused impotence, and magical texts appear prominently in those questions. For example, where earlier theologians and canonists had taken it for granted that magic could cause impotence, Albertus explicitly discussed ‘whether someone can be impeded from sexual potency by the impediment of magic?’ His answer was yes: ‘the holy fathers say so and the church has promulgated laws about it. This is also clear to all those who know something about necromancy and making images.’<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Albertus also asked whether magic always made a man impotent with just one woman, or whether it could make him impotent with everyone. Again he referred to a magical text, this time citing one by name: ‘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 cuts off all intercourse. Therefore it seems that someone can be bewitched with respect to everyone.’<sup>12</sup>

Albertus also seems to have been the first *Sentences* commentator to discuss whether it was legitimate to use magical cures. Unlike the pastoral writers and canonists, who referred to the use of magical cures in the world around them, Albertus was again prompted by what he had read in a magical text: ‘For 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*.’<sup>13</sup> Several works on magical talismans said to have been revealed by Hermes were attributed to Aristotle, so Albertus was probably referring to one of these. He may have meant the *Secret of Secrets*, a work on kingship attributed to Aristotle that in some manuscripts contained a section on talismans, although it seems that Albertus only read this later.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> ‘An maleficii impedimento aliquis potest impediri a potentia coeundi? ... 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.’ Albertus, *In 4 Sent.* 34.8, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Auguste Borgnet (Paris, 1894), xxx.336.

<sup>12</sup> ‘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.’ *Ibid.*, 34.10, 338.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Necromantici enim docent unum maleficium per aliud excludi: sicut patet in libro Hermetis, qui *de secretis Aristotelis* intitulatur.’ *Ibid.*, 34.9, 337.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Burnett, ‘Arabic, Greek and Latin Works on Astrological Magic Attributed to Aristotle’, in J. Kraye, W. F. Ryan, and C. B. Schmitt (eds.), *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages* (London: Warburg Institute, 1987), repr. in Burnett, *Magic*, 84–96; Steven J. Williams, *The Secret of Secrets: the Scholarly Career of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Latin Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 190.

However, although his sources were different from those of the pastoral writers who discussed magical cures, Albertus agreed with the pastoral writers that they should never be used: ‘in no way should medicine be sought from an enchanter, but rather, the magic should always be tolerated. . . they [the necromancers] teach this knowledge in order to be harmful: and when demons cease from hurting [someone], then they seem to cure, as it is said in the *Life of St Bartholomew*.’<sup>15</sup>

As in this example, Albertus often cited the magical texts as objections against the point he wished to make, and then argued against them using more orthodox sources like 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. In using the magical texts in this way, Albertus assumes that they are referring to the same phenomenon as the more traditional discussion of impotence magic found in sources like *Si per sortiarias*. This conflation of the magical texts with popular magic determines many of the questions that he asks about magically-caused impotence, because he is forced to explain away any differences between the two. If the magical texts say that magic can make a man impotent with all women, why do earlier discussions of magically-caused impotence not mention this? If the magical texts say that magical cures are effective, why is it wrong to use them? Thus, even though he usually argued against them, Albertus’ reading of the magical texts encouraged him to ask new questions about magically-caused impotence.

However, Albertus was unusual in using magical texts to discuss magically-caused impotence in this way. Only one other writer seems to mention them in a commentary on *Si per sortiarias*. His name is not known, but he was a student of the Franciscan theologian Eudes Rigaud and his commentary survives in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale manuscript lat. 10640.<sup>16</sup> Eudes himself was active in the 1240s, but he does not seem to have commented on Book 4 of the *Sentences*.<sup>17</sup> Eudes’s student copied Albertus’ reference to the ‘Book of Images’ that taught how to

<sup>15</sup> ‘nullo modo querenda est per incantatorem medicina: sed potius semper tolerandum est maleficium. . . illi ut pestiferi docent noscere: et cum cessant demones a lesione, tunc curare videntur, sicut dicitur in vita S. Bartholomei.’ Albertus, *In 4 Sent.* 34.9, 337.

<sup>16</sup> Stegmüller, *Repertorium*, i.296.

<sup>17</sup> Kilian F. Lynch, ‘The Alleged Fourth Book on the Sentences of Odo Rigaud and Related Documents’, *Franciscan Studies* 9 (1949), 87–145.

make a man impotent with all women,<sup>18</sup> but he also talked about magic in ways that Albertus did not, distinguishing between three different kinds of impotence magic. Two were permanent: ‘It is said that this magic happens in one way in itself [*per se*], in another by accident [*per accidens*].’ The author then went on to discuss magic that was permanent ‘in itself’, explaining in a complex passage how several factors had to be combined:

If it is in itself, as happens more frequently, the first [factor required] 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 powers of herbs and occult characters. The third is suitable materials, like a stone or herbs that have an occult power or seem to have, and I say this on account of empirical processes whose effects cannot be explained rationally. 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, and when an impediment of this sort lasts for three years, it is judged to be permanent. Mercurius [MS reads: Macurius] says this in his response ‘On judgement by a demon or devil’, etc.<sup>19</sup>

This kind of impotence magic is a complex combination of many elements: 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. In order to learn about these occult properties, the magician must consciously invoke the demons, thereby entering into a relationship with them. The demons pretend that the magician is coercing

<sup>18</sup> ‘hoc habetur ex libro Ymaginum, ubi docetur fieri [MS: filius] ymago que maleficiat simpliciter, et facit perpetuo amare castitatem.’ BN MS lat. 10640, 70r.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Fit autem hoc maleficium dicitur quoddam per se, quoddam per accidens. Si per se, ut frequencius ibi concurrunt, primum est permissio diuina, iusto iudicio etsi latente. Secundum est operatio diabolica (nam demones vigent acrimonia sensus) et cognitione rerum temporalium, uirtutum herbarum et occultorum caratorum [MS: ceterorum creatorum]. Tercium est materia congrua, ut lapis vel herbe, que habent virtutem occultam, uel habere uidentur, et hoc dico propter empirica que nullam rationem habere ad productionem effectuum suorum. Quartam est familiaritas aliqua manifesta vel occulta inter demones et homines, et ideo per characteres, inuocationes, coniurationes, sacrificia, ?scemata [MS: sterimata], cissuras facit se inuocari ab hominibus ut uideatur cogi. Et tunc docet compositionem aliquam facere, uel herbam uel lapidem inuenire ut cum iste se preparat ad cognoscendum suam impediatur eum, et cum huiusmodi impedimentum durat per tres annos, iudicatur esse perpetuum. Hoc dixit ?Mercurius [MS: Macurius] respensionem de iudicio scilicet demono et dyabolo etc.’ Ibid, 70r–v.

them, but this is not really the case. The role of demons thus seems very clear, but the author then complicates things by mentioning ‘empirical’ processes, which cannot be explained but are not necessarily demonic. As will be seen in Chapter 9, contemporary medical writers also discussed empirical remedies for impotence, and like this anonymous theologian they acknowledged that herbs or stones might have unexplained but natural powers to affect the world around them. As the contemporary theologian William of Auvergne pointed out, however, it was difficult to tell which uses of herbs or stones were ‘empirical’ and which were demonic.<sup>20</sup>

The author then describes the other two categories of impotence magic much more briefly. Magic that is permanent ‘by accident’ is caused by spells that can normally be lifted, but for some reason cannot be lifted in some particular case:

But [impotence that is] permanent by accident 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 are still alive but do not know how to destroy what they have done, the magic accidentally becomes permanent when, however, it was not permanent in itself because it could be lifted.<sup>21</sup>

This idea that a spell becomes permanent if the person who cast that spell has died or does not know how to lift it, may be taken from contemporary canon law, as it resembles remarks made by the canonist Geoffrey of Trani.<sup>22</sup> The third type of impotence magic is ‘transitory’ or ‘remedial’, and is ‘quickly done and quickly lifted’.<sup>23</sup> The author does not say what this might involve.

The sources of this division of magic into ‘permanent in itself’, ‘permanent by accident’ and ‘transitory’ are unknown. Only the initial reference to the ‘Book of Images’ can be traced to Albertus Magnus, although elsewhere in his *Sentences* commentary Albertus provided a similar list of magical techniques: ‘invocations, conjurations, sacrifices, suffumigations and

<sup>20</sup> See Ch. 5, n. 31.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Perpetuum uero per accidens est quod fit per dationem alicuius potionis, uel inuocationis demonum, que per contrarium aliquod tolli potest. Tamen quando Dominus non permittit tolli, uel aliquis scit tollere qui moritur uel etiam quando nescit ipse idem qui fecit destruere, non sublato eo, perpetuatur maleficium per accidens, quod tamen de se non erat perpetuum cum posset tolli.’ BN MS lat. 10640, 70v.

<sup>22</sup> See Ch. 7, n. 18.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Transitorium uero uel remediale est quando cito fit et cito tollitur.’ BN MS lat. 10640, 70v.

adorations'.<sup>24</sup> Like Albertus, the anonymous author was probably drawing on magical texts for his reference to the occult properties of objects, invocations, characters, and sacrifices, since magical texts include all of these things. His reference to a text by 'Mercurius' (if that is who the 'Macurius' of the manuscript really is) also suggests this. Many of the magical texts translated from Arabic were attributed to Mercury (also known as Hermes), although there is nothing with a similar title in Paolo Lucentini and Vittoria Perrone Compagni's recent list of medieval hermetic texts.<sup>25</sup> However, the anonymous author also seems to have been thinking of the 'empirical' remedies recommended by contemporary medical texts. He thus conflates magical texts which invoked spirits directly both with empirical remedies involving natural objects and with the traditional forms of magic found in *Si per sortitarias* and described by Geoffrey of Trani, to make a single picture. For this anonymous writer, as for Albertus, the distinction between learned and popular, natural and demonic magic seems to have been irrelevant.

Apart from this one anonymous writer, however, later theologians did not copy Albertus Magnus' references to magical texts. On the other hand, they did copy the questions that these texts prompted Albertus to ask about whether magic could cause impotence, and about magical cures. In the case of Thomas Aquinas, this turning away from magical texts seems to have been a deliberate choice because Aquinas was taught by Albertus and copied parts of his commentary on other occasions. His omission of Albertus' references to magical texts is therefore striking. It seems that not everyone was willing to conflate learned magic with popular beliefs about magically-caused impotence in the way that Albertus and the anonymous author of BN MS lat. 10640 were.

## THE *SENTENCES* COMMENTATORS AND THEIR SOURCES (2): THE PASTORAL MOVEMENT

Instead of quoting magical texts, the theologians of the 1250s used information about magical practices in the world around them to answer

<sup>24</sup> 'invocationes, coniurationes, sacrificia, suffumigationes et adorationes', Albertus, *In 2 Sent.* 7.9, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Borgnet, xxvii.164.

<sup>25</sup> Paolo Lucentini and Vittoria Perrone Compagni, *I Testi e I Codici di Ermete nel Medioevo* (Florence: Polistampa, 2001).



the questions asked by Albertus Magnus. This information is similar to that found in canon law and pastoral literature and, as in these genres, it is likely to have reached the theologians through the pastoral movement. Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas mentioned magical practitioners' confessions explicitly: 'but not every [spell] can be dissolved by magic, or human aid, because the magicians, as is known from their confessions, know how to do some spells which they themselves, once they have been converted to penitence, cannot destroy.'<sup>26</sup> Some theologians said more about magical practices than others: for example, Peter of Tarentaise and Richard de Mediavilla did not mention them except when they summarized the argument of some earlier writers that no magic was permanent 'for it can be solved by the magician themselves, or by another person, or by penance and conversion to God, or by the exorcisms of the Church and the prayers of the saints.'<sup>27</sup> However, as in canon law, the pastoral movement provided a new source of information for writers who were interested, one that was probably more respectable than the magical texts quoted by Albertus Magnus.

Bonaventure also claimed that women performed impotence magic. Duns Scotus gave more details, suggesting that the woman might want the man for herself, or want to marry him off to someone else: 'say if she does not want him to marry this woman, but herself, or someone else.'<sup>28</sup> This seems to be the first time that these scenarios appear in a commentary on the *Sentences*, but writers in other genres as early as Hincmar of Rheims and Burchard of Worms had associated impotence magic with

<sup>26</sup> 'sed non omne dissolvi potest per maleficium, vel humanum consilium, quia malefici, sicut per confessionem eorum scitur, aliqua maleficia sciunt facere, quae ipsi, ad poenitentiam conversi, non possunt destruere'. Bonaventure, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Collegium S. Bonaventurae (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1889), iv.773; 'ut ipsi malefici confitentur', Thomas Aquinas, *Commentum in Quartum Librum Sententiarum*, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Luis Vivès, xi (Paris, 1874), 34.3, 168.

<sup>27</sup> 'nullum maleficium est perpetuum, potest enim solvi per ipsum maleficum, vel per alterum, vel per poenitentiam, et conversionem ad Deum, vel per exorcismos Ecclesiae, et orationes sanctorum.' Peter of Tarentaise, *In IV Librum Sententiarum Commentaria* (Toulouse, 1651, repr. Ridgewood, NJ: Gregg Press, 1964), 34.4, p. 343; Cf. Richard de Mediavilla, *Super quartum sententiae* (Venice, 1499), 34.3, 218v.

<sup>28</sup> 'secundum petitionem sortilegae mulieris', Bonaventure, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2, 773; 'sicut aliqua maga vult istum perpetuo impediri respectu istius, non tamen respectu alterius, puta si nolle quod istam duceret, sed se, vel aliam.' Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones in Quartum Librum Sententiarum*, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Lucas Wadding (Paris, 1894, repr. Farnborough: Gregg Press, 1969), xix.404.

women. Surviving trial records from the late Middle Ages suggest that this association had some truth in it, although in one case, Matteuccia di Francesco acted on behalf of a man who wanted to marry the bride himself.<sup>29</sup> References to ex-lovers and failed matchmakers can also be found in other sources that discuss impotence magic. The idea that men could be bewitched by their ex-lovers was particularly common, both in churchmen's discussions of magically-caused impotence and in case records. The case of the matchmaker is referred to less often, but in 1115, Guibert of Nogent recorded that his father was thought to have been bewitched by a woman who wanted one of her own nieces to marry him.<sup>30</sup>

Duns Scotus and his followers also gave specific details about magical practices, although they did not mention the source of their information. For example, Duns claimed that if the bewitchment was caused by a particular object, then destroying this object would end the spell automatically: 'the person destroying [the magic object] is not acquiescing to evil works, but believes that the demon can and wants to torment [the victim] as long as the sign lasts, and the destruction of the sign puts an end to the vexation.'<sup>31</sup> Duns was the first theologian to say this, but as with his references to ex-lovers and failed matchmakers, parallels for this idea can be found much earlier in the cases of magically-caused impotence described by Master Odo and Thomas of Chobham, and also in the *Pantegni*, which advised bewitched couples to look under the bed and take away any magical items.<sup>32</sup>

Duns Scotus also mentioned particular magical practices: the magician might use 'say, a bent needle, or something of this kind'.<sup>33</sup> Peter Auriol stated that 'magic is a corporeal thing, such as a wax image or something of the kind', and later described how piercing such an image could kill someone.<sup>34</sup> It is difficult to know whether these statements reflect written sources, current magical practices, or both, because needles and

<sup>29</sup> See Appendix 2.      <sup>30</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> 'destruens non acquiescit operibus malignis, sed credit daemonem posse et velle fatigare, dum tale signum durat, et destructio talis signi imponet finem tali vexationi.' Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones*, 403.      <sup>32</sup> See Ch. 4, n. 51, Ch. 6, n. 21, and Appendix 1.

<sup>33</sup> 'puta acus curvata, vel aliqua huiusmodi.' Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones*, 403.

<sup>34</sup> 'maleficium est res corporalis, puta imago de caera vel aliquid huiusmodi', Petrus Aureolus, *In Librum Sententiarum* (Rome, 1605), bk. 4, 34.1, 181; 'illud est valde mirabile, et stupendum, quod si pungatur imago aliqua alicubi, possit aliquis ad mortem deduci.' *Ibid.*, 34.2, 181.

wax images appear both in magical texts and in popular magic. Peter may, however, have been thinking of the high-profile case of Hugh Géraud, bishop of Cahors, who in 1317 was accused of using wax images in an attempt to harm the pope.<sup>35</sup> In contrast to this case involving a bishop, Duns Scotus' earlier references to ex-mistresses and failed match-makers suggest that he was not thinking of learned magic. Unlike Albertus Magnus, who derived his knowledge of magic from books, Duns Scotus and Peter Auriol described practices that anyone could do, and that Duns referred to certain groups of women doing particularly. It is thus likely that these writers were referring to real practices and situations. Another anonymous commentator, at the same time, stated specifically that 'this and things much greater occur and happen every day.'<sup>36</sup>

For other theologians, the relationship between magical practices and written sources is more complex. Some references to magical practices and cases which look as if they have been taken from experience, turn out on closer inspection to have a written source. For example, in a passage quoted below, John Quidort (also known as John of Paris), writing in the 1290s, described a case of magically-caused impotence which he took from Costa ben Luca's *Physical Ligatures*, a text on amulets discussed in Chapter 3. Similarly, Pierre de la Palud mentioned a kind of magic in which 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'.<sup>37</sup> Pierre told this story as if it were true, but in fact the tale of a reckless bridegroom who put his wedding ring on a statue of Venus (or in some versions the Virgin Mary) and was then unable to consummate his marriage, goes back to the twelfth century.<sup>38</sup> Pierre also mentioned magical practices involving beans and cocks' testicles in a passage quoted below, but again this reference came from a written

<sup>35</sup> Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: their Foundations in Learned and Popular Culture 1300–1500* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), 13.

<sup>36</sup> 'hoc et multo maiora cotidie eveniunt et contingunt.' Oxford, Balliol College MS 230, 198v; see Stegmüller, *Repertorium*, i.482.

<sup>37</sup> '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, 388.

<sup>38</sup> See Paull Franklin Baum, 'The Young Man Betrothed to a Statue', *Publications of the Modern Languages Association of America* 34 (1919), 523–79.

source, the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African. On the other hand, the way in which Pierre and John used this information was not so different from the way in which Duns Scotus and Peter Auriol referred to needles and women. Both sets of writers used their information as evidence of real events and practices. In this sense, Pierre and John testify to the importance of experience in theological discussions of magically-caused impotence of this period as much as do Duns and Peter.

However, the theologians' interest in experience had limits. Some aspects of their discussions of magic and impotence did not resemble widespread magical practices at all. For example, Thomas 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'.<sup>39</sup> Magically-caused impotence was a special case, because the devil had more power over the genitals than over other parts of the body. This does not correspond with the views of bewitchment that appear in trial records from the late medieval and early modern periods, in which a wide range of illnesses and other problems were blamed on magic. Magical texts also included spells to inflict all kinds of physical harm, not just impotence. Therefore the idea that magic could only cause impotence probably reflects 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.

Taken as a whole, the *Sentences* commentators' sources were more mixed than those of either the canonists or the pastoral writers. Like the contemporary physicians discussed in Chapter 9, they drew on both written sources and experience, without always distinguishing clearly between the two. Experience seems to have been the most common source. Aquinas, Bonaventure, and Duns Scotus all mentioned magical practices that they claimed were real, whereas references to written sources remain isolated and tend to emphasize what the texts say about real cases. However, although they were interested in experience, the theologians did not let this interest get in the way of their more theoretical ideas about how magic worked. Even though it was widely believed that magic could cause all

<sup>39</sup> 'Sed daemones 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 hujusmodi impedirent.' Aquinas, *In 4 Sent.* 34.3, 167; cf. Bonaventure, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2.2, 772.

kinds of illnesses, the theologians still preferred the idea that the devil had particular power over the sexual organs. This same uneasy combination of experience and theoretical discussion can also be seen in discussions of two issues that interested many theologians: the legitimacy of magical cures and the role of demons in magic.

## MAGICAL CURES

As in pastoral literature and canon law, references to magical practices went hand in hand with the question of whether it was legitimate to use magical cures, and like the canonists, the theologians offered a variety of views. The first theologians to mention the subject borrowed directly from canon law: William of Auxerre, in the passage quoted above, said that magically-caused impotence could be cured 'by the same art through which it was made', a statement very similar to the views of the canonists Huguccio and Damasus, who had believed that whoever cast a spell could also lift it. Alexander of Hales took a different view, arguing that cures which worked by the 'secret force of words or herbs' were 'divine', 'because men do not know [these things] except by divine revelation'.<sup>40</sup> Again, this view was shared by some contemporary canonists.<sup>41</sup> This suggests that the debate about how to categorize the occult forces found in natural objects and words spanned several disciplines in the early thirteenth century.

As in canon law, the argument that certain cures were 'divine' seems to have been dropped after the early thirteenth century. Instead, many theologians began to describe certain kinds of cure as '*maleficium*', a term that signified that they relied on demons and were therefore automatically wrong. The first writer to do this seems to have been Albertus Magnus, who asked whether it was wrong to use *maleficium* to cure *maleficium*.<sup>42</sup> As described above, Albertus was thinking of the newly translated magical texts, and it was probably the nature of these texts that led him to be suspicious of their cures. If the texts seemed demonic, then any cures that they recommended must also be demonic. However, later writers took up his terminology without quoting the magical texts. For example, Thomas

<sup>40</sup> 'Divinum autem est, quando per vim secretam verborum vel herbarum curatur; quoniam non noverunt homines nisi ex revelatione divina.' Alexander of Hales, *Glossa*, 544.

<sup>41</sup> See Ch. 7, n. 46–7.

<sup>42</sup> 'An maleficium sit excludendum per maleficium?' Albertus, *In 4 Sent.* 34.9, 337.

Aquinas, Peter of Tarentaise, and Richard de Mediavilla also stated that ‘if *maleficium* can offer a remedy, nevertheless [the impotence] should be considered permanent, because in no way should someone invoke the help of a demon by *maleficia*.’<sup>43</sup> Thus Albertus shifted the focus of the discussion. By labelling certain ways of curing impotence, as well as causing it, as *maleficium*, he pioneered a less flexible attitude to cures that worked in mysterious ways than that presented by either William of Auxerre or Alexander of Hales.

Despite this shift towards viewing certain cures for impotence as *maleficium*, a question mark still remained over the use of the occult forces in natural objects. The anonymous author of Paris, BN MS lat. 10640 was cautious, suggesting that some uses of words and objects relied on demons, but that other ‘empirical’ processes might not be demonic. Bonaventure agreed that some kind of power resided in natural objects, but he thought that the devil made use of this power, especially when the objects were used to cause impotence rather than cure it: ‘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].’<sup>44</sup> Most radical of all was Pierre de la Palud, who argued that there was no power at all in the natural substances used to cause impotence: ‘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.’<sup>45</sup>

Thomas Aquinas was also interested in occult forces, but he discussed them in a separate work *On the Occult Works of Nature* and in his *Summa Theologica*, rather than in his discussion of magically-caused impotence.<sup>46</sup> Like Bonaventure and the author of BN MS lat. 10640, Aquinas did not

<sup>43</sup> ‘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, 168; cf. Peter of Tarentaise, *In 4 Sent.* 34.4, 344; Richard de Mediavilla, *In 4 Sent.* 34.3, 218r.

<sup>44</sup> ‘et tunc vel propria virtute, vel per herbam, vel lapidem, vel naturam occultam vim impedit.’ Bonaventure, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2.2, 773.

<sup>45</sup> ‘Cum autem faciunt mulieres sortilegia cum fabis, gallorum testiculis, non est credendum, quod virtute illarum rerum vir impotens reddatur, sed occulta virtute demonum illudente sortitias per illa corporalia.’ Petrus de Palude, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2, 388.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph Bernard McAllister (trans.), *The Letter of St Thomas Aquinas ‘De Occultis Operibus Naturae ad Quemdam Militem Ultramontanum’* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1939); Brian Copenhaver, ‘Scholastic Philosophy and Renaissance Magic in the *De Vita* of Marsilio Ficino’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 37 (1984), 541–4.

think that the occult powers of stones or herbs were necessarily demonic, but words and written characters were another matter: ‘But if in addition there be employed certain ciphers, words or other vain observances, which clearly have no efficacy by nature, then this is superstitious and wrong.’<sup>47</sup> Therefore Aquinas went on to warn his readers against astrological images that had characters inscribed on them; scriptural amulets which contained ‘strange words we do not understand’ or signs other than the sign of the cross; and amulets which had to be written or worn in a particular way.<sup>48</sup>

At the end of the century, John Quidort presented a completely different explanation for why certain objects could cure impotence: the placebo effect. This is found in his commentary on Book 2, Distinction 7 of the *Sentences*, which dealt with the powers of demons, rather than in the section on magically-caused impotence:

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 a magic art [*arte magica*], I say that according to the standards I have said, they are not done by a magic art. But if they are done otherwise, that is a magic art and such things are superstitious.<sup>49</sup>

John took this anecdote from a passage of Costa ben Luca’s *Physical Ligatures*, a text on the medicinal uses of amulets.<sup>50</sup> However, like Alexander of Hales’s statement that certain cures were ‘divine’, this argument was not

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. and trans. Thomas Franklin O’Meara and Michael John Duffy (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1958), 2a 2ae, 96.2, 76–7.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.4, 82–3.

<sup>49</sup> ‘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 Cleopatrae. 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 saepe 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.’ Jean de Paris (Quidort), ‘Commentaire sur les Sentences’, ed. Jean-Pierre Muller, *Studia Anselmiana* 52 (1964), 101.

<sup>50</sup> See Ch. 3, n. 67.

taken up by later writers, perhaps because John's statement that the soldier's so-called 'magical' impotence was caused by the imagination was too far away from the theologians' usual model of demonic *maleficium*. There thus remained no consensus about whether and to what extent the use of the occult forces in natural objects to cure impotence counted as *maleficium*.

Duns Scotus agreed with Albertus, Aquinas, and Bonaventure that *maleficium* was wrong because it relied on demons, but he applied this theory to the question of cures for impotence in a new way, drawing a distinction between destroying a magical object that was causing the bewitchment, and actively resorting to magic oneself. Because the magical object had no power in itself but was merely a sign to demons, Duns argued that it was perfectly legitimate to destroy it: 'this question, whether it would be licit to take away the magic [object] with the intention of curing the bewitched person, is frivolous; for it is not only licit but meritorious to destroy the works of the devil.'<sup>51</sup> This idea does not seem to appear in earlier *Sentences* commentaries on magically-caused impotence, but it was not invented by Duns. In 1280, the Paris theologian Henry of Ghent had offered a similar argument in a general discussion of magic: '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.'<sup>52</sup>

Duns Scotus' students took the same view, but were more careful to state that although it was acceptable to destroy magical objects, the active use of magic was still a sin. Joannes de Bassolis specified that 'sometimes getting rid of the magical objects can act as a remedy. And I say that these are licit in the sense that whoever finds that sign [to the demons] or another one, can break it; however, a magic spell is not to be removed by

<sup>51</sup> 'trufatica est illa quaestio, an liceat tollere maleficium intentione curandi maleficiatum; non enim solum licet, sed est meritorium destruere opera diaboli.' Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones*, 403.

<sup>52</sup> 'Et sic dico quod licitum est maleficium deponere simpliciter: quemadmodum licitum est idolothyrum in cloacam proiicere: et etiam ut curetur infirmus maleficiatus: non credendo quod virtute illius maleficii morbus ille contingat.' Henry of Ghent, quodlibet 5, qu. 33, in *Quodlibeta* (Paris: 1518, repr. Louvain: Bibliothèque S. J., 1961), i.211r. See P. Glorieux, *La Littérature Quodlibetique de 1260 à 1320* (Paris: Bibliothèque Thomiste, 1925), i.184.



doing magic.<sup>53</sup> Peter Auriol 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.’ Peter also mentioned ‘some doctors who seem to hold the opposite view,’<sup>54</sup> suggesting 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. If some *Sentences* commentators did say this, it would explain why Joannes and Peter felt the need to clarify Duns’ statements.

As mentioned above, this idea that a spell could be lifted by taking away and destroying the magical object responsible may well reflect Duns and his followers’ knowledge of popular magical practices, in contrast to the earlier theologians’ blanket prohibitions of *maleficium* which go back to Albertus Magnus’ reading of magical texts. The *Sentences* commentators’ sources thus played an important part in determining their view of magical cures. However, even Duns Scotus and his followers did not reflect popular beliefs uncritically. The popular attitude to magical cures is likely to have been more tolerant still. Records of witch trials from early modern Lorraine show that centuries later, many people still sought magical healing for magically-caused illnesses, either from a local cunning man or woman, or from the suspected witch.<sup>55</sup>

These ‘magical’ cures were probably not considered to be *maleficium* in the same way as using magic to cause impotence was. Many of the healers accused of magical 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’.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> ‘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 III et IV Sententiarum Opus* (Paris, 1517), 34, 114v.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Videtur mihi distinguendum, quod 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.’ Alii autem Doctores, qui videntur tenere oppositum, ad hoc accedunt, quando scilicet maleficium destrueretur operatione malefica.’ Petrus Aureolus, *In 4 Sent.* 34.3, 181–2.

<sup>55</sup> Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: the Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), 159.

<sup>56</sup> 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: Croom Helm, 1987), 175, repr. in Brian P. Levack (ed.), *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology*, vol. 5 (New York and London: Routledge, 2001).

As will be seen in Chapter 9, some university-trained physicians were also happy to recommend cures that according to Thomas Aquinas' criteria looked demonic. Duns Scotus and his followers, and Henry of Ghent, may have been closer to popular beliefs, but they still assumed 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.

### MAGICIANS, DEMONS, AND WITCHCRAFT

Apart from when the theologians cited magical texts, much of what they said about magical practices and magical cures is similar to statements made in canon law and pastoral literature. However, from the mid thirteenth century onwards the theologians were also considering more abstract questions about the role of demons in causing impotence that writers in other genres did not share. Canonists, pastoral writers and early commentators on the *Sentences* did not mention demons openly when they discussed impotence magic, but from Albertus Magnus onwards, the theologians did. Jeffrey Burton Russell and David Keck have pointed out that theologians from the mid thirteenth century onwards were becoming increasingly interested in the powers and nature of both angels and demons, and they argue that this interest was inspired by the newly translated works of Aristotle. Aristotle provided more precise categories with which to study the nature of spiritual beings, and 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 blamed on demons.<sup>57</sup> The new interest in demons may also have been prompted by the newly translated magical texts which sometimes included methods of invoking spirits. It is certainly suggestive that among the first writers to mention demons explicitly were Albertus Magnus and the anonymous author of BN MS lat. 10640, both of whom also cited magical texts.

Many historians have suggested that in the long term, this interest in angels and demons contributed to the image of the devil-worshipping

<sup>57</sup> David Keck, *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 73; Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972), 142–4.

witch that emerged in the fifteenth century. They argue that as theologians debated the role of demons in magic, they gradually came to believe that everyone who performed magic must do so through a conscious, explicit relationship with a demon. Over time, this idea contributed to the image of the devil-worshipping witch.<sup>58</sup> The *Sentences* commentaries on magically-caused impotence seem to confirm this argument, because from the mid thirteenth century onwards, some theologians were making comments about impotence magic which resemble certain aspects of this later stereotype. These comments can be found in the theologians' answers to three questions in particular. Did magic exist at all? Why did God permit demons to cause impotence? And what was the relationship between demons and magicians? The first of these questions was discussed at length by Thomas Aquinas:

Certain people have 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 men's bodies and imaginations, when God permits; and so through them, magicians can produce certain signs. Moreover, this opinion proceeds from the root of infidelity or incredulity, for they do not believe that demons exist except in the minds of the masses, so that the terrors which a man makes for himself from his own mind are ascribed to a demon; and also [they believe] that certain figures appear to the senses in the same forms as a man has thought of them through the strength of the imagination, and so men think that they are seeing demons.<sup>59</sup>

Bonaventure also 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.'<sup>60</sup> It is

<sup>58</sup> e.g. Cohn, *Demons*, 114, and Michael Bailey, 'From Sorcery to Witchcraft: Clerical Conceptions of Magic in the Later Middle Ages', *Speculum* 76 (2001), 960–90.

<sup>59</sup> '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 alicue figure apparent in sensu tales quales homo cogitat, et tunc creduntur demones videri.' Aquinas, *In 4 Sent.* 34.3, 167.

<sup>60</sup> '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, 772.

not clear who he and Aquinas were arguing against. Some ten years later, a controversial master of arts at Paris, Siger of Brabant, used Aristotle to argue that according to reason, demons did not exist, although Siger claimed that he still believed in demons because faith took precedence over reason. Like the sceptics imagined by Aquinas and Bonaventure, Siger had disdained popular opinion, remarking that ‘many false things are common knowledge.’<sup>61</sup> It is possible that other members of the arts faculty at Paris had held similar opinions earlier, although so little is known about the Paris arts faculty before around 1265 that it is impossible to be sure.<sup>62</sup>

Other thirteenth- and fourteenth-century sentence commentators did not expand on Aquinas and Bonaventure’s statements about the existence of magic, but two centuries later, writers about witchcraft did. Heinrich Kramer, the inquisitor who wrote *Malleus Maleficarum* in 1486, 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 the passage from Aquinas quoted above.<sup>63</sup> The *Malleus* shows how an idea that began when Aquinas and Bonaventure answered a theoretical objection to the concept of magically-caused impotence, had by the late fifteenth century become bound up with arguments for the existence of witchcraft. The emphasis on experience which had begun with the pastoral movement had by this time become part of the discourse about an imaginary crime.

Recently, Walter Stephens has argued that when Thomas Aquinas wrote about the existence of magic, he was also thinking about another question which he discussed separately: why God allowed marriage, which was a sacrament, to be impeded by magic, which was the work of the devil. Stephens argues that Aquinas wanted to argue against the idea that magic was nothing but imagination, because this would mean that ‘magically-caused’ impotence was also caused by the imagination. But how could mere imagination impede the sacrament of marriage, with its

<sup>61</sup> ‘Multa enim falsa vulgata sunt.’ Armand Maurer, ‘Between Reason and Faith: Siger of Brabant and Pomponazzi on the Magic Arts’, *Medieval Studies* 18 (1956), 6–8, 9.

<sup>62</sup> Sten Ebbesen, ‘The Paris Arts Faculty: Siger of Brabant, Boethius of Dacia, Radulphus Brito’, in John Marenbon (ed.), *The Routledge History of Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), iii.271.

<sup>63</sup> Heinrich Kramer, *Malleus Maleficarum* (Speyer, 1487, repr. Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1991), part 1, qu. 1, p. 7. On the authorship of the *Malleus* see Hans Peter Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum and the Construction of Witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 18–19.

emphasis on fertility? Therefore, demons were brought in to explain how the sacrament could ‘fail’.<sup>64</sup> However, it seems unlikely that this is why Aquinas argued that magic was more than imagination, for two reasons. Firstly, theologians had begun to discuss why God allowed demons to cause impotence some ten years earlier. In the 1240s Albertus Magnus and an anonymous student of Eudes Rigaud whose commentary survives in BN manuscript lat. 3424 had both asked this question, but neither of these authors referred to anyone saying that magic did not exist.<sup>65</sup> Secondly, Albertus and Eudes’s student were able to answer the question, so there is no need to suppose that either they or Aquinas were anxious about the efficacy of the marriage sacrament. Eudes’s student stated that ‘the divine blessing is indeed more powerful, with respect to the purpose that it was ordained to counter.’<sup>66</sup> In other words, the sacrament of marriage was designed to cancel out the sin involved in sex, rather than to cure impotence. Albertus simply said that the devil could cause impotence with divine permission, if men deserved it.<sup>67</sup> Therefore it seems more likely that when Aquinas and Bonaventure discussed the existence of magic they were responding to questions similar to those raised about the existence of demons by Siger of Brabant.

Many of the arguments given above are based on the works of Thomas Aquinas, because most historians who have discussed the origins of the image of the witch in late medieval theology have focused on him.<sup>68</sup> One reason for this is that some witchcraft texts, notably *Malleus Maleficarum*, drew heavily on Aquinas. By contrast, Aquinas’ contemporary Bonaventure has been overlooked by historians of witchcraft, perhaps because there has

<sup>64</sup> Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 318–21.

<sup>65</sup> ‘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, 336. ‘Maleficia sunt arte et potestate demonum, sed matrimonium est remedium et beneficium divinum . . . non videtur quod matrimonium per maleficium dissolvatur’, Paris, BN MS lat. 3424, 223r. Odon Lottin dates this commentary to c.1250: ‘Un commentaire sur les Sentences tribulaire d’Odon Rigaud’, *RTAM* 7 (1935), 404.

<sup>66</sup> ‘Beneficium autem divinum potius est verum, quantum ad illud contra quod ordinatur.’ BN MS lat. 3424, 223r.

<sup>67</sup> ‘opus demonis propria auctoritate non destruit opus Dei, sed Deo permittente, et homine hoc pati merente’, Albertus, *In 4 Sent.* 34.8, 337.

<sup>68</sup> e.g. Broedel, *The Malleus*, 43–4, 72–3; Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, 318–21; Cohn, *Demons*, 112–14.

often been a tendency more generally in histories of late medieval theology to focus on Aquinas' influence at the expense of Bonaventure's.<sup>69</sup> However, in many ways Bonaventure's discussion of magically-caused impotence is closer to the later image of the witch than Aquinas'. In particular, Bonaventure drew an interesting parallel between magic and miracles when he discussed how magic could make a man impotent with one woman but not with another:

But because [the impotent man] is impeded by a demon (who is present and attacking him at the request of a sorceress, *who obtains this by the merit of her unfaithfulness, just as faith obtains that God is present to do miracles*) [my emphasis] when the sorceress does her magic with respect to a specified person, the devil shows himself in that act and not in others.<sup>70</sup>

This idea that the sorceress's relationship with a demon was on some level the same as a devout person's relationship with God moves the sorceress who causes impotence one step closer to the devil-worshipping witch. Recently Alain Boureau has identified other parallels between the magician's relationship with the devil and mankind's relationship with God in the works of some other Franciscan theologians, focusing particularly on the concept of the contract or pact. In the thirteenth century, many theologians described the sacraments in terms of a contract between God and mankind, and Boureau argues that in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, some Franciscans used this same concept of the pact to analyse the relationship between the magician and the devil.<sup>71</sup> These later Franciscans may well have been influenced by Bonaventure's earlier willingness to draw parallels between the faithful Christian and the magician in the context of magically-caused impotence.

Bonaventure's view of the relationship between magicians and demons also influenced later Franciscan *Sentences* commentators when they wrote about magically-caused impotence. Duns Scotus followed him in describing how a specifically female magician caused impotence through her personal

<sup>69</sup> Heiko A. Oberman, 'Fourteenth-Century Religious Thought: a Premature Profile', *Speculum* 53 (1978), 81.

<sup>70</sup> 'sed quia demoniaco impeditur—qui assistit et se obiicit secundum petitionem sortilegae mulieris, impetrante hoc merito infidelitatis, sicut fides impetrat, ut Deus assistat ad facienda miracula—cum sortitaria respectu personae determinatae facit sortilegium, diabolus in actu illo praesto est et non in aliis,' Bonaventure, *In 4 Sent.* 34.2.2, 773.

<sup>71</sup> Alain Boureau, *Satan Hérétique: Histoire de la Démonologie (1280–1330)* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2004), 82–90.

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.’<sup>72</sup> In turn, Joannes de Bassolis and Peter Auriol followed Duns, although Joannes was less sure that the culprit was always female: ‘the devil or evil spirits frequently have pacts with certain men or women . . .’<sup>73</sup> Dominican theologians, by contrast, followed Aquinas, who did not discuss the pact explicitly and presented demons as much less powerful than the Franciscans did.<sup>74</sup> For example, the Dominican Pierre de la Palud described in more traditional terms how the women were merely deluded by the demons into thinking that they could cause impotence.<sup>75</sup> Thus the Franciscan *Sentences* commentators in particular developed ideas in their discussions of magically-caused impotence which eventually fed into the witchcraft literature of the early modern period. Their emphasis on the relationship between the sorceress and the devil is significantly different from what is found in earlier theology and in contemporary canon law, pastoral literature, and medicine.

## CONCLUSION

The picture of magically-caused impotence offered by the *Sentences* commentators between the 1240s and the early fourteenth century is more varied than that found in any other discipline. Although the theologians shared ideas and sources with canon law and pastoral literature, such as a concern with magical cures and with information learned in confession, they also brought in information and questions that were entirely their own. Most of these related to how magic worked, and were prompted both by magical texts like those described in Chapter 5, and by questions about the nature and powers of demons. With these diverse sources and concerns went a diversity of opinions about issues relating to magic. For example, although all the theologians agreed that it was wrong to use ‘magical cures’, they did not all agree on what these were or how they worked. Similarly,

<sup>72</sup> ‘maga habens pactum cum daemone procurat ab eo ut istum impediatur a tali actu, cum tali muliere, quamdiu tale maleficium perseverat.’ Duns Scotus, *In 4 Sent.* 34, 403.

<sup>73</sup> ‘dyabolus vel spiritus maligni frequenter habent pactiones cum aliquibus hominibus vel mulieribus . . .’ Joannes de Bassolis, *In 4 Sent.* 34, 114v; Petrus Aureolus, *In 4 Sent.* 34.1–2, 181.

<sup>74</sup> Boureau, *Satan Hérétique*, 157.

<sup>75</sup> See above, n. 45.

Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure's defence of the reality of magic looks like an attempt to refute contemporaries who took a very different view.

The relationship between learned and popular ideas about magically-caused impotence in these sources is very complex. In some ways the theologians seem to reflect popular culture relatively accurately, such as in the assertion of many writers that women performed impotence magic, Aquinas and Bonaventure's insistence that some magic spells could not be lifted, and Duns Scotus' argument that it was legitimate to destroy magical objects. However, Albertus Magnus and the anonymous author of BN MS lat. 10640 referred to a different set of magical practices when they quoted magical texts, and although these might reflect what was going on in the universities, they were probably not very close to popular magic. Furthest from any kind of reality were the theoretical discussions involving demons, which later fed into the image of the witch.

Part of the reason for the difference between theology on the one hand, and canon law and pastoral literature on the other, lies in the wider range of sources that the theologians were using. However, the different purposes for which the different genres of source were written are probably also important. Canonists and 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. Theologians, by contrast, could mention pastoral concerns if they wanted to, but they were interested in abstract issues as well. 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 the pastoral movement did have an effect, theologians had more scope than either canonists or pastoral writers to follow their own interests and tackle less concrete questions.



## 9

### Herbs and Magic: Medicine, 1240–1400

Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century writers of pastoral literature, canon law, and theology were all affected to varying degrees by the church's pastoral movement. By contrast, the medical writers who discussed magically-caused impotence in the same period regarded it as an illness that could be cured, suggesting treatments from many different sources that worked in a variety of ways. The medical writers thus bring into focus several issues that have run through the earlier chapters of this study, such as the relationship between learned discussions of magic and popular practices, ideas about the definition and legitimacy of magical cures, and theories about how magic worked. Their views of these subjects often differ in interesting ways from those offered by writers in other genres, giving us a fuller perspective on attitudes to magically-caused impotence and its cures in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Medical discussions of magically-caused impotence were always sporadic compared with those in canon law and theology, because the physicians did not comment on a set textbook which included it in the same way as the canonists and theologians did. Indeed, perhaps the most influential medical textbook of the period, the *Canon of Medicine* by the tenth-century Arab physician Avicenna, which was translated into Latin in the twelfth century, explained impotence without referring to magic at all.<sup>1</sup> A number of later medical writers similarly offered purely non-magical explanations for impotence, including Constantine the African in his treatise *De Coitu* and William of Saliceto, a thirteenth-century surgeon and physician.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Avicenna, *Liber Canonis* (Venice, 1507, repr. Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1964), bk. 3, fen. 20, ch. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Constantini Liber de Coitu*, ed. Enrique Montero Cartelle (Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago, 1983); Gulielmus de Saliceto, *Summa Conservationis et Curationis* (Venice, 1489), ch. 156.

However, the first explicit references to the chapter on magically-caused impotence in the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African appear in the mid thirteenth century, and from this time onwards a small but steady stream of medical writers did discuss the subject.

Most of these discussions of magically-caused impotence occurred in a particular genre of medical writing, the *practicae* or medical compendia, large works that discussed the treatment of individual illnesses, rather than the general principles of medicine.<sup>3</sup> The second half of the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African, known as the ‘Practica’, is an early example, but the compendia appear in larger numbers from the mid thirteenth century onwards. Although compendia were written by university-educated authors and contain medical theory as well as recipes for cures, they can be seen as intermediaries between academic medicine and medical practice.<sup>4</sup> Their authors were sometimes willing to quote remedies that were used by non-learned practitioners; and equally, some compendia were translated into vernacular languages or had their prescriptions incorporated into recipe collections, and so reached a wider audience.<sup>5</sup> The presence of magically-caused impotence in these texts, with their emphasis on practice and individual cases, rather than in more theoretical works, suggests that the physicians believed that it was an illness that their readers might encounter in the world around them. In taking impotence magic seriously as a problem that existed outside the universities, the physicians shared the approach of many contemporary theologians, canonists, and pastoral writers, even though they disagreed with these writers on many other points.

A few medical writers also discussed magically-caused impotence in other contexts. In the years around 1300, Arnold of Villanova and Peter of Abano mentioned the subject when they discussed the influence of the stars on the physical world. There also existed a separate treatise on the causes of and cures for magically-caused impotence, which began to circulate some time after the late thirteenth century, sometimes under

<sup>3</sup> Luke Demaitre, ‘Scholasticism in Compendia of Practical Medicine’, *Manuscripta* 20 (1976), 82.

<sup>4</sup> Jole Agrimi and Chiara Crisciani, *Edocere Medicos: Medicina scolastica nei secoli XIII–XV* (Naples: Guerini e associati, 1988), 167; Demaitre, ‘Scholasticism’, 83–5.

<sup>5</sup> Tony Hunt, *Popular Medicine in Thirteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1990), 26; Faye Getz, *Healing and Society in Medieval England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), p. xv.

the title *Remedies Against Magic*. This was based on the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African, but some manuscripts also include recipes from later medical compendia, and from other unknown sources. The changes made by successive copyists, and the manuscript contexts in which the text is found, can tell us about how magically-caused impotence and its cures were seen over several centuries.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first focuses on the sources of the medical discussions of magically-caused impotence which, as in other genres, included both written texts and the authors' own observations. The second section will focus on what the medical writers say about an issue which interested many writers about magically-caused impotence in all disciplines: the definition and legitimacy of magical cures. The third section will also focus on the relationship between magic and medicine, but will look at the works of Arnold of Villanova and Peter of Abano, who both offered alternative explanations for the kind of impotence that most medical writers blamed on *maleficium*. In the fourth section I will discuss the treatise *Remedies Against Magic* separately, as a case study that brings these themes together, looking particularly at what this text says about the relationship between magic and medicine and the relationship between written sources and medical practice.

## THE PHYSICIANS AND THEIR SOURCES

The first thirteenth-century medical writer to discuss magically-caused impotence in detail is a shadowy figure. Gilbertus Anglicus<sup>6</sup> was probably physician to King John of England in 1207. It is not clear whether he ever studied or taught medicine in a university, but he probably wrote his medical compendium, the *Compendium of Medicine*, in around 1240. When he discussed impotence, Gilbertus began with its causes,<sup>7</sup> starting with physical problems such as defects in various organs, or an excess of hot or cold humours. At the end of this section, he suggested (in a phrase borrowed from the twelfth-century writer Roger de Barone) that if there

<sup>6</sup> See Faye Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 39–42.

<sup>7</sup> Gilbertus Anglicus, *Compendium Medicinæ* (Lyons, 1510), bk. 7, *De Approximeron*, 282r–6r.

were no signs of a physical problem, then the impotence might be caused by *maleficium*.<sup>8</sup> He then moved on to cures, focusing particularly on the patient's diet,<sup>9</sup> but also including potions made of herbs and other substances, ointments, and plasters to be worn over the kidneys. Again, *maleficium* appears at the end of the section, and the first cures that Gilbertus recommends for it are similar to those that he has suggested for non-magical causes of impotence: a medicine of theriac and the sap of St John's wort, or a plaster of St John's wort placed over the kidneys.<sup>10</sup> Theriac was believed to be a universal antidote for poisons, made principally from vipers' flesh; it was discussed a great deal in the late thirteenth century because physicians could not explain why it worked.<sup>11</sup> St John's wort was believed to repel demons. For example, the *Life of St Hugh of Lincoln*, written in around 1212, told how a woman was protected from demonic attacks by keeping the plant in her house.<sup>12</sup>

The ingredients for these medicines are different from those of the earlier recipes, because neither works in a physically explicable way, but Gilbertus uses them to make a potion or plaster, in the same way as he uses other substances to make cures for naturally-caused impotence. However, Gilbertus went on to acknowledge that these cures might not work: 'if medicines are of no use, use empirical remedies.'<sup>13</sup> He then listed various procedures, the first of which he 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 [23<sup>rd</sup> June], let a man aged twenty 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

<sup>8</sup> 'Cum autem est ex maleficio cognoscitur per exclusionem aliorum signorum.' Ibid., 286r. Cf Roger de Barone, Ch. 4, n. 57.

<sup>9</sup> 'In hac egritudine circa dietam cura maxima adhibenda est.' Gilbertus, *Compendium*, 286r.

<sup>10</sup> 'Si autem fit ex maleficio, detur tyriaca cum succo ypericon, et ypericon emplastretur renibus. Maleficia enim solvit.' Ibid., 287r.

<sup>11</sup> Michael McVaugh, 'Theriac at Montpellier, 1285–1325', *Sudhoffs Archiv* 8 (1972), 113.

<sup>12</sup> *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis*, ed. and trans. Decima L. Douie and David H. Farmer, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 119–23.

<sup>13</sup> 'Quod si medicine non conferant, fiant empirica.' Gilbertus, *Compendium*, 287r.

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 has intercourse with the woman, the woman will conceive a male, and conversely if the woman [wears the slip she will conceive] a female.<sup>14</sup>

Gilbertus then added two other cures: fumigation (presumably of the woman’s vagina, which was recommended for some gynaecological problems) with a dead man’s tooth, or with a eunuch’s shoes, and a drink made from an herb which grows through a hole in a stone.<sup>15</sup> Later, when discussing female sterility, he also mentioned that mercury could cure a woman whose vagina had been made too narrow by magic, a rare reference to magic impeding the ability of women to have sex.<sup>16</sup>

Gilbertus’ sources for these cures are not clear, although other medical compendia contain similar charms that mix scriptural passages with nonsense words.<sup>17</sup> However, two characteristics of these cures suggest that he may have been drawing on sources outside the learned medicine of the universities. Firstly, he calls these cures ‘empirical’ remedies, which meant that they could not be explained by medieval science, but could only be discovered by experience and observation.<sup>18</sup> Because they could not be explained, empirical remedies were often associated with unlearned medical practitioners and women, although university-trained physicians might also collect cures of this sort.<sup>19</sup> Secondly, Gilbertus’ empirical

<sup>14</sup> ‘Empericum quod numquam fallit et hoc quando dubitatio fit, cuius culpa aut viri aut uxoris proveniat impedimentum. Per hoc enim in manu nostra multe que steriles putabantur, conceperunt. Masculus XX annorum et supra in vigilia beati Iohannis baptiste consolidam maiorem primo, postea consolidam minorem cum radice extrahat de terra ante horam tertiam dicendo ter orationem dolicam. Nec eundo nec redeundo nemini respondeat, nec aliquid dicat. Et sic tacendo, succum extrahat de predictis. Et cum illo succo scribat in tot cartis, quot indiguerit, ista verba: ‘Dixit Dominus crescite. +. Uthihoth. +. et multiplicamini. +. thabechay. +. et replete terram. +. amath. +.’ Si mas chartam tali succo et ipsismet verbis scriptam circa collum habeat dum feminam cognoscit, marem femina concipiet, et e converso si femina feminam.’ *Ibid.*, 287r.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Aliud empericum: suffumigetur cum dente hominis mortui vel soleis castrati, vel bibat herbam crescentem per medium lapidis perforati.’ *Ibid.*, 287r.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Et dicunt quod argentum vivum delatum aufert maleficia in coitu si ipsa fit nimis stricta maleficio.’ *Ibid.*, bk. 7, *De sophisticatione vulve*, 302r.

<sup>17</sup> See Lea Olsan, ‘Charms and Prayers in Medieval Medical Theory and Practice’, *Social History of Medicine* 16 (2003), 343–66.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 347–8.

<sup>19</sup> Michael McVaugh, ‘Two Montpellier Recipe Collections’, *Manuscripta* 20 (1976), 178; Jole Agrimi and Chiara Crisciani, ‘Savoir Médical et Anthropologie Religieuse: les Représentations et les Fonctions de la *Vetula* (XIIIe–XVe siècle)’, *Annales* 48 (1993), 1285.

cures are similar to methods of repelling harmful supernatural influences that can be found in medieval and later folklore. For example, mercury appears very widely in folklore as protective against evil, and the theologian William of Auvergne (d. 1249) testified to the existence of this belief in the Middle Ages.<sup>20</sup> Nineteenth-century folklorists also referred to the use of perforated stones in England and elsewhere as amulets against bad luck.<sup>21</sup> These parallels suggest that Gilbertus learned these cures from healers outside the university.

The sources of Gilbertus' St-John's-Eve remedy also seem to have lain outside the academic medicine of the universities. By the thirteenth century, academic medicine had been transformed by medical texts translated from Arabic, which tended to favour cures whose action could be explained physically. Instead of reflecting these texts, Gilbertus' cure recalls medical practices found in early medieval Latin sources. The instructions to be silent while gathering herbs, and healing formulas using prayers and scripture have parallels in eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon medical texts.<sup>22</sup> Reciting the Lord's Prayer over herbs was also referred to in early medieval penitentials, which stated that nothing should be recited over medicinal herbs *except* the Lord's Prayer or the Creed. Cures like this can be found in recipe collections all through the late Middle Ages,<sup>23</sup> and Gilbertus' text shows that they still had a place in academic works that presented practical solutions to a wide range of illnesses. They perhaps had a place especially as cures for an illness like *maleficium*, which was not caused by an imbalance in the patient's body and so could not be cured by treating that imbalance in the way favoured by more rationalistic university medicine.

The second thirteenth-century medical writer to list cures for magically-caused impotence approached the subject differently. Much more is known about Petrus Hispanus than about Gilbertus Anglicus. Petrus studied and taught medicine at Montpellier and Siena, where he wrote commentaries

<sup>20</sup> E. Hoffmann-Krayer and Hanns Bächtold Stäubli, *Handwörterbuch des Deutschen Aberglaubens* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1935), vii.414; William of Auvergne: see Ch. 5, n. 31.

<sup>21</sup> Charles Godfrey Leland, *Etruscan Roman Remains in Popular Tradition* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892), 335.

<sup>22</sup> Karen Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 115.

<sup>23</sup> Lea Olsan, 'Latin Charms of Medieval England: Verbal Healing in a Christian Oral Tradition', *Oral Tradition* 7 (1992), 116–42.

on several key medical texts. He has often been identified with another writer of the same name who wrote an influential treatise on logic, but it now seems that the two Petruses were different people.<sup>24</sup> Our Petrus was a physician at the papal court, became pope as John XXI in 1276, and died in 1277. His *Thesaurus Pauperum* was a guide to simple medicines written 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.<sup>25</sup>

When he discussed impotence, Petrus did not mention causes, but simply listed remedies. In contrast to Gilbertus Anglicus, he drew exclusively on written sources, which he cited by name. These sources included Gilbertus and the *Pantegni* (making Petrus the first medical writer on magically-caused impotence to cite Constantine's text by name), but also a number of ancient medical texts. One was the *De Materia Medica* of Dioscorides, an encyclopaedia of medical substances written in the first century AD, from which Petrus took several suggestions such as keeping coral in the house, or suspending a squill plant in the doorway. Another was the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* of Sextus Placitus.<sup>26</sup> The third was the *Kyranides*, the Greek text dealing with the properties of natural objects and the making of amulets discussed in Chapter 2, which was translated into Latin in 1169. Rather than citing any descriptions of how to make amulets, Petrus used the *Kyranides* in the same way as his other sources, as a source of information about the properties of individual birds, plants or fish. For example, he quoted the *Kyranides*' recommendation that if a man and woman wear the hearts of a male and female crow respectively they would always come together harmoniously, but not the instructions for the full amulet, which was equally good 'for conjugal love'.<sup>27</sup>

However, although Petrus' sources are different from Gilbertus', this should not obscure the similarities between the two writers. Both offered

<sup>24</sup> Angel d'Ors, 'Petrus Hispanus O.P., Auctor Summularum', *Vivarium* 35 (1997), 21–71.

<sup>25</sup> Maria Helena da Rocha Pereira (ed.), *Obras Médicas de Pedro Hispano* (Coimbra: Acta Universitatis Conimbrigensis, 1973), 15.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 237. On Dioscorides see John M. Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985).

<sup>27</sup> 'ad coniugalem amorem.' Louis Delatte (ed.), *Textes Latins et Vieux français relatifs aux Cyranides* (Liège: Faculté de philosophie et lettres, 1942), 32; Petrus Hispanus, *Thesaurus*, in da Rocha Pereira (ed.), *Obras*, 239.

a range of cures that worked in different ways, including herbal remedies to be ingested and various substances to be worn. Moreover, the cures that Petrus took from Gilbertus and the *Pantegni* may only have been one step away from a non-written tradition. Petrus also throws in a comment that ‘many people’ call St John’s wort ‘demons’ bane’.<sup>28</sup> This remark may go back to earlier works on the properties of herbs, but the *Life* of Hugh of Lincoln shows that the belief in this herb’s demon-repelling powers was not just found in medical texts. Both Gilbertus and Petrus also thought that their cures were worth including in a book of practical medicine, and both found a wide audience. In many ways, the different sources of the remedies in these two texts are less important than these similarities.

The *Compendium of Medicine* of Gilbertus Anglicus and the *Thesaurus Pauperum* of Petrus Hispanus, together with the *Pantegni*, became the standard medical authorities on magically-caused impotence. They continued to be copied in the fourteenth century and their cures were mentioned in new compendia like the *Practica* of William of Brescia (d. 1326).<sup>29</sup> These three sources did not completely dominate the field, however. Some writers of compendia did not mention magically-caused impotence at all, such as Bernard of Gordon, who wrote the influential *Lilium Medicine* in 1305. Bernard noted in his chapter on impotence that ‘this chapter can be entitled *On Frigid and Bewitched People*’, (the same chapter title used by canonists) but in the chapter itself he did not mention magic.<sup>30</sup> Neither did Niccolo Bertucci (d. 1348) in his *Compendium Artis Medice*.<sup>31</sup> These writers may have been following earlier physicians like Avicenna who had not discussed the subject or, like the anonymous author of a treatise on sterility written in early fourteenth-century Montpellier and quoted below, they may have thought that the cure for magic should be ‘left to God’. One collector of medical recipes, Jacobus de Dondis, writing in 1355, did mention magically-caused impotence but quoted older sources directly: the herbal of Apuleius, Pliny, and the *Kyranides*.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> ‘ypericon si teneatur in domo fugantur demones; ideo dicitur a multis fuga demonum.’ *Ibid.*, 237.

<sup>29</sup> Gulielmus Brixienensis, *Practica* (Venice, 1508), ch. 125, 139r.

<sup>30</sup> ‘istud capitulum posset intitulari de frigidis et maleficiatis.’ Bernard of Gordon, *Lilium Medicine* (Ferrara, 1486), part 7, ch.1, 138r.

<sup>31</sup> Niccolo Bertucci, *Compendium sive Collectorium Artis Medicae* (Cologne, 1537), section 3, tr. 8, ch. 1, 171v–172v.

<sup>32</sup> Jacobus de Dondis, *Aggregator* (Venice, 1481), tr. 6, ch. 1, 256r–v.



The author of another fourteenth-century compendium combined his reading of the *Pantegni* and the *Thesaurus Pauperum* with his own medical practice. John of Gaddesden wrote the *Rosa Anglica* in around 1320. He was a fellow of Merton College, Oxford, seems to have spent time in the south of France, and was a bachelor of theology as well as a doctor of medicine.<sup>33</sup> John's discussion of impotence occurs in his chapter on sterility, where he deals with a range of impediments to conception in both men and women. Most of these are not related to magic, but at one point John mentions how sterility in men can be caused by eating 'sterilizing' substances such as lettuce or glow-worms, and from these he moves on to *maleficium*, citing both the *Pantegni* and Urso of Salerno by name:

Similarly, a needle with which a dead man has been sewn up, fixed in the bed or in a man or woman's clothes when they should have intercourse, impedes the erection of the penis and consequently generation, as Constantine says in the eighth book of his *Practica*, the treatise on *maleficia*. And Urso in the commentary on the twenty-fourth of his *Aphorisms* gives this case. And there Constantine recites many *maleficia*.<sup>34</sup>

For John, *maleficium* was thus a kind of impotence that had been inflicted on a man by external causes, similar to eating presumably non-magical but 'sterilizing' foods.

When he listed cures for impotence, John included medicines containing herbs and animal parts, dietary advice, and advice on how to have sex. One of the medicines included a passing reference to magic: 'a confection made of figs and nuts and hazelnuts and almonds and ginger is good even against poisons and against *maleficia* with *herba icanis* [I have not been able to identify this].'<sup>35</sup> John's other remedies for *maleficium* occurred at the end of his list of cures. First he 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

<sup>33</sup> H. P. Cholmeley, *John of Gaddesden and the Rosa Medicinæ* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), 4; Getz, *Medicine*, 42.

<sup>34</sup> 'Similiter acus cum qua suebatur homo mortuus fixa in lecto vel in pannis hominis vel mulieris cum debet fieri coitus, impedit erectionem virge et per consequens generationem, ut dicit Constantinus 8o *Practice* sue, tractatu de maleficiis. Et Urso in *Afforismis* suis commentario 24o [edition reads 34o] dat causam istius. Et Constantinus ibi recitat multa maleficia.' John of Gaddesden, *Rosa Anglica* (Pavia, 1517), ch. 17, 94r.

<sup>35</sup> 'confectio facta de ficibus et nucibus et avellanis et amigdalibus et zinziber valet etiam contra venena et contra maleficia cum herba icanis.' *Ibid.*, 96v.

of fungus], and *diaturbit* [possibly a compound medicine, as these often begin with ‘dia’] once a week for his problem with phlegm. And so [the remedy] against magic is clear.<sup>36</sup> First-person accounts of cures in medieval medical texts were sometimes copied from earlier writers, but John refers to his own experience elsewhere,<sup>37</sup> and I have found no earlier references to this case. If it was John’s experience, it shows how, as in the fig recipe that he described earlier, a physician might take magic into account when dealing with a case of impotence, and guard against it while also treating other causes.

Like Gilbertus Anglicus, John also suggested that if this medicine did not work, then his readers should try a separate set of remedies for *maleficia*: ‘Next, if he is still prevented from having intercourse by a lack of erection caused by magic, then Constantine says in the eighth book of his *Practica* . . .’<sup>38</sup> The cures that follow come from both the *Pantegni* and Petrus Hispanus’ *Thesaurus Pauperum*, and include sprinkling the house with a dog’s blood, removing magical objects from the bed, and keeping St John’s wort or coral in the house. Despite the existence of written sources for this section, there are again indications of John’s own experience, because he modified the final cure that is found in some but not all manuscripts of the *Pantegni*. In this cure the couple had to make confession and take communion, and then a priest was required to give them a slip of parchment with a biblical verse written on it to wear as an amulet. John, however, prescribed 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 29: 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 67: 5–6) and this one: *You bless the year with the dew of your blessing, and your fields are filled with fruitfulness* (Psalm 65: 11). And then they should go home and abstain from intercourse for three days and

<sup>36</sup> ‘et isto modo curavi unum qui non habuit erectionem virge per triennium. Et potavit herbam sancti Ioannis quottidie 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’, *ibid.*, 98v.

<sup>37</sup> Hunt, *Popular Medicine*, 27.

<sup>38</sup> ‘Deinde si adhuc prohibeatur coitus propter non erectionem ratione maleficii, tunc dicit Constantinus 8o *Practice* sue . . .’ John of Gaddesden, *Rosa*, 98v.

nights. Then they should have intercourse and ask God if it pleases him to give them many good children and offspring.<sup>39</sup>

John's willingness to modify a cure from an older source suggests that he was really using some of these methods.

Another physician who claimed to have encountered reproductive magic was Arnold of Villanova (c.1240–1311). Arnold taught medicine at Montpellier and served as physician to the kings of Aragon. He wrote a large number of medical texts, and also spiritual texts predicting the imminent coming of the Antichrist. One of the latter was condemned by the theology faculty of the University of Paris in 1300, but Arnold was protected by a position at the papal court after successfully curing Pope Boniface VIII of kidney stones.<sup>40</sup> In his medical compendium the *Breviarium Practice*, Arnold did not mention that magic could cause impotence, but he did claim that magic was commonly believed to be a cause of sterility in women: 'According to many people, sometimes conception is impeded, as women say, by wicked deeds or *maleficia* done to that woman. And it happens to many through the art of necromancy, as I have seen in many people, and this kind of sterility cannot be cured, unless the spells are first taken away.'<sup>41</sup> As discussed in Chapter 8, the idea that the best way of curing magic was to remove the magical object was a common one. Arnold's comment suggests that the belief that magic could impede the reproductive process was equally widespread.

The writers discussed above drew on a combination of written sources and their own observation, though the balance between these two sources varied between writers. They also suggest that cases of impotence or sterility

<sup>39</sup> '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.' *Ibid.*, 98v.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph Ziegler, *Medicine and Religion c. 1300: the Case of Arnau de Vilanova* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 21–7.

<sup>41</sup> 'Quandoque impeditur conceptio, sicut mulieres dicunt, per facinora seu maleficia, facta illi mulieri, secundum plures. Et pluribus accidit per artem negromantiae, ut in pluribus vidi, et huiusmodi sterilitas curationem non recipit, nisi prius facinora tollantur.' Arnold of Villanova, *Breviarium Practice* bk. 3, ch. 1, in *Opera Omnia* (Basel, 1585), 1319.

in which magic was suspected were relatively common. Gilbertus Anglicus, John of Gaddesden, and Arnold of Villanova all claimed to have encountered cases, and other writers thought that the subject was worth including in works of practical medicine. The medical writers' use of these sources does not seem to change much over the period, in contrast to the canonists and theologians who were influenced by the pastoral movement in the thirteenth century and then lost interest in magically-caused impotence in the fourteenth. However, the medical discussions were not completely static. A final fourteenth-century writer shows how a new source of information about impotence had the potential to influence medical attitudes to the subject profoundly.

Guy de Chauliac, a physician who completed a work on surgery, the *Chirurgia*, in 1363,<sup>42</sup> did not mention *maleficium* as a cause of impotence, and did not suggest any cures for impotence at all. Instead, he described how the physician or surgeon might be asked to testify in the church courts in cases where couples were seeking annulments on grounds of impotence 'because it is the custom of justice to entrust the examination to physicians'. The physician should examine the man's complexion and genitals, and then arrange for a 'matron accustomed to such things' to provide warming ointments and watch the couple as they try to have sex.<sup>43</sup> Since the twelfth century, canonists had suggested that midwives inspect the wife of the impotent man to establish whether she was still a virgin, but from around 1300, in some areas, at least, male physicians became involved in the process.<sup>44</sup>

Guy was probably also drawing on his experiences in the church courts when he warned the physician to be on his guard against fraud: 'Let him take care, however, that he is not deceived, because people are in the habit of committing many frauds in such cases, and especially there is great danger in separating what God has joined, unless it is required by a very just cause.'<sup>45</sup> Guy's comments show that by the second half of

<sup>42</sup> Guy de Chauliac, *Inventarium sive Chirurgia Magna*, ed. Michael R. McVaugh (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: Brill, 1997), i, p. xii.

<sup>43</sup> 'quia iusticia consuevit committere examen medicis...' Ibid., i.386.

<sup>44</sup> Michael McVaugh, *Medicine Before the Plague: Practitioners and their Patients in the Crown of Aragon, 1285–1345* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 204–5; Murray, 'Origins', 243.

<sup>45</sup> '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, *Inventarium*, i.386.

the fourteenth century, the church court had become a new source of information about impotence. They also show how legal cases offered a different perspective on the subject, highlighting issues such as fraud that had previously not concerned medical writers. Although other fourteenth-century medical writers do not mention similar experiences in the church courts, we will see in Chapter 10 how the courts probably helped to bring the attitudes of some fifteenth-century medical writers to magically-caused impotence closer to those of the canonists, theologians, and pastoral writers.

### MAGIC AND MEDICINE

The medical writers discussed above offered a wide range of cures for magically-caused impotence, taken from many different sources. Some of these cures would have been defined as ‘superstitious’ by contemporary theologians: for example, Thomas Aquinas claimed that unknown words, of the sort that appeared in the cure given by Gilbertus Anglicus, were superstitious because they might be the names of demons.<sup>46</sup> However, the physicians do not seem to have shared Aquinas’ concerns, and this section will examine what their views on the subject were. Did the physicians have a concept of ‘magical cures’ for impotence equivalent to those of the pastoral writers, canonists, and theologians? If so, what was it? Did it matter to them how a particular cure worked? Michael McVaugh and Lea Olsan have addressed some of these questions in recent studies of incantations and charms,<sup>47</sup> but instead of discussing one kind of cure that was used for many different illnesses, I will focus on the range of cures offered for magically-caused impotence in particular. The attitude of Gilbertus and the other physicians suggests that the notion of demonic involvement in certain cures that was put forward so forcefully by thirteenth- and fourteenth-century pastoral writers and theologians, was not shared by all learned writers.

<sup>46</sup> See Ch. 8, n. 47.

<sup>47</sup> Michael McVaugh, ‘Incantationes in Late Medieval Surgery’, in *Ratio et Superstitio: Essays in Honor of Graziella Federici Vescovini*, ed. Giancarlo Marchetti, Orsola Rignani, and Valeria Sorge (Louvain: Fédération internationale des instituts d’études médiévales, 2003), 319–45; Olsan, ‘Charms’.

Although they do not express the concerns raised by writers in other disciplines that it might be wrong to use certain cures for magically-caused impotence, the medical writers do imply that cures for *maleficium* were somehow different from cures for other, non-magical kinds of impotence. For Gilbertus Anglicus they were ‘empirical remedies’, a last resort to be used when ‘medicines’ failed, and they came from popular medicine and folklore rather than from academic medical texts. Petrus Hispanus, on the other hand, did not divide his impotence cures into ‘medicines’ and ‘empirical remedies’, but his list of cures does fall broadly into two halves. The first half consists mostly of ointments (‘crush laurel berries and mix them with orchid sap and anoint the kidneys and genitals with it’) and substances to be ingested, such as *diasatyriion* (an aphrodisiac made from several ingredients) or a badger’s testicles.<sup>48</sup> These recipes come with recommendations like ‘it powerfully excites intercourse’, ‘they excite the generative force marvellously’, and ‘it makes a great erection of the penis’.<sup>49</sup> They appear as aphrodisiacs with no suggestion that there was anything magical involved in the original impotence.

The second set of cures are explicitly said to be good against *maleficium* or against demons.<sup>50</sup> Here we find several of Gilbertus Anglicus’ remedies against *maleficium*, including the plaster made from theriac and St John’s wort, and the drink made from a herb that grows through a hole in a stone. Apart from Gilbertus’ recipes, however, none of the other remedies against magic are designed to be eaten or used as ointments. In several cases, substances are worn, as in the example of the crow’s heart quoted above. In others, the cure involves manipulating the couple’s environment by keeping certain substances in the house (coral, mugwort, St John’s wort) or by, for example, sprinkling dog’s blood around the home, in a cure borrowed from the *Pantegni*.

There are several overlaps between Petrus’ two sets of remedies. In neither case does Petrus explain how his remedies work. Instead, both sets of remedies rely on the properties of plants and animal parts. Both sections also include items to be ingested and others to be worn as amulets: Gilbertus’

<sup>48</sup> ‘Bacce lauri terantur et conficiantur cum suco satirionis et ungantur inde renes et genitalia.’ Petrus Hispanus, *Thesaurus*, 235.

<sup>49</sup> ‘potenter excitat coitum’, ‘mire excitant uim generatiuam’, ‘facit multam erectionem uirge’, *ibid.*, 235.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Item ad tollendum maleficium’, ‘soluit maleficium’, ‘tollit maleficium’, ‘omnia demonia fugient’, ‘nunquam aliquas insidias demonum sustinebit.’ *Ibid.*, 237–9.

theriac potion is good against *maleficium*, while ‘carrying the stone which is found in the right-hand side of the jawbone of a *salpax* [unidentified]’ is in the first section of remedies that ‘excite intercourse’.<sup>51</sup> However, the emphases of the two sections are broadly different, with the first designed primarily to increase the man’s libido using primarily medicines to be ingested and ointments, while the second is mainly designed to repel evil supernatural influences using amulets or by keeping substances close by. Unlike Gilbertus, however, Petrus mentioned demons explicitly, perhaps prompted by the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African which had described *maleficium* that caused impotence as ‘diabolical’.

So far, Petrus’ cures for magically-caused impotence were not fundamentally different from Gilbertus’. Both writers suggested cures that worked in physical ways, followed by procedures designed to repel evil influences. At the end of the chapter, however, Petrus included a process that was designed not to repel the magic of others, but actively to benefit the doer: ‘If you behead a hoopoe at the new moon, at sunrise, and eat its still-beating heart, you will know everything that is in the minds of men, and also heavenly things.’<sup>52</sup> Several factors suggest that contemporaries might have seen this process differently from, say, wearing a crow’s heart as an amulet. Firstly, hoopoes often featured in magical texts, particularly in procedures that, like Petrus’ recipe, aimed at allowing a person to see or know things beyond ordinary perception. For example, 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.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, killing the bird could be seen as a sacrifice to demons. 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), Petrus 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 his other cures did not.

<sup>51</sup> ‘Item lapis qui inuenitur in dextra maxilla salpiciis, portatus.’ *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>52</sup> ‘si in luna noua, in ortu solis, decollaueris upupam, et cor eius palpitans translutias, scies omnia que fuerint in mente hominum et etiam celestia.’ *Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>53</sup> David Pingree, ‘Plato’s Hermetic “Book of the Cow”’, in Pietro Prini (ed.), *Il Neoplatonismo nel Rinascimento* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1993), 142; on hoopoes see Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: a Necromancer’s Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), 50.

John of Gaddesden's view of cures for magically-caused impotence was in many ways similar to that of Gilbertus and Petrus. Like them, he started with 'medicines' that could be ingested. One of these medicines employed St John's wort, traditionally a repeller of demons, but it used it alongside the well-known aphrodisiacs ginger and almonds. However, as seen above, John also acknowledged that physical remedies might not work, and then suggested various remedies from the *Pantegni* and the *Thesaurus Pauperum*. These remedies are very mixed, ranging from sprinkling a dog's blood round the house, and wearing coral, to the prayer and confession recommended by some manuscripts of the *Pantegni*. Like Petrus, John does not describe these remedies as 'empirical', but he does separate them from his other cures. It is perhaps significant, however, that he did not quote Petrus' hoopoe recipe. Thus Gilbertus, Petrus, and John all recognized that cures for naturally-caused impotence might not be effective against *maleficium*, and were willing to suggest additional cures that did not work in an explicable physical way, although Petrus went further than either Gilbertus or John.

Some physicians were less keen on 'empirical' remedies, believing that since they could not be explained scientifically, they had no place in academic medicine. One anonymous early fourteenth-century writer stated that 'the cure of [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.'<sup>54</sup> Guy de Chauliac also denounced Gilbertus, Petrus, and John's remedies as 'mere tales', although he did recognize that amulets might inspire confidence in a patient who believed in them.<sup>55</sup> However, once empirical remedies had found a place in learned medicine, most subsequent medical writers were willing to tolerate them. Once a Gilbertus Anglicus or a John of Gaddesden had recorded these cures, they became part of the written medical tradition, guaranteed by a named medical authority. The canonist

<sup>54</sup> 'sicut in maleficiatis, quorum cura deo dimittenda est per ipsos maleficiores extirpando vel revocando, quamquam aliqui libri medicine ponant aliqua remedia empirica, sicut est portacio argenti 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: Universidad de Valladolid, 1983), 126.

<sup>55</sup> Olsan, 'Charms', 349; McVaugh, 'Incantationes', 344.



Hostiensis had likewise noted that a cure that might otherwise seem superstitious could be given legitimacy by a written authority.<sup>56</sup> This attitude helped to render acceptable practices that might otherwise have seemed suspicious or even demonic.

Gilbertus, Petrus, and John were probably also more typical of wider attitudes to curing reproductive illnesses of all kinds. For example, Francesco Datini, a fourteenth-century Italian merchant, and his wife Margherita, tried a variety of practices to help Margherita conceive. They consulted both a university-trained physician and a female empiric, and also tried incantations and prayer.<sup>57</sup> In another case, Master Antonius Imbert, a healer prosecuted in Manosque, Provence, in 1326, offered both ‘medicines, baths and drinks’ and ‘a false and magic art’ to cure sterility and impotence. Imbert’s customers did not have a problem with such ‘magical’ cures, and only complained when the cures did not work and Imbert fled in the night to avoid refunding their money.<sup>58</sup> These cases suggest that the eclectic approach to curing magically-caused impotence that is found in most medical compendia was probably closer to the views of the majority of the population than the attitudes of writers in other genres who worried about the demonic forces behind certain cures and consequently tried to prohibit them.

## IMPOTENCE, THE SOUL, AND THE STARS

The vast majority of medical writing about magically-caused impotence follows the pragmatic pattern discussed above, focusing on cures. However, two writers took a different approach and questioned how, exactly, the practices that most medical writers called *maleficium* could cause impotence. The first of these writers was Arnold of Villanova. With the exception of the short treatise *Remedies against Magic* which, as we will see below, was sometimes attributed to him, Arnold said little about

<sup>56</sup> See Ch. 7, n. 58.

<sup>57</sup> Katharine Park, ‘Medicine and Magic: the Healing Arts’, in Judith C. Brown and Robert C. Davis (eds.), *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy* (London: Longman, 1998), 130.

<sup>58</sup> ‘arte falsa et magica, et medicinis, balneis et potationibus et aliis dolose utendo.’ Joseph Shatzmiller, *Médecine et Justice en Provence Médiévale* (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, 1989), 176–7.

magic as a cause of impotence. He did not mention it in his short treatises on coitus and conception, or in his general works on medicine, the *Breviarium Practice* and the *Speculum Medicine* (although, as mentioned above, he did say that magic could cause sterility in women).<sup>59</sup> However, Arnold did mention how certain substances could cause impotence in another context. In *De Parte Operativa*, which was probably written in the 1290s while Arnold was teaching at Montpellier,<sup>60</sup> he discussed how the stars and planets could affect people and objects on earth. One way in which this happened was when particular substances became infused with heavenly powers.

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 [God] bring them about in any other 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 sorcerers and even the influences of those who cast the evil eye have no other efficacy, even though demons help.<sup>61</sup>

After giving examples of objects which were designed to receive the impressions of heavenly powers, like the gold seal depicting a lion which he used to cure Boniface VIII of kidney stones, Arnold went on to describe how certain substances could cause impotence in the same way: ‘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.’<sup>62</sup> The *Pantegni*

<sup>59</sup> All in Arnold of Villanova, *Opera*.

<sup>60</sup> Ziegler, *Medicine*, 24.

<sup>61</sup> ‘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 Omnia*, 274. The early modern editions read ‘festinantes impressiones’, but the phrase ‘fascinantium impressiones’ appears later in the text, 275.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Similiter presentia quarumdam plantarum, aut etiam particularium animalium, ac etiam quorundam lapidum alligatorum corpori, vel suspensorum, aut vestibus consutorum, prohibent organa generationis suum officium exercere.’ *Ibid.*, 275.

had also suggested that impotence could be caused by items (including animal parts) placed in or near the bed, and described this as *maleficium* and ‘diabolical’. Arnold interpreted them very differently. Although he admitted that demons might be involved in producing marvellous effects, he emphasized instead that the forces involved were a natural part of the universe which could be channelled by anyone with the right knowledge.<sup>63</sup>

The second writer to suggest that impotence ‘magic’ worked through means that were partly natural was Peter of Abano (d. 1316), who taught medicine and astronomy at Paris and Padua. Peter offered his explanation in a work on astronomy, the *Lucidator*, which he completed in 1310. At the beginning of his text, Peter condemned various illicit forms of magic and divination. One of these he called *garamantia*:

*Garamantia* is a spell [*maleficium*] that is a fascination of the soul, which seizes [a person’s] strength so that they are not able to control themselves, impeding sexual intercourse in particular, which is done by images, round mirrors, beans, chickpeas or nails (and especially those from wagons), so that what is accomplished with beans can be cured more by divine than by human remedies: *Practica Pantegni*.<sup>64</sup>

For Peter, as for Urso of Salerno, *maleficium* that caused impotence worked by affecting the victim’s soul. However, Peter’s emphasis was different. Even if impotence ‘magic’ was a form of fascination, Peter still described it as a form of *maleficium* and included it in a discussion of illicit magic, whereas Urso had presented the effect of the needle on the man’s soul as being completely explicable by natural means.

These two writers show that there was more than one way for medical writers to think about magically-caused impotence. As well as dealing with cases in a pragmatic way, they could also ask theoretical questions

<sup>63</sup> Paul Diepgen, ‘Studien zu Arnald von Villanova IV: Arnalds Stellung zur Magie, Astrologie und Oneiromantie’, *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 5 (1912), 93–4.

<sup>64</sup> ‘Garamantia est maleficium quod est fascinatio animalis, occupans vires ut sui compos esse non valeat, actum venereum impediens proprius, quod imaginibus, speculis spericis, fabis, ciceribus aut claviculis et, proprie curruum, operantur, ita ut quod fabis perpetratum divinis magis quam humanis curetur auxiliis, *Practica Pantegni*.’ Graziella Federici Vescovini (ed.), *Il ‘Lucidator Dubitabilium Astronomiae’ di Pietro d’Abano* (Padua: Programma e I+I Editori, 1988), 122; see also Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), ii.901.

about what impotence magic was, how it worked, and whether demons were involved, similar to those discussed by contemporary theologians. As in theology, these writers probably took their ideas from new texts that had been translated into Latin in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The theologians seem to have begun to link impotence magic to demons after reading both image-magic texts and the works of Aristotle which aroused their interest in spiritual beings, but the physicians drew on a different set of sources. The idea that one person's soul could bring about physical effects by affecting another person's imagination featured in Avicenna's *De Anima*.<sup>65</sup> The theologians' and physicians' use of these new texts and ideas to ask abstract questions shows a different approach from that of the canonists and pastoral writers, who followed earlier ecclesiastical writing more closely and stuck to more concrete questions.

As well as using different sources, the medical writers also came to different conclusions from the theologians. Neither of these writers emphasizes the demonic nature of magic that so interested contemporary theologians. Arnold did not discount the possibility that demons might be involved in practices involving heavenly forces, but played it down. Peter condemned *garamantia* in the same chapter as he condemned magic that explicitly invoked demons,<sup>66</sup> but he still explained it in terms of the power of the soul. The search for natural explanations for seemingly supernatural events can also be found in other contemporary medical writers, and went back to the twelfth century.<sup>67</sup> This relative scepticism may also be another reason why the authors of the medical compendia were often not particularly worried about whether their non-physical cures for impotence were 'magical'. Even if most authors of compendia did not themselves offer physical explanations for procedures that other writers termed *maleficium*, the fact that physical explanations could be offered may have helped them to accept cures that the theologians or pastoral writers denounced as demonic.

<sup>65</sup> Dag Nikolaus Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima in the Latin West* (London: Warburg Institute, 2000), 162.

<sup>66</sup> Eugenia Paschetto, *Pietro d'Abano: Medico e Filosofo* (Florence: Nuovedizioni E. Vallecchi, 1984), 133–9.

<sup>67</sup> Simone C. Macdougall, 'The Surgeon and the Saints: Henri de Mondeville on Divine Healing', *Journal of Medieval History* 26 (2000), 262; M. D. Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century*, trans. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 11–18.

## THE REMEDIES AGAINST MAGIC

A separate treatise on the causes of and cures for magically-caused impotence, sometimes known as *Remedies against Magic*, also touches on the themes discussed in this chapter. Much of this text was copied from the *Pantegni*, but some manuscripts also included remedies from Gilbertus Anglicus, Petrus Hispanus, and other unidentified sources. Gerda Hoffmann edited the text in 1933 from four manuscripts of the *Pantegni* and two sixteenth-century editions of the *Remedies* that were printed with the works of Arnold of Villanova,<sup>68</sup> but more manuscripts have been found since then and I have produced a fuller edition in Appendix 1.

It is difficult to know who first copied the *Remedies* separately from the *Pantegni*, and when. Although the text was ascribed to Arnold of Villanova in the sixteenth century, historians have argued for a long time that Arnold was not the author, because he is often sceptical about magic in his other works.<sup>69</sup> The surviving manuscripts are inconclusive: two name Arnold as the author; two name Constantine the African; one names Petrus Hispanus; and the rest are anonymous.<sup>70</sup> Even if the *Remedies* was not compiled by Arnold, it may have been put together around the time that he was writing, in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. The sources would all have been available by then, and some medical writers of this period seem to have been particularly interested in problems relating to fertility.<sup>71</sup> On the other hand, all of the known manuscripts of the *Remedies* have been dated by their cataloguers to the fifteenth century or later, except for *Br*, which is dated to the thirteenth century (see Appendix 1 for sigla). It is possible that the text was first compiled in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century but circulated more widely in the fifteenth because, as will be seen in Chapter 10, at that time physicians were more interested than earlier writers in magical illnesses and cures.

<sup>68</sup> Hoffmann, 'Beiträge', 129–44.

<sup>69</sup> Juan A. Paniagua, 'El Maestro Arnau de Vilanova, Médico', 2nd edn., in *Studia Arnaldiana* (Barcelona: Fundació Uriach 1838, 1994), 73–4; see also Diepgen, 'Studien zu Arnold von Villanova IV', 92.

<sup>70</sup> *So* and Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 5315 name Arnold; *Mu* and *Va* name Constantine; Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana MS Ashburnham 143 names Petrus. See Appendix 1 for sigla, text, and references to manuscript catalogues and descriptions.

<sup>71</sup> See Ch. 6, n. 65.

It is possible to discern broadly two versions of the *Remedies*. The first is found in *Br*, *So*, *Fl*, *Mp*, and *Va*. These manuscripts contain the chapter on magically-caused impotence from the *Pantegni* in its full version, including the final cure in which the couple make confession and are given a piece of parchment inscribed with a biblical verse. They do not contain passages from either Petrus Hispanus' *Thesaurus Pauperum* or Gilbertus Anglicus' *Compendium of Medicine*. The second version is found in *Mu* and in the sixteenth-century printed editions of the *Remedies*. Here the final cure from the *Pantegni* is omitted (as it is in some manuscripts of the *Pantegni* itself), but in its place are remedies from Petrus and, in the printed editions, from Gilbertus as well. The two versions of this text may in fact represent two independent uses of the *Pantegni*, because if the authors of *Mu* and the printed versions simply added cures from Gilbertus and Petrus to the version of the text found in the other 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 Petrus where they were used, were copied word for word, but the compiler or copyist of *Mu* left out many of the cures from Petrus Hispanus that are found in the sixteenth-century printed versions of the *Remedies*, and changed the order of the remaining ones. Also, in both *Mu* and the printed editions, one of Petrus' recipes was altered to make it more relevant to impotence. The *Remedies* reads: '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.' Petrus' version was different: 'Item if someone has been bewitched so that they love some man or woman too much . . .'<sup>72</sup> The compiler of this version of the *Remedies* thus altered a cure for love magic to a cure for impotence magic. If the compiler changed this deliberately (and did not simply misread 'nimis' as 'non') it raises questions about whether anyone was actually expected to try this remedy, since the compiler changed its result to the opposite of what it was originally supposed to be. However, it also suggests that the compiler was trying to produce a coherent text dealing with impotence magic, and so was prepared to adapt his remedies to fit.

<sup>72</sup> 'Item si quis maleficiatus fuerit ad nimis amandum aliquem uel aliquam . . .' Petrus Hispanus, *Thesaurus*, 237–9.

The additions made to the text in two other versions, the 1509 printed edition and *Fz*, have not been traced to written sources. These two versions show how readers of the *Remedies* could take very different views of the relationship between magic and medicine. One of the cures in the 1509 edition, like the written charm recommended by Gilbertus Anglicus, contained unknown words and so was superstitious according to the definition of Thomas Aquinas, but it seems to have presented no problems for the writer who added it to the *Remedies*. The reader was required to ‘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 gospel of John would never fit into a cup, only the first verse was meant, ‘In the beginning was the word...’<sup>73</sup> This passage was widely seen as powerful: 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.<sup>74</sup> Thus despite its use of unknown words, this process had affinities with orthodox piety. These affinities can also be found in the other cures added to the 1509 edition, which often recommend prayer, confession, communion, and plants collected while saying the Lord’s Prayer.

The manuscripts in which the *Remedies* is found suggest that most of the men who copied the *Remedies* shared the compiler of the 1509 edition’s view that the remedies contained in it were orthodox, even if some might be superstitious by the standards of Thomas Aquinas. They also suggest that in most cases, the *Remedies* was read as a medical work, rather than as a collection of magical remedies. Of the eight known manuscripts, seven contain medical recipes, works on medicine, and works on the properties of natural substances: *Br; So; Mu; Va; Mp*; Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ashburnham 143; and Vienna, Austrian National Library MS 5315. Other works that told readers how to produce unexplained but not explicitly demonic effects seem to have been perceived in the same way. For example, many texts of non-demonic image

<sup>73</sup> Hoffmann, ‘Beiträge’, 138, n. 2.

<sup>74</sup> Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 215–16.

magic are also found bound with works on medicine and the wonders of nature.<sup>75</sup>

There is one exception to this pattern, however. In *Fl*, the *Remedies* is found alongside explicitly magical texts: not just works on image magic that could be part of an interest in the natural world, but also works that explicitly discuss angel names and demons. The extra cures added to the text in this manuscript also have affinities with the rituals found in magical texts rather than with orthodox religious practices. 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 in contrast to Gilbertus, the words in question have no link to the Bible: ‘astea. astia. assa. assa. alnab. liberate.’ Another involves writing ‘*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 magically-caused impotence (although in one Scandinavian case a sword was used to cause impotence),<sup>76</sup> but they were a feature of some necromantic spells which invoked demons.<sup>77</sup> This manuscript therefore suggests that it was possible, although not usual, to read the *Remedies* as a magical text.

The *Remedies* confirms the impression given by the medical compendia that magically-caused impotence was believed to be a real problem, not just a remote case that only appeared in comprehensive encyclopaedic works. It shows that the problem was worth singling out, and that it was often singled out by copyists and readers who were interested in the more practical aspects of medicine, such as recipes. The modifications made to the text also suggest an ongoing interest in the subject. Like Gilbertus Anglicus and Petrus Hispanus, the readers and copyists of the *Remedies* were willing to tolerate a wide range of cures from written and occasionally perhaps non-written sources, even if some of these might appear superstitious by theological standards. One copyist even stretched the bounds of acceptability further and combined the *Remedies* with an interest in truly demonic magic. In cases of impotence, at least, the relationship between explicable, natural medicine, illicit magic, and the vast grey area in between, was fluid, more so than writers in other genres suggest, and it remained so into the fifteenth century and beyond.

<sup>75</sup> Frank Klaassen, ‘English Manuscripts of Magic, 1300–1500: a Preliminary Survey’, in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits*, 4.

<sup>76</sup> See Ch. 5, n. 39.

<sup>77</sup> Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 47–50, 59, 62, 117.



## CONCLUSION

The medical writers confirm the impression given by the sources discussed in earlier chapters that many learned writers about magically-caused impotence recorded beliefs that were widely shared. Gilbertus Anglicus probably drew on popular medicine, and Petrus Hispanus included cures for *maleficium* in a work designed for a wide audience. Arnold of Villanova stated that many people believed that magic could make women sterile, and John of Gaddesden claimed to have treated a man for magical as well as natural impotence. Guy de Chauliac expected physicians to come across cases of impotence in the church courts. Most physicians were interested in the practical implications of *maleficium*, how it could be diagnosed and treated, but Arnold of Villanova and Peter of Abano went further and offered physical, or at least partly physical, explanations for methods of causing impotence which other writers termed *maleficium*. However, in contrast to the theologians who were also interested in theoretical questions, Arnold and Peter played down the role of demons in causing impotence, although they did not discount the possibility altogether.

Magic is never the primary explanation for impotence in the medical texts. It is usually found at the end of the chapter, after physical explanations such as defects in the man's complexion or deformities of the genitals have been covered. Some writers did not mention it at all. This pattern is the same as in canon law and theology, which also listed natural causes of impotence first, and then moved on to *maleficium*. The few impotence cases from church court records described in Chapter 7 suggest that many cases of impotence were ascribed to natural rather than magical causes in reality, as well as in written textbooks. However, in cases where the impotence did not seem to have a physical cause, many medical writers were willing to consider *maleficium*. As Gilbertus Anglicus put it, magic could be diagnosed 'through the absence of other signs'. Moreover, because *maleficium* did not have an identifiable, physical cause that could be treated, many writers recommended similarly inexplicable, 'empirical' remedies. Indeed, Gilbertus and John of Gaddesden said that the physician might have to resort to these if medicines failed. Although some medical writers criticized these remedies, this situation seems to have remained relatively constant throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the manuscripts of the *Remedies Against Magic* show that

cures whose action could not be explained physically were deemed acceptable for magically-caused impotence into the fifteenth century and beyond.

The physicians also show how fluid concepts of magic could be. Like the theologians and canonists, the medical writers made a distinction between cures that worked by explicable physical means and those that did not. However, they did not label the inexplicable cures as ‘magic’, and the few writers who objected to them did so because they were not part of rational academic medicine, rather than because they were superstitious. In this, the medical writers differed from many writers in other genres, who defined magic more rigorously. This willingness to tolerate a wide range of cures was probably shared by many people, as the examples of Francesco and Margherita Datini, and Antonius Imbert suggest. This does not mean that the medical writers reflected popular beliefs uncritically, however. When Gilbertus Anglicus distinguished between ‘medicines’ and ‘empirical remedies’, he was probably thinking harder about how these remedies worked than most people ever did. Many people would not have had access to a university-trained physician, especially in the countryside,<sup>78</sup> and so would have had no need to distinguish between the medicine offered by academic physicians, and the ‘empirical’ remedies of other practitioners. Despite these differences, however, it seems likely that the physicians reflected wider attitudes to magical cures more closely than did the pastoral writers, canonists or theologians, because they were not seeking to stamp out magic in the name of pastoral reform.

<sup>78</sup> McVaugh, *Medicine*, 45–8.

## Impotence Magic and the Rise of Witchcraft

By 1400, magically-caused impotence was a clearly defined phenomenon and the rules that governed cases were well established. Pastoral writers, canonists, theologians, and medical writers had covered the basic issues and examined various related questions about how magic worked and, above all, about the definition and legitimacy of magical cures. They had also offered a wide range of answers to these questions, often based on magical practices that existed in the world around them. However, by the later fourteenth century, many writers were saying less about magically-caused impotence than their thirteenth-century counterparts. Most writers either said little about the subject, or were content to repeat the conclusions of earlier authorities. Thus, to an observer in around 1400, the state of scholarship on magically-caused impotence would have appeared relatively stable. But appearances were deceptive, because attitudes to magic underwent profound changes in the fifteenth century. The final chapter of this book will examine the impact that these changes had on learned attitudes to magic and impotence.

The early fifteenth century saw the emergence of a new stereotype of a magic-worker: the witch. Witches did not just do harmful magic, but were also believed to be members of a secret sect which renounced God and worshipped the devil. Periodically they were believed to fly to sabbaths where they met the devil, held orgies, murdered babies, and planned how they could inflict magical harm on their neighbours. Impotence featured regularly in descriptions of witches as one of these forms of magical harm,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 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: Université de Lausanne, 1999), 35, 148, 279, 370.

and in 1486, the most famous (or infamous) witch-hunting manual of all, *Malleus Maleficarum*, described several cases of men being rendered impotent or having their penises stolen by witches.<sup>2</sup> *Malleus Maleficarum* seems to have been particularly interested in the relationship between witchcraft and sex,<sup>3</sup> but the notion that witches attacked fertility seems to have been widespread, and it fitted in well with the idea that witches attacked whatever was central to Christian society.

The belief in harmful magic was very widespread in the Middle Ages, but the origins of the rest of the image of the witch are much debated. As seen in Chapter 8, certain theologians from the thirteenth century onwards were developing the idea that magicians had a special relationship with the devil that was in some way equivalent to the relationship between the devout Christian and God, and this idea fed into the image of devil-worshipping witch. The fantasy of a secret sect that had orgies and murdered babies goes back to Roman images of the Christians and was applied in the Middle Ages to heretics and Jews, but other parts of the image seem to be derived from folk beliefs, such as the idea of flying supernatural beings.<sup>4</sup> These elements were all old in the fifteenth century, but they came together in a new way in the 1420s and 1430s, in a relatively limited geographical area, the Alps and their neighbouring regions, south-east France and northern Italy. Here, at this time, several writers first described a sect of flying, devil-worshipping witches and the first prosecutions for being a member of this sect took place.<sup>5</sup>

Historians have offered many explanations for why the image of the witch crystallized in this particular time and place. They have variously focused on the role of the dukes of Savoy, who controlled much of this area, in prosecuting witches; economic crises; jurisdictional conflicts between ecclesiastical and secular authorities; and the interest of church reformers

<sup>2</sup> Heinrich Kramer, *Malleus Maleficarum* (Speyer, 1487, repr. Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1991), Part 2, Qu. 1, Chs. 1 and 7, pp. 95, 115–18. On these stories see Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 302–10 and Moira Smith, 'The Flying Phallus and the Laughing Inquisitor: Penis Theft in the *Malleus Maleficarum*', *Journal of Folklore Research* 39 (2002), 85–117.

<sup>3</sup> Hans Peter Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum and the Construction of Witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 177–83.

<sup>4</sup> Cohn, *Demons*, 1–15, 35–50; Wolfgang Behringer, *Shaman of Oberstdorf: Chonrad Stoeckblin and the Phantoms of the Night*, trans. Erik Midelfort (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998), 33–4.

<sup>5</sup> Ostorero et al., *L'Imaginaire du Sabbat*, 9–11.

in prosecuting heresy in the same area.<sup>6</sup> More general explanations for why witchcraft appeared to be a genuine and urgent threat to Christian society at this time have pointed to a sense of crisis and insecurity after the upheavals of the fourteenth century; the attempts of nation-states to consolidate their power; and the extension of inquisitorial judicial procedures which made magical crimes for which there was no physical evidence easier to prosecute.<sup>7</sup> Fears also seem to have been fed by an increased awareness of magic in this period. A series of high-profile political trials in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries involved allegations of magic, magic and divination were practised at some courts, and a few authors began to describe their own or named contemporaries' experiences with magic openly.<sup>8</sup>

Recently, historians have also pointed to the links between witchcraft and reform movements in the fifteenth-century church.<sup>9</sup> The Great Schism had called attention to abuses within the organization of the church and, in response, the great Councils of Constance (1414–18) and Basel (1431–49) planned to reform the church 'in head and members'. In practice, the councils concentrated on the clergy rather than on pastoral care,<sup>10</sup> but reform initiatives also sprang up elsewhere. Some reformers outside the councils did discuss how to improve the pastoral care of the laity, such as Jean Gerson (d. 1429), theologian and chancellor of the University of

<sup>6</sup> Arno Borst, 'The Origins of the Witch-Craze in the Alps', in Borst, *Medieval Worlds: Barbarians, Heretics and Artists in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 109; Pierrette Paravy, *De la Chrétienté Romaine à la Réforme en Dauphiné* (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1993), ii.785–90; Andreas Blauert, *Frühe Hexenverfolgungen: Ketzer-, Zauberei- und Hexenprozesse des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg: Junius, 1989), 37–8; Ostorero et al., *L'Imaginaire du Sabbat*, 11–12.

<sup>7</sup> A great deal has been written on this question. Borst, 'Origins', 121; Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch and the Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), 123; Martine Ostorero, *Folâtrer avec les Démones: Sabbat et Chasse aux Sorcières à Vevey (1448)* (Lausanne: Université de Lausanne, 1995), 184; Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: their Foundations in Learned and Popular Culture* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), 18–19.

<sup>8</sup> Jan R. Veenstra, *Magic and Divination at the Courts of Burgundy and France* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: Brill, 1998), 96; Nicolas Weill-Parot, *Les 'Images Astrologiques' au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance: Spéculations Intellectuelles et Pratiques Magiques* (Paris: Champion, 2002), 606.

<sup>9</sup> Blauert, *Frühe Hexenverfolgungen*, 30; Kieckhefer, *Magic*, 199–200.

<sup>10</sup> Philip H. Stump, *The Reforms of the Council of Constance (1414–1418)*, (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: Brill, 1994), 139–40; Johannes Helmuth, *Das Basler Konzil 1431–1449: Forschungsstand und Probleme* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1987), 334–6.

Paris.<sup>11</sup> In several religious orders, observant movements aimed to restore higher standards of behaviour, and some of the supporters of these movements also attempted to bring the message of reform to Christendom as a whole, including the preachers Bernardino of Siena, Vincent Ferrer, and Johannes Nider, all of whom seem to have taken a particular interest in magic.

This climate of reform affected attitudes to magic in several ways. Firstly, a number of reformers attacked magic particularly. Jean Gerson and other theologians wrote treatises denouncing magical practices, and Gerson also encouraged bishops to investigate superstitions in their dioceses.<sup>12</sup> Other reformers stirred up fears of magic and magical practitioners. Vincent Ferrer and other friars spread what one recent historian has termed an 'obsession with the devil' in the Dauphiné, and Bernardino of Siena persuaded his initially sceptical listeners to denounce magical practitioners in Rome.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, the new ideas about witchcraft were developed and circulated at the Council of Basel, alongside ideas about church reform.<sup>14</sup> This council was an enormous international gathering with over 3,200 participants between 1432 and 1443 and, as such, it provided new opportunities to exchange texts and ideas.<sup>15</sup> Several early writers about witchcraft spent time there. It was at Basel, for example, that Johannes Nider discussed witchcraft at length with a secular judge from Bern, Peter of Gruyeres, and these discussions formed an important part of his theological dialogue, the *Formicarius*, which was one of the earliest texts to include the full stereotype of the devil-worshipping witch.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See Louis B. Pascoe, *Jean Gerson: Principles of Church Reform* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: Brill, 1973), 135–54.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 143; Françoise Bonney, 'Autour de Jean Gerson: Opinions de Théologiens sur les Superstitions et la Sorcellerie au début du XVe Siècle', *Le Moyen Age* 77 (1971), 85–98.

<sup>13</sup> Paravy, *Chretiené*, 903; Franco Mormando, *The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 56.

<sup>14</sup> E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976), 21.

<sup>15</sup> Jürgen Miethke, 'Die Konzilien als Forum der öffentlichen Meinung im 15. Jahrhundert', *Deutsches Archiv* 37 (1981), 749, 763.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Bailey, *Battling Demons: Witchcraft, Heresy and Reform in the Late Middle Ages* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 28; Werner Tschacher, *Der Formicarius des Johannes Nider von 1437/8: Studien zu den Anfängen der europäischen Hexenverfolgungen im Spätmittelalter* (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 2000), 174–5.

Given the importance of the thirteenth-century pastoral movement in shaping learned views of magically-caused impotence at that time, this reappearance of a connection between church reform and changes in attitudes to magic is interesting. We might expect to see a further flow of information about magical practices into learned writing on magically-caused impotence, as happened in the thirteenth century. This did indeed happen to some extent, especially among the medical writers, who began to say more about magical practitioners and cases of bewitchment than their earlier counterparts. However, the rise of witchcraft also prompted many learned writers to take a new interest in theoretical questions about how magic worked and about the role of demons. In the thirteenth century, these questions had been confined to theology, but now they spread into canon law and medicine, and even the theologians discussed them with a new intensity. Several writers also related these questions explicitly to the new image of the witch. This change meant that fifteenth-century discussions of magically-caused impotence began to look less like those of earlier periods, which had combined snippets of information about magical practices with academic commentaries on a particular text. Instead they resembled the witchcraft literature of the early modern period, which mixed together experience, older texts, and theoretical questions about the powers of demons into a more integrated discussion of a single phenomenon, witchcraft.

#### THEOLOGY, CANON LAW, AND PASTORAL LITERATURE

The response of the theologians, canonists, and pastoral writers who discussed magically-caused impotence to these changing ideas about magic was not uniform. As in the fourteenth century, some commentators on the *Sentences* did not discuss the subject at all, or did so in a very conservative way. For example, the Cologne theologian Henry of Gorkum said little about magically-caused impotence in his *Sentences* commentary, and although Denis the Carthusian (d. 1471) said more, he followed Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus very closely.<sup>17</sup> Short confession

<sup>17</sup> Henricus de Gorinchem, *Conclusiones in Sententias* (Lyons, 1489), bk. 4, dist. 34. Dionysius Cartusianus, *Opera Omnia*, ed. by monks of the Carthusian Order (Tournai: Imprimerie N.-D. des Prés, 1913), xxv.141–5.

manuals did not single out impotence magic particularly, any more than they had done in earlier periods. Thus the influential theologian and archbishop Antoninus of Florence did not mention the subject in his short *Summa for Confessors*, and neither did the *Manner of Confessing* of Andreas de Escobar (d. 1427).<sup>18</sup> Even those writers who did discuss impotence magic in detail borrowed many of their ideas from earlier texts. This is in contrast to the thirteenth century, when a steady stream of writers in theology, canon law, and pastoral literature added new information to traditional discussions of magic and impotence.

This conservatism may result from the fact that by this time, canon law commentaries, *Sentences* commentaries, and confession manuals were all long-established genres. In the thirteenth century, it had been necessary to find new ways of thinking about magically-caused impotence because the canon law and theology of the subject were still being developed. In the fifteenth century, by contrast, the conclusions of earlier writers were easily available and not much disputed. Thus when Johannes Capreolus set out to defend controversial claims made in the *Sentences* commentary of Thomas Aquinas, he passed over the section on magic and impotence altogether.<sup>19</sup> Another work by Henry of Gorkum also suggests that this conservatism is the result of working in a conservative genre, rather than the result of a lack of interest in magical practices. Although his *Sentences* commentary says little about magic and impotence, Henry also wrote a treatise on superstitions in 1425.<sup>20</sup> If fifteenth-century *Sentences* commentators preferred to follow earlier authorities rather than begin from scratch, a treatise on superstitions offered more scope for originality.

As Henry of Gorkum's writings suggest, the conservatism of commentaries on the *Sentences* and on canon law does not necessarily mean that fifteenth-century writers were not interested in the world around them. Antoninus of Florence penned a long discussion of impotence in his

<sup>18</sup> Antoninus of Florence, *Summa Confessorum* (Cologne, 1486); Andreas de Escobar, *Modus Confitendi* (Augsburg, 1475). See Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 39–40; Pierre Michaud-Quantin, *Sommes de Casuistique et Manuels de Confession au Moyen Age*, *Analecta Mediaevalia Namurcensia* 13 (Louvain: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1962), 71–4.

<sup>19</sup> Johannes Capreolus, *Defensiones Theologiae Divi Thomae Aquinatis*, ed. C. Paban and T. Pègues, vi (Tours: Alfred Cattier, 1906, repr. Frankfurt: Minerva, 1967).

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Hansen, *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns und der Hexenverfolgung im Mittelalter* (Bonn: C. Georgi, 1901), 87–8.



*Summa Theologica*, much of it quoted from earlier sources, but he also stated that 'because this material is disgusting, and cases of it do not happen all that often, therefore I will cut it short, and you can see it more fully in the *summas*.'<sup>21</sup> This perception that impotence cases were uncommon may explain why some writers did not think that it was worth producing new discussions of the subject. On the other hand, the canonist Nicholas de Tudeschis (also known as Panormitanus) took the opposite view, advising his readers to 'note this gloss [on impotence] well up to the end, because it is an everyday matter and the gloss pertains to the understanding of the chapter *Si per sortiarias*.'<sup>22</sup> In this, he was probably echoing the thirteenth-century canonist William Durandus, who had also described the material on impotence as 'everyday',<sup>23</sup> but where William had applied the comment to all forms of impotence, Nicholas applied it to *Si per sortiarias*, which dealt with magically-caused impotence in particular. It is difficult to tell whether Nicholas' view or Antoninus' was closer to the truth, especially as there may have been regional variations. However, both statements show that even when writers repeated older material, they might still think about how it would apply to their own place and time.

Other writers used older sources in ways that reflect changes in learned attitudes to magic. Fifteenth-century authors of canon law and *Sentences* commentaries or pastoral manuals knew what earlier writers in the same genres had said about magically-caused impotence, and many selected passages that interested them from more than one source. Their selections can thus tell us about their own interests and preoccupations. One of these preoccupations was the question of how magic worked. For example, when he discussed impotence caused by *maleficium*, the theologian and reformer Gabriel Biel (d. 1495)<sup>24</sup> combined passages from several writers to emphasize the demonic element in magic. Firstly he summarized Thomas Aquinas' statement that magic really exists and is not just a label that people give to

<sup>21</sup> 'Et quia ista materia est turpis, et non ita saepe contingunt casus ejus; ideo truncabo, et ipsam plenius potes videre in *summis*.' Antoninus of Florence, *Summa Theologica* (Verona, 1740, repr. Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1959), iii.43.

<sup>22</sup> 'Nota bene istam glosam usque finem quia materia quotidiana et instat glossa super intellectu c. Si per sortiarias.' Nicholas de Tudeschis, *Super Quarto Decretalium Libro* (Nuremberg, 1486), gloss to X 4.15.6, *divinum miraculum*. On Nicholas see Knut Wolfgang Nörr, *Kirche und Konzil bei Nicholauus de Tudeschis (Panormitanus)* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1964), 3–10.

<sup>23</sup> See Ch. 7, n. 43.

<sup>24</sup> See Heiko A. Oberman, *The Harvest of Late Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 10–21.

phenomena that they do not understand.<sup>25</sup> Then he quoted, almost word for word, Duns Scotus' remarks about how 'a female magician, having a pact with a demon, takes care that she impedes such-and-such a man with such-and-such a woman for as long as the spell lasts.'<sup>26</sup> However, Gabriel did not mention Duns' argument that it was legitimate to remove magical objects in order to cure impotence. At a time of growing concerns about magical practices, this was perhaps seen as too close to condoning the active use of magic.

Finally, drawing on Pierre de la Palud, Gabriel listed five ways in which magic could cause impotence, and like Pierre he stressed that these forms of magic were performed through the power of demons: 'Women do not do these things by their own natural power, or by other things that they use in their work, but through the operation of demons who use pacts and sacraments which deceive men in this way.'<sup>27</sup> The passage of Pierre's commentary on which this was based was similar, but not identical: 'When women do sorceries with beans [or] cocks' testicles, it should not be believed that the man is rendered impotent by the power of these things, but by the hidden power of demons who delude the sorceresses by these physical things.'<sup>28</sup> Although Pierre had mentioned demons, the reference to pacts and sacraments seems to be Gabriel's own. He may have taken the idea of the pact from Duns Scotus, but his interest in the subject probably also reflects the developing idea that witches made pacts with the devil, and worshipped him with their own diabolical sacraments.

Gabriel Biel gave his discussion of the role of demons in causing impotence a new emphasis in several places, but as his sources show, theologians had been interested in this subject since the thirteenth century. Now, however, these concerns about demons were beginning to spread outside theology into canon law. Not all canonists mentioned demons—Nicholas de Tudeschis did not, for example—but one writer did. Johannes

<sup>25</sup> 'Falsa est opinio dicentium maleficium nihil esse in rei veritate, sed solum in talium hominum existimatione qui effectus quorum cause sunt occulte nonnunquam solent maleficiis demonum imputare.' Gabriel Biel, *Supplementum in XXVIII Distinctiones Ultimas Quarti Sententiarum* (Paris, 1521), 34.2, 107v. Cf. Aquinas, Ch. 8, n. 59.

<sup>26</sup> 'Sic saga aliqua habens pactum cum demone, curat ut talem impediatur cum tali muliere quamdiu maleficium perseverat.' *Ibid.*, 107v. Cf. Duns Scotus, Ch. 8, n. 72.

<sup>27</sup> 'Non autem muliercule illa faciunt sua naturali virtute, aut rerum aliarum quarum utuntur ministerio; sed ministerio demonum, quorum utuntur pactis et sacramentis qui hominibus sic illudunt.' *Ibid.*, 107v.

<sup>28</sup> See Ch. 8, n. 45.

de Turrecremata (d. 1468), a Dominican who studied both theology and canon law and took part in the Council of Basel, used the *Sentences* commentaries of Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Pierre de la Palud, and Albertus Magnus to discuss how demons were involved in making men impotent, why God permitted this to happen, whether magic existed at all, and whether it was legitimate to use magical cures—but he did this in his commentary on Gratian's *Decretum*, rather than in a theological work.<sup>29</sup> Although syntheses of canon law and theology had been attempted for centuries (such as the *Summas* of John of Freiburg and Astesanus of Asti) this use of theology in a commentary on a legal textbook seems to be new. Although it may simply reflect the fact that Johannes had studied theology as well as canon law, just as the earlier *Sentences* commentary of Pierre de la Palud reflected his studies in canon law as well as theology, it also suggests that ideas about the demonic nature of magic were spreading into contexts where they had not previously been seen as relevant.

Gabriel Biel and Johannes de Turrecremata selected those texts that dealt particularly with the role of demons in causing impotence, even though alternative sources were available. In this, they are likely to be reflecting wider concerns about magic, which were probably in turn stimulated by the spread of the image of the witch at Basel and in reforming circles more generally. Another writer who had been at Basel went even further and added ideas also found in the first descriptions of witches to his discussion of magically-caused impotence. This was the Franciscan theologian Guillaume de Vorillon, who wrote the fourth book of his *Sentences* commentary at Paris shortly before 1448.<sup>30</sup> Guillaume described the magician's relationship or pact with a demon in similar terms to Duns Scotus and his students, and used Duns' example of magic done by a curved needle.<sup>31</sup> However, he then attached these points to a much more general discussion of magic, quoting many

<sup>29</sup> Johannes de Turrecremata, *Commentaria super Decreto* (Lyons, 1519), 33. q. 1 c. 4, 200r–201r; on Johannes see Thomas M. Izbicki, *Protector of the Faith: Cardinal Johannes de Turrecremata and the Defense of the Institutional Church* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981), 1–28.

<sup>30</sup> See Ignatius Brady, 'William of Vaurouillon, O.Min. (d. 1463): a Biographical Essay', in Isidorus a Villapadierna (ed.), *Miscellanea Melchior de Pobladura* (Rome: Institutum Historicum OFM.Cap., 1964), 291–315.

<sup>31</sup> 'ut si cum mago pactizet: quamdiu acus hec erit curvata, tamdiu hic cum illa non conveniet.' Guillelmus de Vorillon, *In Sententias* (Venice, 1496), bk. 4, dist. 34, 284v.

more sources than Duns had. These included passages from John of Salisbury and Isidore of Seville which described various kinds of divination, and parts of the discussion of *sortilegium* in Gratian's *Decretum*.<sup>32</sup> These texts had not been mentioned by earlier *Sentences* commentators when they discussed magically-caused impotence, but they show that ideas about the subject were drawing closer to more general discussions of magic.

Guillaume's view of magic is complex, however, and he also suggested an alternative view of magic that caused temporary impotence, one that draws on a different kind of source. He described it as 'the fascination of the powers of the soul, that is, stupefaction. Paul seems to be talking about this kind of fascination in Galatians, chapter three: "O stupid Galatia, who has fascinated you so you do not obey the truth, when before your eyes Jesus Christ was condemned and was crucified for you?"'<sup>33</sup> (Galatians 3: 1) Guillaume was not the first writer to describe impotence magic as a kind of fascination that affected the soul: the physician Peter of Abano had made a similar point in the early fourteenth century. Guillaume's use of this idea in a *Sentences* commentary seems to be new, however, and suggests that theories about how magic worked were spreading between disciplines, not only from theology to canon law, but also from other kinds of writing into theology.

## MEDICINE

The new concerns about magic and demons thus affected writers in both canon law and theology. However, the impact of these concerns is most visible in another kind of source: medical compendia. Several fifteenth-century physicians described cases of magically-caused impotence in more detail than earlier medical writers had, and their claims often seem to reflect their own experiences. Although some medieval medical authors took their statements about experience from earlier written

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 284r–v.

<sup>33</sup> 'Sexta vero species est maleficium ad tempus: et est maleficium virtutum animalium fascinatio, id est obstupentia, de qua fascinatio Paulus ad Galath. dicere videtur c. 3: O insensati Galathe, quis vos fascinavit veritati non obedire, ante quorum oculos Ihesus Christus proscriptus [edition reads 'prescriptus'] est et in vobis crucifixus?' Ibid., 284r.

sources,<sup>34</sup> in these cases the authors were specific, mentioning where they encountered the case, and sometimes other details such as how the magic was performed. In addition to mentioning cases, the medical writers also began to express concerns about certain kinds of cure, questioning how they worked and whether demons were involved. This appearance of concerns about the legitimacy of certain cures represents a significant shift in attitudes, because in previous centuries, medical writers do not seem to have been interested in these questions when they discussed magically-caused impotence. What had changed?

One change was connected with the way in which medical writing was developing more generally in the early fifteenth century. The medical writers of this period were very interested in practical medicine, and so tended to record cases in more detail than had earlier writers like Gilbertus Anglicus. Even old texts might be approached with this in mind: for example, when the Parisian physician Jacques Despars wrote a commentary on Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine* between 1422 and 1453, he included many anecdotes about his own experience,<sup>35</sup> including one quoted below that related to magically-caused impotence. Historians have suggested several reasons for this shift towards practical medicine. Rapid urbanization was increasing the market for professional medical services and so expanding the market for works dealing with medical practice; moreover, medical learning was so complex by this time that even university-trained physicians could find one-volume reference manuals useful.<sup>36</sup>

The physicians may also have discussed cases involving magic in particular because they had spoken to people who believed in witchcraft or even encountered early witch trials. Of the writers who will be discussed below, one was writing in an area in which early witch trials took place, another was interested in church reform, and a third may have been criticizing a colleague who wrote treatises on exorcism. It is also likely that fifteenth-century medical writers had begun to absorb legal and theological ideas about impotence, including magically-caused

<sup>34</sup> C. H. Talbot, *Medicine in Medieval England* (London: Oldbourne, 1967), 75.

<sup>35</sup> Danielle Jacquart, 'Theory, Everyday Practice and Three Fifteenth-Century Physicians', *Osiris* 2nd Ser. 6 (1990), 140.

<sup>36</sup> Katharine Park, *Doctors and Medicine in Early Renaissance Florence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 210; Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 138.

impotence, in the church courts. As discussed in Chapter 9, from the fourteenth century onwards, physicians might be called upon to diagnose impotence in annulment cases. The physician and surgical writer Guy de Chauliac mentioned some of the issues that would have been discussed there, such as the question of fraudulent impotence claims. Peter of Argellata (d. 1423), who taught logic, astrology, and medicine at Bologna, may also have been thinking of the church courts when he discussed how impotence magic related to ecclesiastical ideas about marriage: 'but this work [impotence magic] is diabolical and against divine law. For it takes away the natural love which ought naturally to exist between husband and wife.'<sup>37</sup> The idea that husband and wife should love each other featured in theological discussions of marriage and in sermons,<sup>38</sup> but it was not usually found in medical texts. If one medical writer could use ecclesiastical ideas about marriage in this way, then others could adopt attitudes to magic and magical cures from similar sources.

The first author to mention a case of magically-caused impotence was Niccolo Falcucci, a physician who worked in Florence in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries: 'and see Constantine in the *Pantegni*, on those who cannot have intercourse with their wives, as I saw in a respected and honourable count and landowner.'<sup>39</sup> Falcucci also suggested a situation in which a diagnosis of magic might be plausible: 'when an intelligent physician cannot discover one of the abovementioned causes from the signs described, or from the account of the patient, then [the impotence] is because of magic, and especially if the man can have intercourse with another woman apart from his wife or lover.'<sup>40</sup> Like Peter of Argellata's remarks about love in marriage, this idea that magic could be

<sup>37</sup> 'Est autem hoc opus diabolicum et contra legem divinam. Subtrahit enim naturalem amorem, qui inter virum et uxorem naturaliter esse debet.' Quoted in Hoffmann, 'Beiträge', 187. On Peter see Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), iv.132–3.

<sup>38</sup> Jean Leclercq, *Monks on Marriage* (New York: Seabury Press, 1982), 15, 25; David d'Avray, *Medieval Marriage Sermons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 8.

<sup>39</sup> '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* (Venice, 1491), sermo 6, tr. 2, ch. 6, 25r. On Falcucci see Park, *Doctors*, 210.

<sup>40</sup> 'Cum enim non poterit intelligens medicus investigare aliquam dictarum causarum ex signis dictis neque ex relatione patientis, tunc est ex maleficio et maxime si poterit vir cum alia muliere coire ab uxore vel amasia.' Falcucci, *Sermones*, 23r.

diagnosed when a man could sleep with one woman but not others is also found in canon law, but does not seem to appear in earlier medical texts.

Antonio Guaineri (d. after 1448), professor of medicine at Pavia from 1412, and from 1427 physician to the duke of Savoy, gave more details about another case: 'men and women are often bewitched; moreover, because of this, they are often never able to produce offspring, as I saw from my own experience in Pinerolo. They were so enchanted by certain cursed old sorcerers [or sorceresses] that from then on they could never conceive again.'<sup>41</sup> Guaineri refers to the victims in this case in the feminine, so the magic presumably caused female infertility rather than male impotence, but the reference to a real case of bewitchment is still interesting. The reference to Pinerolo suggests that this case of magic was linked to developing ideas of witchcraft, because the territory of Guaineri's employer the duke of Savoy was the setting for some of the earliest witch trials, and Pinerolo in particular experienced trials for heresy and magic in 1427.<sup>42</sup>

Jacques Despars said even more:

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 completely." 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.<sup>43</sup>

This is an early reference to causing impotence by tying knots, a process known as tying the *aiguillette*, which was widely feared in sixteenth- and

<sup>41</sup> 'Viri ac mulieres fascinantur. Preterea sepe que ob hoc producere sibi similem valent nunquam, ut Pinaroli ad experientiam vidi. A quibusdam vero maledictis vetulis sortilegiis fuerunt taliter precantate ab inde post concipere potuerunt nunquam.' Antonio Guaineri, *Practica* (Lyons, 1525), 11.19, 149r. On Guaineri see Jacquart, 'Theory', 141 and Helen Rodnite Lemay, 'Anthonius Guainerius and Medieval Gynaecology', in Julius Kirshner and Suzanne Wemple (eds.), *Women of the Medieval World* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 320–1.

<sup>42</sup> Tschacher, *Der Formicarius*, 297.

<sup>43</sup> '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 uxor ipsius pulchra et succi plena et annorum 20.' Jacobus de Partibus, commentary on Avicenna's *Liber Canonis* (Lyon, 1498), bk. 3, fen. 20, tr. 1, c. 36, quoted in Danielle Jacquart, 'Le Regard d'un Médecin sur son Temps: Jacques Despars (1380?–1458)', *Bibliothèque de l'école des Chartes* 138 (1980), 63.

seventeenth-century France.<sup>44</sup> Despars also emphasized that the knight's behaviour was irrational: his wife was young and beautiful, so there was no reason why he should not have been attracted to her. This element of irrationality was common in cases where impotence magic was suspected, as in the case of Philip Augustus of France, and the cases described in Chapter 3.

However, unlike the other medical writers, Jacques Despars included this anecdote in his chapter on homosexuality, rather than in the one on impotence. He presents it as an example of how magic can make a man homosexual, which he includes in a commentary on a sentence in Avicenna's *Canon* that referred vaguely to a 'malign art' (*arte maligna*) being a cause of homosexuality.<sup>45</sup> However, the facts that Despars presents are those of an impotence spell: the strap was tied, and the knight became impotent with his wife for no apparent reason. Despars does not specify whether the count and the knight had previously had a relationship, but the count appears here in the same role as the female ex-lovers who appear regularly in cases of impotence magic. There thus seems to be a confusion between impotence and homosexuality that is very rare in discussions of magically-caused impotence. The gender implications of this are particularly interesting, since this is the only known case where a man performed impotence magic himself, although in another case a man employed a female professional, Matteuccia di Francesco of Todi, to perform impotence magic on his behalf.<sup>46</sup>

Another physician, Giovanni Michele Savonarola (grandfather of the famous Florentine preacher Girolamo Savonarola) initially appears to be sceptical about cases of impotence magic. Savonarola studied and taught medicine at Padua, but moved to Ferrara in 1440. He wrote the sixth and final part of his *Practica* in Ferrara before 1446, and later wrote a treatise on obstetrics in the vernacular, dedicated to the women of the city. He was also interested in religious reform, writing treatises on history, politics, and asceticism.<sup>47</sup> On the subject of impotence magic, Savonarola said that he

<sup>44</sup> Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, 'The Aiguillette: Castration by Magic', in *The Mind and Method of the Historian*, trans. Siân and Ben Reynolds (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1981), 84–96.

<sup>45</sup> 'Quandoque fit alubuati per incantationes et magicas artes.' Despars, bk. 3, fen. 20, tr. 1, c. 36.

<sup>46</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>47</sup> On Savonarola see Ynez Violé O'Neill, 'Giovanni Michele Savonarola: an Atypical Renaissance Practitioner', *Clio Medica* 10 (1975), 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), 45–102.



had 'heard many things, and seen few'.<sup>48</sup> He also 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 the weakness of the members, as the canons lay down.'<sup>49</sup> However, Savonarola did not rule out ascribing impotence to a magical cause altogether, because he listed several of the cures for *maleficium* that are found in Petrus Hispanus' *Thesaurus Pauperum*, such as carrying a magnet, eating a herb that grows in the hole in a stone, and carrying (rather than eating, as Petrus had suggested) a hoopoe's heart. He even remarked that his readers would find 'many useful things in what has been said'.<sup>50</sup> He also mentioned his own observation of magical cures for impotence: 'very many of the common people in my own time manage this cure with incantations and fascinations, as if they were better trained than natural doctors'.<sup>51</sup>

These fifteenth-century physicians give snippets of information about cases of magically-caused impotence and magical cures, which they combined with information taken from earlier written sources. In this, they resemble the writers who discussed magically-caused impotence in pastoral literature, canon law, and theology in the thirteenth century. Another feature of fifteenth-century medical discussions of magically-caused impotence also resembles the interests of thirteenth-century writers in other academic disciplines. This was a concern with the legitimacy of magical cures. In the thirteenth century, discussions of magical cures were often prompted by the pastoral movement, but the medical writers remained unaffected. Although thirteenth- and fourteenth-century medical writers sometimes recognized that certain cures, especially cures for *maleficium*, did not work in a way that could be explained, they did not define these cures as 'magical' or illicit. In the fifteenth century, however, medical writers asked questions about whether demons were involved in these cures and whether it was legitimate to use them, and their inspiration for this seems

<sup>48</sup> 'multa audivi et pauca vidi', Joannes Michael Savonarola, *Practica Major* (Venice, 1497), 6.20.32, 238v.

<sup>49</sup> '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.' *Ibid.*, 239v.

<sup>50</sup> 'Multas et utiles ex dictis invenies.' *Ibid.*, 239v.

<sup>51</sup> 'hanc curam plurimi vulgarium incantationibus et fascinationibus ita meo tempore tractaverunt ut magis perfecti sint quam medici naturales', *ibid.*, 238r.

to have been the increasing concern about magic and witchcraft in the world around them.

As in thirteenth-century writing on 'magical' cures, the fifteenth-century physicians shared a consensus that some cures were less acceptable than others, but opinions varied about where exactly the line should be drawn. Both the nature of the cures themselves and the status of the person offering them were significant, as in the works of the canonists Roffredus of Benevento and Hostiensis in the thirteenth century. For example, in the passage quoted above Savonarola criticized the 'incantations and fascinations' offered by the 'common people' who acted 'as if they were better trained than natural doctors'. By contrast, Savonarola recommends several amulets from Petrus Hispanus' *Thesaurus Pauperum*, even the recipe involving the hoopoe's heart, although he may have had doubts about this because he only copied half of the original sentence given by Petrus, omitting the statement that whoever ate the heart would learn 'heavenly things'.<sup>52</sup> In Savonarola's account, the nature of the cures is thus combined with the status of the person offering them to render certain practices unacceptable. When he criticized 'incantations' Savonarola was objecting to verbal cures in particular, but he probably also objected to the common people who offered cures that were rejected by natural doctors. On the other hand, he may have seen amulets as more acceptable, but he was probably also reassured by the fact that they were offered by a learned writer and pope like Petrus Hispanus.

The status of the practitioner offering the cure was also important for Antonio Guaineri. Guaineri drew an explicit line between what physicians did on the one hand, and what 'sorcerers' did on the other, warning his readers that 'it is not your part to know about bewitched people, but it is a sorcerer's, to whom they can go if they want.' Again, when discussing cures for magically-caused sterility in women, he said that 'enchantments and fascinations are cured by counter-enchantments, for which you should go back to the old sorceresses.'<sup>53</sup> Elsewhere in his treatise, Guaineri was similarly keen to differentiate himself from 'vulgar

<sup>52</sup> 'Si in luna nova decollaveris upupam, et cor eius super te portaveris.' *Ibid.*, 239v. Cf. Petrus Hispanus, Ch. 9, n. 52.

<sup>53</sup> 'De fascinatis tua noscere [edition: nascere] non interest, sed sortilegi ad quem si velint recursum habeant.' Guaineri, *Practica*, 11.20, 149v; 'precantationes quoque fascinationes per contrarias precantationes curentur, de quibus ad vetulas sortilegias recursum habeas.' Guaineri, *Practica*, 11.21, 150v.

practitioners',<sup>54</sup> but he also suggested that the kinds of cure that these practitioners offered were different from what he himself would recommend: they were 'counter-enchantments' rather than natural cures.

Guaineri's view of the subject is complex, however, as he shows when he discusses an 'empirical' cure for sterility or impotence found in Gilbertus Anglicus' thirteenth-century *Compendium of Medicine*. This required the physician to gather herbs on St John's Eve and make an amulet on which a biblical quote and mysterious words were written. 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 with the throwaway (and seemingly unique) remark that 'the English are the greatest sorcerers in Christendom', but added that since they had been unsuccessful in France, presumably in the closing years of the Hundred Years' War, he should end the discussion.<sup>55</sup> Thus, for Guaineri, the existence of a professional, written authority could only legitimize a dubious-looking cure so far. Gilbertus' status could get his recipe a place in Guaineri's text, but it could not allay all of Guaineri's suspicions.

As his attitude to Gilbertus Anglicus suggests, Guaineri's reluctance to recommend cures that he could not explain stemmed from scepticism, not from a belief that they were superstitious. He extended this scepticism to old women who claimed to have magical powers. Citing the astronomer Ptolemy, Guaineri admitted that certain people could command demons if they were born under the right astrological signs, and so women who offered gifts to demons might really be able to do incredible things. But he went on to argue that if these women had marvellous powers, then

<sup>54</sup> Lemay, 'Anthonius Guainerius', 327.

<sup>55</sup> 'Recitat item aliud empiricum cui nullam fidem adhibeo penitus, etsi innumeras steriles reputatas concepisse ob hoc affirmet . . . Adhibenti forsan 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, *Practica*, 11.23, 152r-v. Cf. Gilbertus Anglicus, Ch. 9, n. 14.

these powers were probably derived from the power of their souls over the elements around them, rather than from demons. Therefore, since he did not believe that there was anything demonic about the old women's cures, Guaineri said that a bewitched person could use them if they wished.<sup>56</sup> This use of the power of the soul to explain phenomena that some writers classed as magical was not new: Guaineri cited Avicenna, and the earlier medical writers Peter of Abano and Urso of Salerno had suggested that some methods of causing impotence might also work by affecting the victim's soul.<sup>57</sup> However, unlike these earlier writers, Guaineri explicitly contrasted his view of the old women's remedies with the attitude of contemporaries who 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.'<sup>58</sup>

Jacques Despars was equally sceptical about the role of demons in unexplained phenomena. Although he described a case of impotence caused by tying a strap, elsewhere in his commentary on Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine* he was very sceptical about illnesses allegedly caused by magic or demons. Despars admitted that in theory, demons could alter people's physical or mental health, but he argued that illnesses caused by demons 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' or to natural processes.<sup>59</sup> Like Guaineri's comments on the power of the soul, these ideas were not new. Costa ben Luca's *Physical Ligatures* had also emphasized the role of the imagination in a case of a man who believed that he was bewitched.<sup>60</sup> However, like Guaineri, Despars deployed these arguments in conscious opposition to contemporaries who believed in demonic witchcraft and were burning people for it. Both writers criticized the friars for spreading belief in supernatural illnesses,<sup>61</sup> but they

<sup>56</sup> 'Ecce ergo secundum Ptolomei sententiam qualiter sub tali constellatione 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. Et tu precantatus ad tales recursum habeas si libet.' Guaineri, *Practica*, 11.21, 150v.

<sup>57</sup> See Ch. 4, n. 61 and Ch. 9, n. 64.

<sup>58</sup> 'verum etsi his fidem nullam adhibeam, non credenda tamen quotidie istis in partibus audio, ubi anno isto ob hoc cremate sunt plurime.' Guaineri, *Practica*, 11.21, 150v.

<sup>59</sup> Jacquart, 'Regard', 71.

<sup>60</sup> See Ch. 3, n. 67.

<sup>61</sup> Jacquart, 'Theory', 152.

may also have been thinking of other groups. Guaineri had probably seen witch trials in the duchy of Savoy, and Danielle Jacquart suggests that Despars was arguing against Gilles Carlier, a theologian who wrote treatises on exorcism and who was, like Despars, a cathedral canon at Tournai.<sup>62</sup>

However, not all medical writers rejected demonic explanations in this way. Michele Savonarola warned his readers that ‘incantations and fascinations’ relied on demonic power: ‘and I am amazed at their effects and ascribe them to a diabolical rather than a divine thing.’ Elsewhere he condemned the ‘fascinations and machinations of bad women or men who, despising nature and God, serve the devil’.<sup>63</sup> 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 more than earlier medical writers had, and hint at some kind of relationship between the magician and the devil. Savonarola is likely to have absorbed these concerns through his interest in religious reform, since the stereotype of the witch, complete with her pact with the devil, was being elaborated and spread in reforming circles at this time.

The examples quoted above show how the new ideas about witchcraft made these early fifteenth-century medical writers more aware than earlier physicians had been of magic in the world around them, and also made them more anxious to define what was or was not magical. The same anxieties are also visible in medical discussions of *incubus*, a sleep disorder that was sometimes attributed to demons. As with magically-caused impotence, fifteenth-century medical writers on *incubus* were more willing than their earlier counterparts to take demonic explanations seriously, either to accept or refute them.<sup>64</sup> Discussions of both of these illnesses thus highlight how the medical writers’ attitudes to magic and demons varied considerably. Peter of Argellata described impotence magic as ‘diabolical’ but did not elaborate, and Jacques Despars and

<sup>62</sup> Jacquart, ‘Regard’, 72.

<sup>63</sup> ‘et ego de eorum effectibus miratus rei diabolice magis quam divine ascripsi.’ Savonarola, *Practica*, 6.20.32, 238r; ‘fascinationes et machinamenta malarum mulierum aut virorum, qui naturam et deum despicientes diabolo serviunt’, *ibid.*, 239r.

<sup>64</sup> Maaikje van der Lugt, ‘The Incubus in Scholastic Debate: Medicine, Theology and Popular Belief’, in Peter Biller and Joseph Ziegler (eds.), *Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages* (York: York Medieval Press, 2001), 199–200.

Antonio Guaineri were openly sceptical about the role of demons in causing or curing illnesses. Only Savonarola came close to describing the stereotypical witch who renounced God to serve the devil. These diverse explanations show how controversial ideas about witchcraft were, a situation which continued well into the second half of the fifteenth century, with witch hunters meeting resistance from local authorities.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, there were many positions available between absolute belief and total scepticism throughout the period of the witch-hunts,<sup>66</sup> and the early fifteenth-century medical writers illustrate this very clearly.

## CONCLUSION

In the early fifteenth century, magically-caused impotence ceased to be simply a problem in marriage law, one of many impediments to marriage that featured in legal treatises and occasionally appeared in the church courts. Nor was it just another illness that featured in medical compendia. Now, for many writers, it was part of a wider discussion of magic, a discussion that spanned theology, law, and medicine. Genres of writing that had developed relatively separately in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were beginning to share the same ideas about how magic worked. However, although there was an increased interest in the role of demons in magic, there was no consensus on this subject. Authors could and did suggest various explanations, involving both demons and other factors. Both demons and the occult powers of the soul displayed in fascination were part of the discussion of magically-caused impotence, and they remained part of witchcraft literature into the early modern period.<sup>67</sup>

Of all the genres that discussed magically-caused impotence, the medical compendia were the most affected by these changes. One reason for this is that fifteenth-century medical writers were interested in practical medicine more generally and so, like the thirteenth-century canonists, theologians, and pastoral writers, they were open to including information about the

<sup>65</sup> Wolfgang Behringer, *Witchcraft Persecutions in Bavaria: Popular Magic, Religious Zealotry and Reason of State in Early Modern Europe*, trans. J. C. Grayson and David Lederer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 71.

<sup>66</sup> Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: the Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 182.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 274–5.

world around them. Another reason, however, is that the medical writers were drawing closer to canon law, theology and pastoral literature, rather than the other way round. Concerns about magical cures and demons had existed in some or all of these three genres since the thirteenth century, and the medical writers were simply catching up. Suddenly, cures that did not work in an explicable, physical way began to look potentially demonic, forcing the medical writers either to condemn them or to explain how they worked. The grey area of 'empirical' cures thus became polarized into natural medicine or illicit magic. The same process is visible in a non-medical source, the supplement to Bartholomew of Pisa's *Summa Pisanella* written by Nicholas of Ausimo in the early part of the century. Like the medical writers, Nicholas modified an earlier account of magical cures for impotence. Where Bartholomew had copied Hostiensis' statement that 'frivolous' cures could be tolerated, Nicholas added 'but certainly all frivolous remedies that are not natural are illicit and harmful.'<sup>68</sup>

But how deep did these changes in attitudes to magically-caused impotence and its cures really go? Antoninus of Florence said that impotence cases were uncommon, and many short confession manuals did not single out the problem, any more than they had in earlier centuries. As with the debates about witchcraft more generally, do the changes in our sources represent a change in popular beliefs about impotence magic, or were the new concerns about magic and demons simply learned anxieties? It seems that the answer lies somewhere in between. The belief that magic could cause harm was very widespread, and fed into the image of the witch found in learned witchcraft texts such as *Malleus Maleficarum*. New learned concerns about magic could also spread across social levels, especially in the hands of persuasive preachers like Bernardino of Siena. However, the situations in which accusations of impotence magic might arise, and the sorts of practices used to cause and cure it, seem to have remained constant. The fifteenth-century writers' descriptions of cases and magical cures are in many ways very similar to those offered by earlier writers, even as far back as Hincmar of Rheims and Burchard of Worms.

These continuities in descriptions of cases of impotence magic suggest that while learned writers were still taking information from popular

<sup>68</sup> 'Sed certe omnia vana remedia non naturalia sunt illicita et perniciosas', Bartholomaeus de Sancto Concordio, *Summa Pisani cum Supplemento* (Cologne, 1483), 'Impedimentum' 15, f. cli.

sources, in some cases more than they had done earlier, their attitude to this information had changed. The thirteenth-century writers had made passing references to confessions, and occasionally included anecdotes about cases they had heard about, but they did not give the impression that impotence magic was a serious problem. It was sinful to do it, cases occurred, and some writers even said that it happened often, but it was something within ordinary experience. Only the theologians discussed the demonic forces behind magic at length. In the fifteenth century, by contrast, impotence magic and its cures were very serious business indeed. Not all of the writers cited here believed that demons were behind every instance of magic, but many of them felt obliged to address the question. The idea that magic was always demonic had escaped from theological commentaries into the world at large.



## Conclusion

In the period between the ninth and the fifteenth centuries, the belief that magic could cause impotence was widespread and shared by people of all social levels. The sources give contradictory hints about how often cases occurred, from Hostiensis, who said that men were bewitched by their former lovers 'many times', to Antoninus of Florence, who stated that impotence cases were not very common, but suspicions could always arise, given the right circumstances. Magic was particularly suspected when a man either became impotent with his wife or simply hated her for no apparent reason, especially if he had a former lover who might be suspected of bearing a grudge. These situations are linked with impotence magic throughout the Middle Ages, from Lothar and Theutberga in the ninth century to the trials of Ragnhildr Tregagás, Margot de la Barre, and Marion la Droiturrière in the fourteenth. Sometimes, such as with Matilda of Tuscany and the very much younger Welf of Bavaria, a modern reader might attribute the impotence to incompatibility rather than to magic, but most known cases present no obvious patterns of this sort. In fact, rumours of magic were probably reserved for the cases that baffled medieval observers as much as modern historians, such as Philip Augustus' sudden, mysterious aversion to Ingeborg of Denmark.

A pattern that does emerge in these cases, however, is that the accused are nearly always women. In only two cases were men held responsible for causing impotence, and one paid a female professional to cast the spell for him, while the other, it is implied, was in a homosexual relationship. This extreme gender specificity is interesting, and there are several possible reasons for it. Christopher Faraone has noted that in the ancient world, magic that was designed to prevent a person from leaving an existing relationship (as impotence magic often seems to have been) was associated either with women or with men who were described in female terms,<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Christopher A. Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), ix.

this pattern may have persisted into the Middle Ages. Moreover, in the Middle Ages all forms of love magic were associated with women, not just impotence magic, perhaps because, as Richard Kieckhefer has suggested, men were more likely to claim that they were bewitched in order to explain illicit affairs.<sup>2</sup> It is also possible that since impotence magic was believed to attack men in particular, male anxieties about it were likely to focus on women.<sup>3</sup>

The situations in which impotence magic might be suspected were relatively constant throughout the medieval period, but the way in which medieval writers discussed them varied, both over time and between different kinds of source. As well as tracing what these sources say about impotence magic, this study has also addressed the following questions: why were medieval writers interested in impotence magic, and what factors determined the way in which they wrote about it? In particular, what was the relationship between the academic legal, theological, and medical texts that discussed impotence magic, and popular magical practices?

The sources explored in this study suggest that many writers included information about magical practices in their discussions of magically-caused impotence, but that they presented this information in a framework determined by learned concerns. In particular, many writers drew a distinction between impotence magic and other forms of love- or hate-magic that most people probably did not. They did this because they often wrote about the subject in contexts in which other forms of erotic magic were irrelevant, but in which impotence was important because it was a ground for annulling a marriage or an illness that could be cured. This pattern of recording popular practices within an artificial, learned framework began with Hincmar of Rheims and Constantine the African in the early Middle Ages. Hincmar and Constantine mentioned magical practices and cases of impotence magic in the world around them, but they were also the first writers to distinguish magically-caused impotence from other forms of love- and hate-magic in the contexts of marriage law and medicine. In doing so, they defined the conceptual frameworks in which impotence magic was discussed for the rest of the Middle Ages.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Kieckhefer, 'Erotic Magic in Medieval Europe', in Joyce E. Salisbury (ed.), *Sex in the Middle Ages: a Book of Essays* (New York: Garland, 1991), 30–1.

<sup>3</sup> Vern L. Bullough, 'On Being a Male in the Middle Ages', in Clare Lees (ed.), *Medieval Masculinities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 43.

However, the balance between learned writing about impotence magic and popular beliefs varied over time. The two interacted most closely in times when churchmen were particularly interested in the pastoral care of the laity. In the early Middle Ages, this occurred when individual churchmen, like Hincmar of Rheims and Burchard of Worms, promoted pastoral care in their own dioceses, and then incorporated the information that came back to them from their clergy into their discussions of impotence magic. In the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, however, a more widespread interest in pastoral reform, combined with the development of church courts that dealt with marriage cases, brought more churchmen than before into contact with popular beliefs, and encouraged those churchmen to write about them. What followed was a flow of information about popular magic into the academic works that discussed magically-caused impotence. In this period authors of confession manuals like Thomas of Chobham, theologians like Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure, and canonists like Geoffrey of Trani and Hostiensis included information that came from the confessional or from marriage litigation. By contrast, the medical texts of the thirteenth century were not influenced by the pastoral movement, but some claimed to have treated cases of magically-caused impotence or sterility, while others wrote about the subject in works explicitly aimed at a wide audience. Writers in all four genres of source thus presented their discussions of magically-caused impotence as practical descriptions of a real problem; or, as the canonist William Durandus put it, 'useful and everyday'.<sup>4</sup>

A similar pattern can be seen in the early fifteenth century, when another church reform movement, combined with the new image of the devil-worshipping witch, brought popular magical practices to the attention of learned writers once again. This time, however, the interaction between learned writing about magically-caused impotence and magical practices was more complex. Writers in earlier periods had included snippets of information about practices without, it seems, changing them significantly, but fifteenth-century authors often interpreted these same practices in the light of the new concerns about witchcraft and the demonic nature of magic. Their interpretations varied, however. Thus one medical writer, Michele Savonarola, denounced magical cures as demonic, while two others, Antonio Guaineri and Jacques Despars,

<sup>4</sup> See Ch. 7, n. 43.

consciously argued against those who offered demonic explanations for either illnesses or cures.

These periods of intense interest in pastoral reform, in which many writers mentioned magical practices relating to impotence, were interspersed with others in which less was said about the authors' own observation. The reasons for this varied. In the twelfth century, when impotence magic first received widespread academic discussion, many writers focused on the interpretative problems presented by Hincmar of Rheims' ruling on the subject, *Si per sortiaris*, rather than on the reality behind it. This is not surprising: it was more important to decide what the law regarding impotence was than to write elaborate discussions of popular beliefs. Again, in the fourteenth century, many canonists and theologians lost interest in magically-caused impotence. By this time, most questions about the subject (and about marriage in general) had been answered, and it is also possible that the novelty of popular magical practices had worn off. Learned writers knew what the laity were doing and were no longer surprised by it.

Concerns about pastoral care were thus crucial in shaping learned attitudes to magically-caused impotence, especially in the thirteenth century. However, most learned writers did more than simply record popular practices. As discussions of magically-caused impotence became ever more detailed and sophisticated, they also began to include other, related issues. A common question was whether it was legitimate to treat magically-caused impotence with 'magical' cures. Ideas about this were surprisingly varied. There seems to have been a general consensus that cures that could not be explained by natural causes were somehow different from those that could, but the exact nature of this difference, and what it meant, was less clear. The theologians were strictest. Most argued that any cure that did not work naturally must rely on demons, although a few writers thought that it was legitimate to destroy magical objects as long as no magic was actively performed. The pastoral writers were particularly concerned about cures that involved words. The canonists' response was mixed, with Roffredus of Benevento criticizing the cures offered by 'enchanters' and 'diviners', while Hostiensis accepted even cures that he thought looked 'superstitious' if they were recommended by an authoritative medical writer. At the other end of the spectrum were the physicians, who implied that unexplained 'empirical' cures were different from other forms of medicine and might be particularly useful against

*maleficium*, but do not seem to have worried about whether these cures were superstitious or demonic.

These discussions of magical cures suggest that the status of many so-called 'magical' practices remained undefined well into the thirteenth century, especially if they were used to cure impotence rather than cause it. Authors could debate both whether they were 'magic' and whether they were legitimate. Between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries, however, attitudes began to harden. In particular, the theologians' concern that all unexplained cures might be demonic spread into canon law, pastoral literature, and medicine in the early fifteenth century, despite the efforts of certain medical writers who gave little credence to demonic explanations. This hardening of attitudes reflects the growing anxieties about magic more generally that many historians have identified in this period,<sup>5</sup> which was one factor that made witch-hunts possible from the fifteenth century onwards.

These debates about the legitimacy of magical cures for impotence interacted in varying degrees with popular ideas about magic, with some writers taking a more 'popular' attitude than others. However, many theologians and a few medical writers also considered more abstract questions about how impotence magic worked that probably bore little relation to how most people thought about the subject. The medical writers Urso of Salerno, Arnold of Villanova, and Peter of Abano played down the role of demons in causing impotence, and offered explanations involving the imagination, the power of the soul, and the stars instead. By contrast, many theologians from the 1240s onwards emphasized the role of demons in magic. The first to do this seems to have been Albertus Magnus, who was inspired by magical texts recently translated from Arabic. Magical texts also prompted the anonymous author of another commentary in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale manuscript lat. 10640 to develop a new way of categorizing impotence magic as 'permanent in itself', 'permanent by accident', or 'transitory'. Later theologians dropped these explicit references to magical texts, but remained interested in demons. Bonaventure and the Franciscan theologians who followed him elaborated on this theme the

<sup>5</sup> See Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: Their Foundations in Learned and Popular Culture* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), 10–26; Cohn, *Demons*, chs. 6 and 7; and most recently Alain Boureau, *Satan Hérétique: Histoire de la Démonologie (1280–1330)* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2004), 10.

most, discussing the relationship between demons and human magicians in ways that would later feed into the image of the devil-worshipping witch.

As a case study of the way in which learned and popular ideas about magic influenced each other in the Middle Ages, discussions of magically-caused impotence thus show a high level of interaction. Although some sources ask abstract questions, for example about the role of demons in magic, the majority focus instead on what Richard Kieckhefer has called the 'common tradition' of medieval magic: basic techniques that were widely known and could be used in many different magical rituals. This pattern corresponds to the picture of late medieval popular religion offered by many historians, who stress that although there were differences between popular and learned beliefs, the texts produced by the thirteenth-century pastoral movement can tell us much about popular religion.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the sources for magically-caused impotence show that this model of the interaction between popular practices and written sources can be taken even further. Not only do confession manuals and the statutes of church councils take an interest in popular beliefs about impotence magic from the thirteenth century onwards, but this interest can also be found in academic legal and theological works that might not be expected to reflect pastoral concerns to the same extent.

However, for many of the writers influenced by the pastoral movement, this interaction between learned and popular culture had limits. Despite their familiarity with and interest in widespread magical practices, many writers also saw clear differences between their own beliefs and those of most people around them. For these writers, it was always other people who did impotence magic or used magical cures. They did not expect their readers to be personally familiar with these practices, but only to learn about them at second hand, through confessions or the church courts. The readers of these texts are also expected to regulate the behaviour of the laity by preaching against magic and ensuring that in cases of magically-caused impotence, couples tried to solve the problem through prayer, confession, and the church courts, instead of using magical cures. There is thus an ongoing tension in many of the texts that discuss magically-caused impotence. Although learned writers often picked up popular ideas about magic from the pastoral movement, this same pastoral

<sup>6</sup> See Introduction, nn. 9 and 10.

movement also prompted them to present elite beliefs as fundamentally different from and superior to popular ones.

This tension is largely absent from medical writing, because physicians were not primarily engaged in reforming lay beliefs and practices. When medical writers took information from popular beliefs, they did not present learned and popular views of impotence magic as fundamentally different. Instead, they drew a distinction between cures that could be explained rationally and cures that could not. Although some medical writers felt that unexplained 'empirical' remedies were the province of unlearned healers and so did not have a place in academic medicine, most writers on magically-caused impotence did not labour this point. Only in the fifteenth century did Antonio Guaineri and Michele Savonarola seek explicitly to distinguish their approach to impotence from that of the 'common people' who offered 'incantations and fascinations'. Their motive in doing so was probably related both to new concerns about witchcraft and to the growing professionalization of medicine.

Learned discussions of magically-caused impotence can thus be seen as the products of a process of negotiation between popular and learned culture, in the same way as historians of the early modern period have recently emphasized that beliefs about witchcraft were.<sup>7</sup> It is possible to see some elements of the later image of the witch taking shape, but until the fifteenth century, these elements remained peripheral. The sources for magically-caused impotence thus underline how radical was the transformation of learned attitudes to magic that took place in the early fifteenth century. For most of the Middle Ages, learned writers about magically-caused impotence recorded what seem to have been widespread magical practices that bear little resemblance either to later notions of witchcraft or to the contents of the magical texts newly translated from Arabic. This was especially true in periods when churchmen were interested in the pastoral care of the laity. Moreover, learned attitudes to magically-caused impotence were also surprisingly varied. Although it was widely agreed that it was wrong to use magic to cause impotence, most other questions about the subject were open to debate. The debates that followed tell us a great deal about popular magical practices, and about how they shaped learned attitudes to magic.

<sup>7</sup> See Introduction, n. 12.

## Appendix 1

‘On those who, impeded by magic, cannot have intercourse’: *Pantegni*, ‘Practica’ Book 8, Chapter 29, and the *Remedies Against Magic*

### Manuscripts of the *Pantegni*

Charles Burnett and Danielle Jacquart list 17 manuscripts of the *Pantegni* containing this chapter in *Constantine the African and Alī ibn al-Abbās al-Maǧūsī: the Pantegni and Related Texts* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: Brill, 1994), 316–51.

#### *Manuscripts consulted:*

- Sl* London, British Library MS Sloane 2946, f. 67v  
*Se* London, British Library MS Sloane 3481, f. 157v  
*Rc* London, Royal College of Physicians MS 397, ff. 77r–v  
*Mf* Montpellier, Université, Faculté de Médecine MS 187, ff. 112v–113r  
*Ox* Oxford, Oriel College MS 55, f. 166v  
*Ps* Paris, BN MS lat. 6887A, ff. 94r–v  
*Pa* Paris, BN MS lat. 6886, ff. 178r–v  
*Pr* Paris, BN MS lat. 14393, f. 113v

### Manuscripts and editions of the *Remedies Against Magic*

There is no comprehensive list of known manuscripts of the *Remedies*. Lynn Thorndike and Pearl Kibre listed five manuscripts in *A Catalogue of Incipits of Medieval Scientific Writings in Latin*, 2nd edn. (London: Medieval Academy of America, 1963), column 1542, but several others have been found since.

#### *Manuscripts and editions consulted:*

- Fl* Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale MS II.iii.214, ff. 8r–v, described in David Pingree, ‘Learned Magic in the Time of Frederick II’ *Micrologus* 2 (1994), 39–56.



- Mp* Montpellier, Université, Faculté de Médecine MS 277, ff. 60r–v: text published by Henry Sigerist, ‘Impotence as a Result of Witchcraft’, in *Essays in Biology in Honour of Herbert M. Evans* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1943), 539–46. I have also consulted a microfilm of the manuscript.
- Mu* Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibl. MS 321, ff. 256r–v. See C. Halm and G. Laubmann, *Catalogus Codicum Latinorum Bibliothecae Regiae Monacensis*, 2nd edn. (Munich: Bibliotheca Regia, 1892), i.81–2.
- So* London, British Library MS Sloane 3529, ff. 12r–v
- Va* Vatican, Bibl. Ap. Vat. MS vat. lat. 2403, 85r
- 1509 Printed in the *Opera Omnia* of Arnold of Villanova (Lyon, 1509), f. 215v; reprinted in 1520, 1532
- 1585 Printed in the *Opera Omnia* of Arnold of Villanova (Basel, 1585), columns 1529–32
- Br* Bruges, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 370, text published by A. de Poorter, *Catalogue des Manuscrits de Médecine Médiévale de la Bibliothèque de Bruges* (Paris: Champion, 1924), 20–2; I have collated from de Poorter’s transcription.

*Other manuscripts of the Remedies not consulted:*

Erfurt, Codex Amplonianus 4o 217, 97v, mentioned in Hoffmann, ‘Beiträge’, 132, n. 4. The *Remedies* is not mentioned specifically in the entry for this manuscript in Wilhelm Schum, *Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der Amplonianischen Handschriften-Sammlung zu Erfurt* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1887), 474, as this section of the manuscript is summarized as containing various recipes.

Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana MS Ashburnham 143, mentioned by Lynn Thorndike, in *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), ii.498, n. 1. See also *Indici e Cataloghi 8: I Codici Ashburnhamiani della Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana di Firenze* (Rome, 1887), i.231–5.

Vienna, Österreichisches Nationalbibliothek MS 5315, ff. 76v–78r. See *Tabulae Codicum Manuscriptorum in Bibliotheca Palatina Vindobonensi Asservatorum*, ed. Academia Caesarea Vindobonensi (Vienna, 1870), iv.100–1.

I have followed (more or less) the editorial principles suggested in David d’Avray, *Medieval Marriage Sermons*, 31–47. In each section a base manuscript has been transcribed in full, either in the text or in the apparatus. Where there seems to be an error in the base manuscript, superior readings from other manuscripts have been put into the text. In order to keep the apparatus to a manageable size, variants from the base manuscript in the other manuscripts have not normally

been recorded if they are clearly scribal errors (for example, 'glandis' for 'glandes'). Nor have I recorded minor variants which do not change the meaning of the text (such as 'quod' for 'quia', 'alia' for 'altera') or minor variations in word order (such as 'divinis auxiliis' for 'auxiliis divinis'), except when they occur in the base manuscript. Variant readings that change the meaning of the text, and which do not appear to be scribal errors, have their sigla in bold type. If more than one manuscript contains the variant, I have signified this with a plus sign, for example *Mp*+

The bold Arabic numbers in the apparatus correspond to the numbers at the beginning of each sentence in the text. Where a manuscript contains a variant reading for an entire sentence of the text, I have signalled this by saying 'all]' and then giving the variant sentence in full at the end of the apparatus for that sentence.

Seven of the eight manuscripts of the *Pantegni* that I consulted fall into two groups, each of which share readings which are not normally shared by manuscripts in the other group. It is difficult to determine which group is closest to the author's original text, as both contain readings that improve the clarity of the text but are not shared by the other group. In taking *Se* as my base manuscript, I have usually followed the readings of Group Two, unless a notably better reading is given by the manuscripts of Group One.

Group One: *Sl*, *Rc*, and *Pz*

Group Two: *Se*, *Ox*, *Mf*, and *Pa*

A few variant readings are shared by both groups, notably 'volumus' for 'nolumus' in the first section of the text, but these often seem to be errors arrived at independently, rather than deliberate variants. However, one manuscript, *Pr*, shares variant readings with both groups. Instead, its closest parallels are with the later *Remedies* manuscripts *Fl* and *Va*. It may correspond with other *Pantegni* manuscripts that I have not consulted, or it may be that at some point a scribe consulted more than one manuscript of the text.

If manuscripts of both groups agree on a reading which is not found in the base manuscript, I have cited one manuscript from each group, in the order of priority listed above. For example, if *Sl* supports the variant reading, I have given this as the authority; if it does not, then I have given *Rc*; and if that does not, then *Pz* and so on. The fact that I have cited *Sl* does not mean that other manuscripts further down the priority list do not also contain the variant reading; as mentioned above, the presence of a particular variant in other manuscripts is indicated by the plus sign, as in *Sl*+

The manuscripts and printed editions of the *Remedies* show a higher level of both scribal errors and variant readings that change the meaning of the text. One manuscript, *Mu*, is particularly idiosyncratic, omitting several sentences and including many variants that are not shared with any other manuscript. Where its reading differs substantially from that found in all the other manuscripts, I have transcribed it separately at the end of the apparatus.

## Text

## Part 1

Base Manuscript: *Se* (London, British Library MS Sloane 3481, 157v)

1. Sunt quidam qui maleficiis impediti cum uxoribus suis coire non possunt. De quorum suffragio librum nostrum nolumus denudare, quod medicamentum (ni 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.

4. Maleficiorum quedam de animatis fiunt, ut testiculi gallorum, qui suppositi lecto cum ipsius sanguine efficiunt ne coeant in lecto iacentes.

5. Quedam de characteribus scriptis de sanguine vespertilionis. 6. Quedam vero de inanimatis sicut si nux vel glans separetur, quarum medietas ab una parte vie ponatur, et alia ab alia, 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. (10. *Ox* and *Mu* only: Sufficit bene intelligentibus.)

11. Sed quia hec sunt diabolica et maxime sunt in mulieribus, aliquando divinis, aliquando humanis auxiliis curantur. 12. Item si sponsus et sponsa

1. maleficiis] maleficiis diabolicis *Mp* denudare] enudare *Sl+*: enodare *Pr+* quod... est] quo ad medicamentum quo usi sumus *Mu* medicamentum] medicamenta *Rc* est] *Sl+*: *om. Se+* 2. si cui... speret] si tibi hoc contigerit, speres *So*, 1509, 1585: si cui] cum *Sl* hoc] *Sl, Mf+*: *om. Se* deo] domino *Pr+* benignitatem] bonitatem *Pr* (all)] *om. Mu* 3. maleficia sunt multimoda] est maleficiorum multitudo *So* 4. animatis] animalibus *Ps* testiculi] de testiculis *Rc+* corrected in MS from 'testiculatorum' *Se* gallorum] galli *Sl+* suppositi] *Rc, Mf* superpositi *Se, Sl* lecto] recto *Rc*: tecto *Ps* coeant] concumbant *Sl+* in lecto] *Sl+*: loco *Se+* (all)] Maleficiorum quedam de animatis fiunt, quedam de inanimatis. De animatis ut testiculi galli lecto supra positi *Mu* 5. vespertilionis] vespertilionum *So* 6. inanimatis] terrae nascentibus 1509, 1585 nux] nucibus *Ps* separetur] *Pa, Ox*: separantur *Se* quarum] *Sl+*: quorum *Se+* vie... ab alia] *om. Mu* ab alia] ex altera parte *Sl* 7. conficiuntur] confecta *Mu* coquantur] conburentur *Mu* 8. in tecto] *Sl, Mf+*: in lecto *Se+*: in toto *So*: tres sub lecto 1509, 1585 infra] circa 1509, 1585 9. vel plumbo] vel plumbo et ferro 1509: *om. Mu* sicut ex acu] sicut que fiunt ex acu *Sl+* mortui vel mortue] *Sl, Ox+*: mortui et mortue *Se* suuntur] sumuntur *Pr*: suuntur in sudariis 1509, 1585 11. et maxime sunt in mulieribus] *om. Mu* sunt in mulieribus] *Sl+*: sunt mulieribus *Se+*: fiunt a mulieribus *Pa*: mulieribus sunt assueta *Mf*: a mulieribus sunt *Fl*: in mulieribus fiunt 1509, 1585 aliquando divinis... auxiliis] aliquando a uiris divinis quandoque *Pr, Fl* 12. Item] Item sciendum est quod *Mu* et] vel *Pr* supradictis... conturbentur] curantur *Fl*: huiusmodi contrahuntur maleficiis 1509, 1585 disserere] dicere *Rc+*: speculari 1509,

maleficiis supradictis conturbentur, sanctius est de hiis disserere quam silere, 13. quia si non succurrantur, separantur et sic deiciuntur. 14. Et hoc maleficium exercentes non solum in proximis, sed etiam in creatore peccare videntur. 15. Si enim maleficium recte extirpare volumus, videndum est si supradictum maleficium supersit lecto et auferatur. 16. Sed si auctor illius maleficii in die auferat et in nocte ponat, vel e converso, aliam domum acquirant sponsus et sponsa ibique iaceant.

17. Si caracteribus hoc maleficium fiat quod cognoscitur, quia sponsus et sponsa non diligunt se adinvicem, 18. queratur si super limen hostii vel infra sint, et si quid inveniatur, deferatur ad sacerdotem, sed si non, faciat ea, que inferius ponuntur. 19. Si nux vel glans sit causa huius maleficii, accipiat quilibet nucem vel glandem, separetque eam, 20. cumque una medietate pergat vir ex una parte alicuius vie vel illius per quam venerunt, et ibi ponat medietatem suam. 21. Mulier vero ex alia parte aliam ponat partem nucis. 22. Deinde sponsus et sponsa accipiant ambas partes nucis, testa non extracta, et postea tota nux reintegretur, et sic servetur per vii. dies. Hoc facto coeant.

23. Si autem sit propter fabas, magis divinis quam humanis curari potest. 24. Si sit propter acus mortuorum, querantur maleficia in culcitra vel pulvinari. Si non inveniuntur, in alia domo et lecto cubent. 25. Fel canis masculi nigri

1585 silere] tacere *Ps*: celare *Mu* 13. succurrantur] succuratur *Sl+* deiciuntur] deviant *Sl*: degenerantur *Mp*: est malum *So* 14. Et hoc ... videntur] Et per hoc maleficium non solum exercetur in paroxysmis, sed etiam in curatione 1509, 1585 maleficium] malum *Mp* exercentes] facientes *Sl* in creatore] in spiritu sancto *Mp*: in creatione *So* 15. recte] tecti *Sl+*: lecti 1509, 1585 extirpare] curare vel extirpare *Br* supersit lecto] supersit *Sl+*: lecto superponatur vel subsit vel supersit lecto *Mf*: subsit lecto *Mp*: lecto non supersit *Mu* 16. auctor] *Sl+*: actor *Se+* illius] istius *Sl+* et in nocte] vel in nocte *Sl* 18. queratur] quere *Pr* si] *om*. *Sl* sint] *om*. *Sl+* sacerdotem] sacerdotem vel episcopum *Pr* faciat] faciunt *Sl*: faciant *Rc* ea] *Sl+*: *om*. *Se+* 19. accipiat] accipe *So* accipiat ... eam] accipiat venenum quilibet vel glandem eam, quae separat 1509, 1585 quilibet] mulier quelibet *Sl+*: mulier quamlibet *Ps*: quilibet maleficium secundum *Mu* 20. pergat] spargat *So* vel ... suam] et ibi ponat *Sl+* all] Et cum illa parte immediate pergat vir ex una parte et ibi ponat 1509, 1585 21. parte] parte vie *Sl+* 22. Deinde ... nucis] *Sl*, *Ox+*: *om*. *Se* non extracta] non vero extracta intus redeant *Pr*, *Ff*: non extracta redeant *Ps*: vero detracta *Br*: deposita *Mu*: vero extracta 1509, 1585 tota] cocta *Ox* et sic servetur] et sic sunt necesse *So*: et firmetur 1509, 1585 per vii] per vi 1509, 1585 coeant] comedant 1509, 1585 23. sit] *Sl+*: fit *Mf*: fiat *Pr*: *om*. *Se* magis] tunc tam *Mu* humanis] humanis auxiliis *Mu*: humanis medicinis *So* curari potest] potest adiutoriis *Mf* potest] *Sl+*: possunt *Se*, *Ox*: debet vel potest *Pr* 24. sit propter] super 1509, 1585 in culcitra] vel in fulon *Mp* inveniuntur] *Sl+*: inveniuntur *Se*, *Ox* lecto] culcitra vel lecto *Br* 25. maleficium] malum medicamentum *Mp* domum purgat ... inferatur] demonem pugnat, ne maleficium damnum inferat

domui aspersum domum purgat et efficit ne ullum maleficium domui inferatur. 26. Canino sanguine domus parietes asperge: ab omni maleficio liberabitur.

(*Mu* does not contain the rest of Part 1.)

27. Fel alicuius piscis et maxime zangarini si sponsus et sponsa secum habeant in pixide iuniperi 28. et eant dormitum et ponatur super carbones vivos ut inde fumigentur, omnia supradicta maleficia evanescent. 29. Similiter si argentum vivum accipiatur et in calamo cum cera cooperto nesciente sponso et sponsa in loco ponatur nullum maleficium eis obest.

### Part 2

Base Manuscript: *Se* (London, British Library MS Sloane 3481, 157v)

Found in *Se, Mf, Pa, Pr, Ox, Br, Fl, Mp*, and *So*

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 verum propheticum in carta scriptum: 5. *Vox Domini super aquas* etc. 6. Deinde veniant domum, a copulatione per iii dies et noctes abstineant, postea rem agant, id est coeant. 7. Et sic omnis diabolica actio destruetur. (8. *Mp* only: Expletus est libellus de maleficiis. Deo gratias Amen.)

(All remaining manuscripts of the *Pantegni*, and *Br, Mp*, and *So* end here.)

1509, 1585 26. domus] *Rc, Ox+*: demus *Sl, Se* maleficio] malo *Ps* maleficio liberabitur] purgat maleficio 1509, 1585 liberabitur] *Sl+*: liberatur *Se* 27. zangarini] zangari ursi *Sl*: angarici *Mf*: zacarini *Pa*: zingarini *Br*: zancharini id est lucii parni *Fl*: zangarini (glossed: id est lucii) *Mp*: sagarici *So*: lausularum 1509, 1585 habeant] *Sl+*: habuerint *Se, Ox* 28. carbones vivos] carbonem vivum *Sl+* 29. argentum vivum] argentum alias argentum vivum 1509 accipiatur] accipiant *Ps* calamo] calamo canne *Sl+*: calamo canne mittatur *Rc*: calamo canne mutatur *So* cum cera] calamo cum cera *Sl+*: in calamo cum plumbo et cera *Pr* sponso et sponsa] sponso vel sponsa *Mf* loco] in lecto *Mf*: in aliquo loco *Pa* in loco ponatur] *om. Sl+* obest] nocebit *Mp*

1. imminentibus] existentibus *Mf*: eminentibus *Pa* non] minime *Mp* et confiteantur] *om. Pr* 2. et si... invenitur] et si episcopus hoc non concesserit, nullum remedium invenitur *Pr*: et si episcopus hoc concesserit et nullum remedium invenitur *Mp* et si] et sic adhuc *Mf* resurrectionis] sancte resurrectionis *Mp* 4. sacerdote] aliquo religioso sacerdote *Mf* det sibi] dicat ipse *Pa* sibi] eis *Fl* vel sacerdos] *Pr*: *om. Se* 6. per iii... 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*

*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 [MS: hospocio] 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 maleficii 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 maleficorum 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 calciet, 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, etiam mentes hominum, etiam

1. fel] *om.* 1509      3. incantatione] in incantatione 1585      4. renibus]  
renes 1585      5. maleficorum] maleficorum 1509, 1585      8. calciet] calciet re  
1585      10. scies] sciens 1509

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 mulierem vel uxorem sedat omnino.

13. Item fumigetur 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 brionie, 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.

*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.

*Part 5 (1509 only):*

1. Item si fiat maleficium contra sponsum et sponsam virgines, ut sponsus 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.

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,

2. puncto] puncta *Fl*      3. punctum] punctam *Fl*      4. punctum] punctam *Fl*

2. crucis] certis 1509      5. coeant] Hoffmann's emendation: capiant 1509

6. crucis] Hoffmann's emendation: certis 1509      8. coronatus] coronat 1509

efficacissimum est. Post facies predicta scilicet evangelium etiam et omnia dicta scribat unus infans virgo coronatus.

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. Expliciant remedia contra maleficia.



## Translation

(This translation of Parts 1 and 2 is based partly on the translation of *Mp* by Henry Sigerist, in the article cited above.)

### *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 help for them, 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; this spell is worst 8. 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.

11. But because these spells are diabolical, and are especially found among women, they can sometimes be cured by divine methods, sometimes by human ones. 12. If the bride and groom are thrown into confusion by the abovementioned spells, it is holier to discuss them than to keep silent, 13. because if they are not helped, they will be separated and thus cast down. 14. And those who do such magic seem to sin not only against their neighbours, but also against the Creator. 15. If we wish to eradicate the spell correctly, we should see whether the abovementioned spell is above the bed, and take it away. 16. 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.

17. If the spell is done by characters, which is known if the bride and groom do not love each other, 18. search for it above the threshold of the door, or below, and if you find something, take it to the priest, but if not, do what is set out below. 19. If a nut or acorn is the cause of this spell, someone should take a nut or acorn, and separate it. 20. 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; 21. but the woman should put the other part of the nut on

the other side of the road. 22. 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.

23. But if it happens because of beans, it can be cured with divine rather than human methods. 24. 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, the couple should have intercourse in another home and bed. 25. The bile of a black dog, sprinkled around the house, purifies it and brings it about that no spell can be brought in. 26. Sprinkle the walls of the house with dog's blood; it will be freed from all spells. 27. 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 28. 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. 29. 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 29: 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.

### 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, they should 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 against spells 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 from the sinner, and all wild beasts, and it makes a man pleasing to all men and women, and rich and potent. Gilbertus. 3. The jay bird, either roasted or boiled, if eaten, quickly brings health back to the sick and frees 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 magician, 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 all the walls, takes the spell away from the home where it is done. Sextus to Octavian [Sextus Placitus' *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, both 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 him 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. 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 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, and 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 symbolized 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 to his servants. 13. Having done that, they should take the leaves of the bramble and the flowers, if they 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

### Cases of Magically-Caused Impotence, 800–1450

857–69: Lothar II of Lotharingia tries persistently to repudiate his wife Theutberga. He is rumoured to have been bewitched by his former mistress Waldrada. Hincmar of Rheims, *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, ed. Félix Grat, Jeanne Vielliard, and Suzanne Clémencet (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1964), 93.

860: Hincmar of Rheims tells how a bridegroom is bewitched but is cured by penance and ‘ecclesiastical medicine’. Hincmar of Rheims, *De Divortio Lotharii Regis et Theutbergae Reginae*, ed. Letha Böhringer, MGH Concilia 4, Suppl. 1 (Hannover: MGH, 1992), 205–6.

Before 1008: Aimoin of Fleury describes how Merovingian King Theuderic II, bewitched by his grandmother Brunhild, refused to consummate his marriage to Ermenberga, daughter of the Visigothic king Witteric, and sent her home. Earlier sources do not mention magic. PL 139:759

1115: Guibert of Nogent describes how his father was bewitched and made impotent by a woman who wanted him to marry one of her own daughters. Guibert de Nogent, *Autobiographie*, ed. Edmond-René Labande (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1981), 76–8, 84, trans. Paul J. Archambault, *A Monk's Confession: the Memoirs of Guibert of Nogent* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 34–8.

1125: Cosmas of Prague describes how Duke Welf of Bavaria accused Matilda of Tuscany of bewitching him and making him impotent on their wedding night. Other sources do not mention magic. Cosmas Pragensis, *Chronica Bohemorum*, MGH Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum NS II (Berlin: MGH, 1923), 127–9.

c.1160: Theologian Master Odo describes how a knight was bewitched by his ex-mistress. The magical object was lost, and the knight and his wife had to separate. Artur Landgraf, ‘Zwei Gelehrte aus der Umgebung des Petrus Lombardus’, *Divus Thomas* 3rd ser. 11 (1933), 170.

c.1190: Decretal *Litteras*: husband accuses wife of bewitching him and making him impotent. They are denied an annulment because it is against the custom of the Roman church. 1 Comp. 4.16.4.

1193: King Philip Augustus of France rumoured to have been bewitched on his wedding night to Ingeborg of Denmark. H. François Delaborde, ed., *Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton* (Paris: Renouard, 1882), i.124–5.

Before 1216: Thomas of Chobham describes how a man was bewitched by his ex-mistress. She confessed what she had done, and the spell was lifted. Thomas of Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, ed. F. Broomfield, *Analecta Mediaevalia Namurcensia* 25 (Louvain: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1968), 184.

1216–27: Decretal *Littere vestre*: a man says he can sleep with women apart from his wife; some commentators think that this might be a case of magic, but his parish priest is unable to find any other women who have slept with him. X 4.15.7.

Before 1250: a count is bewitched so that for thirty years he cannot sleep with anyone but his wife. Hostiensis, *Summa Aurea* (Lyons, 1548), 4.15.8, 214r.

1324–5: Ragnhildr Tregagás sentenced to 7 years' pilgrimages by archbishop of Bergen for making her ex-lover impotent with his new wife. Stephen Mitchell, 'Nordic Witchcraft in Transition: Impotence, Heresy and Diabolism in Fourteenth-Century Bergen', *Scandia* 63 (1997), 17–33.

1341: Johann of Luxembourg, younger son of the king of Bohemia, marries Margaretha, heiress of Count Henry VI of Carinthia and Tirol. The marriage is not consummated, and a few months later, Margaretha remarries without waiting for an annulment. Johann is rumoured to have been bewitched by Margaretha's stepmother Beatrix of Savoy (d. 1331). The marriage is formally annulled in 1349. Dieter Veldtrup, 'Johann Propst von Vyšehrad: Illegitimer Sohn eines "impotenten" Luxemburgers', in Friedrich Bernward Fahlbusch and Peter Johanek (eds.), *Studia Luxemburgensia: Festschrift Heinz Stoob zum 70. Geburtstag* (Warendorf: Fahlbusch/Hölscher/Rieger, 1989), 51–60.

1345: A miracle of B. Gerard Cagnoli cures a young Pisan noble and his thirteen-year-old bride who cannot consummate their marriage and suspect that they are bewitched: 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), 153.

1390: Margot de la Barre and Marion la Droiturière burned by Châtelet court in Paris for making Marion's ex-lover impotent with his new wife. H. Duplès-Agier (ed.), *Registre Criminel du Châtelet de Paris de 6 Septembre 1389 au 18 Mai 1392* (Paris: C. Lahure, 1861), i.327–63.

1403: Catherine Mathee appears in the visitation records of the bishop of Grenoble, accused of doing magic between husbands and wives. C. U. J. Chevalier, *Visites Pastorales et Ordinations des Evêques de Grenoble de la Maison de Chissé*, Documents Historiques Inédits sur le Dauphiné iv (Lyons, 1894), 104.

Before 1412: Physician Niccolo Falcucci records that a respectable count and landowner was bewitched and made impotent. Niccolo Falcucci, *Sermones Medicales* (Venice, 1491), Sermo 6, Tr. 2, Ch. 6, f. 25r.

1418, Poland: When his wife Margaretha seeks an annulment because he is impotent, Gregorius de Dzedzicze claims that he has always been potent before and so must be bewitched: B. Ulanowski (ed.), 'Acta Capitulorum nec non Iudiciorum Ecclesiasticorum Selecta II', *Monumenta Medii Aevi Historica* 16 (1902), 41.

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