The Demonology of William of Auvergne

THE DEMONOLOGY OF WILLIAM OF AUVERGNE

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DEDICATION

To my parents.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the demonology of William of Auvergne, to determine why and how he constructed his theories out of contemporary lore about demons and other spirits. William was master of theology in the University of Paris and bishop of Paris from 1228 until his death in 1249, in which position he served as a major advisor to the young Louis IX. In addition to being one of the most politically influential people in the French kingdom, William was one of the greatest thinkers of his generation, producing numerous works of theology, philosophy and science. William's efforts combine an adoption of an Aristotelian "physics" for spiritual entities with an uncompromising reaffirmation of the view that demons are evil, fallen angels. He believed that a demonic conspiracy existed to deceive humans into false worship, and his concerns led him to precisely define the capabilities of demons according to the latest scientific views of spirits, to characterize opinions with which he disagreed as demonic lies and to label their holders as demonic dupes. William's demonology represented a choice between several alternative varied and contradictory conceptions of spirits that circulated among the western European populace. With his demonology, he hoped to help impose an order he considered doctrinally and politically-acceptable onto the turbulence of early thirteenth century France.

1.0 INTRODUCTION: BY FIRE AND SWORD

"When honor and glory are transferred to accursed and evil spirits, it is thus an obvious insult and an intolerable injury to the creator and such extremely impious idolatry ought to be exterminated by fire and sword."[1]

-- William of Auvergne

Once there was a knight named Henry who doubted the existence of demons, recounts the Cluniac monk and storyteller Caesarius of Heisterbach (d. c. 1240). So very curious about demons was Henry that he hired a magician to summon some demons for him to witness. This magician, a cleric named Philip, took Henry to a crossroads at noon and surrounded him with a protective circle. Soon demons appeared as floods and winds and invisible grunting pigs. Lastly, a man-shaped shadow taller than the trees arrived. Henry and this demon struck up a conversation. The demon implored Henry for a token, first, his cloak, then his girdle, then a sheep, and lastly a lowly rooster. Henry refused. Then the demon revealed several of Henry's hidden sins, before once again requesting an offering. When Henry refused to give it anything the demon grew angry, and made to attack Henry, so that he cried

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[1] "Hunc igitur honorem et gloriam transferre in maledictos et malignos spiritus, manifesta est contumelia, et injuria intolerabilis creatoris, impiissimaque idolatria, igneque et gladio exterminanda." William of Auvergne 2.3.24 *De universo* in *Opera omnia* ([?]: Paris, 1674; reprinted Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1963), 1:1066bF.

out, bringing Philip to the rescue and ending the conversation. Never afterwards was Henry quite the same – nor did he doubt the existence of demons any more.[2]

Caesarius's story reflects some of the social and intellectual changes that wracked Europe in his day. The thirteenth century witnessed the final stages in what R. I. Moore terms "the formation of a persecuting society." The rapid population growth and urbanization of the eleventh and twelfth centuries had disrupted traditional agrarian society. A marked increase in the centralization, efficiency and reach of royal and ecclesiastical governments created larger and more intrusive polities. Religious reform and the growth of papal monarchy transformed the official Church, which was met in turn by a profusion of heresies. Previously tolerated forms of deviance in religion and personal mores became increasingly subject to censure, and more capable churches and states enforced this rigorous conformity where it could. Notably, the thirteenth century brought the establishment of inquisition against heresy, the persecution and expulsion of Jews from many kingdoms, and appalling acts of violence.[3]

As Western Europe's social organization reformed along stricter, more hierarchical lines, the views of its elites were in turn profoundly affected by the importation and systematic study of scientific and philosophic knowledge drawn from

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[2] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum,* edited by Joseph Strange (Cologne: H Lempertz and Company, 1851/7; reprinted Gregg Press: Ridgewood, NJ, 1966), 5.2, 1:276-78, trans. H. Von Scott and C. C. Swinton Bland as *The Dialogue on Miracles*, 2 vols. (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1929), 1: 315-17.
[3] R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 1950-1250* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1987). A second edition due in December, 2006.

the wider Mediterranean world. The formation of universities increased the number of clerks engaged in higher study; the translation of Arabic knowledge further transformed their curricula, and touched off fears that both trends would undermine traditional Church teachings.[4]

Conceptions of demons provide an excellent vantage point from which to examine the transformation of the world-view of educated western Europeans in the thirteenth-century. Consider Philip, the cleric and magician, and an emblem perhaps for Caesarius of the perils of the schools and their new learning. Philip practices a very specific type of magic, which Caesarius calls "necromancy," a word which by Caesarius' day had acquired a meaning quite different from its original definition of "divination by the dead." In a thirteenth-century context, it meant the summoning of any sort of spirit, but particularly demons, through Latin ritual invocations. Necromancy was the preserve of the educated, or the half-educated; hence Philip's status as a cleric. Necromancers were particularly associated with the burgeoning universities of the day, clearinghouses of new learning imported from the Arabic world and places where skill in Latin abounded. This scientific and philosophic learning formed the raw material for the great edifice of scholastic theology, but its attendant penumbra of magical and pseudo-scientific works formed the textbooks of

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[4] Marsha Colish, *The Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997). Étienne Gilson, *La philosophie au moyen age: des origins a la fin du xive siècle*, 2nd edition (Paris: Payot, 1947). David Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought*, 2nd ed., ed. D. E. Luscombe, and C. N. L Brooke (Longman: London, 1988). Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe In the Middle Ages*, ed. F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936; rpt. 1987).

necromancy.[5] Caesarius makes the connection explicit in other stories, where magician students and masters summon demons and flirt with a variety of bad ends.[6]

Next, consider the demon itself. It appears in a variety of forms, some reminiscent of natural forces such as wind and water, others recalling biblical demons, such as a herd of pigs. The demons of the thirteenth century sprang from many origins, and it was under the heading of demons that Christianity had reclassified and suppressed the manifold spirits of pre-Christian pagan religion. And what does this demon *want*? It pleads for Henry to grant it an object, an offering--perhaps, in the case of the sheep or the rooster, a sacrifice. Even for Caesarius, sequestered from the world in the vigorous and strict Cluniac order, demons represented a threatening, if only potential, alternative religion. Paganism and heresy, conceived as demonic bondage, might return to claim Christian souls, individually or collectively.

1.1 William of Auvergne's Demons

This dissertation examines the demonology of William of Auvergne (d. 1249), to see how this influential theologian employed the new intellectual tools of the early thirteenth century, the ideas of Aristotle as transmitted by the Arabs and the logical procedures taught in the burgeoning universities, to impose order on what he saw as

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[5] Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 151-75.
[6] See for example, Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.4, 1:328-30. Translated in Scott and Bland, 1: 318-20.

the chaotic mix of superstition, paganism and heresy of his contemporaries and to combat them on the intellectual plane as they were being fought bodily by crusaders and the inquisitors. Caesarius' near contemporary, William was at one time a master in the University of Paris, then served as bishop of that city from 1228 until his death in 1249. A prodigious scholar and one of the greatest thinkers of his day, he produced numerous works of theology, philosophy and science.[7] William, like his contemporary theologians, faced the heady challenge of absorbing the sophisticated and complex philosophical tradition imported from the greater Mediterranean world. The works of Aristotle, and Arabic commentaries on Aristotle, formed the heart of this tradition, which far exceeded anything Latin Europe had previously encountered.[8]

Demons and demonology form a significant part of William's description of the spiritual universe and humanity's place in the struggle between the evil angels and God. William incorporated the new scientific theories of spirits, while exposing and refuting what he saw as demonic lies designed to undermine Christian society. Key to William's scientific view was a conception of a regular, orderly nature, into which divine power only rarely intruded. Demons thus lost some of their mysterious character and became subject to the same natural laws as human beings. William argued that demons were completely bodiless demons after the pattern of Aristotelian intelligences, rejecting the ancient view of spirits as composed of bodies of air. Their

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[7] The standard bibliography of William remains Noël Valois, *Guillaume d'Auvergne, évêque de Paris (1228-1249): Sa vie et ses ouvrages* ([?]: Paris, 1880; rpt.W. C. Brown Reprint Library: Dubuque, Iowa, 1963).
[8] See Colish, *Foundations*; Knowles, *Evolution*, and Gilson, *La philosophie* for overviews.

powers were mostly illusory, dependent upon their ability to manipulate human sense perception and their vast knowledge of the secrets of nature.

William explained the variety of heterodox demonological beliefs as a result of demons' efforts to mislead humans and secure human worship. The Church's official view that demons were fallen angels competed with conceptions of demons as natural and astral spirits. The newly imported Arabic philosophy and science, heavily laced with magical and astrological suppositions, bolstered existing ideas of demons as astral beings of potentially benevolent disposition. According to William, the new astral magic as much as ancient paganism consisted of demons' assault on the Christian revealed religion. Thus William carefully examined contemporary accounts of demonic phenomena to determine their causal origin, natural, divine or demonic illusion, and hence whether or not they represented dangerous demonic deceptions. [9]

William's more precise definition of the physical and spiritual worlds, like those of the schools generally, coincided with the educated elites' efforts to control the beliefs and actions of the populace. William expected – even demanded – that Christians accept his theories of the natural and spiritual worlds and his evaluations of the truth and falsity of their beliefs and customs. Of idolatry and superstition, even among Catholic laity, he declares that it should be "exterminated by fire and sword."[10] Such a statement was more than an idle threat when issued by a bishop

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[9] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3. See my exposition in chapters 5 through 7.
[10] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066bF.

with ties to a king and pope, who having defeated the heretics of southern France, now attempted to impose orthodoxy by force.

1.2 Historiography

This dissertation relies upon the recent work of scholars approaching demons and demonology from several different directions. I have aimed to combine and synthesize, in order to show not only the place of William's thought in the evolution of European theology and science but also its social relevance. Nancy Caciola's *Discerning Spirits* and Dyan Elliot's *Fallen Bodies* have examined medieval views of bodies, gender and spirituality, and the relationship between demons and the human bodies that they molest and inhabit, contrasting demonic possession with angelic and divine possession.[11] Recent works in French such as Alain Boreau's *Satan Heretique,* Maaike Van der Lugt's *Le ver, le Démon et la vierge*, and Tiziana Suarez-Nani's works on angelology have traced social and scientific views of spirits within high medieval scholastic thought.[12] Art-historical studies such as Sarah Lipton's *Images of Intolerance* and Debra Higgs Strickland's *Saracens, Demons, and Jews* examine the

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[11] Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003). Dyan Elliot, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999). See also Caroline Bynum, "Why all the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective," *Critical Inquiry* 22.1 (April, 1995): 1-33.
[12] Alain Boureau, *Satan Hérétique: Histoire de la Démonologie (1280-1330),* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2004). Maaike van der Lugt, *Le ver, le dDémon et la vierge: les théories médiévales de la génération extraordinaire* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2004). Tiziana Suarez-Nani, *Connaissance et langage des anges selon Thomas d'Aquin et Gilles de Rome* (Paris: Vrin, 2002) and *Les anges et la philosophie: Subjectivité et fonction cosmologique des subsances séparées à la fin du xiie siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 2002).

medieval portrayals of non-Christians as demons and monsters (and vice versa).[13] Treatments of magic, particularly those by Richard Kieckhefer and Valarie Flint, have studied the role of demons as a presumed causal force in the generation of marvelous effects.[14] Historians of the Early Modern witch-trials have written on demons and demonology from many perspectives. Of recent works, undoubtedly the most important is Stuart Clark's magisterial *Thinking with Demons* with its many insights into the rhetoric and science of witch hunting.[15] Moreover, I have drawn extensively on works documenting the closing of Western Europe's political and social structures. Many more studies have been useful than I can feasibility list here, but my debt to the works of William Chester Jordan and R. I. Moore have been particularly deep.[16]

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[13] Sarah Lipton *Images of Intolerance: the Representation of Jews and Judaism in the Bible Moralisée* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews : Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 2003).

[14] Valerie I. J. Flint, "The Demonization of Magic and Sorcery in Late Antiquity: Christian Redefinitions of Pagan Religions," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome* ed. Ankarloo and Clark (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), *The Rise of Magic in Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials : Their Foundations in Popular and Learned Culture, 1300-1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (Sutton Publishing: Thrupp, UK, 1997); *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and "The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic" *The American Historical Review* 99.3 (June 1994): 813-36.

[15] Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

[16] William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews*: *From Phillip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade: A Study in Rulership* (Princeton:

1.3 The Plan of the Work

This brief introduction, numbered chapter one, is followed by a trio of chapters placing William and his demonology into its social and intellectual context. Chapter two argues that early thirteenth century was a troubled age for France. Political difficulties such as recurrences of heresy, religious enthusiasm and rebellion beset Louis IX's early reign, added to the longer-term disruptions of demographic change, urbanization, and the growth of the university in Paris. Chapter three demonstrates the complexity of the medieval world-view and the difficulties inherent in thirteenth-century scholars' attempts to reduce to order the relationship of nature and the divine. Chapter four examines how the influx of Arabic reinvigorated the range of demonological beliefs present in Western Europe and threatened to overturn the Church's view that all demons were evil fallen angels.

The remaining chapters demonstrate how William met the range of existing demonological beliefs by constructing a demonology that incorporated the most appealing features of astral magic, while safeguarding the Christian identification of demons as fallen angels and explaining the presence of so many conflicting views. Chapter five sets forth William's view of demonic motives, nature and powers. Chapters six and seven document how he used his theory to explain the myriad beliefs about demons already present in western European culture and to classify

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Princeton University Press, 1979); R. I. Moore, *The First European Revolution, c. 970-1215* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000); *Formation of a Persecuting Society.*

them as acceptable or unacceptable. Chapter six shows how William applies Aristotelian science to two common beliefs about demons—that they can create life and that they are responsible for divination. Chapter seven argues that in his treatment of a related complex of Germanic beliefs, William's misogyny led him to condemn as idolatry those beliefs associated with women and female spirits, but to treat as potentially beneficial those that involved male spirits such as ghosts and the warriors of the Wild Hunt.

2.0 WILLIAM OF AUVERGNE AND THE MAKING OF HIGH MEDIEVAL FRANCE

This section intertwines William's biography with a brief treatment of the major trends that affected his life and work. The early thirteenth century in France was a troubled time. The political, social, and intellectual order of William's world lay in flux, creating both a heady sense of reform and renewal as well as a deep uncertainty about the future. William worked to bring what he saw as proper order to the political and the intellectual fields. A strong supporter of the royal family, he participated in high politics, attempting to bring stability to St. Louis' difficult early reign. As bishop of Paris, he governed the souls of one of the most populous, important and fractious cities of Western Europe.[1] As a philosopher, his writings reflect the integration and systemization of the philosophy and science imported from the Arabic world. As a theologian, his description of the spiritual and natural worlds helped construct a more rigorous orthodoxy and refute the perceived errors of religious dissidents and rivals.

2.1 Early Life

William's early life is obscure. His appellation "of Auvergne" almost certainly indicates his place of origin even though it probably does not designate

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[1] For estimates of the populations of "giant" towns, see N. J. G. Pounds, *An Economic History of Medieval Europe*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1994), 257-58.

membership in a noble family. Thanks to a manuscript note, we can localize his origin further, to Aurillac.[2] Later evidence suggests that William was born to a poor family – but this tale is suspect because it forms an historiographic stereotype. The fact that William was teaching theology in 1225 places his date of birth sometime late in the twelfth century, because permission to teach theology was customarily limited to persons thirty-five years old and older, and William was teaching it in 1225. If he was 35 in 1225, he would have been born in 1190. In all likelihood he was older, meaning we can estimate his date of birth as before 1190 and thus early in Philip Augustus's (1180-1223) reign.[3]

2.1.1 The Economic Basis of Change

As a youth William lived in a world profoundly affected by the population boom that had characterized Western Europe since roughly 1050. Local and long-distance commerce increased. The larger population brought previously unused land into cultivation. The cities, which had been comparatively neglected since the Roman period, revived as centers of cultural and economic activity. Fairs and urban growth in turn stimulated trade. The urban populations, with their new wealth, often wrested

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[2] At the end of Paris, *Bibliotheque Nationale* Latin 15756, one of the best manuscripts of *De universo*. See Noël Valois, *Guillaume d'Auvergne: Éveque de Paris (1228-1249): Sa vie et ses ouvrages* (Paris: Librairie d'Alphonse Picard, 1880; rpt. Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Reprint Library, 1963), 5, n. 3.

[3] Ernest A. Moody, "William of Auvergne and His Treatise *De Anima*," (1933), reprinted in *Studies in Medieval Philosophy, Science and Logic* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 1975), 1-2. Noël Valois, *Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 1-7, remains the most important biography of William.

or purchased legal privileges such as self-government from their lords. For self-protection, those engaged in particular trades organized themselves into guilds, and the urban elites as a whole developed the local governments known as communes. Royal and seigniorial authority often supported the towns against local nobility and bishops in exchange for political and monetary support.[4]

Religiously conservative Western Europe was ill-equipped to accommodate many of these changes. The foremost cause of anxiety was the increased number of persons and pursuits to be found outside of the traditional manor and its economy and especially the widespread pursuit of profit in a monetary economy. The Church's prohibition of usury, defined as the lending of money at interest, proved particularly difficult to reconcile with the need for credit in many commercial enterprises, but it was only the most visible manifestation of a widespread uneasiness concerning wealth. The newly rich of the cities lacked the traditional function of warriors with

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[4] John W. Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus: The Foundations of French Royal Power in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 59-64. André Chédeville, Jacques Le Goff, Jacques Rossiaud, *La ville en France au Moyen Âge des Carolingiens à la Renaissance* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1980/1998), esp. 137-79, 295-314. Jacques Le Goff, *St. Louis* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), 228-38. Jacques Heers, *La ville au moyen âge en occident: paysages, pouvoirs et conflits* (Paris [?]: Fayard, 1990). David Nicholas, *The Growth of the Medieval City: From Late Antiquity to the Early Fourteenth Century* (London: Longman, 1997), 3-271. Pounds, *Economic History*, 90-123, 223-82; and *The Medieval City* (Westport: Greenwood, 2005), 1-19, 99-135. Adriaan Verhulst, "The Origins and Early Development of Medieval Towns in Northern Europe," *The Economic History Review* 47.2 (May 1994): 362-73. On trade and guilds, Oliver Volckart and Antje Mangels, "Are the Roots of the Modern Lex Mercatoria Really Medieval?" *Southern Economic Journal* 65.3 (January 1999): 427-50. For an inhabitant's eye view of city life, see Sharon Farmer, "Down and Out and Female in Thirteenth-Century Paris," *The American Historical Review* 103.2 (April 1998): 345-72 and Keith D. Lilley, *Urban Life in the Middle Ages, 1000-1450* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2002).

which the landed aristocracy justified their economic superiority. Merchants, traders and financiers in particular could seem parasitical, as they produced nothing with their hands, only profited from the labor of others.[5] As we shall see, the tensions caused by urbanization contributed to the rise of new religious movements.

Greater wealth and population formed the preconditions for the growth of more powerful, centralized states. The High Middle Ages also saw the development of standing, specialized, and above all, record-keeping organs of government in most of the major states of Western Europe. Advances in administration were coupled in many areas with the revival of Roman law, which began to supplement or displace regional customary law. Many people resented the novel methods used by the new bureaucracies, especially those involved in the collection of revenue. During William's lifetime these procedures spread from Paris into outlying regions such as his own Auvergne.[6]

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[5] John W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and his Circle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 261-95. Pounds, *Economic History*, 408-412. Le Goff, *La bourse et la vie* (Paris: Hachette, 1986), trans. Patricia Ranum as *Your Money or Your Life* (New York: Zone, 1988). Priscilla Baumann, "The Deadliest Sin: Warnings against Avarice and Usury on Romanesque Capitals in Auvergne," *Church History* 5.1 (March 1990): 7-18 discusses artistic works near William's birthplace.

[6] Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus*, 44-58, 101-175, and *Masters, Princes and Merchants*, 228-51. Elizabeth M. Hallam and Judith Everard, *Capetian France 987-1328*, 2nd ed. (Harlow, England: Pearson, 2001), 203-21. See also: Alain Boureau, "How Law Came to the Monks: The Use of Law in English Society at the Beginning of the Thirteenth Century," *Past and Present* 167 (May 2000): 29-74.

2.1.2 The French Monarchy in William's Youth

The late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries are usually seen as a period during which the kings of France vastly increased the extent of their territory and dominance over local rivals. Such a view is true in the long term, but in the short term it severely underestimates the degree of chance and uncertainty that plagued the French monarchy during William's life.

In William's youth, the French and English kings contended over large parts of what is now northern and central France. The duchy of Normandy lay at the center of a collection of English possessions on the Continent so extensive that together with England itself, historians have often called them the Angevin Empire. The English continental possessions, which the English king held as fiefs of the French, occupied an anomalous and contested place between the Angevin and French spheres of influence. The English king naturally resented the implied subordination to the French crown and its attendant obligations, whereas the French king resented the English king's influence within "French" lands.[7] The Auvergne itself was contested territory. Henry II ceded it to Philip in 1189, but its two counts remained effectively independent until Philip conquered them in 1199 and 1213 respectively.[8]

Philip Augustus spent much of his reign attempting to wrest continental possessions away from the English King Henry II and his sons Richard I and John I. Although Henry II supported Philip in his early struggles against Flanders in the early

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[7] Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus*, 3-27. Hallam and Everard, *Capetian France*, 164-68.
[8] For the Auvergne, see Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus*, 199-200.

1180s, Philip soon attempted to pry away Henry's continental possessions, both by open war and by encouraging divisions among Henry's sons. Philip's cultivation of Richard's friendship ended in Richard's rebellion against his own father, Henry II, in 1188, ending in the old king's death the following year. Philip and Richard went on crusade together in 1190, but their friendship soon soured. Philip once again tried to persuade Richard to marry his half-sister Alix, but Richard instead married Berengaria of Navarre, a move designed to fortify his southern holdings. Philip returned to France early, and while Richard's journey home was delayed by his imprisonment, Philip invaded Normandy, a move that violated not only the general ban on attacking an absent crusader's possessions but also an explicit agreement Philip had made with Richard before their mutual departure. Richard proved a formidable enemy, charismatic and competent in battle. Returning, Richard established an alliance against Philip and in 1197 and 1198 he recaptured his lost territories, leaving Philip precariously situated.[9]

2.1.3 Religious Enthusiasm and Dissent

Just as the political and economic scene was cloudy and wracked with change, so too was the religious scene. As William embarked on his clerical career, the western Church faced serious challenges from the profusion of religious movements of dubious orthodoxy that had emerged and grown strong in the period c. 1120-1180.

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[9] Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus*, 3-27, 77-94. Hallam and Everard, *Capetian France*, 164-68.

From the early eleventh century onwards, such places as Orleans, Milan and Arras had been centers of heretical movements. By the twelfth century, there seem to have been two primary factors leading to the spread of new religious movements, whether heterodox, orthodox or borderline. First, dissatisfaction with existing institutions and modes of piety ran high. The Gregorian reform, an eleventh-century movement that aimed to reform the morals of the clergy and remove ecclesiastical institutions from lay control, had encouraged the laity to expect more from their clergy, in personal morality, in education, and in piety, and the reformers had used resulting lay demands to push their agenda for ecclesiastic independence from secular powers. Even after the Gregorian reformers among the clergy had largely achieved their goals, the resulting lay enthusiasm continued to find new religious expression in groups such as the Cathars and Waldensians.[10] Second, there was widespread discomfort over the moral legitimacy of the new mercantile and urban social patterns, of which the church's condemnation of usury represented only one manifestation. The striking gap between urban success and urban poverty fostered resentment among the poor and

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[10] Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*: *Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 14-96. The foundational work on the relationship between Gregorian reform and High Medieval Religious movements is Herbert Grundmann, *Religiöse Bewegungen im Mittelalter; Untersuchungen über die geschichtlichen Zusammenhänge zwischen der Ketzerei, den Bettelorden und der religiösen Frauenbewegung im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert, und über die geschichtlichen Grundlagen der deutschen Mystik,* new ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961), trans. Steven Rowan as *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages: The Historical Links between Heresy, the Mendicant Orders, and the Women's Religious Movement in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century, with the Historical Foundations of German Mysticism* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

guilty consciences among the newly successful and their descendants. The biblical sending of the Apostles formed a counter model, as religious enthusiasts took as paradigmatic Christ's command that his disciples travel barefoot and poor.[11] As a result, many movements embraced voluntary poverty, lay preaching, and a wandering life. Such movements as the Waldensians, the Cathars, and the Humiliati were strongest in the richer and more urbanized areas of Western Europe, particularly in what is now southern France and northern Italy.[12]

The Waldensians, one of the most characteristic and successful of the new religious movements, evidenced the appeal of the apostolic ideals. Around 1176, the merchant Valdes of Lyons, following a spiritual conversion, renounced his property, began a life of preaching, and attracted many followers. The Waldensians' doctrines were not initially heterodox, but in preaching without the local bishop's permission, they became heretics in the eyes of the church hierarchy. When attempts to reach an understanding failed, the Waldensians drifted further away from the established church, actively attacking the institution that had rejected their needs and sometimes skirting close to Donatism by denying the efficacy of sacraments performed by priests who did not conform to Waldensian expectations of proper behavior, especially sexual behavior.[13]

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[11] Luke 9:1-6.
[12] Malcolm Lambert, *The Cathars* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1998), 4-18; *Medieval Heresy*, 14-96.
[13] Gabriel Audisio, *Les 'Vaudois': naissance, vie et mort d'une dissidence (xiiie - xvie siècle)* ([?].: Albert Meynier Editore, 1989), trans. Claire Davison as *The Waldensian*

Other widespread movements adopted similar ideals. The Humiliati of northern Italy resembled the Waldensians in their poverty and preaching.[14] The Beghards and Beguines of northern Europe were primarily urban groups of men and women who sequestered themselves singly or in communal houses, living off their labor and often engaging in mysticism. The ecclesiastical authorities sometimes condemned Beguines and Beghards for heresy, individually or as an ill-defined group, but others found enthusiastic clerical supporters. Thus for the most part they continued to occupy the dubious penumbra of questionable religious practices that the Waldensians had originated.[15]

More threatening than the Waldensians, the Beguines or other similar groups, the Cathars represented perhaps the most serious challenge to ecclesiastical authority. In their "home" areas of southern France and Italy, they combined radically heterodox doctrine with significant popular appeal and even political support. The Cathars' practices superficially resembled those of the Waldensians. Their leaders, known as the Perfect, renounced wealth, wandered widely, and engaged in preaching attacks on the existing Church, citing Scripture, particularly the New Testament, in defense of their position. Ordinary believers aided and venerated the Perfect but did not follow their rigorous lifestyle. This double-tiered system, which recalls the separation between clergy and laity among Catholics, permitted ordinary persons to

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Dissent: Persecution and Survival, c. 1170- c. 1570 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6-39. Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 70-96.

[14] Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 74-80, 102-3.

[15] Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 199-205.

benefit from the moral example, leadership, and instruction of the Perfect without committing themselves to their ascetic code.

The Cathars differed considerably in doctrine and organization from the established Church and even most other heterodox religious movements. They constituted themselves as a separate church with their own officials and sacraments. The central Cathar ritual, the *consolamentum*, consisted of a laying-on of hands. This spiritual baptism removed the sins of the recipient, offering salvation so long as he or she committed no further sins against the rigorous Cathar code of behavior, which included prohibitions against sex, eating animal products, and owning property. Thus, most adherents of the sect took the *consolamentum* only on their death-bed, where it served as a kind of last rite. Only the Perfect took the *consolamentum* earlier, for whom it served as a kind of ordination. In what is now southern France, Cathar belief spread through both preaching and kin-networks, attracting the nobility as well as ordinary peoples. Catharism benefited from widespread toleration and even admiration. Many inhabitants of Cathar regions hedged their bets against damnation by availing themselves of the services of both Catholic clergy and Cathar Perfects. [16]

Cathar beliefs encompassed several religious doctrines the established clergy found unacceptable, even shocking. Cathar teachings tended towards various forms

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[16] Lambert, *The Cathars*, 60-91, 141-58. On the Italian Cathars, see Carol Lansing, *Power and Purity: Cathar Heresy in Medieval Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 23-78. On economic factors in Catharism, see Lutz Kaelber, "Weavers into Heretics? The Social Organization of Early-Thirteenth-Century Catharism in Comparative Perspective," *Social Science History* 21.1 (Spring 1997): 111-37.

of dualism. The most radical Cathars affirmed the existence of two principles, one good and one evil, although they usually regarded the evil principle as more limited than the good principle. The evil principle, often identified with Satan and the God of the Old Testament, was said to have created the material universe. The good principle, identified with Christ, governed the world of the spirit. Thus, the material universe was evil, the devil's creation, and human bodies were a prison in which he had trapped human souls in a cycle of perpetual reincarnation. Cathar prohibitions against procreation and its byproducts thus represented a rejection of the devil's creation, and the *consolamentum* and the Cathar church represented a method of transcending matter and returning to the good god. To theologians trained in Augustine, such doctrines seemed a rebirth of Manicheanism, a radically dualistic religion of the Roman world. Thus the most learned opponents of the Cathars stigmatized it as radically dualist and fundamentally incompatible with their own monotheism. [17]

The Auvergne being close to Languedoc, William would have been aware of these challenges to clerical doctrine and authority. Moreover, he would have been

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[17] Lambert, *The Cathars*, 158-65, *Medieval Heresy*, 129-137. Lansing, *Power and Purity*, 81-134. On the later Cathars but a deserved classic, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou, village occitan de 1294 à 1324*, rev. (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1982). Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans, trans. and ed. *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961/91), 447-630, offers translations of several important later Cathar documents. Especially interesting is the "Book of Two Principles," 511-91.

aware of the ineffectiveness in southern France and northern Italy of the Church's response, until then limited to debate, persuasion, and small-scale censure.[18]

2.2 Study in Paris

We do not know exactly when William moved to Paris, the city that would be his home for the rest of his life and to whose church he would be symbolically wedded as bishop. Medieval students attended university far earlier than their modern counterparts, often as soon as their Latin preparation was complete, in their early teens or even younger.[19] Thus William was probably in Paris at least by the year 1200, after which he achieved the education which familiarized him with the new learning that was increasingly a prerequisite for holding high ecclesiastic and secular offices.

2.2.1 The Role and Development of the University

During the twelfth century, the universities of Europe developed slowly out of existing cathedral schools, monastic schools and the followings of individual teachers. The universities played a key role in the burgeoning societies of Western Europe. The increasingly sophisticated governmental apparatus of church and state required the literate, trained personnel which the universities supplied. It was

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[18] Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 47-51.
[19] Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe In the Middle Ages*, ed. F.M. Powicke and A.B. Emden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936; reprinted 1987), 3:340-53.

common for students to attend university for only a year or two, not completing any degree, then exit to take up employment in the lower echelons of the bureaucracy. Those with higher levels of accomplishment, of course, did correspondingly better, as all the governments needed lawyers trained in the rediscovered Justinian's Code or in the increasingly sophisticated canon law which was modeled after it. Likewise, theological training became more and more a route to higher Church offices.[20]

Certain textbooks became standard parts of the curriculum in the universities. In the arts, Aristotle's books on logic formed the heart of studies. In theology, the most important book, after the Bible, was the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. Because much theology took the form of commentaries on it, the *Sentences* long influenced which subjects were discussed and in what order. For law, the formative work was Justinian's *Code*, a compilation of Roman legislation rediscovered in the early twelfth century. From c. 1140, Gratian's *Decretum* provided a standard, systematic treatment of canon law for study in schools. Whereas the *Code* was a compilation of laws, the *Decretum* included a conscious juxtaposition of conflicting quotations from theological opinions, conciliar decrees, papal letters and commentary on them, with speculation on the principles behind them and how to resolve conflicts. Justinian's *Corpus Juris Civilis* had analogous volumes in the *Digest* and the *Institutes*. The

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[20] Rashdall, *Universities,* 1:298-311.

same needs that fed the study of Roman law in a more populous and centralized Europe also nourished the training of canon lawyers for service in the church.[21]

As the number of students grew, followers of various disciplines tended to congregate wherever instruction was available or where particularly prestigious teachers had settled. The increased number of students probably stemmed from a combination of overall population growth, a wave of enthusiasm for learning, and the practical benefits -- that is, career advancement -- to be accrued from study. The autobiography of Abelard, the most famous of these early teachers, gives a vivid picture of the enthusiasm, backbiting and chaos of the period. Certain cities such as Bologna, Paris and Salerno early established their place as the foremost centers of learning, and the students and teachers almost continually in residence began to form guilds after the pattern of urban industry. In some cases in Mediterranean Europe, such as Bologna, the university was a guild of students. More often, as in Paris and the rest of Northern Europe, the university formed as a guild of teachers. The universities, like other guilds, were mostly self-regulating. As clerical institutions they at first suffered from dependent relationships on the local bishops and their chancellors, who controlled matters of justice over local clerics and also the granting of the license to teach. In Paris, the chancellor had attempted to subordinate the

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[21] David Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought*, 2nd ed., ed. D. E. Luscombe and C. N. L Brooke (Longman: London, 1988), 141-44,1 56-66, 171-72. For example, although Michael had previously played a large role in angelology, later angelology followed the *Sentences'* lead in omitting him from its discussion. See David Keck, *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 87-92.

university by threatening to withhold the license, by charging a fee, or by abusing his powers of justice but the masters appealed to the pope, and in 1212 he compelled the chancellor to stop harassing masters and to grant the license to the masters' candidates for free. Conflicts between the masters and the chancellors continued, but the popes had decisively affirmed the university's basic independence.[22]

2.2.2 The New Learning in General

When William arrived in Paris, it was undoubtedly the foremost place in Europe to study theology and the arts. Paris had been a place for teaching and learning since the early twelfth century. The (in)famous Abelard had taught there in the early twelfth century After Abelard, there followed a succession of masters who continued to lay the foundation of the scholastic method in philosophy and theology. The school of St. Victor's in Paris in the early twelfth century developed biblical commentary and interpretation. Peter Lombard (d. 1260) produced the *Sentences*, a collection of extracts of the Church fathers intended to serve as an introductory textbook to theology. John of Salisbury (d. 1180) wrote on good government in his

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[22] Marsha Colish*, The Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 265-88. Rashdall, *Universities,* esp. 1:1-73, 271-343. For Abelard in his own words, see *Abelards "Historia Calamitatum" : Text - Übersetzung - literaturwissenschaftliche Modellanalysen*, ed. Dag Nikolaus Hasse (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002).

Policratus. Alain de Lille (d. c. 1203) wrote extensively on theology, nature and society.[23]

Thinkers in Paris in the late twelfth century grappled with the rapid influx of texts rediscovered or translated from other Mediterranean languages. As the century advanced and western European scholars increased in number, they turned to external sources for the information and ideas they felt lacking. The corpus of the works of Aristotle and his commentators arrived slowly, over the course of a century. The missing logical works arrived first and were eagerly absorbed. The commentaries of Avicenna (ibn Sina) arrived shortly thereafter, and his synthesis of Neo-Platonism and Aristotle exerted a profound influence on William and his contemporaries. The more purely Peripatetic works of Averroes (ibn Rushd) followed by the thirteenth century, but too late to have the same measure of influence on William.[24]

2.2.3 The New Science

Many important developments followed the reintroduction of Aristotle, but the focus of this dissertation will be primarily on the changes in natural philosophy. The late antique Roman world had had a well-developed scientific system, combining and harmonizing elements of Neoplatonism and Aristotelian thought. It identified the Neoplatonic One with the Unmoved Mover of Aristotle and superimposed the

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[23] William Chester Jordan, *Europe in the High Middle Ages* (London: Penguin, 2002), 113-28.
[24] David Knowles, *Evolution*, esp. 167-212; and Étienne Gilson, *La philosophie au moyen age: des origins a la fin du xive siècle*, 2nd edition (Paris: Payot, 1947), esp. 259-400. Moody, "William of Auvergne," 11-8.

ontological emanations of Neo-Platonism atop Aristotle's physical universe of nested astral spheres and earthly elements. Following Aristotle, the heavenly bodies, the fixed stars and especially the planets were regarded as composed of a superior type of matter, a fifth or quintessence in distinction to the four earthly elements of fire, air, earth and water. Each planet, including the sun and the moon, circled the earth in a nested hierarchy of concentric spheres. The heavenly bodies, perfect and unchangeable, nonetheless by their motions imparted in sublunary matter a variety of effects, stirring, as it were, everything on earth in their ceaseless revolutions. The relative influences of the planets on any given point of the Earth's surface were thus calculable, and were thought to imprint themselves on actions or births taking place at that time. Earthly creatures and objects were characterized by the combination of the four elements dominant in them and in the astrological influences active upon them. Empirical observation, preserved in encyclopedias such as Pliny's *Natural History*, documented the properties of animals, plants, and natural objects. Spirits such as gods and demons occupied various positions in the system, providing motive force to the planets, acting as stellar intermediaries, or interacting in various (usually) negative ways with human beings.[25]

Latin-speaking Christians of the Late Empire generally accepted the scientific system of their pagan predecessors but had difficulty reconciling some of its features

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[25] Knowles, *Evolution*, 11-45. Gilson, *La philosophie*, 115-38. For a fine, if synchronic and idiosyncratic introduction to the medieval cosmological world-view, see C. S. Lewis' *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).

with their religion. A look at Augustine demonstrates the issues he thought worth mentioning, and the solutions he proposed, to reconcile Christianity to the learned scientific systems of antiquity. He accepted as plausible the idea that the stars affected earthly events, but he objected to a view of astrology that regarded stellar influences as completely overriding human choice. He lauded those elements of the system which appeared to support the existence of a supreme being, but objected to particular formulations about God's nature and human souls made by Plato and Aristotle, and objected to views of the world's eternity or creation that contradicted Scripture. He viewed spirits as demons and strongly censured interaction between demons and spirits. All in all, one is struck by his indifference to scientific questions, which he usually avoids unless he holds a religious objection to a specific scientific position.[26]

The Roman scientific system became the common heritage of the successor-states to the Roman world throughout the Mediterranean – the Byzantine Empire, the Islamic Caliphate, and the kingdoms of Western Europe. In Western Europe, ancient scientific theory atrophied (in part because people in the western world north of Naples were, with a few exceptions, ignorant of the Greek language) but did not

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[26] Valerie I. J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* on Augustine specifically, 29, 96, 131-2. See also Knowles's characterization of Augustine's interests, *Evolution*, 29-45.

disappear altogether. Nevertheless, Latin writings, the writings of Augustine in particular, continued to convey its key elements.[27]

The Islamic world, by contrast, produced philosophers who further elaborated and refined the Late Antique philosophic and scientific legacy. Following the translation of major works into Arabic, it became the language of philosophy throughout the Islamic world, permitting the exchange of ideas across religious communities. Islamic philosophy, hardly static, went through several phases of development, often stimulated by the patronage of individual princes, as in the eleventh-century Buyid era.[28] Several figures in Arabic thought deserve particular mention.[29] Al-Kindi (d. 865), the first major Muslim philosopher, set much of Islamic philosophy's subsequent shape by continuing the work of the Late Antique Alexandrian school in synthesizing Aristotle and Neoplatonism. His school produced the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*, an extract of the writings of Plotinus later taken as a work of Aristotle.[30] Al-Farabi (d. 950) further adapted philosophy to the needs of

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[27] Valerie I. J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 92-101, 128-46. See the chapter "L'universe du xiie siècle," in Gilson*, La philosophie au moyen age,* 318-28, for a short summary of the early medieval view of the stars and the physical world.
[28] Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival during the Buyid Age*, 2nd ed. rev. (Leiden: Brill, 1992).
[29] For general introductions to Arabic philosophy from the perspective of its influence on Christian scholasticism, see Marsha Colish, *The Medieval Foundations*, 140-48. Knowles, *Evolution*, 175-98. Gilson, *La philosophie du moyen age,* 344-68.
[30] Peter Adamson, "Al-Kindi and the Reception of Greek Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, ed. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 32-51. Fritz W. Zimmerman, "Al-Kindi," in *Religion, Learning and Science in the 'Abbassid Period*

an Islamic society, disassociating philosophy from its pagan and Christian past and positing a philosopher-prophet who establishes religion via inspiration by the Active Intellect.[31] Ibn Sina (d. 1037), best known for his metaphysics, attempted to harmonize religion and philosophy in his understanding of the soul and of the relationship between revelation and religion.[32] Ibn Rushd (d. 1198) attempted to remove Neoplatonic elements from the philosophic tradition, returning to a purer Aristotelianism.[33]

The inherent difficulties in Mediterranean science for the monotheistic religions first became apparent in the philosophic schools of the Islamic world. Science, as it was practiced in Late Antiquity, rested on fundamental assumptions about the cosmos which did not accord well with those of the monotheistic religions. The interconnected cosmos of philosophy contained a supreme being, but it was a unified Cause that causes, a source projecting emanations, not a Creator with a will engaged in a personal relationship with humans. Ibn Rushd in particular had sometimes claimed a superior esoteric understanding of the truths behind revealed

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 364-69. Colish, *Medieval Foundations*, 140. Knowles, *Evolution*, 170.

[31] Colish, *Medieval Foundations*, 140-1. Alfred L. Ivry, "Al-Farabi" in *Religion Learning and Science in the 'Abbassid Period*, 378-88. Knowles, *Evolution*, 177-8. David C. Reisman, "Al-Farabi and the Philosophical Curriculum," in *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, 52-71.

[32] Colish, *Medieval Foundations*, 141-45. Knowles, *Evolution*, 179-81. Salvador Gómez Nogales, "Ibn Sina" in *Religion Learning and Science in the 'Abbassid Period*, 389-404. Knowles, *Evolution*, 179-81. Robert Wisnovsky, "Avicenna and the Avicennaian Tradition," in *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* 92-136.

[33] Colish, *Medieval Foundations*, 146-47. Knowles, *Evolution*, 180-3.

religion which set philosophers above the masses and religious experts alike.[34] The immensely influential Al-Ghazali (d. before 1111), learned in philosophy, the Islamic religious sciences, and Sufi mysticism, attempted a solution. His mature work affirmed the primacy of Islamic revelation over the contradictions and uncertainties of philosophy, while nevertheless bringing many philosophical techniques and insights into the theological mainstream.[35]

Jewish philosophy in the Mediterranean world, which shared a common scholarly culture with Islamic philosophy and also used Arabic as its language of communication, developed a similar position. The *Guide to the Perplexed* of Moses ben Maimonides (d. 1204) used philosophy to buttress and support revealed religion, resolving conflicts in favor of the greater authority of the latter. His example exerted great influence on the theologians of Christendom.[36]

In Western Europe, translations of the major works of antiquity and of Arabic philosophy began to circulate in the schools, where scholars and church authorities received them with a mixture of enthusiasm, trepidation, and censure. Aristotle's so-called "new logic" caused relatively few problems and soon became an integral part

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[34] Knowles, *Evolution*, 180-83. Richard C. Taylor, "Averroes: Religious Dialectic and Artistotelian Philosophical Thought," in *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* 180-200.
[35] Abid Nayif Dayib, "Al-Ghazali in *Religion, Learning and Science in the 'Abbassid Period*, 424-45. Gilson, *La philosophie du moyen age,* 356-57. Colish*, Medieval Foundations*, 147-48. Michael E. Marmura, "Al-Ghazali," in *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, 137-54.
[36] Colish*, Medieval Foundations*, 152-59. Knowles, *Evolution*, 183-86. Gilson, *La philosophie du moyen age,* 368-76. Colette Sirat, *La Philosophie juive medievale en terre d'Islam* (Paris: Presses du CNRS, 1988).

of the curriculum. By contrast, the natural philosophy of Aristotle and his commentators, along with their penumbra of related works, presented Christian students with several difficulties. The fundamental difference in tone between the cosmological views of the Aristotelian scientific system and those of a revealed religion like Christianity presented itself in a series of positions which flowed naturally from the axioms of the scientific system but which contradicted Christian doctrine. For example, Aristotle had argued that the world was eternal, a position fully consistent with the idea that earthly changes are precipitated by the unending cyclical motion of the heavens but incompatible with the teachings of Genesis. Another, much vexed, set of problems involved the soul. Aristotle himself denied the soul's immortality. Moreover, Avicenna had argued that the active or agent intellect lay outside the human soul, a position which seemed to imply that humans participated in a super-consciousness, into which human individuality merged, a position repulsive to most theologians.[37]

Western European thinkers thus found the newly-revived scientific system elegant, cohesive, logical, and yet wrong. At Paris, a split soon developed between the conservative and cautious thinkers in the church hierarchy and the theological faculty on the one hand and on the other hand the scholars (particularly in the arts faculty) who enthusiastically adopted the new ideas. In 1210 local authorities ordered the arts masters to cease teaching Aristotle's natural philosophy, a prohibition the popes repeated in 1215 and 1231 with the caveat that the prohibited books would

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[37] Knowles, *Evolution*, 180, 181-2, 187-98. Gilson, *La Philosophie*, 377-90.

remain interdicted only temporarily, until purged of errors. The appeal of such works could not be denied so simply; some evidence exists that the forbidden works were still taught by arts masters.[38] William's theological use of the new Aristotelian science thus represented an innovative departure from the norms of his peers.

2.2.4 William and Necromancy

During his studies at Paris, William was interested not only in the genuine works of Aristotle and his commentators then in circulation, but also in the works of magic and experiment associated indirectly with the new learning. William's Paris hosted a flourishing population of magical practitioners, literate in Latin, whose practices and pretensions drew upon a corpus of magical books. Richard Kieckhefer has identified a "clerical underground" of practicing magicians. As members of the literate class, trained in the performance of official ritual, they already had the requisite skills necessary to provide less reputable ritual services for themselves and their clients. The clerical underground developed a distinctive form of magic known as "necromancy," which aimed to summon and control spirits, sometimes acknowledged as demonic, in other cases identified as angels or as good spirits.[39]

There appear to have been several roots to necromancy. First, the ritual of exorcism contributed significantly. Exorcism formed a basic ritual of the medieval church, and exorcist was one of the minor orders preceding ordination as a deacon or

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[38] Knowles, *Evolution*, 205-9.
[39] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 151-75.

priest. As a result, would-be clerical necromancers already knew some formulas and practices for controlling demons, and it was a short step from commanding spirits to leave the possessed to commanding them to perform other functions. Many magical rituals of the later Middle Ages show strong similarities to liturgies of exorcism.[40] Given the briefer and more informal exorcisms of the high medieval period, it is uncertain at which period and in which stages this cross-fertilization occurred.[41]

Arabic astrology and astral magic, which claimed to manipulate the spirits and influences associated with the stars and planets, also contributed to the development of necromancy. Such knowledge was not necessarily suspect. Arabic astrology and astronomy were significantly more developed than anything previously known in Latin Europe, and the disciplines correspondingly gained in reputation and acceptance. Arabic astral magic entered at the same time and by the same channels, although unlike astrology, it never attained great intellectual stature. It posited spirits for each star, planet or constellation, and supposed that a magician with the correct knowledge could summon a servant from each.[42] The *Picatrix*, a work which typified this strand of magic, first saw translation into Latin circa 1256. Although obscure in

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[40] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 165-72.
[41] A line of speculation suggested by Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 225-73.
[42] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 165-72.

the century of its translation and for some time thereafter, it went on to gain great fame in the latter Middle Ages, becoming a staple of Renaissance learned magic.[43]

2.2.4.1 The Books of the Clerical Underworld

William provides one of the few reliable witnesses to the titles and contents of the books circulating in the early thirteenth century and presumably in Paris itself. His accounts in *De legibus* and *De universo* are unusually informative about such books: *Major* and *Minor circulus*, the Hermetic *De deo deorum*, and the *Annuli saturni*, the *Rings*, the *Sign*, and the *Idea of Solomon*, the *Nine Scarabs*, the *Entoca*, the *Liber sacratus*, and the *Mandal* or *Almandel.* [44]

Some of these works survive. For others we have only William's information about them, but can make educated guesses as to their contents based on later, surviving works. The name *al Mandal* combines an Arabic article with the Sanskrit *mandal*, suggesting an Indian origin and Islamic transmission, but the work itself promises to bring the magician into contact with the angels of the Jewish and

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[43] David Pingree, ed., *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghayat Al-Hakim* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1986).

[44] Robert Mathiesen suggests that *Candariae* should read *Canthariae* ("Scarabs") and Entoca should read *Eutotca*. "A Thirteenth-Century Ritual to Attain the Beatific Vision from the *Sworn Book* of Honorius of Thebes," in *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic*, edited by Claire Fanger (University Park, Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 1998), 143-62, esp. 146, 160, n. 15. William of Auvergne, *De legibus,* 1:84bH-85bB, 89bD, *De universo* 2.3.8, 1030aG, 2.3.20 1056bF, 2.3.23 1060bF-G, 1064bF, non inclusive.

Christian Solomon tradition.[45] Thus it can be classed as angel magic. William notes that its contents include rituals for summoning spirits in the form of knights and kings. The frequency of words such as *imago* or *sigilum* and references to rings and circles, not to mention the prominent references to Solomon, in the other titles seem to indicate that these are works related to the *ars notoria* tradition of magical works, which emphasizes the drawing of symbols and circles in magical operations.[46]

New elements entering necromancy in the early fourteenth century aggravated the problem of determining the contents of the books William mentions because later works incorporate angel magic presumably unknown in William's day. The *Liber sacratus* was once believed to be the same as the *Liber juratus* or *Sworn Book of Honorius,* containing astral and angel magic, which survives in several later medieval manuscripts. Recently, Richard Kieckhefer has argued that elements of Jewish Merkabah mysticism in the *Liber juratus* derive from Abraham Abulafia (d. circa 1290). Hence it cannot be William's *Liber sacratus,* and previous assumptions about

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[45] Jan R. Veenstra, "The Holy Amandel: Angels and the Intellectual Aims of Magic" in *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 189-229. Thanks to Professor Linda T. Darling for assistance with the Arabic terminology.

[46] For Hermetic influences, see Paulo Lucentini, "L'ermetismo magico nel secolo XIII", in M. Folkerts and R. Lorch, ed., *Sic itur ad astra. Studien zur mittelalterlichen, insbesondere arabischen*, *Wissenschaftsgeschichte. Festschrift fur Paul Kunitzsch zum 70. Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), 409-50. For the *Ars notoria*, Elizabeth M. Butler, *Ritual Magic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949; rept. University Park, Pennsylvania: Penn State Univerity Press, 1998), 46-99, Michelle Camille, "Visual Art in Two Manuscripts of the Ars Notoria," in *Conjuring Spirits*, 110-39, Claire Fanger, "Plundering the Egyptian Treasure: John the Monk's *Book of Visions* and its relation to the Ars Notoria of Soloman," in *Conjuring Spirits*, 216-49.

the contents of the works available to William may need to be revised.[47] Other works also attest to an infusion of Kabalistic elements into Christian magic during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The *Liber visionum* (condemned in 1323) of John the Monk claimed to grant its possessor knowledge of the liberal arts and to summon good angels.[48]

2.2.4.2 William the Magician?

Did William himself dabble in magic as a student? In one autobiographical passage, in which he adopts an apparently confessional tone, he appears to admit that at one time he attempted to achieve visions through mystical, and perhaps magical, practices:

> I even thought that gradually by abstinence and by abstracting my soul from the solicitudes and delights that held it captive and submerged it in the inferior world, which is the sensible world, those things that were obscuring and clouding my soul might be broken by contrary habits, and the chains and bonds extinguished, and thus my free soul might evade them, and be able to break forth free and capable through its very self into the superior region, which is of the light.[49]

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[47] For the *Liber sacratus*, Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923-58), 2:279-89, Frank Klassen, "English Manuscripts of Magic 1300-1500: A Preliminary Survey," and Richard Kieckhefer, "The Devil's Contemplatives: The *Liber Juratus,* the *Liber Visionum*, and Christian Appropriation of Jewish Occultism," in *Conjuring Spirits*, 250-65.
[48] Claire Fanger, "Plundering the Egyptian Treasure," 216-49. Richard Kieckhefer, "The Devil's Contemplatives," 250-65. Nicholas Watson, "John the Monk's *Book of Visions of the Blessed and Undefiled Virgin Mary, Mother of God:* Two Versions of a Newly Discovered Ritual Magic Text," in *Conjuring Spirits*, 163-215.
[49] "Opinibar enim, quia paulatim abstinentia, et abstrahendo animam meam a sollicitudinibus et delectationibus, quae eam captivant, et demergunt in mundum inferiorum, qui est mundus sensibilium, abstergerentur ab anima illa, quae erant

William eventually soured to his experimentation, realized that it was not so easy to ascend to a divine state of consciousness and refocused his hopes on more conventional studies. His dabbling in any case seems to have injured neither his ecclesiastical nor his scholarly career. Perhaps it was not so uncommon among youths in the heady atmosphere of the university.[50]

2.2.5 From Philip Augustus to Louis IX

During the time when William studied at the University of Paris, the kings of France made significant territorial gains during William's school days, causing repercussions which would affect William keenly after he became bishop. In 1199, Richard I of England died unexpectedly while suppressing a rebellion in his continental possessions. Philip Augustus's fortunes turned at this moment, for whereas he had made little headway against the formidable Richard, he was to overwhelm Richard's brother and successor, John. John and his cousin Arthur of Brittany quarreled over their inheritances. During the wars and truces that followed, Philip used Arthur as a pawn, until Arthur fell into John's hands in 1202 and subsequently disappeared. Meanwhile, John had married Isabella, countess of Angoulême, a potentially useful strategic move but one marred when in the process

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obscurantia eam, et obtenebrantia, et per consuetudines contrarias dirumperentur, et consumerentur vincula illa, et laquei: et sic evaderet anima mea libera, et potens per semetipsam in regionem superiorem, quae lucis est, erumpere." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.20*,* 1:1056bE.

[50] Moody, "William of Auvergne," 6. Valois, *Guillaume,* 5-6. William of Auvergne, *De Universo* 2.3.20 1:1056aE-bF.

he ineptly alienated her previous betrothed Hugh de Lusignan, count of La Marche and Philip's vassal. In the war that followed, John invaded La Marche, and thus Philip gained yet another *causus belli* against John. Although Poitou changed hands several times, and the lands south of the Loire remained in Angevin hands, by 1205 Philip had torn the heart out of the Angevin continental possessions, having conquered Normandy and most of John's possessions north of the Loire. The French royal position was thus dramatically strengthened, the English one weakened.[51]

For the next few years, Philip continued his struggles against the weakened John and his ally Otto of Brunswick. In 1214, John attacked Philip through Aquitaine, while an alliance consisting of Otto, the English, and the counts of Flanders and Boulogne moved towards Paris. Philip Augustus' heir, Louis, defeated the southern advance, while Philip himself met the northern force at the Battle of Bouvines. Philip's resounding success solidified his control over his new territories and the new political order they represented, and it may have seemed that Capetian propaganda was correct in presenting it as a divine vindication.[52]

For a time, it seemed that the French string of victories might continue further. In 1215, a baronial revolt against John seemed to offer Philip the chance to make the French heir Louis the king of England with the backing of the English barons.

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[51] Baldwin, *Government of Philip Augustus*, 94-100, 191-95, Hallam and Everard, *Capetian France*, 169-71.
[52] Hallam and Everard, *Capetian France*, 169-71. Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus*, 196-219. See also Georges Duby, *Le dimanche de Bouvines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), trans. Catherine Tihanyi as *The Legend of Bouvines: War, Religion and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: Polity Press, 1990).

Unfortunately for the French, the unpopular John died the next year, leaving his infant son, the future Henry III, as heir to the English throne. The prospect of a weakened crown during a regency satisfied the English Barons' desire for independence, and they rallied against Louis when he landed in 1216. Louis withdrew following a losing battle in 1217, and the expansion of French royal power stopped at the Channel.[53]

2.2.6 The Albigensian Crusade

Meanwhile, equally significant events were taking place to the south of Paris, the outcome of which – expanded royal power and a changed relationship between heresy and the institutional Church -- would occupy much of William's future career. During William's time at the university, the institutional church's reaction to heresy underwent a major transformation. From 1184, the bull *Ab abolendam*, an agreement between Lucius III and Frederick Barbarossa, had set the standards for cooperation between secular and ecclesiastic authorities in the suppression of heresy. Around 1200, the papacy began to intervene even more forcefully in local efforts against dissident groups. The principal architect of papal strategy, the formidable, brilliant Innocent III (pope 1198 -1216), pursued both carrot and stick in a comprehensive, centrally-led campaign against heresy. The carrot involved drawing novel and potentially heretical groups back into the Church by accommodating some of their

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[53] Baldwin, *Government of Philip Augustus*, 332-42. Hallam and Everard, *Capetian France*, 171-72.

desires. This effort was attempted with the Waldensians but found its greatest success in the founding of the two mendicant orders, the Dominicans and Franciscans, who each combined the appeal of poverty and wandering preaching with orthodox doctrine. The stick would lead to the Albigensian Crusade, and indirectly to a major expansion of royal power into the regions of Languedoc. The Church acted to support orthodoxy by founding the University of Toulouse and appointing the first inquisitors to operate in the area.[54]

The popes desired forceful, perhaps military, suppression of the heretics and a reordering of society so that the Cathar base of power, in particular, would be eliminated. Thus, the popes lobbied local authorities to forcibly suppress heresy, and if they would not, worked to replace them with other candidates who would. This policy was crucial in the papal selection of Frederick II against Otto of Brunswick in the competition for the imperial crown -- a contest that was also resolved at the Battle of Bouvines. The bishops of Languedoc, drawn from local families and thus a part of the power and family networks that tolerated heresy, often lacked the zeal, the will, and perhaps the means to act. As a result, the papacy investigated and replaced many local bishops.

Secular authorities were necessarily involved as well. Innocent had identified Raymond VI, count of Toulouse, as the largest impediment to his plans. Although Catholic, Raymond showed little inclination to begin a major action against the Cathars and Cathar sympathizers in his lands. He knew that many of his vassals

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[54] Lambert, *Heresy*, 75-76, 99-114. *Cathars*, 92-130, 158-59.

supported the Cathars, and any such move would profoundly disrupt his own base of power. Until 1208, papal negotiators vainly attempted to pressure Raymond into action. When one of Raymond's vassals murdered the papal legate, perhaps without his overlord's knowledge, the pope declared Raymond's lands forfeit and declared a crusade against him. For the next two decades, war seesawed back and forth across Languedoc, between Raymond in and out of excommunication and the crusaders led by the adventurer Simon de Montfort, a knight from Northern France. Simon, a highly effective leader and warrior, made great gains in the first phase of the crusade, but after his death in 1222, his son Aimery lost most of them to a resurgent Raymond.[55]

The French kings entered the contests of the Midi only reluctantly. The Pope had repeatedly tried to interest Philip Augustus in the prospect of a military action in Languedoc. Philip initially refused; he was, after all, busy with the English. In 1219, less pressed by northern demands, Philip permitted his son Louis (who showed rather more enthusiasm) to undertake a small expedition, but soon recalled him. The year after his father's death in 1223, having conquered Poiters and La Rochelle from the English, Louis, now Louis VIII, proposed to undertake a crusade – if the church would agree to grant him the monies to conduct it. Pope Honorius III declined to meet Louis' initial terms, and so the expedition was delayed until the following year. Thereafter, Louis made rapid progress, his actions given additional legitimization

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[55] Hallam and Everard, *Capetian France*, 236-37. See also Jonathan Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978/1999), for a history of the crusade.

when Aimery de Montfort surrendered his mostly empty titles to the king. Just in the middle of this key conquest, in 1226, Louis died suddenly, leaving the throne to his young son and distributing his other conquests among his other sons as apanages, feudal grants that would revert to the crown if there was no direct heir.[56] The strategy probably reflects the custom of the Capetian kings. There is also some evidence that the kings of France were experimenting with various arrangements to balance the need to satisfy younger sons with long term dynastic considerations, for many of the grants stipulated that they would revert to the crown if the holders died without direct male heirs.[57]

The French royal family under Louis VIII had thus inherited the gains of the crusade, now having under its control areas of southern France almost equal to those won from England under Philip Augustus. Moreover, the feared and detested Cathar heresy had been dealt a major blow; in the wake of Albigensian Crusade, the papacy and the bishops began to experiment with empowering special agents, inquisitors, to find and prosecute those who held or had held heretical beliefs. The presence of inquisitors did as much as war to change the region's culture.[58] Although the institutional church had made major gains, the struggle against the Cathars would continue throughout the rest of William's adult life and, indeed, into the next century.

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[56] Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus*, 336-39. Hallam and Everard, *Capetian France*, 174-78, 236-39. Le Goff, *St. Louis*, 75-88.
[57] Charles T. Wood, *The French Apanages and the Capetian Monarchy, 1224-1378* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966).
[58] Lambert, *Heresy*, 144-53. See also James Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society: Power, Discipline, and Resistance in Languedoc* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1997).

Louis VIII's entry into the crusade in 1226 is widely seen as cementing the doom of the Cathars, but local lords in southern France continued to resist royal intrusion, probably more from political motives than religious ones, culminating in the large-scale rebellion of Raymond VII in 1244. Thus, a concerned observer such as William might well have continued to fear a resurgence of this deeply entrenched heresy.[59]

Louis' mother, Blanche of Castile, acted as regent until he officially came of age and continued to play a heavy role in the government thereafter. As Bishop of Paris after 1228, William was also to work closely with the young king and his mother. He lived, not in his episcopal palace, but in the king's, where he served as Blanche's confessor and was in close contact with Louis , perhaps nurturing the young king's characteristic piety.[60]

During Louis' minority and early reign, the young king and his mother faced several significant revolts among the higher nobility, often aided by the English King Henry III. One source of trouble was Peter Mauclerc, count of Brittany, who had inherited a claim to the throne through Louis VII's brother. Peter Mauclerc boycotted Louis' coronation, and intermittent war followed between Louis' forces and those of Peter and Henry III, lasting into the early 1230s. During approximately the same period, the restless Theobald of Champagne (king of Navarre after 1234) shifted

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[59] Hallam and Everard, *Capetian France*, 73-77.
[60] Valois, *Guillaume*, 145-54.

between supporting first Peter Mauclerc and then Blanche, whom he was sufficiently taken with to write poetry dedicated to her.[61]

Nor could Louis count as secure his control of lands taken in the Languedoc. At Louis VIII's death, military activity was still ongoing. Raymond VII, count of Toulouse, did not finally submit until 1229. The subsequent treaty, to which William also affixed his seal,[62] dealt leniently with the rebellious count. Raymond retained most of his county, but as part of the diplomatic arrangement his daughter and heir married into the Capetian house. The county was thus intended to pass to the Capetians when Raymond died. This settlement brought only temporary peace to the region, as Raymond attempted to change the order of succession and as other disaffected nobility in the region pressed their claims, either against Raymond or the French Crown directly. The king of neighboring Aragon, unhappy with Capetian presence in the region, supported several of these actions. In 1240 royal troops had first to suppress war between Raymond-Berengar of Provence and Raymond VII of Toulouse and then defeat an attempt by Raymond Trencavel to retake his lost lands in the Midi. [63]

2.2.7 The Friars

During the early decades of the thirteenth century, the Church institutionalized several religious movements as a new form of order. The mendicant orders, most

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[61] Hallam and Everard, *Capetian France,* 267-71. Le Goff, *St. Louis*, 99-107.
[62] Valois*, Guillaume*, 145.
[63] Hallam and Everard, *Capetian France,* 271-75. Le Goff, *St. Louis*, 107-8, 149-56.

prominently represented by the Dominicans and Franciscans, adopted the poverty and obedience of monks without the requirement for strict enclosure. Thus they differed from both the "secular" clergy of parish priests and bishops and the "regular" clergy, monks who lived under a rule in a fixed location.

The Dominicans arose specifically to combat the heresies of the Cathars and the Waldensians. In 1203 a preaching mission from Spain, consisting of Diego of Osma and the future St. Dominic, traveled to the Languedoc. To enhance their appeal, they adopted the wandering, ascetic lifestyle of their opponents. Dominic soldiered on after Osma's death and eventually won the approval of Innocent III in 1215 for the Order of Preachers. The future St. Francis' story began very differently. The son of a merchant, he dramatically renounced his father's wealth and adopted the apostolic life of preaching and wandering poverty. Innocent III likewise approved Francis' mission in 1209. Unlike previous experimental orders, the Dominicans and Franciscans had early success and expanded rapidly into the major cities of Europe. The first Franciscans reached St. Denis in 1219, the first Dominicans Paris in 1217.

The establishment of the two orders soon changed the distribution of power and responsibility in every parish in the western Church. From the perspective of the secular clergy, the friars' mission intruded on their established privileges. In confession, burials and preaching, they duplicated many of the functions of the secular clergy, but were outside the authority of an area's bishop. Additional legislation attempted to restrict the friars intrusion into these areas but it was not

always effective. Likewise, the new orders attracted substantial donations that might otherwise have gone to traditional cloistered monasteries.[64]

2.3 William at the Cathedral

Following or near the end of his studies, William secured his position as a canon in the cathedral of Notre Dame, where he first entered the records in 1223. Assuming he began his studies around 1200, William would have been in Paris for over twenty years. Two years later we find him teaching theology, meaning that he would have been at least thirty-five. He had also come to the attention of the then pope, Honorius III, who used him as an agent to examine and reform monasteries within France in 1224 and 1225.[65] William's prominent position, evident gifts, and previous service to the papacy doubtless aided his rise to Bishop three years later.

2.3.1 Election as Bishop

In 1227, Barthélemy, Bishop of Paris, died, setting in motion a sequence of events that would result in William's becoming his successor, bishop of one of the most populous cities in Europe, and prominent advisor to the young Louis IX. The early thirteenth century was a time of change in ecclesiastical structure and administration. In his move to become bishop, William exploited changing canon law and growing papal power to further his political ambitions.

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[64] C. H. Lawrence, *The Friars*: *The Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society* (London: Longman, 1994), 26-88, 102-26.
[65] Valois, *Guillaume,* 6-7.

During the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, a number of factors had contributed to the regularization and centralization of church authority under the papacy. Building on the successes of the Gregorian reform, twelfth-century popes increasingly articulated a view of the papacy that not only placed the pope in a monarchical superiority over other bishops, but over the kings and emperors of Christendom as well.[66] William exploited these trends in pursuing his own candidacy for bishop, especially the way in which the papacy was increasingly inclined to interfere in the "free" elections determined by the autonomous decision of cathedral chapters supposedly secured during the Gregorian reform. In the proceedings that followed Barthélemy's death, the chapter failed to agree on a candidate. One of the canons claimed inspiration, selecting the chanter. When William objected to this procedure, claiming it had not fulfilled the requirements of canon law, the chanter withdrew his candidacy, but his party then nominated the dean instead. In response, William appealed to Pope Gregory and traveled to Rome to pursue the case. Gregory reserved to himself the right to appoint the new Bishop, and perhaps unsurprisingly, nominated William in 1228, who presumably had opposed the other candidates in order to secure just such an end.[67]

The presence of the university in Paris, and William's training in that institution, must have been a factor in his selection. Brenet suggests that Gregory chose William for his background in the university, seeking through him to encourage

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[66] Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 182-88, 205-236, 413-451.
[67] Valois, *Guillaume*, 7-19.

the university's growth and studies and to provide a moderating influence against the more radical strains of Aristotelianism.[68] As a creature totally dependent on the pope for his appointment, William would also have been a papal client very close to the French court. Even if the bishop of Paris was subordinate to the archbishop of Sens in the ecclesiastic hierarchy, he was still the most physically proximate to important events in the court. Thus the greatly enhanced prestige of the kings of France also dictated the need for a politically reliable candidate to fill the see of their capital city, and William's work on the previous pope's behalf probably also furthered his case.

2.3.2 University Revolt and the Friars

William's first major test as a bishop occurred during the student riots of 1229. Town and gown conflicts could be quite violent in Paris in the early thirteenth century. As young men, often adolescents, away from home and independent of traditional rural and familial social controls, some students took advantage of the city's natural opportunities for trouble. The resulting tensions between townsfolk and students of different regions could on occasion boil over into widespread violence. Jurisdictional conflicts between royal and clerical authority hampered effective law enforcement against rioters. As nominal clerics, the students were exempt from royal justice, subject to church courts instead. In times of crisis, therefore, the royal soldiery who were the sole effective keepers of the peace could do little to stop an

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[68]Jean-Baptiste Brenet, introduction to Guillaume d'Auverne, *De L'Âme (VII, 1-9)* trans., ed., notes by Jean-Baptiste Brenet (Paris: Vrin, 1998), 7.

uprising by students. The seminal test case had occurred in 1200, when following the Provost of Paris' suppression of a student tavern riot, the Pope affirmed the privileges of the university and condemned the offending official to perpetual imprisonment.[69]

The incident in 1229 began as a tavern dispute, which soon escalated into a riot between students and townsfolk. Ignoring the privileges ceded to the university by Phillip Augustus and confirmed under the name of Louis IX the year before, the regent Blanche of Castile used the royal Provost to restore order and prosecuted the students in secular court. In response, the masters of the university withdrew from Paris in protest. The university was their guild, and in theory they could relocate it elsewhere or dissolve it entirely. In the two years it took to resolve the dispute, various kings and towns competed for the displaced students. In the end, the University of Paris proved too important to the papacy and the kings of France to allow them to tolerate a permanent dissolution. Louis paid an indemnity and reconfirmed (yet again) the university's privileges, including their immunities. William's future relations with the university reflected its growing power to act independently of its bishop, especially in awarding the license to teach, a source of contention between the bishop, his chancellor and the university masters.[70]

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[69] Rashdall, *Universities*, 294-98.
[70] Recounted in Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. Henry Richards Luard (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1825-91; reprinted Wisebaden: Kraus, 1964), 3:166-69. Moody, "William of Auvergne," 5. Rashdall, *Universities,* 1:334-43. Valois, *Guillaume,* 47-55.

2.3.3 The Friars in the University

The clash between the university and the crown also revealed another tension in early thirteenth-century society – that caused by the spread of the new mendicant orders. During the brief time in which the university was disbanded, William appointed or confirmed several mendicants as teachers of theology, supporting them in their efforts to gain acceptance in the face of opposition from the secular clergy.

In 1231, the mendicant orders were scarcely two decades old, and their rapid spread represented an enormous success in the Church's efforts to channel and direct the apostolic forms of piety away from heresy. Both orders had need of theological education. From the first, the Dominicans, originating within the church hierarchy, aimed to become a wholly orthodox answer to heresy. As such, they early concentrated on the doctrinal training necessary to debate with heretics. The Franciscans developed a tradition of scholarship more reluctantly, as Francis' piety had emphasized emotion and mystical experience over formal learning, but their mission came to require it.

Working to promote the power of the bishop over his former colleagues in the university, William took advantage of the secular masters' absence to grant the first chair in theology to a Dominican, Raymond of Cremona. When they returned, the secular masters viewed with distrust the intrusion of the new orders into what had previously been their preserve, and, in particular, objected to the fact that the mendicants had not supported the boycott, but rather had continued to teach. Some twenty years later, the simmering difficulties caused by presence of the mendicants

would lead to another constitutional crisis for the university. For the moment, William had aided the friars to an important victory by helping them break into the prestigious theological faculty.[71]

2.4 High Politics

As bishop, William strongly supported king and pope. In 1230, he assisted Louis IX in diplomacy in Brittany. William helped conduct the ceremonies surrounding the installation of the Crown of Thorns in the St. Chapelle, which Louis had purchased from the financially-strapped Latin Emperor of Constantinople, and establish a feast-day in its commemoration. He lent his presence at important events. At the king's marriage to Marguerite of Provence in 1238, William was part of the great crowd of ecclesiastic and secular dignitaries.[72] In 1237, the chapters of Sens, Orléans, and Auxerre asked William to intercede with Louis on their behalf because of his influence with the king.[73] William supported the royal policy favoring the mendicant orders, whom Louis IX employed in his churches and administration. Once when Blanche was preparing a pilgrimage to St. James of Compostella, William persuaded her that the money would be better spent on the Dominicans.[74]

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[71] Lawrence, *Friars,* 127-31. Rashdall, *Universities*, 370-97. Valois, *Guillaume*, 53-57.
[72] Le Goff, *St. Louis*, 128-37.
[73] Valois, *Guillaume* 145-47.
[74] Le Goff, *St. Louis*, 140-48, 746-50. Valois, *Guillaume*, 148-9, based on Stephen of Bourbon, *Anecdotes historiques légends et apologues tirés du recueil inédit*, ed. A. Lecoy de la Marche (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1877), 389, n. 1.

William continued to serve as an important papal agent. In 1229, William sent money to aid the Pope's efforts against Frederick II – but no armed troops. In 1231 he represented the pope in peace talks between France and England. In 1238, Gregory IX reproached William for letting the king's officers intrude upon the grounds of Notre Dame.[75]

The early 1240s saw multiple sources of discontent combine forces in a serious attempt to reverse Capetian gains. In 1241, Hugh of Lusignan, whose wife, Isabella of Angoulême, was also widow of John I of England, led resistance against Louis's brother Alfonso's investiture as count of Poitiers. By 1242, just about everyone with a grievance against Louis had thrown in his support: the Emperor Frederick II, and the kings of Aragon and Castile, but most seriously Raymond VII of Toulouse and Henry III of England, who landed an expeditionary force. Louis IX soon brought Hugh of Lusignan to heel and forced the English king into retreat before turning towards Raymond. Matters ended in 1243 with Raymond's further submission and a treaty with the English.[76]

It was only after this decisive show of royal strength that Louis' inheritances were definitively secured. Yet rather than enjoying a period of untroubled consolidation, France faced further disaster. In 1244, Louis fell ill and almost died. William was one of those who attended the king on his sickbed. On recovering, Louis took the cross, committing himself to a dangerous and dubious adventure in the

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[75] Moody, "William of Auvergne," 3. Valois, *Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 79.
[76] Hallam and Everard, *Capetian France,* 271-75. LeGoff, *St. Louis*, 149-57.

eastern Mediterranean.[77] William Chester Jordan argues that in his pursuit of crusade, Louis (perhaps unconsciously) sought autonomy from his mother. Blanche had made most of the major decisions in Louis' adult life, and although the two were close, this must have been somewhat stifling, leading Louis to form his own identity by insisting upon a socially and religiously approved venture which his mother opposed.[78]

This move did not please his mother -- or his bishop.[79] Crusading was a dangerous venture, and one that placed not only the king's person but the future of the kingdom at risk, as Louis had no son to accept the throne. Matthew Paris reports that William tried to convince the king to change his mind and listed the many dangers besetting the realm. He notes: "The lord Pope, knowing the necessity of your realm and the debility of your body, will dispense with your vows."[80] Blanche adds: "It excuses you sufficiently, my son, that you were sick, deprived of your reason, dull in

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[77] Matthew Paris, *Chronica Major*, 4: 397-98

[78] William Chester Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade: A Study in Rulership* (Princeton: Princeton, NJ, 1979), esp. 3-13.

[79] *Récits d'un ménestrel de reims au treizième siècle*, vol. 35, ed. Natalis de Wailly (Paris: Librarie Renouard, 1876), 35:189-95. Trans. Robert Levine, *A Thirteenth-Century Minstrel's Chronicle* 35 (Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 89. Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, 5:3-4, 5:312, 354. Valois, *Guillaume,* 150-51. See also the Confessor of the Queen Marguerite, *Vie de St. Louis*, in *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, vol. 20 (Paris: L'Imprimerie royale, 1840), 66-67.

[80] "Benigne dispensabit nobiscum dominus Papa, sciens regni necessitatem et corporis tui debilitatem." Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, 5:3.

all your faculties, and either close to death or out of your mind."[81] To this, Louis replied by surrendering the cross. The elation that followed was only temporary, for he immediately asked that it be given again, saying: "My friends, surely now I am not lacking in sanity or sense, nor am I sick. Now I demand that you give me back my cross. He from whom nothing is hid knows that nothing edible will enter into my mouth until I have it back."[82] Thus, to the dismay of his foremost counselors, Louis demonstrated his commitment to the crusade even at the potential expense of his realm's future stability. William would see Louis depart but would die before his safe return.

2.4.1 Anecdotes about William

Several figures associated with St. Louis' court left later anecdotes recalling William's days at court. In them, William appears as a clever man, short of temper, who allays doubts and defuses potentially troublesome situations with adroit words.[83] Steven of Bourbon recounts several incidents in which William displays his wit in dealing with figures of the court. In one story, the Chancellor Jean de Beaumont asks

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[81] "Excusat te, fili mi, sufficienter, quae tibi evenit in infirmitate tua, rationis priviato, sensum omnium hebetatio, immo etiam vel ipsa mors, vel mentis alienato." Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, 5:4.

[82] "Amici mei, profecto nunc non sum expers rationis aut sensus, non mei impos aut infirmus. Reposco nunc mihi reddi crucem meam. Novit autem Qui nihil ignorat, non itrabit in os meum quicquam mandibile, donec ea reconsignetur." Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, 5:4.

[83] Jacques Berlioz, "La voix de l'évêque. Guillaume d'Auvergne dans les *Exempla* (xiiie-xive siècle)" in *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne (+1249): Études réunies*, ed. Franco Morenzoni and Jean-Yves Tilliette (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 9-34.

William why he keeps a jar of water beside his excellent wine at table, if he never mixes it. William replies that the wine serves him the same purpose as Jean serves at the court of the king. If the spirits of other courtiers run too high, Jean silences them. Likewise, if William's wine goes to his head, he can drink the water to counteract it.[84] William's temper is in evidence in Stephen's anecdotes. In one, William loses his temper with a cleric. The cleric reminds his superior that he owes him patience. William replies that he never promised to pay it immediately (*non ad solvendum modo*).[85]

Joinville depicts a similar William, able to soothe a troubled soul with his wit. A master of theology comes to William, confessing his doubts about the faith. William asks him who would win more honors, a lord who held a castle in the safe interior of France, or one who held it against the king's English enemies on the border. The one who held the more dangerous posting, replies the master. The same with your soul, says William, and the master departs reassured.[86] When St. Louis' first child was born, members of the court feared to tell the king that it was a daughter, not the hoped-for son. William broke this news to St. Louis with his customary humor, telling the king that today he had gained a kingdom. If the child had been a son, the king would have had to grant the new prince lands out of the crown's. But since the child was a daughter, the king would marry her away to a

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[84] Valois, *Guillaume*, 147-52. Steven of Bourbon, *Anecdotes,* 388, n.1.
[85] Valois, *Guillaume*, 147. Steven of Bourbon, *Anecdotes,* 388, n.1.
[86] Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis* 1.9, ed. Natalis de Wailly (Paris: Librairie de firmin Didot Fréres, Fils et Cie, 1874), 27-28. trans. by Natalis de Wailly and Joan Evans as *History of St. Louis* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), 13-14.

prince or king, thus gaining a kingdom for the family.[87] These anecdotes probably reflect in part William's actual personality, and in part the needs of the stories for a character to deliver the perfect *bon mot.*

2.5 Learning, Censure and the Cure of Souls

William was a prolific scholar as well as a bishop and teacher. His intellectual legacy consists of some dozen treatises on religious and philosophical subjects. Many were intended to form part of a larger work, the *Magisterium Divinale*, an encyclopedia intended to provide all necessary information on divine matters, and supported by philosophical proofs. He also left a body of sermons in several manuscript collections.

In his writings, to be discussed in detail in subsequent chapters, William buttresses a largely traditional "Augustinian" theology with selective use of the new Aristotle, attendant commentaries, and related scientific and magical translations. He adapts Aristotelian concepts and terminology for his own usage, but often in idiosyncratic ways that reflect a world-view that remains largely Neoplatonic and Augustinian. This confusion is exacerbated by William's circuitous and rambling style of writing which presents his points without the clear order and argumentation that marks the *summas* of his contemporaries, and there are infrequent but frustrating occasions where one cannot easily tell which of several alternative explanations he

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[87] Valois, *Guillaume*, 149-50. Steven of Bourbon, *Anecdotes,* 389, n. 1.

prefers. William also shows great interest in natural science, drawing extensively on magical, experimental, and hermetic works.

William's writings also represent a transitional stage in the development of the scholastic style. The *Magisterium* resembles later theological summae in its scope and approach, if not in the details of its presentation. In particular, the *quaestiones* format of question, objection, support, and response that would come to dominate later medieval theological writing had already emerged in the writings of William's contemporary Alexander of Hales (d. 1245). Although some traces of it can be seen, especially in *De universo*, William does not use *quaestiones* with any consistency or rigor. Moody speculates (not very convincingly) that the difference results from Alexander's intention that his works be used in the schools, whereas William did not.[88]

2.5.1 Heresy

William's theological and philosophical works reflect the larger intellectual trends of the thirteenth century; his exposition of the spiritual universe results from a desire to define orthodoxy and apply it to overcome deviance. R. I. Moore argues

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[88] For introductions to William's thought, see Gilson, *La philosophie du moyen age,* 414-427. Knowles, *Evolution*, 208-29. Stephen P. Marrone, *William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste: New Ideas of Truth in the Early Thirteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 27-38. Moody, "William of Auvergne." Roland Teske, "William of Auvergne and Plato's World of Ideas," *Traditio* 53 (1998), 117-29; and "William of Auvergne's Debt to Avicenna," in *Avicenna and his Heritage: Acts of the International Colloquium Leuven—Louvain-la-Neuve, September 8- September 11, 1999*, ed. Jules Janssens and Daniel De Smet (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 156-70.

that many social and intellectual trends in the high Middle Ages resulted in the "formation of a persecuting society," in which authorities began to systematically prosecute social, intellectual and religious deviance.[89] William directed his intellectual gifts and his authority as bishop to suppressing heresy, whose challenge he felt strongly. His *De universo* opens with an attack on Catharism. This section probably began as a separate treatise, and may reflect the anxiety he felt about the Cathar presence in southern France. Likewise, the *De legibus* opens with an extended justification of the prosecution of heretics.[90] As bishop of Paris, William actively issued condemnations of heretical doctrines and practices, drawing upon the prestige of the university to support his actions. In 1235, William and the masters discussed the practice of holding multiple benefices simultaneously. In 1241/4, they together prepared the condemnation of ten heretical propositions dealing with such matters as the procession and status of the Holy Spirit, the nature and the fall of angels, and the disposition of the soul after death. The cooperation between William and the university may have laid the ground-work for the university to issue condemnations itself, one of its most important functions as a guardian of orthodoxy in later years.[91]

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[89] R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987). On the Capetians in particular, see Robert E. Lerner, "The Uses of Heterodoxy: The French Monarchy and Unbelief in the Thirteenth Century," *French Historical Studies* 4:2 (Autumn 1965): 189-202.
[90] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 1:1:1-10, 593-604, *De legibus* 1, 1, 1:27bA-29aB. Roland J. Teske, "William of Auvergne and the Manichees," *Traditio* 48 (1993): 63-75.
[91] Luca Bianchi, "Gli articoli censurati nel 1241/1244 et la loro influenza da Bonaventura a Gerson," in *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 155-71. Moody,

2.5.2 Condemnation of the Talmud

William also participated in the condemnation of the Talmud in 1248, an incident that reveals the ways in which church and state called upon the learned men of the schools to judge and censure dissenters in a society that increasingly insisted on religious conformity, even to the extent of revoking traditional protections for its sister religion. Henceforth, Christian theologians sat in judgment of the beliefs and practices of Judaism.

Previously, the Church had upheld the Jews' right to practice their religion. Christian states since the late Roman Empire had typically allowed Jewish worship within their borders. In early medieval kingdoms, the Jews occasionally suffered various legal disabilities, but no more. (Visigothic Spain was an exception to the typical pattern for the Early Middle Ages; it harshly persecuted Jews within its territory until the Muslim conquest in 711.) Christian popular opinion seems to have shifted against the Jews before official doctrine or policy. In the enthusiasm accompanying the first crusade, gathering knights, soldiers and hangers-on attacked several Jewish communities, first in Rouen and then, especially, in what is now Germany. Bishops and lords tried to prevent these massacres with mixed success,

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"William of Auvergne," 5, esp. n. 5. J. M. M. H. Thijssen, *Censure and Heresy at the University of Paris, 1200-1400* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998). The condemnation of John Scottus Eriugena took place in 1225, under William's predecessor.

and popes vainly reissued bulls forbidding the murder and forced conversion of Jews.[92]

The late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries saw an increase in anti-Semitism reflected in popular culture and embodied in royal and ecclesiastical policies. Many authorities staged forced debates and compulsory sermons to demonstrate the supposed errors of Judaism and encourage individual Jews to convert. Lateran IV mandated special clothing for Jews, among other disabilities. The legal status of Jews, as non-Christians, was varied and vulnerable and often directly dependent on the king. They were subject to arbitrary taxation (or "takings").[93] By Louis IX's time, anti-Jewish ideas, which opposed Judaism as a religion, and anti-Semitic ideas, which attacked Jews as a minority community, had permeated learned religious culture, and religious fervor and devotion often found expression in anti-Semitic themes. Several of the more repulsive legends of the Middle Ages originated in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries – for example, the blood-libel. As Cohen argues, the new mendicant orders took up this anti-Semitic strain of piety and may have been responsible for some of its spread.[94] The forced

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[92] Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 19-32. Richard Landes, "What Happens when Jesus Doesn't Come: Jewish and Christian Relations in Apocalyptic Times," in *Millennial Violence: Past Present and Future*, ed. Jeffrey Kaplan (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 243-74. Gavin Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemetism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 63-99. Moore, *Formation*, 27-29.
[93] Gavin Langmuir, *Definition*, 167-94. Moore, *Formation*, 29-45.
[94] Cohen, *Friars and the Jews*, 19-99. Irven M. Resnick, "Medieval Roots of the Myth of Jewish Male Menses," *Harvard Theological Review* 93.3 (July 2000): 241-63. Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New

debates which formed a part of new efforts to convert the Jews seem to have inflamed Christian opinion against the Jews. Joinville recounts a story Louis IX told him. A knight happens to arrive at a monastery where such a debate is scheduled. Speaking to the most learned Jew present, the knight asks the rabbi if he believes in the Virgin; when the Jew replies in the negative, the knight strikes him dead. The king gives the following moral to the story: "… no man, unless he be a very good clerk, should argue with them; but the layman, when he heareth the Christian law reviled, should not defend it but by his sword, wherewith he should pierce the vitals of the reviler as far as it will go."[95] Louis IX's rationalization of the knight's murder of the Jew illustrates to what extent these public, staged "debates" were open in their expected outcome. That the Virgin forms the flash-point of contention suggests a confluence of honor and sexuality with religion, and, indeed, Marian devotion often coincided with anti-Jewish feeling, as the poems of Gautier de Coinci attest. The growth of anti-Semitism can also be measured by the fact that, far from considering the tale of the Jew's murder a slur on Louis IX's sense of justice, Joinville clearly considered the tale an edifying one that was fit for the court of Louis IX's grandson, Philip IV.[96]

Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and its Relation to Modern Antisemitism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943).

[95] "[N]ulz, se il n'est tres bon clers, ne doit disputer à aus; mais li hom lays, quant il ot mesdire de la loy crestienne, ne doit pas desfendre la loy crestienne, ne mais de l'espée, de quoy il doit donner parmi le ventre dedens, tant comme elle y peut entrer." Joinville, *History of St. Louis* 1.10, 29-31. Quote on page 30. Translation from Natalis de Wailly and Joan Evans, *History of St. Louis*, 15-16.

[96] Gautier de Coinci, *Les Miracles de Notre Dame*, ed. V. Frederick Koenig (Geneva: Librarie Droz, 1955-70). Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews*, 45-47 for an

In France, Philip-Augustus had pursued a shifting policy that reflected both popular anti-Judaism and a desire to financially exploit his Jewish subjects. In 1182, only two years into his reign, he expelled the Jews from royal territory. He later readmitted them in 1198 but regulated and certified their loans and exacted special taxes from them. After his conquest of Normandy and other possessions, the number of Jews adversely affected by his harsh and unpredictable policies increased in proportion to the territory he had won. As a result, formerly prosperous Jewish communities found themselves economically weakened and forced into precarious dependence on the crown. Louis VIII's short reign (1223-26) witnessed another taking (or *captio*) in a document known as the *stabilimentum*, confiscating and nullifying loans for his profit and also signifying an important change in royal policy. The king refused any longer to certify or police the repayment of loans, so distasteful had they become to popular opinion and piety. Although his conquests in the south brought the Jewish populations there under his rule, he died before he could set any firm policy there. Blanche of Castile and Louis IX had recourse to the *captio* once again in 1228, but more important was a ban preventing the Jews from charging interest. In 1234, regulations of pawn-broking followed, again reflecting the king's desire to prevent usury.[97]

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analysis of Gautier. Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 7-39, for the connection between Marian devotion and anti-Judaism.

[97] Yoram Barzel, "Confiscation by the Ruler: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Moneylending in the Middle Ages," *Journal of Law and Economics* 35:1 (April 1992): 1-13. William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews*: *From Phillip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania

The condemnatory Christian interest in the Talmud of 1240 constituted a new and largely unprecedented line of attack on contemporary Jewish beliefs and institutions. True, some hundred years previously, Peter the Venerable had attacked the Talmud, but his works on the subject seem to have attracted scant notice within the wider Christian world. In 1239, a Jewish convert to Christianity named Nicholas Donin, who later joined the Dominican Order, approached the pope, who professed to be shocked by the revelation that the books used in Jewish worship allegedly contained anti-Christian blasphemy and propaganda. Donin's word was perhaps suspect, for his conversion had inflamed disputes with his former community, and he seems to have been fired with a passionate dislike for his former religion. Donin went to the pope, who sent letters to Christian kings and centers of learning urging them to investigate the matter. Most ignored the letters, but Louis decided to act and held a trial of the Talmud to which leading rabbis were summoned. The university theologians and Bishop William participated in rendering a condemnation of the indicted books, which were subsequently burned. The affected Jews appealed to the pope and eventually lost. In 1248, William, as bishop of Paris, officially issued the ecclesiastical condemnation.[98] The condemnation of the Talmud and William's

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Press, 1989), 3-136. Aaron Kirschenbaum, "Jewish and Christian Theories of Usury in the Middle Ages," *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, n.s. 75:3 (January 1985): 270-89. Gavin Langmuir, *Towards a Definition*, 137-94.

[98] See the recent collection of essays in Gilbert Dahan and Élie Nicholas, ed., *Le brûlement du Talmud a Paris: 1242-4* (Paris Les Éditions du Cerf, 1999), esp. Yvonne Friedman, "Anti-Talmudic Invective from Peter the Venerable to Nicholas Donin (1144-1244)," 171-89, Jacques Le Goff, "St. Louis et les juifs," 39-46; André Tulier, "La condemnation du Talmud par les maîtres universitaires parisiens, ses

participation in it thus reflect the thirteenth-century elites increasing intolerance of deviance and the sharpened intellectual and governmental tools that enabled them to pursue it.

2.6 Crusade

The last years of William's life coincided with his king's preparations for his dubious crusading venture. From 1244 to 1248, Louis prepared meticulously. He negotiated with foreign powers to secure participation and general peace, but these efforts floundered on the ongoing conflict between the papacy and Frederick II and on the English king Henry III's unwillingness to forgo his project of reconquering lost Angevin territories during Louis' absence. Pressing on regardless, Louis undertook a major reform of royal administration, partly a method for securing the necessary revenues but also perhaps out of a spiritual desire to set his kingdom into proper order before departing. Thus, in 1247, Louis appointed *enquêteurs* to make an audit of his kingdom, seeking out corruption among his officials.

Louis departed for crusade just prior to William's death, sailing away to an uncertain fate. The anxieties which Blanche of Castile and William shared proved to have been well-founded. The crusade turned into a disaster, although not a total one.

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causes et ses conséquences politiques et idéologiques," 59-78. Also, Jeremy Cohen, "Scholarship and Intolerance," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 592-613. Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews,* 137-41. Le Goff, *St. Louis*, 804-6. Lesley Smith, "William of Auvergne and the Jews," in *Christianity and Judaism: Papers Read at the 1991 Summer Meeting and the 1992 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Diana Wood (London: Blackwell, 1992), 107-17.

Louis' army succumbed to dysentery, of which Louis himself nearly died. The Egyptians captured the king and threatened him with execution before finally ransoming him for 400,000 bezants.[99] Still, Louis survived the experience and eventually returned to France. The gains of his early reign, the pacification of restless barons, and the overhaul of the royal administration were not swept away in the crisis of another minority, but became the foundation of a long and successful reign that was to last another 20 years. William never lived to see the stability of St. Louis' later rule; he experienced only the political uncertainty and anxiety that preceded it.

2.7 Conclusion

In an age of change, William contributed his intellectual gifts and authority towards the creation of a new political and religious order that would defend what he considered to be the essential features of orthodoxy. He supported the central authorities of king and pope against local rivals. In seeking and accepting papal appointment as bishop of Paris, he undercut the authority of the chapter of Notre Dame. His struggles with the university reveal a desire to subordinate the masters to his authority. As a supporter of Louis IX, he participated in the formulation of policies designed to retain the restless territories Philip Augustus and Louis VIII had added to the French crown.

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[99] Hallam and Everard, *Capetian France*, 275-88. Jordan, *Crusade*, esp. 71-77. Le Goff, *St. Louis*, 181-93.

William also directed the power of his office and his thought against those religious and intellectual movements that he felt constituted a threat to the established Church and her doctrines. His writings incorporate the strengths of newly-translated philosophical material but also argue forcefully against the errors he found there and in the teachings of groups such as the Cathars. As bishop, theologian, and king's councilor, he justified and advocated the use of force against those who held beliefs that he and other theologians had determined were incorrect. The tighter social control and hierarchical political government he supported found expression in unprecedented attempts to control or destroy dissidents. The Albigensian Crusade and the inquisitorial investigations that followed represented the use of force and legal coercion against Christian heretics. The increased hostility towards Jews manifested itself in Louis IX's economic legislation and, perhaps most frighteningly for those it targeted, in the burning of the Talmud, where Christian scholars and rulers sat in judgment over the practices of a rival religion. Such recourse to fire and sword as William advocated heralded a major change in the mentalities of Europe's elites, and it is to the world-views he encountered, adopted and transformed that we will turn in the subsequent chapters.

3.0. A UNIVERSE FILLED WITH POWERS

This chapter will examine the spectrum of beliefs within whose context William constructed his demonology. Medieval conceptions of demons formed part of a much larger spectrum of beliefs about the natural and spiritual worlds. The Christians of thirteenth-century Western Europe believed that they lived in a world filled with mysterious forces: the acts of the Christian God, saints and angels, the whims and caprices of demons and less-identifiable spirits, the malice of sorcerers, the dubious powers of cunning-folk, the strange properties of gems, herbs and animals, and the influence of the stars. These beliefs stemmed from many sources -- ancient paganism, folklore, scientific theory, and Christian religion. Scholastic thinkers such as William attempted to categorize and explain (or explain away) these various phenomena according to the powers that supposedly produced them: divine miracles, demonic trickery, or natural marvels. Their explanations permitted educated men to believe in the same phenomena as everyone else, but there remained a tension, latent or overt, between the Christian world view, contemporary science, and at least a part of the vast range of natural and supernatural beliefs present at every level of society.

3.1 Definitions

A note on terminology is necessary here to avoid confusion. I have chosen to follow the lead of Richard Kieckhefer, who forcefully argues that historians should

restrict their use of words from a particular culture to definitions that at least some members of the culture would recognize. As he notes, the word "magic" is essentially the same as the Latin *magia* or *magica*, and when discussing the Middle Ages, it should only be used to designate practices that medieval persons themselves would consider magic. Medieval theories possessed a "specific rationality" -- a kind of internal logic-- based on causation. Scholastic thinkers distinguished sharply between superficially similar miracles and magic acts because of the great importance their theories placed on the ontological and moral differences between them.[1] Thus I define "magic" as a process which purports to produce unusual phenomena via natural causes and/or via the action of spirits. "Miracles," by contrast, purport to produce unusual phenomena via divine intervention. Although these definitions closely match William's own and those of his contemporaries, I may have to stretch them from time to time to better reflect medieval usages.

Other historians and anthropologists often employ the word *magic* formally, to describe cross-cultural phenomena. They are often concerned with how one can distinguish "magic" from "religion" on the one hand and "science" on the other. Certain older definitions, such as Frazer's distinction between magic as coercion and religion as petition of supernatural powers, are now generally considered outmoded,

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[1] Karen Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 71-131. Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 8-17, and "The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic," *The American Historical Review,* 99.3 (June 1994): 813-836.

but other more advanced formal and cross-cultural definitions of magic are still in use.

Of particular relevance is the school of historiography represented by Keith Thomas in his seminal *Religion and the Decline of Magic* and more recently by Valerie Flint in her *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe,* both of whom favor universal definitions of magic, divorced from the cultural conceptions of its practitioners in a given society. Historians of this school are able to speak of the "magic" of Church rituals without logical contradiction. A ritual such as the mass or the blessing of a field is magical because of its formal qualities, whether or not the actor himself would categorize them so. Their approach usefully draws attention to the similarity and competition between the official "magic" of the clergy and the unofficial "magic" of sorcerers, and indeed, it is this aspect of medieval and early modern culture which most interests Flint and Thomas. Although I do not employ their terminology, I still hope to retain the insights Flint and Thomas bring to relationships between magic, religion, and science. [2]

3.2 Nature and Supernature in Thirteenth-Century Thought

The scholastic thinkers of William's day, challenged by the influx of Aristotelian texts, applied themselves diligently to the scientific and theological

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[2] Valerie I. J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Medieval Europe (*Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 3-12. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England (*New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), esp. 1-77, 252-79.

questions provoked by the vast variety of medieval beliefs. Their resulting system purported to explain the natural and supernatural worlds and thus to define the parameters of acceptable belief for the entire populace.

The emerging consensus of thirteenth-century scholars sharply differentiated between phenomena caused by nature and those caused directly by God. This distinction itself represented a mental revolution, breaking from earlier conceptions of the world such as those of Augustine. Thinkers in those earlier centuries stressed the immanence and purpose of the divine in nature, as with Augustine who spoke of seeds God had planted in creation that could then blossom into wonders. Thus miracles seemed almost "natural." By contrast, William and his contemporaries conceived of miracles as the intrusion of divine power into the set course of nature: henceforth, miracles were supernatural exceptions to the mechanistic, Aristotelian order of the universe. As a result, the difference between the miraculous and the ordinary was more a matter of theological perspective than an objective difference between the phenomena so labeled.[3]

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[3] Per Binde, "Nature in Roman Catholic Tradition," *Anthropological Quarterly* 74:1 (January 2001): 15-27. Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature: 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 21-133. M-D. Chenu, "Nature and man – the Renaissance of the Twelfth Century" in *La théologie au douzième siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 1957), translated as *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, ed. and trans. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 1-48. For a general overview of the medieval sense of wonder, see Caroline Walker Bynum, "Wonder," *The American Historical Review* 102.1 (1997): 1-26.

Indeed, William had inherited a conception of the "supernatural" quite similar to our own. "Supernatural" literally means "above nature."[4] In an attempt to craft a universal terminology for the study of religion, the sociologist Rodney Stark defines "supernatural" as "forces or entities beyond or outside nature that can suspend, alter, or ignore physical forces."[5] This phrasing suits the medieval definition of the word as well as the modern. When William says "*gratia supra naturam*," we could translate it either as "grace is above nature" or "grace is supernatural."[6]

Although medieval thinkers would define supernatural the same way as a modern person, they would include different phenomena in the category because of their different views of nature. From a modern perspective, astrology, miracles, and magic all remain equally inexplicable to modern understandings of nature, and are all equally supernatural. The medieval concept of nature was considerably more expansive than the modern one. A medieval theorist would take reports of strange phenomena as valid data for rational analysis, and would consider many of these phenomena extensions of natural properties inherent in the subjects' or objects' actions. Many natural objects held occult (or hidden) virtues, such as fish whose presence stopped the motion of ships, marvelous races with the heads of dogs or faces

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[4] Medieval theorists sometimes restricted the word *nature* to the sub-lunary sphere--the realm in which, according to Aristotle, the actions of the stars continually mixed the four elements. This refinement will not much concern us, and when using *natural* I will refer to the entire created order, earthly and celestial.
[5] Rodney Stark, "Micro Foundations of Religion: A Revised Theory," *Sociological Theory* 17.3 (1999): 264-89, 269. A bold but not entirely convincing effort, particularly in its definition of magic.
[6] William of Auvergne, *De virtutibus* in *Opera omnia* (Paris, 1674; reprinted Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1963) 1:132bF.

in their bellies, or the influence of the stars and planets upon earthly objects. Likewise the category of marvels (*mirabilia*) represented natural occurrences that excited human wonder through their rarity. By contrast, divine action was truly supernatural, exceeding any rational explanation. Miracles (*miracula*) would be the clearest example of divine intervention, as in them God clearly and spectacularly violates the ordinary course of nature. Other less spectacular divinely-caused phenomena included the sacraments, the benefits of priests' blessings, and the results of prayer.

3.2.1 Spirits

Thirteenth-century theorists also acknowledged the ability of invisible spirits to affect the natural world. These spirits were of three kinds: angels, demons, and human souls. Of the three, demons would be the most frequently encountered and hence the most important. In the theories of William and his contemporaries, spirits were not supernatural in Stark's sense of being "entities beyond or outside nature that can suspend, alter, or ignore physical forces." Angels, demons and ghosts acted within the limits of nature as then understood, but as intelligent actors, and often ones of great power, they could potentially cause a large number of unusual phenomena.

Orthodox theologians always regarded the involvement of spirits in human affairs as a matter of grave moral concern. Demons might, for motives of their own, manipulate nature on behalf of human beings, either to produce a desired effect at human request or produce via their powers over nature the illusion of the desired

effect. Because demons responded to human signs and words as a request, it might seem that human beings themselves produced these phenomena. The technical term for such a relationship was "magic" (*magia* or *magic*), but this was not its exclusive use.

For theorists of the thirteenth-century, the word "magic" (*magica*) carried multiple meanings. In the Early Middle Ages, the word "magic" exclusively designated the tricks of demons – a polemical term; its opposite was the divine miracle. A wondrous phenomenon was magical if produced via demonic involvement; it was miraculous if produced by divine action. The magical and the miraculous were opposed categories. Magic was an evil illusion which could not rival a true miracle, just as the devil and his servants opposed, but could not really rival, God and his saints.[7] When William speaks of the relationship between grace and nature, he has the contest between God and Devil firmly in view. In the spiritual combat human beings wage against the wiles of demons and their own baser, natural deficiencies, he means that humans can count on supernatural help.[8]

In William's time, as Latin thinkers began to speculate about nature and its virtues, they recognized the possibility that humans might artificially create marvels using the occult (or hidden) properties of nature. They called this new category

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[7] Jolly, "Medieval Magic," 13-20. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 8-17, 36-42. Much of what Clark says in *Thinking with Demons* about the relationship between demonology and science also applies to William's period as well. Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 151-311.
[8] William of Auvergne, *De virtutibus*, 1:132bF.

natural magic to distinguish it from *demonic magic*. "Natural" magic was thus no more than a kind of applied science, and in the minds of its proponents, no more illicit. The two categories were not related causally, but because of the furtive and mysterious nature of their end-products.[9]

3.2.2 Disjuncture

The learned theories of the university-trained elites provided a respectable way for them to comprehend and classify the many beliefs that surrounded them, but there often remained a significant disjuncture between the logic of theory and the internal logic of the beliefs themselves. Several factors were at work. First, many medieval beliefs about the world and its inhabitants derived from former pagan religions, transformed into folklore through the continuing vitality of their imagery and appeal. A Christian system naturally ignored or redefined these beliefs. For example, the Christian division of the spiritual world into good and evil factions simply could not accommodate the appeal of the *genii loci* and monsters, tending to dismiss them as delusions or demonic illusions. Second, although theologians made an exception for the Christian God and his Providence, the Aristotelian conception of a regular mechanistic nature denied the attribution of chance events to other morally and personally responsive forces or entities. Official theory thus had to redefine or

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[9] Daston and Park, *Wonders*, 21-133. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages,* 8-18, 181-87. Francesco Santi, "Guglielmo d'Auvergne e l'ordine dei domenicani tra filosofia naturale e tradizione magica," in *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne (+1249): Études réunies*, ed. Franco Morenzoni and Jean-Yves Tilliette (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2005), 137-53.

ignore beliefs originally based on an animistic view of the universe. Finally, there was the great diversity of cultures that existed in or had contributed to the mental life of different regions of Western Europe. University-trained thinkers, deeply indebted to kings and popes, would not tolerate beliefs that appeared to them to detract from the unique sovereignty of a monarchical high god upon whom the whole ruling elite drew for legitimization.[10]

3.3 Belief, Story and Theory

In William's time, beliefs in unusual phenomena such as miracles, magic and spirits found expression in different ways and at different levels of sophistication. Many of the recorded stories and practices appear to spring from emotionally and mythologically-resonant ideas deeply embedded in ancient Mediterranean and medieval European cultures, perhaps in the human psyche itself. These core ideas are often extremely simple. Humans are surrounded by invisible beings. People who have died may haunt the living. Features of the landscape are filled with numinous or terrifying powers. These core ideas emerge in recorded stories and customs with various rationalizations, depending on the worldview of the area and teller. Because

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[10] The disjuncture between learned theory and popular belief is similar to that described in several famous studies of the imposition of learned witch beliefs on those accused of more traditional types of sorcery. Carlo Ginzburg, *I benandanti : stregoneria e culti agrari tra cinquecento e seicento* (Turin: Guilio Einaudi Editore, 1966), trans. John and Anne Tedeschi as *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983). Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: Their Foundations in Popular and Learned Culture, 1300-1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

all stories are partially explanatory, there is sometimes a feeling of disjuncture between the mythological core and the frame of the story. For example, different authors might explain the apparitions of the dead begging and pleading with the living as ghosts, as souls in purgatory, or as the deceits of demons.

3.4 Manifestations of a Christian Universe

Let us first consider those stories and beliefs about unusual phenomena that sprang from a Christian view of the spiritual universe. A believer lived every day surrounded by hidden powers, invisible but influencing his disposition, rewarding or censuring his behavior and capable of momentous intervention in his or her life. At times these hidden powers might become manifest.

Divine providence worked on both a large scale, protecting kingdoms and Christianity as a whole, and also on a small one, arranging the universe for the spiritual benefit of individuals, provided they regarded their fortunes or misfortunes as lessons or punishments and reacted accordingly. Biblical stories such as the destruction of Sodom or the Babylonian captivity reinforced the idea that communal sins brought punishment, communal virtue reward. Many interpreted contemporary political events such as the threatened Mongol invasion of Europe as a divine punishment or reward upon all Christendom. Matthew Paris's *Chronicle* includes a letter depicting the "Tartars" as physically deformed cannibals. Some tales connected the Mongols and other steppe populations to the mythical peoples of Gog and Magog, whom Alexander had penned behind a range of mountains to await the end of the

world. Others, perhaps more optimistically, interpreted the Mongols as a divinely sent opportunity to defeat the Muslims of the Near East. For example, Innocent IV and Louis IX each dispatched messengers to the Khans in hopes of a Christian-Mongol alliance.[11]

On a personal level, daily tribulations could test or punish the individual believer. If a person had sinned, then sickness or misfortune served as a useful corrective. On the other hand, perhaps the person was merely inclined towards a particular sin. In that case, tribulation might be preventive. Provided the believer accepted life's adversities with the proper frame of mind, any calamity might represent God's interest in him or her. Augustine's *Confessions* and Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* probably did much to spread these views among the educated classes.[12] As the personified figure of Philosophy in the *Consolation* tells Boethius, because of Providence "every kind of fortune, whether pleasing or hard, is

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[11] LeGoff, *St. Louis* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), 43-50, 552-55. Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews: Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 192-206, 228-29. The letter of Ivo of Narbonne is in Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. Henry Richards Luard (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1825-91; rept. Wisebaden: Kraus, 1964), 3.270-77. Robert E. Lerner, *The Powers of Prophecy: The Cedar of Lebanon Vision from the Mongol Onslaught to the Dawn of the Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), chronicles the fate of one prophecy originally associated with the Tartars.

[12] Augustine, *Confessions*, ed. and commentary James J. O'Donnell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* in *Boethius: The Theological Tractates*, trans. S. J. Tester (Cambridge: Harvard, 1973). Some of the discussion in Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 78-112, is also useful, despite the difference in milieux.

granted for the purpose either of rewarding or exercising good men, or of punishing or correcting the bad, every kind is good, since it is agreed to be just or useful."[13]

Social customs and institutions often relied upon providential power for their enforcement. Oath-taking, for example, invoked divine sanction against those who broke their word. Monastic communities sometimes ritually cursed those who had wronged them.[14] Trial by ordeal and combat assumed that God would visibly protect the innocent and punish the wicked. When people carried a hot iron or fought their challengers, they explicitly called upon the justice of God to manifest itself. (Naturally, the judgment of the community and its authorities was also at play.) At Lateran IV the Church withdrew its support from ordeals and trials by combat, arguing that such tests tempted God. The new view reflected the discomfort scholastics felt in the face of a procedure with little support in Scripture or Roman law, and trial by jury or resort to torture replaced the ordeal in deciding difficult cases.[15]

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[13] "Cum omnis fortuna vel iucunda vel aspera tum remunerandi exercendive bonos tum puniendi corrigendive improbos causa deferatur, omnis bona quam vel iustam constat esse vel utilem." Tester, trans. Boethius, *Consolation*, 4.7, 374-75.
[14] Lester K. Little, *Benedictine Maledictions: Liturgical Cursing in Romanesque France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).
[15] John W. Baldwin, "The Intellectual Preparation for the Canon of 1215 against Ordeals," *Speculum* 36 (1961): 613-36. Bartlett, Robert Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water: The Medieval Judicial Ordeal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986). Roger D. Groot, "The Jury of Presentment before 1215," *The American Journal of Legal History* 26.1 (Jan. 1982): 1-24. Charles M. Radding, "Superstition to Science: Nature, Fortune and the Passing of the Ordeal," *The American Historical Review* 84.4 (Oct. 1979): 949-69. Peter Brown, "Society and the Supernatural: A Medieval Change." *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 302-32. Colin Morris "Judicium Dei: The Social and Political

Divine purpose was also visible in nature, from the regular dance of the stars to the behaviors and properties of animals that served as salutary moral lessons. Bestiaries compiled the properties of animals; many creatures represented portions of the Christian revelation or embodied virtues and vices. For example, when hunters pursued a beaver seeking its testicles for medicine, it would bite them off and leave them behind. Thus it served as an exemplar of self-mortification in defiance of the dangers of sexuality. Perhaps no one believed these fantastic tales, especially concerning familiar animals, but the trust in providential order they embodied was real enough.[16]

The passage of time and history, too, were suffused with divine meaning. Perhaps most pressing was the fear and anticipation of the end of time. The massive social changes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries encouraged eschatological expectations to an extraordinary degree, not only traditional beliefs but novel ones as well.[17] Adso of Montier-en-Der's biography of Antichrist (c. 950) perhaps best

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Significance of Ordeal in the Eleventh Century," *Studies in Church History* 12 (1975): 95-112. Vickie L. Ziegler, *Trial by Fire and Battle in Medieval German Literature* (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2004).

[16] The story of the beaver is most accessible in T. H. White, trans., *The Book of Beasts being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century* (New York: G.P Putnam's Sons, 1954), 28-29. Ron Baxton, *Bestiaries and their Uses in the Middle Ages* (Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing, 1998). Daston and Park, *Wonders,* esp. 39-48. Debra Higgs Strickland, *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Lisa Verner, *The Epistemology of the Monstrous in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 91-121. Hanneke Wirtjes, ed., *The Middle English Physiologus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[17] David Burr, *Olivi and Franscican Poverty: The Origins of the* Usus Pauper *Controversy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989). Bernard

summarized mainstream medieval belief regarding the End Times. Antichrist would create an empire, persecute the faithful, and then perish himself, ushering in the last judgment and an earthly paradise. Although official doctrine had long taught that last judgment would come "like a thief in the night," that is to say, unpredictably, many believed that Antichrist's reign was imminent or had already begun.

Another doctrine of eschatological history, more novel than Adso's compilation of Antichrist beliefs, began to circulate in the late twelfth century. Joachim, Abbot of Fiore in Calabria (d. 1202) argued that exegetical correspondences between the Old and New Testament forecast future events in a Trinitarian scheme. Similar events would occur in triplicate, first in the age of the Father, recorded in the Old Testament, then in the age of the Son, recorded in the New Testament and continuing into the (then) present, and finally there would be a future Age of the Holy Spirit. With this theory, he predicted future events, including elaborate theories about the Antichrist. His ideas gained in currency among the mendicant orders and especially radical Franciscans. [18]

McGinn, *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), esp. 1-172, and "Apocalypticism and Church Reform: 1100-1500" in *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism,* ed. by Bernard J. McGinn, John J. Collins, and Stephen J. Stein (New York: Continuum, 2003), 273-98. Richard K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages*: *A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art and Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981).

[18] Bernard McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim of Fiore in the History of Western Thought* (New York: Macmillan, 1985), 1-47, 99-203. Majorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future: A Medieval Study in Historical Thinking,* rev. ed. (Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing, 1999), 1-58. Delno C. West and Sandra Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore: A Study in Spiritual Perception and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 1-98.

Beneath the cold and rather distant present and future actions of Providence, there lay numerous secondary powers of a more human disposition, less lofty and more amenable to supplication, placation or ire. The first of these powers were the saints. The human community of the Church reached into the afterlife. People of special holiness, the saints, on earth or in heaven, watched over individual Christians, performed miracles on their behalf and punished them for their transgressions. Theologians argued that saints could not perform miracles by themselves but because of their close relationship with God, they would intervene for other mortals on their behalf. Such a distinction made little practical difference, and many pre-Christian deities, spirits, and folk-heroes of the early Middle Ages had found a home in the cult of saints, where their powers were retained in a form acceptable to the new religion.[19] There seems to have been a tension between the laity and the clergy over the proper use of and control over the cult of saints. Caesarius of Heisterbach, for example, records that the clergy of his region assigned guardian saints to parishioners by lot. The parishioners resisted this regularization of their devotion, to Caesarius' evident displeasure. One woman, for example, drew St. Andrew but decided to venerate

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[19] The Irish Saint Brigit is an excellent example. See Pamela Berger, *The Goddess Obscured* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), and, more recently, Séamas Ó Catháin, *The Festival of Brigit: Celtic Goddess and Holy Woman* (Dublin : DBA Publications, 1995). Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event 1000-1215*, rev. ed. (Aldershot: Gower, 1987).

another instead. On her deathbed, she saw Andrew, her true guardian, who had protected her through life and who had come to reprove her for scorning him.[20]

The church imputed divine power to the bodily remnants and personal items of saints. Communities fought over, bought and sold relics. Louis IX was especially attached to relics; he purchased elements of the crown of thorns from the Latin Emperor of Constantinople, installing it in the magnificent Ste. Chappelle of his palace complex in Paris.[21] The thirteenth century also witnessed the veneration of the Eucharist as a relic, albeit a reproducible and nearly universally accessible one. The elevation and procession of the Host took on new meanings and venerations. Book Nine of Causarius' *Dialogue* is devoted to Eucharistic miracles. As a reflection of these trends, the Church instituted the feast of Corpus Christi. This new status of the Host had profound negative consequences for the Jews; enthusiasts of the new cult accused Jews of abusing the host, causing it to bleed or cry out. Malefic magic

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[20] Peter Brown**,** *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). See also the articles in James Howard-Johnson and Paul Antony Hayward, ed., *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Rosiland and Christopher Brooke, *Popular Religion in the Middle Ages: Western Europe 1000-1300* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), 31-45. Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 8.56 and 61 ed. Jospeh Strange (Cologne: H. Lempertz and Company, 1851/7; rept. Gregg Press: Ridgewood, NJ, 1966), 2:129, trans. H. von Scott and C. C. Swinton Bland as *The Dialogue on Miracles* (George Routledge and Sons: London, 1929), 2:58-59, 2:64-5. Flint, *Rise of Magic*, 254-73.

[21] Brooke, *Popular Religion*, 14-30. Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978) examines the dynamics of relic thefts in an earlier period. On Louis IX and relics, see William Chester Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade: A Study in Rulership* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 108-9, 191-95, Le Goff, *St. Louis* 124-7,140-48.

involving the host, with which Jews were also charged, took on a new importance and prominence.[22] The Virgin Mary, as mother of God, occupied a special place in the cult of saints, being widely seen as both more merciful and more powerful than other saints. As devotion to her increased, her miracles became an important literary *topos*. Gautier of Coincy (d. 1236) versified a collection of her miracles, while Caesarius devoted an entire book of his *Dialogue* to them.[23]

Living humans and their institutions regularly called upon divine power. The Christian sacraments purported to bring divine blessings and transformations to the community, whether the baptism that washed away original sin or the mass that transformed bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Unlike divine miracles or the intervention of saints, sacraments were reliable – so long as the priest performed the rituals correctly. Sometimes additional signs accompanied the sacraments, testifying to their efficacy, as when for example, celebrants of the mass saw bloody indicators of Christ's presence.[24] There also existed a penumbra of non-

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[22] Brooke, *Popular Religion*, 31-34. Caearius of Hiesterbach, *Dialogue on Miracles,* 9. Gary Macy, *The Theologians of the Eucharist in the Early Scholastic Period: A Study of the Salvific Function of the Sacrament according to the Theologians, c. 1080-c.1220* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984); and *Treasures from the Storeroom: Medieval Religion and the Eucharist* (Collegeville, MI: The Liturgical Press, 1999). Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 7-39; and *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
[23] Gautier de Coinci, *Les Miracles de Notre Dame*, ed. V. Frederick Koenig (Geneva: Librarie Droz, 1955-70). Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogues*, 7.
[24] Caroline Bynum, "Seeing and Seeing Beyond: The Mass of St. Gregory in the Fifteenth Century," in *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theology in the Middle Ages*, ed. Anne-Marie Bouché and Jeffrey Hamburger (Princeton: Department of Art History, Princeton University, 2005), 208-240. The reliability of sacraments was a point

sacramental practices that aimed to manipulate or induce marvelous phenomena by recourse to Christian sources of sacred power. For example, the sign of the cross could be used to ward against misfortune. Priests blessed a variety of objects, such as the bells of churches or fields for prosperity, consecrated the grounds of church-buildings and graveyards, and performed exorcisms.[25] Many popular charms and spells use elements of the liturgy or invoke incidents from the life of Jesus or the saints. Flint argues that practices of this type served a basic psychological need which Christian authorities met by "rescuing" and legitimizing existing popular practice.[26] According to her classificatory scheme, these practices are "magical," regardless of their presumed source of power. But are they "magical" in the medieval sense of the term? That is, would those who used them have felt that they relied on occult natural virtues or demonic intervention? For the sacraments, and for practices such as the sign of the cross or holy water, particularly when performed by the clergy, the answer is certainly "no." The use of liturgy and invocation, especially in healing magic, were more suspect, forming what Jolly calls a "middle category" between magic and miracle. The herbs might serve as a sign to invisible demons, with the use of holy names and stories a blasphemous addition. Conversely, the healing effect might be attributed to the herbs or the prayers alone. Probably only highly educated clergymen concerned themselves with such questions; more ordinary practitioners

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against the ordeal in the minds of reformers; as a miracle of sorts, the ordeal could not claim the same automatic efficacy. Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water,* 89-90.

[25] Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft Sex and the Crisis of Belief (*Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), *Demon Lovers*, 180-206.

[26] Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, 173-85, 254-328.

probably cared only if the charms worked or, if they worried about falling into error, were sufficiently assuaged by the presence of Christian elements. Taken as a whole, as Karen Jolly suggests,[27] the range of practices implied a power in words and ritual at odds with the theories of schoolmen such as William, who denied that the demonic names and strange words of magical formulae held any occult power to affect objects.[28]

3.5 Sacred Kingship and Providential Power

High medieval kings were widely believed to possess unusual powers and a special place in the providential order that rendered their actions especially significant. These conceptions had deep roots. The theory of tri-functionalism argues that primitive Indo-European society divided its members into three classes: workers, warriors and priests, and that traces of this division persisted in its descendant societies into the medieval period and beyond. As heads of society, kings partook of the qualities of all three.[29] So distant is the ancient Indo-European past that theories

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[27] Karen Jolly, "Medieval Magic: Definitions, Beliefs, Practices," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Middle Ages*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 30-35; and *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 71-131. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages,* 65-66, 70-75.
[28] William of Auvergne, *De legibus* 27 1:90aF-91bC. Claire Fanger, "Signs of Power and the Power of Signs: Medieval Modes of Address to the Problem of Magical and Miraculous Signifiers" (Ph. D. Diss., University of Toronto, 1993), 192-93.
[29] The mythologist Georges Dúmezil developed the theory of tri-functionalism and spent his life refining it and applying it to different European mythologies. See for example, "L'idéologie tripartite de Indo-Europeans," *Latomus: Review d'études latines* 31 (1958): 5-122. Georges Duby, *Les trois orders ou l'imaginaire du*

about its nature are difficult to demonstrate, but there is evidence that historic Germanic kingship included sacral and magical qualities. The Merovingian kings' long hair was a sign of the Frankish kings' special (possibly religious) status. The pagan kings of the Icelandic sagas presided over important sacrifices. Western Christians drew upon the motifs and ideas present in the Bible, in particular the story of David, when conceptualizing their kings' relations to God and society.[30] The Roman and Byzantine emperors' place at the head of the Church and their role in resolving theological disputes probably also influenced the position of kings relative to their churches in the Roman successor states.[31] From Constantine on, the emperors in Constantinople considered themselves *is-apostolicos*, equals of the apostles themselves, and thus not only qualified to decide on matters of doctrine but possessed of miraculous power.[32]

The early medieval period was characterized by an easy interrelationship between church and state functions, the domination of many ecclesiastical institutions by kingly power, and a quasi-priestly function of kings as heads of society. In the Carolingian Empire, the clergy served as scribes, administrators and *missi*, their

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féoalisme (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), trans. Arthur Goldhammer as *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). For application of this theory to Louis IX, see Le Goff, *Saint Louis,* 642-73.

[30] On kingly sacrality in general, see the collected articles in Aziz Al-Azmeh and János Bek, ed., *Monotheistic Kingship: The Medieval Variants* (Budapest: Akaprint., 2004)

[31] Flint, *Rise of Magic*, 381-86. Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957/1997).

[32] Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest : The Imperial Office in Byzantium* , trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

policy often dictated by the king/emperor himself. A similar situation prevailed in the Ottonian Empire, where the emperor's prerogative of nominating bishops permitted him to fill large non-hereditary holdings with loyal candidates, greatly easing the task of governance.

In the eleventh century, the Gregorian reformers' campaign to divorce church appointments from lay control rejected many of these kingly religious functions. In heated rhetoric of the struggle, theologians advanced competing views on the sacrality of kings. Traditionalist imperial theologians argued that kings, by virtue of their anointing and coronation were nearly priests, and thus legitimate leaders of the Church. Reforming theologians held that kings were laymen and thus subordinate to the Church's spiritual care. The reformers' position largely became the orthodoxy of the later Middle Ages, but the sacral, miraculous character of kingship persisted in the medieval imagination, a fact skillfully promoted by kings and their supporters in the increasingly centralized and royally dominated states.[33] Some historians, particularly Georges Duby, have argued that Indo-European tri-functionalism was resurrected in the early eleventh century as the political theory of the three orders which proscriptively divided Latin Christian society into three classes: those who fight,

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[33] R. I. Moore, *The First European Revolution, c. 970-1215* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), esp. 160-98 discusses the clerical reformer's breakup of the old order generally. See Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050-1250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 11-56, 79-133, 154-173, 182-204, 226-36, 550-77, for papal developments and imperial-papal and royal-papal relations.

those who pray, and those who labor. By William's day, it had evolved into the dominant ideology of an ordered society with a king at its head.[34]

During the same period, a new aspect of sacral kingship emerged -- the kings of England and France both claimed to cure specific diseases. Mark Bloch's *Les Rois thaumaturges* charts the refinement of the general claims of French and English monarchs to cure diseases into the single claim to cure scrofula via customary rituals. These claims became part of royal propaganda, in part against papal attempts to marginalize and secularize kingship.[35] Royal sacrality persisted in other ways as well. Following the biblical example of David, medieval kings were also sometimes thought to receive prophetic visions and other insights.[36] In the *De universo,* William of Auvergne considers kings, along with prophets, to be among the most likely candidates to receive divine visions.[37]

The special quality of kings persisted in other ways as well. In keeping with a view of the world in which God punished or rewarded peoples for the conduct of their kings, the outcome of political events was often interpreted as evidence for the rightness of a monarch's cause such as the aforementioned victory of Bouvines, which Philip Augustus did not hesitate to portray as divinely granted. So closely linked were the fortunes of the realm and the moral conduct of the king that Louis IX

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[34] Duby, *The Three Orders*.
[35] Marc Bloch, *Les rois thaumaturges,* trans. J. E. Anderson as *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).
[36] Paul Edward Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), esp. 5-22.
[37] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.20, 1:1044aG-H.

prepared for his campaign with an extraordinary inquest to settle matters of justice. His defeat in Egypt in 1250 led him to blame himself and pursue a lifelong course of penance.[38]

The procreation of kings was also imbued with magical and providential significance -- unsurprising given the dangers that could affect a country if the king died without a suitable male heir at hand. The Capetian line had often flirted with disaster due to lack of heirs, hence the celebrations whenever a royal son was born.[39]

3.6 Astrology

The astrology of the high Middle Ages saw a meeting of two streams of thought: one, the widespread but unsophisticated popular trust in the powers of the stars; the second, a complex and mathematically-precise practice imported from the Arabic world. Astrology raised both distrust and admiration among the educated elites of the thirteenth century. Its moderate forms won widespread acceptance; the power of stellar influences formed a key component of science as understood throughout the Mediterranean world. On the other hand, extreme astrological doctrines compromised human and divine freedom by implying that the stars caused all earthly events and resembled paganism in attributing governing spirits and

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[38] Georges Duby, *Le dimache de bouvines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), trans. by Catherine Tihanyi as *The Legend of Bouvines: War, Religion and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990). Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of Crusade,* 127-220.
[39] Le Goff, *St. Louis*, 32-33

intelligences to the planets and stars – spirits that some magicians claimed they could manipulate or control.

The people of the Roman Empire had practiced astrology at differing levels of sophistication, ranging from general ideas about the influence of planets to a complex art that required a good knowledge of mathematics and astronomy, as well as the possession of extensive astronomical tables -- compilations of observational data. The casting of a horoscope in particular required complex calculations to determine the position of stars in the sky at the latitude and longitude of the subject's birthplace. Astrology gained in scientific importance following the publication of such important works as Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* (second century CE), which integrated the art more closely with cosmological theory. Despite astrology's popularity among all classes and astrology's scientific importance, Roman authorities occasionally punished its practitioners of astrology. In particular, casting the Emperor's horoscope was regarded as treasonable, largely because of its explosive political ramifications.

Christian authors of Late Antiquity generally distrusted astrology. Perhaps most formatively, Augustine objected to astrology's seeming determinism. His account in *The City of God* builds on the works of earlier non-Christian skeptics such as Cicero in an attempt to disprove it through cases such as identical twins born to different destinies.[40] The Early Middle Ages saw a softening of this early

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[40] Augustine, *City of God* 5.1-8, 4th ed., ed. Bernardus Dombart and Alphonsus, Corpus Christianorum Series Latinus 47 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1955), 1:128-36. Kalb Tamsyn Barton, *Ancient Astronomy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 32-85. Flint, *Magic in the Middle Ages,* 88-101. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*,

condemnation. Flint claims that the early medieval Church "rescued" astrology for respectability as part of its general program to Christianize beliefs that fulfilled certain basic psychological needs.[41] I suspect that astrology was simply too integral to the late antique world-view to jettison easily. Late antique natural philosophers had refined Aristotle's view that the stars affected sublunary elements, and predictive arts based on stellar position thus had a respectable scientific foundation. As its position evolved in the Early Middle Ages, the Church accepted stellar influences but rejected fully deterministic astrology or astrology that too greatly mixed pagan and Christian elements, such as the system of Zeno of Verona, who had developed a Christian zodiac.[42]

Astrology in early medieval Europe generally confined itself to less complex methods of predictions that did not require astrological tables or mathematically difficult calculations but which still capitalized on the idea that heavenly bodies influence earthly life. For example, the *lunaria* assigned qualities to each day of the lunar month, and calendars noted the unlucky "Egyptian days." Astrology also had an important if primitive role in medicine, determining when it was appropriate to bleed a patient or perform other operations.[43]

24-28. Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science: During the First Thirteen Centuries of Our Era* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1923), 1:480-547.
[41] Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, 128-46.
[42] Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, 142.
[43] Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, 128-46, 185-99. Dieter Harmening, *Superstitio: Überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters* (Berlin: Erich Schmid Verlag,

Beginning around the twelfth century, Arabic texts and their translations introduced western Europeans to a sophisticated and mathematical art. The scholars of the Islamic world built upon the foundational works of late antiquity and predictive astrology became an important part of philosophy. Arabic astrology was a learned art that had its greatest effect on social elites, and was supported by extensive astronomical observation.[44] The techniques of calculating horoscopes crossed into Western Europe with little alteration, and the lords and kings of secular courts commissioned astrological predictions of themselves and their enemies. Court astrologers also predicted propitious dates for weddings and other political activities. Building on the primitive medicinal auguries of the Early Middle Ages, physicians trained in Galenic medicine in the universities adopted from the Islamic world more sophisticated astrological methods. Systematic theologians generally approved of these practices, with two reservations: first, they feared that astrologers might knowingly or unknowingly invoke demons to perform augury; second, that astrologers might claim for the stars prerogatives reserved for God, in particular the

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1979), 164-69. Jolly, "Medieval Magic," 53-58. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 76, 85-90. S. J. Tester, *A History of Western Astrology* (Wolfeboro, NH: The Boydell Press, 1987), 57-131.

[44] Haskell D. Isaacs, "Arabic Medical Literature," 342-63, esp. 363. David A. King, "Astronomy," 274-289. David Pingree, "Astrology," 290-300, in *Religion, Learning and Science in the 'Abbassid Period,* M. J. L. Young, J. D. Latham, and R. B Serjeant ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). For the mathematical aspects of prediction, see the articles in George Saliba, *A History of Arabic Astronomy: Planetary Theories During the Golden Age of Islam* (New York: New York University Press, 1994); Aydin Sayili, *The Observatory in Islam and its Place in the General History of the Observatory* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1960), 1-253.

unacceptable claim that the stars did not merely influence human action, but necessarily and unavoidably determined it.[45]

3.7 Marvels: A Miscellany of the Strange

The medieval Europeans of William's generation believed themselves surrounded by unusual objects, animals, and happenstances. Books such as Gervase of Tilbury's *Otia Imperialis* or Walter Map's *De nugiis curialum* collected marvelous tales from all over the known world.[46] As befits this eclectic approach, the stories in the compilations derive from various origins, some classical, some based on popular hearsay. The theory of occult virtues held that certain natural objects could perform actions at a distance. The lodestone was but one example of such hidden power. Occult virtues were often tied to the power of heavenly bodies over earthly matter – the object might be especially susceptible to the influence of a particular star or planet. Unifying these phenomena were the emotions they excited in the viewer or listener.[47]

Many natural objects and creatures were held to possess unusual or amazing properties. Many gemstones were held to have powers such as curing disease or nullifying poison. Real or imagined animals had remarkable powers, such as the

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[45] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 116-33. S. J. Tester, *A History of Western Astrology*, 131-97.
[46] Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia: Recreation for an Emperor* 3.86, ed. and trans. S. E. Banks and J. W. Binns (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 722-25.
[47] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone, 2001), esp. "Wonder," 37-75. Datson and Park, *Wonders*, 21-133.

remora to stop ships, or the salamander to survive fire. Parts of creatures had medicinal or magical use, such as the heart of the hoopie bird, utilized in many spells, or the semen of a donkey, which when burned in a candle produced illusions.[48] The so-called monstrous races were believed to inhabit exotic locales. Ancient physiognomic theory provided an explanation for the monstrous races' existence, holding that the extremes of climate helped shaped their bodies. Thus the monstrous races also served as an indicator of medieval racial sensibilities and their attitudes towards external peoples, with the monstrous races taking on the characteristics held to be stereotypical of Jews or Saracens.[49]

3.8 Magic

In William's time, there was widespread conviction that human beings could wield mysterious powers outside the Church's approved repertoire of miracles, sacraments and sacramentalia. Several different streams – Roman, Germanic, Celtic, and Arabic -- fed the high medieval use of and conception of magic.

Practices that the Middle Ages would come to consider magical formed an important part of the ancient Mediterranean world. The Latin words *magica* and *magus* derive from the Persian word *magus*, or priest. In a Roman context, the word was almost always pejorative, and rapidly expanded to mean not only the distrusted religious specialists of a hostile power but any sort of surreptitious and dangerous

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[48] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.22, 1:1059aB-C. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 102-5, 116-33.
[49] Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews*, esp. 29-59.

manipulation of invisible forces. Roman law, beginning with the ancient Twelve Tablets, condemned magic, and Roman Emperors such as Augustus tried occasionally to suppress it and its practitioners. In literature, witches such as Horace's Canidia or Lucian's Erictho were terrifying figures who practiced infanticide and cannibalism. Poison was not generally distinguished from malefic magic, and magicians were often presumed proficient in both.[50]

Such condemnations cannot tell the whole story; for in the ancient world in general and in Late Antiquity in particular, religious and magical access to gods, demi-gods and *daimons* was commonly sought, indeed was part of religious consciousness. Much of our knowledge of Late Antique practices comes from preserved papyri and tablets. Egypt especially abounds in such finds because its dry climate preserves soft materials like paper from decomposition. The magical papyri attest to a variety of formulae and evocations designed to secure love, to harm enemies, or to protect someone. The imagery of binding and loosing is especially common to such spells, which are imagined as tying the spell's target. Similarly, the nails driven through lead tablets or through dolls, a practice known as *defixio*, were meant to sympathetically secure or afflict a person or his or her bodily members. Some dolls have both bindings and piercing. The dead and other chthonic spirits

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[50] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 19-33. Flint, *Rise of Magic*, 13-35. Richard Gordon, "Imagining Greek and Roman Magic," 161-275; George Luck, "Witches and Sorcerers in Classical Literature," 91-158, in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome.* Fritz Graf, *Idéologie et Practique de la Magie dans l'Antiquité Gréco-Romaine* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1994), trans. Franklin Philip as *Magic in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

were presumed to provide the operative force for *defixiones* tablets– which were often cast into graves, caves and other subterranean locales.[51] These practices must have been extremely common given the number of surviving examples. In the third century CE, there arose a Neoplatonic movement that attempted to explain and justify magical practices. Believing that intermediary powers such as demons and gods formed a link between humanity and the godhead, philosophers such as Porphyry and Iamblichus advocated *theurgy*, a purified system of sacrifices and prayers directed at the *daimones*.[52]

Early Christian authorities distrusted and vilified contemporary pagan magical practices. They argued that the gods and *daimones* of the pagans were actually fallen angels, implacably evil and hostile. Again, Augustine's views were formative when he argued that all relied on the deceits of demons to operate.[53] Everyday members of the congregation may have had a very different understanding of these practices. The

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[51] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 19-27. Flint, *Rise of Magic*, 13-35. Daniel Ogden, "Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls in the Greek and Roman Worlds," 2-90, in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome.* Naomi Janowitz, *Icons of Power: Ritual Practices in Late Antiquity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002). The granddaddy of collections of translations of ancient papyri spells is Hans D. Sieter Betz, ed. and intro, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation Including the Demotic Spells,* 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). See also John G. Gager, ed. and intro., *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
[52] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 27-28.
[53] Flint, "The Demonization of Magic and Sorcery in Late Antiquity: Christian Redefinitions of Pagan Religions," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, 278-348; and *Rise of Magic*, 13-84. Fritz Graf, "Augustine and Magic," in *The Metamorophosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 87-103.

papyrus finds of Late Antiquity and onwards contain Christian and Jewish elements. In them, Christ, Moses and the Judeo-Christian God appear as entities comparable to and embedded in formulae similar to those by which the ancients invoked other deities. Hebrew names for God, such as "Iao Sabaoth" seem to have been particularly popular. Some of these charms may have originated among non-Christians, attracted perhaps to the presumed powers of an exotic minority.[54] Moses, for example, was famous throughout the Empire as a magician.[55] Other charms may have been made by Christians for their own use. The syncretism and easy attitude towards manipulation of the divine that they reveal continue into the Early Middle Ages, when as Flint notes, churchmen continued to complain that their congregations had recourse to diviners and magicians.[56]

The Germanic and Celtic cultures of the Early Middle Ages had their own indigenous traditions of the supernatural, which over time blended with Roman and Christian conceptions of magic. For example, Anglo-Saxon England strongly retained the Germanic belief that disease was caused by invisible projectiles hurled by elves. The corpus of Anglo-Saxon texts includes a great many charms and prayers,

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[54] For translated spells with Christian elements, see Marvin Meyer, Richard Smith and Neal Kelsey, ed. *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (New York: Harper SanFrancisco, 1994).
[55] John G. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism (*Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 134-61. Luck, "Witches and Sorcerers in Classical Literature," 115-16.
[56] Flint, *Rise of Magic*, 59-84.

many including Christian elements, designed to protect against and to cure "elf-shot."[57]

Old Norse literature is particularly rich and informative, as the storytelling traditions of Iceland preserved much material that has been lost for earlier Germanic cultures. In the Icelandic sagas in particular, magic and paganism are closely linked, with magic portrayed as a hold-over from the bad old days of pagan religion. The sagas describe various mysterious human powers, for which Raudvere suggests *trolldómr* as a blanket term.[58] Sensitivity to fate represented one form of power. Some men and women had the power of foresight, especially with regard to their own fate and the fate of their families.[59] This gift usually seems to have been a form of spontaneous knowledge, occasioned by circumstance, and accomplished without ritual or even conscious effort, as when in *Egil's Saga,* Kveldulf correctly predicts that King Harald Fair-hair "has plenty of good fortune in store for him" but "this king won't bring my family much good fortune."[60]

Shape-shifting and related phenomena constituted another kind of power. The Norse believed that a person's *hugr* (or soul) could accomplish various actions at a distance. outside the body it took on a *hamr* (or "skin"), usually an animal or object that reflected the owner's personality. When a *hamleypa* (or skin leaper) slept, his or

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[57] Jolly, *Popular Religion*.
[58] Catharina Raudvere, "*Trolldómr* in Early Medieval Scandinavia," in *Witchcraft and Maic in Europe: The Middle Ages,* 73-171, 73-90.
[59] Catharina Raudvere, "*Trolldómr* in Early Medieval Scandinavia, 90-101.
[60] *Egil's Saga* 3 and 5, trans. Bernard Scudder in *The Sagas of the Icelanders: A Selection* (New York: Penguin, 1997/2000), pages10, 12.

her *hugr* could travel great distances in a different *hamr*.[61] The same Kveldulf is reputed to be a shapeshifter—his name means "night wolf," presumably because he travels as wolf while asleep.[62] Many other Norse magical practices seem to have involved the spoken and written world. The sagas portray both inscribed runes and recited verse as having magical powers. The ritual (or family of rituals) known as *seiðr* represented a highly elaborate and widespread practice, in which a *volva*, or seeress, led a ritual on behalf of a client and his household. The Norse may have imported the *seiðr* from neighboring peoples, such as the Finns or the Sámi, whom the sagas often portray as especially skilled in such socially-suspect practices. The ceremony involved multiple persons, the seeress herself and her attendants who were required to chant an accompaniment.[63]

Such northern pagan practices and beliefs, combined and assimilated more or less well to Roman and Christian conceptions, together formed the basis of what Kieckhefer calls the "common tradition" and Jolly a "popular tradition" of medieval magic, a staple low magic of divination, charms, image magic, and herbal remedies. Building on Frazer's classic categories, Kieckhefer gives a good account of the

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[61] Claude LeCouteux, *Fées, sorcières et loups-garous au moyen âge: histoire du double* (Paris: Imago, 1992), 59-65. Kirsten Hastrup, *Culture and History in Medieval Iceland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 144-54; and *Nature and Policy in Iceland 1400-1800: An Anthropological Analysis of History and Mentality (*Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 198-212. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 43-55. Catharina Raudvere, "*Trolldómr* in Early Medieval Scandinavia , 101-8.
[62] *Egil's Saga* chapter 1, 8.
[63] Thomas A Du Bois*, Nordic Religions in the Viking Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 94-138. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 43-55. Catharina Raudvere, "*Trolldómr* in Early Medieval Scandinavia, 101-50.

underlying logic that fueled common magic, and whose symbolism often lay unexpressed and unacknowledged by the clerical elite. Sympathetic magic worked by resemblances between objects; for example, an animal part used in a medical remedy might resemble the disease in question, or a wax doll might resemble the target of a spell. Antipathic magic worked via symbolic dissimilarity between objects. As Kieckhefer notes, both sympathy and antipathy formed a part of scientific theory but were less popular than astrological explanations. The emotional roots of the idea probably lay deeper than any theory, as practices from many cultures other than medieval European ones operate on sympathy and antipathy. Kieckhefer also notes that some magic operated by what he calls "animism," that is, that objects were seen as having an in-dwelling personality or spirit. Unlike sympathy and antipathy, animism had little place in Christian thought's system of angels and demons.[64]

Theologians of the Early Middle Ages believed that demons were the source of most (if not all) magical power. The classic description of magic from the period is Isidore of Seville's description in his *Etymologies*, book 8, section 9. As might be expected, his account is conservative, dependent on the Latin tradition, and perhaps not very representative of actual practice – but it does tell how clergymen conceived of magic and what they considered its important elements. He defines divination as the use of demons to learn the future, describes famous magicians of antiquity beginning with the "Zoroastrian" magi and then lists various forms of divination,

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[64] Karen Jolly, "Medieval Magic: Definitions, Beliefs, Practices," 13-71. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 10-15. Don C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

especially those used in Roman times.[65] Despite the Church's condemnation of magic as demonic, practitioners of the "common tradition" of magic usually did not internalize the theological censure directed against them by consciously calling upon demons, or admitting that what they did was evil. But neither did they often advance theories of their own in refutation. Presumably they found it unnecessary to justify traditional practices implicitly sanctioned by their world view and supported by an avid clientele.[66]

The rise of learning in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries bifurcated the theological view of magic. During the twelfth century, an explicitly demonic form of magic, necromancy, arose in western Europe. Necromancy aimed to evoke and control powerful spirits, conceived of as either astral spirits or Christian demons or both, through the use of elaborate Latin formulae and ritual actions. The original meaning of the Greek, "divination by the dead," disappeared by blending into the conception of the spirits involved as demonic or astral. The stimuli behind necromancy seem to have been the growth of learning generally and the availability of translated Arabic works on astral magic, added to Christian conceptions of magic as the work of demons. Most necromancers were clerics or otherwise associated with the Church, men who had some command of Latin and experience in performing rituals. In a way, then, the Christian clergy, which had condemned magic as

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[65] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies* 1.9 in *Etimologie o origini,* ed. Angelo Valastro Canale (Turin: Unione Tipographico-Editrice Torinese, 2004), 1:662-71.
[66] Flint, *Rise of Magic*, *passim*, but esp. 51-54. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 9-12.

demonic, whether it was intended so or not, created its own magic which explicitly invoked evil spirits in a way that the common tradition did not.[67]

Yet, perhaps in response, there shortly followed a theological interest in purely natural forms of magic and a desire to rescue them from demonic influences. Early thirteenth-century schoolmen, such as Grosseteste and Bacon, interested themselves in the wonders and limits of the natural world. Our own William of Auvergne was one of the first theologians to speak favorably of "natural magic," and to argue that humans could produce wondrous effects that relied entirely on the occult qualities of nature he found in Arabic learning. Thus, by William's time, Christian theologians divided magical practice into two forms – the natural and the demonic – a distinction which artificially divided the rituals which the traditional magicians themselves had perceived as a unified and functional set of principles.[68]

3.9 Spirits

Medieval Europe inherited or originated a variety of beliefs about spirits. In addition to the Christian heritage of angels, demons and souls, there was a penumbra of belief in spirits such as the elves, trolls, sprites, giants, ghosts, fairies, and *genii loci* which meshed imperfectly with both Christian theology and scientific theory.

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[67] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 11-14, 151-75. Nicolas Weill-Parot, "Astral Magic and Intellectual Changes (Twelfth-Fifteenth Centuries): 'Astrological Images' and the Concept of 'Addressive' Magic" in *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 167-87.
[68] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 11-14.

Medieval Christians believed the universe to be populated by the invisible spirits of their religion, angels and demons. From scripture, Christians knew that angels served as God's messengers. They recalled the angel who held back Abraham's hand when he was about to sacrifice Isaac, the angel who wrestled Jacob and gave him the name Israel, the angel of death who afflicted the pharaoh, and the Angel Gabriel of the annunciation, among others. Closer to daily life, in story and legend, angels sometimes appeared at mass, at choir, or on deathbeds. Monks, who viewed their communities as heavenly, were particularly likely to see choirs of angels singing. Angels also guarded individual human beings – the idea of a guardian angel appeared at this time.[69]

The fallen angels, demons, had more fearful precedents. In scripture, Satan had tested and afflicted Job and tempted Jesus in the wilderness. Christ had cast out demons from humans and ended the fearful disease and insanity they brought. In the present, demons were believed to do the same: to possess, to torment, even to kill. They swirled everywhere, testing and probing individual moral weaknesses. Sometimes they could be seen, in visions, on deathbeds, or known indirectly through the behavior of demoniacs. Stories of angels and demons, whether transmitted as hagiography, exempla or folk belief, usually presented the educated with few

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[69] Marsha Colish, "Early Scholastic Angelology," *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 62 (Jan/Dec 1995): 80-109. David Keck, *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

problems of interpretation.[70] Yet, even Christian spirits at times might contradict established theology or scientific theory. For instance, the demons of popular tradition might be more anthropomorphic than theology allowed – feeling regret, lust or hunger to an unacceptable degree.[71]

There also existed stories of spirits who defied easy classification in the Christian system. Such spirits usually derived from pre-Christian or non-Christian beliefs, but others may have arisen spontaneously in an environment already Christian. Roman spirits and deities had a long life in the Middle Ages, for even if they were forgotten by the common population, the educated clergy encountered them in the corpus of Latin literature, where the prestige of ancient authors may have made them seem more real and of greater importance than the folklore they found around themselves. People remembered the names of the old Roman gods, their domains and functions. Clergy such as William continued to refer to monsters by Latin names as *strix* and *lamiae*. Memory of other pagan traditions was extremely tenuous in most of Europe after the early Middle Ages. The chroniclers of the early conversions, like the Roman ethnographers before them, tended to refer to non-Roman pagan deities by the names of corresponding Roman gods. Thus, clerics writing in Latin would call Odin Mars, for example. Once vernacular memory of the old deities passed away, so too

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[70] For more complete coverage of the range of demonological beliefs, see the following chapter.
[71] Richard P. H. Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late Medieval Byzantine Demonology* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1988), 179-95.

did the ability to identify the gods of such texts.[72] For example, when Martin of Braga or Burchard of Worms condemns belief in "Diana," we do not know to which deity this name refers.[73]

Where evidence exists, it suggests that these mostly forgotten traditions continued to be important into William's day as folklore. To take one example, Icelandic literature records Norse traditions regarding spirit projection and other sorts of doubles. Spirits known as *flygjur* personified the fate of individuals (sometimes of families), taking on female forms or animal shapes appropriate to the character of the person they represented. Their appearance portended significant changes in fortune: their deaths, the immanent demise of the human they represented. For example, in the *Saga of the Greenlanders*, the woman Gudrid briefly encounters a strange double of herself whose appearance underscores the disastrous Skraeling attack on the Norse base camp in Vinland.[74]

Dead persons (and especially the wicked in life) returned as *draugr*, corporeal undead who resembled blackened corpses. Although it is exceedingly unlikely that

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[72] Brian Branston, *The Lost Gods of England*, 2nd ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974). Jane Chance, *Medieval Mythography,* 2 vols. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1994/2000). Ken Dowden, *European Paganism: The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2000).
[73] Burchard of Worms*, Decretorum libri viginti* 11:1*,* in *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina,* ed J. P. Migne (Paris, 1844-55; reprinted at http://pld.chadwyck.com), 140: col. 831-833C. Martin of Braga, *De Correctione Rusticorum* 7, ed. and trans. Mario Naldini in *Contro Le Superstizioni: Catachesi al Popoplo* (Florence: Nardini Editori, 1991). William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1061aD-1070aG.
[74] *The Saga of the Greenlanders* 6, trans. Keneva Kunz in *The Sagas of the Icelanders*, 649.

any direct transfer of Norse spiritual beliefs to William's France occurred, these ideas may have been current in other earlier, medieval pagan societies as well. Certainly, these elements find a more than coincidental echo in sources from well outside the Norse cultural area. William himself, as we shall see, mentions spirit projection and bodily revenants in particularly striking --and condemnatory--terms.[75] Carlo Ginsburg's famous *benandanti* were individuals born with a caul; that is, the amniotic sack was still around the newborn infant, and thus believed themselves destined for special spiritual powers. They believed that their souls left their bodies at night to battle witches. Similar beliefs, perhaps the relics of ancient shamanism, are represented throughout medieval and early modern Europe.[76]

Some of these pagan beliefs were simply irreconcilable with official theology and confused or appalled the theologians who encountered them. For example, theologians could not countenance either Norse-style spirit projection or the *draugur*-type bodily undead mentioned above. The conception of the body and soul involved was simply too alien. Christian theologians accepted that humans could fly—but not

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[75] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1061aD-1070aG.
[76] Nancy Caciola, "Wraiths, Revenants and Ritual in Medieval Culture," *Past and Present* 152 (August 1996): 3-45. Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles*, and *Storia notturna* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi Editori, 1989), trans. Raymond Rosenthal as *Ecstasies : Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath* (New York: Pantheon, 1991). Gábor Klaniczay, "Shamanistic Elements in Central European Witchcraft," (1984), reprinted in *The Uses of Supernatural Power: The Transformation of Popular Religion in Medieval and Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Karen Margolis, trans. Susan Singerman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 129-50. The Christian tradition also had room for "near death" experiences, in which human souls were granted visions of the afterlife – but this tended to reinforce the belief that disembodied souls belonged exclusively to the realms of the dead. See, for example, Eileen Gardiner, ed., *Visions of Heaven and Hell before Dante* (New York: Ithaca Books, 1989).

that the immortal soul could leave the body before death and wander the earth in another shape. Similarly, a bodiless ghost lay within their conceptual range (although they preferred to believe that ghosts were demons), but an embodied one such as a *draugur* required an unacceptable form of resurrection. Far easier to believe that a demon possessed the dead body than that the departed soul had taken on physical form of its own or had returned to its former habitation.[77]

Clergy and laity alike were apt to find a place in Christianity for pagan spirits by assimilating them to demons, angels or saints. Some early medieval saint-cults were probably founded to appeal to the followers of a particular pagan deity or spirit. The shrine would become a church and the original deity assimilated to a saint with a similar name or attribute. Other spirits became demons. Since its earliest days, Christianity claimed that rival gods were demons in disguise. This important process will come up again later and at length in connection with demonology.[78]

Fairies are a case of spirits unassimilable to the Christian tradition. The word *fairie* (F. *fée*) is ambiguous; it designates spirits that are not angels or demons and that humans encounter on earth or in earthlike locales, not in heaven or hell. The word derives from Latin *fata* or "fate" – which was both a concept and a group of goddesses. In addition to the Roman element, Celtic and Germanic gods and spirits

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[77] Nancy Caciola, Du Bois, *Nordic Religions*, 70-91. Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, 125-44.
[78] Flint, "The Demonization of Magic."

spirits also contributed to fairies.[79] There is a striking correspondence between the motifs found in the romances and those of the preserved pre- and early- Christian literature of Wales and Ireland. The Welsh tales of the *Mabinogi*, for example, feature commerce between this world and another, ruled by powerful beings who mirror human society, but are clearly not human.[80] Fairie lands may be secularized descendants of pagan visions of the afterlife or the realms of the gods, and some romances, such as *Sir Orfeo*, present fairies with attributes similar to the dead.[81]

The category of fairies owes much to the verse romances written for the courts of Languedoc and France and the Angevin Empire in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the romances, Fairies generally appear as human in shape, form and size. (The motif of tiny fairies originated much later.) They are associated with mysterious powers. Sometimes they are magicians, but just as often the lands in which they dwell-are also magical in quality – otherworldly , and often inaccessible, although fairies sometimes lead humans there, or humans stumble into them on their own. Perhaps most importantly, fairies are not uniformly hostile to the human race.

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[79] Laurence Harf-Lancner, *Les fées au moyen âge: Morgane et Mélusine: La naissance des fees* (Geneva: Editions Slatkine, 1984) and *Le Monde des fees dans l'occident medieval* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 2003). See also the collected articles in "Fées, dieux et déesses au Moyen Age," *Bien dire et biee apprendre: Revue de Médiévistique* 12 (1994).
[80] Trans. Patrick K. Ford, *The Mabinogi and Other Medieval Welsh Tales* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).
[81] A. J. Bliss, ed., *Sir Orfeo*, 2nd ed. (Clarendon: Oxford, 1966). See also Marie-Thérèse Brouland, *Sir Orfeo: le substrat celtique du lai breton anglais* (Paris: Didier érudition, 1990).

Although many of them serve as antagonists, they do not appear to be intrinsically evil.

Oral traditions of fairies or fairy-like spirits also existed. Some clergymen of the High Middle Ages preserved scraps of information about popular belief in non-Christian spirits. William, is in fact, one of our better sources. He mentions food offerings to ladies dressed in white, worship given to propitiate infanticidal spirits, and veneration of goddesses and spirits of fields.[82] The folklore of modern Europe, recorded in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by philologists, folklorists and nationalists, shows clear similarities to medieval materials. Sometimes, we can use the later descendants of medieval tales to illuminate that which seems obscure in the medieval texts themselves, but such a practice is as imprecise as it is useful.[83]

The infusion of Arabic philosophical, scientific and magical texts brought yet another conception of spirits to the attention of medieval schoolmen – that of astral spirits.[84] Neoplatonic cosmology included such abstractions and emanations from the godhead as *nous* and the world-soul. Aristotelian Intelligences provided the motive force for the planetary spheres. Perhaps drawing on older, Sabaean traditions of stellar worship, Arabic works such as the *Picatrix* listed the spirits who dwelt in each

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[82] William of Auvergne, *De Universo* 2.3.23, 1:1061aD-1070aG.
[83] Carl Lindahl, "Folklore," in *Medieval Folklore, A Guide to Myths, Legends, Tales, Beliefs and Customs*, ed. Carl Lindahl, John McNamara, and John Lindow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 142-48.
[84] Arabic *jinn*, by contrast, seem to have made little impact on the imagination of medieval Christendom.

star or planet and provided methods for summoning them. Theologians alternately assimilated and rejected these concepts. Neo-Platonists, such as the twelfth-century school of Chartres, sometimes identified Platonic emanations with various aspects of God. Angels sometimes substituted for Aristotelian intelligences in the cosmic scheme. Stellar spirits almost universally became demons; controlling them became an important part of necromancy.[85]

3.10 Conclusion

People at all levels of medieval Christian society believed that they were surrounded by invisible forces and strange beings: angels and demons, fabulous beasts, monstrous races, hostile magic, saints, miracles and the benevolent influence of providence. The scholastic thinkers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries simplified this great variety of beings and powers by dichotomizing and classifying them as either natural or demonic. In so doing, they reified the evil forces and created different problems from the ones they had intended to resolve. William embraced a mechanistic and Aristotelian conception of a cosmos guided by the regular motion of the stars and their influence on the sublunary world. Although divine miracles formed the only true exception to this order, for only God could suspend the regular

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[85] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* 151-75. David Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought*, 2nd ed., ed. D. E. Luscombe and C. N. L Brooke (London: Longman, 1988), 103-4, 120-28. Tiziana Suarez-Nani, *Les anges et la philosophie: Subjectivité et fonction cosmologique des substances séparées à la fin du XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 2002). David Pingree, ed., *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghayat Al-Hakim* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1986).

laws of the universe he had created, demons in practiced formed a second exception, one of illusion which was part of the natural order but seemed otherwise. To fit the new theory of the schools, the learned elite, including William, used demonic magic to shoehorn existing beliefs into the framework of Aristotelian science. Occult virtues formed one avenue of explanation –what had been thought expressions of supernatural and immanent power, theologians now conceived as exotic but natural phenomena. Demons constituted another. William and his contemporaries were to construct a vision of demons as wicked spirits who used their natural powers of illusion to delude, confound and damn humanity, thus explaining the most intractable or impossible-seeming of popular beliefs. In effect, these writers, who were also Church officials, ascribed unusual events to either good or evil causes, performing a scientific variation of *discretio spirituum* (discernment of spirits), searching for the divine presence in nature and guarding against a demonic one. But, like the phenomena demons would be called upon to explain, demons themselves had been the subject of contradictory lore, opinion, and speculation. It is to this range of beliefs that we now turn, to examine how out of its variety, William refined and constructed his cutting-edge, Aristotelian demonology.

4.0 DIVERSE DEMONS

Of necessity, William's demonology had to acknowledge pre-existing conceptions of demons, whether he intended to uphold them or to refute them. He is, therefore, a leading source of information about European demon-lore at the beginning of the thirteenth century. In sketching the status of the general understanding of demons in William's day, it will be beneficial to look at some of William's own references to contemporary ideas, in order to round out the picture. His analysis will come to the fore, later. This chapter examines the range of ideas about demons held by twelfth- and thirteenth-century Europeans. The Christian division of spirits into angels and demons had long dominated European learned culture, gradually, and as the result of military political, and cultural processes like intermarriage, rendering marginal those beliefs derived from other systems such as pagan religion. With the explosive growth of the universities and scholarship of the High Middle Ages ancient literary sources, such as Neoplatonism, reappeared, and with them came theories that reinvigorated dormant conceptions of spirits as astrological and natural entities. Necromancers accepted some or all of these ideas, threatening to dilute or substitute them for the theory of the fall, thus re-*daimon*izing learned Latin Christendom's conception of demons.

4.1 Demons Old and New

Western European conceptions of demons in the thirteenth century can be largely separated into two categories. First were those understandings, what I will call the common lore, which developed over the long, complex process of conversion in Europe. Second were those beliefs betraying the influence of scientific and magical theories recently imported from the Arabic world. At first, these ideas remained confined to specialists such as the university-trained elite or the necromantic underground.

We can access the common fund of demonic lore by examining the snippets of information given by different written sources. As different authors utilized strands of this lore in many fashions, tailoring or explaining it according to their needs and their audiences, this reconstruction is of necessity an imprecise process, but certain themes do emerge – some clearly reflecting the teachings of the official Church but others seemingly emerging from folklore or pre-Christian paganism.

The *Dialogus Miraculorum* of William's near contemporary, Caesarius of Heisterbach (d. c. 1250), will serve as my primary example for the common lore, because it is especially rich in the number and quality of tales that it contains.[86] Perhaps born in nearby Cologne, Caesarius joined the Cistercian community at Heisterbach in northern Germany around the close of 1198. He eventually became

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[86] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, ed. Joseph Strange (Cologne: H. Lempertz and Company: 1851/7; reprinted Ridgewood, NJ.: Gregg Press, 1966), trans. H. von Scott and C. C. Swinton Bland as *The Dialogue on Miracles* (George Routledge and Sons: London, 1929).

the Master of Novices, where he was responsible for instructing converts to the order and aiding their transition from secular to monastic life. In 1220, he became prior, or assistant to the Abbot. He wrote several widely-distributed works, including the *Dialogues*, the *Homilies*, and *Lives* of local saints Engelbert of Cologne and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, whose body was at Marburg.[87]

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[87] G. G. Coulton, introduction, in Scott and Bland, 1:vii-xix. See also: Jacques Berlioz and Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu, ed. *Les Exempla médiévaux: introduction à la recherché*, suivie des tables critiques de l'Index exemplorum de Frederic C. Tubach (Carcassonne [France]: Garae/Hesiode, 1992), and *Les Exempla médiévaux : nouvelles perspectives* (Paris: H. Champion ; Geneva : Slatkine, 1998). Jessalynn Bird, "The Construction of Orthodoxy and the (De)construction of Heretical Attacks on the Eucharist in *Pastoralia* from Peter the Chanter's Circle in Paris," in *Texts and the Repression of Medieval Heresy*. ed. Caterina Brucshi and Peter Biller (York: York Medieval Press, 2003), 45-61. Dominique Donadieu-Rigaut, "Les ordres religieux et le manteau de Marie," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales* (XIIIe-XVe siècles) 8 (2001): 108-34. Sharon Farmer, "Persuasive Voices: Clerical Images of Medieval Wives," *Speculum* 61.3 (July 1986): 517-43. James France, "Cistercians under Our Lady's Mantle," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 37.4 (2002): 393-414. Michael E. Goodrich, "A Note on Sainthood in the Hagiographical Prologue," in *Lives and Miracles of the Saints: Studies in Medieval Hagiography,* ed. Michael E. Goodrich (Burlington, VT: Variorum, 2004), IX:168-174. Katrien Heene, "De Litterali et Morali Earum Instruccione: Women's Literacy in Thirteenth-century Agogic Texts," in *The Voice of Silence: Women's Literacy in a Men's Church.* ed. Thérèse de Hemptinne and María Eugenia Góngora (Turnhout: Brepols: 2004), 145-66. Jacqueline E. Jung, "From Jericho to Jerusalem: The Violent Transformation of Archbishop Engelbert of Cologne," in *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, ed. Caroline Walker Bynum and Paul Freedman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 60-82, 283-92. Brian Patrick McGuire, "Friends and Tales in the Cloister: Oral Sources in Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus miraculorum*" and "Written sources and Cistercian inspiration in Caesarius of Heisterbach," in *Friendship and Faith: Cistercian Men, Women, and Their Stories*, *1100-1250*, ed. Brian Patrick McGuire (Burlington, VT: Variorum, 2002), I:227-82, II:167-47. Ivan G. Marcus, "Images of the Jews in the *Exempla* of Caesarius of Heisterbach," in *From Witness to Witchcraft: Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian Thought*, ed. Jeremy Cohen (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), 247-56. Jacqueline Murray, "'The Law of Sin that is in my Members': The Problem of Male Embodiment" in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval*

The *Dialogues* reflect Caesarius' concerns as Master of Novices; in them an older monk carries on an ideal conversation with a novice, recounting many edifying tales designed to fortify the novices' commitment to the order and its austere practices. Compared to fully established monks, novices were more strongly connected to the laity of the surrounding community, since novices had not yet taken the vows that, in principle, would sever their ties with that community and their families. Caesarius' chosen tales of the supernatural reflect these facts, making visible the normally invisible actions of spirits and saints that underlay everyday lay and monastic life and underscored the spiritual dangers of the life "in the world" the novices had left behind.

The stories that feature demons serve these purposes no less than his stories that have the Virgin Mary or a pious monk as a protagonist. For example, in *Dialogus miraculorum* 1.5, a lapsed novice dies to the accompaniment of terrible portents, reinforcing the danger of leaving the monastic vocation.[88] Tale 5.7, in which a priest sees tiny demons clinging to a rich woman's garment, shows the dangers of vanity among the laity.[89] Similar stories in *Dialogus miraculorum* 3.2,

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Europe, ed. Samantha E.J. Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002), 9-22. J. M. M. H. Thijssen, "Master Amalric and the Amalricians: Inquisitorial Procedure and the Suppression of Heresy at the University of Paris," *Speculum* 71.1 (Jan. 1996): 36-65.

[88] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 1.5, 1:117-8, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:22-3.

[89] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, 5.7, 1:287, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:327.

3.3, and 3.5 are clearly meant to underline the value of confession.[90] Doubtless, Caesarius selected or massaged all his stories with similar didactic purposes in mind.

Nevertheless, there is some evidence that some of Caesarius' tales may originate in oral sources from inside or outside the monastery. The three tales 3.2, 3.3 and 3.5 each feature a demoniac whose demon calls out the sins of passersby, and each story has a similar narrative structure and moral. Caesarius assumes them to be differing incidents, but it seems more likely that they represent some form of diffusion of the tale as it was told.[91]

Other sources, too, shed light on common conceptions of demons current in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Caesarius' work is only a part of a larger tradition of monastic miracle stories, such as those written by Peter the Venerable (d. 1156) and Herbert of Torres (active, mid-twelfth century). Herbert and Caesarius were Cistercians, Peter a Cluniac, but the substance of their tales reflects a tradition that spanned both newer and older orders.[92] The books of wonders and curiosities such as the *Otia Imperialis* of Gervase of Tilbury (d. ca. 1220) and the *De nugalis curialum* of Walter Map (d. ca. 1210) provide another genre rich in anecdotes about monsters, demons and spirits. These works, intended to provide entertainment

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[90] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 1:112-5, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:125-136.
[91] He remarks that that he is uncertain whether the demoniac in 3.3 is the same as the one in 3.2. Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 1:112-5, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:125-136.
[92] Herbert of Torres, archbishop of Sardinia, *De miraculis libri tres*, PL 158, col 1273-1383B. Peter the Venerable, *De miraculis libri duo*, ed. Dyonisia Bouthillier (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988). See also Flint on demons and monks, *The Rise of Magic in Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 105-6.

for lay rulers and their courts, catalogue a variety of foreign wonders, remarkable sights, strange beings, and magical objects. [93]

Among the influx of new ideas that entered or reentered Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were ideas about spirits which did not accord with the Latin Church's traditional doctrines. Some of these ideas were philosophical, such as the Aristotelian Intelligences which moved the heavenly spheres. Some reflected ancient pagan religion and philosophy, which took on new importance when viewed in light of the Arabic lore. Yet the most dangerous ideas were those which had roots in Arabic astral magic and which provided theoretical justification for necromancy. As time passed, these ideas percolated beyond the specialists, affecting the more ordinary run of clerics and the common lore.[94]

Necromancy represented a radical and forceful departure from Christian orthodoxy. Much of our information about it comes from magicians' grimoires from later in the Middle Ages. Despite the fact that they often post-date William considerably, their content often conforms to what is known and recorded elsewhere about earlier, lost High Medieval works. Many of these works exhibit a fierce defense of magic. The *Picatrix* (c. 1251) and the *Sworn Book* (c. 1317) defend magic

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[93] Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia: Recreation for an Emperor* 3.86, ed. and trans. S. E. Banks and J. W. Binns (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002). Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialum* 11, ed. and trans. M. R. James, rev. C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors (Clarendon: Oxford, 1983).

[94] Here I have found helpful Greenfield's division of demonological beliefs into "mainstream" and "alternative" currents, for William likewise encountered many demonological ideas blurred by interplay, confusion and mutual appropriation, Richard P. H. Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late Medieval Byzantine Demonology (*Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1988).

as a noble form of philosophy. The *Sworn Book* and the *Liber visionum* (c. 1323) also assert that they are using good spirits as spiritual sources of their magic. The *Sworn Book* uses angels to induce the beatific vision and the *Liber visionum* claims to be a revelation from the Virgin Mary. It seems likely that they reflect ongoing debates about the legitimacy of magical arts within the clerical community.[95]

Old and new demonic lore had many correspondences. Both the common lore and Arabic theories of spirits drew heavily on ancient Mediterranean conceptions of the spirit world, which in turn shared many assumptions with Biblical, Celtic and Germanic lore. As such, similar themes played out in all types of sources, as new and old lore reinforced, enriched and collided with each other.

4.2 Christian Concepts

Most concepts of demons in western European authors drew on Christian tradition and utilized its conceptions. From its beginnings, Christianity had claimed to free its followers from the ancient world's threatening *daimones*. These spirits served in theory as intermediaries between gods and men, but in practice were seen as unpredictable, destructive entities. The Church identified the *Daimones* as the fallen angels of biblical tradition, and the clergymen of following centuries continued to

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[95] Richard Kieckhefer, "The Devil's Contemplatives: The *Liber Juratus,* the *Liber Visionum*, and Christian Appropriation of Jewish Occultism," in *Conjuring Spirits*, 250-65. David Pingree, ed., *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghayat Al-Hakim* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1986). Nicholas Watson, "John the Monk's *Book of Visions of the Blessed and Undefiled Virgin Mary, Mother of God:* Two Versions of a Newly Discovered Ritual Magic Text," in *Conjuring Spirits*, 163-215.

stress this identity. If *daimones* were demons, this not only explained the beliefs of their flocks in non-Christian spiritual entities, but also emphasized the folly and danger of venerating such creatures. Such teachings had a profound effect on the spiritual beliefs of all levels of society, which largely absorbed the doctrine that demons were evil spirits, profoundly concerned with human morality.

4.2.1 Fallen Angels

The fall of the angels is one of the most important Christian teachings about demons. The story of the fall of the angels developed in Jewish tradition, reaching its currently recognizable form during the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. The nucleus of this motif is the brief and enigmatic passage in Genesis 6.1-4, part of what is called the J textual tradition:

> And after that men began to be multiplied upon the earth, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God seeing the daughters of men, that they were fair, took to themselves wives of all which they chose. And God said: My Spirit shall not remain in man for ever, because he is flesh, and his days shall be a hundred and twenty years. Now giants were on the earth in those days. For after the sons of God went in to the daughters of men, and they brought forth children, these are the mighty men of old, men of renown. And God seeing that the wickedness of men was great on the earth, and that all the thought of their heart was bent on evil at all times, it repented him that he had made man on the earth… [96]

The Sons of God (*Bene Ha'elohim*) seem to have been shadowy, lesser divinities forming a court or pantheon for Yahweh. Their lust for mortal women gave birth to the Nephilim, a kind of giant, who may have been identified with Canaanite heroes or

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[96] Douay-Rheims version. Capitalization regularized.

the Caananite people. Whatever tale lay behind the Genesis account, it seems soon to have been forgotten; indeed, its very brevity and the choppiness of the exposition seems to indicate that the J author/s felt a certain embarrassment about the whole business or the patching together of comparatively discredited fragments.[97]

The earliest narratives of the fall of the angels, those of the so-called Watcher tradition, formed a rival for the Genesis text. *I Enoch* and related texts tell of the descent of spirits to the earth. These beings, called Watchers, are no longer dubious divinities, but recognizably angels. They spread culture and technology among humanity. Sometimes, God blesses their task; in others, the spreading of technology clearly contradicts God's desires. In either case, the angels mate with human beings, an act which the texts present as thoroughly reprehensible. They and their hybrid offspring spread temptation and destructive technology until God is moved to punish them. The Nephilim, slain by the flood or by each other, lose their bodies and become malignant ghosts. In many versions of the story God binds some or all of these spirits in places of punishment beneath the earth.[98] Later versions of the fall have more familiar outlines. In these, Satan is cast from heaven for simple pride or for jealousy and refusal to worship Adam. Other elements are introduced: the battle

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[97] Ronald Hendel, "The Nephilim were on the Earth: Genesis 6:1-4 and its Ancient Near Eastern Context," in Christoph Auffarth, Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Alexandra Wisniewsk, ed., *The Fall of the Angels* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 11-34.
[98] Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "The Origins of Evil in Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition: The Interpretation of Genesis 6:1-4 in the Second and Third Centuries B.C.E.," in *The Fall of the Angels*, 87-118. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 174-207.

with Michael, the identification of the serpent of Eden with Satan, and the imprisonment of the devil and demons in the air or on or under the earth. Some of the Fall becomes Christian Scripture, a "political" rebellion in contrast to the Watchers's sin of sexual desire.

Early Christianity inherited these traditions, and the fall of the angels from heaven quickly became a prominent and enduring motif of the new religion. The Watcher version, though it did not disappear, faded from prominence. In the New Testament, the Devil and demons figure prominently. In early "Gnostic" variants of Christianity, the fall of the devil and his power over the earth became a prominent motif and locus of theological speculation. This prompted a response from the eventually victorious moderate party, who took pains to stress the devil's subordination to God and incidentally and in the process settled the fall of the angels from heaven as a method of emphasizing that subordination.[99]

Demons and fallen angels served Christian thinkers in another purpose as well; they provided early Christians with a ready explanation for antiquity's many gods and spirits. The antique and late antique world-view abounded not only with gods but many lesser beings, often known as *daimones.* (Our own word *demon* comes from *daimon* via *daemon*/*demon* in medieval Latin.) *Daimon* did not necessarily designate an evil spirit, merely a lesser one. In Neoplatonic thought,

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[99] Jeffrey Burton Russell Russell, *The Devil*, 207-12, 228-43, 247-49 and *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), esp. 51-79. Dyan Elliot, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 128-29.

daimones constituted intermediary spirits that linked the divine with the earthly. In the popular imagination, *daimones* were fickle, threatening and inconsistent. People often attempted to placate or control these spirits which were linked with the chthonic powers and tied to such fickle forces as health, love and luck. The numerous surviving *defixiones* tablets, amulets, papyri and charms serve as testament to this widespread use and fear of the daimonic powers.

Christian efforts to recast the *daimones* were probably facilitated by the increasing fear in which such spirits were already held. This same process could be (and was) extended to the pagan gods as well. (Few seem to have found particularly attractive the view that held that the pagan gods and spirits did not exist, although many adopted the Euhemeristic view that the pagan gods were merely legendary heroes that popular imagination had elevated to godhood.) In any case, this equation of pagan spirits with fallen angels continued paradigmatically to be applied not only to Roman deities but eventually to Germanic ones as well, as can be seen in Martin of Braga's (d. 579) attack on the superstitions of his age.[100]

In the thirteenth century, theological works such as William's *De universo* clearly locate demons in the ranks of a monotheistic spiritual hierarchy of creatures.

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[100] Martin of Braga, *De Correctione Rusticorum* 7, ed. and trans. Mario Naldini in *Contro Le Superstizioni: Catachesi al Popolo* (Florence: Nardini Editori, 1991). Ken Dowden, *European Paganism: The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2000). Valerie Flint, "The Demonization of Magic and Sorcery in Late Antiquity: Christian Redefinition of Pagan Religions," in Bengt Ankaroo and Stuart Clark, ed., *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 279-348. Snorri Sturluson, *The Prose Edda: Norse Mythology*, trans. Jesse L. Brock (New York: Penguin, 2005), esp. 1-8.

Authors such as Caesarius incorporated the fall of the angels into their narratives. In 5.9 of his *Dialogus miraculorum*, he reports a demon as saying, "I would rather go down to hell with one soul whom I had myself deceived than go back to heaven."[101] In 5.10, another demon laments its fall from heaven and declares itself willing to undergo almost any ordeal if only it could return.[102]

Such redemption, of course, would be impossible. In 3.26 Caesarius records another story in which a demon is moved to confession. The demon in human form admits that he is "one of those who fell with Lucifer." The priest requires only that the demon ask for God's pardon for its sin against Him, to which the demon replies that it cannot, so great is its pride.[103] Thus, in this one sequence, Caesarius a) reminds his listeners that demons were once in heaven, b) underscores the value of penance, and c) demonstrates the irrevocably reprobate and prideful nature of demons. Perhaps it also served as a corrective for those who doubted the justice of demons' eternal damnation.

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[101] "Si hoc eset in meo arbitrio, mallem cum un anima a me decepta descendere in infernum, quam redire ad coelum." Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, 5.9, 1:1:289-90, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:330. Quoted on 1:289,.

[102] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, 5.10, 1:290, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:330-331.

[103] "Daemon ego sum, unus ex his qui cum Lucifero ceciderit." Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, 3.26, 1:143-4, trans. Scott & Bland, 1:161-162. Quoted on page 143.

4.2.2 Tempters

As spirits of evil, Christian demons desired to influence human beings towards immoral behavior. Stories of demonic temptation have been part of the Christian tradition at least from the gospels onward. The devil himself tempted Christ in the wilderness, and this incident became paradigmatic for the struggle between good and evil in early Christianity, which saw itself participating in a cosmic struggle of good and evil forces.[104] The monasticism of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages took up the theme of spiritual combat. Monastic heroes like St. Anthony battled demonic temptations and survived triumphant.[105]

High medieval sources also attributed to demons the vexation and temptation of human beings. Caesarius dedicates an entire chapter to demonic temptation, organized into sections on the various deadly sins to which a person might fall prey. Most of his stories naturally relate to the special temptations of his monastic audience – sleep (due to celebrating hours at night, etc.), meat (due to their vegetarian diet) or simply the world (the desire to leave the rigors of the monastery behind or to pursue military or family callings). In his anecdotes, demons play several roles. Visions of demons might personify a person's sins – as when various animals appear on lazy monks asleep at the choir.[106] In other cases, demons actively tempt their victims,

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[104] Mark 1:9-14. Matthew 4:1-11. Luke 4:1-13.
[105] Athanasius, *Vie d'Antoine* esp. 5,-10, 21-30, 38-43, 51-53, ed. G. J. M. Bartelink (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1994), 142-65, 193-221, 239-53, 273-79.
[106] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 4.32-35, 1:202-4, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:230-2.

drawing them on with promises of food or sex.[107] William follows a similar scheme in a sermon on Job VII, "a man's life on this earth is military service" (*Milicia est uita hominis super terram*), but seems more concerned with idolatry than any other potential demonic temptation.[108]

4.2.3 Possession

Christian tradition, drawing on conceptions of spirits from throughout the ancient Mediterranean and Near East, had long spoken of the ability of demons to usurp control of human bodies and minds. In the Gospels, many of Christ's miracles demonstrate his power over the malefic spirits who cause madness and disease, as when he cast a demoniac's legion of demons into a herd of pigs.[109] Throughout the Roman world, people similarly feared the *daimones* of ill-health, and early Christianity's claim to offer protection from them perhaps explains some of its appeal.

Some of this fear is reflected in later accounts of possession. People had to be extremely careful of their behavior and speech or risk grave misfortune. Small lapses in ritual might have profound effects. Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* recounts the story of a nun who became possessed when she ate a head of lettuce without first crossing herself. When exorcised, her demon protested, "What did I do? What did I

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[107] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 4.81-2, 5.84, 5.87, 1:249-52, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:283-84, 285-86, 288.
[108] I wish to express gratitude to Franco Morenzoni for letting me see (August, 2005) his forthcoming edition of Paris, BNF, lat. 16471, fol. 207rb-209va (RLS 357).
[109] Mark 5:1-10.

do? I was just sitting on the lettuce. She came along and ate me."[110] More than half a millennium later, Caesarius of Heisterbach recounts similar cautionary tales against the dangers of casual blasphemy. In 5.11, a man's wife becomes possessed when he tells her to "go to the devil."[111] In 5.12, a man similarly condemns his son.[112] In 5.26, a father tells his tiny daughter that "I wish you might eat the devil in your greediness," and so she was possessed.[113]

Tales of demonic possession also served as a method of confirming the efficacy of the Church's sacraments and relics. Demons are made to confess their own helplessness before Christian forms of power. Caesarius' most common theme is that confession erases knowledge of one's sins from demons' minds. The demons possessing various victims demonstrate their knowledge of the unconfessed sins of people passing by, only to have their knowledge wiped away later by confession.[114] Demoniacs provide other kinds of testimony as well. In 5.14, a relic of the crown of thorns proves its veracity when it makes a demoniac cry out in agony.[115]

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[110] "Ego quid feci? Ego quid feci? Sedebam mihi super lactucam. Venit illa et momordit me." Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* 1.4.7, ed. Adalbert de Vogüé, trans. Paul Antin (Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1978-1980), 3:44.
[111] "Vade diablo…" Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.12, 1:291, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:331-32.
[112] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.12, 1:291-92, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:332-33.
[113] "Diabolum comedas in ventrem tuum." Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.26, 309, t rans. Scott and Bland, 1:354-55.
[114] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 1:112-5, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:125-36.
[115] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.14, 1:292-93, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:334.

4.2.4 Prisoners and Punishers in Hell

The Christian classification of demons as spirits of evil finds perhaps its greatest expression in their assigned role in the afterlife. In the Christian tradition demons are not only occupants of hell, but one of its principal torments. Indeed, their relationship to hell seems an ambiguous one, not only coming and going from their place of punishment, but also overseeing the damned human souls therein. In traditions where Purgatory is still ill-differentiated from Hell, demons sometimes torment souls destined for eventual release.[116]

Caesarius clearly assigned demons the role of punishing sinners in hell, whereas he allowed angels to administer discipline lovingly in Purgatory.[117] In many of his tales, demons appear at sinners' deathbeds, ready to ferry them off to punishment. Sometimes, the dying person discerns his or her future fate, like the usurer of Cologne who felt demons pouring money into his mouth to chew.[118] In others, they pass into the afterlife in a "near death experience," returning with some

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[116] See the collected stories in Eileen Gardiner, ed., *Visions of Heaven and Hell before Dante* (New York: Ithaca Books, 1989), esp. "St. Patrick's Purgatory," 135-48. Le Goff, *La Naissance du Purgitoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1981), trans. Arthur Goldhammer as *The Birth of Purgatory,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), esp 193-201, 204-8. On Caesarius's use of Puragtory, see Caeasarius, *Dialogue on Miracles* esp. 1.32, 2.2, 4.30, 7.16, 12.24, 1:36-39, 1:58-62, 1:198-202, 2: 17-23, 2:335-36, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:39-42, 1:64-67, 1:225-29,1:473-79, 2:313-14. Also, Le Goff, 300-10.
[117] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 1.32, 1:36-39, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:39-46.
[118] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 11.42, 2:301-2, trans. Scott and Bland, 2:272-73.

vision of the otherworld.[119] Finally, in numerous visions, the souls of those in purgatory or hell return to warn their friends or beg for some favor.[120] Similar stories occur in Peter the Venerable[121] and Herbert of Torres[122] and constituted an ongoing theme in monastic vision literature.

4.2.5 Sources of Magic, Familiars of Magicians

The Christian tradition had long portrayed demons as the source of non-Christian magic. Although the subject of many fantastic tales, magicians themselves were hardly legendary: many persons practiced or claimed to practice magical arts, from the lowlier cunning folk to Kieckhefer's clerical underground of churchmen dabbling in necromancy.[123] Usually, it is the clerics who appear in tales for a clerical audience. The latter are particularly important as a trope in Caesarius of

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[119] For example, Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 12.23, 2:332-35, trans. Scott and Bland, 2:310-3.
[120] Practically the entire first half of Book Twelve consists of such stories. Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 12.2-42, 2:316-54, trans. Scott and Bland, 2: 291-344.
[121] Peter the Venerable, *De miraculis libri duo* 1.23, 1:27-8, ed. Dyonisia Bouthillier (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988), 68-72, 82-94.
[122] Herbert of Torres, *De miraculis libri tres* esp. 1.4,1.19, in *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris: Garnier; and Turnhout: Brepols, 1844-55, 1862-65; reprinted http://pld.chadwyck.com), 189: col 1280D-85D, and 189: col. 1294A-96D.
[123] See Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 151-75.

Heisterbach.[124] Thus, the tales told, no matter how fantastic, could be hung upon actual persons.

In such sources, magicians associate willingly with demons, even swearing forms of homage and allegiance.[125] In the oft-retold story of Theophilus, originating in Late Antiquity, Theophilus uses a Jewish magician to contact the devil, through whom he sells his soul. Only the intervention of Mary saves him and nullifies the contract. Its frequent repetition attests to the early and continuing appeal of even such elements as the pact that do not assume their full importance until much later in the history of persecutions. [126] In Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus miraculorum* 1.32, the devil attempts to convince a scholar to swear homage. He fails, but the scholar does accept a magical stone that grants him knowledge. For this he narrowly escapes damnation.[127] Sometimes it seems the demons are willing to accept anything at all from a human. In 5.2, the doubting knight Henry persuades a skilled cleric to

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[124] See for example Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 1.32-4, 5.2, and 5.4, 1:36-43, 326-27, 328-30, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:39-46, 315-17, 328-30.
[125] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 1.32, 1:36-39, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:39-43.
[126] Miri Ruben, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 7-39. For Theophilus, see Flint, *Rise of Magic*, 344-7, Russell, *Lucifer*, 80-81. For more on the common motif of Jews as magicians, see Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and its Relation to Modern Antisemitism* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1943), 57-75.
[127] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 1.32, 1:36-9, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:39-43.

summon up a demon. Safe within a magic circle, the knight repeatedly resists the devil's shifting demands: for a cloak, a girdle, a sheep, even a cock.[128]

Several additional motifs recur in accounts of necromancy. Demons are able to change shape and create fantastic illusions. In Caesarius' *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.4, some curious students witness demons capering about their protective magic circle, transforming first into soldiers, then into beautiful women. When one of the students unwisely reaches beyond the circle, a demon seizes him and carries him away to hell.[129] Demonic horses are another common motif, beasts which carry their riders to the ends of the earth and back in the shortest of times.[130]

The existence and content, real or imagined, of magical books contributed to the common demonology of the High Middle Ages. Many sources also attribute to demons the power of divination – either real or feigned, and there was a long-standing tradition of using young boys as mediums in divinatory operations. John of Salisbury, for example, recalls that at a young age his master tested him for suitability in such operations.[131]

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[128] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.2,1:326-27, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:315-17.
[129] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.4, 1:328-30, trans. Scott and Bland, 1: 318-20.
[130] See Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, 5.37, trans. Scott and Bland, 368-70. See also 8.59, 2:131-33; Trans. Scott and Bland, 2:61-63.
[131] John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, trans. and ed. Clemens C. J. Web (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1909; reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1979), 2.15, 429B-C. See also the discussion in chapter 6 of this dissertation.

4.2.6 Begetters of Idolatry, Heresy and False Belief

The Christian tradition was also inclined to identify demons as the root of false religious beliefs and practices. The thirteenth-century institutional Church faced numerous dissident religious beliefs and was inclined to meet them with increasing severity and vilification. From ancient paganism to modern heresies and superstitions, to the competing monotheisms of Judaism and Islam, orthodox Christians explained the existence of competing religions by attributing their origins to devilish agency.

From the early church onwards clerics attacked the pagan gods as demons. (This position seems to have been more influential and widespread than the simple denial of their existence.) The *Life of Boniface* is but one of the more famous examples of this strategy.[132] As missionary contacts with Germanic pagans continued, churchmen continued this trend of identifying pagan deities as demons. The memory of such conflicts lingered even as paganism receded into the background and continued to color the memory of pagan religion and the Roman world, and most importantly, to condition responses to the many pagan Roman authors and philosophers that were still read. [133]

Because churchmen considered local spirits and gods to be demons, they also often viewed unauthorized but nominally Christian cults and practices as a form of

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[132]Willibaldus, *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii Archepiscopi Moguntini*, ed. Wilhelmus Levison (Hanover: Bibliopolis Hanianus, 1905; rept. [?], 1977/2003).
[133]Richard Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe: From Paganism to Christianity: 371-1386 AD* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997).

demonolatry -- that is, the worship of demons. This long-standing attitude, well attested in Martin of Braga and other early Christian authors, had an enormous effect on the response to religious dissidence in William's own day. Many authors of the High Middle Ages, disturbed by the new heresies, assumed they must be devilish in origin. Caesarius tells several anecdotes about heretics in his Book 5, "On Demons." In 5.18, Caesarius recounts that the heretics at Besançon proved invulnerable to fire and injury. The bishop turned to a cleric who had once been a necromancer, commanding him to summon up the devil. Under questioning, the devil admits that "[the heretics] are my servants and are sent by me; and they preach what I have put into their mouths." Further, it revealed that they would remain invulnerable until the demonic contracts they had sewn into their armpits were removed.[134] In others of these stories, demons make no appearance whatsoever except implicitly as the ultimate cause of trouble.

Some Latin Christians implicated demons in the continued existence of non-Christian religions. Certain legends circulating in Latin claimed that Muhammad was a demoniac, others that he was a magician -- in short, that demons had created Islam or (less radically) furthered its rise.[135] Some authors, notably Joachim of Fiore, situated Islam in a chain of attacks on the Church by various heresies which would

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[134] "Mei sunt, et a me missi, et quae in ore illorum posui, illa praedicant." Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.18, 1:296-298, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:338-41. Quoted on page 1:297.

[135] Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960; rept. London: Oneworld, 1993), 47-53, 88-98, 106-12.

culminate in the false religion of the antichrist.[136] C*hansons de geste* often portrayed Islam as an outright pagan religion, identifying strange gods with outlandish names. Norman Daniel argues that such stylized presentations constituted a literary convention, which the poets did not intend to accurately represent Islam even as it was known to the courtly audience.[137] Nevertheless, it is striking how often and how easily western Christians charged non-Christian religions with idolatry and labeled their adherents pagans, who by Christian definition worshiped demons.

Anti-Jewish traditions often associated Jews and demons. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries witnessed a sharp decline in Jewish-Christian relations and were marked by the slaughter or expulsion of previously-protected Jewish communities and the burning of previously tolerated Jewish writings. Some of the more virulent accusations against Jews radiated from either new elites (such as the friars) or old ones expanding their power (such as the French kings and their agents).[138] For example, several Marian legends depict Jews as being in regular contact with the devil and his servants. The late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries saw a plethora of new verse versions of Theophilus from such authors as Gautier de Coincy, Adgar,

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[136]Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 209-213.
[137]See Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 338-43, and *Heroes and Saracens: an Interpretation of the Chansons de Geste* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1984), esp. 121-32.
[138]See, for example: Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); Gilbert Dahan and Élie Nicolas, ed., *Le Brûlement du Talmud à Paris*: 1242-44 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1999); William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

and Rutebeuf.[139] The twelfth century saw the first accusations that Jews ritually murdered Christians– a form of human sacrifice, and (possibly) demonolatry – or required Christian blood for their own purposes. Some sources accuse the Jews of ritually reenacting the Crucifixion, either with a human victim, or in the case of one of Adgar's poems, through a waxen image.[140] Moreover, twelfth and thirteenth century artistic programs often conflated depictions of Jews, Muslims, heretics and demons.[141] The illustrations of the *Bibles Moralisées*, illuminated paraphrases of the Bible intended for the French royal family and their immediate entourage, often transfer attributes from one group to another. Thus, demons and Muslims share the exaggerated noses and other physical features used to depict Jews, while heretics

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[139] Adgar, *Le Gracial,* ed. Pierre Kunstmann (Ottowa: Éditions de l'Université d'Ottowa, 1982), miracle 26, 167-93; Gautier de Coinci, *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*, ed. V. Frederic Koenig, 4 vols. (Librarie Droz: Genève, 1955-1970), 1:50-176; Rutebeuf, *Le miracle de Théophile: Miracle du xiie siècle,* ed. Grace Frank (Paris: Librarie Honoré Champion, 1986). For an analysis of Gautier, William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews*: *From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989). For the development of the pact in the thirteenth century, see Alain Boureau , *Satan Hérétique: Naissance de la démonologie dans l'Occident médiévale (1280-1330) (*Paris: Odile Jacob, 2004), 93-123. Irène Rosier-Catach, "Signes sacramentels et signes magiques: Guillaume d'Auvergne et la théorie du pacte," in *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne (+1249): Études réunies*, ed. Franco Morenzoni and Jean-Yves Tilliette (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 93-116.

[140] For such accusations in general, see also Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, 109-55. Adgar, *Le Gracial* 20, 143-47.

[141] See Sara Lipton, *Images of Intolerance: The Representation of Jews and Judaism in the* Bible moralisée (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Ruth Mellinkoff*, Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

often received a "Jewish" hat or purse. And many illustrations depict Muslims, Jews and Christian heretics in the process of worshiping idols.[142]

Caesarius does not speak directly of ties between Jews and demons, but at times the former take on characteristics of the latter in his portrayals. For example, in one story, a young Jewish convert smells the "stench of Jews" when her family tries to return her from the convent in which she has hidden.[143] This stench, believed in some cases to stem from a curse or physical ailment set upon Jews after the Crucifixion, seems particularly important as demons too were noted for their bad smells. [144] Caesarius reinforces the connection between repugnant odor, Jews and demons when he describes Jews reversing the baptism of one of their number by drawing the apostate through the opening of a latrine, a traditional demonic haunt.[145] In a third story, 2.23, confession saves a cleric from his Jewish adversaries in a manner almost directly parallel to the manner in which confession in a previous story placed the protagonist beyond the accusing powers of a demoniac. The cleric, who has seduced a young Jewish woman, confronts her family in the bishop's court, but his confession has miraculously rendered his accusers mute. [146]

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[142] See Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*, esp. 21-28, 77-81, 83-111.
[143] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 2.25, 1: 95-98 , trans. Scott and Bland, 1:107-9.
[144] For more on the *foetor judaicus,* see Trachtenberg, *the Devil and the Jews*, 47-52.
[145] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 2.26, 1: 98-9, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:109-10.
[146] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 2.23, 1:92-4, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:102-4.

4.3 Spirits of Nature

Existing simultaneously with the Christian moral classification of demons as evil spirits, many other beliefs in Western Europe associated demons with the natural world as guardians or embodiments of celestial and earthly places, functions which they had held in ancient pagan religions and which they still held in ancient Neoplatonic and contemporary Arabic philosophies. Thus Arabic conceptions of demons as natural spirits reinforced notions already present in the common lore.

4.3.1 Stellar Orders

Association of spirits with the heavenly bodies was an old and important idea. Christian Europe still retained many vestiges of Antiquity's association of gods and planets -- in the names of the planets and their influences, the names of the days of the week, and so forth. Astral magical texts often named the demons associated with various stars and planets and contained formulae to invoke them. Such practices had some philosophical justification, as many philosophers held, following Aristotle, that the planets were alive -- that is, that they had a guiding intelligence, spirit or *daimon*. In magical texts, this hierarchy of celestial beings was elaborated with great precision.[147] As these ideas filtered into Europe from the wider Mediterranean world and again became important matters for scholastic debate and interpretation,

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[147] As for example, in the *Liber Visionem,* which consists entirely of spells directed towards the planetary spirits, or the *Picatrix*, esp. Book Two, 31-89.

theologians had to confront the belief that the planets were aware and receptive to supplication – gods, indeed, in all but name.

The magical books of philosophy and necromancy often claimed to teach how to summon and manipulate helpful spirits, usually assumed to be drawn from the stars. A significant clerical sub-culture read, produced and preserved magical and philosophical works in Latin. These might be late antique works; for example, William sometimes quotes from the *De deo deorum* of Hermes. Others, like the *Al-mandalus*, seem to have been translations from the Arabic. Certain necromantic theories were prepared to jettison moral classification altogether, and with it, Christianity's long-standing assertion that all demons were evil – that all *daimons* were demons.[148] Some did this by outright adoption of non-Christian categories for spirits. Others took the half-way step of claiming that the demons with which they associated were, in fact, angels, the good spirits of Christianity. For example, William notes that the same necromancer who divided demons into eight stellar and four elemental orders also claimed that he communed with good spirits. The necromancer claimed to have learned from beings "he calls dwellers in the light." William confidently dismisses this claim based on their vile, earthly habitat:

> Why indeed would they have been living in a horrid and vile place, if the place of their dwelling was more sublime and noble in the ultimate heavens, where the king and lord of all ages was living with

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[148]William of Auvergne, *De legibus,* 1:84bH-85bB, 89bD, *De universo* 2.3.8, 1030aG, 2.3.20 1056bF, 2.3.23 1060bF-G, 1064bF. Jan R. Veenstra, "The Holy Amandel: Angels and the Intellectual Aims of Magic," in *The Metamorophosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 189-229.

> innumerable hosts of holy and blessed spirits? It is plain therefore that they fell from the bright place of their habitation, unless someone were to rave that they descended here to teach this erring and evil man and to erect deluded schools of necromancy and of this execrable art that is also odious to God.[149]

4.3.2 Elementals and Genii Loci

Elemental systems, associating spirits with each of the classical elements, merged easily with astral classifications.[150] Martianus Capella (d. before 429) forwards the idea that certain demons might be morally-neutral, long-lived inhabitants of various locations, a view which can be found in later authors such as William of Conches (d. post 1154) and Bernard Silvester (active mid twelfth century).[151] William of Auvergne gives one example of such a system by an unnamed necromancer, which classified demons into eight planetary and four elemental orders. In refuting this system, William amalgamates it to other works he has read. He begins by noting that on the planetary orders his source "does not vary

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[149] "Cum his autem omnibus scito, quia homo non habitavit, nisi cum Angelos malos, quos tamen ipse vocat inhabitantes lucem. Ex hoc manifestum est eos fuisse spiritus malignos vel malos Angelos, quia in deserto habitabant, sicut ipse dicit; quomodo enim sponte in loco horrido, et vilissimo habitabant, si locus habitationis erat sublimior atque nobilior in coelo ultimo, ubi inhabitabat Rex, et dominus saeculorum cum inumeris exercitibus sanctorum spirituum, et beatorum. Planum est igitur, eos cecidisse de loco praeclaro illius habitationis, nisi quis deliret eos illud descendisse ad docendum istum erroneum hominem, atque nefarium, et ad erigendas ibi scholas necromanticae, et excrabilis artis, atque Deo odibilis." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.8 1:1034 aF.
[150] Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late Medieval Byzantine Demonology*, 202-11.
[151] Lynn Thorndike, A History of *Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923; rpt. [?]: Kessinger, 2003), 2:545, 4:55,103-4.

from the error of Mercury and others, who posit for each heaven its own spirit."[152] This Mercury is Hermes Trismegistus. William's explanation of the remaining orders waxes long and contains many references to the pagan gods of antiquity. He lists gods associated with each element, such as Neptune with water, and Priapus, Ceres and Bacchus with the earth. He even refers to Cicero's *De natura deorum* at one point in his discussion.[153]

Demons share many traits with monsters in medieval art and narrative: marked with horrific or bestial features, such creatures were supposed to dwell in waste areas far from human beings. Although in some cases, monsters are clearly corporeal and demons are clearly spirits, in others the boundary between spirit and corporeal entity blurs. This suggests another possible system of classification for demons: one based on their types and features. Take, for example, the water-dwelling *dracs* mentioned by Gervaise of Tilbury. These spirits, individually and collectively, may have originated in religion or folklore as *genii locii*, spirits of place.[154]

4.3.3 Directional Spirits

The association of demons with the cardinal directions is also prominent

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[152] "De octo quidem ordinibus non discrepavit ab errore Mercuri, et aliorum, qui posuerunt unicuique coelo proprius spiritus, quemadmodum praeostendi tibi, quia etiam in circulo signorum poserunt spiritus ministrantes, similiter in circulo Saturni, deinde in circulo Jovis." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.8, in *Opera omnia* (Paris: [?], 1674; reprt. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1963), 1:1033bB.
[153] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.11, 1:1036-40.
[154] Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialis*, 3.85, 716-21. See also Claude Lecouteux, *Démons et génies du terroir au Moyen âge* (Paris: Imago, 1995).

among unorthodox conceptions of spirits. William cites one magical text, the *Major circulus*, that divides the world of demons into four kingdoms, each occupying one of the four directions:

> … in the malefic operation, which they call the *Major Circle*, they say that four kings of the demons, gathering together, appear from the four parts of the world, with their army and a great following of retainers, and alas! they name them according to the four parts of the world, so that the first is called East, the second West, the third the King of the South, the fourth the King of the North.[155]

The image of the demons occupying the four directions (which appears in the *Liber juratus*, as well as the *Testament of Solomon*) is almost as common in magical books as is an astrological division.[156] It is perhaps connected with astral systems through its association of individual demons with decans, and may be associated with the traditional naming of the winds as well. As Greenfield points out, this division reinforced the idea of demonic specialization and association with parts of the earth.

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[155] "Quoniam autem in opere illo malefico, quod majorem circulum vocant, apparere dicuntur quator reges daemonum a quator mundi partibus, cum exercitibus suis & comitatu magno, convenientes et ab ipsis quator mundi partibus heu cognominaverunt eos, ita ut primus vocatus Oriens, secundus Occidens, tertius rex Austri, quartus rex Septentrionus." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 12, 1:1037aB-C.

[156] See *Liber Juratus*, the second Treatise. There have been two editions of the seventeenth-century English translation: *Liber Juratus, or the Sworne Book of Honorius the Magician*, ed. Joseph H. Peterson, 1998. (http://www.esotericarchives.com/juratus/juratus.htm as of July, 2006) and *The Sworn Book of Honorious the Magician, As Composed by Honorious through Counsel with the Angel Hocroell*, ed. Daniel J. Driscoll (Gillette, NJ: Heptangle Press, 1977; rept. [?], 1983). The latter I have been unable to obtain. See also Greenfield, *Demonology*, 219-48, and tables IV-IX, 335-51.

This specialization sometimes led to particular operations involving particular kings.[157]

4.4 Mysterious Beings

Finally, there are those stories that emphasize the dangers and perhaps the rewards of human contact with demons whose ill-defined powers can greatly affect those mortals so rash as to engage them. Whether in the form of mysterious visions, furtive or forced sexual contact, or the strange boons of allegedly well-disposed demons, mysterious demons blurred the distinction between demons and other spirits.

4.4.1 Threatening Apparitions

The folklore of the High Middle Ages included many sorts of terrible and threatening wonders. Multiple sources recount ghostly hordes, nocturnal spirit projections, visitations by night hags and other entities and traditions that may have originated in pre-Christian religion and folklore. When committing accounts of these marvels to writing, many clerical narrators and theologians attributed them to demons or to demonic agency, although not without some hesitation. Such oddities fit poorly with the conception of demons as fallen angels, and some Christian authors identified the sources of these terrible wonders as ghosts or spirits or left them unidentified. Ultimately, however, there was little other suitable choice: in a Christian spiritual

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[157] Greenfield, *Demonology*, 225-48.

universe, strictly divided into human souls and good and evil angels, an author could hardly but assimilate and subsume any seemingly powerful but hostile entity under the name of "demon."

As a result, many stories include a mélange of "demonic" behaviors and entities which had little in common other than their ability to frighten, alarm, and mystify. For example, a variety of high medieval sources attests to belief in the Wild Hunt, a procession of dead warriors or other spirits.[158] Another widespread tradition concerns sightings of supernatural women in white, such as the lady Handund or Abundia. These white ladies, whether in the form of Abundia or unnamed, appear in William's *De universo*, in Caesarius' *Dialogus miraculorum*, Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose* and Gervase of Tilbury's *Otia imperalis*. Likewise, the perhaps related phenomena of nocturnal flights of witches or female spirits (which may be a form of spirit projection) appear in several sources. [159]

Many authors locate other marvels on the fringes of human habitation or at liminal times or places. For example, Gervase of Tilbury describes hilltops and

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[158] See, for example, the book-length treatment in Claude Lecouteux, *Chasses Fantastiques et Cohorts de la Nuit* (Paris, Imago: 1999).

[159] In general, see Ginzburg, *Ecstacies*, 89-92; Jacob Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, trans. James Steven Stallybrass (London: George Bell and Sons, 1883; rept. New York: Dover, 1966), 1:283-88; Lecouteux, *Chasses Fantastiques,* 13-25. For specific medieval examples, see Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum,* 3.11 1: 123-24, 11.63 2:313-14; Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose*, ed. Félix Lecoy (Librairie Honoré Champion: Paris, 1966-70), ll. 18395-18440, 457-468; William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.14, 1:1066aG-aH. Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialis*, 3.85-6, 715-25. See also my discussion of the hunt and the good ladies in chapter seven.

castles known to be haunted by frightening phenomena.[160] William and Gervase mention the *stryges* and *lamiae* who enter houses at night to kill newborn infants. William claims that demons inhabit wastelands and such unpleasant locations as sewers and toilets.[161]

In several of Caesarius' anecdotes, those unlucky enough to encounter a demon suffer death or injury as a result. In 5.28, the sight of a demon (encountered in a lavatory) strikes a lay brother down for several days. In 5.30, two squires see a demon in the form of a woman and are rendered deathly ill. In 5.31 and 5.32, the touch of a demon brings death. In 5.3, 5.34, and 5.42, demons injure various (not entirely innocent) victims by dragging them about the ground or air and into obstacles.[162] Flint speculates that magicians pulled people and objects into and through the air in early medieval European tales because of the associations of demons and the upper air.[163]

4.4.2 Sexual Partners, Harassers, and Procreators

There seems to have been a widespread belief that human beings could and did have sex with demons. Perhaps this belief reflects the many sexual liaisons between gods and humans in ancient pagan religions, sometimes transformed into a

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[160] Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialis*, 3.45, 642-45, 3.58, 668-69
[161] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1066bF-G and 2.3.6 1:1024bG-H. 1025bB. Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialis*, 3.85-6, 716-25.
[162] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum,* 5.3,5.28, 5.30-2, 5.34, 5.42, 1:278-9, 311-12, 315-16, 318, 326, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:317-8, 3 55-57, 3 60-63, 364-65, 375-76.
[163] Flint, *The Rise of Magic in the Early Middle Ages*, 121-23.

Christian moral about sexual temptation. Some of Caesarius' stories are clearly meant to warn his readers of the dangers of lustful thoughts. In 5.33, a demon in the form of nun copulates with a sleeping lay-brother. Shortly thereafter, he dies -- presumably, remarks Caesarius, some fault on the lay-brother's part brought the fatal demon to his bed. In others, the demon, accepted or rejected, tempts a conscious victim with its blandishments.[164]

Other tales have no such moral motive. In 3.12, Caesarius touches upon the common belief that coitus between demons and humans could produce live offspring, such as Merlin, believed to have a demonic father, or the Huns, the result of an ancient union en masse between rejected Gothic women and demons.[165] Merlin's supposed demonic parentage serves as a *locus classicus* for discussions of possible impregnation by demons. Many other authors, such as William himself, mention Merlin (and other demonic offspring) in their works.[166]

4.4.3-Good Demons

In some accounts, demons appear as neutral or even helpful spirits. Certain of these writings spring from Neoplatonic philosophical and magical traditions in which

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[164] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, and 5.33, 1:120-24, 203, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:134-37, 362-64.
[165] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 3.12, 1:124-5, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:139-40.
[166] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 1:1070aG-H. Van der Lugt gives an excellent discussion of the academic treatment of this subject and William's place in it. Maaike van der Lugt, *Le ver, le démon et la vierge: les théories médiévales de la génération extraordinaire* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2004), 339-49.

daimones serve as intermediaries and natural forces. Others may reflect less sophisticated pre- and post-Christian beliefs in a universe of spiritual guides, servants, and agents. Yet others may demonstrate no more than a storyteller's need for wish-fulfilling figures and plot devices. Even in a staunchly Christian author such as Caesarius of Heisterbach, one finds stories of demons who are not actively malevolent. In one of his stories, a knight accidentally discovers that his faithful squire is a demon. The horrified knight immediately tries to dismiss his servant. The demon, far from being wroth or trying to secure the knight's soul, instead rather piously asks him for five gold pieces, which he use to buy a church bell, a traditional protection against demons.[167]

4.4.4 Demons as the Dead

In pagan religion, as in the folklore that descended from and paralleled it, the spirits of dead humans often melded with spirits of other sorts. Roman religion-had the *larvae*, *penates* and *manes* , all ancestral spirits, as it were, of varying function and disposition. The romances of vernacular French literature at times evoked the uncanny association of faeries with the dead. In the twelfth-century romance, *Lancelot* or *The Knight of the Cart*, Lancelot penetrates a faerie realm in search of Guinevere. In the quasi-underworld he has entered: he crosses a thinly-masked river

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[167] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.36, 1:319-21, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:366-68.

of death upon a naked sword-blade.[168] The motif appears even more strongly in the fifteenth-century *Sir Orfeo*, which transposes the ancient legend of Orpheus into the courtly tradition of the matter of Britain. Orpheus becomes Orfeo, a knight, and his wife taken to the realm of Faerie rather than the classical Hades. Yet Faerie in this case is clearly also an underworld.[169]

Magicians sometimes conceived of their spirits as dead souls rather than non-human entities like angels. Classical poetry such as Horaces' Epode 5 depicts witches who sacrifice a boy in order to use his spirit in their magic. [170] In the later Roman world, magicians and their clients cast *defixiones* tablets into the tombs of the newly dead, precisely so that the spirits of those interred therein might perform magic.[171] William confronts the use of dead spirits in magic in his description of an unnamed ancient philosopher who, he recounts, sacrificed a child so that the boy's

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[168] Chrétien de Troyes*, Le Chevalier de la Charrette (Lancelot),* ed. and trans. Alfred Foulet and Karl D. Uitti (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 1989), ll. 3017-3155, pp. 171-79.
[169] A. J. Bliss, ed. *Sir Orfeo*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966).
[170] Horace, Epode 5, in *Horace: Epodes and Odes: A New Annotated Latin Edition*, ed. by Daniel H. Garrison (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 8-10.
[171] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 19-33. Flint, *Rise of Magic*, 13-35. Daniel Ogden, "Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls in the Greek and Roman Worlds," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome,* 2-90. Naomi Janowitz, *Icons of Power: Ritual Practices in Late Antiquity* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002). The foremost collection of translations of ancient papyri spells is Hans D. Sieter Betz, ed. and intro, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation Including the Demotic Spells,* 2nd Ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). See also John G. Gager, ed. and intro., *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

ghost would become his familiar spirit. William abhors this great crime (*scelus*), as he calls it, and denies that the boy's ghost could in fact aid in magic.[172]

4.5 Conclusion

Many differing conceptions of demons circulated in thirteenth-century Western Europe. The dominant view held demons to be the fallen angels of Christian tradition, but it only partially masked and suppressed the existence of other traditions. In earlier centuries, clerics engaged in conversion and Christianization had identified pagan gods and spirits as demons in disguise. As a result, many demons still retained traces of their origins, as evidenced by conceptions of their nature and order that harmonized poorly with official theology. The influx of philosophical and magical texts reinvigorated many of these ideas and granted them a new theoretical respectability. The following chapters will examine how William crafted a demonology that met the challenge of these ideas, incorporating their philosophical advances while rejecting what he saw as their heterodox elements.

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[172] Far from being well-disposed towards its killer, it would shun him. The resulting familiar spirit, William insists, must be a demon in disguise. William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.18, 1:1050bF-H. Aquinas' *De malo* quotes John Chrysostom's testimony to this practice in antiquity. Perhaps this same homily (on Matthew hom. 28, PL 57:453) is also William's source. *The* De Malo *of Thomas Aquinas*, trans Richard Regan, notes Brain Davies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 813, n. 45.

5.0 DEMONIC INTENT, NATURE, AND POWERS

This chapter sets forth William's own theories of what demons are and do. William's demonology reflects the joining of Christian tradition, thirteenth-century scholastic Aristotelian thought, and his own desire to combat superstition, heresy and idolatry. He constructed his demonology largely in response to the influx of Graeco-Arabic philosophical and magical texts, incorporating the scientific vocabulary and methodology of these theories that he found so appealing, but rejecting those elements he saw as unorthodox. Fear of the dangers of false belief and the need to counter it thus lay at the heart of William's demonology. He himself explained the great variety of demonic beliefs, past and present, as evidence that demons themselves had been spreading lies. To William, ancient paganism and contemporary magic and superstition simply represented pieces of a much larger demonic conspiracy to direct human worship away from God and towards themselves.

5.1 The Suspicion of Idolatry

William needed a new demonology because he saw the conceptions of spirits which accompanied Arabic knowledge into Western Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as a threat to Christianity. Astral magic's depiction of morally neutral spirits threatened long-established doctrine and energized latent ideas in the common lore regarding demons' connection to the natural world and their similarities to other types of spirits. No one knew this better than William of Auvergne, situated

at the intellectual heart of Western Europe, well-versed in both the old and new lore, and deeply concerned about the future of what he saw as orthodox doctrine.

5.1.1 Worship

William especially feared a resurgence of idolatry, a word which for William does not indicate exclusively the religious worship of statues and images. Rather, he uses it to designate worship directed at any object other than God. William argues that idolatry is a consequence of fallen human nature. Human nature is inclined to worship something. If there had been no fall, this object would have been God, but in the present, the post-lapsarian corruption of humanity's moral faculties has caused many humans to redirect the worship due their creator towards other objects. William likens this process to adultery, both in its crime (the dalliance of the human soul with an illegitimate object of affection) and in the offense it gives the soul's proper spouse (God himself).[1]

William argues that demons have created and nurtured the pagan religions as means exploiting this human propensity to worship wrongly. He articulates his views most clearly in his *De legibus*. He employs the concept of idolatry to both explain and attack those ideas about demons which he disapproved, arguing that demons themselves encouraged a wide range of religious and magical practices: magic, heresy and ancient paganism. His synchronic approach blends these differing elements into

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[1] William of Auvergne, *De legibus* 24 in *Opera omnia* (Paris: [?], 1674; reprinted Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1963), 1:68aE.

a comprehensive picture of a pervasive demonic bid for human worship. William's use of idolatry as a concept is hardly radical in its outlines -- churchmen and theologians had long equated polytheism and magic with idolatry[2] -- but in its scope William summons a sinister vision presenting the philosophical and intellectual challenges facing the thirteenth-century Church as the newest form of the perennial demonic attack on society.[3] William attributes historical pagan religion to the consistent efforts of demons to draw worship away from God and identifies the spirits of ancient Near Eastern and Graeco-Roman religion and mythology as demons. *Idolatria* and *cultus daemonorum* are practically synonymous terms for William. The deceits of demons did not end with the disappearance of Roman paganism. Although William usually treats magic/paganism as a single category different from Christian heresy and the non-Christian monotheisms of Judaism and Islam, he sometimes regards some contemporary superstition, heresy and idolatry as similar to paganism. He describes contemporary heresy as demon-worship and heretical opinions as demonically inspired. For example, he refers to the common image, so important for later witch-persecutions, of heretics worshiping demons in the form of a black cat.[4] This image recurred throughout the High Middle Ages in a variety of more or less

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[2] See, for example, Augustine *City of God*, 8.19, 10.9-11. Keickhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 36-42.
[3] For the later development of these darkening trends in demonology, see Alain Boureau, *Satan héretique: Naissance de la démonologie dans l'Occident medieval (1280-1330)* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2004).
[4] William of Auvergne, *De legibus* 26, 1:83aD.

sensationalized forms, both in narrative and art.[5] As we shall see, William also classes as idolatry many popular practices involving spirits.[6]

Philosophy and magic are just as important to William's conception of idolatry as accounts of ancient paganism or contemporary heresy. He distinguishes them so little because of the common suppositions they shared. Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophical theories, whether of ancient origin or later Arabic elaborations, often contained cosmological speculation linking stars and natural objects to spiritual entities, a thesis which could lead people to venerate or conjure such beings. William also regards certain philosophical concepts, such as the Platonic world-soul, as being dangerously close to divinities. For similar reasons he regards certain formulations of stellar and planetary influences as crossing over into positive worship of astronomical entities.[7] But his greatest censure and fear he reserves for those fellow Latin Christians whom he perceives as lapsing into active idolatry by practicing the new Arabic-influenced necromantic magic

William conflates the astrological magic of his necromantic sources with the ancient pagan cults. In *De Legibus* William expounds a systematic treatment of "idolatry," using categories which blend contemporary magical practice with ancient

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[5] See for example, Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans, trans. and ed., *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961/91), documents 42B, 45A, 55.4, pp 254-56, 267-69, 390-92; and Sarah Lipton, *Images of Intolerance: the Representation of Jews and Judaism in the* Bible Moralisée *(*Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 88ff for artistic depictions of heretics, Jews and Muslims venerating idols in various shapes, including that of a cat.
[6] See chapter 7, on popular beliefs.
[7] William of Auvergne, *De legibus* 25, 1:77bC-D.

religion. He enumerates ten forms of idolatry. The first, "the cult of demons," and the fourth, "that of idols," suggest the worship of pagan gods. The second, the cult of "stars and lights," strongly suggests astral magic. The fifth, "that of images," refers to the animate statues of the Latin Hermes. The sixth, "that of figures," comprises the circles and figures of magical practice, and the seventh, "that of words and names," suggests the elaborate invocations, strange written characters, and lists of names of necromantic texts. There are obvious astrological references in the remaining categories: "time and parts of time, such as the hours and the four seasons," "the start and commencement of things" and "the tenth, that of the invention and discovery of things."[8] Each type of idolatry receives its own treatment, in which magical texts form a prominent source of information alongside descriptions of pagan religions.

William censured necromancy as idolatry, not only because of the Church's longstanding condemnation of magic, but because necromancy's many connections with the new learning threatened to make its depiction of spirits seem more scientifically reputable than traditional Christian doctrine. William reports that no less an authority than Aristotle himself claimed to have summoned a planetary spirit – from Venus![9] Given that William accepted much that was pseudo-epigraphic,

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[8] "Est igitur prima et radicalis idolatria cultus Deamonorum. Secunda, stellarum et luminum. Tertia, elementorum. Quarta, idolorum. Quinta, imaginum.... Sexta, figurarum .... Septem, verborum et nominum. Octava, temporis et partium eius, videlicet horarum, et quator partum anni. Nona, initiorum et initialium rerum. Decima, inventionum et inventitiarum rerum." William of Auvergne, *De Legibus* 24, 1:67aB.

[9] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.36, 1:1026bF-G. A late medieval manuscript may contain a version of William's source. See Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic*

magical, and of dubious worth as Aristotle's own, it is perhaps more remarkable that he redeemed any of the new philosophy as useful than that he rejected some of it as idolatrous.

5.1.2 By Fire and Sword

William's response to the challenge of idolatry was multifold. The first was to support the forceful suppression of dissident ideas. The *De legibus* opens with a defense of violent punishment against dissenters.[10] William expected – even demanded – that Christians accept his theories of the natural and spiritual worlds and his evaluations of the truth and falsity of their beliefs and customs. Of idolatry and superstition, even among Catholic laity, he declares that it should be "exterminated by fire and sword."[11] Such a statement could be more than an idle threat when issued by a bishop of the thirteenth century, particularly one with ties to the French crown. In Paris, William himself condemned several persons for doctrinal errors.[12] Episcopal and royal officials alike did not hesitate to condemn the writings of Judaism, despite its status as a protected religion.[13] William may also have had in mind the University's recent condemnation in 1225 of John the Scot Eriugena for "pantheism,"

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and Experimental Science During the First Thirteen Centuries of Our Era (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923; rept. [?]: Kessinger, 2003), 2:259-60.
[10] William of Auvergne, *De legibus* 1, 1:27bA-29aB.
[11] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066bF.
[12] Ernest A. Moody, "William of Auvergne and His Treatise *De Anima*," (1933), rpt. in *Studies in Medieval Philosophy, Science and Logic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 5, esp. n 5.
[13] See, for example, Gilbert Dahan, and Élie Nicolas, ed., *Le Brûlement du Talmud à Paris: 1242-1244* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1999).

a stance that, in conflating creator with creation, would seem to skirt dangerously close to idolatry and perhaps encourage magic by attributing sacred power to creation itself.[14] In the Midi, the Albigensian crusade was not long ended, inquisitorial inspection was underway, and warfare against the rebellious local aristocracy was still possible. Louis IX himself waged another crusade to the Muslim enemies of Christianity, departing slightly before William's death. Perhaps William desired to repeat the (doubtless to his mind) very satisfying imposition of order and Catholic control on the formerly heresy-ridden areas of southern France by carrying out a comprehensive campaign against rural idolatry.[15]

As it happened, there was no immediate persecution of idolaters or magicians, but in calling for one, William reflected the thirteenth-century desire to enforce with violence conformity to prescriptive norms defined by theologians.

William's intellectual response cannot be underestimated, either. His *Magistrum divinale*, of which *De universo* and *De legibus* formed parts, aimed to set forth a correct, convincing explanation of all needful knowledge supported by non-revelatory proofs. Although this exercise was aimed primarily at clerics in university training, presumably it would also appeal to the non-Christian, the heretic and the philosopher. It is with this intellectual response that the remainder of the chapter will be concerned.

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[14] Étienne Gilson, *La philosophie au moyen age: des origins a la fin du xive siècle*, 2nd edition (Paris: Payot, 1947), 382-85. Dermot Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena: A Study of Idealism in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989), 277-79.

[15] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3 24, 1:1066bF.

5.2 Bodiless, Corrupted and Bound: Demonic Nature

Of the questions that William had to address in constructing his demonology, the first concerned the nature of demons themselves: their composition, disposition, and society. Against the varied conceptions of demons as astral spirits and *genii loci* that abounded in the common and necromantic lore, William asserts that all demons are fallen angels, physically bodiless, hierarchically ordered under Satan, and mentally deranged by their damnation. It follows from their origins that demons do not personify or embody specific locations. In their exile they may pretend to heavenly status, but in actuality they inhabit earthly wastelands and suffer divine punishment in hell. Thus William both incorporates and refutes learned and popular conceptions of demons as *genii loci* and astral spirits.

5.2.1 Incorporeality Asserted, Airy Bodies Denied

In William's mind, demons' origin as fallen angels constitutes the key fact about them. All other facts about their nature and disposition follow as corollaries. To understand William's view of demonic nature, we must first understand his view of angels and then perform a process of subtraction. William's writings form an important turning-point in scholastic angelology. Influenced by Aristotelian doctrines on intellectual substances, William posits a theory of angels as completely bodiless, decisively rejecting the earlier view that angelic bodies are made of air or ether, and forwarding a theory that their interactions with human beings consist entirely of

perceptual illusions, a view that both presaged and diverged from later thirteenth-century thought.

Until the twelfth century, most Christian thinkers had attributed bodies to angels and demons. Classical and late antique pagan thought had posited that spirits were a type of animal possessing a subtler body than humanity, but bodies nonetheless. Unlike human bodies, which were composed of a mixture of elements in which earth predominated, spirits' bodies were composed of ether, fire or air. The conception of spirits as air had deep roots in Mediterranean religions and languages. Breath and soul were often synonymous as in Latin, where the word *spiritus* literally meant "breath" or "wind," or in Genesis, where God created human beings by supplying them with His breath. Likewise, the conception of spirits as air explained the idea that spirits could enter human bodies, possessing or inspiring them.[16] The early Church applied existing Late Antique theories about spirits' physical composition wholesale to its own angelic and demonic spirits. For example, Augustine held that angels had ethereal bodies, and that demons exchanged them for airy ones in their fall, thus describing them according to the prevailing scientific view.[17] This airy body theory continued through Early Middle Ages but began to

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[16] Valarie Flint, "The Demonization of Magic and Sorcery in Late Antiquity: Christian Redefinitions of Pagan Religions," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, 278-348, esp. 283, 317-18.
[17] Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram libri duodecim* 3.10, ed. Joseph Zycha (Prague: F. Tempsky, 1894), 72-74. Elliot, *Fallen Bodies*, 128/240 n. 5.

break down in the twelfth century in favor of angelic incorporeality.[18] For example, Alexander of Hales quotes Augustine to the effect that angels and demons are airy beings, but also asks whether they are united with their bodies (*corpus unita*) or simply put them on as garment (*corpus tamquam indumenta*).[19]

In the late twelfth- and early thirteenth-centuries, thinkers influenced by Arabic and Aristotelian views began to develop new theories about the nature of spirits. Their demonology reinforced the position that demons were bodiless. Why did thirteenth-century scholars reject a theory of angelic and demonic nature which had formed a staple of Christian angelology and demonology for centuries and which still retained many contemporary supporters? The answer lies in the scholastics' conscious imitation and adoption of an Aristotelian understanding of intellectual substances and souls.[20]

Of particular interest are the Intelligences that Aristotelian commentaries held to govern the stars and planets. These entities had many similarities to Christian angels, as they dwelt in the heavenly spheres, performing a benevolent function in assisting in the government of the cosmos and mediating between heavenly spheres and the sublunary realm as well as between immaterial and the material beings. The question confronting Christian thinkers in their adoption of Aristotle was this – were

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[18] Marsha Colish, "Early Scholastic Angelology," *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 62 (Jan./Dec. 1995): 80-109. Elliot, *Fallen Bodies*, 128-156.
[19] Alexander of Hales, *Glossa in quator libros sententiarum* bk 2, d8, c. 6, ed. College S. Bonaventure (Quaracchi: Typographica Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1953), 2:75-76.
[20] Elliot, *Fallen Bodies*, 128-56. David Keck, *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 75-114.

these Intelligences the same as the angels? Tiziana Suarez-Nani in *Les anges et la philosophie* examines the issue by comparing the angelology of two scholastic thinkers, Thomas Aquinas and Thierry de Freiberg. Thomas' angels took on the place and most of the characteristics of the Aristotelian Intelligences, and, although they did not inhabit the planets as bodies, imparted motion to stellar objects. Thierry's scheme had both angels and Intelligences, with only the Intelligences acting as planetary motors. Both Thomas and Thierry posited spiritual entities, conceived of as angels or Intelligences, as necessary steps in the chain of entities between God and His creation.[21]

Suarez-Nani's account begins after William's death, but the issues which confronted his early adoption of Aristotelian ideas remained similar. William denies the identity of angels and the intellects and sees no need for planetary motors.[22] Yet his angelology nevertheless makes substantial use of Aristotelian influences: William's category of spiritual substances (that, is angels, demons and human souls) parallels Aristotle's category of intellectual substances. It seems highly likely that the bodiless nature of Aristotle's intellects encouraged William's similar position on spiritual substances. Finally, Aristotle's view of the soul and its capacities encouraged William towards an incorporeal view of angels and demons. Aristotle

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[21] Tiziana Suarez-Nani, *Les anges et la philosophie: Subjectivité et fonction cosmologique des subsances séparées à la fin du xiie siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 2002).
[22] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.1.1-7, 813-15.

held that the soul was the form of the body. Although he certainly held the immortality of the soul, William also held that it was completely immaterial.[23]

William completely rejects the theory of airy bodies, considering it not only unviable but also ridiculous.[24] For example, when in *De universo* he discusses the battles that demons supposedly fight with each other and with human beings, he denies that human weapons can harm demons, counseling his reader that "first of all you ought to bear in mind that the substances which appear in this manner are neither material nor bodily."[25] No pure element is suitable to receive a soul. Citing Aristotle, he singles out the idea of an airy body for particular censure:

> … if their bodies were airy, they would be the most mortal of all animals, and greatly liable to all wounds and hurts because of the vulnerability of their bodies, which you can clearly observe in air. I also said to you that such an apparition could neither have this kind of body nor such a fixed magnitude, because as you learned from Aristotle that anything wet, especially air, is badly suited to that end.[26]

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[23] See *De anima*, esp. 1.1-7, and 3.1 in *Opera omnia*,

[24] See also William's refutation of Islamic theories of elemental bodies, light for angels and fire for demons, in *De universo* 2.2.6, 1:849-50. The demons with bodies of fire probably refer to jinn.

[25] "In primis igitur reminiscendum est tibi, quia substantiae, quae sic apparent, nec corporeae, neque corporales sunt." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1065bC.

[26]"Quod si corpora essent eis aerea, essent omnium animalium mortalissima, omnique vulneri, et laesioni maxime obnoxia propter passibilitatem corporum suorum, quod evidenter vides in aere. Dixi etiam tibi, quia neque figura posset esse huiusmodi corporibus, quia neque magnitudo determinata, cum secundum Aristotelem didiceris humidum, qualis maxime est aer, male terminabile est proprio termino." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 1:2.3.24, 1:1065bC-D.

William thus employs the recently-imported Aristotelian science against older understandings of demonic and angelic nature. [27]

5.2.2 "Virtual Bodies": William and the Development of Demonology

William's position on demonic physicality represents a departure in the evolution of demonology. William's demons are *completely* without bodies. He attributes all of their seemingly physical interactions with human beings to their powers as spirits to manipulate human sense perceptions, and, to a lesser extent, to move objects directly with their will in a kind of telekinesis. For William, demons have no bodies, and they need none to perform all the acts attributed to them.

Other scholastics were disinclined to follow William's view that demons could perform all of their recorded interactions with human beings without the aid of some type of corporeal tool. Such theologians thus adopted a differing theory which held that in their interactions with humans, angels and demons manipulated the earthly elements to create a temporary body that would then interact with the physical

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[27] I disagree with Dyan Elliot's assessment that William's treatment of angelic bodies is inconsistent. She argues that William "posited demonic immateriality, albeit in a conflicted and unsystematic way," adding in a footnote that "although William of Auvergne refers to angels as incorporeal substances, he also argues that demons are subject to the passions and capable of feeling." Elliot, *Fallen Bodies*, 152, 262, n. 147. As a result, she credits Thomas Aquinas with the first philosophically coherent defense of angelic immateriality, arguing that he was the first to adopt an Aristotelian view of angels as "pure intellect and will." Elliot, *Fallen Bodies*, 134. Although I will concede that William is a sometimes a difficult author to follow, I find no inconsistency in his theory of angelic and demonic incorporeality, least of all because he attributes emotion and desire to demons. The physical composition of spirits is a separate issue from their psychological disposition, and William has a well-developed theory of each.

world. Stephens calls this the "virtual" body theory of human-demonic interaction, and it would continue to be the dominant theory into the early modern period. These temporary demonic bodies have received a great deal of attention, especially in the theory of witchcraft, where they formed the basis for allegations that witches performed physical acts of fealty and copulation with demons. For example, Stephens argues that the presumed presence of these bodies and the "confirmation" they provided for human and demonic interactions, played a key role in allaying the doubts of witch hunters about the "reality" of the crimes they prosecuted.[28]

In the decades after William, theologians further refined their theories regarding demonic bodies. The majority view, developed by Thomas Aquinas in particular, agreed with William that demons had no bodies.[29] The minority view, developed by Bonaventure, upheld Avicebron's doctrine of *hylomorphism*, which

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[28] Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex and the Crisis of Belief (*Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 58-124. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1.51.1-3, vol 9 ed. and trans. Kenelm Foster (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 9:30-43. Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quator libros sententiarum*, bk. 2, dist. 8, part 1, in *Opera omnia,* ed. R. P. Bernardini a Portu Romantino (Quaracchi: Ex typographia Collegii S. Bonaventure, 1882-1901), 2:209-24. Michael J. B. Allen, "The Absent Angel in Ficino's Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36.2 (April – June, 1975), 219-40. Marsha Colish, "Early Scholastic Angelology," 80-109, esp 107 on Alexander of Hales. Elliot, *Fallen Bodies*, 127-56.

[29] Thomas Aquinas, *De Malo* 16.1, in *The* De Malo *of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies, trans, Richard Regan (Oxford: Oxford University Pres, 2001), 802-21. *Tractatus de spiritualibus creaturis* articles 1, 2, 5., ed. Leo Keeler ([?]: Rome, 1937), 61-71; trans. Mary C. Fitzpatrick and John J. Wellmuth as *On Spiritual Creatures* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1949), 15-40, 65-72.

held that all things must have both a form and a substance. He held that demons and angels possessed a body, one composed of spiritual matter.[30]

5.2.3 Corruption of Demonic Minds and Emotions

In William's view, the fall from an angelic state significantly transformed demonic psychology, distorting demons' perception, turning their minds towards negative emotional states and leading to a diminution of their intellectual powers:

> Because the capacity for good emotion (*vis motiva nobilis*) is depraved in them, there is necessarily a deterioration in the closely related apprehensive faculty (*vis apprehensiva*), exactly the same as one sees in states of ire, hate, envy, and love. Therefore this state is called envy (*invidia*), because it is as though it sees things backwards. Indeed, to him who envies (*invidet*) everything seems hateful (*invidus*) to the degree that it is good. He does not see (*videt*) (which is to say, he disregards) anything except that which is bad in the object of his sight and deems the good things in it either bad or less good than they really are. Thus, ire disturbs its mind's eye, that is to say, its intellect (*intellectus*) ... .[31]

William makes the analogy more concrete by comparing the demonic mental state to madness (*furore*, *turbatus*) and extremes of love. The link between perception

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[30] Elliot, 132-35. Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 93-99. James A. Collins, The *Thomistic Philosophy of the Angels,*. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University Press of America, 1947), 1-74. For a systematic exposition of Thomas' demonology, which resembles William's on most points but evidences greater and clearer elaboration, see Charles Edward Hopkin, *The Share of Thomas Aquinas in the Growth of the Witchcraft Delusion,* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1940; reprinted, New York: AMS Press, 1982).

[31] "Et quoniam depravata est in eis vis motiva nobilis, necesse est deterioratum esse in eisdem vim apprehensivam, quae conjunctissima est illi, sicut manifeste vides in ira, et odio, invidia, et amore; propter hoc enim dicitur invidia, quasi visui contraria invidus enim quantumcumque bonus sit is, cui invidet, non videt, idest non judicat in eo nisi malum, et bona omnia illius, aut mala illi esse videntur, aut minus bona, quam sint: sic ira turbat oculum mentis, idest intellectus. ..." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.1.1:1015bE - 1016aE.

(*videre*) and envy (*invidia*) in this passage is not merely a rhetorical one. It is also something of a pun based on the syllable *vid* as the root of both *videre* and *invidia*. William may also be playing with the conception of envy as an evil eye –that is, malefic, projected vision. His point, however playfully made, is that demonic emotions are rooted in misperception. In defining envy as inverted vision, William reinforces the demonic inversion of the angelic hierarchy.[32]

Several important corollaries follow. First, because of their altered mental states, demons are unalterably evil. William, like Christian thinkers before him, stresses the complete hostility of demons towards mankind. The wickedness and hostility of demons may seem to require no affirmation, but this point remained contested by some thirteenth-century thinkers. The ambiguity that had characterized pagan gods, spirits, and *daimones* still lingered in many stories about demons. Even educated churchmen did not always rigorously oppose conceptions that granted demons positive characteristics. As we have seen, the Cistercian Caeasarius of Heisterbach (d. 1240), recording pious tales for the instruction of novices, includes several stories that suggest doubts about the damnation of demons and give them credit for an occasional good act. In two tales demons regret their fall; in another, a disguised demon aids a knight.[33] Other elements of the population expressed more fulsome doubts that all demons and earthly spirits were evil. Those who worshiped,

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[32] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.1 1:1016aE-F. See also 2.3.4, 1019aA-1022bG.
[33] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, 3.26, 1:143-44, 5.36, 1:319-21, trans Scott and Bland, 1:161-162, 1:366-68.

venerated or placated local spirits, necromancers and other ritual magicians, even the authors of romances incorporating fairy traditions and lore, all dissented, even if only implicitly, from official doctrine.

Countering these views, William rejects the idea that demons are benevolent in intent or in action. For example, he notes that demons do not enter churches, and from this he deduces, somewhat circuitously, that they cannot be good.[34] He likewise rejects the common magical view that demons might want to be bound to serve magicians. In discussing the claim of necromancers to summon astral spirits, he remarks: "What foolish spirit indeed would desert its wealth and felicity and rich habitation and gifts [i.e. as an angel in heaven], and go down into exile and what man would with such sacrifices and words be able to bind or to deceive them to such an extent?"[35] His scorn cuts to the quick of all magicians' claims to compel spirits for good purpose.

Moreover, William argues that demons' altered mental states prevent demonic happiness – an emotion which would raise the problematic possibility of a victory, however temporary and pyrrhic, in their struggle against God. If demons can be happy even in damnation, have they not in some sense escaped God's justice? In considering the question of whether demons experience pleasure at the misdeeds they

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[34] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.6 1:1024b-1029bB, esp. 1024bG-H.
[35] "Quis enim dives et stultissimus, foelicem, et opulentum habitationem aut muneribus deseret, et in exilium abiret, quem hominem possent talia vel verba vel sacrificia cogere, vel eousque dementare?" William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.6, 1:1026bF-G.

cause and whether this overcomes or mitigates their tortured state, William concludes that their enjoyment in human evil cannot compensate for the torments imposed upon them. He strikes at various plausible arguments for demonic happiness – for example, the argument that because evil humans outnumber the good ones, demons must be happy indeed. His refutation emphasizes the misery demons take in the blessedness of angels and the saints, and the tortures demons experience in Hell.[36] In so doing, it reinforces the centrally important subjection of demons to divine power and providence, and denies demons any scope of independent action which might potentially adhere to them in a dualistic theology, such as the one he imputes to the Cathars.

5.2.4 Demonic Hierarchy

William conceives of demons as ordered into a hierarchy under the prince of evil spirits. He depicts the devil as a monarch with the other demons arrayed below him in a kind of feudal order. For William, the hierarchy of demons inverts the angelic hierarchy of Pseudo-Dionysius. It represents for him an anti-church, an anti-society and a mockery of the angelic realm. This element of inversion, rhetorically useful for reinforcing his own view of society's proper structure, probably accounts for the great stress that William gives to hierarchy as a part of the demonic polity and the importance he lays upon the Devil as its sovereign.

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[36] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.4, 1:1021bA-22bG.

5.2.4.1 The Prince of Evil Spirits

According to Christian tradition, one principal demon surpasses and rules the others. William takes the Devil's existence and headship over other demons for granted. Although the creed "Firmiter credimus" of Lateran IV (1215) was the first to mention him, the Devil was so much a part of the Christian tradition, that for a thirteenth-century churchman, the existence of the devil and the outlines of his history and power were already set.[37] "It is declared and well known that one evil spirit was made prince of them all," he says.[38] William sometimes refers to Satan by name but more often calls him simply the "prince of evil spirits" (*princeps malignorum spiritum*).

Yet in affirming the prince of evil spirits' superiority over other demons, William was also at pains to refute the Cathar concept of an evil principle potentially co-equal with God. The widespread Cathar movement was marked by strikingly Gnostic ideas about the relation of the devil and the world, holding in many cases that the Devil had created the world and imprisoned the fallen angels in human bodies. Salvation through Cathar practices and rituals represented a return to heaven and an escape from a cycle of reincarnation. The opening of *De universo*, part 1.1.1-1.1.10, serves as an anti-Cathar treatise. William's ideas of Cathar doctrine presented therein may reflect some of the same confusion of past and present heresy that leads him to label them "Manichees." The Cathars' actual degree of dualism may have varied, but

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[37] Russell, *Lucifer,* 189-90.
[38] "Iam autem declaratum est, et notissimum effectum unum esse principem omnium malignorum spiritum." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 1:1039 bD.

William clearly views it as one of their central and most dangerous doctrines. In insisting on the orthodox story of the fall of the angels, William implicitly aims multiple blows at Cathar theology: he differentiates human souls from fallen angels, he stresses the divine creation of the world, and he insists on the Devil's subordinate role in the universe.[39]

5.2.4.2 Subordination without Humility

William's assertion of the devil's primacy implies a hierarchy among his followers. Although it is logically possible that the devil rules a mass of followers undifferentiated in power or rank, all equally and abjectly subject to him, William envisions a kind of feudal ladder of greater demons receiving the obedience of the lesser ones. He speaks of *majores* and *minores* among demon-kind and of the coercion the one exercises on the other.

William must explain the existence of a demons' hierarchy in a manner compatible with their distorted emotional and moral drives. For William, the human social order implies virtues such as patience, humility and love among its participants. A hierarchy among demons in fact implies peace among them – *pax*, a term that in a Christian context carries virtuous associations inappropriate for demons. If demons

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[39] Alan E. Bernstein, "William of Auvergne and the Cathars," in *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne (+1249): Études réunies*, ed. Franco Morenzoni and Jean Yves Tilliette (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 271-92.

keep peace among themselves, do they not also have virtue? Or, if they are without virtues, why are they not constantly at war, each one against the other?[40]

William answers this objection by arguing that other factors overcome demons' natural pride. The subordination of the prideful demons to the devil is itself a divine punishment, springing from God's justice:

> Therefore you ought to consider their crime of pride, which cannot be better or more conveniently punished than by a most shameful subjection in which they are subjected to the most worthless one of all. No punishment indeed is more fitting for their exceeding hostility than this harshest of oppressions," in which they are oppressed by their most vile and most abominable prince.[41]

Moreover, demons' hatred of God and humanity so much overwhelms their dislike of each other that they cannot help but obey their prince.[42] The peace thus established does not result from any demonic display of humility or love or patience, and no virtue should be imputed to them because they maintain it. Rather it springs from the same envy and hate as fuels the rest of their behavior and clouds their judgment. Nor is their constant, frustrated desire to rebel against their wicked prince meritorious, for it springs from no good motive.[43]

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[40] See, for example, *De universo* 2.3.14 and 2.3.16, 1:1044aG -1047bA.
[41] "Diende consideranda est tibi nequitia superbiae eorum, quae non melius, aut convenientius puniri potuit, quam subjectione turpissima qua villissimo omnium eorum subjecti sunt. Nulla enim poena iustior est tam iniquae excellentiae, quam vilissima conculcatio, qua a vilissimo, abominabilissimoque principe suo nequissime opprimuntur." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.15, 1045aA.
[42] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.15, 1045aB.
[43] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.15 1045ab-1045bD.

5.2.4.3 Heaven Inverted and Mocked

The hierarchy of hell mirrors that of heaven. William accepts as a valid description of the angelic hierarchy the scheme put forward by Pseudo-Dionysus and elaborated by others. Dionysus divided the angels into three groups of three orders each, the understanding and function of which varied according to their relative proximity to God, with the higher angels passing their knowledge and imitation of the divinity to the lower ones. The lowest two orders, archangels and angels respectively, also occasionally conveyed messages to humans on their earthly realm.[44]

Considering the view that the "tenth part" of angels fell, William reacts against the view that a tenth and lowest order had previously existed in heaven and that it was these angels who became devils. William argues that this ten-ordered conception of angels (or demons) is mistaken. "There never was a tenth order," he states. Theologians interpret the statement "not according to the plain sense of the letter, but according to the proportion of those that fell." The angels that fell from each of the nine Dionysian orders, when totaled together, equaled a tenth of all angels. They did not all fall from a single tenth order, leaving nine behind. Nor did they aggregate together to form a new such order after their fall.[45] Because representatives fell from each order, the fallen angels now perform twisted versions

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[44] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, in *The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 143-91. William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.2.111-46, 1:962-96.

[45] "Theologi Christianorum ponunt decimem ordinem solum cecidisse, sic intelligentes non secundum planum literae, quia decimus ordo nunquam fuit, sed secundum aequalitatem… " William of Auvergne 2.3.8, 1:1034bF, more generally, 2.3.8 entire.

of their previous duties: Antiseraphim, once most inflamed with love for God, now "burn with the greatest hatred for the creator," (*majori odio exardescunt*), Anticherubim, once the most knowledgeable, now "exceed the others in their deceptiveness" (*majori caeteris praecellunt astutia*), the Antithrones, once the guardians of justice, now corrupt it, and so forth.[46] For William, the demonic hierarchy must invert the angelic one, just as demonic nature is angelic nature corrupted.

5.2.4.4 The Devil, the Pope and the King

In his summary of the hellish hierarchy William stresses its inversion of heavenly and earthly norms: "This is the ordering of the Church of the malignant and the Synagogue of Satan. … This is a most ridiculous aping, terribly shameful in its horrible deformity, and yet the prince of the malignant spirits glories in its [supposed] similarity to the glorious Divine Church."[47] Presiding over an order of wickedness, not virtue, the devil's malevolent headship mocks the fatherly benevolence attributed to popes, kings, and God himself. Yet for William and his readers, it was perhaps a comforting mockery, for it apes human society as it should be, not as it is. The chaos of secular and ecclesiastic conflicts of William's day undermined the hierarchical

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[46] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.8, 1:1034bF.
[47] "Haec est igitur ordinatio Ecclesiae malignantium, et synagogae sathanae juxta sermones propheticos tam Hebraicae, quam Christianae legis, haec est ridiculosissima simia, et horrifica deformitate ignominiosissima, de ejus similitudine ad gloriosam Die Ecclesiam princeps malignorum spiritum gloriantur…" William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.10 1:1035bD-1036aF.

political theories that attempted to define and contain a fractious society. William himself was a strong supporter of royal and papal prerogatives, and so William's imputation of a strict order to the demonic kingdom reinforces correct social order on earth, assuaging fears that human society was less than it should be. Much as secular society is (or should be) arranged in a pyramid under a king, and religious society is (or should be) gathered under the protection of popes and bishops, William attributes to demons a hierarchical kingdom under a single prince, Satan. If the divine and devilish spiritual worlds mirror each other in dueling hierarchies, this implies that human society, too, is essentially hierarchical, and that Christians should conform to it in their battle against evil.

William rejects potential structures for the demonic hierarchy that contradict the idea of a single principal devil. It is in this context, too, that William opposes magical schemes that classify demons by the planets they governed or the quadrants of the globe which they ruled.[48] In sections 2.3.7 and 2.3.12, William addresses the division of demons into directional kingdoms, rejecting it because it posits four demon kings:

> Wherefore if the aforementioned four are true kings, appointed to the four divisions of the world, then obviously they are not subject to another king or prince other than the Prince, King and Lord of all the ages. Yet, it is declared and well known that one evil spirit was made prince of them all, as no one has yet heard about these other evil ones. Yet if someone should say that these kings are rectors of single cities (*singularum civitatum rectores*), and should be called kinglets (*reguli*), who oversee small dominions: I respond by saying that the rectors of a

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[48] Richard P. H. Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late medieval Byzantine Demonology* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1988), 220-33.

> city, who are under kings or dispatched to cities are called prefects (*praefecti*) or commanders (*praepositi*) of cities, not kings; but those who represent a province under a king, are properly called governors (*praesides*) of provinces and not kinglets (*reguli*).[49]

Thus, William's argument hinges on his conception of the title *rex* and the political order it implies, and a division into four kings must be false precisely because it involves a subdivision of the devil's kingly sovereignty. There can be only one prince of demons, and his dominion should not be compromised by subdivision into fiefs or sub-kingdoms. For William divinity and monarchy are one. William regards the devil as an absolute ruler of all rebels because he considers God to be the absolute ruler, monarch, of all loyal forces, whether angels or human souls. Satan's imitation of the divine hierarchy is a pathetic mockery, but it is based on the same principles as the heavenly hierarchy. His linkage of royal dignity on earth and in hell paradoxically renders an assault on the sovereignty of the Devil an attack by proxy on all authority, not only the devil's, but God's, the king's, and the Pope's as well.

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[49] "Quare si veri reges sint illi quator praenominati, et a quator mundi plagis [sic] agnominati, manifestum est eos non subesse alij regi, vel principi, excepto dumtaxat principe, vel rege, et Domino omnium saeculorum. Iam autem declaratum est, et notissimum effectum unum esse principem omnium malignorum spiritum, quod nec ipsi malefici inficiari adhuc auditi sunt. Si quis autem dixerit, quia reges sunt singularum civitatum rectores, et reguli etiam dici consueverunt, qui parvis regnis praeerant: respondeo in hoc, quia rectores civitatum, qui subsunt regibus, praefecti, seu praepositi civitatum nominantur, non reges, sed praesides provinciarum proprie nominatur, qui sub regibus praesident provinciis." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 1.3.12, 1:1039 bD – 1040aA.

5.2.5 Demons in the Air, on Earth and in Hell

Many strands of thirteenth-century lore attributed to spirits appearances, behaviors and locations that could not be reconciled with orthodox Christian understanding of these spirits as fallen angels. In particular, common lore and learned theories tended to associate demons with the stars and the planets, with certain earthly locations, and with Hell. William explains these associations as either demonic deceptions or reflections of their punishment.

5.2.5.1 Demons and the Planets

William addresses the relationship between stars and spirits at numerous points in *De universo*, always condemning what he sees as errors in the correct formulation of the relationship between spirits and celestial objects. In a series of chapters in *De universo*, he addresses the questions of whether the stars require the spirits to move and whether demons or angels dwell in the heavens. He differs from other scholastics because he denies the existence of heavenly Intelligences, rather than assimilate them to Christian angels or other spirits. He puts demons firmly in the upper air and states that angels do not reside in the stars.[50]

William's outright denial of planetary intelligences reflects his fear of planetary idolatry. He argues that in the pagan religions demons sometimes pretended to be planetary gods to obtain worship:

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[50] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.2.93-2.2.101, 1:945-954.

> But in truth they usurped for themselves the names of the planets so that they would be believed by human beings to be celestial gods and therefore be cultivated piously and with more sublime veneration by these same humans. It is no wonder if some one of them presumed to usurp the name of the sun, since one had sometimes been permitted to transform himself into it, and in the place of the sun to exhibit himself in the splendor of its image (or idol). Perhaps a similar deception was directed by the demons at the planets of the same name and sometimes attained.[51]

Similarly, the contemporary astral magic of the necromancers claimed to invoke the spirits of the stars and planets, drawing them to earth to perform useful services.[52] Surviving books of astral magic testify to the exotic names attributed to these spirits and the complex rituals used to compel them. William, for his part, sees the rituals found "in books of cursed images and other sorts of wicked books" as a type of demonolatry. They falsely claim that "spirits descended from each of the mobile heavens called, abjured, and enticed by their wicked sacrifices to perform detestable actions," but this is a lie, a trick of the demons themselves. No blessed spirit would be willing to leave the delights of heaven and certainly not for such bad company and disgusting sacrifices. Nor would they permit themselves to be bound in such a fashion.[53]

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[51] "Sed revera nomina Planetarum sibi usurpabant, ut Dii coelestes ab hominibus crederentur, et propter hoc sublimiori veneratione ab eisdem pie colerentur; nec mirum, si nomen solis usurpare aliquis eorum praesumsit, cum etiam eidem permissum aliquando fuerit in ipsum solem se transfigurare, et instar solis exhibere se in ejus idolis praefulgore, forsitan, et similis ludificatio de aliis Planetis a doemonibus [sic] ejusdem nominis attentata, et nonnumquam facta est." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.8 1:1033bD – 1034aE.
[52] See Greenfield, *Byzantine Demonology*, 220-25.
[53] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.6, 1:1026bF-G.

5.2.5.2 Demons on Earth

Much thirteenth-century lore associates demons with the lower air and the earth that it surrounds. The lower air had served as the traditional dwelling place of *daimones*. Late antique theories often described them as beings proper to that region of the cosmos.[54] William accepts as a matter of Christian belief (*doctrina Christianorum*) that demons inhabit the air (*aëre*) where they "do many things that appear terrible and wondrous to humans." Only at the end of time will they be definitively and permanently cast into hell.[55]

On the earth, demons were supposed to have many differing appearances. William is aware of many schemes that have been proposed to explain such differences, for example, the astral and directional schemes already mentioned, or the elemental classification system William mentions, whereby creatures from classical mythology such as fauns, satyrs and nymphs are associated with the elements of fire, air, earth and water.[56]

Because these sorts of classifications are so common, William considers and rejects the possibility that these types of orders could have arisen after the fall. Imagining an objection that perhaps Satan was powerful enough to reorganize his followers after their fall, William states that:

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[54] Flint, "The Demonization of Magic and Sorcery in Late Antiquity," 283, 317-18.
[55] "De aere vero non est dubium, quin multa in eo hominibus terrifica et miranda egerint: in quo secundum doctrinam Christianorum habitare creduntur usque ad diem judicii, et tunc in profundum suppliciorum infernialium detrudendae." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.2.70, 1:924bH.
[56] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.8, 1:1033-35.

> … The prince of malignant spirits was unable to change the order established by the creator, even of those spirits who fell. If he was not able to demote or to promote even the smallest spirit when he was situated in his original power and liberty, how much less [now], bound and captive, in misery, can it seem that he is able or was able to do it? [57]

William also considers and rejects the possibility that God ever made new demons after the initial creation of angels, or that there were multiple falls, and that thus elemental or stellar orders could have arisen after the fall. [58]

William's reluctance to embrace any of these alternatives reflects, I think, not only a dislike of novel twists to the ancient story of the fall of the angels, but a recognition that the new orders proposed were incompatible with the moral classification of spirits that underlay Christian tradition. Any reorganization of demons into new orders based on the stars or the elements would compromise the division of spirits into good and evil by compromising with pagan notions of spirits as natural forces.

William argues that demons' varied earthly appearances are lies. Demons, being fallen angels, have neither an intrinsic connection to their environment nor any specialization into different kinds of creatures appropriate to varying earthly locales and functions. They do not differ from each other, whatever their accidents of

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[57] "Quare manifestum est, quod nec princeps spiritum malignorum mutare potuit ordinationem a creatore, etiam in his, qui ceciderunt, spiritus, quoniam cum esset in sua primaria potestate, ac libertate constitutus, nec minimum omnium spiritum, hujusmodi poterat vel deprimere, vel exaltare; quanto minus religatus, et captivus, et in miseria, in qua modo esse dignoscitur, hoc potest, vel potuit?" William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.8, 1:1034bH.
[58] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.6, 1:1025aB-C.

behavior and appearance. "These differences between and among demons are external and accidental…. Neither works nor offices naturally or essentially differentiate them."[59]

Although he classifies creatures such as fauns and satyrs as demons (and thus spirits, not monsters or monstrous races), he denies that their habitual appearances reflect their true natures. These are only their favored guises, which they put on to deceive human victims.[60] William rejects these classifications based on demons' appearance for the same reason he rejected those that connected them to stars or elements – classifications other than those based on their original angelic nature contradict the story of the fall.

Likewise, he argues that fallen angels have no natural connection to the earth and thus do not govern or provide the magical power for objects in the natural world, as this is not their natural habitation. For example, William refers to the belief that demons inhabit gemstones. In medieval thought, gemstones had many amazing properties.[61] Given this underlying belief, the idea that such abilities sprang from an indwelling spirit would not be so illogical. William rejects this notion:

> If someone should say that these powers and protections of theirs are natural, just as much as that of a man in his house or habitation, or even as of an animal in its nest or cave, I respond in this matter that

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[59]"Dico differentias istas exteriores, et accidentales, esse inter ipsos, et apud ipsos … nec naturaliter diversant eos opera hujusmodi, vel official." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.7, 1:1032aG.

[60] See esp. William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.5 and 2.3.8, 1:1022-24, 1033-35. Fauns and satyrs in particular seem to be rhetorical *topoi* for various personified spirits.

[61] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 102-105,116-33.

> these habitations are neither natural nor granted to them by the creator, but they assumed them with the permission of the creator. I say therefore that these are prisons as much as dwelling-places. [62]

Demons simply would not want to, nor are forced to, live in rocks. The powers of gems stem from natural occult powers, not associated spirits. [63]

Demons may have no intrinsic connection to earthly places, but they nevertheless frequent certain areas over others. William describes demons as living primarily in wilderness and other unpleasant areas far from human habitation. In closer proximity to humankind, they dwell in sewers. William argues that they frequent these sorts of locations because of the dishonor associated with these sorts of most shameful and vile habitations (*habitatio huiusmodi ignominiosa ... et vilissima*)[64] and because of the strong contrast it draws with holy angels and holy places. The "just judgment of God"(*iusto Dei iudico*), rather than their desire, forces these dwelling places upon them. [65] Likewise, the same forces of providence and punishment that force demons to inhabit unsavory locales such as sewers also forces them to obey any angels or holy human beings they encounter.[66]

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[62] "Quod si dixerit quis, quia naturalis est eis potestas haec, et praesidentia, quemadmodum unicuique hominum in domo sua, vel habitatione, etiam unicuique animalium in nido, vel spelunca. Respondeo in hoc, quia istae habiationes non sunt eis naturales, neque creatoris dono eisdem concessae, sed ab ipsis usurpatae, et a creatore permissae. Dico etiam, quia carceres sunt tanquam habitacula." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.6, 1:1027aB
[63] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.6, 1:1027bA-1029aD-bA.
[64] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.6 1:1024b-1029bH. 1:1027aB
[65] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.6 1025bB, 1:1025bB-D.
[66] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.17, 1:1047aC-bA.

William draws heavily on the symbolic motifs of inversion when discussing demons' habitations and punishments. In mocking those who venerate demons, he asks why their alleged gods would live in such vile places as latrines, derisively comparing toilets to temples:

> If sordid sewers please them so greatly, since the other [locations] do not please them, they must receive the passing of feces as welcome gifts and offerings, and they must be more greatly pleased by people with dysentery and diarrhea than by healthy people. These sick persons are justly considered their most devout followers because they honor them more generously and frequently with such honors and offerings. From this it follows that constipated people are gravely offensive to them because they cannot hurry along their bowel movements. [67]

Angels, by contrast, frequent sweet-smelling places. Thus we can tell angels from demons, and the angelic hierarchy is distinguished from the monstrous demonic one.[68] William dehumanizes those who groups considers to be demonolators by suggesting that defecation should represent their ultimate sacrament.[69]

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[67] "Postquam sordes cloaces eis-eousque placent, ut alibi eisdem esse non placeat, assellantium igitur stercora, tanquam grata munera, et oblationes, recipient, quapropter dysentericis, et diarrhaeticis, magis propitii sunt, quam sanis hominibus, ipsosque devotissimos cultores suos non immerito reputant, utpote qui eosdem huiusmodi muneribus, et oblationibus affluentius, et crebrius honorant. Ex quo sequitur, ut constipates, et accelerare non valentibus, graviter offensi sint." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.6, 1: 1027bC-D.

[68] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.6 1:1027bD.

[69] See Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 3-147, for the role of inversion in early modern demonology.

5.2.5.3 Demons in Hell

Christian tradition incorporates three powerful images of demons without fully resolving them. The first image is of supernatural evil subdued: God has punished the wicked demons with hell; they are defeated and bound. The second image is of demons as active agents of evil. Omnipresent on earth, they tempt and torment, vex and deceive humankind. The third image is of human evil punished. In hell, demons visit just punishment on human wrong-doers. Whereas the first two images concentrate on demons as agents of evil, in the third, human evil lies in the foreground, and demons are merely agents of punishment. William attempts to resolve this paradox temporally: demons are currently free to move about the atmosphere. Naturally, they suffer punishment there, through the distortion of their wills and their subjugation to divine providence, but at the end of time, they will be further confined in hell. This device does not fully address the issue of their torment (as he discusses the effect of hellfire on demons), but it does provide a workable framework for explaining their dual role.

This contradiction (if contradiction it is) of demonic roles as both punishers and victims of punishment resembles the larger conflict and co-existence between Greater and Lesser Eschatology in Christian thought. Medieval Christianity simultaneously affirmed two powerful images: first, that the dead would receive judgment on Christ's return, and second, that the dead already suffer torment or receive reward based on their merits. The issue came to be resolved intellectually, by arguing that dead souls go to their places of reward and punishment in the

interval between their deaths and the resurrection of the dead. Symbolically and emotionally, as Gurevitch argues, the two narratives conflicted, and people could choose between one or the other based on context or the needs of the moment.[70]

William confirms both of demons' traditional roles in Hell: they torment damned human souls, and they themselves suffer torment there,[71] noting that:

> … not a few Christian theologians seem to think that the torments of the damned fittingly would be the more painful, if the damned see that they have as a torturer he whom they had as a deceiver in this life, and that they are able to reckon themselves to receive only this repayment from him, whom they served so studiously and officiously.[72]

Yet, wonders William, why is it that the prince of evil spirits should perform this operation?[73] There remains a felt contradiction between their roles as both punishers and punished which even William's temporal differentiation between demons' relative current freedom and increased future punishment does not really address. William appears content to leave the problem of demons' simultaneous roles unresolved. After the general resurrection, which is also the end of time, the demons have no further role on earth -- tempting humans -- and so they can be confined to hell, where their liberty will be eliminated.

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[70] Aaron Gurevich, "The *Divine Comedy* Before Dante," in *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception,* trans. János M. Bak and Paula A. Hollingsworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 104-52.
[71] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.11, 1:1036aG-bE, 2.3.17, 1:1047aC-1048aH.
[72] … nonnulli ex Christianorum Theologis istud videntur sensisse, ut scilicet per hoc acerbiora sint tormenta damnatorum, quia illum videbunt se habere tortorem, quem habuerunt in hoc saeculo deceptorum, et hanc solam computare poterunt se recipere ab eo mercedem, cui tam, studiose, atque officiose servierunt." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.11, 1:1036aG.
[73] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.11, 1:1036aG.

A second unresolved problem relating to hell involves the nature of its torments: are hell's punishments corporeal or merely spiritual? Physical things hardly seem to be able to touch spiritual beings such as demons or dead souls. Therefore, one likely solution is to attribute the torments of hellfire to their action on the imaginative faculty of spiritual beings. Yet William, like other Christian thinkers, and in particular Augustine, except for a passage in *De genesii ad litteram* 12.32, seems reluctant to take this radical step, perhaps for fear --as William puts it-- that a merely spiritual fire is insufficiently vivid to deter potential wrongdoers, and perhaps so as not to compromise the authority of scriptural passages that refer to hell's physicality. As a result, William concludes that physical fire affects spiritual beings in a corporeal way.[74]

5.3 Demonic Powers

No matter how powerful demons might appear, in William's thought they operate under the same constraints as other spirits, from angels to human souls. They cannot suspend or alter the normal operations of nature. In William's conception, demons' ability to affect the physical world and the human beings who inhabit it

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[74] The seemingly unresolved contradiction in William's views led Alan Bernstein to argue that William modified his teachings depending on his audience. Jacques Le Goff disagreed. In any case, William's arguments remain maddeningly ambiguous. See Alan E. Bernstein "Esoteric Theology: William of Auvergne on the Fires of Hell and Purgatory," *Speculum* 57 (1982): 509-31; and Le Goff, *Birth of Purgatory*, 244-45. The relevant sections in William are *De universo* 2.1.60-65, 1: 676-682 and 2.3.18, 1:1047-9. See also Jérome Baschet, *Les justices de l'au delà: Les représentations de l'enfer en France et en Italie (XIIe-XVe siècle)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1993), 43-46.

derives from and is constrained by their capacities as spirits, unfettered by the limits of the body. Their powers are largely analogous to those of the human soul, but writ large as befits former angels. I classify demonic powers as three: (1) to pick up and move physical objects, analogous to, but more expansive than the human soul's ability to affect its body; (2) to replicate or mimic natural phenomena (including occult properties), deriving from demons' more perfect knowledge of the created world, and (3) to manipulate the sensory operations of the human soul, causing a person to experience things that do not really exist or to exhibit the symptoms of possession. These three abilities – movement, natural magic, and illusion – and the physical theory that underlies them, were to remain largely unchanged throughout the witch-craze, only finally to disappear with the abandonment in the early modern era of the Aristotelian conception of the cosmos.[75]

William further distinguishes what demons potentially might accomplish with their capacities from what God actually permits them to do most of the time. Demons do not have unlimited freedom to exercise their powers, and sometimes God specially charges them to perform specific tasks, tasks which might otherwise be beyond their innate capacities.

5.3.1 Carrying Saints by the Hair: Demons and the Physical

For an incorporeal entity such as a demon or an angel or a ghost, even the simplest interaction with the physical seems impossible. How can a creature with no

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[75] Clark, *Thinking With Demons*, 294-311.

body touch a material object? For William a disembodied spirit's interaction with the physical universe is not a problem. His assumptions about the relationship between spirit and matter reflect Neoplatonic doctrine that higher entities, such as the Ideas, have a natural superiority over inferior matter. William argues that it is the nature of spiritual substances (which are superior) to move material substances (which are inferior). Human souls possess this ability to a limited degree – they move their own living bodies. Demons and angels, being pure spirits, possess it in an even greater degree. For William, it is not so much a demonic soul's capacity to affect material things that requires explanation, it is the human soul's lack of the same ability.

William argues that it is normal for a spiritual substance to move a material one despite its weight. The particular case that serves as the starting point for William's discussion involves the angel who carries Habakkuk by his hair from Jerusalem to Babylon and back.[76] How was this possible, since obviously angels "have neither necks nor bones nor other convenient instruments for carrying."[77] William frames the problem in terms of the natural weight of an object (*ponderositas*) and the violent impulse or motion (*violentus motus*) which overcomes it. William argues that spiritual substances, overcoming the natural weight of an object, can then give it lightness through violence (*levitas violentia*), without touching the object, in a manner similar to magnetism.[78] William compares the phenomena to magnetic stones

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[76] Daniel 14:33-39 William's discussion is in *De universo* 2.3.13, 1:1062aH-63aB.
[77] "Qui nec colla, nec humeros, nec ulla instrumenta portantibus convenienta." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.13, 1062aG.
[78] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.13, 1062aH-bH.

that seem to move themselves. His logic, relying on the Neoplatonic assumption that the spiritual is superior to the material, runs as follows:

> If, as is obviously the case, a body can imprint in another one, a disposition contrary to its natural weight, then how much more can spiritual substances do so through spiritual virtues even in the naturally heavy bodies under discussion. No one with understanding doubts that spiritual virtues are incomparably stronger and more potent than are corporal virtues. Therefore whether these bodies are animate or inanimate, it is not impossible for the virtues of spiritual substances to pick them up or move them.[79]

Demons and angels, unlike human souls, possess the full power over material objects that their spiritual nature would imply. William often speaks of demons manipulating physical objects. For example, he explains the wax found in certain homes after a spiritual visitation as real wax, which the demons have gathered.[80] When discussing incubi and succubi, he argues that some pregnancies result from semen that demons have obtained elsewhere and carried to their victims.[81]

For William, the human soul has less ability to move objects than demons or angels. Human souls are made to move one physical object only – the body into which they were born. Death was not part of human nature before the Fall, and human souls were never intended to separate from their bodies. Of course, humans

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[79] "Quod si hoc potest corpus in corpus per virtutem corporalem scilicet, imprimere illi dispostionem contrariam naturali ponderositati, quanto fortius substantiae spirituales per virtutem spiritualem poterunt haec in corpora naturaliter ponderosa: nemo enim intelligens dubitat virtutes spirituales fortiores incomparabiliter esse, atque profusiores, quin sint virtutes corporales. Sive igitur corpora inanimata sint, sive animata corpora, non est impossibile ea assumere, vel induere virtutem spiritualium substantiarum." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1062bH-1063aA.

[80] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1066aG-H.

[81] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.25, 1:1070bG-1073aC.

are now mortal, and certain things happen when they die, including the separation of the soul from the body. Yet the inability of a disembodied human soul to affect matter does not stem from its disembodiment so much as its death.[82] From death until the resurrection, the soul is deprived of its divinely appointed object of manipulation:

> Once extinguished and undone by the death of this vehicle, all the operations of the human soul and all the operative force of its power over the body are impeded, and this for that reason. [Moreover,] disregarding the body, because through death it is rendered useless for undertaking any operation of that very soul, the virtues of abstract substances do not require this kind of vehicle. Nor [do they lack] any dispositions over the body which they might wish to move, for everything which they wish to do either inside or next to or outside of themselves is in them and proper to them..[83]

Demonic and angelic souls do not require a body to interact with the physical world; in this they exceed human souls, living or dead.

Thus, William argues that ghosts cannot manipulate physical objects. In chapter 2.3.24, William discusses one of the ghost stories from Gregory the Great's *Dialogues.* In this story a stranger attends to a bishop in the baths. When the bishop offers him the Eucharist as payment, the man admits that he is a ghost and says that he cannot take it. God put him there as punishment for his sins. Instead, he asks the bishop to pray for him. When the bishop does so, the ghost vanishes. William denies

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[82] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1063aD-bC.

[83] "Deficientibus igitur, et extinctis per mortem huiusmodi vehiculis, impeditur omnis operatio animae humanae, et impeditur omnis eius virtus operativa in corpora, et per illud: a parte vero corporis, quia per mortem efficitur ineptum ad omnem operationem ipsius animae suscipiendam: virtutes substantiarum abstractarum non indigent huiusmodi vehiculis, nec ullis dispositionibus in corporibus, quae movere voluerint, sed totum est in eis, et apud eis, quo indigent ad operationes, quas efficere volunt, sive intra se, et apud se sive extra." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1063bA-bB.

that the ghost could ordinarily have handled the objects necessary for his punishment such as the wood used in the fire. William's insistence on this matter leads him to search for alternative explanations. He considers the idea that the ghost's activities were some form of illusion, but rejects it. Gregory considered the matter a true vision, and it would reflect badly on the saint if he were to have been mistaken. William asserts instead that God granted the ghost the abilities necessary for its punishment, in a violation of the natural order.[84] A modern perspective perhaps finds the idea of a miraculous punishment somewhat off-putting, but like all purgatorial punishments, this one would be to the eventual benefit of the ghost's soul. Both of these explanations indicate that William felt dead human souls incapable of interacting with the physical world under ordinary circumstances.

5.3.2 Natural Magic

William argues that demons use natural processes and capacities to perform many of the wonders attributed to them. Demonic knowledge of the natural world far exceeds that of humans, and so many of the effects that they produce seem amazing and unaccountable to the credulous. William denies that demons have any ability to suspend or alter what we would call the laws of nature. William's view of what is naturally possible includes many phenomena we would consider impossible or ridiculous today, and therefore it is important to leave prejudice behind when evaluating his thought. Although William admits many bizarre wonders to be true, he

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[84] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1067bC-68aE.

attributes them to natural, and not demonic, causes. The distinction is an important one, for William argues that demons always seek to appear more powerful than they are, in order to attract worship towards themselves and away from God.

Despite William's efforts to separate them, natural and demonic virtues and wonders remain deeply entangled in his thought. Certain natural effects, particularly hallucinogens, mimic demonic powers. Natural objects reputedly affect incorporeal demons. The word *magic* is used to describe the production of effects from any type of obscure cause, whether natural or demonic. Demons themselves may use wholly natural virtues to produce wonders. The sharp division that William wants to introduce between natural and demonic magic thus blurs when confronted by the multitudinous array of the marvelous and the magical.

5.3.2.1 Demonic Use of Natural Virtues

William asserts that demons perform many of their wonders, not through their own intrinsic power, but through their understanding and use of natural virtues in ordinary objects. He returns to this explanation throughout his discussion of the demonic. To understand the full extent of demonic capacity, then, it is necessary to explore the role of natural virtues in William's thought, and in particular the role he gives to "natural magic." For demons, in addition to using their powers directly, are also natural magicians, awing and deceiving the credulous with perfectly natural effects.

In a departure from Early Medieval descriptions of magic, William divides magic into two classes, the natural and the demonic. William argues that many wonders of seemingly demonic origin have an entirely natural source, which humans can exploit and utilize. In *De legibus*, he categorizes operations of this sort as "natural magic:"[85]

> .. [the science of] this kind of work is natural magic, which philosophers call necromancy, most licit in itself, and the eleventh part of all natural license (*licentia*). Thus those people ignorant of this kind of science believe that demons produce those wonders, which nature works through virtues imputed in them by the creator, and for that reason alone attribute to demons not only a great power and wonder but even omnipotence, and in this doubles the injury to the creator.[86]

Such a division reflects the new conception of an autonomous nature found in works influenced by Aristotelian and Arabic magical sources. In particular, William draws upon "books of experiments" (*libris experimentorum*) and "books of natural stories" (*libri naturalium*). By books of experiments, he seems to be referring to magical manuals circulating in the Middle Ages, perhaps those he describes in *De legibus* and

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[85] William of Auvergne, *De legibus* 24, 1:69bC-D.

[86] "Et de operibus huiusmodi est magia naturalis, quam necromantiam, seu philosophicam philosophi vocant, licet multum improprie, et est totius licentiae naturalis pars undecima. Haec igitur mirifica homines ignari scientiae istius, quae natura operabatur virtutibus sibi a creatore inditis, credebant daemones operari, et propter hoc solum potentiam magnam, et mirificam eisdem attribuerunt: sed etiam omnipotentiam: et hoc in duplicem iniuriam creatoris." William of Auvergne, *De legibus,* 1:69bC-D. The meaning of *licentia* is unclear in the context, but may perhaps be a reference to the liberal arts, as which proponents of necromancy sometimes classified their art. For example, the Latin *Picatrix* begins by calling necromancy a science. Pingree, ed. *Picatrix* 1.2, 5.

De universo.[87] William criticizes certain of these works as leading to idolatry, yet he also says that "to whatever extent you are able to know their causes and reasons of these magical works, most of them are from the natural magical art.[88]" Thus, he seems willing to separate magical experimentation into acceptable (natural) and unacceptable (idolatrous) forms.

William gives his fullest account of natural magic in *De universo* 2.3.22. Here, William claims that he will divide magic into three classes, but only the division between the first and second kind is clear in the text. The first kind is what we today would call sleight of hand, which William notes is a popular entertainment. The second constitutes things which "do not have any kind of truth, except the appearance, yet are made by subtraction or the application of certain things."[89] The cases William gives seem to be referring to either optical illusions or hallucinations that rely on substances affecting human perception. For example, he mentions lights which seem to make snakes or toads appear – perhaps this is a kind of shadow play. Others seem more fantastic, such as candles made from asses' semen or tears that cause people seen by thier light appear to be asses themselves. William introduces

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[87] William of Auvergne, *De legibus,* 1:84bH-85bB, 89bD, *De universo* 2.3.8, 1030aG, 2.3.20 1056bF, 2.3.23 1060bF-G, 1064bF, non-inclusive. See also Chapter 2, "The Books of the Clerical Underworld."

[88] "Ex his igitur, et similibus, quae in libris experimentorum, et in libris naturalium narrationum plurima leguntur, ut[er]cunque cognoscere poteris causas, et rationes quorumdam operum magicorum, maxime quae sunt ex arte magica naturali." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.22, 1:1060bF.

[89] "Secundum genus est eorum quae non habent, nisi apparentiam, et nihil omnino veritatis, fiunt tamen subtractione, vel adhibitione quarumdam rerum." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.22, 1:1059aA.

the term *praestigium* to describe this kind of illusion by which human vision is subverted. He suggests that demons lie behind some or all of these operations, yet perhaps not all of them, for he then defends the idea of purely natural effects.[90]

Chapter 2.3.22 contains examples of various sorts of wonders, not all of them illusions, arising from the natural properties of things. Their extensive treatment reveals their large role in William's thought. He attributes to certain natural objects the ability to produce effects on other bodies without any obvious mechanical connection between them. Although an innocuous enough concept, the English term *occult* for such hidden properties carries many of the same connotations as the Latin word for such virtues (*occultus*) held for Latin readers. The classic example is the lodestone, which attracts iron from a distance with no visible cause. In William's thought, occult powers encompass more than simple action at a distance. Some of the effects involved are bizarrely elaborate, and to modern thinking, highly improbable. For example, William recounts that the *torpedo* fish binds the limbs of those it touches and that *remora* fish prevents ships from moving despite the presence of wind.[91] He discusses the properties of stones, such as the jasper, which makes snakes

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[90]William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.22, 1:1059aA-1061aD.
[91] "Et tu iam audivisti multas alias ligationes esse ex virtutibus animalium, sicut de Torpedine, cuius subra feci mentionem, quae tactu suo ligat membra tangentium ipsam; et de Remora, qui ligat naves contra impetum ventorum." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.25, 1:1059bD.

flee, or agate, which when pulverized and burned produces a smoke which is unbearable to women who are not virgins.[92] All of these constitute natural magic.

5.3.3 Demons and the Human Composite: Illusions & Possession

Demonic possession and illusion form staples of the Christian accounts of demonic assaults on Christians. Interiorly, demons usurped victims' bodies; exteriorly, they deceived victims with false wonders that opposed and vainly imitated the miracles whose ontological status they could never rival. In keeping with his view of spirits as completely immaterial, William argues that despite appearances, neither demonic possession nor demonic illusions require demons to enter into physical contact with human beings or other physical objects. William explains both phenomena as ~~a~~ demonic effects on the human body and mind from a distance.

5.3.3.4 Possession

The central image of possession is the entrance of evil spirits into the human body. Most accounts from the Early Middle Ages take this literally: a demon, with its body of air, physically entered the orifices of the human body and inhabited its empty spaces and flesh.[93] For example, Gregory the Great's tale of a nun who swallows a demon along with some cabbage when she forgets to cross herself before eating

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[92] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.25, 1:1060aG-H.
[93] Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 36-43, especially on Gregory and Isidore.

shows both the demons' mode of entry and the dangers attendant on lapses in protective ritual.[94]

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, theories about demonic possession multiplied significantly, as some learned clerics attempted to integrate their ideas of possession with the influx of Aristotelian scientific ideas from the Arabic world. Bodily entry of the demon into the victim remained the dominant theory, but Graeco-Arabic medical theory now provided a framework for understanding how demons entered and manipulated the human body. As Caciola argues, two concepts became particularly important. First, there was the idea that human bodies possessed a system of vapors known as the *spiritus*, or spirit. The human system of *spiritus* was not the soul, but formed an intermediary between the soul and the body and provided a handle by which invading spirits could manipulate human physiology and perception. Alien spirits could enter either of two systems of bodily spaces. Good spirits entered and resided primarily in the vascular system, particularly the heart. Evil spirits usually entered by the alimentary tract and resided in the bowels, providing a medical explanation for the already strong association of demons with human waste products and their points of origin.[95]

Second, medical theory held that human bodies varied in their composition. The prevalent degree of heat and moisture varied from body to body. The density of human tissue also varied, with some people's flesh being more porous and open.

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[94] Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* 1.4.7, ed. Adalbert de Vogüé, trans. Paul Antin (Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1978-1980), 3:44.
[95] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 176-222.

Aristotelian medical theory strongly linked characteristics of body and *spiritus* to sex differences. Women's bodies were colder, wetter, and more porous than male bodies, which were hotter, denser, and drier. Such characterizations had strong value judgments attached. Men were considered more active, vital, and, indeed, better formed.[96] A female fetus developed when the heat of conception and gestation proved insufficient to produce a male. As Peter Brown notes, biologically, "Women … were failed males."[97] Theorists of possession used these sex-linked characteristics to explain why women succumbed to demonic influence more frequently than men. Their wetter, colder bodies produced more of the vapors that caused hallucinations and visions, and their more open, less sealed bodies provided more space for demons to enter.[98]

The developing consensus that demons were bodiless beings also affected the evolution of possession theory. In views of this type, forwarded by Vincent of Beauvais (ca. 1190- ca. 1264) and William of Auvergne in particular, the entry of demonic spirits into the human body was simply irrelevant, because bodiless demons could affect humans equally well at a distance. Says Vincent, "[I]t should be understood regarding the Devil, that he is not in the soul substantially, but he is said to enter into it because of the operations which he makes in it (that is, by leading it

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[96] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 176-222.
[97] Peter Brown, *Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 10.
[98] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 176-222.

astray with his images or suggestions), and also because of his lordship, as when a man is said to gain possession of a territory or a castle."[99]

Such externalist views of demonic possession had wide diffusion in William's day, even if they did not meet with universal acceptance. William's contemporary Caesarius of Heisterbach takes as his authority the old-fashioned work of Gennadius (d. c. 496) and argues that demons must be in the body, because "a thing cannot properly be said to come out, unless it was within."[100]

Because of William's theory that spirits are immaterial and the importance of the soul in his theory of cognition, he transforms the venerable idea that demons enter and leave the body of the possessed into a metaphor of siege warfare, where the demon exists external to the human attacked. William agreed with Vincent that distance is no hindrance to possession: "No matter how small the power with which an evil spirit should assail any human body whatsoever, it can possess it in the Orient

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[99] "Sic etiam de Diabolo intelligendum est, quod non est intra animam substanialiter, sed intrare dicitur in eam propter operationes quas in eam exercet scilicet imaginibus vel suggestionibus suis eam seducendo, et etiam propter dominium, sicut in posessionem alicuius terrae vel castri intrare dicitur homo." Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Naturale* 26.69 ([?]:, Douai, 1624; rpt., Graz, Akademische Druck- u. Verlaganstalt, 1964-65), 1:1881aA. Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 195-96.

[100] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.15, 1: 308-9, trans. in Scott and Bland, 1:334-6. For Caesarius, as with many more traditional thinkers, a demon's entry into the human body is unproblematic, but he carefully guards against a demon's entry into the human soul. Following Gennadius (d. c. 496), he distinguishes between the Holy Spirit, which can enter the soul, and a demon, which can only assail it from without. Vincent also makes a distinction between the ability of God to enter the soul and angels and demons which remain outside. Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 195-96. Elliott, *Fallen Bodies*, 140.

from the Occident, just as if it was in the Orient itself."[101] Demons control a possessed person just as a besieging army controls a besieged city or castle, by preventing entry and exit through its gates, that is to say, the operation of the soul's natural abilities.[102]

For William, possession (*arreptionis*) is merely one form of an altered perceptual state which can spring from either natural or demonic causes. As Caciola notes, "William's approach to spiritual interference … consistently tends to regard the impressions of spirits as attacks on the perceptual and cognitive facilities, rather than as attacks on the flesh and limbs of the body."[103] In *De universo* 2.3.13,William explains that the human soul (*anima*) can enter into states where it is so caught up that it ignores outside stimuli. William says he himself saw a wise man so caught up in reading that he did not notice what was happening around him. In further examples of this sort of state, he mentions those who are so taken up that they lose their ability to choose and succumb to bestial urges, even throwing themselves into fire or water. For this reason, some doctors attribute all altered states of consciousness to natural causes, such as vapors or an imbalance of the humors. William wonders whether natural objects can induce such states, can not demons do it better? Thus he speaks of

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[101] "Quacunque igitur virtute sua obsideat malignus spiritus corpus humanum quodcunque, atque potest ipsum possidere ab Oriente in Occidentem, ut in ipso Oriente." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.13, 1:1042bF. Caesarius's novice mentions the metaphor of siege, but not William by name, when he discusses theories of possession. Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.15, 1: 308-9, trans. in Scott and Bland, 1:334-6.
[102] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.13, 1:1042-44, esp. 1042bf-G.
[103] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 155.

demons manipulating human sense perception so that the possessed see them in horrible forms or experience other delusions, such as thinking themselves wolves.[104] William sometimes speaks as if demons actually enter the bodies of those they possess, but such instances are probably figures of speech.[105]

5.3.3.5 Illusion

William argues that, just as demons can manipulate the human minds and bodies to create the symptoms of possession, so too can they place other, lesser perceptual artifacts there as well. The difference between illusion and possession is one of degree rather than kind, with greater alterations to human consciousness being experienced as possession and lesser ones as illusions.

William argues that illusions take place in the human mind, not in the external world, as older conceptions of demons as airy beings would suggest.[106] His test cases are stories in which saints combat and resist demons. If demons were made of air, illusions present little difficulty: demons could reshape their airy body to whatever form they desired. Likewise, their more pugnacious qualities would present no difficulties: an airy body, like a wind, could wrestle with a human being. But William holds that demons cannot take physical form. How did these illusions and confrontations take place, if not by means of an airy body? William argues that such

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[104] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1061aD-62aE.
[105] He uses the words "intrat corpus humanum" in his discussion of possession during demonic experiments. William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.18, 1:1050aG.
[106] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1061bC-1062E.

combats took place in the soul, and that the demons planted blasphemous thoughts in the saints' minds, especially in their intellectual capacities (*virtus intellective*).[107] From this he extrapolates from thoughts to images, saying: "How easy therefore is it for evil spirits to paint in the interiors of our souls whatever thoughts they might wish, and not just things thought (*cognita*), but even things seen (*visa*), such as in sleep and dreams."[108] Not only can demons, as superior beings, induce natural bodily processes that result in hallucination, but as superior spiritual beings, they can affect the human mind's sense perceptions directly. Thus, William explains demonic illusions in terms of his theory of his theory of cognition, by which demons can make a human being see or experience whatever they wish.[109]

5.3.4 Restrictions

William's theory seems to attribute to demons almost unlimited power. They can duplicate most natural wonders and perform acts of extreme strength, speed and malice. What they cannot actually perform, they can trick humans into believing by manipulating humans' very sense perception. One might wonder, therefore, why demons do not more thoroughly dominate human beings even if for some inscrutable reason they do not exterminate us outright. William stresses that demons must

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[107] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1061bD.
[108] "Quapropter facile est in virtutibus interioribus animarum nostrarum malignis spiritibus pingere cogitata quaecunque [sic] voluerint, quoties permittiuntur, et illa non cogitata tantum, sed ut visa, quaemodum in somnis, et somniis." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1061bD-1062aE.
[109] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1061bC-1062E.

operate under divine and natural constraints that severely curtail the full application of their powers.

5.3.4.1 Demons subject to the natural

William argues that demons are subject to natural virtues that can prevent their activities or drive them away. He cites many examples, such as the Roman belief that human urine drives away evil spirits, some of which he considers more plausible than others.[110] William argues that it is only as a consequence of their fall and punishment that demons find themselves subject to natural substances and virtues. Being spiritual substances, demons should have immunity from the manipulations of mere material things. Spirits should move matter around, not the reverse. Indeed, they "they ought to be completely immune to and free of every bodily subjection, because of the nobility and excellence of their nature."[111] Only their punishment subordinates them to crude matter. Just as they will be subject to corporeal hellfire as a part of the punishment for their fall, so too they are now subject to natural virtues to which they would as angels have been immune.[112]

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[110] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.22, 1:1060aE-G.
[111] "[A]b omni subjectione corporali immunes esse prorsus deberent liberi, per naturae suae nobilitatem, et praecellentiam " William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.22, 1: 1061aA-B.
[112] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.22, 1:1060aE-G. For comparison, see Aquinas's treatment. Aquinas, *In quator libros sententiarum* book 4, ds 44, q. 3, a2.rtin *S. Thomae Aquinatis opera omnia,* ed. Robert Busa (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1980), 1:647-650.

5.3.4.2 Divine Permission

Demons' powers are not entirely under their own control; they are forced to act as agents of divine providence whether they wish it or not. William seems to feel that demonic phenomena are relatively rare and that their temptations and tricks rarely lead to outright murder. In most discussions of demonic power, William adds caveats, indicating demons' subservience to divine power, which varies by degrees.

First, demons require the approval of Providence to act against humans. If this is not given, they can do nothing. In more radical cases, God enjoins or compels demons specifically to perform particular actions. For example, in 2.3.24 he argues that contrary to popular belief, the demons called *striges* and *lamiae* do not ordinarily harm infants. Nonetheless, "in order to punish the parents, demons are permitted to kill infants, because sometimes parents love their children so much that they do not love God."[113]

Secondly, William affirms-that God actively assists humans over and above their natural capacities in resisting sin and demons. "*Gratia supra naturam*," he says, meaning that grace in this case supercedes and supplements human nature. In an analogy fitting with his view of God as a monarch, William argues that like a feudal lord supporting his troops, God sends grace to assist his spiritual soldiers in struggle with demons.[114] Far from being potential contenders for divine prerogatives or

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[113] "Interdum autem permittitur eis parvulos occidere in poenam parentum, propter hoc, quia parentes eousque interdum diligunt parvulos suos, ut Deum non diligant…" William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1069aD.
[114] William of Auvergne, *De virtutibus* in *Opera omnia*, 1:132bF.

worship, demons are so subordinate that they only combat humans as and when God chooses.

Thus, William denies those elements of the common tradition that see in demons a kind of independent godling.[115] Demons' subordination to Providence and grace was especially galling to them, because God's will always has a potentially salutary moral effect for the mortal "victims" of demonic anger. Such arguments have added force in the context of William's attack on Catharism. William attributed to the Cathars a radical dualism, which allegedly held that the devil or evil principle had the power to create and control the material world. His own view of demonic subordination denigrates the devil; far from a coequal evil principle, William's devil must unwillingly submit to God's plan and power.

5.4 Conclusion

William created his demonology for polemic purposes: to uphold the Christian view of demons as fallen angels against competing views that would attribute to them natural functions, divine powers, or a less-than-evil disposition. For this reason, William draws upon the most advanced theories of spiritual nature available to him, jettisoning older views of demons and angels as bodily creatures. Their wills, too, he describes as distorted and fallen, the better to explain their behavior and their hostility. William applies his scientific understanding to demons' activities on earth,

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[115] William's position resembles that of the "orthodox" Byzantine tradition identified by Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late Medieval Demonology*.

explaining exactly how and where they fit into the chain of being and how their powers operate, for these assertions provided a position from which he could assail competing theories, ancient, popular or magical.

William attributes to demons an impressive but profoundly limited array of powers. Their spiritual nature allows them to move physical objects. Their extensive knowledge of the natural world permits them to replicate natural wonders and processes that would astonish most human beings. Finally, their power over human souls enables them to usurp control of the human body and to fool human sense perceptions. Between physical strength, natural magic, possession and illusion, there is little they cannot inflict upon a human being. Yet demons suffer from several important limitations. They cannot exercise the full extent of their natural capacities at will, but only when and where divine providence permits them to act. Indeed, it may compel them to act, and often for purposes and results which they do not desire. This mixture of potency and limitation thus provides the basis by which William evaluates the range of reputedly demonic phenomena, explaining those he believes to be genuine instances of demonic power and refuting those he holds to be pernicious illusions.

6.0 GENERATION AND DIVINATION

William asserts that the demons who once posed as the pre-Christian gods now seek to return to their former influence, gaining adherents through their evil suggestion and power to create illusions. This chapter and the following one will examine how William treats different phenomena, finding theoretical explanation for the demons of popular belief, anecdote and homily, in ancient pagan literature and recently imported magical and philosophical books. I have grouped my discussion loosely by the varying status different beliefs enjoyed in medieval society, first those beliefs that the clerical elite would have perceived as more acceptable, then, in the following chapter, the ones they scorned. This chapter therefore examines William's explanations for two ideas often encountered in learned scientific and theological writings: the belief that demons can generate living creatures or reproduce with them, and the suspicion that demons lay behind divination. One requires William to reconcile the many stories of demonic sex and procreation with his assertion that demons are incorporeal. In the other, William draws upon his innovative theory of human intellectual apprehension to explain the phenomena human beings experience in altered states of consciousness, whether naturally, divinely or demonically inspired.

6.1 William's Interpretive Matrix

In constructing a comprehensive demonology, William engages in a form of translation, transforming the accounts found in disparate genres into data for his theoretical exposition. He asks of his sources very different questions than most of them had been written to address: were the phenomena they described possible? What *caused* them? And *how?* William's discussions of individual cases thus largely consist of his choices among several alternative explanations and his justification for those choices. In other words, from sources that are largely stories, rituals, and non-systematic theology, he produces theories consonant with his view of correct Christian doctrine. Such a project mirrors other ongoing scholastic efforts to produce theories (natural and supernatural) that were clear, rational, comprehensive, and consistent.[1]

William was in one sense a conservative thinker: he was unwilling to abandon or dismiss as counterfactual the reports of his source material. Modern readers, upon finding accounts that utterly contradict our settled expectations, are wont to dismiss them as delusions, urban legends, or lies. Relatively few modern people, for example, believe in UFOs, despite the wide number of accounts of sightings and abductions. Because they consider alien visitations *prime facie* improbable or impossible, they refuse to credit people who report them. The majority might attribute sightings to psychological disorders or to intentional fraud, but they would doubt that the events described occurred in any real sense. One measure of the

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[1] See chapters two and three.

difference between William's mental world and ours lies in the easy credence he grants to his written sources that the phenomena contained therein really occurred. The reported phenomena may have occurred as demonic illusions, but he almost always accepts that they did occur, and he generally presumes that even sources that he considers ideologically and religiously suspect contain a reliable guide to the surface appearance of the wonders they describe. He does occasionally attribute wonders to what we would consider the mental illness or hallucination of witnesses, but he almost never questions the reliability of the transmission of the text or the sincerity of its author even though he clearly regards as impossible many of the deeds and characteristics attributed to demons.[2]

For its day, William's demonology represented one of the most fully-developed expositions of the relationship between divine and natural powers. With it, he could furnish several possible causal explanations for unusual and reputedly demonic phenomena. First, a phenomenon could be completely natural, either an ordinary natural occurrence or a rare but interesting wonder (*mirabila*). Second, it could be divine in origin, a true miracle (*miracula)* that supersedes the normal laws of nature. Third, it could result from real, directly-visible demonic activity – their ability to carry objects, for example, or to use natural magic. Fourth, it could be a mere seeming, a demonic deception based upon their ability to produce illusions in

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[2] See, for example, his account of demonic and angelic eating and drinking, or of the presence of the night ladies, which will be discussed more fully in chapter seven. William of Auvergne, *De universo*, in *Opera omnia* ([?]: Paris,1674; rpt. Minerva: Frankfurt am Main, 1963), 2.3.24, 1:1065-70.

the human mind. Or it could be some combination of demonic illusion with another causal category – demons weaving illusion around a natural event or natural magic to make it seem as if they caused that event directly. [3]

This array of choices permits William to explain almost any reported phenomenon's causation without compromising the basic premises he holds about demonic nature and powers. 1) He could declare it natural in origin, either 1a) a product of the ordinary course of nature, 1b) the result of an occult property, 1c) an extraordinary and wondrous occurrence or 1d) the product of human manipulation of nature ("natural magic." 2) If spirits were involved, they could either 2a) have produced the phenomena according to natural law or 2b) have created an illusion, again through natural processes. 3) If God produced the phenomenon in contravention of natural law, then the phenomenon was a miracle and neither needed nor was capable of any further explanation.[4]

Several important observations follow. First, William assumed a regularly operating nature which produced the vast majority of phenomena and which denied that immanent spiritual forces other than Providence affected the outcome of events. Second, there was very little this system could not explain one way or another. It

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[3] Also remarkable is the close correspondence between William's approach to wonders and those used by demonologies centuries later. See Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 151-311, esp. 161-78.

[4] The best discussions of this system in action refer to the early modern period. Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 151-94. Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft Sex and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 32-144.

contained two escape hatches by which it subordinated and preserved belief even in phenomena considered naturally impossible. The divine action of miracles could literally perform the impossible, and the illusions of demons could *appear* to perform the impossible. Third, the causal category assigned to any given phenomenon largely depended on ideological grounds. "Bad" phenomena could be condemned as demonic illusion, "good" ones classed as miracles, and neutral ones assigned to "nature." Perhaps because of its flexibility, this system lasted into the early modern period with very little change, until it ran afoul of its very adaptability. As Clark notes, the marriage of early modern demonology and Aristotelian science collapsed because together they could not be falsified.[5]

So flexible is his system and so varied are the traditions for which he must account that William often hesitates among several explanations. On the one hand, he has a wide respect for the hidden virtues of the natural world and seems inclined to favor them as explanations for mysterious phenomena. On the other hand, he does not wish to deny outright that demons have immense powers, particularly when they act with God's permission and for ends he has ordained. Thus, William prefers to attribute mysterious phenomena primarily to "natural" causes but to reserve the possibility that sometimes "supernatural" causes will produce a nearly identical result, if such a cause is necessary to avoid denying a traditional view of demonic

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[5] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 195-213. Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, argues that early modern witch hunters coerced accused witches into testifying about sexual relations with demons precisely because the witch hunters themselves needed eye-witness testimony to assuage their doubts about the reality of the spirit world.

temptation or circumscribing God's freedom of action.[6] We will see these tendencies play out in the accounts that follow.

6.2 The Demonic Production of Life

Of the issues that vexed thirteenth-century theologians, particularly difficult was the question of whether, how, and under what circumstances demons could generate living creatures. Stories of such generation were well-attested in an overwhelming number of sources, learned, popular, even the scriptural story of the Nephilim. Yet the demonic generation of living, material creatures was difficult to reconcile with demons' status as fallen angels, and doubly so for thinkers such as William who also asserted demonic incorporeality. Scholastic thinkers of William's generation, as well as before and after, much vexed themselves with issues involving sexual reproduction and magical generation. On these issues William was a pioneer, helping to shape the parameters for future discussion.

6.2.1 The Magical Generation of Animals

The widespread motif of the demonic horse serves as the focus for William's discussion of demons' alleged creation of animals. Tales of the marvelous and magical rites alike claimed that demons could magically create mounts for airborne travel to and from exotic locales. Caesarius of Heisterbach recounts two tales in

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[6] See, for example, his discussion of the Ephialtes, which will be discussed more fully in chapter seven. *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1069aB-D.

which a demon transports a human: once to Rome and Jerusalem on its horse, and once from India by itself.[7] Actual magicians may have attempted to summon and control demonic mounts. Kieckehefer's *Forbidden Rites* contains several fifteenth-century examples of spells designed to do just that. Whether it was merely a literary conceit, a jest, or an earnest attempt at such transportation cannot be said, but it testifies to the continuance of the motif in the later Middle Ages.[8] A similar spell seems to have provoked William's discussion "about a horse, which magicians (*malifici*) believe they make for traveling about on (*vectigationes*) and think is made of reeds by the evil characters and writings, they write and paint on them"[9] in blood.[10] From William's description of the spell in question, it seems that the magic horse included some of the other improbable qualities sometimes imputed to such mounts, such as the ability to fly,[11] but William focuses primarily on the narrower question of generation: could a demon make a horse?

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[7] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, 5.37 and 8.59, 1:321-3, 2:131-33, trans. by Scott and Bland,1:368-70, 2:61-63.
[8] Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (Thrupp, UK: Sutton Publishing, 1997), esp. 42-44.
[9]"Si vero queritur de equo, quem ad vectigationes facere se credunt malefici, credunt inquam facere de canna per caracteres nefandos, et scripturas, quas in ea inscribunt, et impingunt…" William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1064aF-G. Grimm cites this passage as evidence for a belief that witches rode brooms or stalks. Jacob Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, trans. James Steven Stallybrass (London: George Bell and Sons, 1883-88; rpt. New York: Dover, 1966), 3:1083.
[10] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1064bE.
[11] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1064F.

First, William rejects the idea that demons can make horses out of reeds or wood; these materials, he says, are too fragile.[12] But in considering whether demons could create horses at all, he turns to a second story that suggests they might have this power – the biblical story of the wonder-working duel between Moses and the Egyptian sorcerers. In it the Egyptian magicians create frogs and serpents to demonstrate their powers. The Egyptian sorcerers were often the focus for Christian discussions of magic. Peter Lombard's influential *Sentences* treats the sorcerers as its primary example of demonic magic. He argues that the sorcerers' magic proceeded from demons, but Moses' wonders were miracles of divine origin. Moses, in proving the supremacy of God over demons, demonstrates that his miracles have a superiority of degree over the Egyptians' magic so extreme as to be a difference in kind that even the Egyptians themselves recognized. The *Sentences* cite Augustine:

> But more remarkable is how the power of the magi, which was able to make serpents, completely failed when it came to the tiniest flies and (evidently) gnats, to which Egypt succumbed in the third plague. Then indeed the magi died saying: "The finger of God is here."[13]

God permits such demonic power because of the benefits it provides by "deceiving the deceptive, warning the faithful, or exercising and testing the patience of the

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[12] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1064aH.

[13] "Sed illud est amplius admirundum, quomodo magorum potentia quae serpentes facere potuit, ubi ad muscas minutissimuas, scilicet, cinifes ventum est, omnino defecit: qua tertia plaga Aegyptus caedebatur. Ibi certe defecerunt magi dicentes: *Digitus Dei est haec.*" Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae* 2.7.6, 3rd ed., (Rome: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Clarasas Aquas, 1971), vol. 1, part 2:362.

just."[14] The Egyptians' magic later served as a ready discussion point for the possibilities and limits of demonic magic. Commentators on the *Sentences* used the Lombard's findings as the basis of their discussion, hence the scholastic treatment of demonic magic.[15] For our present purposes it is perhaps sufficient to note that the *Sentences*, in placing the demonic serpents into a contrasting relationship with the insects of the divine plague, treats them as real animals and not illusions.

Because William likewise conceives of the magicians' frogs as real animals produced by demonic agency, they become central to his questions about the demonic horses appearing in his sources. If demons can make frogs, why can they not make horses? "Someone might say, that malignant spirits have the power and the knowledge, by which once upon a time they generated frogs in Egypt, and therefore it is possible for them to generate a real horse." William denies (with some hesitation) that a demon could in fact make a horse in this manner: "To that I reply, not necessarily, because it is very easy to generate frogs: the generation of horses is in truth difficult, and takes a long time."[16]

William presumably calls the making of frogs "easy" because of the widespread belief in the spontaneous generation of certain animals. Aristotelian

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[14] "[V]el ad fallendum fallaces, vel ad moendum fideles, vel ad exercendam probandamque justorum patientiam." *Sentences* 2.7.6, 1.2:362.
[15] Brian Levack, *The Witchcraft Sourcebook,*.(New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 31-36. Thanks to Sarah Anne Smith for this reference.
[16] "Quod si quis dixerit, quia malignis spiritibus est illa potestas, atque scientia, quae quondam fuit eis in Aegypto ad generatione ranarum, et propter hoc possibile est eis procurare generationem veri equi. Respondeo in hoc, quia non est necesse, cum facillima sit generatio ranarum: equi vero generatio difficilis est, et multi temporis." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1064bE-F.

science distinguished between imperfect animals (which generated spontaneously from seeds latent in appropriate raw materials or putrescence) and perfect animals (which reproduced only with semen from an animal.)[17] At the risk of reading too much into William's limited discussion, I would suggest that he considers frogs and horses imperfect and perfect types, respectively. Hence, the demons could produce the former via spontaneous natural virtues, but the latter would require more lengthy and complex processes involving the procurement and incubation of semen.

6.2.2 Sexual Generation

Many accounts circulating in the Middle Ages depicted demons as engaging in sexual activity with human beings, even siring offspring on human sexual partners.[18] Many tales were told of how demons had begotten offspring on human women: they attributed to the legendary Merlin demonic parentage, and claimed that the race of the Tartars had sprung from congress between demons and humans. As noted above, scripture spoke of how the magicians of Egypt created snakes and frogs during their magical duel with Moses. William's account reflects larger conflicts between widespread but non-theoretical traditions and the systematic theology of the schools.[19] He guards against conceptions, however venerable their origins, which

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[17] See Maaike van der Lugt, *Le ver, le démon et la vierge: les théories médiévales de la génération extraordinaire* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2004), 95-131, esp. 132-24.
[18] See, for example, Caesarius of Heisterbach, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.12. In the latter, Caesarius mentions both the Huns and Merlin.
[19] Greenfield notes that many "alternative" Byzantine traditions depict demons as more anthropomorphic – eating, drinking, having sex, and reproducing, etc.-- than the

depict demons as being too much like human beings. Such anthropocentric accounts of demons retained great prestige and potential credence even among educated persons. For example, a widely circulating tale in William's day derived from Jordanes' sixth-century *Gothic History* and attributed the origins of the Huns to intercourse between Gothic exiles and demons. It retained wide circulation in variant forms and purported to explain the supposedly inhuman ferocity of such other eastern peoples as the Mongols.[20] Genesis 6.1, as we have seen, attributes sexual desire to the sons of God, and represents extremely ancient conceptions of God's court and human nature long abandoned by mainstream Abrahamaic religion.[21] These accounts, whose validity William denies, all indicate the continuing availability and appeal of stories that attributed human motives and bodily characteristics such as lust and procreation to spiritual beings.[22]

William's theology depicts demons and angels as spiritual substances parallel to Aristotelian intelligences. William's is a philosophically elegant definition of demons, but one that separates them sharply from the drives and necessities of human beings. Demons, being bodiless, lack gender, sexual organs and other accouterments of reproduction. Their species, we might say, being immortal and without organs of generation, has no need for sexual activity. There are no truly male or female

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official theology would countenance. Richard P. H. Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late Medieval Demonology* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1988), 153-218.
[20] See van der Lugt, *Le ver, le démon et la vierge,* 254, 355.
[21] Ronald Hendel, "The Nephilim were on the Earth: Genesis 6:1-4 and its Ancient Near Eastern Context," in Christoph Auffarth and Loren T. Stuckenbruk, ed., *The Fall of the Angels* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 11-34.
[22] William of Auvergne, *De universo 2.3.25,* 1:1070aG-H.

demons, only illusions of gender that the demons assume. Demons never produce offspring with mates of their own kind, not even monstrous offspring. Not only do demons not have the necessary organs to procreate, but even if they did, such hybrid offspring, like mules, would be sterile. Being sexless, they naturally have no erotic desires or sexual drive. [23]

William argues that the sexual relations which seem to take place between humans and demons are the result of demons' powers of illusions. Having no bodies, demons cannot really experience or desire carnal relations, but they can simulate these alien activities for the purposes of leading humans into sin. William depicts demonic/human sexual acts as wholly feigned, produced by illusion. Many later scholastics such as Aquinas explained demonic/human intercourse in terms of temporary bodies which demons made from earthly elements, whence the theory passed into early modern demonology.[24] William does not mention feigned bodies; perhaps he had not considered this intermediary position reconciling the airy body and the incorporeal traditions of demonic nature. He attributes instead the congress to illusion, not a reshaping of an airy body as the word illusion sometimes means in other demonologies, but demons' ability to paint in the human sense perception. He says of demons that they "appear many times to men in the form of women and with

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[23] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.25, 1:1070aG-1073aB.
[24] See chapter five.

a similar illusion are known by them." Similarly they appear to women in male form.[25]

Nevertheless, it sometimes suits demons (being liars) to pretend to father children by impregnating a female partner with semen procured from some other source. The reputed demonic generation of living offspring provides William with greater difficulties of explanation. William denies that bodiless demons can ever produce true offspring, but given the scope of the natural virtues at their command, he argues that they can pretend to do so in any number of ways. They can collect existing semen from humans or animals or use natural processes to generate it indirectly. He justifies this argument by referring to winds which allegedly fertilize horses in Portugal.[26] Demons can use a similar technique to move semen from one place to another:

> No wonder then, when such matters are attended to by humans,, it is believed by them to act through another manner than through the accustomed manner of generation.[27]

The result accounts for many old tales, such as Merlin's demonic parentage.[28] In thus incorporating these tales into his theory, William denies demons the problematic corporeality of popular anthropomorphizing lore.

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[25] "… in specie muliebri multoties se supponunt hominibus, et ab eis illusione simili cognoscuntur." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.25*,* 1:1070bH.
[26] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.25, 1071bB.
[27] "Nec mirum, cum jam attentum sit ab hominibus, et creditum ab eis hominibus, per aliam viam efficere, quam per viam consuetae generationibus…" William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.25, 1:1072aF.
[28] William of Auvergne, *De univers*o 2.3.25, 1:1072aH.

There are several bizarre twists to William's argument. The semen demons use to impregnate humans need not come from human beings! Indeed, William never directly mentions the transfer of semen from human to human, although it seems to be latent in his argument.[29] He does mention the transfer of semen from animals to humans. William cites as evidence a story in which a bear raped a woman from Saxony, who then gave birth to twin sons.[30] Improbable as such a tale may seem to us, to William it represents valid scientific evidence. Moreover, demons do not even need animals for a ready supply of semen. They can reproduce it directly from its constituent elements via natural processes. He cites a biblical story in which Egyptians transformed water into blood. As semen was thought to be a form of blood, "the generation of human semen from water or other liquid, does not seem more difficult than the generation of blood from similar substances."[31] William uses this artificial generation of semen to explain a tale from a saint's life in which an incubus demon, when "tempting her with illusory lovemaking, polluted her with such a flood of semen, that a thousand men could not have emitted so much."[32] Naturally, a certain amount of sexual obsession, either William's or his sources', seems to be

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[29] See van der Lugt, *Le ver, le démon et la vierge*, 280.
[30] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.25, 1:1071bC-D.
[31] "Manifestum est ex lege hebraeorum, atque innumerabilium hominum testimoniis, quod in Aegypto procuraverunt conversionem aquarum in sanquinem, quapropter generationem sanguinus ex aquis non videtur autem difficilior esse generatio[ne] humani seminis ex aqua, vel ex alio liquore, quam generatio sanguinis ex eodem." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.25, 1:1072aE.
[32] "Sicut ex testimonio sanctae cuiusdam mulieris scire potui, quidem ex huiusmodi daemonibus, cum sic ludificasset eam, videlicet concubitu fantastico, tanto fluxu seminis inquinavit eam, ut mille homines non emitterent tantum." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.25, 1072aE.

revealed by such fantastic scenes, but his reasons for accepting this story and for explaining it remained within the realm of Aristotelian science as practiced in the universities. William's position that demons could create semen seems to have been tied to his adoption of complete demonic incorporeality. Several mid-century thinkers adopted a similar stance, but by late in the century, theologians favored instead the idea that demons transferred only human semen.[33]

6.2.2.1 Demons and Homosexuality

As Elliot notes, William recognizes that the genderless nature of demons puts his argument on potentially awkward ground: could a demon that appears to men and women in turn be imagined as engaging in homosexual acts?[34] In the developing consensus of the twelfth- and thirteenth-centuries, sodomy came to represent a violation of the natural order of almost cosmic import. For example, Alain de Lille's *Plaint of Nature* linked a new conception of the dignity of nature with a heightened outrage at sodomy's offense against her laws.[35] William so vilified sodomy that it was too heinous a crime for even fallen angels. He consequently takes pains to refute

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[33] Van der Lugt, *Le ver, le demon et la vierge*, 209-92, esp. the chart on 280.
[34] Elliott, *Fallen Bodies*, 150-56.
[35] Alain de Lille, *De Planctu Naturae*, ed. Nikolaus M. Häring, in *Studi medievali* 3.19.2 (1978): 797-879. The theme is also taken up in Jean de Meung's continuation of the *Romance of the Rose* ll. 19599-19657, ed. Félix Lecoy (Paris: Librarie Honoré Champion, 1970), 3:89-91. See also the formative John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality : Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1980), 303-32. Elizabeth B. Keiser, *Courtly Desire and Medieval Homosexuality: The Legitimation of Sexual Pleasure in* Cleanness *and its Contexts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 71-164.

the more prurient aspects of his theory. He adamantly asserts that demons have no sexual drive, and denies that demons' illusory dalliances with another species render them worse than sodomites. Indeed, he develops the rather curious argument that even demons, who have no natural sex drive, are so repulsed by unnatural sex acts such as sodomy, that they will not perform them.[36]

6.3 Fingernails and the Soul

A second issue provides further material for William's demonology. In explaining the relationship of demons to divination, William connects his demons to his theory of the human intellect. The association of demons and divination was an ancient one, reflected in various streams of medieval thought. Late antique sources, both pagan and Christian, attests to the common assumption that those who try to read the future (or the hidden present) rely on spirits as intermediaries. Roman priests performed auguries to determine the will of the gods. Neoplatonic magicians and theorists, such as Iamblichus, acknowledged the power of magico-religious rituals to entice *daimones* and other spirits to aid humans and particularly to impart knowledge.[37] Naturally, Christian thinkers were inclined to label such pagan gods and spirits as demons. For example, Isidore of Seville discusses divination as a form

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[36] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.25, 1:1070bG, 1071aA.
[37] Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 27-28.

of commerce with demons.[38] Likewise, high medieval sources depict demons used for the acquisition of knowledge. For example, Caesarius of Heisterbach's story of a cleric who uses a demon to learn the liberal arts shows the continuance of the link between demons and surreptitiously-obtained knowledge (as well as Caesarius' distrust of the schools).[39]

William's demonology, then, could hardly ignore the question of demons and divination, and, indeed, he does consider attempts at obtaining knowledge through magic as fraught with the danger of demonic deception. Yet William also believed that human beings sometimes could obtain hidden knowledge through methods that, although outwardly similar, were not only licit, but even holy.

6.3.1 The Relevance of Fingernails

Twelfth- and thirteenth-century sources attest to the prevalence of a particular form of divination: one in which pre-pubescent boys peer into a reflective surface and whose visions the magician then interprets. William reports that in such instruments the magicians see "hidden things as in a mirror or in boys' fingernails, or the hooves of sheep, or a polished handle or a polished sword" which are often covered with "an unction of olive oil" and the magic facilitated by "certain exorcisms, or abjurations,

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[38] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies* 1.9 in *Etimologie o origini*, ed. Angelo Valastro Canale (Turin: Unione Tipographico-Editrice Torinese, 2004), 1:662-671.
[39] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 1.32, 1:36-9, trans. in Scott and Bland, 1:39-43.

and observations of the time and the hour."[40] Such operations typically sought some sort of "revelation such as a theft or a robbery or some other kind of hidden thing."[41] William understands contemporary divinatory practices to be primarily of this well-attested type, which he uses as a jumping-off point to discuss various problems related to the soul, the intellect, divination and prophecy, Plato and Aristotle's views of the soul, what constitutes prophecy, and the effect of divine illumination and music on human cognition.

William's interest in this type of divination probably derived in large part from a pastoral desire to combat a real and common practice, indeed one in which William may himself have once dabbled. Divinatory rituals using boys formed an important part of the repertory of clerical necromancers. For example, John of Salisbury (d. 1180) recounts how his master used him as a participant in a magical rite:

> During my boyhood I was placed under the direction of a priest, to teach me psalms. As he practiced the art of crystal gazing, it chanced that he after preliminary magical rites made use of me and a boy somewhat older, as we sat at his feet, for his sacrilegious art, in order that what he was seeking by means of fingernails moistened with some sort of sacred oil or chrism, or of the smooth polished surface of a basin, might be made manifest to him by information imparted by us.

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[40]"[I]llos similiter divinos nuncupant qui instrumenta aliqua adhibent, quare in eis aspiciantur occulta huiusmodi sicut speculum, aut unguis puerilis, aut ovum, aut manubrium eburneum aut gladius elimatus quibus omnibus apponitur etiam unctio ex oleo, ut augeatur instrumentorum huiusmodi luciditas: addunt etiam deceptores, et malefici, exorcismata quaedam, sive adjurationes, & observantias temporum, et horarum, tanquam virtute rerum huiusmodi fieret apparitio, vel visio in instrumentis praenominatis." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.28, 1:1049bA-C.
[41] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.28, 1:1049bC.

> And so after pronouncing names which by the horror they inspired seemed to me, child though I was, to belong to demons, and after administering oaths of which, at God's instance, I know nothing, my companion asserted that he saw certain misty figures, but dimly, while I was so blind to all this that nothing appeared to me except the nails or basin and the other objects I had seen there before.
>
> As a consequence I was adjudged useless for such purposes, and, as though I impeded the sacrilegious practices, I was condemned to have nothing to do with such things, and as often as they decided to practice their art I was banished as if an obstacle to the whole procedure. So propitious was God to me even at that early age.
>
> But as I grew older more and more did I abominate this wickedness, and my horror of it was strengthened because, though at the time I made the acquaintance of many practitioners of the art, all of them before they died were deprived of their sight, either as the result of physical defect or by the hand of God, not to mention other miseries with which in my plain view they were afflicted. There were two exceptions. — the priest whom I have mentioned and a certain deacon; for they, seeing the affliction of the crystal gazers, fled (the one to the bosom of the collegiate church — the other to the refuge of the monastery of Cluny) and adopted holy garb. None the less I am sorry to say that even they, in comparison to others in their congregations, suffered many afflictions afterward.[42]

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[42] "Dum enim puer ut psalmos addiscerem sacerdoti traditus essem qui forte speculariam magicam exercaba, contigit ut me et paulo grandiusculum puerum praemissis quibusdam maleficiis pro pedibus suis sedentes ad speculariae sacrilegium applicaret, ut in unguibus sacro nescio quo oleo aut crismate delibutis vel in exterso et leuigato corpore peluis quod quaerebat nostro manifestaretur indicio. Cum itaque praedictis nominibus, quae ipso horrore, licet puerulus essem, daemonum uidebantur, et praemissis adiurationibus, quas Deo auctore nescio, socius meus se nescio quas imagines tenues tamen et nubilosas uidere indicasset, ego quidem ad illud ita caecus extitiut nichil michi appareret nisi ungues aut peluis et cetera quae antea noueram. Exinde ergo ad huiusmodi inutilis iudicatus sum et, quasi sacrilegia haec impedirem, ne ad talia accederem condemnatus, et quotiens rem hanc exercere decreuerant, ego quasi totius diuinationis impedimentum arcebat. Sic michi in ea aetate propitiatus est Dominus. Cum vero paululum processissem, flagitum hoc magic et magic exhorrui, et eo fortius confirmatus est hoor meus quod, cum molutos tunc nouerim, omnes antequam deficerent aut defectu naturae aut manu hostili benefico luminis orbatos uidi, ut ceterea incommoda taceam quibus in conspectu meo a Domino aut prostrati

The principal elements of the ritual John's master performed seem identical to those William describes -- a shining object, oil, and a boy suited, for whatever reason, to see visions. It also provides a social context for the ritual that is missing from William's account – how a magician procured suitable boys, for example, as well as his class, profession and educational level.

Several written versions of this sort of divinatory rituals survive in later-medieval versions. The Munich manuscript, Clm 849, a fifteenth-century magical book edited by Kieckhefer as *Forbidden Rites,* contains multiple examples, the vast majority of which require a boy as a participant, which conform to William and John's description very closely. Altogether, 19 of the 47 items in Clm 849 are divinatory rituals, and most of them employ virgin boys. Many of these experiments contain elements mentioned by William. Some, such as 27-A and C, use fingernails as a divinatory medium. Others such as 22 and 27A claim to reveal thieves or stolen objects. [43]

William devotes several chapters of *De universo* ostensibly to examining these experiments, but the course of his argument takes him into rarified

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aut perturbati sunt, exceptis duobus, sacerdote videlicet quem praemisi et diacono quodam, qui speculariorum videntes plagam effugerent, alter ad sinum canonicae, alter ad portum cellulae Cluniacensis, sacris vestibus insignati. Eosdem tamen prae ceteris in congregationibus suis aduersa plurima postmodum perpessos esse misertus sum." John of Salisbury, *Policraticus* 2.28, books 1-4, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (Turholt, Prepolis, 1993), 167-8, trans. by Joseph B. Pike in *Frivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), 164-65.

[43] Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (Phoenix Mill: Sutton, 1997), 103-4.

philosophical territory. At the very end of 2.3.18, he begins his remarkable turn to new subjects, saying: "Whatever the truth may be about this contradiction between Plato and Aristotle, this treatise will begin to approach it, even though it is not directly relevant."[44] William's treatment of these subjects in the context of magic may strike the modern reader as mere digressions (an impression only strengthened by William's rambling and discursive presentation) or as a disagreeable mixture of high philosophical matters with superstition. Yet the range of philosophical and physical explanations on which William draws demonstrates the extent to which, in his thought, the study of magic and demonology were inseparably mingled with natural and theological matters. William then discuses several doctrines related to conceptions of the soul and morality. Thus, in chapter nineteen, he refutes several Platonic doctrines, such as the inherent knowledge and goodness of the soul, preferring alternatives more clearly derived from Aristotle that he feels are more compatible with Christian conceptions of the soul and morality. In chapters twenty and twenty-one, William considers the manner in which the human soul may obtain knowledge through direct intellectual apprehension and the medical, physical and spiritual factors which inhibit or encourage such apprehension.[45]

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[44] "Quid autem veritas habeat circa istam contradictionem Platonis, et Aristotelis, etsi non ex directo pertineat ad praesentem tractatum, determinare illud aggrediat." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.28, 1:1050bH.

[45] Chapters twenty and twenty-one are both labeled chapter twenty in the printed edition. As the subsequent chapter is chapter twenty-two, I indicate the second chapter twenty as 21. See also Steven P. Marrone, *William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste: New Ideas of Truth in the Early Thirteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) 39-72, esp. p. 61 nn. 72 and 86, 70 n. 88, and

6.3.2 Theories of the Intellect

William argues that the human soul can achieve altered states of consciousness very similar to those claimed for magical rituals, but not by the means that magicians and philosophers commonly assumed. Platonic theories of knowledge often argued that human beings were born pre-equipped with knowledge of Ideas that served as archetypes for their earthly exemplars. Souls imperfectly recalled the Ideas they had encountered between incarnations; the more they recalled, the better philosophers they were. One might therefore argue that fingernail experiments worked because the boy's soul, being closer to its disincarnate state, remembered better than adult souls who had had more time to forget or be distracted by worldly matters. Anything the boys saw in the crystals, they were actually "remembering."[46] William takes exception to allegedly Platonic theories of intrinsic knowledge that might justify the fingernail experiment. In their place, he puts forth his own theory, Aristotelian in its influence if not in its particulars, that the soul exists at the horizon of two worlds, and that external factors can activate its latent intellectual capacities.

6.3.2.1 The Errors of Plato

William objects to the doctrines he perceives as Platonic largely because he cannot countenance a conception of the intellect that so deplores the divinely-

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"William of Auvergne on Natural Magic and Philosophy and Theology," *Miscellania Medaevalia* 26 (1998):741-748..

[46] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.18, 1050aF.

ordained conjoining of soul and body. He states that Plato has reversed the proper view of the soul's relation to its body. According to William, Plato argued that the soul, imprisoned in the body, suffers a kind of death because its natural intellectual powers suffer when "buried" (*sepulta*) in flesh.[47] "Some ancient sages" (*sapientes nonulli ex antiquis*) therefore argued that operations with reflective surfaces caused the human mind to turn inwards, so that "if it is purged and cleaned of the dirtiness that comes as part of the body and adheres to the human soul, then (as though in a clear and clean mirror) it sees either all hidden and manifest things or some part of them or some hidden object which it seeks"[48] The purer the soul of the viewer, the more clearly it can discern that which illuminates it.[49] Boys, being pure from polluting sexual desire, therefore make better diviners than adults.[50]

In William's view, the human soul's intellectual capacities do not suffer degradation by being joined to a body; rather, the soul requires the body's senses to activate its powers. Far from having greater perception, a disembodied human soul would be enfeebled. William argues that the human senses "stimulate" (*erigere*) the

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[47] "Quaemadmodum enim mortuus est homo, cuius omnes sensus extincti sunt; ita videlicet, ut nullo eorum utatur, quomodo non similiter anima humana mortua reputanda est, in qua potissimum virtus intellectiva sic sopita, vel sepulta est, ut nihil ex ea vitae appareat." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19*,* 1:1051aA.
[48] "Si purgata sit et tersa a sordibus, quae a parte corporis adveniunt, et adhaerent animae humanae, velut in speculo claro, et terso, videt vel omnia occulta, et manifesta, vel aprtem eorum, vel occultum, quod qaeritur." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.18*,* 1:1049bD.
[49] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.18*,* 1:1049bC.
[50] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.18*,* 1:1050aE-bE.

human intellectual power into apprehending objects.[51] As Marrone notes, William viewed the senses as a kind of goad to the human intellect. They did not directly supply the intellect with the information it needed about exterior objects, but provided a kind of stimulus, permitting it to apprehend them directly. The senses may have been superfluous to the pre-lapsarian soul, but in William's view, it required them to function properly.[52] Nevertheless, as will become clear, he was not totally opposed to the idea that lessening the connection between soul and body would increase the soul's intellectual scope.

William clearly felt the view of knowledge as memory to be erroneous, even risible: "Contrary to Plato, knowledge does not come only from the soul's reminiscence of past experiences, but it indeed is able, through the senses, to acquire new knowledge of concrete objects."[53] William proffers several arguments for his position that depend more on common experience than philosophical subtlety. He notes that people forget as well as remember and compares the human memory to a kind of slate which can both be inscribed and erased.[54] He argues that if such knowledge were in the soul, people would see the vestiges of such knowledge. That we do not is well-attested in our own manner of speaking about knowledge:

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[51] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19*,* 1:1051bA-bB.
[52] Marrone, *William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste,* 58-71.
[53] "Quare non est juxta sententiam Platonis detectio, vel revelatio praeteritarum cognitionum in animabus nostris, quantum ad res sensibiles; sed vera novarum cognitionum de rebus huiusmodi acquisitio." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19*,* 1:1051bD.
[54] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19 *,* 1:1052aF-1052aG.

> none of us asks each of our teachers to "uncover knowledge which I do not have." No one says, "show me the knowledge which lies in my soul, that I do not see," but clearly we all say "make me know, that of which I am ignorant." No one says to us "Make me see that which I really know" rather "that which I indubitably know I do not know."[55]

Once again William makes a scientific argument from common linguistic usage. Presumably, he feels that the Platonic concept of knowledge and ignorance is absurd if it is not supported by the experience of most people, as evidenced by their manner of speech. William goes on to compare the possession of either blindness or sightedness to that of knowledge or ignorance. They cannot exist simultaneously in the same soul.[56]

Finally, and most forcefully, William objects to the view that humans are intrinsically good and that only ignorance makes us evil. Assuming William has not simply let his subject draw him into a long digression on unrelated Platonic errors, the issue here must lie in the supposed purity of the boys in the experiments. If souls are good and the boys closer to a pure state than adults, then magicians might reasonably argue that the knowledge they reveal is also good. The extent to which William considers the doctrine absurd is evident almost at once. If all men are good, then:

> … only good men sin, only good men perform all evil deeds, and only good men steal, only good men rape, lie, judge unjustly,

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[55] "Propter hoc nemo nostrum dicit, detego scientiam, quam non habeo. Nemo dicit, ostende mihi scientiam, quae latet in anima mea, neque eam video, sed plane dicimus omnes ad ad [sic] unumquemque docentium; fac me scire, quod ignoro. Nemo dicit apud nos, fac me videre illud, quod revera scio, sed quod ego me nescire indubitanter sentio." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19*,* 1:1052aG.
[56] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19*,* 1:1052bF.

> because there are no evil men, and there cannot be, if evil does not occur naturally in souls, and they cannot become evil later [57]

Such a view, he feels, undermines not only human moral responsibility but the entire Christian concept of a Last Judgment. William argues that humans cannot have an intrinsic knowledge of the good because many people act evilly. Human moral responsibility and Divine goodness require that even post-lapsarian humans be capable of learning and of concomitant moral improvement.[58]

6.3.2.2 Natural and Divine Access to Illumination

In place of Platonic doctrines which he considers erroneous, William proposes another explanation for the efficacy of altered states of consciousness, one grounded in his theory of the human intellect. The human soul sits at the horizon of two worlds.[59] The upper world is that of divine things, of God. The lower is the world of material objects. Upon its fall, the human soul lost its capacity to perceive the upper world, and its ability to perceive the lower one was significantly diminished. In its pre-lapsarian state, the intellect perceived the essence of objects in the material world directly, whereas the diminished post-lapsarian intellect requires the stimulus of the

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[57] "Quare soli boni homines peccant, soli boni omnia mala faciunt, soli boni furantur, soli boni rapiunt, fraudant, iniuste judicant, cum mali nulli nec sint, vel esse possint, postquam nec malitia naturaliter est in animabus indita, nec advenire possit eisdem." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19*,* 1:102bE-F.
[58] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19*,* 1:1053aC-1053bA. See also Roland J. Teske, "William of Auvergne's Spiritualist Concept of the Human Being," in *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne (+1249): Études réunies*, ed. Franco Morenzoni and Jean-Yves Tilliette (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 35-53, esp. 45-52.
[59] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.20*,* 1:105aH.

senses to prompt it to this act of intellectual perception.[60] It is the pre-lapsarian state which magical experiments, chance, and grace occasionally, if fitfully and partially, permit the human soul to reproduce, enabling its gaze to rise once again to the upper of the two worlds and to look upon the lower world unimpeded.

In chapters twenty and twenty-one, William considers the possibility that the divinatory experiments involving reflective surfaces function by encouraging the participants' intellectual perception of the upper world. William uses light imagery to characterize this upper region. This terminology is somewhat confusing, because, as Marrone observes, William's theory of knowledge rejects divine illumination as a part of ordinary cognition. Other medieval thinkers had argued that only divine intervention, expressed poetically as God's light, permitted knowledge of the world. William instead permitted the intellect to perceive objects without the aid of such divine illumination. Thus it seems that when William persistently describes the upper world in terms of divine light, he means something very different from conventional theories of divine illumination. Rather, it seems to be an example of what Marrone terms "illumanism" – a mystical state that expresses its experience of the divine in terms of light imagery.[61]

William argues that several different causes, natural and divine, can open a human's intellect to the divine light. The rarest but most sound of these methods is

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[60] Marrone, *William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste,* 58-71. On the fall and human nature, see Roland Teske, "William of Auvergne on the Various States of Our Nature," *Traditio* 58 (2003): 201-18.
[61] Marrone, *William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste,* 3-71, esp. 5, n. 4.

divine grace. William argues that God has thus revealed himself to prophets and saints by activating their higher intellectual faculties. Kings, too, because of their special quasi-sacral role, sometimes dream prophetic dreams.[62] Such grace cannot be sought reliably through human efforts. William himself describes how he tried and failed to obtain intellectual visions by purifying his life, but with no result:

> I even thought that gradually by abstinence and by abstracting my soul from the solicitudes and delights that held it captive and submerged it in the inferior world, which is the sensible world, those things that were obscuring and clouding my soul might be broken by contrary habits, and the chains and bonds extinguished, and thus my free soul might evade them, and be able to break forth free and capable through its very self into the superior region, which is of the light. Yet as I learned a long time ago by studying theology, I now know that human souls cannot be purified from the iniquity of vices and sins, except by the virtue and grace of the creator, and that the freedom to break forth and to elevate itself into the region of light, although it is natural, cannot be repaired or restored in any other way. From their own words, it is indeed manifest that the prophets sometimes receive prophetic splendor through prayer, or recall it to themselves, and they do not often obtain it except though fasting, abstinence and other exercises.63

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[62] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.20*,* 1: 1053bC-D,1056bF-H.

[63]"Opinibar enim, quia paulatim abstinentia, et abstrahendo animam meam a sollicitudinibus et delectationibus, quae eam captivant, et demergunt in mundum inferiorum, qui est mundus sensibilium, abstergerentur ab anima illa, quae erant obscurantia eam, et obtenebrantia, et per consuetudines contrarias dirumperentur, et consumerentur vincula illa, et laquei: et sic evaderet anima mea libera, et potens per semetipsam in regionem superiorem, quae lucis est, erumpere. Nunc autem, et a tempore multa iam didici per exercitationem rerum divinalium animas humanas non posse purificari ab inquinamentis vitiorum, et peccatorum, nisi virtute, et gratia creatoris; et istam libertatem, quamquam naturalis sit, videlicet erumpendi, et elevandi se in regionem lucis, non esse eis aliter reparabilem, aut restaurabilem. Ex sermonibus etiam prophetarum manifestum est eos interdum orationibus recipere, vel revocare ad se splendorem propheticum, nec non ieiuniis, et abstinentiis, aliisque factis exercitationibus ipsum saepius impetrare." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.20*,* 1:1056bE-F.

An older and wiser William concluded that, like other miracles, illuminism was an exception to the normal mechanical operations of nature and hardly to be induced by them. Nevertheless, he felt that natural procedures and virtues might lead to similar, if less exalted, experiences. Various mental or bodily states could incline a person to see the divine light. Could this second method of accessing higher perceptions explain the fingernail experiments?[64]

First and foremost, excessive attachment to worldly matters hinders the reception of visions, as bodily pleasures serve to bind the soul more closely to the body. Vices and sin also dim this faculty. This is why ascetics and holy men have visions more frequently than others. William uses antique sources to support his view. For example, he argues that Socrates' companion god attended him because of his clean living and good morals.[65] He cites Cicero's *De natura deorum* on the value of temperance in eating and drinking, and abstinence from sex. William adduces that this is one instance in which the ancient philosophers confirm the wisdom of Christianity's emphasis on continence and asceticism. This argument seems rather perplexing given William's earlier rejection of similar Platonic arguments.[66] The difference here seems to be that William sees the embodied post-lapsarian soul as encumbered, not with the flesh per se, but with the sins that necessarily accompany it after the Fall.

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[64] See also Barbara Faes de Mottoni, "Guglielmo d'Alvernia e l'anima rapita," in *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 55-74.
[65] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.20*,* 1:1054bF.
[66] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.20*,* 1:1054bG.

A person's dominant humor also affects his or her likelihood of receiving visions. Phlegmatic persons are disinclined to visions, as "Galen the greatest doctor says that the phlelegmatic complexion aids no virtues of the soul."[67] Melancholics, on the other hand, are inclined to receive visions of a distorted and deranged sort, which are nevertheless the result of the divine light. Says William:

> Thus they begin to speak about the divine matters in the manner of the prophets naturally, but they continue speaking this way for only a little while. Then they immediately fall back into the language of their usual foolishness, as though the melancholic fumes, ascending towards their intellectual virtue, intercept the light and obscure it, so that they plunge the mind from the height of such light down into mad things, and draw it down to saying those things. This is because after a while the melancholic vapors stop rising into the minds of this sort of person and for this reason they first send their vapors into the height of these lights where their minds are carried along before rapidly falling back again into alien and mad thoughts.[68]

Physical infirmity, such as blindness, can also aid visions. William uses the metaphor of a continually refilled water jug with a hole in it. If the normal outlet is blocked, the water may flow out of some other hole. Likewise in a human, if ordinary senses fail, then the intellectual faculty may become more

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[67] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.20*,* 1:1054aF.

[68] "Quapropter adinstar Prophetarum de rebus divinalibus naturaliter loqui incipiunt, sed loquelam huiusmodi non continuant, nisi ad modicum. Et propter hoc statim recidunt in verba desipientiae consuetae, tanquam si fumus melancholicus ascendens ad virtutem intellectivam in illis fulgorem ipsius intercipiens illam offuscet: et propter hoc ab altitudine tanti luminis mentem in aliena deiiciat, et ipsam ad ea loquenda deducat. Causa autem in hoc est, quoniam ad modicum cessant ascendere vapores melancholici ad mentes huiusmodi hominum, et propter hoc ad modicum permittunt eas esse in alto huiusmodi irradiationis, miraque subitatione trahunt eas, atque praecipitant in cognitationes alienationis, et delirationis." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.20*,* 1:1054bF-G.

developed. William mentions the example of a blind man, who because he was blind, developed extraordinary abilities – first of battle, and then of prophecy.[69] Likewise, William mentions a certain philosopher who blinded his own sons so that they would be better able to perceive intellectual truths.[70]

Various external influences can also induce visions. William explains, following a tradition running through Platonism, that music can also aid intellectual perceptions. Although William mentions the *Timaeus*, his prime example seems to be not Plato but David and the music he played to soothe King Saul's madness. He notes the ability of music to rouse the human soul to different kinds of emotions, and concludes that it can aid the intellect as well as drive away any harmful demons in the vicinity.[71] Finally, different kinds of natural substances can also cause visions. As examples, William lists *triblia*, the eye of a tortoise and heart of the hoopoe. These prepare the soul to receive intellectual light in dreams, although William warns that they have unwanted side-effects.[72]

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[69]William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.20, 1:1055aD- 1055bA.
[70]William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.20, 1:1055aB. See also Brenno Boccadoro, "La musique, les passions, l âme et les corps," in *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 75-92.
[71] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.21, 1:1056bF-1057aA.
[72] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.20, 1:1057bD-1058aF.

6.3.2.3 Demons

William's digressive dismissal of Platonic epistemology finally circles back to magical experiments. Are they licit uses of natural virtues, or are they demonic deceptions? Although he holds that natural processes can sometimes induce visions, William argues that experiments such as those involving boys and fingernails are for the most part demonic deceptions, dangerous to the magicians and their young assistants. He classes these experiments not as natural magic but as divination, a demonic art tied to the pagan cults of Antiquity and thus inherently evil. Such experiments may contain efficacious natural elements and thus sometimes operate successfully and naturally, but more often demons interfere with some or all of the visions received.

William distinguishes divination, which is exclusively demonic, from related natural and divine phenomena. Prophecy and revelation, for example, proceed from God's grace. Angels and prophets do not engage in divination, they prophesy.[73] Likewise, William does not classify natural means of predictions made from art or skill as divination. Thus, physicians do not divine even though they "from time to time predict the health and the deaths of men by their experience of their art."[74] Nor do astrologers, although "they reveal many hidden things from time to time to other

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[73] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19, 1:1049aD-bA.
[74] "Medicos autem, qui interdum sanationes hominum et mortes praedicunt experientia artis suae, quamquam occulta aliis hominibus dicant, nemo dicit eos divinare, quia sicut praedixi, divinare non est ex arte, vel artificio sed ex revelatione." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19, 1:1049aD-bA.

men."[75] William's distinction, like the distinction between magic and miracle, is based on the causal source of the revelation, not its results.

Despite his willingness to redeem other aspects of magical practice, William forcefully reaffirms the traditional Christian view of divinatory experiments as the inverted cultic practices of a religion hostile to Christianity. He says that

> [Ancient pagans] believed that their demons knew the secrets of the present, the past, and the future, and thus they most certainly considered them to be gods. And this credulity (that is to say, idolatry) supported their cult to no small extent; indeed many men fell, and even today still fall into their cult's impiety through avidity and excessive desire to know these kinds of hidden things. May their stupidity be far from you. It is therefore manifest from these considerations, that it is our custom to call them seers and fanatics and possessed men *(arreptiones)]* because they speak of hidden things either from their madness or some other manner, that is to say from diabolic revelation.[76]

Clerics of the necromantic underground, such as John of Salisbury's boyhood master, represent not just people engaged in theoretically flawed scientific experiments but the abettors, willing or unwilling, of a demonic conspiracy.

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[75] "Sic neque Astronomos, divinos homines dicunt, sed sapientes tantum, quoniam non ex revelation, sed ex sapientia, et arte, multa aliis hominibus interdum occulta revelant." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19*,* 1: 1049aD-bA.

[76] "Haec autem erat secundum opinionem ipsorum, qua occulta praesentium, praeteritorum, et futurorum, eos, hoc est, deos huiusmodi, sue daemones nosse credebant, propter quod eos deos potissimum aestimaverunt. Et credulitas ista non parum provexit cultum eorum, idest idolatiam; multi enim ex hominibus aviditate, et nimio desiderio sciendi occulta huiusmodi, in impietatem cultus eorum prolapsi sunt, et usque hodie prolabuntur quorum stultitia longe sit a te. Manifestum igitur est ex his, quia ariolos, fanaticos, et arreptitios divinos vocavit antiquitas, et nostra consuetudo, sive furore, sive alio modo divinent, hoc est, ex revelatione diabolica loquantur occulta." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19*,* 1:1049bA-bC.

Supporting his view of divinatory magical experiments as part of a demonic plot, William himself provides a sinister explanation for why boys figure so prominently in these rituals. Divinations of this sort have the potential to harm the participants, especially if the demonic is present. Far from rendering a benign view of the inner self, such experiments so frighten the boys that the magicians close the boys' eyes and hold them shut. "Otherwise [the experience] would threaten the boys with bodily harm and indeed insanity."[77] William claims that "If this vision or apparition is made by demonic possession, the horror will remain far longer in his memory (*aspectus*) because of the demonic presence, which greatly disturbed his nature, nor can a demon ever go into a human body, without a vestige of the fear it causes remaining therein."[78] Magicians, with their Platonic theories, are thus the unwitting victims of demonic deception, and demons, being perverse, prefer that magicians use boys in their rituals, because they desire to pollute or destroy people who exhibit the virginity and innocence that they despise.[79] William reinforces his

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[77] "Alioquin immineret puero periculum corporis, aut forte insania, quia etiam cum ista observatione, quam dixi, notabiliter perpetuo horrificus remaneret aspectus huiusmodi puerorum post expletionem talis operis." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19*,* 1:1050aG.

[78] "Quod si ab arreptione daemoniaca fiat visio, vel apparitio, remanebit longe major horribilitas in aspectu illius propter praesentiam daemoniacam, quae naturam illius non modicum turbaverat, nec unquam intrat corpus humanum, quin vesitgia horribilitatis suae relinquat in eo. Quapropter nec debet tibi mirum videri, si minor horror appareat in oculis huiusmodi inspectoris, cum sola natura operata fuerit, quam cum horrifica, et inimica naturae diabolica substantia operas suas immiserit, vel admiscuerit huiusmodi visioni." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.20*,* 1:1050aG-aH. Presumably, given William's theory of posession, the entry is metaphoric, not literal.

[79] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19*,* 1:1050bF.

point by recounting the story of "one of the most famous of the great ancients among the Latins"[80] who killed a boy so that his ghost would tell the future. William mocks the motive for this "crime" (*scelus*), and denies that the unnamed Latin succeeded in controlling the boy's ghost, whom he argues would hardly be well-disposed towards its killer. Instead, William says that an evil spirit assumed the boy's form, duping the magician.[81] Thus William links past forms of divination with present ones, presenting magicians as part of a conspiracy to return Europeans to demonic bondage.

Ultimately, William returns to his original question: by which causes do the divinatory experiments with boys operate, or are they effective at all? He clearly believes that, at least some of the time, such experiments are efficacious. This leaves only the question of how these operations work. William thinks that the causes of visions in the experiments are most likely natural, but that demons interfere in such operations, causing false visions:

> Yet, although it may be possible to make these revelations and rays through the means which you have heard, namely though the inspections of lucid bodies, nevertheless, as I earlier said to you, sometimes evil spirits interfere with their operations for this reason, so that they might harm people with the injury of their sight in the inspection of lucid bodies, which truly are noxious to human eyes, or by customary action in this kind of revelation, or

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[80] "magorum antiquorum apud Latinos nominatissimus," William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19, 1:1050bF. Aquinas' *De malo* quotes John Chrystosom's testimony to this practice in antiquity. Perhaps this same homily (on Matthew hom. 28, PL 57:453) is also William's source. See *The* De Malo *of Thomas Aquinas*, trans.Richard Regan, notes Brain Davies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 813, n. 45.

[81] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.19, 1:1050bF-H.

> divination, to drag them to other things, which cannot be done without peril and offence to the creator.[82]
> To defend his position, William describes the thorough penetration of divine influence and wisdom into all areas of creation. He cites the wonders of plants, and animals, birds, and precious stones, and the power of generation itself. If all these things are natural and wondrous, he thinks it likely that human knowledge of the natural world and its powers can permit divinatory operations of the kind he describes. But if they are done by demons, they are of course bad, and he condemns them.[83] Thus, William posits a view of "divinatory" experiments as natural, yet does not deny the more traditional demonic interpretation. The weight of tradition comes down squarely against the practice of divination, and, although William does not deny that natural causes sometimes lead to heightened intellectual states, he considers attempts to utilize these means too perilously close to the demonic for Christians to venture.

6.4 Conclusion

In proposing and adopting new Aristotelian scientific ideas, William aimed to buttress core demonological doctrines against rival theories that he imputed to a demonic conspiracy to overturn Christianity. Theologians had long held that divination was a damnable demonic art and that demons sometimes produced animals and had (or pretended to have) sexual intercourse with human beings. William's innovation lay in providing cutting-edge theory to explain how immaterial demons used a combination of natural magic and illusory deception to simulate animal and

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[82] "Licet autem possibile sit fieri revelationes, et irradiationes, per modos quos audivisti, videlicet per inspectiones corporum lucidorum: tamen, ut praedixi tibi, interdum immiscent operationes suas operibus istis maligni spiritus, vel hac de causa, ut noceant hominibus laesione visus eorum inspectione luminosorum corporum, quae revera noxia est oculis humanis, vel ut assuefactione in revelationibus huiusmodi, seu dicinationibus, protrahant eos ad aliqua, quiae sine periculo, et offensa creatoris exerceri non possunt." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.21, 1:1057bC-D.
[83] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.21, 1:1058bH.

human reproduction and how demonic, natural and divine forces combined and competed to grant the human intellect extraordinary knowledge. In both cases, he felt that correct knowledge would prove indispensable in countering demonic lies and attacks on Christian society.

7.0 TERRORS AND APPARITIONS: THE WILD HUNT AND FEMALE SPIRITS

William's conviction that demons use their power of illusion to encourage idolatry leads him to closely examine spiritual beliefs at all levels of Christian society. The previous chapter examined his response to potentially heterodox ideas in intellectual culture. This chapter treats his evaluation of beliefs that circulated among the populace at large such as the Wild Hunt, nocturnal visitations of sorceresses and spirits, the sudden deaths attributed to spirits, and female beings of mysterious and possibly benevolent intentions.[1] These beliefs had common roots in northern European paganism, and were united by their shared association with goddesses and other female spirits.

William accepts that such phenomena occur – it is their causes that interest him. Which ones represent natural wonders or salutary miracles? Conversely, which ones are demonic deceptions, and thus result in beliefs and practices that the Church should suppress? William's responses reveal a misogynistic distrust of women's knowledge and the female form. Although he remains ambivalent about the Wild Hunt and other apparitions of the dead which he believes may have a salutary purpose and possibly be of divine causation, William condemns as demonic idolatry those

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[1] For William and popular culture, see Pierre Boglioni, "Peuple et culture populaire chez Guillaume d'Auvergne," in *Mensch und Objekt im Mittelalter und in der Frühen neuzeit: Leben – Alltag – Kutur. Internationaler Kongress Krems an der Donau 27 – 30 September 1998* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1998), 193-222.

beliefs and practices that overtly incorporate female spirits or are associated with women's social networks.

7.1 The Wild Hunt

Of the various items of popular belief which William discusses, perhaps the most important is the ghostly army of dead warriors, known variously to historians and folklorists as the Furious Host, the Wild Hunt and other names. Belief in nocturnal gatherings of spirits, presumably of ancient Germanic origin, is well attested in a variety of sources from the early Middle Ages from the ride of the valkyries to Hellequin's cohort.[2]

This phenomenon, which I will henceforth call the Wild Hunt,[3] consists of two primary elements – the congregation of large numbers of ghosts or spirits, and their leader. The identity of the Wild Hunt's leader varies considerably; indeed, the fact that the Wild Hunt has a leader often seems more important than who it is. The leader is sometimes a male, such as Odin, Arthur or the frequently occurring figure Hellequin, whose name, obscure in origin, also appears as "Herlathing," "Harlequin"

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[2] See Alan E. Bernstein, "The Living Dead and the Conquest of Death in Western European Medieval History" (unpublished paper, Taipei: November, 2005).

[3] I settled on the "Wild Hunt" over the alternatives, because "Furious Host" can be confused with the Eucharist, and Herlequin, though a common figure, is not universal. The Wild Hunt is not necessarily hunting anything.

and other variants.[4] Indeed, a marginal note in the thirteenth-century Vatican Codex Lat. 848 of *De Universo* identifies the subject of William's discussion with the annotation "de familia hellequini."[5] In other legends, however, the leader is a female spirit such as Herodias, Diana, or the Valkyries. Perhaps the most famous source of Hunt lore is the *Canon episcopi*. A tenth-century work of Regino of Prüm, then incorporated in Buchard of Worm's *Corrector*, this canon (which would became important for the history of witchcraft) decried women who believed that they flew through the air with "Diana." In this case the women represent the body of the Wild Hunt, whereas the name of their leader "Diana" probably masks some other non-Latin deity.[6]

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[4] See, for example, Claude Lecouteux and Philippe Marcq, ed. and trans., *Les Esprits et Les Morts* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1990), 93-100; and Claude Lecouteux, *Chasses Fantastiques et Cohorts de la Nuit* (Paris: Imago, 1999), 103-5.
[5]Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, vaticanus latinus 848 CD f. 350^{v}, col. A margin. The folio numbering on the original MS is either illegible or cropped from the CD image. I have reconstituted the folio numbering from the folios extant in the CD. For more on Harlequin's hunt see Otto Driesen, "Der Ursprung des Harlekin" (Ph. D. dissertation, Strassburg: Kaiser Wilhelms Universität, 1903); Alfred Endter, "Die Sage vom wilden Jäger und von der wilden Jagd: Studien über den deuschen Dämonenglauben" (Ph. D. dissertation, Schmalkalden, 1933); H. M. Flashdieck, "Harlekin: Germanischer Mythos in Romanischer Wandlung," *Anglia* 61 (1937): 225-340; Dieter Harmening, *Superstitio: Überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittlealters* (Berlin: Erich Schmid Verlag, 1979), 96-98; Lecouteux, *Chasses Fantastiques*; Lecouteux and Marcq, *Esprits*, 89-102; Karl Meisen, *Die Sagen vom Wütenden Heer und Wilden Jäger*, Volkskundliche Quellen 1 (Munster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1935); and Hans Plischke, "Die Sage vom Wilden Heere im Deutschen Volke" (Ph. D. dissertation, Leipzig, 1914).
[6]Burchard of Worms*, Decretorum libri viginti* 11:1*,* in *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1844-55; reprinted at http://pld.chadwyck.com), 140: col. 831-833C. The PL appears to remain the most current edition. See also: Carlo Ginzburg, *Storia notturna* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi Editori, 1989), trans.

By the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, evidence for many sorts of ghostly troops abounds.[7] The same central motifs recur with new explanations and elaborations: ghostly riders equipped with military apparatus, who may wish the living well or ill, but who are always mysterious and terrifying. In some of the tales, the Wild Hunt's nature remains unexplained. Gerald of Wales (d. 1223) recounts how a ghostly army attacked a living one under the command of Robert Fitz-Stephens.[8] In Rodulfus Glaber's *Five Books of History* (c. 980-1046), a ghostly army serves as an omen of the impending death of its only witness.[9] In a story recorded by Walter Map, the Briton King Herla travels to the otherworld to fulfill a vow, and, on returning, he and his retinue find they have been gone for two hundred years. The king of the otherworld gave them a lapdog and warned them not to dismount until it jumps down, lest they turn to dust, and so they ride for centuries, waiting for the signal from the dog. Map later equates Herla with "Herlathingus" or Hellequin.[10]

Raymond Rosenthal as *Ecstasies : Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath* (New York: Pantheon, 1991), 89-90. Lecouteux, *Chasses Fantastiques*, 13-14, 115. Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Les revenants: les vivants et les morts dans la société médiévale* (Paris: Éditions Galliard, 1994), trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan as *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 26.

[7] Schmitt, *Ghosts,* 93-121. Many of these stories appear in translation in Andrew Joynes, *Medieval Ghost Stories: An Anthology of Miracles, Marvels and Prodigies* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001); and Lecouteux and Marcq, *Esprits*.

[8] Giraldus Cambriensis, *Expugnatio Hibernica: The Conquest of Ireland* 1.4*,* ed. and trans. A. B. Scott and F. X. Martin (Royal Irish Academy: Dublin, 1978), 38-39.

[9] Rodulfus Glaber, *Historiarum libri quinque* 5:6*,* ed. and trans. John France (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 222-3.

[10] Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialum* 11, ed. and trans. M. R. James, rev. C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 26-31. The Wild Hunt is also mentioned in 4.13, 370-71.

We can see several attempts in the twelfth and thirteenth century to fit these tales into a Christian system of the afterlife. Various authors depict the Wild Hunt as purgatorial souls seeking release, as the damned playing out their punishment and warning others of their fate, as terrifying demons, or even as troops of the saved and blessed dead. Otloh of St. Emmeram tells of two brothers who encounter their father in a ghostly procession. He laments the plundering of monasteries that led to his posthumous punishment and orders them to make repayment. When they retort that he doesn't look so badly off, he tells them that his armor and equipment are burning hot and offers one of them his spear as proof. It is so hot that the son cannot hold it. When they have a change of heart, their father is immediately freed from torment.[11] Orderic Vitalis tells an even more elaborate story in which a priest encounters an enormous army, which he recognizes from other accounts as belonging to "Herlequin." Not only does it include tormented souls but also monsters and demons of many descriptions. When he tries to steal some of the procession's horses, four dead knights threaten him, and his own dead brother, a member of the procession, rescues him. The priest's brother explains his torment and his expected release as a form of purgatorial punishment.[12]

William himself seems to envision a traditionally martial Wild Hunt. He describes the phenomenon as "substances appearing in the likeness of horsemen and

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[11] Otloh of St. Emmeram, *Liber visionem* 7, ed. Paul Gerhard Schmidt (Weimar: Herman Böhaus Nachfolger, 1989), 67-69.
[12] Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 8.17, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 4:226-51.

warriors."[13] The number of figures involved evidently range in quantity but sometimes are so numerous that they seem to "cover mountains and valleys."[14] As William describes it, the Wild Hunt's participants engage principally in fighting amongst themselves or against other similar armies, and William prominently and frequently mentions their *hastiludia* (spear games) or jousting. [15]

7.1.1 The Nature of the Wild Hunt

The entities in the Wild Hunt present William with several thorny problems. First, what exactly are these creatures? Certainly they are not saints in heaven. Yet, if they are human spirits, why are they not in hell or at least purgatory? If they are angels or demons, what can their appearance in this manner represent?

William's position is not entirely clear, for he voices many possible theories as he seems to proceed haphazardly from argument to argument. He alternately suggests that Wild Hunt's manifestations are (a) hallucinations, (b) demonic deceptions, (c) dead souls undergoing purgatorial punishment on earth, or (d) divine visions of dead souls in purgatory. The only alternative he seems to reject completely is (e) bodily return: that the Wild Hunt consists of dead people returned bodily to life.

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[13] "[I]n similitudine equitantium et bellatorum…" William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24*, Opera omnia* (Paris, 1674; reprinted Frankfurt am Main, 1963), 1:1065bB.
[14] "Dico, quod in aliis locis etiam fiunt, cum videantur exercitus ibi nocturni multitudine sua operire montes, et valles." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1067aA.
[15]For more on this unusual word, see "Hastiludium," in Victor Henri Du Cange, *Glassarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis* ([?]: Paris, 1688, reprinted Graz: Akademische Druckund Verlagsanstalt, 1954), 4:174.

Ultimately, William seems to imply that most Wild Hunt sightings are either (b) demonic deceptions or (d) divine visions of souls in purgatory, but he does not state this conclusively and leaves open the other possibilies (a) hallucinations, (b) demonic deceptions, and (c) dead souls undergoing purgatorial punishment on earth. Such confusion would resemble other medieval accounts of ghosts, who seem caught somewhere between the damned, the demonic, and the purgatorial.[16]

7.1.2 Hallucinations

Explanation (a), hallucinations, weighs the merits of a purely natural explanation. In its favor William notes in passing that all sorts of "visions and fantastic apparitions … are caused by melancholic sickness in many people, especially women,"[17] and suggests that people dream of recent events or of things important to them "without any participation of evil spirits." Men, for example, are especially inclined to dream of warfare.[18] William does not long consider this theory, devoting most of his space to other explanations.

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[16]See Schmitt, *Ghosts*, 93-121, esp. 119-121 where he discusses William.
[17] "[M]ultae de visionibus istis, et apparitionibus fantasticis, ex morbo melancholico in multis fiunt, sed in mulierbus maxime." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066bH.
[18]"… absque ulla operatione malignorum spiritum." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066bH. For more on William and hallucinations, see Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 149-51.

7.1.3 Demonic Illusions

At various points in 2.3.24, William seems to categorize the Wild Hunt as a form of illusion – explanation (b), demonic deceptions. Discussing the jousting of the Wild Hunt and its participants' inability to render real wounds to each other, he concludes that "they are not prohibited by impossibility from presenting such illusions and tricks (*ludificationes*) to men," and notes that among other manifestations, "the tricks of demons sometimes appear in the likeness of dead men, only truly terrible in size, and bearing weapons and horses."[19] Indeed, the very enormity of the figures might indicate a demonic origin. Thus, demons could account for some or all of the Wild Hunt's appearances.

Supporting the idea that the Hunt consists of demons, William notes that "evil spirits" appear more frequently at crossroads than in other places. William's explanation in this instance seems to echo popular belief, for he holds that:

> Truly, crossroads have less spiritual and bodily cleanliness on account of the crowds of people there. Fields, by contrast, are very pure in comparison with public roads and crossroads, as was earlier said. Indeed, in them (that is in public roads and crossroads) robbers and brigands and all manner of evil-doers (*maleficorum*) gather by night.[20]

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[19]"Dico igitur in his, quia non sunt prohibiti impossibilitate, quin tales illusiones, et ludificationes faciant hominibus, et modos effectionis earum iam feci te scire in praecedentibus, et hic est unus modus apparitionum istarum, videlicet quia ludificationes daemonum interdum non solummodo sunt in hac manerie, ut apparent, in similitudine hominum mortuorum, sed apparent terribiles magnitudine, armis, et equis, apparent etiam cum facibus, seu faculis, seu aliis ignibus." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066aG.

[20]"Compita vero propter frequentiam hominum minus habent munditiae et spiritualis, et corporalis. Agri namque mundissimi, ut ita dicatur, comparatione viarum publicarum et compitorum. In his enim, hoc est in viis publicis, et compitis, de nocte

Crossroads are traditionally a haunt of ghosts and evil spirits of all sorts. For example, William's approximate contemporary, Caesarius of Heisterbach, describes how the knight Henry witnesses the summoning of a devil at a crossroads.[21]

7.1.4 Corporeal Revenants Denied

As for explanation (e) -- that of bodily return -- William discusses the possible resurrection or return of the dead near the end of the chapter. He refers to tales of the dead attacking the living -- such deeds as he says are most often attributed to bodies which were buried mostly or wholly intact or at least those which have not yet rotted away.[22] William here seems to refer to a belief in corporeal revenants, that is, corpses returned to malicious unlife.[23] Such bodily undead are particularly marked in Icelandic tradition, of which the *draugr* Glam in *Grettir*'s *Saga* remains justly the most famous, but they are also represented in other lore with which William could have been familiar. Nancy Caciola's "Wraiths, Revenants and Rituals" provides

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conveniunt latrones et raptores, omniaque genera maleficorum." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1067aA.

[21]Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.2, ed. Jospeph Strange (Cologne/Bonn/Brussels, 1851), 1:267-78, trans. H. von Scott and C. C. Swinton Bold as *The Dialogue on Miracles* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1929), 1:315-17.

[22]William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1069bB-C.

[23] Paul Barber, *Vampires, Burial and Death: Folkore and Reality* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1988), provides a cross-cultural survey of such beliefs and their relationship to decomposition.

many examples of the walking corpse in the Latin clerical tradition.[24] William rejects the most common causal explanation given in these stories for the undead – that a demon has possessed and animated the corpse—despite the fact that he elsewhere affirms the demonic ability to move material objects. William's Hunt remains incorporeal from first to last.

William also denies that revenants consist of dead bodies reinhabited by human souls. Blessed souls would not wish to return from heaven, and those suffering hellish or purgatorial punishment would not be free to do so, even with the assistance of evil spirits. There will be no individual resurrections before the general one.[25] He considers two examples from scripture and Christian literature that seem to contradict his point: one of a knight (or soldier) whom Jesus raised from the dead at Mary's request, the other the prophet Samuel, revived by the "Pythoness" at King Saul's command. In the former case, William argues that Jesus could not refuse his mother. In the second, he denies that the dead man returned bodily, since only God could perform a true resurrection. In this latter case, a demon must have assumed the form of the prophet, and here William's interpretation seems entirely traditional.[26]

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[24]Nancy Caciola, "Wraiths, Revenants and Ritual in Medieval Culture," *Past and Present* 156 (Aug 1996): 3-45. Thomas A. Du Bois, *Nordic Religions in the Viking Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999). *The Saga of Grettir the Strong* 34-5, trans. Bernard Scudder, ed. Örnólfur Thorsson (London: Penguin, 2005), 81-86.
[25]William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1069bB-C.
[26]William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1: 1069bC.

Most medieval commentators likewise presumed the ghost of Samuel to be a demon in disguise.[27]

William attributes to demonic power and artifice the murders supposedly done by revenants of this source. According to William, spirits can "paint" any sort of illusion into human minds; thus they can make the illusion of a dead man's weaponry attacking people.[28] Nevertheless, they cannot kill people at "the whim and desire of their evil," but only when and if God permits them.[29] Thus, even the wounds they seem to make with their weaponry are illusory.

7.1.5 Purgatorial Souls – Vision and Actuality

William considers favorably the idea that the Wild Hunt might be composed of ghosts who have not yet left the world of the living and that those who have died untimely and violently deaths might return as ghosts. As we have seen, many authors categorized the Hunt's participants as purgatorial or damned souls. William's evaluation of such theories strangely conflates Platonic doctrines and Christian beliefs about Purgatory. He mentions that Plato spoke of people, who, having died violently before completing their natural life-span, wander about their tombs. When their time

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[27] Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 33.
[28] Their "facultas pingendi." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1061bD. See Chapter 5, "Demons and the Human Composite: Illusions and Possession."
[29]"[N]on enim possunt interficere homines pro voto, et libito malignitatis suae, sicut saepius audisti." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1: 1070aE.

is fulfilled, they return to the appropriate star.[30] William connects this to appearances of the Wild Hunt:

> The vulgar call them the "sword-slain" (*disgladiatos*), because those who were killed by arms appear either alone or especially in the same armies, and they are also believed to do their penitence in arms since they sinned in arms.[31]

These dead men often return to their friends to "reveal these things, such as the punishments that they suffer, and the causes of their punishment."[32] William connects this observation to his theory of Purgatory, in which the place of punishment is "earthly," (*locus purgatorii ... terrena habitatio est*) and the souls expiate unfinished penance.[33] William speculates that although the dead are confined to places of punishment or reward, the likeness of those in purgatorial places of punishment sometimes may appear for the edification of sinners. Those who see visions of punished souls refrain from violence, but so too will those who only hear of such visions.[34]

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[30] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1067aC. Perhaps a reference to *Timaeus* 42.

[31]"[E]t quoniam illi, vel soli, vel potissimum illi apparent in exercitibus istis, qui armis interempti sunt, disgladiatos eos vulgus vocat, creduntur autem poenitentiam agere in armis quoniam in armis peccaverunt." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1067aC.

[32]"Ipsi etiam, qui sic apparent prout fama est, ista saepe revelaverunt, videlicet et poena, quas patiuntur, et poenarum causus." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1067aD.

[33] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1067aD-bA. Jacques Le Goff describes William's as one of the first fully-elaborated theories of purgatory. See Le Goff, *La Naissance du Purgitoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1981), trans. Arthur Goldhammer as *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 241-45.

[34]William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1067aD-1068aF.

But after giving this argument in favor of (c), dead people undergoing earthly purgatorial punishment, William goes on to state that not all of these spectacles need be of the souls themselves. He argues that it would normally be impossible for purgatorial souls to manipulate the spears and other physical objects associated with their punishment. Once again, it could be only their likeness that appears. William compares the situation to dreams, in which symbols demonstrate real truths:

> It is not necessary that these souls themselves thus appear in their own essence or persons any more than the things, which we seem to see in dreams, truly appear with their own presences. Rather in dreams signs of them suffice, which stand for the truth of things. Thus regarding these apparitions too, all of them should be even more clearly understoodto be absentthan the things seen in dreams.[35]

William does not deny the moral lesson to be derived from the Wild Hunt's appearances, only (c), its actual presence on earth. Thus he seems to be arguing here for explanation (b), demonic deceptions, that sometimes the Wild Hunt appears as a "fantastic illusion" for the edification of sinners without involving actual dead souls. This illusion might (one supposes) be caused directly by God, but more probably William intends illusions of demonic origins produced under divine sanction or mandate.

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[35]"Neque necesse est, ut ipsae animae in essentiae suis, vel personis, praesentialiter sic appareant, quemadmodum neque in somnis necesse est, ut res ispsae quae videri videntur, praesentia sua et veritate appareant, sed sufficiunt ispa signa earum somniantibus, quae pro rerum veritate se illis exhibent: sic et in his apparitionibus, sed de his potius, tanquam de visis per somnia, judicandum omnimode est." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1067bB.

Yet William also claims that in visions of this kind God sometimes suspends the normal laws governing spirits. As evidence he cites famous examples of purgatorial punishment – the two similar accounts of bathhouse ghosts from Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*. In the first, Gregory recounts how the ghost of Paschasius the deacon appeared in the Roman baths. When questioned by a bishop, Paschasius replied that he was being punished for obstinately supporting the losing candidate in an ecclesiastical election. After the bishop prayed for him, Paschasius was released from his punishment. In the second, a priest encounters in the bath a man who offers to serve as his attendant. When the priest attempts to give his benefactor an Eucharistic loaf, the attendant protests that he cannot eat it, for he is dead. God has condemned him to serve in the bath on account of his sins. He asks for the priest to intercede with God for him, and when it is done, he vanishes.[36] William's reference seems to be to the second story rather than the first, as he clearly conceives of the ghost as performing menial physical tasks and discusses how they could be undertaken.

William argues that ordinarily the bathhouse ghost would be unable to gather wood or manipulate the bathhouse fire and that God would not punish a soul by ordering it to do the impossible. Although this also seems to be an argument for (c), the purgatorial punishment of the dead on earth, William seems inclined to attribute Gregory's story to *illusiones fantastica*e. Yet Gregory, clearly a great man according

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[36] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1067bH-1068aE. See also Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* 4.42 and 4.57, in *Dialogues,* ed. Adalbert de Vogüé, trans. Paul Antin (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1978-1980), 3:150-57, 184-95.

to William, believed that the occurrence was a true vision and that his word should not be lightly doubted. Therefore, William concludes that only God's power (*non aliter ... nisi virtute creatoris)* made the ghost able to manipulate the wood and fire, and so concludes that Gregory saw a vision. Thus, William seems to be arguing in favor of (d), a divine vision of a soul undergoing punishment in purgatory.[37]

7.1.6 Ambiguity of Causation

Given the number of explanations that William presents, it is impossible to determine exactly how he would divide the proportion of the Wild Hunt's appearances between various explanations or if he would instead attribute them to a single cause. Judging from the placement of his arguments and their general development, William seems to favor explanations in which the Wild Hunt serves an edifying moral purpose -- that is, explanations (b), demonic deceptions, and (d), visions of souls in purgatory. In explanation (b), demonic deceptions, the demons performing the illusions would be acting with divine permission and for divine purposes. In explanation (d), God himself would supply the vision. Although (b), "illusiones fantasticae," present a false picture and (d) a true one, they would both have a similar moral effect on the viewer, warning him or her not to sin in arms.

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[37]William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1067bC-1068aE.

7.2 Women, Female Spirits, and Night Terrors

William uses the Hunt as a starting point for discussing beliefs involving living sorceresses and female spirits, particularly those that share associations with the night and with sleepers, such as the lady Abundia and other female spirits believed to bless houses at night and the *lamiae, striges* believed to assail children and sleepers. Perhaps because of their resistance to his teachings, as will become clear, women represent a sector of society whose beliefs William finds automatically suspect. William views human women as incorrigibly superstitious and the idea of female spirits as pernicious inversions of the proper spiritual order. Thus, he unhesitatingly classifies all female spirits as demons and accuses women of perpetuating the idolatry of female spirits. Female customs of worship and the female form constitute especial points of anxiety for William.

7.2.1 The Wild Hunt and Female Spirits

The female spirits whom William describes are not so divorced from the question of the Wild Hunt as might at first appear. As we have seen, the Hunt's leader was often female – a Diana or a Herodias – and sources such as the *canon Episcopi* testify to the belief that devotees of the goddess accompanied the Hunt bodily or in spirit.

William notes that the Wild Hunt's warriors cannot touch people who seek refuge in fields. He recounts that once a man encountering such an army fled into a

field, whereupon they passed him by and left him in peace.[38] William explains this by saying that "in the opinion of the many, fields rejoice in the protection of the creator because of their utility to men. Thus, evil spirits cannot enter them and likewise do not have the power to harm people therein."[39]

The motif of the protective field recalls the miracles attributed to female saints associated with the harvest. In these tales, the saint, fleeing a hostile force, often a male rider, takes refuge in a newly-sown field, whose miraculous growth tricks her pursuer into abandoning the hunt. Pamela Berger in *The Goddess Obscured* speculates that these tales reflect a tradition of pre-Christian goddess worship whose aspect and stories the saints have assumed.[40]

Thus, it is perhaps significant that William also notes (and rejects) another explanation for the Wild Hunt's inability to enter fields: that the popular veneration of "Ceres" (the Roman grain goddess) protects the fields.[41] Whether the Goddess in question was actually Ceres or some other deity whom William calls by a Roman name, his characterization of her worship as "idolatry" suggests that not only is the Wild Hunt demonic but so is the power that "protects" people from it. It also

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[38]William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1067aA.
[39]" … propter quod inolevit opinio apud multos, agros gaudere protectione creatoris propter utilitatem hominum et hac de causa non esse acessum malignis spiritibus ad eos, neque potestatem nocendi propter hanc causam hominibus existentibus in eis." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1067aA-aB.
[40]See Pamela Berger, *The Goddess Obscured: Transformation of the Grain Protectress from Goddess to Saint* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 49-76. Berger analyzes the stories of Radegund, Macrine, Walpurga, Milburga, and Brigid, 55-74.
[41]William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1067aB-C. See also Caciola, "Wraiths, Revenants and Ritual" *Past and Present* 3-45, esp. 17, 26-27.

reinforces the link between female spirits and the Wild Hunt in the underlying folklore. Not only does the Goddess Diana sometimes lead the Wild Hunt, but the goddess Ceres also protects travelers from it.

7.2.2 The White Ladies

William fears that, unlike the Wild Hunt whose appearance often has a salutary effect, troops of female spirits will lead people into idolatry. Soon after he introduces the problem of the Wild Hunt, William describes spirits who "appear in the likeness of girls or of matrons in white womanly garments in woods and dark places and the hoary trees"[42] and in houses. Among them are the Ladies Abundia and Satia and their retainers, a wandering troop that enters human habitations to receive offerings of food and drink. [43] Abundia's name, perhaps that of a Roman goddess, has sometimes been connected with Herodias. Herodias in this case is not the Herodias who engineered John the Baptist's death through her daughter Salome's dance but some goddess similar or identical to the Germanic "Holde" to whom the name of the Biblical figure became attached for obscure reasons. Perhaps the deity's

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[42]"Sunt et aliae ludifcationes malignorum spirituum, quas faciunt interdum in nemoris, et locis amoenis, et frondoris arboribus, ubi apparent in similitudine puellarum, aut matronarum ornatu muliebri, et candido." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066aG.
[43]William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066aG-aH.

name resembled Herodias or "Herodiana," or perhaps her behavior recalled that of the unpleasant Biblical queen to the minds of the recording clerics.[44]

In other sources, Abundia and her near equivalents patronize witches and night-riders. For example, Jean de Meung's continuation of the *Romance of the Rose* mocks those people, especially "foolish old women"[45] who imagine "that they become sorcerers at night and go roaming with Lady Abundance." The poet derides their claim that they leave their bodies behind and travel in the spirit so that doors and locks cannot hinder them. Jean asks scornfully, do they die and return to life regularly, in defiance of the unique and single resurrection at the last judgment?[46]

In a story recorded by Vincent of Beauvais, one such sorceress exhorts her priest to favor her because once when traveling disembodied, her cohort entered his house and looked in upon him sleeping. She claims that the other riders wished to harm him, but she prevented them. When the astonished priest asks how she got through his door, she tells him she could easily pass through it. In response, the priest

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[44] Ginzburg, *Ecstacies*, 89-93. Jacob Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, trans. James Steven Stallybrass (London: George Bell and Sons, 1883; rpt. Dover: New York, 1966), 1:283-88. Lecouteux, *Chasses Fantastiques,* 13-25.

[45]"Foles vielles," Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Le Roman de la Rose*, ed. Félix Lecoy (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1966-70), ll. 18457-68, trans. Francis Horgan, *Romance of the Rose* (New York: Oxford, 1994), 285.

[46] "Don maintes genz par leur folies/Cuident estre par nuit estries,/Erranz aveques dame Abonde." De Lorris and de Meun, *Roman*, ll. 18395-18440, trans Horgan, *Romance*, 284.

strikes her on the head with a crucifix, saying "travel through this, Lady Seeress!"[47] Thus does he contemptuously refuse the woman's claim to do anything good.

Women in white appear in several stories in Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogue on Miracles*, their intentions even less benevolent than William's Abundia. In one tale, a woman in "white linen garments" (*alba vesta et linea*) sexually importunes a wine-seller by night. When he refuses, the woman picks him up and carries him through the air, depositing him on a distant hillside. Shortly thereafter he dies. In another tale, a maid sees a dead woman with "a pallid face in snow-white garments" (*vesta nivea et facie pallide*) whose gaze apparently dooms their household to death.[48]

William reports several customs, which he charges are practiced by women in particular, related to Abundia. He reports that people frequently leave food and drink exposed in their homes as an offering to the Lady Abundia and other wandering spirits and do not lock or bar their homes on such locations.[49] In return, Abundia "is thought to cause an abundance of good times in those houses which she frequents."[50]

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[47] "Exito hinc domina sortilege!" From Vincent de Beauvais, *Speculum morale* 1.27, in ([?]: Douai, 1624; rpt., Graz, Akademische Druck- u. Verlaganstalt, 1964-65) 3:1114bE-15aA. Trans. in Lecouteux and Marq, *Esprits,* 39

[48] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum,* 3.11 and 11.63, 1: 123-24, 2:313-14, trans. Scott and Bland, 1:138-39, 2:287.

[49] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066aH.

[50] "De illis vero substantiis, quae apparent in domibus, quas dominas nocturnas, et principem [sic] earum vocant dominam abundiam pro eo, quod domibus, quas frequentant abundantiam bonorum temporalium praestare putantur, non aliud tibi sentiendum est, neque aliter, quam quemadmodum de illis audivisti: quod enim comedere, et bibere videntur." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066aH.

These customs perhaps descend from ancient paganism, which were frequently associated with groves, with households, and with protective household spirits.[51]

William condemns such customs as idolatry. He insists that the spirits, being bodiless, cannot actually eat or drink the offerings left for them, but they encourage the practice because it draws worship towards them and away from God. Knowingly or not, Abundia's devotees worship demons, as he says: "it is manifest that the crime of idolatry is committed when food and drink are willingly offered to evil spirits because they are thought to come to a place and eat there."[52] William charges that women and in particular old women are especially likely to preserve and spread this custom: "… such foolishness of old women has held fast to almost all vestiges of idolatry, has retained them, and continues ceaselessly to advance them."[53]

William proposes that the thirteenth century's new, harsher methods of social repression be directed against women and their beliefs. He despairs, it seems, of educating the female populace out of the false beliefs that "foolishness (*desipientia*) … nearly ineradicably fixes in women's minds"[54] and suggests that their errors be

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[51] Compare the pagan practices described in Ken Dowden, *European Paganism: The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2000).
[52]"Ubi manifestum est, scelus idolatriae committi, cum cibi, et potus malignis spiritibus sint expositi eo intentione, qua ad locum venturi, et inde sumpturi creduntur." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066bF.
[53]"… pene omnes reliquias idolatriae retinuit, et reservavit, et adhuc promovere non cessat anilis ista fatuitas." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066bH.
[54]"[D]esipientia … animis mulierum aliarum pene irradicabiliter infixit." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066bG-H.

exterminated with "fire and sword."[55] This remarkable statement reflects William's confidence in his own appraisal of such beliefs and in the efficacy and reach of the French crown and the papacy's corrective power in the wake of the Albigensian crusade.

7.2.3 The Paradoxical Masculinity of Sexless Angels

In William's mind, allegedly female spirits and female humans act in concert to spread idolatry and superstition. William argues that seemingly female spirits *must* be genderless demons. They cannot be angels. He puts forward several arguments to this effect, directing his attacks against foolish "old women" and their intractable beliefs. First, angels would never ask for food or drink and would only accept food offerings out of deference to the pious and for God's glory, not their own. Nor do angels appear in holy places, lest their presence encourage humans to worship them instead of God. Moreover, angels bring God's commands to humans, counsel them or encourage them to do good deeds. The spirits who appear as women do none of these things.[56]

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[55] "igneque et gladio exterminanda" William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066bF.
[56]William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066bG.

William asserts that "good angels only appear in the form of men, and never in the form of women, which evil spirits take."[57] To defend this statement, which appears to impart gender to spirits, William replies that:

> If someone should say similarly that the male sex has no place among sublime and blessed spirits, I respond that it is true, but, still, virtue and fortitude and the active power have a place in men and they are well-matched to spiritual substances. Truly, passive power, infirmity, debility and womanly dispositions are in all ways incompatible with good spirits. For this reason, therefore, a virile appearance is appropriate to [good spirits], but not because of its sex, which is nothing but the active force in the service of reproduction, from which, by the nobility of their [virile] nature, they are prohibited and greatly removed [from womanly dispositions].[58]

Thus, although spirits no more have a male sex than a female one, they find that the spiritual qualities associated with the male sex are more akin to their nature than those associated with the female sex, because the latter are in William's view, passive and weak. William frequently mentions demons in male form. Therefore, angels appear only as males; demons as either sex.[59]

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[57]"quod boni Angeli in specie virorum solummodo apparent, et nunquam in specie muliebri, quod maligni spiritus faciunt." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1068aH.

[58] "[Q]uod si dixerit quis, quia similiter virilis sexus non habet locum apud sublimes, ac beatos spiritus. Respondeo quia verum est, verumtamen virtus, et fortitudo et vis activa locum habet in viris et congruunt ista bene substantiis spiritibus; vis vero passiva, et infirmitas, atque debilitas dispositiones muliebres sunt omni modo incongruentes huiusmodi spiritibus. Ob causam igitur hanc species virilis conveniens est eis, non propter sexum, qui non est aliud nisi vis activa in operatione generationis, a qua naturae suae nobilitate prohibiti sunt; ac remotissimi." William of Auvergne, *De universo,* 2.3.24, 1:1068aH-bE.

[59] For example, William's discussion of the demon impersonating Saul, above. See also, Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 72-78,161-62.

Finally, William argues that if the spirits were in fact women they would be able to reproduce. If female spirits cannot reproduce, then they must be sterile either because they have become old, which is impossible for a spirit, or because God has punished them. If punished in such a fashion they must indeed be wicked spirits, not angelic ones. If female spirits could reproduce, their offspring, being immortal, would eventually populate the whole earth. Moreover, he mocks, spirits would eat the humans out of house and home. (William rejects the idea that spirits eat only the essence of food, as is the case in certain modern fairy beliefs.) [60]

William's argument could be considered inconsistent by many standards – an essentially sexless spirit could appear female without having the capacity to give birth. After all, the sexless spirits appearing as males do not have the ability to beget children.[61] For William, it seems that physical reproduction is the defining feature of being female, even for a spirit, but masculinity consists of the possession of essentially virile spiritual character. Thus, in criticizing women's opinions and their veneration of female spirits, William reveals a radical misogyny that extends from the human world into the spiritual.

7.2.4 Night-terrors and Sudden Death

William also mentions other spirits associated with the night, with death, and with women, such as *lamiae* and *striges* believed to kill infants, or the Ephialtes, a

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[60] William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1068bE-bH.
[61] See William's discussion of this issue in *De universo* 2.3.25, 1:1070aG-1073aC.

form of demon believed to injure sleepers. Although these three creatures have similar attributes, William approaches the first two differently from Ephialtes. The difficulty of *lamiae* and *striges* lies in whether they are living women with supernatural powers or bodiless demons. William treats them much as he does Abundia, designating them as demons and fearing the idolatry they encourage. Yet William follows most of his contemporaries in favoring a natural explanation for Ephialtes, perhaps because Ephialties is a male demon. Equally important, in treating these phenomena William reserves space for divine providence, arguing that God sometimes uses demons as agents of vengeance against sinners, either mimicking disease in the case of Ephialtes or destroying infants in the case of the *striges*.

7.2.4.1 Ephialtes

The Ephialtes, bearing the same name as the (male) Greek Titan in charge of sleep, was a variety of demon believed to sit on the chest, causing sleep, paralysis, or death.[62] In the thirteenth century, attacks of Ephialtes were often attributed to medical causes rather than demons, as John of Salisbury reports.[63] William for the most part agrees with John, arguing that most if not all accounts of Ephialtes are

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[62]See, for example, Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* 35.3, rev. (New York: Penguin, 1960). The giant Ephialtes in the *Divine Comedy*, noteworthy for having rebelled against Jupiter, presumably reflects Dante's classical interest in the Titans. See *The Inferno* 31.91-96.

[63] Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia* 3.86, 722-25. Lecouteux and Marcq, *Esprits,* 28-29. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 2.15, trans. and ed. Clemens C. J. Web (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1909; reprinted Arno Press: New York, 1979), 429B-C. William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1069aC.

really accounts of digestive problems: "many skilled doctors deny that Ephialtes is a demon, and the oppression, which the reclining demon seems to make in human bodies, they say comes from a compression of the heart."[64] William provides a detailed summary of the medical theory, but rather than concluding that Ephialtes constitutes a completely natural phenomenon, he suddenly declares that: "Nevertheless, you ought not to doubt that sometimes the providence of the creator lets malignant spirits kill men with compressions, oppressions, suffocations, and other methods."[65] Thus, for William, divine permission and divine punishment might at any time violate the natural order of things, confounding skepticism, and producing morally useful events. Such a view, moreover, retains traditional reports of demonic activity even while advancing a scientifically more precise understanding of the possible.

7.2.4.2 Baby-Killers

William's treatment of female spirits believed to cause death and illness shows none of the cautious naturalism he displays in his account of the male Ephialtes. In Latin lore, *striges* and *lamiae* are cannibalistic women or female spirits

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[64]" [M]ulti ex peritioribus medicorum Ephialtem daemonem esse negant, et oppressionem illam, quam eos incumbens daemon facere videtur, hominibus, ex compressione cordis esse dicunt....." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1069aB-C.

[65]"Verumtamen dubitare non debes, quin malignis spiritibus interdum providentia creatoris permittat compressiones, et oppressiones facere, necnon et suffocationes, et alterius modi extinctiones hominum …." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1069aD. See also Lecouteux and Marcq, *Esprits,* 28-29, for a discussion of digestive diseases and night terrors.

believed to eat the flesh and blood of young children. The Latin words *lamiae* and *striges* originally referred to creatures from ancient Roman folklore. *Lamia* designated a sorceress or witch in general, but in particular one that sucked the blood of children.[66] A *strix* or *striga* seems to have been a similar sort of spirit that preyed on infants, and was sometimes associated with owls.[67]

Some medieval sources depict *lamiae* and *striges* as evil spirits, other sources speak of them as human magicians magically enabled to perform evil deeds. For example, Gervase of Tilbury hesitates between classifying *lamiae* as spirits, following St. Augustine, or as witches, following his popular sources. Gervase reports that:

> It is the wretched lot of some men and women to cover great distances in a swift nocturnal flight; they enter houses, torment people in their sleep, and inflict distressing dreams on them, so causing them to cry out. Apparently they also eat, and light lamps, take people's bones apart, put them back together again in the wrong order, and move babies from place to place.[68]

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[66] In consulting the early mss of *De universo*, I have several times encountered versions of this word whose shifting minims might reasonably be construed as *larvae*, a word for ghosts.

[67] Richard Gordon, "Imagining Greek and Roman Magic," in Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark, ed., *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 192-93, 216-17. Georg Luck, "Witches and Sorcerers in Classical Literature," in Ankarloo and Clark, *Witchcraft: Greece and Rome*, 130-1. Diane Prukiss, *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories* (London: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 2000), 11-51, gives an impressionistic account of the psychological elements behind such entities.

[68] "[H]ec esse feminarum ac virorum quorundam infortunia, quod de nocte celerrimo uolatu regiones transcurrant, domos intrant, dormientes opprimunt, ingerunt sompnia grauia, quibus planctus excitant. Sed et comedere videntur et lucernas accendere, ossa hominum dissoluere, dissolutaque nonnumquam cum ordinis turbatione compaginare, sanguinem humanum bibere, et infantes de loco ad locum mutare." Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia: Recreation for an Emperor* 3.86, ed. and trans. S. E. Banks and J. W. Binns (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 722, 4. Gervase also

Lecouteux and Marcq argue that *striges* became less demonic and more human with the passage of time, which they consider a part of the greater trend towards anthropomorphism in the Middle Ages. [69]

William by contrast argues that although such spirits appear as old women, they are actually demons in disguise, describing them as "other evil spirits that the vulgar call *striges* and *lamiae*, which during the night appear in houses in which infants are being nourished and seem to snatch babies from their cradles and tear them to pieces or roast them in fires."[70]

William charges that the *striges* and *lamiae* use the fear they cause to spread idolatry. Old women serve as the demons' allies and dupes, encouraging parents to make propitiatory offerings -- not so much out of hope of receiving a blessing but "out of the hope that the spirits might spare infants -- that is, not tear them apart or roast them in the fire." [71] In this way, William comments, "evil spirits have acquired for themselves fear and honor and idol-worship (*culturam idolatriae*)." [72]

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mentions *lamiae* in connection with the water spirits *draci.* See *Otia*, 3.85, 716-22, and the analysis in Lecouteux and Marcq*, Esprits*, 19-24.

[69] Lecouteux and Marcq, *Esprits,* 29.

[70] "[E]t eodem modo sentiendum est tibi de aliis malignis spiritibus, quas vulgus striges, et lamias vocant, et apparent de nocte in domibus in quibus parvuli nutriuntur, eosque de cunabulis raptos laniare, vel igne assare videntur." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.23, 1:1066bF-G.

[71]"ut parvulis parcerent, hoc est, ut illos nec laniarent, neque igni assarent." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066bG.

[72]"… timorem, et honorem, ac culturam idolatriae sibi acquisiverint ..." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066bG.

William asserts that any attempt to prevent the demons' depredations by making offerings to them or by worshiping them is sinful. Indeed, he thinks that loss of a child an appropriate punishment for parents' lack of faith. He argues that although immaterial *striges* and *lamiae* cannot actually eat the infants, they do indeed occasionally murder them:

> Sometimes, in order to punish the parents, demons are permitted to kill infants, because sometimes parents love their children so much that they do not love God. Therefore he deals with these parents usefully and beneficially because their offence subtracts from the creator.[73]

Thus, he is not especially sympathetic to ordinary people's fears or fantasies about the potential death of themselves or their children, particularly when parents venerate rival, female sources of authority for advice and reassurance.

7.3 Conclusion

William's interpretive matrix permitted him wide latitude in the categories to which he could attribute common lore about spirits. The same phenomenon could often fit as easily into the category of divine miracle as natural wonder – or demonic deception. Which interpretation William assigned often depended as much on his evaluation of the group believing in it as it did on William's physical theory, for, like Clark's early modern demonologists', Williams physical theory was flexible to the

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[73]"Interdum autem permittitur eis parvulos occidere in poenam parentum, propter hoc, quia parentes eousque interdum diligunt parvulos suos, ut Deum non diligant: utiliter igitur, atque salubriter cum ipsis parentibus agitur, cum causa offensa creatoris subtrahitur." William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.24, 1:1066bG.

point of being unstable, holding enough exceptions to make exact determination difficult, if not arbitrary.[74]

William's treatment of the Wild Hunt demonstrates how confused the question of causation could become, as well as the criteria that most influenced him in making judgments. William himself seems uncertain whether the figures of the Hunt are natural wonders, demons, ghosts, demonic trickery or divinely caused illusions. By contrast, William's unhesitating classification of Abundia and other female spirits as demons reveals his fear of idolatry and his intense distrust of women, viewing human women as especially, even constitutionally, likely to spread idolatry.

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[74] Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Clarendon: Oxford, 1997), 294-311.

8.0 CONCLUSION: SYNTHESIS AND CENSURE

As Bishop of Paris, William of Auvergne held the cure of souls of one of Western Europe's most populous cities and supervision of the community of scholars that formed the intellectual heart of Latin Christian Europe. Amid the profound intellectual, social and religious changes of the early thirteenth century, he feared a resurgence of paganism, which he conceived as the idolatrous human worship of demons. The works translated from the Arabic world that would help form scholastic theology also contained philosophic and magical understandings of spirits at variance with what William saw as orthodox doctrine. The new learning's conceptions of spirits -- integral to the workings of the heavens and of the natural world and susceptible to human persuasion and coercion -- threatened to energize similar conceptions which already circulated in Western Europe as the legacy of ancient religion and philosophy. William saw in such ideas the deceits of demons, part of a conspiracy to secure the worship of themselves, the old, false gods, Christians' first enemy: idolatry.

William constructed his demonology to expose and counter the perceived threat of idolatry. He used the latest philosophic and scientific theories to uphold what he saw as central Christian doctrines – that demons were fallen angels under the headship of Satan, subject to divine providence, and malevolently bent on securing human worship for themselves. He held that demons were completely bodiless, incorporating some Arabic and Aristotelian speculation about intelligences, but

rejecting the view of magicians that demons held any governance over any parts of the natural universe.

William argued that demons' ability to cause illusions in the human mind combined with a vast knowledge of the natural world enabled them to pretend to miraculous power and thus secure human worship. He blamed demonic lies for the existence of rival views that made demons seem overly powerful or excessively anthropomorphic. His own demonology, grounded in the most prestigious scientific theories of the day, aimed to unmask what he saw as demonic trickery. It explained how incorporeal demons might seem to create higher animals and father human children, how they encouraged dangerous magical experiments to gain knowledge, and set various deceits to secure human worship under the guise of goddesses and monsters. Nevertheless, William reassured his readers, even these demons were subject to divine purpose, restrained from their fullest malice by a God who often forced them to produce salutary, if horrifying, wonders such as the Wild Hunt or even the death of children for the good of their parents' souls.

8.1 Relevance

In constructing his demonology, William chose between competing conceptions of spirits: His decisions reflect his evaluation of the scientific and theological value of ideas imported from the wider Mediterranean world and his attitude towards various groups within and outside of European society itself. Thus, his final synthesis has relevance beyond the relatively narrow confines of the study of

magic and demonology proper: for the development of scholasticism generally, for the reaction of the institutional Church towards religious deviance and for the preconditions that eventually led to the early modern witch trials.

8.1.1 Early Thirteenth-century Scholasticism

William's demonology further illuminates his role in the evolution of scholasticism. William and his contemporaries, such as Alexander of Hales (d. 1245) and Vincent of Beauvais (d. c. 1264), form an important intermediate step in the digestion of the ancient and philosophical corpus and their synthesis into theology, laying the groundwork for the considerably more sophisticated and elegant works of the likes of Albertus Magnus (d. 1280), Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) and Bonaventure (also d. 1274). William's treatment of issues such as demonic incorporeality, possession, and illusion form a case study for the assimilation of Mediterranean scientific and philosophical notions and their subsequent development within the Latin tradition. Even if later thinkers rejected his position that illusions alone could account for all instances of demonic and human interaction, he was one of the first to enter an area later explored more fully by others and which eventually became acquired territory, part of Europe's intellectual equipment..[1]

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[1] See Chapter 5.

8.1.2 Persecution

William's demonology constitutes an especially revealing example of the ideology employed in what R. I. Moore has labeled the "formation of a persecuting society." Moore argues that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, European society became markedly less tolerant of deviance in religion and behavior, and used the greater capacity for oversight inherent in the governmental and social structures that resulted from the economic boom to suppress and persecute deviance.[2] I would stress that the universities formed a key part of this process. Scholastic theology defined doctrine more precisely and thus greatly reduced the range of opinion considered acceptable. William's demonology provides a particularly interesting case of this process: he explicitly excludes a large percentage of the demonic lore circulating in Europe, and he vilifies those holding opinions besides his own as the literal servants of the devil. His call to exterminate idolaters with fire and sword indicates his willingness to sanction the use of violence against dissidence he considered dangerous. The logical strategies of scholasticism served as a kind of mental armament in this campaign.

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[2] R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 1950-1250*, (London: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

8.1.3 Witchcraft

Finally, there is William's place in the history of magic and witchcraft. William was influential in producing several of the theological positions that were the preconditions for the later witch trials.

William helped create Aristotelian demonology that formed the scientific underpinning of the witch hunts, especially in his championing the new category of natural magic and in his examining the subjects of demonic bodies, possession and sexuality. His division of wondrous events into three causal categories -- divine miracles, demonic illusion, and the occult operations of nature – remained largely unchanged into the early modern period. Moreover, by stressing the regular operation of nature, this system held that whenever a human allegedly produced a wonder that could not be a miracle or natural magic, it must result from demonic illusion and participation . Even natural magic was suspect to William, for demons were the most knowledgeable in the properties of nature and might perform natural magical magic on behalf of a human being. As Clark demonstrates, the Aristotelean system William helped pioneer had not changed significantly by the time of the witch trials. [3]

Moreover, William contributed significantly to the suspicion that a conspiracy operated against Christian society. It has long been recognized that specific elements of witchcraft belief evolved from earlier attacks on heretics – for example, the idea of

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[3] Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 151-311, esp. 161-78.

veneration of a cat, or the nocturnal orgy.[4] Moreover, Alain Boureau argues in his *Satan Heretique* that the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century saw the development of a view of Satan as the arch-heretic. I would argue that in light of William's forceful view of demons as the champions of contemporary error, indeed as agents seeking the return of paganism, the processes Boureau describes began earlier than his starting date of 1280.[5] William held that Satan was the king of demons, head of an inverted and perverse hierarchy that aped what William saw as divinely-ordained monarchical human society. Finally, William's extreme suspicion of women as likely idolaters and his condemnation of their beliefs in female spirits should also be seen as a forerunner of the witch hunts' virulent misogyny.

8.2 Final Thoughts

William's works, and especially his demonology, reflect the sometimes paradoxical nature of early thirteenth century society and thought: open to outside influences yet determined to establish orthodoxy and suppress deviance. Intensely curious and widely-read, William drew upon an astounding range of sources: ancient and contemporary Mediterranean philosophy, magical and experimental works, and

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[4] Carlo Ginzburg, *Storia notturna* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi Editori, 1989), translated by Raymond Rosenthal as *Ecstasies : Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath* (New York: Pantheon, 1991), 69-80. Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: Their Foundation in Popular and Learned Culture, 1300-1500*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1976), 10-26. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), esp. 85-165.

[5] Alain Boureau, *Satan Hérétique: Histoire de la Démonologie (1280-1330),* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2004).

even local oral traditions. Perhaps his greatest contribution to the schools was his use of the Aristotelian natural corpus at a time when many authorities still sought to ban it. Yet William was hardly an "open minded" thinker in the modern sense. He extended no tolerance towards rival views, as shown by his readiness to turn to fire and sword in the suppression of religious deviance and his paranoid suspicion of what he feared was a resurgent idolatry. From William's own perspective there was no contradiction between his eagerness to read widely, and his willingness to pronounce and enforce his opinions. Fascinated and horrified as he undoubtedly was by the range of opinions and practices confronting him, William's end-goal was always to establish a single system of truths, and he fervently hoped that fire and sword would eliminate religious and intellectual dissidence and lead to the creation of an ordered and hierarchical Christian society.

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