

SIMILAR STARS
AND STRANGE ANGELS:
GIORGIO ANSELMI'S
ASTROLOGICAL MAGIC

CONTENTS

	Introduction.....	3
1	Quid Sit Magus.....	12
2	Anselmi's Daemonic Cosmos	22
3	Ceremony: Sacred Tools and Moving Words.....	33
4	Images: Nature and Law.....	44
5	The Place of Giorgio Anselmi in the History of Magic.....	61
	Appendix A: Contents of the <i>Divinum opus de magia disciplina</i>	66
	Appendix B: The Parts of Magic According to Giorgio Anselmi.....	70
	Appendix C: Select Planetary Correspondences	
	According to Giorgio Anselmi.....	71
	Bibliography.....	72

INTRODUCTION

The physician and astrologer Giorgio Anselmi da Parma wrote his *Divinum opus de magia disciplina* (Divine Work on the Discipline of Magic) in the early fifteenth century, in the waning of the Middle Ages or the youth of the Italian Renaissance. This large, complex book is perhaps the century's major original work on magic before the high noon of Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, but it was not widely read; falling between the fields of medievalists and specialists in the Renaissance, it has drawn less scholarly attention than his treatise on music theory.¹ The work attempts to systematise a range of medieval magical literature and present a unified conception of this *scientia* and *ars* that includes divination, talismanic magic and related practices. Here I will examine Anselmi's system of astrological and demonic magic, describe its philosophy and practices, and place them within the history of magic and ideas.

LIFE AND WORKS

Giorgio Anselmi da Parma (Georgius Anselmus Parmensis or Georgius de Anselmis) was born in Parma shortly before 1386, when his father Enrico died.² Both his father and his grandfather Bernardo were philosophically trained physicians. Anselmi studied in his youth in Pavia, since the *Studium* of Parma had been closed in 1387 after Giangaleazzo Visconti decreed Pavia the sole university of Lombardy. During his four-year degree in arts and medicine, he would have studied mathematics, natural philosophy, medicine,

¹ The main secondary literature on Anselmi's magical and astrological works includes Thorndike, *History of Magic*, 4, pp. 242–6, 677–9; Burnett, 'The Scapulimancy'; Weill-Parot, *Images astrologiques*, pp. 622–38. Weill-Parot (p. 623) calls the *Divinum opus* 'one of the three major works on the talismanic art of the fifteenth century along with Marsilio Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda* and Jerome Torrella's *Opus praeclarum de imaginibus astrologicis*'.

² The following biography draws from Affò, *Scrittori parmigiani*, 2, pp. 153–61; Thorndike, *History of Magic*, 4, pp. 243–5; Handschin, 'Anselmi's Treatise on Music', p. 124; Anselmi, *De musica*, pp. 7–19; Pannella, 'Anselmi, Giorgio senior'; Adkins, 'Anselmi, Giorgio'; Burnett, 'The Scapulimancy', p. 64; Weill-Parot, *Images astrologiques*, p. 622; Grendler, *Universities*.

astronomy and astrology.³ Anselmi became a professor at the faculty of arts and medicine at the University of Parma when it reopened in 1412 with the permission of his city's new ruler, Marquis Niccolò III d'Este of Ferrara (1383–1441).

Pavia, along with Bologna and Padua, was a centre of astrological teaching in northern Italy. Its theology faculty employed a single professor in the 1390s, expanding to two in the early fifteenth century; at Parma there was no paid lecturer in theology until 1448. Unlike in northern Europe, this minimal presence of theology in Italian universities allowed natural philosophers to understand their discipline as independent from theological concerns.⁴ Although astral magic was not part of the curriculum, their training in astrology and astrological medicine, oriented to the effects of celestial motion on human beings *ex radice superiori*, prepared some for an interest in the subject. Contemporary with Anselmi, Antonio Guaineri (d. c.1448), a professor at Pavia, wrote on astrological seals used as plague cures, and Ugo Benzi (1376–1439), Anselmi's colleague at Parma, included astral magic in his theoretical discussion of imagination.⁵

One of the three professors of astrology employed at Pavia at the turn of the century was the eminent philosopher, mathematician and astrologer Biagio Pelacani da Parma (Blasius of Parma, c.1345–1416), who taught there from 1389 to 1407.⁶ Anselmi and Guaineri both likely studied under him. Pelacani was a radical naturalist Aristotelian who denied the separability and immortality of the intellectual soul and upheld astral determinism and the eternity of the universe, as well as spreading the concept of *inertia* in Italy. In 1396–7 he was suspended from the university and appeared before the bishop of Pavia to answer the charge that certain of his views were against the faith and the Church; he recanted and was reinstated. Pelacani was Anselmi's colleague at Parma until his death in 1416.

³ Rutkin, 'Astrology', p. 541. The archives of the college of arts and medicine have not been preserved, but on its teaching of astrology and astrological medicine, with a reconstruction of the fifteenth-century *corpus astrologicum*, see Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars*, ch. 1.

⁴ Grendler, *Universities*, pp. 282, 356, 373; Krayer, 'Pietro Pomponazzi', pp. 92–4.

⁵ On Guaineri: Thorndike, *History of Magic*, 4, pp. 215–31; Jacquart, 'De la science à la magie'; Weill-Parot, *Images astrologiques*, pp. 567–70, 580–2. On Benzi: Weill-Parot, *Images astrologiques*, pp. 546–50.

⁶ Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars*, pp. 27, 230–1 n. 26. On Pelacani: Thorndike, *History of Magic*, 4, ch. 39; Grant, 'Blasius of Parma'; Federici Vescovini, *Astrologia e scienza*.

After the university was suppressed again by Filippo Maria Visconti in 1420, Anselmi was probably invited to Ferrara by Niccolò III d'Este to practise medicine for his family. In 1425 he was living and practising in Modena. For his distinguished service Niccolò conferred on him in 1428 the honorary citizenship of Ferrara as 'outstanding doctor of arts, astrologer, and most renowned investigator of heavenly motion'.⁷ In April 1434 Anselmi dedicated a treatise on music to Pietro Maria Rossi, Count of San Secondo (1374–1438), based on conversations between the two that took place the previous September at the baths of Corsena near Lucca.⁸ Anselmi retained his connections with the College of Arts and Medicine in Parma, which continued to confer degrees without teaching: he was present at a medical thesis defence in 1439 and was among the reformers of the college statutes in 1440. In 1448–9 he taught practical medicine at the University of Bologna; this is the last known record of his life.

He had four sons, Ilario, Bartolomeo, Giovanni and Andrea, and a daughter, Francesca; his grandson Giorgio (before 1459–1528), Andrea's son, was a humanist who mourned his grandfather in certain of his noted epigrams.

Anselmi wrote on medicine, mathematics, astronomy and astrology, magic and music. His lost works include a medical *Theorematum radicalium libri quatuor*, *Matheseos canonicae institutiones libri septem*, on astronomy, and *Sylva de Solis triumpho*, seemingly a poetic work.⁹ Three of his writings survive, all deeply concerned with the celestial world.¹⁰

A copy of his *Astronomia*, also titled *Theoremata radicalia*, in several hands is preserved in a manuscript at the Vatican Library, where it follows texts titled *Isagoge in astrologiam* and *De iudicis astrologicis* attributed to John of Seville.¹¹ Anselmi's *Astronomia*

⁷ Anselmi, *De musica*, p. 15: 'eximio artium doctori et astrologo coelique motus speculatori clarissimo'.

⁸ On Rossi, see Lasagni, *Dizionario biografico* (<http://www.parmaelasuastoria.it/ita/Rondani-Ruzzi.aspx?idMostra=38&idNode=300>, accessed September 2015).

⁹ Affò, *Scrittori parmigiani*, 2, pp. 156–8; Anselmi, *De musica*, p. 16.

¹⁰ For bibliography of these works, see Recio Muñoz, 'Georgius Anselmus senior'.

¹¹ Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 4080, s. XV, ff. 41r–87r: 'Georgius Anselmus salutem et recommendationem. Cum pluries apud te, vir inclite, pluribus de rebus . . . /'Est concordantia modus maxime nõ et diiat'ri horoscope vel principanti adiiiite/adiiicite sint. Georgius'.

is dedicated to an unnamed ‘noble *praetor* . . . the distinguished pride of our country, as the most renowned and invincible prince himself testifies’, an interested amateur of the science of the stars.¹² *Praetor* indicates some kind of official; Ireneo Affò interpreted it as meaning the *podestà* of Parma.¹³ This introductory treatise consists of numbered ‘radical [fundamental] propositions’ on the heavens and their influence on the sublunar world, each briefly explained. Two of the theorems concern demons and ‘images, fascinations and haustus’. Anselmi’s *Astronomia* was among the books bequeathed to the convent library of St Thomas of Pavia for the use of poor students by the Milanese court astrologer and physician Antonio Bernareggi, who had taught at the University of Pavia in the first half of the fifteenth century.¹⁴

The *Divinum opus de magia disciplina* exists likewise in a single manuscript in Florence, where it occupies all 230 folios.¹⁵ It is written in two sixteenth-century hands: after the first 157 folios the second, looser one takes over in the middle of a chapter (4.3.4). The first scribe, but not the second, includes rubricated marginal notes, mostly descriptive subheadings, but a few are discursive comments (ff. 65r, 117r) that show knowledge of medical and magical literature. The work is divided into five treatises, subdivided into parts and chapters: see Appendix A for a table of contents. The fourth part of the fourth treatise, on the images of the eighth sphere, also appears in a Vatican Library manuscript.¹⁶

The work’s opening alludes to a preceding discussion of astrology which is probably the *Astronomia*; it is addressed to an ‘inclitus miles’, seemingly the same ‘vir inclitus’ to whom that writing is dedicated, and proposes to speak further of celestial

<http://www.mss.vatlib.it/guii/console?service=shortDetail&id=3765> (accessed September 2015). See Thorndike, *History of Magic*, 4, pp. 245–6, and the partial list headings on 677–9 (Appendix 48).

¹² Anselmi, *Astronomia*, introduction: ‘magnanime pretor . . . patrie nostre decus egregium, teste ipso clarissimo et invictissimo principe’.

¹³ Affò, *Scrittori parmigiani*, 2, p. 157.

¹⁴ Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars*, pp. 46–7.

¹⁵ Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 44, cod. 35, 1501–10, cart., 200 × 275 mm; available online: <http://opac.bmlonline.it/Record.htm?idlist=1&record=640112446839> (accessed August 2015).

¹⁶ Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 5333, 1542, ff. 1r–38r: ‘Quarta pars quarti tractatus Georgii Parmensis de modis specialibus imaginum octavi orbis et de modis compositionum earundem per exempla’/‘Explicit tractatus quartus de imaginibus magistri Georgii Parmensis 1542 die februarii ad dei laudem et honorem. Explicit.’

influence.¹⁷ While patronage of astrological works was not unusual, the *Divinum opus* is one of the first works of magic to be commissioned in Italy by a courtly patron. After introducing the science of magic and divination, the first treatise then treats geomancy, chiromancy and scapulimancy in detail.¹⁸ The rest of the work deals with operative magic. The second treatise is devoted to the kinds and nature of demons, the third to ceremonies: its three parts deal with ritual instruments, incantations, and astrological timing. In the fourth treatise, which makes up almost half of the work, Anselmi analyses the making of astral talismans and presents a long series of examples for various effects. The fifth is given to a category called *alphetica* of magical–physiological techniques, but includes only the first of its parts, *veneficia* (recipes for drugs), and may thus be incomplete. After that are appended two folios of abbreviated notes on particular talismanic operations.

Anselmi's *De musica* comes to us through a single copy that was owned and glossed by the famous music theoretician Franchino Gaffurio (1451–1522), who cited the work with admiration.¹⁹ This musical treatise, dated 1434, consists of three dialogues between 'Petrus et Georgius collocutores': *de harmonia coelesti*, *de harmonia instrumentali* and *de harmonia cantabili*. The first dialogue is a detailed and original contribution to the tradition of the music of the spheres; I will return to it in my discussion of Anselmi's cosmology. The second dialogue discourses on the tonal system with reference to the cithara and the monochord, and the third part, on practical music, is devoted to choral singing and proposes a new system of mensural notation.

SOURCES AND PREDECESSORS

Anselmi takes few pains to reveal or conceal his textual sources. He occasionally refers directly to Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Apuleius, Calcidius, Solomon and others, and

¹⁷ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 1.1: 'visum est nobis exposuisse motus eos qui hoc in inferiori orbe . . .'

¹⁸ The section on scapulimancy (1.2.2, 4, ff. 32r–37r) has been analysed, edited and translated into English by Charles Burnett ('The Scapulimancy'). He finds that Anselmi's treatment derives from the same non-extant Latin translation of an Arabic text on scapulimancy as the medieval work found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Canon. Misc. 396, ff. 108r–112r, edited and translated in Burnett, 'Islamic Divinatory Technique'.

¹⁹ Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, H. 233 inf., mid-fifteenth century; ed. G. Massera, Florence 1961.

other likely sources can be identified, but many of his ideas are common to the medieval philosophical and astrological traditions. Although in places he adapts earlier texts, as in his treatment of scapulimancy, the *Divinum opus* as a whole is not a compilation but an idiosyncratic *summa* developed from diverse, sometimes contradictory traditions. In the following chapters I will discuss Anselmi's sources where I have been able to identify or suggest them, but a full source analysis remains to be undertaken.

His framework is the Platonically infused Aristotelianism taught in standard texts of the arts curriculum, including translated works of Arabic astrology. As well as drawing on the ancient Latin Platonists and other classical authors, the theoretical physics, cosmology and demonology and the practical magic of the *Divinum opus de magia disciplina* combine the two great streams of learned magic that entered Europe in the high Middle Ages. Finding commonality among their varying principles and methods, Anselmi speaks of a single magical tradition, a *scientia magica* invented in antiquity and taught by *artis magistri*.

The tradition of astral magic was transmitted from the Islamic world to the Latin West in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.²⁰ Deriving from the astral religion of the Syrian city of Harrān, from Arabic astrology and Platonic–Aristotelian natural philosophy, it most often aimed to draw spirits of the stars into talismans engraved with images at astrologically determined times. Its texts were attributed to historical figures or to the legendary Hermes Trismegistus and related personages, and hence it is sometimes referred to as Hermetic magic. Anselmi's thought shows resemblance to al-Kindī's theoretical treatise *De radiis*, which explains physical operations in terms of Platonic cosmic harmony mediated by rays and was widely copied along with practical talismanic texts, but it is not consistent enough to demonstrate direct influence. Likewise, although Paola Zambelli has claimed that the *Divinum opus* is based on the *Picatrix*, and suggested that Marsilio Ficino gained access to that book through Giorgio's heirs, I have not found close enough correspondences to show that he used it.²¹

²⁰ See e.g. Pingree, 'Sources of the *Ghāyat*'; Pingree, 'Diffusion'; Burnett, *Magic and Divination*.

²¹ Zambelli, *White Magic, Black Magic*, pp. 9, 17.

The second branch developed in the Christian world, at least partly in Byzantine Greece, and incorporated Jewish influences. By means of elaborate devotional rituals that invoked the aid and sacred names of God, it aimed to invoke beings conceived as angels, demons or more ambiguous spirits. Its formal texts often claimed to be divinely inspired; many were attributed to the biblical Solomon, reputed as a binder of demons, and this magic has thus been named Solomonic.²² Giorgio Anselmi was influenced by the overtly demonic ‘nigromantic’ branch, and so I will leave aside the ‘theurgic’ magic that invoked angels and aimed at divine vision and knowledge, exemplified by the *Ars notoria*, and other currents such as that embodied in the *Liber Razielis*. The *Clavicula Salomonis*, likely the most important and widespread treatise of Solomonic magic, derived from the Byzantine work sometimes known as the *Hygromanteia Salomonis* and was probably written in the second half of the thirteenth century.²³ It was almost certainly a major source for Anselmi, who cites the magical writings of Solomon in his *Divinum opus*; where he refers the reader to ‘similar prayers that the exorcists write in their books’ for protection from demons, a marginal note comments that ‘Solomon puts these prayers in the *Clavicula*’.²⁴

The Arabic magic could in part be assimilated to scholastic natural philosophy, in which occult forces of nature were understood in terms of substantial forms imprinted in matter by the stars. Those best trained to study and practise it were physician-astrologers such as Anselmi, educated in philosophy and astronomy in university arts faculties. The ritual demonic magic, whose conjurations were based on orthodox liturgical sources such as exorcisms, seems to have been to a large extent the domain of monks and priests, Richard Kieckhefer’s ‘clerical underground’.²⁵ Frank Klaassen has described how the two traditions were, from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, largely separate also in their manuscript transmission. While texts of image magic were copied intact with works of

²² See e.g. Fanger, ‘Medieval Ritual Magic’, in *Conjuring Spirits*; Boudet and Véronèse, ‘Le secret’; Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*; Véronèse (ed.), *L’Ars notoria*; Klaassen, *Transformations of Magic*, ch. 5.

²³ The earliest known surviving copy of the Latin *Clavicula* is in Amsterdam, Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, 114, late fifteenth century. See Boudet and Véronèse, ‘Le secret’; Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, pp. 353–9; Skinner, *Techniques of Solomonic Magic*.

²⁴ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 3.4.2 (fo. 117r): ‘orationes similes quas exorciste scribunt in libris suis’, ‘has orationes ponit Salomon in Clavicula’.

²⁵ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, pp. 12–13.

astrology, medicine, *naturalia* and natural philosophy, ritual magic texts appear in a distinct stream, often excerpted or reworked.²⁶

In northern Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, there was considerable overlap of astral and demonic interests. The destruction of many manuscripts of illicit magic, including all medieval copies of the *Clavicula Salomonis*, makes the evidence harder to assess, but Klaassen appears to overstate the degree of separation as far as Italy is concerned. Several of the fifteenth-century manuscripts extant in Italian libraries richest in works of image magic also contain texts of demonic magic; the two outstanding examples are Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, II.III.214 and Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 89, sup. 38.²⁷ Beyond the presence of astrological elements in ritual magic texts, astral material was also often compiled in informal nigromantic notebooks.²⁸

Let us consider Italian physician-astrologers who wrote on magic. Pietro d'Abano (1257–c.1315), discussing the *scientia imaginum* in his *Lucidator dubitabilium astronomiae* of 1303–10, also mentioned several Solomonic works, including the *Clavicula Salomonis*, its first appearance in the European record.²⁹ The *Clavicula* is next mentioned in Antonio da Montolmo's magical treatise *De occultis et manifestis*, written at the end of the fourteenth century, which cites both astral and demonic texts.³⁰ It is then recorded in 1407 and 1426 in the inventories of noble libraries, and an Italian translation dated 1446 survives from the milieu of the Visconti.³¹

Before Anselmi, two other Italian scholars had conceived their own hybrid astrological–demonic magics. Cecco d'Ascoli (Francesco Stabili, 1257–1327), who was

²⁶ Klaassen, 'English Manuscripts'; *Transformations of Magic*.

²⁷ On these, see Thorndike, 'Traditional Medieval Tracts'; Pingree, 'Learned Magic'; Gentile and Gilly, *Marsilio Ficino*, pp. 107–12, 233–5, 238–40. Others include Vatican, Pal. lat. 1196; Florence, Laurenziana, Ashburnham 1520 (1443); Venice, Marciana, lat. XIV. 174 (4606). See Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, p. 155, n. 122.

²⁸ E.g. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 849, ed. Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*.

²⁹ Pietro d'Abano, *Lucidator dubitabilium astronomiae*, p. 117: 'Quales sunt que Hermetis, Belenuz, Thozz Greci, Germath Babylonensis, Job Arabis, Zekel caputque Saturni, necnon Liber Lune Liberque Veneris et aliorum planetarum, Liber Razielis, volumina Salomonis, ut Ydea, Sigilla, Quatuor anuli, Tres figure spirituum, Clavicula, Ars dicta notoria, Fortunati . . .'

³⁰ Antonio da Montolmo, *De occultis et manifestis* 6: 'Sit etiam balneatus et suffumigatus, ut dictum est in *Clavicula Salomonis*'. See Weill-Parot's introduction, p. 223.

³¹ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ital. 1524. See Gal, 'La magie'.

burned at the stake for reasons related to his theories, interpreted the cosmology of Johannes Sacrobosco's handbook *De sphaera* in terms of Solomonic demonology and explained events in the history of Christianity by stellar and demonic influences. Antonio da Montolmo's magical writings, *De occultis et manifestis* and the *Glosa super ymagines duodecim signorum Hermetis*, likewise articulated the powers of spirits called intelligences or angels with the influence of the stars.³² Like Anselmi, Cecco and Antonio turned to demonic magic texts to fill in ritual absences in their astrological and astromagical sources.

Anselmi's dual interest in astral and demonic magic, then, was unusual but far from unprecedented among astrologers, and among writers on magic in late medieval and early Renaissance Italy appears to have been more the norm than the exception. In part because of the difficulties of copying and printing nigromantic texts, however, there was little consensus on how they were to be combined.

³² Cecco d'Ascoli, *In spheram mundi enarratio*, ed. Thorndike, *Sphere of Sacrobosco*; Antonio da Montolmo, *De occultis et manifestis*; *Glosa super ymagines duodecim signorum Hermetis*, ed. Weill-Parot, 'Antonio da Montolmo'. See Weill-Parot, 'Dans le ciel'; 'I demoni della Sfera'; Federici Vescovini, *Medioevo magico*, ch. 11. Outside Italy, the Catalan or Valencian scholar Berengario Ganell also compiled both astral and demonic materials in his *Summa sacre magice* (1346), currently being edited by Damaris Gehr.

1

QUID SIT MAGUS

Giorgio Anselmi introduces the magical arts in the eighth proposition of his *Astronomia*. Presenting the art of talismans as an aspect of the science of the stars, as had the pseudo-Ptolemaic *Centiloquium* and the *Speculum astronomiae*, based at once on celestial and demonic force, he proceeds to dramatically evoke the power of the soul turned towards heaven:

8 and images, fascinations and *haustus*

The composition of images, fascinations, and *haustus* are human arts. By the power of the celestials and of demons they utterly bind lives and bodies and the processes of souls and remove strength so that it can be restored by no other art. They move according to the intention of the craftsman, as a ship moves [directed by its pilot]. These arts proceed perhaps by their own teachings and institutions, as has been explained by us elsewhere, or at times the human soul, partaking and mindful of the heavenly divinity from whose abundant source it flowed, freeing itself from carnal bonds, lifted up beyond measure, may advance. At first, indeed, weakening its own body, it deprives it of food and drink, and then, intent upon the very heavens, it forces the flaming fires to descend, disturbs the airs with winds and fog, the seas with storms, the lands with gap and chasm.³³

These themes are developed in his larger work.

³³ Anselmi, *Astronomia* 8: 'Ymaginum compositio et faxinationes et haustus arte humane sunt. Hec quidem supercelestium vi atque demonum omnino vitas corporaque et animarum processus ligant et vires exhauriunt ut arte nulla preterquam sua restitui valeant. Movent quidem secundum intentionem artificis quemadmodum navis. Artes vero hae fortassis documentis et institutionibus suis procedunt, qualiter a nobis expositum est in loco alio, sive quandoque humana anima, particeps et memor divinitatis celestis cuius e largo fonte manavit, sese carnis vinculis liberans, ultra modum elata, proficiat. Proprium corpus inprimis immo macerans, cibus arcet et potibus, atque dehinc, in celum ipsum intenta, flamantes ignes descendere cogit, aera totum ventis perturbat et nebula, tempestatibus maria, terras hyatu et voragine.'

THE SCIENCE OF MAGIC

The title of Anselmi's *Divinum opus de magia disciplina* announces his intention to teach magic as a sacred and a systematic art. *Disciplina* in scholastic contexts indicates the acquisition of understanding of a science, and the word retained a Christian monastic sense as in *disciplina spiritualis* or *caelestis*. The term *magica disciplina* figures in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* (2.20, 3.18), but appears mostly in books of the sixteenth century and later. I cannot account for the appearance of *magia*, rather than *magica* or *magiae*, in the manuscript.

In the first two chapters he sets out his governing conception of this art and science and analyses its parts. This introduction leans on the chapter *De magis* (8.9) of Isidore of Seville's seventh-century summary of knowledge the *Etymologiae*, the root of the tradition of formal summaries of magic in the Christian West. For his typology in particular, Anselmi also draws on the eccentric classification and bibliography of *mathematica prohibita* by the Averroist Taddeo da Parma (Thaddeus of Parma), which he set out for his students at Bologna in 1318 in his *Expositio super theorica planetarum*.³⁴ We will see that Anselmi updates and reframes his source texts in important ways.

He begins his treatise on magic with celestial influence as understood by natural philosophy:

In what was said before, famous knight, it seemed enough to us to have explained those motions that in this inferior sphere of generable and corruptible things are made to follow the motions of the superior bodies and their various ways. Now, with the help and favour of almighty God, I describe in detail . . . those motions that are referred to, and have proportion to those generable things and to the motions of the elements and their mixtures. It is these motions that philosophy examines.³⁵

³⁴ Federici Vescovini, 'La classification des mathématiques'. See Thorndike, *History of Magic*, 3, pp. 12–16; Weill-Parot, *Images astrologiques*, pp. 413–16, 625; Federici Vescovini, *Medioevo magico*, pp. 315–22, 427–33. Taddeo's classification was also used by Symphorien Champier in *De medicine claris scriptoribus* (1506).

³⁵ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 1.1.1 (fo. 1r): 'Postquam in eis que premissa sunt, inclite miles, sufficienter visum est nobis exposuisse motus eos qui hoc in inferiori orbe generabilium et corruptibilium fiunt consequi motus corporum superiorum et eorum modos diversos. Nunc, cum Dei omnipotentis adiutorio et favore,

He divides philosophy into the permitted and the forbidden. Permitted philosophy, which serves the needs of human life, includes the moral and natural sciences, especially physics, psychology, medicine and mathematics. We forbid the study and practice of the other sort, he says, yet its study is allowed to the wise and good philosopher, who enquires into nature's secrets for the advancement of every human being, in the process becoming closer and more similar to God:

For he knows at what times and from what causes the elements are to be mixed together, their proportion to one another, which superiors' motions they imitate, when and what and what sort of and how much agreement and friendship and connection there is between them, in what places they vary, how much they differ from each other in perfection, and which are among the highest of beings, which are the last and which of middle rank, and generally which are nearer to eternal God and which more remote, and the causes and ways of all these alterations, generations, corruptions and motions, and in what ways they can be either opposed or assisted.³⁶

Just as it is not proper for a priest to sin or a doctor to use poisons, it is not permitted for a philosopher to practise these forbidden things. It is unclear whether he means all practice of forbidden philosophy, or its harmful uses in particular. He writes of these matters, he says, so as to teach how to avoid and deal with magic performed by evil men, to whom this science and its practice are forbidden: the common Boethian argument, used also by Taddeo, that a good person cannot avoid evil unless he knows it.³⁷

Anselmi now moves from the sphere of natural philosophy to that of religion. Some ignorant people, he says, name philosophers learned in these arts 'magicians' (*magi*) as if this is to call them sorcerers (*malefici*) and poisoners (*venefici*); but in fact *magus* is

prosequor dum videtur de motibus iisdem qui referuntur et proportionem habent ad eadem generabilia et ad motus elementorum et mixtorum ex illis. Sunt vero hi motus de quibus philosophia speculatur.'

³⁶ Ibid. 1.1.1 (fo. 1v–2r): 'Novit siquidem quibus temporibus quibus ex causis elementa commiscenda sunt, et eorum ad se invicem proportionem et quorum superiorum motus imitentur et quando et quae et qualis et quanta sit inter ea convenientia et amicitia et connexio quedam, et quibus locis varientur, et quanta a se invicem perfectione differant, queque inter entia suprema sunt, et quae ultima et quae media, et universaliter quae aetherno Deo propiora et remotiora, et causas et modos alterationum et generationum et corruptionum et motuum omnium horum, quibusque modis aut resisti aut succurri possit.'

³⁷ Boethius, *De topicis differentiis* 2 (*Patrologia latina* 64, p. 1184b): 'Mali quippe notitia deesse bono non potest, virtus enim sese diligit et aspernatur contraria, nec vitare vitium nisi cognitum queat.'

simply the Persian word for ‘priest’. Zoroaster, king of the Bactrians, was defeated by Ninus, the Assyrian king; though highly skilled in the magical art, he refrained from putting it to evil use to overcome his foe. It is the magus who knows the divine ways and piously observes the sacred rites. Anselmi condemns as wicked and inhuman those who would abuse the art of the magicians to cause harm, but asks why its knowledge and practice should be forbidden to a good philosopher who would use it only to help, though in this, nevertheless, ‘we have decided to submit to the judgement of the holy Roman Church’.

Anselmi mentions but does not dwell on the wise men who honoured Jesus. Instead, his bold rehabilitation of the *magus* follows the pagan example of Apuleius, who in his *Apologia* invoked the Persian magi as pious *sacerdotes*, citing Plato’s *Alcibiades I* (122b), to ennoble the *magia* with which he was charged.³⁸ Anselmi’s Zoroaster, the king, magician and opponent of Ninus – though not specified here as the founder of magic – is the medieval Christian figure drawn from Eusebius and Isidore; but his evaluation reverses that of Augustine, for whom Zoroaster’s defeat proved magic’s futility.³⁹

Both kinds of philosophy, we learn, investigate movers, whether celestial or sublunar, and their movements of the elemental world. While the permitted natural sciences study causes and effects that are evident and known, this science enquires into occult causes and ‘unusual effects that exceed the general course of nature and are wonderful’:⁴⁰

Thus the craftsman of this science binds superior movers with inferiors by a certain divine and hidden power of sacred words, so that from these mixed together is made a single movement that moves powerfully. The inferior movers are demons, elemental qualities and occult properties of things, implanted in mixed things and assigned by none other than the most excellent founder of these things, who liberally distributes virtues and power to beings to the extent that they merit and are able to receive them. From these movers mixed in this way there arises a single mover of wonderful effect that is

³⁸ Apuleius, *Apologia* 25–6. See Bidez and Cumont, *Les Mages hellénisés*.

³⁹ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 21.14.

⁴⁰ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 1.1.1 (fo. 3v): ‘inconsuetos effectus et communem naturae cursum excedentes et mirandos’.

found only by experience. The magus, therefore, knower and interpreter of divine power, alone knows the mixtures of these movers and at times joins them together.⁴¹

Anselmi, then, argues that this science, though potentially dangerous, should be permitted to worthy philosophers for pragmatic ethical reasons; he negates the distinction of magic from religion and defines it in terms of subtle and hidden causes, whether natural or otherwise. Why, then, is it forbidden? Despite his boldness, Anselmi does not challenge the official framework of licit and illicit knowledge, accepting as a given the nominal prohibition of the magician's art. This sort of dissonance was not uncommon; Michael Scot, for instance, in his *Liber introductorius* had repeated Hugh of Saint-Victor's exclusion of magic from philosophy and accepted the forbiddance of practices about which he showed ambivalence.⁴² The concept of forbidden philosophy does not recur after the introduction.

THE PARTS OF MAGIC

Anselmi proceeds in the second chapter to his idiosyncratic taxonomy of *scientia magica* (see Appendix B). He seeks to update and expand the received account, rooted in Isidore, and to shift such censorious reports to a neutral or positive framing. Anselmi shares with Taddeo da Parma several uncommon terms (*giromantia*, *polismantia*, *theurgica maior* and *minor*, *agathomantia*, *cacodemonica*, *scenobatica*, *altigraphia*), but he often interrelates and defines them differently and does not adopt them into his usual vocabulary.

The magical science, he writes, has two major parts, divination and superstition. Divination, or *mathesis*, is predicting the future by understanding signs in the elemental world. Astrology is distinct from divination and not part of the magical art because it

⁴¹ Ibid. 1.1.1 (ff. 3v–4r): 'Ligat ergo huius scientiae artifex motores superiores cum inferioribus quadam sacrorum verborum vi et divina et occulta ut ex eis conmixtis fiat unus motus potenter movens. Sunt vero inferiores motores demones et qualitates elementales et occulte rerum proprietates mixtis insite et attribute non nisi ab ipsarum rerum conditore optimo qui affluenter entibus virtutes et posse distribuit quantum merentur et capere valent. Ex his ita conmixtis motoribus consurgit motor unus mirandae operationis qui nisi ex experientia invenitur. Magus itaque divinae potentiae conscius et interpres horum motorum conmixtiones solus novit et quandoque coniungit.'

⁴² Thorndike, *History of Magic*, 2, pp. 319–20.

predicts instead from the movements of the stars understood as efficient causes, not signs. This was a conventional view: Thomas Aquinas, for example, had likewise rejected the semiotic interpretation of astrology, and argued that it was lawful in so far as it foretold necessary effects by observing their causes.⁴³ The ancients called divination ‘rei divinae actio’, Anselmi writes, ‘because those who predicted claimed that they were consulting the gods and thus performing divine rites for them, and that the gods spoke through their mouths and they were frenzied with the divine spirit’.⁴⁴ Isidore’s etymology reads: ‘Diviners are so named as if the term were “filled with god”, for they pretend to be filled with divine inspiration, and with a certain deceitful cunning they forecast what is to come for people.’⁴⁵ In the positivised version, the scornful ‘pretend’ (*adsimulant*) is amended to the neutral ‘claimed’ (*asserebant*).

Anselmi enumerates and describes the parts of divination, starting with pyromancy, aeromancy, geomancy and hydromancy, following Varro and Isidore. He encompasses the remaining methods under the term *giromantia*, the art of predicting the future by observing humans or animals. This was Taddeo’s word, more logically, for divination from things appearing in the sky (*in circulo celesti*); Anselmi’s *giromantia* is equivalent rather to the *homosmantia* (*ab homos*) that Taddeo placed, illogically, under *giromantia*. Gyromancy includes *salisaltica*, spatulimancy, polismancy, augury and auspices, chiromancy and physiognomy. *Salisaltica* is divination from the internal organs and blood of a slaughtered animal; it may be a corruption of *salisatio*, ‘palpitation’, as in the *salissatores* mentioned by John of Salisbury.⁴⁶ *Polismantia* or *poplismantia* is divination from the knee, analogous to scapulimancy; Taddeo uses the same word in a different sense. True to Anselmi’s orientation in natural philosophy, all these methods foretell, as he says, from signs in the natural world: they are forms of omen or pattern divination, in Cicero’s terms divination by *ars* rather than *furor*.

Anselmi’s general term for operative magic is *superstitio*, which he defines as ‘the religious observance of those that stand above [*superstant*]’ and later as ‘a certain religious

⁴³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 2.2.95.5.

⁴⁴ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 1.1.2 (fo. 4r): ‘quod qui predicabant se deos consulere asserebant et propterea divina sachra pro his peragere, deosque per eorum ora loqui et se spiritu divino plenos furere’.

⁴⁵ Isidore, *Etymologies* 8.9.14, tr. Barney et al.

⁴⁶ John of Salisbury, *Policraticus* 12.

observance of substances standing above the human race'.⁴⁷ These substances include God, angels, celestial intelligences, and demons, the latter being most relevant to the present work. In this he follows a standard etymology of *superstitio* but startlingly reevaluates it. Cicero recorded a derivation from *superstes* in the sense of 'survivor', but Servius interpreted a passage of Lucretius to obtain it from *supersto* as meaning empty and excessive fear of the celestial and divine beings that stand above us. Isidore thus reported that 'Lucretius says superstition concerns things "standing above", that is, the heavens and divinities that stand over us, but he speaks wrongly'.⁴⁸ Like magic, the concept of superstition had shifted over time and was often a barely coherent polemical weapon, variously applied to excessive, foolish, misdirected or heretical religiosity.⁴⁹ Anselmi, who understands magic as a religious enterprise, later comparing demonic incantation to the words of the Eucharist, does not explain or defend his remarkable attempt to rehabilitate superstition as a near-synonym of religion.⁵⁰

He divides *superstitio* into three parts: knowledge of demons, ceremony, and the making of talismans, the subjects of the second, third and fourth treatises. Knowledge of demons is said to encompass greater and lesser theurgy, categories taken from Taddeo. The usage of *theurgia* (the manuscript reads *theurgica*) reflects its usual medieval sense as demonic magic, derived from Augustine's argument that entities subject to conjuration in pagan theurgy must be demons, rather than angels, since the latter are impassible.⁵¹ For Anselmi, greater theurgy is the art of invoking demons, whether good (*agathomantia*) or evil (*cacodemonica*), while lesser theurgy teaches how to convene or bind a particular demon to a certain place or to carry out a specific act. *Scenobatica* is a type of lesser

⁴⁷ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 1.1.2 (fo. 6v): 'religiosa eorum quae superstant observatio'; 2.1.1 (fo. 37v): 'Est autem superstitio religiosa quedam superstantium substantiarum generi humano observatio.' The equivalent term for *superstitio* in Taddeo's structure is *mathesis*, applied by Anselmi to divination but traditionally, as by Firmicus Maternus and Isidore, to astrology: see Tester, *History of Western Astrology*, pp. 133–4.

⁴⁸ Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.28; Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 1.62–5; Servius, *ad Aeneid* 8.187: 'superstantium rerum, id est caelestium et divinarum, quae super nos stant, inanis et superfluous timor'; Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.3.7: 'Lucretius autem superstitionem dicit superstantium rerum, id est caelestium et divinorum quae super nos stant; sed male dicit.' See Harmening, *Superstitio*, pp. 26–33.

⁴⁹ See e.g. Harmening, *Superstitio*; Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, pp. 184–7; Bonney, 'Autour de Jean Gerson'.

⁵⁰ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 3.2.1 (71r).

⁵¹ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 10.9; see Fanger, 'Introduction', in *Invoking Angels*, pp. 18–20. The absence of 'theurgy' as a positive term in the Middle Ages can be compared to that of 'gnosis'.

theurgy in which a demon is bound in a crystal, mirror, or other reflective object so that images of the past or future appear. Here he also mentions necromancy (*nicromantia*) in something like its original sense as evoking the soul of a dead human being; this meaning had survived alongside the prevailing medieval sense of *nigromantia* as bad or demonic magic.

Ceremony consists, we are told, of the preparation (*apparatus*) and incantation required for demonic invocation. The master of the art, the place of the operation, clothing, fumigations, sacrificial animals, circles for protection and binding, and various tools must all be ritually prepared. Incantation, Anselmi writes, is the religious utterance of words necessary for magical ritual, including invitation, invocation, conjuration, prayer and imprecation.

Under the third branch of *superstitio*, the making of talismans, he places *altigraphia* and *alphitica*. Altigraphy is ‘the art of accomplishing desired things by the composition of images or impression of characters, with the aid of celestial bodies and of incantation’; the term, presumably from *altus* and *graphō*, is Taddeo’s.⁵²

The curiously defined art of *alphitica* or *alphetica*, finally, combines ceremony or talismans with physical methods to affect a human or animal body, bringing health and strength or the reverse. Anselmi enumerates its parts as *veneficium*, *maleficium*, *prestigium*, *fascinatio* and *haustus*. *Veneficium* is the art of compounding poisons (*venena*); this ancient term, equivalent to the Greek *pharmakeia*, encompassed the use of medicine, drugs, poisons and spells.⁵³ *Maleficium* is the art of preparing substances to make a living body powerless and weak. *Praestigium* confuses people’s senses with magical illusions. Fascination renders the subject impotent or causes love or hate through imagination or antipathy together with ceremonial methods. *Hhaustus*, ‘greater than fascination’, uses incantation to exhaust a person in soul and body; Taddeo mentions this term, not usually used in such a sense, but does not define it, while Anselmi seems to derive it from *haurio* in the sense of drawing out a person’s strength. The title of the fifth and final treatise of

⁵² ‘dicitur altigraphia quia est de characteribus et figuris’.

⁵³ Noonan, *Contraception*, p. 25; Luck, *Arcana Mundi*, p. 517.

the work promises to teach the methods of *alphetica*, but only *veneficium* is included, suggesting that Anselmi's book, or the manuscript, is incomplete.

*

Anselmi's map of the occult arts resembles earlier normative classifications, but answers different purposes. In the twelfth century, theologians and jurists including Hugh of Saint-Victor, Gratian and John of Salisbury had set out typologies of magic and divination based on the authority of Isidore.⁵⁴ Seeking a theological and legal norm, they aimed to situate the occult sciences within human knowledge and condemn them against the standard of Christian orthodoxy; with more or less thoroughness they supplemented the Isidorian categories with new practices emerging from the Arabo-Latin translations. Thirteenth-century theologians such as William of Auvergne and the author of the *Speculum astronomiae*, with greater knowledge of the texts, sought to mark out licit from illicit in their taxonomies. Taddeo da Parma's fourteenth-century classification partially departed from the Isidorian tradition but was equally theoretical.

Giorgio Anselmi, instead, from the inside viewpoint of an astrologer and probable magician, wrote a textbook of magic intended not to criticise magic but to teach it. Isidore and some of his successors evoked *malefici* and *venefici* like bestiaries of exotic lands; Anselmi's typology aimed to orient a potential practitioner in the field and classified not only magic's kinds but also its operative elements: incantation, suffumigation, hours, and so on. His descriptive and reasonably logical structure incorporated the two learned magics that formed his synthesis: the Christian and Jewish demonic magic, present especially in his third treatise on ceremony, and the Arabic astral magic that he expounds in the fourth treatise on images.

At the start of the third chapter, Anselmi laments the present decline of the science of magic, forbidden by the leaders of the world, who now abhor this art and pursue learning for profit instead of knowledge, and driven into poor repute by ignorant

⁵⁴ Hugh of Saint-Victor, *Didascalicon* 6.15; Gratian, *Decretum* 2.26; John of Salisbury, *Policraticus* 1.9–12. See Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, pp. 89–107, 210–12; Lawrence-Mathers and Escobar-Vargas, *Magic and Medieval Society*, pp. 22–3, 30–3, 101–2, 106–7.

people who use it without reason. He does not propose a response to this state, a magical renaissance, but moves to the description of divinatory methods. This plaint seems to juxtapose the intensified repression of magic by the papacy since the early fourteenth century with the gap between the standard learned description of magic and contemporary practice. Thinking partly in the medieval framework, perceiving a continuous rather than a periodised magical tradition, Anselmi retained in his model such fixtures as Isidore's four kinds of elemental divination but devoted most of his work to the 'other rites and methods' by which the art now proceeded.

2

ANSELMI'S DAEMONIC COSMOS

Anselmi is concerned in all three of his extant writings to describe the structure and workings of the cosmos and the intermediary beings that inhabit it, for it is through these that astrology can provide judgements, magic can bind higher to lower, and cosmic and musical harmony can be grasped. His is, of course, a version of the Christianised Aristotelian–Ptolemaic cosmos, and his understanding of celestial influence is in the medieval tradition largely derived from Aristotle and Arabic writers such as Abū Ma‘shar, but he adds to this a demonology, assembled from diverse sources, that includes demons in the basic causal functioning of the universe. In this he readdresses dangerous demonological arguments that were waged in the first centuries of Christianity.

THE HEAVENS

At the beginning of Anselmi's second treatise, he names the spiritual substances standing above the human race:

almighty God, who is the first cause and first end of all things and stands above all, and his blessed angels; and after him follow the celestial bodies with their ascribed intelligences; next, within the spheres are other intelligences that they call demons, placed midway between God, with the angels and intelligences, and the human race with nature and perfection, and agreeing with and partaking in both⁵⁵

The nine orders of angels, he reports, stand before God, praise Him unfailingly, and are messengers and interpreters of the divine will, 'and therefore their invocation is in no way

⁵⁵ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 2.1.1 (fo. 37v): 'omnipotens autem Deus, qui prima rerum omnium causa et finis primus et ante omnia superstat, et eius angeli benedicti; et sequuntur eum supercelestia corpora cum intelligentiis appropriatis; de hinc infra orbis sunt intelligentie alie quas demones appellant, inter Deum cum angelis et intelligentiis et genus humanum medie posite, cum natura et perfectione et cum utrisque convenientes et participes'.

permitted, for it would be a vain effort and, beyond that, an inexplicable crime offending the divine majesty'.⁵⁶

The incorruptible heavens were created by God and move unfailingly and eternally.⁵⁷ They consist of concentric spheres: the ninth sphere that moves the others, the eighth sphere of the twelve zodiacal signs and extra-zodiacal constellations, and the seven spheres of the planets, from Saturn downward to the Moon. Below the sphere of the Moon are the elemental spheres of fire, air, water and earth, subject to generation and corruption.

The stars are spherical 'celestial bodies' but are not composed of elements, including ether, which Anselmi conflates with fire.⁵⁸ Their 'ascribed intelligences' would seem to be the Aristotelian separate substances that move the celestial spheres and bodies, which were identified as angels by scholastic theologians. Anselmi links these separate substances to the celestial sort of demons according to Plato, which unlike the lower kinds are impassible.⁵⁹ He later passes over these beings in places where one would expect him to mention them, and so their status for him and their distinction from the mass of demons remains unclear.⁶⁰

God governs our lower world, he writes, by the movement of the stars and constellations.⁶¹ The movements of the lower, elemental world follow the movements of the higher, celestial world, which are the causes of generation, corruption and change here below. Anselmi does not propose a medium such as fire, rays or spirit for this celestial action. Rather, each star has its own nature, and elemental bodies follow its motions 'according to similarity, as iron is similar to the power of the Hercules stone [lodestone]'.⁶² Material things receive form impressed by the superior bodies when they

⁵⁶ Ibid. 2.1.2 (ff. 42v–43r): 'ideoque de eorum invocatione nullo modo licet, foret enim vanus labor ultra quod lese divine maiestatis crimen inexplicabile'; 2.1.6 (fo. 47r).

⁵⁷ Anselmi, *Astronomia*, introduction, 3.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 6.

⁵⁹ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 2.1.1 (fo. 39v), 2.1.2 (fo. 42r–v).

⁶⁰ Ibid. 2.1.4 (fo. 46r), 2.1.6 (47r).

⁶¹ Anselmi, *Astronomia*, introduction.

⁶² Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 4.1.3 (fo. 121v): 'secundum similitudinem mota qualiter ferrum ad lapidis Herculei potentiam'.

have proportion to those stars and have been prepared by elemental qualities corresponding to them.⁶³

Because they are not elemental bodies, the stars do not truly have complexions, elemental qualities or accidents. Rather, they are called hot, cold, moist or dry, masculine or feminine, benefic or malefic, and are said to have accidents such as colours according to this similarity with those inferior things that are moved by their movements. Thus the ancients divided the zodiac into twelve parts and named them according to the animals or other things that they were found to govern, and likewise with the other constellations or ‘images’ (*imagines*) of the eighth sphere.⁶⁴

Anselmi’s understanding of celestial action combines the Aristotelian conception of efficient cause with Stoic–Platonic sympathy. He writes of the planetary agents as movers that effect motions in sublunar patients, and he also employs throughout his works the rich Latin vocabulary that we too readily reduce to ‘sympathy’ and ‘correspondence’: *amicitia* and *inimicitia*, *approprio*, *assentio*, *concordo*, *congruo*, *conveniō/convenientia*, *proportio/proportionalis*, *similis/similitudo*. For Anselmi, ‘the highest things are connected to the lowest and the lowest to the highest’ and the stars act on the lower world through vertical similarity.⁶⁵

DEMONS

Anselmi’s demons partake of the ancient Graeco–Roman *daimones*, the Arabic *rūhāniyāt* of the stars and planets, and the evil Christian *demonēs*. He bases his understanding of them on ancient pagan philosophy, above all Apuleius’s *De deo Socratis* and Calcidius’s commentary on Plato’s *Timaeus*, the standard Latin sources for Platonic demonology, citing both by name but sometimes attributing their ideas to Plato.⁶⁶ Anselmi devotes to these spirits the seventh proposition of his *Astronomia* and the second treatise of the *Divinum opus*, where he treats in turn their nature, variety, names, number, form and

⁶³ Anselmi, *Astronomia* 4–5.

⁶⁴ Ibid. 6, 11–12; *Divinum opus* 4.1.3.

⁶⁵ Ibid., introduction: ‘conexa summa infimis et infima summis’.

⁶⁶ Apuleius, *De deo Socratis*; Calcidius, *Commentarius in Timaeum* 127–36. See Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, pp. 46–7, 317–20; den Boeft, *Calcidius on Demons*; Timotin, *La démonologie platonicienne*.

quality. Following Apuleius and Calcidius, he writes that demons were created intermediate between God and man in nature, perfection and place. Like God and man alike, they are rational; they are eternal and immortal, like God, but composite and passible, moved by appetite, like man.⁶⁷

Demons act as intermediate causes in Anselmi's universe, a role comparable to Ficino's *spiritus*: both ensure continuity in gapless nature between the celestial and elemental worlds.⁶⁸ As passible intermediary beings, they are moved by the movements of the heavens and in turn move the spheres of the elements and the things composed of elements within them. Acting 'not as natural but as voluntary agents', they 'will move the elements and elemental things to mixture, assisting each of their movements, and will be present in all motions as a second cause after the sphere'.⁶⁹ It appears that every motion is attended by a demon, and one demon easily assists in many motions since it is able at will to travel instantly anywhere it wants.⁷⁰ Anselmi's demon-filled universe recalls the twelfth-century *Cosmographia* of Bernardus Silvestris, which drew similarly on Apuleius and Calcidius, and his general demonic causation echoes Augustine's statement that 'every visible thing in this world has an angelic power set over it'.⁷¹

The innumerable multitude of demons, Anselmi says, varies greatly in nature and place. There are demons assigned both to the celestial and elemental spheres: ethereal demons inhabit the sphere of fire, aerial ones the air, aquatic ones the water and terrestrial ones the earth.⁷² Their friendships and enmities follow these attributions. Drawing now on medieval hierarchies of named and categorised demons, he writes: 'Furthermore, they held that among them were kings and princes, to which each multitude of individuals in its race is obedient . . . Again, there are also those set over the

⁶⁷ Cf. the definitions of Apuleius, *De deo Socratis* 13: 'daemones sunt genere animalia, ingenio rationabile, animo passiva, corpore aëria, tempore aeterna'; and Calcidius, *Commentarius in Timaeum* 135: 'Daemon est animal rationabile immortale, patibile, aethereum, diligentiam hominibus impertiens.'

⁶⁸ Anselmi, *Astronomia* 7; *Divinum opus* 2.1.2 (fo. 43v), 2.1.6 (ff. 48r-v).

⁶⁹ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 2.1.6 (ff. 48r-v): 'non tamen ut agentia naturalia sed voluntaria'; *Astronomia* 7: 'movebit elementa et elementata ad commixtionem unicuique horum motui assistens, et aderit motibus omnibus causa secunda post orbem'.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 2.1.4 (fo. 45v), 2.1.6 (50r).

⁷¹ Bernardus Silvestris, *Cosmographia: Microcosmus* 7, and see notes on p. 294. Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus* 79: 'unaquaeque res visibilis in hoc mundo habet potestatem angelicam sibi praepositam'.

⁷² Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 2.1.2 (ff. 42r-v), 2.1.4 (ff. 46r-v).

government of the parts of the world, east and west, south and north, to which is subject an obedient multitude.⁷³ He names these demon kings as Oriens or Asmodiel in the east, Paymon in the west, Amaymon in the south, and Egyon in the north.⁷⁴ They were known in Latin in the 1230s when they were mentioned by William of Auvergne, and their names appear, in various forms, in several Solomonic sources, including the *Clavicula Salomonis*, the *De quatuor anulis*, and the list of demons that appeared later as Johann Wier's *De praestigiis daemonum*.⁷⁵

Most contentiously, Anselmi avers that some demons are beneficent and helpful to the human race, some are intermediate in nature, others evil and harmful.⁷⁶ This question was the ancient *terminus* between pagan and orthodox Christian demonology. The early Christians adopted the Jewish tradition that sharply distinguished the good angels who served God in heaven from the evil demons of the lower world, and Augustine argued at length against the Platonists that good demons did not exist.⁷⁷ In Anselmi's lifetime, the theology faculty of the University of Paris, condemning all sorcery and tying it to the devil's pact, denounced the idea of the existence of good demons as an error.⁷⁸ Anselmi, however, here favoured the Platonists over Church teaching, not once mentioning the idea of demons as fallen angels. Furthermore, his magical sources presented him with two contradictory demonologies: the non-evil astral spirits persuaded to empower talismans and the evil or ambiguous demons compelled to obey in Solomonic texts. Anselmi resolved these disparate views of the spiritual inhabitants of the cosmos by translating them into the variety of his daimonic multitudes.

He reports conflicting ancient views of their corporeality and substantiality: that some have ethereal bodies and others airy, or their bodies are of ether and air

⁷³ Ibid. 2.1.2 (fo. 43r): 'Posuerunt insuper inter eos esse reges et principes, quibus unaqueque multitudo in genere suo supposita est obediens . . . Sunt et rursus prepositi regimini partium mundi, orienti et occidenti, austro et boree, quibus subest obediens multitudo.' See also 3.1.4.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 2.1.3 (fo. 44r); also 3.1.4 (fo. 60r), 3.3.6 (fo. 107r).

⁷⁵ William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.3.8, 12; *Clavicula Salomonis* 1.6 (1446 Italian translation); *De quatuor anulis*, fo. 28v. See Boudet, 'Les *who's who* démonologiques'; Skinner, *Techniques of Solomonic Magic*, pp. 127–40.

⁷⁶ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 2.1.2.

⁷⁷ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 9.

⁷⁸ Denifle and Chatelain, *Chartularium*, vol. 4, pp. 32–5: Article 23: 'Quod aliqui demones boni sunt, aliqui benigni, aliqui omniscientes, alii nec salvati nec damnati, error.'

compounded or of air alone. Some of the ‘school *ypatheticorum*’ (?) said that demons were not embodied but rather simple and incorporeal substances, able to enter the bodies of others, not as their forms ‘but to be present in them and move them by their will, as a sailor does a ship’.⁷⁹ They have no true forms (*figurae*), but assume cloudy bodies by shaping elemental matter. Good demons take the forms of children, youths or nobles, while malign ones appear in bestial and monstrous shapes, and therefore the magician commands them by the power of God to cast off those forms and put on pleasing ones.⁸⁰

He expands on their powers: ‘demon’, Anselmi says, is a Greek word that means ‘wise’ or ‘knowing’, for they are learned and wise from their many experiences and the subtlety of their substance.⁸¹ As Augustine wrote in *De divinatione daemonum*, demons through their understanding of the workings of the cosmos are able to know the future, ‘as a doctor knows through long experience what or when a disease will lead to health or death’.⁸² By observing our character and the changes in our humours and spirits that follow our imagination, they can know our thoughts and future actions. They can affect human behaviour by exciting our natural instincts and possess the bodies of animals and men; they cause outward illusions, misleading dreams, and otherwise seek to deceive us.⁸³ Thus while his view of demons was an exceptionally positive one in his time, he accepted, too, the dramatic vision of the menacing Christian demon lying in wait to harm, deceive, and frighten men.

The ancient philosophers were largely silent on the names and organisation of demons, and so for these Anselmi turned to more and less orthodox medieval sources. He writes that demonic names may be corrupted in their rendering into Latin, or in a language unknown to us, and ‘therefore we do not dare to set down the names of more than a few, and only ones that were written by approved people’.⁸⁴ He has abstained from recording the many other names found in his sources, ‘lest a great error occur in the

⁷⁹ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 2.1.1 (41r): ‘sed assistere illis et movere pro arbitrio qualiter nauta navem’.

⁸⁰ Ibid. 2.1.5.

⁸¹ Ibid. 2.1.2 (fo. 42r). Cf. Plato, *Cratylus* 398b–c.

⁸² Ibid. 2.1.6 (fo. 50v) ‘quomodo medicus experientia multa novit quid vel quando egritudo vel ad salutem vel ad mortem’.

⁸³ Ibid. 2.1.1 (fo. 41r), 2.1.6 (ff. 50v–52r).

⁸⁴ Ibid. 2.1.3 (fo. 44r): ‘ideoque non audemus preter paucorum nomina ponere et quae ab approbatis scripta sunt’.

art'.⁸⁵ Anselmi's cannot be the usual concern with *verba ignota* that supposedly divine and angelic names may secretly belong to demons.⁸⁶ Rather, he seems to mean that one should be sure to use accurate names of the demons one *intends* to invoke; yet his caution carries a trace of the orthodox anxiety.

CELESTIAL SPIRITS

Seemingly most important to Anselmi are the celestial demons placed under the planets, the signs of the zodiac and the other fixed stars. These are said to affect those earthly things and events governed by the star or constellation that they themselves are subject to (*subiecti*) and directed by (*regulantur*). The power and activity of a demon of Saturn, for instance, is in the parts of the world moved by Saturn, in his days and hours, and over Saturnian people, animals, things and events, and accords with Saturn's current astrological condition.⁸⁷ Anselmi's chapter on demonic names lists several angels of each of the twelve zodiacal signs, seven planets and two lunar nodes (see Appendix C).⁸⁸ These names appear in several manuscripts in a short text titled *Nomina angelorum planetarum* and the like.⁸⁹

In the Arabic talismanic literature, astral influences were intimately bound up with spiritual beings (*rūhāniyāt*) dwelling in the heavens, sometimes specified as ruling the spheres or set over or guarding the planetary gods. These astral spirits appeared variously in Latin translation as *spiritus*, *angeli* and *demones*, and their integration into the Christian cosmos was uncertain. If they were invoked for private ends, how could they be

⁸⁵ Ibid. 2.1.3 (fo. 45r): 'ne error maior in arte accidat'.

⁸⁶ E.g. *Speculum astronomiae* 11.

⁸⁷ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 2.1.2 (ff. 42r–v, 43r), 2.1.6 (ff. 47r–48r).

⁸⁸ Ibid. 2.1.3 (ff. 44r–45r).

⁸⁹ This list appears in various forms: 1. in three versions in London, British Library, Sloane 3847, s. XVII, ff. 101r–112r, as part of the *Liber imaginum Sebel, alias Zoel*, a work of astral magic involving the decans (I have not checked the *Liber imaginum* of Zael in London, British Library, Sloane 312, s. XV, ff. 136v–147r, which has a different incipit: Thorndike and Kibre, *Catalogue of Incipits*, p. 351). 2. in three manuscripts by itself as *Nomina angelorum planetarum secundum Zael*: Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 4085, s. XIV–XV, fo. 105r; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 7337, s. XV, pp. 46–7; London, British Library, Royal 17A.XLII, s. XVI, fo. 79r. 3. in two more without the attribution to Zael (the ninth-century astrologer Sahl ibn Bishr al-Isra'ili): Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 89, Sup. 35, s. XV, fo. 68r; Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 89, Sup. 38, s. XV, ff. 280r–v.

good angels? If they were evil spirits, how could they reside in the heavens ruled by divine grace? Cecco d'Ascoli and Antonio da Montolmo offered similar solutions. To Sacrobosco's astrology, Cecco added from Solomonic tradition the four demon princes mentioned by Anselmi who, served by demonic legions, ruled the four cardinal points of the subcelestial world. These fallen angels, excluded from grace, were organised under the cardinal signs of the zodiac in imitation of the good angels, nostalgic for the heavens they left behind. Antonio's cosmos includes three kinds of intelligences: the four orders that stand under the four cardinal signs, twelve orders called *altitudines* under the signs of the zodiac, drawn from the *Almadel*, and those under the planets. For both Cecco and Antonio, these beings subject to ritual invocation were inevitably evil demons cast down to the lower world, sharply distinguished from the good angels dwelling in heavenly grace, such as the celestial movers.⁹⁰

Anselmi, too, states that experience teaches that 'those demons that we are able to summon are substances dwelling below the lunar sphere'.⁹¹ The situation is less clear, however, in the planetary prayers that he provides in the third treatise. These supplications are addressed to angels said to be subject to the planets, for instance 'whom supreme almighty God placed under the sphere and star of Saturn, to carry out his movements in this world'.⁹² The chapter's subheadings, however, take the form 'Modus et exemplum orandi ad Solem', and the invocations give praise for what might appear the nature and actions of the planet itself. Thus the Solar prayer praises the addressee for bestowing light and brightness and as king of all the stars and all things under God, the role that Anselmi gave in his *Astronomia* to the Sun itself.⁹³ The Mercurial angel is said to be God's messenger and interpreter.⁹⁴ It seems that the planet – the celestial body and intelligence? – is elided with its chief subject angel, its executor in the lower world.

⁹⁰ See note 32.

⁹¹ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 3.3.1 (fo. 99r): 'demonnes esse eos quidem quos convenire possumus substantias fore lunari sub orbe inhabitantes'.

⁹² Ibid. 3.2.7 (fo. 78v): 'unusquisque demon cuiuscunque fuerit ordinis vel planetae vel signo subiectus', (fo. 79v): 'quem Deus omnipotens summus Saturni orbi et eius stelle supposuit et eius motus hunc in mundum exequendos'.

⁹³ Ibid. 3.2.7 (ff. 85v–86v); *Astronomia* 9.

⁹⁴ Ibid. 3.2.7 (fo. 89).

A few of these entities are named. The angel of Saturn is Capeiel, a variant form of Casziel, one of seven angels in Hebrew mysticism and magical lore often aligned with the planets and including the biblical angels Raphael, Gabriel and Michael.⁹⁵ Astaroth is named as a Saturnian demon, said in the introduction to have been bound in an idol as an oracle.⁹⁶ The good angel of Venus is Belyal, earlier named among famous biblical evil demons.⁹⁷ However we should understand these planetary angels, they are celestial powers of exalted rank.

In their astrological nigromancy, Anselmi's predecessors preferred to constrain evil Solomonic spirits, more in accord with orthodox demonology, than to entreat the unclear and doctrinally problematic Arabic celestial powers. Anselmi, more open to the Platonic and eastern traditions, together with Christian conceptions accepted the strange angels: benefic as well as malign, offered fumigation and sacrifice of the Arabic type, praised in invocation like the planetary gods.

THE CELESTIAL HARMONY

Anselmi's *De musica*, alongside his contemporary Ugolino of Orvieto's *Declaratio musicae disciplinae* (1430–5), was part of a revived interest in the Pythagorean music of the spheres after three centuries in which philosophers including Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas followed Aristotle's dismissal of the theory in *On the Heavens*.⁹⁸ It follows the general authority of Boethius's *De musica* but departs from that tradition in certain details; while the first of its three divisions of harmony, *harmonia coelestis*, is equivalent to Boethius's *musica mundana*, *harmonia instrumentalis* and *harmonia cantabilis* are not identical to *musica humana* and *musica instrumentalis*.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 3.1.7 (ff. 79v, 80r). These seven angels are named in e.g. the *Liber iuratus*, the *Liber Razielis* (Vatican, Reg. lat. 1300, fo. 135r, p. 265), and English manuscripts of the *Clavicula Salomonis* (see <http://www.esotericarchives.com/solomon/ksol.htm>). The form Capeiel for a Saturnian angel appears in British Library, Sloane 3826.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 3.1.7 (80v, 89v), 1.1.2 (fo. 7r).

⁹⁷ Ibid. 3.1.7 (87v, 90r), 2.1.3 (fo. 44r).

⁹⁸ Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic*, pp. 73–4. On *De musica*, as well as Massera's edition, see Handschin, 'Anselmi's Treatise on Music'; Clercx, 'Le traité *De musica*'; Palisca, *Humanism*, pp. 164–8; Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth*, pp. 131, 156; Godwin, *Harmony of the Spheres*, pp. 145–51; Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic*, pp. 74–7.

Anselmi's account of cosmic harmony in the first dialogue is the most substantial Latin treatment of the subject in the millennium after Macrobius.⁹⁹ Here, the planets, their presiding angels, the human soul and earthly music resound in joyful harmony: 'The tireless soul of the whole world, indeed, sings with the same [harmony] its ceaseless praises to the eternal, most high and all-benevolent Governor by means of the celestial motions, with which the holy throngs of blessed spirits, sweetly echoing, contend in song and in the ineffable beauty of their rivalling hymns.'¹⁰⁰ While Boethius's heavenly spheres each sounded a single note, Anselmi, anticipating Kepler, conceived each sphere singing its own ever-changing song in counterpoint with the others in accord with the numerical proportions of the world-soul. In this elaborate account, their relative intervals follow the empirical periods of their orbits of the earth, and enharmonic intervals are linked to the astrological aspects.

Christianising the Platonic sirens and muses, Anselmi correlates the angelic orders as given by St Gregory the Great to the heavenly spheres:¹⁰¹

10		God
9		
8	fixed stars	Seraphim
7	Saturn	Cherubim
6	Jupiter	Thrones
5	Mars	Dominations
4	Sun	Principalities
3	Venus	Powers
2	Mercury	Virtues
1	Moon	Archangels
	elements	Angels

The Powers are said to 'restrain the evil and unclean spirits to prevent them from doing harm in the world of generation, particularly to human nature, for which they are always

⁹⁹ Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic*, p. 74.

¹⁰⁰ Anselmi, *De musica* 1 (p. 97, tr. Godwin): 'Ipsa siquidem est qua omnis mundi anima infatigata concinit indeficientes laudes illi eterno summoque et omnium beneficentissimo conditori motibus celorum quos cantibus connitantur felicissimorum spirituum suavius perstreptentium sanctissima agmina concertantiumque hymnorum ineffabili dulcedine.'

¹⁰¹ Plato, *Republic* 10.617b; Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* 1.27–9.

eager with their snares'.¹⁰² Although the angels are said to inhabit the spheres, we should perhaps interpret the planets and angels as corresponding orders on different levels of being, like the octaves of the musical scale.¹⁰³

The speech concludes with a pioneering declaration of man's metaphysical stature:

If, however, the mind should turn toward the heavens and toward God their director, it will deem nothing more pleasing to the intellect and certainly nothing more desirable, and the same mind will long to be loosed from these bonds and to join with those most holy spirits from whom it originally issued forth, and to whom it will certainly not be inferior if its merit should suffice.¹⁰⁴

Petrus, not Georgius, is the primary speaker in the dialogue, and Anselmi's interlocutor Pietro Maria Rossi, who is known to have composed motets and a ballad, may indeed be responsible for much of its content. The distance of this vision from the cosmology and demonology of the *Divinum opus* is too wide to wholly account for by their differing focuses, though it may owe partly to the simple passage of time. The world-soul of the *Timaeus* and the concept of harmony are strikingly absent from Anselmi's magical work, yet they bear directly on the similarity and concordance that, together with demonic action, forms the core of his magical theory. Judeo-Christian angels, too, restraining unclean spirits, take the cosmic place of his pagan and astral daemons. Where Marsilio Ficino would assemble similar philosophical, astrological and musical materials a half-decade later into his operational astral music, in Anselmi's writings they remain tantalisingly apart.

¹⁰² Anselmi, *De musica* 1 (p. 103, tr. Godwin): 'coercent spiritus malignos et immundos ne mundo generabilium, proprie vero nature humane cuius insidiis semper sunt quantum optant, nocere valeant'.

¹⁰³ Godwin, *Harmony of the Spheres*, p. 146.

¹⁰⁴ Anselmi, *De musica* 1 (p. 106, tr. Godwin): 'Mens tamen si ad celos eorumque conductorem Deum converterit, nihil intellectu suavius, nihil optabilius profecto iudicabit, cupietque his ea mens vinculis dissolvi atque illis sacratissimis spiritibus associari unde fuit eius primarius exortus, quibus profecto si modo promeruerit non inferior fiet.' Cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 90a–d.

CEREMONY: SACRED TOOLS AND MOVING WORDS

The third treatise of the *Divinum opus*, on ceremony, is the practical counterpart to the theory of the second. It answers the question: Given that there are demons of this nature, how are we to deal with them to our advantage? Anselmi has said that ceremony is ‘the due observance of the things and methods that superstition requires’, and the first two parts of the treatise follow ceremony’s division into preparation and incantation.¹⁰⁵ Within the framework of the natural philosopher investigating nature’s hidden powers, he took the demonic and astral traditions as complementary, drawing practices from each to fill voids in the other, refashioning them to suit his composite system.

After the book’s introduction, Anselmi calls his magician not *magus* but rather *magister (artis)* or *artifex*. *Magister* was a term for fifteenth-century court physicians as well as the magician of the *Clavicula Salomonis*.¹⁰⁶ Anselmi understands magic as an *ars* analogous to the liberal arts or medicine, and the term *artifex* is used in *De quatuor anulis* as well as the *Liber Razielis* (BnF, lat. 3666). As in Solomonian works, in the *Divinum opus* the *magister* may be assisted by companions, *socii*, but they are not fully integrated into his system: their role is poorly defined and they seem to fade in and out of view.

The treatise begins with an origin story of magical ritual. Anselmi tells that when demons first showed themselves to the human race, people learned that prayers, fumigations and sacrifices were pleasing to them and that they could be persuaded thus to do as the invoker asked. When these means were not effective, they added conjuration and exorcism and noted the times and places to which the demons returned, and in this way the art of magic was first discovered. This art, therefore, is to demons as rhetoric is to

¹⁰⁵ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 1.1.2 (fo. 7v): ‘rerum et modorum observatio debita quas superstitio requirit’.

¹⁰⁶ Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars*, p. 19.

men. But wicked and vicious demons must be forced to appear and serve through conjuration by God most high, whom they fear and to whose power, like every rational creature, they are subject.¹⁰⁷

INSTRUMENTS

In the first part of the treatise, Anselmi sets out ritual circumstances and tools. He first explains the sort of birth chart that gives someone power over demons, and specifies that a practitioner must be learned and wise, prudent, benevolent, bold, and clean in mind and body.¹⁰⁸ The following prescriptions for the place of the operation, protective circles, divine names, seals and ritual equipment are all drawn from Solomonic magic. Invocation requires, to begin, a private house and garden, remote from human habitation and free of distracting noise. It should be clean, ‘with windows onto the four parts of the world so that invocations can be made to each part’.¹⁰⁹

Anselmi describes sacred circles to be drawn on the floor, a feature absent from astral magic texts. One sort contains a square of earth for invited angels to appear in. If invoking malign demons, the master must stand in one circle for protection from the demon’s anger at his conjurations and threats, and command it to enter a second. Anselmi discusses several kinds from different texts, including one with an entrance way, as found in manuscripts of the *Hygromanteia* and *Clavicula Salomonis*. The circles are to be drawn with a ritual knife and cord or a sword, inscribed with divine names and characters, and may feature squares, triangles, pentacles or bisecting lines. In the manuscript are three gaps where promised figures do not appear.¹¹⁰

Divine names are then considered, to be inscribed in the circles or uttered in invocation. He lists Hebrew, Greek and Latin names and titles of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Trinity. Here Anselmi shows caution. From their numbering and definitions we can see that he takes his Hebrew names of God from Jerome’s tenth letter,

¹⁰⁷ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 2.1.6 (48v–50v); *Astronomia* 7.

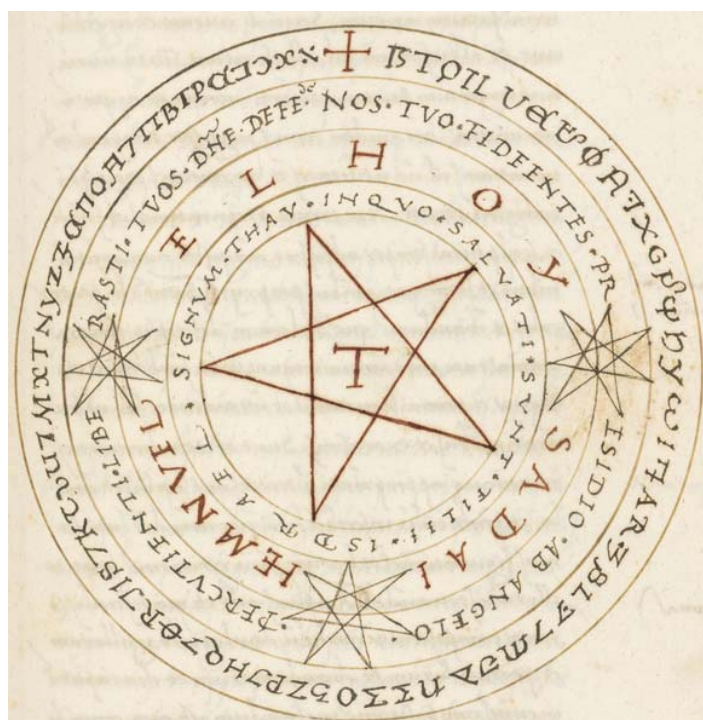
¹⁰⁸ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 3.1.1.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* 3.1.3.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* 3.1.4. See Skinner, *Techniques of Solomon Magic*, pp. 152–76.

to Marcella, and as with those of demons he omits other names found in magical texts 'lest through ignorance of their unknown tongue we may either err or be reproved, for in their books they are found written in different ways'.¹¹¹ Although orthodox exorcism and the *Clavicula Salomonis* call on the Trinity, Christ and the Virgin, in Anselmi's many sample prayers and conjurations only the Hebrew and Greek names of God appear. The work's Christian theological content is slight.

Anselmi next introduces further devices of conjuration, summarising fuller Solomonic sources.¹¹² He describes a pre-eminent seal called the seal of almighty God (*sigillum omnipotentis Dei*), which is to be inscribed in blood on parchment. When conjuring a malefic demon, the practitioner may show it this seal and command the demon to swear by it.¹¹³ Its form, this time, is shown in the manuscript:



Anselmi's *sigillum omnipotentis Dei* is similar but not identical to the *sigillum Dei* whose consecration and use are described in far greater detail in the *Liber iuratus Honorii*. There

¹¹¹ Ibid. 3.1.5 (fo. 62r): 'ne propter linguae ignotae imperitiam vel errare vel redargui possimus, cum in suis libris aliter et aliter scripta reperiantur'.

¹¹² Ibid. 3.1.6.

¹¹³ Ibid. 3.2.9 (fo. 96r).

is confusion here: around the tau enclosed by ‘the pentagonal figure of Solomon’ the text specifies three interlinked pentacles but the figure shows three separate heptagrams. The outer seventy-four characters are said to be the ‘74 capital characters of the 72 names of God’, apparently garbled from the Hebrew seventy-two-letter name of God, the *shem hameforash*.¹¹⁴ It is not otherwise evident that Anselmi consulted the *Liber iuratus* itself.

He then briefly mentions four rings, perhaps derived from the *De quatuor anulis*; ‘the pentacles and *candariae* that Solomon described’, seals that appear in the *Clavicula Salomonis* and *De novem candariis*; and a crown.¹¹⁵ The seventh chapter describes the making of further ritual implements (*artis instrumenta*) from the Solomonic tradition: knives, swords, a hazel or laurel wand, a cord for drawing protective circles, and a whistle to aid in invoking rebellious demons.¹¹⁶

Solomonic texts also describe ceremonial clothing, suffumigations and animal sacrifice, but these treatments evidently did not suit Anselmi’s chiefly planetary demonology.¹¹⁷ For these ritual elements, therefore, he turned to the astral magic tradition, in which they are specific to the planet whose forces and spirits are to be called. For each planet, from Saturn down to the Moon, he specifies the colour and style of clothes to be worn (always clean), a character-inscribed ring and a censer of a particular metal, emblematic objects to be worn or carried, and a suitable manner of walking and speech.¹¹⁸ Such correspondences are familiar from works of astrology as well as astral magic, such as the *Liber de locutione cum spiritibus planetarum* of al-Tabarī.¹¹⁹

For each planet, likewise, Anselmi provides several recipes for fumigations composed of plant and animal substances, of the sort found in texts of planetary talismans. He emphasises their appeal to demons, which, delighted by such ceremonial offerings and supposing that divine honours are being conferred on them, may then

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 3.1.6 (fo. 62v): ‘charatteres 74 numero capitales 72 nominum Dei’. See Veenstra, ‘Honorius’.

¹¹⁵ The *candariae* are not candles, as translated in *Speculum astronomiae*, pp. 241, 245; Jan Veenstra derives the word from *cantharias*, *-ae*, a precious stone in Pliny, *Natural History* 37.187. See Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, pp. 148–9; Veenstra, ‘The Holy Almandal’, p. 206.

¹¹⁶ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 3.1.7.

¹¹⁷ E.g. *Clavicula Salomonis* 2.9, 20, 23.

¹¹⁸ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 3.1.2.

¹¹⁹ Pingree, ‘Al-Tabarī’.

readily grant requests. In general, aromatic incense is appropriate for good demons and benefic planets, foul-smelling incense for evil ones and the malefics. The mixture is to be consecrated, sealed, and used for fumigating talismans and magical implements.¹²⁰

In the same way, it is sometimes fitting, he writes, to offer an animal in sacrifice to the demon invoked. The animal is to be led to the ritual place, beheaded, and specified parts of it burned, a practice that likely dates back to Harrānian planet-worship and perhaps to earlier Mesopotamian rites. Once more, animals governed by each of the planets are named.¹²¹

INCANTATION

Anselmi explains the importance and principles of incantation in chapter 3.2.1:

Incantation is the art of by words and religion driving and bringing together the forces of superior bodies and of demons and of binding them with inferior things, and likewise inferiors with superiors. For by words, along with certain and ordered arrangements of the heavens, demons are invoked and conjured, both good and evil, plural and singular . . . For the wise are agreed that words are absolutely necessary in this work and that without them it cannot be performed and achieved. By them the force of the stars and of demons is joined . . . and they are the bond by which operator and operated are joined as operation. . . .

This is plain in all cases when by will people drive motions to happen by appropriate words, for unless the master first says to the servant ‘Run’ he does not run, and if he says ‘Run’ he does not sing, and if a builder is told ‘Build’ he builds, he does not run. For through the appropriate words the intention of the mind is expressed, which is the cause of the motion of the joining of agent and patient. It is likewise plain that in the Lord’s sacrament unless the priest clearly pronounces those secrets he does not accomplish it, even if he directs his mind to it. Thus it is that neither is a thing accomplished in this practice unless there is a clear and distinct utterance of the appropriate words. . . .

¹²⁰ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 3.1.8.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* 3.1.9.

Therefore the words should be uttered with expert affection, and the stronger the affect behind the utterance, the more effective will be the connection of the mover with the thing to be moved, the more it will move the matter, and the more obedient will the matter be. For when the human soul is heavily weighed down by fleshy mass, it is less able to move elements and their parts, not only in its own body but also in another . . . Various motion follows in elements and elemental things: they are affected following one's intention, which is the prime mover in this work.¹²²

Thus the force of the practitioner's concentration (*intentio*) and will (*voluntas*), transmitted by the utterance of the proper words, persuades or compels the demon to act and at the same time binds the celestial power to the demonic and connects this joint mover to the material world. We have seen in the *Astronomia* the craftsman's *intentio* compared to a pilot moving a ship.¹²³ Anselmi's theory of incantation and the transitive power of the human soul to strengthen the operations of the stars and affect the material world accords variously with Galen, al-Kindī, Avicenna and works of Arabic astral magic.¹²⁴ For Anselmi, as in *De radiis*, the marvellous effects of ritual utterances are continuous with the affective power of ordinary speech acts on human beings. On the other hand, he does not follow the full Kindian account, omitting the roles of imagination and celestial harmony as well as of rays. He places more emphasis on the

¹²² Ibid. 3.2.1 (ff. 70v–71r): 'Incantatio est ars per verba et religionem urgendi et conveniendi superiorum vires corporum et demonum et alligandi eas cum inferioribus et pariter inferiora cum superioribus. Per verba siquidem certis et ordinatis celi dispositionibus advocantur et coniurantur demones et boni et mali et plures numero et singuli . . . Sunt siquidem sapientes concordantes verba in hoc opere necessaria penitus et sine illis non posse proficere et perfici. Etenim illis adiungitur stellarum vis et demonum . . . et sunt vinculum quo adiungitur operans et operatum qualiter operatio. . . . Palam autem fit in omnibus cum per voluntatem agant motus fieri per apropiata verba, nisi etenim dicat dominus servo prius curre non currit, nec si dicat curre cantat, et si dicatur domificatori dominifica domificat non currit. Exprimitur siquidem per apropiata verba mentis intentio, que causa est motus adiunctionis agentis et passi. Et item palam fit in dominico sacramento quia nisi sacerdos proferat distincte illa secreta non conficit etsi id animo intenderit. Quare fit ut neque in hoc exercitio perficitur res nisi fuerit apropiatorum verborum clara et distincta prolatio. . . . Sunt itaque verba cum solerti affectione proferenda, et quanto fuerit affectus cum prolatione fortior, sic erit eo coniunctio motoris supra movendam rem utilior et amplius movens materiam et fit magis obediens materia. Anima siquidem humana cum fortiter fuerit carnea mole gravata, minus potens erit ad movendum elementa et eorum partes, non modo in corpore proprio verum et alieno . . . Sequitur motus varius in elementis et elementatis: consequens intentionem afficiuntur, quae est in hoc opere primum movens.'

¹²³ Anselmi, *Astronomia* 8.

¹²⁴ E.g. *Picatrix* 1.4.1; al-Kindī, *De radiis* 5–6. See Burnett, 'Powerful Words'.

direct persuasive address to demons as intelligent substances, though without reducing it to an expression of Aristotelian–Augustinian conventional signs.

He notes that ‘although the prayers and invocations must be committed to memory and each held in readiness without error, as he speaks [the master] must always have before his eyes a written text of what he says and see whatever word he is speaking’.¹²⁵ To invoke evil demons the master requires ‘the force and power of commanding, dominating, licensing, summoning, condemning, damning, absolving and delivering, so that they tremble at his commands, bow down and do not presume’.¹²⁶ Demons are invoked using sacred words and by divine names, but Anselmi is unsure whether Hebrew, Greek or Persian names bear more divinity than when translated into Latin.¹²⁷

The system of invocation that Anselmi unfolds in the following chapters is once more a hybrid of astral and demonic strains. By and large, the Arabic magic persuades spirits set in the heavenly spheres by God to empower talismans by prayer, fumigation and sacrifice, while Solomonic nigromancy binds malefic demons by conjuration and threat.¹²⁸ These disparate conceptions and methods are reflected in Anselmi’s benign and malign demons and the distinct magical-rhetorical tactics he teaches for dealing with each kind. As with more and less cooperative people, he writes, demons of different natures must be addressed in different ways. Good-natured demons readily comply with men’s prayers, less benign ones should be swayed by fumigation, sacrifice and conjuration, and the most obstinate and malign must be threatened and rebuked before they will appear and obey.

Before the ritual can begin, the master and his companions must prepare themselves and the things necessary for the work. They must first purify their bodies and

¹²⁵ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 3.2.9 (ff. 95r–v): ‘quamvis menti commendasse debeat orationes et advocaciones que habenda sunt singula in promptu et sine errore, semper tamen dicens scriptum tenet quod dicit pre oculis et videat quodcunque verbum dixerit’.

¹²⁶ Ibid. 3.2.9 (fo. 95v): ‘habeat magister vim et posse mandandi et dominandi et licentiandi et conveniendi et condemnandi et damnandi et absolvendi et liberandi ut ad sua intremiscant mandata et inclinent et non presumant’.

¹²⁷ Ibid. 3.1.5 (fo. 62r).

¹²⁸ Pingree, ‘Learned Magic’, p. 43.

souls, for seven days refraining from error and excess, fasting and confessing their sins, and after that they must ritually clean and exorcise themselves and the house for seven more days.¹²⁹ Methods are then given for exorcising the ritual implements introduced in the last part: clothing, knives and other tools, fumigations and sacrificial animals, places (again) and circles. The master prays to God to bless, sanctify and keep things safe from bad demons, sprinkles holy water and sings psalms and hymns. The outline of these ascetic spiritual preparations and consecrations of tools is that of Solomonic magic. The specific procedures and prayers, however, draw on orthodox liturgy but must be largely of Anselmi's own devising, since they cleave to the structure and principles of his personal magic. The clothing, fumigations and animals, based on the Arabic tradition, are to be consecrated by the same Christian prayers as the Solomonic implements.

At the astrologically elected hour, then, the demon must first be invited (*invitatio*) to enter the appointed place. A good demon or angel should be offered fumigation and sacrifice and then convoked (*convocatio*). Naming the spirit's planet, sign or quarter of the world, the operator humbly entreats it (*oro, precor, advoco*) by God and by its own goodness: 'Approach, therefore, most dear and beloved, hear and heed your devotee; for my part, I resolve to open to you the secrets of my heart. I have chosen you above all, you to whom I wish myself and mine to be committed, after God, the common founder of all.'¹³⁰

Anselmi provides extensive examples, covering fourteen folios, of how to pray in this mode to angels of each of the seven planets, as I discussed in the previous chapter, offering suffumigation and sacrifice.¹³¹ For Saturn and Mars, two prayers are given, one for protection from the planet's harmful effects and one to inflict them on another as punishment; for Venus, there are prayers for love and concord, eloquence, joy, and answers, and so on for the other benefics.

The operator first prays to almighty God, 'whom all the heavenly powers obey, bow to and adore, to whom the angels of heaven, the stars and the elements rejoice to be

¹²⁹ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 3.2.2.

¹³⁰ Ibid. 3.2.6 (fo. 77v): 'Accede itaque, suavissime et dilectissime, et audi atque exaudi devotum tuum; tibi equidem cordis mei arcana referare disposui. Te super omnes elegi cui me et mea commissa velim, post Deum comunem omnium conditorem.'

¹³¹ Ibid. 3.2.7.

subject', to send the planetary angel.¹³² He then turns towards the talisman (*imago, idolum*) or the planet in the sky. Following the ancient structure of invocation, argument and petition, the prayers call upon the angels by God and his divine names and praise them, using formulae such as 'tuum est [infinitive]', for their power, nature and actions. These descriptions and epithets resemble those found in astrological and talismanic texts. The magician then requests that the angel aid him in a particular way and be present in the talisman.

An evil demon may also be similarly invoked for a benefic work if its governing planet is well dignified; otherwise, a different manner and sequence of invocation is used. First, rather than invited, it must be incited (*excitatio*). The magician calls on it, again, by its planet, sign or quarter and demands (*cito, excito, requiro, moneo*) that it be present by divine names, holy seals and other instruments, and God's command. Repeating this incitement three times, the third time he threatens the demon (*admonitio*) with the punishment and anger of God if it should disobey.¹³³

If the invoked demon is rebellious and does not come, the craftsman must conjure it to appear and obey:

'By the virtue and power of the same highest, most holy and invincible God, whose hands you cannot escape, I conjure, perjure and adjure you that you immediately hear me, be present without delay, and approach in humble and abject human shape, and, falling to the earth, yield to these holy names and signs . . . and that you hear and understand me and obey my commands.'¹³⁴

¹³² Ibid. 3.2.7 (fo. 79r): 'cui celestes omnes potestates obediunt, inclinant et adorant, angeli celi et stelle et elementa subesse gaudent'.

¹³³ Ibid. 3.2.6.

¹³⁴ Ibid. 3.2.8 (fo. 93r): 'Ego per eiusdem Dei altissimi et sanctissimi invictissimi virtutem et posse, eius manus non potes effugere, coniuro et periuro et adiuro quatenus statim audito me, adsis omni sublata mora, accedasque in figura humana humili et abiecta, et in terram devolutus inclines ad hec sancta nomina et insignia . . . et me audias et intelligas et obedias mandatis meis.'

If this too fails, the master resorts to the stages of imprecation (*imprecatio*), binding (*religatio*), damnation (*damnatio*) and sentence (*sententia*), uttering ever harsher and more thunderous condemnations and threats of God's punishment.¹³⁵

HOURS

In the third part of the treatise, Anselmi undertakes to astrologise demonic magic. While the practitioner of astral magic astrologically elects a time in which the configuration of the heavens is most favourable to his desired effect, ritual magic texts generally do not require the casting of an astrological chart. The *Clavicula Salomonis* largely relies, less demandingly, on the planetary rulerships of days and hours and on the phases of the moon within a lunation.¹³⁶ Anselmi has such works in mind in his call for astrological rigour at the beginning of this section. There, in one of his few concessions to controversy, he corrects those magical authors who place all importance in the lord of the hour and in the Moon's conjunction with the Sun, and who claim that a single hour is suitable for calling demons of different planetary and zodiacal orders.

Anselmi counsels the practitioner that the planets move things more strongly when they are well dignified in all the ways explained in the astrological literature, and in the following four chapters instructs the reader in the election of hours for invoking good and evil demons. The rest of the third part, and the brief fourth part, form an unsystematic miscellany. In the sixth chapter he presents ritual methods for demonic catoptromancy using a virgin boy as medium, compiled from nigromantic texts, appending his own guidance for choosing the proper hour. The seventh describes seven procedures to conjure powerful astral demons to enter talismans that the craftsman may then use in commanding others. The eighth chapter reports image-engraved stones, of the sort found in lapidaries, that grant protection from demons, and the fourth part provides further natural and ceremonial methods to keep people and places safe from demonic attack.

¹³⁵ Ibid. 3.2.8.

¹³⁶ *Clavicula Salomonis* 1.1–2.

The electional requirements given in translated works of astral magic vary in precision. The most common such text in surviving manuscripts is the *De imaginibus*, translated from Thābit ibn Qurra's book on talismans by John of Seville, followed by the *Opus imaginum* ascribed to Ptolemy, perhaps also translated by John. The latter requires only that the Moon and a particular decan be ascending. Similarly, in the widely copied *Liber de quindecim stellis, quindecim lapidibus, quindecim herbis et quindecim figuris*, a talismanic ring is made when a certain fixed star conjoins the Moon on the ascendant or the midheaven.¹³⁷ The planetary talismans incorporating magic squares described in the *Liber de septem figuris septem planetarum* are made in the planetary day and hour and when the planet is well dignified.¹³⁸ Following the *De imaginibus*, however, the practitioner must consider the entire chart and the conditions of all the planets, including their aspects, house placements and other factors. It is this model that Anselmi follows in the many examples of talismans that occupy most of the second half of the *Divinum opus de magia disciplina*. In these magical images, made without invocation of demons, the spectre of natural magic enters the scene.

¹³⁷ Klaassen, *Transformations of Magic*, p. 44.

¹³⁸ See Page, *Magic in the Cloister*, pp. 76, 189 n. 26.

IMAGES: NATURE AND LAW

The question of natural magic and purely astrological talismans, without the involvement of intermediary beings, has occupied some contemporary scholars as it did late medieval theologians and jurists. In this chapter I will discuss the theory and practice of Giorgio Anselmi's *compositio imaginum* and relate it to this controversy.

After the influx of translated Arabic learning in the twelfth century, thirteenth-century scholars attempted to interpret and classify the new astrology, divination and magic using scholastic methods and categories based on Christian theology and an Aristotelian philosophy that was itself in question. As theologians and philosophers, they were driven both to understand and to control. In these fields, the most influential normative commentators included William of Auvergne, Albertus Magnus, the author of the *Speculum astronomiae* if that was not Albert, and Thomas Aquinas.

Augustine of Hippo had allowed the use of the hidden virtues endowed by God in material things, but he condemned all magic and divination, including the theurgic use of physical materials, as demonic and unlawful.¹³⁹ He held that the 'superstitious' arts function by a 'pernicious association of men and demons' based – since words signify not by nature but by an agreement between speakers – on a common language of conventional signs, which the Christian must renounce.¹⁴⁰ The bishop of Paris William of Auvergne altered Augustine's categories: he introduced, in *De legibus* (1228–30), the term 'natural magic' for the human use of occult properties, a legitimate part of natural philosophy that was sometimes mistaken for demons' work.¹⁴¹ But he excluded from

¹³⁹ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 21, esp. 21.6.

¹⁴⁰ Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 2.36–8; *De divinatione daemonum*. See Markus, 'Augustine on Magic'; Graf, 'Theories of Magic'.

¹⁴¹ William of Auvergne, *De legibus* 24.

natural magic the techniques of *magisterium imaginum*: its images, figures and characters remained demonic and forbidden.¹⁴²

The idea of ‘natural magic’ proved difficult partly because it was often not rigorously opposed to the supernatural but incoherently to the demonic. Concepts and boundaries of ‘natural’ and ‘supernatural’ were themselves being formed and negotiated by the schoolmen, and the status of demons was often ambiguous.¹⁴³ Non-Augustinian theories of magic, based on an animate cosmotheistic universe, were always present, but ideas of the inherent power of words and images, rooted in a Platonism most of whose texts were unknown, and of the world-soul, tainted by twelfth-century conflation with the Holy Spirit, were suspect. The more expansive Platonic conception of nature would not flourish again until those texts were rediscovered and translated by Ficino in the late quattrocento.

Around the middle of the thirteenth century, the *Speculum astronomiae* attempted to establish and defend the legitimate domain of the science of the stars.¹⁴⁴ It states that of the three ways of making images (talismans), two are necromantic, superstitious and illicit. The first, ‘abominable’ and idolatrous, attempts to compel (necessarily evil) spirits with suffumigations and invocations; the spirits are not really compelled, but when God allows may feign to be in order to deceive us. Here the author mentions a number of Hermetic works. The second method, ‘somewhat less unsuitable [but] nevertheless detestable’, involves inscribing characters and exorcising them by names in unknown languages, which (it is suggested) are again those of demons. This kind is exemplified by Solomonic texts.

The third sort alone, astrological images (*imagines astronomicae*), is said to be a licit part of electional astrology, though he does not recommend it. An image (depicting the intended effect) is cast or engraved at an elected hour without suffumigation, invocation, exorcism or inscription of characters. Words are spoken such as ‘This is an image for the destruction of scorpions . . .’, but this is not an exorcism or invocation; words such as ‘Destruction’ and the name of the ascendant or its lord may be engraved

¹⁴² William of Auvergne, *De universo* 2.2–3.

¹⁴³ See Bartlett, *Natural and Supernatural*.

¹⁴⁴ *Speculum astronomiae* 4, 11, 16–17.

on the talisman, but this is not an inscription of characters. This astronomical image obtains its virtue solely from the ‘celestial figure’: it ‘will have an effect from the celestial virtue by the command of God, because the images found in this sensible world [made] from the four elements obey the celestial image’.¹⁴⁵ Only Thebit’s *De imaginibus* and the *Opus imaginum* ascribed to Ptolemy are placed in this class.

The *Speculum*’s distinction of astrological from necromantic talismans influenced the copying of magical texts, so that Thebit’s and Ptolemy’s appear far more often in manuscripts than those that the *Speculum* condemned.¹⁴⁶ Its distinction of ‘abominable’ and ‘detestable’ magic was less influential and more obscure, since the latter texts are hardly without incantation and suffumigation, or the former without characters.¹⁴⁷ Further, the two works named as potentially legitimate are part of the same stream of Arabic astral magic as the ‘abominable’ condemned ones, and it seems to be accidental that they ended up in forms acceptable to the author of the *Speculum*. He classes the independent translation of Thābit’s book that includes prayers and suffumigations, Adelard of Bath’s *Liber prestigiorum*, as ‘abominable’; whether John excised originally existing ritual elements from his translation or Adelard added such elements to his, it is unlikely that Thābit, assuming the attribution is correct, intended to describe a wholly different practice from his native Harrānian astral worship.¹⁴⁸

The concept of an art of ‘astrological images’ that strictly excludes astral spirits, therefore, chased an elusive quarry. Nicolas Weill-Parot has identified the operating principle in this discourse as *destinativité* or ‘addressativity’: ‘A magical “addressative” act can be defined as an act by means of which the magician addresses a sign to a separate intelligence (a demon, an angel or some other spirit or intelligence) in order to obtain its help to perform the magical operation.’¹⁴⁹ This term, however, fails to distinguish between acts that intentionally direct signs to intermediary beings and those that were

¹⁴⁵ *Speculum astronomiae* 11 (p. 218, tr. Burnett et al.): ‘habebit effectum iussu Dei a virtute caelesti, eo quod imagines quae inveniuntur in hoc mundo sensibili ex quatuor elementis oboediunt caelestibus imaginibus’.

¹⁴⁶ Klaassen, *Transformations of Magic*, pp. 43–7.

¹⁴⁷ Pingree, ‘Learned Magic’; Weill-Parot, *Images astrologiques*, ch. 1.1.

¹⁴⁸ Burnett, ‘The Arabic Hermes’; Thābit ibn Qurra’; Perrone Compagni, ‘*Studiosus incantationibus*’.

¹⁴⁹ Weill-Parot, ‘Astral Magic’, p. 169; *Images astrologiques*, p. 37.

interpreted by anti-magical theorists as doing so whether the magician knows it or not. Aquinas did make this distinction: ‘But in this respect astrological images stand apart from necromantic ones: in necromantic images there are expressed certain invocations and magic signs [*praestigia*], whence they pertain to explicit pacts with demons; but in the other images there are tacit pacts through certain signs of figures or characters.’¹⁵⁰ This discourse employed interrelated binaries of licitness, naturalness, demons, address, ceremony and incantation: to understand it we must discern the various ways in which commentators correlated these considerations.

PRINCIPLES

Giorgio Anselmi devoted the fourth and much the largest treatise of his *Divinum opus* to the making of talismans. The first part sets out the principles of inscribing images and characters:

An image is a natural likeness induced through artificial election to strengthen natural things and wonderful operations. We understand by ‘natural things’ those that are considered by philosophers and that are free of supernatural things; they are those that depend on the movements of elements and elemental things because of the action and passion of contrary qualities. But there are, in this lower world, generations and corruptions that follow from elemental alterations in vegetables, plants and animals through the plagues and famines that occur in regions. . . .

People form intentions to construct images so that after general or even particular roots there may be something fixed and long-lasting that strengthens the higher, and as with roots when they are well provided for by things supplied to them so that the proper effects follow, it is the same with the roots of images. And so the effects of things are strengthened by the composition of images. For as a field of good soil produces more abundantly when it is diligently ploughed and manured, so by a properly

¹⁵⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 2.2.96.2: ‘Sed in hoc distant astronomicae imagines a nigromanticis, quod in nigromanticis fiunt expressae invocationes et praestigia quaedam, unde pertinent ad expressa pacta cum daemonibus inita: sed in aliis imaginibus sunt quaedam tacita pacta per quaedam figurarum seu characterum signa.’ On Aquinas’s view on talismans, see Weill-Parot, ‘*Images astrologiques*’, pp. 38–9, 223–7; Rutkin, ‘Astrology and Magic’, pp. 498–500.

made image the work of the root is strengthened, and the evil and harm that could perhaps happen without it are prevented or seriously blunted.¹⁵¹

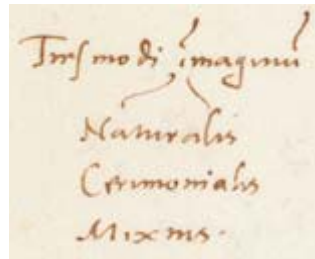
The magical image strengthens an existing natural process, the celestial action of the root (*radix*), the elected configuration of the heavens. Anselmi then distinguishes images to affect general things (*res universales*), such as regions and princes, particular things, such as individual persons, and many things indiscriminately. The last sort are made in the likeness of constellations of the eighth sphere, for they refer to an entire species. He continues:

There are three ways of composing and fashioning images. One is natural, and is when for making the image only the present arrangement of the heavens is admitted. The second, on the contrary, is purely ceremonial: this way is when, in composing the image, the craftsman only uses the material when he wishes, the thing or figure to be impressed, and certain ceremonies, with prayers, invocations, conjurations and the like, concentrating only on the place, along with these things. The third is a way that combines these two: it is when the craftsman, when there is a definite configuration of the heavens appropriate to the particular material, imprints a figure in the likeness of each thing, and adds ceremonies, fumigations, sacrifices, words and prayers. He invokes the demons and spirits that are present to stand by, makes a proposition to them with these things, along with their names, impressions and characters, and finally he puts them in the place. This way is believed by the learned to be the strongest.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 4.1.1 (fo. 118r): ‘Inmago est similitudo naturalis per artificiosam electionem inducta ad confortandum res naturales et operationes mirabiles. Intelligimus autem per naturales res eas circa quas sunt philosophorum considerationes et a supernaturalibus absolute, et sunt que dependent ex elementorum motibus et elementatorum propter actionem et passionem qualitatum contrariantium. Sunt vero generationes et corruptiones hoc in inferiori orbe consequentes alterationes elementales in vegetabilibus et plantis et animalibus per pestilentias et fames quae veniunt in regionibus. . . . Fiunt autem intentiones inmagineum constituendarum causa quatenus post radices universales aut etiam particulares foret aliquid fixum et perdurable superius confortans, et cum qualiter in radicibus quotiens bene disposite sunt ex prestitis ut sequantur proprii effectus, et est imagineum radicibus idem. Fortificantur itaque per inmagineum compositionem rerum effectus. Etenim qualiter aratus diligenter et stercoreatus ager bonae glebae fructificat uberius, sic per inmagineum decenter factam fortificatur radicis opus, et prohibetur malum et damnum quod fortassis sine ipsa posset accidere aut pro multa et graviore parte obtudatur.’

¹⁵² Ibid. 4.1.1 (ff. 118v–119r): ‘Sunt quidem componendarum et figurandarum imagineum modi tres. Unus quidem naturalis, et est quotiens pro imagineis factura, sola celestis presens dispositio recipitur. Alius e contrario pure ceremonialis, cuius est modus cum artifex ad compositionem solam accipit materiam

In the margin is written:



Anselmi has shown little interest in the question of naturalness up to this point, though in chapter 3.4.1 he offered two ways of protecting from demonic attack. One is natural, using stones with a natural antipathy to demons, optionally engraved with images such as Perseus or the head of Medusa. The second combines natural and supernatural elements by adding exorcisms and invoking divine aid. Anselmi's typology of natural, ceremonial and combined ways, like that of Antonio da Montolmo which it resembles, is practical while the *Speculum astronomiae*'s division of 'abominable', 'detestable' and astrological images is normative.¹⁵³ While Anselmi's threefold typology shares one type, the wholly astrological image, with the *Speculum*'s, it conceives the other two types in different terms, and it is not clear that it should be seen, as Weill-Parot suggests, as a response to or a subversion of it.

NATURAL INCANTATIONS

Thomas Aquinas, arguing that all magical incantations were signs addressed to evil separate intelligences, added that 'An indication of this is that the significant words that the magicians use are called invocations, supplications, adjurations, or even commands,

quotiens volet et rem vel figuram imprimendam et cerimonias quasdam cum orationibus et advocationibus et coniurationibus et huius similibus, ad solum locum itendens cum his. Tertius est modus hos duos coniungens, est vero cum artifex, stante celi dispositione certa et apta de articulata certa materia, figuram imprimit ad cuiusque rei similitudinem et addit cerimonias, fumigia, victimas, verba, orationes, advocat presentes demones et spiritus ut adsistant, et proponit eosdem his cum eorum nominibus, impressionibus et characteribus suis et tandem loco disponit, et creditur apud doctos modus hic fortior.'

¹⁵³ Antonio da Montolmo, *De occultis et manifestis* 4.2. See Weill-Parot, 'Images astrologiques', pp. 613, 628.

as of one person speaking to another.¹⁵⁴ Al-Kindī, however, in discussing the power of words, had analysed operative speech into modes such as *indicativa*, *optativa*, *adiuratio*, *execrativa*, of which it was specifically supplications (*obsecrationes*) and the imperative voice (*oratio imperativa*) that were directed to God or spirits.¹⁵⁵ Most of the following occur in Anselmi's book (Kindian terms in Latin):

obsecratio, imperativa

direct request/command	second-person active imperative	'[Entity], do this'
indirect request/ command	first-person active indicative introducing indirect command	'[Entity], I ask/command that you do this'
<i>optativa</i>	third-person optative	
wish		'May this happen' 'May this be done'
wish with analogy		'Just as [analogous thing happens], may this happen'
agented wish		'May [entity] do this' 'May this be done by [entity]'

indicativa

declaration of personal act	first-person active indicative	'I do this'
declaration of purpose	third-person active indicative	'This is for this purpose'

In his main treatment of incantation in the third treatise, Anselmi advises the master of the art, when a suitable comparison presents itself, to use a formula such as 'Just as water extinguishes fire, so may such and such a thing extinguish love.'¹⁵⁶ He introduces this method of persuasive analogy (to use S. J. Tambiah's term) in the context of invocation, but its addressative status is unclear.¹⁵⁷

Presenting what he calls the natural mode of making images, he writes that 'if in this it is necessary to name the thing for which it is made, this is certainly so that the

¹⁵⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.105: 'Huius autem signum est: nam huiusmodi significativae voces quibus magi utuntur, *invocationes* sunt, *supplicationes*, *adiurationes*, aut etiam *imperia*, quasi ad alterum colloquentis.'

¹⁵⁵ Al-Kindī, *De radiis* 6; Burnett, 'Powerful Words', pp. 221–6.

¹⁵⁶ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 3.2.1 (fo. 72r): 'sicut ignem extinguit aqua, sic res hoc talis amorem extinguat'.

¹⁵⁷ Faraone, 'Agonistic Context', pp. 5–10.

power of the craftsman may fall upon it'.¹⁵⁸ When images to affect a region are made by a ruler, as Anselmi recommends, the craftsman 'should be present at the composition and say appropriate words over them, so that will and the effects of the lower and the upper world come together over the image'.¹⁵⁹ The power of the practitioner's soul takes part in joining the celestial powers to the subcelestial world to form the single talismanic mover, as in his discourse on incantation, but without, as there, addressing intermediary beings.

Anselmi employs this 'naming of the thing for which it is made' in his examples of natural images. As he makes and buries the talisman, the craftsman is to repeat an utterance such as 'May great famine and want fall upon this people . . .'.¹⁶⁰ Two of the operations in part 4.2 wish for divine action: 'May almighty God be present; may he make this soil fertile and protect it from harm . . .'.¹⁶¹ These optatives resemble the wishes and declarations used in *De imaginibus* and the *Opus imaginum*: 'This is the burial of such and such a species, so that it may not enter this place'; 'May no raven remain that does not come to this talisman'.¹⁶² They are plainly not invocations of intermediary beings, yet the original context of such rituals was astrolatry, and scholars of ancient magic differ on whether similar expressions in written binding spells (*defixiones*) were performative utterances intended to operate automatically or accompanied by oral invocations of gods.¹⁶³

IMAGES AND CHARACTERS

William of Auvergne held planetary images to be idolatrous: 'do not think that these images are likenesses of the planets, but rather characters, which in their lines and form

¹⁵⁸ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 4.1.1 (fo. 119r): 'si in hoc sit opus rem nominare pro qua fit, quod quidem est uti cadat supra eam artificis vis'.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. 4.1.1 (fo. 119v): 'compositioni presens ipse sit, apropiata verba super eas dicat, quatenus pariter concurrant supra imaginem voluntas et effectus inferioris et superioris orbis'.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. 4.2.1 (fo. 132r): 'Cadat super hanc gentem . . . fames valida et indigentia . . .'

¹⁶¹ Ibid. 4.2.2 (fo. 135r): 'Adsit omnipotens Deus et fecundet et fertilem hanc glebam faciat et a nocivis defendat . . .'


¹⁶² Thābit, *De imaginibus* (I) 1: 'Hec est sepultura illius et illius speciei ut non intret in illum locum.'; [Ptolemy], *Opus imaginum* 26: 'Non remaneat corvus quin veniat ad hanc ymaginem.'

¹⁶³ Faraone, 'Agonistic Context' pp. 5–10; Gager, *Curse Tablets*, p. 13.

have no similarity to the planets'.¹⁶⁴ Aquinas averred that unlike the substantial forms of natural bodies, imbued with active forces by celestial influence, the shape of artificially crafted bodies is the principle of neither action nor passion, and so talismanic figures cannot dispose matter to receive such influence: 'It remains, then, that [magicians] may use them only as signs, for there is no third possibility. Now, we do not use signs except to other intelligent beings. The magical arts, therefore, get their efficacy from another intelligent being to whom the speech of the magician is directed.'¹⁶⁵ It is implicitly against such claims that Anselmi argues that images and characters are similar to stars, not conventional or unintelligible signs, and asserts that this similarity is effective.

For Anselmi, we recall, an image is a likeness made to strengthen the natural effect of the stars. When the images of the planets were formed, he states, 'consideration was given to the things and accidents that follow their motions and to give figures similar to these'.¹⁶⁶ He then describes these images with their Arabic iconography and explains each feature as a representation of the planet's influences.

Turning to characters, he distinguishes them from images thus:

A character is an artificial likeness of an accidental thing inscribed to strengthen natural things. A character differs from an image, since an image represents the form or natural shape of a thing by similar lines; a character, on the other hand, represents the thing it represents by a likeness to some accident of that thing, whether separable or inseparable. For instance, this character , which is half of the circle that represents the Moon when it is two-horned and squares the Sun . . . These characters are enquired into and

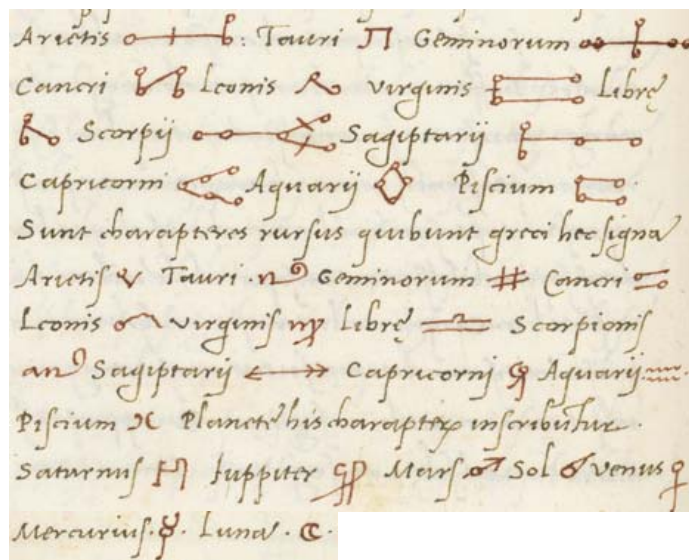
¹⁶⁴ William of Auvergne, *De legibus* 27 (*Opera omnia*, 1, p. 89c–d): 'non intelligas autem imagines istas planetarum similitudines, immo quosdam characteres; quae in lineatione sua et figuracione nullam habent similitudinem planetarum'. On magical characters, see Grévin and Véronèse, "Caractères" magiques'; Page, *Magic in the Cloister*, pp. 85–8.

¹⁶⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 2.2.96.2; *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.105.7–12: 'Relinquitur ergo quod utantur eis solum quasi signis: non enim est aliquid tertium dare. Signis autem non utimur nisi ad alios intelligentes. Habent igitur magicae artes efficaciam ab alio intelligente, ad quem sermo magi dirigitur.'; *De occultis operibus naturae*.


¹⁶⁶ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 4.1.3 (fo. 122r): 'fuit consideratio supra res et accidentia quae sectantur eorum motus et his assimilatas figuras dedere'.

inscribed according to characteristics that the learned craftsman knows agree with the thing to be represented.¹⁶⁷

He then names several types of characters: characters of the signs of the zodiac that show their component stars as small circles joined by lines, Greek characters of the signs and planets (the familiar symbols), those of the phases of the moon, of the twenty-eight lunar mansions, and characters ‘in the likeness of the mover stars or an image on the ascendant’.¹⁶⁸ The manuscript depicts the first two kinds but leaves empty spaces for the others.



Characters can also be formed to ‘represent likenesses of the things that the craftsman intends’, such as intersecting or separate part-circles to depict friendship or enmity, or animals to represent people according to their nature.¹⁶⁹ He concludes, reproving the external judgements of non-experts:

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. 4.1.4 (ff. 125r–v): ‘Charapter est accidentalis rei similitudo artificiosa inscripta ad confirmandum res naturales. Differt autem charapter ab imagine, quoniam imago representat formam sive naturalem figuram rei per similes lines, charapter vero rem pro qua representat per similitudinem ad eius aliquod accidens, separabile sit aut inseparabile. Veluti charapter hic , qui medietas est circuli Lunae representantis cum ditorna fuerit et est tetragona Soli . . . Inquiruntur autem et inscribuntur charapteres hii secundum appropriationes secundum quod artifex doctus convenire representandae rei cognoverit.’

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. 4.1.4 (ff. 126r–v): ‘ad similitudinem motricum stellarum aut horoscopantis imaginis’.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. 4.1.4 (fo. 126v): ‘representantes rerum similitudines quas intendit artifex’.

When two or more characters are put together . . . the craftsman brings together superior and inferior forces, and by this principle there will be a strong movement of things. From all this, it should be evident that impressions of characters are not ceremonial things, as those who do not know the matter suppose, but natural.¹⁷⁰

This listing of characters, as well as instructing in their use, aims to demystify: to show that they are natural likenesses, not conventional signs that can only signify by agreed meanings within a community of speech with demonic intelligences, as per Augustine. Anselmi's argument is something like this: Astral images represent their subject not as literal depictions of its body but as complex figurative likenesses of its effects; they are not addressed to it. Characters are like images, but they represent their subject as simple likenesses of one of its characteristics (accidents); they are not like letters and are not addressative either. For Anselmi it is enough to say that images and characters work by *similitudo* and *convenientia*. His philosophical difference with the scholastic Aristotelians is that, as well as the transitive power of the soul, he accepts the sympathetic action of the ontologically effective symbol, which their time lacked the learning to fully express.¹⁷¹

EXAMPLES

Anselmi devoted the rest of his fourth treatise to extensive examples of talismans for specific effects. Although he stated that the most effective operation combines astrological and ceremonial techniques, all his examples are of the first, solely natural type. A heading after the title of chapter 4.2.1 announces 'On natural images'. Modelled largely on Thābit's *De imaginibus*, as we can see from the multiple points of similarity, these instructions were almost certainly composed by Anselmi himself based on astrological

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. 4.1.4 (fo. 127r): 'Quando vero componuntur duo aut plures charapteres invicem . . . convenit artifex vires superiores et inferiores et per tale principium erit rerum fortis motus. Ex his autem manifestum sit non fore charapterum impressiones cerimoniales res, sed naturales, qualiter hii qui ignorant rem opinantur.'

¹⁷¹ The following chapter, 4.1.5, describes images found imprinted by nature on stones, once (fo. 128r) citing Albertus Magnus's *De mineralibus* (2.2.4).

rules and principles of astral magic.¹⁷² The second part of the treatise describes ‘images that follow great motion and whose roots move great and general things and accidents’: it covers the causing and preventing of famine, disease and war in an entire region.¹⁷³ The third, much longer part gives ‘particular’ images that are made under lesser roots and affect an individual subject. Each chapter presents *exempla* that illustrate how to apply astrological and operative principles to achieve a specific kind of effect; they are organised in pairs of destructive and beneficial ends: for ‘adaptation and destruction, health and sickness, love and hatred’, as Thābit wrote.¹⁷⁴

Most emphasis and space is given to the arrangement of the heavens, using complex full-chart elections involving the influences of multiple planets and the full array of astrological techniques. For each talisman, although the whole celestial situation should be considered, the craftsman is to identify a ‘principal ruling and moving star’.¹⁷⁵ After explaining what sort of *radix* is required, Anselmi gives examples of specific horoscopes, placing planets in aspects, houses (*loca*), signs and sometimes decans, though without including astrological charts. For a good talisman, the benefic planets, especially the principal star, must be strong and fortunate, well dignified and not impeded; the malefics should be weak and unfortunate. Conversely, for a bad talisman, malefic planets must be strong and unfortunate, benefics weak and unfortunate.¹⁷⁶ Anselmi gives guidelines on making elections particular to a subject person, ruler or country by incorporating factors of their birth chart, again as in *De imaginibus*.¹⁷⁷

The craftsman is to engrave or cast the image at the appointed hour, while speaking what he wishes to occur. Most of the figures described are *secundum intentionem operis*, representing the intended effect rather than a star, apart from some of zodiacal signs and fixed stars. Anselmi writes that talismans are twice as powerful when impressed

¹⁷² In 4.1.1 (fo. 120r), Anselmi also alludes to casting an anthropomorphic talisman body part by body part, as in *De imaginibus* 5.

¹⁷³ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 4.2.1 (fo. 130r): ‘imagines quae sectantur motum magnum et radicem quarum est movere grandes et universales res et accidentia’.

¹⁷⁴ Thābit, *De imaginibus* (I) 8: ‘de adaptatione scilicet et destructione et salute atque infirmitate et amore atque odio’.

¹⁷⁵ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 4.1.1 (fo. 119r): ‘stella motrix principalis’, 4.2.1 (fo. 130r): ‘stella principaliter regulans et movens’.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. *Astronomia* 12.

¹⁷⁷ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 4.2.1 (fo. 131v).

in a material that acts in concert with the purpose and the celestial body. They should be cast from metals or engraved in stones that follow the motions of the active benefic or malefic stars – gold, silver or tin for benefic talismans, lead or iron for malefics – or, for ‘general’ ends, on baked earth of the region.¹⁷⁸ The talisman, if not worn on one’s person, is to be buried at the threshold of the target’s house or a place he or she passes, or in the middle or the four corners of the place to be affected. The incantations are non-addressative wishes in the third-person optative: long orations, sometimes wishing for God’s intervention, for the ‘general’ talismans, shorter utterances for ‘particular’ ones.

The longest of these chapters are 4.3.1–4, where Anselmi applies his knowledge of astrological medicine to damaging and preserving the health of the body. The fourth chapter discusses medical talismans of each sign of the zodiac against diseases of the body parts it rules; unlike the *Liber imaginum signorum*, a comparable text thought to date to the early fourteenth century, Anselmi follows the traditional melothesia.¹⁷⁹ He stresses that magic will do little good for someone who is not getting ordinary medical treatment: ‘In the same way, neither do images for victory avail for someone inexperienced in and ignorant of the military art, or for someone, however knowledgeable, with no soldiers or with only recruits or very few, however brave, against a great army.’¹⁸⁰

At the end of each chapter, Anselmi includes talismans of the fixed stars and constellations of the eighth sphere, and the fourth part of the fourth treatise focuses on these. Each constellation (*imago, constellatio*) governs the animal species in whose likeness it is named and depicted, as well as similar things and events, and when a planet passes under it, the constellation strengthens and gathers individuals of that species if the planet is benefic, or harms them if malefic. Three chapters treat, in turn, the signs of the zodiac and the constellations north and south of it, calling them by Arabic-inflected names such as Inflammatus for Cepheus. When the constellation or fixed star is on the ascendant or the midheaven together with an appropriate benefic or malefic planet, which should be dignified as usual, the image is impressed on corresponding metal or stone so that the

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. 4.1.1 (fo. 120r), 4.1.2; *Astronomia* 5.

¹⁷⁹ See Lucentini and Perrone Compagni, *I testi e i codici*, pp. 52–3.

¹⁸⁰ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 4.3.2 (fo. 150r): ‘Sic neque imagines ad victoriam imperito et ignoto militaris artis, aut quemlibet doctissimo sine militibus aut cum solis tyronibus aut paucissimis quantum fortibus, adversus grandem militiam.’

rulers and movers are joined to the talisman. Anselmi mentions at one point the *Liber de quindecim stellis*, the sole Arabo-Latin text devoted to talismans of the fixed stars, and he draws on its information, but his sources are mostly astrological rather than talismanic.

It is curious that after his long treatments of demons and ceremony, and despite stating that the mixed astrological–ceremonial way is considered the stronger, all Anselmi’s examples, except those at the end of the third treatise, are of this natural sort; perhaps, after all, he felt more comfortable in the astrological domain where his expertise lay. After the work’s explicit – ‘Finis. Laus Deo optimo maximo.’ – two folios are filled with notes on seventeen further talismans:

For the fertility of crops

Make an image from the earth of the place that you want to abound with crops for the person whose the place is, under the rulership of Aquarius, and bake it in fire or the sun, and when it is well baked inscribe characters of Saturn and Taurus, and bury it in the middle of the place, saying the names of the angels of Taurus.¹⁸¹

These broadly follow Anselmi’s principles except for sometimes using planetary hours and bare utterances of astral angel names, and a few, such as one for a fleet to appear in the sea, have a nigromantic air. They may well be by a later writer.

JUDGEMENTS

Giorgio Anselmi is one of the magical authors in whom Weill-Parot finds a disconcerting ambiguity. Anselmi, he notes, fails to state clearly what he approves and disapproves of in his introductory typology. He shows no embarrassment in describing frankly addressative rituals while showing concern for what is licit and affirming that he remains within

¹⁸¹ Ibid. (fo. 229v): ‘Pro fertilitate fructuum: Fac ymaginem de terra loci quem vis fructibus abundare pro illo cuius est locus, sub dominio ☿ et coque eam ad ignem sive solem in qua bene cotta scribe characteres ♃ et ♄ et subterra in medio loci dicendo nomina angelorum ♂.’

Christian orthodoxy, as encapsulated in his declaration that ‘We will examine each of these ways [of making talismans], if it pleases God’.¹⁸²

It is no wonder, however, that the physician and astrologer Anselmi did not see his business as judging what his readers should and should not do according to theology or law. We should not confuse self-protective affirmations of orthodoxy with deceptive or self-deceptive hypocrisy. Anselmi indeed makes some conventional expressions of piety at moments of difficulty or doctrinal danger: ‘we have decided to submit to the judgement of the holy Roman Church and deviate from it in no way’, ‘by what we will speak of [about demons] we may be seen to further affirm the Christian faith’, and so on.¹⁸³ He had seen his colleague Pelacani’s run-in with the bishop, as Ficino would witness the troubles of Plethon and Bessarion; that he escaped censure suggests a non-confrontational personality who learned how to present himself. In this respect, Anselmi’s ambiguity is no more than the common practice of arts-faculty philosophers of acknowledging theological positions while enquiring into autonomous philosophical truths.

Moreover, Anselmi makes no mention of licitness after his introduction. For him, magic as a whole is *superstitio*, a religious and addressative art that encompasses certain natural techniques: timed use of celestial influence, some incantation, the impression of images and characters. He does not claim that these methods are any more licit than ceremonial ones, since he includes the natural magic of occult causes in forbidden philosophy. Far from wanting to disguise his magic as more natural or orthodox than it was, rather than equivocating evil demons with the neutral term *spiritus* he embraced the word *demon* for even good planetary angels despite its negative Christian cast.

Weill-Parot considers that Anselmi, in prescribing impersonal wishes for the effects of talismans (‘May this happen’), suppresses the question of addressativity because it would lead to demonic or angelic involvement.¹⁸⁴ That is to beg that question in favour of the anti-magical polemic that all magical symbols are addressative signs, and a writer so

¹⁸² Ibid. 3.4.1 (fo. 119r): ‘Exeqemur autem de unoquoque horum modorum si Deo placuerit’. Weill-Parot, *Images astrologiques*, pp. 626–8, 635–6.

¹⁸³ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 1.1.1 (fo. 3r): ‘decrevimus subesse iudicio sanctae Romanae ecclesiae et ab eo nullas in partes declinare’, 2.1.1 (fo. 38r): ‘per ea quae dicturi sumus videamur amplius Christianam fidem affirmare’.

¹⁸⁴ Weill-Parot, *Images astrologiques*, pp. 632–4.

strikingly frank about demons has no cause for insincerity here.¹⁸⁵ Weill-Parot also judges Anselmi to approach hypocrisy in the disparity between this evasive malefic incantation and the easy Christian appeal for God's benefic aid, but one of the three malefic 'general' incantations (3) also wishes for an act of God, and only two of the three benefic ones (2 and 4) do.

Nevertheless, granting Anselmi's case that images, characters and certain incantations are not signs directed to spiritual substances, was it natural to draw down powers of celestial bodies that are moved by intelligences, served by spirits and represented in the forms of pagan gods? The scholastic Christian divide of natural and supernatural was imposed on practices based on an animate cosmos. It leant on the authority of Augustine, who, arguing with Porphyry, not the greatest theurgic advocate, had dismissed the explanation of theurgy by vertical sympathy:

As to Porphyry's view that by means of herbs and stones and animals, and certain kinds of sounds and words and figures and drawings, and even by observing certain movements of the heavenly bodies in the turning heavens, men may create on earth powers capable of bringing about various effects: all such beliefs arise from the tricks which those same demons play on the souls of those who are subject to them, creating delicious entertainment for themselves from the errors of mankind.¹⁸⁶

Ficino, having at last regained the Iamblichan and Proclan basis of theurgy that Augustine and the Latin West had barely known, would yet fall back awkwardly on the easier discourse of nature and law to defend his magic. The ambiguity of Anselmi's position stems from his apparently general demonic causality and from his Arabic sources, which did not always make scholastic distinctions between mechanical celestial and intelligent demonic agency. Unpersuaded by the theologians' anti-magical speculations, uninterested in distancing himself from 'base nigromancers', for Anselmi

¹⁸⁵ See also Weill-Parot, *De occultis et manifestis*, p. 224.

¹⁸⁶ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 10.11: 'Et quod ei uidetur herbis et lapidibus et animantibus et sonis certis quibusdam ac uocibus et figurationibus atque figmentis, quibusdam etiam obseruatis in caeli conuersione motibus siderum fabricari in terra ab hominibus potestates idoneas uariis effectibus exsequendis, totum hoc ad eosdem ipsos daemones pertinet ludificatores animarum sibimet subditarum et uoluptaria sibi ludibria de hominum erroribus exhibentes.'

natural magic and the 'astrological image' were no promised land of permitted and sanctified magic but an analytic category within his *magia disciplina*. The difficulty of distinguishing natural cosmic forces from animate powers was not the magicians' ambiguity but the learned culture's.

THE PLACE OF GIORGIO ANSELMINI IN THE HISTORY OF MAGIC

The twenty-three-year-old Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, born a century after Anselmi, submitted the first draft of his magical *summa*, *De occulta philosophia*, to his mentor Trithemius in 1510. In his dedicatory letter, he lamented magic's perversion and evil repute:

Since, then, these things are so, I wondered much and was no less angry that as yet there had been no one who had vindicated so sublime and sacred a discipline from the crime of impiety or had delivered it purely and sincerely to us, since those more recent writers I have seen – Roger Bacon, Robert the Englishman, Pietro d'Abano, Albertus Magnus, Arnald of Villanova, Anselmi of Parma, Picatrix of Spain, Cecco d'Ascoli of Florence and many other authors of obscure name – when they promise to treat of magic, have offered nothing but irrational ravings and superstitions unworthy of honest men.¹⁸⁷

Since Albert and the *Picatrix* in particular are among Agrippa's major sources, we may suspect some grandstanding to his teacher. Should we agree, though, with his verdict, which groups Anselmi with men of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, amid the old dirty magic, to use Frances Yates's phrase, of the medieval darkness?

Scholars have placed Anselmi within the late medieval liberation of magical writing, in the line of individuated 'author-magicians' who overcame the double

¹⁸⁷ Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia* (p. 70): 'Cum haec igitur sic se haberent, mirabar admodum neque minus etiam indignabar neminem hactenus extitisse, qui tam sublimem sacramque disciplinam ab impietatis crimine vindicasset aut illam nobis pure syncereque tradidisset, siquidem quos ex recentioribus ego vidi – Rogerium Bachonem, Robertum Anglicum, Petrum Apponum, Albertum Teutonicum, Arnoldum de Villanova, Anselmum Parmensem, Picatricem Hispanum, Cicchum Asculum Florentinum et plerosque alios sed obscuri nominis scriptores – cum se magiam tradere pollicentur, nonnisi aut deliramenta quaedam, nulla ratione subnixa, aut superstitiones probis omnibus indignas praestiterunt.'

impossibility of writing on magic under one's own name: the ascription of magical knowledge to ancient divine revelation, and theological prohibitions of extra-institutional ritual.¹⁸⁸ We must qualify this historiographical concept: the term 'author-magician' works better in its original French, since 'author' does not promise a named writer as does *auteur*; nor are we sure that they all practised magic. Weill-Parot's 'logical impossibility' is exaggerated, since it is angelic and demonic magic, far more than the astral sort, that traditionally presents mysteries of divine origin, and an author can logically report secrets first divinely received.¹⁸⁹ The concept must also be qualified with regard to place, since Alfonso X's scriptorium, for instance, does not follow the pattern.

Anselmi, while not straying far into autobiography, maintains a first-person authorial presence in the *Astronomia* and *De magia disciplina*, positioning himself as an expert, bewailing magic's parlous state much as Agrippa did, asserting his own views on the need for rigorous astrological timing and on the naturalness of images. He held radical stances on the *magus* and *superstitio*, affirmed that good demons and Arabic heavenly spirits existed, that demons were instrumental causes, worthy of ritual invocation but not involved in all magic and divination; that images, characters and spoken words held natural power. For all this, he was not a controversialist, espousing his pro-magical ideas without declaiming his contradiction of authorities like Augustine in scholastic disputation or dramatic rhetoric. His language, though often workmanlike and less refined than later treatises, shows the mark of humanism, most forcefully in *De musica*'s spiritual flights and Socratic and Ciceronian dialogue, his exaltation of magic too anticipating, perhaps influencing, Agrippa's:

This science is of subtler, higher and more hidden things, requiring great, serious and profound investigation, which enquires into the causes and experiences the powers of the most hidden things. [Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 1.1.1 (ff. 8r–v)¹⁹⁰]

¹⁸⁸ Weill-Parot, *Images astrologiques*, pp. 602–38, and 'De occultis et manifestis', pp. 221–2; Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, pp. 393–408; Véronèse, 'La notion d'"auteur-magicien"'

¹⁸⁹ Boudet and Véronèse, 'Le secret'.

¹⁹⁰ 'Est vero scientia hec de subtilioribus et altioribus atque occultioribus, grandi et gravi egens indagatione et profunda, quae causas et inquirat et vires experitur rerum occultissimarum.'

The magical faculty, possessing the greatest power and full of the highest mysteries, involves the deepest contemplation of the most secret things . . . [Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia* 1.2¹⁹¹]

Between the two authors lay the instauration of magic by Ficino, Pico and others less famed by retrieving its sources in ancient Greek philosophy and Hebrew mysticism. Ficinian Platonism allowed Agrippa to articulate the drawing down of celestial influence in ways Anselmi could not; with Christian Cabala, Agrippa could present, in his third book, a Judeo-Christian ritual angelic magic ‘purer and more sincere’ than the Solomonic nigromancy that Anselmi had unashamedly promulgated. Anselmi, without access to these texts, engaged with the available ancient and Arabic sources as authoritative but not infallible voices, divided from his own world by no great gap, respectfully citing pagan knowledge with neither Christian qualification nor Ficino’s pagan enthusiasm. He readily accepted the demonic magic whose fortune the humanists would disown.

In the *Astronomia* and the *Opus de magia disciplina* he seems uncommitted to Aristotle or Plato. He did not call Aristotle ‘the Philosopher’ or cite Averroes; where he perceived differences, as on the nature of demons, he presented both their views. He called Plato ‘most learned priest of divine things’ and ‘divine man’, yet did not draw heavily on his writings, neither the long-available *Timaeus* nor the new humanist translations of other dialogues.¹⁹² His physics of celestial influence relies on the vertical sympathy that, as expounded by Plotinus and the theurgic Platonists, connects sublunar and heavenly bodies, through human, daemonic and divine souls, to higher divine principles. In external theurgy, its lesser form, corresponding stones and plants were combined with prayers, sacrifices and other elements of popular magic or civic cults to invite divine material benefits.¹⁹³ Anselmi is unable to thus articulate his *similitudo*, and unlike the Proclan chains it is largely monodirectional: influence flows down but the

¹⁹¹ ‘Magica facultas, potestatis plurimae compos, altissimis plena mysteriis, profundissimam rerum secretissimarum contemplationem . . . complectitur’.

¹⁹² Anselmi, *Astronomia* 7: ‘rerum divinarum sacerdos doctissimus’; *Divinum opus* 2.1.2: ‘divinus vir’. See Hankins and Palmer, *Recovery of Ancient Philosophy*, pp. 10–11.

¹⁹³ Copenhaver, ‘Hermes Trismegistus, Proclus’; ‘Scholastic Philosophy’, p. 552; Shaw, *Theurgy*; Struck, *Birth of the Symbol*, ch. 6–7; Chlup, *Proclus*, pp. 127–36, 168–73.


soul, while looking upwards, remains earthbound.¹⁹⁴ His magic, despite being *superstitio*, is in this way poor religion. *De musica*, though, is a waymark in the renaissance of Platonism. There, Anselmi–Pietro names Plato ‘that greatest and best of philosophers’, lucidly discourses on the world-soul and, in new detail, the Pythagorean and Platonic *musica caelestis*, and rapturously evokes one of the main Platonic *loci* of the soul’s ascent.¹⁹⁵

Rather than in the recovery of sources, Richard Kieckhefer has located magic’s renaissance in the turn of attention by Ficino and Pico to unearthing its ancient authenticity and authority, and pursuing its revelation of the structure and operation of the cosmos.¹⁹⁶ This viewpoint, like Klaassen’s term ‘Scholastic image magic’ and the controversy of ‘astrological images’, subordinates practice to theory and defines magic from the outside, looking to its surrounding elite discourse rather than its own content, use or experience. So reckoned, Anselmi preceded this renaissance: for him, the dignity of magic was confirmed by its honourable sacerdotal origins but did not depend on them, and his curiosity did not focus on the past. Though interested in wider theoretical implications, his book moves, like the downward flow of creation, from theory to application; looking to the heavens, he teaches a down-to-earth practical magic. As a doctor, he counsels medical attention before turning to talismans; his incense recipes do not feature transliterated Arabic words or substances impossible to obtain. He writes that elephants and whales, the largest animals, are apt Jovial sacrifices, but ‘failing these, [the craftsman] should make do with a white lamb or [?]’.¹⁹⁷ The master must ensure that all his equipment is properly prepared and exorcised, ‘and he should carefully count everything so that no error occurs, for that would be dangerous’.¹⁹⁸ He should keep at hand an exorcised candle or lamp and a lunch box with wine and food or a medicinal compound to sustain him during long and frightening workings.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ Cf. p. 12.

¹⁹⁵ Anselmi, *De musica* 1 (p. 99): ‘ille philosophorum maximus et optimus’.

¹⁹⁶ Kieckhefer, ‘Did Magic Have a Renaissance?’.

¹⁹⁷ Anselmi, *Divinum opus* 3.1.9 (fo. 70r): ‘deficientibus his, supleat cum albo agno vel .

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. 3.2.9 (fo. 95r): ‘omnia quoque, ne interveniat error, subtiliter enumeret, esset enim periculosum’.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. 3.1.7 (fo. 65r), 3.2.9 (fo. 95r).

Giorgio Anselmi's *Opus de magia disciplina* describes a system of magical practice made intelligible by philosophy, not a philosophy illustrated by magic, and for that it is no less intellectually coherent. Though no great philosophical work, it robustly and plausibly conceives Anselmi's composite astrological and demonic universe. It did not change the course of Western ideas; Anselmi was not venerated or condemned except in lists like Agrippa's: praised by Jacques Gohory, reviled by Johann Wier and Martin Delrio.²⁰⁰ A revealing link in the astrological and magical succession, he stands not quite in line with his predecessors – in his embrace of pagan sources, his move towards Platonism, his exhaustive systematisation of talismanic astrology and his personal and peculiar synthesis – or with the humanist mages to come.

20,000 words

²⁰⁰ Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 105, n. 3; Wier, *De praestigiis daemonum* 2.4; Delrio, *Disquisitiones magicae* 1.3 (p. 15): 'ab hoc numero removeo, ut daemónicos Magos, Robertum perscrutorem, . . . Picatricem Hispanum, Anselmum Parmensem, Cicchum Esculanum, Petrum de Abono, et Corneliam Agrippam, et Paracelsum . . . homines partim atheos, partim haereticos.'

APPENDIX A

CONTENTS OF THE *DIVINUM OPUS DE MAGIA DISCIPLINA*

tr.	pt	ch.	fo.
[1]		introduction; divination	
	[1]		
	[1]	magic	1r
	2	the parts of magic	4r In notitia scientiae magicae et eius partium in generali
	3	geomancy	8v De instructione artis geomantiae et eius figuris in figurarum dispositione
	4		11r Notitia complexionis et naturae et proprietatis uniuscuiusque figurae
	5		13v Notificatio rerum et motuum et accidentium quae unaqueque figura gubernat et movet
	6		18r De notitia modorum quibus fiunt figure fortunatae vel infortunatae
	7		21r Notitia habitudinum quae accidunt inter figuras artis huius
	8		23r De regulis comunibus in indicando per artem hanc
	[2] [1]	chiromancy	27r De chiromantia
	2	scapulimancy	32r Notitia spatulae et eius partem et artis inventionem
	4		33v Notitia iudiciorum per inspectum in osse spatulae
2		superstition	De superstitione
	[1]	demons	Notitia demonum
	1	nature and substance of demons	37r In quo asserit esse demonum et qualis sit earum substantia
	2	variety of demons, angels and spirits	42r Notitia diversitatis demonum et angelorum et spirituum
	3	names of demons	43v Nomen et demonibus demonum
	4	number of demons	45v Notitia numerum et multitudinis demonum
	5	form of demons	46v Notitia figurae demonum
	6	nature and quality of demons	47r Notitia naturae et proprietatis demonum
3		ceremonies	De ceremoniis
	1	preparation and instruments	Notitia appetentium ad executionem artis
	1	quality of the craftsman	52r Notitia qualitatis artificis
	2	clothing	54v Notitia modorum vestium et earum coloribus
	3	place	57r Notitia qualitatis locorum ad invocationes
	4	circles	58r Circulorum artis et fumigationis eorum
	5	divine names	60v Notitia divinorum nominum quae circulis inscribuntur
	6	seals, rings and <i>candariae</i>	62r Notitia modorum sigillorum anulorum et chandariorum
	7	knives, wand, etc.	64r Notificatio modorum cultellorum et virgae

8	fumigations	65r	Notificatio modorum fumigiorum et diversitatis eorum pro natura cuiuscumque demonis et horis servandis ad hec
9	sacrificial animals	69v	Notificatio animalium quae idonea sunt ad sachra demonum secundum septimum planetas
[2]	incantations		De incantationibus
1	theory of incantation	70v	Que verba in hoc opere sunt necessaria
2	exorcism of master and companions	72v	Notificatio modorum quibus exorcizandi artis magister et sotii
3	exorcism of clothing and apparatus	74r	Notificatio exorcizationis vestimentorum, cultellorum et similium
4	exorcism of fumigations and sacrificial animals	75r	Quomodo exorcizandum est fumigium et sachrificium
5	exorcism of places and circles	75v	Notificatio modi et ordinis exorcizandi et loca et circulos
6	invitation and incitement of demons	77r	Notificatio modorum invitandi et convocandi et excitandi et admonendi demones
7	praying to planetary angels	78v	Notificatio modorum quibus unusquisque demon cuiuscumque fuerit ordinis vel planetae vel signo subiectus per exemplum exorcizandum est
	Saturn	79v	
	Jupiter	81r	Modus et exemplum orandi Iovem
	Mars	83r	Modus et exemplum orandi ad Martem
	the Sun	85r	Modus et exemplum orandi ad Solem
	Venus	87v	Modus et exemplum exorandi Venerem
	Mercury	89r	Modus exorandi Mercurium per exemplum
	the Moon	90v	Modus et exemplum quo Lunaris demon exorcizandus est
8	conjunction, imprecation and binding of demons	92v	Notificatio per exemplum coniurationum et imprecationum et religationum demonum
9	conclusion: further observances	94v	Et est epilogum eorum que observaturus est artis magister
3	hours (astrological timing)		Notificatio horarum que observantur in hoc opere
1	inadequacy of some past instructions	98r	Quod tempora que quidam dederunt non sufficiunt
2	hours for good demons	99v	Quomodo una eademque hora possit quisque ordinis demon queri
3	hours for evil demons	102r	Notificatio horarum que servande sunt in conveniendo demones malos cuiusque ordinis
4	hours for a particular good demon	103v	Notificatio modorum per exemplum horarum quae servantur in conveniendo singularem de bonis
5	hours for a particular evil demon	104r	Notificatio horarum in convocando demonem singularem de malis, per exemplum
6	catoptromancy for knowledge of secrets and stolen objects	105r	Modi conveniendi spetialiter spiritum pro notitia secretorum et furti furati
7	images to make demons obedient	109r	De modis et exemplis quorundam imaginum quarum presentia demones coniuari[?] et obedientes fiunt
8	seals to protect from demons	113r	Notificatio modorum et sigillorum quorundam quibus fient homines tuti ab incurisibus demonum

[4]	protection from demons		De modis preservandi se ab infestationibus demonum
1	protecting oneself from infestation by demons	113v	
2	protecting places and people from attack by demons	116v	De modis servandis ad liberandum regiones et loca et homines ab incursu et vexatione demonum
4	images		De modis et exemplis charapterum
[1]	images and characters		
1	making images	118r	Notificatio modorum qui servandi sunt in compositione inmaginum
2	materials for images	120v	In qua materia imprimuntur imagines et similia
3	images of the seven planets	121r	Notificatio signorum et inmaginum quae septem planetis attribuuntur
[4]	characters	125r	Notificatio modorum charapterum et figurarum
5	images found on stones	127r	Modi inmaginum repertarum in gemmis quibusdam et eorum posse
2	examples of images with general effects		
1	to induce famine	130r	Exemplum et modus componendi imagines ad inducendam famem
2	to prevent famine and barrenness	133v	Ad prohibendum famem sterilitatemque et malum aerem
3	to induce diseases	136r	Modi quibus fiunt imagines ad inducendum epidimiam et infirmitates in regionibus
4	to protect places from pestilence and misfortunes	138v	Modi quibus conservanda sunt loca a pestilentia et infortuniis
5	to induce wars, etc.	142r	Modi quibus fiunt imagines ad inducendum bella et populationes et accidentia similia
6	to keep peace and prevent attacks	144v	De modis quibus fiunt imagines ad conservanda loca in pace et prohibendos inimicos insultus
[3]	examples of images with particular effects		
1	to shorten life and damage health	148r	Notificatio modorum inmaginum ad abbreviandam vitam et permutationem corporum ad malas dispositiones
2	to preserve health and prolong life	149v	De modis inmaginum que fiunt ad conservationem sanitatis et prolongationem vitae
3	to cause diseases in a part of the body	152v	Notificatio modorum inmaginum quae fiunt ad excitandum speciales egritudines
4	to keep a part of the body healthy	156r	Notificatio modorum inmaginum que fiunt ad sanitatem specialium membrorum et curam egritudinum
[5]	to make stupid	162r	Notificatio modorum inmaginum quae fiunt ut sint homines insensati et stolidi et amentes vel non apti scientiis
[6]	to make intelligent	164r	Notificatio modorum inmaginum quibus fiunt homines prudentes, bene sensati vel apti scientiis etc.
7	to bring dishonour and disgrace	165v	Notificatio modorum inmaginum quae fiunt ad dedecus et infamiam per exempla
8	to bring fame and honour	167r	Notificatio inmaginum ad famam et honorem per exempla
[9]	to harm kings	169r	De modis inmaginum quae fiunt ad nocendum regibus et dominatibus et removendum illosa regnis et dominatoribus
10	to acquire and preserve kingdoms	171v	De modis inmaginum que fiunt ad acquirenda regna et conservationem eorum per exempla

[11]	to destroy wealth	174r	De modis imaginum ad consumptionem divitiarum et casum in paupertate
12	to acquire wealth	175v	De modis imaginum ad acquirendas divitias per exempla
13	to bring discord and strife	177v	Notificatio modorum imaginum quae fiunt ad discordias et lites
14	to bring peace and harmony	179v	Notificatio modorum imaginum ad pacem et concordiam
[15]	to separate a husband and wife	182r	Notificatio modorum imaginum quae fiunt ad separandum inter virum et uxorem
16	to bring together a husband and wife	184r	Notificatio modorum imaginum ad componendum inter virum et mulierem
[17]	to cause violent death	185v	Notificatio modorum imaginum quibus fiunt imagines ad malam et violentiam et turpem mortem
18	to avoid violent or shameful death	187v	Notificatio modorum imaginum quae fiunt ad evitandam turpem mortem
19	to bring a king's disfavour	189v	Notificatio modorum imaginum ad casum et indignationem regum et potentium
20	to restore a king's favour	190v	Notificatio modorum imaginum quae fiunt ad reditum in gratiam regum
21	to acquire a king's favour	192r	Notificatio modorum imaginum ad acquirendam benivolentiam regis
22	to cause imprisonment or exile	193v	Notificatio modorum imaginum quae fiunt ad captivitatem et exilium
23	to free from imprisonment or exile	194v	Notificatio modorum quae fiunt imaginum quae ad liberandum a carcere vel exilio
4	images of the eighth sphere		De modis spetialibus imaginum octavi orbis et modis compositionum per exempla
[1]	images of the signs of the zodiac	196r	
2	images of northern extrazodiacal constellations	209r	Notificatio modorum componendi imagines boreales orbis octavi ultra zodiacum
[3]	images of southern extrazodiacal constellations	214r	Notificatio modorum imaginum quae fiunt sub stellis figurarum que a zodiaco tenent australem partem
4	non-astral images	217v	De modis componendi imagines que non sunt stellatae sed concomitantes signorum
5	<i>alphetica</i>		De modis alphaeticae
1	<i>veneficia</i>		De veneficiis
1	making <i>veneficia</i>	224r	Notificatio modorum quibus componuntur veneficia
2	protecting from poisons	228v	De modis se defendendi a venenis
	notes on operations	229r	

Brackets indicate where I have amended inaccurate or missing section numbering in the manuscript.

APPENDIX B

THE PARTS OF MAGIC

ACCORDING TO GIORGIO ANSELMI

	scientia magica
divinatio	superstitio
pyromantia	demonum notitia
arismantia	theurgica maior
geomantia	agathomantia
hydromantia	cacodemonica
giromantia	theurgica minor
salisaltica	scenobatica
spalimantia	nicromantia
po(p)lismantia	cerimonia
chyromantia	apparatus
physionomia	artis magistri qualitas et dispositio
augurium	locus
auspicium	vestes
	fumigia
	victimae
	circuli
	kandarie, anuli, gladii, virge et huiusmodi reliqua
	incantatio
	invitatio
	invocatio
	coniuratio
	oratio
	imprecatio
	imaginum compositio
	altigraphia
	alphitica/alphetica
	veneficium
	maleficium
	prestigium
	fascinatio
	haustus

APPENDIX C

SELECT PLANETARY CORRESPONDENCES ACCORDING TO GIORGIO ANSELMINI

	colour (3.1.2)	metal (3.1.2)	angels (2.1.3)
Saturn	black	lead	Saturnus, Sathor, Onach, Anefen, Prothofares, Gayn, Sythila, Abroth
Jupiter	greenish white	tin	Iupiter, Nasthegeon, Scyagip, Tortendeyton, Feliaps, Versyel, Astrondex
Mars	dark red	iron	Mars, Belygeron, Tholuthet, Tophares, Schecha, Burgens, Iolidron or Iolirion, Priscondres, Porris, Inphythath
Sun	red or yellow	gold	Sol, Alphecreon, Lucundum, Farlethephayn, Moderyel, Daramel, Panches, Strydabelyon
Venus	bright white	silver	Venus, Penel, Apyrypos, Filyac, Dyphoros, Notyr, Prebaol, Naptalyon
Mercury	various colours	silver or congealed mercury	Mercurius, Calamitan, Pergamidan, Crithys, Apeops, Cyrael, Derlian, Gesmasnay
Moon	white or yellow	silver	Luna, Ydroel, Nar, Estorphym, Borlysan or Borlyasan, Gesruz, Phylose, Easymoloy

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