White Magic, Black Magic in the European Renaissance

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White Magic, Black Magic in the European Renaissance

By

Paola Zambelli

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This book is dedicated to two historians, Lauro Martines and Donald Weinstein, very old friends of mine since the time when they were doing research in the Archivio di Stato at Florence, where I used to work in my youth as a keeper. Both of them were already outstanding writers who opposed "political power [which] is irresponsible [...and] passes into the hands of ruthless élites" (cf. RQ, LIX/4, 2006, p. 1184).

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Some of the present chapters (the *Introduction*, the first chapter and the Appendix to Part Three) were first published in the Italian edition of this book—*Magia bianca, magia nera nel Rinascimento* (Ravenna, A. Longo, 2004); others were originally published in periodicals or miscellanies and I would like to thank the publishers of these for allowing me to reprint them: the first chapter appeared as 'Astrology and Magic in Italy and North of the Alps. Continuity in the Definition of Natural Magic from Pico to Della Porta', in *Die Welt im Augenspiegel. Johannes Reuchlin und seine Zeit*, *Akten des IV Reuchlin Kongresses* (held in Pforzheim, Juni 1998), eds. D. Hacke and B. Roeck, Stuttgart, Thorbecke, 2002, pp. 51–66; a few pages in Italian have been published in *Geografia dei saperi. Scritti in memoria di D. Pastine*, a c. di D. Ferraro e G. Gigliotti (Firenze, Le Lettere, 1999), pp. 24–41. A shortened version of chapter 2 was published as 'Scholastiker und Humanisten. Agrippa und Trithemius zur Hexerei. Die natürliche Magie und die Entstehung kritischen Denkens' in *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 67, 1985, pp. 41–79; a complete version appeared under the title 'Scholastic and Humanist Views of Hermeticism and Witchcraft', in *Hermeticism and the Renaissance*, eds. A. G. Debus and I. Merkel (Washington, Associated University Presses, 1988), pp. 321–350. Chapter three uses and rewrites two notes published in miscellanies printed in Belgium and in Poland: 'Pseudepigrafia e magia secondo l'abate Tritemio', in *Ratio et superstitio. Études . . . Vescovini* (Turnhout, Brepols, 2003), pp. 347–368; 'Dal Cusano al Bovelles? Nota sulle idee e le fonti di J. Trithemius', *Archiwum Historii Filozofii*, XLVII, 2002 (= *Festschrift Szczucki*), pp. 199–211. 'Magic and Radical Reformation in Agrippa of Nettesheim' (2), *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, XXXIX, 1976, pp. 69–103.

Unfortunately I cannot thank anyone for the chapter 7 on 'Hermetism and Magic in Giordano Bruno. Some Interpretations from Tocco to Corsano, from Yates to Ciliberto', of which a preprint was produced and printed in July 2003 for the proceedings of a conference on 'Giordano Bruno nella cultura del suo tempo', organized by Alfonso Ingegno for the University of Urbino and for the Institute of Philosophical Studies. This off-print was published in Naples, Città del Sole, 2004; some time after the preprint had been published in 150 copies, Avvocato Gerardo

Marotta, the founder and president of this Institute, and the chief-editor of the conference Ingegno—who had urged me to produce it—decided to remove my contribution altogether from the book.

The translations were done by Ann Vivarelli (chapter 2), Jeanne Clegg and Franco Giusberti (chapter 5), Clare Tame and her team for chapters 3, 4 and 6 (I am sorry to say that I was unsatisfied with their work), and last but not least by Benita Wells: she translated the Introduction, chapters 3, 6, and 7, appendix III and revised other translators' work. I am particularly grateful to Benita for her competence and kindness. Friends like Daniela Fink, Ilse Girona and Brendan Dooley helped me with the English translation. I am extremely grateful also to my friends Maddalena Gentile, Fernanda Gherardelli and Nicola Borchi, who worked with me on the Italian proofs as well as to Boris van Gool who produced the English book with the assistance of Michael Wielema.

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INTRODUCTION

MUST WE REALLY RE-APPROPRIATE MAGIC?

During the Renaissance the whole idea of nature changed—of its infinity and its limits, of man's dominion over the physical world both vegetables and animals, of the regularity of physical and biological phenomena. In short, what changed was man's idea of nature's laws. But it was the time of the demonology of those inquisitors who organized large-scale burnings of witches and who, after the Council of Trent, put on spectacular shows of exorcism of those considered possessed by demons; nor did they fail to keep a strict watch on everything written or said on these matters by philosophers.

This book will explore certain philosophical theories which provided an interpretation of these ideas of nature, of its laws and exceptions and, lastly, of man's capacity to dominate the cosmos.

It is usual for studies of this sort to concentrate on the Hermetic and Neoplatonic philosophers, or on the relationship between magic and the scientific revolution—all with good reason. I shall not, however, concentrate on these aspects but rather upon the interference of astrology and magic with alternative rites and also with witchcraft, which in the Renaissance period was an important question for social and religious history. Above all I shall concentrate on the definitions of magic provided and discussed by certain heretics and "wandering scholastics".[1]

At the beginning of the fifteenth century teaching the philosophy of nature was a matter of presenting and interpreting the *Physics* and other natural-philosophical works of Aristotle; at the end of the sixteenth century one of the professors of philosophy appointed at Rome's university, La Sapienza, was the Neoplatonist, Francesco Patrizi da Cherso. There had been some antecedents early in the century: Leonico Tomeo in Padua and Francesco Cattani da Diacceto in Pisa, both of whom were disciples of Ficino. In their official teaching they were obliged to read out the works of Aristotle, but in their personal writings they discussed

[1] See this definition *infra* II/1, note 1.

Neoplatonic and Hermetic problems just as their master and model had done. In the course of these two centuries—when Ficino's translations made it possible to read the whole of Plato, *Corpus Hermeticum*, Plotinus, Porphyry, Jamblichus, Proclus, Psellus and others—much had changed in philosophy, particularly in natural philosophy.

Nor was this all, for the period saw many other fundamental changes. The philological method elaborated by Lorenzo Valla, Politian and Erasmus made it possible to date and compare rediscovered texts and thus to read them in a new light. Agricola and Ramus devised a new inventive method; followers of Lull developed the art of classification and combination as well as the encyclopedia; Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Kepler and Galileo proposed new methods for measuring the movements of celestial bodies; Vesalius reformed anatomy; Servetus, Realdus Columbus, Caesalpinus and Harvey discovered the double circulation of the blood; Lucretius' work discovered in the fifteenth century suggested an atomistic conception of matter and corroborated the idea of the infinity of worlds.

Thanks to Ficino's *De amore* and *De vita coelitus comparanda* and to Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's *Apologia* for his *Conclusiones nongentae* (*Nine hundred theses*), by the end of the fifteenth century the theory of "natural magic" had become much discussed in high-cultural circles.

Working on a basis of Neoplatonism, Orphism and Hermetism, the two philosophers had reintroduced the traditional astrological theory of the correspondences between celestial bodies and "elementated" bodies, combining this with Avicenna's theory of the power of the imagination and the Stoic-Neoplatonic idea of "spiritus"—thus Ficino, Pico and many others maintained that the power of magic was independent of the invocation of spirits.

Ficino and Pico had brought to light a number of ideas that were already to be found in patristic and scholastic times, but had received limited attention from professional philosophers. From the end of the fifteenth century these had become dominant among the elites and soon spread abroad among academic and literary circles. The Neoplatonic and Hermetic theories of the two Florentines on the cosmos, the "spirit" and the forces of nature had given rise to a new idea of magic.

In those same years, between the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, another who failed to believe this was Lefèvre d'Etaples, the great Parisian editor of humanist translations of the ancient philosophers of every school, who later joined the evangelical church and whose attitude

anticipated that of the Nicodemites. Unlike Trithemius, Lefèvre denied that magic could be natural and totally rejected it. His *Magia naturalis*, written in a brief moment of infatuation with Ficino, is the only one of his works which he did not print and which he refused to distribute in manuscript, as would still have been normal in those early decades of printing. But there were very few who acted in this way. Ficino and his followers admitted the existence of spiritual beings (demons, angels and devils, anthropomorphic movers of astral bodies etc.) to whom it was possible to address prayers, hymns or innocent spells, thus making their influence beneficial; the Benedictine abbot Trithemius was an extreme example of the use of these spells, the formulas of which he left in manuscript for a small number of initiates. He openly refused to believe in the theory of Ficino and his followers that magic could be "purely natural".

In conformity with this idea and with the requirement of the times, Trithemius refused however to publish magical writings in print: in view of the fact that Trithemius' other writings were printed in bulky incunabula we can only suppose that this political-cultural choice was not without significance and was not to be explained merely by the playful and instrumental idea of magic which he occasionally displayed. There was an aspect of magic which could be cultivated only "in amazement and in silence". For twenty years Trithemius' disciple Agrippa observed the order he had given him not to print the encyclopedia *De occulta philosophia*, which was already finished in 1510; but before he died Agrippa could resist no longer his desire to publish. Did he succumb to the temptation because he was by then a radical reformer, one who conversed in secret with evangelicals and thus became convinced that it was impossible to hide his light under a bushel?

In order to differ from the popular methods of sorcerers, in 1486 Ficino and Pico had claimed the possibility of a purely natural magic, with no invocation of demons: a few years later (in 1499 and around 1509) Trithemius crossed swords with them over this very question. Shortly after, Paracelsus was to base his magical works on ideas somewhat similar to those of Trithemius; they expressed in the vernacular and left in manuscript their writings recording popular beliefs. These works were disseminated again, translated and printed with great enthusiasm in the second half of the sixteenth century. In the same period, in a group of initiates the most famous of whom was John Dee, having read the first of Paracelsus' texts to be available in print as

well as secret (indeed initiatory) manuscripts by Trithemius, Giordano Bruno reverted to these ideas: this may have contributed to his being brought to the stake.

Figures such as the ambiguous magicians Ficino, Pico and Della Porta were highly successful and influential (even if under the Inquisition people at times took care to avoid mentioning their names): in the case of later texts it is still more difficult to recognize implicit but important quotations from Trithemius, Agrippa, Paracelsus and Cardano. But these compromising sources are clearly recognizable in the magical works of Giordano Bruno, who more than all the others deserves to be called a "wandering scholastic"—as Konrad Gesner had described Paracelsus.

The Renaissance philosophy of magic, which was both complex and elegant, enjoyed much success and was associated not so much with the "scientific revolution" as with the religious ferment caused by the Reformation, particularly the Radical Reformation (examples such as Agrippa, Paracelsus and Servetus). These ideas were to survive into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in literary documents and in the hobbies of important scientists (the most quoted example being that of Newton, with his secret passion for alchemy); but this is not the subject of this book. A great deal, too much perhaps, has already been said about it; interest (and sometimes belief) in the theory of "natural magic"—in itself ambiguous—which Ficino and Pico had enunciated and many had embraced, has to some extent revived and led to a reassessment of this important trend in Renaissance philosophy, which had been derided by historians during the Enlightenment and by rationalists in the nineteenth century. The eight-volume *History of Magic and Experimental Science* (1923–1958), to this day essential reading for anyone studying these subjects, is full of derisive comments: on the other hand, as in the case of this monumental work by Lynn Thorndike, assenting to the idea of a purely natural magic makes it possible to link it up once more with science. Unlike Thorndike, more recent historians no longer look upon the magical, astrological and alchemical research (that was so widely practised during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance) as an accumulation of data which was then discarded thanks to the scientific revolution, or rather to positivist science. Instead they have pondered deeply and debated over the connection between this research or occult thinking in general and the scientific revolution, or at least over the ideology of the new sciences. In a few cases exclusive insistence on natural magic on the part of recent historians

is a sign of nostalgia or even of apologetic intentions. Presenting it either as an accumulation of empirical data which interpreted anew would lead to modern science (Thorndike) or as an anticipation of the scientific revolution (Rossi 1957, Garin, Yates) or at least of its ideology (Elkana)—in the long run means making it more acceptable, and thus more desirable, as the positive response among the general public in recent decades has shown. That some of these historians (Rossi 1977, Elkana, Vickers) have strongly disputed the positive value attributed by others to magic, does not alter the fact that they too have only been considering natural magic.

It is interesting that efforts have been made to define magic from a sociological and linguistic point of view, but what is still seriously lacking is a historical definition of this discipline in its various forms. We need to identify and estimate the different components for the last decades of the fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries, a period which was immediately before and at the beginning of the scientific revolution and also—above all—of the Reformation. In recent decades historians have been considering "natural magic" in isolation, thus accepting its utopian view that it was a fruitful and respectable scheme, albeit not highly realistic; it was (as Elkana maintained) an ideology, but it was not impossible to consider it exhaustively in all its contents**.** The result of all this has been a lame controversy that stood on only one leg without realizing that the other leg was missing. The whole campaign against the so-called "Yates theory" would have been far less resounding or would have appeared in a completely different light if the contenders had borne in mind that at the time of the Renaissance magic meant also ceremonial magic.

A highly ragarded academic figure, when inaugurating an international congress held recently in an important center, suggested that we should "resume magic".[2] This surprising invitation would have been unthinkable if an important part of this historical phenomenon had not remained neglected and unknown.

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[2] M. Ciliberto, 'Riprendiamoci la magia', *L'Unità*, 2 October 2003, where he published a section of his speech opening an international congress on Magic in Modern Europe organized in Florence (palazzo Strozzi) by the Istituto nazionale di studi sul Rinascimento and its president Ciliberto. "È con la crisi di quelle che sono state le strutture costitutive della modernità che riappaiono all'orizzonte magia, astrologia, alchimia, nel vivo di un processo di crisi complessiva che vede incrinarsi ed esplodere allo stesso tempo sia le strutture scientifiche 'classiche', sia quelle di ordine letterario, come dimostrano [. . .] Gadda oppure Joyce".

But there is a kind of magic, which the 'natural' magicians—perhaps in good faith—wished to be forgotten: this consisted of rites and ceremonies that had the object of evoking powers and demons possessing not intelligence and abstract capacity but an anthropomorphic, almost divine personality which was none the less changeable and subject to passions. During the religious upheavals of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation it was natural that such ideas and rituals should exert enormous fascination and, even though they could never be openly professed, attract followers. We have seen already that certain theorists of magic were radical reformers.

To make this point clearer we must go back and investigate this somewhat neglected question more carefully.

Naturally Aristotelians had long been dealing with the problems of astrology and magic. Ever since al-Kindi and Avicenna, Aristotle's 'imagination' had been reinterpreted as a power capable of modifying physical reality: it was linked with the rays of the stars, to which Al-Kindi devoted a treatise which aimed at explaining prodigies. But this natural power excluded every sort of anthropomorphism and consequently the use of prayers and incantations which might alter a presumed personal desire (intent) attributed by others to astral demons. Thus the universe is a machine ruled by imagination in the general picture of sympathy between astral bodies and elementary bodies with the boundless automatism of the astral movers. But these must not be considered either anthropomorphic or modified by human agency. They are pure intelligences, neither demons nor angels. The theories of Al-Kindi were to determine a line of thought that lasted from Albertus Magnus and Witelo right down to the sixteenth century, when Pomponazzi would use the stars' rays to unmask demons, rationalize omens and produce the horoscope of religions.

Less than a generation after Ficino, an unexpected reader of his, the great Aristotelian, Peretto Pomponazzi, re-examined, in a critical and totally innovating manner, certain traditional 'questions' in the natural philosophy of the schoolmen, for example, that of the immortality of the individual soul. Pomponazzi knew his Ficino and his Pico well. He was not of a critical frame of mind; he had no personal doubts as to the reality of spells and prodigies, indeed he accepted them, attributing them simply to celestial influence or to the power of the imagination—the cosmos being interwoven with correspondences. Pomponazzi, like other Peripatetics, denied the possibility of admitting demons to the Aristotelian cosmos. He had discussed this 'neo-Aristotelian' thesis

with Tommaso de Vio, the Grand Master of the Dominicans, but nonetheless it was disapproved of and censured by the inquisitors of the Order and by most of the Catholic Church (later by other churches as well); Catholic ritual and sacraments (confession, penance, baptism, indulgences) presupposed the existence of angels and devils, as indeed did the whole doctrine of retribution after death—heaven, purgatory and hell. Pomponazzi's denial of their existence was not available in print, but the inquisitors of those who were close to him (Mazzolini da Prierio, Spina, Armenini and minor Dominicans) were quick to accuse him of being the leader of the "*strigi-magi*" without religion. Apart from Pomponazzi, who thanks to his ability and also to his protection in high places avoided getting into trouble, throughout the following decades and centuries those who denied the existence of demons (essential figures in moral theology and the theory of retribution) continued to be watched over and punished.

This book will end with the burning of Giordano Bruno in 1600, shortly after he had written and read out his clandestine magical works to a small number of adepts. These reflect the conflicts that took place in the interpretation of the magic cosmos and the powers of those intending to operate in it.

These pages hope to present from another point of view subjects which I have frequently studied: astrology and magic considered historically in a philosophical context, and also in that of religious ideas in the Renaissance.

The magic which Ficino defined as natural promised to make men capable of working many wonders, but it claimed to exclude the invocation of demons. At that particular time it was necessary to state this in view of the fact that demonologists accused witches of these very invocations and tributes, and that mass persecution of witches had begun at the end of the fifteenth century and, unlike the Medieval period, no longer observed the restrictions imposed by the *Canon episcopi* but accepted accusations obtained under torture from suspected accomplices.

The definition of natural magic given by Ficino and Pico in 1486 was taken up by Agrippa and through him by Della Porta: the encyclopedias of magic produced by these writers ensured a long life for the formulas of the Florentine magicians. But, except in the case of Pico, who would be prepared to swear that these men had indeed abandoned the other kind of magic? Not even for Pico could any man be sure that he had never practised it . . .

In this same period there was indeed a secret vein of ceremonial magic, which Trithemius, Agrippa and Paracelsus professed before a small group of adepts and which was based on prayers and evocation of astral demons. The library of ceremonial magic was extremely rich and varied: this is borne out among other things by the long list of *grimoires* read by Trithemius or collected by him for his private interest in the abbey library at Sponheim, all carefully catalogued in his *Antipalus maleficiorum*.

In spite of all the assurances about the 'natural' method, we cannot exclude the possibility that the 'orphic' rites and fumigations witnessed in Careggi by Ficino and his companions were something of this sort. It is hard to allay our doubts on this point in view of the fact that the difference between white magic and black magic lay principally in the definition of intelligences and celestial powers, a problem belonging to the Christian exegesis of the Aristotelian system which Ficino and Trithemius never expressly discussed.

Lefèvre d'Etaples, Charles de Bovelles and other intellectuals of the time rejected Trithemius's magic and also that of Ficino because they did not believe that it was "purely natural". Abbot Trithemius, having been removed from the abbey of Sponheim, wrote secretly for those who had given him refuge, prescribing satanic prayers and rites designed to cure such disorders as impotence. Paracelsus wrote for the common people in the vernacular, but the spirit of his writings was no different. Even though historians have no documentary evidence of a meeting between the two men or for identifying in Trithemius one of the "four bishops" who were Paracelsus' teachers, the latter must have known the opinions of the other: both men avoided printing their writings on these subjects. Giordano Bruno was to act in the same way with his Latin magical works, which he hoped would provide the basis for founding a "Giordanist sect" in Germany. Sects never rise out of Platonic metaphors or Aristotelian reasoning; they are held together by convictions and rites of a religious sort, like the invocations of astral demons provided in Trithemius' writings, which remained unpublished, secret and forbidden until the seventeenth century, and which were copied in Bruno's *De magia cabalistica* or possibly used as rituals in one of his little groups of initiates.

If the definition of the Renaissance as 'The Age of Printing' is right, it will be as well to point out one or two publishing facts that are not always taken into consideration: first of all that Ficino's translation of the *Corpus hermeticum*, one of his first works to be printed, appeared as

a pirate edition, published far away from the author and without his consent. One cannot help wondering if such piracy was not simply a precautionary measure, in other words, a mere fiction. Nevertheless, it shows that the manuscript of this translation enjoyed wide circulation. Moreover, it seems probable that Ficino knew and decided to translate the *Corpus hermeticum* having already read such works as the *Picatrix*, which he was able to study thanks to an extremely reserved loan. In a letter to Michele Acciari, Ficino said that he had squeezed all the juice out of *Picatrix* and injected it into the *De vita coelitus comparanda* so that it would suffice to read this work without going back to the earlier *grimoire*. Ficino claimed to have had this read to him in secret by a friend, a certain Giorgio, who has been identified as Giorgio Ciprio.[3] I would suggest, however, that he should be identified with Giorgio Anselmi da Parma the elder, or more likely still with his heirs; this man was the author of an unpublished treatise on magic, based on the *Picatrix*, which many decades later his nephew Giorgio Anselmi da Parma the younger tried to complete, because a section was missing, and hand to the printers. This would be just another episode showing how these treatises on ceremonial magic were protected with difficulty and frequent risks and circulated in secret over a long period. In fact Giorgio Anselmi junior belonged to a group of initiates in the second decade of the sixteenth century, and already at that time was trying in vain to print his uncle's unpublished works. If my theory is correct, then Ficino would have read first *Picatrix* and subsequently *Corpus hermeticum* and not the reverse. Praise given to Cosimo de' Medici for having bought the costly Greek codex of the Pimander may be correct from the economic point of view, but not for the interest in and search for this text, which is more rightly to be attributed to Ficino.

Libraries of forbidden books, particularly of magico-ceremonial texts, collections of spells and other forbidden practices certainly continued to exist both before and after the invention of printing; but clearly these are not easy to reconstruct. Strange to say it is less difficult to reconstruct them for the end of the Middle Ages than for the early centuries of printing, when keeping watch over forbidden books was reorganized and became systematic. Trithemius' library at Sponheim—he began

[3] Cfr. D. Delcorno Branca, 'Un discepolo del Poliziano, Michele Acciari', *Lettere italiane*, XXVIII, 1976, pp. 464–81; E. Garin, *Ermetismo del Rinascimento* (Roma, Editori Riuniti, 1988).

his collection when Ficino was still alive and probably continued it up till 1505—is the best example of this: it is extremely fortunate that we have documentary evidence of its catalogue, or at least of the bibliography of the texts that were examined, if not actually possessed, by the abbot himself. Immediately after this the library was dispersed, but a few pieces and the works of Trithemius himself ended up in good hands—in those of Agrippa and later in those of his secretary, Johannes Wier, who later collaborated with the publishers in Basle who printed some of these *grimoire*s, most of the Paracelsian corpus and the *Opera omnia* of Agrippa.

It is a strange but relatively harmless fact that one of the Aristotelians, the great professor of Bologna university, Alessandro Achillini, handed the manual of the popular chiromancer Cocles to the printers. Aristotelians no less than Platonists and Joachimites wrote about the vicissitudes of the religions (*Leges*). Nifo printed and commented on the original philosophical ideas that Averroes had expressed in his *Destructio destructionum*, one of the texts that inspired first Pomponazzi and subsequently Giordano Bruno. Pomponazzi was wisely cautious in his printing and publication strategy: he printed the famous and subversive *De immortalitate animae*, defended it in print in three apologies, which were in no way retractive, and remained unharmed by the resulting controversy; four years later he edited two treatises, one on fate and one on spells, but wisely decided against having them printed. These treatises were certainly not *grimoires*, but Pomponazzi wrote in them about astral fate and natural marvels. He was not interested in "making printers rich", as he wrote in the *De fato*, but he knew how to organize manuscript circulation among chosen and trusted readers; documentation of this is definite.

The way in which writings on magic were presented—openly or in code for a clandestine audience—deserves to be examined, particularly for the period which saw the censorship of printed books becoming organized and established and the Inquisition centralized. In this context the question of ceremonial magic and its rituals may be particularly revealing.

PART I

WHITE MAGIC, BLACK MAGIC

CHAPTER ONE

CONTINUITY IN THE DEFINITION OF NATURAL MAGIC FROM PICO TO DELLA PORTA. ASTROLOGY AND MAGIC IN ITALY AND NORTH OF THE ALPS

[Magus] naturae dono artifex et mechanicus
Della Porta[1]

I would like to discuss the theory of magic in the one-hundred-year period after Giovanni Pico's *Apologia* for his *Conclusiones*, which was to have been discussed in 1486. This period concludes with Giambattista Della Porta's publication of the definitive edition of his twenty books *Magia naturalis* (but I could just as well continue my analysis further into the seventeenth century, or begin as far back as the Age of Scholasticism).

We usually associate two historical facts with this period (late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries): the scientific revolution and the philosophical debate on the possibility of natural magic. I would like to look at how these two developments relate to each other, keeping in mind that there may be other factors deserving of our attention. I will consider Italian authors, including Ficino, Pico, Zorzi,[2] Cardano,[3] Bruno, Della Porta, as well as Paulus Ricius, and his brother, the astrologer Augustinus;[4] I

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[1] Giambattista Della Porta, *Magiae naturalis ll. XX* (Napoli, Salviani, 1589), Book I, ch. 32; the word "mechanicus" does not appear in *Magiae naturalis sive de miraculis rerum naturalium ll. IV* (Napoli, M. Cancer, 1558), Book I, ch. 2 (henceforth I will cite the first edition, mentioning its date, whereas the 1589 edition will be cited as *Magiae naturalis ll. XX*).

[2] On Francesco Zorzi (Giorgio Veneto) cf. Cesare Vasoli, *Profezia e ragione* (Napoli, Morano, 1974), pp. 129–403.

[3] Cf. Nancy Siraisi, *The Clock and the Mirror. G. Cardano and Renaissance Medicine* (Princeton, Princeton U.P., 1997); Antony Grafton, 'Girolamo Cardano and the Tradition of Classical Astrology, in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 142/3 (1998), pp. 323–354; Id., *Die Welten und Werke eines Renaissance-Astrologen* (Berlin, Berlin Verlag, 1999); Id., *Cardano's Cosmos. The Worlds and Works of a Renaissance Astrologer*, (Cambridge Ma.-London, Cambridge U.P., 1999).

[4] The family of these converted Jews chose a very common Italian name and lived in Italy; Paolo was "physician of the Emperor" in Vienna, taught in Pavia and wrote on the Kabbalah and other occult subjects; until now they have not been studied in

will also consider authors living north of the Alps. To use the words of one of the latter, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, I will take into account not only Italy, but "Germaniam et Galliam, totam illam barbarorum nostram colluviem".[5] Whereas England had almost no astrology or natural magic before the times of Shakespeare and Marlowe,[6] France and Spain had minor cases: Lefèvre d'Etaples derived his "De magia naturali" from Ficino;[7] Champier was a derivative writer and a *rhétoriqueur*;[8] Bovelles did not write on magic, but merely denounced Trithemius' theurgy;[9] Jean Thibault is almost unknown,[10] and Michel Servetus is mostly known as a radical Reformer.[11] The German-speaking area is richer and more interesting. Think of Reuchlin, Trithemius, Agrippa, Paracelsus, as well as Thomas Erastus and Johann Weyer. In this area, well-educated humanists, such as Reuchlin and Agrippa, wrote on natural magic. Both criticized sharply the medieval magicians (Robert Kilwardby and Roger Bacon, Peter of Abano and *Picatrix*), repudiating their non-natural theory of magic.[12]

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monographs. See some hints in my edition of and commentary on Agrippa, 'Dialogus de homine' in *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia* XIII (1958), pp. 47–71: François Secret, 'Du "De occulta philosophia" a l'occultisme du XIX siecle', *Charis* 1 (1988), p. 8; Moshe Idel, 'Il mondo degli angeli in forma umana', *Rassegna mensile di Israele*, S. III/LXIII (1997), pp. 1–76, here p. 73ff.

[5] Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, *Opera omnia* (Hildesheim/New York, Olms, 1970), II, p. 14.

[6] British documents and problems studied by Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), and by Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons. The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, Oxford U.P., 1997), confirm this chronology.

[7] Eugene Rice, 'The "De magia naturali" of J. Lefèvre d'Etaples', *Philosophy and Humanism. Renaissance Studies in Honour of P. O. Kristeller*, ed. by Edward P. Mahoney (Leiden, Brill, 1976), pp. 19–29.

[8] Brian Copenhaver, *Symphorien Champier and the Reception of the Occultist Tradition in Renaissance France* (The Hague, Mouton, 1978): in this book the author follows the Yates thesis, which he was later to attack, without admitting his change of mind, exactly as happened with Paolo Rossi, cf. note 28.

[9] Cf. my Cornelio Agrippa', *Testi umanistici sull'ermetismo*, ed. by E. Garin, (= *Archivio di Filosofia*, 1955), pp. 105–162, especially pp. 116–118.

[10] H. Tollin, 'Der königliche Leibartz und Hofastrologe Johann Thibault, M. Servet's Pariser Freund', *Archiv fur pathologische Anatomie*, 78 (1879), pp. 302–318.

[11] C. Manzoni, *Umanesimo e eresia: Michele Serveto* (Napoli, Guida, 1974); J. Friedman, *Michael Servetus. A Case in Total Heresy* (Geneve, Droz, 1978), pp. 137–139; F. Rude, 'Michel Servet et l'astrologie', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* XX (1958), pp. 380–87; E. F. Hirsch, 'Michael Servetus and the Neoplatonic Tradition', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* XLII (1980), pp. 561–575.

[12] Johann Reuchlin, *De Verbo mirifico*, ed. by Widu-Wolfgang Ehlers and others, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, Frommann-Holzboog, 1996 (= Sämtliche Werke, III), p. 124: «Nihil igitur horum et Robertus [Anglicus] et Bacon et Abanus et Picatrix et concilium

Reuchlin, called Capnion Pforcensis, introduced the Kabbalah, which became very important in ceremonial magic. His *De verbo mirifico* and later his *De arte kabbalistica* were both used by Agrippa as sources for his famous encyclopedia *De occulta philosophia*. However, as far as methodology was concerned, Agrippa closely followed his teacher Trithemius. The latter was a monastic humanist and an elegant writer of chronicles and bibliographies (he is supposed to have been the first literary historian). In his secret manuscripts he revealed black-magic rites, formulae and recipes to Joachim Elector of Brandenburg. Most of these had the same aim as the modern pharmaceutical Viagra with the difference that they conjured up demons for this reason. Trithemius taught Agrippa not to be content with natural magic. Presented by Ficino and Pico as eschewing recourse to demons and theurgical rites, the doctrine and praxis of this magic were not sufficient according to Trithemius. He was one of Reuchlin's Greek teachers and perhaps also one of four prelates mentioned by Paracelsus as his teachers; Agrippa was certainly one of the authors Paracelsus read. However—not unlike Trithemius—the latter did not reject theurgy and used many popular beliefs or practices as sources for his magic, alchemy and medicine.

I would like to emphasize that the biographies of these German authors are no less interconnected than Ficino's and Pico's. It is worth mentioning that one of them took part in Reuchlin's defense: for this reason, Agrippa's "Stygianus" was attacked under this nickname by the scholastic "homines obscuri (Dunkelmänner)".[13] I see a more cultivated type of magic in Reuchlin and Agrippa, a more popular one in Trithemius

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magistrorum, vel maxime ob linguarum ignorantia ad amussim, ut oportet, tenere atque docere, minus etiam librariorum manus ab exemplis dupla scribentium, non aberrare, minus discipuli discere, minus operarii potuerunt operari». Cf. Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia*, ed. by V. Perrone Compagni (Leiden, Brill, 1991), p. 70: "Tota magia, quae est apud modernos et quam merito exterminat ecclesia, nullam habet firmitatem, nullum fundamentum, nullam veritatem quia pendet ex manu hostium primae veritatis". Agrippa's unavowed source here is G. Pico, *Conclusiones Nongentae*, ed. by Bohdam Kieszkowsi (Genève, Droz, 1973), p. 78; cf. Id., *Novecento tesi*, ed. and transl. by A. Biondi (Florence, Olschki, 1995), p. 116: Pico, when reformulating the 13 condemned theses, excepts Bacon (see Pico, *Novecento tesi*, p. 146). For Reuchlin's philosophy, cf. W. Beierwaltes, 'Reuchlin and Pico della Mirandola', *Tijdschrift voor Philosophie* 56 (1994), pp. 313–337; Ch. Zika, *Reuchlin und die okkulte Tradition der Renaissance* (Sigmaringen, Thorbecke, 1998), p. 36. For Reuchlin's visit to Trithemius see *Ibid*. p. 70.

[13] Cf. *Lamentationes obscurorum virorum* (1518), in Eduard Böcking (ed.), *Hutteni Operum Supplementum*, III.1 (Leipzig 1869), pp. 101, 390f., quoted in my paper 'Agrippa von Nettesheim in den neueren kritischen Studien und in den Handschriften', *Archiv fur Kulturgeschichte* 51 (1969), pp. 264–295, p. 270 n. 21, p. 280 n. 40.

and Paracelsus. I say popular magic because of its content: folklore, popular recipes and rites,[14] as contrasted with the literary and antiquarian materials prevailing in the Florentine treatises.

Another useful criterion for finding one's way among humanist magicians is the critical method used in their approach to classical sources. The humanists were all well read in Latin and often also in Greek classics; they could write these languages correctly. But only some of them (Lorenzo Valla, Erasmus) felt the need to find critical rules for establishing texts and assigning dates to them. To take one example, Ficino was a great humanist and a great translator of Greek, but he was not especially interested in these critical methods. Trithemius was very learned, but certainly not interested in these methods, and not critical at all in his general attitude; he even resorted to falsification. Not having studied all the documents, I put this forward as an open question: might a historian who, like Trithemius, faked sources (Hunibal and Meginfrid) to prove the descent of the Franks from Trojan exiles,[15] also have invented Libanius Gallus and Pelagius, the Majorca hermit, whom he claimed as having been his teachers of magic? Some new documents have recently been published by Klaus Arnold and Jean Dupèbe, but a great deal of material regarding Trithemius has never been published or studied. Trithemius himself identified Pelagius with Fernandus Cordubensis, but elsewhere he wrote differently; this identification has been found impossible by historians. Several of them have tried and failed to identify Pelagius,[16] but nobody has advanced my hypothesis. Several scholars (François Secret and after him Dupèbe) have promised a full study of this question, but they have not yet published their research.[17]

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[14] Ch. Webster, 'Paracelsus and Demons: Science as a Synthesis of Popular Belief', *Scienze, credenze occulte, livelli di cultura, convegno internazionale di studi*, ed. by Istituto Nazionale di studi suI Rinascimento (Florence, Olschki, 1982), pp. 3–20.

[15] See F. L. Borchardt, 'Wie falsch war der Fälscher Trithemius?', *Johannes Trithemius: Humanismus und Magie im vorreformatorischen Deutschland* (München 1991), pp. 17–27 (and former bibliography, especially Lhosky's *Apis*); K. Arnold, *Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516)* (Würzburg, Schöningen, 1972), p. 167.

[16] J. Dupèbe, 'Curiosité et magie chez Johnannes Trithemius', *La Curiosité a la Renaissance, Actes reunis* par Jean Ceard (Paris, Société de l'enseignement supérieur, 1986), p. 83 n. 51, refuses to identify Pelagius either with Fernandus Cordubenis or with Juan Llobet, as proposed by Pasqual, by Hillgarth and recently by J. Gayà, 'Reminiscences lulliennes dans l'anthropologie de Charles de Bovelles', *Charles de Bovelles en son cinquième centenaire* (Paris, Editions de la Maisnie, 1982); Id., 'Algunos temas lullianos en los escritos de Charles de Bovelles', *Estudios lullianos* 24 (1980), pp. 49–69, here p. 53ff.

[17] Cf. François Secret, *Hermétisme et Kabbale* (Naples, Bibliopolis, 1992), pp. 91–118 (cf.

The problem is interesting because Trithemius was the earliest of the learned magicians in the German-speaking area and, according to him, Pelagius and Libanius transmitted necromantic and spiritual magic in secret texts which pupils inherited from their teachers (Libanius from Pelagius, Trithemius from Libanius, Agrippa from Trithemius): "arcana in philosophia, in fide Christiana, de natura spirituum bonorum et malorum, et de naturae mysteriis et alia multa, quae non sunt passim vulgaria in scholis hominum istius tempestatis".[18]

As Trithemius tells us, these doctrines were not taught everywhere. Even in Italy, where humanism and natural magic originated, necromantic and spiritual magic was secret, but not absent. The famous treatise *Picatrix*, which Ficino rediscovered and used but never mentioned in print, has two aspects: its philosophical theory, copied in Ficino's *De vita*, and its recipes. These recipes had been used long before (in the first half of the fifteenth century) by an author less interested in the theory than in the rites and recipes of magic: Giorgio Anselmi da Parma the Elder. His unpublished work, not yet as classical and refined as humanist treatises would be, has a real black-magic content. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, on behalf of a secret group of friends (which probably included also Agrippa), his grandson, Giorgio Anselmi da Parma the Younger, tried to have this manuscript printed but finally gave up the idea.[19]

Taking my cue from Renaissance authors, I will distinguish between two main lines in their theory of magic: natural magic and spiritual or demonic magic. Whereas the latter kind of magic might, in its extreme forms, come close to witchcraft, in some sources (Giovanni Pico's *Conclusiones*, for instance) the first has been called "a part of natural philosophy" or "its perfection (*consummatio*)".[20] Such definitions amount to watchwords for every natural magician from Marsilio Ficino and Pico to Della Porta.

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ibid., note 8 for Secret's earlier studies and Dupèbe's published and announced articles).

[18] Secret, *Hermétisme et Kabbale cit.*, p. 81, note 44, where Trithemius's *Nepiacus* is quoted.

[19] On Georgius Anselmi Parmensis, *Divinum opus de magia* (see especially Tr. III, 'De ceremoniis', cap. 1), Ms. Laur. Plut. 45, cod. 35., cf. C. Burnett, 'The Scapulimancy of Giorgio Anselmi', *Euphrosyne* 25 (1995). On his nephew cf. *Luigi Guicciardini e le scienze occulte*, ed. by Raffaella Castagnola (Florence, Olschki, 1990), pp. 268–269.

[20] Pico, *Conclusiones*, ed. by Kieszkowsky cit., p. 79; Id., *Novecento Tesi*, ed. by A. Biondi cit., p. 118.

In his *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance*, Wayne Shumaker considers *magia naturalis* "one of the pre-modern forms of natural science": excerpts from his book have been included by Cesare Vasoli in an Italian anthology under the old-fashioned title dealing with 'Magic and Science in the Age of Humanists'.[21] A more careful formulation limits this nexus to that "practical orientation on the part of scientists" which, "as Garin was the first to notice and Frances Yates the first to popularize, originated with the Renaissance magicians" in opposition to the classical speculative ideal (I mean Aristotle's *bios theoretikós*, as analyzed by Werner Jaeger):[22] the Renaissance insight, of which Ficino and Pico were the first exponents, held that practical application was of equal dignity with theorizing.[23] In several recent studies, this idea has been interpreted not as the force leading to the scientific revolution, but as its image. According to Yehuda Elkana's methodology, the role of magic or of Hermetism in the scientific revolution should be seen mainly as "the influence of ideologies [. . .] of religious ideologies—on the image of knowledge".[24]

It is this scientific aspect of Renaissance magic which interests most readers, but, unfortunately, it is not the aspect which I study. I am well aware of the historiographical case for the relationship between Hermet-

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[21] Cf. W. Shumaker, *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance, A Study in Intellectual Patterns* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1972), has been selected and translated in a reader *Magia e scienza nell'età umanistica* ed. by C. Vasoli (Bologna, Mulino, 1976).

[22] Cf. Werner Jaeger, 'Ueber Ursprung und Kreislauf des philosophischen Lebensideals', *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philosoph.-histor. Klasse (Berlin 1928), pp. 390–421; reprinted in his *Scripta minora* (Rome 1960), pp. 347–393.

[23] I am citing a definition given by Carol Kaske, Introduction to M. Ficino, *Three books on Life, A critical ed. and translation* by Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clarck (Binghamton N.Y., RSA Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1989), pp. 54–55. She quotes E. Garin, *Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Bari, Laterza, 1954), p. 153 and Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London-Chicago, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 155–56. According to Kaske, Ficino's "magic is characterized by a practical orientation and a vitalizing, but depersonalizing of the agents. The materialistic goal allies him with the *Picatrix* and distinguishes him from the speculative and contemplative Plotinus and the religious Neoplatonists. The vitalization he shares with Plotinus, the depersonalization with Plotinus and some but not all of the *Picatrix*".

[24] See Yehuda Elkana, 'Alexandre Koyré: Between the history of ideas and sociology of disembodied knowledge', *History and technology* IV/I–4 (1987), pp. 116–117. Cf. Id., 'A programmatic attempt at an anthropology of knowledge', *Science and Cultures*, ed. by Everett Mendelsohn and Yehuda Elkana (Dordrecht/Boston, Reidel, 1981), pp. 13–21. To appreciate the implications of this view we should keep in mind that according to Elkana ideologies do not influence the body of knowledge; in the case of natural magic this is obvious, since magic did not have much scientific or cognitive content in itself.

icism and the scientific revolution, for the so-called Yates thesis (which really ought to be called "Paolo Rossi's *Bacon* thesis"); but for me the main interest of magic in the Renaissance lies elsewhere. I have read many historical papers on magic vs. science in the Renaissance and in the seventeenth century, but I do not find this approach the most fruitful for studying the question of magic in these periods. It is unkind to act as a devil's advocate, but I think I should make clear from the start, especially for those unfamiliar with my work on this topic, that I have not been concerned with the so-called scientific character of magic, but rather with its place in the religious and social context. Let me emphasize that I am a historian of philosophy; and although I find historical anthropology and the history of mentalities very interesting and believe that these methods, among others, have contributed to my field, I cannot identify my work with them, and I strongly believe that the history of philosophy still deserves our attention and our research.

Magic not only concerns the history of philosophical and scientific thought. As Delio Cantimori, one of my teachers, pointed out, "in the religious field in the Age of Reformation, Hermetic, philosophical and initiatic Humanism, originating in Italy and especially in Florence, suggested, always indirectly and by allusion, pointed out, hinted, and tickled, awakening curiosity and asking new questions".[25]

To be sure, there were connections between magic and the various sciences, some stronger than others. Medicine, more than other sciences, had always been affected by the dominant astrological theories, and later by their crisis: one need look no further than some chapters in Pico's *Disputationes adversus astrologiam iudiciariam*, Paracelsus' medical works, the dispute on syphilis among Leoniceno, Giovanni Mainardi, and Fracastoro, or in Germany the similar debate between Pollich von Mellerstadt and Simon Pistoris (whether it was a "new disease" or caused by miasmas, i.e. by a general poisoning of the air due to astral influences).[26] The theoretical foundation of magical medicine and the principle of correspondences (or *signatures*) have their basis in the theory of astrology: the systematization of these ideas on magic is due to this.

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[25] I am quoting from Delio Cantimori, *Umanesimo e religione nel Rinascimento* (Turin, Einaudi, 1975), p. 272.

[26] Cf. W. Pagel, *Paracelsus. An Introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance* (Basel, Krager, 1982); see M. L. Bianchi, *Introduzione a Paracelso* (Roma/Bari, Laterza, 1994), which lists works by Pagel and recent secondary literature. More titles and secondary literature regarding the other physicians mentioned is to be found in my *L'ambigua natura della magia* (Venice, Marsilio, 1996), 2nd ed., p. 76ff.

After all, astrology could be passed on more openly than other occult disciplines,[27] since there were chairs of astrology in many universities and astrological science was apt to be formalized.

To be sure, theoretical formulations in the fields of astrology and magic were far from rigorous. Both had strong roots in medieval mentalities (not to mention the equally important contributions of Late Antiquity). Throughout the Scholastic period, such ideas were essential elements and underwent a process of systematization: far from presenting them as spontaneous beliefs, magicians and astrologers worked out highly articulated bodies of knowledge, rich in complex argumentation.

Intense interest in the occult arose in Europe in the twelfth century with the dissemination of Greco-Arabic texts in the West. The dichotomous definition of magic (which one encounters in Albertus Magnus' writings)[28] was reintroduced and relaunched by Pico, and soon found its way into France and Germany. Roger Bacon's fundamental ideas also influenced Pico, who owned many of Bacon's works not yet printed. But on the way from Bacon to the prince of Mirandola, the meaning of the word "magic" changed. With the help of highly varied terminology Bacon remains faithful to his teacher Guillaume's manner of expression, relegating magic to a negative semantic level, but then allowing it to re-emerge under a different name (*ars* or *scientia quintae essentiae*). Bacon criticized *nullitatem magiae*, but he meant "nothingness of necromancy", and admitted several ideas and practices which subsequently were considered to be natural magic. Giovanni Pico praises magic and turns it into the dynamic center of his world view. Is this a real change, or merely a superficial, semantic one? One clue, which indicates a close relationship between the two, can be found in the distinction Bacon draws between art and nature:

> Given the fact that nature is powerful and marvelous, art, nevertheless, which employs nature as its instrument, is more powerful thanks to its natural virtue, as is shown in many instances.[29]

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[27] Cf. Paolo Rossi, *Immagini della scienza* (Rome, Editori riuniti, 1977), pp. 71ff. (chapter on 'The equality of the intelligences') who insists on secret initiation as characteristic of the occult disciplines, but fails to point out the very different case of astrology.

[28] On this dichotomous definition of astrology, magic etc. in the Middle Ages and for more medieval bibliography see my *The "Speculum astronomiae" and its enigma* (Dordrecht, Reidel, 1992). On the distinction of types of magic in the Renaissance cf. D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (London, Warburg Institute, 1958).

[29] *Epistola de secretis operibus artis et naturae*, in Roger Bacon, *Opera quaedam hactenus inedita*, ed. by J. S. Brewer (Wiesbaden 1965), p. 523. This treatise expresses Bacon's ideas, even

Bacon praises the "wonderful effects of art and nature [. . .] in which there is nothing of a magic nature, so as to show how all magical [necromantic] power is inferior to these effects and worthless altogether". This idea resurfaces in Pico's and Ficino's works: even though it can be traced back to Plotinus, the clear and articulate way in which the two Florentine thinkers express it is closer to Bacon.[30] Trithemius, Agrippa, and many others quoted Bacon, while unjustifiedly considering his magic much less natural than their own.[31]

Let us compare this context with the twelfth and thirteenth centuries[32]—a less dangerous time for witches. This will help corroborate my hypothesis that the most famous formulation of natural magic, articulated in 1486 by Ficino and spread far and wide by Pico, provoked censorship and condemnation, but also won lasting fame, because it took place at the same time as another relevant historical-religious development. In 1486–1487, Pico and Ficino were forced to write *Apologiae* for their theses on magic, which form the core of (respectively) Pico's *Conclusiones* and Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda*. In the same years, two Dominican monks, Jacob Sprenger and Heinrich Institoris (Kramer) published *Malleus maleficarum*, a tract directed against adepts of magic who, of course, had few speculative, dialectical, and political means at their disposal to defend themselves. Just before condemning Pico, Pope Innocent VIII was induced by Kramer to issue his famous bull against witches. This bull, the *Summis desiderantes affectibus*, was included as a preface to *Malleus maleficarum* in 1487—the Pope's stamp of approval. Together, the bull and the tract established the criteria for repression

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if it is a compilation of them prepared by another writer. It might be useful to compare Ficino's contribution (very limited, in my view) with his own sources for books I and II of *De vita*, i.e. with *De retardatione accidentium senectutis*, now attributed to Bacon or one of his contemporaries, but which Ficino considered to have been written by Arnaldus a Villanova: this medical writer was, however, the real author of *De conservanda bona valetudine*, a commentary on *Regimen sanitatis salernitanum*, another source of Ficino's "De vita". Cf. John R. Clarck, 'Roger Bacon and the composition of M. Ficino's "De vita longa"', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 49 (1986), pp. 230–233.

[30] Among many studies on Bacon, see N. W. Fisher and S. Unguru, 'Experimental Science and Mathematics in Roger Bacon's Thought', *Traditio* 27 (1971), pp. 353–378; A. G. Molland, 'Roger Bacon as a Magician', *Traditio* 30 (1974), pp. 445–460.

[31] Cf. *supra* note 12.

[32] Cf. L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York, Columbia U.P., 1923–1958), apart from its thesis this work is still very useful because of the large amount of data offered, especially in volumes I–IV on the Middle Ages.

See also W. E. Peuckert, *Gabalia. Ein Versuch zur Geschichte der 'Magia Naturalis' im 16. bis 18. jahrhundert* (Berlin, Schmidt, 1967), in which Della Porta's textual loanwords from Agrippa have been noted, but not studied.

for two centuries to come.[33] Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola were undoubtedly very different in culture and influence from the simple countrywomen accused of witchcraft. Nonetheless, these two scholars aimed at establishing a natural theory of magic urgently needed in a period when more and more witches were being burned at the stake. It is impossible to see all this as a mere coincidence. Only then could they return—without incurring too much danger—to their readings and hymns, free to continue their speculation and fumigation in peace.

Both Ficino's *De vita* and Pico's *Conclusiones* were written and immediately published in 1486, just a year before *Malleus maleficarum*. This coincidence is probably the reason why Ficino's *De vita* provoked much criticism, and why it was reprinted many times, enjoying far greater fame than his *De amore*, the commentary written on Plato's *Symposium* and dealing with magic which he wrote in 1469 and which was received without a stir. Ficino's material and means of expression were not completely new, but he had a different and much larger audience than Bacon ever had. I quote from the *Apology* for Ficino's *De vita*, the "founding charter of the new natural magic",[34] in the excellent translation by Carol Kaske:

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[33] Already Josef Hansen, *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns* (Bonn 1901), underlined that printing the bull as a preface had been an abuse. See now *Der Hexenhammer. Entstehung und Umfeld des "Malleus maleficarum" von 1487*, ed. by Peter Segl (Köln/Wien 1988). In his paper 'Heinrich Institoris. Personlichkeit und literarisches Werk', Segl radicalizes Hansen's thesis ('Heinrich Institoris "Hauptverfasser des Hexenhammer" '); cf. *ibid.* also Hans-Christian Klose's study on the co-author Jakob Sprenger; Segl sees Institoris "als alleiniger Autor" (*ibid.*, pp. 116–117). It should be observed on the contrary that Sprenger lived for several years after the printing of *Malleus*, without denying his responsibility. This is the decisive fact, for such a document is not simply a literary text, of which one can appreciate style and original value. The *Malleus* is the document of an Inquisitorial operation, and its most important antecedents (see Hjalmar Crons, 'Antonin von Florenz und die Schätzung des Weibes im Hexenhammer', *Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae*, (Helsingfors), XXXII/4, 1903) are to be found in the Dominican Order, to which both authors belonged. The documents studied by Segl are relevant, but they do not permit to delete the name of Sprenger from the title-page of the *Malleus*, where every edition prints it. As for Innocent VIII, Raffaele Volterrano characterized him as slow-witted and uneducated ("ingenio tardo ac litteris procul"): cf. my paper 'Magic and radical Reformation in Agrippa of Nettesheim', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 39 (1976), pp. 69–103, reprinted *infra* pp. 138–182.

[34] It is a pleasure to see this definition (given in my 1973 paper 'Platone, Ficino e la magia', now reprinted in *L'ambigua natura della magia cit.*, p. 34) quoted by Kaske: I am grateful for the attention she has given to my studies and my theses, not very popular in her own school. She asks if we are not "passing over such predecessors as William of Auvergne and Albertus Magnus" (Ficino, *Three books on Life cit.*, p. 54), but I would answer 1. that William is simply registering his congregation's beliefs, and is

> There are two kinds of natural magic. The first is practiced by those who unite themselves to demons by a specific religious rite, and, relying on their help, often contrive portents. This, however, was thoroughly rejected when the Prince of this World was cast out. But the other kind of magic is practiced by those who seasonably subject natural materials to natural causes to be formed in a wondrous way. Of this profession there are also two types: the first is [motivated by curiosity], the second, by necessity. The former does indeed feign useless portents for ostentation.[35]

Ficino states immediately that the first sort of magic is condemned by God. The example advanced by Ficino is well within the bounds of the worst *curiositas* already condemned by the Church Fathers.

> This type [of magic] must be avoided as futile and dangerous to the health and the saving of the soul. Nevertheless, the necessary type, which joins medicine with astrology, must be kept.[36]

There was a kind of magic which, combining medicine with astrology, was widely performed: according to Ficino this type was necessary and was to be saved, despite attempts to condemn it, along with astrology, from the time of Albertus Magnus. In terms similar to Pico's more articulate expressions in the *Apologia*, Ficino responded to the accusation of having introduced, by way of his *imagines* and his theurgy, a forbidden ceremonial and demonic magic.

> Nor do I affirm here a single word about profane magic which depends upon the worship of demons, but I mention natural magic, which by natural things seeks to obtain the services of the celestials for the prosperous health of our bodies. This power, it seems, must be granted to

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not trying to write a theory of magic, 2. that what Albert defends is astrology, not magic, and 3. that even Roger Bacon insisted less than the Florentine Platonists when he defended magic and that his ideas did not receive much attention; 4. I would keep in mind the publication of "Malleus maleficarum" and the general historical context of the persecution of witches in Ficino's and Pico's time.

[35] Ficino, *Three Books on Life cit.*, p. 398 ('Apology'): "Denique duo sunt magiae genera. Unum quidem eorum qui certo quodam cultu daemones sibi conciliant, quorum opera freti fabricant saepe portenta. Alterum <genus est> eorum qui naturales materias opportune causis subiiciunt naturalibus, mira quadam ratione formandas. Huius quoque artificii species duae sunt: altera quidem curiosa, altera necessaria. Illa sane ad ostentationem supervacua fingit prodigia". Here I modify Kaske's translation, because I think that the text refers to the Augustinian notion of *curiositas.* See the rendering of this sentence in a recent Italian translation: Ficino, *Sulla vita*, transl. by A. Tarabochia Canavero (Milan, Rusconi, 1995), p. 299. Cf. *La curiosité à la Renaissance cit.*

[36] Ficino, *Three Books on Life cit.*, p. 398: "Hoc autem tamquam vanum et saluti noxium procul effugiendum".

> minds which use it legitimately, as medicine and agriculture are justly granted, and all the more so as the activity which joins heavenly things to earthly is more perfect.[37]

In this context, Ficino criticizes those "superstitious blind people who see life plainly in even the lowest animals or in the meanest plants, but do not see life in the heavens or the world". These benighted souls do not see that "the Whole in which 'we live, move, and have our being' is itself alive", as Aratus, who sees life on Jupiter as well as on our own planet, teaches us.[38] Ficino also refers to Luke the Evangelist and the Apostle Paul, "who are not afraid to admit that there is life in the world". Here Ficino very clearly admits that Jupiter and all heavenly bodies have souls—a doctrine rejected as a Pythagorean error by Albertus Magnus and other medieval Aristotelians. Ficino was even more explicit in a letter he wrote to Filippo Buonaccorsi (alias Callimacus Esperiens):

> It is the Platonic thesis . . . that for as many Gods, that is, stars, as there are in the heavens, there is an equal legion of demons around the earth, and in every legion is contained as many demons as there are stars in the sky, and that the principles of the demons are twelve like the signs of the Zodiac. Furthermore, some are saturnine, others jovial, martial, or solar. Analogously, the Platonics count and call the various demons according to the name and properties of other stars [outside the Zodiac]. They also say that the orders of human souls are equal in number to the stars or the legions in which the demons are counted, and that the souls assign the nature and function and name of the other elements whether they be dæmons or heavenly bodies. Indeed these demons are called genii by the Platonics, noble guides for the ingenuity assigned to us, each to his soul, by the law of fate, that is, when according to this law the souls descend into the body by the disposition and influence of all the spheres: even though they do not obey certain bad demons, nor the lower senses, each day our souls are thus guided almost with easy and hidden persuasion, as ships are guided by the helmsman.[39]

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[37] Ficino, *Three Books on Life cit.*, p. 396: "Neque de magia hie prophana, quae cultu daemonum nititur, verbum quidem ullum asseveravi, sed de magia naturali, quae rebus naturalibus ad prosperam corporum valetudinem coelestium beneficia captat, effici mentionem. Quae sane facultas tam concedenda videtur ingeniis legitime utentibus, quam medicina et agricoltura iure conceditur tantoque etiam magis, quanta perfectior est industria terrenis coelestia copulans". Very similar to Ficino is Pico, *Apologia*, in his *Opera* (Basileae 1601), I, pp. 110–114.

[38] Cf. Ficino, *Three Books on Life cit.*, p. 398.

[39] Cf. Ficino, *Opera omnia* (Basel 1576), I, pp. 865–866: "Platonicorum sententia est[. . .] quot in coelo dii, id est stellae sunt, totidem circa terras esse daemonum legiones, totidemque in qualibet legione daemones contineri, quot in coelo sunt stellae, duodecim esse daemonum principes quemadmodum et duodecim sunt in zodiaco signa. Praeterea

This does not mean that planets or nature are worshipped in magic. The true magician, Ficino writes, "is almost a farmer; he certainly dedicates his cult to the earth". Ficino's magician described as *mundicola* should be understood as a humble and honest interpreter and husbandman of nature, not as a pagan worshipper of the earth ("not for this reason shall we worship the earth"). This is one of the images in the *Centiloquium*, falsely attributed to Ptolemy: "the soul of the wise man is in accord with the celestial operations as the good farmer is in accord with nature in his hoeing and harrowing". This will become an image dear to Pico and Della Porta. In the following passage Ficino compares the magician to the farmer:

> by analogy with the farmer, he is a cultivator of the world. Nor does he on that account worship the world, just as the farmer does not worship the earth; but just as a farmer tempers his field to the airs for the sake of human welfare, so that wise man, that priest, for the sake of human welfare tempers the lower parts of the world to the upper parts; and just as a farmer sets the hen [to brood upon] eggs, so the wise man fittingly subjects earthly things to heaven that they may be fostered. God himself always brings this about and by so doing, teaches and urges us to do it in order that the lower things be produced, moved and ruled by the higher.[40]

In Pico's *Oratio de dignitate hominis* we read:

> from the recesses of the world, in the lap of nature, in the mysteries of God, the artist brings forth [things] which are almost miracles; just as

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alios quidem Saturnios esse, Iovios alios, Martios atque Solares. Similiter pro aliarum stellarum tum nomine, quam virtute varios daemones censent atque cognominant. Addunt tot insuper esse humanarum ordines animarum, quat et stellae et daemonum legiones connumerantur, aliasque aliorum tum daemonum, tum syderum, tam naturam quam munus appellationem sortiri. Hoc vera daemones appellant genios ingenuos duces ingenii, singulos singulis animabus a lege fatali, id est, ab ipsa quando animae labuntur in corpus sphaerarum omnium dispositione influxuque nobis accomodatos quibus mentes nostrae quatenus deterioribus quibusdam daemonibus sensibusque non parent, quotidie facili quadam occultaque persuasione ita ferme ducuntur, ut naves gubernatore ducuntur". In a different context, I used and commented on this passage in my *L'ambigua natura della magia cit.*, pp. 144–145, which includes further observations on the debate between Ficino and Callimacus Esperiens.

[40] Cf. Ficino, *Three Books on Life cit.*, pp. 396–398: "quasi quidam agricola est, certe quidam mundicola est . . . Nec propterea mundum hic adorat, quemadmodum nec agricola terram, sed sicut agricola humani victus gratia ad aerem temperat agrum, sic ille sapiens, ille sacerdos gratia salutis humanae inferiora mundi ad superiora contemperat, atque sicut ova gallinae, sic opportune terrena subiicit fovenda coelo". Cf. Pseudo-Ptolemy, *Centiloquium*: "Sapiens anima confert caelesti operationi quemadmodum optimus agricola arando et expugnando confert naturae".

> the farmer joins the elms to the vines, so does the magician marry earth and heaven, that is to say, the inferior forces to the superior endowments and properties.[41]

This Virgilian metaphor—"marry the elms to the vines"—had already pleased Ficino. Della Porta would invoke it yet again, in both editions of his work in 1558 and 1589:

> These things a magician being well acquainted withal, doth match heaven and earth together, and the husbandman plants elmes by his vines; or to speak more plainly, he marries and couples together these inferiour things by their wonderful gifts and powers, which they have received from their superiours: and by this means he, being as it were the servant of Nature, doth betray her hidden secrets, and bring them to light, so far as he hath found them true by his own daily experience, that so all men may love, and praise and honour the Almighty power of God, who hath thus wonderfully framed and disposed all things.[42]

At this point I must digress. We know that throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the printing press increasingly became an "agent of change" in European culture, to the point that the Renaissance has indeed been defined as the age of printing.[43] But in the case of printed treatises on magic signed by their authors, we must not consider only the technical development of printing and the wider diffusion. These authors wondered whether the results of natural research on magic should be published to the world, or whether these secrets should be revealed only to a select few. To print or not to print? The decision reflected the attitude of the author. When Ficino and Pico unhesitatingly printed their works in 1486, they were declaring their determination to defend magic, which was under attack from Pope Innocent VIII's

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[41] Cf. Pico, *Oratio de dignitate hominis etc.*, ed. by E. Garin (Florence, Vallecchi, 1942), pp. 152–153: "in mundi recessibus, in naturae gremio, in promptuariis arcanisque dei latitantia, miracula quasi ipsa sint, artifex promit in publicum; et sicut agricola ulmos vitibus, ita magus terram coelo, id est inferiora superiorum dotibus virtutibusque maritat".

[42] Della Porta, *Magiae naturalis ll. XX cit.*, Book I, ch. VI, p. 6: "Magus ut agricola ulmos vitibus, sic ipse coelo terram vel, ut apertius loquar, inferiora haec superiorum dotibus mirificisque virtutibus maritat, et inde arcana naturae gremiis penitus latentia, veluti minister in publicum promit quaeque assidua exploratione vera noverit, ut omnes cunctorum artificis amore flagrantes sui conentur omnipotentiam laudare et venerare". Cf. Paolo Rossi, *Francesco Bacone. Dalla magia alla scienza* (Bari, Laterza, 1957), pp. 71–72, who on this metaphor cites Pierre-Maxime Schuhl, *Machinisme et philosophie*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1969 (3rd ed.), p. 57 ss.

[43] Elisabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge, Cambridge U.P. 1979).

theologians; the authors wished to propose a new theory which would legitimize magic. But although Pico felt obliged to react to theologians and inquisitors by printing his *Apologia*, not all natural magicians felt similarly obliged. In 1493, shortly after meeting Pico and Ficino in Florence, Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples wrote his treatise *De magia naturali*, which begins with some of Ficino's well-known topics and goes on to emphasize the elementary aspects of magic while suppressing all others. Lefèvre usually had his works printed, but in this case he decided not to print. In 1504 he declared, in public and in private, that no magic was good and that to assume the existence of a natural kind of magic was misleading.[44] In contrast, Trithemius adopted the principle of initiatic silence, never expressed by the Florentines so clearly as in Reuchlin's *De verbo mirifico*.[45] He never published his magical recipes or his letters on methodology wherein he proposed to his few readers a necromantic and initiatic attitude: he gave the precept that the expert should teach only to adepts of proven faith and discretion.[46] According to Trithemius, those who assumed with Charles de Bovelles (but we might add, before him, Ficino and Pico), that one should study only natural magic were stupid.[47] In 1510, Trithemius' pupil Cornelius Agrippa—the recipient of one of the above-mentioned letters—accepted his teacher's view in *De occulta philosophia*",[48] which he circulated in manuscript form for twenty years before having it printed in 1531–1533, an act which led to his banishment from the Empire. Agrippa's decision to print his encyclopedia on magic reveals that he no longer believed in secret initiatic magic. If we recognize this important fact we can better understand why, at the same time, he published a critique of magic in his *De incertitudine et vanitate omnium scientiarum atque artium*.[49]

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[44] Cf. note 8.

[45] Reuchlin, *De verbo mirifico cit*., p. 410.

[46] See Trithemius' unknown pages published in my 'Scholastic and Humanist Views of Hermeticism and Witchcraft', in *Hermeticism and the Renaissance*, eds. Allen G. Debus and Ingrid Merkel (Washington 1988), pp. 151–153.

[47] Cf. note 10.

[48] Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia*, ed. by V. Perrone Compagni (Leiden, Brill, 1991), p. 86, L. I, ch. 2. Throughout book III and especially in chapters 2: 'De silentio et occultatione rei secretae', and 3: 'De dignificatione magi', initiatic attitudes are to be found.

[49] Cf. my 'Cornelio Agrippa, ein kritischer Magus', *Die Okkulten Wissenschaften in der Renaissance*, ed. by August Buck (Wolfenbüttel 1992), pp. 67–89; reprinted *infra*, pp. 115–137. Less useful regarding this question is the most recent monograph by Marc Van Der Poel, *Cornelius Agrippa. The Humanist Theologian and his Declamation* (Leiden, Brill, 1997).

I will conclude by looking at the models and analysing the literary sources of "the classic natural magician of the whole period", Giambattista Della Porta.[50] His *Magia naturalis* went through several editions, the first in IV books (1558), the final in XX books (1589). From 1574 to 1580 Della Porta was repeatedly interrogated by inquisitors, and the publication of his writings was prohibited. Jean Bodin, in his *Démonomanie des sorciers* (1580), accuses Della Porta of being a "poisonous sorcerer" and goes on to attack Agrippa. Among the various followers of Paracelsus, Jacques Gohory, denounced Della Porta. As Massimo L. Bianchi has recently demonstrated, Della Porta was up to date on Paracelsus' ideas, although perhaps only through his followers.[51] As if this were not enough, Thomas Erastus, a Protestant critic of Paracelsism, spoke out against Della Porta as well[52]—which leads one to believe that the last two accusations were also reactions against his chemical experiments. This onslaught forced Della Porta, at the height of his fame, to cease publishing for several years.

In the last edition of the *Magia naturalis* we find many additions by Della Porta, but no sign of a real change. Already in the title page of the *Caelestis physionomia* Della Porta had advanced a strong refutation of astrology, but, given the content of this work, it seems most likely that these words were simply a sop intended for the Inquisition.[53] If we

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[50] Stuart Clarck, *Thinking with Demons: the Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1977), p. 127: this book is new and thorough when dealing with seventeenth-century demonologists, but the author should have traced his arguments back to the debate at the time of Ficino, Pico, Pomponazzi (cf. only ch. 14: he is however unaware of the denunciation of the latter by the demonologist Prierias) and should have been more careful in some of his philosophical definitions (cf. "scepticism" at pp. 242–243).

[51] See his 'Premessa' to Wolfgang Ambrosius Fabricius, *Aporema botanikon. De signaturis plantarum*, ed. by M. L. Bianchi (Lecce 1997), p. X. On paracelsism cf.: *Paracelsus. The Man and his Reputation, his Ideas and their Transformation*, ed. by Ole Peter Grell (Leiden, Brill, 1998).

[52] Cf. Germana Ernst, *Religione, ragione e natura. Ricerche su Tommaso Campanella e il tardo Rinascimento* (Milan, F. Angeli, 1991), pp. 167–190.

[53] According to the bibliography given in Della Porta, *Criptologia*, ed. by G. Belloni, (Roma, Centro Intern. di Studi Umanistici, 1982), p. 43, the ed. princeps of this work in Latin was printed in Naples, G. B. Subtilis, 1603; its titlepage continues as follows: *astrologia refellitur et inanis et imaginaria demonstratur*; nevertheless, the treatise classifies physionomies in correspondence to the 7 planets (Book I–II) and the 12 zodiacal signs (Book IV). Cf. Book I, ch. 1, 'Come molte scienze divinatrici siano vane e perniziose, e quanto sia grande l'eccellenza della fisionomia come nata da principi naturali'. It is noteworthy that its edition Vicenza, Pietro Paolo Tozzi, 1615, was illustrated by the author himself ("dallo stesso autore accresciuti da figure"), a very unusual thing at

wanted to trace his evolution, we should have to compare *Magia naturalis* with his *Villae libri XII*, an encyclopedia of agriculture based on the author's travels through Europe. Even though the *Villae* were written just ten years after the final edition of the *Magia naturalis*, Della Porta's approach toward his material as a "natural historian" in the *Villae* is quite different from his earlier "magical" method. In the introductory chapters of the first edition of the *Magia naturalis*, Della Porta offers a definition of natural magic which will remain consistent through all subsequent editions; according to this definition the greatest generosity consists in researching natural magic.

> There are two sorts of magick: the one is infamous and unhappie, because it hath to do with foul spirits, and consists of inchantments and wicked curiosity; and this is called sorcery, an art which all learned and good men detest; neither is it able to yeeld any truth of reason and nature, but stands merely upon fancies and imaginations, such as vanish presently away and leave nothing behinde them, as Jamblichus writes in his book concerning the *Mysteries of the Egyptians*. The other magick is natural; which all excellent wise men do admit, and embrace, and worship with great applause; neither is there anything more highly esteemed or better thought of by men of learning. The most noble philosophers that ever were, Pythagoras, Empedocles and Plato, forsook their own countries and lived abroad as exiles and bannished men, rather than as strangers; and all to search out and to attain this knowledge; and when they came home again, this was the science which they professed and this they esteemed a profound mysterie. They that have been most skilful in dark and hidden points of learning, do call this knowledge the very highest point and the perfection of all natural science, insomuch that if they could find out or devise amongst all natural sciences, any other thing more excellent or more wonderful than another, that they would call by the name of magick.[54]

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this time. See now Giovanni Battista Della Porta, *Coelestis Physiognomia*, ed. by Alfonso Paolella (Naples, Bibliopolis, 1996), and Michaela Valente, 'Della Porta e l'Inquisizione. Nuovi documenti dell'Archivio del Sant'Uffizio', *Bruniana e Campanelliana* V (1992), pp. 415–434.

[54] For the quotations in my paper I will henceforth use Della Porta, *Natural Magik books XX*, English Anonymous Translation of 1658, ed. by Derek J. Price (New York 1958), vol. I, p. 52. Cf. Pico, *Oratio de dignitate hominis cit.*, pp. 148–151: "duplicem esse magiam [. . .] quarum altera daemonum tota opera et auctoritate constat, res mediusfidius execranda et portentosa. Altera nihil est aliud, cum bene exploratur, quam naturalis philosophiae consummatio [. . .] ex hac summa litterarum claritas gloriaeque antiquitus et pene semper petita."

Della Porta cites classical authors to bolster his claim:

> Cicero derives this from Plato: that we are not born for ourselves alone . . . Wherefore such things as hitherto lay hid in the bosom of woundrous Nature, shall come to light from the storehouses of most ingenious men, without fraud or deceit. I discover those things that have been long hid either by the envy or ignorance of others; nor shall you finde empty trifles, or riddles, or bare authorities of other men. I did not think fit to omit anything by erring honestly, or following the best leaders; but such as [are] magnificent and most excellent, veil'd by the artifice of words, by transposition and depression of them; and such things, as are hurtful and mischievous, I have written obscurely, yet not so but that an ingenious reader may unfold it and the wit of one that will thoroughly search may comprehend it.[55]

These words imply that magic is natural, but that it should not be taught to everyone. They contradict Della Porta's earlier statement of 1558 that, on the contrary, magic should be taught far and wide to the common man. The 1589 edition of the *Magia Naturalis*, completed in a period after Della Porta had met Sarpi and other scientists (perhaps even Galileo) in Padua, deals with "magnalia naturae", a definition of science which Francis Bacon took from him: in 1589 Della Porta deals among other subjects with optics, for which he is respected. These additions, however, did not in the least affect Della Porta's ideas on natural magic. Even worse, from the point of view of the Inquisition, was Della Porta's definition of magic, which—far from being new—was actually very familiar to the inquisitors: Della Porta simply copied it from Cornelius Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia*, another Renaissance encyclopedia that was on the Index. And Agrippa, alas, had borrowed his definition from Ficino's and Pico's apologies of 1487!

In contrast to Ficino, Pico, and Agrippa, our Neapolitan author does not speak of rites which "dignify" the artist in a religious way. Nor do we find in Della Porta the cabalistic mysticism so dear to his predecessors, or the ambiguity of Ficino's natural magic—an ambiguity which Pico and Agrippa also used in their early writings. Della Porta, who lived "en pays d'lnquisition" and wrote after the publication of the "Index librorum prohibitorum", keeps his distance from such dangerous top-

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[55] Della Porta, *Magia naturalis libri XX cit.*, 'Preface', not numbered page and fol. Cv. Cf. also another passage already present in the first edition: *De magia libri IV* (Antwerp 1558), Book I, ch. 2, p. 3: "Nam si haec in manibus alicuius minus ingeniosi versabuntur, derogatur scientiae fides, sitque ut fortuita videantur quae verissima ac necessariis eveniunt causis".

ics. In Book I, chapter 2, of the *Magia naturalis* we find the same belief that Agrippa expressed in Book I, chapter 2 of his *De occulta philosophia*; but Della Porta's statement on philosopher-magicians calls for special attention, because here the source is a very different work of Agrippa's, *De vanitate et incertitudine scientiarum et artium*. In its twelfth chapter 'de magia naturali' Agrippa writes:

> Men thinke that naturall magicke is nothing else, but a singular power of naturall knowledges which therefore they call the greatest profoundness of natural Philosophie and absolutest perfection thereof, and sheweth what is the active part of natural philosophie, which with the aid of naturall vertue, according to mutuall and convenient applyinge of them, doth publishe workes exceeding all the capacitie of admiration.[56]

Della Porta's first book owes much to Agrippa also on the subjects of *pia philosophia* and the "Egyptian", i.e. Hermetic tradition,[57] the elements and elementary qualities,[58] form-matter relationships (then defined in terms of Aristotelian *koyné*),[59] and so on. These formulae, in Della Porta's first book, are simply borrowed from Agrippa, who here and elsewhere

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[56] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, ch. XLII, first edition Antwerp, Grapheus, 1530; cf. Agrippa, *Opera omnia*, 11, p. 90: "Naturalem magiam non aliud putant quam naturalium scientiarum summam potestatem, quam idcirca summum philosophiae naturalis apicem eiusque absolutissimam consummationem vocant: et quae sit activa portio philosophiae naturalis, quae naturalis virtutis adminuculo, ex mutua earum et opportuna applicatione opera edit supra omnem admirationis captum". That Della Porta uses Agrippa's *De Vanitate* is confirmed by his preference for the definition "portio philosophiae naturalis", which attenuates the one used by Pico and also by Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia*: "absoluta consummatio", a wording which however Della Porta himself uses in his ch. 1.

[57] On *pia philosophia* see Della Porta, *Magiae naturalis libri XX cit.*, Book I, ch. 1, p. 1, who, for the names of the founders of magic and of different cultures constituting a religion (which is unique) reproduces a list given by Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia*, Book I, ch. 2, p. 88 and *passim*. The same has to be observed with the myth of Egypt: Della Porta, *Magiae naturalis ll. XX*, L. I, ch. 2, p. 2: "Ob id Aegyptii Naturam ipsam magam vocarunt quod vim in alliciendo attrahendoque similia possideret et vim illam in amore consistere et quae Naturae cognatione esse videtur"; cf. Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia*, Book I, ch. 37, p. 154, who in turn draws this passage from Pico's *Apologia cit.*, p. 121. On the topic of *pia philosophia*, cf. *Magiae naturalis ll. XX*, ch. I "Che cosa dinoti il nome di magia", where Della Porta reproduces exactly the same doxography which Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia*, p. 88, integrating some items, took from Ficino and Pico.

[58] Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia*, p. 89f., Book I, ch. 3, "De quatuor elementis"; cf. Della Porta, *Magiae naturalis libri IV cit.* (1558), Book I, ch. 6, p. 9; *Magia naturalis libri XX*, Book I, ch. 4, pp. 3–4.

[59] Della Porta, *Magiae naturalis libri IV cit.* (1558), Book I, ch. 5, p. 7. Cf. William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature. Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton 1994), p. 212, who refers to Agrippa. Cf. Antonio Borrelli, 'Su un censimento delle opere di G. B. Della Porta', *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* 79 (2000), pp. 448–451.

is a clever compiler of earlier theories of magic. Della Porta's definition of magic has been much commented upon recently. For instance, a passage Della Porta quotes from Proclus' *De sacrificio et magia* is often cited,[60] but no one has identified the context from which this passage is actually taken, nor has anyone observed that Della Porta mistakenly attributes this treatise to Plotinus. This is what happens when someone is copying!

> The Platonicks, as Plotinus (sic) imitating Mercurius writes in his book of *Sacrifice and magick*, make it to be a science whereby inferior things are made subject to superiours, earthly are subdued to heavenly, and by certain pretty allurements, it fetches forth the properties of the whole frame of the world. Hence the Egyptians termed Nature herself a magician, because she hath an alluring power to draw like things by their likes; and this power—say they—consists in love; and the things that were so drawn and brought together by the affinity of Nature, those—they said—were drawn by magick. But I think that magick is nothing else but the survey of the whole course of nature. For whilst we consider the heavens, the stars, the elements, how they are moved, and how they are changed, by this means we find out the hidden secrecies of living creatures, of plants, of metals, and of their generation and corruption; so that this whole science seems merely to depend upon the view of nature, as afterwards we shall see more at large. This doth Plato seem to signifie in his *Alcibiades*, where he saith, that the magick of Zoroastres was nothing else, in his opinion, but the knowledge and study of divine things, wherewith the Kings of Persia, amongst other princely qualities, were endued; that by the example of the Commonwealth of the whole world, they also might learn to govern their own Commonwealth. And Tully in his book *De divinatione*, saith 'that amongst the Persians no man might be a king unless he had first learned the art of magick'.[61]

However, a few pages later, Della Porta correctly cites Proclus as the author of this treatise, and quotes from it at length (a very interesting quotation, from a philosophical point of view). From 1558 to 1589 Della Porta faithfully followed in Agrippa's footsteps, echoing many of

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[60] H. Vedrine, 'Della Porta et Bruno sur la nature et la magie, *Giovan Battista Della Porta nell'Europa del suo tempo*'. *Atti del convegno* (Naples 1989), pp. 243–259; cf. A. Ingegno, 'Cardano e della Porta', *ibid.*, p. 234; see also G. Belloni, 'Conoscenza medica e ricerca scientifica', in her ed. and transl. of Della Porta, *Criptologia*, (Roma 1982).

[61] Della Porta, *Natural Magic*, p. 2; Giovambattista Della Porta Napolitano, *Della magia naturale. Tradotta dal latino in volgare per Gio. de Rosa V.L.P.* [pseudonym of Della Porta] (Naples 1589). L. I: 'Questo libro investiga le cagioni naturali, dalle quali si producono gli effetti maravigliosi'.

his ideas on magic. Agrippa had compiled his treatise out of Ficino's and Pico's theses on methodology of magic and out of their classical doxology, to which he later added ideas taken from Reuchlin's magical and Kabalistic pages, from Trithemius, and later from Francesco Zorzi.[62] Agrippa's eclecticism meant that Della Porta's works also benefitted from this variety, and Della Porta was able to cite all the major theorists of "natural" magic. Of course, Della Porta sometimes bypasses Agrippa: he uses Ficino, and he cites also his commentary on Plato's "Symposion".[63] In Book I, chapter 2 of the 1589 edition of the *Magia naturalis*, he literally takes one page from Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda*, chapter 26.[64]

In his recent research on "books of secrets", William Eamon writes: "Unlike Agrippa, the Neapolitan philosopher and magus Giambattista Della Porta never disavowed his commitment to magic, despite continual harassment by the Inquisition. From his first juvenile effort to his last unpublished work, Della Porta dedicated his life to establishing natural magic as a legitimate empirical science, but it is hard to believe that his

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[62] Cf. V. Perrone Compagni, 'Riforma della magia e riforma della cultura in Agrippa', *I Castelli di Yale* 2 (1997), pp. 115–140. This scholar, who verified Francesco Zorzi's *De harmonia mundi*, a source mentioned by Agrippa himself in his correspondence, has a tendency to give too much importance to this compilation, where Agrippa finds quotations from Ficino, Pico, Reuchlin, authors with whom he was already familiar. Regarding the relationship Zorzi-Agrippa, it would be more interesting to investigate how both were connected to pre-reformed catholic groups and took an interest in the beginning of Radical Reformation.

[63] Della Porta, *Magiae naturalis libri XX*, 1589, Book I, ch. 9, p. 10: "Platonici magiam vocabant attractionem unius rei ab altera ex quadam naturae cognatione. Mundi autem huius partes seu animalis unius membra omnes ab uno authore pendentes, unius Naturae coniunctione invicem copulantur: ideo sicut in nobis cerebrum, pulmones, cor, iecur et cetera membra a se invicem trahunt aliquid, seque mutua iuvant, ut uno illorum aliquo patiente compatiantur ita huius ingentis animalis membra, idest omnia mundi corpora connexa similiter mutuant invicem naturas, et mutuantur, et ex communi cognatione communis nascitur amor et ex amore communis attractio. Haec vere magica est"; cf. Ficino, *De amore*, Oratio VI, ch. X, *Opera*, II, p. 1348; *Commentaire sur le 'Banquet' de Platon*, ed. by Gabriel Marcel (Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1956), p. 220. Cf. W. Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature* (Princeton, Princeton U.P., 1994), p. 213 and *passim.*

[64] Ficino, *Three Books on Life cit.*, pp. 388–389, where Ficino, the very translator of Proclus' *De sacrificio et magia*, does not attribute it to Plotinus. Della Porta, *Magiae naturalis libri XX*, Book I, ch. 2, p. 2, where this passage immediately follows another already quoted (see note 23): it was used in the 1558 edition to state Ficino-Pico's distinction between two types of magic: "Bifariam mageian ipsam dividunt: infamem alteram ac immundorum spirituum commerciis inauspicatam [. . .] quam goeteian vocant [. . .] Naturalem alteram [. . .]" (in the corresponding *Magiae naturalis libri IV* (1558), Bk. I, ch. 1, p. 1 this passage on Plotinus is missing).

aim was to articulate the theoretical underpinnings of the professors of secrets' research program".[65]

There was very little respect for copyright in this period. But it is not for this reason that I have pointed out Della Porta's borrowing from Ficino's and Agrippa's books, which went unnoticed at the 1986 congress on Della Porta and in other recent research. I have brought this up merely to confirm:

1. that the definition of "magia naturalis" as a utopian attempt to distinguish it from demonology, ceremonial magic, and other dubious practices, was formulated at the time of Pico and of the "Malleus maleficarum", and would remain unchanged;
2. that this definition acquired an inertia, such that it was maintained by Della Porta even when no longer needed: many observations on nature were added in 1589 to the already long list of observations which had been included in the 1558 edition of Della Porta's "book of secrets", to give it legitimacy;
3. that the determining force behind this development was ecclesiastical censorship and the Inquisition, which was centralized and newly organized as part of the Counter Reformation;
4. that the system of astrology and natural magic could not be reformed (cf. Della Porta), although in some authors endowed with strong critical attitudes (Pico, Agrippa) it gave rise to unsparing self-criticism;
5. that natural magic in the Renaissance had more to do with religion than with science.

[65] Cf. Eamon, *Science cit.*, pp. 196–197.

CHAPTER TWO

SCHOLASTIC AND HUMANIST VIEWS OF HERMETISM, WITCHCRAFT, "NATURAL MAGIC". TRITHEMIUS' MAGIC AND AGRIPPA'S CRITICAL TURN OF MIND

> *Lamiam igitur hanc Plutarchus ille Chaeronaeus [. . .] habere ait oculos exemptiles, hoc est quos sibi eximat detrahatque cum libuit, rursusque cum libuit resumat atque affigat [. . .] Lamia haec, quoties domo egreditur, oculos sibi suos affigit vagaturque per fora, per plateas, per quadrivia, per angiportus, per delubra, per thermas, per ganeas, per conciliabula omnia, circumspectatque singula, scrutatur, indagat, nihil tamen bene obtexeris quod eam lateat [. . .] Domum vera ut revenit, in ipso statim limine demit illos sibi oculos abiicitque in loculos: ita semper domi caeca, semper foris oculata.*
>
> Politianus[1]

§ 1. *Medieval Hermetic Antecedents*

Hermetism and witchcraft, when considered from the point of view of intellectual and religious history, travel along paths that are almost parallel. They certainly are not absent in the Middle Ages, when they surface again and again. But it is particularly in the last decades of the fifteenth century that both undergo their decisive renewal and a kind of codification, in Italy as well as in Germany.

As for Hermetism, it is a well-known fact that *Asclepius*—perhaps translated into Latin by Apuleius—had been circulating uninterruptedly ever since Lactantius had praised Hermes as a precursor of Christianity[2]

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[1] Angelo Poliziano, *Lamia*, ed. by Ari Wesseling (Leiden, Brill, 1986), pp. 3–4.

[2] Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, 1.6: "[Hermes] maiestatem summi et singularis Dei asserit, iisdemque nominibus appellat, quibus nos, Deum et Patrem"; other quotations of a theological character from *Asclepius* about "God, son of God" and his incarnation as divined by Hermes *ibidem* 4.6 and 11; 7.18; while in 2.15 to differentiate two types of demons is used the Hermetic pejorative definition "immundum, malum, terrenum." Cf. *De ira Dei*, which, like the preceding text, follows Cicero's *De natura Deorum* by presenting Hermes as "longe antiquior" than Pythagoras and the seven Wise Men.

while Augustine had condemned him as having inspired the demonic cult. In doing this, Augustine defined long in advance the terms that were later cited in the condemnation of witchcraft; he thus inspired the views of medieval and Renaissance demonologists right up to the *Decretum magistri Gratiani.*[3]

Hermetic themes going back to *Asclepius*, to Patristic sources, or to medieval pseudepigraphical texts (which for their part have close connections with the Hellenistic corpus so rich in alchemical and ritual passages) were of great importance to people like Hermann von Kärtner, Hildegard von Bingen, Thierry de Chartres, Bernardus Sylvester, Alain de Lille, Godefroid de Saint-Victor, and Guillaume d'Auxerre, as has been shown by M.-T. d'Alverny, E. Garin, T. Gregory, and more recently by B. Stock.[4] However, a few authors of the middle of the thirteenth

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[3] Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 7.23–24. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas are considered the two principal founders of demonology; this traditional conception is summarized in H. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the 16th and 17th Century, and Other Essays* (New York, 1969). Cf. *Corpus iuris canonici I. Decretum Gratiani*, ed. E. Friedberg (Leipzig, Tauchnitz, 1879) cols. 1019–ff.: pt. I, ch. 26 ("Sacerdos sortilegus"); pt. 2, chs. 5, 7, 8, 10; pt. 3, ch. 1–2; pt. 5, ch. 13. Augustine is cited on account of this and other works of his, but particularly through Hrabanus Maurus's *De magicis artibus.*

[4] M.-T. d'Alverny, 'Le cosmos symbolique du XII[e] siecle', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et litteraire du Moyen Age* 20 (1953), pp. 38–81; Id., 'La survivance de la magie antique', in *Miscellanea mediaevalia* I: *Antike und Orient im Mittelalter*, ed. P. Wilpert (Berlin, 1962), pp. 154–78; E. Garin, 'Un dialogo sull'immortalità dell'anima: il *Liber Alcidi'* [1940] in *Studi sul platonismo medievale* (Florence, 1958), pp. 89–151; Id., 'Nota sull'ermetismo' [1955] in *La cultura filosofica del Rinascimento italiano* (Florence, 1961), pp. 142–54, and the studies by Liebeschiitz, Silverstein, Woolsey, Delhaye, Chenu there quoted at p. 150n. In addition, the substantial introductions to both the English and French translations: *Hermetica*, ed. W. Scott and A. S. Ferguson (Oxford, 1924–36), 4, pp. XLIV–XLVI; *Corpus Hermeticum*, ed. A. D. Nock and A.-J. Festugière (Paris, 1945), 2, pp. 264–75. (From now on abbreviated as *CH* + vol. + page.) Among the special studies, cf. T. Gregory, *Anima mundi* (Florence, Sansoni, 1958), p. 105n, on the influence of the *Asclepius* (6.301–2) on the development of the idea of microcosm in the twelfth century, and pp. 152–53 on Hermann of Carinthia and the *De sex principiis*, attributed to Hermes; pp. 134n, 183n on Thierry de Chartres and the *Asclepius*; pp. 98 and 199 on the *Asclepius* in Bernard Silvestris's *De mundi universitate*; Id., 'L'idea di natura nella filosofia medievale prima dell'ingresso della *Fisica* di Aristotele' in *La filosofia della natura nel Medioevo* in *Atti del terzo Congresso internazionale di filosofia medievale* (Milan, 1966), pp. 61–65; now both reprinted in his *Mundana sapientia*, Rome 1993. The author notes, on the Hermetic or pseudo-Hermetic literature current in the twelfth century: "in the background of the play between sympathy and antipathy, of magic rituals and of witchcraft, where they appeal to a god in whom it is difficult to recognize the Christian god, a new desire is afoot to know nature and its most hidden secrets". In the second paper cit., concerning the *Asclepius*, he connects Bernard Silvester's and Pico's notions of microcosm; Id., 'La nouvelle idée de nature et de savoir scientifique au XII siècle' in *The Cultural Context of Medieval Learning* (Dordrecht, 1975), pp. 193–218; now in his *Mundana sapientia*. See also B. Stock, *Myth and Science in the Twelfth Century: A Study of Bernard Silvester* (Princ-

century whom I shall quote here as examples are closer to the problem of Hermetism versus witchcraft. They have not been studied closely from this point of view—except Albertus Magnus who has been recently studied "en face d'Hermès Trismégiste".[5] Guillaume d'Auvergne, as the great scholar Thorndike has pointed out, does indeed "display an intimate acquaintance" with Hermetic texts.[6] Apparently Guillaume had recourse to several medieval pseudepigrapha, like *Mercurius magnus in libro Veneris*[7] and a *Liber septem planetarum*, where Mercurius speaks of a *fabula saracena* regarding the catastrophe of incarnation and fall of two angels.[8] Among the numerous passages—by no means complete—that I found when first perusing the Guillaume d'Auvergne folio edition, there was one that is unmistakable and fundamental, namely, the famous text from *Asclepius* on theurgy (i.e. on the "creation of gods," that is, of statues that are alive and endowed with divine powers).[9] Chapter 23 of *De legibus* quotes the entire passage verbatim and expressly names the source, Mercurius Trismegistus, in the book "quem scripsit *De hellera*, hoc est *De deo deorum*,"[10] and shortly after that, chapter 25 narrates:

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eton, 1972), p. 150ff. (on *Asclepius* interpreted as source, particularly in the Stoic sense), p. 170ff. (on Apuleius demonology, *De Deo Socratis*). Still fundamental is L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 8 vols. (New York, 1923–58), which in its volumes 1 and 2 treats of these and many other medieval authors. See now C. Moreschini, *Storia dell'ermetismo cristiono*, Brescio, Morcelliona, 2000.

[5] Cf. note 15 *infra.*

[6] Thorndike, *History*, 2, p. 339; cf. *ibid.* p. 355 and all of ch. 52.

[7] *Guilelmi Alverni Opera omnia* (1673; reprint, Frankfurt, 1963), I. 953, col. IC (= *De universo*, 2.2.100).

[8] *Ibid.*, I, p. 881, col. 2A (= *De universo*, 2.2.37).

[9] *CH*, 2.325–ff. (§§ 23–24). In connection with this action, harshly condemned by medieval and Renaissance demonologists, should be noted those Hermetic terms that re-emerge and will appear again in Pico's central section of the *Oratio de dignitate hominis* written as the introduction to his *Conclusiones*: "felicissimum hominem iudico . . . Nec immerito miraculo dignus est" (ed. E. Garin in *De hominis dignitate*, Florence, 1942, p. 102). In the *Asclepius* one section, the one concerning the creation of the gods, has been mentioned and analysed several times by historians: E. Garin, 'Nota sull'ermetismo', in his *La cultura filosofica del Rinascimento italiano* (Florence, 1961), pp. 143ff., and even more so in F. A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London, 1964), pp. 36–37.

[10] *Guilermi Alverni Opera*, 1.66, col. 2GH (= *De legibus*, ch. 2): "Ita homo effector est Deorum, qui in templo sunt, humana proximitate contenti". Having quoted extensively from the Hermetic text, Guillaume criticized it in the same chapter: "Nullatenus dubitandum est quin virtutem divinam et naturam attribuerit huiusmodi erroneis statuis seu imaginibus" and then compiles his classification of ten kinds of idolatry among which there is "prima et radicalis" the cult of demons incarnate. They are evoked by means, which Guillaume mentions ("imagines . . . figuras quasdam, quarum alias sigilla planetarum, alias annulos, alias characteres eorum, alias imagines vocant"), and which will be still used by Ficino (*De vita* bk. 3), Agrippa, and Trithemius. Guillaume's

> the destruction of the mistakes made by Mercurius where it is stated that by means of those execrations, which he calls consecrations, it was possible to turn statues into artificial gods, and to create gods by human ingenuity and power.[11]

Guillaume's attention to this text is so intense and so unceasing that he himself acknowledges *Asclepius* as "the book we often referred to, [where] Mercurius calls the world, as well as the planets, 'the sensitive God'".[12]

Even though *Asclepius* is the main text in Guillaume's Hermetic library, it is not the only one; the bishop of Paris makes use of all Greek Hermeticists,[13] and in the particular context in which I am interested, when he discusses nature and the veneration of demons (that is, sorcery) in his time.[14] Owing to Guillaume's pastoral duties he is most certainly

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discussion of *Asclepius*' theurgy is extended; here only a brief criticism of his will be quoted: "quantum erravit Mercurius, qui eas [imagines] deos factitios mentitus est" (*ibid.*, 1.83, col. 2B [= *De legibus*, ch. 26]).

[11] *Ibid.*, I, p. 85, col. lA (= *De legibus*, ch. 26) where he continues "Humana natura est magis dea et maiori divinitate naturaliter erit quam huiusmodi statuae" (an observation that must have pleased Giovanni Pico). He then cites again the magic treatment with officinal herbs and the fumigations in the Hermetic tradition: "Quod si dixerit, quia virtus ista causa est humanae naturae herbarum et aromatum, dixit enim Mercurius quia usi sunt maiores nostri ad hoc herbis et aromatibus, vim divinitatis in se habentibus (1.85, col. IC) and concludes: "Huiusmodi substantias vocat ipsemet Mercurius animas daemonum et dicit quia maiores nostri animas daemonum statuis indiderunt, quae locutio non potest habere intentionem nisi erroneam". *Ibid.* pp. 86ff. (Ch. 27), Guillaume says: "Confutat alium errorem veteris idolatriae, sc. de statuis quae stultis visae sunt esse dii factitii".

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 77, col. 2 D (Ch. 25) "destruit cultum stellarum et corporum caelestium" and in this context Guillaume discusses at the very outset the definitions of the world soul in *Timaeus*, those of Aristotle (as interpreted by Avicenna), and of Hermes and Boethius.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 78, col. I EF in the same chapter (followed by ch. 26 on idolatry of the four elements) Guillaume summarizes the harmony of the stars in the world regions, in the body limbs, and in the "elementata", which is not very different from the net of correspondences to be used two centuries later by natural magic: "Solem et lunam rectores orbis terrarum deos putaverunt, et ipsis planetis atque signis duodecim orbem inferiorem terrarum totum partiti sunt, [. . .] ut Marti Germaniam, Saturno Italiam, Cyprum Veneri. *Sectas* etiam et *leges* et artificia, virtutesque at vitia eisdem distribuerunt; eidem modo ornamenta et instrumenta, colores, odores et sapores per singulos diviserunt necnon et animalis, etiam furnos, molendina et quidquid etiam de locis et habitudinibus hominum: animalia quando eisdem partiti sunt, ut animali gypsei coloris attribuerunt Veneri et aves ruffi coloris Marti et corvinum genus Phaebo sive Apollini; litteras et numeros similiter eisdem partiti sunt, et ad ultimum ipsum corpus humanum per partes et membra distribuerunt eisdem; et haec omnia in libris iudiciorum astronomiae et in libris magorum atque maleficorum tempore adolescentiae nostrae nos meminimus inspexisse".

[14] *Ibid.* vol. 2, p. 796, col. 19 (= *De universo* 2.2.27) where he construes an unusual connection between *fatum* (fate) and the fairy of the folktale: "Nomen autem fati vel fatae

one of the richest sources. He shows no hesitation in examining closely the authenticity of the various parts of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, whereas in the case of the young "sententiarius," Albertus Magnus, an element of doubtful criticism, unusual for that time, becomes evident. Who was that Trismegistus, the author of *Liber XXIV Philosophorum*, which he considered a forgery?[15]

In the case of *Secretum secretorum*, a text of Arabic-Syrian origin, which was attributed to Aristotle and commented on by Roger Bacon with "a defense of legitimate divination," the repeated appearance of the names of Hermes or Hermogenes suffices for Albertus to classify the text as belonging to the works of Hermes Trismegistus. Albertus finds in it one of the basic principles of witchcraft, namely the ability of the *malefici* to reverse the *maleficium*:

> Indeed, necromancers teach that one *maleficium* can be superseded by another one, as is clear from Hermes' book entitled *De secretis Aristotelis.*[16]

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vel fatationis apud utramque gentem [hebraicam et christianam], sicut praedixi tibi, horrificum est et abominabile . . . quoniam utraque lege antiquior est mentio culturae deorum atque dearum et idolatria; velut reliqua quaedam ex sequela aliqua huiusmodi culturae remansit opinio fatationis, potissimum autem circa anus seu vetulas, quae vel curiositate faciente muliebrique levitate vel quaestuatione, pre qua mentiri non verentur, nondum recesserunt ab eis".

[15] Albertus Magnus, *Sententiarum* [1.3.18] in *Opera*, 21 vols., ed. Pierre Jammy (Lyons, 1652), 16, pp. 68–69, quoted and commented on by L. Sturlese, 'Saints et magiciens: Albert le Grand en face d'Hermes Trismegiste', *Archives de philosophie* 43 (1980): 620–21. The following hypothesis ("omnia enim que dicitur dixisse Trismegistus [*in Libro XXIV philosophorum*, quem credo confictum], inveni in quodam libro magistri Alani") does not, it would seem to me, present any proof that young Albertus was little familiar with Hermetic writings nor does it constitute a *comparaison ambigue.* In Alanus is to be found a kind of theological Hermeticism that is closely related to that of Lactance in *Contra Haereticos* [1, ch. 30; 3, chs. 2–4] *PL* 210: 223, 276, where Asclepius is cited among other "auctoritates gentilium philosophorum", not only to prove "quod anima humana sit immortalis" but also "quod tres sunt personae divinae et una est eorum natura". If Alanus represents a middle course here between Lactance and Ficino, he is by no means a stranger to the medieval Hermeticists he quotes (*ibid.* 405). The *Liber XXIV Philosophorum* with its famous "Monas gignit monadem et in se suum reposat ardorem" is taken up by Albertus in the same context as in *Sententiarun* 11.1 (*Opera*, ed. Jammy, 14: 206). However, we must stress the background, purely theological and not at all historico-philological, of the doubt which arose in Albertus as to the author of *Liber XXIV Philosophorum.* (A doubt not at all occasioned by the very old age which is assigned to Hermes by *Asclepius* and other noncontroversial texts, as becomes evident from Albertus's earlier and later writings): "Si tamen philosophus fuit ante incarnationem, et non didicit in libris Veteris Testamenti, nec per revelationem, tunc dico quod loquitur de uno Deo generante, id est producente suum intellectum in mundo et omnia quae fecit diligenter propter seipsum" (*Opera*, ed. Jammy, 14, p. 69).

[16] Albertus, *IV Sententiarum* 34.9 (*Opera*, ed. Jammy, 16, p. 710) as quoted by L. Sturlese, *op. cit.*, p. 621.

Albertus cites Hermes in other passages as being among those "dedicated to divination," a practice for which he prepared himself like a hermit "in deserted places";[17] he often discussed secrets of alchemy[18] or of horticulture[19] that he had taken from the *Libri incantationum Hermetis*, as well as Hermes' general deliberations on astrology.[20] However, Loris Sturlese's interesting investigation points most emphatically to one passage, stemming from *Asclepius*, that is quoted in Albertus' *De animalibus.* In this quotation, a dynamic conception of the microcosm becomes apparent, which is very close to that developed by Pico later on: "Hermes ad Asclepium scribens quod solus homo nexus est Dei et mundi".[21] Yet it is even more interesting that Albertus links this concept with the problematic nature of the *fascinatio*, somatisation and transitive faculties thanks to which some sorcerers (*magi*) are able to alter the bodies of others by means of the sorcerer's imagination.

> In those people who were born under the best [astral] conditions we see that they act with their souls transforming worldly bodies so that they are said to perform miracles. Hence originates *fascinatio* through which one person's soul causes in another's either obstacle or advantage, by means of his gaze or some other sense.[22]

Albertus was greatly impressed by that *Asclepius* passage, which later on was to inspire the most stirring and suggestive passages of Pico's *Oratio de dignitate hominis.* This can be seen in Albertus's recurring use of the

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[17] Albertus, *De somniis* 3:1.5; *Opera*, ed. Jammy, 5, p. 97; quoted by Sturlese, p. 627.

[18] Albertus, *De mineralibus* 3:1.8; 1.1.1; 2.2.4; 2.3.3; quoted by Sturlese, 'Saints et magiciens' *cit.*, pp. 618–19. Cf. also 2.2.10 [in D. Wyckoff's excellent English translation *On minerals* (Oxford, 1967), p. 103 a compilation of quotations from *Asclepius* in this work (*ibid.* pp. 273–74), in *De animalibus*, 22.1.5 and *De natura loci*, 1.5; see notes 19 and 20 *infra*.]

[19] Albertus, *De vegetabilibus* 4.4.2; 5.2.6 and 6.1.32; *Opera*, ed. Jammy, 5, pp. 414, 429, 455; cf. L. Sturlese, *op. cit.*, p. 629 note 41.

[20] Albertus, *De natura loci* 1.5; *Opera*, ed. Jammy, 5, p. 268: "Egregie dicit Hermes in libro de virtutibus universalibus, quod constellatio est causans virtutem qualitatum earum quae infunduntur in inferioribus et est formativa ipsorum per qualitates elementorum, quae sunt sicut instrumenta virtutum caelestium".

[21] Cf. L. Sturlese, *op. cit.*, p. 27. Those expressions which would indicate this text to have been a source of Pico's *Oratio* are, e.g., "sicut testatur Hermes, si aliquando aliquis hominum per electionem se mundo inferiorem fecerit, iam quasi honore humanitatis exutus, proprietatem accipit bestiae". As to the technical aspects of magic practices, Pico's text, so famous and typical, stresses the foundation—in regard to the relationship between Man and World—of the "fascinatio qua anima unius agit ad alterius impedimentum vel expeditionem per visum vel alium sensum". See ed. Stadler, *Beiträge Bäumker* 15–16, p. 1353 [bk. 22, ch. 1. sec. 5].

[22] *Ibid.*

same passages in his *De intellectu et intelligibili.*[23] Here, however, one lacks the concrete application to the case of the miraculous signs that can be performed transitively by those who, on account of the favorable constellation of their birth, possess faculties that elevate them above ordinary mortals. The analysis of phenomena such as somatization and transitive faculties in general is of interest because it involves to a considerable degree discussion as to the possibility and naturalness of certain effects, be they magical or due to witchcraft.[24] Therefore, the

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[23] Cf. Albertus, *De intellectu et intelligibili* 3.6 (*Opera*, ed. Jammy, 5, p. 268): "Antiquissimos idiotas Hermes increpans dixit tales nulli humanorum in vita opera dedisse, sed more porcorum vitam expendisse"; in the same work, 3.9 (*Opera*, 5, p. 260) the Hermetic topos "homo nexus est Dei et mundi" is repeated twice, as L. Sturlese points out appropriately, without, however, explaining the dynamic interpretation with which Albertus seems to have anticipated Pico.

[24] Albertus's comments on themes closest to witchcraft and demonology are found in the theological works, e.g., *IV Sententiarum*, 34.8–9 (*Opera*, ed. Jammy, 16, pp. 709–10): "Art. VIII; An malefici impedimento aliquis potest impediri a potentia coeundi; Art. IX: An maleficium sit excludendum per maleficium", *Summa theologiae* 2.8.30 (*Opera*, ed. Jammy, 18, pp. 176ff.): "Si praestigia magorum facta sint miraculo vel non"; note 26 *infra*. In Albertus, *II Sententiarum*, see in particular the Distinctiones, which discuss the angels, and fall together with some articles regarding characteristics of demons and their *praestigia*: Dist. VI, Art. V: "Utrum aer caliginosus sit proprius locus daemonum?" (*Opera*, ed. Jammy, 16, pp. 73–74); Dist. VII, Art. IV: "Utrum daemones triplicem habeant scientiam?" (particularly "de his quae sunt contingentia de futuro, de quibus praecedit signum in natura, ut in motu caeli vel dispositione elementorum"); Art. V: "Utrum daemones possunt futura praedicere?" ("daemones futura scire possunt corporalia aliquo modo ad cursum naturae ordinata tribus modis, scil. per cursum siderum et per dispositiones rerum naturalium et per revelationem sibi factam"); Art. VII: "Quomodo et qualiter daemones transmutant corpora, utrum scil. corpore assumpto vel alio modo?" (all of them in *Opera*, ed. Jammy, 16, pp. 81–85); Art. IX: "An daemones in suis operibus constellationibus iuventur an non? Et utrum scientia imaginum fiat operatione daemonum an non? (*Opera*, ed. Jammy, 16, pp. 87–88); and, last but not least, *Dist.* VIII, Art. V: "Queritur de actibus Angelorum: an boni possunt comedere et mali generare? et undemali habeant semine suae generationis?" (*Opera*, ed. Jammy, 16, pp. 97–98). Among the arguments *quod sic*, Albertus concedes: "Verissime legitur de incubis et succubis daemonibus, et vidimus personas cognitas ab eis et loca in quibus vix unquam per noctem potest dormire vir, quin veniat ad eum daemon succubus. Item, rumor publicus de Merlino filio incubi testatur hoc, ut videtur". Among the arguments *contra*, the basic question is whether the semen that permits such a demonic procreation amounts to a real secretion of these spiritual beings or whether the semen can be provided by other means: "Sicut videtur dicere Augustinus, quod accipit semen a pollutis et transfundit, vel facit se succubum uni incubum alteri, et ita transfundit". But in this, physiological problems ensue ("propter longitudinem genitalium vel ineptitudinem evaporat semen in egressu et expirat ab se spiritus, ita quod non sit aptum generationi"); in addition, the thesis that the coitus is necessary in order to cause the female semen to come to the fore is not correct—according to Avicenna. He ascribes such a secretion only to the "motum matricis", therefore in the case of the demon "cum possit matricem movere, videtur quod sit superfluum coire"). As to the *solutio*, Albertus appears to be extraordinarily irresolute: "Nescio secundum

famous passage of the young and quite Hermetic-minded Giovanni Pico should be related not only to Albertus's passage taken from *Asclepius* and emphasized by Loris Sturlese, but also to Avicenna's theory on the power of imagination.[25] It was certainly not by chance that this open-ended and non-inquisitorial discussion on magic surfaced again and again, particularly in the case of thinkers who were greatly influenced by Hermes as well as by Avicenna, notably in Guillaume, Bacon, Albertus, and in the early Pico.[26]

§ 2. *Ficino and Pico*

In the fourteenth century, the frequent occurrence of Hermetic passages in Thomas Bradwardine's *De verbo Dei* and in the writing of German mystics has been noted.[27] But it is only in the century of humanism

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veritatem quid dicam, sed hoc videtur probabilius quod succubi sint ad unum et incubi ad alium; tamen verissime ab eo nuper, qui adhuc vivit, intellexi, quod dum mollitei vitio subiaceret quodam tempore, infiniti catti circa eum pollutum apparuerunt, maximo ejulatu et strepitu semen lingentes et deportantes". If, therefore, Albertus hesitates to assume bisexuality in the case of the demons, he considers it logical that the wicked fruit excreted in the course of male masturbation provides these demoniacal procreations with the indispensable matter that can be conserved "in vasis seminariis ad tempus" when namely the devils "circumponunt illud seminibus similibus calore naturali" (*Opera*, ed. Jammy, 15, pp. 97–98).

[25] Note, however, that even an author like Thomas Aquinas (*Summa theologiae*, 1.32), who was to become the model for the most famous and most cruel demonologists of the Renaissance, does not refer directly to the fourth dialogue of *CH*, but to the *Liber XXIV Philosophorum* ("Monas gignit monadem"). This point is stressed by E. Garin, 'Ludovico Lazzarelli', *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* 42 (1963), p. 280.

[26] Cf. Albertus, *II Sententiarum*, Dist. VII, Art. VII; to be specially noted is the reference to this theory that is supposed to explain the bodily changes ascribed to demons: "Quidam philosophi sicut Avicenna in *Libro VI de naturalibus* et Algasel in *Physica* sua, ponunt fascinationes, ita quod anima unius hominis per adspectum vel propinquitatem impediat processum operum alterius hominis virtue spiritualiter egrediente de una anima et operante super alia". Albertus acknowledges only one reservation that can be held against this theory (to which he refers in many other writings)—namely, that the firm belief in God makes the faithful immune: that in fact (to him) "non nocet fascinatio, nec nocere potest ars magica, nec facit aliquid ex his quae de talibus timentur". Since the completion of this paper (1982) I have examined other medieval texts on "fascinatio" in my paper 'L'immaginazione e il suo potere. Da al-Kindi, al-Farabi e Avicenna al Medioevo latino e al Rinascimento', in *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 17: *Orientalische Kultur and Europdische Mittelalter* (Berlin and New York; 1985), pp. 188–206.

[27] E. Garin, 'Ermetismo e antica teologia', *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia*, 28 (1973), p. 332, insists on the central role of Hermetism in *De verbo Dei* by Bradwardine; L. Sturlese, 'Proclo ed Ermete in Germania da Alberto Magno a Bertoldo di Mosburg', *Von Meister Dietrich zu Meister Eckhart*, ed. K. Flasch (Hamburg, 1984), pp. 22–33. Already Ferguson (*Hermetica* 4.46) stressed that *Asclepius* and another Hermetic texts (which could not be located under the title *De mundo et caelo*) were used by Bradwardine (who

that a great qualitative change takes place. In 1463, Marsilio Ficino translated *Pimander*, his first work published as incunabulum in 1469. The interest in the fourteen dialogues grouped together under this title (and later expanded with another three—the *Definitiones Asclepii*—translated by Lazzarelli) by no means eclipsed the luster of the remaining *Corpus Hermeticum.*

§ 3. *Hermetists in Germany*

It continued to draw on traditional medieval pseudepigraphic sources, and the resounding success of *Pimander* was directly responsible for a series of reprints, commentaries and translations into various languages of the *Asclepius*; it also led to original writings imbued with Hermetic spirit.[28] Here too Ficino opened the way to further research, both with his "Argumenta," which prefaced his translations, as well as with the *De amore in Platonis Convivium*, the *De vita* and the theological writings themselves. Besides Pico and Lazzarelli, Ficino's successors at the beginning of the sixteenth century were Zorzi and Steuco in Italy; Lefèvre d'Etaples, Bovelles, Champier and Postel in France; Reuchlin, Trithemius and Agrippa in Germany, to name only the most important ones. Later on there followed the *Christianismi restitutio* (in which Servetus deals in a negative way with the question whether "daemon ille Pimander" had known Christ and whether his way of glorifying man was adequate),[29] and the tradition of Paracelsus, whom his publisher, Huser, called the "Trismegistus Germanus".[30]

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considered the text just mentioned the source of *De mundo* ascribed to Aristotle), as well as by Bernard Silvester in his *De mundi universitate*.

[28] Details about these cultural goings-on are well known: suffice it to mention here P. O. Kristeller, *Supplementum Ficinianum*, 2 vols. (Florence, 1937) I, p. 95ff.; Id., 'M. Ficino e L. Lazzarelli', *Annali della R. Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, 2d ser., 7 (1938), p. 243; D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella* (London, 1972), pp. 1–113; E. Garin, 'Immagini e simboli in M. Ficino', in his *Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Bari, 1954), p. 288; Id., 'Nota sull'ermetismo'; Frances Yates, 'G. Bruno'; Kristeller, 'La diffusione europea del platonismo fiorentino', in *Il pensiero italiano del Rinascimento e il tempo nostro* (Florence, 1971) p. 27. Kristeller concludes that Ficino's translations of Plato and Hermes Trismegistus, as well as his books *De vita* were the most read of his works.

[29] Michael Servetus, *Christianismi restitutio* (1553; reprint, Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 212–13: "Videtur daemon ille Pimander vere docere voluisse, sed Christum ignorasse", quoted by C. Manzoni, *Umanesimo e eresia: Michele Serveto* (Naples, 1974), pp. 104–5; Manzoni then (*ibid.*, p. 113 and passim) observes that Servetus criticizes Hermes Trismegistus on account of his insufficient glorification of man.

[30] This name given him by Johann Huser the editor of the first corpus of Paracelsian and pseudo-Paracelsian works (Basel, 1583–91) was already noted by A. Rotondò,

But the crucial development occurred in 1486–87. At this moment Pico and Ficino were forced to write the *Apologiae* or their magic theses—these form the hub of both Pico's *Conclusiones* with the introductory *Oratio* mentioned above and of Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda*. At the same time two Dominican monks published in Cologne the *Malleus maleficarum* ("The witches' hammer"), which was directed against groups of adepts of magic who certainly had fewer speculative, dialectical, and political means at their disposal to defend themselves against persecution.[31] As is well known, Pope Innocence VIII, whom Raffaele Volterrano characterized as being "not very intelligent and unlearned (*ingenio tardo ac litteris procul*),"[32] issued, shortly before condemning Pico, the famous bull against witches. The pope had been inveigled into it by the authors of *Malleus*. In fact, the "witch bull" *Summis desiderantes affectibus* was printed as the most authoritative preface to Jacob Sprenger's and Heinrich Institoris's manual. *Malleus maleficarum* is, to be sure, more in the nature of a compilation, according to many historians. Yet for more than two centuries, it constituted the authorized code of repression.

I find it impossible to consider all this a mere chronological coincidence. Ficino and Giovanni Pico undoubtedly moved on a level

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Studi e ricerche di storia ereticale italiana del Cinquecento (Turin, Giappichelli, 1974), p. 363 n. 280; as to the presence of "cultured" Hermetical elements passed on by German and Italian humanists, there are conflicting evaluations in regard to their presence in Paracelsus's writings. W. Pagel, *Paracelsus* (Basel, I. Karger, 1956), p. 296, concurs with Peuckert's old monograph and also with Walker (cf. note 28 *supra*), see p. 85. C. Webster, 'Paracelsus and Demons: Science as a Synthesis of Popular Belief', in *Scienze, credenze occulte, livelli di cultura* (Florence, 1982), pp. 3–4; Id., *From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the Making of Modern Science* (Cambridge, 1983), ch. 4. For later Paracelsism, apart from Rotondò quoted *supra*, see C. Gilly, 'Zwischen Erfahrung und Spekulation: Theodor Zwinger und die religiose und kulturelle Krise seiner Zeit', *Basler Zeitschrift fur Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 77 (1977), pp. 57–123; 79 (1979), pp. 125–233. Of great interest for Hermetism at the end of the sixteenth century, see F. Purnell, 'F. Patrizi and the Critics of Hermes Trismegistus', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 6 (1976), pp. 155–78; Id., 'An Addition to F. Patrizi's Correspondence', *Rinascimento*, 2d ser., 18 (1978), pp. 135–50; Id., 'Hermes and the Sybil: A Note on Ficino's Pimander', *Renaissance Quarterly* 30 (1977), pp. 305–10.

[31] I have tried to investigate these correspondences, also comparing similar cases in the Aristotelian school (mainly for Pomponazzi). See my papers 'Il problema della magia naturale nel Rinascimento', *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia* 28 (1973), p. 271ff.; also in French translation with an appendix of documents in *Magia astrologia e religione nel Rinascimento. Convegno polacco-italiano* (Wroclaw, 1974) [= Accademia Polacca delle Scienze in Roma, Conferenze, 65], pp. 48–82, reprinted in my *L'ambigua natura della magia*, Venezia, Marsilio, 1996 (2nd ed).

[32] Raffaele Volterrano, *Commentariorum urbanorum libri XXXVIII* (Lyons, 1552), col. 680.

of culture and authority that cannot be compared to that of simple country women accused of witchcraft. Yet the concepts—Hermetic, no doubt—of these two scholars aimed at the establishment of a natural theory of magic; such a foundation appeared to be urgently needed in view of the first burning stakes. Only then could they continue to devote themselves—without incurring too much danger—to their readings and speculations, to their hymns and fumigations, which were fashionable already at the time when Gemistus Pletho was in Florence.[33]

The name of Gemistus Pletho brings to my mind the keen observation made by J. E. McGuire and C. B. Schmitt on the relative importance of the components of philosophy of the two Florentines and their followers (the two scholars probably think that this philosophy must be "syncretistic"). According to the above-mentioned historians their conceptual framework is characterized mainly by Neoplatonism, not by Hermetism, the mystical texts of which were too vague and would not have provided sufficient breadth to inspire an entire movement.[34] Here I shall mention only briefly the complex and at times distressing debate which, after an initial period of success in the departments of the history of science, almost led to an inquisitorial process against the late Frances Yates. As Schmitt points out in fairness to her, she was primarily interested in other topics.[35] But I should like to express my opinion here without failing to mention this observation (which in my opinion was the keenest made in the course of the entire debate): I think the McGuire-Schmitt thesis is valid primarily in the field of the

[33] Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic cit.*, pp. 60–ff.

[34] J. E. McGuire, 'Neoplatonism and Active Principles: Newton and the Corpus Hermeticum', in *Hermeticism and the Scientific Revolution*, ed. R. S. Westman and J. E. McGuire, papers read at a Clark Library Seminar, 9 March 1974 (Los Angeles, Clark Library, 1977), pp. 126–27. Cf. review by B. P. Copenhaver in *Annals of Science* 35 (1978), pp. 527–31.

[35] 'Reappraisals in Renaissance Science', *History of Science* 16 (1978), p. 201: "The relation of Bruno to the history of Science plays a relatively small role in Yates's book and the attentive reader will find that she focuses rather upon other issues, e.g., symbolic, occult, political and religious ones, and touches upon Bruno's role in science only in passing". Cf. *ibid.*, p. 203: "While symbols may well play a role in scientific discovery from time to time, they have little to do with finished formulations of science . . . The real difficulty dealing with symbols is that their use goes specifically against the ideal precision which has always been one of the chief criteria of any valid science"; p. 208: "In my view it still remains to be shown that hermetism ever functioned as an important, independent world-view in the Renaissance"; and finally, p. 206, where Schmitt takes up and emphasizes McGuire's theory concerning the dependent relationship between Hermetism and Neoplatonism. Schmitt's survey of the preceding discussions is very thorough and useful.

history of science; to be more specific: this thesis is correct in the case of codification rather than of invention of science. For the person who is concerned with the codification of exact data and of theories, there is an absolute necessity to refer to a philosophical theory in the most complete and systematic manner possible. Undoubtedly Hermetism, because of the mystical and literary vagueness of its dialogues, must necessarily lose something to Neoplatonism; in fact even more to Platonism proper and to Stoicism (the Hermeticist cosmology and psychology have so much in common with stoic ideas). Not only that all these considerations would be null and void vis-à-vis Aristotelianism, if this criterion were univocal or, to be more realistic, if philosophy could always be so rigorous and pure. So far as theories dealing with religiosity and magic itself (from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance) are concerned, formal characteristics of systematics and completeness are not of great importance; on the contrary, they may even produce opposite effects.

In Ficino's *De amore*, there are some passages interpenetrated with magic, which had been written when the author was already considered an "alter Plato" and a disciple of Trismegistus. His translations of Plotinus, Porphyrius, Jamblichus, Proclus, Dionysius, and Psellus, however, were not yet planned. Therefore, when Pico arrived in Florence, he enjoined Ficino most urgently to undertake that task. Yet *De amore* remains Ficino's richest philosophical work and together with *De vita coelitus* his most magical work and masterpiece.[36]

In short, the unmistakably vague and mystical nature of *Pimander* and *Asclepius* only encouraged their literary success and their lasting influence on the piety of pre-Reformation times and of the radical Reformation itself. Finally, they accounted for the dominant presence in a debate that must be considered of great importance for the social problems of the Renaissance, the debate on the natural and demoniacal character of magic—on the distinctive features of natural magic and witchcraft—if they exist at all.

The reader who has had the patience to follow my presentation up to now will notice that I do not intend to maintain that the definition of natural magic by the two Florentine Platonists was entirely their own achievement—just as I would hardly maintain that the *Malleus*

[36] Cf. my paper 'Platone, Ficino e la magia', in *Studia humanitatis: Ernesto Grassi zum 70. Geburtstag* (Munich, 1973), pp. 121–42; now in my *L'ambigua natura cit.*, pp. 28–52.

maleficarum was totally devised by Sprenger and Kramer (who did not shrink from drawing on Apuleius). It is, however, quite evident that after Pico and Ficino there was much more emphasis on natural magic in all discussions since the threat of the approaching dark age became more and more evident and urgently called for the disavowal of any kind of ceremonial magic that might be denounced as witchcraft. Mention has already been made that such a definition had been current at the time of early Scholasticism (no need to go back so far as Apuleius!). But it is easy to see what kind of meaning a term like *natural magic* takes on in the mind of the Avicennian Guillaume d'Auvergne. In this source, so important for Pico, both words can be found, but they do not define a legitimate form of magic to be practiced by Christians experienced in nature, as claimed by E. Peter, an American historian of witchcraft.[37] When Guillaume speaks of *magia naturalis* he—being a true adherent of Augustinian terminology—has in mind the human nature that is corrupted by original sin and destined to sin again and again.

With the help of a very variable terminology—which in most cases indicates magic in its very negative sense, while in contradistinction praising "ars" or "via" or "scientia quintae essentiae"—another Avicennian thinker, the mystic and scientist Roger Bacon, introduces the idea of legitimate and natural magic: this must not be confused with the other kind commonly practiced. This illegitimate magic constitutes simply fraud and fiction ("fictum et fraudibus occupatum") if it does not make use of supernatural agents.[38] According to Roger Carton, the so-called Bacon experience of the exterior senses was part of an essentially Hermetic inspiration and would have to be traced all the way down to Campanella. Certainly his commentary on the *Secreta secretorum* must be mentioned here, as well as the numerous excursus in his three *Opera*; we must cite also a text attributed to him, but probably

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[37] Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch and the Law* (Hassocks/Sussex, Harvester Press, 1978), p. 90. According to Guillaume d'Auvergne, "the Advent of Christianity condemns all magic except natural magic to the status of maleficia".

[38] *Guilelmi Alverni De legibus*, ch. 24, in his *Opera cit.*, pp. 67–69. While he treats of "corruptio humanae naturae" from which emerges "prostitutio curiositatis", he dwells on "idolatria naturalis . . . sicut curiositas quae est fornicatio prostitutae virtutis nostrae et voluptuositas sive luxuria, fornicatio virtutis concupiscibilis nostrae . . . quia igitur fornicationes duarum aliarum virium [animae], quas novimus, naturales sunt, hoc est ex nativa seu innata nobis corruptione procedentes". Having enumerated various forms of such prophetic idolatry, he proposes his definition: "Et de operibus huiusmodi est *magia naturalis* quam necromantiam seu philosophicam philosophi vocant, licet multum improprie, et est totius licentiae naturalis pars undecima" (p. 69 col.2D).

just compiled from his works, *Epistola de secretis operibus artis et naturae et de nullitate magiae.* These works need not be analyzed in detail, but their fundamental idea influenced Pico, whose library included Bacon's works. Suffice it to consider the relationship between art and nature:

> Given the fact that nature is powerful and marvelous, art, nevertheless, which employs nature as its instrument, is more powerful thanks to its natural virtue, as is shown in many instances.[39]

Bacon praises "the wonderful effects of art and nature . . . in which there is nothing of a magic nature, so as to show how all magical [necromantic] power is inferior to these effects and worthless altogether".[40] Bacon develops ideas of Guillaume d'Auvergne; particularly in his discussion on *Asclepius*'s theurgy and on the famous statues magically revived, Guillaume had precluded that these "deos factitios esse et humano artificio atque potentia deos effici."[41] Bacon dismissed a contrast between art and nature in which preference seemed to be given to art.[42] Among the magic delusions, which are to be distinguished from futuristic (I am almost tempted to call them Leonardesque) prodigies, which Bacon projects and describes, "non solum secundum naturae possibilitatem, sed secundum artis complementum",[43] there are express references to

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[39] (Pseudo) Roger Bacon, *Epistola de secretis operibus artis et naturae* in Roger Bacon, *Opera quaedam hactenus inedita*, ed. by J. S. Brewer (Wiesbaden, 1965), p. 523.

[40] R. Carton, *L'experience physique de Roger Bacon* (Paris, 1921), p. 177; also cf. pp. 168, 178, in regard to the distinctive terms Bacon uses for these secret sciences, in his works *Metaphysica, Opus maius, Opus Tertium*. See also T. Gregory, 'Il Duecento', in *Storia della Filosofia*, ed. by M. Dal Pra, 10 vols. (Milan, Vallardi, 1976), 6, pp. 185–94.

[41] *Guilelmi Alverni De legibus cit.*, ch. 26; p. 85, col. IAB.

[42] (Pseudo) Roger Bacon, *Epistola*, p. 523: "Humana natura est magis Dea et maioris divinitatis naturaliter erit quam huiusmodi statuae [. . .], non solum erit Dea humana natura, sed etiam deifica". This position of Bacon, more so than that of Guillaume d'Auvergne, is close to a text of the unpublished *Polychronicon* by Ralph Ridge, a Benedictine from Chester monastery who lived about 1340: "sensus naturae, quae est una de radicibus magiae naturalis". This would constitute an alternative to God's miraculous powers. See G. R. Owst, 'Sortilegium in English Homiletic Literature of the Fourteenth Century', in *Studies Presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson*, ed. J. Conway Davies (London, Oxford U.P., 1957), p. 287.

[43] (Pseudo) Roger Bacon, *Epistola*, p. 538; cf. pp. 535, 532–33: "Narrabo igitur nunc primo opera artis et naturae miranda, ut postea et modum eorum assignem, in quibus nihil magicum est; ut videatur quod omnis magica potestas sit inferior his operibus et indigna" .This methodological explanation introduces some technological miracles "per figuram et rationem solius artis", i.e. plans for navigation and aeronautics that are to replace human propulsion. But this explanation is immediately preceded by an attack against books on necromancy: "Qui nec artis, nec naturae continent potestatem, sed figmenta magicorum . . . Nam, si quis in aliquo illorum opus naturae vel artis inveniat, illud accipiat; si non, relinquat velut suspectum, et sicut indignum est sapienti et illici-

necromantic practices (invocations, deprecations, sacrifices to demons) that are "all foreign to philosophical consideration, and in which neither art nor the power of nature is rooted."[44] Moreover, "there is no need for us to aspire to magic, because art and nature are sufficient" in order to effect the greatest prodigies (non est necesse nobis aspirare ad magicam cum ars et natura sufficiant)".[45] Bacon remains faithful to his teacher Guillaume's manner of expression and relegates magic to a negative semantic level, but then allows it to re-emerge under a different name.

Giovanni Pico praises magic and turns it into the dynamic center of his world view. Thus, a terminological turnabout has happened between the two writers. However, is this a real or only a verbal revolution? An enlightening, close relationship—though not exactly for continuity—, which is stronger and of greater import than the lexical variants, can be found in this distinction between art and nature; it re-emerges in Pico and Ficino's works.[46] Even if this distinction can be traced back

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tum magica pertractare, sic superfluum est, nec est necessarium". Bacon continues the subject when he comments on the *Secretum secretorum*, in *Opera hactenus inedita*, 16 vols., ed. Robert Steele (Oxford, 1920), 5, pp. 6–7, and attacks witchcraft in a harder form of expression than usual. Witchcraft is transferred from the parents to their children: "Ulterius procedit demencia mathematicorum falsorum sine apparicione daemonum *nec est ars, nec natura* [. . .] errores vetularum sortilegarum et virorum similiter. Nam edocti fuerunt primitus a magicis et matres docent filias et patres docent filios".

[44] (Pseudo) Roger Bacon, *Epistola*, p. 524: "In his vero omnibus nec philosophica consideratio considerat, nec ars, nec potestas naturae consistit. Sed praeter haec est nequior occupatio, quando homines contra leges philosophiae et contra omnem rationem spiritus invocant nefarios, ut per eos suam compleant voluntatem. Et in hoc est error, quod credunt sibi subijci spiritus, ut ipsi cogant humana virtute; hoc enim est impossibile, quia vis humana longe inferior est quam spirituum. Atque in hoc magis oberrant huiusmodi homines, quod per aliquas res naturales quibus utuntur, credunt vel advocare vel fugare spiritus. Et adhuc erratur, quando per invocationes et deprecationes et sacrificia nituntur homines eos placere, et adducere pro utilitate vocantium". *Ibid.*, p. 531: "Multi igitur libri cavendi sunt propter carmina et characteres et orationes et coniurationes et sacrificia et huiusmodi quia pure magici sunt".

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 542–43 (where the *Secretum secretorum* is cited); *ibid.*, p. 530, a particularly lucid example showing that Bacon agreed with the imagination theory of Avicenna: "Natura enim corporis (ut Avicenna docet . . .) obedit cogitationibus et vehementibus desideriis animae; immo nulla operatio hominis fit, nisi per hoc quod virtus naturalis in membris obedit cogitationibus et desideriis animae. Nam (sicut Avicenna docet tertio *Metaphysicae*) primum movens est cogitatio, deinde desiderium conformatum cogitationi, postea virtus naturalis in membris, quae obedit cogitationi et desiderio; et hoc in malo (ut dictum est) et in bono similiter".

[46] Compare Ficino, *Commentaire sur le Banquet de Platon*, ed. R. Marcel (Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1956), p. 220 (6.10); Pico, *Conclusiones magicae*, in *Opera*, Basileae, 1575, conclusio 10, and *Oratio de dignitate hominis cit.*, p. 152, cf. also my comments in 'Platone, Ficino e la magia' cit., pp. 130–ff.

to Plotinus, the enunciation that it undergoes in Florence is closer to that of Bacon, where this distinction is clearer and more articulate.

Trithemius, Agrippa, and many others will quote him while considering his magic unjustifiably much less natural than their own. The dichotomous definition of magic that is clearly recognizable in Albertus Magnus's writings[47] was reintroduced by Pico and soon found its way to France and Germany. In 1493, shortly after he had met Pico in Florence, Lefèvre wrote the book *De magia naturali*,[48] and covered it with a tight

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[47] Albertus, *Metaphysica* 9.3.2; *Opera*, ed. Jammy, 3, p. 405, col. 2. In a context, in which the movement of the heavens is defined as being natural and not artificial ("artificialis"), Albertus observes that the latter "non est a natura, sed a principio naturae minister artifex, sicut est medicus et alchimicus aliquando". Cf. *Summa theologiae* 2.8.30; ed. Jammy cit. 18.176, 180 defends in the same *quaestio* 30 the "magia naturalis", which is founded on the Augustinian "rationes seminales". ("Adhuc Augustinus in Glossa magna: 'Insunt rebus corporeis elementa mundi per omnia quaedam occultae seminariae rationes' . . . Si ergo per incantationes magorum, per semina indita virgis, virgae proruperunt in serpentes modis et finibus illorum debitis et tale opus verum est et naturale, etiam vera et naturalia fuerunt opera magorum, et propter modum quia subito fecerunt, vera miracula sunt dicenda") and in his detailed description of witchcraft based on the interpretation of *Canon Episcopi*: "Daemones quaedam futura praedicunt et quaedam mira faciunt, quibus homines alliciunt et seducunt. Unde quaedam mulierculae post Satanam conversae, daemonum illusionibus et phantasmatibus seductae, credunt se et profitentur nocturnis horis cum Diana Paganorum dea, vel Herodiade, vel Minerva et innumera mulierum multitudine equitare. Ipse namque Satanas, qui transfigurat se in angelum lucis, cum mentem cuiusque mulierculae ceperit, et hanc sibi per infidelitatem subiugaverit, illico transformat se in diversarum personarum species ac similitudines: et mentem quam captivam tenet in somnio deludens, modo laeta, modo tristia, modo cognitas, modo incognitas personas ostendens, per devia quaeque deducit. Et cum solus hoc patitur spiritus infidelis, non in animo tantum, sed et in corpore evenire opinatur. Idcirco nimis stultus et hebes est, qui haec omnia qua in spiritu fiunt, etiam accidere in corpora arbitratur". Like prophets and apostles, witches only "in spiritu, non in corpore tales visiones viderunt" (p. 181).

[48] E. Rice reported on this still unpublished work, handed down in two complete manuscripts and a short fragment, in *The Prefatory Epistles of Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples* (New York, 1976), p. 118 n. 7; and in the article 'The 'De magia naturali' of Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples', in *Philosophy and Humanism: Renaissance Essays in Honor of P. O. Kristeller*, ed. E. P. Mahoney (New York, 1976), pp. 19–29. The date of origin of this work, as well as the date of the visit to Pico in the spring of 1492 have been established by A. Renaudet, *Préréforme et humanisme* (Paris, 1953), pp. 142, 153 n. 6, 668. It is explainable that during the course of such a visit to Florence, Lefèvre learned nothing about the criticism of astrology and other such "vanities", which was being worked out by Giovanni Pico at that time (the only surviving documents thereof are the *Disputationes adversus astrologiam*, which were first published by Gianfrancesco Pico in 1496, namely after the completion of *De magia naturali*). The *Disputationes* of Pico were soon to cause different reactions in France, starting with the long epistle written by Gaguin to Wilhelmus Hermannus, an Augustinian canon, on 16 September 1496, against the astrologers, "saepenumero ad magiam se convertentes, see Robert Gaguin, *Epistolae et orationes*, 2 vols., ed. Louis Thuasne (Paris, 1904), 1, pp. 26–35, and continuing up to a document,

network of classical quotations emphasizing the elementary aspects of magic while suppressing all others. The book starts with some of Ficino's well-known topics. But even before 1504 the author had decided not to publish his work—something unusual for him—and declared, in public and in private, that no magic was good and that it was mere pretence to assume the existence of a natural kind of magic.[49] Champier made use of Ficino's topoi in many of his compilations, but in the *Dialogus in magicarum artium destructionem* (1500?) he had already made depreciatory allusions to witches.[50] In any case, Champier had both edited and written commentaries on *Pimander* and the *Definitiones Asclepii.*

Even more complex are the circumstances under which Hermetism and the definition of natural magic reach Germany, where they are of even greater importance for the development of intellectual, religious, and social history. Johann Reuchlin's *De verbo mirifico* was saturated with Ficino's Hermetism, natural magic, and Pico's cabala. However, all this is not under discussion here, since his originality lies especially in the last component.[51] The great Hebrew scholar who himself became

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which Thuasne refers to in a note, i.e., the *Invectiva contra astrologos* by Thomas Murner, published in 1499 in Strasbourg. Concerning an older document written against the astrologers (Jean de Bruges, 1484; Paris, bibl. Mazarine, MS 3893) *ibid.* cit., I, 39; cf. H. de Lubac, *Jean Pic de la Mirandole: Etudes et discussions* (Paris, 1974), chs. 4 and 5, pp. 307–32. However, Lefèvre expresses a strong belief in astrology also in his edition of the Pseudo-Dionysius in 1499. Therefore, it cannot be traced back to his reading of Pico's *Disputationes* alone, if he rethinks the question of the occult sciences, but that is still to be explained.

[49] A. Horowitz, *Michael Hummelberger* (Berlin, 1875), pp. 39–40, quotes a letter from Hummelberger to Christophorus Sertorius, which, in the year 1512, makes a reference to that judgment "a praeceptore meo Jacobo Fabro Stapulensi olim accepi nullam scilicet magiam esse bonam: figmentum etiam ullam esse naturalem", cited by Rice, *Prefatory Epistles*, p. 120.

[50] Recently two editions of this dialogue have been published, along with the corresponding translations into English and French by A. Rijper in *Anagrom* 5/6 (1974), pp. 1–54; and in the monograph of B. P. Copenhaver, S. *Champier and the Reception of the Occultist Tradition in Renaissance France* (The Hague, 1978), pp. 243–330. In regard to Champier's Hermetic edition, see C. Vasoli, 'Temi e fonti della tradizione ermetica in uno scritto di S. Champier', in *Umanesimo e esoterismo*, ed. E. Castelli (Padua, 1960).

[51] Cf. F. Secret, *Les Kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance* (Paris, 1964), ch. 4 and passim; L. Spitz, *The Christian Reformation of the German Humanists* (Cambridge, Ma., Harvard U.P., 1963), ch. 4; Id., 'The 'Theologia platonica' in the Religious Thought of the German Humanists', in *Middle Ages Renaissance Volkskunde: Feschrift J. G. Kunstmann*, University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages, n. 26 (Chapel Hill, North Carolina U.P., 1959), pp. 118–33. A critical edition of Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia* (Leiden Brill, 1994) was published by Vittoria Perrone Compagni, who continued a project that I outlined in my dissertation on Agrippa, discussed with Professor Eugenio Garin

the victim of the witch-hunt, even though he never expressed himself in regard to the problem of witchcraft, represents the most important link between Pico and Agrippa (it was Agrippa's encyclopedic *De occulta philosophia* which made sure that these ideas remained adequately known up to the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the works of Pico and Reuchlin were reprinted less and were less remembered).

Of the same thought pattern was the Benedictine abbot Trithemius, who wanted to hand over his philosophical and occult work under the undecipherable seal of an initiate. To his own contemporaries—less so to historians—it was quite obvious that he was a disciple of the Florentines. Among others it was clear to his *confrère* Johannes Butzbach, who wrote the *Macrostroma de laudibus trithemianis*, preserved in a Bonn palimpsest,[52] to defend Trithemius against the charges of necromancy

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of the University of Florence in 1958: I refer the reader to Appendix to its Part II, pp. 179–228. Having used it in this paper to show Agrippa's use of Reuchlin, I quote a few examples from the appendix to my dissertation to show the influence on the first edition of Agrippa (Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, cod. M.ch.q.50, henceforth cited as W) of *De verbo mirifico* and, on the final version published in 1553 in Cologne, also of *De arte Kabbalistica*: both writings of Reuchlin contain not only cabalistic matters but also numerous classical and Platonic-Florentine quotes. *De verbo mirifico* (Lyon, 1551), p. 213 (Bk. 2, ch. 21) resumes the Hermetic "magnum miraculum est homo", cited passim in *De occulta philosophia; De verbo mirifico*, pp. 218–19 (Bk. 2, ch. 21) quotes Vergil's verse "Igneus est ollis vigor", also cited in *De occulta philosophia*, Bk.1, ch. 7, in Agrippa, *Opera* (Lyon, 1600), (Ferguson's list, ed. IV), vol. I, p. 13, where the Zoroastrian rule is taken up again; "barbara et antiqua verba" not translated in the magical ritual and other Zoroastrian quotes are to be found in Reuchlin as well as in the first version W of Agrippa: W III, 4 = *De verbo mirifico*, III, 7; W III, 42 = III, 55; W III, 45 = iii, 58. The most exemplary case is the one in which those ancient wise men are enumerated who used natural magic, the list goes from Plinius (*Naturalis Historia*, 31.1–6) to Ficinus and Picus, (*Oratio*, note 8, 150) from which Agrippa derives material (*De occulta philosophia*, p. 3; Bk. I, ch. 2 = W.I, 2) especially in *De verbo mirifico* 92, where also the names of the younger and more dubious magicians are listed (Alfred of Sareshel, Roger Bacon, Pietro d'Abano and *Picatrix*), added by Agrippa in the second version (Epistle to Trithemius).

[52] H. Fertig, *Neues aus dem literarischen Nachlasse des Humanisten Johannes Butzbach (Piemontanus)*, (Würzburg, Programm d. k. Neuen Gymnasiums, 1906–7), which gives a detailed description of the handwritten works (pp. 25ff.) as well as a correct biography of this Benedictine who started as a tailor and then became a student of Trithemius's literary history, later carrying on this work himself (cf. K. Rühl, *Das "Aktuarium de scriptoribus ecclesiasticis" des J. Butzbach*, Bonn, 1937). In the quoted *Macrostroma*, in *Microstroma*, in which Butzbach sings the praises of Trithemius in verses (fol. 54*r*: "doctrina exundans ut Trismegistus erat"), and finally in the section of his *Apologia ad Johannem Trithemium* which refers to this work (ed. by H. Fertig, cited *supra*, pp. 76–78, from Bonn UB, Cod. S 358), Butzbach proves himself to be a valuable source for Trithemius' ideas and his fate in the years that directly follow the crisis at Sponheim. The three works—of which the *Macrostroma* is the first and by far the most interesting—were actually written in short succession during the year 1508. Fertig (p. 70) had already emphasized that cer-

uttered by other friars and by Charles de Bovelles. In connection with other complaints (which his *confrères* interposed because they were tired of having to copy manuscripts in the time of Gutenberg), Trithemius was finally deposed in 1505 as abbot of Sponheim.[53] His faithful friend Butzbach, who must have had on his desk at Maria Laach a copy of Pico's *Apologia* (condemned and for half a century out of print, but widely circulated in Germany), used some of its main arguments against Trithemius's critics,

> who do not understand, or do not wish to, that in this book he deals with natural magic; he teaches with extreme elegance with the strongest arguments and a multitude of testimonies, as did recently the erudite

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tain sections of the *Apologia* were literally dependent on the letters of Giovanni Pico to Poliziano and to Paolo Cortesi, in Pico, *Opera*, 2 vols. (Basel, 1557), 1, pp. 364–65. See also the *Epistola sive tractatus de differentia sive qualitate stili* (Cologne, Historisches Archiv, MS W 8°, 352, fol. 166*v*–166*r*), where both Picos appeared as well as Ermolao Barbaro and Lefèvre "in triplici lingua orator doctissimus/ philosophus diviniloquus qui plurima culto/ edidit in sacros libros commenta stilo". In addition, Erasmus, philosopher, orator and writer without comparison either in Italy or in France, and among the frequently quoted Germans, Trithemius, Reuchlin "triplici sermone politus" and Cardinal Cusanus, mentioned for his Vulgar and Latin works; also Murmelius, Hermann van den Busch, Ortwin Gratius (who then was still considered among the "homines clari"), Peutinger, Alexander Hegius, Rudolphus Agricola, Bebel and—despite a recent polemic with his friend and master, Trithemius—Jacob Wimpfeling. See also on Butzbach P. Richter, 'Die Schriftsteller der Benediktinerabtei Maria-Laach', *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift fur Geschichte und Kunst* 17 (1898), pp. 314–31.

[53] The episode is discussed by F. W. Roth, 'Studien zum J. Trithemius-Jubeljahr (1516)', *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktiner Ordens* 37 (1916), pp. 267–73; by K. Arnold, *J. Trithemius* (1462–1516), (*Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Bistums u. Hochstifts Würzburg*, 23 = Würzburg, 1971: second ed. 1991), pp. 203–8. This is an excellent biography and an important work on the MSS, not to be overlooked in any future research dealing with this author, as happened in a work by N. L. Brann, *The Abbott Trithemius (1462–1516): The Renaissance of Monastic Humanism* (Leiden, 1981), pp. 31–53. It is difficult to assess the gravity of the plot organized by the prior of Sponheim, Nicholaus von Remich, who is mentioned by Trithemius and Butzbach; Nicholaus exploited the scandal caused by a letter written in 1499 by Trithemius to Arnold de Bost, a Carmelite in Gand: this letter summarized and announced the first occult work just written by Trithemius, the *Steganographia.* The letter, upon the death of its recipient, made its way to the Gand monastery, only to be intercepted by the abbot; it most certainly enjoyed wide circulation, a fact documented in a number of manuscripts. One of these originated from the hand of J. Reuchlin (London, British Library, Add. MS 11416, fol, f. 200*v*–202*r;* which contains also an unknown and unpublished letter about Johannes Mercurius from Correggio, which prompted an extremely harsh judgment from Trithemius, different from the critique of the same Johannes Mercuriusin his *Chronicon Hirsaugiense*, in *Opera historica*,St. Gallen, 1690, 2, p. 584). In this document there is a parallel to his famous letter to Johann Virdung of Hassfurt (see *infra*, p. 79 n. 17), in which he severely attacks the historical Faust and emphasizes his intolerance of these prophets and popular seers.

> Pico, that this [magic] is different and has to be distinguished from that magic which is impious and criminal. Indeed, no person who has read Pico's *Apologia* could be in doubt that "magic is twofold"; as the author says, the one is concerned with the entire work and authority of the demons, a practice most certainly abominable and unnatural. The other is, when correctly examined, nothing but the absolute perfection of natural philosophy.[54]

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[54] Butzbach, *Macrostroma* (Bonn UB, cod. S 357, fol., f. 92*r*): "non intelligentes, nec intelligere volentes eum de naturali magia ibi agere, quam non parvo intersticio, sicut et doctissimus ille Picus dudum ab impia et scelesta differre [et] separari fortissimis rationibus et multorum testimonio elegantissime edocet. Nam 'duplicem esse magiam' nemo, qui ipsius Pici *Apologiam* legerit, inficiabitur, quarum altera, inquit, demonum toto opere et auctoritate constat, res medius fidius execranda et portentosa; altera nichil est aliud cum bene exploratur quam naturalis philosophiae absoluta consummatio'". The section quoted from *Apologia* corresponds to Pico, *Opera*, I, p. 80. Butzbach also adopts Pico's topical enumeration of the magi and wise men of antiquity (Pythagoras, Empedocles, Democritos, Plato "who went on journeys in order to learn magic", Zalmoxides, Abbaris Yperboreus, Oromasis's son Zoroaster, Karondas, Damigeron, Apollonius Tyanaeus, Osthanes, Dardanus, Homer, Eudoxus, Hermippus) and of some "iunores" who had a limited knowledge of it ("olfecerint"), like al-Kindi, Roger Bacon, Guillaume d'Auvergne; in addition, Antonio Vinciguerra alias Chronicus, a Venetian diplomat, probably mentioned in such august company by Pico in order to gain support from the Roman Court. Shortly after that (fol. 92*v*) Butzbach adopts from Pico's *Apologia* (pp. 81, 112) the definition of natural magic that is ascribed to Guillaume somewhat *par force* ("Guilhelmus Parisiensis episcopus, coetaneus Roberti Linconiensis qui dicit quod magi prohibiti dicuntur magi quasi mali, quare mala faciunt; magi autem naturales dicuntur magi quasi magni, quia magna faciunt"). He cites Guillaume's *De universo* to relegate to Egypt the prohibited magic, "quia ibi vigebat cultus daemonum", the good one to Ethiopia and India, where there exists an abundance of herbs and other substances effective in natural magic. He assigns Pico's thesis that magic is "pars scientiae naturalis" to Guillaume's other work, *De legibus*. Then Butzbach refers to an extraordinarily distinguished personality in the Germanic church tradition, Albertus Magnus, who is, however, considered by many to have been in error in regard to magic to the same extent as Trithemius: "Hanc naturalem magiam vir catholicus et sanctus Albertus Magnus se dicit esse secutum et experientiis in ea multa comperisse, quamobrem apud vulgus iners, quod omnia in sinistrum facilius interpretatur, nicromanticus dicitur fuisse. Quod et Trithemius iste noster [. . .] sibi quandoque perspicuum habuit evenire. Sic enim ad Bostium scribens ait: 'Hec ideo dixerim, ut si forte aliquando ad te rumor aliquis pervenerit, me scilicet impossibilia posse, non me magum [*supple*: malum], sed philosophum existimes. Nam quod Alberto Magno, profundissimo naturalium rerum scrutatori contingit, ut propter miranda quae occulte virtute naturae operatus est, magus a vulgo sit habitus, michi similiter contingere posse certum sum". The comparison between Trithemius and Albertus Magnus is again continued, fol. 94*r*: "Similiter cum legant Albertum inter experimenta magiae multum temporis consumpsisse, de magia naturali hoc intelligant, non de prohibita, ne exemplo tanti viri illi [magiae experimento] se dedant, quo illi licuit, sibi quoque licere praesumentes. Cum itaque Trithemium nostrum, quem in manibus habemus, mirabilia exercere vel scire scimus, audimus et legimus, non ea *per magiam* nicromanciam, sed per naturalem fieri credamus". The same comparison in Wolfgang Treffler, 'Epistola D.no Wolfgango de Solms', 21 July 1508; ed. Ziegelbauer-

Thus, the existence of two forms of magic became a topos, albeit one that cannot be considered a new discovery. However, as Walker has so keenly shown in his standard work, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, it is impossible to separate the one from the other entirely.[55] Given the fact that Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda* and Pico's magical cabalistic theses did not exclude instances of spiritual magic (Hermetic characters, talismans, seals, Orphic hymns, fumigations) such a definition is in reality more than a dichotomy; it can be misunderstood, it is ambiguous, and in those dark years when demonology was codified and the witch-hunts had their beginnings, this ambiguity afforded some aid and relief.[56] John of Salisbury,[57] Guillaume d'Auvergne, Roger Bacon,

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Legipontanus in *Historia litteraria O.S.B.* (Augsburg-Wiirzburg, 1754), I, p. 493: "Sed ut Trithemius licentius excusare possis, magnus ille Albertus tibi prima fronte occurrat, cui non nihil superstitiositatis quoque ascribitur, quod ipse etiam vel nunc vita functus suum esse negabat". About Treffler, see Pertz's Archiv, 2 (1820), pp. 239–44; *Catalogus librorum MSS Bibliothecae Bodleianae D.Thomae Phillipps, A.D. 1837*, 8, Nr. 705 (see now Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, cod. Lat. fol. 666); AN., 'Aus dem Gelehrten Freundeskreis des Abts Trithemius', in *Historisch-politische Blatter* 77, p. 923ff.; D. Konig, 'Mainzer Chronisten: W. Treffler' in *Histor. Kommission bei d. K. Akademie d. Wissenschaften, Forschungen z. Dt. Geschichte*, 20 (Göttingen, 1880), p. 40ff.

[55] Quoted *supra*, note 28. The great merit of this book is to have pursued, in a pioneering way, the entire discussion on magic even in the demonological writings of Wier, Erastus, Bodin, Del Rio, and particularly in the Aristotelian theories. It deals with Trithemius (pp. 86–90), and considers it highly probable that Trithemius carried out magic feats "with the help of planetary angels". Starting with the *Steganographia* and the *De septem secundeis* (both considered "dangerous demonic Magic" by Bovelles, Wier, and Del Rio), Walker distinguishes the first two cryptographic books from book III (ed. Heidel, Nurnberg 1721, p. 310), which prescribes "fac imaginem ex cera vel pinge in chartam novam figuram Orifielis in modum viri barbati et nudi; stantis super taurum varii coloris, habentis in dextra librum et in sinistram calamum", in order to address, at an astrologically propitious time, a magic prayer to them. Walker's interpretation was reviewed by E. Garin, 'La magia da Ficino a Campanella', *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* 39 (1960), pp. 156–57; see also, H. C. Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia* ed. by K. A. Nowotny (Graz, 1967), p. 429. Of a different opinion is W. Shumaker, *Renaissance Curiosa* (Binghamton, N.Y., 1982), pp. 91ff.

[56] It is noteworthy that the *topos* ascribed to Plotinus is taken up again by Butzbach, but is not emphasized, "ubi naturae ministrum et non arteficem magum demonstrat" (*Macrostroma cit.*, fol. 92*r*; Pico, *Opera*, I, p. 81). Also he reverts time and time again to the theme of sympathy developed already in Ficinus's *De amore*. It is on this basis that the magician makes full use of the peculiarities that are hidden in nature by means of certain enticements ("illecebrae") "in mundi recessibus, in naturae gremio, in promptuariis Dei latitantia miracula, quasi ipsa [Natura] sit artifex, promit in publicum. Et sicut agricola ulivos vitibus, ita magus terram caelo, id est inferiora superiorum dotibus virtutibusque maritat . . . Neque enim ad religionem, ad Dei cultum quidquam promovet magis quam assidua contemplatio mirabilium Dei, que ut per hanc de quo agimus *naturalem magiam* bene exploraverimus in Opificis cultum amoremque ardentius animati illum canere compellemur" (*Macrostroma*, fol. 92*r*).

[57] John of Salisbury, *Polycraticus*, 2 vols., ed. by C. C. 1. Webb (London, 1909), I,

Arnau de Villanueva,[58] Thomas Aquinas,[59] and even Erasmus[60] were very different from the two elitist Florentines who would not discuss witches expressly; and yet the very existence of witches was real and they were extremely near—even within the reach of Ficino's favorite academic walks (like the one at Fontelucente that Poliziano mentioned with some irony);[61] bearing their existence in mind is the indispensable prerequisite to understanding why they insisted on this difference. If I may make this somewhat irreverent and paradoxical comparison, that distinction has essentially the same purpose as Albertus and Thomas Aquinas's distinction in regard to the *duae viae* of theology and philosophy, namely to legitimize and render practicable the second way, the *via naturalis*. Giovanni Pico, who had received Scholastic training (in Padua and Paris) more comprehensive and deeper than that of Ficino and other magicians, had managed to find some formulations that would eventually become classic definitions and (like that on magic as "naturalis philosophiae absoluta consummatio", a definition taken from Psellus) would be repeated systematically as late as Della Porta.[62] Butzbach makes use of them when he defends Trithemius:

> As the Greeks do mention both, they do not think that one deserves the name of magic, thus they call it *goeteían*, whereas they use as a specific and proper name *mageían*, to denote the other which they consider the perfect and highest science. Equally, according to Porphyrius, the word

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pp. 9–10, 14; II, pp. 26–28. See also H. C. Lea, *Materials towards a History of Witchcraft* ed. A. C. Howland (New York, 1957, 2d ed.), pp. 127–28; cf. E. Peters, *The Magician*, pp. 46–50, passim. See also Heinrich von Langenstein, *Unterscheidung der Geister*, ed. by Th. Hohmann (Munich, 1977).

[58] P. Diepgen, 'Arnaldus de Villanova: De improbatione maleficorum', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 9 (1911), pp. 385–403; Arnaldus, *Opera* (Lyon, 1532), fols. 123*r*–130*r* ("De parte operativa"), fols. 215*v*, 290*r*–292*v*, 295*v*.

[59] Cr. note 25 *supra*.

[60] *Opus epistolarum Erasmi*, ed. P. S. Allen (Oxford, 1906), I , pp. 336–40. Letter n. 143 to Antonius de Bergen (Paris, 14 January 1501) reports in great detail on a case about which he had learned in the previous year at Meung-sur-Loire: A necromancer about to die entrusted to his wife forbidden books he had in his house. She was to give them to a priest and accomplice who held ceremonies at Orléans "non insciente uxore, filia quoque virgine etiam adiutante". Erasmus provides, though second-hand, one of the most precise reports on the ceremonies ascribed to witch masters in which Church rites were used.

[61] Cf. Poliziano's *Lamia* cited (p. 35 *supra*). The ironic image has its origin in Plutarch's saying that witches have artificial eyes and Poliziano concludes with facetious polemics against those who do not believe in the philosophical vocation germinating in the poet Poliziano.

[62] Cr. my *Platone, Ficino e la magia cit.*, p. 136 n. 23.

> magician in the Persian language denotes those we call interpreters and worshippers of divine things. Great and indeed enormous are the difference and dissimilitude between the two arts. The one is condemned and loathed not only by the Christian religion, but by all religions and every orderly state; the other is approved of and cherished by wise people and nations who love the knowledge of divine and celestial things. The one is a most fraudulent art, the other is the highest and holiest philosophy. The one is false and useless; the other is reliable, enduring and solid. Those who cultivate the first always keep it secret, because it causes shame and offence to its practitioners; from the other men have sought the greatest literary glory (and that [happened] from the earliest times and almost always.[63]

Butzbach, being rather naive, seems to be in the dark about Trithemius's demeanor as an initiate—unless he himself was an initiate and wanted to misuse Pico's fine rhetorical tirade in order to dispel any suspicions against his teacher in the order and in the art itself. Ambiguity, by the way, was already inherent in the formulations of Pico, who very honestly never acted as an initiate. In Persian, *magic* is synonymous with

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[63] Butzbach, *Macrostroma* (Bonn, U.B., cod. p. 357), fols. 90*v*–9I*r*: "Utriusque [magiae] cum greci meminerint, illam magiae nullo modo [ms: minus] nomine dignantes, *goeteían* nuncupant, hanc propria peculiarique nuncupatione *mageían*, quasi perfectam summamque scientiam vocant. Idem enim, ut ait Porphirius, Persarum lingua magus sonat apud nos divinorum interpres et cultor: magna aut immo maxima inter has artes disparilitas [ms: disparitas] et dissimilitudo. Illam non modo christiana religio, sed omnes leges, omnis bene instituta res publica damnat et execrat. Hanc omnes sapientes, caelestium et divinarum rerum studiosae nationes approbant et amplectuntur. Illa arcium fraudulentissima, haec altior sanctiorque philosophia; illa irrita et vana, haec firma, fidelis et solida; ilIam quisquis coluit semper dissimulavit, quia in auctores esset ignominiam et contumeliam; ex hac summa literarum claritas et gloria antiquitus et pene semper petita". Cf. Pico, *Conclusiones magicae cit.* An indication as to the disquieting presence of the scandal initiated by the *Steganographia*, as well as by the letter cited *supra*, through which Arnold de Bost was notified in advance, can be recognized in Butzbach's mention of this; namely, the course of events that forced Trithemius to abdicate as abbot of Sponheim. On fol. 89*r*, after having given a brief summary of the work still in the process of writing, Butzbach criticizes his contemporaries: they may be noble and well educated, but there are many "qui existimant ista impossibilia et supernaturalia exclamant. His ipse et omnibus nobis multa naturaliter esse possibilia, quae vires nescientibus impossibilia et supernaturalia videntur". As Trithemius wrote to Bost: "Sunt omnia pure naturalia sine deceptione aliqua, sine suspicione, sine magica, sine invocatione aut mysterio spirituum quarumcumque. Haec ideo [Trithemius] dixit, ut si forte aliquando ad eum rumor perveniret eum scire impossibilia, non eum magum, sed philosophum existimaret. Quod equidem et nos idem de se sentire voluit. Nam quod Alberto Magno profundissimo naturalium rerum scrutator contingit, ut propter miranda quae occulta virtute operatus est magus a vulgo sit habitus". Apart from the famous letter (published in *Polygraphia* as early as 1518 in Basel, pp. 240ff.), Trithemius developed the idea that Albertus Magnus was his famous and saintly precursor in the natural magic in *De septem secundeis* (Cologne, 1567), pp. 89ff.

wisdom (as everyone would from now on repeat, while constantly adding to a long list of equivalent roles such as magicians, sages, priests, and druids).[64] Magic was also the favorite of those persons and communities who were "coelestium ac divinarum rerum studiosae," such as astrologers, speculative theologians, and at times even priests. In fact Pico, the natural magician,[65] did not limit himself to combining occult (less well-known) properties of elementary substances (*elementata*) on all levels of the scale of being and thus to having "the world wedded"; the most objectionable of his *Nine hundred theses* even maintained that such magic combined with the cabala was useful for the certification of miracles wrought by Christ,[66] whereas another thesis, the final one, maintained that "sicut vera astrologia docet nos legere in libro Dei, ita Cabalah docet nos legere in libro Legis",[67] and elsewhere again he dealt with "voces et verba in opere magico"[68] and even indicated that "plus posse caracteres et figuras in opere magico, quam possit quecunque qualitas materialis".[69]

It is probably no coincidence that almost all of the Renaissance theoreticians of magic, including Lefèvre, Zorzi, Postel, Servetus, Paracelsus, Bruno, and Campanella, had probed deeply into religious meditation, often verging on heterodoxy.[70] It is thus understandable

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[64] Cf. note 54 *supra*; see also D. P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology cit.*, pp. 80–ff.

[65] It is to be noted that Butzbach knows about Pico's change of opinion in regard to astrology and Lucio Bellanti' book criticizing his *Disputationes*; however, he does not attach the right value to it: "Sic Picus contra astrologos probe insurgens, iam vita functus a quodam astrologiae professore carpitur".

[66] Pico, *Conclusiones*, in *Opera*, 10, p. 79 (n. 7).

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 90 (n. 72).

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 79 (n. 19).

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 80 (n. 24).

[70] Cf. notes 47–48 for Lefèvre. For Francesco Giorgio Veneto (Zorzi), cf. V. Perrone Compagni, 'Una fonte di C. Agrippa: Il 'De Harmonia Mundi' di F. Zorzi', *Annali dell'Instituto di Filosofia* [Università di Firenze] 4 (1982), pp. 45–74, with extensive bibliography. For Postel, see F. Secret, *Bibliographie des Mss. de G. Postel* (Geneva, Droz, 1970); and M. Leathers Kuntz, *G. Postel, Prophet of the Restitution of All Things: His Life and Thought* (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1981). For Michael Servetus and Paracelsus, see note 29 *supra*; and K. Goldammer, *Paracelsus Studies* (Klagenfurt, Verlag des Geschichtsverein für Kärtner, 1954), pp. 42–66; Id., ed., *Paracelsus, Theologische und religionsphilosophische Schriften* (Wiesbaden, 1955–73). For Bruno; cf. Yates, *Giordano Bruno cit.*; and A. Mercati, *Il sommario del processo di G. Bruno* (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana ed., 1942); cf. L. Firpo, 'Il processo di G. Bruno', *Rivista storica italiana* 60 (1958); 61 (1959); now reprinted Id., *Il processo di G. Bruno*, ed. by D. Quaglioni, (Rome, 1998). For Campanella, see Id., *Ricerche campanelliane* (Florence, 1947), pp. 137–ff.; idem and N. Badaloni's papers in *L'opera e il pensiero di Giovanni Pico della Mirandola*, 2 vols. (Florence, Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 1965), 2, p. 363–ff., and 373–ff. Still valid is

that at least some of these were doubly motivated to take a stand on the phenomenon of witchcraft that had also been interpreted as a phenomenon of alternative religion.[71] Even today there are heated disputes among historians in regard to the nature of witchcraft, but at that time such an issue was even less painless and safe. And yet, more than one Hermetic philosopher felt obliged to express his opinion on witchcraft, perhaps because of his own conscience and sensitivity to either religious or magic problems, or perhaps in response to the need of those turbulent times. This is common knowledge, so far as the time span during and after the Council of Trent is concerned. Johannes Weyer, disciple of Agrippa and admirer of Erasmus, the encyclopedist and natural magician Giambattista Della Porta, Michel de Montaigne, Reginald Scot, Friedrich von Spee, Christian Thomasius and others spoke out in defense of witchcraft. Meanwhile, on the other side of the barrier, a dramatic contradiction is shown within the works of a great intellectual such as Jean Bodin (*Universae naturae Theatrum* and *Heptaplomeres* versus *Démonomanie des sorciers*, 1581). This contradiction can be understood when one takes into consideration, as Lucien Febvre has taught, the common mentality prevailing at that time, without defining it as pure "sottise".[72]

But even before the reformed Johannes Weyer, a follower of Erasmus, had started this well-known debate, not everyone had observed the elitist silence that was somewhat opportunistic as practiced by Pico and Ficino.

There is Champier, who as early as 1500 spoke out against the witches. There is Pico's nephew, Gianfrancesco, who moved away from the "vanity of pagan doctrines" (the Hermetic and Neoplatonic ones included).[73] At the request of a Dominican Inquisitor who between

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L. Blanchet, *Tommaso Campanella* (Paris, 1920), pp. 193–225; G. Ernst, *Tommaso Campanella. Il libro e il corpo della natura*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2002.

[71] I prefer not to join the intense discussions as to the reality of the so-called Sabbath meetings. But even if those were different from the fantasies of collective unconsciousness—cf. N. Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons* (London, Chatto—Heinemann—Sussex U.P., 1975), pp. 223–ff. and 258–63—involved here are always phenomena difficult to grasp. They originate just as much in the religious sphere as they do in the sexual and depth-psychological spheres.

[72] 'Sorcellerie, sottise ou revolution mentale?' [1948], in L. Febvre, *Au coeur religieux du XVI^e siecle* (Paris, SEVPEN, 1957), pp. 301–309.

[73] See P. Burke, 'G. F. Pico and His Strix', in *The Damned Art*, ed. S. Anglo (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 32–ff. *Ibid.*, pp. 53ff. and 76ff.; *ibid.*, see also C. Baxter's papers on Weyer and Bodin.

Padua and Bologna was battling with some radical Aristotelians (Achillini, Pomponazzi, and Tiberio Russiliano), Gianfranceso even wrote a dialogue *Strix* (*The Witch*). These Aristotelians were spreading doubts about the existence of demons, even though the Hermetic tradition was not unknown to Nifo, to Pomponazzi, and to Russiliano.[74] But the most noteworthy case is the one that involved the Germans, already mentioned. Trithemius and Agrippa, who cooperated in the elaboration of the Hermetism and natural magic of the Florentines in Germany, both participated in the debate on witchcraft, but on opposite sides.

Agrippa, then in his early twenties, showed in 1510 the first manuscript draft of his *De occulta philosophia* to Trithemius. Both were attached to Johannes Reuchlin and they had a frank discussion, which must have been an eye-opener to the younger one, in regard to a good many secrets and to the "two ways" of magic. The abbot urged him not to stop at the mere natural magic as required by the "ox" Bovelles who believed and would concentrate on only one discipline ("in unius duntaxat facultatis rudimentum iuravit"), but to probe under the veil of initiation into the prodigies of magical practice. Trithemius makes it incumbent on Agrippa to keep the occult a secret.[75] The pique finds its echo here on having been denounced by the traitor Charles de Bovelles (and it was very dangerous after the letter to Bost which brought about Trithemius' loss of Sponheim abbey).

But what interests us in this document is Trithemius's instigation to double-dealing; he revealed this attitude only to the few disciples who had arrived at the final initiation.Certainly also Trithemius's game with magic and witchcraft amounts to double-dealing. In his form of magic, the aspect of ceremonial magic is present, indeed it is prevalent. In the *Steganographia* denounced by Bovelles there is to be found, apart from a strange cryptography, spiritual magic of the cabalistic type.[76] His letters to Joachim von Brandenburg,[77] beside the one to Agrippa mentioned

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[74] For G. F. Pico, see Burke, 'G. F. Pico' cit.; for the Aristotelian Nifo, see my studies 'I problemi filosofici del necromante A. Nifo', *Medioevo* I (1975), pp. 129–17; Id., 'Aut Diabolus aut Achillinus', *Rinascimento*, 3d ser., 18 (1978), pp. 59–86.; Id., *Une réincarnation de Jean Pic à l'époque de Pomponazzi* (Milano, Il polifilo, 1994).

[75] *De occulta Philosophia* ([Cologne, Soter] 1533), fol. a6*r*: "ut vulgaria vulgaribus, altiora vero et arcana altioribus atque secretis tantum communices amicis". Cf. in Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia*, ed. by A. Nowotny, *Epistola Trithemio* (dedication from Würzburg ms). and CLM 4392, fol. 5*r–v.*

[76] Yates, *G. Bruno*, pp. 145–ff.

[77] After the unhappy episode of the *Steganographia* and of the corresponding letter to Bost in 1499, there is a series of letters in which Trithemius begins to present his magic convictions by means of frequently repeated numerological concepts. It is appropriate

earlier, leave little room for doubt; and yet Trithemius wrote three works against witches who engage in the same practices. The preface of one of these works, *De daemonibus* (dated about 1507 or shortly after) has

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to mention Libanius Gallus's works and the correspondence addressed to him; he is supposed to have been a disciple of the hermit Pelagius of Majorca, i.e., perhaps of Joan Llobet, or, according to Trithemius's *Chronicon Hirsaugiense cit.*, p. 585, of Fernandus of Cordoba (dead in 1480) who had in the nineties [?!] withdrawn to the island of Lull in order to devote himself to magic. See J. N. Hillgarth, 'Some Notes on Lullian Hermits in Majorca saec. XIII–XVII', *Studia monastica* 6 (1964), p. 310 f. (about Joan Llobet, dead in 1460); J. Gayà, 'Algunos temas lulianos en los escritos de Charles de Bovelles', *Estudios lulianos* 24 (1980), pp. 53–55. Besides more recent studies cited and discussed *infra* (Ch.II,1 pp.000) see F Secret, 'Qui etait Libanius Gallus, le maitre de Jean Tritheme?', *Estudios Lulianos* 6 (1962), pp. 127–137; *Id.*, 'Histoire de I'esoterisme chretien' in *Annuaire de la 5e Section EPHE*, 86 (1977–78), pp. 411–15. I prefer not to present here, but *infra* my hypotheses in regard to these "teachers" of Trithemius, who on their part were in contact with the circles around Bovelles, Germain de Ganay, Wolfgang Hopilius and Narcissus Brunus. These epistles contain brief treatises on ritual and numerological magic; e.g., in the 1503 letter to Johannes von Westerburg (*De septem secundeis*, pp. 81ff.). See also the numerous letters to Joachim von Brandenburg who will be his sponsor, benefactor and disciple in this domain: 26 June 1503 (in *De septem secundeis*, pp. 48–57); 11 and 20 June 1505, 10 June 1506, 14 October 1506, 25 November 1506, 17 January 1507, 9 April 1507, 29 May 1507 and 16 October 1507 (*Opera historica*, 2, pp. 441,490, 519–ff., 526, 531–32, 571) some of them also mentioned in *De septem secundeis*, in letters addressed to his French correspondents, Germain de Ganay, Johannes Capellarius and Wolfgang Hopilius (from 1505 onward, all in *Opera historica*, 2, pp. 453ff., 471–72, 473, 555ff.). A dozen letters (some of them unpublished, other ones taken from the collection of the *Epistolae familiares* (Hagenau, 1536) constitute an appendix to *De septem secundeis* of 1567, particularly on account of their occultist character. Already in the oldest letter addressed to Westerburg (10 May 1503), Trithemius defends his innocence in regard to the accusations brought against him as a consequence of the Bost episode. But he admits: "Magiam me penitus ignorare naturalem dicere non possum, per quam quae miranda fiunt naturaliter fiunt". Also here he cites Albertus Magnus's influential precedent: Trithemius claims to have followed in his footsteps when investigating natural phenomena as well as in regard to mysticism:

"Scientia autem mali non est malum, sed usus . . . Multa fateor magorum volumina legi, praestigiorumque non pauca synthemata perlustravi. Nec ea volumina, quae ligamenta spirituum docent, et eis consimilia penitus a lectione nostra reieci, et in his omnibus firmior semper fateor in sancta fide christianorum evasi, quia divino munere quae legeram, intellexi, ut plurimum". In order to refute every error and invention of these books ("abominanda quae occultantur in libris magiae supersticiosae et in illis quae de coniurationibus daemonum conscribuntur"), is needed a learned Christian who would know how to understand them. "Magia naturalis, quae aliquando principiis naturae innixa in sua simplicitate pura constabat, tot mendacibus, tot impuritatibus, tot deceptionibus confusa est, ut nemo nisi in utraque doctissimus sit, qui alteram ab altera discernere possit". In the following he criticizes those who "tempus et substantiam alchymiae impendentes perdunt" and lists "tria principia in magia ista naturali occulta", all of a numerological character, as well as those contained in Bovelles's letters and in book 2 of Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia.* Here, however, Trithemius admits that "opus in magia naturali et supernaturali" is being realized thanks to these numerical secrets: "Fugiunt daemones acceduntque vocati secundum dispositionem quaternarii".

recently been published. There is also a detailed table of all twelve books that were probably never completed;[78] however, their content is very similar to an unpublished pseudepigraphical appendix to *Antipalus maleficorum* written in 1508 for the Elector of Brandenburg, but published posthumously and censored. This censored section, titled *Synusiastes Melanii Triandrici ad Iaymielem*, about *maleficium impotentiae* and other thorny problems, is, however, considered authentic by Klaus Arnold, the specialist for Trithemian manuscripts.[79] A few months prior to that, also

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[78] K. Arnold, 'Additamenta Trithemiana. Nachträge zu Leben und Werke des J. Trithemius, insbes. zur Schrift *De daemonibus*', *Würzburger Diozesan Geschichtsblätter* 37/38 (1975), pp. 239–67, where Arnold makes reference to many codices, among them also those which deal with the *Steganographia* (pp. 245ff. nn. 32–36), a work that really ought to be philologically analyzed. This introduction to the "proemium" and the synopsis—i.e., the only known parts of *De daemonibus, ibid.*, pp. 254–ff.—as well as Arnold's *Trithemius*, pp. 199–ff.—show that he knows the letter of 31 August 1507 to Rutger Sicamber in which Trithemius announces his intention to write this treatise "in posterum . . . quod libris duodecim foret distinguendum", but then also remarks that he would have "ad tempum differre intentionem meam hanc". See also the other letter of 16 July 1507, which mentions it to Nikolaus Gerbelius (both letters in *Opera historica*, 2, p. 545, 565); however, he does not appear to be informed about Butzbach's quotation of the *De daemonibus* in *Macrostroma*, which came into being at about the same time as these two letters were written, but Butzbach refers to it as if it constituted already a finished work (see fol. 94*r*): "Nullo ergo modo debuit cuique esse suspectus Trithemius de magia necromantica, cum enim refellere sciamus omnem magiam prohibitam ab ecclesia, illam damnans et detestans. Scripsit namque super hoc opus pergrande contra omnes artes ab ecclesia prohibitas in XII libros distinctos et *De daemonibus* praenotatum. Quod si etiam quaedam similia callere cognoscitur, quamdiu ad malum usum non verterit ipsam, redarguendus est minime. Malum quippe scire non est malum reputandum, sed malum malo operari. Sunt qui eum artem Lulli, alii notoriam, alii scientiam cabalisticam, quam nos mosaycam dicere possumus, callere ex individia dicunt". Butzbach's testimony in regard to the existence of a completed *De daemonibus* seems to be consonant with that of the autographical list written by Trithemius in 1514. There the introductory words of *De daemonibus* are "Multi vigiliis et" instead of "Maximis et vigiliis et" the same as in MS Würzburg, Stadtarchiv, Biographische Abteilung s.v. 'Trithemius;' Arnold, *Trithemius*, p. 256 inexplicably, considers them identical (*ibid.*, p. 254). The 1515 list was published in P. Lehmann, 'Merkwürdigkeiten des Abtes J. Trithemius' (Munich, 1961) [= *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*/Phil.-hist.-K1., H.2], p. 74. I am, of course, aware that the initial words may be a stylistic variant or a slip of the pen, and as happens in many cases, a badly informed correspondent could have thought the work had already been completed. I thank R. Wolfe, Rare Books Librarian in the F. A. Countway Library of Medicine, Boston, for having sent me photocopies of their MS 8 so quickly. I collated Lehmann's edition with it. What must be particularly emphasized in Butzbach's words is the connection, by no means accidental, which he makes between the accusations of necromancy and this work's project. It had, as did later on the *VIII quaestiones* and the *Antipalus*, the function of exculpating him. Böcking, the editor of *Hutteni Operum supplementum* (Leipzig, 1870), 2, pp. 478–90, published a bibliography of Trithemius taken from the actuary of Butzbach. It contains the title *De daemonibus* dating it 1508, without its incipit.

[79] Arnold, *J. Trithemius*, p. 199, observes correctly that the Pseudepigraph makes use

in 1508, Trithemius answering eight topical questions that the Emperor Maximilian had intended to put to him at the Diet of Cologne (1505) wrote his *Liber octo quaestionum*.[80] Half of them (questions 3, 5, 6, 7) were concerned with witchcraft. While he did not publish the other works, Trithemius had this one published in 1515. But—and this is indeed rare—two manuscripts written by the author or by Trithemius's usual copyist have been preserved. The Viennese manuscript corresponds to the printed version and was probably written around 1515;[81] the second manuscript, kept at Uppsala, is shorter, but at times more explicit,

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of the pseudonyms which Trithemius (Melanius Triandricus) and Joachim (Iaymiel Megalopius) have adopted in the letter to Libanius Gallus (6 October 1507). See also the dedicatory letter. Cf. *Opera historica*, 2, p. 570. For this part of the *Antipalus* (not to be found in all MSS.) see Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Stuttgart, 2° cod. 212 (Trithemius's friend, Konrad Peutinger, owned it), fols. 118r–30v, 236*r*–45*r*; Cornell University Library, cod. M61 (folios not numbered). This miscellany, which at the beginning of the seventeenth century was in the possession of Heinrich Khunrath, seems to have been copied, in the library of the Elector of Brandenburg (see its first part, fol. 1r: "Liber Abdelachi vatis Arabi de sortilegis ad Delium regem Persarum") considering the fact that a preface dated 1510 refers to Joachim and his angel Iaymiel; the second part of the MS, fol. 1r says that the *Antipalus* originates "ex manuscriptis Serenissimi Electoris Joachimi". For the authenticity of the books named here speaks the fact that book 5 (here in part 2, fol. 5*r* dated Würzburg, 20 October 1508) and also several recipes at the end of book 4 are found in a manuscript of proven authority. I did not investigate a late fragmentary MS that according to Arnold is found at Liège; but the authenticity of these recipes in book 5 seems to me indubitable. The editor, J. Busaeus, of the *Paralipomena opusculorum P. Blesensis et J. Trithemii* (Mainz, 1605), p. 426, declares categorically that the recipes must be considered as "remedia superstitiosa".

[80] Thanks to the *Epistolae familiares* of this time Trithemius' experiences and travels in the era between Sponheim and Würzburg are well known. They were collected by him and then published posthumously in 1536 at Hagenau. After his stay in Speyer, Trithemius (who had become acquainted with the Elector Joachim, margrave of Brandenburg, at the Imperial Diet at Frankfurt/M. as early as 1503) accepted the Elector's invitation to meet him at the Imperial Diet in Cologne, at the end of June 1505. There and at the castle of Boppard, he also met Emperor Maximilian who, according to the dedicatory letter, put to him the famous "eight questions"—which were in reality purely topical ones. When the Imperial Diet ended, Trithemius accepted, in spite of several other invitations (among them one from Bishop Germain de Ganay) Joachim's offer to come to his court at Berlin and Ursel. Trithemius stayed in Brandenburg from 11 September 1505 until Easter 1506. In October of the same year, he withdrew to the very modest abbey ("Schottenkloster") of Würzburg where only three monks lived. He preferred the abbot's life to that of a courtier, in spite of many tempting offers. The three works on demonology and witchcraft can be traced back to this interim period, which was filled with worries such as being accused of necromancy. The *Polygraphia* also belongs in this era. Cf. Arnold, *J. Trithemius*, pp. 204–8; Brann, *The Abbot Trithemius*, pp. 31–55.

[81] Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 11716, fols. 4*r*–112*v*, indicated as autograph by Arnold who, however, did not notice the difference between the two versions.

and one is inclined to date it to 1508, soon after the meeting with the emperor. The pertinent correspondence indicates that the variants were agreed upon with Maximilian or even urged upon Trithemius by the emperor.[82] Question 3, "On the miracles of the heathens,"[83] states in one of the first sentences that "indeed, magicians having made implicit or explicit pacts with demons are capable of performing miracles,"[84] whereas the published edition deals generically with "heathens," not magicians. In this context the discussion frequently involves demonic magic because, beside God and the angels, the Devil also with "monkey-like curiosity"[85] ("qui quasi simia imitari gliscit quodcumque viderit")[86] performs miracles on the natural level "cum [daemones] naturas optime noverunt herbarum omnium,"[87] as occurs also within demons' answers to inquiries, which in the eyes of Trithemius do not constitute merely astrological practices, but really are vaticinations inspired by the Devil. At times demons enjoy practical jokes:

> They behave like children who sometimes put on masks and hide, only to jump out and when they succeed in terrifying their shocked friends they enjoy themselves enormously, as if they had achieved some great honor.[88]

Some of their jokes are really in bad taste, but once again, according to the *Canon Episcopi*, one is dealing here with delusions

> as when they force their way into corpses and are reputed to restore them to life for a short time, or having thrown them in some remote place, they exhibit somehow the image of the dead.[89]

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[82] Trithemius, *Annales hirsaugienses*, in *Opera historica*, 2, pp. 670–72. In his reply of 25 August 1511 from Würzburg addressed to Maximilian, who had asked for advice in view of his pending participation in the schismatic council of Pisa, Trithemius advised the emperor not only to distrust "levitas Gallorum" and to make his peace with Pope Julius II; he also remarked on the work that is of interest here: "De octo quaestionum serenitatis tuae libello, quem te imperante conscripsi, faciam quod iubes". This sentence may refer to the revision in the Viennese MS, as well as to the Oppenheim edition of 1515, or even to both.

[83] Uppsala University Library, cod. C IV, fols. 125*r*–56*r*.

[84] *Ibid.*, fol. 131*v*: "magi quidem per privatos cum demonibus contractus implicitos sive explicitos miranda faciunt."

[85] *Ibid.*, fol. 134*v*.

[86] Trithemius, *Liber octo quaestionum* (Oppenheim, 1515), reprinted by Busaeus, *Paralipomena*, p. 459; see also Vienna, cod. 11716.

[87] Uppsala, cod. C IV, fol. 134*r* = ed. cit.: "quemadmodum pueri faciunt, qui larvati quandodque latitantes erumpunt ac, territis ex inopinato coevis, mirum gaudent in modum quasi magnum ex hoc videantur assecuti honorem".

[88] *Ibid.*, fol. 133*v*.

[89] *Ibid.*, fols. 134*r–v*: "quandoquidem aut ipsi mortuorum ingressi cadavera ad tem-

The misdeeds of witches, however, are anything but jokes.

> Those who appeal to demons are capable of marvels; like witches who having submitted to the power of evil spirits renounced the Catholic faith, and turned toward damnation by paying demons the basest homage of loyalty. With God's permission, demons always take part in evil when appealed to; sometimes they appear in visible form, at other times they are invisible; they upset the atmosphere, cause storms, hail and lightning, they ruin crops and ravage with their spells whatever is produced by the earth. They cause illness in man and beast, and use every skill to carry out whatever plan they can think of to ruin man.[90]

The hymns and sacrifices, so dear to Ficino, the Orphic priest, and to other highly sophisticated humanists, together with the very formulas that Trithemius in his *Steganographia* directs to the planetary spirits, are seen here at the top of the list of witches' crimes. In this *quaestio* Trithemius talks, as in other places, of an explicit pact; and though it is true that he does not advocate the stake, he does insist on exorcism and ecclesiastical purification as they were in use before the *Malleus*,[91]

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pus illa vivificare putantur, aut illis in locum aliquem remotiorem proiectis, aliquod in forma defunctorum simulachrum exhibent".

[90] *Ibid.*, fols. 135*r–v*: "Miranda faciunt homines invocatione daemonum manifesta, sicut mulieres maleficae, quae, malignorum se spirituum potestati submiserunt, fidemque abnegates catholicam homagium fidelitatis in reprobum sensum averse daemonibus praestiterunt. His permittente Deo semper in malum rogati daemones cooperantur aliquando visibiliter, aliquando invisibiliter apparentes, aerem turbant, suscitant tempestates, choruscaciones et grandines inducunt, ledunt fruges, et queque nascencia terrae suis maleficiis devastant. Denique homines infirmant et bestias, et quicquid in perniciem excogitare generis humani possint summo studio exequuntur"; cf. Busaeus, *Paralipomena cit.*, p. 465, where the definitive text skips the central sentence about the demoniacal pact (as it does in the Vienna MS): "Necromantici daemonum invocatione mirandos producunt effectus. Maleficae quodam professionis genere subiiciuntur daemonibus, quorum ministerio aerem turbant, tempestates suscitant, fruges devastant, homines et iumenta infirmant, agunt cum daemonibus spurcissimae voluptatis foeda commercia, et eos perniciosis carminibus, quos voluerint, ab inferis revocant in aspectum".

[91] Arnold, *J. Trithemius*, p. 199, in translation: "He never occupied himself with the worldly persecution of witches: his remedies are the old exorcisms of the Church, and whatever he found in the medical literature of his library". But in addition to authors named by Arnold (Albertus Magnus, Arnaldus de Villanova, Petrus Hispanus), there must also be mentioned the Trotula Gynacology, the Kirannides (from *Antipalus* cited in Cornell MS, part 2, fol. 5*v*), his most beloved hermit Pelagius (*Antipalus*, p. 395). Arnold, "Additamenta", pp. 254, 256 n. 77, stresses that the *VIII quaestiones* enjoyed a wide circulation (after they were printed). He lists thirteen complete editions; particularly emphasized are the edition of *quaestiones* 5, 6, and 7 (in N. Jacquier, *Flagellum haereticorum fascinariorum* [Frankfurt, 1581], pp. 452–94, as well as in the incomplete German translation in *Theatrum de veneficiis*, "Von Teuffelsgespenst" [Frankfurt, 1586]). Though these questions were to contribute to the persecution of witches, Arnold vows that when Trithemius composed his writings on this particular subject he certainly could

and his indictment is illustrated with the most atrocious and gruesome details.[92] With regard to the other questions,[93] only *quaestio* 5: "De reprobis et maleficis", and 7: "De permissione Dei" should be taken up here. These questions correspond to the usual themes of the literature on witchcraft. Like all other Trithemius texts on demonology, they are studded with quotations from Augustine (whose theology of providence spread the idea that demons and witches perform evil according to a divine plan that allows them to do so, but does not remove their subjective guilt from them). *Quaestio* 6 on the other hand, entitled "On the power of witches" ("De potestate maleficarum") appears to be a new, reworked version of the treatise *De daemonibus*, attributed to a Byzantine scholar of the eleventh century, Michael Psellus, and translated by Ficino. The *quaestio* contains a classification of the types of demons and adds to those which correspond to the four elements two further categories, the "subterranean" and "lucifugous". Of all Trithemius's demonological texts, this is by far the most Florentine-Hermetic in character, even more so than the bibliographical section of the *Antipalus maleficiorum* which obviously also lists pseudo-Hermetic writings in great number.

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not foresee this development of persecution. Yet these witch-hunts were very noticeable in Germany twenty years after the printing of the *Malleus*. It is true that Trithemius abstains from issuing any directions in regard to persecution measures and he does not even prescribe exorcisms. But from the historical point of view it is not unimportant that he copies chapters 5 through 11 of book I and chapters 3, 5 through 9,12,14, and 15 of book 2 (cf. Arnold, "Additamenta" p. 256 n. 77) from the *Malleus Maleficarum* (a copy of which he had in the Würzburg abbey) and uses them verbatim in his *De daemonibus* and *Antipalus*. A. Ruland had pronounced a much more severe judgment upon Trithemius's responsibility in a review of J. Silbernagl's *J. Trithemius*, in which Trithemius is portrayed as having completely adopted the point of view of the *Malleus Maleficarum* (see *Theologisches Literaturblatt* 3 [1868], pp. 734, 765ff.). J. Hansen, *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns und der Hexenverfolgung* (Bonn, 1901), pp. 379n, 291–97, quotes his most concrete passages and many details given by Trithemius in regard to the activity of witches. H. C. Lea, *Materials towards a History of Witchcraft* (New York, 1957, 2d ed.), pp. 369–70, is of the opinion that Trithemius "makes full use of the *Malleus* and is fully persuaded of the truth of all the absurdities attributed to witchcraft". Such an opinion is perhaps unjustified considering the unpleasant, unfree circumstances under which Trithemius wrote these demonological treatises. Hansen as well as Lea (who relied heavily on the former) stress the sentence expressly.

[92] The great interest in blessings and exorcisms is verified by descriptions of Abbot Adam's activities. In charge of the Saint Martin monastery in Cologne and a famous exorcist, he healed numerous possessed nuns in monasteries in various regions. Cf. *Chronicon Hirsaugiense*, pp. 576–79.

[93] *Liber VIII quaestionum* deserves to be analyzed in its handwritten version and probably to be published, since it almost constitutes an entire and different book.

In fact, this classification of demons is then greatly expanded in Trithemius's *De daemonibus* and assumes here, in question 6, that only two out of six demons—the terrestrial and aerial ones—have dealings or intercourse with witches in some unusual cases. All this had been taken literally, even if tacitly, from the excerpts of (pseudo) Psellus' work on demons, translated by Marsilio Ficino soon after he had finished his book *De vita coelitus* in 1488.[94] This translation was perhaps the most specific, or rather the only, contribution Marsilio had made to the debate on witchcraft; for the small treatise dwells in detail on the individual and collective practices ascribed to witches at the end of the Middle Ages, in both the Byzantine and Latin worlds. Not only poisoning and evil charms are mentioned, but also ointments causing demoniacal apparitions and nocturnal flights onto bewitched trees, and real orgies and sabbaths where the children of such promiscuous unions between demons and human beings are sacrificed. Nevertheless, Trithemius introduces a classification acknowledging the Byzantine-Florentine source ("sicut Michael Psellus dicit"),[95] but he does not include these pages on witchcraft in his *quaestiones*. One must, however, admit that even though Trithemius places the demonologists Johannes Nider and Jacob Sprenger among the "Illustrious Men of Germany"[96] and has certainly read Sprenger's *Malleus* (its first edition is preserved in

[94] Ficino's translation did not get much attention from the critics. Kristeller, *Supplementum ficinianum* (Florence, 1937), p. 135 n. 27, lists only a few pages from Corsi, Galeotti, Della Torre, and Saitta. Psellus's short treatise was also investigated in the light of his hagiographic writing. Cf. Ch. Zervos, *Un philosophe néoplatonicien du XI^e siècle* (Paris, 1920), ch. 5, pp. 135–ff., 162–91; K. Svoboda, *La demonologie de M. Psellos* (Brno, 1927), pp. 11–18; P. P. Joannou, *Démonologie populaire-Démonologie critique au XI^e siècle: La vie inedite de S. Auxence par M. Psellos* (Wiesbaden, 1971), pp. 11–42. More recently the authenticity and the date itself (corrected to the end of the thirteenth century) have been questioned by P. Gautier, 'Le *De daemonibus* du pseudo-Psellos', *Revue des études byzantines* 38 (1980), pp. 105–94.

[95] Uppsala, cod. C IV, fol. 145v.

[96] *Catalogus illustrium virorum Germaniam . . . exornantium* in Trithemius, *Opera historica cit.*, I, p. 154 no. 53, about Joannes Nider "studiosus eruditus et in philosophia scholastica probe instructus . . . muliercularum quas maleficas vulgus appellat acerrimus persecutor" (about Nider, cf. also *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis, ibid.*, p. 354); *Catalogus*, p. 177 n°. 45, about Jacobus Sprenger "divinarum scripturarum professor et interpres eruditus, atque in philosophia aristotelica egregie doctus, ingenio clarus, sermone scholasticus, cum olim ab Innocentio VIII una cum Henrico Institoris eiusdem ordinis theologo inquisitor haereticae pravitatis esset constitutus scripsit pro cautela et instructione simplicium contra mulierculas maleficas, instrumenta diaboli, volumen non abiciendum, quod praenotavit *Malleus maleficarum* liber unus; si quid amplius scripserit, ad notitiam meam non pervenit".

the Würzburg library),[97] one cannot find anywhere in his writings calls for the burning of witches—apart from the quote from Exodus 22: 18: "Maleficos non patieris vivere", which he repeats as a topos.[98] As Arnold points out, Trithemius recommends only ecclesiastical means employed in less difficult times, such as exorcisms and purifications.[99] I should like to add here that Trithemius does not deal with the Sabbath. Description of this supposed ceremony is a characteristic element which, after the appearance of the *Malleus* or a few decades earlier, began to change the intellectual and judicial attitude in regard to witchcraft. In my view, the Sabbath is not dealt with in the *Liber octo quaestionum* and in the *Antipalus*, while only 4 out of 343 chapters of the envisaged book *De daemonibus* announce remarks concerning that particular theme. Namely, Liber X, caput 18: "Quomodo per aera vehantur a daemonibus"; ch. 19: "Qualia convivia et chorizaciones cum daemonibus habent"; ch. 20: "Qualia maleficae offerunt sacrificia"; ch. 22: "Quis modus sit daemonum coeundi cum maleficis". But the bare scheme of an unfinished text does not permit any conjecture as to the probable development of this qualifying point nor of the other that is connected with the maintenance of the *Canon Episcopi* (see Liber X, ch. 26: "An maleficarum delacionibus contra alias sit credendum").[100]

It seems, therefore, that in selecting from Psellus' compilations the most truculent pages have been omitted deliberately, perhaps just because Trithemius wanted to be moderate in his intervention against witches. In the first version of *quaestio* 6 there are moreover various other quotations from the heritage of Florentine magic—to corroborate Psellus's definitions of the first two types of demons, and only in this case does Trithemius quote Ficino, as well as Orpheus, Porphyrius, and Apuleius.[101] In a passage that was added, he solemnly reminds us that "before that time Mercury, the Thrice Great, had said: 'Surely no part of the world is free of the presence of demons'".[102] But the

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[97] Arnold, "Additamenta", p. 254, n. 71.
[98] *Ibid.*, p. 253.
[99] *Ibid.*, pp. 253–54.
[100] *Ibid.*, pp. 265–66.
[101] Uppsala, C IV, fol. 145*v*; missing words taken from Busaeus, *Paralipomena*, p. 501, in square brackets; "Primum genus sicut grecus [Michael Psellus tradit] igneum nuncupatur . . . Et [Marsilius Ficinus] Apuleium daemonia quaedam ignea esse animalia dicentem introducit . . . [hos Orpheus igneos sive celestes appellat, [. . .]ut opinor, quod eorum corpus est ignis]" (fols. 147*v*–148*r*; not in Busaeus ed.). "Sicut Porphirius asserit . . . ut in quit Plato". See the passage to be found cited *infra* in the note 103.
[102] Uppsala, cod. C IV, fol. 145v; passage also in Busaeus ed., p. 502.

most revealing is a long passage absent in the edition and in the Viennese manuscript; that passage defines demons not in the manner of an inquisitor, but in that of Porphyrius and Plato, whose dialogue *Ion*, very often used in this context by Ficino as well as by Pomponazzi, had already been quoted at the beginning in a passage that remained in the text printed in 1515.[103]

All this leads me to believe that in his maturity Trithemius had not forsworn that "Reformatio hermetica" which Noel L. Brann,[104] his recent biographer, has read into his letter of 1499 to Arnold Bost, in which the abbot of Sponheim solemnly professes an exclusively natural magic introducing the *Steganographia*, full of names of every kind of demon.

I cannot, therefore, trace a change in Trithemius's attitude toward the Hermetic conception, as well as toward spiritual and demonic magic, and toward witchcraft. On the other hand, I see a clearer evolution in his disciple, Cornelius Agrippa. In order to explain the contradictions within his two major works, *De occulta philosophia* and *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum et artium*, various hypotheses have been put forward by many scholars and also by me.[105] I have tried to show the existence of

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[103] Uppsala, cod C IV, fols. 147*r*–48*r* (at end of *quaestio* 6; not in Busaeus edition): "Omnia haec daemonum genera sic affecta sunt, ut Deum aversentur et angelos bonos, odientque homines et insidiis persequantur, licet aliud alio peius. Aereum et terrestre maleficis invocatum obsequitur, quibus non uniformiter se consueverunt exhibere, sed pro varietate affectionum, ut vel actio requirit, vel materia, unde formam accipiunt visibile, permittit. Nihil ergo mirandum quod maleficae tanta possunt mortalibus inferre maleficia, quando sua sponte daemones in pernicie humani generis unanimiter omnes conspirant. Quae autem causa inimicitiarum nisi invidia, sicut in libro *Sapienciae* scribitur: 'quoniam invidia diaboli mors introivit in orbem terrarum' Invidiae autem causa beatitudo hominis in paradyso posita fuit. Constat igitur nunc manifeste quod maleficarum potestas tota cooperatione stat daemonum, qui omnes semper inquieti et perturbati ubicunque fuerint suis passionibus agitantur prava habitudine acquisitis, et quantum in eis est quiescere neminem permittunt. Nam et inter se compugnant adinvicem saepius concitati rabie furoris. Sunt enim superbia pleni et superbioribus agitantur, usque adeo, sicut Porphirius asserit, ut nihil vehementius optent quam dii a nobis estimari supremi et pro ilIis maxime coli atque timeri, quorum princeps, quem Luciferum Scriptura vocat, id potissimum contendit, ut deus primus omnium habeatur. Incitant nos ad corporis huius oblectamenta quibus ipsi in nobis ferme similiter oblectantur. Incendunt nos ad contenciones et praelia, at assiduo gaudent mendacio. Est enim diabolus ut inquit Plato, animal humectum immortale, passibile, plenum nequicia, odio et invidia, bonis hominibus torquetur, malis laetatur. Libenter itaque daemones utuntur voluntate maleficarum depravata in odium et perniciem generis humani, et tota eis virtute quantum deus permittit cooperaturi occurrunt."

[104] Brann, *The Abbot Trithemius cit.*, p. 117.

[105] C. J. Nauert, *Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought* (Urbana, Ill., 1965); see also my papers 'A proposito del 'De vanitate' di C. Agrippa', *Rivista critica di storia della*

a coherent line of thought, even if complex and uneven. Considering just the magician Agrippa's attitude vis-à-vis witchcraft, here I shall only recall his two most famous polemic documents, i.e. some letters in which he describes his own defense of a peasant woman charged with having inherited witchcraft from her mother in Voippy, a village near Metz in 1519 and his better-known, vehement chapter 96 against the Inquisitors in *De vanitate*.[106] It is not so well known that this author (who provides a concrete historical link between Trithemius, his model and master, and Johann Weyer, his disciple and defender) wrote a treatise *Against the Inquisitors of Witches* (*Adversus Lamiarum inquisitores*) probably a little earlier than 1533 (i.e. when he worked to publish bks. II and III of *De occulta philosophia*, and two years before his death). This work was still quoted with horror in 1566 by a Dominican Inquisitor, Sisto da Siena.

> Cornelius Agrippa, a follower of the Lutheran heresy, in his book which he published under the title of *Adversus Lamiarum inquisitores*], turns this sentence by John [Galatians 3: 1] against those who prosecute and punish women for witchcraft, when it is proved they had sexual intercourse with demons; he mocks the thing as a tale born of the imagination and the dreams of delirious old women, since often asleep, they are deceived by dreams, and at times, even when they are wronged by the thought of vehement libido, and even think that acts which are only formed in imagination, really occurred to them.[107]

From the quotes of Sixtus, who probably saw in Agrippa a radical reformer, it appears in the first place that Agrippa mocks the belief in intercourse between witches and demons, interpreting it—along the lines that will be developed by Weyer and Della Porta—as a delusion due not to the presence of demons, but to dreams and hysteria, and so described by the *Canon Episcopi*. Sisto da Siena, moreover, does not seem to know the *De praestigiis daemonum* by Weyer, published three years previously, and therefore cannot make the comparison, which would have been enlightening, between the famous work by the disciple and the lost work by the master. From data given in Sisto's *Bibliotheca sancta*

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filosofia 15 (1960), pp. 47–71; Id., 'Agrippa von Nettesheim in den neueren kritischen Studien und in den Handschriften', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 51 (1969), pp. 264–95.

[106] These and the following segments are cited more completely and in greater detail in my article 'C. Agrippa, Sisto da Siena e gli inquisitori', *Memorie domenicane*. n.s., 3 (1972), pp. 146–64. See also W. Ziegeler, *Möglichkeiten der Kritik am Hexen- und Zauberwesen* (Cologne, 1973), pp. 137–99.

[107] Sisto da Siena, *Bibliotheca sancta* (Venice, 1566), pp. 556, 558 (cf. 1574 ed., 2, pp. 52–53).

it appears certain that, in order to strengthen the thesis of delusion, Agrippa quoted the *Canon Episcopi* extensively to show that this document (superseded by the *Malleus*) proved the impossibility for witches to fly "corporaliter" to the Sabbath and considered those "vectationes et translationes" always only imaginary ("semper sola imaginatione fieri").[108] Among the faculties attributable to imagination, Agrippa, however, did not include the evil eye (*fascinatio* of witches on children).

> Cornelius Agrippa, a heretic, in the book *Adversus Lamiarum inquisitores* published by him, takes the occasion offered by this sentence [by John Chrysostom] to stigmatize inquisitors as heretics and charges them, among other things, with having invented this last kind of slander against those simple and innocuous women, called witches, namely that they fascinate children showing their faces and corrupting them by the fixed gaze of their eyes.[109]

Agrippa was indeed courageous; primarily because of his intellectual honesty he was anxious not to legitimize the misdeeds attributed to peasant witches with the refined magic of imagination, which, from Avicenna to Ficino and later, had been the principal and favorite resource for natural magicians and also for himself. He was in fact rethinking it in those same years while preparing the *De occulta philosophia* for print (1533), including in it various heretical motives such as psychopannychism and Nicodemism[110] (this resulting from a more serious and deeper understanding of that Pythagorean-Hermetical silence, so forcefully recommended to him by Trithemius and so sought after in his earlier works).

Hermetic positions could at times take on progressive roles in social, intellectual and religious conflicts. But certainly through these circumstances in Germany, Hermes Trismegistus had lost that marvelous peaceful impassiveness which at the beginning he expressed in *pia philosophia, docta religio*, and the general concordia attributed to him by the Florentines. In the wooden choir-stalls of Ulm cathedral Jorg Syrlin in 1474 had sculpted in a most accomplished manner the sibyls escorted by the prophet Micah, and also by Terence, Cicero, Quintilianus, Seneca, Pythagoras, and a rather egg-headed Ptolemy. But the German artist

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[108] *Ibid.*

[109] *Bibliotheca sancta* (1566), pp. 869–70 (cf. 1574 ed., 2, p. 428).

[110] See my study 'Magic and Radical Reformation in Agrippa of Nettesheim', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 39 (1976), pp. 69–103; now reprinted pp. 138–182 *infra*.

had no space left for Hermes, who instead dominates the physical and ideal space of the floor mosaic in the cathedral of Siena, where the sibyls and Hermes himself, as their scrolls show, are clearly connected to the Florentine rebirth of ancient magic and pious theology. In Siena the cycle was accomplished about fifteen years after the one in Ulm (1481–98?) and in both it is possible to recognize the local peculiarities of two traditions already firmly rooted in humanism. If the stalls of Ulm had been built somewhat later, one might have been able to admire the wooden carved figure of a German Hermes Trismegistus, but just a few decades later, when the conflicts of ideas that I have tried to outline in the field of Hermetism were better defined, who knows if the canons of the cathedral of Ulm would have wanted and been able to have their sibyls keep such bad company with a Hermes by then so irredeemably compromised? These ladies themselves would have appeared, so says Johannes Weyer, "Sibyllae a daemone conductae".[111]

[111] J. Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum* (Basel, 1660), pp. 18–19 (book 1, ch. 8).

CHAPTER THREE

MAGIC, PSEUDEPIGRAPHY, PROPHECIES AND FORGERIES IN TRITHEMIUS' MANUSCRIPTS. FROM CUSANUS TO BOVELLES?

Io non parlerò come santo profeta, come astratto
divino, come assumpto apocalittico, né quale angelica
asina di Balaam
Bruno, *De la causa*

Est enim haec scientia cahos infinitae magnitudinis,
quod nemo comprehendere potest
Trithemius, *Antipalus maleficiorum*

§ 1. *To publish or not to publish?*

To date there is no systematic research on how Renaissance authors decided whether or not to publish their works, to keep them unpublished in secret, to circulate them in manuscript privately or among initiates, or to publish them as apocryphal or spurious works. Research of this sort, based on a list of authors and their works, would indeed yield interesting results, but to date there is not even a project. It has been noted that in the early sixteenth century, under the Catholic kings of Spain, the new figure of the censor[1] came into being: "a faithful scholar of good conscience", whose task it was "to prohibit apocryphal, superstitious and condemned works as well as vain and useless things". In her book, *Openness, Secrecy, Authorship*, Pamela O. Long sets out to discover the approach taken by writers, from late antiquity to modern times, in presenting their own work. While Long devotes much attention to Agrippa, Trithemius is barely mentioned, and then only as one of Agrippa's masters.[2] Naturally I do not want to deny that he was, in many

[1] Cf. M. Infelise, *I libri proibiti*, (Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2001); Id., Introduction to F. Barbierato, *Libro e censure*, Milan, S. Bonnard, 2002, pp. 5–6; H.-J. Martin, *Histoire et pouvoir de l'écrit*, Paris, Perrin, 1988, pp. 255–56.

[2] P. O. Long, *Openness, Secrecy, Authorship. Technical Arts and the Culture of Knowledge from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins U.P., 2001). The author deals with Agrippa again in her article "New Work on the 'Occult' and Natural Disciplines of the Renaissance", *Renaissance Quarterly* LV (2002), pp. 1323–36.

respects, Agrippa's master; in the perspective of these enquiries, he was this above all in that he advised Agrippa over his decision whether to present his work *De occulta philosophia* (and the hermetic tradition that lay behind it) openly, or in secret, i.e. through a circle of initiates. It is very remarkable in this context that Trithemius, a prelate, advised Agrippa, a layman, to keep an initiatic attitude. Long has provided us with an original and stimulating synthesis, and I do not want to criticize her silence on the abbot Trithemius. Indeed, specialized works of research on this abbot are by no means complete. Notwithstanding the 'Trithemius Renaissance'[3] observed in the historiography of the last forty years, many of his works, and particularly those dealing with magic, remain unpublished and unexplored. The Benedictine Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516) was a monastic humanist, uninterested in philological criticism and opposed to the innovations produced by printing (although he himself, on the advice of Wimpfeling, had taken advantage of it). His booklet written against the printing press has attracted much attention: it was modelled on what Gerson had written at the time of the amanuenses, which therefore caused less of a sensation.[4] Trithemius was a copyist and collector of manuscripts for the celebrated library of his first abbey, that of Sponheim in the Palatinate. He was considered to be the founder of literary history, but was denounced and exposed by his own contemporaries as a great forger of historical sources. Johannes Stabius wrote of Trithemius as a writer of fables, not of historiography ("ego non pro historico, sed fabulatore omnium falsissimo reputo").[5]

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[3] N. Staubach, "Auf der Suche nach verlorenen Zeit: Die historiographischen Fiktionen des Trithemius im Lichte seines wissenschaftlichen Selbstverständnisses", *Fälschungen in Mittelalter. Internationaler Kongress der MGH*, Part I (Hannover, Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1988), p. 264, has observed a 'Trithemius Renaissance' in the studies of the last thirty years, i.e. after the monographic biography and bibliography by K. Arnold, *Johannes Trithemius* (Würzburg, Schöningh, 1971; see also its revised edition with an enlarged, precious list of works and manuscripts, 1991). See also N. L. Brann, *The Abbot Trithemius (1462–1516), The Renaissance of Monastic Humanism* (Leiden, Brill, 1981), and a popular but perceptive biography compiled by M. Kuper, *Johannes Trithemius, der schwarze Abt* (Berlin, Zerling, 1998).

[4] The booklet is characteristic of his position as a humanist not much taken with philological criticism and opposed to the innovation brought by the printing press: Trithemius, *De laude scriptorum*, edited and translated by K. Arnold (Würzburg, Freunde Mainfränkischer Kunst und Geschichte E.V., 1973). Subsequently a translation was made into English by R. Beherendt (Lawrence/Kansas, Coronado Press, 1973); see also an Italian translation under the title of *Elogio degli amanuensi*, edited by A. Bernardelli (Palermo, Sellerio, 1997).

[5] Cf. Arnold, *Johannes Trithemius*, p. 170, see also *Ibid*., pp. 170–174 on other humanists' criticism of Trithemius as a historian, and *Maximilian I. Austellungskatalog der Œsterreichischen National Bibliothek* (Wien, 1959) publishes at N.° 35 from the ms.

This habit known to his contemporaries should have brought the historians of magical theory to question Trithemius' magical sources like Pelagius and Libanius Gallus. One of the aims of the present chapter is to invite readers to consider and verify my critical hypothesis regarding them.[6]

§ 2. *Trithemius' Passion for Magic*

Trithemius was a notorious follower of the magical sciences.[7] He had unashamedly maintained that ceremonial practices were indispensable in magic and had criticized those who, following Ficino and Pico, claimed not to go beyond "natural" magic.[8] He kept in manuscript form most of his magical works, sharing them only with a close circle of initiates; some of these writings were published many decades after his death, others are to this day unpublished, or have been lost.

Occult secrets are never easy to safeguard: in 1499 when Trithemius sent one of his first works, the *Steganographia*, to Arnold Bost, a

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Wien ŒNB, 3227, Trithemius' caricature inspired by the humanist historian Johannes Stabius.

[6] Cf. J. Dupèbe, "L'écriture chez l'ermite Pelagius. Un cas de théurgie chrétienne au XV[e] siècle", in *Le texte et son inscription* (Paris, Editions du CNRS, 1989), pp. 113–53; Id., "Curiosité et magie chez J. Trithemius", in *La curiosité à la Renaissance (Journée d'étude de la Société française des seizièmistes)* (Paris, Société d'édition de l'enseignement supérieur, 1986); Id., "L'ars notoria et la polémique sur la divination et la magie", *Cahiers V. L. Saulnier* 4, pp. 123–34; Id., "L'ermite Pelagius et les Rose-Croix", in *Rosenkreuz als europäisches Phänomen in 17. Jahrhundert*, edited by the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica (Amsterdam, Pelikan, 2002), pp. 134–57. The first two of these studies contain some of the writings attributed to Pelagius and to Libanius: the analysis of these documents is excellent, but perhaps could refer directly to Trithemius.

[7] On the magic works written by Trithemius, see W. Shumaker, *Renaissance Curiosa* (Binghamton N.Y., SUNY Press, 1982), which, as the subtitle indicates, devotes an entire section to the *Steganographia*; F. Secret, *Hermétisme et magie* (Naples, Bibliopolis, 1992), pp. 91–118, in particular p. 96 n. where the question and the first studies of Dupèbe cited *infra* are discussed; N. L. Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology. A Chapter in the Controversy over Occult Studies in Early Modern Europe* (Albany, N.Y., SUNY Press, 1999); T. Ernst, 'Schwarzweisse Magie. Der Schlüssel zum dritten Buch der *Steganographia* des Trithemius', *Daphnis. Zeitschrift für Mittlere Deutsche Literatur* XXV (1996), pp. 1–203, a monograph on the unedited magical works whose print out has also been sold separately as a book. See also the edition of the unedited and unfinished *De daemonibus*, in K. Arnold, 'Additamenta trithemiana. Nachträge zum Leben und Werk des Johannes Trithemius, inbesondere zur Schrift *De daemonibus*', *Würzbüger Diözesan-Geschichtsblätter* XXXVII–XXXVIII (1975), pp. 256–67.

[8] Now cited and commented on by Arnold and Brann, these declarations of method, made by Agrippa in 1510 and edited by him in 1530, were pointed out in my *Cornelio Agrippa*, in *Testi umanistici sull'ermetismo [Archivio di Filosofia]*, 1955, pp. 116–18.

Carmelite in the monastery of Ghent, the missive fell into the hands of the prior, who accused Trithemius of having written and circulated a text of black magic; a short time later his monks accused him of conducting his abbey badly, with the result that he lost the abbey of Sponheim and, except for one or two books of magic (probably copied by his hand) that belonged to him personally, the library that he had built up there.[9]

In the following period still full of worries—while he was tormented by accusations of necromancy—he produced three occultist works (*De daemonibus, Antipalus maleficiorum, De septem secundeis*) as well as the *Polygraphia*, which unlike the *Steganographia* provides cryptography without ceremonial magic and was printed precisely in order to excuse the author for the earlier work. In Trithemius' magic cryptography is the main point. It has a useful application, but also some drawbacks, particularly if made known to everybody: in this case no writing would be reliable, because codes and combinations would be infinitely multiplied.

One need only read the bibliography in the *Antipalus*, reprinted here in the appendix as a document, not in critical and philological form, simply to enable the reader to see the strength of the tradition attributing to mythical authorities the occult doctrines which one wanted to teach; still frequently a fictitious authority refers immediately to another. The fact that Trithemius severely criticized authors and attributions of these works on magic does not mean that he was alien to this field:

> This science is an infinitely great chaos, that nobody is able to understand: however greatly one were instructed in this art [of cryptography], what he understands is much less than what he does not understand. It is a property of this science always to make the disciple more skilled, without comparison, than the master, provided the former is keen and eager.[10]

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[9] See Trithemius, *Epistolae familiares*, ms. Vat. Palat. Lat. 730 (autograph), which was then edited by Jakob Spiegel, a relative of Wimpfeling (Hagenau, P. Brubach, 1536); it begins with a letter written by Trithemius on 6th November 1506 to his step-brother Jacobus to tell him that he had deliberately made this collection to give his version of these recent misfortunes ('epistolas nostrarum testes calamitatum [. . .] in unum revocamus volumen'). Arnold, *Johannes Trithemius cit.*, pp. 201–208; Kuper, *Johannes Trithemius cit.*, p. 86–86, on Germain de Ganay, and on Maximilian.

[10] Trithemius, *Praefatio apologetica cit., n.n. Ibid.*: "Est enim haec scientia chaos infinitae magnitudinis, quod nemo comprehendere potest: quia quantumlibet doctus in hac arte fueris, minus tamen est quod intelligis [quam] illud quod nescis. Nam huius scientiae proprietas est magistro discipulum semper, modo sit induxtrius et velit, reddere sine comparationem doctiorem".

In the two versions this text wavers between 'kabbalah' and 'receptio', between "women" and "wives": but in both the author maintains that whoever knows these techniques is able to send every message securely ("tantis mysteriis virtute cabalistica obvolvet"). In such secret ways were recorded doctrines or discoveries by many ancient philosophers, wise men and founders of religions, among them Moses himself.[11] Ficino's idea of "docta religio" and ancient philosophy now has a cryptographic meaning.

A characteristic of Trithemius' *Antipalus* is his underlining that for many magical works attributions are unfounded and deceitful: one wonders whether he was not inspired by the intention to create an antecedent so as to justify his falsification and legitimating of *Liber naturalium experimentorum Pelagii heremitae*. Often cited in *Antipalus*, this book attributed to Pelagius of Majorca, whose only witness is Trithemius, is now lost. No independent document can be found for this supposed hermit; furthermore Trithemius is the only source also for his pupil and draftsman Libanius Gallus, who would have introduced him to Pelagius' "experimenta naturalia". It cannot thus be excluded that both Pelagius and Libanius were fictions invented by our abbot, who to legitimate a ritual felt it necessary to present it under the authority of sacral figures.

Already to Stabius and other Humanists, Trithemius' habit of writing faked sources (Hunibaldus, Meginfridus, and so on) and using them as historical proofs was well known. Pelagius had been the name of a heretical commentator of Saint Paul, who had put into circulation a pseudepigraph (*Primasii Uticensis episcopi in omnes divi Pauli epistolas commentaria*), which was printed only in 1538. A translation by Francesco Zambeccari of the *Epistolae* by Libanius, a rhetor and sophist, had recently been printed in Krakow in 1504, but it contained no less than one hundred letters faked by the translator. Had their names been chosen by Trithemius as a signal to his purpose of making a joke and deceiving the readers?

Another pseudepigraph, *Liber Abdelachi vatis Arabi de sortilegiis ad Delium regem Persarum*, was composed later by Trithemius, given that its proem

[11] Trithemius, *Praefatio apologetica cit., n.n*: "Antiquos philosophos et sapientes artis ac naturae, si qua reperissent secreta, ne ad noticiam hominum devenissent, variis occultasse modis atque figuris multorum opinio est". He refers to Moses as well as to Saint John: "pene tot in *Apocalypsi* mysteria latere [. . .] quot verba".

dated 1510 mentions Joachim and his angel Jaymial. As to Menastor, another teacher of magic already cited in *Steganographia*, even a scholar who does not doubt the existence of Pelagius and Libanius, admitted that this was indeed a forgery.[12] And yet in recent scholarship nobody dealing with Pelagius and Libanius had any doubts as to their historical existence.[13] Indeed, in the eighteenth century Petrus Fridericus Arpe, who declared himself an admirer of Gabriel Naudé's *Apologies pour les grands personnages accusés de magie*, considered both magicians "fictitious and mystical names". According to Arpe, Trithemius' case was similar to the later attitudes of the authors of Rosicrucian texts. This was the judgement of Arpe, who underlined their initiatory nature ("hanc sacrosanctam anacriseos scientiam semper tenebo secretam").[14]

§ 3. *Trithemius as a Prophet or Prognosticator*

Elsewhere, in another context, I shall speak about a work written for Maximilian, *De septem secundeis*. This booklet is purported to have been written in 1508 (a date which may be confirmed), but it was printed posthumously in 1522 in Latin and, for obvious propaganda motives, also in German.[15] These dates correspond respectively to the first and

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[12] Trithemius, *Steganographia*, Darmstadt 1606, pp. 160–161, Bk. III praefatio: "Inveni in quodam libro cuiusdam antiqui philosophi, qui dictus est Menastor" about seven angels presiding over the seven planets: "illis sunt 21 spiritus subiecti, per quos nuncientur archana". Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology*, p. 143, who does not doubt the real historical existence of Pelagius and Libanius Gallus, in the case of Menastor admits that it is a fiction,

[13] Amongst twentieth-century scholars an exception is Kuper, *J. Trithemius cit.*, p. 94 note and p. 102. We have however to wait until all manuscripts attributed to Pelagius have been thoroughly studied and published, as Jean Dupèbe has started doing.

[14] P. F. Arpe, *Feriae aestivales sive scriptorum suorum historiam*, Hamburg 1726, pp. 115–118: "Ficta esse nomina et mystica nemo non videt, praecursores quasi Fratrum Rosaecrucis. Ipsi libri a lectione curiosorum juramenti fide muniti, magnam vitae integritatem prae se ferunt adeoque in hoc genera scribendi reliquosque longe antevenerunt." Living between 1682 and 1748, Arpe, the first Trithemius historian, listed Pelagius' and Libanius Gallus' manuscripts.

[15] Trithemius declares so in his *De septem secundeis* § XIX, in his *Opera historica*, I, f. ***2; *ibid.*, I, ff. **4r, ***2r, and places himself at the disposition of ecclesiastical approval. The draft was approved by Maximilian I in an interview in 1508. See Arnold, *Johannes Trithemius* (reprint 1991), pp. 162, 250–51, who dates this composition to the same year and classes it among the historical writings, but considers the *De septem secundeis* as arguably belonging more to the magical writings. The first edition in Latin and the German translation by J. Haselberg were both printed posthumously in Nürnberg, H. Hoeltzel, 1522 (other editions in German (Speyer 1529), in Dutch (Antwerp 1532), and in French (Paris 1867; Paris 1898). In a Vatican miscellany of prognostications

last phases of the astrological controversy and propaganda over the flood and the end of the world, foretold for the year 1524—a correspondence that appears not to have been noticed so far by those who study Trithemius, nor by those dealing with the debate on the flood.

It is very interesting that the Magus Trithemius acted also as a prophet, and was eager to produce such an apocalyptical prognostication written for Maximilian, when Luca Gauricus had composed and circulated his first prognostica. Trithemius had a good knowledge of the eschatological literature[16] and oral prophetic performances of his own days. He kept up to date on Giovanni Mercurio da Correggio, a popular wandering preacher, who was one of the first Hermetic-Cabalistic prophets, but Trithemius criticized his begging and preaching.[17]

The penultimate paragraph of *De septem secundeis*, which is by far the longest section in this "chronologia mystica" and takes in the whole history of the universe, from the creation to the present day,[18] corresponds

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(*Eversio Europae*; Leovicius, *De coniunctionibus*; Paracelsus, *Prognostica ad XXIV annum duratura*), owned and annotated by Achilles Pirmin Gassar, there exists a 1534 edition of the German translation *Von den siben Geysten oder Engel den Gott die Himel zu furen von Anfang der Welt bevolen hat*, s. l. 1534, that to f. DVv refers to the famous almanac 'gepractiziert durch Jacob Pflaum von Ulm im jar 1500' where for the first time was recorded the great conjunction of February 1524. In this copy an annotator refers several times to Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia*, in particular to Ch. 24 of L. III, where the *De septem secundeis* is explicitly cited.

[16] Trithemius, *Annales Hirsaugenses* (Sankt Gall, 1690), II, p. 225 on John of Rupescissa: he criticizes his alchemy, but does not deal much with his eschatology. Bovelles refers to Ganay (*Epistolae familiares cit.*, f. 172 r) noting that when he visited Trithemius in Sponheim, "cum de mundi irreligiositate sermo inter nos incidisset, praedixit venturum brevi quendam sanctum pontificem, nomine Urbanum, qui ecclesiastice pacis verus zelotes illa apostolica dignitate praeesset, eamque ad meliorem immortalitatis frugem converteret".

[17] London, British Library, ms. Additional 11416, f. 3r–v: Trithemius, Epistola ad Episcopum Verdunsem in Gallis, s.d.: "Homo novus est, qui veterum hebraeorum occultatam et omnimodam (ipse idem assertor est) calle[re] scientiam, qui et latinorum et graecorum omnium scientiam audet improbare, inquiens: 'neminem unquam in graecis vel latinis fuisse sapientem'. Se autem in scientiis consummatum iudicat se secretarum rerum naturae profundissimum exploratorem gloriatur, prae se in publico fert gravitatem, severitatem, habitum, mores et vitam cum mendicitate prophetica. Se ad summas res natum, se deo plenum, se ex spiritu caelesti loqui innuit; metallorum transmutator, veluti Vene[r]is in Lunam et Lunae in Solem, profitetur. Felicia infelicitare et infelicia felicitare novit[. . .] Recordabitur sancio Iuvenalis [. . .] ubi dicit: 'quemvis hominem secum attulit ad nos, grammaticus rhetor gometra pictor aliptes augur schoenobates medicus magus, omnia novit, graeculus exuriens in caelum iusseris, ibit'. Ita profecto ii qui hunc pauperem esurientem, qui se tamen divitem iactat, in secretioribus familiariter speculati sunt, aiunt eum magum, sed non de genere eorum qui malefici et facinorosi magi sunt, quod daemonum constat ('de quibus' in *Decretis* XXVI q.V)".

[18] These ages, which lasted 354 years and four months each, were dominated in turn by the seven planetary angels ('spiritus Saturni Orifiel, Anael spiritus Veneris,

to the age dominated for the third time by Samael, the spirit of Mars. "A great religious sect will arise to destroy older religions." "In the first period dominated by Samael [Noah's] flood was announced by Mars, in the second the massacre of Troy, in the third, about its end, the great spoiling of [our religious] unity. Given these precedents, one can foretell what will happen in future. This third domination of Mars will not end without the fulfilment of a prophecy and the founding of a new religion." In 1525 we shall see the effects and the meaning of the crosses worn by men on their clothes (he means "crucesignati" and their processions).[19]

§ 4. *Magical Authorities and Forgeries*

Although the *Steganographia* was actually written—but never finished—at Sponheim in the fifteenth century, and had already named[20] Pelagius,

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Zachariel angelus Iovis, Raphael spiritus Mercurii, Samael spiritus Martis, Gabriel angelus Lunae', and again in rotation, until the twentieth and last period, which shall start in 1525: "huius revolutionis futura series prophetiam requirit"). In the first age men were 'rudes et agrestes, more bestiarum in solitudine commorantes"; in the fourth age writing was invented, while printing came into being in the nineteenth period; in the eleventh period "superstitiones in cultura idolorum per homines fuerunt institutae, incantationesque et artes imaginum diabolicarum mirum in modum auctae, et quicquid subtilitatis et ingenii Mercurio ex more attribuetur, tunc temporis augebatur"; in the fourteenth period, which saw the Sybil Cumana, "magia quoque temporibus istis apud reges persarum magno in pretio fuit. Pythagora philosophus et multi alii apud graecos tunc floruerunt'. In the fifteenth period Christ was born 'magna iis temporibus portenta videbantur in Europa, animalia domestica fugere ad nemora, sanguis fluxit, igneus e coelo globus cum fragore micuit . . . Tres Romae Soles apparuerunt". In the seventeenth period, the age of Merlin and of King Arthur, "multis his temporibus amore philosophiae Christianae, sese ad eremum contulerunt, multa etiam apparuere portenta, cometes, terraemotus, pluvia sanguinis".

[19] *Ibid.*: "Secta religionis consurget magna, veterum destructio religionum. Timendum ne caput unum amittat bestia quarta. In Samaele Mars primo praedixit diluvium, Troianum in secundo excidium, in tertio erit circa finem magnum unitatis detrimentum. Ex praecedentibus enim iudicentur futura quae sequuntur. Non consummabitur haec Martis tertia revolutio sine prophetia et novae alicuius institutionis religionis. Abhinc anno Chritianorum 1508 restant anni usque ad finem gubernamentis Samaelis 17, in quibus dabuntur significantes initium malorum figurae. Anno enim Christianorum 1525 cruces in vestimentis hominum visae quod praeteriit suum ostendent effectum".

[20] Arnold, *Johannes Trithemius cit.*, pp. 204–208; Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology cit.*, pp. 31–53. See Trithemius, *Nepiachus*, in J. C. Eccardus, *Corpus historicum Medii Aevi* (Leipzig, 1723), II, col. 1830, which narrates Libanius' first visit to Sponheim, and relates that he was instructed first by Pelagius, and then by Pico; see also the letter dating to 1498–1500, extracts of which are published in Trithemius, *De vera conversione mentis ad deum*, n.d. [Mainz 1500 ca].

Libanius Gallus[21] and another unfindable magician, Menastor, we must nonetheless remember that some of Trithemius' reading of fundamental magical theories took place during his years of exile. For example, while he was in Brandenburg in 1505, he read Porphyry, Iamblichus, Sinesius, Proclus and Psellus, having been loaned these authors by bishop Dietrich von Bülow, with whom he also discussed them.[22]

In the same year one of his epistles deals with Platonic-Pythagorean numerology and the harmony of the heavens;[23] he adds to it a criticism of naturalistic astrologers who do not consider God's providence and religious interest before announcing their previsions ("judicia").[24]

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[21] See *infra* p. 86n.

[22] Trithemius, *Epistolae familiares cit.*, pp. 117–19; Arnold, *Johannes Trithemius cit.*, p. 206; Kuper, *Johannes Trithemius cit.*, p. 91, refers to his epistolary relations with the carmelite Johannes Evriponus, whom Trithemius visited in the convent of Dahme to discuss crytography and, above all, with the bishop of Lebus, Dietrich von Bülow.

[23] Trithemius, *Epistolae familiares*, epistle to Germain de Ganay, from Spira 24 August 1505, in *Opera historica cit.*, pp. 472–473, where he expounds his conception of magical numerology: "Studium generat cognitionem, cognitio autem parit amorem, amor similitudinem, similitudo communionem, communio virtutem, virtus dignitatem, dignitas potentiam, et potentia facit miraculum. Hoc iter unicum ad finem magicarum perfectionum tam divinarum quam naturalium, a quibus arcetur et confunditur procul omnem superstitiosum, praestigiosum atque diabolicum. Enimvero nihil aliud per magiam intelligi volumus quam sapientiam, physicarum scilicet et metaphysicarum intelligentiam rerum, quae divinarum et naturalium virtutum scientia constat. Harmoniam caelestem non materialem, sed spiritualem consonantiam nobis sufficiendam scias oportet, ubi numerus, ordo et mensura per ternarium in unitatem conveniunt, ad quam consonantia inferiora nostra omnia sunt conformanda. Fatuum est harmoniam arbitrari caelestem, stellarum consonantium motu causante auribus perceptibile causari sonum. Est autem harmonia caelestis, numero, ordine, et mensura distributionum corporum inviolabilis consonantia, sed hanc supergredi necesse est, ut ternario paretur ascensus ad eam, quae supercaelestis est, harmoniam, ubi nihil materiale, sed spiritualia sunt omnia. Inde menti assumenda similitudo unde venit".

[24] *Ibid.:* "Stellaris autem harmonia mentem nec dedit nec influit. Quidam philocryphus dicebat sic: Quicumque conditionem caelestis harmonia notam haberet, tam praeterita quam futura cognosceret. Quis autem mihi dabitur ex milibus unus, qui harmoniam hanc intelligat caelestem? Ad supercaelestem mens nata est, cuius similitudine vivit. Astra nihil intelligunt, nec sentiunt quidem, unde nec sapientiam menti nostrae conferunt, nec aliquod in nos dominium habent, qui spiritus ambulamus confitentes Dominum Iesum Christum omnia in sua potestatem habentem, ad cuius nos similitudinem pro viribus fideliter oportet conformare. Ipsa est enim sapientia Dei patris, ipse est fons et origo scientiae, ipse est enim animi centrum, per quam facta sunt omnia. Abeant homines temerarii, homines vani et mendaces astrologi, deceptores mentium et frivola garrientes. Nihil enim ad mentem immortalem, nihil ad scientiam naturalem, nihil facit ad sapientiam supercaelestem stellarum dispositio, sed corpus in corpus duntaxat suum habet imperium. Mens est libera, nec stellis subiicitur, nec earum influentias concipit, nec motum sequitur, sed supercaelesti principio, a quo et facta est et foecundatur, tantum communicat" (*ibid.*, pp. 472–73). These topical reservations on the stars and the mind of man run parallel to those on alchemy.

In Trithemius' view magical power had a range of different aspects, one of these being its therapeutic use, particularly in cases of impotence—a problem apparently of great concern to his neurotic young patron, Joachim, for whom he wrote, among other works, the *Synusiastes Melanii Triandrici ad Yaymielem*, a series of recipes which his editor Busaeus censored, leaving them unpublished among Trithemius' *Paralipomena* printed posthumously.[25] The formulas prescribed the invocation of demons, which was apparently very efficacious since Joachim was later blessed with a number of legitimate children together with several illegitimate ones. To the same patron are dedicated many letters and writings attributed to the Majorcan hermit, Pelagius, and his pupil Libanius Gallus.[26] There is no trace of these authors in other documents independent of Trithemius or his readers; Libanius' writings are ritualistic and theurgical, as are certain prayers which Trithemius modelled on

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[25] See, for example, Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, Cod. 212/4, f. 123r: "radix eius sumpta cum lacte caprarum mirabiliter excitat libidinem, erigit virgam et auget semen [. . .] aliud de quo pulvirisato vir quidam potavit quartam particulam unius dragme et in tantam fuit libidinem succensus quod per viginti continuos dies virga eius semper mansit erecta et in tantum fecit negocium cum uxore sua, quod illa fugit ab eo putans quod demonio esset obsessus. Unde oportet quod temperetur, ne quid nimis". Arnold, *Johannes Trithemius. cit.*, p. 199, observes how the pseudo-epigraph text uses the denominations under which Trithemius (Melanius Triandricus) and Joachim von Brandenburg (Iaymiel Megalopius) are mentioned in the letter of 6 October 1507 to Libanius Gallus, in his *Opera historica cit.* II, p. 570. Arnold, *Ibid.*, p. 80, does not pose the problem of the real historical existence of Pelagius and Libanius, but lets the reader understand that he has some doubts on the subject. The *Synusiastes*, which is not present in all the manuscripts of the *Antipalus*, can be read in the manuscripts Stuttgart, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, Codex in folio 212 (already belonging to Konrad Peutinger), ff. 118r–130v, 236r–245r; Ithaca N.Y., Cornell U.P., codex M 61, ff. n.n. Ms. Cornell is a miscellany which uses various systems of numbering. At the beginning of the seventeenth century it belonged to Heinrich Khunrath, who had copied it in the library of the Electors of Brandenburg. Already the first piece, f. lr., *Liber Abdelachi vatis Arabi de sortilegiis ad Delium regem Persarum*, has a preamble dated 1510 and refers to Joachim and to his angel Jaymial, from which he takes his initiatory name: here one reads, on a loose-leaf folio (f.1r), that the effigy of Joachim was placed alongside the two portraits of Jaymial and the parchment representations of philosophers from various nations.

[26] J. Dupèbe, 'L'écriture chez l'ermite Pelagius. Un cas de théurgie chrétienne au XV^{e} siècle', in *Le texte et son inscription* (Paris, Editions du CNRS, 1989), pp. 113–53; Id., 'Curiosité et magie chez J. Trithemius', in *La curiosité à la Renaissance (Journée d'étude de la Société française des seziémistes)* (Paris, Société d'édition de l'enseignement supérieur, 1986); Id., 'L'ars notoria et la polémique sur la divination et la magie', *Cahiers V. L. Saulnier* 4, pp. 123–34; Id., 'L'ermite Pelagius et les Rose-Croix', in *Rosenkreuz als europäisches Phänomen in 17. Jahrhundert*, edited by the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica (Amsterdam, Pelikan, 2002), pp. 134–57. The first two of these studies contain some of the writings attributed to Pelagius and to Libanius: the analysis of these documents is excellent, but perhaps could refer directly to Trithemius.

Christian liturgy (see especially Book III of the *Antipalus*). His conclusions confirm the fact that such practices were frequent and tolerated by the Church"dissimulando"; for instance, "maleficia" are cured with certain vain and superstitious ceremonies and rites, not damaging men subjected to them and not dealing clearly with demons.[27]

These "maleficia" and other practices were confessed, when interrogated or exorcised, by persons possessed by demons or suspected of witchcraft. There is little need to point out that the practices are related to psychosis or sexual disorders and the confessions certainly due to the violence to which suspected people were made to submit.

§ 5. *Blessings and exorcisms*

In his historical writings Trithemius also appears extremely interested in "blessings" and exorcisms. He speaks of those described to him by a famous exorcist, his correspondent Adam, abbot of the monastery of Saint Martin in Cologne, who in various places had freed nuns and friars possessed by devils: these operated appearing as negroes, as bulls, as wolves ("in specie viri aethyopis, tauri, lupi") or as men, dogs, bears and monkeys. The victims acted as if they were "daemones incarnati".[28]

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[27] Ms. Augsburg Cod. 212/4, ff.92v–93r: "Sed dicant mihi taliter opinantes: unde proveniant his mediis vanissimis contra impotentiam coeundi optatos effectus? Non ex deo, quoniam neque invocatur, neque intentio curantis ad illum dirigitur. Non ex virtute occulta naturae, quia nihil confert annulus ad propositum. Valde igitur timendum est ista remedia frivola varia et superstitiosa demonum fieri cooperatione propter pactum quod ex intenione primi instituentis medium auferendi maleficium intexuerit. Sunt etiam plurique quos ecclesia dissimulando tolerat, qui ceremoniis et ritibus quibusdam vanis et superstitiosibus maleficia curant, sine alicuius detrimento hominis et sine manifesto cum demonibus commercio, aliquid, quorum etsi vana sint studia, non tamen censentur esse maleficiosa."

[28] Trithemius, *Chronicon Hirsaugiense* (Sankt Gallen, 1690), II, pp. 576–79: "in diversis figuris, virorum, canum, ursorum, simiarum, aliarumque diversarum bestiarum et inaudita turpitudinis coram eis et cum eis commercia exercebant. Postremo autem taliter intus et fori sunt ludificatae moniales, quod et certis intervallis ipsae daemones esse putarentur (ut ita dixerim) incarnati. Conveniebant more consueto ad chorum: horas confuse ululando magis quam canendo faciebant canonicas, missam tandem ad finem cantare minime potuerunt, demonibus voces interrumpentibus [. . .] Mox vero ut canendo pervenissent ad Sanctus, humanas voces mutarunt in diabolicas, mixtim ululando et horribiliter clamando, non uno sed vario modo atque confuso, cum tanto horrore, quod nemo sine maximo eas timore poterat audire".

If some cases are violent and terrifying, there is another which leads us to wonder if it had a more natural and pardonable explanation: Trithemius describes what appears to have been some youths visiting some nuns:

> they climb up to the windows, jump into the dormitory and run to and from every cell, having sex with sleeping nuns and continuing to make base violence on those lying in bed.[29]

Another, and even more important, purpose of magic for Trithemius was the rapid acquisition and perfect conservation of knowledge. According to his faithful disciple and fellow-monk, defender and indeed spokesman, Johannes Butzbach, when asked by Joachim "if this art is possible (*de possibilitate artis*)", Trithemius had replied, among other things that those "who use magic are able to operate good by its means, for instance to speak in languages never heard before". In the famous letter written to Germain de Ganay on 8 March 1509, Bovelles reopens after ten years the scandal caused by Trithemius' letter to Arnold de Bost and intercepted by the latter's prior: after several years Bovelles makes a retrospective denounciation of the *Steganographia* (which by then would be rare). He considers Trithemius' repentance to be "lachrimae cocodrilli" and explains his behaviour on the grounds that he was a self-taught person. At the age of fifteen the Benedictine friar was unable to read, yet subsequently learnt Latin and music without the help of teachers and went on to boast of being the teacher of other fellow disciples. According to Bovelles he pretended to have instructed a German prince: under Trithemius' guidance this pupil, still illiterate, in one hour had learned to write, to speak in Latin and to compose epistles; but when he went away the teacher had cancelled everything.[30] This quick, magical teaching is the objective declared in the *Ars notoria*, revealed to Solomon and drawn up by his disciple Apollonius, an occult art which greatly interested Trithemius. He believed that it makes it possible to learn ("acquirere et habere") "all sciences, be they liberal or

[29] *Ibid.*: "Ascendere per fenestras in specie iuvenum videbantur et saltare in dormitorium et per cellas discurrere singulas, dormientibus sese coniungere atque in stratis jacentibus vim inferre turpitudinis non cessantes".

[30] Bovelles, *Opera cit.*, f. 172v: Carolus Bovillus Germano Ganaio Regio Consiliario: [. . .] ex S. Quintino, 8 martio 1509: "edoctum semel a se quendam principem germanum: prius illitteratum una hora scribere, latine dicere, ita ut epistolas dictaret; sed et priusquam ille abcessisset ab eo omnia subtraxisse, indoctum ut prius reliquisse".

mechanical or dealing with exceptional things": this would be obtained "pronouncing the mystical words of holy prayers and invoking the names of holy angels".[31]

§ 6. *Trithemius and his German contemporaries*

Trithemius was the first person to have described two great, though very different, figures of Renaissance Germany: Nicholas of Cusa[32] and the 'historical' Doctor Faustus. There is a well-known letter from Trithemius to Johann Virdung von Hassfurt, one of the celebrated astrologers with whom he was in contact (the others being Johann Carion and Joseph Grünpeck, and all of them were important authors in the debate about 1524). Historians consider this letter the earliest evidence of the historical Faustus, owing to the fact that during his exile in 1506–07 Trithemius had received information about him. The letter deserves close attention. Here Trithemius warns Virdung about Faust in case he will pay him a visit: "you will find not a philosopher but a foolish man, agitated by excessive recklessness." Indeed

> some priests told me that in the presence of many listeners Faust claimed to have acquired such great wisdom and memory of every discipline ("scientia") that, if all the books of Plato and Aristotle with all their philosophy were to be lost from human memory, he, like a second Ezra, would be able to restore everything, and with still greater elegance. Later, during my stay in Speyer, he went to Würzburg, and, moved by the same vanity, was reported to have said that the miracles of Christ the Saviour are not wonderful; that what Christ did he could have done himself

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[31] *Ibid.:* "ut per eam omnes scientias liberales, mechanicas et exceptivas, et earum facultates per breve spacium temporum posset acquirere et habere [. . .] in proferendo mystica verba sanctarum orationum et invocando nomina sanctorum angelorum". Cf. Dupèbe, 'L'ars notoria cit., pp. 123–34. On this and some other important texts of ceremonial magic in the Middle Ages, see C. Fanger (ed.), *Conjuring Spirits. Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic* (Phoenix Mill, Sutton, 1998).

[32] Niccolò Cusano, *Opere religiose*, edited by P. Gaia (Turin, UTET, 1971), p. 86, and bibliography. A sound knowledge of the figure and of the philosophical and other works of Nicholas of Cusa is attested to by a very important and well-known passage in Trithemius, *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, in *Opera historica* cit., pp. 359–60. It has been observed that Trithemius as a visitor of the Benedictine monasteries of the congregation of Brunsfeld continued the work of Nicholas of Cusa, who was one of the founders, see Arnold, *Johannes Trithemius cit.*, p. 23 (see p. 59 where he refers to Trithemius' visit to the library of Kues); Borchardt, *Diskussion* in R. Auernheimer and F. Baron (eds.), *Johannes Trithemius: Humanismus und Magie in Vorreformatorische Deutschland (Bad Kreuzenach Symposien I)* (Munich, Profil, 1992), p. 65.

> whenever he wanted and at any moment. He came to Gelnhausen in this last Lenten time and, glorifying himself in the same foolish manner, promised to do great things, claiming that he was the most accomplished in alchemy, greater than all the alchemists that have lived, and that he knew every thing that men might desire to know.[33]

In this letter, which gives a second-hand account of the boasting of Faust we should note that he not only denied the supernatural nature of Christ's miracles (as Giovanni Pico della Mirandola had already done in his *Conclusiones*,[34] where he claimed that one can perform the same acts with the use of magic) but also promised to do so "whenever he wanted and at any moment". This reminds us of *ars notoria.* The reference to Plato and Aristotle[35] is also important. These two philosophers had become a point of reference for theorists of magic: if their books were to be lost it would mean the loss of the basic principles underlying philosophy and magic—unless, of course, someone gifted with extraordinary mnemonic and inventive power were able to recreate them. Like the kabbalah, mnemotechnics and the inventive arts (from Cicero's *ars memoriae* to the art of Lull, which would appear to have inspired some of Trithemius' concentric figures),[36] ceremonial magic could be seen as providing a short cut to knowledge. Trithemius learnt this from necromantic treatises as well as from the manuals of exorcism.[37]

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[33] Trithemius, *Opera historica cit.*, II, pp. 71–73. This letter written from the new abbey of Würzburg, on 20 August 1507, has been published and repeatedly analysed; see D. Harmening, *Faust cit.*, p. 61 n.

[34] Pico, *Conclusiones nongentae. Le novecento tesi dell'anno 1486*, edited by A. Biondi (Florence, Olschki, 1995), p. 118 ("Conclusiones magicae secundum opinionem propriam", 7–9).

[35] Several pseudo-Aristotelian treatises have magical, alchemical or otherwise occult content. Cf. Ch. Schmitt and D. Knox, *Pseudo-Aristoteles Latinus. A Guide to Latin Works falsely attributed to Aristotle before 1500*, London, The Warburg Institute, 1985; J. Kraye, W. F. Ryan and C. B. Schmitt, *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages*, London, The Warburg Institute, 1986; W. F. Ryan and C. B. Schmitt, *Pseudo-Aristotle. Secret of Secret*s, London, The Warburg Institute, 1982.

[36] See Trithemius, *Clavis Steganographiae* (n.d.), f. A12r, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms. Canonici 500, ff. 154–56 (very kindly communicated to me by David Pingree, whom I thank); *Clavis generalis triplex in libros Steganographicos*, Darmstadt, B. Hofmann-J. Berner, 1621, f. Er: "Directi alphabeti commutationes steganographicae" and *passim*.

[37] Dupèbe, 'L'ermite Pelagius' *cit.*, p. 145, is correct to stress that the practices prescribed by Pelagius, Libanius and Trithemius, are designed to obtain visions ("Anacrises"). See Butzbach, *Macrostroma cit.*, f. 89r: "Cumque post longam phantasiam, ut ait, unquam de impossibili penitus desperaret, dormitum se nocte reposuit, facultatem ipsam deridens quoniam impossibilia querere tentaret. Eadem vero nocte extitit ei quidam qui ei dixit: 'Non sunt vana, o Trithemi, quae cogitasti; quamquam tibi sint impossibilia, quae nec tu, nec alius quispiam tecum poteris invenire'. Ad quem ille ait: 'Si possibilia sunt, dic—obsecro—quomodo fiant'. Et ille aperiens os suum de singulis

Ceremonial magic was certainly a short cut and a safe way to communicate occult knowledge as well as private and risky information. Communication of this sort was of great interest to Trithemius, who well deserves the place he has won in the history of the perfect language.[38] In his unpublished *Macrostroma de laudibus trithemiamis*, friar Johannes Butzbach wrote that his master Trithemius had received many attacks, for being a practitioner of Lull's art, or of kabbalah, a science "which we can call *mosaic*":[39] *ars notoria* was attributed sometimes to Moses, sometimes to Solomon, and Butzbach writes of it with respect in order to defend Trithemius. Ever since Pico had included theses taken from Lull and from kabbalah in his *Conclusiones Nongentae*, and had thought it possible to combine the two, many readers had ventured along this road. Trithemius was highly interested in prophecy and criticized Giovanni Mercurio da Correggio, the famous 'Hermetic' wanderer and preacher.[40]

§ 7. *Ancient and medieval occult sources*

Trithemius was a great admirer of Pietro d'Abano, and an even greater admirer of Albertus Magnus. He defended both against accusations of necromancy, while sustaining such charges in regard to the writings of

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eum per ordinem instruxit, ostendens quomodo fieri, quae cogitaverat multis diebus frustra, facile possent".

[38] U. Eco, *La ricerca della lingua perfetta nella cultura europea* (Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1993). P. Behar, in his *Les langues occultes de la Renaissance* (Paris, Desjonquères, 1996) does not deal with Trithemius.

[39] Butzbach, *Macrostroma cit.*, f. 94r: "Sunt enim qui eum artem Lulli, alii nostram, alii scientiam cabalisticam quam nos mosaycam dicere possumus, callere ex invidia obiciunt".

[40] London, British Library, ms. Additional 11416, f. 3r–v: Trithemius, Epistola ad Episcopum Verdunsem in Gallis, s.d.: "Homo novus est, qui veterum hebraeorum occultatam et omnimodam (ipse idem assertor est) calle[re] scientiam, qui et latinorum et graecorum omnium scientiam audet improbare, inquiens: 'neminem unquam in graecis vel latinis fuisse sapientem'. Se autem in scientiis consummatum iudicat se secretarum rerum naturae profundissimum exploratorem gloriatur, prae se in publico fert gravitatem, severitatem, habitum, mores et vitam cum mendicitate prophetica. Se ad summas res natum, se deo plenum, se ex spiritu caelesti loqui innuit; metallorum transmutator, veluti Vene[r]is in Lunam et Lunae in Solem, profitetur. Felicia infelicitare et infelicia felicitare novit [...] Recordabitur sancio Iuvenalis [...] ubi dicit: 'quemvis hominem secum attulit ad nos, grammaticus rhetor gometra pictor aliptes augur schoenobates medicus magus, omnia novit, graeculus exuriens in caelum iusseris, ibit'. Ita profecto ii qui hunc pauperem esurientem, qui se tamen divitem iactat, in secretioribus familiariter speculati sunt, aiunt eum magum, sed non de genere eorum qui malefici et facinorosi magi sunt, quod daemonum constat ('de quibus' in *Decretis* XXVI q.V)".

Michael Scot, which he regarded as superstitious and satanic (in which "nihil est non superstitiosum et diabolicum"). In the case of Pietro d'Abano, Trithemius cited with interest his unpublished *Lucidator dubitabilium astronomiae*, and denied that other superstitious books circulating under his name were really of his authorship.[41] In the case of the great Dominican, in the *De septem secundeis* Trithemius rejected the criticism he had incurred for having blamelessly read superstitious books ("apud imperitos etiam magus et superstitiosus usque in hunc diem iniuriose sit habitus": wrongly since "scientia autem mali non est malum, sed usum").[42] He was extremely careful to distinguish the *Secretum Alberti* and other spurious works from the authentic ones:

> many necromantical and magical books are wrongly attributed by some slanderous and lying person not only to Albertus Magnus, but also to other holy and learned men, who never thought of writing them. On the contrary it is proved that the holy Albertus always condemned such books.[43]

On the contrary, it happened that both Albert and Trithemius were badly considered because of the vulgar prejudices. As we learn from his defender, Johannes Butzbach, the present critiques against Trithemius and those against Albertus are very similar: the latter, being a saint and a true catholic, was interested in natural magic and performed many "experiences" and discoveries ("miranda, quae occulta virtute naturae operatus est"), but the vulgar not understanding them considered him a necromancer.[44]

In the context of this problem, Trithemius explicitly asserted that the *Speculum astronomiae* was authentic, referring to one of its most controversial passages—the main one which Pierre Mandonnet had cited in

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[41] Trithemius, *Antipalus cit.*, see *infra* p. 105: "sunt et alia plura superstitiosa volumina huic Petro inscripta, quorum sit auctor quicumque fuerit, vanus et superstitiosus erat per omnia.

[42] Trithemius, *De septem secundeis* (Köln, 1567), p. 89 ss.: "multa volumina necromantiae et magicae isti maledici non solum Alberto Magno falso et mendaciter adscribunt, verum etiam aliis viris sanctis atque doctissimis, qui talia nunquam cogitarunt. Quin potius mihi constat Albertum virum sanctum libros talium semper condemnasse".

[43] *Ibid.*

[44] Butzbach, *Macrostroma cit.*, f. 89r: "Hanc naturalem magiam vir catholicus et sanctus Albertus Magnus se dicere fuisse secutum et experientiis in ea multa comperisse, quamobrem apud vulgus iners quod omnia in sinistrum facilius interpretatur, nicromanticus dicitur fuisse. Quod et Trithemius iste noster [. . .] sibi quandoque perspicuum habuit evenire"; *ibid.*, ff. 92v e 94r: "Similiter cum legant Albertum inter experimenta magiae multum temporis consumpsisse, de magia naturali hoc intelligant, non de prohibita, ne exemplo tanti viri illi se dedant quod illi licuit sibi quoque licere presumentes"; "quod Alberto Magno contigit, ut propter miranda, quae occulta virtute naturae operatus est, magus a vulgo sit habitus".

order to attribute this work to an apocalyptic like Roger Bacon: books containing incantations will be used when it will be necessary to fight against demons, "seducers" of simple people, the Antichrist himself and his followers.[45] Trithemius was in many ways a follower of Albert: both hoped that the forbidden books would not be suppressed, but would instead be preserved "sub censura plurium" in certain places such as monasteries (as was the case at Sponheim) or cathedrals, or universities, so that access to them would be denied to anyone without a good reason for consulting them.

This was the thesis of the *Speculum astronomiae* attributed (according to Trithemius and in my opinion rightly) to Albertus: this work, which in many codexes and by many witnesses has been attributed to him, contains a very useful bibliography of the astrological treatises known in the second half of the thirteenth century.[46] Trithemius took it as a model, brought it up to date and copied part of it in order to provide a bibliography of ceremonial magic for sixteenth-century readers of his *Antipalus maleficiorum* as well as for his patron Joachim of Brandenburg. It should be pointed out that in this work, as in the *Speculum astronomiae*, both the titles and the opening words are indicated (even more than one of these when various different examples are to be found). He notes the size of the books and the names of their presumed authors: a characteristic of Trithemius is his insistence on making quite clear that in fact these attributions are unfounded and fraudulent.

The request to rescue the *grimoires* from the flames reminds us that Trithemius wrote his *Antipalus maleficiorum* when the Dominicans had, already for years, been indulging in witch-hunting and their dispute with his friend Reuchlin was in its early stages; Reuchlin was supported

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[45] Trithemius. *Antipalus cit.*, p. 00,: "ut si quando surrexerint aliqui talium rerum professores arte diabolica populum alicubi seducentes, propriis armis convicti poenas recipiant, quas meruerunt".

[46] In order to give the reader a contextual understanding of this work and the historiographical case that relates to it I refer to my *The 'Speculum Astronomiae' and its Enigma* (Dordrecht, Kluwer 'Boston Studies', 1992) pp. xvi–352, in particular pp. 25–32, 240–50. For the many coinciding passages in the *Speculum astronomiae* and in the *Antipalus* I refer also to the key comment of L. Thorndike, 'Traditional Medieval Tracts concerning engraved astrological Images', in *Mélanges Auguste Pelzer* (Louvain, 1947), pp. 217–74. More recently new mss. of the *Speculum astronomiae* and catalogues have been found that attest to the existence of other lost codexes, seeing in them the basis for a different attribution: see A. Paravicini Bagliani, *Lo 'Speculum astronomiae', une énigme? Enquête sur les manuscrits* (Florence, SISMEL, 2001). The information that this work of Trithemius gives on the circulation and on the text of the *Speculum astronomiae* does not appear to me, however, to have been noted and taken into consideration here.

by many humanists, who contested the attack of Pfefferkorn and other 'viri obscuri' who were willing to burn the books of the Jews. It is nonetheless true that Trithemius wondered whether:

> To take pleasure in reading demon's books is nothing else than to consecrate oneself to demons. Many impious books full of rubbish have been put into circulation. Curious and rash people have been deceived by these books because they are falsely attributed to ancient philosophers and promise to do great and absolutely impossible things. These people believed it to be allowed to constrain with characters, magical rings and pentacles the evil demon, so that it will answer every question without deceit. Given that in our time there is great iniquity and in many persons charity grew cold, the wicked men became too powerful, disseminating their viciousness' dread not only among simple people, but—and this is deplorable—they are also highly considered among kings, noblemen and princes, so that nobody dares to have his say and to find fault with them.[47]

The superstitious nature of the magical writings listed here is always admitted, recognized and openly condemned by Trithemius in his *Antipalus*. He does this, however, by way of precaution, as seen in the classification of demons according to the nobility's hierarchy: although this classification is condemned here in regard to the *Liber officiorum*, nonetheless Trithemius adopted it in his *Steganographia* following Peter of Abano.[48] Among many other items this very classification was criticized by Charles de Bovelles who, a decade earlier, had been allowed to examine the *Steganographia* for two hours.

These bibliographical passages from the *Antipalus maleficiorum*[49] are a

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[47] *Ibid.*: "Libros enim cum voluptate legere daemonum quid aliud est quam semetipsum daemonibus immolare? Multos et varios libellos circumferunt plenos spurciciis et impietate. Veterum philosophorum nominibus fallaciter inscriptos, quorum ostensione curiosos et incautos plures decipiunt, promittentes magna et omnino impossibilia: characteribus, annulis atque pentaculis se spiritum posse coarctare malignum, ut coram appareat visibilis, ad omnia interrogata sine dolo responsurus. Et quia nostris temporibus abundavit iniquitas et refriguit charitas multorum, isti maledicti homines nimium invaluerunt, non solum intus simplices orrorem sue pravitatis disseminantes, sed etiam quod est dolendum apud reges plerosque magnos et principes in pretio sunt habiti, ut nemo sit qui sermones in eos ausit dirigere".

[48] *Ibid.*: "Partitur autem in huiusmodi figuris spiritus ipsos in quattuor Imperatores, Duces, Comites et Servos. Imperatores autem totius orbis esse tantum duodecim, quotquot et venti a philosophis esse traduntur. Ex his quoque quattuor precipuos designat: oriens, meridiei, accidentis et septentrionis, quos ut magnos imperatores appellat. Sub quolibet imperatore statuit duces puto trigenos aut quadragenos. Sub ducibus singulis rursus comites, maiore numero, et servos sub comitibus, innumeros."

[49] See Chapter 2 of Bk. I of the *Antipalus maleficiorum* in *Paralipomena opusculorum Petri Blesensis et Johannis Trithemii*, ed. by Johannes Busaeus (Mainz, apud Balthasarum Lippium, 1605), pp. 292–311, reproduced *infra*, pp. 101–112.

very useful repertory for the scholars and the historians of this extreme type of magic, as they reconcile, and in a paradoxical manner combine, the abbot's two passions of bibliography and magic. "Dixit Thebit Bencorath: dixit Aristoteles . . ." we might make a joke of it: "Dixit Trithemius: dixit Libanius Gallus: dixit Pelagius eremita".

There is a longer draft of the preface to *Steganographia*, printed after Trithemius' death. In it he wrote to defend this early work on cryptography and demonology, written for the Elector Philip Count Palatine of the Rhine and Duke of Bavaria, his Lord at Sponheim and first patron:

> Ancient philosophers, masters in art as well as in nature, when they discovered secrets, concealed them in various ways and figures, to avoid that they might come to be known by the wicked.[50]

According to the kabbalists ("doctiores quique Hebraeorum") in *Genesis* Moses used simple words for "uspeakable mysteries and secrets" ("ineffabilium mysteriorum secreta"). According to Hieronymus, "pene tot in *Apocalypsi* mysteria latere . . . quot verba", and the same may be said of the Greeks. But secrets of natural magic and "steganographic" art have to be held secret for purposes of security.[51]

Knowledge of magical techniques also allows evil-doers to communicate with one another; a case which is even worse when this art is used to communicate with a woman, or even with a wife, who would be better kept if illiterate and unable to write and use cryptography, which is a social danger:

> if a woman although so far not knowing Latin, being brought to it and commended very much by a man, becomes very expert in the words of both laguages or idioms, and able to understand letters on all sides: [she will] answer with a very meaningful discourse, which is perfectly sure.[52]

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[50] Trithemius, *Praefatio apologetica cit.* n.n.: "Antiquos philosophos et sapientes artis ac naturae, si qua reperissent secreta, ne ad noticiam pravorum hominum devenissent, variis occultasse modis atque figuris multorum opinio est".

[51] *Ibid.*: "ne hoc magnum secretum in aures vulgarium imperitorum aut pravorum hominum perveniat." The danger is great: "quanta per hanc scientiam mala in republica fieri per malos et lubricos possent, si ad multorum notitiam devenerit: adulteria, fornicationes, conspirationes, traditiones, homicidia, latrocinia et infinita mala".

[52] Trithemius, *Praefatio apologetica*, contained in *In Caii Secundi Naturalis historiaem I et II Libros XXXII commentaria*, Würzburg 1548 (Vatican Library, Palat. Iv 830), n.n.:. "dum foemina, quamvis latini sermonis hactenus inscia, per sancta et pudica verba cuiuslibet linguae seu idiomatis effecta doctissima, malam et impudicam amatoris sui voluntatem, viro licet perferente ac collaudante, literas latissime intelligere suumque desiderium eodem modo securissima quum voluerit late illi remandare diserta satis oratione

Cryptograpy is a clever and ingenious mechanism, but it must be kept secret:

> Although this science may seem childish to some, if it were published in the state the public order would be indeed upset, all trustworthiness would be over: letters, contracts, documents and even a man's words would fall under suspicion.[53]

§ 8. *Denunciations and Self-Defences*

On his own initiative Trithemius wrote to his French friends[54] and to Bovelles himself[55] reminding him of the two weeks he had spent at

possit"; "quanta per hanc scientiam mala in republica fieri per malos et lubricos possent, si ad multorum notitiam devenerint: adulteria, fornicationes, conspirationes, traditiones, homicidia, latrocinia et infinita mala".

[53] Trithemius, *Praefatio apologetica cit., Ibid*:: "Enimvero licet haec scientia puerilis videri aliquibus possit, tamen si fuerit publicata totius reipublicae ordo turbaretur, fides periret publica, literae, instrumenta, scripturae omnes ipsi denique hominum sermones in perpetuam suspicionem verterentur."

[54] See the letter of 20 June 1515 to Germain de Ganay, now edited by K. Arnold, 'Ergänzungen zum Briefwechsel des Johannes Trithemius', *Studien u. Mitteilungen z. Gesch. d. Benediktiner-Ordens* 83 (1972), pp. 203–204 and 185, where the homage of the *Polygraphia* (a cryptograph, this time without necromantic appendices) is polemically linked to the criticisms spread in France by Bovelles. "Verum ne quis Bovillo similis artis huius archana, quae leges naturae christianaeque fidei normas nec excedunt, nec offendunt, in aliquo non intelligens, propterea quod enigmatibus involuta cernuntur, aut pravis demonum artibus aut supersticiosis ascriberet vanitatibus ,[. . .] conscripsi, quod *Clavem Polygraphiae* praenotavi [. . .] nihil peto abs te, nihil requiro a Bovillo, nisi quod iustum est, decens et honestum. Non sum inimicus hominis, neque iniurias mihi factas in eum contumeliose retorquere, ut possem, disposui, sed innocentiam meam plano atque veraci demonstrare sermone. [. . .]de qua [Steganographia mea] non recte intellecta Bovillus omnem de me male ac false suspicionis materiam sumpsit". Trithemius apologizes for not being able to send *Steganographia* to Ganay because he does not have a copyist. Later on, in the preface to the *Polygraphia*, Trithemius protested publicly, making clear allusions to the 'Bovillina societas'. According to Arnold, *Johannes Trithemius cit.*, pp. 183n–84, Trithemius had indeed written an *Apologeticus in Bovillum* in two books: the first to refute the letter-denounciation sent by Bovelles to Ganay (Bovillus, *Opera*, p. 172 n. 75); Bk. II, destined to cause debate and to change ideas as to who could have been persuaded by Bovelles, is included in the list that Trithemius makes in 1514 of his own works; when in the epilogue (1516) to the *Polygraphiae* he mentions the *Apologeticus in Bovillum* he talks as if he had one single book. In the opinion of Arnold, Bovelles could have been pressed by Trithemius' letter to Bost, which referred to the *Steganographia* and circulated widely, with an echo of scandal, in the preceding years. I suspect a different origin of the denounciation. See also Brann, *The Abbot Trithemius cit.*, pp. 29–31, 44–45, 266–67.

[55] J. M. Victor, *Charles de Bovelles 1479–1533* (Geneva, Droz, 1978), pp. 13–21 (on the years of travel, 1503–1512), pp. 31–36 (on relations with Trithemius), pp. 116–22 (on *De intellectu*). See also E. Garin, *Introduzione* to Bovelles, *Il libro del sapiente* (Turin, Einaudi, 1987), pp. xv–xx and bibliography.

Sponheim as his guest.[56] Trithemius expressed admiration for his Cusanian philosophizing, a method that was little noted or used even among Platonists, at any rate prior to the edition edited by Lefèvre in 1514;[57] Trithemius praised Bovelles' style and way of thinking "following the wisdom of the Ancients, you are sound and able to make the truth brightly clear": Bovelles was no *rhétoriqueur* and Trithemius appreciated it.[58]

> I liked and many more readers appreciate what you have written in *De intellectu:* this treatise contains true, pure and perfect Christian theology, which gives knowledge to our minds and grants to our volition a desire of the Highest Good (*Summum Bonum*). This theology is consistent, pure, complete and innocent and gives wisdom to children.[59]

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[56] Interest in revealed doctrines and prophetic attitudes is recognisable in Bovelles, who rather significantly went to visit Trithemius immediately after having visited the hermitage in Switzerland where 'Bruder Klaus' (Nicholas von Flühe), anorexic for twenty years, died in 1487: there a cult had become established, to which Trithemius contributed in his *Chronicon Hirsaugiense* (pp. 504–5, 527). Bovelles had visited Trithemius in Sponheim in 1504: only much later was he to betray the faith of his host, denouncing him in 1509. He would charge him on account of the necromantic content of his *Steganographia* only several years after the writing of this work and Bovelles' reading of it , cf. 'Epistola Germano Ganaio, ex S. Quintino, 8 Martii 1509', in C. Bovillus, *Opera* (Amboise, 1510), fols. 172*v*–73*r*). Trithemius admired Cusanus and his follower and had voluntarily submitted the work to Bovelles. Cf. Trithemius, *Epistolae familiares*, I, p. 39, in Id., *Opera historica*, I , p. 476. On 22 August 1505 (at the height of the abbot's crisis) Trithemius writes on his own initiative to Bovelles, reminds him of the two weeks he had spent as his guest, and praises his style of thought. Bovelles, on his part, takes up Trithemius's magic numerology and his theory concerning the seven "Secundei" or planetary angels in two letters of 1508 addressed to Ganay (*Opera*, fols. 171v–72*r*). But Bovelles betrayed his host's trust and denounced him in March 1509: this date is before the letter in which Trithemius, on 8 April 1510, accepts the dedication of Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia* (cf. CLM 4392, fol. 5*r–v*).

[57] E. F. Rice, *The Prefatory Epistles of Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples and Related Texts* (New York, Columbia U. P., 1971), pp. 342–48; in the dedication to Denis Briçonnet of *Nicolai Cusani Opera* (Paris, B. Ascensius, 1514), p. 346, Lefèvre distinguishes three types of theology (intellectual, rational, natural): "theologia Cusae ad primam illam intellectualem theologiam totam pertinere et qua nulla magis iuvamur ad sacra Dionysii Areopagitae adyta et eorum, qui generosius, augustius et sublimius de Deo philosophati sunt, dicta conquirenda'. Among the many (including Reuchlin) who are thanked by Lefèvre, Bovelles and Trithemius are missing. See also E. Garin, *Cusano e i platonici italiani del Rinascimento* (1962), reprinted in his *L'età nuova* (Naples, Morano, 1969), pp. 293–317.

[58] Trithemius, *Epistolae familiares* (I, 39), in *Opera historica cit.*, II, p. 476, written on 22 August 1505, in the midst of the Sponheim abbey crisis: "quoniam veterum more doctorum solidus es et veritatis enucleator lucidus, neque verborum multiplicatione superfluus, neque deficentia in his quae fuerint necessaria recusus".

[59] *Ibid:* "Ea quae *De intellectu* scripsisti et mihi complacuerunt et multis. Continent enim veram Christianorum theologiam, puram et absolutam, quae menti cognitionem et affectui confert summi boni desiderium, consistens in se pura, integra et candida, [. . .] sapientiam praestans parvulis". I have already hinted at Butzbach and Bovelles in relation to Trithemius in my *Scholastiker cit.*, now *supra*, p. 53ff. On the *De intellectu* of Bovelles, see Kuper, *Johannes Trithemius cit.*, p. 90.

So the abbot had read the *De intellectu* in manuscript; only five years later, Bovelles published it in the collection of his philosophical writings.[60] Trithemius made considerable use of it when concluding the first of his *Octo quaestiones* on faith and intellect:[61] without quoting Bovelles, he referred explicitly to Nicholas of Cusa, the most learned man of his time and like him a native of the Moselle. He "maintains that God is a straight line of infinite length, which makes a circle".[62]

This is the pseudo-Dionysian, Erigenian and Cusanian "negative theology", which is not new: what is more surprising and interesting in Trithemius is his choice of a mathematical and geometrical formulation.

> God being infinite, maximum beyond quantity, optimum beyond quality, being all in all without being limited and circumscribed, being above all and not having a position which excludes [anything], it is impossible for Him to be comprehended and understood by a man's soul (*intellectus*), which is limited, circumscribed and bound to the use of the senses; it is impossible moreover that what is promised to the soul (*intellectus*), when at last it will be purified in the hereafter (*in patria*), would be conceded when the soul is confused and not pure in its lifetime.[63]

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[60] Bovilli *Opera. De intellectu* [. . .], (Amboise, 1510, but really 1511).

[61] Trithemius, *Liber octo quaestionum*, in *Paralipomena opusculorum cit.* (Mainz, B. Lippius, 1605), p. 433 ss.: 'Prima quaestio Serenissimae majestatis tuae ista fuit: "Quare omnipotens Deus credi a mortalibus voluit potius quam sciri et intelligi, eo videlicet modo cognitionis et intelligentiae, quo a sanctis angelis cognoscitur et intelligitur"'. On p. 440 one sees the 'beautiful simile' attributed to Empedocles 'Deus est sphera cuius centrum ubique, circumferentia nusquam', which is in fact the most celebrated image in the Dionisian and Cusanian hermeneutic tradition. See *Das pseudohermetische Buch der XXIV Meister*, edited by C. Baeumker, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters*, XXV (Münster, 1928), pp. 207–14. This theme of the *Liber XXIV Philosophorum* is present in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I Pars, q. XXXII, a.1, and in Ficino, *De Deo et anima*; see P.O. Kristeller, *Supplementum ficinianum* (Florence,1937), II, p. 134; Cf. E. Garin, *La cultura filosofica del Rinascimento italiano* (Florence, Sansoni 1961), p. 145n; Id., *L'età nuova. cit.*, pp. 407–8. Yates, *G. Bruno cit.*, p. 247 n.; A. Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (New York, J. Hopkins U.P., 1958), pp. 10, 18, 279 n. 19.

[62] Trithemius, *Epistolae familiares cit.*, pp. 440–41: "[Cusanus] dicit: 'Deus est infinitae longitudinis linea recta, quae circulum facit'." Trithemins goes on: "Videamus nunc igitur. Si linea est recta, quodammodo circulum facit? Quod si facit circulum, quomodo recta? Sunt enim circulus et linea recta naturaliter opposita. Verumtamen infinitae longitudinis linea cum neque principium habet, neque finem, circulum necessario facit, quamvis non curva, sed recta proponatur imaginanda".

[63] *Ibid.*: "Cum ergo Deus sit infinitus, maximus sine quantitate, optimus sine qualitate, omnia in omnibus sine circumscriptione, supra omnia sine excludente positione, non fuit possibile, quod ab intellectu circumscriptibili humano qui sensuum ministerio utitur, ad intelligendum comprehenderetur, et quod ei promittitur purificato tandem in patria, confuso et impuro concedatur in vita".

Throughout the whole first *quaestio* Trithemius owed much to Bovelles: he had immediately realized the importance of his treatise *De intellectu* inspired by Nicholas of Cusa. According to Trithemius, who was well versed in mathematical sciences, Butzbach wrote on the philosophy of geometry:

> Euclid of Megara, a contemporary of Plato, wrote [on geometry] and also the holy Plato conceded him the prize in the geometrical disciplines. The Greek text of Euclid's geometry was translated into Latin by Campanus, who wrote on it also a commentary in his short and concise style, a style—I tell it *pace sua*—which is almost obscure because of the excessive conciseness that he loves and displays more than other authors. Euclid's geometry is not yet brought to the highest degree by Campanus, given that he has not discovered isoperimetric figures and solids. This discovery is due to Thomas Bradwardine's geometry, which is a very useful introduction to understanding exactly Aristotle's and Plato's works. He explains almost every mathematical doctrine [. . .], written by Aristotle in his books. Both, i.e. Thomas [Bradwardine] and Euclid, wrote on speculative geometry, a [theory] brought to perfection by Cardinal Nicolas of Cusa in his book intitled *De complemento mathematice*".[64]

If according to Butzbach and Trithemius, Euclid was a holy writer "contemporary of Plato", we have to think of him as one of the founders of "ancient philosophy". Thomas Bradwardine was the best writer among those who developed Euclid's geometry and he is very important in the Hermetic philosophical Latin tradition. Trithemius certainly ought not to be considered greatly as a philosopher, but his position is in the middle

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[64] Butzbach, *Macrostroma cit.*, ms. S. 358, f. 3r: "scripsit Euclides Megariensis contemporaneus Platonis, cui etiam ille divinus Plato concessit palmam in geometricis disciplinis; huius quidem Euclidis geometricam graece conscriptam vertit ex graeco in latinum Campanus, qui etiam commentaria in eundem conscripsit sermone brevi et succincto, et—pace sua dixerim—pene obscuro propter nimiam brevitatem quam ipse prae caeteris auctoribus amat et affectat. Huius tamen Euclidis geometria non est undique consummata, quia nullam prorsus fecit inventionem de figuris et corporibus ysoperimetris, quam Thomas Bradwardinus docet in geometriam suam, quae sane miro modo ducit ad libros Aristotelis et Platonis recte intelligendos. Declarat enim pene omnia illa mathematicalia quae Aristoteles [. . .] scripsit in libris suis; et hi duo, scilicet Thomas [Bradwardinus] et Euclides scripserunt geometriam speculativam, quam dominus Nicolaus Cusanus cardinalis complevit in libro suo quem *De complemento mathematice* inscripsit"; Butzbach's text continues: 'Est et alius auctor qui scripsit geometriam practicam, cuis nomen ignoratur, quam Joannes Campanus pulcherrime commendatus est, et hic liber tenet principatum inter omnes geometriae practicae, docet enim mensurare quaelibat corporalia tam irregularia quam regularia, et docet artem de binomiis, et de recisis eorundem binomiorum, quae ars multum iuvat ad decimum et undecimum librum Euclidis recte intelligendum'.

of the road which originates in medieval, Chartrian and Cusanian Platonism and leads to Ficino, the *alter Plato*, and his school.

Trithemius was a reader of the Platonic texts translated by Ficino, as well as personal writings by Ficino, Giovanni Pico and Johannes Reuchlin; Reuchlin was a frequent visitor to the Platonic academy in Florence and Trithemius knew him personally. Among these Florentine Platonists the Benedictine had found not only the distinction between the two types of magic, one natural and lawful, the other diabolic and to be avoided (a distinction which he did not accept), but also a clear idea of the microcosm.[65] Among Pico's works he was acquainted with the *Disputationes* against judicial astrology,[66] and also the *Apologia* (of which he made tacit use).[67] In *Quaestio VI* "De potestate maleficarum"—the manuscipt of which contained important additions and variants compared with the printed text—for the *igneus* type of demonsTrithemius clearly depends more on the orphic hymns in Ficino's translations and "Michael Psellus graecus", i.e. on the treatise *De daemonibus* falsely attributed to Psellus but derived from his authentic works: it had been translated by Ficino who took an interest in its classification of demons according to the four elements, especially the element of fire. Trithemius worked out this classification too, combining it with Apuleius's definition of demon as an animal corresponding to the element of fire.[68]

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[65] Butzbach, *Macrostroma cit.*, ms. S 358, f. 95v.

[66] Butzbach, *Macrostroma cit.*, ms. S 357, f. 226r: "Picus contra astrologos mire insurgens, iam vita functus, a quodam astrologiae professore [Bellanti] carpitur"; ms. S 358, f. 4r: "Hanc [astrologiam] sancti doctores scriptis suis insectarunt, contra cuius professores etiam Joannes Picus Mirandula X [sic!, but really XII] instructissimos libros composuit, cuius omnem eorum virtutem subnervavit [. . .] Esaias propheta invehitur in babylonicis astrologis [. . .] Vide de hac Picum: 'arithmeticam vero prius omnium Pithagoras in artem disciplinamque redegisse dicitur. Hinc pitagorici illi qui totam fere Italiam occupavere per numerum, ut Campanus auctor est, mirabant quaternarium, quo nihil apud eos videretur esse perfectius. Quippe quattuor elementa: aerem, ignem, aquam, terram; quattuor anni tempora: ver, aestatem, hiemem, autumnum; quattuor qualitates omnium rerum quae fuissent a natura producta: calidam, siccam, frigidam, humidam; quattuor caeli plagas: orientem, meridiem, septemtrionem et occidentem; et multa alia quae brevitatis gratia omittenda sunt. Quamobrem opinatum Pythagoram ferunt omnia divina et humana certa numerorum ratione constare".

[67] Butzbach, *Macrostroma*, ms. S 358, f. 93r.

[68] Trithemius, *Liber octo quaestionum cit.*, pp. 500–501: "Hinc motus ut reor, Marsilius Ficinus Apuleium introducit: daemonia dixit animalia esse ignita"; it is interesting to see also ms. Uppsala C IV, ff. 145v–146r. Pseudo-Psellus may have been lent to Trithemins by Dietrich von Bülow, the bishop of Lebus, an interesting lawyer and councellor of Joachim, who received his doctorate *in utroque* at Bologna. Dietrich had stayed a long time in Italy, visiting Rome and other Italian cities precisely in the years of the denunciations of Pico's *Conclusiones* and Ficino's *De vita*. This explains why Bülow owned and was acquainted with the 'magic' translations of Ficino.

§ 9. *Socratism and Cusanian Ignorance or Simplicity*

Trithemius did not agree with the sanctification of Socrates then current among the humanists:

> Those who consider themselves among the wisest of the whole world [have two ideas]: 1. that Socrates was the first to obtain from Apollo the prize for his wisdom; 2. that after having studied for many years, he declared that he had realized that he knew nothing. It is vain to be called Christian if we do not follow Christ, who in the Gospel told us he was the road [to follow], so that speaking frequently with the master the disciple obtained a rule of life and a Christian will imitate that meekness always shown by Christ.[69]

This Socratic attitude amounts to a re-evaluation of the intelligence of 'simple', uncultured men, who are able to understand what eludes scholastics and erudite men: Socratism is a strong thread uniting Nicholas of Cusa, Erasmus, Lefèvre, Bovelles, Agrippa, Sebastian Franck and other Renaissance thinkers. Trithemius did not grasp or accept this fundamental principle. But in other ways his ideas were not very far from those of the Christian humanists. In the same letter in which he criticized their sanctification of Socrates he also criticized the domineering attitude of the scholastics, who even in their sermons ignored the writings of the New Testament and the Fathers of the Church.

They behaved—so writes Trithemius—"as if the New Testament were not the least useful for the study of celestial knowledge". Moreover "the majority of our preachers combine opinions from Aristotle or from Lull with the pure words of God, and they quote pagan philosophers more often than they quote Christ or the apostles". Trithemius urges men to read the Christian Fathers and doctors and gives a long list from Origen and Augustine to Petrus Damianus, Anselm, Bernard of Clairvaux. In their sermons ("very famous homilies") we will not find this combination: "the flour of Christian purity is never mixed with the bran of Gentiles and philosophers".[70] In this passage Trithemius

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[69] Trithemius, *Epistolae familiares*, epistle to Wolfgang Hopilius, from Spira 24 August 1505, in *Opera historica*, p. 474: "qui se magnos inter sapientes huius mundi existimant, tunc Socratem ab Apolline sapientiae palmam primo fuisse adeptum, cum post multorum studia annorum hoc se tandem scire profitetur, quod nesciret. Frustra enim appellamur christiani, si Christum non fuerimus secuti, qui propterea viam se in Evangelio dixit, ut conversatio magistri vivendi norma fieret discipuli, et illam humilitatem imitetur Christianus quam semper exhibuit Christum". Hopyl was a printer who used to work for Lefèvre d'Etaples.

[70] Trithemius, Letter to W. Hopilius cit.: "quasi nobis ad studium caelestis doctrinae

reminds us of Erasmus' socratism.[71] The Fathers do not quote "Aristotle the peripatetic philosopher", nor Porphyry the apostate, nor Plato, nor Averroes, nor Cicero"[72]

> In Christ's school [there is] a way of teaching which in my judgement is an unworthy one: [it seeks] confirmation of the words of the Holy Spirit, paying attention to the names of those whose inspiration is—no doubt—far away from Christ. [They] did not know God's wisdom, more wise than this world, and therefore lose their strength (*evanuerunt*) basely in their vanities. There are among Christian people some wiseacres (*scioli*), who, excessively reckless and conceited, dare confirm that Socrates both in his life and in his death, as well as in his doctrine, prefigured our Saviour.[73]

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minus sufficiat Evangelium Christi desintque ad fidei nostrae confirmationem divinarum testimonia scripturarum, ut in omni pene sermone ad christianos de fide gentilium sit necesse opinionem introducere [et] sapientiam [. . .] Nostri autem concionatores maiore in numero purissimos dei sermones aristotelicis lulianisque intermiscent opinionibus, crebrius philosophos gentilium quam Christum apostolosque allegantes".

[71] H. van der Hardt, *Antiqua literarum monumenta* (Braunschweig, 1690), p. 35, published from a ms. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, cod. lat. fol. 410, ff. 156r–157r, Trithemius' letter to Albertus Moderer OFM in 1492. At that time Erasmus' *Antibarbari*, dealing with Socrates' and other pagans' salvation, had not yet been published, but had circulated since it was written in 1488–1489; the "Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis" can be read in one of Erasmus' *Colloquia*, precisely *Convivium religiosum* of 1523. Trithemius, who was accused of having included lay writers and humanists ("professores saecularium litterarum") in his *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, sent to Moderer this letter in order to excuse himself: "Indignum plane meo iudicio genus docendi, ut in schola Christi quasi pro dictorum spiritus sancti confirmatione, illorum audiantur nomina recitari, quorum spiritus absque ambiguitate a Christo penitus sunt alieni. Non enim cognoverunt Dei sapientiam, ipsius mundi sapient[iorem], et propterea in suis vanitatibus turpiter evanuerunt".

[72] Trithemius, Letter to W. Hopilius cit.: "Revolve precor omnium sanctorum patrum sermones veterum, simul et celebratissimas eorundem homilias, et vide si gentilium philosophorum furfures invenias farinae commixtas christianae puritatis. Disquire obsecro quam diligentissime Origenis, Hippolyti, Cypriani, Hilarii, Gregorii Nazianzeni, Ambrosii, Basilii, Chrysostomi, Hieronymi, Maximi, Severiani, Augustini, Fulgentii, Gregorii papae, Isidori, Bedae, Rabani, Albini, Haymonis, Petri Damiani, Anselmi, Bernardi aliorumque veterum sanctissimorum patrum homilias atque sermones, et non invenies aliud in eis quam Christi doctrinam veram, solidam, puram et ab omni fermento gentilum traditionum alienam. Non ibi allegatur peripateticus ille Aristoteles, non Porphyrius apostata, non Plato, non Averrois, non Cicero, non denique ex reliqua cohorte gentilium quisquam, sed ipsa duntaxat Dei patris sapientia Christus Iesus ipsiusque summae veritatis apostoli, sancti, patriarchae et prophetae".

[73] Butzbach, *Macrostroma*, ms. S 357, f.227r: "Indignum plane meo iudicio genus docendi, ut in schola Christi quasi pro dictorum spiritus sancti confirmatione, illorum audiantur nomina recitari, quorum spiritus absque ambiguitate a Christo penitus sunt alieni. Non enim cognoverunt Dei sapientiam, ipsius mundi sapientior et propterea in suis vanitatibus turpiter evanuerunt. Sunt inter christianos alioquin scioli, qui nimia temeritate presumptuosi ausint confirmare Socratem philosophum, tam in vita quam in morte atque doctrina Salvatoris nostri praestasse figuram".

Let us not forget that Erasmus was to make a manifesto of the invocation "Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis". Butzbach confirms that his master maintained that "Socrates impie confertur cum Christo".[74] Trithemius underlined with horror that Socrates was a pagan.

> They are too absurd and bold in this comparison to Christ, which is unbearable to Christian ears. Of a man whose last words—as quoted by Plato in his *Phaedon*—were: *'Crito, we owe a cock to Aesculapius: do not forget to offer it [to this god']*, they are speaking as if he was exempt from idol worship.[75]

Butzbach goes on to note the snarling and biting suffered by "Plato archiphilosophus", Aristotle, Eubulides Milesius, Epicurus, Pythagoras, Empedocles and Theophrastus.[76]

The reading of these authors' works had enabled Trithemius to understand and immediately appreciate the *De intellectu*, which has not been the most acclaimed of Bovelles' writings among historians (after Cassirer and Klibansky many have given pride of place to the *De sapiente*, in which the author was closer to Pico).[77] On the other hand, Trithemius was extremely appreciative of Nicholas of Cusa's speculative geometry and even associated it with that of Euclid, Campano da Novara and Bradwardine. Thus he was well-versed in Cusanus' speculative mathematics, so dear to Bovelles,[78] and indeed had a

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[74] Butzbach, *Macrostroma.*, ms. S.358, f. 5r on Socrates, according to Xenophon (but elsewhere, ms. S 357 f. 227, also Aristophanes is cited concerning him), and on pagans, who have no knowledge of the true God, but who were still pious, thanks to their understanding of mathematical and philosophical matters. "Socrates, sententia oraculi sapientissimus iudicatus, tanta in se conflavit continue [invidia] ut morti addictus sit ab eis qui se sapientes reputare sperabant: ita et Aristophanes in ipsum invexerit quia in scriptis suis atque sermonibus accusari visus est de impietate, de corruptela adulescentum, ideo adiuticatus est morte".

[75] Butzbach, *Macrostroma*, ms. S 357, f.227r. "Socratem philosophum, tam in vita quam in morte atque doctrina Salvatoris nostri praestasse figuram, comparationem illam ad Christum [illi] facientes, nimis absurdi, protervi, et christianis auribus nullatenus tolerandam, quasi a cultura idolorum fuerit alienus qui moriturus, ut Plato in Phaedone meminit, ultimum verborum suorum talem dixit: "O Crito, Aesculapio gallum debemus, quem reddite, neque negligatis"; ms. S.358, f. 5^{r} on Socrates, according to Xenophon.

[76] Butzbach, *Macrostroma cit.*, ms. S.357, f. 91 within a long, inexplicit but literal citation from Pico: "Ad hanc magiam Pythagoras, Empedocles, Democritus, Plato discendam navigavere, hanc predicavere reversi et in archanis precipuam habuerunt".

[77] E. Cassirer, *Das Erkenntisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit* (Berlin, B. Cassirer, 1906); Id., *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance* (Leipzig, 1927): this publishes in an Appendix the Klibansky edition of Bovelles' *De sapiente*.

[78] See Bovelles, *Opera cit.*, f. 171v: letter to Germain de Ganay, 2 June 1505 and 12 August 1509, and passim; see J. Céard, 'Bovelles et ses traditions numérologiques', in *Charles de Bovelles en son cinquième centenaire. Actes du colloque international* (Paris, G. Tédamiel-Editions de la Masnie, 1982), pp. 211–28.

certain competence in the subject. Given that the abbot-magician was so inventive and self-confident, would it be too much to suggest that this was the unpredictable model on which he freely drew for his magic numerology?

Magic and all its ceremonies could not fail to attract a man like Trithemius, with his love of prophecies and propaganda, games and forgeries, who put his vast culture at their service. The authenticity or pseudoepigraphy of magical treatises are thus a key which Trithemius used purely and simply to confer prestige and authority on the doctrines they contained and which he simply attributed or denied to their reputed authors. This too was a game that the great humanist played, to the detriment of less cultured or more naive men, like Joachim of Brandenburg. If Trithemius forged the genealogy of the Hapsburgs, if he did not hesitate to write pseudoepigraphic sources, this was all the more reason why he felt entitled to do the same with magical treatises and the sacred figures of their authors. We need not be surprised at this if we remember that even a great philologist like Erasmus did not hesitate to forge and put into circulation a treatise on martyrdom which he attributed to one of the Fathers of the Church in order to send out a metaphorical religious message.[79]

But when he manipulated works by Nicholas of Cusa and Bovelles, Trithemius overstepped the limit that the latter of these was prepared to accept. Bovelles' accusation may have been motivated by anxiety over religious orthodoxy or by the irritation of an author who had been more or less plagiarized; but in my opinion it expressed above all the reaction of a humanist who was aware of the rules of critical method to a learned man who was not interested in them. Beside their common Platonic-Hermetic-Cusanian sources Trithemius struck him as being an undiscerning, disrespectful Magus.

[79] S. Seidel Menchi, 'Un'opera sconosciuta d'Erasmo? Il trattato pseudo-ciprianeo 'De duplici martirio'', *Rivista storica italiana* XC (1978), pp. 709–43.

APPENDIX ONE

TRITHEMIUS' BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR NECROMANCERS

While waiting for the long-promised critical edition, in which around one hundred texts, for the most part unpublished, will be identified,[1] I reprint below the bibliographical pages of Trithemius' *Antipalus maleficiorum*, which are a most useful source for anyone studying the history of this extreme type of magic. Since there is still no critical, annotated text, and in view of the inconsistent manner in which names are cited, these will all be indexed in the same way. I have followed the text of Chapter 2 of the BK. I of the *Antipalus maleficiorum* published by Johannes Busaeus in his edition of the *Paralipomena opusculorum Petri Blesensis et Johannis Trithemii* (Mainz, apud Balthasarum Lippium, 1605), pp. 292–311. This edition has been made with care, using perhaps several mss., given that the margins are marked with variants or conjectures, in the present transcription inserted into the text in square brackets, particularly as regards the titles or names of the authors. It does not seem to me to be necessary to go back to the four manuscripts (three of which date back to the XVI century) pointed out by Arnold, *Johannes Trithemius* cit., p. 252 in order to extract a brief passage. I have, however, examined the two most interesting ones belonging to Konrad Peutinger (Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, 2° cod. 212), and to Heinrich Khunrath, who transcribed it personally 'ex libro manuscripto Serenissimi Electoris Joachimi' (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Library, ms. M 61). I would like to make some observations and point out some unedited passages published in my *Scholastic and Humanist Views cit.*, here *supra*, p. 60ff. I wish, however, to add this document to the dossier of attributions of the *Speculum astronomiae* to

[1] C. Gilly, *Spanien und der Basler Buchdruck bis 1600*, Basel-Frankfurt M., 1985, p. 33 n. 98. Cf. E. Peuckert, *Pansophie*, Berlin, 1956, pp. 46–59, quoted Trithemius' list almost completely. C. Gilly, *M. Ficino e il ritorno di Ermete Trismegisto*, Firenze, 1999, pp. 276–278; Id., *Magia, alchimia, scienza dal '400 al '700. L'influsso di Ermete Trismegisto*, Firenze, 2001, pp. 275–283, has discovered the only known manuscript, owned by John Dee, of Berengarius Ganellus' *Summa magicae* in 5 books—quoted *infra* p. 105 by Trithemius in his list. This unpublished work by an author of the thirteenth century, probably from Catalunya, contains "texts of solomonic magic dealing with spirits".

various authors: I did not use it in my book and by a strange coincidence this remained unnoticed by Paravicini Bagliani. The problems which he and also Richard Sharpe[2] have recently raised with regard to "tituli" attested by writings and catalogues should also reckon with these pseudepigraphs, which are by no means rare in manuscripts of astrology and magic.

Claviculae Salomonis praenotatum volumen, quod incipit: *Recordare fili mi Roboam*, Salomon Rex Hierusalem neque composuit, neque vidit unquam, et tamen eius nomini circumfertur inscriptum. Et quid continet, nisi vana, stulta, conficta et aperta mendacia, promittens omnia et nihil praestans operantibus in eo, nisi deceptionem, conscientiam laesam et animam daemonibus penitus subiectam? Quicunque illud opus composuit, indoctus et Christianae religionis desertor fuit, quoniam—ut oratio contra instituta grammaticorum est incongrua—et characteres simul et nomina demonum per totum habentur inscripta.

Liber quoque *Officiorum*, qui incipit: *Multi sapientes tractaverunt*, quam sit vanus, confictus, et mendacio plenus, nemo est vel mediocriter doctus, qui non intelligat. Et quis sapiens illum sine risu vel audire, vel legere posset, in quo demones distinguuntur in quattuor Imperatores, Reges quoque multos, Duces, Marchiones et Comites? Quis denique ferat opinionem Sanctorum his spurcitijs et superstitionibus mendaciter et iniuste obfuscari, ut dicantur vel credantur Adam, Seth, Noe, Thare, Abraham, Moyses, David, Salomon, Ezechiel, Daniel et reliqui patriarcharum et prophetarum artibus daemonicis impendisse operam, tabulasque schemhamphoras et similia composuisse deliramenta, quemadmodum hi maledicti confingunt?

Est et aliud volumen decem continens libros partiales, quod sic incipit: *Progressus divinae conditionis*, cuius auctor se magistrum Iob de Arabi nuncupat. In quo tanta promittuntur miranda, quanta vix homo cogitare

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[2] Cfr. *supra* p. 106 n. 32 and R. Sharpe, *Titulus: Identifying Mediaeval Latin Texts*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2003. I use the text already quoted in my paper I.3, of Trithemius'*Antipalus* (Bk. II, ch. 2). Busaeus gave a careful edition, probably prepared on the basis of several manuscripts. Given Gilly's promise to prepare a critical edition, which has to identify all of them, I do not deem it necessary to go back to the four mss. (three of them dated XVIth century) listed by Arnold, *Johannes Trithemius* cit., p. 252, simply to give a single chapter which interests us as a document. I have anyway studied the two most interesting mss.: one of them is an autograph and was the property of Konrad Peutinger (Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, 2° cod. 212), the other was owned by Heinrich Khunrath, who had transcribed it with his own hands «ex libro manuscripto Serenissimi Electoris Joachimi» (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Library, ms. M 61).

posset, ministerio et arte daemonum patranda, quae omnia non solum vana et stulta, sed etiam prorsus impersuasibilia videntur. Imitatur in parte *Picatridem* rebus et characteribus simul et coniurationibus infinita componens mendacia.

Picatrix vero magnum composuit volumen librorum quatuor, quod sic incipit: *Ut Sapiens ait, primum quid agere debeamus* ex ducentis et 24, sicut dicit, veterum libris anno Christianorum MCCLVI ex arabico in latinum traductum, in quo multa continentur frivola, superstitiosa et diabolica in fronte sermonis aperti, quamvis etiam naturalia quaedam videantur intermixta. Orationes facit ad spiritus planetarum; imagines quoque et annulos cum multis et varijs characteribus quae omnia sancta mater Ecclesia condemnat, ut illicita et superstitiosa.

Item est opus 7 librorum, quod nuncupatur *Sepher Razielis* et incipit sic: *Dixit Salomon 'Gloria laus cum multo honore sit Domino omnium creatori'*. Et hoc opus multa tractat de spiritibus et promittit magna, plenumque est vanitate et superstitione.

Deinde est *Liber Hermetis*, quem *angelicum* vocant sive angelorum sive librum occultum, quem fingunt ante diluvium a tribus angelis compositum, et incipit: *Hic est liber magnus atque secretus*. Continet autem sub 28 mansionibus Lunae et 12 signis Zodiaci multa conficta et vana nomina angelorum duodecim altitudinum, et quicquid curiositas humana concupiscere possit audacter more talium ribaldorum pollicetur.

Alius est liber, qui nominatur, *Puritatem Dei*, quem Razielem angelum confingunt revelasse Adae poenitenti, et multum concordat cum libro iam scripto, incipitque sic: *Adam exulavit a paradyso*. Est autem totus vanus et nominibus ignotis et superstitione plenus, orationes et characteres continens, promittitque multa curiosa et penitus impossibilia.

Postea est unum opus, quod appellant *Librum perfectionis Saturni*, et incipit: *Invenit Abel filius Adae hunc librum*. Quam stulta et temeraria praesumptio perditorum hominum, qui sancto et innocenti Abeli suas superstitiones non verentur adscribere.

Item est *Liber* alius pestifer *4 Regum* ex demonum numero praenotatus, cuius initium est varium, et nunc quidem incipit sic: *Quicunque magica artis*; apud alios vero aliter inchoatur. Et hoc maledictum opus S. Martyri Cypriano audent adscribere, quod ultimo supplicio esset vetandum.

Est etiam liber, qui praenotatur *Ars calculatoria Virgilij*, per quam se nomen et characterem boni et mali spiritus uniuscuiusque hominis posse calculare et invenire promittunt, qui et coniurationes et characteres daemonum continet plures, et sic incipit: *Calculatione nunquam fatigatus*

aut lassatus fui. Sed vere tenendum est, quod nunquam Virgilius viderit eum, sicut in principio patet.

Item est *Liber Simoni Mago* inscriptus, qui sic incipit: *Cum itaque essem in Iudea*. Continet autem vana, superstitiosa, conficta et ementita omnia, multa promittens per daemones, quae nihil aliud sunt nisi mendacia et curiosorum deceptiones.

Praeterea est volumen, nescio cui Ruperto inscriptum, quatuor continens libros, et nominatur *Thesaurus spirituum*, in daemonum characteribus nominibusque ludens multa pollicetur temeritate omnimodam malignorum spirituum obedientiam, quotiens eius ministerio fuerint ad circulum vocati. Incipit autem: *Ego Rupertus Lombardus*. Alij vero codices aliud habent principium, videlicet: *Incipit tractatus necromantiae cum nota*.

Est et *Liber spiritualium operum*, qui adscribitur Aristoteli philosopho et sic incipit: *Cuilibet populo septem climatum*. Multa continet ad rationem astronomiae pertinentia, sed ad coniurationem daemonum vanissime stultissimeque licet cum labore contorta.

Item est opus magnum, quod praenotatur *Flos florum*, in plures libros divisum: quod continet varias daemonum coniurationes, nomina et characteres. Multa quoque perniciosa et diabolica experimenta, quae penitus sunt contemnenda, quoniam christianae religioni omnino sunt contraria, et sic incipit: *Flos florum et experimentum omnium*.

Ad eandem vanissimam superstitionem est liber *Almadal* Solomoni adscriptus, qui sic incipit: *Invenimus illuminationem Spiritus sancti*. Narrantur enim spurca mendacia in eo, quae daemoniaca sunt omnia, et merito procul ab Ecclesia Dei removenda.

Porro est *Liber* fictitius, qui adscribitur *Enoch*, continens fabulosam narrationem de stellis quindecim, earum herbis ac characteribus lapidibusque per quorum scientiam vanissimam, ut caeteri, curiosa promittit. Ex cuius principio auctoris stultitia cognoscitur. Incipit enim sic: *Ego Enoch tamquam unus e prophetis et philosophis, propono gratia Messiae, qui post me venturus est*.

Liber quoque *annulorum septem planetarum*, qui adscribitur Messalae, et incipit: *Cum operari volueris*. Omnia sunt vana, quae continet, superstitiosa et Christiano penitus abiicienda.

Alius liber est *Quatuor annulorum Solomonis*, de quo perditissimi homines daemonum invocatores multum gloriantur, quum tamen nihil contineat nisi vana et superstitiosa. Incipit autem sic: *Quatuor sunt annuli ad ideae*.

Liber, qui dicitur *Speculum Ioseph*, in quo visio promittitur in ipso speculo personalis, vanus, superstitiosus et impius est, ideoque et illicitus. Incipit autem sic: *Si cupis videre omnia*.

Liber etiam, qui vocatur *Speculum Alexandri Magni Regis Macedonum* simili malignitate perfidorum compositus et confictus est, incipit autem sic: *Huius magni secreti*.

Item est *Liber Secretorum Hermetis Hispani*, qui incipit: *Qui cum spiritibus loqui desiderat*, opus est similiter vanum, superstitiosum et diabolicum, characteribus et daemonum coniurationibus plenum.

Item est volumen magnum in multos divisum libros atque tractatus compositum a quondam Bugario [Ungario] Ganello, qui praenotavit ipsum *Summam magicae*, et incipit sic: *Magica est scientia arctandi spiritus malignos et benignos bonos per nomen Dei*. Bone Deus, quam stulta, frivola et superstitiosa auctor ille ex omnibus aliis comportavit in unum, quo se militem daemonum ostenderet, non Dei. Item circumferunt homines isti perniciosi complures libros et tractatus diabolicos cuiusdam Tosigei, quem alii nominant Toez Graecus, de quibus pene omnes suas confirmant superstitiones.

Est liber cuiusdam Michaelis Scoti, in quo promittitur, diabolo docente, omnium rerum scientia: in quo nihil est non superstitiosum et diabolicum; incipitantem sic: *Si volueris per spiritum habere*.

Item est liber, qui incipit: *Antequam incipias*, quem Alberto fallaciter et mendaciter adscripsit, qui composuit author: in quo more caeterorum coniurationes daemonum vanissimae traduntur.

Est alius liber, quem Alberti praenotant, de invisibilitate, spurcitia et superstitione plenus, qui sic incipit: *Adiuro vos tres Principes*. Alia quoque multa volumina necromantiae et magicae isti maledici non solum Alberto Magno falso et mendaciter adscribunt, verum etiam aliis viris sanctis atque doctissimis, qui talia nunquam cogitarunt. Quin potius mihi constat Albertum virum sanctum libros talium semper condemnasse.

Item est liber praenotatus *Elucidarium necromantiae* Petri de Apono medici Paduani, Conciliatoris dicti, de quo fabulosa multa dicuntur. In quo nihil sanum continetur, sed vana et superstitiosa sunt omnia, per annos, menses, dies et horas singulas confingens ad coniurationes sibi nova daemonia, spiritus, nomina simul et opera. Incipit aut sic: *Multi experimentatores diversimode*. Sunt et alia plura superstitiosa volumina huic Petro inscripta, quorum sit auctor quicumque fuerit, vanus et superstitiosus erat per omnia.

Item est liber perfidia et stultitia plenus incerti auctoris, quem praenotaverunt, *Secretum philosophorum*, et incipit sic: *Incipit magnum secretum*. In quo stultissimae operationes daemonum continentur.

Similiter est liber, qui incipit sic: *Schemhamphoras*, *ut dicunt Doctores, est nomen, quod timent*. Non continet nomen sui auctoris et est fictitius totus et

vanus, ementita veterum sub nominibus exprimens documenta schemhamphoras, quae vanissimus auctor ad coniurandos spiritus confinxit.

Item est liber Salomoni adscriptus, que nominatur *Lamene* [Lamen]: in quo rerum omnium scientia promittitur per orationes et ministeria spirituum. Vanus est totus, et sic incipit: *Salomon rex prudentissimus*.

Item est alius liber de compositione nominum atque characterum malignorum spirituum, similiter vanus et superstitiosus, cuius nomen authoris non inveni, et sic incipit: *Ad habendum scientiam experimentum*.

Est quoque liber, qui appellatur *Rubeus*, qui tractat de variis daemonum artibus et operationibus. Totus est vanus et diabolicus, confictus, consimilis *Libro officiorum*, et incipit: *Hic traditur generalis*.

Et est liber mendaciter Alberto Magno adscriptus, quem stolidus auctor *Secretum Alberti* praenotavit. In quo cuiusdam spiritus maligni familiaritas ad omnia promittitur, et incipit: *In nomine patris, filij et spiritus*.

Et est liber Salomoni adscriptus *De officiis spirituum*, magnus et alius ab illo, quem superius nominavi, execrabilis et totus diabolicus, qui sic incipit: *In hoc libro sunt secreta omnium artium*.

Est quoque liber dictus *Vinculum spirituum* multas continens orationes et coniurationes, per quas vanissimi homines et perditi daemonas se posse constringere ad omnimodam obedientiam confidunt. Hic liber sic incipit: *De vinculo spirituum non est silendum*.

Item est *Liber pentaculorum Salomonis* falso dictus, in quo ad coniurationes daemonum agitur, continetque candarias et alia multa vana, et sic incipit: *Quomodo et qualiter fiant pentacula*.

Et est liber Torzigei *De stationibus ad cultum Veneris*, etiam vanus et superstitiosus, multa promittens, qui sic incipit: *Commemoratio historiarum*.

Est et alius eiusdem *De quatuor speculis*, in quo similiter omnia superstitione sunt plena, et incipit: *Observa Venerem cum venerit ad Pleiades*. Item est liber alius eiusdem Totzgraeci, sive dicatur Tozigaei, ut quidam volunt, quem praenotavit *De imagine Veneris*, qui incipit: *Observa Venerem, cum intrabit Taurum thorum*. Et sicut dictum est superius, multa reperiuntur et eius vana opuscula.

Est liber Salomonis *De novem candariis* ad coniurationem daemonum compositus, vanus et superstitiosus, qui sic incipit: *Locum hic monet ut dicamus*. Eiusdem de tribus figuris spirituum est liber alius, qui sic incipit *Sunt de caelestibus septem nominum*, qui sic incipit: *Dixit Mahumeth filius Abosan*. Eiusdem est alius liber, qui sic incipit: *Haec sunt quindecim nomina*. Titulus etiam libri est *Quindecim nominum*.

Et est *Liber de capite Saturni* ad necromantiam et spirituum convoca-

tionem pertinens, superstitiosus plane, qui incipit: *Quicumque hoc secretis*. Item circumferunt necromantici plures alios libros suae dementiae testes diversis auctoribus adscriptos, quorum per nomina facere mentionem nimis longum esset et taediosum. Nam Salomoni plures adscribunt, quorum praenotiones silentio pertransivi, Hermeti quoque, Balemio, Razieli, Aristoteli, Platoni, Zoroastri, Rogerio Bachoni Anglico, Ruperto Lombardo, Petro de Apono Paduano medico, Artephio, Virgilio, Thebiet Bencorat multisque aliis, quos non est huius propositi ad unguem enumerare.

Omnes praescripti necromanticorum libri, vani et pleni mendaciis sub nominibus praestantium virorum per ignavissimos et perditos nebulones tenebrionesque confecti sunt ad deceptionem curiosorum hominum: et nihil continent veritatis, sed mendacia et daemonum retia componunt, quibus animas capiant et perdant incautorum. Cave precor, nobilissime princeps, ne talium libros imitatione quorundam curiosorum legas, quorum lectio tibi plus nocumenti conferat, quam utilitatis. Commemoravi enim paescriptos maleficorum spurcissimos libros, non ut legas, sed ut fugias. Nam quicunque illorum delectatur studio ad hoc tertium genus maleficarum se norit pertinere. Libros enim cum voluptate legere daemonum quid aliud est quam semetipsum daemonibus immolare?

Conservandos autem necromanticorum libros Magnus Albertus in opusculo suo *De duabus sapientiis*, sive *Speculum* praenotato, quod incipit: *Occasione quorundam librorum apud quos non est radix scientiae* etc., consuluit necessaria conditione dicens: *De libris vero necromanticis, salvo iudicio melioris sententiae, videtur magis quod debeant servari quam destrui. Tempus est enim iam forte, quod propter quasdam causas, quas modo taceo, eos saltem occasionaliter proderit inspexisse. Nihilominus ab eorum usu sibi caveant inspectores*. Assentior huic Alberti consilio, ut si quando surrexerint aliqui talium rerum professores arte diabolica populum alicubi seducentes, propriis armis convicti poenas recipiant quas meruerunt. Hoc tamen videtur observandum, ut vel in monasteriis, vel in ecclesiis cathedralibus, aut certe in gymnasiis custodiantur tali loco sub censura plurium, ut nulli sine causa rationabili ad eos pateat accessus.

Et scias, magnifice princeps, quod sunt etiam alii plures libri vani et superstitiosi de componendis imaginibus, figuris, annulis, sigillis et characteribus, sub certis constellationibus ad varios mirandosque effectus pro bono et malo, quorum cum praescriptis nullam feci mentionem. Qui etsi cum daemonibus nullam manifestam habeant communionem,

tamen ratione modi, compositionis et usus vehementer est timendum, quod ad malum finem pertrahant in eis operantes, maxime ubi suffumigiis, coniurationibus et characteribus agitur.

Unde ex libris Hermetis est unus, qui praenotatur *Liber praestigiorum Hermetis*, in quo multa vana habentur atque suspecta, qui sic incipit: *Qui geometriae aut philosophiae peritus, expers astronomiae*. Et alius eiusdem, qui sic incipit: *Probavi tres libros*, et agit de compositione imaginum ut alii.

Et est liber Abolemiten *De opere horarum*, qui totus est vanitate et superstitione plenus, et sic incipit: *Dixit Abolemiten, qui et Apollo dicitur*. Est liber eiusdem alius *De 4 imaginibus*, seorsum a praescripto, qui continet frivola, vana, et sic incipit: *Differentia, in qua etc*.

Est aliud volumen Hermetis *De compositione imaginum*, quod in plures libros dividitur, et continet imagines Mercurii omniumque planetarum, de annulis atque sigillis, et sic incipit: *Dixit expositor huius libri: oportet querentem substantiam*. Item Hermetis volumen aliud, in multos etiam libros divisum, quod praenotatur *Liber Veneris*, et continet varias compositiones, partim naturales, partim superstitiosas, nec est finis vanitatum eius. Incipit autem: *Dixit compilator: 'quod Venus est etc.'* Et est alius liber Hermetis, qui praenotatur *Liber Solis*, continens similiter imagines, annulos et characteres, et incipit: *Lustravi imaginum scientiae*. Item est *Liber imaginum Martis*, quem Hermeti similiter adscribunt, qui sic incipit: *Hic est liber Martis, quem tractat Hermes*. Est etiam alius eiusdem *Liber Iovis*, qui sic incipit: *Hic est liber Iovis, quem tractat Hermes*. Item *Liber Saturni*, qui sic incipit: *Hic est liber Saturni, quem tractat Hermes*. Est etiam alius eiusdem *De imaginum compositione* liber, qui sic incipit: *Tractatus octavus in magisterio imaginum Hermetis*. Et est *Liber Hermetis de annullis 7 planetarum*, de qua Picatris multa suscepit, qui sic incipit: *Divisio Lunae, quando semiplena fuerit*.

Et est *Liber 7 planetarum figurarum Geberi Regis Indorum*, qui numeris includit septem nomina Dei, quemadmodum auctor in principio sermonis sui promittit, et sic incipit: *Antiqui sapientes et philosophi in astronomia*.

Item est *Liber praestigiorum Thebit*, in quo per compositionem diversarum imaginum mirabiles pollicetur effectus, qui sic incipit: *Dixit Thebit Bencorat editor huius libri: 'Altissimus creator omnium posuit in fundamento stellas'*.

Et est *Liber Ptolomaei de imaginibus*, per quas vana praestigia et vaticinia pollicetur, qui incipit: *Ars imaginum est multiplex*.

Item est *Liber praestigiorum Nesbar* magnus, in quo multa per imagines promittuntur miranda et stupenda, qui sic incipit: *Quum voluerit aliquid operavi in compositione*.

Est liber Balenitz, qui et Abolemiten, simul et Apollo nominatus fuit, *De compositione imaginum 7 planetarum*, et incipit: *Dixit Balenus 'Magna*

est virtus imaginum'. Et est liber alius eiusdem *De sigillis 7 planetarum*, in quo similiter stupenda et miranda promittuntur complura, quae non videntur mihi habere radicem veritatis, sed conficta magis apparent et ementita. Sic vero incipit: *Quoniam necessarium est volentibus in compositione imaginum*.

Item est alius liber Behencasin, praenotatus *De sigillis 7 planetatum*, qui sic incipit: *Saturnus habet in metallis plumbum, qui etc*.

Est quoque alius *Liber Beyeli Bexeli sapientis, de annulis 7 planetarum* praenotatus, qui sic incipit: *Septem sunt stellae erratiles, quas planetas vocamus*. Est etiam ex operibus memorati hominis, quem Bexelum vocauerunt, *Liber de figuris 7 planetarum* cuius Picatrix meminit in secundo, qui sic incipit: *Cum volueris facere*.

Item est *Liber Ptolomaei de componendis imaginibus, annulis atque sigillis duodecim signorum*, qui sic incipit: *Incipiamus tractare de compositione*.

Et est liber Arnoldi de Villanova, qui praenotatur *De sigillis duodecim signorum*, qui sic incipit: *Antiquorum solertia caelum in 2 partes*.

Est porro ex operibus Hermetis liber alius *De compositione imaginum secundum 24 horas diei et noctis*, qui a plerisque Balenitz ascribitur sapienti, sed mihi non videtur eius habere processum. Incipit autem: *Dixit Hermes 'Quicumque voluerit in magnis operationibus'*.

Est inter opera Hermetis alius liber, qui continet tres [sic!] tractatus: *De quindecim lapidibus* unus, et sic incipit: *Dixit Hermes: 'Intentio nostra'; De quindecim herbis* alter, et incipit: *Dixit Hermes: 'Postquam docuimus'*. Tertius *De quindecim stellis*, et incipit: *Dixit Hermes: 'Nunc dicamus de stellis'*; quartus *De quindecim figuris sive characteribus* est, et incipit: *Dixit Hermes: 'Diversa sunt imagines'*.

Item est liber Thebit *De imaginibus*, in quo per influentias astrorum mirabiles pollicetur effectus, qui sic incipit: *Dixit Thebit Bancorath: 'Dixit Aristoteles qui philosophiam'*.

Est item liber incerti auctoris, qui praenotatur *Figurarum 12 signorum contra omnes infirmitates humani corporis*, et sic incipit: *In praesenti tractatu exponere volumus virtutem*.

Et est liber Thoczgraeci *De compositione atque virtute imaginum*, in quo magna promittuntur, et incipit: *Verba in imaginibus sunt, ut spiritus in corpore*.

Item est liber Dorothei sapientis Graecorum, quem praenotavit *Iudiciorum*, in quo multa dicit pulchra de astrorum influentia, qui incipit: *Dixit Dorotheus*.

Item sunt libri plures Alrazi cuiusdam Arabis, cuius meminit Picatris in secundo *De magicis institutionibus*, qui sic incipit: *Dixit Alrazus 'Scientia imaginum'*. Et alius *De formis planetarum atque sigillis*, qui sic incipit: *Forma Saturni*. De magica quoque librum composuit magnum.

Et sunt Geberi Regis Indorum multa in magicis volumina, sicut Picatris testatur in secundo, inter quae circumferuntur ista: *Liber secretorum magicae*, aliud quoque magnum opus in libros 8 divisum. Item liber, qui nominatur *Clavis figurarum*. Item *De astrolabio* librum composuit mille capitolorum, in quo mirabiles narrat effectus. *Complementum* etiam *magicae* volumen magnum, in quo dicta veterum sapientum multa comportavit.

Est liber Zeherit Chaldaei *De compositionibus et effectibus imaginum planetarum* superstitiosus, in quo spiritibus orationes facit et offert sacrificium planetis. Incipit autem: *Spiritus planetarum*.

Est alius liber Namionis *Mirabilium effectuum* praenotatus, in quo miranda narrantur, qui sic incipit: *Cum unusquisque planetarum*. Continet etiam multa ad electiones pertinentia.

Est alius liber Zahel, qui praenotatur *Liber eventuum fortuitorum*, vanus quidem, sed nihil continens artium diabolicarum, et partim accedit ad omnia. Quicquid enim fortuito acciderit, ad significationem aliquam occultorum reducit; incipit autem sic: *Rerum accidentium occultos eventus*.

Est alius liber Balenitz, qui *De coniecturis* praenotatur, et tractat de iudiciis occultorum ad omnem quaestionem, et incipit: *Dixit Balenitz: 'Dum furto'*. Et est alius liber eiusdem ad electiones faciens pro itineraribus rarus et singularis: sed non caret vanitate. Incipit autem: *Itinerarium hoc composuit*.

Item est liber Alcandrei, praenotatus *De nativitatum inventione*, quem maiori ex parte vanum reputo, quia per litteras nominis horam nativitatis cuiuslibet hominis posse invenire pollicetur. Et sic incipit: *Cum sit necessarium iis, quis*.

Et est *Liber praestigiorum* cuiusdam Thomae, in quo miranda promittentur, ex annulis compositis secundum 8 mansiones Lunae in characteribus et fumigationibus vanis, qui sic incipit: *Ego Thomas omnium scientiarum amator*.

Est et alius liber Balenitz qui nominatur *Lunaris*, in quo multa tradit vana et superstitiosa pro diversorum effectuum assecutione mirabilium, et sic incipit: *Dixit Balenitz: 'Liber ipse dicitur'*. Item est alius *Liber de inclusione spirituum in annulos 7 planetarum*, cuius nomen auctoris non repperi. Incipit autem sic: *Die et hora planetae, ipso planeta existente in domo, vel*. Est et alius liber Balenitz *De imaginibus 7 planetarum*, ad multos effectus mirabiles, quem vanum reputo et superstitiosum. Incipit autem sic: *Dixit Balenitz qui vocatus est Apollo cognomine*.

Item est ex operibus Hermetis *Liber de imaginibus et annulis 7 planetarum*, sic incipiens: *Est homo equitans currum imago solis ductum*. Et est liber

Hermetis alius *De diebus et horis 7 planetarum*, in quibus pro imaginibus est operandum, qui incipit: *Dixit Hermes operaturus*. Est et liber alius Hermetis *De imaginibus quae sculptae reperiuntur in lapidibus pretiosis*, qui sic incipit: *In iaspide Mars stans armatus*.

Et est liber Ptolomaei *De 12 annulis Veneris*, qui tractat de lapidibus insculpendis ad producendum mirabiles effectus, et incipit sic: *Accipe iaspidem viridem in die et hora*.

Item est liber Petri de Apono Paduani medici *Experimentorum de annulis mirabilium, secundum 28 mansiones Lunae*, qui sic incipit: *Primo et principaliter in hac parte*.

Et est liber Thebit *De proprietatibus 15 Stellarum, lapidum et herbarum praenotatus*, qui sic incipit: *Prima stella vocatur Algol*.

Item est *Liber imaginum mirabilium Abenhali*, qui sic incipit: *Dixit Abenhali: 'Quia omnes Orientales operabantur per has imagines'*, etc., adscribitur autem idem liber a plerisque Ptolomaeo.

Item Kyranidarum sunt plura volumina in magicis et medicinis, sed continent quaedam foeda non solum legi, sed etiam naturae spernenda. Fuit autem Kyrannus Rex Persarum, et multa valde obstrusa in rebus comportavit. Est autem Kyrannus liber dictus a nomine auctoris, maior et minor. Maior enim prenotatur, *Philosophicalis [Physicalis]*. Minor tractat de 24 herbis, totidem piscibus, 24 lapidibus et 24 volatilibus, qui sic incipit: *Elementum planum alpha ampelos losti*, quod sonat vitis, alpha, aquila, volucris. Sunt autem eius operis partes 7 in uno volumine.

Est etiam liber Hinnaxii [Hamay] filii Zachariae, qui praenotatur *Institutionum activarum Platonis*, qui mirabilia pollicetur, prorsus incredibilia, qui sic incipit: *Galiennez quum praeparavit, ut abbreviaret*. Et nota, quod Hinnaxius, alias vero Isaac, fecit librum aggregationum, super praescriptum librum Platonis, qui nominatur *Augnempere [Augemis]*.

Et est liber incerti auctoris sortilegiorum, qui praenotatur *Sphaera Pytagorae, Platonis et Apuleii philosophorum*, confictus, vanus et inutilis, qui sic incipit: *Omnis sapientia a Domine*.

Item est liber Algabor Arabis de sortilegiis, etiam vanus, quem praenotavit Almachbale, incipit autem sic: *In nomine Dei summi, qui omnia creavit*.

Et est alius *Liber sortilegiorum Albedach*, similiter vanus et fictus ad Darium regem Persarum, qui sic incipit: *Dario regi magno Persarum*.

Est etiam liber Iacobi Alkindi *Theoricarum artis magicae*, qui nominatur alias *De radiis physicis*, cuius tale initium est: *Omnes homines qui sensibilia*. Feruntur eiusdem alia multa in magicis opuscula, de quibus non est meum propositum per singula iudicare.

De libris autem geomantiae et chiromantiae non est huius propositi singulatim facere mentionem, quum praescripto generi maleficiorum tertio in nullo deseruire multis videantur. Praescripti vero libri non omnes a suspicione probantur alieni, sed secundum plus et minus, ut ego intelligere potui multa in eis continentur Christianae puritati contraria, quamvis apertum non habeant cum daemonibus commercium, sicut libri necromanticorum, quos primo ordine commemoravimus. Sunt enim characteribus et vana superstitione in multis foedati, quamquam, ut dictum est, alii plus, alii minus. Verumtamen, si quis eorum lectione voluerit uti, caveat, ne ductus curiositate mentem daemonibus prostituat suam. Qui Deum veraciter diligit, his conceptibus non intendit. Omnes igitur qui daemones per libros et artes necromanticorum invocant, coniurantes illos ad circulum, ad vitrum, ad speculum, ad crystallum, ad capita mortuorum, ad annulum, ad manum, ad unguem, ad imaginem, ad aquam, ad ignem, vel ad quamcunque aliam rem vel procurantes sibi per eos visiones, somnia, revelationes sive iudicia, sciant se abnegatores Christi, et ab Ecclesia eius penitus alienos ad tertium genus pertinere maleficarum, et ignibus hic temporaliter, et post mortem aeternaliter digne cruciandos. Quisquis enim hinc vult esse diaboli discipulus, nisi poenitentiam agat ante mortem, socius erit sui magistri in poenis.

PART II

AGRIPPA AS AN AUTHOR OF PROHIBITED BOOKS

CHAPTER FOUR

AGRIPPA OF NETTESHEIM AS A CRITICAL MAGUS

The figure of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa[1] embodies, and indeed has become a literary model *par excellence*, for a troubled Magus turned sceptic. In some interesting comments by his contemporaries Paolo Giovio,[2] and Andreas Hondorf,[3] we find many elements of Agrippa's biography, which will blend with those of the historical Faust. For example, Marlowe, a writer hostile to occultism, makes Agrippa the model for his Doctor Faustus, who

> Will be as cunning as Agrippa was
> Whose shadows made all Europe honour him.[4]

One of the arguments often used to attack Agrippa, from the Jesuit Martin Delrio onwards, was to classify him alongside the historical Faust, a comparison unfair to Agrippa; as Frances Yates has observed, "the association of Faustus with Agrippa is central to Marlowe's play and is part of its general denigration of Renaissance magic". In this tragedy, moreover, and indeed in that of Goethe, "this survey of all human learning,

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[1] In addition to the studies examined in my review-article 'Agrippa von Nettesheim in den neueren kritischen Studien und in den Handschriften', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 51 (1969), pp. 265–95, see also Appendix to Part II, *infra* pp. 183–188, where more recent studies are listed and in some cases discussed.

[2] See Paolo Giovio, *Elogia virorum litteris illustrium* [1546] (Basle 1577), p. 187: Agrippa "excessit e vita [. . .] multis eum tanquam necromantiae suspicione infamem execrantibus, quod cacodaemonen nigri canis specie circumduceret, ita ut quum propinqua morte ad poenitentiam urgeretur, cani collarem loreum magicis per clavorum emblemata inscriptum notis exsolverit, in haec suprema verba irate prorumpens: 'Abi perdita bestia, quae me totum perdidisti!', nec usquam familiaris ille canis ac assiduus itinerum comes, et tum morientis domini desertor, postea conspectus est, quum praecipiti fugae saltu in Ararim se immersisse, nec enatasse, ab his qui id vidisse asserebant existimetur". See Johannes Wierus (Weier, Weyer), *De praestigiis daemonum* [1564], in his *Opera* (Basle 1583), pp. 165–66, Book II, V, 2; and L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York, Columbia U.P., 1951, 2nd printing), V, p. 137, n. 39s.

[3] A. Hondorf, *Historien- und Exemplenbuch* (Leipzig, 1568), f. 101v: "Henricus Cornelius Agrippa, der hat sich sehr auf die schwarze Kunst befliessen, und hat ein Geist in Gestalt eines Hundes mit ihm gefuhrt", where Paolo Giovio is cited.

[4] These verses from Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1594) Act I, 1, 144–45 are cited and analysed by F. A. Yates cf. *Infra* note 5.

and the dismissal of it as vain, sounds like an echo of Agrippa's *De vanitate*".[5] One should not, however, overemphasize the renowned case of Goethe, who was, as is evident in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*,[6] an attentive reader of Agrippa. Suffice it to note the case of Monsieur, Agrippa's pet dog, who—as Johannes Wierus assures us—used to mate with the bitch Mademoiselle in a perfectly natural way; something he would not have done had he really been a devil incarnate, as was the common belief. The legend of Agrippa the sorcerer, accompanied by an incarnate devil in the form of a dog reappears in Goethe's *Faust*, and this theme was destined to enjoy a long life. Goethe was a competent judge of Agrippa's work and quite capable of evaluating both the irony and the criticism of his occult doctrines, and it was he who coined the famous phrase ("das Pudels Kern") that has grown into a proverb.[7]

Furthermore, the personification of a dog goes back to the dedication in *De vanitate* where Agrippa describes himself to his sponsor, the merchant Agostino Fornari, as a man almost transformed into a dog: he admits that in the *De vanitate* he "resembles nothing so much as one dog biting, barking, cursing". In this "declamatio cynica"[8]

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[5] F. A. Yates, *The Occult Philosophy* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 116–17. See A. Faivre and F. Tristan (eds.), *Cahiers de l'Hermetisme. Faust* (Paris 1977: in particular see the articles by A. Dabezies, p. 71; K. Theens, p. 91); F. Baron, *Dr. Faustus from History to Legend* (Munich 1978). See M. H. Keefer, 'Agrippa's Dilemma: Hermetic "Rebirth" and the Ambivalences of *De vanitate* and *De occulta philosophia*', *Renaissance Quarterly* XXXI (1988), 41, pp. 614–53. Cf. the popular biography by M. Kuper, *Agrippa von Nettesheim, ein echter Faust*, Berlin, Clemens Zerlig, 1994.

[6] See H. Jantz, *Goethe's Faust as a Renaissance Man: Parallels and Prototypes* (Princeton 1951), pp. 29–30, 55, 59, 154–55, 163. It is interesting to note that Jantz considers Faust's first monologue and his review of the faculties as inspired by Agrippa to be the "most elaborate and impressive review' of the occult disciplines given in the *De vanitate*" (and analysed here by Jantz). See also R. C. Zimmermann, *Das Weltbild des jungen Goethes* (Munich, Fink, 1969–79), particularly vol. II, pp. 92–106, where he observes that as early as 1770 Goethe already knew and used this work, together with the *De occulta philosophia* (particularly Ch. XXXXV–XXXXVIII of Book I). See also A. Reichl, 'Goethes Faust und Agrippa von Nettesheim', *Euphorion* IV (1987), pp. 287–301; G. Ritter, 'Ein historisches Urbild zu Goethes Faust (Agrippa von Nettesheim)', *Preussische Jahrbücher* 141 (1910), pp. 300–305; and A. Bartscher, *Paracelsus, Paracelsisten und Goethes Faust* (Dortmund 1911), pp. 8, 18, 21–24.

[7] Goethe, *Faust*, v. 1323 (Weimarer Ausgabe, XII, p. 690).

[8] See the Cologne edition 1531, cited shortly afterwards by Conrad Gesner *Bibliotheca universalis* (Zurich 1545), f. 307. The definition "cynicam declamationem" is used by the author in the dedication to Agostino Fornari, here cited in the text of my paper. See E. Korkowski, 'Agrippa as Ironist', *Neuphilologus* 60 (1976), 594–607. Cf. also J. IJsewijn, 'Neo-Latin Satire: Sermo and Satyra menippea', in R. R. Bolgar (ed.) *Classical Influences on European Cultures A.D. 1500–1700* (Cambridge 1976), p. 41 n. 4: "Erasmus's *Laus stultitiae* as the example [of the genre *declamatio*] par excellence").

> I have barked so much at all that gigantic war of the sciences and the arts, and clenched with very vigorous bites all those most valiant hunters after the sciences and the arts, that every time I return to revise my book, I myself marvel to see myself, man made dog.[9]

In this passage the image of the "hunters after the sciences" draws on Nicholas of Cusa, and was later to be taken up by Bruno, but in the successive literary tradition the cynical concept of the critic as a dog is transformed into the popular image of the dog as a devil incarnate in the role of a magician's familiar.

Guillaume Apollinaire, inspired by his misogynist point of view, which made him unsympathetic toward Agrippa's *De nobilitate et praecellentia foeminei sexus*, renews the ironical image that associates this author with a dog.[10]

Other twentieth-century writers have been inspired by the figure of Agrippa as a tormented Magus turned sceptic, but one who never completely made up his mind to abandon the magical-sympathetic conception of the world. Thus, Marguerite Yourcenar in her *Oeuvre au noir*, and in particular the Russian symbolist Valierii Brjusov in his novel, *Ogennyi Angel*, where he shows himself an expert on the sixteenth century, better informed than some academics. In his work one can detect the author's careful reading of Auguste Prost's excellent biography,[11] and

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[9] Agrippa, *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum atque artium declamatio invectiva*, in Agrippa, *Opera cit*, II, f. 3r–v: "ex ipsa indignatione [. . .]cum [. . .]versus sim in canem [. . .] nil amplius memini nisi mordere, oblatrare, maledicere, conviciari [. . .]; in universam illam scientiarum atque artium gigantomachiam oblatravi, sic omnes illos scientiarum atque artium robustissimos venatores validissimis morsibus perstrinxi, ut quoties opus ipsum reviso, ipse ergo me demirer talem in homine canem, et cui [meo volumini] nihil caninum desit praeter adulationem, licet aulico admodum necessariam". These and other passages from *De vanitate* have been translated by C. Tame, taking into account the old translation by James Sanford, printed and dedicated to the Duke of Norfolk in 1569: Agrippa, *On the Vanitie and Uncertaintie of Artes and Sciences* ed. by C. Dunn (Northridge, Ca. 1974). I also mention F. Mauthner's good translation and introduction to Agrippa, *Die Eitelkeit und Unsicherheit der Wissenschaften und die Verteitigungsschrift* (Munich 1913); two old French translations were published, and a translation into Italian by Ludovico Domenici *Dell'incertitudine e vanità delle arti e scienze*, 1547; ed. by T. Provvidera (Torino, Aragno, 2004), was published very early despite the fact that both Agrippa and this treatise had been condemned by many theological faculties and placed in the first class of the *Index librorum prohibitorum* in its first edition.

[10] G. Apollinaire, *Alcools* (*Cortège*, vv. 36–39).: «O Corneille Agrippa, l'odeur d'un petit chien m'eût suffit/ Pour décrire exactement tes concitoyens de Cologne/ Leur rois-mages et la ribambelle ursuline/ Qui t'inspirait l'erreur touchant toutes les femmes.» See M. Sendrail, 'Le Mage errant. Corneille Agrippa', *La Table Ronde* 224 (1996), p. 23.

[11] A. Prost, *Les sciences et les arts occultes au xvi siècle: Corneille Agrippa, sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris 1881–1882). These two volumes still make valid reading today and are far superior

of many passages of Agrippa's work. Brjusov is inspired by Agrippa in two ways. First, many elements of Agrippa's life and work converge in the portrait of Heinrich, the protagonist of Brjusov's novel. In the novel Heinrich pays Agrippa a visit, where he puts to him an important question: precisely why did he publish the *De occulta philosophia*, having criticised the selfsame principles and occult practices in Chapters XXX–XLVIII of the *De vanitate*? The apparent contradiction underlined in this question has attracted the interest of many historians and has given rise to various explanatory hypotheses, but Brjusov's presentation of it in the form of a novel helps sum up the question well. It is a very different consultation from the one that Panurge has with Agrippa in 1546 in Chapter XXV of Rabelais' *Tiers Livre*.[12] In Brjusov, Agrippa explains the purpose of the *De occulta philosophia*, replying "with irritation" to the questions put to him by Heinrich.

> I stated clearly in the preface, that a Magus should be neither superstitious, nor an intriguer, or demoniacal, but should instead be a wise man, a priest, a prophet. I consider to be a true Magus the Sibyl who prophesied the coming of Christ in an era of paganism, or those three kings, who having come to know of the birth of the Saviour from the marvellous mysteries of the universe, set out with gifts to the cradle of the manger. Whereas in magic you (as the greater part of men) evidently look not for the hidden knowledge of the Universe, but for the many forms of trickery with which to harm one's neighbour, or to obtain riches, or to

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to the romanticised biographies of H. Morley (1856) and J. Orsier (1911), the latter translated into Russian by Brjusov in Moscow in 1913. Among twentieth-century scholars, see C. G. Nauert, *Agripppa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought* (Urbana 1965).

[12] François Rabelais, *Tiers livre*, edited by M. A. Screech (Paris/Geneva, Droz, 1974), pp. 177–215. In contrast to the thesis (cf. M.A. Screech (ed.), *ibid.*, p. 177n and Id., 'G. Cardano's *De sapientia* and the *Tiers livre* de Pantagruel', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* XXV (1963), pp. 97–110) that sees Cardano's *De sapientia*, rather than Agrippa's *De vanitate* as the source of the review of practical magic given by Rabelais in the cited Chapter XXV, I believe that the figure of "Her Trippa" represents Agrippa on account of both his encyclopedic knowledge of the occult disciplines, and of the misadventures with his third wife. This chapter by Rabelais acts as a crystal that splits the figure of Agrippa into that of a fortune-teller who boasts his knowledge of obscure things, and that of a man who is quite unaware of the fact that his wife is cuckolding him before his very eyes (see Thomas More's *Epigramma* cited in *De vanitate*, Ch. XXXI; *Opera cit.*, p. 77: "Omnibus ast uxor quod se tua publicat, id te/ astra, licet videant omnia, nulla monent") and which also ridicules Agrippa using the very same observations and critical arguments used in the *De vanitate*. Already six or seven years before the *Tiers livre*, the interest of the French in Agrippa was attested by Jean Visagier's, *Epigrammata* (Lyons 1536; see 2nd edn. Lyon 1537, fol. 257), cited by L. Febvre, *Le problème de l'incroyance* (Paris 1947), p. 37: Visagier is full of the deepest sympathy for the recently deceased Agrippa.

> know the future; but for this sort of information there is no need to turn to philosophers, but to conjurers or charlatans. My book *De philosophia occulta* was written in my youth and contains many mistakes, but it is nevertheless an attempt to inquire into all that has been said of magic, so that an intellect that is curious to understand can examine all the branches of this science: but I have never induced anyone to throw themselves into experimenting with the *goëteia*, which is obscure and not deserving of any approval.[13]

Heinrich, who was in love with a witch later burnt at the stake for stirring up an epidemic of demonic possession in a convent, had painstakingly built up a library of magical works and sought initiation into occult practices. Unconvinced by any such relation between magic and *pia philosophia*, he asks Agrippa:

> Why then, oh Master, after having so carefully studied the dominions of magic and finding only deceits, did you not try to dissuade others from sterile application to this science, but are, on the contrary, intent on publishing this work that you yourself have considered imperfect? It may have been composed by you in your youth, but you should not forget that you have added two prefaces, written recently, in which you speak of magic with great deference and do not manifest in any way a contemptuous attitude with regard to it.[14]

Agrippa answered Heinrich by throwing the question back at him, a technique also used by historians when discussing this contradiction in Agrippa's intellectual biography.

> In my book, *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum*, which cost me many years of work but procured me only derision and accusations of heresy, that which I call pseudo-science is explained in much detail [. . .]. The pseudo-philosophers [. . .] have perverted magic, considered by the Ancients to be the height of human knowledge, so that nowadays natural magic is nothing more than formulae for poisons, sleeping potions, fireworks and suchlike things; while ceremonial magic is reduced to giving advice on how to enter into contact with the lower forces of the spiritual world, or how to exploit it as would brigands, and by stealth. In the same way that I will never tire of contesting and deriding false science, thus will I also unremittingly deny false magic.[15]

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[13] V. Brjusov, *Ogennyi Angel*, 1908; I use the German contemporary transl. *Der feurige Engel* (Munich, Hyperion Verlag, 1910), pp. 208–209.
[14] Brjusov, *Der feurige Engel cit.*, 209.
[15] Brjusov, *Der feurige Engel cit.*, pp. 211–212.

In 1970, Richard Popkin, an authoritative specialist on Renaissance scepticism, summed up the question in similar terms:

> Agrippa makes a specific palinode for having written the *De occulta philosophia* and attacks the occult credibility of the authority of the Ancients, the Hermetics, the Neoplatonists and even the Kabbalists. The Kabbalah, on which he had held a course in France in 1509, and which he considered very important for obtaining the ultimate truth, is now excluded as a pure rhapsody of superstitions. The various occult sciences were rejected as vain, useless and mere superstition. In this way [Agrippa] nullifies all those fields that he had previously favoured, seeming to indicate a complete and total change of mentality. On the other hand, as Nauert had indicated, Agrippa did not seem willing to accept the completely negative attitude of *De vanitate* [. . .] in spite of his theoretical refutation of occultism, he could have maintained sufficient interest or involvement in what he had worked on so long, and a minimal faith in its premises, so as to be willing to publish a work [*De occulta philosophia*] that had already become a classic reference work on the new magic in the Renaissance.[16]

Naturally Agrippa did not confine himself to this problematic issue in his anti-encyclopaedia. In the *De vanitate* he tried to demonstrate the uncertainty and the sheer vanity of all the sciences and scientific practices then in use. However, occult disciplines enjoy a rather disproportionate importance in his review, and indeed occupy almost exclusively a third of the entire work (i.e. 48 chapters).[17] *De vanitate* deals also with the disciplines and philosophical topoi of the Church, economy, society

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[16] R. D. Popkin, 'Introduction' to Agrippa, *Opera cit.*, in particular I, pp. xiv–xvi; cf. Id., *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza*, 3rd edn. (Berkeley/Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1979), pp. 23–26.

[17] This is what I will analyse here, referring to my previous papers for the rest. A partial correction of Nauert's thesis, cited by Popkin ('Introduction', in Agrippa, *Opera cit.*, pp. xviii–xix): "Agrippa remained a Catholic all his life [. . .] had Agrippa lived a generation later, when many of his own views had become officially heretical, he might have been forced to make a choice that he had managed to avoid in his own day. If he had to choose between his belief and the Church, it is hard to tell where he might have ended up. But, living in the generation before the lines were clearly drawn, Agrippa, like Erasmus and Lefèvre d'Etaples, could remain a reform-minded religious teacher without being a Reformer [. . .] It seems likely that Agrippa would have become a partyless believer rather than either a Reformer or a Counter-Reformer". See my papers 'Humanae litterae, verbum divinum, docta ignorantia', *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, 45 (1966), pp. 182–217. See also on Agrippa's religious attitude, 'Agrippa, Erasmo e la teologia umanistica', *Rinascimento* II X. x (1970), pp. 1–59; 'Scritti inediti e dispersi di E. C. Agrippa' ed. by P. Zambelli, *Rinascimento* S II (1965), pp. 195–316; and especially 'Magic and Radical Reformation in Agrippa of Nettesheim', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* XXXIX (1976), pp. 69–103 (the latter is now reprinted in the present volume pp. 138–182).

and crafts; the first subject is central to the apologetic writings for the *De vanitate*, that is, the *Apologia*, the *Querela* and the *De vanitate scientiarum et ruina christianae religionis dialogus* published by Agrippa in 1533–1534. These apologies place even more emphasis on the influence that the religious crisis (Lutheran Reformation, but also the Radical Reformation) exerted on the work of our author, as stressed in the last part of the *De vanitate* and in some chapters of the *De occulta philosophia*.

The main objective of my survey here, however, is to examine the *De vanitate*, placing it in relation to other humanistic reviews of contemporary culture, such as those of Crinito, Volterrano and Polydorus Vergilius (all works often used by Agrippa), and Vives' *De disciplinis*.[18] Above all, I wish to focus on the long series of chapters (48 out of 102) with which Agrippa opens his work; with the sole exception of alchemy (which is examined separately, following the sections dealing with diet and cooking) all the occult disciplines are dealt with in this series of chapters. Despite some reference to experiments in alchemy in his correspondence, Agrippa had little interest in the subject, and its practices and sources are virtually absent in the *De occulta philosophia*. Furthermore, in the *De vanitate* alchemy is liquidated with a comment taken from the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum*, a pamphlet which was of key importance in the development of Agrippa *qua* polemicist.[19] In one of the pamphlets published against *Epistolae obscurorum virorum*, the *Lamentationes*, the young Agrippa is already referred to as "stygianus" (i.e., as

[18] There is insufficient space here to give a detailed indication—in the sense of a project proposed by August Buck—of the important contribution made by Agrippa in introducing the writings of the Italian humanists in Germany. A few examples should suffice: see *De vanitate*, Ch. II: 'De literarum elementis', in *Opera cit.*, p. 9; Ch. III ('De grammatica'), *ibid.*, p. 16, where he also uses Crinito as a *repertoire* for data about contemporary scholars, for example, on Georgius Trapenzuntius (see Pietro Crinito, *De honesta disciplina*, Rome 1955, III, 1, p. 103). E. Schwenter, 'Agrippa von Nettesheim über Ulfilas', *Wörter und Sachen* 21 (1940), pp. 227–28, highlights the first citation, in which we see, as a paradox, the German Agrippa defining "Galfila" (*recte* Ulfila) according to its (usual) Italian source Crinitus; Schwenter supposes that Agrippa could have met him between 1511 and 1518 in Italy. Similarly, Raphael Volterannus is cited and used in the *De vanitate*, Ch. V ('De historia'), Ch. VI ('De rhetorica') and passim. Nauert (*Agrippa cit.*, p. 125, n.) has stressed the use that Agrippa makes of an Italian text of Giovanni Pico; E. Halm, *Die Stellung des Agrippas in der Geschichte der Philosophie* (Dissertation Leipzig 1923), pp. 20–21, stressed the use of the *burle* of Poggio Bracciolini and Pietro Aretino. The general question of the contemporary Italian authors read, diffused and rewritten by Agrippa (among others Petrarch, Poliziano, Lorenzo Valla, Mancinelli, Beroaldus, Campanus, Sabellico, Biondo, Flavio, etc.) deserves to be re-examined.

[19] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XCVI; *Opera cit.*, p. 263.

a necromancer) by the "homines obscuri (i.e., the enemies of Reuchlin and of humanists).[20] In the controversy with them it was claimed that "omnis alchimista est medicus aut saponista" ("every alchemist is a physician and a saponifier [soap-maker]").[21] In Chapter XC of *De vanitate* Agrippa repeats this criticism, observing that it would take too long to recount all the foolish mysteries and vane riddles of this art of the Green Lion, of the Fugitive Hart, of the Flying Eagle, of the Leaping Madman, of the Dragon devouring its tail, of the Swollen Blockhead, of the Crow's Head, of the Black which is Blacker than Black, of Hermes' Seal, of the Mud of Madness (I should say: of Learning), and of similar and endless nonsense.[22]

In defining the philosopher's stone by way of riddles, Agrippa makes a successful satire of the mystifying language of the alchemists; he lists the various ecclesiastical or civic prohibitions of alchemistic practice. However, he does not appear to develop the theoretical premises of alchemy, seeing the hasty way in which he sums them up: Alchemy

> promises things which nature can neither allow nor attain, because art cannot surpass nature, but imitate it, and follow it at great distance, the force of nature being much stronger than that of art.[23]

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[20] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XCVI ('De arte inquisitorum') where Agrippa refers to his own participation in the polemics of the humanists against the *Dunkelmänner* and to the "triumphus Capnionis": it deals with a passage of *De vanitate* censured in the *Opera cit.*, p. 280, that should thus be read in one of the editions published by Agrippa himself. As regards the appellative "stygianus" given to Agrippa in the *Lamentationes obscurum vivorum*, Cologne 1518, see my ed. and introduction to Agrippa, 'Scritti inediti e dispersi' cit., p. 280, n. 40; see also G. Ellinger, *Italien und der deutsche Humanismus in der neulateinischen Lyrik* (Berlin 1929), p. 339; Antonio Possevino later used the same definition of Agrippa as "the living dominator of the Styx".

[21] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XCl ('De alcumistica'); in *Opera cit.*, p. 263. See also F. G. Stokes (ed.), *Epistolae obscurorum vivorum* (London 1909), p. 64 n.: "This sentence, not previously found ("omnis alchimista est medicus aut saponista"), was quoted by Agrippa as a proverb".

[22] Agrippa, *De vanitate cit.*, Ch. XC; in *Opera cit.*, II, p. 265: "verum nimis longum foret, narrare omnia huius artis stulta mysteria, ac inania aenigmata, de leone viridi, de cervo fugitivo, de aquila volante, de stulto saltante, de dracone caudam suam vorante, de bufone inflato, de capite corvi, deque illo nigro nigrius nigro, de sigillo Hermetis, de luto stultitiae (sapientiae dicere debui) ac similibus nugis innumeris".

[23] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XC; *Opera cit.*, II, pp. 262–63, after an initially destructive definition ("alcumistica itaque, sive ars, sive fucus, sive naturae persecutio dici debeat, profecto insignis est, eademque impunis impostura, cuius vanitas eo ipso se facile prodit") Agrippa goes on with the passage cited above: "cum polliceatur, quae natura nullo modo pati potest, nec attingere: cum tamen ars omnino non possit naturam superare, sed illam imitetur et longis passibus sequatur, et multo fortior sit vis naturae quam artis".

An interesting scholar, editor of the *De occulta philosophia*, Karl Anton Nowotny,[24] has noted that Agrippa does not introduce alchemistic themes in this work, but that in the *De vanitate* he parodies them in part. This negative reaction is what distinguishes Agrippa most clearly from Paracelsus, a thinker with whom he should be compared more often than has been the case to date.[25] This distinctive trait is particularly relevant because it is not merely a question of the greater or lesser range of the occult disciplines acknowledged by Agrippa in his encyclopaedia of magic, but is rather a revealing idiosyncrasy that makes him reject the vague and mystifying language of alchemists. We have already seen his use of parody, but we have yet to see how he works to provide a rational definition of "natural magic" and of its indispensable theoretical basis, that is, of astrology. In doing so Agrippa is not altogether original, but his gifts of synthesis and his ability to develop arguments make him something more than the "gifted populariser of the ideas of others" referred to, somewhat inaccurately, in the *Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*.[26]

Here I wish to re-examine the first forty-eight chapters of *De vanitate* that criticize the *artes sermocinales* (Chapters III, VI, VII) and related disciplines (poetry, historiography, sophistry, Lullian art, art of memory) (Ch. IV–V, VIII–XI), the *reales*, i.e. mathematics (Ch. XII), geometry (Ch. XXII), music (Ch. XVII), and finally astronomy (Ch. XXX) that in turn introduce the subjects of astrology (Ch. XXXI) and the other occult sciences. These are placed alongside various geometrical and mechanical artifices, optics, sculpture, catoptrics, *cosmimetria* (Ch. XXVII "Of the measure of the world"), architecture, and the art of finding

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[24] K. A. Nowotny, 'Erläuterungen' to his edition of Henricus Cornelius Agrippa ab Nettesheym, *De occulta philosophia* (Graz, Akademische Druck- und Verlangsanstalt, 1967), p. 418.

[25] E. Jaeckle, 'Paracelsus und Agrippa von Nettesheim', in *Nova Acta Paracelsiana* (1945), pp. 83–109.

[26] B. Copenhaver, 'Natural Philosophy: Astrology and Magic', in Schmitt C. B. and al. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 264. In spite of this judgment much space is dedicated here to Agrippa (pp. 263–66, 289). I am grateful for the references made here (differently from other occasions) to my researches on Agrippa; I should however point out that the passage of Agrippa quoted here p. 289 n. 51 is not from the *Prognosticon in agrippinarum archivis inventum* (1523) which I discovered and published in *Umanesimo e esoterismo*, ed. by E. Castelli (Venice 1960), p. 168, but is in fact from a letter written by Agrippa three years later, which I quoted from *Opera* and commented on *ibid.* As an expert on the Renaissance literary genre, Copenhaver should have been able to distinguish easily a satirical prognostic from an epistle.

metals (Ch.XXII–XXIX). To give unity to such a paradoxical combination of disciplines—a combination which clearly has a polemical intention and makes it impossible to classify the *De vanitate* as a pure and simple study of the system of the 'trivium' and 'quadrivium'[27]—Agrippa uses a special criterion: with it he combines and condemns all these disciplines as artificial and vain pursuits, as word games and playing with mechanisms or mirrors. In all of them (logic and grammar as well as the occult arts) he detects much of ludic artifice and vanity. One notes that also where he deals with other disciplines Agrippa tends to underline analogies or references to magic or astrological beliefs. For example, he criticises the madness of the musicologists "who affirm that [. . .] the skies themselves sing, but with voices that no man has ever heard",[28] and the Greek theorists of dance who

> have said that the principles of these dances are divinely derived from the movements of the stars and the planets, from their comings and goings, alignments and order, [. . .] from a certain harmonic dance of the celestial things, together with the generation of the world.[29]

That the matter dealt with in the first forty-eight chapters of *De vanitate* on the whole constitutes a unity is evident from Chapter XVI ('Again of Arithmetick') which refers in turn to Chapter XXXV ('Of Palmestrie' i.e. Chiromancy), and Chapter XXXVI ('Again of Geomancy'). Chapter XVI is thus entitled because the subject had already been dealt with in Chapter XII ('Of Arithmetick'), a chapter which regarded numeric

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[27] See G. H. Daniels, 'C. Agrippa', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* XXVI (1964), p. 329.

[28] Agrippa, *De vanitate* ch. XVII ('De musica'); *Opera cit.*, p. 49: "Atque tamen hinc plurimum gloriantur musici isti, quasi ipsi supra rhetores habeant movendorum affectuum imperium; quos insuper eo ipsa evexit insania, ut ipsos etiam coelos canere affirment, vocibus tamen a nullo unquam mortalium auditis, nisi forte quod musicis istis per suum evovae, seu per temulentiam, vel insomnium innotuerunt. Nullus tamen musicorum interim e caelo descendit, qui vocum consonantias omnes noverit, quique proportionum inductiones omnes invenerit. Attamen dicunt artem esse consumatissimam, et quae omnes amplectatur disciplinas, nec sine universa disciplina tractari possit, etiam divinationis vim illi tribuentes, qua corporis habitudines, animique affectus et mores hominum per ipsam iudicentur: sed et dicunt artem esse infinitam, nec ullo ingenio exhauriri posse, sed indies illam pro cuiusque captu novos dare modulos." See on this chapter the excellent study by K. G. Fellerer, 'Agrippa von Nettesheim und die Musik', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 16 (1959), pp. 77–89.

[29] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XVI; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 50: "laudarunt tamen hanc nonnulli Graecorum scriptores, sicut pleraque alia foeda ac perniciosa, ipsaque saltationum exordia e summis caelis, e stellarum siderumque lationibus, eorumque gressu et regressu, complexu ac ordine tanquam harmonica quadam caelestium choraea, una cum mundi generatione divinitus prodiisse dicunt".

divination as a result of arithmetic:[30] "Plato says that it [i.e. arithmetic] was first shown by a wicked demon together with the game of dices".[31] Thus, Lycurgus banished mathematics "as a troublous thing" from Sparta. Indeed, the vanity of the game ensues from "that obstinate war of the arithmeticians". Agrippa summarises here some of the difficult themes on which he built Book II of his *De occulta philosophia*, i.e., questions as to "what is the most perfect number"[32] and so forth.

> Beyond this, it would be difficult to say which Pythagorean mysteries and which magical forces they dream to be in numbers, even being bare of things themselves; they dare to declare that God could not have created the world without those instruments and models, and that the cognition of all divine things is contained in numbers: as if it were in a rule much more certain than any other: from here are born the heresies of Marcus the Magus and of Valentine, based on numbers and derived from numbers; which by way of some very cold numbers they presumed to be able to rediscover and to declare to be the divine religion and the innumerable secrets of divine truth. Alongside this is the Pythagorean Tetractis interposed between the sacraments.[33]

The thesis that heresies are generated by an abuse of the sciences is characteristic of the *De vanitate* and of this penultimate phase of Agrippa's intellectual biography. It is interesting to note how often he makes

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[30] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XVI; in *Opera cit.*, II, p. 42, and see also Chapter XVIII.

[31] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XVI; in *Opera cit.*, II, p. 44: "Sed ad arithmeticam redeamus: hanc Plato a malo daemone una cum talorum et alearum ludo primum monstratam ait. Et Lycurgus, magnus ille Lacedaemoniorum legislator, illam ceu turbulentam e republica sua eiiciendam censuit."

[32] *De vanitate*, Ch. XVI; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 44: "Hinc illud arithmeticorum irreconciliabile bellum uter numerus, par an impar, praeferendus sit: quis inter ternarium, senarium, denarium, numerus sit perfectior. Item quis numerus dicitur pariter par, circa cuius definitionem Euclidem, ipsum geometriae principem, non parum errasse contendunt".

[33] *De vanitate*, Ch. XVI; *Opera cit.*, II, pp. 44–45: "Praeterea non facile dixerim, quae Pythagorica mysteria, quas magicas vires numeris inesse somniant, etiam ab ipsis rebus nudatis: dicereque audent, nisi illis instrumentis exemplaribusque mundum a Deo creatum iri non potuisse, ac divinorum omnium cognitionem in numeris, tanquam in regula omnium certissima, contineri. Hinc orti sunt Marci Magi et Valentini haereses in numeris fundatae et ex numeris progressae, qui divinam religionem et innumerabilia divinae veritatis secreta, sese per frigidissimos numeros posse invenire et enunciare praesumebant. Accedit istis Pythagorica tetractis inter sacramenta habita, et alia plura iis similia, quae omnia vana, ficta et falsa sunt, nec quicquam veri superest arithmeticis illis nisi insensatus ac inanimatus numerus: atque tamen hinc sese divinos homines agere arbitrabantur, quod scient numerare: sed hoc aegre illis concedunt musici, hunc honorem suae harmoniae libentius deferentes."

this accusation, even with regard to the most disparate and apparently innocent of disciplines. He refers to two Neoplatonists used as authorities in the *De occulta philosophia* to give a general formulation:

> As Porphyry and Iamblichus say, the accumulation of words and the multitude of disciplines is a beatitude, which is not increased by the quantity of reasons and of words: if that were the case, nothing should hinder from being happy those who have gathered together all learning, and unhappy those who are deprived of them; so philosophers would be more blessed than God's ministers. True happiness does not consist in the cognition of good, but in living a good life; not in understanding, but in living with intellect. Because it is not good intelligence, but good will that joins men with God.[34]

Agrippa himself uses the method of accumulation, particularly in the *De vanitate*; there his critique is not, for the most part, a rigorous and well-constructed philosophical confutation and argumentation. His method is based on the juxtaposition and enumeration of different or contrary theses, which follow one another and coexist for every type of problem. Agrippa often invokes the morally dangerous and corrupting consequences of study. In the case of the 'artes sermocinales', for example, the study of grammar is criticised and ridiculed even with reference to philologists of the calibre and intelligence of Poliziano, whose *Miscellanea* and whose celebrated exegesis of Aristotle with regard to the *entelechia* do not escape Agrippa's poisonous allusions.[35] The logic

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[34] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. I; in *Opera cit.*, II, p. 4: "de rhetore ait Plato: nam quo erit (inquit) ineptior atque indoctior, hoc plura narrabit, imitabitur omnia, nihilque se indignum existimabit. Nihil igitur exitialius quam cum ratione insanire. Si quis autem vir bonus et sapiens possideat, fortassis bonae erunt scientiae ac reipublicae utiles, possessorem autem suum nihilo reddent beatiorem: non enim (ut aiunt Porphyrius et Iamblichus) verborum accumulatio disciplinarumque multitudo beatitudo est, quae nec ullum insuper pro rationum ac verborum qualitate accipit incrementum: quod si ita esset, nihil prohiberet illos, qui omnes congregaverunt disciplinas, esse beatos; hunc vero, qui his careat, nequaquam essentque philosophi sacerdotibus beatiores. Vera enim beatitudo non consistit in bonorum cognitione, sed in vita bona: non intelligere, sed in intellectu vivere: neque enim bona intelligentia, sed bona voluntas coniungit homines Deo."

[35] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. III ('De grammatica'); *Opera cit.*, II, p. 12: "Utrum Aristotelis anima scribi debeat *endelechia* per delta vel *entelechia* per tau"; see also, p. 55, Ch. XXII: "Quale Politianus narrat animal, quod dum secatur in mensa, bibit interim viventisque repraesentat motus atque voces.". Cf. A. Poliziano, *Opera* (Lyons 1533), I, p. 506f. (*Miscellaneorum centuria prima*). See the revealing list in the *De vanitate*, Ch. III, *ibid.*, p. 12, where clear allusions are made to works shaped on Poliziano's, Valla's and Erasmus' models: "in hunc usque diem dies noctesque laborantur, scribuntur commentaria, elegantiae, quaestiones, annotationes, scholia, observationes, castigationes, centuriae, miscellanea."

of the Sophists is defined as a debauched mental game because, as was usual from the time of Abelard's *Sic et non*, it is disputed *in utrumque*. Here again Agrippa quotes Plato, this time from an authentic text, the *Republic*: in this dialogue Plato

> desires that logic sould be studied much later by the Guardians, because [this discipline] disputes *in both parts* and makes the principles and criteria of honest and dishonest rather unstable.[36]

In Agrippa's opinion, the study of logic, rather than serving to combat heretics, is "in effect the strength of those same heretics".[37]

Rhetoric fares no better. In this field Agrippa distinguishes two types of corrupting influences. Like Erasmus he rejects and criticizes the Ciceronians, but in the *De vanitate* his main target is the evangelical movement, starting with Luther.

> Who are the leaders of the German heresies, which having begun with Luther alone are today much multiplied, so that nearly every city has its own particular heresy? Are they not those very eloquent men, armed with fluency, language and *elegantia* of style? The same scholars, who only a few years ago we saw being greatly praised for their knowledge of languages, the ornament of their speech and their readiness to speak and to write, that nothing could be added to their praises; today we see the same scholars as leaders and princes among heretics. And thus there are still now many who, given up to eloquence, while they wish to make themselves Ciceronians, become pagans, and of those who most diligently study Aristotle or Plato, the first ones become superstitious, the latter ones impious.[38]

Placing the liberal arts and the occult disciplines on the same level also makes the same type of criticism possible. In Chapter XXXI

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[36] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. VIII; *Opera cit.*, p. 39: "quare Plato ipse sero admodum voluit dialecticam attingi a veritatis custodibus, eo quod haec in utramque partem disserat et minus firmas reddat de honesto aut inhonesto rationes."

[37] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. VIII; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 39: "[dialectica est] robur omnium haereticorum"; see also *ibid.*, p. 38: "[theologi] persuadere audent sacratissimam theologiam sine logica, sine dialectica, sine rixa, sine altercatione, sine sophismatibus constare non posse".

[38] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. VI; *Opera cit.*, II, pp. 34–35: "Qui sunt duces Germanicarum heresum, quae ab uno Luthero suscepto exordio hodie tam multae sunt, ut fere singulae civitates suam peculiarem habeant haeresim? nonne authores illorum homines disertissimi, linguae eloquentia et calami elegantia instructi? Et quos ante annos aliquot a linguarum peritia, a sermonis ornatu, a dicendi scribendique promptitudine sic laudatos vidimus, ut nihil illorum laudibus potuisset adiici, hodie videmus capita et principes haereticorum: ita sunt adhuc multi, qui eloquentiae dediti, dum volunt ciceroniani fieri, efficiuntur pagani: et qui Aristoteli et Platoni impensius student, fiunt illi quidem superstitiosi, hi vero impii."

('Of judicial astrology') Agrippa designates astrology as "the mother of heretics";[39] in Chapter XLVIII ('Of iunglinge', i.e, "De praestigiis") thanks to which "magicians make ghosts and with a swindler's trickery play many miracles and send dreams", after having cited Iamblichus, who places these phenomena on the same level as pure fantasy, Agrippa gives a severe definition of magic in general as being responsible for producing entire generations of heretics.

> Magic is nothing less than the coming together of idolatry, astrology and superstitious medicine. From magicians thus have been born in the Church a great mass of heretics, who indeed, as Iamnes and Mambres rebelled against Moses, so, they oppose the apostolic truth: chief of these was Simon the Samaritan [. . .] for many generations followed by the monstrous Ophites, the filthy Gnostics, the ungodly Valentinians, Cerdonians, Marcionists, Montanians and many other heretics.[40]

After this rather astonishing magical interpretation of the heresies of the early Church, Agrippa publishes here his famous retraction. The chapters on the occult sciences in the *De Vanitate* close with this bold declaration worthy of a preacher. They were reproduced by the author in the final and printed version of *De occulta philosophia* (1533). Competent, albeit limited, this retraction, cautiously used in *De occulta philosophia* to withdraw "all that in which I have erred by reason of the curiosity of my youth", is followed by a condemnation delivered much in the style of a preacher or inquisitor, and speaks out against other, unspecified, followers of magic,

> so that all those who presume to divine and to prophesy not in truth, nor in virtue of God, but deluding people with the help of demons, according to the operation of evil spirits, and those who for magical vanity, exorcisms, incantations, lovers spells, *agogima* and other diabolical conceits, exercise deceits of idolatry and show illusions and vain visions,

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[39] Agrippa, *De vanitate* Ch. XXXI; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 81: "Haec ideo narrata sunt, ut cognoscatis astrologiam etiam haereticorum progenitricem esse".

[40] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XLVIII; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 104: "patet, non aliud esse magiam, quam complexum idololatriae, astrologiae, superstitionsaeque medicinae. Iamque etiam a magis magna haereticorum caterva in Ecclesia orta est, qui, sicut Iamnes et Mambres restiterunt Moysi, sic illi restiterunt Apostolicae veritati. Horum princips fuit Simon Samaritanus, qui Romae sub Claudio Caesare propter hanc artem statua donatus est, cum hac inscriptione: Simoni santo DEO'. Eius blasphemias copiose narrant Clemens, Eusebius et Irenaeus. Ex hoc Simone, tanquam ex haeresum omnium seminario, per multas successiones monstrosi Ophitae, turpes Gnostici, impij Valentiniani, Cerdoniani, Marcionistae, Montaniani, et multi alii haeretici prodierunt'.

> who boast of working prodigies and miracles which immediately cease, all those, together with Iamnes, Mambres and Simon Magus, will be condemned to the torment of the eternal fire.[41]

However, not all were reprinted there, but only Chapters XLI–XLVIII,[42] omitting those on astrology and alchemy, but also those on various types of divination, on *praestigia* and on frenzy. These chapters were perhaps excluded because, corresponding exactly to Chapters LII–LX of Book I of *De occulta philosophia*, their reading might betray the author's intention: he concentrates there on the astrological principles on which divination is based. In order to explain both common elements in, and the declared contradictions between, the two works, one should consider that the *De occulta philosophia*, presented by the author to Trithemius in 1510, was then circulated in manuscript form in Italy and France with Agrippa's permission, as appears from the surviving codex and some of his letters. When dealing with the problems of the occult sciences in the *De vanitate* Agrippa was thus conscious of being well known and qualified as the author of the *De occulta philosophia*: either in its 1510 version or in the intermediate one with its "commentary" (or additions) written in his Italian period, this work would have been known to more than one reader of the critical *declamatio*.

It remains to be seen whether the chapters examined here are fully consistent with the boastful declaration at the end of the work, and whether they do indeed indicate a complete move away from the cultural position and doctrines of the *De occulta philosophia*. On its completion and revision for printing (additions to the first two books and a complete revision of the third book) Agrippa was working in the same year in which his *De vanitate* was published.[43]

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[41] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XLVIII; *Opera cit.*, II, pp. 104–105: "Quicumque enim non in veritate, nec in virtute Dei, sed in elusione daemonum, secundum operationem malorum spirituum, divinare et prophetare praesumunt, et per vanitates magicas, exorcismos, incantationes, amatoria, agogima et caetera opera daemoniaca, et idololatrie fraudes exercentes, praestigia et phantasmata ostentantes, mox cessantia miracula sese operari iactant, omnes hi cum Iamne et Mambre et Simone mago aeternis ignibus cruciandi destinabuntur".

[42] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XLVIII; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 105: "Verum de magicis scripsi ego iuvenis adhuc libros tres, amplo satis volumine, quos *De occulta philosophia* nuncupavi, in quibus quidquid tunc per curiosam adolescentiam erratum est, nunc cautior hac palinodia recantatum volo: permultum enim temporis et rerum in his vanitatibus olim contrivi. Tandem hoc profeci, quod sciam, quem iis rationibus oporteat alios ab hac pernice dehortari".

[43] Nauert, *Agrippa and the Crisis cit.*, pp. 98, 100 n. 52, 108, 294 and passim, dates the

In *De vanitate* Agrippa tends to use more often medieval and humanistic sources whereas he uses mainly classical ones in the *De occulta philosophia*, (which however coincided with the *De vanitate* in its method of citation). In the passages already examined on the occult arts Agrippa again returns to Plato (both spurious and authentic), to Porphyrius, to Iamblicus and elsewhere to other Neoplatonists, the Pythagoreans, Hermes, Zoroaster—all the authorities which Pico and Ficino made use of in presenting both their *pia philosophia* and this natural type of magic; on these authorities they, like Agrippa, had given a foundation to magic and presented it in this framework. Unlike the *De occulta philosophia*, in the *De vanitate* Agrippa was to treat these sages as occult, rather than as theological, authorities.

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work to 1526 ("the composition of *De vanitate* in the discouraging summer of 1526") which has since been regarded as unquestionable by other scholars. This would mean that in the last few months of his stay at the French court in Lyons Agrippa had not only conceived and made a rough draft of his book, but had written it completely. See, *inter alia*, Keefer *Agrippa's Dilemma cit*, p. 618; it is true that unlike the *De occulta philosophia*, the work was drafted relatively rapidly. Indeed, the letter in which Agrippa claims to have written the *De vanitate* in two days, was dismissed as sheer boastfulness already by A. Philibert Soupé (*Annales de la Faculté des Letters de Lyon* I (1883), p. 50). In my *Agrippa von Nettesheim in den neueren kritischen Studien cit*, p. 283 n. 45, I have already noted the observations on the divorce of Henry VIII which induced Nauert (*Agrippa cit.*, p. 108 n. 11) to admit that "Agrippa continued to revise the book after he had completed the basic text in 1526". It is worthwhile to stress a passage from the *De vanitate* (Chapter LII, p. 114: "scripsit etiam recentioribus diebus de spiritu quodam Lugdunensi fabulam Protonotarius quidam Gallus, homo nequam et impostor") which I analyse elsewhere. Agrippa refers here to the story of a the dead nun, Alix de Tésieux, who in the convent of Saint-Pierre in Lyons visited as 'revenante' sister Antoinette de la Grollé. Althought it refers to facts that must be dated between 16 February and 21 March (that is, during Agrippa's stay in the city), the story was published by Adrien de Montalembert only two years later, in his work entitled *L'Histoire merveilleuse de l'esprit qui s'apparut au monastère de Saint-Pierre de Lyon, nouvellement imprimée à Paris . . . XV^e^ jour d'octobre l'an 1528, en la rue Saint-Jacques a l'enseigne des Mathurins* [Paris, BN, Res Lk7 19974]; reprinted in Rouen in 1529, and in Paris in 1580. See La Croix Du Maine-Du Verdier, *Bibliothèque française* (Paris 1772), I, p. 8; E. Freré, *Recherches sur les premiers temps de l'imprimerie en Normandie* (Rouen, 1829), p. 11; N. Lenglet-Dufresnoy, *Traité historique et dogmatique sur les apparitions* (Antwerp 1751), I, pp. 1–90; H. Busson, *Le rationalisme dans la litterature française de la Renaissance* (Paris 1957), p. 256. Montalembert, who in 1529 became 'Aumonier' to king François I, was asked to write his *Histoire* "à la confusion et extermination de la secte damnable des faux heretiques" by the auxilliary bishop of Lyons, Barthelemy du Bois; Montalembert had made enormous efforts to fight off the spirits; he was accompanied to the convent to carry out exorcisms by many curious people. *L'Histoire* contains amusing details, such as the theft of the convent's silver chalices by late sister Alix. It must be for details of this sort that the author is criticised by Agrippa; among others Montalembert writes: "Les princes des tenebres cy ne seront evoqués, par contraicte nygromantie, qui promettent les beaulx faictz" (f. Hi. verso).

> I shall leave aside the theology of the Gentiles, described in time past by Museus, Orpheus, and Hesiod: one knows that all is altogether fabulous and poetical; already a long time ago, and with very strong reasons, this was profligated by Eusebius, Lactantius and other Christian doctors; neither will I speak of the theology of Plato, nor of the other philosophers, all of whom were masters of errors.[44]

This is not, however, the true reason why Agrippa renounced in the *De vanitate* the Ficinian and Pichian figure of the Magus-cum-priest, with which he had opened and concluded the *De occulta philosophia.* In the *De vanitate* the Ancients are cited as magical authorities, while medieval sources and authorities are few.

> But among the Moderns few have written of natural magic, and those only a few works; [they include] Albertus [Magnus], Arnoldus de Villa Nova, Ramon Lull, Bacon, Pietro d'Abano, and the author of the book to Alphonsus published under the name of *Picatrix*, which however mixed much superstition with natural magic.[45]

This observation on *Picatrix* indicates how much care Agrippa took to distinguish those natural aspects of magic that he tried to save in the *De vanitate*, whilst at the same time downgrading them. The passage immediately before this reveals how in this perspective he had carefully read Roger Bacon's work on the relation between nature and art.

> Natural magic is therefore that which, having contemplated the forces of all natural and celestial things, and considered their order with diligent curiousity, thus makes public the hidden and secret powers of nature, coupling inferior things with superior powers as if there were a certain allurement in a natural joining of them together.[46]

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[44] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XCVII; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 282: "Praeteribo autem Gentilium theologiam a Musaeo, Orpheo, Hesiodo quondam descriptam, quam omnino poeticam et fabulosam esse in confesso est; quam Eusebius et Lactantius et aliorum Christianorum doctores iam dudum validissimis rationibus profligarunt, neque etiam de Platonis caeterorumque philosophorum, quos omnes errorum magistros ostendimus superius".

[45] Agrippa, *De vanitate* Ch. XLII; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 91: "Ex recentioribus vero scripserunt in naturali magia pauci et illi quidem pauca, ut Albertus, Arnoldus de Villa Nova, Raymundus Lullus, Bachon et Aponus et author libri ad Alphonsum sub *Picatricis* nomine editus, qui tamen una cum naturali magia plurimum superstitionis admiscet".

[46] Agrippa, *De vanitate* Ch. XLII; *Opera cit.*, II, pp. 90–91: "magia itaque naturalis ea est, quae rerum omnium naturalium atque caelestium vires contemplata, earumdemque sympathiam curiosa indagine scrutata, reconditas ac latentes in natura potestates ita in apertum producit, inferiora superiorum dotibus tanquam quasdam illecebras sic copulans per eorum mutuam applicationem adinvicem".

Here one recognises the language of Pico, where a Magus must "marry the world", and sees in the "allurements" (*illices* or *illecebra*) words which are characteristic of Ficino. Agrippa continues on natural magic,

> thereof oftentimes there arise wondrous miracles, not so much by art, as by nature, to which, when it works these things, such an art is a servant (*ministra*). So that Magi, as very diligent explorers of nature, take these things that are prepared by her, apply the active to the passive, which very often produces, long before the time ordained by Nature, effects which are held by the masses to be miracles, whereas in truth they are merely natural works, nothing else coming between but the sole anticipation of time, as if one were to make roses bloom in the month of March or grow already mature grapes, beans and parsley sown and in little space of hours grown into perfect plants, and greater things than these, such as clouds, rain, thunder, animals of diverse sorts and infinite transformations of things, in such a way as Roger Bacon boasts to have done with pure and natural magic.[47]

Thus, in the *De vanitate* natural magic has a modest agrarian and meteorological programme; the same that Pico had admitted to be correct even in the *Disputationes adversus astrologiam iudiciariam*; it was the same programme, which, in the period of the scientific revolution, was developed by Giambattista Della Porta, who indeed dares to justify it with the formulae that Agrippa in the *De occulta philosophia* had skilfully distilled from Pico and Ficino. This was therefore a very successful codification, destined—as we have seen—with Della Porta to enjoy a long life. It is also present in the same chapters of the *De vanitate*, which quotes Pico to the letter.

> They say that natural magic is nothing other than the strongest power of natural knowledge, which therefore is called the hightest pitch and absolute perfection (*summum apicem . . . absoluta consummatio*) of natural philosophy: it shows which is the active part of natural philosophy.[48]

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[47] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XLII; *Opera cit.*, II, pp. 90–91: "ut exinde stupenda saepe consurgant miracula, non tam arte, quam natura, cui se ars ista ministram exhibet haec operanti. Nam magi ut naturae accuratissimi exploratores, conducentes ea, quae a natura praeparata sunt, applicando activa passivis, saepissime ante tempus a natura ordinatum effectus producunt, quae vulgus putat miracula, cum tamen naturalia opera sint, interveniente sola temporis praeventione: ut si quis in mense martio rosas producat, et maturas uvas, aut satas fabas, vel petroselinum intra paucas horas excrescere faciat in perfectam plantam, et iis maiora: ut nubes, pluvias, tonitrua, et diversorum generum animalia, et rerum transmutationes quamplurimas, cuiusmodi multas fecisse se iactat Rogerius Bachon pura et naturali magia".

[48] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XLII; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 90: "Naturalem magiam non aliud putant, quam naturalium scientiarum summam postestam, quam idcirco summum

Here the dependence of magic on astrology, which constitutes the indispensable theoretical foundation for both and for other occult disciplines, is even clearer and more focussed than in the *De occulta philosophia*. For example, in Chapter XLI ('Of Magic in general') Agrippa affirms that magic

> is indeed tightly joined and connected with astrology: he who professes magic without astrology, does nothing, but loses his way entirely.[49]

The various divinations, called by Agrippa "many-headed in the form of a Herculean hydra", are all produced by astrology, geomancy,[50] physiognomy,[51] *metoposcopy* (divination based on the form of one's forehead) and chiromancy (Chapters XXXII–XXVI): they are often defined as being "created by astrology". Agrippa provides us with a more general explanation in Chapter XL ('Of fury' i.e., of frenzy):

> all these skills of divination have their roots and foundations in astrology. Therefore if one inspects the body, face, or hands, or if one sees dreams, monsters or auguries, or what frenzy had inspired, they want to erect the figure of heaven, from the declaration of which, together with the conjectures of similitudes and of signs, they go to search out the meanings of the significators: and thus all divinations require the art and the use of astrology and they admit that it is a necessary key to the knowledge of all secrets.[52]

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philosophiae naturalis apicem eiusque absolutissimam consummationem vocant; et quae sit activa portio philosophiae naturalis, quae naturalium virtutum adminiculo, ex mutua earum et opportuna applicatione opera edit supra omnem admirationis captum".

[49] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XLI; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 89: "ipsa cum astrologia sic coniuncta atque cognata est, ut, qui magiam sine astrologia profiteatur, is nihil agat, sed tota aberret via."

[50] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XXXII; *Opera cit.*, II, pp. 81–82: "Admonet hic locus etiam de caeteris divinationum artibus dicere, quae non tam observatione caelestium, quam rerum inferiorum quandam caelestium umbram et imitationem habentium, vaticinia praebent, ut illis intellectis melius cognoscatis, hanc astrologicam arborem, de qua tales fructus descendunt, atque abs qua velut Lernaea hydra, multorum capitum fera generata est".

[51] Cf. Agrippa, *De vanitate cit.* Ch. XXXIII; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 82: "De Physiognomia [. . .] probabilius signis se assequi posse praesumit quatenus hunc Saturnium aut Iovistam, illum Martium aut Solarem, alterum Venereum, Mercurialem, aut Lunarem pronunciat: ex corporis habitudine illorum horoscopia colligit, ex affectibus paulatim (ut aiunt) ad causas videlicet astrologicas transcendens, ex quibus postea nugatur quicquid libet".

[52] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XL; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 89: "Omnia itaque haec divinationum artificia in ipsa astrologia suas radices et fundamenta habent. Nam sive corpus, vultus, manus inspecta sint, sive somnium, sive prodigium visum sit, sive auspicium, sive furor afflaverit, caeli figuram erigendam consulunt, ex cuius indiciis, una cum similitudinum, signorumque coniecturis significatorum venantur opiniones: ita divinationes

It is precisely this dependence of all types of divination on astrology that constitutes the grounds of their falsity. To demonstrate the falsity of astrology Agrippa had explicitly cited Giovanni Pico's *Disputationes*, refuted in vain by Lucio Bellanti; it is probable that Gianfrancesco Pico, whose *De rerum praenotione* was used for the *De occulta philosophia*, was also used here in the *De vanitate*.

> All arts of divination show how much they differ from truth, because so evidently do they avail themselves of false principles, feigned by poetical temerity: which although they are not [real], nor ever have been, nor ever will be, yet they would be supposed, contrary to the truth, to be causes and signs of what happens.[53]

Agrippa often emphasised the idea of conjecture, the probability of which he considered to be even less than that of astrological prognostication. He did not, however, attempt to defend divination and magic in empirical and observational terms, indeed the part of their content which is nothing more than "conjectures and observations of experience" has no value because one cannot detect there "any rule of truth", because their foundations

> are voluntary fictions, about whose principles the same masters of divination, men of equal doctrine and authority, do not agree".[54]

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omnes astrologiae artem usumque sibi deposcunt, ut hanc veluti clavem ad omnium arcanorum notitiam necessariam fateantur".

[53] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XL; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 89: "Quare omnes hae divinationem artes quantum absint a veritate, palam sese offerunt ex eo, quod principiis utantur tam manifeste falsis, ac poetica temeritate confictis: quae cum nec sunt, nec fuerunt, nec erunt unquam, tamen causas et signa eorum esse solent, quae sunt rerum eventus, contra apertam veritatem in illa referentes".

[54] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XXXV; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 84: "Omnes tamen ultra coniecturas et experientiae observationes tradere queunt nihil. Non esse autem coniecturis illis et observationibus ullam veritatis regulam, ex eo manifestum est, quia figmenta sunt voluntaria, et super quibus ipsi etiam aequalis doctrinae et authoritatis illarum Doctores non concordant". How Agrippa kept himself up to date is revealed by a list of the theoreticians of chiromancy near to his age (that of the ancient chiromantics begins with Hermes and Pythagoras, and must be compared with an analogous, old list of ancient sages in Chapter XLII, where al-Kindi, Geber, Albertus, Arnoldus de Villa Nova, Raymundus Lullus, Bacon and "Petrus Aponus", are mentioned *ibid.*, Chapter XLII ('De magia naturali'); *Opera cit.*, pp. 90–91) reveal: *ibid.*, p. 84 "Ex posterioribus vero Petrus Apponensis, Albertus Teutonicus, Michael Scotus, Antiochus Bartholomaeus, Cocles, Michael Zavanarola, Antonius Cermisonus, Petrus de Arca, Andreas Corvus, Tricassus Mantuanus, Ioannes de Indagine, et plerique alii illustres medici". Agrippa insists on the purely conjectural character of the other forms of divination: *Ibid.*, Ch. XXXVIII ('De speculatoria'); *Opera* II, p. 86: "prodigia interpretatur, non tamen alia

We have seen that the fundamental rule in Agrippa's so-called sceptical method is that of documenting the disagreement among the most authoritative masters of the various disciplines. For example, in Chapter XXX ('Of astronomy'), he uses a small treatise published by his friend Agostino Ricci in order to demonstrate the many divergences that divide astronomers and astrologers regarding the number of the celestial spheres. Using the same criterion it is not difficult for Agrippa to emphasize the fluctuations and contradictions in the followers of the various occult arts.

One last part of *De vanitate* helps elucidate Agrippa's technique in composition: as a writer he often reworks his own material and passages of his writing to rehash them in new works. In the *De vanitate*, Chapter XXIII ('Of geometry'), and Chapter XLIII ('Of mathematical magic') repeat a series of examples of mathematically calculated *automata* that are also used in one of the chapters added to the *De occulta philosophia* after 1510. Not only do the lists largely coincide, but the characterization that the *De vanitate* gives of mathematical magic is identical to that given in the *De occulta philosophia*:

> There are other very prudent emulators and very bold searchers after nature, who without any natural virtues, with the mathematical disciplines alone, adding the influences of the heavens, boast their ability to produce things similar to the work of nature, such as bodies that move and speak, but which have not however animal virtues: as was the wooden dove of Archyta, which flew, and the statue of Mercury, that spoke, and the bronze head made by Albertus Magnus, which was said to have been able to speak. In these things Boethius, a man of deep wit and extremely learned, was excellent. Cassiodorus writing to him of similar things said: 'you are determined to know difficult things and to show miracles: with the genius of your art metals do bellow, Diomedes' bronze [statue] blows aloud, the brazen serpent hisses [. . .]'.[55]

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via, quam coniecturae et similitudinis, quam equidem plurimum errare manifestum est; quod haec omnia naturalia opera sunt, non prognostica."; *Ibid.*, Chapter XXXIX ('De somnispicia'): "quorum interpretes proprie coniectores vocantur: quemadmodum canit Euripides, 'Qui bene coniectat, is vates optimus esto'".

[55] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XLIII; *Opera cit.*, II, pp. 91–92,: "Sunt praeterea alii naturae sagacissimi emulatores inquisitoresque audacissimi, qui absque naturalibus virtutibus ex solis mathematicis disciplinis, adscitis caelorum influxibus, sese naturae operum similia producere posse pollicentur, ut corpora euntia, vel loquentia, quae tamen non habeant virtutes animalis; qualis fuit columba Archytae lignea, quae volabat, et statuae Mercurii, quae loquebantur, et caput aeneum ab Alberto Magno fabricatum, quod locutum perhibent. Excelluit in istis Boetius vir maximi ingenij et multiplicis

The talking statues of Mercury are the famous living images or *simulacra* referred to in the *Asclepius* and frequently mentioned in recent works by historians of hermetism, after this page had been commented on by Eugenio Garin and by Frances Yates. In these passages from Agrippa, which probably all date from the same period, i.e. between 1526 and 1531, theurgical action is downgraded to a mere mathematical and mechanical artifice, a game of *automata*.[56] This occurs in the same terms in both the *De vanitate* and the *De occulta philosophia*.

Another example, in both, is the borrowing from Ficino and Pico, of the Persian etymology of the word 'Magus' and its interpretation as wise man or priest:

> The common opinion is that this is a Persian name (with which opinion Porphyrius and Apuleius agree), and that in their language it means both priest, sage or philosopher. Thus magic, embracing all philosophy, physics and mathematics, adds to those the power of religions. And for this it also contains *goëtia* and Theurgy. For which reason many have separated magic into two parts, that is, natural and ceremonial.[57]

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eruditionis: ad quem de istiusmodi scribens Cassiodorus, 'Tibi, inquit, ardua cognoscere et miracula monstrare propositum est: tue artis ingenio metalla mugiunt, Diomedes in aere gravius buccinatur, aeneus anguis insibilat[. . .]'."

[56] See Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XXII; *Opera cit.*, p. 55: "artificiata narrat Mercurius Aegyptios Deorum confinxisse simulachra, ut articulata promerent voce atque progrederetur, illa etiam Archytas Tarentinus ligneam columbam sic geometricis rationibus construxit, ut surgeret in altum et volitaret. Iam vero et Archimedes primus aeneum caelum tanto artis opificio fabricasse legitur, ut inibi planetarum omnium motus planissime depraehenderentur, simulque singularum caelestium sphaerarum vertigines". See also Agrippa *De occulta philosophia*, L. II, Ch. I ('De necessitate mathematicarum disciplinarum, atque de mirandis multis operibus, quae solis mathematicis artibus perpetrantur'); *Opera*, I, p. 153; cfr. ed. Perrone Compagni, pp. 249–250: "Mathematicae disciplinae ad magiam tam sunt necessariae atque cognatae, ut qui hanc absque illis profiteatur, is tota aberret via, frustraque laboret, minimeque desideratum adsequatur effectum: quecunque enim sunt et fiunt in istis inferioribus naturalibus virtutibus, omnia haec numero, pondere, mensura, harmonia, motu et lumine fiunt atque reguntur: et omnes res quas videmus in istis inferioribus, habent radicem et fundamentum in illis: nihilominus tamen etiam absque naturalibus virtutibus, ex solis mathematicis disciplinis, opera naturalibus similia produci possunt, ut inquit Plato, res non quidem veritatis et divinitatis particeps, sed simulachra quaedam sibi ipsis cognata, ut corpora euntia vel loquentia, quae tamen carent virtute animali, quales fuerunt quae apud antiquos Dedali simulachra et automata appellata sunt, et quorum Aristoteles meminit, Vulcani et Dedali tripodes seipsos moventes, quos sponte sua in certamen prodiisse narrat Homerus, et quos legimus in Jarbae Gymnosophistae convivio seipsos motasse: aureasque statuas pincernarum et structorum operam convivis prestasse. Leguntur etiam statuae Mercurii quae loquebantur, et columba Architae quae lignea volabat; et quae narrat Cassiodorus Boethii miracula, Diomedem in aere buccinantem, aeneum anguem insibilantem".

[57] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. XLI; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 89: "Communis opinio est nomen esse persicum, cui adstipulantur Porphyrius et Apuleius, et significare eorum lingua

In the meantime, however, the position of Agrippa on magic underwent a profound change. The figure of the Magus too had undergone a transformation and become quite distinct from that of sage or wise man and priest. From 1526 onwards it is the religious priestly figure that occupies Agrippa's attention, whilst philosophy, physics and mathematics acquire a more precise and well defined meaning for him. These too are subject to the critical observations of the *De vanitate* for errors in the way they are exercised—albeit to a lesser extent than magic—and are also in a state of flux and re-evaluation. Echoing Saint Augustine, whom Agrippa greatly admired in this period, he writes:

> With the growing of the faith in Christ, the sciences have declined so that the greater and better part of these have died out altogether: these very powerful magical arts have passed away leaving not so much as a shadow.[58]

idem, quod sacerdotem, sapientem sive philosophum. Magia itaque omnem philosophiam, physicam et mathematicam complexa, etiam vires religionum illis adiungit: hinc et goetiam et theurgiam in se quoque continet. Qua de causa magiam plerique bifariam dividunt, in naturalem videlicet et caeremonialen."

[58] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, Ch. CI; *Opera cit.*, II, p. 305: "invalescente fide Christi ceciderint scientiae, ita quod maxima, et potior earum pars penitus perierit, nam magicae illae potentissimae artes sic abierunt, ut ne vestigia supersint".

CHAPTER FIVE

MAGIC AND RADICAL REFORMATION IN AGRIPPA OF NETTESHEIM*

> O Corneille Agrippa, l'odeur d'un petit chien m'eût suffit
> Pour décrire exactement tes concitoyens de Cologne
> Leur rois-mages et la ribambelle ursuline
>
> Guillaume Apollinaire, *Cortège*

We have quite precise data concerning the milieu in which Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486–1535) grew up, his studies and his early writings; in fact we have the dedication copy of the first version (1510) of his *De occulta philosophia*.[1] This manuscript is in itself a finished work of such historical importance that the librarian of the Warburg Institute, Hans Meier, very appropriately undertook an edition quite separate from any comparison with the definitive version published in 1533. We are, however, much less well-informed about the concluding phase of Agrippa's intellectual experience, even though it was in fact in the last five years of his life that he gave the finishing touches to all his works and published them. Uncertainties and lacunae remain, not only regarding the date of writing. Works printed later had in some cases been drafted many years before, only to be enlarged, revised and modified later at different moments in history. These conditions are, in my opinion, quite definitely reflected in his writings, though not in a direct or explicit way, especially in his two most famous works.

Our uncertainties and lacunae also concern much more important facts and much larger problems. They are all epitomized by the mystery of Agrippa's death, which took place either in Lyons, or more probably in Grenoble in 1534, or, what is more likely, in 1535. If we are to

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* Originally published in memoriam of Franco Giusberti: he and his wife Jeanne Clegg translated this paper for *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XXXIX, 1976.

[1] J. Bielmann, 'Zu einer Handschrift der *Occulta philosophia* des Agrippa', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* XXXVII (1937), pp. 318–24; Henricus Cornelius Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia*, edited by K. A. Nowotny (Graz, Akademische Druck- und Verlaganstalt, 1967) (facsimile of the printed edition [1533] and of MS Würzburg M. ch. q. 50 [1510]); Id., *De occulta philosophia*, edited by V. Perrone Compagni, Leiden, Brill, 1992. Dr. Meier's edition of the 1510 manuscript was unfinished in proofs at the time of his death in an air-raid in 1941.

believe Paolo Giovio's vitriolic *Elogium*, the humanist fled to Lyons and, reduced to illness and extreme misery, passed his last days in a tavern. Agrippa was not unfamiliar with inns; on the contrary, he frequented them willingly and a few stones were sufficient to pay his bills because, as Del Rio says, he gave them the appearance of good money in the eyes of the landlord. This time, however, he had lost his magical powers and was abandoned by all except his dog. Realizing that the end was drawing near, Agrippa himself grew tired of even this last, faithful companion, and brusquely sent him away. Giovio gives his exact words: "Get away, damned beast, you who have brought me to utter damnation!" The meaning of the anecdote is clear: the dog, which was of course black, was no less than the incarnation of the devil. As soon as Agrippa, his victim, came to his senses and realized the damnation brought him by his companion, the dog plunged headlong into the river Saône, splashing and giving off sulphurous fumes. The legend coined by Giovio gained currency: it soon spread through German circles by way of Andreas Hondorf's stories,[2] and was conflated with the Faust legend long before Goethe expressed it in the form we all know. Giovio's famous story also had some significant antecedents when Agrippa was still alive.

In 1518, during the polemic on the suppression of Hebrew books, the young Agrippa had not yet published anything, but was already known for his magical work which was circulating in manuscript. It owed much to Reuchlin's *De verbo mirifico*. Ortwin Gratius in his *Lamentationes*, trying to turn the fierce, brilliant irony of the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* against the humanists connected with Reuchlin, attacked and derided him by the name "Agrippa stygianus". The young man, who is supposed to have already shown himself to be a worshipper of demons and an expert in necromantic meditation, is asked by his correspondent:

> What is the infernal kingdom to me? What are the Elysian fields, the mighty hand of Pluto, which rules far and wide throughout the underworld, to me?[3]

At that time Agrippa was already supposed to be in the habit of "chattering [...] falsehoods about the hereafter". Citing Servius's commentary on the sixth book of the *Aeneid* ("he denies that the lower regions can

[2] *Historien-und Exemplenbuch* (Leipzig, 1568), f. 101v.

[3] *Hutteni Operum Supplementum*, ed. by E. Böcking, I (Leipzig, 1864), p. 390: "Quid mihi de inferorum regno? quid de campis Elysiis, de praepotente Plutonis manu longe lateque in terrae visceribus dominante?"

be contained in the center of the earth, because the earth is solid"), Lucretius ("who said that hell does not exist"), Ovid (who makes Pythagoras say "why are you afraid of the Styx, of the shadows and these empty names?"), and Cicero himself, his partner puts a rhetorical and provocative question:

> If the lower regions do not exist, if there are no kingdoms of Pluto, if the Elysian fields are a legend like the Chimera, what will become of us, who—having despised the King of the Heavens and neglected all the virtues—are destined to mourn for all eternity?

The answer attributed to Agrippa, the devotee of the Styx, underlines the very close link which these traditional polemicists saw at that time between his supposed necromancy ("in three days you and I will make a banquet with Pluto"; that is, more or less, a black sabbath), and the denial of immortality, of the eternal reward of virtue and of retribution for sin. Certainly the connection did not have to be proclaimed aloud even in the humanist circles of Cologne, where Agrippa had returned for a while. He had undertaken his "peregrinations" to Paris and London, in Spain and Italy more after the fashion of a humanist and adventurer than of a traditional student. In *Lamentationes* Agrippa begs his friend "per fidem perque inferos omnes" to burn his letter immediately, "so that the theologians will not read it and say that you have been made prisoner by the fictions of the poets and that the whole sink of your errors is drawn from them".

Nevertheless, one of the most anti-conformist of the theologians of Cologne, Dietrich Wichwael (Theodoricus Cyrenensis episcopus, the archbishop's vicar), shared his interest in the occult arts, and anxiously pointed out to Agrippa the Pico-Bellanti polemic on astrology. Yet even he had already found him "ambiguous" on the relations between magic and astrology, "perhaps because of some, I do not know which, half-sacred, half-superstitious doctrine to which you adhered and which you commended in your writing".[4] The writing Dietrich Wichwael refers to can be none other than the first *De occulta philosophia*. As Trithemius had prescribed, Wichwael noticed that Agrippa had not limited himself to

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[4] Agrippa, *Opera*, 'Lugduni per Beringos fratres', n.d., vol. II, pp. 700–701 [Epistolae, i, 21] (This edition, reprinted in Hildesheim, Olms, 1970, will be quoted hereafter as Agrippa, *Opera*; it corresponds to edition N.r 4 in the list by J. Ferguson, 'Bibliographical notes on Agrippa's Treatises', *Proceedings of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society* XII (1924), pp. 1–23).

"swear allegiance to the principles of only one discipline"; not excluding from his survey, or even from his definition of magic, the ceremonial aspect, which Charles de Bovelles had criticized in Trithemius's *Steganographia*. Even though he begins with criticism similar to that of Pico and Reuchlin, of the abuses of certain medieval necromancers, his work represents, as Frances Yates has remarked, "an apotheosis of religious magic".[5]

Paolo Giovio's *Elogium* does not depend directly on Ortwin Gratius's *Lamentationes obscurorum virorum*, but one can see an analogy between the two documents, albeit separated by decades and by considerable differences of context. Even apart from this analogy, it seems to me that beneath the exaggeration and polemical intention of Gratius and Giovio there lies a real and significant historical problem. The first version of Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia*, with its wealth of classical quotations—not so different from those attributed to him in the *Lamentationes*—is already a prime example of the movement called by Aby Warburg the revival of ancient paganism. This encyclopedia of magic, this systematic treatise *more germanico*, this compilation, is not, after all, so original, but it is of great historical importance. It places far greater (though contradictory) stress on religious elements than do its major Italian models. These are, among Marsilio Ficino's works, *De Amore (Commentary on the Symposium)*, *Theologia platonica* and *De vita*, together with Giovanni Pico's *Conclusiones magicae* and *Apologia*. An entire generation had not passed in vain. The tragedy of Savonarola had, as we know, left its mark on Pico's experience, and influenced him in his turning away from astrology and the other occult arts; it had troubled Ficino himself, though less profoundly. A German who had grown up in Cologne, the citadel of scholastic tradition, the center of an epidemic of witchcraft denounced and repressed in the Rhine region by the authors of the *Malleus maleficarum*, could certainly not remain indifferent to the turmoil of the pre-Reformation, to which he had been introduced by John Colet in London, by Jacques Lefèvre in France, and by the Gallican circles of the "conciliabulum" of Pisa and Milan. Nor, after Luther's theses, could he be indifferent to the beginnings of the Reformation. But the social position of a courtier and the *forma mentis* of a humanist interested in the occult sciences, mediate these experiences, giving them forms

[5] *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 142.

which are paradoxical and hard to decipher. Hence the paradox of this magician who, as I shall try to show, precedes and is not inferior to Paracelsus in the history of the radical Reformation. One of the reasons why he can be rightly seen in this light is his rewriting of *De occulta philosophia* in response to the religious development of his time. Already in 1510, and even more clearly in 1533, magic is for Agrippa an alternative form of religious life.

Agrippa's religious interests have not, of course, escaped the attention of historians. He figures in Herminjard's *Correspondance des réformateurs […] de langue française*. Doumergue in his picture of Geneva before Calvin's arrival names him first among the reformed preachers who came to the city, though he observes that this role was to be more properly filled later by Agrippa's friend and protégé, François Lambert d'Avignon.[6] But from Pierre Bayle (who yet recognized Agrippa as "sujet à diverses alternatives", and acknowledged certain quietist attitudes in the *De occulta philosophia*), up until the excellent American biographer, Charles Nauert Jr., historians have tackled the problem of his religious position in traditional terms: did Agrippa embrace the Lutheran Church or did he remain faithful to the Catholic Church?[7] If it seems difficult to accept the first alternative, the facts based on biographical data (that Agrippa was a courtier in particular need of support for his numerous family, and therefore bound to Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggi and to the prince-bishop of Cologne), do not seem to me sufficient grounds for a definitive choice of the second alternative.

In fact, Agrippa chose his protectors from among the less zealous Catholics. Cardinal Campeggi, who was old and confined to bed by gout, devoted himself to sumptuous banquets and games of dice, as we know from Luca Gaurico and from Campeggi's family archive in Bologna. However, he, and his secretary and *factotum* Luca Bonfio the Paduan humanist, who was closely connected with Agrippa and Francesco Zorzi of Venice, were engaged in eirenic discussions with Melanchthon and adopted a conciliatory policy in the German Legation of 1530–1532. Hermann von Wied was considered more or less a pagan by Charles

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[6] A.-L. Herminjard, *Correspondance des réformateurs des pays de langue française*, I–III (1512–1536), Geneva/Paris 1866ff.; E. Doumergue, *Jean Calvin*, II, Lausanne 1899ff., p. 111.

[7] P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, s.v., rem. N: "Il expliquait sa *Philosophie occulte* d'une manière qui n'est guère différente des speculations de nos quiétistes". See C. G. Nauert Jr., *Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1965), pp. 157–93.

V, and ten years later (after an important attempt at Catholic reform with Johannes Gropper) was to take his diocese, Cologne, into the Lutheran camp. He gave hospitality to Agrippa without being able to read his writings—for he knew no Latin—though he kept himself well-informed on the religious polemic which was raging in Germany. But these are external circumstances, and they only allow us to reach conclusions regarding the humanist's practical outlook. We now know that the phenomenon of Nicodemism covered forms of religious radicalism[8] and that it developed well before Calvin's denunciation of it. In actual fact it grew up in those circles in Strasbourg with which Agrippa was associated as a correspondent of François Lambert and above all of Wolfgang Köpfel (Capito). Moreover he was associated with these circles in the very years (1525–1528) during which this form of religious simulation seems to have been introduced by Otto Brunfels, who had been struck by the defeat of the peasants led by Thomas Müntzer, and who was aware of the dangers which accompanied his passage "from Erasmus to Anabaptism, or rather to extreme spiritualism". It is in terms analogous to these that we must pose the question of the religious choices of Agrippa, a humanist in many respects akin to Brunfels in his natural, astrological and scriptural interests, if we are to find a way out of the impasse of an over-traditional problematic, and not make do—as, *faute de mieux*, I myself have done in the past—with the view of Agrippa as an extreme Erasmian.

On the other hand, the left wing of the Reformation, especially in its Spiritualist forms, has often been defined—not without reason—in terms of extreme Erasmianism, or as the drawing of extreme conclusions from Erasmus' premises. The possibility of Erasmian influences on Hans Denck, Balthasar Hubmaier, Thomas Müntzer, and finally Sebastian Franck, has been admitted by Walter Köhler and others. Although we must, as Harold S. Bender[9] insists, allow ample space to the Lutheran and Zwinglian role in the formation of the Anabaptist sacramentarians, we should not limit the influence of Erasmus only to the question of the bondage of the will, on which they (and Agrippa) were decidedly with him and against Luther.

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[8] C. Ginzburg, *Il nicodemismo* (Turin, Einaudi, 1970), pp. 27, 29ff. See also A. Biondi, 'La giustificazione della simulazione nel Cinquecento', in *Eresia e Riforma nell'Italia del Cinquecento* (Florence, Sansoni/Chicago, Newberry Library, 1974), pp. 5–68.

[9] H. S. Bender, 'Walking in the Resurrection: the Anabaptist Doctrine of Regeneration and Discipleship', *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XXXV, 1961, pp. 96–110, in particular p. 110.

Agrippa's contemporaries had not yet elaborated our subtle but necessary distinctions between the sects into which the Reformation had split, but they were extremely sensitive in identifying those choices which could not be classified according to any of the orthodoxies instituted before 1536. Even a Catholic bishop like Paolo Giovio (to say nothing of his brother, Monsignor Benedetto,[10] who was equally worried by the difficulty of "clipping Agrippa's barking dog") recognized the immense intellectual vigour and great learning of Agrippa's polemic ("immenso captu vastaque memoria"). In so doing, he underlined the religious side of the criticisms contained in the treatise *De incertitudine et vanitate omnium scientiarum atque artium*. According to Giovio, Agrippa "undermines the disciplines and casts doubt on religions". The plural "religions" may here be something more than simply a feature of humanistic style. It reminds one of the "laws" ("leges" and "sectae", i.e. churches) of which Giovio had heard his master, Pomponazzi, give a relativistic reading in all their historico-astrological vicissitudes. Above all this plural recalls Agrippa's critical references to "the old and the new tyrannies" in religious life. Agrippa, in what Giovio called his "light-hearted declamation", had ridiculed all the labours and achievements of learning; Giovio bitterly underlined the fact that he does this "all the more vehemently and effectively because he has the support of such novel arguments and the authority of the sacred letters".

In 1545, a year before Giovio, the young naturalist Konrad Gesner had dedicated a long and accurate article in his *Bibliotheca universalis* to Cornelius Agrippa. Gesner had received his intellectual and religious education as a 'famulus' of Köpfel, and had gone to Zurich, where he became a devoted follower of Heinrich Bullinger's preaching and of his polemic against the Anabaptists. For this Zwinglian too, Agrippa's religious position was a problem which deserved considerable space in an encyclopedia entry:

> This author agrees with the Roman Church on many points, and disagrees on many others: he derogates her authority, favours the married clergy, censures any use of images, asserts the cowl to be an invention of the Devil, and rejects the writings of the more recent theologians such as Scotus or Thomas.[11]

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[10] See P. Zambelli (ed.), 'Cornelio Agrippa: Scritti inediti e dispersi', *Rinascimento* XVI (2nd ser., v) (1965), p. 198n.

[11] C. Gesner *Bibliotheca universalis* (Zurich, 1545), fol. 309v: "Hic author in plerisque Romanae Ecclesiae consentit, in multis dissentit, authoritati ipsius derogans, nuptias

Up to this point the summary of Agrippa's "many points of disagreement" with the Church of Rome seems to coincide more or less with the tendencies of the pre-Reformation and with the theses of the Catholic Reform. The polemic against scholastic theology and "meditationes in Scotum" is common to various generations of humanists from Petrarch and Lorenzo Valla onwards. The attacks on the friars ("cucullati") and their abuse of images, as well as on relics, pilgrimages, and alleged miracles go back to the pre-Reformers, though the violence with which these attacks are expressed in the *De vanitate* reminds us of Lutheran pamphlets.

The question of ecclesiastical celibacy itself had been taken into consideration and given a prominent place in negotiations between Catholics and Protestants. Nevertheless, Gesner's testimony concludes with a judgement which is very relevant to our Nicodemian line of inquiry when he says that Agrippa was "not very firm on certain things, and that he did not dare to express his deep convictions". These words perhaps reflect the influence of Gesner's master, Wolfgang Köpfel, and may therefore express the disillusionment felt by the man who had by now become one of the firm, magisterial guides of the Strasbourg Reformation. Yet even Köpfel had deeply sympathized with the Anabaptist and extremist groups between 1525 and 1528. During this interesting period the Hebraist Köpfel took into his house Martin Borrhaus (Cellarius), a pupil of Reuchlin's who had become an Anabaptist. At the beginning of the period, the ex-Franciscan Lambert, whom Agrippa had helped to flee the order and find refuge in Strasbourg, wrote to him from there in the name of Köpfel and "all the church of the saints": they were overjoyed "at hearing of the fruit borne by the Word of God amongst the courtiers, indeed amongst almost all the French". Lambert thanked God not only for the subsidy collected for him among the humanists of the court of Margaret of Navarre, where Agrippa was then, but also "that he was always the same, that is, a real lover of truth".[12] A judgement of this kind had been passed by another reformer whom Köpfel had met in his Basle period. In a letter as frequently quoted as the previous one, Köpfel, who had met

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sacerdotum suadens, imaginum omne usum taxans, cucullam diaboli inventum asserens, recentiorum theologorum, ut Scoti, Thomae, scripta reiiciens".

[12] Agrippa, *Opera*, II, p. 829; Herminjard, *Correspondance cit.*, I, p. 317: "semper idem es, nempe veritatis amator".

Agrippa earlier in Cologne, and had been a member of the Reuchlinian group, expresses an enthusiastic judgement, one to which he subscribes. He had asked:

> What does Agrippa think of the German heresy? Is he opposed to Luther? Or does he perhaps take sides with the learned Parisians?

Köpfel had met Agrippa in about the year 1520, and supposed that he was deeply committed to Lefèvre's cultural and religious group, for he had in 1519 intervened in Lefèvre's defence in a debate on some passages of the New Testament. Köpfel's correspondent replies to this question:

> Not at all: in fact he may have been a forerunner of Luther's and therefore cannot oppose him: these things, which Luther sees now, he had seen a long time ago.[13]

Köpfel therefore thought of, or at least heard others speak of, Agrippa as a forerunner of Luther; and Agrippa did not reject this description of himself. He thought Köpfel's correspondent had been joking, but was willing to forgive him: "I wish I could one day be as he has depicted me to you!". Moreover, he confirmed his connection with the Reformation by entrusting his cautiously worded answer to the fugitive Lambert, recommending him, "a diligent minister of the Word of God", to Köpfel and his friends, and asking them to show him the same courtesies and help him as they would Agrippa himself. The letter also contains another very interesting passage, which Herminjard excludes in his edition. Köpfel is so sure of Agrippa's interest "in the situation of Germany" that he gives him an account of the decisions on the sacraments and on discipline taken by Karlstadt at Wittenberg during Luther's exile in the Wartburg (4th May–4th December 1521). To Köpfel it seemed a violent and dangerous time: in the first place he did not approve of "the imposition of prescriptions arbitrarily conjectured from the truth of the Gospel", as had occurred with the abolition of vigils and Lent, with the concession to, or rather the "imposition of the chalice on the laity and with the anathema on anyone who has regard for pious works".

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[13] Agrippa, *Opera*, II, p. 789; Herminjard, *Correspondance cit.*, I, p. 98 "Quid [...] de Germanica haeresi sentit? Num repugnat Luthero? Anne facit cum doctissimis parisiensibus? Tum ille: "Nihil minus, inquit; nam praeire Luthero potest, resistere non potest, quae modo Lutherus ille olim vidit". See Agrippa, *Opera*, II, pp. 740–70, and my paper 'Agrippa, Erasmo e la teologia umanistica', pp. 1–59. *Rinascimento* XXI (2nd ser., x), 1970, pp. 29–59.

Thus the Lutheran *novatores* had worked up the "uncouth crowd" and provoked acts of violence against the houses of priests and citizens. In this way a change had come about in public opinion "so that, as Luther and his most learned followers believe, the common cause of faith was quickly turned into general hatred". Luther had been recalled to Wittenberg, where he was preaching daily: "he attacked the innovators who did not have respect for the simple people", but naturally he did not fail to restate what he had already stipulated concerning matters of faith. The people followed him in great numbers: "*cum patientia* they move towards the freedom of Christ". Köpfel hopes that the princes will soon come to understand "how smooth and easy is the way of Christianity", or rather, "what a great difference there is between a seditious innovator and a peaceful Christian (*Christianus patiens*)". Köpfel was still speaking from a "provisional" or Nicodemian position (only a year later, in Strasbourg, he was to declare himself a Lutheran, but even twenty years later he was still to address to his Italian friends his famous invitation to Nicodemism). It is certain that in 1521 he was already deeply involved with the Reformation. He concludes:

> I would not dissuade you from following the Gospel, but I am happy that you remain apart from the untimely ventures of those who are imprudent [...] do keep before you the image of the meekness of Christ, even in private conversations, so that no one will be able to slander our pious undertaking.

The pacifist, tolerant attitude which characterizes Köpfel among the religious leaders of Strasbourg, and which in 1528 was to make him the most open to dialogue with the Anabaptists and Spiritualists, is already evident when in 1522 he rejects popular violence and even more strongly he refuses the prevarications of theologians on matters of opinion:

> What has Christ ever said that was harsh? Where I ask myself do we find that he ever took it upon himself to criticize? Does he not always take a benevolent attitude? Let us not be foolish. O preposterous piety, so pedantically pious that it can obliterate even the model of piety itself![14]

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[14] Agrippa, *Opera*, II, p. 790; Herminjard, *Correspondance cit.*, I, p. 99: "Scientissime vir, non te ab Evangelio dehortor, sed ab importunis ausibus imprudentium te gaudeo alienum [...] mansuetudinem Christi prae te feras, in familiaribus etiam colloquiis, ne quis calumniari queat pium istum institutum [...] Quid enim acerbum Christus sonuit, ubinam loci, quaeso, animum reprehendendi prae se tulit? Num ubique benignus occurrit? et nos tantum non insanimus. O praeposteram pietatem, tam morose piam, ut vel imaginem pietatis queat obliterare".

This invitation to tolerance, so characteristic of the Spiritualists, this insistence on allowing the laity to be free and to have a say in theological questions, the insistence that these be not reserved to specialists, we find some years earlier in Agrippa's polemical defence of Lefèvre's exegesis. The arguments and methods used were Erasmian: Agrippa maintained that the universal value of theology and its relevance for the common man should not be limited:

> if only those are to be considered theologians who have been made doctors of the schools in the scholastic gymnasium with the approval of our masters, and who have achieved the crown of masters of theology by means of great disputations, great pomp and an enormous banquet, just as carpenters, blacksmiths, shoemakers and all the other 'mechanics' or artisans are forced to do their apprenticeships, gain their experience and receive their qualification as masters from those who control their trade, however uncouth they may be.[15]

Though this work cannot yet be described as Lutheran, we do find here an Erasmian thesis: it is the thesis of the universal relevance of theological meditation and of the competence of the common man, a thesis which was to inspire the radical reformers in their refusal to identify themselves with the various magisterial reforms in Wittenberg, Zurich, Strasbourg and then Geneva. Agrippa remains firm on this principle right from the polemic of 1519 down to the *De vanitate* (1530) and its self-defences (the *Apologia* and *Querela*, both published in 1533, and the anonymous *Dialogus de vanitate scientiarum et ruina christianae religionis*[16]). He is also consistent on the even more important principle of the Spiritualist interpretation of Scripture. Not only did he reject "the Aristotelian sophisms, Scotist subtleties and Ockhamist niceties" invoked by scholastic interpreters, "we owe reverence to the text of the Scripture" more than to them as he reminds his readers: he was also more specific about such an interpretation being spiritual and "prophetic":

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[15] Agrippa, *Opera*, II, p. 597: "Si illi solummodo theologi habendi sunt, qui in scholastica palestra accedente magistrorum nostrorum [...] calculo, magnis contentionibus, ampio fastu, nec immodico [!] symposio, theologici magistratus coronam ambientes, scholastici doctores creati sunt, quemadmodum lignarii, ferrarii, sutores et caeteri mechanici opifices, artis suae exercitium usum atque magisterium ab artis illis praefectis vel quantumcumque rudissimis recipere compelluntur".

[16] See my introduction and edition of Agrippa, 'Scritti inediti e dispersi', *Rinascimento* XVI (2nd ser., v), p. 249ff. My attribution of this pseupepigrah to Agrippa does not seem to have met with opposition.

> Every time there is a conflict about the sense of Scripture, its interpretation must not be entrusted to human acumen, but rather to the gift of the spirit and of prophecy, to which Paul exhorts us; so that not only do we speak in tongues, but also prophesy, that is we interpret the sense of Scripture through the Holy Spirit.[17]

This spiritual gift is not to be found "amongst our Masters who love disputations", or in the most erudite doctors, but "in those who succeeded to the place of the Apostles, to whom God revealed that which he kept hidden from many learned man, even though the Apostles were totally lacking in human erudition, indeed were often very simple souls (*saepissime idiotis existentibus*)". Next Agrippa turns to parry the accusations of the Louvain theologians, and some traditional concessions follow. But if these concessions are considered with respect to the general tenor of the text, they must be seen as cautionary measures taken by a man who had chosen the way of Nicodemism and who in 1533 did not feel able to cross to the far side of the Lutheran barricade. The true tenor of the *Apologia* and the other writings (starting from the *De verbo dei* and the *Encomion asini*, which conclude the profoundly Cusanian "declamation" on the vanity of knowledge) can be summed up in a statement in Agrippa's next paragraph:

> This I have learned from Paul: the Scriptures are so transcendent that they cannot be subjected to the ingenuity of any creature, or by any means invented by a created intellect, but, being sufficient unto themselves […] interpret themselves.[18]

From this thesis, formulated on the basis of what he had learned from Erasmus's criticism of the Holy text as it had been transmitted by the compilers and the translators of Scripture, follow two consequences. One is the well-known criticism of the arts and sciences, which, without being a true form of scepticism, still attracted the attention of many contemporaries, from Vives to Montaigne. The other, less remarked upon but crucial from a religious point of view, is a development of the Pauline topos "the letter killeth" (2 Cor. iii, 6).

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[17] Agrippa, *Opera*, II, p. 312: "Quoties ergo de sensu Scripturae pugna est, non propterea humano ingenio tribuenda est eius interpretatio, sed dono spiritus et prophetiae, ad quos nos hortatur Paulus, ut videlicet non solum linguis loquamur, sed et prophetemus, hoc est, interpretemur sensum Scripturarum ex Spiritu Sancto…".

[18] Agrippa, *Opera*, II, p. 313: "ex Paulo didici: tam exuperans est Scriptura divina, ut nullius creaturae industria, nullius intellectus creati adminiculo subjiciatur, sed sibi ipsi sufficiens seipsam […] interpretatur".

> This opinion stands firm and impregnable: that is, all the infallibility, truth, authenticity and certainty of the Holy Scripture come from the Word or the Spirit of God, and Scripture is only comprehended by those to whom He wanted to reveal it. There is, in fact, no man who speaks truly in whom God does not speak.[19]

Already, in his assertion of the insufficiency of *intellectus creatus*, Agrippa comes very close to an author who has always seemed to me crucial for the clarification of Agrippa's position with respect to the Reformation. Agrippa's protégé, François Lambert, immediately after his arrival in Strasbourg, had published two works (as well as the *De sacro coniugio*, which has much in common with the more heretical side of the humanistic *De matrimonio* written by Agrippa for Margaret of Navarre a year later).[20] Both Lambert's works, the *Tractatus de prophetia* and the *Antithesis verbi Dei et inventorum hominum* (1524), develop these same ideas in a less refined but equally extreme form. The first was directed "against those who, almost forgetful of the Spirit, worship the letter beyond measure (*adversus eos qui literam nimium adorant Spiritus ferme obliti*)". Calling God as his witness, Lambert asserts that he has held this conviction for many years; he had therefore probably discussed it with Agrippa himself before "God deigned to allow him to partake of His truth". Since making this choice Lambert has utterly despised, "all who have consecrated themselves to the letter rather the spirit, and who grant to it what should be granted to the spirit". He concludes: "summe abominatus sum omnes literarios".[21]

Going on to discuss "De eruditione humana seu cognitione naturalium" (Chapter 1), François Lambert rejects, just as Agrippa was to do, the *sensus creatus* on which the limited and erroneous human sciences are founded, and gives privileged status exclusively to the *sensus increatus*, the source of the only authentic knowledge. God the creator of the universe

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[19] Agrippa, *Opera*, II, pp. 310–11: "Certe stat firma et inexpugnabilis sententia, scripturae infallibilitatem, veritatem, synceritatem, certitudinem omnem, esse a verbo et spiritu Dei, quae a nullo comprehendatur nisi cui voluerit ille revelare. Non enim est homo verax, in quo Deus non loquitur".

[20] Cf. my paper *Femme, mariage et lutheranisme chez H. C. Agrippa*, "Nouvelles de la république des lettres", 1997/1, pp. 79–102.

[21] Francisci Lamberti Avenionensis *Commentarii de prophetia*, (Quedlimburg 1668), fol. Ai r–v.

> was pleased that the higher things be now concealed from our nature, so that, after everything has been raised to eternal glory, they may be given the full knowledge of created things in ever-growing joy; because every creature, even in spite of itself, is subject to vanity.[22]

It follows that this view too admits the existence of no true sciences other than the one and only scriptural and prophetic knowledge:

> only that doctrine and learning is true, and only that is safe, which derives from faith. And there is little doubt that any other is derived from the created understanding (*sensus*), which by itself is empty, meddlesome, mendacious and ruinous, unless it is perfected by the untreated understanding (*sensus*).

For Lambert,

> all doctrine of the unbelievers is vain, deceptive and ruinous, and detestable to God, because it has nothing in common with the understanding (*sensus*) of eternal truth. From this it follows that only the faithful can teach rightly, even on human and natural matters.[23]

During the same period, Agrippa was drafting his *declamatio* which certainly showed no mercy towards vain, fallacious and pernicious doctrines. But he perhaps would not have gone as far as Lambert; he might not have agreed with the constructive conclusion Lambert drew concerning the admissibility and validity only of the teaching of the "faithful". It was this category which betrayed the future magisterial reformer of Hesse in the neophyte Lutheran newly arrived in the open milieu of Strasbourg. But in that "provisional" and happily creative phase in Strasbourg Köpfel himself maintained analogous theses. In his lectures on the prophet Hosea, held in 1526–1527 and published in 1528, three years after Lambert's *Commentarius* on the same text, he wrote:

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[22] *Ibid.*: "ut potissima naturae nunc absconderentur, ut instauratis omnibus et suscitatis in aeternam gloriam electis, ipsa perfecta creaturarum notitia illis proficiat in gaudii nunquam desituri incrementum. Quia enim creatura, vel nolens, subiecta est vanitati".

[23] *Ibid.*: "ea sola doctrina seu eruditio vera est, eaque sola tuta, quae fide habetur. Nimirum omnis alia est a sensu creato, qui a seipso est vanus, curiosus, mendax et perniciosus, nisi a sensu increato perficiatur [...] omnis doctrina incredulorum est vana, fallax, perniciosa Deoque execrabilis, quod nihil habeat commune cum sensu aeternae veritatis. Sequitur quoque ex hoc, quod soli fideles recte docere possunt etiam humana et naturalia".

> we are not, as far as our own capacities go, able to think anything, but, if we are capable of something, that we owe to God, who put in us flesh in place of a heart of stone.[24]

In particular, "humanum ingenium in rebus divinis periculose conatur". Köpfel stressed this point: "quam incerta et periculosa res est fiducia proprii iudicii praesertim in divinis rebus". At the beginning of the *Commentarii* he had defined "the authority of Scripture", making it clear that "Scriptura spiritu auditur", just as "iuxta Scripturam iudicantur spiritus": therefore "mortuae literae Scripturarum non nitendum", on the contrary "Scriptura veneranda, sed non habenda pro idolo". For Köpfel, too, the spiritual criterion valid for exegesis was universal and was also the determining criterion for any other kind of knowledge. In an interesting interpretation of the three days of the resurrection of Christ, which he sees as symbolizing the degrees of revelation and purification, he pointed out

> by which steps we penetrate into the knowledge of God. Indeed, most vain is the opinion of the most wise Rabbi Abraham, of Moses the Egyptian and of the others who affirm that I know not what natural sciences and orderings of human ingenuity have to go before this divine knowledge; most vain because here we are not dealing with upstart knowledge. Nor does it in fact derive from any other flesh and from our own effort, but what we are dealing with here is the science of the Cross, whose servants and handmaidens are aversion for the world, the annihilation of the flesh and charity which edifies our neighbour. It is a gift of God, not the fruit of the works of man.[25]

Only on the third day after the resurrection will God wake us to live "in conspectu eius" and "in gradu amplioris gratiae", where authentic knowledge will be attained. But also in the day after the death of Christ, when his body is buried and Antichrist has power ("die secundo, dum Christus ceu sepultus iacet, id est e medio submotus, rerum potiente Antichristo") for Köpfel we are necessarily in an antithetical situation.

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[24] Wolfgang Fabricius Capito, *In Hoseam prophetam commentarius*, (Strasburg 1528), fol. 57v: "non idonei sumus cogitare quicquam tanquam ex nobis ipsis, sed si ad aliquid idonei sumus id est ex Deo, qui pro lapideo corde carnem inserit".

[25] Capito, *In Hoseam*, fol. 120r: "quibus gradibus ad scientiam Dei penetrandum, quandoquidem vanissima est sapientissimi Rabi Abraam, Mosi Aegyptii et aliorum sententia, qui nescio quas scientias naturales ac dispositiones humanae industriae scientiae huic divinae praemittendas asseverant, quia hic non agitur de scientia inflante. Neque enim alia ex carne nostroque studio nascitur, sed de scientia crucis agitur, cuius administrae et pedissequae sunt fastidium mundi, interitus carnis, charitas aedificans proximum. Donum Dei est, non fructum operae humanae".

The Hebrew scholar, who had rejected the encyclopedic illusions of the Zohar, reveals a rare and profound interest in Cusanian speculation, and also in this he is very near to Agrippa.

> When we experience through our own faith, we know the miracle of divine power, thus bringing contraries out of contraries, that is innocence out of sin, science out of error, truth out of lies, hope and everlasting life out of desperation and death.[26]

This transcription of the "docta ignorantia" into moral and teleological terms owes much to Lefèvre's reprinting and Bovelles' interpretation of the tracts of Nicholas of Cusa. In fact, in the important dedication of his commentary to Margaret of Navarre, Köpfel quotes the spiritual counsellors of the princess, Michel d'Arande, Gérard Roussel and above all Lefèvre (he used to discuss with her "de fidei nostrae mysteriis" with sweet grace and indeed "iucunda quadam gravitate et festivitate [...] senili"). This was the circle Agrippa tried to enter in 1525–1526. Once himself the defender of Lefèvre d'Etaples, Agrippa at this point found himself compelled to call upon Lefèvre's group in his own defence. He turned especially to Michel d'Arande, to whom he addressed an important theological epistle in defence of the *De matrimonio*. This treatise had not been well received for theological reasons, rather than because of the social case pointed out by Emilie Droz.[27]

On Nicholas of Cusa, however, and on the use of his thought in theology, Agrippa (who just after his disappointment at the French court was to begin writing on the vanity of knowledge and the happiness of the ass and the idiot) was in agreement with the French proto-reformers. In Strasbourg, Köpfel knew Nicholas of Cusa well enough to become interested in the "two epistles written to you in French about God's essence and power, which appropriately philosophize in the style of Nicholas of Cusa".[28] As Herminjard supposes, Köpfel is here referring

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[26] Capito, *In Hoseam*, fol. 117v: "Cum de fide nostra experimur, tum potentiae divinae miraculum agnoscimus sic elicientis ex contrariis contraria, hoc est ex peccato innocentiam, ex errore scientiam, ex mendaciis veritatem, ex disperatione morteque spem ac vitam sempiternam".

[27] Agrippa, *Opera*, II, pp. 538ff., 787ff.; see E. Droz, *Chemins de l'hérésie*, II (Geneva 1971), p. 6, who explains the failure of *De matrimonio* with the *gaffe* of addressing such a tract to a newly widowed woman who had not yet, as the humanist must have known when he chose his theme, decided to marry again.

[28] Capito, *In Hoseam*, fol. 4v; Guillaume Briçonnet-Marguérite d'Angoulême, *Correspondance*, I (1521–22), ed. C. Martineau, M. Veissière, H. Heller (Geneva 1975); and *BHR*, XXXIII, 1971, p. 301; see Herminjard, *Correspondance cit.*, II, pp. 119–22.

to the writings of Briçonnet. Faithful to his confessional and sacramental historical interest, Herminjard stops his translation short at the critical comments on the "inanem [...] multiplicem illam operum et meritorum observantiam quae tibi sine spiritu saepenumero fuit", which the Cusanian writer founded on the "naturae humanae debilitas" and on the disobedience of the will to the spirit when inspired by God. According to Köpfel, who like Lambert aligns himself with the Lutheran thesis *de arbitrio hominis vere captivo*—given that the opposite thesis of the *operarii* (those who believe that good works gain a soul's health) "is in fact a hypocrisy most odious to God, who demands truth".[29] I presume that the reformers of Strasbourg and Meaux would not have been able to agree with Agrippa on this point, for Agrippa, like Erasmus, the Spirituals and many Anabaptists, maintained the doctrine of freedom of judgement. Indeed, it was on this that he based his rejection of astrological doctrine, a rejection which had matured with his reading of Pico's *Disputationes* in the period following 1509. On the other hand, Agrippa would have agreed with Köpfel and the author of the Cusanian epistles on gnoseological themes:

> In fact a human doctor is of no use for that spiritual doctrine [...] as it has to be continually perfected by God. [...] Since the whole Church learns all she knows from God, to no one in fact of the mortals in the Church of Christ can be given the title of doctor, which simply belongs to the one and only Christ.[30]

According to Köpfel, Margaret had accepted this non-magisterial conception of theology, but had experienced how

> this rather too lofty philosophy brings too much trouble and too little benefit: all of which you rejected on the basis of its uncertainty and its transient nature, because you could not but perceive how uncertain are opinions of this kind. And in fact at no two different points in time do they satisfy the mind of him who professes them; nay rather they are perpetually divided between themselves by the invisible waves of inconstant speculation, however self-sufficient they seem on the surface.[31]

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[29] Capito, *In Hoseam*, fol. 4v: "est exosissima quidem Deo, qui veritatem requirit, hypocrisis".

[30] Capito, *In Hoseam*, fol. 4r: "Nullus enim usus carnalis doctoris est ad eam spiritus doctrinam, [...] ut subinde divinitus perficiendam. [...] Nemini igitur mortalium in Ecclesia Christi, quia tota a Deo docta est, tribuendum nomen Doctoris, quod quidem in unum Christum simpliciter competit".

[31] Capito, *In Hoseam*, fol. 4v: "philosophia ista sublimior molestiae plurimum et emolumenti parum adferat. Id quod ex incertitudine fluxaque natura eius coarguebas.

These criticisms of the theologians who "even though they speak of Christ *religiose*, do not found themselves upon him as upon a cornerstone", are aimed at the variety of opinion and the uncertainty among the doctors, both Catholic and Protestant, because they approach all theology "homini mortali ex se nata".

At a time when Köpfel's thought was least identifiable with the orthodoxy of the new churches—it was precisely the Commentary on Hosea which was a cause of consternation to Bucer and Zwingli—he insisted on the theme of learned and pious ignorance:

> We are all zealous for God—I am in fact talking of those called to be Evangelists—but we do not all have the knowledge, because the capacity of each sets limits, and no one can bear what goes beyond the mediocrity of his intellectual power. Rather, he suspects things, however devoutly said, which depart from his dogma; but even more that doctrine which is the same as his, and merely expressed with different arguments or in another form, is intolerable to him. By these secret ways the new tyranny creeps along under the ecclesiastical one, while the old one still lives. So we trifle with the study which should be for the glory of God, but is, I must admit, corrupted by our excessive arrogance. Each of us believes himself better than the other, and to be gifted with a more certain inspiration.[32]

The tolerant tone and the rejection of both popular and theological violence which reverberate in the epistle which Köpfel wrote to Agrippa before going over to the Reformation party, are still present in the authoritative but not conformist quadrumvir of Strasbourg. The invitation to tolerance certainly refers to a burning question, one connected with the presence of Anabaptist groups in Strasbourg and Switzerland.

Zwingli's *Elenchus*, which had been published a short time before, is cited by Köpfel elsewhere in the *Commentarius*. There Köpfel criticizes the "lapsus" made by "our Anabaptists, for the most part good people",

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Etenim non potuisti non sentire [quantum] varient istiusmodi cogitationes. Neque enim ad unum atque alterum temporis punctum professoris animum eiusmodi satis tranquillant, quin occultis undis vagae ratiocinationis inter se perpetuo distrahuntur, quamlibet statum animi de se foris supercilio praebeant".

[32] Capito, *In Hoseam*, fols. 7v–8r: "Zelum Dei omnes quidem habemus, nam de vocatis, ut Evangelistis loquor, sed scientiam non item, quando suum quisque captum amplitudinem spiritus moderatur, neque quicquam patitur quod intelligentiae suae mediocritatem superat. Quin suspectum habet quamlibet pio dictum, quod a suis dogmatibus recedit, vel verius quae cum sua doctrina eadem est, si diversa tantum ratione et alio ductu tractatur, intolerabilis est. His cuniculis nova subrepit ecclesiastiac tyrannidis, vetere adhuc supersite. Studio gloriae Dei sic ineptimus, fateor, sed quod sit infectum nimia nostri fiducia. Quisque se alio meliorem ac spiritu praeditum certiore putat".

because of their prohibition of oaths, "quod sub specie pietatis fundamentum pietatis politicamque vitam funditus evertit". Köpfel, who was highly conscious of the organizational problems of a national or civic church, politely disagrees with the Anabaptists on this single point.[33] The principle on which he bases his dissent is significant; it is a more Spiritualist principle than the "sacramental" theses which forbade the taking of oaths: "the whole problem on which they dispute concerns only words, i.e. wordly matter".[34]

Since Zwingli had allowed the execution of Mantz, Grebel and other Anabaptists, Köpfel's tolerance is in itself highly significant, and is confirmed by the protection he offered to the radicals who sought refuge in Strasbourg. The most important aspect of his position nevertheless seems to me to be its Spiritualist tone, which at that time brought him nearer to the positions of Hans Denck, Sebastian Franck and the prophets of Zurich. In the dedication of the *Commentarius* he had expressed himself very clearly, in a way that a man like Agrippa would certainly understand:

> And so caution and anxiety about piety turns for us into vice, because, on account of the perfidy of the wicked, we suspect the zeal of our good brethren. We have to take care of the public peace, but in such a way that we do not prohibit the prophets, that we do not extinguish the spirit, nor censure the gifts of God employed for the common good.[35]

Like Otto Brunfels, François Lambert insists on the theology of the Cross ("subnascentem Ecclesiam talis decet nutricatio [...] crucem durissimam fomentum esse christianis teneriusculis mollissimum"), and sees it as the doctrine most appropriate to the times. His polemic claims also to be addressed to the Catholic authorities ("nova episcoporum

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[33] Capito, *In Hoseam*, fol. 95r ff.: "deplorandi sunt Anabaptistae nostri, homines ut ergo ego sentio plerique minime mali, quod negent obstinatissime Christiano homini iurare"; "quamquam electos Dei ac timore domini plerosque praeditos esse et quosdam gloriae quoque Dei constantissimos professores esse agnoscam, adeoque ut fratres charissimos amplectar".";.

[34] Capito, *In Hoseam*, fol. 90r. "Quare tota disputatio, quantum video de verbis linguae, hoc est de elementis mundi [...] tantum est [...] Adde his quod Bucerus annotavit in Matthaeum [...] [et] constantissimus frater noster Hulderichus Zwinglius *Elencho* suo [...], quamquam [Anabaptistas] electos Dei ac timore domini plerosque praeditos esse et quosdam gloriae quoque Dei constantissimos professores esse agnoscam, adeoque ut fratres charissimos amplectar".

[35] Capito, *In Hoseam*, fol. 8v: "Itaque cautio et studium circa pietatem vitio nobis vertitur, propterea quod ob malorum perfidiam fratrum bonorum sedulitatem suspectam habemus. Providendum est publicae tranquillitati, sed sic ne prohibeamus prophetas, ne spiritus extinguamus, ne dona Dei in utilitatem communem collata vituperemus".

decreta"). His real target is without doubt the internal situation in the reformed churches, at a time when they were passing through a dangerous process of constant splitting up, a danger particularly acute in Strasbourg, the refuge of all extremists. Lambert and Köpfel are on many points in agreement with Agrippa's ideas: in the first place there is the thesis of the spiritual interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, or rather the opposition of Spirit to Letter, *cortex-medulla*, and the reduction of the sacred text to a testimony which only the inspiration given to each of the faithful makes it possible to render meaningful. It is unnecessary to recall the later developments of this thesis, which originated with Erasmus, but was taken far beyond his premises. In fact, whereas Erasmus seized the opportunity of obtaining his degree in theology (at a second-rate Italian university), in 1523 Karlstadt abolished academic grades and insignia, putting forward his *Laienchristentum*, and in 1532 Johannes Campanus was to call for the *Sitzenrecht* in Strasbourg. Agrippa did not go so far, but he mentions him with approval as the author of the *Contra totum post apostolos mundum*:[36] he may have met or heard him spoken of in Cologne.

It is certain, however, that from the devaluation of authority and of reason without divine inspiration Agrippa drew a critique of the sciences and of institutions which was much better constructed and more learned, albeit no less firm, than that of François Lambert. Indeed his Spiritualism seems to lean towards natural religion when he advises his readers to believe not that the Word of God

> belongs only to the theologians, but to all men, whether man or woman, whether old, young or child, native, or stranger, or proselyte, and all are obliged to know it according to the capacity which has by grace been conferred on each of them; and from this we must not stray even a hair's breadth.[37]

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[36] Agrippa, *Opera*, II, p. 778 (*Epistolae*, II, 60: "Coloniae anno 1520"): "Quin ignorat hos [colonienses] esse illos magistros qui Ioannem Campanum, insigni doctrina et virtute virum, scholis secluserunt"; Id. *Epistolae*, VII, 26; *Opera*, II, p. 1040, where we find named as "Aesticampanum" (Johannes Rack von Sommerfeld) the humanist with whom Böcking, ed., *Hutteni Operum Supplementum cit.*, II, 2, p. 294, and C. Krafft, *Briefe and Dokumente aus der Zeit der Reformation*, Elberfeld 1876, p. 141, identify this with Campanus. On the other hand, J. G. Schellhorn, *Amoenitates litterariae*, xi, Amsterdam 1729, pp. 1ff.; W. Rembert, *Die Wiedertäufer im Herzogtum Jülich*, Berlin 1899, pp. 161–5; and C. MacCormick, 'The Antitrinitarianism of John Campanus', *Church History* xxxii (1963), pp. 278ff., quote a contemporary, George Witzel, "An non praedicabatur Coloniensium sophistarum victor?", and hold that Agrippa is speaking of Johannes Campanus as a young man.

[37] Agrippa, *Opera*, II, p. 303 (*De vanitate*, ch. 100). see Cologne edition, 1531: "[non]

In another passage in the chapter 'De verbo Dei', a passage which was likewise immediately condemned by the theologians and soon cut out of the *De vanitate*, Agrippa once again stated that

> nothing in sacred letters is so arduous, so profound, so difficult, so arcane, so holy that it does not concern all Christians: nor has anything been entrusted to these pedantic *magistri nostri* that they ought or are able to hide from the Christian people. On the contrary the whole of theology must be common to all the faithful, to each individual according to his capacity and according to the measure of the gift of the Holy Spirit: to one in the form of milk, to another in the form of solid food.[38]

One could list other examples of criticism in the *De vanitate*, from the references to the *Gravamina* to that to Girolamo Savonarola (now considered a prophet whereas a few years previously Agrippa had singled him out as a disgrace to his order). One could refer to the homage paid to Luther here and in a letter to Melanchthon. Luther was the "invincible heretic, who serves the Church according to the sect which is called heresy". (This formula should be compared with the various interpretations of the Gospel's *oportet haereses esse*).[39] Again, there is the insistence in the *Apologia* on the idea of *restitutio*, so redolent of Anabaptist thought.

Finally, the reference to Plutarch in the famous chapter "De scientiarum magistris", seems to me very suggestive as a key to the intellectual history of Agrippa. In this reference Agrippa takes up again and reaches a deeper understanding of the thesis that, at the coming of Christ, the oracles, the sciences and even the most powerful magical arts all disappeared.[40]

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ad solos ipsos theologos pertinere, sed ad omnem hominem, [sive vir, sive mulier, sive senex, sive iuvenis, sive puer, sive indigena, sive advena, sive proselytus], omnes ad eius cognitionem pro data sibi capacitatis gratia obligari et ab illo ne ad festucam discendendum".

[38] Agrippa, *De Vanitate*, ch. 100; not to be found in *Opera*, II, p. 304. See Cologne edition, 1531: "nihil esse in sacris literis tam arduum, tam profundum, tam difficile, tam absconditurn, tam sanctum quod ad omnes Christi fideles non pertineat: [quodve sic concreditum sit istis sesquipedalibus magistris nostris, ut ad Christianum populum debeant possintve celare]: quin tota ipsa theologia omnibus fidelibus communis esse debet, unicuique autem secundum capacitatem et mensuram donationis spiritus sancti [...] alteri quidem in lacte, alteri autem in solido cibo".

[39] Agrippa, *Epistolae*, VII, 13; *Opera*, II, p. 1013. Cf. H. Grundmann, "Oportet haereses esse", *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* XLV (1963), pp. 129–64; F. Stegmüller, 'Oportet haereses esse (I Cor. XI, 19) in der Auslegung der Reformationszeit', *Reformata reformanda. Festgabe für H. Jedin*, I (Münster 1965), pp. 330–64.

[40] Agrippa, *De vanitate*, ch. 101 *Opera*, II, p. 305: "Scimus enim ex Ecclesiasticis

I do not want to dwell on the *De vanitate* and the defences of that work. Nor do I want to deal with the pamphlets which led up to it during Agrippa's French period—the *De sacramento matrimonii* and even more clearly the explanatory letter to Michel d'Arande, which takes up once more the Pauline "Melius nubere quam uri"; the *Liber de triplici ratione cognoscendi Deum*, the *Dehortio gentilis theologiae*, and also the *Vetus prognosticon in Archiviis agrippinarum inventum*, where Agrippa precedes Brunfels in using popular astrological forms for sarcastic and unrelenting propaganda in the political and religious field.[41] I would like instead to move towards my conclusion with a consideration of the *De occulta philosophia*, and especially the third book, which was printed in 1533 against the will of the inquisitors of Cologne. Frances Yates has already observed that when, in Book III, Chapter 64, Agrippa mentions the statues which are animated by the gods by an act of magic (as the *Asclepius* had it), "the examples given are mostly ancient, but the reference to marvel-working magic in Church is obvious".[42] The attack on fraudulent miracles was already there in Erasmus's *Colloquia*, but here it occurs in a much more extreme context.

In 1510, the third book of the *De occulta philosophia* dealt with that part of magic "which teaches us knowledge of the laws of religions". With a great wealth of quotations from Hermetic, Orphic and Virgilian texts, it emphasized the role of religion in the framework of natural magic. Agrippa presented religion—above all because of its effect on the imagination—as one natural force among others, though the most elevated of those forces. In 1533 he felt the need to give many more initiatory recommendations, and these take on a tone different from the usual formulas of the *Kirannides* or the *Corpus hermeticum*. In 1510 he was quoting from Tertullian: "in all religions one must commit oneself to silence: those who do not respect this rule are on the brink of danger"; and he went on to invoke Apuleius. In 1526, during the

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historiis, etiam experientia ipsa edocti, quomodo invalescente fide Christi, ceciderint scientiae, ita quod maxima et potior earum pars penitus perierit: nam magicae illae potentissimae artes sic abierunt, ut ne vestigia supersint". See P. Pomponazzi, *De incantationibus* (Basle 1567, repr. Hildesheim, Olms, 1970), pp. 218–19, 278ff.

[41] Agrippa *Opera*, II, pp. 358ff., 787–89 (= *Epistolae*, IV, 7) 454ff., 484ff.; see my papers 'Cornelio Agrippa', *Archivio di filosofia* [*Testi umanistici sull'ermetismo*] 1955, pp. 147–62; and *Umanesimo magico-astrologico e raggruppamenti segreti nei platonici della Preriforma*, in *Umanesimo e Esoterismo. Atti del V Convegno internazionale di studi umanistici* (Padova, 1960), pp. 141–174, in particular pp. 168–70.

[42] F. A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 140.

religious repression sparked off by the Sorbonagres after the disaster of Pavia, Agrippa had given a very real and contemporary significance to these very ancient formulas. In a letter to a French courtier closely connected with Lefèvre and with Guillaume Cop, he wondered whether it was possible "transferre aliquid de Christianismo ad Christianissimum regem". That means, I believe, that he was wondering if he, a German, should translate Lutheran *Flugschriften* for the king, as it seems he had been asked to do; or whether it would be better "to offer his own meditations (*propria meditata proferre*)".

He had noted that

> it is right to fight with one's own weapons, and perhaps safer to hide behind someone else's shield; but the safest thing of all is to keep silent. Today, in fact, as you can see, Christian truth is most safely served by rapture and silence, so as not to be seized by [...] the inquisitors [...] who, threatening to send us to the stake, would force us to recant.[43]

Strengthened by this strategy and by his increasingly risky existence, Agrippa re-stated in the *De occulta philosophia* his initiatory advice. At the end of yet another list of *prisci philosophi*, who had secretly handed down from one to the other the essential truths of religion ("For this reason the Ancients took great care to hide the sacraments of God and nature, and to conceal the various sacraments"), after the disciples of Ammonius (Plotinus is put on the same level as Origen), Agrippa puts Jesus Christ:

> While on earth He spoke in such a manner that only the most intimate (*secretiores*) of his disciples could understand the mystery of the Word of God, and all the others understood only the parables: and he also warned not to give what is holy to the dogs, and not to cast pearls before swine.[44]

When looked at closely these words recall the question Brunfels put to the faithful of Strasbourg on the parables of Christ and on the ini-

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[43] Agrippa, *Epistolae*, IV, 44; *Opera*, II, p. 863: "honestum est propriis armis decertare, ac tutius forte sub alieno clipeo delitescere; tutissimum autem tacere. Nam hodie, ut vides, Christiana veritas nullo securiori modo colitur quam stupore et silentio, ne forte corripiamur a [...] inquisitoribus [...] qui nos fasciculorum metu cogant ad palinodias".

[44] *De occulta philosophia*, 1533, p. ccxiii: "Dum adhuc in terris ageret ea lege et ratione loquutus est, ut tantummodo secretiores discipuli intelligerent mysterium verbi Dei, caeteri autem solas parabolas sentirent: praecipiens insuper non dandum sanctum canibus, nec margaritas exponendas porcis".

tiation of the Apostles and disciples, and remind us also of Lefèvre's commentary on the Pauline Epistles.

In Agrippa the reference to magic does not confuse, but rather renders more complete the Nicodemite attitude:

> Just as the gods detest what is public and profane, and love what is secret, so all magic experiments avoid the public and need to be kept secret.[45]

This Nicodemite prudence was essential and necessary among Catholics, but it would also have been essential and necessary among Lutherans for a man who touched on the commemorative character of the Eucharist (though he did not have any particular interest in sacramental questions, which is consistent both in a humanist and in a Spiritualist context). But above all it would have been necessary for one who declared that the true temple is the soul absorbed in meditation. This thesis, which in the *De occulta philosophia* (III, 59) is based on Plotinus, was during the same period put forward by the Spiritualists in the formula of the "invisible Church". Agrippa had already put forward this argument in the *De vanitate* in 1530, and it is not by chance that it was condemned in that very year by the Sorbonne, or that Agrippa and his ideal and literary follower, Sebastian Franck, were also reproved on account of it by shrewd Calvinists like Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde and Gisbert Voet, and also that Gottfried Arnold included Agrippa in his *Ketzer-Historie*.[46]

Agrippa did not take refuge in Strasbourg, which in any case turned out not to be a definitive solution, as exemplified in the case of Martin Borrhaus (Cellarius), Sebastian Franck and Michael Servetus. Because of his more extremist temperament, but also because he had been

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[45] *Ibid.*: "quemadmodum ipsa numina detestantur publica et prophana, amant secreta, sic experimentum omne magicum fugit publicum, quaerit occultari".

[46] C. Duplessis d'Argentré, *Collectio iudiciorum de novis erroribus*, II (Paris 1728), p. 88; Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde, *Godsdienstige en Kerkelijke Geschriften* [...], door J. J. Van Toorenenbergen, II (The Hague 1878), pp. 15–16; see P. Fredericq, *Marnix en zijne Geschriften* (Ghent 1881), pp. 98ff. on 'De ondersoeckinge ende grondelijcke Wederlegginge der Geestdrijvische Leere (1595)'; G. Voet, 'De magia: appendix prima ad disputationem [...] 1636, [...] ad diem 16 Maij 1657', *Selectae disputationes theologicae*, III (Utrecht 1659), pp. 613ff., 617: "ne quid dicam de periculosis et religioni christianae repugnantibus, quae in libro *De vanitate scientiarum* occurrunt, quorum aliqua notata sunt a domino Sancto Aldegondio"; G. Arnold, *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, II (Frankfurt am Main 1699), pp. 321–3, "Von Theophrasto Paracelso and denen übrigen so gennanten Enthusiasten: Weiln er unter allen partheyen verdammet worden, mag seiner hier vielleicht auch nicht ohne ursach meldung geschehen".

educated not as theologian but as a humanist, he perhaps hesitated, like Erasmus, in face of a choice which was still of a confessional nature. I believe that he chose a Nicodemite position. We must remember that Köpfel himself adopted this position and both promoted it in practice and contributed to its theoretical justification.[47]

Agrippa had turned first to the French court, where he attempted to become part of Margaret de Navarre's entourage. He had been dismissed, having fallen into disgrace with Louise of Savoy, not because of theological differences, but because, having been appointed astrologer, he had disappointed her by his reluctance to practise his art as a form of propaganda. He had moved on to the court of Brussels, but there encountered grave difficulties with the two zealots, Margaret of Austria and Charles V. Arrested for debt and thrown out of Court, he spent some time in prison and was denounced to the emperor by the theologians of Louvain, but then made a safer choice. No sooner had Mary of Hungary succeeded her aunt as governor of the Low Countries than he turned to this princess, well known for a court sympathetic to the Reformation and to humanism. I do not intend to analyse here these details of Agrippa's biography, especially because I have not yet been able to verify the accuracy of the testimonies, late but repeated, concerning the banishment to which Charles V is supposed to have commuted a death sentence passed on him for heresy. (This could have been either for religious motives or for magic.) But if documentary evidence could be found which would confirm that this was the reason for his flight to France, it would certainly enable us to close decisively the circle of conjecture so far presented. For the moment we cannot be sure of the claims made by Martin Del Rio and the Sieur Clavigny de Sainte

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[47] Long before the famous letter of 1540 (see C. Ginzburg, *Il Nicodemismo*, pp. 139ff., 207–13), Köpfel himself took a Nicodemite attitude; see P. Kalkoff, *Wolfgang Capito im Dienste Erzbischof Albrechts von Mainz (1519–1523)* (Berlin 1907), pp. 2ff. "Nur ein so hervorragendes diplomatisches Talent wie Capito konnte in dieser exponierten Stellung jahrelang eine auf Schonung und Förderung der in ihren Anfängen noch leicht zu unterdrückenden evangelischen Bewegung bedachte Politik durchführen. Er hat diese seine Politik in den Briefen an Luther vom 4. September 1518 and 20/21 Dezember 1521 entwickelt. […] Nach dem Grundsatze: *obliquo ductu magnae res secure conficiuntur*, hat er selbst gehandelt". See also E. Böcking, ed., *Hutteni Operum Supplementum*, II, 2, pp. 804–5, Köpfel's letter to Luther, from Mainz, 16 March 1521: "Nescis, mi Luthere, quantum profeceris rebus humanis, modo a pontificibus et mendicis queas subsistere, […] Deinceps vere vereor qui [quomodo] possim latere […] In arenam igitur producor, quamlibet invitus". Ginzburg does not use this letter or Kalkoff's book.

Honorine,[48] which are not only late, but are also accompanied by too many legendary stories. One of these tells of the apprentice magician who was killed by a devil incautiously called up with the aid of Agrippa's *grimoire*. He is then supposed to have been reanimated and taken off by this same devil on the orders of the *maître-sorcier*, who wished to create an alibi for himself by bringing about the death of his assistant in the presence of passers-by who could act as reliable witnesses.

There is also a Catholic inquisitor who has left an earlier testimony. Sisto of Siena preserves in his *Bibliotheca sancta* (1566) the only known fragments of Agrippa's late work *Adversus inquisitores lamiarum*, which I have elsewhere reconstructed on this basis.[49] He also left a curious series of testimonies which present Agrippa as a Lutheran or Anabaptist heretic (the inquisitor does not go in for subtlety in classifying his victims).

These testimonies make it possible to link Agrippa and his works, when read in this light, with a thesis already maintained not only by the Anabaptists, but also by Luther and by Margaret of Navarre. The converted Jew and lapsed heretic Sisto proves himself an attentive reader of the *De vanitate scientiarum*, of the *De occulta philosophia*, and, as we have seen, also of some texts by Agrippa which have been lost to us. According to him, on the basis of certain patristic passages,

> Cornelius Agrippa, follower of the Anabaptists, in the third book of his *De occulta philosophia*, tries to maintain that the pious souls of the dead will be deprived of the vision of the Divinity until the day of the Last Judgement.[50]

This surprising declaration by a well-informed inquisitor particularly interested in the doctrine of the "sleep of souls", which was circulating

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[48] Martinus Del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum libri vi*, Venice 1640, p. 498: "Carolus V imperator Agrippa poenam mortis non indulsit, sed cum is effugisset, exilium irrogavit et in Francia ille obiit"; p. 115: "Carolus V potissimus et religiosissimus imperator iure optimo Cornelium Agrippam et duos alios nobiles aula et regnis exulare iussit, eo quod illi thesaurorum per artem magicam spem obtulissent"; cf. J. de Clavigny de Sainte Honorine, *Le descernement et l'usage que le prince doit faire des livres suspects* (Paris, 1672), pp. 106–7: Agrippa's death "n'eust pas été moins funeste que celle de Lucilius Vaninius, si le cardinal Campege et Antoine de Leve, ses protecteurs, n'eussent détourné Charles-Quint de le faire punir".

[49] See my paper 'Cornelio Agrippa, Sisto da Siena e gli inquisitori', *Memorie domenicane*, n.s., III, 1972 [*Motivi di riforma tra '400 e '500*], pp. 146–64.

[50] Sixtus Senensis, *Bibliotheca sancta* (Venice 1566), p. 859: "Cornelius Agrippa, Anabaptistarum assecla, libro *De occulta philosophia* tertio astruere conatur pias defunctorum animas usque ad diem iudicii divinitatis visionem carere".

in a popular form among the Venetian Anabaptists under his care, refers to a passage in John Chrysostom. However, if one compares this *Annotatio* (VI, 264) with others on the same theme (V, 64; V, 169), and especially with VI, 345, in which Sisto outlines a brief historical account of this kind of "Armenian or Anabaptist error", one realizes that of the patristic quotations discussed, it was this very chapter of Agrippa's which provided him with his basic and richest source. Normally Sisto of Siena avoids any open acknowledgement of his indirect source for his quotations from Tertullian, Irenaeus, Ambrose and Augustine, but he is forced to acknowledge that he had not managed to check the original texts for a passage attributed to Clement (he equivocates between Clement of Rome and Clement of Alexandria). He derived it "from the third book of *De occulta philosophia* by Cornelius Agrippa, the heretic, who especially on this point holds erroneous views".[51] Sisto had no doubts about Agrippa's wicked tendencies. In Chapter C of the *De vanitate* Agrippa had discussed an exegetical problem in the Gospel—whether Matthew (27) is in error when he contradicts John by saying that the centurion's lance struck Christ before he died. This chapter had already been condemned by the theologians of the Sorbonne, and in connexion with this Sisto again states:

> Agrippa, a lover and follower (*studiosissimum*) of the dogmas of the heretics, found the pretext for such a rash statement in the mad ravings of Pietro di Giovanni Olivi the Minorite.[52]

There is probably an element of exaggeration in linking Agrippa directly with Olivi as well as with the Fathers of the Church (when Agrippa daringly points out the discrepancies between the two Evangelists, his source is Chrysostom). On the other hand, Sisto's statement that Agrippa was very interested in "Anabaptist" doctrines, especially in the sleep of souls, is convincing, though he seems to me even more interested in camouflaging them, and above all in re-interpreting them from his own Spiritualist or relativist point of view. But it is worth considering the doctrine which, because of a linguistic error by now compounded, is usually called *psychopannychism*. It is well known that this term derives

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[51] *Op. cit.*, p. 906: "ex libro tertio *De occulta philosophia* Cornelii Agrippae, hominis haeretici et in hoc praesetim articulo perperam sentientis".

[52] Duplessis d'Argentré, *Collectio*, pp. 89–90; Sixtus Senensis, *Bibliotheca*, p. 762: "Agrippam, haereticorum dogmatum studiosissimum, accepisse ansam huiusce temerariae assertionis [...] ex deliramentis Petris Ioannis Minoritae".

from *Psychopannychia*,[53] the hellenised and rather precious title John Calvin gave to the first of his polemical tracts, with the object of reaffirming that "the soul is always awake". Certainly we find a new reference to the problem of combating "veternosos hypnosophistas" in a letter of 1538, in which Calvin was at last able to say that Bucer, who had previously dissuaded him from publishing, was now exhorting him to print his work.

The initial advice given by Bucer corresponds to a letter written by Köpfel in 1534 (or 1535) and known to Baum, Herminjard and Doumergue: there once again Köpfel expresses his ironic and tolerant attitude. He praises Calvin's work of which, he says, the "gustus perplacet" in Strasbourg. Köpfel's advice and that of other theologians of the city in whose name he writes is to postpone the printing of it "in tempus commodius":

> Already throughout the sects everything is in great turmoil and the Germans, to the great harm of religion, have become experienced in winning fame by fighting errors [...] that argument, which is treated by both sides without the analogy of faith, will bring forth debates and conflicts [...]. Time too will teach a deeper understanding of all the Scriptures. The most miserable condition of the French churches demands rather that you turn away from all quarrels, for with these you will upset even the best servants of Christ's citadel.[54]

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[53] Published in Strasbourg in 1542, the tract has two prefaces: one dated Orleans 1534. and the other Basle 1536. But contrary to the opinion initially expressed by the editors of the *Corpus Reformatorum* (an opinion later abandoned) it was given to the publishers only in 1542, and it therefore reflects the mature thought of the reformer: indeed both these prefaces were used in the final draft of the *Institutio religionis christianae* (III, 25, 6) which reproduced exact phrases from them. Calvin published both prefaces as evidence of the length of time he had laboured over the work and the extent of his interest in the question even during his Evangelical period, before leaving France. However, the text does not remain faithful to the draft of 1534. By 1536 Calvin was already saying of this draft—which he had in the meantime submitted to the scrutiny of Olivetanus and Köpfel—that he had almost completely rewritten those parts which were only notes ("in adversaria congestas"), not so much suppressing or adding arguments but rather giving them a totally different order. It is difficult to say whether Calvin worked on the text again between 1536 and 1542. [cf. C. van der Kooi, *As in a Mirror. John Calvin and Karl Barth on Knowing God*, Leiden, Brill, 2005, p. 66 and nn. 101–102]

[54] Herminjard, *Correspondance cit.*, III, pp. 243–44; "Iam sectis omnia perstrepunt et Germani, magna calamitate religionis, experti sunt errores oppugnando fieri illustriores [...] argumentum illud, quia extra analogiam fidei utrinque tractatur, fecundissimum erit rixarum [...] Tempus etiam docebit Scripturarum omnium penitiorem intelligentiam. Summa Gallicarum ecclesiarum afflicta condicio efflagitat, ut ab omnibus contentionibus avocetis potius; nam tali opere plurimos eosque optimos assectatores castrorum Christi conturbabis".

Here Köpfel is certainly thinking of Luther himself, who was initially not opposed to a psychopannychist interpretation of Scripture. Earlier he had alluded to Kaspar Schwenckfeld and Martin Borrhaus, who had shortly before abjured the errors of the Anabaptists. Köpfel refers to them as "auctores splendidi, quos deiecit Dominus a pertinacia istiusmodi erroris affirmandi", who might be either newly inflamed or on the other hand put off by Calvin's polemic. In fact the thesis of the sleep of the soul circulated widely among these sectarians, though today we are obliged to reconstruct this from confutations rather than from the texts themselves. One of the first of the confutations came from Zwingli, for Zurich was the main center from which the Anabaptists' ideas spread. Even there the doctrine had been imported by Gerard Westerburg, nicknamed "Dr. Fegfeuer" because of the title of the pamphlet he had published in the vernacular in 1523; in the same year his famous brother-in-law, Andreas Karlstadt, had declared his own position in *Sermon vom Stand der Christglaubigen Seelen, vom Abraham Schoss and Fegfeuer*. It is unnecessary to underline the fact that in these two pamphlets, printed in Wittenberg at a time when the theological debate was still fierce, the attack on the tradition of an "intermediate state" of the soul between death and the Last Judgement, was part of the general polemic against indulgences and "private masses". The doctrine of the "sleep" or suspension of consciousness of the soul separated from the body before the resurrection reunites it with the purified body, had much more ancient precedents.

In the Middle Ages "the idea that there existed a sort of provisional state which was imposed on certain guests of the supernatural abodes before they were admitted to the true Paradise [...] was a commonplace in eschatology, at least in popular eschatology", and the idea appeared frequently on occasions such as beatifications or in funeral sermons, in legends of saints or in romances, in Biblical exegesis or in works of art. Marc Bloch observed this in an important and pioneering essay on the history of popular mentality.[55]

Whilst not making any claims to reconstruct the whole complicated history of the question, we can indicate very schematically two periods in which the theses of the Fathers reacquired relevance. During the period of the Avignon popes, John XXII in 1331–1332 denied beatific

[55] 'La vie d'oûtre-tombe du Roi Salomon' [1925] reprinted in Bloch's, *Mélanges historiques*, II (Paris 1963), pp. 920ff.

vision to the souls of the just before the resurrection, and Benedict XII dedicated a constitution of 1336 to its reaffirmation. During the interval a polemic exploded, which together with the more famous one with Ludwig the Bavarian, left its mark on Ockham's *Dialogus*, a work which was still remembered in the sixteenth century, when it was re-edited by Beatus Rhenanus. Agrippa himself knew of it and it is not surprising that he cited the work and read it with pleasure. Although it seems extraneous to the line he preferred and tended to follow, it opens by giving a negative answer to the *quaestio*: "Utrum ad theologos vel canonistas spectet definire quae assertiones haereticae et quae catholicae sint habendae". The question came to the fore again during the Council of Florence. This Council wasted little time over the doctrine of Purgatory which, as was realized from the beginning of negotiations, raised difficulties, since the Byzantines sustained the theses of the Greek Fathers. Only at the end was the question brought up: with all the members of the Council absorbed in the discussion of the Trinity and the "filioque", in the final Decree the theologians accepted the formula offered by Pope Eugene IV, a formula based on the dogmatic determination of Benedict XII.

Paradoxically, something similar has taken place among historians of the radical Reformation. They have all been absorbed in reconstructing the anti-Trinitarian debates, and few have mentioned the diffusion of the thesis of the sleep of the soul, though Trechsel noticed it and Cantimori mentions it occasionally. Though G. H. Williams did not have at his disposal the necessary foundation of monographic studies, he alone has attempted to make this thesis one of the main threads of his pioneering reconstruction of the *Radical Reformation*. He has returned to the subject in connexion with Camillo Renato, who supported the doctrine in Emilian Reformation circles before 1540.[56] Like every other scholar working in this field, I am indebted to the American historian's research and his most useful synthesis.

To be honest I must confess that his general thesis on the Aristotelian, Averroistic and Paduan origins of the doctrine fails to convince me. According to Williams "psychopannychism has come to be the generic term for a complex of sectarian views about the death or sleep of the soul after the death of the body, pending the resurrection of all the dead

[56] G. H. Williams, 'Camillus Renatus, called also Lysias Philaenus and Paolo Ricci (ca. 1500–ca. 1575)', *H. A. Wolfson Jubilee*, vol. II (Jerusalem 1965), pp. 833–36, 863–64.

or of the elect alone. [...] All three groups [espousing psychopannychism in the Reformation era, i.e. the Spiritual Libertines, the Anabaptists and the Socinians] seem to have been directly or indirectly influenced by the speculation emanating from two schools of interpreters of Aristotle in the northern Italian universities of Padua, Bologna and Ferrara, the Averroists and the Alexandrines". In Williams's opinion "the great struggle between the spiritualizing Averroist Aristotelians and the naturalizing Alexandrine Aristotelians [...] was to dominate the philosophical debate in the northern Italian universities in the sixteenth century and constitute the background of psychopannychism as a *distinctively Italian stress* of the radical fringe of the Reformation movement".[57] I would find this more convincing if the Neoplatonist Leonico Tomeo rather than the Aristotelian Pomponazzi had been singled out for attention from among the Paduan professors.

From a general point of view one certainly sees an important and undeniable sign of the times in the delineation of two Aristotelian parties in Padua, from Ficino's denunciation of them and the philological contributions of Ermolao Barbaro and Girolamo Donà, right down to when, in 1516, Pomponazzi frankly interpreted Aristotle as affirming the mortality of the soul. (This interpretation was by and large tolerated by the ecclesiastical authorities—in fact it had been prepared or, so to speak, supported by personalities of the pre-Reformation like two cardinals, Thomas de Vio and Gasparo Contarini, two bishops, Niccolò and Luigi Lippomani.) One cannot see in these philosophical debates the basis of the psychopannychist theses of the Anabaptists and the Spiritual Libertines. Williams seems to be conditioned by the traditional identification of Aristotelianism with naturalism. Much shrewder in connexion with many aspects of ancient, medieval and Renaissance "naturalism" are the observations of one of my teachers, the late Delio Cantimori. He found "the tendency to a sort of materialism of a bio-physiological or naturalistic type [...] constant or at least pre-eminent, for it always returns to make itself felt in Anabaptist thought".[58] He cited as an example the fact that the Christological question was seen in terms of the doctrine of procreation according to various contemporary physicians, and this reminds one exactly of the tone and the content

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[57] G. H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia 1962), pp. 106–7; on Westerburg, see pp. 47, 73–75, 100, 103–5.

[58] D. Cantimori, s.v. 'Gli anabattisti', in *Grande Antologia filosofica*, VIII (Milan 1964), pp. 1411–1413.

of certain pages in Athenagoras or Tertullian. But to return to their immediate precedents, the Platonic, or rather Neoplatonic revival of the fifteenth century was anything but alien to naturalistic tendencies. One thinks of the crucial philosophical role played by the Ficinian idea of "spiritus" in theology, magic and medicine. In the last two disciplines, D. P. Walker[59] has illustrated its relevance for the theses of the harmony of all things and of the "astral body", so important in physicians like Fernel, and also, according to Walter Pagel, Paracelsus.[60] Although I do not know of precise formulations of the "sleep of souls" in Ficino or Pico, I believe that some references in the *Theologia platonica*, from the Avicennian myth of the suspended man, to the discussion in Book xviii, *De medio animorum statu*,[61] lent themselves to developments of this kind. Ficino confirms that the intimate union between *anima* and *spiritus*, "its vehicle", does not come to an end with the dissolution of the *synolon* (man as an organism composed of matter and form), when he cites Avicenna

> who proves that the soul in heaven, separated from the body with which she was united, uses as her own a certain heavenly instrument received from the body of the heavens, and by means of that instrument exercises the function of imagination.[62]

These hypotheses were not offered in a theological-sacramental context; Ficino intended them to answer the difficulties raised by the Aristotelians concerning the immortality of the soul as to whether the soul was essentially tied to the imagination and therefore to the body *tanquam subiecto*, or at least *tanquam obiecto*. He admitted that

> it is against the law both of universal and of individual nature for the soul to remain in a state of separation from the body. The soul however remains everlasting after the death of the body. And since what is against nature cannot be everlasting, it follows that the soul will receive again her body at some time.[63]

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[59] W. Pagel, 'The Astral Body in Renaissance Medicine', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* XXI (1958), 119–33, 123: "the astral body appears in Renaissance writings as a religious conception".

[60] W. Pagel, *Das medizinische Weltbild bei Paracelsus* (Basle/New York 1962), p. 106.

[61] Ficino, *Theologia platonica*, edited by R. Marcel, III (Paris 1970), pp. 238ff. (Book XVIII, ch. 10).

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 221: "probans animam a contagione corporis separatam in caelo caelesti quodam instrumento uti quasi suo a corpore caeli accepto perque ipsum imaginationis officium exercere".

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 223: "efficitur ut contra ordinem tam universae quam propriae naturae

Ficino interprets the fate of the intemperate soul, which—according to the principle of eternal retribution, a principle he had emphatically re-affirmed—must be punished according to a sort of *contrappasso* "for excess of love for the elemental body"; he writes as follows:

> in the seventh book of the *Republic* [534c–d] Plato says that this soul sleeps deeply in this life, and dies before it is able to wake up; and that after death it sinks into even deeper sleep, and is disturbed by even more horrid nightmares: this state is properly called Tartarus.[64]

This is how Ficino understands the Orphic "*populus somniorum*". According to his conception the sleep, that is the suspension of consciousness which seems to occur only in extreme cases of the intemperate soul too strictly bound to matter, corresponds to a kind of punishment, and does not apply to the souls of the blessed. However, these suggestions, made in a text widely read in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, were to be easily followed up and modified in a more specifically theological and eschatological context. Ficino connects this no less suggestive interpretation of Pythagorean metempsychosis with the theme of the astral body which the soul forms for itself after death.

> If anyone wants to know what is the shape of that body, I would say that according to the Magi vapours are made into the various effigies of the different animals. Immediately after death, the soul takes on the form of that animal whose kind of life she has imitated in her habits [...] it is in this way perhaps that we should understand the transformation of men into beasts of which the Ancients speak.[65]

So Pico's dynamic conception of the microcosm as man's identification with various degrees of the scale of being, which he chooses freely, is applied in the context of necromancy. In fact Ficino quotes the celebrated passage from Hermes' *Asclepius*:

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sit animam seorsum a corpore permanere. Permanent autem post corporis interitum sempiternae. Cumque quod est contra naturam sempiternum esse non possit, consequens est animas quandoque sua corpora receptura"

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 232 (Bk. XVIII, ch. 10): "Hunc animum in septimo *de Republica* [534c–d] Plato inquit in hac vita profunde dormire et antequam expergiscatur decedere ac post mortem somno profundiore gravari insomniisque acrioribus perturbari, quod proprie Tartari nomine designatur".

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 233: "Si quaeratur qualis sit corporis illius figura, respondebimus secundum Magos varia simulacra diversorum animalium ex huiusmodi vaporibus fieri. Qualis enim quaelibet animalis vitam moribus imitata est, talem in primis sese facit [...] ita forte intelligenda est apud veteres hominum in bestias transformatio".

> in the same way, by magic, demons are in a sense chained to their statues by means of a certain disposition of the statues themselves, made to attract certain demons.[66]

Souls too are subjected to their body-effigies—"in this respect they are in a state of such servility that they grieve and are in great sorrow". In these few pages of the *Theologia platonica* one has the impression of being very far away both from the philosophical problematic of the Paduan Aristotelians, and from the eschatological debate of the psychopannychists. Indeed we find them combined in the writings of an attentive reader of Ficino, our Cornelius Agrippa.

Dedicating Chapter 52 of the *De vanitate* (1530) to doctrines of the soul, he opens by recalling "that demoniac Aristotle" ("daemoniacus ille Aristoteles") who "invented a new word, and called the soul *entelechia*, that is the perfection of a natural organic body, which has life in potency, and which gives the body the principle of intellection, sensation and movement".[67] He recalls Alexander's, Themistius's and Averroes's "empty definition of the soul given by this universally accepted philosopher". He also recalls the "ancient theologians" (Zoroaster, Hermes, Orpheus and Plato), who describe it more happily as "a divine substance, whole and individual, present in the body as a whole and in each of its parts", and who declare that it was created out of nothing. Of the Fathers of the Church he knows the traducianist and creationist theses. However, all these doctrines are listed only to lead up to an extremely critical conclusion.

> Therefore we do not find anything certain on the soul, either in the opinions of the theologians, or in those of the philosophers. In fact Epicurus and Aristotle think that the soul is mortal; Pythagoras would have it that the soul wanders about [i.e. that has to undergo cycles of reincarnations]. 'There are those' (as Petrarch says somewhere), 'who would restrict each man's soul to his body; those who make it pass into the bodies of animals; those who make it return to heaven; those who make it peregrinate around the world; those who claim the existence of the lower regions; those who deny its existence; those who believe that the souls were created one by one; those who think that all the souls were created simultaneously.'[68]

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[66] *Ibid.*, p. 233: "sicut arte magica per certam statuarum dispositionem daemonibus certis accomodatam daemones statuis quasi devinciuntur, quod Mercurius confitetur et Plotinus [*Asclepius*, ch. 37; in *Corpus hermeticum* edited by Nock and translated by Festugière, II (Paris 1945), p. 347; Plotinus, *Enn.*, III, v, 6]".

[67] Agrippa, *Opera*, II, p. 109.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 112: "Adeo nihil neque apud philosophos, neque apud theologos de anima

Agrippa, as a humanist, was familiar both with Petrarch, whose *De remediis utriusque fortunae* was then being translated into German by Georgius Spalatinus, one of his old friends, and with Pomponazzi, whose rather daring work *De incantationibus* he was tacitly making use of.[69] He had been able to read it, perhaps by the mediation of some of his friends: one of these might have been the poet Nicolò d'Arco, who invited both philosophers to his palace in Mantua; another was the bishop Tommaso Campeggi, a pupil of Peretto and copist of some of his most important *reportationes*. But Agrippa's knowledge and acceptance of the Pomponazzian mortalist exegesis of Aristotle does not seem to be at all related to his discussion of psychopannychism, which comes later in the same chapter of the *De vanitate*.

> There is quite a serious disputation amongst theologians as to whether (as the Platonists believe), the souls, having been freed from their bodies, remember or are aware of what they did while alive or whether they have no knowledge of these things, which is what the Thomists, together with their Aristotle, firmly maintain. They support this with the story of that Carthusian theologian from Paris who returned from the lower regions. He was asked what was left in him there of his science, and he answered he knew nothing but pain; and quoting the words of Solomon, "for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest" he seemed to conclude that the dead retained no knowledge at all. But this clearly contradicts not only what the Platonists maintain, but also the authority and truth of Scripture; since the Scriptures say: the wicked 'will see and know that God is'; indeed they will have to render account not only of their actions, but also of their vain words and thoughts.[70]

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certum. Nam Epicurus et Aristoteles mortalem putant, Pythagoras in gyrum ducit. 'Et sunt (ut quodam loco ait Petrarcha) qui eam contrahunt ad suum corpus; sunt qui eam spargunt in corporibus animantium; sunt qui coelo reddant; sunt qui circa terras exulare cogant; sunt qui inferos asserunt; sunt qui negent; sunt qui unamquamque per se, sunt qui omnes simul animas creatas putent' ".

[69] It was as yet not printed, but Agrippa obtained the unpublished manuscript, put into circulation by the author; cf. my paper 'Pietro Pomponazzi's "De immortalitate" and his clandestine "De incantationibus". Aristotelianism, eclecticism or libertinism?', *Bochumer Philsophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter*, 6, 2001, pp. 88–115; 'Di un'opera clandestina del Pomponazzi e del suo eclettismo', in *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, LXXXIII (LXXXV) 2004, pp. 275–300.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 113: "Quippe etiam gravis inter theologos disputatio est, an (quae Platonicorum opinio est) in animabus exutis, eorum quae in vita gesserint relinquerintque, memoria sensusque supersint, aut istorum cognitione omnino careant; quod Thomistae cum suo Aristotele firmiter tenent, et Carthusiensis exemplo confirmant de parisiensi illo theologo ab inferis reverso, qui interrogatus: quid illi restaret de scientia sua? respondit nihil se scire nisi poenam: et citato Salomonis verbo 'Non est ratio, non scientia, non opes apud inferos', conclusisse illis videbatur nullam mortuis superesse cognitionem:

In 1530, then, Agrippa had the psychopannychists' thesis in mind and strongly resisted accepting it precisely because it was tied to the principle of the eternal retribution of free human action. He had in mind the Platonists' arguments, which he considered consistent with the immortality and awareness attributed to the souls of the dead by Scripture. That does not mean, however, that he favoured the penitential system, which he frequently criticizes in the *De vanitate*, together with other aspects of the Roman religion. In his consideration of the re-appearances of the dead he seems concerned about the abuses to which they can give rise.

> But there are many who dare to write of and recount many things about the appearances of separated souls, and what they say is quite often alien to the doctrine of the Gospel and to the Sacred Canon.[71]

He knows "many little books full of stories" ("multi fabulosi libelli") about these apparitions, but they contain "no vestige of solid truth or arcane wisdom, which are the foundations of true charity and the salvation of our souls". They are only propaganda for "alms, pilgrimages, prayers, fasting, and all the other works of popular piety, all practices which are taught in a much better and healthier way by sacred letters".

> Of course I do not in the least deny the pious appearances of the dead, their warnings and revelations; but I would warn that they are quite suspect. Satan, in fact, very often disguises himself as an angel of light, or as an effigy of a soul.[72]

The *De vanitate* attributed to the Stoics a position of compromise between Democritus's and Epicurus's belief in the mortality of the soul on the one hand, and Pythagoras's and Plato's belief in immortality on the other. The way Agrippa expresses it makes it possible to see a strong parallel with psychopannychist arguments. They believe

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quod tamen manifeste est, non tam contra platonicorum assertionem, quam contra Scripturae authoritatem, veritatemque, cum dicat Scriptura 'Visuros et scituros impios, quia ipse Deus est': quin et omnium, non modo factorum, sed et verborum ociosorum et cogitatuum rationem reddituros".

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 113: "Sunt etiam qui de animarum separatarum apparitionibus plura scribere et referre audent, eaque non raro ab Evangelica doctrina et Sacro Canone aliena".

[72] *Ibid.*, pp. 113–14: "Neque tamen propterea pias defunctorum apparitiones, admonitiones et revelationes omnino inficior sed valde suspectas esse admoneo, Sathana sese saepissime in lucis angelum et animarum effigiem transfigurante".

> that the soul will leave the body: so that the soul which in this life has not been elevated by any virtue will die with the body; but if the soul has been shaped by heroic virtues, they believe that she will join the eternal natures, and rise to the higher regions.[73]

Agrippa knew of one of the scriptural themes most often invoked since the time of Wyclif in discussions on the sleep of the soul, the parable of the rich man and the pauper Lazarus ("according to the doctrine of the rich man buried in hell, who thought that if someone came from the dead to testify to his brothers still on earth, they would be persuaded to change their lives").[74] However, he did not develop these arguments in a psychopannychist direction, but seized the opportunity to identify them with popular belief in ghosts, the possibility of whose existence he did not doubt. But he deplored the growing credulity in the appearance of spectres, which the Apostles had warned against:

> For these credulous people the Gospel is so old-fashioned that they believe more readily and more deeply in someone reporting from the dead than in the prophets, Moses, the Apostles and the Evangelists.[75]

The treatment of this subject in the *De vanitate* concludes by referring the reader to what the author has already written "about these apparitions" in his dialogue *De homine* and in *De occulta philosophia*. Of this dialogue there survives only a fragment from the beginning of the work, and it does not deal with this subject.[76] In his encyclopedia of magic, on the other hand, there are two long chapters (I, 58 and III, 41) which correspond exactly to this reference. These sections were added after the 1510 version, in which there is only the totally undeveloped germ of one of the sections—quite insufficient to explain the reference to a full treatment of the theme.

In the first book, which is dedicated to natural magic, Chapter LVIII deals with "De mortuorum reviviscentia, de longaeva dormitione atque

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[73] *Ibid.*, p. 111: "animam corpus relicturam sic, ut quae in vita hac nullis sublimata virtutibus infirmior sit una cum illo emori; sin autem heroicis formatam virtutibus permanentibus illam naturis sociare et ad sublimiores sedes evadere putent".

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 113: "Adeo penes istos antiquatum est Evangelium, ut citius magisque credant uni ex mortuis renuncianti quam prophetis, quam Moysi, quam apostolis, quam evangelistis".

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 114; ed. in *Scritti inediti e dispersi di E. C. Agrippa*, *Rinascimento*, 2nd ser., V (1965), pp. 294–304.

inedia". Agrippa gives a list of the ways in which "we understand that the magicians and the physicians resuscitate the dead" taken from Pliny, Apuleius and the Zohar; in fact he gives an account of apparent deaths, hysterical phenomena and over-hasty burials. Amongst the traditional materials we find, however, a source which is quoted twice and is also recorded in his correspondence as one of the prohibited books used in secret with a few disciples about 1520: Marcus Damascenus' *De variis et prodigiosis animorum naturis*.[77] This was a manual of necromancy, German in origin, which seems to be lost to us. The date 1520 and the reference made in 1530 in the *De vanitate* mark the outer limits of the period to which the pages added to the *De occulta philosophia* can be attributed. The problem of dating is interesting in connexion with chapter 41 of the third book, which deals with ceremonies and is entitled: 'Quid de homine post mortem: opiniones variae'. This chapter already existed in embryonic form in 1510, so that it is possible to make a comparison between the two. Such a comparison on the one hand confirms the literary and classicistic character of the first version, with its poetic quotations from Virgil and Lucretius, and on the other hand indicates that the only conceptually significant passage draws on one of the sources Agrippa had already been using most frequently in 1510, Marsilio Ficino (in this case the *Theologia platonica*, XXVI, 5):

> Since in fact in the soul separated from the body the feelings, memories and sensations remain, the Platonists say that the souls, especially of those who have been killed, give no peace to their enemies and that this happens, not so much because of human wrath, but rather because of divine nemesis, with the permission and by the agency of the daemon.[78]

In 1533 there no longer appears the reference to "Plato in the ninth book of the *Laws*", which the 1510 text had reproduced faithfully from Ficino. In compensation, the additions and original developments are very considerable. In dealing with this subject from the point of view of natural magic Agrippa had observed:

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[77] *De occulta philosophia*, 1533, p. lxxiiiff.; *Opera*, II, pp. 699, 704, 711–13, 717.

[78] *De occulta philosophia*, 1533, p. ccxcvi: "Nam cum in anima seiuncta a corpore perturbationes et memoriae sensunque remaneant, dicunt platonici animas precipue interfectorum hostes exagitare, non tam humana indignatione id efficiente, quam eciam divina nemesi ac daemone providente ac permittente"; cf. Ficino, *Theologia platonica*, xvi, 5; ed. Marcel, iii, pp. 123–24.

> Since therefore all human souls are everlasting, and all the spirits obey the perfect souls, the magi believe that perfect men, through the powers of their souls, restore and re-inspire other inferior souls, already in a way separate, into their dying bodies.[79]

Agrippa began his discussion of the same subject from a ceremonial point of view by underlining the inescapability of death ("it has been decreed that it is a fate common to all men once to die; death is the fate of all men"),[80] and then went on to the law of retaliation and divine vengeance. From here the passage to transmigration and reincarnation of souls was rapid. A long quotation from Plotinus's *De proprio cuiusque daemone*, in Ficino's translation, introduces an analysis of reincarnation in accordance with merit analogous to what we have seen in the *Theologia platonica* ("all those who have kept intact their human nature are born again as men; but those who used only their senses come back as brute animals").[81] He compares this with the sayings of Solomon and the rather different ones of the Kabbalah. The theme of "the mind always without sin" ("mens culpae semper insons"), which had already been drafted in 1510 but was amply developed in 1533, owes a great deal to Ficino. The mind is seen as distinct from the soul, which is capable of error, and which is therefore judged by the mind itself or, if it is worthy, it comes out of the body "with her aethereal vehicle" and enjoys the same pleasures as the mind. Rising "to the higher regions", it would seem to be admitted immediately to the state of blessedness:

> the blessed soul, with eternal happiness in all her senses and powers, is granted perfect knowledge of all things and also the vision of God and possession of the Kingdom of Heaven, and partakes of the power of God: she also bestows these favours and various gifts to those on earth, just as God does.[82]

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[79] *De occulta philosophia*, 1533, pp. lxxiv–lxxv: "Cum itaque animae hominum omnes perpetuae sint, perfectisque quoque animis omnes spiritus obediunt, putant magi perfectos homines per suae animae vires alias inferiores animas iam quodammodo separatas moribundis corporibus suis posse restituere rursusque inspirare".

[80] *Ibid.*, p. ccxciv: "omnibus hominibus communiter semel mori statutum est".

[81] *Ibid.*, p. ccxciv: "Quicumque proprietatem servaverunt humanam, homines iterum nascuntur; quicumque vero solo usi fuerunt sensu, bruta animalia redeunt", and so forth.

[82] *Ibid.*, p. ccxcvi: "omnibus sensibus et potentiis suis perpetua felicitate beata, perfecta omnium rerum cognitione, insuper et divina visione ac regni coelorum possessione fruitur, divinacque potestatis particeps, in inferiora haec beneficia varia dona largitur ceu immortalis Deus".

This passage is still close to the 1510 version, and perhaps represents a revision of that text a short time later. Agrippa's view is very traditional: he presents the blessed souls as having all the prerogatives attributed to the saints in the cult of the Church. He then adds that according to the Pythagoreans and Platonists, Virgil and Augustine, "the separated souls still keep intact their will and the memory of their deeds in this life", and invokes the Aristotelian notion of "intellectus adeptus" ("usus et exercitii characteres" impressed on the soul as a result of what it had done when united with the body). On that idea he bases an almost Thomistic view of immortality:

> even though the body and instrument decompose, nevertheless activity will not cease, and affections and similar dispositions will remain.[83]

If these are the *manes* of the classical world, the idea of *limbus* (the Elysian fields) is called upon to make possible the immortality and even the posthumous conversion of virtuous pagans: in limbo such pagans would enjoy "extraordinary pleasures and even sensory as well as both intellectual and revealed knowledge; they will even perhaps be taught faith and righteousness". Indeed many of them would be converted "after this life" thanks to their having listened to preaching "in illis animarum receptaculis", where they, so to speak, will be kept all together in custody until the time comes when the supreme judge will examine their merits.[84] Agrippa cites in support of these arguments Lactantius, Irenaeus, Clement of Rome, Tertullian, Augustine and Ambrose (the same writers are quoted later as authorities for the sleep of souls). We must take note of the fact that this doctrine also fascinated Calvin himself.

In any case, Agrippa here begins to move towards a kind of natural religion, which is hinted at in the opening chapters of the third book of *De occulta philosophia*, which were also added in 1533. In passages written in 1533, for which there are no equivalents in the earlier version, Agrippa contrasts the posthumous fate of the wicked with that of good men, taking the *Theologia platonica*, and especially Chapter 10

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[83] *Ibid.*, p. ccxcvi: "licet corrumpantur corpus et organum, non cessabit propterea operatio, sed remanebunt affectiones et consimiles dispositiones".

[84] *Ibid.*, p. ccxcvii: "Ubi fruantur miris quibusdam voluptatibus atque etiam cognitione, cum sensitiva tum intellectuali, et revelata gaudere, forte etiam erudiri in fide et in iustitia [...] probabile est hanc fidem [christianam] adhuc multis paganis et saracenis post hanc vitam praedicari in illis animarum receptaculis ad salutem, et in illis veluti in communi custodia detineri, donec tempus adveniat quo maximus iudex meritorum facturus sit examen".

of Book XVIII, as his source. In these pages of Ficino's, mentioned above, the theological themes of the spiritual "vehicle" are developed. For sinners "in virtute irascibili", in particular the punishments are similar to those which come upon "those who rave in folly, mania and melancholy in this life". No less Ficinian is the explicit reference to the "spiritus", which serves to explain the nature of the "larvae", "the wicked souls who can find no good dwelling [...] and wander about in their aerial body".

> A much happier fate is granted to the blessed souls, for they are able, like the good angels, to live in us and illuminate us.[85]

Without hesitating before either of the two kinds of spirit, Agrippa gives a series of classical and popular examples of ceremonial magic: "Here is concealed a great mystery, not to be rashly revealed!" ("Magnum hic latet, sed non temere revelandum mysterium!") It is not worth following him through the list of those restored to life, the possessed, and the "manes" who help the good in the capacity of guardian angels, and all the strange things which he draws from the *Odyssey*, from Pausanias, from Claudian, or from German sources, or which he claims to have seen or touched, but which he does not want to reveal for fear of being accused "by unbelievers" of lying. However, the comment with which he concludes this part of his long chapter (III, 41) is relevant for us:

> These things would be incredible [...] if we did not have the testimony of laws handed down to us, and the trustworthy historical accounts of the Ancients! Nor indeed is it alien to the Christian religion that many souls may be restored to their bodies before the universal resurrection of the flesh. As a matter of fact we believe that many men have been assumed into glory in their bodies by a special gift of God, and even that many have descended into hell while still alive.[86]

In the face of remarks of this kind, the reader, however familiar he may be with the writings of this surprising author, does not know whether to suppose a blasphemous intention in the parallel which follows immediately between, on the one hand, the assumption of the Virgin

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[85] *Ibid.*, p. ccxcix: "Quod multo meliori sorte etiam beatis animis concessum est, ut bonorum angelorum instar nos habitare et illustrare possint".

[86] *Ibid.*, p. ccc: "Miranda [...] nisi fidem facerent et latae leges et creditae antiquitatum historiae! Neque demum a Christiana religione alienum est animas multas ante universae carnis resurrectionem suis corporibus restitui posse; quin et multos credimus singulari Deo beneficio cum corporibus in gloriam adsumptos, multos etiam vivos descendisse in infernum".

into heaven and the descent of Christ (or of Orpheus!) into the lower regions, and on the other the ancient laws of Crete: these laws laid down that the ghosts of husbands, who came back to haunt their widows and to possess them once more, should be transfixed with a nail. But perhaps one need only recall the concluding remarks of Keith Thomas, the social historian who has reconstructed the link between *Religion and the Decline of Magic during the Renaissance*: "at the end of our period we can draw a distinction between religion and magic which would not have been possible at the beginning".[87] This observation seems to me a consistent development of Aby Warburg's pioneering thesis.

In fact, to the even greater surprise of the reader, it is just at this point that Agrippa introduces the psychopannychist argument which had given rise to the accusations of the inquisitor Sisto of Siena. He does not want to overlook in the *De occulta philosophia* "what many Christians have thought concerning the dwellings of the souls", for he considers these arguments to be "not really divergent from what we have already said". Immediately after Tertullian's *Adversum haereses Marcionis* (IV, 34), Agrippa gives a text from the *Recognitiones* of Clement Romanus, which Sisto of Siena attributes to Irenaeus. It begins with words which, for a Nicodemite, would be suggestive:

> You force me [...] to publish something on ineffable things: I shall not refuse to go to the limits of what can be said. Christ, who from the beginning always was, and has always been present, even if in a mysterious way, to the pious men of all generations and especially to those who looked for him and to whom he frequently appeared. But the time for the resurrection of the bodies of the dead had not yet come.[88]

No less suggestive than this preliminary statement is the coincidence between these two opening quotations and those made by Calvin in his *Psychopannychia*, though its editors have emphasized the exclusively scriptural nature of the documentation of this treatise. These two texts, together with some from Augustine (also used by Agrippa in other passages) constitute the only page in Calvin's polemical treatise which is

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[87] K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), p. 640.

[88] *De occulta philosophia*, 1533, p. cccii: "Cogis me [...] aliqua de ineffabilibus publicare verumtamen quoadusque proferre licet non pigebit: Christus, qui ab initio et semper erat, per singulas generationes piis, latenter licet, semper tamen aderat his praecipue a quibus expectabatur quibusque frequenter apparuit: sed non erat tempus ut tunc resolutis corporibus fieret resurrectio".

based on the Fathers. Though it is used for an interpretation opposed to Agrippa's, this concidence is striking. Calvin also declares that he will fight certain "nugatores", whose "headquarters, weapons and secret tricks and refuges he does not know", whose "complaints and raucous screams" he has heard, but whose writings he had not been able to discover. In the *De scandalis* of 1550 he explicitly attacks libertines like Agrippa, maintaining "that the appearance of evangelical doctrine is immediately followed by riots and disorders, and by a turmoil of many sects, and by the monstrous, unheard-of spreading of error". Finally there is a series of allusions which place great emphasis on the *De vanitate*, from which Calvin borrows Agrippa's images of himself as a Cyclops who fights against the sciences, as a barking dog, and of those "imitators of Lucian who deride the whole religion of Christ". All these suggest to me a question which I put to the specialists. Could it not be that Calvin saw Agrippa as playing a rather important role—both during his lifetime and after his death—in the groups of "Nicodemites" and "Spiritual Libertines" against whom he was conducting a polemic in these and other treatises?[89] Certainly Agrippa had not only reproduced in full eight psychopannychist texts (from Irenaeus, Lactantius, Augustine and three from Ambrose, besides the two we have already seen), texts which, together with passages from the Gospel interpreted in a similar way, had led the Sienese inquisitor to see in this magical treatise a means of smuggling in dangerous "Anabaptist" ideas. Agrippa had drawn from all these passages conclusions opposed to the cult of the dead; but above all he had in the end reached a Spiritualist conclusion.

> Since therefore the judgement of souls is postponed until the Last Day, many theologians believe that not only those who will be justified, but also the damned, can be helped before the pre-ordained Day of Judgement by expiatory prayers for the souls of the dead.[90]

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[89] Jean Calvin, *Psychopanychia*, ed. Walter Zimmerli (Leipzig 1932); see *Opera* (*Corpus Reformatorum*), V, Brunswick 1860–1900, pp. xxxvi–xxxvii; *Institutio*, in *Opera selecta*, III (Munich 1967), XXV, pp. 161–62, 169, 432. On these works and also on *Excuses a MM. les nicodemites, Contre la secte [. . .] des libertins, De scandalis*, cf. K. Müller, 'Calvin and die Libertiner', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* XL (N.F. iii), 1922, pp. 83–129; W. Niesel, 'Calvin and die Libertiner', *ibid*., XLVIII (N.F. xi), 1929, pp. 58–74; F. Bohatec, *Budé and Calvin* (Graz 1950), pp. 162–65, 322; L. Febvre, *Le problème de l'incroyance* (Paris 1942), pp. 60ff., 190ff., 244ff.; G. Schneider, *Der Libertin* (Stuttgart 1970).

[90] *De occulta philosophia*, 1533, p. ccciii: "Quia igitur animarum iudicium in extremum diem dilatum est, putant plerique theologi non solum iustificandis, sed etiam damnatis piacularia suffragia ante praestitutam iudicii diem posse opitulari".

Saint Gregory liked to believe that this had been so for the pious Emperor Trajan. There is disagreement between Thomas Aquinas and those who believe "that he has not been freed from the punishment pronounced on him, but that the execution of the sentence has been postponed until the day of the Last Judgement". Agrippa is happy to remind his readers of the disagreements on the question of Purgatory among theologians, whom—in 1533—he still does not divide into Catholics and Protestants:

> There are some theologians who believe that prayers for the souls of the dead do not take away the punishment, nor reduce the sentence, but at most, bring some relief and healing to their sufferings: like a porter boiling with sweat, whom someone sprinkles with water, and who seems to be relieved from the weight of his burden, to be helped by this to carry it more easily, even though the weight of his burden is not diminished. However the common opinion of theologians is that funeral prayers and rites cannot be of any help to the guilty in the cave of Dis.[91]

The classicistic style and the cave of Dis are intended to disguise a statement which is completely anti-Roman. But in the end Agrippa reveals the reason for his undeniable penchant for accumulating texts which are often contradictory and always unclear.

> In fact these things are always of impenetrable obscurity, and many have sharpened their wits on them in vain.[92]

As Augustine says: "It is better to be in doubt about mysteries, than to dispute about what is uncertain" ("Melius est dubitare de occultis, quam litigare de incertis"). Faithful to the Erasmian model of the "simplicitas" of the Gospel, Agrippa concludes with a Spiritualist passage which would have pleased one of his contemporary German translators, Sebastian Franck (the other translator, Theodor Fabritius, was also a radical). Franck's writings owed as much to Agrippa's inspiration as to that of Erasmus, and it is significant that when he was censored at

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[91] *Ibid.*, p. ccciv: "Sunt ex theologis qui suffragiorum inferiis nec poenam tolli, nec mulctae detrahi, sed duntaxat dolorum solatia et fomenta quaedam adferri opinantur, idque aestuantis geruli similitudine, qui conspersione aquae videatur pressu ponderis levari sive ad facilius ferendum iuvari, quamquam nihil sit ex pondere detractum. Communis tamen theologorum sententia negat reis in Ditis antro, preces et funebria quicquam suffragari".

[92] *Ibid.*, p. ccciv: "Verum haec omnia cum sint incomprehensibilis obscuritatis, multi in illis ingenium frustra exacuerunt".

Ulm by the Lutheran authorities, it was the ideas that he had derived from Agrippa that were most frequently attacked.

Returning to the Gospel parable most frequently cited in connexion with the sleep of souls, Agrippa declared:

> I have no doubt that we must understand that the rich man burns and suffers, and that the pauper is rewarded with joy and happiness.[93]

The moral meaning of the parable was, in fact, quite clear, but, as Wyclif had already warned and as John Frith repeated in 1532, it should not be distorted in an attempt to base upon it dogmatic decrees:

> the meanings of that flame of Hell, that bosom of Abraham, that tongue of the rich man, that finger of the pauper, that tormenting thirst, that drop of relief are hardly discovered even by those who search for those meanings with humility and meekness, and never by the contentious.[94]

Quite apart from any doctrinal adherence to psychopannychism (of which I am less persuaded than was the Dominican inquisitor), Agrippa's attitude towards authority and his free and individualistic exegesis, in which he tended to stress the contradictions in the sacred texts themselves, must have made him unacceptable to Calvin. Calvin made the first draft of the *Psychopannychia* in 1534. It was some years before that the thesis which he attacked in this treatise had spread from Wittenberg—where even Luther had accepted it in more than one of his writings—to Strasbourg and to the court of Margaret of Navarre (its circulation in this milieu was discovered by Lucien Febvre). Agrippa had been closely connected with both these circles, and he was from Cologne, the town of Gerard Westerburg, "Dr. Fegfeuer", who had been the first to propagate the doctrine of the sleep of souls, and was one of the Anabaptist leaders there. Agrippa could not therefore have seemed to Calvin unconcerned with the diffusion of this doctrine, with its critical development and even more with its transmission among initiates.

Indeed this secrecy is, paradoxically, a characteristic common to both magic and radical reformation.

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[93] *Ibid.*, p. ccciv: "illum quippe divitem in ardore poenarum et illum pauperem in refrigerio gaudiorum intelligendos esse non dubito".

[94] *Ibid.*, p. ccciv: "Sed quomodo intelligenda illa flamma inferni, ille sinus Abrahae, illa divitis lingua, ille digitus pauperis, illa sitis tormenti, illa stilla refrigerii, vix a mansuete quaerentibus, a contentiose autem certantibus nunquam invenitur".

APPENDIX TWO

RECENT STUDIES ON AGRIPPA

I decided to add a section—reprinting only two of the dozen papers I published on Agrippa—to the short series of collected studies I published in Italian under the title *Magia bianca, magia nera nel Rinascimento*, a volume which for incomprehensible reasons disappeared from bookshops and libraries in less than a month, October 2004.

As a reviewer, not disposed to flatter an old lady, noted in RQ 2005, my work on Renaissance magic and Agrippa began fifty years ago, when this author was suggested to me by the late Eugenio Garin as the subject of my first paper and, two years later, as the field of my thesis. I continued to study Agrippa's texts and documents, publishing many essays on his work (I cite their titles in the footnotes of this book only when needed to support my present arguments). When a student I started this research reluctantly, but now I consider Agrippa to be a great figure in the history of Renaissance thought, especially in Germany. Moreover, in the context of the philosophical, scientific and religious issues of the sixteenth century, he is an author who merits more attention than he has so far received, even if we take into account several papers published in the last twenty years or so. It is remarkable that the fifth centenary of his birth in 1986 passed virtually unnoticed, whilst the centenary of the publication of the *Malleus maleficarum* was celebrated with a congress, the second in the series 'Bayreuther Historische Kolloquien', organized 'als wissenschaftlichen Kontrapunkt zu den zahlreichen Medienspektakeln dieses Jahres".[1] (I chose as an introduction to Part II 'Agrippa as a critical magus', a general paper read at a conference in Wolfenbüttel, which concerns mainly his *De incertitudine et vanitate omnium scientiarum atque artium* and focuses on the passage from his passion for magical disciplines (which produced an encyclopedia *De occulta philosophia*) to his critical or paradoxical attitude (one might speak of "scepticism", if this term is not taken in a technical sense according to Popkin's and Schmitt's interpretation related to

[1] *Malleus maeficarum* ed. by P. Segl, Cologne/Vienna, Böhlau Verlag, 1988, p. vii.

the 'second Academy' and Diogenes Laertius). In the commentary by Pierre Villey, *De vanitate* was however considered the main source of Montaigne's *Apologie de Remond Sebond*: this change from Master of Magic to "enemy of all learning" is the problem chosen by many, indeed by almost all the historians dealing with Agrippa.

The other (older) paper I am reprinting comes from a lecture given at the Warburg Institute in a series organized by D. P. Walker; it dealt with a historical problem which, after more than 30 years, has still not attracted enough attention among historians of the theory of magic, nor among historians of the Reformation, the Radical Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. Agrippa was a Nicodemite. In the early thirties of the sixteenth century or perhaps as early as 1526 he maintained ideas very far from orthodoxy and spread them in a secret and clandestine manner (but this clandestine way did not, however, keep the faculties of theology, the Inquisitors and the *Index* from finding his ideas perfectly clear as well as unacceptable).

In this paper I gave just one example. In Book III of *De occulta philosophia* Agrippa hinted at the doctrine of psychopannychism and tried to conceal it from Catholic censors or readers. This doctrine of the so-called 'sleep of the souls' expresses the heretical thesis that after death, the human soul instead of going directly to Hell, Purgatory or Paradise will 'sleep' until the Last Judgement. This is 'psychopannychism', an idea that had been discussed in a few pages by the Fathers of the Church, and which, in Agrippa's time, was present only in the preaching and pamphlets of radical Reformers; it was discussed around 1534 in a book which has been considered the "starting point of Calvin's Theology",[2] but it was not easy to find it in a learned philosopher before Michael Servetus. Psychopannichism is connected with theological discussions on the soul's destiny after death and with the Last Judgement, a subject dear to prophets and preachers on the Apocalypse, a beloved text, which attracted ever more intense commentary in Europe after Savonarola. The presence outside Italy of this attitude of concealment, and the need to redate Nicodemism to a few years before the date proposed by Carlo Ginzburg in his monograph,[3]

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[2] W. J. Tavard, *The Starting Point of Calvin's Theology*, Grand Rapids, Mi, W. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 2000.

[3] C. Ginzburg, *Il Nicodemismo. Simulazione e dissimulazione religiosa in Italia nel 500*, Torino, Einaudi, 1970.

were the main points in this paper on 'Magic and Radical Religion in Agrippa'.

The silence of historians on this thesis of mine is probably explained by the great distance still existing between the history of philosophical thought and the history of religious ideas and movements in the sixteenth century. This distance may be seen in the writings of a pupil of Professor Garfagnini who has recently been named full professor of the history of philosophy. Of a short treatise by Agrippa, *De triplici ratione cognoscendi Deum*, this scholar has given a critical edition and enlarged the commentary. I am very proud of it, because most of the same work (except for a few pages, corresponding to ch.I, part of ch.V and ch.VI) had been annotated by me when I was nineteen; moreover the choice of this text had been inspired by my proposal to publish it beside Agrippa's *Oratio in Poemandrum* in a volume planned and edited by E. Garin.[4] At that time, an American specialist, Professor Ch. J. Nauert, had announced his intention of publishing a critical edition of the *De triplici ratione* on the basis of the only known manuscript (Parisinus lat. 166125): this was the main reason for my not undertaking the same work, which was not necessary in order to give readers an idea of Agrippa, who was then being studied only from a biographical point of view. I realize that this reason cannot be easily understood today, when respect for one another's work is no longer the usual attitude among scholars.

My main commitment, then (1955) and later, was to focus on Agrippa's complex religious attitude and its influence on the development of his theory of magic. Exactly half a century has elapsed, and I hope that readers, now specialized and updated, will appreciate this new edition which has added a few variants and footnotes.

It is a pity, however, that the long introduction to this edition shows no awareness of the strong relationship which exists, even if in a concealed and allusive way—as is usual for so-called 'Nicodemites'—between Agrippa and the Reformation, if we take this historical period and its definition in the sense that historians have adopted in the last 70 years, after Cantimori's *Eretici italiani*.

Let us hope that in the near future this scholar will find time to compile also from this paper to investigate and perhaps find some

[4] *Testi umanistici sull'ermetismo* (= *Archivio di filosofia*), Rome, Bocca, 1955, pp. 147–162.

new documents and texts among the numerous data about Agrippa's relations with Reformers (pre-Reformation, Evangelical Reformation, radical Reformation) instead of writing simply:

> In their general lines Agrippa's choices, religious or philosophical choices, were already decided in 1516, if not earlier, when he wrote the first version of *De occulta philosophia*,

that is, in 1510. I ask myself what this sentence means. It might mean: 1. that Agrippa never chose to be an Evangelical or a radical Reformer, Hermetism being enough for him or for the present writer, or 2. that in 1516 or 1510 he was "Lutheran before Luther, as one of his (Lutheran) correspondents wrote. But the first one must be the right meaning, given that this scholar goes on:

> It is true that the historical events which were to follow (breaking of Christian unity, building up of new *Magisterial [Churches]*, repression of heterodoxy) would in part modify the way in which Agrippa expressed his thought, [...seeing his work as] a concrete mission of spiritual reform of his own time.

Historical events are—if I am not mistaken—never independent of men's thought and activity: it is therefore likely that persons like Agrippa contributed to the changes that took place in Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century (from the times of Julius II to the eve of Calvin's Reformation). Hermetism is certainly an important element among this century's ideas, but Reformation, in its various aspects, appears to me a larger and more universal element of it.

In addition to the studies examined in my review-article,[5] I must now refer the reader to the critical edition of Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia* by Vittoria Perrone Compagni (Leiden: Brill, 1992); she continued a project that I outlined in my dissertation on Agrippa, directed by Professor Eugenio Garin and discussed by Professors Delio Cantimori and Francesco Adorno at the University of Florence in 1958, which included in an Appendix, vol. II, pp. 170–222, a complete table of comparison of the first version (submitted to Trithemius in manuscript kept in Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, cod. M.ch.q.50) and the final one (Cologne, Soter, 1533). She obtained from me a copy of this

[5] See my paper 'Agrippa von Nettesheim in den neueren kritischen Studien und in den Handschriften', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 51 (1969), pp. 265–95 (cf. *Rinascimento*, XIX, 1968, pp. 169–199).

comparison, as well as about 400 precise notes identifying sources, and used them without acknowledgment: not having worked on the original of the Würzburg manuscript she did not realize that the first version of 1510 was a text revised, completed and ready to be printed. Only Trithemius' prescription of initiatic silence caused a delay of more than twenty years before it was printed: in the meantime Agrippa had it circulating among trusted friends, changed the order of some chapters and added to the first version many short texts (for instance the pages written under the title *Dialogus de homine*).

Leaving out of consideration several studies or translations on Agrippa's two feminist pamphlets (*De nobilitate et praecellentia foeminaei sexus*, and *De matrimonio*) I have now to list at least R. D. Popkin, 'Introduction' to H. C. Agrippa von Nettesheim, *Opera* (Hildesheim/New York, G. Olms Verlag, 1970), in particular I, pp. xiv–xv, xxvi; Id., *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza*, 3rd edn. (Berkeley/Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1979), pp. 23–26; M. de Gandillac, *Les secrets d'Agrippa*, in *Aspects du libertinisme au 16e siècle*, edited by A. Stegmann (Paris 1974), p. 133ff.; J. Wirth, '"Libertins" et "Epicuriens": aspects de l'irreligion au 16e siècle', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* XXXIX (1977), pp. 609–13; R. Crahay, 'Un manifeste religieux d'anticulture: le *De Vanitate*', in *Troisième Congrès Intern. d'études néolatines* (Paris 1980), pp. 889–924; B. C. Bowen, 'Cornelius Agrippa's "De Vanitate": Polemic or Paradox?', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* XXXIV (1972), pp. 251–56; W. D. Müller-Jancke, among several papers on Agrippa published *Magie als Wissenschaft im frühen 16. Jahrhundert. Die Beziehung zwischen Magie, Medizin und Pharmazie im Werk des Agrippa von Nettesheim*, Dissertation, Universität Marburg/Lahn, 1973; and Id., 'Von Ficino zu Agrippa. Der Magia-Begriff der Naturmystik des Renaissance-Humanismus im Überblick', in A. Faivre and R. C. Zimmerman (eds.), *Epochen der Naturmystik* (Berlin, E. Schmidt Verlag, 1979), pp. 24–51, and several papers more; V. Perrone Compagni, 'Una fonte di Cornelio Agrippa: il "De harmonia mundi" di Francesco Giorgio Veneto', *Annali dell'Istituto di filosofia* [University of Florence], IV (1982), 45–74; Ead., 'Il "De occulta philosophia" ', in C. Canziani and G. Paganini (eds.), *Le edizioni dei testi filosofici e scientifici del Cinquecento e del Seicento* (Milan, Franco Angeli, 1986), pp. 99–111; V. Perrone Compagni, *Ermetismo e cristianesimo in Agrippa.*', Firenze, Polistampa 2005, pp. 85–191; M. H. Keefer, 'Agrippa's Dilemma: Hermetic "Rebirth" and the Ambivalences of *De vanitate* and *De occulta philosophia*', *Renaissance Quarterly* XXXI (1988), 41, pp. 614–53; M. van der Poel, *Cornelius Agrippa. The Humanist Theologian*

and his Declamations, Leiden, Brill 1997. The only scholar who considers the wide diffusion of Agrippa's work and ideas among (Italian) Nicodemites is S. Adorni Braccesi, 'L'Agrippa Arrigo e Ortensio Lando fra eresia cabala e utopismo: ipotesi di lettura', *Historia philosophica*, II, 2005, pp. 97–113; see also her 'Passioni repubblicane, polemiche antinobiliari e inquietudini religiose dei lettori del '*Della vanità delle scienze*' di Agrippa nella Venezia del '500', in *Repubblicanesimo e repubbliche nell' Europa di antico regime* (conference held at Lucca 18/19 Novembre 2005, Acts forthcoming). The printing of this book in its Italian original was already at the proof stage when I was able to read C. I. Lehrich, *The Language of Demons and Angels. Cornelius Agrippa's Occult Philosophy* (Leiden, Brill, 2000): in this dissertation which gives an accurate exposition of the *De occulta philosophia* and holds, as is indeed correct, that the relevance of ceremonial magic has been neglected by many otherwise intelligent scholars, I found some interesting observations dealing with the work of Agrippa and Trithemius, and concerning cryptography, secrecy, and initiation. I do not subscribe to the critique published by Perrone Compagni.[6]

[6] 5. V. Perrone Compagni, *Ermetismo e cristianesimo cit.*, p. 18 n.: "Affermando che 'without ceremonial, demonic magic, natural (and presumably celestial) magic tend to slip into evil and darkness' Lehrich dimostra di non cogliere la distinzione tra la teologia (che è la premessa conoscitiva sulla quale si sviluppa la magia religiosa, ma che non è, direttamente, la magia) e la sua applicazione operativa". [After writing this appendix and having it in proofs I came to read a paper by the same scholar 'L' innocenzo di Eva. Reto rico e teologia nel de nobilitate foeminei sexus di Agrippa Bruniorra e Compenellena, XII/e, 2006, pp. 59–80. In the same periodical a paper by S. Adozeri Broccesi on Italian translations of minor works by Agrippa, clandestinely printed in sixteenth century, is forthcoming].

PART III

BRUNO AS A READER OF PROHIBITED BOOKS

CHAPTER SIX

THE INITIATES AND THE IDIOT. CONJECTURES ON SOME BRUNIAN SOURCES

> Catarella ha la fantasia, le alzate d'ingegno, le invenzioni di un picciliddro. Ed essendo picciliddro, queste cose le dice, senza ritengo. E spesso c'inzerta. Perché la realtà, vista con l'occhi nostri, è una cosa, mentre vista da un picciliddro è un'altra. *(Catarella has the phantasy, the brainwaves of a child. And being a child, he tells such things without reserve. And often he guesses right. It happens so because reality seen by our eyes is one thing, whereas seen by a child it is another)*
>
> Andrea Camilleri, *Il giro di boa*

> idiotam, purum mechanicum, sermone indisertum et infantem, artium ceterarum quae faciunt ad veritatem eius artis quam profitetur imperitum
>
> Bruno, *Idiota triumphans*

If we apply Konrad Gesner's description of Paracelsus[1] to Giordano Bruno we may consider him too a 'wandering scholastic'. In this case we must read his works mindful of the tradition of these academics, as against that of the goliards, understood in the broadest sense: even great Aristotelian teachers such as Vernia and Pomponazzi were prone to making goliardic quips and jests which are registred in the accounts of their lessons (*reportata*). The first of these two, who published little in his lifetime, left a vast inheritance of salacious jokes, which Bruno may possibly have known as a boy thanks to another, older 'Nolan' who had heard Vernia.[2] But there are other examples of the goliardic tradition such as the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* or Rabelais. It seems to me that we can understand Giordano Bruno better if we remember

[1] Gesner uses the definition, "vulgo scholasticos vagantes", in a letter dated 16 August 1561; see C. von Kraftheim, *Epistolae medicinaliae ll. III* (Zurich, Frosch, 1577), I, f. 1v, cited by N. L. Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology. A Chapter in the Controversy over Occult Studies in Early Modern Europe* (Albany, NY, SUNY Press, 1999), p. 297, n. 61.

[2] See *infra*, Appendix III *A "Nolanus" before Bruno*.

these antecedents rather than by limiting ourselves to those of Thomas Aquinas or Marsilio Ficino.

Bilingualism and other factors make Bruno a safe bet for many academics of today: publishing work on Bruno can be a valid title for the career of a scholar of Italian literature or of the history of Italian language, or for that of a student of neo-Latin culture, for specialists in theatre, the history of science, the history of philosophy and so forth. Bruno was a very original writer in many fields—from theatre to prose, from art of memory to Lullian combinatory art, from philosophy to magic. These subjects are all combined in his works, which were written in Italian or in Latin according to circumstances and to the author's public in the various phases of his exile. Bruno's choice of language would appear to have been determined not so much by criteria connected with the subject of each work, with types of literature, with the habits or the style of the moment, as by whether or not there was an 'Italianate' public in the place where he happened to be writing, as in Paris for the *Candelaio*. In the literary circle of Philip Sidney and John Florio in London the Italian tongue could be used, whereas Latin was compulsory in Germany, Prague or Zurich. In view of this, the present lack of studies and even of a lexicon of Bruno's Latin works (whereas in the case of Italian works these have long been published) is extremely serious.

Giordano Bruno's exile had taken him to Rome, then to the north of Italy, to Geneva, Toulouse, Paris and London, then back to Paris, to Prague and various university cities in Germany, to Zurich and finally back to Padua and Venice. Here he was reported to the Inquisition, imprisoned and transferred to Rome, where he was condemned and sent to the stake. Having been a Dominican until 1576 when for the first time he was accused of heresy and had to escape from St. Dominic's convent and from Naples, Bruno had been brought up on Aristotle, the Scholastic philosophers and above all Thomas Aquinas.[3] There is documentary evidence that Bruno had already read texts, or at least editions of Erasmus, who was on the Index, whilst he was in this convent.[4] In addition to strong criticism of the clergy, of pilgrimages

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[3] L. Firpo, *Il processo di G. Bruno*, D. Quaglioni (ed.) (Rome, Salerno, 1993), p. 17 n. 55, 277: "De theologi catolici n'ho sempre fatto stima et in particolare san Tommaso le cui opere l'ho sempre tenute presso di me".

[4] This is apparent from the "opere di san Grisostomo e di san Hieronimo con li scholii di Erasmo scancellati, de li quali mi servivo occultamente', in Firpo, *Il processo cit.*, p. 191 (5th interrogation).

and of the cult of relics, from Erasmus Bruno could have assimilated Neoplatonic ideas culled from Ficino and Pico (but we don't really need this hypothesis, since in the second half of the sixteenth century these two writers were very fashionable and were widely read). From the trials of the Inquisition in Naples we also know that among local sorcerers and witches not only Ficino's works circulated but also Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia* and Trithemius' unpublished works on necromancy.[5] Thus, we cannot rule out the probability that Bruno had become familiar with these theorists of magic right from this early period; but the influence of Trithemius became apparent only later, in the magical works he wrote at Helmstedt.

§ 1. *Bruno as a reader of the necromancers' 'theoricae'.*

In the second half of the sixteenth century, the magic inspired by the *Hermetica* and by Neoplatonic texts translated and commented on by Marsilio Ficino and subsequently taken up by other theorists of 'natural magic' (Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples, not to mention the different theses of Johannes Reuchlin, Johannes Trithemius, Cornelius Agrippa, Theophrastus Paracelsus, etc.) was highly fashionable among men of letters.

Early on, while still in Italy or in the first stages of his exile, by the early 1580s, Bruno had read Ficino: already in his Italian dialogues, written in London, and in his Oxford disputation in 1583, he maintained the idea of magic found in Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda* and in the writings of Pico and Agrippa, which were part and parcel of the common heritage of men of letters of the day. In his philosophical works concepts like that of the three worlds and the three types of magic (natural, celestial or mathematical and ceremonial or religious),[6] the ideas of 'spiritus', of macrocosm and microcosm, of sympathy and antipathy, of correspondences and influences are drawn from the tradition of Ficino, Pico and Agrippa and treated with depth and finesse, but they are not new. In his dialogue *De la causa* (1584), Bruno describes the microcosm in words which remind us of Pico: 'The human species,

[5] P. Lopez, *Inquisizione, stampa e censura nel Regno di Napoli tra '500 e '600* (Naples, Edizioni del Delfino, 1974); Jean-Michel Sallmann, *Chercheurs de trésors et jeteuses de sorts. La quête du surnaturel à Naples au XVI^e siècle* (Paris, Aubier, 1986), pp. 189, 203.

[6] Cf. the passage quoted *infra* 12 from Bruno's *Spaccio* and restored by Aquilecchia's last edition.

particularly in its individuals, shows the variety of all the others', and he discusses extension and infinity in the words of Nicholas of Cusa, which are moreover the same as those in the hermetic *Liber XXIV philosophorum*:[7]

> In the infinite, therefore, the point necessarily does not differ from the body, for from its status as a point, it becomes a line, from its status as a line, it becomes a surface; from its status as surface, it becomes a body. So the point, because it possesses the potency to become a body, does not differ from the status of a body, where the potency and the act are one and the same thing [...] If the point does not differ from the body, nor the center from the circumference, nor the finite from the infinite, the maximum from the minimum, we may surely affirm that the universe is entirely center, or that the center of the universe is everywhere; but the center is nowhere insofar as it differs from the circumference.[8]

In one of the most famous pages of the *Spaccio della bestia trionfante* (1584), with reference to the magical cult of the Egyptians and the Jewish Cabala,[9] Bruno explains the principles of paganism and polytheism. In connection with this he admits plurality or difference in rituals: astrology, theurgy, orphic or cabalistic rites, astrologically based spells and formulae, and so on.

> So it is with parts, with members, with colors, with seals, with characters, with signs, with images [corresponding to the seven planetary angels] which are distributed into seven species. But they did not fail because of

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[7] G. Bruno, *cause, Principle and Unity*, transl. and ed. by R. J. Blackwell, Cambridge, Cambridge U.P. 2000, pp. 88–89; Id., *Oeuvres complètes, III. De la cause* (Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1996), p. 277, dialogue V. Hereafter I use the critical text of G. Aquilecchia, referred to as 'OC'. For Hermetic and Cusanian themes, see *supra* I/3.

[8] Bruno, *Cause cit.*, pp. 88–89; Id., *De la cause cit.*, OC III, p. 276, dialogue V: "Se dalla potenza non è differente l'atto, è necessario che in quello il punto, la linea, la superficie e il corpo non differiscano; perché cossì quella linea è superficie, cossì quella superficie è mossa e fatta corpo: come la superficie può muoversi e con il suo flusso farsi corpo. E' necessario dumque che il punto ne l'infinito non differisca dal corpo, perché il punto scorrendo da l'esser punto si fa linea; scorrendo da l'esser linea si fa superficie; scorrendo dall'esser superficie si fa corpo: il punto dunque perché è in potenza ad esser corpo, non differisce dall'esser corpo dove la potenza e l'atto è una medesima cosa. Dumque l'individuo non è differente dal dividuo, il simplicissimo da l'infinito, il centro dalla circonferenza [...] Se il punto non differisce dal corpo, il centro da la circonferenza, il finito da l'infinito, il massimo dal minimo, sicuramente possiamo affirmare che l'universo è tutto centro, o che il centro de l'universo è per tutto; e pur che la circonferenza è per tutto, ma il centro non si trova in quanto che è differente da quella".

[9] Bruno, *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*, transl. and ed. by A. D. Imerti (New Brunswick, Rutgers U.P., 1964), p. 240; *Spaccio della bestia trionfante* OC,V/2, pp. 453–455, dial. III.

> this to construe that there is found in all things Divinity, who since she diffuses and imparts herself in innumerable ways, has innumerable names, and who, by innumerable paths with principles pertaining and appropriate to each, is sought after as we honor and cultivate her with innumerable rites, because we seek to receive her with innumerable rites.[10]

One of the rites is mathematical, or rather cabalistic:

> Kabbalah of the Jews (whatever wisdom may be found in its genus) has proceeded from the Egyptians, among whom Moses was instructed.[11]

It is however a polytheistic ritual which obtains power applying and combining numbers. Bruno writes:

> First, that Kabbalah attributes an ineffable name to the first principle from which, second, there proceed four names, which afterwards are converted into twelve, in a straight line change into seventy-two, and obliquely and in a straight line into one hundred-forty-four, and farther on are unfolded by four and by twelve into names as innumerable as species. And likewise, according to each name (inasmuch as it befits their own language), they name one god, one angel, one *intelligence*, one power, who presides over one species. From this we see that all Deity finally reduces to the first and self-illuminated source and images that are in mirrors as diverse and numerous as there are particular subjects, are reduced to their sources, the one formal and ideal principle.[12]

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[10] Bruno, *Expulsion cit.* p. 239; Id., *Spaccio cit.*, OC, V/2, pp. 423–425, dial. III: "Cossì de le parti, de membri, de colori, de sigilli, de segni, de imagini destribuite in sette specie. Ma non manca per questo che quelli intendessero una essere la divinità che si trova in tutte le cose, la quale, come in modi innumerabili si diffonde e comunica, cossì have nomi innumerabili, et per vie innumerabili, con ragioni proprie et appropriate a ciascuno, si ricerca, mentre con riti innumerabili si onora e cole, perché innumerabili geni di grazia cercamo impetrar da quella. Però in questo bisogna quella sapienza e giudizio, quella arte, industria et uso di lume intellettuale, che dal sole intelligibile a certi tempi più e a certi tempi meno, quando massima- e quando minimamente viene revelato al mondo".

[11] Bruno, *Expulsion cit.* p. 240; *Spaccio cit.*, OC, V/2, pp. 425, dial. III: "Da questo parmi che deriva quella Cabala degli Ebrei, la cui sapienza (qualumque la sia in suo geno) è proceduta da gli Egizzii, appresso de quali fu istrutto Mosè".

[12] Bruno, *Expulsion cit.* p. 240; *Spaccio cit.*, OC, V/2, pp. 425–427, dial. III: "Quella primieramente al pimo principio attribuisce un nome ineffabile, da cui secondariamente procedono quattro, che appresso si risolvono in dodici: i quali migrano per retto in settandoi, e per obliquo e retto in centoquarantaquattro; e cossì oltre per quaternari e duodenarii esplicati, in innumerabili, secondo che innumerabili sono le specie. E talmente secondo ciascun nome (per quanto vien commodo al proprio idioma), nominano un dio, un angelo, una intelligenza, una potestà, la quale è presidente a una specie: onde al fine si trova che tutta la deità si riduce ad un fonte, come tutta la luce al primo e per sé lucido, e le imagini che sono in diversi e numerosi specchi, come in tanti suggetti particulari, ad un principio formale et ideale, fonte di quelle".

Bruno defines magic and its three typologies in relation to Unity. In the *vulgata* Tocco and Gentile edition there is a different text, or rather a *lacuna* due to an *homoteleuton*: for that reason it proved difficult to recognize, and it was kept in the translation in English.[13] In the commentary by Aquilecchia the source was however detected, as corresponding to the three books of the system on magic published by Agrippa: natural magic; mathematical magic; "supernatural" magic i.e. spiritual, ritual, religious magic ("à la limite du corporel et du spirituel, du spirituel et de l'intellectuel").

> This 'habitus' is called magic: *and it, as much as it considers supernatural principles, is godlike*; as much as it moves around the contemplation of nature and scrutiny of its secrets, it is natural: and it is called intermediary and mathematical in so far as it consists in the reasons and the actions of the soul, which stands on the horizon of the corporal and the spiritual, of the spiritual and the intellectual.[14]

The dialogues written by Bruno in London reveal that he knew of Paracelsus and of his controversy with the classical tradition and the universities. In *De la causa, principio e uno* Bruno states that "a man who knows neither Greek, nor Arabic, nor perhaps Latin, like Paracelsus, can have a better knowledge of the properties [i.e. nature] of drugs and medicine than did Galenus, Avicenna and all those who communicate with the Roman tongue").[15] This was the highest praise that Bruno could give to any man: in his earliest work, the *Candelaio*, he had described

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[13] Bruno, *Dialoghi italiani. Dialoghi metafisici e dialoghi morali*, nuovamente ristampati con note di G. Gentile, 3rd ed. by G. Aquilecchia (Florence, Sansoni, 1958), p. 782: this edition deletes ["Magia] per quanto versa in principi sopra naturali"; in his English translation Imerti follows the Tocco-Gentile text; this line, italiced here in the quotation, has been restored by Aquilecchia in his final edition (OC, V/2, p. 425) which corrects it, without pointing it out in the apparatus in OC, V/2, p. CCXXXIII. The French translation, quoted here, is by Yves Hersant, *ibid*., p. 424; this commentary refers to Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia*; the reference is lacking in the commentary by Gentile cit. and in Bruno, *Dialoghi filosofici*, edited by M. Ciliberto *et al.* (Milan, Mondadori, 2000), pp. 702–703.

[14] Bruno, *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*, transl. and ed. by A. D. Imerti (New Brunswick, Rutgers U.P., 1964), p. 239; *Spaccio cit.*, OC V/2, p. 425: dialogue III: "Il quale abito si chiama magia: e questa per quanto versa in principii sopra naturali, è divina; et quanto versa circa la contemplazion de la natura e perscrutazione di suoi secreti, è naturale: ed è detta mezzana e matematica in quanto consiste circa le raggioni e atti dell'anima che è nell'orizonte del corporale e spirituale, spirituale e intellettuale".

[15] Bruno, *De la causa*, OC III, p. 161, dialogue III: "uno che non sa né di greco, né di arabico, e forse né di latino, come il Paracelso, può aver meglio conosciuta la natura di medicamenti e medicina, che Galeno, Avicenna e tutti che si fanno udir con la lingua romana". Cf. *Cause, cit.*, pp. 52–53.

himself as "an academic of no academy". In the third dialogue of his *De la causa* he disagrees with Paracelsus' definition of matter, considering it at the same level as Pythagoras', Plato's and Aristotle's theory of nature, life and organism.

> All who want to distinguish matter and consider it [matter] in itself, without form, resort to the analogy of art. So it is with the Pythagoreans, the Platonists and the Peripatetics. […] All these arts produce various images, compositions and figures in their own particular material, none of which is natural or proper to that material. Nature is similar to art in that it needs material for its operations, since it is impossible for any agent who wishes to make something to create out of nothing. There is, then, a sort of substratum from which, with which and in which nature effects her operations or her work, and which she endows with the manifold forms that result in such a great variety of species being presented to the eyes of reason."[16]

Here Bruno takes the example of a carpenter's activity, but he is considering mainly Paracelsus' ideas on organism and principles of nature,

> that very point which earns Paracelsus pride. In discussing medical philosophy he reproves Galen for having introduced philosophical medicine and for having created such an annoying mixture and tangled web that, in the last analysis, he comes across as a very shallow physician and a very confused philosopher".[17]

Bruno maintains that Paracelsus' idea that mercury, salt and sulphur, as seen in natural *elementata*, are the only elements which compose physical reality, could not be accepted by philosophers; it would be

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[16] See Bruno, *Cause, Principle cit*, p. 56; *De la causa cit*., OC, pp. 173–175. "Tutti quelli che vogliono distinguere la materia e considerarla da per sé senza la forma, ricorreno alla similitudine de l'arte. Cossì fanno i Pitagorici, cossì i Platonici, cossì i Peripatetici. […] Tutte queste arti in una propia materia fanno diversi ritratti, ordini e figure, de le quali nessuna è propria e naturale a quella. Cossì la natura, a cui è simile l'arte, bisogna che de le sue operazioni abbia una materia: per che non è possibile che sia agente alcuno, che se vuol far qualche cosa, non abia di che farla; o se vuol oprare, non abbia che oprare. È dumque una specie di soggetto, del qual, col quale e nel quale la natura effettua la sua operazione, il suo lavoro; et il quale è da lei formato di tante forme che ne presentano a gli occhi della considerazione tanta varietà di specie." 'Here Bruno goes on': "ma questo sia detto con qualche rispetto perché non ho avuto ocio, per esaminare tutte le parti di quell'uomo".

[17] See Bruno, *Cause, Principle cit* p. 56; *De la causa cit*., p. 173: "Avete toccato quel punto nel quale è lodato Paracelso che ha trattata la filosofia medicinale, e biasimato Galeno in quanto ha apportata la medicina filosofale, per fare una mistura fastidiosa, et una tela tanto imbrogliata, che al fine renda un poco exquisito medico e molto confuso filosofo". See Bruno, *Oratio valedictoria*, OL, I/1, p. 17: 'Paracelso […] quis post Hippocratem similis?'; *Sigillus sigillorum*, OL, II/2, p. 181.

accepted only by "a mechanic or a medical doctor, who works in a practical manner, like him who divides the whole body into mercury, salt and sulphur".[18] Paracelsus is considered unable to understand the real meaning of "elementa" and "elementata", for like a baby he had not mastered philosophy and cultured speaking ("sermone indisertum et infantem"),[19] but he is deeply rich, has genius and is highly inspired. His work is to be studied with respect, equal to the philosophies of Plato or Aristotle, Cusanus or Ficino.

Here we see that Bruno was familiar with Paracelsian magic, his alchemy and especially his theory of medicine. Though he was well aware that one who practised these arts went against the "rigour of the theologians", he did not disapprove of them; indeed he declared that

> among the different medical methods, I do not condemn the one that proceeds magically by applying roots, hanging up stones and murmuring incantations, if the rigour of the theologians will let me speak purely as a natural philosopher. I approve of what is done physically, carried out by means of apothecaries' prescriptions to flux or dispel bile, blood, phlegm and melancholy. I accept that other method which proceeds alchemically, extracting quintessences and using fire to volatilize mercury, deposit salt, make sulphur grow luminous or extract oil from all these compounds.[20]

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[18] Bruno, *Cause, Principle cit.*, p. 63; *De la causa cit.*, OC, III, p. 171, where the whole context is as follows: "questo modo di considerare [la materia], che voi dite, so che non potrà star bene se non a un meccanico o medico che sta sulla prattica, come a colui che divide l'universo corpo in mercurio, sale e solfro; il che dire non tanto viene a mostrar un divino ingegno di medico quanto potrebbe mostrare un stoltissimo che volesse chiamarsi filosofo". Nature's principles are not bound to material elements, and Bruno underlines this method: he admits however that, as the Ancients spoke of the "four roots" (fire or 'ethereal body', air, water, earth, cf. *Cause, Principle cit.*, p. 62), Paracelsus has to be allowed to choose his three roots, if only he does not identify them with the elementata mercury, salt, sulphur as they are really found in our experience ("l'anima inseparabile dal solfro, dal mercurio e dal sale, è principio formale; quale non è soggetto a qualità materiali, ma è del tutto signor della materia, non è tocco dall'opera di chimici, la cui divisione si termina alle dette tre cose"). In these passages from the *De la causa* Paracelsus' presence and the analysis of his theses had already been emphasized by Lasson, Gentile, Guzzo and others.

[19] Bruno, *Idiota triumphans*, in Id., *Due dialoghi sconosciuti e due dialoghi noti*, ed. by G. Aquilecchia, Roma, Storia e letteratura, 1957, p. 5. This booklet written against Fabrizio Mordente, an autodidact who had found a new mathematical and astronomical instrument, shows that the definition "idiot" brought with it ambiguity.

[20] Bruno, *Cause, Principle cit*, p. 63; *De la causa cit.*, OC, III, pp. 195–97: "vari ordini di medicare, non riprovo quello che si fa magicamente per applicazion di radici, appension di pietre e murmurazione d'incanti, s'il rigor di teologi mi lascia parlare come puro naturale. Approvo quello che si fa fisicamente e procede per apoticarie ricette, con le quali si perseguita o fugge la còlera, il sangue, la flemma e la melanconia. Accetto quello che si fa chimicamente, che abstrae le quinte essenze e, per opera del fuoco, da tutti que' composti fa volar il mercurio, subsidere il sale e lampeggiar o disolar il solfro".

In his *Cabala del cavallo pegaseo* (1585) Bruno had listed various orders of cabalistic intelligences. These included the angelic hierarchy and the names of the governors of

> the ten spheres: 1. the primum mobile; 2. the starry sky or eighth sphere or firmament; 3. the sky of Saturn; 4. of Jupiter; 5. of Mars; 6. of the Sun; 7. of Venus; 8. of Mercury; 9. of the Moon; 10. of the sublunary Chaos divided into four elements. These are assisted by ten motors or contain ten souls: the first is Metattron, the prince of faces, the second Raziel, the third Zaphciel, the fourth Zadkiel, the fifth Camael, the sixth Raphael, the seventh Aniel, the eighth Michael, the ninth Gabriel, the tenth Samael [...], beneath these are four terrible princes [...] Behemoth, Belsebub, Leviathan, Satan.[21]

He went on to list the names of "Ceter, Hochma, Bina, Hesed, Geburah, Tipheret, Nezah, Hod, Iesod, Malchut...; Haioth, Hecados, Ophanim, Aralin, Hasmalin, Choachin, Malachim, Elohim, Benelohim, Maleachim..."[22] The *Cabala* gives little more than these, and the source is clearly to be found in Agrippa.[23] In *De magia mathematica*[24] this list was reduced to the names of the seven planetary demons; here Bruno was drawing not on Agrippa but on Trithemius, who was the only contemporary author who had been named regarding this matter by

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[21] Bruno, *Cabala del cavallo pegaseo*, OC, VI, pp. 56–59; Bruno, *Dialoghi filosofici*, ed. by Ciliberto *et al. cit.*, pp. 702–3, particularly n. 43: "dieci sfere: 1. Il primo mobile; 2. Il cielo stellato o ottava sfera o firmamento; 3. Il cielo di Saturno; 4. di Giove; 5. di Marte; 6. del Sole; 7. di Venere; 8. di Mercurio; 9. della Luna; 10. del Chaos sublunare diviso in quattro elementi. Alli quale sono assistenti diece motori o insite diece anime: la prima Metattron o principe de faccie, la seconda Raziel, la terza Zaphciel, la quarta Zadkiel, la quinta Camael, la sesta Raphael, la settima Aniel, l'ottava Michael, la nona Gabriel, la decima Samael [...], sotto il quale sono quattro terribili principi [...] Behemoth, Belsebub, Leviathan, Satan".

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] H. C. Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia*, ed. by V. Perrone Compagni (Leiden, Brill, 1992), pp. 424–5, 427 (Bk. BA. III, Ch. 10).

[24] G. Bruno, *Opere magiche*, edition directed by M. Ciliberto, and edited by S. Bassi, E. Scapparone, and N. Tirinnanzi (Milan, Adelphi, 2000), pp. clxii–1594; hereafter referred to as 'OM'. In addition to other contributions by these scholars, other works have recently been published, and I list them here but not strictly in relation with the current research: M. Cambi, 'Il "De magia" e il recupero della sapienza originaria. Scrittura e voce nelle strategie magiche di G. Bruno', *Archivio di storia della cultura*, VI, 1993, pp. 9–33; L. Spruit, 'Magia: socia naturae. Questioni teoriche nelle opere magiche di G. Bruno', *Il Centauro* 17–18 (1986), pp. 146–69; L. Bolzoni, 'Le 'lien' magique de la beauté chez Giordano Bruno', *Carrefour. Revue de la Société de philosophie de l'Outaouais* XVII/2 (1995), pp. 9–25; K. S. De Léon-Jones, *Giordano Bruno and the Kabbalah. Prophets, Magicians and Rabbis* (New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 1997); T. Dagron, 'G. Bruno et la théorie des liens', *Les études philosophiques*, 1999, fasc. 4, pp. 466–87; V. Perrone Compagni, 'Le opere magiche di G. Bruno', *Rivista di storia della filosofia* II, 2002, pp. 201–24.

Agrippa in his *De occulta philosophia.*[25] Bruno had felt the need to go back to Agrippa's source in Trithemius and to cite this ill-famed name explicitly:

> Everyone of them [planets' intelligences] is told to rule the world for three hundred years, in an order which begins from Saturn's Intelligence: in his treatise Abbot Trithemius exposed their vicissitudes. [26]

The tract in question was the *De septem secundeis id est intelligentiis sive spiritibus orbes post Deum moventibus*,[27] a short work on the astrology of history, written by the abbot Trithemius, commissioned by Maximilian, and published precisely when a furious polemical debate was raging about the end of the world, forecast as the result of a universal flood in 1524. But in his *De magia mathematica* Bruno added the names "of the intelligences presiding over the twelve signs", "over the twenty-eight mansions of the moon", over the four winds and the four parts of the world, "over the four elements", "over the evil spirits" and so forth. Many of these names can be traced back to Agrippa who copied Trithemius, but there are others for which we must go back not only to him but also to the *Elementa magica* of the pseudo-Pietro d'Abano, a pseudo-epigraph written possibly in the second half of the sixteenth century which was included in the edition of Agrippa's *Opera* published in Basel in 1580 under the forged name of Bering.[28]

Using Agrippa's words,[29] with a few additions, Bruno mentioned these names for invocation in exorcism ("Hinc accedunt ad orationes et vota sacrificia oblationes multorum generum"), adding for safety: "quae practicis committimus". Indeed—according to this—he did not wish to be considered a "practicus", or operator of magic rites. He was to declare this later in his *Processo.* Was he suspected? In Mocenigo's indictment,

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[25] Bruno found mention of Trithemius, and indeed of the same sort of work, in Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia* cit., p. 470 (Bk. III, Ch. 24) indicated as: "scripsit de istis specialem tractatum ad Maximilianum Caesarem abbas Trithemius, quem qui medullitus examinaverit magnam futurorum temporum cognitionem inde elicere potest".

[26] Bruno, *Opere magiche*, edizione diretta da M. Ciliberto, a c. di S. Bassi, E. Scaparrone, N. Tirinnanzi, Milano, Adelphi, 2000, hereafter cited as OM), p. 28: "Horum singulos aiunt mundum gubernare annos tercentos quinquaginta quatuor incipiendo a Saturni intelligentia per ordinem, quorum vicissitudines notavit Trithemius Abbas in suo tractatu".

[27] Bruno also cites this in the *De rerum principiis* (OM, p. 656), but using a more critical tone: "Petrus Aponensis […] cuius caput Trithemius Abbas in unum volumen extendit pluribus verbis et minori sensu".

[28] OM, pp. 19–39.

[29] Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia cit.*, p. 469 (Bk. III, Ch. 24).

and among the books he took from Bruno in order to hand them over to the Venetian inquisitors, there was indeed one on exorcisms.[30] Bruno must have returned to Italy bringing with him a cultural baggage of necromancy. In fact, when he was questioned about this "little book of spells", "full of [magical] characters", and about "the book *De sigillis Hermetis*, in which I know not whether in addition to natural divination there be some other condemned thing; and this in order to make use of it in the astrological predictions, but I have not yet read it", Bruno went on to explain that he had had it transcribed from a manuscript belonging to his secretary Hieronymus Besler.[31]

> By reason of the fame of the authors named therein—Albertus Magnus, St Thomas Aquinas and others […]—I am sure that nothing in that book is in honour of the Devil or in dishonour of Our Lord, for the authors are most serious and founded upon the virtues of the heavenly synods and other dispositions of more lowly principles, although I realise that not everyone is allowed to have this book and this science owing to the abuse that may take place when they fall into the hands of clever but malign persons, for the efficacy of that art is the very same that is promised in the titles.[32]

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[30] Firpo, *Il processo cit.*, p. 146, on this book "*De sigillis Hermetis*, nel quale non so se oltre alla divinatione naturale, sia alcuna altra cosa dannata; et questo per servirmene nella giudiciaria, ma non l'ho ancora letto". See also pp. 287, 17 on a "libretto di congiurazioni, che io ho trovato fra certe sue carte scritte"; Bruno asked that the court would permit him to have it back, at least in a copy ("desse almeno copia").

[31] Firpo, *Il processo cit.*, p. 166 (3rd interrogation, 2 June 1592), where Bruno says that Besler had resided in Padua recently ("poco fa") and minimizes the duration of this activity as his secretary or copyist, reducing it to "perhaps two months", whereas it had in fact lasted for two or more years. In the trial interrogations Bruno had no regard for Besler: probably he behaved in this way because he knew that the latter was in safety, outside Italy (as were Acidalius and other fellow students who then related to each other with dismay the news of Bruno's burning at the stake).

[32] Firpo, *Il processo cit.*, p. 166: "per la fama dell'autori antichi nominati, da Alberto Magno, da San Tommaso et altri […]. Son certo che in detto libro non è cosa alcuna in honore del Demonio e contumelia di Nostro Signore, perché l'autori son gravi e fondati sopra le virtù de sinodi celesti et altre dispositioni di principi inferiori, benché conosca che il presente libro e scienza non è conceduto a ognuno d'haver, per l'abusi che possono accadere quando venissero in mano di persone sapienti e maligne, essendo tal'efficacia di quell'arte quale si promette nei tituli" [n], see also p. 193, and particularly p. 287: "Non ho mai avuto intentione di propagare detta scientia e comunicare detto libro [of exorcisms copied by Besler and handed over by Mocenigo] ma solo di haverlo presso di me, sin che fossi informato della forma e teorica della scienza, perché la prattica mai mi piacque". Even if he recognized that he should not have possessed this book of exorcisms "senza licentia", Bruno declared to have done so in order to "seguitare la scientia e cognitione commune che la sia, perché dice San Tomasso 'Omnis scientia est de genere bonorum' et questa stimo una delle nobili, ma tale quale deve essere presso huomini santi e giusti".

The art of ceremonial magic is a powerful weapon, like a sword, that cannot be good if it stays in the hand "of a scoundrel", but only in that of a man who fears God and

> is able to judge the lawful and the unlawful results coming forth from these principles, and in what manner they are brought into execution by virtue of heavenly dispositions and the operation of images and characters. Be they done by wise men or by demons, all agree in this, that by the observation of signs and times and treating of inferior matter by way of ceremonies, they perform wondrous things both in harm and in usefulness to men.[33]

It is obvious that these are statements that Bruno was obliged to make before the inquisitors, nor does he deny here that he possessed this forbidden book. He had even boasted of having founded a "Giordanist sect",[34] something that has often been quoted but without recognising that it can only refer to a group that was also held together by rites or ceremonial practices held in secret.

Bruno was an assiduous reader of an author who ranked high on the first class of the Index, that is, one whose writings were all forbidden—Agrippa, whose work was none the less widely available; there were even manuscript copies of the two long volumes of his *Opera omnia*. The clarity and stylistic elegance with which Agrippa had organized natural, mathematical and ceremonial magic had made these works compulsory reading for anyone interested—even in an amateur manner—in these subjects. In the opening pages of the *De occulta philosophia* he made a distinction between the "white" and purely "natural" magic of the ancients, from Hermes Trismegistus and Zoroaster on, and the reprehensible magic of more recent necromancers; this distinction of principle should have protected Agrippa from the censors, but it failed to attain this end because it was belied by the content, particularly of the third book of *De occulta philosophia*. It was explicitly contradicted in an exchange of letters with Johannes Trithemius in which this Benedictine abbot, a very erudite man and a pupil of the kabbalist Johannes Reuchlin, encouraged Agrippa not to be satisfied by the merely natural magic of Ficino and Pico. This letter was revised in the opening pages

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[33] *Ibid.*

[34] *Documenti veneti, I*, in V. Spampanato, *Vita di Giordano Bruno, con documenti editi e inediti* (Paris, Les Belles Lettres-Aragno, 2000), p. 680. On his idea of making himself "autor di una nuova setta sotto nome di nuova filosofia", see Aquilecchia, *Giordano Bruno* (Rome, Enciclopedia italiana, 1971), p. 86.

of Agrippa's work; Agrippa had taken over twenty years to rewrite (or to be exact, to complete) the first version, which he had submitted to Trithemius as a polished manuscript ready to go to press.

In this letter there were numerous complex and obscure circumlocutions, but an attentive reader would have understood the allusions to ceremonial magic and to the person (the philosopher Charles de Bovelles) who had criticised and denounced one of Trithemius' works. This was the *Steganographia*, which owing to earlier attacks on the part of his brethren (1499–1505), had remained unfinished in manuscript. But in the years in which Lefèvre also was writing his *Magia naturalis*, soon to be disowned, Bovelles had visited Trithemius at Sponheim in order to ask his advice and to read this unpublished work. On magic the abbot had published a few writings which were quickly forgotten, but this unpublished piece, the most frequently cited, was the most cabalistic and ceremonial of all his works. Deprived of his great abbey, though later reinstated in Würzburg thanks to the Emperor Maximilian and other powerful patrons, Trithemius had never taken up the *Steganographia* again, so that at the end of the sixteenth century it was still in manuscript in very few copies and was therefore available to only a small number of clandestine readers.

However, Trithemius and his ceremonial magic was a revelation to Bruno, who was by then mature. He probably read it in his central European period, between the summer of 1586 and that of 1591, when—at least from Wittenberg on—he gathered together a group of disciples (Besler, Michael Forgach, Daniel Rindtfleisch, Raphael Egli, Valens Acidalius etc.: were these perhaps initiates?), some of whom were prepared to follow him to Italy.[35] It must be emphasized that the curriculum presented by Bruno in the *Oratio valedictoria* at Wittenberg included magic "in all its species".[36]

It is therefore remarkable not only that Bruno appropriated many passages from the *Steganographia* and other works by Trithemius in his

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[35] *Giordano Bruno 1548–1600, Mostra alla biblioteca Casanatense di Roma* (prepared by E. Canone and M. Palumbo (Florence, Olschki, 2000), pp. 170, 176–77. One of the curators of the exhibition,), Canone, had already published *Giordano Bruno. Gli anni napoletani e la peregrinatio europea* (Cassino, Università degli Studi, 1992), pointing out these pupils at pp. 120–21.

[36] *Opera latina*, ed. by Tocco et al., Firenze 1890), hereafter cited as OL I/1, p. 15: the fifth of the liberal arts, "quae corporalium substantiarum naturam speculatur in causis, principiis et elementis" covers among other things, "chimicam et secundum omnes suas species magiam".

De magia cabalistica, but that he should also have shamelessly cited the name and title of an author with such a record as a master of diabolic evocation. For the difficult knowledge of the names to be evoked to receive help from different devils in different cases, Bruno refers to Abbot Trithemius, a very happy and competent author, of whose *Steganographia* he states his aim to provide an abridgement.[37]

This fact alone illustrates the initiatory nature of Bruno's magical works, or at least of the *De magia mathematica* which is more ceremonial than the rest. His tendency to secrecy was also in line with the abbot's warnings: in 1510, in the letter cited above—Trithemius had advised Agrippa—who had adopted him as a model and as judge of the *De occulta philosophia*—to maintain initiatic secrecy ("ut vulgaria vulgaribus, altiora vero et arcana altioribus atque secretis tantum communices amicis"). It would be hard to find clearer declarations in favour of ceremonial and initiatory magic. Neither Ficino nor Pico would ever have professed such an attitude; their magical writings do not contain any invitations to initiation or any ceremonial texts or formulae of the sort given by Trithemius. Agrippa himself, who in fact provides many doctrines and secrets of ceremonial magic, takes good care not to profess them using such explicit methodology. But in his *De principiis* Bruno declares himself in favour of an initiatory attitude.[38] We shall see that in his works it is possible to recognize not only natural magic, which combines the occult properties of stones, metals, plants and animals according to their celestial correspondences, but also another, very different element—the magic deriving from words and "ceremonies", which can only be transmitted to initiates.

At the end of the sixteenth century Johannes Trithemius was cited and censured by some well-informed demonologists, but on the whole his writings were almost forgotten.[39] Moreover, in the following century, when Busaeus published some of his works for the first time, he

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[37] OM, p. 12: "quod arduum dicimus esse est nominum advocandorum noticiam habere, pro diversis negotiis atque diversis effectibus diversorum; quae quidem nomina multae industriae viro et in hac arte felicissimo Trithemio Abati fuere revelata et nos redegimus in hoc compendium ea quae in sua *Steganographia* dispersa proposuit ille".

[38] OM, p. 666: "nefas enim est quemlibet scire quaelibet". *Ibid.* p. 664 he maintains that "haec cognitio et philosophia sit vulgaris, quae tantum apud sapientes et probos locum debebat habere"

[39] Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology* (Albany, New York, 1999), devotes an ample and interesting section to the controversy on the magical works of Trithemius in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: they gave rise to a debate, but not a diffusion comparable to that of Ficino and Pico.

censured certain passages, ostensibly for reasons of decency, whereas in reality the reason was to avoid exposing the fact that this highly cultured abbot, collector of codices, founder of bibliography and literary history, also performed incantations. The most serious thing was that Trithemius maintained a theory of magic with which it was not possible to "swear on any single rudiment"; thus it could not be defined in purely natural terms—as Ficino, Pico and Lefèvre d'Etaples had maintained. Trithemius believed that, in order to attain its marvels, magic had to resort to astral demons and even to devils.

Is there not a likelihood that Bruno, having managed to read Trithemius' unpublished necromantic works, had a more complete idea of the true nature of late fifteenth and sixteenth-century magic? He must have seen unpublished writings by Trithemius when he was in Germany (1586–1588, 1589–1591), or even in 1583–1585 in England or in the spring and autumn of 1588, when he was staying in Prague under the Emperor Rudolph II.[40] It was in Prague that two years earlier, in April 1586, John Dee had performed his famous evocation of spirits using the *Steganographia*, which he considered invaluable and had copied out himself in Antwerp.[41]

Having read this, Bruno then enthusiastically set about disclosing these rites to his pupils; rites which would have been totally unacceptable to any of the contemporary churches—Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, or Calvinist—and which the Church of Rome had only very recently condemned. It is possible that what aroused his enthusiasm were the great powers that Trithemius, and later Agrippa, Paracelsus and John Dee had recognized in spiritual or demonic magic.

In the *Praefatio in Lampadem combinatoriam* Bruno had clearly pointed out a mystical-intellectual vein which in this connection cannot be overlooked; with regard to mystical theology, Bruno underlined that John Scotus Eriugena was the source of "your Nicholas of Cusa" who

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[40] R. J. W. Evans, *Rudolph II and his World* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1973).

[41] N. Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: between Science and Religion* (London, Routledge, 1988), and the bibliography. Dee had in vain proposed the costly purchase of the *Steganographia* to Lord William Cecil. I would like to thank Hilary Gatti who pointed out the proposal of purchase made to the secretary of the British sovereign by Dee. Very rich and interesting on Dee's library C. Gilly, 'Tra Paracelso, Pelagio e Ganello. L'ermetismo di John Dee', in *Magia, alchimia, scienza dal Quattrocento al Settecento. L'influsso di Ermete Trismegisto*, ed. by C. Gilly and C. van Hertum, Firenze, Centro DI 2002, pp. 275–283.

> declared to have got [from this author] the deep and godly understanding of mysteries, difficult to acquire and known to few persons, which are concealed in the river of [Eriugena's] doctrine; from him came the new prince of physicians, Paracelsus, who, in a different, but not inferior type of medicine, is to be considered in my opinion the first with Hippocrates.[42]

§ 2. *Bruno and the Paracelsian revival*

With regard to Galen, whose books were essential in the teaching of medicine in all universities and had been burned in public by Paracelsus in Basle, Bruno openly declared his preference for him and for Hippocrates, another priestly master. One should not forget that Paracelsus, in addition to his controversy with the academic tradition, was also considered to be a radical reformer and mystic. Decades later this aspect appeared not to have been forgotten in Basle, Paris and Germany among those who were reviving interest in him by translating and printing his works.

Paracelsus thought that everything is animated. It is important to note that Bruno compared Paracelsus to Lull and to the pseudo-Lullian tradition, which, unlike Lull himself, was an alchemistic and occultist current: according to Bruno, to be honest and not to be unfair to Lull, Paracelsus' only merit was "to have taken up the seed secretly scattered by Lull, so that he was alone in due time to harvest the fruits".[43]

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[42] OL, II/2, pp. 234–35: "a quo [Johanne Scoto Eriugena] admirandum illud vestratis Cusani quanto profundius atque divinius, quanto paucioribus pervium minusque notum ingenium mysteriorum, quae in multiplici suae doctrinae torrente delitescunt, fontes hausisse fatetur; a quo novus ille medicorum princeps Paracelsus (ille inquam qui in alio non inferiore medicinae genere solus cum Hippocrate primus sedere debet)"; Lull, Lefèvre and Bovelles are cited in this context. See my 'Humanae litterae, verbum divinum, docta ignorantia', *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* XLV (1966), pp. 116–17, for interesting traces of Nicholas of Cusa in Cornelio Agrippa who presents them with a rather different emphasis.

[43] OL, II/2, p. 234: "Quicquid animae habet atque corporis accepisse convincitur, quamvis insobrie ingrato ultraque modum ambitioso honor iste non sufficiat, quod ideo tantum ipsi iure debeatur, quia e seminibus, quae Lullius sparsit et occuluit, ipse peracto quasi maturitatis tempore solus fruges noverit emetere, ad ulteriorem praxim revocans universa. Iam vero de Lullio nusquam ipsum meminisse video, nisi ubi exoptatior illi detrahendi locus occurrit". Here Bruno criticizes Paracelsus, as he did Agrippa, for having plagiarized Lull and adapted his alphabet.

As François Secret and Didier Kahn have observed, the "Paracelsian revival" went hand in hand with a revived interest in Trithemius.[44] The Paracelsian tradition which Giordano Bruno encountered during his first stay in Paris—by this I mean in particular the tradition deriving from Jacques Gohory, alias Leo Suavius—was an initiatory tradition.[45] The "Lycium philosophale" which Gohory founded in Paris and which probably survived him, has frequently been said to have prefigured the "Jardin des plantes": but it was also a sect of Paracelsian occultists.

This tradition had only just been placed on the Index in 1580,[46] after the Sorbonne, on 9 October 1578, had condemned fifty-nine articles by Paracelsus, the same ones which Thomas Erastus had criticized a few years earlier.[47] Although Gohory, who died in 1576, could no longer take up the defense of Paracelsianism, the condemnation had little effect;[48] but when Bruno arrived in France, and then in Paris itself, it was nevertheless very recent and could not be ignored.

Among other things Gohory also produced a selection of Paracelsian writings, *Paracelsus philosophiae et medicinae universae compendium*, published between 1566 and 1574. Various Latin translations from Paracelsus' vernacular were prepared by Adam von Bodenstein, Gerard Dorn and other scholars in and around Germany with whom Gohory was in open controversy.[49] He claimed to be the promoter of new Latin translations from the original of Paracelsus, which he admitted he was unable to

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[44] D. Kahn, whose rich *thèse d'état* on *Paracelsisme et alchimie en France à la fin de la Renaissance*, discussed at the University of Paris IV in 1998 (forthcoming at Geneva, Droz), refers to Secret's *Situation de la littérature alchimique en Europe* (*thèse*, p. 172, n. 156).

[45] Ph. Gohory, *Philippi Theophrasti Paracelsi philosophiae et medicinae universae compendium*, published in Paris (no date : 1567?) by P. G. Roville (from which I cite; the work was subsequently reprinted in Basle by Pietro Perna in 1568), p. 18, where he admonishes Adam von Bodenstein, "agnosce eos qui hanc sapientiam sint adepti, eam in sinu continere: cuius ostentatio praebet inscitiae tuae argumentum". *Ibid.*, p. 211, Gohory in his *Scholia in Paracelsi De vita longa*, draws on many of Trithemius' works and on the same *Steganographia* (explicitly cited and for the same extracts that interest Bruno): "secreta docet abscondere".

[46] *Index de Rome 1596, avec étude des Index de Parme […] IX* (Sherbrooke, Editions de l'Université Sherbrooke/Geneva, Droz, 1994).

[47] D. Kahn, 'Cinquante-neuf thèses de Paracelse censurées par la Faculté de Théologie de Paris le 9 octobre 1578', in S. Matton (ed.), *Documents oubliés sur l'alchimie, la kabbale et Guillaume Postel, offerts à l'occasion de son 90e anniversarie à François Secret* (Geneva, Droz, 2001), pp. 161–78. From this study it appears that the weight of Erastus's *Disputationum de medicina nova Philippi Paracelsi […] Partes* was very relevant also in France.

[48] Kahn, *Paracelsisme cit.*, p. 990ff. dedicated Appendix II/2 to this censure, written by a Protestant, but used by everyone to get a better understanding of Paracelsus' ideas.

[49] See, for example, Gohory, *Compendium cit.*, p. 60.

read: in his long and detailed introduction, the *Compendium*, he decided to use Paracelsus' *Philosophia ad Athenienses*, an important piece which is philosophical rather than therapeutic; he deliberately had this unpublished work translated[50] in order to use it as the basis of his exposition of Paracelsian philosophy. This was done in strict observance of the initiatory secret, which prevented Gohory from saying everything.[51]

> He calls Great Mystery the first principle of reality, and he thinks that thence all mysteries have been created or formed. Eternal is the cause of all things which we see and it is joined to perishable things. But the eternal is unknown to us mortals, so that equally unknown is the soul's origin, coming and death. Eternal beings are born, not generated .[52]

In the *Compendium* the four elements are represented by gnomes, mermaids, lorindae, melosinae, diemeae, durdales and others ("Paracelsus goes back from elemental bodies (*elementata*) to their elements, thus from human to 'humus', from nymphs to water, from melosinae to air").[53] These are the correspondences, characteristic of Paracelsus, which Charles Webster[54] rightly traced back to folklore: but for Gohory ("ut magorum libros praetermittamus") they were derived from the "prisci philosophi"—Plutarch, Pliny, Apuleius, Augustine—and could perhaps be traced back further to the *Dies geniales* of Alexander ab Alexandro

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[50] Gohory, *Compendium cit.*, p. 26: "Ad quorum intelligentiam sunt primum statuenda fundamenta *Philosophiae* illius *ad Athenienses*, quam e lingua germanica mihi vertendam curavi". Elsewhere Gohory points to the linguistic difficulty in reading the original texts of Paracelsus owing to the many neologisms introduced by him.

[51] Gohory, *Compendium cit.*, p. 24: "quantum licet per iusiurandum philosophorum", that is, according to the oath taken by members of the "Lycium philosophale" established by him in 1572.

[52] Gohory, *Compendium cit.*, pp. 26–27: "Primum initium rerum appellat Mysterium magnum, ex quo vult omnia mysteria creata vel condita. Aeternum esse causam eorum quae videmus omnium, et esse coniuctum cum rebus caducis. Sed aeternum esse incognitum nobis mortalibus, unde pariter ignotus sit animae ortus, adventus, discessus. Aeterna esse nata, non genita".

[53] Gohory, *Compendium cit.*, p. 27: "Paracelsus omnia elementaria corpora resolvi tandem in suum elementum, ut humana in humum, nymphas in aquam, melosynas in aerem" In this context and *passim*, the personifications of the spirits of the four elements appear (Lorindae in water, Melosinae in the air, Diemeae in stone, Durdales…) that are characteristic of Paracelsus: "Terra nititur columnis archaltis, aer est archa invisibilium, aqua nympharum. Terra praebet thronum, aqua Turas, Aer samies, et sunt magnalia Dei. Separatio prima mysterii magni sunt elementa, firmamentum separatum est ab igne, a quo firmamento stellae tanquam flores ab herba, sed splendor est ab arcano, non ab igne in sole et stellis".

[54] C. Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the Making of Modern Science* (Cambridge, Cambridge U.P., 1982).

and above all to Plato,[55] but they were derived also from Roger Bacon's *De vita longa*, from Arnaldo da Villanova and from the Lullian[56] and particularly from the pseudo-Lullian[57] tradition).

It is clear that Paracelsian thought, as diffused by Gohory in Paris, did not consist only of formulae and cures, as was usually the case with Paracelsian medicine,[58] but also of heretical doctrines that denied divine creation[59] and considered unknowable the origin of the soul, its incarnation and its immortality.

> Everything created is together, and at the same time, in what is not created, as the model in wood. A simple example of these mysteries is in milk, which is the mystery of cheese, butter and so on: cheese is also the matter from which worms are born.[60]

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[55] Gohory, *Compendium, cit.*, p. 34: "Haec sunt ex antiquae philosophiae penetralibus, tanquam praesentis Paracelsi institutionis fundamenta, reliquae erunt ex varia librorum eius penu depromptae interpretationes". *Ibid.*, p. 39 on the 'spiritus' defined by Ficino "scite ex Platonis sui sententia" and corresponding to the "corpus invisibile" of Paracelsus. Kahn, *Paracelsisme cit.*, p. 155), where he insists on this aspect of Gohory and of his "humanisme nourri au sein de la Pléiade", from which appears "l'intégration de Paracelse au monde des lettres humanistes" (p. 157).

[56] Gohory, *Compendium cit.*, p. 48: "Autoritas praecipua videtur Raymundi Lulli". See M. Pereira, 'Alchemical Writings attributed to R. Lull', in P. Rattansi and A. Clericuzio (eds.), *Alchemy* (Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1994), p. 10.

[57] Kahn, *Paracelsisme cit.*, defines Gohory "admirateur [...] de Trithème" on pp. 146, 149, and *passim*, on pp. 165–66, cites from the *Compendium* (ed. Basileae, 1568), pp. 158–60: "ceux qui parmi les philosophes les plus récents flairent la sagesse cachée, l'arabe Al-Kindi, l'anglais Roger Bacon et Guillaume de Paris, n'écrivent que pour les enfants de la science [...] Mais l'allemand Jean Trithème [...] était remarquable par sa profonde érudition [...] notre Paracelse, au livre de la *Petite chirurgie* le reconnait de plein gré comme son maitre en philosophie et naguère Corneille Agrippa le révérait comme son père".

[58] H. Trevor Roper, *Renaissance Essays*, Chicago, Chicago U.P., 1985; cf. Id., *Il Rinascimento* (Rome/Bari, Laterza, 1987), pp. 129–218, in particular on Gohory (p. 150 and n. 21). This contains a brief bibliography of studies up to 1985, with particular emphasis on the connection between Paracelsianism and heretical groups, Huguenots and Puritans. A specialist of paracelsism, who is in fact more interested in the German or English linguistic area, A. G. Debus, *The French Paracelsian* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 26–8, 31, refers to previous studies by Walker, Hannaway, Couliano, and observes that the Paracelsianism of Gohory 'should be centred less on practical medicine than on the occult interpretation of the Paracelsian description of the cosmos'. Matton, Kahn and other scholars of the school of Secret have recently published new works; here we only cite those which are indispensable.

[59] Gohory, *Compendium* (*Praefatio in scholia*), p. 262: "ut taceamus tanquam Christianae sapientiae circa aeternitate rerum contraria".

[60] Gohory, *Compendium*, p. 262: "Omnia creata simul eodemque tempore esse in increato, sicut imago in lignum. Exemplum rude mysteriorum cerni in lacte, quod mysterium est casei, butyri, atque huiusmodi: caseum esse materiam etiam vermium qui in ipsum nascuntur".

Here we have a theory and a picture reminiscent of Menocchio's *Cheese and worms*, so dear to Carlo Ginzburg.[61] It was one of the articles condemned in Paris and had previously been criticized by Erastus.[62]

For Giordano Bruno too, time was eternal, with no divine creation of the universe and its parts, which, however, correspond to the archetypes of the divine mind—the One-and-All.

The elements proceed from the original magma, and the four elements are four worlds.[63]

Bruno's philosophical culture and strictness of reasoning were certainly more profound than those of Paracelsus of Hohenheim, Jacques Gohory or John Dee, but in some ways the Nolan resembled these rather than following in the footsteps of the refined and cautious Hellenist, Ficino. Who knows if Helmstedt was the scene of illuminations and evocations like those which Paracelsus' *famulus*, Joannes Oporinus, claimed to have witnessed in Basle, or like the angelic evocations performed by John Dee in Prague?

§ 3. *Bruno as a reader of Lullian and pseudo-Lullian works*

When a reader has a weakness for forbidden writings there is no way to curb him. Giordano Bruno had this weakness and the authors mentioned above did not account for all his forbidden and clandestine reading. One may almost say that the Index of forbidden books was his bibliographical guide. In addition to Agrippa and Trithemius (whose *Steganographia*, as soon as it was printed in 1606[64] that is, six years after Bruno's stake, was placed on the *Index*), the works of Lull and the pseudo-Lullians, which contained combinatory and also alchemical

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[61] See C. Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi* (Turin, Einaudi, 1976).

[62] Kahn, *Cinquante-neuf thèses, cit.*, p. 173. On this point see Thomas Erastus, who was, according to Debus, also known to Gohory.

[63] Gohory, *Compendium, cit.*, p. 27 ss.: "Omnia autem elementa continere aliqua rationalia et irrationalia, sic ex elementi separationes procreationum et ex procreationibus postrema mysteria. Elementa autem quatuor totidem esse mundos. Sic Plato, qui numero mundos ad quique de singulis elementis singulos constituerent, credibilitatem eis concessit".

[64] For the *Steganographia* see J. M. de Bujanda, *Index des livres interdits* (Sherbrooke, Editions de l'Université Sherbrooke/Geneva, Droz, 2002) vol. XI, *Index librorum prohibitorum 1600–1966*, p. 894; hereafter cited as *Index*, followed by the volume number in Roman numerals and page numbers in arabic numerals.

art, aroused Bruno's curiosity and spurred him on to draw his reading from the Index.

In his fourth Venetian interrogation, when asked "if he had read books by similar heretical theologians, and if so, which?", Bruno replied that he had read, but not possessed, writings by Luther, Melanchthon and Calvin; but he admitted to having "kept other books by condemned authors, such as Ramon Lull and others who had treated of philosophical subjects".[65] Today we may wonder why Lull was on the Index at all.[66] We think of Blessed Raymund of Majorca as a hermit, as a missionary among unbelievers, and as an ingenious but harmless inventor of combinatory art, which was later set against the Ramist method,[67] and finally came to be considered a prefigurement of informatics. This was certainly one aspect of his thought which interested Giordano Bruno (thanks to his excellent memory this technique enabled him to carry out highly lucrative and prestigious teaching), but it was

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[65] Firpo, *Il processo cit.*, p. 177 (2 June 1592).

[66] For the fourteenth-century precursors, see M. Menendez y Pelayo, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles* (Madrid, Editorial Catolica, 1978), I, pp. 546–48, on the Dominican Nicholaus Eymerich, who had also attacked Lull in the *Tractatus intitulatus Fascinatio lullistarum* in 1371. All in all, twenty or so Lullian works were cited and censured in the fourteenth century by Eymerich (1320–1399) in his *Directorium Inquisitorum* and condemned in a Papal bull that he himself falsely attributed to Pope Gregory XI: the *Directorium*, a manual for inquisitors, had been printed on the orders of the *auditore rotale* Francisco Peña in 1578, thus renewing the polemics and fourteenth-century censure for and against Lull and reproposing the false Gregorian Papal bull. Lull was spared in the first Tridentine edition of the *Indice dei libri proibiti*, also because from Majorca and from Barcelona an entire committee of theologians arrived to safeguard their revered fellow countryman. Notwithstanding this, a little later Raimon Lull was included in the *Index* of Venice in 1554 (*Index, III, Index de Venise 1554*), pp. 99, 104, 349–51, that lists at nn. 503–22, 374–75 the Lullian works condemned on the basis of Eymerich and of the Papal bull attributed to Gregory XI. Cfr. *Index*, *VIII*, *Index de Rome 1559*, pp. 302–3: 'Raimundi Lulli opera per Gregorium XI damnata'. *Index*, *IX 1596*, pp. 423, 318–19, 48, 73, 168, 373 n. 25 and *passim*; see *Chartularium* edited by Denifle-Chatelain and the Lullian bibliography of Rogent-Duran, see M. Battlori, 'Il lullismo en Italia (Ensayo de sintesis)', *Revista de filosofia* 2 (1943), p. 518; Id., *Il lullismo in Italia*, Roma, Antonianum, 2004, Id., 'Entorn de l'antilullisme de S. Robert Bellarmino', *Estudios lullianos* I (1957), pp. 97–99.

[67] See P. Rossi, *Clavis universalis. Arti della memoria e logica combinatoria da Lullo a Leibniz*, (Bologna, Il Mulino, 1983, 2nd edn.); L. Bolzoni, *Le stanze della memoria* (Turin, Einaudi, 1995); Id., *La rete delle immagini* (Turin, Einaudi, 2002). F. A. Yates, *The Art of memory* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), was wrongfully criticized by R. Pagnoni Sturlese in the "Introduction" to his edition of Bruno, *De umbris idearum* (Florence, Olschki, 1991), pp. lv–lvi. A complete collection of Bruno's *Opere mnemotecniche*, edited by R. Pagnoni Sturlese *et al.*, Milano, Adelphi, 2003, has just been published and financed by the Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento; this only makes the inclusion of some of these writings (*Medicina lulliana*, *Lampas*) in OM more absurd.

probably not the only aspect of the Majorcan teacher's work to be appreciated by Bruno.

Lull was a realist philosopher of the 'via antiqua', decidedly anti-Averroist and anti-Thomist. In his *Tractatus de articulis fidei Christianae* he had declared that all divine predicates (including the Trinity and the Incarnation) could be demonstrated by reason: for this thesis his contemporaries accused him of rationalist extremism.[68] Could this work have provided the inspiration for that booklet written by Bruno and subsequently lost, *Di Dio per la deduzione di certi suoi predicati universali* ('On God, deduced from some of his universal predicates') which Mocenigo could have handed over to the Inquisitors?[69] Gilles Gourbin, who published the *De umbris idearum* and other works by Bruno in Paris in 1582, shortly before this had published works by Lull: these included not only his *Ars brevis*, but also the *Tractatus*, which was Lull's most explicit as well as most radical expression of metaphysical realism. This printing by Gourbin, was not the 'editio princeps', but it appears to have been the occasion that led to Lull's inclusion on the Index; it was also the occasion that excited Bruno's enthusiastic interest. The technique of concentric wheels, described in the *Ars brevis* and the *Ars magna* and elsewhere, was well known. These works by Lull or by his imitators on combinatory practices were fairly widely read. Gourbin himself had reprinted *De auditu kabbalistico* (a Lullian pseudepigraph written in Italy by Pietro Mainardi in the early sixteenth century);[70] another work printed by Gourbin was the *Explanatio compendiosaque applicatio artis* by Bernard Lavinheta, much used by Bruno, which was also on the *Index*.[71] Since these writings were reprinted by Gourbin it is probable that Bruno discovered them and read them in his workshop. He had already made use of Lull's combinatory technique in his *De umbris idearum*, though the editors of this and of *Opere magiche* consider Lavinheta, rather than Lull, to have been Bruno's source for this work.[72] Indeed, the editors clearly

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[68] Firpo, *Il processo cit.*, pp. 145, 292.

[69] Firpo, *Il processo cit.*, p. 41.

[70] Allow me to refer to the special study on it reprinted in my collection *L'apprendista stregone* (Venice, Marsilio, 1995). It is difficult to understand why it has been argued that there was no interest in the Lullian art in sixteenth-century Italy.

[71] *Index IX* (*Parme 1580*), p. 90. The compilation that Lavinheta wrote and printed in Lefèvre's Paris in 1523 is only the most important of a series of pseudo-Lullian texts produced by that group.

[72] G. Bruno, *De umbris idearum*, ed. by R. Sturlese (Florence, Olschki, 1991), p. lxxiii, where she admits that "l'importanza del ruolo giocato da Raimondo Lullo" in the *De umbris*: "L'influenza del Doctor Illuminatus va vista non solo nella natura combinatoria

do not realize that the concentric wheels of combinatory technique were invented by Lull and not by Bruno.

Other aspects of Lullism merit attention. First and foremost, the figure of the idiot, of the simple man, of the enlightened hermit. We read in Bruno's *Praefatio in Lampadem combinatoriam*, written and printed in Wittenberg in 1587, that there are many who consider Lull to be illuminate ("Raymundum Lullium revere divinitus in multorum peritia illuminatum profiteri non cunctaverunt").[73]

Having quoted Pythagoras, who in order to develop a great and true knowledge of nature spent ten years as a contemplative hermit, and having spoken of Zoroaster, Xalmoxis, Abbaris, Moses and other 'magicians' listed by Ficino as *pious philosophers*—not to mention Jesus Christ himself[74]—Giordano Bruno adds two more of his favourite writers to this list, Lull and Paracelsus:

> In his hermitage Ramon Lull, a completely foolish and idiotic man, showed with his discoveries to be very deep. Paracelsus who preferred to be called a hermit rather than a master or doctor, became the new prince of physicians and author not inferior to anyone.[75]

It appears that no one has noticed that Lull's works listed in the Index include his *Philosophia amoris*, which was also published in Paris in 1516 by Lefèvre d'Etaples: this is a work which, for good reason, has not been mentioned in historical studies on combinatory art. Yet it attracted the

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del sistema [...] e nell'impiego di ruote mobili come strumento meccanico per generare le combinazioni, ma anche nell'idea di un'arte inventiva, di un'arte come metodo di ricerca. Mentre tuttavia per Lullo l'arte opera con principi che sono ad un tempo logici e metafisici, l'inventività dell'arte lulliana si realizza solo e proprio in virtù del fatto che essa opera con segni manipolabili"; *ibid.*, pp. xii–xiii on Gilles Gourbin, also editor of Bovelles, Patrizi, Raimondo Sabunda; in the bibliography Sturlese does not cite Lull, but only Lavinheta, *ibid.*, p. 205.

[73] OL, II/2, p. 235.

[74] OL, II/2, p. 181: "Jesus Nazarenus non prius coepisse mirabilia dicere et operari fertur quam post conflictum cum diabolo in deserto habitum". A little further on he takes up the topical list again, which after Ficino had been repeated many times and with many variations: "Hinc olim Aegyptiis et Babiloniis ociosi contemplatores, Gallis Druidae, Persis Magi, Iudaeis Pharisaei, Indis Gymnosophistae, Christicolis Monachi, Babassi Mahumetanis, ut vel naturae rerum contemplatores vel morum iuxta leges essent contemplatores, optime fuerant instituti".

[75] Bruno, *Sigillus sigillorum*, in OL, II/2, p. 181: "Raymundus Lullius apprime stultus et idiota ex eremo in pluribus inventionibus se profundum exhibuit. Paracelsus, qui magis eremitae quam doctoris vel magistri titulo gloriatur, novus et nulli inferior medicorum extitit princeps et author". See Scaparrone's and Tirinnanzi's notes to *De vinculis*, OM, *cit.*, p. 550 and ss.

attention of historians specializing on Lull, such as Llinarès, and also of Yates in her earliest articles on the Majorcan hermit.[76]

Bruno discovered Lull thanks to the biography by Charles de Bovelles, whom he considered "more illustrious in brilliance and judgement" than the chief of his group Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples.[77] Bovelles' book may have been suggested to Bruno in Paris by that same group which, having promoted the reprinting of many Lullian works, later was to have Gourbin publish Bruno's *De compendiosa architectura et complemento artis Lullii*. Paris was a Lullian center *par excellence*. It was there that Lull had held disputations and had discovered his disciple, Thomas le Myésier,[78] to whom "he taught his art" and "he gave instead of a dead letter a vivifying doctrine", which is a Heaven's gift ("spiritus sancti scientia…gratiae donum sive scientiam infusam").[79]

Lull's 'mystical' writings, *Liber contemplationum idiotae, De amico et amato,*[80] *Proverbia Remundi, Philosophia amoris*,[81] printed by Lefèvre, portray him

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[76] Yates, *Lull and Bruno. Collected Essays, I* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 78 ss.

[77] OL, II, 2, p. 235: "Mitto quantum Lullio tribuat mille in propositis Stapulensis ille Faber, in cuius unica philosophia iuxta peripateticorum dogmata Gallia gloriatur; mitto Carolum Bovillum, non tam (si Aristarchorum ferulae subiciatur) orationis stilo Fabro ipso humilior, quam (si e cathedra philosophiae examinentur) ingenio illustrior iudicioque in multiplici disciplinarum genere maturior et excultior, qui de Lullii vita scripsit Lullianaeque doctrinae edit ubique specimen et ubique pro summo habet honore, ut Lullianus apparet"

[78] See J. N. Hillgarth, *Ramon Lull and Lullism in Fourtheenth-century France* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1971).

[79] *Acta Sanctorum Junii*, ed. Sollier, V (Antwerp, 1709), p. 673: "Artem suam edocuit, mercedis loco reddens pro voce spirituum, pro emortua littera vivificantem doctrinam. Vere enim vivificantem doctrinam eius dogmata censuerunt, quorum facio ipse alios judices […] non esse hominum, sed potius caelitus […] indulta. Etenim praeclara spiritus sancti scientia (quam nos gratiae donum sive scientiam infusam appellamus) ea momento in hominibus supplet, perficit, operatur, quae per hominum doctrinam nullo aut labore aut tempore complentur". For all the context of Renaissance Lullism, see J. and T. Carreras y Artau, *Historia de la filosofia española. Filosofia cristiana de los siglos XIII al XV* (Madrid, R. Academia de ciencias exactas, 1943), T. II, part IV: "Esbozo de una historia filosofica del lulismo", in particular, pp. 206–9.

[80] See E. F. Rice, *The Prefatory Epistles of J. Lefèvre d'Etaples* (New York, Columbia U.P., 1972), pp. 140–45. In the dedication to this 1505 edition Lefèvre praises the "contemplatio quae fit in Deo" in Lull's work so much that "demisso mundo Deum in solitudine quarerem".

[81] *Ibid*., pp. 373–78: "in philosophia porro amoris nusquam ab aeterno amato mentem deflectit"; "neque deterreat legentem sancti heremitae sermonis simplicitas, quem viventem vita simplex, vilis habitus et neglectus mundus Christo faciebant carissimum". As in Nicholas of Cusa, edited in that period by Lefèvre, in Lull too the 'idiot' or simple man, who scorns the vanity of the world, whilst catching its essence, is used in contraposition to the scholastics and their 'disputatiunculae'.

as a hermit, a simple man and an 'idiot', but one who was able to communicate with simple people and convert them, a missionary and a prophet.[82] This picture, which expresses the antagonism to scholastics and Averroists, is similar in style and vehemence to Bruno's representation of the "pedants" and Aristotelians of his time.

Bruno, who was himself certainly one of the most important representatives of the Lullian tradition in the Renaissance, points first to the commentaries of Agrippa and then to Lefèvre and Bovelles.

In the tradition of the philosophy of love and the commentaries on the *Song of Songs*, a tradition very near to mystical literature, these Lullian masterpieces hold the place of honour. May we not suspect—I am merely suggesting a simple and as yet unproven research hypothesis—that for the *Heroici furori* or the *De vinculis* Bruno was inspired not only by Ficino's commentary on Plato's *Symposium* but also by these works of Lull? Here, and in the other 'mystical' writings of Lull referred to above, he certainly recognized his beloved figure of the simple 'idiot', with his deep understanding of things that eluded learned men and scholastics.

In the *Sigillus sigillorum* Bruno gave his version of the *pia philosophia* myth and the topics of the lineage of the sages who, according to Ficino, Pico, Lefèvre d'Etaples, Champier, Agrippa and many other natural magicians,[83] had performed wonders and founded civilizations and religions. In the case of Bruno, the list has clearly been revised since it includes not only Raimon Lull, but also Paracelsus. There is also a new, very personal change of emphasis which it seems to me

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[82] *Hic continentur libri Remundi pii eremitae... Liber de laudibus b. Virginis… Libellus de natali pueri parvuli… Clericus Remundi… Phantasticus Remundi*, Paris, for Guidonem Mercatorem, 1499, c.aiv: "neque vos quicquam deterreat quod vir ille idiota fuerit et illiteratus, horride rupis et vastae solitudinis assiduus accola, nam et creditur quadam superna infusione dignatus, qua sapientes huius saeculi longe precelleret". This and other contexts of Lefèvre, Bovelles and various Lullians active in Paris are analysed in more detail in my *L'apprendista stregone, cit.*, p. 69 ss., 166 ss. (on Bruno, Lull and the editions Gourbin, that reprinted the pseudo-epigraph, *De auditu kabbalistico*, compiled in Italy in the early sixteenth century).

[83] *Sigillus sigillorum*, OL, II/2, pp. 180–81: "Pythagoras decennio ab hominum frequentia liber, magnum atque veracem naturae rerum se reddidit contemplatorem. Solitudine viginti annorum in omni magia et divinatione profecit Zoroaster, ut et Xalmoxis, Abbaris et alii. E deserto Oreb Moses supra illius magos Pharaoni prodiit admirabilis. Jesus Nazarenus non prius coepisse mirabilia dicere et opinari fertur, quam post conflictum cum diabolo in deserto habitum. Raymundus Lullius apprime stultus et idiota ex eremo in pluribus inventionibus se profundum exhibuit. Paracelsus, qui magis eremitae quam doctoris vel magistri titulo gloriatur novus et nulli inferior medicorum extitit princeps et author". See *supra*, p. 151, n. 56.

has not yet been observed, though it deserves attention given the highly significant aim and meaning of its message.

This new emphasis does not lead to that substantial 'concordia' which Ficino and Pico, behind apparent divergences, had claimed to recognize and which could have the effect of bringing together differerent traditions of 'docta religio' and 'pia philosophia'.

Influenced by a strong preoccupation with religion, Ficino began by accepting, almost without noticing it, the distinction, dear to the gnostics and maintained by Averroes, between two types of humanity: simple, ignorant men who are not initiated into the sacred mysteries, and those who are able to reach the spirit under the letter, the philosophers.[84]

Not so Bruno, for whom magicians were "contemplators of nature", simple men who had all lived the life of hermits, cutting themselves off from society: Pythagoras lived outside, "free" from the human community for twenty years; likewise Xalmoxis, Abbaris, Moses, the wise men of Egypt and Babylon, the Druids,[85] Persian wizards, Pharisees, gymnosophists, Christian monks and Muslim *babassi*—had all developed their particular powers in a similar experience of solitary life. Also like them—in Bruno's opinion—was Jesus Christ, but only after the "conflict with the devil that He had in the desert"; only then did he become powerful; it was owing to this fundamental experience and not to his relationship with God the Father that he began to "speak and perform wonderful things". In the Christian era there were two great inspired men: Lull, a self-taught man ("apprime stultus et idiota"), despised by learned men and the scholastics of his time, who having retired to his hermitage ("ex eremo") had shown his creative power through deep inventions of the Art; and Paracelsus, prince and founder of the new medicine, who "gloried in the title of hermit rather than in that of doctor". This version of the 'pia philosophia' and 'docta religio' tradition is no longer that of Ficino and Pico, though it was possibly influenced by the ideas and attitudes of the Nicodemites, a generation

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[84] E. Garin, *L'umanesimo italiano* (Bari, Laterza, 1952), Ch. III, p. 121, where we find the citation of a classical Ficinian formulation: "factum est ut pia quaedam philosophia quondam et apud Persas sub Zoroastre et apud Aegyptios sub Mercurio nasceretur, utrobique sibimet consona, nutriretur deinde apud Thraces sub Orpheo atque Aglaophemo, adolesceret quoque mox sub Pythagora apud Graecos et Italos, tandem vero a divo Platone consummaretur Athenis".

[85] See *supra* n. 56; to mention the Druid cannibals and polytheists among the ancient sages was dear to French authors, see D. P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology* (London, Duckworth, 1972), pp. 63, 73–79, 87–88, 94–96.

which was, alas, overcome by the events of the Counter-Reformation. The hermit Giordano Bruno may, for a brief period, have collected a few keen disciples, sworn in under a prudent oath of initiation and secrecy; but his end was far more tragic than that of the 'stultus et idiota' Lull who had risked being stoned to death by infidels, or than the misfortunes of Paracelsus: he was condemned by his own community to a death penalty comparable to that of Christ himself.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HERMETISM AND MAGIC IN GIORDANO BRUNO. SOME INTERPRETATIONS FROM TOCCO TO CORSANO, FROM YATES TO CILIBERTO

> *Halfway to the altar the procession met the cleaning woman, who, with soap, water and scrubbing brush, was scrubbing at the blazon of the Romzberk family, inlaid into the floor in many-coloured marbles.*
>
> Bruce Chatwin, *Utz*

Now that we have become familiar with Renaissance thinking on magic and astrology—thanks to all the research on and editions of the magical writings of Ficino,[1] Pico,[2] Agrippa,[3] Pomponazzi[4] and Giordano Bruno,[5] it is hard to realise that up to half a century ago these subjects were not considered pertinent to the history of philosophy. Naturally they were fully documented for the ancient world and were studied by good classicists (Bouché-Leclerq, Usener, Boll, Bezold, Gundel, Rohr and others), by art historians and by scholars interested in European popular traditions. But for great historians like Burckhardt and Huizinga they were of interest only as anecdotes or signs of contemporary customs. The complicated, albeit not very precise theories that lay behind astrology and magic were not taken into consideration. Even Lynn Thorndike's monumental and fully documented *History of Magic and*

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[1] Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, A Critical Edition and Translation with Introduction and Notes by Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark, Binghamton N. Y., The Renaissance Society of America, 1989; Id., *Sulla vita*, ed. by A. Tarabochia Canavero, Milano, Rusconi, 1995.

[2] Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *De hominis dignitate, Heptaplus, De ente et uno e scritti vari*, ed. by E. Garin, Firenze, Vallecchi, 1942; Id., *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem*, ed. by E. Garin, Firenze, Vallecchi, 1946; Id., Conclusiones sive theses nongentae ed. B. Kieszkowski, Genève, Droz, 1973; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae. Le novecento tesi dell'anno 1486*, ed. and transl. by A. Biondi, Firenze, Olschki, 1995.

[3] Cornelius Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia libri tres*, ed. V. Perrone Compagni, Leiden, Brill, 1992.

[4] Pietro Pomponazzi, *Gli incantesimi*, ed. by C. Innocenti, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1996.

[5] Giordano Bruno, *Opere magiche*, edition directed by M. Ciliberto, ed. by S. Bassi, E. Scapparone, N. Tirinnanzi, Milano, Adelphi, 2000, pp. CLXII–1594.

Experimental Science, which is very useful to this day and provides scholars with a fund of historical data on the lives and writings of magicians, astrologers and alchemists, is not oriented to philosophical problems. When Thorndike wrote about Ficino, Pico, Pomponazzi, Paracelsus, Bruno, Kepler or other thinkers he clearly did not consider the role of philosophical ideas in their magic, even though this one was based and built upon the other. His lack of interest in this discipline made it possible for him to write of "Bruno's experience with the Inquisition, more tragic than any of the foregoing, but perhaps less related to magic and science (sic!)".[6]

Recently it has been even too strongly asserted that neither Tocco nor Gentile nor—I would add—Corsano[7] had noticed this aspect of Giordano Bruno's thinking; what is more, no historian of philosophy, whether of the idealist or of the positivist school, would ever have considered his views on magic under the heading of philosophy. The idea which is at the center of *Philosophie et magie*, a little book published by Hélène Védrine in 1996, would have been inconceivable.

§ 1. *F. A. Yates, D. P. Walker and other scholars in the Warburg Institute*

The first people who noticed that astrologers and magicians had theories linked with the philosophical ideas that they professed, were Ernst Cassirer and his pupils Edgar Wind and Erich Weil.[8] As professor of philosophy in Hamburg, Cassirer tackled a number of crucial subjects (astral determinism or free will, sympathy, marvels etc.) in a book which he dedicated to Aby Warburg in 1927.[9] Warburg's library, having been opened to the public in that city, became a research center for the revived interest in the ancient "demonic" mentality and tradition. Like Erwin Panovsky, his pupil Edgar Wind and last but not least Warburg's librarian, Fritz Saxl, Cassirer did not hesitate to appreciate these ideas and their importance. Raymond Klibansky, who worked in

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[6] L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, New York, Columbia U.P., 1941, VI, p. 155; cfr. pp. 423–428. The author appears not to be up to date on Tocco's, Mondolfo's, Cassirer's research on Bruno's ideas on science and magic.

[7] Cfr. *infra* nota 52.

[8] E. Weil, *Die Philosophie des P. Pomponazzi*, "Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie", XLI, 1932, p. 127. Id., *La philosophie de P. Pomponazzi. Pic de la Mirandole et la critique de l'astrologie*, Paris, Vrin 1985. On E. Wind cf. *infra* nota 38.

[9] E. Cassirer, *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance*, Leipzig, Teubner, 1927; Engl. Transl. By M. Danandi, Oxford, Blackwell, 1963.

the Warburg Insitute when it was still in Hamburg and later in London, wrote that for Aby Warburg "magic and astrology were powers of the spirit closely linked with other powers and the development of reason. He had devoted his life to studying these connections. In order to understand the history of forms he considered it necessary to be very well informed, particularly about rites and superstitions".[10]

In the very middle of the 20th century a French student of Hellenism, Père A.-J. Festugière, not only made a contribution to a critical edition of the *Corpus Hermeticum* which surpassed that of W. Scott,[11] but in a long monograph analysed the aspects and ideas of hermetism ('astrology and occult sciences', 'the cosmic god', 'doctrines of the soul', 'the unknown god and gnosis').[12]

It is true that the distinction he put forward between theological treatises and popular writings (formulas, recipes, prayers and other rituals etc.) had been discussed, yet far better than theologically based studies like that of Hans Jonas on gnosis,[13] Festugière's research made it possible to discern the connection between Hermetic ideas and the practice of magic in the first centuries of our era. The long and lasting fortune of this tradition, the Hermetic testimony found in the works of Augustine and Lactantius, familiarity with *Asclepius* from the 12th century on and Ficino's translation of *Poemander*, were all recognized

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[10] R. Klibansky, *Le philosophe et la mémoire du siècle. Entretiens avec G. Leroux*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1998, p. 36.

[11] *Hermetica*, ed. W. Scott, I–IV, Oxford, 1924–36 (whose vol. IV has been ed. by A. S. Ferguson); *Corpus Hermeticum*, texte établi par A. D. Nock et traduit par A. J. Festugière, Paris, 1954 (Festugière is responsible there for the critical edition of Stobeus' fragments).

[12] A.-J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermes Trismegiste*, Paris, Gabalda, 1950–1954: the four titles I mentioned correspond to the 4 volumes of this great research project. Cf. E. Garin, 'Nota sull'ermetismo del Rinascimento', *Testi umanistici sull'ermetismo*, ed. by E. Garin ("Archivio di filosofia"), 1955, pp. 7–19 (reprinted in his *La cultura filosofica del Rinascimento italiano*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1961); F. A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964, p. x; D. P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology*, London, Duckworth, 1972, p. 17, all of them see in Festugière "the greatest modern authority on *Hermetica*". Before this classic Festugière had devoted a book to *La philosophie de l'amour de Marsile Ficin et son influence sur la littérature française au XVI^e siècle*, Paris, Vrin, 1941 : in this he did not focus on Hermetic sources in Ficino's writings. It is a great pity that discussions on the Yates thesis' (by Charles B. Schmitt, J. E. McGuire, Robert Westman, Brian Copenhaver, Brian Vickers, Hilary Gatti, Anthony Grafton, and other scholars) never mention Festugière, i.e. the fundamental premise of all research on Hermetic ideas.

[13] H. Jonas, *The Gnostic religion*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1958, in particular Ch. VI on *Poemander*. Jonas, a pupil of Bultmann, had prepared several studies on it: his book *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist* had been published in Göttingen in 1934.

by Eugenio Garin in a series of studies on the 12th century and the Renaissance that were published in the early fifties.[14] In particular the *Note* with which, in 1955, he introduced the Hermetic writings of Humanists like Lazzarelli, Agrippa and Zorzi,[15] clearly showed this trend of thought.

About ten years after this and other papers by Garin, Yates published her *Giordano Bruno*, a book which became a worldwide bestseller: discussion began on the autonomy, between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries, of this current, which was not recorded in the canon of the four Greek schools of philosophy. Kristeller failed to mention it even in his research on Ficino, where this great philologist had however been obliged to recognize that Ficino's most successful work was the *De vita*.[16] Later he was openly criticized for this.

In his preface to the *Collected Essays* of Frances Yates, D. P. Walker firmly pointed out that in a review of Kristeller she had drawn attention to the fact that there was no sign at all of "any discussion on the Hermetic influence on Renaissance thought. This omission would appear to be a great pity, since Kristeller is extremely knowledgeable on this subject and has contributed invaluable original research" on Giovanni Mercurio da Correggio and on Lazzarelli. With an optimism which I fear has been belied by recent developments in philosophical historiography in my country, Frances Yates went on:

> Garin's epoch-making book *Medioevo e Rinascimento* (1954),[17] has given rise in Italy to a new school of thought and research on these problems. "In order to assess adequately", says Professor Garin "the magical theme at

[14] E. Garin, *Medioevo e Rinascimento*, cit.; Id., *Studi sul platonismo medievale*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1958, Ch. II on the "Liber Alcidi".

[15] Cf. *supra* note 12.

[16] P. O. Kristeller, *Supplementum ficinianum*, Firenze, Olschki, 1937, I, p. 20.

[17] Yates quotes frequently from this book by Garin, from which she took inspiration. In Garin, *Medioevo e Rinascimento cit.*, pp. 151–152, one reads: "Sempre Bruno nelle *Theses de magia*, determinando secondo un ordine antico la scala degli esseri e degli influssi di Dio sulle cose, sottolinea […] l'attività magica che ascende al cielo, che congiunge le cose, che armonizza i contrari, che pacifica le lotte mondane e fa degli elementi un sublime concento. Sarà proprio la magia che operando miracoli, penetrando nei cuori degli uomini con incantamenti e seduzioni, verrà riformando fino alle radici la città terrestre" Garin did not take this page from Corsano… Ciliberto, on the other hand, in the introduction to his *Umbra profunda*, Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1999, giving a historiographical outline of research on magical theory, goes directly from Corsano to Yates, not even mentioning Garin, his own professor and forerunner at the INSR, who was the very scholar who suggested to several pupils this research on Bruno's magical writings. (Cf. Bruno, *Opere magiche cit.*, XXXI–XXXII).

> the dawn of modern culture, it must be realised that this motive, always present in the Middle Ages, passed (in the Renaissance) from the cultural subsoil into the light of day, assuming a new aspect under which it became common to all great thinkers and scientists. All of them owed an impulse to it, when—and even above all when—like Leonardo, they sharply condemned the inept cultivators of low-grade necromantic practices. To mention only the greatest, Marsilio Ficino dedicated to *magia* a conspicuous part of his *Libri de vita*; Giovanni Pico wrote an eloquent and courageous apology for it; Giordano Bruno defined the *Magus* as the wise man who knows how to operate… How much Francis Bacon owed to magical-alchemical tradition is clearly shown in his way of thinking of science as power, an investigation which listens to the language of nature in order to take possession of it." [18]

Having quoted this passage Yates declared her own theory:[19]

> The reformed learned and philosophical magic of the Renaissance was the Renaissance equivalent of science, passing at times and in some thinkers, into genuine science. It was the scientific basis of Renaissance philosophy. The naturalist philosophers are not entirely out of touch with their origins in the Ficinian magical and dynamic view of nature. And when the animist universe, operated by magic, transforms into the mathematical universe operated by mechanics, the Seventeenth century had arrived.[20]

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[18] Yates, *Collected Essays*, III, cit., pp. 313–314.

[19] Yates, 'No man's land' (a review of Kristeller's *Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance*, Stanford, Stanford U.P., 1964), published in *New York Review of Books*, November 19, 1964; reprinted in her *Collected Essays, II*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983, p. 77 (*ibid.*, p. XII, cf. D. P. Walker's preface). Cf. Yates, *G. Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition cit.*, pp. 176–177: "a theme which I believe may be of absolutely basic importance for the history of thought—namely, Renaissance magic, as a factor in bringing about fundamental changes in the human outlook [...] Quite apart from the question of whether Renaissance magic could, or could not, lead on to genuinely scientific procedure, the real function of the Renaissance Magus in relation to the modern period (or so I see it) is that he changed the will. It was now dignified and important for man to operate; it was also religious and not contrary to the will of God that man, the great miracle, should exert his power. It was this basic psychological reorientation towards a direction of the will which was neither Greek, nor medieval in spirit, which made all the difference".

[20] Yates, *Collected Essays, II cit.*, p. 77; she went on: "if we recognise with Professor Garin that there is a Hermetic core within Neoplatonism—a magico-scientific basis to that branch of Renaissance thinking—the mists begin to clear over no man's land". *Ibid.*, p. 78: "We all descend from Descartes and the seventeenth century [...] what did the seventeenth century emerge from? [...] Perhaps we should look harder for the hidden springs of the movement which was so fateful, seeking them not in humanism nor in a rather confused 'Neoplatonic' philosophy, but in the accompaniments of that philosophy, Hermetism, Cabalism, Lullism, Pythagorean numerology".

Frances Yates would not have been able to hold this theory in the Thirties: she herself declares that at that time she conceived the history of science in the terms indicated by Duhem and focusing on late scholasticism:[21] she "had no idea at all about the nature of the Hermetic tradition" .[22]

A few years before her extremely successful book, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition in the Renaissance* (1964), Daniel P. Walker had published in 1958 the first historical outline of magical theories from Ficino to Campanella.[23] Perkin Walker (as his friends called him) did not become celebrated and fashionable in the same way as Yates. But this is not the only reason why he was not drawn into the unpleasant and deliberately planned controversy aimed at the so-called "Yates thesis": as we saw above, this saw a link between the "operative" orientation of Hermetic magicians and the scientific revolution. Dame Frances did not develop this hypothesis in her *Giordano Bruno* book but in an article published in 1968.[24] This was in fact a theory that had already been advanced by an Italian historian, Paolo Rossi, in a book published in 1957, *Francesco Bacone dalla magia alla scienza*. Later Rossi was also one of the first to severely criticize Garin, Yates and the numerous works stimulated by their ideas on Hermetism. It was a long controversy and one that may not be finished even now:[25] but Walker was not harmed

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[21] Later Yates (see her *Collected Essays, III cit.*, p. 240 n. 94) did not agree with Duhem who used to put Bruno not beside Ficino, but beside Johannes Major.

[22] Yates, *Collected Essays, III cit.*, pp. 313–314.

[23] D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella*, London, The Warburg Institute, 1958; this was the first book by an author who was still young, but it had the honor of being reviewed both by E. Garin, *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, XXXIX, 1960, pp. 156–157 (e cfr. *ibid.*, XXXV, 1956, p. 578), and by P. O. Kristeller, *Speculum*, XXXVI, 1961, pp. 515–517. The latter considers "the subject evidently unattractive for most contemporary scholars"; he praises Walker: "unlike Thorndike, he emphasizes the general philosophical and metaphysical principles underlying magical theory rather than the detailed notions of magical practices, and insists on the connections that link magic not only with astrology, alchemy and the sciences, but also with music, poetry, and oratory, and with the philosophical and religious thought of the period, especially with the Platonist tradition". Yates, *G. Bruno cit.*, p. 7, wrote that Walker's book "brings out for the first time shades of differences in Renaissance attitudes to magic and indicates the bearing of the subject on religious issues"; p. 142 and note 2: "The problem of Renaissance Magic in relation to the religious problems of the Sixteenth Century is a vast question and one which cannot be tackled here". "The pioneer in seeing it as a problem is D. P. Walker".

[24] Yates, 'The Hermetic Tradition in Renaissance Science', in *Art, Science and History in the Renaissance*, ed. by Ch. S. Singleton, Baltimore, J. Hopkins Press, 1968, pp. 255–274.

[25] I dealt with this historiographical debate in my *L'ambigua natura della magia*, Venezia, Marsilio, 1994, 2ª ed., pp. 250–327; an item to be added to the books and papers I

by it. In fact he had set his sights on Neoplatonism rather than on Hermetism[26] and other subjects claimed his attention more. One of these was the idea of the stoic ancestry of the "spirit" as a vehicle of the soul, which provided a network of links with physiology, medicine, psychology, astrology and more. In many of his writings Walker insisted on this idea[27] with the continuity, without repetition, that was his wont. Where Yates was fascinated by the practical and creative abilities of the Hermetic magicians, Walker's interest in the musical theory, in the harmony both of sounds and of the cosmos, in the most universal connotation of this word,[28] prompted him to focus on a dif-

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discussed there is Hilary Gatti, *Giordano Bruno*, Ithaca, Cornell U.P., 1999, in which the author is extremely critical of Yates.

[26] Walker, *The Ancient Theology cit.*: the first four among these collected essays had been published before *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*: they deal with "Orpheus the Theologian", "Savonarola and the Ancient Theology", "The Ancient Theology in Sixteenth Century France", "Atheism, The Ancient Theology and Sidney's *Arcadia*". In the introduction, p. 3, Walker declares his interests: "The magical strand in the tradition of the Ancient Theology was of the greatest importance during the Renaissance. Since, however, it has been fully and brilliantly treated in F. A. Yates' *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, and since I have dealt with some aspects of it in my book on Ficino's magic, I shall in this book omit it as far as possible. But the dividing line between magic and religion, between theurgy and theology, is a hazy one, and the two overlap and interfere. I shall not therefore avoid all mention of magic [...] Moreover, the acceptance or rejection of the Ancient Theology was frequently determined to a high degree by the attraction or dangers of the magical tradition that went with it". *Ibid.*, p. 14: "In this book I shall deal mainly with only two of the Ancient Theologians: Orpheus and Hermes Trismegistus" (i.e. "an Hellenistic amalgam of Platonism, Stoicism, Judaism and Christianity, set in a gnostic and magical framework", cfr. pp. 17–19 e *passim*). Also in the series of his musicological papers Walker considers themes relevant to the history of ideas: "The Harmony of the Spheres", "Kepler's celestial music", "Mersenne's Musical Competition of 1640", in his *Studies in Musical Sciences in the Late Renaissance*, London, Warburg-Leiden, Brill, 1978; "Le chant orphic de M. Ficin", "Ficino's *spiritus* and music", "Francis Bacon and *spiritus*", "Origène en France au début du XVI^{e} siècle", "Eternity and the Afterlife" in his book *Music, Spirit and Language in the Renaissance*, London, Variorum, 1985.

[27] Walker, *The Astral Body*, "Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld", XXI, 1958, pp. 119–133; *Medical Spirit in Philosophy and Theology from Ficino to Newton*, in *Arts du spectacle et histoire des idées. Recueil offert en hommage à J. Jacquot*, Tours 1984; *Medical Spirit and God and the Soul*, in *Spiritus. IV Colloquio internazionale del Lessico intellettuale europeo*, ed. by M. Fattori e M. L. Bianchi, Roma, 1984, pp. 233–244.

[28] Walker, *Studies in Musical Sciences cit.*, p. 3: "The connexion of the Harmony of the Speres tradition with [cosmology and astronomy...] are obvious enough"; pp. 4–5: "First, the Harmony of the Spheres may itself be the subject of a piece of music"; "Secondly, by way of astrology, our tradition was active in Ficino's attempt to create magically powerful song, his Orphic singing, and in later versions of his magic", such as Paolini's or "Campanella's, in those astrological rites he secretely performed with Pope Urban VIIII we should remember also Ficino's quite impressive *spiritus* theory of the power of music; and someone should look seriously at his commentary on the *Timaeus*, from which it appears that he had read in manuscript Ptolemy's *Harmonica.*

ferent attitude in Renaissance man, one which was more complex but without Hermetic characterization. In his view the Hermetic tradition was simply one of the streams which, like Platonism, Neoplatonism and Orphism converged in *Ancient Theology*. It was not even the main stream. To sum up, one might say that Walker was closer to the interpretive line of Kristeller while Yates was more in line with Garin. For Walker the magic stream in the theological tradition of the ancients was of the greatest importance during the Renaissance [...]. The dividing line between magic and religion, between theurgy and theology, is indistinct, and the two fields overlay and interfere with one another [...] Moreover, acceptance or refusal of the theology of the ancients was often strongly determined by the attraction or the perils of the magical tradition in question.

We have the impression that for Perkin Walker the tradition of magic in the Renaissance was personified by Ficino, who played the lyre, and for Frances Yates by Giordano Bruno, who practised magic. It is worth pointing out the differences between Yates and Walker who are often assimilated in view of the close collaboration and understanding of each other's ideas that grew up between them. They had been brought into contact in the early forties because articles taken from Walker's Oxford PhD thesis on 'Vers et musique mésurée' had aroused Yates' interest when she was engaged on *The French Academies of the 16th Century* and needed to interpret hymns, festivals and other musical documents of the court of the Valois. Shortly before this she had joined the editorial

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Thirdly, the mathematical and astronomical side of the tradition, the effort to make a precise correlation between the ratios of musical intervals and the distances, speeds or orbits of the planet, led in at least one case, Kepler, to interesting and original explanations of the emotional power of music" [...] an examination of those contrasting points of view and of controversies arising from them, mentioned by John Dee in his famous preface to Billingsley's *Euclid* (1570) as dispute among 'Harmonists and Canonists', would certainly throw light on the relationship in early modern science between empiricism and more or less *a priori* mathematical theory. Walker admits that about intonation "there are important connections with science, other than the astronomical and cosmological ones". *Ibid.* p. 25, after citing Mersenne and Christian Huygens, who in their musical theories referred to the Pythagorean discovery of consonant relations, he wrote that "Newton, like Francis Bacon, took the legends of antiquity very seriously, and believed in a tradition of ancient wisdom, whose deep truths were hidden in a veil of fables". In drafts which Newton prepared in the last ten years of the seventeenth century for a second edition of his *Principia*, and left as unpublished manuscripts, his aim was mainly to find "anticipation of his own scientific discoveries in the surviving writings of the ancient theologians, the *prisci theologi*, and in the fables of antiquity", in particular "in the version of the Pythagoras story given by Macrobius, who of course links this musical discovery with the Pythagorean doctrine of the harmony of the spheres".

staff of the recently founded review of the Warburg Institute[29] where she proceeded to introduce Walker, who was fifteen years younger than her, as a scholarship holder.

At the Warburg Institute[30] Walker carried on at the same time his research on the history of Renaissance musicology as well[31] as on the history of ideas from the 15th to the 18th century.[32]

> This was the beginning of a scientific exchange and a friendship that lasted without friction for nearly forty years. Each of them read and suggested improvements in each other's manuscripts, criticizing or encouraging as needed or according to their characters. Between these two there grew up an affectionate friendship which did not need to be expressed in words, as happens, perhaps, with two timid people who are also scholars and writers. Perkin Walker wrote, as he spoke, with superb clarity and control, with an assurance and mastery of the suject and its structure. His lucidity, which was never condescending, was the result of his originality and never of simplification. He had the gift of discovering interesting subjects, which then became essential, and of making them accessible and important for others.[33]

Frances Yates was more or less self-taught,[34] while Walker had all the blessings of a scholar from the Oxford stable. Thus the exchange of

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[29] Being the only British-born person on the committee Yates was responsible for revising the first papers published by the refugees in English; cf. Yates, *Collected Essays cit*, III, p. 317: "I was consulted and shown such current work by original and profoundly learned members of the Institute" See F. Saxl, 'The Classical Inscription in the Renaissance', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, IV, 1940–1941, p. 18, who thanks her for her revision; this is the only mention of her work as editor of the *Journal* that I found in the first years, but Yates was included on the board of editors as early as volume VI, 1943, where she took the position E. Wind had left after he moved to the USA.

[30] Walker started working there as Lecturer, then he became a Reader and gave courses on Renaissance culture; finally he was appointed Professor for the history of classical Tradition, teaching for a while at the University College, later in the Warburg Institute, which was then part of the University of London. Walker was frequently a visiting professor at American universities.

[31] This was a new field he created at the Warburg Institute: James Hutton, Penelope Gouk and for a part of his writings Charles Burnett continued to work in his line.

[32] D. P. Walker, *The Decline of Hell. Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964; Id., *Unclean Spirit. Possession and Exorcism in France and England in the late Sixteenth and early Seventeenth Century*, London, Scholar Press, 1981; Id., *Il concetto di spirito o anima in Henry More e Ralph Cudworth*, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 1986.

[33] J. B. Trapp, *In Memory of D. P. Walker*, At the Warburg Institute 29 May 1985.

[34] E. H. Gombrich in *Frances A. Yates 1899–1981*, London, The Warburg Institute, 1982, pp. 10, 13–14. Gombrich's obituary has been reprinted in his *Tributes. Interpreters of our Cultural Tradition*, Oxford, Phaidon, 1984. Yates obtained an "external" B.A. in French and later as an internal student an M.A. in the same discipline at the University College of London. She never studied history at the University, nor had she "worked for a doctorate".

information and interpretation could be advantageous to both, but especially to her. Sir Ernst Gombrich observed that she was a "reader of primary rather than of secondary sources", a preference that is uncommon and in my opinion precious. In this way it could happen that she would amaze her colleagues or her readers because of her little consideration or even "disregard of established views": yet this was not simply the result of her lack of academic training, but rather of her "unconventional courage".

In the opinion of Hugh Trevor-Roper and of Gombrich, Dame Frances possessed a special quality of "historical intuition", which accounts for the "rapport she had established with the people of the past" and enabled her to understand "the mentality of past ages with greater immediacy than most of us".[35]

It was just this situation of being "self-taught" which must have led to her expository method; this took nothing for granted, but in plain language and with extreme simplicity ran over the same course that she herself had followed in order to grasp a problem. This style is completely different from the precious, Hermetic manner preferred by many Renaissance scholars, which alludes hermetically to ideas known to cultured people or even only among specialists.

§ 2. *Renaissance magic as seen by Yates and Walker*

In her autobiography Frances Yates describes how, having missed the career bus, when young she avoided every kind of traditional training, had no ties with the school system and was thus free to follow any line of research that she encountered.[36] This lack of conditioning made her congenial to the small interdisciplinary group of wanderers who were gathered in the Warburg Institute: later Walker too was accepted there, introduced by her. What these two had then in common was a passion for French Renaissance literature and culture, to which before long they added 15th and 16th-century Italian as well as Elizabethan culture. They were among the first English scholars to join the Institute,

[35] Gombrich in *Frances A. Yates 1899–1981 cit.*, pp. 17, 20. *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11, Hugh Trevor-Roper wrote: "She was herself, in the best sense, an amateur—but an amateur who combined enthusiasm with exacting professional standards" and was gifted with "a powerful historical imagination".

[36] Yates, *Collected Essays*, III cit., p. 307.

which, being in exile, lived sparingly on funds donated by the Warburg bank and subsequently by Samuel Courtauld; it was only in 1946 that it became an organic part of London University.

Frances Yates had been introduced there by Edgar Wind,[37] whom she had met in November 1936 in the house of Charles and Dorothy Singer. Wind was one of the most important of the Warburg group up to the outbreak of World War II, when he moved to the United States.

In the Thirties this philosopher, who had been a pupil of Ernst Cassirer, became Frances Yates' chief point of reference. Wind had already been a member of the Warburg Library in Hamburg and had contributed decisively to organizing its inevitable move to London in the Thirties; after this he worked for the Institute and with Rudolf Wittkower was co-editor of the *Journal of the Warburg Institute*. His philosophical training and his constant attention to subjects relating to natural magic are clearly seen in his book *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*.[38] While before meeting Wind socially Yates had never heard of the Warburg Institute, Wind maintained that he "thought he had heard her spoken of" on account of her first books, *John Florio* and *A Study of Love's Labours Lost*. Having heard of the "difficulty she had met with" in trying to translate Bruno,

> he invited me to use the library of the Warburg Institute, then in its first home in England, in Thames House. I eagerly availed myself of the opportunity and thenceforth was in touch with the Institute. The Institute's library is designed to present the history of culture as a whole—the history of thought, science, religion, art—and to include in this the history of imagery and symbolism. The library works in association with the

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[37] Yates, *G. Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition cit.*, p. XI.

[38] On E. Wind, who as a student and young teacher stayed at the University of Hamburg, then as a refugee teacher worked in the United Kingdom, and later in the USA (in 1942 obtained a post as a teacher in the history of art in the University of Chicago), cf. C. Ginzburg, 'Da A. Warburg a E. H. Gombrich (note su un problema di metodo)', *Studi Medievali*, S.III, VII, 1966, pp. 1019–1022; S. Ferretti, 'Edgar Wind: dalla filosofia alla storia dell'arte', *La cultura*, 29/1–2, 1991, pp. 346–357; M. Ghelardi, 'L'allievo di Warburg', *L'indice dei libri*, 1993/2, pp. 19–20; Id., 'E. Wind e Michelangelo', *Il Sole 24 ore*, November 25, 2001; H. Bredekamp, 'Falsche Skischwünge. Winds Kritik an Heidegger und Sartre', in *Edgar Wind Kunsthistoriker und Philosoph*, ed. by H. Bredekamp, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1998, pp. 207–218; B. Buschendorf, 'Auf dem Weg nach England. Edgar Wind und die Emigration der Bibliothek Warburg', in *Portrait aus Bücher. Bibliothek Warburg und Warburg Institute. Hamburg—1933—London*, ed. by Michael Diers, Hamburg 1993, pp. 85–128; B. Buschendorf, 'War ein sehr tüchtiges gegenseitiges Fördern: E. Wind und A. Warburg', *Idea. Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunsthalle*, IV, 1985, pp. 165–209. Cfr. also H. Lloyd-Jones, 'A Biographical Memoir', in E. Wind, *The Eloquence of Simbols*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 1983, pp. XIII–XXXVI.

> photographic collection, which is arranged iconographically. All this was entirely new in this country.[39]

As we have already seen, contrary to the idea of art history as defined by Riegl and Wölfflin which was current at the time, we have here a "conception of culture as a coherent entity which Warburg had deduced from Burckhardt: culture understood in an almost anthropological sense".[40] As for the presence of these subjects and their organization, the Warburg library was definitely far ahead of what was subsequently done by the historians of the *Nouvelles Annales*.

In addition there was particular attention to subjects (Magic, Demons, Neoplatonic hierarchy), which are fundamental for linking Antiquity with the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Ernst Gombrich wrote that:

> In London, at the Warburg Institute, everyone was talking about Neoplatonism. It was the big fashion of that period: Raymond Klibansky and Edgar Wind were no longer in London, but Rudolf Wittkower worked on Neoplatonism in the writing of architectural treatises; Frances Yates studied the esoteric trends of the Renaissance that had influenced Giordano Bruno; D. P. Walker knew all about Renaissance music and magic. I too was interested in this and I read Marsilio Ficino.[41]

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[39] Yates, *Collected Essays*, III, p. 313; *ibid*., p. 317: through Saxl and Bing she came in touch with Aby Warburg's method on mythology and its history "learning something of the European tradition, living in a wider world of scholarship than I had known […] which I could never have learned in more normal academic channels in England".

[40] Ginzburg, 'Da A. Warburg' cit., p. 7. These aspects of Aby Warburg's work have been re-evaluated by historical anthropologists only recently: his paper, read in Binswanger's hospital, on the journey undertaken 27 years before to New Mexico, where he visited Pueblos natives, was published at the time; cf. A. Warburg, *Schlangenritual. Ein Reisebericht*e, ed. U. Raulff, Berlin, Wagenbach, s.d.; Raulff, *Parallel gelesen: Die Schriften von A. Warburg und Marc Bloch zwischen 1914 und 1924*, in *Aby Warburg. Akten des intern. Symposions Hamburg 1990*, ed. by H. Bredekamp, Weinheim, VCH, 1991, pp. 167–178. Yates, *Collected Essays*, *III*, p. 313; The Institute's library is designed to present the history of culture as a whole—the history of thought, science, religion, art—and to include in this the history of imagery and symbolism. […] All this was entirely new in this country"; pp. 316–317: "I had absorbed at least one of its ideas, the encyclopedic idea, that in the Renaissance all subject connected with one another and were not departmentalized […] the Warburg approach to mythology and its history—an absolutely new world to an English-educated person at that time"; «the round, encyclopedic history, the history of symbolism and imagery integrated with general history—in short *Warburgian history* as I had picked it up through informal contacts with the Warburg Institute in the years since 1937». See also Yates' celebration of *Le Warburg Institute et les études humanistes*, in *Pensée humaniste et tradition chrétienne aux XV^e^ et XVI^e^ siècles*, Paris, 1950, pp. 343–347.

[41] E. Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest. Conversations on Art and Scienc with D. Eribon*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1993, p. 000 (originally published as D. Eribon – E. Gombrich, *Ce que l' image nous dit*, Paris, Adam Biro, 1991).

It was possible to say of Saxl and Ms. Bing that "by dint of practising magic, astrology, Neo-platonic smoke and Oriental talismans they were never tempted by irrationalist vocations, on the contrary they accentuated rationalist attitudes which were sometimes almost Voltairian".[42] The same could be said of Wind, of Walker[43] and also of Frances Yates, of whom Gombrich had written that she "became increasingly absorbed in the various manifestations of this current, but she made no concessions herself to occultism of any sort".[44] What is more, when, in their maturity, Perkin Walker reviewed Dame Frances' book *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, he continually emphasized that in order to understand Ficino and the other magicians one needed to bear in mind that "the Church possessed its own magic, and there was no room for any other magic". One must interpret magic and angelology in comparison with the mentality of the Church and the faithful:

> It is a matter of considerable historical importance, because the possible heterodoxy or the unintentional devil worship of those dealing with angels was extremely strong and worked against the Rosicrucians [...] it is important to remember that in this period, since all Christians believed in angels, people disapproved of conversing with them, not because those who did so were considered superstitious or hallucinated, but because the practice was believed to be diabolical—which is far more dangerous.[45]

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[42] E. Garin, *Introduzione* a F. Saxl, *La storia delle immagini*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1965, p. XXV.

[43] So far as Walker is concerned, one has only to think of his studies on the decline of belief in Hell or on ceremonies for exorcising people who appeared to be possesed: Walker is never sympathetic to occultism and his rational attitude is already clear. In his book *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 36, Ficino's magic "had many sources. Perhaps the most important, though Ficino does not avow it, and may not even have been conscious of it, is the Mass, with its music, words of consecration, incense, lights, wine and supreme magical effects—transubstantiation. This, I would suggest, is a fundamental influence on all mediaeval and Renaissance magic, and a fundamental reason for the Church's condemnation of all magical practices. The Church has her own magic; there is no room for any other". Neither Walker nor Yates was sympathetic to twentieth-century religious-magical sects. After having written and read at a conference in Paris (September 2001) the present paper, I read, with great surprise and displeasure, A. Grafton, 'Der Magus und seine Geschichte(n)', in *Der Magus. Seine Ursprünge und seine Geschichte in verschiedenen Kulturen*, ed. by A. Grafton et al., Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 2001, p. 5, where he wrote that Yates "erfreute sich gleichzeitig [in den sechziger und siebziger Jahren] einer enormen, heimlichen Berümtheit in den halbdunklen, marihuanaumdufteten Zimmern der Blumenkinder, deren Misstrauen gegenüber dem Establishment und deren Liebe zu Aussenseitern und Sonderlingen sie teilte".

[44] E. Gombrich in *Frances A. Yates 1899–1981 cit.*, p. 18.

[45] *History of Science*, XI, 1973, pp. 306–309.

As a person, Frances Yates reminded me of Agatha Christie's Miss Marple, but as a writer she was like a combination of Carlo Ginzburg and Jacques Le Goff. Like these two she was loved by a public of non-specialists and became a best-selling author. Her obituary in *The Times* said that her books were "as exciting to read as any detective story".[46] Walker was never like this. I do not wish to be irreverent, for I had the greatest admiration for both of them and they honoured me with their friendship, but I should like to put forward a hypothesis as to why their fortunes were so different. Walker, who was most efficacious as a teacher, could offer her information, connections and observations, but she was unable to infuse into him her wonderful gift of writing. When we observe the successive dates of their works,[47] might we not be tempted by an irreverent doubt: that Perkin Walker acted as prompter to Frances Yates? Nevertheless, the merit of having had the most fortunate inspiration remains hers: to have seen in Giordano Bruno the culmination of the operative attitude of Hermetic magic.

A very interesting writer on the subject of angelology, Giordano Bruno, in the past few years has enjoyed strong but questionable topical interest and here we can see a great difference between Walker and Yates: while Walker devoted only one page of his book to him—defining the *De vinculis* as a book dealing with theories of emotions, including those in the sexual sphere [48]—Frances Yates made the Nolan the center of her most important books, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* and *The Art of Memory*. In these and other works of hers we find many points of view that are still interesting, but there is one in particular that I should like to emphasize:

> The ban of the medieval Church on magic had forced it into dark holes and corners, where the magician plied his abominated art in secrecy. Respectable people might sometimes employ him surreptitiously and he was much feared. But he was certainly not publicly admired as a religious philosopher. Renaissance magic, which was a reformed and learned magic and always disclaimed any connection with the old ignorant, evil or black magic, was often an adjunct of an esteemed Renaissance philosopher. This new status of magic was undoubtedly mainly due to that great flood of literature which came in from Byzantium, so much of which dated

[46] *The Times*, 3 October 1981, reprinted in *Frances A. Yates cit.*, p. 6.

[47] Walker, *Vers et musique mesurée* (= *Musical Humanism*, "The Music Review", II, 1940-III, 1941); Yates, *The French Academies*, 1947; Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, 1958; Yates, *G. Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, 1964.

[48] Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic cit.*, pp. 83–84.

> from those early centuries after Christ in which the reigning philosophies were tinged with occultism [...] Thus Hermes Trismegistus was not the only most ancient theologian or Magus whose sacred literature was badly misled. Nevertheless it is probable that Hermes Trismegistus is the most important figure in the Renaissance revival of magic.[49]

§ 3. *Magic tricks of Professor Ciliberto*

According to Professor Michele Ciliberto, "If there is an excess in the historiography [on Giordano Bruno] in our century, it has surely been that of depicting all the last production and final work of Giordano Bruno under the heading of magic".[50] In order to rectify this situation, Professor Ciliberto has published his ambitious edition of Bruno's Latin works on magic, which he had announced in the following terms: "I myself, together with my students, have prepared a new critical edition (new critical text, commentary, and Italian translation) of Bruno's *Opere magiche*, to be published by Adelphi". Shortly before this, early in 2000, *Ciliberto* had published Bruno's *Dialoghi* with a commentary.[51] This edition of Bruno's Italian dialogues generated a sharp and protracted debate on the ethics of its publication and resulted in the setting up of a website (www.Giordanobruno.it) which reproduced the various articles, for and against, that had appeared in specialized reviews and in the press. According to Ciliberto, compared with *Opere magiche*, his highly controversial edition of the dialogues aimed

> to be something different: on the one hand to provide an interpretation of Bruno's thought, and on the other to determine what, if any, is the relationship between ourselves and Bruno's own philosophical 'experience',

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[49] Yates, *G. Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition cit.*, pp. 17–18.

[50] In the introduction to Giordano Bruno, *Opere magiche*, edited by S. Bassi, E. Scapparone, and N. Tirinnanzi, under the direction of M. Ciliberto (Milan, Adelphi, 2000), p. xx. Though Adelphi had planned to have the *Opere magiche* in the bookshops in the autumn of 1999, to sell it as a New Year's present, nothing appeared until mid-January 2001, by which time it was no longer defined as a "critical text". In the meantime, most advanced book reviews had already been printed.

[51] Bruno, *Dialoghi filosofici italiani*, edited by M. Ciliberto and N. Tirinnanzi (Milan, Mondadori, "Meridiani" series, 17 February 2000): this date corresponds to the fifth centenary of Bruno's being burnt at the stake. It was also the last moment when it would still have been possible to sell many copies of this required text to the candidates preparing for the 'habilitation' to teach philosophy in Italian secondary schools, the first of these examinations to be held after a hiatus of many years.

> if it is true—as is the case—that the greatness of a classic lies in its ability to reach out (*sporgere*) beyond the barriers of its own time.[52]

In view of this editorial programme, the reader would expect from the *Opere magiche* a monument of philological precision and an interpretation which compares Bruno's theory of magic with present-day theories—whatever might be the value of the latter—e.g. with contemporary philosophy of language, as Lehrich has recently done[53] or, as Albano Biondi, the first Italian translator of *De vinculis*, attempted, with C. G. Jung's analytical psychology.[54] But after a long wait, anyone hoping for something of this sort will be disappointed. I do not mean this as a reproach. For though I grant Giordano Bruno full marks for "reaching out" beyond his own time—to use an expression dear to the Marxist school of Bari—I do not believe that his magic deserves attention because it is relevant to our own time. If it were placed in the context of the religious and intellectual history of his own time, then indeed its importance would become clear. Unfortunately nothing of the sort can be found in the *Opere magiche*.

The presence of astrological, magical, and Lullian issues in Bruno is generally recognized, as is generally the case for all the philosophy of nature in the Renaissance. These influences made an impact on many authors, who in most cases combined and blended them together. But this does not alter the fact that these issues differ from one another. Astrology was a respectable discipline, taught in the universities and well received at court. The movements of the planets in relation to the fixed stars had been observed since antiquity; according to the theory of astral influences these observations served as the foundation of judiciary astrology and natural magic. Magic was not absent from the Middle Ages, but at the end of the fifteenth century it experienced a strong new upsurge owing to the combination of two elements: first, the powerful influence of religious anxieties and witchcraft practices; and, second, the recovery and wide circulation of the Hermetic and Neoplatonic texts

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[52] M. Ciliberto, 'Il testo rapito. Una polemica fra brunisti', *Rivista di storia della filosofia* LV (2000), pp. 235–52.

[53] See C. I. Lehrich, *The Language of Demons and Angels. Cornelius Agrippa's Occult Philosophy* (Leiden, Brill, 2000): one can read there some interesting observations based on recent philosophy of language in this dissertation which deals with secrecy, cryptography and initiation.

[54] Albano Biondi, 'Introduction' to G. Bruno's, *De magia. De vinculis in genere* (Pordenone, Biblioteca dell'immagine, 1986), pp. xvii–xix, where Ernst Bloch is also mentioned.

translated by Marsilio Ficino. According to the Ciceronian tradition, the art of memory worked by a system in which the speaker had to list and to follow a series of "places" (*topoi*, *loci*), to which he connected the themes of his speech. According to Ramon Lull, on the other hand, it worked by means of combinatory techniques. It is true that Lull, as a continuator of the *via antiqua*, had been condemned, but it was for his mystical theories and his claim to demonstrate the divine essence, and not for the crime of magic. The art of memory is connected to the techniques of oratory and the need—extremely strong in the pre-Gutenberg era—to memorize data. Indeed, it has very much to do with the encyclopedic ideal and the unity of knowledge. Prodigious claims were sometimes made for these rhetorical artifices. The first pages of an *ars memoriae*, or of a treatise in the Lullian tradition, often read like the words of an inspired teacher: some penniless writers did make use of such deceptive advertising in order to boost their charisma and increase their clientele But this was not magic. I would also not rule out the possibility that such constituted the framework in which Bruno presented his Lullian-mnemotechnical arts; but the content of these writings is not magical. The specialists confirm this. This is why Dame Frances Yates found it necessary to write two separate books: *Giordano Bruno* and *The Art of Memory*;[55] and Paolo Rossi,[56] and more recently Lina Bolzoni[57] distinguished Ciceronian mnemotechnics as well as Lull's combinatory methods from magic in the true sense. These currents, which often appear together, must be analyzed separately. *Ars memoriae* and *ars combinatoria* are not *ars notoria*, nor are they other types of magic. To give an example from everyday life, one finds in so-called 'books of secrets' certain techniques proclaimed as prodigious: they deal really with subjects such as cosmetics, distillation and gastronomy, and they are pretended prodigious; but this does not mean that gastronomic recipes, etc., bestow magical powers. For this reason it is both inopportune and unjustifiable to include *De medicina lulliana* and *Lampas triginta statuarum* in Bruno's *Opere magiche*, where they occupy no less than 830

[55] Yates, *Art of Memory* (London/Chicago, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), has been criticized by R. Pagnoni Sturlese in the introduction to her edition of Bruno, *De umbris idearum* (Florence, Olschki, 1991), pp. LV–LVI.

[56] Rossi, *Clavis Universalis: Arti della memoria e logica combinatoria da Lullo a Leibniz* (Milan, Ricciardi, 1960); 2nd edn. (Bologna, Il Mulino, 1983).

[57] L. Bolzoni, *Le stanze della memoria* (Turin, Einaudi, 1995); Id., *La rete delle imagini* (Turin, Einaudi, 2002).

pages.[58] It would have been better if Professor Ciliberto and his team had divided into two volumes (each part would have been more manageable as well as more coherent) the contents of the last volume of the national edition of Bruno's *Opera latine conscripta*: it comprised in a helter-skelter manner all that had been left of his unpublished Latin writings, but it did not proclaim itself in its title as the *Opere magiche*.

Moreover, nowhere in the introduction or apparatus of the *Opere magiche* did Professor Ciliberto and associates analyse the peculiar characteristics of Bruno's Lullian writings and their complex technique. From a philosophical point of view, it is also inexcusable that Bruno's discussions of the void according to Lucretius,[59] of the infinite worlds of Democritus,[60] and of the body that without any sense perception can be "modified" by the imagination,[61] were simply passed over without mention. Furthermore, other sources should have been supplied, for instance where mention is made of a manual of magic or where an allusion to the Paracelsian corpus or a citation from Pomponazzi occurs.[62]

These unpublished works by Bruno, which were unknown until the end of the nineteenth century, were a brilliant discovery and a mature result of the philology of the late nineteenth century. I say this not only because Felice Tocco, with the ongoing assistance of Gerolamo Vitelli and palaeographical advice of Cesare Paoli, included them in the national edition of Bruno's Latin works[63] (a project the quality of which was also guaranteed by Francesco Fiorentino, a very competent historian who had worked on Bruno and other Renaissance thinkers and had however dedicated the first volume to Francesco De Sanctis, then Minister of Education), but also because some of the great European scholars of the day had discovered and studied the manuscripts. I am of

[58] OM, pp. 760–1590.
[59] OM, pp. 200–202.
[60] OM, p. 330.
[61] OM, p. 334.
[62] At least certainly on p. 364 where there is a peculiar and revealing quotation from Pomponazzi on *psylli*; it would have been wise to check whether the references to Pomponazzi did not come from Cardano, as is often the case.
[63] *Jordani Bruni Nolani opera latine conscripta*, III, edited by F. Tocco and G. Vitelli, III (Florence, 1891). In the Introduction Pagnoni Sturlese deals with the project of this eight-volume edition (Naples/Florence, Morano, 1879–1891; reprinted in Stuttgart, Fromann, 1962, and now also available on microfiche and CD-ROM), it was prepared by Fiorentino, Imbriani, Tallarigo and others.

course speaking of three very famous figures whom Professor Ciliberto, despite his expertise in the history of historiography, completely ignores. Wincenty Lutoslawski was one of the fathers of structuralism. In the same year (1891) that he published his book on the *Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic*, where he had suggested the stylometric method for determining the chronology of Plato's dialogues, he also called attention to Bruno's unpublished works on magic. In his work on Bruno, Lutoslawski enjoyed the assistance of Christof Sigwart, a logician and historian of philosophy of the neo-Kantian school of Württemberg. Lutoslawski, however, did not believe in the authenticity of these magical texts. It was Remigius Stoelzle, an authority on Aristotle's idea of the infinite, who argued for their authenticity and who, after the discovery of the draft copy (MS Noroff 136), by Lutoslawski in Moscow, himself discovered a second manuscript, the clean copy in Erlangen (UB, MS 493; Irm. 1279). To Stoelzle goes the merit of having discovered and published for the first time, in 1890, the *Tractatus de unitate et trinitate divina*, for which Abelard was condemned by the Council of Soissons in 1121. Stoelzle was such a dedicated and original scholar that Tocco and Vitelli had no hesitation in handing over to him the work on the Erlangen manuscript, which, like that of Moscow, had been copied by Hieronymus Besler. This copyist's hand does not present the "very considerable deciphering difficulties" of which Ciliberto complains.

Like the corresponding volume in the Tocco edition, this elegant Adelphi edition (*kostbar* in all senses: despite the generous financial backing of the CNR, the Italian National Research Council) is also the product of collaboration, namely, of three young specialists who worked under Professor Ciliberto, the director of the edition. Among other duties, Professor Ciliberto sits on the board of Rinascimento, the organ of the Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, of which he is the president. Formerly the director of the philosophy section of the Gramsci Institute (the Italian Communist Party's Institute for advanced study) in Rome, Ciliberto now also sits on the board of *L'Erasmo* (issues n. 1 to n. 18, 2001–December 2003): this is a cultural magazine for entertaining supporters of the party of Silvio Berlusconi, and is directed by the bibliophile Marcello Dell'Utri, a right-wing Senator of the Italian Republic, who for years was under indictment for Mafia charges and later was convicted.[64] In the introduction Ciliberto thanks two other

[64] See *La Repubblica*, 31 August, 2002.

professors, Giancarlo Garfagnini for medieval philosophy and Gabriella Albanese for medieval, humanist and Renaissance philology, along with four young scholars, for their essential contribution to the 'preparation of the texts'.[65] On the other hand, no palaeographer appears to have been consulted.

Critical editions require a great deal of thankless drudgery; few are produced in Italy and they receive scant respect in Italian philosophy departments. People usually prefer to 'redo' former editions.[66] For this reason many important writers remain for the most part unpublished (Pomponazzi, Magalotti, etc.), while others who are fortunate enough to be already available in a readable text (Pico, Bruno, Vico, etc.) receive a better—or worse—fate.

It is indeed a pity that such a large number of people—all well-trained and qualified[67]—should have failed to produce something more innovative and detailed than the national edition. The way the nineteenth-century group worked is shown by a document in the 'fondo Tocco', i.e. the books bequeathed by Felice Tocco to the library of the Facoltà di Lettere in Florence. The document is Lutoslawski's edition of Bruno's *Lampas triginta statuarum*[68] collated and corrected for the national edition. Those indeed were the days when professors did their own collation of manuscripts! Of the numerous specialists in the present group, not one has worked on the manuscripts or attempted a new transcription of the text, which, in the parts that I have collated, faithfully reproduce every blank space[69] and even the typographical errors of the Tocco edition; very occasionally, without explanation, a passage which Tocco gave in the text is moved to the apparatus, or vice versa. The footnotes

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[65] *Opere magiche*, xxx–xxxi.

[66] Tirinnanzi, Bassi and Ciliberto himself had published several of Bruno's writings with commentary in the paperback series of Rizzoli (BUR) and at Laterza. See among other texts by Bruno, *Eroici furori* ed. by S. Bassi (Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1995); ed. by N. Tirinnazi (Milan, Rizzoli BUR, 1999).

[67] I shall not mention the many guarantors who have stepped into the shoes of De Sanctis and Fiorentino since I am not sure of identifying them all. Among the young editors, N. Tirinnanzi, author of *Umbra naturae. L'immaginazione da Ficino a Bruno* (Rome, Edizioni di Storia e letteratura, 2000), had published an Italian translation of Bruno, *De rerum principiis* (Napoli, Procaccini, 1995), with a preface by Ciliberto. Bruno's *De magia* and *De vinculis* had been translated by A. Biondi (Pordenone, Biblioteca dell'Immagine, 1986). In OM there are brand-new translations only of *Lampas triginta statuarum*, *De magia mathematica*, *Theses de magia*.

[68] *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* III (1890), 526–71; see C. Stoelzle, 'Die Erlanger Giordano Bruno-Manuscripte', *ibid*., III (1890), 573–78.

[69] OM, p. 348, xvii, line 7; p. 346, xxxi, line 9; etc.

are based on Tocco.[70] At least 95 per cent of the variants are identical with those of Tocco. To take another example of this parroting, the apparatus duplicates Tocco in simply calling *De magia* a text of Bruno's which Ciliberto has here renamed *De magia naturali* (in spite of the further risk of confusion with the *De magia mathematica*). Tocco's more general title, incidentally, seems to me better suited to the content of this particular work. There is, as in Tocco, a rare Latin verb, *appellunt* (i.e. they drive or cause to move), which in spite of its root *pello* (i.e. I strike'), has been translated with the Italian verb *ricerchino* (i.e. they seek out').[71] Would it not have been advisable, if this is the meaning and translation according to Ciliberto, to emend the text with, say, the verb *appetibunt* (i.e. they will seek out)? But in this luxurious book no one had any intention, or desire, to improve on Tocco's text.

It is quite understandable that Tocco, Vitelli and their associates had little interest in magic, and even less sympathy. It was a subject that would have been hard to appreciate in 1891, for men whose philosophies were rationalistic, neo-Kantian or positivistic. Nevertheless, they did an excellent job, even if, as they themselves acknowledged, in the case of *De magia mathematica*, they did not reproduce the entire text. Tocco and Vitelli did not publish this compilation in a complete form. For long citations they were content simply to give very precise references to the sources they had identified. The new edition of *De magia mathematica* reintegrates the sources cited by Bruno. This feature should therefore be a most important contribution to Bruno studies and the chief merit of the Adelphi volume. But here again, the citations have not been transcribed from the manuscript, but merely reproduced from present-day standard editions of Ficino, Pico, Agrippa or whoever is being referred to. This would be more acceptable if, like Tocco, the present editors had provided cross-references instead of inserting long passages into the text as though these were literally a part of it. This criterion has been enunciated and adhered to without hesitation in the Adelphi edition on the pretext of its necessity in order to bring the edition up to date in the citation of sources for which critical editions now exist. Yet it is a highly questionable criterion for a writer

[70] Among his other studies on Bruno, see F. Tocco, 'Le fonti più recenti della filosofia del Bruno', *Rendiconti dell'Accademia dei Lincei*, 1892. The Adelphi volume itself received the benefit of a presentation ceremony in the palace of Accademia Lincei in 2001.

[71] OM, p. 352.

like Bruno, all the more so in the case of these works of his written at Helmstedt, where he could dictate everything that interested him to his secretary, Besler and, if he wished, sum up or leave out of his compilation passages which he considered unimportant. So simply citing modern editions without any qualifications or further annotation risks importing words and passages that Bruno himself did not use or did not intend to be part of his text.

This fact is involuntarily admitted even by our editors of the new millennium (if I am allowed to reverse their description of Tocco and his coeditors…).

Their criterion is substantially the same as that followed by Tocco and his associates who, when making "collations" or references to such sources (pseudo-Albert, Ficino, Pico, Agrippa, Trithemius), admitted nonetheless that this method might lead to certain doubts.[72] As the Adelphi editors state, Tocco and his "nineteenth-century" editors "neglected more or less lengthy treatments present in the sources and merely extracted the names, qualities, and attributes of the spirits".[73] This choice of more "practical" passages is important. Frances Yates had already observed that in this work "the passages of Agrippa and Trithemius which Besler copied for Bruno were those which Bruno needed for his evocations", which is saying a lot. Bruno probably never intended these writings—*De magia naturali, Theses de magia, De magia mathematica, De principiis rerum, elementis et causis, De vinculis*—for publication, but if anything, for secret circulation, no doubt among the initiated. Chronologically they are all very close, to the point of being homogeneous. Cross-references between one and another are frequent. It would have been possible, using these cross-references, to reconstruct the order in which Bruno wished his works to be read. For example, *De magia naturali* explicitly refers back to the *Theses*, which in the Adelphi translation are entitled *Articoli sulla magia*.[74] One wonders

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[72] Bruno, *Opera latine conscripta cit.*, VIII, p. 492.

[73] Yates, *G. Bruno, cit.*

[74] The *Theses de magia* have been translated under the title "Articoli sulla magia": this means that Ciliberto's team is unaware that Bruno gave such a title to other works (*Centum et viginti articuli de natura et mundo adversus peripateticos*, 1586; *Acrotismus seu rationes articulorum physicorum adversus peripateticos*, 1588; *Articuli centum et sexaginta adversus huius tempestatis mathematicos et philosophos*, 1588); mainly they are not aware of the scholastic method of submitting theses to be discussed in public (as Pico and many others before him and after him had done), to attach comments or corollaria to each of them. One may wonder if, in this case, these comments may perhaps have been recorded by Besler

why. This rendering shows that the editors had not taken into consideration the fact that other works by Bruno have the word "Articuli" in their titles, and above all, that in changing the name from "Theses" to "Articles", no one has apparently remembered the scholastic habit of preparing "Theses" for disputation, as Pico and many others had done, and providing them one by one with solutions, commentaries, and corollaries. Nor has anyone asked whether the *Theses* might not be Besler's recording of a disputation actually held in a magic conventicle (I put this forward merely as a hypothesis to be examined, not as an asseveration). The references in the *Theses* are inexplicable and absurd unless one recognizes that the *Theses* refer to the real "articuli" of *De magia naturali*. The editors cannot, and do not even attempt to explain the cross-references which *Theses* XVIII, XXII, XXIII, XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX, XXXII, XXIII, XXXIV, XXXV, XXXVI, XXXVII, XLI, XLII, XLVIII, XLIX and LIII make to themselves. Let me give a couple of examples:

> XXII. Ratio quia magnes secundum genus attrahit, est consensus quidam formalis et effluxus quidam partium materialis, qui est ab omnibus corporibus ad omnia. Ratio huius consistit in exemplis quae sunt in articulo XXII°.[75]

or again:

> XXXV. Numerus unius vocis alterius vocis numerum subprimit, confundit vel etiam tollit. Per ea quae in XXXV° articulo.[76]

I defy anyone to explain these highly succinct cross-references unless they go to pp. 260, 264–65 where, in *De magia naturali*, one may read the true "articuli" which are taken and discussed in the *Theses*, with which in fact the work ends. The Erlangen manuscript is perfectly clear and gives the numbers of these "articuli" in the margins, but the new-millennium editors make no mention of this fact. One wonders whether the manuscript has indeed been examined with the attention needed to produce an edition ("critical" or otherwise), and whether the Adelphi edition is not based on a scanned copy of the nineteenth-century edition. These difficulties in fixing the relationship between the

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in the course of a disputation that really took place somewhere. There is another interesting fact to add: *Theses de magia* no doubt are the last section of *De magia naturali*: otherwise how may we explain the fact that they refer to themselves?

[75] OM, pp. 354–56.

[76] OM, p. 368.

two texts by means of the "movement" of their readings ("movimento variantistico" sic!) are borne out in a recent article by one of the editors, S. Bassi.[77] The article reiterates the view that "the *Theses* are a rewriting of *De magia naturali*",[78] without so much as a suspicion that they might be a section of the latter work itself.

It would surely have paid for Ciliberto to have tried to understand why these writings were so explosive and perhaps might have contributed even to Bruno's tragic end in the *Campo dei Fiori*. Giovanni Aquilecchia suggested that Bruno's return *en pays d'Inquisition* was due to his hope of obtaining a university chair, either in Padua, where the chair of mathematics had been vacant since 1588 (it was subsequently given to Galileo in 1592), or else in Rome itself, where Francesco Patrizi da Cherso had been hired.[79] Such audacity and naivety, although amazing, is not without precedent. Leaving aside the slightly different case of Pico's *Nine Hundred Theses*, Tiberio Russiliano, Paracelsus himself and Campanella, each tempted by a desire to obtain a chair, were no less imprudent. In these circumstances, the copyist Belser (far more than Giovanni Mocenigo) involuntarily brought about Bruno's tragic destiny. It was to this famulus, or secretary-cum-pupil, indeed alter ego, that Bruno had dictated his *Opere magiche* (just as he had had him copy other texts) between 19 November 1589 and the early summer of 1590 in Helmstedt, and again in 1591. Finally Bruno had followed Besler to the University of Padua, where Besler had become a procurator of the German nation. In Padua, Besler had gathered together a private audience of German students on Bruno's behalf, whom the latter had already met in Wittenberg or in Helmstedt (Michael Forgach and Daniel Rindtfleisch, as well as Valens Acidalius). Information on these individuals can be had from catalogues of two exhibitions (one in Cassino in 1992 and another to be discussed shortly, which Ciliberto himself had organized, though he may not have studied all its contents).

A book of exorcisms is noted in Mocenigo's denouncement of Bruno and listed among the volumes which Mocenigo confiscated from Bruno and handed over to the Venetian inquisitors. Bruno had thus returned to Italy with a bag full of necromancy.

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[77] 'Struttura e diacronia nelle '*Opere magiche*' di Giordano Bruno', *Rinascimento*, series. II, 40 (2000; *recte* Sept. 2001), pp. 3–17.

[78] Bruno, *Opere magiche cit.*, p. 401.

[79] G. Aquilecchia, *Giordano Bruno* (Rome, Enciclopedia Italiana, 1971), 80–82; reprinted (Turin, Aragno, 2001), pp. 73–76.

Bruno's magical-hermetical orientation already shows up in his English period, in the *Spaccio, Eroici furori*, and *Cena delle ceneri*. But these ideas, which were very common among philosophers, artists and *letterati* in the late sixteenth century, are not the only ones we need to stress in his magical writings in 1589–1590. That Ciliberto should insist on them now is a novelty worth savouring since in his introduction to Bruno's *Spaccio* he made it plain that he believed that Ficino in the *De vita* was discussing the immortality of the individual soul,[80] whereas this treatise deals with theurgy and magical therapy, even with the soul of the world, but not at all with the immortality of the individual soul.[81]

But on the *Opere magiche* there is much more to be said, which I hope I may succeed in conveying briefly.

The reader would expect to find in the Adelphi edition at least an attempt to place Bruno's magical works within their historical context. One of the best-known landmarks in the history of witchcraft is the *Hexenbulle*, i.e. the bull *Summis desiderantibus affectibus*, which Pope Innocent VIII issued against witches in 1486 (not in 1484 as stated on p. 20), at the instigation of Heinrich Institoris (Kramer). Together with another Dominican, Jakob Sprenger, Institoris subsequently published the *Malleus maleficarum*, in which the papal bull was used as a preface. A whole congress was devoted to the study of this inquisitorial manual.[82] On page 290 of the Adelphi volume we read that the two Dominicans simply "commented on" the *Hexenbulle*. The Bruno-team seems to have misunderstood a word in some English-language articles; but above all they failed to consider that two friars would never have dared to "comment" on the words of a reigning pope. Still less did they give thought to the reasons why the persecution of witches should have started anew during the Renaissance and spread rapidly like an epidemic. If we are aware of this context, we can well understand how even for a person as reckless as Bruno even the most minimal prudence necessitated maintaining secrecy and refraining from printing his writings on ceremonial magic.

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[80] Bruno, *Spaccio della bestia trionfante*, Introduction and commentary by M. Ciliberto, (Milan, Rizzoli BUR, 1985), p. 14.

[81] M. Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, a critical edition, edited and translated by C. V. Kaske and J. R. Clark (Binghamton N.Y., The Renaissance Society of America, 1989).

[82] See *Der Hexenhammer. Entstehung und Umfeld des 'Malleus Maleficarum'*, edited by P. Segl (Cologne/Vienna, Böhlau, 1988).

Working from recent editions, but ignoring the now plentiful historical research on Renaissance magic, the editors provide a long commentary at the end of each text. These commentaries are, however, rather hit-or-miss in respect of Bruno's text and pass over many passages which require comment. Here and there we also find errors. For example, the *De vegetabilibus* is frequently cited as being pseudo-Albertian (not a misprint; see pp. cxxxi, 120), when in reality this is the most highly valued of all of Albert's authentic works on the natural sciences. Does this confusion arise from the fact that Bruno does make use of other writings which really are pseudo-Albertian, such as the *De mirabilibus mundi* and the *Liber secretorum*? Or because in commenting on the *De vegetabilibus*, Albertus Magnus erroneously attributed it to Aristotle? But the fact that a commentator worked on a spurious text does not necessarily mean that his commentary is spurious; and in this case it most certainly is not.

The same may be said in the opposite direction of another of Bruno's few magic sources indicated in this edition, namely, the *Elementa magica*, cited as being by Pietro d'Abano (d. 1315). This text is indeed a spurious work, probably written shortly before 1565, when it was included in *Pantopolion*, a collection of works concerning ceremonial magic, reprinted in the first volume of Agrippa's *Opera omnia*. One would not expect to find such a muddle in so ambitious a publication as the Adelphi *Bruno*. Furthermore, given the bulk and the importance of these texts, the lack of an analytical index is another drawback.

The repeated strong, though not surprising, criticisms of Ciliberto's previously mentioned edition of the *Dialoghi filosofici italiani* commit one mistake in my opinion, namely, that of insisting exclusively upon the obvious impropriety of his appropriation of Giovanni Aquilecchia's critical edition, which is duplicated as though it were a mere "reference text" in need of correction. Many critics contested this (mis)appropriation, few of them however have commented on Ciliberto's historical exactness. It is not my intention here to defend the late and excellent Aquilecchia, since there are plenty of specialists on Bruno or in humanistic philology who can do this in his memory. In the case of the Adelphi edition, in view of the fact that Tocco, Vitelli, Stoelzle and the rest are no longer here to defend their rights as Aquilecchia had tried to do, the texts are not said to have been revised "for the general reader", all the more so because they are written in Latin rather than Italian and thus hard to rewrite for the general reader. Moreover, during the debate over his

edition of *Dialoghi filosofici italiani*, Professor Ciliberto[83] described this edition as "publishing for the masses", inviting his many critics to wait and see what he would do in his "academic publishing" of the *Opere magiche*. This is what we are now seeing. We also have a precedent for the controversy over the *Dialoghi* from the time when Ciliberto directed the philosophy section of the Istituto Gramsci in Rome. Immediately following the publication of V. Gerratana's critical edition of Gramsci's *Quaderni del carcere*, it was suggested that this edition needed to be immediately revised or better redone (although to date this has not been the case). On that occasion Ciliberto first elaborated upon his methodology. Taking into account the fact that the project of the new edition had to include the translation exercises completed by Gramsci while in prison, Ciliberto called for "the most exact representation possible of the diachronic processes of these writings as a whole (independently of any prejudices of a progressive nature)" and then proceeded to distinguish various types of editions "aimed at different sorts of public".[84]

Comparison of the *Opere magiche* with Bruno's *Dialoghi* and other famous works leads me to hypothetical conclusions, which have their basis in these texts, but have not been formulated by Ciliberto. We know that Giordano Bruno had read Marsilio Ficino before the famous disputation that took place in Oxford in 1583, and many of his writings were influenced by this. He had read Cornelio Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia* (and also his *De vanitate*); as early as 1585 he used the first of these, an encyclopedia of magic, when writing the *Cabala del cavallo pegaseo*.[85] Trithemius and his ceremonial magic was a discovery belonging to the period Bruno spent in Germany between the summer of 1586 and that of 1591, when—at least from Wittenberg on—he collected a little group of initiated disciples whom he joined later in Italy. We cannot exclude the possibility that Bruno had obtained a copy of this rare text—which was clandestine and in manuscript form—at an earlier date, in London or in Prague, but his reading of it bore fruit in the Latin works written in Helmstedt or immediately after.

In the last two decades of the sixteenth century Ficino's work was enjoyed by *letterati* and was even appreciated by many Aristotelian

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[83] *Corriere della Sera*, 13 August 2000; see www.giordanobruno.it.
[84] *IG. Informazioni trimestrali della Fondazione Istituto Gramsci* 2 (1992), pp. 57–58.
[85] Bruno, *Dialoghi filosofici italiani cit.*, p. 702.

professors who, since the time of Nifo and Pomponazzi, had felt obliged to study his works as well as Plato and the Neoplatonic texts which he had translated. They were compulsory reading for every writer.

Agrippa was included in the first class of the Index, but was nevertheless widely read. Though his *Opera omnia* are extremely long, manuscript copies were made of them: the clarity and stylistic elegance with which he organized natural, mathematical and ceremonial magic made him compulsory reading for anyone interested in magic. At the beginning of the *De occulta philosophia* Agrippa made the distinction between the pure, white magic of ancient magicians, from Hermes Trismegistus and Zoroaster onwards, and the reprehensible, black magic of more recent necromancers: this theoretical distinction should have protected him from the censors, but it failed to do so because it was contradicted by the contents of *De occulta philosophia*, particularly of the third book. The contradiction became still more explicit in an exchange of letters with Johannes Trithemius in which he exhorted Agrippa not to be content with the merely natural magic of Ficino and Pico. This letter was published in the foreword to Agrippa's treatise in 1531, after he had spent more than twenty years rewriting the first version, submitted to Trithemius in 1510. The letter was highly involved, with numerous circumlocutions, but an attentive reader would have understood the allusions to ceremonial magic and to a philosopher (Charles de Bovelles) who had been criticising and denouncing the earliest of Trithemius' occult writings, the *Steganographia*, a long fragment which remained in manuscript unpublished. Later the abbot wrote other works on magic, but this was the most openly cabalistic and ceremonial; he had not returned to the *Steganographia* and apparently tried to have it forgotten,[86] with its prayers and evocations of demons, named in great detail, and by the end of the sixteenth century this was known to few people. Seemingly all of Trithemius' magical writings were soon forgotten, if we except inquisitors' condemnations.

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[86] We have already seen the two crises that Trithemius underwent because of this writing: in 1505–1506, deprived of his abbey and library, he led a wandering life, and happily met two patrons: the Emperor Maximilian and the Elector of Brandenburg, for whom he had written necromantic recipes of a sexual nature when living in exile at his court.

About this episode and the second one, when Bovelles denounced *Steganographia* in 1509, cf. *supra* chapters 2 and 3.

These writings, or extracts from them, reached however, among others, some sorcerers in Southern Italy, as we know from their trials.[87] Only Agrippa, meaning well, kept the Abbot's memory alive and in his *De occulta philosophia* mentioned openly Trithemius as an author of magical works, whether printed and known to the public (as was the case with *Polygraphia*[88] and *De septem secundeis*)[89] or not. The latter case corresponded not only to the famous *Steganographia*,[90] but also to two long "epistles", then unpublished, in which Trithemius writes to Joachim and to Westerburg[91] working out his theory of magic: both of them were published only after Agrippa's death.[92]

Trithemius' writings were put on the *Index*; it is indeed surprising that from the beginning (i.e. at least thirty years after the Abbot's death) the fathers of the congregation of the *Index of forbidden* books devoted their attention to these writings, the diffusion of which must have been

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[87] Cf. P. Lopez, *Inquisizione, stampa e censura nel regno di Naples tra Cinquecento e Seicento* (Naples, Edizioni del Delfino, 1974). The same has been observed in Inquisition Archives concerning Sicily by M. Leonardi in her dissertation (forthcoming).

[88] Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia*, edited by V. Perrone Compagni (Leiden, Brill, 1992), p. 491; see passim for memories of their personal meeting, in Agrippa's correspondance and *ibid.*, pp. 66, 68, 70, 72.

[89] Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia cit.*, p. 470: "scripsit de ipsis specialem tractatum ad Maximilianum", i.e. *De septem secundeis.* According to Agrippa an attentive reader "magnam futurorum temporum cognitionem inde elicere potest", given the cycles of years and centuries dominated by these intelligences. It is interesting that the reading and quoting of Trithemius came later, in Agrippa's treatise, than his reference to the Holy Scripture: this one was already mentioned as a source in Würzburg ms. (ms. ch. III,50) for listing of planets' intelligences: "De istis spiritibus praesidentibus planetis et signis meminit etiam Joannes in *Apocalyspi*" (Apoc. 1.4; 21.12).

[90] Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia cit.*, p. 97. It is interesting that Agrippa refers openly to Trithemius' *Steganographia* and *Polygraphia* "duo ingeniosa volumina" also in *De vanitate*, ch. LXIV, in his *Opera cit.*, II, p. 162. Cf. Brann, *Mystical Theology cit.*, p. 158.

[91] Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia cit.*, pp. 228, 406–407, 411, quotes (without naming Trithemius) the letter to Joachim dated June 26, 1503) "de rebus convenientibus vero mago"; at pp. 90–91 (where Agrippa takes from Trithemius the whole of chapter I,4: 'De triplici elementorum ratione consideranda').

[92] Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia cit.*, p. 93 and p. 256 quotes Trithemius' fundamental 'Epistola Joanni Westerburgh comiti… de tribus naturalis magiae principiis sine quibus nihil in ipsa ad effectum produci potest (May 10, 1503)". In both cases Agrippa reproduces several lines, but does not name Trithemius as the author. All of these quotations were added in 1533. According to Arnold, *J. Trithemius cit.*, p. 260, both letters had their *editio princeps* in reprints of *De septem secundeis* dated 1567 and 1610–613; their diffusion is confirmed by a late ms. (17th Century) compiling this and other letters by Trithemius reproduced in Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia*, ed. K. A. Nowotny, Graz, Akademische Verlaganstalt, 1967, pp. 627–639.

wider than the data concerning numbers of preserved manuscripts and printed editions may attest.[93]

Lull was not included in the *Index* of the Council of Trent; shortly after he was however included in various successive editions of the *Index*. Bernardo Lavinheta, whose commentary on Lull was used by Bruno, was also on the *Index*, as were Agrippa, Trithemius, and the *Heptameron* of the pseudo-Pietro d'Abano. In short, Bruno was interested above all in writings that were condemned by the Index and he quoted from them freely. It is remarkable not only that in his *De magia cabalistica* Bruno quoted numerous pages from Trithemius, but also that the name and title of such a writer should have been openly cited by him as a master of demoniac evocation: since it is difficult to know the names to evocate, and to understand exactly each one's effectiveness, it is useful that they had been recorded and published by Trithemius, "a very diligent man, extremely successful in such an art", to whom these "names were disclosed". Bruno wrote *De magia mathematica* to abridge and put in order what Trithemius wrote fragmentarily ("dispersa") in *Steganographia*.[94]

These lines alone should be enough to demonstrate the initiatory nature of Bruno's *Opere magiche*.

Let me now move on to some historical and not merely philological points. Does Professor Ciliberto know that a few years before Bruno's magical works were set down at Helmstedt and circulated among initiates like Besler and Mocenigo, Rome had issued a prohibition, better to say a pronouncement against astrologers and magicians? As Aquilecchia, Germana Ernst[95] and Ugo Baldini recently reminded us,[96] early in 1586 Pope Sixtus V published the papal bull *Coeli et terrae*

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[93] See n. 24 supra; see also *Indices librorum prohibitorum*, edited by Jesus Martinez de Bujanda, 10 vols., Sherbrooke, Centre d'études de la Renaissance (Geneva, Droz, 1984–1996), passim.

[94] OM, p. 12: "quod arduum dicimus esse est nominum advocandorum noticiam habere, pro diversis negotiis atque diversis effectibus diversorum; quae quidem nomina multae industriae viro et in hac arte felicissimo Trithemio Abati fuere revelata et nos redegimus in hoc compendium ea quae in sua *Steganographia* dispersa proposuit ille".

[95] G. Ernst, *Religione, ragione e natura: Ricerche su Tommaso Campanella e il tardo Rinascimento* (Milan, Angeli, 1991); especially the chapter 'Dalla bolla *Coeli et terrae* all'*Inscrutabilis*: L'astrologia tra religione, natura e politica nell'età della Controriforma', pp. 255–80. See *supra* n. 18 on Aquilecchia.

[96] U. Baldini, 'The Roman Inquisition's Condemnation of Astrology: Antecedents, Reasons and Consequences,' in G. Fragnito (ed.), *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001), 79–110.

against "every form of divination" and against "a whole host of curious arts", which are "deceptive because based on the craftiness of evil men or on the work of demons". In only repeating the sources indicated by Tocco, Ciliberto appears not to have noticed that these texts (particularly Trithemius and Agrippa) were strictly forbidden and placed on the *Index* throughout the sixteenth century (namely for the whole length of Bruno's life), and that Trithemius' *Steganographia* was still unpublished. It is therefore necessary to ask the question: what was the historical meaning of Bruno's use of these texts?

In 1510, after Agrippa had chosen him as his model and the reviser of his *De occulta philosophia*, Trithemius wrote to Agrippa admonishing him to keep it strictly reserved as something "lofty and secret to let know only to sure friends".[97] It would be hard to find declarations more clearly in support of a magic which was both ceremonial and initiatory. Neither Ficino nor Pico would ever have professed such an initiatory attitude. Their works on magic do not contain "ceremonies" such as are to be found in Trithemius. Agrippa himself, although he does in fact make reference to many doctrines and secrets of necromancy, does not profess them within such an explicit methodology as Trithemius'.[98]

On the contrary, Bruno, in *De principiis*, declares himself in favour of an initiatory attitude: his conviction is that "this knowledge and this philosophy, that must be kept only among learned and excellent persons, has not to become a vulgar one".[99] We shall see that in Bruno, apart from the natural magic that combines the occult properties of stones, metals, plants, and animals according to their celestial markings (*signaturae*), there is clearly another very distinct species, the magic of words and of ceremonies which can only be disclosed to initiates.

Still drawing on Tocco, the Adelphi edition cites Trithemius' *Steganographia* in its first edition, that is, of 1606. Anyone can see that this date is subsequent to the burning of Giordano Bruno in 1600. As director of a large exhibition held in Rome in 2000, Professor Ciliberto himself had published some useful information (ignored here!) on the manuscript

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[97] Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia cit.*, pp. 72–73: "ut vulgaria vulgaribus, altiora vero et arcana altioribus atque secretis tantum communices amicis" (see the whole text of this letter where Trithemius answers Agrippa's letter to him and 'Ad lectorem', pp. 74–75, 65–67: these texts were modified for the printing of 1530).

[98] OM, p. 666: "nefas enim est quemlibet scire quaelibet".

[99] OM, p. 664: " indignum esse arbitramur ut haec cognitio et philosophia sit vulgaris, quae tantum apud sapientes et probos locum debebat habere".

circulation of the *Steganographia*, which was "only given to the press in 1606" and was "condemned on 7 September 1609 together with twenty-four other pernicious books, by decree of the Master of the Sacred Palace".[100] It is a pity that just when it would have been of use to him, Ciliberto overlooked the relevant data which M. Palumbo and E. Canone had prepared for his exhibition. During Bruno's lifetime, Trithemius' *Steganographia* was unpublished and rare even in manuscript form, but it was used by Southern Italian sorcerers according to their inquisitors.[101] Still other occult writings by this ceremonial magician (*Liber octo quaestionum, De septem secundeis, Antipalus maleficiorum, De daemonibus*) were rare then and still are to this day. Trithemius was deprived of his abbey in the wake of various accusations by his fellow Benedictines. Later he was accused by Charles de Bovelles, a thinker inspired by Lull and Cusanus, subsequently dear to Bruno. Bovelles had criticised Trithemius for professing magic that was against nature.[102] Frances Yates dealt briefly with the *Steganographia*, but tended to minimize its significance: "[it] purports to be, and perhaps really is to some extent, about cryptography or ways of writing in cipher. It is also, however, Cabalist angel magic".[103] Although she did no research on Trithemius' magic manuscripts, nor on the letters he published on the methods of the two kinds of magic, Dame Frances showed that she was aware of the necromantic tradition, of the *ars notoria*, and of the practical Cabala: "through Reuchlin, Pico's Cabalist magic leads straight on to the angel magic of Trithemius or of Cornelius Agrippa, though these magicians were to work in a more crudely operative spirit than the pious and contemplative Pico".[104]

Before Frances Yates, D. P. Walker had also written on Trithemian ceremonial magic.[105] Trithemius has been studied somewhat less than other

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[100] *Giordano Bruno 1548–1600: Mostra alla Biblioteca Casanatense di Roma, giugno-settembre 2000* (Florence, Olschki, 2000), pp. 170, 176–177.

[101] See *supra* note 86.

[102] See my papers 'Agrippa', *Testi umanistici sull'ermetism* cit.o, pp. 105–62; Id., 'Scholastic and Humanist Views of Hermeticism and Witchcraft', in A. G. Debus and I. Merkel (eds.), Hermeticism and the Renaissance (Washington, Associated University Presses, 1988), pp. 131–38, 147–53; this paper and two other notes on Trithemius are reprinted *supra* p. 00.

[103] Yates, *G. Bruno cit.*, 145.

[104] *Ibid.*

[105] D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (London, The Warburg Institute, 1958). See 'The Ancient Theology in Sixteenth Century France' in his *The Ancient Theology* (London, Duckworth, 1972).

magicians because to this day some of his writings are unpublished, but some good research on him is available. After Wayne Shumaker,[106] we may read Klaus Arnold, who has given us a fundamental bio-bibliography,[107] as well as the first edition of the fragment of Trithemius' *De daemonibus*,[108] Noel L. Brann,[109] Thomas Ernst,[110] and several interesting articles.[111] The director of a large research institute should have known about these publications, particularly when they so clearly bear upon his own research (if we may call it such).

At the end of the sixteenth century, Johannes Trithemius was cited and censured by Martin Del Rio and certain other well-informed

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[106] W. Shumaker, *Renaissance Curiosa: John Dee's Conversations with Angels, Girolamo Cardano's Horoscope of Christ, Johannes Trithemius and Cryptography, George Dalgarno's Universal Language* (Binghamton NY, SUNY Press, 1982), who devotes an entire section to the *Steganographia*, as befits the book's subtitle.

[107] K. Arnold, *Johannes Trithemius* (Würzburg, Schöningh, 1971); the 2nd edn. (Würzburg, Schöningh, 1991), contains a list of new manuscripts and a bibliography. This study marks the beginning of the 'Trithemius Renaissance' hailed by N. Staubach, 'Auf der Suche nach verlorenen Zeite: Die historiographischen Fiktionen des Trithemius im Lichte seines wissenschaftlichen Selbstverständnisses,' in *Fälschungen in Mittelalter. Internationaler Kongress der MGH*, Teil I (Hannover, Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1988), p. 264. Arnold has published many papers on Trithemius, including in the congress proceedings, F. Baron and R. Auernheimer, ed., *Johannes Trithemius: Humanismus und Magie in vorreiformatoirsche Deutschland* (Munich/Vienna, Profil, 1991), pp. 1–16. See also the recent popularizing, but very perceptive biography by Michael Kuper, *Johannes Trithemius, der schwarze Abt* (Berlin, Zerling, 1998).

[108] K. Arnold, '*Additamenta Trithemiana*. Nachträge zur Leben und Werk des J. Trithemius, insbesondere zur Schrift *De daemonibus*,' *Würzburger Diözesan-Geschichtsblätter*, 37–38 (1975), pp. 256–67.

[109] N. L. Brann, *The Abbot Trithemius (1462–1516): The Renaissance of Monastic Humanism* (Leiden, Brill, 1981); and see n. 41 *infra*.

[110] T. Ernst, 'Schwarzweisse Magie. Der Schlussel zum dritten Buch der *Steganographia* des Trithemius,' *Daphnis. Zeitschrift für Mittlere Deutsche Literatur*, 25 (1996), pp. 1–203; the print-out of this was also sold separately as a volume in its own right.

[111] J. Dupèbe, 'L'écriture chez l'ermite Pelagius. Un cas de théurgie chrétienne au X^ve^ siècle', in *Le texte et son inscription* (Paris, Editions du CNRS, 1989), 113–53; id., 'Curiosité et magie chez J. Trithemius', in *La curiosité à la Renaissance* (*Journée d'étude de la Société française des seziémistes*) (Paris, Société d'édition de l'enseignement supérieur, 1986); id., 'L'ars notoria et la polémique sur la divination et la magie', *Cahiers V. L. Saulnier*, 4, pp. 123–34; id., 'L'ermite Pelagius et les Rose-Croix', in *Rosenkreuz als europäisches Phänomen in 17. Jahrhundert*, edited by the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica (Amsterdam, Pelikan, 2002), pp. 134–57; N. H. Clulee, '"Astronomia inferior": Legacies of Johannes Trithemius and John Dee', in W. R. Newmann and A. Grafton (eds.), *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge Ma., MIT, 2001), pp. 173–234.

demonologists,[112] but by and large he became a forgotten writer.[113]

Even in the following century, when Johannes Busaeus printed some of his unpublished works, he censored certain passages, ostensibly for reasons of decency, but actually in order to conceal the fact that Trithemius, this eminently learned abbot, collector of manuscripts, and the founder of bibliography and literary history as branches of knowledge, was also in the practice of casting spells. The most serious problem was that Trithemius developed a theory of magic in which it would be impossible to "swear upon a single rudiment". Thus his magic could not be defined in purely natural terms, as was true for Ficino, Pico, and Lefèvre d'Etaples. For Trithemius, magic, in order to obtain its prodigious results, must have recourse to astral demons and even to devils.

May we not wonder whether Bruno, after having succeeded in reading somewhere (probably in Germany) Trithemius' unpublished necromantic works, did not arrive at a more complete idea of those types of magic which were current at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth century? He must have seen unpublished Trithemian works when he was in Germany (1586–1588, 1589–1591) and even when he was in England (1583–1585), or between the spring and autumn of 1588, during his stay in Prague. Two years earlier, in April 1586, at the court of Rudolph II in Prague, John Dee had used Trithemius' *Steganographia* to perform his famous evocation of spirits.[114] Dee himself had copied out the work in Antwerp and considered it extraordinarily precious, to the point of suggesting that Queen Elizabeth's minister, Sir William Cecil, should purchase it for a large sum of money.[115]

No sooner had Bruno completed his reading than he set about enthusiastically showing his pupils these rites which would have been inadmissible in all the Christian churches—Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, and Calvinist—and which had recently been condemned by the Church of Rome. His enthusiasm may have been due to the extraordinary power

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[112] N. L. Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology. A Chapter in the Controversy over Occult Studies in Early Modern Europe* (Albany NY, SUNY Press, 1999), which has an ample and interesting section dealing with the controversy over Trithemius' magical works.

[113] Regarding the survival of Trithemius see the last section of Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology cit.*

[114] See R. J. W. Evans, *Rudolph II and His World* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1973).

[115] See N. Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (London, Routledge, 1988), and the bibliography.

that first Trithemius, then Agrippa, Paracelsus, and John Dee had seen in spiritual or demoniac magic. Bruno's philosophical culture and his consistency in argument were certainly far greater than those of Paracelsus or of John Dee, but in certain respects he resembled them.

Professor Ciliberto tells us what he believes to have been Bruno's reasons for not publishing his *Opere magiche*, especially the *De magia mathematica*, although immediately after teaching in Helmstedt he spent a long time in Frankfurt so as to have more of his works printed by Wechel:

> It is certainly most strange that he did not publish these writings but chose to keep them shut up in a drawer… they were, of course, unfinished, still in the process of being worked upon. In some other cases the texts were produced as material for lessons, or for public disputations, but not for printing, at least not immediately. It is therefore highly probable that Bruno himself intended to go back over these writings, to investigate their subjects more thoroughly and improve the texts before handing them to the printers. Though their fundamental positions are extremely clear and settled, the *Opere magiche* appear to be a magmatic material, still unsettled and incomplete.[116]

Surely, in formulating an obvious problem it should have been enough to remember the old rules of historical method which Ciliberto must have learnt from one of his teachers, the same Delio Cantimori[117] to whom he has devoted a monograph.[118] What does it mean if among Bruno's sources, all of which Tocco has already identified and recorded, appear the works of Trithemius, which at the time were unpublished and hard to find? The *Steganographia* was itself a strictly prohibited grimoire. It would have been highly impolitic for Bruno to arouse suspicions that he knew it and used it. Moreover, Bruno himself was writing another grimoire, a book of black magic.

It may come as a surprise to find that a scholar who has been appointed as the director of an institution such as the Istituto Nazionale

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[116] Bruno, *Opere magiche cit.*, p. XII.

[117] D. Cantimori, author of *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento* (first published in German in 1937), edited by A. Prosperi (Turin, Einaudi, 1992), and other studies on Nicodemitism and heresy, as well as of *Storici e storia* (Turin, Einaudi, 1971) held courses on Droysen's Historica: he is considered a great authority on the methodology of historical studies: see G. Miccoli, *Delio Cantimori: la ricerca di una nuova critica storiografica* (Turin, Einaudi, 1970).

[118] M. Ciliberto, *Intellettuali e fascismo: saggio su D. Cantimori* (Bari, De Donato, 1977).

di Studi sul Rinascimento is unaware of the basic rules of historical scholarship and textual criticism. But we must remember that we no longer live at a time when such appointments are decided by a minister such as Francesco De Sanctis.

APPENDIX THREE

A NOLAN BEFORE BRUNO, MOMUS AND SOCRATISM IN THE RENAISSANCE

Many scholars of Giordano Bruno quote from the description of Nola written by Ambrogio Leone Nolano and published in 1514 with tasteful illustrations by Girolamo Moceto, an engraver of the school of Bellini: what better way to open a biography of Bruno than to use this elegant description of the town and its history? Yet they failed to notice that between the two Nolans there are other possible similarities: in the first place, like Giordano Bruno, the doctor Ambrogio di Marino Leone[1] (1459–1525) was known as the "Nolan" and insisted on signing all his writings in this way (some of them were still being reprinted in Bruno's lifetime). I have the impression that these deserve to be glanced at in order to have an idea of what Bruno as a boy may have read before leaving Nola, where Leone could certainly have been remembered and where his son Camillo Leone, who published his father's works, probably still lived.

We know that Bruno's father was a friend of Tansillo who grew up in an uncle's house in Nola until 1532; it is possible that in the same period Ambrogio Leone or his son Camillo[2] coming from the Veneto

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[1] This patronymic comes from the title of one of his works quoted by L. Nicodemi, *Addizioni […] Toppi* (Naples, S. Castaldo, 1683), pp. 8–10, and has been accepted by Allen (ed.), *Opus epistolarum Erasmi*, III (Oxford, Clarendon, 1913), p. 352. Cf. for Leone's biography, B. Toppi, *Biblioteca napoletana* (Naples, A. Bulifon, 1678), p. 11; B. Tafuri, *Istoria degli scrittori nati nel Regno di Napoli* (Naples, 1744), III/1, p. 158; G. G. De Soria, *Memorie storico-critiche degli storici napoletani* (Naples, 1782), pp. 347–351; B. Chioccarelli, *De illustribus scriptoribus […] Neapolis* (Naples, V. Ursini, 1780), pp. 27–28, who quotes from Camillo Leone's epistle printed in A. Leone, *De nobilitate* (Venice, 1525), more titles of unpublished or lost works (*Libellus de bisexto, De E et I, Gallucia: de vi ridendi, Lucubrationes in VI Metaphysices, Libellus de signis pluviarum et ventorum, Adnotationes in theriacam*). A recent and detailed biography has been published by L. Ammirati, *A. Leone* (Marigliano, Anselmi, 1983); the same scholar has also printed an edition of A. Leone, *De Nola* (Marigliano, Istituto Editoriale Grafico Italiano, 1997); see also an ed. by A. Ruggiero (Naples, 1997).

[2] Camillo Leone as well took a degree in medicine, but in Venice at the Scuola di Rialto, where his father was teaching; M. Sanudo, *Diari* (Venezia, 1889), XXXVIII, cols. 54, 57. On professors of the Scuola di Rialto, see B. Nardi, *La scuola di Rialto e l'umanesimo veneziano*, in *Umanesimo europeo e umanesimo veneziano* ed. by V. Branca (Firenze, Sansoni, 1963), pp. 93–139.

visited Nola and maintained contacts there, in particular that they may have known a writer—Tansillo—who was dear to Bruno and his father and whose obscene little poem "the grape harvester" is frequently mentioned in connection with Leone's *De Nola*.[3] Ambrogio had been connected with Neapolitan humanists, he quoted Pietro Summonte for his letter to Galateo,[4] corresponded with Sannazaro and looked after the Aldine printing of Pontano's prose works.[5]

Having obtained a doctorate in medicine, possibly in Padua[6] as a pupil of Nicoletto Vernia,[7] who was also offered a post in Naples,

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[3] G. Remondini, *Della nolana ecclesiastica historia* (Napoli, 1742), III, pp. 206, 208; A. Maiuri, 'Sul 'De Nola' di A. Leone', in *Studi in onore di R. Filangieri* (Napoli, 1959), II, pp. 268–269, comparing georgical descriptions by Ambrogio Leone to Tansillo's 'Vendemmiatore' which in 1559 was placed on the Index for its obscenity. D. Berti, *Vita di G. Bruno* (Firenze, 1868), p. 42; V. Spampanato, *Vita di G. Bruno* (Torino, Aragno), 2000, pp. 16–17; S. Ricci, *G. Bruno nell'Europa del Cinquecento* (Roma, Salerno), 2000, pp. 12–13, all of them relating Bruno to Leone, but without considering his *Castigationes.*

[4] Cf. *Castigationes in Averroym* (Venezia, 1524), on Aristotle's *De anima*, *De sensu et sensili*; the book contains also *De anima et corpore compendium* written by Ambrogio: in its dedication to the doge Andrea Gritti the author mentions Antonio Galateo as "familiaris" of king Ferdinand of Aragona: the last years of the fifteenth century and the Aragonese milieu had clearly been a great experience for Ambrogio Leone.

[5] Cfr. P. de Montera, 'La 'Béatrice' d'Ambroise Leone', in *Mélanges de philologie, d'histoire et de littérature offerts à H. Hauvette* (Paris, 1934), pp. 191–210; B. Croce, *Aneddoti di varia letteratura*, I (Napoli, Ricciardi, 1952), p. 131 ss, in particular pp. 138–139, and F. Nicolini, *L'arte napoletana del Rinascimento* (Napoli, 1925), p. 281 (I was unable to read it). Ambrogio Leone is not mentioned in A. Altamura, *Umanesimo nel Mezzogiorno* (Firenze 1941), nor in other studies I have found on culture in Naples in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

[6] Biographers mention this doctorate taken in Padua (L. Ammirati, *A. Leone*, cit., pp. 50–51, dates it to 1484, after seven years of study), but this is not confirmed by the *Acta graduum* nor by documents relating to Padua University, very kindly consulted on my behalf by dr. Emilia Veronese, whom I thank warmly together with prof. Gregorio Piaia.

[7] On Vernia's philosophy, cf. E. P. Mahoney, 'N. Vernia and A. Nifo on Alexander of Aphrodisias: an unnoticed dispute', *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia*, 1968, pp. 268–296; Id., 'The Date of Publication of an Edition of Aristotle by M.A. Zimara', *The Library. Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, XXVI, 1971, pp. 53–56, and a number of other studies in his collection *Two Aristotelians of the Italian Renaissance, N. Vernia and A. Nifo* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2000). Cf. P. Ragnisco, *Documenti inediti e rari […] N. Vernia e Elia Del Medigo* (Padova, B. Randi, 1891), pp. 5–12, on his wills and on his library, on Vernia's important activity as editor of the first Latin printed editions of Aristotle and other philosophers see L. Minio-Paluello, 'Attività aristotelica dell'umanesimo', in *Umanesimo europeo e umanesimo veneziano*, cit., p. 257 ss.: invited by Marco Sanudo, who was still a student, Vernia set about correcting the corrupt commentary by Averroes probably for the edition printed by Andrea Torresano in Venice 1484; S. Caroti, 'Note sulla Biblioteca di N. Vernia', in *Vetustatis indagator: scritti offerti a F. Di Benedetto*, a c. di V. Fera e A. Guida (Messina, Università degli Studi-CISU, 1999), pp. 183–206; L.Villani, 'Un testamento inedito di N. Vernia e le vicende dei suoi libri', *Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova*, 34, 2001, pp. 337–350.

Ambrogio was made professor of medicine in the Neapolitan Studio. We do not know the reason why he later left the kingdom of Naples (where he nevertheless returned several times, maintaining relations with the above-mentioned humanists, with various local magnates and above all with the Orsini, nobles of Nola and powerful condottieri who during the struggles following the barons' plot were the chief opponents of the Church State); this reason was said to be his disappointment at not being ennobled;[8] but the fact that after his death Camillo, his only son and intellectual heir, was asked to return to Nola,[9] leads one to wonder whether the father had not been asked to leave or actually banished. What is certain is that Ambrogio settled first in Padua, from 1507, and subsequently in Venice: there he worked as proof-reader together with Erasmus for the Torresano-Manuzio printers and later became very successful as a physician, treating Aldo Manuzio and his family, Erasmus and even Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, the future pope Leo X.

Besides being a physician and a Hellenist (already as an adult, over forty years old, he became a disciple of Marco Musuro), Ambrogio was extremely interested in Averroes, and from 1517 on published a series of observations amounting to a kind of miscellaneous super-commentary on Averroes' commentaries on Aristotle. His *Castigationes in Averroym*—recalling the humanist expression used by Ermolao Barbaro, Leoniceno, Pierio Valeriano and others to indicate their philological and critical research on the manuscript tradition—[10] were planned to cover the entire Aristotelian corpus and were highly critical of the

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[8] C. Minieri Riccio, *Memorie storiche degli scrittori [...] di Napoli* (Naples, 1844), recounts that when Charles VIII invaded Naples, Ambrogio Leone, offended "per alcuni dispiaceri causatigli dai suoi concittadini" from Nola, probably because he had not received a title of nobility, quitted his chair of medicine at the University of Naples, which he had obtained from king Ferdinand I of Aragon. Minieri Riccio took this fact from G. G. Origlia Paolino, *Istoria dello Studio di Napoli* (Naples, G. De Simone, 1753–1754), I, pp. 260–261, who states simply that Ferdinand "proposed" his name for this chair.

[9] The posthumous edition of Ambrogio's *De nobilitate dialogus* and of his translation of pseudo-Aristotle's *De virtutibus* was edited and printed by Camillo in Venice in 1525, with dedications to Enrico Orsini da Nola and to the lawyer and 'reggente apostolico' Jacobantonio de Cesarini da Nola: Camillo appears to have been grateful for being asked to return to Nola after he had lost his father, and it is probable that he settled there.

[10] Leone's in-folio commentaries were published at almost the same time as Marcantonio Zimara's *Contradictiones*; this coincidence may be the reason for its scant success; also Zimara named his works "castigationes": cf. Nardi, *Saggi sull'aristotelismo padovano* (Firenze, Sansoni, 1958), p. 335.

"commentator". As Konrad Gesner says, "liber magnus est ac totius philosophiae thesaurus. Sunt enim quasi commentarii quidam ordine in singulos Aristotelis libros".[11]

In his dedication to the doge Andrea Gritti Ambrogio describes his *Castigationes in Averroym*:

> apud latinos homines Aristotelis libri de anima parum latine legerentur maleque intelligerentur et Averroe literarum bonarum ignaro et audaci homine mutati et corrupti falsoque interpretati ferentur, unde immensa damna bonis ingeniis ac philosophari nitentibus obortaque sunt atque in dies erant oritura maiora. Nos tam magnis incommodis providentes, illos exacte latinos fecimus ac lucida declaratione aperuimus, passim castigando Averrois ignaviam adeo ut unusquisque futurum aristotelicas disputationes facillime atque cum utilitate maxima consequatur[12]

The manuscript project of the *Castigationes* aimed "adversus omnes Averroys interpretationes": in this work not only did the author declare that in his commentaries on Aristotle's *Logica, Metaphysica, Physica, De anima, De coelo, De generatione* and *De animalibus*, Averroes misunderstood former commentators. but Ambrogio Leone also had criticized Averroes' original works, such as the *De substantia orbis* and—last but not least—the *Destructio destructionum*.[13] It is a great pity that, so far as I have been able to discover, Leone's criticism of this original treatise of Averroes on the philosophy of religion (a treatise which had caused great scandal and aroused still more interest when it was published and commented upon by Agostino Nifo in 1497), was never published and was subsequently lost.

In the middle of the 16th century Ambrogio Leone's philosophical works, and still more his medical works, were not forgotten and were

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[11] *Op. cit.*, f. 32r–v.

[12] In the dedication dated October 10, 1524, the Doge is praised for being what Plato called a "king philosopher", and a valiant *condottiero*, who reconquered Padua, Brescia, Verona, Udine, Vicenza, Crema and Bergamo.

[13] Camillo Leone wrote this in his afterword to *Castigationes* (Venezia, A. Pinto, 1532), f. CCVIIIv, which gives us an idea of his enormous work as editor ("pertinaci cura et sollecitudine"): "velut omnia in farragine et ut rudes ossa forent, denuo severiori acriorique cura et examine adhibito singula scripta lingere perpendere atque recensere aggressus est". Ambrogio had completed the revision of his notes on *Categoriae, De enuntiatione* (*Perì hermenéias*), *Analitica, Physica*; other "inexpectatae" sections were evidently being revised by Camillo ("in dies expurgantur").

reprinted in Italy and in Basel.[14] In at least one instance the medical works contain important declarations on his anti-Averroist method.

> Averrois quoque interpretando Aristotelem frequentius expositiones Graecorum interpretum retulit ut suas: quamobrem latinis hominibus qui graecas litteras ignorarent visus est apprime doctus. Ubi vero suis navigare velis est ausus, navem impegit.[15]

The opinion that Ambrogio Leone gives here of his author recalls the fact that in the fourteen-sixties Ermolao Barbaro suggested that Averroes had done no more than pilfer from the Greeks.[16] This leads us to presume that Leone had criticized the *Destructio* and the *De substantia orbis* still more severely. "Nam praeter caetera in tractatu suo *De substantia orbis*, praeterquam quod multas sententias falsas inculcavit, non etiam est conspectare analysim ullam alicubi vel doctrinam quae ordine ullo procederet, ut latius in cogitationibus adversus ipsum demonstratum est a nobis".[17]

The plan of the *Castigationes* was similar to that of a humanistic repertory rather than of a scholastic commentary, with frequent digressions; examples may be seen in Chapter II with: "ut decenti ratione creditum est antiquis stellas esse deos et vocatos et adoratos" and in L. III the 'Castigatio tertia' declared that "Mathematica sunt substantiae pythagoricis".

In 1523, in order to satisfy his passion for miscellaneous observations, Ambrogio Leone also printed in Venice one of the first 'libri di segreti': this was his *Opus quaestionum tum aliis plerisque in rebus cognoscendis, tum maxime in philosophia et medicina scientia*, on which he was already at work while collaborating with Erasmus in 1507–08,[18] but which, as usual with Ambrogio, matured very slowly and was only printed

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[14] The most successful among his works is a translation from the Greek, Johannes Actuarius *De urinis ll. VII*; published by Cratander, Basel 1528. Cf. *Castigationes*, 1532, cit., p. 26: after praising Averroes on several points, Ambrogio declares his intention to polemize with one of his commentators: "ea diximus ut ostederemus Averroem volentem extollere falsis et ineptis usum esse, quod alienum et ab officio commentationis et maxime contrarium studiis philosophorum [...] Aristotelem interpretari nolumus, Averroem convincere et castigare volumus".

[15] *Castigationes*, cit., p. 26. Cf. Erasmus, *Adagiorum Centuriae*, sub voce 'Navem Impegit'.

[16] B. Nardi, *Saggi* cit., p. 343.

[17] Konrad Gesner, *Bibliotheca* (Zurich, 1545), f. 32v.

[18] *Opus epistolarum Erasmi*, cit., III, pp. 402–403 (Erasmus to Ambrogio, 15 October 1518): "De problematis rerum naturalium, quod opus iam olim habebas in manibus, admiror te nihil meminisse".

in 1523; it has been neglected by the many who specialize today in this type of literature. On the other hand, Thorndike,[19] comparing it to the work of Adelard of Bath, found it less systematic and aimed at a more popular public, but nevertheless representative of its time and of its generation. It is important to notice that questions like the first one—why Bacchus is represented with horns and a beard—call to mind Polizianus' *Miscellanea*, the various *Castigationes*, the *Adagia* of Erasmus as well as many collections of proverbs and emblems inspired by these works.

In the Aldine entourage Ambrogio was acquainted with the great humanist: both worked for the Manuzio printing press and Erasmus also published there the first edition of his *Adagia* (Venice 1508). Indeed, in this very period Leone had in fact followed and contributed to the *Adagia* collection, more than once earning mention and praise from Erasmus.[20] Later he frequently made use of the *Adagia*, as appears from a

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[19] L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic* (New York, Columbia U.P., 1941), V, p. 144; *Ibid*., p. 147: "Books of secrets and experiments had been prominent in medieval manuscripts and were to flare forth again in the second half of the century [...] Meanwhile we may note a single specimen of this genre from the first half of the century". See also B. Lawn, *I quesiti salernitani* (Cava dei Tirreni-Napoli, Di Mauro, 1969), p. 158 ss. There is nothing on Ambrogio Leone in W. Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature. Books of Secrets in Mediaeval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton, Princeton U.P., 1994), nor in L. Daston – K. Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York, Zone Books, 1998).

[20] Cf. Erasmus, *Adagiorum Centuriae*, in *Opera omnia*, II/1 (Amsterdam, North Holland Publ. Co., 1993), see *Adagium* 163, pp. 276–282, in particular p. 278 and note (where A. Leone expounds musicological theories of the Ancients and Boethius: see J.-C. Margolin, 'Erasme commentateur de Boèce', *Latomus*, 36, 1967, pp. 188–191 and note). See also *Adagia* 1250 and 2666. Many studies have been devoted to the period here mentioned, cf. *Opus epistolarum Erasmi* cit., III, pp. 352–355 (letter 854 by A. Leone to Erasmus, 19.7.1518), 402–404 (Erasmus' answer, 15.10.1518), see also I, pp. 55, 61; II, p. 315 (J. Watson refers to his meeting with A. Leone in Venice, 1516), 493; VI, p. 186 (A. Leone's death; on his funeral in S. Bartolomeo a Rialto cf. Sanudo, *Diari*, XXXVIII, p. 54, who notes among those who were present Antonio de Fantis, an Avicennian philosopher): P. de Nolhac, *Erasme en Italie* (Paris, Impr. Vaticane, 1988), p. 31 ss. (see on p. 66 a letter by Aleandro, 23 July 1508, who writes to inform Ambrogio on "via peripatetica et de le matematiche" in Paris in Lefèvre's time); Id., *Les correspondants d'Alde Manuce* (Rome, Imprimerie Vaticane, 1988); M. Dazzi, *Aldo Manuzio e il dialogo veneziano di Erasmo* (Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 1969), pp. 83, 108–109; S. Marcon – M. Zorzi, *Aldo Manuzio e l'ambiente veneziano 1494–1515* (Venezia, Il cardo, 1994); H. G. Fletcher, *New Aldine Studies* (S. Francisco, B. M. Rosenthal, 1988), pp. 35, 27, draws attention to letters from Leone concerning the last illness of Aldo in 1515; *Ibid*., p. 13 and in M. Lowry, *Il mondo di Aldo Manuzio* (Roma, Il veltro, 2000) (2nd ed.), p. 184 and note., who quotes Luca Pacioli, *Divina proportione* (Venezia, Paganini, 1508), ff. 30v–31v, to attest that Ambrogio and other scholars of Aldo's milieu (Lascaris, Egnazio, Fra Giocondo, B. Bembo, etc.) were present at Pacioli's lecture on Euclid on August 11, 1508 in the Rialto church.

letter he sent Erasmus on 19 July 1518. The two men had become firm friends and remained so until Leone's death, which Erasmus bewailed in October 1525 in a letter to their mutual friend, Battista Egnazio.[21]

The *Castigationes adversus Averroem* were edited by Camillo Leone while he was still a student. From the *Diary* of Marino Sanudo[22] we learn that at first there was a request for a privilege in which Camillo appeared as the author. The project included about thirty books; the first series of *Castigationes*, dedicated to Leo X, appeared in that same year (1517), which coincided also with the reopening of the Studio in Padua (closed since 1509 when Italy was at war); they were reprinted in 1524 and subsequently in 1532, after Ambrogio Leone's death.

One wonders whether part of this work may not have been freely drawn from notes made by Ambrogio when he was a student of Nicoletto Vernia, in particular in the final period in which this professor was obliged to be less favourable to Averroes, or from those manuscripts which Vernia had left to a pupil. The *Castigationes* are less strongly Averroist than the teaching of Nicoletto, at least up to the time when he was obliged to retract,[23] but they reflect his lack of belief and a strongly goliardic attitude.

This attitude caused Ambrogio Leone to write in his *Opus Quaestionum*

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[21] Like Ambrogio Leone this important humanist was loyal to Niccolò Orsini, the powerful *condottiero* of the Venetian Repubblic, and he delivered the *Oratio habita in funere cl.mi imperatoris Nicolai Ursini Nolae Pitilianique principis* (Venetiis, 1509) (cit. by A. Broccoli, *Catalogo della biblioteca del R. Museo Campano* (Capua, s.d.), p. 757, but not found by me).

[22] M. Sanudo, *Diari*, XXIV (Venice, 1889), col. 647, 11 September 1517: "Fu poi leta una gratia [che] dimanda maestro Ambrogio di Nola dotor medico, qual avendo Leon so' fiol fato una opera contra Averrois, et ave poterla far stampar [...] richiede niun possi far stampar dita su opera per anni 10, ut in gratia". I am very grateful to Doctors Susy Marcon, Elisabetta Lugato and Stefano Trovato, librarians of the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, for having checked this passage against the Ms. and confirmed its correctness. On this basis the reader must suppose that in 1517 Ambrogio Leone intended to attribute to his son the work of which Camillo later declared to be the editor. In 'Camillus Leo studiosis', an afterword to the 1532 edition of *Castigationes*, f. CCVIIIv, we find more *privilegia* by Pope Leo X, by the King of France, by the Viceroy of Naples, by the Doge and the Consiglio dei Rogati of Venice: Camillo promises "reliquas autem *Castigationum* partes, nam tres alias poliendae remansere quarum singulae pares sunt huic uni, quae nunc incussa est [...] suo tempore dabimu". This project was never completed. At a time when it was relatively unusual to concede *privilegia*, the fact that both Leones had applied for it shows that they expected a great success in the bookshops: the rare quotations from *Castigationes* and the few copies found in libraries would seem to prove that it was not obtained.

[23] B. Nardi, *Saggi* cit.

> Quur a graecis excogitatus deus est, quem Momum appellant, qui cuncta deridet, reprehendit, carpit?[24] […] quem Momum appellarunt etiam ab acri et exacta disquisitione cuiusque erroris qui latet in rebus, iccirco Momus est omnium accusator acerrimus, deos etiam, non superbos homines solum, ac caetera cuncta detecta eorum nota cogens.[25]

This figure had been taken up in Leon Battista Alberti's *Momus*, a work that had just been printed and published in 1520, and again by Erasmus in an *Adagium*,[26] all of which leads us to think of the second Nolan.

Ambrogio Leone has received little attention in works on Aristotelism, Averroism and on the neo-Aristotelism of the Renaissance: he is recorded by Cranz,[27] but even Schmitt fails to consider him except in a biographical entry.[28] Nor does research on Bruno or on Averroes take him into account.

Ambrogio Leone was no great philosopher and Bruno certainly did not draw his most characteristic cosmological ideas from him, seeing that the *Castigationes* (1524) opens with the question

> Quur impossibile est plures mundos esse? Quur mundus est finitus et rotundus.

But might not the *Castigationes in Averroym* have been the first philosophy book to have fallen into the hands of Giordano Bruno? To a boy in Nola it could have offered a fascinating and varied reading that would have aroused his curiosity on a number of 'neo-Aristotelian' subjects and given him an example of that disrespectful irony of Erasmus which

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[24] *Opus quaestionum* (Venezia, de Vitali), 1523, f. <63v> 'Problema 404' and last. Here he writes: "omnes Momo deo pleni sumus et omnia non solum quae homines dicunt aut faciunt magnam erroris partem continent"; he speaks also "Democriti philosophi perpetuus ac momicus risus". Ambrogio's dialogue *De risu*, one of his posthumous and unpublished writings cited by Camillo, may have been similar to these pages.

[25] Cfr. F. Bacchelli, 'Palingenio e Giordano Bruno', *Physis*, N.S. XXXVIII, 2001, pp. 213–214n, quotes and comments on the whole passage on 'Momus'.

[26] Erasmus, *Adagium 5074*: "Momo satisfacere". It would be interesting to study how the 'Momus' figure was used in the Renaissance.

[27] E. Cranz, *A Bibliography of Aristotle Editions 1501–1600* (Baden-Baden, 1971), p. 156; 1984 2ª ed.; E. Cranz, P. O. Kristeller eds., *Catalogus translationum et commentariorum* (Ann Arbor, 1960–95), I, pp. 117–18 II, II, pp. 149, 420–422. See also H. A. Wolfson, 'Revised Plan for the publication of a Corpus Commentariorum Averrois in Aristotelem', *Speculum*, 38, 1963, pp. 88–104.

[28] Cf. Ch. B. Schmitt, s.v. 'A. Leo', in *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, ed. P. G. Bietenholz, II (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1986), pp. 322–323; Schmitt, 'Renaissance Averroism studied through the Venetian Edition of Aristotle-Averroes', in *L'averroismo in Italia* (Roma, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1979), deals with "dictionary type works") by Zimara, Posius, Feltrius, Pavisius, G. B. Bernardi, but does not mention Leone.

was to become his own.

But Ambrogio Leone was close to Bruno even when he seemed to echo Erasmus' famous "sancte Socrates ora pro nobis", when he criticized the interpretation that Averroes had given in the first book of the *Physics* of Aristotle's definition "de virtute morali" and his divergences from the Socratic position.

> Socrates enim virtutem esse scientiam faciebat: et apud eum illa erat indubitata sententia, unumquemque bonum esse in quantum sciens est, Aristoteles vero tantum abfuit, ut concederet virtutem esse scientiam, ut etiam docuerit, nec scientiam, nec ex scientia, <seu> consuetudine esse, nec scientiam adiuvare.[29]

Ambrogio Leone continued:

> Quam autem absurdum sit dicere virtutes esse scientias hoc modo contra Socrates in primo *de moralibus magnis* disputavit <an>ne Socrates quidem, inquit, recte scientias virtutes faciebat [...] ibidem et in aliis 'evenit igitur et temere virtutes esse et non esse scientias', haec Aristoteles, in quibus est videre omnia, quae dixit Averroes, aliena esse ab Aristotele atque socratica esse potius.[30]

Morality and custom are not natural and immutable phenomena:

> Namque si mores essent naturales et per se non mutarentur, sicut lapidis casus non mutatur, quod falsum est; item si essent naturales, illos discendo consequeremur a praeceptore, quod etiam falsum est; item scientes simul essent et scientes et boni, quod est falsum; multos enim doctos esse rerum videmus, qui etsi non sunt pravi, non sunt etiam virtute praediti; suntque veluti aegri illi qui regulas medicorum callent, peiore tamen aegritudine periclitantur, quae cum ita se habeant, patet non esse recte factam consequentiam: veluti si scientes ergo necessario studiosi, sicut credit Averroes. Quin etiam mirandum est, si ea fuisset necessitas inter scientiam naturalem et virtutes morales, non etiam eadem usum esse Aristoteles.[31]

"Socratic" teaching does not agree with that of Aristotle, nor with the opinions of the ancient Aristotelian commentators.

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[29] *Castigationes*, cit., p. 7 (Castigatio VIII) on 'locus VIII', quotes from Bk. II of *Nicomachean Ethics* "ne innumeros locos super hac re referamus" from this work and from *Magna moralia*.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[31] *Ibid.*

> Quod si ea socratica sunt non aristotelica, manifestum est illa non fuisse cantata (sic) ab Alexandro, cuius alimenta fuere sola Aristotelis verba, neque item Themistii, qui potius aristotelicus fuit. In quo aberravit Averroes, atque in illo evidentius quod relicta Aristotelis disciplina, quam exponendam sumpsit, ad eam prolapsus est persuasus <iocis> illis oratoris non philosophi, quam Aristoteles ubique taxavit atque correxit.[32]

Ambrogio wrote that according to Averroes

> Socratem ignorasse logicam et metaphysicam naturalem et mathematicam et particulares scientias demonstrativas, calluisse tantum moralem et probabilem. Verumtamen etsi compertum nobis sit Socratem scripsisse nunquam, docuisse semper ita, ut ex eius scriptis iudicium nullum sit adferre de eo.[33]

On the question of the unwritten teaching of Socrates, Leone added a little further on: "At hoc nihil vetat eum scivisset praesertim si ea tempestate potius memoria quam libri exercentur".[34]

Thus Socrates was the founder of philosophy:

> Omnium igitur philosophorum et scriptorum consensus est, Socratem parentem fuisse philosophiae totius, omnes philosophos illustres ita profluisse ac exortos esse ab eo, ut rivuli a fonte nascuntur, qui deinde aliquanto a se divisi varias scholas sectasque peperere. Quae res primum fidem faciunt Socratem calluisse et comunes et proprias vias, atque adeo exacte, ut nemo dedignatus sit auscultatione et praeceptione Socratis […] Nec quisquam eorum, qui ea tempestate fuere, repertus est qui ubi Platonis dialogos legerit, reprehederit Platonem mendacii, monstravitque quae platonicus Socrates dicit ea Socrates non censuisse […] Non modo in dialogis Platonis socratica sapientia splendet, sed etiam eiusdem Platonis testimonio, quod refert in *Convivio* Alcibiades.[35]

Leone also quotes from the Delphic oracle: "sapientem esse Socratem sua tempestate etiam oraculo patefactum est, cuius auctoritas non est parva, modo consentiant aristotelici".[36]

The irony of this passage shows that Leone did not identify himself with the peripatetic school:

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[32] *Ibid*., p. 9 (cast. IX).
[33] *Ibid*., pp. 9–10 (cast. XI).
[34] *Ibid*., p. 10 (cast. XI).
[35] *Ibid*., p. 10 (cast. XI), where he complains of the use of sources proved to be conjectural: "Quamquam Philostratus doceat quae in dialogis scripsit Plato, ea Platonis esse, non Socratis, ego autem vellem […] Philostratum condiscipulum Platonis fuisse, ut certa referret, non autem coniectura uteretur concepta".
[36] *Ibid*., p. 10 (cast. XI).

> [Socratis] sententia fuerit, se hoc solum scire se nescire, quare interrogabat semper, respondebat nunquam [...] nam eo modo ut dicere solebat, omnes qui se scientes arbitrarentur. At hic erat atticus nasus, non modo socraticus: nam eo modo, ut dicere solebat, omnes qui se scientes esse arbitrarentur nescire arguebat.[37]

Learned ignorance was an important standpoint in the Renaissance and Bruno too adopted it in his *Cabala*, when he reminds us how "that enraptured, profound and contemplative Aereopagite [...] declares that ignorance is a most perfect science".[38]

But Ambrogio Leone insists: "Socratem fuisse philosophorum praestantissimum": though frequently treating "circa moralia", there is no demonstration that Socrates ignored natural philosophy ["Socratem ignorasse naturalia"]. On the contrary, he before all others "eam philosophiam de caelo deduxit in terram in urbes et domos, ut ait Cicero".

First of all Theophrastus, then Themistocles (who had been copied by Averroes),[39] Plutarch, Galen and Plotinus had all pointed out and corrected "aliqua male dicta" in Aristotle. "Et omnes qui Aristotelem sectati sunt, excepto Alexandro Aphrodisaeo, Platonem et Socratem sunt sectati atque aliquando se pro eis opposuisse Aristoteli".[40]

This picture of Socrates provides another cue for criticizing Averroes.

> Convenit dicere inepte fecisse Avverroem dum conatus sit Socrati tantam ignorantiae notam inurere, primumque philosophiae parentem et de possessione et de agro suo depellere.[41]

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[37] *Ibid.*, p. 10 (cast. XI).
[38] OC, VI, p. 83: "quel rapto, profondo e contemplativo Areopagita [...] afferma che la ignoranza é una perfettissima scienza".
[39] *Castigationes*, cit., p. 12.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 10 (cast. XI).
[41] *Ibid.*

INDEX NOMINUM

INDEX RERUM[1]

[1] Here and everywhere in this book I use "necromantical, necromancy, necromancer" in the broader sense of these words (black magic using spells, conjurations, charms, prayers etc.), not in the strict sense of communicating with the dead or using parts of dead bodies. I use the names of (non-authentic and pseudepigraphical) authors in the form found in my source.