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CHAPTER

6

The Magic That Was Needed: Rescued Means of Magical Intervention

IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE to reject all aspects of the pre- or non-Christian magic of the heavens out of hand. For one thing, Christianity had no full-fledged scheme with which to replace them. Genesis, to be sure, with its story of the creation of the world in six ordered days, provided a promising outline, but sections even of Genesis were markedly unclear in their precise meanings, and parts of it (such as 6:1-4, as we have seen) were contested by scriptural traditions still of great authority. And for another, of course, beliefs in an order that transcended the material order, and habits that encouraged the looking to the heavens for help, even divinatory help, needed rather to be cherished than set aside. Both were at least concomitant with reverence, and this fact, taken together with the further manifest truth that so many of the non-Christian magical practices which involved the heavens quite simply refused to die, required a more muted approach than the stridency of the first stage of conversion enthusiasm. Many medieval Christians, moreover, still fell short of that trusting belief in divine providence espoused by Eligius, and of that acceptance of the full responsibilities human free will imposed with which the Fathers opposed the divinatory arts. Perhaps this would always be so. For this last reason too, then, some of the old beliefs and habits might have to be indulged to help such persons on their way.

The process whereby certain aspects of the magic of the heavens came to be indulged, and indeed encouraged by Christian leaders, cannot be truly understood without some insight into the contemporary strength of earthly magic too; for horrified resistance to far grosser earthly beliefs (at some of which we shall look in the next chapter) was an issue of major importance when it came to decision making about magic in general by the Christian Church. For some medieval Christians the repression of every aspect of magical practice was still

the only answer; but for others negotiation was possible, and for this the non-Christian heavens might actually provide resources, for those wise enough to notice them. Thus, "gross," condemned, and earth-bound magic was, through the reactions it provoked, centrally engaged in the rescue of much of the magic of the heavens. Tempered belief in the powers of the sun, moon, and stars, and in the influence of demons and angels, and Christian invocation of, and control over, storms and rains and pestilences, came to seem to these others an excellent way of combating the prevalence and popularity of the non-Christian earthly magic purveyed by conjurers and witch doctors and necromancers, love charms and potions, spells and the powers of the dead. And there was, in addition, a great deal in the content of the magic of the heavens that was of itself attractive and could be rendered at least inoffensive and perhaps again helpful to Christians. This was plundered with more eagerness than we have always understood.

ASTROLOGY

One of the most spectacular rescues in the history of magic's rise in the early Middle Ages is the rescue of astrology. From being bowed almost to extinction by the heavy weight of patristic condemnation, astrology became a perfectly acceptable, indeed encouraged, object of learned inquiry. I tried to argue in the preceding chapter that the rescue of astrology was in fact thought to be desirable in a remarkably short time, and that the early lack of manuals on the subject, a lack which Laistner sees as evidence of a failure of astrological practice, is evidence of no such thing. The reappearance of such manuals in the tenth, and especially the eleventh, centuries is marked, certainly. It may mean, however, not that an interest in astrology had reappeared after many centuries' eclipse, but that its scrutiny and even practice had fallen into different hands. I think it does mean this; and I would reaffirm that divination by means of the stars and the planets and the signs of the zodiac was enthusiastically practiced throughout our period, and that the ways in which, and the reasons why, it was quickly made respectable are among the most instructive we have before us.

The rescue of astrology was, of course, in part accomplished by wordplay. Isidore's distinction between "natural" and "superstitious" astrology paved the way, as we saw, for the rehabilitation of "natural" astrology and made it possible for the terms *astronomia* and *astrologia* to become, under certain conditions, interchangeable. We do not owe

the rescue solely, or even primarily, however, to semantics. Astrology was made respectable in the early Middle Ages for three particular reasons. Firstly, there were in existence forms of non-Christian magic thought more destructive both mentally and socially than astrology, and against which astrology might prove to be an active compromise and counter. Secondly, once it became desirable to make an honest science of astrology, supporting materials could be found for the decision to do so; and they could be found, moreover, in sacred as well as in scientific writings. Thirdly, astrology properly understood exercised the mind to a high degree. Such exercise might be seen as a quite acceptable ingredient of asceticism, and an appropriate way of freeing the spirit from the miring of the earth and of associating it with the angels, provided that it be undertaken with due purpose, and in the context of a style of life in other respects undeniably virtuous. This last state of affairs may be one (though not, of course, the only) reason why, when we do have certain sorts of astrological direction committed to writing in our period, they are committed to writing so often by monks. It was perhaps Archbishop Gerard of York's misfortune in this respect that his style of life was not beyond reproach. Observers could, quite independently, find excellent occasions for moral disapproval, and it was therefore easy for them to range his astrological interests among these. The reputation of Gerbert of Aurillac suffered in the same way and at some of the same hands.¹ The position of astrology was necessarily precarious, and those who continued to find in it a wicked form of magic could always lay their hands upon good reasons to condemn it. There were persons, however, who, almost from the earliest, could see not only that it might not be magic in its destructive sense at all, but that it could be both a widely acceptable answer to that magic which must indubitably be outlawed, and a positive inducement to intellectual achievement and religious devotion. The translating of such insights into action was not easy; but it was possible and it did, in the end, yield results.

Three views believed to be scientifically based assisted in the rehabilitation of astrology on many different levels, and in the scrutiny of

¹ Archbishop Gerard of York had a reputation for lasciviousness, and William of Malmesbury had reasons to dislike him too for his refusal to submit his province to the primacy claimed by Canterbury. The same William regarded Gerbert as a renegade monk. Edit. N.E.S.A. Hamilton, *Willelmi Malmesbiriensis Monachi De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum* RS (London, 1870), pp. 259-260; edit. W. Stubbs, *Willelmi Malmesbiriensis Monachi de Gestis Regum Anglorum*, i, RS (London, 1887), 193-195.

its surviving texts. Firstly, in that the heavenly bodies, the stars and the planets, influenced growth and decay and the changes of the seasons, it could be, and was, argued (and with an increasing fervor) that a knowledge of their movements might be both of medical and agricultural benefit. It might be especially so in contrast to deeply dubious prevailing non-Christian magical practices, such as the use of ligatures and the charming of crops. Secondly, the moon, in its nearness to earth and in its capacity to penetrate the murky demon-filled air, was firmly believed to have, in its waxing and waning, an especially powerful effect. Thirdly, comets and falling stars had long been acknowledged to be important to events on earth, and this supposedly proven fact slipped easily into the mental ground prepared by the other two beliefs. All these heavenly bodies, then, deserved respect and attention.

Isidore was, once again, crucial to the restoration to propriety of one manifestation of this respect and attention: the scrutiny of the stars and planets for medical purposes. It might be remembered that, in the section of his *Etymologies* devoted to magical practices, he had found the use of ligatures in medicine especially execrable.² In another section of these same *Etymologies* Isidore positively advocated medical astronomy, with its contemplation of the laws, the stars, the changes of the seasons, as a means of understanding the workings of the human body.³ The medical aspects of the Christianization of astrology are important ones and will be better seen in their true context when we come to treat of non-Christian earthly magic and the remedies it advocated; but we might note meanwhile that Isidore was a most enthusiastic early medieval propagator of the notion, derived from Greek science, that the body of a man is a microcosm of the universe and reflects in little all the constituent parts of it. Isidore seemingly gave the word *microcosmus* its first Latin form. If, then, the forces of the universe permeate human beings, then those first created and immensely powerful bodies of the heavens might be expected to influence humanity especially intensely. It can, indeed, be shown that Isidore believed in this permeation, this power, and this intense influence, even to the extent of admitting of the possibility that the heavenly bodies could be signs to and about humankind in virtue of the sympa-

² See above, chap. 3.

³ *Etymologiae* IV, 13–14; edit. W. M. Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX* (Oxford, 1911).

thy that binds the universe, and that they might themselves have souls.⁴

Priscillianist enthusiasms for astrology went, as we saw in the first section of this chapter, too far, and they brought down upon their heads the anathemas of the mid-sixth-century Council of Braga. This council objected specifically to the notions that the twelve patriarchs might have the signs of the zodiac assigned to them, and that these signs ruled the health and sickness of certain set parts of the body. The Priscillianists were condemned chiefly for their views about the overweening power of Satan, and this tainted their other beliefs; but once the Priscillianists themselves had retreated, attitudes to astrology might, and in fact did, change. Medical astrology, of a sort, early found its advocates. Some of the forms this advocacy took might, to judge from our manuscript records of it, seem little removed from the sort of superstitious faith in ligatures Isidore condemned. But they were different in kind. They used mental rather than physical conjurations. And they rested upon things thought to be known for certain about the power of the moon.

"Scientific" knowledge about the moon, in contrast with those magical beliefs we have briefly surveyed, played a vital part in the rescue of astrology. Lunar influence over growth and decay was a firm ingredient of scientific orthodoxy, for the moon was, after all, the planet nearest to earth and was considered to be much bigger than the earth. Its influence might then be expected to be strong. Such views were ancient, reaching back at least as far as Hesiod, but Pliny and Augustine were perhaps their most forceful conveyors to this period. Pliny gave the moon prominence in his advice, for example, to agricultur-

All cutting, gathering and trimming is done with less injury to the trees and plants when the moon is waning than when it is waxing. Manure must not be touched except when the moon is waning, but manuring should chiefly be done at new moon or at half moon. Geld hogs, steers, rams, and kids when the moon is waning. Put eggs under the hen at the new moon. Make ditches at full moon, in the night time. Bank up the roots of trees at

⁴ J. Fontaine, "Isidore de Séville et l'astrologie," *Revue des Études Latines* 31 (1953), 283–285. In his *De Natura Rerum* xxiii Isidore can say that the planets are called "errantia" not because they err themselves but because they cause men to err; edit. J. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville, Traité de la Nature* (Bordeaux, 1960), pp. 258–259.

full moon. In damp land sow seed at the new moon and in the four days round that time. . . ."⁵

Pliny's influence was greatly assisted by Augustine's acceptance of the fact that farmers needed to consult the movements and behavior of the heavenly bodies.

We see that the seasons of the year change with the approach and the receding of the sun. And with the waxing and waning of the moon we see certain kinds of things grow and shrink, such as sea urchins and oysters, and the marvellous tides of the ocean.⁶

Augustine's words here were uttered, it is true, within the context of a general condemnation of the science of the mathematici, and he goes on to point out that "choices of the will are not subject to the positions of the stars"; but the door had been opened a chink.

Such naturalistic explanations of the moon's effects were useful in counteracting the excesses of Diana worshipers, and this may be one reason for their perpetuation. Again Isidore and Bede did not fail. In the *De Temporum Ratione* Bede quoted Ambrose and Basil with great approval on the power of the moon, especially over winds and waters and growing things. He advocated the taking of great care that wood, for example, be cut at the correct phase of the moon, if it was to be used in shipbuilding or preserved from termites; and he drew attention to the marvelous capacity of moonlight to penetrate Persian selenite, or moonstone, and to make its luster wax and wane with that of the moon (here Bede probably draws upon the *City of God* XXI, v, which is itself dependent upon Pliny). It was at this point that he adduced his famous observations on the tides and the ways of the moon with these.⁷ It is a very long step indeed, of course, from such observations to the science of astrology fully armed, and Isidore was particularly careful to point out that the moon exercised its powers strictly within the control of Divine Providence. Perhaps he feared that others might object to how close to the edge of Christian orthodoxy he had drawn. Bede issued a clear condemnation of astrology too, as we have seen,

⁵ *Natural History* XVIII, lxxv; edit. and transl. H. Rackham *Pliny Natural History* v (Loeb Classical Library, 1950), 390-391.

⁶ *City of God* V, vi; edit. and transl. W. M. Green, *Saint Augustine City of God Against the Pagans* ii (Loeb Classical Library, 1963), 156-157.

⁷ Isidore, *De Natura Rerum* xix; edit. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville, Traité*, pp. 246-247. Bede, *De Temporum Ratione* xxviii, xxix; edit. C. W. Jones, *Beda Opera De Temporibus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1943), pp. 231-235.

and that in the same *De Temporum Ratione*,⁸ but he issued only one, and there may be in that also an instinct for self-defense which was stronger than his conviction that astrology in all its manifestations should be outlawed. If star lore taught that the stars governed human fate entirely, then its doctrine would indeed be foreign to the Christian faith, as Bede declared. But if it merely brought to light sure influences and enabled people to take these influences into account when making their choices, and if, in addition, it enabled the more expert of Christians to face, and indeed outplay, the ever present haruspices or augures, on their own ground, then the matter might be different. At least such beliefs about the power of the moon could enable the door to be opened perhaps one inch more.⁹

Anglo-Saxon sources are especially rich in evidence of both fear of, and trust in, the moon. Pliny's view that the moon was important to the growth of plants finds many echoes, for example in the *Anglo-Saxon Herbal*: "[Periwinkle] must be plucked when the moon is nine nights old, or eleven nights, thirteen nights or thirty nights, and when it is one night old."¹⁰ Isidore's recommendations that the movements of the heavenly bodies be taken seriously when it comes to medical diagnosis and cure find a clear response in these and other sources. Bloodletting may only take place during certain lunar phases. Bede has the saintly John of Beverley very cross about a bleeding on the fourth day of the moon's waxing. A nun from Watton had become seriously ill. John was outraged. "You have acted foolishly and dangerously to bleed her on the fourth day of the moon; I remember how Archbishop Theodore of blessed memory used to say that it was very dangerous to bleed a patient when the moon is waxing and the Ocean tide flowing." The nun recovered only as a result of his prayers.¹¹ *Lacnunga*, among many early treatises, dilates upon the danger of bloodletting on Mondays.¹² Cures for lunacy involve, as one might expect, similar careful

⁸ iii; edit. Jones, *Beda Opera*, pp. 183-184.

⁹ I have tried elsewhere to argue that, in his *De Natura Rerum*, Bede did indeed show a good deal more interest in astrological motifs than one might expect: V.I.J. Flint, "Thoughts about the Context of Some Early Medieval Treatises *De Natura Rerum*," in idem, *Ideas in the Medieval West* (London, 1988) III, pp. 22-24.

¹⁰ clxxix (MT); edit. and transl. O. Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England* i, RS (London, 1864), 314.

¹¹ *Ecclesiastical History* V, 3; edit. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 460-461.

¹² clxxxix; transl. J.H.G. Grattan and C. Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine* (Oxford, 1952), p. 199. Professor James John has drawn my attention to a *calendarium*, found in a manuscript datable to the early years of the eleventh century (and coming

reference. "For a lunatic take this wort [clovewort], and wreath it with a red thread about the man's neck, when the moon is on the wane."¹³

Collections of medical prognostics from the moon are very commonly to be found in surviving manuscripts, such as this one from an eleventh-century Canterbury manuscript, BL Cotton Tiberius A iii, fol. 38a (a famous codex to which we shall have cause to return): "When the moon is one night old, he who is attacked by disease will be dangerously attacked. If disease attacks him on a two night old moon, he will soon be up. If sickness attacks him when the moon is three nights old he will be confined to bed and he will die."¹⁴ And so on until the thirtieth night. Belief in the value of such reckonings inspired the composition of whole books which followed the moon through the thirty days of its life, assigning recommendations and characteristics to each day. Sometimes they were accompanied by spheres, such as the curious (and widely copied) little *Sphere of Pythagoras* (or *Sphere of Apuleius*). This sphere, in manuscripts, took the form of a circle divided by a line across the middle. Above and below the line were three compartments each, among which the numbers one to thirty were divided. Described as a "sphere of life and death or of all sick people and their questions," it was worked by adding the sum of the letters of the sick person's name (each letter had a number assigned to it) to the day of the moon on which he or she became sick, and then dividing the sum by thirty. Should the resulting number fall below the line, it signified death, and if above it, life. Further calculations involving the compartments, and lunar tables matching the numbers found, might throw light upon the length and extent of the illness.¹⁵ It is hard to see what, if any, comfort the sufferer derived from such activities, but they certainly gave the calculator power of a sort through which the pretensions of the local medicine man or woman might temporarily have been thwarted. This may have been one im-

perhaps, and interestingly, from the environs of Liège), in which days unsuitable for bloodletting are clearly marked. G. I. Lieftinck, *Manuscripts Datés Conservés dans les Pays-Bas* i (Amsterdam, 1964), 46-47, and pls. 34-35.

¹³ Anglo-Saxon Herbal x, 2 (MT); edit. Cockayne, *Leechdoms*, i, 100-101.

¹⁴ (MT) Edit. Cockayne, *Leechdoms*, iii, 182.

¹⁵ An excellent illustration of such a sphere, together with directions for its use and lunar prognostic tables, is to be found in ms London B.L. Cotton Caligula A xv, fols. 121v-122. The lunar prognostics are printed and discussed by M. Förster, "Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Volkskunde VIII," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen* 129 (1912), 30-49.

portant reason for their appearance in monastic manuscripts. It was, I think, to look ahead for a moment, a major reason for the rehabilitation of astrology from condemned non-Christian mumbo jumbo to respectable Christian science.

Often prognostics based upon the moon went well beyond mere medical ones. Thus:

The fourth day of the moon. Let blood in the morning. This is a good day on which to begin undertakings and to send boys to school. Whoever tries to run away will be speedily recaptured and whoever falls ill will quickly die, with almost no hope of recovery. Boys born on this day will be fornicators and so will girls. If you have a dream on it, good or bad, it will come true.¹⁶

Lunaria of this kind, sometimes with a token Christian reference to the birthday of a biblical figure, were exceedingly popular. We have surviving texts of them from the ninth century onward and some indication that they may have been in fashion from as early as the third.¹⁷ Sometimes they took cognizance of the relation of the moon to the signs of the zodiac—"Do not shave when the moon is in the sign of Aries"—sometimes of the position of the moon in relation to the planets. Happily they did not always agree among themselves. Parents of incipient fornicators, for example, might have the relief of turning to another prognostication.¹⁸ We cannot know quite how seriously they were taken, but they were carefully copied in monastic scriptoria. Yet, at the same time, behavior which depended upon the moon attracted hostile attention in ecclesiastical councils and in sermons. We may surely see here a division in the Christian ranks, and evidence of a greater willingness at a local level than at a central one to make compromises with older beliefs. We shall explore this divisive aspect of the matter far more thoroughly when we turn to the magic of the earth. One thing is certain, however, and that is that beliefs in the moon, and *lunaria*, were important ingredients in the mounting pressure for serious attention to be paid to astrology.

The third "scientific" view assisting in the rehabilitation of astrol-

¹⁶ From a late eleventh-century Vatican manuscript, Vat. Lat. 3101 from Bavaria, printed in E. Svenburg, *De Latinska Lunaria* (Gothenburg, 1936), p. 31 (MT).

¹⁷ E. Svenburg, *Lunaria et Zodiacologia Latina* (Gothenburg, 1963), p. 6.

¹⁸ "A child [born on the fourth day of the moon] will be an important servant of the realm"; Svenburg, *De Latinska*, p. 31 (from the eleventh-century ms B. L. Cotton Titus D XXVII).

ogy, the idea, that is, that comets and falling stars might be portents, particularly of disaster, was, again, perhaps most effectively transmitted to the Middle Ages by Pliny. Pliny gives evidence of such portended disasters in human history (though he is careful to say that such influences did not wholly govern them).¹⁹ This view was also taken up by Isidore, by Bede, and by their copious following with enthusiasm. Isidore, while obviously approving of the idea, quite cheerfully ascribes it to the supposedly forbidden "Genethliaci."²⁰ Comets, thus dignified, became popular with historians too as a satisfying preface to, and often implied reason for, disasters of a possibly more complex origin. Medieval chroniclers employed them gladly, and so comets shine through histories as portents of war, pestilence, famines, and the fall of kingdoms. We have very many examples of this way of using them.²¹ On this convenient (if intellectually sometimes slightly dubious) pretext as well, then, comets were able to insinuate themselves, probably even more effectively than through the scientific texts alone, into the learned and the popular imagination. Gregory of Tours insisted that one could differentiate between types of comet. "When it seems to have a flaming diadem, it portends the death of a king. When it has a long ray like a sword, glowing red, and spreads its hair abroad darkly, it announces ruin to the country."²² Whether helped primarily by the political and intellectual exigencies of historians (as I think), or because it was set out in scientific treatises *De Natura Rerum*, insistence

¹⁹ *Natural History* II, xxiii; edit. Rackham, Pliny, i, 234–239.

²⁰ Isidore, *Etymologiae* III, lxxi, 16; edit. Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis. De Natura Rerum* xxvi, 13; edit. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville, Traité*, pp. 272–275. Bede, *De Natura Rerum* xxiii; edit. C. W. Jones, *Beda's Venerabilis Opera, Opera Didascalica* i, CC (Turnholt, 1975), 216.

²¹ Comets heralded the inroads of Saracens into Gaul, according to Bede, and portended "dire disaster to east and west alike." *Ecclesiastical History* V, 23; edit. Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, pp. 556–557. Paul the Deacon ascribed a particularly severe pestilence in Rome to the appearance of a brilliant comet. *History of the Lombards* V, xxxi; transl. W. J. Foulke, *Paulus Diaconus, History of the Lombards* (Philadelphia, 1907), p. 235. The early eleventh-century historian Adhémar of Chabannes is a particularly good example of one who takes readily to explanation by means of signs in the heavens. See, for instance, his entry for the year 1010: "His temporibus signa in astris, siccitates noxiae, nimiae pluviae, nimiae pestes, et gravissimae fames, defectiones multae solis et lunae apparuerunt." These foretold, according to Adhémar, the destruction of the Holy Sepulcher. *Adhemari Historiarum Libri III* iii, 46–47; edit. D. G. Waitz, *MGH SS* iv (Hanover, 1841), 136–137.

²² *De Cursu Stellarum* xxxiv; edit. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* i(2) (Hanover, 1885), 419 (MT).

on the influence of comets certainly did a great deal further to fortify belief in the power the heavenly bodies in general had over humankind, and thus, when the time was right, to reinforce the mounting enthusiasm for the rescue of astrology.

One additional factor in the building up and justification of an interest in the heavenly bodies lay in the practical needs of the ecclesiastical computus and monastic horarium. Cassian, when speaking of demons, gave us a vivid example of the timing of the next meal by the sun; Gregory of Tours, in turn, tells us how important was the observation of the stars' position in the night sky in determining the times at which to rise for the night offices. His *De Cursu Stellarum* (in which he described the two kinds of comet) was in fact written primarily for the help of the monk whose responsibility it was to wake everyone up for those offices which normally occurred in darkness. The appropriate hour was determined by noting the place in the sky—a place that varied from month to month—of specific stars and constellations. Gregory describes these stars and constellations, includes illustrations, and then gives directions for their proper interpretation and use. For example: "If [in the month of December] you ring the bell for matins when you see Arcturus rise, then thirty psalms may be sung without difficulty."²³ Thus, splendidly illustrated copies of such treatises on the stars and heavenly bodies as the *Aratea* of Cicero, the *Astronomica* of Hyginus, and the *Arati Phaenomena* of Germanicus Caesar, became standard works in monastic libraries, and we have many startlingly beautiful surviving copies of them.²⁴ Often they are accompanied by maps, some of which had an agreeable tendency to place the observer up in the firmament and have him look down on the constellations, like Scipio in his dream.²⁵ At the very least, these needs and these

²³ *De Cursu Stellarum* xxxv; *ibid.*, p. 421.

²⁴ References to and descriptions (with plates) of such manuscripts are contained in F. Saxl and H. Meier, *Verzeichnis astrologischer und mythologischer illustrierter Handschriften des lateinischen Mittelalters* (Heidelberg, 1915–). An English translation of the volumes bearing upon manuscripts held in England was made in 1953 by H. Bober. Among these MSS B. L. Harley 647 of the ninth century and 2506 of ca. 1000 (originally from Fleury) are striking examples of the type of text to which I refer. A magnificent representation of the ninth-century Leiden Aratus manuscript (MS Voss. lat. Q 79) is available in R. Katzenstein, *The Leiden Aratea: Ancient Constellations in a Medieval Manuscript*, J. Paul Getty Museum (Malibu, 1988).

²⁵ Certain maps accompanying Isidore's *De Natura Rerum* in tenth- and eleventh-century manuscripts for example, are drawn from this perspective, most probably from antique exemplars. W. M. Stevens, "Isidore's Figure of the Earth," *Isis* 71 (1980),

treatises helped to focus watchful and admiring attention upon the skies, and they again helped to make the notion of the heavenly bodies' power over human lives more palatable, and so astrology more acceptable as a legitimate exercise than even Isidore had hoped. The calculation, too, of the days of the movable feasts, especially Easter, required reckonings from the sun and the moon, and manuscripts assembled for the purposes of these calculations, usually called "computi," are rich sources of medical astronomy, of lunaria, and of astronomical and sometimes of astrological knowledge.

Such manuscripts, which as a whole contain a great mine of material still to be worked on, and which vary greatly among themselves in computistical and astrological complexity, become an excellent gauge of the state of affairs and attitudes prevailing in separate areas, and even in separate communities. It may be no accident, for instance, that the great Benedictine abbeys of Bavaria—which, to look ahead for a moment, most probably produced one of the earliest surviving manuscripts we have of the *Mathesis* of Julius Firmicus Maternus (that astrological treatise which was the downfall of Archbishop Gerard)²⁶—are also among the richest we have in star guides and computistical texts. There are many examples of these. A striking one is an early ninth-century codex from the abbey of Saint Peter's, Salzburg, a well-thumbed book contained a medley of astronomical material from Bede, Hyginus, scolia on Germanicus, Pliny: little bits, indeed, of the works of many of those contributors we have distinguished in isolation as pressures building toward the rehabilitation of astrology.²⁷ Much of Pliny's *Natural History* reached the Middle Ages only as a result of its inclusion in computistical collections. Thus, much as the enthusiasm of historians for the use of comets as aids to historical explanation helped to perpetuate a belief in their influence, so did the practical requirements of the computus help to provide space and incentive for the recording of much about the heavenly bodies that was not exclusively computistical, and much that many used to find frankly magical.

The mention of the ecclesiastical computus and the requirements of the liturgy bring us to one last aid to the process (another intensely

268–277. Two ninth-century celestial hemispheres, attached to a star book and most probably used for teaching, are reproduced in F.V.M. Cumont, "Astrologica," *Revue Archéologique* 5 (1916), 11–16.

²⁶ MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek clm. 506, of the eleventh century.

²⁷ MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek clm. 210.

practical one, although dressed up in theory) of justifying serious thought about the stars and the planets: liturgical music. This is illustrated well in a letter for which a ninth-century date seems appropriate, and which shows a clear sympathy for astrology. The author explains his conviction that the planets, especially, affect human action.

We can understand how it is that this or that planet brings prosperity or adversity. Thus, Jupiter, which is most in concord with the sun, and Venus, in its numerical ratio and nature, with the moon, are thought to conduce to human health. This is not because they think about whether to confer good or ill, but because certain things about the future are shown by the transits of the planets. Their pauses and their retrograde motions make clear certain aspects of the future, rather as birds give signs through their flights and their stillnesses, and their types and their cries and their feathers, although they do not know that they do so.²⁸

The careful denial of reason to the planets and the reference to the signs of birds are both of interest, but the most important point to notice here is that the author writes this paragraph immediately after a disquisition upon the harmony of the spheres. He introduces his astrological beliefs, that is, after expressing a view common to medieval musical theorists especially, that the distances between the planets produce intervals, and their motions, sound; and, in the numerical ratios of these intervals, all produce concords similar to those produced by the musical scale.²⁹ Humans were thought to be drawn to this music and to try to create some semblance of it upon earth. Such a view was sometimes recognized as akin to condemned astrology, and not everyone agreed with it,³⁰ but the impact was sufficient for us to be able to find that codices concerned with musical theory and with the music of the liturgy not infrequently contain items of an astrological interest also.³¹

Music, therefore, and especially the music the liturgy required, gave

²⁸ Edit. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epistolae Karolini Aevi* ii (Berlin, 1902), 198–199 (MT).

²⁹ Macrobius was a familiar source for such a view, especially his *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* II,iii–iv; transl. W. Stahl, *Macrobius, Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (New York, 1952), pp. 193–199.

³⁰ Cassiodorus, for example, was wary of it: *Expositio in Psalterium*, Psalm cxlviii; PL 70, 1047.

³¹ Such a codex is London, B.L. Add. 17808, of the eleventh century, which binds treatises on music together with directions upon how to use the astrolabe, and with the frankly astrological *Liber Alchandreii*.

its participants and audiences one further excuse for pondering upon the influences of the planets. We cannot suppose that medieval ecclesiastical music invariably put one in mind of the superior music of the spheres; only that the connection could be made, and that sometimes, when it was made, it brought with it thought about the power of the heavenly bodies too. It is worth remarking, also, that psalmody would come to be thought an acceptable noise (if, that is, one must indulge in forms of noise) in Christian approaches to sympathetic magic for the moon, and in Christian efforts to provide a supernatural counter to storms.³² Here music again assists (though differently) in the adjustment of attitudes to magic, and in the acceptance of aspects of it formerly condemned.

And materials supporting a scrutiny of the heavenly bodies for directions about human behavior could, in the final resort, be found, once one looked; even in the Bible, especially in Genesis. Light itself was, after all, created on the first day, and the great luminaries in the firmament on the fourth. God himself set the sun and the moon, moreover, "to rule over the day and over the night, and to sign the seasons and the days and nights" (Gen. 1:3-5, 14-18). He created these well before he created man, and, according to those Christian cosmologies we have already noticed, they were higher up in the heavens than were the demons. Much of the stuff of which astrology was made could, then, rightly hold a most important place in the mind of those who placed the Bible in the forefront of Christian learning and reverence, and who felt that demons had to be contained by superior powers. In other places in the Old Testament, moreover, God himself could be seen to use the heavenly bodies as signs and even as determinants. Thus he moved the sun as a sign to Hezekiah of his healing (2 Kings 20:10-11) and made the sun and the moon stand still for Joshua (Josh. 10:12-13). Of course humankind may not worship the heavenly bodies in place of God (thus Deut. 4:19), but people might be expected to be in awe of them and to be alerted to God's possible use of them. The zodiac, to be sure, is not to be found as such in the Scriptures, but, once again, ingenious exegesis might make it a fellow traveler, and the twelve signs do appear, as for example in 2 Kings 23:5. Parallels could be drawn between these signs of the zodiac and the twelve precious stones in Exod. 28:15-21 and 39:9-14. It was a short step then to their additional association with Joseph's dream of the eleven stars in Gen.

³² See below, chap. 7.

37:9, with the patriarchs—that is, the twelve sons of Jacob—and with, then, the twelve tribes of Israel and even the apostles.³³ Certain individual signs could readily be assigned, too, to single biblical figures: the Ram, for example, to Abraham, the Lion to Daniel, Taurus and Sagittarius to Joseph (Gen. 19:24 and Deut. 13:7). The evangelist signs from Ezek. 1:10 and Rev. 4:7 found their echo in the zodiac, in the man (Aquarius), Taurus, and Leo. Two of the evangelists, Matthew and John, were, of course, apostles. In that many of the authors of the Scriptures may themselves have been sensitive to astrological lore,³⁴ earnest seekers after astrological precedent could be expected to find at least some justification there, then, once they turned to the Scriptures for such help. The Bible provided no direct incentives for the study of astrology, it is true; but neither did it plant insuperable obstacles in its way.

The lack of classical written works containing material on astrology, works such as the *Astronomicon* of Manilius or the *Mathesis* of Julius Firmicus Maternus, began to be remedied only gradually and, judging from the manuscripts that survive, perhaps only in the late tenth and the eleventh centuries. But, to say nothing of the incentives we have already discussed, seventeen manuscripts of the whole or parts of Isidore's *De Natura Rerum* have come down from the period before the ninth century; and from the ninth century onward we hear rumblings which grow into a roar as opposition to astrological interests within the Latin church crumbles under the weight of the reasons for its rehabilitation, and of efforts to provide for this. From the ninth century we have copies of the *Sphere of Pythagoras*, speedily followed by other versions of lunar calculations of this type. It is from the ninth century also that we can trace an increasing desire to find Christian equivalents for the signs of the zodiac, as though the zodiac was now attracting the kind of attention which should be turned to a Christian account. Thus the Ram represents Abraham's offering (Gen. 22:1-14), the Bull Jacob's struggle with the angel (Gen. 32:25ff), the Twins Adam and

³³ Philo Judaeus was of great importance to exegesis of this kind, although he was himself a ferocious opponent of astrology. Such associations are sometimes a guide to the seriousness with which astrology was viewed in general. Vital information on the texts bearing upon the Christianization of the zodiac is to be gained from W. Hübner, *Zodiacus Christianus*, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 144 (Königstein, 1983).

³⁴ See, for example, S. Weinstock, "The Geographical Catalogue in Acts II, 9-11," *Journal of Roman Studies* 38 (1948), 43-46.

Eve, the Crab Job's sores (Job 2:7), and so on.³⁵ Christianizing of this sort had been tried before,³⁶ but not, it seems, quite on this scale. The crucial turning point for the rehabilitation of astrology may have come, indeed, in the ninth century. This seems to have marked, as I shall also suggest, the turning point for the rehabilitation of the Magi of Saint Matthew as respectable astrologers, and it is perhaps understandable that the Christian Carolingians, confronted as they were by the peculiarly turbulent and impenitent paganism of the Saxons and Slavs, should have been active in arranging controlled compromises of such a kind. Simply by being there, and particularly by being there in great numbers, competing magicians hold up the process of conversion, cause, as it were, a catch of breath, and make space for choices. These moments (some of them very extended ones) and these choices allow parts of the old magic to slip through and take up, paradoxically, a position far more stable and permanent than the circumstances which set it on its way. Astrology, for all the reasons we have discussed, and finally for this last one, was a prime candidate for such a crossing.

In the tenth century, certainly, we have a rush toward respectability for astrology. We begin to have circulated written directions for the use of the astrolabe, manuscripts of the treatises I have mentioned, and compilations containing astrological material from Arab sources, such as the perplexing ms Paris B.N. Lat. 17686.³⁷ The distinguished Benedictine scholar Abbo of Fleury (d. 1004) may take a place beside the more famous Gerbert of Aurillac (d. 1003) in the history of the active sponsoring of "natural astrology." In the tenth century too the lost astronomical handbook of Boethius—who had expressed a certain sympathy for astrological assumptions in his *De Consolatione Philosophiae* and whose execution may have been prompted in part by such sympathies—became sought after again following a long period of obscurity.³⁸ From the tenth century come tangible examples, one espe-

³⁵ These and other equivalents are set out in Hübner, *Zodiacus Christianus*, pp. 69–85 and 194–208.

³⁶ By, for example, Bishop Zeno of Verona in ca. 400 and by his ninth-century imitator Pacificus. *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12 and also idem, "Das Horoskop der Christen," *Vigiliae Christianae* 29 (1975), 120–127.

³⁷ This manuscript and other, related, ones are discussed in A. Van de Vyver, "Les plus anciennes traductions latines médiévales (x–xi siècles) de traités d'astronomie et d'astrologie," *Osiris* 1 (1936), 658–691.

³⁸ *De Consolatione Philosophiae* IV, 51–55, for example; *edit.* and *transl.* H. F. Stewart et al., *Boethius* (Loeb Classical Library, 1973), pp. 360–361. Gerbert was pleased to

cially spectacular, of the coming together in apparent harmony of Christian associations which were, in an earlier period, specifically condemned. An ivory reliquary from Quedlinburg in northern Germany, possibly a gift of the emperor Otto I, has a Christianized zodiac of a special type carved upon its sides. These sides depict the twelve apostles, bordered by precious stones, and, placed above each apostle, a zodiac sign. In the center of the front panel is a medallion of Christ.³⁹ The latter may be meant to represent Christ the "sun of justice" (Mal. 4:2) replacing the sun as the center of the zodiac. Christ and apostles together were meant most probably to be seen to surpass the planets and the zodiac as guides, but to be involved with them nonetheless, rather as the Astrologer-Magi of Matthew were perhaps meant to be seen as outdoing older magicians on the Franks Casket of the seventh/eighth centuries.⁴⁰ The position of astrology was still precarious and responses to it divided,⁴¹ but the Quedlinburg reliquary and its companion pieces are speaking examples of the importance now assumed by astrological motifs, and of how far opinion has moved from the uncompromising outrage earlier expressed at such associations.

An interesting little text, datable, it seems, to the late eleventh century, *On the Make-up of the Celestial and Terrestrial Universe*, gives us an excellent idea of the state of affairs which prevailed before the

have found a copy of the *Astrologia* at Bobbio. H. Lattin, *The Letters of Gerbert* (New York, 1961), p. 54.

³⁹ The Quedlinburg reliquary is illustrated and described in A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser* I (Berlin, 1914), pp. 32–33 and pl. XXIV. Goldschmidt draws attention to four more reliquary fragments showing apostles and zodiac signs, and all from the tenth century. The Quedlinburg reliquary was possibly made in Fulda, and the metalwork and cameo were perhaps added in the early eleventh century and, interestingly, to render the whole a little more Christian in appearance: P. E. Schramm and H. Mutherich, *Denkmale der deutsche Könige und Kaiser* I (Munich, 1962), 153, and H. Keller, "Zum sogenannten Reliquienschrein Ottos des Grossen in Quedlinburg," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987), 261–264. I owe these references to Drs. Lawrence Nees and Robert Melzack. A reverse process may be detected in a manuscript of the late tenth century, probably from the Fleury of Abbot Abbo. Here, zodiac illustrations are actually intruded into the decoration of Eusebius's canon tables: C. Nordenfalk, "A Tenth Century Gospel Book in the Walters Art Gallery," in *edit.* U. E. McCracken et al., *Gatherings in Honor of Dorothy E. Miner* (Baltimore, 1974), pp. 139–170.

⁴⁰ See below, chap. 11.

⁴¹ The Berne glosses on Lucan, for example, are still, though not hostile, wary: "All mathesis is a matter for conjecture." H. Usener, *M. Annaei Lucani Commenta Bernensia* (Leipzig, 1869), p. 42.

twelfth century turned to the Arabs with such excitement. This text seems very probably to have been put together as a result of school-room lectures and so may be taken to represent actual teaching.⁴² It is striking in its concern with, and sympathy for, astrology. The four elements of earth, water, air, and fire still predominate as the basis of the discussion (on the plan of ancient cosmographies), and that section of the text which deals with the heavens is initially arranged as a steady ascent through the elements up to the ether, the abode of the planets and the stars. The whole is suitably prefaced by a reference to the compound of these elements in man, to man as microcosm in fact, and we spend much of our time agreeably suspended above the earth as we do in some of the maps I mentioned earlier. The lecturer, or compiler of the text, loses little time before he mentions geographical astrology (but without the denunciation of astrological measurements of time Bede had thought it proper to make),⁴³ and he brings us far more information about the planets and the zodiac than Bede or Isidore had ever offered. Nor is he above a straight-faced use of material drawn from sources well known to be opposed to astrology. He chooses, for example, four horoscopes from the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* but neatly omits the arguments against astrology with which the author of the *Recognitions* had surrounded these. Thus:

When Venus and the Moon are with Saturn in Saturn's houses, that is, in Capricorn and Aquarius, whatever females are born by day with that horoscope will be masculine women, quick to take up farming, waging war and building houses, and, neglecting the scents, sandals and clothing belonging to women, they seek that which is common to men. Nor are they effectively opposed in this by their husbands.⁴⁴

To those who knew their *Recognitions*, and it seems, as we have seen, that there were many such, this use of the text would have conveyed a clear message.

⁴² This has recently been edited and translated by C. Burnett, *Pseudo-Bede: De Mundi Celestis Terrestrisque Constitutione. A Treatise on the Universe and the Soul*, Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts x (London, 1985). My remarks are dependent upon his discussion and apparatus. It remains just conceivable that this treatise was written in the ninth century, and in South Germany (perhaps even at Reichenau): H. W. Hine, "Seneca and Anaxagoras in Pseudo-Bede's *De Mundi Celestis Terrestrisque Constitutione*," *Viator* 19 (1988), 111-127.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 55. I have emended the translation very slightly. The *De Mundi Celestis Terrestrisque Constitutione* interestingly omits that part of the Clementine horoscope which tells that such women commit adultery with whom they please as well.

The influence of the Arabs and the accessibility of their libraries and translators to such as Gerbert and his fellow enthusiasts have for long been blamed for, or credited with, the eventual incursion of astrology into the West. The importance of the Arabs cannot be doubted; and yet the greatest of the incentives may lie in truth elsewhere. It is more than conceivable that astrology owed its rehabilitation in the early medieval West primarily to the problems posed to and by Benedictine monks—and non-Christian magic; that, in short, the monks made their rather simpler efforts in the direction of astrological divination, in the form of divining spheres and lunaria and the like, primarily to make friends, and indeed Christians, of the people of the countryside in which they settled, and among whom the old magic persisted in so many of its forms. Such friendships, and such inducements to follow the Christian faith, required the making of accommodations with dearly held magical beliefs, and astrology, in its less refined forms, could help them to make these accommodations. It may also be that that increasing sophistication of astrological theory which took place in Northern Europe, especially Lorraine, was in one part prompted by the interest certain bishops came to take in the education of their clergy (and by the intellectual and political choices attendant on this interest), and in another part by alarm at the too simple practices of certain Benedictines. In the surviving codices, indeed, there is some evidence of such a distinction of origin and purpose.⁴⁵

None of these hypotheses can be turned into certainties, but it can be proposed with some firmness that the revival of astrology both "popular" and "scientific" owed a great deal to the active interest ninth- and tenth-century Christians still had in persisting divinatory practices, and that, to the Christian Church, astrological lore was an appropriate way of distracting attention from the more menacing of the forms of supernatural intercession with which it was surrounded. Some of its leaders reacted toward simpler forms of astrological divination, some toward astrological science. Astrology of a simple kind could cohabit with, and perhaps dignify, the less harmful and certainly popular elements of rustic superstition, such as beliefs in the power of the moon; it could be practically and, when it came to it, even scripturally supported, and it could allow a certain authority over such beliefs to communities attempting to live a life of Christian excellence. Astrol-

⁴⁵ Compare, for instance, the contents of ms B. L. Cotton Titus D.xxvi with those of ms B. L. Harley 2506. I have set out the evidence which supports this suggestion in V.I.J. Flint, "The Transmission of Astrology in the Early Middle Ages," *Viator* 21 (1990), 1ff.

ogy of a more scientific kind, though it might inspire reactions and even resentment, might also help to avoid confusion with forbidden rustic practices and might allow Christians to capture a divinatory authority they badly needed.

The power and persistence of other forms of the old magic, and the pastoral anxieties and ambitions both of the Benedictine Order and of bishops, were at least as important as the Arabs to the rescue of astrology. Isidore was a herald of an enterprise taken up with enthusiasm by those who needed to outplay the non-Christian sorcerers and diviners who pressed upon them.

DEMONS

I have suggested that the demons of the lower air came into the early Middle Ages in part because there were scriptural and philosophical foundations for a belief in them, and in part (I suspect, indeed, in the main) because they were useful as a means of isolating evil from good, and of inspiring an appropriate fear of it. For all these reasons their rescue from the ancient world was assured; and displayed prominently amid all this evil was magic. The roles of the demons here might change, however, as certain magical practices or practitioners aroused a greater or lesser abhorrence. Sometimes demons might seem to be most threatening when dealing in anxieties about the future, sometimes when tampering with human love and sexual potency, sometimes when inflicting diseases or affecting the weather and crops or even, on occasion, waking the dead. Changing views about those demonic magical activities thought to be most damaging will have a consequent effect on counters to them; and these will, in turn, vary in time. On some occasions angels might seem to be the only answer to demons, and so the need for the old bad daemones would lead to the rescue and the emphasis of the good ones too. On others science and reason might be invoked—astrology, for instance, against demonic powers of prediction, or scientific medicine against their ability to inflict disease. On other occasions still, men and women supernaturally reinforced might win unearthly battles against demons—and with the help of a Christian magic these same demons will do much to illuminate, and so, perversely and paradoxically, encourage. At an opposite extreme demons might bear the blame for apparent human faults. Nor must one forget that skepticism could be a lively force, and that evil magic demonically inspired could seem useful as a concept to counter-

act this too. Many and diverse factors conditioned the rise and the roles of demons within the period, and they could be remarkably variously employed; but that they had a place, and that this place was an important one, there is no doubt.

I propose at this point to look in a general way at some of our chief sources for the active rescue of demons in the cause of discrediting the non-Christian magic as a whole: sources in which magic and its demonic associations are a preoccupation, that is, and which found a wide audience in our period. We shall consider in later chapters those specific forms of magic which demons seem most to help to throw into relief, and then we shall look a little more closely at some of the reasons for which, and the places at which, demons were chosen to perform this service.

Foremost among the general treatises promoting the active rescue of demons is Augustine's *On the Divination of Demons*. Augustine wrote this treatise with the aim of isolating abhorrent magical practices in the face of their pressing persistence. It was, as I have already mentioned,⁴⁶ copied very nearly in its entirety into Rabanus's *On the Magic Arts*. Rabanus clearly revered it, and, taken from Rabanus, it went into Burchard's *Decretum*. Together, these three rescued demons with the greatest of vigor and associated them most firmly with the magical arts.

Demons live, all agreed with Apuleius and Plato, in a part of the cosmos superior to that inhabited by human beings (the air there may be murky in comparison with the pure spaces of the ether, but it is incomparably better as a habitation than the earth), and as physical beings they are superior too. Their bodies, for instance, are enviably lighter.

The nature of demons is such that, through the sense perception belonging to the aerial body, they readily surpass the perception possessed by earthly bodies, and in speed, too, because of the superior mobility of the aerial body, they incomparably excel not only the movements of men and of beasts, but even the flight of birds. Endowed with these two faculties, in so far as they are the properties of the aerial body, namely, with keenness of perception and speed of movement, they foretell and declare many things that they have recognized far in advance.

These physical capacities and perceptions enable demons to outwit men and to hurt them.

⁴⁶ See above, chap. 3.

They often receive the power to induce diseases, to render the very air unwholesome by vitiating it, and to counsel evil deeds to men who are perverted and greedy for earthly gains. . . . They persuade them . . . in marvelous and unseen ways, entering by means of that subtlety of their own bodies into the bodies of men who are unaware, and through certain imaginary visions mingling themselves with men's thoughts, whether they are awake or asleep. . . . Sometimes they foretell, not the deeds which they themselves perform, but future events which they recognise in advance through natural signs which cannot reach the senses of man.⁴⁷

In each of these passages, Augustine and his followers go a little further than did Apuleius in the *De Deo Socratis*, and than did the *Life of Saint Antony*, and further even than Cassian. Augustine stresses the superiority of demons to birds, but here it is a superiority in evil, and he associates demons with the misadventures of everyone, not just with those of monks. In this treatise Augustine is concerned to vilify all those religious practices Christianity had come to replace, but, as one who was himself preoccupied with the evils of augury and divination, he singles out augury and divination as activities peculiarly demonic. The copying and use of this little work may be a guide to the places and periods within which augury and those apparently expert in arts of this kind were most to be feared.⁴⁸ Augustine seems interested here also in the demonic causes of illnesses and dreams. Magicians might, as we shall see, be called upon especially in cases of illness and in the interpretation of dreams, and so demons might also appropriately be brought into service to discredit these practices especially, and perhaps even to draw both praise and fire away from the magician himself.⁴⁹

Augustine, of course, has biblical precedents for the association of demons with illness and dreams, and many will make these associa-

⁴⁷ *The Divination of Demons* 3,5 (transl. R. W. Brown; in edit. R. J. Deferrari, *Saint Augustine, Treatises on Marriage and other Subjects* (Washington, 1955), pp. 426, 430.

⁴⁸ The earliest known manuscript, an eighth-century one, may be English: J. Zycha, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 41 (Vienna, 1900), p. xxxviii. Augustine associates demons with these peculiarly noxious forms of magic in many other widely popular works of course, for instance in the *De Doctrina Christiana* II,xx,xxiv and the *De Civitate Dei* VIII,xix.

⁴⁹ Demons, for Augustine, often explain away the apparent achievements of magicians, for instance those of the magicians of Pharaoh: *De Civitate Dei* XXII,X; edit. Green, *Saint Augustine*, vii,254-255. Augustine makes the same point in his *De Trinitate* III,vii, a passage often quoted. It is quoted, for example, by Hincmar of Rheims in his *De Divortio Lotharii et Tetbergae*; PL 125,676-677.

tions after him; but it is worth noting at this juncture that not everyone did. Medieval scientific treatises *De Natura Rerum* tended to stress natural (nondemonic) features, of airborne illnesses, for instance, and so to counter magical beliefs in a different way.⁵⁰ The energetic rescue of demons for these and allied purposes could, then, on occasion be tempered by an equally energetic rescue of natural knowledge, and a too great reliance on demons of the kind in which Augustine sometimes indulged could induce an equally strong reaction. Demons, though a favorite answer to the problem of explaining away misfortune apparently magically induced, were certainly not the only one. Although our preoccupation here is with the rescue of demons, the processes which tempered the rescue or, on occasion, made it all the more forceful (sometimes through contrasting views of human psychology and the place of science) should constantly be borne in mind.

As well as Rabanus and Burchard, Caesarius of Arles stands out for his willingness to use, build upon, and bring into Europe Augustine's associations between demons and forbidden magic. In his most famous and most widely borrowed sermon against augury, he too connected demons most particularly with divination,⁵¹ and this emphasis passed into the works of many of his admirers.⁵² According to Caesarius, demons, led by the devil himself, also stand behind large numbers of other magical practices. "One who restrains men from observing omens, wearing phylacteries, or consulting magicians and seers is known to bear testimony to Christ when he speaks against these temptations of the Devil."⁵³ In this sermon he gives an especially full account of those forbidden magical practices which most distress him and which the devil and his demons help him to illuminate. In one passage he shows just the same anxiety as Augustine about the involvement of demonically inspired magicians in cures. Mothers rush for the help of

⁵⁰ Isidore does not mention demons in his various efforts to explain airborne pestilence: *De Natura Rerum* XXXIX; edit. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville, Traité*, pp. 302-305. Nor does Bede, *De Natura Rerum* XXXVII; edit. Jones, *Beda Venerabilis*, p. 223. Certain of the tenth-century glosses on Lucan contain a very down-to-earth explanation of dreams, too, in which heat and cold play a large part: edit. Usener, *M. Annaei Lucani*, pp. 220-221.

⁵¹ ". . . diabolicas divinationes" (Sermon 54); edit. G. Morin, *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis Sermones* I, CC (Turnholt, 1953), p. 236, transl. M. M. Mueller, *Saint Caesarius of Arles, Sermons* I (Washington, 1956), 266.

⁵² Into the *Scarapsus* of Pirmin of Reichenau, for example, which uses many of the same words, PL 89,1041, and into Sermon xliii of Rabanus, PL 110,81.

⁵³ Sermon 52; transl. Mueller, *Saint Caesarius*, I,260.

such forbidden magicians for abortions, or when their sons are ill, instead of turning to the church.

They do not ask for the church's medicine, or that of the author of salvation and the eucharist of Christ. Nor . . . do they ask the priests to anoint them with blessed oil, or place all their hopes in God. . . . They say to themselves: Let us consult that soothsayer, seer, oracle or witch ["illum ariolum vel divinum, illum sortilegum, illam erbariam"]. Let us sacrifice a garment of the sick person, a girdle that can be seen and measured. Let us offer some magic letters, let us hang some charms on his neck. In all this the Devil has one aim: either cruelly to kill the children by abortion, or to heal them still more cruelly with charms.⁵⁴

At one point Caesarius bursts out, "If only they would seek that health from the simple skill of doctors!" We have a hint of an active counter to magic in the form of science here, as well as "church medicine," though, as we shall see later, doctors were not thought by everyone to be an appropriate answer. They were not by Gregory of Tours, for example. We have a similar appeal to reason as a counter in the same sermon, when Caesarius speaks of our now familiar old beliefs about the moon.

How is it that foolish men think they should, as it were, help the moon in its eclipse? When its shining orb is covered at certain times by a natural condition of the air or is suffused with the nearby heat of the setting sun, they think that there is some conflict of incantations against heaven. This they imagine they can overcome by the sound of a trumpet or the ridiculous tinkling of bells that are violently shaken, through the vain persuasion of pagans believing they make the moon friendly to themselves by wicked shouting. Now, since at God's bidding it renders service to rational man, why does man render foolish obedience to it, to the insult of God? Let every wise and pious man, we beg you, avoid and detest these errors, or, rather, this madness, this shameful mockery. If the substance of this heavenly body is inferior to you, why do you fear to offend it by your silence? If it is superior to you why do you think it needs your help?⁵⁵

Caesarius can reach for rational argument, as well as demons, as a corrective to forbidden magical beliefs, and he seems here, for a moment, to be a little closer to Sisebut than to Eligius. Demons come in

and out, as it were, as counters, depending partly upon the writer, partly upon the audience to be addressed, partly upon the political and psychological circumstances within which the pastor believes he operates. Belief in, and invocation of, demons is never universal and without its fluctuations, not even (especially not so) in the early Middle Ages. Astrology, not demons, will eventually take pride of place as a means of contesting those beliefs about the moon which were determined superstitious; and a greater skill in herb lore, at monastic hands perhaps especially, will come to replace Caesarius's "erbaria" and the other demonic seducers of anxious mothers. Sometimes science will work in tandem with a belief in demons in an effort to excite hostility to magic; sometimes science will be used directly to put demonic magic to flight, and demons then take second place to it; sometimes demons will be asked to do what reason cannot. For Caesarius particularly, much seems to have depended upon the audience to whom the sermon was addressed; the more intelligent and responsible the audience, perhaps the more possible it was for him to make an appeal to reason or science, confident that the appeal would not get out of hand. For certain audiences, however, and for his central pastoral purposes, Caesarius is as sure as anyone that demons must on occasion be invoked and so must be carefully preserved.⁵⁶ God is always liable to make use of the devil and his minions to try the virtue of Christian people (even the most rational of them). "Therefore avoid the Devil's tricks as much as you can."⁵⁷ Caesarius, like Augustine, drives the point home very hard.

A further firm believer in the association between demons and condemnable magic is Martin of Braga, in his sermon *Reforming the Rustics*. This is worth our pausing over, for Martin spelled the whole matter of demons out succinctly, and strictly within the context of a battle against magical beliefs. As a simplified rendering of Augustine's views it was an extremely forceful propellant of that demonization at which Augustine was adept, and it reached many readers and writers, such, for example, again, as Pirmin of Reichenau. Martin gives us a whole cosmology in reinforcement of his views. To Christians this is a familiar story, but it is pointed here in its reference to demonic magic in particular. Satan, for the sin of pride, "along with many other angels

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 262. I have emended the translation very slightly.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 261.

⁵⁶ The sermon ascribed to Eligius in his *Vita* and referred to earlier is modeled upon one of Caesarius's, Sermon 13, designed for general parish use.

⁵⁷ Sermon 54; transl. Mueller, *Saint Caesarius*, I, 268.

who had agreed with him was cast from that celestial abode into the air which is beneath the heavens; and he who had formerly been the archangel lost the light of his glory and became the devil, full of gloom and horror." Once men fell too, they became the prey of Satan and his demons, and the demons

began to appear to them in various forms and speak with them and demand of them that they offer sacrifices to them on lofty mountains and in leafy forests and worship them as God. . . . [They] even persuaded them to build temples to them and to place therein images or statues of wicked men and to set up altars to them, upon which they should pour out for them blood both of animals and even of men. Furthermore, many of the demons who had been expelled from the heavens now preside over the sea or streams or fountains or forests, and in similar fashion ignorant men who do not know God worship them as gods and offer them sacrifices.⁵⁸

We can see from this how quickly Martin leaves the Bible and plunges into post-Roman Spain, and also how, as he launches himself upon that condemnation of pagan practices which is his purpose, he launches the demons into the Christian world with him as he charges them specifically with the magical practices he abhors. Demons used to this end are, as it were, both rescued and recycled.

None of those I have cited as readily associating demons with the magic they condemned, and so as bringing demons through primarily for their services to this end, had any doubt that this magic was, at the same time, real. Happenings beyond human understanding and control did take place at the demons' hands. Augustine wrote his *On the Divination of Demons* in part to explain how it was that the destruction of the Temple of Serapis in 391 had been accurately predicted; and Caesarius spelled out clearly his own firm belief that magic can indeed have an effect. He did so, for instance, in a sermon on Num. 22-25, the story of Balaam the magician and Balak, king of Moab.

This Balaam was exceedingly famous for his magical art, and very powerful with his harmful verses ["carminibus noxiis"]. He did not possess the power or skill of words in blessing but only in cursing, for the demons are invited to curse but not to bless. . . . Do not wonder if there is such a thing as

⁵⁸ *Reforming the Rustics*, transl. C. W. Barlow, *Iberian Fathers* i (Washington, 1969), 72, 74-75.

magical art. Even Scripture declares that this art exists but prohibits its use.⁵⁹

Again:

Perhaps someone says: What are we to do, for the magicians and seers often announce true omens to us? . . . Again you say: Sometimes many would run the risk even of death from the bite of a snake or some infirmity if there **were** no magicians. It is true, dearly beloved, that God permits this to the Devil . . . to try Christian people. Thus, when they sometimes are able to recover from sickness by these impious remedies, men see some truth in them and afterwards more readily believe the devil.⁶⁰

Both Augustine and Caesarius were, of course, very quick to insist that demons do none of these things without divine permission. They denied them *truly* supernatural powers of any sort. Demons may only do that which is consistent with their natures, and they have no capacities which are of themselves divine. That being said, however, the demons they believe in and describe are so immeasurably greater in capacity than man, and so incalculably more adept at ambivalence and deception, that it is easy to believe their powers supernatural in comparison with his. Thus they remain a necessary part of the cosmos as long as irrational and forbidden magical divinations, marvels, and cures are sought after and are thought surely to work.

In this way, of course, demons both help man to allow that events beyond his understanding do take place, and they save him, weak as he is, from having to take upon himself full-scale responsibility for them. Thus a belief in demons can help to rescue man from excessive blame and its punishment. Demons work only under God. Man may, again under God, contend with them; but, without God's help, it goes almost without saying, man will never be their match. This dimension to the early medieval rescue of demons is an exceedingly important one. Demons do not here play that role for which they are later to become so famous in witchcraft trials; the role, that is, of active agents in a drama of fear and repression, and sometimes as assistants to so-called scientists in a process of proscription.⁶¹ Rather, they play an

⁵⁹ Sermon 113; transl. Mueller, *Saint Caesarius*, ii, 156, 158.

⁶⁰ Sermon 54; *ibid.*, i, 267.

⁶¹ See, for example, the interesting remarks in W. Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718* (New York, 1911), pp. 23, 76-77, on the tendency of professional physicians to lay the blame for difficult cases upon witchcraft diabolically

almost exactly opposite one. They are used to take the panic, much of the blame, and the extreme penalties from the accused maleficus upon themselves. This humane use of a belief in the magical powers of demons by the early medieval church is one deserving of some emphasis, for, in the light especially of later abuses, sight of it can easily be lost.

There are many examples of this motive for the rescue of demons, and of this way of employing them. A particularly vivid one may be found in the *Life of Bishop Ursmar* (abbot of Lobbes, d. 713). This is vivid because it conjures up so graphically the atmosphere of fear which might surround an instance of supposed diabolical possession, and the relief that the recognition and dismissal of the offending demon immediately occasioned. Here, a nun is so possessed as to be made to utter dreadful obscenities ("per os illius turpia loqui"). Her "consores" blamed a demon but were unable of themselves to expel it. It needed Bishop Ursmar. He exorcised it accordingly, and immediately the terror it had inspired ("pavor tamen et horror") vanished with it. The sprinkling of blessed salt and water confirmed the expulsion and the cessation of fear. At no point was the nun seen as anything but a victim, and the exorcism ritual employed by the bishop was clearly associated with the restoration of serenity.⁶² This, and stories like it, show us clearly how demons could be used, and why they were thought to be so necessary. They illustrate here the supernatural abilities of the bishop-saint and they promote, furthermore, the power of the particular ecclesiastical magic he purveys, in addition to saving the unhappy nun from obloquy. Vital to the elimination of non-Christian magic, demons were thus helpful, too, to the verification of its Christian counterpart.

The testimony of any one of the great preachers and storytellers I have cited would have been sufficient of itself to rescue magical demons for our period, and we have seen in the writings on magic of Rabanus and Burchard in particular how such a rescue was achieved.⁶³ Many further examples of these crucial associations—between demons, those different magical practices it was thought at various times necessary to outlaw with their help, and the Christian countermagic

inspired, even when such accusations were known possibly to lead to severe persecution.

⁶² *Vita Ursuari Episcopi et Abbatis Lobbiensis* 4; edit. B. Krusch and W. Levison, MGH SRM vi (Hanover and Leipzig, 1913), 458–459.

⁶³ Isidore, too, faithfully follows Augustine. *Etymologiae* VIII, xi, 15–16; edit. Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis*.

whose usefulness they did so much to illustrate—can and will be found. I have chosen just one more to be looked at here, partly because it is to be found in one of the more famous of the texts concerning early medieval magic, but mainly because it too may be seen to draw the blame for magic from hapless humans by the invocation of a belief in demons, and to call upon demons largely for this service. The text is the famous *De Divortio Lotharii et Tetbergae* of Hincmar of Rheims (written ca. 860).

Hincmar's thoughts about (and obstruction of) the divorce of King Lothar II from his wife are among the more interesting of the surviving pieces of evidence for the belief that the magical arts could really work, and for the invocation of demons, both to account for this and to cope with some of the more frightening of its results. Hincmar is concerned, of course, to incriminate Waldburga, Lothar's mistress, but not, it seems, too severely. This fact is important. He expatiates, to this end, upon the apparent fact that some women (adulteresses especially, in Hincmar's view) could sow seemingly supernatural hatred or uncontrollable love between men and women. There are, of course, biblical precedents for such an ability. The devil incites such passions, says Hincmar, as he had in the case of Amnon's love for Tamar and his subsequent hatred of her (2 Sam. 13). Unhappily, however, these powers were manifest too in Hincmar's own day. In the archbishop's very diocese, indeed, the devil had provided a hostile mother-in-law with the means to render her son-in-law impotent. Only "ecclesiastical medicine" could mend the matter, Hincmar declared.⁶⁴ Adulteresses were still laying claim to such powers in the early eleventh century, according to Burchard.⁶⁵

Though they are frequently (and rightly) given prominence in histories of witchcraft, it would be wrong to view either Hincmar's treatise or Burchard's observations here as directed only at the magical machinations of women. Hincmar happens immediately to be concerned with the problem of Waldburga, and so the possible malpractices of adulteresses occupy a great deal of his attention; but he is quite capable of ascribing magical malpractice in the matter of affairs of the heart to men (as when a little later in the treatise he tells the story of the young man accused of making a pact with demons to procure the

⁶⁴ *De Divortio* XV; PL 125, 717.

⁶⁵ *Decretum* XIX (Corrector); PL 140, 975. The supernatural capacities of adulteresses in matters of sexual love will be mentioned again in chaps. 8 and 9.

love of a girl).⁶⁶ The principal concern shewn here by both Hincmar and Burchard is with the *demonic* incitement to magical practice of both men and women. It is to this concern that I wish to draw particular attention, and, even more importantly, to the light it throws upon the helplessness of ordinary humans in the face of such incitement. To both Hincmar and Burchard humans are indeed helpless before such assaults, and in desperate need of the supernatural remedies for their plight provided by the church. In an earlier section of the same treatise Hincmar assembles for us a number of biblical, patristic, and early medieval references to demonic power, some of which are already familiar.⁶⁷ Everyone is vulnerable to it, he insists. Burchard is gentle in his penances. Hincmar's stories have happy endings, involving the humbling of the persons involved, and "ecclesiastical medicine" of a kind to which we shall come, but no great pain beyond that. The ability to cast the blame upon demons could help and here, it seems, once again did help most strongly to hold fiercer, perhaps secular, pressures for the persecution of magicians at bay, and to enable even those who felt themselves most harmed to recognize, in the one who worked for demons, a victim of demonic ill-doing rather than a wholly culpable perpetrator of it.

The service demons might render in such a cause as this helped also, then, to bring them through; and it is well to remember, and to emphasize, how important a service it was. We do have a little independent evidence, and from close to Hincmar's place and period, of the type of penalty to which persons accused, or even simply suspected, of magical practice might be subject if one could not, or would not, blame the wrong involved in the magic upon demons. I drew attention to it in an earlier section and shall have cause to mention it again when treating below of love magic. Gerberga, friend of Judith, the wife of the Emperor Louis the Pious, was actually drowned, "more maleficorum," on suspicion of tampering with the affections of her friend's husband; and Agobard of Lyons, of course, only just saved suspected cloud-borne harvest stealers from Magonia from being stoned to death.⁶⁸

Aery demons then, flying about full of lightness and power in the

⁶⁶ PL 125, 721–725.

⁶⁷ Interrogatio IX; PL 125, 677–679.

⁶⁸ Nithard, *Historiarum Libri III* I, v; edit. G. H. Pertz, MGH SS ii (Hanover, 1829), 653; Agobard, *De Grandine et Tonitruis*; edit. L. Van Acker, *Agobardi Lugdunensis Opera Omnia*, CC (Turnholt, 1981), p. 4.

middle air, were a reality in our period, if a somewhat fluctuating and variably exploited one; and the particular ways in which they lent themselves as supports (both to Christian anxieties about and belief in magical practice, and to Christian reservations about penalties in times of threat) meant, paradoxically, that they were one of the features of the old pre-Christian magical world most enthusiastically transferred. Demons were thought to exist and were found to be necessary, sometimes (and this needs to be stressed again and again) for the most compassionate of reasons. Much of the magic in which they so greatly indulged, then, seemed real, and perhaps necessary, too. It might explain away (once more like astrology, but in different ways) any embarrassing successes soothsayers might have and at the same time isolate the objectionable features of their practice. It might preserve from excessive public punishment, or private vengeance, humans who could be supposed to be mere victims of demonic ill will. Belief in, and fear of, demons might profitably, even joyously (and this too needs emphasis), be manipulated for all of these ends. Demons were reduced, it is true, from the realm of the truly supernatural to that of the comparatively so. Their capacities, though extensive, were, when set against man's, limited both by Divine Providence and by their own natures. They were there as a sort of supernatural power nonetheless. And if the magical power of demons was truly there for all these reasons, then it had, for many of the same reasons, to be countered. Humankind evidently, however, could not counter it alone. Other heavenly agencies and other forms of Christian heavenly magic would become as important as the demons, and the rescue of the demons would lead to the rescue and elaboration of these agencies and practices in their turns. Thus, lastly and perhaps joyously too, the abetted persistence of the demons and the need to resist them would spawn many other rescues, rescues we might also with justice term risen Christian magic. We have had hints of these in the divisions between the supporters of different forms of astrology, in the story of the nun, and in Hincmar. We may follow them further very shortly.

ANGELS

In that early medieval Europe sustained a powerful belief in angels, it is true to say that the old good *daemones* were to some extent rescued in this form. In his *City of God* Augustine contributed some thoughtful chapters to an argument, clearly attracting attention among contem-

poraries, about whether Plato's "daemones" might be the same as the angels of Matt. 4:11 or Col. 1:16. These sections from the Scriptures underlay much subsequent discussion of the question. To a certain extent Augustine is happy with Plato's demons. Angels, like them, he agrees, do indeed live in the higher parts of the upper air, and they probably have superior fiery bodies as opposed to the merely aery ones of the wicked demons. They also, of course, have powers far superior to those of man. Unlike the older gods, however, and unlike the men called gods in Ps. 82:6, angels live with and in the knowledge of God himself. Unlike them too, angels will not encourage humans to worship them but will direct this worship to God alone. Provided this last distinction was clearly made, the cult of angels seemed to Augustine to be legitimate, and so angels were firmly fixed within the new supernatural heavenly hierarchy of the early Middle Ages.⁶⁹ Man, furthermore, might aspire to a place among the angels. He might, indeed, be called upon to fill the gap opened up in the heavenly city by the fall of those angels who became bad demons.⁷⁰

Angels, like demons, then, and as a result of a parallel combination of philosophical, patristic, and scriptural (notably Hebrew) supports poured into our period rank upon rank.⁷¹ It is hardly, in short, possible

⁶⁹ *City of God* IX,xxi-xxiii, X,i-iii; edit. D. S. Wiesen, *Saint Augustine*, lli,230-265. For Augustine's views on the fiery bodies of angels, see his *Eighty-Three Different Questions* 47; transl. D. L. Mosher, *Saint Augustine, Eighty-Three Different Questions* (Washington, 1982), p. 82. The problems of whether angels could be said to have bodies at all and, if they could, of the nature of these bodies, were much discussed in the Middle Ages. An introduction to some of the texts involved may be found in edit. and transl. A. de Gaudemaris and R. Gillet, *Grégoire le Grand Morales sur Job* i (Paris, 1975), 258-261. Fulgentius of Ruspe sums up a distinction widely accepted: angels have fiery and vaporous bodies, demons merely aery ones. *De Trinitate* IX; PL 65,505. It is not improbable that later tendencies to disallow fiery bodies to angels were prompted by associated anxieties about the reverence due to fire.

⁷⁰ One of the first exponents of this view was the *Life of Antony* 22-23; transl. R. T. Meyer, *St. Athanasius, the Life of St. Antony* (Westminster, Md. and London, 1950), pp. 38-39. Envy of human capacity to take up their lost places is held here to account for the extreme hostility of demons to human beings. Martin of Braga appeals to this view too in *Reforming the Rustics* 4 and 14; transl. Barlow, *Iberian Fathers*, pp. 72-73, 79. In this it forms a part of Martin's general onslaught upon outlawed magical practices. Gregory the Great gave the view a particularly wide appeal: e.g., *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia* II,xxxiv; PL 76,1249-1250. The further notion that each person had a guardian angel assigned to him or her was spread by Jerome's widely popular commentary on Matt. 3:18; PL 26,135.

⁷¹ Col. 1:16 is a frequently cited source for the view that there were distinct ranks

to move far into the Middle Ages without falling over one.⁷² All this is well known. Less generally remarked upon, however, and to us much more interesting, are the connections between these good angels, active as God's messengers and man's protectors in the world of the supernatural, and that good magic which was needed both as an illustration of, and as a counter to, the bad. Yet, as was the case with demons, early medieval angels are, within this context, often at their most energetic. Man, as a lesser creature than either angels or demons in the order of creation, was thought to be vulnerable to both of them in his relations with the supernatural.⁷³ He should choose, of course, to rely only upon the one, but this had its difficulties. Sometimes he would be unable to escape the magical tricks of demons without direct angelic intervention. In his attempts to evade the snares of demonic magical delusions, man must often both invite and receive angelic help, and God might, and very often did, use angels specifically to put a limit upon the games demons played with magic, and to suggest appropriate answers to these games.⁷⁴ Certainly I do not mean to claim, in drawing attention to this aspect of the activities of early medieval angels, that the need to combat the old magic, and encourage and illuminate the new, was the mainspring of medieval angelology. No more would I argue (as I hope I have made plain) that the survival of demons is wholly to be understood within this context. Both demons and angels sprang from a lineage, and sustained a being, larger than such anxieties; but this dimension of angelic activity is vital both to our understanding of many of the views early held about angels and to the survival of some of the old magical practices. And it has been, perhaps, a little understressed.

Angels contribute substantially to the rise of magic in early Europe,

of angels. Revelation was perhaps the most exploited biblical source of medieval angels.

⁷² In addition to Jerome, Augustine, Gregory the Great, and the great commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy* of the Pseudo-Dionysius by John Scotus Eriugena, Cassian is as important a conveyor of angels into the early Middle Ages as he was of demons. *Collations* VII,xiii; edit. and transl. E. Pichéry, *Jean Cassien Conférences* i (Paris, 1955), 257-258. A full collection of biblical references to angels and of references to angelic interventions in the Middle Ages may conveniently be found in the pages on the Feast of Michael and All Angels in AS Septembris viii (29 September), 4-39 and 89-109.

⁷³ This proposition, borrowed from Augustine, is to be found, once more, in Hincmar, *De Divortio*; PL 125,726.

⁷⁴ *On the Divination of Demons* 6 (transl. Brown); in edit. Deferrari, *Saint Augustine*, pp. 431-432.

and this on two levels, the first in general rather better explored than the second. Firstly, the old daemones are brought through, though in disguise, in angels as well as in demons. Secondly, angels in their new guises are used extremely forcefully as agents in the process of selecting that in the old magic which is to be welcomed in its Christian form, and in overcoming previous rejections. Demons distinguish both that in magic which is forcefully to be cast out, and that in human behavior which is to be saved from too harsh penalties, and they are in part preserved, as we have seen, for their services to these ends; angels, by "magical" victories over that which is harmful in supernatural exercises, and by use or approval of that which is helpful or inspiring, may fittingly point man to much that may be retained and reordered to his profit. They might help especially to distinguish those Christian supernatural powers that may be most effective against the demons. Some of the descriptions of angels and of their special capacities which early writers put before us, then, are more sharply imprinted with the negative image of contemporary demonic magic, and more urgently associated with hopes for joyful magical counters to this, than is, I think, generally realized. As with demons, so with angels, there is a psychological dimension to their employment. I have chosen to concentrate here upon those accounts of the actions of rescued angel-daemones which were most read in our period and which, to my mind, bear these imprints most clearly.

If we look again therefore at Augustine's treatment of angels and the "daemones" of Plato we may note that Augustine is especially concerned to emphasize the powers of wise and dependable farsightedness possessed by angels, and to contrast these with the much more limited (though still sought after) divinatory powers of demons. One passage in particular is worth quoting at some length.

The demons . . . do not fix their gaze on the eternal causes, the hinges as it were of temporal events, which are found in God's wisdom, though they do foresee many more future events than we do by their greater acquaintance with certain signs that are hidden from men. Sometimes too they announce in advance events that they themselves intend to bring about. Consequently the demons are often mistaken, the angels absolutely never. For it is one thing to guess at temporal matters from temporal, and changeable matters from changeable, and to introduce into them the temporal and changeable workings of one's own will and capacity, and this is a thing that the demons may do within fixed limits; but it is quite another to foresee in

the light of the eternal and immutable laws of God, which derive their existence from his wisdom, the changes that time will bring, and to discern, by partaking of his spirit, the will of God, which is as absolutely certain as it is universally powerful. This gift has justly been reserved and bestowed upon the holy angels.⁷⁵

Augustine expresses the same opposition and singles out this same particular aspect of angelic power in the *On the Divination of Demons*. "Demons foretell many events that will come to pass. Yet, far above them is the loftiness of that prophecy which God brings to pass through the holy angels and prophets. . . . Absolutely true are the pronouncements of the angels and the Prophets."⁷⁶ Angels here assist special humans, prophets, to outdo the demons in their divinatory skills. This same emphasis upon an angelic power to counter demonic foresight above all else is to be found elsewhere: in Bede, for instance, in his *Commentary on Samuel* (quoted with approval by Hincmar).⁷⁷ Bede clearly follows Augustine but lays an added stress on the belief that demons could only ever have learned such powers of prediction as they have from angels, and with the permission of these last. It may well be that both Augustine's influence and alarm at the activities of contemporary pagan diviners dictated this continued insistence by both Bede and Hincmar upon a foresight which angels alone have and in which man can and should trust. When demons use bad and fallible magic—here divination—angels will use good magic of a related type but one infinitely more rewarding. With a greater frequency than has been generally observed, God seems, as it were, to take his cue from the magical activities of demons as to when, and where, and in what manner he might license his angels to exercise their superior powers. Past and current demonic practices dictate the shape and purposes of the counterpractices angels might encourage humankind to share and to adopt. Particularly specialized forms of good magic may, as a result, be associated with and be seen to come from angels at particular times.

Augustine invests his angels here with a near monopoly of divinatory skills. Only prophets share them. By this device he contrives to

⁷⁵ *City of God* IX, xxii; transl. Wiesen, *Saint Augustine*, iii, 234–237. Similar points about the limitations of demonic foresight and the contrasts between demonic and angelic behavior are made in the *Life of Antony* 31–37; transl. Meyer, *St. Athanasius*, pp. 46–51.

⁷⁶ Chapter 6 (transl. Brown); in edit. Deferrari, *Saint Augustine*, p. 431.

⁷⁷ Bede, *In Primam Partem Samuhelis Libri IIII* IV, xxviii; edit. D. Hurst, *Beda Venerabilis Opera, Opera Exegetica* ii, CC (Turnholt, 1970), pp. 256–257.

leave no room for "scientific" or "natural" methods of prediction such as scientific astrology, which he had, of course, particular reason to hate. This too may be, on occasion, the role of angels in our period. They might be chosen to mediate the supernatural powers of God (the direct contemplation of whose face they never lose)⁷⁸ if need be as an alternative to, or at the expense of, natural human powers. They might even be used directly to criticize these natural powers. Paradoxically, the threats associated with the progress of certain sciences at hands deemed to be the wrong ones could contribute as much toward a belief in the angels, and in particular forms of their good magic, as could the need to counter the demons. Just as excessive emphasis upon demons sometimes compelled a turn to scientific answers, too great a reliance on these last could impel the invocation of angels. This particular use for angels in the service of Christian magic deserves a mention too.

Angels might always outdo pagan diviners and encourage Christians in their hopes about the future, and in a way more fulfilling than the diviners ever could. They might also outdo magicians engaged in other types of practice. By the time Isidore came to write his *Etymologies* angels had certain characteristics ascribed to them, such as wings with which to ride upon the winds (Ps. 103:3), an ordered hierarchy dividing them into nine ranks, and attested names and abilities.⁷⁹ Interestingly too, certain of the abilities Isidore singles out and ascribes to his named angels, though derivable independently from biblical, Rabbinic, and apocryphal traditions, do in fact have clear echoes in the world of the non-Christian magicians, including that of the magi Isidore himself describes. Like Augustine's angels, Isidore's prophesy first and foremost, and the first angel named is the prophetic angel Gabriel. Then comes Michael, "Qui sicut Deus," renowned for a strength close to that of God himself (Michael may here and frequently be placed with Gabriel because of the help he gave to the angel in Dan. 10:13). Raphael has the power to heal and indeed healed the blindness of Tobit (Tob. 6:5-9, 10:7-15). Uriel (taken perhaps from 4 Ezra:1 and notably abandoned in later lists of accredited angels) has power over fire and comes in fire. The rank of the Virtues governs all portents and wonders ("miracula"), and that of the Powers controls the malice of evil spirits. Some of the services people used to ask of Isidore's diabol-

⁷⁸ Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job* II,iii; edit. de Gaudemaris and Gillet, *Grégoire le Grand*, I, 258-259.

⁷⁹ VII, v, 1-33; edit. Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis*.

ically assisted magi may thus, *mutatis mutandis*, be rendered by the angels instead, and in this way carefully selected angels might fill the gaps left by those magicians for whose downfall so many so fervently hoped.

Sometimes the invocation of angels in such causes could be a little overenthusiastic. At the end of the fifth century a Roman council had to rule against amulets which invoked, or were engraved with, the names of angels, and to insist that these names were merely a disguise for demons. Charlemagne, in the *Admonitio Generalis* of 789, and Ansegisus, in the collection of capitularies he made in the early ninth century, had to forbid the calling upon angels by names that were not scriptural.⁸⁰ But, interestingly, angels as healers are sometimes especially distinguished in early medieval literature for the medical orthodoxy of their treatments, as if to support points a little like those made by Caesarius about the unreliability of medical magic and the availability of respectable supernatural, as well as professional, alternatives to it. The healing angel in Sulpicius's *Life of Martin* is a case in point. In the cleaning of Martin's wounds and the expert application of salves, this angel could hardly have been more professionally respectable, or less tainted by contemporary magical practice.⁸¹ Here, the angel dignifies acceptable science used in conjunction with appropriate supernatural power. Sulpicius seems to have been aware of the distinctions he was making here. Others use angels to emphasize the superiority of the purely supernatural healing power available within the Christian dispensation, and against the same enemies. Paul the Deacon tells a striking little story, for instance, about angelic measures against pestilence, one in which good angels are found to be entirely in command. A pestilence struck Rome in the year 680. It was inflicted, Paul tells us, by bad angels, but on the command of good ones. "A good and a bad angel proceeded by night through the city and as many times as, upon the command of the good angel, the bad angel, who appeared to carry a hunting spear in his hand, knocked at the door of each house with the spear so many men perished from that house on the following day."⁸² This passage is a significant one, with many levels of interest. Eclipses of the moon and of the sun preceded

⁸⁰ Council of Rome 494; Mansi, VIII, 152. The *Admonitio Generalis* and Ansegisus may be found in edit. G. Waitz, *MGH Leges* I (Hanover, 1835), 57, 276.

⁸¹ *Vita S. Martini* 19,4; edit. and transl. J. Fontaine, *Sulpice Sévère, Vie de Saint Martin* I and II (Paris, 1967-1968), 294-295, 888-892.

⁸² *History of the Lombards* VI, 5; transl. Foulke, *Paulus Diaconus*, p. 255.

the pestilence, says Paul, but angels were clearly operative, not the favored agents of non-Christian magical belief (eclipses themselves, that is) or the baneful influence of the moon charmed by the sorceress. Angels, in other words, had here replaced such possible sources of supernatural enchantment with a Christianized form of magical control. An angel it was, also, who listened to Saint Gall when he sought to release his people from the plague.⁸³

Power over plague is sometimes attributed to an angel personally; to Saint Michael, for instance. When in 590 Pope Gregory the Great consecrated the Mausoleum of Hadrian to the Archangel Michael, a vision of the archangel was reported. A terrible plague had ravaged the city, and Michael was seen to be putting his sword back into its scabbard after it, as though he had presided over it.⁸⁴ The shadow of the avenging angel stands behind these stories, but so too does the view that, within the Christian dispensation also, powers far stronger than man intervene for and against him in supernatural affairs, and that there are mechanisms about which man both can and must learn in order to avail himself of their beneficence. The line between acceptable and unacceptable supernatural and natural agents, and between acceptable and unacceptable forms of magical intervention by them, was very hard indeed to draw;⁸⁵ but angels were vital to the task, and, above all, to the rescue of the acceptable.

The promise of the angel to Saint Gall to relieve his people from the plague was made good by a pilgrimage to the tomb of Saint Julian the Martyr at Brioude; and the angels who brought the pestilence to Rome in 680 were in fact so employed to point to the virtues of another martyr, this time Saint Sebastian. The passage from Paul the Deacon continues:

Then it was said to a certain man by revelation that the pestilence would not cease before an altar of St. Sebastian the martyr was placed in the church of the blessed Peter which is called "Ad Vincula." And it was done, and after the remains of Saint Sebastian the martyr had been carried from the city of Rome, presently the altar was set up in the aforesaid church and the pestilence itself ceased.

⁸³ *Vitae Patrum* VI,6; transl. E. James, *Gregory of Tours: Life of the Fathers* (Liverpool, 1985), p. 57.

⁸⁴ *AS* Septembris viii (29 September), 72.

⁸⁵ Occasionally ecclesiastical councils had to rule against the excessive devotion given to certain angels, Michael in particular. For example, the Synod of Seligenstadt of 1012 did so in canon X; Mansi, XIX, 397-398.

We know from other sources about Saint Sebastian's supposed power over pestilence. His death by arrow shot was thought to give him special abilities in the matter of transforming the arrows of disease shot by elves or demons ("elfshot" in fact) into instruments for good. One legend about him would have it that he had, after all, recovered from his own arrow wounds,⁸⁶ and so who better to help others do the same? The idea that disease was shot through the air by malignant agencies did much to keep illness which was otherwise inexplicable within the sphere controlled by demons, and to that extent again demons did those liable to be accused of malevolent witchcraft a service; but then the cure of such illness might require, as a corollary, the intervention of angels—or extra-special humans. Martyrs and saints might have this power, or, for particular reasons, persons who followed the way of the cross. We shall consider why this was so in the chapter that follows this, and the impact made by this conviction upon medical magic especially in a later chapter again.⁸⁷ Here I would simply draw attention once more to the important, and complex, role rescued angel-dæmones played in justifying Christian forms of magic, and to the ramifications this rescue may have had upon subsequent ones.

Among the many biblical references to angels, two Old Testament stories stand out as supports for those who would make connections between angels and outlawed demonic magic, and for those who would link angels and that magic which could bring supernatural blessings upon men. The first is the story of the battle between Moses and the magicians of Pharaoh (Exod. 7:8-13); the second is that of Balaam and the ass (Num. 22:21-35). Augustine insisted that it was angels who, through the power of God, in fact enabled Moses and Aaron to turn their rods into serpents, and this precisely to discomfit the demons who assisted Pharaoh's magicians.⁸⁸ Here Augustine introduced a dimension that is not to be found in the strict wording of the text and to which not everyone commenting on that text would resort.⁸⁹ Caesarius had similar points to make about the story of Balaam, and by similar

⁸⁶ *AS* Januarii ii (feast, 20 January), 278.

⁸⁷ *Chap.* 9.

⁸⁸ *City of God* X, viii; edit. Wiesen, *Saint Augustine*, iii, 282-283. The matter is the subject of more complex treatment in question 79 of Augustine's *Eighty-Three Questions*; transl. Mosher, *Augustine*, pp. 200-205. Here, angels are seen as exponents of that greater public generosity which magicians lack, and which earns angels and remarkable people special powers from God.

⁸⁹ Isidore, for example, does not when he mentions the battle in the *Etymologies* VIII, ix, 4; edit. Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis*.

means. The king of Moab sends Balaam to curse Israel; an angel, seen first by the ass and not by Balaam, conveys God's command to Balaam to change his curses into blessings, which he does to appropriate effect. The angel is in the text—but Caesarius brings in demons and sees the story at this point as an account of a battle of magic between the two celestial supernatural powers. "[Balaam] climbed on his ass, and there met him an angel. . . . he sees the demons but not the angel who the ass beholds."⁹⁰ A human diviner or enchanter (which Balaam was) could never, says Caesarius, hope for angelic help. "None of the holy spirits obey a seer. He cannot invoke Michael or Raphael or Gabriel."⁹¹ Such persons remain in the grip of demons unless angels or specially equipped persons close to the angels intervene on their behalf.

Both Augustine and Caesarius, we might remember, found their flocks to be peculiarly vulnerable to diviners and enchanters, and to pagan magicians and their practices in general. They delighted to translate the conflict to a higher sphere and so to represent it as one between angels and demons, which angels, predictably, win. Thus Caesarius could urge good Christians to range themselves confidently with the angels in their abjuration of condemned activities—"I exhort you, and before God and His angels I proclaim, that you should not come to those devilish banquets which are held at a shrine, or fountains or trees"⁹²—and could imply that, by doing the will of the angels, they would be assured of the help of powers greater than their own, and greater too than those to which non-Christian magicians might pretend. Here was a proposition full of hope and capable of bringing great comfort to the hearer. Angels might both bear the burdens the old supernatural aids were to relinquish and outdo them in supernaturally beneficent power (just as Christianized demons might, as we saw, remove some of the blame from unhappy humans for failure). This dimension of the need for angels was never far from the minds of preachers such as Caesarius, and it was of immeasurable value for them to find how well the Bible provided for it. The story of Balaam and the ass was among the most popular of all Bible stories in the early Middle Ages.

The introduction of angels and demons into such biblical passages

⁹⁰ Sermon 113 (MT); transl. Mueller, *Saint Caesarius*, ii, 159–160.

⁹¹ Ibid., 158.

⁹² Sermon 54; *ibid.*, i, 270.

was primarily a matter for those engaged in exhortation and inclined to encourage a simple and hopeful response. One would not expect to find it in serious works of exegesis and, for the most part, one does not.⁹³ Just sometimes, however, it is possible to trace a clear connection between biblical exegesis of this kind and the deeper anxieties aroused by contemporary magical practice. Thus, in his *Commentary on Exodus*, Rabanus uses for his remarks upon the battle between Moses and the magicians of Pharaoh exactly the same passage from Augustine on Exodus he was to use again in his *De Magicis Artibus*.⁹⁴ This double use of the passage has a double interest, for besides showing quite clearly that this biblical story with its exegetical supports bore directly upon Rabanus's own concern about magic, Augustine and Rabanus concentrate in it precisely upon angels. In explaining how it was that the rods of Moses and Aaron were turned into serpents in a transformation exercise seemingly identical to that practiced by the condemned magicians of Pharaoh, both commentators emphasize a cosmic order in which "occultae seminariae rationes" are hidden there by God, to be activated at his command. Angels are all, good and evil alike, subject to this command; but they are his chosen activators and thus have the most prominent place of all created beings in God's dealings with that in his cosmos which is supernatural in the sense that it is occult, or hidden from man.⁹⁵ For Rabanus this section from Exodus, together with Augustine's exegesis, is a vital support for his argument that God has good magic, and, in the angels, unsurpassable operators of it to advance against the evil kind with which he, Rabanus, felt himself surrounded.

Finally, this early period produces one particularly vivid contemporary illustration, both of the need felt for the services of authentic

⁹³ Isidore, for instance, does not introduce angels into the discussion in his *In Exodum* viii, PL 83, 290, nor does Bede in his, PL 91, 300–301. Bede is reserved, too, in his account of Tobit and the angel; *edit.* D. Hurst, *Beda Venerabilis Opera, Opera Exegetica* ii, CC (Turnholt, 1983), p. 10. He does, however, allow an angel to cure Saint Cuthbert in the manner of Raphael. *Life* ii; *edit.* and *transl.* B. Colgrave, *Two Lives of St. Cuthbert* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 158–161.

⁹⁴ Rabanus, *Commentaria in Exodum* I, xii, PL 108, 33, and *De Magicis Artibus*, PL 110, 1099. The common passage reads, "Non . . . fuerunt creatores draconum . . . seminarias rebus inseruit"; *edit.* I. Fraipont, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Quaestionum in Heptateuchum Libri VII*, CC (Turnholt, 1958), pp. 77–78.

⁹⁵ The whole discussion may owe a great deal to Origen (through Rufinus), especially *Contra Celsum* VIII, 31–32; *transl.* H. Chadwick, *Contra Celsum* (Cambridge, 1953), pp. 474–476.

heavenly angels in conflicts over suspect practices and of the alarms this need could bring with it. It is to be found in the arraignment by Saint Boniface of one Aldebert, whom Boniface finally had brought to trial before Pope Zachary at Rome in 745,⁹⁶ and it deserves our special attention both because it is so striking in itself, and because it brings into the very sharpest focus so many of those aspects of angelic activity, in the cause of magic's rise within the new religion, which we have been trying here to follow. Aldebert was wandering about sowing dissension in the ranks of Boniface's hoped-for flock. He believed, we are told, that he was himself an angel, and that another angel had brought him relics of especial power. The Archangel Michael himself had somehow made available to him (via Mont-Saint-Michel) a letter from Christ which had fallen from heaven. Aldebert also conjured by the names of angels, some garbled and misremembered from Gnostic and Jewish sources: "I pray and conjure and beseech ye, Angel Uriel, Angel Raguel, Angel Tubuel, Angel Michael, Angel Adinus, Angel Tubuas, Angel Sabaoc, and Angel Simiel."⁹⁷ He claimed lastly, and most dangerously of all, that God himself had guaranteed to answer all such prayers. Aldebert had acquired a reputation for possessing remarkable supernatural powers, especially powers of healing, and a troop of devotees followed him about, to whom he distributed "relics" in the form of clippings from his nails and hair. Boniface tells us that he attracted multitudes of people to his public ceremonies which, he adds (significantly), took place in fields and at springs "or wherever he pleased."

Aldebert's infuriating capacity to empty nearby churches was in part the cause of Boniface's distress, it is true, but by far the larger measure of it seems to have stemmed from the means which Aldebert used. Aldebert appealed to many levels of the devotional instincts of the credulous, some pagan and some precariously Christian, but he appealed especially to a devotion to angels that was deep, and that was of importance to the authorities precisely because of the vital part the angels played on these delicately constructed, difficult to police, and ever-changing frontiers between Christian and non-Christian super-

⁹⁶ The letter from Boniface to Pope Zachary about Aldebert which was received at the 745 Synod of Rome, and also the process of condemnation there, is contained in transl. E. Emerton, *The Letters of St. Boniface* (New York, 1940), pp. 100, 106.

⁹⁷ The possible derivations of Aldebert's angels are interestingly discussed in J. B. Russell, "Saint Boniface and the Eccentrics," *Church History* 33 (1964), 237-238. An appendix (pp. 245-247) lists the further sources for the conflict between Aldebert and Boniface.

natural invocation and practice. Some of Aldebert's garbled names may have been drawn from a contemporary Soissons litany. Others are to be found in contemporary prayers.⁹⁸ In another part of the prayer in which he called upon the eight so-called angels, Aldebert made appeal, for instance, to God seated above the Seraphim and Cherubim, and so to a form of phrasing often found in exorcism formulae. As a way of dealing with malign spirits and maleficia, exorcism prayers and charms for health commanded an extraordinary importance in the early medieval church, and angels (especially the three, Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, who came to be their named representatives, but unbiblical ones too, despite sporadic efforts to condemn them) were central to such exercises. We have, for example, a letter, written within twenty years at the most of the arraignment, and printed among the letters of Boniface and Lull, in which a sister invokes angels much as Aldebert does, but this time for her brother's health within the Christian fold.⁹⁹ A charm against fever, using these and further angel names, is to be found in the manuscript containing the Bobbio Missal, a manuscript possibly written in the early eighth century, and so close in time to Boniface's concerns.¹⁰⁰ The arraignment of Aldebert throws into dramatic relief how sensitive was the issue of angelic invocation, how closely linked it was with the world of forbidden magical practices, and how vital it was to the support of Christian magical ways of countering these.

Michael, Aldebert's supposed letter from Christ, and the shrine of Mont-Saint-Michel are matters which touch peculiarly delicate Christian sensibilities. The Archangel Michael seems to have occupied a prime position in the early medieval cult of angels and was, indeed, the only angel to be honored by a special feast until the ninth century. It is worth dwelling upon him for a moment, for of all the early medieval angels invoked he is perhaps the most instructive. The first reported appearance of Michael seems to have been that at Monte Gargano early in 493. It caused a great stir, and so we are quite well

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, and nn.

⁹⁹ Edit. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini Aevi* i (Berlin, 1892), 429.

¹⁰⁰ Russell does not note these particular possible derivations, but, in the identifications of Adinus and Sabaoc, they support his conclusions. One such exorcism formula may be read in the collection made by Baluze: Mansi, *XVIII*, 661-664. The charm is printed in edit. E. A. Lowe, *The Bobbio Missal* (London, 1920), p. 153.

informed about it.¹⁰¹ Michael came to protect a bull from a herdsman, made angry because it had strayed into a remote cavern. We know about this cavern from an independent source. It had been the seat of an oracle, Calchas, and his cult, long preserved at Monte Gargano. Calchas required sacrifices, and those who wished to consult him had to spend the night on the mountain, lying upon the skin of the ram they had given to him.¹⁰² Michael, however, did not want sacrifices. He intervened instead to protect the animal from the ferocious herdsman. Nor did he want persons prostrated upon a mountainside, but a church in which Mass could be said; nor, finally, anxious consultations with seers, but trust in the Christian way to salvation. Michael, in short, might look in some ways like Calchas,¹⁰³ but the form of behavior he encouraged could not be more opposed to that which was required by his pagan predecessor.

It is, sadly, very rare indeed for us to have clear record of such contrasts. We may, then, perhaps allow this one to stand out as an example of the sort of role angels might be asked to play in magical transference, and of the sorts of sensibilities that might be hurt by its abuse. It might illustrate, too, the kind of rational inquiry into prediction and forward planning it could inhibit. And, lastly, it can begin to show us how, deftly adapted, non-Christian magical interventions in human affairs can become Christian ones. Michael intervened at an important moment, early in the Middle Ages, and he was used to make clear Christian points about sacrifice, about the consultation of oracles, and about Christian dispositions toward the supernatural in general. We noted Michael's intervention in the matter of pestilence and on behalf of Saint Sebastian. Michael's methods and remedies could be a little extreme, but he is the prototype of the angel employed to advance the case for the rise of certain kinds of Christian magic.

In the eighth century Michael was held to have appeared to Autbert, bishop of Avranches, and to have ordered an oratory to be built at Mont-Saint-Michel for the special protection of sailors.¹⁰⁴ The Archangel Michael has long attracted the attention of historians of

paganism and folk belief, and spirited attempts have been made to explain the popularity of his cult in general. This has been attributed variously to the forced encouragement of Constantine the Great, to the links that might be forged between Woden/Mercury and Michael protector of warriors,¹⁰⁵ and to the atmosphere of excitement generated by reported visions and appearances. Michael as protector of warriors from shrines high upon mountains is exceptionally well attested in the West. So too, and especially by the Carolingians, is Michael protector of pilgrims. Boniface himself favored the founding of shrines to the Archangel. It may not be wholly fanciful to connect Boniface's stress upon Michael's control over journeys with the concern shown by Pope Gregory III, for example, at the prevailing tendency to turn to pagan diviners for such help.¹⁰⁶ Michael's care, combined with that angelic skill in foresight so widely acknowledged in early medieval literature about angels, would, it seems to have been hoped, render such exercises obsolete. The form taken by the cult of Michael shows us with great clarity both the negative impress of forbidden demonic means of wielding supernatural power and the positive Christian one of how the wish for, and hope in, supernatural help might best be sustained in the face of this.

Boniface thought Aldebert was wicked and a heretic. Zachary thought he was mad. Both agreed that he should be silenced. He was accused, in the end, of "summoning demons to his aid under the guise of angels," and thus the affair was supposed to be ended (although Aldebert in fact remained at large, partly, it seems, through papal leniency). As I have tried to suggest elsewhere, it might to some have seemed more sensible to combat forbidden aery magic and deviant devotions with science, both natural and exegetical, rather than with charms and exorcisms dangerously like those condemned.¹⁰⁷ Bede himself, whom Boniface admired, may, indeed, have favored such a course in certain circumstances.¹⁰⁸ Boniface, however, clearly believed that

¹⁰⁵ Fundamental still to work upon Michael is O. Rojdestvensky, *Le Culte de Saint Michel et le Moyen Age Latin* (Paris, 1922).

¹⁰⁶ See above, chap. 5.

¹⁰⁷ V.I.J. Flint, "Thoughts about the Context," pp. 13-24.

¹⁰⁸ The commentary on Tobit by Bede was one of those most widely read by medieval exegetes. Tobit is the main biblical authority for Raphael's healing powers. Bede treats these wholly allegorically. It may be that he here deliberately avoided all entanglement with the idea that angels could assist in earthly healing, and that in part because he feared the type of confusion the contest between Boniface and Aldebert would bring to light.

¹⁰¹ AS, Septembris viii (29 September), 60-62.

¹⁰² Strabo tells of the cult of Calchas in his *Geography* 6.3.9; edit. and transl. H. L. Jones, *The Geography of Strabo* iii (Loeb Classical Library, 1924), 131.

¹⁰³ An engraved Etruscan image of Calchas shows him as winged, as Michael came to be. F. Lenormant, *A Travers l'Apulie et la Lucanie* i (Paris, 1883), 62.

¹⁰⁴ The Archangel required that his new shrine be at least up to the standard of that built for him at Monte Gargano; AS Junii iii (18 June), 602-603.

the matter of Aldebert and, indeed, the matter of non-Christian supernatural practice in general, had gone beyond the arena of sober reason—an area of exercise never perhaps in any case of the first importance to the saint. In such a state of affairs good angels became the front line of attack, and their invocation by means of prayers, charms, litanies, and cult a matter of vital importance.

We touch here again upon the large issues of science and religion and upon those borderlines between the two which might have, on occasion, to be patrolled by angels. The confrontation between Boniface and Aldebert is a particularly stark and singular one, and many of the attitudes to which it draws attention were certainly forged by the peculiar conditions that confronted Boniface in early Carolingian Germany. We cannot generalize from it; but it does throw light upon many of the pressures which made angels necessary to the new good magic, and upon at least some of the disadvantages and complications attendant upon their employment in its aid. In addition to defeating the magic of the demons, angels were needed to distinguish those means of intervening in supernatural affairs which, in Christian hands, might compensate for the lost non-Christian ones (or those it was hoped would be lost); but simple helps such as angels could, among the unlearned, be as simply abused. The years ca. 740–745 seem to have been especially important in Boniface's struggle against the pagan magic of the Germans;¹⁰⁹ hence, perhaps, his stress upon the powers of rightful angels, but hence, too, the limit to his success. Angels needed better and more distinctive supports in their rescue of magic than Boniface could here give them, and pagan magic other counters too. Without these, angels might be dangerous aids to orthodoxy.

¹⁰⁹ These are the years which produced the *Indiculus Superstitionum*, for example, and during which anxieties about magic are to be found in the capitularies of Carloman; edit. A. Boretius, *MGH Capitularia Regum Francorum* i (Hanover, 1883), 25.