"All was this land full fill'd of faerie," or Magic and the Past in Early Modern England

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I.

In 1625 Gabriel Naudé (1600–53), student of medicine and up-and-coming librarian, wrote a history of magic.[1] Paracelsianism had been debated in France for decades, and in 1623 Naudé had lent his pen to the controversy following the hoax appearance of bills posted in Paris announcing the arrival of the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross and the wonders they could provide. The impetus for Naudé's history of magic was a pamphlet that described Homer and Virgil, abusively, as magicians. As Didier Kahn has shown, Naudé's 1623 intervention against the Rosicrucians wrested a brewing dispute about Paracelsianism from the hands of theologians and settled it in the name of reason, not religion; his medical training no doubt informed his intervention.[2] In his history of magic Naudé complained that everyone who ever did anything clever was now reputed to be a magician, which meant in league with the devil. His project was to clear the ground of the

[1] *Apologie pour tous les grandes personages faussement soupconnez de magie* (Paris, 1625). I have used John Davies of Hereford's English translation, *The History of Magick By way of Apology, For all the Wise Men who have unjustly been reputed Magicians, from the Creation, to the present Age* (London, 1657). Naudé is best known as Mazarin's librarian and for his *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque* (Paris, 1627).

[2] Didier Kahn, "The Rosicrucian Hoax in France (1623–24)," in *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. William R. Newman and Anthony Grafton (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT University Press, 2001), 235–344, esp. 283–294.

false histories that had been written for the previous two hundred years. Adopting a mode of *historia litteraria*, he redeemed the reputations of several dozen learned men—including Zoroaster, Socrates, Roger Bacon, Agrippa, and ultimately Virgil—whose names had been sullied by the term magician.[3]

The branding of natural philosophers and especially mathematical practitioners as magicians had been an enduring problem.[4] As John Aubrey would later reflect in notes on the life of the Oxford scholar Thomas Allen, "In those darke times Astrologer, Mathematician, and Conjurer, were accounted the same thing."[5] But Naudé provides an elaborate account of why these accusations initially might have been fabricated—jealousy, incredulity, malice, fear of technology—and demonstrates a method for unmasking these errors. Follow the simple rules of good scholarship, he insists: read the best authors, think logically, and acquire "a certain familiarity with the most profitable Sciences, and the most universal and general account of the affairs of this World that may be had, which is to be gained partly by our own industry, partly by the endeavors of those who have gone before us, such as may be those of Historians."[6] That is, through hard work and the help of other historians, understand the context in which these texts were written. Perfect historians are indispensable; false historians should be read with caution.[7] If one encounters a fabulous tale, locate its textual sources, read critically, and remember that (many) historians vend rubbish.[8] Naudé surveys a vast literature dating from antiquity through the sixteenth century, demonstrating that misreadings of tropes and irony, for instance, have led to the labeling of poets and natural philosophers as magicians.[9] Likewise, where people have professed their magical powers, Naudé is careful to show that writing books about magic and boasting about one's expertise are not the same thing as practicing magic.[10] These fables persist because authors repeat what others have written without applying the above principles of good research; they write for their own glory instead of doing proper research; and they show off their polymathic skills by assembling great

[3] Naudé, *History of Magick*, 51. On *historia litteraria* see Donald R. Kelley, *The Descent of Ideas: The History of Intellectual History* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 75–78.
[4] J. Peter Zetterberg, "The Mistaking of 'the Mathematics' for Magic in Tudor and Stuart England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 11 (1980): 83–97.
[5] John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. John Buchanan-Brown (London: Penguin, 1999), 370.
[6] Naudé, *History of Magick*, 5.
[7] Ibid., 6.
[8] Ibid., 9.
[9] Ibid., 24, 51 ff., 80, 158, 256.
[10] Ibid., 187–88.

heaps of examples instead of making sense of them. Thus the noble name of history is built upon a monstrous edifice of fables.[11]

In short, prompted by festering occultism and religious controversies in Paris, Naudé wrote a history of magic in order to release the great men of learning from the label of magician. This is a history of the "first appearance of learning, the first rising of the great wits, the time they flourished, the ages which have brought forth most, and take notice by the way, how that ignorance hath always persecuted them with this calumny"; he defines magic historically.[12] Great learning and suspicion of its demonic sources are inseparable. Through pragmatic reading, Naudé redeems scholars who have been called magicians, and shifts the onus of explanation away from these learned men and onto historians and their incredulous readers.[13] Poor histories are written by men guilty of pride and malice. These fables persist because the devil teaches superstition and fosters credulity, and because booksellers promote this mania—though Naudé stops short of describing authors of best-selling books on magic as agents of the devil.[14]

To anyone writing a history of magic, Naudé's advice is heartening. He outlines a sensible (if ambitious) method for handling fabulous and recalcitrant material. He shows that the history of magic is the same as the history of learning, and that belief and credulity are central features of that history. The history of magic, he reassures us, is relevant and feasible. It is lodged firmly in the terrain of books and the historian's task, it follows, is to draw a true map from an abundance of contradictory and implausible reports of self-interested adventurers, themselves often subject to the delusions of the devil. This is one way to write the history of magic, though most historians of early modern magic have instead followed the more sociological lead of Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London, 1584), to which I will return below.[15]

With Naudé's advice in mind, this essay considers historical accounts of magic dating from the early modern period, and through them establishes the terms in which magic was defined and debated: was it natural, de-

[11] Ibid., 264 and Ch. 22.

[12] Ibid., 33.

[13] Cf. Michael Wood, *The Road to Delphi: The Life and Afterlife of Oracles* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 156 on the profitable pairing of credulity and suspicion.

[14] Naudé, *History of Magick*, 194.

[15] On the historiography of magic see esp. Richard Kieckhefer, "The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic," *American Historical Review* 99 (1994): 813–36; Stanley J. Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

monic, or trickery? Then I turn from their past to their present, specifically to England in the 1650s, where the question of whether magic was old or new gained in urgency and where evidence for its vitality abounded.

II.

Naudé's admonitions went unheeded and fabulous histories of magic continued to be written. Numerous works devoted to magic and related subjects were printed in London in the 1650s, and John Davies of Hereford's translation of Naudé's history joined them in 1657.[16] These books mark a surge of interest in and concern for occult subjects that accompanied the waves of witchcraft prosecutions and debates about religious non-conformity during the political upheavals of the civil wars and protectorate.[17] Most

[16] Davies is known for his translations (E. Lord, "John Davies," *Dictionary of National Biography* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004]). He dedicated this work to Sir Richard Combes, whom he describes as being judiciously skeptical about accusations of witchcraft. Perhaps this is Sir Richard Combe, Justice of the Peace in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, though this man seems not to have been knighted until 1661: *Elias Ashmole, Autobiographical and Historical Notes, Correspondence, and Other Sources*, ed. C. H. Josten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 3: 1084. Works on magic printed or reprinted in London in the 1650s include, in chronological order, Jacques Gaffarel, *Vnheard-of Curiosities: Concerning the Talismanical Sculpture of the Persians, the Horoscope of the Patriarkes, and the Reading of the Stars*, trans. E. Chilmead (1650); Robert Gell, *Aggelokratia theron, or a Sermon Touching Gods Government of the World by Angels* (1650); Henricus Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, trans. J[ohn] F[rench] (1650, 1651, 1655; the 1655 edition included the spurious fourth book); Eugenius Philalethes [Thomas Vaughan], *Magia Adamica: or the Antiquitie of Magic, and the Descent thereof from Adam Downwards, Proved* (1650, 1656); Reginald Scot, *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1651, 1654); Hardick Warren, *Magick & Astrology Vindicated From those False Aspersions and Calumnies* (1651), a reply to John Raunce, *Astrologia accusata pariter & condemnata, or the Diabolical Art of Judicial Astrologie* (1650) (to which William Ramsey also replied with *A Reply to a Scandalous Pamphlet . . .* [1650]); Elias Ashmole, *Theatrum chemicum Britannicum* (1652), with an essay digression on magic in the "Annotations"; [John Gaule], *A Collection Out of the Best Approved Authors, Containing Histories of Visions, Apparitions, Prophecies, Spirits, Divinations* (1657); [Thomas Bromhall], [*A Treatise of Specters*], *an History of Apparitions . . . and the Cunning Delusions of the Devil* (1658); Hocus Pocus Junior, *The Anatomy of Legerdemain, or, the Art of Jugling* (1658), extracted out of Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*; *The Devil of Mascon* (1658), with a preface by Robert Boyle; *A True & Faithful Relation of What Passed for Many Yeers Between Dr. John Dee . . . and Some Spirits*, ed. Meric Casaubon (1659); *Frier Bacon his Discovery of the Miracles of Art, Nature, and Magick*, trans. T. M. (1659).

[17] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973 [1971]); Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform 1626–1660* (London: Duckworth, 1975).

of these books drew on the convention of defining witchcraft and magic historically, often through an exegesis of the divine authority recorded in the Bible and occasionally in expositions of ancient texts.[18]

Historical accounts of magic had been standard techniques of demonologists for more than a century. For instance, Andreas Hyperius (1511–64), the eminent Marburg theologian, wrote about "Whether that the Devils Have Bene The Shewers of Magicall artes."[19] He relies heavily on Augustine's broad condemnation of ritual magic as demonic and he spells out the three types of magic found in the Bible: firstly, delusions caused by incantations, witchcraft, and juggling; second, divination (soothsaying, auguries, marking of dreams, conversing with the dead); and third, miracles effected by the help of evil spirits.[20] In all of these cases the devil, with the leave of God and according to the parameters of nature, works either directly or through magicians.[21]

Other histories of magic built on the tradition of debates in chronicles about when and to whom God imparted knowledge of arts and sciences; they contrasted natural magic, a divinely imparted art, with demonic magic.[22] Sir Walter Raleigh, for instance, accumulates a heap of accounts of the history of magic, natural and demonic. He explains that the four sorts of magic described in the Book of Daniel—as practiced by magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and "Chaldeans" (diviners)—had been linguistically and willfully corrupted.[23] There were, he continues, three true types of magic. 1) Astrology is the knowledge of the effects of the stars on the lower

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[18] On witchcraft and history, see esp. Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), Pt. 3. On challenges to Biblical authority, see esp. Joseph M. Levine, "Matter of Fact in the English Revolution," *JHI* 64 (2003): 317–35.

[19] Andreas Hyperius [Gerhard], *Two Common Places taken out of Andreas Hyperius* (London, 1581), 75 ff. On Hyperius's impact see Jameela Lares, *Milton and the Preaching Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 79–80, 95, 98, 100.

[20] Hyperius, *Two Common Places*, 40 [sic 77]. On miracles, see also 96 ff. On medieval definitions of magic, see esp. Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Sophie Page, "Magic at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, in the Late Middle Ages" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 2000).

[21] Hyperius, *Two Common Places*, 76, 44 [sic 81].

[22] On divine knowledge, see for instance J. E. McGuire and P. M. Rattansi, "Newton and the Pipes of Pan," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 21 (1966): 108–43; Arnold Williams, *The Common Expositor: An Account of the Commentaries on Genesis, 1527–1633* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), 82; cf. Nick Jardine, *The Birth of History and Philosophy of Science: Kepler's* A Defence of Tycho against Ursus *with Essays on its Provenance and Significance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), Ch. 8.

[23] Walter Raleigh, *The History of the World* (London, 1614), Bk. 1, Ch. 9; Daniel 2.2.

elements; 2) astrology can be extended to include the "knowledge of the true God" (drawing on astronomy and mathematics); 3) and a third sort of magic "contayneth the whole Philosophie of nature" and "bringeth to light the inmost virtues, and draws them out of Natures hidden bossom to human use."[24] Abraham was the first to discover the powers of astrology, and he instructed the Chaldeans, Phoenicians, and Egyptians in mathematics, astronomy, astrology, and divine knowledge; Albertus Magnus, Arnold of Villanova, Raymond Lully, and Roger Bacon were true "chymists" and applied "things that worke, to things that suffer"; and Zoroaster excelled at all three sorts of magic. A magician, he concludes, "is no other then . . . *A studious obseruer & expounder of diuine things*."[25] Unlawful magic and the workings of the devil are another subject. To call them magic is abusively to esteem them "to be as branches of that Tree, on whose root they neuer grew."[26] Here he enumerates the many sorts of magic that Hyperius discounts: necromancy, or the calling of spirits and angels; wicked divinations; and fascination or witchcraft.

Naudé draws on a similar range of historical and exegetical sources, though he is more systematic. He identifies four species of magic, each defined according to whether it is effected by God, angels, demons, or human industry. The final sort is natural magic, and its applications are in mechanics and medicine. Angelic and demonic magic are founded on corrupt rituals, they are unlawful, and it is these which magicians practice. Thus he establishes the lawfulness of the practices of scholars, scholars who are commonly, and erroneously, called magicians.[27] Natural magic is not the work of the devil; rather, the devil sows the seeds of credulity from which these defamations spring.

The case of Zoroaster, whom Pliny named as the first magician, is a good example of how Biblical exegesis and ancient history were combined in efforts to categorize magic as natural or demonic. Raleigh's digression on magic is part of his chapter on "*Of* ZOROASTER, *supposed to haue beene the chiefe Author of Magick Arts: and of the diuerse kinds of Magicke*" (bk. 1, ch. 11), and Naudé devotes a chapter (ch. 8) to "*That* Zoroastes

[24] Raleigh, *History of the World*, 172; cf. *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghayat Al-Hakim*, ed. David Pingree (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1986), Book II, Cap. V: 46; Book IV, Cap. III: 188–89 and Nick Popper's article in this volume.
[25] Raleigh, *History of the World*, 174.
[26] Ibid., 177; on unlawful magic and the workings of the devil see 177–81.
[27] Naudé, *History of Magick*, Ch. 2, esp. 13–14. The first three sorts of magic are: divine magic (prophecies, miracles, "gift of tongues"); theurgy, or white magic; geotick, or demonic magic. On medicine and magic, see esp. 22, 165 ff.; on machines, see 37–38.

was neither Author nor Promoter of Geotick, Theurgick, *or unlawfull* Magick."[28] Following Annius of Viterbo's identification of Zoroaster with Ham (Cham) in the fifteenth century, numerous historians had engaged in chronological and philological acrobatics to sort out whether these were indeed the same man, whether he invented magic, whether he was its first practitioner, and if he did engage in any magical actions, whether they were lawful. Ham was the son whom Noah had cursed for seeing him drunk and naked. He was credited variously with constructing the pillars that preserved knowledge from the flood (one was impervious to water, the other to fire), reintroducing evil to the world, and inventing the art of calling demons.[29] Zoroaster, Raleigh explains, was not the same person as Ham, though he was greatly learned in the "true philosophy" and was astronomer to King Ninus.[30]

Naudé does something a bit different. He complains that historians have been confused because they have been posing the wrong question. Instead of asking who was the first practitioner of magic (and Zoroaster is a good candidate), they should be asking to whom Satan first taught it.[31] Satan invented unlawful magic, and he made use of it well before the Flood. Ham did practice magic that was taught to him by his father, and Zoroaster was an "excellently knowing man, well acquainted with all manner of Disciplines, a subject of *Ninus*, contemporary with *Abraham*, and by countrey a Chaldæan, who having been instructed by *Azonach*, one of the Disciples of *Sem* or *Heber*, was so earnest in the cultivation and restauration of the Disciplines lost by the Floud, that he became the most eminent man of his time, and writ a many books. . . ."[32] His magic was the "perfect knowledge of Naturall Philosophy" and the "knowledge of divine things wherein the

[28] Naudé, *History of Magick*, 63–79.

[29] On Ham and the history of magic, following ancient, scholastic, and humanist sources, see for instance Naudé, *History of Magick*, 48, 70–75; Raleigh, *History of the World*, 169–70; Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, ed. Montague Summers (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1972 [1930]), Bk. XV, Ch. 2: 222; Warren, *Magick & Astrology Vindicated*, 28. Agrippa simply notes that Zoroaster and Zamolxis were believed to be the inventors of magic: *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, ed. Donald Tyson (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1997), Bk. I, Ch. 2: 6. See also Walter Stephens, *Giants in Those Days: Folklore, Ancient History, and Nationalism* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 87–88, 116.

[30] Raleigh, *History of the World*, 169–70, 172. On Scaliger's reading of Eusebius on Zoroaster, see Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 2: 593.

[31] Naudé, *History of Magick*, 67.

[32] Ibid., 70–71, 74–75 (quotation).

Kings of *Persia* caus'd their children to be instructed."[33] That is, Zoroaster practiced natural magic. Raleigh and Naudé, in contrast to the standard theological and demonological line, evaluate magic according to the actions of its practitioners. Magicians practice unlawful ritual magic; the magic of priests and natural philosophers was natural and lawful.

III.

Magical, alchemical, and astrological texts (what we might call occult philosophies), like those of astronomy and mathematics, often began with an account of the ancestry—divine, angelic and human—of their arts.[34] In these accounts, confusingly, "magician" has a more neutral meaning and refers to practitioners of both natural and demonic magic. In 1650 Thomas Vaughan (c. 1621–65), twin brother of the poet Henry, Oxford scholar, Anglican clergyman, veteran of the Royalist cause, recent arrival at Thomas Henshaw's house in Kensington, alchemist, and Rosicrucian apologist, published a history of magic under his usual pseudonym Eugenius Philalethes. This was *Magia Adamica: or the Antiquitie of Magic, and the Descent thereof from Adam Downwards, Proved.* This followed a series of vituperative exchanges in print earlier that year between Vaughan and Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist supreme—though More insisted that he had not read and would not comment on this book.[35] "*Magic*," Vaughan

[33] Ibid., 76.

[34] See for instance my *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan London: Simon Forman, Astrologer, Alchemist, and Physician* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), esp. Ch. 9.

[35] [Henry More], *The Second Lash of Alazonomastix . . . or a Sober Reply to a Very Uncivill Answer to Certain Observations upon* Anthroposophia theomagica, *and* Anima magica abscondita (Cambridge, 1651), 188. On Vaughan, see *Thomas and Rebecca Vaughan's 'Aqua Vitae: Non Vitis' (British Library MS, Sloane 1741)*, ed. Donald R. Dixon (Tempe, Az.: University of Arizona Press, 2001), Intro.; William R. Newman, *Gehennical Fire: The Lives of George Starkey, an American Alchemist in the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 213–22 (a reworking of his "Thomas Vaughan as an Interpreter of Agrippa von Nettesheim," *Ambix* 29 [1982]: 125–40). On the dispute between Vaughan and More, see Noel L. Brann, "The Conflict Between Reason and Magic in Seventeenth Century England: A Case Study of the Vaughan-More Debate," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 43 (1980): 103–26; F. B. Burnham, "The More-Vaughan Controversy: The Revolt against Philosophical Enthusiasm," *JHI* 35 (1974): 33–49; Robert Crocker, "Mysticism and Enthusiasm in Henry More," in *Henry More (1614–1687): Tercentenary Studies*, ed. Sarah Hutton (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1990), 137–55, esp. 144–47; Crocker, *Henry More, 1614–1687: A Biography of the Cambridge Platonist* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003), 45–53; A. M. Guinsburg, "Henry More, Thomas Vaughan and the Late Renaissance Magical Tradition," *Ambix* 27 (1980): 36–58.

begins, "is nothing els but the *Wisdom* of the *Creator* revealed and planted in the *Creature*. It is a Name . . . not Distastefull to the very Gospel it self."[36] Vaughan writes a history with explanatory force akin to those found in historical and exegetical texts, and like them he focuses on the Bible.[37] Magic has a primitive existence in God himself. It is the practice or operation of the divine spirit working in matter, uniting principles into compounds. God imparted the knowledge of this art to man—man did not invent it—and the history of magic is the history of when and to whom this knowledge was revealed.[38] Thus Vaughan's book traces the true history of magic "from the very *Fall* of *Man* to the *Day* of his *Redepmtion* (sic); Along (sic), and solitary Pilgrimage, the *paths* being unfrequented because of the *Briars*, and *scruples* of *Antiquitie*, and in some *places* overgrown with the *Poppie* of *Oblivion*."[39]

This is Vaughan's history of magic. With the Fall the light was withdrawn from the world (the physics is complicated, and still evident in wonders and miracles), Adam suffered, God held a secret conference with the angels, Raziel was appointed Adam's guardian and tutor, and Adam was instructed in the workings of nature by the spirit of God and his ministering angels: he "had his *Metaphysics* from Above."[40] This was a philosophy of salt: "the first *mineral secret*, namely the *Salt* of the *Earth*, which is *Salt* and *no Salt*, and the *Preparation* thereof."[41] Here Vaughan gestures towards his exposition of a tradition of alchemy following Michel Sendivogius, a tradition in which alchemical procedures begin with philosophical earth, or salt which is not salt; and a tradition in opposition to the mercurial alchemy of George Starkey and Robert Boyle.[42] Adam conveyed this knowledge to his children, initiating a familial legacy of learning.[43] Joseph taught these arts to the Egyptians.[44] Moses knew magic not from this lineage, but from a face-to-face encounter with God.[45] Finally, Vaughan tracks the history of magic from the Jews through the Romans and concludes that in Chris-

[36] Vaughan, *Magia Adamica*, 1.
[37] Then he moves from the Jews to the Egyptians and the Greeks: *Magia Adamica*, 10–11.
[38] Vaughan, *Magia Adamica*, 9.
[39] Ibid., 64–65.
[40] Ibid., 19–20, 26.
[41] Ibid., 32–33.
[42] Newman, *Gehennical Fire*, 87–88, 213–27; William R. Newman and Lawrence M. Principe, *Alchemy Tried in the Fire: Starkey, Boyle, and the Fate of Helmontian Chymistry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), esp. 275–81.
[43] Vaughan, *Magia Adamica*, 38, 42.
[44] Ibid., 71; see also 39, 40.
[45] Ibid., 40, 43, 73.

tendom it had reached its infancy, cradled in some unknown hands, which were not those of the schoolmen; later Arnold of Villanova and Raymon Lully fostered this child.[46]

Like Raleigh and Naudé, Vaughan disentangles the lineage of true, lawful, natural magic from false, unlawful, demonic magic.[47] But unlike Raleigh and Naudé, Vaughan provides a sustained history of demonic magic. His story describes corrupt magic as akin to corrupt religion. As religion entails the elemental baptism by water, so magic entails a spiritual baptism by fire.[48] The apostles instituted and left behind them water, oil, salt, and lights to signify great mysteries. "Papists" did not understand that these things were signifiers, not signs, and worshipped them idolatrously as though they were inherently holy. They invented other false practices outright. The reformers cast away these signs, mistaking them for superstitions, and these ceremonies were at the heart of the current divisions within the church.[49] The fate of magic has been the same. "The *Magicians*"—note the positive use of the term—"they also instituted certain *Signes*, as the *Clavis* to their *Art*, and these were the same with the former, Namely *Water*, *Oile*, *Salt* and *Light*, by which they tacitly discovered unto us their *Three Principles*, and the *Light* of *Nature*, which fills and actuats all Things."[50] Common men read these books, but misunderstood them. They "took *Candles*, *Common Water*, *Oile*, and *Salt*, and began to *Consecrat*, and *exorcise* them, to make up his damnable and Devilish *Magic*." Magicians spoke of words, and common men made them into charms. Magicians spoke of circles and triangles to bind the soul to the body, and common men used them to bind the devil. True magicians were kings, priests, and prophets, men acquainted with the substantial, spiritual mysteries of religion; they dispensed the outward, typical part of their magic to the people. False magicians were "*Scriblers*, who prætended to *Magic*" and wrote "Ceremonial, Superstitious *Trash*." Lawyers and clerics declared these works heretical, and true magicians "buried all in a deep Silence." Then God ended this

[46] Ibid., 76–77.

[47] Ibid., 64.

[48] Ibid., 5. For Biblical references to baptism by fire, see Matthew 3:11 and Luke 3:16. Vaughan touches on the histories of religion and magic again in *Lumen de lumine: Or, a New Magicall Light Discovered and Communicated to the World* (London, 1651), 39–40.

[49] Vaughan, *Magia Adamica*, 6. On the corruption of rituals within the church, thereby rendering them "magical," see also Raleigh, *History of the World*, 165–68; Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Book IX, Ch. 12: 114–15.

[50] Vaughan, *Magia Adamica*, 6–7.

dark time and stirred some resolute and active spirits, such as Agrippa and Vaughan himself, to put pen to paper to dispel this cloud.[51]

Vaughan, like Naudé, brings the history of magic up to the present; Raleigh sees no need to do this. At the outset Vaughan notes that the mysteries of true magic have continued to this day, yet his task "[t]o reconcile this *Science*, and the Masters of it to the world, is an Attempt more plausible, than possible, the prejudice being so great, that neither Reason, nor Authoritie can ballance it."[52] And at the end of his personified account of the history of lawful magic, he concludes, "I need not tell you how he [the child Magic] hath thrived since, doe but look upon his *Traine*, for at this Day who prætends not to *Magic*, and that so *magisterially*, as if the *Regalos* of the *Art* were in his powers?"[53] True and false magicians were both at work in the present. Vaughan's history defines and separates them while documenting the vivacity of true and false magic and the presence of the devil in the 1650s.

IV.

The devil had been a problem for a while.[54] Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) was first printed at the height of a wave of witchcraft prosecutions in the 1580s, then reprinted several times in a second wave of the 1650s. Like other demonologies, this work was historicist, and like some of them it demonstrated that witchcraft was a novel (modern) phenomenon.[55] Scot, however, denied that the devil was the author of witch-

[51] Ibid., 7–8; cf. Warren, *Magick & Astrology Vindicated*, 5.

[52] Vaughan, *Magia Adamica*, 2.

[53] Ibid., 77.

[54] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 315 ff.; Robert W. Scribner, "The Reformation, Popular Magic, and the 'Disenchantment of the World,'" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23 (1993): 475–94.

[55] There is no critical edition of Scot's work. I have used the deficient 1972 edition (originally printed in 1930), which lacks the front matter and appended essay, "An excellent Discourse of the Nature and Substance of Devils and Spirits"; an anonymous second book was added to this "Discourse" in the 1665 edition. For the main text I rely on the 1972 edition and for the extra material I use the 1665 edition, but in order to mitigate confusion, I cite book and chapter numbers as well. Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Book XII, Ch. 23: 162; Book XV, Ch. 31: 262; Scot, *Discovery of witchcraft* (London, 1665), "To the Reader," sig. b2v. Though Scot features in most histories of witchcraft, he has received limited sustained attention from historians. David Wootton's work is beginning to address this: "Reginald Scot / Abraham Fleming / The Family of Love," in *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Stuart Clark (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001), 119–38; idem, "Reginald Scot," *Dictionary of*

craft and magic. He focused not on accused or avowed practitioners of magic (who were poor old women and tricksters respectively), but on the belief in witchcraft and magic. As Naudé would later focus on false historians and their incredulous readers, so Scot chronicles the play between credulous people and those who were suspicious of their beliefs. Where Naudé seeks the origins of fabulous histories, Scot explains the social dynamics of belief. Witchcraft, Scot argued, was not caused by the devil, but by the fraudulent religion of Rome. "Robin Good-fellow *ceaseth now to be much feared*," he began, "*and Popery is sufficiently discovered. Nevertheless, Witches Charms, and Conjurors Cosenages are yet though[t?] effectual. Yea, the* Gentiles *have espyed the fraud of their cosening Oracles, and our cold Prophets and Inchanters make us fools still, to the shame of us all, but specially of Papists, who conjure every thing, and thereby bring to pass nothing.*"[56] The age of oracles had passed, miracles had ceased, protestant clerics had rejected the rituals of Rome, spirits and fairies had vanished, yet witches and conjurors were granted the abilities to command these obsolete powers.

I want to consider Scot's assertion that Robin Goodfellow, legendary fairy, had recently ceased to terrorize the English. Reports out of Germany similarly announced that since Luther's time spirits and devils had disappeared.[57] Fairies were spirits that came in two sorts. Wild ones lived in the woods and occasionally harmed (blasted) people who came across them, and could be enticed into performing magic or sharing their secrets. Domestic fairies were less powerful and less harmful, and punished people who did not keep their houses tidy and servants who neglected their chores.[58] The sentiment that fairies had been more active in days gone by was nothing new. "In olde dayes of the king Arthour,/ Of which that Britons speake

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National Biography. For an overview of Scot's book, see Sydney Anglo, "Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*: Scepticism and Sadduceeism," in *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft*, ed. Sydney Anglo (London: Routledge, 1985 [1977]), 106–39.

[56] Scot, *Discovery of Witchcraft*, "To the Reader," sig. b2.

[57] Ibid., Book VII, Ch. 15: 87; cf. Wolfgang Behringer, *Shaman of Oberstdorf: Chonrad Stoeckhlin and the Phantoms of the Night*, trans. H. C. Eric Midelfort (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 1998). With caution, see also Diane Purkiss's *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories* (London: Penguin, 2000).

[58] Scot, *Discovery of Witchcraft*, "Discourse," 51–52; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 724 ff., 727. Sometimes fairies were associated with the spirits described by Psellus, hence Naudé's insistence that ancient philosophers worked through natural powers, not through the efforts of fairies or demons: Naudé, *History of Magick*, 20; cf. Thomas Heywood, *The Hierarchie of the Blessed Angells* (London, 1635), Bk. 9: 563 ff.

great honour,/ All was this land full fill'd of faerie," noted Chaucer's Wife of Bath.[59] For many people fairies inhabited either the past, or the fancies of ignorant people. As Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) famously noted, associating witches and fairies, "the opinion that rude people have of fairies, ghosts, goblins, and the power of witches" is attributed to the "ignorance of how to distinguish dreams, and other strong fancies, from vision and sense."[60] Scot and Hobbes similarly explain magic as a feature of the popular imagination, though Scot specifies that witches had replaced fairies.

But he spoke too soon. Traffic with the spiritual realm had been pursued and prohibited for centuries. From the 1560s through the 1690s it was monitored as never before.[61] Both within and distinct from cases of witchcraft, there was abundant evidence for and concern about the presence of spirits in England. Most witchcraft was defined as *maleficium*, inflicting harm through malice.[62] When James VI & I came to the throne (with his experience of Scottish witchcraft), consorting with spirits, which was not the same thing as suckling a familiar, was singled out and legislated as a capital offense under the 1604 witchcraft statute. Subsequently fairies and spirits were implicated in various cases, such as one in 1616 in which

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[59] Geoffrey Chaucer, "Wife of Bath's Tale," *The Canterbury Tales*, ll. 1–16, cited in Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 725. The passage continues, describing the replacement of fairies with begging friars.

[60] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1651]), 18.

[61] Here the literatures on occult philosophy, demonology, and wonder intersect. On occult philosophy see esp. Brian Copenhaver, "Astrology and Magic," in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Charles Schmitt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 264–300; Brian Copenhaver, "The Occultist Tradition and Its Critics," in *The Cambridge History of 17th Century Philosophy*, ed. Daniel Garber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 454–512; John Henry, "Occult Qualities and Experimental Philosophy: Active Principles in Pre-Newtonian Matter Theory," *History of Science* 24 (1986): 335–81; Keith Hutchison, "What Happened to Occult Qualities in the Scientific Revolution?" *Isis* 73 (1982): 233–53. On demonology see esp. Clark, *Thinking with Demons*. On wonder see esp. Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998). See also discussions of the notion of the "disenchantment of the world" in Lauren Kassell, "The Economy of Magic in Early Modern England," in *The Practice of Reform in Health, Medicine, and Science, 1500–2000: Essays for Charles Webster*, ed. Margaret Pelling and Scot Mandelbrote (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 43–57; Scribner, "Reformation, Popular Magic, and the 'Disenchantment of the World' "; Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion*.

[62] James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in England 1550–1750* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1996), 114 ff. Sharpe's book provides the first survey of English witchcraft. Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), and Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* have proved seminal and controversial.

one Margaret Lambe was indicted (and acquitted) "for consulting and entertaining evil spirits with the intention of exercising witchcraft, charming and sorcery with their aid."[63] Men more often were accused of using spirits (to find hidden treasure) or trickery than were women.[64] Spirits, according to extant records, became most active in cases in Essex in the 1640s and Kent in the 1650s.[65]

This was the period when medical practitioners and natural philosophers advocating Paracelsian and Helmontian ideas became identified with religious nonconformity and enthusiasm. To adhere to any of these positions was to risk suspicion of an allegiance to the devil. Most of the texts that I have discussed were printed or reprinted in the 1650s, and these books and pamphlets were instruments in the disputes about religion and natural philosophy. Two works by ministers, John Gaule's *A collection out of the approved authors, containing histories of visions, apparitions, prophecies, spirits, divinations, and other wonderful illusions of the devil wrought by magic or otherwise* (1657) and Thomas Bromhall's *A history of appartitions . . . and delusions of the devil* (1658), prefigured the natural histories of spirits produced in the following decades.[66] Most famously, in the 1660s and 1670s Joseph Glanvill (1636–80) proved the reality of witchcraft from scripture, and with Henry More and others collected testimonials about apparitions, spirits, and witches in the present.[67] As experimental

[63] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 118.

[64] Ibid., 114. See also Malcolm Gaskill, "Witchcraft in Early Modern Kent: Stereotypes and the Background to Accusations," in *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief*, ed. Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester, and Gareth Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 272–78.

[65] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 118. Such cases were recorded into the 1690s.

[66] Simon Schaffer, "Godly Men and Mechanical Philosophers: Souls and Spirits in Restoration Natural Philosophy," *Science in Context* 1 (1987): 55–85, esp. 72–73. Bromhall's work was published with an anonymous essay translated from the French: "A Learned Treatise, confuting the Opinions of the Sadduces and Epicures."

[67] Joseph Glanvill, *A Philosophical Endeavour towards the Defense of the being of Witches and Apparitions* (1666; 1667a; 1667b; 1681, each with a different title). For these histories see Ian Bostridge, *Witchcraft and its Transformations c. 1650-c.1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 53–84; T. H. Jobe, "The Devil in Restoration Science: The Glanville-Webster Debates," *Isis* 72 (1982): 343–56; Schaffer, "Godly Men and Mechanical Philosophers," 74. For Glanvill's proposal for a Baconian natural history of the "Land of Spirits," see Charles Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the Making of Modern Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 93. On spirits in the disputes between More and Boyle, see also Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 209–10. See also Michael Hunter, "Alchemy, Magic and Moralism in the Thought of Robert Boyle," *British Journal for the History of Science* 23 (1990): 387–410.

philosophers sought to naturalize the spirit world and to bring it under their control, histories of magic became natural histories of magic.[68]

Unlike earlier exegetical and historical works, these texts prioritized present cases reported by men of standing over the actions of great scholars lodged in books from past ages. Naudé would not have approved of these great heaps of examples, heaps that have, I think, contributed to a mode of writing about early modern magic that provides an accumulation of anecdotes and fails to account for the pairing of credulity and suspicion of it.[69] This essay has in part been a test of Naudé's methods. Through close reading, logical thought, and historical contextualization I have shown that in early modern Europe histories of magic were conceived of by demonologists, historians, and occult philosophers as interventions in debates about the natural, demonic and divine; that spirits and practitioners of magic (broadly defined) were visible (especially in print) during the 1650s, a period of intense debate about the meaning of religion; and I have suggested that histories of magic became natural histories of magic.

Yet in this land teeming with spirits, the past—a realm of enchantment and credulity—remained a problem. Through the 1690s John Aubrey was Britain's chief hunter of fairies, tracking them in the memories of his countrymen and women and throughout the British forests.[70] He noted the locations of various caves that afforded entrance to the Land of Faerie, and recorded details about people throughout the realm who had spoken with spiritual beings.[71] He later complains that "the divine art of Printing and Gunpowder have frighted away Robin-good-fellow and the Fayries."[72] He noted that there was much talk of fairies amongst country people when he was a boy.[73] Again he dated their disappearance to recent times: "[w]hen

[68] Brian Copenhaver, "A Tale of Two Fishes: Magical Objects in Natural History from Antiquity through the Scientific Revolution," *JHI* 52 (1991): 373–98; Schaffer, "Godly Men and Mechanical Philosophers," 72–73. Cf. Horst Bredekamp, *The Lure of Antiquity and the Cult of the Machine: The Kunstkammer and the Evolution of Nature, Art and Technology*, trans. Allison Brown (Princeton: M. Weiner Publishers, 1995), on the historicization of natural history.

[69] On the historiography of magic, see n. 15 above.

[70] On Aubrey as an antiquary and ethnographer, see Daniel Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture 1500–1730* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), esp. 383–86. The standard work on Aubrey remains Michael Hunter, *John Aubrey and the Realm of Learning* (London: Duckworth, 1975).

[71] John Aubrey, *Miscellanies* (London, 1696), 122, 156, 176.

[72] John Aubrey, "Remaines of Gentilisme and Judaisme," in *Three Prose Works of John Aubrey*, ed. John Buchanan-Brown (Fontwell, Sussex: Centaur Press, 1972), 290.

[73] Aubrey, "Remaines of Gentilisme and Judaisme," 203. For an episode when the young Aubrey sought fairies, see Marjorie Swann, "The Politics of Fairylore in Early Modern English Literature," *Renaissance Quarterly* 53 (2000): 449.

the wars came, and with them liberty of conscience and liberty of inquisition, the phantoms vanished."[74] Aubrey himself was accused of credulity, yet in his efforts we see an ongoing concern to document the history of magic.[75]

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[74] John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1898), 2: 318; see also Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 725.

[75] Schaffer, "Godly Men and Mechanical Philosophers," 73; see also 79 for further examples of such name calling.

I am grateful for comments from Simon Schaffer, Joad Raymond, and the audience at the EMPHASIS Seminar, Birkbeck, University of London. An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the 2004 History of Science Society meeting in Austin, Texas. Thanks to Robert Goulding, James Steven Byrne, Nicholas Popper, and Anthony Grafton for their comments at the HSS meeting.