

Chapter 1 : Magic in Medieval Manuscripts by Page, Sophie | eBay

A brilliant idea for a book, "Magic in Medieval Manuscripts" by Sophie Page gives us fascinating insight into the diverse mysterious forms of magic practiced in Europe during the Middle Ages and analyses the role or significance of magic in the medieval world.

The general approval of a proposition, however, is not necessarily related to its truth value. This sentence, for example, has a number of untrue implications. It asserts, first of all, that the man who was to become the archetype of human dealings with the devil did exist and was called Johannes. Now, philological investigations have established that the historical Faustus did indeed exist, but he was not called Johannes at all, but rather Georgius. Again, this seems to be false, for there is no historical evidence that Faustus was ever in Poland. It is widely known that according to certain popular beliefs, magicians were wandering students who learned magic from books by great intellectual effort in special schools. Such schools were located, for example, in Salamanca and Toledo. It is quite understandable why these Iberian towns had such a reputation: This was where the Western world had been confronted with—and started to translate—the Arabic scientific corpus. This cultural import included at least as much astrology, talismanic magic, and alchemy as mathematics, philosophy, optics, and physics. It is not surprising, therefore, that a whole tradition of topoi had presented Toledo as an international center of the black arts, divination, and demonic magic, ever since the first scientific and magical texts were translated. Naples, Athens, and Toledo. My book has succeeded if, by its end, its readers feel that they have received sufficient information to answer this question. Even though I cannot promise to identify a public school for the black arts functioning in the medieval territories of Poland, Hungary, or Bohemia—as magic was never instructed officially and openly in any medieval school or university in Europe—a large number of instructive cases will compensate the reader for the frustration caused by the lack of a department of necromancy: Nevertheless, the main focus will be the university masters whose libraries include—besides a large number of scientific treatises—some surprising items pertaining to the field of learned magic: For the sake of clarity, the texts under investigation will be classified into certain categories. The first comprises the relatively innocent practices of natural magic, which operate through the secret correspondences of the world and the hidden properties of objects. Then come the more manipulative methods of image in other words, talismanic or celestial magic, which work with names and figures engraved in specific stones and metals. The last is that of ritual or ceremonial magic, which relies on the invocation of angels and demons, and which is somewhere on the borderline between magic and religion. These categories, with which I will operate throughout my study, will be carefully defined in the Chapter 1. For the moment, it is enough to emphasize that although the threefold distinction of natural, image, and ritual magic is a helpful framework for the classification of medieval magical texts, the borders between these subcategories will not always be clear. It is much harder to account for the inclusion of two further categories, the divinatory material including geomancy and palmistry and the alchemical sources. These arts share with magic the characteristic of being frequently condemned; nevertheless, they were not necessarily seen as branches of magic, and—as it will be argued in due course—were condemned for reasons different from those marshaled against talismanic and ritual magic. But as the borderlines in the field of magic are fuzzy, I tended to be inclusive rather than exclusive. Therefore, divination is also incorporated in this study, considering the fact that texts on divination often traveled together with texts on natural and image magic. Evidence of alchemy, as provided by a couple of Central European sources, will also be presented, first because it seems to supplement the picture on the readership of magic in that era, and second because I—like most modern readers—am somewhat imprisoned in the modern categorization of magic, which undeniably includes alchemy. It is important to always bear in mind that the modern and medieval categories of magic, science, and religion do not necessarily coincide. No similar admission is made in this book regarding purely astrological texts, even though nowadays astrology might also seem to be a part of magic. It is of primary importance to remember that there is no necessary link between the two fields Astrology was taught in certain universities, magic never, or at least not as part of the curriculum. Even though certain elements of astrology provoked serious theological debates, such as the

concept of the Great Year which implied that earthly history is fundamentally periodical, which contradicted the teaching of the church and the effect of the stars on particular events and on human free will, general astrological principles in a more innocent form were relatively well accepted as a part of medical training, and as functional elements of natural philosophy. The idea that the incorruptible, perfect, and divine celestial regions exercise an influence over the corruptible earthly bodies was supported not only by the arguments of Aristotle and Ptolemy—the two main authorities of antiquity in the field of celestial sciences—but also by empirical evidence. Celestial causal superiority is evident in the influence of the sun on temperature, rain, and the cycle of seasons; or the power of the moon on the ebb and flow of the tides; not to mention that a sophisticated system had been worked out relating the sections of the zodiac, the planets, and the various parts of the human body. In addition, experience—understood in the medieval sense of the word—suggested that celestial virtues influenced metals think of the behavior of the magnet, which was a frequent subject in the discussions of natural philosophy, and the association of planets with metals the sun with gold, the moon with silver, and so on was regarded as valid in general, not just in alchemical considerations. Second, astrology is excluded for regional reasons: In brief, astrology was a fully fledged discipline in its own right in the fifteenth century, but magic was never officially studied or practiced, and if certain philosophers who will be introduced in the next chapter proved tolerant of some of its forms, magical texts never entered the university curriculum. Therefore, I will frequently touch upon the issue of astrology while looking at the use and the codicological context of magical works, but I will not, however, include astrological sources in the textual analysis. Further limitations to this study are linguistic. The focus of the research is predominantly on Latin texts. This is not due to the complete lack of vernacular sources. Although no such examples have been found in Hungarian, the fifteenth century no doubt witnessed the translation of divinatory and natural magic texts into German and Czech. Again, these sources will not be ignored completely; however, proper research into the vernacular texts of learned magic finding the Latin original, identifying the additional elements coming from local sources, and so on would require a separate study. Nevertheless, the presentation and close reading of basic texts form only the first objective of my investigations. Once the examples of magic have been collected, and their codicological contexts examined to determine which texts travel alone in the manuscript tradition, and which ones occur together with other genres, the main concern of the book is to explore and characterize the circle of people who wrote, copied, collected, used, and read these manuscripts to the extent that the evidence will permit. While only in some exceptional cases are the specific owners known, it is often possible to identify the social stratum to which they belonged. Their curiosity in experimental and occult studies, their education, profession, background, convictions, and wishes can be inferred from the books they collected. And then, reconstructing the university careers, training, interests, and libraries of the compilers and owners of the given texts helps us understand the role of the magical books that lined their shelves and the place of magical beliefs in their conceptual schemes. Similar questions are to be raised in a Central European context. What is known about the people who wrote, copied, and used magical texts? Did Central Europe have its own magicians, or was the presence of sources on magic nothing more than the result of simple incidental curiosity of well-known intellectuals at the universities and the courts? In other words, in what stratum of the social hierarchy should one look for the readers: Did the scribes add their own inventions to the field of magic, or did they merely follow Western practices? And on a more general level: Furthermore, were the compilers and the collectors educated at Polish, Bohemian, or Hungarian universities? Did they possess such handbooks for personal use or out of pure curiosity? Central Europe comprises the countries of three Christian states, whose political developments show genuine resemblances: Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary. In the following, however, for the sake of simplicity and brevity, I will refrain from operating with such difficult expressions. As far as manuscripts are concerned, the eastern boundary of Central Europe is very clear: The southern borders are more cultural than political: Therefore, the famous alchemical text *Pretiosa margarita novella*, composed in Pula by Petrus Bonus, a native of Ferrara, will not be treated together with Bohemian, Polish, and Hungarian sources on alchemy. The western boundaries of my region are somewhat less clear, and defined according to different, rather practical considerations. Culturally, these countries formed an organic unity; Polish, Bohemian, and Hungarian students frequently studied in German and Italian universities, while

German and Italian humanists and professors often came to Central European institutions. Apparently, political boundaries did not present any obstacle. However, the source material provided by Italy, Austria, and Germany are substantially different both in quantity and quality. In the present study, I intend to rely on a well-defined and delimited Polish, Bohemian, and Hungarian sample. It follows that I will not present a systematic survey of the magical manuscripts of Vienna or Erfurt, for example, because such an attempt would go beyond the scope of a single book, but whenever the traces lead to the West, I intend to follow them naturally, and I will include occasionally material from beyond the western limits of my area. The reason for this is that Central European universities were founded at much the same time and in much the same way as the universities of the German-language area Heidelberg, Cologne, Leipzig, and Erfurt, and that political boundaries did not stop the wandering students of the fifteenth century. Having thus acquainted ourselves with the idea of Central Europe, it is still not quite clear why this region should be treated separately as far as the texts of learned magic are concerned. Two answers can be given to this question. The first is related to a tendency already pointed out by the scholarship dealing with the diffusion of Arabic magical texts in Western Europe: The second characteristic feature of this area is a relative tolerance shown toward texts on learned magic. This tolerance—which I definitely do not want to overstate—is to be understood by Western European standards. While in Paris, statutes and theological declarations condemning various forms and practices of magic were issued one after the other in the later Middle Ages, in Central Europe it was apparently without the slightest sign of fear of prosecution that university students and professors kept magical items in their libraries. Because the two phenomena are closely related, they can be investigated in parallel. In order to understand why magical texts arrived in Central Europe with such a considerable delay, it is necessary to observe the particular traits of the intellectual history of the area. Roughly speaking, the use and copying of magical texts presupposes the presence of a certain learned culture, and the emergence of a sufficient number of learned scribes, compilers, and book collectors to sustain such a culture requires an intellectual milieu that only universities, monasteries, and royal or episcopal courts can provide. After the death of its founder, King Casimir the Great, the university fell into a state of decline that ended only thanks to a new stimulus received from Queen Jadwiga, in the last years of the fourteenth century. This renewal opened up a golden age in the life of the university, in which, in the first half of the fifteenth century, two private chairs were founded especially for the studies of astronomy and astrology. These chairs yielded many new astronomical and astrological works, and provided the history of science with several generations of astronomers, while supplying various clerical and secular courts of Central Europe with thoroughly trained astrologers. On the one hand, interest in alchemy was already present in Bohemia two hundred years before its late sixteenth-century apogee at the time of Emperor Rudolf II. This interest or even practice of the science of alchemy was probably stronger than a pure curiosity on the part of a confined intellectual circle, because we have an alchemical work dating from the middle of the fifteenth century written in the vernacular, that is, in Czech. On the other hand, natural and image magic, as well as divination, are well represented in the manuscript collections of the first university of Central Europe in Prague. Apart from the university, the monastic context must have also provided fertile ground for an interest in magic: Finally, the southernmost intellectual center of the time no less interested in the celestial sciences was the court of King Matthias of Hungary. According to Antonio Bonfini, one of the learned Italians staying in the royal household, members of the court were deeply concerned with Neoplatonism, and the names of Plato, Pseudo-Dionysus the Areopagite, Hermes Trismegistos, Zoroaster, Orpheus, Plotinus, and Pythagoras were mentioned in philosophical discussions on a day to day basis. Astrology was taken so seriously that Matthias consulted his court astrologer before campaigns and had the horoscope of his new university prepared. This was the institutional milieu that served as fruitful soil, not only for the development of the celestial sciences, but also for a deep interest in magic. The intellectual centers listed so far copied and produced a considerable number of texts belonging to each branch of magic. In various courts of kings, archbishops, bishops, dukes, and princes, as well as in the newly founded Central European universities, a new type of intellectual found himself in a peculiar and convenient place for satisfying his interest and getting involved in research. Interest in various forms of magic did not constitute a unified or coherent movement either inside or outside the

courtly and university life. By pursuing these lines further, we can then address the general issues of who produced and preserved these sources. On the other hand, however, if we proceed in the opposite direction, and wish to provide a general picture of the intellectual activity of the region, we can talk about a strong, consistent concern in astrology, but this claim cannot be extended to the question of magic, examples of which will remain relatively scattered and isolated. The succeeding chapters follow the former of the two procedures. The codicological context of the particular magical texts will also be questioned as veritable sources: In addition, an excursus departing from the main body of the argumentation of the book will focus on the visual material contained in the sources. Part Two concentrates more on the human and institutional elements. Two chapters will be devoted to the role that magic played in monastic milieus and royal courts, while a third will survey the patterns of the founding of universities and go deeper into the secrets of the personal libraries of university professors and students. Here is where we return to the person of Faustus. The present work can expect basically two kinds of readers:

Chapter 2 : Sophie Page (Author of Magic in Medieval Manuscripts)

Product details. With numerous fascinating illustrations from the British Library's rich medieval collection, Magic in Medieval Manuscripts explores the place of magic in the medieval world.

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: Amelia Carr Sophie Page. *Magic in Medieval Manuscripts*. University of Toronto Press, This slim volume comes from the North American publication of the British Library series *Medieval Life in Manuscripts*, to which Page earlier contributed a volume *Astrology in Medieval Manuscripts*. The series draws upon the vast resources of the British Library manuscript collection to present topical themes—flowers, warfare, courtly love—to a general audience. Page succeeds admirably with this handsome paperback in which beautifully reproduced images and an insightful text are sensitively integrated. The text does not simply string together a series of fascinating pictures, nor are those images merely illustrations to the narrative. Page provides a solid introduction to the subject of magic and richly demonstrates its visual nature. The book is divided into a brief introduction and five chapters: All of the illustrations come from the British Library and are adequately, if briefly, identified with a descriptive caption, date, manuscript, and folio number, the title of the work and context for the image being signaled in the text. Because the manuscripts of the British Library are so well studied, additional information about individual manuscripts can readily be found elsewhere, including, now, the catalogues and digital image databases online. This period reflects the high Middle Ages that is best represented in the preprint, manuscript tradition, but also coalesces comfortably into an historical period that begins at the time when many Jewish, Greek, and Arabic texts on magic were translated into Latin, and ends with the trials and witchcraft persecutions of the late Middle Ages. Page lays the ideological foundations for understanding Renaissance and Reformation developments, but only alludes to them. Yet the book reproduces a richer array of manuscript evidence. The earliest illustrations are culled from eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon bestiaries, *Marvels of the East*, and medicinal texts; the latest shows angels of the sun from an early-sixteenth-century *Liber iuratus*. Many images are taken from continental manuscripts: The images are so numerous and well-chosen that it would be heartless to fault the book for not containing more examples of German or Italian origin. In fact, it is difficult to imagine a single library that by itself could provide a significantly more comprehensive range of materials, or that is equally committed to bringing its manuscripts to the public. If the images emphasize an Anglo-French tradition, the text does not. During this period, ideas about magic came from a body of diverse texts transmitted through scholarly channels that transcended national borders. Page makes reference to a wide range of authors, so that readers hear of seminal thinkers Augustine and Albertus Magnus and key texts such as *Picatrix*, from which no pictures are available. The result is a book that lays a solid foundation for understanding medieval magic. Page is sensitive to modern questions about magic, but lets the material shape her discussion using the categories and terminology of the medieval period. We see its origins in the pagan Zoroaster; glimpse the Biblical passages where magicians challenge Aaron, Moses

Chapter 3 : *“Magic in Medieval Manuscripts”*™ by Sophie Page | Patricia Lovett MBE

Magic in Medieval Manuscripts explores the place of magic in the medieval world and the contradictory responses it evoked, through an exploration of images and texts in British Library manuscripts. These range from representations of the magician, wise-woman and witch, to charms against lightning, wax images for inciting love, and diagrams to.

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Chapter 4 : Magic Or Medicine: Medieval Mysteries

In this illustrated talk, medieval magic and astrology specialist Sophie Page shines a light on illuminated manuscripts and other items from our collection to explore magic in the Middle Ages. Sophie Page is a Lecturer at University College London specialising in the area of European medieval magic.

Chapter 5 : Magic in Medieval Manuscripts - The National Archives Bookshop

"Magic in Medieval Manuscripts" explores the place of magic in the medieval world and the contradictory responses it evoked, through an exploration of images and texts in British Library manuscripts.

Chapter 6 : Magic in Medieval Manuscripts by Sophie Page

'Magic in Medieval Manuscripts' by Sophie Page This delightful little pocket sized book by Sophie Page, published by the British Library, is lavishly illustrated by many medi ival manuscripts and explains the conundrum in the Middle Ages of angels and devils, magicians, magic spells and charms.

Chapter 7 : Magic in Medieval Manuscripts - Sophie Page - Google Books

In the first chapter, "The Medieval Magician," Page chronologically presents a series of magicians, at that time considered historical figures, thereby writing a brief history of magic while describing what magicians did and shaping a working definition of magic.

Chapter 8 : Magic in Medieval Manuscripts | JORVIK Shop

The author teaches late Medieval History at University College London and works on medieval magic and astrology especially in the relation to religion, cosmology and natural philosophy.

Chapter 9 : Late Medieval English Magic | English manuscripts containing 15th-century magical texts

Magic in Medieval Manuscripts. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Pp. 64, 55 illustrations. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Pp. 64, 55 illustrations. This slim volume comes from the North American publication of the British Library series Medieval Life in Manuscripts, to which Page earlier contributed a volume Astrology in.