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Jewish Magic *A Perspectives Symposium*

Jewish magic, once denigrated as foreign to Judaism and unworthy of serious consideration, has become the subject of considerable scholarly attention in recent years. AJS Perspectives asked three scholars who have dealt with Jewish magic and allied phenomena in their recent work to assess the impact of the study of magic on their fields. Michael Swartz surveys recent developments in the study of Jewish magic and points to areas for future research. Rebecca Lesses, whose work has compared Jewish magical texts from late antiquity to the Greco-Roman magic of the same period, demonstrates how thoroughly multicultural the study of such texts needs to be. Ephraim Kanarfogel's essay shows how the study of magic can enrich the study of intellectuals in Ashkenaz who were thought at one time to have no substantial esoteric dimension.

A Magic All Its Own

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According to some analysts, an amulet may have brought about the election of Benjamin Netanyahu as Prime Minister of Israel in 1996. Copies of the amulet, signed by Rabbi Yitzhak Kadouri, were distributed to thousands of voters by Netanyahu supporters. Whether or not this really made for the margin of his victory, there is no denying that the diverse phenomena we call magic play a part in current affairs.

For scholars as well, the category of magic has a magic all its own; it can bring together divergent phenomena and cultures, and at the same time arouse fascination and repulsion. Pioneers such as Joshua Trachtenberg and Gershom Scholem (whose last publication was a magical handbook, "Havdalah de-Rabbi Akibah," *Tarbiz* 50, 1980-81: 243-81) paid close attention to magic texts; Jacob Neusner characterized

Magic All its Own cont'd

the ancient Rabbis as “The Lawyer-Magicians of Talmudic Babylonia” (*History of the Jews in Babylonia*, Vol. 4, Leiden, 1969: 353). Since then there has been a remarkable growth in the study of magic among historians of Judaism.

This corresponds to a flourishing of the study of magic in general among historians, classicists, and scholars in religious studies. The last thirteen years alone have seen the publication of several editions of Jewish magical texts. Shaul Shaked has been active in publishing magical texts from Palestine, Babylonia and the Cairo Genizah with Joseph Naveh (*Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (2nd ed.), Jerusalem, 1987; *Magic Spells and Formulae: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity*, Jerusalem, 1993) and has completed three volumes in a series of editions of magical texts from the Genizah

with Peter Schäfer (*Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza*, 3 Vols., Tübingen, 1994-99). In 1992 Lawrence Schiffman and I published a selection of amulets from the Genizah with introduction and commentary (*Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Genizah*, Sheffield, UK, 1992). Other studies, cited in the articles following, have furthered our understanding of these phenomena. One could cite parallel developments in the spheres of Greco-Roman magic and magic in Europe in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. An advantage of these studies is that they allow us to see genres of magical literature on their own terms, without the imposition of pre-conceived notions or conceptual agendas. At the same time, these publications allow non-specialists access to literature that was previously buried in obscurity. The study of magic also offers remarkable

opportunities for collaboration across disciplines and fields. I have attended conferences on magic in the ancient world where specialists in such areas as Egypt and Jewish Babylonia were able to finish each others' sentences—such is the cosmopolitan nature of magic.

Yet the term magic itself is the source of a great deal of controversy. Nineteenth-century anthropologists such as E. B. Tylor and James Frazer sought to separate the attempt to use supernatural forces for personal goals from “true” religion and separate “civilized” from “primitive” religion. Since then, students of magical literature and phenomena, rejecting this dichotomy, have wrestled with whether the term magic itself implies an unwarranted denigration of important human phenomena, and an artificial segregation of one aspect of religion from another. As a result of this controversy, studies

Jewish Magic and Multiculturalism in the Ancient World

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The study of ritual practices to gain power in late antiquity provides, first and foremost, an opportunity to explore questions of the boundaries, or lack thereof, between Jews and other peoples of late antiquity. For example, in fourth century Antioch, John Chrysostom (*Against the Jews* VIII. 5,6) accused Christians of “Judaizing” by worshipping in synagogues as well as churches, and by learning magic and getting amulets from Jews. Among the many recipes for incantations and rituals found in the Greco-Egyptian magical papyri (2d century B.C.E.-5th century C.E.) there occur numerous invocations addressed to “Iao” and other epithets of the God of the Jews, and even whole spells

that intermix Greek and Jewish names for deities and angels: “First angel of [the god], of great Zeus, Iao, and you Michael, who rule heaven's realm, I call, and you, archangel Gabriel. Down from Olympos, Abrasax, delighting in dawns, come gracious who view sunset from the dawn” (Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation : Including the Demotic Spells*, Chicago, 1986: 11). Similarly, spells taken over bodily from Greek invocations appear in early Jewish ritual and mystical literature, such as the ritual to speak to the angel of the sun in *Sefer ha-Razim* (ca. 4th/5th century C.E. Eastern Mediterranean; edited by Mordechai Margolioth, Tel Aviv,


Magic All its Own cont'd

of magic can provide an opportunity to explore theoretical issues such as the boundaries between prayer and incantation, the performative nature of ritual language, and the psychology and sociology of possession. At the same time, magical texts often deal with the most concrete problems of individuals and communities. In amulets from the Genizah, we can see how a husband estranged from his wife, a shopkeeper in need of customers, a Jewish man angry with this Muslim neighbor, and a woman about to give birth made use of incantations to help with their problems. We would have a far poorer understanding of such diverse individuals as Joseph Karo, Shlomo Molkho, and Solomon Maimon if we did not understand the role that the magical tradition on their lives and thought. More than these specific insights, however, the study of magic allows us to see

Jewish communities in greater depth, as places where not only philosophers and halakhists puzzled out profound truths, but where people from all sectors of society called on the power of God and His intermediaries to answer their needs. The study of magic, therefore, advances a process begun by Gershom Scholem, whose attitude, described by David Biale as "religious anarchism" (*Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History*, Cambridge, MA, 1979: 98) rejected no religious phenomenon as a legitimate subject for study, and by S. D. Goitein, who labored heroically to bring the daily lives of all levels of medieval Mediterranean society to light.

There are still many ways in which the study of magic can contribute to the study of Judaism. There are texts in related genres, such as divination and esoteric medicine, that have yet to be published. Given

the relevance of magic to contemporary Jewish society, there are excellent opportunities to study the social context, material culture, and popular reception of contemporary practitioners and their historical roots. The work of Yoram Bilu on popular healing practices and saints in contemporary Israel and by Jeffery Chajes on possession (*dybbuk*) in the early modern period provide excellent starting points. For medieval historians, the availability of magical texts in the Genizah can allow for a deeper consideration of the social context of magical texts and practitioners. Such a study could use documentary sources in Arabic along with literary sources in Hebrew and Aramaic.

And now that editions and studies of this difficult material are available, it remains for intellectual, literary, and social historians to integrate the study of magic further into their own research. 

Multiculturalism cont'd

1966), which contains a Greek prayer to Helios in Hebrew transliteration (12), and the Greek phrases found in the ascent account of *Hekhalot Rabbati* (Rebecca Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations, and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism*, Harrisburg, PA, 1998: 336-343). These few examples demonstrate that Jews lived in a cultural world which experienced multilingualism and the transmission of traditions from one language to another, and participated in the "rich international blend that is so characteristic of late antique culture in all of its dimensions" (John Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*, Oxford, 1992: 13).

They as well as their neighbors engaged in ritual practices such as making and wearing amulets for healing, invoking angels for mundane help and visionary experiences, and protecting themselves against enemies, both human and demonic. Ritual traditions in Egypt circulated among people speaking Coptic, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek; the Jews of Palestine knew Greek as well as Hebrew and Aramaic, and Greek took its place in Mesopotamia alongside Aramaic and Persian (Lesses, 284).

Many scholars of Jewish ritual practice in antiquity have resorted either to comparisons with Greco-Roman magic or have traced the Greek or Latin ancestry of a particu-

lar Jewish spell or rite. For example, Mordechai Margalioth's 1966 publication of *Sefer ha-Razim*, a Jewish book of recipes and rituals from late antiquity, carefully showed parallels to spells and rituals found in the Greco-Egyptian ritual papyri. Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, in their two books on amulets and Babylonian incantation bowls (*Amulets and Magic Bowls*, 1987 and *Magic Spells and Formulae*, 1993; both cited above in Swartz), have also noted the occasions when Greek (more rarely Latin) phrases occur on the amulets or bowls and have discussed the ways in which formulae and historiolae have traveled across cultural boundaries. (Historiolae are "short stories

Multiculturalism cont'd

recounting mythological themes that sympathetically persuade the sufferer's illness to cease" [Roy Kotansky, "Incantations and Prayers on Inscribed Greek Amulets," in Christopher Faraone and Dirk Obbink, eds., *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, Oxford, 1991:112]). Peter Schäfer's and Shaul Shaked's editions of Jewish magic texts from the Cairo Geniza (*Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza*, 3 Vols., Tübingen, 1994-99) have also performed an invaluable service by exploring the Greco-Roman antecedents of various spells and rituals. Giuseppe Veltri's recent book (*Magie und*

Halakha: Ansätze zu einem empirischen Wissenschaftsbegriff im späantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Judentum, Tübingen, 1997) on the "ways of the Amorites" (forbidden ritual practices, mostly omens and prophylactic rituals) in rabbinic literature also carefully traces Greek and Roman parallels. My recent book, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, compares rituals for revelation in the early Jewish mystical texts, the Hekhalot literature, with revelatory incantations in the Greco-Egyptian ritual papyri. Much basic research still needs to be done on the connections and comparisons between Jewish and Greco-Roman magic, and in particular the frame of

reference must be opened up so that we are thinking not only of Greek or Latin magic formularies and amulets, but also Christianized Coptic texts that bear a striking resemblance to some of the Hekhalot texts, Christian Syriac texts, etc.

Scholars of Greco-Roman magic have more rarely made use of the Jewish sources, even since the publication of such works as *Sefer ha-Razim* in its English translation by Michael A. Morgan (*Sefer ha-Razim: Book of the Mysteries*, Chico, CA, 1983), although there are certain welcome exceptions. Notice has been taken of the Jewish spells in the Greco-Egyptian ritual papyri, especially their relation to

Magic in the Rabbinic Culture of Medieval Ashkenaz

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It has been generally acknowledged that the rabbinic scholarship of medieval Ashkenaz was almost exclusively halakhocentric. That is, little time was devoted to the study or cultivation of disciplines outside of Talmudic literature and halakhic [legal] interpretation. A perusal of Ephraim Urbach's magisterial study of the intellectual lives of the Tosafists [a school of talmudic commentators], specifically with regard to magic, yields barely a handful of references. The implication is that mainstream Ashkenazic Talmudists and halakhists during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had scant interest or expertise in this area, a conclusion that dovetails with Urbach's characterization of the rabbinic period as well.

In fact, however, there are numerous passages, found for the most part in manuscript, which suggest that Ashkenazic rabbinic culture did have an awareness of, and more than a passing interest in, magical

concepts and techniques. For example, a Parma manuscript from the thirteenth or fourteenth century (written in a German hand) contains a lengthy section or treatise of magical formulae and adjurations. Although some of the material is recorded anonymously and may represent the pre-Crusade period, names of twelfth and thirteenth-century German Pietists and Tosafists also appear. Among the magical techniques and aims described is the transporting of a person from afar, the apprehension of a thief through the recitation of various Divine Names, and the achieving of *petihat ha-lev*, literally "opening the heart."

Petihat ha-lev in this passage connotes the ability to understand Torah teachings clearly and recall those teachings effortlessly. The state of *petihat ha-lev* was to be accomplished through the writing of a request formula (and adjuration) on a well-boiled egg that was deter-

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early Christianity (see for example Morton Smith's *Jesus the Magician*, New York, 1978). John Gager's *Curse Tablets* (cited above) considers the Aramaic incantation bowls and metal amulets alongside lead tablets in Greek, Latin, Coptic, and other languages. Roy Kotansky has also included Jewish amulets in his collection of inscribed amulets (*Greek Magical Amulets: the Inscribed Gold, Silver, Copper, and Bronze "Lamellae": Text and Commentary*, Opladen, 1994) and his articles on amulets mention Jewish evidence alongside Christian, Greek, Latin, and Coptic material (e.g., "Greek Exorcistic

Amulets" in Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, eds., *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, Leiden, 1995: 243-277). What is really lacking is the inclusion of Jewish magic within larger discussions of Greco-Roman magic, for example, in Fritz Graf's recent work, *Magic in the Ancient World* (translated by Franklin Philip, Cambridge, MA, 1997). Other recent publications, like the first volume of Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark's series *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe*, *Ancient Greece and Rome* (Philadelphia, 1999), which has articles on the curse tablets, witches and sorcerers in Greek and Roman literature, imagining magic, and early Christian redefinitions of magic, barely

mentions Jewish magic, even though the book covers both antiquity and late antiquity. This may be part of a larger problem of thinking of "Greco-Roman" as referring literally only to Greeks and Romans, and not to Jews, Egyptians, or other peoples who lived within a Hellenistic or Greco-Roman culture. We need to think about the history of magic/ritual practice in the ancient world as a multicultural practice. Much lip service is paid to the idea of the international nature of magic—this needs to be elaborated and taken much more seriously, both from the standpoint of the study of Judaism in late antiquity and the study of late antique culture as a whole. ☞

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mined to have been the first ever laid by a hen, by the recitation of the adjuration that was directed to the *Sar ha-Torah* as well as the *Sar ha-Panim*, and by eating the egg. These procedures, and the angels to whom they are directed, reflect known concepts and figures within Hekhalot literature, although the precise application in the Ashkenazic text at hand constitutes a partial synthesis of different Hekhalot rituals.

Ivan Marcus, in his analysis of the education initiation ceremony that is described in rabbinic sources from both Germany and northern France, cites formulations from R. Eleazar ha-Qallir, Sa'adyah Gaon (d. 942), and *Sefer Razi'el* (a work that often reflects geonic and other early medieval traditions) as models of magical techniques for *petihat ha-lev* found in the ceremony that involved the eating of cakes or

eggs. The procedure for achieving *petihat ha-lev* through the eating of a magical egg, as outlined in the Parma manuscript and in other related manuscript passages, suggests that the use of adjurations and Divine Names for magical purposes was in vogue within Ashkenaz itself in the late eleventh or early twelfth century — even before the first recorded description of the initiation ceremony.

R. Isaac of Dampierre (d. 1189), and other leading Tosafists, approved the magical summoning of *shedim* (demons) in order to ascertain through divination the whereabouts of lost objects. R. Isaac's contemporary, R. Eliezer of Metz (1115-98), has a lengthy discussion in his *Sefer Yere'im* about adjuring demons and angels (*hashba'at shedim* and *hashba'at malakhim*). He concludes that these techniques, which are akin to methodologies found in *Sefer Yezirah*, are not prohibited as sorcery. Only when a

person "creates an actual object or changes a person's mind through his own magical manipulations" is he guilty of sorcery.

Several manuscripts attribute a magical *shemirat ha-derekh* (protection on a journey) to R. Avigdor Katz (d.c. 1275), the successor of R. Isaac b. Moses Or Zarua' in Vienna in the second half of the thirteenth century, and a teacher of R. Meir of Rothenburg. After a person has departed his city, and he is at the distance of an arrow's flight, he should turn his back toward the city. According to one version, he should then recite the verse that records Jacob's recognition of the angels who met him (and protected him) following his departure from Lavan, and then state: "Just as Jacob was not harmed by his brother Esau, I should certainly not be harmed." In a second version, the person recites a specific Divine Name that will protect him from all kinds of harm and danger.

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R. Meir of Rothenburg (d. 1293) was himself involved in aspects of both magic and practical esoteric applications, through the recitation of *shemot* [divine names] and mystical formulae, and the use of Divine Names and letter combinations. In some instances, his formulae are recorded in manuscripts in close proximity to those of R. Judah he-Hasid (d. 1217), R. Eleazar of Worms (d. c. 1230), and other Ashkenazic figures, including his own student, R. Dan. The purpose of these formulae was to achieve certain aims and states of being, such as *petihat ha-lev*, and protection from physical harm and danger, whether caused by rulers and *maziqin* (harmful demons), or through incarceration. R. Meir decided a matter of monetary law that he had not studied or discussed with his teachers based on what he

learned from an angelic *ba'al ha-halom* (angel appointed over a dream) in a dream he had while being held captive in the tower of Ensisheim. Moreover, R. Meir composed a divination formula (*goral*) for predicting or knowing the future. I have gathered and discussed these and many other examples in my book entitled "*Peering Through the Lattices*": *Mystical, Magical, and Pietistic Dimensions in the Tosafist Period* (Detroit, 2000).

The relative inability of modern scholarship to detect the presence of magic in Tosafist circles may be better understood by considering several of the approaches taken by Joshua Trachtenberg in his pioneering work, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: a Study in Folk Religion* (New York, 1939). Following the work of Lynn Thorndike in particular, Trachtenberg offered a thorough

treatment of medieval Jewish magic, relying, in large measure, upon *Sefer Hasidim* and other published writings of the German Pietists, as well as the writings of Ashkenazic halakhists.

Nonetheless, Trachtenberg was unaware of several important developments, mostly because of circumstances beyond his control. He was not familiar with many manuscript passages involving both twelfth and thirteenth-century Tosafists, as well as German Pietists, that have an important bearing on the topics in which he was interested. Nor did he know the full extent of the Pietists' rich theosophical literature (and the impact which that literature had on Spanish kabbalah).

Finally, Trachtenberg was not sufficiently aware of the texts of Hekhalot literature, the significance of this literature for the German

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Dissertations in Progress

Julien Véronèse, University of Paris X – Nanterre, *The Ars notoria in the Medieval and Early Modern Period: Study of a Manuscript Tradition of Theurgic Magic (XIIth-XVIIth century)*.

In his *History of Magic and Experimental Science* (vol. II, p. 279-283), Lynn Thorndike made a preliminary survey of manuscripts of the magical art ascribed to king Solomon and his disciple Apollonius called the *Ars notoria*: he found eighteen manuscripts of it, an impressive result for a condemned tradition of ritual magic. But Thorndike's brief discussion raised more questions than it answered. How is one to

explain the success of this magical art? What is its history and its origin? Has it any relation to the other magical texts ascribed to Solomon which spread through occidental christendom from the middle of the XIIth century? And what is its content?

To find answers to these questions, I began by attempting to complete Thorndike's original inventory of manuscripts. At this point I have located more than fifty manuscripts preserved in occidental libraries, of which more than thirty are from the medieval period, and I have also researched inventories of medieval libraries for places where the *Ars notoria* is mentioned. Using this evidence, in the first part of the thesis I try to give a more precise

Rabbinic Culture cont'd

Pietists (and for other Ashkenazic rabbinic figures), or the role played by Ashkenazic Jews in preserving (and editing) this corpus. It should be noted that in the first half of the ninth century, Agobard of Lyons learned from Jews in his realm about concepts and constructs such as the magical powers of the letters of the alphabet, the nature of the *kisse ha-kavod* (Throne of Glory), and *Shi'ur Qomah*-like descriptions of the Divine body, all of which reflect material found in the Hekhalot literature. This suggests that pieces of this literature, if not entire sections, were known (and available) to Jews in central France well before the year 1000. The presence of this literature in southern Italy at that time, and in the Rhineland by at least the early eleventh century, has also been established.

In addition — or perhaps as a result — as the subtitle of his book indicates, Trachtenberg viewed medieval Jewish magic as most closely related to superstition and folk religion, rather than as an offshoot or an allied field of Jewish mysticism. Since the German Pietists recorded and were involved with many aspects of magic, and since their mystical teachings were (in Trachtenberg's view) markedly less sophisticated than those of their Spanish and Provençal counterparts, Trachtenberg was inclined to study this magic from the popular level up rather than from the mystical level down. In fact, however, the nature of much of the magic itself — as well as the parallels to Hekhalot literature and the involvement of both the German Pietists and certain Tosafists in studies that are decidedly mystical — suggests how Ashkenazic magic derived its status

in the eyes of rabbinic scholars as a discipline related to mysticism rather than as a transformation of folk custom.

The presence of magical (and mystical) teachings within the spiritual orbit of the Tosafists has several larger implications. Further evidence for the compatibility of these disciplines with Talmudic scholarship is one example; the coherence of Ashkenazic rabbinic culture before and after the First Crusade, at least with respect to these areas, is another. Moreover, the scholars of Ashkenaz must now be included among those medieval rabbinic thinkers who sought to supplement their Talmudism with other forms of spirituality or knowledge such as philosophy and Kabbalah. This development constitutes a significant shift in our view of medieval Jewish intellectual history. ¶

Notes and Queries cont'd

idea of the process of diffusion of this text and to examine the conditions of its circulation. Preliminary results show that in the earliest period of its copying (the oldest manuscripts found are dated from the beginning of the XIIIth century) the *Ars notoria* spread essentially in the north of Italy (more precisely in Bologna) and travelled outward from there by independent routes.

After an analysis of this quantitative data, the second part of my thesis will be devoted to the description of the known manuscripts, with the objective of learning what filiations existed between its different manuscripts and versions, and understanding how the text was transformed by owners over the long

term. The identification of the different versions of the *Ars notoria* will also allow me to prepare a critical edition from them. Ultimately the study of the oldest manuscripts should allow me (in relation to other sources like Gervase of Tilbury's *Otia imperialia*) to offer some preliminary hypotheses about the origin of this magical art.

In the last part of my thesis I will examine the content of the different versions in an attempt to understand what kind of ritual magic it is. I will focus on its theurgical nature (which in my view partly explains its success, since its aspect is orthodox, and it has no implications of demonic involvement), and on its goals: the increase of memory and the infusion of scholastic knowl-

edge. I will also describe the different rituals and analyse their distinctive elements (ascetic precepts, latin prayers, figures or *notae*, angel names and *verba mistica*, etc.), and compare them with those of other theurgical or necromantic texts ascribed to Solomon. Finally, I will try to learn more about the practitioners of this art (did they all belong to what Richard Kieckhefer called the 'clerical underworld'?), and to delve into the critical viewpoints of the theologians and the ways in which they tried to undermine the legitimacy of this ambiguous magical practice. I hope that this study, made under the direction of Professor Colette Beaune and in collaboration with Jean-Patrice Boudet and which will be finished in 2003 or 2004, may help to lay to

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rest the widespread opinions about the marginality of magic in medieval society.

Benedek Láng, Central European University (Budapest), *Readers of Magical Texts and Handbooks in Central Europe (Fifteenth Century)*

My doctoral dissertation, to be defended at the Central European University (Budapest) in May 2003, as the fruit of research carried out in the manuscript collections of Central Europe, has a double objective. Firstly I provide a catalogue and an analysis of the extant texts of learned magic (belonging to the fields of natural, image and ritual magic, as well as to those of alchemy and divination), and secondly I characterize the circle of those persons who can be related – as scribes, owners, readers, practitioners or authors – to these magical texts. I also attempt to answer the question of why these sources were copied or written, and whether the magical procedures were put into practice or belonged to a pure “academic interest” on the

part of the collectors.

While the texts which have survived from medieval Poland, Bohemia and Hungary are usually mere reproductions of the well known hermetic, divinatory and ritual material, in some cases – such as the royal prayer book of Wladislas, which incorporates crystallomancy, and long paragraphs of the *Liber visionum* of John of Morigny (see the previous issue of the Newsletter) and an alchemical tract presented as a Christian mass, written by Nicolaus Melchior – they constitute highly original works.

Besides identifying a few examples of monastic magic in Brno and Trebon, I have found that texts of learned magic were copied and collected primarily in courtly and university contexts. I analyzed some instructive cases of courtiers practicing magical methods, such as the crystallomantic treasure hunts of Henry the Czech, and the *Bellifortis* by Conrad Kyeser, a famous manual on military technology and magical warfare. The greatest number of tracts, however, appear in the codices of the masters of the newly founded Central European

universities, especially in the milieu of the chair of astrology in Krakow. One of the first (and the only illustrated) version of the *Picatrix*, two of the four extant copies of the *Liber runarum* (a text on the use of magical runes for the purposes of astral magic), a thirteenth-century *Liber vaccae*, and a variety of other magical works may be found in the late medieval professorial libraries of Krakow and Prague. While in most cases the written evidence is not sufficient to tell whether the magical instructions were only read and copied or even followed, a few sources involve clear indications regarding their actual use.

It appears that the readers of magic texts in Central Europe are neither semi-literate and self-made magicians, nor anonymous university members who failed to find useful or permanent employment. They benefited from the tolerant milieu of the Central European universities and courts, and belonged to a higher and more respected intellectual stratum than that to which the expression “underworld of learning” might seem to refer. €

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Societas Magica will be sponsoring four sessions at the 39th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, May 6-9, 2004.

Session topics are:

1. Philosophical and Theological Views on Magic in the 14th Century (co-sponsored with the Fourteenth-Century Society)
2. Magical Diagrams, Figures, Images and Talismans
3. The Sorcerer as Mountebank: Magic that Works, Magic that Doesn't
4. Ritual Theory and Ritual Practice in Magic

Paper proposals are welcomed from all scholars engaged in pertinent areas of research. Please send abstracts and queries about the sessions to Claire Fanger (cfanger@bmts.com). Abstracts should not be more than a page in length. Deadline for proposals is September 15, 2003.

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