

Achieving Invisibility and Having Sex with Spirits: Six Operations from an English Magic Collection ca. 1600

Frank Klaassen
University of Saskatchewan

Katrina Bens
University of Victoria

The magic operations presented here are curiosities for a variety of reasons, many of which coalesce around a single question: why would someone write them down? And since they represent a long-standing tradition, why would they have been copied and preserved long enough for the scribe to find them? Some forms of magic probably had subjectively convincing results that motivated their practitioners to preserve them and pass them on to others.¹ But that an operator could achieve subjectively convincing invisibility seems very unlikely. Implausibility is arguably a common characteristic of magic: why would one pursue by magic what one could gain without much trouble in other ways? Other examples from the collection from which these rituals are drawn include seduction of women, invariable success at fishing, and assured gains in gambling. Invisibility is only the least plausible of an implausible lot. This quality reminds us that, whatever drove the preservation and copying of these texts, it need not have been a series of experimental successes. The fantastic will have an appeal no matter how improbable, but, in addition to this, a combination of factors evidently motivated the scribe to write these operations down, including the texts' believability as magic, masculine wish fulfillment, their value as entertainments, and a sixteenth-century fascination with fairies.

¹ On achieving subjectively convincing experiences of the numinous through exercises in

One element that would have made the piece attractive was that the magic was credible in the sense that it adhered to the general form of medieval and renaissance magical works.² The idea that magical properties inhered in nature and could be derived from animals was common, and books listing the sorts of short “secrets” or “experiments” that appear here circulated in manuscript and print.³ The longer pieces also reflect common assumptions about magic. They begin with the usual preparations associated with medieval ritual magic such as abstinence and bathing. The structure of the conjurations follows traditional form, including an invocation or call, a charge or command to the spirit, and a licence for the spirit to depart.⁴ Like all works of necromantic magic, they assume that duly upright Christians have the power to command demons in the name of God, as in exorcism. The use of Latin for conjurations was almost uniform prior to the Reformation and common afterward. And if invisibility seems to us an implausible goal, it was certainly common enough in medieval collections of magic. The combination of shorter operations with longer conjuring pieces was also common.⁵ So in a variety of ways the texts would have appeared to be credible parts of the genre.

The experiments listed here probably are not original creations of the scribe. All likely derive from earlier sources and may be considered products of a long-standing selection process. For example, an operation similar to the first one presented here appears in Reginald Scot’s *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, attesting to a broader textual tradition.⁶ The scribe must also have drawn upon a conjuring manual since (as we shall see) he was not competent enough in Latin to have made up the conjurations himself. The texts also reflect much earlier traditions. From antiquity, birds commonly appear as elements in operations for invisibility. Similarly, the use of eyes or the blinding of a bird or other animal are common.⁷ Lore on rings and stones of invisibility also evidently draws on

² This might usefully be compared with the construction of truth in early science. See Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

³ The *Secreti Alberti* sometimes known as the *Book of Secrets* attributed to Albertus Magnus, for example, lists a wide variety of similar short descriptions of the powers of plants, stones, and animals. Albertus Magnus, *The Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus of the Virtues of Herbs, Stones, and Certain Beasts, Also a Book of the Marvels of the World*, ed. Michael R. Best and Frank H. Brightman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973). See also William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁴ For an example of a late medieval conjuring manual, see Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer’s Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997). For the relationship of conjuring to exorcism, see 144–49.

⁵ For a discussion of the magic of illusions, see *ibid.*, 42–68. For a discussion of the three operations for invisibility in the Munich Handbook, see 59–61. For example, of the experiments cited in the Munich Handbook above, two are relatively short (Nos. 21 and 45), and one is a longer operation (No. 11).

⁶ For a discussion of the relationship of this experiment to Scot, see below.

⁷ The use of eyes appears to be a form of sympathetic magic. The reasons for the use of birds are less clear, except perhaps that they are creatures of the air, the medium through which sight is transmitted. In the Munich Handbook, one experiment employs

traditions extending back to antiquity, and the notion that birds can fetch or somehow produce magical items is well attested.⁸ Although less common, similar power is attributed to ants.⁹ As we shall see, the text also draws upon common elements in fairy lore.

The notion that abstinence or control of sensual and sexual impulses might make one more magically powerful is omnipresent in medieval ritual magic and, if muted, appears in these pieces.¹⁰ Although the requirement to avoid “H & G” in the first ritual is obscure, it probably initially involved avoidance of women or sexual impurity in general. The need for virgin wax, a clean location, clean clothes, bread made with good wheat, and a cleansing bath before operating reflect these assumptions as well. The requirement that the operator not accept food or wine from the spirits in the second piece also suggests the value of self-control or even asceticism, as he is supposed to content himself with bread and water. The strange coincidence of these sorts of assumptions with prurient goals also commonly occurs in necromantic manuals. In fact, the last operation epitomizes this strange opposition by hinting at the possibility that the magician can have sex with one of the conjured spirits! It might be that the ritual actions and resulting states were understood to have a kind of mechanical efficacy, independent of the intent of the operator. But in the end, this seeming contradiction cannot entirely be explained away.

These texts might also have been attractive or entertaining as masculine fantasies. The collection from which these passages are drawn was copied by a single, sloppy hand and graced with an artless title page reading “Of Love, of Kardes, Dies, and Tables, and Other Consaytes.” The constituent magic operations betray a set of rakish or adolescent sensibilities with a focus on women, sex, gambling, fishing, hunting, and sneaking about in an invisible state.¹¹ Given this context, one might well read the longer invisibility

a bird (No. 45). Another (No. 21) involves killing a cat, cutting out its eyes, and placing seeds in the eye cavities. The Greek *Kyranides*, I, 15, contains an operation for invisibility involving a ring and bird eyes.

⁸ In Plato’s *Republic*, II, 359a–60d, the Gyges invisibility story includes a ring of invisibility. Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, 37: 60, mentions a stone of invisibility identified as “heliotrope” and described as having a “leek-green colour, streaked with blood-red veins.” Albertus Magnus, *The Book of Secrets*, 26–27, also mentions heliotrope but not in conjunction with invisibility; instead, the stone *opthalmus*, or opal (Greek root “eye”), has the invisibility potential (for heliotrope, see 35–36). They are repeated by Henry Cornelius Agrippa in *De occulta philosophia*, I, 13, 23, and 27. Kittredge cites a report of a stone of invisibility “ejected” by the pet raven of the Earl of Arundel. George Lyman Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 176. On swallows fetching magical items, see Pliny, *The Natural History*, 25: 50 and 37: 56. Pliny, 33: 4, also reports with scepticism a ring of invisibility. On stones found in swallows’ nests, see Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia*, I, 47.

⁹ The early-seventeenth-century necromantic collection by Arthur Gauntlet contains a short section on operations for invisibility, one of which employs an anthill. London, British Library, Sloane 3851, f. 135.

¹⁰ See, for example, Claire Fanger, “Virgin Territory: Purity and Divine Knowledge in Late Medieval Catoptromantic Texts,” *Aries* 5, 2 (2005): 200–25.

¹¹ London, British Library, Sloane 3850, ff. 143r–66v. The collection includes operations to make oneself invisible, to detect pregnancy or virginity, to guarantee conception, to

operations (and even the entire magic collection) as a fantasy of male power. The magician commands beautiful virgins by gesturing with his sceptre and knows how to control his desires to sexually conquer them. Many other pre-modern ritual magic texts reflect similar sorts of sensibilities, and this mythologized masculinity would also have been attractive to a certain portion of the population.¹² Additionally, one might regard this section as analogous to portions of medieval magic manuals in which the authors engage in fantastic bragging about their powers.¹³

These experiments also served literary functions. A general appetite in the sixteenth century for “wonders” of this kind can be illustrated by the popularity of books of secrets. Although many books of this kind included genuinely useful craft information, a large number evidently responded to popular interest in curious and sensational material and were thus as much a literature of entertainment as practical magic books.¹⁴ That the scribe referred to the secrets as “consayts” and attempted to make the title page look like a printed frontispiece strongly suggest that he associated this collection with that larger literature. The works in this collection also echo late medieval literary motifs, further suggesting literary sensibilities. Mysterious but attractive women who are really demons or fairies and whose supplications one must avoid are common in British vernacular literature, particularly in Celtic literature. That they might involve complex tests of character also suggests these sources, though such tests typically do not yield gifts but allow the protagonist to avoid danger or loss of honour.¹⁵ So, in part at least, this ritual might derive its resonance for readers from literature. The line between magic and literature or storytelling was not always clear.¹⁶

make others dance (naked or clothed), to win at shooting (as well as the aforementioned gambling), to find or identify thieves, and to catch birds, fish, or rabbits. Operations for garnering the love of a woman make up the vast majority of the text. There are more than forty individual love operations throughout the manuscript (ff. 147r–52v are entirely devoted to this subject). Most are “secrets” or “charms” involving the body parts and fluids of the operator and of various birds and animals and sometimes parchment, ink, apples, or wax figures. The operator harnessed the inherent magical and astrological properties of each ingredient to ensure a result sympathetic to his wishes. Operations for purposes other than love and sex are in the minority. The six operations for invisibility in this edition are placed together at the beginning of the text. The last several folios of the manuscript (ff. 162v–65r) feature magical charts, figures, and diagrams. One notable feature is the use of a simple cipher, replacing letters with numbers.

¹² For more on masculinity and pre-modern ritual magic, see Frank Klaassen, “Learning and Masculinity in Manuscripts of Ritual Magic of the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 38, 1 (2007): 49–76.

¹³ See *ibid.*, 69–74.

¹⁴ See Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*.

¹⁵ Lady Bertilak, who tempts Gawain in *Gawain and the Green Knight*, is perhaps the best known example. She tests Gawain’s good character, and his next-to-complete success makes possible his survival. The danger of such mysterious women is also attested by the revelation at the end of the poem that Morgan le Fay has contrived the entire affair.

¹⁶ For a discussion of the early modern fusion of literary and magical traditions, see Elizabeth Butler, *Ritual Magic* (1949; reprint, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 295–317.

This combination also marks a period of change in the conception and practice of magic in the latter part of the sixteenth century driven by a variety of factors: changing religious ideas resulting from the Reformation, an expanding *vernacular* literature of learned magic (print and manuscript), new scientific ideas, and an extensive printed literature of anti-magical invective.¹⁷ The emulation of printed literature by the scribe of this collection is one example. A set of elements in the last operation also highlights how learned magic was wound together with literature and popular traditions in new and unusual ways. The last text concludes by implying that the operator is to have sex with the spirit that he has just conjured. Given that a witch's pact with the devil was often understood to be sealed with a sexual act, it seems incautious at best to have sex with a spirit of any kind, and the notion that a spirit might be a virgin is even more peculiar.¹⁸ This unusual operation (including the sex) derives from a late medieval manual known as the *Thesaurus spirituum* that was generally dedicated to more conventional demon conjuring.¹⁹ Necromantic manuals might offer to transport the woman of your choice to your bedroom, but this operation is the only instance of which we are aware in learned magic in which the magical ritual could result in sex with undefined spirits.²⁰ So why did the scribe select this operation out of the host of other more conventional ones available both in the *Thesaurus spirituum* and elsewhere?

We have already discussed masculine fantasy and the power of a good story as possible motivations but to these we can also add the peculiarly Elizabethan fascination with fairies and fairy lore. The ritual accords well with popular fairy lore according to which one might take a fairy wife who was actually female (rather than the illusory sexuality of a demon) and with whom one might even produce children.²¹ It evinces a range of other commonalities with these traditions as well.²² Most tellingly, the fascination with fairies is in evidence

¹⁷ On the relationship between magic and science in the sixteenth century, see Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*. On the transformation of ritual magic under the influence of science, see Frank Klaassen, "Ritual Invocation and Early Modern Science: The Skrying Experiments of Humphrey Gilbert," in *Invoking Angels*, ed. Claire Fanger (Penn State University Press, 2012), 341-66. On the relationship among the Reformation, anti-magical invective, and learned magic, see Frank Klaassen, "The Return of Stolen Goods: Reginald Scot, Religious Controversy, and a Late Sixteenth-Century Manuscript of Magic," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 1, 2 (2006): 135-77.

¹⁸ Necromantic manuals frequently seek sexual gratification by magical means but almost invariably aim to bring willing women of the magician's choosing to his room or to make them fall in love with the magician. See Richard Kieckhefer, "Erotic Magic in Medieval Europe," in *Sex in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, ed. Joyce E. Salisbury (New York: Garland, 1991), 30-55. On operations for sexual gratification, see Klaassen, "Learning and Masculinity," 61-64.

¹⁹ See for example London, British Library, Sloane 3853, 36r-38r.

²⁰ Kieckhefer, "Erotic Magic in Medieval Europe."

²¹ Such stories are common indeed. See, for example, John Rhys, *Celtic Folklore* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), 45-46, 54, and 61.

²² The operation's requirement that one not eat food offered by the virgins might reflect the notion that eating fairy food is dangerous. *Ibid.*, 290, 691. Its attention to details such as which side one was to lie on or the requirement not to ask the spirit if she is

elsewhere in contemporary magic literature. A very similar operation in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* and a seventeenth-century manuscript explicitly refer to the women as fairies.²³ Having sex with fairies is also the explicit target of another version of this ritual in a manuscript in the Folger Shakespeare Library.²⁴ K.M. Briggs has identified the occurrence of some elements of these rituals, particularly the offering of a meal at a specially arranged table and the consequent arrival of three persons or fairies in thirteenth-century French literature and later popular magic traditions.²⁵ This regular incorporation of fairy lore into necromancy seems peculiar to the late sixteenth century and is attested by other examples.²⁶ The choice of this unconventional experiment was evidently related to a growing written literature that discussed fairy magic in association with ritual magic and the considerable fascination that fairies held for Elizabethan writers.²⁷ In short, the shift in emphasis it involves subtly illustrates the transformation of the medieval traditions under the influence of peculiarly sixteenth-century preoccupations.

The Relationship of This MS to Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*

The first operation for invisibility is almost identical to an operation in Scot's 1584 *Discoverie of Witchcraft*,²⁸ an anti-magical/anti-Catholic work containing innumerable examples of what Scot regarded as ludicrous religious or magical

human might reflect the peculiar conditions imposed by fairies upon humans. For example, if a man scolds or strikes his fairy wife three times, she will leave him, never to return. See, for example, *ibid.*, 673.

²³ Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, XV, 10. For a discussion of the fairy operation in eMus 173, see K.M. Briggs, "Some Seventeenth-Century Books of Magic," *Folklore* 64, 4 (1953): 445–62.

²⁴ Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, X. d. 234. For an edition and a discussion of this version, see Frederika Bain, "The Binding of the Fairies: Four Spells," *Preternature* 1, 2 (2012): 323–54.

²⁵ Briggs, "Some Seventeenth-Century Books of Magic," 461.

²⁶ For other examples of ritual magic works involving fairies, see London, British Library, Sloane 1727; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 1406; Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, X. d. 234; and Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, V. b. 26. For a brief discussion of this phenomenon, see Frank Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic: Illicit Learned Magic 1300–1600* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2013), Chapter 6.

²⁷ On fairies in Elizabethan literature, see Minor White Latham, *The Elizabethan Fairies* (New York: Octagon Books, 1972); K.M. Briggs, *The Anatomy of Puck: An Examination of Fairy Beliefs among Shakespeare's Contemporaries and Successors* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959); and K.M. Briggs, *The Fairies in English Tradition and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967). For a discussion of the connection between necromancy and fairies in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, see Barbara A. Mowat, "Prospero's Book," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 52, 1 (2001): 1–33. On fairies and their association with ritual magic in print, see the passages from Scot cited here. See also *The Examination of John Walsh before Maister Thomas Williams, Commissary to the Reuerend Father in God William Bishop of Excester, Vpon Certayne Interrogatories Touchyng Wytchcrafte and Sorcerye, in the Presence of Diuers Ge[N]Tlemen and Others. The .Xxiii. of August. 1566* (London: Iohn Awdely, 1566).

²⁸ See XV, 10.

practices. Both evidently draw upon a common prior text and are not directly related.²⁹ Scot does not seem to have copied his version from ours. Since he was intent on exposing the ridiculous side of magical operations, he would certainly have included the second, longer invisibility operation as well, with all its ludicrous and lascivious details. Various aspects of the text also tend to confirm that Scot did not copy from Sloane 3850.³⁰ It is also unlikely that our scribe copied from Scot. Although a manuscript source *might* conceivably have given rise to the numerous mistranscriptions to which the scribe was prone, the reasonably readable editions of *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* would likely have given rise to a more accurate copy. Furthermore, the pattern of expunged words on line 96 makes clear that the scribe jumped up a line in the text from which he was copying. More significantly, the Scot sections do not contain Latin passages, and the scribe would have had to invent them. The errors in the Latin passages below suggest difficulties in expanding Latin contractions in his source manuscript rather than in Latin prose composition.³¹

²⁹ Several segments correspond word for word, suggesting that they were drawn from a common textual source. In both versions, the preparations are the same, including identical mentions of “virgin wax” and “fair water.” The second part of the invocation is identical (spelling aside) in both texts: our scribe writes “corthe, corthea, cortheos, milia, aeillia, and cebillim,” while Scot has “Sorthie + Sorthia + Sorthios + Milia + Achilia + Sibylia.” Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, XV, 10. The spirits that appear are also conjured with similar language. Our scribe writes “by the virtue of Jesus and by the virtue of his flesh and of his blood that he took of our lady St Mary, of his birth, of his death, of his resurrection and by the virtue of the trinity.” Scot has “by the virtue of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the virtue of his flesh and precious blood that he took of our blessed lady the virgin, and by all the holy company in heaven.” The next phrase is almost identical in both versions: “one of them will put a ring upon thy finger, wherewith/by therewich thou shalt/mayest go invisible.” The operation concludes similarly in both texts. Both have “When thou hast this token or ring on thy finger, look in a glass,” followed by “thou shalt not see thyself” (Scot) and “if thou mayest not see thyself, thou hast [spoken] well” (our scribe).

³⁰ Scot’s versions of the magical names are either common ones or credible variations of them: “Panthon + Graton + Muriton + Bisecognaton + Siston + Diaton + Maton + Tetragrammaton + Agla + Agarion + Tegra + Pentessaron + Tendicata.” The scribe of Sloane 3850 spelled his versions of names haphazardly, and most of them are unrecognizable: “paton, craton, muciton, biso, jvcoquay, colca, palazecam, terdialary.” It would be surprising if Scot was able to interpret and correct them to proper forms. Furthermore, while the first four names are the same (spelling aside), four are different, and Scot includes five more than our scribe. Scot would have had no reason to substitute new names when our scribe had already provided him with perfectly workable (if garbled) ones, evidence of just how corrupt and corruptible the operation was. Scot includes a passage invoking “angels, archangels, thrones, dominations, principats, potestates, virtutes, cherubim and seraphim,” and later he inserts astrological symbols, none of which appears in Sloane 3850. He calls the spirits who appear “fairy sisters,” while our scribe calls them “sisters” only. The sequence of events in the operations also differs. Scot would have had no cause to alter the order of the operation if he was copying from Sloane 3850. See Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, XV, 10.

³¹ It is of course conceivable that the scribe copied his operation from a text descended from Scot’s version; however, if this is the case, then such a source must have been at some remove from its ancestor in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*.

Editorial and Translation Conventions

The scribe did not have the necessary skills in Latin to copy sections in that language from his base manuscript accurately, and mistakes in spelling and inflection have rendered substantial segments nonsensical.³² So as not to give a false impression of the scribe's Latinity, and to accurately represent the Latin passages as they appear, we have left the original corrupt spellings in place and offered suggestions in square brackets of how the original source text might have read. Where we suggest an alternative ending, it is preceded with a hyphen (e.g., *probatim [-um]* suggests a replacement of "im" with "um"). The translation is based in part on our conjectures about what the original Latin text might have been and is thus something of an abstraction.³³

We have modernized the punctuation and capitalization throughout and have silently expanded standard or obvious abbreviations. The catchphrase at the bottom of 145v has been omitted. Words expunged in the text have been indicated in the apparatus by strike through. Latin phrases appearing in the English sections we have translated in the notes, repeated phrases only once.

³² Perhaps the most grievous example is his extension of English morphological habits to the Latin segments, where occasionally he adds a final *e*, resulting in peculiar non-words such as *fiate*.

³³ We are indebted to Michael Klaassen and Claire Fanger for their suggestions in untangling these sections.

The Manuscript

Shelfmark:	London, British Library, Sloane 3850, ff. 143–66.
Material:	Quarto. Paper. The folios containing the larger collection from which these texts are drawn form a discrete set of gatherings.
General Contents:	The codex was evidently compiled in the seventeenth century from previously independent sets of gatherings. It is composed entirely of a variety of magical works, principally works of conjuring such as the <i>Thesaurus spirituum</i> (ff. 117–29) but also including a selection of astrological image magic texts such as <i>De imaginibus</i> of Thabit ibn Qurra (ff. 182–87).
Script:	Folios 143–66 were written by a single messy secretary hand of the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. The hand appears nowhere else in the codex.

The Text

f. 144r

Experimentum visionis pro Invisibilit[atem] omni[-e] tempore. In nomine patris et filij et speritis sancti. Amen.

Experiment of vision for invisibility for any time. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

5 Go to a place that is bothe secrete and honiste and a clene chamber ther in vpon the ground in³⁴ som delle from folkes disolat. And kepe thee from .h. and .G. xv dayes before. Then make thee naked and make a candill of vergyn waxe and light it. Then make a fyer of clen char colle and lighte it with thy candill in the³⁵ mydeste of the chamber. Then³⁶ take fayer walter that ronithe towards the easte³⁷ in a pane and sette it overe the fyre and washe thy selfe ther with. But firste say thes wordes, goyng a bovt the fyre thre tymes hovldyng in thy ryght hand

15 the wax candill: paton, craton, muciton, biso, jvcoquay, colca, palazecam, terdialary. Then say thes wordes: corthe, corthea, cortheos, milia, aeillia, and cebillim.³⁸ In nomine patris et fillij et

³⁴ and] and

³⁵ in the] in the in the

³⁶ then] then then

³⁷ In Christian spiritual geography, the East is the most holy of the points on the compass. The clearest example is the orientation of churches toward the east.

³⁸ These sorts of divine names are common to most learned magic in the Latin West. In some cases, they appear to be the product of scribal imagination; in other cases, they have an ancient lineage. For a useful discussion, see David Porreca, "Divine Names: A

speriti sancti.³⁹ Amen. I requier you iij sistres in the
20 nam of the father of the sonn and of the holy goste, iij
parsons in tranaty, that⁴⁰ ye appear bodyly hear be
for me in this chambre without any defrad or decayt
and brynge with you bodly here⁴¹ to me a token through⁴²
the which I may be invysibell when I wovld. In
25 nomine patres et felii et spretyvs sancti. Amen. That
done, washe thy⁴³ bodye in the water and goe
in to thy bede, being clean and mad befor

f. 144v

in that chamber and lay thy ryght arme out of the bede
and a⁴⁴ kerchife or a silke band befor thy face or
30 eyes and fear not for thou shalt haue no harm nor
case to feare. Then the iij sistres, ryghte fayre
wemen, [will appear] to thy syght all a rayd in white. On of them
will pute a ryngge upon thy fynger by the which thou
mayest go invysibell. And then say thes wordes: millia,
35 afillia, I require you by the vertu of Iesus and by
the vertue of his fleshe and of his blode that
he toke of our Lady St Mary, of his berthe, of his
deathe, of his riesserection, and by the vertue of the
trenaty that ye be obedante in the nam of god and
40 at eche tyme that I calle ye be redy to bryng
me a token of invisibellnes. If they com
not the firste⁴⁵ nyght, reqvyer them the .2. and
the .3. if ned be and they will com without
dout. And when ye hast this token or ryngge
45 on thy fynger loke in a glase and if thou
mayest not se thy selfe thou hast spead well.
And when thou wilt⁴⁶ be invisibele, put it
on the fynger that was put on first, and at evry newe mone
renew it with the words aforsayd, for after the firste tym that
50 thou hast it thou shalt never fayle of it. And begyn this

Cross-Cultural Comparison (*Papyri Braecae Magicae, Picatrix, Munich Handbook*),”
Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft 5, 1 (2010): 17–29, and Julien Véronèse, “God’s Names
and Their Uses in the Books of Magic Attributed to King Solomon,” *Magic, Ritual, and
Witchcraft* 5, 1 (2010): 30–50.

³⁹ In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti = In the name of the Father and of the Son and
of the Holy Spirit.

⁴⁰ that] that ~~the~~

⁴¹ here] her

⁴² through] thought

⁴³ thy] thy ~~selfe~~

⁴⁴ a] a ~~if~~

⁴⁵ firste] firste ~~tym~~

⁴⁶ wilt] wilt ~~worke~~

worke with the bignyng of the new mon, for then it is best
workyng. ⁴⁷ Pro batim. ⁴⁸

f. 145r

To go invisibele

Go to a swalloes neste when she haue yovng ons be-
tween nine and a leven. Put out ther eyes and come
55 agayn the second day at the sam our and you shall fynd
a marvelose stone of sundry colores. And take on of
them and put in your mouthe and locke vpon
on side fastely and it will begyne to loue you.
And take a pece of the neste in the bignes of the .3. stones
60 and lay in the neste and com agayn the third day
and you shall fynd a nother ston. Et fiat. ⁴⁹ /

Alitere ⁵⁰

Locke in a lapwinkes ⁵¹ neaste and you
shall fynd a ston [with] which you may
go in visibelle. Et fiate. ⁵² /

Alitere

65 Go to a pesmares ⁵³ hill ⁵⁴ and take a gallon of
hote scolding water and povre it on the hill
and shortly go a gayn and thou shalt
fynd a stone of dyvres collors. Take it
and bare it in thy hand. Et fiate.

f. 145v

To go invysibelle

⁴⁷ Operations situated within lunar months or taking into account the mansions of the moon are common in magic literature. At the same time, the Christian calendar, particularly calculation of the date of Easter, also depended upon lunar months, so it is not clear what might have motivated lunar elements in magic. On lunar astrology, see Charles Burnett, "Lunar Astrology: The Varieties of Texts Using Lunar Mansions, with Emphasis on *Jafar Indus*," *Micrologus* 12 (2004): 43–133.

⁴⁸ Probatum = Proven.

⁴⁹ Et fiat = And let it be done.

⁵⁰ Aliter = Another. Following English morphological habits, the scribe adds a final e, corrupting the Latin.

⁵¹ Lapwink commonly signified various members of the plover family and the hoopoe.

⁵² Et fiat = And let it be done. Following English morphological habits, the scribe adds a final e, corrupting the Latin.

⁵³ pesmares = ants.

⁵⁴ pesmares] pesmares ~~neste~~

70 Go to a swalloes neste on Thursday mornynge
 when she haue younge ons and breake all
 ther legdes and put out ther eyes and bynd
 ther legdes with wergen wholes wyres strynges
 and let them so remayn. Then the swalowe will
 75 com and see them so tyed together. She will
 ferche a stone that will make them see
 agayn and also loose ther legdes. Then vpon
 the nexte thvrsday if thou seke, thou
 mayest haue a ston in the neste.
 80 Take it out with thy ryghte hand and
 thou⁵⁵ mayest by it goe in visibell. Et fiat.

To go invisibele

In the day and hovre of Venus⁵⁶ make ij. circles that on
 may tovche the other so as thou mayeste goe betwen
 out of on in to the other. In on crcle make a faire bed
 85 with new washed shetes, swet and well smyllinge. All
 so thou moste hau a tabell to the lenght of iij. cvbites
 and in bredthe a cvbit and a halfe. Let the fette be of
 laurell and the tablle of swete wode and theron a clene
 clothe newe washed with roswater and dryed and layd
 90 thear on iij newe knyves and a new coptefull of
 watter and fyne breade of pure goode wheat flour.

f. 146r

And sette so the tabell that the mydeste stande in the crcle.
 Then streche thy septer towards the sovthe⁵⁷ and say
 Coniuro Vos Spiritus, Michel, Chicam, et Burfee, virgines, per
 95 infinitam dei patris potentiam et per infinita[m] filij
 sapientiam et per infinitam Sanctus Spiritus clementiam et per Beatissimam⁵⁸
 Virginem Mariam et per omnis celi miliciam et per
 tremendum [-am] diem judicij. Coniuro et vos virgines per omnes
 spiritus Jovis et hoc sigillum Jovis qu[od] ord[in]o et per eman-

I conjure you spirits, Michel, Chicam, and
 Burfee, virgins, by the infinite potency of
 god the father and by the infinite wisdom of
 the son and by the infinite mercy of the holy
 spirit and by the most Blessed Virgin Mary
 and by the soldiery of the whole of heaven

⁵⁵ thou] then

⁵⁶ This would generally mean on Friday and either at sunrise or the eighth hour after sunrise. Hours were sometimes understood as twelve equal divisions between sunrise and sunset. Sometimes they were understood to be of constant length, equal divisions of the twenty-four-hour day. See Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia*, II.34.

⁵⁷ Operations commonly begin with prayers to the east. That this one begins in the south might be evidence that this is a fragment of a larger operation. It might also be that, as demons are being invoked, the operator has to turn in the direction over which they dominate. For an example in charms, see Lea Olsan, "The Inscription of Charms in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts," *Oral Tradition*, 14/2 (1999): 407.

⁵⁸ Beatissimam] Beatissimam ~~dei patris~~

100 ationes sanguinis a latr[i] [a latere] Jesu Christi crucifixi
 et per cissuram veli templi et per obscuracionem
 sol[is] in eius morte et per mortuorum desureccionem [suscitationem et]
 eius morte gloriosam ressureccionem et per virginitatem
 et⁵⁹ humilitatem et fecunditatem beatissime
 105 dei genitrix [genetricis] et per omnia nomina sua et per nomina domini
 Iesu Christi et per ineffabile nomen quod in
 ceptro meo hic sculptu[m] est et in anulo meo mirifice
 insignitem[-um], quatenus mihi invisibilitatis [visibilitate?] veniat
 et anulum invisibilitatis mihi aportari[-e] festinetis
 110 et mihi solacium qu[od] poteritis in omnibus preparatis et
 sine ficcoriem [fictorie] calacia [fallacia] aut mora mihi celeriter
 apperiat et meum velle eum [etiam] effectue perficere
 non desinetis vt vna ex vobis, quem elegere [eligere], in hoc lecto
 sacratissimo quiescens [quiescere se] festinet vt et vbique
 115 terrar[um] [terrae] sciant populi qua mirabile et gloriosam
 sit nomen suum sanctissimum [sanctissimum], prestante qui veniat
 Iudicari seculum per ignem. Amen Which sayd iij

and by the fearful day of judgment. I conjure you, virgins, by all the spirits of Jupiter and this sigil of Jupiter [which I ordain?] and by the emanation of blood from the side of Jesus Christ Crucified and by the rending of the veil of the Temple and by the obscuring of the sun at his death and by [his raising of the dead (and)] glorious resurrection, and by the virginity and humility and fecundity of the Blessed Mother of God, and by all of her names, and by the names of lord Jesus Christ and by the ineffable name which was sculpted in my scepter and marvelously marked in my ring, that you come to me visibly and hasten to bring a ring of invisibility to me and that you prepare for me the assuagement which you are able to do in all things prepared, and that without deceit, error, or delay you swiftly appear to me and that you not cease to carry out my will effectively, that one of you, whom you will choose, hasten to rest in this most sacred bed in order that everywhere the people of the world may know how wonderful and glorious is his most holy name, with him furnishing [this] who comes to judge the world by fire. Amen. Which sayd iij

tymes thou shall se .3. fair wemen that shall bryng
 with them most ryall meates and wynd and come

f. 146v

120 to the tabelle. But take hed that thou sit for they⁶⁰ shall
 make thee great chear and cute thy meat and bed ye drynk.
 But yet eate not with them. But thou shalle se one
 of them that is fayrest and she shall make ye no chere.
 Then pryvily put thy cepter to the hight of hir face
 125 and stand in the circle and kisse hir and say to hir⁶¹

this: Coniuro te, virgo, per ceptram et veritatem virtute quorum huc ven-
 istis quatenus mihi data Anulo invisibilitatis
 et ad hunc lectum accedere sine mora festines et
 nuda ibidem quiescas per istud nomen venerabile
 quod hic in ceptro meo cervi [cernis OR gravi] ibidem quoque incens [in anulo]

this: I conjure you, virgin, by the sceptre and the truth by virtue of which you have come here that you hasten to give to me a ring of invisibility and to approach this bed without delay and lie down nude by that venerable

⁵⁹ et] et (something expunged)

⁶⁰ they] thy

⁶¹ hir] thir

et nisi omne solacium que poteris facies, sine fraude vel dampno aut illusionione vel lesura corporali, nec a me recedas quousque licentio[-am] tibi voluero condonari[-e] et te elego in meam voluntatem et astringo horum virtute verborum, precante domino nostro Jesu Christo, qui vivit et regnat cum domino patre in vnitatem spiritus sancte deus per omnia secula seculorum amen.

name which you discern in my sceptre [OR which I carved in my sceptre] and in the same manner also in the ring and, unless you make every assuagement you can without fraud or harm or illusion or bodily wound, that you do not depart from me until I desire to give you the licence and choose you my own volition. And I bind [you] by the power of these words, with the Lord Jesus Christ praying who lives and reigns with Lord the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Then take the ryng of hir ere⁶² thou go to bed for if thou syn with hir or then takest the ryng thou shalt not
140 hau it. Therefor sit downe agayn when thou hast kysed hir and, the coniuration sayd, the iij other will disdayn at it and will eat no more. Then lysans them⁶³ and they shall go in peas. Then put the ryng on the fynger named medicus⁶⁴ or then licens them.⁶⁵ And when thy
145 be past from thee, go naked to bed. Ly on the righte side of the bed and she on the lyfte sid of the bed and do what yow wilt. But aske note whether she be a Spirit or a woman, for then she well spaeke no mor to the. And she shall do thee no harm. Then lycans hir in the mornyng to go and she
150 will com agayn when thou callst hir.
Probatim.

⁶² ere] or

⁶³ them] then

⁶⁴ I.e., medius = middle.

⁶⁵ them] then