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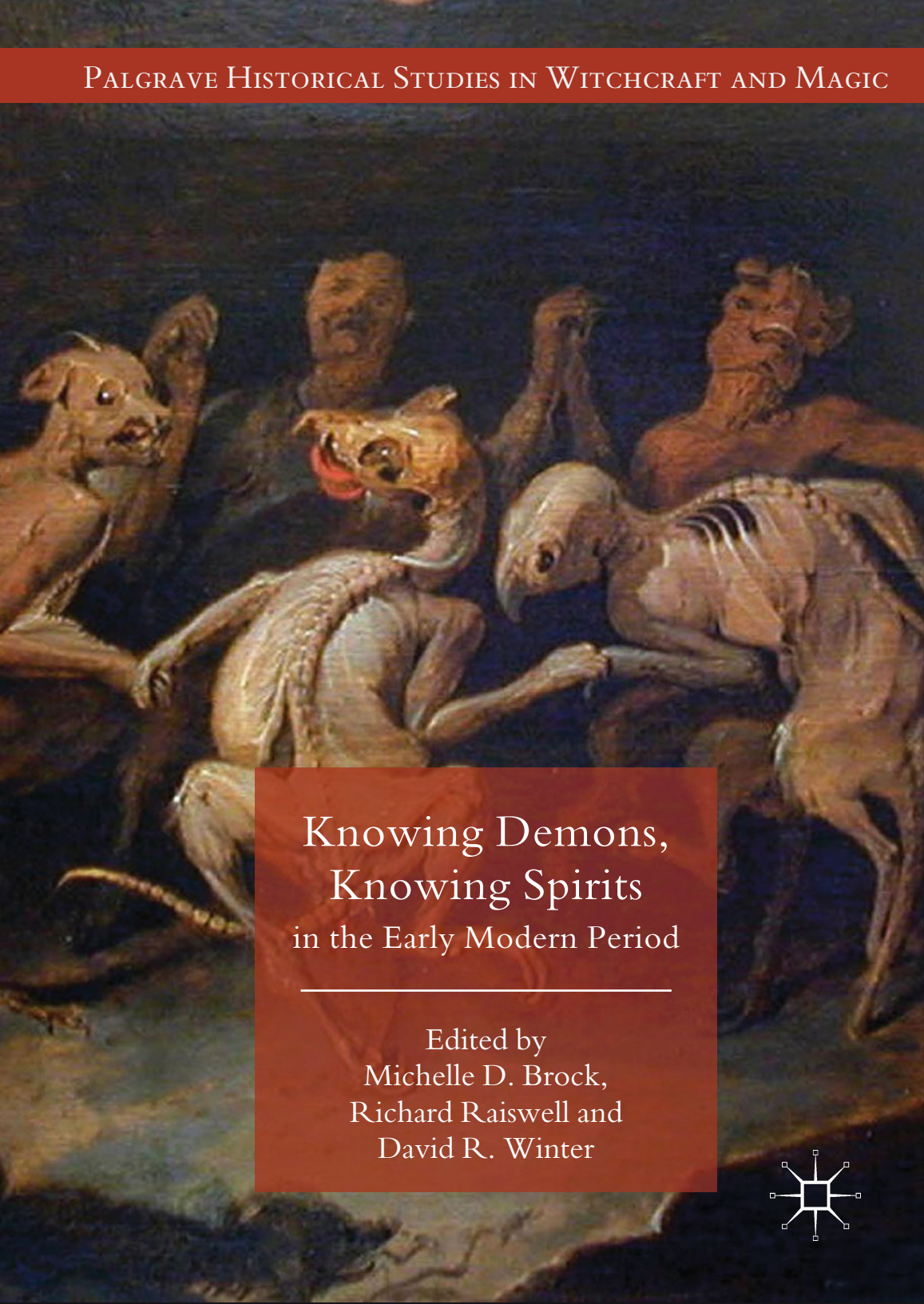

Knowing Demons, Knowing Spirits

in the Early Modern Period

Edited by
Michelle D. Brock,
Richard Raiswell and
David R. Winter

Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic

The history of European witchcraft and magic continues to fascinate and challenge students and scholars. There is certainly no shortage of books on the subject. Several general surveys of the witch trials and numerous regional and micro studies have been published for an English-speaking readership. While the quality of publications on witchcraft has been high, some regions and topics have received less attention over the years. The aim of this series is to help illuminate these lesser known or little studied aspects of the history of witchcraft and magic. It will also encourage the development of a broader corpus of work in other related areas of magic and the supernatural, such as angels, devils, spirits, ghosts, folk healing and divination. To help further our understanding and interest in this wider history of beliefs and practices, the series will include research that looks beyond the usual focus on Western Europe and that also explores their relevance and influence from the medieval to the modern period.

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David R. Winter
Editors

Knowing Demons, Knowing Spirits in the Early Modern Period

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In memory of Axel, Hilda and Molly

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Contents

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List of Figures

PART I

Introduction

CHAPTER 1

Theory and Practice in Early Modern Epistemologies of the Preternatural

Michelle D. Brock and David R. Winter

In 1710, the French abbot and polygraph Laurent Bordelon wrote a satire intended to expose the frivolous superstitions of those who read and believed accounts of demons, hobgoblins, fairies, and the like. Entitled *L'histoire des imaginations extravagantes de Monsieur Oufle*, the story centers on the credulous M. Oufle (an anagram of *le fou—the fool*), a merchant who spends his nights reading books of magic, charms, apparitions and divinations, thoughtlessly trusting the veracity of these texts in the face of any rational argument to the contrary. He commissions paintings of magicians and diviners surrounded by hosts of devils, specters, and phantoms in a variety of horrible and ridiculous forms. He fills his bookshelves with writings by some of the leading occultists and spiritologists from the previous century, including those of Cornelius Agrippa, Pierre de Lancre, Henri Bouguet, and Jean Bodin. Immersed in these

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anachronistic, "superstitious" images and texts, Oufle becomes variously convinced that he had been bewitched, transformed into a werewolf, and tormented by devils in the shapes of butterflies that followed him around relentlessly.[1]

Bordelon's *L'histoire*—translated into English the following year as *A History of the Ridiculous Extravagancies of Monsieur Oufle*—was part of the larger corpus of works beginning in the late sixteenth century and proliferating in the early Enlightenment that rejected claims about preter- and supernatural beings maintained largely on the basis of belief, bolstered by a selective and uncritical reading of various printed texts.[2] This point is perhaps most clearly illustrated in Oufle's "Discours sur les Diables," a short tract included in the story, penned, we are told, by the merchant in an attempt to convince his brother—the tellingly named *Noncrede*—of his perfect knowledge of spirits and their marvelous operations in the universe.[3] Here, Oufle cites authorities as diverse as Balthasar Bekker, Martin Delrio, and Johann Wier, alongside Theodoret, Gregory of Nyssa, Apollinarius, Aristotle, and Hesiod—with some strange outliers like Leo Africanus and the Qur'an—to prove a number of popular and ill-reasoned claims about the power of devils: that they can metamorphose into monks, beggars, or lawyers; elm, oak, or frozen trees; dogs, asses, prognosticating caged birds, straw, lettuce leaves, gold; even wheels and whole rivers.[4] M. Oufle reads books much as Menocchio, the Friulian miller, had done more than a century earlier.[5]

At the core of Bordelon's critique of the fictional Oufle, however, was not simply his gullibility or foolish superstition. It was his utter failure even to attempt to understand the beings he encounters in his books. Bordelon wrote at one point that to reason with men like Oufle—to discuss with them rationally the natural philosophical principles their

[1] The work was published in French separately in two volumes, the first published in Amsterdam, the second in Paris later the same year. Laurent Bordelon, *L'histoire des imaginations extravagantes de Monsieur Oufle*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam, 1710); Laurent Bordelon, *L'histoire des imaginations extravagantes de Monsieur Oufle*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1710).

[2] As Bordelon describes the situation, "Leur fort, c'est de croire fortement les opinions les plus extravagantes & les plus bizarres, & de s'y confirmer par les histoires qui leur conviennent." Bordelon, *L'histoire*, 2:7–8.

[3] Ibid., 12.

[4] Ibid., 12–30.

[5] See Carlo Ginzburg's classic *Il formaggio e i vermi: il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1976).

beliefs seem to confound—is to talk with them in a language they do not understand and which they are not inclined to study.[6] Oufle and his kind *knew* spirits only in the sense in which they were reported and described in a literature that was increasingly at odds with the rationalist tenor of the age, with its new modes of evidence gathering and analysis and new conceptions of proof.[7]

But more than this, Abbé Bordelon's text is a lampoon of the beliefs themselves. Most strikingly, perhaps, the text features an engraving by Giuseppe Maria Crespi depicting Oufle viewing the witches' sabbat that borrows heavily from the imagery of the 1613 "Description et Figure du Sabbat des Sorciers" by Jan Ziarnko that accompanied de Lancre's *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et demons*. But while Ziarnko's illustration was intended to make visual some of the horrors recounted by accused witches to de Lancre during his time in the Basque country, Crespy's was intended to depict the vision of a superstition-ridden fool—indeed, to underscore the point, a fool in full regalia stands behind Oufle pushing him forth into the sabbat.[8]

Despite the force of the theologically trained *abbé*'s critique, most Europeans of the early modern era continued to inhabit a spirit-wracked world. Well into the eighteenth century, they largely accepted the premise that nature was alive with spirit activity and that, more than this, their actions could be detected across the breadth of creation.[9] It was a view that was grounded in scripture and refined by many centuries of rumination, belief, and experience. To be sure, the precise nature of these

[6] Ibid., 7.

[7] See James A. T. Lancaster and Richard Raiswell, "Evidence Before Science," in *Evidence in the Age of the New Sciences*, ed. James A. T. Lancaster and Richard Raiswell (London: Springer, forthcoming 2018).

[8] Roland Villeneuve, *La beauté du Diable* (Paris: Pierre Bordas et fils, 1994), 204–5. See also Robert Muchembled, *A History of the Devil from the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Polity, 2003), 169–70.

[9] On the persistence of beliefs in demons and spirits through the eighteenth century, see Owen Davies, *Witchcraft, Magic and Culture, 1736–1951* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Sasha Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World: Ghost Beliefs and Ghost Stories in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007); *Beyond the Witch Trials: Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment Europe*, ed. Owen Davies and Willem de Blécourt (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

beings—demons, angels, fairies, and ghosts—was the subject of many vibrant debates, but their general existence was assumed and experienced by people across the social hierarchy.

While the processes for ascertaining information about spirits could be a complex and deeply fraught matter, the ability to understand their operation became a fundamental element of the many and varied knowledge-making practices of the period. Natural philosophers, magical practitioners, medical specialists, layfolk, and others applied themselves to the task of learning the veritable nature and habits of demons and spirits with earnestness, albeit to different ends. Indeed, what Bordelon's work *does* capture is something of the diversity of approaches to spiritology through M. Oufle's use of a wide variety of sources from different discursive traditions. However, unlike the gullible M. Oufle (whose beliefs were neither cautious nor subtle), a large number of pre-modern Europeans appear to have made meticulous, detailed, and sometimes almost empirical readings of the precise form and scope of demonic activity in the world. Theologians and scientists, magicians, philosophers, missionaries, and artists might all elaborate their own particular views with respect to how and why demons undertook the actions they did, but in most instances their reckonings were grounded in painstaking observation, research, and debate. The reason for caution was manifest: at stake was the disposition of one's very soul. Within the ambit of the early modern world system, demons and spirits were vital constituents of creation; understanding why they functioned as they did might reveal key elements of the divine plan to a society anxiously seeking signs of salvation.

Yet the early modern era was also one of great change and upheaval. From the intellectual ramifications of the printing press to the century of religious warfare that followed on the heels of the Reformation to the first sparks of disruptive Enlightenment ideologies, this period was characterized by profound instability as venerable social, intellectual, and political structures were reworked and reoriented. At the same time, early modern Europeans experienced and reinforced important continuities, both consciously and unconsciously. Many men and women continued to believe and behave as they had for centuries in a world that remained hierarchical, agricultural, and most important for our purposes, suffused with supernatural forces.

The various reformations of the period—Protestant, Catholic, Radical, and so on—fractured consensus about these supernatural forces and generated profound questions, on the page and from the pulpit, about how

Christians might and ought to interact with spirits, both malevolent and benevolent. These questions were in no way peripheral or confined to the debates of educated elites. Indeed, outbreaks of witch-hunting and cases of demonic possession generated (and were generated by) anxieties concerning the spirit world among Europeans from across the social spectrum.[10] At the same time, Catholic and Protestant churches alike increasingly attempted to exert control over how individuals perceived and interacted with the forces of magic and the spirit realm, although confessional methods and motivations for doing so could differ markedly.[11] Widespread anticipation of the Apocalypse cast a long shadow over religious life throughout Europe.[12]

This was also an era of discovery, evolving ideas about science, changing standards of evidence, and challenges to long-held tradition.[13]

[10]Two recent and excellent surveys of witchcraft in early modern Europe are Brian Levack's *The Witch-hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 4th edition (Routledge, 2016); Julian Goodare's *The European Witch-hunt* (Routledge, 2016). For demonic possession and exorcism, see Sarah Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (Routledge: London, 2004); H. C. Erik Midelfort, "The Devil and the German People: Reflections on the Popularity of Demon-Possession in Sixteenth-Century Germany," in *Religion and Culture in the Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. Steven Ozment (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1989), 99–119; Guido Dall'Olio, "The Devil of Inquisitors, Demoniacs and Exorcists in Counter-Reformation Italy," in *The Devil in Society in Premodern Europe*, ed. Richard Raiswell and Peter Dendle (Toronto: CRRS, 2013), 511–36; Brian Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

[11]For a discussion of the label of "superstition" as an attempt to characterize or control inter- and inner-confessional interactions with the spirit realm, see Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe, Superstition, Reason, and Religion, 1250–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), esp. chapters 11–15. See also Stuart Clark, "Protestant Demonology: Sin, Superstition and Society," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries,* ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 45–82.

[12]Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse: Sixteenth-Century Apocalyptism, Millenarianism and the English Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978); Katharine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530–1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); Richard Landes, *Heaven on Earth: The Varieties of the Millennial Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[13]Lorraine Daston, "Probability and Evidence," in *Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1108–44; Richard W. Serjeantson, "Proof and Persuasion," in

By the early eighteenth century, debates about "reason" and "rationality" occupied the center of European intellectual discourse, engaging with and reshaping demon and spirit epistemologies.[14] How could one prove or disprove the existence of demons, fairies, and angels? To what extent did the devil intervene in the terrestrial realm, or was the ability to do so confined to God? Were interactions with the spirit world simply illusions, manifestations of human sin, or gullibility? Such questions were not new to the early modern era, of course. But many of the tools for addressing them—the printed page, scientific empiricism, increasingly complex understandings of matter, geography, and the cosmos, the networks of peer review—were new and, at times, disruptive to the status quo. And yet for many men and women, belief in the terrestrial reality of benevolent and malevolent spirits was no less fervent or consequential in 1750 than it had been in 1500.[15] In short, this was a period in which the theory and practice of knowing demons and spirits was contested, in flux, and essential.

This book, then, explores the manifold ways of knowing the preternatural beings that inhabited and shaped early modern European worlds. Its contributors examine how people across the social spectrum assayed the various types of spiritual entities that they believed dwelled invisibly but meaningfully in the spaces just beyond (and occasionally within) the limits of human perception. When these creatures—and they *were* understood to have been created things—elected to disclose their presence (or

The Cambridge History of Science, Volume 3: Early Modern Science, ed. Katherine Park and Lorraine Daston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 132–75; Lancaster and Raiswell, "Evidence Before Science."

[14]The relationship between spirit discernment and new experimental science has been fruitfully explored by Caciola and Sluhovsky, "Spiritual Physiologies: The Discernment of Spirits in Medieval and Early Modern Europe," *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies of the Preternatural* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–48. For the ways in which new methods of interrogating nature informed early modern thinking about the preter- and supernatural, see Lorraine Daston, "Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe," *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 1 (1991): 93–124; Daston, "The Nature of Nature in Early Modern Europe," *Configurations* 6, no. 2 (1998): 149–72.

[15]On the persistence of supernatural beliefs into the Enlightenment era and beyond, see, for example, Lizanne Henderson, *Witchcraft and Folk Belief in the Age of Enlightenment* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2016); Jonathan Barry, *Witchcraft and Demonology in South-West England, 1640–1789* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012).

were forced to appear through conjuration), it was essential to know as much about them as was possible: what they were, how they operated, how they might be ranked and distinguished from one another, how they might be tested, and how, if necessary, they might be put to flight. The articles that follow deal with these priorities and concerns. This is, therefore, a book about the epistemological and experiential knowledge of spirits: the formal and informal modalities and praxes employed by early modern people to evaluate the identity, motives, and actions of discarnate beings.

Chronologically, the collection ranges from the close of the Middle Ages to the first stirrings of industrial society in the mid to late eighteenth century (ca. 1500–1750). It looks at how spirit knowledge was rewritten in the light of the profound changes of the period to reflect or challenge changing discursive priorities. To be sure, these new ways of looking at the world shifted or "reset" where the lines demarcating the natural from the preternatural were drawn. Early modern men and women and the communities of practice and belief they inhabited were obliged—repeatedly—to contest, navigate, and recast their own demonic and spirit epistemologies in the face of the novelties, contradictions, and uncertainties that arose in response to the new cultural, religious, and intellectual climate. This collection explores how these problems and experiences fed into attendant (and rapidly expanding) discourses on witchcraft, alchemy, possession and exorcism, colonialism, and beyond.

Historiography

In recent decades, demons and, to a lesser degree, other spirits such as angels and fairies have been ushered to the forefront of late medieval and early modern historiography.[16] Perhaps the most important of these studies remains Stuart Clark's seminal work *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, which successfully and influentially argues that "demonology was a composite subject consisting of

[16]On fairies, see, for example, Lizanne Henderson and Edward Cowan *Scottish Fairy Belief: A History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001); Richard Firth Green, *Elf Queens and Holy Friars: Fairy Beliefs and the Medieval Church* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017); on angels, see Laura Sanga *Angels and Belief in England, 1480–1700* (London: Routledge, 2012); *Angels in the Early Modern World*, ed. Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

discussions about the workings of nature, the processes of history, the maintenance of religious purity, and the nature of political authority and order."[17] While Clark is concerned with formal demonology in the context of witch belief, his central arguments paved the way for subsequent exploration of the relationship between demons and other early modern beliefs and epistemologies. Most important, his work demonstrates that far from being aberrant or "irrational," ideas about the demonic were integral to mainstream early modern religious, political, historical, and scientific discourses. While *Thinking with Demons* focuses almost exclusively on theoretical discussions about demons, more recent studies also examine the experiential reality of demons and spirits, asking how early modern men and women might have encountered otherworldly beings in the library or on the landscape.[18]

Much of this literature has concentrated on spirit knowledge in specific contexts, and few areas have proven more fruitful for scholarship than discernment and possession.[19] To "test the spirits" according to the biblical injunction of 1 John 4.1 and the warning of 2 Corinthians 11.14 was both a scriptural imperative and practical necessity in cases of possession, ecstasy, and prophecy. As Nancy Caciola has demonstrated, medieval discernment was determined by broader social, ecclesiastical, and

[17]Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), viii.

[18]Much of the early modern literature on demonic experiences outside of cases of witchcraft or possession has been focused on the British Isles. See Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Nathan Johnstone, "The Protestant Devil: The Experience of Temptation in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies* 43, no. 2 (2004): 173–205; Frank Luttmer, "Prosecutors, Tempters and Vassals of the Devil: The Unregenerate in Puritan Practical Divinity," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 51, no. 1 (2000): 37–68; Darren Oldridge, *The Devil in Tudor and Stuart England* (Sutton: Stroud, 2010); Joyce Miller, "Men in Black: Appearances of the Devil in Early Modern Scottish Witchcraft Discourse," in *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Julian Goodare, Lauren Martin, and Joyce Miller (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 144–65; Michelle D. Brock, *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland, c.1560–1700* (London: Routledge, 2016). Beyond Britain, see Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994).

[19]Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, and Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Levack, *The Devil Within*; Caciola and Sluhovsky, "Spiritual Physiologies."

political concerns about devotion, gender, and authority.[20] Following the Reformation, discernment remained a critical issue across religious divides, the practice of which could be an important source and site of confessional conflict.[21] As the contributions in this volume illustrate, just as there was no single devil—because this identity shifted in response to discursive priorities—there was no single blueprint for interactions with the demonic and spiritual, and this uncertainty could lead to both doctrinal conflict and experiential confusion.[22]

This volume seeks to expand the extant literature by examining how people from across the early modern world—both spatially and chronologically—attempted to understand demons, angels, and fairies against the backdrop of the broader intellectual changes of the period. It explores the ways in which these individuals conceptualized and responded to a range of preternatural entities, while also revealing the experiential slippage between these categories. Recently, Julian Goodare has pointed out that fairies show us how the early modern spirit realm could be actively indeterminate; as the chapters below illustrate, the same could be said, to varying degrees, of angels and demons.[23] Moreover, from Jesuits to Calvinists to Orthodox Christians, agreement within faith traditions about the nature and appearance of spirits may have been achievable in theory, but consensus was often shattered by knowing these

[20] Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003). For other works on medieval discernment, see Richard Kieckhefer, "The Holy and the Unholy: Sainthood, Witchcraft, and Magic in Late Medieval Europe," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 24.3 (1994): 355–85; Barbara Newman, "Possessed by the Spirit: Devout Women, Demoniacs, and the Apostolic Life in the Thirteenth Century," *Speculum* 73.3 (1998): 733–70; Rosalynn Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writings of Late Medieval Women Visionaries* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: York Medieval Press, 1999); Nancy Caciola, "Mystics, Demoniacs, and the Physiology of Spirit Possession in Medieval Europe," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 2 (2000): 268–306.

[21] See Clare Copeland and Johannes Machielsen's edited volume *Angels of Light? Sanctity and the Discernment of Spirits in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2012) for an excellent examination of issues of discernment in both Protestant and Catholic areas of early modern Europe.

[22] On the malleability of constructions of the devil, see Richard Raiswell, "Introduction," in *The Devil in Society in Premodern Europe*, 23–65.

[23] Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm in Scotland," in *Airy Nothings: Imagining the Otherworld of Faerie from the Middle Ages to the Age of Reason*, ed. Karin E. Olsen and Jan R. Veenstra (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 139–69.

otherworldly beings in practice. Perhaps this experiential indeterminacy and flexibility explains the persistence of belief in and encounters with demons and spirits—and the attendant desire to know their nature—long after the so-called disenchantment of Europe.[24]

Organization

Early modern discourses upon preternatural entities (demons, fairies, angels, ghosts, wraiths, and other sorts of anthropomorphized spirits) were not static; those who accepted the existence of such beings—and in the period between 1500 and 1750, this number no doubt included the preponderance of the European population—generally did so in critically engaged ways based on varying degrees of debate, research, and experience, and according to methodologies and priorities. Indeed, throughout the period, knowledge concerning the nature, activities, and fields of action of demons and other spirits underwent intensive scrutiny and testing. Discourse surrounding spirit engagements (both those that were considered fraudulent or mistaken as well as those that were deemed accurate, authentic, and/or verifiable—that is, which conformed to the discursive principles of a particular community of practice) shifted repeatedly in response to changes in intellectual priorities, practices, and the experiential realities of various communities over time. This book demonstrates how epistemologies of spirit knowledge and discernment were reworked and reconstituted by far-reaching changes in religion and natural philosophical practice. Each of the contributors to this volume suggests how traditional arguments, beliefs, and representations were challenged by new understandings about the relationship between authority and experience, by debates over nature and the value of evidence, by new modes of knowledge acquisition, and by the sorts of conclusions that could be drawn from such apparent "facts."

Each chapter investigates, in a specific geographical and chronological situation, how sorcerers, scholars, artists, exorcists, travelers, theologians—as well as ordinary men and women—detected, responded to, and understood preternatural presences. Incorporating a range of

[24] "Disenchantment" has long been the subject of historical debates, which have been recently summarized in Alexandra Walsham's excellent historiographical essay, "The Reformation and 'The Disenchantment of the World' Reassessed," *Historical Journal* 51, no. 2 (2008): 497–528.

methodological approaches such as history, anthropology, art history, literary theory, and information studies, this book collectively aims to reframe and extend the current understanding of spirit epistemologies in both theory and practice. It is for this reason that the collection is divided into two distinct but interrelated parts: "Knowing in Theory" and "Knowing in Practice."

"Knowing in Theory" ruminates on the ideological development of spirit knowledge in Europe and its emerging colonial and mercantile outposts in the period between 1500 and 1750. Its chapters trace, in their individual ways, how discourses surrounding demons and spirits informed—and were informed by—the broader cultural, intellectual, and social trends. While each author applies a distinctive methodological and historiographical lens, and concentrates on a particular evidentiary field, the critical concerns of this section are who had the ability to acquire and articulate knowledge of demons and spirits and, accordingly, how they conceptualized such knowledge. It also addresses the issue of authority in relation to discernment, particularly how it changed and was challenged in response to new understandings of the operation of the natural world.

"Knowing in Practice" moves from the rarified setting of the library to the homelier environs of the magician's atelier and the crofter's hearth. It examines how new theories and models of spirit knowledge and discernment played out across a range of personal, rhetorical, and communal contexts. As in the previous part, this section of the book explores "ways of knowing" from a number of scholarly perspectives. At its core, however, the chapters focus primarily on the issue of engagement. They ask: What did it mean for Europeans to encounter the preternatural world actively on the landscape? How did those who brushed up against, summoned, or contested fairies, angels, or demons understand and characterize their encounters? What methods did they use to verify or discredit the experience? How, and to what extent, did these sorts of meetings alter, confirm, or reshape their worldviews? Thus, this section explores the ways in which experiential reality mapped onto and deviated from the theoretical suppositions of those who traced the movements and activities of spirits from a more remote vantage.

Taken together, these two sections reveal that across the rapidly evolving ideological landscapes of the early modern era, "ways of knowing" demons and spirits became heterogeneous and mutable in new ways: shifting, responding, and offering themselves up for negotiation both

at a theoretical level and in practice. Accordingly, we have structured the collection quite broadly, emphasizing methodological and topical inclusivity. Our intention has been to create a book that construes the issue of demonic and spirit knowledge across a breadth of geographical, disciplinary, and chronological contexts. This allows its contributors—and our readers—to explore how events such as the Reformation(s), the so-called Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and Europe's colonial enterprise informed—and were informed by—discourses about, and experiences with, the preternatural world. Indeed, this collection views the accumulation of spirit and demon knowledge as fundamental, even axial, to the intellectual developments of early modernity, rather than as something separable from a more legitimate (though surely illusory) "mainstream" of early modern thought or ideology. Indeed, this book views the recognition, development, and use of preternatural knowledge as critical elements helping to shape the "modern" world.

This volume's investigation of knowing spirits in theory begins in the Netherlands, with Gary Waite's illuminating chapter on the unique demonologies and religious toleration of Dutch intellectuals and clergymen in the wake of the Radical Reformation. He argues that their relative toleration and skepticism derived from a spiritualist approach to religious identity, which emerged in response to state persecution of Anabaptists and other religious dissenters in the 1530s. The most influential spiritualist voice was that of Dutch Anabaptist David Joris, whose unorthodox theology centered on cultivating one's internal spirit, a focus which entailed the depreciation of both physical practice and the exterior existence of demons and other spirits. Discerning spirits was, in a sense, still crucial, but this discernment was more individually creative than doctrinally prescriptive, concerned with manifestations of inner faith rather than external appearance or confessional allegiance. As Waite suggests, the spiritualism and skepticism of Joris and his followers had a significant and hitherto overlooked influence on later Dutch thinkers such as Bekker and Baruch Spinoza, whose ideas would eventually challenge the very existence of the demonic.

Of course, demons were far from the only category of preternatural beings that at once fascinated, frightened, and perplexed early modern intellectuals. In "Hell and Fairy," Dan Harms throws light on preternatural taxonomies and systems of spiritual and demonic classification. He begins from the basic insight that modern scholars sometimes have considerable difficulty distinguishing fairy activity from that of other kinds

of spirit beings. He posits that despite (or perhaps because of) the considerable epistemological slippage between classes of beings, early modern observers—especially those involved in learned ritual magic—would have had fewer anxieties with respect to differentiation than modern observers, both because they were less concerned about the boundaries of Fairy (frequently invoking unclassified beings whom they referred to simply as "spirits") and because they understood the nature, designs, and instrumentality of fairy operations in ways that aligned with their cultural expectations of how such creatures ought to behave. Nevertheless, he argues, there are ways to ascertain whether early modern practitioners sought to invoke or summon entities that we would recognize as the Fair Folk. Using material from grimoires and other magical texts, Harms assays the forms and modalities that distinguish these fairy operations from other kinds of magical rites.

While theologians, ritual magicians, and other elites drove theoretical debates surrounding the knowledge of demons and other spirits, their arguments required both the experiences and the imagery of ordinary early modern men and women. Andrew Keitt's "Preternatural Peasants and the Discourse of Demons: Xenoglossy, Superstition, and Melancholy in Early Modern Spain" focuses on the stock figure of the Iberian rustic laborer as a site of contestation between learned and popular ways of knowing the demonic in the sixteenth century. Structuring his argument around Inquisitorial records and documents from the Spanish Church's anti-superstition campaign—and especially on intersected discourses surrounding the critique of demonism and the analysis of melancholia—Keitt shows how Spanish interventions into debates about the preternatural realm problematize traditional narratives. In particular, he uses cognitive theory to demonstrate how historians can avoid precipitous idealizations of complex historical realities, particularly with respect to emerging, transformative cultural processes such as social discipline and disenchantment. According to Keitt, because discourses concerned with xenoglossy and melancholy cut across divisions between natural and supernatural, and because they frequently appeared in tandem, their intersection provides exceptionally fertile ground for those seeking to understand the epistemological horizons of the preternatural as well as other, broader, kinds of knowing in early modern Europe.

Of all the issues that generated an urgency to understand demons and spirits in the early modern era, few were more powerful or socially salient than witchcraft trials and attendant cases of demonic possession. Stefan

Heßbrüggen-Walter's chapter elucidates the demonological disagreements between two Protestant philosophers over the use of the "water test" during a witch trial in late sixteenth century Germany. Both men were concerned with explaining why it was that water rejected the bodies of witches based upon sound natural philosophical principles. Neither of them actually questioned that the test *did* work. Rather, the core of their disagreement was over the question of whether or not spirits needed a body in order to exist—a fundamental question faced by many early modern individuals seeking knowledge of the preternatural. Through close analysis of two spiritological tracts composed in response to a 1583 trial in Lemgo, Heßbrüggen-Walter demonstrates that demonology was not a pressing intellectual concern for jurists and theologians alone. Philosophers, too, took a keen interest in the fundamental nature of demons and spirits, applying their theoretical ideas to real-world scenarios such as the witch trials and possession cases. He suggests that present day historians of philosophy, long disinterested in early modern demonology, would benefit from serious examination of demonological debates in the context of broader philosophical theories and works.

Early modern attempts to know demons and spirits involved a range of senses, and sight was among the most essential, contested, and potentially unreliable.[25] After all, how did one know a demon when one saw one? Dmitriy Antonov's study, "'The Damned Trinity': Judas, the Devil, and the Hell-Beast in Russian Iconography," ventures into the complex but fascinating realm of pictorial representation, that is, visual ways of knowing. Antonov elaborates the meaning and significance of a widely dispersed, but hitherto little-studied diabolical ensemble that inverted (and, in many ways, subverted) the familiar semiotic language of Orthodox Christian triune hierarchies. The result was an iconographic/ideological product designed to shock the sensibilities of the pious and to reify the rudiments of the faith for those whose access to religion was entirely or partially mediated by the enunciations of artists and sculptors. Using the work of Jérôme Baschet as a starting point, Antonov traces a complex legacy of semantic and epistemological slippage, as the "Damned Trinity" *hypermotif* (Antonov's coinage) shifted in response to theological, political, and cultural change. He notes that the motif

[25] On the senses and visual epistemologies, see Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

continues to have valence and currency in an era far removed from the one in which it was originally conceived.

Turning from theory to practice, in the opening chapter of Part III, Frank Klaassen's "Spirit Conjuring and Alchemy in the Sixteenth Century" traces the increasing alignment of conjuration and alchemy in the operations of magical practitioners in early to mid-sixteenth-century Britain. He notes that throughout the Middle Ages, necromancers and alchemists tended to pursue their respective arts in ways remarkably isolated from one another. Indeed, their methodologically distinct attempts to generate knowledge about spirits were rarely mentioned together in the manuscripts of the period, and the medieval biographical data related to the two kinds of preternatural experts seldom reported any meaningful degree of professional overlap. After 1500, however, Klaassen notes an increasingly discernible pattern of reliance and sympathy among practitioners of these previously discrete disciplines. The newfound sixteenth-century willingness to know spirits through interwoven praxes can be seen in the works of Humphrey and Adrian Gilbert, Edward Kelly, and, of course, the renowned John Dee. Klaassen accounts for this shift by arguing that a number of factors coalesced in the work of Renaissance occultists. Clearly, their fundamental readiness to produce grand synthetic schemata encouraged the elaboration of conceptual frameworks that accommodated previously disconnected epistemologies. This readiness, in turn, had been stimulated by a high level of tolerance throughout Britain for experimentation and exploration of the darker corners of the early modern occult.

Exploration of the darker corners of the early modern occult occurred not only in Europe, but also on the landscapes of an increasingly interconnected and colonial world. In "Edward Terry and the Demons of India," Richard Raiswell examines early modern demonic epistemology through a spatial lens. Using Calvinist divine Edward Terry's 1655 *Voyage to East India* as the focal point of his study, Raiswell argues that as Protestant Europeans began to refine their ideas concerning geography, identity, and ethnographic difference, they came to believe that they understood the workings of providence with greater precision and clarity. Indeed, Terry's early seventeenth-century visit to South Asia had shown him that there was a complementarity between the demonic microcosm and the macrocosm. Just as God occasionally permitted demons to inhabit humans as an *exemplum* for the faithful, so too had he given the devil license to operate freely in the land of the Great Mughal. India,