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Bells and Spells: Rosicrucianism and the Invocation of Planetary Spirits in Early Modern Germany

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Abstract: This paper examines early modern theurgical techniques in the context of Christian anti-magical polemics and an associated marginalization of gnostic-emanationist religiosity. Particular attention is directed to the ritual invocation of planetary spirits in the Rosicrucian tradition, which involved artefacts (spirit-summoning bells, animated statues, etc.) manufactured from Paracelsian *electrum magicum*, a pervasive material in European ritual magical practice. Further light is cast upon this Christian Cabalistic theurgical tradition by the author's discovery of the Dutch Behmenist origins of the Gold- und Rosenkreuz.

Regarded as illicit by the major Christian confessions, the invocation of planetary spirits maintained a limited currency within a network of interrelated Paracelsian, Rosicrucian and Behmenist traditions in early modern Germany, primarily via a little-known Christian Cabalistic manuscript lineage I will address in the following paper. The value of these manuscripts within the economy of religious knowledge arose from their depiction of practical invocative techniques – fasting, prayer, entheogen use and quasi-Tantric ascetic practices – designed to cultivate altered states of consciousness. As post-Enlightenment historiographies of religion remain deeply informed by Protestant anti-enthusiasm, these techniques and their associated doctrines continue to be represented as a magical counter-category to both Christian faith and modern science; but for all their Neoplatonic and Jewish roots, they are more accurately described as marginalised forms of Christian religiosity. Within this suppressed form of Christianity the planetary intelligences constitute indispensable steps on an inner path to gnosis conceived as the reversal of an emanationist cosmogony. Despite the best efforts of Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist authorities to abolish this alternative Christian worldview and way of life,

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the invocation of planetary spirits and the related theurgical animation of statues persisted among inheritors of the inspirationist tendency of the so-called Radical Reformation.

Today there is a growing recognition among scholars that 'magic' has always been the religion of an Other.[1] The identity of that magical Other has remained surprisingly constant within the broader history of Christian discourse on magic, as has Christian orthodoxy's hegemonic concern with the preservation of institutional power and a monopoly on the valid expression of religiosity.

As a polemical category, the term 'magic' first arose amongst the ancient Greeks in reference to practices originating among the Persian priests (*mágoi*); while *mageía* could be envisaged as an exotic but entirely legitimate *prisca theologia*, it also possessed the negative connotation of fraudulent wonder-working techniques lacking any sophisticated theological superstructure or higher philosophical intent.[2] Similar positive and pejorative characterisations of *magia* persisted in pagan Rome: both are depicted side-by-side in the *Apologia* of Apuleius, for example, while the conception of magic as a set of barbarous, charlatanic techniques qualitatively different to religion was most influentially advanced in the work of Pliny.[3]

By contrast, the Church Fathers employed the term in a purely negative sense against the gnostic-emanationist pagan competitors of the early Christian Church. Thus Augustine (354–430) – utilizing magic as a synonym for Neoplatonic and Hermetic theurgy – condemned the summoning of celestial intermediaries between humankind and higher divinity, declaring that anyone who has recourse to such 'demons' has

[1] On magic and the demarcation of the boundaries of religion, see Randall Styers, *Making Magic: Religion, Magic and Science in the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 96–116.

[2] E.g. the positive connotation of Plato, *Alcibiades* 1.121e–122a, in Plato, *Alcibiades*, ed. Nicholas Denyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 60, and the negative connotation of Euripides, *Orestes* 1497, in Euripides, *Orestes*, ed. and trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 89.

[3] Apuleius, *Apologia*, pp. 25–26, in Apuleius, *Pro se de magia*, ed. Vincent Hunink (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 86–90; Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 30.1–7, in Pliny, *Natural History libri XXVIII- XXXII*, ed. and trans. W. H. S. Jones (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 279–283.

strayed from 'divine religion'.[4] His words were aimed specifically at the statue-animating passages of the Hermetic *Asclepius*, which described the drawing down of celestial spirits into their artificial likenesses for divinatory purposes, and which was to inform subsequent Christian controversies regarding talismanic magic.[5] Such astrological divination not only contravened Augustine's teachings on free will, but also posed the threat of a surreptitious pagan influence within the Church, as the pagan gods were linked to the heavenly bodies as their rulers.[6] If these celestial beings existed at all, as rivals of the Church they could be nothing other than malevolent, and Augustine warned they must be distinguished clearly from the higher angels and other benevolent (Christian) powers of the supercelestial heavens.[7]

The defenders of nascent Christian orthodoxy also demonized gnostic-emanationist rivals within the early Church's own ranks by blackening their names – e.g. Simon Magus, Marcus, Marcus, Priscillian – with accusations of 'magic'.[8] The purpose of this polemic was not only to segregate the divine from the natural realms, but first and foremost to obstruct access to the divine via emanationist conceptions of nature, thus establishing the priests, rites and doctrines of the Church as the sole legitimate avenue to God.[9]

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[4] Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 8.24, 10.9, in Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, Vol. 3, ed. and trans. David Wiesen (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 116–129, p. 287.

[5] *Asclepius* 24, 37, in Brian Copenhaver, trans., *Hermetica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 81, 89–90.

[6] Augustine himself had 'worshipped' these stellar and planetary rulers in his Manichaean years: *Confessiones* 3.6, 4.3, in Augustine, *Confessions*, Vol. 1, trans. William Watts (London: William Heinemann, 1912), pp.114–121, pp. 153-157.

[7] Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 10.26 (Augustine, *City of God*, pp. 369–370); in another place (*Ad Orosium contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas* 11.14) Augustine appeals to Sirach 3.22 ('what is hidden is not your concern') when considering the existence of planetary intelligences (Augustine, *Aurelii Augustini opera*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985), p. 177).

[8] Acts 8.9-11; Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1.15.6, 1.23.1, in Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, ed. and trans. Dominic Unger (New York: Newman Press, 1992), pp. 68, 81–82; Sulpicius Severus, *Historia sacra* 2.46, in Sulpicius Severus, *Historia sacra* (Leiden: Ex officinâ Elseviriorum, 1635), pp. 165–166.

[9] This refusal of interaction with intermediary spirits is also evident among the Platonist Church Fathers; Origen, for example, anticipates Augustine when he declares 'all the heathen gods are demons' (*Contra Celsum* 7.69, cf. Psalms 96.5), and insists that 'the high priest' Christ is the only valid intercessor for prayer and

The close association of the polemic against magic with the marginalization of gnostic-emanationist religiosity persisted within medieval Christendom. Above all, it was the quest for sources of healing in the natural world that brought clerics and lay Christians alike into perilous proximity with marginalized texts and practices, particularly those of Hermetic provenance. Enduring problems for the Church hierarchies were posed by the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Christian reception of the Arabic *Picatrix*, which depicted the preparation of talismans in the context of a Neoplatonic natural philosophy coloured by Sabian-Hermetic star worship. As divine cosmogonic emanations, stellar and planetary spirits lend their occult powers to stones, rings or other objects engraved with their characters at the appropriate astrological moment. Usually worn as amulets, such talismans were employed for purposes of healing, fertility and the mitigation of various worldly travails.[10]

Responding to this increasingly popular practice, Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225–1274) proscribed the use of *verba ignota* (unknown words) or talismanic characters.[11] For Thomas, all linguistic signs (words, characters, symbolic figures) are invocative (or 'addressative', to use Weill-Parot's neologism) – that is to say, they all address an autonomous intelligence to obtain its aid in performing the magical operation.[12] While Thomas' *Summa theologiae* states that textual amulets with Christian *verba divina* are a legitimate means of protection and healing, their efficacy derives from an understanding of the sense of those divine words rather than any

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supplication (*Contra Celsum* 5.4) (Origen, *Contra Celsum*, ed. and trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 266, 452).

[10] *Picatrix* 1.5. in pseudo-Maǧrīṭī, *Picatrix: das Ziel des Weisen*, ed. and trans. Hellmut Ritter and Martin Plessner (London: Warburg Institute, 1962), pp. 24–34, 111–113.

[11] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 2.2.96, articles 1, 4, in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, Vol. 3, Part 2, Section 2, trans. the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007), pp. 1602–1606.

[12] Nicolas Weill-Parot, 'Astral Magic and Intellectual Changes (Twelfth-Fifteenth Centuries): "Astrological Images" and the Concept of "Addressative" Magic', in *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, ed. Jan Bremmer and Jan Veenstra (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), pp. 167–188, p. 169. See in particular Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles* 3.105.10-12, in Thomas Aquinas, *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith. Summa Contra Gentiles*, Vol. 3, ed. and trans. Vernon Bourke (New York: Image Books, 1956), p. 96.

power inhering in the form of their characters.[13] Thomas concedes the natural materials with which such amulets are created may indeed receive beneficial occult virtues from the heavenly bodies, but the use of talismanic characters resembles an act of prayer, and any such act directed beneath the divine (supercelestial) hierarchy is necessarily demonic.[14]

This segregation of the illicit invocation of celestial intelligences from the licit natural magical manipulation of occult sympathies and antipathies in nature went hand-in-hand with a 'dis-integration' of the cosmos and the disciplines used to investigate it, leading to the propagation of a form of the Scholastic 'double truth' (*duplex veritas*). Hence in his *De mineralibus* Albertus Magnus (1193–1280) praised not only the art of making talismans but also its founder, Hermes; through the engraving of images upon stones and metals one may lawfully receive occult virtues from their source in the divine *nous* via their intermediaries in the hierarchy of being, the stars and planets.[15] Yet in his theological writings Albertus makes the contradictory claim that 'the art of images is wicked', as it inclines to idolatry via the ascription of divinity to the stars themselves.[16] Techniques that may be licit in a natural philosophical context are illicit for any religious purpose: while occult virtues devolve from God, the stars are merely impersonal media in the natural process of the impression of forms (as are the talismanic images themselves, which will eventually become 'cold and dead' once the operation is finished).[17]

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[13] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 2.2.96, article 4: 'Chrysostomus dicit... ubi est virtus Evangelii? In figuris litterarum, an in intellectu sensuum?', etc., in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Vol. 3 (Ottawa: Impensis Studii Generalis O. Pr., 1942, p. 225; cf. Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, p. 1606.

[14] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 2.2.96, articles 2, 4 (Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, pp. 1602–1606); note Thomas concedes planetary and stellar talismans may indeed produce their intended effects, but these are not natural physical effects, as they are achieved only indirectly via the intellectual natures (demons) they invoke; Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles* 3.104.7–12, 3.106.1–10 (Aquinas, *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith*, pp. 91–93, pp. 97–99).

[15] Albertus Magnus, *De mineralibus* 2.3.3, in Albertus Magnus, *Book of Minerals*, trans. Dorothy Wyckoff (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 134–137.

[16] Albertus Magnus, *Super sententiarum* II 7.9: 'Sed imaginum ars ideo mala est, quia inclinans est ad idololatriam per numen quod creditur esse in stellis', in Albertus Magnus, *Opera omnia*, Vol. 27, ed. Stephan Borgnet (Paris: Ludovic Vivès, 1894), p. 158.

[17] Albertus Magnus, *De mineralibus* 2.3.3 (Albertus Magnus, *Book of Minerals*, p. 137).

This disintegrative astrologizing of natural philosophy was developed further by Pietro d'Abano (1250/1257–1316) in his *Conciliator* (ca. 1310), in which he attempted to explain the perceived efficacy of talismanic magic within a non-invocative Aristotelian framework. Subsequent generations came to associate d'Abano with the invocative magic of the *Picatrix*, in part due to his medical experimentation with a Hermetic solar talisman.[18] However, d'Abano rejected the intervention of planetary intelligences as conceived in Hebrew and Arabic magical texts; rather, he ascribed the efficacy of talismans merely to an intransitive psychosomatic force of the imagination.[19] Notwithstanding his considerable post-mortem reputation as a student of 'damned magic',[20] d'Abano's persecution by the Inquisition was probably inspired by the deterministic implications of his rational naturalistic approach, and specifically by a doctrine set forth in the *Conciliator* associating the seven planetary rulers with astrologically determined historical epochs.[21] The hostility of the authorities towards both astrological determinism and his textual sources led d'Abano to disguise this doctrine's origin:[22] it was not derived from Averroes – as implied in

[18] The operation in question was derived from two related Hermetic texts: see Nicolas Weill-Parot, 'Arnaud de Villeneuve et les relations possibles entre le sceau du lion et l'alchimie', *Arxiu de textos Catalans antics* 23/24 (2005), pp. 269–280, pp. 271–272). The amalgamated texts are to be found inserted within the Latin version of the *Picatrix* – a fact that gave rise to the suspicion (noted in later manuscript copies of the *Picatrix* itself) that the *Picatrix* had been d'Abano's source; David Pingree, ed., *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghāyat Al-Ḥakīm* (London: Warburg Institute, 1986), pp. 82–85, 242.

[19] Pietro d'Abano, *Conciliator differentiarum philosophorum et medicorum* (Mantua: Johann Wurster and Thomas Septemcastrensis, 1472), f. 290r (*Diff.* 156); cf. Vittoria Perrone Compagni, 'La differenza 156 del Conciliator: una rilettura', *Annali del Dipartimento di Filosofia* 15 (2009): pp. 65–107, pp. 88–89.

[20] Brian Copenhaver, *Symphorien Champier and the Reception of the Occultist Tradition in Renaissance France* (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1978), p. 150.

[21] D'Abano, *Conciliator*, f. 20r (*Diff.* 9): 'Nam prima quidem est Saturni cassiel [sic]. Secunda Iovis sackiel. Tertia Martis sammael. Quarta Solis micael. Quinta Veneris anael. Sexta Mercurii raphael. Septima vero Lune Gabriel.' D'Abano's brief allusion to his persecution follows at the end of *Diff.* 9 (f. 21r).

[22] Witness, for example, Tempier's Parisian Condemnation of 1277, which threatens excommunication for the mere possession of invocative magical texts (*Chartularium universitatis parisiensis*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Delalain, 1889), p. 543), and which condemns a number of theses on astrological determinism and radical

the *Conciliator* – but rather from Eleazar of Worms' commentary on the *Sefer Yetzirah*.[23] As we shall see, Eleazar's angelic planetary rulers and epochs were to exert considerable influence on subsequent Christian practitioners of invocative astrological magic, chiefly via the works of d'Abano and Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516).

During the Renaissance Platonist revival, proponents of pagan theurgy sought to philosophically circumvent earlier medieval strictures against celestial invocations, creating cracks in the broader edifice of Christian orthodoxy that would contribute substantially to its widespread collapse in the course of the Reformation. Thus Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) appealed to a work erroneously attributed to Thomas Aquinas (*De fato*) to claim that both the natural materials *and* the artificial graven images of a talisman are capable of drawing down occult virtues from the celestial realm – a notion in clear contravention of Thomas' genuine writings.[24] Indeed, the third book of Ficino's *De vita* ('On Obtaining Life from the Heavens') was essentially a commentary via Plotinus upon the theurgy of *Asclepius* – a text Thomas had specifically condemned.[25] Echoing the naturalism of d'Abano and Albertus, in *De Vita* Ficino emphasised that his astrological magic relied not upon the invocation of planetary and stellar intelligences, but rather upon the impersonal *spiritus mundi* mediating between the

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Aristotelian themes, leaving a naturalist such as d'Abano exposed to persecution on a number of grounds.

[23] Eleazar ben Judah, פירוש ספר יצירה, London: British Library Add MS 27199, ff. 388v-470v (f. 438r); the same angels (קפציאל [Saturn], צדקיאל [Jupiter], סמאל [Mars], רפאל [Sun], ענאל [Venus], מיכאל [Mercury], גבריאל [Moon]) are given in Eleazar ben Judah's סודי רזיא, London: British Library Add MS 27199, ff. 1r-379v (f. 29r), a tract that was the chief source of the later grimoire *Sefer Raziel*. The Jewish provenance of the doctrine was well-known to d'Abano, as it also appears as an addendum to his translation of Abraham ibn Ezra's *Liber rationum*: *Abrahe Avenaris Iudei astrologi peritissimi in re iudicali Opera* (Venice: Petrus Liechtenstein, 1507), f. 43v. A similar list is to be found in Judah ben Barzillai's commentary (ca. 1200) on the *Sefer Yetzirah*, complete with the Babylonian planetary demons as attendant spirits, but there is no reference there to the 354-year epochs: Judah ben Barzillai, פירוש ספר יצירה (Berlin: M'kize Nirdamim, 1885), p. 247.

[24] Brian Copenhaver, 'Scholastic Philosophy and Renaissance Magic in the *De vita* of Marsilio Ficino', *Renaissance Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (1984): pp. 523–554, pp. 532–534.

[25] Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles* III 104.7–12.

anima mundi and the sensible world.[26] Elsewhere, however, he effectively mounted a defence of Orpheus and the *magi* against St. Paul himself; in so doing, he revealed that his resurrection of the *prisca theologia* was indeed concerned with the invocation of *numina* (spirits), each of which constituted a rung on a great ladder between heaven and earth.[27]

There is less dissimulation evident in the work of the great magical Reformers, Paracelsus (1493–1541) and Agrippa (1486–1535), with their 'overtly demonic, recklessly unorthodox magic'.[28] The Christian reception of Jewish Kabbalah and the Hekhalot literature by Pico, Reuchlin and their heirs contributed substantially to this 'reckless' tendency in late Renaissance magic, as did the emergence of various other inspirationist currents within the 'radical' wing of the Reformation, which took the newfound emphasis on individual religiosity, the priesthood of all believers, and direct, unmediated contact with the divine world to its furthest conclusion.[29] In this latter development lie the origins of magisterial Protestant and later Enlightenment polemics against

[26] Marsilio Ficino, *De vita libri tres* 3.25, in Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life: A Critical Edition and Translation*, trans. and ed. Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark (Tempe, AZ: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), pp. 37, 383. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads*, 4.4.26, in Plotinus, *Enneads IV.1-9*, trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 206–211; this spirit is the macrocosmic homologue of the fine material *spiritus* mediating between the soul and the body in the human individual; it transmits 'seminal reasons' (the Stoic *logoi spermatikoi*) which impress particular archetypal forms originating in the intellectual realm onto the world of matter: see Daniel Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), pp. 112–113.

[27] Ficino, *In epistolas divi Pauli* VIII; cited in Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, pp. 48–51.

[28] Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 75.

[29] On relevant figures such as the 'Platonic spiritualists' (e.g. Franck, Schwenkfeld, Weigel) see R. Emmet McLaughlin, 'Spiritualism: Schwenckfeld and Franck and their Early Modern Resonances', in *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521-1700*, ed. John D. Roth and James M. Stayer (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 119–161; George Williams and Angel Mergal, eds., *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006); and the classic study by George Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1992).

'enthusiasm', which were closely allied to the modern polemic against magic.[30]

As gnostic-emanationist religiosity stemming from the Hermetic and Kabbalistic traditions remained widely illicit in the early modern period, its practical invocative techniques often went unprinted, circulating instead in oral and manuscript form. The value of such manuscripts within the economy of religious knowledge was derived in part from the very strictures of Christian orthodoxy against their dissemination; in some cases, however, access to this knowledge was restricted because it was deemed by practitioners to be properly esoteric in character, i.e. unsuitable for the uninitiated.[31] Although such restricted knowledge is less visible to the contemporary historian, it would be unwise to accept Hanegraaff's claim that esotericism is 'an imaginative construct in the minds of intellectuals and the wider public', as we are studying marginalized European religious practices with historically and functionally related homologues in Levantine Jewish, Islamic and Indo-Tibetan contexts.[32]

The Rosicrucian tradition is a particularly important conduit for manuscript collections of invocative magical texts, the contents of which were constantly edited and interpreted anew by practitioners. On the whole these manuscripts deal with the induction of altered states of consciousness through prayer, music, chanting, fasting and the ingestion of alchemically

[30] The paradigmatic text in this regard is Johann Christoph Adelung, *Geschichte der menschlichen Narrheit*, 7 vols (Leipzig: Weygand, 1785–1789); cf. Monika Neugebauer-Wölk and Markus Meumann, 'Aufklärung - Esoterik - Moderne. Konzeptionelle Überlegungen zur Einführung', in *Aufklärung und Esoterik: Wege in die Moderne*, ed. Monika Neugebauer-Wölk, Renko Geffarth, and Markus Meumann (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), pp. 1–36.

[31] Although Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 140, uses the term 'occult' to characterise magical learning 'reserved for the few and concealed from the many', the term 'esoteric' is far more exact and less ambiguous; notwithstanding its loose contemporary connotations in popular culture, I use the term here in accordance with its etymology, i.e. to refer to knowledge that is communicable to – or intelligible by – a privileged circle of initiates alone. Cf. William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 43.

[32] Hereward Tilton, Review of Wouter Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), *Journal of Religion in Europe* 6 (2013): pp. 491–493; Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, pp. 376–377.

produced entheogens – that is to say, psychoactive substances created in the laboratory that tend to elicit an experience of the divine.[33]

The Rosicrucian manifestos of the early seventeenth century bear traces of these invocative practices, although they are indistinctly expressed. Indeed, the manifestos' vacillation on this subject is suggestive of two redactional layers within the texts, the first stemming from a Paracelsian inclined to invocative magic and the second from a disinclined Lutheran. This fact accords well with the theory of their joint authorship by Tobias Hess (1558–1614) and Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654).[34] The *Confessio fraternitatis* is the more heterodox of the two works, as it elaborates more fully on Paracelsian practices that are only implied or mentioned cursorily in the *Fama fraternitatis*. Hence in the earliest known manuscript copy of the *Fama fraternitatis* it is said that the legendary medieval scientist-monk Christian Rosenkreuz learnt his arts from the 'Elementarische Inwohner' (elementary inhabitants) of Fez, which are specifically contrasted with human beings.[35] The *Confessio fraternitatis* goes on to state that Christian Rosenkreuz gained his knowledge 'through the service of angels and spirits'; it also refers to *nectromantia*, or the art of knowing other people's secrets by controlling their familiar spirits, and to *necrocomia*, or the prophetic interpretation of heavenly signs through the *evestrum* or astral spirit.[36] And there is a specific reference in the *Confessio*

[33] On this subject see Hereward Tilton, '*Alchymia Archetypica*: Theurgy, Inner Transformation and the Historiography of Alchemy', in *Transmutatio: La via ermetica alla felicità / The Hermetic Way to Happiness*, Quaderni di Studi Indo-Mediterranei V (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2012), pp. 179–216, pp. 187–192.

[34] The contribution of both Andreae and Hess to the manifestos has long since been established: see Martin Brecht, 'Johann Valentin Andreae. Weg und Programm eines Reformers zwischen Reformation und Moderne', in *Theologen und Theologie an der Universität Tübingen*, ed. Martin Brecht (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1977), pp. 270–343, pp. 285–290. A third party is also implicated in the authorship of the manifestos: see Carlos Gilly, 'Die Rosenkreuzer als europäisches Phänomen im 17. Jahrhundert und die verschlungenen Pfade der Forschung', in *Das Rosenkreuz als europäisches Phänomen des 17. Jahrhunderts. Akten zum 35. Wolfenbütteler Symposium*, ed. Carlos Gilly and Friedrich Niewöhner (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan, 2001), pp. 19–56, pp. 28–32.

[35] Pleun van der Kooij and Carlos Gilly, eds., *Fama fraternitatis: Das Urmanifest der Rosenkreuzer Bruderschaft* (Haarlem: Rozekruis Pers, 1998), pp. 11, 76, 104.

[36] *Confessio fraternitatis oder Bekanntnuß der löblichen Bruderschafft deß hochgeehrten Rosen-Creutzes/ an die Gelehrten Europae geschrieben* (Frankfurt

fraternitatis to *Weltfürsten* or world rulers when it describes attracting spirits and 'entrancing the mighty sovereigns of the world' through a type of Orphic singing.[37]

Although the authors of the manifestos envisaged the integration of Biblical teaching with pagan philosophy and the abolition of the Scholastic *duplex veritas* – 'it shall not be said, this is true according to philosophy, but false according to theology', as the *Fama fraternitatis* has it – their ambivalence vis-à-vis invocative astrological techniques reflects a broader ideological struggle within early Rosicrucianism.[38] This fact is succinctly illustrated in an anonymous and undated *Hieroglyphic Portrait and Contrast of the True, Simple Brother of the Rosy Cross and the Falsely So-called Brother* (*Hieroglyphische Abbildung und Gegensatz der wahren einfaltigen und falschgenandten Brüder vom RosenCreutz*, ca. 1625–1630) (Fig. 1). The false Rosicrucian depicted here is evidently a Christian Cabalist, as he commands an angel with a wand and has Dee's hieroglyphic monad at his heart. A taloned foot betrays this diabolical impostor, whose gown is adorned with the names of Stoic philosophers – a reference to the pantheistic tendency of the Paracelsians to blur the distinction between the divine and natural realms.[39] To the left the sun is surrounded by the Zodiac and planetary signs, while an accompanying citation from the Book of Jeremiah implies that astrological magic leads back to the worship of the pagan gods.[40]

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am Main: Johann Bringer, 1615), pp. 59–60; cf. Adam Haslmayr, *Antwort an die lobwürdige Brüderschafft der Theosophen von Rosencreutz* (Frankfurt am Main: Johann Bringer, 1615), pp. 97–98; Paracelsus, 'Astronomia magna: oder die ganze Philosophia Sagax der grossen vnd kleinen Welt', in *Paracelsus: Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. 12, ed. Karl Sudhoff (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1929), pp. 1–507, pp. 148–157.

[37] 'Die mächtige Fürsten der Welt': *Confessio fraternitatis*, p. 62. The nature of these 'sovereigns' is certainly ambiguous: the Latin edition of the *Confessio* gives 'the mightiest sovereigns of the terrestrial realm' ('...potentissimos imperii terreri [sic] principes...'), though the contrast with Pluto – the king of the underworld – suggests an allusion to angelic powers; *Confessio fraternitatis R. C. ad eruditos Europae* (Kassel: Wilhelm Wessel, 1615), f. H2r.

[38] *Fama fraternitatis*, p. 99.

[39] Carlos Gilly, *Cimelia Rhodostaurotica. Die Rosenkreuzer im Spiegel der zwischen 1610 und 1660 entstandenen Handschriften und Drucke. Ausstellung der Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica Amsterdam und der Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel* (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan, 1995), pp. 170–171.

[40] Jer. 7.17-18: 'Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the

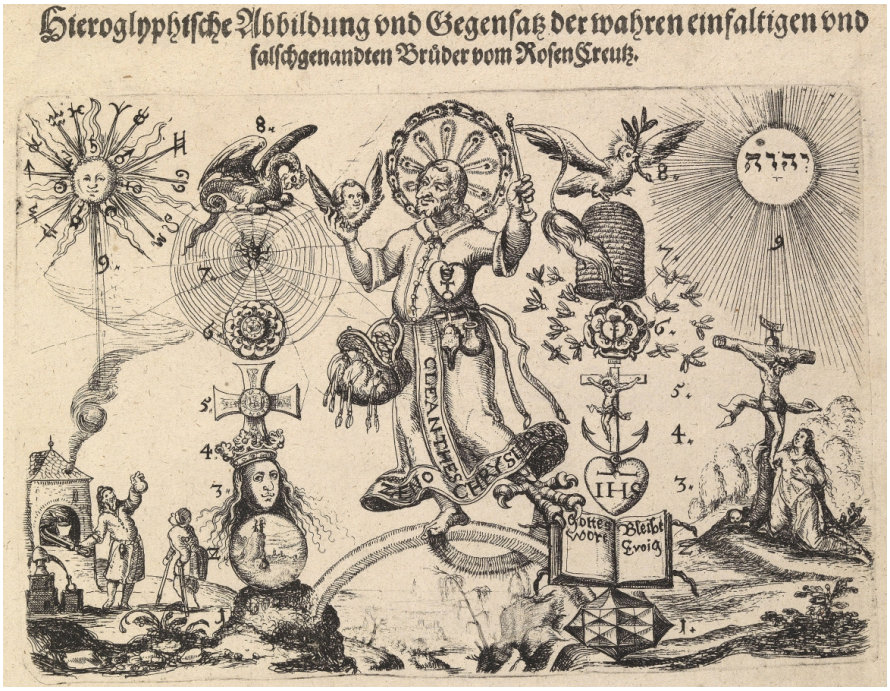

Fig. 1. *Hieroglyphische Abbildung und Gegensatz der wahren einfaltigen und falschgenandten Brüder vom RosenCreutz*. Anonymous broadside, ca. 1625–1630. Wellcome Library, London.

The persecution of ostensibly Rosicrucian groups in Hessen-Kassel, Hessen-Darmstadt and Württemberg during the early years of the Thirty Years War underlines the perceived threat to the social order posed by inspirationist Protestant currents – and specifically by those inspirationists inclined to invocative astrological practices. During his trial in 1619 the 'holy fool' Philipp Homagius was accused of distributing the late sixteenth-century Paracelsian grimoire *Arbatel* among a 'conspiratorial society' of Rosicrucians numbering over two hundred in Hessen-Kassel; he

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women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke me to anger.'

was subsequently sentenced to 'perpetual imprisonment' as an enthusiast, a pantheist and a threat to state security.[41]

The invocation of planetary spirits and rulers within seventeenth- and eighteenth century Rosicrucianism occurred in the context of an art the *Arbatel* – utilising Paracelsian terminology – terms 'Olympic magic'.[42] In the genuine work of Paracelsus, 'Olympic spirits' are hypostases of the stars, their astral operations and their governance of the world; according to the treatise *De causis morborum invisibilium* they are the key to the Cabalistic art, and constitute the invisible power behind the visible stars in the heavens and the microcosmic stars within the human body.[43] Strangely, the *Arbatel* portrays the seven Olympic spirits as the visible stars themselves; they are 'governors of the cosmic machinery', and their duty is 'to determine fate and administer destiny, insofar as God permits it'.[44]

While the magic of the *Arbatel* – in keeping with most grimoires – is primarily directed towards miraculous worldly ends such as the attainment of invisibility or purses pouring forth gold, among seventeenth-century networks self-identifying as 'Rosicrucian' we find invocative astrological practices employed (in accordance with Hermetic and Jewish Kabbalistic antecedents) for decidedly gnostic purposes. That higher religious intent – a spiral ascent through the heavenly spheres, conceived microcosmically as seven qualities of the human soul (Fig. 2) – has been preserved in the manuscript traces of a Behmenist-Rosicrucian circle that became known to posterity as the Gold- und Rosenkreuz (Gold and Rosy Cross).

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[41] Karl Hochhuth, 'Mitteilungen aus der protestantischen Secten-Geschichte in der hessischen Kirche', *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie* 32, no. 1 (1862): pp. 86–159, pp. 87–88, 128–129, 131.

[42] *Arbatel de magia veterum* (Basel: Petrus Perna, 1575), p. 4.

[43] Paracelsus, 'De causis morborum invisibilium', in *Paracelsus: Sämtliche Werke*, vol 9 (Munich: Otto Wilhelm Barth, 1925), pp. 249–350, pp. 298–299.

[44] Named with the faux-Hebrew and faux-Greek neologisms 'Aratron', 'Bethor', 'Phaleg', 'Och', 'Hagith', 'Ophiel' and 'Phul'. Their appointment to particular historical periods (*Arbatel*, pp. 23–25) is indirectly derivative of the aforementioned Kabbalistic tradition transmitted by d'Abano; however, the fact their names are given in 'Olympic speech' – i.e. an angelic *Ursprache* uncoupled from a sacred language such as Hebrew – is reminiscent of Dee. *Arbatel*, p. 22.

Fig. 2. The seven inner heavenly spheres, as depicted in Johann Georg Gichtel and Johann Georg Graber, *Eine kurtze Eröfnung und Anweisung der dreyen Principien und Welten im Menschen* (Leiden: [s.n.], 1696), figure IV.

The confluence of Behmenist and Rosicrucian currents dates to the earlier seventeenth century; an important intermediary was the Dutch engraver Michel le Blon (1587–1658), an associate of Erasmus Wolfart (fl. 1609),[45]

[45] Heinrich Khunrath's friend and editor.

Johann Arndt (1555–1621),[46] Paul Nagel (?–1624)[47] and Abraham von Franckenberg (1593–1652),[48] whose printed and manuscript works place invocative astrological magic within the framework of apocalyptic speculation on the seven angels of Revelations.[49] As a haven of relative religious tolerance, Amsterdam formed the heart of this union of Behmenist and Rosicrucian doctrine and practice, which by the later seventeenth century had coalesced around Ulrich Pfeffer (?–1680) and the Angelic Brethren of Johann Georg Gichtel (1638–1710).[50]

The alchemico-Cabalistic grimoires of the order of the Gold and Rosy Cross stem from the circle of Pfeffer and Gichtel; although they list a great number of techniques for the invocation of planetary intelligences, they rarely give any clear indication of their ultimate gnostic purpose (i.e., a *magia Metatrona* that had become the sole preserve of the order's highest grade of Magus).[51] The most important of the techniques in question deal

[46] The prominent proto-Pietist.

[47] A follower of Böhme and early distributor of the Rosicrucian manifestos.

[48] Publisher of Böhme and author of the first defence of the ancient Gnostics.

[49] Revelations 1.20. In his printed response to the manifestos (*Antwort oder Sendtbrief/ an die von Gott erleuchte Bruderschafft vom Rosen Creutz* (Amsterdam: [s.n.], 1615), le Blon confesses his chief interest is the fraternity's 'theological magic', while his manuscript *Tractatus magicus de Astronomia supernaturali* (Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, MS App. 736) touches upon the relation of the planetary rulers to Revelations and is signed with a Rosicrucian motto (f. 66v). On the early confluence of Rosicrucian and Behmenist currents, see Theodor Harmsen, 'The Reception of Jacob Böhme and Böhmist Theosophy in the *Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer*', in *Offenbarung und Episteme: Zur europäischen Wirkung Jakob Böhmes im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Friedrich Vollhardt (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), pp. 183–206, p. 195.

[50] On Pfeffer, Gichtel and the origins of the Gold- und Rosenkreuz, see Hereward Tilton, 'The Urim and Thummim and the Origins of the Gold- und Rosenkreuz', in *Octagon: Die Suche nach Vollkommenheit im Spiegel einer religionswissenschaftlichen, philosophischen und im besonderen Masse esoterischen Bibliothek*, Vol. 2, ed. Hans Thomas Hakl (Gaggenau: H. Frietsch Verlag, 2016), pp. 4–70.

[51] Tilton, 'Urim and Thummim', pp. 46–54. The principal tracts in this regard are 'Jehova Jeschua Metatron, das ist, Magia Dei alba Jesu unsers Heylandes und Gnadenthrons', in *Septimus sapientiae: Liber verus ac genuinus* (Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Kiesewetteriana 1e), pp. 399–421; 'Magia Metattrona [sic], das ist, die gute Heilige Geistkunst der cabalistischen weissen Magiae', *Septimus sapientiae*, pp. 422–425; 'Dei Magia, oder Magia divina, seu

with the summoning of celestial and supercelestial spirits via the animation of statues (Figs. 3 and 4) and the striking of bells.

Figs. 3 and 4. Animated solar (left) and lunar (right) statues, from *Magia divina, oder gründ- und deutlicher Unterricht, von denen fürnehmsten Caballistischen Kunst-Stücken derer Alten Israeliten Welt-Weisen, und Ersten, auch noch einigen heutigen wahren Christen* ([s.l.]: L. v. H., 1745), pp. 58, 61.

Both classes of artefact – statues and bells – are manufactured from *electrum magicum*, an alloy of the seven alchemical metals that is uniquely

Praxis Cabulae albae et naturalis Theophrasti Paracelsi', *Septimus sapientiae*, pp. 426–556; 'Jesus spricht: In meines Vaters Hause sind viel Wohnungen', *Septimus sapientiae*, pp. 560–587; and *Das Buch mit sieben Siegeln* (Yale: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Mellon MS 110).

receptive to planetary influences.[52] A pervasive material in European ritual magical practice, *electrum magicum* first enters the historical record in the sixteenth-century pseudo-Paracelsian *Archidoxis magica*. There the author claims to have met a necromancer in Spain who engraved certain names and talismanic characters upon the interior of an electrum bell, which when rung would summon the corresponding intelligence; in this way the Olympic spirits exercise an influence upon the star (*astrum*) or 'invisible human' lying hidden in the mind and thoughts of the visible human being.[53]

Elaborating upon the practices referred to in the *Archidoxis magica* and the *Arbatel*, the texts of the order of the Gold and Rosy Cross effectively describe the *binding* of lower planetary spirits via the invocation of their commanding angels from the supercelestial realm.[54] Hence two types of magical electrum bell are described in the order's *De magia divina*: one for the summoning of 'the seven princes of the planets' (which are given the names of the Olympic spirits from the *Arbatel*), the other for summoning their angelic superiors.[55] The former 'bell of the lesser angel' (Fig. 5) is cast with Latinised Hebrew names of God: on the exterior, 'Saday' and 'Tetragrammaton', together with the planet and constellation of the operator's birth; on the interior, 'Elohim'; and on the clapper, 'Adonay'.

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[52] On the production of *electrum magicum* see Hereward Tilton, 'Of Electrum and the Armour of Achilles: Myth and Magic in a Manuscript of Heinrich Khunrath (1560-1605)', *Aries* 6, no. 2 (2006): pp. 117–157, p. 119 n.7, pp. 128–131.

[53] Pseudo-Paracelsus, *Archidoxis magica*, in *Paracelsus: Sämtliche Werke*, Vol, 14 ed. Karl Sudhoff (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1933), pp. 437–498, p. 488.

[54] The centrality of Paracelsian Olympic magic to the order's practice is evident in 'Liber Theophrasti de septem stellis', *Septimus sapientiae*, pp. 182–342, pp. 227–228: '...der erste und oberste Fürst über die 7. Himmel... wenn er in seiner eigenen vom HERRN empfangenen Kraft in diesem Mysterio Magno, von einem magnetischen Lichte eines wahren Kindes GOTTES beweget wird, der thut alsdenn mehr, denn alle äußerliche sichtbare Sterne am Firmamente, so sich also in *descendente* erzeigen'; cf. *Liber de septem stellis dr. Philippi Theophrasti Paracelsi ab Hohenheim eigener hand abgeschrieben zu Saltzburg anno 1570* (Leipzig: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Cod. mag. 39), f. 2r, where we find the same pseudo-Paracelsian tract without the order's Behmenist accretions.

[55] *De magia divina oder Caballistischer Geheimnüsse* (London: Wellcome Library, MS 4808), pp. 223–263, pp. 244–248. A third *electrum magicum* bell utilizing the characters of the moon and Aquarius to summon subterranean spirits is described in a version of the order's *Thesaurus thesaurorum* entitled *γνῶθι σεαυτόν seu noscete ipsum* (Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Kiesewetteriana 1d), p. 291.

Following ritual purification and prayer, the name of the planetary spirit to be summoned is written within the bell; a coloured ink matching the spirit's planetary provenance is used, and this ink is also laid out with paper and quill to receive the angel's answers (presumably a form of automatic writing is alluded to here).

Fig. 5 (left) and Fig. 6 (right). *Electrum magicum* bells from *De magia divina oder Caballistischer Geheimnüsse* (London: Wellcome Library, MS 4808), pp. 223–263 (pp. 246, 248).

The 'bell of the greater angel' (Fig. 6) is cast with 'Jesus', 'Tetragrammaton' and 'Adonay' upon the exterior, together with the names of 'the seven angels' (Oriphiel, Sachiel, Samuel, Michael, Aniel, Raphael and Gabriel). These are the *Angeli planetarum* of Trithemius and d'Abano,[56] although the order's texts describe them variously as archangels and thrones, and also associate them with Böhme's seven source spirits.[57] Likewise, the order's gnostic journey through the seven microcosmic celestial spheres corresponds to the opening of the seven seals, with all its apocalyptic repercussions (Fig. 7).[58]

[56] Hence the distinctive corruption of קפציאל as 'Oriphiel' via Trithemius' 'Oriffiel' and d'Abano's 'Caffiel'; cf. n.27, 29 supra and Trithemius, *Steganographia, hoc est, Ars per occultam scripturam animi sui voluntatem absentibus aperiendi certa (*Frankfurt am Main: Johannes Berner, 1606), p. 162.
[57] 'Liber Theophrasti de septem stellis', *Septimus sapientiae*, pp. 221–22.
[58] 'Liber Theophrasti de septem stellis', *Septimus sapientiae*, 283 ff.

Fig. 7. The closed book with seven seals, from *Das Buch mit sieben Siegeln* (Yale: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Mellon MS 110), f. 8r.

One curious instruction is of particular interest: 'a grain's weight of astral tincture' together with 'something fragrant' is to be placed under the operator's tongue while the bell of the lesser angel is struck and the invocation performed.[59] This detail is suggestive of the use of an alchemically produced entheogen; the operation is in any case an example of alchemically assisted theurgy, a category of magical practice I have described elsewhere.[60]

While the order's (mechanically) animated statues seem to be inspired – in part, at least – by Agrippa's citation of Ficino's various reflections on the *Asclepius*, the *electrum magicum* bells belong to an artefactual tradition that can be traced to the alchemico-Cabalist Heinrich Khunrath (1560–1605) via Ulrich Pfeffer.[61] Earlier incarnations of the order's bells are

[59] *De magia divina*, Wellcome Library, p. 246.
[60] Tilton, '*Alchymia Archetypica*', pp. 187–192.
[61] Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia* 1.39 (Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *De occulta philosophia libri tres* (Venice: Curtius Navò, 1551), ff.

depicted in an emblem of Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae* and a ritual magical tableau associated with Khunrath;[62] what is more, an *electrum magicum* planetary bell owned by Khunrath's protector Emperor Rudolph II is still in existence today (Fig. 8).[63]

Fig. 8. A replica of a spirit-summoning bell of Rudolph II, ca. 1600; the original is to be found at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, KK 5969 (artist: Hans de Bull; dimensions: 7.8 x 6.3 cm; materials: the seven alchemical metals, gilded). Depicted on the bell's exterior are the seven planetary spirits, their characters and their constellations; around the bell interior and clapper are indecipherable spiralling strings of Greek and Hebrew *verba ignota*.

24v–25r); Ficino, *De vita* 3.20, in Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, pp. 348–355; *Picatrix* 3.5, pseudo-Maǧrīṭī, *Picatrix: das Ziel des Weisen*, pp. 193–197; *Asclepius* 24, 37 (Copenhaver, *Hermetica*, pp. 81, pp. 89–90; Tilton, 'Urim and Thummim', pp. 44–46, 51.

[62] *Tabulae theosophiae Cabbalisticae* (London: British Library, Sloane MS 181), ff. 1v-2r; cf. the work of the tableau's discoverer, Peter Forshaw, '"Behold, the dreamer cometh": Hyperphysical Magic and Deific Visions in an Early Modern Theosophical Lab-Oratory', in *Conversations with Angels: Essays towards a History of Spiritual Communication*, ed. Joad Raymond (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 175–200, pp. 184–186.

[63] On Rudolph's *electrum magicum* planetary bell, see Beket Bukovinská and Ivo Purš, 'Die Tischglocke Rudolfs II.: Über ihren Urheber und ihre Bedeutung', *Studia Rudolphina* 10 (2010): pp. 89–104.

It is an intriguing fact that early seventeenth-century Rosicrucians were implicated in invocative magical practices closely related to those current among the eighteenth-century inheritors of the Rosicrucian mantle – yet the earlier circles were the bane of established religious and social hierarchies, while the Gold and Rosy Cross in its late quasi-Masonic phase became their staunch defender. Indeed, Prussia's Friedrich Wilhelm II himself became one of the seven Magi at the order's apex in April 1783 after consulting an *electrum magicum* 'Urim and Thummim', the order's most important ritual magical artefact.[64] The response to his subsequent ascent to the Prussian throne from a prominent Enlightened scientist is telling:

> Well may Europe lament the death of the great king [Frederick the Great]! For the glimmer of the Enlightenment and freedom of thought we had vainly cherished while his great example prevailed is extinguished. Now let us bow before the Magus Magorum and seek among the true sages – for whom the Philosophers' Stone is a mere trifle – the Urim and Thummim that grants a glimpse into the realm of the spirits. For we have another great paragon who encourages us to do just this, and who consigns that abominable freedom of thought to the abyss. All hail to an epoch in which Protestant Inquisitions, too, will be advancing the happiness of humanity![65]

Although Frances Yates portrayed the early Rosicrucian phenomenon as a proto-Enlightenment, by the dawn of modernity proper the inspirationist tendencies within Rosicrucianism constituted a reaction to the advance of mechanistic science and Enlightenment philosophy, which had discarded the ambiguous esoteric discourse of alchemy and rejected divine inspiration as a legitimate path to scientific knowledge. As the anti-

[64] See the letter from Johann Christoph von Woellner to Johann Rudolf von Bischoffwerder (Berlin: Geheime Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, BPH Rep. 48 - König Friedrich Wilhelm II, Nr. 8, Bd. 1), f. 20r (22 April 1783).

[65] Brigitte Leuschner, ed., *Georg Forsters Werke*, Vol. 14 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1978), p. 557: 'Den Tod des großen Königs mag Europa nur beweinen! denn nunmehr ist der Schimmer von Aufklärung und Denkfreyheit wohl auf immer dahin, womit man sich einmal schmeichelte, solange seyn großes Beyspiel den Ton angab. Jetzt wollen wir uns vor dem Magus Magorum beugen und das Urim und Thummim, welches den Blick ins Reich der Geister öfnet, bey den wahren Weisen suchen, denen der lapis eine Kleinigkeit ist; denn wir haben ja ein anderes großes Beyspiel, welches uns dazu aufmuntert, und die abscheuliche Denkfreyheit in den Abgrund verdammt. Heil den Zeiten, wo auch protestantische Inquisitionsgerichte das Glück der Menscheit befördern werden!'

enthusiast polemic moved from a Reformation to an Enlightenment context, inspired knowledge evolved from the status of diabolical heresy to mere trickery: thus the divinatory art of animating statues of the planetary rulers detailed in the *Magia divina* was portrayed by the arch-enemies of the Gold and Rosy Cross, the Illuminati, as the epitome of religious manipulation of the masses.[66] In turn the inspired sciences of astrology and alchemy gave way to disciplines with no place for either heavenly influences or the investigation of poorly-understood psychosomatic phenomena, and the social response to the excluded modes of thought and practice shifted from prohibition to mere ridicule – a state of affairs that continues until the present day.

[66] Frances Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (New York: Routledge, 1972); Anon., *Der Rosenkreuzer in seiner Blösse* (Amsterdam: [s.n.], 1781), pp. 38–40; cf. Lucian, *Alexander* 26, in *Lucian*, Vol. 4, trans. A. M. Harmon (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 211; Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 4.28, in Hippolytus, *The Refutation of all Heresies*, trans. J. H. McMahon (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1868), pp. 93–97). For the Enlightenment reception of this ancient rhetorical topos, see Fontenelle's *Histoire des Oracles* (The Hague: Gosse et Neaulme, 1728).