

The Binding of the Fairies:

Four Spells

Author(s): Frederika Bain

Source: *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2012), pp. 323-354

Published by: [Penn State University Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/preternature.1.2.0323>

Accessed: 29-11-2015 07:50 UTC

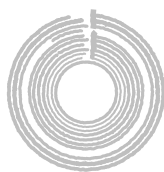
Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Penn State University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural*.

<http://www.jstor.org>



THE BINDING OF THE FAIRIES: FOUR SPELLS

Frederika Bain

HOW AND WHY TO BIND A FAIRY

Sex has always been a dangerous business. In medieval and early modern England, sex with priests might lead to excommunication; sex with prostitutes to the French pox; sex with animals to deformed or half-human offspring, and perhaps the death of the human or animal partners; and sex with demons to the sealing of a demonic pact and thence to the loss of one's soul. This introduction will discuss four early modern spells, found in Folger MS Xd 234, that show how a mage may bind to his will and command one or more fairies for sexual purposes; it is clear that this operation is considered to be fraught with its own dangers, perhaps the more fearsome for never being fully described. But it also appears to offer unique pleasures and benefits not obtainable from other forms of sexual congress. I explore how and why a mage might have considered sex with fairies first as a possible and then as a desirable thing, looking at texts and traditions relating to such spells for inter-nature coupling.

Xd 234 (ca. 1600)¹ is a sheet of vellum on which are inscribed a series of interconnected spells to summon, supplicate, control, and copulate with “the seven Sisters of the fairies.”² It is absent from the group of manuscript spells most often cited in the scholarship on the summoning of spirits, devils, and fairies,³ being mentioned only in Alan Nelson's biography of the Earl of Oxford, *Monstrous Adversary*,⁴ in connection with Oxford's being accused of necromancy, and in passing in David Rankine's *Book of Treasure Spirits*.⁵ Nonetheless it is worth study for the insights it offers into the nature of magecraft, spirit summoning, and supernatural sex.

Are spirits, devils, and fairies—ethereal beings that may be summoned—thus conflatable? To some extent. It is well understood that the traditions out of which early modern fairy lore arises are complex:⁶ sexual binding or

forced sexual congress in particular, of or by fairies or demons, is referenced in romances,⁷ ballads, and witchcraft trials,⁸ as well as throughout medieval demonology. This last requires some discussion: because the spells of Xd 234 so resemble in form conjurations of demons, it will be well to begin with a brief overview of the traditional relationship between fairies and devils.⁹ Many early modern authors, including Reginald Scot¹⁰ and Lewes Lavater,¹¹ conflate them or see fairies as emanations of the Devil. In his *Daemonologie*, James I argues that “the deuill illuded the senses of sundry simple creatures, in making them beleue that they saw and harde such thinges” as “the Phairie,”¹² while in fact they are merely demonic illusions. Emma Wilby points out that examiners of accused witches repeatedly seem to have heard “demon” or “devil” when the examinant said “fairy,” as in the confession of Elspeth Reoch, where the examiner writes that Reoch had met “the devell quhilk she callis the farie man.”¹³ Summonings and conjurings of fairies and of demons in manuscript spell books and in Scot’s *Discoverie of Witchcraft* often use near-identical language, evincing equal amounts of propitiation, fear, and fascination; calling on the same religious entities to lend their powers of coercion and protection to the endeavor;¹⁴ and requesting similar boons.

Another example of the imbrication of the traditions is the changing identity of the spirit Oberon/Oberion. In her discussion of possible prototypes for Prospero’s magic book in *The Tempest*, Barbara Mowat focuses on Folger Shakespeare Library MS Vb 26,¹⁵ a compendium of spells and charms from around 1577–83. It includes instructions for conjuring “Oberyon,” here illustrated as a jinn-like figure complete with turban and vaporous tail, and cataloged among such “Spirrites” as Baal and Satan, though he is also referred to as king of the fairies.¹⁶ Oberon appears in his fairy form, along with his more recognizable name, both before Vb 26, in *Huon of Burdeaux* (translated 1534),¹⁷ and afterward in a number of sources, including *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and Ben Jonson’s *Oberon, the Fairy Prince* (1611); he also appears more conclusively as a demon in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century court records.¹⁸

Demon summoning was necromancy, which etymologically means “divination by means of the dead” but was used along with the variant “nigromancy,” or black magic, to mean conjuration of spirits in general.¹⁹ Necromantic practices and practitioners have been the subject of heightened scholarly interest over the last two decades,²⁰ and questions of the nature and identity of necromancers are increasingly being explored. Richard Kieckhefer has influentially identified them as members of a “clerical underworld,” showing that the majority must

have been in some way connected with the Church, whether priests, monks, or others.²¹ Frank Klaassen has shown that manuals of magic can offer insights into the preoccupations and anxieties of their producers and users precisely because of their illicit nature, since such spell collections were usually intended for private use and were often altered and emended by their scribes.²² This very intimacy, coupled with the ways the spells of Xd 234 both follow and depart from fairy and demon tradition, makes it possible to speculate on this scribe and some of his motivations and desires. The spells are descriptively titled “Here followeth the way to make a band to bind the seven sisters of the fairies to thee, to your book, and to thy child or friend forever,” “Here followeth the way and manner how you shall call one of these virgins of fairies aforenamed at once unto thy bed whenever thou list and have her at pleasure,” “The manner of the band to bind her when she is appeared to thee,” and “Here followeth the manner of the license when you will have her to depart.” The mage requests in the course of them three things: treasure, knowledge, and sex. He both desires them and believes they are obtainable from fairies. What else can these spells tell us about him, and how may they reflect the traditions out of which he was writing?

The above-listed desires and beliefs are in keeping with much of the necromantic tradition. Certainly money or material objects were commonly coveted; Scot, in his impassioned attack on witch beliefs and witch-hunting, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, argues that mages are in search of “wealth, learning, . . . commoditie, pleasure, &c.”²³ Rankine²⁴ argues that desire for treasure was essential to the entire enterprise of spirit summoning, though Kieckhefer points out that, like fairy gold, claims of demon-gotten gains were often understood to be illusory or “cynical charlatanry.”²⁵ Desire for gold was just as, if not more, associated with fairy lore: in her extensive surveys of British fairies, Katherine Briggs points to numerous stories concerning fairy gold, both its promise and its disappointments,²⁶ and Diane Purkiss devotes a chapter to what she describes as the “very particular use” of fairies: “solid cash.”²⁷ Owen Davies shows that the longing for wealth was one of the main reasons for consulting a cunning woman or man, who might have received her or his knowledge from familiar spirits such as fairies.²⁸ But wealth is not the main concern in Xd 234. The first spell does request that the seven fairy sisters “bring with you treasure” or show the speaker where it is buried, almost as a nod to the traditional fairy summonings, as though the connection between fairies and gold were indissoluble. But the request is dropped entirely in the three spells following; the scribe of these spells is clearly not much focused on it.

Desire for knowledge is likewise an important and a common reason for summoning spirits, both demon and fairy; it is the single largest reason, for instance, that Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus undertakes his pact with Mephistophilis.²⁹ Klaassen discusses the high value placed on knowledge and learning among medieval necromancers, as evidenced by the significant proportion of spells in several collections, including Clm 849 and MS Rawlinson D.252,³⁰ purporting to help the caster to attain forms of knowledge. Consulting directly with angelic or demonic spirits and numerous forms of divination—including scapulimancy, divination by means of a sheep's shoulder blade³¹—appear throughout the grimoires³² as major areas of endeavor. Nelson argues that in Xd 234 the emphasis of the spells is on the knowledge the mage can gain after fairy sex, referencing the portion of Spell 3 that offers, "Then when thou hast accomplished it and fulfilled thy will and desire with her, then mayst reason with her of any manner of things that thou desirest to, and in all kind of question you list to demand of her."³³ He suggests, as well, that the Earl of Oxford made a "similar assumption that the magician's goal is not so much pleasure as knowledge—particularly knowledge of the future,"³⁴ though this specific information is not referenced in the spells.

Sequentially, knowledge does follow sex in this spell, and the terms "then" and "when" imply but do not mandate a causal relationship between the two actions. Here are shades of Circe, she who would impart her knowledge to Odysseus only after he had come to her bed. In the necromantic tradition sex and knowledge, though both important aims, tend not to be connected. One other spell I know of, in Scot's *Discouerie*, specifies the bed as a site for knowledge transmission: fairy spirits are summoned to the speaker's bed to answer questions, though there is no indication that any sexual relations take place. However, sex is a primary source or site of knowledge transmission in texts as far back as the Apocryphal Book of 1 Enoch, in which the Watchers' sexual congress with human women is directly related to the harmful knowledge the human race gains.³⁵ A further manuscript, Sloane 3850, couples sex with a spirit, not specifically defined as a fairy, with a boon she can bring him, in this case a ring of invisibility rather than knowledge specifically. However, in this case the ring must be taken from her before the sex act, for "if/thou syn with hir or then takest the ryng thou shalt not/hau it."³⁶ In Xd 234, the paramount importance of the sex act in and of itself, not as a means to knowledge, seems clear. While treasure and information are each mentioned very briefly, the particulars of summoning, enticing, and binding one specific fairy, Lilia, for "a carnal copulation" make up the middle two spells entirely and parts of the first and last. The speaker

gives instructions for the body positions of mage and fairy and emphasizes Lilia's physical nature: she is beautiful and bountiful, and "without doubt she is a woman." He assures the mage who is his intended audience that he has never had "so pleasant a creature or lively **woman** in bed," marking off with virgules and underlining the most important word.³⁷ The spell also promises that he may take his pleasure with her at will.

This pronounced emphasis on sex is one reason the manuscript is of interest: there are no other spells, as such, that I am aware of that so concern themselves with sex with fairies, or in fact with any supernatural beings. A spell reprinted by Scot requires of the fairy Sibyllia (and later her two sisters, Achilia and Milia) a "common copulation,"³⁸ but after this phrase nothing more is said concerning the act; and the spell in Sloane 3850 referenced above suggests that the speaker "do what yow wilt" with the spirit—who has several fairy characteristics—who appears to him. Fairy-summoning spells request treasure or other material aid or knowledge much more frequently than sexual intercourse. Xd 234's spells are in this regard more akin to necromantic conjurations, which more commonly reference sex, but even in these the sex desired is rarely if ever with the demon itself. Far more usual are spells summoning demonic aid in coercing human women into intercourse with the mage, or those that work through means of an image or potion on the human woman desired. A manuscript in the Bavarian State Library, Clm 849, shows several examples of experimenta³⁹ that purport to cause a woman to fall in love with the speaker but whose language is rather that of extreme sexual manipulation. After creating a wax image of the beloved, the mage is directed to "write on the genitals of the image the name 'Cupid,' saying, 'As you, Cupid, are on the genitals of this image, may you thus remain always on the genitals of so-and-so, arousing her so that she despises all men of this world and desires me alone, and may the fire of love for me torment and inflame her.'"⁴⁰ Love is situated in the genitals. Here Cupid, as a pagan god, takes the place of the demon spirit, but in either case it is not he who is summoned for sex; it is his influence that is brought to bear on a human woman. Demon-inspired lust for the mage might backfire, however; Kieckhefer describes the case of a woman, recounted in the vita of St. Basil, who had been so constrained by her amorous desires for a certain mage that she married him, but upon discovering the source of her feelings afterward she denounced him to the bishop.⁴¹

There are many accounts of or references to human–fairy sex not in the form of spells, but in the majority of them the demand for sex is on the part of the fairy. In witchcraft confessions a male fairy, spirit, demon, or familiar may require the accused woman to lie with him as a solemnization of their

pact; Wilby⁴² and Purkiss⁴³ both provide cogent and illuminating discussions of women's accounts of this strand of fairy sex. In her transcription and discussion of the mid-seventeenth-century confessions of accused witch Isobel Gowdie, Wilby demonstrates how Gowdie's description of sex with the demonic fairy man draws on multiple traditions—as well as, she speculates, her own experiences—in order to create a coherent narrative for her questioners. Wilby shows that although sections of her confessions imply that Gowdie and others have enjoyed this supernatural sex, having “werie great pleasur in their carnall cowpula[tio]n w[i]th him, yea much mor th[a]n w[i]th their awin husbandis,”⁴⁴ the scenario is nonetheless predominantly one of coercion and force, and certainly the original approach to Gowdie was the fairy man's.⁴⁵ Purkiss likewise examines the confessions of Elspeth Reoch and other accused witches,⁴⁶ who make it clear that the impetus for their coupling came from the fairy men in question.

Human men, likewise, tended to be solicited by fairy women: in 1598 the Scottish man Andro Man testified, in his examiner's words, that he had “carnall deall with that devilische spreit, the Quene of Elphen,” who had originally approached him for this purpose, though Wilby remarks that he “seems to have been quite willing to oblige.”⁴⁷ Literary fairies might also use their powers to entice or attempt to seduce their chosen human consorts, as Morgan le Fay does through Lady Bertilak in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (ca. 1400);⁴⁸ and many female fairies in the realm of ballad and story also require human males to lie with them. In such ballads as those of Tam Lin and Thomas the Rhymer, sex is enfolded into a larger narrative of capture or seduction and abduction to fairyland, for purposes that may also include companionship, practical services, desire for children, and the need to pay a human tithe to hell.

Demons, as well, were thought to want sex with humans far more than humans wanted sex with them.⁴⁹ Medieval and early modern demonologists argued that demonic spirits or the Devil himself might assume a glamour or illusion to seduce witches into sex, but of greater interest to these theorists were the nonconsensual sex practices of Satan's minions. The mechanics by which such spirits as incubi and succubi were able to copulate with humans either against their will or without their conscious awareness are recounted in a number of texts, though the sedulous attention to detail reaches its height in the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486). Though demons are immaterial, Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger explain, they are able to animate a recently deceased corpse or cause a sleeping man to pollute himself, in order to get the vital essence with

which to perform the act.⁵⁰ This process is referenced, though with some doubt, by James I, who accepts that it may happen but denies that it could lead to viable offspring, owing to the cooling of the sperm as it transits in the grasp of the demon from man to woman.⁵¹

Further, by the early modern period accounts of demonic sex primarily concern human women. Patristic and early medieval accounts and illustrations show saints being tempted by demons in the shape of women; this tradition is continued in later literary characters such as Duessa in the *Faerie Queene*, whose description echoes that of the Whore of Babylon in the Book of Revelation and thus betrays her demonic nature.⁵² But for consummated sex with demons, as opposed to mere temptation, women become the focus, owing of course to their weaker nature.

There is, then, a large body of literature that accepts sex with fairy/demon spirits but seems to ignore or deny the possibility of it being sought or desired by the human. What does it mean, in that case, that the scribe of Xd 234 explicitly requests such a conjunction? There is more background to this question and to these spells, however, for there are in fact many ballads and folktales concerning men who desire sex with fairies or other supernatural beings, usually variants of the “Animal Bride” type. The human male tricks or traps a fairy woman into staying with him for a host of reasons, including sex/romance but also material gain and the need to perpetuate his line. These narratives are in no small part genealogically focused, sometimes explaining the particular characteristics of a certain family line as stemming from their fairy ancestor. In the Melusine legend first compiled by Jean D’Arras at the end of the fourteenth century,⁵³ Raymondin traps the eponymous fairy woman into staying with him by means of a compact—until he breaks his promise, when she escapes, though she returns periodically to warn her descendants of coming ill fortune.

Just as in the stories of Tam Lin and his literary relatives, where the captured human must remain in fairyland until he or she is rescued or can escape, in these narratives keeping the fairy woman from leaving is a primary focus. This can be done by confiscating magical objects belonging to her, like the seal’s skin in the Celtic tales of the selkies that, regained, allows the fairy woman to return to her seal shape and swim away. Hopeful husbands likewise may steal the feather robes of swan maidens to keep them from flying off. There is also a warning in many of these stories that the fairies’ essential nature must not be probed too deeply if they are to stay: Melusine stays with her husband, giving good fortune to his family, on the condition that he never look at her on Saturdays.

Eventually doing so, he discovers that she possesses a serpent's tail from the waist down; realizing she has been found out, Melusine flies away with a shriek. In Marie de France's *Launval*,⁵⁴ written around the turn of the thirteenth century, the knight's fairy lover warns him, "If this love were known[.]/you would never see me again/or possess my body," though after he does tell of her existence she eventually relents.

Warnings concerning secrecy, silence, and the unspeakable nature of faerie also appear in a spell in Xd 234. It warns, "I **advise** thee to be well **ware** that you ask her not **what she is**, and also I advise thee to be well **ware** that you never tell, during the time she is bound in friendship to thee, what she doth for thee." However, there is no sense that the proscription is necessary in order to keep Lilia with the mage; there is nothing long term about this contact. The stories of men who desire fairy lovers are really those of men who want fairy *wives*—they are concerned with ways to keep the fairy women from leaving—but these spells specifically detail the way to banish her once the mage has gotten what he has requested. Discretion concerning this particular fairy consort instead appears due to a fear of more immediate, physical harm.

For fairies, whether or not associated with devils, were creatures to treat with caution; they might offer substantial aid to those they chose to favor, but they were more often influenced by particular contractual relationships, or caprice, than by their essential moral natures.⁵⁵ Wilby makes the argument that cunning women and other summoners of spirits might have been relatively at ease with this moral ambiguity in their spirit partners, not finding it necessary to code them as solely malevolent or beneficent: "Early modern . . . culture was still considerably influenced by a magical, essentially monist, conception of life, and therefore people would have been more comfortable with the idea of ambivalence in both people and spirits than contemporary Christian teachings might suggest."⁵⁶

Acceptance of moral ambiguity did not, however, lead to being sanguine about potential dangers: fairy folk were thought to engage in a variety of antisocial practices ranging from the annoying to the lethal, including violent pinching, blood sucking, wounding with elfshot, and sacrificing to hell. A large percentage of Xd 234's spells are concerned with forestalling the fairies' penchant for evildoing. They are debarred from holding any power over the speaker's body or mind or hurting any other creatures or things in the world; they are warned to use neither guile nor mockery to trick him and to keep from doing him any harm whether he is awake or asleep. The speaker also takes care to reassure the

potential summoner, "[Y]ou needest not to fear her, for she shall have no power to hurt thee, being so bound as is afore to thee prescribed," itself ominous in its implication that if for some reason the mage had not bound her correctly, the outcome might not be so salutary.

One thing is certain: though what evil the fairies of these spells might do is not clearly specified, they are dangerous. Lilia is no animal bride, to be even partially domesticated; in the potentially explosive nature of the contact with them, she and her sisters are connected to the demon-summoning tradition, which seeks to limit the term of interaction⁵⁷ and bind the evil spirit with appeals to higher powers, most often religious, before the human is able to engage with it. A relatively mild example of limitation is the conjuration in e. Mus. 173 f3, which warns that after the spirit has been brought to appear in the magic circle, "looke not to muche on him I warne thee for it is not holsome,"⁵⁸ and the concern rises upward from there.

The confrontation with and acceptance of danger that emerges in these spells also affects the self-fashioning of the scribe/mage. Klaassen offers an important analysis of the formulation of masculinity evinced in medieval grimoires, in particular the boast or brag, showing that while certain features of the magician's lifestyle, including clothing and probable celibacy, might have been seen as potentially emasculating, spells and books of magic also often include elements that show the mage presenting himself as "a man's man,' intelligent, materially successful, controlled, and bold."⁵⁹ Xd 234's spells address at times a separate auditor, the potential user of the spells, and offer him commentary and warnings. Here the speaker clearly codes himself as a man of power and courage: having himself bound the fairies correctly and escaped the hurt they may cause, he is shown as brave and also a superior magician, able from his lofty stature to offer aid to one he feels might need it. He also boasts of his sexual relations with Lilia: "[F]or beauty or bounty neither **queen** nor **empress** in all the whole world is able to countervail her, for I have diverse times proved her and have had her with me." The particularly fulsome praise of Lilia's sexual nature and talents in bed argues that he is not only man enough to tame a fearsome fairy but also man enough to rouse a woman to great lubricity. Thus, though the repeated consummation of the sexual act here is contrary to the tradition of courtly love, the use of the body of the female to effect a moment of male bonding and bravado also echoes Simon Gaunt's formulation of the *fin'amor* genre as one in which the beloved fair woman, so far from being the main focus of the men's existence, is essentially used as the vehicle by which they negotiate their own relationships.⁶⁰

Despite its interspecies nature, then, and even despite the dangers it was understood to pose, there were a number of benefits for a human man in having a fairy necromantically or otherwise magically bound to him: she could be summoned and dismissed at will; she would burn with desire for him; and in this instance at least, she has the additional important attribute of permanent virginity, being repeatedly referenced in the spells as a virgin although the speaker has lain with her “diverse times.” Beyond this, there was the frisson of danger inherent in dealing, especially so intimately, with such a potentially fearsome being, and the opportunity to use these risky dealings to enhance the speaker’s own image. But while on the one hand fairy sex is clearly presented as dangerous, it would perhaps also have seemed safer in some ways to a cleric or scholar in an all-male community than would intercourse with a human woman, even one demon-bound into lustful submission. Safer in terms of possible pregnancy, possible venereal disease, possible risk of marriage and subsequent denunciation, as happened to the hopeful necromancer in the vita of St. Basil. Safer in terms of not having to have a wife who was always around and could not be banished. Perhaps even safer in relation to his immortal soul. For there was always the question of whether fairies did exist, whether demon sex was even possible,⁶¹ and therefore there was the potential benefit of not actually having to go through with the act. Speaking of, desiring, preparing for sex with a fairy might have been enough. After all, the perils of spirits were to some extent theoretical, but human women were known to be dangerous.

DATING

The mingling of traditions evident in the spells of Xd 234 makes it difficult to date the work with any degree of certainty. While the Folger dates the manuscript to “ca. 1600,” Heather Wolfe, the curator of manuscripts, explains that this designation is based solely on the handwriting style, as the library has no records concerning its provenance.⁶² Looking at texts with similar phraseology or nomenclature provides only limited help: the earliest referents of the fairies’ names appear in the medieval MS 448 in “The Sigismund Fever Charm,”⁶³ though here they name fevers, not fairies. Demon-summoning manuscripts with similar formulae or names range through the Middle Ages. Additional indicators as to date can be found in Scot’s *Discoverie* (1584). Klaassen and Chris Phillips show that “Scot was reasonably careful in reproducing original texts”

of spells, though he betrays a selection bias toward the lurid and sensational⁶⁴ and adds occasional sardonic marginal notes. One of the spells given by Scot is “An experiment of the dead,” which includes “[t]he maner of binding the fairie *Sibyllia* at hir appearing”; the spell reads for several sections, each several lines long, almost word-for-word with the four spells in Xd 234.⁶⁵ It seems possible that the manuscript spells and Scot’s original might have been different translations-with-emendations of the same Latin experimentum. However, a major difference between “An experiment of the dead” and the conjuring of Lilia is the latter’s comparative lack of paraphernalia and ritual. While *Sibyllia*’s conjuration requires a dead body to be raised, a badge reading “Sorthie, Sorthia, Sorthios” to be fashioned and pinned on the breast of the mage, and an intermediary spirit to be summoned, trapped in a “christall stone”⁶⁶ and then sent to fetch the fairy, Xd 234’s spells call for none of this apparatus. Though both require a circle to be drawn, Xd 234 does not specify its size and seems reasonably indifferent to its composition, directing that it be drawn of “chalk or otherwise,” nor is there any intermediary required,⁶⁷ and this general paring away of ritual points to a later date. Two other spells, in MSS 3824 (1649) and Sloane 1227 (ca. seventeenth century), give as the names of the seven sisters of the fairies to be summoned several that are identical or similar, but none makes any mention of copulation, and they are almost certainly more recent than Xd 234.

The strongly Catholic terminology used throughout, including “confessors” and “martyrs,” and the spells’ emphasis on the Virgin Mary, may seem to imply that the group of spells is a copy, emendation, or translation of a version from or before 1558, the last year of Mary I’s reign and the last time in the early modern period that the Catholic Church held any significant political power in England. As Eamon Duffy and others make clear, however, elements of Catholic belief, ritual, and terminology persisted in England for at least two generations after the Reformation,⁶⁸ so the religious wording cannot provide very precise help. Finally, the emphasis on virginity, coupled with the use of the words “queen” and “empress” in a human as well as a fairy context, recalls Elizabeth I, particularly in relation to her depiction in the *Faerie Queene* in 1590 and 1596. But this connection is too nebulous to provide a firm clue as to the manuscript’s date.

Situating Xd 234 in time more precisely than has been done is not yet possible, therefore, but the picture nonetheless emerges of a document in conversation with numerous others, reflecting a variety of traditions. Aside from its emphasis on the “carnal copulation” desired by the speaker with Lilia, and the particular relationship between the speaker and the intended audience of the spell, the

spells here are representative of other summonings. In wording, they echo many of the more commonly cited fairy- and demon-conjuring spells, and the stated aims of the speaker in casting them approximate the aims of other mages. But it is an interesting addition to the store of manuscript fairy spells not only as an exemplar of the traditions but also for the ways it departs from them. It offers a personal aspect to the grim visage of the mage: when an undergraduate class of mine read it, Xd 234 prompted laughing comments on his probable previous state of filth before he got “clean,” as he is ordered to do, and speculations on whether he had ever had a human lover to compare with the fairy. In a spell entirely concerned with the faerie, what comes through most clearly in it is the human.

STYLISTIC AND TEXTUAL NOTE

The four spells are written on one side of a single sheet of vellum in a single secretary hand in a single ink that has faded to light brown. The hand is small, even, and not distinguished by much flourishing or decoration, with the exception of a few justifying line fillers and infrequent, possibly extraneous tittles. Serifed cross symbols are inserted around the names of the fairies and some holy names, and strokes underline and bracket off certain words or phrases. The most notable stylistic feature of the text is the graphic emphasis almost always placed on two key words, “conjure/conjuration” and “visible,” and occasionally on other words as well. In these instances the word or phrase is enclosed by a virgule at the beginning and end and is also underlined, possibly pointing to the importance of the performative act of conjuration and also to the importance the speaker places on *seeing* the fairies, invisibility traditionally being one of their gifts. Other instances of this emphasis tend to set off warnings given by the speaker. The lines are fairly even, though there is no ruling, and there are almost no margins at the left and right sides and the top. The lines begin to tilt down slightly to the left around the middle of the page, and there is a large amount of empty space at the bottom of the page. The manuscript is crumpled at the edges and creased and stained throughout, though especially toward the bottom; the writing at the edges is faded and some holes are worn in the vellum, seemingly at stretch points of the skin. The sheet is not a fully symmetrical rectangle, but rather is cut in some irregular angles and notches at the bottom edge.

The spells are presented here in semi-diplomatic and modern English transcriptions in facing-page format. In the modern English version, punctuation

and spelling have been regularized, though occasional archaic verb forms such as “followeth” have been retained. Ampersands have been replaced with “and” and the Roman “vij” with “7.” Occasional words that it was not possible to fully make out have been replaced with possible meanings, though in cases where the word was wholly unintelligible it has been left as a lacuna represented by < . . . >.

In the semi-diplomatic transcription, all original spelling has been retained, including the use of the þ (thorn) and the relatively rare reversals of *u* and *v* and *i* and *j*. Long *s*’s have been silently regularized. The scribe uses relatively few abbreviations, with the exception of the brevigraph & which is used almost to the exclusion of “and,” and which is retained. Otherwise, a handful of instances of the “-es” graph, rendered *es*, and a few “special *p*’s”—“*par*” or “*per*”—are the only brevigraphs used. These brevigraphs have been expanded, as there is no satisfactory font symbol to convey them; however, as many abbreviations as could be retained were retained, including a few tittles above certain letters and a number of instances of superscript letters, both techniques signifying the omission of one or more letters (“*mañr*” for “manor,” for instance, “þ” for “that,” and “*w^{ch}*” for “which”). The cross symbols have been rendered with “+,” though this symbol does not fully convey their size or prominence, and the emphasis around key words has been rendered with boldface. Angled brackets have been inserted where it has been impossible to make out or reconstruct the words, enclosing a series of periods corresponding with the estimated number of letters missing. Where words or letters are obscured or obliterated in the manuscript due to holes, blotches, or general wear, it has occasionally been possible to reconstruct with some degree of certainty what a particular obliterated word was, owing to the repetitive nature of these spells; in these cases the word or letters have been inserted, italicized, in square brackets. The lineation is preserved, which serves to show the consistent patterns of damage in the manuscript extending over several lines and the wearing on the left edge of the sheet.

SPELL I

hearefolloweth the waie to make a bande to bynde the vij Sisters of the fayeres
 do þe to
 yo^r booke, & to thy child or frende for evar.
 I couniour you & bynde you fayeres þe w^{che} are vij Sisters & theses are yo^r
 names: + Lilia + hestillia + fata + sola + : afrya + Africa + Iulia + venulla + I
 connior &
 constrane you blessed vergins all, by the father by the sone: & by the holly
 gooste & by the
 blessed virgyn marie & by all the holly company of heaven, & by the dredfull
 day of
 d[ome]; & by all angelles; & archangelles & correctours þ^t in the firmament
 be & there
 vertewes, & by þe blood þ^t Rñ ow^t of the side of Iesus christ crucified allso
 I conniuor
 you vij Sisteres of fayres by all the wordes afore Reacited & by the Vertewes. I
 [const]rayne youe & bynde youe all to come to me & to apeare to me visible
 in my
 [sight] that I shall call youe by any wordes of **conniuracion** that is written in
 [this] booke
 & to apeare visible as the **conniuracion** leadethe [or *badethe?*] also I
connier you
 [ble]ssed virgynes of fayres by the openinge of heaven and by the cuttinge of þe
 [temple &-] by the darkenes of the sone in the tyme of his deathe, & by the
 Rysinge
 [of the ded] in the tyme of his glorious Resurreccion; & by the vnspeakable
 name of +
 [tetrag]ramaton the name of god moste hieste & by the Kynge of fayres & his
 vertou
 & by [the Q]uene of fayres & her vertues & powers. I coñure you all 7 Systeres of
 fayres < . . . > by all the Ryall wordes aforesayed. Reherced I coñiour youe all
 apeare
 at all < . . . > tymes as is foresaid. & to apeare to suche aperson before þe
connioracion be
 Red 3 tymes do come & apeare to me or to hym **vysible** all at one tym or
 on at þe

SPELL I

Here followeth the way to make a band to bind the seven sisters of the fairies
 to thee, to
 your book, and to thy child⁶⁹ or friend forever:
 I conjure you and bind you fairies, thee which are seven⁷⁰ Sisters and these
 are your
 names: + Lilia⁷¹ + ⁷² Hestilia⁷³ + Fata⁷⁴ + Sola⁷⁵ + Afrya + Africa + Julia +
 Venulla⁷⁶ + I conjure and
 constrain you blessed virgins all, by the Father, by the Son, and by the Holy
 Ghost, and by the
 blessed virgin Mary and by all the holy company of Heaven, and by the
 dreadful day of
 doom; and by all angels and archangels and correctors⁷⁷ that in the firmament
 be and their
 virtues, and by the blood that ran out of the side of Jesus Christ crucified.⁷⁸
 Also I conjure
 you, seven sisters of fairies, by all the words afore recited and by the virtues. I
 constrain you and bind you all to come to me and to appear to me visible⁷⁹
 in my
 sight, that I shall call you by any words of **conjunction** that is written in
 this book⁸⁰ and to appear visible as the **conjunction** leadeth; also I **conjure** you
 blessed virgins of fairies, by the opening of heaven⁸¹ and by the cutting of the
 Temple⁸² and by the darkness of the sun⁸³ in the time of his death, and by the
 rising
 of the dead in the time of his glorious resurrection; and by the unspeakable
 name of +
 Tetragrammaton,⁸⁴ the name of God most highest, and by the king⁸⁵ of fairies
 and his virtue⁸⁶
 and by the queen of fairies⁸⁷ and her virtues and powers. I conjure you all
 seven sisters of
 fairies . . . By all the Royal words aforesaid [and] rehearsed, I **conjure** you all
 appear
 at all . . . times as is aforesaid, and to appear to such a person before the
conjunction be
 read three times. Do come and appear to me or to him **visible**,⁸⁸ all at one time
 or one at a

tyme as the **conuracion** in this booke leadethe & to brynge wth you treasure & to laye it down in the plasse. as I shall apoynte. & to geve me good counsell to come by treasure hid in the yearthe & to shoue me in what plasse thaye are

hid & howe

I maye distroie & caste ow^t þe Keperes therof & to Reasolue me [*persyotlye?*]
in all

other thinges þ^t I or hym shall demande of that or any of you my will to be fulfilled wth ow^t any desceyt or tarringe & þ^t effectually and presenlye you
do come

to apeare to me or hym **visible** for I will choose you all to be my bountyfull vergines & will haue copulacion wth youe as I do soe occasion no power nor [*pow*]eres þe shall haue of my boody yearthely: to do me any harme nether slepinge nether wakinge nethere yet to hert any other creatoures or other thinges in the hole worlde nether to delued me by any meanes: but to fulfill & do all these thinges afore named **vigilantes** & trulye for me or hym in at all tyme & tymes whensoever I or him shall demande you I **conniure** youe all Sisters of fayres. + lilia + hestillia + fata + Solla + afria + africa + Iulia +
venila

+ by all the Ryall wordes aforesaid Reaherced; I bynd you + all to be obedeyente to me & to hym: & to all þe wordes þ^t be written in this booke aforesaid.

I constrayne

and **conniour** you all this band to fullfill vppon payne of all paynes & everlastinge condemnacion booth in this world to come fyat fyat fyat +
+ awaye +

the peace of god betewexe the & me go thy waye vnto thye plasse predestenanty of god vntyll I shall cale the gayne by this forsaide band or in vocation in the name of the father & the sone and the holly gooste amen.

time, as the **conjunction** in this book leadeth, and to bring with you treasure
 and to
 lay it down in the place⁸⁹ as I shall appoint, and to give me good counsel to come
 by treasure hid in the earth and to show me in what place they are hid and how
 I may destroy and cast out the keepers thereof, and to resolve me presently in all
 other things that I or him shall demand of that or any of you, my will to be
 fulfilled without any deceit or tarrying, and that effectually and presently you
 do come
 to appear to me or him **visible**, for I will choose you all to be my bountiful
 virgins and will have copulation with you as I do so occasion.⁹⁰ No power nor
 powers thee shall have of my body earthly, to do me any harm neither
 sleeping, neither waking, neither yet to hurt any other creatures or other
 things in the whole world, neither to delude⁹¹ me by any means, but to fulfill
 and do all these things afore named **vigilantly** and truly for me or him, at all
 time and times, whensoever I or him shall demand you. I **conjure** you all,
 sisters of fairies: + Lilia + Hestillia + Fata + Solla + Afria + Africa + Julia +
 Venila,
 + by all the royal words aforesaid [and] rehearsed: I bind you + all to be
 obedient to
 me and to him and to all the words that be written in this book aforesaid.
 I constrain
 and **conjure** you all this band to fulfill, upon pain of all pains and everlasting
 condemnation,⁹² both in this world [and the world] to come. Fiat,⁹³ fiat, fiat +
 + away +

The peace of God betwixt thee and me. Go thy way unto thy place
 predestinately⁹⁴ of God until I shall call thee again by this aforesaid
 band or invocation in the name of the Father and the Son and the
 Holy Ghost, amen.

SPELL 2

Reed est

& west

Southe

& northe

awaye to Ryess[en] en[d]i< . . > the houer of Iubyter &
lord of þe ascendent let them be called in as aforesaid. You
muste call them before Sone: & after Sone marke acurcle
of chalke or other wise one for her and then for yor selfe.

heare followethe þe waye & manor howe youe shall call one of
theese vergins of fayres aforenamed at onces vnto thy beed when
[e]vere thoue liste & haue her at pleasuer

Sett vp a cyrcle Rounde abowt thy bed & other adioynige fast to it & in it set
a square

table. and laye a clene clothe or napkyn vppon the table, & set a fayer candell
of wax

ine a cleane candellsticke burninge one it then set youe downe in a chayer
haveinge

one cleane and sewte clothes and maike a perfume as is an for her & let thy
beed be

pleysantes maid & trymed wth sweet odores & fayer clene sheetes & thou muste
be all alone

w^t ow^t any company year[thly] < > & you saye theeses wordes; I **connire**
þe lilia, +

Gentle vergine of fayries by < . . . > [the] name of the father the Sone & the holly
gooste & by

þe dredfull daye of dome, al[so I co]nniore/ þe lilia, +, oh blessed virgine of
fairies

by all the sperites of Iupter [and by] the spirites and correctors also I do
connioure þe

the blessed virgyn by the Kynge of fayres & his vertues & by the Quene of fayres
& by her vertues & powers, & by the faythe and obedyincey þ^t thou beareste
to them

all & by the blessed blood þ^t Rñ ow^t of the syde of Iesus christe crucified. &
by þe

SPELL 2

Read east and west, south and north:

Away to Risen < > In the hour of Jupiter⁹⁵ and
lord of the ascendant, let them be called in as aforesaid. You
must call them before sun, and after sun mark a circle
of chalk or otherwise, one for her and then for yourself.

Here followeth the way and manner how you shall call one of
these virgins of fairies aforesaid at once unto thy bed when-
ever thou list and have her at pleasure:

Set up a circle round about thy bed and another adjoining fast to it, and in it
set a square

table. And lay a clean cloth or napkin upon the table, and set a fair candle of wax
in a clean candlestick burning on it, then sit you down in a chair, having
on clean⁹⁶ and sweet clothes, and make a perfume, as is one for her, and let thy
bed be

pleasantly made and trimmed with sweet odors and fair clean sheets. And thou
must be all alone,

without any company earthly⁹⁷ < > and you say these words: I **conjure**
thee Lilia, +

gentle virgin of fairies, by < > [the] name of the Father, the Son and the
Holy Ghost, and by

the dreadful day of doom also; I **conjure** thee Lilia, + O blessed virgin of fairies.
By all the spirits of Jupiter and by the spirits and correctors also, I do **conjure**
thee,

thou blessed virgin, by the king of fairies and his virtues and by the queen of
fairies

and by her virtues and powers, and by the faith and obedience that thou bearest
to them

all, and by the blessed blood that ran out of the side of Jesus crucified, and by the

openinge of heaven, and by the cuttinge of the temple & by the darknes of the
Sone in the tyme of his death & by the Ryssinge of the ded in the tym of his
Reasurrection

& by the virgine marye mother of Iesus christe: & by the unspeakable name of

+

+ tetragramaton + I **conniore** þe blessed & bountyfull virgynes all þe Ryall
names

& wordes afore Reacited, & charge þe to apeare in this cyrcle **vysyble** in the
forme

and shape of a bountyfull maide & virgine befor me in agrene gowne & bewtyfule
[*appar*]elle & most fayreste to be holde, & to apeare quyklye & pleasantlye
w^t ow^t

[*lette*] or tarryenge, and you fayle not to fullfyle my wile & desier effectuallye
for I shall [*chose*] the & haue the to be my blessed virgine & Ioye: maike haste &
spede to come to me & apeare before me for I wile haue a carnall copulacion
wth the therfore maike haste and come by the vertewe of the father the
Sone, & the hollye gooste & of all the wordes herein this booke wryttn to
whome be all lavde hen[*e*] & glorie for ever & ever world wth [*word*] amen
fiat fiate

This worde don & ended, yf she come note
Reapete the **connioracion** agayne and bynde
her, when that is apeared, by this bande
as followeth

SPELL 3

The manor of the bande to bynd her when shee
is apeared to the

I **conniure** the oh blessed virgyn by the **coniuoracion** & by the vertew of these
wordes

throuwge force wherof thoue camste. hether I charge the blissed virgyn by all
þe Ryall wordes & names thowe camste hether do come to the bed + hallowed
+ & þ^t thowe

Reste therin in clenlye & peasable manor, & that you lye downe ther in &
gentlye quyetye

opening of heaven, and by the cutting of the Temple, and by the darkness of the sun in the time of his death, and by the rising of the dead in the time of his resurrection,
 and by the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, and by the unspeakable name of +
 + Tetragrammaton +. I **conjure** thee, blessed and bountiful virgins, [by] all the royal names
 and words afore recited, and charge thee to appear in this circle, **visible**, in the form
 and shape of a bountiful maid and virgin before me in a green⁹⁸ gown and beautiful apparel and most fairest to behold, and to appear quickly and pleasantly without
 let or tarrying, and [see] you fail not to fulfill my will and desire effectually for I shall choose thee, and have thee to be my blessed virgin and joy. Make haste and
 speed to come to me and appear before me, for I will have a carnal copulation with thee; therefore, make haste and come⁹⁹ by the virtue of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and by all the words here in this book written, to whom be all laud, heaven and glory, for ever and ever, world with word, amen.
Fiat, fiat.

This word done and ended, if she come not,
 repeat the **conjunction** again and bind
 her, when that [she] is appeared, by this band
 as followeth:

SPELL 3

The manner of the band to bind her when she
 is appeared to thee:

I **conjure** thee, O blessed virgin, by the **conjunction** and by the virtue of these words
 through force whereof thou camest. Hither I charge thee, blessed virgin, by all the royal words and names thou camest hither: do come to the bed + hallowed + and that thou
 rest therein in cleanly and peaceable manner, and that you lie down therein and gently, quietly,

wth ow^t fraude hurte guile or illisibus, ordowinge vnto me any boodyelye harme
ether sleapinge or wakinge or vnto any other creatoure or thinges þ^t god hath
created

in the worlde, and þ^t you departe not frome me vntyle it shall please me to geve þe
lycens for to departe, for I do choose þe to be my blessed virgine, in this world
to haue in

copulacion wth you I do bynde by the vertewe of all thinges that ever god made
or wrought by all the vertue of all his angelles, archangelles apostolles martires
confresseres & virgyns. My will to be fullfilled, & I do bynd the **visable** appeare
to me

in any places to me & to this booke, by the vertue of the Ryall & sacred wordes
contayned in this booke & by the vertewe of Iesus chirste the immaculate
Lamebe & sone of the holy goost be all howers & glorie Impire & Rule in the
world

of worldes + fyat, fyate + amen amen. +

This said goo to thy naked beed wth her but laye youe one to þ[e] Ryght syde &
lett lye one her lefte syde & do wth her what soo ever you please or canste doo
for wth

ow^t doute shee is a woman + & you needeste not to feare her for shee shall
haue no

power to hurte the, beinge so bownde as is afore to the prescribed, nor the nether
in the lyf hadiste soo pleasante a creature or lyvelye **woman** in beed wth the for
bewtye & bountye nether **quene** nor **empres** in all the all worlde is able to
countervaille her for I haue dyveres tymes provede her & haue had her wth me
amen then when thou haste accomlishe it & fullfilled thie will & desier
wth her then maiste Reason wth her of any mañ of thinges þ^t thou desyreste
& in all Kynd of question you lyste to demande of her but in any wysse I
advyse the to be well **warre** þ^t youe aske her not **what she is** and
also I **advyse** the to be well **warre** þ^t youe never tell deweringe the tyme shee
is bownd in frendshipe to the, what she doothe for the, to no boodye nor bye
any other meanes dysclosse it for no kynde of occasion or besines hawe greate
or whate soever it be, & sodowinge & ordyryng thy selfe you shall be sewer not
only to haue her Redye at yo^r comandemente, to come to lye wth the when
soever, it is thye will to haue thy pleasure on her but allso you shalbe suere
to haue thy wille fullfyled & done in all other thinges þ^t you lest to demande of
her amen

without fraud, hurt, guile, or illibus,¹⁰⁰ or doing unto me any bodily harm,
either sleeping or waking, or unto any other creature or things that God hath
created

in the world, and that you depart not from me until it shall please me to give thee
license for to depart, for I do choose thee to be my blessed virgin, in this world
to have in

copulation with. You I do bind by the virtue of all things that ever God made
or wrought, by all the virtue of all his angels, archangels, apostles, martyrs,
confessors, and virgins. My will to be fulfilled,¹⁰¹ and I do bind thee **visible**
appear to me

in any places: to me and to this book, by the virtue of the royal and sacred words
contained in this book and by the virtue of Jesus Christ the immaculate
Lamb and Son of the Holy Ghost, by all hours and glory, empire and rule, in
the world

or worlds. + Fiat, fiat. + Amen, amen. +

This said, go to thy naked bed with her but lay you on to the right side, and
let [her] lie on her left side,¹⁰² and do with her whatsoever you please or canst
do, for with-

out doubt she is a woman + and you needst not to fear her, for she shall have no
power to hurt thee, being so bound as is afore to thee prescribed, nor thee never
in thy life hadst so pleasant a creature or lively **woman**¹⁰³ in bed with thee. For
beauty and bounty, neither **queen** nor **empress**¹⁰⁴ in all the whole world is
able to

countervail her, for I have diverse times proved her and have had her with me,
amen. Then when thou hast accomplished it and fulfilled thy will and desire
with her, then mayst reason with her of any manner of things that thou desirest,
and in all kind of question you list to demand of her, but in any wise I
advise thee to be well **ware** that you ask her not **what she is**, and
also I advise thee to be well **ware**¹⁰⁵ that you never tell, during the time she
is bound in friendship¹⁰⁶ to thee, what she doth for thee, to nobody nor by
any other means. Disclose it for no kind of occasion or betimes, how great
or whatsoever it be, and so doing and ordering thyself you shall be sure not
only to have her ready at your commandment, to come to lie with thee when-
soever it is thy will to have thy pleasure on her, but also you shall be sure
to have thy will fulfilled and done in all other things that you list to demand of her.
Amen.

SPELL 4

heare followeth the mañr of the lycens when you
 will haue her to departe
 oh blessed virgine I **coniuoure** þe bi all the hollye names of god most hyeste &
 by the
 vertewe of the same wordes þ^t thoue camste hether before me I **coniuoure** þe
 & **comande** the to departe in peaces for a tyme for me & to Rest in the plasse
 where
 god haste ordayned the Reste in & to be Redye agayne to come vnto me, at
 any tyme when so ever, I shall comande the, & call the by the vertewe of all Ryall
 names & wordes þ^t be wrytten in this booke & by the vertewe of god
 ower lord Jesus chirste and by the vertewe of god the father almyghtye & of god
 the
 hollye gooste three dyvidet person & one verye god in essences to heme all
 boo<.>wk &
 prasse glorye & maiestie nowe & for ever more world to come fyat fyate +
 amen + amen

SPELL 4

Here followeth the manner of the license when you
will have her to depart:

O blessed virgin, I **conjure** thee by all the holy names of God most highest and
by the

virtue of the same words that thou camst hither before me. I **conjure** thee
and **command** thee to depart in peace for a time from me and to rest in the
place where

God hast ordained thee rest in,¹⁰⁷ and be ready again to come unto me, at
any time whensoever I shall command thee, and call thee by the virtue of all
royal

names and words that be written in this book and by the virtue of God
our lord Jesus Christ and by the virtue of God the Father Almighty and of God
the

Holy Ghost, three divided persons and one very God in essence, to have all < .
..... > and

praise, glory and majesty, now and forever more, world to come. Fiat, fiat. +
Amen, amen. +

NOTES

Frederika Bain is engaged in writing her dissertation in the English Department of the University of Hawai'i-Manoa on textual sites and significations of dismemberment in late medieval and early modern English literature. Her other research interests include mermaids, monsters, the animal-human boundary, and conceptions of the body.

1. The dating of the manuscript will be discussed further below.
2. Though the spells are presented in both semi-diplomatic transcription (see Stylistic and Textual Note for particulars) and modern English spelling, all quotes in the introduction will be given in modern English only.
3. A short list of fairy spells available in transcription or commonly cited includes Sloane 1727, partially transcribed in Katherine Briggs, *The Anatomy of Puck: An Examination of Fairy Beliefs Among Shakespeare's Contemporaries and Successors* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), 250–51; and Briggs, *A Dictionary of Fairies: Hobgoblins, Brownies, Bogies, and Other Supernatural Creatures* (London: Allen Lane, 1976); Ashmole 1406, partially transcribed in Briggs, *Anatomy of Puck*, 248–50; and Briggs, *Dictionary of Fairies*, 376–78; e. Mus 173, partially transcribed in Briggs, *Pale Hecate's Team: An Examination of the Beliefs on Witchcraft and Magic Among Shakespeare's Contemporaries and His Immediate Successors* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), 259–60; and Sloane 3851, which is commonly referenced, but I do not know of any transcriptions of it. Necromantic or demon-summoning spells include MS 3824, partially transcribed in David Rankine, *The Book of Treasure Spirits: A Grimoire of Magical Conjurations to Reveal Treasure and Catch Thieves by Invoking Spirits, Fallen Angels, Demons, and Fairies* (London: Avalonia, 2009), 109–13; and Clm 849, transcribed, partially translated and discussed in Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997). For an excellent, though not conclusive, list of magic manuscripts dealing with either summonings or image magic, see the appendix in Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*.
4. Alan Nelson, *Monstrous Adversary: The Life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), 60–61. Portions are also transcribed here.
5. Rankine, *Book of Treasure Spirits*, 110. It is referenced here under its previous Folger designation, MS 2250.
6. See Emma Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits: Shamanistic Visionary Traditions in Early Modern British Witchcraft and Magic* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 17–25; and Diane Purkiss, *At the Bottom of the Garden: A Dark History of Fairies, Hobgoblins, and Other Troublesome Things* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), in which the question is addressed throughout. Also useful for background are Minor White Latham, *The Elizabethan Fairies: The Fairies of Folklore and the Fairies of Shakespeare* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930); and Katherine Briggs, *Anatomy of Puck, Dictionary of Fairies, and The Fairies in English Tradition and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).
7. See Lucy Paton, *Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance* (Boston: Atheneum Press, 1903), for a full description of the romance tradition of the fairy.
8. Keith Thomas, in *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Belief in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), points out that accused witches' accounts of sex with the Devil are much fewer in English witchcraft trials than they are on the Continent, appearing mainly during the tenure of Matthew

Hopkins, the famous witch-finder (1645–47); however, Lizanne Henderson and Edward J. Cowan, in *Scottish Fairy Belief: A History* (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2001), show that they are more common in Scotland.

9. See Matthew Woodcock, *Fairy in "The Faerie Queene": Renaissance Elf-Fashioning and Elizabethan Myth-Making* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), chap. 1, for an overview of the association of demons and fairies. See also Emma Wilby, *The Visions of Isobel Gowdie: Magic, Witchcraft, and Dark Shamanism in Seventeenth-Century Scotland* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), 382–93, for the conflation of the Devil and the fairy man encountered by the accused witch Isobel Gowdie, and, more broadly, pp. 379–537 for “demonological elements” in Scottish fairy tradition.

10. Reginald Scot, *Discouerie of Witchcraft* (1584) (facsimile ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1971).

11. Lewes Lavater, *Of Ghosts and Spirits Walking by Night* (1572), ed. J. Dover Wilson and May Yardley (1929; rpt. Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing Company, 2003), 93.

12. James I, *Daemonologie* (1597), ed. G.B. Harrison (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), 74.

13. Wilby, *Visions of Isobel Gowdie*, 383.

14. The religious entities called on in both types of spells are most often Christian, particularly Catholic, including the Virgin Mary, martyrs, saints, and archangels. Occasionally Jewish and Roman terminology may be included, the latter often appearing if the spell has an astrological bent, while the former is evidenced in the particular angels mentioned and in the name “Tetragrammaton.” Kieckhefer shows that this name appears in numerous necromantic spells, predominantly Christian, that nonetheless partake of Jewish or Arabic elements; see *Forbidden Rites*, 115–16. The mage is positioned only as being able to work on the spirits through the power and with the permission of the divine, while divine names have inherent power as well, in and of themselves, when correctly deployed by a believer.

15. Barbara Mowat, “Prospero’s Book,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (2001): 1–33. Images of Vb 26 are available online through Folger’s Luna catalog, <http://luna.folger.edu/>.

16. Mowat, “Prospero’s Book,” 14–15. See also Owen Davies, *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 60–61, for a discussion of Oberion/Oberon.

17. John Bouchier, trans., *The Boke of Duke Huon of Burdeaux* (London: Early English Text Society, 1882).

18. Mowat, “Prospero’s Book,” 18–19.

19. Charles Burnett, “Talismans: Magic as Science? Necromancy Among the Seven Liberal Arts,” in *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages*, ed. Charles Burnett (Hampshire: Ashgate, 1996), 3.

20. Texts not elsewhere referenced in this essay include Michael Bailey, “The Feminization of Magic and the Emerging Idea of the Female Witch in the Late Middle Ages,” *Essays in Medieval Studies* 19 (2002): 120–34; Claire Fanger, ed., *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998); and Frank Klaassen, “English Manuscripts of Magic, 1300–1500: A Preliminary Survey,” in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits*, 3–31; “Medieval Ritual Magic in the Renaissance,” *Aries* 3, no. 2 (2003): 166–99; “The Middleness of Ritual Magic,” in *The Unorthodox Imagination in Medieval Britain*, ed. Sophie Page (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010); and “Three Early Modern Magic Rituals to Spoil Witches,” *Opuscula* 1, no. 1 (2011): 1–10.

21. Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 153.

22. Frank Klaassen, "Learning and Masculinity in Manuscripts of Ritual Magic of the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 38, no. 1 (2007): 52–53, 62.
23. Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 228.
24. Rankine, *Book of Treasure Spirits*, 11.
25. Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 102.
26. Briggs, *Dictionary of Fairies*; and *Anatomy of Puck*.
27. Purkiss, *At the Bottom of the Garden*, 116.
28. "While learned conjurors with their grimoires commanded demons, spirits, and angels to come to their aid, the more humble could, instead, call upon the services of the fairies." Owen Davies, *Cunning-Folk: Popular Magic in English History* (London: Hambledon and London, 2003), 93–95.
29. Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, in "Doctor Faustus," and Other Plays, ed. David Bevington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
30. Klaassen, "Learning and Masculinity," 62–64.
31. Charles Burnett, "Arabic Divinatory Texts and Celtic Folklore: A Comment on the Theory and Practice of Scapulimancy in Western Europe," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 6 (1983): 31–42.
32. Randle Cotgrave, in his 1611 *Dictionary of the French and English Tongues*, defines a grimoire as a "booke of coniuring, or exorcising," adding that such are "much in vse among Popish Priests."
33. Nelson, *Monstrous Adversary*, 61. The transcription is mine.
34. Ibid.
35. 1 Enoch 7–8, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/boe/index.htm>.
36. Frank Klaassen and Katrina Bens, "Achieving Invisibility and Having Sex with Spirits: Six Operations from an English Magic Collection ca. 1600," in *Opuscula: Short Texts of the Middle Ages*, forthcoming.
37. What the emphasis on "woman" signifies here is open to question. It may dissociate the fairy from her ethereal nature—physical being (in the shape of a woman) as opposed to disembodied spirit—but it may also serve to convey a bawdy tone, emphasizing gender—woman as opposed to man.
38. Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 406.
39. A commonly used term for spells in medieval manuscripts. Juris Lidaka argues that to translate it as "spells" or "experiments" loses the sense of the word. See "The Book of Angels, Rings, Characters, and Images of the Planets: Attributed to Osbern Bokenham," in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits*, 40.
40. Qtd. in Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 83.
41. 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.
42. Wilby, *Visions of Isobel Gowdie*, 386–88, 441–45; and *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits*, 143, 237–38.
43. Purkiss, *At the Bottom of the Garden*, 85–89.
44. Wilby, *Visions of Isobel Gowdie*, 47.
45. Ibid., 384–85.

46. Purkiss, *At the Bottom of the Garden*, 89–96
47. Wilby, *Visions of Isobel Gowdie*, 106.
48. Simon Armitage, trans., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (New York: Norton, 2008).
49. An excellent study of demon–human sex is Walter Stephans's *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
50. Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. and ed. Montague Summers (1928; rpt. Charleston: Forgotten Books, 2008).
51. James I, *Daemonologie*, 67.
52. Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* (1590), ed. Thomas Roche Jr. (London: Penguin, 1978), 1.7.16–18.
53. A. K. Donald, ed., *Melusine* (London: Early English Text Society, 1895).
54. Marie de France, *Lanval*, in *The Lais of Marie de France*, trans. Robert Hanning and Joan Ferrante (Durham, N.C.: Labyrinth, 1978), 105–25. (ll. 148–50).
55. An exception is *Huon of Burdeaux*, which presents Oberon as a Christianized king of the fairies.
56. Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits*, 117. See also Wilby, “The Witch’s Familiar and the Fairy in Early Modern England and Scotland,” *Folklore* 111 (2000): 283–305.
57. There are perhaps even more spells and charms *against* demons and fairies than there are to summon them, and again the language against the two can be similar. Often no distinction is made in the words used between summoning and banishing demons and spirits: “adiuro,” “exorcizo,” and “coniuro” tend to be used interchangeably, regardless of the intent of the spell (Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 127). Kieckhefer also elaborates the ways in which the two different processes that would be termed in modern usage as “conjuring”—summoning—and “exorcizing”—banishing—were markedly similar (*ibid.*, 14).
58. Briggs, *Pale Hecate’s Team*, 260.
59. Klaassen, “Learning and Masculinity,” 65.
60. Simon Gaunt, “Poetry of Exclusion: A Feminist Reading of Some Troubadour Lyrics,” *Modern Language Review* 85, no. 2 (1990): 310–29.
61. Stephans, in *Demon Lovers*, chap. 4, argues that an important reason for the fixation of interrogators at witchcraft trials on demonic sex was that they were trying to convince themselves that it was really possible.
62. Heather Wolfe, personal communication, June 6, 2011.
63. MS 448 in the Dijon Bibliotheque Municipale, trans. Ernest Wickersheimer, rpt. in Faith Wallis, ed., *Medieval Medicine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 69.
64. Frank Klaassen and Chris Phillips, “The Return of Stolen Goods: Reginald Scot, Religious Controversy, and a Late Sixteenth-Century Manuscript of Magic,” *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 1, no. 2 (2006): 141.
65. Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 404–10.
66. *Ibid.*, 405.
67. Scot himself objects to the involved ritual he is reprinting, remarking in a marginal note, “If all this will not fetch hir up the diuel is a knave” (*ibid.*, 406).
68. Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400–c. 1580*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

69. The occasional use of a young boy in the demon-summoning spells in Clm 849 is discussed in Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 104. Youths were considered useful for this purpose because of their asexual purity and lack of personal stake in the rite. Kieckhefer conjectures that the participation of the young boy might be the reason certain spells are written in the vernacular rather than in Latin (pp. 16–17).

70. Though the fairies are twice referenced as seven (vij), eight names are given. Seven is a traditional number for the fairy band, so it is likely that “Afrya” and “Africa” are the same name, respelled. In other spells that reference seven similar fairies, only one variant of “Africa” is given.

71. Lilia, the name of the fairy specifically singled out for copulation in the later spells, echoes the name of Lilith, Adam’s apocryphal first wife who was one of the Jinn. Kieckhefer points to spells conjuring up a female demon, Lilet, who is almost certainly related to Lilith. See *Forbidden Rites*, 104, 106. Lilia is referenced as the first of the seven sisters of the fairies in MSS Sloane 3824 and Sloane 1727. Lilia is also the name of one of seven *fevers* to be cast out in “The Sigismund Fever Charm” in MS 448, 69.

72. I take this as an indication that the speaker of the spell should make the sign of the cross here. This symbol shows up in a number of manuscripts, including Clm. 849, as well as in several spells printed in Scot’s *Discoverie of Witchcraft*.

73. The name is given as “Restilia” in Sloane 1727 and MS 448 and as “Rostilia” in Sloane 3824.

74. This Latin root of the word “fate” is also the root of the word for “fay,” or fairy, OED n. 2. According to E. Cobham Brewer, the fata were “supernatural beings introduced in Italian medieval romance, usually under the sway of Demogorgon,” a demon. See *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, Centenary Ed.*, rev. Ivor Evans (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 400. The name is given as “foca” in Sloane 3824 and Sloane 1727; the *a* and *o* might easily have been switched by either scribe, as is true of the lowercase *c* and *t*. Interestingly, one of the names of the fevers in MS 448 is “Suffoca.” It is possible the name changed from “Suffoca” to “Foca” to “Fata”; since Fata is actually connected with fairies, it would be an easy mistake for a copier to make. However, the instances of “foca” extant are in more recent manuscripts.

75. Given as “fola” in Sloane 3824 and Sloane 1727; the long *s* and lowercase *f* might easily have been switched by either scribe.

76. Both “Iulia” and variants of “Africa” and “Venulla” are given in Sloane 3824, Sloane 1727, and MS 448.

77. “A director or superior of an ecclesiastical office, religious order, etc.” OED n. 2b.

78. This blood was considered especially potent and miraculous. For the significance of the blood from Jesus’s side, see Carolyn Walker Bynum’s *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Devotional Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), esp. chap. 7. See also Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 244–48, for the many devotions to the side wound of Jesus.

79. One of numerous attempts to forestall imagined attempts by the fairies to find a loop-hole in the spell.

80. One of several references to “this book” that imply that the spells were copied out of an older book.

81. Revelation 4:1 and 19:11 refer to this event, a time of judgment and prophecy.

82. The spell in Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, uses the phrase “renting of the Temple” (405), possibly a reference to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E.; however, Klaassen suggests the phrase instead is a reference to the cutting/rending of the Temple curtain. Personal communication, February 2012. The curtain, then, would be that separating the Holy of Holies from the sight of the congregation.

83. Originally spelled “sone,” this can be read as a pun. “His death” is that of Jesus, so the darkness is both his own and that of the sun when he died. Though there is no reference in the Gospels to the sun going dark at Jesus’s death, it appears in Revelation 6:12 as one of the signs of the Apocalypse.

84. Yod hay vav hay, the four Hebrew letters that constitute the name of God. In Jewish tradition, God’s name was so holy that it was never to be spoken, save once a year on the Day of Atonement when a rabbi would go alone into the Holy of Holies and speak it aloud. According to Davies, *Grimoires*, 31, there was a medieval legend that the source of Jesus’s ability to perform miracles was that he had learned this unspeakable name of God from the Temple in Jerusalem.

85. Oberon, or Oberion, is identified as the king of the fairies in *Huon of Burdeaux*, until he is succeeded by Huon, and in Folger Vb. 26, an identification that Shakespeare likewise follows in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

86. Not necessarily “moral goodness,” but “power.”

87. It is less easy to make a positive identification here: Titania, Shakespeare’s queen of the fairies in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, is a possibility. Mab is also identified as fairy queen in *Romeo and Juliet* and in later early modern works; however, Micol or Micob are the names given to the queen in Vb 26 and Sloan 3824.

88. The importance of visual descriptions in accounts of meetings with fairies is emphasized in Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits*, 61.

89. Another instance of the legalistic insistence on identifying all possible loopholes.

90. The accretive structure of the clauses implies a fear of ending the sentence before all contingencies are accounted for.

91. The glamour, or illusion, was a common trait of the fairies, as of demons.

92. That is, the fairies can be condemned to hell if they do not follow the binding spell to the letter. If the fairies are equivalent to demons, though, presumably they are already condemned to hell. This also implies that God will punish them, however, since only God can effect everlasting condemnation.

93. Latin: “So be it.”

94. That is, by predestination; the implication is that God has predestined a place for the fairies to reside. This is consistent with the idea that the fairies are under God’s power, which pervades all the spells.

95. The hour of Jupiter, along with the hour of Venus, is identified in *The Book of Angels* as best for endeavors having to do with “love, peace, or amity.” See Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits*, n. 34, p. 75. The hour of Jupiter is also specified in Scot’s “Experiment of the dead,” and the *Book of Angels, Rings, Characters, and Images of the Planets* (Dd XI 45) directs that the “figure of Jupiter” be chosen for a magic ritual that will ensure that “all who see you will love you.” See Lidaka, “*Book of Angels, Rings, Characters, and Images of the Planets*,” 65.

96. Numerous authors identify cleanliness as one of the qualities most valued by fairies in humans and most likely to be punished in its absence. See Briggs, *Dictionary of Fairies*, 421.

97. This contradicts the references to “thy friend” or “him” throughout. It may be that an outsider is to be present during only part of the spells and not during the actual copulation. The “friend” may also be the intended user of the spells as opposed to the mage writing them.

98. Both Briggs, *Dictionary of Fairies*, 108–9; and Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits*, 62, point out that green was a color commonly associated with fairies; Wilby mentions it was also associated with the Devil.

99. The tone becomes that of an eager bridegroom pleading with his beloved rather than an autocratic summoner.

100. Latin: “mockery.”

101. An inversion or perversion of “thy will be done” in the Paternoster; this is one of the few places that seems to evince an actual lack of respect for God, as opposed to merely a lack of respect for his laws (e.g., by consorting with demonic spirits).

102. The spell referencing sex with a spirit in Sloane 3850 specifies that the speaker “Ly on the righte/side of the bed and she on the lyfte sid of the bede.” Klaassen and Bens, “Achieving Invisibility and Having Sex with Spirits.”

103. The fact that the speaker evidently feels the need to cross himself when invoking the fairy as a woman points to either reverence or fear; the latter seems more likely considering what follows.

104. The references, with their graphic emphasis, to “queen” and “empress” recall Elizabeth I, especially coupled with the repetition throughout the spells of “virgin.” Her adviser, the angelologist and necromancer John Dee, is considered the first person to have used the term “British Empire.”

105. The emphasis here points to the importance of this proscription.

106. “Friend” might refer to a “lover or paramour.” See *OED* n. 4.

107. The implication is that in calling the fairy out from this place the mage is countering God’s will, taking her from the place God has ordained that she be.