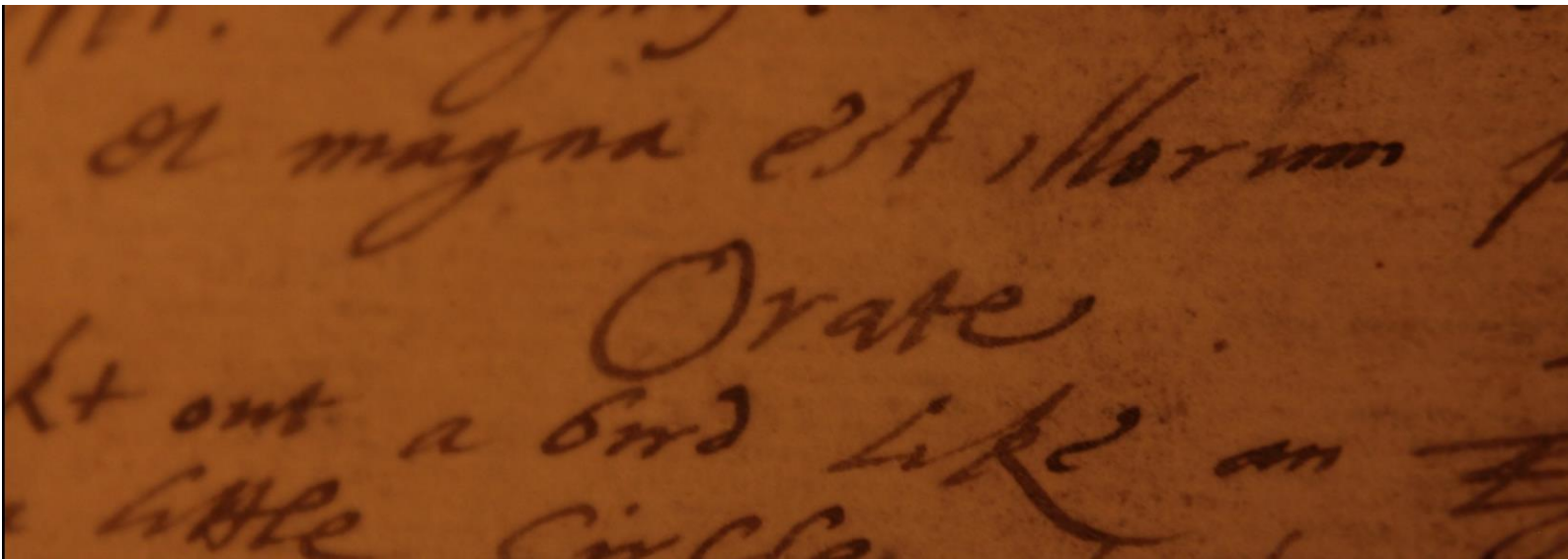


Magic in Context

An Analysis of dr. John Dee's Libri Mysteriorum Quinque as an entry point for Sixteenth-Century Magic and its Medieval Roots.



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1. Introduction

Over the past decades, people have become increasingly aware that history is indeed written by the victors, as the famous Jawaharlal Nehru quote reads.¹ The repercussions of this statement, however, have not permeated into history to their full extent. What does it mean to write a history of anything that is *not* dictated by ‘victors’, or at least victories? What image of history will we have to deal with, when we broaden our scope to include what seems to be irrelevant if you focus only on progression? The history of science is a history that tends to be written around a few victors like no other historical field. From Da Vinci to Galileo, Newton to Einstein and on to Steve Jobs: absolute success stories are told. These stories, however, tell only a part of a greater narrative. The history of science should not be written as the history of success. It is a history that should narrate the great depths of failure that often precede or surround success. A history that should be able to delve into systems of knowledge no longer in use, to make understandable the choices of the past instead of ridiculing them. The thesis in front of you is about a definite ‘loser’ in history, in terms of scientific success and legacy.

Although described in introductions of historical works as a brilliant mathematician, cartographer, astronomer, councillor to Queen Elizabeth I and men like Walter Raleigh and Francis Bacon, dr. John Dee (1527-1608) is an ambivalent historic character, if there ever was one. He was indeed all of the above, yet he also failed almost his entire life to gain steady patronage from any European prince, endeavoured zealously in prospectless scientific branches (like astrology, spiritual alchemy, and Cabbala) and died impoverished and almost alone in 1608. With this thesis, I aim to contribute to completing the image of John Dee as a historic actor and early modern individual.

Over the past 30 years John Dee has been the subject of a manifold of studies. Most of these works are based on the well-known ‘Yates Thesis’ of 1968, in which Frances Yates proposed that the ‘hermetic’ or occult sciences of the Early Modern Age have delivered an essential contribution to the series of insights and inventions known as the Scientific Revolution.² Peter French, himself a student of Yates, followed her in 1972 with his *John Dee, the world of an Elizabethan magus*.³ New research, however, quickly tempered Yates’ optimism towards the role played by the occult sciences. Since then a myriad of works have tried to explain just how far Yates was from the truth. What role did the occult sciences play in the Scientific Revolution? Did these strange and seemingly irrational alchemists really contribute to the glorious new ideas of the seventeenth century? John Dee’s name seems to pop up wherever the discussion on the worth of the occult sciences is debated. From the extensive *John Dee’s Natural Philosophy* by Nicholas Clulee to Glynn Parry’s biography, Deborah Harkness’ *John Dee’s conversations with angels* and the highly technical and complex *John Dee’s Occultism* by Giorgi Szönyi, an inspiring and most eloquent historiography has been formed.⁴ With this thesis, I aim to contribute to Dee studies by analysing one of his most enigmatic works, the *Libri Mysteriorum Quinque* (LMQ).

¹ Although the quote is often ascribed to Walter Benjamin, the words are Nehru’s but are most likely a paraphrase of a longer quote on how rulers inherit power from their victorious predecessors. J. Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New Delhi 1949).

² F. Yates, ‘The Hermetic Tradition in Renaissance Science’, in C.S. Singleton (ed.), *Art, Science and History in the Renaissance* (Baltimore 1968). And the preceding F. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago 1964).

³ P.J. French, *John Dee: the world of an Elizabethan Magus* (London 1972).

⁴ N.H. Clulee, *John Dee’s Natural Philosophy: between science and religion* (London 1988). G. Parry, *The Arch-Conjuror of England. John Dee* (New York 2011). D.E. Harkness, *John Dee’s Conversations with Angels. Cabbala, alchemy and the end of nature* (New York 1999). G.E. Szönyi, *John Dee’s Occultism: magical exaltation through powerful signs* (New York 2004).

This curious manuscript, kept in the British Library in London, is one of Dee's most intriguing endeavours.⁵ It is a diary of a kind, in which Dee recorded his 'scrying sessions' in which a seer, or scryer, looked into a crystal ball to find spiritual answers. Through this form of 'crystallomancy', the magical act of using crystals for occult purposes,⁶ Dee tried to gain a deeper understanding of the universe and its future. Although it will be properly introduced in the section dealing with its history and properties, the above suffices to argue for the strangeness of the book. Next to being strange, the LMQ is unique, since it shows us the praxis of early modern magic like very little sources do. The magical handbooks and manuals that are known, often only tell us about the theory of magic, not the practise of it. In this thesis the LMQ will be analysed both in materiality, and content, so that we can gain a deeper understanding of ritual magic in the sixteenth century.

In the following, I will introduce the framework of my research. My aim is to analyse the LMQ as a historical source, and put it into the context of a broader magical tradition.

1.2 Theory and Framework

Christoph Lehrich proposed that there are two sensible ways of analysing a major source. The first method is a close reading of every detail of the text, creating a thoroughly theoretical paper that is next to impossible to read for the non-expert reader. The second method starts with a defined problem, providing a logical point of entry, creating a kind of lifeline through the study of the source. After the, as Lehrich puts it, axes have been grinded, a detailed analysis can follow.⁷ In this thesis, I have opted for the second option, although the close reading analysis will only be touched upon as I am writing a thesis and not a book. Many studies on Dee have focussed mainly on his person and his place in (English) history. One of the few that did not was Szönyi, who wrote on several of Dee's occult works in *John Dee's Occultism* and placed them in a larger theoretical perspective. He chose to omit the LMQ from his analysis, however, leaving a gap that I intend to fill with this thesis.

The sixteenth-century magician is an elusive historical character, that still needs extensive study to be fully understood in an academic sense today. Frank Klaassen has done tremendous work on this subject in the recent past, placing the traditions of magic from the Middle Ages to the early modern times in a new perspective. He proposed that the idea by Lynn Thorndike and Frances Yates followed by scholars of magic like Deborah Harkness, John Henry, and Brian Copenhaver that the 'old dirty' medieval magic was in decline in the Renaissance is inherently wrong. These scholars tended to focus only on 'Natural Magic' leaving out the demonic or necromantic magic, that was professed both in the medieval days and well into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁸ Klaassen stated that early modern magic had so many similarities to its medieval predecessor, that we might have to change our image of early modern magic completely.⁹ Klaassen demonstrated

⁵ British Library, London, Sloane MS 3188.

⁶ B. Lång, *Unlocked Books. Manuscripts of learned magic in the medieval libraries of Central Europe* (Pennsylvania 2008), p. 3. R. Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites. A necromancer's manual for the fifteenth century* (Pennsylvania 1998), p. 97.

⁷ C.I. Lehrich, *The Language of Demons and Angels. Cornelius Agrippa's Occult Philosophy* (Leiden 2003), p. 213-214.

⁸ Klaassen, F., 'Ritual Invocation and Early Modern Science: the skrying experiments of Humphrey Gilbert', in C. Fanger (ed.), *Invoking Angels. Theurgic ideas and practices, thirteenth to sixteenth century* (Pennsylvania 2012), pp. 341-366, P. 355. F. Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic: Illicit learned magic in the later Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Pennsylvania 2013), p. 4-5, 7-9.

⁹ Klaassen, 'Ritual Invocation and Early Modern Science', p. 343.

this via the case of the English scholar Humphrey Gilbert (1539-1583); I will bolster Klaassen's argument via John Dee and the LMQ.

There is another image of sixteenth-century magic I believe needs remonstrating. Leirich showed us an old but still present idea about the medieval and early modern magus that would lead us to believe that the magus was an isolated individual, performing magic in secret.¹⁰ Marcel Mauss wrote, in line with his contemporary Émile Durkheim, that 'a magical rite is any rite which does not play a part in organized cults – it is private, secret, mysterious and approaches the limits of a prohibited rite'.¹¹ Through the case of John Dee, I will demonstrate that this idea is both exacerbated and untrue. Despite the image of a long-bearded and secluded magus Dee might inspire, we will see that these men were very much invested in society and that the private sphere of their magic was not very private at all.

In a philosophical sense, I take John Dee, and essentially the discussion about science and magic, out of the rigid discourse of the Scientific Revolution and place it into a context of social and intellectual history.¹² My aim with this is not to downplay the importance of the Scientific Revolution, but to undermine the historical discourse in which the Revolution is generally discussed. John Dee's scientific life is a textbook example of why this rigid discourse has become outdated, and no longer serves a purpose. Gyorgi Szönyi even went so far to propose to no longer study Dee historically, but to shift to an anthropological viewpoint.¹³ However, I do believe historical study of Dee is still necessary and meaningful. It simply needs to be detached from the slumbering presentism that the discourse of the Scientific Revolution, narrowing its view to include only the 'great discoveries' of our past, still tends to uphold.

As Steven Shapin wrote in his 2010 book *Never Pure*, the history of science was, and is, in great need of 'lowering the tone' of optimism and presentism.¹⁴ With this, he meant that the history of science, like no other, was written around a select number of known 'victors'. One thinks of Isaac Newton as a usual suspect. As Shapin states in his book, however, Newton is the best example of how the traditional history of science is crooked in its perception. Newton was primarily an alchemist, not a physicist, as is known and accepted by now. An alchemist with many failures in his research, and with some promising discoveries indeed. For the latter he is famed and remembered, for the former he is not mentioned at all. Dee's is an interesting case with which to show that science and the occult were not necessarily mutually exclusive in the Early Modern Age. Although the occult sciences did not play the large part in the Scientific Revolution Yates described, they coexisted with, and complemented the scientific endeavours our history celebrates.

I believe we need to divert the historical focus from that rigid discourse, as Klaassen also proposed, of 'great men' and grand narratives, to the 'social and intellectual context' [...] in which the modern science was born'.¹⁵ A man like Dee, undeniably an extremely learned man, did not pick science above magic, or the other way around. Frances Yates may have overstated the influence of

¹⁰ Leirich, *The language of Angels and Demons*, p. 5.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

¹² The old theory of the scientific revolution is discussed elaborately in M.J. Osler, 'The Canonical Imperative: Rethinking the Scientific Revolution' in, M.J. Osler (ed.) *Rethinking the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge 2009), pp. 4-22.

¹³ Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 7-13.

¹⁴ S. Shapin, *Never Pure: historical studies of science as if it was produced by people with bodies, situated in time, space, culture, and society, and struggling for credibility and authority* (Baltimore 2010).

¹⁵ Klaassen, 'Ritual invocation and Early Modern Science', p. 342.

(hermetic) magic on the Scientific Revolution, but we cannot, and should not, dismiss magic completely.¹⁶

1.3 Contextualisation and Method

The problems that will form the starting point for this thesis can be divided into three. First and foremost I want to compare the magic in the LMQ to older medieval magical traditions, to test Frank Klaassen's hypothesis of continuity in ritual magic. How does the LMQ relate to medieval ritual magic? To answer this, I will conduct a comparison between the LMQ and the medieval magical manuals called the *Ars Notoria* and the *Liber Iuratus*, stemming from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries respectively. Besides testing Klaassen's hypothesis, this will help us place the LMQ, and the sixteenth-century magic into context. However, in line with Leirich's method, there are several 'axes' that need grinding before we can do this.

There is some uncertainty about the LMQ's author needs to be resolved before we can safely connect Dee to the content of the text. The manuscript was found decades after Dee had died, making it questionable whether Dee actually wrote it. The seventeenth-century intellectual Elias Ashmole acquired the book after its rediscovery, and he assessed that it was indeed written by John Dee. No scholar since has, to my knowledge, problematised this. I believe this is something worth researching. After all, do we not need some certainty that Dee truly wrote the LMQ before we can use it to find answers regarding Dee and his magic? In three steps I will determine whether or not the LMQ is indeed Dee's autograph. Firstly via a cross-referencing of dates from the LMQ and Dee's diary, that partially covers the same period. This will tell us, for example, whether Dee was present at his home when the sessions from the LMQ were being held. Secondly, a brief analysis of word usage will be conducted. Brief, because it will only be compared to a select number of sources. Unfortunately, again, I am writing a thesis and not a book, so there is no space to compare all Dee's writings in depth. Thirdly, and possibly most importantly, a palaeographical analysis will show us whether the hand(s) from the LMQ share any particularities with Dee's hand(s) found in other sources. Lastly, before moving on to analysing the content of the LMQ, I will determine whether or not it is probable that Dee believed in the magic written down. After all, even if we say the LMQ is an autograph that does not exclude the option of the entire content being simply made up by Dee.

After all of the above has been determined, and given that the answers are in favour of Dee, the last chapter will deal with the content. First, we look at the content of the angelic conversations and the 'practiced magic' inside the book. As mentioned above, one of the unique traits of the LMQ is that it shows us the practice of magic. The methods of Dee's magic, his instruments and the structure of the scrying sessions will be evaluated, and compared to the magic in the *Ars Notoria* and *Liber Iuratus*. We will then try to find an answer to the question why Dee kept the LMQ a secret. The evaluation of its content will answer the question on whether it could be classified as dangerous, explaining why Dee kept the book out of sight. The focus will be on heresy, demonic or necromantic magic, and frankly any parts of the text that could be called abominable or problematic from a sixteenth-century Christian viewpoint.

¹⁶ An attentive reader might ask here why I chose to call it 'magic' despite this. This is simply for reasons of readability and connecting to the historiography. Frank Klaassen's *Transformations of Magic* is one of the key-publications for this thesis, so I have taken his jargon on the subject as my own.

Simply put, there are three questions I will ask, that will at the end put the LMQ into context and make it accessible for future research. First, we will ask whether Dee actually wrote the book; so 'is the LMQ an autograph by Dee?' Second we will ask whether or not the LMQ stands in a medieval tradition of magic that transgressed the constructed border between the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age. Thirdly we will determine whether the content of the LMQ is indeed such that the author would be likely to keep it from the public eye, or that there could have been another reason for secrecy. These questions all serve the purpose of opening the LMQ as a historical source, and furthering our understanding of the tradition of sixteenth-century ritual magic. I will start, however, with sketching the essential magical, historiographical and biographical framework.

1.4 On the Order of Things

After discussing relevant traditions of magic in the second chapter, chapter three presents a concise overview of the historiography on Dee to sketch the outlines of Dee studies so far. Chapter four provides a biographical summary based on several publications on Dee's life, but most notably on Glynn Parry's 2011 biography of Dee.¹⁷ In chapter five the authorship of the LMQ will be problematised and analysed in the following way. First of all, in section 5.1.1, I compare the dates on which the scrying sessions were held according to the LMQ to dates found in Dee's diary that was published by James Halliwell in 1842.¹⁸ Luckily, a significant part of the diary is contemporaneous with the LMQ, allowing us to find out where Dee was, and what he was doing during the time of the scrying sessions. What follows, in section 5.1.2, is a short analysis of Dee's word usage and writing style. This will buttress the arguments telling us whether Dee was, or was not, the author. Thirdly the LMQ will be subjected to a palaeographical analysis and compared to other works that we know for sure were written by Dee in section 5.1.3.

The three arguments combined will then allow us to decide whether it is probable or not that Dee wrote the LMQ himself. In the case of a positive answer, we can move on to analysing the source. However, should the arguments point in the other direction we will have to consider the possibility that Ashmole's assessment was simply wrong. Even though the preliminary evidence points in favour of the first outcome, the second would spectacularly revise Dee studies and is therefore worth pursuing. In section 5.3 I will briefly go into the question of whether we can categorise Dee as a true believer, or a deliberate impostor. This can be done succinctly as there is sufficient evidence for a definitive answer.

In chapter six I will present the analysis of the content of the LMQ, answering the questions posed above. Section 6.1 will deal with the contents of the angelic conversations and the way in which Dee and Kelley conducted their scrying. As briefly mentioned, it is unique to have a documentation of the actual practice of magic at our disposal; this section will elaborate on that praxis.

In section 6.2, the magic from the LMQ will be analysed and placed in a context of medieval Solomonic magic, via comparison with the *Ars Notoria* and *Liber Iuratus*. Here Frank Klaassen's theory of continuity instead of a breaking of tradition will be tested. Dee's methods will be compared to those found in these magical manuals, either explicit or implicit. Klaassen suggested

¹⁷ Parry, *The Arch-Conjuror of England*.

¹⁸ J. Dee, *The Private Diary*, ed. by J.O. Halliwell (London 1842).

that understanding individual sixteenth-century occult scholars will enhance our understanding of the period.¹⁹ Via comparison between these texts, I hope to further this understanding.

The ‘dangerous’ content found in the LMQ, and arguably the answer to the question why Dee chose to hide his book, will be presented in section 6.2. I will look for heretical ideas and beliefs, demonic necromancy and frankly all parts of the angelic conversations that could be seen as conflicting with Christian theory and theology. If discovered, these conflicting ideas will be presented as arguments why Dee kept the LMQ to himself. However, in section 6.3, an answer will be provided to remonstrate the comment by Mauss on magic being professed privately and in secret. As Klaassen showed in the case of Humphrey Gilbert, I do not believe the sixteenth-century magus should be seen as an isolated figure.

Two appendices are included. The first (Appendix 1) presents a documentation on the palaeographical research summarized in section 5.3. The second (Appendix 2) presents one of the scrying sessions as conducted by Dee and his most important scryer (Edward Kelley).

1.5 Translation and Transcription

The transcriptions of the LMQ used and quoted in this thesis are based upon Peterson’s edition of the LMQ. Peterson edited the LMQ, filling in some lacunae caused by damage to either the paper or the ink from Ashmole’s edition of the text. I will use the manuscript kept in the Sloane collection (Sloane MS 3188) of the British Library as a means to check on Peterson’s transcriptions should they ever be unclear or doubtful. All citations are presented verbatim. This means some early modern English will be included, leaving a sometimes awkward spelling— for example when Dee spells the word ‘priest’, as ‘preist’. The translation of the Latin used in the LMQ will also be taken from Peterson’s edition.

For the *Liber Iuratus* I have used Gösta Hedegård’s Latin edition and Joseph Peterson’s English translation in complementary fashion.²⁰ Latin quotes from the *Liber Iuratus* are taken from Hedegård. English quotes are taken from Peterson. English quotes from the *Ars Notoria* were taken from Rowe’s edition of Robert Turner’s 1650 translation.²¹

¹⁹ Klaassen, ‘Ritual Invocation and Early Modern Science’, p. 358.

²⁰ G. Hedegård, ‘Liber Iuratus Honorii: a critical edition of the Latin version of the Sworn Book of Honorius’ in, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, *Studia Latina Stockholmiensia* 48 (Stockholm 2002).

J.H. Peterson, *The Sworn Book of Honorius: liber iuratus honorii* (Boston 2016).

²¹ R. Turner, *Ars Notoria: the notary art of Solomon*, trsl. by B. Rowe (1999).

2. On Traditions of Magic

'The pitfalls which beset the path of the professional sorcerer are many, and as a rule only the man of coolest head and sharpest wit will be able to steer his way through them safely.'

James Frazer, 1922.²²

Whether in the Middle Ages or today, the study of magic is a highly complex and time-consuming business. In a way, the modern historical scholarship of magic does not even differ that much from the medieval scholar trying to master the magic. When we, as historians, study traditions of magic in order to understand the historical magical theory, we are in effect replicating what medieval and early modern scholars of magic did. We pick up the magical theories of the past, put them side by side and try to extrapolate something of a transcending theory of magic from them. In this chapter, I will introduce some magical theories, definitions and occultists of the late Middle Ages and Early Modern period.

Only what is essential to understand Dee's work and train of thought in his studies will be clarified and introduced. It is not an attempt to provide an exhaustive overview of all magical practices of the period. Witchcraft and related subjects will not be addressed, since the kind of magic invoked in witchcraft, and witchcraft discourse, is of a different essence than the more learned magic Dee was invested in.

In 1922 James Frazer came up with three interesting questions about historical magic, that I still find relevant for our studies today, despite the fact that Frazer might have answered them very differently from us due to paradigmatic changes in historical studies.²³ He asked, as summed up by Christoph Lehrich:

1. Is there not a certain rationality, however, defined, or application of rational principles, which inheres in magical practices?
2. Does magic have some historical or analogical relation to modern science? Does it have such a relation with religion?
3. What status can we attribute to the claims of magicians; in other words, is a magician, in general, a "sorcerer who sincerely believes in his own extravagant pretensions", or a "deliberate impostor"?²⁴

The first question will be addressed in section 2.1. The second question can be briefly dealt with here. The problematic relation between science, magic, and religion has been mentioned in the introduction and is evidently complex. Suffice it to say that for a man like Dee his magic was deeply religious and methodically scientific.²⁵ It is only when we try to categorise magic within the modern

²² J. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. 1 (New York 1922), p. 215.

²³ Lehrich, *The Language of Demons and Angels*, p. 4-5.

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 4. J. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p. 52-57.

²⁵ Even though he dubbed his scrying 'optical science' himself, we cannot take his word 'science' for what we mean with it today. The relevance here lies in the fact that he saw what we would call magic as methodically the same as what he called science.

notions of 'science' and 'religion' that we run into trouble. The third question will be dealt with in chapter five, section 5.3 when we establish whether it is probable that Dee was either a believer or a deceiver regarding his experiments.

2.1 Definitions of Magic

Every study of the occult has to deal with definitions of 'magic'. As one can imagine, this is an extremely complex and essential choice that has to be made. The problems surrounding choosing a definition in this thesis, are manifold. For example, what we might justifiably call 'magic' would not necessarily have been called so by John Dee or his contemporaries. Then again, it is very hard to establish what would have been seen as magical in the sixteenth-century (scholarly) mind. Their terms and ours are inherently incommensurable, as they have to stretch over several paradigms. Kieckhefer chose in his book *Magic in the Middle Ages* for the following, somewhat problematic, division: 'an action is magical if it evokes occult or demonic power, and is not magical if it evokes divine power or the apparent powers of nature'.²⁶ This means that, for example, astrology can be called natural instead of magical, since an astrologer only 'reads' what is shown by nature. It also means that Dee's ritual evocation of angels falls in between, since it can be argued to work via divine powers, but demonic just as easily. An explicit inclusion of theurgic magic would solve this problem.²⁷ Catherine Rider disagrees with Kieckhefer's definition, as she places the occult within natural magic. Occult powers, after all, are simply powers of nature that we cannot normally perceive.²⁸ Kieckhefer more accurately described magic as a 'kind of crossroads' where religion, science and popular culture intersect.²⁹ Lynn Thorndike's definition, which included '... all occult arts and sciences, superstitions and folklore' solves the problem of in-/exclusion by simply including everything that might be called magical.³⁰ This makes the definition so broad that it loses its significance.

When we try to decide whether medicine and religion can be called magic, we run into further problems. Historical medicine might seem magical to us, even when contemporary users would not necessarily have seen it as such. Amulets, for example, could be an accepted medicine in the Middle Ages and Early Modern period.³¹ There are even Biblical examples of amulets being used for healing.³² Charms, prayers, and spells were frequently used simultaneously making a division on what is medicine, and what is magic practically impossible.³³ Moreover, it seems that many definitions of magic are based on the faulty idea that there are relatively few kinds of magic.³⁴ It is exactly the plurality that makes creating a definitive definition near impossible. The old cliché seems to be applicable here, leaving the definition of magic 'in the eye of the beholder'. This automatically means that sharp and rigid definition is off the table. It would be better to imagine

²⁶ R. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge 1989), p. 14.

²⁷ I define theurgic magic as ritual magic that aims to evoke celestial beings and wisdom, or make the magus ascend to a higher celestial and even divine understanding himself.

²⁸ C. Rider, 'Common Magic', in D.J. Collins (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West* (Cambridge 2015), pp. 303-331, p. 305.

²⁹ L.N. Kallestrup, R.M. Toivo, 'Approaches to Magic, Heresy and Witchcraft in Time, Space and Faith', in L.N. Kallestrup, R.M. Toivo (eds.) *Contesting Orthodoxy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cham 2017), p. 7.

³⁰ L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. 1 (London 1964), p. 2.

³¹ F. Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic*, p. 313.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 314.

³³ B.P. Copenhaver, 'Magic' in K. Park, L. Daston (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Science*, vol. 3, Early Modern Science, pp. 518-540, p. 531. Rider, 'Common Magic', p. 310.

³⁴ Lehrich, *The Language of Angels and Demons*, p. 11.

the categories of magic that follow in this chapter as overlapping circles that all touch each-other at some point. They might have evolved into very different methods and systems of magic but they are inherently and undeniably connected to each-other.

I believe that for this thesis, an inclusive definition of magic in relation to 'science' is most fitting. To John Dee, the division between 'science' and 'magic' would be useless and strange. He used every method he knew to learn more about our universe and its future, calling his scrying 'optical science'.³⁵ In this sense, I disagree with scholars like Szönyi who persistently study Dee as a man who went '... from science to magic'.³⁶ To some, his scrying would be necromancy, but to Dee, it was a method for finding truth. The only true division in these terms we encounter in the LMQ is between what Dee and Kelley are doing, and witchcraft.³⁷ Subsequently, an inclusive definition fits our purposes best. Bearing this in mind, all forms of the evocation of powers that are usually beyond man, i.e. the occult, divine, angelic and demonic, are called magic for purposes of clarity.

This is complemented by two disclaimers however. It needs to be clear that for the most part this thesis deals with learned magic, and I have no pretence that my conclusions also ring true for 'lower' magic or witchcraft. By learned magic I mean kinds of magic that were utilized in an educated manner, for example through Latin, Hebrew, Greek and literary studies of magic of the past. This kind of magic is not liable for use to 'the masses'. *Mutatis mutandis* this means that 'lower' magic is the exact opposite: magic that did not require any system of thought or deeper theory, and could be utilized by anyone and everyone. An example of learned and lower magic to explicate the difference, would be alchemy as learned, and love- or weather magic as lower. This does not mean, however, that learned men could not, or did not, profess the lower kind of magic. Besides, the Early Modern Age saw a sort of 'opening up' of education and learning, allowing more people to dabble with learned magic and its theoretical framework. Secondly it needs to be absolutely clear that despite the blossoming of magic in the Early Modern period, it was in no way the general consensus that the magic Dee worked with was A: real, and B: safe. The late sixteenth century is a strongly ambivalent age when it comes to magic and scepticism.³⁸

The term 'common' magic deserves some elaboration, as it is easily understood in a wrong way. As Catherine Rider explains, the term is often unjustly understood as the counterpart of 'learned' magic: 'lower' magic. Kieckhefer coined the term in studies of magic, and he meant it to stand for a tradition of magic that is commonly used, and not confined to being used by 'common' people.³⁹ The scrying that Dee professed, for example, is a typical form of common magic. It was easy to learn and could be done in numerous ways, by almost anyone.⁴⁰ Probably because of this, it was widely popular in the sixteenth century.⁴¹ I will deal with this more elaborately in section 2.5 of this chapter. The way Dee communicated with angels, however, can be called 'learned' since it

³⁵ Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 177-178.

³⁶ G.E. Szönyi, 'From the Hieroglyphic Monad to Angel Magic: semiotic aspects of John Dee's esotericism', in *Lexia. Rivista di semiotica*, vol. 11-12 (2012), pp. 109-136, p. 136. Deborah Harkness made the same point in Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels*, p. 63-64.

³⁷ An angel introduced by Uriel, named 'Il' or 'El' dismisses a book that Dee calls his 'Arabic boke' as containing 'fals and illuding Witchcrafts' and therefore useless. Dee does not contest whether it contains witchcraft, nor whether witchcraft is indeed to be avoided. Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 353.

³⁸ Interestingly Elias Ashmole categorised alchemy and natural magic alongside navigation and printing. However, this would not be a common or self-evident division. V., Feola, 'Elias Ashmole's collections and views about John Dee', in *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, vol. 43 (2012), pp. 530-538, p. 532.

³⁹ Rider, 'Common Magic', p. 303.

⁴⁰ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, p. 112.

⁴¹ Whitby, C.L., 'John Dee and Renaissance scrying', in *Bulletin of the Society of Renaissance studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, October 1985, pp. 25-36, p. 28.

was filled with Latin, calculations and complex references to magical books of the past. The goal of Dee's scrying also connects his scrying to 'learned' magic, since the acquisition of knowledge or even divine insight is typically learned.⁴² Therefore a form of 'learned common magic' could exist.

Lastly, I would like to address the first of Frazer's questions presented above, as its answer is important for understanding historical magic.

Is there not a certain rationality, however, defined, or application of rational principles, which inheres in magical practices?

To call historical magic irrational is inherently anachronistic. The magic of the Middle Ages and Early Modern age are not irrational; they are simply founded on a system of knowledge different from ours. If one would accept that historical magic, just like medicine, was based upon an extremely complex and intellectual system, it becomes impossible to maintain that it was completely and utterly irrational. An analogy I like to use is the influence of the moon on earth.

We know that the moon influences the sea on earth through gravity. Even though most of us have never tested this in an experiment, we choose to believe it because we trust the authorities that tell us this. Is it such a large step, then, to believe that the moon influences not only the waters, but also the lifeforms on earth? Is it really that irrational to believe that the moon's powers also influence our state of mind, the fate of new-born babies and, for example, certain plants? If you trust the authorities conveying the message, you tend to trust the message. So either both examples are irrational, or both are not. They simply come from different paradigms, making the latter uneasy for us, in the paradigm of the former.

2.2 Occult and Natural Magic

Although already addressed briefly above, more needs to be said on the divisions that can be made between different forms of magic. What is it that classifies certain types of magic as 'occult' and others as 'demonic', or 'natural'? This division is never as rigid as it might seem. Modern scholars thoroughly enjoy categorising the types of magic we encounter, which is fine, but that does not mean the same divisions were made in the past. As we already saw with Kieckhefer, Rider, and Copenhaver, there is hardly a consensus on the subject today.

Simply put, the division in modern historiography is as follows: occult powers are hidden powers in the sublunary world. The word 'occult', of course, comes from the Latin *occultum* or *occultus* which translates as 'secret' or 'hidden'. An example to clarify this today is gravity. Gravity is very much an occult power, since it cannot be seen but is still believed to influence life on earth. If occult powers are powers that cannot normally be seen, natural magic works with powers that can (partially) be seen. The best example of this is astrology and prognostication. An astrologer observes the natural moving of the planets and can foretell which planet will be where at a certain moment. After that, he can estimate what the influence of the planets will be in the sublunary world at that moment. Prognostication works in the same way, only it includes a more broad spectrum of actions, including finding lucky and unlucky days, creating schematics for bloodletting and calculating the right and wrong days for certain earthly endeavours. However, even natural magic

⁴² Klaassen, 'Ritual invocation and Early Modern Science', p. 344.

like this is not without risk. As we can learn from Heinrich Agrippa (1486-1535), there is always the chance it attracts demons and becomes extremely dangerous to practice.⁴³

Astrology and astronomy, historically used interchangeably, stand in an ancient tradition of star-gazing, starting for medieval purposes with the ancient Greeks. Until well into the eighteenth century astrology stood among the sciences of name and statute, after which it gradually changed into the astronomy we know today. At least since the sixth century it was part of the quadrivium of the seven liberal arts, placing it in a long tradition of learning and education.⁴⁴ It was taught at Europe's major universities from the fourteenth century onwards, within the three subjects of mathematics, natural philosophy and medicine.⁴⁵ As Tester has shown, astrology saw many influences over time, and never really stopped evolving -or at least changing.⁴⁶

For the late Middle Ages, astrology functioned as follows: the motions of the planets needed to be mapped and studied to be able to predict them. The influences of the planets for life on earth (or the sublunary world) could then be analysed through what Rutkin calls '[...] a geometrical-optical model of planetary influences'.⁴⁷ The planets influenced both earth and each-other inspiring a holistic approach to their power and effects. When all the facets of movement were taken into account, this could be integrated into mathematical natural philosophical models.⁴⁸ The first step to astrological predictions and prognostication, then, is being able to foretell what the celestial bodies would do exactly, and where they would end up. This stands in a Ptolemaic tradition of ancient Greek science.

Astrology is a peculiar case, because it could be very much a learned science yet it could be evoked to some extent by almost everyone, making it common and un-learned magic. If you imagine the kind of astrology Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) professed, you could think of the complicated calculations and measurements needed to understand one bit of the celestial movement he observed. Yet he also did predictions on political and personal subjects for Emperor Rudolph II (1552-1612).⁴⁹ But anyone could understand that if a child was born under a full moon, he would be 'moonstruck' and therefore severely dull or apathic (hence the term 'lunacy').⁵⁰ That is also a facet of astrology. Next to these two kinds of astrology, one of the most important uses of predictions via the stars was found in medicine. Countless numbers of manuscripts and printed works of schematics and tables could tell a physician, surgeon or barber when to, or not to, treat a patient with a certain ailment. Bloodletting, for example, had to be done at specific times, or the patient would be put in jeopardy. When the scientific side of astrology was fading away in the seventeenth century, it held its authority in medicine.⁵¹ These are relatively innocent kinds of magic, except for a constant threat of potential demonic interference.⁵²

⁴³ Copenhaver, 'Magic', p. 525-6. For a more extensive overview of Agrippa's life and writings on the magical and religion, I refer to W. Müller-Jahncke, P.R. Blum 'Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535): Philosophical magic, empiricism, scepticism' in P.R. Blum (ed.), *Philosophers of the Renaissance* (Washington 2010), pp. 124-132.

⁴⁴ S.J. Tester, *A History of Western Astrology* (New York, 1987), p. 101-102.

⁴⁵ H.D. Rutkin, 'Astrology' in K. Park (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Science*, vol. 3, Early Modern Science, pp. 541-561, p. 541.

⁴⁶ Throughout Tester's *A History of Western Astrology* we find pre-Greek, Greek, Roman, Arabic and Oriental influences on what became western astrology.

⁴⁷ Rutkin, 'Astrology', p. 547.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, p. 547-548.

⁴⁹ Marshall, *The Mercurial Emperor*, 169.

⁵⁰ Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic. Studies in popular beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-century England* (London 1971), p. 352.

⁵¹ Rutkin, 'Astrology', p. 557

⁵² Ibidem, p. 544.

Dee however, made astrology dangerous for himself in 1554 when he foretold the future of queen Mary Tudor, Mary's pregnancy and her future with Philip II of Spain.⁵³ He was arrested for this, but probably more so because of the political implications than because it was seen as dangerous magic. Dee, as we will see in chapter four, was not the most tactical of men. Something that may prove very dangerous, when balancing on the thin line between religion, science and magic. In the LMQ we encounter much less astrology than one might expect. There are few references to the celestial movements or their effects on the sublunary world. More frequently, we encounter mention of the planets in terms of astrological hierarchy, and when the 'governors' of the planets, certain angels or entities that have specific planets under their control, are named. Therefore, I do not deem it necessary to delve into astrology as a magical subject further. For an extensive work on Astronomy and Astrology in the Middle Ages, I refer to Jim Tester's *A History of Western Astrology*, and Nicholas Campion's *Astrology in Time and Place*.⁵⁴

A form of 'Natural Magic' that typically transgresses the border between the occult and the natural is Alchemy. There are two kinds of alchemy that need to be taken into account. The first is physical alchemy, dealing with medical recipes and of course the study of base metals on a quest to create gold. The second is spiritual alchemy, which concerns itself with harmonizing one's being with God, or at least his spirit.⁵⁵ The first kind is in essence basic modern chemistry. The combining and distilling of certain ingredients to create a new substance. Like astrology, physical alchemy is typically used in combination with theories of correspondences.⁵⁶ For example, when creating a medicine for fever, a disease that is hot and wet in the tradition of the humours of Galen, one must look for a cure that is cold and dry. Spiritual alchemy was not used for curing disease, but simply bettering oneself through the transcendence that could be found in the *Almagest* (or *almahest*), that could maximise a person's, or metal's, potential. In this kind of alchemy, we see a clear example of how Neoplatonic and Hermetic ideas permeated into scholarly theory.

As usual, this division is not rigid, and Dee used both types of alchemy, although I would argue that he had a strong preference for the latter. Dee is constantly working in the LMQ to harmonize himself, his being and his scribe. Through prayer, fasting and a strict time-scheme while working, he made sure, on the Angels' command, that their beings were ready for receiving the messages they got. He did have an interest in the *Almagest*, that was said to be able to create gold from base metals, but I believe his interest lay more in the fact that this 'creating' of gold worked through opening up the base metal's potential to the maximum. The same could be done for a person. And even though Dee and Kelley did work with base metals and gold, this was typically what an alchemist would say to be able to do when convincing a prince of his worth.

The great alchemists of Dee's age, like Johann Reuchlin (1455-1522) and Heinrich Kuhnraht (1560-1605), usually worked, as Dee did, with both forms of alchemy. Kuhnraht combined alchemy with cabbala, attested in his 1595 publication of the *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae* (Amphitheater of Eternal Wisdom). Alchemy was a relatively safe form of natural magic for one to practice. Of course, we tend to call it magic now; a sixteenth-century man would not. I suppose our typical definition of magic also finds a fundament in things that are no longer accepted as rational or scientific today. Perhaps alchemy was not as contested as certain other forms of

⁵³ Elaborated upon in chapter four, dealing with Dee's biography.

⁵⁴ Tester, *A History of Western Astrology*. N. Campion, *Astrology in Time and Place: Cross-Cultural Questions in the History of Astrology* (Cambridge 2015).

⁵⁵ Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 24.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

magic, because it was typically a form of learned and uncommon magic. After all, who had the money, time and space for alchemical instruments and the knowledge to use them? Next to that, princes were far too interested in the possibility of creating gold to condemn the practise of it.⁵⁷

One of the most well-known alchemists of the sixteenth century was beyond doubt Paracelsus, or Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1493-1541). He combined the latest knowledge in the field of alchemy with the latest in medicine.⁵⁸ He is a typical example of the physician in this age of transition in the fact that he sought personal *exaltatio*, as Szönyi calls it, through the spiritual and the physical alchemy in the medicinal sense.⁵⁹

2.3 Spirit Conjuring and Scrying

The term 'Spirit Conjuring' might seem clear: the evocation of spirits by humans to influence the world. But as is to be expected, it is not that simple. Necromancy is a form of spirit conjuring that is intuitively categorised as demonic magic. Necromancy can mean black magic, use of the dead or death for magic, but also simply conjuring spirits and demons for magical purposes. Dee's conjuring of angels in his crystal can also be categorised as necromancy and therefore as demonic magic. For this reason I chose to use the term 'Spirit Conjuring', since the term 'Spirit' covers both angels and demons. Despite that Dee saw a clear difference between his angels and evil demonic powers, he was accused more than once of performing necromancy (elaborated upon in chapter four). The argument against him could be, for example, that the spirits he conjured lied, and were demons in disguise. As we will see later on, Dee used several tricks to convince a possible reader that he did not evoke demons, but worked with angels only.⁶⁰ In the first scrying session, this is seen when a creature appears in the crystal that Dee and his scryer take to be the angel Annaël, but when asked for the truth disappears and makes room for the 'real' Annaël.⁶¹ This first creature was a demon, posing as an angel to confuse the two men.

Even for medieval scholars it was hard to establish what forms of evocation could be licit or Christian, or had to be demonic.⁶² Did this kind of ritual magic indeed become effective via the power of a language? For example, the Hebrew language had a certain magical power in the magical system of cabbala (elaborated upon in section 2.5). As Kieckhefer describes, at the end of a centuries-long discussion on licit natural magic versus illicit demonic magic we find two contradicting conclusions. The first is that many forms of evocation could, in essence, be licit and Christian. However, the second is that virtually all types of evocation could also be demonic.⁶³

As we already discussed above, definitions of magic were very much in the eye of the beholder. This means that, even though Dee could try to justify and defend his methods, a third party could always classify it as demonic, and therefore illicit, magic. For men like Dee, this meant that a certain cautiousness was needed. This will be explored further when dealing with the content of the LMQ and Dee's possible reasons for hiding it. The same goes for 'licit' and 'illicit' magic. According to some Christian authors, all forms of magic were wrong. This is most notably stated by

⁵⁷ In Dee's life we see this longing for the creation of gold with Elizabeth I and emperor Rudolph II, elaborated upon in chapter four.

⁵⁸ Marshall, *The Mercurial Emperor*, p. 106.

⁵⁹ Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 35.

⁶⁰ Cf. 289 p. 55.

⁶¹ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 61

⁶² Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, p. 182-183.

⁶³ Ibidem, p. 184-185.

St. Augustine, who wrote that magic simply existed to test the belief in God of humankind.⁶⁴ Other writers did not see all kinds of magic as a threat to Christianity, for instance in clerical circles where a certain syncretic Christian religious magic was sometimes practiced.⁶⁵ This ambiguity did not decrease in the later Middle Ages but actually increased.

Angels were undeniably important throughout Christian history, but also were a source of ambivalence. The importance of angels is certainly attested by the huge amount of medieval scholars interested in angels and angelic philosophy. Perhaps not surprisingly, many of the scholastics have tried to deal with understanding angels. Men like Alan of Lille, Thomas Aquinas, William of Ockham and John Duns Scotus devoted much time and effort into the theory of angels, and how the angelic presence fitted into the Christian universe.⁶⁶

The angels, sanctioned by the canon, could be addressed in prayer and devotion, but evoking angels is something completely different. As Kieckhefer describes, it was never really a question whether evoking angels was dangerous, but it is strangely quite difficult to explicate why it was dangerous.⁶⁷ Many infamous medieval books of magic, like the *Liber Iuratus*, *Ars Notoria*, and *Liber de Angelicis* dealt with the evocation of angels and magic rituals in which angels were used.⁶⁸ In 1398 the theological faculty of the University of Paris condemned 27 magical propositions concerning the magical arts, five of which relate directly to angelic magic.⁶⁹ However, the later Middle Ages still saw an exponential growth of devotion to angels, in ways that would in the earlier Middle Ages have been condemned as idolatry.⁷⁰ The evoking of angels itself was not always really the problem, but the chance that the person involved was being misled by a demon posing as an angel was. And frankly, there was no trustworthy single method of determining whether or not that was the case.⁷¹

When we realize that both magic and, for example, sanctioned hagiography were riddled with unorthodox angels, we have to come back to the point made above, that the definition of magic lies in the eye of the beholder. It is best described by Frank Klaassen in his *Transformations of Magic*, when he wrote that inherently, '[...] magic was a complex sin'.⁷²

Divination and scrying were, unlike alchemy, potentially very dangerous. In 1542 a law was passed in England stating that any man who conjured spirits in a crystal or the like to find answers and to foretell, would be punishable by death.⁷³ One William Wycherly was arrested on these grounds,

⁶⁴ Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic*, p. 20.

⁶⁵ As seen in S. Page, *Magic in the Cloister. Pious motives, illicit interests, and occult approaches to the medieval universe* (Pennsylvania 2013), and in Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, p. 151-172.

⁶⁶ I. Iribarren, M. Lenz, 'Introduction', in I. Iribarren, M. Lenz (eds.), *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry. Their function and significance* (London 2008), p. 1-11.

⁶⁷ R. Kieckhefer, 'Angel Magic and the Cult of Angels in the later Middle Ages', in L.N. Kallestrup, R.M. Toivo (eds.) *Contesting Orthodoxy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cham 2017), pp. 71-110, p. 75.

⁶⁸ Kieckhefer, 'Angel Magic and the Cult of Angels in the later Middle Ages', p. 76-78.

⁶⁹ Ibidem, p. 79-80. E. Cameron, *Enchanted Europe. Superstition, reason, and religion, 1250-1750* (Oxford 2010), p. 42-43.

⁷⁰ Kieckhefer, 'Angel Magic and the Cult of Angels in the later Middle Ages', p. 85.

⁷¹ As we will see in chapter 6, Dee also had to deal with demonic intrusion during his scrying. Even though sometimes this intrusion is exposed, there would be no way of telling whether the angel exposing another angel as a demon is truly an angel.

⁷² Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic*, p. 18. There are, however, rituals that are supposed to make the magus sensitive to this difference. Yet one could never be entirely sure.

⁷³ C.L. Whitby, 'John Dee and Renaissance scrying', in *Bulletin of the Society of Renaissance studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, October 1985, pp. 25-36, p. 31.

and convicted in 1549.⁷⁴ Other than alchemy, divination is common magic in optima forma. Everyone could pick up the art of divination, as there are countless ways of doing it. In Dee's case we see the use of a crystal ball, but it might just as well be done with a blade, a nail, a reflecting pool or simply water in a jar, stones, bones, twigs and so on.⁷⁵ Especially in the fifteenth century, divination was immensely popular. This is hardly surprising due to its accessibility.⁷⁶ It is important to understand that, contra to what we might think, divination is not inherently un-Christian. Divination through calculation or astrology, for example, came in the Christian sense from the act of Computus (the mathematical and astrological way to determine the date for Easter, and through that the most important Christian feasts).

Scrying as Dee did it was very attractive, since you instantly got results; you could see that it seemed to work.⁷⁷ Did Kelley not see the visions, and receive the answers to Dee's questions? In a strange sense scrying fits into a modern method of science, if you are willing to stretch its boundaries a little. It was typical for a magus performing ritual magic to start off with a magical manual, but build a new system of magic whilst working.⁷⁸ When apparitions were involved, it was custom to choose the authority of the entity over that of the written source.⁷⁹ Combined with the meticulous documentation of the rituals performed, this does look an awful lot like the 'science' that historical research of the Scientific Revolution praises and celebrates so readily.⁸⁰ There is also a Biblical precedent that could be used to justify divination as Dee professed it.⁸¹ Dee does exactly that after the opening prayer of the LMQ, where he emphasises that others like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joshua were sent messages via angels, and that his 'shew-stone', or crystal ball, was an instrument '... which the high preists [sic] did use ...'.⁸² We might read this as a disclaimer saying 'righteous believers before me did this, making it licit'. It is striking, however, that certain magical manuals use the same formula in their prayers and orations. As we shall see in chapter 6, this is a strong argument in the discussion on whether or not (ritual) magic saw a radical change around the transition into the Early Modern Age. Scrying, however, also provides an argument for a minor change or adjustment between medieval and early modern ritual magic. In medieval rituals it was custom, according to some manuals, to use a virgin child as scryer.⁸³ John Dee, just like Humphrey Gilbert a few decades earlier, does not.

In terms of categories of magic, Dee's variant of divination is typically occult or demonic. You might say a slumbering attribute of the crystal is tapped into by the seer, but you might also say a demon created the visions and messages. Here the 'eye of the beholder' comes into play, as one could argue it belongs with the 'occult', 'natural' and 'demonic' magic. After all, you could see divination as an agent, 'reading' the signs of nature, but also as a demon inspiring the agent, or misleading him. What is interesting in Dee is that he uses traditional means for his scrying and divination, yet he takes his questions and research a lot further than most did. He did not just look

⁷⁴ Whitby, 'John Dee and Renaissance Scrying', p. 30.

⁷⁵ R. Kieckhefer, 'Angel Magic and the Cult of Angels in the later Middle Ages', in L.N. Kallestrup, R.M. Toivo (eds.) *Contesting Orthodoxy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cham 2017), pp. 71-110, p. 73.

⁷⁶ Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, p. 88, 95.

⁷⁷ Whitby, 'John Dee and Renaissance scrying', p. 27. However, since the scryer was the middle man between Dee and the angels, it still heavily counted on his belief in his scryer.

⁷⁸ Klaassen, 'Ritual Invocation and Early Modern Science', p. 353.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 353-354.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 350.

⁸¹ Whitby, 'John Dee and Renaissance scrying', p. 27

⁸² Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 58.

⁸³ Klaassen, 'Ritual invocation and Early Modern Science', p. 344. Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, p. 25, 116.

for treasure, or finding what was lost or stolen, as was often done, but went deep into existential and cosmic theory to find out how the world works.⁸⁴ Still, he stood very much in a magical tradition as set out by Johann Reuchlin and Agrippa.⁸⁵

2.4 Neoplatonism and Hermeticism

Neoplatonism and Hermeticism might seem a strange addition to a section dealing with certain types of magic, since they are not necessarily magical at all. What makes it essential to spend some time elaborating on these subjects, is the fact that they underlined the magical practices of many scholars of the past, and particularly the magicians of the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age. Neoplatonism and Hermeticism are similar in the respect that they both do not represent a fixed set of dogmas or ideas.⁸⁶ Both stand for a tradition of thought and universal ordering that could be altered slightly by each user. Because of this, many individual traditions co-exist and influence each other in minor ways.

Platonism found its place of birth at Plato's side, and rebirth (hence the 'neo-') in the third century with Plotinus. Naturally it is a very old tradition, but it remained a very living and fluid tradition. As Christia Mercer explains by way of a quote of L.P. Gerson, Platonism is in many ways bigger than Plato.⁸⁷ The late medieval Neoplatonism and cabbala got a boost in the Latin West, after Cardinal Bessarion took his library with him to Rome from Constantinople just before its fall to the Turks in 1453.⁸⁸

In late antiquity, the Middle Ages and the (early) modern period every scholar that took up Neoplatonism, used it in a way that fit his purposes and understanding of nature and the cosmos. For example, Aquinas harmonized Aristotle with the Biblical understanding of the universe via Plato and Neoplatonism.⁸⁹ So it is important to understand that every period, or even every scholar *in* that period, could have a different definition of Platonism (called Neoplatonism in modern historiography because of it deviates from the philosophical system of thought we call Platonism).⁹⁰ Christia Mercer calls this 'conciliatory eclecticism', by which she means that those who utilized Neoplatonism for their studies assumed that '[...] elements of the major schools of philosophy could be combined to form a coherent and *true* philosophical system'.⁹¹ Exactly this is done by John Dee who expressed that the combination of divine angelic knowledge that he received with the knowledge he had from books and manuscripts create a true philosophy of nature, transcending all that were before.

Every form of Neoplatonism does have certain similarities with the others. There is no Neoplatonic 'anything goes'. The system of knowledge used by Neoplatonism leaves a lot of room for rituals that we might call magic today. Rationality can easily coexist with this kind of ritual within the knowledge system of Neoplatonism.⁹² Mercer lists five points that differing systems of

⁸⁴ Whitby, 'John Dee and Renaissance scrying', p 33-34.

⁸⁵ Ibidem, p. 34.

⁸⁶ Mercer, C., 'Platonism in Early Modern Natural Philosophy: the case of Leibniz and Conway', in J. Wilberding, C. Horn (eds.) *Neoplatonism and the Philosophy of Nature*, pp. 103-125, p. 104.

⁸⁷ C. Mercer, 'Platonism in early modern natural philosophy', p. 111.

⁸⁸ P. Marshall, *The Mercurial Emperor: the magic circle of Rudolph II in Renaissance Prague* (London 2006), p. 90.

⁸⁹ Ibidem, p. 105.

⁹⁰ Aquinas would have seen it as simply Platonism. The modern term is used to discern between ancient and medieval Platonism.

⁹¹ Mercer, 'Platonism in Early Modern Natural Philosophy', p. 107.

⁹² C. Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism* (London 2014), p. 171-2.

Neoplatonism have in common. First, they all submit to a Supreme Being. God, within Christian systems, is the perfect being that exemplifies a self-sufficient, unified being. Plato's theory of 'Ideas' comes into play here, as the Ideas are frameworks within which God's creation could take place. Second comes Emanation and Harmony, meaning that God creates through emanation. All of the attributes of perfection are given, and the more a creature has of these emanating powers (i.e. self-sufficiency, being unified, and even godly), the more harmonised and perfected it becomes. The third is a sense of cosmic unity. A holistic perception of the universe in which every action influences another. The unity emanated by God is felt through every living or inanimate thing in the universe. Fourth comes a Harmonized Plenitude and Enhancement, resulting in the belief that some creatures or objects held special relationships with other creatures or objects. This touches upon the medieval belief of Sympathies, meaning that certain objects that look like other objects might be related. For example, a plant or root that is shaped like a certain organ could be used to heal that organ. Lastly is the belief in a Soul. Every individual soul is given an emanating perfection by God, making it self-sufficient, perfected and unified. Souls then become conduits of a sense that enhance the power that God emanates into the world.⁹³

With Dee, we see these aspects of Neoplatonism in his belief that through contact with the angels he could perfect his own being, receiving and enhancing all the aspects a completely Harmonised being demands. After Dee would have become Harmonised himself, he would become a conduit of harmony and contribute to restoring the world to the perfection it knew before the Fall.

Hermeticism refers to an Alexandrian mystical tradition transmitted through several Greek and Latin texts into the Middle Ages. Leirich calls the hermetic texts a loose collection of Neoplatonic dialogues from Alexandria in the first centuries CE.⁹⁴ These texts were perceived by some Renaissance Christians as equiprimordial to, or even older than, the Bible.⁹⁵ Despite some Christian authorities denouncing it as heretical, most notably St. Augustin, it was recognized by many Christian scholars as complementary to the Bible. Arguably the most influential hermetic text is the *Corpus Hermeticum* (CH), thought to be written by the Egyptian philosopher Hermes Trismegistus. The rediscovery of several texts from this book in 1460, and the subsequent edition by Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) with Cosimo the Medici (1389-1464) as patron, ensured that the Renaissance witnessed a blossoming of hermetic theology and mysticism.⁹⁶ With his edition Ficino provided for the Christian want for ancient sources of Christian information and theology. The older the source, after all, the more liable its information. Because of this, the Christian tradition of the Renaissance amalgamated the Hermetic tradition into its ranks.⁹⁷

The CH consists of a collection of dialogues on the nature of God, nature itself and godlike powers. The knowledge found in the book was classified by Ficino as theological (he presented Hermes as a theologian, not a magus), but was received ambiguously throughout the Early Modern period.⁹⁸ It was connected with demonic magic and necromancy already in the fifteenth century,

⁹³ Mercer, 'Platonism in Early Modern Natural Philosophy', p. 111-113.

⁹⁴ Leirich, *The Occult Mind: magic and theory in practice* (New York 2007), p. 4.

⁹⁵ A. Faivre, 'Renaissance Hermeticism', in G.A. Magee (ed.) *The Renaissance and Early Modernity* (Cambridge 2016), p. 133, 135.

⁹⁶ Faivre, 'Renaissance Hermeticism', p. 134, 137, 139.

⁹⁷ B.P. Copenhaver, 'Hermes Domesticated', in B.P. Copenhaver (ed.) *Magic in Western Culture: from antiquity to the enlightenment* (Cambridge 2015), p. 189. Szönyi, 'From the Hieroglyphic Monad to Angel Magic', p. 111.

⁹⁸ B.P. Copenhaver, 'Hermes the Theologian', in B.P. Copenhaver (ed.) *Magic in Western Culture: from antiquity to the enlightenment* (Cambridge 2015), p. 158, 189.

even leading up to the burning at the stake of its followers.⁹⁹ Many scholars took up hermetic writings as proof of the Christian tradition, since the same information as found in the Bible could be found reading between the lines of the highly enigmatic CH. Several of the most famous early modern scholars worked with hermetic ideas and philosophy.¹⁰⁰ It is even found in Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus* when he compares the sun to Hermes as an entity.¹⁰¹

The hermetic writings are highly multi-interpretable and inspire a manifold of uses by scholars. As Szönyi noted, this left hermetic thinkers '[...] in a labyrinth of significations'.¹⁰² In essence, it boils down to a form of (religious) magic through words and phrases, that has as an end-goal the same transcendence and Harmony Neoplatonism pursues.¹⁰³ What was found most compelling by Christian scholars, was the fact that the hermetic writings emphasised monotheism, and seemed to propagate the same religious values Christian even before Christianity came into existence.¹⁰⁴ Typical Hermetic influence on the LMQ is found in its hinging on names, specific words and numbers to profess magic.¹⁰⁵ This kind of subtle influence from the Hermetic writings is found in many humanist's scholarly work. As one editor of the CH aptly notes, 'The influence of the Hermetic literature on the humanistic Renaissance can hardly be overstated'.¹⁰⁶ Paradoxically, it can also difficultly be explicated. Agrippa and Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), for example, find hermetic truth in the sense that humanity was constructed of both a divine spark and an animal-like passion. Only through harmonizing the latter and emphasising it in your being could one transcend the animal nature and become '[...] inferior to them [i.e. the angels] in nothing'.¹⁰⁷

Specifically in England, the Hermetic tradition was sidestepped by the authorities of the Anglican church. Edward VI and Mary Tudor did not endorse its study, and even Elizabeth went against it. Despite the culture of intolerance towards Hermeticism, it was studied by scholars like John Dee. They were driven underground, however, or into private settings, where it was studied vigorously.¹⁰⁸ A game-changing blow to Hermeticism was delivered by Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614) Father of Meric Casaubon (1599-1671), in 1614 when he published his conclusions that the CH had to be dated centuries after the coming of Christ, and was therefore influenced by Christianity instead of the other way around.¹⁰⁹ Even after Casaubon's work the Hermetic tradition remained vivid and vigorous throughout the ages, and even today.¹¹⁰

2.5 Cabbala

⁹⁹ B.P. Copenhaver, 'Hermes on Parade', in B.P. Copenhaver (ed.) *Magic in Western Culture: from Antiquity to the Enlightenment* (Cambridge 2015), p. 211, 214.

¹⁰⁰ Faivre, 'Renaissance Hermeticism', p. 137, 139.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem, p. 137.

¹⁰² Szönyi, 'From the Hieroglyphic Monad to Angel Magic', p. 111.

¹⁰³ Copenhaver, 'Hermes the Theologian', p. 158

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 163, 174. Szönyi, 'From the Hieroglyphic Monad to Angel Magic', p. 111.

¹⁰⁵ M. Findell, 'The "Book of Enoch", the Angelic Alphabet and the "real Cabbala" in the Angelic Conferences of John Dee (1527-1608/9)', *Henry Sweet Society Bulletin*, May 2007, p. 7-22, p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ R. van den Broek, G. Quispel (transl.), *Corpus Hermeticum* (Amsterdam 1990), p. 14.

¹⁰⁷ Szönyi, 'From the Hieroglyphic Monad to Angel Magic', p. 113.

¹⁰⁸ Faivre, 'Renaissance Hermeticism', p. 140.

¹⁰⁹ Ibidem, p. 141.

¹¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 141. For an elaborate account on Hermeticism and Hermetic magic in the early modern ear, I refer to chapter 8 through 10 in Copenhaver's *Magic and Western Culture*.

In Dee's case specifically, we see a typical early modern Christian trend, in which Dee applied many superficially cabbalistic calculations and schematics to his writings, without really delving into their meaning. His knowledge of Hebrew was probably basic at best, attested by a lack of marginal notes (most of his other works are riddled with them). Both with letters and with numbers we see on almost every page of the LMQ, particularly in the later chapters, cabbalistic influences. The final goal of cabbala was to bring God closer to Man, and Man closer to God, and that is exactly how Dee aimed to use it.¹¹¹

In historiography, cabbala was received ambiguously. For a long time, it was almost uncontested that cabbala was not worth studying, as it was nothing more than ridiculous Jewish superstition. Not until Gershom Scholem's mid- and late-twentieth-century publications on the subject did it become somewhat appreciated or even accepted in academic circles.¹¹²

Strictly speaking, cabbala is a Jewish form of mysticism by numbers. The Hebrew language is connected to certain numerical values, which show the perceptive and informed observer deeper truths of the universe. The problem for the medieval and early modern scholars of cabbala was that everything Jewish was typically regarded with suspicion. Christian scholars of cabbala have gone a long way to create a hybrid Christian cabbala, which left many Jewish aspects out.¹¹³ In a way, they changed it beyond recognition and formed a completely new form of numerology.

Christian scholars employed this Jewish tradition to make their work, and consequently themselves, look more learned. They used as little cabbala as possible, while seeming as intellectual as they could.¹¹⁴ Eggert compares the early modern scholar of cabbala with the modern day student: 'they don't read what they have to read in a detailed manner, but they 'skim' through the pages'. Skimming, skipping through the pages of a book to take its essence in, but leave the details out, is according to Eggert the best way in which these scholars could have read cabalistic works. In this way, they accumulated what Eggert calls 'disknowledge'. Defined by her as 'knowing while not knowing at the same time'.¹¹⁵

In any case, cabbala is a very complex and theoretical system of magic that would find its place in the 'natural' category. The world and universe are made up of numbers, and numbers can be used to learn to understand them. These numbers are part of nature, but are at the same time hidden. Once again it becomes clear that the divisions often made in magic are not so rigid, as this would classify cabbala as 'occult' just as easy. In the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries cabbala became popular in Neoplatonic circles.¹¹⁶ At the same time, the Hebrew language crept back into university studies, as the two go hand in hand. Through the willful changing of the tradition and many mistakes made in translations of Hebrew a Christian cabbala came into being.¹¹⁷ The first cabalist of some weight in the West was Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494).

Using Mirandola's opening of the cabbala in the Christian West, Johannes Reuchlin and Marsilio Ficino took up the tradition in a Christian sense as well. Ficino also translated Platonic

¹¹¹ Marshall, *The Mercurial Emperor*, p. 91

¹¹² Lehrich, *The Language of Demons and Angels*, p. 147-149.

¹¹³ As argued by Katherine Eggert in K. Eggert, *Disknowledge: Literature, alchemy, and the end of humanism in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia 2015).

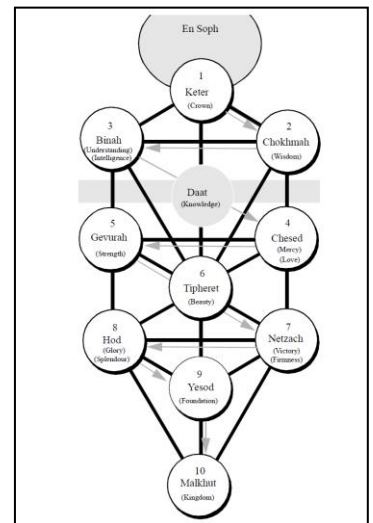
¹¹⁴ Eggert, *Disknowledge*, p. 116.

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 116.

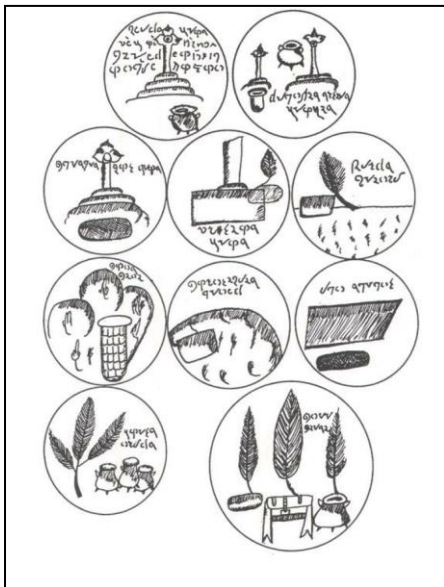
¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 118.

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 119-121.

works and made a connection between (neo)Platonism and cabbala.¹¹⁸ Reuchlin applied it to alchemy, to which cabbala is easily connected through the so-called *sephiroth*. The *sephiroth* are ten male and female emanations from God, with which he created the world.¹¹⁹ The ten sephiroth are captured in the Cosmic Tree: a schematic drawing that explicates the connection of the physical, metaphysical and linguistic essence of the universe. The illustration on the right depicts a classic Sephiroth of the cabala. On the left we can see an interpretation of it in the LMQ, showing cabalistic influence on Dee.



The Sephiroth, as depicted in C. Low, *A Depth of Beginning: Notes on Kaballa* (2009), p. 11.



An interpretation of the Sephiroth in the LMQ. Although crude, we can clearly distinguish the typical traits of the traditional Sephiroth.

Once more proving the dangers of immersing oneself with magic, particularly Jewish magic, Johannes Reuchlin was condemned by the Pope for 'Jewishness' and had to pay an impressive fine.¹²⁰ Reuchlin's conviction scared the humanists and scholars of the early sixteenth century into a defensive position about magic and some of its Jewish origins.¹²¹

Cabalistic techniques are often found in the elegance of arithmetic and mathematics. There are of course Christian numbers that are of great importance - like one, three, seven, ten and thirty-three - for reasons of theology. Add calculations like $1+ 2+ 3+ 4 = 10$, and you get the sense of a mystical power hiding in the mathematics. This elegance mesmerized early modern scholars and was used to create a sense of magical power in and behind the numbers used. Another use of cabbala is found in combination with the Hebrew alphabet, for example using the name YHWH, transformed by Christian scholars to YHSWH to mean Jesus (Yeshua). Hebrew was important to Christians as well, as it was seen as the language derived directly

from the language of Adam.¹²² For an exhaustive overview of the historiography of cabbala, as well as a clear narrative on cabbala and its historical development, I refer to Moshe Idel's *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* and Gerschom Scholem's classical *Origins of the Kaballah*.¹²³

In the next chapter I will put Dee in his historiographical context, in order to clarify what Dee studies have amounted to, from the twentieth century until today.

¹¹⁸ For an extensive elaboration of Ficino's magic and his contribution to Neoplatonist theory, I refer to B. Copenhaver, 'How to do Magic and Why', in B. Copenhaver (ed.), *Magic in Western Culture from Antiquity to the Enlightenment* (Cambridge 2015), pp. 231-271.

¹¹⁹ Marshall, *The Mercurial Emperor*, p. 91.

¹²⁰ Eggert, *Disknowledge*, p. 124.

¹²¹ K.A. Nowotny, 'Introduction' in H.C. Agrippa, *De Occulta Philosophia*, trsl. K.A. Nowotny (Graz 1967), p. 388.

¹²² Marshall, *The Mercurial Emperor*, p. 91.

¹²³ M. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (London 1988), p. 1-34. G. Scholem, *Origins of the Kaballah* (Philadelphia 1987).

3. Status Quaestionis: Historiography.

Maybe one of the most used and famous quotations, that aptly describes the way in which science works and develops, is best known for being expressed by Isaac Newton (1642-1726). As he paid homage to the scholars that worked before him, upon who's work he based his own, he stated that '[...] if I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants'.¹²⁴ Although the quote itself is from the 12th-century philosopher Bernard of Chartres, it is only fitting that Newton is the champion from whom it is known. Once again our usual suspect takes the prize! This anecdote brilliantly explains exactly how modern history used the preceding Middle Ages. A piece of medieval wisdom suddenly becomes the intellectual property of an early modern man, through historians ascribing it to him. In a very similar way historians have argued that early modern science and magic stood apart from the preceding medieval traditions. And similar to Newton's anecdote, it is untrue.

In any case, the above is precisely the reason that a historiographical overview is imperative for a thesis such as this one. We need to understand what historians have done, and how they influenced how we perceive certain subjects. In the following I will provide a concise survey of the current state of scholarship regarding historical Dee studies from the twentieth century up to today, focussing on the most important works only.

The trouble with a historiographical summary of the study of magic, from the 1960's onward, is that it can in no way be given concisely. The scholarly interest in magic has grown exponentially over the last couple of decades, and especially since the year 2000. The scholarly prejudice on studies of magic became alleviated, but still many studies of magic are conducted safely in a framework of the history of science, which focusses solely on inventions and ideas that have demonstrably influenced science. This is exactly the rigid discourse mentioned in the introduction, from which magical studies need to be lifted. In studies on Dee, we see the same trend, as many works have been written on him since the late 1990's. Besides this, the subject of magic can be extremely broadened, based on decisions of definition and what you classify as magic. For example, if we classify astrology or alchemy as magic, entirely new historiographies need to be taken into account. Therefore I will focus only on the subjects essential to understanding Dee's occult work, just as I did in the above chapter on magic and definitions, next to some very general yet essential works.

In Frank Klaassen's formidable *The Transformations of Magic* he tried to set the record straight on whether or not magical practice changed radically between the late Middle Ages, and the Early Modern period. But he does not do so before very briefly going over the 'essentials' in terms of scholarly work on magic. I refer to his work for the historiographical essentials on magic. The focus on the following historiographical chapter will be solely on John Dee.

3.1 On John Dee

In the time shortly after Dee's death in 1608, there was still interest in his life and work.¹²⁵ Even though occasionally Dee was mentioned, both positively and negatively, the first notable

¹²⁴'An Unpublished Letter of Robert Hooke to Isaac Newton', A. Koyré, in *Isis*, vol. 43, No. 4, December 1952, pp. 312-337.

¹²⁵ An example would be John Davis' report on his navigational travels whilst searching for the famed 'Northwest Passage' to China. Dee is mentioned here as a friend of his, and famous and skilled scientist. He is also mentioned for a

publication on Dee and his magical works was written by Meric Casaubon in 1659.¹²⁶ With this publication Casaubon made an edition of parts of Dee's magical work, that was prepossessed in the sense that he had a clear goal in mind to discredit the doctor and claim that he had dealings with demons or even the devil.¹²⁷ If before Casaubon Dee was remembered, as Giorgy Szönyi quotes, as 'the wise doctor', after Casaubon's publication his reputation ended up pretty much shattered.¹²⁸ However, Casaubon did not explain Dee's 'inspiration' away as an irrational and backward medieval tradition, but strongly believed in the magic Dee practised. He simply warned against it, calling Dee's book a work of darkness, disguised as a work of light.¹²⁹ Casaubon seems to have been quite radical in his views, purveyed by his support of the 'traditional' witch trials of the seventeenth century.¹³⁰

Dee's story became part of a greater narrative of morality by Casaubon's published edition. In Casaubon's preface, he posits John Dee not unlike the traditional dr. Faustus, who is made to be a magus selling his soul to the devil, or the interactions with evil spirits found in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.¹³¹ Although Casaubon used this to criticize the Cromwell government and its political and religious views, it is typically the morality discourse in which Dee is found after 1659.¹³² In the rest of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Dee seems to have been almost forgotten, attested by a lack of his name in publications. It was not until the 1850s that he was mentioned again, and remembered for occult endeavours.¹³³ Still, he was often described in the words of Meric Casaubon's condescending discourse, in which he was named a superstitious, if not plain delusional, man dealing with obscure magical practices.¹³⁴ Only in the first decade of the twentieth century did a new vision arise at the hands of Charlotte Fell-Smith.¹³⁵

Fell-Smith shook off the condescending phrases and accusations of the centuries before and delivered a relatively strong first biography. She was not a historian, however, and therefore not up to speed on the history of science, or the methods of history at the time.¹³⁶ Still, she tried to provide an objective reconstruction of Dee's life. Her study became the fundament for the publications that followed in the 1930s. Now that Dee was being washed clean of the accusations of necromancy as well as superciliousness, some space had become available in which Dee could be studied in a completely new way. Fell-Smith created a sort of *tabula rasa*, providing a fresh start.

The first to place Dee in a new context of scientific progression, as the history of science still permitted a presentist outlook at that time, was Eva Taylor in the 1930s. In her *Tudor Geography* Dee was mentioned in light of his cartography and geographical work.¹³⁷ The second to mention Dee after Fell-Smith was Francis Johnson, in his 1937 *Astronomical Thought in Renaissance*

conviction on grounds of divinatory magic in 1554. The report was published in 1880. like A.H. Markham, *The Voyages and Works of John Davis the Navigator* (London 1880).

¹²⁶ M. Casaubon, *A true and faithful relation of what passed for many years between Dr. John Dee and some spirits* (London 1659). Casaubon wrote several Christian critiques, like the *Of Credulity and Incredulity* in 1668. Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, p. 272-273.

¹²⁷ R.J. Stark, *Rhetoric, Science and Magic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Washington 2009), p. 162.

¹²⁸ Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 7-8.

¹²⁹ Stark, *Rhetoric Science and Magic in Seventeenth-Century England*, p. 169.

¹³⁰ As found repeatedly attested in Casaubon's *A true and faithful relationship*, 'preface'.

¹³¹ Stark, *Rhetoric Science and Magic in Seventeenth-Century England*, p. 169.

¹³² Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 8.

¹³³ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

¹³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

¹³⁵ C. Fell-Smith, *John Dee 1527-1608* (London 1909).

¹³⁶ Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 8.

¹³⁷ E. Taylor, *Tudor Geography, 1485-1583* (London 1930).

England.¹³⁸ Both authors disagreed with the image of Dee as a magus, in the sense that they wanted him to be perceived as a scientist in the first place, dabbling with some obscure magic in the second. In a way, they argued that the accusations of being a magician were mostly false, based on a negative sentiment towards Dee.¹³⁹ The scholarly vision of Dee changed radically in the middle of the twentieth century, when the so-called 'Warburg School' started re-evaluating the Renaissance and its scholars of the occult.¹⁴⁰ As the idea that the Renaissance saw a radical change from a theocentric to an anthropocentric worldview grew, new space became available for new historical concepts and conceptions. The first to revalue the occult practices of the early modern days radically, was Frances Yates.

Inspired by the Warburg school, as well as Ernst Cassirer's *the Individual and the Cosmos* of 1963, Frances Yates developed what came to be known as the 'Yates-thesis'. Next to that, one of her students, Ian Calder, had written a Ph.D. dissertation on Dee in 1952 that, according to Georgy Szönyi, inspired Yates not only to include Dee, but to make him a key player in her work.¹⁴¹ The Yates Thesis stated, in short, that the hermetic, or occult, sciences of the pre-modern age contributed greatly to the Scientific Revolution. This was taken up by another of Yates' students, Peter French, in his 1972 *John Dee: the world of an Elizabethan magus*.¹⁴² Although Yates' work should certainly not be dismissed as she made a fundamental shift possible in how the occult sciences of the pre-modern age were valued, the 1970s saw some justified critical reviews. Most notably by Robert Westman and John Heilbron, who argued strongly against Yates' and French' optimism and selective readings of occult works. Lack of evidence made the critics dub their work speculative at best.¹⁴³ Heilbron argued strongly against the focus on the occult, calling the occult sciences not a part of the Scientific Revolution, but an obstacle in its way.¹⁴⁴ Dee would have been a mathematician foremost, and magus second.

In the above, and indeed the entire historiography, a division can be seen between scholars proposing Dee to be a scientist in the modern sense and a magus only secondly, and scholars finding Dee to be a deeply occult man who observed the world from a magical perspective. The former group would include Fell-Smith, Taylor, Johnson, Westman and Heilbron, and the latter Calder, Yates, and French. Through the 1980s and 1990s, this division remained an important chasm between two sides of Dee studies. In 1988 Nicholas Clulee published a book in which he tried to study Dee's work in its own right. He did not focus on a tradition like Yates and French, but tried to look at Dee's writings one at a time, not looking at the earlier ones in light of the later ones.¹⁴⁵ He was able to reserve a place for Dee in the history of science once more, but to some extent ignoring, again, his magical work. He did leave more room for the magical Dee than can be said for William Sherman however, who published in 1995, and focussed on the political as well as the scientific side of Dee's life.¹⁴⁶ Although Clulee criticised Sherman in the fact that he ignored the magical parts of

¹³⁸ F.R. Johnson, *Astronomical Thoughts in Renaissance England. A study of the English scientific writings from 1500 to 1645* (New York 1937).

¹³⁹ S. Clucas, 'Introduction', in S. Clucas (ed.), *John Dee: interdisciplinary studies in English Renaissance thought* (Utrecht 2006), pp. 1-22, p 1. Dee is mentioned as the chief reason for the advancing of the English sciences next to Robert Recorde by Johnson. F. Johnson, *Astronomical Thought in Renaissance England*, p. 55.

¹⁴⁰ Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 9.

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*, 9.

¹⁴² French, *John Dee: the world of an Elizabethan Magus* (London 1972).

¹⁴³ Clucas, 'Introduction', p. 4-5.

¹⁴⁴ J.L. Heilbron, 'Introduction', in W. Shumaker, *John Dee on Astronomy: Prodaeumata Aphoristica (1558 and 1568), Latin and English* (Los Angeles 1978), p. 264.

¹⁴⁵ Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy*.

¹⁴⁶ Sherman, *John Dee: The politics of reading and writing in the Elizabethan Age*.

Dee's work, I believe this is not completely just, since Sherman states not to pretend to create a complete vision of Dee.¹⁴⁷ Sherman's focus is on the non-magical, since he argued that the Yatesian theories were dysbalanced because of an almost exclusive focus on the magical. His goal was to '[...] recover these [i.e. not magical] scattered and neglected sources [...]'.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, I believe an inclination towards the not-so-magical Dee is explained and allowed. A recent example of a strong emphasis on 'scientific Dee' is Stephen Alford's *London's Triumph*, where Dee is celebrated as a brilliant polymath, and solely a man of traditional science.¹⁴⁹

A clear voice searching to conduct research on exactly the magical works of Dee came in 1999 in the form of Deborah Harkness' *John Dee's conversations with angels*. As Clucas described in his short overview of Dee studies, Harkness placed Dee's most unscientific work in the modern sense inside of historical science by calling it 'universal science'. Dee's conversations with angels, as portrayed in the LMQ, suddenly became a 'science' in the sense that it is part of the trend in Natural Philosophy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to learn to further the understanding of the universe and the world.¹⁵⁰ As Clucas aptly phrases it, she explained Dee's 'problematic' career, instead of explaining it away.¹⁵¹

Before turning the 21st century, three publications arguing against seeing Dee as a non-magical actor deserve mentioning. Whitby's *John Dee's Actions with Spirits* (1988), Fenton's *John Dee's Diary* (1998) and Wilding's *Raising Spirits* (1999) all argue, contra to Sherman and some extent Clulee, that the magical Dee should not be ignored. In Håkan Håkansson's 2001 *Seeing the World* he argued that not only should scholars focus more on the magical side of Dee's life and work, but Dee should also be rescued from the clutches of historians of science.¹⁵² Dee, he argued, should be finally cut loose from the discourse and narrative of the Scientific Revolution, and should be studied from different branches of the humanities. This is a point shared by György Szönyi, who studied Dee from the perspective of cultural anthropology. In 2004 Szönyi published a magnificent work on Dee's occultism, and his relying on magical signs and words to achieve *exaltatio* or transcendence.¹⁵³ As seems to be the trend from the millennium onwards, Dee's magic and occult endeavours were no longer off limits, or seen as a lesser subject. Embedded strongly in the Renaissance idea's and traditions of the new and independent role the human being gradually attributed to himself, Szönyi analysed Dee's life and occult writings in relation to other Renaissance philosophers like Pico della Mirandola, Ficino, and Agrippa. In doing so he dug up Frances Yates' buried treasure and again seeks for traditions in which Dee's work can be placed. He does not endorse the old Yates thesis, but seeks out its points of accuracy respectively.

Despite being a historian of science myself, I tend to agree with Håkansson and Szönyi that Dee needs to be unshackled from the rigid discourse and narrative of the Scientific Revolution. As I briefly mentioned I strongly feel the Scientific Revolution is outdated as a narrative model. As with all periods, the Scientific Revolution as a concept that was conjured up retrospectively as a model for understanding the past. We must never forget, however, that such periods did not actually 'happen' in the strict sense. Trying to reserve a place for Dee in the narrative of the Scientific Revolution is inherently problematic, since that narrative was written in a discourse that leaves no

¹⁴⁷ Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy*, p. 236.

¹⁴⁸ Sherman, *John Dee*, XII

¹⁴⁹ S. Alford, *London's Triumph. Merchant adventurers and the Tudor city* (London 2017).

¹⁵⁰ Clucas, 'Introduction', p. 17.

¹⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 16-17.

¹⁵² H. Håkansson, *Seeing the world: John Dee and Renaissance Occultism* (Lund 2001).

¹⁵³ Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*.

room for what I called prospectless sciences -but sciences nonetheless- in the introduction. Even though Szönyi's work is sublime, he does not seem to free Dee from the narrative of the Scientific Revolution in the way he set out to do. Just like many scholars before him, he still tries to explain why a man of science turns to magic. I believe that this line of questioning still stems from the discourse of the presentist history of science. Why do we need to explain how a sixteenth-century scholar studied both mathematics and crystallogancy? Would said scholar not have perceived them as part of one single goal, namely studying the universe? Would John Dee have made the distinction himself? I think not, and therefore argue to leave of this train of thought behind.

One recent publication deserves some special attention still. In 2011 Glyn Parry's biography *The Arch-Conjuror of England* appeared and radically updated Dee studies.¹⁵⁴ In an astonishingly detailed analysis, Parry reveals Dee to be anyone but a shunned and isolated magus. Scholars had shed light on Dee's public and courtly life before, but the depth that Parry reaches, makes his work unique. That is, for one major flaw. Parry has chosen to include additional information on Edward Kelley, Dee's most important scryer. Kelley is a deeply obscure historical actor, as we know very little of his life before Dee. Even during his cooperation with Dee, very little is known outside what Dee writes in his personal notes. Since these only concern Kelley's life directly relevant to those notes, they are marginal at best. Parry chose to fill the gaps or better, chasms, by employing Meric Casaubon's *True and Faithfull relation [...]* printed in 1659.¹⁵⁵ A publication that was, as I mentioned, strongly biased, besides being written after Dee had died.¹⁵⁶ For obvious reasons, this source is less than trustworthy when it comes to relating how Dee and Kelley behaved in daily life. This is the only source, for example, that explicitly tells us about anger fits that Kelley had, and his supposed excessive drinking.¹⁵⁷

Even though Parry might have had good reasons for using this source to inform his reader on Kelley's life, and his troublesome relation with Dee, he does not explain them. Parry refers to Casaubon's work dozens of times, without even once informing his reader on the problems surrounding this publication. Because of this, caution is advised when reading his biography, since the most spectacular or surprising bits of information indeed come from Casaubon. Therefore, the book can be used extensively for studying Dee's life, as long as you are prepared to check every other footnote.

Interestingly there is a trend in Dee studies to focus on the persona of Dee. Many books and articles start with 'John Dee ...', or 'John Dee's ...'. Szönyi's focus was on the written works by Dee, instead of Dee himself, but we have already seen that he omitted the LMQ from his analysis. This is exactly why I think the LMQ, and other written sources by magicians like Dee, should be re-evaluated and commented upon.

¹⁵⁴ Parry, *The Arch-Conjuror of England*.

¹⁵⁵ Casaubon, *A true and faithful relationship of what passed for many years between Dr. Dee and some spirits*.

¹⁵⁶ Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 174. Its mission was to draw up Dee's life and work, to prevent other Christians from making the same mistakes.

¹⁵⁷ As found in Meric Casaubon's preface to his 1659 *A true and faithful relationship*.

4. Who, When, and What? John Dee as a Person.

'John Dee (1527-1608) was one of the most influential figures of the Elizabethan age. He studied mathematics, astrology and from an early age was supposed to practice magic.'

- Information on Dee, found by his portrait in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford -

Just as every publication on Dee and his works or life, the Ashmolean Museum presents him as a man of great influence, learning, and status. From his latest biography, back to the first publications on the doctor, Dee is usually celebrated at first. When you read on and delve deeper into his life and accomplishments, this feeling of greatness begins to fade away. We initially read that he was an advisor to Elisabeth I, but it later turns out she visited him a few times, and he confirmed the date of her coronation to have been an astrologically proper one. When he asked her, repeatedly, for patronage and a steady income in the 1580s and 1590s, she did not respond.¹⁵⁸ And when we read at first that he gave advice to Francis Bacon, we later learn that they might have conversed a few times, but it is not known what their relation has been.¹⁵⁹ Dee's political and otherwise public life and career are extremely hard to grasp. Befitting for the times in which he lived, his prospects could change fundamentally in a few years, and they did so more than once. In a couple of years, Dee's prospects could change, going from a respected member of society, science and the court, to a man accused of dark magic and unethical behaviour. Besides this, he could move from a financially stable player in terms of income and reserves, to a man in need of many loans which he did not, or not within years, pay back.

In this chapter I will provide the historical context of Dee's life and the politics in contemporary England, providing an idea of what Dee's status must have been. In doing so, it will quickly become clear that Dee's case is far from clear-cut or without difficulty. I will present Dee as neither an overly celebrated scientist nor as an obscure, marginal figure of his time. Dee must be seen as exactly what he was: a man living in turbulent times, concerning himself with researching nature and the universe in ways and methods that were received ambivalently during his life. In no way do I intend the following to be a complete and exhaustive biography of Dee. What is relevant and essential for understanding my thesis will be provided, but for a full-fledged biography and detailed description of Dee's life and the times he lived in, I refer to Glyn Parry's *The Arch-Conjuror of England*.

John Dee was born to Roland and Jane Dee in July 1527. Through Roland's marriage with Jane Wilde, he had ensured a certain political clout for his family since the Wilde family was already in with certain political players, in this instance in the form of Henry Wyatt (1460-1537).¹⁶⁰ Roland was a mercer, which could be lucrative business at the time. Roland ensured an education for Dee, and a political position as a 'gentleman sewer' for Henry VIII (1491-1547) via the privileged position he had through his marriage with Jane, and good money made through his work. Even though Roland

¹⁵⁸ Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England*, p. 230, 236, 239-40.

¹⁵⁹ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 7.

¹⁶⁰ Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England*, p. 5-6. Wyatt was a member of the Privy Council under Henry VII and kept a privileged position with Henry VIII as well.

lost nearly everything in the late 1540s, he had made sure that Dee's future would be quite positive in terms of learning and chances.¹⁶¹

Aged 15, in 1542, Dee studied Logic at St. John's College in Cambridge, graduating as Bachelor of Arts in 1546. He graduated as Master of Arts in 1548, after teaching for two years on logic and sophistry in an academic setting. What was uncommon in England at the time, was that Dee focussed his studies on mathematics, instead of rhetoric and logic. Mathematics were seen more as 'manual labour', where as literate studies were seen as befitting for a gentleman.¹⁶² Dee was indeed warned by Roger Ascham, lecturer on mathematics at St. John's, that overly devoting oneself to mathematics could not prepare a man the eloquence he needed as a gentleman in the way that literature could.¹⁶³ As we will see in the LMQ, numbers always played an important role in Dee's life and work. Whether it was Euclid's mathematics, geography, astrology or cabbala, Dee's endeavours tended to be made up around numbers and calculations from his study onwards. Dee worked at Trinity College in Cambridge as a junior fellow from 1546 until 1547, which provided him with the financial means to finish his studies in 1548 in Louvain, where he studied with, among other famous scholars, Gemma Frisius and Mercator.

This had no doubt been a turbulent period in Dee's personal life since his father suddenly lost his good fortunes in 1547, when his company took a tumble causing Roland to lose his prestige, work, and monetary means. In the political sense, a lot more trouble was headed their way because of the death of Henry VIII. In Louvain Dee re-converted to Catholicism, which he had had to abjure during his time in Cambridge. This might seem strange to the modern reader, as it may imply that Dee was strongly opportunistic, aligning himself with whatever side of the Reformation benefitted him most. In reality, the rigid divide between Protestant and Catholic Christendom is usually not as clear cut as it is presented to be. It might even be called a faulty idea in general that individuals chose one side of the Reformation, and stuck to that.¹⁶⁴ It was not uncommon for people to switch, which one can imagine if you take the religious and political situation of sixteenth-century England into account. Although switching back and forth, as Dee did, might have been more unusual. Szönyi writes that 'One might say that Dee's religious eclecticism converged with the denomination of his patrons'.¹⁶⁵

Henry VIII severed the English Church from Catholicism - or at least the Pope - but his children had to deal with the repercussions. Christopher Haig demonstrates the chaos of ongoing Reformation, by presenting it in no way as an implemented programme, but as the eventual outcome of the decisions of numerous individuals.¹⁶⁶

Edward VI, Henry's initial heir, and his advisors carried on what Henry started that can rightly be called Protestantism. When he suddenly died at age 15 in 1553, Mary Tudor gained the scepter and did not waste time or effort to re-establish the Catholic faith in England. In a zealous effort, which gained her the nickname 'Bloody Mary', to reassert Catholicism she effectively reversed her father's work. To add to the chaos exponentially, Mary died in 1558 after which Elisabeth, daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, ascended to the throne. Elisabeth supported the Protestant Church of England and again renounced Catholicism. Even though she never completely abolished all aspects of Catholicism from the English Church, being a Catholic openly became very

¹⁶¹ Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England*, p. 5-6, 13-14.

¹⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 9.

¹⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 179.

¹⁶⁵ Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 261.

¹⁶⁶ C. Haig, *English Reformations: religion, politics and society under the Tudors* (Oxford 1993), p. 50-57.

dangerous. A severe problem for courtiers was the side they would choose or had chosen under one of the four monarchs described here. Dee would feel the consequences of his choice to align himself with Edmund Bonner (1500-1569), Bishop of London, in 1554, under Mary's reign.¹⁶⁷

Ever doubtful over his choice of religion within the Reformation spectrum, Dee had himself ordained a Catholic priest in 1554, with the backing from Bonner. Bonner personally made sure this was realised within a surprisingly short amount of time. In 1554 this might have seemed a safe choice, but in the long run, this would have serious consequences for Dee. After Elisabeth's coronation, Catholicism, obviously, became a problem. When Bonner fell from grace, this affected Dee's reputation as well. Bonner was executed in 1569. In any case, this example makes abundantly clear the uncertainty people must have felt deciding on religious problems and sides.

In 1550 Dee visited Paris, teaching on Euclid at the University. Amusingly, Dee took great pride in the fact that the hall he lectured in was not large enough to house all the students coming to his lecture. He described people standing outside, peeking through the windows hoping to catch a glimpse of the lecture. What Dee did not know, is that the University of Paris made all lectures on Euclid mandatory, resulting from a lack of expertise on the subject among its teachers and professors.¹⁶⁸ Dee returned to England in 1551, possibly hoping to gain Edward's patronage and a permanent position at the court.¹⁶⁹ Even though this did not happen, Dee did move up the courtly ladder when Robert Dudley, Philip Sidney and William Cecil gained prominent positions at the court, since they were all to some extent connected to Dee. Cecil specifically was very much interested in Dee's occult work. Through his connections, Dee ensured some work and income for himself. Edward eventually made Dee rector of Upton-upon-Severn, despite Bishop Hooper's complaints. Befitting Dee's shaky fortunes, however, he leased the land to of the parish to parishioners who refused to pay their dues.¹⁷⁰

The following years of his life were probably quite formative for Dee. In 1554 Princess Elisabeth requested Dee to foretell the future of Mary Tudor and King Philip II of Spain, who could claim the English throne via a possible marriage with Mary. This means that Dee already had some reputation as astrologer or diviner. Dee was arrested for this in 1554 and brought to the Tower.¹⁷¹ It is not clear whether Dee was tortured here as was common practice with criminals, since it was believed that pain brought out the truth. Personally, I believe this must have made Dee very conscious as to what could happen when magic crossed people in power. I do not find it overly speculative to assume that Dee had this experience in the back of his mind throughout his occult career and later life, for example in his decision to keep the LMQ hidden. Moreover, I find it necessary to point out that accusations like these were most likely not in the first place about magic at all. All accusations of practicing magic against Dee were, to my knowledge, connected to politics. I argue that magic was not so much a problem in courtly circles, but rather an excuse to accuse those who are standing in your way. An accusation of necromancy was not one to ever take lightly, even when it concerned, as it did with Dee, communicating with possible angels. We already saw in chapter two that 'Spirit Conjuring' could mean both angelic and demonic spirits. Dee was released in 1555 and was not shunned afterwards, attested by Dee's direct pleas to Mary for a royal library to make up for the many books lost after Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries.

¹⁶⁷ Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England*, p. 29.

¹⁶⁸ Ibidem, p. 22. Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 149.

¹⁶⁹ Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England*, p. 22.

¹⁷⁰ Ibidem, p. 20, 30.

¹⁷¹ Ibidem, p. 36-37.

Dee left England for a few years to travel through Europe after Elisabeth's ascension to the throne. He visited, among other places, Louvain, Paris, and Rome. Ever the collector, Dee used his travels to obtain as many books as possible. He took everything with him that connected to the occult, cabbala, magic, alchemy and certain facets of medicine he could get his hands on. It is no surprise, then, that Dee eventually owned the largest library in England, dwarfing even Cambridge University's collections at over 4000 manuscripts and printed books.¹⁷²

In 1564 Dee published an almost incomprehensible occult work, titled *Monas Hieroglyphica*.¹⁷³ He dedicated it to Maximilian II who was coronated as king of Hungary that year and would later become Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, preceding the famous Rudolph II. Whether Maximilian ever read it, cannot be attested, but for sure he never responded to it. This was one of Dee's typical efforts to gain the patronage of a major prince of Europe, that usually ended up being ignored or answered negatively. Dee cannot be credited with the ability to read situations, political tact or empathic skills, but one cannot dismiss his perseverance when it came to finding patronage and being appointed a permanent place at a princely court.

Dee already was in contact with Elisabeth before she became Queen, attested by his divinatory efforts at her request in 1554. In 1575 she even visited him at his house in Mortlake along the Thames, and in 1574 she sent her personal physician to Mortlake when Dee returned seriously ill from travelling to Paris and Lorraine.¹⁷⁴ On several occasions, especially in the 1570s Dee had some significant political clout. This is also the period in which Dee had severe troubles with accusations of necromancy and harmful or illicit magic. Accusations made by one Vincent Murphyn would haunt Dee for years to come.¹⁷⁵ According to Parry, Murphyn not only spread rumours, but he even forged documents to back his claims.¹⁷⁶ Murphyn's accusations were rephrased a couple of times, for example in the *Acts and Monuments*, and anti-Catholic work written by John Foxe (1516-1587) published in 1570.¹⁷⁷ But as I stated, it is not surprising that Dee would run into some slandering, going into the most politically successful phase of his life. The accusations, however, cooled down after 1576, when he connected to Robert Dudley, first earl of Leicester, providing him with political advice.¹⁷⁸

The 1570s were a very turbulent time at the English court. Threats were perceived from both within and without the borders, and conspiracies were on a lot of prominent people's minds. Because of Dee's initial position of favour with the queen, he was not disconnected from this crisis. This is the period in Dee's life that is often celebrated as when he coined the term 'British Empire' when advising Elisabeth on New World exploration, which he indeed seems to have done. Most interesting was the motivation behind the exploration missions, at least for John Dee himself. However modern or even scientific this sense of exploring and discovering the unknown may sound, the fundament for this 'British Empire' and for exploring the New World, was that many people believed that across the seas one could find lost remnants of King Arthur's peoples. And since, conveniently, Elisabeth could trace her lineage back to Arthur himself, this would mean she had a

¹⁷² Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England*, p. 51.

¹⁷³ For a short but interesting analysis of the content of the *Monas* in terms of sixteenth-century semiotics and magic, see G.E. Szönyi, 'From the Hieroglyphic Monad to Angel Magic: semiotic aspects of John Dee's esotericism', in *Lexia. Rivista di semiotica*, vol. 11-12 (2012), pp. 109-136.

¹⁷⁴ Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England*, p. 87.

¹⁷⁵ In 1592 Dee wrote a letter devoted solely to counter personal accusations of necromancy that had pursued him since at least 1547, kept in the British Library under signature Cotton Vitellius C VII, f. 2r-13r.

¹⁷⁶ Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England*, p. 68.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 122.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 93.

rightful claim to the entire continent.¹⁷⁹ In a sense this strengthened apocalyptic ideas on Elisabeth being the last world ruler, after whom the world would end in the Biblical Apocalypse. And since the whole of Europe was dealing with religious and political crises, it is not hard to imagine that Godfearing people would perceive signs of the end-times, and prophesy on just that. Related to Dee, I find it hardly surprising that he was strongly interested, even zealously, in apocalyptic theory and the future of the world attested not only by the apocalyptic undertone of the LMQ, but also texts like *Limits of the Empire*, dealing Elisabeth's claim on both Europe and the New World.¹⁸⁰ On a more personal level, Dee's apocalyptic feelings might have been enhanced by the death of his first wife.

Confirming the crisis of the 1570s at the English court is the case of Thomas Elkes who was executed in 1580 for magically seeking and unearthing treasure. The apocalyptic train of thought of the period and fear of magical conspiracies probably motivated the court to act quite aggressively. This was problematic for Dee since a courtier had provided him with a scryer named Bartholomew Hickman in 1579, so they knew about his ritual magic.¹⁸¹ This semi-public knowledge of Dee's magical interests might have inclined Dee even more to keep the LMQ close to his chest.

The end of the 1570s also marked the end of Dee's successful political career, no doubt in some matter because of the execution of Elkes for professing magic. Even though Elisabeth did promise Dee and his studies her personal protection, Dee connected with two men that would drastically change his fortunes. The first of these was Edward Talbot, who later turned out to be an alchemist named Edward Kelley, a possible fugitive for fraud and forgery. As will become painfully clear in the following, Kelley was quite influential on Dee and the direction of his studies and indeed life. The two of them met in 1582 when Kelley replaced Dee's scryer Barnabas Saul. Parry speculates that Kelley might have bullied or scared Saul into leaving, after which he could move in on Dee's divinatory interests.¹⁸² In the years after meeting Kelley, Dee went into his most magically inspired years, indeed writing the LMQ during an astonishing amount of hours spent scrying. His life with Kelley took him all over Europe on both magical, religious, financial and political quests, seeking out princes hoping to find a permanent patron. Pre-eminently these were also the years of Dee's life that made him the obscure historical player he became, due to the presentist scope of the history of science ever biased towards the magical and the occult.

In 1582 and 1583 Dee was still part of New World exploration plans working with men like Walter Raleigh and Francis Drake, but his problematic relation with Kelley complicated Dee's courtly life.¹⁸³ The same goes for Dee's endeavours in adapting the calendar that by then was behind 11 days on reality, because of a discrepancy between the classical time-reckoning and the actual astronomical situation. The solution for this problem was already presented in 1582 via Pope Gregory XIII, but the English crown was dissociated from the Popish power since Henry. Dee was one of the scholars at the English court that suggested a change (England converted to the new-style Gregorian calendar in 1750, with the Calendar Act).

The second man that Dee allied himself with that bore more problems than gain, was the Polish noble Albrecht Laski (1527-1605). At the time Laski came into Dee's life Dee was already heavily invested in the angel-magic that delivered us the LMQ. With Kelley, Dee took up the art of

¹⁷⁹ Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England*, p. 94, 110-112.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 130.

¹⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 136-137.

¹⁸² *Ibidem*, p. 146.

¹⁸³ *Ibidem*, p. 153-4. Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 8.

scrying more seriously than before, apparently giving them some fame in the sense of magic. What Laski's real goals were is hard to establish now, but he was certainly looking for money, complemented by divinatory advice.¹⁸⁴ He overstayed his welcome, however, when suspicions started to arise at the court, especially with Francis Walsingham, that he was a Habsburg spy. And since Laski was permitted by Dee to attend some of their scrying sessions their fates were bound. At exactly the time Laski's motivation for being in London, namely 'taking in the sights', had become doubtful in the eyes of the court, Dee was being accused of necromancy by Vincent Murphyn once more and was heavily indebted to several moneylenders.¹⁸⁵ Demonstrating Dee's social awkwardness and inability to read situations, he requested patronage from Elisabeth at this time at 200 pounds a year. She declined, leaving Dee and Kelley with few options left. Conveniently the angels, during one of their sessions at which Laski was present, told Dee and Kelley to travel with Laski to Poland, and help him realise his destiny, replacing the Polish king.¹⁸⁶ In late 1583 they left England after which Dee and Kelley would never return together. Laski's presence during the scrying is an important event, on which I will elaborate in section 6.3. Despite Dee's attempts at secrecy, he allowed a significant amount of people to witness their ritual evocations.

Laski's promise of a yearly fee might have been a fair motivation for Dee and Kelley to leave their homes, combined with the angels' command to follow him. Dee's wife, Jane Fromondes, travelled with them along with a modest following and a selection of 800 books and some instruments. In Poland, in 1584, they got into political quicksand when a conspiracy led by Laski against King Bathory (1533-1586) was discovered. The angels were again helpful to dash out of a straitened political situation by telling the two men Laski had lost his way and should no longer be followed.¹⁸⁷ Although it is unclear how Dee and Kelley came into the money, they took up their belongings and following and headed for Prague, to try and gain an audience with Emperor Rudolph II. Rudolph was a fervent collector of everything occult and magical. He has been known not only to invite great alchemists and occultists like Marcus Maier (1568-1622), Heinrich Kunrath (1560-1605) and Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) to his court, but also the famous Tycho Brahe (1473-1601) and Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) who wrote their game-changing innovative astrological work together under Rudolph's auspices. The two men could not stand each other, and might not have come to work together if not for Rudolph's requests and patronage.¹⁸⁸

Dee was quick to overplay his hand during his first and only audience with Rudolph, when he told him the angels had commanded him to say that Rudolph needed to better his ways in a religious sense, or God would take his throne from him.¹⁸⁹ This, however, is an immensely important anecdote for studies of Dee's work I would like to address briefly. It might have been that Kelley was indeed a severely troubled and fraudulent man, keeping Dee on a string via his 'scrying abilities'. But it is unlikely Dee was fraudulent as well. One does not lightly walk up to the most powerful man in Europe to convey that God commanded you to tell him to change his ways. This must have been backed by a strong personal belief in the scrying sessions and the messages the angels brought via Kelley. I will return to this subject in section 5.3. What is important for now, is that Dee never gained patronage at Rudolph's court, so they needed to look further for a place to

¹⁸⁴ Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 242-3, 248.

¹⁸⁵ Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England*, p. 157, 158, 160, 161.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 161. Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 226.

¹⁸⁷ Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England*, p. 178.

¹⁸⁸ Marshall, *The Mercurial Emperor*, pp. 153-158, p. 177-179.

¹⁸⁹ D.E. Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels. Cabbala, alchemy and the end of nature* (New York 1999), p. 55.

settle, again. They ended up in Hungary, coming back to Prague to test their luck with Rudolph a second time, again with money from unclear origins.¹⁹⁰ We can only imagine the amount of discomfort this created for Dee's following, and especially his wife.

In Hungary Dee and Kelley had allowed Francesco Pucci (1543-1593) to attend their scrying sessions, which they kept having even during their travels.¹⁹¹ Always the bad judge of character and intentions, sadly, Dee discovered much too late that Pucci was working with the Papal Nuncio, looking to get Dee to appear before the Holy Inquisition.¹⁹² Even though Dee and Kelley avoided ever appearing in Rome to defend their work, which probably would have got them executed eventually, they were banished from the Holy Roman Empire in 1585, after which they were given 40 days to leave. They manoeuvred to Kassel, only being invited back to the Holy Roman Empire in 1586, when Count Vilem Rozmberg (?-1592), whom they met in Hungary, persuaded Rudolph to allow Kelley and Dee to reside in Trebon.¹⁹³ This marks the last phase of the cooperation between Dee and Kelley. Between 1586 and 1588 their already complicated relationship found its definitive end.

Kelley had been working on his own fame, probably in spite of Dee's. This is attested by the fact that he always was offered more payment than Dee when money was offered, and by the fact that Kelley was far more successful in gaining patronages. It would indeed seem to be the case that Kelley used Dee to gain a foot inside the door of courtly Europe, which he did. On the 18th of April 1586, the chasm between Dee and Kelley grew exponentially when the angels commanded they needed to swap wives for a night to create a deeper 'unity' between them. God possessed the power to turn sin into virtue, making it an act approved by him. The act was consummated on the 20th of May 1586, after a month of moral discussion and, one imagines, heated conversations with their partners.¹⁹⁴ Shortly after this happened, the two men parted, as Kelley wanted to settle in Eastern Europe, and Dee returned to England.

During the entirety of their travels, Dee kept corresponding with the English court, hoping to be allowed to return with some dignity to the queen's side. An answer was usually denied him until a letter came asking Kelley to come back to England as Kelley was rumoured to be able to alchemically create gold.¹⁹⁵ Dee wanted to tag along, probably convincing himself Elisabeth wanted both men returned, but Kelley had no intention of leaving Prague. In 1589 Dee returned to England with his family and part of his following, as another part had accompanied Kelley to the court of Rudolph II where he finally received patronage to create gold through alchemical process. Rid of Dee, Kelley could fend for himself admirably. Elisabeth did receive Dee and even allowed him to regain some of his reputation through her protection.¹⁹⁶ He regained his house in Mortlake, after paying the mortgages, but the house and his belongings had been ravaged and picked clean by his creditors. Some of his belongings he was able to restore, but most he was not. Elisabeth's

¹⁹⁰ Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England*, p. 184, 185.

¹⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 188.

¹⁹² Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels*, p. 58-59. Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 255.

¹⁹³ Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 255. It is an intriguing idea that this might have been the moment the *Summa Sacre Magice* found its way to Kassel, with marginal annotations by Dee. The book is thought to have been compiled by Berengarius Ganellus (Latinized) in the fourteenth century. The book contains over 800 folios of magical material. It is currently kept in the University Library with shelfmark 4° Ms. astron. 3 and is accessible in digitised version online.

¹⁹⁴ Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England*, p. 198.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 201-202.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 205-206.

willingness to restore Dee to a certain position might have been inspired by a surreptitious hope for Kelley's return to England.¹⁹⁷

The court grew weary of requesting Kelley to return eventually, and gave him one final chance to come to England to help the crown. Kelley did not budge. His fall from grace inevitably cast a shadow on Dee's reputation as well. There are conflicting stories on Kelley's death making it unsure what happened to him. He is said to have died after attempting to escape imprisonment in Prague after Rudolph lost his patience waiting for alchemical results and the gold Kelley promised. In Dee's private diary we simply read the entry 'the newes that Sir Edward Kelley was slaine' on the 25th of November 1595.¹⁹⁸ This must have been hard for Dee to swallow since he presumably received a letter in August of that year re-inviting Dee to Prague to work with Kelley.¹⁹⁹

During the last years of Dee's life, he lost all political clout after Elisabeth died in 1603. James I, who ascended to the throne after Elisabeth died childless, was not as prone to listening to occult advice as Elisabeth had been. Next to that every connection Dee had to the court through acquaintances was severed after practically everyone had died. In the 1590s Dee had rebuilt some of his former life, and a modestly good life indeed. Dee secured some positions for himself, giving him a modest income. Jane Fromondes died of bubonic plague in 1605, and Dee himself died in 1608, or possibly 1609. After an immensely strange, adventurous and profoundly interesting life Dee died near impoverished with only his daughter at his side. His reputation had not been destroyed yet, as this would not happen until Meric Casaubon's 1659 publication mentioned before, but it no longer held the sway it did in the 1570s. One can only wonder what Dee's thoughts and beliefs must have been at the end of his life. Did he become disillusioned with all the promises of riches and apocalyptic developments offered by the angels? Or did he stay firm in his belief in the worth of what he and his selection of scryers had accomplished over half a century? In any case, we turn our attention now back to the 1580s in the next chapter, delving into the words and promises of the angels in the LMQ.

¹⁹⁷ Elizabeth's capriciousness toward Dee is very typical for her behaviour as ruler. In many ways she was fickle and stubborn, sometimes even to the point of endangering England. J. Guy, *Elizabeth: the forgotten years* (London 2016), p. 4-8.

¹⁹⁸ Dee, *The Private Diary*, p. 54.

¹⁹⁹ Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England*, p. 248.

5. The Manuscript: Libri Mysteriorum Quinque

[...] his only (but great and dreadful) error being, that he mistook false lying Spirits for Angels of Light, the Divil of Hell (as we commonly term him) for the God of Heaven.²⁰⁰

- Meric Casaubon, on Dee (1659) –

This chapter is dedicated to providing answers to the problems of authorship posed in the introduction. As discussed there, the problematic authorship of the LMQ is underappreciated and needs to be addressed explicitly. The LMQ is currently kept in the Sloane collection of the British Library, bearing signature Sloane MS 3188. This is what is thought to be the original autograph by Dee, bound by Elias Ashmole (1617-1692), founder of the Ashmolean Museum and fervent collector of manuscripts and occult paraphernalia. The first 108 folios in the codex form the LMQ, and the rest is Ashmole's work, along with the preface. The measurements of the manuscript are 320 mm to 205 mm, and it was written between 1581 and 1583. The British Library writes in the title of the codex that indeed Dee and Ashmole are the joined writers of the material within. Interestingly, the British Library dubs Dee an 'astrologer' in his description. Maybe he could be called that, but certainly not *just* that.

The codex sustained some damage over time, making parts of the LMQ illegible.²⁰¹ These gaps have been filled in Peterson's edition using both Sloane MS 3677, which is a copy of the LMQ that Ashmole made before the damage was sustained. This manuscript was auctioned in 1739 on the continent eventually leading to its acquisition by the British Museum. Next to Sloane MS 3677, Sloane MS 3189 was used by Peterson, containing other magical work by Dee and Kelley and can be used to complement Sloane MS 3188.

Sloane MS 3188, for all clarity, contains the part of Dee and Kelley's scrying sessions that precede the work that Meric Casaubon edited in the seventeenth century. What I call the LMQ, is that which took place between Dee and his scryers from 1581, to 1583.²⁰² Casaubon's edition covers the period between 1583 and 1587. That means that Sloane MS 3188 also precedes Dee's travels to the continent, and is written on the brink of the end of Dee's political career. After all, he fled England when his prospects on the island were pretty much shot in 1584, only to return in late 1588.

5.1 The Manuscript: a Problem of Authorship

In terms of ownership of the manuscript I already briefly addressed how the manuscript came into Ashmole's hands. It was found, along with some personal belongings of Dee, in the secret compartment of a chest that was auctioned. Ashmole saved the contents of the compartment from certain destruction and bound the manuscript with some of his own work. It was ascribed to Dee, and Elias Ashmole found this convincing. Since then it has been catalogued as an autograph. I aim

²⁰⁰ M. Casaubon, *A true and faithfull relationship*, 'the preface', p. 17.

²⁰¹ Most notably folio 17, from which the top part is missing. Peterson used Sloane MS 3677 (Ashmole's edition of the LMQ) to fill in some of the gaps made by damage sustained after Ashmole's editing.

²⁰² I write 'scryers' in plural, even though Barnabas Saul scryed for the first session only. The remainder has been done with Edward Kelley.

to avoid the mistake of taking Ashmole's word at face value, however, and confirm this for myself. To do so I have compared several aspects of the manuscript to several other manuscripts by Dee, or books in which Dee wrote marginal commentaries.

5.1.1. Comparison of dates

As mentioned above, Dee's personal diary has been preserved. Maybe 'diary' is not the most fitting term, since it suggests that it is an autonomous book solely dedicated to Dee's personal endeavours. It is actually a marginal text, discovered in the late nineteenth century on the margins of another manuscript.²⁰³ Its discovery in the nineteenth century tells us a possible forger of the LMQ could not have used the dates from the diary to place Dee and Kelley in the right time and place. The diary's importance for our purposes lies in the fact that it has been written over a long period of time, including the period in which the LMQ was written. I have compared the dates of entry for both books, to cross-reference Dee's location and pursuits at the time of writing. If this delivered some anomalies, that would be worth looking into.

The LMQ is written in 30 sessions that took place between December 1581 to April 1583. Several entries in the diary coincide with entries in the LMQ. For example, we read on the 8th of March 1582, two days before the first session with Edward Kelley, that Kelley exposed Barnabas Saul, Dee's scryer before Kelley and after Bartholomew Hickman, to be talking negatively about Dee behind his back. We read 'Mr Talbot²⁰⁴ declared a great deale of Barnabas nowghty dealing toward me, as in telling Mr Clerkson ill things of me ...'.²⁰⁵ This fits into the entry on 10 March 1582 nicely, where we first meet Kelley as a scryer in the LMQ. Secondly, the diary entry on the 28th of April 1582 tells us Dee was visited in the morning by a Mr. Eton to speak about his position as rector for Upton.²⁰⁶ We read in the LMQ that on the same day Dee and Kelley had a scrying session, but they began at 16.00; leaving room for a morning appointment.²⁰⁷

Edward Kelley left for London on 22 November 1582, which fits into the LMQ that has a scrying session on the 21st of November that year. It is the last session for that year, actually, with the next one held on 23 March 1583. On the 18th of March 1583 Dee wrote to have met Albert Laski, the Polish noble that would lead Dee and Kelley to the Continent later that year. Unfortunately, this is where the cross-matching of entries for the LMQ and diary end since no other entries coincide. Still, this helps us build a case that might conclude that the LMQ is indeed an autograph: the dates add up.

5.1.2. Word usage and writing style

To find certain words, or combinations of words, that appear to be characteristic for an author is no easy task. For this thesis, this will be done succinctly because a full analysis on the level of word usage will have to be done by cross-referencing at least a dozen sources and categorising every word. Evidently, this would take up more space than is relevant for this thesis. I will include the sources that were used for the palaeographical analysis of 5.1.3, complemented by Smith MS 97,

²⁰³ Dee, *The Private Diary*, p. VII-VIII.

²⁰⁴ Edward Kelley initially used the name Talbot, but changes to Kelley during the scrying for the LMQ.

²⁰⁵ Dee, *The Private Diary*, p. 15.

²⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

²⁰⁷ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 151.

kept in the Weston Library Oxford, Dee's diary and his *Mathematical praeface to elements of Geometrie of Euclid of Megara*.²⁰⁸ That way we have both marginal notes, letters and a book for comparison. Even though a full-fledged analysis on Dee's word usage cannot be included here, it would be an interesting angle for future research.

The attentive reader of Dee's work will promptly discover the main characteristic of his writing style: his writings are seldom concise, and actually hang toward the prolix. Even in the marginal notes in Ashmole MS 487 and 488 he elaborates in detailed descriptions, taking up quite some space in the margins. The name 'Albert Laski' is complemented with his title 'The Prince', even though Laski had been named a couple of times in the preceding notes. It is hard to find certain 'buzz words' Dee used more often, but Dee's this style of writing is recognisable. Adjectives are often stacked upon adjectives, creating tedious and difficult sentences as found in the *Mathematical Praeface*. Admittedly this is a typical trait of seventeenth-century scholarly writing. It would therefore seem that Dee stood in the early beginnings of this tradition of wordiness. An example of his writing in the *Praeface*:

While I consider the diuerse trades of these two excellent Philosophers (and am most sure, both, that Plato right well, otherwise could teach: and that Aristotle mought boldely, with his hearers, haue dealt in like sorte as Plato did) I am in no little pang of perplexitie: Bycause, that, which I mislike, is most easy for me to performe (and to haue Plato for my example.) And that, which I know to be most commendable: and (in this first bringyng, into common handling, the Artes Mathematicall) to be most necessary: is full of great difficultie and sundry daungers. Yet, neither do I think it mete, for so straunge matter (as now is ment to be published) and to so straunge an audience, to be bluntly, at first, put forth, without a peculiar Preface: Nor (Imitatyng Aristotle) well can I hope, that accordyng to the amplex and dignitie of the State Mathematicall, I am able, either playnly to prescribe the materiall boundes: or precisely to expresse the chief purposes, and most wonderfull applications therof.²⁰⁹

Dee's writing-style is also characteristic in his neatness and structure of writing. If we, for now, assume the LMQ is indeed Dee's autograph we can see his resolute zeal in the level of detail, and the elaborate character of his writings in clear contrast with a similar book written by Humphrey and Adrian Gilbert, described by Frank Klaassen, that is far more disorganised.²¹⁰

A second typicality of Dee's writing is a tendency to throw in some Greek every now and then. We see this in his personal diary, and again in Ashmole MS 487. The author of the LMQ does the same, without any apparent reason.²¹¹ This can also be seen as part of the same seventeenth-century tradition in which the wordiness stands. Whether this is done in an attempt at secrecy (in his diary, for example, he turns to Greek when describing a dream his wife had about conceiving a son), or some other reason is left to the historian's guess.²¹² The LMQ author seems to randomly choose for either Hebrew or Greek at some points in the text. It makes one wonder about Katherine Eggerts theory of 'skimming', in which authors utilize ancient language to seem eloquent.

²⁰⁸ Weston Library, Oxford, Smith MS 97. J. Dee, *Mathematical Praeface to elements of geometrie of Euclid of Megara* (Antwerp 1560). The book is edited and made available for the public through the Gutenberg publication project, accessible via <http://www.gutenberg.org> (accessed on 16-06-2017).

²⁰⁹ Dee, *Mathematical Praeface*, p. 4. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22062/22062-h/22062-h.htm>.

²¹⁰ F. Klaassen, 'Ritual Invocation and Early Modern Science'.

²¹¹ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 127, 356. Dee, *The Private Diary*, p. 7, 11.

²¹² Dee, *The Private Diary*, p. 7.

Unfortunately, attentive skimming on my part of the LMQ, Dee's diary, the *Mathematical Praeface*, the sources kept in the British Library and the Weston in Oxford have delivered a string of buzz words that can be connected to Dee. This might be a fruitful endeavour to be conducted in the near future. It could bring us just that last bit closer to Dee as a person. For now I believe it suffices to conclude that Dee had a particular writing style that is also found in the LMQ.

5.1.3. Palaeography

Here I will present a summarized version of the palaeographical analysis found in Appendix 1. I believe to have sufficiently shown that we can indeed conclude the hands of the LMQ to belong to John Dee. After having established that the LMQ is written in four hands, two of which being significant for our analysis (the other two are used specifically for the title of the five books, and in tables and schedules), it became clear that the two hands differed notably. The first hand is a neat cursive hand, that seems to have been written down with care. The second is a less-neat block-letter that seems to have been used for quick writing. This difference can easily be explained, when we realise the cursive hand is used in parts of the LMQ that could be written at ease, for example the opening prayer, where the block-letter is used for documentation of the actual scrying. This had to be written down at a much quicker pace.²¹³

The three characteristic letters that form the core of my palaeographical analysis, are the 'a', 'g' and 'h'. The ductus of both the 'a' and 'g' seems to be quite dissimilar between the two hands, and likewise the letter 'h'. The capital 'A' from the cursive hand leans toward the left, where the block-letter 'A' hinges to the right. This is a change of ductus one would not expect in a single scribe. The same goes for the 'g'. Both hands show a 'g' with a long tail underscoring several letters to the left, but the ductus of the cursive hand goes upward eventually, where the block-letter moves downward. The 'h' found in the cursive hand is one typical for Elizabethan England. A curly 'h' connecting to the preceding letter high, and the following low.²¹⁴ Being typical for the age and place, however, it is not really telling. The block-letter 'h', however, is, as it is an atypical letter, lacking the left stem of the 'h'. It stands neatly on the writing line. Moreover it is significant that the cursive hand uses commas as punctuation, where the block-letter tends to use a full-stop.

Based on the above, one would be inclined to conclude that in fact two scribes have been working on the LMQ. The definitive answers, however, are found in comparison to manuscripts that where beyond doubt written by Dee. In five manuscripts from Dee's hand, or with annotations by Dee, we see the same combination of palaeographical traits that we perceived in the LMQ. The differing ductus of the 'g', the atypical 'h' combined with the typical one and the capital 'A' we found earlier. The most telling example is found in Ashmole MS 487, where we find the 'h' from both the cursive and the block-letter in one sentence, in one hand. The same goes for the two types of 'h' that are found in the LMQ. Both appear in one sentence, in the same ink, and in one hand.

Supported by the palaeographical evidence, I feel confident in backing Ashmole's conclusion that the LMQ was in fact written by John Dee. The unconvinced or curious reader can

²¹³ J. Burgers explains that a cursive hand is often used for fast writing, but is not necessarily meant solely for that purpose. In the cursive hand of the LMQ we see a clear example of a neat and slowly-written cursive hand. J.W.J. Burgers, *Schrift en Schrijfdragers in de Nederlanden in de Middeleeuwen: De paleografie van de documentaire bronnen in Holland en Zeeland in de dertiende eeuw* (Leuven 1995), p. 20-22.

²¹⁴ As seen in the examples of G. Dawson, L. Kennedy-Skipton, *Elizabethan Handwriting 1500-1600: A Guide to the Reading of Documents and Manuscripts* (London 1966), p. 48, 50.

find full documentation of the palaeographical analysis conducted for this conclusion in Appendix 1.

5.2. The Manuscript: John Dee, Believer or Deceiver

Lastly it is imperative to ascertain whether Dee was sincere in his magical endeavours; for if he was not, the LMQ as a source for historical study would instantly lose most of its value. After all, what could it really be used for if Dee had made it out of whole cloth? There has been some discussion in Dee's historiography on what his motivation for his magical endeavours was. I believe there is a manifold of arguments to be given to say that Dee did, in fact, believe wholeheartedly in the magic he professed, despite the arguments some scholars might have against that. In this short paragraph, I will remonstrate the image of Dee as a fraud and argue for him being a believer, using the manuscript and its layout along with some historical arguments.

Even though we have now made probable that Dee is indeed the author of the LMQ, we do not necessarily have to take his account on how he wrote it at face value. The idea is that Dee wrote down the information transferred by the angels, while the scrying was being done. But could Dee and Kelley not just as easily have written the entire account without even approaching a crystal ball? What arguments do we have that bolster this idea of the writing process?

Thinking back on the section on palaeography above, there are immediately several arguments buttressing my hypothesis that the LMQ was written during scrying sessions. In the opening prayers we discovered a neat and curly hand, obviously written down with care. However, when the scrying started we saw Dee change to a less time consuming hand, allowing him to write quickly. And when the scrying was in full swing, he combined the hands in apparently random order. I take this as an argument for the suggestion that Dee wrote as they went along. There is even one instance in which Dee comments in a personal footnote that he could not write a prayer by Kelley down verbatim, as Kelley's tempo in reciting it was too fast.²¹⁵ This kind of detail would not be expected in a forgery.

Next to the seemingly random changing of hands, there is the layout of the pages. Most pages are brimming with connecting lines, marginal comments, words added later, notary signs and all kinds of little intermissions of the actual text. The pages that lack this form of chaos, understandably do so. For example, in the last two books of the LMQ the angels consign an angelic (or 'Adamic') language to the scryers, that we find in neat and careful writing. As Dee must have given these words extra care, this is hardly surprising. The disorganised bulk of the pages, however, also argue for the idea of Dee writing during the sessions. Lastly we can only detect a single kind of ink in the document.

Briefly we will delve into definitions once more, as a complement to the definitions discussed in chapter two. As challenging as discerning the two from each other might be, the discerning is not that relevant in Dee's case. It does not matter for our purposes that learned magic and science are almost indistinguishable (as much for the sixteenth-century mind as it is for us), it matters what Dee perceived them to be. In that regard, as discussed in chapter three, Dee was a believer in science. He did not discern between science and magic, as we can ascertain from his own words as he dubing scrying 'optical science'.²¹⁶ We encounter this again in the LMQ, when

²¹⁵ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 323.

²¹⁶ Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, p. 177-178.

Hagonel, an apparition of an angel, tells Dee and Kelley 'In this thow mayst lern science'.²¹⁷ And a second time when the same angel states that 'Thow desyrest use, and I teache use, and yet the Art [i.e. scrying] is to furder the understanding of all sciences'.²¹⁸ Even though the latter examples do not stem from Dee's mind, he does accept the angel's words and therefore seems to approve of them.

A well-known anecdote in Dee studies also validates the thesis that Dee was a true believer. As already noted in chapter four, Dee once gained an audience with Rudolph II, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. In Prague Dee approached Rudolph, and confidently overplayed his political hand when he conveyed the message the angels had told Dee to bring to Rudolph, stating that Rudolph needed to better his Christian ways, or God would bereave him of his throne.²¹⁹ I find it very hard to swallow that an otherwise sane man would walk up to the most powerful man in Europe, and basically chastise him, without being earnest in his intent. For all his lack of finesse I do not think even Dee would have done this lightly.

In his zealous effort to gain patronage in Europe, Dee travelled many miles and spent more than a few pounds. He took his entire household on tow, and dragged them halfway through the continent. Dee never got rich; he never became a court-magus; he never convinced any notable man or woman indefinitely of his scientific competence; yet he never gave up. In all the hardships Dee had to endure, from financial bankruptcy to fighting with his wife over 'the angel's' proposition he and Kelley share wives, Dee never gave up on the scrying and the angels he knew. Would you not assume that if Dee was in the game as a fraud looking to get either rich or famous, he would have changed his game to adjust to the demand of the 'magical market'? Kelley ended up in service of Rudolph as an alchemist, after claiming to be able to create gold. That is far more in line with expectations of a fraudulent magician.

Dee devoted himself completely to the study of his 'optical science' for almost ten years of his life. After his collaboration with Kelley had come to an end he did not conclude his business with the angels for lack of interest, but that of a scryer. All things considered, this led me to conclude that indeed Dee cannot be called a fraud or charlatan. A whole different case could be built around Kelley, but that is beyond our scope. One could accuse Dee of naiveté without much trouble, but his integrity seems to have been forthright.

With this conclusion, we can turn to the book's content. In the next chapter I will try to place the practiced magic from the LMQ into a context of magical traditions and furthermore determine why the LMQ would not have been published, by Dee or otherwise, during Dee's life. We might never know who hid the LMQ in the secret compartment of the chest it was found in, but why it was hidden we just might learn.

²¹⁷ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 212-213.

²¹⁸ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 212-213.

²¹⁹ Cf. 183, p. 35.

6. The Contents of the Libri Mysteriorum Quinque.

'The number of individuals and movements since the onset of the age of rationalism that have been influenced by angelic inspiration or communication is impressive.'

J. Schorchs, in 'Modern Angels, Avant Gardes and the Esoteric Archive'.²²⁰

In this chapter, the contents of the LMQ will be analysed in an attempt to grind another metaphorical axe mentioned in section 1.2, following Lehrich's method of analysing a source. We have seen how Dee's life developed and how he approached science and his research. From this, we could conclude that Dee did not, in fact, make his way from science to magic. He was simply invested in conducting research on the Book of Nature, as complement to the Book of Scripture, by all possible means.²²¹ Next, to that, we could indeed bolster Ashmole's claim that the LMQ is an autograph written by dr. Dee.

In this chapter I will demonstrate the contents of the sessions and their strangeness. One might imagine the angelic conversations to have a clear and understandable nature, but the opposite is true. Even though some of the conversations are fairly comprehensible and unambiguous, most are not. After the praxis of Dee's magic becomes clear, I will delve into one of the unique traits of the LMQ, namely the way in which Dee practised of magic, in paragraph 6.1.1. Many necromantic manuals and manuscripts describe spells, charms and rituals, but we almost never encounter the documentation of a necromancer, or magician, in action. In the following, I will create an image of how exactly Dee practised his magic, and compare that to the rituals and texts found in both the *Ars Notoria* and the *Liber Iuratus*, or *Sworn Book of Honorius*. Here I will argue that indeed, as Klaassen demonstrated, there is no radical break between the fifteenth and sixteenth century in ritual magic. Dee's magic stood firmly in a medieval tradition.

I will highlight specific parts of the LMQ that might have made Dee hide the book. Even though we will probably never know who hid this part of the sessions inside the secret compartment of the chest it was found in, we can assume that Dee did intend it to be kept hidden. Section 6.2. of this thesis will provide possible reasons why. I will seek out subjects that might be called heretical, demonic magic, necromancy, or an undermining of the clerical monopoly of contact with the divine. Next to the practical problems of publishing a book in the sixteenth century, this might lead us to conclude that Dee could very well have made the right choice in his secrecy.

We seem to have to deal with a distinct private and public reality, that do not always correspond. In the private reality, we find Dee cloaking his magical practice and keeping it out of sight. In the contemporaneous public reality we will discover that a great many people must have been aware of Dee and Kelley's magical sessions. In the end we have to realize that a sixteenth-century occult scholar like Dee differed from the medieval magician in certain ways, most notably his isolation; the sixteenth-century magician was not isolated at all. From all layers of society we find people assisting Dee in some minor or significant way, that must have made them privy to

²²⁰ J. Schorsch, 'Modern Angels, Avant Gardes and the Esoteric Archive', in *Lux in Tenebris: the visual and the symbolic in western esotericism* (Leiden 2017), p. 397.

²²¹ The idea of a 'Book of Nature' was a religious concept of approaching the world, where the world God created was seen as a mirror image of the Book of Scripture. Studies into the one, could lead to insights in the other. Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels*, p. 64-65.

Dee's magical work to a certain degree. I will present this as a small step in unearthing an infrastructure of magical knowledge that existed in early modern society. The private Dee as a magician was at risk of being accused of heresy or practising necromancy. The public Dee was accepted by a large part of society as exactly what he was: an occult scholar, practising magic.

6.1 The Contents of the Angelic Conversations

In this chapter I refer to Appendix 2, containing one of the many conversations Dee and Kelley had with angels during their years of cooperation. It is clear that the contents of the conversations were quite complex, bordering on the incomprehensible. In fact many, if not most, of the scenes conveyed by Kelley after looking into the crystal are not dealt with even by Dee and Kelley themselves. Often after an angel spoke, they would analyse the words and ask for clarification if it was not readily clear to them.²²² The bulk of the strange scenes that unfolded before Kelley's eyes, however, were not elaborated upon at all leaving a reader at a loss. Scenes in which, for example, a group of men appeared, wearing certain colours and carrying instruments that they would play as they appeared and again when they disappeared were written down without an attempt at an explanation.²²³ To me this is a strong argument for why we should not be too quick in calling Kelley a simple charlatan. The contents are too complex, and the duration of the sessions too long for this simplified conclusion. We need to perceive Kelley as a, up to a certain point, sincere scryer, despite the fact that he was most likely fraudulent in some aspects.²²⁴

It is important to understand that Dee and Kelley had a massive library filled with occult books and magical manuscripts at their disposal.²²⁵ Therefore it is not surprising to find references to major late medieval scholars of the occult occasionally. This is a trend perceivable throughout the entire LMQ in two ways. On the one hand we see Dee referring to writers like Agrippa and Reuchlin in the margins or footnotes of the LMQ, sometimes wondering whether they wrote about the same subjects in their works, and sometimes as a reminder for himself to look something up.²²⁶ On the other hand, we see in Kelley's conveying of the angelic messages certain names and references that are also found in other works. Peterson gives several examples of this in his edition, but more can be found.²²⁷ An example not mentioned by Peterson is a list of angelic names that is found almost verbatim in an addition to a *Liber Iuratus* manuscript.²²⁸ Apart from minor differences in spelling that might be explained by manuscript traditions and transcription the names are the same.

²²² Literally we read: 'I pray you make some of these last instructions, more playne, and euident'. The angel dealing with Dee at that time answers 'I haue shewed thee perfectly', and continues to explain in another way the same information. Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 210.

²²³ An example can be found in Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 106-107.

²²⁴ A modern example of a man perceiving himself to be a scientist, despite the fact that he was fully aware that he was forging the evidence for his most important theses is the Dutch professor of social psychology Diederik Stapel. Despite his fraudulence he said in interviews that he did not stop believing in his own work. This might seem like a strange example here, but the point is that the rigid divide between 'true' and 'false' that we tend to make is not necessarily accurate. R. Abma, *De Publicatiefabriek: Over de bekentenis van de affaire-Stapel* (Nijmegen 2013).

²²⁵ Cf. 171, p. 34.

²²⁶ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 77.

²²⁷ Ibidem, p. 27-29, 57.

²²⁸ A list of many angelic names was added to one of the *Liber Iuratus* manuscripts, called 'Manuscript R' by Peterson, used by Peterson for his English edition. It is very interesting and deserves more research that this specific list is found in the LMQ. J.H. Peterson, *The Sworn Book of Honorius: liber iuratus honorii* (Boston 2016), p. 4-5.

Angelic Names in an addition to a <i>Liber Iuratus Manuscript</i> ²²⁹	Angelic Names in the LMQ ²³⁰
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Zaphkiel</i> • <i>Zadkiel</i> • <i>Camael</i> • <i>Raphael</i> • <i>Hamiel</i> • <i>Michael</i> • <i>Gabriel</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Zapkiel</i> • <i>Zadkiel (Ars Notoria: Zadakiel)</i>²³¹ • <i>Cumael (Ars Notoria: Camael)</i>²³² • <i>Raphael</i> • <i>Haniel</i> • <i>Michael</i> • <i>Gabriel</i>

Besides this we find the names ‘Medicina Dei’ and ‘Fortitudo Dei’ for the angels Michael and Raphael in both the LMQ and the *Ars Notoria*.²³³ Another example is the angel Anael, who is found in the LMQ, as well as in the *De Occulta* by Agrippa and frequently in the *Liber Iuratus*. Anael is often synonymous for Uriel.²³⁴ These corresponding names are one of the many signs that Dee’s magic indeed stood firmly in the medieval Solomonic tradition of ritual magic. Other examples of corresponding names can be found in several other medieval magical works on Solomon.²³⁵

Even though this might be taken as evidence of Kelley’s insincerity, it could be interpreted as information that Kelley might have had in the back of his mind while scrying. It is not uncommon for a magical medium to tap into his or her own subconscious for the information sought for. In various instances we encounter information that might have come directly from Dee’s library. Whether this served simply as inspiration or instruction is very hard to tell, however.

The actual practicing of magic is hard to find in historical sources. We have manuals, prognostic tables and all kinds of magical texts, but these are usually either instructive or meant to condemn. The LMQ presents a unique peek into the magical practice of the sixteenth century.²³⁶ Even when dealing with the well-known scholars of the occult, a clear line to practice is hardly evident. Marsilio Ficino, for example, definitely worked with descriptive magical texts and copied them, but it is unclear whether he practiced.²³⁷ This is simply not mentioned, and can only be speculated upon. The same can be said of Heinrich Agrippa. Dee’s text is quite the opposite, conveying no instructions at all. It is truly and solely a documentation of what was spoken of during the sessions.

²²⁹ Peterson, *The Sworn Book of Honorius*, p. 79. The names Hanael (possible variation on ‘Hamiel’ or ‘Haniel’) and Anael are found in the *Liber Iuratus* edited by Hedegård on page 121-122.

²³⁰ Peterson, *John Dee’s Five Books of Mystery*, p. 123. Peterson notes on page 77, that these names also occur in Agrippa’s *De Occulta*.

²³¹ Turner, *Ars Notoria*, p. 38.

²³² *Ibidem*, p. 38. The word is used in an oration.

²³³ *Ibidem*, p. 39-40.

²³⁴ Hedegård, ‘*Liber Iuratus Honorii*’ p. 67.

²³⁵ For example in the *Lesser Key of Solomon*, or Lemegeton. Peterson, *John Dee’s Five Books of Mystery*, p. 29.

²³⁶ There is a similar magical manuscript that is a documentation of scrying for answers by the English court-dwellers and half-brothers to Walter Raleigh: Humphrey and Adrian Gilbert. Dee is still unique, however, in his almost painstaking and meticulousness detail. This manuscript is analysed in F. Klaassen, ‘Ritual Invocation and Early Modern Science’.

²³⁷ V. Feola, ‘Elias Ashmole’s collections and views about John Dee’, p. 533.

Lacking instructive information, the LMQ cannot be seen as a manual in any way. This might have made the LMQ more susceptible to suspicion, as it can impossibly be argued to be simply informative to the curious scholar, or used to 'know the enemy' as might be argued with more transmittable knowledge like in Agrippa's work or that of Ficino. The information found in the LMQ is not transmittable; one could not learn to scry from it. So unlike the manuals described by Kieckhefer in *Forbidden Rites*, one who owned the LMQ would be liable to an accusation of practicing the magic professed within the book. A very good example of a collector of magic texts who did not practice, is again Elias Ashmole. Though he likely believed in the angel magic he read about, but he never (visibly) practiced.²³⁸

Even if Dee would have wanted to publish the LMQ at one point, the non-transmittable nature of it might have made it more difficult. We know Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica* was published in 1564 by the Antwerp publisher Willem Silvius (1520-1579). The men probably were befriended, and Silvius was a good friend to have as he was a prominent publisher in Antwerp.²³⁹ Silvius died in 1579 so even if he had been willing to print the LMQ, he died four years too soon. Still, the LMQ would have brought great risks for a publisher, since it does not contain knowledge anyone could use. Its content is even limited by time, since a prediction made somewhere in the 1580s might have lost all its relevance ten years later. Despite that publishing might have been tricky, the question remains why Dee decided never to multiply the book.

To bolster a sense of understanding Dee's and Kelley's magic I will now provide a summary of what their magic looked like in the practical sense, based solely on the LMQ. What was their set-up? What did they do exactly, and how did they do it? Next to this I will highlight some interesting practical sides of their magic, for example in the instance where Dee directly asked one of their appearing angels if, and how, he could influence the Spanish crown for English purposes. Lastly I will highlight parts of the LMQ that corresponds with the *Ars Notoria* and *Liber Iuratus*.

In essence Dee's angelic conversations boil down to the following: a scryer looked into a crystal ball, utilizing a skill that he was most likely born with. In choice of scryer Dee does differ from medieval traditions. In medieval magic it was custom that a virgin child was used for scrying, as he would have been more pure. In Dee's case we see that Kelley was born with the skill to scry, and Dee was not.²⁴⁰ Dee would write down what was said during every session for later study. The magus asked the angels (or apparitions) questions, and received an answer by the mediating scryer. The first, and obvious, trick to receiving divine beings in the crystal, is prayer. Every session seems to have been preceded by what Dee called 'fervent prayer', besides certain moments upon which the angels commanded Dee and Kelley to pray mid-session.²⁴¹

Prayer is one of the most common elements of a preparatory action for ritual magic in the manuals we know. Both the *Ars* and *Liber Iuratus* lean heavily on fixed prayers.²⁴² I believe Dee not only knew these prayers, but to some extent used them in his own rituals. In the *Ars* we come across the phrase '[...] world without end. Amen' numerous times at the end of a prayer or oration.²⁴³ In no less than eight instances do we encounter this exact phrase in the LMQ both in the angels' and

²³⁸ Feola, 'Elias Ashmole's collections and views about John Dee', p. 532.

²³⁹ G. Asaert, *1585: De val van Antwerpen en de uittocht van de Vlamingen en Brabanders* (Antwerp 2004), p. 194.

²⁴⁰ This is how it works in Dee's case specifically. Medieval sources of ritual scrying convey how it could be done using children, who are pure, or women. With Dee however we see that he himself could not do it, and his son could neither. Hickman, Saul and Kelley, however, possessed what seems to have been a gift. Parry, *The Arch Conjurer of England*, p. 197-198.

²⁴¹ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 61.

²⁴² Klaassen, 'Ritual invocation and Early Modern Science', p. 347.

²⁴³ Turner, *Ars Notoria*, p. 5, 15, 30, 42, 45, 48.

in Dee's own words.²⁴⁴ The words of angels might have come from Kelley, via the ball, but the opening prayers did not. This might indicate Dee used, among others, the *Ars* as manual for his magic. In Latin the phrase is found in both the *Ars* and *Liber Iuratus* as '[...] per infinita secula seculorum. Amen'.²⁴⁵ We also find this in the LMQ, in an excerpt from Sloane MS 3849 explaining a ritual to evoke angels in a crystal.²⁴⁶ The *Ars* was only translated into Latin in 1656 by Robert Turner, and we know Dee used the Latin Sloane 313 version of the *Liber Iuratus*. Still it is interesting, and seems to be significant, that the phrase is found, even though translated into English, in the LMQ a number of times.

Other necessary preparation found in both the *Ars* and *Liber Iuratus* are fasting, cleaning one's body and clothes, giving alms to the poor and avoiding contact with either women or wicked men during the rituals.²⁴⁷ We know that Dee and Kelley were at times commanded to commence in fasting as well, but we can only speculate on whether they would have taken other preparatory actions into account.²⁴⁸ Since Dee did not write a manual, but only documented what came to pass during the sessions he must not have felt inclined to write that down. It is likely, however, that they indeed completed various other acts that were needed as preparation for the scrying. Through the years of scrying, however, Dee and Kelley received further instructions on how to proceed with the scrying sessions, making manuals ultimately obsolete.

Some of the instructions given by angels, even though they might not have come directly from any manual since our medium was the conduit for the information, were still very much in line with the Solomonic tradition. Through the years in which the sessions were held, Dee received instructions to construct various paraphernalia to aid him in his experiments. These instruments are of particular interest to us since they indeed confirm, along with other aspects of the ritual scrying Dee conducted, that there was a strong continuity in ritual magic between the Middle Ages and the sixteenth century.

The most important instruments used were the scrying crystals, and one obsidian mirror used for the same purpose. Some of these are displayed in the British Museum, London, and open for all to see. Through the years several 'shew-stones' were used, sometimes interchangeably. These crystals were not made by Dee however, and at least one of them was already present in the first session, before any contact with angels was documented. Dee's first crystal from the LMQ, held inside a dedicated retainer, looked like this according to a schematic drawing by Dee:²⁴⁹



²⁴⁴ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 63, 161, 255, 269, 353, 357, 385, 412.

²⁴⁵ Hedegård, 'Liber Iuratus Honorii', p. 138, 139, 140, 145.

²⁴⁶ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 453. British Library, London, Sloane MS 3489.

²⁴⁷ Turner, *Ars Notoria*, p. 9, 11, 19, 24. Peterson, *The Sworn Book of Honorius*, p. 18, 20, 21.

²⁴⁸ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 64.

²⁴⁹ British Library, London, Sloane 3188, folio 8v.

The first object Dee is instructed to craft is an engraved golden lamen to wear around his neck during the sessions. As Peterson notes, this is a typical magical instrument that was worn around the neck whilst performing rituals.²⁵⁰ Dee's lamen was to be made out of gold, and engraved with certain signs. In a much later session, surprisingly, the angels make it known that the first lamen was actually false and a new one had to be constructed.²⁵¹ As we will see, this is a trend in Dee's magical career. Certain objects or pieces of knowledge are once presented as true instruments for an agent of God, but are later revealed as false or insufficient.

In line with the lamen, the angels show Kelley and Dee a design for a particular ring. This ring, as they are told by the Archangel Michael, '[...] was never revealed since the death of Salomon: with whom I was present'.²⁵² For Dee, this must have been an exciting moment as so many medieval magical texts refer to Solomon as a very powerful mage, capable of great things.²⁵³ Dee writes down the instructions verbatim, to be able to recreate it as detailed as possible.

It shewed to be a Ring of Gold: with a seale graved in it: and had a rowne thing in the myddle of the seale and a thing like a V, throwgh the top of the circle: and an L, in the bottome: and a barr – cleane through it: And had these fowre letters in it, P E L E.²⁵⁴

Peterson describes these instruments as typical for ritual magic. Apparently they are typical for both the Middle Ages and the sixteenth century.²⁵⁵ What is interesting here, is that Dee asks the angel who should make this ring, since they are not skilled smiths themselves. The angel answers:

Cause them [the ring and lamine] to be made up, (according to Instruction) by any honest man.²⁵⁶

Another important instrument is actually a piece of furniture. Dee and Kelley are instructed on the 10th of March 1582 to construct a table on which to set their instruments, to be able to call for angels in a proper way.²⁵⁷ The table was constructed and used accordingly. Like the ring described above, the table design was described in painstaking detail, not unlike the Biblical description of the Ark of the Covenant. All the materials, the measurements, the signs to be made upon it and the exact form are conveyed by Uriel, Archangel as well.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁰ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 24. Seen in *Key of Solomon* and the *Heptameron*.

²⁵¹ Ibidem, p. 24.

²⁵² Ibidem, p. 78.

²⁵³ One could even say that the entire tradition of, at least, learned magic of the high and later middle ages stood on a Solomonic tradition, probably heralded by the *Ars Notoria*.

²⁵⁴ Peterson, p. 79. As Dee notes in the margin, strengthening Klaassen's argument for continuity in magical practice, the name PELE is also found in Reuchlin's *De Verbo Mirifico*.

²⁵⁵ For example found in the *Testament of Solomon*, which Dee was known to possess. Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 24.

²⁵⁶ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 179.

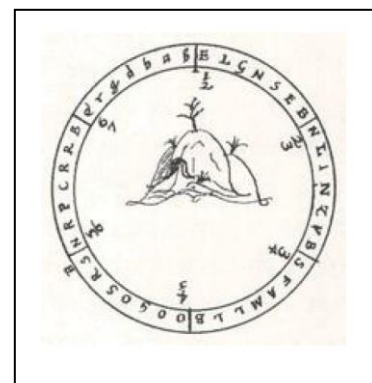
²⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 69-70.

²⁵⁸ Ibidem, p. 69-73.

The last instrument used in the scrying sessions is a short rod called 'El' by the angels.²⁶⁶ As described by one of the angels in a session in March 1582, '[...] the stroke of [the rod], bringeth all things, in theyr degree to an ende'. It is a magical instrument not dissimilar to a wand that became the early modern substitute for the medieval magical sword. Despite that this particular instrument only has to be made once, apparently it is done right the first time, it is certainly an instrument seen in much older magical traditions.²⁶⁷ There are many Biblical and Talmudic examples of magical rods being used by either the followers of God or their spiritual opponents. In both the *Liber Iuratus* and the *Lesser Key of Solomon* we encounter the use of wands in rituals on several occasions.²⁶⁸ Descriptions of how exactly wands were supposed to be made and used can also be found in these manuals. Most commonly the wand is used to create a certain holy space, for example by drawing a circle, or to point in the direction of a place of power, wind direction or at the person or apparition on which your magic is focussed.

These are the instruments used during the sessions. The crystals and obsidian mirror are used as 'shew-stones', the table has to hold the crystal, and the wax *Sigillum Dei*. The golden lamine and ring have to be worn around the neck and on the hand, and the rod can be used in specific situations dictated by the angels, to bring 'things' to an ende.²⁶⁹ Lastly, there are several symbols and seals that did not have to be made in the physical form, but were used as drawings or by imagining them. These are most notably several characteristic seals of certain angels.

These seals can be seen as symbols representing the angelic beings in a mystical way. Besides these symbols we find many tables with numbers and letters - Dee's cabbalistic influence – that convey myriads of angelic information. Several of the names, or variations on the names, of the angels in the LMQ are also found in different scholarly books on angelic magic and hierarchy. Since the *Ars Notoria* gets its name from the magic via images that is found within, we can safely call this kind of image magic, as Frank Klaassen calls it, traditional as well.²⁷⁰ Image magic is a form of ritual magic that, also according to Klaassen, does not suffer radical change between the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age.



An example of one of the many magical seals and symbols found in the LMQ. Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 240.

6.1.1. Internal Practiced Magic

At this point we understand the way in which Dee professed his magic, and in that sense are now familiar with the practical side of his work. We also find references to other kinds of practical sides of magic, however, like means to call for Archangel Michael, or even to influence political reality. In this section I will briefly work out the most significant of the examples of practical magic found in the LMQ. It has become clear that the LMQ cannot be considered a magical manual, so other than

²⁶⁶ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 14.

²⁶⁷ Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, p. 33. G.W. Dennis, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Myth, Magic and Mysticism* (New York 2007), p. 1, 8, 19, 55, 70-73, 103, 219, 222. We also encounter this in the *Liber Iuratus* and *Summa Sacre Magice*. Veenstra, 'Honorius and the Sigil of God', p. 174.

²⁶⁸ Hedegård, 'Liber Iuratus Honirii', p. 137. The word 'wand' from the English tradition is translated from the word 'virgula' in Latin.

²⁶⁹ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 267.

²⁷⁰ Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic*, p. 95, 98-99.

when dealing with manuals we can now assume that the magic was performed in the exact way it is mentioned in the LMQ.

When dealing with the holy table, Uriel mentions 'You must use Michaël'.²⁷¹ Dee answers, however: 'I know no meanes or order to use in the invocating of Michaël'.²⁷² Uriel then starts to explain that Michael can be called upon via the 'psalms of David' and prayer:

He is to be invocated by certain of the psalmes of Daud, and prayers.²⁷³

The psalms, Uriel explains, are meant to bring about the right state of mind for the men needed to receive from Michaël. Next to this Dee and Kelley need to use 'pleseat sauour' which could mean to be certain herbs or otherwise pleasant odour.²⁷⁴ And since God had approved to convey angelic messages to Dee and Kelley, a full conjunction of minds between them was necessary to call for Michaël. This is a pragmatic instruction of how to invoke an Archangel, and therefore an interesting piece of magic that we know was practiced by Dee, simply because indeed a few pages further Michaël appears indicating that they most likely followed the instruction.

The calling of Michael in the 'shew-stone' is, interestingly, deviant from the instructions of the *Liber Iuratus*. The *Liber Iuratus* reads:

Some of them [i.e. the angels] serve God only, and those are the nine orders of angels, that is to say, cherubin, seraphin, thrones, dominations, virtues, principates, potestates, archangels, and angels. Of whom it is to be spoken among mortal men, for they will not be constrained by any artificial power. And therefore they ought not be invocated.²⁷⁵

So the calling of Michael goes directly against the rules of the *Liber Iuratus*. In what I called 'prismatic tradition', it was custom for magicians like Dee to take existing traditions and form them into their own. The authority of an entity or apparition usually was given priority over written sources; Uriel contradicts the *Liber Iuratus*, but he had the authority to do so.

Another form of practiced magic found in the LMQ is the search for hidden treasure. Even though plenty of arguments for continuity with the medieval past have been made, here we find another one. Methods to find treasure via ritual magic is often found in magical lists and handbooks throughout the later Middle Ages.²⁷⁶ The search for treasure is a component of ritual magic that is found in most manuals at least once. In the *Liber Iuratus*, we read a ritual that is used to '[...] have all treasures, metals, precious stone and all other things hidden in the ground'.²⁷⁷ In the *Ars* we find a, or *the*, '[...] true and approved experiment, to understand all Arts and secrets of the World, to find out and dig up minerals and treasure [...]'.²⁷⁸ Dee's method is somewhat deviant from these

²⁷¹ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 70.

²⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 70.

²⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 70. The term 'psalms of David' is commonly used to mean psalm 6, 32, 36, 51, 102 and 130 (or 6, 31, 35, 50, 101 and 129 in the Vulgate numbering). Uriel indeed explains to mean these, called 'the Seven Psalmes'.

²⁷⁴ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 70.

²⁷⁵ Peterson, *The Sworn Book of Honorius*, p. 11. Latin: 'Celestium duo sunt modi, quorum quidam servient Dei soli, et isti sunt 9 ordines angelorum, videlicet cherubyn, seraphin, troni, dominaciones, virtutes, principatus, potestates, archangeli, et angeli, de quibus nec ex coacta virtute nec ex artificiali potencia inter mortales est loquendum, et isti nullatenus invocantur [...]'. G. Hedegård, 'Liber Iuratus Honorii', p. 65-66.

²⁷⁶ For a manifold of examples I refer to the manuscripts described and analysed by Frank Klaassen in Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic*, p. 34-35, 137, 139, 140, 148.

²⁷⁷ Peterson, *The Sworn Book of Honorius*, p. 10. Latin: 'de thesauris, metallis et lapidibus preciosis et omnibus rebus absconditis in terra habendis'. Hedegård, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, p. 65.

²⁷⁸ Turner, *Ars Notoria*, p. 42.

manuals, however, since he simply asks the angel '[...] de Thesauro abscondito',²⁷⁹ after which the angel answers 'Ne perturbes; Nam hae sunt Nugae'.²⁸⁰

Because of this, the treasure seeking is very short lived for Dee, as the angels literally tell him not to bother about such 'trifles'.²⁸¹ Peterson explains the treasure seeking by arguing that Dee and Kelley probably used certain grimoires for their magic that must have included questions to find treasure.²⁸² Since a ritual to find treasure was the next step in the grimoire, they started that ritual. I disagree in that sense that I do not think Dee would let himself be influenced that strongly, and would not have asked for treasure if he did not really want to look for it. Initially they must have worked with a manual, but after some time they received clear instructions on how to progress during their sessions, making manuals obsolete. Moreover it is not that surprising that Dee would try to find treasure, or valuable minerals, since financial problems were never that far of for him.

The last example I will present here is interesting, because it has political implications. Dee at one moment asks one of their angelic apparitions for a method to influence the Spanish monarch via ritual magic, and he receives an answer. Literally, Dee asks:

Yf I wold have the King of Spayne his hart to be enclined to the purpose I have in hand, what shall I do?²⁸³

The answer he receives is, unfortunately, ambiguous. The angel called 'H' tells him:

First cast thyne ey unto the Generall Prince²⁸⁴, Governor or Angel that is principall in this world. Secondly consider the circumstances of thy Instruction. Thirdly place my name, whome thou hast all ready. Fowrthly, the name of him, which was shewed thee yesterday²⁸⁵, whose garments were short and purple.

Fifthly, his power, with the rest of his six perfect Ministers. With those thou shalt work to a good ende. [...] Thy feet must be placed upon those tables which thou seest written last comprehending 42 letters,²⁸⁶ and names. [...] Last of all the Ring, which was appointed thee: with the lamine comprehending the forme of thy owne name: which I to be made in perfect gold, as is affore sayd.²⁸⁷

This particular case shows us several things. First of all, it is very interesting that Dee comes up with the question of influencing the Spanish king via magic. We saw in chapter two that during periods of crisis at the English court there was fear of a magic conspiracy; apparently this was not that far-fetched.²⁸⁸ Dee seems to have been fully willing to use his ritual magic for political purposes. Second we see that even tables with letters can be used in several ways. One could try to read the letters,

²⁷⁹ Translation: 'regarding hidden treasure'. Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 62.

²⁸⁰ Translation: 'Don't bother, for these are trifles'. Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 62.

²⁸¹ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 61.

²⁸² Ibidem, p. 11.

²⁸³ Ibidem, p. 213.

²⁸⁴ This is Baligon, a prince of the world that is named in the hierarchy of 'governors' of the planets in an earlier session.

²⁸⁵ We can read in Dee's footnotes that he wondered whether that was Annael or a different angel. Literally we read: 'is it not Annael with whome I began?'. Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 416.

²⁸⁶ A table with 42 letters that, if read properly, held the names of angels inside was seen in the stone a few sessions earlier. Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 207.

²⁸⁷ Ibidem, p. 213-214.

²⁸⁸ Of course this might also have happened the other way around in the case that the fear for a magic conspiracy inspired Dee to try and influence the Spanish monarch via magic.

or form them into certain words with magical power, but in this case the table itself is of magical use. This reminds us somewhat of the court-cases Kieckhefer described in *Forbidden Rites*, in which the necromantic books that were found were condemned to the stake and subsequently burned.²⁸⁹ Magical texts could have inherent magical powers that emanated from the text into the world. Lastly we see two of the instruments of magic described in 5.1, namely the ring and the lamin, used in a ritual presenting us with some idea of their use.

This is the kind of information that makes the LMQ a treasure trove in terms of magic. We know for certain that Dee performed these magical rituals, shedding some light on the practicing of magic in the sixteenth century. In the next section I will explicate and analyse the parts of the LMQ that could have been dangerous for Dee if they became public knowledge. My focus will be on heresy and demonic intrusion and presence during their evocations.

6.2 The Dangers Inside

In this part of this thesis will try to determine whether the content of the LMQ indeed was such that Dee would have been inclined to keep the work hidden, despite the fact that he tried to gain a foothold at certain European courts through it. Again, we know the book was hidden; the question is why. The relevance, as elaborated upon in the first chapter, lies in making the LMQ accessible as a historic source, and strengthening a basis for putting the LMQ into a larger context.

We will go more deeply into the magical material of the LMQ, looking for parts of it that could be called heretical, demonic or illicit magic, or otherwise in conflict with the Christian morals and values. We will be looking at the information in the LMQ in contrast to English law and certain judicial precedents that might tell us how authorities might have responded to the LMQ. I have chosen not to structure this section chronologically, dealing with the LMQ moving on from page one, but thematically. Firstly I will look at heresy, and secondly at demonic magic. Throughout these sections less categorizable feats of the LMQ that might be called dangerous from a Christian perspective will be discussed as well.

What needs to be made clear is that despite the fact that Dee kept his work hidden, and possibly physically hid it himself, we cannot be sure what he intended to do with the LMQ initially. In the *Liber Iuratus*, we find several rules of conduct that needed to be known before dabbling with the *Iuratus'* magic. It tells the reader that only three copies of the book may exist simultaneously, and that if a magus has no apprentice at his time of death, the book needs to be buried with him. As we have seen in chapter 3, Dee lost all contact with Edward Kelley at the end of his life, and his son was not able to scry for him, as he apparently lacked the 'gift'.. This might very well have influenced Dee in his choice to keep the book hidden. We have also seen that Dee presented the magic he professed at length to a number of people however, so this might not have been the only reason for Dee to keep the LMQ a secret.

On the first folios of the LMQ Dee writes an extensive prologue, followed by an opening prayer. In the prologue he defends the calling of angels in a 'shew stone' with Biblical examples. The high-priests of the Jews used similar crystals for seeking answers, Dee argues, and men like Abraham, Isaac, Daniel, Esdras and Enoch stood in contact with angels as well.²⁹⁰ Even though this might be seen as a pre-emptive defence against a hypothetical reader, we cannot dismiss the idea

²⁸⁹ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, p. 193.

²⁹⁰ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 58-59.

that he did intend the work to be read, at least initially. He might have reconsidered after the revelations by the angels, realising the information he received might be found unchristian, or in conflict with Christian theology by some. I am inclined to interpret the prologue as a kind of disclaimer, indicating that Dee might have intended his work to be read. On the other hand, this type of prayer is compellingly similar to prayers in the *Ars* and *Liber Iuratus* in which these names of 'great men' are also included. In one of the early orations in the *Ars* we read,

Oh Lord, the Fountain which thou openest to Adam, and to thy Servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to understand, learn and judge; receive Oh Lord my Prayers, through all thy Heavenly virtues, Amen.²⁹¹

The *Liber Iuratus* tells us, regarding the ritual for sanctifying the Sigillum Dei,

[...] and with them to praise and to know God the creator, and this knowledge is not to know God in his majesty and power, but even as Adam and the prophets did know him.²⁹²

In the prologue Dee wrote for the LMQ we read a very similar choice of words,

And, seing, I haue red in thy bokes, & records, how Enoch enjoyed thy favour and conversation, with Moyses thow wast familier: And also that to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Josua, Gedeon, Esdras, Daniel, Tobias, and sundry other, thy good Angels were sent [...].²⁹³

Especially the orations from the *Liber Iuratus* strongly comply with Dee's prologue and intermittent parts found in between the scrying sessions. It seems that Dee used the *Liber Iuratus* as key manual for the LMQ. Apart from the instructions that we can find in the *Liber Iuratus* that we know Dee followed, it appears that Dee structured the LMQ to the *Liber* in some detail. It might even be the case that Dee's LMQ is his personal worked out version of the *Liber Iuratus*; this would mean that we have an extremely detailed documentation of a specific and durational practicing of the ritual magic of the *Liber Iuratus*. Although this is purely hypothetical at this point, it would be a very interesting starting point for future research to compare the structure and details of the *Liber Iuratus* with the LMQ to determine this. More so because we know Dee used the *Liber Iuratus* that is now Sloane MS 313 specifically.

A first case of almost tangible danger found in the LMQ, is the search for treasure elaborated upon in section 6.1.1. above. Thomas Elkes was executed in 1580 for accusations of divination to find hidden treasure.²⁹⁴ This accusation did not stand on its own since it was connected to politics and courtly life, but Dee had very similar courtly connections, and problems. Perhaps Dee's case of treasure finding would be less frowned upon since he did not end up actually doing it, but he was interested nonetheless. And the fact that Elkes was executed, and not only fined or shortly imprisoned no doubt had its repercussions on the magicians in England at the time.

6.2.1. Heresy

²⁹¹ Turner, *Ars Notoria*, p. 35.

²⁹² Peterson, *The Sworn Book of Honorius*, p. 11. Latin: 'Et ista cognicio non est cognoscere Deum in maiestate et potencia nisi illo modo, quo Adam et prohete cognoverunt'. Hedegård, 'Liber Iuratus Honorii', p. 66.

²⁹³ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 58.

²⁹⁴ Cf. p.36.

Heresy is a layered term that, like magic, cannot be caught in a single definition. In essence heresy is a category of unorthodox beliefs, which is dictated by those who call themselves 'orthodox'.²⁹⁵ To be short, heresy, in this case, means an act, thought, or theory that goes against fundamental Christian theology and teaching. This could mean a theory conveyed by the angels of the LMQ, but could also be taken to mean the act of evoking angels itself. As we shall see it is quite complicated to establish whether a thing is heretical or not. Just like we saw with magic, maybe even more strongly so, heresy lies in the eye of the beholder. One very clear case of heresy found in Dee's life is the 'wife swapping' Dee and Kelley participated in. Since the spirit that compels them to do so says that it is not a sin if God does not find it sinful, they eventually conceded and consummated the act. This leaves the two men with a clear case of antinomy, ignoring the Ten Commandments that unambiguously speak out against adultery. This took place in 1586, however, and therefore well beyond the scope of the preceding LMQ that was finished in 1583. As mentioned, the LMQ is the part of the angelic sessions that precede the folios that were published by Meric Casaubon in 1659.²⁹⁶ It is not part of the book we are examining now.

Simply the act of evoking angels already conjures up several problems in terms of theology. Since Christianity has an established tradition of revelation, it is not surprising to find people receiving revelations throughout Christian history. After all, like Dee argued, if certain men and women of the past were able to receive messages from angels or even God himself, why couldn't he? Personal contact with the divine has, however, been answered with suspicion for several reasons. Messages received via such contact might conflict with Christian beliefs and theology. The antinomy mentioned above is such an example. And even more problematic, the person receiving messages from the angels or even God might start to disseminate an unorthodox message, leading other people into error. We know of certain cases in which men and women who had such epiphanies that they wished to convey onto Christianity, that ended in either a retraction as consequence of torture or in downright execution (but more often the former than the latter).²⁹⁷ One example is a fifteenth-century man called Burghin who received messages from angels, and wrote a rule for a new order of disciples he would take on. Refusing to recant, he was burned at the stake for his heresy.²⁹⁸ Capital punishment was not the rule, but torture was, as Lerner shows in many such cases dealt with in his book.²⁹⁹

The sixteenth century is problematic, certainly in Dee's case, because of the religious variety found throughout Europe. The Protestants had examples of people standing in direct contact with divine messages, the leaders of the Reformation the obvious examples, but there were no more than a few before the seventeenth century.³⁰⁰ The Catholic Church saw more examples of such 'mediators' between man and the divine, and, because of this, was more prone to answer these epiphanies aggressively.³⁰¹ John Dee, of course, moved in both Protestant and Catholic circles, and, to complicate matters, the Church of England fell somewhere in between. It is therefore hard to

²⁹⁵ J. Kolpacoff Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition* (New York 2011), p. 2.

²⁹⁶ Cf. 202, p. 40.

²⁹⁷ R. Lerner, *The Heresy of the Free Spirit in the Later Middle Ages* (London 1972), p. 175.

²⁹⁸ Lerner, *The Heresy of the Free Spirit*, p. 175.

²⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 171, 175-176, 177-178. Despite that these examples took place in the fifteenth century, heretical teachings and beliefs were still very dangerous in the sixteenth. We can think of men like Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) paying the horrible price for their unorthodox beliefs, and refusing to recant.

³⁰⁰ Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels*, p. 44-46. This argument hinges on the chosen definition of 'Protestant', as including Anabaptists would enlarge the group of Protestants in contact with the Divine. See Euan Cameron for more examples. Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, p. 20, 22-24, 250-251, 304.

³⁰¹ *Ibidem*, p. 45-46.

say in how much direct danger Dee would have been, but we do know that Dee had been arrested and possibly tortured in 1554, and ‘invited’ by Francesco Pucci to come and explain himself before the Inquisition in Rome.³⁰²

In many cases found in Leirich’s book we see people who claimed to have contact with the Divine, and spread the message of what they learned and heard were a possible threat to a Christian society and were subsequently treated as such. This is interesting in our case, since exactly this might have compelled Dee to keep his writings to himself. As we saw, he was invited by the Roman Inquisition via Francesco Pucci to come and explain his work to them.³⁰³ Dee talked his way out of going to Rome, but if he had copied or disseminated his work this might have been far more troublesome. I have remarked before that Dee was not the most tactical of men, but in this light it seems his choice for secrecy might have been a tactical one. Dee did have one thing in his advantage over some others who received epiphanic messages from divine entities, namely that he was part of the clergy. Especially in England, however, this brought its own set of risks because of the political back-and-forth between Protestantism Catholicism. That Dee was part of the clergy might have been why Pucci tried to get Dee in front of the inquisition; as a Protestant Dee would have a lot more to explain than his magic. The combination of members of the lower clergy and necromancy, interestingly, was one seen more often.³⁰⁴ Since exorcism could be an essential part of ritual evocation this is not necessarily surprising. Even the lower clergy was allowed to perform exorcisms, and instructed in performing them.

In terms of heresy it is very hard to find other clear examples in the LMQ. As Lerner wrote, it was often even immensely hard for inquisitors to pin down heretical beliefs themselves.³⁰⁵ In an earlier age the plurality of angels and the characteristics prescribed to them in Dee’s magic might have been problematic since the Christianity of the early Middle Ages only knew three sanctioned angels, in the later Middle Ages and Early Modern Age this was not the case.³⁰⁶ Especially in the later Middle Ages we see a huge plurality of angels and angelic devotion. However I believe via the possible heresy in the LMQ described here we have an interesting argument for arguing why Dee might have hidden his book. An act of magic or even heresy performed is something completely different from one that is written down and disseminated. As we will see in the next section, dealing with demonic magic, a quite similar conclusion can be drawn.

6.2.2. Demonic Magic

Despite Dee’s efforts to distance himself from necromancers and demon worshippers, the presence of demonic magic or demonic necromancy is a significant problem present in the LMQ. The title of this sub-chapter is ‘demonic magic’ as opposed to ‘spirit conjuring’ as seen in chapter two for a reason; here we are not dealing with how Dee saw his magic, but how it might have been perceived

³⁰² Dealt with in chapter four, pages 32-33 and 35-36 respectively.

³⁰³ Cf. 191, p. 37.

³⁰⁴ Young, F., *Exorcism and the Development of Ritual Magic* (2015), p. 5, 11
<https://www.academia.edu/17945803/Exorcism_and_the_Development_of_Ritual_Magic> [accessed on 17-05-2017].

³⁰⁵ Lerner, *The Heresy of the Free Spirit in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 5-7.

³⁰⁶ In the early Middle Ages there were only three sanctioned angels, attested by Charles the Great’s *Admonitio Generalis*: Michael, Raphael and Gabriel. H. Mordek, K. Zechiel-Eckes, M. Glatthaar, *Die Admonitio Generalis Karls des Großen* (Wiesbaden 2013), p. 16. This however might also tell us there probably existed veneration of angels other than these, since otherwise it would not have been necessary to lay down a rule.

from a theological standpoint. In the prologue, Dee formulates his contempt for men who consciously conjure demons as follows:

And having allwayes a great regarde & care to beware of the filthy abvse of such as willingly and wetingly, did invoke & consult (in diuerse sorts) Spirituall creatures of the damned sort: angels of darknes, forgers & patrons of lies & untruthes.³⁰⁷

It is near impossible, however, to discern an angel from a demon.³⁰⁸ This was the case in many kinds of magic, and as we have seen in chapter two there always seems to have been a slumbering danger from demonic intrusion. Even astrology, having nothing to do with conjuring spirits or the like, brought a constant risk of demons trying to pry into this world according to some.³⁰⁹ As I will demonstrate below, demonic presence was a major problem for Dee and his scryers. Even when not dealing with spirits or apparitions, one could never be certain whether or not magical rituals worked via demonic powers. Even when an angel would reveal another apparition to be a demon, it could just as easily be the other way around. Who is the demon in disguise, and who is the real angel? They could even all of them be demons, working together. Dee and Kelley fall for demonic disguises several times, when an angel reveals that one of the angels they summoned before was actually a demon posing as an angel. So they conjured it into the ball, listened to it, wrote its message down and sometimes even followed it's instructions. So with Dee we are not dealing with an implicit threat from demons, but a very explicit, and explicated, one.

On numerous occasions the scrying sessions are intruded by demonic apparitions, sometimes posing to be angels. In the first scrying session recorded, on the 22nd of December 1581, a non-angelic entity appears. In this particular instance it is not explicated that the apparition is a demon, he first appears when Dee and Barnabas Saul, the first scryer in the LMQ, call for Anaël.³¹⁰ Unsure whether they are dealing with Anaël, they asked whether he really was him. The LMQ reads:

But being earnestly requested of me to tell the Truthe yf he were Anaël, An other did appere very bewtifull, with apparel yellow, glittering, like gold.³¹¹

If the initial apparition was not an angel, what was he? This is not answered -nor asked- in the LMQ. In any case, it would not be hard to argue that it was a demon, intruding the session and ultimately showing the dangers of the evocation of spirits. After a few sessions with Edward Kelley in 1582, on the 10th of March another intruder appears, and this time more serious.

Uriel, also called Anaël, was explaining the exact measurements and materials of which the holy table was to be constructed, when he warned Dee and Kelley of a demon named Lundrumguffa that '[...] seketh your destruction, in the hatred of men, in the hurt of thy goods'.³¹² Together with Uriel they discharge the intruder via prayer and a short ritual.³¹³ This is a typical form of exorcism

³⁰⁷ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 59.

³⁰⁸ M. Bailey, *Fearful spirits, Reasoned Follies. The boundaries of superstition in late medieval Europe* (London 2013), p. 10.

³⁰⁹ For Dee's period the most notable scholar claiming that all magic could at all times be intruded by Demons was Agrippa. Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic*, p. 202-203.

³¹⁰ A name for Uriel, also used by Agrippa in the *De Occulta Philosophia* and mentioned in Solominc works like the *Ars Notoria*, *Liber Iuratus* and *Lesser Key of Solomon*.

³¹¹ Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 61.

³¹² Peterson, *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, p. 72.

³¹³ A ritual that is simply a form of traditional exorcism.

found in ritual magic and evocation. These episodes are highly problematic from a Christian point of view. Taken together with the official ban on divination and scrying in England at the time and the way in which crystallo-mancy was sometimes treated, this must have been very delicate information that could lead to unfortunate events for Dee and Kelley should it fall into the wrong hands. If we again think of Thomas Elkes being executed for divination in 1580, we can only imagine what kind of punishment active dealings with demons would deliver. On five more occasions do demons intrude the sessions and cause chaos.³¹⁴ One time they are even harassed by Mammon, one of the seven princes of Hell, himself.³¹⁵

A special case of intrusion is found on the 15th of April 1583, when a group of demons attack Edward Kelley preceding a scrying session.³¹⁶ Three spiritual beings appeared after a reciting of information written down in the preceding session, and they asked Kelley why he had summoned them. After Kelley tried to explain that he in fact did not summon them, they have an argument. Dee calls the spirits liars, saying that he did no more call upon them than a man who is reading a prayer from a piece of paper is praying.³¹⁷ The creatures lose their temper and attack Kelley, breaking his arm (according to Kelley). Dee apparently could not see the creatures, as he asks Kelley where they are before he exorcised them '[...] in the name of Jesus [...]'.³¹⁸ We encounter exorcism once more. One could not wish for a better explanation of how demonic intrusion could endanger a magus and his accomplices. Even though they did not mean to call for them, they appear and start causing havoc. Kelley's alleged broken arm is not mentioned a single time after this.

Even though we know of cases of accusations and conviction because of demonic magic, or magic that was believed to have worked via demonic presence, it is very hard to establish a pattern or certain commonalities between them.³¹⁹ One case elaborated upon by Frank Klaassen tells of a monk using the *Ars Notoria* and eventually being condemned for heresy. We know of very few cases of condemnation for using or possessing the *Ars Notoria*, which Klaassen explains by the fact that the *Ars Notoria* mostly forms a threat to the person using it.³²⁰ However the monk John of Morigny was condemned probably not just for using the text, but for disseminating it and gathering a following in doing so.³²¹ If we use this case to compare to Dee, we find the exact same argument as we found concluding section 6.2.1 on heresy; the danger lies not so much in professing the magic, it lies in writing it down and disseminating it. It becomes increasingly probable that Dee chose not to copy his work or present copies of it to others because of a sensitivity to the dangers of doing so. There are plenty of arguments found in the LMQ that buttress an image of Dee as a demon conjuror. The secrecy around the LMQ would indeed seem a conscious choice made by Dee to ward off possible accusations of being a necromancer.

Additionally we could argue that Dee kept the LMQ hidden because of the rules of conduct given in the *Liber Iuratus*. Despite that these rules apply to the *Liber Iuratus* as a text itself, it might very well have influenced Dee in his choices about what to do with the LMQ. Even more so if we would indeed interpret the LMQ to be a documented performance of the *Liber Iuratus* ritual. The magic in the *Liber* had to be kept secret, and privy only to a select few of initiates. We seem to have

³¹⁴ We see demonic intrusion on pages 61, 72, 82-83, 128, 257, 278-80 and 348-349 of Peterson's edition. On page 128 there is even mention of Satan himself, in what could be read as a battle between Michael and Satan's forces.

³¹⁵ Peterson, *John Dee's Five books of Mystery*, p. 82-83.

³¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 348-349.

³¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 348.

³¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 348-349.

³¹⁹ M. Bailey, *Magic and Superstition in Europe: a concise history from antiquity to the present* (London 2007), p. 120.

³²⁰ Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic*, p. 93.

³²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 321 (footnote 18).

have to deal with a distinct physical and written reality, just like with heresy and demonic magic. Dee told people of his magic, travelled Europe to sell it and had multiple people make magical instruments for him. In writing, however, he kept his work secret and hidden; maybe even hiding it for after his death. And we have just seen that writing about magic and disseminating a written message was indeed more dangerous than professing it.

6.3 Circles of Magic

In section 1.2 I introduced the old but vivid idea that the medieval and early modern mages were isolated figures, dabbling with the occult in secretive private setting. To remonstrate this idea we could not ask for a better case than Dee's. Dee was very much a part of several layers of society, and a significant amount of people within those layers knew of Dee's magical work. Here we have to deal with a strange situation, in which the private Dee seems to have acted quite different from the public Dee. As will become clear it is very hard to grasp Dee's intentions and explain his behaviour indefinitely.

As we have just seen in sections 6.1 and 6.2, it seems that the most dangerous thing to do with ritual magic, was disseminating a message and creating a following. Dee did propagate the messages he received from the angels, for example at the Rudolphian court in Prague.³²² Shortly after this, he was approached by Francesco Pucci in name of the Holy Inquisition. The former did not necessarily lead to the latter, but they do seem correlated in some way. At some point in Dee's continental travels Pucci became aware of the ritual magic he was performing, probably before being invited by Dee to witness one of the scrying sessions. Since princely courts were very much public institutions, we need to see this as an act of the public John Dee. He walked up to the powerful Emperor, and conveyed a message from God onto him. Many important people certainly heard him do this. Dee did not seem that careful in this instance. This might seem to go directly against the rules of secrecy found in the *Liber Iuratus*, but it can be explained. Just as with the 'wife swapping' by Dee and Kelley, and the evoking of Michael in the crystal, the authority of the apparition is worth more than that of the written sources. If the angels tell Dee to convey a message to Rudolph, than that is what he does.

The same can be said for his magical endeavours with Elizabeth, who employed Dee as early as 1554 for his magical abilities.³²³ Somehow she knew that he conducted divinations. Undoubtedly he was quite open about his magic to her, and members of her court (since a prince was never alone). Moreover, since Dee was delivered Bartholomew Hickman as a scryer in 1579 via his court connections, we can only assume that at least a significant part of the Elizabethan court was aware, to some degree, of Dee's magical activities.³²⁴ Next to Rudolph and Elizabeth, we know that the noblemen Albert Laski and Vilem Rozmberg were privy to some of the scrying sessions. They were not just aware of Dee's magic, they were a part of it. Both men facilitated Dee and Kelley for some time during their travels, and Rozmberg even led them back into the Holy Roman Empire after they had been banished from it.³²⁵ This banishment had come into being because Dee allowed Francesco

³²² Cf. 183, p. 33.

³²³ Cf. 170, p. 33.

³²⁴ Cf. 181, p. 36

³²⁵ Cf. 192, p. 37.

Pucci to be present during scrying, which gave Pucci the evidence to, in a way, try and turn Dee and Kelley over to the inquisition.³²⁶

The two half-brothers to Walter Raleigh, Humphrey and Adrian Gilbert were also included in Dee's ritual magic. At one point the two brothers even conducted their own scrying sessions, in line with Dee's tradition.³²⁷ Adrian is mentioned multiple times in the LMQ, and was also present during some of the scrying. Both men were part of the political elite and heavily invested in the Elizabethan Court. Despite that their own magical experiment was a one-time thing, they had no traceable problems with Dee's ritual magic. But apart from these men, and one woman, of certain distinction, a significant group of people from the lower classes were aware of Dee's magic as well.

Dee had three scryers over the years, two of which disappear at some point. Bartholomew Hickman and Barnabas Saul were therefore fully aware, and part, of Dee's ritual magic. In chapter five we saw that Dee asked the angels whether Kelley needed to make the gold ring and lamina that they were ordered to construct.³²⁸ The angel responded that it could be done by any honest man. This most likely means that a London based smith made two pieces of jewellery inscribed with magical signs and symbols. He might not have recognised them as magical instruments in Solomonic tradition, but they must have raised some red flags, or at least the smith's interest. This argument can be nuanced slightly if we realise the medical treatments might have included special amulets from time to time.³²⁹ The same could be said for a possible woodworker that constructed the Holy Table. It might also be possible however, that Dee had a plain table constructed, and did the 'magical' adaptations himself. Lastly we have Dee's household to take into account. Dee conducted his scrying sessions held in England at his house in Mortlake. In his household there were people besides his own family, for example in housekeeping. These people must have been aware, to some degree, of what the Pater Familias was up to in his private room, especially since the sessions were quite frequent. And when the Dee family left for the Continent with Laski in 1583, a part of his household travelled with them; one can only wonder at the explanation Dee gave for this sudden exit.

Despite Dee's secrecy on paper, he was evidently quite open about his magic to certain people, and to some degree. If he had intended the magic to be known by no one except himself and his scryers, he would not have included so many people in his magical doings. The old idea of the isolated magus is effectively nullified by Dee. But how do we account for his secrecy in writing? I believe that if we add the secrecy that the *Liber Iuratus* commanded, to the dangerous content of the LMQ we have two compelling motivations explaining Dee's scriptural secrecy. As we saw in 6.2, the dangers of heresy and demonic magic lay not so much in the practicing or holding of certain ideas; it was writing about it and spreading it. Apparently, the written word did have some power over the spoken.

The infrastructures of magic would be enormously interesting to root up in future research. We might just find out that the mages of the sixteenth century were not just part of the princely courts, as is often accepted as fact, but that the magic they conducted was part of the society at large. The best way to think of these infrastructures would be overlapping circles, spread over a so called 'social map'. Every circle represents a person who was acquainted with other people, all within their own circles. A visualisation like that would quickly show the depth in which magic was

³²⁶ Cf. 170, p. 33.

³²⁷ Cf. 209, p. 42.

³²⁸ Cf. 256, p. 51.

³²⁹ Cf. 29, 30, p. 12.

present in sixteenth-century societies. Such research would fill the gap between historical research of ritual magic of the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age, and possibly even the nineteenth and twentieth centuries connecting to, for example, Alex Owen's *The Place of Enchantment*.³³⁰

6.4 Preliminary Conclusion

Summing up the above, we saw that Dee had an extensive (magical) library from which he could begin his magical work. Books like the *Ars Notoria* and *Liber Iuratus* could be found among his books. We have seen significant similarities between the LMQ and these two magical manuals, for example in angelic names, preparations for ritual magic, the instruments used and certain content and questions, like the search for treasure. We saw that the LMQ does not, opposite to the *Ars* and *Liber Iuratus*, contain transmittable knowledge. One could not learn how to profess ritual magic via the LMQ. This could have made the book that much more dangerous to have or even have written, since it is immediately clear that the magic was actually performed. The two other dangers that were emphasised above, heresy and demonic magic, were kept secret in that sense that Dee kept the document hidden, but did share it with several people in spoken fashion. This seems to be a trend with Dee, but other magic of the period as well. Kieckhefer and Frank Klaassen showed us that an act of heresy or otherwise frowned upon act became extremely dangerous especially when written down.

The similarities between the two medieval magical manuals viewed and the LMQ are striking, and telling. We can safely conclude, completely in line with Klaassen's argument based upon Humphrey Gilbert's magic, that Dee's magic and the magic of the LMQ was not solely typical Early Modern; it was typically medieval as well.

³³⁰ A. Owen, *The Place of Enchantment. British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (London 2007).

7. Conclusion

The *Libri Mysteriorum Quinque* is an autograph written by dr. John Dee, and stands firmly in a medieval tradition of ritual magic. The book was written during scrying sessions and is witness to Dee's sincerity concerning ritual magic and the evocation of angels. The content of the book was not without risks, both from judicial or ecclesiastical as angelic authorities. The combination of these risks have led Dee to keep the LMQ a secret to everyone except a circle of confidants. Dee used several magical manuals, but the manual that played the most important part in Dee's preparation for scrying and the layout and structure of the LMQ was the *Liber Iuratus*, and specifically Sloane MS 313. This bold statement can be made as a result of the above research.

This thesis set out to analyse the LMQ as a historical source to fill the gap left by Giorgy Szönyi when he omitted it from his *John Dee's Occultism* and to bolster Frank Klaassen's argument that the ritual magic of the Early Modern Age did not differ much from its medieval tradition. Several of these magical traditions were discussed, followed by a 'status quaestionis' and biographical summary of Dee's life. In these chapters, I have presented Dee not as an overly celebrated scientist, nor as a secluded and marginal magician. Dee was presented as what I believe he was; a learned man living in turbulent times, concerning himself with researching nature and the universe in ways and methods that were received ambivalently during his life. We could conclude that Dee was not a man of science transforming into a man of magic, but was a fervent believer in both (although 'science' was his term for both).

From the historiography of chapter three we could historicize how historians of the past perceived Dee, showing us the ideas and views that preceded my own research. We could make up our own minds in chapter four, describing Dee's life and career. But before we could say anything about the content of the LMQ we needed to problematise its authorship.

It is evident that John Dee must have written the LMQ himself, as Elias Ashmole proposed in the seventeenth century. Dee's private diary showed us parts of his day-to-day agenda, allowing for a comparison of dates between the diary and the LMQ. A very telling case was the scrying session on the 28th of April 1582. In Dee's private diary we could read that he had an early meeting on that day. In the LMQ we read that the scrying commenced from 16:00 in the afternoon, leaving room for a morning appointment. The two sources lined up perfectly, creating the first argument. In section 5.1.2. we analysed Dee's writing style, to find that he was never concise in his choice of words. The wordiness and his tendency towards using Greek and Hebrew from time to time placed Dee's writing in a seventeenth-century scholarly tradition of meticulous writing. We saw this style in both the LMQ and the selection of sources, providing the second argument for the LMQ being an autograph.

Palaeography provided the last argument for this hypothesis. The hands that were found in the LMQ are found structurally in Dee's writing, whether for private or public use. The actual research is presented in Appendix 1 and has made evident to a significant level of certainty that Dee wrote the LMQ himself, during the scrying sessions. That last part is important, for it tells us something about Dee's sincerity. The hands become less neat during the sessions, and the layout frankly becomes chaotic. This tells us that Dee was writing with haste, meaning that he probably did write while Kelley scryed. This is an argument against the idea that Dee might have forged the LMQ as a magical document by making everything up himself. There even is an instance in which Dee stopped writing during a prayer by Edward Kelley and placed a footnote in which he explains

that he could not keep up with Kelley's tempo. Despite the setbacks, Dee never gave up on his magic or the angels, which even drove him to follow the angel's command to tell Emperor Rudolph II that he needed to better his Christian ways, or he would lose his throne. This effectively ruined Dee's chances to gain patronage from Rudolph, and tells us how strongly he believed. Years of devotion without much gains did not slow Dee down in his magical endeavours. We can only conclude that Dee was about as convinced and sincere in his ritual magic as one can get.

In the last chapter we analysed the content of the LMQ, now that the authorship had been confirmed, to gain a better understanding of the ritual magic and evocation Dee professed and compare it to older medieval traditions of ritual magic. The first similarities between the LMQ and the *Liber Iuratus* and *Ars Notoria* are found in the angelic names encountered in the LMQ. Some of the names, and indeed lists of names, found in other sources are found in the LMQ, telling us that Dee and Kelley were not only familiar with these sources but they utilised them for their scrying purposes. The methods of evocation found in the LMQ are significantly similar to those in the *Ars* and *Liber Iuratus*, which I will briefly surmise here.

The fundamental method underlining all rituals in these three sources is prayer. Without exception every ritual starts with 'fervent prayer'. In Dee's prayers we encountered phrases both in English and Latin that we find verbatim in the *Ars* and *Liber Iuratus*. Fasting is the second method that is preliminary to the ritual magic of both the LMQ, the *Ars* and *Liber Iuratus*. The remaining preparational actions found in the *Ars* and *Liber Iuratus* are not found explicated in the LMQ but may very well have been followed by Dee and Kelley. Here we see an important dissimilarity between these sources, namely that the LMQ is not a manual. Not every detail of the rituals and evocations is explicated like they are in the *Ars* and *Liber Iuratus*. We find cleaning oneself and one's clothing, almsgiving and steering clear of wicked men and women during the rituals. Even if Dee followed these instructions to the letter at first, during the later sessions they are given new instructions on many occasions, making the manuals obsolete eventually. In terms of method we find one dissimilarity between the LMQ and the *Ars* and *Liber Iuratus*: a grown man is used as a scryer. As we have seen, medieval traditions were keen on using children for their scrying.

Three practical rituals for magic were explicated in the LMQ providing a unique peek into the practice of sixteenth-century magic. The summoning of Michael, the quest for hidden treasure and finding a way to influence the Spanish Crown. Summoning Michael goes against the rules of the *Liber Iuratus*, which might seem strange since Dee valued that manual quite highly. In what I have dubbed 'prismatic tradition' however, we saw the typical tendency of early modern magicians to make their own mix out of several standing magical traditions, and to take the authority of an apparition before that of a written source. That same principle was in play when Dee revealed some of the angelic mysteries to Emperor Rudolph II and Adrian Gilbert.

As with the methods, we saw that the instruments used were the typical instruments for medieval ritual magic. The crystal and obsidian were essential crystallomantic instruments, the golden jewellery stood in a clear Solomonic tradition and the Holy Table is found in alternate form in the *Almadal*. Dee's Sigillum Dei came from Sloane MS 313, a manuscript containing a full *Liber Iuratus* and was perfected via instructions given during the scrying. Lastly we found a wand, or 'rod', standing in a Jewish-Solomonic tradition, and a manifold of magical seals that bear great similarities to those found in the *Ars* and *Liber Iuratus*. The trend we discovered in the instructions that Dee was given for the instruments, was that usually an instrument needed to be replaced by a newer version, because it was either faulty or tainted.

With a clear idea of the magic and messages found in the LMQ, what were the dangers of such a book? Why would Dee have kept it a secret, despite that it was the crown upon his learned career -in his own eyes at least. As we saw in chapter four, Dee was arrested in 1554 for divination in service of Princes Elisabeth. He was imprisoned at the Tower and possibly tortured as part of questioning. In terms of risk-taking, this no doubt horrifying experience might have influenced Dee strongly. The two categories of risky magic discussed in chapter six were heresy and demonic magic. Both could be found on several occasions and in several ways, and regarding both we concluded that the action itself was not the most dangerous part; it would have been copying and disseminating a message, resulting in the gathering of a following. Besides the judicial or ecclesiastical authorities, however, the angelic authorities had rules of their own. In the *Liber Iuratus* it is said that the magic must be kept a secret, and that the magus should bury the book with him after his death if he did not have a worthy apprentice. This, as we have seen, might be exactly what Dee decided to do. He and Kelley lost contact in the later 1580s, leaving Dee without an apprentice to pass his work on to. To surmise: Dee had ample motivation to keep the LMQ to himself. The question remaining, however, is: did he?

A significant group of people was aware of Dee's magic. This group was made of people from all layers of society, ranging from Emperors and Queens to artisans and housekeeping. I divided John Dee into two persons; a private and public Dee. Even though I have exposed the conflict between these two versions of Dee, future research on the infrastructure of magic in the sixteenth century would be extremely interesting and necessary to further our understanding of sixteenth-century society and the place that ritual magic had in it.

Despite the wonderful academic work that has been done on furthering our understanding of early modern magic, and its relation to medieval magic, there is still a vast unexplored area to be uncovered. Case studies such as this one have the pivotal function of creating broad support for an eventual transcending new theory on magic and magicians. Dee can be a case in point in future endeavours to reevaluate the role of ritual magic and the evocation of angels and, maybe, demons, for modern societies. If scholars dare transgress the borders between the Middle Ages, Early Modern Age and the Modern Age we could eventually extrapolate a broad and detailed vision of magic and its transformations over time. I believe we will discover that the Solomonic traditions of Christian ritual magic that found its origin with the *Ars Notoria* in the thirteenth century is traceable through history until the famous Modern occultists like Helena Blavatsky and Aleister Crowley. For now, this thesis on John Dee places him at the forefront of this potential future research.

Repeating the statement made above we now know that Dee wrote the LMQ during sessions, documenting ritual magic that stood firmly in a medieval tradition that was certainly Early Modern as well. As a historian I like to conduct thought-experiments from time to time starting with the phrase 'If I had a time-machine ...'. Traveling back in time would very quickly make clear to us the enormous changes culture and conduct have seen over the centuries. Provided that John Dee possessed this hypothetical time-machine, and, as is traditional in time-traveling stories, got stuck in the thirteenth or fourteenth century he might have run into all kinds of trouble regarding etiquette and culture; but in terms of magic, he would have fit in like no other beyond a doubt.

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Appendix 1: Palaeographical Analysis

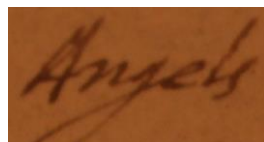
Since the LMQ will be the basis of this analysis, I will first determine the handwriting found in the LMQ manuscript.³³¹ There are several hands found throughout the manuscript, that might very well belong to the same person. These hands seem to have some correlation to function in the manuscript. For example, the opening prayers are written in a neat cursive hand, apparently done with some care. When the scrying starts, however, the hand changes immediately. This can be explained, of course, since the opening prayers could be written at ease, while the writing done during scrying is done hastily. In this section, I will analyse the hands found in the LMQ, and compare them to several of Dee's manuscripts.

In total, we detect four different hands, which I believe could belong to one person. The main reason for this, as will become clear in the following pages, is that we see typical traits of Dee's hand in all the significant hands found in the LMQ. Two of the hands of the LMQ are barely significant. The first since it is only found on the title pages of every 'book', or chapter. A very neat and artistic hand that simply reads 'Liber Mysteriorum Primus', 'Secundus' and so forth. Another less than significant hand is found in tables and schedules. This is an enlarged detached letter, unlike any other in the book. Both these hands will be omitted in the following analysis. The first significant hand is the cursive hand in which the writer starts the opening prayers, ranging from folio seven to eight. It is a legible hand written down with care.

Halfway through the page of folio eight recto, the hand changes into a simpler and easy to write a semi-block letter (the second significant hand). Based only on the LMQ, it is hard to establish whether the hands belong to the same person. As we will see in the analysis below, the two significant hands found in the LMQ differ from each other significantly. Despite the fact that one is cursive, and the other is not, you would expect the ductus of a single author to remain intact. Interestingly, that is not the case. The three characteristic letters that are most telling in this case are the 'a', 'g' and 'h'. On folio seven the author writes a capital 'A' as follows:



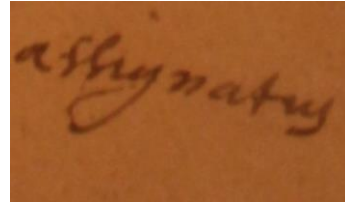
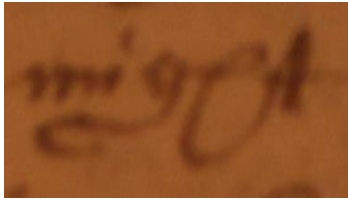
The letter hinges to the left and has a curly bulge that forms the 'line' of the 'A'. The block-letter, however, shows a completely different 'a':



Here the letter leans to the right and is far more rectangular and rigid. As mentioned, despite the differing hand one would expect the ductus of a letter to remain comparable with one scribe.

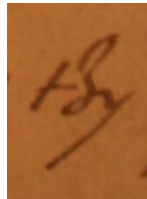
³³¹ With gratitude to Mark Vermeer for lending his palaeographical expertise to further my conclusions and hypothesis.

The case of the 'g' is slightly similar. In the cursive hand (next page, on the left), we see a 'g' that has a remarkable long tail, that underscores multiple letters to the left. At the end of the tail, the ductus moves down with a slight curve, finishing the letter.

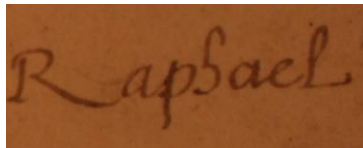


In the block-letter (on the right), we again perceive a significant change of ductus. Even though the 'g' also has a long tail, underscoring several letters to the left, the ductus here moves upward instead of down. It is these small pieces of palaeographical evidence that indeed makes one wonder whether we are dealing with the same person here. However, this would leave us with two possible scribes to have written in the LMQ, which does not exclude Dee from being one of them.

The last significant letter to be scrutinized is the 'h'. The cursive 'h' written in the LMQ is one very typical for the time and place of the LMQ. A letter formed of two curls, attaching to the latter preceding letter high, and to the following low.



Being a standard letter to be used in Elizabethan England, this does not tell us much.³³² The 'h' of the other hand, however, does, as it is quite atypical.



The letter stands upright on the writing line and lacks a left stem. This is a letter that we can identify as being John Dee's, as we encounter the same 'h' below in one of Dee's hands. The ductus is hard to establish here, in both cases, leaving us with little arguments besides what we have.

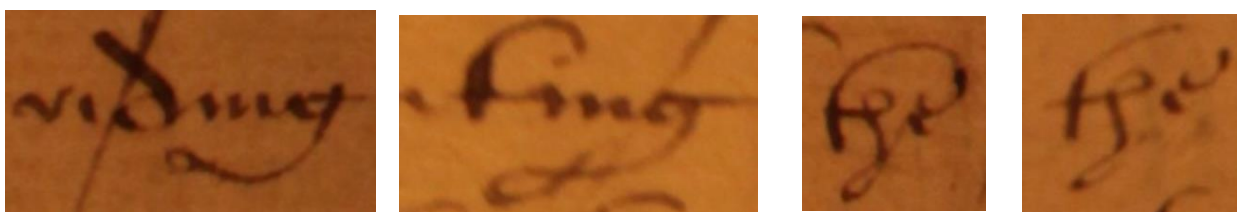
A last interesting point to make is that the cursive hand tends to use commas as punctuation, where the block-letter is more inclined to use a full-stop. This, combined with the ductus we observed, might have us conclude that indeed two different scribes wrote the LMQ, leaving us guessing as to who this might have been. It could have been Edward Kelley, but we know Kelley's hand from other sources that do not seem to compare easily to our cursive hand from the LMQ.³³³ In the following section, I will compare the hands from the LMQ to those of other manuscripts we know have been written, or commented upon, by Dee.

³³² As seen in the examples of G. Dawson, L. Kennedy-Skipton, *Elizabethan Handwriting 1500-1600: A Guide to the Reading of Documents and Manuscripts* (London 1966), p. 48, 50.

³³³ Sloane, MS 3189.

The choice for manuscripts is vast when looking for Dee. As mentioned above, at one point in his life Dee owned maybe the most elaborate library of England. Being the devout scholar that he was, he took the trouble of going through most of his books whilst writing in the margins personal annotations, references, and comments. These help us determine Dee's basic hand. The choice of manuscripts made for this comparison is pragmatic: they are all kept in either the British Library in London or the Weston Library in Oxford.³³⁴ The most important manuscripts for us, are Ashmole MS 487 and Ashmole MS 488, kept in the Weston Library, for reasons explicated below. What I am looking for in all of these manuscripts are the characteristic traits of the hands found in the LMQ, as described above. That means the 'A', 'g' and 'h' as well as punctuation. Lastly, but that is least telling, a lack of abbreviations.

Cotton Vitellius C VII is an interesting case since it includes a section written in a neat and cursive hand similar to the cursive hand from the LMQ. It is a collection of correspondence, back and forth, with a Rodger Edwards between March and July 1580. This period is obviously meaningful since it approaches the period in which the LMQ was written (1581-1583). We are off to a good start with this manuscript since the important traits from the LMQ hands do indeed appear. We encounter the curly 'h' made out of two circles and see the 'g' that underscores at least two letters to the left, with the ductus moving up.



Harley MS 532, RP MS 9595, Ashmole MS 487 and Ashmole MS 488 show the same characteristics in writing, and all our telling examples. The manuscripts that will enable me to make a convincing argument for the LMQ being written by Dee, are Ashmole MS 487 and 488. These manuscripts show astrological tables and prognostic information, and in the margins we find Dee's hand. It is absolutely certain the marginal comments are Dee's because they include the names 'Jane Dee' (Dee's mother, or possibly wife), Albert Laski (the Polish nobleman Dee got acquainted with), Humphrey and Adrian Gilbert (other 'scryers' Dee was in contact with), the name of his house (Mortlake) and his personal hieroglyph. The reason these manuscripts are important to us, is that since they mention Laski, and hint at their departing England, they are written in the exact same period the LMQ was written (1582/83).

Regarding the characteristic traits established for the LMQ, what do we encounter in these manuscripts? You might say it is a palaeographical jackpot. One of the most relevant examples of Dee's using of two types of letters interchangeably is found in the example in the upper right corner, showing twice the word 'the'. In the first we see the curly 'h' we also saw in the LMQ, and beneath we see the 'one-stemmed' 'h' we encountered. A clear example of this characteristic hand. We might even assess that the ductus of both versions of 'h' is the same, starting high and moving to the right without pausing for the stem

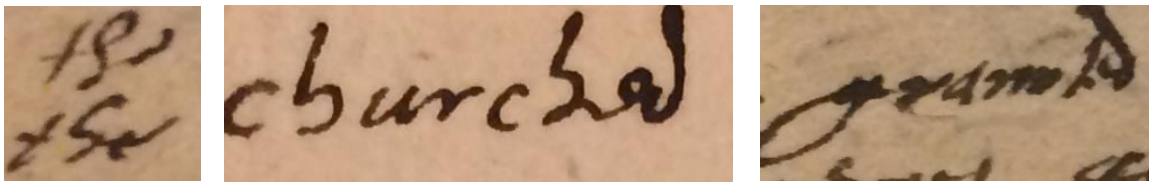


Dee's hieroglyph, as found in the margins of Ashm MS 487.

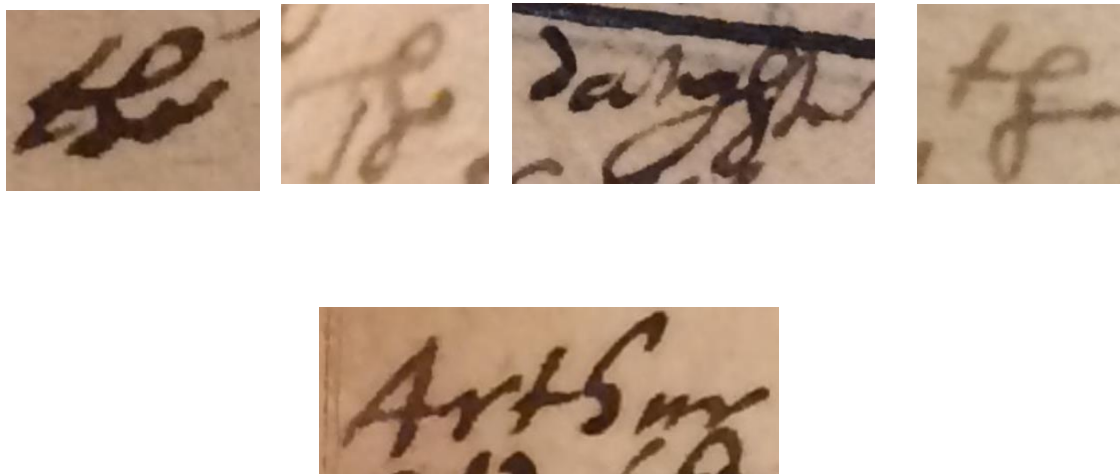
³³⁴ The manuscripts used are Cotton MS Vit. C. VII, British Library London; Harley MS 532, British Library, London; Ashmole MS 487, Weston Library Oxford; Ashmole MS 488, Weston Library, Oxford; RP MS 9595, Weston Library, Oxford.

on the left. Secondly, we see the expected 'g' moving to the far left and interestingly enough going upward in ductus. This is similar to the cursive 'g' we encounter in the LMQ. Again we see characteristics of both LMQ hands combined. Lastly, we find the capital 'A' in combination with Dee's typical 'h' in the name of his son, Arthur. The 'A' hinges to the right, and is as rigid as the one we found in the LMQ.

Ashm. MS 487



Ashm. MS 488



In terms of palaeography, I believe this is indeed convincing material for establishing that the person that wrote the LMQ is the same who wrote the marginal comments in these manuscripts; and that person is certainly Dee.

Appendix 2: Example of a Scrying Session

This is one conversation between Dee, Kelley and some angels recorded in 1582. The transcripts and translations of the Latin are taken from Peterson's edition of the LMQ. The text has been taken verbatim from the LMQ, explaining the variation in spelling of certain words. This particular conversation was chosen since it includes most of the typical aspects of Dee and Kelley's scrying.

Δ = John Dee.
E.T. = Edward Kelley (under his earlier pseudonym Edward Talbot).
Raph = Raphael.
F.D. = Fortitudo Dei (an apparition in the stone).
Sal = Salamian (an angel).
Ur = Uriel.

Martij 15. Thursday. Hora 1¼ a meridie.

Δ: After E.T. his calling into the stone, appeared a tall man, with a sceptre (very great) of gold, glittering. His body all red: and out of his hed, did shote out beames of light, like the sonne beames.

Δ: Being desirous, to know who he was, and his name, I requested him earnestly thereto. But he answered, as followeth, *Invocate nomen Domini, et agnoscetis eum.*³³⁵

Δ: Then I prayed the psalme, *Deus misereatur nostri, et benedicat nobis &c.* After that, he sayd, I am mighty.³³⁶

Δ: Bycause he delayed to declare his name, E.T. the skryer did require him, in the name of God the father, Jesus Christ his sonne, and of the holy ghost, to express his name: and he answered in speche.

So I will by and by.

Δ: Then he seamed to take from his hed little bright sparcks, like little candells endes: and to stick them about the chayre: and he went rownd about the chayre: and than he spake, as followeth, I am mighty, and working wonders: I am SALAMIAN. I rule in the hevens, and beare sway uppon erth in his name, who be blessed for euer. Thow doost dowt at me. I am the servant of God, in his light: I serve him. I say, I serve him, with feare and reverence. My name is SALAMIAN: Mighty in the Sonne, worker of wordly actions, as well internall, as externall: known unto God: whose name I know, and bless for euer.

Δ: Then appeared a big flame of fyre by him in the ayre.

³³⁵ Trnsl.: Invoke the name of the Lord, and acknowledge him.

³³⁶ Trnsl.: May God be gracious to us and bless us.

Sal: Thow knowest not, or thow wilt not know, that Mamon, with his servants, are present about thee: whose presence doth hinder the presence of the vertues Adonay our comming. Blessed be God,
in the highest.

Amen.

Δ: He toke the forsaide flame of fyre, and flung it up unto the heven ward.

Sal: Mamon is a king whome God hateth: whose sect, contynually tempt, provoke and stir-up wickednes, against the Lord, and against his annoynted. But he dyeth: blessed be God for euer.
Driue
him away.

Δ: It is incomparably more easy for you to do. And as for my parte, I fele neyther in body, nor sowle, any token of his presence or working. Thereuppon he caused the whole chamber (which we were in) to appere very playnely in the stone: and so there shewed a great cumpany of wycked spirits
to be in the chamber: and among them, One, most horrible and grisely thretting, and approaching to our heds: and skorning and gnashing at us.

Sala: God determines his mysteries, by Arte and vertue.

Δ: Then he willed me very egerly, to drive them away. And I prayed fervently. And there seamed One to come into the stone, which had very long armes: and he draue them away courragiously:
And
so they were driuen away. After that presently, cam one into the stone, all white. Salamian reached this white one a Cup. The white man held-up the Cup: and sayd, as followeth,

Lo, this is my name.

God shall bless you. Fear not: your faithfulness provoketh me to tell my name, and this it is: (putting furth the Cup again) for, I am called Medicina Dei. I will shew thee, and I will shew you, the Angel of your Direction, which is called OCH.

Δ: This name he spake: he shewed it allso on the Table (before him) written.

Raph: He is mighty in the sonne beames: He shall profit thee hereafter.

Δ: Then cam in an other, and sat down in the chayre: and he sayde, as followeth,
The strength of God liueth: and God raigneth for euer. I am Fortitudo Dei.

Δ: Why, then, you are Gabriel: and I toke you hitherto to be Michaël. How shall I then amend my boke, in respect of your name, allwayes before, written Michael?

For.Dei: What thow hast written, that hast thow written: and it is true. Write down this name.

POLIPOS. Dost thou understand it?

Δ: No, God knoweth.

For.Dei: When that day commeth, I will speak with thee: yf thou observe that which I haue commaunded thee. As truely, as I was with SALOMON, so truely will I be with thee.

Δ: Then cam in an other, whom we toke to be Uriel: for he went allso, as he was wont, and leaned at the Table.

For.Dei: Search for wisdome and lerning, and the lord will deliuer it unto you.

Δ: I wold to god, I knew your name truely, or what peculier letter I might set for you, to Note your words and Actions by.

For.Dei: Name I haue none, but by my office. SALAMIAN cam not hither, but by me. He is a mighty Prince, governing the hevens, under my powre. This is sufficient for thy Instruction. I was with

Salomon, in all his works and wonders: and so was this, whome God had appointed unto him. The Diuines know his name: and he is not hidden from the face of the erth: His name is written in the booke which lyeth in the Wyndow.

Δ: Do you mean Agrippa his booke? And is it there expressed by the name SALAMIAN?

For.Dei: I haue sayde.

Δ: What order will you appoint unto us two, in respect of our two beings to-gither? My frende here, may haue other intents and purposes of his affayres, then will serve me, for his ayde hauing in these Actions.

For.Dei: Joyne in prayers. For God hath blessed you: Downt not. Consider these mysteries.

Δ: Then they in the stone used talk to gither: but not well to be discerned of the eare of E.T. At length F.D. talked very much, and spedily to E.T. and disclosed unto him (which he expressed not to me, at the stone but afterward) all the manner of the practise, and the Circumstance about the Action intended, with the Gold lamin, the ring, the seales &c. And after I had spoken somewhat, in requesting him, to shew me the manner, How I shold artificially prepare euery thing spoken of, he sayd,

F.D:

[. . . Use me, in the Name of God, for all occasions. . . .]³³⁷

Blessed be God, who revealeth all Mysteries, &c. I am strength in nede. And Lo, here is Medicine for the sore. We bless the Lord: We gouern the erth, by the societie of Gabriel: whose powre, is with us: but he not here. &c.

Use Patience.

Ur: I liued with Esdras: I liued in him, in the lord, who liueth for euer.³³⁸

Raph: I liued with Tobie: Tobie the yonger.³³⁹

Δ: This was the white creature, that spake this.

F.D: We liue in the Lorde: who be prayed for euer.

Δ: I stode silent a good while.

FD: What wilt thou?

Δ: I did attend, what you wold say.

F.D: I haue sayd.

Δ: I haue byn long at this tyme, in my dealing with you. I trust, I do not offend you therewith. But, for my parte, I could finde in my hart to contynue whole dayes and nights in this manner of doing: euen tyll my body shold be ready to synk down for wearines, before I wold giue ouer. But I feare, I haue caused wearines to my frende here.

F.D: In vertue is no wearines.

Δ: Now he stode up, out of his chayr: and he, and they all, ioinctly blessed us, stretching theyr hands toward us, Crossingly. And so they went away. The Table and the chayre remayned and the glyttring sparckles, or drops of streaming little lightes were of the chayre immediately.

Δ: Glorie, thanks, and honor be unto the Almighty Trinitie.

Amen.

³³⁷ Due to damage the rest of this sentence is not legible.

³³⁸ Joseph Peterson here refers to the Apocryphal book of Esdras, 4.1, 4.36, 5.20, 10.28.

³³⁹ Joseph Peterson here refers to the Apocryphal book of Tobit 3.17.