

BIROn - Birkbeck Institutional Research Online

Champion, Matthew (2011) Crushing the canon: Nicolas Jacquier's response to the Canon Episcopi in the Flagellum haereticorum fascinariorum. *Magic, Witchcraft, Ritual* 6 (2), pp. 183-211. ISSN 1556-8547.

Downloaded from: <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/20605/>

Usage Guidelines:

Please refer to usage guidelines at <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/policies.html>
contact lib-eprints@bbk.ac.uk.

or alternatively

Crushing the Canon: Nicolas Jacquier's Response to the Canon *Episcopi in the Flagellum haereticorum fascinariorum*

MATTHEW CHAMPION

Queen Mary, University of London

The *Flagellum haereticorum fascinariorum* (The Scourge of Heretical Bewitchers) is a significant text for the formation of witchcraft theory that has until very recently received little attention. Written by the Burgundian Dominican Inquisitor Nicolas Jacquier in 1458, the *Flagellum* forms part of a “second generation” of antiwitchcraft treatises written in the period between the early treatises of the 1430s and 40s and the *Malleus Maleficarum*. Recently, Martine Ostorero's important study, *Le diable au sabbat. Littérature démonologique et sorcellerie (1440–1460)*,¹ has cast new light on the *Flagellum* and its author. This work on Jacquier's biography and the role of the *Flagellum* in the history of demonological discourse means that it is now possible to undertake a broader and more detailed analysis of the *Flagellum*'s argument and its situation within the wider cultural history of late-medieval Europe.

This article addresses those sections of Jacquier's text that form one of the most important and extensive fifteenth-century attacks on the famous canon *Episcopi*.² My aims are twofold. First, I closely follow Jacquier's argument to

1. Originally a doctoral dissertation (Lausanne 2008), Ostorero's work has now been published in the Micrologus library (Florence: Sismel, editioni del galluzzo, 2011).

2. On the canon, see Werner Tschacher, “Der Flug durch die Luft zwischen Illusionstheorie und Realitätsbeweis: Studien zum sog. Kanon *Episcopi* und zum Hexenflug,” *Zeitschrift des Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 85 (1999); Alan Charles Kors and Edward Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe, 400–1700: A Documentary History*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 60–63; Martine Ostorero, *Le diable* 571–79.

show the particular ways in which his case is made against the canon. Jacquier undermines the canon by showing that the fifteenth-century *fascinarii* are not identical to the women described in the canon, and that the canon's authority is dubious. Second, I situate the text within and alongside a variety of fifteenth-century theological, philosophical, and legal structures of meaning relating to bodily reality, systems of proof, and systems of authority.³ The language of the *Flagellum* resonates not only with a variety of judicial practices of the late-medieval inquisition, but with relationships between gender, interiority, and lay devotional practices in the Dominican reform movement, and with particular aspects of late-medieval Eucharistic piety associated with trampling. Charting the ways in which Jacquier attacks the relevance of the canon to the new sect of the *fascinarii* not only shows the specific place of Jacquier's text within the demonological tradition, but also reveals ways in which his text forms, and is formed by, a variety of late-medieval cultural structures. By drawing together the history of witchcraft and the intellectual and cultural history of the fifteenth century, this article contributes to the important move to integrate witchcraft and demonology into broader historical discourse on the late Middle Ages.⁴

Erroneously attributed to the fourth-century Council of Ancyra, the canon *Episcopi* first appeared in Regino of Prüm's tenth-century *De synodalibus causis et disciplinis ecclesiasticis* and was eventually incorporated into the most significant collection of medieval canon law, Gratian's *Decretum*.⁵ *In nuce*, the canon stated that women who believe that they ride on "beasts with Diana, the goddess of the pagans . . . and in the silences of the night traverse great spaces of earth" are experiencing "phantasms" administered "by the malignant spirit."⁶ If the canon applied to the new witch sect that many believed was

3. I adopt the vocabulary of structure advisedly in the manner advocated in William Hamilton Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). For Sewell, cultural structures are systems of meaning that are neither synchronic or atemporal, but rather are continually created by agents through time.

4. Important examples of this move include Michael D. Bailey, *Battling Demons: Witchcraft, Heresy, and Reform in the Late Middle Ages* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), and Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

5. *Causa* 26 q. 5 c. 12. On Gratian, see Kors and Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe*, 72–77.

6. *Ibid.*, 62. Ostorero, *Le diable*, 571–74. The most commonly available Latin edition of the canon is still Joseph Hansen, *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns und der Hexenverfolgung im Mittelalter* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1901), 38–39.

rising to prominence in Europe in the early to mid-fifteenth century, then the witches' sabbath, a key element in identifying, describing, and prosecuting the sect, must be considered an illusion. The canon presented significant obstacles to combating a "real" sect, in which real people met in real places and physically committed real crimes.

Debate over the significance of the canon, the reality of the sabbath, and the possibility of "real" night flight occurs in a variety of fifteenth-century sources. Johannes Nider's *Formicarius*, though not denying the possibility of such flight, was skeptical about its reality.⁷ By contrast, the anonymous author of the *Errores Gazariorum* had little doubt about the sabbath's reality.⁸ Later texts to deal with the canon followed similar paths. Alfonso Tostado, Bishop of Avila's *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (c. 1440) dealt with the question of whether the Devil could carry people from place to place, arguing for its possibility.⁹ Tostado's compatriot, John of Torquemada, in his *Commentary on Gratian's Decretal* (1445–51), took the opposite view.¹⁰ Around five years later, the Dominican inquisitor of Carcassonne, Jean Vinet, wrote the *Tractatus contra demonum invocatores*, stressing the bodily reality of demons and the reality of the sabbath.¹¹

Jacquier's detailed response to the canon forms the second section of his *Flagellum* (chapters 7–9). Jacquier argues that the canon *Episcopi* cannot determine the Church's response to the new witch sect, the *fascinarii*.¹² For Jacquier, the *fascinarii* are unlike the women described in the canon in that, first,

7. Tschacher, "Der Flug durch die Luft," 261–62; Ostorero, *Le diable*, 604–5. On Nider and the *Formicarius*, see Bailey, *Battling Demons*, 11–53; Werner Tschacher, *Der Formicarius des Johannes Nider von 1437/38: Studien zu den Anfängen der europäischen Hexenverfolgungen im Spätmittelalter* (Aachen: Shaker, 2000).

8. Martine Ostorero et al., *L'imaginaire du sabbat: édition critique des textes les plus anciens, 1430 c.–1440 c.* (Lausanne, Université de Lausanne, Section d'Histoire, Faculté des lettres, 1999), 278–99, 321–23; Tschacher, "Der Flug durch die Luft," 262; Ostorero, *Le diable*, 601–2.

9. Hansen, *Quellen*, 105–9; Ostorero, *Le diable*, 605–9; Michael D. Bailey and Edward Peters, "A Sabbat of Demonologists: Basel, 1431–1440," *Historian* 65, no. 6 (2003): 1393–94; Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 146–54.

10. Ibid., 112–18; Ostorero, *Le diable*, 604–38; Bailey and Peters, "A Sabbat of Demonologists," 1393; Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), 149–50.

11. Hansen, *Quellen*, 124–30. On dating Vinet's tract, see Ostorero, *Le diable*, 108. The tract was not widely known until a print edition appeared in 1483.

12. On the meaning and origins of the term *fascinarii*, see Ostorero, *Le diable*, 453–56.

they are conscious and awake in their bodily participation in their synagogues; second, they have direct bodily communication with demons; third, faithful witnesses have seen their real meetings; and fourth, the *fascinarii* actively worship demons. Finally, Jacquier attacks the authority of the canon by undermining its source, the Council of Ancyra, and its use of scriptural exemplar. Throughout, the text constantly stresses the physical reality of the *fascinarii*'s interaction with demons against the illusions experienced by the women of the canon.

The first difference identified in the *Flagellum* between the *fascinarii* and the deluded women of the canon *Episcopi* is that the *fascinarii* are conscious and awake when they participate in the sect. Sex with demons plays a decisive role in demonstrating that the *fascinarii* must be awake at the synagogue.

Experience manifestly teaches that the operations of Venus and the passions of carnal pleasure are not able to be carried out or completed by those who are asleep, even if initiated in sleep by illusions or disgusting fantasies.¹³

Jacquier's concern here is not whether demons exist or act on humans, but whether demonic (inter)action happens when asleep or awake, in the exterior or the interior world, spiritually or bodily. Most importantly, the fact that the *fascinarii* are awake when they attend the synagogue makes their crime conscious.

The meeting, therefore, of the depraved *fascinarii* is not a fantastical illusion, but a real and bodily, or personal undertaking.¹⁴

The *personal* aspect of the crime is essential to guaranteeing human free will—the freedom of the human to sin. It is also important judicially as it makes the *fascinarii* responsible for their actions, and therefore more easily prosecuted.

This discussion of sexual intercourse between the *fascinarii* and demons introduces the tract's first extended description of the meetings of the sect. If sex is the initial guarantor of the synagogue's physical reality and hence the conscious participation of the *fascinarii* in a cult of demon worship, the most

13. F:37. *experientia manifeste docet, quod operationes Venereae et passionis carnalis voluptatis perfici sive consumari non possunt a dormientibus, etiam si per illusiones aut turpes fantasias inchoentur dormiendo.* All citations are to the generally reliable 1581 Frankfurt am Main print edition and take the form F:page number.

14. F:38. *Conventio igitur . . . perversorum fascinariorum non est fantastica illusio, sed realis et corporalis sive personalis excitatio.*

forceful evidence comes from Jacquier's account of a near-contemporary trial in which a sixty-year-old man confessed that when he was five or six years old, his mother had dedicated him to the sect of the *fascinarii*:

Once, when he was a youth, namely five or six years old, his mother took him to the synagogue of the *fascinarii* with his little brother whom she carried in her arms and with his sister. And she presented the three children to a demon appearing in an effigy of a goat and instructing them that he was their lord and master who would do many good things for them. And their mother made the aforesaid children touch the aforesaid demon with their hand on the head of the aforesaid effigy and the Demon himself, whom they called Tonyon, touched all three with his back hoof on their hip and imprinted them with an indelible sign. The aforesaid man, who confessed this, bore this sign which was the size of a single bean in appearance. And he remained in the aforesaid sect for many years after the aforesaid introduction, with his aforesaid brother and sister. He was around sixty years old when he confessed the aforesaid things freely.¹⁵

This account switches into legal language with nine uses of *dictus*, *praedictus*, and *supradictus*. It is plausible that Jacquier is here signaling that he is working from an actual legal source, thereby emphasizing the reality of the account. In addition, the man's confession has a particular realism. The demon is given a real name, and the reality of the demon's action is given a physical form in the bean-sized mark on the body of the child. The mark is a *signum* written by the devil on the body of the child. This is a powerful sign of the child's initiation into the devil's sect, an inversion of the indelible and invisible sacrament of baptism.¹⁶

The conclusion to be drawn from such bodily interaction between humans and demons is made with particular rhetorical force:

15. F:40. *cum olim ipse esset iuvenis, scilicet quinque vel sex annorum, mater eius ipsum cum quodam fratre eius parvulo quem inter brachia portabat, et cum quadam eius sorore, duxit ad Synagogam fascinariorum, et ipsos tres liberos Daemoni obtulit, apparenti in effigie cuiusdam hirci, instruendo eos, quod ille esset eorum dominus et magister, qui eis multa bona facturus esset, et fecit ipsa mater dictos liberos tangere praedictum Daemonem manu super caput effigiei praedictae et ipse Daemon quem vocabant Tonyon omnes tres praedictos anteriori pede tetigit in eorum coxis, et eis signum impressit indelebile, quod signum praedictus ipse, qui hoc confitebatur, deferebat, apparens ad quantitatem unius fabae, qui et pluribus annis post praedictam introductionem perseveravit in praedicto cultu sectae, cum fratre et sorore supradictis: erat enim circiter sexaginta annorum, quando supradicta confitebatur sponte.*

16. Martine Ostorero, "Les marques du diable sur le corps des sorcières (XIVe–XVIIe siècles)" *Micrologus*. Nature, Sciences and Medieval Societies: La peau humaine XIII (2005): 379–80.

The deeds, therefore, and the meetings of this heresy and sect of the *fascinarii* are not fantastical delusions but rather perverse and perfidious, real and corporeal actions of those who are awake and damnable operations of the willing and consenting.¹⁷

Extensive use of rhetorical embellishment, alliteration (*huius haeresis, sectae fascinarorum—sunt fantasticae, perversae et perfidae*), characteristic assonantal chiasmus (*damnabiles . . . operationes*) and homoiteuton (*reales corporales actiones damnabiles . . . operationes*), are typical of important passages in the *Flagellum*'s argument.¹⁸ Here, Jacquier particularly emphasizes the contrast between the illusory world of the canon and the waking, bodily, real, and freely willed actions of the *fascinarii*.

The second difference between the *fascinarii* and the women of the canon is the direct communication between the *fascinarii* and demons.¹⁹ Following the traditional theology of the pact, Jacquier makes it clear that *maleficia* cannot be carried out without real communication and a pact with a demon.²⁰ Such *maleficia* form part of the confessions of the convicted *fascinarii*.²¹ The *maleficia* effected by the sect are, then, further proof of the differences between the *fascinarii* and the women of the canon.

The *Flagellum* employs a symbolic gender opposition to argue that there is direct communication between demons and humans at the synagogue. The women of the canon believe in a poetical fiction, the reality of Diana and Herodias; the *fascinarii* include not only women but men, and priests and members of the religious orders:

Nothing else is contained in that fantastical apparition or illusory congregation, concerning which the oft-cited canon *Episcopi* speaks, except that certain deluded women think that they travel in the service of Diana or Herodias, who are indeed fabulous and poetical fictions. But in the sect or synagogue of the *fascinarii*, not only women meet together, but also men and, what is worse, even clerics and members of religious orders who stand and speak with demons perceptibly.²²

17. F:40. *Gesta igitur et conventiones huius haeresis et sectae fascinariorum, non sunt fantasticae illusiones, sed perversae et perfidae vigilantium reales et corporales actiones, damnabilesque volentium et consentientium operationes.*

18. Compare F: *praefatio* i.

19. F:41–47.

20. Compare Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, q. 110 a. 4 resp. 2; IIa IIae, q. 96, a. 1–4. Ostorero, *Le diable*, 468–70.

21. F:43.

22. F:41. *In ea enim fantastica apparatione, sive illusoria congregatione, de qua sit mentio in saepedicto cap. Episcopi, nil aliud habetur, nisi quod quaedam mulieres illusae, putabant se*

The role of gender in this passage resonates with changes in religious practice, devotional art, and the concerns of church reform movements in the fifteenth century. Other prominent Dominican theorists of witchcraft, like Johannes Nider, have been productively situated within the reform movement.²³ Jacquier's links with Dominican reform are less clear. His presence at the Council of Basel and his relationship with the proreform Dominican Master General, Martial Auribelli, provide some evidence that he supported reform, as does his membership of the Dominican house at Lille and its incorporation into the reformed Congregation of Holland.²⁴ As Auribelli's representative, Jacquier was involved in the canonization process of Catherine of Siena in 1459–60, working to persuade the Doge of Venice to advocate for Catherine's canonization.²⁵ This was not Jacquier's last involvement with female sanctity, an arena of spiritual life so important to Dominican reformers. Later in life, in 1471, he was requested by the Bishop of Tournai to assess the miracles of Colette of Corbie.²⁶ This evidence, combined with his role as an ambassador for the proreform Duke of Burgundy, Philip le Bon, suggests a relatively strong connection between Jacquier and Dominican reform.²⁷ But regardless of Jacquier's direct links with reform movements, a circumstantial trail of evidence links the view of the canon espoused in the *Flagellum* to reformers' concerns about female spirituality.

As this overview suggests, Jacquier's involvement with reform occurred in

ire in obsequium Dianae vel Herodiadis, quae sunt fabulosae quadam et Poeticae fictiones. In hac autem fascinariorum secta sive Synagoga conveniunt non solum mulieres, sed viri, et quod deterius est etiam Ecclesiastici et Religiosi, qui stant et loquuntur cum Daemonibus perceptibiliter.

23. See Bailey, *Battling Demons*.

24. See Ostorero, *Le diable*, 117–48; Bailey and Peters, “A Sabbat of Demonologists,” 1392–93; Thomas Kaepelli, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi*, 3 vols. (Rome: Ad. S. Sabinae, 1980), 3:172–75; Hansen, *Quellen*, 133–34; Jacobus Quéatif and Jacobus Echard, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1719), 1:847–48.

25. Ostorero, *Le diable*, 132–33; M.-H. Laurent, *Il Processo Castellano* (Siena, Università di Siena, 1942), LXXIII, 486–88.

26. Ostorero, *Le diable*, 145; Quéatif and Echard, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum*, 848.

27. See Helmut Weigel and Henny Grüneisen, eds., *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, vol. 19/1 (Göttingen, 1969), 104, 144, 412; Nicolae Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire de croisades au XVe siècle* (Paris, 1902), 342ff.; Heribert Müller, *Kreuzzugspläne und Kreuzzugspolitik des Herzogs Philipp des Guten von Burgund* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1993), 54, 80; Jacques Paviot, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne, la croisade et l'Orient (fin XIVe siècle–XVe siècle)* (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2003), 123, 125–26, 139, 145; Yvonne Lacaze, “Philippe le Bon et les terres d'Empire,” *Annales de Bourgogne* 36 (1964): 90; Ostorero, *Le diable*, 124–27.

the context of Continental reform of religious orders, particularly in Burgundian territories. Such reform was, of course, not limited to Burgundy. The Augustinian reformer, Johannes Busch, for example, detailed the reform of Erfurt's Benedictine Convent of the Holy Cross in his *Liber de reformatione monasteriorum* (c. 1470):²⁸

we saw that each of the sisters had images of Christ and the Saints in the choir behind the altar where they stand and in their seats, . . . for their own devotion, all of which we thence removed and replaced toward the east in the space between the choir and the church, so that all could see them equally, and have devotion from them in common and not, as according to their custom, in private.²⁹

Busch's *Liber* reveals a desire present across various late-medieval religious reform movements to control two fields of female devotion: devotions assisted by images and private devotion.³⁰ This desire was prompted by the perceived extravagance of female mysticism in the preceding two centuries.³¹ Earlier mystics' experiences were both highly individualized and often highly interiorized.³² In the fifteenth century, the German Dominican reformers Johannes Nider and Johannes Meyer both reached "the cautious conclusion

28. Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 87–88.

29. Cited in *ibid.*, 88, 495–96.

30. Claims made by scholars that there was no clear boundary between private and public devotion in the fifteenth century must be balanced by clerical anxieties about the growth of certain forms of private religion. See, for example, Victor M. Schmidt, "Diptychs and Supplicants: Precedents and Contexts of Fifteenth-Century Devotional Diptychs," in *Essays in Context: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych*, ed. John Oliver Hand and Ron Spronk (Cambridge and New Haven: Harvard University Art Museums; Yale University Press, 2006), 24.

31. Werner Krapp Williams, "Frauenmystik und Ordensreform im 15. Jahrhundert," in *Literarische Interessenbildung im Mittelalter*, ed. Joachim Heinze (Stuttgart: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 1993), *passim*; Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, 386, 390; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 8, 87; Jo Ann McNamara, "The Rhetoric of Orthodoxy: Clerical Authority and Female Innovation in the Struggle with Heresy," in *Maps of Flesh and Light: The Religious Experience of Medieval Women Mystics*, ed. Ulrike Wiethaus (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 24–27; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 21–23.

32. Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003), 19.

that most visions are the work of the devil.”³³ Their reform of Dominican houses was designed to regulate these untrustworthy interior visions of the female religious, visions aided by a piety which focused on images.³⁴ Women’s vision was to be controlled by, and visible to, male reformers through strict enforcement of women’s monastic enclosure. By attempting to make devotions more communal and to control the use of images in devotion, reformers attempted to regulate what was seen as the untrustworthy, interior private devotions of women.

Similar links between interiority, vision, individualism, and femininity have been found by scholars across Europe in the fifteenth century.³⁵ In Jacquier’s Burgundian milieu, attention has been drawn particularly to the role of Books of Hours and devotional art in constructing such links. By examining the *Flagellum* alongside examples from Burgundian devotional practices, aspects both of these practices and of the *Flagellum* can be thrown into sharper relief.

According to Jeffrey Hamburger, the medieval “history of interiority is largely circumscribed by the history of spirituality, prayer and devotion.”³⁶ Spirituality, prayer, and devotion in the late Middle Ages, and thus the history of late-medieval interiority are, in turn, incomprehensible without understanding lay devotion. Lay devotion in the fifteenth century was strengthened and formed through the increased use of personal prayer books, particularly the Books of Hours. These books promoted an interior prayer life, grounded in a visionary piety that was, at least initially, particularly feminine.³⁷ Devotional portraits within Books of Hours overwhelmingly depict female patrons.³⁸ Indeed, according to recent research, women owned around 75

33. Johannes Nider, *Formicarius* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1971), books 2 and 3. Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, 440; Williams, “Frauenmystik und Ordensreform,” 303–4.

34. Williams, “Frauenmystik und Ordensreform,” 303–7.

35. See, for example, Jennifer Bryan, *Looking Inward: Devotional Reading and the Private Self in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

36. Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, 30.

37. Andrea G. Pearson, *Envisioning Gender in Burgundian Devotional Art, 1350–1530* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 6ff., and Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and their Prayers, 1240–1570* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 55–57.

38. Laura D. Gelfand, “The Devotional Portrait Diptych and the Manuscript Tradition,” in *Essays in Context: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych*, ed. John Oliver Hand and Ron Spronk (Cambridge and New Haven: Harvard University Art Museums; Yale University Press, 2006), 50.



Figure 1. Rogier van der Weyden, *Triptych of the Seven Sacraments* (“Chevrot Altarpiece”), c. 1440–45. Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, inv. 393–95.

percent of surviving fifteenth-century Books of Hours.³⁹ The figure of the reading lay woman with her Book of Hours forms an analogue to the private devotions of nuns subject to the Dominican reform movement.

Such a figure is portrayed by the famous Burgundian artist Rogier van der Weyden in his *Triptych of the Seven Sacraments* (c. 1440–45).⁴⁰ The *Triptych* shows a woman reading her Book of Hours while an elaborate world is created around her: a concurrent crucifixion and mass alongside an embodiment of the entire sacramental system of the Church (figures 1 and 2). The seated reading woman almost seems to project the world of her interior

39. Pearson, *Envisioning Gender*, 6.

40. Dirk de Vos, *Rogier van der Weyden: The Complete Works* (New York: Harry N. Adams, 1999), particularly 217–25.



Figure 2. Detail from Rogier van der Weyden, *Triptych of the Seven Sacraments*.

reflection into a vivid exterior world. In another fragment of a van der Weyden altarpiece, Mary Magdalene sits reading, intensely absorbed in some form of devotional book (figure 3).⁴¹ Is it possible to talk about these images as depictions of an imagined female interiority, vivid physical worlds that spring from the internal imagination of the reading woman? Certainly the relationship between reader and devotional portrait in the Book of Hours does not allow a strict division between the image and the viewer. Far from being just an image for contemplation, the devotional portrait played a role in shaping the devotional practice of the book's owner.⁴²

Two famous images from Mary of Burgundy's Book of Hours show how these portraits shaped piety and blurred boundaries between the world of the

41. Ibid., 238–41.

42. Gelfand, "The Devotional Portrait Diptych," 50.



Figure 3. Rogier van der Weyden, *Mary Magdalen Reading* (fragment of a *Sacra Conversazione*), c. 1445. National Gallery, London, inv. 654.

image and the “real” external world.⁴³ In these images, feminine interior personal piety is imagined as a flight from the physical world of Mary’s private chamber into no less real visionary experiences.⁴⁴ In the first image, Mary sits reading a Book of Hours while beyond her, through a window, the Virgin

43. Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 53–54.

44. Eric Inglis, *The Hours of Mary of Burgundy: Codex Vindobonensis 1857 Vienna*, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (London: Harvey Miller, 1995), 14v, 43v.

and Child sit inside a Gothic church (figure 4). The situation is extremely similar to the depictions of reading women in the van der Weyden *Triptych* and *Fragment*. What makes this image particularly startling is the presence of a woman almost exactly like Mary of Burgundy in the interior of the church.⁴⁵ The second image likewise features an open window, through which Christ can be seen being nailed to the cross (figure 5). In this image, the viewer is not present, but a Book of Hours lies open on the ledge at a depiction of the crucifixion. This time, the external viewer of the image is not given a portrait of Mary to mediate the visionary experience, but sits in the place of the earlier Mary, transfixed by the realistic bodily vision of the crucifixion. She is invited also to pass through the window to the side of Mary, who is the scene's emotional focal point, not only through the parallel with the earlier image, the extreme realism of the depiction, and the strong tradition of compassion with Mary and Christ, but also through the backward glance of a single courtly lady in the scene.⁴⁶ This courtly lady seems to upbraid the viewer for remaining on the other side of the window.⁴⁷

If we do understand the reading woman in this way, alongside the discourse on deluded women in the canon *Episcopi*, is it possible to posit a "cultural plot" where female imagination blurs the boundaries between an interior world of imagination and a material, bodily world of re-presentation? Jacquier is certainly interested in this kind of gendered reading of interiority and exteriority. He maintains that the external reality of the *synagogues* of the *fascinarii* differs from the imaginary convocations of deluded women, because the synagogue is not simply a gathering of women. It is explicitly distinguished from the assemblies of the canon *Episcopi* by the presence of guarantors of physical reality—men and male clergy.⁴⁸

One interpretation of Jacquier's denial that the *fascinarii* are all women is particularly consonant with the concerns of reformers. Jacquier can be seen to voice Dominican reformers' anxiety about a female mode of interior piety that cannot be grounded in the "real" world. Images like van der Weyden's could be seen to portray the kind of female piety that troubled reformers. But this argument must be seen as conditional: the images of van der Weyden

45. Ibid., 20–22.

46. On *compassio*, see James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* (Kortrijk: Van Ghemmert, 1979), 252, and Otto G. von Simson, "Compassio and Co-redemptio in Roger van der Weyden's Descent from the Cross," *The Art Bulletin* 35, no. 1 (1953).

47. Inglis, *The Hours of Mary of Burgundy*, 30.

48. See above, n. 22, F: 41.



Figure 4. *Book of Hours of Mary of Burgundy*, f. 14v., c. 1480. Codex Vindobonensis 1857. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.



Figure 5. *Book of Hours of Mary of Burgundy*, f. 43v., c. 1480. Codex Vindobonensis 1857. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.

and the Books of Hours can also be interpreted as supporting the position of the *Flagellum*. The reading women in these images experience the narrative and ritual worlds of the church as physical embodiments. This interpretation of female piety as essentially somatic is stressed by Caroline Walker Bynum.⁴⁹ Interiority can be seen not as a flight from the body, but a flight with the body. The bodily presence of the *fascinarii* at the sect's meetings is similar to the bodily presence of the female devotee in the midst of her vision. In fact, the way in which these images remove the boundaries between the two worlds may be seen as emblematic of Jacquier's refusal to allow a dualistic reading of witchcraft as a set of disembodied delusions.⁵⁰ The piety of the women in van der Weyden's altarpieces or the Book of Hours is a bodily piety, just as the participation of the *fascinarii* in their meetings is a bodily participation.

For the *fascinarii* interact with demons bodily—they talk with them, call them by name, fall down on bended knees, and adore them with open eyes. The practice of worship in the sect of the *fascinarii* is extremely corporeal. The authority of sight is conclusive: not only do the *fascinarii* worship with open eyes, but when they are given ingredients to carry out *maleficia*, external witnesses see these materials.⁵¹ Given the distrust of sight in much twentieth-century philosophy, it is difficult to recover the sense of bodily reality that sight had under the Aristotelian “scopic regime” of late-medieval scholasticism.⁵² Because physical objects were thought to emit *species* that transmitted images to the beholder, sight was closely linked with corporeality. Jacquier's tract is yet more evidence for the importance of seeing to late-medieval knowing.⁵³

49. Most famously in Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 251–76.

50. On medieval desires to avoid dualism, see Caroline Walker Bynum, “Why all the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective,” *Critical Inquiry* 22 (1995).

51. F:41–42. *Quae quidem materiae venifcae, frequenter sunt ab aliis repertae et visae.*

52. For example, Thomas Aquinas, *A Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 15. See also Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denegation of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 38–39. Ostorero's observation that touch rather than sight is the privileged sense in the *Flagellum* focuses too exclusively on sex with demons. Ostorero, *Le diable*, 311–12.

53. Michael Camille, “Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing,” in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance*, ed. Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), particularly 206; Clark, *Vanities of the Eye*, 1–2, 14–18. Evidence for the importance of sight in this regard can be found in the rise of *Augenkommunion* in the late medieval period. S. Rosenstein,

In discussing the relationship between humans and demons in performing *maleficia*, Jacquier reflects on the status of the *fascinarii* in contrast to other heretics. Heretics they may be, but they are far worse than Manichees, Arians, or Pelagians.⁵⁴ The *fascinarii*, in full consciousness of the Christian faith, not only believe in false doctrine but actively worship demons. The narrative world in which the *fascinarii* make sense is apocalyptic: as the world hastens to its end it will abound in iniquity and *caritas* will be thwarted.⁵⁵ As John prophesied, at the end of the world, Satan, whom Christ had bound, will be released to deceive and scourge mankind. The sect of the *fascinarii* is evidence that this end is at hand.

The third difference between the *fascinarii* and the women of the canon also concerns sight. Faithful witnesses state that they have seen the meetings of the sect when walking at night.⁵⁶ These eerie meetings are lit by some kind of light—a light that Augustine says can be created by demons. That witnesses do not see the demons themselves is explained by the fact that demons can assume bodies that appear human. But the light is itself further evidence that members of the synagogue must be awake: they can see the synagogue.⁵⁷ Perhaps more importantly, this light means that the proof of the sect's existence conforms to the Roman law principle that “proofs must be as ‘clear as light.’”⁵⁸ The fifteenth-century jurist Angleus Aretinus argued that “one can find an example of *indubitata indicia* wherever the quantity and

“Bodies of Heaven and Earth: Christ and the Saints in Medieval Art and Devotion,” in *Pious Journeys: Christian Devotional Art and Practice in the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Linda Seidel (Chicago: David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, 2001), 29ff.; Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 63–64. The difficulties with making this a totalizing theory of the Eucharist are noted by Charles Caspers, “Augenkommunion or Popular Mysticism?” in *Bread of Heaven: Customs and Practices Surrounding Holy Communion*, ed. Charles Caspers, Gerard Lukken, and G. A. M. Rouwhorst (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1995), 90, and Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 86–90.

54. F:44.

55. F:44.

56. F:47.

57. On the importance of light for medieval theories of vision, see Camille, “Before the Gaze,” 202–4.

58. Richard M. Fraher, “Conviction According to Conscience: The Medieval Jurists’ Debate Concerning Judicial Discretion and the Law of Proof,” *Law & History Review* 7, no. 1 (1989): 55; Paul Kreuger, “Corpus Iuris Civilis,” in *The Roman Law Library*, ed. Y. Lassard and A. Koptev (1954), 4.19.25.

the quality of the circumstantial evidence pointed out the truth in the mind's eye of the judge 'just as a bright light shows the truth to one's physical eyes.'"⁵⁹ Interpreted alongside this principle, the light that illuminates the meetings of the *fascinarii* can be seen as literalizing legal requirements of proof. Light becomes an indication of the physical reality of things seen, even as it indicates the presence of demonic deception.

The fourth difference between the canon and the sect of the *fascinarii* is that the *fascinarii* worship demons. This argument reveals a structure of inversion that Stuart Clark emphasizes as an important aspect of the symbolic grammar of early modern demonology.⁶⁰ The logic is often introduced by a *sicut* (just as): just as God desires sacrifices, offerings, true faith, and devout service and worship, so evil demons require the inverse—offerings of infidelity and lies.⁶¹ This logic is most fully revealed in the meetings of the *fascinarii*. Just as Jacquier's arguments about bodily, waking demon worship are given form in the synagogue of the *fascinarii*, so too the synagogue is the ritual space where the logic of inversion assumes bodily form: when someone is baptized they renounce the Devil, all his pomps, and all his works; when anyone enters the sect of the *fascinarii* the Devil requires that they renounce the worship of God and deny the sacraments of the church.⁶² The women of the canon did not offer any such worship.

What, then, do demons require of their worshippers? The resources drawn on by Jacquier to answer this question place the *fascinarii* alongside the previous manifestation of demon worship, idol worshippers.⁶³ Like their biblical forebears—or rather, like themselves in days of yore—the demons at the synagogue demand idol worship. By focusing on the idolatry of the *fascinarii*, Jacquier further emphasizes the overwhelming seriousness of their sin.⁶⁴ But what form does this idol worship take? First, demons still require the profanation of sacred things, just as the temple was contaminated by idol worship in the time of the prophet Ezekiel.⁶⁵ Second, demons desire the slaughter of

59. Angelus Aretinus, *Tractatus de maleficiis*, cited in Fraher, "Conviction According to Conscience," 55.

60. Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), particularly chap. 5. See also Stuart Clark, "Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft," *Past and Present*, no. 87 (1980).

61. F:49–50.

62. F:50–51.

63. Ostorero sees this discussion of idolatrous sacrifices as a particular novelty in Jacquier's tract. Ostorero, *Le diable*, 464.

64. Compare Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, IIa IIae, a. 3.

65. F:52.

innocents.⁶⁶ Finally, they desire offerings of semen and blood. This is proved by the injunction against offering semen to the idol Moloch in Leviticus and the blood offering of the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings.⁶⁷

To match each of these scriptural exempla, Jacquier produces a modern equivalent. Alongside the profanation of the temple, Jacquier places the *fascinarii*'s profanation of the host.⁶⁸ The *fascinarii* trample the host with "sacrilegious foot."⁶⁹ Alongside the biblical slaughter of innocents, Jacquier laments the *fascinarii*'s murder of children.⁷⁰ Certain *fascinarii* have confessed to strangling infants when acting as midwives. The offering of semen has two equivalents. The first is sex with demons at the synagogue. The second is a story narrated to him by the Master General of the Dominican Order.⁷¹ A few years earlier, a priest and a woman secretly had sex in a church and their seed was mixed with the sacrament of chrism.⁷²

These modern exempla provide a wealth of material for cultural analysis. Three judicial exempla included in the description of host desecration offer clear examples of the mechanics of truth both in Jacquier's evidentiary system and in Burgundian judicial practice.

In the year 1458, a certain woman of this sect made a confession voluntarily and judicially and afterwards in a public sermon that on many of the days of Easter she secretly removed the sacred host from her mouth with her hand which she had received from the priest and afterwards she guarded it until the following Thursday, on which day she carried the host to the synagogue of the *fascinarii* and, in the sight of the Demons and of her Master, trampled it with sacrilegious foot.⁷³

66. F:52, Ps. 106:37–8.

67. F:53–54. Lev. 20:1–5, 1 Kings 18.

68. On magical uses of the host, see Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 334–42.

69. F:55–56. *Et quod horribile est auditu, sacrosanctum corporis domini, et salvatoris Sacramentum . . . pede sacrilego, cum verbis perfidis, conculcant.*

70. F:57. *magis opus est lamentatione, quam narratione.* On child murder, see Richard Kieckhefer, "Avenging the Blood of Children," in *The Devil, Heresy and Witchcraft in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honor of Jeffrey B. Russell*, ed. Alberto Ferreiro (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

71. F:58.

72. Pollution of a church through spilling of blood and semen occurred at St. Baaf's Cathedral in Ghent in 1414. Peter J. Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), 54. On similar narratives, see Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 61–80.

73. F:56. *Hoc anno scilicet 1458 quaedam mulier huius sectae confessa fuit sponte ac*

In the previous year, namely 1457, another certain woman apprehended for this heresy voluntarily and with groans judicially and subsequently in the presence of a great multitude of people in a public preaching confessed that she similarly had reserved the sacred host which she had taken at Easter for thirty years, and taken it out from her mouth secretly and following that trampled it with her feet.⁷⁴

Now around twenty years earlier a certain priest in the city of Nevers was apprehended from this heresy and sect, and degraded, and was then led to the place of punishment, in the presence of the Lord Count of Nevers. At the moment when he was crossing through a certain place or boundary on bent knees he begged the aforesaid Count that something be placed there. On account of his reverence for God, he wanted a cross erected in that place, designating as the cause of his petition that once, in that place in the sight and worship of demons whom he worshipped, he had trampled underfoot a certain host consecrated by him and carried there.⁷⁵

Jacquier obviously accepts this judicial evidence as true, and his text points to what “makes” it true—the linguistic signals of truth. Jacquier’s three guarantees of truth are dating, evidence of free will, and public verification.

These accounts employ a strikingly consistent method of narration. In all three cases the trial is dated. These dates are linked with a direct reference to the present: “this year, 1458”; “in the previous year, namely 1457”; “now around twenty years earlier.” This dating makes the events directly relevant to the present. The threat of the *fascinarii* is thus made more urgent: they are operating now. Second, for the two cases involving lay women, the text emphasizes that the women confessed their crime *sponte*, that is, without torture, and *iudicialiter*, that is, within the system of judicial authority. Jacquier has already made clear the necessity of free will when dealing with sin. The

iudicialiter, et postmodum in publico sermone se pluribus diebus Paschae sacram hostiam a sacerdote sibi ministratam ex ore clandestine retraxisse manu, et inde eandem usque ad subsequens diem Iovis custodiuisse, qua die ad Synagogam fascinatorum ipsam hostiam portavit, et in conspectu Daemonis, sui Magistri pede sacrilego conculcavit.

74. F:56. Anno praeterito scilicet 1457 alia quaedam mulier, de hac haeresi deprehensa, sponte ac cum gemitu iudicialiter, et consequenter coram multitudine copiosa populi in publica praedicatione confessa fuit, similiter sacram hostiam triginta annis singulis diebus Paschae suspectam reservasse, clandestineque retractam ex ore, eandem pede conculcasse.

75. F:56–57. Nunc circiter praeterierunt viginti anni, quidam Sacerdos in civitate Nivernensi, de hac haeresi et secta deprehensus, et degradatus, cum duceretur ad locum suplicii, astante domino Comite Nivernensi moderno transitum faciendo per quendam locum sive terminum, petens ibidem aliquandiu sisti, et genibus flexis rogavit praedictum Comitem, quatenus ob reverentiam Dei, vellet facere erigi unam crucem in ipso loco, assignans causam suae petitionis quia . . . quadam vice in ipso loco in conspectu et veneratione Daemonis, quem coluerat ipse, quadam hostiam, ab ipsomet consecratam et illuc apportatam pede conculcavit.

“free” confessions of the women are analogous to their free participation in the sect. Indeed these free confessions prove that the witnesses were neither constrained to lie by the devil, nor constrained to confess falsely by torture.⁷⁶ External manipulation of human freedom taints the value of evidence whether that manipulation is applied by demonic means or through torture. Finally, this free confession within the judicial system is then opened up to a public verification: in one woman’s case *in publico sermone*, in the other’s *coram multitudine copiosa populi in publico*. For both women, then, the crime is revealed through a public sermon and confession.

This same pattern can be observed in near-contemporary accounts of trials from the famous *Vauderie d’Arras*.⁷⁷ The *Vauderie*, which began while Jacquier was in Italy in 1459, was Burgundy’s most spectacular witchcraft prosecution. It seems likely that the text of the *Flagellum* was known to the anonymous author of the *Recollectio casus, status et condicionis Valdensium ydolatrum . . .*, a short antiwitchcraft text probably written by a member of the Arras inquisition.⁷⁸ Accounts of judicial condemnations of those convicted of *Vauderie* are contained in Jacques du Clercq’s *Mémoires sur le règne de Philippe le Bon Duc de Bourgogne*.⁷⁹ Both du Clercq and Jacquier model a process analogous to the way in which the sacrament of confession was conceptualized in late-medieval society.

The late-medieval practice of confession, according to Dallas Denery, was a way of “public knowing,” an epistemological space and dynamic created between confessor and confessant.⁸⁰ Denery argues that in confession a visual

76. F:174.

77. On the *Vauderie*, see Franck Mercier, *La Vauderie d’Arras: une chasse aux sorcières à l’automne du moyen âge* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006). Also Gordon Andreas Singer, “La Vauderie d’Arras, 1459–1491: An Episode of Witchcraft in Later Medieval France” (D. Phil. diss., University of Maryland, 1974).

78. Mercier, *La Vauderie*, 30–31. The most recent edition is still Hansen, *Quellen*, 149–83.

79. Paul Frédéric, *Corpus Documentorum Inquisitionis Haereticae Privatis Neerlandicae*, 5 vols.1 (Gent: 1889–1906), 1:353, 371, 380. See also J. Fr Michaud, *Nouvelle collection des mémoires relatifs à l’histoire de France depuis le XIII^e siècle jusqu’à la fin du XVIII^e siècle*, new ed. (Paris: Didier, 1857), 605–40.

80. Dallas G. Denery, *Seeing and Being Seen in the Later Medieval World: Optics, Theology, and Religious Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 71–74. This is “public” in a slightly different sense than the women’s confession *publice*. Despite confession being conducted in a publicly visible place and the possibility of public reconstruction of sins from the types of penance imposed, the actual words of confession were still “private.” Private confessionals are a sixteenth-century development. John Bossy, “The Social History of Confession in the Age of the Reformation,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 25 (1975): 30–31.

representation of the sinful confessant was negotiated, assented to, and, finally, absolved. Both the *Flagellum* and the *Mémoires* record that the representation of the heretics was given in a public sermon, then assented to in the act of public confession. The content of this publicly preached and confessed self is stated in both accounts: the host was taken secretly, and then, in the presence of demons, trampled. By re-publicizing the preaching and confessions of the *fascinarii*, the *Flagellum* itself comes to re-embody the social practice of validating the reality (the externality and perceptibility) of the *fascinarii*'s crimes. This social practice is best understood as an inversion of an inversion—what was secret is made public; the covert worship of the synagogue is reincorporated into the narratives of the church.

What of the crimes committed by the accused in Jacquier's exempla? Each account particularly stresses that these *fascinarii* trampled the host. It is common to stress the importance of the host within late-medieval theology and piety.⁸¹ Scholarship has also turned to examine the particular importance of host desecration in medieval culture.⁸² Trampling as a particular form of desecration has not, however, been the subject of sustained historical analysis. The meaning of taking and trampling the host is more profoundly grasped when understood in relation to the place of trampling within various symbolic structures of the fifteenth century. To understand these structures it is necessary to trace the accumulation of significance that the metaphor of trampling had amassed by the late Middle Ages.

The symbolism of trampling as a sign of domination and power over someone or something has a long and complex history.⁸³ It is embedded in Old Testament language about the authority and majesty of God, and the concomitant subjection of enemies. For example, in Psalm 110, "the Lord said to my Lord: sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool."⁸⁴ This image appears to be derived from "an ancient and widespread custom" where a ruler placed his foot on the necks of his subjects as a "symbol of his

81. See, for example, Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture, and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993); Rubin, *Corpus Christi*; Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*.

82. See, for example, Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999).

83. This notion of the deep history of symbolism is derived from Paul Ricoeur's discussion of the symbol in Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. Emerson Buchanan (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 19–24. See also Carlo Ginzburg, "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm," in *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, ed. Carlo Ginzburg (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

84. Ps. 110:1.

power.”⁸⁵ So Joshua invited the Israelites to “put [their] feet on the necks” of five Amorite kings.⁸⁶ Drawing on the long messianic kingship tradition, including Old Testament texts like Psalm 110, the New Testament uses the symbol of trampling to show Christ’s majesty and power over death.⁸⁷ This trope appears in medieval depictions of the triumphant Christ and angels trampling serpents and demons (figure 6). Christ’s power over demons is handed on to his disciples, and becomes a motif in saint’s lives. One such example, used by Jacquier, is the life of St. Margaret, where the saint “cast the demon to the ground, trampling its impious head with her holy foot.”⁸⁸ Margaret’s example shows that trampling not only implies a symbolic hierarchy—the trampler is higher than the trampled—but that it involves defilement and symbolic degradation attached to contact with the earth. The medieval historian does not have to retreat here, however, to some kind of primitive religious sensibility, or to anthropological analysis along the lines proposed by Mary Douglas.⁸⁹ Late-medieval sensitivities to symbolic trampling and contact with unclean earth are embedded in liturgical items like the housling cloth, used to prevent crumbs from the Eucharist falling on the earth.⁹⁰ Even more directly, a paraphrase of the Gospel of Matthew by Jerome used at the Council of Basel refers to a “foolish prelate” as “‘good for nothing’ except that he should be cast out, that is, deposed, and ‘trampled by pigs’, that is, by demons.”⁹¹ No matter who is on top, trampling remains a sign of degradation and pollution.

85. Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1959), 694. On the broader Near Eastern “cultural pattern,” see Othmar Keel, *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament: Am Beispiel der Psalmen* (Zürich: Benzinger, 1972), 232–33.

86. Josh. 10:24–25.

87. See particularly 1 Cor. 15:25–26 and Eph. 1:22. On the appropriation of the psalm in New Testament thought, see M. Gourgès, *A la droite de Dieu: résurrection de Jésus et actualisation du Psaume 110:1 dans le nouveau testament*, Études Bibliques (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1978).

88. F:8. *deiecit [daemonem] in terram, pede sancto caput impium conculcans*.

89. For Douglas’s famous discussion of purity and dirt, see Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1966).

90. Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400–c.1580*, updated ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005), 128.

91. Aeneas Sylvius Piccolominus, *De gestis concilii Basiliensis commentariorum*, ed. Denys Hay and W. K. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 68–69. *stultus prelatas, ‘ad nihil prodest’, nisi ut mittatur foras, id est deponatur; ‘et conculcetur a porcis’, id est daemonibus*. Compare Matt. 5:13.

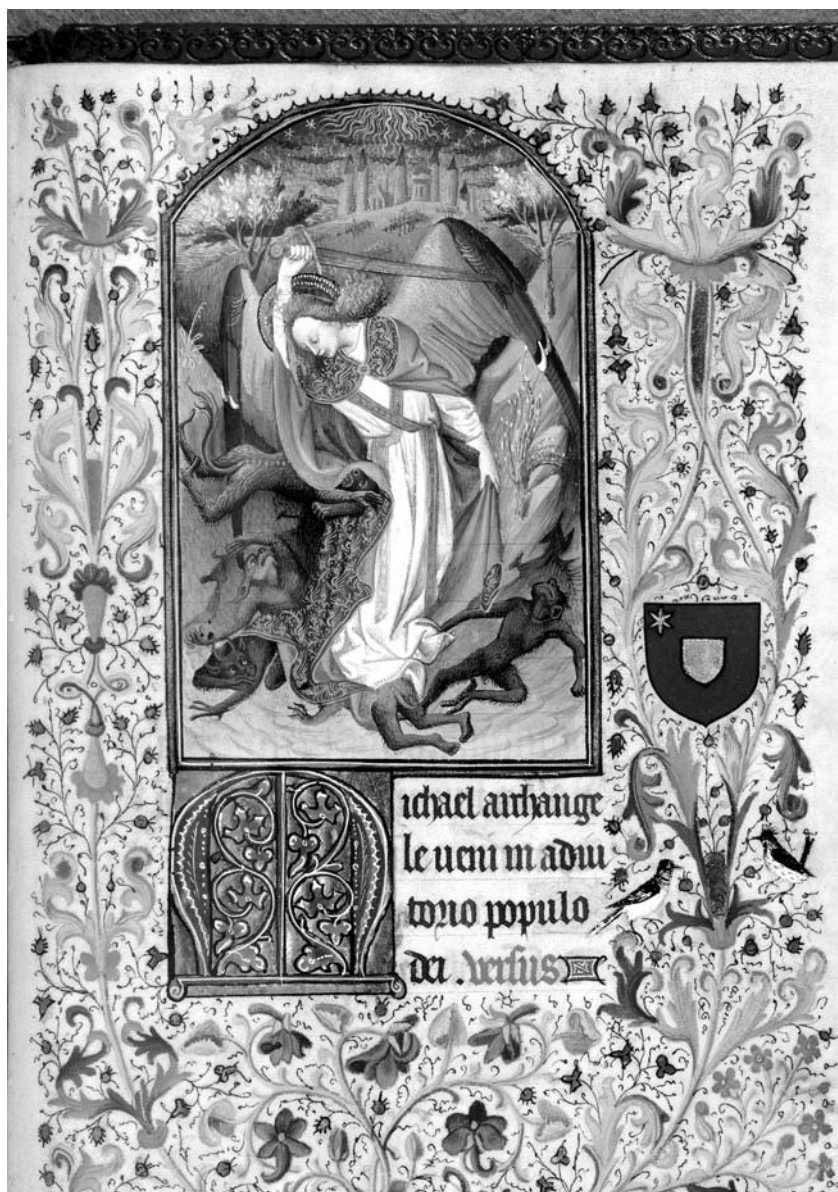


Figure 6. Master of Walters 281, *The Archangel Michael Tramples Devils*, f. 230, Northern France or Belgium, Tournai, c. 1430–35. Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, ms. W 281.

In the crucifixion and resurrection, Christ was both trampling victor, trampling down death by death, and the trampled victim. The *fascinarii*'s symbolic degradation of the host forms part of a late-medieval emphasis on Christ's victimhood, his vulnerable and wounded body.⁹² This aspect of the symbolics of trampling was significantly refined in a body of literature that was particularly common in late-medieval Burgundian territories: biographical accounts of the passion of Christ. These accounts have been analyzed in detail by James Marrow.⁹³ Marrow contends that, especially during the fifteenth century, typological metaphors are transferred into narrative histories of Christ's life, giving rise to detailed and elaborated anecdotal accounts of episodes in the passion.⁹⁴ Trampling often features in these elaborations, particularly in descriptions of Christ's flagellation: "then the evil rascals took our beloved Lord from the column and fiercely cast him to the floor and stamped upon him."⁹⁵ In this literature, and in the art to which it is related, there is a strong link between the trampling and scourging of Christ's body, and its vulnerability to attack from enemies.

The image of trampling is not simply one of vulnerability. Christ's wounds are also the source of salvation, a theological point linked to trampling through the Old Testament metaphor of the wine press. In the passion, Christ's body is pressed, trampled, and scourged until the blood of salvation pours forth.⁹⁶ The symbolics of degradation are simultaneously symbolics of elevation. This understanding of trampling allows us to modify the argument made by Walter Stephens about the relationship between witches and host desecration.⁹⁷ For Stephens, "a desecration that did not produce flesh or blood would have served the witches' purpose but not those of the tales' tellers."⁹⁸ The desecrations recorded in the *Flagellum* do not produce flesh and blood, but they remain within the logic of the recapitulation of Christ's passion that undergirds medieval Eucharistic piety. The host, the body of Christ, undergoes the same trampling that Christ suffered in his passion.

Trampling seems to have had particular theological significance for Jacquier. His first tract to deal with demonology was entitled *De calcatione daemo-*

92. Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, 85; also Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 251ff.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid., 66–67.

95. Ibid., 82. This constructs a link between the witch sect and Jews. On Jews and host desecration, see Rubin, *Gentile Tales*.

96. Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, particularly 44–67. Also Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*.

97. Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, 207–40.

98. Ibid., 211. Stephens is referring to an account of host desecration in the *Mal-leus maleficarum*, but this is quickly elided with all witchcraft theorists.

num (Concerning the Trampling of Demons). In it, he argued that the divinely instituted office of casting out demons ranks alongside the administration of the sacraments in its importance for the priestly office. Jacquier returns to this point later in the *Flagellum*, when he stresses the dignity accorded the priestly office in its power over demons.⁹⁹ If, then, a central role of the priestly office is to trample demons, the *fascinarii* have a symbolic function as the inverse of the catholic priesthood. The *fascinarii* symbolically become priests of the demonic cult, trampling, as opposed to elevating, the body of Christ, and deifying, rather than trampling, demons. The priesthood possesses the trampling power of the resurrected Christ, which triumphs over the trampling power possessed by evil over Christ's crucified body. In this context, the third judicial account, that of the priest who joined the sect in the city of Nevers, creates a particularly startling combination of the catholic priestly function with membership in the demon cult of the *fascinarii*. The evidence unites and dramatizes the actions of consecration and trampling in one person's crime.

Corruption of the priestly office and the sacraments of the church likewise feature in the story of a priest and woman whose bodily fluids corrupted the sacrament of chrism:¹⁰⁰

And what is horrible to hear, a few years beforehand, a certain priest and a woman in a church secretly slept together carnally and their semen was mixed with the sacrament of chrism.¹⁰¹ And this the inquisitor relates who is now the general master of the order of preachers and is called Master Martial Auribelli of Avignon. He told me these things in writing and asserted that they were true.¹⁰²

Sex in church is already a corruption, a desecration of a holy space. Sex in church involving a priest, who should be celibate, is an even greater corrup-

99. F:162–67. On exorcism and authority, see Sarah Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (London: Routledge, 2004), 11–12.

100. See above, n. 16. Lea omits this story from his notes because it “is too disgusting to be repeated.” Henry Charles Lea and Arthur C. Howland, *Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft* (New York: T. Yoseloff, 1957), 279. Elliott notes that such narratives surface within reform movements. Elliott, *Fallen Bodies*, 69.

101. Jacquier's Latin suggests the semen is the combined fluids of man and woman. The reality and function of female semen were debated by scholastic theologians. See Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 18, 21–26, 31–34, 118–30.

102. F:58. *Et quod horribile est auditu, a paucis annis citra, quidam sacerdos et mulier in Ecclesia clam carnaliter concubuerunt, ut semen eorum cum sacramento Crismate commisceretur. Et hoc retulit Inquisitor, qui nunc est generalis Magister ordinis Praedicatorum, et vocatur Magister Martialis Auribelli de Avinione, qui mihi haec scribenti narravit et asseruit esse verum.*

tion. The office of the priesthood and the church are polluted, and encapsulating these pollutions, the sacramental oil of chrism—used to anoint the newly baptized—is profaned. At every level—institutional, personal, and sacramental—the order of the church is usurped. There is an enormously disgusting aspect to the story: semen could be used to anoint a newly baptized Christian child. The symbolic interplay here suggests that the story is not simply about the celibacy of the priesthood, but represents an anxiety about the effect of such improper couplings on children. The use of the passive verb *commisceretur* may imply that the children of such unions are not sealed with the oil of chrism, but stained with the sexual fluids of an unclean union between celibate and concubine.

Having made clear how the *fascinarii* re-embody the crime of idol worship, Jacquier goes on to argue that these “modern idol worshippers” are more detestable than those in scripture.¹⁰³ Here, the historical situation of the *fascinarii* after the incarnation proves decisive. Since humanity has been freed from bondage to the Devil, and its nature so dignified by Christ’s incarnation, how much worse is it to return to bondage?¹⁰⁴ It follows that the ancient idol worshippers could not approach the evil worship of the *fascinarii* who turn away from the fullness of truth revealed in Christ and the Church.¹⁰⁵ This is in fact a magnification of the logic of inversion. The ancient idol worshippers could not be a full inversion of the proper order of Creation, since that order was only fully revealed in Christ: the better the good, the worse the evil.

After identifying the historical differences between women of the canon, idol worshippers, and the *fascinarii*, the *Flagellum* turns to a more technical discussion of the authority of the canon *Episcopi*.¹⁰⁶ The first argumentative move is to undermine the authority of the council that supposedly promulgated the canon, the Synod of Ancyra. As the canon comes from a local synod, not a general council, its authority is limited. According to the *Flagellum*, this is something that Gratian wanted us to know when he included the canon in his *Decretum*. By prefacing each law with its source, Gratian drew attention to the fact that the canon had limited authority.

To undermine the canon’s position further, Jacquier attacks its use of scriptural exempla. The canon cites Ezekiel’s vision of Jerusalem, which occurred “in the spirit,” as evidence for nonbodily, spiritual transportation.¹⁰⁷ Against

103. F:59. *Sunt autem moderni Idolatrae fascinarii deteriores et destestabiliores his Idolatris, de quibus fit mentio in supraallegata scriptura.*

104. F:59–60.

105. F:60–61.

106. F:61–72.

107. F:64.

this, Jacquier cites Habakkuk's very bodily transportation to Babylon to visit Daniel in the lion's den, a favored exemplum for other ecclesiastical authors defending the reality of flight.¹⁰⁸ This exemplum is supported by the strange transport of Philip from somewhere between Jerusalem and Gaza to Azotus.¹⁰⁹

Finally, the canon argues that anyone who believes that a creature can transform itself into any other shape is worse than a pagan. Using the scholastic and Augustinian vocabulary of active and passive virtues, Jacquier shows that rigidly holding to this principle does not accord with the powers shown by the magicians of pharaoh in their contest with Moses.¹¹⁰ In a traditional application of Augustine, Jacquier shows that the transformation of a staff into a snake by the magicians was not done by miraculous divine aid, but through an acceleration of the natural processes by which worms are generated from wood.¹¹¹ This distinction between natural wonders (*mira*) and supernatural miracles (*miracula*) maintains the place of demons as supreme manipulators of the natural order, who nevertheless remain subject to both nature and God's supernatural authority.¹¹² It is to the power of God and God's relationship with the powers of demons that the later chapters of the *Flagellum* turn.

Jacquier's sustained attack on the canon *Episcopi* and its deluded women reveals more than the common delusions of a "pathetic" way of thinking and system of belief.¹¹³ The *Flagellum*'s armory of strategies for contesting the legitimacy of a text that dealt with the legitimacy of women's visions testifies to the ways in which cultural and spiritual authority, in texts and "in the flesh," were negotiated in the fifteenth century. Even more fundamentally, its web of mutually reinforcing, often circular, proofs shows how reality was constructed and tested across legal, theological, and broader cultural boundaries. The complexity of Jacquier's response to the canon *Episcopi* shows that close analysis of witchcraft texts like Jacquier's is valuable for historians of the late-medieval world in at least three ways. First, this kind of reading of texts eliminates the kinds of generalizations about witchcraft literature that charac-

108. Dan. 14:32–38 and Hansen, *Quellen*, 116, 126.

109. Acts 8:39–40.

110. Exod. 8.

111. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, III.ii.13; Maaike Van der Lugt, *Le ver, le démon et la vierge: Les théories médiévales de la génération extraordinaire* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2004), 135–39; Ostorero, *Le diable*, 632.

112. Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 151ff. See also Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, q. 110 a. 4.

113. Contra Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, 21.

terize some recent English language scholarship to deal with the *Flagellum*.¹¹⁴ Second, this form of reading shows how texts like Jacquier's are thoroughly enmeshed in the structures of meaning that formed the cultures within which late-medieval thought operated. It thus contributes to recent moves toward integrating the history of witchcraft with broader cultural and intellectual histories of the late-medieval world. Third, it shows how "minor" texts like Jacquier's can be analyzed in dialogue with "high" cultural artifacts like Burgundian art to cast a different light on processes of cultural transformation in the fifteenth century. This mode of analysis creates new perspectives for historical analysis, revealing new horizons for the study of late-medieval western Europe.

114. See especially *ibid.*, 21, 134–36.