

The Problem of Magic in Early Anglo-Saxon England

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Since 1989, when Richard Kieckhefer first published his ground-breaking *Magic in the Middle Ages*, scholarly interest in the area has continued to grow.¹ In 1991, Valerie Flint published her study of *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*.² Its title sets it up, as others have pointed out, as a complement to Keith Thomas' classic of 1971, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*.³ Flint takes up the challenge of Thomas' idea that the medieval church offered a 'magic' of its own, but shifts the enquiry back in time to the meeting of different cultures which took place when early-medieval churchmen, with an education founded on Judaeo-Christian and classical models, embarked on the conversion of northern European societies.

Thomas argues that 'nearly every primitive religion is regarded by its adherents as a medium for obtaining supernatural power'; and that this was an essential element in the Anglo-Saxon Church's struggle against paganism.⁴ He goes on to propose that, throughout the medieval period, the Mass, in particular, was associated with 'magical power'.⁵ For Flint, Christian leaders frequently condemned magic, and considered it as competing with true religion; but at the same time, they were also capable of perceiving that magic, in at least some of its aspects, produced positive social, emotional and psychological effects. Moreover, they acted on this belief, and not only 'tolerated certain "magical survivals"' but deliberately adopted them, through an awareness of the benefits of the emotional charge certain sorts of magic offered. Thus, the interpenetration of magic and religion is re-presented, not as the

result of inadequate policing of the borders but as the expression of 'a delicate social sensitivity' and of deliberate planning 'at the highest levels'.⁶

What complicates the argument is the problem of a satisfactory definition of magic. For Flint, magic is 'the exercise of a preternatural control over nature by human beings, with the assistance of forces more powerful than they'; and this definition consciously links magic with Christian religious concepts such as *miracula* and *mirabilia*.⁷ Indeed, this lack of any real boundary between religion and magic does much to facilitate the freedom of both thought and action which she attributes to her early-medieval churchmen.⁸ The fact that it also defines much of their religion as magic, in the face of their own explicit statements to the contrary, is left rather as an area of silence.

One of the most important responses came from Richard Kieckhefer who, in an article of 1994, pointed out that Flint's category of 'approved forms of magic' frequently contradicts early medieval writers who expressly contrasted Christian categories such as miracles and grace with magic.⁹ Kieckhefer returned to the problem in the Foreword to the Canto edition of his book, in 2000, arguing that although many aspects of medieval Christianity 'may seem to a modern eye indistinguishable from magic' this is due to the application of anachronistic criteria: 'If we confuse what they called blessings with what they called magic, we are not listening attentively to what they had to say about their conception of the world'.¹⁰

Karen Jolly puts the point extremely succinctly:

The history of magic has increasingly become conceptual history [...]. The purpose is no longer to give an account of what magic was, but of what it was perceived to be at any given time.¹¹

Jolly's survey also opens with the statement that 'Magic is more a concept than a reality'.¹² However, this is nuanced by her

acknowledgement of what is implicit in the historiographical developments sketched here, namely that magic as a concept was not only defined differently at varying points in medieval history; it is also defined differently by varying modern historians. The consequences of this are perhaps made visible in the contradictory stances taken towards magic in Julie Ann Smith's book of 2001, *Ordering Women's Lives : Penitentials and Nunnery Rules in the Early Medieval West*. For Smith, magic was associated with the devil and hence was 'unacceptable for its diabolical powers rather than its pre-Christian cultural roots'.¹³ This gives a very different image of the attitudes of early-medieval churchmen from Flint's. Smith's own definition of magic; moreover, is in direct contradiction to that posited by Flint, since for Smith

magic is interpreted as any practice which did not incorporate some element of recognition that the Christian God was the prime cause of both good and ill circumstances, though not the author of evil.

In other words, for Smith, the categories of magic and of paganism effectively collapse into one another, despite her reassurance that "pre-Christian" did not necessarily equal "magic".¹⁴ This is necessarily problematic when Smith argues that churchmen in the early middle ages found it necessary to replace pagan magical practices with Christian substitutes, and that the creation of a 'Christianised magic' was a step perceived by some churchmen as necessary.¹⁵ The overlapping nature of the categories can lead to problems in the handling of source-texts. For instance, when discussing a custom which led women to 'draw their children through the earth' at cross-roads in an attempt to cure them, Smith calls this 'a form of healing magic'; and yet the text from which the example is taken, the *Confessional of Egbert*, terms it simply 'paganism'.¹⁶

Widely differing definitions of magic, and of the dividing lines between magic and religion, can thus mean that historians are

attempting to write about a complex and varied area of practice upon whose content they are far from agreeing. There is also the issue raised by Murray, who suggests that historians have in effect been fooled by a deliberate blurring of categories carried out by early-medieval churchmen. Magic, argues Murray, was always a 'distinct enterprise' within paganism, and never more than an unofficial undercurrent of it, and Christian churchmen were aware of this, but chose to 'lump together' paganism and magic in order to win converts from both.¹⁷ Thus, acceptance of magic as a pagan survival becomes effectively belief in this revision. However, as Kieckhefer argues, 'ahistorical use of the word "magic" blurs distinctions vitally important to those who made them' in the early medieval period.¹⁸

A form of evidence for early-medieval magic which has proved particularly problematic to use is that of the Penitentials. This is partly because of the difficulties in establishing reliable texts and provenances for these widely-distributed works, which were frequently given 'authority' by attributions to famous churchmen whilst their actual origins remain largely unknowable. A further problem is the possibility that they were merely repetitions of canonical precepts or patristic formulations relating to penance. Indeed, this has led Smith to argue that these texts are valuable precisely as records of what was officially approved or required in early-medieval societies.¹⁹ However, as has long been recognised, some Penitentials include descriptions of concrete practices which are not found in patristic sources and which do appear to be drawn from direct experience. This view was put forward, for instance, by McNeill, and was influentially argued by Frantzen, who concluded that 'the penitentials are collections of sins which had actually been confessed'.²⁰ It is also true that both the textual structures and the 'canons' used by different early author/compiler vary considerably – a fact which strongly suggests that there was no simple dependence upon one text by the compiler of the next before the ninth century.

Bieler, in his *The Irish Penitentials*, points out that, whilst the earliest Penitentials 'purport' to originate in sixth-century Wales, there can be no proof of this, since the oldest surviving copies are in two closely-related manuscripts made on the Continent some time later.²¹ Moreover, neither contains any clear dating evidence beyond their script, abbreviations and codicology. However, Bieler does conclude that the penitential system represented by these texts most likely originated in Wales, before being further developed in Ireland.²² These oldest penitential texts have a legal, rather than theological or liturgical, nature, and are aimed primarily, and in some cases exclusively, at the clergy; they are as yet far from being general manuals for confessors. Unsurprisingly perhaps under these circumstances, they make no mention of practices which could be considered magical. However, the idea of producing formal collections seeking to regulate the behaviour of Christians, and to specify what was necessary to maintain full membership of the community of believers, was taken up elsewhere in the early medieval period, and in the Irish Church and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in particular.

Thus Penitentials, if sufficiently reliable texts can be identified and located in their actual context, can potentially offer information on two very important areas for the history of magic in early Anglo-Saxon England. Firstly, these texts can reveal whether Church leaders were applying canonical materials on magic derived from earlier Church councils, and if so which particular concepts and definitions were being deployed. Secondly, they can show whether practices and behaviours not found in earlier canonical or penitential texts are referred to. If so, these references are potentially sources of information on practices within the society to which the Penitential is addressed. Indeed, the value of the evidence goes further, since most Penitentials use some form of organisation or ordering principles for the canons which they include; thus, the headings under which these practices appear, and the contents of neighbouring clauses, provide evidence for the conceptual categories within which they were analysed and

interpreted. Moreover, this approach will avoid the problem which has led Frantzen to criticise the use of the Penitentials by social historians who have tended to treat them as if 'penitentials from the eighth century and those from the tenth were one'.²³ This is also an issue which has proved problematic for Smith, who argues that the authorship of the Penitentials is not a concern for her work, since what matters for her is that 'the promulgation of the handbooks by the higher clergy and their use by parish priests provide evidence for the place of the handbooks in early medieval communities'.²⁴ However, this in itself raises all sorts of difficulties as to the nature of a parish clergy in the early middle ages; and it does not prevent Smith's analysis of the themes dealt with in the Penitentials from falling into considering them as a rather homogenous group.

For the purposes of this article therefore the first question is whether any surviving Penitential can be relatively securely identified as the work of influential Church leaders in early Anglo-Saxon England. The answer, fortunately, is that there is one such text, known as the *Penitential of Theodore*.²⁵ This follows the standard early-medieval practice of attributing the work to a well-known individual since the Theodore in question was Theodore of Tarsus, archbishop of Canterbury 668-90 (and credited by Bede with bringing about significant reforms and restructuring to bring the English Church into line with continental, and papal, expectations). The actual authorship of the text is a complex issue. Numerous Carolingian writers refer to Theodore as the author of a Penitential, while Regino of Prum regarded the *Penitential of Theodore* as one of only two authoritative Penitentials. The problem is that the surviving text, edited in different versions by Wasserscheben, Haddan and Stubbs, and Finsterwalder, does not claim to be solely the work of Theodore.²⁶ Rather, it is presented as the result of editorial work by a writer who calls himself *discipulus Umbrensiū* (usually taken to mean that he was educated or influenced by the Northumbrian Church), and who states that the Penitential consists of answers on matters relating to penance given

by Theodore to a priest called Eoda. The latter, like Theodore, was apparently dead by the time the *discipulus* was at work.

This complex situation may possibly explain why Bede, who gives a fairly full account of Theodore's achievements in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, makes no mention of his authorship of a Penitential. Moreover, the *discipulus* states in his prologue that Eoda possessed a *libellus scottorum* and that he used this as the basis for his questions to Theodore. This would indeed explain the surviving text's familiarity use of the Welsh and Irish material; it has further been argued by Thomas Charles-Edwards that this *libellus scottorum* was the Irish work known as the *Penitential of Cummean*.²⁷ It is also demonstrable that 'Theodore's' text itself had an influence in Ireland. Bede's silence might thus partly be the result of his disapproval of influence from the Celtic Church, as well as the fact that none of the writing of this Penitential is actually ascribed to Theodore. There is also the issue of when the *discipulus* produced his 'edition'. He gives no date, but his work survives in two ninth-century manuscripts (now Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 320 and Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, MS 2223).²⁸ Thus, it appears that the *discipulus* worked during the century following Theodore's death; and his prologue comments on the fact that various versions of what was claimed to be Theodore's text were already in circulation, suggesting some gap of time between Theodore's death and the *discipulus*' work. However, Frantzen does accept this Penitential as probably genuine, or at least as insular and eighth-century, and as a major source for the (spurious) Penitentials attributed to Egbert of York and to Bede.²⁹ Equally, Michael Lapidge accepts the 'collection of pronouncements on matters of penitence and ecclesiastical discipline known as the *iudicia* or *canones Theodori*' as being by Theodore (though this does raise issues as to which version of the text is to be preferred).³⁰

Fortunately, the *Penitential of Theodore* is important for this analysis as a text of English eighth-century origin which achieved wide acceptance rather than for its authorship. Its status is attested

for instance by Bedingfield, who accepts it as early-eighth-century.³¹ This follows Frantzen's statement that this text is 'the first known penitential of English origin' and that it was 'probably issued during the first quarter of the eighth century'. Frantzen also identifies the chief sources for this work as Irish, and suggests that the *libellus* cited by the *discipulus* was almost certainly the Penitential of Cummean.³² However, the texts embody the wide range of influences brought together in the English Church in this period. Lapidge points out that the *iudicia* make reference to the 'Apostolic Canons' as well as to canons issued by the Councils of Ancyra, Neocaesarea, Antioch, Laodicea and Africa.³³ This is what might be expected in a text attributed to an archbishop of Canterbury who had come to England from Asia Minor (via Rome), whose colleague, Hadrian, came from North Africa, and whose expertise in canon law is celebrated by Bede. It would thus appear that the Penitential of Theodore offers very important evidence for the question of how definitions of magic were brought together, and transferred from one society to another, in early medieval England. Close analysis of the text, and comparison with its predecessors, should also make it possible to identify clauses relating to sins which had actually been confessed in an Anglo-Saxon context, and to see whether any of these are relevant to the history of magic. It is also fortunate that this text has been edited by Haddan and Stubbs (in *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, III, Oxford, 1871, pp.173-212) and that this edition (based on Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Ms 320) is generally accepted.

The 'Theodore' text is divided into two main sections, or Books, the first following the 'British' tradition of setting out sins and penitential tariffs, whilst the second brings together a more general collection of canons. The first part is comparable in its range and in its grouping of material to those texts which use Cassian's 'eight principal faults' as a structuring guide (of which Cummean's is the first). Strikingly, however, only a few of its chapter-headings correspond to 'Cummean's'. For this article, use

will be made of Bieler's edition of Cummean's Penitential, whilst Haddan and Stubbs will be used for 'Theodore'.³⁴ In Bieler's text, Cummean's Penitential starts with a *Prologus de Medicinae Salutaris Animarum*, then deals with material on: Gluttony; Fornication; Avarice; Anger; Dejection; Languor (Accidia); Vainglory and Pride; before moving on to Petty Cases and the Sinful Playing of Boys. 'Theodore' starts with a Preface by the *discipulus* before going on to deal with: Drunkenness; Fornication; Avarice; Killing; Heresy; Perjury; Diverse Sins; the sins of Priests; Sunday observance; the Eucharist; the Reconciliation of penitents; issues relating to Marriage; and the worship of Idols. These differences of structure and emphasis themselves suggest that the Irish text was adapted primarily for a monastic setting, whilst 'Theodore's' addresses the sorts of issues likely to arise in a society where precise details of Christian practices are still relatively unfamiliar (and where paganism is still a problem). Whilst no heading refers directly to magic, the address to partially-pagan, secular society might make the problem more likely to arise in Theodore's Penitential. However, the first important point, in relation to the problem of magic, is that the reader of 'Theodore' quickly agrees with Frantzen that early English bishops were considerably less preoccupied with problems of superstition and magic than their continental counterparts, an interesting point in itself.³⁵

In the section on Murder and Killing, one clause does refer to killing by a potion or any 'art' and assigns the penance of four or more years (in one variant, seven). This could clearly include a reference to destructive use of magic; but it cannot be taken exclusively in this sense. The heaviness of the penance presumably relates to the fact that these are secret, and premeditated, forms of killing, as much as to any possible recourse to magic (killing in anger is given a penance of three years). The same problem applies to the next relevant section, that which deals with issues relating to marriage and sexual conduct. It is in this section that the issue of a woman who wishes to 'increase love' is raised. Interestingly here,

rather than general mention of 'magic' or 'potions' we are told that women take the semen of the desired man and mix it into food.³⁶ The next clause, still more laconically, refers to a woman who drinks her husband's blood 'as a remedy'. Since this is still placed within the section on Marriage all these passages may be tentatively categorised as dealing with 'love magic'. However, whilst the text is very straightforward in its naming of the practices it does not offer clear categories or theological definitions.

This problem is made all the more difficult since the section on Diverse Sins also refers to the drinking of blood or semen, though without giving any information on those who might do this, or the context within which it might happen. This section is very diverse; but its largest group of clauses deals with clean and unclean food and drink. The clause at issue, however, is placed separately. Moreover, the drinker is linguistically potentially male, which differentiates this from the blood-or-semen-drinking women of the Marriage section. Clearly gender is a significant category, and it might tentatively be suggested that when women engage in the consumption of these bodily fluids their behaviour is taken to be linked to love-magic, whilst when men do something similar their offence is left much more vague. Thus, there are hints here that magic is a gendered activity.

Still more difficult to interpret in terms of a clear category of 'magic' is the material given in the section on the Worship of Idols and therefore with practices associated with pagan worship. This section has no parallel in Cummean. Like Leviticus, the section equates pagan deities with demons; and like both Leviticus and Carolingian Penitentials (which it may have influenced) it forbids recognisably pagan mourning practices. Two clauses in this section raise particular problems, though for rather different reasons. Most wide-ranging is a clause which starts, once again, with the issue of the behaviour of women, and specifically with their performance of 'diabolical incantations or divinations'.³⁷ The nature and purpose of these are unspecified, but they are not treated as a serious matter, since the penance assigned is at most one year. 'Theodore' goes on

to link them with practices from the late antique world and quotes one of the canons of Ancyra which deals with 'auguries, [...] auspices from birds or dreams' or other pagan divinations. It is the quoted canon which makes explicit reference to magic, by referring to 'the arts of *malefici*'.³⁸ Thus, the Anglo-Saxon text differentiates between the women's relatively minor incantations and divinations, which appear to be part of an 'issue arising', and the more sinister arts of the male *malefici* referred to in the canon. Moreover, the term 'diabolical' is interesting, since it is explicitly deployed as providing the link between pagan and magical practices.

However, the clause which has received more attention from historians of magic is one which makes no allusion to magic at all. This is in the same section, again deals with women's behaviour, and states: 'If any woman puts her daughter upon a roof or into an oven for the cure of a fever, she shall do penance for seven years'.³⁹ This, then, is a considerably more serious matter than any of those dealt with above; but it is not referred to as magical (and appears to have no classical source). Rather, it is an idolatrous, and specifically female, form of medical cure, which is apparently more seriously wrong than various forms of killing. No canon is here cited to give a parallel, and there is no such reference in Cummean; thus, it appears to be a problem arising amongst Anglo-Saxons. That being the case, the attention to the gender of those performing various acts is again noteworthy; and the fact that this is something which women do to their daughters is intriguing. However, no term such as diabolical is here applied, and the practice is thus to be classified in terms of the section heading, which presents it simply as pagan.

The final relevant passage comes in Book Two, which is devoted to setting out rules and procedures to be followed in a wide range of issues. It contains a section on Those Who Are Vexed by the Devil, where clause 5 distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable treatments. Both stones and herbs may be used for one possessed by a demon; but they must not be accompanied by incantations.⁴⁰ Here this text reaches territory fully relevant to the

historiographical arguments on magic, paganism and religion. Incantations have already, in Book One, been linked with paganism and with the activities of magicians (taking this as the most likely meaning of *malefici*); but 'Theodore', like Augustine, apparently accepted the purely medical uses of stones and herbs. This is especially interesting since Bede suggests that Theodore himself was interested in medical issues, and has John of York quote him as warning against phlebotomy when the moon and the tides were waxing – for purposes of avoiding excess blood-loss rather than avoiding magic.⁴¹ Brief as it is, this clause thus confirms that this text makes distinctions between medicine and magic which were clear within their own social context. A similar conclusion is suggested by clause five of the section on the Uses of Animals. This declares, presumably because a question had arisen, that hares may be eaten, and that this is helpful for dysentery; moreover, their liver may be mixed with pepper as a cure for pain. Here again there is a clear interest in medicine; and the placing of the clause suggests that the doubt as to the acceptability of eating hares related to rules about clean and unclean foods, not to worries about magic. Taken together with the rejection of placing fevered girls on roofs or in ovens purely as a strongly idolatrous practice, the reader is led to the conclusion that medicine, paganism and magic are all separate categories for this text.

This raises the question of how issues of fertility and unwanted pregnancy are dealt with, since all these are areas where categories of sexuality, medicine and gender are raised. As the list given above makes clear the Penitential of Theodore, unlike its Carolingian followers, does not have a separate section on the behaviour of women. The section on Fornication deals only with sexual relations as such, not with 'medical' issues related to this. Equally, there is no reference to abortion in the section on Killing. The issue is raised in the section in Book One relating to marriage (which, with 30 clauses, is the longest in this Book). The language is very plain and straightforward, referring simply to the carrying out of an abortion (*abortivum*). This is thought of as a woman's

crime, since only women (*mulieres*) are referred to as involved. What is important, however, is the age of the foetus; no attention is given to the means by which the abortion is procured, and no question of magic is raised. Book Two has another long section on questions relating to marriage (with 36 clauses, occupying three pages in the printed edition, this is easily the longest in the whole work). However, this is entirely related to 'technical' issues such as consanguinity, periods of mourning, the remarriage of widows, and adultery, and contains nothing of relevance.

Overall it would appear that, whilst 'Theodore' was aware of, and draws on, patristic teaching on magic and magicians, these issues were of relatively small concern. Where the subject of magical practices does occur, it is treated mostly as the errors of women and allotted fairly light penances; but there is no attempt to define or clarify its relationships to either paganism or medical treatments. What emerges most strongly is that magic, as well as being gendered, is something which is likely to occur in domestic and sexual contexts, where women may attempt amateur divinations, practise simple 'love charms' based on consumption of bodily fluids, or invite *malefici* into their homes if something more specialised is required. What makes the pagan cure of female fevers so very wrong is left unspecified. Overall, the impression given by this text is of a group of biblical, patristic and canonical sources being drawn upon, within a textual and spiritual framework supplied by the 'British' penitential tradition, to deal with material derived from Anglo-Saxon reality. It is important to emphasise that none of this material in the Penitential of Theodore relating to magic is paralleled in the Penitential of Cummean; these references thus seem entirely to relate to early Anglo-Saxon England.

If this text is accepted as belonging to the eighth century, then it was produced during the time when Christianity was establishing itself in one Anglo-Saxon kingdom after another. This accords with the amount of space devoted both to paganism and to explaining fairly basic aspects of Christian practice. The small space which is seen to be given to magic-related practices is in itself a corrective

to the selective approach which can, by focusing only on magic, imply that this area occupied an important place in the penitentials and in the concerns of the individuals who produced and circulated them. Equally, the lack of clarity in the use of terminology and in the placing of potentially magical practices in itself suggests that the author-compiler of Theodore's text did not have available a 'centrally-approved' or generally-held definition of magic. The work of correlating early-medieval practice with Christian theory was underway, but it was at an early stage. The suggestion that the Penitentials simply repeat one another, and canon law, has proved to be untrue in the cases of Theodore and Cummean. Instead, it has been seen that both the practices mentioned, and the headings and sections under which they are placed, vary considerably. This gives the impression that these texts have something of the nature of works in progress, and that they do genuinely address issues perceived as both current and real. Thus, their status as evidence for magical practices in the societies which produced them is reinforced, despite the complexities around authorship and the establishment of reliable texts.

It has also emerged that 'Theodore' used categories of paganism, medicine and magic which were flexible but clearly separate. Whilst lingering paganism is, as would be expected, strongly condemned, there is no attempt to discredit paganism by describing it all as magic. Instead, pagan-influenced behaviour on the part of Christians is more likely to be perceived as idolatry; whilst magic is recognised as something practised by Christians as well as pagans (after all, penance is only applicable for Christians). Beyond the conceptual problems, evidence has also emerged as to those who were believed to practise magic. Here, what has emerged as a significant theme is the issue of gender differentiation. The majority of those who have recourse to magic in early Anglo-Saxon England, according to Theodore's penitential, are women. Yet the *malefici*, incorporated by reference to canons of late-antique origin, are apparently men providing specialised magical services which women cannot perform themselves. Finally, the more dramatic

material of the Carolingian texts, with their references to beliefs in night-flights, a goddess-cult and cannibalistic practices, is not found in the Penitentials of either Cummean or Theodore.⁴² This material, with all its foreshadowing of beliefs about witches and their practices, was apparently to be brought into England in the tenth century, when new, composite penitential texts, based upon the Carolingian editions, were introduced. In the meanwhile, it is hoped that this study has provided sufficient evidence to suggest that magic had a limited but real presence within certain aspects of social behaviour in early Anglo-Saxon England.

NOTES

¹ References in this article will be to the paperback edition, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000).

² Published Princeton and Oxford, Clarendon, 1991.

³ See Karen Jolly, 'Medieval Magic; Definitions, Beliefs, Practices', in Karen Jolly, Edward Peters and Catharina Raudvere, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Middle Ages*, (London, Athlone, 2002), pp. 1-26, at pp. 10-11.

⁴ Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, (New York and London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971), pp. 27 and 28.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁶ Flint, *Rise of Magic*, p. 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹ Richard Kieckhefer, 'The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic', *American Historical Review* 99,3 (1994): 813-36; p. 823.

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- ¹⁰ For all these points see Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, p. xi.
- ¹¹ Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark, Introduction, op. cit., (London, Athlone, 2002), pp. ix-xiv, at p. x.
- ¹² Karen Jolly, 'Medieval Magic', at p. 3.
- ¹³ Julie Ann Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives: Penitentials and Nunnery Rules in the Early Medieval West*, (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2001), p. 77.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 103-104.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., p. 89.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., p. 92.
- ¹⁷ Andrew Murray, 'Missionaries and Magic in Dark-Age Europe', *Past and Present* 136 (1992): 186-205; p. 199.
- ¹⁸ Richard Kieckhefer, 'Specific Rationality', pp. 822-3.
- ¹⁹ Smith, op. cit., passim; but see pp.4 and 35.
- ²⁰ See J. T. McNeill, 'Medicine for Sin as Prescribed in the Penitentials', *Church History* 1 (1932): 14-26; p.22; and A. J. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1983), p.56.
- ²¹ L. Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* (Dublin, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1963), vol 5, p.3.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ A.J. Frantzen, 'The Penitentials Attributed to Bede', *Speculum* 58.3 (1983): 573-97; p.594.
- ²⁴ Smith, op. cit., p.16.
- ²⁵ On the establishment of the text, see J. T. McNeill and H. M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance; a Translation of the Principal Libri Poenitentiales* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1938, pp. 179-180. See also T. Charles-Edwards, 'The Penitential of Theodore and the *Iudicia Theodori*', in M. Lapidge (ed.), *Archbishop Theodore; Commemorative Studies on his Life and Influence* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.141-74.
- ²⁶ The pioneer in the collection and editing of penitential texts was F. W. H. Wasserschleben, in *Die Bussordnungen der abendlandischen Kirche*, (Halle, Graege, 1851). However, the fundamental work on British texts is Haddan and

Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, 3 vols (Oxford, Clarendon, 1869-78). The most comprehensive collection of materials for 'Theodore's' text is P. W. Finsterwalder, *Die Canones Theodori Cantuariensis und ihre Uberlieferungsformen*, (Weimar, Bohlaus, 1929). However, the translation in McNeill and Gamer is based on their own collation of the manuscripts (see pp. 54-60).

²⁷ See T. Charles-Edwards, *op. cit.*

²⁸ See A.J. Frantzen, 'The tradition of penitentials in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 11 (1982): 23-56; pp.28-29.

²⁹ See Frantzen, 'Penitentials attributed to Bede', p.584.

³⁰ M. Lapidge, 'The School of Theodore and Hadrian', *Anglo-Saxon England* 15 (1986): 45-72; p.48.

³¹ B. Bedingfield, 'Public Penance in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 31 (2002): 223-55; p.229.

³² A.J. Frantzen, 'The tradition of penitentials', p.28.

³³ M. Lapidge, *op. cit.*, p.64.

³⁴ Text and translation of Cummean are in Bieler, *op. cit.*, pp. 108 -35. Bieler's comments on the surviving manuscripts and on the work itself are given in his Introduction, pp. 5 - 7. Here he identifies the author (or putative author) as Cummaine Fota, or Cumianus Longius, bishop of Clonfert, who died in 662.

³⁵ Frantzen, 'Penitentials attributed to Bede', p.584.

³⁶ The Latin text makes it clear that the semen is mixed with food so that the woman may 'receive more love'; who actually eats the food is not specified, but the food seems to be cooked and prepared by the woman.

³⁷ '*incantations vel divinationes diabolicas*', Haddan and Stubbs, p.190.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.198.

⁴¹ Bede, *A History of the English Church and People*, Trans. L. Sherley-Price, rev. R.E. Latham (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968), pp.273-4.

⁴² These beliefs are found in the much-cited *Correctar* of Burchard of Worms. They are also cited in detail in the *Canon Episcopi*, falsely attributed by Carolingian writers to the Council of Ancyra but apparently unknown to Theodore and actually first found quoted in the canonical collection of Regino of Prum (early tenth century). On this, see in particular Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch and the Law*, Hassocks (Sussex) 1978, at pp. 72-74. Peters argues that '[the *Canon Episcopi*'s] form is clearly that of a capitulary of the ninth century'.