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Another royal encounter for the Woman of Endor: 1 Samuel 28 as a proof text in King James VI's *Daemonologie*

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Abstract:
One of the *loci classici* for the Renaissance witchcraft debate is 1 Samuel 28, the story about King Saul's desperate consultation of a female necromancer in Endor at the eve of his battle against the Philistines. The demonization of the woman of Endor reached its climax in the learned concept of witchcraft as it circulated throughout Europe and on the British Isles in the late medieval and early modern period. The much-maligned necromancer also featured prominently in the only witchcraft treatise ever written by a monarch, namely *Daemonologie* (1597) by King James VI of Scotland. James wrote this tract in the aftermath of the North Berwick trials (1590-91), in which he had interrogated some of the suspected witches who had been accused of treason by sorcery. The king's personal involvement in these trials convinced him of the immediate danger that witchcraft posed to his reign as well as to the Protestant faith. Fulfilling his God-given duty, James zealously sought to eradicate the "slaves of the devil" from his country and educate his subjects in the reality of witches and witchcraft, both past and present, including the "Witch of Endor" and her dark craft. *Daemonologie* is considered a largely derivative work, interspersed with proof texts, and this article discusses in detail how reliant James's exposition of 1 Samuel 28 was on antecedent traditions in Renaissance art and literature.

The king's discovery of witches & *Daemonologie*

On the death of Elizabeth Tudor in 1603, King James VI of Scotland (1566-1625) ascended the throne of England and became James I. It was a personal triumph for the "cradle" king, who at thirteen-months' old had been crowned king of Scotland in 1567 and whose ambition it had been to inherit the English crown from Elizabeth I. The King James Version (KJV), also known as the Authorized Version, was commissioned by James in 1604, shortly after his

accession to the English throne, and was first published in 1611. Despite its initial lukewarm reception, the KJV eventually became the English people's Bible, and James became, and still is, well-known for this Bible translation.

A generally lesser-known aspect of James's reign is his crusade against witchcraft. When he was still King James VI of Scotland, he acquired a reputation for being a royal witch-hunter. James's zealous interest in witchcraft seems to have been sparked by several incidents in the autumn of 1589 when repeated attempts to bring his new wife, Anne of Denmark, to Scotland were thwarted due to heavy gales and rough seas.[1] Moreover, Jean Kennedy, one of Princess Anne's prospective ladies-in-waiting, lost her life when the ship that carried her from Burntisland to Leith, where she would await the arrival of the princess, got caught in a storm and sank. In the end James gallantly decided to travel to Norway to join his wife, who was staying there after her ill-fated attempts to reach Scotland. The newlyweds subsequently travelled to Denmark and spent the winter at the Danish court. In spring 1590 James was finally able to bring his wife over to her new homeland but that voyage too was troubled by stormy weather. James initially stated that Anne's failed journeys had a natural rather than supernatural cause,[2] but in the autumn of 1590 the incidents with the royal fleets were brought up during interrogations of suspected witches in East Lothian. They confessed that the storms had been plotted by the devil and his band of witches "to bewitch and drowne his Maiestie in the sea."[3] In order to expose this treason by sorcery, James was personally involved in the so-called North Berwick witch trials (1590-91), which took place during one of the fiercest witch-hunts witnessed in early modern Scotland.[4] In an almost inquisitorial manner, the king, together with

[1] For a reconstruction of these ill-fated sea journeys and subsequent events that led up to the treason-cum-witchcraft trials of 1590-91, see L. Normand and G. Roberts, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's* Demonology *and the North Berwick Witches* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), pp. 29-38.

[2] James blamed the delays on "the contrariousness of the winds"; *Letters of King James VI & I* (ed. G.P.V. Akrigg; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 95

[3] As stated on the title page of the anonymous pamphlet *Newes from Scotland* (London, late 1591?), which offered a sensationalist account of the ensuing North Berwick trials. This piece of witch-hunt propaganda flatteringly portrayed James as "the greatest enemie hee [the devil] hath in the world." See the digitised facsimile reprint from 1816 (British Library, C.101.a.6.): https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/witchcraft-pamphlet-news-from-scotland-1591, accessed on December 24, 2020.

[4] For an extensive discussion on these trials, their legal documentation, and the full, modernised text of the pamphlet *Newes from Scotland*, see L. Normand and G. Roberts, *Witchcraft*, esp. chs. 7-9. The standard overview of witchcraft prosecutions in Scotland is Christina Larner's *Enemies of God: The Witch-hunt in Scotland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981); cf. C. Larner, "The Crime of Witchcraft in Scotland," in *Witchcraft and Religion: The*

the privy council, examined the suspected witches and authorized the use of torture. All of them were found guilty and sentenced to strangling and burning.

Figure 1. Suspected witches are threatened in front of two magistrates in a woodcut printed in *Newes from Scotland*. The seated man was commonly, and erroneously, identified as King James VI. © Charles Walker Collection / Alamy Stock Photo.

In the aftermath of the North Berwick trials, James VI wrote a tract against witchcraft, entitled *Daemonologie*, which was first published in 1597.[5] Interspersed with proof texts, this work

Politics of Popular Belief (ed. A. Macfarlane; Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp. 23-33. The online *Survey of Scottish Witchcraft* is another important resource for the history of witchcraft and witch-hunting in Scotland. It provides access to an electronic database which holds nearly 4,000 records of accused witches and documentation of witchcraft beliefs: https://www.shca.ed.ac.uk/Research/witches/, accessed December 24, 2020.

[5] It is unclear whether the North Berwick trials immediately prompted James to write *Daemonologie* or that his involvement in another fierce but lesser documented witch-hunt, which took place in 1597, inspired him to

aimed to prove wrong those who denied the reality of witchcraft, such as the early sceptics Johann Weyer and Reginald Scot, and to stress the danger it posed to the monarchy and the Protestant faith.[6] As the Lord's Anointed, James VI had the God-given duty to cleanse his country from the "slaves of the devil," and their witchcraft had to be battled against with all judicial means.[7] *Daemonologie* is constructed as a dialogue between Philomates (Gr. "lover of learning"), who – in the same vein as Weyer and Scot – questions the reality of witches and witchcraft, and Epistemon (Gr. "knowledgeable"), whose answers reflect James's own views.[8] Slightly over 80 pages, the king's relatively short treatise is divided into three books which deal with magic, witchcraft, and spirit manifestations respectively.

James's *Daemonologie* should be seen within the context of the learned treatises on witchcraft written by Continental demonologists from the late fifteenth century.[9] In general, the Christian witch theory did not uphold the traditional distinction, found in civil or Roman law, between white (beneficial) and black (malefic) witchcraft.[10] It rather stated that *all* types

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compose it; see R. Dunlap, "King James and Some Witches: The Date and Text of the *Daemonologie*," *Philological Quarterly* 54 (1975): 40-46; cf. L. Normand and G. Roberts, *Witchcraft*, pp. 327-28. On the great witch-hunt of 1597 and James's role in it, see J. Goodare, "The Scottish Witchcraft Panic of 1597," in *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context* (ed. J. Goodare; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 51-72.

[6] Stuart Clark argues that James primarily wrote his treatise against witchcraft to underscore the divine nature of his hitherto weak kingship; S. Clark, "King James's *Daemonologie*: Witchcraft and Kingship," in *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft* (ed. S. Anglo; London: Routledge, 1977), pp. 156-181. On James using the medium of print to display his theological learning and strengthen his Protestant reputation, see A. Stilma, "King James VI and I as a religious writer," in *Literature and the Scottish Reformation* (ed. C. Gribben and D.G. Mullan; Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 127-141; cf. J. Rickard, "The Word of God and the Word of the King: the Scriptural Exegeses of James VI and I and the King James Bible," in *James VI and I: ideas, authority, and government* (ed. R. Houlbrooke; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 135-149.

[7] James refers to witches as "slaves of the devil" in his preface to *Daemonologie*. Interestingly, although none of the suspected East Lothian witches whom James interrogated are explicitly mentioned in *Daemonologie*, in the outer margin of one of the surviving manuscripts (Folger MS V.a.185) several initials have been scribbled – apparently not in the king's own hand – that seem to refer to the names of some of the accused; R. Dunlap, "King James and Some Witches," pp. 40-43; cf. *Minor Prose Works of King James VI and I: 'Daemonologie', 'The True Lawe of Free Monarchies', 'A Counterblaste to Tobacco', 'A Declaration of Sports'* (ed. J. Craigie; Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1982), pp. 174-176.

[8] On the use of the dialogue-form as a catechistic and didactic strategy in witchcraft treatises, see L. Normand and G. Roberts, *Witchcraft*, pp. 333-334.

[9] An in-depth discussion on early modern demonological treatises and sceptical tracts is offered by S. Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

[10] *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, codex 9, Tit. 18.

of witchcraft, whether used for benign or harmful purposes, had their origin in the demonic pact between the witch and the devil and were thus evil per se. The devil would grant magical powers and material prosperity in exchange for the witch's body and soul. The introduction of demonological ideas and their application in the witchcraft trials had devastating consequences across Europe from the late fifteenth century onward. According to Christina Larner, "the village healer was as likely to be prosecuted as the local scold."[11] Moreover, because the learned concept of witchcraft advocated the idea that the witch did not work in isolation, but was part of a group of like-minded devil worshippers, the accusation of one witch usually led to a catastrophic chain-reaction of confessions, often under torture, and naming of accomplices.

Well before the mania of 1590-91, suspected witches had been put on trial and sometimes executed in Scotland, because witchcraft was a criminal offence, as stated in the Witchcraft Act of 1563.[12] However, those witch trials had been rare and isolated incidents, and there are no records of a ferocious state-run witch-hunt in Scotland between 1563-1590. Moreover, prior to the North Berwick trials, James had shown hardly any interest in witches, witchcraft, and demonology.[13] It has been suggested, though, that it was James himself who brought the

[11] C. Larner, "James VI and I and Witchcraft," in *Witchcraft and Religion: The Politics of Popular Belief* (ed. A. Macfarlane; Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp. 3-22, esp. p. 4; originally published in *The Reign of James VI and I* (ed. A.G.R. Smith; London: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 74-90.

[12] On the Witchcraft Act of 1563 and the debate surrounding the role of John Knox and his clergy in its passing, see C. Larner, "James VI and I and Witchcraft," pp. 5-6; cf. C. Larner, *Enemies of God*, pp. 66-67. On the wording of the 1563 act and its magical and divinatory vocabulary, see L. Normand and G. Roberts, *Witchcraft*, pp. 89-92; cf. P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Satan's Conspiracy: Magic and Witchcraft in Sixteenth-Century Scotland* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001), pp. 35-45.

[13] Larner refutes the suggestion that James had already shown an energetic interest in the subject of witchcraft prior to the events that led to the North Berwick trials; C. Larner, "James VI and I and Witchcraft," pp. 8-9. Interestingly, in April 1589, whilst visiting Aberdeen, James requested to see Marioune McIngaruch, "ane of the (maist) notorious and rank Wichis in all this realme"; R. Pitcairn, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1833), I, iii, p. 201. She showed him the tools that she used for her magical practices. James's consultation with Marioune, which could be construed as a capital offence according to the Witchcraft Act of 1563, seems to have happened out of sheer curiosity rather than a zealous desire to hunt down a witch. Cf. P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Satan's Conspiracy*, p. 141; J. Wormald, "The Witches, the Devil, and the King," in *Freedom and Authority: Historical and Historiographical Essays Presented to Grant G. Simpson* (ed. T. Brotherstone and D. Ditchburn; East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), pp. 165-180, esp. 171. The same lenient and seemingly curious attitude was discernible around the beginning of July 1590, when a woman from Lübeck arrived at Leith with a prophecy for James. According to the correspondence of Robert Bowes, the English ambassador in Scotland at that time, "The King and country think her a witch; yet he is purposed to hear her"; *Calendar of State Papers*

Continental witch theory to Scotland, having been introduced to it by the demonologist Niels Hemmingsen, whom he met during his stay in Denmark in 1589-90 and whom he cites as an authority in his preface to *Daemonologie*.[14] Although James spoke about theological matters with Hemmingsen,[15] it is uncertain whether they actually discussed topics such as the demonic pact, the devil's mark, the sabbat, and night-flying. Moreover, demonological theory may already have circulated across Scotland – at least among members of the ruling elite – well before James's return from Denmark in the spring of 1590.[16] Therefore, the introduction of demonological ideas in Scotland and their application in the witch trials of 1590-91 cannot solely be attributed to James.[17]

Philomates's argumentation: The king & the trickster

As is customary in tracts against witchcraft, *Daemonologie* relies heavily on the Bible as its main authority for arguments and evidence. The first proof text that *Daemonologie* refers to is 1 Samuel 28, the story about King Saul's secretive nocturnal visit to a woman in Endor who is

relating to Scotland and Mary Queen of Scots, 1547-1603 (ed. J. Bain et al.; 13 vols; Edinburgh: H.M. General Register Office, 1898-1969), x, pp. 348, 457, 460; cf. P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Satan's Conspiracy*, p. 134.

[14] Following Legge's observation that there was a lack of knowledge about Continental demonology in Scotland prior to the witch trials of 1590-91 (F. Legge, "Witchcraft in Scotland," *Scottish Review* XVII [1891]: 261), Larner speculated that it was probably James who imported the demonological theory to Scotland after having been introduced to it during his six-month stay at the Danish court, and her thesis became commonplace in academic circles; C. Larner, "James VI and I and Witchcraft," pp. 10-11.

[15] The main topic of their conversation seems to have been predestination; see P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, "The Fear of the King is Death: James VI and the Witches of East Lothian," in *Fear in Early Modern Society* (ed. W.G. Naphy and P. Roberts; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 209-225, esp. 209 and the literature cited therein.

[16] Adam Bothwell, bishop of Orkney, owned copies of the *Malleus Maleficarum* and Jean Bodin's *De la Démonomanie des Sorciers*; cf. *The Warrender Papers* (ed. A.I. Cameron; Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1931), ii, pp. 399, 403. The demonic pact is already referred to in the catechism of John Hamilton, archbishop of St. Andrews, which dates from 1552: "For without dout, all Wytches, Nigromanceris and siclike, workis be operatioun of the devil under a paction, condition, band or obligation of service and honour to be made to him"; *The Catechism of John Hamilton* (ed. T.G. Law; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1884), p. 50.

[17] For a critical discussion of Larner's thesis, see P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, "The Fear of the King is Death," pp. 211-213; cf. L. Normand and G. Roberts, *Witchcraft,* pp. 34-35; D. Willis, "James among the Witch-Hunters," in *Malevolent Nurture: Witch-Hunting and Maternal Power in Early Modern England* (ed. D. Willis; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), pp. 117-158, esp. 147-148; J. Wormald, "The Witches, the Devil, and the King," pp. 166 n. 3, 174.

a necromancer.[18] The references to the woman of Endor are found in *Daemonologie* I i, immediately after Epistemon's assertion that "… witchcraft, and Witches haue bene, and are, the former part is clearelie proved by the Scriptures, and the last by dailie experience and confessions."[19] Although the references to "the Scriptures," "experience," and "confessions" are part of the standard demonological vocabulary, Epistemon's words acquire a deeper meaning given James's strict religious upbringing and education, which transformed him into a theologian-king, as well as his personal involvement in the North Berwick witch trials.[20]

Philomates immediately brings up the woman of Endor in his reply to Epistemon, calling her "Saules Pythonisse" (in Bodley MS 165, composed in late Middle Scots, "saulis pithonisse"). The term "pythoness," which is partly borrowed from French and Latin respectively, is already found in a variety of spellings in Middle English.[21] Its earliest attestation is in Geoffrey Chaucer's poem *The House of Fame* (*c*1380):[22]

> Magiciens and tregetours [conjurers]
> And phitonesses, charmeresses,
> Olde wicches, sorceresses,

[18] Interestingly, the scriptural references, including 1 Samuel 28, that have been added in the margins of Folger MS V.a. 185, are in the king's *own* handwriting; cf. *Minor Prose Works* (ed. J. Craigie), p. 166.

[19] The Appendix in the present study contains *Daemonologie* (I i) as published in *Minor Prose Works* (ed. J. Craigie), pp. 1-4. Craigie's edition is based on an "uncorrected" copy of the Waldegrave's Edinburgh edition of 1597, which is held in the National Library of Scotland, pressmark, L.C. 1499. *Daemonologie* was originally composed in late Middle Scots, as shown by Bodley MS 165 (Bodleian Library, Oxford), which contains fragments of an early draft of the work in the king's own handwriting, and Folger MS V.a.185 (Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington). However, in the first edition of *Daemonologie*, printed in 1597, the spelling was considerably anglicised, perhaps with an eye on the English book market. Further on the textual history of *Daemonologie*, see *Minor Prose Works* (ed. J. Craigie), pp. 159-171; L. Normand and G. Roberts, *Witchcraft*, pp. 11-14.

[20] On James's religious and classical education, see C. Bingham, *James VI of Scotland* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), pp. 30-34, 38-44.

[21] See "pythoness, n." *Oxford English Dictionary (OED) Online* (Oxford University Press, December 2020): www.oed.com/view/Entry/155586, accessed December 28, 2020. For Older Scots (12th century - 1700), see "Phetanissa" and "Phitones" *Dictionary of the Scots Language (DSL)* (Scottish Language Dictionaries Ltd., 2004): https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/phetanissa and https://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/phitones, accessed December 30, 2020.

[22] *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (ed. W.W. Skeat; 7 vols; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894–97), iii, p. 38 (ll. 1260-63).

That use exorsisaciouns.

As a designation for the woman of Endor, the Latin form *pythonissa* goes back to the Vulgate. This ancient version translated אשת בעלת־אוב in 1 Sam. 28:7 as *mulier habens pythonem* "a woman who possesses a *python*" and וגם־לשאול באוב לדרוש in 1 Chron. 10:13 as *sed insuper etiam pythonissam consuluerit* "and moreover, he [Saul] even consulted a *pythonissa*."[23] The term *python* may go back to the mythological serpent that was slain by Apollo at Delphi, formerly called Pytho. Given the connection with the Delphic Oracle, the term *python* (Gr. πύθων) was subsequently associated with the power to divine the future. Hence, in Latin *pythonissa* originally referred to a woman with a spirit of divination, but this neutral term took on a negative connotation in medieval and early modern sources, wherein it was often associated with witchcraft.[24] In the English language, as well as in Older Scots, the same development took place with regard to "pythoness." This classical term for a female diviner

[23] The late medieval and early modern English Bible translations do not employ the term "pythoness" for the woman of Endor. In the influential Geneva Bible (1560), for instance, אשת בעלת־אוב (1 Sam. 28:7) is translated as "a woman that hath a familiar spirite," and וגם־לשאול באוב לדרוש (1 Chron. 10:13) as "and in that he [Saul] sought and asked counsel of a familiar spirit" (the idea of the familiar spirit, a domesticated demon which usually comes in the guise of an animal and assists the witch, is considered an early modern, typically English concept; R. Hutton, *The Witch: A History of Fear, from Ancient Times to the Present* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018], pp. 272-278). However, the Geneva Bible refers to the woman of Endor as a "witche" in its introduction to 1 Samuel 28 and in the chapter's header, and in the margin of 1 Chron. 10:13 it reads "Or, witche and sorceresse." The Bassandyne Bible (1579), the first complete Bible printed in Scotland, is based on the Geneva Bible. The present author is currently preparing a monograph, entitled *Disenchanted Scripture: The Perception of Magic, Divination and Witchcraft in the English Bible*, which also analyses the paratext of those scriptural passages that deal with sorcery, spirit possession, divination, and other types of malefic witchcraft, or at least what the translators interpreted as belonging to the dark arts.

[24] See "pȳthōnissa" *Thesaurus linguae Latinae (TLL) Online* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter. n.d.): https://db.degruyter.com/view/TLL/10-2-17/10_2_17_pythonissa.xml, accessed December 28, 2020. In 1348 Margery Ryvel was excommunicated by the bishop of Exeter, John de Grandisson, for practising divinations. According to the bishop's register, Margery was a reputed *phitonissa demoniaca*; see *The Register of John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter (AD 1327–1369)* (ed. F.C. Hingeston-Randolph; 3 vols; London: G. Bell & Sons, 1894–99), ii, pp. 1044-1045; cf. M. Haren, *Sin and Society in Fourteenth-Century England: A Study of the Memoriale Presbiterorum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 150. In a sermon (*c*1400) by the Benedictine monk Robert Rypon from Durham Priory, the *phitonissae* are described as otherworldly beings who drink wine and use people as horses for night-flying; see MS Harley 4894 fols. 33r-34v (British Library, London); cf. C. Rider, *Magic and Religion in Medieval England* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), pp. 76-77.

acquired a broader meaning and became a synonym for "sorceress, witch" among the educated elite.[25] Thus, when James employed the term "Pythonisse" for the woman of Endor, it had already acquired this negative connotation in both English and Older Scots.

Philomates subsequently argues that the story about the woman of Endor does not serve as scriptural proof for witches and witchcraft. First of all, the biblical passage already indicates how distraught Saul was, "being troubled in spirit, and having fasted long before." He must have had "so guiltie a conscience" about his visit to the woman of Endor, knowing that his desperate resort to necromancy was a heinous offence. His feelings of guilt were amplified by his "vnlawful curiositie, and horrible defection."[26] The woman quickly saw through Saul's disguise and became aware of his true identity, but she kept that information to herself. Only when she pretended to bring up Samuel, she feigned surprise upon "discovering" that this nocturnal visitor was none other than the king himself. Saul would not have noticed the woman's deception by "hir faining [feigning] of hir voice" because he was in another room and his senses were distracted due to his troubled state of mind and being faint with hunger. Secondly, it would have been impossible for the woman to raise Samuel's spirit. Philomates dismisses that idea as "Prophane, and against all Theologie." Neither could it have been the devil himself in the guise of Samuel because God would not have allowed him to take on the shape of "his Saintes." Otherwise, the prophets in those days would never have been sure which spirit spoke to them in their visions: would the message have come from God or from the devil? Moreover, the devil is unable to foretell the future because "Prophecie proceedeth onelie of

[25] For the English language, see R. Hutton, "The Meaning of the Word 'Witch'," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 13 (2018): 98-119, esp. 110. With reference to Older Scots, the sixteenth-century Scottish ballad-writer Robert Sempill mentioned "Phetanissa" in the same breath as the black arts: "For Phetanissa hes he send, / With sorcerie and incantationes, / Heising [raising] the devill with invocations"; *The Sempill ballates. A series of historical, political, and satirical Scotish poems, ascribed to Robert Sempill. 1567-1583* (Edinburgh: T.G. Stevenson, 1872), p. 208.

[26] James's use of the words "conscience" and "vnlawful" in relation to Saul may have been influenced by the marginal gloss to 1 Sam. 28:8 in the Geneva Bible, which states that "He [Saul] seketh not to God in his miserie, but is led by Satan to *vnlawful* meanes, which in his *conscience* he condemneth." Later on in the present study we will see how important such glosses were for the learned concept of witchcraft. James's probable reliance on the marginal notes of the Geneva Bible for his interpretation of 1 Samuel 28 contrasts sharply with his subsequent criticism of them during the Hampton Court conference (1604). For James's view on the Geneva Bible and its copious marginal glosses after his accession to the English throne, see J. Rickard, "The Word of God," pp. 147-148.

God." Hence, according to Philomates's line of reasoning, the woman of Endor was a fraud and trickster. She had simply changed the tone of her voice to deceive Saul.

Since *Daemonologie* is a largely derivative work, James most likely adopted Philomates's sceptical arguments concerning the woman of Endor from Reginald Scot (*c*1538-1599), whose views on witchcraft were diametrically opposed to those of James.[27] The latter even explicitly mentioned Scot and his "damnable opinions" in the preface to *Daemonologie*. Abhorred by the witch-persecutions of his time, the Englishman Scot had written a lengthy study, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, which was first published in 1584, a few years before the North Berwick trials, which started James's crusade against witches.[28] Scot refuted and ridiculed both popular lore and the learned writings of Continental demonologists, most notably the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486/87) and Bodin's *De la Démonomanie des Sorciers* (1580), thereby consistently calling their respective authors "witchmongers."[29] Thus, ironically, England's first demonologist happened to be highly sceptical of the reality of witches and witchcraft. Yet, simultaneously, he brought the Continental witchcraft theory to English shores.

According to Scot, some of the supposed witches were merely innocent sufferers from melancholy, senility, or delusion, whilst others were cheats, frauds, and tricksters. He basically denied the reality of demons and spirits, dismissing cases of diabolic magic as artful trickery. Crucially, even the magical practitioners mentioned in the Scriptures were nothing more than imposters,

> "But bicause they are all termed of our translators by the name of witches in the Bible: therefore the lies of *M Mal*. [*Malleus Maleficarum*] and *Bodin*, and all our old wives tales

[27] For a discussion on the overall influence of Scot's work on James's treatise, see S. Clark, "King James's *Daemonologie*," pp. 171-172.

[28] Almond critically discusses the persistent, yet unfounded story that James was so offended by Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* that, shortly upon his accession to the English throne, he ordered every extant copy to be burned; P.C. Almond, "King James I and the Burning of Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*: The Invention of a Tradition," *Notes and Queries* 56 (2009): 209-213; cf. *Minor Prose Works* (ed. J. Craigie), pp. 110-112.

[29] Further on Reginald Scot and his book, see P.C. Almond, *England's First Demonologist: Reginald Scot & "The Discouerie of Witchcraft"* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011); S. Anglo, "Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*: Scepticism and Sadduceeism," in *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft* (ed. S. Anglo; London: Routledge, 1977), pp. 106-139. The references to *Discoverie* in the present study are taken from the reprint of the first edition (1584): Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (ed. B. Nicholson; London: Elliot Stock, 1886).

are applied unto these names, and easilie beleeved of the common people, who have never hitherto beene instructed in the understanding of these words" (p. 109).

Scot's sceptical attitude is evident in his interpretation of 1 Samuel 28. He explained the events that occurred during Saul's fateful visit to Endor as "meere cousenage [deception]," thus radically undermining the relevance of the *locus classicus* for the Continental witch theory. A comparison between the points raised by Philomates in James's *Daemonologie* and Scot's sceptical argumentation yields some striking parallels.[30]

Firstly, Philomates emphasised that King Saul was deeply distraught, and this idea was already underscored by Scot. For instance, according to the latter, Saul was "straught of mind, desperate" (p. 144), and the woman "sawe that *Saule* was affraid and out of his wits" (p. 146).

In addition, Scot explains in detail, more than James's Philomates, why the woman immediately saw through the king's disguise. According to 1 Sam. 10:23, Saul was taller than the people among him, and therefore his height betrayed him. And because Saul dwelled nearby, the woman would have known him since "the princes of the Jewes were much conversant with the people" (p. 145).[31] Moreover, the fact that this nocturnal "stranger" specifically asked her to bring up Samuel, Saul's once trusted ally, would have made it even clearer to her that it was the king himself who paid her a visit.

In *Daemonologie* Philomates speaks of the woman's "faining of hir voice," and we find a similar notion in Scot's *Discoverie*: "[she] did cast hir selfe into a transe, and so abused *Saule*, answering to *Saule* in *Samuels* name, in hir counterfeit hollow voice" (p. 150). Scot's reference to her voice being counterfeit and hollow rests on his understanding of the term אוב:[32]

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[30] Scot's exposition of 1 Samuel 28 is found in Book VII (= pp. 126-155) of *Discoverie*. It also influenced the interpretations of this story in other late sixteenth-century demonologies, namely, George Gifford's *A Discourse of the Subtill Practises of Devilles by Witches and Sorcerers* (1587) and Henry Holland's *A Treatise against Witchcraft* (1590). The parallels in the exposition of 1 Samuel 28 between these tracts and James's *Daemonologie* can be traced back to their joint reliance on (and refutation of) Scot's treatise; cf. L. Normand and G. Roberts, *Witchcraft*, p. 336.

[31] Scot is probably referring to Saul having set up camp at Gilboa, not far from Endor. He argues that the journey from Saul's lodging to the woman's house could not have been a long one because, apparently, she had not yet gone to bed. Moreover, their acquaintanceship would explain why the woman consented to his request without too much of a protest.

[32] Although the Hebrew term אוב seems to refer to the spirits of dead, its precise meaning and etymology are still debated in contemporary scholarship. For an overview of the discussion, see J. Tropper, "Spirit of the Dead אוב," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (ed. K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P.W. van der Horst;

"…*Ob* signifieth most properlie a bottle, and is used in this place [1 Sam. 28], because the *Pythonists* spake hollowe; as in the bottome of their bellies, whereby they are aptlie in Latine called *Ventriloqui*" (p. 126).

Scot's interpretation of the term אוב as "bottle" was derived from Johann Weyer's *De Praestigiis Daemonum* (1563):

"…for the Hebrews, the word *Ob* signifies a bag or bottle. Therefore, the demons who gave responses in obscure voices from the more remote parts of the body, such as the armpits, or the pudenda of women, as though from a bag or bottle, were called *Ob* by the Hebrews, or in the plural *Oboth*."[33]

Weyer, in turn, relied on the expertise of the renowned humanist and orientalist, Andreas Masius (1514-1573), whom he had consulted on the meaning of seven Hebrew terms relating to magic in the Bible.[34] Masius's interpretation of אוב as "bag" or "bottle," which is now commonly dismissed, may be traced back to Job 32:19. In that verse the identically looking, yet unrelated word אוב (used in the plural form אבות) probably refers to a wine-skin and was thus understood as a bag or bottle. These meanings were subsequently (and imaginatively) applied to attestations of אוב in necromancy-related passages in the Bible.

Leiden: Brill, 2nd edn, 1999), pp. 806-809 and the literature cited therein; cf. E.J. Hamori, *Women's Divination in Biblical Literature: Prophecy, Necromancy, and Other Arts of Knowledge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 105-110.

[33] Johann Weyer, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors in the Renaissance: Johann Weyer, De preastigiis daemonum* (ed. G. Mora; trans. J. Shea; Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1991), p. 96 (II i). The physician Johann Weyer (1515-1588) was critical of the persecution of alleged witches, but his views were rather moderate compared to those of Scot. Nevertheless, James also attacked Weyer in his preface to *Daemonologie* and even accused him of belonging to these "craftes-folkes" himself. For more on Weyer and his book, see the introduction to *Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, pp. xxvii-lxxxvii; cf. C. Baxter, "Johann Weyer's *De Praestigiis Daemonum*: Unsystematic psychopathology," in *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft* (ed. S. Anglo; London: Routledge, 1977), pp. 53-75.

[34] The seven terms are: *Chasaph, Kasam, Onen, Nahas, Habar, Ob*, and *Idoni;* Weyer added a discussion on *Hartumim*; see *De Praestigiis Daemonum*, pp. 102-109; Scot acknowledged his reliance on Weyer and Masius in the introduction to his exposition of these words; *Discoverie*, p. 109.

Hence, the fact that Scot mentioned the woman of Endor in the same breath as ventriloquism was not unique. The Septuagint already translated אשת בעלת־אוב in 1 Sam. 28:7 as γυνὴ ἐγγαστρίμυθος "a ventriloquizing woman" (or rather: "a woman speaking from the belly"), and in rabbinic literature we find the notion that the voices of the dead speak from between the joints or from the armpit of a בעל אוב.[35] However, whereas most translators and commentators interpreted the woman of Endor's ventriloquism as some kind of genuine (or demonic) divinatory technique, or they were at least ambiguous about it, Scot merely regarded it as a fraudulent practice. The prophet's part in this deception "was performed in the person of the witch hir selfe, or of hir confederate [accomplice]" (p. 148). Although a dissident voice among the Renaissance demonologists, Scot's depiction of the woman of Endor as a fraud was not entirely unique. The Jewish medieval commentator David Kimḥi refers in his commentary on 1 Samuel 28:24 to the opinion of R. Samuel ben Hofni (†1034), the Gaon of Sura, according to whom the woman had immediately recognized Saul and simply fabricated the prophet's message. Of course, it is highly plausible that Scot, completely unaware of the views of R. Samuel ben Hofni, reached the same verdict on the woman of Endor by coincidence. Alternatively, in my view, he may have drawn Hofni's opinion from Kimḥi's commentary, of which he was aware through Weyer, who had referred to it in his own exposition of 1 Samuel 28 (*De preastigiis daemonum*, II ix). David Kimḥi, and several other Jewish medieval commentators, are mentioned in the list of foreign authors at the beginning of *Discoverie*, but the extent to which Scot had consulted their actual works remains unclear.[36]

If the woman was simply a fraud, how then could she have correctly described Samuel's appearance to Saul? Scot argued that she surely would have known Samuel because, during his lifetime, he was the most famous Israelite and "her neighbour by the space of manie yeeres"

[35] See *m*.Sanh.7:7 and *b*.Sanh. 65b. On the rabbinic interpretations of 1 Samuel 28, see K.A.D. Smelik, "The witch of Endor, I Samuel 28 in Rabbinic and Christian exegesis till 800 AD," *Vigiliae christianae* 33 (1979): 160-179. For an extensive discussion on the use of אוב in the Septuagint as well as in Targumic and rabbinic sources, see A. Piquer Otero, "Who Names the Namers? The Interpretation of Necromantic Terms in Jewish Translations of the Bible," in *Textual Criticism and Dead Sea Scrolls Studies in Honour of Julio Trebolle Barrera: Florilegium Complutense* (ed. A. Piquer Otero and P.A. Torijano Morales; Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 241–276.

[36] As far as I am aware, Scot had not mastered the Hebrew language, but he could have sought assistance from others to gain access to and understand Kimḥi's commentary. Although Scot most likely adopted the references to the Jewish commentators from Weyer (compare, for instance, *Discoverie* pp. 141, 151 with *De Praestigiis Daemonum* II ix), the similarities between his depiction of the woman of Endor and that of R. Samuel ben Hofni remain intriguing (see below for further parallels).

(p. 147). Samuel's spirit had not been raised by the woman, neither a demon impersonating him, simply because spirits and demons do not exist. By stating this, Scot radically dismissed the two rival theories on the nature of Samuel's apparition which dominated the Continental witchcraft debate. Predominantly Catholic commentators, such as Jean Bodin, Francesco Suárez, and Martín Del Río, argued that Samuel himself, or at least his effigy, was raised, whereas Ludwig Lavater, Petrus Martyr, and even the moderate sceptic Johann Weyer, held the prevalently Protestant opinion that the prophet's apparition was a demonic illusion.[37] In the same vein as Scot, but much briefer, Philomates in James's *Daemonologie* denied the idea that the woman had summoned Samuel himself or a demonic illusory likeness.

Furthermore, according to Philomates, Saul was so easily tricked by the woman of Endor because he was "in an other chalmer."[38] The notion that Saul was in a separate room during the woman's ventriloquistic performance is also found in Scot's *Discoverie*: the woman "plaied hir part in hir closet [private room]" (p. 147), whilst Saul stood foolishly behind the door listening to her deceptive words.[39] Scot used 1 Sam. 28:21 as a proof text because, according to him, the beginning of the verse states: "Then the woman came out unto *Saule*" (p. 147).[40] Scot's view that the woman was in a different room is seemingly unique; its antecedent

[37] I shall discuss James's own stance in this debate later on in the present study. On the various viewpoints, both Catholic and Protestant, and their roots in the patristic exegetical tradition, see S. Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), ch. 7, esp. pp. 242-246. Further on the reception of 1 Samuel 28 in patristic literature, see R.A. Greer and M.M. Mitchell (eds), *The "Belly-Mother" of Endor: Interpretations of 1 Kingdoms 28 in the Early Church* (Atlanta: SBL, 2006); K.A.D. Smelik, "The witch of Endor."

[38] MS. Bodley 165 first read "inner house" but deleted it, and put "other chalmer" above it.

[39] Her being in another room would also explain why she could have been aided by an accomplice, who played Samuel's part in this trickery.

[40] The translation given by Scot is not entirely correct because the Hebrew text reads: ותבוא האשה אל־שאול "Then the woman came to Saul." In addition, neither the ancient versions nor contemporary English translations provide support for his interpretation. Both the Geneva Bible and the Bishops Bible translated the first part of verse 21 as "Then the woman came unto Saul" (cf. LXX: καὶ εἰσῆλθεν ἡ γυνὴ πρὸς Σαουλ; Vulgate: *ingressa est itaque mulier ad Saul*). However, Brinsley Nicholson observes in his introduction to the 1886 reprint of *Discoverie* that Scot probably altered translations taken from the Geneva Bible "according to his own views and taste" (p. xl).

tradition is unclear.[41] Interestingly, an illustrated German Bible from *c*1465-1470 contains an illumination in which Saul enters the room where the woman of Endor has just raised Samuel.[42]

Philomates finished his sceptical argumentation by proclaiming that "Prophecie proceedeth onelie of God" and that the devil had no knowledge of the future. Again, James was heavily indebted to Scot because the latter stated that "the foretelling of things to come, is the onelie worke of God" (p. 159). The woman was able to predict the future simply because a deeply distressed Saul explained his reasons for seeking the deceased prophet's counsel, whilst standing behind the door. Moreover, the steady decline of Saul's royal power as well as Samuel's earlier prophecies about the end of his reign provided her with further clues to shrewdly guess the dire fate that awaited the king.[43] Scot's combined arguments are highly reminiscent of the ones used by the eleventh century Gaon R. Samuel ben Hofni, who opined that the woman had fabricated Samuel's message. The similarities strengthen my assumption that Scot may have known Hofni's views through Kimḥi's commentary on 1 Samuel 28:24.

Epistemon's response: The witch & the devil

After the argumentation by Philomates has finished, James expresses his own views through the voice of Epistemon. The latter concurs with his rhetorical opponent that Saul was in another room, but only briefly, because a witch will not allow anyone to witness the drawing of circles and the conjurations. As soon as the woman had raised the spirit of Samuel, she called Saul into the room. Upon seeing the prophet's apparition, "*Saul knew him to be Samuel*".[44] Hence,

[41] Perhaps he derived the idea from local lore about fraudulent "Pythonists" (or rather ventriloquists), such as the Maiden of Westwell and the Dutchman at Maidstone, whom he refers to in Book VII of *Discoverie* (pp. 126-133). In addition, Scot's claim that such tricksters "go into corners to whisper" (p. 139) hints at a spatial distance between them and their unsuspecting victims.

[42] Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Cgm 8010a, fol. 274v. Charles Zika observes that this illumination introduces a spatial relationship between the woman and King Saul which is unprecedented in the medieval visual depiction of the story; C. Zika, "Images in Service of the Word: The Witch of Endor in the Bibles of Early Modern Europe," *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums* (2009), pp. 151-165, esp. 153 and fig. 1. Cf. C. Zika, "The Witch of Endor Before the Witch Trials," in *Magic, Heresy and Witchcraft: Contesting Orthodoxy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (ed. L.N. Kallestrup and R.M. Toivo; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 167-191, esp. 180-181 and fig. 12.

[43] Weyer provides fairly similar arguments but he attributes the prophecy to a demon rather than to the woman herself; *De preastigiis daemonum,* II ix.

[44] James clearly refers here to 1 Sam. 28:14, although no scriptural reference is provided in the margin. The Geneva Bible translates וידע שאול כי־שמואל הוא in verse 14 as "and Saul knewe that it was Samuel."

Saul did not merely rely on the woman's statement that she saw an old man wearing a mantle since there were many old men in Israel wearing mantles. As every Christian would agree, though, Saul did not see Samuel, but rather an "unclean spirit." Epistemon thus implicitly passes judgment on Philomates, which is amplified by his subsequent assertion that "mere ignorants, or Necromanciers or Witches doubtes thereof." According to the Bible, "*Sathan can trans-forme himselfe into an Angell of Light*,"[45] and whilst God would never allow the devil to deceive his own prophets, he does permit him to illude those who deceive themselves "because they would not beleeue the trueth."[46] Therefore, the devil was able to take on the likeness of Samuel. And although, admittedly, the devil does not know everything that will come to pass in the future, he can foretell certain events. Saul's tragic ending, "which the wit of woman could never have fore-spoken," proved that the devil's words had been correct. The devil is sometimes able to foretell the future, not only because he is worldly-wise, having been around since the beginning of time, but also because God occasionally grants him this knowledge for a specific purpose, as shown in the story about Micaiah's encounter with King Ahab.[47]

Rather surprisingly, James also adopted Scot's view that the woman was in another room for Epistemon's part in the dialogue. In doing so, James followed his sceptical opponent's seemingly unique, but incorrect interpretation of 1 Sam. 28:21. However, James explained, through the voice of Epistemon, that the woman retreated to another room because "none of that craft" will allow an outsider to behold the circle-drawing and uttering of conjurations. Scot also referred to the woman's "words of conjuration" (p. 146) and "her inchanting phrases and words" (p. 147), but rather within the context of her deceptive performance. He did not mention the woman's circle-drawing, which is understandable because, in his view, only Saul's ears needed to be deceived, not his eyes, since he stayed in another room for the whole duration of the fraudulent ceremony. Although conjurations and circle-drawing are not mentioned in the biblical story itself, James believed these magical rituals to be a crucial part of the black arts, both past and present, and he even devoted an entire chapter to them in his *Daemonologie* (I

[45] A reference to 2 Cor. 11:14, as indicated in the margin.

[46] James seems to refer to 2 Thess. 2:12.

[47] A reference to 1 Kings 22, as indicated in the margin.

v), which not only betrays influence from the works of Pseudo-Agrippa, Weyer, and Scot,[48] but possibly also from the witches' own confessions during the North Berwick trials.[49]

James's depiction of the woman of Endor as a ritual magician reflects the shift in the gendered conception of ritual magic at that time. Whereas it had traditionally been considered the domain of the male elite, gender boundaries started to blur in the Continental witchcraft theory. This shift is also visible in the pictural history of the woman of Endor from the late Middle Ages onward.[50] Until the fifteenth century, the visual depictions of the story in 1 Samuel 28 focused neither on the woman of Endor nor on her necromantic practices. However, henceforth, artists and printers gradually turned her into a witch and ritual magician, and the diabolical nature of her necromancy was increasingly highlighted, in accordance with her depiction in contemporary demonologies. The most influential visual representation of the woman of Endor in the sixteenth century was a woodcut, probably designed in 1569 by Johann Teufel, which appeared in the 1572 Wittenberg edition of the Luther Bible (see figure 2).[51] In the woodcut the woman and the conjured-up Samuel stand together in a circle. They are surrounded by her magical paraphernalia, with an altar-like table in the background, all of which could also be interpreted as anti-Catholic sentiments, just like the rosary hanging from her arm. In a marginal gloss to the story in this Bible translation, Luther stated that not Samuel himself but an evil spirit ("böse Geist") had addressed Saul and the sorceress ("Zeuberin"),

[48] See L. Normand and G. Roberts, *Witchcraft*, p. 371. On the origins and role of circle-drawing in late medieval and early modern ceremonial magic, see R. Hutton, *The Witch*, pp. 115-118; cf. C. Tuczay, "Magic Circle," *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition* (ed. R.M. Golden; 4 vols; Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006), pp. 698-700 and the literature cited therein.

[49] A draft of the indictment against Francis Stewart, Earl of Bothwell, dated August 10, 1593, mentions the summoning of a spirit through conjurations and the drawing of a figure (possibly a triangle) by the magician Richard Graham on behalf of the earl. Francis Stewart was accused of master-minding the witchcraft conspiracy against the king. Sharing the same fate as the other East Lothian witches, Graham had already been executed in February 1592 for his involvement in the plot, but his testimony was included in the indictment (Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh, JC26/2/6; for the modernised text, see L. Normand and G. Roberts, *Witchcraft*, p. 284).

[50] For a discussion on the visual representation of the woman of Endor in the late medieval and early modern period, see C. Zika, "The Witch of Endor: transformations of a biblical necromancer in early modern Europe," *Rituals, Images and Words: the varieties of cultural expression in late medieval and early modern Europe* (ed. C. Zika and F.W. Kent; Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 235-259.

[51] I am indebted to Charles Zika's detailed analysis of this woodcut, see C. Zika, "Reformation, Scriptural Precedent and Witchcraft: Johann Teufel's Woodcut of The Witch of Endor," in *Reforming the Reformation: Essays in honour Peter Matheson* (ed. I. Breward; Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2004), pp. 148-166.

thus emphasising the malign character of the woman of Endor and the demonic nature of Samuel's apparition.

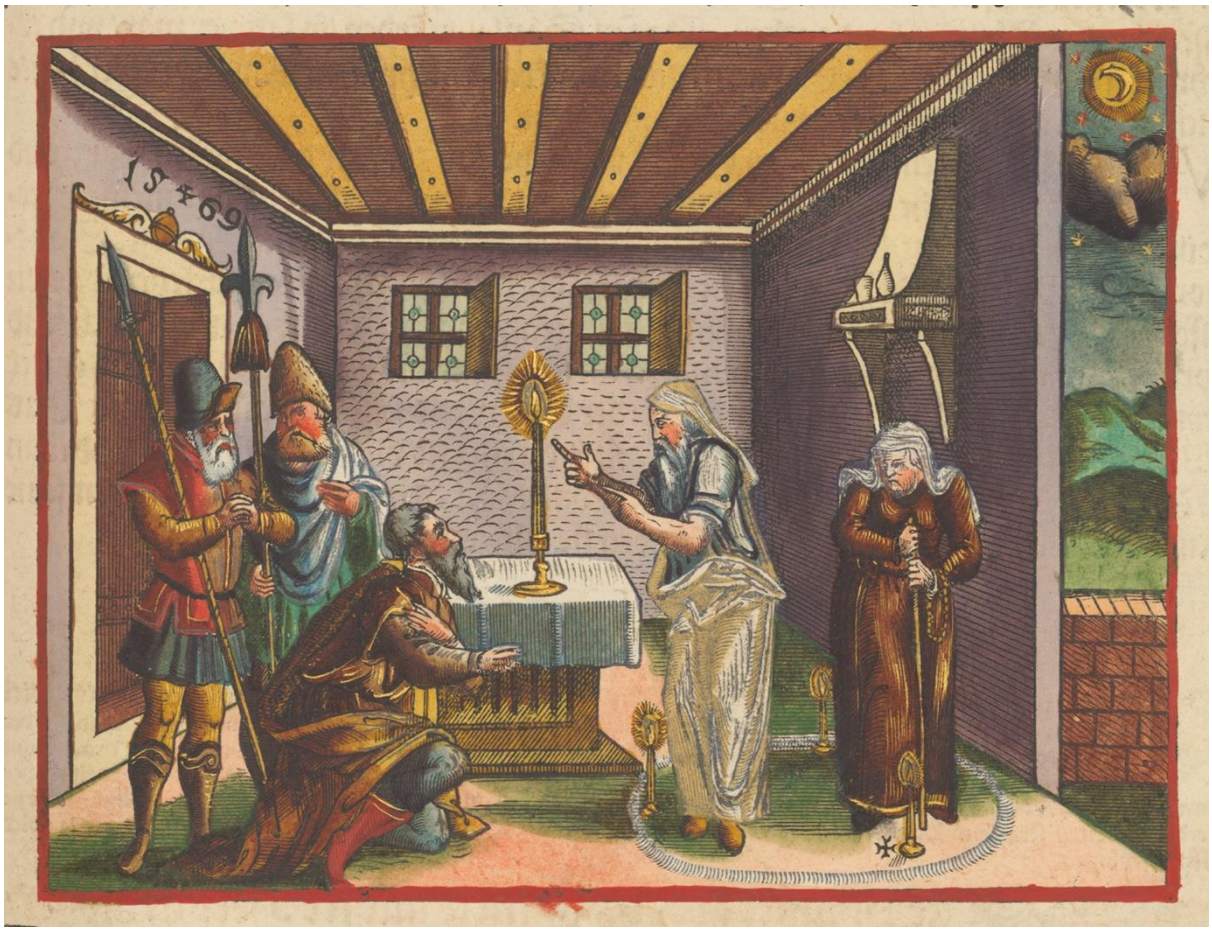

Figure 2. The woman of Endor as a ritual magician in a woodcut from the 1572 Wittenberg edition of the Luther Bible. *Biblia Das ist: Die gantze heilige Schrifft Deudsch. D. Mart. Luth.*, Wittenberg [Hans Krafft], 1572, p. 197. © Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart.

Luther's explanation for Samuel's apparition does not stand on its own; as stated above, it was the dominant view in the Protestant exegetical tradition of 1 Samuel 28. It was also the one which James used for Epistemon's counter-argument. Accordingly, it becomes clear why his rhetorical opponent, Philomates, dismisses the idea that Samuel himself was raised as "Prophane, and against all Theologie"; it contradicted *Protestant* theology.[52] James's anti-Catholic stance is further implied in Epistemon's claim that the diabolical nature of Samuel's

[52] James's anti-Catholic sentiments are further noticeable in *Daemonologie* I v, II iiii, II vii, and III iiii. For a discussion on James's fervent anti-Catholicism in his writings from the 1580s, see J. Rickard, "The Word of God," pp. 138-142.

apparition is accepted by "all Christians of whatso-ever Religion" and in his condemnation of those who are doubtful of it as "mere ignorants, or Necromanciers or Witches." His words acquire a deeper meaning when we take into account that mostly Catholic demonologists rejected the idea that the woman had summoned a demonic illusion of Samuel. Therefore, James not only took aim at Scot, the radical sceptic, but also at the predominately Catholic thinkers who defended the genuine nature of Samuel's apparition, thereby even insinuating that they were practitioners of the black arts themselves.[53]

In the guise of Epistemon, James thus propagated his strict adherence to the view, favoured in Protestantism, that the woman had conjured up a demon, or rather an "unclean spirit," in the king's own words.[54] James quoted 2 Cor. 11:14 to prove the reality of such demonic deceit.[55] The use of this verse as a proof text in the exegesis of 1 Samuel 28 had a long antecedent tradition, going back as far as the early church fathers.[56] Closer to James's time, the influential Geneva Bible indirectly referred to 2 Cor. 11:14 in its marginal gloss to 1 Sam. 28:14: "To his [Saul's] imaginacion, albeit it was Satan, who to blinde his eyes toke upon him the forme of Samuel, as he can do of an Angel of light." This marginal annotation dispelled any possible doubt about the diabolic nature of Samuel's apparition.[57]

Epistemon's subsequent, yet implicit, reference to 2 Thessalonians 2 – James simply wrote "as *Paul* sayth" – was also customary in the demonological tradition.[58] This Pauline

[53] On the common Protestant identification of Catholicism with witchcraft (and vice versa), see S. Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 526-545.

[54] The Greek phrase πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον is frequently found in the New Testament. In the Gospels it is synonymous with the term δαιμόνιον and the verbal form δαιμονίζεται, meaning that demons and unclean spirits were understood to behave and act similarly; J. Reiling, "Unclean Spirits," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (ed. K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P.W. van der Horst; Leiden: Brill, 2nd edn, 1999), pp. 882. The Geneva Bible renders πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον as "uncleane spirit."

[55] The source text reads αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ σατανᾶς μετασχηματίζεται εἰς ἄγγελον φωτός, which is translated in the Geneva Bible as "for Satan himselfe is transformed into an Angel of light."

[56] K.A.D. Smelik, "The witch of Endor," pp. 166-167.

[57] Cf. the marginal gloss to 1 Sam. 28:11 in the Geneva Bible, which regards Saul's request to bring up Samuel as proof of his "gross ignorance" because Satan has no power over the saints. For references to 2 Cor. 11:14 by authors mentioned in James's preface, see Weyer, *De preastigiis daemonum*, II ix, II x (citing Augustine twice); Ypres, *Methodi Theologiae*, II p. 313.

[58] Stuart Clark even ranks 2 Thessalonians 2 with other seminal scriptural texts such as Exod. 22:18 and 1 Samuel 28; S. Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 330-332; cf. S. Clark, *Vanities of the Eye*, pp. 178-182. For the use of 2 Thessalonians 2 by the authors whom James mentions in his preface, see Hemmingsen, *Admonatio*, sig.

passage about the Antichrist's "lying wonders" helped to explain why God permitted the devil and his band of witches to wreak havoc in the world and, more particularly, why He had allowed this diabolical illusion to happen in Endor. Because Saul did not believe the truth, God had given the devil permission to fatally delude him. However, Epistemon emphasized, "God will not permit him so to deceiue his own" and, again, these words are reminiscent of the Geneva Bible, which states in its marginal annotation of 2 Thess. 2:10 that "Satans power is limited that he can not hurt the elect to their destruction."

Epistemon concluded his exposition of 1 Samuel 28 with a two-fold explanation for the devil's ability to foretell Saul's imminent death, but not before having first made a misogynistic remark about the limitations of the female mind in this respect.[59] Not only had the devil's primordial role made him worldly-wise,[60] but occasionally, and only for specific purposes, God granted him knowledge about things to come.[61] Epistemon referred to 1 Kings 22 to prove the reality of divinely permitted, diabolical divination. According to this biblical story, around four hundred prophets unanimously, but falsely predicted King Ahab's victory over the Arameans. Micaiah, though, the Lord's true prophet, foretold the king a disastrous outcome and explained to him that God had allowed a spirit to entice King Ahab by becoming a lying spirit (Hebr. רוּחַ שֶׁקֶר) in the mouth of these prophets.[62] In Late Antiquity, Pseudo-Justin had already compared Saul's demonic deception with that of Ahab, and 1 Kings 22 also became an influential proof text in the Renaissance witchcraft debate.[63]

B3ʳ; Scot, *Discoverie*, p. 130 (note that Scot's "S. *Paule* saith" is echoed in the words used by James: "as *Paul* sayth"); Weyer, *De preastigiis daemonum*, II viii; Ypres, *Methodi Theologiae*, II pp. 306, 307, 320, 323.

[59] Demonology and misogyny tend to go hand in hand (cf. S. Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 112-118), and James's treatise also contains derogative assumptions about the female sex. Deborah Willis not only traces the king's misogynistic attitude back to his involvement in the Continental witchcraft debate and the North Berwick trials, but also to his personal relations with women; D. Willis, "James Among the Witch-Hunters." For James's unfavourable view on women in his adolescence, see C. Bingham, *James VI of Scotland*, pp. 50-51.

[60] James may have adopted this idea from Weyer (*De preastigiis daemonum*, I x), who, in turn, attributed it to Augustine.

[61] In *Daemonologie* I vii Epistemon briefly refers to this diabolical divination again when he speaks of the "miserable endes" that will befall those who seek counsel from magicians and necromancers: "For the Deuill hath neuer better tydings to tell to any, then he tolde to *Saule*."

[62] The Geneva Bible identified this spirit as the devil in its marginal annotation of 1 Kgs. 22:21.

[63] On the use of 1 Kings 22 by the church fathers, see K.A.D. Smelik, "The witch of Endor," p. 175. For the use of 1 Kings 22 by the authors who are mentioned in James's preface, see Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia*, III

By way of an inclusio, James briefly returns to 1 Samuel 28 in the final chapter of *Daemonologie* (III vi). He mentions the biblical episode in the discussion about the appropriate punishment for people who have been accused of attending the witches' gatherings in spirit, whilst they were asleep. Epistemon asserts that these persons are just as deserving of the death sentence because the devil would never have assumed their likeness had they not given him permission for this diabolical imitation. Philomates, his sceptical partner in dialogue, retorts "Then Samuel was a Witch: For the Deuill resembled his shape, and played his person in giuing response to Saule."[64] Epistemon immediately refutes this blasphemous suggestion by answering, "Samuel was dead aswell before that: and so none coulde slander him with medling in that vnlawfull arte."[65]

Concluding Observations

The derivative nature of James's *Daemonologie* has already become apparent in the above analysis of his exposition of 1 Samuel 28. His treatment of this passage is relatively short and superficial compared to the lengthy discussions in the sceptical works by Scot and Weyer,[66] but he nevertheless covers the main topics in the Renaissance debate surrounding the woman of Endor. In accord with the orthodox Protestant exegesis of that time, James depicts her as a pythoness and ritual magician, who did not raise Samuel, but a demon who had taken on the prophet's shape to deceive Saul, albeit with God's permission, because the king's apostasy made him deserving of death.

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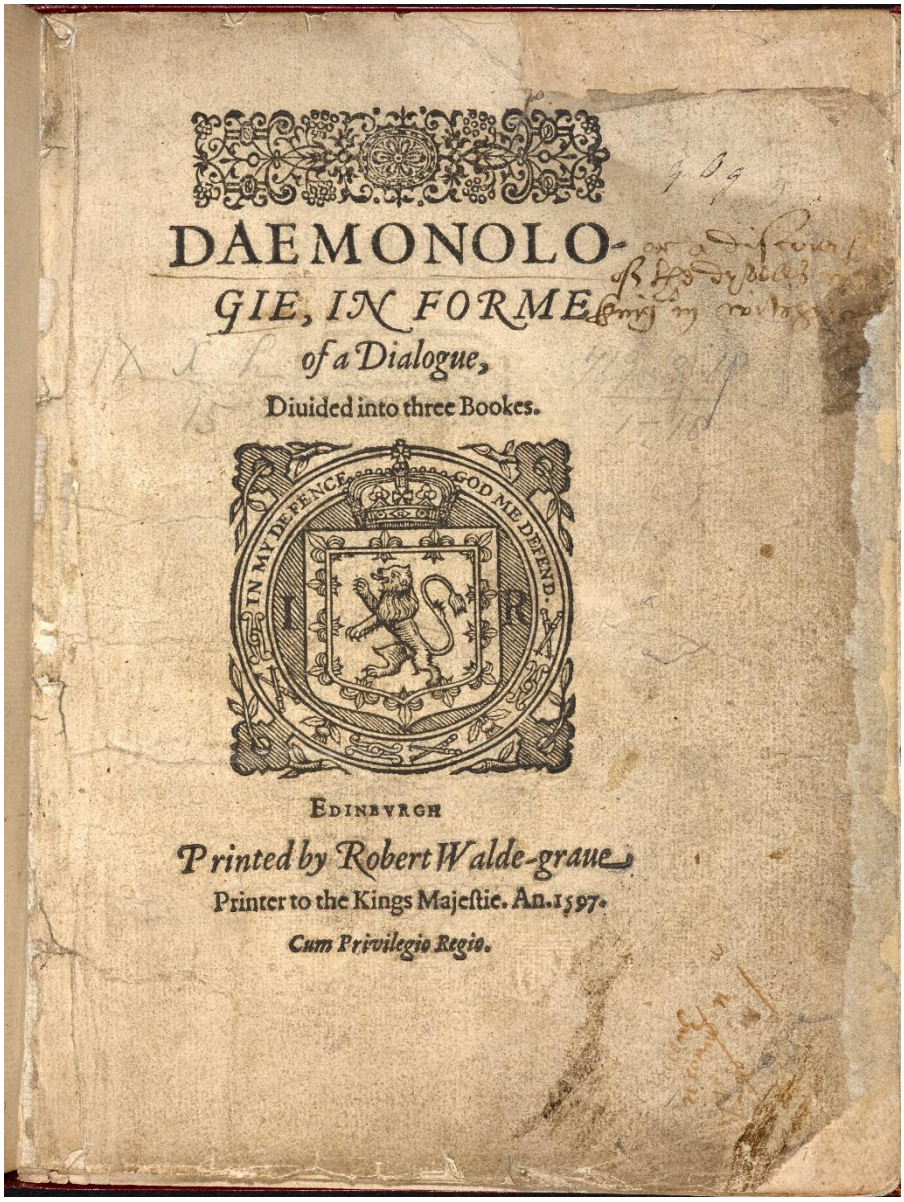
xviii; Bodin, *De la Démonomanie des Sorciers*, I v; Scot, *Discoverie*, pp. 514; Weyer, *De preastigiis daemonum*, I xxiii.

[64] Rather unsurprisingly, Philomates's words are far removed from his erstwhile scepticism about the nature of Samuel's apparition. In his farewell speech to Epistemon he fully acknowledges the reality of witches and witchcraft: "I pray God to purge this Cuntry of these diuellishe practises: for they were neuer so rife in these partes, as they are now."

[65] According to Weyer, Samuel had already been dead for nearly two years; *De preastigiis daemonum*, II ix. Agrippa implies that Samuel's sprit could only have been summoned within a year after his passing; *De Occulta Philosophia*, III ccclvi-ccclvii. Both Weyer's and Agrippa's words are reiterated by Scot; *Discoverie*, pp. 141, 148.

[66] The other authors whom James mentions in his preface only refer to 1 Samuel 28 in passing, and I could not detect any distinct parallels between James's exposition of this passage and theirs; cf. Agrippa, *De Occulta Philosophia*, III xviii, xlii; Bodin, *De la Démonomanie des Sorciers*, I vi, II iii; Hemmingsen, *Admonitio*, sigs D3^{r}, K2^{r-v}; Ypres, *Methodi Theologiae*, II p. 307.

Whilst Philomates's argumentation can almost entirely be traced back to Scot's exposition of 1 Samuel 28, the sources behind Epistemon's counterarguments are more scattered. Although the influence of Scot's *Discoverie* is traceable, Epistemon's words are also reminiscent of the Geneva Bible (including its marginal annotations) and Weyer's *De preastigiis daemonum*. Hence, as to his exposition of 1 Samuel 28, James was heavily indebted to the authors whom he despised most. Yet, the erudition of their treatises outrivalled James's *Daemonologie* by far. The stakes were high for these sceptics and, therefore, their arguments had to be brought forward with an impressive amount of evidence. James, the self-professed scholar-king, on the other hand, seems to have written his treatise in haste and without ample consultation of contemporary and past works on witches, witchcraft, and demonology. The meagre exposition of 1 Samuel 28 by the erstwhile "greatest enemie" of the devil in this world certainly testifies to that.



DAEMONOLO-
GIE, IN FORME
of a Dialogue,
Diuided into three Bookes.

IN MY DEFENCE GOD MIE DEFEND.

EDINBVRGH
Printed by Robert Walde-graue
Printer to the Kings Majestie. An. 1597.
Cum Privilegio Regio.

Figure 3. Title page of King James VI's *Daemonologie* (Edinburgh: R. Walde-grave, 1597). © British Library Board. Shelfmark: C.27.h.1

Appendix

Book I, chapter 1 of King James VI's *Daemonologie* (ed. Craigie)

CHAP. I. ARGVMENT.

Proven by the Scripture, that these vnlawfull artes in genere*, haue bene and may be put in practise*.

PHILOMATHES and EPISTEMON reason the matter.

PHILOMATHES.

I am surely verie glad to haue mette with you this daye, for I am of opinion, that ye can better resolue me of some thing, wherof I stand in great doubt, nor anie other whom-with I could haue mette.

EPI. In what I can, that ye like to speir at me, I will willinglie and freelie tell my opinion, and if I proue it not sufficiently, I am heartely content that a better reason carie it away then.

PHI. What thinke yee of these strange newes, which now onelie furnishes purpose to al men at their meeting: I meane of these Witches?

EPI. Surelie they are wonderfull: And I think so cleare and plaine confessions in that purpose, haue neuer fallen out in anie age or cuntrey.

PHI. No question if they be true, but thereof the Doctours doubtes.

EPI. What part of it doubt ye of?

PHI. Even of all, for ought I can yet perceaue: and namelie, that there is such a thing as Witch-craft or Witches, and I would pray you to resolue me thereof if ye may: for I haue reasoned with sundrie in that manner, and yet could never be satisfied therein.

EPI. I shall with good will doe the best I can: But I thinke it the difficiller, since ye denie the thing it selfe in generall: for as it is said in the logick schools, *Contra negantem principia non est disputandum*. Alwaies for that part, that witchcraft, and Witches haue bene, and are,

the former part is clearelie proved by the Scriptures, and the last by dailie experience and confessions.

PHI. I know yee will alleadge me *Saules Pythonisse:* but that as appeares will not make much for you.

EPI. Not onlie that place, but divers others: But I marvel why that should not make much for me?

PHI. The reasones are these, first yee may consider, that *Saul* being troubled in spirit, and having fasted long before, as the text testifieth, and being come to a woman that was bruted to haue such knowledge, and that to inquire so important news, he having so guiltie a conscience for his hainous offences, and specially, for that same vnlawful curiositie, and horrible defection: and then the woman crying out vpon the suddaine in great admiration, for the vncouth sicht that she alledged to haue sene discovering him to be the King, thogh disguysed, & denied by him before: it was no wounder I say, that his senses being thus distracted, he could not perceaue hir faining of hir voice, hee being himselfe in an other chalmer, and seeing nothing. Next what could be, or was raised? The spirit of *Samuel?* Prophane and against all Theologie: the Dieuell in his likenes? as vnappeirant, that either God would permit him to come in the shape of his Saintes (for then could neuer the Prophets in those daies haue bene sure, what Spirit spake to them in their visiones) or then that he could fore-tell what was to come there after; for Prophecie proceedeth onelie of GOD: and the Devill hath no knowledge of things to come.

EPI. Yet if yee will marke the wordes of the text, ye will finde clearely, that *Saul* saw that apparition: for giving you that *Saul* was in an other Chalmer, at the making of the circles & conjurations, needeful for that purpose (as none of that craft will permit any vthers to behold at that time) yet it is evident by the text, that how sone that once that vnclean spirit was fully risen, shee called in vpon *Saul.* For it is saide in the text, that *Saul knew him to be Samuel,* which coulde not haue bene, by the hearing tell onely of an old man with an mantil, since there was many mo old men dead in *Israel* nor *Samuel*: And the common weid of that whole Cuntrey was mantils. As to the next, that it was not the spirit of *Samuel,* I grant: In the proving whereof ye neede not to insist, since all Christians of whatso-ever Religion agrees vpon that: and none but either mere ignorants, or Necromanciers or Witches doubtes thereof. And that the Diuel is permitted at som-times to put himself in the liknes of the Saintes, it is plaine in the Scriptures, where it is said, that *Sathan can trans-forme himselfe into an Angell of Light.* Neither could that bring any inconvenient with it to the visiones of the Prophets, since it is most certaine, that God will not permit him so to deceiue his own: but only such, as first wilfully deceiues them-

selues, by running vnto him, whome God then suffers to fall in their owne snares, and justlie permittes them to be illuded with great efficacy of deceit, because they would not beleeue the trueth (as *Paul* sayth). And as to the diuelles foretelling of things to come, it is true that he knowes not all thinges future, but yet that he knowes parte, the Tragicall event of this historie declares it, (which the wit of woman could never haue fore-spoken) not that he hath any prescience, which is only proper to God: or yet knows anie thing by loking vp-on God, as in a mirrour (as the good Angels doe) he being for euer debarred from the fauorable presence & countenance of his creator, but only by one of these two meanes, either as being worldlie wise, and taught by an continuall experience, ever since the creation, judges by likelie-hood of thinges to come, according to the like that hath passed before, and the naturall causes, in respect of the vicissitude of all thinges worldly: Or else by Gods employing of him in a turne, and so foreseene thereof: as appeares to haue bin in this, whereof we finde the verie like in *Micheas* propheticque discourse to King *Achab*. But to prooue this my first proposition, that there can be such a thing as witch-craft, & witches, there are manie mo places in the Scriptures then this (as I said before). As first in the law of God, it is plainely prohibited: But certaine it is, that the Law of God speakes nothing in vaine, nether doth it lay curses, or injoyne punishmentes vpon shaddowes, condemning that to be il, which is not in essence or being as we call it. Secondlie it is plaine, where wicked *Pharaohs* wise-men imitated ane number of *Moses* miracles, to harden the tyrants heart there by. Thirdly, said not *Samuell* to *Saull*, that *disobedience is as the sinne of Witch-craft?* To compare to a thing that were not, it were too too absurd. Fourthlie, was not *Simon Magus,* a man of that craft? And fiftlie, what was she that had the spirit of *Python?* beside innumerable other places that were irkesom to recite.