Seeing The Whole Picture: Scryers in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England

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Abstract

This thesis discusses the characteristics of scryers in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, by comparing the description of scryers in ritual magic manuscripts to those in historical documents. It first describes the characteristics of the 'ideal' scryer, as found in English vernacular ritual magic manuscripts. This thesis provides a typology of the rituals, and shows that the typical ideal scryer was an adult. However, the medieval tendency to view children as perfect scryers is also still present in a third of the rituals. The scrying materials and goals display a wide variety of options.

The 'real' or historical scryer, found in documents such as (descriptions of) court cases and ego-documents, shows a different view. The majority of the historical scryers were male adult practitioners, although women were starting to take on scrying too. When comparing the ideal to the historical scryer, the absence of child-scryers is one of the main differences, as well as the absence of elaborate rituals for historical scryers. However, the large variety of scrying goals, as well as the materials that reflect and refract light, appear to still be mostly similar, although the historical scryer tends to use glass and crystal most often.

In some of the cases, the historical scryers were called 'cunning folk,' and the third chapter shows that some scryers might indeed have been cunning folk, but that scrying is a specific gift not all the cunning folk have. At least three scryers used that gift to establish a network by means of which they were able to further their own personal career, showing that scrying can lead into other high-risk-high-gain ventures if the patron's network is utilised to their advantage. Finally, the conclusion will show the characteristics of scryers and provide some avenues for further research.

Keywords: scryers, early modern period, England, manuscripts, cunning folk

Contents

Introduction

> *He knoweth that one Lowth, in Flete-strete, a borderer, useth the cristall stone, and goeth about daily to dygge for treasure. Thomas Malfrey of Goldstone besides Yarmouth, [and] a woman besides Stoke Clare, whose name [he] knowethe not, are skryers of the glasse.*
>
> - William Wycherley, 1549[1]

When reading this quote, you might picture a scryer as someone who goes treasure hunting or someone with a crystal ball predicting that their client will meet a tall, dark, and handsome stranger. Someone else might think of other mysterious ritualistic conjurations that involve spirits. In reality, scrying is more diverse than this. Scryers, people who can perceive spirits in a reflecting surface, could be anyone, and they could use their scrying for virtually anything they put their minds to. Who exactly these scryers were in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, however, has not been researched yet. This thesis canvasses the description of scryers in ritual magic texts as well as the historical scryer and their social position in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England.

Scrying is an umbrella term for different types of divination. Examples of these types of divinatory practices are crystallomancy (with a crystal), onychomancy (scrying in fingernails), and catoptromancy (with a mirror). In some of the cases, it is unclear which scrying material is used, and hence this thesis does not distinguish overly between the different types of scrying and focuses on a more general sense of the word. In this thesis, "scrying" means divining by means of reflecting and refracting surfaces. Although various terms can be used to denote the different varieties of scrying, these different varieties are not the central focus of this thesis and hence will not be distinguished between. The main focus of this thesis is the scryers rather than the material they use and the denominations of those types of scrying. The scryer is thus someone who is able to perceive and communicate with spirits by means of reflecting and light-refracting surfaces. The term "spirit" is used as a neutral denominator for angels, demons, and non-specified entities with which contact could be made. Spirit perception and communication in themselves do not necessarily require the

[1] John Gough Nichols (ed.), *Narratives of the Days of the Reformation Chiefly from the Manuscripts of John Foxe the Martyrologist; With Two Contemporary Biographies of Archbishop Cranmer* (London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1859), 334.

use of a scrying device, but scryers always use some form of scrying device, hence the specification. Some magic practitioners could see or feel the spirits appear, sometimes even communicate, but they were unable to scry.

Status Quaestionis

While (the history of) magic has been researched in significant depth since Lynn Thorndike's *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, the focus is usually on magic practitioners in general or on the rituals they work with. In *Behind the Crystal Ball*, Anthony Aveni attempts to write a full history of magic and the occult in less than 400 pages; although the title suggests the involvement of scrying or scryers, it skips over most of the history and focuses on modern-day uses for magic and the occult. Edward Bever discusses the scientific basis for the belief in magic prevalent in the early modern period in Europe in *The Realities of Witchcraft* and briefly touches upon scrying.[2] In his chapter on divination and prophecy, he highlights twenty-eight German court cases in which divination is used.[3] However, Bever's focus is not on the practitioners and rituals but on finding an working explanation for these magic phenomena. His definition of scrying involves the induction of "a subjective experience, […] a visual one, whose content was relevant to the issue at hand" which can be done with "windows and mirrors, […] crystal balls, […] and sword blades, water in a bucket, and even polished thumbnails."[4]

Some of the literature above mentions scryers, but none of the authors look at this specific group in depth. Rather, it surfaces in several different studies on various historical periods, from the Roman period to appearances in modern magic. There are a few publications that do focus on scryers, such as Armand Delatte's *La catoptromancie grecque et ses dérivées*. In 1932 Delatte published this book, in which he describes the history of catoptromancy, or the art of divination by mirror, to prove that its origin lies in Ancient Greece. The focus of this author is on the literary, philosophical, and theological history of catoptromancy, which he traces back to Greek roots where the medieval and early modern expression of the practice was established.[5] His examples are concerned with one specific type of scrying, namely the use of the mirror and occasionally lecanomancy, which uses a basin of water for the same purpose. Nevertheless, he does provide a concise history of these

[2] Edward Bever, *Realities in Witchcraft and Popular Magic in Early Modern Europe. Culture, Cognition, and Everyday Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), xiv.
[3] Bever, *Realities in Witchcraft*, 219-70.
[4] Bever, *Realities in Witchcraft*, 222-23.
[5] A. Delatte, *La catoptromancie grecque et ses dérivées* (Liège: Imp. H. Vaillant-Carmanne, 1932), 133, 147-49.

types of scrying up until the sixteenth century, with occasional mentions of sources on about catoptromancy or lecanomancy in later periods as well.

Theodore Besterman's *Crystal-Gazing*, first published in 1924 and republished in 1965, also focuses on the history of scrying. He uses the term "crystal-gazing" as an umbrella term for the different types of scrying, and describes scrying in legends and early literature across various periods such as Antiquity and the Middle Ages as an attempt to write a first introduction to scrying. Other chapters focus on scrying in modern Europe, in the (Middle) East, and on other continents, and Besterman dedicates several chapters to the science behind scrying, how exactly scrying is supposed to work, and issues of fraud.[6]

Claire Fanger posits in a 2005 article that the use of virgin boys in thirteenth century Latin magic rituals transmitted in ritual magic manuscripts is intrinsically connected to aspects of natural philosophy and to liturgy.[7] In this article, she also observes the absence of secondary literature on the topic of catoptromancy or scrying and especially notes that there are several primary sources that mention scrying from antiquity onwards, but that no diachronic or cross-cultural studies of the phenomenon exist so far, save for Delatte's literary study.[8]

Some literature mentions specific scrying rituals. An example appears in Benedek Láng's *Unlocked Books*, in which he discusses different types of magic practised in Central Europe. One chapter describes the prayer book of a certain king Wladislas of Poland and Hungary (c. 15, exact dates unclear), which contains crystallomantic prayers among the more general prayers, and in the chapter, Láng discusses issues concerning the origin of the prayers and the prayer book, the crystal used, and the owners of this manuscript.[9] Several other scrying rituals appear in Richard Kieckhefer's edition of Munich, Bavarian State Library, Clm 849, *Forbidden Rites*, in which Kieckhefer provides seventeen rituals that "entail catoptromancy, or scrying."[10] Kieckhefer also briefly introduces scrying in his chapter on divinatory experiments, but mainly focuses on the fifteenth century, which is the relevant time period for the manuscript he edited.[11] A description of several scrying rituals carried out

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[6] Theodore Besterman, *Crystal-Gazing. A Study in the History, Distribution, Theory and Practice of Scrying* (New York: University Books, 1965).
[7] Claire Fanger, "Virgin Territory: Purity and divine knowledge in late medieval catoptromantic texts," *Aries* 5, no. 2 (2005): 201.
[8] Fanger, "Virgin Territory," 201.
[9] Benedek Láng, *Unlocked Books. Manuscripts of Learned Magic in the Medieval Libraries of Central Europe* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 162-88.
[10] Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites. A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), 25.
[11] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 96-125.

by Humphrey Gilbert and John Davis are furthermore discussed by Frank Klaassen in his article "Ritual Invocation and Early Modern Science," in which he argues that ritual magic is still relevant to the early modern history of science.[12]

Specific groups of magic practitioners are also not often the topic of research. Owen Davies' book *Popular Magic* is an exception, focusing on the description and historical placement of one group of magic practitioners, namely the cunning folk. Cunning folk were English folk practitioners, who practised love magic, found bewitchers, provided protection against witchcraft, and found lost and stolen goods.[13] His book attempts to create a full image of the cunning folk from about the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. Davies' concept will be discussed in more depth in chapter 3 of this thesis. Johannes Dillinger discusses treasure-hunters in *Magical Treasure Hunting in Europe and North America*, in which he analyses and discusses "the magic of treasure hunting in Britain, Europe, and North America from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century."[14] He discusses the social background of four groups of people that comprise a treasure-hunting group, concluding that these groups were usually heterogenous and briefly connected through a common goal, bridging "social gaps insofar they brought together people from very different strata of society," even if the individuals followed different religions.[15]

Some of the scryers or their patrons discussed in this thesis have been scrutinised in depth already from a different angle. The astrologer John Dee (1527-1608/9), and by extension Edward Kelley (1555-1597/8), have been the topic of at least three monographs since 1999.[16] Although the relationship between John Dee and his scryer Edward Kelley has

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[12] Frank Klaassen, "Ritual Invocation and Early Modern Science: The Skrying Experiments of Humphrey Gilbert," in *Invoking Angels. Theurgic Ideas and Practices, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. Claire Fanger (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 341-66. These rituals have recently been edited and published by Phil Legard and Alexander Cummins. Besides providing an edition, Alexander Cummins also briefly introduces the concept and history of scrying in England. See Phil Legard and Alexander Cummins, eds., *An Excellent Booke of the Arte of Magicke. The magical works of Humphrey Gilbert & John Davis from British Library Additional Manuscript 36674* (London: Scarlet Imprint, 2020).

[13] Owen Davies, *Popular Magic. Cunning-folk in English History* (London/New York: Hambledon Continuum, 2003), vii.

[14] Johannes Dillinger, *Magical Treasure Hunting in Europe and North America. A History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 2.

[15] Dillinger, *Magical Treasure Hunting*, 173.

[16] See Deborah E. Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels. Cabala, Alchemy, and the End of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Benjamin Woolley, *The Queen's Conjuror: The Science and Magic of Dr. John Dee, Advisor to Queen Elizabeth I* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001); Glyn Parry, *The Arch-Conjuror of England: John Dee* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2011). Books before 1999 include Richard Deacon, *John Dee: Scientist, Geographer, Astrologer and Secret Agent to Elizabeth I* (London: Frederick Muller, Ltd., 1968); Peter J. French, *John Dee. The World of an Elizabethan Magus* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972); Nicholas Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (London & New York: Routledge, 1988); Christopher Whitby, *John Dee's Actions with Spirits. 22*

been examined in depth, most of the literature so far focused on the relationship between the two rather than on the practices of scrying or solely on the role of the scryer. Simon Forman (1552-1611) has similarly been the topic of several monographs.[17]

Research question and methodology

The scryer is the central focus of this thesis, which investigates the characteristics of scryers in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. The previous section showed that the focus in magic research usually is on either the manuscripts or the historical practitioners, but only rarely on both. This thesis thus aims to bridge the gap in research between the historical realities of practitioners and the imagined ideals provided in ritual manuscript depictions, focusing specifically on the differences and similarities a comparative study might provide for scryers by asking the question: What are the characteristics of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English scryers?

The first chapter focuses on the representation of scryers in early modern English vernacular magic manuscripts, detailing the rituals scryers used and how scryers are depicted in these rituals, as well as the materials they used and the goals for which these rituals could be used. It will answer the question: What are the characteristics of the ideal sixteenth- and seventeenth-century scryers? The chapter will first provide a preliminary typology of scrying rituals before focusing on the depiction of the scryer in those sources. The passages from the eighteen different rituals will be analysed by means of close reading to draw out terms relating to the ideal scryer's sex and age, as well as the materials used and the goals for which the rituals were used. The first chapter serves to describe the ideal manuscript scryer, which can then be compared and contrasted to the reality of scryers in the same period in England.

The second chapter discusses the depiction of historical scryers and uses close reading to find the historical scryer in records of court documents, ego-documents, and pamphlets and other literary productions. It will answer the question: What are the characteristics of the historical sixteenth- and seventeenth-century scryers? Once again, the focus is on the scryer's age and sex, the materials used and the goals. Additionally, this chapter shows other jobs

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December 1581 to 23 May 1583, two vols. (New York & London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1988); R.J. Roberts and A.G. Watson, eds., *John Dee's Library catalogue* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1990).

[17] See (in chronological order) A.L. Rowse, *Simon Forman. Sex and Society in Shakespeare's Age* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974); Judith Cook, *Dr Simon Forman: A Most Notorious Physician* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2001); Barbara Howard Traister, *The Notorious Astrological Physician of London. Works and Days of Simon Forman* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Lauren Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan London. Simon Forman: Astrologer, Alchemist, and Physician* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).

scryers held, their education level, and their itinerancy and monetary gains. The end of this chapter shows the contrasts between the ideal scryer and the historical scryer.

Finally, the third chapter shows a comparison between scryers and cunning folk, a group some of the scryers seemed to belong to, and discusses one fundamental difference between scryers and cunning folk in particular. This chapter answers the question: What sets apart the scryer from other magic practitioners? It also discusses scryers who used their ability to advance their own social status and better their own career. Three ex-scryers will be analysed in depth to see how they employed their scrying network as a means of furthering their own career. The underlying question in this chapter is focused on the status of scrying as a stationary job, as most careers in magic are seen as long-term commitments rather than temporary careers.

The conclusion will summarise the thesis and finally answer the main question about the general characteristics of the scryer in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, and provide topics for further research, as well as highlight an increased need for research into magic practitioners that uses a similar comparative basis for analysis by means of using ritual magic manuscripts and non-fiction sources. It will show that by using sources that show both views, comparative analysis can be carried out to show that the ideal scryer, shown in ‘prescriptive’ sources, is not always indicative of the historical realities of the scryer in the same period, and show that this thesis has contributed an initial insight into the historical scryer and a typology of scrying rituals in magic manuscripts of the period.

Chapter 1: The ideal, imagined scryer

This chapter discusses the ideal, imagined scryer as they appear in rituals in vernacular English manuscripts from the sixteenth and seventeenth century to show what their characteristics were. These scryers are shown to be mostly adult practitioners who use a variety of (elaborate) rituals and have a diverse set of goals. First, I will introduce the rituals used in this analysis, which are then followed by the analysis of the rituals in question. The analysis of the sex and age of the practitioner is followed by an analysis of the scrying materials and goals. This chapter thus provides an initial survey of the social composition of the scryer as demonstrated through ritual manuscripts in the sixteenth and seventeenth century in England, which can then be compared to the description of the historical scryer which will be discussed in the second chapter.

The circulating manuscripts of ritual magic in early modern England correspond more or less to medieval conventions but not to contemporary practices. In order to plot the changes and the ways in which practice deviated from written traditions this chapter will survey a representative group of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century magic manuscripts and establish a typology of practices. Since no such typology has so far been developed, it should also aid subsequent researchers in their analysis of scrying rituals. It will be found that the rituals may be subdivided into two types, one preparatory in nature while the other directly leads to scrying. The rituals that lead directly to scrying can be subdivided into two types: one employing a medium (often a child) to act as the scryer and another in which the scryer is the magician. It appears likely that the child-scrying rituals represented an earlier tradition, while the master-as-scryer rituals were part of a shift away from child scryers. The goals of scrying are varied but all focus on gaining knowledge of some kind, and they employ a variety of materials from crystal stones or glass to a child's thumbnail. The rituals are mainly geared towards seeing spirits but some focus more on obtaining materials that can be used for scrying. These rituals tend to be found in manuscripts which do not employ a child scryer. It appears that a virgin child was already regarded as a sufficient medium for access to the spirit world, but other routes required more preparation.

As has been discussed in the introduction, scrying is here taken to mean "gaining knowledge by means of reflecting or refracting surfaces." The scryer is the person who can perceive spirits in the material used, but that does not exclusively mean that the other people present might not be able to perceive spirits at all. Perception of spirits is an integral

characteristic of the person who does the scrying, but it does not mean that everyone who could perceive a spirit could also act as a scryer, which some of the examples later in this chapter will demonstrate. During the Middle Ages, scrying techniques slowly became part of a larger, overarching set of tools to be used in ritual magic. Fanger notes in her article on the use of virginity in scrying rituals that ritual scrying in the later Middle Ages was usually embedded in other types of ritual magic, used to summon and bind spirits, rather than being a ritual in and of itself. The summoning and binding of spirits enabled the practitioner to gain more knowledge about the world at large. A medium functioned as the scrying 'material' through which images that contain information could be delivered.[18] The scrying rituals used in this chapter have been carefully selected and vetted to ensure that the rituals are, in fact, scrying rituals. An example of a ritual that could be seen as a scrying ritual but in fact is not appears in Sloane 3853: spirits are captured in a vial of water, but there is no indication that any kind of scrying took place after the spirit was captured.[19]

[18] Fanger, "Virgin Territory," 200.
[19] See London, British Library, Sloane MS 3853, f. 229v for the full ritual.

No.	Manuscript	Folios	Ritual name	Dating	Passive/active child	Material	Ritual main type	Ritual subtype
A	Newberry Library, MS 5017	3r	To save a spirite in a glass	17th century	n/a	Glass	Scrying preparation	Spirit catching, cross of hallowed oil
B	Additional 36674	47v-53v	An excellent booke of the Arte of magicke	~1567	n/a	Stone	Scrying	
C	Additional 36674	54r-56v	To make any spyritt, that is in any stone invisble, to appeare in anonother visible to all	~1567	n/a	Stone	Scrying	
D	Additional 36674	83r-84v	The invocation of Salomon	Late 16th century	Passive child	Crystal stone, beryl stone	Scrying	Invocation of Solomon
E	Additional 36674	85v	An Angells sight	Late 16th century	Moderately active child	Crystal stone	Scrying	"Hermely" in crystal
F	Additional 36674	86r	An Angells Sight	Late 16th century	n/a	Crystal stone	Scrying	"Agla" in crystal
G	Sloane 3846	34r-37r	An experiment to see in a glass or christall stone what secretts thou wilt	Early 17th century	n/a	Crystal stone	Scrying	Crystal in animal skin
H	Sloane 3846	37r-v	An experiment to see by thy selfe without a boy or companion the spirits […] in a cristall	Early 17th century	n/a	Crystal stone	Scrying	
I	Sloane 3846	64r-66v	The invocation of Salomon	Early 17th century	Passive child	Crystal stone	Scrying	Invocation of Solomon
J	Sloane 3846	66v-67v	An Angells sight	Early 17th century	Moderately active child	Crystal stone	Scrying	"Hermely" in crystal
K	Sloane 3850	30r	To haue a glasse wherin all menne may see theire desiers	16th century	n/a	Glass	Scrying preparation	Ritual magic
L	Sloane 3850	79v-81r	To haue a spirit in a glasse to tell all things	17th century	n/a	Glass	Scrying preparation	Spirit catching, cross of hallowed oil
M	Sloane 3850	133r-139r	Of the art of the glasse	17th century	n/a	Glass	Scrying	
N	Sloane 3853	54r-58r	Experiment wherby the Maister by hym selffe or by a Chylde that is a virgin in a Glasse of cristall maye see	15th century, early 16th century	Active child	Crystal stone	Scrying	
O^a	Sloane 3853	58r-61v	An experiment with a Glasse	15th century, early 16th century	Moderately active child	Crystal stone	Scrying	Child and circle
O^b						Child's thumbnail		
P	Sloane 3853	142r-143r	How to have a spirit in close wiche shall answer the	15th century, early 16th century	n/a	Hollow glass, 'bowster' glass	Scrying preparation	Spirit catching, magic circle
Q	Sloane 3853	217v-219r	An experiment for a crystall ston to se thi selfe	Late 16th century	n/a	Crystal stone	Scrying	Crystal in animal skin
R	Sloane 3853	232v-233v	To have a spryt in a glasse	Late 16th century	n/a	Crystal, glass, mirror	Scrying preparation	Spirit catching, magic circle

Table 1.1: An overview of the scrying rituals.

The rituals

Before delving into the analysis of the age and sex of the scryer or the scrying materials and goals, we must examine the rituals themselves. The analysis and subdivision of these rituals leads to a typology presented below. The two main categories are rituals that directly lead to scrying, and rituals that focus on obtaining suitable scrying material. The subdivision can be seen in Table 1.1 above. Only five rituals are of the "scrying preparation" type, which are dedicated to preparing or obtaining scrying materials, while the other thirteen directly lead to scrying. These two categories can be divided into further subtypes, based on identical or shared characteristics that occur in the rituals themselves.

1. Crystal in Animal Skin

The first subtype of scrying rituals is typified by wrapping the crystal in animal skin, which is a practice that can be found in rituals G and Q. For this specific ritual, one needs to say prayers over a crystal wrapped in animal skin before holding it up in the sun in the middle of the day:

> Take a Christall stone of glass most cleare without Cracke, and wrap it in a peece of harts lether, saying: In the name of the holy trinity and the high deity Amen. Then hould the Christall stone or glass in thy right hand in the sunn beames that is most leightest and hottest in the middest of the day, saying the Conurations following and by and by thou shalt see the spirite under written yadventure appeare himselfe[20]

The example above is from ritual G, but ritual Q has a similar passage. However, in ritual Q, first the operator should say a specified prayer before taking the crystal and wrapping it in animal skin. These preparations show that it is important to take care of the crystal. Ritual Q also specifies that the operator should be "clene from lecherye by the spase of vii days before." [21] It appears that the ritual in Q is slightly more specified in terms of information about the operator. After the spirit has been called upon and has done whatever was asked of them, they should be sent away with a "Coniuracion licenseales."[22]

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[20] Sloane 3846, f. 34r. All quotations provided are direct transcriptions from the source, no editing has been done on these.
[21] Sloane 3853, f. 217v.
[22] Sloane 3853, f. 218v-219r. Licencing conjurations are used to dismiss spirits while also requiring them to return whenever the magic user wants them to return. See Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 141.

2. Invocation of Solomon

The second subtype is called "The invocation of Solomon," which occurs in rituals D and I. In this case, the rituals are identical, with the exception of some minor spelling variants. This subtype asks for the ritual to be carried out by an operator and a fourteen-year-old child. The operator "being prepared thy conscience clean & had in deuotion" has to make sure that the time and weather actually work for the ritual they want to carry out.[23] What time and weather suit this ritual best is not specified. Then, they have to go "into some apt place, haueing with thee a child of 14 yeares, & haueing a christall or berill stone whole & sound the which the child holding in his hand."[24] First, the child and operator have to say a prayer, before they continue in a conjuration and "a devout prayer for the Christall."[25] Then, another conjuration, for the (angels of) the light, must be said, and "then looke into that part he cometh & say" a prayer and a conjuration.[26] This conjuration must be repeated until "the stone waxe greater" and then an adjuration must be said, after which "you see him come rideing vpon a horse like a yonge man cloathed in scarlet."[27] Another conjuration follows, after which Solomon has to be conjured into the crystal, and when he has come and done what the operator wanted, the spirit is licensed to depart by means of a "benedictas dominus," which is provided in full in ritual D but not copied in ritual I.[28]

3. An Angel's Sight (Hermely)

Rituals E, F, and J are all titled "An Angells Sight," but they are not as similar as the title suggests. The first strand may be identified by its requirement that "Hermely" be written on the crystal, while the other requires "Agla" to be used. Rituals E and J form the first strand, in which "Hermely" should be written on the crystal. Once again, these rituals are almost identical, save for some spelling differences. This ritual requires the operator to do the following:

> take a pen full of sallet oyle, & write on the middest of the glass or stone Hermely, then turne thy backe south & thy face North, set the child between thy legs & say as followeth[29]

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[23] Add MS 36674, f. 83r; Sloane 3846, f. 64r.
[24] Add MS 36674, f. 83r; Sloane 3846, f. 64r.
[25] Add MS 36674, f. 83r; Sloane 3846, f. 64v.
[26] Add MS 36674, f. 83v; Sloane 3846, 64v-65v.
[27] Add MS 36674, f. 83v; Sloane 3846, 65v-66r.
[28] Add MS 36674, f. 83v-84r; Sloane 3846, f. 66r-66v. Sloane 3846, f. 66v does state "When he hath so done, licence him and say benedictus nominus," but does not include the entire prayer like Add MS 36674 does.
[29] Add MS 36674, f. 85v. This passage also appears in Sloane 3846, f. 66v.

What follows is a prayer, after which the operator should make the "signe of the Crosse in the forehead of the child" with their thumb, and then ask the child to say a Pater Noster, an Ave Maria, and a Credo, and repeat the names On, El, Ely, Eloy, Messias, Sother, Emanuel, and Sabaoth, which are names of God.[30] Then the operator has to say another prayer three times, "& then there will appeare 3 bright Angells that will shew thee by thy child any honest request thou wilt demaunde."[31]

Ritual N could be seen as a variation of the "Hermely" strand, as in this ritual, the master and child have to write "Onoly" on the stone with olive oil after the stone has been cleaned. However, it also contains traces of the first subcategory, in which the crystal has to be wrapped in animal skin. The operator has to do the following:

> Put the cristall in the childes right hande and turne your selves to wardes the sonne and knele solvue on our knees and then the master must say with the childe this Blyssyng […] with an pater noster and an ave maria and an Credo[32]

Then, the master has to say a prayer himself, which is followed by the master having to hold the crystal stone, which is "wrapped in a thonge of an harth skynne."[33] Another prayer follows, and then a conjuration is said by the master until the spirit appears (several condemnations might be needed before the spirit appears). Once the spirit has appeared, "take the crsitall Ston in thy hande and bydde the Chylde looke in the sayd stone and demaunde of hym whither he seethe the spirit in the stone or nat."[34] If not, the master has to continue with more conjurations and condemnations, but if the child confirms that the spirit has appeared, the following happens:

> then Cast sumwhat on the sith or on the tabyll as a napkyn or a glove wher ywo wylt haue the spirit to appeere so that the Childe takyng on the clothe or glove may the more persyghtly and sonde see and beholde the spirit apperyinge in the stone between hym and the sayde napkyn or glove[35]

[30] Add MS 36674, f. 85v; Sloane 3846, f. 67r.
[31] Add MS 36674, f. 85v. The quotes passage also appears in Sloane 3846, f. 67v.
[32] Sloane 3853, f. 54r.
[33] Sloane 3853, f. 54v.
[34] Sloane 3853, f. 57v.
[35] Add MS 36674, f. 57v.

Once the spirit has achieved whatever the operator wanted him to achieve, the spirit will be licenced to depart.

4. An Angells Sight (Agla)

In ritual F, the operator has to engrave the world "Agla" in the crystal. It is entirely different from the other strand, even though they do bear the same title. The ritual shows the importance of preparing the scrying device according to specific instructions, requiring the operator to do the following:

> Make a glasse of christall which is proper neat & well polished & wiped of one whose body is not polluted with women & graue in it the most holy name Agla, so that it be upon the backside of it then lay it reuerently vpon the Altar vntill 9 Masses be songe, & then take it away & set it in a siluer or wood giulded, & this must be grauen & made ready vpon the day of Jupiter or Venus & must be ended vpon the days aforesaid, but let the worker be cleane from women, & abstaine as much as lyeth in him from all filthy pollutions, also if thou will knowe any thing that is in the end of the world, or else if any of yours doe aske you of any doubtfull thing, then put your glasse against the eye of the sun so that the sun may cast his beames vpon it & marke diligently, & say those fiue prayers after one manner & forme as followeth[36]

This passage is followed by the five prayers the operator can say, which are the prayers of St John the Baptist, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Passions of the Lord, of the Ascension of the Lord, and of Longius.[37] After saying the first prayer of John the Baptist, the operator will then be able to see something appear in the crystal,

> and if it be a fortunate or a lucky thinge, you shall see white points or hilles ascending vpward a pace in the glasse, if you doe enquire of man, or beast, or a booke, or any material matter the forme & fashion of the thinge, euen right as it is indeed will appeare in the glasse[38]

[36] Add MS 36674, f. 86r.
[37] Longius here probably refers to Longinus, whose spear pierced Christ's side on the cross in John 19:34.
[38] Add MS 36674, f. 86r.

If nothing appears after the first prayer, the operator should say the prayer of the Blessed Virgin Mary, et cetera, until it works. Finally, the ritual also provides the nine masses that should be sung over the crystal.[39]

5. Assassel, Aosal, and Oriens

Rituals B and C are long rituals to conjure the spirits Assassel, Aosal, and Oriens in a crystal or move them from one crystal to the next in which they then appear visibly.[40] In ritual B, most of the calls are conjurations and curses for the spirits to appear. Ritual C provides a number of prayers and conjurations rather than ritual steps that should be taken, and the final folios are dedicated to the inscriptions on the crystal, which will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter.[41]

6. Art of the glasse

Ritual M is an intricate one and should be started on Monday in the new moon, with fasting and devotion to God. The operator should also "read the first chapter of the gospel of saint Iohn […] verie deuoutly" and abstain from sin.[42] He should prepare several "carracters & figures" by which he should call the spirits. Finally, the operator "must bind the seal of salomon about thy right arme: The pentagon and Mortagon about thy head: and the girdle about thy brest: Then houlde a little myrth and francomsence vnder thy tonge and call what spirite thou wilte."[43] After this, the operator is ready to work with the glass, and he should buy the glass on Saturday. The preparation of this glass for scrying exercises is described in detail: the operator should go to a secret chamber and divide the glass into four and spread wax over it. Once the glass is sufficiently prepared, the scryer should "fumygat the said glase with franconsense myrth & masticke & then kepe this glase in a fayer newe lynnen cloth till you need to vse it."[44] To use the glass, the operator should "rise one a satterday before the sonne" and say devout prayers, sprinkle themselves with holy water, then say the Credo, Pater Noster, and the Gospel of Saint John, and cross themselves.[45] Then, the operator has to "place the glase before thee towards the east" and then say several prayers, before saying

[39] Add MS 36674, f. 86r.
[40] Add MS 36674, f. 47v.
[41] Add MS 36674, f. 56r-56v.
[42] Sloane 3850, f. 133r.
[43] Sloane 3850, f. 134r.
[44] Sloane 3850, f. 135r.
[45] Sloane 3850, f. 135v.

conjurations with "Ink gould francomsense & myrth vnder nethe thy tonge."[46] Then, the spirit will appear in the glass, and "afterwards bene downe towards them & say you are welcome hether to obay vnto me," after which the spirit will thank the operator and the operator has to say one final conjuration or binding.[47] Folio 138r provides several possible questions to ask the spirits regarding various topics (theft, treasure, "if any body haue fownd any thing," "of certain artes," about friends).[48] Once the spirit has done whatever the operator wanted it to do, it will be given licence to depart.[49]

7. "The arte magicall natural"

Ritual O contains two possible rituals in one. Ritual O[a] should be carried out on a Thursday between "noon and one a clock in the new of the mone" with an eleven-year-old virgin. To practise "the arte magicall natural," the operator has to hold the child in his arms and "take a clene and a cleere glasse in the wyche neuer woman loked," after which the operator must say a conjuration directed to the child.[50] Then, the operator has to make a circle in a secret place and "sett the Glasse in thy Ryght hande and saye thes verses and prayers following," and he should say more prayers to the child afterwards.[51] Then, the spirit apparently appears: "And then aske of the spirit or the childe suchre requestes as thew desyerst to knowe and he shall declare yt to yow and thus yow maye knowe all your desyer be the chylde."[52] Ritual O[b] substitutes the glass for the child's thumbnail, in which case the same ritual can be followed but the operator has to do the following:

> first scrape Clene the nayle with a clene knyfe or with newe glasse and then wryght vppon the nayle of the childe with oyle olive thees ffyve letters .O.N.E.L.Y. And then anoynte the nayle and cetera. And that done saye thys prayer. And also Cawse the Chylde to saye yt after yow with a goode audibile voice and soo repete the sayde prayers tyll the spirit appeare vnto the Chylde.[53]

[46] Sloane 3850, 135v, 136r.
[47] Sloane 3850, f. 136v-137v.
[48] Sloane 3850, f. 137v.
[49] Sloane 3850, f. 138r-v.
[50] Sloane 3853, f. 58r-v.
[51] Sloane 3853, f. 59r.
[52] Sloane 3853, f. 59v.
[53] Sloane 3853, f. 60v.

The prayers should be said until the spirit appears, and once its task has been fulfilled, it will be licenced to depart by both the child and the master.[54]

8. To see without a companion [incomplete]

Ritual H is titled "An experiment to see by thy selfe without a boy or companion […] in a cristall" but it only consists of one prayer in which the operator asks "that I may see thse spirits without hurte […] that they appearing to mee in this Christall stone, may show mee the truth of all things past present and to come heare whensoeuer I shall aske them."[55] This specific ritual seems to be incomplete but does express the changing need to scry without a child or other companion present.

9. Cross in crystal

Rituals A and L show the first subtype to prepare the scrying material, which focuses on catching spirits in a glass on which a cross is drawn in hallowed oil. The preparation of the glass is central in this ritual. It requires the operator to consecrate the glass, put the glass on a clean towel, and then put five drops of hallowed oil on the glass in the shape of a cross. A prayer must be said before the five drops are connected to form the shape of a cross. This should be followed by another prayer, before the operator has to make a suffumigation and say another prayer. Following this, the glass should be washed and rubbed in bread crumbs. Then, the spirit will appear in the glass and the operator should say a conjuration to bind the spirit to the glass. Once done with the spirit, the operator should give the spirit licence to depart, and finally, the operator should wrap the glass in virgin parchment and write the names "Osmeny, Lis, Crebey, Asazel, Raphan, Oberion" on the parchment.[56]

10. Magic circle

Rituals P and R demonstrate the second subtype to prepare scrying material, which focuses on spirit catching by means of a magic circle. Once again, the preparation of the scrying material is central. The operator needs virgin parchment and has to put the glass used in the middle of the parchment before writing several names on either side of the scrying material.[57]

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[54] Sloane 3853, f. 61r-v.
[55] Sloane 3846, f. 37r-v.
[56] Newberry Library, MS 5017, f. 3r-v. In Sloane 3850, f. 81r, the only names that should be written on the parchment are Osmeny, Lic, and Crebey.
[57] Sloane 3853, f. 142r requires the following names: Osiminilis, Orodon, Malcallito, Ascariell, Baylon, Affryell, Babethe, Barioll, Volfriett, and on the other side: Cerberus, Blimera (or Alumfra or Alumfroge),

The operator should say a conjuration three or nine times while holding the glass in his left hand and holding his right hand over the glass "after the sonne goethe down."[58] Next, the operator should make "a serklys of eight or nynge fote brod then hyd the glasse vnder the erthe a fote within the serkyll on the northe syd," in which the name Osiminilis should be written.[59] Then, the operator has to "Entre the serkyll and Close it vp after the and torne the toward the northe parte" and say a conjuration three or nine times.[60] Once the operator returns in the morning, they will find "a spryt in the glas which shall answer the to all thynges."[61]

11. Ritual magic

Finally, ritual K does not fit in with any of the aforementioned rituals. It is an intriguing but short ritual, in which a black chicken should be buried three feet deep in an earthen pot at a crossroad. The operator has to say a conjuration and several prayers once the pot is buried, and then on the third day, the operator has to dig up the pot:

> and you shall finde a glasse which before any bodie looke therin alie yt vp for vij daies in a secret place and euerie daie saie certeine orations and so departe. And the .7. daie take yt awaie and thow shalte see in yt what thou will.[62]

The age and sex of the scryer

Out of the eighteen rituals described above, six include children as the scryers. The children are participants in the rituals to varying degrees, but in all cases they are described as the participant who can observe spirits or answer questions posed to the spirits. However, the majority of the rituals only feature adult practitioners, which shows a shift from the use of children as scryers in the Middle Ages to adult scryers in the early modern period.

Most late medieval scrying manuscripts recommend using children as scryers, as they were considered to be the most suitable mediums in those manuscripts. The gender of the child did not matter much, although monastic education of young boys would imply a higher

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Ffrondosmia (or Ffrondosima), Hundalginda, Immiolbolda, Ffunmibolda, Kamnian (or Kammyan), Bunditiche (or Bdanyoche), Lunndryningunsa (or Lunganpha), Hymgalgynida, Inuninbolda. The names in ritual R, on folio 232v of the same manuscript differ slightly. There, the names are Osiminilis, Oredon, Malcalite, Ascariell, Baylon, Offioll, Raheth, Bariel, and Cerberus, Almifroga, Sanissima, Hindell, Giuda, Fumboldi, Camini, Anigairdioth, Lundingumsa, Rimonelda, Beldasrandes, Vnoo.

[58] Sloane 3853, f. 142r; Sloane 3853, f. 232v.

[59] Sloane 3853, f. 232v. The instructions as well as the dimensions are similar in Sloane 3853, f. 142r-v.

[60] Sloane 3853, f. 233r. The instructions are similar in Sloane 3853, f. 142v.

[61] Sloane 3853, f. 233r-v.

[62] Sloane 3850, f. 30r.

number of young male scryers, as they were readily available to the mostly clerical practitioners in the Middle Ages, especially before the dissolution of the monasteries.[63] However, the implication of the term "child" rather than "boy" points towards an indifference about the gender of the child, as female scryers were not clearly excluded, either. Claire Fanger shows that thirteenth-century manuscripts in Latin still mostly rely on boys as a medium through which the answers of angels or spirits can be revealed, although it appears these manuscripts also show the start of a transition towards adult scryers alongside children.[64] The lower number of child-scryers (only six) appears to show the same shift towards adult practitioners continuing in the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

The number of rituals that involve children is drastically lower than those than do *not* involve them. In rituals D, E, I, J, N, and O, a child is used as the scryer. Ritual O requires "a Chylde that is a virgin of a leven yeres of age" or "a Chylde […] within xii yeres of age."[65] Ritual D asks for "a child of 14 yeares" to accompany the practitioner, as does ritual I.[66] The other rituals, E, J, and N do not explicitly state an age, but do require a "Chylde" or "Child" who was able to view the spirits.[67] It is difficult to establish what exactly is meant when documents mention a child in the Middle Ages or early modern period – the concept is as intangible in this period as it is in later times. Deborah Young writes that age is both determined by biological and social development, as well as calendar years in the Middle Ages, and asserts that between twelve and fourteen years old, one's childhood would have been coming to an end, as both biological and social expectations and concerns start changing. However, an adolescent might still be considered a child in some aspects and thus treated as such, and the other way around.[68] The concept of "child" is thus rather difficult to define, but in this thesis, "child" means a person of fourteen years or younger. In the six rituals in this paragraph, thus, the "child" points towards a person of under fourteen, even if the age is not explicitly stated (such as in rituals E, J, and N).

The virginity of the child is only mentioned once in a ritual, but it used to be a major part of the reason to use children in scrying rituals. Fanger writes that the virginity of children can be used to ensure that they are speaking the truth, equalling virginity to purity of mind, as

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[63] For more information on the clerical underworld, see Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 151-175.
[64] Fanger, "Virgin Territory," 211-12.
[65] London, British Library, Sloane MS 3853, f. 58r-v; ibid., f. 60r.
[66] London, British Library, Additional MS 36674, f. 83r; London, British Library, Sloane MS 3846, 64r. The phrase that appears in Sloane 3846 is identical to the one in Add MS 36674.
[67] Sloane 3853, f. 54r; Sloane 3846, f. 66v; Add MS 36674, f. 85v.
[68] Deborah Young, *The Life Cycle in Western Europe, c. 1300–c. 1500* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), 1, 96, 119-20.

well as having the capacity to constrain demons.[69] Two rituals in Sloane 3853 mention the virginal state of the child. The first, ritual N, only does so in the title to the ritual itself: "Experiment wherby the Miaster by hym selffe or by a Chylde that is a virgin in a Glasse of cristall maye see."[70] The other, ritual O, specifies the requirement of a virginal child in the ritual, stating that the practitioner of this ritual should have "a Chylde that ys a virgin," and further in the description of the ritual, the "Chylde must be lawffully begottyn In matermony."[71] This requirement of using a legitimate child is an addition to the requirement of a virgin scryer, in a way implying that the child could be sullied by being an illegitimate child. Fanger writes that the use of a legitimate virgin child is a typical requirement for scrying rituals.[72] In her analysis, she focuses on rituals that appear in two manuscripts only: Munchen, Bavarian State Library, Clm 849, and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson D. 252.[73] Both manuscripts are in Latin and date back to the fifteenth century.[74] This is a small survey and requires additional research to establish whether the use of children as scryers was in fact as widespread and prevalent as she suggests.

The rituals also ask for varying degrees of involvement from the child in question. Some of the rituals mentioned ask for the child to be actively involved, repeating prayers and invocations after the master, while others only need the child to be present to enable communication with the spirits. In ritual N, the child is an active participant in the ritual. The child is asked to say specific prayers and conjurations in conjunction with the master, and to hold the crystal in their hand: "Then put the cristall in the childes right hande and then turne your selves to wardes the sonne and knele […] and then the master must say with the childe this Blyssyng."[75] Then, the master must say more prayers and invocations until the spirit appears. Then the master must take the crystal in his hands and:

> bydde the Chylde looke in the sayd stone and demaunde of hym whither he seethe the .s. in the stone or nat. And yf he saythe yes, then Cast sumwhat of on the sith or on the table as a napkyn or a glove where yow wylt haue the .s. to apeere so that the Child takyng on the

[69] Fanger, "Virgin Territory," 208-09.
[70] Sloane 3853, f. 54r.
[71] Sloane 3853, f. 58r-v, f. 60r.
[72] Fanger, "Virgin Territory," 201.
[73] Fanger, "Virgin Territory," 205.
[74] Fanger, "Virgin Territory," 205. For a further introduction to Clm 849, see Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 22-41.
[75] Sloane 3853, f. 54r.

> clothe or glove may the more persyghtly and sonde see and beholde the .s. apperyinge in the stone between hym and the sayde napkyn or glove[76]

So once the child can see the spirit, the spirit has to be transported from the crystal to a napkin, in which the child is once again instrumental: the child can see the spirit and has to repeat specific prayers and invocations after the master, before the master can ask the spirit any questions.[77] In this specific ritual, the child is an active participant in the ritual to enable the master to make contact with the spirits.

Rituals E and J, both called "An angel's sight," are similar in level of participation for the child. In both cases, the child is supposed to be held between the operator's legs while the operator says the required prayers. Then the operator and child should work together:

> Then make the signe of the Crosse in the forehead of the child with thy thumbe, & let the child say one Pater Noster, and Ave Maria, & a Credo. Let him also say after thee these names of God. On + El + Ely + Eloy + Messias + Sother Emanuel Sabao in nominee patris + & filij + & spiritus sancti + Amen.[78]

After this has been done, the operator has to say a prayer three times, and then three angels will appear to the child, who will be their mouthpiece in what follows. The angels "will shew thee by thy child any honest request thou wilt demaunde."[79] Ritual J is identical to E with the exception of some minor spelling differences.

Ritual O only requires passive participation from the child. Once again, the operator should "holde hym in your armes" but then the operator should address conjurations to the child.[80] The child does not need to anything until the spirits have appeared, when the operator can "aske of the .s. or the childe suche Requestes as thew desyerst to knowe and he shall declare yt to yow, and thus yow maye knowe all your desyer by the Chylde."[81] The involvement of the child in ritual O is thus more passive; at most, the child has to repeat a Pater Noster, Ave maria and a Credo.[82] If the ritual uses the child's thumbnail as a scrying device rather than the crystal stone (ritual O^b), the child's involvement is slightly more active,

[76] Sloane 3853, f. 57v.
[77] Sloane 3853, f. 54r-58r.
[78] Add MS 36674, f. 85v.
[79] Add MS 36674, f. 85v.
[80] Sloane 3853, f. 58v.
[81] Sloane 3853, f. 59v.
[82] Sloane 3853, f. 59v-60v.

as in that case the operator should "saye thys prayer. And also cawse the chylde to say yt after yow with a goode audibile voice and soo repete the prayers tyll the .s. appeare vnto the chylde."[83] As soon as the spirit has appeared, the child and master both have to say another prayer. In this second part to the ritual, O^b, which can be carried out in a child's thumbnail, the child has to be an active participant rather than the passive participant they appear as in ritual O^a.

An even more marginal or passive participation can be seen in Rituals D and I. These rituals are identical save for spelling differences. In both, the 14-year-old child only has to touch the crystal or beryl stone used in the scrying ritual: "hauing with thee a child of 14 yeares, & hauing a christall or berill stone whole & sound the which the child holding in his hand."[84] This is the most passive of the six rituals involving a child.

These varying levels of participation are interesting, especially when compared to earlier scrying rituals involving child-scryers. Fanger does not describe the level of involvement of the virgin children in thirteenth-century rituals, but it appears that the children are merely (passive) mediums through which the operator or practitioner would gain entry to the spirit world.[85] Although rituals D, I, and O^a show passive participation of children in some of the rituals, Fanger's analysis does not prove to carry over for the majority of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century rituals. Instead, varying degrees of participation for the child in question can be seen in rituals E, J, N, and O^b. In rituals E, J, and O^b, the child is merely asked to repeat prayers and invocations and to hold the crystal, but it still is an active participation for the child. Ritual N actually needs the child to see the spirits and move them to a handkerchief so the master can see the spirits as well, in which case the child is an active participant in the scrying, and not merely the medium through which spirits come down.

However, as much as children functioned as scryers in the Middle Ages and in some of the rituals in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the early modern period showed a shift towards adult practitioners and the slow removal of the medium in general from scrying rituals. Fanger writes that it is possible for an adult practitioner to perceive spirits through scrying, but that it is more difficult and more frustrating.[86] Purity and virginity, the two main reasons to use a child-scryer, are not necessary in order to perceive spirits, but instead feature as a positive modifier to make rituals shorter and less frustrating.

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[83] Sloane 3853, f. 60v.
[84] Add MS 36674, f. 83r.
[85] Fanger, "Virgin Territory," 200-01.
[86] Fanger, "Virgin Territory," 211-12.

Twelve of the eighteen rituals analysed assume an adult would be able to eventually see the spirits through scrying without the help of a child-scryer. Only one ritual explicitly states that the adult operator can scry by himself, namely ritual H, which is titled "An experiment to see by thy selfe without a boy or companion the spirits vnderwritten in a cristall."[87] The number of rituals that do not involve child-scryers or mediums implies that the adult practitioner becomes the standard in ritual magic manuscripts in the early modern period.

So would non-virgin adult operators be able to scry at all if the child is the most suitable medium? Eliminating the medium in the equation made it easier for a magic practitioner to attempt scrying, as less people were involved. As has already been shown, virginity was not a necessity to be able to *see* spirits, but instead the presence of a pure and virginal child acts as a modifier to increase the chances of success of the conjurations. Rituals in which the scryer is on his own thus feature more and longer prayers and invocations, as well as a more thorough preparation of the scrying material, as the central focus on the preparation of the glass in the rituals above shows. The operator might even need to curse or condemn the spirit several times in order for the spirit to actually listen to the operator and appear. However, the virginity of the scryer could be replaced by prayers or conjurations that ask the virgins and virgin saints (the Virgin Mary, for instance) to help the operator.[88] These different types of virgins, both real and biblical, can apparently be used interchangeably, but having either a virgin child or the help of a virgin saint helps the operator's case to call upon spirits. Scrying was thus possible for whoever had enough time and patience to call upon the spirits to appear visibly to them by invoking virginal saints.

Both gender and age are difficult to pinpoint for the adult scryers in these twelve rituals. The assumption that the scryers are adults is based on the absence of the (explicit) mention of child-scryers or mediums, and the fact that a scryer might have to say daily prayers or undertake ritualistic acts for which time is needed, or the inclusion of materials which should be obtained somehow. Gender works similarly – the focus of the rituals is on being able to scry rather than on whether the person attempting to do this is male or female. Many rituals follow a step-by-step guide that instructs the operator to carry out specific acts without using any pronouns whatsoever. Rituals B, C, F, G, K, M, P, Q, and R address the reader with instructions, using the pronoun "you" or "thou." Ritual F instructs the scryer to

[87] Sloane 3846, f. 37r.
[88] Fanger, "Virgin Territories," 209, 211.

"be cleane from women," while ritual H does not use any pronouns whatsoever, and in ritual A, the pronouns "they" are used if any are used at all.[89] The operator thus remains a neutral entity in most of these rituals.

The materials and goals of scrying

Apart from the differences between adult or child scryers, the eighteen rituals also showcase a variety of rituals. The differences lie in the materials used for scrying and the goals for which one would scry according to the ritual. In order to establish what the 'norm' for scrying is in these sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English rituals, the materials and goals will be discussed in order to facilitate discussion about the differences between the ideal scryer and the historical scryer.

Materials

Usually, the materials scryers use in these rituals are crystals or pieces of glass. The modern idea of scryers using a crystal ball is not quite as prevalent – the scrying material does not need to be a perfect sphere of crystal, for instance, but there are certain materials that work better than others. The underlying idea is that, whatever is being used, it has to reflect and refract the light in some way.

In the eighteen rituals, the majority of the scryers use a crystal stone or glass. Rituals C, D, E, F, G, H, J, N, O[a], and Q require the use of a crystal. While rituals C and D initially simply require a "stone," the final binding conjuration on folio 55v asks that the spirit does not break "my christall stone," and afterward, the specifications for the stone follow, which clarify that the stone should be crystal.[90] Rituals A, K, L, and M require "a glass," "a glasse," "a glasse," and a "glase," respectively.[91] Some of the rituals suggest that multiple materials can be used to carry out the rituals. An example is ritual R, which could be carried out in "fayer mirror of glasse" or "myror or glas."[92] Rituals D and I could be carried out in a "christall or berill stone."[93] Ritual O could be done with a "Clene and a Cleere Glasse" or "in the nayle of thy thombe of a Childe."[94] This child's thumbnail was one of the more traditional options for scrying, but as the use of a child-scryer was declining after the Middle Ages, it

[89] Add MS 36674, f. 86r.
[90] Add MS 36674, f. 55v-56v.
[91] Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 5017, f. 3r; Sloane 3850, f. 30r, 79v, 134r.
[92] Sloane 3853, f. 232v.
[93] Add MS 36674, f. 83r. The citation is identical in Sloane 3846, f. 64r.
[94] Sloane 3853, f. 58v, 60v.

only makes sense that this scrying device slowly loses popularity. Figure 1.1 shows the distribution of materials in the eighteen rituals analysed in this chapter.

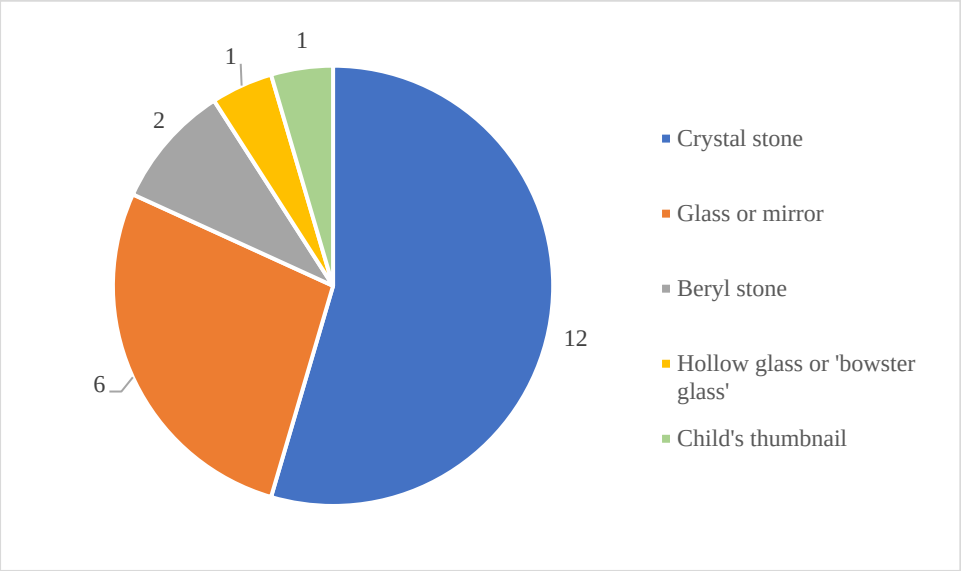

Figure 1.1: Distribution of possible scrying devices

That a scryer has to use a piece of glass or a crystal does not provide researchers with much information about the exact materials they used. Luckily, in some cases, the shape and size of the crystals one should use in a ritual are specified, as is the case in ritual D, where the practitioner's crystal should be "flatt of bothe sydes, and cleare without crackes or staines, and as large as may be gotten, and of A good thicknes."[95] The same ritual also provides us with additional information about the best crystals: they should be as broad as possible, and engraved with specific characters. It is not good at all if the stone is not flat on both sides – the crystal should thus *not* have the characteristic round ball shape that we are used to in modern times and depictions.[96] Not all of the crystals are described in as much detail as is given in ritual D. In most of the cases, the scrying stones are simply supposed to be "whole & sound," "proper neat and well polished," "most cleare without cracke," "cleare and bright," "clene and […] Cleere," "clere round and […] fayer."[97] Only a few rituals just ask for a crystal, not specifying the state of the crystal in particular.

[95] Add MS 36674, f. 56r.
[96] Add MS 36674, f. 56r-v.
[97] Add MS 36674, f. 83r (and Sloane 3846, f. 64r); ibid., f. 86r; Sloane 3846, f. 34r; Sloane 3853, f. 54r; ibid., f. 58v; ibid. 232v. Sloane 3853 does not use a crystal, but it still specifies that the hollow glass should be clean and clear (f. 143r).

An issue arises with the "glass:" what exactly constitutes glass in the late Middle Ages and early modern period? There is not much information about the glass used in these rituals, and in some cases 'glass' actually meant 'mirror.' Ritual A shows that the glass should be big enough to at least "put five drops of hallowe oyle on five places of the glass like a Cross," as does ritual L.[98] Ritual K simply changes a chicken into "a glasse that all menne may see in yt whatsoeuer they will."[99] Ritual M provides slightly more insight into the glass used. It requires the scryer to use a "cleane fine & faire glase," which should be divided into four parts and inscribed with specific names and characters, provided to the operator in an image on folio 135r.[100] However little information this is about the glass used – and whether crystal and glass might not be synonymous in this case – it does provide initial insight into the type of glass used: it should be fine and fair. Glass was locally produced in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and it was produced in multiple colours and styles.[101] Both green glass and the more luxurious Venetian glass were produced in England, and while green glass was less expensive, it is unclear which type might have been used for scrying.[102]

The crystal stone or piece of glass cannot be used as a receptacle for spirits without any other form of preparation. First, it needs to be made ready for use, or consecrated. This preparation is most prevalent and detailed in rituals that do not include a child scryer. According to ritual D, consecration is only needed when one wants to talk to angels, and that "inferiors," i.e. demons, can be talked to in unconsecrated crystals, but this specific ritual is the only one that includes this piece of information.[103] Often, the preparation of the crystal is preceded by saying prayers over it, which is then followed by writing specific characters or names in the crystal or in the virgin parchment surrounding it to prepare it as a receptacle for spirits, as has already been described in the previous subchapter.

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[98] Newberry Library, MS 5017, 3r; Sloane 3850, f. 80v.
[99] Sloane 3850, f. 30r.
[100] Sloane 3850, f. 134v-135r
[101] Robert J. Charleston, "New Light on Renaissance Glass in England," *Journal of Glass Studies* 25 (1983): 132, < https://www.jstor.org/stable/24190744>
[102] On the production of glass in England in general, see D.W. Crossley, "The Performance of the Glass Industry in Sixteenth-Century England," *The Economic History Review* 25, no. 3 (1972): 421-33. On a more general history of glass and glass-making in England, see Edward Dillon, *Glass* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), and Robert J. Charleston, *English Glass and the Glass Used in England, Circa 400-1940* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1984).
[103] Add MS 36674, f. 56v.

Goals

There is a great variety in scrying rituals, materials, and practitioners, and the same trend continues in the goals for which one can use a scrying ritual. All eighteen rituals give some idea of what kind of queries can be answered with the scrying rituals, and Table 1.2 below gives a concise overview of the different goals that are named in the rituals as possible outcomes. More information will be given in the text below the table in question.

Rit.	Theft	Murder	Treasure	Friends	Secrets	Future	Unspecified
A							x
B							x
C							x
D							x
E							x
F					x	x	
G	x				x		
H	x	x	x	x	x		x
I							x
J							x
K							x
L							x
M							x
N		x	x	x	x		
O							x
P				x			x
Q	x	x	x	x			
R	x						x

Table 1.2: Scrying goals mentioned in the rituals

As can be seen in Table 1.2, many of the rituals are vague about what exactly can be done with the rituals or spirits conjured through the scrying glass. Fourteen of the eighteen rituals are unspecific about the goals for which the ritual can be used or merely state that the ritual will show the truth of any doubtful matter. They only state that any question can be answered by means of the ritual, or whatever the operator wants to know. Yet some rituals are slightly more specific, and specify that they can be used to find hidden treasure (“treasure”), stolen or lost goods (“theft”), murders and information about manslaughter (“murder”), the state of friends and whether they are still alive and well (“friends”), any secret things (“secrets”), and the future (“future”).

As can be seen in the table, most of the rituals are geared towards gaining knowledge in general or unspecified terms. Then, uncovering secrets, theft detection, and seeing how friends are doing are the most prevalent goal of the scrying ritual, with four out of eighteen rituals being geared towards this. After this come finding treasure and murderers (three rituals each), and finally, uncovering the future. All of the rituals are geared towards gaining

knowledge of a specific kind – finding a thief, murder, or lost and stolen goods, or the state of friends. The spirits are apparently a good source of information for all these issues.

Conclusion

Based on the analysed scrying rituals in this chapter, there appear to have been two different types of scryers in English vernacular ritual magic manuscripts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The first works as a medium – people who are able to see the spirit world in the crystal and function as a link between the spirit world and the master – while the master guides them through prayers and other ritualistic steps. This type, often a child, is only visible in a third of the rituals analysed in this chapter and could display varying levels of activity in the rituals. The second type of scryer is the magician who works directly with the crystal themselves without the help of the medium. If the scryer was a medium, they were usually a (virgin) child of under fourteen years old, while the master could be an adult of any age or sex. The materials involved are predominantly crystal stones, but could also be glass or mirrors, beryl stones, or thumbnails. These materials often required some form of preparation, most notably in the absence of a child scryer. The rituals that appear in the five examined manuscripts are manifold, but they are mainly geared towards seeing spirits and show actual scrying rituals, while there are some that focus more on obtaining materials that can be used for scrying later on. The goals of scrying are varied but all focus on gaining knowledge of some kind.

The ideal scryer in ritual manuscripts is thus relatively homogenous, although there are two different types. It is clear that while the preferred scryers were children, this was changing to adult scryers in the early modern period, even in ritual magic descriptions of scrying. The use of children as scryers might still have been a hold-over from the Middle Ages that remained through careful copying of the rituals in medieval manuscripts. As a result, the scrying materials were crystal stones or glass rather than a child's (thumb)nail. The two types of scryer that emerge from the analysed rituals will be compared to the reality of scryers in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: The real, historical scryer

The previous chapter discussed the depiction of the ideal scryer, and this one will focus on the reality of scrying in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth century to show the characteristics of the historical scryer. The depiction of the historical scryer can be gleaned from court cases and ego-documents, such as diaries and casebooks, and will show that scryers do not form a uniform group. It will show that the scryer could be both male and female, although they were predominantly adults. The scrying materials, goals, and rituals also varied greatly across the historical scryers. This forms the basis of the comparison between the 'ideal' scryer and the historical scryer, which is discussed at the end of this chapter, which will show that there are some major differences between the historical and the 'ideal' scryer.

The sources

This chapter uses court cases, reports of court cases, and ego-documents such as diaries and casebooks to discuss the reality of scrying in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. To show the context in which these scryers appeared, the sources are briefly introduced. The court cases are discussed first, and are followed by a discussion of the reports of court cases that appear in other treatises. Then, the diaries, casebooks, and autobiographies are discussed.

Court cases appear to be relatively safe to work with, information-wise, as they are supposed to reflect the realities of the court case. However, in some cases, reports of court cases are not fully trustworthy; the different courtroom strategies that could be adopted by the accused in a case might muddle the waters, as everyone behaves differently when they have to appear in court. Some people might grovel, others might outright lie about their guilt, and the next could simply confess and bargain for clemency.[104] In some cases, it is difficult to establish which strategy is adopted and thus how trustworthy the accused is. The court cases analysed in this chapter are briefly introduced here to explain the circumstances of their publication and the case itself.

The first source is the examination of William Wycherley in 1549. This case is transmitted in London, British Library, Lansdowne 2 and has been edited and published by

[104] Thomas V. Cohen, "Thee Forms of Jeopardy: Honor, Pain, and Truth-Telling in a Sixteenth-Century Italian Courtroom," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 29, no. 4 (1998): 975-98. See also Derek Neal, "Suits Make The Man: Masculinity in two English law courts, c. 1500," *Canadian Journal of History* 37, no. 1 (2002): 2-22.

J.G. Nichols.[105] Wycherley adopted the strategy of confession and informed on many other practitioners as he went along, positing that there were at least 500 conjurors in England.[106] It is unclear for what reason Wycherley "and his complice" were examined, and if they had indeed committed a punishable crime or not.[107] The second case appears in the Records of Quarter Sessions in the country of Wiltshire, in which a man called Simon Rose is accused of consulting a cunning man about the loss of a sheep.[108] The summary of this particular case is provided by W.D. Macray. It is unclear whether Rose was convicted or not, and the full description of the court case is unfortunately unavailable.

There are also multiple descriptions of court cases written by people who were involved in the court cases or witnessed the trial(s). These appeared in pamphlets or treatises on court cases on witchcraft or magic in general. In the anonymous *The Triall of Maist. Dorrell*, published in 1599, the author of the address to the reader specifies that he was not the author of the main body of the text or the dedication.[109] He simply was the one who decided to publish the papers in his possession. The collection of papers is focused on witchcraft trials that took place in 1599, one of which mentions a scryer. This is the witchcraft trial of Anne Kerke of Castle Alley in London, which details her arraignment, condemnation, and eventual execution.[110] Alexander Roberts' *A Treatise of Witchcraft* is another compilation of witchcraft trials, published in London in 1616.[111] Roberts wrote this treatise to show the Christian reader that witchcraft was something negative.[112] In the 1616 trial against Marie Smith, wife of a glover called Henry Smith, a scryer is briefly mentioned. Thomas Ady, on the other hand, argued in *A Candle in the Dark* that witchcraft and magic were not real, and thus all magic practitioners were frauds. In one of the cases, a butcher from Essex visited a scryer who was viewed as a "notable cousening Knave."[113] A more neutral perspective is provided by Joseph Glanvill, who attempted to prove that ghosts and witches existed in *Saducismus Triumphatus*. Henry More, Glanvill's close friend, published this book

[105] The text can be found in London, British Library, Lansdowne 2/26, f. 62r-64v. This thesis uses the printed version, which is found in John Gough Nichols, ed., *The Narratives of the Days of the Reformation* (London: J.B. Nichols & Sons, 1859), 331-35.
[106] Nichols, *Narratives*, 334-35.
[107] Nichols, *Narratives*, 331.
[108] W.D. Macray, ed., *Historical Manuscripts Commission: Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections. Volume I* (London: Mackie & Co. Ltd, 1901), 128.
[109] Anonymous, *The Triall of Maist. Dorrell* (Middelburg, 1599), 10.
[110] Anon., *Triall of Maist. Dorrell*, 99-103.
[111] Alexander Roberts, *A Treatise of Witchcraft* (London, 1616).
[112] Roberts, *A Treatise of Witchcraft*, A1r.
[113] Thomas Ady, *A Candle in the Dark shewing The Divine Cause of the distractions of the whole Nation of England, and of the Christian WORLD* (London, 1655), 62.

posthumously.[114] Glanvill himself knew a scryer called Compton, who appeared on two separate occasions: first, alongside a certain Mr. Hill, who attempted to solve the mystery of a haunted house with Glanvill, and second in the witchcraft trial of Elizabeth Styles of Bayford.[115]

Some of the treatises or pamphlets focus on one person rather than on multiple cases against different people. Two scryers in particular were only mentioned in pamphlets depicting their own court case(s). The first scryer is John Lambe, who was discussed in the anonymous pamphlet *A Briefe Description of the Notorious Life of Iohn Lambe*, published in 1628. The pamphlet describes Lambe as having lived "a Scaudalous life," which formed the topic of this pamphlet.[116] The anonymous author appeared to be well-informed about Lambe's life, basing most of the statements in the source on court cases in which Lambe was involved. One indictment was for "certaine euill Diabolicall and execrable arts called Witcrafts, Enchantments, Charmers, and Sorcerers," another for spirit conjuration and invocation, and the last for rape of an underage girl.[117] The second scryer is Anne Bodenham, whose trial was held in 1653 and has been transmitted in two sources: Edmond Bower's *Doctor Lamb Revived* and the anonymous *Doctor Lamb's Darling*. The anonymous source only provides the reader with a summary of the trial and some of the juicy details, like the poison plot which formed an integral part of the case.[118] Bower's pamphlet is more detailed and also describes the history between Anne Bodenham and Anne Styles, the two subjects of the case.[119] Bower was present at the trial and even conducted some of the interviews himself, explaining that the account of the history between Bodenham and Styles was provided by Styles herself.[120]

Scryers also appeared in autobiographies and other ego-documents, such as diaries. William Lilly described several scryers in his autobiography, naming them as well as describing some of their backgrounds and the rituals they used.[121] In other cases, diaries or casebooks can be used to pinpoint information about scryers. What remains of John Dee's

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[114] Coleman O. Parsons, introduction to *Saducsimus Triumphatus* by Joseph Glanvill, (London, 1689; Gainsville: Scholar's Fascimiles and Reprints, 1966), vii, xvii.
[115] Joseph Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, (London, 1689; Gainsville: Scholar's Fascimiles and Reprints, 1966), 333-34, 344-49.
[116] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description of the Notorious Life of Iohn Lambe otherwise called Doctor Lambe* (Amsterdam, 1628), 1.
[117] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*, 4, 5, 15.
[118] Anonymous, *Doctor Lamb's Darling: or Strange and terrible News from Salisbury…* (London, 1653).
[119] Edmond Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived, or Witchcraft Condemned in Anne Bodenham…* (London, 1653).
[120] Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived*, 11.
[121] William Lilly, *The Life of William Lilly* (London, 1774).

diaries and books of angel conversations have been edited by Meric Causabon, J.O. Halliwell, and Christopher Whitby.[122] The casebooks of Simon Forman are part of the Ashmolean collection of the Bodleian Library in Oxford, but have been digitised and edited through the Casebooks Project, spearheaded by Lauren Kassell.[123] The report of scrying proceedings of Humphrey Gilbert and John Davis can be found in London, British Library, Additional MS 36674 and have recently been edited and published.[124] These sources are all drawn up by people who employed scryers.

The historical scryer

This subheading discusses the different aspects of the scryers that appeared in the sources described above. The focus in this chapter is once more on sex, gender, and the rituals, scrying materials, and goals used, but it also focuses on additional details that can be gleaned from some of the sources, such as the level of education of scryers, as well as employment strategies and monetary gains for scryers. Most of these characteristics are shown in Table 2.1 below. The discussion of these different characteristics of scryers facilitates the comparison between the ideal scryer and the real, historical scryer at the end of this chapter, but also the comparison to cunning folk, which opens the next chapter.

[122] Meric Causabon, *A True & Faithful Relation of What passed for may Yeers Between Dr. John Dee […] and Some Spirits* (London, 1659); J.O. Halliwell, ed., *The Private Diary of Dr. John Dee and the Catalogue of his Library of Manuscripts* (London: John Bowyer Nichols and Son, 1842); Whitby, *John Dee's Actions with Spirits*, 2 vols.
[123] The Casebooks Projects and transcriptions, editions, and digital images can be found at the following link: https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/.
[124] Add MS 36674, f. 58r-62v. For the published edition, see Legard and Cummins, eds., *An Excellent Booke of the Arte of Magick*.

No	Name	Sex	Age	Dating	Scrying materials	Scrying goals	Other jobs	Patron/Client
1	Robert Bayly	m	A	16th century	Crystal	Conjuring	*Unspecified*	William Wycherley
2	William Wycherley	m	A	16th century	Crystal	Conjuring, finding lost/stolen goods	*Unspecified*	*Unspecified*
3	Lowth	m	A	16th century	Crystal	Treasure-hunting	"Broderer"	*Unspecified*
4	Thomas Malfrey	m	A	16th century	*Unspecified*	*Unspecified*	*Unspecified*	*Unspecified*
5	Anonymous	f	A	16th century	*Unspecified*	*Unspecified*	*Unspecified*	*Unspecified*
6	John Davis	m	16/17	1567	Crystal	Spirit conversations	Navigator	Humphrey Gilbert
7	Barnabas Saul	m	A	1581-2	Crystal	Angel conversations	Preacher	John Dee
8	Edward Kelley	m	A	1582-7	Crystal	Angel conversations	Apothecary	John Dee
9	Arthur Dee	m	7/8	1587	Crystal	Angel conversations	n/a	John Dee
10	John Goodage	m	A	1587-97	Glass	Call upon spirits	*Unspecified*	Simon Forman
11	Stephen Mitchell	m	17/18	1588	*Unspecified*	Call upon spirits	Navigator	Simon Forman
12	Bartholomew Hickman	m	A	1591-1607	*Unspecified*	Angel conversations	*Unspecified*	John Dee
13	"a cuning-man"	m	A	1599	Glass	Find bewitcher	Cunning man	"an innkeeper"
14	Charles Sledd	m	A	16th/17th century	Crystal	*Unspecified*	Apothecary	*Unspecified*
15	"one"	m	A	17th century	Glass	Find bewitcher	*Unspecified*	Edward Drake
16	John Lambe	m	A	17th century	Glass, crystal	Find lost goods, tell fortune	Physician, teacher	*Unspecified*
17	Sarah Skelhorn	f	A	17th century	Crystal	Angel conversations	*Unspecified*	Arthur Gauntlet
18	Anne Bodenham	f	A	17th century	Green glass	Find lost/stolen goods, finds poisoners, show present and future	Teacher	Anne Styles, Goddard family
19	Anonymous ("cunning man")	m	A	17th century	Glass	Find stolen goods, thieves	Cunning man	Simon Rose
20	Anonymous	m	A	17th century	Glass	Find lost/stolen goods	Cunning man	Essex butcher
21	Compton	m	A	17th century	Mirror	Show present	Physician	Mr. Hill, Richard Vining
22	John a Windor	m	A	17th century	*Unspecified*	*Unspecified*	Scrivener	*Unspecified*
23	Ellen Evans	f	?	17th century	Crystal	*Unspecified*	*Unspecified*	*Unspecified*
24	Gladwell of Suffolk	m	A	17th century	Beryl	Angel conjuring?	*Unspecified*	*Unspecified*
25	William Hodges	m	A	17th century	Crystal	Answer questions	Astrologer	*Unspecified*

Table 2.3: An overview of the historical scryers

Sex

In the first chapter, it appeared that the sex of the practitioner did not matter much, but that at least some of the rituals bore markers that specified a male (adult) scryer. The historical sources show that this trend of mostly male scryers continues in the early modern period, but that there is also an increase in female scryers. This subheading discusses the sex of the practitioners, by first focusing on the male practitioners and then showcasing some of the female scryers.

The majority of the court cases focus on male practitioners. William Wycherley, a scryer himself, provided the names of the scryers with whom he worked or whom he knew about. He worked with a certain Robert Bayly, but also admitted to using the crystal himself at least twice.[125] Wycherley mentioned other magic practitioners towards the end of his examination, and he named three scryers: two male and one female. The two male practitioners were named Lowth and Thomas Malfrey.[126] In the other court case, in which Simon Rose of Berwick Basset was accused of consulting a cunning man about a stolen sheep, the scryer is merely described as a "cunning man."[127] In descriptions of court cases, there is also a plethora of male practitioners: in the trial against Anne Kerke, an innkeeper whose daughter was cursed went to visit a "cuning man" who showed the cause of his daughter's madness, Anne Kerke, in a glass.[128] In the trial against Marie Smith, Elizabeth Hancocke's father, Edward Drake, went to "one" for advice, and this person showed him the face of Marie Smith as the cause of his daughter's ailments. Although the scryer is referred to as "one," male pronouns were used to describe him.[129] John Lambe was also a male scryer, as well as Compton, the scryer mentioned in Glanvill's *Saducismus Triumphatus*, and the anonymous cunning man Ady describes in *A Candle in the Dark*.[130] William Lilly mentioned several scryers, of whom the majority were also male. The male "speculators" he names are Edward Kelley, John a Windor, Gladwell of Suffolk, Charles Sledd, and Mr. William Hodges.[131] Edward Kelley was one of the four male scryers Dee employed in his life. Dee's other scryers were Barnabas Saul, Bartholomew Hickman, and Dee's own son Arthur.[132]

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[125] Nichols, *Narratives*, 333.
[126] Nichols, *Narratives*, 334.
[127] Macray, *Report on Manuscripts*, 128.
[128] Anonymous, *The Triall of Maist. Dorrell*, 100-01.
[129] Roberts, *Treatise of Witchcraft*, 52-53.
[130] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*; Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, 333; Ady, *Candle in the Dark*, 62.
[131] Lilly, *Life*, 39-40, 72, 145, 146, 151.
[132] Whitby, *John Dee's Actions with Spirits*, I:19-53. Some scholars believe that Dee employed other scryers as well, such as Roger Cook, William Emery, Patrick Saunders, and John Pontois, but as there is no direct proof that they in fact worked as scryers for Dee, they will not be discussed in this thesis. For more information on

Both of Forman's scryers, John Goodage and Stephen Mitchell, were male, as was Humphrey Gilbert's scryer John Davis.[133] This brings the total of male practitioners to twenty-one out of twenty-five scryers in total.

This means that four female scryers appear in the analysed sources. First, there is the unnamed female scryer that William Wycherley mentioned in his examination: "a woman, whose name [he] knoweth not."[134] The second case that features a woman is the trial against Anne Bodenham, who was accused of witchcraft and employed scrying.[135] The third and fourth are mentioned by William Lilly in his autobiography; they are Sarah Skelhorn, who was a scryer to Arthur Gauntlet until his death and worked on her own after, and Ellen Evans, about whom not much is known.[136]

So, while there are women who were described as scryers, the majority was still male in early modern England. This makes sense in the context of the "clerical underworld," coined by Richard Kieckhefer, as this theory supposes that mostly men were involved in the transmission of learned magic (manuscripts). As most of the clergy – chantry priests, monks, friars, those merely ordained to join a university – were literate and had basic knowledge of the rites of exorcisms as well as time, they could engage in magic practices to pass the time.[137] While the dissolution of the monasteries and clergy that formed the clerical underworld changed this, one would still need to have time and be literate to carry out most of these rituals. The introduction of female scryers shows that the theory of the clerical underworld does not quite work for the early modern period in England. The dissolution of the monasteries led to the inclusion of women which created more diversity in practitioners of (learned) magic, although it is not clear whether these women were all involved with learned magic.

Age

In the previous chapter, a shift from child-scryers to adult scryers could already be seen as compared to the medieval ideal of the child-scryer. In these historical sources, this trend continued; the overwhelming majority of the scryers were adults. In some cases, it is difficult

these scryers, see Whitby, *John Dee's Actions with Spirits*, I:53-54 and Roberts and Watson, *John Dee's Library Catalogue*.

[133] Kassell, *Medicine and Magic*, 217; Traister, *The Notorious Astological Physician*, 107; Add MS 36674, f. 59r.

[134] Nichols, *Narratives*, 334.

[135] Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived*, 1, 27.

[136] Lilly, *Life*, 149-50.

[137] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 155-56.

to establish what age a scryer was because it is not always stated explicitly, but for other scryers, there are some indications of their age. The descriptor "child," which was used in rituals, does not appear in these sources, and thus most information here is gleaned from their presence in court. It is important to reiterate that children were generally considered to be people under the age of 14, as specified in the previous chapter.

For some scryers, their age could be read directly in the sources or be deduced from other information. The oldest scryer was Anne Bodenham, described as "Wife to Edward Bodenham Clothyer, aged 80. years."[138] Additionally, she had supposedly been a servant to doctor Lambe, who died in 1628; Bodenham was at least 23 years old if she had known Lambe at all, seeing this case was held in 1653.[139] Edward Kelley was in his late twenties when he started scrying for Dee in 1582, and Bartholomew Hickman probably started scrying for Dee in his late forties, in the 1590s.[140] John Davis, scryer to Humphrey Gilbert, was sixteen or seventeen when their experiments took place.[141] Stephen Mitchell was seventeen or eighteen when he acted as scryer to Simon Forman.[142]

For other scryers, context clues, such as training in a specific field or the fact that they were highly praised as scryers, provide information about their status as adults. Barnabas Saul, one of Dee's other scryers, was described as someone who had experience with scrying and was trained as a preacher.[143] John Lambe was trained as a physician, as was Compton.[144] John Goodage worked as a scryer for Simon Forman in 1587 and again between 1591 and 1597.[145] His age is unclear, but as Forman employed another male adult scryer, Goodage can be assumed to be at least over 14 too. The ages of John a Windor, Gladwell of Suffolk, William Hodges, Charles Sledd, Sarah Skelhorn, and Ellen Evans were not specified in Lilly's *History*. Sarah Skelhorn, however, was a scryer until she died, and David Rankine deduced that she was working for her final patrons from circa 1636 until circa 1653.[146] The anonymous practitioners that appeared in the trials of Anne Kerke and Marie Smith remain

[138] Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived*, 1.
[139] Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived*, 1; Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*, 20-21.
[140] The initial angel conversation Dee conducted with the help of Kelley took place on March 10, 1582. In this instance, Kelly was still known to Dee as "Edward Talbot." It is only after 15 November 1582 that Kelley is known as "Kelley" to Dee. See Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:30, II:138. For information on Hickman, see Halliwell, *Private Diary*, 1, 5.
[141] Klaassen, "Ritual Invocation," 341.
[142] See Chapter 3 for a further investigation into Mitchell's age. He was supposedly born around 1570.
[143] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:10.
[144] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*, 1-2; Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, 333.
[145] Traister, *The Notorious Astrological Physician*, 107.
[146] David Rankine, ed., *The Grimoire of Arthur Gauntlet. A 17th century London Cunning-man's book of charms, conjurations and prayers* (London: Avalonia, 2011), 11.

without a clear age.[147] The same goes for the anonymous cunning man in the case of Simon Rose, the fraudulent cunning man in Ady's *Candle in the Dark* and for Robert Bayly, Lowth, Thomas Malfrey and the female scryer who were named by Wycherley in his examination, as well as Wycherley himself.[148]

One scryer has not yet been discussed, and this is Arthur Dee. Arthur Dee was John Dee's son, born in 1579. When Dee and Kelley fell out, Dee used his young son as a replacement scryer, although it did not work as well as working with Kelley. Arthur is the only confirmed child-scryer: he was seven years old when his father employed him.[149] Intriguingly, based on the results, the child did not help Dee in his conversations with angels, which differs from the medieval theory that a child was the best scryer. In the early modern period, this theory appeared to be slowly losing traction.

The scryer's background

There are several fascinating factors besides age, sex, and the scrying materials, rituals, and goals that will be discussed in the next subheading. This subheading discusses the background of the scryer: what was their level of education, what were their employment strategies, what were their monetary gains, and were they itinerant? The scryer's level of education is specifically tied to literacy and serves as one of the bases for comparison between scryers and cunning folk, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The scryers that appeared in court do not provide the reader with much information about their background. The five scryers appearing in the examination of William Wycherley are only described with the most basic of information. The level of education and literacy is unclear for all practitioners, but there is some information about their employment strategies and itinerancy. Wycherley himself was a tailor who also dealt in magical necessities such as swords, and the scryer called Lowth was a "borderer" who went out daily on treasure hunts.[150] For all five scryers – Wycherley himself, Bayly, Lowth, Malfrey, and the anonymous female scryer – it is unclear what their monetary gains were, even though, Wycherley stated that he had paid customers come to him to buy or find specific magical instruments.[151] It is unclear whether or not the scryers were itinerant because of the lack of

[147] Anonymous, *The Triall of Maist. Dorrell*, 101; Roberts, *A Treatise of Witchcraft*, 52-53.
[148] Macray, *Report on Manuscripts*, 128; Ady, *Candle in the Dark*, 62; Nichols, *Narratives*, 333.
[149] Halliwell, *Private Diary*, 6; Causabon, *True and Faithful*, III:4-9. Arthur Dee's stint as scryer was short: from 15 to 17 April 1587.
[150] Nichols, *Narratives*, 331, 333-34.
[151] Nichols, *Narratives*, 333-34.

information, but it appears that three of the scryers were more or less sedentary. Wycherley provided the names and locations of three scryers as follows: "Lowth, in Flete-strete […] Thomas Malfrey of Goldstone besides Yarmouth, [and] a woman besides Stoke Clare," thus linking the practitioners to specific places where they could be found.[152] Although it is unclear how long exactly these practitioners stayed at their respective locations, they lived and worked there long enough to be identified by their name and specific location. Conversely, Wycherley himself appeared to be itinerant: he lived in the parish of Saint Sepulchre's, specifically in Charterhouse Lane in London, for at least two years, but ten years before that, he was in a place called "Pembsam" in Sussex to carry out a ritual in which his own role was unclear.[153] According to Nichols, "Pembsam" referred to the village of Pebblesham, between Hastings and Bexhill in East Sussex.[154] Nine years before the trial, Wycherley attempted a conjuration at Yarmouth, and two months before his examination, he used "hallywater, a sworde unconsecrated […] at Hale oke beside Fullam."[155] Wycherley apparently travelled around to practise magic, although he probably stayed in and around Sussex for most of his life. It is unclear where else Robert Bayly, the scryer who was present at the conjuration at Pembsam, practised his craft.[156] The court case in which Simon Rose was accused of consulting a cunning man provides less information about the scryer in question. While the scryer is described as a "cunning man," no additional information is provided about his level of education or other jobs he might have held down.[157] However, this cunning man lived in Sapworth, and could apparently be identified by just his job and his location, which points toward him being sedentary like the scryers mentioned in Wycherley's examination.[158]

Descriptions of trials contain slightly more information in most cases, probably to clarify to the reader who the main players were in the cases in question. The descriptions of the trials in which John Lambe, Anne Bodenham, and Compton appeared provide a wealth of information about these practitioners in general. John Lambe's entire life is described in the anonymous source *A Briefe Description*, through which the reader learns that Lambe was trained as a physician and that he taught children of gentlemen to read and write English.[159]

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[152] Nichols, *Narratives*, 334.
[153] Nichols, *Narratives*, 331-32.
[154] Nichols, *Narratives*, note d., 332.
[155] Nichols, *Narratives*, 333-34.
[156] Nichols, *Narratives*, 332-33.
[157] Macray, *Report on Manuscripts*, 128.
[158] Macray, *Report on Manuscripts*, 128.
[159] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*, 1-2.

He was not a licenced physician, but did have the training required for the job.[160] For his scrying, no monetary gains were recorded, but he did provide services for which he presumably was paid. He visited his clients, although it is unclear how far he travelled to meet those clients.[161] Lambe appeared in court several times and apparently moved around relatively often. In his first trial, he lived in Tardebigge, but he moved to Henlipp shortly after.[162] In a rape case held fifteen years later, Lambe appeared to live in Southwarke, and finally he moved to a house near Parliament House, where he was stoned to death by an angry mob.[163]

Anne Bodenham was taught how to read by John Lambe, to whom she had been a servant, and taught children herself, although she was "pretending to get her livelihood by such employment."[164] She possessed several books, some of which contained images.[165] Bodenham's case is one of the few in which monetary gains are explicitly mentioned. However, there does not seem to be any kind of rhyme or reason to it. To find a stolen spoon (that Bodenham could not find but that she said would be returned soon), she required a payment 12 shillings and a jug of beer, while for finding lost pieces of gold, which involved a scrying ritual, the payment was 7 shillings.[166] For a second, relatively similar scrying ritual, Bodenham later requested 3 shillings, and the cost of finding the location of hidden poison was unclear. Overall, Bodenham was paid more than £2 by the Goddard family and their servants. For some of the enquiries posed by Anne Styles and other servants, the cost was not provided in court, and it is not clear whether this was because Bodenham did not earn anything from those enquiries or for other reasons. There is no indication that Bodenham ever moved from the town of Fisherton Anger in Wiltshire apart from during her servitude to John Lambe.[167] If clients wanted to consult her, they knew where to find her and probably consulted her in her home.

The third scryer about whom important information can be gleaned from descriptions of court cases is Compton. This Compton "practiced Physick" and must thus have had some form of education.[168] He also appeared to be an opportunist who took any and all offers made

[160] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*, 1-2.
[161] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*, 6. One of those visits is described in this source, where Lambe went to visit "a gentleman's house in Worcester."
[162] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*, 3, 5.
[163] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*, 15, 20-21.
[164] Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived*, 1-2.
[165] Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived*, 27.
[166] Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived*, 2.
[167] Bower, *Doctor Lamb's Darling*, 1.
[168] Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, 333.

near him, using any and all opportunities to get involved in anything magic-related. He offered to take care of the haunted house which was "a Rendezvous of Witches" for £100, but the scrying he did right afterwards for Mr. Hill, he appeared to have done for free to demonstrate his abilities.[169] It is not clear whether he was itinerant, but he appeared to be sedentary up to a certain point, as Richard Vining, who consulted Compton, knew where to find Compton "in the Parish of Ditch Eate" to learn if his wife could be healed – a service for which Compton's monetary gains were once again not stated.[170]

While the three cases above contain a wealth of information about the scryers involved, other trials include less information. This is linked to the role of the scryer in those trials in question: the scryers that appeared in the trials of Anne Kerke and Marie Smith, and in the description of Ady's *Candle in the Dark* played a (relatively) minor role. There is no information on the level of education of the three anonymous scryers described in these sources, and neither is there any information about their payment. All three scryers were consulted by clients who were after information (such as finding their lost cattle or finding out who bewitched their daughter), but their monetary gains are not specified.[171] Both the scryer consulted by the innkeeper in the trial against Anne Kerke and the scryer consulted by the Essex butcher in Ady's *Candle in the Dark* are described as cunning men.[172] There is no further information about the scryer consulted by Edward Drake in the trial against Marie Smith.[173] For all three, it is clear that people knew where to find them if they needed to consult a cunning man or magic user, like the three scryers mentioned by Wycherley and the anonymous scryer in the case of Simon Rose. While Ady's anonymous cunning man is described as driven to carry out a ritual for the fee, it is not clear what the fee in question was.[174]

While court cases and descriptions of court cases generally provide a relatively clear picture of the scryer, this is less the case for ego-documents. This is because diaries, letters, and casebooks were written for personal use and often presuppose knowledge about the persons described in the documents. Autobiographies do include slightly more information about the practitioners, but the reader mostly has to rely on what the author thought was necessary information to provide. Lilly thus does introduce more information about Edward

[169] Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, 333-34.
[170] Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, 349.
[171] Anonymous, *The Triall of Maist. Dorrell*, 100-01; Ady, *Candle in the Dark*, 62; Roberts, *Treatise of Witchcraft*, 53.
[172] Anonymous, *Triall of Maist. Dorrell*, 101; Ady, *Candle in the Dark*, 62.
[173] Roberts, *Treatise of Witchcraft*, 53.
[174] Ady, *Candle in the Dark*, 62.

Kelley than John Dee does. Lilly described Kelley as an apothecary, and Kelley's grasp on Latin must have been sufficient to hold angel conversations in Latin.[175] When Kelley was introduced to Dee, he immediately proved himself as a scryer and discredited Saul, Dee's previous scryer, as soon as he could.[176] Kelley secured his employment with Dee through an initial angel conversation, in which the angel Uriel implied that the only way for Dee to talk to Michael was to work closely together with Kelley; they would "ioinctly, haue the knowledge of his Angells togither."[177] Dee paid Kelley for his scrying services, but it is unclear how much until Kelley told Dee he would be leaving Dee's service for Mr. Harry Lee's on 29 June 1583. Lee offered to pay him £40 per year, after which Dee promised Kelley £50 per year. However, Kelley released him of this promise less than a week later, on 4 July 1583.[178] Kelley could be described as itinerant – Dee's diaries show some of his movement – but it is unclear whether he travelled around to practise magic or just on errands for Dee or his own family. Kelley's life is discussed in further detail in the next chapter. Barnabas Saul, the scryer discredited by Kelley, was a preacher, "A Master of Arts, a preacher of thy word admitted."[179] Saul already had a reputation as a scryer, and Dee found him when looking for a scryer to facilitate angel conversations.[180] There is no record of Dee paying Saul for his scrying services, and it is also unclear whether Saul travelled around before, during or after Dee's employment. Dee's final scryer was Bartholomew Hickman, whose level of education is unclear. He worked as a scryer for Dee from about 1591 onward, working on a long-term project, but was employed by Lord Willoughby instead of by Dee himself.[181] On 29 September 1600, Dee burned the results of nine years of scrying with Hickman.[182] There is no record of Dee paying Hickman for his scrying services, but Hickman did travel between his own home and Mortlake. Dee's three main scryers all appeared to have entered a contract of sorts with Dee, scrying for him in the long term.

There seems to be a similar connection based on contracts or longer-term appointments for the scryers in service of Simon Forman and Humphrey Gilbert. Forman did

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[175] Lilly, *Life*, 146. Most of the angel conversations were held in Latin, although some were conducted in English, too. See the conversations in Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, vol. II, and Causabon, *True and Faithfull Relation*.
[176] The first action in which Kelley acted as a scryer and proved he could see, on 10 March 1582, and can be found in Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:16ff. Kelley discredited Saul's angel conversations in visions on 10 March 1582 and 15 March 1582. See Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:21, 24, 40.
[177] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:20.
[178] Causabon, *True and Faithful, A True Relation*, 28-30.
[179] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:10.
[180] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:10.
[181] Halliwell, *Private Diary*, 51.
[182] Halliwell, *Private Diary*, 63; Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels*, 24.

not often use scryers in his line of questioning, mostly answering questions by astrological means. Forman dreamt that he could actually scry himself, but always had to employ a scryer.[183] There is a lack of information on his two scryers, Stephen Mitchell and John Goodage or Goodridge. It is unclear for both men if they were educated and to what degree, what their monetary gains were, and whether or not they were itinerant. For John Goodage, other jobs are also difficult to pinpoint, while Stephen Mitchell probably worked with John Watts to establish a sea-faring career. Forman's scryers are shrouded in mystery, while Humphrey Gilbert's scrying practices were much more obscure than his scryer. While John Davis' exact education was unclear, he was probably classically schooled.[184] He was Humphrey Gilbert's scryer for just a few months in 1567. Davis eventually became a well-respected navigator, which is discussed in more detail in the next chapter. It is unclear what he was paid for his services, if he was paid at all, and he appeared to be a sedentary scryer, alongside Gilbert, rather than itinerant.

Finally, there are the six scryers described by William Lilly in his autobiography. Lilly provided varying levels of information about the practitioners. John a Windor was a "scrivener" whom Lilly saw write "many bonds and bills," implying that he must have had some form of basic education. It is unclear what Windor was paid for his scrying services. Lilly implied that Windor moved around occasionally by stating that he was "sometimes living in Newbury," but it is unclear how often this happened and for what reason he travelled.[185] William Hodges was described as an astrologer who acted as a scryer when he could not answer astrological questions. He understood Lilly's writings on astrology and thus must have had some form of training in reading and/or writing.[186] People knew where to find him for astrological questions, and he also had some skill in surgery and physick.[187] Hodges lived in "Wolverhampton in Staffordshire" and appeared to be mainly sedentary during his life.[188] Charles Sledd was an apothecary like Edward Kelley, and must also have been educated to a certain degree.[189] Lilly described him as an apothecary with "very perfect sight," but it is unclear how he found his employment as a scryer or what his wages for his

[183] Kassell, *Medicine and Magic*, 217.
[184] Clements R. Markham, *A Life of John Davis, the Navigator, 1550-1505, Discoverer of Davis Straits* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company Publishers, 1889), 9.
[185] Lilly, *Life*, 145. Lilly stated that Windor visited Dee's house in Mortlake at one point, although it is not clear whether Windor and Dee knew each other. See Lilly, *Life*, 145.
[186] Lilly, *Life*, 72-73.
[187] Lilly, *Life*, 72-76.
[188] Lilly, *Life*, 72.
[189] Lilly, *Life*, 39-40.

services were.[190] It is also unclear whether he was an itinerant practitioner or not. Sarah Skelhorn, one of the few female scryers, was a fulltime scryer to Arthur Gauntlet until his death around 1636, and afterwards served as scryer to Mrs. Stockman and Lady Beconsfeld.[191] She left Gauntlet's service only after his death and served her next patrons until her own death, proving that she was loyal to her patrons. However, it remains unclear how she found her employment or what her monetary gains were. Sarah Skelhorn was a sedentary scryer, only moving when her patron did. She lived and worked both "about Gray's-Inn-Lane" and on the Isle of Purbeck, in the very south of England.[192]

There is very little information on both Gladwell of Suffolk and Ellen Evans. For both, it is unclear if they were educated, what they did in their daily life, and how they found their scrying clients. It is also unclear what their monetary gains were and if they were itinerant, as Lilly focused on describing the rituals they used over providing personal information about these two scryers. However, it is clear that scrying, or having the ability to scry, was a highly valued skill: Gladwell of Suffolk lost his sight and either he or Sir Robert Holborn, who introduced him to Lilly, were willing to pay Lilly £200 to restore it, suggesting that this sight was a valuable asset and that paying a large sum of money to have it restored was only a minor inconvenience.[193]

The level of education for a scryer is not described in the rituals discussed in the previous chapter, but literacy might be a factor in the connection between the ideal and the real scryer. The twenty-five practitioners in this chapter display various levels of literacy: some could read and write in English fluently, while others even mastered Latin, but for the majority, it is unclear what their level of literacy or education in itself was. Additionally, the scryers were not just scryers; they also often held down other jobs. In thirteen of the twenty-five cases, the scryer was also a cunning man, navigator, preacher, or any other job. For eleven people, it is unclear whether they did have another job, and in the case of Arthur Dee, this is left as non-applicable, as he was a child when employed as a scryer. The type of contract the client or patron entered should also be taken into account; this could be both a one-time-only type of interaction or service, or it could be a long-term agreement. Long-term agreements appear only in a few cases – Barnabas Saul, Edward Kelley, Bartholomew Hickman, John Davis, John Goodage, and Sarah Skelhorn – while the majority of the cases

[190] Lilly, *Life*, 40.
[191] Rankine, *Grimoire*, 11.
[192] Lilly, *Life*, 149; Rankine, *Grimoire*, 11.
[193] Lilly, *Life*, 151.

seem to be linked to short-term or one-off scrying services. Both monetary gains and itinerancy are difficult to pinpoint. Some cases demonstrated the possibility of scrying as something highly valued, while in other cases the monetary aspect was lacking entirely. The absence of mentioned monetary gains might be connected to the fact that the Jacobean and Elizabethan "Witchcraft Acts" did not explicitly condemn *payment* for magic services but the magic services in itself. If the case was connected to fraud and money was involved, the payment or monetary gains for the (fraudulent) scryer might be mentioned. In most cases, however, it seems to be of less import than the involvement of magic at all. The same goes for itinerancy. In many cases, the clients knew exactly where to find the scryer, which implies that the scryer was sedentary more often than itinerant, or that the scryers consulted most often were mostly sedentary. The result is curious, as Deborah Harkness states that "scryers travelled about in early modern England" in her book on John Dee.[194] This does not appear to explicitly be the case for the twenty-five practitioners analysed in this study, and would certainly merit from more detailed research into the truth of Harkness' statement. Instead, it appears that practitioners became recognisable through their (sedentary) location.

Scrying material, rituals, outcomes, and purposes

The previous paragraphs focused on the social composition of the scryers to draw a comparison with the ideal scryer of the first chapter, but the first chapter also showed a variety of rituals, materials and goals or purposes for scrying which can form a second basis of comparison. This subheading describes the various scrying materials, rituals, and goals used by the historical scryer, once again described by scryer.

The two court cases in which scryers appeared do not convey many details. In William Wycherley's court case, several uses of the crystal emerge. When Wycherley was conjuring a spirit called Baro in Pembsam with Sir John Anderson, Sir John Hickley, Thomas Goslyng, and the scryer Robert Bayly, it is not clear what exactly the role of Bayly was in the whole of the ritual. Bayly could have been present to catch the spirit in the crystal, but it is not fully clear from the minimal description of the ritual.[195] Wycherley himself used the crystal too, in order to invoke the spirit Scariot, who could help him find stolen things. This he did about a hundred times, and he was able to help people recover stolen goods. He also tried to find treasure with the crystal, but that did not work. Additionally, he could call spirits

[194] Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels*, 16.
[195] Nichols, *Narratives*, 332-33.

into the crystal but could not bind them as well as other scryers did.[196] The other three scryers Wycherley mentioned in the court case were only described as scryers or users of the crystal. He specified that Lowth used the crystal for daily treasure hunting, but Thomas Malfrey and the anonymous female scryer remain without clearly stated scrying rituals or goals.[197]

In the case against Simon Rose, who consulted a cunning man, this cunning man was simply described as using a glass to show Rose who stole his sheep. The goal is thus clear: finding stolen cattle. The description the cunning man provided of the culprit was good enough for Rose, and he did not feel the need to check the glass himself.[198]

The descriptions of court cases show varying levels of descriptiveness of the rituals and materials used by the scryers. In some cases, the descriptions only portrayed the goals and scrying material, such as in the trials against Anne Kerke and Marie Smith. In the trial against Anne Kerke, the anonymous scryer was able to tell the innkeeper that his daughter was cursed by a "conversant in his house," and then showed the innkeeper the face of Anne Kerke in a glass.[199] A full ritual was apparently not necessary to be able to pinpoint the culprit. The anonymous scryer who was consulted by Edward Drake in the case against Marie Smith might show us more about the rituals and materials needed to scry. Drake brought some of his daughter's urine with him to the scryer, although this was only used in the witch's cake made afterwards to cure Drake's daughter. The scryer used a glass to show Drake the face of the culprit.[200]

In other cases, the description of the ritual involved is more detailed. In Ady's *Candle in the Dark*, the ritual prepared by the anonymous cunning man to find the butcher's lost cattle is described in detail, as the cunning man was a fraud. The goal of the ritual was to find the butcher's lost cattle, and the ritual itself was intricate and dependent on people not knowing that it was fake. Multiple players were involved, all set on scamming the client. The butcher was asked to look into a glass made specifically for this purpose and look at the "devil" – one of the cunning man's friends dressed up in a bull's hide with a pair of horns on his head. The cunning man said several charms or conjurations, and then asked the butcher to look in all four wind directions to find his lost cattle. The butcher did not see anything and knew something was wrong, so he went back to ask the practitioner to show him again, and

[196] Nichols, *Narratives*, 333.
[197] Nichols, *Narratives*, 334.
[198] Macray, *Report on Manuscripts*, 128.
[199] Anonymous, *The Triall of Maist. Dorrell*, 101.
[200] Roberts, *A Treatise of Witchcraft*, 52-53.

as the devil appeared, the butcher called his boy and dog into the room. The dog bit the 'devil,' revealing it to be a man, not a devil, and the butcher knew he had been deceived.[201]

The cases of John Lambe, Anne Bodenham, and Compton contain most details, and show the rituals used (if they are present), the scrying materials, and the goals for a historical scryer. John Lambe used a crystal glass in his scrying ventures, specifically to recover lost goods and to tell fortunes, such as marriage prospects or cheating partners.[202] The source does not provide any information about cases in which John Lambe used scrying to find lost and stolen goods. His method was to have the client look into the scrying glass, suggesting a client could also see images in his glass. The court cases against Lambe contain several cases in which the scrying glass was involved. Master Wayneman testified against Lambe, describing Lambe attempting to draw him into what Wayneman calls witchcraft.[203] Wayneman described that he was curious about angels, and that Lambe put a round "Christall Classe" in his hat and called upon a spirit called Benias.[204] Wayneman suggested to Lambe that he should not 'adjure' but instead 'admire' or 'adore' the angel instead, still under the impression that Lambe was conjuring an angel into the glass. When Wayneman was told that Lambe conjured a spirit instead, he was not happy, leading to a testimony against Lambe in court, telling the judge that Lambe had four spirits bound to his crystal, and that Benias was Lambe's main spirit.[205] In the same case, Anthony Birch testified that he picked up Lambe's crystal ball, which Lambe had left unattended while amusing guests at a gentleman's house. Birch looked in the glass and saw several images in it. When Birch asked Lambe what he just saw, Lambe snatched the crystal ball from his hands.[206] The third, an unnamed gentlewoman, testified that she consulted Lambe while he was imprisoned, wondering who she was going to marry. Lambe asked her to return on a specific day, and when she did, Lambe required her to join him on the bed and look into the crystal ball which he placed on the floor. She saw some acquaintances at first, but then they disappeared and when Lambe asked her to look again, she saw an unfamiliar gentleman in all green clothing.[207] She testified that she eventually met this gentleman and married him.[208]

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[201] Ady, *Candle in the Dark*, 62.
[202] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*, 2.
[203] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*, 6.
[204] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*, 4.
[205] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*, 4-5.
[206] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*, 6.
[207] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*, 7-8.
[208] Anonymous, *A Briefe Description*, 9.

Anne Bodenham used a piece of green glass for her scrying, which was prepared by putting it on an image in one of her books, rubbing the glass, and holding it up against the sun.[209] She used scrying in an unconventional sense to show what was going on in another location in real time, as well as finding things and culprits to various crimes. Bodenham did not find stolen goods and thieves, but rather poison and poisoners. In one of the first instances of Bodenham's scrying, Anne Styles had to look into the crystal to see what was happening in her master's house, but a second time, the piece of glass was used to conjure spirits into the house.[210] The spirits appeared through the open back door. In the third appearance of the scrying glass, a spirit appeared in multiple shapes in the house, after which, Styles had to look into the glass herself to find the location of the hidden poison.[211] The final ritual with the scrying glass in this court case was to find out who hid the poison. For this, Bodenham drew a circle before saying invocations to the stone. Five spirits then appeared and accompanied Styles to a meadow at Wilton to pick the specific herbs Bodenham needed to find out who did it.[212] Bodenham used four different rituals for the green scrying glass, for different purposes, and the spirits that appeared always behaved differently. She appeared to have improvised the rituals to reach her goal based on her own knowledge.

Mr. Compton did not appear to have a specific scrying material he used. Instead, in his demonstration for Mr. Hill, he used a mirror that was already present in the room. He set the mirror down in front of Mr. Hill, and Mr. Hill looked into it to see his wife in real time.[213] The scryer did not need to conduct a ritual to show his client the image of his wife. In Compton's second appearance, in the trial of Elizabeth Styles, there is no specification whether or not he used scrying to determine whether or not the wife of Richard Vining was cursed (and by whom).[214]

In the diaries, casebooks, and autobiographies, there are also varying levels of details of the rituals, scrying materials and goals. The account of Humphrey Gilbert and John Davis' spirit conversations does not describe the rituals or materials used, but only records the visions seen by Davis and Gilbert. The preceding rituals, already discussed as B and C in chapter one, are often seen as the rituals Davis and Gilbert used, but the spirit conversations themselves do not provide any information about the materials or rituals used. It is clear

[209] Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived*, 2.
[210] Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived*, 2-3; 5.
[211] Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived*, 6.
[212] Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived*, 7.
[213] Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, 334.
[214] Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, 349.

Davis was scrying to establish contact with spirits, and he probably used a crystal, but the exact rituals followed are not clearly stated.[215] The same goes for Stephen Mitchell and John Goodage, scryers to Simon Forman. While there is a description of John Goodage and Simon Froman making "our glase" and praying and fasting four days, then drawing a circle, it is not clear if this same ritual was followed for Stephen Mitchell.[216]

The most detailed accounts of the scrying materials and goals can be found in Dee's diaries. The rituals will only be briefly discussed for a lack of space. In the first of Dee's angel conversations, held on 22 December 1581 with Barnabas Saul, Saul had to "loke into my great Chrystaline Globe."[217] The stone or crystal globe was placed in a frame, and the angel An(n)ael described the ritual needed to converse with angels.[218] This ritual included daily prayers, and Dee could continue his operation "when it shall please god."[219] This operation required Dee to fast and pray from morning onward on "the brightest day," and the stone or crystal should be placed in the sun.[220] It is the only extant angel conversation in which Saul featured as the scryer.

The scrying rituals conducted by Dee and Kelley, on the other hand, were numerous. Most of them were attempts to converse with angels to gain knowledge of secret and hidden information but another example showed Kelley attempting to use the angels to find treasure.[221] The descriptions of the angel conversations provide information about the material and ritual steps to instigate contact with spirits. In one of the very first actions featuring Kelley on 10 March 1582, Kelley provided Dee with information about the materials needed to contact the angels perfectly.[222] Kelley used Dee's "stone in the frame," in which Dee himself once saw a vision, and prayed with the stone placed on Dee's desk. After fifteen minutes, the first spirit appeared to Kelley. Kelley "expected for two more" but Dee, eager to talk to this angel (Uriel), did not wait.[223] Uriel would be their conversational partner for the first few actions and would show what material should be used to have perfect angel conversations, like a perfect description of the table on which the crystal should be placed.[224] Later, on 21 November 1582, the angels gave Dee a new scrying stone, which was "as big as

[215] Add 36674, f. 62r.
[216] Kassell, *Medicine and Magic*, 217.
[217] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:12.
[218] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:13-14.
[219] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:14.
[220] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:15.
[221] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:220-24.
[222] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:16-25.
[223] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:16-17.
[224] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:21-22.

an egg: most bright, clere, and glorious," and Dee himself described it as "rowndysh and less then the palm of my hand."[225] The stone Kelley used for scrying could be both in or outside of a frame. On 18 April 1583, Dee writes that Kelley could not see anything in the crystal until he "had put the stone again into the frame" and they said multiple prayers.[226] The rituals to talk to the angels were mainly comprised of prayers until the angels appeared, and to summon Michael, for instance, specific prayers should be said: "the psalmes commonly called the Seven psalms."[227]

Unfortunately, less information is known about the scrying practices of Arthur Dee and Bartholomew Hickman. In the case of Bartholomew Hickman, this is because Dee burned the records of the angel conversations held with Hickman in 1600. Arthur Dee only acted as a scryer to his father for a few days, using Kelley's scrying table and "Stone in the frame," and they also seemed to have used Kelley's rituals.[228]

The descriptions of the rituals and paraphernalia in Lilly's autobiography vary in the number of details provided, although in some cases the details are intriguing. The information on Ellen Evans is scarce, and Lilly only writes that Evans' "call unto the crystal" was directed towards a certain Micol, the Queen of the Pigmies.[229] Charles Sledd and the rituals he used are similarly scarce in details, save for the fact that he used a crystal.[230] For most of the scryers, however, Lilly provided slightly more information. John a Windor apparently copied one of Dee's invocations, which he used to call upon spirits. Lilly described Windor as "a most lewd person" and as being "much given to debauchery," which meant that the spirits often did not appear to him. Windor had to suffumigate the room or curse the spirits to make them appear, and he would often "vex the spirits" by cursing them or suffumigating with "contraries."[231] It is not clear what scrying material he used or what exactly he called upon the spirits for.

Lilly did not describe Sarah Skelhorn's rituals in detail, but he writes that she inspected "her crystal, to see," and that the call she used for the crystal started with an address to the angels.[232] London, British Library, Sloane MS 3851 contains some of the rituals supposedly written down by Skelhorn's initial patron, Arthur Gauntlet, but it is not

[225] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:217-18.
[226] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II: 326-27.
[227] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:20.
[228] Causabon, *True and Faithfull Relation*, III:4-8.
[229] Lilly, *Life*, 150. Evans addresses the crystal with "O Micol, O tu Micol, regina pigmeorum veni, &tc," according to Lilly.
[230] Lilly, *Life*, 39-40.
[231] Lilly, *Life*, 145.
[232] Lilly, *Life*, 149-50.

clear whether Skelhorn actually followed these rituals. The rituals in Sloane 3851 are similar to the scrying rituals discussed in the first chapter and include a multitude of prayers and invocations to make the angels appear.[233] The presence of a child to whose sight the angels should appear is reason to believe these rituals were not carried out by Skelhorn.

Gladwell of Suffolk owned a beryl stone with which he could communicate with Uriel and Raphael until he lost his sight of "carelessness; so that neither of them both would but rarely appear, and then presently be gone, resolving nothing."[234] Gilbert Wakering gave Gladwell the beryl stone he used for scrying, and "it was of a largeness of a good big orange, set in silver, with a cross on the top, and another on the handle; and round about engraved the names of these angels, Raphael, Gabriel, Uriel."[235] While the ritual used by Gladwell is not described, it is clear that he was communicating with angels to answer questions.

Lilly provides some hints about William Hodges' scrying business. Lilly describes Hodges as someone who "understood [the crystal] as perfectly as any one in England."[236] While he answered most queries through astrology, he did not want to be involved in nativities, and "in things of other nature, he repaired to the crystal," where the angels Raphael, Uriel, and Gabriel helped him answer questions.[237] Hodges used the crystal for John Scott to find "the person and feature of the woman he should marry."[238] Hodges asked Scott to follow him out into a field, where he put down his crystal. Scott then had to "set his foot to his, and, after a while, wishes him to inspect the crystal, and observe what he saw there."[239] Scott saw a woman in a red waistcoat drawing beer, but said that that could not be right, because he was going to marry "a tall gentlewoman in the Old-Bailey."[240] Hodges answered that he should marry the woman he saw, and when Scott returned to the city, he found his gentlewoman already married. Two years later, Scott met the woman he saw in the glass and married her.[241]

Overall, there seem to have been a wide variety of rituals and goals for which to scry, while the scrying materials are more similar. In some cases, the goals are not explicitly stated or they simply seem to be to contact spirits or angels. In other cases, the rituals are geared towards finding treasure, lost or stolen goods, or bewitchers and poisoners, predicting the

[233] Rankine, *Grimoire*, 113-4; 114ff.
[234] Lilly, *Life*, 151.
[235] Lilly, *Life*, 151.
[236] Lilly, *Life*, 72.
[237] Lilly, *Life*, 73.
[238] Lilly, *Life*, 73.
[239] Lilly, *Life*, 73
[240] Lilly, *Life*, 73-74.
[241] Lilly, *Life*, 74.

future, or showing the present. The materials still are rather similar: eighteen of the historical scryers use a crystal or glass, two use a mirror or beryl stone, respectively. For the five remaining scryers, it is unclear which material they used.

The real versus the ideal scryer

This sub-chapter will compare and contrast the ideal scryer and the image of the scryer. As has already been discussed, there are a variety of factors to take into account: the sex and age of the practitioners, the rituals they undertake, as well as the scrying materials and goals.

Most of the historical scryers presented in this chapter were male adult practitioners. Although there were some women who practised scrying, the overwhelming majority were male. Children were not used as scryers with the exception of John Dee's son, Arthur. It appears that most practitioners had some level of education, even if it was just basic reading skills, although both literacy and the fees a scryer might get were not always clear in the available sources. The employment strategies were also varied: most scryers seem to have had a second job, although others were simply called cunning folk. More information on the relationship between scryers and cunning folk will follow in the next chapter. Many sources are also not quite clear on whether the scryer was itinerant or sedentary – although it is clear that people usually knew where to find scryers, or scryers knew how to find their clients or patrons. The rituals, materials, and outcomes or goals of scrying were just as varied. Most often, crystals, glass, or mirrors were used to gain knowledge such as the location of stolen or lost property or thieves, or how to conduct magic.

This means that there was a radical difference between the ideal scryer gleaned from the pages of ritual magic manuscripts and the historical reality of these people and their rituals. The previous chapter showed that the ideal scryer was an adult practitioner, but children could still be used as scryers. According to Fanger, scrying rituals would take longer and be more frustrating for adults. This is not at all reflected in the historical sources detailing real scryers, where the majority of practitioners were male adults, but the length of rituals does not appear to be influenced by the absence of children. Instead, the ritual component of scrying appears to have been abandoned altogether, with the exception of the scryers who were after contact with higher spirits and angels, such as the scryers employed by John Dee and Humphrey Gilbert. For more 'mundane' issues, such as finding thieves or real-time spy-cams, it was not necessary to follow elaborate rituals. The similarities between the ideal and the real scryer, which largely depended on the material used, can be explained through the

tradition of scrying, which required the use of a reflecting or light-refracting surface. Crystals, glasses, and mirrors are still objects people think about in connection to scrying, and they were relatively easy objects to procure. There are thus many differences between the "ideal" scryer and the "real" or historical scryer, showing that the ritual magic manuscripts were not as prescriptive or indicative of the realities of magic practice in early modern England as some researchers tend to think.

Chapter 3: Scrying as a rung on the social ladder

The previous two chapters discussed the general descriptions of scrying in ritual manuscripts (the ideal scryer) and the way in which this group of practitioners is described in court cases and other sources (the historical scryer). This chapter shows how the historical scryer relates to cunning folk, comparing and contrasting the two to show that there is one characteristic that set scryers apart. The two groups are shown to only partly overlap: some cunning folk were in fact also scryers, but in most cases, the scryers were not necessarily cunning folk. Instead, scrying can be described as a gift that not all cunning folk have, which explains why not every cunning person is a scryer. Then, three scryers who used their gift to further their career by using their patron's network will be discussed to show that the gift of scrying, which sets the scryer apart from cunning folk in general, could be used to climb the social ladder and to find new employment in a similarly high-risk-high-gain career.

Scryers as cunning folk

The notion of "cunning folk" has already been mentioned several times in the previous chapters. In some of the sources, scryers were described as part of this group by contemporaries. Anne Bodenham was specifically called a "cunning woman" in her court case, as were the unnamed scryers that appear in the trial of Simon Rose, in the story of the butcher from Essex, and in the trial against Anne Kerke.[242] This chapter shows that the relationship between scryers and cunning folk is similar to a Venn diagram: in some cases, they seem to overlap, while in others, they do not. The fact that some of the scryers were specifically called cunning folk while others were not is intriguing, and shows that scrying might require something other than just cunning as well as reveal something about the social position of scryers. Owen Davies, author of *Popular Magic* (2003), also specifically excludes charmers from cunning folk, describing charming as "a distinct tradition" based on the practitioner having a gift.[243] While some charmers might have practised other types of magic, they were never cunning folk, according to Davies, which lends more credulity to the hypothesis that scryers likewise form a separate group that only occasionally overlaps with the cunning folk.

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[242] Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived*, 1-2; Ady, *Candle in the Dark*, 62; Macray, *Report on Manuscripts*, 128; Anonymous, *The Triall of Maist. Dorrell*, 101.
[243] Davies, *Popular Magic*, 83.

Davies' work is one of the first studies that deals extensively with cunning folk as a category in late medieval and early modern England. The name "cunning folk" is derived from the Old English verb *cunnan*, which means "to know," and it denotes a group of people who are more knowledgeable than the people in their immediate vicinity, and whose knowledge could have been gained through supernatural means, innate abilities, or through reading.[244] The term "cunning folk" only started appearing in the late fifteenth century in written sources.[245] Cunning folk are defined by Owen Davies as "multi-faceted practitioners of magic" who charged for magical cures or tools, such as un-bewitching, finding stolen goods and treasure, and love potions, although it remains unclear whether Davies thinks "cunning folk" denotes a specific social group or whether the term can be used as a label.[246] The majority of their occupation was centred on 'low' or practical folk magic, rather than high, philosophical magic. Furthermore, cunning folk were ambiguous in nature, practicing neither black nor white magic.[247] Davies estimates based on historical sources that the majority or at least two-thirds of this group was male and that they had some form of authority and learning in order to be able to help the community in the way they did.[248] This evaluation differs to an extent from Emma Wilby's description in her 2005 monograph; she implies that cunning folk were not necessarily learned or even literate.[249] Nevertheless, both agree that this group possessed a certain expert knowledge, which coheres with a remark by Kieckhefer, who observes that the magician is often depicted as "a specialist who performs services for others." [250] Regardless of whether cunning folk were literate or not, they were specialists in their own field. This thesis will use the description provided by Davies as the benchmark to which the scryers are compared.

Beyond having a certain expert knowledge, members of the cunning folk often held down multiple jobs: one being their official day job, the other their cunning or magic business. Davies derives from this and other clues that cunning folk must have been artisans or tradesmen, as they had enough time to conduct their other business alongside practicing folk magic. Artisans would be able to close their workshop or have their spouse or apprentice continue working while they received their clients in their shop and conduct their magic

[244] Davies, *Popular Magic*, viii.
[245] Davies, *Popular Magic*, viii-ix.
[246] Davies, *Popular Magic*, vii, 94-99.
[247] Davies, *Popular Magic*, ix-x.
[248] Davies, *Popular Magic*, 69.
[249] Emma Wilby, *Cunning folk and familiar spirits: Shamanistic visionary traditions in early modern British witchcraft and magic* (Brighton/Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 27.
[250] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 50.

business.[251] Cunning folk usually also kept their other job, both as a front for the authorities and to stay connected to the community from which they derived most of their magical assignments. However, these jobs were usually "nominal or minor concerns," as they could in many cases live off the income from their cunning.[252]

However clear Davies' description of this group appears, multiple issues emerge when comparing the scryer to cunning folk. For instance, several scryers were of a higher class than practitioners subsumed under the cunning folk category usually were. For Davies, cunning folk are "definable by what they practised," and so, if physicians were practicing love magic, thief detection, astrology, fortune-telling, herbalism and unbewitching, they could be considered cunning folk.[253] Although he says that some practitioners who were part of a higher class could be called cunning folk, he does warn that astrologer physicians, such as Napier, Dee, and Forman, should not be considered cunning folk, and neither could physicians who cured their patients of bewitchments if they did not do this through magic. He notes that if the physician just "diagnosed and cured" bewitchment without using magic or divination to do so, or if they only practised astrology, they were not considered cunning folk. In some cases, it is difficult to pinpoint whether a practitioner did "resort to magic or divination in any way," which for Davies is reason to exclude those practitioners for whom it was unclear whether they might have used magic at all. This creates difficulties in attempts to discern whether scryers can also be part of the cunning folk, as the exact parameters of the "cunning folk" proves difficult to pinpoint.

The label "cunning folk" might thus not be an exact fit for the diverse social composition of the scryers. There are, however, several similarities between the descriptions of scryers and those of cunning folk. Davies' characterisation of cunning folk is that they were mostly male practitioners, who were educated up to a certain point, were authoritative, and also held a job that gave them enough time to practise cunning on the side. The sources discussed in the previous chapter show that while in some cases the scryers can be seen as cunning folk, at the same time, scrying appears to have been based on a specific gift that not every cunning person had.

The similarities start at the ratio between male and female practitioners. As has been mentioned before, Davies argues that the majority or two-thirds of cunning folk were male. The same is true for scryers in the early modern period – most of the practitioners were male,

[251] Davies, *Popular Magic*, 69, 74.
[252] Davies, *Popular Magic*, 75.
[253] Davies, *Popular Magic*, 75-76.

although more women took up the profession, as was shown in Chapter 2. However, this is the weakest of the similarities, as such statistics may be skewed by the number of sources in which cunning folk or scryers appear. Davies writes that more cunning women were indicted than cunning men, and that cunning folk were usually accused after failing to cure bewitched people or find lost or stolen items, but occasionally they were also indicted after "neighbourly disputes" that turned into situations which could be perceived as threatening and which then led to witchcraft accusations.[254] Davies' estimate of the ratio between male and female cunning folk is not simply based on indictments, but also on minor appearances of cunning folk in court cases. The ratio of male to female scryers is not as clear as it appears to be for cunning folk, but the majority of the scryers appears to have been male in the early modern period.

Davies also attempts to make definitive statements about cunning folk's social status which do not work for scryers. Davies states that farmers did not want to consult anyone below their social stature, and artisans or traders were above farmers on the social ladder. Since farmers formed the main clientele for cunning folk, Davies bases his argument on the farmers as well as on the general "hierarchical nature of social relations."[255] Labourers rarely had the time for anything more than subsisting, making it less likely that they would attempt to practise cunning. Just as critically, the class-bias he suggests would make them unattractive to potential clientele. By comparison, it is difficult to assign any clear class-based pattern among scryers. The case of Anne Bodenham shows that scryers could be consulted by people from high and low social classes. She was consulted by several servants in the Goddard household, but also by John Goddard's son-in-law, who was of a higher social status.[256] Edward Kelley was probably not part of the higher social classes but still did scrying work for John Dee. Dee paid Kelley for his efforts, which goes against Davies' statement that clients might not want to consult cunning folk who were below the client's own social status. Although there is no proof that Dee and Kelley made money through scrying, they occasionally involved people of similar social status to Dee in their experiments, which only strengthens the argument that social status of the scryer might not have been as important as Davies says it was for cunning folk. The combined efforts of John Dee and Edward Kelley as well as Anne Bodenham point towards consultation by higher society. The farmers that Davies uses as the basis of the pool of clients for cunning folk might

[254] Davies, *Popular Magic*, 12-13.
[255] Davies, *Popular Magic*, 69.
[256] Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived*, 2.

have been especially aware of class, but it appears that for clients or patrons of scryers, this social class difference might not have been as important as for cunning folk.

There is something that sets scryers apart from the cunning folk in more general terms. Davies describes the magical ability as a "natural or inherited gift," and scrying could very well be one of those gifts.[257] Fanger argues that virginity is tied to the ability to see, and that the use of a virginal child scryer was the best option, but invoking a saint's virginity could work too to be able to scry temporarily.[258] Most rituals in the early modern period show the inclination towards long invocations, but the historical scryers do not need these invocations or rituals whatsoever, pointing towards the reality of scrying as a gift rather than something that can be obtained. If scrying is seen as a specific gift, as something that cannot be acquired through studying the topic, the relationship between the scryer and the patron or client might thus bridge social classes, as the social position of the person with the scrying gift was less important than the scryer actually having this specific gift.

So, the scryers were not necessarily cunning folk. Kieckhefer writes that late medieval and early modern magic was not necessarily linked to a specific "suspicious class of practitioners," but that instead there were multitudes of types and groups of practitioners, although some traditions might overlap.[259] Scryers could thus be considered cunning folk in some cases, although the overlap between magical practices does not necessarily mean that they were, in fact, always cunning folk. The different practitioners had their own approaches, and while some were scrying as part of their cunning folk curriculum, others were not related to cunning folk. The best way to describe the relationship between cunning folk and scryers is that it appears as a Venn diagram: occasionally, the groups overlapped, but in most cases, they existed separately as well. This was caused through the nature of the magical ability, in this case scrying. The scryer had the gift to be able to discern spirits and gain knowledge through reflecting surfaces, which sets him apart from other practitioners.

Scrying as a stepping stone

Most magic practitioners tended to be involved with magic their entire life. The same was true for cunning folk in general, and, according to Davies, learning and knowledge were key

[257] Davies, *Popular Magic*, 70.
[258] Fanger, "Virgin Territory," 210-12.
[259] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 56-57.

to further themselves in life.[260] However, it appears that scrying could function similarly to learning and knowledge for cunning folk: to enable the scryer to advance themselves in life.

The previous paragraphs show that being a scryer did not necessarily mean that one was also a cunning person. Some magic practitioners transcended the position of scryer to move on to bigger things, showing that scryers could use their innate ability to further themselves through their patrons. John Davis, Stephen Mitchell, and Edward Kelley functioned as scryers and used their gift to find a patron whose network might help further their career. They used the extensive networks of their scrying patrons to enter a higher social class, as will be shown below. Scrying could thus be used as a temporary job and function as a stepping stone to climb the social ladder or establish oneself in a specific career. Scrying, like other types of magic, can be seen as a high-risk-high-gain career, and intriguingly, the three men discussed below all decided to continue to work in similar types of jobs.

John Davis (1550-1604)

Davis was born in 1550 in Sandridge, where his father, a yeoman, held a small freehold.[261] Davis' connection to navigation and seafaring started at a young age, according to Markham, who writes that John and his younger brother Edward often went out with a boat on the river Dart.[262] Sandridge was close to Greenway Court, where Humphrey and Adrian Gilbert and Walter Raleigh lived – all three renowned seafarers. Davis appeared in the conjuring experiments of Humphrey Gilbert in 1567, functioning as Gilbert's scryer between 24 February and 6 April 1567.[263] Frank Klaassen writes that connection to Humphrey and Adrian Gilbert enabled the growth of Davis, the Gilberts' 17-year-old protégé, into a great navigator.[264] The statement, albeit not further elaborated on in his article, proves true. According to Markham, John Davis received a classical education but it is not clear where and when he received it. In 1579, Davis reappeared as an experienced sailor, "a captain of known valour and conduct, in whom merchants and other adventurers were willing to repose trust and confidence."[265]

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[260] Davies, *Cunning Folk*, 69.
[261] Markham, *Life of John Davis*, 4.
[262] Markham, *Life of John Davis*, 6.
[263] London, British Library, Additional MS 36674, f. 58r-62v. While Humphrey Gilbert was stationed in Ireland for most of the time between 1566 and 1570, he appears to have been in England between January and May of 1567, which makes it probable that "H.G." mentioned in this manuscript in fact is Humphrey Gilbert. See David Beers Quinn, *The Voyages and Colonising Enterprises of Sir Humphrey Gilbert* (Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint Limited/Hakluyt Society, 1967), 13.
[264] Klaassen, "Ritual Invocation," 341.
[265] Markham, *Life of John Davis*, 9.

How exactly Davis went to sea is unclear, but the connection with the Gilberts and Raleigh must have helped him, especially since this connection between Davis and the Gilberts was already established. Davis became involved with Humphrey Gilbert's brain child: the Northwest Passage, which aimed to reach the Pacific Ocean through the Arctic Ocean, by means of travelling past the very north of North-America. Humphrey Gilbert involved John Dee, after the men first met in 1577, and in September 1580, Gilbert granted Dee the royalties of discovery to anything north of 50 degrees latitude if they continued working together.[266] After Gilbert's death, interest in the Northwest Passage stayed in the Gilbert family, and the venture was briefly taken up by Sir John Gilbert before he continued working on southern explorations and Adrian Gilbert took over.[267]

When Adrian Gilbert took over the venture for the Northwest Passage, he involved Davis. Dee also remained connected to the venture, and on 23 January 1583, Sir Francis Walsingham (1532-1590), the Secretary of the State, was included as well.[268] The day after, Dee, Gilbert, and John Davis "went by appointment to Mr. Secretary to Mr. Beale his howse, where onely we four were secret, and we made Mr. Secretarie privie to the N.W. passage, and all charts and rutters were agreed upon in generall."[269] This passage suggests that the plans about the Northwest Passage were made in secret between Adrian Gilbert, John Davis, and John Dee before anyone else was involved, and it shows that the connection between Adrian and Humphrey Gilbert and Davis continued even after Davis stopped scrying for the Gilberts.

In addition to being supported by and gaining information from John Dee, Davis was also connected to a major source of influence at the court through the Gilberts: Sir Walter Raleigh (1552/4-1618), who was the Gilberts' half-brother. When Dee left for Poland, Gilbert and Davis turned to Raleigh for help to support their venture, and Raleigh asked the Queen for a charter to find the Northwest Passage in the name of him, Gilbert, and Davis.[270] Raleigh recommended Adrian Gilbert and John Davis to William Sanderson (1547/8-1638), a well-known merchant and adventurer, who supported the venture financially.[271] On 7 June 1585,

[266] Halliwell, *Private Diary*, 3, 4, 8.
[267] Beers Quinn, *Voyages and Colonising Enterprises*, I:95-96.
[268] Halliwell, *Private Diary*, 6-7. Where Halliwell notes this is in 1583, Markham writes that this meeting takes place in 1584. 1584 would make more sense in the context of the death of Humphrey Gilbert, but Markham does not include sources, which makes it exceedingly difficult to find where he has found his information. However, since Whitby's *Actions with Spirits* also include questions about Adrian Gilbert's suitability to the task of finding the Northwest Passage, and these take place in 1583 as well (see the actions of 26 and 28 March 1583 in Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, II:238-52), it is assumed here to be 1583.
[269] Halliwell, *Private Diary*, 18.
[270] Markham, *Life of John Davis*, 31.
[271] Markham, *Life of John Davis*, 31-32.

Davis started his initial voyage as captain to find the Northwest Passage, through which he had already been introduced to several influential people in England: Sir Francis Walsingham, Sir Walter Raleigh, and William Sanderson.

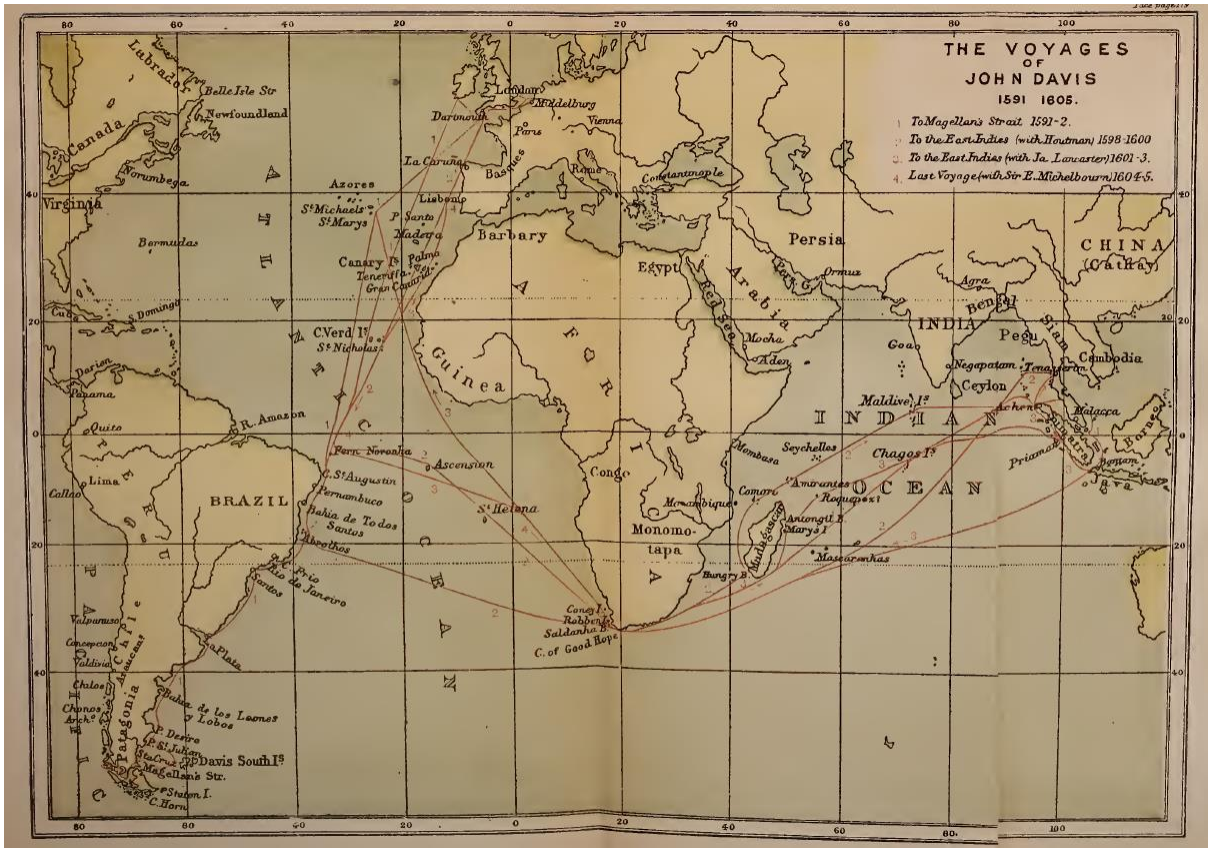

Figure 3.2: A map of John Davis' ventures.[272]

The initial connections established through scrying for the Gilberts led to a myriad of adventures (shown in Figure 3.1), including fighting the Armada for Queen Elizabeth, an expedition to the Azores, a trip to Sumatra under the prince-merchant of Veere and joining the British East Indian Trade Company, before dying at the hand of Japanese pirates.[273] He also published two works, *The Seaman's Secrets* (1594) and *The Worlde's Hydrographical Description* (1597).[274] This adventurous life was not without its drawbacks, though, and Davis also suffered great losses, including a loss of £1100 through a failed expedition, losing most of his crew at sea, being abandoned by his wife, and being locked up in prison for

[272] This map appears in Markham, *Life of John Davis* as an insert between pages 178-79. Note that the ventures for the Northwest Passage are not included on this map.
[273] For a detailed description of Davis' life and his voyages, see Markham, *Life of John Davis*.
[274] Markham, *Life of John Davis*, 158, 169.

desertion.[275] While one could argue these risks are worth the benefits, it is important to keep in mind that these adventures were only possible through his network of experienced sailors and captains, with whom he came in contact through scrying for the Gilberts.

The case of John Davis thus shows that having good connections can lead to a great career. Davis' initial scrying for Humphrey Gilbert strengthened the contact between the Gilberts (and by extension, with Walter Raleigh) and John Dee, which eventually led to Davis' sea travels and his establishment as a great navigator. He established good relationships to several well-known people such as Sir Francis Walsingham, Sir Walter Raleigh, and William Sanderson, and used those connections to fund his discoveries. John Davis is an example of someone who successfully used scrying as a stepping stone for his own career and who used his network to further himself. The fact that the merchant prince of Veere happily accepted Davis on his own merits rather than those of his friends or his network proves that Davis had outgrown his initial scrying position.

Stephen Mitchell (ca. 1570-?)

Whereas there is a wealth of information available about John Davis, this is considerably less the case for Stephen Mitchell. Stephen Mitchell was a step-nephew to Simon Forman – a son of Forman's step-sister.[276] A.L. Rowse writes that Stephen Mitchell was twenty years younger than Simon Forman, who lived from 1552 to 1611, thus placing Mitchell's year of birth around 1572.[277] In 1591, Mitchell was twenty-one, which puts his year of birth around 1570, meaning that Mitchell was seventeen or eighteen years old when he first acted as a scryer for Forman, as the first time Stephen saw for Forman was on 21 September 1588.[278]

Mitchell appeared to have been employed by two people at the same time. Mitchell was probably an apprentice to John Watts (1550-1616) for five years before Watts appointed him captain in 1591.[279] Watts (1550-1616) was a merchant and privateer who invested in many voyages outside of his own ventures.[280] Mitchell also appeared in Forman's service in 1589, but "left soon after to go to sea."[281] Mitchell (or Michell) was appointed as captain of a

[275] See Markham, *Life of John Davis*, 120-39, 218-21.
[276] Traister, *Notorious Astrological Physician*, 229n58.
[277] Rowse, *Simon Forman*, 168.
[278] Kenneth R. Andrews, ed., *English Privateering Voyages to the West Indies, 1588-1595* (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1959), 96; Traister, *The Notorious Astrological Physician*, 107.
[279] Andrews, *English Privateering Voyages*, 97, 131.
[280] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. "Watts, Sir John," last modified 3 Jan 2008, https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/28889.
[281] Traister, *The Notorious Astrological Physician*, 159.

vessel called the Pegasus in a fleet of four ships which were part of John Watts' venture for the West Indies.[282] The fleet left in April 1591 and they captured several foreign ships, earning several thousand pounds.[283] While the captains under Watts are not explicitly described as privateers, they do seem to have worked like them.

After this voyage, the life of Stephen Mitchell becomes a mystery. Mitchell contributed a statement to defend Watts in a court case started by George Carey to get part of the spoils from this voyage, as some of Carey's ships had sailed with Watts' when major prizes were captured.[284] Mitchell also emerged in some of Forman's casebooks, which appears to be the only way to track Mitchell after 1591. Forman made several astrological charts to answer questions asked by Stephen Mitchell or questions that concerned Mitchell.[285] There are eleven of these cases, spanning the period between 12 October 1598 and 28 November 1601, but Forman only recorded the questions posed and astrological charts used to answer them, not the answers to those questions.[286] The first questions pertained to whether or not Mitchell should leave on a specific ship to the Indies; on 12 October 1598, Mitchell asked whether or not he should join the Mayflower and the Swan, on 3 November of the same year he wondered the same about the ship "Rebecka," on 4 November the vessel in question was the Neptune, and on 30 November "the brewars flibote."[287] On 20 January 1600, Forman himself enquired when Mitchell would return.[288] The questions about which ship Mitchell should board resurfaced in 1600: on 7 June, he wondered whether he should join the ship on which "Ihon Becket of Limouse" was captain, and on 16 June 1600, the Green Dragon was the subject of his question.[289] Two questions are more difficult to understand and appear to be related to whether Stephen should board a ship at a harbour called "Foy," but unfortunately, there is not enough information available about this question

[282] Andrews, *English Privateering Voyages*, 96-97. Pages 131-32 provide an extract of the document that specifies the appointment of "Stephanus Michell."
[283] Andrews, *English Privateering Voyages*, 97, 103, 170.
[284] The proceedings are included in Andrews, *English Privateering Voyages*, 170-72.
[285] For an overview of the cases in which Mitchell is in any way mentioned, see Lauren Kassell, Michael Hawkins, Robert Ralley, John Young, Joanne Edge, Janet Yvonne Martin-Portugues, and Natalie Kaoukji, eds., "Stephen Michell (PERSON4987)," *The casebooks of Simon Forman and Richard Napier, 1596–1634: a digital edition*, accessed 30 April 2020, https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/identified-entities/PERSON4987. The case numbers given on the website are cases 4339, 4449, 4453, 4563, 7615, 7678, 8666, 9390, 9392, 9518, and 9879.
[286] See case numbers 4339 and 9879.
[287] Kassell et al., "CASE4339," https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE4339; Kassell e.a., "CASE4449," https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE4449; Kassell e.a., "CASE4453," https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE4453; Kassell e.a., "CASE4563," https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE4563.
[288] Kassell e.a., "CASE8666," https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE8666.
[289] Kassell e.a., "CASE7615," https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE7615; Kassell e.a., "CASE7678," https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE7678.

to state this with any certainty.[290] In the final two questions that involved Stephen Mitchell, Mitchell enquired how his voyage with a vessel called the Elizabeth would go on 14 July 1601, and how his voyage on the Centaur would go on 28 November 1601.[291] After this Mitchell apparently did not return to Forman and he disappeared from the records.

Although it is not clear what Mitchell's life looked like past 1601, it is clear that he, like Davis, used scrying as a temporary career rather than a life-long one. He did remain connected to his scrying patron, Forman, and even asked Forman questions about his possible choices to assess the risk of the voyages. While Mitchell's connection to Forman might be less important than his connection to John Watts, it does show that Mitchell joined high-risk-high-gain ventures. Mitchell also continues to employ divinatory means through Forman to possibly mitigate the risks involved in some of his ventures. This penchant for scryers to enter other high-risk-high-gain ventures is also shown in the discussion of the next scryer, Edward Kelley.

Edward Kelley (1555-1597/8)

Edward Kelley gained most of his fame through his angel conversations with John Dee, but he also established himself on his own terms. The previous chapter already discussed in broad strokes what happened during Kelley's life, but this chapter shows in more detail how Kelley established himself through Dee's network, which he made his own.

Although little is known with any sort of certainty about Kelley's life before he worked for John Dee, some information has trickled down. Kelley was born on 1 August 1555 in Worcestershire, according to Dee's horoscope, and Lilly writes that Kelley was trained as an apothecary.[292] In the description given by Anthony à Wood, Kelley was seventeen years old when he "had attained a competency of grammar learning at Worcester and elsewhere."[293] Wood posits that Kelley must have been part of the University of Oxford under the name of Talbot but was unable to find which college he belonged to. Three Talbots were registered, but none of them clearly referred to Edward Kelley.[294] Wood in turn "[has] been informed by an ancient bach[elor] of divinity" that Kelley had spent time in Thomas

[290] See Kassell e.a., "CASE9390," https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE9390 and Kassell e.a., "CASE9392," https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE9392.
[291] Kassell e.a., "CASE9518," https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE9518; Kassell e.a., "CASE9879," https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE9879.
[292] Halliwell, *Private Diary*, 1; Lilly, *Life*, 148.
[293] Anthony à Wood and Phillip Bliss, *Athenae Oxoniensis. An Exact History of all the Writers and Bishops who have had their education in the University of Oxford* (London, 1813), I:639.
[294] Wood and Bliss, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, I:639.

Allen's house in his youth.[295] However, Wood cautions that most of his information is based on hearsay or "dubiously delivered," such as the following tale that Kelley left Oxford without being entered in the registry, and went to practise "certain foul matters," after which he lost both his ears in Lancaster.[296] The foul matters Kelley lost his ears for were related to necromancy, supposedly practised in a graveyard near Walton-in-the-Dale, now Walton-le-Dale, in Lancashire. The footnote by Bliss suggests that there was probably truth in the multiple accounts of this instance and the punishment that followed.[297] Whitby writes instead that Kelley's ears were probably cropped for "forging title-deeds or for coining base money" in 1580.[298] Kelley might have been a secretary to Thomas Allen (1540-1632), who was an Oxford scholar who also knew John Dee.[299] Allen owned magic manuscripts and although there is no conclusive evidence that Allen was a practitioner, this shows an interesting connection between Dee, Kelley, and Allen, and might also be how Kelley found out about Dee and his library.[300]

On 8 March 1582, Kelley, then referred to as Talbot, was first introduced to Dee by a certain Mr. Clerkson. It is unclear who this Clerkson was, but Clerkson and Barnabas Saul, Dee's previous scryer, knew each other.[301] Kelley travelled often, which enabled him to broaden his network. On 15 November 1582, Kelley was reintroduced as "Kelley" rather than "Talbot," and shortly after, "the angels declared that 'none shall enter into the knowledge of these mysteries but this worker.'"[302] During the angel conversations, the archangel Michael asked Kelley to marry, which Kelley did: either in late 1582 or early 1583 Kelley married Jane (Joan) Cooper, from Chipping Norton.[303] When Kelley returned to Dee in March 1583, he brought with him a book, which Dee called the Book of Dunstan, and a scroll which would reveal the locations of Dane treasures.[304] Being employed by Dee did not mean that Kelley was bound to Dee only, just that he had to scry for Dee. Kelley was free to leave,

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[295] Wood and Bliss, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, I:639.
[296] Wood and Bliss, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, I:639.
[297] Wood and Bliss, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, I:639n4.
[298] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, I:43.
[299] Andrew G. Watson, "Thomas Allen of Oxford and his manuscripts," in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts, & Libraries. Essays presented to N.R. Ker*, eds. M.B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (London: Scolar Press, 1978), 279-80.
[300] Frank Klaassen, *Transformations of Magic. Illicit Learned Magic in the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Univeristy Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 37.
[301] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, I:43; Halliwell, *Private Diary*, 14-15.
[302] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, I: 44-45, II:138, 174-75. Dee's Diaries first mention "E.K." on 22 November 1582, see Halliwell, *Private Diary*, 17.
[303] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, I:45.
[304] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, I:45-46. For further information on the scroll, see Francis Young, "Edward Kelley's Danish treasure hoax and Elizabethan antiquarianism," *Intellectual History Review* 30, no. 2 (2020): 167-86, https://doi.org/10.1080/17496977.2019.1643182.

which he did several times when the two men did not agree on the nature of the spirits or scrying sessions.[305] Dee and Kelley becoming involved with the Polish lord Albert Laski (1535-1605) in March 1583 led to a series of voyages and involvement in foreign politics. On 21 September 1583, the entire Mortlake household left for Poland, and in 1584, Dee and Kelley moved to Cracow. Between 1583 and 1589, they spent most of their time in and around Bohemia.[306] In May 1588, Edward Kelley felt he had surpassed Dee's own mastery of alchemy, although he was still scrying for Dee.[307]

In October 1588, Kelley's wife returned to England, while Kelley himself stayed behind in Bohemia. Dee also left but gave Kelley the glass or crystal he was given by Queen Elizabeth and the materials Kelley would need for Lord Rosenberg, one of Dee's clients.[308] Kelley remained with Emperor Rudolph II of Bohemia and was even made a knight in 1589.[309] Kelley was thus linked to the highest authority in the country. In May 1591, Kelley was incarcerated by Rudolph II, and although the story is muddled and unclear, Kelley seems to have been in and out of prison for the majority of the remainder of his life. Kelley was held at Křivoklát (or Püglitz) and was probably also held in other castles, but still remained a very popular alchemist.[310] The date of Kelley's death is unclear – his death is as mysterious as his life. In 1595, Dee receives "the newes that Sir Edward Kelley was slayne," but Evans states that Kelley was still alive in 1597 and that Borbonius (1566-1629), a famous Czech doctor and alchemist, thought that Kelley was even still alive in 1598.[311]

Kelley clearly used his scrying to gain entrance to higher society and worked with Dee to access his extensive network, which put him in contact with nobility like Albert Laski and ultimately Rudolph II. Although he worked for Dee as a scryer, he was also an alchemist, in which capacity he was knighted by Rudolph II. When Dee went back to England, Dee and Kelley remained in contact through letter exchanges. Dee and Kelley worked well together, but on his own, Kelley achieved the knighthood Dee never obtained in his own precious England. However, like the two scryers described before, Kelley also seemed to be involved with high-risk-high-gain career choices – although it is unclear why Kelley was imprisoned,

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[305] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, I:46-47.
[306] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, I:28-29; Evans, *Rudolph II*, 218.
[307] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, I:48.
[308] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, I:48; Halliwell, *Private Diary*, 29-30.
[309] Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, I:48; R.J.W. Evans, *Rudolph II and His World. A Study in Intellectual History, 1576-1612* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 226.
[310] Evans, *Rudolph II*, 227-28; Whitby, *Actions with Spirits*, I:48-49.
[311] Halliwell, *Private Diary*, 54; Evans, *Rudolph II*, 227-28. On Borbonius, see Evans, *Rudolph II*, 206-07, and *Středočeská vědecká knihovna v Kladzě*, s.v. "Borbonius z Borbenheimu, Matyáš, 1566-1629," accessed 4 May 2020, https://ipac.svkkl.cz/arl-kl/en/detail-kl_us_auth-0283074-Borbonius-z-Borbenheimu-Matyas-15661629/.

it seems to be connected to his alchemical pursuits, which shows that it could lead to great things such as a knighthood but also to less pleasant things like being imprisoned. It shows that alchemy can be added to the high-risk-high-gain ventures that scryers might turn to, in addition to navigation as we have already seen in the discussion of John Davis and Stephen Mitchell.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that cunning folk and scryers are not necessarily the same group of people. While some scryers can also be described as cunning folk, in most cases the two groups do not overlap. This is mostly because scryers have a specific gift, namely the gift to be able to see spirits in a scrying device, and this is not something all cunning folk have. However, some scryers might also function as cunning folk. Other scryers use their gift to move up in life, like the three scryers discussed in this chapter.

The three scryers who have been discussed in the paragraphs above all moved beyond the scrying profession through the use of their networks. While John Davis managed to use the network he was part of through Humphrey and Adrian Gilbert to become a navigator, and Stephen Mitchell became a navigator or privateer through John Watts' tutelage and Simon Forman's guidance, Edward Kelley became an accomplished alchemist. All three joined high-risk, high-gain ventures after their initial scrying adventures, whether in seafaring (discovery or privateering) or alchemy. For all three ex-scryers, however, their choices of career were probably influenced through their network; John Davis' connection to the Gilberts and Raleigh, and Stephen Mitchell's connection to John Watts probably led to them becoming involved with seafaring, like the majority of their network, while the more obvious choice for Edward Kelley was to continue working with alchemy, as both Dee and himself had already been pursuing that path. Intriguing is also that all three scryers stayed connected to their initial patron in some way. The Gilberts helped establish Davis' career and they continued working together or using their network to further Davis' career. Stephen Mitchell remained connected to Simon Forman by consulting him on questions that pertained to his further career, and Edward Kelley stayed in contact with Dee through letter writing. Their patrons might have initially helped them further their career by connecting them to a larger network, but the scryers remained loyal to them even after their scrying connection was severed.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to find a typology of ideal or imagined and real, historical scryers in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, by means of the analysis of manuscripts and other historical sources. The introduction already clarified the term "scryer," which is here taken to mean the practitioner who can see or hear the spirits through a scrying device, rather than someone who simply can see spirits. Chapter two demonstrates that in some cases, the non-scrying practitioner could also perceive the spirits in some way, but not through the scrying devices, or only after the spirits were removed from the scrying device and moved into the earthly planes.

The first chapter focused on the description of rituals in which the ideal scryer features, as well as the description of the ideal scryer, answering the question of characteristics of the ideal sixteenth- and seventeenth-century. The rituals themselves all varied, but the main characteristics were that a glass, mirror, or crystal stone was used. The chapter presented an initial typology for scrying rituals based on eighteen rituals. These rituals can be divided into two main categories: rituals that prepare for future scrying (by catching the spirits in the scrying devices) or those that facilitate scrying in themselves. Twelve rituals facilitate scrying and only six are preparatory rituals. Common features for all rituals are prayers (to the divine) and invocations of those spirits, as well as the use of hallowed oil or writing names into the scrying device or parchment in which the device is kept. The preparation of the scrying material was notably only described in rituals without a child scryer. The goals for which scrying can be used varied, but in general there is a focus on finding lost or stolen goods, treasure, murderers, secrets, or finding out how friends are doing.

In the thirteenth century, the scryer was still a child in most cases, but Fanger observed a shift from a child scryer to an adult male practitioner scrying, and it appears this trend continued into the early modern period in England. Only six of the eighteen rituals analysed in the first chapter featured children as scryers, and the other twelve explicitly required an adult practitioner. A child-scryer would have to be under the age of fourteen. The sex of the child did not seem to matter much, but in some of the rituals, the child was required to be legitimate and a virgin. The adult scryer was not expected to be a virgin, and Fanger explained that invoking a virgin saint, such as Mary, could be equally exchanged for

the use of a virginal scryer. However, the adult practitioner should then expect the ritual for scrying to take longer and be more annoying.

The second chapter focused on real, historical scryers who appeared in legal documents and other sources from the sixteenth and seventeenth century, answering the question on the characteristics of the real or historical scryer. This chapter showed that the majority of the real scryers were not children, but male adult practitioners. Some of the historical scryers were clearly educated (i.e., teachers, physicians, preachers, or apothecaries) but for others it was not clear if they had some form of education at all. The same goes for their wages; in most cases it was clear that they were paid but unclear how much they were paid. Most of the practitioners were sedentary, while others were itinerant and found work wherever they moved, albeit not always as a scryer. The historical scryer was often employed to find lost or stolen goods, treasures, thieves, or bewitchers, while they could also be used to conjure spirits or facilitate angel conversations. They used glass or crystal to scry with, regardless of the period in which they lived.

Magic manuscripts in some ways reflect what we know about the actual practice of magic, but in other ways they do not. The materials and goals, for instance, were still similar. The scrying material was mostly glass or crystal, and scrying was used to find things and people (i.e. stolen goods, thieves, poisoners), and treasure hunting, but also for conversations with spirits. In significant ways, however, real practices diverged from manuscripts. Instead of using children, the adult practitioner was prevalent in historical sources, and the scrying goals also turned towards angel conversations. The contrast between the real and imagined scryer is significant and shows that real practice differs greatly from the tradition shown in manuscripts. This in turn demonstrates how important it is to not regard magic manuscripts as transparent evidence for the practices they accompany.

The third chapter compared the description of the real, historical scryer to cunning folk to answer the question what set apart the scryer from other magic practitioners. Cunning folk, according to Owen Davies, were mostly men who were semi-literate and practised specific types of folk magic, such as love magic, un-bewitching and finding lost and stolen goods. They typically performed magic alongside some other form of employment. Davies has suggested that good standing in the community (in part provided by having other employment) and literacy were key qualities in cunning folk. Ideally they would be of equal or higher social standing than their clients. This upward social hierarchical relationship between the client and cunning folk described by Davies pertains to farmers, who formed the

majority of the clientele for scryers and would not want to consult cunning folk who were in a lower social position than they were.

Some scryers were called cunning folk, but while scryers and cunning folk show similarities, they only overlap at times instead of being identical categories. Some of the scryers discussed in chapter two were described as cunning folk by contemporaries, but most of them did not entirely match the description suggested by Davies. While scryers also tended to use their scrying devices to find lost and stolen goods, they could only find possible love matches or people who bewitched a client, but could not make people fall in love or un-bewitch those who were bewitched. Like cunning folk, scryers tended to have a second job, commonly as a teacher or priest, and most of them were literate, although for many of the scryers discussed, information about their employment and level of literacy was difficult to establish. They either worked for their patrons on an ongoing basis for a longer period of time, or they worked with clients to resolve smaller issues, which amounts to a "pay-per-view" type of contact between scryers and their clients. The social hierarchical relationship Davies sees does not show in most of the cases discussed in chapter two. In some cases, this is because the social class of the practitioner was unclear, but in others, there is a clear downward social hierarchical movement, such as in the case of John Dee, who employed simple priests (Barnabas Saul) or apothecaries (Edward Kelley) as his scryers. If one views scrying as a gift, the distinction between cunning folk and scryers becomes more noticeable; a scryer has this gift and could potentially also function as cunning folk, but not every cunning person has this gift to see.

While many scryers practised their profession their entire lives, some used their scrying patronage to create a network through which to establish a more 'respectable' career, with varying levels of success. The three men discussed in chapter three – John Davis, Stephen Mitchell, and Edward Kelley – all managed to move on to something else through their patron's network. John Davis might have been the most successful of the three through his connection with the Gilbert brothers and Sir Walter Raleigh. Davis became a well-known and well-respected navigator until he died at the hand of Japanese pirates. Stephen Mitchell probably gained his career in navigation through a placement with John Watts, and he interwove his new career in navigation with magic, seeking Forman's advice on which ship to join. However, Mitchell's career is significantly harder to trace than Davis's and thus it is not clear how well this venture ended. Edward Kelley probably had a less than savoury life before being employed as a scryer by John Dee, but eventually managed to become a knight to Emperor Rudolph II through Dee and Dee's connection to Albert Laski. They all seemed

to find a new high-risk-high-gain career after their scrying: Davis' career brought him much but also lost him his wife and eventually his life, it is not clear whether Mitchell lived past 1601, and Kelley, though knighted, was in and out of prison.

Through these three chapters, the main research question about the characteristics of scryers has been answered. In short, the characteristics of this group were varied and differ in some aspects from the perfect or ideal description of the scryer that was found in manuscript descriptions of the same period. The scryers were mostly male, but there was an increase in the number of women who scry in the seventeenth century. For most practitioners, it is clear that they were at least semi-literate. There seem to be two separate strands in the historical adult scryers: those who worked for clients on a 'pay-per-view' basis, and those who had contracts with their patrons. The scryers who were bound to a contract of sorts, or who scried for longer periods of time for the same patron, were often involved with higher society, while the 'pay-per-view' scryer worked for whoever wanted their services.

This initial survey of the depiction of scryers in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England thus leads to the new insights that the ideal or imagined perfect description of the scryer in ritual manuscripts does not match up to the real, historical scryer in this period. Even though there certainly is a shift from child-scryers to adult scryers in the description of rituals, it appears that the manuals have not yet caught up to the time period. This ideal picture might be skewed by people conservatively copying a manuscript. The largest number of early modern scryers were adults, although some instances of child scryers persist. In addition, adult female scryers appeared and became more common. Not all of the scryers can be described with the same umbrella term of "cunning folk", and some even manage to leave the scrying business altogether. The three ex-scryers studied in the third chapter were all connected to people who had access to a larger network, which they used to further themselves in the world.

As the introduction to this thesis already showed, scrying in itself is an understudied topic. This is an initial survey, based on eighteen rituals in five manuscripts, and case studies of twenty-five scryers. A larger survey would serve to create a more balanced and nuanced view of this practice, but unfortunately that falls outside of the scope of this MA thesis. This thesis also only focused on England and on the sixteenth and seventeenth century. The social composition of scryers could vary in other countries or other time periods. Additionally, the connections between scryers and other magic practitioners, as well as the transmission of knowledge between scryers are fascinating topics that warrant further research. The origins of the rituals and practices merit a more in-depth view. Another possibility is to carry out similar

comparative research for other magic practitioners. Within scrying and magic, the possibilities are still almost endless, as most avenues of research are undiscovered as of now and scrying in particular is one of those untrodden avenues of research. So, while scrying might be able to predict the future, that does not mean that its past is clear.

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