



Masquerading

Men masked as animals and women dance a round dance to the tune of a gittern. Such folk rituals celebrating nature, which tapped deep into the pre-Christian roots of medieval culture, were vital components of popular religion despite the efforts of church leaders to eradicate them. Reproduced in Charles Knight's *Old England: A Pictorial Museum of Regal, Ecclesiastical, Baronial, Municipal, and Popular Antiquities* (London: Charles Knight & Co., 1845) v. 1, p. 308 after a mid-fourteenth-century Flemish manuscript now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Bodeleian MS 264, f. 21V.

65. BURCHARD OF WORMS'S CORRECTOR (c. 1008-12)

Burchard of Worm's Corrector offers a memorable glimpse of some of the pre- or extra-Christian beliefs that were staples of popular religion to the never-ending exasperation of churchmen. Burchard (d. 1025) was elected bishop of Worms in 1000. Around 1008 he compiled an important early collection of canon law in twenty books called the *Decretum* (not to be confused with Gratian's work of the same name from the mid-twelfth century). He titled the nineteenth book of this work *Corrector et Medicus* since it was designed for priests in their role as spiritual doctors correcting and curing the sickness of souls. Following the lead of earlier penitential handbooks compiled to aid priests in administering confession, it adhered to the notion of "tariffed penance," a fixed term of penance (usually fasting) for any particular sin no matter the varying characters and circumstances of the penitents and their sins. Burchard culled most of the sins and their penances in his collection from older penitentials, some dating back to the seventh century. So the sometimes startling popular beliefs and practices he equipped his priests to tackle in confession may not always paint an accurate picture of the state of popular Christianity in his own day. Still, some of his more detailed descriptions — for example, the witch Hulda, the rain-making ceremony, and various love potions — arguably come from his own first-hand encounters with the current folk practices in his diocese. While all the sins in Burchard's penitential concern the failure to meet the demands of Christian living, the complete work is too long to include here. Translated below are those sections that deal explicitly with sins that stray from Christian orthodoxy into pre-Christian beliefs and magic. The various topics Burchard covers are framed as questions for priests to ask penitents.

Source: trans. J. Shinnars from Burchard's *Decretorum Liber Decimus Nonus* in F. W. H. Wasserschleben, *Die Bußordnungen der abendländischen Kirche* (Halle: Verlag Graeger, 1851, rpt. Graz, 1958), pp. 643-65 with additions from J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina* (Paris: Migne, 1880), CXL, cc. 949-976. Latin.

This book is called the Corrector or Doctor because it is full of correctives for bodies and medicines for souls, and it teaches every priest, even one with little education, how he can come to the aid of anyone: someone in holy orders, a secular person, rich or poor, a boy, a young man, an old man, a decrepit man, someone healthy or sick, people of every age, and of either sex. . . .

Concerning the Magical Arts

52. Have you violated a grave, by which I mean, after you see someone buried have you gone at night, broken open the grave, and taken his clothes?

If you have, you should do penance for two years on the appointed fast days.

52a. Have you consulted magicians, inviting them into your house to look for some lost article using magical arts, or to purify the house; or, following pagan practice, have diviners divined something for you, so that you might ask them about the future as you would a prophet; or have you invited to you those who cast lots, or those who hope to foretell the future for you by lots, or those who pay regard to auguries or incantations? If you have, you should do penance for two years on the appointed fast days.

53. Have you observed pagans customs which, as if by hereditary right and with the devil's aid, fathers pass on to their sons even in these times: for instance, have you worshipped the elements, that is, the moon or sun, or the course of the stars, the new moon, or the waning moon whose light you hope to restore by your noise making or aid? Have you used those elements to try to bring you help or to help others, or have you consulted the new moon before building something or getting married? If you have, you should do penance for two years on the appointed fast days, for it is written: "Whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" [Col. 3.17].

53a. Have you observed the first of January using pagan rites, so that you did something more on that day because it was the new year than you would normally do either before or after it, by which I mean to say that on that day have you either set your table with stones or food-offerings, or led singers and dancers through the neighborhoods and streets, or sat on the roof of your house with your sword circumscribed with signs in order for you to see and know there what will happen to you in the coming year? Or have you sat at a crossroads on a bullskin in order to know your future? Or have you made loaves of bread to be cooked in your name the night before so that, if they rise well and are firm and tall, from this you foresee that your life will be prosperous in the coming year? If so, because you have abandoned God your creator and turned to idols and such vain things and have become an apostate, you should do penance for two years on the appointed fast days.

54. Have you tied knots, made incantations or other various enchantments that wicked men, swineherds, oxherds, and sometime hunters do while they sing devilish chants over bread, herbs, and certain foul bandages, and either hide these in a tree or throw them where crossroads meet in order either to free their animals or dogs from pestilence or loss or to cause the loss of

someone else's? If you have you should do penance for two years on the appointed fast days.

55. Have you been present at or approved of those foolish things that women perform while doing their wool-work or weaving, who, when they start their weaving, hope that they can make it come about either with incantations or with their first steps that the threads of both the warp and the woof get so tangled together that unless some opposing diabolical incantations again intervene, the whole weave will fail? If you have been present at or approved of such, you should do penance for thirty days on bread and water.

56. Have you collected medicinal herbs using other incantations besides the Creed or the Lord's Prayer, that is, singing the "I believe in God" or the "Our Father"? If you have done this, you should do ten days of penance on bread and water.

57. Have you gone to any place to pray other than a church or some other religious place that your bishop or your priest showed you; for example, to springs, rocks, trees, or crossroads; and have you burned candles or small torches there to venerate that place, have you brought bread or some other offering there, have you eaten there, or sought anything there for the health of the body or the soul? If you have done this or approved of it, you should do penance for three years on appointed fast days.

On Divination

58. Have you practiced divination by looking in books or tablets as many are wont to do who presume to divine things in psalters, Gospel books, or books like this? If you have, you should do ten days of penance on bread and water.

59. Have you ever believed or taken part in this kind of faithlessness: that enchanters and those who say that they can summon up storms are able by demonic incantations either to stir up storms or influence men's minds? If you have believed or taken part in this, you should do penance for one year on appointed fast days.

60. Have you ever believed that there is a kind of woman who can do what certain women, deceived by the devil, claim they must do by necessity or command; namely with a band of devils transformed into the shape of women (which the foolish rabble calls Hulda the Witch) on some nights they

must ride on various beasts, and number themselves in this assembly? If you have believed or taken part in this, you should do penance for one year on appointed fast days. . . .

64. Have you believed or taken part in this kind of lack of faith: that there is a kind of woman who can influence men's minds using spells and incantations; that is, she can change a man's hatred into love or love into hatred, or can either destroy or steal a man's possessions using her enchantments? If you have believed or taken part in this, you should do penance for one year on appointed fast days.

Concerning Impiety

78. Have you neglected to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord at the four proper times of the year, namely Holy Thursday, Easter Sunday, Pentecost, and Christmas; and have you not abstained from sexual intercourse during the whole of Lent and both seven days after the aforesaid times, and five days before receiving the sacred Body of the Lord? If you have neglected this, you should do twenty days of penance on bread and water.

78a. Have you refused to attend mass or prayers or to make an offering to a married priest, by which I mean have you not wished to confess your sins to him or receive the Body and Blood of the Lord from him because you thought he was a sinner? If you have done so, you should do penance for one year on the appointed fast days.

More concerning the Magical Arts

78b. Have you believed or taken part in this kind of faithlessness that some wicked women, turning back to Satan and seduced by the illusions and phantasms of demons, believe and proclaim: in the night hours they ride on certain animals with the pagan goddess Diana and a countless multitude of women, and they cross a great span of the world in the stillness of the dead of night, and they obey her commands as if she were a noble lady, and on some nights they are called to her service? Oh, if only these women alone perished in this faithlessness and did not lead many along with them down into the utter wreck of their inconstancy! For a countless multitude, deceived by this false belief, believe these things are true and stray from true faith by believing them; they turn back to pagan error when they consider that anything is divine or godly outside the one God. But the devil transforms him-

self into the figure and likeness of various people, and he deceives the mind that he holds captive with dreams, sometimes showing it joyful things, sometimes sad things, sometimes unknown people, and leads it off the straight and narrow. Though only the spirit experiences this, the unfaithful mind believes that it happens to the body, not the spirit. For who is not led out of himself in dreams and nocturnal visions and sees many things sleeping which he never saw awake? But who is so stupid and dimwitted to think that all these things which happened only in the mind also happened to the body? When the prophet Ezechiel saw and heard visions from the Lord in his spirit, not his body, this is what he said: "Immediately," he says, "I was in the spirit" [e.g. Ezek. 37.1]. And Paul is not so bold as to say that he was taken up in body [2 Cor. 12.2]. Thus, it should be publicly announced to everyone that anyone who believes these or similar things loses his faith, and he who does not have right faith with God belongs not to him, but to him in whom he believes — that is, the devil. For it is written about our Lord: "All things were made through him, and without him was made nothing" [John 1.3]. If you have believed these worthless things, you should do penance for two years on appointed fast days.

79. Have you observed the funeral wake; that is, have you been present at vigils over the bodies of the dead where Christian bodies are watched over with pagan rites? Have you sung devilish songs there or danced those dances there that pagans devised at the devil's instruction? Have you gotten drunk there and dissolved into laughter and, putting aside all piety and feelings of charity, have you seemed to rejoice at the death of your brother? If you have, you should do penance for thirty days on bread and water.

Concerning Superstition

80. Have you made diabolical amulets or markings as certain people are wont to do at the devil's inspiration, or [employed magical] herbs or amber? Or have you honored Thursday as Jove's [i.e., Thor's] day? If you have done or approved of such, you should do forty days of penance on bread and water.

81. Have you conspired with other plotters against your bishop or his adjuncts, by which I mean to say have you ridiculed or derided your bishop's or priest's teachings or orders? If you have, you should do penance for forty days on bread and water.

82. Have you eaten any offerings made to idols, that is, from offerings left in

certain places at the tombs of the dead, or offered at springs, trees, rocks, or crossroads; or have you carried stones to cairns, or put headbands on the crosses set up at crossroads? If you have done or approved of such, you should do penance for thirty days on bread and water.

More concerning the Magical Arts

83. Have you put you son or daughter on your rooftop or on your oven in order to gain some remedy for their illness, or have you burned grain where a dead man has lain, or tied a dead man's belt in knots in order to harm someone, or have you clapped together over a corpse the combs which little women use to tease wool, or after a corpse has been carried from its house, have you cut the cart that carried it in half and had the corpse carried between the two halves of the cart? If you have done or approved of such, you should do penance for twenty days on bread and water.

84. Have you done or approved of this sort of foolishness which stupid women are accustomed to do who, when the cadaver of a dead man is still lying in his house, run to some water and quietly bring along a jug filled with it; and when the dead man's body is lifted up, they pour some of this water underneath the bier, and they take care while the body is being carried out of the house that it is lifted no more than knee-high, which they do for purposes of some sort of healing? If you have done or approved of such, you should do penance on bread and water for ten days.

85. Have you done or approved of what some people do to a killed man when he is buried? They put a special ointment in his hand, as if his wound can be healed after death by this ointment, and they bury him in this way with the ointment. If you have, you should do penance for twenty days on bread and water.

86. In any work you have undertaken, have you done or said anything using sorcery or the magic arts when you should have invoked God's name? If you have, you should do penance for ten days on bread and water.

87. Have you done the sort of things pagans did and still do on the first of January, going about [masquerading] as a little stag or a calf? If you have done so, you should do penance for thirty days on bread and water.

88. Have you disparaged or cursed or someone out of envy? If you have, you

should do penance for seven days on bread and water.

89. Have you done what many people do? They scrape the area in their house where they normally make the fire and put grains of barley on the still warm spot; if the grains pop, there will be danger; if they lie there, there will be good fortune. If you have, you should do penance for ten days on bread and water.

90. Have you done what some people do when they visit anyone sick? As they approach the house where the sick person is lying, if they see any rock lying nearby they turn it over and look underneath it to see if anything alive is there. If they find a worm, a fly, an ant, or anything moving, then they claim that the sick person will recover; but if they find nothing moving, they say the person is going to die. If you have done or believed this, you should do twenty days of penance on bread and water.

91. Have you made tiny shooting bows or shoes for little boys and thrown them down your cellar or in your shed for satyrs and gnomes [*pilosi*] to play with so that they will bring you other people's goods and make you richer? If you have, you should do penance for ten days.

92. Have you done what some people do on the first of January, that is, seven days after the Lord's birth? On that holy night at the devil's urging they wind thread, spin, and sew, doing all the work they can begin because of the new year. If you have, you should do penance for forty days on bread and water. . . .

Concerning Forbidden Foods

115. Have you eaten a body scab to gain health, or have you drunk a solution of those little worms called lice, or drunk human urine, or eaten any feces to gain health? If you have, you should do penance for ten days on bread and water.

116. Have you eaten carrion, that is, animals that you discovered dead that have been mauled by wolves or dogs? If you have, you should do penance for ten days on bread and water.

117. Have you eaten birds that a hawk caught and you did not first kill them with any arrow bolt? If you have, you should do penance for five days on bread and water.

118. Have you eaten birds or animals that got strangled in nets and you found them dead that way? Unless you were compelled by famine to do this, you should do penance for ten days on bread and water.

119. Have you eaten fish you found dead in the water? Unless you found it dead this way on the same day that it was caught by fishermen, you should do penance for three days on bread and water. . . .

More concerning Sacrilege

124. Have you burned down a church or approved of this? If you have, restore the church and distribute your worth (that is, your *wergeld*) to the poor, and do fifteen years of penance on the appointed fast days.

125. Have you held back offerings for the dead because you did not want to hand them over to the church? If you have, you should do penance for one year on the appointed fast days.

126. Have you celebrated Easter, Pentecost, of Christmas in any place other than that city to which you are subject, unless you were prevented by some infirmity? If you have, you should do penance for ten days on bread and water. . . .

More concerning Impiety

131. Have you done what some people are wont to do? After eating they go to mass stuffed with food and staggering from wine and dare to receive the sign of peace offered by the priest for the people. If you have, you should do three days of penance on bread and water.

132. Have you received the Body and Blood of the Lord after eating something no matter how little? If you have, unless you did it once during childhood, or you received it as the *viaticum*, you should do penance for ten days on bread and water.

133. Have you done what some people are accustomed to do? When they come into church, at first they move their lips a little as if they were praying, this for the sake of those standing or sitting about; but they quickly move on to telling stories and gossiping, and when the priest greets them and calls them to prayer, they return to their stories and say no responses or prayers. If you have, you should do penance for ten days on bread and water. . . .

Concerning Unbelief

137. Have you believed what some people are wont to? When they are going on any journey, if a crow flies from their left to their right and caws to them, they hope that it means their journey will be prosperous. And when they are anxious about where to lodge, if that bird called a mouse-catcher [*muriceps*] (because it catches mice and is named for what it eats) flies across the path before them, they entrust themselves more to this augury and omen than to God. If you have done or believed this, you should do five days of penance on bread and water.

138. Have you believed what some people are accustomed to? When they have need to go somewhere before daybreak, they do not dare, saying that it is now the next day, and it is forbidden to go out before the cock crows, and that it is dangerous because unclean spirits have more power to do harm before cockcrow than after, and that the cock's crowing is better able to repel and settle these spirits than that Divine Mind which resides in man through faith and the sign of the cross. If you have done or believed this, you should do penance for ten days on bread and water.

139. Have you believed what some people are accustomed to? That those beings which are popularly called the Fates either exist or that they can do what they are believed to do: namely when anyone is born, at that point they have the power to shape him into whatever they want, so that as often as he likes, he can be transformed into a wolf, which common stupidity calls a *wenwoff*, or into any other shape? If you have believed this (which never did or could occur since the divine image can never be transformed into another form or likeness by anyone other than Almighty God) you should do penance for ten days on bread and water.

140. Have you believed what some people are wont to believe: that there are wild women called *silvaticae* who say that they are corporeal, and when they wish, they reveal themselves to their lovers, and they say that they amuse themselves with them; and also when they wish, they hide themselves and vanish? If you have believed this, you should do ten days of penance on bread and water.

In all the above things priests ought to exercise great discretion that they distinguish between someone who has sinned publicly and should do public penance, and someone who has sinned privately, and has confessed voluntarily.

Although all the above questions should be put commonly to men and women, the ones that follow particularly pertain to women.

Concerning Women's Vices

141. Have you done what some women are accustomed to do during certain times of the year? You prepare a table in your house and put your food and drink with three knives on it so that if those Three Sisters (which ancient posterity and ancient stupidity called the Fates) should come, they can take repast there; and have you removed from the Divine Piety his power and name and given them to the devil, by which I mean have you believed those whom you say are the Sisters can help you either now or in the future? If you have done or approved of such, you should do penance for one year on the appointed fast days. . . .

147. Have you done what certain women are wont to do who, when they are fornicating and they want to kill their embryo, take action as the uterus is conceiving and, using their enchantments and their herbs, they abort it so that either the conceived child is killed or knocked loose, or if they have not yet conceived, they take action to prevent conception? If you have done, approved of, or taught such, you should do penance for ten years on the appointed fast days. But one ancient decree removes such women from church for the rest of their life. For whenever a woman prevents conception, she is guilty of homicide. Nevertheless it makes a great difference if the woman is poor whether she does this because of the hardship of raising the child or because she is a prostitute and does this to conceal her sins. But in the Council of Lérida it is thus ordered for those who abort their infants conceived in adultery:

148. For those who have wrongfully conceived by committing adultery and either try to kill the child as it is being born or crush it in its mother's womb with some potions, holy communion is offered to both adulterers, that is, the father and the mother, after a seven-year course [of abstinence]; nevertheless, they should dwell every moment of their life in tears and humility.

149. Have you given something or shown to anyone how she could abort or kill her conceived child? If you have, you should do penance for seven years on the appointed fast days.

150. Have you aborted your conceived child before quickening? If you have,

you should do penance for one year on the appointed fast days. If you have done this after it was instilled with a spirit, you should do three years of penance on the appointed fast days.

151. Have you willingly killed your newborn son or daughter? If you have, you should do penance for twelve years on the appointed fast days and never be without penance.

152. Have you neglected your infant and through your fault it died without being baptized? If you have, you should do penance for one year on the appointed fast days, and never be without penance.

153. Have you mixed any lethal potion and killed anyone with it? If you have, you should fast for one quarantine [*carina*, or forty days] with seven years penance subsequently, and you should never be without penance. If you wished to kill someone by poison and did not succeed, you should do penance for one year on the appointed fast days.

154. Have you tasted your husband's semen in order to make his love for you burn greater through your diabolical deeds? If you have, you should do seven years of penance on the appointed fast days.

155. Have you drunk holy oil to subvert a judicial ordeal [*judicium Dei*], or have you done anything or taken counsel with others to do anything using herbs, words, wood, gemstones, or anything else foolishly believed in, or have you had something concealed in your mouth, sewn into your clothing, or tied around you, or contrived any other trick that you believed could subvert God's judgment? If you have, you should do seven years of penance on the appointed fast days.

156. Have you done what certain women are wont to do and firmly believe, I mean to say that if their neighbor has an abundance of milk or honeybees, they believe that with their enchantments and charms they can shift this abundance of milk or honey — which they saw that their neighbor had before they did — to themselves and their own animals or to whomever they wish with the devil's aid. If you have, you should do penance for three years on the appointed fast days.

157. Have you believed what certain women are wont to believe: that whatever house they enter, with a word, look, or sound they claim they can cast

the evil eye and destroy goslings, the chicks of peafowl, chicks, even piglets and the offspring of other animals? If you have done or believed this, you should do penance for one year on the appointed fast days.

158. Have you believed what many women turning back to Satan believe and assert to be true: you believe that in the stillness of a quiet night, with you gathered in your bed with your husband lying at your bosom, you are physically able to pass through closed doors and can travel across the span of the earth with others deceived by a similar error? And that you can kill baptized people redeemed by Christ's blood without using visible weapons and then, after cooking their flesh, can eat it, and put straw, wood, or something like this in place of their hearts, and, though you have eaten them, you can bring them back to life and grant them a stay during which they can live? If you have believed this, you should do penance for forty days (that is, a quarantine) on bread and water with seven years of penance subsequently.

159. Have you believed what some women are wont to believe: that in the stillness of a quiet night while your doors are shut, you along with other minions of the devil rise up into the sky all the way to the clouds and fight there with others, and that you wound them and they wound you? If you have believed this, you should do penance for two years on appointed fast days.

160. Have you done what some women are wont to do? They take a live fish and put it in their vagina, keeping it there for a while until it is dead. Then they cook or roast it and give it to their husbands to eat, doing this in order to make the men be more ardent in their love for them. If you have, you should do two years of penance on the appointed fast days.

161. Have you done what some women are accustomed to do? They lie face down on the ground, uncover their buttocks, and tell someone to make bread on their naked buttocks. When they have cooked it, they give it to their husbands to eat. They do this to make them more ardent in their love for them. If you have, you should do two years of penance on the appointed fast days.

162. Have you put your baby next to the fire and then someone else puts a pot of water on the fire which boils over the pot onto the baby killing it? You, who should keep a child under your care for seven years, should do three years of penance on the appointed fast days; the person who put the

water into the pot is innocent.

163. Have you done what some women do carrying out the devil's lessons? They study the footprints and tracks Christians make when walking, and then they take some sod from their footprints and examine it, hoping to bear away their health or life. If you have, you should do five years of penance on the appointed fast days.

164. Have you done what some women are wont to do? They take their menstrual blood, mix it into food or drink, and give it to their men to eat or drink to make them love them more. If you have done this, you should do five years of penance on the appointed fast days.

164a. Have you done what some women are wont to do? They take a man's skull, burn it, and give the ashes to their husbands to drink for health. If you have, you should do one year of penance on the appointed fast days.

164b. Have you eaten or drunk any animal's blood? If you have, you should do penance for five days on bread and water.

165. Have you done what some women are wont to do? I speak of those who have bawling babies. They dig a hole in the ground and make a tunnel through to the other side; then they pull their baby through the hole and say that this stops the baby's crying. If you have done or approved of such, you should do five days of penance on bread and water.

166. Have you done what some women are accustomed to do inspired by the devil? When any infant dies without baptism, they take the baby's corpse, put it in some secret spot, and impale its little body with a stake, saying that if they did not do so, the infant would rise from the dead and cause many people harm. If you have done, approved of, or believed in such, you should do penance for two years on the appointed fast days.

167. Have you done what some women are wont to do filled with the devil's boldness? When a woman is due to give birth and is unable, while she is struggling vainly to give birth, if she dies from her birth pangs, they impale the mother and her child into the ground with a stake in the same grave. If you have done or approved of such, you should do penance for two years on the appointed fast days.

168. Have you involuntarily overlain your baby, or smothered it by the weight of your [bed] clothes, and did you do this after it was baptized? If you did, you should do forty days of penance (that is, a quarantine) on bread, water, vegetables, and beans; and you should abstain from marital relations until the forty days are up. Afterwards you should do penance on appointed fast days for three years and keep three forty-day fasts each year. If you overlay the baby before it was baptized you should do penance for the next forty days as described above and then for five years.

169. If you have found your baby overlain next to you where both you and your husband were lying and it is not apparent whether its father or you smothered it, or whether it died on its own, you should not be carefree or without penance. For in these cases there should be a great regard for piety since though nothing evil was willed, someone did die. Nevertheless, because of your negligence, you should do penance for forty days on bread and water. But if it is clear that you were the cause of the infant's death — not willingly, but through negligence — you should do penance for three years on the appointed fast days, one of these on bread and water; and during the term of the penance you should keep yourself away from all luxuries. . . .

171. Have you done what some women are wont to do? When a baby is newborn, immediately baptized, and dies, when they bury it, they put a wax paten with a Host in its right hand and in its left hand they put a wax chalice with wine in it and then they bury it. If you have, you should do ten days of penance on bread and water.

172. Have you done what some adulterous women do? As soon as they find out that their lovers wish to take lawful wives, then they use some sort of evil art to extinguish the men's sexual desire so that they are useless to their wives and unable to have intercourse with them. If you have done this or taught others to, you should do penance for ten days on bread and water.

173. Have you taken your child to be baptized at other than the legitimate times, that is, Easter Saturday and Pentecost Saturday, unless the child's ill-health requires otherwise? If you have, you should do ten days of penance on bread and water.

174. Have you neglected to visit the sick, have you not gone to those in prison, and have you not ministered to them? If you have not, you should do penance for ten days on bread and water.

175. Have you eaten meat during Lent? If you have, you should abstain from eating any meat for the course of that year.

176. Have you eaten any food from Jews or from other pagans which they prepared for you? If you have, you should do penance for ten days on bread and water.

177. Have you done what certain people are wont to do? When they go to church, on the way there they flaunt their vanities and talk about idle things, and they give no thought to anything that has to do with what is useful for the soul. When they enter the porch of the church where the bodies of the faithful are buried, they trample on the tombs of their neighbors without reflecting that this will be their future, and they make no mention of them nor pour forth prayers to the Lord on their behalf as they should. If you have neglected this, you should do penance for ten days on bread and water, and take care that you not let this happen again. But whenever you enter the porch of a church, you should pray for them and ask those holy souls whose bodies rest there that they intercede before God for your sins insofar as they can.

178. Have you done any work on the Lord's Day? If you have, you should do penance for three days on bread and water.

179. Have you done what some women are accustomed to do? They take off their clothes and smear honey all over their naked body. With the honey on their body they roll themselves back and forth over wheat on a sheet spread on the ground. They carefully collect all the grains of wheat sticking to their moist body, put them in a mill, turn the mill in the opposite direction of the sun, grind the wheat into flour, and bake bread from it. Then they serve it to their husbands to eat, who then grow weak and die. If you have, you should do penance for forty days on bread and water.

180. Have you done what certain women are wont to do? When they have had no rain and need it, they gather together many young girls and put one small virgin in charge as their leader. They strip her and lead the naked girl outside the village where they find the henbane plant, called *belisa* in German. They make the nude virgin dig up the henbane with the little finger of her right hand and then make her tie it by its roots with some string to the little toe of her right foot. All the other maidens, each holding a single branch in her hand, lead the virgin dragging the plant behind her into a

nearby river where they sprinkle river water on the virgin from their branches; by their incantations, they thereby hope to get rain. With the naked virgin turning and changing her footsteps to resemble the [sideways] walk of a crab, they lead her back from the river to the village in their hands. If you have done or approved of such, you should do penance for twenty days on bread and water.

66. THE INQUISITOR BERNARD OF GUI ON SORCERY (c. 1323)

In the wake of the rapid spread of Cathar heretics through southern France, Pope Gregory IX expressly set up procedures for the papal inquisition in the early 1230s to root out and suppress heresy. (It should not to be confused with the later, royally-sponsored Spanish Inquisition directed at first against Jews and Muslim converts to Christianity.) The inquisition's practical powers and its effectiveness were never as sweeping as later historians would claim, but that it existed at all testifies to how seriously churchmen counted organized challenges to accepted Christian doctrine. The Dominican Bernard of Gui (c. 1261-1331) was papally appointed as inquisitor of Toulouse in 1307, a post he held until 1324. Around 1323 he composed a manual to aid his fellow inquisitors (who were typically Dominicans or Franciscans) titled the Technique for the Work of Inquest into Heretical Depravity. It first explained the mechanics of the inquisition: its procedures of arrest, investigation, sentencing and commutation, and the legal powers of inquisitors. Then it offered a detailed description, based both on Bernard's experience and his research into old documents, of the various heresies and errors spread about southern France in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries such as the Cathars, Waldensians, Pseudo-Apostles, Beguines, Jews, and sorcerers. The following list of questions to be put to suspected witches exposes a range of popular magical beliefs and practices that comfortably co-existed with Christianity in most medieval communities. It is fruitful to compare it to Burchard of Worms's similar list compiled 200 years earlier.

Source: trans. J. Shinnars from G. Mollat and G. Drioux, *Bernard of Gui's Manuel de l'Inquisiteur [Practica officii Inquisitionis heretice pravitatis]*, (Paris: Edouard Champion, 1927), v. 2, pp. 20-25. Latin.

1. The following concerns sorcerers, diviners, and invokers of demons. The plague and error of sorcerers, diviners, and invokers of demons assume many and multiple forms in various lands and places according to the varied fabrications and false and vain information of superstitious people who resort to the spirits of error and the teachings of demons.

2. Questions for sorcerers, diviners, and invokers of demons. Examining a sorcerer, diviner, or invoker of demons, he should be asked what and how many kinds of sorcery, divination, or invocations he knows and from whom he learned them.

Next, getting down to particulars, consider the quality and the condition of the persons, since one should not ask the same questions of everyone equally or employ a single method: men should be interrogated one way,