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The Discernment of Spirits

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The Discernment of Spirits

Assessing Visions and Visionaries
in the Late Middle Ages

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Introduction

A Tale of Two Visions

Sometime around 1115, the Virgin Mary appeared in a dream to the twelfth-century Englishwoman Theodora (later Christina) of Markyate (c. 1097–1156), who was seeking to end her unwanted betrothal in order to live a celibate religious life. The Virgin urged Christina not to fear and then promised to help her escape her fiancé, leaving Christina with "immense joy ... [and] a cheerful countenance."[1] However, when the fifteenth-century Italian woman Giovanna (later Veronica) Binasco (1445–97) likewise sought to clear her way toward religious life by teaching herself to read, the apparition of the Virgin who appeared to her and urged her not to fear had a very different reception: "Veronica said to her, 'I will never believe that the Mother of God has come to an unworthy woman such as I, but rather I think that you are the devil, who has put on the appearance of this remarkable woman in order to deceive me.'"[2] These two visionary experiences had a great deal in common: both women sought religious life, both enjoyed the Virgin Mary's intercession in order to resolve difficulties in the pursuit of their vocation, both enjoyed later visions of the Virgin, and both found their episodes written into a *Vita* intended to position its protagonist for canonization (although neither woman achieved formal sainthood). The aftermath of the two visions was also similar: in both

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[1] *Vita* of Christina of Markyate 24, ed. Paulette L'Hermite-Leclerq and Anne-Marie Legras, *Vie de Christina de Markyate* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2007), 1:108: "Magnitudinem leticie quam conceperat ex spe liberacionis sue vultus propalabat hilaritas." A good English translation is Charles Talbot, *The Life of Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth-Century Recluse*, rev. ed. (Toronto: Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching, 1998). Of course, the Virgin's admonition not to fear replicates the Angel Gabriel's advice to Mary herself in Luke 1:30.

[2] Isidore Isolano, *Inexplicabilis mysterii gesta Beatae Veronicae Virginis praeclarissimi Monasterii Sanctae Marthae urbis Mediolani*, reprinted as *Vita Veronica de Binasco* in *Acta Sanctorum Januarii* (Antwerp: Société des Bollandistes, 1648), 2:172: "Cui Veronica: Hocce numquam crediderim, quod ipsa vilis femella cum sum, indigna existam ad quam Mater Dei veniat. Arbitror potius te diabolum fore, qui me deceptum veniens hujusce eximiae mulieris speciem induisti."

cases, the Virgin helped remove obstacles to entry into religious life, appearing to Christina's fiancé to convince him to annul the betrothal and teaching Veronica three mystical letters to substitute for the ones she could not understand. But the initial reception of these Marian visions was very different. Christina's delighted acceptance of the Virgin's message was not complicated by doubt; her hagiographer records that she awoke from the dream to find her pillow wet with tears and immediately concluded that "just as the tears she dreamed she had shed were real, so were the rest of the things she had dreamed."[3] Veronica, on the other hand, required further assurance from Mary: "Do not doubt, daughter, that I am the mother of Christ; I am indeed she."[4] Only after Mary's repeated assurances that she was the true Mother of God did Veronica agree to listen to the remainder of her message.

   This book addresses the question of what happened in the centuries between the two visions to make their protagonists respond so differently to the helpful Virgin. This is not a book about the details of individual prophecies and visions; rather, it is a book about how these revelations were received and understood by the visionaries themselves and by the people around them between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries in Christian Europe. Among the world's religious traditions, Christianity had a unique relationship with the concept of prophecy: like the other Abrahamic faiths, its scriptures included and relied on prophets and prophetic texts, but unlike the other Abrahamic faiths, Christianity provided significant opportunities for contemporary prophecy as well. In both Judaism and Islam, mainstream traditions had identified a point at which prophecy had ceased, so that when revelations and visions appeared throughout Jewish and Muslim history, they were viewed as distinct from any scripturally authorized tradition of prophecy.[5] Over the course of two millennia, Christian thinkers occasionally took a similar position, arguing that proph-

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[3] *Vita* of Christina of Markyate 24, in L'Hermite-Leclerq ,76: "sicut verum flere fuit quod sompniasse putabat, ita de reliquorum eventu non ambigeret que per idem somnium viderat."

[4] Isolano, *Vita Veronica de Binasco*, in AS, 2:172: "Cui mater Dei: Ne ambigas, filia, me matrem Christi esse: ipsa enim ego sum."

[5] Rabbinic Judaism maintained that prophecy ended with the biblical Malachi (as codified in the Babylonian Talmud Yoma 9b), and Islam took the position that Muhammad was the final prophet and "seal of the prophets" (as codified in Qur'an 33:40 and numerous other verses). Judaism did have one major later claimant to prophetic status, the seventeenth-century visionary Nathan of Gaza, who argued that prophecy had returned along with the messiah Shabbatai Tzvi and whose claims ended after Shabbatai's apostasy.

ecy had died out after the apostolic era.[6] Most of the time, however, a straightforward reading of the New Testament committed Christians to the position that prophecy could continue to exist within the Christian community.[7] Christian visions and revelations were therefore generally treated as part of a continuous spectrum including prophecy, with all its attendant theological implications. Discrediting all revelations was impossible, since it could lead to discrediting the foundations of the Christian tradition.

As a result, the emerging institutions of Christianity had to contend since their earliest days with potentially destabilizing claims of new revelations ranging from reiteration to supercession of Christ's message. From the Montanist sect of the second century C.E. to the Pentecostal movement in the twentieth, Christian individuals and groups have attempted to bypass established institutions and claim religious authority by virtue of some supernatural connection with the divine. As a result, Christian thinkers have devoted considerable effort to authorizing the new revelation of Jesus, working out the implications of the Spirit's gift of prophecy, and warning about false prophets whose arrival would herald the imminent apocalypse. Who could be a prophet under the terms of Christ's new covenant? What would such a title signify? How were believers to distinguish between the equally plausible possibilities of true and false prophecy? At some points in the history of Christianity, of course, these issues were of more immediate interest than at others. For Christina of Markyate, at the beginning of the twelfth century, prophecy was not an important contemporary category, and her dream-vision of Mary was merely one of many signs of divine favor. But beginning in the twelfth century, European Christians rediscovered prophecy, and so late medieval Western Europe became a time and place in which prophetic and institutional claims to Christian religious authority clashed repeatedly and generated a discourse about verification to which clergy and laity, men and women, visionaries and hagiographers all contributed. This discourse was gradually routinized and systematized until the mid-fifteenth-century Church inherited both the doubt which plagued Veronica Binasco and the set of doctrines and tech-

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[6] For a rare medieval example, cf. Chapter Two's discussion of Augustinus of Ancona's 1310 *Tractatus contra divinatores et sompniatores*. Modern examples are relatively easy to find in the mainline Protestant traditions; cf. the Christianity-centered account of "rhythms of prophecy belief" in chp. 2 of Paul Boyer's *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

[7] Relevant passages from the New Testament include Acts 2:17–18 (quoting from Joel 2:28–32), which argues that prophecy is a sign of the "last days" which have begun at Pentecost, and Paul's several assertions that prophecy will continue until Christ's return (1 Cor. 1:4–8, 1 Cor. 13:8–10, Eph. 4:7–13).

niques for distinguishing between true and false revelations which her avowals of humility were intended to demonstrate. Late medieval Christians kept the connection to biblical prophecy when they referred to these doctrines and techniques either as "testing spirits" (1 John 4:1), evoking a warning against false prophecy, or as "discernment of spirits" (1 Cor. 12:10), that is, the spiritual gift of interpretation which Paul had juxtaposed with prophecy.

The Visionary Context of Discernment

The earliest historiography on the late medieval development of doctrines and techniques for the discernment of spirits assumed that medieval thinkers were merely recording a static doctrine handed down from the Church Fathers. Until the end of the twentieth century, the topic was usually addressed in the context of Christian (usually Roman Catholic) theology, often as part of a sweeping historical survey which tended to privilege famous figures (e.g., Aquinas) over minor but more influential authors (e.g., Gerson) and to harmonize patristic, medieval, and modern doctrine at all costs. These surveys also ignored sources outside the genres of either scriptural commentary or scholastic treatise; this produced a significant bias in favor of the early modern period, when scholastic treatises on the discernment of spirits were relatively common.[8] Contemporary theological treatments of the "discernment of spirits" often continue this trend, leaving the impression that the Middle Ages was devoted largely to waiting for Ignatius Loyola to burst onto the discernment scene.[9] As a recent study notes, "one tendency reflected in the popular historical surveys of discernment is to speak of a 'discernment tradition' or a lineage of 'discernment literature' which communicates a similar voice extending from the Patristic Fathers up to and through Ignatius."[10] The few works

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[8] See, for instance, F. Vandenbroucke, "Discernement des esprits: au Moyen Age," in *DS* 3: 1254–66; A. Cholet, "Discernement des esprits," *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1911), 4:1412–15; and Günter Switek, "*Discretio spirituum*: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Spiritualität," *Theologie und Philosophie* 47 (1972): 36–76.

[9] One of the most recent and detailed historico-theological surveys of the discernment of spirits – although it deals only with Bernard, Aquinas, Catherine, Gerson, and Denis the Carthusian in the medieval period – is Manuel Ruiz Jurado's *El discernimiento espiritual: teología, historia, práctica* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1994).

[10] Evan Howard, *Affirming the Touch of God: A Psychological and Philosophical Exploration of Christian Discernment* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000), 18. Howard's own historical overview simply begins with Ignatius.

devoted specifically to late medieval discernment reflected the same tendency: Paschal Boland's 1959 study of *discretio spirituum* in Gerson made no claim to address Gerson's work in any kind of historical context but instead tried "to indicate that the norms, rules, and observations proposed and taught by Gerson… vary little from that of later writers."[11]

Beginning in the 1990s, a surge of interest in the writings of medieval visionary women encouraged scholars of history and literature to reassess the discernment of spirits in terms of late medieval women's spirituality. Rosalynn Voaden defined the discernment of spirits primarily as a "discourse developed and defined by men"[12] and argued, replicating decades of theological scholarship, that "the essential points of the doctrine [of *discretio spirituum*] have varied little from Augustine to the present day."[13] Women are therefore denied any participation in the creation or transformation of this static (and inevitably misogynist) discourse; instead, "a medieval woman who wanted recognition as a visionary… had to be able to translate her experience into the masculine discourse."[14] A more nuanced but similarly gendered treatment of the topic appears in Nancy Caciola's otherwise astute 2003 exploration of late medieval debates over lay female sanctity. Caciola rejects the narrative in which visionary laywomen are controlled by male clerical authorities wielding guidelines for discernment but argues that "the medieval debate over the testing of spirits focused with particular intensity on women,"[15] a conclusion she demonstrates by confining her exploration of exorcisms, canonization controversies, and a handful of fourteenth-century scholastic treatises on discernment to those cases or passages which address women. She argues that similar male cases are fundamentally different: "when religious men became targets of controversy, the debate about them usually was encoded in different terms."[16] Dyan Elliott's 2004 work connecting the fourteenth-century "rise of the discourse of spiritual discernment" to "clerical apprehension [about]… highly visible contemporary prophets and visionaries"

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[11] Paschal Boland, *The Concept of* Discretio Spirituum *in John Gerson's* "De Probatione Spirituum" *and* "De Distinctione Verarum Visionum A Falsis" (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1959), x. (For more on the historiography of discernment vis-à-vis Gerson, cf. the discussion in Chapter Five.)

[12] Rosalynn Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writing of Late-Medieval Woman Visionaries* (York: York Medieval Press, 1999), 45.

[13] Voaden, "Women's Words, Men's Language: *Discretio Spirituum* as Discourse in the Writing of Medieval Women Visionaries," in *The Medieval Translator*, eds. R. Ellis and R. Tixier (Louvain: Brepols, 1996), 67.

[14] Voaden, *God's Words*, 55.

[15] Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 16.

[16] Ibid., 17.

makes excellent points about the connection between the discernment of spirits and inquisitorial culture, but it also addresses the topic purely in terms of how that connection affected female spirituality in the late Middle Ages, noting its applicability to men only in passing.[17]

At this point, it has become commonplace for scholars writing about late medieval visionary women to cite "discernment" as an example of how female visionaries were marginalized by a repressive Church. Recent works on Joan of Arc and Birgitta of Sweden address *discretio spirituum* as a factor – largely negative – in each woman's reception.[18] At the same time, references to *discretio spirituum* has focused on the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries (when the first scholastic treatises clearly aimed at the "discernment of spirits" were written) as the beginning of serious medieval discussion on the topic. Voaden's medieval citations come exclusively from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries; Caciola begins her discussion of "clerical" discernment with the late fourteenth-century trio of Henry of Langenstein, Pierre d'Ailly, and Jean Gerson; Elliott expands the trio to include another scholastic author, Henry of Friemar, two generations earlier. An otherwise excellent recent study of demoniacs and mystics in early modern Catholicism argues that Henry of Langenstein wrote "the first systematic attempt to develop a simple method for the discernment of possessing spirits" in the late fourteenth century.[19] This narrow time frame has the effect of reinforcing the preoccupation with gender in the existing scholarship, since it is precisely in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries that the discourse on *discretio spirituum* becomes gendered. Earlier visionary controversies which do *not* revolve around gender are dismissed. For instance, Caciola mentions the Spiritual Franciscan controversies of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries briefly as an example of the differences between how

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[17] Dyan Elliott, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 5.

[18] Karen Sullivan, *The Interrogation of Joan of Arc* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999) and Deborah Fraioli, *Joan of Arc: The Early Debate* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), both have two-to-three-page sections devoted to defining *discretio spirituum* and then proceed to invoke the concept throughout their studies. Claire L. Sahlin, *Birgitta of Sweden and the Voice of Prophecy* (Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2001), does an excellent job of examining key passages in Birgitta's *Reuelaciones* but does not credit Birgitta with being other than reactive with respect to "late-medieval criteria for the discernment of spirits" (117).

[19] Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, and Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 173. In Chapter Five, I argue that Henry of Friemar was neither simple nor methodical; in earlier chapters, I make my case for why he was not first.

men and women were treated, but not as a discussion of "discernment of spirits," since she is applying the latter concept only to women.[20]

In the following study, I will argue for continuity between thirteenth-century debates over visionary Franciscan clerics and fifteenth-century debates over visionary lay women. More generally, I will argue for a *visionary discourse* about the discernment of spirits throughout the late Middle Ages, that is, not only a forward-looking discourse but a discourse in which many of the participants either experienced revelations and other special spiritual gifts or were reputed by contemporaries to have done so. Academically trained theologians who wrote about the discernment of spirits also wrote about "mystical" theology; authors of saints' lives described their own visions of the prospective saints; preachers and confessors alluded to their own spiritual consolations while offering guidance to visionaries they encountered on a daily basis. Some female visionaries – Birgitta of Sweden prominent among them – could and did contribute to this discourse, which remained relatively egalitarian until the fifteenth century. In other words, there was no absolute distinction between the "visionary" and the "examiner" until the very end of the period in question. What preoccupied these men and women was not gender, but *authority*: they sought to define, regulate, or justify their own or their companions' religiously based claims to influence the direction of late medieval Christendom. Their efforts turned to writing about the discernment of spirits at precisely those historical moments when the Church's authority structures were being called into question (as, indeed, they frequently were during this period). And the precise details of those historical moments had considerable and demonstrable impact on the texts that grew out of them. It is for just that reason that I have also focused on examining writings about the discernment of spirits within their *historical contexts*, a practice which throws the idiosyncratic details of each text into the sharpest possible relief and avoids the temptation of lumping too many disparate formulations into a vaguely understood "discourse."

There are many things that this book does *not* do: most important, it does not presume to define the reality (much less the ultimate inspiration) of any individual's religious or spiritual experience, and it does not address the legal and quasi-legal events such as exorcisms and trials which bear a significant but tangential relationship to the theological discourse under consideration. (The studies of Caciola and Elliott, mentioned above, have done a great deal to illuminate just these sorts of events.) Despite revision, my work bears some of the hallmarks of the dissertation in which it originated and which was cited by many of the "recent" works I have

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[20] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 18.

mentioned above. But I have chosen to revise and publish this study because the current consensus that the late medieval conversation about the discernment of spirits was important in defining and limiting expressions of female spirituality simply does not give that conversation enough credit. The late medieval discourse on the discernment of spirits was a visionary project (in both senses), a series of reactions to key events in the history of Christianity, and a dynamic conversation across several centuries addressing widely diverse claims to religious authority within late medieval Christendom. To reduce it to a static doctrine or limit it to discussions of exclusively female spirituality is to miss a great deal.

Notes on Methodology and Language

As I have already suggested, my investigation will view the late medieval discernment of spirits primarily in terms of religious authority rather than gender studies or doctrinal continuity. The sociologist Max Weber, perhaps the first modern theorist of religious authority, tried to distinguish the overlapping sources of authority wielded by magicians, prophets, and priests, arguing that prophets were authorized via "charismatic authentication, which in practice meant magic," despite their focus on doctrine.[21] The priest, on the other hand, "lays claim to authority by virtue of his service in a sacred tradition, while the prophet's claim is based on personal revelation and charisma."[22] However, Weber himself was more interested in tracing religion along an evolutionary track:

A religious community arises in connection with a prophetic movement as a result of routinization (*Veralltäglichung*), i.e., as a result of the process whereby either the prophet himself or his followers secure the permanence of his preaching and the congregation's distribution of grace, hence insuring the economic existence of the enterprise and those who man it, and thereby monopolizing as well the privileges reserved for those charged with religious functions.[23]

According to Weber, once routinized, the "decline or petrification of prophecy is practically unavoidable."[24] Conflict between forces is minimized in this evolutionary model; priest and prophet seldom encounter one another, since they belong to different stages of religious life. This model is quite unlike the realities of late medieval Europe.

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[21] Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. E. Fischoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 47.

[22] Ibid., 46.

[23] Ibid., 60–1.

[24] Ibid., 78.

To some extent, I am influenced by Michel Foucault, insofar as I can conceive of discretio spirituum as a "discourse" and insofar as I suspect that the rules which evolved around the process of discerning spirits came to (at least partially) constitute the experiences they were intended to regulate.[25] However, the process of discerning spirits I am studying tended to involve negotiation among a number of potential sources for authority, and so it involves an institution where several types of Weberian "prophets" and "priests" function simultaneously and sometimes complementarily. In late medieval Catholic Christianity, those who wrote about visions and revelations – regardless of whether they themselves were identified as the visionaries in question – could select from a plethora of potentially authorizing agents: they could cite confessorial or communal approval, demonstrated virtue, episcopal blessings, scriptural prooftexts, the lives of the saints, miracles, fulfilled predictions, patristic writings, gender (in several different ways), theologians' determinations, papal decrees, canon law, and (last but not least) the charismatic verdict of the Holy Spirit. In theory, all these sources would yield the same answer as to the origin of a given experience. In practice, however, they often differed.

It is precisely this sort of multiplicity that the static and/or misogynist model of *discretio spirituum* fails to take into consideration. In order to suggest ways of dealing with this complex, I will be using ideas derived from the French historian and theorist Michel de Certeau. In partial opposition to the single panoptic institution envisioned by Foucault, de Certeau posits a multitude of "strategies" and "tactics" through which authorities can be interrelated, prioritized, or balanced within and around a given institutional framework. As for many thinkers associated with poststructuralist and/or postmodern thought, the very creation of language for de Certeau implies relations of power and hence of authority: "Once it is spoken – once it can be breathed and felt – a language implies points of reference, sources, a history, an iconography, in short, a construction of 'authorities.'… *Inherited* representations inaugurate a new credibility at the same time that they express it."[26] However, these authorities can from

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[25] On the term "discourse," I am thinking of the first part of Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 28: "The analysis of the discursive field …must grasp the statement in the exact specificity of its occurrence; determine its conditions of existence, fix at least its limits, establish its correlations with other statements that may be connected with it, and show what other forms of statement it excludes. … The question proper to such an analysis might be formulated in this way: what is this specific existence that emerges from what is said and nowhere else?"

[26] Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, trans. Luce Giard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 11. I am ignoring de Certeau's distinction between "strategies" and "tactics" in part because I find it difficult to sustain outside the strictly

the very beginning be multiplied. In an early article, de Certeau identifies two types of signs of authority in a society: "discourses (works and texts) or persons (who are also representatives)."[27] Of course, the categorization of authorities, along with other types of categorization, "implies, by definition, a relationship of force and domination."[28] In order to talk about any given authority, whether personal or textual, one must view it as "a *theoretical interpretation* … tied to the *power of a group* and to the structure of the society in which it conquered this position."[29] Power reproduces itself through any type of authoritative knowledge.[30] But authorities can provide insight into the dominated as well as the dominant groups in this societal structure: "an authority serves as a frame of reference to the very group that breaks away from it or that it rejects."[31] What we have, then, is a complex social structure in which each of several authorities provides more or less force in order to actualize a whole spectrum of power relationships. The most useful thing about this formulation is the plurality which it assumes: "Both appropriations and displacements depend on a dynamic distribution of possible goods and functions in order to constitute an increasingly complex network of differentiations, a combinative system of spaces."[32]

"Appropriations and displacements" are central in the discourse on discernment of spirits. De Certeau himself was fascinated by the troubled "mystics" of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and how they interacted with the "examiners" who bedeviled them, often with fully formulated guidelines for *discretio spirituum* in hand.[33] Although he is more interested in the mystics than in their examiners, de Certeau does suggest the extent to which institutional authority ultimately becomes a key factor in the mystic discourse: "The *institution* itself *is the other* in relation to

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political realm and in part because it does not seem to apply to the texts I am focusing on, all of which combine localized strategies with dislocated tactics.

[27] Ibid., 12.

[28] Ibid., 77.

[29] Ibid., 87.

[30] Cf. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 36: "*a certain power is the precondition of this knowledge* and not merely its effect or its attribute. It makes this knowledge possible and at the same time determines its characteristics. It produces itself in and through this knowledge."

[31] De Certeau, *The Mystic Fable: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 19.

[32] Ibid., 127.

[33] These "examiners" are mentioned throughout *The Mystic Fable*; cf. also 81ff. of *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

[the mystics'] delirium, and that is why the institution is relevant for them. … It is a question of determining whether, in refusing to replace the institution with a delusion, the mystic is not actually in the position of aligning himself with it, and by conforming to it in this way, of eliminating the other and returning to the same."[34] While individual texts "always define themselves as being entirely a product of inspiration," they are nevertheless implicated in many forms of religious authority: "*beside* the authorized institution, but outside it and *in* what authorizes that institution, i.e., the Word of God."[35] Although de Certeau might well resist this development of his thought, I wish to suggest that both mystics and examiners draw on and negotiate some of the same sets of authorities – and not solely in cases where mystics and examiners were identical! At no point in the late Middle Ages does anyone advance a *single* guideline for distinguishing between true and false revelations; there are always multiple guidelines, and at many points the very possibility of a single definitive rule is explicitly denied. This persistent multiplication of authorities is precisely what I find fascinating about the discernment of spirits, and I hope to make that multiplicity evident in my account.

In summary, my treatment suggests that the late medieval discourse on the discernment of spirits involves a struggle for symbolic power, often framed in linguistic terms. It is a process of appropriation and displacement, of negotiation among multiple authorities. It bears striking parallels to the form of discourse de Certeau defines as "mystic," perhaps because mysticism is precisely the form of discourse it seeks to define and delimit. Unsurprisingly, then, the discourse on discernment of spirits also – following de Certeau – bears a suspicious resemblance to the project of the historian, who must weigh and assess multiple sources in order to construct a single authoritative narrative. De Certeau notes that "the territory that [the historian] occupies is acquired through a diagnosis of the false."[36] Both "examiner" and historian work within received ideologies even as they critique them. As de Certeau suggests in an essay on a closely related phenomenon, demonic possession, "it involves the possibility of acceding to the speech of the other, which is effectively the problem facing historians: what can we apprehend from the discourse of an absent being? How can we interpret documents bound to an insurmountable death, that is to say, to another period of time, and to an 'ineffable' experience always

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[34] De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 45–6.
[35] De Certeau, *Heterologies*, 92–3.
[36] Ibid., 200.

approached from an outside evaluation?"[37] De Certeau ultimately advocates a return to the text: "It is best to limit oneself to the consideration of what goes on in texts whose status is labeled 'mystic,' instead of wielding a ready-made definition (whether ideological or imaginary) of what it is that was inscribed in those texts by an operation of writing."[38]

Of course, the term "mystic" is itself difficult for someone writing about the late Middle Ages. Bernard McGinn has emphasized that "there can be no direct access to experience for the historian. …[M]ysticism needs to be understood contextually, and … the mystical text and its place in the tradition – not mystical experience (whatever it may be) – are the primary objects of study."[39] In this book, I am wary of using the terms "mystic" or "mysticism" as a central focus because they may involve a theological (and hence normative) judgment which I do not feel qualified to make, and also because they are products of a later time period than the one on which I am focusing. The medieval authors I will examine prefer to use the categories of visionary/vision and prophet/revelation, categories which they often view as interchangeable for the purpose of discerning spirits and which they occasionally blur or elide in an effort to present certain experiences in a more positive light (e.g., the important distinction between claiming "prophecy" and "prophetic inspiration"). However, the adjective "mystical" (especially in the context of "theology") does have a place in late medieval Christian thought, and it does crop up in my narrative from time to time. As for mystical texts, all of the writings on the discernment of spirits presuppose the possibility of supernatural encounter with the divine, and almost all of them agree that such an encounter is possible even today. However, I wish to investigate not what a given encounter might have been, but how it could have been understood, interpreted, and constituted within the world of late medieval Christian spirituality.

A few other linguistic disclaimers must be offered at the outset. I have tried to use gender-inclusive or non-gender-specific language in my own analysis where possible, but my translations of medieval texts strive to be mostly literal. Medieval Latin and the assorted vernaculars of the late Middle Ages are gendered languages in which masculine pronouns usually allow for the possibility of mixed-gender referents while underlining the priority of male agents, so I have generally chosen to translate references to *homines* (or, for example, Middle High German *menschen* used to

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[37] De Certeau, "Discourse Disturbed: The Sorcerer's Speech," in *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 244.

[38] De Certeau, *Heterologies*, 82; cf. also *Mystic Fable*, 15.

[39] Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism: Origins to the Fifth Century* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), xiv-xv.

address mixed audiences) as "men," while supplying as much context as possible to help my readers understand whether a given author might conceivably have envisioned a mixed-gender audience for his or her work. Throughout the work, I have also provided the original language in the footnotes so that those who are conversant with it can draw their own conclusions. On the other hand, I have not standardized the linguistic choices involved in rendering the proper names of medieval figures: in an effort to maximize readability while adhering to a variety of scholarly conventions, I have referred to Augustine of Hippo and Augustinus of Ancona; Peter Olivi, Pedro of Aragon, and Pierre d'Ailly; John Cassian, Johannes Tauler, Jan van Ruusbroec, and Jean Gerson. This mélange of naming conventions does at least reflect the transnational and multilinguistic nature of the late medieval discourse on the discernment of spirits!

Plan of the Book

In the first chapter of this book, I explore the biblical and patristic origins of the "discernment of spirits" and outline the twelfth-century "rediscovery of prophecy" which brought the concept back into contemporary discourse. Prophecy was a constant part of Israelite, Second Temple, and early Christian religion; the problem of false prophecy was therefore also a constant concern, as witnessed by references in the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and even the early Christian *Didache*. Of course, the phrase "discernment of spirits" itself comes from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, where it follows prophecy in a list of the Holy Spirit's gifts. Drawing on language from the early Christian theologian Origen of Alexandria, Athanasius' third-century *Life of Antony* described its monastic protagonist distinguishing between angelic and demonic visitations through just such a spiritual gift. Augustine of Hippo described his mother Monica as having a similar gift, but elsewhere described the discernment of spirits as the charism whereby a biblical prophet might distinguish between spiritual visions of divine or diabolic origin. Augustine even outlined a tripartite theory of prophetic vision. Meanwhile, Augustine's contemporary Ambrosiaster insisted that *discretio spirituum* was a charism bestowed on the church hierarchy *ex officio*, and John Cassian summarized a tradition growing out of the Desert Fathers when he described *discretio* as a communally conditioned virtue central to monastic life. Gregory the Great drew on both the Desert Fathers and Augustine in order to link personal holiness with an ineffable ability to distinguish between revelatory and illusory dreams. Medieval thinkers inherited these divergent traditions from their patristic predecessors, but they devoted relatively little attention

to the topic until several factors converged in the twelfth century: the rise of a new prophetic tradition in which innovative scriptural interpretations were defended through appeals to revelation, the beginnings of a predominantly vernacular visionary "new mysticism," and the attempted consolidation of religious authority (through sacramental power in particular) within the ordained clergy.

In Chapter Two, I describe how *discretio spirituum* began to interest Catholic thinkers again in the thirteenth century, at first as a way of reining in the excesses of self-appointed prophets and visionaries and then as a way of reacting to the fragmentation of the Franciscan Order. The canon law tradition beginning with Innocent III's 1199 letter *Cum ex iniuncto* bred distrust of self-proclaimed prophets and required either miraculous or scriptural support for their missions, but it did not curtail discussion of the discernment of spirits in theological circles. Thanks to the Franciscan predilection for Joachite exegesis and the order's upheaval during its century-long poverty debate, the Friars Minor exhibited particular interest in the issue of *discretio spirituum* throughout the thirteenth century, with authors on both sides of the Joachite conflict (ranging from David of Augsburg to Peter of John Olivi) using the concept to bolster their positions vis-à-vis the authority of visionary experiences. Olivi's own use of others' visions to help explain difficult passages of Scripture bred further controversy, as did the political and religious influence of more openly prophetic figures such as Arnald of Villanova who sympathized with Olivi and his Beguin supporters. Opponents weighed in using the same language, including William of Saint-Amour's efforts to recast the mendicant orders as false prophets and Augustinus of Ancona's denial of the very possibility of contemporary prophetic gifts. By and large, however, Franciscan thinkers – along with their allies and opponents – retreated from the subject as Christendom took on new challenges in the fourteenth century.

In Chapter Three, I note that as the Church became increasingly fearful of supposed "Free Spirits," self-proclaimed orthodox writers leapt into action in an effort to reclaim *discretio spirituum* for their own parties and connect it to the ability or lack of ability to distinguish between the workings of nature and grace on the intellect. This development was foreshadowed by the work of the Augustinian master Henry of Friemar, Augustinus of Ancona's contemporary, who attended the 1311 Council of Vienne, where the "heresy of the Free Spirit" was first defined. However, the combination of mystical and prophetic controversies flowered in Germanic vernacular literature, where "discernment" and "distinction" were translated by the same word. In the wake of Meister Eckhart's condemnation, his disciples Henry Suso and Johannes Tauler wrote extensively about the signs by which truly spiritual people could be distinguished from false

mystics by someone who possessed the gift of discernment. Other spiritual authors were influenced by both Eckhart and Tauler: the renowned contemplative Jan van Ruusbroec and the relatively obscure author of the *Buch von Geistlicher Armuth* both developed theories of spiritual development in which discernment played a major role. All these authors agreed on the difficulty of distinguishing orthodox devotion from the pernicious, heretical antinomianism of the Free Spirits; the concept of discernment of spirits offered one potential way of making such a distinction. In some cases, powers of discernment could even compensate for a lack of ecclesiastical standing. Certainly, the choice of vernacular languages instead of Latin for spreading these sorts of ideas ensured that they could potentially reach a female and/or lay audience.

In Chapters Four and Five, I explore the ways in which the Great Western Schism (1378–1417) precipitated a new crisis for prophetic as well as ecclesiastical authority. Contemporaries seem to have simultaneously admired recent prophets whose predictions had been validated by the Schism and kept an eye out for the false prophets forecast for the oncoming apocalypse. Chapter Four describes how visionaries such as Birgitta of Sweden and Catherine of Siena had begun to use the language of discernment and even *discretio spirituum* in order to authorize their missions of reform in the years leading up to the Schism, suggesting that the grace of discernment stemmed from a close experiential relationship with Christ. When visionary demands that the Pope return to Rome, seemed to precipitate the Schism, the examiners, confessors, and hagiographers of Birgitta, Catherine, and their fellow visionary Pedro of Aragon turned to increasingly technical (and in some cases gender-specific) defenses of their divinely inspired prophecies. Chapter Five addresses the extent to which the Schism also fostered the expansion of universities and of the prerogatives of university-trained theologians, so that by the end of the fourteenth century, treatises modeled after scholastic *quaestiones* and written by reformers were offering increasingly specific scholastic guidelines for discernment of spirits and the detection of false prophecy by theologians. Pierre d'Ailly wrote two treatises addressing the endemic problem of false prophecy, and Henry of Langenstein authored the first treatise entitled *De discretione spirituum*, but both agreed that a systematic doctrine of discernment was impossible.. Both men also assumed that some post-apostolic prophecies (especially those of Hildegard von Bingen) had immediate bearing on the situation of the Schism, so their concern was to distinguish useful prophecies and revelations from their false and useless counterparts.

In Chapter Six, I focus on Jean Gerson, chancellor of the University of Paris at the beginning of the fifteenth century and a student of both Langenstein and d'Ailly, who wrote three major and several minor works

concerned explicitly with the discernment of spirits in what amounted to a reform-minded synthesis of previous traditions. Of course, these traditions did not always fit together smoothly, and so Gerson sought to resolve some of these contradictions with a scripturally-based appeal to the Holy Spirit: he argued that spiritual experience was the best preparation for even a theologically trained examiner, and he finally concluded that absolute certainty about the origin of a given revelation could be granted only through an encounter with the divine (but not, of course, the same encounter that produced the revelation in the first place). At the same time, Gerson worked to tie the discernment of spirits into plans for the reform of the university, the institutional Church, and Christendom as a whole. Although Gerson and his contemporaries succeeded in ending the Schism, Gerson's ambitious program for the discernment of spirits did not meet with equal success: later writers cited him as an authority but simplified his approach, moving towards a hierarchical and judicial emphasis on examination of the potential visionary and ignoring Gerson's inconvenient insistence on the primacy of spiritual experience.

My study demonstrates that the discourse on discernment of spirits must be understood not as a static discourse or a unified doctrine but as an evolving and often self-contradictory series of visionary responses to specific moments of crisis or contested authority in the history of the late medieval Church. This account tracks such responses for a little over two hundred years, pinpointing various traditions and new ideas which entered the mix as sources of religious authority shifted and changed during a tumultuous era in European history. At the end of this period, marked by the completion of Gerson's extensive and widely distributed discernment treatises, there was synthesis and systematization but no solution to the intractable problem of how to tell true from false prophecy. Indeed, the complexity and internal contradictions of the late medieval discourse on discernment of spirits virtually assured that there *could* be no solution. The problem of *discretio spirituum* was to be taken up again in the following centuries, preoccupying individuals on both sides of the Reformation and opening up into a larger-scale questioning of authority and of the very concept of certainty. My hope is that this study of the late medieval discourse on discernment of spirits will be of significance not only to the history of medieval spirituality and culture, but also to scholars who study the Reformation and to all interested in the relation of prophecy to religious institutions. While prophecy is not as a rule a spiritual gift allotted to historians, I feel safe in predicting that the twenty-first century will continue to produce, interpret, and assess visions and revelations.

Chapter One

Prophecy and Discernment in Early Christianity

Prophecy, Politics, and Punishment in Scripture

Although biblical prophecy is sometimes described in lofty spiritual terms, the tradition of *false* prophecy in the Hebrew Bible always appears in a historical and political context. The book of Deuteronomy, which seems to have been either written or recovered during the religious reforms of Israel's King Josiah (c. 622 B.C.E.), remains the only book of the Torah or Pentateuch to discuss the problem of dubiously divine inspiration in any detail. What is clearly a coherent discussion of prophetic authority (following similar explanations of judicial, then royal, then priestly authority) begins at Deut. 18:9 with Moses' injunction against imitating "the abhorrent practices of those nations" in the land of Canaan. Apparently, the "nations" depend on augury, sorcery, necromancy, divination, and immolation of children for divine advice. In contrast, the God of Israel "will raise up for you a prophet from among your own people … him you shall heed" (Deut. 18:15). However, this authority must not be abused:

But any prophet who presumes to speak in my name an oracle that I did not command him to utter, or who speaks in the name of other gods – that prophet shall die. And should you ask yourselves, "How can we know that the oracle was not spoken by the Lord?" – If the prophet speaks in the name of the Lord and the oracle does not come true, that oracle was not spoken by the Lord; the prophet has uttered it presumptuously; do not stand in dread of him (Deut. 18:20–22).[1]

A parallel but briefer discussion in Deuteronomy 13 adds a corollary: if a prophet urges the worship of another god, even if the prophet's signs and portents come true, "do not heed the words of that prophet or that dream-diviner. For the Lord your God is testing you…. as for that prophet or dream-diviner, he shall be put to death" (Deut. 13:2–6).

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[1] All citations of the Hebrew Bible are taken from the 1995 Jewish Publication Society translation. On the dating of Deuteronomy to Josiah's reform, cf. Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11* introduction, in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* 5, general eds. W.F. Albright and D.N. Freedman (London: Doubleday, 1991), esp. 81–4. (Weinfeld points out that Deuteronomy in its current form is probably a version of part of Josiah's book. The Hebrew Bible accounts of this "discovery" are 2 Kings 22:8–10 and 2 Chron. 34:14.)

Even at this early stage, however, capital punishment for false prophecy seems to have worked better in theory than in practice. On the rare occasions when false prophecy appears in the Hebrew Bible, it is inevitably linked with official corruption and imminent divine (not human) retribution. As Ezekiel lists the sins which have caused God to turn away from Israel, he laments the injustice of officials and notes that Israel's "prophets, too… prophesy falsely and divine deceitfully for them [officials]; they say, 'Thus saith the Lord God,' when the Lord has not spoken" (Ezek. 22:28). The prophet Jeremiah complains repeatedly of false prophets and prophets who deal falsely, but what seems to bother him the most is the total complacency of the Israelites: "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule accordingly, and my people like it so. But what will you do at the end of it?" (Jer. 5:31). God, Jeremiah asserts, will punish these false prophets along with their auditors: "they prophesy falsely in my name, with the result that I will drive you out and you shall perish, together with the prophets who prophesy to you" (Jer. 27:15).[2] Likewise, Ezekiel's God warns that false prophets will be destroyed, both men and women "who prophesy out of their own imagination" (Ezek. 13:2).[3] The handful of references to false prophecy in the Hebrew Bible leaves it indelibly associated with oncoming catastrophe and divine rather than secular punishment, and the fate of the Jewish people is expected to bear out these threats. Prophecy proper, however, remains God's gift to the Israelite people; it might be expected to return to them at some later eschatological moment, as witnessed by God's famous promise to "pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Joel 2:28).[4]

Many of the New Testament references to false prophecy are made in the same tenor as those in the Hebrew Bible: the "Little Apocalypse" in the synoptics (Mark 13, Matthew 24, and Luke 21) forecasts false prophets and false Messiahs along with famine, war, and earthquakes. Similarly, a false prophet accompanies a beast and a deceiving devil in John's Revela-

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[2] Note the similar passage in Lam. 2:14: "your seers prophesied to you delusion and folly. They did not expose your iniquity so as to restore your fortunes, but prophesied to you oracles of delusion and deception."

[3] The same phrase is repeated again in Ezek. 13:17, referring to male and female prophets respectively. (Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, God's enforcement record on false prophecy is mixed, dealing death to the false prophet Hananiah in Jeremiah 28 but ignoring the prophet who lies to another prophet in 1 Kings 13:18.)

[4] An excellent overview of recent scholarship on prophecy in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple era can be found in the collections of David Orton, *Prophecy in the Hebrew Bible: Selected Studies from Vetus Testamentum* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), and Michael Floyd and Robert Haak, *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2006).

tion, and "deceitful spirits" are linked with the last times in 1 Tim. 4:1.[5] Other passages, however, come closer to Deuteronomy in their implication that false prophets are simply an inevitable problem of everyday living. 2 Peter 2:1 notes the historical pattern of false prophets, promising more of the same for the nascent Christian community, while Acts 13:6 mentions Paul's confrontation with "a Jewish magician and false prophet called Bar-Jesus."[6] There is an idolatrous, fornicating, self-proclaimed prophetess identified as "Jezebel" in the church of Thyatira (Rev. 2:20). 2 Cor. 11:14 warns against angels of Satan who appear disguised (routinely, it seems) "as angels of light." The most famous of these passages, however, and the one which most closely echoes the Deuteronomistic warnings, is Matt. 7:15–6: "Beware of false prophets who come to you disguised as sheep but underneath are ravenous wolves. You will be able to tell them by their fruits." Fruits or καρπων in Greek (translated *fructibus* in Latin) would probably have referred to outcomes or results, suggesting that this advice refers back to the accuracy of the prophet's predictive message.[7] The Johannine corpus also acknowledged the inevitability of false prophecy: "Beloved, not every spirit is to be trusted, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets are at large in the world" (1 John 4:1). Here, again, there is some effort at offering guidelines, but also a hint of eschatology: "Any spirit which acknowledges Jesus Christ, come in human nature, is from God, and no spirit which fails to acknowledge Jesus is from God; it is the spirit of Antichrist, whose coming you have heard of; he is already at large in the world" (1 John 4:2–3). Given the early Christian emphasis on the imminent kingdom of heaven and the end of days, the distinction between contemporary false prophecy and false prophecy as a sign of the eschaton was bound to blur a little.

The matter was complicated by the fact that prophecy was apparently a central element in the earliest Christian communities and was based on a combination of Jewish and Greco-Roman traditions.[8] Joel's prediction was said to have been fulfilled in Acts 2, the account of "Pentecost" in which

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[5] Cf. Rev. 2:20, 16:13, 19:20, and 20:10.

[6] All New Testament quotations in translation comes from the New Jerusalem Bible unless otherwise specified. All Greek passages come from the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th ed.

[7] A more detailed consideration of this pericope (and its partial analogue in Luke 6:43–6) exists in Michael Kramer's "Hütet euch vor den falschen Propheten: eine überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Mt 7:15–23 / Lk 6:43–46 / Mt 12:33–37," *Biblia* 57:3 (1976): 349–77.

[8] Cf. Laura Nasrallah, *An Ecstasy of Folly: Prophecy and Authority in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003) and the earlier but still important Gerhard Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1975).

the Holy Spirit (clearly identified with the prophetic spirit of the Hebrew Bible) entered into Jesus' disciples. Of course, Pentecost also therefore marked the beginning of Joel's "last days," so prophecy and eschatology met once again. Paul's discussion of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians features a similar emphasis. He observes that prophecy and knowledge will continue until "perfection comes" (1 Cor. 13:8–10), insists that spiritual gifts will remain with the Christian community until Christ's return (1 Cor. 1:4–8), and notes that prophecy is a community-building gift especially reserved for believers (1 Cor. 14:22).[9] However, Paul also cites as spiritual gifts what Antoinette Clark Wire has called "second-order speech," that is, the interpretation of both prophecy and glossolalia.[10] In the case of glossolalia, the need for an interpreter was evident; in the case of prophecy, both Jewish and Greco-Roman traditions had long suggested that divinely inspired speech or vision might require equally inspired interpretation, and Paul's own treatment of the question in 1 Cor. 14:29 advised that two or three prophets should "speak while the rest weigh their words." At one point, Paul even seemed to suggest that the interpretation of divinely inspired speech was a separate gift: in the catalogue of spiritual gifts in 1 Cor. 12, he noted that "to another [is given] prophecy; to another, the discernment of spirits; to one, the gift of different tongues and to another, the interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:10).[11] The phrase "discernment of spirits" is *διακρίσεις πνευμάτων* in Paul's Greek; although there is an ongoing debate among biblical scholars as to whether Paul intended this phrase to refer exclusively to prophecy or to include a broader range of inspired speech,[12] other early Christian uses of the noun *διάκρσις* reinforce its basic meaning of "distinguishing" or "differentiation."[13] While Paul

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[9] Cf. also Eph. 4:7–13, in which prophecy is one of the gifts that will remain until Christians achieve a unified faith.

[10] Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 148.

[11] I break with the NJB translation here with the more traditional English phrase "the discernment of spirits"; NJB has "the power of distinguishing spirits," which anticipates the future development of the concept.

[12] Cf. André Munzinger, *Discerning the Spirits: Theological and Ethical Hermeneutics in Paul* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007) and his summary and evaluation of these arguments on 45–74. An even more recent effort to trace Paul's intentions through early Christian works (up through the *Vita Antonii*) is Elisabeth Hense, *Frühchristliche Profilierung der Spiritualität: Unterscheidung der Geister in Ausgewählten Schriften* (Berlin: LIT Verlag Münster, 2010). Any final answer to the question of Paul's original intention in framing 1 Cor. 12:10 falls well outside the scope of this study.

[13] The other Pauline use of *διάκρσις* comes in Rom.14:1, where Paul advises against "arguments about doubtful points" (*διάκρισεις διαλογισμων*), but there are also references

was not an uncritical champion of contemporary prophecy, he accepted it as a reality, and the enigmatic phrase "discernment of spirits" clearly had something to do with how he advised Christian communities to identify or interpret prophetic experience.

With or without Pauline support, a tradition of Christian prophetic gifts handed down from the apostles endured through the first centuries of the Common Era. The early Christian community of the *Didache* was headed by bishop-deacons but was advised to honor wandering prophets on apostolic missions as if they were Jesus himself. False prophecy was an ever-present possibility, but the *Didache* maintains that a false prophet would be easily identified by attempts to outstay his or her welcome. Although the language of "testing" is used in the *Didache*, there is no reference to (or apparent need for) a special spiritual gift for distinguishing between prophets and freeloaders.[14] By the middle of the second century, however, competition between the claims of prophets and bishops (both claiming their own forms of apostolic succession) could be seen in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, and by the end of that century Christianity was dealing with the movement called Montanism or the "New Prophecy," whose adherents combined prophetic or ecstatic trances with the eschato-logical expectation of an imminent "new Jerusalem" at Pepuza in Asia Minor.[15] Reaction to Montanism was mixed, with the Roman Church eventually condemning Montanism but supporting the inclusion of the prophetically flavored Johannine corpus in the Christian canon. Indeed, much of the Montanist debate was fought over Scripture: anti-Montanists appealed to the warnings about false prophecy in Matthew, 1 Timothy, and 1 John, while Montanists countered with citations from Paul about the necessity of prophecy in a Christian community.[16] Throughout the Montanist debates, both sides claimed to be upholding Pauline orthodoxy, but there was comparatively little use of the Pauline concept of διάκρισις

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in Heb. 5:14 (where it refers to distinction between good and evil), 1 Clement 48:5 (where it refers to the skill of interpreting discourse), and the LXX text of Job 37:16 (where it describes the divine activity of regulating the clouds).

[14] See *Didache* chps. 10–11 (in *SC* 248) and Aaron Milavec, "Distinguishing True and False Prophets: The Protective Wisdom of the *Didache*," *Early Christian Studies* 2:2 (1994): 117–36. Also cf. Hense, *Frühchristliche Profilierung*, 39–55.

[15] Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority, and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) reconstructs the Montanist prophetic succession on 33–6 and discusses Ignatius's opponents on 38–9. As Trevett points out, Ignatius not only suggests that bishops themselves should ideally possess visionary and other charismatic gifts but also encounters the problem of competing prophets, especially in Philadelphia (not far from the region where Montanism developed).

[16] Ibid., 129.