Special Collections: early modern books

Coniuratio malignorum spirituum in corporibus hominum existentium prout in Sancto Petro
Rome, ca. 1486-1487
BX2340.C66 1486
Exorcism manual; no t.p. or info. Marginalia. Ephemeral, unbound, probably meant to be carried around by priests. Fundamental belief in the existence of an invisible, supernatural world, here including demons/malign spirits. Cites Scripture for authoritative accounts of demons and exorcism. (NB: rites for summoning and expelling demons not dissimilar; cf. Black Mass).

Magica de spectris et apparitionibus spirituum
Leiden, 1656
BF1520.M34 1656
Magic of spectres, foretelling the future. Woman w/ cauldron, demons. List of authorities – really pulling on ancient works to validate idea that this exists. In Latin – not for “vulgar” audience, all about learnedness. P. 68 bottom, story via prognostication via the head of an infant.

de Vallemont, M.L.L.
La physique occulte ou traité de la baguette divinatoire
Amsterdam, 1683
Treatise on dowsing (using stick to find water, AND minerals, hidden treasure, thieves and murderers). Part of [natural] philosophy, i.e. science, it works because “particles” are given off by subterranean water, etc. Investigated by Royal Society, Robert Boyle expresses wish for research on topic. Reported in Transactions of the Royal Society. Described not as demonic, but natural. People don’t believe there are unknown things in nature, and thus so many stupid fables re sorcerers, and belief those who knew a little Greek or Hebrew were magic, or that mathematical figures had magical force. Just because we haven’t understood the mechanism does not mean it is magic. Image: calculating correct time for cutting dowsing stick, in relation to movements of celestial bodies that influence the earth. Not superstition, but observations based on experience!

Newton, Isaac
The book of Nicholas Flamel
(Manuscript), ca. 1690-1699
QD25.F613 1690z
An alchemical book, published in Paris in 1613 as Livre des figures hiéroglyphiques and in London in 1624 as Exposition of the Hieroglyphical Figures was attributed to Flamel.[5] It is a collection of designs purportedly commissioned by Flamel for a tympanum at the Cimetière des Innocents in Paris, long disappeared at the time the work was published. In the publisher's introduction Flamel's search for the philosopher's stone was described. According to that introduction, Flamel had made it his life's work to understand the text of a mysterious 21-page book he had purchased. The introduction claims that, around 1378, he travelled to Spain for assistance with translation. On the way back, he reported that he met a sage, who identified Flamel's book as being a copy of the original Book of Abramelin the Mage. With this knowledge, over the next few years, Flamel and his wife allegedly decoded enough of the book to successfully replicate its recipe for the Philosopher's Stone, producing first silver in 1382, and then gold.
Baxter, Richard
*The certainty of the worlds of spirits*
London, 1691
BF1445.B39 1691
http://library.mit.edu/item/001759652
Proves immortality of souls and malices of devils (cp. Exorcism manual). Scriptural quotes on t.p. A3 seeing devils would not bring our Atheists to believe in God (on why they are normally invisible), and rest of us believe by faith anyway. Contents list: contemporary and classical instances of witchcraft, catholic frauds, devil worship, demons having sex with women, good angels, etc. “Multitudes” refuse to believe “fullest evidence” of spiritual world. See p. 42 IX. Re what counts as “certain and full” example of witchcraft (involving stones that could be seen and exactly described, testimony of Boyle and Earl of Shmpthn, holograph narrative by minister).

Hauber, Eberhard David
*Bibliotheca, acta et scripta magica* (vol. 1 only)
Lemgo, Germany, 1739-1745
BF1547.H38 1739
Compendium of stuff. Witch undergoing trial by drowning; Dr. Faustus; Gorgon of Augsburg terrifies Attila’s army (fear of naked old woman).

Albert, Petit
*Secrets merveilleux de la magie naturelle & cabalistique*
Lyon, 1743
BF1602.A43 1743
“wonderful secrets of nature.” Distillation. Recipe for perfume for Saturday, under Saturn (use to seek minerals on that day). Also, conciliate gnomes when looking for metal. Wear a talisman (instructions for preparing, image + words in Greek).

Barrett, Francis
*The magus, or, Celestial intelligencer*
London, 1801
BF1611.B37 1801
http://library.mit.edu/item/001988325
A grimoire, or book of how to do magic; note also involved with “science”, magnetism, theology (fall of man) – as well as alchemy, making talismans, conjuring spirits. Fruit of laborious research into “curious and rare” knowledge, includes “rare experiments.”
Rhetoric of impartiality.
Books on spiritualism

Cahagnet, Louis Alphonse
The celestial telegraph, or, Secrets of the life to come revealed through magnetism
London, ca. 1850
BF1292.C34 1850
Title says it all.

Hammond, Charles
Philosophy of the spirit-world
New York, 1853
BF1251.H36 1853
Text delivered to a minister acting as a medium.

Prichard, John
A few sober words about table-talk and table-spirits, and the Rev. N.S. Godfrey's incantations
London, 1853
BF1375.P75 1853
Fellow, Royal College of Surgeons; a very amusing pamphlet by a skeptic. T.p. cites Macbeth. Also refers to the Franklin séance described in pamphlet

Dods, John Bovee
Spirit manifestations examined and explained
New York, 1854
BF1042.D63 1854

Wilson, Robert P.
Discourses from the spirit-world
New York, 1855
BF1291.W55 1855
Also dictated to a minister medium. Part of P&B series on spiritualism.

Hare, Robert
Experimental investigation of the spirit manifestations
New York, 1856
BT961.H37 1856
By MD and professor of chemistry. “Doctrine of the spirit world” including heaven and hell. Apparatus for testing supposed manifestations.

Crosland, Mrs. Newton
Light in the valley
London, 1857
BF1251.C76 1857
Appeal to “just and dispassionate” audience who can look beyond “preconceived ideas and opinions” to consider evidence, which she has “rigidly” examined.

Zerffi, Gustavus George
Spiritualism and animal magnetism
London, 1871
BF1031.Z47 1871

Crookes, William
Researches in the phenomena of spiritualism
London, 1874
BF1371.C76 1874
Appendix contains accounts of séances; reprint from scientific journal. Excited re use of photography and electric light (new technologies) to test a supposed medium.

[Anonymous]
_Confessions of a medium_
London, 1882

Zöllner, Johann Karl Friedrich
_Transcendental physics_
London, 1885
BF1383.Z66513 1885
Spiritualism must be regarded as “a simple question of evidence,” presented here by well-known German scientists and academics.

[Serial publication]:
Society for Psychical Research (Great Britain)
_Proceedings_
London, 1883-1907
BF1011.S63 (all volumes will be on display); but see vol. I re the aims (“objects”) of the SPR.

[Set of 5 pamphlets]:
1. "Letters on table-moving" by A.B. (1853)
2. "A practical investigation into the truth of clairvoyance" by An Unprejudiced Observer (1854). Medium produces information about the fate of the lost Arctic explorer, Sir John Franklin.
3. "Le spiritisme envisagé et réfuté ... " par P. Fumeaux S.J. (1865)
4. "Psychic force and modern spiritualism" by William Crookes (1871)
5. "Table moving, with directions how to experiment" by Nicholls (1873)
BF1272.C65 1833 (items 1-5)