Writing Witch-Hunt Histories

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Writing Witch-Hunt Histories

Challenging the Paradigm

Edited by

Marko Nenonen and Raisa Maria Toivo

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CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Chart

Tables

Figures

Map

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Tampere, February 28, 2013

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CHALLENGING THE PARADIGM OF WITCH-HUNT HISTORIOGRAPHY

Marko Nenonen and Raisa Maria Toivo

Why a Work on Witch-Hunt Historiography?

The witch-hunts in Europe are a phenomenon that both repulse and attract attention. The panics, instigated by the new witchcraft theories in the early modern period (1450–1750), are seen at the very least as a history of social exclusion and cynical exploitation, and frequently as a phenomenon characterized by persecution, bigotry, irrational hatred and violence. What witch-hunt historiography did not acknowledge before the late twentieth century was the fact that despite the horrors of the large witch panics that occurred in Europe and in some parts of North America, such panics were relatively rare. Moreover, the number of death sentences, once believed to be in the hundreds of thousands or even millions, has in more realistic studies plummeted to 40,000 to 60,000.[1] In a three hundred-year period of European history, that figure is not exceptional; higher numbers of people were sentenced to death for various other crimes. Whereas the scandalous atrocities of witchcraft trials easily attract the attention of historians and their audience, a strictly neutral standpoint is needed for the purpose of research in order to examine all sides of the phenomenon and acknowledge the subtleties and diversity of interpretations.

It is not only the witch persecutions that have attracted the interest of succeeding generations; the secrets of magic and the mysteries of the supernatural also intrigue the modern mind, making witch-hunts, as a historians' subject, especially fascinating. In fact, the secrets of academic witch-hunt historiography are as enthralling as the phenomenon it attempts to explain. This book focuses on the history of witch-hunt historiography. An analytical reconsideration of the research history is an

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[1] Cf. Wolfgang Behringer, "Neun Millionen Hexen. Entstehung, Tradition und Kritik eines populären Mythos," *GWU* 49 (1998): 664–685. The article can also be found on www.muenchen.de/forumhexenforschung/; Richard M. Golden, "Satan in Europe. The Geography of Witch Hunts," in *Changing Identities in Early Modern France*, ed. Michael Wolfe (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 220–221.

essential element of productive research. Scholars are not immune to preconditioned cultural and ideological assumptions, many of which, usually the most fundamental, are subconscious. Analysis of past research is a constructive tool to spark new approaches. Indeed, this book is not about to repeat what is already known about the European witch-hunts. Much has been written on the issue,[2] but relatively little effort has been made to analyze how witch-hunts have been studied and explained in academic research. Approaches and explanations have varied. This book is one of the rare analytical studies on the history of witch-hunt historiography. The history of witch-hunt research fundamentally contributes not only to our understanding of a bizarre phenomenon in European history, but also allows us to better understand the cultural and academic trends which have powerfully influenced research, even when scholars have not been cognizant of the underlying premises of their own work. How the history of witch-hunts has been represented in scholarly works and textbooks illuminates the prerequisites and cultural directives which have guided research in the field. Indeed, it is possible that the trends within witch-hunt historiography reflect general developments in humanities, although this issue is only remotely touched upon here.

Two approaches will be adopted in this book. Firstly, an analytical account of some historiographical issues that have been of great importance within the field will be presented. Secondly, new and potentially productive aspects of the historical problem will be introduced and put forward for further discussion. This book is about challenging the current canon. Therefore, it concentrates on the themes that we think will offer the most promising avenues for further research.

Naturally, there are many focal issues that we have not been able to cover. Without question there is a need for a historiographical analysis of the history of magic in general. Following Hugh R. Trevor-Roper's lead, historians have been more interested in the panic-inspired trials than in the beliefs, let alone experiences, of witchcraft. The beliefs that have been under scrutiny have largely been those related to diabolic witchcraft, the pact with the devil and the witches' sabbath. Starting in the 1970s,

[2] Among others, see Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark, *The Athlone History of Witchcraft and Magic in Europe*, vol. 1–6 (London: The Athlone Press, 1999–2002); Wolfgang Behringer, *Witches and Witch-Hunts. A Global History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004); Richard M. Golden, ed., *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006); Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd edition (Harlow: Pearson-Longman, 2006; originally published in 1987).

influences from anthropology and English witch-hunt studies brought more attention to maleficium and other forms of archaic magic. However, relatively few scholars have studied magic apart from some who have produced works dedicated to medieval high magic.[3] We have focused, very narrowly indeed, on the witch-hunt historiography—an extensive subject in and of itself. To broaden the theme here would have been impossible, although some possible directions for a productive understanding of the historiography of magic in general have been suggested in this volume. It seems to us that an understanding of the history and nature of witchcraft and magic is in no way a peripheral question in the intellectual and social history of Europe.

As regards the focus of this work, witch-hunt historiography within the narrow geographical perspective of a conventional standpoint, has led to many false generalizations and assumptions. In the following articles the standard perspective is put in a new context. However, a much wider lens is needed to encompass the full significance of the geographical issues. People believed to be witches have been condemned practically everywhere. Even though we have re-evaluated the "Eurocentric" approach—or, more precisely, the "western European paradigm", as Marko Nenonen refers to it in his article—we regret that we have not been able to spread the net wider. Byzantine magic, the regions of eastern Europe in which the Orthodox Churches held sway (of which we cover only Russia), the Middle and Far East, Africa and South America, are barely covered in scholarly works. In our defence, the theories of diabolic witchcraft are

[3] Here only to mention some classic works close to witch-hunt studies: Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1988; originally published in 1971); Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons* (New York: Basic Books, 1975); Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: Their Foundations in Popular and Learned Culture, 1300–1500* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976); Gábor Klaniczay, *The Uses of Supernatural Power. The Transformations of Popular Religion in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); Jan Veenstra, *Magic and Divination in the courts of Burgundy and France* (Leiden: Brill, 1998); W. F. Ryan, *The Bathhouse at Midnight: An Historical Survey of Magic and Divination in Russia* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999); Linda Oja, *Varken Gud eller Natur. Synen på Magi i 1600- och 1700-talets Sverige* (Stockholm: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion, 1999); Éva Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead: A Perspective on Witches and Seers in the Early Modern Age* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999); Owen Davies and Willem de Blécourt, eds., *Beyond the Witch Trials. Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); Marie Lennersand, *Livet går vidare: Älvdalen och Rättvik efter de stora häxprocesserna 1668–1671* (Hedemora: Gidlunds förlag, 2006); Frank Klassen, *The Transformations of Magic: Illicit Learned Magic 1300–1600* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012).

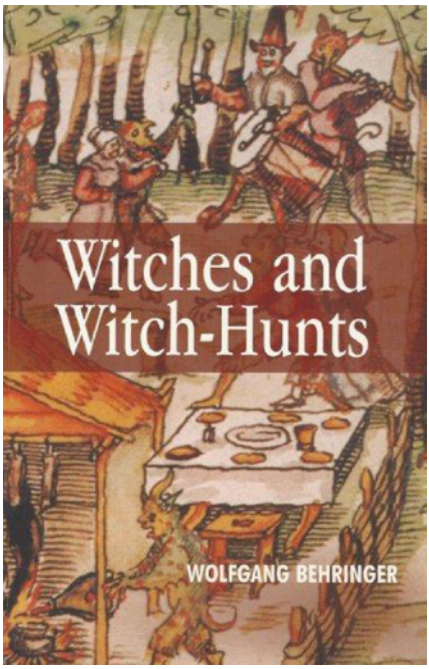


Figure 1.1. Wolfgang Behringer, Witches and Witch-Hunts: A Global History. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004). Cover illustration: The burning of twenty-one witches at Waldsee, 10 June 1587. Zentralbibliothek Zürich.

seen as central only in European witch trials. This may not be an adequate defence, however, as we ourselves demonstrate that diabolic witchcraft was not wholly dominant even in Europe. In any case, understanding the concepts of witches and witch trials in all their diversity demands a broad geographical standpoint. We believe that we have exposed the diversity of witch trials in Europe, although we freely admit that that is not enough. The situation varied hugely even within Europe; how much could be written, for example, if the traditions in China, Japan, Siberia or North Africa were taken into account? We humbly hope that future research will widen the perspective still further.

Our scope has also been restricted in two other ways. The extent to which scholarly trends in witch-hunt historiography reflect the approaches and prerequisites in other fields of historical research or the humanities will remain an open question. In the following articles writers present some remarks on the issue, but it is too huge to allow a thorough exploration here. Finally, it was not possible to give a full account of a theme

that is possibly the most difficult and most controversial in this context: the role of Christian religion in guiding research on the history of magic and witchcraft. This issue, too, covers the whole field of the humanities and even social sciences. We expect new openings in this field to appear alongside future research and we will be more than happy if some directions suggested in the following articles are explored further.

Such has been the potency of witchcraft as a phenomenon that it has drawn the attention of the public, politicians and a variety of academic scholars in different fields of discipline, from history to political science and medicine, and from anthropology and religious science to language studies and literature. It has also exerted a powerful pull in the world of the arts as the subject of literature, films and cartoons. This variety of sources of interest has ensured that different methodologies have emerged, leading to diverse conclusions. In many ways this has been advantageous: although the approaches of social and legal history have long dominated the study of witchcraft, its historiography has been truly an interdisciplinary effort. Most works have adopted a more or less multidisciplinary standpoint, which originally started with combining the reading of court documents—typical for historians—with anthropology and religious studies in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. As a consequence, ideas and developments in various scholarly fields meet in the study of the history of witchcraft and witch-hunts, igniting new ideas, sparking collisions and creating syntheses. This alone gives a strong incentive for a historiographical analysis of witch-hunt historiography. An understanding of how European witch-hunts have been explained and how the social and cultural trends have affected the research in question will be invaluable for further research.

Geographies of Witch-Hunts

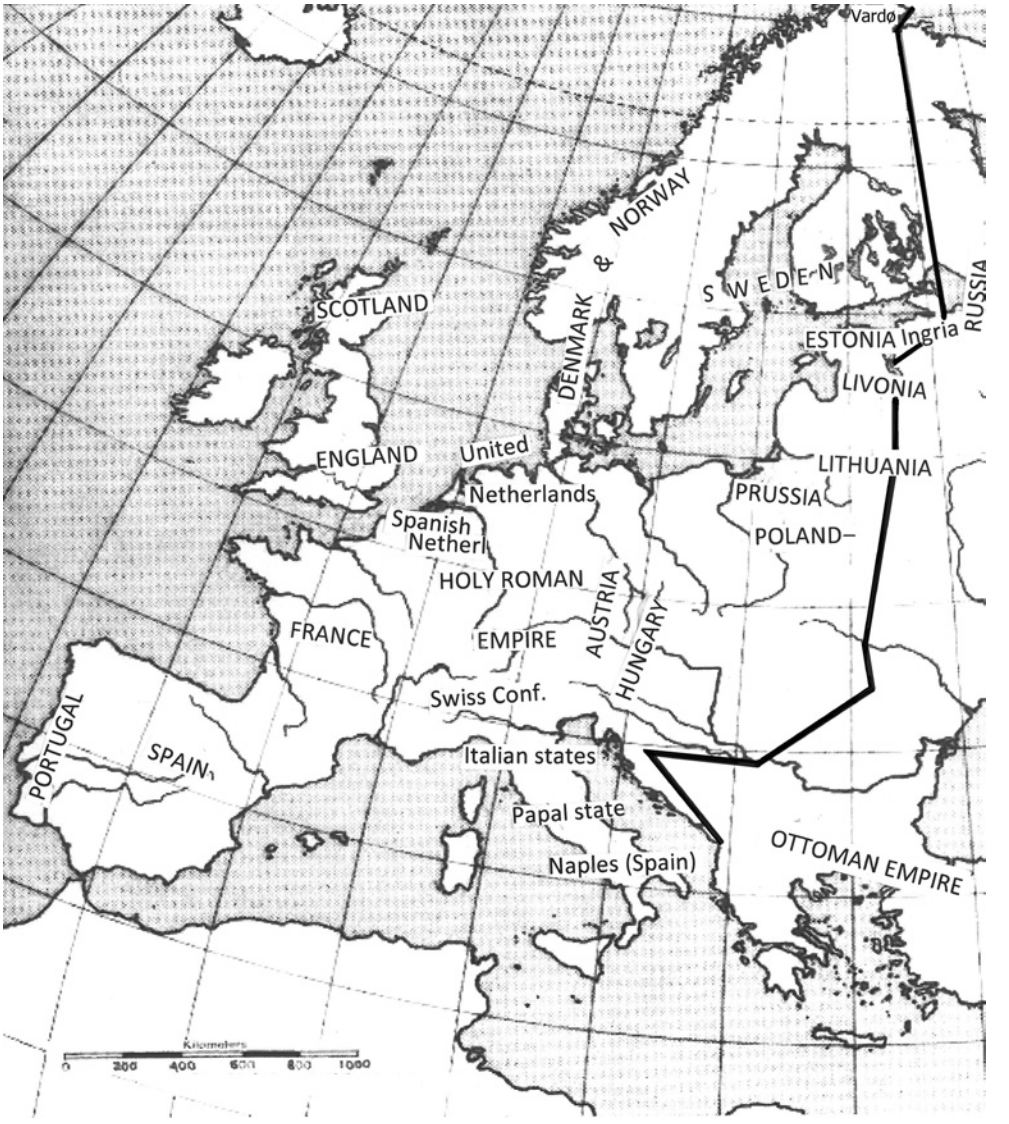
Up until the late twentieth century, witchcraft historiography focused mainly on the mass persecutions in the areas usually referred to collectively as western Europe.[4] The panics or "witch hysteria" in German-speaking areas, mostly parts of the Holy Roman Empire, and some of the other western European regions, have come to represent the "European" phenomenon, a development that occurred alongside the continued political

[4] More on the geographical classifications, see Marko Nenonen's article below.

importance of these regions. Dramatic witch panics have been considered central to the research since the latter half of the nineteenth century. There were also several mass trials in some French-speaking areas, not to mention waves of mass panics in the Basque regions of Spain, Scotland and some areas of Sweden; however, in most regions of Europe mass panics were either sporadic or non-existent.

It is crucial to understand the development of the mass panics, which, as regards European witch trials in general, are no more than half the truth, at most. For a long time scholars emphasized diabolical witchcraft as explicated in the new witchcraft theories. The debate of the origin of the new witchcraft theories has been long, wide and continuous, although the present state of research seems to have determined that new witchcraft theories were created by the learned elite in the late Middle Ages or at the beginning of the early modern period. Naturally, witches were thought to fly to the witches' sabbath. However, this was not the most frequent accusation made against the suspects, probably not even in the areas of modern-day Germany where most panics took place. It is possible that the new witchcraft theories, i.e. the heretical nature of witchcraft, was emphasized by the witch-hunt historians because they viewed some central European areas as "proper Christian Europe". Peripheries in general were of minor interest as they were thought to be politically and culturally less influential. The everyday magic and superstitions of the ordinary people—often called "low magic"—was something very different than the literati's sophisticated analyses of the pact with the devil, apostasy and, of course, sexual activities on the witches' sabbath. As Marko Nenonen puts it in his conclusions, later generations of witch-hunt historians followed the example of inquisitors and the learned people who chiefly wrote about new heretical witchcraft—incidentally something that they themselves created in their treatises. Witch-hunts, often understood in the sense of cumulative mass trials, were a different thing from the small-scale and sporadic trials that involved a limited number of accused persons; for one thing, discussion of witch-hunts alone conceals the fact that a considerable number of the accused, often the majority, were acquitted.

The emphasis on mass panics in some western European areas has led to the omission of many important questions from the canons of witchcraft studies. For example, experiences with religions other than Catholicism or Protestantism in southern and eastern Europe have been left aside. Furthermore, the question of ethnicity has also been neglected, although it is an important issue in the regions where native people met alien ruling



Map 1.1. Map of the geography discussed in this volume.
The black line roughly marks the areas of the Western Catholic Church ca. 1500. For explanations, see Marko Nenonen's article in this volume.

elites and colonists, or where people with different ethnic backgrounds lived side by side and possibly mixed. Additionally, the northern peripheries were long discounted because it was wrongly believed—commensurate with the popular images—that with the exception of Swedish mass panics, not many witch trials took place in the remote wildernesses of northern Europe. Actually, it was a Finn, Antero Heikkinen, who published the first modern work on witch-hunts in 1969.[5] In his study, the new approach involving social and mental history was developed. Of course, his attempt to compare his findings with other European trends failed for the simple reason that there were no other modern works on the issue at that time except Hugh R. Trevor-Ropers' essay of 1967 (1969). Alan Macfarlane (1970), Keith Thomas (1971), E. William Monter (1971, also 1976) and Bengt Ankarloo's (1971) epoch-making volumes appeared within two years, followed by the works of H. C. Erik Midelfort (1972), Zoltán Kovács (1973) and Russell Zguta (1977).[6]

One should not forget that among the worst witch panics were those that occurred in Vardø, in the far north of Norway (then subject to Denmark), on the shores of the Arctic Ocean. The northern and eastern fringes of Europe have been barely considered in current research even though the conference held in Stockholm in 1984, "Centres and Peripheries", promoted a change.[7] Ethnicity and popular representations of the indig-

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[5] Antero Heikkinen, *Paholaisen liittolaiset* (SHS: Helsinki, 1969).

[6] H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books-Peregrine, 1969; originally published in 1967). We do not count Trevor-Ropers' work fully modern in this sense as, regarding the overview of witch-hunts, he quite surprisingly rested heavily on the writers of the nineteenth century. Others mentioned in this context: Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970); Thomas, *Religion and the Decline*; E. William Monter, "Witchcraft in Geneva, 1537–1662," *Journal of Modern History* 2 (1971); E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976); Bengt Ankarloo, *Trolldomsprocesserna i Sverige*, 2nd edition with an epilogue (Lund: Institutet för rättshistorisk forskning grundat av Gustav och Carin Olin, 1984; originally published in 1971); H. C. Erik Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany 1562–1684* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972); Zoltán Kovács, "Die Hexen in Russland," *Acta Ethnographica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, tomus 22 (1–2) (Budapest: 1973); Russell Zguta, "Witchcraft Trials in Seventeenth-Century Russia," *The American Historical Review* 82, No. 5 (1977). Also, it is worth mentioning that Julio Caro Baroja's work *The World of the Witches* (Phoenix Press, 2001; originally published in Spanish in 1961, translated into English in 1964) included many modern standpoints.

[7] Cf. the conference volume Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, eds., *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990). Also in Swedish: *Häxornas Europa* (Lund: Rättshistoriska studier II:13, 1987).

enous culture are important features of Rune Hagen's article, as he shows that the Sami were widely thought to have practiced shamanism. Yet Hagen's statistics show that only 20 percent of the accused witches in Danish Finnmark (modern Norway) were Sami; the majority were Norwegian women. This raises the question of whether judicial practice was the same for all people, even in the same regions. Why was Sami magic dealt with differently? The importance of a judicial system that differed from the western European one is also pointed out in Marianna Muravyeva's article on the historiography of Russian witchcraft. In addition, Raisa Maria Toivo distinctly emphasizes northern material in her comparison of the interpretation of gender in international witchcraft studies with the material from Sweden and Finland.

The areas once covered by the Russian empire (later the Soviet Union and modern-day Russia) did indeed produce witch trials and, with the exception of diabolical witchcraft, they bore all the features typical of western European witch-hunts. Furthermore, "the possessed" were still often encountered in the nineteenth century. Marianna Muravyeva demonstrates that the revival of the interest in witchcraft research in western Europe and the USA that began in the 1990s sparked a new epoch in witchcraft studies in Russia as well. This phase has produced a new set of questions posed by the differences between Russian and western European findings, e.g. why there is a marked presence of male witches and an absence of demonology in Russian witch trials. In many ways legal traditions and jurisdiction in Russia differed from those in western European practices. It is also interesting that scholarly studies on Russian witchcraft and witch trials were already made known in the late nineteenth century, even though the case of Russia was neglected in the majority of twentieth-century research. Some scholars writing on Russian witch trials, such as Zoltán Kovács (1973), were not even mentioned in most works concerning the history of European witch trials.

The rapidly increasing emphasis on Nordic witchcraft and, even more so, on the perspective of the eastern and central European areas in the international debate peculiarly coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequent disappearance of the socialist world system in Europe, as well as the subsequent enlargement of the European Union. A question thus arises: Did the change of the angle in research take place as a result of pure and genuine scholarly logic and academic curiosity or simply because of a change in European political and economic geography?

Popular (Culture) and Academic (Discipline)—Not A One-Way Interaction

While it is difficult to find a country or a region in Europe where absolutely no trials of the panic-induced variety ever took place, historians have found that different areas of Europe hosted differently conducted trials. Indeed, the majority of trials—even in western Europe—were not brought about by the panics. Many times, even during the worst panics, the onset of rumors or the work of witch finders was quickly suppressed in order to prevent the spread of hysteria.[8] Interestingly, the history of witch trials has parallels with the history of legal moderation and cultural and religious toleration. The concern for human rights, for example, arose at that time and was, indeed, influenced by witch-hunt treatises.[9] We feel that the strong opposition to witch-hunts, demonstrated occasionally in many locations, has received too little recognition from modern witch-hunt scholars—especially in the popular textbooks. Horror stories, which appeal greatly to the common readership, can easily be explained by the concept of the primitive mentality of yesteryear—if one chooses to ignore the fact that many of the people who supposedly had "primitive minds" strongly opposed the violation of the law and witchcraft accusations.

The form that the witch trials took depended on many things. The most obvious of these were the judicial circumstances, i.e. the laws and hierarchies of legal systems that were in place. How a trial proceeded depended on, for example, whether or not the local people had an opportunity to seek solutions to their problems without the members of the elite intervening in local affairs. It is clear that most suspicions never reached the courts including, according to Gunnar W. Knutsen, the denunciations received by the Inquisitions in southern Europe. Furthermore, popular beliefs differed, although it is likely that practically all individuals were

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[8] E.g. Alison Rowlands, *Witchcraft Narratives in Germany: Rothenburg 1561–1652* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

[9] See, e.g. Friedrich von Spee, *Cautio Criminalis oder Rechtliches Bedenken wegen der Hexenprozesse*, 8. Auflage, trans. Joachim-Friedrich Ritter in 1959 (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2007; originally published in 1631). See also the English translation *Cautio Criminalis, or a Book on Witch Trials*, trans. Marcus Hellyer (Charlottesville & London: University of Virginia Press, 2003). Modern studies, among others: J. C. Laursen and C. J. Nederman, eds., *Beyond the Persecuting Society: Religious Toleration before the Enlightenment* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998); B. Kaplan, *Divided by faith: religious conflict and the practice of toleration in early modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); C. J. Nederman, *Worlds of difference: European Discourses of Toleration, c. 1100–c. 1550* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000).

afraid of harmful magic and were prone to superstition, a term that some Europeans had already learned to use for this phenomenon even in the era of the witch-hunts. The teachings of the Church were, of course, a crucial factor behind the accusations. Personal concerns and motives, on the other hand, are more difficult to assess.[10] Additionally, wars and the presence of foreign troops frequently affected the jurisdiction. Another aspect worth noting—one that has received relatively little attention—is the pragmatics of religious and social life as related to witchcraft and magic. The diversity of all these issues was, indeed, huge. Although it is alluring to speak about European culture and mentality, there may not have been such a thing. What people considered as witchcraft, magic, or otherwise suspicious activity differed from area to area and, to a great extent, it changed with the passage of time. Judicial practices were constantly changing. Although modern research has made some ambitious attempts to summarize these differences in a concise form,[11] not much has appeared in which the history of the witch-hunt historiography has been thoroughly analyzed. Why have rigorous comparisons been so few?

There has been little research on the possible political, religious, or social and cultural issues that may have affected research schemes. Tunnel vision in scholarly convention has also hampered creativity. Charles Zika demonstrates that for a long time scholars thought of visual art almost exclusively as an elite expression of culture. Zika shows how the study of witchcraft images slowly spread from one German artist to famous Dutch and Flemish artists and gradually came to include more vivid material. Through this process a more methodological insight and breadth was gained. For social and legal historians who prefer written documents, pictures function simply as book decorations to please the publisher and appeal to the broader readership. As if to demonstrate this, the covers of witch history books have been rather uninventive and derivative. At best, witch-hunt historians have seen pictures as mirrors of social reality or expressions of individual fantasies. Zika and his fellow art historians have gone much deeper, as they see images of witches and witchcraft as part of the contemporary discourse on witchcraft.

Themes such as ethnicity and colonialism within Europe were also relevant to popular beliefs and to the way people dealt with witchcraft.

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[10] Few works on this issue have appeared. See, however, Marko Nenonen, "Who Bears the Guilt for the Persecution of Witches," *Studia Neophilologica* 84, supplement 1 (2012). www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00393274.2012.668072.

[11] See note 2 above.

Sometimes religious and social toleration prevailed and harsh punishments were avoided for practical reasons, or simply to maintain social peace. Moreover, accepted and mundane everyday magic, often ridiculed in jokes, existed side by side with the horrible and forbidden diabolical witchcraft that we usually think of when witchcraft comes to mind. In addition to Rune Hagen and Gunnar W. Knutsen, who address the issues of ethnicity at the northern and southern edges of Europe, Marianna Muravyeva and Raisa Maria Toivo discuss the differences in judicial practices regarding different people. The western European emphasis has led scholars to concentrate almost exclusively on the western European concepts of justice. The discussion has, quite rightly, revolved around the issues of accusatorial and inquisitorial legal systems and, furthermore, has explicated the legal traditions from Canon Law to the Germanic law codes and from written laws to orally based customs which early modern Europe still fostered. However, as important as these questions are, they leave aside many other issues. In particular, cultural concepts of crimes such as witchcraft need more attention than has so far been the case. Why are some crimes and their perpetrators important at a certain time and in a particular society? As Muravyeva and Toivo explain, the legal definitions of, for example, witchcraft, blasphemy and rape differed according to region. European-wide comparisons would shed light on these issues and help to explain how they relate to other factors, such as wealth, religion and the state, as well as trade and communications and the dispersal patterns of ideas and influences. Witch-hunts were thus not only a phenomenon of mass destruction, religious or social prejudice and backward mental states; many other factors were also present.

Furthermore, the conventions of legal and judicial systems may have meant that certain groups of people could not be prosecuted due to their social status, their lack of legal capacities in general or their status as property owners. Paradoxically, the very same group of people may well have been considered witches, but witches that had to be dealt with outside the courts. Sometimes, therefore, trials and tractates reveal as much through their omissions as through their words. This point of view deserves more attention in witchcraft historiography, although care should be taken when drawing inferences *ex silentio*. In all, these factors both reflected and influenced the way people thought about and dealt with these matters. Not all witch trials took place under the model circumstances standardized in witch-hunt historians' works.

There were vast differences within Europe regarding what was considered and judged as witchcraft and who these matters concerned. Some of

these differences most likely arose from variations in law and legal conventions. Many of the differences may appear greater than they actually were because scholars have studied them differently and with different standards. The fact that witch-hunt historians do not have many common denominators in their approaches may reflect not only the great diversity of the phenomenon and the creative mind of each scholar but also the lack of discipline in research work. Clearly, horror story narratives without an analytical grip are not enough in academic research. Yet we think that there are differences in approaches that perhaps cannot to be explained in an obvious way such as deep cultural variations, patterns of social interaction, the position of women, traditions and communications and, of course, how witchcraft as well as the spiritual world in general was understood.

Strikingly, these questions have received dichotomous interpretations in modern political circles—and, indeed, we find similarities between the old and new. The fact that radical right-wing feminism in the USA often advocated a total dismissal of the state is unsurprising. On the other hand, the modern social democratic women historians in the Nordic countries, despite their strong adherence to the welfare state, see the state and legal machinery of the seventeenth century as heavily oppressive—just as their right-wing sisters in the modern USA understood the nature of the state in the modern era. Furthermore, in Soviet historiography, witch trials were understood as class oppression of the poor or as persecutions of discontented pre-revolutionaries being attacked by the ruling class.

Popular culture forms a platform on which scholars, with their findings and explanations, meet their non-academic audience. Within popular culture—fiction books, films, art, cartoons, etc.—scholarly findings will always be reinterpreted. Such a relationship between academic scholarship and wider society is natural. It is never a one-way interaction in the sense that the learned elite dictates what is believed and understood. Yet in witch-hunt historiography, images of popular culture were for a long time mightier than the research itself; it is evident that popular images of witch-hunts affected scholars in this academic field perhaps more than in any other. In fact, from the very beginning popular interpretations of witch-hunts highly politicized the understanding of the phenomenon concerning the role of religion and the Church, social and legal control, poverty, gender, terror and ethnicity and race. Instead of critically analyzing these popular images of witchcraft and witch-hunts, researchers tended to take the assumptions underlying them as self-evident and were guided by them until more thorough investigations into the primary documents

were made in the late twentieth century. At the end of this book Ronald Hutton gives a provocative insight into witchcraft in popular culture today. Do we study our dreams, imagination or what? What, exactly, did a witch represent in the past, and what does the concept of a witch signify to us today?

There is one field of witch-hunt studies which is likely to gain increasing attention in the near future, but which has so far been very difficult to handle or even to name: the question of guilt. Historians are usually, and very rightly, reluctant to blame people for their actions in history. Historians prefer to understand rather than condemn. Yet current developments do not allow us to escape the issue so easily. What was the role of the individual in hysterical waves of terror? This question has always been part of investigations into the Holocaust, for example. Ethnic, religious and political violence has not left people untouched even in the modern western world. In witch-hunt historiography the question of guilt instinctively follows, however much one would like to ignore it. The same, of course, has been true when researching the Holocaust, although it seems that in that case it has been much easier to find the perpetrators. In history, we believe, the role of the individual is essential; it seems very unlikely that any specific social or ideological structures can explain the wrongdoings that individuals decide to commit. Are we likely to choose a political explanation whenever it suits us? Is it easier to explain terrible things by neutral, structural factors when we want to hide our guilt? The subjects of fear, persecution and guilt are touched upon in the following articles. Yet the relative moderation of many trials and, moreover, the streaks of toleration that occurred every now and then even during the witch panics are worth noticing when thinking of the role of individuals in persecutions and terror.

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We do not pretend to answer all the questions we have posed here or those that may be posed by others who read this volume. Nor do we pretend to give a full account of the history of witchcraft historiography. Rather, scholars in this work aspire to give an update on some critical developments in the writing of the history of witchcraft and witch trials. Witch-hunt historians encounter a challenge: although reading the court case records is essential, the furthering of research and the finding of new leads is required for a productive analysis of witch-hunt historiography. Also, a critical analysis is a prerequisite for a new synthesis of the European witch-hunts. We call for a change in some of the paradigms

that have almost exclusively directed the attention of scholars in the field for so long. New interpretations will appear, as they have already since the turn of the millennium, although we do not think that we can, nor would we wish to, predict what the changes will be. We hope that new productive approaches and the courage to step across impeding conventions have been nurtured here. That is, of course, the ultimate objective for any discussion.

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THE DUBIOUS HISTORY OF THE WITCH-HUNTS

Marko Nenonen

The witch-hunt has been seen as one of the strangest phenomena of the European past. At the end of the twentieth century it became clear that research into the history of the witch-hunt has been stranger still. For over a century scholars had been explaining a phenomenon that never existed.

The British historian Hugh Redwald Trevor-Roper (1914–2003), who studied and researched at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, became known beyond the boundaries of academia for at least two things. In the 1980s, having examined the supposed Adolf Hitler diaries, he declared them to be genuine, but they were shown to be a bad forgery soon afterwards.[1] He was also known as the historian of the European witch-hunts, as his work, *The European Witch-Craze of the 16th and 17th Centuries* (1969/1967)[2] was for a long time the most important, and indeed for most students, the only work used as a general source and in lecture series, so that its main features were considered sound by those who did not research the witch-hunt themselves.

Trevor-Roper stated in his book that the general outline of the witch persecutions was already familiar from earlier research. All that was needed was a new and up-to-date explanation. In fact, the youngest of the writers referred to in his overview, the German scholar Joseph Hansen, had been born in 1862, a century before Trevor-Roper returned to the matter. Hansen's works have remained classics in the field of witch-hunts, but in the mid-1970s it was found that he had accepted as genuine a collection of sources that told of medieval witch trials, for a long time considered trustworthy but actually nineteenth-century forgeries.[3] Despite this, the majority of Hansen's collections are still considered dependable.

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[1] On H. R. Trevor-Roper, see Marko Nenonen, *Noitavainot Euroopassa. Myytin synty* (Keuruu: Atena, 2006), 271–272.

[2] H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969). Published for the first time in his collection *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (London: Macmillan, 1967).

[3] Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons* (London: Basic Books, 1975), 126–139; Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials. Their Foundations in Popular and Learned Culture, 1300–1500* (London & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), 16–18.

Many western European witch-hunt scholars later erred far more than Joseph Hansen by failing to read the documents they used for their conclusions carefully enough. The infamous piece of work by Heinrich Kramer (Institoris), *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486 or 1487),[4] which instructed in the investigation of witchcraft, is mentioned in many works on the history of the witch persecutions. However, it is clear that many of these researchers had not read *Malleus Maleficarum*, since it was not noted that in the original Latin text of the work almost every third witch mentioned was of the masculine gender. These references must therefore be to male witches, or male *and* female witches. Strangest of all was that it was not scholars researching the witch-hunts that made this observation, but writers from outside the field. The problem was exposed by Lara Apps and Andrew Gow in their work, *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe* (2003).[5] Their observation was a surprise when we note that *Malleus Maleficarum* had been considered the Bible of misogynist churchmen.

Of the works written by inquisitors and theologians, *Malleus Maleficarum* was not the only one that mentioned male witches and men practicing witchcraft. Interestingly, in some of these works male witches are mentioned more frequently than female.[6] In addition, it surely cannot have escaped attention that men as well as women were prosecuted during the era of witch trials. How is it possible that a central question in witchcraft research had been handled so badly as late as the end of the twentieth century? In much of the research the very idea of male witches in the early modern period had been considered almost a categorical impossibility.[7] If such a huge mistake could be made about such a

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[4] Heinrich Kramer (Institoris), *Der Hexenhammer. Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. Wolfgang Behringer, Günter Jerouscheck and Werner Tschacher, 3rd edition (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2003; 1st edition in 2000). *Malleus Maleficarum* was first published in 1486 or 1487.

[5] Lara Apps and Andrew Gow, *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 104. Studies on male witchcraft have been appearing with increasing regularity. Most recently: Alison Rowlands, ed., *Witchcraft and Masculinities in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Rolf Schulte, *Man as Witch. Male Witches in Central Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) (first in German *Hexenmeister. Die Verfolgung von Männern im Rahmen der Hexenverfolgungen von 1530 bis 1730 im Alten Reich.* Bern/Frankfurt a.M, etc.: Peter Lang, 2., ergäntze Auflage, 2001). For a recent exploration of this, see also Raisa Maria Toivo, *Witchcraft and Gender in Early Modern Society. Finland and the Wider European Experience* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

[6] Apps and Gow, *Male* Witches, 104–108.

[7] E.g. Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons. The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999/1997), e.g. 107–133, esp. 112, 115, 119 and 133.

simple question by several researchers, it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that other ideas based on preconceptions were also followed without any attempt at a critical analysis. And this is indeed the case. The earlier generally accepted picture had typically dominated almost the whole modern era of witch-hunt research, for nearly 150 years.[8] Where this idea originated, however, is a question that has only recently been addressed.

Were the Accused Poor?

The stereotypical witch is a woman who serves the devil and flies to the witches' sabbath. Yet the stereotype has other features which fit either poorly or not at all to those who were actually accused. From its very beginning another powerful stereotype of the witch persecution appeared in its historiography: those accused of witchcraft were described and explained as "different". This is natural, as it seems only logical to argue that the accused must have been different in some way, some ending up persecuted and others not. This view suggests that the victims were guilty, but is it credible that the victims of persecution, in one way or another, always provided some reason for their accusation?

Aside from being females, the most important characteristic of witches is said to have been poverty. As early as 1971, long before there had been much detailed research, Keith Thomas stated that the accused were poor and usually women.[9] Poverty has also been one of the most important reasons given as an explanation for the persecutions. But what evidence has been presented to show that more often than not the accused were poor? An examination of international research on the matter shows clearly that detailed studies on the issue based on the original documentary sources and methodological analysis have been very rare. The matter has often been considered only in a few individual cases. However, those works in which the poverty of the accused is argued have handled the

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[8] The first studies in which the witch trials were explained using the methods of modern source criticism appeared in the first half of the nineteenth century. To this period also belongs a work that still has some influence: W. G. Soldan, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse. Aus den Quellen dargestellt* (Stuttgart and Tübingen: J. G. Cotta, 1843). The 2nd revised edition was edited by H. Heppe (Stuttgart: 1880), and the 3rd edition was edited by Max Bauer (Munich: 1911). On research of the 1800s, see Christa Tuczay, "The Nineteenth Century: Medievalism and Witchcraft," in *Palgrave Advances in Witchcraft Historiography*, eds. Jonathan Barry and Owen Davies (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 52–68.

[9] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London & New York: Penguin Books, 1988/1971), 620.

question in a dubious manner. Even H. C. Erik Midelfort, who warned researchers against "impressionist" conclusions in his work *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany 1562–1684* (1972), which became a modern classic of witch-hunt research, had a weak basis for one of his conclusions. According to him, midwives and tavern-keepers were "often" accused.[10] "Often" is an undefined concept, especially in research, and Midelfort provided no further analysis or material. It was not clear from his work how often or how reliably the social status of the accused appeared in the trial records, or what proportion of the accused were midwives and tavern-keepers. Nevertheless, Midelfort emphasized that the widely held stereotypes of the accused disintegrated during the witch-hunts and resulting court cases and that those who were accused came from widely different groups of society—among them many men.

In addition to Midelfort, another modern-day classic in the field of witch-hunt research, E. William Monter's *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland* (1976), gave testimony of the poverty of the accused. Monter stated that the accused were most often women, often widows, and that most of them were poor. The majority of his court case material concerned women and it does seem that an exceptionally large number were widows. The majority of those accused may also have been poor, but, given that Monter had included (in addition to widows) manual workers, craftspeople and others who did not belong to the ranked society of their locality, the assessment of what constituted poverty became too wide. He did not handle the question more closely, nor make the basis for his conclusions clear. Besides, in every second case his records say nothing of the accused person's status.[11]

The Norwegian Hans Eyvind Næss (1982) has long since presented the people accused in the witch-hunts as "often the poorest members of their society".[12] Næss claims that economic conflict and social tension explain

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[10] H. C. Erik Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany 1562–1684* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 7–8, 195. Midelfort's work also gave learned support to the theory that witches were midwives. This theory, which has attracted little support otherwise, was taken up by some social scientists. Cf. Gunnar Heinsohn and Otto Steiger, *Die Vernichtung der weisen Frauen* (Herbstein-Schlechtenwegen: März, 1985).

[11] E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 115–128, 196–200.

[12] Hans-Eyvind Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge på 1500–1600 tallet* (Båstad: Universitetsforlaget, 1982), see, e.g. 314. Næss refers, among other works, to Thomas (1988/1971), although there is no explanation based on original sources in Thomas' work. Further, Næss cites Antero Heikkinen in support of his claim (Heikkinen, *Paholaisen liittolaiset*, Helsinki:

the witch-hunts. He also bravely states that researchers unanimously (*forskerne er enige om*) accept that the accused in witch cases were, almost without exception (*nesten utelukkende*), poor. Næss criticizes the Swedish scholar Bengt Ankarloo, who claimed otherwise in his book *Trolldomsprocesserna i Sverige* (1971).[13] Ankarloo looked into the great persecutions of northern Sweden, in which the accused were not usually poor, but Næss assumes that in other parts of Sweden, as elsewhere, the majority must have been people of little means. He presents no research or material related to Sweden in support of his claims, and subsequent Swedish research has reinforced Ankarloo's view that poverty was not a common factor among those accused.[14] It also appears that even in Norway the majority of the accused were not necessarily poor. Næss claims otherwise, but there is no detailed explanation for this in his work. He makes reference to trial documents but fails to explain how frequently the matter was mentioned or how reliable the information given by the trial records is. It is possible that in most cases there was no mention of this subject.

SHS, 1969, 388), but Heikkinen says precisely the opposite, which is clear from the page Næss refers to. Besides, even in Norway it was not only widows and lone women that were accused—as Næss himself states (308).

[13] Bengt Ankarloo, *Trolldomsprocesserna i Sverige*, 2nd edition with appendix. (Stockholm: Institutet för rättshistorisk forskning, 1984/1971), 277–286, esp. 285.

[14] Compare Næss (1982), 314. A more detailed account of research into social status cannot be given here. Alongside the works of Heikkinen and Ankarloo, observations based on original sources have been made by the following, among others: Christina Larner, *Enemies of God. The Witch-hunt in Scotland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), 89–102. See also her work, *Witchcraft and Religion. The Politics of Popular Belief* (New York: Basic Blackwell, 1984, post.), 87–88; Merete Birkelund, *Troldkvinden og hennes anklagare* (Århus: Historiske Skrifter III, 1983), 58, 63, 103; Birgitta Lagerlöf-Génetay, *De svenska häxprocessernas utbrottsskede 1668–1671* (Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 1990), 104; Per Sörlin, *Trolldoms- och vidskepelseprocesserna i Göta Hovrätt 1635–1754* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1993), 108–144. The only wider account of the social background of the accused that I know of is included in Marko Nenonen, *Noituus, taikuus ja noitavainot Ala-Satakunnan, Pohjois-Pohjanmaan ja Viipurin Karjalan maaseudulla 1620–1700* (Helsinki: SHS, 1992), 152 ff. and 181 ff. Brian P. Levack says that "we can be fairly certain that the great majority of those prosecuted came from the lower levels of society". See Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd edition (Harlow: Pearson-Longman, 2006; 1st edition in 1987), 157. He continues by saying that "witches were not necessarily the very poorest members of society" and that "many witches owned some property". See also Oscar di Simplicio, "Social and Economic Status of Witches," in *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition IV*, ed. Richard M. Golden (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 1054–1059. Simplicio sets forth a mixed bag of conflicting views, and it is noticeable that the research mentioned by him does not really support his conclusions regarding the poverty of the accused.

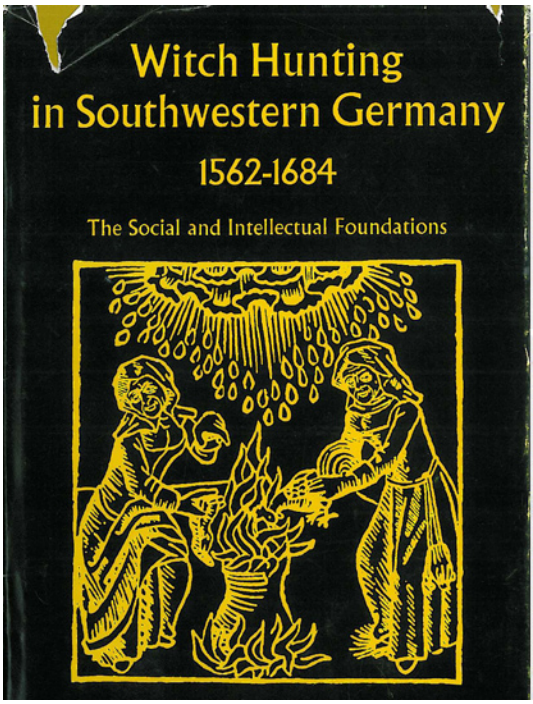

Figure 2.1. H. C. Erik Midelfort, *Witch-Hunting in Southwestern Germany 1562–1684. The Social and Intellectual Foundations*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972). Cover illustration: information not given.

More detailed analyses of social status indicate that without thorough investigation and without sources that complement the trial records it is rarely possible to obtain reliable data on the social status or wealth of those involved. Largely through the help of tax records, it has been possible to conclude that the social status of the accused in witchcraft and sorcery trials in the region of present-day Finland did not generally diverge from that of the rest of the populace. More interesting is that the social status of the accused, informers and plaintiffs—those who did not belong to the administration—often seemed to be similar. Accusations of witchcraft against beggars or the poorest of society were made less often than against others.[15] One of the most important conclusions that can be

[15] Nenonen, *Noituus, taikuus*, 152 ff. and 181 ff. The same conclusions are drawn from material from the whole of (what is now) Finland: see Marko Nenonen and Timo Kervinen, *Synnin palkka on kuolema* (Helsinki: Otava, 1994), 232, 277 and note 5, in which, however,

drawn is that anyone could end up being accused of witchcraft. The suspect did not have to be a professional seer or a social outcast. Many magical practices were general, and it was believed that anyone could have the ability to do harmful witchcraft.[16]

It has to be noted that social status was perhaps not an important factor in giving rise to witchcraft trials. Many of the concerns related above about a past lack of detailed research also apply to the possible links between other personal matters and accusations of witchcraft. Were the accused more often married than unmarried, or more frequently young than old, or were there other factors in their circumstances that distinguished them in terms of the demand for social conformity? There has been no research done on these matters that could provide a basis for generalizations. On the basis of what has been observed in various studies, it seems that the majority of those accused were married. This in itself is an interesting observance, as at that time in western Europe and in the areas where witch-trials were concentrated, there were large numbers of unmarried people.[17] These considerations demolish the generally accepted mantra about the witch-hunts.

The Popularity of the "Scapegoat Theory" and Its Problems

The view that the witch persecutions can be explained by the poverty of the accused became generally established after the Second World War, although there have been other explanatory models.[18] Various accounts

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the statistical material is left out for practical reasons. Also, according to Heikkinen (*Paholaisen liittolaiset*, 254–255, 388), the accused were not the poorest of all, although his information comes only from part of Pohjanmaa.

[16] Nenonen, *Noituus, taikuus*, 162–163, 222. This conclusion has since been strengthened in other studies. For instance, see Robin Briggs, *Witches & Neighbors. The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998/1996), and Marko Nenonen, *Noitavainot Euroopassa. Ihmisen pahuus* (Jyväskylä: Atena, 2007), 117–132.

[17] See the discussion in, among other works, Mary S. Hartman, *The Household and the Making of History. A Subversive View of the Western Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Dr. Tiina Miettinen has analyzed the historiography of this European-wide debate very interestingly in her book *Ihanteista irrallaan. Hämeen maaseudun nainen osana perhettä ja asiakirjoja 1600-luvun alusta 1800-luvun alkuun* (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2012). So far the book is only available in Finnish.

[18] Numerous theories about magic and explanations for the origin of witch-hunts have been presented, and there is no space to address this here. On theories of magic, see, e.g. Daniel L. O'Keefe, *Stolen Lightning. The Social Theory of Magic* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982). O'Keefe emphasizes social disputes and develops his view of harmful magic (witchcraft) as one measure of conflict and internal stress (discord) in society.

have been given by different researchers of how poverty provided an explanation for why certain people were accused, although, on the whole, few models for this have been presented. The bases for these explanations can be divided into two main groups: the first assumes that for some reason poor and deprived people made easy scapegoats when explanations were needed for events and phenomena which could not otherwise be explained—or for which factual explanations were not wanted or sought. According to the second model, something in the behavior or lifestyle of the accused made him or her a relatively easy object of fear and hatred. This behavior could have been, for instance, persistent begging, unpermitted anti-Christian actions, or simply a suspicious method of curing ill people.

Modern witch-hunts in different countries have also been explained using the scapegoat theory. One of the best-known models is Clyde Kluckhohn's (1905–1960) research into the accusations of witchcraft among the Navajo in 1930s North America. According to Kluckhohn, social problems caused stress and disputes, which brought about the accusations. Ultimately, the problems of the Navajo arose because their way of life was being eroded by the lifestyle of the majority, and this increased distress and internal discord. Belief in witchcraft and accusations of it provided an outlet for aggression and conflict, which Kluckhohn considered an important factor.[19]

This is a functional explanatory model.[20] According to this model, the belief in witchcraft has some function or purpose in society, which assists the survival of society and its individuals and the maintenance of social order, although it is partly, or in some respects wholly, disorderly or dysfunctional. Witch-hunt researchers have often discussed the model that Alan Macfarlane developed in his work *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (1970). According to him the victims of witchcraft were more frequently from wealthier families than those who bewitched them. Macfarlane explained that the developing capitalist society and mode of

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[19] Clyde Kluckhohn, *Navaho Witchcraft* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1944), 85, 88–90, and other pages.

[20] Briefly, on its background in witch-hunt research, see: T. M. Luhrmann, "Anthropology," in *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft. The Western Tradition*, vol. 1, ed. R. M. Golden (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 43–45; John Burrow, *A History of Histories. Epics, Chronicles, Romances & Inquiries from Herodotus & Thucydides to the Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin, 2009/2007), 494–495; Nenonen, *Noitavainot Euroopassa*, 158–173 and Marko Nenonen, "Culture Wars: State, Religion and Popular Culture in Europe," in *Palgrave Advances in Witchcraft Historiography*, ed. Jonathan Barry and Owen Davies (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), esp. 115–118.

Figure 2.2. 17th-century beggar-figure collecting donations for the poor in the church of Hauho, Finland. Photo Ville Vuolanto. By courtesy of the photographer.

production emphasized individuality and undermined established social values. As a consequence it was no longer possible to assist the poor as earlier, due to impoverishment—which Macfarlane assumed to have occurred.[21] According to him this explained, for example, the friction that arose over begging.

The originality of Macfarlane's thesis lies in its psychological emphasis. According to Macfarlane, witchcraft accusations arose from bad consciences when people knew they should help beggars but were unable or unwilling to do so. They assuaged their guilt by convincing themselves that a witch had avenged their refusal to help. In this way they suffered their punishment and the guilt for breaking a good practice was easier to carry. According to Macfarlane's explanatory model, the accusation of witchcraft was the shifting of guilt to the weaker party.[22] However, not long afterwards Alan Macfarlane rejected his own theory. In a new work, *The Origins of English Individualism* (1978), he concluded the opposite, with the quite natural view that individuality was no new phenomenon and that witch-hunts could not, therefore, be linked to the birth of capitalism. On the whole, said Macfarlane, the idea of an unchanging rural society is an illusion of later generations.[23]

The scapegoat theory was also upheld by the German historian Wolfgang Behringer. He argued that in the witch-hunts of Bavaria, modern southern Germany, the persecutions intensified after the bad harvests.[24] Behringer placed more emphasis on general setbacks and collective experience than Macfarlane, who saw the matter from the standpoint of individual decisions. The basic idea behind the scapegoat theory is that bad and especially deteriorating conditions give birth to stress and anxiety, which increase and worsen competition and conflict, which then lead to

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[21] Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 195–198, 200 ff., and on poverty, see also 150–151, 155 and 164.

[22] Macfarlane's explanatory model had a powerful influence on his teacher Keith Thomas. Compare Keith Thomas, "The Relevance of Social Anthropology to the Historical Study of English Witchcraft," in *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations*, ed. M. Douglas (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970), 47–80 and Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, esp. 599 ff. For a discussion of this: Jonathan Barry, "Introduction: Keith Thomas and the Problem of Witchcraft," in *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe. Studies in Culture and Belief*, eds. J. Barry, M. Hester and G. Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999/1996), 1–45; Jari Eilola, *Rajapinnoilla. Sallitun ja kielletyn määritteleminen 1600-luvun jälkipuoliskon noituus- ja taikuustapauksissa* (Helsinki: SKS, 2003), 21–30, 256 ff., e.g. 272.

[23] Alan Macfarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1978), 1–2, 59, 189 ff.

[24] Wolfgang Behringer, *Witchcraft Persecutions in Bavaria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), esp. 89 ff. and 388–415.

quarrels and accusations. Whether this theory is right or wrong is impossible to say here, nor is it important in this connection. There are no detailed studies to show regular links between charges of witchcraft and economic setbacks or times of crisis, and Behringer's conclusions are not unambiguous.[25]

The chronology of witchcraft and sorcery trials alone makes one suspicious of generalizations. Trials increased and decreased in intensity simultaneously in different parts of Europe. The coincidence is especially noticeable in western Europe, including the German-speaking regions and Switzerland, and to some extent southwestern Europe. Trials became common in the mid-fifteenth century, after which they diminished in number, whereupon the number increased again in the mid-sixteenth century, in Sweden as well. There were an especially large number of trials for witchcraft and sorcery in Europe at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. Subsequently there were fewer in most of western Europe, but in the Swedish Empire (including Finland), for instance, the greatest witch-hunts occurred as late as the second half of the seventeenth century. In some areas, such as Russia, Poland and Hungary, there were an exceptional number of trials in the eighteenth century. Also, many trials in Sweden continued into the second half of the 1700s.

Furthermore, given that witchcraft trials were different, is it credible that economic discord and crises were behind all types of witchcraft-related events? Researchers have referred to ideas of a new type of witchcraft that arose in the Middle Ages and early modern period as "diabolical witchcraft" (*Hexerei*), or "serving the devil", as opposed to traditional harmful witchcraft and magic intended to do good. Diabolical witchcraft, which refers to the intention of making a pact with the devil, was a new practice and a new crime. By contrast, beliefs about methods of harmful witchcraft and well-intentioned magic were ancient. Harmful witchcraft was an ancient crime, evidenced abundantly in trials from the Middle Ages. Magical practices deemed un-Christian were forbidden in different parts of Europe by the 1500s at the latest, although the trial methods were not in any way unified. Magical practices had possibly been punishable earlier within the Church.

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[25] Behringer himself states (*Witchcraft Persecutions*, 388, 405, note 47) that a direct connection between folk beliefs, burnings at the stake and bad harvest years cannot be made. The causal connection between these things remains unclear.

It may be that witch-hunts began in Bavaria because of bad harvest years. It is equally possible that mass witch trials spread for different reasons than those which caused the first panics. Furthermore, it could also be that in some places economic setbacks were linked to the accusations and in other places different circumstances were decisive. It is certain that most accidents and setbacks, even in bad circumstances, did not lead to witch-hunts. In addition, competition over the successful production and profits from good times might have been as severe as the battle against setbacks in bad times. It is also difficult to demonstrate that the new witchcraft theories about witches who flew to the sabbath had any connection to social discord. Nor is it clear how these accusations might have increased as a result of poverty or discord, even if this might have been the case.

Usually witch-hunt academics describe the beginning of the early modern period as a time of crisis, when impoverishment of the majority of the population, or at least its poorest section, in addition to wars, disasters, diseases and other tribulations, made life difficult. Occasionally these images are over-dramatized to the point of imprudence. As an example, the idea that poor people as a whole became poorer during the three hundred years (c. 1450–1750) of witch trials is ludicrous and explains nothing. The more positive aspects of the period are not mentioned: developments in the natural sciences and technology, widening education and the growth of literature, for example, alongside the beginning of the Enlightenment, fit badly with the witch-hunts. The persecutions were at their most intense during the lifetime of Galileo Galilei (1564–1642).

There is no explanation as to why suspicions of witchcraft grew and increased in the courts that is unanimously accepted by researchers, nor is it clear that there is a single explanation for the phenomenon, although scholars seek one to this day. Traditionally, in scholarly explanations it is the custom to identify necessary conditions (preconditions) and a sufficient condition (or a final cause) that releases a chain of events.[26] The necessary conditions (preconditions) for the rise of the witch-hunts might be general social, political or ideological ones. They could involve changes in clerical thought, judicial practices or social discord. The sufficient condition (final reason), which sets in motion the accusations and leads to

[26] See Wesley C. Salmon, *Causality and Explanation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 34, 147–148. For a less academic treatment, see Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996/1995), 149.

judicial proceedings, may be regarded as the decisive factor, but what was it?

Originally it was thought that the main factors that caused the disputes were economic. However, once the judicial authorities felt it possible to institute proceedings for witchcraft and the pattern of witchcraft trials had been created, any factor could give rise to an individual case. Witchcraft was a vaguely defined crime, which could arise simply on the basis of an imagined event. Since it was necessary to speak of injury or crime in court—otherwise the courts would not be convened—the grounds for making the accusation might have no relation to the reason for the indictment. This point, it seems to me, has been overlooked in research. Several scholars[27] have noted that when someone obtained a reason to suspect someone of being a witch, frequently he or she already had the suspect in mind. However, it is difficult to generalize about personal motives in scholarly explanations. Scholars tend to emphasize social, ideological or political phenomena or structures as though the actors automatically do the deeds they set in motion. However, emphasis on the social structures easily leads to an underestimation of an individual's personal motives and decisions. Interestingly, the terror campaigns of Nazi Germany and the terror in the Soviet Union before the Second World War have often been explained by the personal drive of the dictators. Witch-hunts, on the other hand, are mostly seen as a phenomenon that originated from social and intellectual factors without connection to individuals' personal motives.[28]

Although it might be thought that rational considerations guide people's actions, it remains a problem that what appears sensible to one person seems quite senseless to another. Worse still, the reasons a person gives for his actions may not necessarily be true, and it is clear that people do not always understand their own motives. How, then, should we research people's actions and the thoughts, desires and beliefs that guide them? This problem is not, of course, confined to research into the witch-hunts, although the explanation of deeds that appear absurd is especially challenging. Ultimately, we are left with a question: Can the methods of historical research alone provide sufficient explanation?

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[27] Among others: Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 652.

[28] On this issue, see Marko Nenonen, "Who Bears the Guilt for the Persecution of Witches?" *Studia Neophilologica* (2012), http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/snec. The article can also be found in print form in *Studia Neophilologica* 84, supplement 1 (2012).

The Western European Paradigm of Witch-Hunt Research

The gender and social status of the accused are not the only matters about which mistaken generalities have been corrected in recent research. It appears that in at least two other matters the impact of incorrect understanding has been greater still. It also seems that mistaken generalizations based on these two things have led to mistaken conclusions about matters related to gender and social status.

After the witch-hunts, historians concentrated almost entirely on the largest and most visible mass trials until the end of the twentieth century. Sources on the mass trials were easier to come by, as these exceptional trials attracted attention when they occurred, allowing the authorities to amass countless reports in the archives. In the modern era, mass trials therefore seemed more important than the individual cases, which appeared in court records here and there, but were difficult for scholars to track down. Hugh Redwald Trevor-Roper stated directly that ancient witchcraft and magical practices were a peripheral phenomenon compared to those that appeared in the witchcraft theories and the mass panics. Trevor-Roper did not believe that everyday magic and superstitions had any significance for the general pattern of the witch trials or the explanation for them. He wrote that he was not interested in "mere witch-beliefs" or "those elementary village credulities which anthropologists discover in all times and at all places". He wanted to research

> (…) the inflammation of those beliefs, the incorporation of them, by educated men, into a bizarre but coherent intellectual system which, at certain socially determined times, gave to otherwise unorganized peasant credulity a centrally directed, officially blessed persecuting force.[29]

Nevertheless, Trevor-Roper admitted that commonplace magic and superstition "can be sympathetically studied by those who believe that every illusion, provided it is entertained by the lower classes, is innocent and worthy of respect".[30]

Until the end of the last century it was believed that witchcraft accusations brought in accordance with the new theories were a clear majority

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[29] Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze*, 9.

[30] Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze*, 9. Trevor-Roper's tone is arrogant and derisive. In this phrase the thinking of the scholars who wanted to study everyday magic was identified with peasant superstition and gullibility. Trevor-Roper's mode of thought may have been quite normal in "Oxbridge" circles.

among witchcraft and sorcery trials. Later on, however, suspicion arose that even in western Europe, where the largest mass trials took place, more often than not witches, i.e. people accused in witchcraft and sorcery trials, did not fly, had not attended witches' sabbaths and did not even resemble witches as they were represented in learned witch theories.[31] Nevertheless, the first scholarly works that came out against the stereotypes of western European witches came from areas considered peripheral and were not thought of as representative. In the era of the witch-hunts, jurists and theologians, and very likely others too, were more interested in diabolical witchcraft than popular and everyday superstition, which many of the learned considered ridiculous even then.

Although the limitations of the view were occasionally noted, such observations remained without influence. With considerable foresight, Midelfort (1972) judged that "far more individual witch-trials were recorded than mass witch-trials, even during the period of the great witch-hunts". He added that although the great mass trials had ended, individual and local witch trials continued after the mid-1700s.[32] However, Midelfort had not yet come round to the conclusion that trials which began because of traditional witchcraft or magical practices might have been more common than mass trials brought about by diabolical witchcraft. In his latest works Midelfort nevertheless gives backing to the view that the significance of mass trials and new witch theories in witch trials had been greatly exaggerated.[33]

That the new witchcraft theories were less important than thought earlier is the third great change in witch-hunt research, besides the collapse of the generalities concerning social status and gender. When other adjustments that have been made to the general picture of the witch-hunts[34]

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[31] For more on the limitations of the western European paradigm in witch-hunt research, see Marko Nenonen, "Witch-Hunt Historiography from the 18th Century Encyclopaedias to the Present Research. A New Geography," in *Themes in European History*, eds. M. Aradas and N. C. J. Pappas (Athens: Athens Institute for Education and Research, 2005), 299–313; Marko Nenonen, "Witch Hunts in Europe: A New Geography," *ARV—Nordic Yearbook of Folklore* (2006): 165–186. For the discussion engendered by this: H. C. Erik Midelfort, "Witch Craze? Beyond the Legends of Panic," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 6, No. 1 (2011): 11–33 and Valerie A. Kivelson, "Lethal Convictions. The Power of a Satanic Paradigm in Russian and European Witch Trials," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 6, No. 1 (2011): 34–61.

[32] Midelfort, *Witch Hunting*, 8–9, 71.

[33] Midelfort, "Witch Craze?," 16, 21, 26–27, 28. Compare also Kivelson, "Lethal Convictions," esp. 35–38 and 59–61.

[34] For the modern general picture of the witch-hunts, see e.g. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark, eds., *The Athlone History of Witchcraft and Magic in Europe 1–6* (London: The Athlone Press, 1999–2002); Richard M. Golden, ed., *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The*

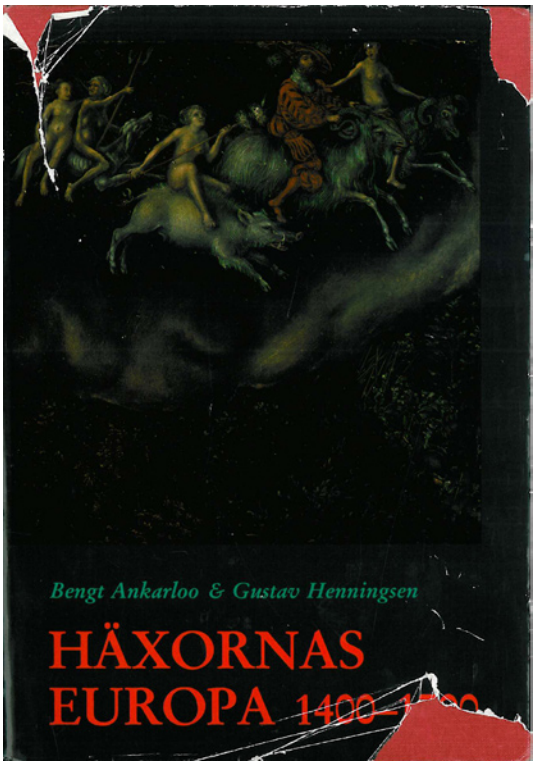

Figure 2.3. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, *Häxornas Europa 1400–1700*. (Lund: Institutet för rättshistorisk forskning grundat av Gustav och Carin Olin 1987). Cover illustration: Lucas Granach S., *The Wild Hunt*.

are added to these three, the understanding of the European witch-hunts has changed so much that it is as if a new historical phenomenon has been uncovered. The difference between the new general picture and the earlier one is sufficiently huge to support the fact that until now scholars have been attempting to explain a phenomenon that never existed. Torture did not exclusively dominate judicial practice, although it was used harshly from time to time. Most of the accused were acquitted. As the number of accused and convicted is now assessed as being far lower than before, it can be safely concluded that compared to many of the horrors of history—such as religious wars or the slave trade—the collective

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Western Tradition I–IV (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006). For shorter summaries: Levack, *The Witch-Hunt* and Wolfgang Behringer, *Witches and Witch-Hunts. A Global History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004).

phenomenon known as the European witch-hunts was relatively limited in impact. Estimates of the number of accused have dropped from the millions to as low as 200,000 or lower (in the years 1450–1750). Far fewer people were accused of witchcraft or sorcery than of many other severe crimes.

Stereotypes of female witches, an emphasis on the poverty of the accused, a focus on stories of the witches' sabbath and mass trials in western Europe have all belonged to the self-evident truths of witch-hunt research. Here I will refer to this approach as the western European paradigm of witch-hunt historiography. How was it born and why did such concepts survive for so long without becoming the targets of thorough investigation? In my opinion the explanation may be found in a fourth crude generalization, which provides the basis for the other incorrect understandings. It seems to me that the geographical emphasis on western Europe led to the creation of persuasive and captivating, albeit false, stereotypes.

Towards the close of the twentieth century the geographical spread of witch-hunt research increased rapidly[35] and the western European paradigm began to fall apart. From the geographical point of view the change turned the general picture on its head. Witch trials linked to the worship of the devil, which had been considered typical witch-hunt procedures in western Europe, were not the most common witch or sorcery trials even in that area. The reverse also applied: trials connected with the practice of traditional harmful witchcraft and magic, which had earlier been thought of as typical only in peripheral regions, were typical also in those west European areas where mass trials resulting from a belief in the witches' sabbath had occurred most often.[36]

The almost exclusive domination of the western European paradigm in witch-hunt historiography requires explanation. The twentieth-century political division between the socialist block and the west European market economy region does not explain it: even the classic works

[35] The geographical spread of witch-hunt research can be seen by looking at requests to libraries or by comparing older and newer bibliographies in works on the subject. For the former, see, among others, "The Witchcraft Bibliography Project" (www.witchcraftbib.co.uk) and "Arbeitskreis interdisziplinäre Hexenforschung," (http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/IfGL/akih/akih.htm), which also included literature. Both URLs accessed 16.6.2011. For a comparison of bibliographies, see, for example, Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Newnes Books, 1984). Compare also Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, eds., *Early Modern European Witchcraft. Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), in which, however, the Finnish figures are wrong.

[36] On this conclusion, see Nenonen, "Witch-Hunt Historiography". See also note 31 above.

on the witch-hunts of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gave little attention to regions outside western Europe. The western European paradigm covered the mass trials in northern Spain and, to some extent, modern-day Italy north of Rome. Moreover, there were early works about English cases—in the late twentieth century, England was among the first areas outside continental Europe where new modern research appeared. Furthermore, the mass persecutions in Sweden were known of in the period immediately following the hunts and thus it is understandable that a modern treatise about them appeared at the head of modern witch-hunt studies. It is still clear that the political frontier between the market economy countries and the socialist countries after the Second World War further consolidated the basic position of western European witch-hunt research, as, for example, can be seen from following the stages of research on Russia and Hungary.[37]

I would suggest that the western European paradigm of witch-hunt historiography originates from the exclusive focus on the core areas of Christian Europe. Geographically, this corresponds to the central and most important regions of Catholic Europe before the Reformation. These areas also constituted the richest and economically as well as culturally most advanced part of Europe—at least according to many western European writers—and most of the scientists and scholars worked there. Diabolical witchcraft theories gained the strongest hold in these areas which were, or had once been, the most developed regions of the Catholic Church.[38] Only the Catholic Church made witches heretics, although the Protestants subsequently adopted the new theories as well. Trials for diabolical witchcraft occurred in other European areas too, but they were rarer. In most of Europe there were few or none at all.

Areas that were strongly Roman Catholic are regarded by many to be the regions in which the development of "Europe", as we know it, began. Later, these areas were somewhat vaguely named "western Europe", as in this article, a concept I will now deconstruct. In Peter Rietbergen's work, *Europe—A Cultural History* (1998), the most important areas are assessed as precisely these. In his foreword, Rietbergen makes it clear that he knows the limitations of his definition, but he defends it vigorously at various points of his work by explaining that the valuable aspects of

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[37] Zoltán Kovács, "Die Hexen in Russland", *Acta Ethnographica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, tomus 22 (1–2) (Budapest: 1973); Nenonen, "Witch-Hunt Historiography," 310–311.

[38] In Spain, Portugal and the region that is now Italy there were, however, generally fewer persecutions. For the reasons, see Levack, *The Witch-Hunt*, 237–245.

Europe's culture and civilization, as well as the most important political developments, are essentially of western European origin.[39]

Because the geography of administration rules the geography of jurisdiction and control, modern researchers do not question why more trials were conducted in the areas where the administration, among other things, was most developed. Learned people, who were concentrated in the most advanced areas, knew the importance of heretical witchcraft theories—of which many in the peripheries knew nothing. Learned men knew how to seek and develop judicial indictments according to the theory. In later centuries, witch-hunt scholars followed the example set by their predecessors, namely theologians' and inquisitors' precepts for witchcraft trials. Scholars of later generations have emphasized heretical witchcraft in the same way their predecessors did at the time of the witch trials. In addition, modern scholars have largely ignored other types of trials for witchcraft and magical practice, and also popular beliefs.

It seems clear that the western European paradigm of witch-hunt historiography is a product of the hierarchies of political and ecclesiastical geography. In Rietbergen's book, the boundary of western Europe runs from the Baltic to the Balkans, although it is often still further to the west in many of his chapters.[40] His western Europe corresponds quite closely to those German- and French-speaking areas (including Switzerland) where witch trials first became widespread and where mass trials arising from the belief in the witches' sabbath occurred. This area is the geographical western Europe of the witch-hunts. Northern Spain belongs to it but northwestern Europe, where witches were rarely met at their sabbaths, really doesn't. Interestingly, northwestern and northern Europe were the regions where many also ended up following Protestant movements.

The Catholic Church influenced the culture and spiritual life of Europeans decisively in many ways for centuries, and the importance of Christianity was not diminished significantly during the Reformation era. Possibly the opposite was true.[41] In witch-hunt studies the Christian religion had a still greater role. Emphasis on Christianity meant an

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[39] Peter Rietbergen, *Europe. A Cultural History* (London & New York: Routledge, 1998), ff. xx–xxi.

[40] Rietbergen, *Europe*, xx.

[41] For this, see, among others, Jean Delumeau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire. A New View of the Counter-Reformation* (London: Burns & Oats, 1977; originally published in French in 1971), e.g. pp. 159–161, 175–202, 225, and Robert Muchembled, *Popular Culture and Elite Culture in France 1400–1750* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985; originally published in French in 1978), 183 ff.

emphasis on heresy—learned magic was already condemned as heresy and criminalized in the Middle Ages—and it was precisely because of this that the new theories of witches who served the devil were necessary. Those who created the theories of diabolical witchcraft were Christians. The vast majority of the witch-hunt scholars who followed them had a Christian ideology or background, even if dogma was not followed in the same way as it had been centuries earlier. In all probability this has made it more difficult to step outside the Christian conceptions of witchcraft and magical practices. A critical analysis of the limitations of the Christian perspective is also needed. Furthermore, the Christian perspective has influenced our understanding of other intellectual and cultural issues as well—a very important question, but one that cannot be addressed here. So far, most scholars who have focused on the history of witchcraft and magic have been Europeans; in other words, mostly people with a Christian background. As a result, most of those who meet each other at conferences on the theme are from this background and almost all critical examination of their work has come from within a restricted milieu.

Any assessment of the extent to which witch-hunt research simply conforms to the general patterns of historical research in western Europe must be left aside here. Although the national direction of writing history has been questioned in many countries, the explanation of the part the Church and religion has played in the field of politics, social life and culture has advanced slowly, as though it is believed that the secularization, which began in the 1800s, has removed the necessity for such an analysis.

What finally sparked the change in the geographical perspective in witch-hunt historiography is yet another question that cannot be answered here. Judging from the way in which new research into the witch-hunts has spread to different countries, it must be suspected that the most important reason has been the economic integration of Europe that has occurred alongside the expansion of the European Union. It cannot be said that the geographical perspective of research has advanced in close concert with economic integration, but the link is clear when work done in the 1990s or later is compared with earlier work. This is grotesque, because it would be hoped that academia's own requirements would influence the development of scholarship rather than external factors. It is also ironic that the economic integration of Europe was founded on just those western European models and ideologies which justified the disregard of non-western European developments in witch-hunt historiography for so long.

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IMAGES AND WITCHCRAFT STUDIES: A SHORT HISTORY

Charles Zika

Our understanding and use of witchcraft images has changed dramatically over the last four decades. The two editions of the source collection edited by Alan Kors and Edward Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe 400–1700*, published almost thirty years apart, clearly exemplify some of these changes.[1] The first edition of 1972 contained seventy-two illustrations, and of these more than one-third were only very loosely related to the theme of witchcraft. Many depicted the origins, temptations and other activity of devils, their role at the last judgment and in administering the punishments of hell, and their exorcism by Christ and the saints. Of the remaining two-thirds, approximately half (twenty-three) were illustrations from three witchcraft treatises: Francesco Maria Guazzo's *A Compendium of Witches* of 1608 (fifteen), Olaus Magnus' *History of the Northern Peoples* of 1555 (four) and Ulrich Molitor's *On Female Witches and Fortune-tellers* of 1489–1500 (four).[2] As the introduction to the later 2001 edition openly admitted, this was a very limited image base, one based on the very limited investigation by art historians and others of the visual lexicon of magic, sorcery and witchcraft. The earlier edition of Kors and Peters' collection was alert to the importance of media in the development of this lexicon, arguing that a basic pictorial vocabulary was created in the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, and developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries largely through the greater circulation, synthesis, standardization and repetition of images facilitated by the newer media of woodcuts and

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[1] Alan C. Kors and Edward Peters, eds., *Witchcraft in Europe, 1100–1700: a documentary history* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), 17–21; 2nd ed., (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 30–40.

[2] Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum* (Milan: 1608), which Kors and Peters misdate 1610 (in 1972 & 2001, 31); Olaus Magnus, *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, (Rome: 1555); Ulrich Molitor, *On Female Witches and Fortune-tellers* (1489–1500). Molitor's work was titled *De Laniis* [or *Lamiis*] *Phytonicis* [or *Pythonicis*] *Mulieribus* in the sixteen Latin editions that appeared before 1500. There is an urgent need of a detailed and comprehensive study of these different editions. For an informative and detailed study, but one which largely ignores the variations in the different editions, see Anita Komary, "Text und Illustration. Ulricus Molitoris 'De laniis et phitonicis mulieribus.' Die Verfestigung und Verbreitung der Vorstellungen vom Hexereidelikt in Bildern um 1500" (Diplomarbeit, Universität Wien, 2000).

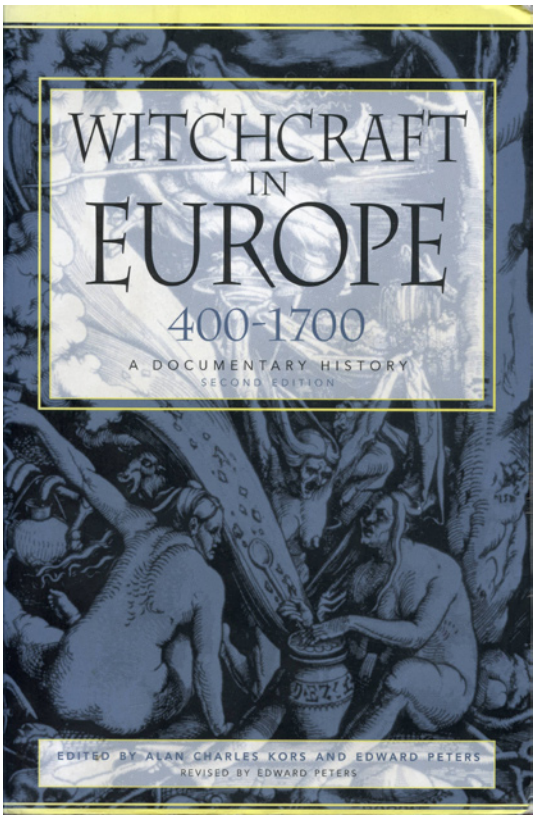

Figure 3.1. Alan C. Kors and Edward Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe 400–1700: A documentary History*, 2nd edition (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001). Cover illustration: Hans Baldung Grien, A group of female witches, woodcut, 1510.

engravings.[3] It limited an understanding of that development, however, in a number of fundamental ways. Firstly, it ignored the novelty and new visual vocabulary used to create images of witchcraft around the turn of the sixteenth century. Secondly, it failed to draw attention to any particular artist who played a critical role in that development, having limited the choice of images fairly much to woodcut illustrations in the works cited above. Thirdly, it failed to identify any development in this imagery over the period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

[3] Kors and Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe*, 1972, 18–19.

As Kors and Peters argued in the introduction to their 2001 edition, developments in approaches to the visual imagery of the witch run parallel to those in archival and literary studies from the early 1970s. The two most critical general changes were a much sharper chronological focus on witchcraft as a phenomenon of the early modern rather than medieval period, stretching from the 1430s through to the eighteenth century, and the much greater attention given to variations in witchcraft beliefs and witchcraft prosecutions across time and place. So while Kors and Peters reduced the original seventy-two illustrations to forty-one in the later edition, they excised almost all the images created before the fifteenth century, they introduced a much more representative range of images from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries with respect to media, geography and chronology,[4] they acknowledged the critical role of particular artists such as Hans Baldung Grien, and they began to outline a development of this imagery from the sixteenth century with respect to media and usage, artistic virtuosity and impact, as well as specific themes such as eroticism, scepticism and satire. And although repeating the widely held claim of Gregory the Great that visual images were "the scriptures of the unlettered" and therefore "the pictorial representation of doctrinal truths", the later edition referred to pictorial traditions as a valid third type of source "alongside archival and literary textual sources", a form of media to be considered alongside preaching.[5] Between the 1970s and the first decade of the twenty-first century there have been significant changes and a growing sophistication in the way both historians and art historians analyze, conceptualize and evaluate visual images, even if after three to four decades this area of research remains in its infancy and is only slowly making an impact on the broader field of witchcraft research.

The Early Twentieth Century: Decorative Illustration and Historical Documentation

Prior to the 1970s there were few works that paid any detailed attention to the development of an iconography of witchcraft or to the role that visual imagery might have played in the history of the European witch-hunt.

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[4] There is only one image from the thirteenth century (Theophilus, from a French psalter), one from the nineteenth (a painting of a witch by Anton Wierz) and one from the twentieth (a woodcut illustration by John Buckland-Wright).

[5] Kors and Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe*, 1972, 18–19; 2001, 32, 34.

From the turn of the twentieth century, however, there were attempts to collect images pertaining to demonology, magic and witchcraft. This was the period of preeminent interest in early prints and book illustration and it gave birth to those vast cataloguing projects of art historians such as Wilhelm Ludwig Schreiber and Max Lehrs, as well as the work of Max Geisberg and Paul Heitz.[6] So when in the first decade of the twentieth century the journalist and writer Max Bauer set about revising the large history of witch trials published by Wilhelm Gottlieb Soldan and Heinrich Heppe in 1843, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse*, he not only drew on the recent path-breaking works of Joseph Hansen, Sigmund von Riezler, Janssen-Pastor and Nikolaus Paulus, he also inserted many illustrations.[7] With the assistance of art museums in Berlin, Bamberg and Zurich, as well as of booksellers in Bonn and Berlin,[8] and possibly the work of cultural historians such as Eduard Fuchs,[9] Bauer illustrated his revised

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[6] Wilhelm Ludwig Schreiber, *Manuel de l'amateur de la gravure sur bois et sur métal au XV^e^ siècle*, 8 vols in 9 (Berlin and Leipzig: Librairie Albert Cohn, 1891–1911); Max Lehrs, *Geschichte und kritischer Katalog des deutschen, niederländischen und französischen Kupferstichs im XV. Jahrhundert*, 9 vols (Vienna: Gesellschaft für vervielfältigende Kunst, 1908–1938); Max Geisberg, *Die Anfänge des Kupferstichs und der Meister E.S.* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1909); Paul Heitz, *Einblattdrucke des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 100 vol. (Strasbourg: Heitz, 1899–1942).

[7] Wilhelm Gottlieb Soldan, *Geschichte der Hexenprozess*, ed. Max Bauer, 2 vol. (Hanau am Main: Müller und Kiepenheuer, 1972; reprint of 3rd ed., Munich: Müller, 1912), xv. The first revised edition edited by Bauer was published in Munich by Müller in 1911. The cited works, published after the appearance of Heinrich Heppe's revision of Soldan in 1880 and before Bauer's own 1911 revision, are: Joseph Hansen, *Zauberwahn, Inquisition, und Hexenprozess im Mittelalter und die Entstehung der grossen Hexenverfolgung* (Aalen: Scientia, 1983; reprint of 1st ed., Munich: Oldenbourg, 1900) and Hansen, *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns und der Hexenverfolgung im Mittelalter* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1963; reprint of 1st ed., Bonn: Georgi, 1901); Sigmund von Riezler, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse in Bayern: im Lichte der allgemeinen Entwicklung dargestellt* (Stuttgart: Magnus, 1983; reprint of 1st ed., Stuttgart: Cotta, 1896); Nikolaus Paulus, *Hexenwahn und Hexenprozess: vornehmlich im 16. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1910); Ludwig von Pastor, ed., *Erläuterungen und Ergänzungen zu Janssens Geschichte des deutschen Volkes*, 9 vols (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1898–1913). The original Janssen, published in 8 vols between 1876 and 1894, was later translated into English: Johannes Janssen, *History of the German people at the close of the middle ages*, 17 vols (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trübner, 1896–1928). For Soldan, Hansen, Riezler and other early students of witchcraft, see Christa Tuczay, "The nineteenth century: medievalism and witchcraft," in *Palgrave Advances in Witchcraft Historiography*, eds. Jonathan Barry and Owen Davies (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2007), 52–68, at 56–59; Wolfgang Behringer, "Zur Geschichte der Hexenforschung," in *Hexen und Hexenverfolgung im deutschen Südwesten. Aufsatzband*, ed. Sönke Lorenz (Ostfildern: Cantz, 1994), 93–146.

[8] Soldan, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse*, xvi.

[9] Eduard Fuchs, *Illustrierte Sittengeschichte vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, 3 vols (Munich: Albert Langen, 1909–1912). The three volumes of this work by the cultural historian and political activist Fuchs included over 450 illustrations; in the introduction (vol. 1,

edition of Soldan-Heppe's work with a rich collection of more than 150 prints and paintings depicting witchcraft and related subjects.[10] Yet these images remained little more than illustrations, decorative objects meant to enliven and complement the narrative text. Artist and medium were frequently ignored or confused, the source and location of paintings and prints omitted, and the relationship between text and image completely neglected.

It was not until 1929 that the first study appeared that attempted to describe and analyze the pictorial representation of sorcery and witchcraft. This was a work by the French historian of the occult, Émile Grillot de Givry, *Le Musée des sorciers, mages et alchimistes*.[11] According to Grillot de Givry's introduction, he regarded the book as a "collection of the iconography of occultism". It was divided into three parts: sorcerers, magicians, alchemists; the first part on sorcery and witchcraft constituted more than half the book's text, and a little under one half of its 376 illustrations. These illustrations were listed systematically, and documented with reference to artist, date, media, location and edition where appropriate. The author saw his task as complementing the anthology of occultism he had published in 1922, producing a pictorial collection that "illuminates the most abstruse doctrines with a commentary of instant lucidity and affords disturbing proof of so many unbelievable tales."[12] The images were clearly

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6–12) Fuchs stresses the importance of visual images as historical sources. He also includes a chapter on witchcraft images entitled "Kranke Sinnlichkeit" (vol. 1, 487–500). For Bauer and his interest in cultural history and *Sittengeschichte*, see Robert Zagolla, "Bauer, Max," in *Lexikon zur Geschichte der Hexenverfolgung*, eds. Gudrun Gersmann, Katrin Moeller and Jürgen-Michael Schmidt, in: historicum.net, URL: http://www.historicum.net/no_cache/persistent/artikel/4010/ (28 October 2009).

[10] Soldan, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse*, xvi. Approximately sixty of the illustrations depict scenes of witches and witchcraft, another thirty are portraits of various individuals, while most of the rest feature subjects such as the activities of demons, exorcism, judicial punishment and execution, and the deadly sins and vices. Joseph Hansen, *Zauberwahn*, 526, referred to seven late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century witchcraft images; a number of these were then reproduced in Hansen, *Quellen*, 101, 185, 244, 298. A similar group (with the addition of Michael Herr's seventeenth-century depiction of the sabbath) had been mentioned by von Riezler, *Geschichte*, 129–130.

[11] Émile Grillot de Givry, *Le Musée des sorciers, mages et alchimistes* (Paris: Librairie de France, 1929). An English translation by J. Courtenay Locke, first published in Boston and London in 1931, has been republished several times under different titles. Grillot de Givry published translations of Savanorola, Thomas Aquinas, Guillaume Postel, the complete works of Paracelsus, the Hieroglyphic Monad of John Dee, as well as studies on Joan of Arc, Lourdes, a thirteenth-century troubadour, the engraver and book designer Louis Jou, and the occult anthology cited below.

[12] Grillot de Givry, *Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy*, trans. J. Courtenay Locke (New York: Dover, 1971), 5; Grillot de Givry, *Anthologie de l'occultisme, ou les meilleures pages des*

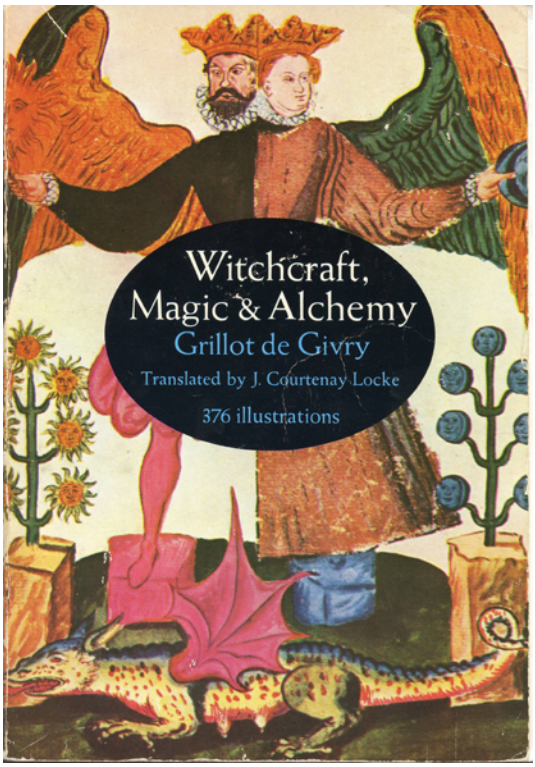

Figure 3.2. Grillot de Givry, *Witchcraft, Magic & Alchemy*, trans. J. Courtenay Locke (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1971). Cover illustration: *The Hermetic Androgyne*, colored miniature from a late seventeenth-century German manuscript *Dritter Pitagorischer Sinodas von der verborgenen Weisheit*.

an outgrowth of his study of occult writings in the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, and he devoted considerable energy to some of these manuscripts in his account of different magical books, the recipes for love magic, and the use of a necromantic bell. Although a Catholic, Grillot de Givry was also a Rosicrucian and occultist, and had a broad interest in both pre-Christian and Christian culture.[13] His book

auteurs qui se sont illustrés dans les sciences hermétiques, depuis les temps anciens jusqu'à nos jours (Paris: Éditions de la Sirène, 1922).

[13] Charles Sen, "Introduction to the Causeway Edition," in *The Illustrated Anthology of Sorcery, Magic and Alchemy*, by Grillot de Givry, trans. J. Courtenay Locke (New York: Causeway, 1973), 3–4; Michel Leiris, "À Propos du Musée des Sorciers," *Documents* 2 (1929): 109–116, at 111; Sigrid Schade, *Schadenzauber und die Magie des Körpers. Hexenbilder der frühen Neuzeit* (Worms: Werner, 1983), 19.

ranges across the work of many European artists, with emphasis on the engravings of David Teniers, as well as the woodcuts used to illustrate the works of Guazzo and Molitor, Jan Ziarnko's *Sabbath* in the *Tableau de l'Inconstance* of Pierre de Lancre, and the *'t Afgerukt Mom-Aansight der Tooverye* of Abraham Palingh.

Grillot de Givry's useful and for the most part carefully documented collection of images, even if some of his attributions have not survived modern scrutiny, is severely limited by the lack of any kind of critical and detailed analysis of his images. The images are organized according to the basic characteristics of sorcery, witchcraft and magic—that is, different kinds of magic and sorcery, such as chiromancy, divination and necromancy, and elements of witchcraft such as invocation, possession and the sabbath. The book presents the images mimetically, as though they are keys to reconstructing a reality which is evident in both text and image, an age-old church under the direction of Satan whose priests and priestesses were sorcerers and witches. So even if Grillot de Givry is aware that Dürer's *Four Witches* needs to be related to contemporary creations of the same subject by Israel van Meckenem and Wenceslaus of Olmütz, he is primarily interested in using the engraving to reconstruct what happened at witches' assemblies.[14] Likewise, the four scenes of witchcraft created by Hans Baldung Grien and his copiers between 1514 and 1516 and reproduced in this study are presented as different stages in the ritual preparation of witches for the sabbath.[15] For Grillot de Givry shares in the not uncommon Romantic notion that witchcraft and the sabbath were survivals from antiquity. He also does not recognize the obviously satirical function of some of these images, such as those accompanying Laurent Bordelon's 1711 work concerning a Monsieur Oufle, arguing that the form of dance depicted in the sabbath illustration to Bordelon's work is "the real diabolical dance, the ancient *tripudium* of the ancients", rather than that depicted in the woodcuts of Guazzo's *Compendium Maleficarum*.[16]

While Grillot de Givry's Romantic evaluation of witchcraft beliefs and practices was totally abandoned by the new witchcraft research of the late 1960s and 1970s, his mimetic approach to witchcraft images as a source of fundamental information about the real or imagined activities

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[14] Grillot de Givry, *Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy*, 55.

[15] Grillot de Givry, *Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy*, 55–59. The three drawings are incorrectly described as prints, and contemporary scholarship only considers two to be by Baldung.

[16] Grillot de Givry, *Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy*, 78, 82–83. The Crépy Sabbath is a parody of Ziarnko's etching of a century earlier.

of witches has persisted for much longer. Historians and also art historians have until very recently tended to read social realities directly from artworks, with little attention paid to the concerns and the oeuvre of the artists involved, the media employed, the possible audience, dating and circulation. This has not been assisted by the lack of detailed study of the technical aspect of these works, their creators and artistic context, and, in the case of prints used in book illustration, a study of the printers, editions and readership. Historians have tended simply to reproduce images in the manner of Grillot de Givry and Max Bauer early in the twentieth century.[17] While historians are well trained to account for differences in genre when dealing with theological, legal or literary treatises, and newssheets or governmental decrees, the same precision and consideration has not marked their use of pictorial sources. Images are frequently included in studies without any real commentary, and at best they are taken as illustrations of claims or descriptions found in witchcraft treatises or trial evidence. Seldom are they considered as the product of artistic invention and imagination within a particular social, cultural and intellectual context.

Early Art Historical and Cultural Analysis in the 1970s and 1980s

The first focused consideration of the role of visual images in the history of European witchcraft came with the 1973 catalogue to an exhibition mounted at the Bibliothèque Nationale by Maxime Préaud, a curator in the Department of Prints.[18] Préaud's exhibition, the first dedicated to the subject of witchcraft—primarily prints, but also some drawings, paintings and manuscript illuminations—signified a major breakthrough in the approach to such images. While the objects were grouped together thematically, and Préaud saw magic as a universal phenomenon common to all times and places, he nevertheless injected a clear historical dimension into his account of the beliefs and influences that combined to create the representations of the fifteenth and following centuries in response to

[17] An early and useful collection of hundreds of images is found in Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown, 1959). Robbins' captions are for the most part accurate, but there is no discussion of the images in his work. Robbins' notes and original photographs were deposited in the Cornell University Library.

[18] Maxime Préaud, *Les Sorcières* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1973).

the theorization and prosecution of heresy and the crime of witchcraft.[19] Each object is carefully catalogued and described with respect to artist, medium, size and content, and any potential relationship to other texts and images. Most importantly, too, Préaud attempts to situate individual witchcraft images not simply within visual traditions of witchcraft or even magic, but also within a broader representational field of what might be called visual discourse. In this way, the murderous practices of witches at the sabbath are grouped with representations of famine and infanticide, their dances with different types of bacchanal. There is both visual focus and coherence, the relationship to witchcraft treatises and trials, as well as the need to situate these artistic constructs within a range of other visual traditions. But the work remains a catalogue, and can only gesture in different methodological directions rather than attempt any systematic analysis.[20]

From the 1980s witchcraft images slowly came to be considered a topic worthy of scholarly study within what was by that time the newly burgeoning field of witchcraft studies. The German art historian, Sigrid Schade, was the first scholar to write a major synthesis of witchcraft imagery in her Tübingen dissertation published in 1983, although her study was largely confined to the period of the later fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth century.[21] Schade's book focuses on the witchcraft images of such artists as Albrecht Altdorfer, Albrecht Dürer, Lucas Cranach and especially Hans Baldung Grien, and demonstrates how these artists transformed traditional notions of magic by locating the source of this magic in the eroticism of the female body. She argues that their work is closely allied to that of contemporary witchcraft treatises and contributes to the mass of witch persecutions in the early modern period. The parallel lies in the fears generated about the seductive power of women through the masculinist projections of witch figures, who represent a nature that had to be overcome in the establishment of a new patriarchal rationalist order.[22]

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[19] On this point I disagree with Sigrid Schade (*Schadenzauber*, 19, 130, n. 54), who groups Préaud with those primarily interested in the link between witchcraft belief and the thought of primitive cultures, such as Grillot de Givry and Kurt Seligmann.

[20] Préaud's creative reading of individual images can be observed in Maxime Préaud, "La sorcière de Noël," *Hamsa* 7, special issue: *L'ésotérisme d'Albrecht Dürer* (1977): 47–51; Maxime Préaud, "Saturne, Satan, Wotan et Saint Antoine ermite," in *Alchimie mystique et traditions populaires*, *Cahiers de Fontenay* 33, ed. Maxime Préaud (Lyon: Éditions de l'ENS, 1983), 81–102.

[21] Schade, *Schadenzauber*.

[22] See also Schade's exploration of how Baldung plays with the voyeuristic gaze in creating his erotic witch images, in Schade, "Zur Genese des voyeuristischen Blicks. Das

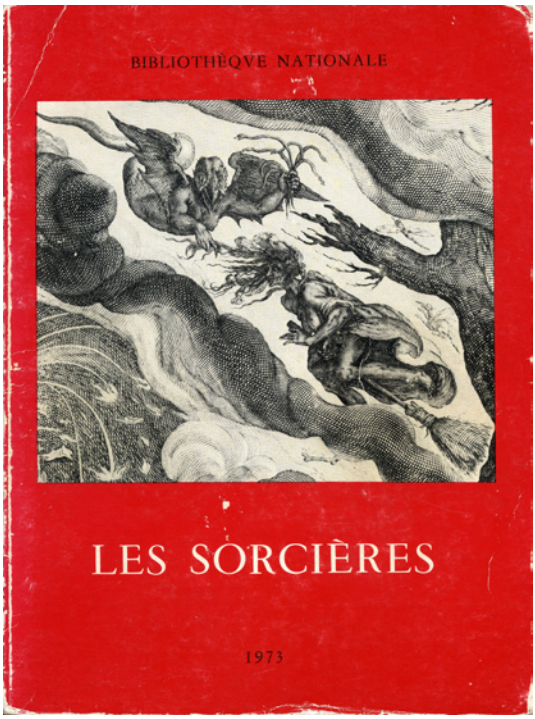

Figure 3.3. Bibliothèque nationale, *Les sorcières*, ed. Maxime Préaud (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1973). Cover illustration: Jacques de Gheyn II, *Preparations for a Witches' Sabbath*, engraving, 1610.

Differentiating her own approach sharply from an earlier historiography that associated witchcraft with the medieval, and therefore saw it as an anachronistic survivor of the medieval at the time of Renaissance and Reformation, Schade's feminist position and analysis is heavily premised on the notion of a fundamental structural transformation and paradigm shift in the sixteenth century drawn from social theorists such as Jürgen Habermas, Norbert Elias and Michel Foucault. Her iconographical analyses are consequently directed towards demonstrating the development and strategic purpose of this new cultural paradigm; in this way she is able to carve out a new social and cultural meaning for witchcraft images.

Erotische in den Hexenbildern Hans Baldung Grien," in *Frauen, Kunst, Geschichte: zur Korrektur des herrschenden Blicks*, eds. Cordula Bischoff et al. (Giessen: Anabas, 1984), 98–110.

A related aim and also accomplishment of Schade's study was to free images from an essentially subordinate function of illustrating literary texts or testifying to the beliefs those texts described. While Schade shows how images are strongly linked to witchcraft treatises, and more so those whose context in treatises demands they be understood as illustrative, she also demonstrates how their power and meaning depends on the associations created with respect to various themes, such as the meaning of nature, representations of the wild horde, discourse concerning melancholy and lust, and most especially with male fears concerning the power of the female body. Visual representations of witchcraft therefore constitute a direct and particular response to the structural changes Schade identifies and are not necessarily created in direct response to contemporary literary or judicial accounts of witchcraft. Schade's work represents a major step forward in identifying many of the key meanings associated with witchcraft in the work of the first generation of artists to focus on this subject, and her work demonstrates how a great number of anonymous and sometimes aesthetically quite crude images can be understood with reference to the work of well-known artists. There is often a mutual interaction and influence between these simple prints in witch treatises, such as between the illustrations in the many incunabula editions of Ulrich Molitor's treatise, and the work of established artists like Baldung, resulting in modifications in both. Schade's work certainly laid the basis for a more rigorous and sustained study, not only of the witchcraft motifs in the work of these early sixteenth-century artists, but also of the iconography they developed and the manner in which it was deployed, modified, transformed or abandoned by artists in the sixteenth and later centuries.

The Fascination with Hans Baldung Grien—from the 1960s to the 1980s

At the time Schade was writing her dissertation, the central artist in her study, Hans Baldung Grien,[23] together with his drawings, prints and single painting on the subject of witchcraft, was beginning to receive unprecedented attention. Through to the early twentieth century, Baldung had generally been considered as nothing more than a pupil of Albrecht Dürer without much artistic originality. Gabriel von Térey had published a

[23] It is sometimes forgotten that "Grien" was Baldung's nickname and simply appended to his name.

collection of Baldung's drawings in the late nineteenth century, and then Carl Koch a fuller and critical edition in 1941.[24] Some recognition of Baldung's artistic achievement followed the exhibition and large catalogue of paintings, drawings, prints and stained glass designs by Baldung and his copyists held in Karlsruhe in 1959.[25] But it was really only in the later 1970s and 1980s that the quality of Baldung's work and his status as one of the leading artists of the early sixteenth century was acknowledged. In 1978 a reappraisal of Baldung's work was attempted through an exhibition and conference held at the Kunstmuseum in Basel; in the same year Matthias Mende produced the first monograph on Baldung's complete graphic oeuvre, which included the publication of all his prints.[26] This was complemented with a book of the same year by Marianne Bernhard, which included a large selection of Baldung's graphic works, together with virtually all his drawings.[27] Gert von der Osten followed with a full catalogue of Baldung's painted oeuvre in 1983.[28] For an Anglophone readership, however, the critical publication was the large catalogue to the exhibition of Baldung's prints and drawings held in 1981 at the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. and at the Yale University Art Gallery.[29] As the editors pointed out in the foreword and introduction, the main purpose of the exhibition was to introduce to an American audience "one of the least known but most creative artists of the early sixteenth century".[30]

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[24] Gabriel von Térey, *Die Handzeichnungen des Hans Baldung gen. Grien*, vol. 1 (Strasbourg: Heitz, 1894); Carl Koch, *Die Zeichnungen Hans Baldung Griens* (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1941).

[25] Jan Lauts, ed., *Hans Baldung Grien: Ausstellung unter dem Protektorat des I.C.O.M., 4 Juli–27 September 1959*, exhibition catalogue, Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (Karlsruhe: 1959).

[26] "Probleme der Baldung Forschung: Kolloquium im Kunstmuseum Basel, 30. Juni 1978," *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 35 (1978): 205–275; Matthias Mende, *Hans Baldung Grien: das graphische Werk. Vollständiger Bildkatalog der Einzelholzchnitte, Buchillustrationen und Kupferstiche* (Unterschneidheim: Alfons Uhl, 1978). On pages 25–38 Mende includes a very useful literature review and bibliography of work completed between 1959 and 1978. For this general development, also see Tilman Falk, "La ricerca attuale sull'opera di Baldung Grien; the present research on the works of Baldung Grien," *Print Collector* 52 (1981): 32–39.

[27] Marianne Bernhard, *Hans Baldung Grien: Handzeichnungen, Druckgraphik* (Munich: Südwest, 1978).

[28] Gert von der Osten, *Hans Baldung Grien: Gemälde und Dokumente* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1983).

[29] James H. Marrow and Alan Shestack, eds., *Hans Baldung Grien, prints & drawings*, exhibition catalogue, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. & Yale University Gallery (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1981).

[30] Marrow and Shestack, *Hans Baldung Grien*, vii.

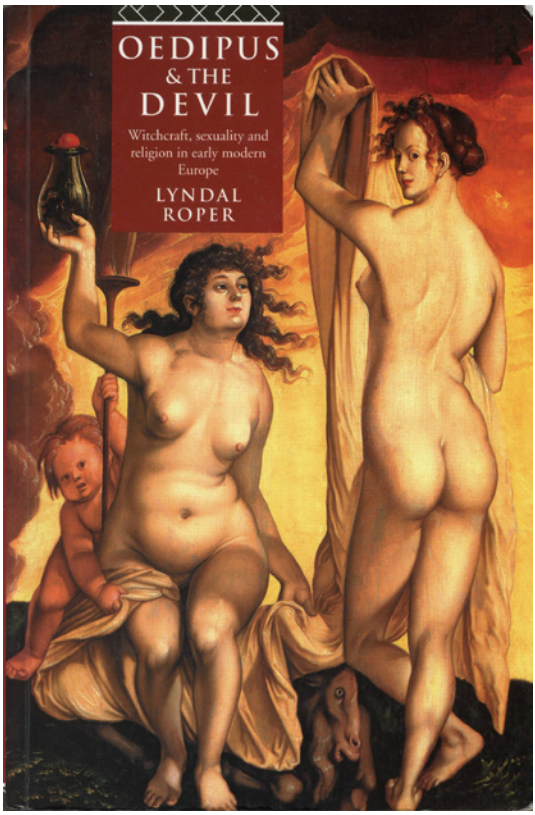

Figure 3.4. Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus & the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994). Cover illustration: Hans Baldung Grien, *The Weather Witches*, panel painting, 1523, Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt am Main.

The catalogue emphasized Baldung's "unprecedented interpretations", his inventiveness and power as a draughtsman, and his "extraordinarily fertile imagination". One aspect of this inventiveness was "his vision of women as predatory, powerful and erotic", elaborated by Charles Talbot in one of the three essays preceding the catalogue proper, "Baldung and the Female Nude".[31] And the most remarkable form that fear of such women took, argues Talbot, was expressed through the imagery of witchcraft.

[31] Marrow and Shestack, *Hans Baldung Grien*, viii, 4, 19–37, esp. 31–33.

Revived interest in Baldung as one of the most creative artistic imaginations of the sixteenth century assured that close attention would soon be given to the witchcraft images which distinguished his work from that of most other artists. Charles Talbot and Sigrid Schade had already drawn on the only monograph dedicated to Baldung's witchcraft images, published two decades earlier by the then Professor of Art History at Heidelberg, Gustav Hartlaub.[32] A student of the relationship between magic and art, Hartlaub nevertheless sought to position Baldung's images outside some broad schema of western demonology and the occultism of all past societies, unlike Grillot de Givry and Kurt Seligman.[33] He saw Baldung as part of a sudden and extraordinary rush of artistic talent born in the German territories in the final decades of the fifteenth century—artists such as Albrecht Dürer, Albrecht Altdorfer, Mathias Grünewald, Hans Holbein, Lucas Cranach, Wolf Huber, Hans Burgmaier, Urs Graf and Niklaus Manuel—and also as an artist sharing in the broad contemporary interest in natural magic represented by figures such as Johann Trithemius, Henry Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim and Paracelsus.[34] He brought together in his study reproductions of the most important of Baldung's witchcraft works,

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[32] Hartlaub was professor at Heidelberg from 1946 to his death in 1963. His early research concentrated on the Italian Renaissance and later moved to the Romantic period and the twentieth century. He was deputy director of the Mannheim Kunsthalle between 1914 and 1919, and director from 1923 until his removal by the Nazis in 1933. See Peter Betthausen, Peter H. Feist and Christiane Fork, *Metzler Kunsthistoriker Lexikon: zweihundert Porträts deutschsprachiger Autoren aus vier Jahrhunderten* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1999), 149–152, which also includes a bibliography of his writings.

[33] Kurt Seligmann, *The History of Magic* (New York: Pantheon, 1948). Seligmann's consideration of witchcraft is couched within a universalist view of magic and demonology influenced by James Frazer and, although richly illustrated, engages only summarily with the content of those images.

[34] Gustav Hartlaub, *Hans Baldung Grien: Hexenbilder* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1961), 3–9. Hartlaub's numerous, but for the most part very short, art historical publications were very diversified, and it was after World War II when in Heidelberg that he published almost all his works on magic and the occult. These included *Zauber des Spiegels: Geschichte, Abbild, Sinnbild in der bildenden Kunst* (Munich: Piper, 1943); *Alchemisten und Rosenkreuzer: Sittenbilder von Petrarca bis Balzac, von Breughel bis Kubin* (Willsbach & Heidelberg: Scherer, 1947); *Prospero und Faust: ein Beitrag zum Problem der schwarzen und weißen Magie* (Dortmund: Schwalvenberg, 1948); *"Paracelsisches" in der Kunst der Paracelsuszeit* (Einsiedeln: Nova acta paracelsica, 1954); *Chymische Märchen; naturphilosophische Sinnbilder aus einer alchemistischen Prunkhandschrift der deutschen Renaissance* (Ludwigshafen am Rhein, 1955); *Das Zwischenreich vom Okkultismus zur Parapsychologie* (Baden-Baden: Holle 1957); *Der Stein der Weisen: Wesen und Bildwelt der Alchemie* (Munich: Prestel, 1959).

as well as a number of closely related works by Dürer, Altdorfer and Filippino Lippi.[35]

Hartlaub's work complemented a chapter devoted to Baldung's witchcraft images written a decade earlier by another Gustav who was also a professor at Heidelberg, and one of Germany's leading legal philosophers, Gustav Radbruch. Radbruch held a professorship in Criminal and Trial Law and Legal Philosophy in Heidelberg in 1904–14, 1926–33 and 1945–49, as well as professorships in Königsberg and Kiel, and two terms (1921–22 and 1923) as Minister of Justice in the Weimar government.[36] In 1938 he published a compilation of seven studies related to the history of criminal law, and one of these studies was devoted to Hans Baldung's witchcraft images.[37] The study endeavored to relate Baldung's images to the involvement of his extended family in the legal profession, to the intellectual and legal interest in witchcraft beliefs and witch trials in Strasbourg and Alsace, and to the treatment of witches in the penal codes of the period. All these doubtless important links remain rather hazy in Radbruch's study, which emphasizes the aesthetic opportunity witchcraft offered Baldung in depicting different female bodies, and distinguishes his "frivolity, cynicism and libertine attitudes" from the "mass witchcraft psychosis" of the later sixteenth century which Radbruch considers to have grown from the seed of the *Malleus Maleficarum*.[38] The essay certainly set up questions for an understanding of Baldung's work, which scholars such as Sigrid Schade and Linda Hults would later endeavor to address.

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[35] A note at the end of the book indicates that the publisher omitted from the book the drawing usually entitled *Witch and Dragon* (1515) on grounds of decency, given that the book was intended for a general readership.

[36] On Radbruch's career and influence, see Armin Schlechter, ed., *Gustav Radbruch 1878–1949: Zeitzeuge des 20. Jahrhunderts zwischen Rechtswissenschaft und Politik*, exhibition catalogue, Universitätsmuseum, Heidelberg (Ubstadt-Weiher: Regionalkultur, 2002); Arthur Kaufmann, *Gustav Radbruch: Rechtsdenker, Philosoph, Sozialdemokrat* (Munich: Piper, 1987).

[37] Gustav Radbruch, *Elegantiae Juris Criminalis: sieben Studien zur Geschichte des Strafrechts* (Basel & Leipzig: Verlag für Recht und Gesellschaft, 1938), 26–37. The second edition was expanded to fourteen studies; the Baldung essay was only slightly altered and reproductions of three of Baldung's images were added. See Radbruch, *Elegantiae Juris Criminalis: vierzehn Studien zur Geschichte des Strafrechts*, 2nd revised edition (Basel: Verlag für Recht und Gesellschaft, 1950), 30–48.

[38] Radbruch, *Elegantiae Juris Criminalis*, 2nd revised edition 46f.: "... die Frivolitäten, Zynismen und Leichtfertigkeiten, die Libertinage Baldungs ... Diese Auffassung Baldungs vom Hexenwesen ... konnte sich so aber nur äußern in einer Zeit, in der die böse Saat des Hexenhammers noch nicht voll aufgegangen, in der der Hexenglaube noch nicht zur Volkspsychose geworden war, wie er es in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts zu werden beginnt."

English language scholarship on Baldung's witchcraft images quickly followed the more general interest in Baldung and the lead set by the German art historians of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The author of one of the three essays to preface the catalogue to the landmark 1981 National Gallery and Yale University catalogue was the American art historian, Linda Hults, who a few years earlier had completed her doctoral thesis on the relationship between Baldung and Dürer.[39] During the 1980s Hults published three important articles on Baldung, focusing firstly on the 1523 painting of *The Weather Witches*, then on the 1544 woodcut of a *Bewitched Groom*, and finally on the so-called Freiburg drawings, which were produced in that city in 1514–15, while Baldung was working there on the high altar in the Münster.[40] One important aspect of Hults' work is her stress upon the complexity of Baldung's images, and the need to uncover the different levels on which each of them works. While Baldung gives expression to the misogyny of his period, argues Hults, the sexual lusts of the women he creates are as attractive as they are threatening. It is by means of this ambiguity that Baldung's works achieve their power. The border between objective reality and subjective fantasy is obscured. This emphasis on fantasy is a theme running through Hults' exegeses, but is strongest in her exploration of the *Bewitched Groom*. She rejects, or rather modifies, the attempt by Charmian Mesenzeva to interpret the woodcut as a simple retelling of the folk legend of the Squire Rechenberger, and prefers to build on an earlier article by Gustav Hartlaub that saw the figure of the groom as the artist's alter ego.[41] She concludes that the woodcut represents the dangerous power of fantasy or creative imagination when not controlled by reason. Hults' tendency to claim this with particular reference to Baldung's temperament as a saturnine or melancholic artist grows out of the third strong element in her work, the requirement

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[39] Linda Hults, "Baldung and the Reformation," in *Hans Baldung Grien, prints & drawings*, eds. James H. Marrow and Alan Shestack, exhibition catalogue, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. & Yale University Gallery (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1981), 38–59; Linda Hults Boudreau, "Hans Baldung Grien and Albrecht Dürer: a problem in northern mannerism" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1978).

[40] Linda Hults, "Hans Baldung Grien's *Weather Witches* in Frankfurt," *Pantheon* 40 (1982): 124–130; Hults, "Baldung's *Bewitched Groom* Revisited: artistic temperament, fantasy and the *Dream of Reason*," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 15 (1984): 259–279; Hults, "Baldung and the Witches of Freiburg: the evidence of images," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18 (1987): 249–276.

[41] Charmian Mesenzeva, "*Der behexte Stallknecht* des Hans Baldung Grien," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 44 (1981): 57–61; Gustav Hartlaub, "Der Todestraum des Hans Baldung Grien," *Antaios* 2 (1961): 13–25.

that we credit Baldung's inventiveness and stylistic bravura. Indeed, an appreciation of how critical Baldung's inventiveness is to his interest in the subject of witchcraft becomes more apparent in Hults' analyses over time. In her 1981 study she considered the subject of witchcraft as affording Baldung a figure study of "the female nude in wild movements and poses", whereas by 1987 the study of witchcraft had been integrated with Baldung's creativity as an artist:

> (…) the witchcraft theme made the exercise of artistic licence not only permissible but unavoidable. What better opportunity to exhibit the artist's brave excursions into the realm of pure imagination than the phantasmagoric context of witchcraft?[42]

As well as the increasing status given to the artistic achievements of Hans Baldung Grien within the art historical world of the 1970s and early 1980s, another stimulus for the growing interest in the witchcraft images of Baldung and his peers was feminist scholarship. The critical entry of feminist issues into witchcraft scholarship did not emerge clearly until the later 1980s and 1990s, with the path-breaking studies of scholars such as Carol Karlsen, Lyndal Roper, Deborah Willis and Diane Purkiss.[43] After the first simple forays of the 1970s by Ehrenreich and English, Christina Larner in the English-speaking world, and Claudia Honegger, Gabrielle Becker, Helmut Brackert and Silvia Bovenschen in the German, were beginning to interrogate the scholarship of witchcraft from a feminist perspective and implant the category of gender into analysis.[44] One sees this reflected in

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[42] Hults, "Hans Baldung Grien's *Weather Witches*," 126; Hults, "Witches of Freiburg," 273.

[43] Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: witchcraft in colonial New England* (New York: Norton, 1989); Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: witchcraft, sexuality and religion in early modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994); Deborah Willis, *Malevolent Nurture: witch-hunting and maternal power in early modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: early modern and twentieth-century representations* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

[44] Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *Witches, Midwives and Nurses: a history of women healers* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1976); Christina Larner, "Witchcraft Past and Present II. Was Witch-hunting Woman-hunting?," *New Society 58*, No. 985 (1981): 11–12; Christina Larner, *Enemies of God: the Witch-hunt in Scotland* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1983); Claudia Honegger, *Die Hexen der Neuzeit. Studien zur Sozialgeschichte eines kulturellen Deutungsmusters* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978); Gabriele Becker et al., "Zum kulturellen Bild und zur realen Situation der Frau im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit," in *Aus der Zeit der Verzweiflung. Zur Genese und Aktualität des Hexenbildes*, eds. Gabriele Becker et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 11–128. Also see Richard Horsley, "Who were the Witches? The Social Roles of the Accused in the European Witch Trials," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 9, No. 4 (1979): 689–715.

the first short article devoted to the relationship of "the art of the Renaissance" and witchcraft studies, published in a prominent, more popular, journal by a Tudor historian from the College of William and Mary, Dale Hoak.[45] Although the article concentrates heavily on the importance of melancholy produced under the influence of Saturn as crucial to beliefs about witchcraft, the title emphasizes its concern with the 'unrestrained sexual appetites of witches', especially as depicted in Baldung's images, and the theme of feminine evil found in the works of other artists such as Hieronymus Bosch. A subsequent article by Hoak on Baldung's *Bewitched Groom*, although primarily concerned with the relationship of its subject matter to an Alsatian folk tale concerning "The Witch in the Guise of a Horse", is said to explore more fundamentally "the symbolic sexual link between wild horses and demonic women."[46] The Canadian art historian, Dorinda Neave, also explored the relationship of attitudes towards women and witchcraft in German art in an article published in the *Women's Art Journal*,[47] while a Dutch scholar, Lène Dresen-Coenders, endeavored to explain the representation of powerful female witches in so many contemporary prints in an article first published in Dutch in 1985 and subsequently in English in a collection she edited in 1987.[48] Although the central artist was still Baldung, the range of artists was slowly expanding to include Albrecht Dürer and Lucas Cranach (as in the case of Dale Hoak and Linda Hults),[49] but the sources for views of witchcraft remained

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[45] Dale Hoak, "Witch-hunting and Women in the Art of the Renaissance," *History Today* 31 (1981): 22–26.

[46] Dale Hoak, "Art, Culture, and Mentality in Renaissance Society: The Meaning of Hans Baldung Grien's *Bewitched Groom* (1544)," *Renaissance Quarterly* 38 (1985): 488–510, at 505f. This article and that by Hoak cited in the previous note were later reprinted in *Articles on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology: a twelve volume anthology of scholarly articles*, vol. 12, *Witchcraft and Demonology in Art and Literature*, ed. Brian P. Levack (New York & London: Garland, 1992), 2–24, 62–66.

[47] Dorinda Neave, "The Witch in Early 16th-century German Art," *Women's Art Journal* 9 (1988): 3–9.

[48] Lène Dresen-Coenders, "Witches as Devils' Concubines: on the origin of fear of witches and protection against witchcraft," in *Saints and She-Devils: images of women in the 15th and 16th centuries*, ed. Lène Dresen-Coenders (London: Rubicon, 1987).

[49] The stimulus for an exploration of Cranach's representations of witchcraft in his *Melancholia* paintings was the classic study: Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: studies in the history of natural philosophy, religion and art* (London: Nelson, 1964). See also the revised and extended German translation, *Saturn und Melancholie: Studien zur Geschichte der Naturphilosophie und Medizin, der Religion und Kunst*, trans. Christa Buschendorf (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990); and the catalogue to the 1974 Cranach exhibition by Dieter Koepplin and Tilman Falk, *Lukas Cranach: Gemälde, Zeichnungen, Druckgraphik*, 2 vols., exhibition catalogue, Kunstmuseum, Basel (Basel and Stuttgart: Birkhäuser, 1974, 1976).

narrow, confined for the most part to the *Malleus Maleficarum*, as was also the case for so many English language studies of witchcraft during this period.

A Broader European Perspective, yet Little Conceptual Advance

By the beginning of the 1990s a serious study of witchcraft images was still very peripheral to the now-burgeoning broader field of witchcraft studies. This can clearly be seen in the twelve-volume collection of articles edited by Brian P. Levack and published by Garland in 1992.[50] The rapid expansion of academic as well as more popular interest in witchcraft had clearly warranted this large publishing enterprise; but the studies devoted to witchcraft images were exactly three of the sixteen articles in one of the twelve volumes.[51] Moreover, approximately two and a half of those articles concerned the work of Hans Baldung Grien and to a lesser extent his early sixteenth-century contemporaries, Albrecht Dürer and Lucas Cranach. Despite Levack's claim in the introduction that the most valuable function of artistic depictions of witches was that they "provide insights into the nature of the elite concept of witchcraft" and "more direct access to the contemporary imagination", and despite Levack's reference in his introduction to the famous 1613 engraving of Jan Ziarnko, the paintings of David Teniers the Younger, the Black Paintings of Goya and the scepticism of Hogarth,[52] there was not a reference to a single work of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the articles that followed. Pushing beyond the sixteenth-century barrier was certainly not impossible. Jane Davidson, one of the two authors included, had written a doctorate and monograph on David Teniers, as well as the only English language book on witchcraft images.[53] But the representation was somehow symptomatic of how

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[50] Brian P. Levack, ed., *Articles on Witchcraft, Magic, and Demonology: a twelve volume anthology of scholarly articles* (New York: Garland, 1992).

[51] Two were the articles by Hoak cited above; the third was by Jane Davidson, "Great Black Goats and Evil Little Women: The Image of the Witch in Sixteenth-Century German Art," in *Articles on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology*, vol. 12, 45–61, originally published in the *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Society* 6 (1985): 141–157.

[52] Levack, *Articles on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology*, vol. 12, ix–x.

[53] Jane Davidson, *The Witch in Northern European Art, 1470–1750* (Freren: Luca, 1987); Jane Davidson, *David Teniers the Younger* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1979); Jane Davidson, "Religious and mythological paintings by David II Teniers" (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 1975).

witchcraft images had become so strongly identified with Baldung and his early sixteenth-century peers over the last decade and more.[54]

The witchcraft images of Flemish and Dutch artists, however, and in particular those of Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Frans Francken the Younger, David Teniers the Younger and Jacques de Gheyn II, have been receiving increasing attention. Not surprisingly, given her earlier studies of David Teniers the Younger, Jane Davidson devoted approximately half her general book on the witch in northern European art to these artists, as well as to others such as David Ryckaert III, Cornelis Saftleven and Leonart Bramer. While few scholars would agree with Davidson's conclusion that artists of the early modern period "were engaged in recording facts about witchcraft", and "were engaged in reportage",[55] her book clarified for the first time in English some of the key artists who had created witchcraft images, described some of the most important images, identified commonalities and differences in their iconography, and situated them historically in relation to the publication and content of witchcraft treatises and the prosecution of witches in judicial trials. At about the same time that Davidson published her book, a doctoral candidate from Amsterdam, Machteld Löwensteyn, was analyzing witchcraft in the imaginative fantasy world of Jacques de Gheyn II, and followed up that study with a fine paper on images of the sabbath in the low countries.[56] Ursula Härting, meanwhile, was making the witchcraft scenes of Frans Francken the Younger accessible to a broader audience through a catalogue raisonée.[57]

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[54] Other significant studies on early sixteenth-century witchcraft images and related images of death include: Joseph Leo Koerner, "The Mortification of the Image: Death as a Hermeneutic in Hans Baldung Grien," *Representations* 10 (1985): 52–101; Christiane Andersson, "Hans Baldung Grien: Zwei Wetterhexen," in *Preziosen. Sammlungsstücke und Dokumente selbständiger Kulturinstitute der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, ed. Günther Pflug (Bonn: Bouvier, 1986), 13–16; Jean Wirth, *La jeune fille et la mort: recherches sur les thèmes macabres dans l'art germanique de la Renaissance* (Geneva: Droz, 1979); Charles Zika, "Fears of Flying: Representations of Witchcraft and Sexuality in Early Sixteenth-Century Germany," *Australian Journal of Art* 8 (1989/90): 19–47 (later republished in Charles Zika, *Exorcising our Demons: magic, witchcraft and visual culture in early modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 237–267).

[55] Davidson, *The Witch in Northern European Art*, 97–98.

[56] Machteld Löwensteyn, "Helse hebzucht en wereldse wellust. Een iconografische interpretate van enkele heksenvoorstellingen van Jacques de Gheyn II," *Volkskundig Bulletin* 12, No. 1 (1986): 241–261; Machteld Löwensteyn, "Peindre le pandémonium païen: images du sabbat des sorcières aux Pays-Bas (1450–1650)," in *Le sabbat des sorciers en Europe* (*XV^e–XVIII^e siècles*), eds. Nicole Jacques-Chaquin and Maxime Préaud (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1993), 427–437.

[57] Ursula Härting, *Frans Francken der Jüngere* (*1581–1642*)*: die Gemälde mit kritischem Oeuvrekatalog* (Freren: Luca, 1989).

And a few years later Marijke Lucas would publish a substantial article concerning the particular contribution of seventeenth-century Netherlandish artists to the construction of and belief in witchcraft.[58] Yet despite such scholarly work over this time, a recent article by Erwin Pokorny that publishes a previously unknown drawing of a *Witches Kitchen* by Teniers in the Valvasor Collection in Zagreb, indicates that there may still be Netherlandish witchcraft images to be discovered.[59]

Another reminder of the substantial contribution Flemish and Dutch artists had made to the visual representation of witchcraft came from an essay by Sigrid Schade in 1987.[60] Richard van Dülmen, Professor of Early Modern History at Saarland University, and one of his doctoral students at the time, Eva Labouvie, had organized an exhibition at the Stadtgalerie in Saarbrücken entitled, "The World of Witches: Magic and Imagination". The accompanying volume that van Dülmen edited contained not only a rich collection of 240 images from the exhibition organized into five different sections with a short introduction preceding each, but also a lengthy essay by Sigrid Schade that offered what certainly was the best general overview of witches in pictorial art from the sixteenth to twentieth centuries. As well as the sixteenth-century German and seventeenth-century Flemish and Dutch artists, it also considered the work of Italians such as Angelo Veneziano and Salvator Rosa, and of Claude Gillot, Goya, Johann Heinrich Füssli, Hans Thoma and Felicien Rops. In line with the aim of the exhibition and accompanying volume, Schade presented the different ways witchcraft images reflected and also shaped and transformed a traditional imaginative world, and argued how central ideas about women were to support masculinist fantasies that constructed subjectivity and history as essentially male. The range and insights of Schade's study created the first clear model of what a history of witchcraft imagery required. It would have to relate to the history of literary discourse about witchcraft, but would also have to move into areas of imaginative experience well beyond

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[58] Marijke S. Lucas, "Het heksengeloof verbeeld 17de eeuwse voorstellingen in de Nederlanden," *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1996): 91–140.

[59] Erwin Pokorny, "Unbekannte Zeichnungen von David Teniers dem Jüngeren in der Sammlung Valvasor" *Acta Historiae Artis Slovenica* 11 (2006): 193–196, fig. 29. On Teniers, also see Margret Klinge, *David Teniers the Younger: Paintings, Drawings*, exhibition catalogue, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp (Ghent: Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1991); Margret Klinge and Dietmar Lüdke, eds., *David Teniers der Jüngere 1610–1690: Alltag und Vergnügen in Flandern* (Karlsruhe: Staatliche Kunsthalle; Heidelberg: Kehrer, 2005).

[60] Sigrid Schade, "Kunsthexen—Hexenkünste," in *Hexenwelten. Magie und Imagination vom 16.–20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Richard van Dülmen (Frankfurt am Main, 1987), 170–218.

Figure 3.5. Richard van Dülmen, *Hexenwelten: Magie und Imagination* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1987). Cover illustration: Frans Francken the Younger, *The Witches' Sabbath*, panel painting, 1606.

that discourse. For its visual components and languages have their own histories, even if they comment on, explore and often expand on the tensions less clearly expressed or even hidden within the textual tradition, and respond at various levels to the judicial histories which document the "reality" of the witch. Although the illustrations of particular texts would require a somewhat different treatment for aesthetically self-conscious artifacts, they both have an almost magical power to make real our inner imaginative worlds.

The 1987 Saarbrücken catalogue was an early example of an increasing number of publications that appeared over the next ten years and would make scholars and general readers far more familiar with the variety and richness of witchcraft images. Unlike some earlier publications, these

works were certainly concerned to provide accurate information regarding the artists, subjects, dates, media and provenance of the reproductions they included, but they rarely attempted any analysis of the images beyond a simple description. For instance, the popular 1987 work, *Les sorcières fiancées de Satan*, compiled by French historian Jean-Michel Sallmann, was crammed with a rich variety of 180 images—many of which had been digitally enhanced, cropped and colored—but there was very little attempt to match image and text.[61] Likewise, in Hans-Jürgen Wolf's richly illustrated work of 1995, the images are regarded quite literally as providing embellishment for the book and nothing more.[62] And even the far more scholarly work on magic and sorcery edited by Robert Muchembled and published in 1994, with an excellent group of contributors and beautifully illustrated, takes virtually no account of the images it features, except for a short section in the chapter by Francisco Bethencourt.[63]

A series of important exhibitions on the subject of witchcraft held in recent years has also produced excellent catalogues containing rich visual materials and illuminating essays, although these rarely provide substantial analysis on the visual materials they present. In 1987 a very significant exhibition on witchcraft and sorcery was held in the castle complex in Riegersburg, in the Austrian state of Styria. An important scholarly outcome was a detailed catalogue of the exhibition and a collection of essays, both edited by a professor of history at the University of Graz, Helfried Valentinitsch.[64] Although the catalogue featured hundreds of objects, prints, books and paintings related to the subject, both regionally and Europe-wide, it contained no general description or analysis beyond that of the individual entries. Of the thirty-three essays in the accompanying volume, only one—on images of the devil—concerned itself specifically with visual culture.[65] A catalogue produced in association with an exhibition held in

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[61] Jean-Michel Sallmann, *Les sorcières fiancées de Satan* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987).

[62] Hans-Jürgen Wolf, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse: Holocaust und Massenpsychose vom 16.–18. Jahrhundert* (Erlensee: EFB, 1995), 7: "durch gute Bildbeigaben geschmückt und überhaupt trefflich ausgestattet worden ist."

[63] Francisco Bethencourt, "Un univers saturé de magie: l'Europe méridionale," in *Magie et Sorcellerie en Europe du Moyen Age à nos jours*, ed. Robert Muchembled (Paris: Armand Colin, 1994), 159–194, at 182–187.

[64] Helfried Valentinitsch, ed., *Hexen und Zauberer. Die große Verfolgung—ein europäisches Phänomen in der Steiermark* (Graz: Leykam, 1987); Helfried Valentinitsch, ed., *Hexen und Zauberer. Katalog der Steirischen Landesausstellung*, exhibition catalogue, Riegersburg, Oststeiermark (Graz: Leykam, 1987).

[65] Helmut Hundsbichler, "Das Bild des Teufels," in *Hexen und Zauberer. Die große Verfolgung—ein europäisches Phänomen in der Steiermark*, ed. Helfried Valentinitsch (Graz: Leykam, 1987), 183–196.

Figure 3.6. Rita Voltmer and Franz Irsigler eds., *Incubi Succubi: Hexen und ihre Henker bis Heute; Ein historisches lesebuch zur Ausstellung* (Luxembourg: Musée d'Histoire, 2000). Cover illustration: Witches Cooking up a Storm, woodcut, in Ulrich Molitor, *De lamiis et phitonicis malieribus*, Cologne, c.1495.

the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe in 1994 did, however, include specific sections on witchcraft images, pamphlets and broadsheets;[66] and in the large accompanying essay volume, the contributions by Wolfgang Schild and Harald Sipek also contained some specific consideration of pictorial imagery.[67]

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[66] Harald Siebenmorgen, ed., *Hexen und Hexenverfolgung im deutschen Südwesten*, exhibition catalogue, Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe (Ostfildern: Cantz, 1994), 113–124, 209–219.

[67] Wolfgang Schild, "Hexenglaube, Hexenbegriff und Hexenphantasie", and Harald Sipek, " 'Neue Zeitung'—Marginalien zur Flugblatt- und Flugschriftenpublizistik" in *Hexen und Hexenverfolgung im deutschen Südwesten. Aufsatzband*, ed. Sönke Lorenz (Ostfildern: Cantz, 1994), 11–48, 85–92.

In what was probably the most important catalogue accompanying such exhibitions in recent years, an exhibition on the "Witchcraze" held in the German Historical Museum, Berlin, in 1992, a further level of information provided in the catalogue was a small sign of a growing sophistication in the understanding of witchcraft images as historical documents.[68] As well as including a brief overview of witchcraft images in general and illuminating descriptions of individual art objects, the catalogue included references for further information at the end of these descriptions, a small recognition that each of these visual "sources" might have their own critical historiography like any other item of textual evidence. The Berlin exhibition was in fact a version of another differently named exhibition held two years earlier in the Musée d'Histoire de la Ville in Luxembourg, a collaboration between the staff of the Musée and an important research project at the University of Trier, "Sorcery and Witchcraft Trials in the Meuse-Rhine-Mosel Region, 15th to 17th Centuries", under the direction of the Trier historians, Fritz Irsigler and Günther Franz.[69] Even though the Berlin exhibition (which had particular input from Rita Voltmer, a research associate on the Trier project, a major contributor to the earlier exhibition and editor of the catalogue) was described as no more than a "nuanced" form of the earlier exhibition,[70] the two catalogues assume a very different form and look: in the Berlin version the essays have been expanded with a consideration of the broader German context; additional images and objects from the exhibition have been reproduced; and the previously undocumented images have been supplied with informative commentaries and references. Yet again, any attempt to elucidate and analyze these visual 'fantasies', as they are labeled, in any substantial fashion by means of an essay, seems to have been considered beyond the scope of an exhibition—even though it is explicitly dedicated to drawing visitors into the mentality of that past time.[71]

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[68] Rosmarie Beier-de Haan, Rita Voltmer and Franz Irsigler, eds., *Hexenwahn: Ängste der Neuzeit*, exhibition catalogue, Deutsches Historisches Museum Berlin (Berlin: 2002).

[69] Rita Voltmer and Franz Irsigler, eds., *Incubi Succubi. Hexen und ihre Henker bis heute. Ein historisches Lesebuch zur Ausstellung* (Luxembourg: Musée d'Histoire de la Ville de Luxembourg, 2000).

[70] Beier de-Haan, Voltmer and Irsigler, *Hexenwahn*, 11.

[71] Beier de-Haan, Voltmer and Irsigler, *Hexenwahn*, 14; Voltmer and Irsigler, *Incubi Succubi*, 12.

A More Nuanced Interrogation of Individual Artists and Particular Art Works—the 1990s and 2000s

A very significant advance in our understanding of how to read witchcraft images, and especially those created in the Netherlands in the early seventeenth century, came with the publication in 2005 of a monograph by the American art historian, Claudia Swan, on the fascinating Dutch painter and printmaker, Jacques de Gheyn II.[72] Building on the earlier work of Judson, van Regteren Altena and Löwensteyn,[73] as well as her own doctoral thesis on de Gheyn's representation of the natural world, Swan published a number of articles on the subject prior to the publication of her book.[74] These focused especially on the contribution of demonology to the broader intellectual and medical discourse concerning the nature of the imagination, and the critical role of visual images in that discourse. In her monograph on de Gheyn, Swan emphasized the way de Gheyn's artistic production oscillates between the poles of scientific naturalism and imaginative fantasy, and how his interest in witchcraft could only be understood in the context of contemporary scientific and philosophical discourse. She demonstrated how de Gheyn's images of witchcraft were infused with contemporary demonological theories of the deluded imagination, as transmitted through the works of Johann Weyer, Reginald Scot (via the 1609 Dutch edition of *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, seven years in the making and translated by Thomas Basson and his son Govert, de Gheyn's brother-in-law from 1608), and Ambroise Paré (through the Dutch edition of 1604).[75] She concluded that the continuing interest in this subject by artists such as de Gheyn had little to do with a belief or desire to

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[72] Claudia Swan, *Art, Science and Witchcraft in Early Modern Holland: Jacques de Gheyn II (1565–1629)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[73] J. Richard Judson, *The Drawings of Jacob de Gheyn II* (New York: Grossman, 1973), 27–34; I. Q. van Regteren Altena, *Jacques de Gheyn: Three Generations*, vol. 1 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1983), 86–89. For Löwensteyn, see above.

[74] Claudia Swan, "Jacques de Gheyn II and the Representation of the Natural World in the Netherlands, ca. 1600" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1997); Claudia Swan, "The *Preparation for the Sabbath* by Jacques de Gheyn II: The Issue of Inversion," *Print Quarterly* 16 (1999): 327–339; Claudia Swan, "Eyes Wide Shut. Early Modern Imagination, Demonology and the Visual Arts," *Zeitsprünge. Forschungen zur Frühen Neuzeit* 7 (2003): 560–581; Claudia Swan, "Diagnosing and Representing Witchcraft: Medico-Philosophical Theories of the Imagination in the Context of Artistic Practice in the Netherlands ca. 1600," in *Imagination und Sexualität. Pathologien der Einbildungskraft in medizinischen Diskursen der frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Stefanie Zaun, Daniela Watzke and Jörn Steigerwald (Frankfurt am Main: Klosterman, 2004), 59–82.

[75] Swan, *Art, Science and Witchcraft*, 164–184.

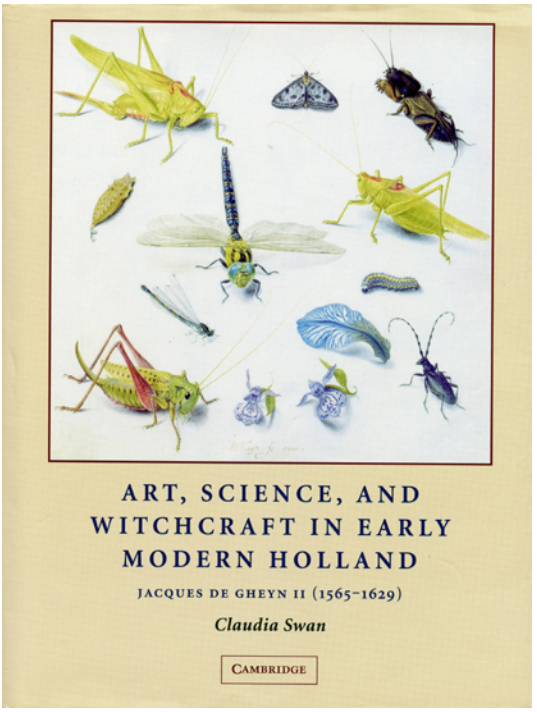

Figure 3.7. Claudia Swan, *Art, Science, and Witchcraft in Early Modern Holland: Jacques de Gheyn II (1565–1629)* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Cover illustration: Jacques de Gheyn II, *Insects and Flowers*, watercolor and gouache on vellum with traces of silverpoint and chalk, 1600, in Lugt Album, fol. 11r.

document witchcraft beliefs visually, but was premised on the capacity of subjects such as witchcraft to facilitate the exercise of the artistic imagination. An intriguing argument of Swan's book was to suggest that de Gheyn's witchcraft images were meant to demonstrate the pictorial basis of the human imagination and represented visual forms of imaginative illusion. But the most important general implication of this book, in my view, was a true understanding that witchcraft images depend not simply on our ability to relate them to the richness and breadth of an artist's oeuvre, to the diachronic development of witchcraft iconography, or to the developing discourse concerning the nature and practice of witchcraft; we need also to explore whether and how the imagery draws on and contributes to quite separate, albeit related, contemporary social, scientific and cultural discourses.

While research into the witchcraft images of some key Dutch and Flemish artists has been proceeding slowly over the last two decades, work has also continued on artists from other geographical regions. Most notably, research on Baldung Grien, his artistic influence, his early sixteenth-century southwest German context, and not least his images of witches, has not flagged. In his dazzling 1993 study of the interrelationship between Baldung and his master Dürer, the American art historian Joseph Leo Koerner read the eroticism and nude female bodies of Baldung's witches as "the male subject's radical Other", expressions of an artistic self-consciousness that represents a "parodic response to an earlier—usually Dürerian—subject".[76] Baldung's witches constitute an integral part of a broader program that overturns or disfigures the beauty of the human form and the closed relationship between the artist and his works, found in Dürer, in order to present the unfinished, uncontained, heterogeneous and fallen self of Baldung. Yet as well as this driving psychic narrative of the young disciple who needs to fashion a self that both absorbs and destroys the models created by the father, Koerner also has a keen eye for the social, legal, medical and humanist networks of audience, family and city that enabled witchcraft to become a key element in that narrative.[77]

Two major exhibitions and catalogues have also made Baldung's witchcraft images better known over the last decade: a more general exhibition held in Freiburg in late 2001, which primarily celebrated Baldung's painting of the high altar of the Freiburg Münster between 1512 and 1517, together with a selection of his drawings, prints and paintings created approximately over the same time-period; and a 2007 exhibition in the Städel Museum in Frankfurt, which concentrated explicitly on what it considered to be Baldung's "strange fantasies" about the lust of witches.[78] The Freiburg catalogue did not present any new material on Baldung's witchcraft images, except for the novel suggestion that the famous inscription on the 1514 Vienna drawing of *The Three Witches* should be read as a New Year's greeting to a female "heart-capturer", rather than to a canon of

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[76] Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), 323–362, esp. 318.

[77] Koerner, *The Moment Self-portraiture*, 327–328, 340, 357–358.

[78] Saskia Durian-Ress, ed., *Hans Baldung Grien in Freiburg*, exhibition catalogue, Augustinermuseum Freiburg im Breisgau (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 2001); Bodo Brinkmann, ed., *Hexenlust und Sündenfall: die seltsamen Phantasien des Hans Baldung Grien. Witches' Lust and the Fall of Man: the strange fantasies of Hans Baldung Grien*, exhibition catalogue, Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main (Petersberg: Michael Imhof, 2007).

a cathedral chapter.[79] A virtue of the catalogue was that as well as summarizing the different readings of these images over the last four decades, it reproduced the drawings and chiaroscuro woodcut versions in something close to their original vibrant subtlety and color.[80] Brilliant reproduction and color is also a virtue of the bilingual catalogue produced for the 2007 exhibition held in the Frankfurt Städel Museum. In what is essentially a long article on the 1523 Baldung painting traditionally known as *The Weather Witches*, the German art historian Bodo Brinkman presents a very perceptive and provocative re-reading of its subject matter and purpose (even if in sometimes clumsy English translation) by drawing on a wide range of Baldung's own work and that of contemporary artists. Brinkman rejects the traditional view that the scene represents weather sorcery, and claims rather that it concerns the dangers of syphilis for those who succumb to the temptations of lust represented by these seductive women. But whether one accepts each of the different elements of the puzzle that Brinkman joins together so ingeniously to construct his argument, focusing especially on the meaning of the flask held by one of the women and the voyeuristic erotic games typical of Baldung's work in general, the most important and demonstrable general point Brinkman makes is that we should not interpret this painting narratively; we need to understand it discursively, as a basis for discussion. The painting "does not tell a story but, with the objects it depicts, triggers chains of association."[81]

Such detailed readings of visual images which carefully consider iconographical elements, internal composition and dynamics, painterly technique as well as broader artistic, cultural and social environments and debates, are of course fundamental to the discipline of the art historian and have multiplied with our increased knowledge both of individual artists, different visual codes and topoi, and of the broader history and discourse of witchcraft. A recent example is the detailed examination by the Vienna art historian, Erwin Pokorny, of Baldung's 1515 drawing of the traditionally titled *Witch and Dragon.*[82] Pokorny finds no compelling attribute that distinguishes this seductive woman as a witch, or the

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[79] Durian-Ress, *Hans Baldung Grien*, 186. This has been rejected by Bodo Brinkmann, *Hexenlust und Sündenfall*, 52.

[80] Durian-Ress, *Hans Baldung Grien*, 41–45, 172–189.

[81] Brinkmann, *Hexenlust und Sündenfall*, 44. Also see 36, 70.

[82] Erwin Pokorny, "Eine Hexe, die keine ist? Zu Hans Baldung Griens Hexen-Zeichnung in Karlsruhe", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 71 (2008): 559–566. Brinkmann titles this drawing *Nude Young Witch Teasing a Fish-Shaped Dragon* (*Hexenlust und Sündenfall*, 60–68, fig. 33).

monster with whom she is sexually engaged, as a dragon. After comparison with other parallel contemporary images, he considers the pornographic duo more likely to represent one of the sea nymphs called Nereids, the water nymph Scylla or the goddess of love Venus in sexual play with a sea-monster, an image of the lustful fantasies that inflame the fire of the human passions and thereby gain their victory.[83] Another striking image, which has a puzzling relationship to the subject of witchcraft and has also been a puzzle to art historians, is a large engraving usually called *Lo Stregozzo* (*The Carcass*) and probably engraved by Agostino dei Musi, also known as Agostino Veneziano, in the second or third decade of the sixteenth century. This has been the subject of subtle analysis by the US art historian Patricia Emison.[84] Emison has shown that as well as the need to understand the puzzling iconographical elements in this print and to recognize the centrality of imaginative fantasy for the representation of both witchcraft and sexuality, the execution of seven male witches for witchcraft in the north Italian territory of Mirandola in 1522–23 explains a number of unusual characteristics that differentiate this print from most witchcraft images in German art of the period. The representation of beautiful young males as the consorts and attendants of a wild female figure enthroned on a giant animal carcass, argues Emison, reflects the male rituals associated with the Mirandola trials which were disseminated through Italy in the works of the Italian humanist Gianfrancesco Pico, Count of Mirandola, in the years immediately following. Dei Musi's task was to persuade his viewers, in the face of some incredulity and even sympathy for the executed, of the veracity and corporeal reality of those rituals and events.

While such rich and critical studies of individual witchcraft images or individual artists have proliferated,[85] far less attention has been given to

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[83] For a different recent reading, see also Katharina Siefert, "Hans Baldung Griens Karlsruher Hexenzeichnung—Eine Neuinterpretation," *Kritische Berichte* 25 (1997): 69–77.

[84] Patricia Emison, "Truth and *bizzarria* in an Engraving of *Lo stregozzo*," *Art Bulletin* 81 (1999): 623–636. Also see Gioconda Albrici, "*Lo Stregozzo* di Agostino Veneziano," *Arte Veneta* 36 (1982): 55–61.

[85] Prominent among these are studies of the works of Salvator Rosa. See Charles Zika, "The Corsini *Witchcraft Scene* of Salvator Rosa: Magic, Violence and Death," in *The Italians in Australia: Studies in Renaissance and Baroque Art*, ed. David R. Marshall (Florence: Centro Di, 2004), 179–190; Helen Langdon, "Salvator Rosa in Florence 1640–49," *Apollo* 100 (1974): 190–197; Luigi Salerno, "Four Witchcraft Scenes by Salvator Rosa," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 65 (1978): 223–231. Amongst other significant studies, see Wolfgang Schild, "Die zwei Schleswiger Hexlein: einige Seufzer zu Lust und Last mit der Ikonologie," in *Festschrift für Gernot Kocher zum 60. Geburtstag*, eds. Helfreid Valentinitsch and Markus Steppan (Graz: Leykam, 2002), 249–271.

the representation of particular themes or figures by different artists across space and time. In an effort to assess the impact of classical literature on the visual representation of witchcraft, I have attempted to explore changes during the sixteenth century to the iconography of the classical witch Circe, for instance, and to a lesser extent others such as Palaestra, Pamphile, Meroe and Medea.[86] My work has been complemented by a recent study of Circe by Guy Tal, which concentrates on Alessandro Allori's depiction of Circe in the Florentine Palazzo of the Salviati family, but adds much to our broader knowledge of Circe in sixteenth-century Italy;[87] while an important study by Bertina Suida Manning explores the subject among Genoese painters such as Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione in the seventeenth century.[88] Medea, on the other hand, has received somewhat less attention, with the emphasis predominantly on Italian examples.[89] The importance of these images of witchcraft drawn from classical literature has been inadvertently highlighted in recent years by a provocative and stimulating study of the American art historian, Margaret Sullivan.[90] Sullivan challenged long-held assumptions about the origins and aims of the witchcraft images of south German and Swiss artists of the early sixteenth century, such as Hans Baldung Grien and Albrecht Dürer, as graphic examples of misogyny and the marginalization

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[86] Charles Zika, "Images of Circe and Discourses of Witchcraft, 1480–1580," *Zeitenblicke: Online-Journal für die Geschichtswissenschaften* 1 (2002), http://www.zeitenblicke.historicum.net/2002/01/zika/zika.html. Also see Charles Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft: Print and Visual Culture in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 133–155.

[87] Guy Tal, "Disbelieving in Witchcraft: Allori's Melancholic Circe in the Palazzo Salviati," *Athanor* 22 (2004): 57–66.

[88] Bertina Suida Manning, "The Transformation of Circe: the significance of the sorceress subject in seventeenth-century Genoese painting," in *Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Federico Zeri*, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Trust, 1984), 689–708. Also see Astrid Wooton, "On Circe's Island: Subversive Power Relationships in a Painting by Sinibaldo Scorza," *Melbourne Art Journal* 1 (1997): 17–24.

[89] Jane Davidson Reid, *The Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts, 1300–1990s*, vol. 2 (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Andrea Emiliani, ed., *Bologna 1584. Gli esordi dei Carracci e gli affreschi di Palazzo Fava* (Bologna: Nuova Alfa editoriale, 1984); Norberto Gramaccini, "La Médée d'Annibale Carracci au Palais Fava," in *Les Carraches et les décors profanes. Actes du colloque organisé par l'École Française de Rome, 2–4 Octobre 1986* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1986), 491–519. See also Lieselotte E. Saurma-Jeltsch, "Die Zähmung der Maßlosigkeit: Die Darstellung Medeas in der deutschen Buchmalerei," in *Medeas Wandlungen: Studien zu einem Mythos in Kunst und Wissenschaft*, eds. Annette Kämmer, Margret Schuchard and Agnes Speck (Heidelberg: Mattes, 1998), 96–128.

[90] Margaret A. Sullivan, "The Witches of Dürer and Hans Baldung Grien," *Renaissance Quarterly* 53 (2000): 332–401.

of women in late medieval and early modern European societies. They are better understood, she argued, as "poetic constructions motivated by artistic goals" and responses to "humanist fascination with the underside of the classical world". Sullivan rests her claim largely on the chronological and geographical proximity of newly published classical texts and the visual representation of the witches found in those texts. But to truly identify and assess the stimulus for a developing witchcraft imagery, we need to understand the interaction between the more general iconography of witchcraft which these artists developed and contemporary illustrations of individual classical witches like Circe and Medea.

Another "literary" witch whose visual history has been almost completely ignored is the biblical witch of Endor from the story of King Saul (1 Sam. 28). Even though Saul's use of this necromancer to call up the dead prophet Samuel features in almost every witchcraft treatise, and her image appears in numerous woodcuts and engravings that accompany accounts of the biblical story from the twelfth century to the present, only one article prior to the last decade had examined the subject in any detail.[91] In order to correct this significant gap in the history of witchcraft images, I have been publishing a number of articles in recent years, which will ultimately contribute to a monograph tracing the development of the figure through European history.[92] This will help us to differentiate more clearly the different stages in the visual history of witchcraft, I believe, and also explicate the part played by biblical authority and exegesis in emphasizing an essentially diabolical understanding of witchcraft and related magical arts, as well as the urgency for authorities to eliminate any who practiced such arts. Just as we need studies of representations of the biblical witch of Endor, we also need studies of Christian saints in order to identify how, when and where their particular struggles with the traditional forces of darkness began to include the forces of witchcraft.

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[91] Jean-Claude Schmitt, "Le spectre de Samuel et la sorcière d'en dor. Avatars historiques d'un récit biblique: I Rois 28," *Études rurales* 105–6 (1987): 37–54, at 50–56. A summary can be found in Schmitt's book, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: the Living and the Dead in Medieval Society* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1998; 1st French edition published in 1994), 15–17.

[92] Charles Zika, "Reformation, Scriptural Precedent and Witchcraft: Johann Teufel's woodcut of the *Witch of Endor*," in *Reforming the Reformation: essays in honour of Peter Matheson*, ed. Ian Breward (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2004), 148–166; Charles Zika, "The Witch of Endor: transformations of a biblical necromancer in early modern Europe," in *Rituals, Images, and Words: varieties of cultural expression in late medieval and early modern Europe*, eds. Charles Zika and F. W. Kent (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 235–259; Charles Zika, "Images in Service of the Word: the Witch of Endor in the bibles of early modern Europe," *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums* (2009): 149–163.

"The Temptations of St Anthony" is an obvious historical art subject in which figures and motifs associated with witchcraft begin to appear in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but this interrelationship has not been explored in any detail.[93] There are also others like St James and St Peter, whose stories in Christian tradition feature momentous struggles against the demonic powers of the master magicians Hermogenes and Simon Magus. But to this point there have only been limited explorations of the manner in which the imagery of these magicians in the sixteenth century takes on particular, and sometimes curious, iconographical elements and themes from representations of witchcraft.[94]

Three Recent Attempts at a Broader Synthesis—Function, Artistic Self-identity and Cultural Meaning

There have been only three attempts in recent years to analyze witchcraft images produced by different artists over a longer period of time and from different regions of Europe. The first is that by the German legal historian from the University of Bielefeld, Wolfgang Schild. Schild has long had an interest in the history of legal ordinances and judicial punishment and this has included visual depictions of legal process, torture and punishment.[95] In 1997 he published a guide to the history of the crime of witchcraft in association with an exhibition held at the Medieval Crime Museum in Rothenburg ob der Tauber.[96] Many of the images included in this extensive and rich collection serve as little more than very general

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[93] Ortrud Westheider and Michael Philipp, eds., *Schrecken und Lust: Die Versuchung des heiligen Antonius von Hieronymus Bosch bis Max Ernst*, exhibition catalogue, Bucerius Kunst Forums, Hamburg (Munich: Hirmer, 2008). Heinrich Trebbin, *David Teniers und Sankt Antonius* (Frankfurt am Main: Haag & Herchen, 1994).

[94] Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft*, 162–178.

[95] Wolfgang Schild, *Bilder von Recht und Gerechtigkeit* (Cologne: DuMont, 1995). As well as his more scholarly publications on subjects such as the early modern jurist Benedict Carpzov, Schild has also written a number of illustrated titles in a series published by the Medieval Crime Museum, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, for a more general readership: *Die Volkacher Halsgerichtsordnung von 1504*, Schriftenreihe des Mittelalterlichen Kriminalmuseums Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Nr. 2, 1997; *Die Eiserne Jungfrau. Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Schriftenreihe des Mittelalterlichen Kriminalmuseums Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Nr. 3, 1999; *"Von peinlicher Frag". Die Folter als rechtliches Beweisverfahren*, Schriftenreihe des Mittelalterlichen Kriminalmuseums Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Nr. 4, 2000. Schild also had a significant role in the witchcraft exhibition held in Karlsruhe in 1994 (see *Hexen und Hexenverfolgung im deutschen Südwesten. Katalogband*, 8).

[96] Wolfgang Schild, *Die Maleficia der Hexenleut'*, exhibition catalogue, Mittelalterliches Kriminalmuseum, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Schriftenreihe des Mittelalterlichen Kriminalmuseums, Nr. 1, 1997.

illustrations of witchcraft, although Schild does frequently make use of other images, and in particular illustrated broadsheets, to highlight particular arguments. In a section on "witch fantasies", he attempts to distinguish the different functions of artworks, in elucidating particular themes within witchcraft, for instance, or in creating propaganda to support its persecution.[97] Schild develops his categorization of witchcraft images according to their function in a subsequent lengthy essay published in 1998.[98] The essay divides these functions into eight main groups, such as "the visualization of witchcraft", establishing credibility for witchcraft theory and propaganda in the battle against witchcraft, creating an aesthetic for an imagined witchcraft; each section is then further sub-divided into the variations of a particular function. As the first such study concentrating on the textual, social, legal, political and cultural functions of witchcraft, Schild's study is extremely valuable; yet almost inevitably with such functional approaches, the multi-functional character and specificity of individual images tend to become lost in the face of categorization, as does the sense of chronological development and geographical individuality. We clearly require an understanding of "fantasies" that does not construct them simply in opposition to "reality".[99]

The other recent attempts to analyze the production and significance of witchcraft images across a significant spread of times and places have been monographs by Linda Hults and myself.[100] I have already described the very significant contribution Hults made to the scholarship on Baldung's witchcraft images in the 1980s. In this book she has extended her coverage very considerably and also broadened her theoretical perspective to produce the most significant and broad-reaching study on the witch in the imagination of artists from the early sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. As a deep reading of artists' engagement with the theme of witchcraft, the book offers an episodic treatment of the role of the witch, with chapters devoted primarily to the works of Hans

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[97] One of the three sections of an earlier essay by Schild is also devoted to *Hexenphantasie*. See "Hexenglaube, Hexenbegriff und Hexenphantasie," 11–37.

[98] Wolfgang Schild, "Hexen-Bilder," in *Methoden und Konzepte der historischen Hexenforschung*, eds. Gunther Franz and Franz Irsigler (Trier: Spee, 1998), 329–413.

[99] The manner in which Lyndal Roper uses images to help create the emotional realities and cultural beliefs that feed particular fantasies is instructive in this regard. See Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: terror and fantasy in Baroque Germany* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 141–59.

[100] Linda Hults, *The Witch as Muse: art, gender and power in early modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft.*

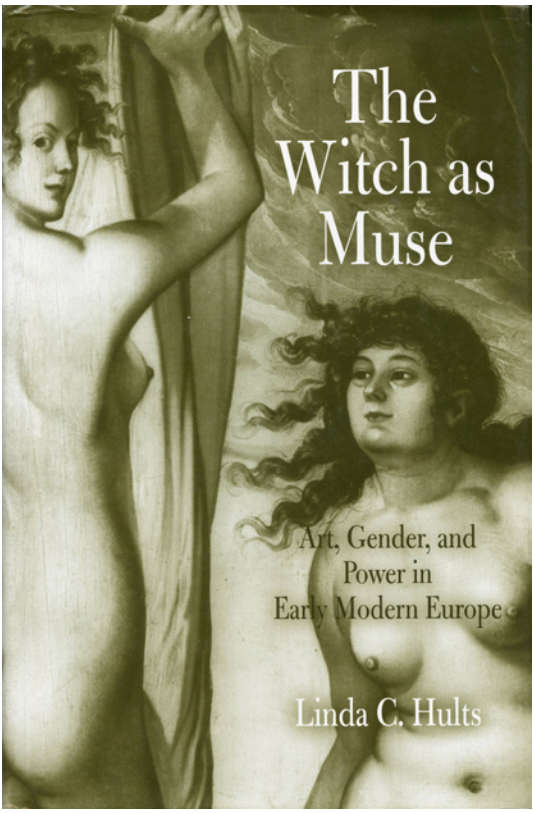

Figure 3.8. Linda C. Hults, *The Witch as Muse: Art, Gender, and Power in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005). Cover illustration: Hans Baldung Grien, *The Weather Witches* (detail), panel painting, 1523, Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt am Main.

Baldung Grien, Frans Francken II, Jacques de Gheyn II, Salvator Rosa and Francesco Goya, with shorter sections devoted to others. There is a real subtlety in tracing the complex range of discourses and contextual factors which impact on and interact with each of the artists, highlighting the role the witch played in the shaping of each artist's self-identity. While the notion of artistic self-fashioning marks a certain continuum with Hults' earlier studies, this later work is far more gendered in its inflection, seemingly influenced by the role of gender in the studies of witchcraft historians of the 1990s, such as Anne Barstow, Lyndal Roper, Marianne Hester and Diane Purkiss. Hults argues that the witch/muse served as a foil for the self-construction of not only artistic, but also male, identities.

Through witchcraft, artists could align themselves with the rhetorical and political strategies of the powerful, display their peculiar imaginative and intellectual prowess, win for themselves intellectual respect and social status, and at the same time carve out for themselves and their craft a space for the articulation of fantasy. More subtly and credibly than any other scholar before her, Hults succeeds in mapping out the engagement of each of these artists with ideas of witchcraft in their quite different political, social and cultural environments, as well as with the intellectual, religious and artistic discourses against and out of which their own particular images were produced.

While Hults' book adopts the most common art historical approach and concentrates on the prominent artists of the period, my approach as a historian has been to understand witchcraft images from the perspective of cultural communication and meaning. I have been especially concerned to uncover the linkages artists create between witchcraft images and different literary and visual discourses in order to give their images added meaning, to show how they create visual cues and codes to make the content of their images more intelligible. Over the last two decades, my exploration of witchcraft in later medieval and early modern Europe has brought together my interest in religion and demonology on the one hand, and the role of the visual on the other—the significance it assumed in those past societies and the potential it has for communicating historical understanding. During the 1990s I published a range of articles concentrating predominantly on witchcraft images of the sixteenth century and covering various themes such as sexuality and sexual disorder, the motif of riding, cannibalism and Saturn, melancholy and the wild horde, seeing and diabolical illusion—and eight of these were later republished in a collection of 2003.[101] Building on some of these earlier studies as well as others published in the years following, my 2007 monograph aimed to show in systematic fashion how witchcraft began to take visual shape in its first one hundred years, the different artists and printers who contributed to the process, some of the ways in which different audiences may have viewed witchcraft—and, most importantly perhaps, how particular

[101] Charles Zika, *Exorcising our Demons: magic, witchcraft and visual culture in early modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2003). Two articles have also been republished in *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic, and Demonology: a six-volume anthology of scholarly articles*, ed. Brian P. Levack (New York: Routledge, 2001); and an abridged version of one later appeared in *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Merry E. Wiesner (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2007), 25–34.

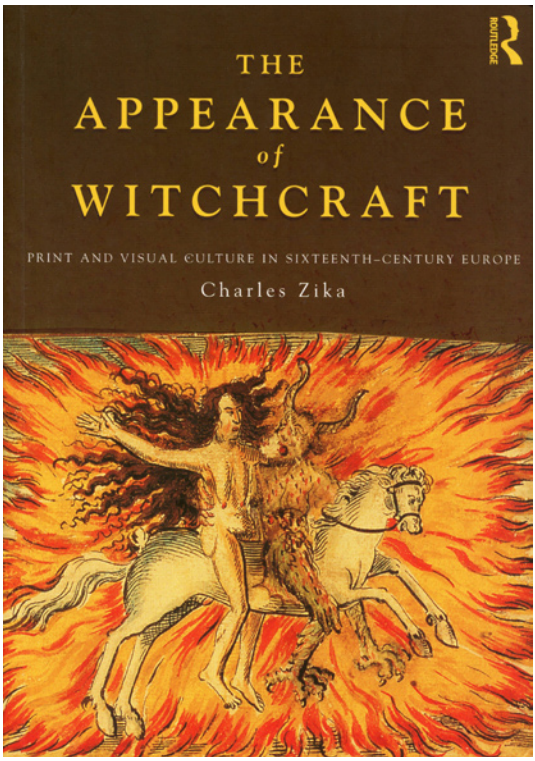

Figure 3.9. Charles Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft: Print and Visual Culture in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007). Cover illustration: The Devil Abducts the Witch of Berkeley and Consigns her to the Fires of Hell, pen and ink and water colour, in Wickiana, MS F. 12, fol. 9r. Zentralbibliothek Zurich.

cultural readings were created by linking witchcraft to visual motifs and themes within contemporary visual culture.[102] For it is only in uncovering these linkages, I believe, that we can begin to understand the cultural significance of these images and how they might have given witchcraft beliefs a wider currency, credibility and power.

A serious study of witchcraft images, as this short survey shows, is only slowly achieving broader scholarly recognition, empirical depth and methodological sophistication. It is hardly possible any more to consider

[102] Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft*. See also the short overview of witchcraft images, in Zika, "Art and visual images," in *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: the western tradition*, vol. 1, ed. Richard Golden (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2006), 59–63.

these images as simple reflections of social reality or as projections of a personal fantasy cut off from social and cultural environment. We need a broad and differentiated approach if we are to unlock the meaning of these images and evaluate their relationship to a broader contemporary discourse about the reality and nature of witchcraft, the political and theological decisions concerning the required response, and the adequacy of judicial machinery to implement that response. My own emphasis on cultural understandings of meaning and semiotic analysis represents only one possible approach. We continue to need more detailed analyses of individual art works in the context of a particular artist's whole oeuvre as a basic building block on which a broader enterprise can rest. We also need more detailed iconographic studies of images that are anonymous or of little aesthetic or art historical interest, a study of particular broad themes and explorations of figures like Circe and Medea. A functional approach to such images is also fundamental in clarifying relationships between image and text, and between image and social action, as is what was once called the "social history of art", the attention to all those involved in the processes of artistic production and consumption. A key player in this process, I would suggest, on the basis of the particular media in which most of these images were produced, is the printer. With the recent global move to new media and digitization of library and museum holdings, we can now begin to do what was previously nigh impossible—to clarify the numbers and transmission of different editions of books and prints over time and space, and thereby better understand the likely impact, readership and audience of these images. By combining studies of artists and printers, of particular themes and literary figures, not to forget the critical role of patrons in the case of some artists, we can gradually move to a greater clarity in our understanding of the evolution of witchcraft imagery over two, three, four hundred years, an understanding that at this point of time remains extremely vague and very partial.

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GENDER, SEX AND CULTURES OF TROUBLE IN WITCHCRAFT STUDIES: EUROPEAN HISTORIOGRAPHY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FINLAND

Raisa Maria Toivo

For a long time historians thought that almost all witches were female, and therefore that the witch-hunt had to do with women and femininity. However, interest in male witches has significantly increased in recent decades, especially after Lara Apps and Andrew Gow's powerful analysis of male witches in a few classic texts of witchcraft theory, which appeared in 2003.[1] According to the current research, the proportion of witches known to have been male is steadily increasing.

Currently it is estimated that around 100,000–200,000 trials and 40,000–60,000 executions took place in early modern Europe. The disproportionate number of women among the victims has frequently been noted, but the gender picture has been changing during the last decade. Traditionally we thought that roughly two-thirds of the accused in western Europe were women, whereas in the eastern "peripheries" the majority of witches were male. Lately, it has been shown that even in western Europe there were areas with significant numbers of male witches. In the Parlement de Paris, a little more than half of the accused were men. In Normandy, the proportion of males among the accused was over 70 percent, in Estonia 60 percent and in Iceland over 90 percent.[2] The geographical

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[1] Lara Apps and Andrew Gow, *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

[2] Alfred Soman, "The Parlement of Paris and the Great Witch Hunt (1565–1640)," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 9, No. 2 (1978); Alfred Soman, *Sorcellerie et justice criminelle: le parlement de Paris (16e–18e siècles)* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992); Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours. The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1998), 260; E. William Monter, "Toads and Eucharists: The Male Witches of Normandy 1564–1666," *French Historical Studies* 20:4 (1997); E. William Monter, "Witch Trials in Continental Europe," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe. The Period of the Witch Trials*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (London: Athlone, 2002), 12–13 for considerably smaller figures. There are overviews of sex-proportions in e.g. Apps and Gow, *Male Witches,* 45, or in Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (Harlow: Pearson-Longman, 2006) 142, or Rolf Schulte, *Man as Witch. Male Witches in Central Europe* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2009), 71. (first published *as Hexenmeister. Die verfolkung con Männern im Rahmen der Hexenverfolgung von 1530–1730 im Alten Reich*. Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Peter Lang 2002) For arriving at the bigger numbers, see Marko Nenonen, *Noituus, taikuus ja noitavainot Ala-Satakunnan, Pohjois-Pohjanmaan ja Viipurin Karjalan maaseudulla 1620–*

variations are likely to be significant. The sex ratios in eastern European regions have not been comprehensively studied, but some suggestions for the ratios in northeast Europe at least can be made on the basis of Finland and Estonia. This chapter will analyze the current historiography of gender in witch trials with the help of the contrasting material from Finland.

Gender and Sex

The history of sex and gender in witchcraft historiography has followed that of women and gender in general. One important part of this common development has been the differentiation between sex and gender. By the early 1980s, historians who specialized in women's history were increasingly discussing ways in which social and cultural systems of sexual differentiation affected both women and men, and began to use the word "gender" to describe these systems. At that time, they differentiated primarily between "sex", by which they meant physical, morphological, and anatomical differences (often called "biological differences") and "gender", by which they meant a culturally constructed, historically changing, and often unstable system of differences. Because it was thought more neutral and less obviously political, "gender" soon became the more widely used term: scholars in many fields increasingly switched from "sex" to "gender", "sex roles" became "gender roles" and "sex distinctions" became "gender distinctions".[3] The consequence has been that many scholars have used the terms "sex" and "gender" as more or less interchangeable.

In writing the history of witchcraft, the differentiation of sex and gender has partly been sidelined longer than in the study of the history of women and gender in general, despite such excellent work by gender historians such as Diane Purkiss, Lyndal Roper and Alison Rowlands.[4] This

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1700 (Helsinki: Societas Historica Finlandiae, 1992) Nenonen, Marko, Finland: Witch trials. In: *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition*. Vol. 2. Edited by Richard M. Golden. Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 2006.

[3] Merry Wiesner Hanks, *Gender in history* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 2. See also Marianna Muravyeva and Raisa Maria Toivo: Introduction. Why and How Gender Matters? In Marianna G. Muravyeva and Raisa Maria Toivo, eds. *Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe.* London And New York: Routledge 2013.

[4] Diane Purkiss, *The witch in History. Early modern and Twentieth-century Representations* (London: Routledge, 1996); Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil. Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994); Lyndal Roper, *The Witch Craze* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Alison Rowlands, *Witchcraft Narratives in Germany: Rothenburg 1561–1652* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

has occurred, at least in part, because the question "why women?" has forced itself on historians that were not otherwise interested in gender, masculinities or femininities, and therefore were not interested in the latest developments in that field. "Traditional social historians" simply considered a chapter on "sex ratios, women and misogynism" a compulsory evil in their works. Moreover, the sex ratios of accused witches seemed to be weighted so heavily against women that it seemed quite appropriate simply to ask "why" and attribute the cause to some cultural, deeply rooted and more or less unconscious misogynism.[5]

When gender as a social and cultural construction and an individual or group identity reached witchcraft studies in the second half of the 1990s, that form of understanding gender was already under attack from two directions. Firstly, there has been, since the turn of the century, a revival of debate on where the line between "sex" and "gender" should be drawn and whether social gender and biological sex are so interrelated that any distinction between the two is meaningless. These doubts have been traced back to several principal developments in scholarship, including increasing uncertainties about most "biological" markers, anthropological developments, psychological research and rethinking "women" as a valid analytical category.[6] Secondly, some early modernists, especially those not primarily interested in gender or queer studies, have continuously questioned whether the concept of gender was as relevant to people in the early modern period as it seems now, since early modern people hardly used it. Is it a valid category of analysis at all in the study of that period? This question has especially attracted social historians, who have felt concepts like "femininity" and "masculinity" to be elusive and who have preferred simpler and more self-sufficient words like "men" and "women". While most scholars would agree that gender as such was rarely talked of by early modern commoners, various sets of source materials suggest that such concepts as "masculinity" and "femininity" were in fact both openly debated and made use of in more tangible and less verbal ways in early modern everyday lives. Today these debates have resulted in loose definitions: "sex" suggests inevitability based on biology and "gender" suggests choice or construction based on social environment. Historians are free to choose their tool according to their need.

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[5] Cf. Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons. The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997), 112–118.

[6] Wiesner Hanks, *Gender in History*, 3–5; On usages of sex and gender, see e.g. Charlene L. Muehlenhard and Zoe Peterson, "Distinguishing Between Sex and Gender. Conceptualizations and Implications," *Sex Roles* 64 (2011): 791–803.

Ratios, Numbers and Dichotomies

Just as historians thought that counting numbers of accused women and men was a job already done, it seems that the late geographical expansion of study and surprising ratios in many parts of Europe are making that task interesting again. Since the work of Lara Apps and Andrew Gow showing the importance of male witches in demonological theory, new case studies counting the number of male witches have mushroomed everywhere.

There are some striking features in these studies: the first is that the numbers differ greatly in different parts of Europe. This is partly because historians have had to use statistics drawn from areas of very different sizes and populations and of time periods of varying lengths. Some hunts took place during a short period of time. In other cases historians have only gathered information based on a short time period or a small geographical area although witchcraft trials were endemic at the time: for example, the hunt conducted by Mathew Hopkins in England, or the affair of witches' sabbat trials in Ahvenanmaa, Finland, where ten women were accused and seven executed during three years. On the other end of the scale, some statisticians gathered data from entire centuries or even longer periods. For example, 4,575 men and 19,050 women were executed in the Holy Roman Empire between 1530 and 1730. In Hungary, 160 men and 1,482 women were executed between 1520–1777. A similar general trial count in Finland—an area roughly similar in size to the Holy Roman Empire but with a population of only 400,000—would amount to over 2,500 accused and 150 executed witches or practitioners of magic between 1530–1800, a clear majority of whom were men.[7] Moreover, statistics have

[7] The cited examples have been presented in e.g. E. William Monter, "Witch Trials in Continental Europe," in Witchcraft and Magic in Europe. The Period of the Witch Trials, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (London: Athlone, 2002), Brian P. Levack, The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe (Harlow: Pearson-Longman, 2006) 142, except for those concerning Finland, which I have amended from those presented by Nenonen, *Noituus, taikuus* and Marko Nenonen, "'Envious are All the People, Witches Watch at Every Gate'. Finnish Witches and Witch Trials in the Seventeenth Century," Scandinavian Journal of History 18, No. 1 (1993) and Nenonen, Finland: Witch trials; Numbers on the Finnish 18th century are still preliminary, and I owe thanks for them to a personal communication from Emmi Lahti. See Emmi Tittonen (Lahti), *"Tuomitaan taikuuden harjoittamisesta." Taikuusoikeudenkäynti 1700-luvun lopun Pohjois-Pohjanmaalla ja Kainuussa.* (Master's thesis, University of Jyväskylä, 2007), 40–41. Online thesis database accessed 1.2.2012, https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/bitstream/handle/123456789/12149/URN_NBN_fi_jyu-2007623.pdf?sequence=1; Emmi Lahti: "Rakkaustaikoja, kotitalouden ja terveyden suojaamista—Naisten harjoittama

included different sorts of trials: traditional maleficium trials, sabbat trials and trials for other kinds of magic. For example, the huge number of trials in Finland cited above includes magic trials, since they were often inseparably entangled with accusations of maleficium. It is clear that the different variables included in the available statistics make comparison difficult, if not altogether impossible. Yet it is also clear that comparisons must be made and that the above-described problems do not explain all the differences in numbers.

The second observation is that only part of this variation seems to be explicable by differences in jurisdiction and jurisprudence: neighboring city-states and even neighboring areas within the same country can be different. There were, of course, regional variations in legal customs within many early modern states, but the legal culture in Normandy was hardly as different from that of the rest of France, or the legal culture in western Finland from that in eastern Finland, as the differences in the sex ratios suggest.[8]

To take an example of this puzzling dilemma, the development of sex ratios in Finland, in the European context, is introduced next.

In Finnish witchcraft and magic trials, a little over half of the accused were men. Male witches clearly dominated in the eastern regions, but they were not uncommon in the western areas either. Throughout the country, the proportion of women grew during the seventeenth century, especially after the 1660s. No comprehensive analysis of gender proportions is yet available from the eighteenth century, but preliminary results suggest that the proportion of men among those accused heavily increased again.[9]

According to statistics drawn up by Marko Nenonen and Timo Kervinen (Chart 1), roughly two-thirds of the witches in Finland were men prior to 1620, with the percentages in each decade varying from 45 to 80 percent. During the rest of the seventeenth century, the overall proportion of men was around half, dropping to as low as 40 percent in the 1670s and around 45 percent in the 1680s. Although the percentage of men only dropped

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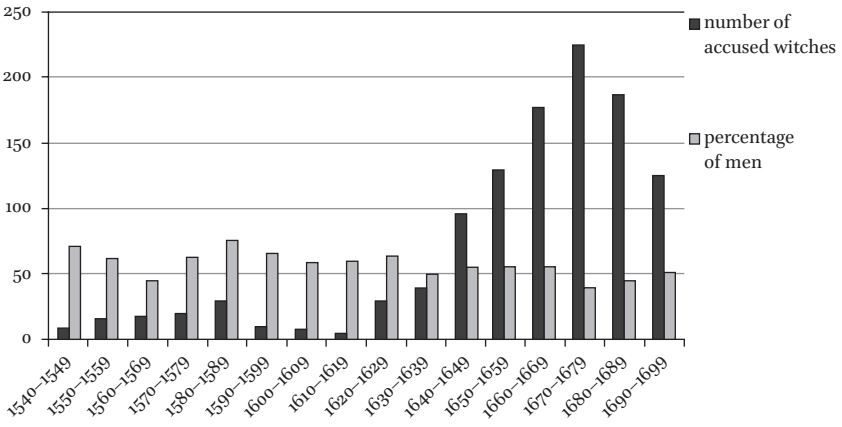
taikuus Suomessa 1700-luvun jälkipuoliskolla". Lecture at Genealogy days in Kuopio 17.3.2012 or Emmi Lahti: Using Sacred Spaces as a Part of Magic Rituals—Popular Beliefs Towards Cemeteries and Churchyards in 18th Century Finland. Paper in the 9th European Social Science History Conference, Glasgow Scotland, UK, 11–14 April 2012.

[8] Apps and Gow, *Male Witches*, 45; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt*, 142; Schulte, *Man as Witch*, 71.

[9] Nenonen, *Noituus, taikuus ja noitavainot*; Nenonen, "Envious are; Tittonen (Lahti), *"Tuomitaan taikuuden harjoittamisesta"*.



Source: Nenonen, Noituus, taikuus ja noitavainot, appendices

Chart 4.1. The number of accused witches and the percentage of men in them in Finland 1540–1699.

below 50 during three decades in the two centuries, the overall proportion of women was slightly greater than that of men.[10]

The increase in the proportion of women and decrease in the proportion of men over time in Finland seems to go against the general European trend. Erik Midelfort's famous explanation of the European trend has been that men began to be accused of witchcraft when the old stereotype of a (female) witch was broken down by or in the great mass trials. Midelfort's theory has lately been supplemented by another, namely that the popular re-imagining of the witches' sabbat—a feature of the mass trials in particular—as a village festival envisaged the attendants of that sabbat as similar to those at a village celebration, with men in key roles as musicians, dance leaders and other masters of ceremony.[11]

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[10] Nenonen, *Noituus, taikuus*, appendices. It should be noted that the source material has survived far more completely for the seventeenth century than for the sixteenth, which may partly explain the apparent growth after the 1620s. Since the 1620s, relatively uninterrupted series of court records have survived, so the availability or lack of material cannot explain the growth after 1660.

[11] Cf. e.g. Erik Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in southwestern Germany 1562–1684. The Social and Intellectual Foundations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972); Peter Heuser, "Die kurkölnischen Hexenprocesse des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts in geschlechtergeschichtlicher Perspektive," in *Geschlecht, Magie und Hexenverfolgung*, ed. Ingrid Ahrend Schulte (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2002); Rita Voltmer, "Witch Hunters, Witch Finders and Kings of the Sabbat: The Prominent Role of Men in the Mass persecution of Trier," in *Witchcraft and Masculinities*, ed. Alison Rowlands (Houndmills: Palgrave 2008).

There were very few, if any, mass trials in Finland, and even if such trials in the rest of Sweden are taken into account, their importance remains small in the overall picture of witch trials in the area. The Swedish witchcraft trials were trials against one or two accused witches at a time, and the accused were not asked or expected to be able to denounce others. This means that any comparison between male and female witches with relatives or family members accused in the same trials is unprofitable. This has been a significant question in the early study of male witches in Europe, arising from the assumption that to be accused as a witch, a man would have to be "tainted by association", i.e. the female members of his family would have to have been already accused. Whereas this had not been a very satisfactory explanation in Europe—Rolf Schulte proposed dividing the accused into "primary" and "secondary" suspects to point out where association with previous suspects could and could not have explanatory power—in Finland it made no sense at all, as few Finnish witches had anyone else, let alone a relative or family member, accused in the same set of trials. On the other hand, a fair number of both male and female witches in the tight-knit and inter-related rural village communities had relatives who had been accused once or twice during the previous decades. However, the lapse of time is often too long to allow any connection to be made between a given accusation and any previous one. Rather, it seems that the social position of these persons, as holders of substantial farms, made them liable to suspicion.[12]

Only during trials that involved accusations about the witches' sabbat were denounciations likely to be asked and followed up. The biggest mass trial shows the scale of these events: in 1666–1668, in Ahvenanmaa, ten women were accused and interrogated, and seven of them were sentenced to death. In the smallish fishing villages of Ahvenanmaa, seven women was a notable number, but of the total number of around two thousand accused in the whole of Finland, the majority were involved in other sorts of trials. Nevertheless, the sabbat trials may have had a greater significance culturally than statistically: stories of them circulated around

[12] Schulte, Man as Witch; Robin Briggs, "Male Witches in the Duchy of Lorraine," in *Witchcraft and Masculinities in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Alison Rowlands (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009) On witches and their relatives in Finland, see e.g. Raisa Maria Toivo, *Witchcraft and Gender in Early Modern Society. Finland and the Wider European Experience* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008) and the stories of the Tommila and Savo families.

Figure 4.1. The devil and two men gossiping. Late medieval mural in the church of Siuntio, Finland. Photo: P. O. Welin 1969–1970. Neg. 104074. National Board of Antiquities in Finland.

the country in folklore, pamphlets, plays, songs and frightening stories that were told for entertainment during the long winter evenings. Therefore, they could have had a significant impact on whether the accused witches were men or women.[13]

In Finland, it seems that the impact of the sabbat imagery was exactly the reverse of Midelfort's theory: almost all the accused in the sabbat trials were women. During the period when the sabbat trials took place and directly thereafter, proportions of men in witchcraft trials were at their lowest. The sabbat, claims Nenonen, broke down the stereotype of the male witch and with its concentration on sexuality brought women into the picture. Thereafter, even though the sabbat notions remained rare in the trials, women were thought of and prosecuted as witches. This view is reinforced by the geographical variations in the sex of witches within Finland. The areas where the sabbat trials took place were on the west coast, and it was in western and central Finland that women were more often tried as witches. In the eastern part of Finland, where no sabbat trials took place, it might be the case that the ideas spread in those trials were less well known, although certainly not unheard of. In this area those accused of being witches were more often men even at the end of the seventeenth century.[14]

Compared to those in western and even in northwestern Europe, the figures for Finland indicate a very different pattern. As one looks at the most obvious explanations, religion and law or judicial praxis, there are differences, but not of such a nature that would immediately throw any light on the causes of these differences. Geographically, culturally and in terms of the gender pattern of witches accused, Estonia, where 60 percent of witches were male, is the closest point of comparison to Finland. Estonia was then part of the same Swedish state as Finland, although the use of law was already slightly different from that of Finland and the western parts of Sweden. Even in the state geographically closest to Finland and Sweden, Denmark-Norway, which shared the Lutheran creed and a fairly similar judicial and legal environment halfway from local to centralized

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[13] On the Ahvenanmaa witches, see Antero Heikkinen, *Paholaisen liittolaiset. Noita- ja magiakäsityksiä ja -oikeudenkäyntejä Suomessa 1600-luvun jälkipuoliskolla* (*n.1640–1712*) (Helsinki: Societas Historica Fenniae, 1969); Toivo, *Witchcraft and Gender,* 60–65, 70–72, and Jari Eilola, *Rajapinnoilla. Sallitun ja kielletyn määritteleminen 1600-luvun jälkipuoliskon noituus- ja taikuustapauksissa* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2003), 124–186.

[14] Marko Nenonen, "Noituus ja Idän mies. Noitavainojen erityisluonne Viipurin Karjalassa," in *Manaajista maalaisaateliin. Tulkintoja toisesta historian, antropologian ja maantieteen välimaastossa*, ed. Kimmo Katajala (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 1995).

and from accusatorial to inquisitorial, strikingly different sex ratios are exhibited and male witches were rare.[15] By contrast, in Russia (68 percent male) and Estonia, where the sex ratios seem similar to those of Finland, both the religion and systems of law and legal culture were very different from those of Finland and Sweden.[16] The conclusion must either be that the causes of the differences lie in much finer characteristics of legal culture and religion, or that they reflect a more complex intertwining of religious, legal and other cultural factors into what could, by modern scholars, be termed "thinking about gender". It is possible that a further study of these variations will show that the early modern experience of gender shared less of the biological determinism of sex than twenty-first-century scholars have hitherto been prepared to accept.

As regards male witches, discussions that echo the old second wave feminist interpretations have also regained ground in the history of witch-hunt histories. As long as the majority of condemned witches was assumed to be women, regarded as reflecting, if not gynocide, at least a deep-rooted cultural misogyny, then the male minority of witches, even if a substantial minority, must logically have been an unvalued sub-group of men, a group somehow effeminized, as Midelfort put it or, in R. W. Connell's terms, not sharing in the hegemonic masculinity.[17] More complicated questions, such as how witchcraft trials might have portrayed male potential, how men wanted to use their options, or of how their gender identities were portrayed or experienced by the men taking part in witchcraft or witchcraft trials, have as yet received comparatively little attention, because male witches have been less researched than female ones.

In this "second wave" treatment, gender is essentially a hierarchical relationship between either men and women, or men and less-hegemonically masculine men. In a crude and vulgar interpretation, this has even been defined as "lesser men". Such a dichotomous understanding of gender, despite all the discourse on social constructivity, relies heavily on biology: the hierarchical gender relationships are inevitably biased in a certain way according to the sex of the parties concerned. Men and women are thus treated as essentially or originally biologically different in witchcraft studies, as if there was a self-evident sex division. Consequently, witchcraft historians, perhaps more than medievalists or early modernists

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[15] Louise Nyholm Kallestrup, "The Devil's Milkmaid: The Witch as a Woman in Reformation Denmark," *Women's History Magazine* 66 (2011): 26–30.

[16] Levack, *The Witch Hunts*. See also Muravyeva's article in this collection.

[17] R. W. Connell, *Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002).

in general, have been willing and able to share Joan Scott and Judith Bennett's dichotomous view of gender as a permanently biased hierarchical relationship in which women are always less well off than men—a "long durée of patriarchal equilibrium".[18] Nevertheless, recent research has questioned whether early modern gender needs to be presented in this way. The actual gender hierarchy in the early modern world can be shown to have been something other than between men and women or men and less conventionally masculine men. Indeed, historians have shown that men often managed to use qualities that have traditionally been considered feminine in order to gain power and appreciation: in a patriarchal society, older men could emphasize their frailty and physical weakness if confronted with young rivals, and religious men presented themselves as the brides of Christ not only as a sign of humility but also because of the intimacy with God and the ensuing status which the expression carried.[19] If gender is taken as lived, experienced and performed, "the long durée" of gender dichotomy may well seem like a modernist reading of what, in the early modern world, was rather a web of practical solutions to presenting oneself in fluid situations.

Identity and Vulnerability

Work has nevertheless been done on masculine identities as well as feminine. In the 1990s and early 2000s, feminist studies produced a new interest in women's roles in witchcraft. This recent work has focused not on the structural male-female comparison and the resulting oppressive patterns, but on the different experiences, different concerns and different options of various women: what they thought, felt and did. What seems striking, however, is that these works have often ended up perceiving the identities

[18] Joan W. Scott, "Gender, a Useful Category of Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, No. 5 (1986): 1053–1075; Judith Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), from which the quotation.

[19] E.g. Raisa Maria Toivo, Male Witches and Masculinity in Early Modern Finnish Witchcraft Trials. In Marianna Muravyeva and Raisa Maria Toivo, eds, *Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. (London and New York: Routledge 2013), 137–152; Maiju Lehmijoki-Gardner, *Worldly Saints: Social Interaction of Dominican Penitent Women in Italy 1200–1500.* (Helsinki, Finnish Historical Society 1999); Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, *Gender, Miracles and Daily Life. The evidence of Fourteenth-Century Canonization Processes.* (Turnhout, Brepols 2009). See also Robert Walinski-Kiehl, Males, Masculine Honor and Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century Germany, in *Men and Masculinities* Vol. 6, No. 3 (2004) on the fluidity of traditionally masculine concepts like honor.

of men and women very stereotypically as either feminine or masculine. This means that women brew their identities in the traditionally feminine spheres of home, family and sexuality, while men pursue theirs in the contexts of village or state trade and politics. The early modern identities, indeed, seem to have been based on alluringly similar models to today. Psychologically oriented feminist scholars—Lyndal Roper stands out as the most important challenge to traditional social historians[20]—have linked witchcraft to mother-child psychology, where the witch came to represent an anti-mother. The purpose was to use the witch-hunts and the material produced by them to look at the identity construction and the social roles of early modern women, with the thought in mind that witchcraft trials had produced not only long but also rare testimonies in which women described how they saw themselves and the world around them and that, with careful examination, their voices could be traced in the sources.

The witch-hunts seem to reveal that the grounds on which women created their identities—professional, maternal and sexual—were always problematic and liable to produce catastrophes. They could give joy and status, but they could also bring disaster. They all bore a continuous risk of failure: milk failed to turn into butter, sexuality was illicit, and children's lives were fragile. The conclusion is that this uncertainty was what produced the witch trials: the witch provided an explanation for the failures, but she was also a figure onto which women could project their own uncertainties and negative feelings. The witch became an anti-mother or anti-housewife. The witch became Death. Contrary to the second wave of feminist interpretations, which viewed women purely as victims of patriarchy, these newer interpretations bestowed upon women the task of upholding society's boundaries, the lines between order and disorder, culture and nature, or good and evil. Witches either failed to toe the line, or consciously or unconsciously blurred it in a way that was considered dangerous.

In relation to male witches, a similar trend of research focusing on identity and masculinity—if not hegemonic, perhaps exaggerated masculinity—can be seen in the interest in shamanistic witchcraft. Rather than effeminized men, male witches have been seen as rather over-masculine trouble-makers—or sometimes shamans. The stereotype of the local maleficent witch, in continental Europe at least, was a woman, likely to hurt children or the elderly. Where men were thought of as unwelcome

[20] Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil* and Roper, *Witch Craze*; Purkiss, *The Witch in History*.

witches, they had transgressed the social boundaries of proper masculine behavior by treasure-hunting, soothsaying, and divining and often also by drinking, violence and unruly sexual behavior—improper but stereotypically masculine disturbances of the peace.[21]

This trend includes some intriguing discussion about gendered power and how male witches used or abused a special form of male power.[22] On the other hand, it seems that the popular cunning village man often held a role of popular authority and a degree of protection from his fellow villagers. In a number of German cities, in the Low Countries and also in Sweden, men who practiced magic acted as cunning men, healers and mediators in local or family disputes. For them, their work and their use of magical knowledge was a way of improving their status.[23] As in the case of the psychological explanations of women as witches, shamanistic male witches are usually thought to have held a certain amount of power and appreciation, which somehow "went wrong" and led to the trial.

A Swedish historian, Linda Oja, suggests that whereas all kinds of magic and witchcraft were open to all sexes, men seem to have dominated benevolent magic and women witchcraft.[24] Finland differed even from the main part of the kingdom: Finnish witches who harmed either humans or animals were more often men than women, whereas women seem to have cured more often than harmed. Instead of a pattern of what men and women did, however, Nenonen sees here a pattern of what was prosecuted: women began to be prosecuted at the same time as *maleficium* charges in general were diminishing and benevolent magic grew more frequent.[25] After the ebbing of the witch trials, the magic trials of the eighteenth century mostly concerned men.[26] Indeed, when one

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[21] See Schulte, *Man as Witch*, 246ff. Walinski Kiehl Males, Masculine Honour; William Monter, Sodomy and Heresy in Early Modern Switzerland. In: William Monter, *Enforcing Morality in Early Modern Europe.* Ashgate 1987.

[22] E.g. articles in the collection of Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline van Gent, ed., *Governing Masculinities in the Early Modern Period: Regulating Selves and Other* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011) and Rowlands, *Witchcraft Narratives*.

[23] Esp. on German areas, see Rowlands, *Witchcraft Narratives* or Johannes Dillinger, *"Evil people": a comparative study of witch hunts in Swabian Austria and the Electorate of Trier* (Charlottesville (VA): University of Virginia Press, 2009); On the Netherlands, see Willem de Blécourt, "'Evil People'. A Late Eighteenth-Century Dutch Witch Doctor and His Clients," in *Beyond the Witch Trials. Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment Europe*, ed. Owen Davies and Willem de Blécourt (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); on Sweden, see Linda Oja, "Kvinnligt, Manligt, magiskt. Genusperspektiv på folklig magi i 1600- och 1700-talets Sverige," *Kyrkohistorisk årsskrift* (1994): 49–50.

[24] Oja, "Kvinnligt, Manligt", 48–49.

[25] Nenonen, *Noituus, taikuus*, 72–78; Nenonen, "Envious are".

[26] Tittonen (Lahti) *"Tuomitaan taikuuden harjoittamisesta."*

looks more closely at the prosecuted cases at the end of the seventeenth century, the immediate observation is that men and women performed benevolent and malevolent magic in equal proportions. Gendered division of labor in magic is, then, to be found in qualities and themes other than "good" or "evil".

Magic on horses and horse equipment was a male prerogative, whereas cattle and human health, household tasks and human relationships belonged to the feminine sphere, claims Oja.[27] Laura Stark, a Finnish folklorist, found similar patterns in nineteenth-century eastern Finland, where horses' harnesses, travel equipment and grain could have been spoiled by a woman stepping or jumping over them, thereby exposing the *väki* (power) of her genitals. Only men could take care of horses and riding equipment in a positive way.[28] This also reflects the role gendering of church frescos in many Finnish churches, which present the butter witch images of women milking and churning with the devil and corresponding images of men with horses and the devil.[29] To an extent it seems to have mirrored the general division of work in society. Yet there were cases in seventeenth-century Finland in which women conducted protective magic on horses. Even more frequently, women tended to and traveled with horses. Traveling was dangerous, but farming women could not afford to leave their butter unsold or their taxes unpaid even when their husbands were at war, nor could they leave their crippled husbands or their belongings in faraway towns. Women took care of transport even for the crown when their husbands were unable to do so.[30] The gender division of labor was slowly forming, but had not yet reached the state described by the historians and folklorists working on the nineteenth century. Extrapolating nineteenth-century gendering of labour to seventeenth-century witchcraft seems anachronistic

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[27] Oja, "Kvinnligt, Manligt," 48–49. Absolute numbers are too small to have evidential value, but no women and 2 men in her sample seem to have magically cured horses.

[28] Laura Stark-Arola, *Magic, Body and Social Order: The Construction of Gender through Women's Private Rituals in Traditional Finland* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 1998), 203ff.

[29] E.g. churches of Lohja & Siuntio.

[30] Women tending horses e.g. National Archives of Finland, District Court Records. Ulvila 16 & 18 June 1694. Vehmaa ja Ala-Satakunta II, KO a 3:251–255 (new page numbers: 151–153). Women performing the official tax-like duty of driving crown officers' and other authorities from one inn to another, called *Kyyditys* in Finnish, *Skiutsväsendet* in Swedish, Ulvila 16&18 June 1694. Vehmaa ja Ala-Satakunta II, KO a 3:251–255 (new page number: 151–153). Ulvila 14–15 Sept 1696. Vehmaa ja Ala-Satakunta II, KO a 7:225. NA. Ulvila 14–15 Oct 1698. Vehmaa ja Ala-Satakunta II, KO a11:103–104. Toivo, *Witchcraft and Gender,* 133–134.

Figure 4.2. Devils and men tending or trading horses. Post 1514 mural in the church of Lohja, Finland. Photo: P. O. Welin 1979. Neg. 151813. National Board of Antiquities in Finland.

Many gender historians have explained that they are not so much seeking explanations for the witch trials from the gender perspective as they are seeking to deconstruct gender with the material produced by witch trials. But will such an extrapolation not lead to a falsely biased picture of gender? If gender is only contemplated through the lens of the drama and tragedy of crime and strife, is it not too easily seen as the thing that went wrong and led to the trials? Can witchcraft trials tell about gender in "normal" life—without considerably extending the investigation?

Shamans and Other Non-Victims

The shamanistic tradition is curiously spread around Europe. There seem to be features of it far east and far north, in Russian Siberia and among the Sami, but also in Italy among the *benandanti* and, to an extent, even the Sicilian female *donas da fuera*.[31] Traces of shamanism in western

[31] Juha Y. Pentikäinen, "Arctic shamanhood: questions on the interpretation of sacred singing, language and knowledge of 'those who know the ways of shamanism'," in *Roots*

Europe have awakened keen interest, but are too few to allow a general study. The shamanistic witch resembles a group that dominates in the stories of Finnish magic and witchcraft two centuries after the witch trials: the *tietäjä*, which could be translated as "the cunning man", or "the one who knows". According to folklore material gathered in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century rural Finland, the *tietäjä* was usually a man, often itinerant, who got paid for performing magical rites such as curing illnesses as well as bad luck in love and marriage, farm work, hunting and other affairs. Such figures are comparatively rare in seventeenth-century material. Sometimes features common to shamanistic magic can be found in the seventeenth-century trials: for instance, witches were occasionally reported to go into a trance, or to use drums of "measuring" when healing. Historians have also pointed out that the Swedish *Blåkulla* (place of the witches' sabbat) owes some of its features to the other world which shamans traveled to. It would be very interesting if the *tietäjä*-tradition could be shown to have shamanistic roots that could be traced back in history, perhaps to some non-Christian (if not pre-Christian) religious tradition, but alas, the evidence from Finland is too sparse for that.[32]

In Finland, one faintly related cluster of magic activity was almost always performed by men: the custom of celebrating calendar festivals with sacrificial offerings and rituals meals, which was condemned and prosecuted as superstition and witchcraft by Lutheran church officials in secular courts. Statistically, this kind of magic or witchcraft was not very significant and in absolute numbers the cases are few. However, these cases may reveal some interesting patterns. While by no means understood as shamanistic by their performers, these rituals reveal important features of male and masculine witchcraft and religious culture in Finland.

Finno-Ugric people in the Nordic countries (Övertorneå: Meän akateemi, 2005)*;* W. F. Ryan, *The Bathhouse at Midnight. Magic in Russia* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), who by no means attributes all Slavic magic to shamanism; Carlo Ginzburg, *I Benandanti: Ricerche Sulla Stregoneria E Sui Culti Agrari Tra Cinquecento E Seicento* (Torino: G. Einaudi, 1966); Gustav Henningsen, "Die Frauen Von Außerhalb: Der Zusammenhang Fon Feenkult, Hexenwahn Und Armut in 16. Und 17. Jahrhundert Auf Sizilien," in *Die Mitte Der Welt: Aufsätze Zur Mircea Eliade*, ed. Hans Peter Duerr (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984). See also Hagen's article in this collection.

[32] On the cult of *tietäjä* see e.g. Laura Stark, *The magical self: body, society and the supernatural in early modern rural Finland* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2006); Juha Y. Pentikäinen, "Arctic shamanhood". On the similar feature in seventeenth-century witches and (undated) shamanism see Eilola, *Rajapinnoilla*, or Per-Anders Östling, *Blåkulla, magi och Trolldomsprocesser. En folkloristisk studie an folkliga trosföreställningar och an trolldomsprocesserna inom Svea Hovrätts jurisdiktion 1597–1720* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2002).

Men usually organized and performed the ritual slaughtering of an animal and the preparation and partaking of the meal, although women could observe. Some of the court records describe the participants in even more detail: only those who "were born in the house", i.e. blood relatives of the owner, were allowed to take part.[33] These rituals were clearly considered both a religious duty of a representative of the kin and as a method of ensuring a successful year for the homestead. These rituals also required their performers to hold a certain status, as they were organized in some of the wealthier free-owning peasants' farmsteads in the parishes. In general, magic was tied to the role of heading the household, so that when a maidservant or a farmhand was described as performing some of the deeds that were construed as witchcraft, such as carrying milk from the neighbors' cows to the milk jugs of her employers' farm, reading magic words or carrying bewitched food to another household, the servants were often not punished for it, since they were thought to have acted under the orders of their mistresses and masters. The mistress or master was considered the one responsible.[34]

Nevertheless, the importance of farming and farm ownership and the roles of the heads of households in Finland do not support Eva Labouvie's claims that Swedish benevolent magic was male-dominated because men as husbands were responsible for the well-being and success of people, cattle, property and work in the household, or that women were more often suspected of harmful magic because they, in their daily work with food and caring for the sick, had ample opportunities.[35] Rather, the farmsteads were usually run by a couple in partnership, both men and women flexibly responsible for the success of the household and farmstead and, consequently, both men and women used magic in their role as the household master or mistress.

In these examples of men performing socio-religious roles and being accused of witchcraft in the process, witchcraft or magic and masculinity appear to be inherently connected to the social role of men at opposite ends of the social scale. The gender roles of the witches were neither inverted nor exaggerated: they duly reflected what was expected of these

[33] *NAF DCR* Eg. Jääski 2.–3. June 1686. Jääski, Ranta ja Äyräpää, II KO a:3:227–229; Jaakkima, 10.–11. March 1675. Käkisalmi KO a 4, 22–23; Uukuniemi 22.–23. February 1678. Käkisalmi KO a4, 103–4; Uukuniemi 28.–29. March 1679. Käkisalmi KO a 4, 184–6. Ruokolahti 18.–20. February 1689 Jääski, Ranta ja Äyräpää, II KO a:3:183.

[34] Toivo, *Witchcraft and Gender.*

[35] See critique in Linda Oja, "Kvinnligt, Manligt, magiskt."

men but different expectations clashed and trouble ensued. However, the very conflicting expectations themselves show how many different meanings could be assigned to "gender" in early modern life.

Conclusion: Variety and Structure

Whereas scholarly interest in shamanism and masculinity reflects wider trends in the scholarship of early modern history, the study of masculinity in the context of witchcraft also mirrors the study of femininity. The essential ingredients seem to be similar—motherhood, housewifery and sexuality for women and patriarchal power relations, farm and kin representation and sexuality for men. It is evident that the level of interest in gender varies between different countries, and that national academic cultures influence what is considered important in gender, such as sex ratios and patriarchal hierarchies or identities and intersectionalities. The former represent more traditional social and women's studies terminologies and methods, the latter reflect the influence of gender and queer studies. The geographical spread and time span of the two Finnish figures that I connected above to the same type of study of masculinity as studies on shamanic type male witches (and let it be clear that these Finnish figures were not shamans), may also suggest other reasons why the interest in masculinity has developed differently in different areas of Europe. A good number, although not all of the calendar festival celebrations took place in the eastern half of Finland, where households with multiple adult generations or multiple families of siblings were common, and the role of the kin and family head may therefore have been more important than in the west, where households were often smaller and consisted of one couple and their children. The proximity to regions that practiced Russian Orthodox religion also seems to have played some part.[36] The *tietäjä*, on the other hand, was almost totally absent from the seventeenth-century court records—not necessarily because he was a new figure in the eighteenth century, but perhaps because he was often a landless, semi-itinerant figure of the sort whose matters were normally dealt

[36] On this see my forthcoming study on "Defining Lutheranism, Superstition and Magic"; on the household structures see also Kirsi Sirén, *Suuresta suvusta pieneen perheeseen* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 1999.

with informally outside the seventeenth-century courts.[37] This suggests that although the trend observed by Jacqueline van Gent—"less on witch hunts and more on magic, religion and beliefs, more on gender, including masculinities, more on literary narrative techniques and more on transatlantic connections"[38]—is certainly right as far as gender is concerned, it may also demand a reevaluation of the old interest in structural framework: law, legal culture, population, family structures and ideologies.

The history of gender in the study of the history of witchcraft and witch-hunts has been one of dichotomy and hierarchical contest to the extent that it has made gender the "cause of trouble"—the thing that led to the trials. Even as later generations of gender historians have claimed not to look for the "causes of the hunts", historians have still had to contemplate gender relationships through the bias of drama and tragedy. Although historians have noted that the connection of gender and witchcraft was clearly not about oppression and hatred, it still seems to have been about insecurity and fear. The widening of scholarly interest to include not only the accused and the accusers but also the witnesses, the crowds of onlookers and the local communities, as well as the current interest in masculinities—in the plural—may eventually change this dichotomous view of gender.

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[37] Stark, *The Magical Self.* Quantitate studies of actors in court are presented in Eva Österberg, "Svenska lokalsamhällen I förändring ca. 1550–1850. Participation, representation och politisk kultur i den svenska självstyrelsen. Ett angeläget forskingområde," *Historisk Tidskrift* 3 (1987).

[38] Jacqueline van Gent, "Current Trends in Historical Witchcraft Studies," *Journal of Religious History* 35, No. 4 (2011).

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RUSSIAN WITCHCRAFT ON TRIAL: HISTORIOGRAPHY AND METHODOLOGY FOR STUDYING RUSSIAN WITCHES

Marianna G. Muravyeva

On February 22, 1997, Sasha Lebyodkin and his nephew Sergei Gretsov, inhabitants of a tiny village on the Russian-Ukrainian border, went on a witch-hunt. Armed with hammers and knives, they entered the house of the woman they said had cast a spell on them, and severely injured her and her two children. Both men insisted that the injured woman had put a curse on Sergei because he would not marry her. Even the local *babka* (witch) could not help very much with removing the curse, which was why they had decided to take things into their own hands. The police did not know what to make of the crime. "We can't just tell everyone in this town that magic is nonsense", said Chekaldin, the police officer on the case, even though it is clear that he would have liked to, "but we have to bring justice". The two men who committed these crimes were being held in the nearby city of Kursk, where they had been examined by psychiatrists and found to be absolutely sane.[1] Although this affair sounded ridiculous to many Russians, it did actually occur.[2]

This story proves that magical practices still occupy a part of the everyday life of some Russian families. Contemporary Russian tabloids are full of advertisements by witches offering spells, curses and other methods to improve one's career or love life. This may explain why Russian witchcraft has been a focus for anthropological and ethnographic research rather than for historical enquiries. Even those historians who have studied witchcraft have mainly concentrated on explaining the relationship between official Christianity and popular religion at given stages of the state-building process and how significant *dvoeverie* (double-belief) was to Russian culture in particular, thus looking primarily at ethnographical data. Therefore, magic as a pagan practice has been viewed as a confirmation of the existence of and intercommunication between two somehow

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[1] Michael Specter, "In Modern Russia, a Fatal Medieval Witch Hunt," *New York Times*, April 5, 1997.

[2] Andrei Sinel'nikov, "Inkvizitory iz derevni Terekhovo," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, March 28, 1997.

different systems of beliefs, namely, those of pagan/popular religion and state/Christian religion. This has led to a large degree of neglect of the topic in Soviet and Russian historiography.

Research on Russian witchcraft has not been very developed in foreign Slavic studies either. American and British Slavists (Valerie Kivelson, Christine Worobec, Russell Zguta, W. F. Ryan) came to the topic through the methodology and research interests of western historiography in which witchcraft became one of the most fashionable subjects of research in the 1970s. These historians mainly attempted to find out why certain features of European witchcraft did not occur in Russia. The major issue was that of witch-hunts, which shaped some research on European witchcraft. Given the explicit absence of witch-hunts in Russia, at least during the primary period for witch-hunts in Europe, namely, the seventeenth century, Brian Levack, based on western historians of Russia such as Russell Zguta and Valerie Kivelson, classified Russian persecutions of witches as a witch-craze with the following characteristics: a small number of people persecuted and executed, a significantly higher percentage of men accused of witchcraft, and an insignificant presence, if not a complete absence, of western diabolism.[3] Compared to Europe, Russian witch-hunts and witchcraft (described by Kivelson in very domestic and pastoral

[3] Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1987), 220–221. Other Russian histories include Russell Zguta's works, "The Ordeal by Water (Swimming of Witches) in the East Slavic World," *Slavic Review* 36 (1977): 220–30; Zguta, "Was There a Witch Craze in Muscovite Russia?" *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 40 (1977): 119–127; Zguta, "Witchcraft and Medicine in Pre-Petrine Russia," *Russian Review* 37 (1978): 438–448; Zguta, "Witchcraft Trials in Seventeenth Century Russia," *American Historical Review* 82, No. 5 (December, 1977): 1187–1207; W. F. Ryan's works, "The Witchcraft Hysteria in Early Modern Europe: Was Russia an Exception?" *Slavonic and East European Review* 76, No. 1 (1998): 49–84; Ryan, *The Bathhouse at Midnight. An Historical Survey of Magic and Divination in Russia* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 1999); Valerie Kivelson's works, "Patrolling the Boundaries: Witchcraft Accusations and Household Strife in Seventeenth Century Muscovy," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 19 (1995): 302–323; Kivelson, "Through the Prism of Witchcraft: Gender and Social Changes in Seventeenth-Century Muscovy," in *Russia's Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*, eds. Barbara Evans Clements, Barbara Alpern Engel and Christine D. Worobec (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 74–94; Kivelson, "Lethal Convictions: The Power of a Satanic Paradigm in Russian and European Witch Trials," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 6, No. 1 (2011): 34–61; and Christine D. Worobec's works, *Possessed. Women, Witches and Demons in Imperial Russia* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001); Worobec, "Witchcraft Beliefs in Pre-revolutionary Russian and Ukrainian Villages," in *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology. Vol. 6: Witchcraft in the Modern World*, ed. Brian P. Levack (New York–London: Taylor & Francis, 2001), 47–70.

terms) are represented as an unsophisticated minor everyday practice, which only becomes criminal if harm is inflicted.[4]

Following the established view that witch-hunts were a phenomenon of "advanced states" and that backwardness and domesticated witchcraft were the hallmarks of Russia's experience, witchcraft historians, such as Alexandr Lavrov and Elena Smilianskaia, have offered a kind of progressive model in an effort to show that Russia had witch-hunts, but not until the eighteenth century, when the state began to focus on all forms of unofficial practices, including those involving religion. They employed theories of social control or state building in order to explain the late development of the witch-hunt, arguing that only then did witchcraft become the focus of state prosecutions. However, instead of thoroughly studying the legal system, court records and the law, historians have tried to draw conclusions on the basis of ethnographical material and have used witch trials as illustrations of how magic practices were used in society in an attempt to determine whether they provide evidence of the existence of the so-called double belief system. The majority of researchers analyzed the trials as narratives of popular religious practices. This approach did not provide much understanding as to why the state made certain practices criminal, why some witches were arrested and others not, or why, for the same practice, some experienced torture and harsh punishment while others did not. Nor can it explain why there were so few prosecutions for witchcraft—only 250 in the eighteenth century[5]—given Russia's size and population. These rates are even more surprising when compared to the number of prosecutions for other crimes, considering the fact that the Russian Orthodox Church launched a widespread campaign to suppress popular religion and eliminate all pagan practices in the eighteenth century.

The historiography and methodology of Russian witchcraft research is closely tied to the availability of sources and the general state of contemporary Russian scholarship. Witchcraft, together with the history of women, gender, family, everyday life and other "social" issues, became "low" social history, entertaining for those historians who chose to study them, but not counted among themes considered worthy of serious research. Political

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[4] Valerie Kivelson, "Male Witches and Gendered Categories in 17th century Russia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45 (2003): 606–631.

[5] According to Smilianskaia: Elena Smilianskaia, *Volshebniki, Bogokhul'niki, Eretiki: Narodnaia religioznost' i dukhovnye prestupleniia v Rossii* XVIII v. (Moscow: Indrik, 2003), see Appendix.

and economic history, in a very narrow sense, still dominate the field and are favored by the official state ideology as being partially the heritage of the Soviet era. In order to legitimize the field, Soviet historians of magic practices (including Smilianskaia, who started her research in the 1980s) used the court cases involving treason (in which witchcraft sometimes played a significant part) of the *Preobrazhenskii* Chancellery (the secret police of the eighteenth century) to underline the importance of this research. The 1990s liberated historiography, and many scholars who had felt constrained in the 1970s and 1980s received the opportunity to reconfigure their research and shift their focus towards other themes, including a wide range of social history and gender studies. Tired of applying preexisting ideological schemes (such as the pseudo-Marxist model of historical development) to their research, many historians simply followed the sources, adopting an extreme revisionist position or rejecting methodology of analysis altogether. This resulted in research of a purely descriptive character with simple and obvious conclusions. Court proceedings became a convenient source to use in this way. However, Russian historical research has evolved since the 1990s and now faces other challenges requiring some assessment of the state of play. This chapter discusses the major issues of Russian witchcraft and opens some areas of methodological development for future research in need of such assessment.

What is Witchcraft in Russia?

Russian witchcraft is subject to many interpretations, so the concept may have many meanings. The Russian language (both old and modern) has a number of words that can be applied to certain magic practices and used to describe witchcraft. The semantics and symbolism of different languages make the definition of "witchcraft" difficult, as it might conceptually be a different practice in English than it is in Russian. In the English language, "witchcraft" is usually defined as "the exercise of supernatural power supposed to be possessed by persons in league with the devil or evil spirits": in other words, it is a type of magic.[6] In the Russian language, however, there is an array of words that could correspond to the English meaning: *volshebstvo, koldovstvo, chernoknizhestvo, vorozhba, charodeistvo*, to list the most common. According to the first systematic

[6] *Oxford English Dictionary*, entry: witchcraft, www.oed.com.

dictionary of the Russian language, published in 1789–1794, *volshebstvo* is a wider term (which might approximate to "magic"), meaning "prophesy, prediction of the future; witchcraft, bewitching, charming, action of a magician". The *volshebnik* (a magician) is the one who makes prophesies or predictions, and as such is usually a soothsayer, but at the same time he or she could be a witch, a wizard or a sorcerer: that is, he or she "who, by whispering certain words or other magic actions falsely promises to do somebody good or to prevent a misfortune".[7]

Koldovstvo is a very narrow technical term, meaning "to give or take away power from something"; it is an action of a *koldun/n'ia* (a wizard/witch).[8] Unfortunately, the dictionary did not go as far as the letter "ch" [ч] in order to explain *charodeistvo*, but the later dictionary of 1822 equates *charodei* (a charmer, derived from the word "charm") with *koldun* (a witch/wizard).[9] *Chernoknizhestvo* (a literal translation would be "the use of black/evil books") is a word that clearly indicates a connection with evil or the devil, and therefore means "black magic".[10] All these four words, in one way or another, mark supernatural powers which cause harm or influence in a negative way. As the Russian pre-revolutionary lawyer Avgust Levenstim put it, witchcraft (*koldovstvo*) is "the ability of a certain person to influence imperceptibly, through a connection with the devil, the fate and welfare of other people".[11] Ethnographical data (although from a later period) gives interesting names to magicians in different areas of Russia. Besides *koldun* (the most common name for a witch/wizard) we find *eretnik (*from "heretic"),[12] *veretnik, charovnik* (a sorcerer) and *ved'mar'* (a witch), while others could be used by different Slavic ethnic groups. All of them name evil practices and diversion from Christianity as major features of such a person.[13]

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[7] *Slovar' Akademii Rossiiskoi*, 6 vols (St. Petersurg: Imperatorskaia Akademiia Nauk, 1789–1794), vol. 1, 817–819.

[8] *Slovar' Akademii Rossiiskoi*, vol. 3, 701–702.

[9] *Slovar' Akademii Rossiiskoi po azbuchnomu poriadku raspolozhennyi*, 6 vols (St. Petersburg: Imperatoskaia Akademiia Nauk, 1806–1822), vol. 4, 1238.

[10] *Slovar' Akademii Rossiiskoi po azbuchnomu poradku raspolozhennyi*, vol. 4, 1272.

[11] Avgust Levenstim, 'Sueverie v ego otnoshenii k ugolovnomu pravu," *Zhurnal Ministerstva Iustitsii* 1 (1897): 178.

[12] On *eretnik*, see the extensive commentary of Felix Oinas, who insists that the connotation of the word was closely connected with both a heretic and a sorcerer: Felix J. Oinas, "Heretics as Vampires and Demons in Russia," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 22, No. 4 (1978): 433–441.

[13] N. A. Nikitina, "K voprosu o russkikh koldunakh," *Sbornik museia antropologii i etnografii* 7 (1928): 299–325.

Linguistic analysis, especially the use of such words as *chernoknizhnik*, proves the assumption that at least in pre-Petrine Russia there was no distinction between white and black magic wrong.[14] W. Ryan points out that although the terms "black magic" and "white magic" did not exist, the concepts did, albeit with different resonances and methods of expression.[15] In the eyes of the law only harmful magic (*koldovstvo*) was liable for prosecution, and this included casting spells, and giving different herbs (usually roots of vegetables or herbs) with the intention of putting charms (or curses) on people or simply poisoning them.

The Early Historiography of Russian Witchcraft: Superstition against Progress

Russian witchcraft has always interested historians and ethnographers. Nineteenth-century Russian scholars paid a great deal of attention to witchcraft and other magic practices. Three groups of scholars who cooperated and exchanged ideas about witchcraft emerged at that time: those who studied *religioznost'*, or the general history of Orthodox Christianity in Russia,[16] those who studied *dukhovnye dela* (in the sense of crimes against religion) in the context of the relationship between the Church and the State,[17] and those who studied customs, traditions and folklore.[18] Scholars such as Grigorii Esipov, Nikolai Novombergskii and others began systematic research on witchcraft trials with the intention of showing

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[14] These assumptions were expressed by Valerie Kivelson: Kivelson, "Through the Prism of Witchcraft," 74–94.

[15] Ryan, "The Witchcraft Hysteria," 52.

[16] See, for example, I. A. Chistovitch, *Feofan Prokopovitch i ego vremia* (St. Petersburg: v tipografii Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1868).

[17] See, for example, V. B. Antonovitch, *Koldovstvo. Dokumenty. Protsessy. Issledovaniia* (St. Petersburg: tip. V. Kirshbauma, 1877); M. I. Semevskii, *Ocherki i rasskazy iz russkoi istorii XVIII veka. Slovo i delo, 1700–1725* (St. Petersburg: Russkaia starina, 1884); G. V. Esipov, *Tiazhelaia pamiat' proshlogo. Rasskazy iz del Tainoi kantseliarii i drugikh arkhivov* (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1885) and his other works; N. Iu. Novombergskii, *Koldovstvo v Moskovskoi Rusi XVII stoletiia* (St. Petersburg: tip. Al'tshullera, 1906) and his other works; and many others.

[18] See, for example, L. Maikov, "Velikorusskie zaklinaniia," *Zapiski Imperatorskogo Russkogo Georgraficheskogo obshschestva po otdeleniiu etnografii* 2 (1868): 417–747; V. I. Dal', *O poveriiakh, sueveriiakh i predrassudkakh russkogo naroda* (St. Petersburg: M. O. Vol'f, 1880); I. S. Beliaev, "Bytovye ocherki proshlogo: Volshebstvo i koldovstvo; Vorozheia i zemskii d'iachok Maksim Markov," *Istoricheskii Vestnik* 8 (1905): 848–861; A. Vetukhov, *Zagovory, zaklinaniia, oberegi i drugie vidy narodnogo vrachevaniia*, 2 vols (Warsaw: tip. Varsh. ucheb. okruga, 1907); and many others.

that Russia had indeed had a witch craze similar to that found in Europe. Another group of scholars led by Vladimir Antonovitch claimed that Russia had never experienced witch-hunts on as large a scale as the rest of Europe.

Legal researchers also focused their attention on crimes against religion and on witchcraft and superstition in particular. The nineteenth-century textbooks in criminal law always contained several paragraphs on "superstition", which was the official term for witchcraft in Russian law.[19] Levenstim noted that although Russia had burned far fewer witches at the stake than Germany, the nature of the crime was the same. He also claimed that in the second half of the nineteenth century, due to the belief in witchcraft among the peasant population, witches were often lynched by local folk.[20]

All scholars point out that the Soviet authorities from the 1930s to 1950s did not welcome the study of witchcraft, as it was considered "a remnant of the past".[21] Ethnographical research was placed under strict control in order to conceal traditional practices that could have undermined the success of collectivization and the industrialization of the country. The new Marxist methodological framework within which the history of Russia was to be studied, and which developed after the famous Stalin address in 1934, did not allow for topics such as witchcraft to function independently without being integrated into the progressivist models of development. The study of religion, superstitions, everyday life and other topics was denounced as of little importance while political and economic history emerged as the major themes of historical research. However, scholars managed to integrate magic (or rather superstition) into studies of political crimes, so-called *slovo i delo* (word and deed) cases.

This research was pioneered in 1957 by Nina Golikova who collected cases from the *Preobrazhenskii* Chancellery's records, which included persecutions of those who expressed dissatisfaction with the authorities (or the tsar personally) or openly rebelled against the tsar and/or the Church. Among them were many religious cases involving blasphemy and anti-religious expressions and non-Christian practices, including various popular magic practices and witchcraft. Golikova showed that the state's

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[19] See, for example, A. Lokhvitskii, *Kurs russkogo ugolovnogo prava* (St. Petersburg: Zhurnal Ministerstva Iustitsii, 1867); N. A. Nekliudov, *Rukovodstvo k osobennoi chasti russkogo ugolovnogo prava* (St. Petersburg: tip. P. P. Merkur'eva, 1878).

[20] Levenstim, "Sueverie," 175–176.

[21] See: Smilianskaia, *Volshebniki*, 31.

Figure 5.1. The Prophesy Book, XVI century—*The Illuminated Chronicles of the XVIth century, Russia* (National Library of Russia, F. 550, F.IV.151, f. 881rev.).

policy was directed mainly against the lower classes rather than against the boyar elite, and that religious crimes, which were quite frequent in Peter I's reign, were a good indication of such repressive policies.[22]

The 1970s may be considered an important stage in Russian witchcraft historiography because of the activities of the Siberian historian Nikolai Pokrovskii and his school. It was he who, for the first time in Soviet scholarship, concentrated on criminal cases from the methodological point of view. He also provided a conceptual framework for contemporary scholars in the field by expressing the idea of an opposition between "official orthodoxy" (or the "Synod's variant of orthodoxy") and "popular orthodoxy", which led to the criminalization of all unofficial practices (including witchcraft and magic).[23] The first non-Russian scholars also started publishing their work on witchcraft during this period: the almost forgotten article of Zoltán Kovács[24] and the more well-known works of Russel Zguta.[25] Both found that Russia did conduct witch trials and that, with the exception of diabolical witchcraft, they exhibited all of the most typical features of the western European witch-hunt.

The revival of interest in witchcraft in western Europe and the US during the 1970s led to a new epoch in witchcraft studies, not only in the West but also in the Soviet Union. In addition, it produced certain methodological and conceptual issues around which contemporary scholarship is constructed, namely, the geography of witch-hunts and the problem of peripheral witchcraft, gender and witchcraft, the demonology issue and the use of court cases as a source for study. Let us explore these issues further.

How Many Witches were there in Russia?

Many assumptions about the persecution of witches have been made on the basis of statistics derived from discovered court proceedings for the crime of witchcraft. The numbers of accused and executed in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century western Europe provide rich data for speculation

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[22] N. B. Golikova, *Politicheskie protsessy pri Petre I. Po materialam Preobrazhenskogo prikaza* (Moscow: izd-vo Moskovskogo un-ta, 1957).

[23] N. N. Pokrovskii, "Dokumenty XVIII veka ob otnoshenii Sinoda k narodnym kalendarnym obriadam," *Sovetstkaia etnografiia* 5 (1981): 96–108 and other articles.

[24] Z. Kovács, "Die Hexen in Russland," *Acta Ethnographica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 22 (1973): 51–83.

[25] Zguta, "Witchcraft Trials," 1187–1207.

about the authorities' attitudes to certain behavioral norms, including magic practices. Specialists in Russia insist that there were not many witchcraft trials, so that, although witchcraft was a malicious and criminal act under the law, the numbers do not allow us to classify the persecutions of witches in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as witch-hunts, or even as a witch-craze.

Zoltán Kovács collected 143 cases from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from different published sources. Valerie Kivelson, who has been collecting witchcraft cases for over twenty years, has discovered 250 from the seventeenth century so far (mostly coming from the Military Chancellery—*Razriadnyi Prikaz*), while Elena Smilianskaia talks about 240 witchcraft cases (she also lists more than 500 crimes against religion that she had discovered, including blasphemy, profanity and others) for the eighteenth century. Lavrov recovered 126 cases from central courts for the period 1700–1740.[26] Christine Worobec provides interesting statistics on nineteenth-century outbreaks of witch persecutions, counting 80 cases from the 34 provinces of European Russia and Russian-ruled Ukraine for the period of 1870–1900.[27] Nineteenth-century historians and lawyers interested in witchcraft trials also provided some statistics. Antonovitch discovered 70 cases just from the eighteenth-century documents of Kiev's central archive.[28] Even a rough estimate shows that we are not talking about the persecution of thousands. The number of those sentenced is even lower. However, the main question here is whether these approximately 500 cases (relying on Kivelson's estimates for the seventeenth and Smilianskaia's for the eighteenth century) represent "hunts" or "crazes"?

In order to answer the question, two sets of comparable parameters should be looked into. The first set should include comparable absolute figures; for the same periods of time, the number of trials should be compared with countries where "hunts" took place, countries where "crazes" took place, and countries where neither of these took place. The second set should represent proportional estimates of all reported crimes in order to see what place witchcraft occupied in the criminal statistics of the era. Estimates of average figures compared with population figures and the size of the country concerned should be made as well, including density and other parameters. Only then will it be possible to answer the question of

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[26] Kivelson, "Male Witches," 618; Smilianskaia, *Volshebniki*, 19, 187; A. S. Lavrov, *Koldovstvo i religiia v Rossii 1700–1740 gg.* (Moscow: Drevlekhranilishsche, 2000), 35.

[27] Worobec, *Possessed*, 86–88.

[28] Antonovitch, *Koldovstvo*, 7.

whether there were major hunts or crazes in Russia and in which century they occurred. So far the historiography has only touched upon the first set of parameters, with the vague verdict that no hunts can be detected in Russia, and that what happened was a "craze" at best. Brian P. Levack estimated that the total number of Europeans prosecuted for witchcraft probably did not exceed 90,000 with an average execution rate of 47 percent of all convicted. The majority of prosecutions took place in Germany and neighboring countries. Levack also pointed out that the number of persons brought to trial does not reveal how many people became the objects of informal accusations (for example, a slander) or how many were formally accused but never brought to trial.[29]

The chronology of witch-hunts is important as well. The hunts as such occurred in the period 1560–1630, followed by a decline in persecutions and prosecutions. However, the period in which hunts occurred varied according to the region involved. In central and eastern Europe (including Russia), such panics were delayed until the eighteenth century because the social, economic and cultural conditions that facilitated witch-hunting in the West did not develop until then.[30] Thus we return to the "delay" model in historiography, which is deeply embedded in the methodology of social evolution. According to this view, Russia could only experience witch-hunts when all the social, economic and cultural conditions required were in place. The country never experienced a "major witch craze", because western demonological theory was absent.[31] However, the question remains: Why then, given that this theory had finally taken shape by the beginning of the nineteenth century, did no hunts or crazes occur within the Russian Empire?

The collected material, which allows us to extract some figures,[32] shows that the number of people (583 people in total or an average of 3.57 individuals a year) prosecuted in Russia between 1622 and 1785[33] was comparable

[29] Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (London: Pearson, Longman, 2006), 20–24.

[30] Ibid., 235.

[31] Ibid., 236.

[32] In the absence of systematic research, the estimates are based on the use of both published and unpublished cases used by specialists: Antonovitch, *Koldovstvo*; Novombergskii, *Koldovstvo*; Kivelson, *Op. cit.*; Smilianskaia, *Op. cit.*; Lavrov, *Op. cit.*; as well as on my own research in the Russian State Archive for Ancient Acts (RGADA), the Russian State Military Historical Archive (RGVIA) and the Central State Historical Archive of St Petersburg (TsGIA SPB). The numbers given are very approximate and reflect the situation in the country only partially, and may therefore be quite unrepresentative.

[33] 1785 was the year when witchcraft ceased to be a felony and was referred to special courts called *sovestnye sudy* (equity courts) that dealt with minor offences, but prosecutions

Figure 5.2. Baba Iaga rides the pig to fight with a crocodile—Russian wooden painting (lubok), 1766—from Rovinsky, Russkie narodnye kartinki.

with other countries, and, from a superficial glance at the statistics, does not apparently constitute an exception, with Russia having the same level of prosecutions as Hungary (an average of 3.6 individuals a year) and Norway (an average of 3.49 individuals a year) in the eighteenth century.[34] But there is always a local flavor to witchcraft persecutions, which is distinct between cultures. There is no doubt that, whatever the local variant of Christianity, witchcraft was universally feared and prosecuted, but the limits and forms of prosecutions depended on the local position of Christianity as the major religion and its relation to other belief systems. The reported scale of witch "hunts" also depended (and this is still the case) heavily on its portrayal in different national historiographies. Looking at the average annual rate of prosecutions brings us to another issue concerning different methods of prosecution, that is, periodic hunts versus methodical persecution of witches. Panics come and go, but the system stays in place: in Russia witchcraft remained a capital crime until as late

did not stop and continued well into the nineteenth century.

[34] The figures are taken from Levack, *Op. cit.*, 23, 280.

as 1785 and even after that continued to be prosecuted as a petty offence, that of superstition, throughout the nineteenth century. It is difficult to assess whether methodical persecution over a long period could be better (or worse) than sporadic hunts or crazes. They would rather represent distinct models of social control theories and criminal ideas as to what is deemed unacceptable and what derives from the established norm. Clearly, in Russia any magic unsanctioned by the Church ended up on the list of criminal offences, because it represented a threat to official Christianity and ecclesiastical institutions. The prosecution of witches, even if their punishment was not the death penalty, attests to the insecurity of the Orthodox Church and its concern with its own spiritual control over the Russian population.

Gender and Witchcraft: Russian Men at Stake?

Valerie Kivelson, in her recent article following Stuart Clark and Robin Briggs, expressed the idea that the gender of the witch, whether male or female, need not inevitably act as the primary determinant of witchcraft beliefs, anxieties and accusations, and that this was precisely the case in pre-Petrine Russia.[35] Although she recognized the importance of gender, she still argued that in Muscovy other factors such as social status and age played a much more important role in witchcraft accusations than the gender of the accused. This concept, which has proved strangely attractive for many scholars of Russia, especially native Russians, raises several issues for discussion.

The first obvious issue is the disproportionate number of men, compared to women, accused of witchcraft. Zguta was the first one to point out that the individuals accused of being witches were predominantly men (fifty-nine men to every forty women, according to him), which was confirmed by Ryan, Kivelson, Lavrov and Smilianskaia. Kivelson, in her early article, claimed that only 32 percent of all the accused in her database were women, explaining the disproportion by the lack of opportunities for women due to strict social and family control to commit criminal offences. In her later article on male witches in Russia, she develops the idea of different social roles, insisting that gender was not a primary factor in witchcraft accusations and that they had much more to do with

[35] Kivelson, "Male Witches," 607.

the social status and ethnicity of the accused.[36] Developing this idea further, Lavrov offers four sets of factors to explain the predominance of men among those accused of being witches: that men constituted a clear majority among the professional sorcerers; that both men and women were much more likely to ask for help from professional male sorcerers than from female witches; that women seldom copied spell books and used them (because of their low literacy); and, finally, that women more often reported men for witchcraft than vice versa.[37] I am not going to deconstruct these factors as they are explicitly gender-biased and drawn from quite specific and incomplete data (from the cases of the secret police, who collected information about all sorts of supposed forms of sedition against the monarch or his/her policies), but the general tendency to deny that gender mattered because prosecuted witches were predominantly *male* needs to be noted.

It is quite symptomatic that another male scholar, Konstantin Bogdanov, criticizing this simplistic attitude, pointed out that the general social image of women and the image that emerges from court cases are quite contradictory: this is to say that the popular image of a witch does not correspond with the court image of a person accused of witchcraft. He claims that court proceedings provide very specific data for research, which reflect administrative and legal aspects of the relationship between the state and the population.[38] Thus the apparent dominance of male-sorcerers in the available court statistics contradicts the most enduring and common *topos* in literary and folkloristic tradition of a witch being an (old) woman. Bogdanov cites numerous religious and political texts in order to show that misogyny was as typical for Russia as it was for the rest of Europe. His explanation of the disproportion in court cases in terms of the gender of the accused refers to the distribution of power in Russian society; he insists that the state and its apparatus were very focused on controlling men rather than women, simply because women were not in the public sphere.[39]

Ryan takes a more consistent approach, suggesting that this disproportion results from the very specific data used by scholars as well as from the

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[36] Kivelson, "Through the Prism of Witchcraft," 83–85; Kivelson, "Male Witches," 611–623.

[37] Lavrov, *Koldovstvo*, 117–118.

[38] K. A. Bogdanov, "Gender v magitcheskikh praktikakh: russkii sluchai," in *Mifologiia i povsednevnost'. Gendernyi podkhod v antropologicheskikh distsiplinakh. Materialy nauchnoi konferentsii 19–21 fevralia 2001 goda*, ed. K. A. Bogdanov (St. Petersburg: Aleteiia, 2001), 150–164.

[39] Ibid., 152–153.

nature of the Russian legal system.[40] Indeed, the *Preobrazhenskii* Chancellery as well as the Secret Chancellery (*Tainaia Kantseliariia*) dealt with political cases of high treason and *lese majeste* (*slovo i delo* being the Russian equivalent) and the main group of suspects included military men and officials rather than the general population.[41] The Synod and consistories were more concerned with the clergy (essentially male) and their families, although they did rule on cases involving monastery peasants. Court marshals obviously tried military men and sometimes their families if they lived in garrisons. It is not surprising then that men numerically dominate in the extant case records.

Since, as we have noted, gender analysis very much depends on the sources, it should not be based simply upon counting the men and women involved. Rather, it should concentrate on the system of power relations and gender constructs which placed witchcraft in a very special position within the social and power structure of society. The researchers should be looking into the structural characteristics of the crime of witchcraft (what kinds of magic practices men and women were accused of), the treatment within procedural law (whether men and women were treated differently throughout the procedure) and the consequences of the criminal prosecution for both men and women (how the sentence given—death penalty, lashes, penance or penal labor—influenced their lives and the lives of their families).

The eighteenth-century data available may be quite useful in spite of its specificity of origin. There are 363 cases involving at least 442 accused. 114 (31.4 percent) of these cases involve 140 women (31.6 percent of the accused). Several types of witchcraft accusations are represented in the cases: witchcraft (including casting spells, malevolent magic and fortune-telling etc.)—155 cases (42.6 percent); suspicion and accusation (including false) of witchcraft—39 cases (10.7 percent); asking a witch for help—6 cases (1.6 percent); healing—8 cases (2.2 percent); possession by demons and connections with the devil—12 cases (3.3 percent); possession of herbs and magic books and letters—119 cases (32.7 percent); the rest—unknown practices. We can clearly see that the possession of herbs and magic books occupies over 30 percent of the cases with 136 accused, but

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[40] Ryan, "Witchcraft Hysteria," 73.

[41] On these two institution, see: V. I. Veretennikov, *Iz istorii Tainoi Kantseliarii. 1731–1762: Ocherki* (Khar'kov: M. Zil'berger i synov'ia, 1911); N. B. Golikova, "Organy politicheskogo syska i ikh razvitie," in *Absoliutizm v Rossii (XVII–XVIII vv.): Sbornik statei,* ed. N. M. Druzhinin (Moscow: Nauka, 1964), 243–281.

only 10 of them were women, of whom 3 were accused of magic book possession. Therefore, the rest of the accused were men, which constituted 41.7 percent of all accused of witchcraft men (126 out of 302) while only 7.1 percent of all accused of witchcraft women were prosecuted for possession of both herbs and books. This disproportion is significant and might invoke several explanatory theories.

When it comes to practicing witchcraft, the situation is as follows:

Table 5.1. Gender of practising witches in Russia, 1700–1785 (reported cases)

Practice	Male (302)	Female (140)
Witchcraft (general)	66—(21,8%)	53—(37,8%)
Malevolent magic	13—(4,3%)	24—(17,1%)
Use of charms	3—(0,9%)	10—(7,1%)
Accusations and denunciations	24—(7,9%)	10—(7,1%)
Asking witches for help	8—(2,6%)	5—(3,5%)
Professional witches	10—(3,3%)	13—(9,2%)
Possession by demons and connections with the devil	8—(2,6%)	7—(5%)
Possession of herbs and magic books	126—(41,7%)	10—(7,1%)
Other	44—(14,5%)	8—(5,7%)

The distinction is notable, especially the difference in prosecuting malevolent magic. The preliminary conclusion here is that although there were less than half as many women accused in court, the practices they were accused of tended to be more serious, resulting in harsher procedure (the use of torture) and sentencing. In addition, more professional female witches were arrested than male witches. On the other hand, the great interest of the authorities in manuscripts and books of all sorts and the targeting of men for this should also be placed within the context of symbolic power control and the prosecution of old believers and heretics in eighteenth-century Russia.

The predominance of men among witches is not a specifically Russian feature. Iceland and the Baltic region also had mostly male witches, while in Finland and Estonia they made up 60 percent of the accused, many of them being professional village sorcerers,[42] which might have

[42] Ryan also points this out: Ryan, "The Witchcraft Hysteria in Early Modern Europe," 73; Kirsten Hastrup, "Iceland: Sorcerers and Paganism," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 383–401; Maia Madar, "Estonia I: Werewolves and Poisoners," in Ibid., 257–272; Antero Heikkinen and Timo Kervinen, "Finland: The Male Domination," in Ibid.,

had something to do with the visible presence of pagan traditions. Thus, in Norway there was a clear difference in the way in which witches were prosecuted, depending on whether they were Norwegians or Sami: 120 Norwegian women and 14 men were put on trial between 1593 and 1695, while only 11 Sami women and 26 Sami men were prosecuted.[43] E. William Monter points out that in Normandy the archetypical witch was not an old woman, but a shepherd, who might have been either an old man or a teenager. Moreover, the proportion of women tried for witchcraft between 1564 and 1660 decreased over time: from 1564 to 1578 women constituted 40 percent of the accused, but by 1646 to 1659 this number had dropped to below 10 percent.[44] Even in southern Germany, the stronghold of female witch-hunts and lurid demonology, men constituted 27 percent of all the accused during its main persecution period between 1625 and 1630, when approximately 642 persons were arrested.[45]

Placing men within the feminized concept of witchcraft, Lara Apps and Andrew Gow suggested that early modern demonologists had their own gender constructs, which they incorporated into their theories and which were essentially misogynist, but they still did not omit men, allowing them to be witches too. On the level of popular knowledge, gender constructs differed so that men could play a prominent role by acting as professional magicians.[46] Scholars tend to oppose these concepts, but I would argue that they constitute a coherent view of the gender hierarchies: fear of the (supernatural) power of women and reassurance of the (dominant) position of men.

The Crime of Witchcraft: Authorities, Courts and Jurisdictions

Ryan, following the pre-revolutionary lawyer Levenstim, pointed out that Russia had no unified and coherent legal system until the nineteenth

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319–338; Marko Nenonen, "'Envious are all the People, Witches Watch at Every Gate': Finnish Witches and Witch Trials in the Seventeenth Century," in *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology. Vol. 2: Witchcraft in Continental Europe*, ed. Brian P. Levack (New York-London: Taylor & Francis, 2001), 69–84; Raisa Maria Toivo, *Witchcraft and Gender in Early Modern Society. Finland and the Wider European Experience* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

[43] Rune Blix Hagen, "Female Witches and Sami Sorcerers in the Witch Trials of Arctic Norway (1593–1695)," *ARV. Nordic Yearbook of Folklore* 62 (2006): 127.

[44] E. William Monter, "Toads and Eucharists: The Male Witches of Normandy, 1564–1660," *French Historical Studies* 20, No. 4 (1997): 563–595.

[45] Robert Walinski-Kiehl, "Males, 'Masculine Honour', and Witch Hunting in Seventeenth-Century Germany," *Men and Masculinities* 6, No. 3 (2004): 255–256.

[46] Lara Apps and Andrew Gow, *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2003), 118–141.

century, although significant laws and edicts were made both by the tsar and the Russian Orthodox Church, which furthered the argument that Russia's witch-hunt was more serious than previously suggested and analogous to some of those in the western countries.[47] Such an assumption is quite common for the progressivist view of Russian history, including legal history, which positions Peter I as a major reformer and Catherine II as a major digester of the laws. One should be quite careful here, as the Russian legal system, on the contrary, operated quite coherently in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and Peter himself, although introducing as many laws as he could, still insisted that the *Ulozhenie* (the Law code of 1649) should be the main source of law and legal procedure.[48] The major problem was overlapping jurisdictions between different state authorities, local administration and the church. Witchcraft as a crime stood exactly at the crossroads of these jurisdictions, as available court records suggest.

The account of laws on witchcraft given by Levenstim and then developed by Zguta and Ryan prompts the conclusion that until well into the eighteenth century these ordinances, edicts and sporadic entries in the general law codes were not the products of any coherent policy and were introduced as quick responses to contemporary situations. Thus seventeenth-century practices of referring witchcraft cases to the state's jurisdiction on the basis of Ivan IV's ordinance to apply the *Stoglav*'s (Russian Orthodox Church Council of 1550, the Council of Hundred Chapters) decisions in relevant cases (including witchcraft)[49] were quite consistent with the general trend in Muscovy to divide jurisdiction over contested cases between the church and the state. Although the *Ulozhenie* (Law code of 1649) never explicitly mentions witchcraft as a crime, the article that deals with evil intent against the tsar and his family's health is clear enough (chapter 2, art. 1) while the whole of chapter 1 is devoted to blasphemy and rebellion against the church, excluding witchcraft.[50] The *Ulozhenie* did not include many other crimes such as, for example, sexual offences

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[47] Ryan, "Witchcraft Hysteria," 62–80; Ryan, *The Bathhouse at Midnight*, 408–428.

[48] *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii*, 45 vols [hereafter *PSZ*] (St. Petersburg: v tipografii II otdeleniia, 1830), vol. V, no. 3435, 737–738.

[49] *Akty istoricheskie, sobrannye i izdannye arkheograficheskoi komissiei*, 5 vols (St. Petersburg: v tipografii Ekspeditsii zagotovleniia gosudarevykh bumag, 1841), vol. I, no. 154, 252.

[50] "Sobornoe Ulozhenie 1649 goda," in *Akty zemskikh soborov*, ed. A. G. Man'kov (Moscow: Iuridicheskaia literatura, 1985), 83–256. All the references in the text are given according to this source. There is also an English translation, which can be used for reference: Richard Hellie, ed. and trans., *The Muscovite Law Code (Ulozhenie) of 1649, Part 1: Text and Translation* (Irvine, CA: Charles Schlacks, Jr., Publisher, 1988).

(rape, adultery etc.), but included domestic crimes (crimes against parents or children), which traditionally fell within the church's jurisdiction. This selection is closely related to the idea that crime was a threat to public order rather than an offence against a certain individual.[51] It is important to grasp that the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century legal system comprised the *Ulozhenie* as well as other major legal codes (such as the *Kormchaia* Book (code of ecclesiastical law) or the Military Code of 1716), which operated together and supplemented each other, alongside different individual laws and ordinances: in other words, matters not handled in the *Ulozhenie* appeared in the *Kormchaia* or other laws. Indeed, the *Kormchaia* provided various punishments, according to both secular and canon law based on Byzantine legal tradition.[52]

Peter I never broke this tradition, but rather specified the notion of witchcraft and systematized legal attitudes to it. He also confirmed that it came within ecclesiastical jurisdiction.[53] However, this only confirmed ecclesiastical jurisdiction in theory, but not the actual jurisdiction, because the investigation of the crime and the trial of the accused were exercised by the same authorities (*prikazy* (chancelleries) in the seventeenth century). The social and professional specialization of the chancelleries complicated the situation even further. It continued in the eighteenth century despite reforms, so that peasants initiated their cases with the local authorities, depending on whose land they lived on, townsmen went to the magistrates, military men to the military court (*kriegsrechts*), clergy to the consistories, while the nobility directly petitioned central bodies such as the Collegium of Justice, the Senate and the Synod or the monarch. Therefore, there should be a clear distinction between the written law and the institutions and authorities that actually applied those laws. Both secular and ecclesiastical law might have been applied in cases of witchcraft.

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[51] A. M. Bogdanovskii, *Razvitie poniatii o prestuplenii i nakazanii v russkom prave do Petra Velikogo* (Moscow: Katkov & Co., 1857); A. P. Chebyshev-Dmitriev, *O prestupnom deistvii po russkomu dopetrovskomu pravu* (Kazan': v tipografii Imperatorskogo universiteta, 1862), 239–242; A. G. Man'kov, *Zakonodatel'stvo i pravo Rossii vtoroi poloviny XVII v.* (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1998), 186–208; V. S. Nersesiants, ed., *Razvitie russkogo prava v XV–pervoi polovine XVII v.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1986), 157–187; Boris Mironov, *Sotsial'naia istoriia Rossii perioda imperii (XVIII-nachalo XX v.)*, 2 vols (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003), vol. II, 11–12 (see English translation: Boris Mironov, *A Social History of Imperial Russia, 1700–1917* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999)).

[52] For more on the question of jurisdiction, see: Ardalion Popov, *Sud i nakazaniia za prestupleniia protiv very i nravstvennosti po russkomu pravu* (Kazan': tipografiia imperatorskogo Universiteta, 1904), 117–121.

[53] *PSZ*, VI, no. 3963.

References to the law that was to be applied, which were usually collected after the investigation and preceded the decision, include both secular and ecclesiastical laws, which were listed in chronological order.[54]

It has been assumed by most scholars that the Russian system of punishment was not as strict or as harsh as that of the rest of Europe, because Russian witches were rarely executed. Indeed, according to the available eighteenth-century court materials, there were very few cases of burning or other forms of execution. The punishments commonly used were corporal punishment, imprisonment (often in a monastery), exile and penal labor. However, there is a discrepancy between the letter of the law, as it assigned the death penalty for witchcraft, and the juridical practice of sentencing. Although the judges had the written laws in front of them while making their final decisions, they still chose milder punishments as opposed to the death penalty. Did they think that witches did not deserve to die? In order to answer this question or offer any relevant and consistent explanation, one would need a lot more material from local authorities that would give information about the strategies of community negotiations and everyday magical practices. The majority of the court cases available and used by scholars come from central bodies (such as the Military Chancellery (*Razriadnyi prikaz*) in the seventeenth century, the *Preobrazhenskii* Chancellery and the Secret Chancellery (*Tainaia kantseliariia*), the Synod and the Investigation Chancellery (*Sysknoi prikaz*) in the eighteenth century). Many cases were referred to these authorities by lower courts for a final decision or for review and revision.

A comparison of the cases collected by Antonovitch and those used by Lavrov and Smilianskaia may illustrate such variations. Antonovitch published selected cases from the Kiev Central archive, using mostly magistrates' books and local court books. In his collection the profile of the accused is very different from the one that was used by both Lavrov and Smilianskaia to reach their conclusions. There are also regional differences and even different legal norms used by various courts. The cases from the Kiev archive mostly involved mutual accusations of witchcraft and the settling of local disputes between families and individuals. The punishments were often in the form of fines; torture was rarely used, and harsh punishments infrequently applied. Cases coming from the central authorities dealt with more serious accusations of *slovo i delo*, treason,

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[54] See published cases: *Opisanie dokumentov i del, khraniashschikhsia v arkhive Sviateishego Pravitel'stvuiushschego Synoda*, 50 vols [hereafter *ODD*] (St. Petersburg: v Sinodal'noi tipografii, 1864–1916), XI, no. 132; XIV, no. 136; XVI, no. 428; XVIII, no. 501; XX, no. 328; XXXIV, no. 17.

assault, heresy, blasphemy and so on, resulting in the use of torture and other harsh means of investigation and punishment, and a different social and gender profile of the accused. To make any conclusions about Russian witchcraft as a crime, there needs to be sufficient research that draws on various regions, courts, authorities and ethnic groups.

Table 5.2. Witchcraft cases in Russia*

Authority/court	1622–1699	1700–1785
The Military Chancellery (*Razriadnyi prikaz*, abolished in 1711; administrative body to manage military men and other officials and corresponding matters)	250**+30+2	5
The Preobrazhenskii Chancellery (1695–1729) and Secret Chancellery(1718–1726; 1731–1801—political police, cases of high treason and 'slovo i delo', including *lese majeste* and attempts on the monarch's life)	5	98
The Investigation Chancellery (*Sysknoi Prikaz*, 1730–1763) and the Moscow Investigatory Expedition (*Moskovskaia rozysknaia ekspeditsiia*, 1763–1782; investigation and prosecution of major crimes [murder, robbery, theft, infanticide, etc.] in Moscow and its region)	0	62
The Synod (established in 1722; appeal court for crimes against religion and the church)	0	85
Consistories (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Rostov and others; established in 1722; first level courts for crimes against religion and the church; divorces and crimes 'against morality')	0	40
Magistrate courts (disputes and minor offences of townsfolk)	0	56
Others (including courts marshal)	3	17
*Total****	290	364

*Estimates from published cases and those referred to by researchers in their work.

**Kivelson, 'Male witches,' 618.

***Other sources for this table include collections cited by Smilianskaia, *Op. cit*, app.; Lavrov, *Op. cit.*, 353–354; Antonovich, *Op. cit.*; and my own collection of cases: *Akty*; *ODD*; the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts [RGADA], f. 7, op. 1, nos. 75, 370, 440, 964, 1045, 1082, 1194, 1307, 1520; f. 372, op. 1, nos. 55, 474, 535, 1281, 1314, 1553, 1598, 1883, 1995, 2005, 5426, 4030, 5882, 5951, 6148; f. 373, op. 1, nos. 175, 209, 573; f. 935, op. 1, no. 700; the Russian State Military Historical Archive [RGVIA], f. 8, op. 3/91, no. 858; the National Library of Russia [NLR], f. 532, no. 1365; f. 159, no. 37; the Central State Historical Archive of St. Petersburg [TsGIA SPB], f. 19, op. 1, nos. 521, 857, 1109, 3192, 3410, 3450, 3538, 3596, 3757, 4970, 6695, 15781.

The purpose of witchcraft cases should be taken into consideration as well. An array of eighteenth-century cases deals with the possession of magic books and manuscripts or suspicious (*podozritel'nye*) letters and books. Possession obviously implied intention to use, but the authorities were mostly concerned with the spread of the old believers' manuscripts and blatantly blasphemous writings, which made officials suspicious of any piece of handwriting. The punishments for possession did not include the death penalty but rather corporal punishment and the destruction of the manuscript in question (burning by the executioner).

When witchcraft ceased to be a capital crime in 1785, prosecutions for witchcraft did not stop. As a petty crime it was still punishable by corporal punishment for the lower classes and fines for the middle- and upper-classes. The lack of harsher punishments, together with popular belief in magic and witches, resulted in the lynching of witches and *klikushi* (the possessed) in the nineteenth century, as more comprehensive nineteenth-century records suggest. Levenstim found at least eighteen cases of alleged local witches being killed by lynching mobs during the period 1874 to 1895.[55] All these lead to the conclusion that Russia systematically prosecuted witches and magic practices at least up to the early twentieth century.

Otkuda Diavoly Berutsia?/*Where Do Demons Come From?* *Demonology and Russian law*

Scholars saw the absence of lurid diabolism and demonology during witch trials in Russia as another peculiarity of Russian witchcraft. It has been assumed that western European witch-hunts were based on the developed concept of diabolism. To be accused of witchcraft was associated with having dealings with the devil, often in the form of some sort of pact and sexual relations with the devil or demons. Western witches were explicitly deemed "servants of Satan". In different ways Zguta, Ryan and Kivelson all insist that Russia was not familiar with this level of theological discussion of diabolism, while Smilianskaia and Lavrov say that Russia had a very developed popular demonology, which successfully substituted for theology.

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[55] Levenstim, "Sueverie,"; Worobec, *Possessed.*

Zguta explained the absence of lurid diabolism as the result of a different understanding of sorcery as a relict of paganism and the influence of the pantheistic concept of the universe. Russian witches, he insisted, could be tried and punished, much like English witches, for the secular crime of malign sorcery—but not for heresy.[56] Criticizing Zguta, Ryan gives quite a detailed account of the demonology of pre-Petrine Russia, but still concludes that there was no sophisticated theology of witchcraft, arguing that what Russia was lacking was western scholasticism and consistent canon law.[57] Kivelson's analysis suggests that only a few cases contained any reference to Satan as the central figure, which makes it difficult to apply any western standards here.[58]

The eighteenth century brings demonology into the picture, as Peter I distinguished between demonic and non-demonic magic. Trials also give evidence of the presence of Satan and of pacts being concluded. N. N. Pokrovskii, one of the few Soviet historians of witchcraft, paid a considerable amount of attention to the connection between popular eschatology and the figure of Antichrist in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He insisted that the references to Satan in many popular and old believers' treatises constituted enough evidence of criminal activities for the cases brought in front of the Synod court to be prosecuted accordingly. The Synod classified those writings as heretical, establishing a direct connection between heresy and *nepotrebnye pis'ma* or wrongful letters.[59] Ol'ga Zhuravel' (Gorelkina) presents several cases where a pact with the devil was made as a means of securing a better future, advancing one's career and ensuring one's financial stability. Thus one Petr Krylov, dreaming of riches and social status, decided to renounce God and make a pact with Satan by writing a letter (which was tantamount to an acknowledgement of Satan) and signing it with his own blood.[60]

The phenomenon of *klikushi* (people possessed by demons), who were mentioned in sources well into the seventeenth century, marks a deep

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[56] Zguta, "Witchcraft Trials," 1205–1207.

[57] Ryan, "Witchcraft Hysteria," 55–62, 81.

[58] Kivelson, "Male Witches," 609–610; Kivelson, "Lethal Convictions."

[59] N. N. Pokrovskii, "Narodnaia eshatologitcheskaja 'gazeta' 1731 goda," in *Issledovania po drevnei i novoi literature*, ed. A. Dmitriev (Leningrad: Nauka, 1987), 290–297; Idem., "Tetrad' zagovorov 1734 goda," in *Nauchnyi ateizm, religiia i sovremennost'*, ed. A. T. Moskalenko (Novosibirsk: Nauka Sib. otdelenie, 1987), 239–266.

[60] O. D. Zhuravel' (Gorelkina), "K voprosu o magicheskikh predstavleniiakh v Rossii XVIII v. (na materiale sledstvennykh protsessov po koldovstvu)," in *Nauchnyi ateizm*, ed. Moskalenko, 291–304.

awareness of the devil's intentions to gain access to the body and soul of a human being and then operate through them. That most of the *klikushi* happened to be women adds an interesting angle to the connection between gender and witchcraft, although *klikushi* were seen rather as the result of somebody else's malevolent magic and not as producers of witchcraft themselves. However, they were very useful as proof for the authorities that an evil act had occurred or that people had engaged in it.[61]

Treatment of Russian demonology as belonging to folklore and the domestic sphere, something that does not represent a serious threat and was not the source of witchcraft accusations, is quite widespread in both Russian and foreign Slavic historiography. However, issues arise once the Russian theology of the time is taken into account. Pre-revolutionary Russian specialists, with the exception of Vasilii Buslaev, agreed that medieval Russian demonology developed around the figure of *bes* (the devil), and was rooted in Bogomil thought. By the seventeenth century, western demonology was also quite familiar, as the writings of Petr of Mohyla (Mogila, 1597–1647) confirm.[62] Nikita Tolstoi, developing this tradition in the early twentieth century, insisted that Slavic demonology represented a mixture of popular ideas and learned images of the devil and demons.[63] Zhuravel' presents a range of popular plots involving the devil in seventeenth-century Russian novels: the renunciation of God, the procedure of such renunciation, and a renunciation letter; renunciation of the Church and the ignoring of the sacraments; the renunciation of one's family and kin and fraternization with the devil; employing the devil as a servant, and the result of his services (usually winning over women and money).[64] Considering that Zhuravel' analyzes popular novels, it is quite difficult to claim that the notion of a pact between the devil and a human being was unknown or known only in certain circles of pre-Petrine Russia.

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[61] See the special law against *klikushi* issued by Peter I: *PSZ*, V, no. 2906 (1715). See also the book on *klikushi* by Christine D. Worobec: Worobec, *Possessed*, 3–63.

[62] See his extensive pieces on sorcerers: Petr Mogila, *Nomokanon ego* (1624). NLR, f. 550, Q.II.141, fol. 23–27, 78rev–80. See also: F. A. Riazanovskii, *Demonologiia v drevnerusskoi literature* (Moscow: pechatnia A. F. Snegirievoi, 1915), 125–126.

[63] Nikita Tolstoi, "Iz zametok po slavianskoi demonologii: Otkuda diavoly raznye? Kakoi oblik diavol'skoi?" in Nikita Tolstoi, *Iazyk i narodnaia kul'tura* (Moscow: Indrik, 1995), 245–268.

[64] O. D. Zhuravel' (Gorelkina), "Russkie povesti kontsa XVII-nachala XVIII vv. o dogovore cheloveka s diavolom v sviazi s mifologitcheskimi predstavleniiami pozdnego russkogo srednevekov'ia," in *Istochniki po istorii russkogo obshchestvennogo soznaniia perioda feodalizma*, ed. N. N. Pokrovskii (Novosibirsk: Nauka Sib. otdelenie, 1986), 41–54.

Figure 5.3. Monk Feofil makes a pact with the Tsar of Demons, Fresco from the Church of Ilyia the Prophet, Yaroslavl', 1715–1716.

Valerie Kivelson claimed that the voracious sexual appetites ascribed to most European, particularly German, witches were not attributed to Russian witches. Seventeenth-century court cases do not provide any evidence of erotic relationships with the devil or of any satanic pact made on that basis. Russian witches, she claims, were driven to magic by the need to earn a living rather than sexual attraction to Satan, and as such remained free of erotic associations.[65] This could also explain the predominance of men over women among the prosecuted, as the lack of sexual liaisons between female witches and Satan deprived accusers of one particular form of illicit female behavior and put women on the same footing as men.

However, sexual attraction to evil and Satan constituted a popular plot in several demonological novels in the seventeenth century. The *Povest' o besnovatoi zhene Solomonii* (*A tale of the demon-possessed woman Solomonia*) represents a typical case. The main character, Solomonia, is the daughter of a priest and she engages in sexual relations with the devil on her wedding night, after her husband left the room. Every day demons in the bodies of handsome young men come to her and have sex with her. When her husband learns of this he takes Solomonia to her father, but demons find their way to her. They try to control her, ordering her to kill her father and live with them. When Solomonia refuses, they torture her. She gives birth to six demons colored black and blue. Finally another woman, who had lived with demons before, teaches her how to rid herself of their power. Solomonia follows the rite, which includes cursing demons in the church, going on pilgrimages to the tombs of certain saints and having visions of female saints, and finally recovers. In 1671 Solomonia told the story of her cure to the Ustiug authorities when they questioned her and the priest leading the investigation wrote down the story and his conversations with Solomonia.[66] Solomonia was not put on trial, possibly because she was cured through Christian rites. Such plots involving sexual relations between women and demons were quite widespread in Russian literature and if in the cases that have been discovered sex was not mentioned, there might well be a different explanation (we probably have yet to find such cases, or they were destroyed due to their nature, as many courts regularly cleaned up their archives in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries).

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[65] Kivelson, "Male witches," 610.

[66] A. V. Pigin, *Iz istorii russkoi demonologii XVII v. Povest' o besnovatoi zhene Solomonii: Issledovanie i teksty* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 1998), 1–110.

We should also look for explanations in the legal field. Court cases represent the facts of law. They are initiated, conducted, tried and closed on a legal basis. In European law of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with its focus on the law of contract deeply entrenched in natural law and the theory of the social contract, the concept of the satanic pact or a contract between Satan and a human being (usually a woman) is quite understandable, but Russian law did not take into account this theory of a social contract to the same extent; natural law did not fully establish itself in political and legal theory until the end of the eighteenth century. The notion of crime differed as well: the element of public danger took priority over private security, so it was generally only those cases which threatened public order, including the political establishment, that were brought in front of criminal courts. For example, crimes such as rape were still considered to be of a private nature unless they disrupted public order, as in the cases of military servicemen raping fellow citizens (the *Ulozhenie*, chapter 7, art. 30). Witchcraft accusations became subject to criminal procedure when they caused serious disruption in the public sphere or when the plaintiffs could prove that such disruption would take place. Fear of a breach of contract or the concluding of an unlawful contract with the intent to harm a private citizen had not penetrated the minds of officials and judges, as the private citizen was not the focus of state law. It was up to the local community to negotiate ways around magic, interpret certain actions and enact punishment for them.

Russian law also focused more on the result rather than on the cause. The majority of the court records available confirm that the notion of premeditation and planning did not interest judges as much as the actual result: harm done, persons killed, animals injured, and so on. The satanic pact suggests planning and choice, and the contract involves agreement between at least two parties on certain activities that would lead to their mutual benefit. Peter I tried to introduce this differentiation, ordering much harsher punishment for witchcraft resulting from a satanic pact. In order to have a more detailed picture and more consistent explanations, one should definitely place witchcraft not within the ethnographical or religious ideas of the age, but within the legal frameworks of the time and determine how it operated as a *crime*, not as magic.

The focus on diabolical witchcraft and demonology has a long history in the European historiography of witchcraft, but recent research has weakened this emphasis. Without denying that major mass panics occurred, it was not diabolic witchcraft that led to cases in which the image of the devil was not necessarily present to be brought before the courts. Marko

Nenonen, in his critical remarks on witchcraft historiography, insisted that the majority of the cases that went to trial in England, the Nordic countries, Russia and Hungary dealt with popular magic, malevolent magic and superstition rather than with satanic pacts, the witches' Sabbath and sexual relations with the devil. In fact, it now seems that cases of diabolical witchcraft, which required a considerable amount of theological knowledge on the part of both the accused and prosecutors, were a highly unusual phenomenon.[67]

The obsession of historians with finding a general pattern to the witch-hunts will inevitably lead to the creation of some other dominant scheme with the same consequences for witch-hunt historiography. It would be better to suggest that there might not be any conventional picture and let diversity have its head.

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[67] Marko Nenonen, "Witch-Hunt Historiography from the 18th Century Encyclopaedias to the Present Research: a New Geography," in *Themes in European History: Essays from the 2nd International Conference on European History*, eds. Michael Aradas and Nicholas C. J. Pappas (Athens: The Athens Institute for Education and research, 2005), 299–313.

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WITCHCRAFT AND ETHNICITY: A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SAMI SHAMANISM IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY NORTHERN NORWAY

Rune Blix Hagen

In three months of the spring and summer of 1599, the Danish-Norwegian king, Christian IV (1577–1648), led a dramatic seaborne expedition to the north of his lengthy realm. Their voyage proceeded to Vardø and further east to northern Russia. Along the coast the fleet confiscated English and Dutch merchant ships, and claimed sovereignty over the waters of northern Russia. The overall purpose of this expedition was to clear His Majesty the King's "streams" of the pirates, freebooters and other undesirable elements who often traversed the area to the northeast of the North Cape without paying Danish-Norwegian duties.

During the early modern period the extent of this northeastern part of Denmark-Norway was uncertain, as there were disputed frontiers with Russia and Sweden/Finland. The indigenous people of northern Fennoscandia, the Sami, lived in all three countries and traveled between them to trade with each other and with foreigners. Living and moving within three countries caused a problem. What the native populace regarded as common districts presented a challenge to national aspirations. This was especially the case for the conflicts between Sweden and Denmark-Norway in a period of territorial state formation. The Sami and their special pattern of mobility were considered by the Nordic state authorities as subjects in need of proper integration into the individual realms. The indigenous way of life caused increasing concern for representatives of the emerging state powers.[1] Gradually, the effort to control the native people of the contested territory came to center around Sami skills in performing different kinds of magic. Portrayed as evil witches from the remote north, the Sami became infamous all over Europe as *The Lapland Witches*—a favorite and powerful motif in travel narratives, literary fiction and demonology

[1] Lars Ivar Hansen, "Tax, trade and diversification among the Northern Sami during the 16th century," in *Transference. Interdisciplinary Communications 2008/2009*, ed. Willy Østreng (Oslo: Centre for Advanced Study, January 2010), internet publication, retrieved 01.10.2012 from http://www.cas.uio.no/Publications/Seminar/0809Hansen.pdf.

throughout the early modern period. Even William Shakespeare, in his *Comedy of Errors* from the early 1590s, mentioned the Lapland Sorcerers, and the Scottish king, James VI (1566–1625), told his readers, in a book on demonology from 1597, that "the devil finds greatest ignorance and barbarity . . . in such wild parts of the world, as Lapland and Finland".[2]

Taking the 1599 journey as my point of departure, I will try to describe some of the issues relating to cultural encounters with the natives of the extreme north. During the penetration of unknown northern lands, the Sami were perceived by state authorities as unreliable and politically suspect. I hope to show how their exotic forms of sorcery sustained these kinds of images, and manifested themselves through witchcraft persecutions in the county of Finnmark. Step by step in scholarship, the question of Sami magic and their pantheistic religion became one of shamanism. In the second part of the article I will present some critical views of this long-standing and stereotypical concept of shamanism and the debate that surrounds it. The discussion will be illuminated by the proceedings of two seventeenth-century witch trials which involved Sami men.

"Ganfinnus"

On their journey northward to Finnmark and the Kola Peninsula more than four hundred years ago, Christian IV and his men came into contact with various forms of northern Sami sorcery. Several of the largest ships sailed in the vicinity of Kola from May 15 to May 28, 1599. The seamen had plenty of time to become thoroughly acquainted with the island of

[2] Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts, eds., *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland. James VI's Demonology and the North Berwick Witches* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 414, and Owen Davies, *Cunning-Folk. Popular Magic in English History* (New York: Hambledon and London, 2003), 179. See also my entry on Lapland Witches in *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft. The western Tradition*, Volume III, edited by Richard M. Golden (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 625–627. A most relevant comment on the lingering images of the witches up north is the chapter on "Locke and the Lapland Witches" in Ann Talbot's book *The Great Ocean of Knowledge. The Influence of Travel Literature on the Work of John Locke* (Brill: Leiden and Boston 2010), 45–62. The concept of the Lapland witches refers back to the indigenous people of the north, the Sami (formerly known as Laplanders or Laps/Lapps), who live in the northern part of Russia, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Today the Sami call their land *Sapmi*, and the whole area of northern Scandinavia and northern Russia is often named The North Calotte. For a fruitful discussion of the categorization and classification through the centuries relating to designations such as "Sami", "Lapps" and "Finns", see Bjørg Evjen and Lars Ivar Hansen, "One people—many names," *Continuity and Change* 24, No. 2 (2009): 214–216.

Kildin. Having run aground on a submerged rock, the flagship *Victor* had been heavily damaged and had to be careened at Kildin. The repairs took several days. The travel logs show that their visit gave them ample time to explore local flora, nature and the way of living. Shortly before the ship set sail to Vardø, one of the king's men, *Hans Lindenov*, came into contact with a Sami who could "gand" (*ganfinnus*), or cast spells. Lindenov paid the Sami in order to hear news from Copenhagen. Unfortunately, Lindenov had to leave rather hastily while the Sami was beginning his preparations. It is suggested here that the Sami was in the middle of his trance-like ritual connected to prophecy. Even though this story concludes rather abruptly because of the Dane's departure, it is of interest because it tells of acquaintance with Sami sorcery. This Russian Sami could send his soul sufficiently far away to discover the fate of people living in Copenhagen. The Danes' belief that the ability to "gand" was synonymous with evil sorcery or maleficium and shamanism, is also notable. Evil witchcraft and shamanism could be considered the black and white sides of the same belief system.

Traces of cultural encounters with the magic of the northern Sami can been found in the two travel logs of the king's personal secretaries, Sivert Grubbe (1566–1636) and Jonas Carisius (1571–1619). At the end of May 1599, while the ships were docked in Vardø and making preparations for their homeward voyage, the king was paid a visit by several Sami bailiffs. The king made use of this opportunity to gain information on the imposition of Swedish taxes on the Sami inhabitants of northern Fennoscandia. Carisius, however, was more interested in one of the deputy bailiffs who could "gand". Grubbe also described his meeting with a "gand-Sami" (*ganfinne*):

> There was a gand-Sami on the island, who was called Quikwas. The District Governor of Vardøhus, Hans Olsen Koefod, referred to him and told me how he had said that our captain [meaning the King] was in great peril on board his ship, but that he, on such-and-such a day, would return unharmed, something which actually happened. This Quikwas gave me one of his sons, who looked like a dwarf with an odd appearance, but his mother refused to let him go.[3]

[3] My translation from Rune Blix Hagen and Per Einar Sparboe, eds., *Kongens reise til det ytterste nord. Dagbøker fra Christian IVs tokt til Finnmark og Kola i 1599*, Ravnetrykk nr. 33 (Tromsø: 2004), 74.

Consequently, the Sami kept the District Governor informed about what had happened with the king during the dangerous voyage along the Kola coast. The description of Quikwas as a "gand-Sami" indicates that this man was able to cast spells by making use of "gand" sorcery. Obviously the District Governor believed in the Sami's skills, and once again we see the close connection between a Sami who masters divination and black magic. According to Éva Pócs, "The belief systems of European shamanism and witchcraft developed as twin siblings of common parentage and were closely bound to each other."[4]

The Fight against Sami Sorcery and Magic

The Danes had heard rumors of Sami sorcery, as had many others throughout early modern Europe. Records indicate that the members of the 1599 expedition experienced the indigenous people's sorcery with both fearful interest and excited curiosity. Even though numerous witches had been put to death at the stake throughout Norway and Denmark, at the end of the sixteenth century no one had yet instigated a similar policy of persecution towards the Sami for their particular skills. But not too many years would elapse before Christian IV turned into a monarch agitated by demons, eager to root out all forms of sorcery, including the practices of the Sami. As a collective group, the Sami posed a threat to the territorial integrity of Denmark-Norway, its state-building and its endeavors to expand and spread civilization and Christianity in the far North.

Since the voyage to the northern regions was his first major foreign venture, Christian IV made sure that an efficient and energetic commanding officer was commissioned at Vardøhus. The aforementioned *Hans Olsen Koefod* was endowed with Vardøhus Fortress and the county of Finnmark in June 1597. He traveled vast distances in northern Norway in the winters of 1597/98 and 1598/99 in order to investigate Swedish taxation of the Sami. He presented his extensive findings to the king. It is likely that it was Koefod's report on the Swedish drive towards the northern coast of Norway that convinced Christian IV himself to sail northwards. Koefod

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[4] Éva Pócs, *Between the Living and Dead: A perspective on witches and seers in the Early Modern Age* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), 166. Raisa Maria Toivo's discussion of harmful and benevolent magic seems relevant in this context: see her work *Witchcraft and Gender in Early Modern Society. Finland and the Wider European Experience* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 129–132.

Figure 6.1. "Domen": During the winter of 1662/63 more than thirty women accused of harmful witchcraft, of which some were mere girls, were brought before the court in eastern Finnmark. Of these, nineteen women were found guilty and burned at the stake. Many of the women told the court that they had been celebrating, dancing and drinking with the devil at a mountain called Domen. Domen can be found between the small fishing villages of Kiberg and Vardø. The mountain is about 150 meters high. Water painting by Hans H. Lilienskiold c. 1698. By courtesy of the University Library of Tromsø.

was known for his highly satisfactory handling of the crown's northern policies. Not only did he disclose Swedish expansionism, but he also impounded goods on which Russian bailiffs had charged a levy. This stern and determined bachelor was the king's right-hand man. Unfortunately, the energetic Hans Olsen Koefod suddenly died in Vardø in May 1601, barely forty years old. The news of his death in the summer dealt a heavy blow to King Christian. There was, however, doubt as to whether Koefod had died of natural causes. There were strong rumors that his death was due to a spell which had been cast upon him. A Norwegian and a Sami, both men, were said to have joined forces in order to bewitch the king's emissary. As a consequence, the stage was set for the largest peacetime persecution in Norwegian history. Vardø became the site of the first two bonfires used in the convictions of the Sami; *Morten Olsen,* from the Sami *siida* community in Varanger , and the Norwegian, *Christen Schreder* living

in Vardø, were condemned to death at the stake for having cast an evil spell on the District Governor. It is likely that their mutual conspiracy involved a payment made to the Sami to cast a lethal spell on Koefod. Morten and Christen may have conspired with others in their plot against the king's civil servant, but only these two are mentioned in administrative reports, since large sums of money were left in their estates.[5] The first two witch trials in the north were omens of escalating domestic dangers, in addition to the external perils posed by Swedes, Russians and foreign merchants.

Fearful of sorcery, the Norwegians, according to reports forwarded to the king in 1608, did not dare to inhabit the fjords of Finnmark where the Sami lived.[6] Thus the king, in a letter dated February 1609, commanded his two northern Norwegian district governors to hunt down and eradicate all kinds of Sami sorcery. Less than ten years after his great voyage to the north, the king decreed that those who practiced it would be put to death without mercy.[7]

If all individuals suspected for some kind of magic in the county of Finnmark are included, twenty-seven Sami were tried in the civil courts between 1593 and 1692.[8] Charges of sorcery were instigated nearly every time serious conflicts emerged between the Sami and Danish-Norwegian authorities. Among the Sami convicted for witchcraft in Finnmark, the

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[5] Lr.V 1601–1602 and 1605–1606, packet 1 (Microfilm No. 519), Statsarkivet i Tromsø (National Archive of Tromsø).

[6] Norske Rigsregistranter (NRR) IV, 1603–1618: 242–245. The fjords in question are Altafjorden, Laksefjorden, and especially Tanafjorden.

[7] Norske Rigsregistranter (NRR) IV, 1603–1618: 296–301, see page 300, subsection 7, for the king's strong command concerning Sami witchcraft.

[8] In all three counties—Nordland, Troms and Finnmark—which make up north Norway, the civil courts persecuted thirty-seven Sami individuals from 1593 to 1695. Of these, twenty men and eight women were burned at the stake for practicing witchcraft. Between 1639 and 1749, in the regions of Swedish and Finnish Lapland, at least seventy-three Sami males and only three Sami females were prosecuted on charges of using drums and practicing sacrificial rituals. Few of them received death penalties, however. For the cases of the northern parts of Finland and Sweden, see the article by Karin Granqvist, " 'Thou shalt have no other Gods before me (Exodus 20:3)'. Witchcraft and Superstition trials in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Swedish Lapland," in *Kulturkonfrontation i Lappmarken, Sex essäer om mötet mellan samer och svenskar*, edited by Peter Sköld and Kristina Kram (Umeå: Kulturgräns norr 1998), 13–29. The different patterns of witch-hunting related to the indigenous people of Norway, Finland and Sweden highlight some very interesting issues, but can only be hinted at in this context. It seems that the persecution became more severe in northern Norway because it took place at an earlier stage in the seventeenth century than that of Finnish and Swedish Lapland. The differences in chronology should, furthermore, be seen in the context of the strategies of penetration and expansion of the different states in the region.

gender division was eight women to nineteen men. However, it is important to remember that most of the people involved in the witchcraft trials of Finnmark were Norwegian women. The Sami made up "only" 20 percent of the people who were persecuted for some kind of witchcraft in this period. In other words, the witch trials of the true north are distinctive in a European context because of the simultaneous prosecutions of Norwegians, most of them married women, and of the native Sami, most of them men. The involvement of the Sami in this important region of witch persecution has been downplayed by previous scholars.[9]

Registered witch-trials in the county of Finnmark 1593–1692:

Sami—Female	8
Sami—Male	19
Norwegians—Female	103
Norwegians—Male	8
Total	*138*[10]

The Demonological Interpretation of Shamanism

Sami witchcraft, rituals and magic were known to have several distinctive characteristics, according to educated Europeans of the early modern age. The Sami were renowned for their abilities to tell fortunes and predict future events. Ever since the Norse sagas had been written, this feature of the indigenous populations of the North had been well known.

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[9] Despite the fact that the Sami comprise a minority in this connection, my numbers show higher figures than scholars have previously believed. In his classical essay from the late 1960s on the European witch-craze, H. R. Trevor-Roper called the Sami "harmless dissenters" and wrote that "... the Lapland witches remained always outside the general European witch-craze". About twenty years later William Monter, in his survey of early modern Scandinavian witchcraft, emphasized that Finnmark "... saw prodigious numbers of witch-trials in the seventeenth century—all of them, however, directed against coastal fishermen rather than the inland Lapps". See Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 91, and E. William Monter, "Scandinavian witchcraft in Anglo-American Perspective," in *Early Modern European witchcraft. Centers and Peripheries*, edited by Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 430.

[10] A total number of 138 human beings involved in the persecution indicates that these witch hunts were among the harshest in Europe, measured in terms of trials per head of the population (about 1,500 Sami and 1,500 Norwegians were living in Finnmark in the middle of the seventeenth century). In the words of Liv Helene Willumsen: "In a restricted area in the periphery of Europe, the highest percentage of witchcraft trials in Europe in relation to the population is found", cited from her PhD thesis "Seventeenth-Century Witchcraft Trials in Scotland and Northern Norway" (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2008), 110.

The Sami people are described in these sagas as highly skilled in various kinds of magic. In general, Old Norse sources give the impression that all Sami were great sorcerers.[11] It was forbidden to visit the Sami of Finnmark, according to the medieval Norwegian laws, to have one's fortune told. Closely associated with their powers of prophecy were the abilities of the Sami to narrate events by invoking dead souls. Through the use of a magic drum (*runebomme*), and other rituals, a Sami shaman (*noaidi*), according to reports from outsiders, would allow himself to fall into a trance—at which time his spirit would be led far away. Upon awakening, he could tell a patron of events that had occurred at the site to which his spirit had traveled.

Satan himself had given these drums to the Sami, according to Christians immersed in demonological concepts of shamanism. The drum, or instrument of the devil, they claimed, was the means by which a sorcerer would summon his demons. Such demons were believed to reside in a drum, and these were revived and called into action by striking the drum. In this manner, each drumbeat was intended for Satan in hell. While in his satanic trance, a shaman would communicate with his attendant demon, who, because of his tremendous acuity and faculty for moving swiftly, could divulge global events to his master. As a result of these beliefs, early eighteenth-century missionaries appointed to the Sami regions made arrangements to burn the drums and to destroy the pagan gods of the Sami. The demonizing of this pantheistic religion continued throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As for the Sami who believed in their abilities to predict the future, they were accused of being satanic prophets. This process can be perceived as an integrated part of the diabolization of Scandinavian folk belief at the time.[12]

"Gand" was the third kind of sorcery attributed to the Sami. The casting of spells—or "gand" (*diabolicus gandus*)—was what Norwegians, and other pious men and women, feared most during the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Sami were known to cast their evil spells across vast distances. In fact, such spells could be carried upon the northern winds and result in illnesses among people far to the south in Europe. Shooting or sending spells "on the wind" were also well-known

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[11] Else Mundal, "The perception of the Saamis and their religion in Old Norse sources," in *Shamanism and Northern Ecology*, ed. Juha Y. Pentikäinen (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996), 112.

[12] Charles Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft. Print and Visual Culture in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 230.

forms of malefic magic in Russia.[13] These beliefs were asserted with great conviction by some of the greatest intellectuals residing in France, England and Denmark. Among others, the famous French jurist and demonologist Jean Bodin (1529/30–1596) had a lot to say about the evil magic of "les sorciers de Lappie".[14] The "gand" was imagined to be something physical, a kind of magical bullet. In the middle of the sixteenth century, for instance, the exiled Swedish archbishop Olaus Magnus (1490–1557) spoke of this kind of spell as a small leaden arrow.[15] Similarly, in a poem written at the end of the seventeenth-century, the Nordland vicar, the fire-and-brimstone preacher Petter Dass (1646–1707), described the Sami spells as "vile, dark blue flies":

> The Lapp may well use his old 'gann' from afar;
> The flies of Beelzebub powerful are
> And bite where the witchcraft determines
>
> They go to a man or they go to a beast,
> Attacking the helpless deserving it least,
> Spread terror wherever they wander.
>
> To anger and peevishness lightly aroused,
> The Lapp takes his vengeance in enemy's house
> Sends 'gann' to his enemy's premise.[16]

Historical court records from Finnmark and Nordland offer specific descriptions and actual illustrations of the Sami "gand". One of the passages even mentions that the "gand" resembles a mouse with heads at both ends.[17] Consequently, the Sami were known to bewitch by casting spells upon people. This is the kind of bewitching that is reported in the Sami sorcery trials of seventeenth-century Finnmark. Some witch trials were also said to contain elements related to shamanism, but only a few.

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[13] W. F. Ryan, "The Witchcraft Hysteria in Early Modern Europe: Was Russia an Exception?" *The Slavonic and East European review* 76, No. 1 (1998): 51, 67.

[14] Jean Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1988; reprint of the first edition, Paris: 1580), 98b. See also Bodin's chapter on ecstasy, book 2, chapter 5, 90a–94b. Bodin got his information about "les sorciers de Lappie" from Olaus Magnus' magnificent *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*, first issued in Rome 1555. See the English translation *Description of the Northern Peoples, 1555*, edited by Peter Foote, translated by Peter Fisher and Humphrey Higgins (London: Hakluyt Society 1996–1998), especially book three of the first volume.

[15] Magnus, *Description of the Northern Peoples*, book 3, chap. 16.

[16] Petter Dass. *The Trumpet of Nordland* (Minneapolis: St. Olaf College Press, 1954), 73.

[17] Tingbok for Finnmark 12, fol. 55f. and Lagting for Finnmark 3, fol. 74f. Court books are kept at Statsarkivet i Tromsø (National Archive of Tromsø). This particular case took place in 1679 and 1680.

Sami Magic at the Edge of Civilization

During the medieval period and the beginning of the modern era, the northern peoples were renowned throughout Europe for their wind magic. Numerous reports began to surface of foreign traders who had purchased wind from the natives.[18] Two people played a large part in giving the Nordic people a reputation for sorcery related to wind magic. One was the Danish chronicler Saxo Grammaticus (c.1150–c.1220), while the other was the Swedish Olaus Magnus (1490–1557), mentioned above. Their accounts of the tenacious belief in sorcery among the Sami and Nordic peoples became well known when their writings were distributed during the sixteenth century, which was also the golden age of Europe's scholarly demonology. Saxo explains how some northern peoples, such as the Finns and the Biarmians, could control the elements of nature, and use magic to defend themselves instead of weapons. Saxo writes about weather magic as primarily a Nordic specialty.[19] As examples of Nordic sorcery, Olaus Magnus mentions wind magic, spell casting, fortune-telling, the ability to foresee the future, writing magic signs, singing incantations, and brewing witches' stews that brought good fortune. Since the northern folk were in harmony with nature, they could interpret the weather. He explains how the inhabitants of the far north could attach "wind knots" to straps and used magical powers to protect against harm. The inhabitants of Finland and Lapland are experts at this, writes the apostle of Nordic culture, at the same time branding the art of sorcery as mad and deranged:

> The entire world is irresistibility fascinated by this devilish art. Sailors are forced to buy wind because of the wind conditions in the north, and for a small change of money they get three bewitched knots tied to a strap. Bad things will happen to those who doubt the power of the knots, but they are nonetheless forced into seeking advice from sorcerers.[20]

Although Saxo Grammaticus and Olaus Magnus mention the art of Sami sorcery, this art is always placed within a greater tradition of Nordic sorcery. Sami and other people within the Old Norse world are able to cause

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[18] Ekkehard Witthoff, *Grenzen der Kultur: Differenzwahrnehmung in Randbereichen (Irland, Lappland, Russland) und europäische Identität in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1997), 74ff.

[19] Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum* (København: Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab & Gads Forlag, 2005; First Latin edition published in Paris 1514).

[20] Magnus, *Description of the Northern Peoples*, 173–174. See also the drawing that accompanies chapter 16 on page 172.

bad weather. In both cultures magic is used in much the same way to cause harm and healing. Nonetheless, the comments on Sami sorcery and its diabolical characteristics were what caught the attention of early modern European people. The Sami, like other peoples who lived on the geographical and cultural periphery, were considered to be the most potent sorcerers, and their practices increasingly became associated with the notion that the northern regions were a hothouse for the forging of witchcraft and idolatry. Thus the Sami who resided in the fjords and on the tundra of Finnmark were drawn into the witch persecutions of the seventeenth century, albeit less than their Norwegian neighbors, as we have seen.

The Enemy Within

An observer might easily be led to believe that the indigenous people of the north, who were addicted to witchcraft, contributed to the large numbers of witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark. As noted, those who lived on the social and geographic periphery of the known world, such as the indigenous Sami and Native American people of the early modern era, were easily regarded as the worst sorcerers. In her analysis of witchcraft during the age of early colonialism in Mexico, Laura A. Lewis writes that "Spaniards and others attributed the most powerful forms of witchcraft to Chichimecs, who were at the greatest geographical and cultural distance from Spanish colonization and thus from Spanish control".[21] The Sami were in the same situation as seen from Copenhagen. However, although they were associated with evil magic and superstition, the indigenous people of the north were not those who suffered most when the witch trials increased in number, just as the indigenous peoples of America were less affected by them than the colonists. The native population was treated as a primitive people, and were basically left to themselves as long as there was no unrest or confrontation.[22] The policy of a thorough integration of the ethnic minority into Danish-Norwegian society started at the beginning of the seventeenth century and lasted for the next two centuries. To make these indigenous people faithful tax paying subjects of the Danish

[21] Laura Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, And Caste in colonial Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 108.

[22] Wolfgang Behringer, *Witches and witch-hunts: a global history* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004), 144.

Crown, the elite had to use strong and sometimes brutal measures. It must be remembered, however, that serious conflicts between the Sami and the Danish-Norwegian authorities during this period of state penetration only emerged when their interests clashed. As Anthony Giddens has pointed out, the general case in conquest states was that indigenous populations would be left to carry on their pre-existing patterns of conduct as long as they paid their taxes and did not hinder territorial expansion.[23] For the local power elite the real threat came not from the border people but from the secret enemy within, or what Wolfgang Behringer has called *the internal outsider*.[24] These enemies were found largely among the women living right in the middle of the Norwegian settlements and communities on the shores of the Arctic Ocean.

From the late sixteenth century onwards, the North became more valuable to the expanding European economy as a result of the growing trade between England, Scotland, the Netherlands and northern Russia. Sweden and Denmark-Norway, too, did everything they could to mark their territorial interests along the northern frontiers. A greater interest in the indigenous people of the North was a by-product of these aspirations to achieve increased territorial and financial control. As regards the witch trials in Finnmark, it could be said that the trials began with the persecution of a few Sami individuals, but then gained full momentum when it was perceived that a collective network of evil Norwegian women was at work. The judicial treatment of the terrifying Sami helped to lay the groundwork for a much wider witch-hunt. Without the Danish-Norwegian regime's assault on the frontier people, the local governors would have been less likely to attempt the annihilation of an imagined sect of Norwegian witches with the determination that was shown in the small fishing communities along the coast of Finnmark. In other words, the story of the brutal witch persecution in Arctic Europe is a part of the well-known phenomenon in which conflicting frontier issues in the wake of clashes of interests, create new kinds of enemies. The witch hysteria in the far north of Norway had a pattern that resembles Gary K. Waite's findings in his work on Anabaptists and witches. According to him:

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[23] Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence: A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1985), 51–52.

[24] Wolfgang Behringer, *Witches*, 144. In the words of Michael D. Bailey: "Rather than an obvious threat from outside, witchcraft was the ultimate manifestation of the secret enemy within." See his book *Magic and Superstition in Europe* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 155.

> (the) demonizing rhetoric against a threatening group . . . might again penetrate the mindset of the populace and be readily redirected to other 'outsiders'. In the medieval and early modern eras, many princes used this adaptable popular suspicion to rid themselves of enemies of the state.[25]

The Difficult Concept of Shamanism

During the last thirty-odd years, some historians and other scholars working on early modern magic and witchcraft have debated the definition and concept of shamanism.[26] According to a recent study by the British historian Emma Wilby, ". . . there is no consensus about what 'shamanistic experience' or, more fundamentally, 'shamanism' itself, actually means".[27] I would like to highlight some of these issues by presenting two witchcraft trials involving Sami men from Finnmark who took part in magic rituals of the type often designated as "shamanism". However, these examples do not display any obvious traces of altered states of consciousness, which seems to be of most importance when identifying shamanic practices. When scholars of shamanism claim that the Sami people practiced full-blown shamanism, including shape shifting and soul journeys in a trace state during their interaction with the spirits, they almost always use Norse literature, the sagas, folklore, arctic fairy-lore, or tales from outside observers, like the priest Olaus Magnus, as their evidence. Very seldom does their evidence include empirical references to court records of the witch persecutions of the Sami people.[28]

In May 1627 a witchcraft case was brought against a man named Quiwe Baarsen, who lived at Årøya in the fjord of Alta, Finnmark. The judicial case

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[25] Gary K. Waite, *Eradicating the Devil's Minions Anabaptists and Witches in Reformation Europe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 197.

[26] Of modern works related to the topic, Ronald Hutton's book on shamans stands out as perhaps *the* essential contribution to this intellectual discourse: see his *Shamans. Siberian Spirituality and the Western Imagination* (New York: Hambledon and London, 2001). One of the most detailed studies with genuine primary sources on shamanistic traditions is Anna-Leena Siikala's work *Mythic Images and Shamanism. A Perspective on Kalevala Poetry* (Helsinki: Academica Scientiarum Fennica, 2002). This is mostly about Finnish traditions, though seen in a north-European context. Siikala offers a detailed and deeper analysis of one shamanistic tradition and, furthermore, an analysis of the transformation of the shamanistic tradition into models of new seers and wise men.

[27] Emma Wilby, *The Visions of Isobel Gowdie. Magic, Witchcraft and Dark Shamanism in Seventeenth-Century Scotland* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2011), 245.

[28] A recent example could be the work by Edward Bever called *The Realities of Witchcraft and Popular Magic in Early Modern Europe. Culture, Cognition, and Everyday Life* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 187.

was conducted over two days in a small fishing community called Hasvåg, on the coast of the western part of Finnmark. Baarsen was a Sami who came from Sweden and had been working for the Norwegians at Årøya for some time. The judicial case turned out to be the very first description of the use of a Sami drum (*runebomme*) in Nordic legal sources. During the court session Baarsen described and explained the purpose and meaning of his drum playing, which he had been practicing for years together with other Sami:

> When they want to cast runic spells, they use a Sami drum. The drum is made of pine root and covered with reindeer hide or buckskin. They use a piece of wood as a handle under the drum, and claws from every kind of animal native to this county are hung around the drum. Nine lines are painted on the drum with alder bark; this bark is also used to paint domestic pillows in the huts of the Sami. The first line on the drum represents their god, the second the sun, and the third the moon; these, in turn, symbolise the animals which can bring them luck or inflict harm on their enemies. And when two sorcerers (gandmen) want to test whose craft is the strongest, they paint two antler-butting reindeer on the drum. Whichever one turns out to be the strongest will indicate which master is cleverest and most cunning in his skills. And when they want to ask their apostle (spirit) about something, they will take some small pieces of copper and hang them on the wings of a bird made of copper, which they then place on the drum. Striking the drum with a horn hammer, lined with beaver skin, the bird leaps around on the drum and finally stops on one of the lines. Then the master knows immediately what the apostle (spirit or demon, as some would say) has answered. To protect the master, or whoever else may be in the hut, from accident, they beat the drum with the hammer. He whose bird falls from the drum will not live long.[29]

The bailiff also asked Baarsen if he had studied this craft for some time. Such things were introduced to him when he was a mere boy, he replied. He was also asked how often he himself had been involved in beating such a drum. In reply to the question he said that he took part once when many sorcerers came together to drum, to see whose craft was strongest. The Sami was also interrogated about who had taught him to raise the wind and make wind knots. Quiwe informed the court that he had learned his skills in Swedish Lapland many years ago.

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[29] Court Book (*Tingbok*), No. 2 for Finnmark, March 1627–August 1633, 4a–5b, Sorenskriveren i Finnmark, kept at the National Archive of Tromsø. An English and German translation of the case against Quiwe Baarsen can be found on my website *The Shaman of Alta* at http://ansatte.uit.no/rha003/shaman.html (URL retrieved 01.10.2012).

In the verdict, the local court made it clear that Quiwe Baarsen had made a free confession about the use of diabolic spells and that he had used witchcraft to drown five people at sea by weather magic. He stirred up water and wind by throwing a piglet into the sea. The wind became too strong and five fishermen perished in the storm. Because of this kind of weather magic the court sentenced Quiwe Baarsen to be burned to death at the stake. However, the final verdict does not mention anything about drum playing.

Sixty-five years later, in early 1692, a similar case of witchcraft was brought against an old Sami called Anders Poulsen. The trial was held in Vadsø, a small fishing community near the Russian and Swedish borders in the very northeastern part of Denmark-Norway. In contrast to the Baarsen case, drum playing was at the center of this trial. Indeed, this particular case turned out to be the most important source of information on the magic drums of the Sami. Historians have singled it out as the best source of information on Sami shamanism in northern Scandinavia.[30] The Sami's confiscated magic drum has been preserved, and it is one of the few drums containing symbols and figures that have been described by the drum's owner.

The Magic Drum

The court, the local authorities, and the local council must have followed with great interest and curiosity how the Sami Anders Poulsen, on a winter's day in February 1692, picked up his confiscated drum from the courtroom table, and how he began to give instructions in magic drum playing. In other words, Paulsen gave a stunning performance that the court had never seen before. Crossing himself and his instrument, he quietly prayed in Finnish as he lovingly played upon it—allowing all to see the drum in use. He shed bitter tears and appeared to be praying with the utmost devotion. The old man drummed with his hammer. The drum's palm danced up and down with the movement of his hand and his heavy beats upon the drum's surface, and he loudly implored his gods not to fear the Norwegians whom he now played for. He continued to play and was finally answered by his spirits.

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[30] Einar Niemi, "Anders Paulsen," in *Norsk Biografisk Leksikon*, bd.1 (Oslo: 1999), 84.

Figure 6.2. A shamanistic drum confiscated from Andreas Poulsen in 1691. Sámiid Vuorká-Dávvirat, De Samiske Samlinger, Karasjok. The photo was first used on page 310 in the book by Hans H. Lilienskiold, Trolldom og Ugudelighet I 1600-tallets Finnmark, Redigert og bearbeidet av Rune Blix Hagen og Per Einar Sparboe, and published by Ravnetrykk, University Library in Tromsø, Tromsø 1998.

Anders Poulsen was charged with possession of, and the use of, an instrument otherwise known as a *runebomme*. With this instrument he had "practised his evil and ungodly sorcery", according to the indictment. The prosecution, represented by deputy bailiff Olle Andersen from Vadsø, headed the case and led the cross-examination. According to Andersen's statements in court, he wished the verdict to be severe. Two whole days had been spent attempting to record thoroughly all the details of the magic drum. In the concluding remarks of the deputy bailiff, he pleaded for the judge to set an example of great severity in the face of such ungodliness and shameful devilry. The court documents show that the deputy bailiff had considered burning the accused at the stake. Poulsen, maintained Olle Andersen, was a sorcerer and a heathen who had forfeited his life. He should be "burned to a cinder upon the flames". His drumming was considered a ritual invocation of demonic power. Poulsen was said to have awakened demons by playing upon his drum, each beat supposedly echoing in the ears of Satan himself. Indeed, the Sami drums were gifts from the devil to the midnight peoples of the high north. It was the devil who was responsible for the magic drum and its symbols, according to the court minutes.

Throughout the case we can see how important it was for the local elites to underline the black variant of the shamanistic magician. But they were less certain when it came to the exact nature of the crime. However, if they were uncertain about his drum playing, they knew that he somehow or another had been practicing improper and superstitious rites. In the 1692 case, the judicial conclusions and grounds for judgment show how the Danish-Norwegian people at the top of the regional power structure interpreted what was said in a way easy for them and their culture to comprehend. A benevolent healer Poulsen was not, but rather a diabolic sorcerer and a worker of harmful magic. To them, Poulsen's strange tales about the drum and about Sami magic could be more easily understood when interpreted from a demonological point of view.[31] Throughout

[31] All citations and the whole examination of the case are based on the legal documents from the court sessions in 1692; Court book (*Tingbok*) no. 21 (1692–1695) for Finnmark, 1a–15b, Sorenskriveren i Finnmark, kept at the National Archive of Tromsø. Poulsen's well-used *runebomme* ended up in Copenhagen, in 1694. Today we can find the several centuries-old magic drum where it naturally belongs: in the Karasjok Sami Collections (Sámiid Vuorká Dávvirat), Finnmark. The drum was left to the Sami Collections in 1979, by the National Museum of Copenhagen. A reconstruction of Poulsen's drum can be seen at http://www.ub.uit.no/utstilling/hekser/utst3.htm (from an exhibition at the University Library of Tromsø on early modern images of the far north). There is also a photo of the

the entire case, we can witness a typical example of how Christian attitudes can demonize non-Christian religions that are overtly pantheistic. The Sami's belief in magic as benevolent knowledge was systematically transformed into notions of diabolic witchcraft. The language of elaborated demonology played an important part within the elite discourses of the case.

From this point of view the cases against the two Sami men, Baarsen and Poulsen, stand out as integral parts of the struggle against simple magical actions widely used by lay people for ages. As Michael D. Bailey has shown, "... authoritative denial and intellectual dismissal of magic have been salient features of modern Western culture for several centuries".[32]

Ecstatic Visions and Trance States

During their explanations of the drum's symbols, both Baarsen and Poulsen highlighted some areas of use. These had to do with healing, fortune-telling, finding lost objects, the absolution of sins, and practicing weather magic. In relation to weather magic, they both mentioned that they were able to predict the weather, and that they could produce fair weather by playing on the drum or by using other kinds of ritual magic as well. It is noteworthy that neither in the interpretation of these figures, nor in other proceedings of the cases, was anything mentioned that could possibly tie their drum playing directly to shamanistic ecstasy and trance-like states.[33] On the other hand, Baarsen and Poulsen possessed certain qualities necessary for communication with the otherworld. To find solutions to problems relating to demands from people in this world, they both tried to get in touch with spirits of the alternate world. Both men, and

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original drum with some further information about witch trials against the native people of the high north on my website: http://ansatte.uit.no/rha003/shaman.html. Both URLs retrieved on 01.10.2012.

[32] Michael D. Bailey, "The Disenchantment of Magic: Spells, Charms, and Superstition in Early European Witchcraft Literature," *The American Historical Review* 111, No. 2, April (2006): 383–404, citation from page 403.

[33] A further discussion and examination of the Poulsen case can be found in Rune Blix Hagen, "Traces of Shamanism in the Witch Trials of Norway," in *Dämonische Besessenheit: zur Interpretation eines kulturhistorischen Phänomens*, edited by Hans de Waardt et al. (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2005), 307–325. See also my contribution to the Forum section "Shamanism, Witchcraft and Magic" in the journal *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* No. 2 (2006): 227–233, and my entries on "Lapland" and "Shamanism" in *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft. The Western Tradition*, edited by Richard M. Golden (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 625–627, 1029–1031.

especially Poulsen, certainly gave a performance in court that was looked upon as extraordinary dramatic and ritualized behavior.[34] But do their ritual techniques make them real shamans in service of their communities? Or are the two Sami to be considered as ordinary cunning folk who used common spells, charms, and magical healing in the broader tradition of magical and ritualized acts used by laypeople all over Europe? Is there something special about their behavior? According to the German historian Wolfgang Behringer, "The separation of the soul from its body and its trip to certain places is the constitutive element for any great shaman."[35] And to most scholars of shamanism the state of trance, in which the soul temporarily leaves the body, is considered to be the most important feature of the shaman.

The shaman's encounter with presumed guardian spirits has the purpose of alleviating a range of problems and crises in the real world. Healing, clairvoyance, and divination are central powers of a shaman. To bridge the gap between the two worlds, the shaman makes use of various rituals, symbols and techniques. Drumming, combined with cries, songs and dance, is a common method of inducing an altered state of consciousness. Although there are multiple shamanistic traditions, it is often claimed that the shamanic altered state of consciousness is achieved through ecstatic techniques that have common features in all shamanistic societies. For the religious scientist Mircea Eliade, who wrote the pioneering book on shamanism in 1951, the deep trance is an important part of all varieties of the phenomenon. He even identifies shamanism with techniques of ecstasy.[36]

If the very heart of shamanism and shamanism is connected to ecstasy, trance and travel to the underworld, the two Sami from Finnmark should

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[34] Ronald Hutton, who has written extensively on the subject of shamanism, regards the rite techniques and the performances as crucial to the definition of "shaman": see his article "Shamanism. Mapping and Boundaries," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 1, No. 2 (2006): 209–213, citation from page 211. See also Stephen A. Mitchell's comments on the importance of performance related to ritualized behavior in *Witchcraft and Magic in the Nordic Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 72.

[35] Wolfgang Behringer, *Shaman of Oberstdorf. Chonrad Stoeckhlin and the Phantoms of the Night*, trans. H. C. Erik Midelfort (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 143.

[36] Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, trans. Willard R. Trask (London: Arkana, 1989; the book was originally published in 1951). In her recent discussion on the shamanistic paradigm, Emma Wilby writes that "... characteristic of shamanism, though by no means a universal feature, is the fact that the journey to and from the spirit world is frequently experienced as some form of flight, either alone or in the company of other spirits and in either human or animal form", in *The Visions of Isobel Gowdie*, 254.

be labeled crypto- or pseudo-shamans rather than typical shamans in the usual and classical sense. Their divination, as related to foretelling of future events and news of daily events, is *not* connected to trance-like conditions anywhere in the sources. Their forms of communication with their spirits are quite different from that of ecstasy and trance. In fact, none of our sources provide any evidence that the Sami involved in the persecution of witches in northern Europe obtained information from remote places in a state of deep trance. The rhythmic sound of their drums is not known to have induced altered states of consciousness, nor do they appear as flying magicians going on an underground shamanistic journey. Nor is there any sign of metamorphosis into animal form, which is considered to be among the most important of shamanistic traits. In the court records associated with seventeenth-century witch trials in Finland there are also a few references to the Sami people and their drum beating, but never in relation with rituals providing ecstasy and trance, or shape-shifting.[37]

In relation to the witch-trials against the Sami of the north, we have to ask ourselves if the whole conception of the Sami shaman as a sort of go-between between two worlds is more or less a fabrication of some eighteenth-century missionaries. Nearly all earlier reports we have about drum playing related to trance are concepts imposed by foreign travelers or priests who, with great pathos and for a long time, have written about this evil art. Their stories about evil drum beating under the feet of naked mountain cliffs and about devils that penetrated the minds of the Sami shaman are numerous. In addition, ancient sagas and prose stories based on oral transmission were recorded by clerical authorities. Too often this myth has been received uncritically by modern historians and incorporated into their work. Scholars who choose to view the topic in a religious-historical light have followed in the footprints of missionaries who, with their own agendas and preconceptions, have focused on the state of ecstasy as a fundamental characteristic of shamanism. If anything, ecstasy was probably nothing more than the most eccentric practice in the Sami repertory. We have to question the wisdom of continuing to use the word "shaman" in such a loose way to describe the category of magician represented by the Sami.

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[37] Marko Nenonen, "'Envious Are All the People, Witches Watch at Every Gate': Finnish Witches and Witch Trials in the Seventeenth Century" *Scandinavian Journal of History* 18, No. 1 (1993): 77–91. Reprint in *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology. Volume 2. Witchcraft in Continental Europe*, ed. with introductions by Brian P. Levack (New York and London: Routledge, 2001).

Figure 6.3. A Sami shaman playing his drum, and then in trance communicating with his attendant spirit. The missionaries burned the runic drums because they were looked upon as the instruments of the Devil. The shaman's guiding spirit was considered to be an evil demon. From "En kortt relation om lapparnes lefwarne och sedher, wijdskiepellsser, sampt i många stycken grofwe wildfarellsser", by Samuele Rheen (1671)—Uppsala: Harald Wretman, 1897. Courtesy of the University Library of Tromsø.

The concepts of "trance" and "ecstasy" carry with them a long tradition of negative associations. During the early modern period, European Christians used the concept of the trance to condemn shamanistic practice as a heathen, devilish, and blasphemous activity (labeled as *Ecstasi Diabolicae*). During the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, the word was used to describe shamans as primitive savages and uncivilized individuals. Later on, the indigenous people became romanticized as exotic creatures from the extreme north, and finally, during the colonial period, the concepts have been used to brand shamanistic societies as underdeveloped and their religious practices as partly insane. Rather than talk about heathen devil rituals, in the late nineteenth century there appeared theories about a kind of correspondence in temperament among many native peoples. Shamanism could be exposed as hysterical fits ("ecstasy") alternating with periods of complete exhaustion ("trance"). Indigenous peoples in Arctic areas were, for instance, easily moved, nervous and short-tempered—in other words, their temperament marked their religious conceptual worlds. Their form of shamanism was diagnosed as Arctic hysteria and winter depression.

Sami Shamanism—in Need of a Critical Deconstruction

"At present," according to William Monter, "the historiography on shamanism seems littered with outdated general theories and awash in cultural relativism."[38] Since the conception of shamanism is in danger of losing its specific meaning and value, there is certainly a need for a deconstruction, and, for such a reconsideration, a comparative historical approach will be of fundamental importance. Based on his own studies, the Danish folklore researcher Gustav Henningsen has declared that in most parts of Europe, professional magicians do not travel into the spirit world. With references to the study of shamanism, he calls for a redefinition of its concepts and terminology and even the abandonment of the trance theory.[39]

If the drumming and ritual activities of Baarsen and Poulsen can legitimately be called shamanism at all, it is certainly a kind of shamanism without any sign of soul journey into a deep trance, or shape-shifting.

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[38] William Monter, "Gendering the Extended Family of Ginzburg's Benandanti," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 1, No. 2 (2006): 222–226, citation from page 222.

[39] Gustav Henningsen, "The White Sabbath and other Archaic Patterns of Witchcraft," *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* 37 (1991/92): 302.

When they communicated with their spirits, the two men were able to work as magical healers, prophets and wind magicians in the service of their local communities. For them, ecstasy and trance do not seem to have been necessary in order to communicate with the other world. To the Sami, the drum was a compass and a divinatory instrument, which they beat to achieve a desired and specific end. The two Sami men did not travel to their spirits, but instead summoned and were filled with them.

The assessment of the two court cases from 1627 and 1692 reinforces the findings of those who criticize the view that ecstasy and trance are essential characteristics in defining the shaman worldview. Having studied the use of the terms "trance" and "ecstasy" during her fieldwork in Siberia, the French anthropologist Roberte Nicole Hamayon questions whether these designations are beneficial when examining shamanism. Hamayon concludes thus:

> The shaman's behaviour, called 'trance' by observers, is qualified by shamanistic societies with reference not to a specific physical or psychic state, but to the shamans being in direct contact with the spirits.[40]

In other word, she calls for a deconstruction of the shifting categories of shamanism. We may still regard Baarsen's and Poulsen's magic skills and rite techniques as shamanistic phenomena, if Hamayon's findings are accurate and her theories sound. Referring to Iceland and Finland, Ronald Hutton speaks about "a subshamanic tradition of working with spirits, in which practitioners were usually men".[41] It seems very obvious and relevant to the issues surrounding shamanism to place the indigenous people of Finnmark and Fennoscandia in this tradition—a long-standing tradition in which healers and magicians can be labeled as shamans without altered states of consciousness. Looking ahead, a cross-cultural reconstruction of the concept of shamanism should start by examining records from witch trials involving people displaying shamanic qualities, in the broadest sense of the term.

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[40] Roberte Nicole Hamayon, "Are 'Trance', 'Ecstasy' and Similar Concepts Appropriate in the Study of Shamanism?" *Shaman: an international journal for shamanistic research* 1, No. 2 (1993): 7. It should also be said that some advanced experts in the history of religions and Sami shamanism have been critical of the over-emphasis on shamanism as an ecstatic phenomenon, for instance Juha Y. Pentikäinen, "Introduction," in *Shamanism and Northern Ecology*, ed. Juha Y. Pentikäinen (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996), 6.

[41] Ronald Hutton, "Shamanism," 213. Appropriate to this context is Raisa Maria Toivo's critical assessments on shamanistic features of Finnish witchcraft: see *Witchcraft and Gender*, 61, 132.

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TOPICS OF PERSECUTION: WITCHCRAFT HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE IBERIAN WORLD

Gunnar W. Knutsen

The historiography of witchcraft trials in southern Europe has been dominated by the study of trials in the various Inquisitions. While much information may still be available from the inquisitorial archives, it could well be the archives of secular courts that hold the greatest promise for future research. These investigations are hindered by the poor accessibility and cataloguing of many of these archives, which makes such research a risky proposition for the PhD students who are doing so much of the work on witchcraft trials.

Jurisdictions

In Spain and Portugal and in Spain's Italian possessions, the jurisdiction over the crimes usually referred to as "superstitions" was divided between the Inquisition, various secular courts and the bishops. Superstitions included everything from the night-flying of witches who collectively worshipped the devil, to sorcery, simple everyday magic and learned magic involving the invocation of demons. "Superstition" was a convenient word, which avoided the necessity of addressing either the reality of the phenomena, or whether the proscribed activities actually worked or not. Instead, superstitious acts and the beliefs they rested on were punished as deviations from Catholic doctrine. Research in all of these areas has centered on the Inquisition, which also tried the majority of the defendants.

The Inquisition looms very large in the historiography of Iberian witchcraft trials for several reasons, not the least of which is the great fascination that the Holy Office has held for modern researchers. Another reason is more pragmatic: nearly all the surviving sources from the Spanish Inquisition have been assembled in one central repository in the *Archivo Historico Nacional* (AHN) in Madrid, while all documents from the Portuguese Inquisition are kept in the *Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo* (ANTT) in Lisbon. The archives of the Portuguese Inquisition are virtually

intact and contain an unparalleled amount of information.[1] Though much material from the Holy Office in Spain has been lost, the surviving archival holdings have been sufficient to keep several generations of historians busy.[2] The archive of the Inquisition in Malta is completely preserved at the *Archive of the Cathedral Museum in Malta* (AIM) in Mdina. However, the fact that the Holy Office in Malta was part of the Roman Inquisition means that there is also relevant documentation in Rome. In Portugal, nearly all the archives of the secular courts of this period have been lost.[3] The sources indicate that some witches, at least, were tried and executed by secular courts.[4] Letters of pardon to witches convicted in royal courts have survived,[5] giving us tantalizing hints that there is much about witchcraft trials in Portugal that we will never know. We know more about the Episcopal courts, which were very active in trying people for superstitions, but we do not have any thorough studies of their activities since very little of the documentation has survived.[6] Spanish secular and Episcopal courts have left us much better sources than their Portuguese counterparts, even though these also have lost much, if not most of their archives, which are spread out and frequently not indexed. It is clear that hundreds if not thousands of cases for superstitions were tried in secular and Episcopal courts in Spain, and the vast majority of executions for such offences in Spain were ordered by secular courts in Catalonia. The Spanish Inquisition's tribunal in Sicily appears to have been able to maintain its jurisdiction over crimes of magic. Only a few cases were tried in secular and ecclesiastical courts before the suppression of the Holy Office in Palermo

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[1] There is one exception, as the archives from Goa are lost, but they are of no concern to us in the current investigation. Charles Amiel, "The Archives of the Portuguese Inquisition: A Brief Survey," in *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe. Studies on Sources and Methods*, eds. Gustav Henningsen and John Tedeschi (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986).

[2] For a survey of these sources, see Gustav Henningsen, "The Archives and Historiography of the Spanish Inquisition," in *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe. Studies on Sources and Methods*, eds. Gustav Henningsen and John Tedeschi (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986).

[3] José Pedro Paiva, *Bruxaria E Superstição Num País Sem "Caça Às Bruxas" 1600–1774*, 2nd ed. (Lisboa: Editorial Notícias, 2002), 196–7.

[4] Francisco Bethencourt, "Portugal: A Scrupulous Inquisition," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft Trials: Centres and Peripheries*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 405.

[5] José Pedro Paiva, "Portugal," in *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft*, ed. Richard M. Golden (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 920.

[6] Paiva, *Bruxaria E Superstição*, 205–7.

in 1783 and even fewer were tried after that.[7] In Malta there are some preserved witchcraft trials in the Episcopal court from the period before the introduction of the Holy Office, though their number is limited. No accused witches are known to have been prosecuted by secular courts, or indeed by the bishop, after the introduction of the Inquisition in 1574.

We thus see that the Inquisition was the most important court in all the areas under study here, and its easily available documentation has made the inquisitorial trials the low hanging fruit of witchcraft research. Other jurisdictions are also important, especially in northern Spain, but are much harder to work with. The relatively good preservation and easy access of inquisitorial sources should make them easier to handle for future comparative studies, in combination with other documents such as baptismal records, notarial documents, and so forth.

Scope and Chronology

The most reliable numbers for trials come from Portugal. The total number of known superstition cases tried by the Portuguese Inquisition's three tribunals between 1540 and 1774 is 912, while the bishops handled some 2,000 cases in the dioceses of Coimbra alone in the years 1640 to 1770.[8] The numbers for other bishoprics and secular courts are unknown. In Sicily we find mention of 456 trials for superstition in the Inquisition,[9] and a few trials in other jurisdictions, as mentioned earlier. There are no available figures for the number of trials in Malta, since the archive of the Inquisition has not been indexed and we await a comprehensive study. The estimates of the total number of trials and executions from secular courts in Catalonia range upwards from 400, while a document from 1620 speaks of more than 1,000 executions in the preceding years alone.[10] The published number for peninsular Spain and Mallorca is 4,923 documented inquisitorial trials in the trial summaries, with notable

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[7] Maria Sofia Messana, *Inquisitori, Negromantici E Streghe Nella Sicilia Moderna (1500–1782)* (Palermo: Sellerio editore, 2007), 100–01; Giovanna Fiume, *La Vecchia Dell'aceto: Un Processo Per Veneficio Nella Palermo Di Fine Settecento* (Palermo: Gelka, 1990).

[8] Paiva, "Portugal," 920.

[9] Gustav Henningsen, "The Database of the Spanish Inquisition," in *Vorträge Zur Justizforschung, Geschichte Und Theorie, Band 2*, eds. Heinz Mohnhaupt and Dieter Simon (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1993), 58.

[10] Gunnar W. Knutsen, *Servants of Satan and Masters of Demons: The Spanish Inquisition's Trials of Superstition, Valencia and Barcelona, 1478–1700* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 86–88.

lacunae, and covering only the period 1540 to 1700.[11] We have no updated summary of known trials in other jurisdictions, or inquisitorial trials from other sources. Recent research does make it clear that other jurisdictions were active also outside of Catalonia.[12]

In the areas surveyed here we can broadly speak of a pattern with numerous defendants accused of performing various magical rituals, and very few trials of witches taking part in collective adoration of the devil or performing maleficium. The majority of the trials for diabolical witchcraft stem from the northern half of the Iberian Peninsula, with a few outliers in Sicily and Malta, and none in southern Spain.

The earliest trials date from Spain in the fifteenth century, and all areas show trials in the sixteenth century, through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and even into the nineteenth century. In Spain and Portugal the Inquisition tried such cases until it was disbanded in the nineteenth century, but the activities of secular and Episcopal courts after that are unclear. Trials continued to take place in other courts in Sicily after the suppression of the Holy Office in 1783, while no such trials are known to have taken place in Malta after Napoleon invaded the island and disbanded the Inquisition in 1798.

Spain

The study of witchcraft trials in Spain has been completely dominated by the study of the Spanish Inquisition. This has led to two common misconceptions of witchcraft trials in Spain: that these trials were always conducted by the Holy Office, and that they almost never resulted in death sentences. Research undertaken in the last decades shows the opposite; a large number of witchcraft trials were held in local secular courts and resulted in executions.

Crimes labeled as superstitions by the Holy Office included everything from telling the future and finding love or money to sorcery and diabolical witchcraft perpetrated by night-flying cannibalistic witches who worshipped the devil and caused physical harm to crops, animals and humans.

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[11] Henningsen, "The Database of the Spanish Inquisition."

[12] See for example María Tausiet, *Ponzoña En Los Ojos. Brujería Y Superstición En Aragón En El Siglo Xvi* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2000); Isabel Pérez Muñoz, *Pecar, Delinquir Y Castigar: El Tribunal Eclesiástico De Coria En Los Siglos Xvi Y Xvii* (Cáceres: Institución Cultural "El Brocense", Excma. Diputación Provincial de Cáceres, 1992).

The trials against the latter always made up a minority of the Inquisition's prosecutions of superstitions, and were restricted to the northern half of the country. Furthermore, while trials for superstition were not an exclusively rural phenomenon in Spain, trials against witches were rare in the towns and cities. There charges of sorcery and magic dominated, while Satan's servants were found in the rural areas of northern Spain.

The many inquisitorial trials for love magic, treasure hunting, fortune-telling, magical healing and so on, are obvious candidates for future study. So far there has been little study of individual types of cases, even though there are ample sources. Following a more general trend in Spanish historical writing, most studies have instead focused on a single geographical area and studied all trials for superstitions there. Studies of individual inquisitorial districts and tribunals usually contain a section on trials for superstitions as well. More fruitful than most regional studies was E. William Monter's classic study of the tribunals of the Aragonese secretariat, roughly half the tribunals on the Spanish mainland, plus Sicily.[13] This study laid out the differences and similarities between a number of tribunals, and brought attention to the connections between France and witchcraft trials in northern Spain.[14]

The Inquisition was never the only court to hold jurisdiction over witchcraft in Spain. Various secular courts could try the accused witches for acts of maleficium, while the bishops retained jurisdiction over religious aspects of these trials. The Inquisition's claim to jurisdiction rested primarily on the demonological interpretation of witchcraft as apostasy and devil worship, and thus as formal heresy. The Holy Office in Spain was never able to claim exclusive jurisdiction over these crimes, and it frequently seemed uninterested in trying to do so. Recent research indicates a significant variation in the Inquisition's attitude towards asserting its jurisdiction over these crimes over time and between the different tribunals.[15] Differing opinions on the desirability of letting others handle these cases occasionally led to severe infighting in some tribunals.[16]

The only study to compare trials in all three jurisdictions is María Tausiet's excellent book on witchcraft trials in Zaragoza, which is also,

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[13] E. William Monter, *Frontiers of Heresy: The Spanish Inquisition from the Basque Lands to Sicily* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[14] Ibid., 121–2.

[15] Knutsen, *Servants of Satan*; Monter, *Frontiers of Heresy*.

[16] See for example, the letters written by the *fiscal* of the Barcelona tribunal in 1619, and the answers by the inquisitors, in BN, MS 2440, fols. 139r–140r, 141r–142r and 143r–144r.

in fact, the only lengthy study of witchcraft trials in secular courts in Spain.[17] She has also published a rare witchcraft trial from an ecclesiastical court.[18] Tausiet's study apart, the most comprehensive study of the role of secular courts in Spanish witchcraft trials is based on Inquisition records, and it is precisely those sources that reveal hundreds of trials, convictions and executions for witchcraft in secular courts in Catalonia.[19] One such trial has been published, and this, together with an earlier study of trials in Vic, demonstrates the large number of trials of witches in secular courts.[20] Several local studies of witchcraft trials in other parts of Spain have appeared over the last forty years, frequently based on the same inquisitorial sources.[21] Naturally, much research has focused on the trials in the Basque Country.[22] The main attraction has been the spectacular Zugarramurdi trials in the years 1609–1614, a series of events that caused the largest witchcraft investigation ever with almost 2,000 suspects. It ended with the Inquisition issuing new instructions that were so strict that it became almost impossible to convict anybody of witchcraft.[23]

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[17] Tausiet, *Ponzoña En Los Ojos*.

[18] María Tausiet, *Un Proceso De Brujería Abierto En 1591 Por El Arzobispo De Zaragoza (Contra Catalina García, Vecina De Peñarroya)* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1988).

[19] Knutsen, *Servants of Satan*, 86–88. See also the articles in Marina Miquel and Museu d'història de Catalunya, *"Per Bruixa I Metzinera" La Cacera De Bruixes a Catalunya Museu D'història De Catalunya 25 De Gener–27 De Maig De 2007* (Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya Departament de cultura i mitjans de comunicació, 2007).

[20] Nolasc del Molar, ed., *Procés D'un Bruixot* (Olot: 1968); Antonio Pladevall i Font, *Persecucio De Bruixes a Les Comarques De Vic a Principis Del Segle Xvii* (Barcelona: 1974).

[21] Some examples are Miguel I. Arrieta Gallastegui, *Brujas Asturianas* (Gijón: Trea, 1995); Heliodoro Cordente Martínez, *Brujería Y Hechicería En El Obispado De Cuenca* (Cuenca: Diputación Provincial, 1990); Francisco T. Fajardo Spínola, *Hechicería Y Brujería En Canarias En La Edad Moderna* (Las Palmas: Ediciones del Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria, 1992); Angél Gari Lacruz, *Brujería E Inquisición En El Alto Aragón En La Primera Mitad Del Siglo Xvii* (Zaragoza: Diputación General de Aragón, 1991); Carmelo Lisón Tolosana, *Brujería, Estructura Social Y Simbolismo En Galicia* (Akal, 1979); Xosé Ramón Mariño Ferro, *La Brujería En Galicia* (Vigo (Pontevedra): Nigra Trea, 2006); Elviro Martínez, *Brujería Asturiana* (León: Everest, 1987); Juan Villarín, *La Hechicería En Madrid: Brujas, Maleficíos, Encantamientos Y Sugestiones De La Villa Y Corte* (Madrid: Avapies, 1993); Sebastián Cirac Estopañán, *Los Processos De Hechicerías En La Inquisición De Castilla La Nueva* (Madrid: Dianas, 1942); Livio Ciappetta, *La Zingara, L'erborista E Lo Schiavo: L'inquisizione a Maiorca, 1583–1625*, 1. ed. (Roma: Aracne, 2010).

[22] Mikel Zabala, *Brujería E Inquisición En Bizkaia: (Siglos Xvi Y Xvii)* (Bilbao: Ekain, 2000). See also the relevant sections of Antonio Bombín Pérez, *La Inquisición En El País Vasco: El Tribunal De Logroño (1570–1610)* (Bilbao: Servicio Editorial Universidad del País Vasco, 1997); Iñaki Reguera, *La Inquisición Española En El Pais Vasco: El Tribunal De Calahorra, 1513–1570* (San Sebastian: Editorial Txertoa, 1984).

[23] Mañuel Fernandez Nieto, *Proceso a La Brujería: En Torno Al Auto De Fe De Los Brujos De Zugarramundi, Logroño, 1610* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1989); Julio Caro Baroja, *Las Brujas Y Su*

It was precisely this skepticism that opened the door for secular courts in Catalonia to successfully challenge the Inquisition and to convict and execute suspected witches that the inquisitors stated were innocent.[24] A frequent misreading of Gustav Henningsen's study of the Zugarramurdi trials and the just fame of the inquisitor Salazar as "the witches' advocate", to use Henningsen's felicitous phrase, has been instrumental in fomenting the belief that witchcraft trials in Spain were invariably handled by the Inquisition, were bloodless and ended in 1614. We have already touched on these first two misconceptions, and shall now turn to the final one: that witchcraft trials ended in Spain in 1614.

The fact that convicting somebody of diabolical witchcraft during the Inquisition became very difficult did not mean that such accusations ceased, that other courts did not continue to prosecute alleged witches, or that the Inquisition stopped trials for other kinds of superstition. Quite the contrary; the majority of such trials that have come to our knowledge were in fact conducted after 1614. The belief that witchcraft trials in Spain ended in 1614 is therefore a misunderstanding. They did not end; they simply changed venue and form, as different courts dealt with witches while the Inquisition continued to try other superstitions. Several works cited in this article deal with the period after 1614, either exclusively or as part of a longer time span. Most of them focus on trials in the Holy Office.

The period of trials for superstitions in Spain that we currently know the least about is the period after 1700. María Tausiet has made a contribution in this area, with a study of alleged witchcraft and possession at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[25] A further contribution will come from Marisa Pedrós Ciurana, who is currently investigating eighteenth-century trials in Valencia. The sources from the Holy Office for this period are in fact abundant, and the Inquisition continued to prosecute "superstition" long after it abandoned any attempt to prosecute collective devil worship by malevolent flying witches.[26] This is therefore a field where we can expect to greatly increase our knowledge in the future. There is no reason to be so optimistic about the period before 1540, about which we know very little. Here there is a distinct lack of sources, and there

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Mundo (Madrid: Alianza, 1966); Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate: Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1980).

[24] Knutsen, *Servants of Satan*, 101–5.

[25] María Tausiet Carlés, *Los Posesos De Tosos (1812–1814): Brujería Y Justicia Popular En Tiempos De Revolución* (Zaragoza: Instituto Aragonés de Antropología, 2002).

[26] For example, Ramon Duarte was prosecuted for attempting to disenchant money in Valencia as late as 1818. AHN, Leg 524, exp 10.

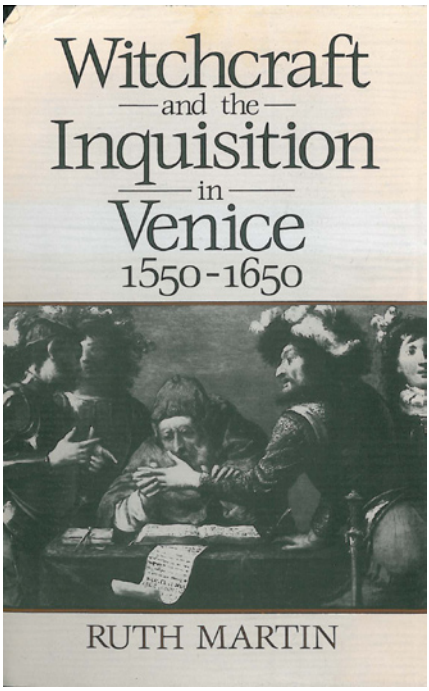

Figure 7.1. Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice 1550–1650*. (Oxford, Blackwell 1989). Cover illustration: *The Fortune Teller* by Pietro della Vecchia.

is little reason to think that many trials were held, since the Inquisition was then so preoccupied with the Spanish Jewry.[27] Another field we may well learn more about is the intersection between religious minorities and superstitions. We know practically nothing about the connection between conversos and witchcraft trials in Spain, and while we now know much more about the Moriscos and superstitions than about the Jews, we are still awaiting a study on this.[28] It is important to bear in

[27] Ricardo Garcia Cárcel reported a total of 15 trials for superstition among the 2,354 cases tried by the Inquisition in Valencia up to 1530. Ricardo García Cárcel, *Orígines De La Inquisición Española: El Tribunal De Valencia 1478–1530*, 2nd ed. (Barcelona: Ediciones Peninsula, 1985), 177, 217–19.

[28] For the Moriscos, see Knutsen, *Servants of Satan*; Yvette Cardaillac-Hermosilla, "Esclavage Et Magie Chez Les Nouveaux Chrétiens En Espagne Au XVI^{e} Siècle," *Revue d'histoire maghrébine* 11, No. 35–36 (1984); Yvette Cardaillac-Hermosilla, "Magie Et Répression. Morisques Et Chrétiens. XVI^{ème} Et XVII^{ème} Siècles," *Revue d'histoire maghrébine* 22, No. 79–80 (1995); Yvette Cardaillac-Hermosilla, *La Magie En Espagne: Morisques Et Vieux Chrétiens Au XVI^{ème} Et XVII^{ème} Siècles* (Zaghouan: Fondation Temimi pour la Recherche

mind that the Inquisition's overriding interest was in punishing Moriscos for deviating from Catholicism. Therefore it did not distinguish between orthodox and possibly superstitious Muslim practices, labeling everything simply as "matters pertaining to Muhammed's sect". It is thus possible that Moriscos escaped prosecution for superstition or witchcraft simply because they were perceived as performing Islamic rituals. The separation between Muslim orthodoxy and heterodoxy are outside the remit of this article, and strictly not a matter of witchcraft trials, but these subjects merit research and may inform us of Islamic magical practices that have influenced European magic.

The presence of large religious minority groups of Jews and Muslims was, of course, one of the things that set Spain apart from most other European countries.[29] The impact of the Muslim population in rejecting the demonological conception of witchcraft caused southern Spain to have very different trials than northern Spain, which more closely resembled southern France. Trials for superstition in southern Spain mainly involved accusations of some concrete magical acts of love magic or treasure hunting that could be defined as physical rituals involving tangible objects. In the north there was also a substantial number of trials involving accusations of collective devil worship at the witches' sabbath, of night flying, diabolical sex, and mysterious damage to crops, as well as infanticide and cannibalism. There are clear French influences in this, both in the Basque country and in Catalonia (though not in Galicia), with named individuals crossing the border and making accusations against Spanish women.[30] So far nobody has studied trials on both sides of the border, which would seem to be a promising avenue for future research. Similarly, the apparent dichotomy between cities and countryside merits further study. As Bernd Roeck shows,[31] there are a number of ways of explaining why cities and towns prosecuted fewer witches than rural areas. Yet witches were certainly discussed in Spanish cities, and stories were published. To study

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Scientifique et l'Information, 1996); Julián Ribera y Tarragó, "Supersticiones Moriscas," in *Disertaciones Y Opúscolos* (Madrid: Imprenta de Estanislao Maestre, 1928); Ana Labarta, "Supersticiones Moriscas," *Awraq*, No. 5–6 (1982).

[29] Similarly, there were relatively large numbers of gypsies in Spain, who also had their run-ins with the Inquisition. See María Helena Sánchez Ortega, "Hechizos Y Conjuros Entre Los Gitanos Y Los No-Gitanos," *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna y Contemporanea* 5 (1984); María Helena Sánchez Ortega, *La Inquisición Y Los Gitanos* (Madrid: Taurus, 1988).

[30] Knutsen, *Servants of Satan*, 105–6, 10–11; Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate*, 30–34; Agustí Alcoberro, "El Caçador De Bruixes, Joan Malet, L'home Que Va Terroritzar Catalunya Al Sege Xvi," *Sàpiens*, No. 71 (2008).

[31] Bernd Roeck, "Urban Witch Trials," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 4, No. 1 (2009).

this means again looking outside of the inquisitorial sources. In both cases, cities versus countryside, and the border areas, we are also looking at the political aspects of the trials. It has long been noted that trials were more common in areas with looser political control (and fewer professional courts). This is certainly one distinction between Barcelona and the Catalan countryside, but it is also relevant when considering the border with France, which was frequently heavily militarized and occasionally engaged in fortunes of war and peace negotiations. This gave the local authorities greater autonomy, but also opens up the possibility that witchcraft trials were used to loosen Madrid's grip on the border areas, both by ambitious local elites and by the French government. Furthermore, many of the areas that saw large-scale witch trials and witch-hunts involving paid witch finders seeking out witches, were part of feudal jurisdictions. Johannes Dillinger's observation that "[o]ne of the reasons why about half of all executions for witchcraft took place in the empire is that many of its principalities offered people without any legal training whatsoever the chance to influence criminal procedures critically" could easily refer to Spain where feudal jurisdictions and village communities close to the French border provided just such possibilities.[32] When the Inquisition came across these witch finders they were inevitably convicted of superstition—and sometimes tortured to find out if they had entered into a pact with the devil, but by then they were already responsible for numerous trials and hangings in secular courts.[33]

Spain produced a number of demonological treatises, some of which have been published in modern editions. There is ample room for new studies of these texts, their production, distribution and use. For example, we know next to nothing about the reading habits, or indeed the libraries of the Spanish inquisitors. From the list of possessions of a deceased inquisitor we know that he owned a copy of the *Malleus Maleficarum*,[34] while in some cases we find references to demonological treatises among the authorities given in the margin of the page as support for opinions.[35] Famously, *la Suprema*, the Inquisition's central council in Madrid, warned the inquisitors in Calahorra not to believe everything they read in the

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[32] Johannes Dillinger, "The Political Aspects of the German Witch Hunts," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 4, No. 1 (2009): 68.

[33] Knutsen, *Servants of Satan*, 105–8; Alcoberro, "El Caçador De Bruixes."

[34] AHN, Inq, Lib 738, fol. 204r.

[35] For example in *Biblioteca Nacional*, MS 2440, fols, 82r–84v.

Malleus Maleficarum.[36] It is clear that the inquisitors knew and used demonological literature, but our knowledge of this is so far anecdotal and unsystematic. The inquisitors themselves are still not very well known to us, and in this there is also an opportunity to learn more about witchcraft trials. For example, we could learn much by a study of those inquisitors who moved between tribunals that handled trials for witchcraft and those that only prosecuted acts of sorcery. Such a study would also be a way to tackle the question of the connection between witchcraft trials in Spain and those in the Spanish colonies, trials which have so far been generally treated as separate phenomena.[37] The inquisitors were trained jurists, and depended on external theologians known as *calificadores* for advice on theology. This is another subject that has received scant attention, and which would certainly have an impact on our knowledge of witchcraft trials. The *calificadores* usually classified any defendant accused of "superstitions" as suspected of an implicit or explicit pact with the devil, no matter how innocuous the alleged facts of the case. Their importance for witchcraft cases is obvious.

Another matter we should consider is that of child-witches. There were hundreds of such trials in Spain, and contrary to common statements about these trials they were not a late phenomenon.[38] Rather, they started very early in Spain. One of the most chilling testimonies to this is the yearly report from the Inquisition's tribunal in Calahorra for 1540, which stated that in that year they had penanced "30 boys and girls between 10 and 14 years old for being witches", as well as eight boys and girls who were older than fourteen.[39] These children were not sorcerers; they were night-flying diabolical witches who had sworn to serve the devil. This was not the first instance of child-witches in Spain, and the discovery of such a large number of them did not trigger any reaction other than the routine search for culprits. Large numbers of child-witches continued to be tried for decades after this, but these trials seem to have been restricted to the Basque country. In Galicia, Catalonia and Aragon the alleged witches were

[36] Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate*, 347.

[37] A rare exception is Gustav Henningsen, "The Diffusion of European Magic in Colonial America," in *Clashes of Cultures: Essays in Honour of Niels Steensgaard*, eds. Jens Christian V. Johansen, Erling Ladewig Petersen, and Henrik Stevnsborg (Odense: Odense University Press, 1992).

[38] For an influential statement that child-witches were a late phenomenon, see Lyndal Roper, "'Evil Imaginings and Fantasies': Child-Witches and the End of the Witch Craze," *Past & Present* 167, No. 1 (2000).

[39] AHN, Inq, Lib 833, fol. 13r.

women, and only rarely were children tried. This is surely a phenomenon that deserves greater attention than it has received so far.

An important aspect of the witchcraft trials in the Basque country came to light in 2004, when Gustav Henningsen finally published a source collection that had been three decades in the making. It included newly discovered material from secular courts, which revealed the systematic extra-judicial abuse and torture of accused witches.[40] This had two aims: first, to make the alleged witches confess, and secondly to prevent them from going to the witches' sabbath. The latter aim was achieved by keeping the alleged witches awake and occupied by improvised processions and charivaris that included on at least one documented occasion the rape of the women accused of being witches. The accused were tortured to make them confess for two reasons. Firstly, their families tortured them because the Inquisition did not execute and confiscate the properties of those who confessed to being witches. This logic reportedly also caused violence against suspected witches by their relatives in Catalonia. Secondly, their "confessions" were reported to the Inquisition and formed the basis for the denunciations against them and the evidence that justified their arrests by the Holy Office. All of this raises new questions, such as the extent of such violence, and what it can tell us about fear of witches. There is obviously much to learn here about the belief in witches, their power and the spiritual or magical power of the Inquisition. It surely cannot be coincidental that forced confessions did not result in lynchings but in denunciations to a court that historians have always characterized as mild in its treatment of witches. This also demonstrates that the archives of secular courts can tell us a great deal about witchcraft trials even when they themselves did not try witches.

Portugal

As in Spain, research has focused on the activities of the Holy Office, and much of what has been said about Spain also applies to Portugal. Given the complete preservation of inquisitorial archives and the total loss of material from the secular courts, the natural focus and limitation of Portuguese witchcraft studies has been the Inquisition. Compared with Spain,

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[40] Gustav Henningsen, ed., *The Salazar Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 62–74.

Portugal had fewer inquisitorial witch trials, but it has left better records of those that were conducted.

The main study is by José Pedro Paiva, who has studied the 818 preserved trials in the Portuguese Inquisition's archives from the years 1600–1774,[41] while Francisco Bethencourt has investigated the sixteenth century.[42] They paint a picture of a skeptical Inquisition which passed death sentences extremely rarely in cases of superstitions. Notably, the Portuguese inquisitors did not face a significant number of trials for diabolical witchcraft, while the demonological literature was certainly known in Portugal.[43] This is all the more striking when we know that the Portuguese Inquisition used torture extensively, submitting more than half of all those accused of superstition to formal sessions of torture.[44] Here widespread use of torture did not bring about mass trials of witches with ever-increasing numbers of forced confessions. Despite this extensive use of torture, the pact with the devil figured in only 36 of 818 trials, according to Paiva.[45]

The Portuguese demonological literature consisted of a total of three books, only two of which have come down to us in preserved copies. It is therefore hard to see this as a future field of research, although the absence of worry and fear of the witches is a notable characteristic of both books.[46] This matches the lack of urgency of the Portuguese witchcraft trials, which never became witch-hunts or witch panics.

We are able to follow the development of the individual trials better in Portugal than in Spain because the archives of the Portuguese Inquisition have been preserved more fully. Thus we know that only one in twenty denunciations actually led to a formal trial.[47] No such figures are available in Spain because the registers of denunciations have been lost. There is, however, no reason to suspect that the figures would be very different in

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[41] Paiva, *Bruxaria E Superstição*. See also the dated English article by Bethencourt: Bethencourt, "Portugal: A Scrupulous Inquisition."

[42] Francisco Bethencourt, *O Imaginário Da Magia Feiticeiras, Saludadores E Nigromantes No Séc. Xvi*, Temas De Cultura Portuguesa (Lisboa: Projecto Universidade aberta Centro de estudos de história e cultura portuguesa, 1987).

[43] José Pedro Paiva, "La Réception Au Portugal Des Traités Français De Sorcellerie Et De Démonologie (XVI^{e}–XVIII^{e} Siècles)," in *La France Et Le Monde Luso-Brésilien: Échanges Et Représentations (XVI^{e}–XVIII^{e} Siècles)*, ed. Saulo Neiva (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2006).

[44] Paiva, *Bruxaria E Superstição*, 202.

[45] Ibid., 208.

[46] Paiva, "La Réception Au Portugal," 177–78.

[47] Paiva, *Bruxaria E Superstição*, 208.

Spain, or indeed in Sicily and Malta. The Inquisition did receive enormous amounts of information and numerous denunciations for various types of offences; however, the inquisitors rarely showed a great inclination to pursue cases of superstitions, and the number of acquittals indicate thorough consideration of the evidence.[48] The fact that the vast majority of denunciations never resulted in a trial confirms the picture of a cautious Inquisition that was not very eager to try this kind of case. It could also indicate that the inquisitors only prosecuted those cases where they felt the evidence was solid. Alternatively, we might take it to mean that there were many frivolous denunciations. The thousands of denunciations that never resulted in trials is a unique corpus of sources that should make for a very interesting study if anybody would venture to work on it. The well-preserved sources have also allowed Paiva to study the social roles and standing of the accused witches, and the ways their neighbors attempted to neutralize their harmful potential. Some even allowed suspected witches to act as godparents to their children in order to protect the children from witchcraft.[49]

Given the loss of the archives from secular courts, the massive loss of Episcopal archives and the work done on the Inquisition, there may appear to be less room for new research in Portugal than in Spain. On the other hand, the preservation of much more extensive sources about each trial will allow for a more detailed study of individual types of trials, or the placing of them into their local context. One study of magical healing has emerged,[50] and others could well focus on other types of magical practices and beliefs. There is a massive amount of information on various forms of magic available, opening up the opportunity for studies on magical practices and beliefs. Given the richness of the Portuguese Inquisition's archive and the union of Portugal and Spain from 1580 to 1640, it appears it would be fruitful to make a comparison between the countries, or simply the border areas. Another point of comparison might be those cases which originated in the Portuguese colony in America but were tried in Portugal, since the Portuguese Inquisition never established an American tribunal.

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[48] Paiva puts the number at 10 percent. For Barcelona the acquittal rate was 27 percent and for Valencia only 2 percent. Ibid., 219; Knutsen, *Servants of Satan*, 64–65.

[49] Paiva, *Bruxaria E Superstição*, 295.

[50] Timothy Dale Walker, *Doctors, Folk Medicine and the Inquisition: The Repression of Magical Healing in Portugal During the Enlightenment* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

The recent debate opened by Erik Midelfort about the significance of chain trials driven by torture would benefit from a study of the extensive use of torture in Portugal.[51] The connection between torture and massive chain trials does not hold true there, and the excellent sources should make it possible to study extensive torture that produced a very different result than we generally expect in such cases. What does not look likely to change is the overall number of known trials in Portugal, or the fact that Portugal did not suffer mass trials of alleged diabolical witches.

Sicily and Malta

As part of the Spanish empire, Sicily was subjected to the Spanish Inquisition. As elsewhere, the Holy Office found an abundant crop of alleged witches. It also found something different: a local fairy cult, the "ladies from outside".[52] This fairy cult and the large numbers of clerical practitioners of learned magic are the two defining characteristics of the witchcraft trials in Sicily. There were some later trials in secular courts, including "the old vinegar lady" so masterfully studied by Giovanna Fiume, where notions of witchcraft were suppressed in favor of the more modern interpretation of poisoning.[53] A recent book by Maria Sofia Messana is the most important contribution to the study of witchcraft trials in Sicily.[54] While her book may appear authoritative and exhaustive, Fiume has already shown how a study of even a single trial can serve to expand our knowledge.

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[51] H. C. Erik Midelfort, "Witch Craze? Beyond the Legends of Panic," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 6, No. 1 (2011); Valerie Kivelson, "Lethal Convictions: The Power of a Satanic Paradigm in Russian and European Witch Trials," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 6, No. 1 (2011).

[52] Gustav Henningsen has published a number of articles on the subject, including Gustav Henningsen, " 'The Ladies from Outside': An Archaic Pattern of the Witches Sabbath," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft. Centres and Peripheries*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Gustav Henningsen, "Die Frauen Von Außerhalb: Der Zusammenhang Fon Feenkult, Hexenwahn Und Armut in 16. Und 17. Jahrhundert Auf Sizilien," in *Die Mitte Der Welt: Aufsätze Zur Mircea Eliade*, ed. Hans Peter Duerr (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984); Gustav Henningsen, "The Witches Flying and the Spanish Inquisition, or How to Explain (Away) the Impossible," *Folklore*, No. 120 (2009).

[53] Giovanna Fiume, "The Old Vinegar Lady, or the Judicial Modernization of the Crime of Witchcraft," in *History from Crime*, eds. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994); Fiume, *La Vecchia Dell'aceto*.

[54] Messana, *Inquisitori, Negromantici*.

Among the many ritual magicians tried in Sicily, a significant number were clerics. This point was made by E. William Monter,[55] and confirmed by Messana,[56] but has not been followed up by a separate study, perhaps in part because of the paucity of sources. It does seem like a worthwhile subject to pick up, given the prevalence of clerics in similar cases elsewhere in the Mediterranean region.[57] The case summaries that form the backbone of our knowledge of the Inquisition in Sicily are quite brief, making comparative investigations both imperative and difficult.

The parts of the archive of the Holy Office in Sicily containing trials of faith and information on the Inquisition's familiars were burned in a public ceremony after the abolition of the tribunal in 1783.[58] The main source to these trials is therefore again the *relaciones de causas* preserved in the AHN in Madrid. Here we find mention of 456 trials for superstition,[59] broadly conforming to the Mediterranean pattern of numerous defendants accused of performing various magical rituals, and very few trials of witches taking part in collective adoration of the devil or performing maleficium. Many of those accused of diabolical witchcraft did in fact take part in the fairy cult and were *donas de fuera*. Unlike the *benandanti* so famously studied by Carlo Ginzburg,[60] Gustav Henningsen found that the *donas de fuera* never became fully demonized in the popular mind. They never willingly confessed to being witches when arrested. Only by lengthy interrogations could the inquisitors produce such confessions, and the process of turning a *dona de fuera* into a witch had to be repeated with every arrest.[61] Maria Sofia Messana came to the opposite conclusion.[62]

What is not contested is that the *donas de fuera* at first saw themselves as doing good deeds. They were organized in companies together with the fairies, and traveled in spirit to rich feasts. In addition, they toured the town at night, entering every house and rewarding those that they found in good order while punishing those that were unkempt. Henningsen called it an archaic cult and Messana also believes it may have had roots in antiquity. Some 90 percent of those tried were female, and they

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55 Monter, *Frontiers of Heresy*, 176–79.

56 Messana, *Inquisitori, Negromantici*, 112.

57 Knutsen, *Servants of Satan*, 68.

58 Messana, *Inquisitori, Negromantici*, 55, 60–61.

59 Henningsen, "The Database of the Spanish Inquisition," 58.

60 Carlo Ginzburg, *I Benandanti: Ricerche Sulla Stregoneria E Sui Culti Agrari Tra Cinquecento E Seicento* (Torino: G. Einaudi, 1966).

61 Henningsen, "The Ladies from Outside," 205–06.

62 Messana, *Inquisitori, Negromantici*, 573.

were given much harsher sentences than the convicted males.[63] In addition to their dream travels and parties, there was a physical side to the fairy cult, since most of those brought before the Inquisition were magical specialists.[64] There was some linguistic confusion around the term *dona di fuora*, as the sources make plain. The term was used both to describe the fairies that accompanied the humans on their nightly travels and also the humans themselves.[65] Furthermore, the inquisitor Diego Garcia de Trasmiera wrote to Madrid that *dona de fuera* was the Sicilian term for what in Spain was called *bruja*, the witch.[66]

Given the public burning of the Inquisition's archive and the success of the Holy Office in maintaining exclusive jurisdiction over witchcraft trials, it seems unlikely that there will be significant findings of new trials in Sicily. Some surprising new evidence may come from the graffiti of the inmates of the Inquisition's jail in Palermo which has recently been discovered, but in general the future of witchcraft studies in Sicily will be limited to the more intense study of trials already used by Henningsen and Messana. The greatest potential here seems to be to use the brief trial summaries in combination with other sources, and to see the Sicilian trials both in a local context and in broader comparisons with Spain, mainland Italy and Malta.

The islands of Malta and Gozo formed part of the kingdom of Sicily, and as such they were under the suzerainty of the king of Spain. From 1532 to 1789 Malta was entrusted to the Knights of St. John who used it as the base for their military activities in the fight against Islam. An inquisitorial tribunal was established in Malta, and thereafter this was the court which tried accused witches. It is not surprising that the Inquisition was able to enforce its sole jurisdiction over witchcraft in a territory that was, after all, ruled by a religious order.

Malta was one of the most multi-cultural societies in the early modern world, ruled by a multi-national religious order which enslaved as many Muslims as it could capture and welcomed all Catholic traders to its port. This is reflected in the trials, which show a wide variety of magical practices by persons with very varied geographical origins. Trials for magical crimes were numerous and lasted until Napoleon's invasion of Malta in June 1798 led to the suppression of the Inquisition.

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63 Ibid., 556.
64 Henningsen, "The Ladies from Outside", 200–02.
65 Ibid., 195.
66 Messana, *Inquisitori, Negromantici*, 554.

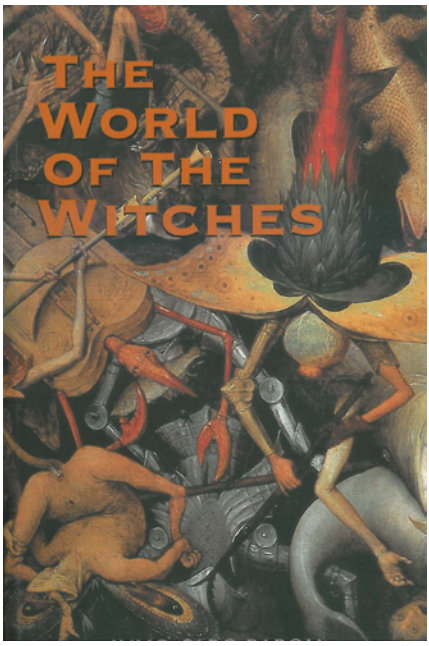

Figure 7.2. Julio Caro Baroja, *The World of the Witches*. (London: Phoenix Press, 2001. First published as Revista de Ociodente by S.a. Madrid 1961.) Cover illustration: *The Fall of the Rebel Angels* by Pieter Bruegel/c. 1528–1569), detail.

Given the small size of Malta, it is no surprise that the number of studies of Maltese witchcraft trials is also quite low. The most significant research has been undertaken by Professor Carmel Cassar, who has worked on witchcraft trials found in the sources left by the Roman Inquisition in Malta.[67] The main focus of this work has not been the trials themselves, but what they can tell us of witch beliefs and Maltese culture. We do not currently have any figure for the total number of witchcraft trials in Malta, because, although the archive of the Inquisition is completely preserved at the *Archive of the Cathedral Museum in Malta* (AIM) in Mdina, it has not been indexed. Research undertaken so far indicates that around

[67] Carmel Cassar, "Witchcraft Beliefs and Social Control in Seventeenth Century Malta," *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 3, No. 2 (1993); Carmel Cassar, *Witchcraft, Sorcery and the Inquisition. A Study of Cultural Values in Early Modern Malta* (Malta: Mireva, 1996). Frans Ciappara mainly deals with the eighteenth century in his chapter on witchcraft trials: Frans Ciappara, *Society and the Inquisition in Early Modern Malta* (San Gwann: Publishers Enterprises Group, 2001).

30 percent of all trials during the Inquisition in Malta were related to witchcraft, compared to some 7 percent in mainland Spain, less than 4 percent in Portugal, and some 8 percent in neighboring Sicily.[68] There were some mass trials against suspected witches in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, but otherwise the trials very rarely involved charges of diabolical witchcraft.[69] Instead, they conformed to the pattern of sorcery and magic we know from Portugal and the southern half of Spain. It is interesting, though, that the only known mass trials in Malta were contemporary with the largest mass trials in Spain.

It may seem that the potential for further study of these trials is limited when we consider the limited size of Malta and hence the number of sources. However, we still lack a study of the actual trials; in fact, we do not know how many there were, or even how many are still preserved. Another obvious way forward is to compare Maltese trials with those in neighboring countries. Malta was part of the kingdom of Sicily, which had some very distinct witchcraft trials. The Inquisition tribunal in Malta formed part of the Roman Inquisition, which also handled witchcraft trials on the Italian mainland. It seems natural to compare Italian trials with those in Malta. The contemporaneous nature of mass trials of witches in southern France, northern Spain and Malta also invites further research, not least because this was apparently the only time Malta saw mass trials, while Spain and France had done so before. Furthermore, since so many foreigners were prosecuted for sorcery on Malta, it should also be a very good starting point for a study of the spread and mixing of magical traditions, popular and elite, oral and written. Frans Ciappara has shown that the eighteenth-century trials from Malta contain a few written magical treatises and instructions,[70] even though the General Tribunal in Rome had ordered that such material be burned after the trial.[71] There is similar material in the AHN in Madrid, and presumably elsewhere. Some of the titles mentioned are also part of the common European elite magical tradition, such as the *Clavicula Salomonis.* A large number of those prosecuted on Malta were Muslim slaves,[72] while such slaves were rarely prosecuted for these crimes in Spain. Questions of ethnicity, race and religion

[68] Henningsen, "The Database of the Spanish Inquisition," 58; Paiva, *Bruxaria E Superstição*, 208; Messana, *Inquisitori, Negromantici.*

[69] Cassar, "Witchcraft Beliefs," 329.

[70] Ciappara, *Society and the Inquisition*.

[71] Cassar, *Witchcraft, Sorcery*, 16.

[72] Ibid.

inevitably crop up, such as the fact that Christian clients sought Muslim sorcerers, but also the question of dominance and subjection when slaves were paid for illegal supernatural services.

Charges of diabolical witchcraft were rare in Malta, and the famous *donas de fuera* from nearby Sicily do not appear to have had any Maltese parallel. It remains to be determined if this is a cultural difference, a judicial difference, or a mix of the two.

Conclusion

There are a number of resemblances between the state of research in the countries referred to above, in great part because of the similarity between their judicial systems, as well as their cultural similarities. The sharing of jurisdiction over witchcraft by as many as three different judicial systems is something that Spain, Portugal and Sicily have in common, which sets them clearly apart from France and the various Protestant countries. In this lies a shared challenge for research and potential for future investigations. Research has so far been focused on the Inquisition, and turning to secular and Episcopal courts now seems to be the most promising way to further our knowledge in Spain and Sicily, while Portugal and Malta seem unlikely to reward researchers in these areas.

Another way forward would be to consider the inquisitors who dealt with these cases, the theologians who advised them and the relationships with other jurisdictions. For example, Messana has pinpointed the inquisitor Diego Garcia de Trasmiera as somebody who turned fantastic stories of *donas de fuera* into diabolical reality more often than his predecessors had done.[73] So who was he? Did he serve in other tribunals in Spain before or after Sicily, and if so, did he try cases of diabolical witches there? These questions also present themselves in Portugal and Malta. Malta is particularly interesting, in that all the inquisitors were outsiders who came to the islands for a limited time, while twenty-four of them became cardinals and two became popes.[74] It goes without saying that witch trials conducted by two future popes are of the highest interest, but so far this has not been investigated.

Clerical magicians provide another subject that may be fruitfully studied in all the jurisdictions mentioned here. The varied practice of love

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[73] Messana, *Inquisitori, Negromantici*, 554.
[74] Cassar, *Witchcraft, Sorcery*, 3.

magic is another such subject, and it would be interesting to see if there are similar practices in various localities. The search for hidden, forgotten or enchanted treasure pops up in several areas, but also shows clear regional differences. In Portugal it was Arab treasure that lured people, while in Valencia it was the generic "Moor" whose money was sought. In Malta, on the other hand, it was Jewish treasure that was believed to be hidden.[75]

Another similarity is the prevalence of mass trials of diabolical witches in northern Spain and in Malta in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. This followed the mass trials in southern France. Portugal and Sicily did not have a similar outbreak of witch trials in these years. In fact, Sicily saw the number of trials for superstition dip at precisely this time.[76] The main outbreak of witchcraft trials in Sicily followed immediately after the food revolts in Palermo and Catania in 1647 and the Neapolitan revolt of 1648, resulting in four *autos de fe* in 1648 alone. Messana speculates that there was a clear connection, an instrumentalization of witchcraft accusations to recover the political equilibrium.[77] A possible political use of witchcraft accusations to destabilize the situation in northern Spain was suggested earlier in this article. Both cases seem to offer possibilities for future investigations.

An interesting fact is that the Inquisition tribunals on islands devoted more of their time to witchcraft than did those on the mainland. Witchcraft made up 6 percent of the trials in the tribunals on the Spanish mainland, and less than 4 percent in Portugal. In Sicily they made up nearly 8 percent, in Sardinia 21, in Mallorca more than 14 and in Malta more than 30 percent.[78] This is simply an observation, but it surely deserves closer scrutiny.

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[75] Paiva, *Bruxaria E Superstição*; Knutsen, *Servants of Satan*; Cassar, *Witchcraft, Sorcery*.

[76] Messana, *Inquisitori, Negromantici*, 102.

[77] Ibid., 136–39.

[78] Henningsen, "The Database of the Spanish Inquisition," 58; Paiva, *Bruxaria E Superstição*, 208; Cassar, *Witchcraft, Sorcery*.

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WITCHCRAFT AND MODERNITY

Ronald Hutton

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the place that witchcraft occupies in the modern world, and how it is affected by older concepts. When westerners think of modern witches, the kind that seems most commonly to occur to them consists of practitioners of a pagan religion venerating deities of the natural world, a stereotype especially strong in Britain and the United States but found across most of Europe and the English-speaking world. Its oldest and most prevalent variety bears the name of Wicca, the standard Anglo-Saxon word for "witch". The foundation myth of this religion refers directly to older forms of belief: that modern pagan witchcraft represents a public reappearance of a surviving ancient faith which was persecuted in the witch trials of the early modern period. According to the myth, that religion was driven underground by the trials, to emerge intact in the mid-twentieth century.[1] This version of history has now largely been abandoned by modern witches themselves, especially by the most highly visible and published of them. It lingers as a position of faith among some prominent witches in America and in what might be termed the backwoods of contemporary witchcraft elsewhere.[2] The fact that it was so powerful in the mid-twentieth century was largely a reflection of the wide acceptance by academics of the belief that the people accused in the witch trials had been practitioners of a surviving pagan religion. Propounded most famously by the English Egyptologist Margaret Murray, it was accepted in Britain by anthropologists such as Mary Douglas and historians of the status of Sir George Clark, Christopher Hill and

[1] The classic statements can be found in Gerald Gardner, *Witchcraft Today* (London: Rider, 1954) and *The Meaning of Witchcraft* (London: Aquarian, 1959); Doreen Valiente, *Where Witchcraft Lives* (London: Aquarian, 1962); Patricia Crowther and Arnold Crowther, *The Witches Speak* (Isle of Man: Athol, 1965); June Johns, *King of the Witches* (London: Davies, 1969); Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979) and *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics* (Boston: Beacon, 1982).

[2] Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 369–88.

Sir Stephen Runciman.[3] Its evaporation among most modern witches, and their acceptance of their religion as essentially a twentieth-century creation, has likewise been the result of its abandonment within the world of professional scholarship. It is in many ways impressive for practitioners of a religion to recognize the falsity of its traditional historical claims with such speed. It is both a sign that pagan witchcraft has its own viability as a spiritual system, and that it is less given than some other faiths to fundamentalist responses.

Two other aspects of the Wiccan foundation myth are of more importance here: from whence it came, and why it was functionally so effective in creating a new religion. As with so much else about modern pagan witchcraft, the myth was both an international product and one that was rooted in major cultural developments. The first of these developments was the loss of literal belief in witchcraft by European elites in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This immediately raised a historical problem in how to characterize the early modern witch trials. The shift of opinion invited the verdict that they had been a huge and tragic error, for which somebody had to be blamed. This was exactly the opportunity taken by the Enlightenment philosophers, especially Voltaire and the authors of the *Encyclopédie*. They used the trials as a stick with which to beat traditional religious beliefs and established churches, an attack broadened and made populist in the era of the French Revolution.[4] In the period of reaction which followed the fall of Napoleon, a potentially effective answer was found. Over thirty years ago, Norman Cohn identified the pioneering authors of this approach as the German scholars Karl Ernst Jarcke and Franz Joseph Mone.[5] What has generally been missed is the polemical context of their work, which represented a powerful reactionary response to the Enlightenment challenge. It conceded that witchcraft was an illusion, but argued that the witches tried in the early modern period had been members of a persisting pagan religion. Furthermore,

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[3] Margaret Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921); G. N. Clark, *The Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1945); Stephen Runciman, preface to paperback edition of *Witch-Cult in Western Europe* by Margaret Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964); Christopher Hill, *From Reformation to Industrial Revolution* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967), 115–18; Mary Douglas, "Sorcery Accusations Unleashed: The Lele Revisited," *Africa* 69 (1999): 177–93.

[4] Roy Porter, "Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment, Romantic and Liberal Thought," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* by Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, Brian B. Levack and Roy Porter (London: Athlone, 1999).

[5] Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons* (London: Chatto and Heinemann, 1975), 103–5.

this had been a disgusting one of sexual orgies and blood sacrifices, so that the traditional powers in church and state had been right to stamp it out.[6]

This argument in turn required a response from the populist and anti-clerical radicals of the mid-nineteenth century. The most famous was provided by the Frenchman Jules Michelet, who responded using a tactic which saved him the trouble of much actual research, by admitting the case but reversing the sympathies. He declared that witches had indeed been pagans, but that their religion had been a generally good one. It had honored women, loved the natural world, been rooted in the common people, and upheld religious and political freedoms against the repressive powers of medieval clerics and magistrates.[7] His view diffused rapidly, finding adherents especially in Britain and America. Margaret Murray was the best known, because she carried out the greatest amount of apparent research to substantiate it, but she was only one of a large group and a long line, and it is important to note that the essentials of the foundation myth of modern pagan witchcraft were already in place among leading scholars by the mid-nineteenth century.[8] The twentieth century, in fact, really added only two further components to it, one American and one British. The American one actually commenced in the 1890s but only achieved wide popularity in the 1970s, the two phases being related to successive stages in the development of modern feminism by characterizing the witch-hunts as a specific means by which men could suppress women.[9] The British contribution, according to all present evidence, dates from the 1940s.[10] It recreated this imagined witch religion, and declared that it had survived in secret, at least in England. From there it spread, as has been said, across the modern western world.

This, however, itself begs the question of how the foundation myth could be so potent, and serve to create a religion strong enough to survive when the historiographical rug was pulled from beneath its feet. From the time of Michelet onward, it characterized pagan witchcraft, in its essence,

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[6] Karl Ernst Jarcke, "Ein Hexenprozess," *Annalen der Deutschen und Ausländischen Criminal-Rechts-Pflege*, 1 (1828): 450; Franz Joseph Mone, "Über das Hexenwesen," *Anzeiger für Kunde der Teutschen Vorzeit* (1839): 271–5, 444–5.

[7] Jules Michelet, *La Sorcière* (n.p. 1862).

[8] Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 140–50, 194–201.

[9] Matilda Joslyn Gage, *Women, Church and the State* (n.p. 1893); Andrea Dworkin, *Woman Hating* (New York: Dutton, 1974), 118–50; Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology* (Boston: Beacon, 1978), 178–222.

[10] Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*.

as a counter-cultural religion *par excellence*, which could be pitted against all that liberals and radicals loathed and feared most in modern society, including sexism, the environmental degradation consequent on industrialization, and repression of the individual. All of these qualities are, indeed, firmly rooted in aspects of early modern depictions of witchcraft, and the religion created by the myth used the older images to oppose those three cultural phenomena directly. First, it was feminist. The witch is, after all, one of very few images of independent female power that traditional European culture has bequeathed to the present. Even now, this identification between witchcraft and women remains to some extent a puzzle. Specialists in early modern history have expended much effort on explaining it, plausibly, in terms of the social structures and ideologies of that period.[11] The problem is that what they have done is to show how the gender stereotyping was assimilated into early modern ideological and social systems. This is a valuable exercise in itself, but the identification is much older, because ancient Greek and Roman, and early medieval Irish, German and Welsh witches are also stereotypically female.[12] Furthermore, it buckles against the fact that in areas such as Iceland, Normandy, Estonia, Russia and (initially) Finland, the majority of those accused in the early modern period were male. These were societies which had the same religious, political and social structures as those which mainly accused women.[13]

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[11] For a range of excellent analyses, see Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), 257–86; James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in England 1550–1750* (London: Hamilton, 1996), 169–89; Stuart Clark, *Thinking With Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 108–33; Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 125–78; and Raisa Maria Toivo, *Witchcraft and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

[12] For the Greek and Roman stereotypes, see Daniel Ogden, *Night's Black Agents: Witches, Wizards and the Dead in The Ancient World* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2008); for the Irish, Welsh and German material, there is work in progress by the present author.

[13] Kirsten Hastrup, "Iceland: Sorcerers and Paganism," in *Early Modern Witchcraft*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); E. William Monter, "Toads and Eucharists: The Male Witches of Normandy," *French Historical Studies* 20 (1997): 563–95; Maria Madar, "Estonia 1," in *Early Modern Witchcraft*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Russell Zguta, "Witch Trials in Seventeenth-Century Russia," *American Historical Review* 82 (1977): 1187–1207; Antero Heikkinen and Timo Kervinen, "Finland: The Male Domination," in *Early Modern Witchcraft*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Structural explanations, therefore, do not seem to work for the gender question. We seem to be left with the less satisfying but seemingly more correct explanation that different areas of the world have had different gender stereotypes for witchcraft, and that witches have been regarded as women in most parts of Europe since history began. This would fit what is known of ancient European religions in general: public rites were usually carried out by men, as heads of social and political units. They could be supported and advised by male specialists, such as priests, seers or Druids. Likewise, men could work magic, but by learning it from books or teachers.[14] Women seem to have been, by contrast, regarded as natural repositories of magical power and knowledge, less regulated, more spontaneous and more dangerous. That is why all the ancient European cultures named above resorted to them as oracles and prophetesses, when normal religious systems appeared inadequate as channels of communication with the divine. Conversely, it seems to have been supposed that women could dispose of destructive magical power far more easily than men; hence the female stereotype of the witch across most of Europe, where this gendered belief system obtained. It may therefore be seen that the identification of witchcraft with female power runs very deep.

The association of witches with the natural world is also old, and seems largely functional. For one thing, they were expected to understand nature because they used natural substances in their craft. More simply, however, because their meetings, rites and revels were clandestine, they had to be held well away from centers of population, in meadows, woods or mountains. This linkage to the wild and green was to serve witches well in a modern age which commenced with the Romantic cult of nature and has gone on to reckon with full-scale ecological crisis. The association of modern witchcraft with self-expression is also firmly based on early modern images. Theologically, of course, early modern witches were enslaved by Satan, and had to find his promises of reward ultimately hollow. In artists' depictions of those witches' activities, and sometimes in the fantasies projected during interrogations, they seem by contrast to be having a wonderful time. They are made into key images of misrule, disorder and freedom from moral constraint, and, whatever the grim implications of their activities to an early modern audience, they are clearly hugely

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[14] Prudence Jones and Nigel Pennick, *A History of Pagan Europe* (London: Routledge, 1995); Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Ken Dowden, *European Paganism* (London: Routledge, 2000); Matthew W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2001).

enjoying themselves. This element of abandoned revelry and full-blooded taking of pleasure easily turned the witch into a modern icon of liberation in the positive sense. It enabled modern witchcraft to function as a religion which celebrates the joys of living, especially sexual union, as things sacred in themselves. By a reversal of sympathies, images constructed to epitomize degradation and transgression could become a means to invest fleshly pleasures with genuine sanctity.[15]

These processes of rehabilitation were much aided by the fact that modern pagan witchcraft is a counter-cultural tradition by a double descent. It not merely embodies challenges to social and religious norms based partly on portraits of early modern witchcraft, but descends directly from the western world's oldest and most continuous intellectual counter-culture. This is one that overlaps with witchcraft, but has generally bypassed it. The earliest surviving rites of modern pagan witches certainly draw heavily on the nineteenth-century myth of a surviving pagan religion. They are also, however, very obviously dependent on the western tradition of ritual magic, and in particular that branch of it commonly called theurgy. This is the use of particular actions and words to produce a direct contact between the human celebrant and a deity, amounting at most to a full if temporary union of the two. Such an enterprise is at the core of the modern witch religion. To achieve it, modern witch liturgies employ invocations, at times taken directly from early modern magical texts, notably the *Key of Solomon*.[16] The informing spirit and ambition of the rites, however, are older still, coming out of the angelic magic of the Middle Ages, especially that which sought the beatific vision of the divine, and before that from Arabic and Hellenistic texts. The Greek Magical Papyri, in particular, represent by far the closest counterpart to modern pagan witchcraft in the ancient world.[17] By the steps just recounted, modern witchcraft *can* credibly claim a direct and unbroken lineage of descent from antiquity. It is just not the one that it has been claiming.

That descent was along the interface of two very different religious traditions.[18] One was European, and rooted in ancient Greece, where a

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[15] Ronald Hutton, *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles* (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1991), 337; Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*; Ronald Hutton, *Witches, Druids and King Arthur: Studies in Paganism, Myth and Magic* (London: Hambledon and London, 2003), 87–192.

[16] Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 223–6.

[17] Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986).

[18] Hutton, *Witches, Druids and King Arthur*, 87–192.

distinction was developed between religion and magic. In the former, the human agent asks the supernatural for attention and aid, and then awaits a response. In the latter, the human has some power to attract or compel the supernatural to respond in a particular way. This distinction, with the implication that magic is inherently disreputable and dangerous by contrast with religion, was appearing among the Greeks, at the latest, by the end of the fifth century BC. The medical treatise "On the Sacred Disease", which dates from that period, praises the supplication of divine beings for medical aid while disapproving of the use of materials and spells to coerce them into helping, as impious.[19] Such a distinction must have achieved greater currency after its adoption by Plato, who attacked those who promised, for payment, to "persuade the deities by bewitching them, as it were, with sacrifices, prayers and incantations".[20] In Plato's century, the fourth BCE, there is a well-recorded case of a woman actually put to death at Athens for trying to avert the righteous anger of gods by using enchantments.[21] The same opposition between religion and magic went straight from Greece to pagan Rome, if it was not indigenous there, and was articulated in the first century CE by the scholar Pliny and the playwright and philosopher Seneca.[22] It was an aspect of Roman popular culture—Apuleius declared with disgust that the "common herd" defined magic as the coercion of the gods—and had serious legal implications. Both Apuleius himself and Apollonius of Tyana, accused of being magicians before courts, secured acquittal by insisting that they merely prayed to deities for aid, instead of trying to compel them.[23] From pagan Rome the contrast passed directly into medieval Christianity, and from that into modern intellectual culture.[24]

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[19] W. H. S. Jones, trans., *Hippocrates* (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1923–31), iii, 149–51.

[20] Plato, *The dialogues of Plato. 4, Laws*, trans. B. Jowett (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), section 10.909B.

[21] Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 50–2.

[22] Pliny, *Natural History: in ten volumes*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), section 30.1–18; Seneca, *Oedipus*, ed. and trans. John G. Fitch (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), lines 561–3.

[23] Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana, books I–IV*, ed. and trans. Christopher P. Jones (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), lines 8.7.9–10; Apuleius, *Apologia*, 2 vol., ed. Vincent Hunink (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1997), section 26.6.

[24] Valerie Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Hutton, *Witches, Druids and King Arthur*, 98–117.

The rival tradition was born in ancient Egypt, where no such distinction between religion and magic existed, because it was considered perfectly respectable to find ways of coercing or persuading divine powers. Egyptians believed that the cosmos was animated and controlled by spiritual power, which was morally neutral and was manipulated by deities to regulate and maintain the natural world. It could, however, be quite legitimately employed by humans for their own ends, even if this meant using it against goddesses or gods. It was especially associated with words and writing, but also inherent in particular stones, plants and incenses, and was activated by ritual. This concept goes to the root of Egyptian civilization, being embodied in the Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom and developed in the later Coffin Texts, Book of the Dead and inscriptions in royal tombs. The category of behavior known in English as "witchcraft" was therefore meaningless in Egypt, as it was considered legitimate to use magic as a weapon in quarrels and ambitions, unless against the king himself, which fell into the category of treason.[25] It is not surprising that Egypt became famed throughout the Greco-Roman world as the pre-eminent land of magic and of magical knowledge. A body of Egyptian texts which embodied the concept of ritual magic as a legitimate activity was translated into Hellenistic Greek. By this means it passed, either directly or through the medium of Arabic, into the medieval European world, and there formed the basis for a clandestine counter-culture that has persisted ever since.[26]

Pagan witchcraft represents, in one respect, its modern flowering. It provides a very convenient spiritual vehicle for modern humans who have largely lost the traditional human fear of the divine and of an associated, menacing and capricious, natural world. It allows such people a relationship with deities based more on affection, alliance and negotiation, like that of a magician with a benevolent invoked spirit or—to some extent—of a witch with a familiar one. It is interesting to speculate that modern pagan witchcraft might well have recognized and claimed such an inheritance, had it not been for the apparent scholarly orthodoxy, at the time when it was developed, that early modern witchcraft had been a pagan

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[25] Robert Kreich Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993); Jan Assmann, "Magic and Theology in Ancient Egypt," in *Envisioning Magic*, eds. Peter Schafer and Hans G. Kippenberg (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1–18; Geraldine Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum, 1994); Joris F. Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1978).

[26] Hutton, *Witches, Druids and King Arthur*.

religion. That diversion of perception was certainly reinforced by the fact that the publicist, and perhaps creator, of modern pagan witchcraft, Gerald Gardner, was closely acquainted with Margaret Murray.[27]

Thus far, this essay has been devoted to explaining the popularity and the benefits of the foundation myth of modern pagan witchcraft. Against these benefits should now be opposed an argument that the myth is both deeply misleading and positively dangerous, for three reasons. The first is that it suggests that the early modern witch-hunts were essentially a Christian aberration, resolved when European humanity recovered from a temporary fit of madness. It is now clear that, on the contrary, the execution of supposed witches was carried out by most of the pre-Christian peoples of ancient Europe and the Near East. What is more, they were able to carry it out in enormous quantity. If the Roman historian Livy is correct and properly understood, the body counts produced by witch-hunts in the Roman republic surpassed anything in the early modern period. One wave of trials in Rome in the second century BCE claimed two thousand victims and another three thousand.[28] Furthermore, early modern people were themselves drawing on this ancient heritage. Shakespeare's witches' chant in *Macbeth* was modeled partly on one found in an *Epode* of the Roman poet Horace, while when Ben Jonson put witches into the initial antimasque for his *Masque of Queens*, he filled his published footnotes to it with references to ancient authors. The swimming test for witches so prominent in the early modern period, to see whether they floated or sank, is first recorded in the law code of the Babylonian king Hammurabi, over three thousand years before.[29] Early modern perceptions of witchcraft are studded with very old folkloric motifs. To class the famous witch trials as a Christian crime, however well rooted this may be in liberal and radical thought since the Enlightenment, is therefore not only to miss the whole point of European witchcraft beliefs but to underestimate the embedded nature of them.

The second caution relates to the fact, recently emphasized by both Wolfgang Behringer and myself, that the figure traditionally called a "witch" in English is found in every inhabited continent of the world.[30]

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[27] Gardner, *Witchcraft Today*, 15–16.

[28] Livy, *History of Rome*, XXXIX.41, XL.43.

[29] G. R. Driver and J. C. Miles, eds., *The Babylonian Laws* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1955): 13–14.

[30] Wolfgang Behringer, *Witches and Witch-Hunts: A Global History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004); Ronald Hutton, "The Global Context of the Scottish Witch-Hunt," in *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context*, ed. Julian Goodare (Manchester: Manchester University Press,

In my own work I have proposed five specific characteristics that define this figure globally. The first is that a witch is somebody who uses apparently supernatural means to cause harm to other human beings. The second is that this person hurts neighbors or kin rather than strangers, and so is a threat within a community. The third is that this person does not usually work for straightforward material gain, but from envy or malice, and is therefore either inherently evil or in the grip of an evil force. The fourth is that the appearance of such a person is not an isolated or unique event: she or he works in a tradition, either by inheriting it or by training and being initiated into it. The final characteristic is that this person can be effectively opposed and defeated by other humans, usually by succumbing to counter-magic, by being forced to recall a curse, or by being eliminated physically. The latter tactic might consist of the suspected witch being sent into temporary or permanent exile, or consigned to prison, or put to death: for serious offences, the last penalty has been the most common one across the globe. Everything else in local constructions of a stereotypical witch is a variable, including gender, social status, whether the witch works alone or as part of a secret society, and whether the actions of one are deliberate or involuntary. It is the five factors listed above which are worldwide, and it may be seen that, between them, they are a recipe for fear, suspicion, and personal or collective tragedy, as well as for the exposure and elimination of personal tensions within a community.

This being the case, it is important to note that they are not an inherent feature of human belief: our species does not, as the historian Robin Briggs and the anthropologist Peter Geschiere once feared, have the witch figure wired into its brains.[31] Every continent of the world has contained not only indigenous peoples who have hunted witches but others who either have not believed that humans can work magic to harm each other or did not consider this to be a serious problem in practice: in every case, this is because they have feared other sources of uncanny misfortune more, such as angry ghosts or spirits of the land.[32] The largest traditional witch-free region of the planet is probably Siberia, which covers one-third of the northern hemisphere, while it may be remembered that in the ancient

2002) and "Anthropological and Historical Approaches to Witchcraft: Potential for a New Collaboration?," *Historical Journal* 47 (2004): 413–34.

[31] Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 394; Peter Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa* (Charlottesville: Virginia University Press, 1997), 223.

[32] Hutton, "Anthropological and Historical Approaches," 424–5.

world Egypt was the most prominent example of a culture which did not have a concept of witchcraft.[33] In the early modern context, the Celtic societies of the British Isles—Gaelic Scotland and Ireland, the Isle of Man and Welsh-speaking Wales—all seem to have been unusually reluctant to try witches, and some similar mechanism may have obtained there.[34] The real problem of this varied pattern of attitude, for the present, is the sheer tenacity of a belief in witchcraft amongst those peoples who have traditionally held it. The early modern European trials are themselves an example of how an ancient fear of the witch acquired new potency in a much later and much altered technological, social, political and religious context.

The story of the developing world today is one of how the European elites, which till recently ruled most of South Asia, Africa and Latin America, have failed to educate the native populations out of the same kinds of beliefs. The process of decolonization since the 1940s has brought about a widespread resumption of witch-hunting in those parts of the world. The most extreme manifestations of this are now apparent in Ghana, Cameroon and Malawi, where laws against witchcraft have been formally reintroduced.[35] In these cases, moreover, the change was brought about as a measure of mercy, because without formal laws the murders of suspected witches were rising to critical proportions. As just one example, the Tanzanian Ministry of the Family has estimated that five thousand people were killed in unofficial witch-hunts in that nation between 1994 and 1998.[36] Most African nations have been faced with this problem, and many have discussed the option of reviving formal penalties for witchcraft, such as fines or prison. The most prolonged argument has been in South Africa, where at one stage the government commissioned an investigation of the issue from a commission of Black academics. The result, the Ralushai Report of 1996, recommended the revival of laws against witchcraft with the use of native magicians as expert witnesses and witch-finders, as occurs in Cameroon. What is especially striking about this is that most of the authors themselves professed and upheld a literal belief in witchcraft. One, Professor Chavunduka, only expressed some doubt as to whether

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[33] Ronald Hutton, *Shamans: Siberian Spirituality and the Western Imagination* (London: Hambledon and London, 2001); Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient*.

[34] I floated this idea in Hutton, "The Global Context," 31, and am engaged in further research into it.

[35] Hutton, "The Global Context," 32; Hutton, "Anthropological and Historical Approaches," 416–17; Behringer, *Witches and Witch-Hunts*, 196–228.

[36] Behringer, *Witches and Witch-Hunts*, 213.

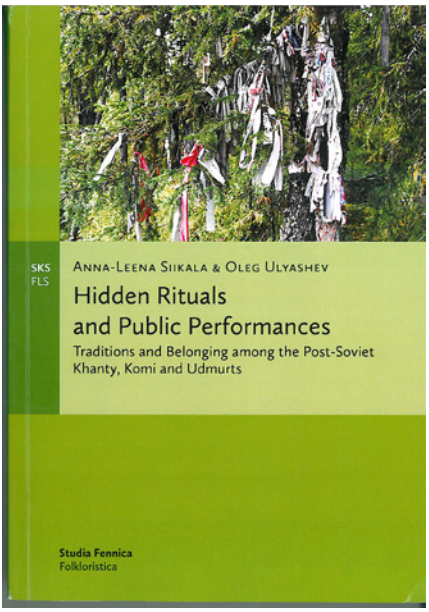

Figure 8.1. Anna-Leena Siikala and Oleg Ulyashev, *Hidden Rituals and Public performances. Traditions and Belonging among the Post-Soviet Khanty, Komi and Udmurts*. (Helsinki: SKS, 2011). Cover illustration: Anna-Lena Siikala, A holy tree in Synya, 2001.

witches rode around at night on hyenas, although he thought it possible.[37] So far the South African government has rejected their recommendations, although in 2007 it came very close to reversing this stance and the problem remains acute. Although most severe in sub-Saharan Africa, the murder of suspected witches by mobs or individuals has also become serious in parts of South Asia, Oceania and Central America.[38]

In that perspective, the area of the modern world in which witches are *not* hunted is contracting sharply. Even the developed part of it is not immune. Within the global context, what genuinely distinguishes the early modern witch trials, and makes them a unique phenomenon, is a pair of major characteristics. The first is that the Europe of medieval western Christianity is the only region in which witchcraft has been regarded as an organized heretical religion, owing allegiance to a cosmic power of evil

[37] John Hund, ed., *Witchcraft Violence and the Law in South Africa* (Hatfield: Protea Book House, 2003).

[38] Behringer, *Witches and Witch-Hunts*, 217–20.

locked into a struggle with the true deity and his true church. The fashionable interpretation of the early modern trials since the 1990s has been the "many reasons why" approach, stressing that different combinations of factors, in different regions, served to turn a belief in witchcraft into a series of legal actions. Historians therefore seek multiple explanations.[39] This is certainly the best means of reconstructing the ways in which witch trials developed in particular communities, but on looking at the whole history of the early modern European hunts, one factor stands out from all the rest. This is the development of the concept of witchcraft as a satanic religion: the whole chronology and spatial spread and contraction of the trials pivots upon this. The second distinctive feature of the early modern trials is that the Europeans who had held them became the only peoples in the history of the world to have both traditionally hunted witches and to have spontaneously changed their minds and rejected a belief in witchcraft altogether. In that sense, the early modern witch-hunts truly were an aspect of the crisis of Renaissance and Reformation Christendom, and also a short-lived and failed experiment in the construction of modernity. As Stuart Clark has emphasized, there was no necessary antithesis between the rise of the new science and a belief in demons and in humans who ally with them; demonology could itself be perfectly "scientific".[40] In the perspective offered here, that is perfectly correct; but so is the older view that the development of a concept of a mechanical universe, and the demand for objective proofs for assertions about the nature of the world were inimical to witch trials. In the annals of the Scientific Revolution, the concept of witchcraft as a newly appeared satanic crusade may count as an apparently valuable idea which was laboriously discussed and tested and then rejected because it failed to produce obvious benefits. Those demonologists who propagated it in the fifteenth century were anxious to emphasize that the threat to which they were drawing attention was not a traditional one, but a serious new menace to Christendom which had appeared in the years around 1400.[41] Three centuries of investigation of this proposition produced the overall conclusion that the danger was in fact either non-existent or could be discounted for all practical purposes.

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[39] Argued most eloquently and influentially by Robin Briggs, "'Many Reasons Why.' Witchcraft and the Problem of Multiple Explanation," in *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester and Gareth Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996a).

[40] Clark, *Thinking With Demons*.

[41] This is especially true of the two most celebrated, the *Formicarius* and the *Malleus Maleficarum*.

Nonetheless, the rejection has not been complete, and the recent and ongoing African experiences serve as further proof that witchcraft beliefs can be as much an aspect of modernity as of traditional societies. Peter Geschiere firmly established this in the African context, and it is now as relatively familiar an experience of anthropologists and journalists in that continent to find witch persecutions flourishing in cities among people who wear suits, jeans and T-shirts, and watch television, as it is among those with more traditional lifestyles. As part of this adaptation, the beliefs that support them are no longer themselves purely traditional. Some of the most vicious and extensive recent witch-hunting activity in Africa has been inspired by evangelical Christian churches based on the American model, which have introduced the concept of a satanic conspiracy to old beliefs in witchcraft exactly as occurred in fifteenth-century Europe. The only real distinction is technological: the new concept is spread mainly by the medium of video recordings.[42] The fact that it has spread from the West is itself highly significant. In 1994 Jean la Fontaine reported on her investigation undertaken for the British government into the panic over alleged satanic ritual abuse of children. This panic had arrived in Britain from America at the end of the 1980s, spread mainly by employees of the social services, and depended on the belief that such abuse was one aspect of an international and secret religion of devil-worshippers who assaulted (and, according to some, sacrificed) children as part of bloody and orgiastic rites. She concluded that no such religion existed, and, indeed, that satanic ritual abuse itself did not exist in Britain. She also pointed out that the belief was a direct survival of the stereotype of a satanic conspiracy that had powered the early modern witch-hunts. In the case of the panic over ritual abuse, it had mostly taken a secularized form whereby most of the people who propagated it had jettisoned a literal belief in Satan. Nonetheless, they continued to believe in the existence of Satan-worshippers who still behaved as early modern witches were said to have done. These people were now depicted as committing purely secular crimes, but as remaining a serious hidden menace to society. The presence of the theological element of early modern witch trials was therefore not needed to produce what proved to be a widespread and potentially very serious hunt, which resulted in children being taken into state custody,

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[42] Geshiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft*; Adam Ashforth, *Witchcraft, Violence and Democracy in South Africa* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005); "Saving Africa's Witch Children," *Dispatches* documentary, British Television Channel Four, screened 12 November 2008 (for Nigeria).

and legal actions being prepared against their parents, in several areas. What quashed the actions was a process which had acted to suppress the early modern trials: that, while not disbelieving in the possible existence of a satanic religion, the established legal authorities came to find the evidence unconvincing in these particular cases. Jean La Fontaine's investigation then served to remove official belief in the religion itself.[43]

Elsewhere in the modern West, even the theological element of early modern witchcraft has been preserved, or revived. The belief in satanic ritual abuse was brought to Britain from America by self-conscious missionaries, who were as active and well-networked as late medieval Dominicans or sixteenth-century jurists. Although many of these, like the majority who propagated this belief within the nation, were secular-minded social workers, some were religious enthusiasts with a wholly literal faith in the existence of the demons allegedly invoked. Within the United States during the 1980s, the same scare produced what has been called a major national crisis, including the longest-running criminal trial in American history and several heavy jail sentences. The beliefs behind it have likewise been exposed as having been reliant on fantasy and the application of leading questions to child witnesses was very reminiscent of those used upon the accused in many early modern trials.[44] Once again the work of Stuart Clark on the "scientific" nature of early modern demonology is relevant here, showing as it did the internal logic and coherence of that thought system. More recently, the American folklorist Bill Ellis conducted an analysis of the contemporary Christian "deliverance ministry" in Canada and the United States, showing how a very similar demonology, complete with satanic witches, could revive and flourish in the present day.[45] Just as in the early modern period, the impact of theological thought, in spreading the concept of a conspiracy that endangers society, has been increased at a popular level by an alliance with sensationalist journalism and embodiment in a few influential books. Given the increasing strength and confidence of the radical religious right wing in the United States during the 2000s, and the accompanying polarization of American culture, this cannot necessarily be dismissed as a marginal

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[43] J. S. La Fontaine, *Speak of the Devil: Tales of Satanic Abuse in Contemporary England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[44] James T. Richardson, Joel Best and David G. Bromley, eds., *The Satanism Scare* (New York: De Gruyter, 1991); David Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate: Rumours of Demonic Conspiracy and Ritual Abuse in History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[45] Bill Ellis, *Raising the Devil: Satanism, New Religions and the Media* (Lexington: Kentucky University Press, 2000).

and ineffectual ideology. It can work in turn on an endemic and persistent unease in western society about the status and nature of supernatural phenomena in general. I have recorded elsewhere one of the most irritating, and disturbing, recurrent experiences during the writing of my own history of modern pagan witchcraft. It consisted of the most common question asked of me by economically prosperous, educationally sophisticated, upper-middle-class British people who heard of my research, often fellow academics: "Do these witches' spells really work?"[46]

My answer was always that, in the straightforward, scientific, cause-and-effect sense, I had no evidence that they did. In another sense, however, it is perfectly clear that witchcraft can in fact kill. This is the third aspect of the foundation myth of modern pagan witchcraft that is dangerously misleading. The classic text to illustrate it is not the work of an ancient author, or an early modern magistrate or demonologist, but of a member of the modern Harvard Medical School. He was called Walter Cannon, and was writing at the height of the Second World War with a special interest in the results of war injuries. He noted that during the previous world war army surgeons had regularly recorded that soldiers were dying of superficial wounds by a process that was vaguely called "shock". He related this to a series of reports which had accumulated from European doctors working among native peoples in colonial possessions. They described cases of individuals who had believed themselves to be cursed or bewitched, and who had subsequently died. The autopsies revealed no primary cause of death, and, from the data, Cannon concluded that the victims had likewise died of "shock". What this meant was that the bewitched person had become too frightened to sleep or eat, thus weakening a system which was constantly flooded with adrenalin. All this put pressure on vital organs, especially the heart, and the failure of any one of those was sufficient to cause death.[47] Since Cannon's time other medical experts have debated his theory and sustained it, save that the number of processes that are now recognized by which death may be induced by a state of mental suggestion, has been multiplied.[48]

It follows from this that, in societies which have a firm belief in the power of witchcraft, bewitchment—whether really attempted or just

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[46] Hutton, *Witches, Druids and King Arthur*, 275–6.

[47] Walter Cannon, "Voodoo Death," *American Anthropologist* 44 (1942): 169–81.

[48] G. L. Engel, "A Life Setting Conducive to Illness," *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic* 32 (1968): 386–90; David Lester, "Voodoo Death: Some New Thoughts on an Old Phenomenon," *American Anthropologist* 74 (1972): 386–90.

suspected—can be literally deadly. In a society in which witches can be lethally effective, it follows logically that they should be prosecuted like any other murderers or assailants. This is precisely the mindset which produced the conclusions of the Ralushai Commission's report. The consolation in this logic is that anybody who genuinely does not believe in witchcraft is safe from it, and so a genuine rejection of the belief system produces its own protection. To those who know James Barrie's play *Peter Pan*, it's the "Tinkerbell effect"—that fairies cease to exist if human beings cease to believe in them—in reverse. This is the reasoning behind the behavior of native peoples under colonial rule who, faced with foreign overlords who rejected witchcraft as an illusion, could continue perfectly easily to believe in it within their own society, while accepting that native witches had no powers over their new rulers. It is the same set of perceptions which has convinced the South African government (at least so far) to reject the Ralushai Report and opt for the tougher and more expensive option of trying to educate the belief in witchcraft out of all its citizens.

That is where western academics have a role. When the systematic study of early modern witch beliefs and trials was commenced about forty years ago, it rapidly grew into a major academic industry. The present collection of essays is one of the latest manifestations of that. The appeal of it has been largely that it offered an especially vivid insight into a world which we seemed to have lost. Like anthropologists working among remote tribal peoples, historians were presented with the intellectual and emotional challenge of coming to understand an alien mindset, and of furnishing their pupils and readers with a similar access to it. To do so convincingly and sympathetically is one of the finest demonstrations of disciplinary effectiveness and personal scholarly prowess. In this excursion into one of the less accessible parts of the foreign country that is the past, modern witches, if they were noticed at all, were regarded as an irrelevance, and commonly a nuisance, an attitude which has persisted among early modern specialists into very recent years. Those witches embodied, after all, a historical claim—that the early modern witch trials were directed against an ancient pagan religion—which historians themselves had come to perceive as utterly erroneous. It may now be argued instead that modern pagan witches actually have a lot in common with professional historians and other kinds of academics. Their erroneous claim was, after all, taken directly from academic publications and founded upon apparent scholarly orthodoxy. On contact with historical revisionism, most of them abandoned that claim, like good scholars themselves. Instead they are conscious, as historians should be, of the manner in which some ancient and

early modern images of witchcraft may function well when transplanted and transformed to serve the needs of modern society. This process represents not charlatanism or delusion, but a classic postmodernist exercise in reception, appropriation and subversion.

What should probably concern specialists in early modern witchcraft much more is that the traditional figure of the witch, as central to the early modern trials, is not part of a lost world. It is not even an aspect of marginal societies in the postcolonial world, or of tiny and impotent subcultures in our own nations. It is now a major practical problem for governments around the globe, and it features as a component factor in ideologies that have increasing importance in the world's most economically and militarily developed states. In an important sense, it is possible that the long neglect by professional western scholars of historic witchcraft as a subject to which derision, contempt and dismissal ought properly to be applied by the educated instead of investigation, reflected a real fear of the consequences of appearing to attach importance to it: scorn and neglect may have been key weapons in the ongoing attempt to finally eradicate the belief. Those attitudes are no longer respectable for historians, not least because they have not proved entirely effective. The fact that witchcraft has not turned out, after all, to be a dead subject should be a source of pride and excitement to those who work upon it. Instead of representing a series of academic holiday snaps, it seems to have a vital living relevance after all. If education really is the key to protecting people both from death or injury by witchcraft, and from death or injury by witches, then historians are among the holders of that key.

It should be a source of comfort and satisfaction to be able to suggest to scholars and students of a subject that the latter may be even more important and interesting than they had thought. In this case, however, I rather wish that I did not have reason to do so.

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INDEX OF NAMES AND SUBJECTS

In some cases the areas discussed are referred in index by their modern names. Captions are not presented in the index.