



PALGRAVE HISTORICAL STUDIES IN WITCHCRAFT AND MAGIC

Cultures of Witchcraft in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present

Edited by
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and Cornelia Usborne



Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic

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The history of European witchcraft and magic continues to fascinate and challenge students and scholars. There is certainly no shortage of books on the subject. Several general surveys of the witch trials and numerous regional and micro studies have been published for an English-speaking readership. While the quality of publications on witchcraft has been high, some regions and topics have received less attention over the years. The aim of this series is to help illuminate these lesser known or little studied aspects of the history of witchcraft and magic. It will also encourage the development of a broader corpus of work in other related areas of magic and the supernatural, such as angels, devils, spirits, ghosts, folk healing and divination. To help further our understanding and interest in this wider history of beliefs and practices, the series will include research that looks beyond the usual focus on Western Europe and that also explores their relevance and influence from the medieval to the modern period. 'A valuable series.'—*Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft*

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Jonathan Barry · Owen Davies
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Editors

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Essays in Honour of Willem de Blécourt
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Photograph of Willem de Blécourt [image created/owned by Cornelia Usborne]

PREFACE

This volume is a collection inspired by the contributions to witchcraft studies of Willem de Blécourt, to whom it is dedicated and who provides the opening chapter, setting out a methodological and conceptual agenda for the study of cultures of witchcraft (broadly defined) in Europe since the Middle Ages.¹ The other contributions from historians, anthropologists, literary scholars and folklorists who have collaborated closely with de Blécourt explore some or all of the themes and approaches which he has pioneered and apply them to cases which range in time and space across all the main regions of Europe since the thirteenth century up to the current time. While some draw heavily on texts, others on archival sources and others on field research, they are all based on a commitment to reconstructing the meaning and lived experience of witchcraft (and its related phenomena) to Europeans at all levels, respecting the many varieties and ambiguities in such meanings and experiences and resisting attempts to reduce them to master narratives or simple causal models. Although this is now a well-established

¹A full bibliography of de Blécourt's publications, together with some unpublished work and discussion of his methods, may be found at his website: <http://historicalanthropologist.eu/>. Only a selection of those writings, particularly those in English, will be cited in what follows. His contributions to the history of unorthodox medicine and sexuality in modern Europe and to the history of the werewolf concept as part of the wider history of animal/human metamorphoses and relationships are not considered here, except insofar as they overlap with the history of witchcraft, but for the latter see his key essay 'The Differentiated Werewolf. An introduction to cluster methodology' in Willem de Blécourt (ed.), *Werewolf Histories* (Basingstoke, 2015), 1–24.

approach, it has not previously been articulated so explicitly as in the opening essay, nor embodied so coherently in a collection of this scope.

De Blécourt grapples critically with the work of French ethnographer Jeanne Favret-Saada. Her self-reflexive study of immersion in the world of witchcraft discourse in a Normandy community in the 1970s has been widely referenced in surveys of early modern witchcraft, in addition to influencing other anthropological and sociological studies of European witchcraft belief. For de Blécourt, anthropology ‘is a way to look at witchcraft’ rather than using it as a comparative tool. It provides a means of understanding the ‘witchcraft discourse’, differentiating it from a ‘discourse on witchcraft’.² In his chapter, he applies this approach to newspaper reports of witchcraft from the last three decades of the nineteenth century in Rotterdam and the area to the south. The results question Favret-Saada’s view that historic witchcraft discourses cannot be fully recovered.

The next two chapters, by Christa Agnes Tuczay and Ruth Bottigheimer, look at the representation of witches in fairy tales, folktales and legends. De Blécourt has written extensively about these genres as sources in Dutch and German contexts. His work has much broader implications, however, in that he sees them as texts that need to be historicised and ‘anthropologised’ in terms of the relationship or discourse between narrator and collector.³ Christa Tuczay surveys the different

²For his views on this see also ‘Time and the Anthropologist; or the Psychometry of historiography’, *Focaal* 26/27 (1996), 17–24; ‘The witch, her victim, the unwitcher and the researcher. The continued existence of traditional witchcraft’ in Willem De Blécourt, Ronald Hutton and Jean La Fontaine, *Witchcraft in Twentieth-Century Europe* (1999), 141–219; ‘Witchcraft—Discourse and Disappearance: Württemberg and the Dutch documentation’, *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft*, 5 (2010), 103–107; “‘Keep that woman out!’: Notions of space in twentieth-century Flemish witchcraft discourse”, *History and Theory*, Forum: At Home and in the Workplace: Domestic and Occupational Space in Western Europe from the Middle Ages, ed. Beat Kümin and Cornelia Osborne, 1.52 (2013), 361–379.

³For his work on legends and folktales, including his incisive critique of transhistorical models of popular mythology underlying witchcraft concepts such as the Sabbath, see ‘Bedding the Nightmare. Somatic experience and narrative meaning in Dutch and Flemish legend texts’, *Folklore*, 114 (2003), 227–245; “‘I Would Have Eaten You Too’: Werewolf Legends in the Flanders, Dutch and German Area”, *Folklore*, 118 (2007), 85–105; ‘The Return of the Sabbath: Mental Archeologies, Conjectural Histories or Political Mythologies?’ in Jonathan Barry and Owen Davies (eds.), *Palgrave Advances in Witchcraft Historiography* (Basingstoke, 2007), 125–145; ‘Sabbath Stories: Towards a New History of Witches’ Assemblies’ in Brian P. Levack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford, 2013), 84–100; ‘The Flying Witch: Its Resonance in the Sixteenth-Century Netherlands’, *Magic, Ritual & Witchcraft*, 11 (2016), 73–93.

elements that characterised the witch and her diabolic relations in Austrian legends and folktales. As she stresses, it is important to distinguish between the two genres. The former purport to be factual, concerning real people rooted in specific times and places. Witches in the latter are works of fiction, though they share some characteristics with the historic witch. Tuczaý explores, in particular, how the witches depicted in legends show both similarities and major differences with the diabolic witch constructed by the early modern demonologists. By way of contrast, Ruth Bottigheimer ponders the absence or reconfiguration of the witch figure in early-eighteenth-century folktales by looking at the popular story ‘Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou’, as told in a collection of a *Thousand and One Nights* published in 1709 by Hanna Dyâb, a young Syrian from Aleppo. Dyâb created a wicked, conniving female character who was ‘witchy’ in certain ways but whom he called a ‘*magicienne*’. She is not categorised as a witch as understood in other historic contexts, and yet the popularity of the story had a significant influence on subsequent portrayals of witch-like female characters in eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century European folk-tale collections. Her conclusions reinforce de Blécourt’s claims regarding the literary origins of fairy tales, often seen as deriving from oral tradition, and the transformative role of the Grimm brothers in creating a new model of the evil witch within modern fairy tales.⁴

Seventeenth-century personal stories and national identities are explored in the chapters by Rita Voltmer and Machteld Löwensteyn. As de Blécourt has explored, literary representations can play a significant role in spreading models of witchcraft, as well as in questioning them.⁵

⁴For his work on fairy tales see ‘On the Origin of *Hänsel und Gretel*: An Exercise in the History of Fairy Tales’, *Fabula*, 49 (2008), 30–46; ‘Fairy Grandmothers: Images of Storytelling Events in Nineteenth-Century Germany’, *Relief. Revue électronique de la littérature française*, 4.2 (2010), 174–197; ‘Metamorphosing Men and Transmogrified Texts. Some Thoughts on the Genealogy of Fairy Tales’, *Fabula*, 52 (2011), 280–296; *Tales of Magic, Tales in Print: On the Genealogy of Fairy Tales and the Brothers Grimm* (Manchester, 2012); ‘Fairy Tales as Belief Narratives’ in Zoja Karanović and Willem De Blécourt (eds.), *Belief Narrative Genres* (Novi Sad, 2013), 51–58; ‘The Witches of the Brothers Grimm’ in Claudia Brinker-von der Heyde, Holger Ehrhardt, Hans-Heino Ewers and Annkatrin Inder (eds.), *Märchen, Mythen und Moderne: 200 Jahre Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm* (Frankfurt am Main, 2015), 195–205.

⁵‘The Laughing Witch: Notes on the Relationship between Literature and History in the Early Fifteenth Century’ in Louise Nyholm Kallestrup & Raisa Maria Toivo (eds.), *Contesting Orthodoxy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Heresy, Magic and Witchcraft* (Basingstoke, 2017), 255–277.

Voltmer traces the tangled publishing history and performance of a German stage play called *The Mirror of the Witches* (1600), written by a quarrelsome Lutheran minister named Thomas Birck. The play has not survived in its entirety, but the seventy pages that have show it included roles for no less than four witches, twenty-four magistrates, three advocates, two hangmen, one sorcerer, an angel, and Death. Voltmer shows how Birck wrote the play as a parochial didactic tool to discipline morals and religious behaviour and assesses what sources he may have drawn upon and how it relates to other German plays of the period that dealt with witchcraft and the Devil. Löwensteyn's chapter also focuses on one individual, an accused witch named Leentje Willems, and how her story came to have powerful national resonance three centuries later. In the mid-seventeenth century, the town council of Oudewater, in the Netherlands, was famed for the fact that it provided a weighing test for people who were the victims of witchcraft slander. One day in 1647, Leentje Willems went to have herself weighed to absolve her of any blame. Löwensteyn examines how the account of the Oudewater weighing test was mythologised and popularised in problematic ways during the mid-twentieth century and how Leentje Willems' story helps unpick the issues. Like Kallestrup's chapter discussed in what follows, Löwensteyn highlights the significance of gender issues in understanding specific witchcraft episodes, a theme developed by de Blécourt in a number of seminal essays, although he has been keen to stress the importance of exploring themes of masculinity as well as women's role in society.⁶

Hans de Waardt's essay puts early modern Dutch witch persecution in a regional perspective. After the Spaniards defeated Antwerp in 1585 the East–West division in the Low Countries became a North–South segmentation. The economic centre moved from Antwerp to Amsterdam, and Flanders and Brabant suffered a sharp economic crisis. Starting in 1587, these latter provinces, particularly Flanders, witnessed several witchcraft panics, whereas in the North trials came to a standstill. De Waardt analyses the relationship between these shifting patterns and the

⁶'Cunning Women: From Healers to Fortune Tellers' in Hans Binneveld & Rudolf Dekker (eds.), *Curing and Insuring* (Hilversum, 1993), 43–55; 'The Making of the Female Witch: Reflections on Witchcraft and Gender in the Early Modern Period', *Gender and History*, 12 (2000), 287–309; 'The Werewolf, the Witch and the Warlock: Aspects of Gender in the Early Modern Period' in Alison Rowlands (ed.), *Witchcraft and Masculinities* (Basingstoke, 2009), 191–213.

similarities of culture and experience between the western parts of the Low Countries and south-eastern England. We shift our attention northwards in the same period with Louise Nyholm Kallestrup's account of the repeated accusations of witchcraft made against the Danish noble woman Christenze Kruckow over two decades. Kallestrup uses the case to explore the role of gossip, gender, kinship and emotion in generating and perpetuating witchcraft accusations and shows how Kruckow's case maps onto national developments, as the religious and political ground was laid for the witch hunt that swept across the kingdom in the period 1617–1622. Eva Labouvie's essay continues the regional theme as she lays out the reasons behind the decline of the trials using examples from the Saarland and neighbouring areas in south-western Germany. Labouvie challenges the idea that the trials declined due to a 'philosophical turn' in educated society, exemplified by new perceptions of reality through scientific developments; emerging doubts about the judicial practice of trials expressed by jurists, theologians and members of the medical profession; the 'crisis of confidence' in the supernatural; and a 'humanisation of the Devil'. A consideration of both everyday experiences and socio-political change leads to a different conclusion, a pattern of reasoning based on different variables and a process of negotiations between authorities, experts, villagers and those affected by witchcraft. Each of these chapters reinforces de Blécourt's insistence on understanding the place- and time-specific character of witchcraft developments while also appreciating the need for comparative perspectives, as developed in his own work on witchcraft in the Netherlands over six centuries.⁷

The last section of the collection concentrates on the continued belief in witchcraft and magic from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century, using different sources and approaches. De Blécourt has long emphasised the need to integrate (both methodologically and substantively) the history of this modern period with medieval and early modern studies of

⁷See his essays (in Dutch) in Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra & Willem Frijhoff (eds.), *Nederland betoverd. Toverij en hekserij van de veertiende tot in de twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1987), some of them republished in English in Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra & Willem Frijhoff (eds.), *Witchcraft in the Netherlands from the Fourteenth to the Twentieth Century* (Rijswijk, 1991) and his *Termen van toverij: De veranderende betekenis van toverij in Noordoost-Nederland tussen de 16de en 20ste eeuw* (Nijmegen, 1990). He is writing a long-term history of witchcraft in the Low Countries from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries entitled *The Cat and the Cauldron*.

witchcraft and questioned models of ‘decline’ and ‘survival’ based on outdated assumptions about the incompatibility of witchcraft beliefs and practice with modern society.⁸ Jonathan Barry examines the transmission of printed accounts of the supernatural during the long eighteenth century, exploring the varied motivations of those who retold the stories and the changes in form and meaning these entailed. He considers which stories were featured, how far new stories were added to the repertoire (or old ones discarded or revised) and what purposes each collection served for both publishers and readers. Owen Davies then looks at newspapers as a key source of evidence of ‘reverse witch trials’ in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century England. Such court cases concerned those accused of being witches prosecuting those who had physically or verbally abused them for practising witchcraft. Davies outlines three such projects he has conducted involving newspaper research in different counties and assesses what they do or do not tell us about the declining belief in witchcraft at a regional and local level, mirroring work done by de Blécourt on different Dutch regions.⁹ Gustav Henningsen, who came up with the term ‘witch trials in reverse’, delves into the Danish collections of local legends and folk beliefs to explore what it was popularly thought witches could and could not do. What he calls a ‘catechism of witch lore’ closely conforms to the experiences people had in reality, as described in early-modern witch trials and the later reverse trials. One of the most remarkable aspects of this catechism of witch lore is the total absence of the Devil.

Mirjam Mencej’s extensive ethnographic research into the continued popular belief in witchcraft and magic in south-eastern Europe rounds off the collection. Here she focuses on research conducted in 2016 in

⁸‘Witch Doctors, Soothsayers and Priests: On Cunning Folk in European Historiography and Tradition’, *Social History*, 19 (1994), 285–303; ‘On the Continuation of Witchcraft’ in Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester and Gareth Roberts (eds.), *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief*, Cambridge, 1996), 335–352; (with Owen Davies) ‘Introduction: Witchcraft Continued’, in Willem De Blécourt & Owen Davies (eds.), *Witchcraft Continued: Popular Magic in Modern Europe* (Manchester, 2004), 1–13.

⁹“‘Evil People’: A Late-Eighteenth-Century Dutch Cunning Man and His Clients’ in Owen Davies & Willem De Blécourt (eds.), *Beyond the Witch Trials: Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment Europe* (Manchester, 2004), 144–166; ‘Boiling Chickens and Burning Cats: Witchcraft in the Western Netherlands, 1850–1925’ in De Blécourt and Davies (eds.), *Witchcraft Continued*, 89–106.

three different regions of central and western Bosnia, each with a prevailing Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox population respectively. She pays close attention to how the term ‘witch’ is used or not in daily discourse and discusses changes in the types of harm ascribed to magic in Bosnia in comparison to the past. This includes possible reasons for the revival of magic practices and counter-practices since the end of the twentieth century in relation to the general social and economic circumstances in post-war Bosnia and to the role of media in the process. Her chapter, with its exemplary ethnographic sensitivity to the context and nature of her fieldwork, demonstrates how recurring themes emerge in witchcraft research no matter the period or methodological approach, as demonstrated by the other contributions to this volume, confirming de Blécourt’s approach, as theorised in his opening chapter and practised across his long and fruitful career.

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Contributors

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(2012) and, as editor, *Werewolf Histories* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). At the moment he is working on another edited collection, *Precursors of the Witches' Sabbath*, and a major monograph, *The Cat and the Cauldron* about the history of witchcraft in the Low Countries.

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and *How Gender Matters in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (2013); 'Knowing Satan from God', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 6.2, (2011); and as co-editor (with Raisa Maria Toivo) *Contesting Orthodoxy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

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Contested Knowledge: A Historical Anthropologist's Approach to European Witchcraft

Willem de Blécourt

Anthropology is about the Other, both as an abstract concept and shorthand for people in different parts of the world. The Other is to be taken as seriously as one would oneself.¹ Historical actors belong to the same categories, but the gap between them and the researcher can only be bridged through writing (I bracket archæology here, or art history). Studying historical, in my case European witchcraft involves a double otherness because of the participants and because of the subject; only over the course of time does this strangeness recede and become slightly familiar. Here (as well as in my other

¹Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York, 1983), which we discussed in class before its publication. See also: Johannes Fabian, 'The Other Revisited. Critical afterthoughts', *Anthropological Theory*, 6 (2006), 139–52; id., 'Cultural Anthropology and the Question of Knowledge', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 18 (2012), 439–53.

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publications) I want to explore this sense of familiarity and present my way of looking at and dealing with it.

Since time is one-directional, communication is foreclosed. To prevent *hodiecentrism*, however, projecting modern notions onto people in the past, it helps to recognise those parts of knowledge which are academically constructed, such as ‘folk culture’ (also ‘popular culture’) or the witchcraft—sorcery division,² and subsequently declare them of limited use. Translation, both from one language to another and from the past to the present, poses different dangers, since without it, the researcher has no public. Nevertheless, an academic translation must be accurate and indicate the precise terms and their range in the other language. An anthropologist works with local categories. In Europe, witchcraft may be a local category, but even that needs to be qualified. Superstition or ‘folk belief’, to name yet another related concept, may have become indigenous among certain peoples, although originally it was also a construct. The devil may also have been known locally but was usually not part of the local witchcraft discourse (see subsequent discussion on the latter) and only became connected to it under specific circumstances. It all depends on who is selected as the subject of an ethnographic study, in terms of education, class, gender, place, period and so forth. There are at least two preconditions for overcoming the self-evident impossibility of asking dead people directly about their opinions: Research needs to be as thorough as possible, and previous researchers are to be questioned about their conclusions and underlying assumptions. Studying historical European witchcraft on a ‘popular’, everyday level is not just a matter of reading between the lines of an early-modern confession; it is also vital to find the right sources. And witchcraft did not disappear when the trials ground to an end. The newspaper reports I will refer to in what follows serve as a stark witness of that.

I have organised this essay as a critical dialogue with the work of Jeanne Favret-Saada about witchcraft in Mayenne (France),³ since her

²In anthropology, the witchcraft—sorcery distinction is a reified opposition, derived from a translation problem by E.E. Evans-Pritchard; in history, it is deemed to separate the demonological *Sammelbegriff* of Joseph Hansen from a popular discourse but fails to do so because it ignores processes of adaptation.

³Jeanne Favret-Saada, *Désorceler* (Paris, 2009), translated by Matthew Carey as *The Anti-Witch* (Chicago, 2015). This is a reworked collection of articles which appeared between 1983 and 1991, still based on the original fieldwork in the late 1960s and early 1970s, see Favret-Saada, *Les mots, la mort, les sorts: La sorcellerie dans le Bocage* (Paris, 1977), translated by Catherine Cullen as *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage* (Cambridge, 1980),

work has dealt with witchcraft more than that of any other European anthropologist or ethnographer. Favret has been acclaimed by other scholars for this focus and for questioning participant observation, the anthropological method of research, as inherently contradictory.⁴ Although her publications (the last appeared in 2009) are about contemporary rather than historical witchcraft, she highlighted the approaches and questions a historical anthropologist should ask when delving further back into the past. Her work certainly calls for a sophisticated response. To me it was very inspiring but also irritating, because it attracted so much attention that most academics concentrated on it and rather ignored other research on European witchcraft, with the result that they treat as exemplary what may be only exceptional. For in Favret's descriptions and analyses the 'unwitcher' (the witchcraft expert, the cunning man or woman) is emphasised and the 'witch' remains largely invisible, whereas elsewhere, for instance in Germany and the Netherlands, the discourse as well as the research grant the 'witch' a more irreplaceable role.⁵ In these regions, the expert mostly facilitates; in Mayenne unwitchers themselves struggle with the witches and send their malice back to them. From my perspective this indirect confrontation of the bewitched with the 'witch' is a huge area left out of witchcraft, although the same might be concluded about Dutch witchcraft from the French point of view;⁶ death, always a possible outcome of the struggle, is not

and Favret-Saada and Josée Contreras, *Corps pour corps: Enquête sur la sorcellerie dans le Bocage* (Paris, 1981). I have retained the English from the first translation, i.e. 'unwitcher' and 'unwitching' rather than 'dewitcher' and 'dewitching'. Until 1974 Favret-Saada published under her maiden name Favret and only used the double-barrelled name after her marriage. To be consistent, this chapter will refer only to Favret but retain her later name in the footnotes for work published or re-issued after 1974.

⁴ *Inter alia*, from an endless list: Peter Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa* (Charlottesville, 1997); id., *Witchcraft, Intimacy and Trust: Africa in Comparison* (Chicago, 2013); Adam Ashforth, *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa* (Chicago, 2005); Koen Stroeken, *Moral Power: The Magic of Witchcraft* (New York, 2010); Nils Bubandt, *The Empty Seashell: Witchcraft and Doubt on an Indonesian Island* (Ithaca, 2014).

⁵ Willem de Blécourt, 'The Witch, her Victim, the Unwitcher and the Researcher: The Continued Existence of Traditional Witchcraft' in Willem de Blécourt, Ronald Hutton & Jean La Fontaine, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Twentieth Century* (1999), 141–219. This essay covers the whole of Europe.

⁶ An English student of witchcraft may find this discussion like splitting hairs, as both could occur; cf. Owen Davies, *Witchcraft, Magic and Culture 1736–1951* (Manchester, 1999), 218–21.

a requirement. Favret did not take the trouble to discuss other contemporary authors on witchcraft (she did not update her references for the 2009 volume); hence, it is difficult to ascertain whether her description is an actual feature of the local Mayenne discourse, a late development or a simple mistake.⁷ To posit at the end of the 1980s, but based on an assessment which was at least ten years older, that Anglo-Saxon anthropologists knew nothing about European witchcraft was challenging; to make the same claim twenty years later without keeping track of the literature is careless.⁸

Yet Favret's notions about witchcraft as discourse, about the *force magique* and about the impossibility of not clarifying one's position within the triangle of unwitcher, victim and witch remain essential. The issue has always been concerned with how this applies to historical research, in which the text replaces the spoken and the unspoken word and researchers are always removed from their 'interlocutors': the following discussion will bear this out. For a substantial consideration of Favret's views I need to refer to specific historical sources; I have chosen Dutch newspaper articles from the last quarter of the nineteenth century which dealt with witchcraft in a small area between Rotterdam and Dordrecht. They have the advantage of being hardly known. I will argue that the concept of 'witchcraft discourse' should be used more restrictedly than Favret did. The issue of ethnographic authority will be addressed and so will the everyday-life occurrence of violence and the accessibility of cunning folk. I will close this essay with an even more explicit, hence rather short, plea for a historical anthropology of witchcraft.

UNWITCHING IN STRIJENSAS

In the early afternoon of 6 June 1879 in the village of Strijensas (west of Dordrecht in the Netherlands), a woman by the name of Maria was sitting in front of her house when a man, together with his

⁷This issue is not taken up in the latest critique of Favret's work: Gregor Dobler, 'Fatal Words: restudying Jeanne Favret-Saada', *Anthropology of This Century* 13 (2015) at aotcpress.com. Cf. Perle Möhl, *Village Voices: Coexistence and Communication in a Rural Community in Central France* (Copenhagen, 1997).

⁸See Owen Davies, 'Witchcraft Accusations in France, 1850–1990' in Willem de Blécourt & Owen Davies (eds), *Witchcraft Continued: Popular Magic in Modern Europe* (Manchester, 2004), 107–32.

fourteen-year-old daughter, passed by. Joseph Hofman, as he was called, asked Maria whether she was ill.⁹ As she admitted later, she had been worrying and was 'somewhat weak' (*wat zwak*) in her head. Not waiting for the answer, the man said to her: 'You are bewitched (*behekst*), I should tell you that straight away.' Then he took the slipper from her feet and cut a hole in it with his knife. Afterwards he took her into the house and, in the presence of his daughter, stroked (magnetised) Maria's hands and feet and made crosses on her head. 'I do not have my books with me', he remarked, 'otherwise you would already have been cured.' He asked for a guilder and a half. 'Then I will cure you in the name of Jesus Christ.' His words and actions persuaded Maria that she really was bewitched and that Joseph was able to cure her. She gave the money to his daughter, who passed it on to him. They both left but returned two days later.

Maria was scared about a further treatment, but Joseph convinced her by saying, 'If you do not let me help you, you will be dead (*kapot*) in six weeks.' And the girl told her: 'woman, my father will not harm you'. Thereupon he mixed a potion he had brought with him in some coffee and gave it to her to drink. He also told her to take off her stockings, rubbed the liquid into her hands and feet and poured some of the liquid into the stockings. Then they both left. At about half past nine that evening they returned. Joseph stuck a knife in the door to hurt the witch and asked Maria for ten guilders; when she said she did not have the money, he reduced this to five guilders and warned her that without money he would not cure her and she would be forever accursed. Joseph asked his daughter to read something from the books they had brought. The girl could not read, but she mumbled something and her father asked Maria whether she believed in Jesus Christ, asked her to recite the Lord's Prayer and say repeatedly 'devil, hell', whereupon he concluded: 'now you have been cured'.

When five weeks later the case came to the court in nearby Dordrecht, Maria declared that Joseph had made her believe that she had been bewitched. Her condition had still not improved since his treatment. It now appeared that Maria's husband and a female neighbour had also been present, and they confirmed the events. Joseph had given the

⁹These are their real first names (at least according to the newspaper); the Biblical connotation is unintended.

husband something wrapped in a piece of paper which he should not look at and bury in the grass bank. When the husband dug it up, he discovered that the paper contained a piece of chalk. The books the girl had been ‘reading’ from turned out to be a Roman Catholic breviary and an (English) description of London. Both defendants confessed to fraud. Joseph was sentenced to two years in gaol and fined 25 guilders; his daughter was acquitted on grounds of *force majeure*.¹⁰

That is the text. It was clearly composed in such a way that it showed the fraudulent actions of the healer, the complicity of his daughter and the gullibility of his patient. Following Favret here, one would say that someone had clearly broken the rules of engagement and used straightforward language, for the unwitcher was denounced to the local police.¹¹ But if witchcraft terminology consists only of circumlocutions and does not refer to anything, how can it ever be studied? ‘Supposed witches do not tell witching stories as they claim not to believe in the phenomenon’, she writes. They ‘restrict themselves to stories of charlatans pulling the wool over the eyes of imbeciles’; only ‘believers’ can tell the exemplary tales.¹² By stressing the limits of the language the ethnographer becomes the expert, which is perfectly acceptable. It becomes a problem, however, when the expert uses the witchcraft discourse to the extent that she closes off all the other expertise and states, for instance, that unwitchers are absent from ethnographic texts,¹³ or that other ethnographers did not have access to ‘exhortatory narratives’ (*récits incitatifs*). These can only be told by ‘those engaged in the process of dewitching’ and involve a complete

¹⁰*De Dordrechtsche Courant*, 13 July 1879; *Rotterdamsche Courant*, 15 July 1879. The verdict in *De Dordrechtsche Courant*, 21 July 1879.

¹¹‘Unwitting Therapy’ in *The Anti-Witch*, 15. Cf. Favret-Saada, ‘Unbewitching as Therapy’, *American Ethnologist*, 16 (1989), 40–56.

¹²‘Unwitting Therapy’, 19.

¹³‘Unwitting Therapy’, 21. At this point the English translation is insufficient because it only implies that the remark is linked to ‘exhortatory narratives’, whereas the French states it explicitly: *Désorceler*, 40. Cf. *Deadly Words*, 233: ‘the unwitcher is absent from this questionnaire’; this only relates to the questions formulated by Arnold van Gennep in 1938. Cf. the motif-index where ‘wise men and women’ do feature (G271.6), but far too little (only when their spells are not known): Ernest W. Baughman, *Type and Motif-Index of the Folktales of England and North America* (The Hague, 1966).

overhaul of familiar practices: the farm of the bewitched is intensively inspected, their life story is extracted, follow-up meetings are held, and protections are devised. Reading Favret's summary merely conveys the impression that some unwitchers were very thorough, not that they were necessarily typical. Perhaps Favret's experience was out of the ordinary and her unwitchers had developed into incomparable specialists.

It is far from clear whether or not Joseph adhered to the witchcraft discourse himself, and even if he did not, he had to be convincing enough to pull off his scheme. The question should also be: to what degree was Maria immersed in the local witchcraft discourse? She had allowed Joseph to guide her, but he had not told her that for her to be properly (according to most other cases) unwitched, the witch herself had to do it. In the Dutch context, an unwitcher helped the bewitched to identify the witch. Only a few travelling cunning folk could afford to largely ignore the local discourse. They performed rituals and then asked to be paid, although one needs to look at a wider geographical area to find this.¹⁴ Cases from the neighbourhood of Strijen came to trial usually when the 'witch' had been assaulted: she had to remove the spell (and no unwitcher could do that). Thus, in 1873 in Lexmond, a woman was dragged into a house and forced to bless a family; in 1875 in Ammerstol an old woman was taken from her bed and dragged by two or three men to the house of a bewitched; in 1886 in 's-Gravendeel a man was assaulted because he protested that his wife was forced to bless a bewitched woman. In 1890 in Rotterdam an 80-year-old woman was severely maltreated by a bargee because he was of the opinion that she had bewitched his child.¹⁵ I will cite more instances of this sort of violence below.

Between 1860 and 1910 various newspapers reported about 70 cases of bewitchments in the province of South Holland, which together with the provinces of Friesland, Drenthe and Gelderland was among the most

¹⁴Staphorst, *Provinciale Drentsche & Asser Courant*, 25 February 1862; Zutphen (arr.) *Provinciale Drentsche & Asser Courant*, 4 March 1862; Hornaar, *Provinciale Drentsche & Asser Courant*, 4 July 1863.

¹⁵*De Dordrechtsche Courant*, 18 March 1873, 26 April 1873 (Lexmond); 20 July 1875 (Ammerstol); 9 May 1886 ('s-Gravendeel); *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 29 November 1890 (Rotterdam).

witch-ridden provinces of the Netherlands.¹⁶ In this essay I will rely on newspaper accounts and restrict my references to those from the south of the province, in Rotterdam and Dordrecht and the area between them.¹⁷ This area was predominantly orthodox Protestant,¹⁸ which provides one of the differences with Catholic Mayenne. Protestants, for instance, could not protect themselves against bewitchments. The end of the nineteenth century witnessed a rapid expansion of the port of Rotterdam; it can only be speculated, however, whether this ‘modern’ development affected accusations of bewitchments or not.¹⁹

WITCHCRAFT AS DISCOURSE

In French academic language, *discours* is a normal expression. Favret’s work demands careful reading to distinguish ordinary discourse from witchcraft discourse, a *discours sorcellaire* or *le discours des ensorcelés*. There is a *discours positiviste* and a *discours folkloristique* or a *discours ethnographique*. Professional therapists ‘produisent ... le discours autorisé sur la thérapie’, which the translator rendered as ‘can speak with authority on therapeutic practice’; there is a distinction between the therapeutic discourse and that of patients.²⁰ According to Favret, there are also two corresponding levels of witchcraft discourse: a straightforward one and another which is more complex. And she distinguishes yet another discourse which is official and heaps scorn on witchcraft.²¹ She calls this *un discours limpide fournirait à un “incroyant” (...) le moyen de dénoncer le désorceleur aux gendarmes, et de railler la crédulité, l’arriération de*

¹⁶See for England: Owen Davies, ‘Newspapers and the Popular Belief in Witchcraft and Magic in the Modern Period’, *Journal of British Studies*, 27 (1998), 139–66; Thomas Waters, ‘Maleficent Witchcraft in Britain since 1900’, *History Workshop Journal*, 80 (2015), 99–122, the latter is mainly an inventory.

¹⁷I am thus revisiting the area discussed in my ‘Boiling Chickens and Burning Cats: Witchcraft in the Western Netherlands, 1850–1925’, in de Blécourt & Davies (eds), *Witchcraft Continued*, 89–106, now with a smaller geographical scope and mostly new material.

¹⁸Hans Knippenberg & Ben de Pater, *De eenwording van Nederland. Schaalvergroting en integratie sinds 1800* (Nijmegen 1988), 188–9.

¹⁹Cf. Birgit Meyer & Peter Pels (eds), *Magic and Modernity: Interfaces of Revelation and Concealment* (Stanford, 2003).

²⁰*Désorceleur*, 27; *Anti-Witch*, 13.

²¹*Anti-Witch*, 84.

l'ensorcelé devant la communauté villageoise; this is also translated without using the term 'discourse': The 'clear and straightforward language might afford a passing "nonbeliever" (...) the possibility of denouncing the dewitcher to the local police, as well as publicly decrying the victim for his credulity and backwardness'.²² The discourses used by therapists and patients are also more or less normal, although there is a twist in the therapeutic discourse (because the unwitcher turns into a therapist); the 'other' discourse is primarily a discourse on witchcraft and not what I would call 'the witchcraft discourse'. This leaves the witchcraft discourse with its two levels, of which the second, complex, one is basically inaccessible according to Favret (unless one is 'caught' oneself), and the direct one 'helps us to understand precisely nothing'.²³ All the material collected by folklorists and everything published in newspapers belong to the latter. This does not, in my view, devalue the Strijensas case as superficial and concerning merely an imposter rather than a genuine unwitcher. While I recognise the position of the unwitcher as a facilitator, or a mediator and even as a carrier of the discourse, in my view he is not a therapist. At most, he is an occasional healer.

To illustrate the differences between the discourses, I will consider another, more common historical Dutch case, albeit one including a rare example of a reporter talking to a participant in the witchcraft discourse. With its help I argue that the dilemma Favret creates for the witchcraft researcher—which basically states: do not study witchcraft, you won't understand it unless you become bewitched or an unwitcher—is not insurmountable and, moreover, that the notion of a witchcraft discourse remains valid.

In 1879, several months after the events in Strijensas, another witchcraft event prompted a reporter of a Rotterdam newspaper to travel to the inner jungle of the city. A newspaper published in The Hague had revealed that a certain 'Mrs P.' in Rotterdam was accused by her neighbours of having bewitched a little child. Someone had suggested

²² Ibid., 15. The original French in *Désorcelier*, 31. There are three other places where *discours* is not translated as discourse, cf. *Anti-Witch* 57, 59, 107 with *Désorcelier* 94, 97, 160. Favret-Saada's is supposed to be an academic text, not a work of literary fancy.

²³ *Anti-Witch*, 27. French: *ne permet pas de comprendre quoi que ce soit au désorcellement*, *Désorcelier*, 50. See also the introduction to *Deadly Words*. This distinction deflates Dobler's criticism in 'Fatal Words', but the question is whether the distinction is valid enough.

consulting a Catholic priest nearby, but he had refused to become involved. Then they found another ‘expert’, born with the caul, who counselled boiling a black chicken (with its feathers still attached) until the witch emerged. Instead of one chicken, two were put in the pot and boiled till the air in the house became unbearable. In the end, the ‘witch’ was simply fetched in person and she said: ‘God bless you, my child, I don’t have the power to do so.’²⁴

The reporter sent to investigate had some trouble finding the place: ‘I never saw such medieval streets in Rotterdam’, he exclaimed. He overcame his aversion, entered a pub and started to talk to the landlady. At first she was hesitant, but when the reporter dropped several hints about the case, she became more talkative: ‘Yes, sir, since you know it already. But it is a strange case (*gek geval*) and one should not believe it and I cannot believe it about Mrs. P. either, but I saw what I saw, that’s for sure.’ And while she kept watching the door: ‘Yes, these are odd times, these days. They can make you shiver. Strange things are happening in the neighbourhood, but you don’t know what to make of it. One person says this and another says that, but I saw what I saw.’ Seeing is believing referred to what was called ‘trying it with God’s Word’. The landlady had kept her own children at home, in case they were touched by the evil hand. ‘They talk about having found wreaths of straw in the child’s bedding’, she continued. ‘They also say that a witch can crawl through the keyhole and what can you do against that?’ The woman with the caul had boasted that she knew more than usual (*meer dan recht toe*).²⁵ Another newspaper mentioned that some men had rubbed oil on a cat and set it alight to discover who the witch was.²⁶

The burning of the cat produced nothing visible on the face of the ‘witch’, but that was apparently only a minor detail. The same was true of the boiling of the chicken, which was meant to attract the witch to her victim rather than to make her appear out of the cooking pot—there was some misunderstanding here, either in the report or among the people involved. At least in this case there were already clear suspicions (rendering the ritual only partially random), which were possibly strengthened

²⁴ *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 12 September 1879, citing *Het Vaderland*, of the day before.

²⁵ *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 12 September 1879.

²⁶ *Leidsche Courant*, 16 September 1879, citing *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*.

by the other ritual with the Bible. The landlady's answers, however, underline the power of vision over words. 'I don't know what to think. People say many things, but I know what I saw.' The crux is that the interpretation of the observations was still based on discourse. No matter how often it was pointed out that wreaths of feathers—or something similar—in pillows or mattresses could also easily occur when people were *not* diagnosed as having been bewitched, once a bewitching was suspected, they became an ultimate piece of evidence. The divination by key and book pointed to a particular woman, and to suggest that it could have been manipulated was sacrilege.

ETHNOGRAPHIC AUTHORITY

Newspaper reports, just like court records, were by their nature biased. Reporters not only situated witchcraft in the metaphorical Middle Ages, thereby denying its contemporaneity, they decried it as 'pagan superstition'. In her turn, Favret sneered at reporters, calling them 'gullible', just as she declared folklorists displayed 'ignorance as a profession'.²⁷ This seems naïve, especially since Favret was decidedly uncritical of some nineteenth-century historians, such as Jules Michelet,²⁸ and folklorists, such as Jules Lecœur (see below), and concluded that their 'exemplary narratives' (*récits exemplaires*) still offered insights. She kept prioritising her own experience when it was dramatic and probably singular, and this does not mean that her work should automatically inform the entire study of witchcraft. In other words, Favret's judgements can be tolerated within the context of her own writing; they become unacceptable when applied beyond it. The issue remains: how valid or useful is the information about everyday culture that can be gleaned from between the cracks of her hostile descriptions? Of course, the spoken words of witchcraft 'are power, and not knowledge or information'.²⁹ Nevertheless, when consigned to paper, words can be studied and also invite reading between the lines.

In a previous essay, situated against the background of an investigation into fortune tellers which concerned the same place and period

²⁷ *Deadly Words*, Appendix II.

²⁸ See the *Annexe* 'Sorcières et Lumières', in *Corps pour corps*, 333–63.

²⁹ *Deadly Words*, 9.

as discussed here, I played around with the similarities between the concepts of historical sensation and psychometry, the latter referring to the psychic power to read history from objects.³⁰ It was meant to provide one answer to the more profound question about ethnographic authority, the tendency of some authors—whether historians or anthropologists—to more or less ignore the context of power in which their material was produced and replace it with their own authority.³¹ Psychometry, I tried to point out, was interesting as a subject but bogus as a method of research since it allowed too much projection of present concerns (of the psychometrist, of the historian who succumbed to ecstasy) into the past. The notion of communicating intersubjectively with the dead may be imaginative but is impossible in practice. Thus I still stressed rationality in the study of a seemingly irrational subject—such is my profession. One of the main contributions of anthropology to witchcraft research has been to show that witchcraft has its own kind of rationality, more practical but evidently not stupid. Putting expressions in which witchcraft is manifested into a ‘witchcraft discourse’ is a way to elaborate this.

Meanwhile, there is no doubt that in the late nineteenth century anonymous newspaper reporters were dominant in the power relationship with their interviewees about bewitchments, in terms of both class and education. Reporters tried to balance what they thought their readers found interesting with how they thought they should be educated. My impression—for what it is worth—is that rather than distorting stories, they undermined them with their prejudices against superstition. Historians can counter this by focusing on the despair and helplessness people must have felt when confronted with illness and death. Of course, I cannot discover the words of those who feared ridicule and thus remained silent; I can only hope that enough others did speak up out of anger and indignation. The witchcraft discourse was one of a number of solutions for (repeated or unusual) misfortune because it gave the bewitched a certain agency. In that context,

³⁰Willem de Blécourt, ‘Time and the Anthropologist; or the Psychometry of Historiography’, *Focaal*, 26/27 (1996), 17–24.

³¹Renato Rosaldo, ‘From the Door of His Tent: The Fieldworker and the Inquisitor’ in James Clifford & George E. Marcus (eds), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley, 1986), 77–97.

words of witchcraft had power. Other discourses, however, carried their own force, and the enlightened discourse of newspapers was mobilised against that of witchcraft discourse. Power is situated just as much as witchcraft discourse.

AGGRESSION

In Favret's work, violence is invariably associated with bewitchments: they are *un affrontement d'une extrême violence entre le sorcier et sa victime, d'une part; le désorceleur et le sorcier, d'autre part*.³² The bewitched have experienced acts of aggression against them, and by employing the services of an unwitcher, they not only start to comprehend the nature of that aggression but are also able to direct their misfortune back to its source, whereupon someone else must live through it and the entire cycle is perpetuated. Yet this is no more than a 'logical' detection: *on est conduit à supposer qu'une proportion non négligeable des ensorcelés est constituée par d'anciens sorciers présumés*.³³ While this is presented as the key to understanding bewitchments and unwitchments,³⁴ there is still the option of a less neat interpretation. Witchcraft events, manifestations of the witchcraft discourse, can hardly be strung together other than by the discourse itself, which is then applied by the ethnographer; historically they are unrelated. What the ethnographer is left with is a series of events, each with its own participants and each to be understood on its own. Of course, because the events are related in the dimension of the discourse, they enable its student to conclude, for instance, that Maria in Strijensas was ill informed when she agreed that the unwitcher could take away her bewitchment, or that seeking a priest as an unwitcher would not insult the Catholic Church but was rather an adherence to a century-old tradition.³⁵ Within Dutch Protestant witchcraft discourse, violence against a 'witch' became justified precisely because accessing Catholic countermagic was prohibited; most Protestants—especially the more strident believers—did indeed avoid

³² *Les mots, la mort, les sorts*, 124 (1985 edition); *Deadly Words*, 69.

³³ *Les mots, la mort, les sorts*, 328; *Deadly Words*, 192.

³⁴ Cf. De Blécourt, 'The Witch', 153 on other European examples of bewitched witches.

³⁵ Cf. *De Maasbode*, 24 April 1879; this relates the case of the assaulted priest, see De Blécourt 'Boiling Chickens', 96.

using the tools of the inimical creed even when they deemed themselves bewitched.³⁶

The next five examples, mostly from Rotterdam, underline the justification of direct violence against the ‘witch’ within the witchcraft discourse. This turned the words into action with the aim of eliciting more words, which were construed as an unwitchment. In the first case, this remains vague, however. When two children in Delfshaven were restless at night, their mother told the neighbours that they were bewitched and that she had found a bunch of flowers in their bed, and that she had burned the flowers as this would help to remove the bewitchment. Another woman from the neighbourhood was fingered as the witch and faced much unpleasant treatment, in Dutch, she had ‘*zeer vele onaangenaamheden te verduren*’.³⁷ Several years later, on the other side of the river Maas, wreaths were found in a child’s pillow, a chicken was boiled (again) and a female cartomancer revealed that a wet nurse was the witch. This nurse was a widow with three children who earned her living as a shop keeper. She was asked to come to the house in question, and once she had entered the door was locked behind her, whereupon the child’s father, mother and grandmother confronted her and said: ‘You! You still ask after our child, you have bewitched it, we have taken the wreaths from the pillow.’ The father ordered her, ‘you will pronounce a blessing’, while he held a knife in his hand; but the mother cried: ‘Don’t use the knife, Klaas, not yet, she has to do the blessing first.’ The wet nurse was apparently ‘struck dumb, frightened, and horrified’. She complied with the request and said: ‘God bless you, God bless all people, God bless the sick child so that it may recover.’ Thereupon she was released.³⁸

Early in 1895 a labourer in Rotterdam was convinced that he had been bewitched and discovered (I do not know how) that his washerwoman had done it. When she replied that she could not help him, he grabbed her with his hands and kicked her to change her mind. She called for help and was rescued by her neighbours.³⁹ A year later a widow of seventy was accused of having bewitched a 17-year-old girl.

³⁶Id., ‘On the Continuation of Witchcraft’ in Jonathan Barry et al. (eds), *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief* (Cambridge, 1996), 335–52.

³⁷*Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 14 October 1885.

³⁸*Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 3 Februari 1892.

³⁹*Algemeen Handelsblad*, 21 January 1895, citing *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*.

The woman was set upon by her neighbours, her door was kicked in, her furniture damaged and someone even tried to burn her house down.⁴⁰ In Oud-Beijerland (south of Rotterdam) a widow was asked to visit a sick girl; once there she was held and threatened with death unless she blessed the girl; when she said she had no idea what was going on, she was dragged towards the girl and forced to say: 'If God bless you, than I bless you, too.'⁴¹ The cases look very similar, but this did not necessarily mean that they were invented by the papers simply to produce copy that would sell; a number of those who had attacked alleged witches were indeed prosecuted and punished.

This violence meted out on the 'witches' was a direct and active deed and, thus, of a different nature than the misfortune that had befallen the passive bewitched, which signalled the latter's lack of power. Once the bewitchment had been identified, the violence was meant to force the perpetrator to lift her spell. Both the actions of the bewitched and the presumed actions of the 'witch' were covered by the witchcraft discourse. The former actually happened,⁴² while the latter were located primarily in the realm of narratives and only became real once the 'witch' had been physically attacked.⁴³ The act of unwitching, the blessing, was formulated in religious terms. This curious mix of concepts as they were expressed in the narratives and concrete deeds was thus compartmentalised according to the position of the participants in the witchcraft triangle. In contrast to Favret's descriptions of Mayenne witchcraft, the witch in the Netherlands is entitled to be heard, if only because of the violence she suffered. It is not that 'witches' had nothing to say on the matter, *ne racontent pas d'histoires de sorcellerie puisqu'ils affirment n'y pas croire*⁴⁴; they might, in a

⁴⁰ *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 22 July 1896.

⁴¹ *De Dordrechtse Courant*, 31 May 1897.

⁴² The notion that drawing blood from a witch (scratching) would cure her victim was English. See, for example, Davies, *Witchcraft, Magic and Culture*, 193–5, 199–200. In the Netherlands it did not take hold.

⁴³ I paraphrase and adapt Favret's conclusion about the relation between hypothetical physical aggression and actual metaphorical aggression, *Les mots, la mort, les sorts*, 133; *Deadly Words*, 75. In the Dutch narratives, the witch is very much present.

⁴⁴ *Désorceler*, 36. In Mayenne, at least according to one informant, touching the witch was 'imprudent' and 'absurd' as there was always the danger of retaliation: *Deadly Words*, 164; *Les mots*, 279.

different situation, have even adhered to the discourse themselves. But as the targets of the insinuations, as the presumed sources of the bewitchment and especially as the sole agents deemed capable of removing it, they had an intrinsic position within the triangle of bewitched, witch and unwitcher. They also had to be kept alive.

In some Dutch cases, it may be possible to find out the names of the bewitched and their supporters and, subsequently, their religion, which in the area under discussion was predominantly Protestantism. Such details, however, would still reveal very little about how they experienced bewitchments and whether or not it influenced their behaviour towards people they presumed had harmed their nearest and dearest. Only some cases reveal the denomination directly, as when the Bible was used in an identification ritual. In Strijensas, Maria needed to believe in Jesus Christ in order to be cured. Certainly all the forced blessings cannot but be understood as expressions of religiosity. Although pronounced by the ‘witch’, they were prompted by the bewitched. More generally, as mentioned earlier, as long as it was a given that only the ‘witch’ could lift her spell, other options for countering witchcraft were rare. The story was different for Catholics.

CUNNING FOLK

Besides the witch and the bewitched, the unwitching expert formed another essential constituent of the witchcraft triangle. The various participants each had their own perspectives: the bewitched sought relief for their ills, the ‘witch’ suffered their machinations, and the unwitcher earned a reputation and some money by stirring things up but then also avoiding the neighbourhood strife. One of them admitted that he would not reveal the cause of misfortune since this would lead to accidents.⁴⁵

The reports are tantalisingly vague about the activities of cunning folk in and around Rotterdam. In that sense the events in Strijensas were extraordinary and atypical. This may partly have been because local experts were in short supply—and they were only indirectly involved in the violence against ‘witches’. As newspapers reported in 1890, the bewitched in Rotterdam searched the entire town for a witch doctor (*tooverdokter*); either none could be found or none was willing to help,

⁴⁵ *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 13 December 1892.

and so no one emerged to assist the patient.⁴⁶ The first option seems to me the most likely. The practice of a good unwitcher could last a lifetime, although the span of his career emerged only in a series of reports. For specialist 'magical' help, the town was the place to go to. Yet a number of unwitchers in Rotterdam must be characterised as fortune tellers who only very occasionally dealt with bewitchments. In 1866 and 1880, two reporters mentioned a 'sleeping woman' (*slaapvrouw*, or *slaapster*) in Rotterdam who was consulted by people from outside the town.⁴⁷ The 'sleeping' was a kind of trance brought on by a male magnetist; this enabled the *somnambule* to see inside the patient's body and discover the cause of the ailment. This sleeping woman was quite possibly the wife of a certain Hofman, living at the Goudsche Singel.⁴⁸ I suspect that this was the same man who in 1879 appeared in Strijensas with his young daughter; four-and-a-half years earlier his practice in Rotterdam had been declared illegal and he was probably forced to become an itinerant practitioner after his release from prison.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the number of fortune tellers in Rotterdam was unlikely to have exceeded a dozen, although their numbers would sharply increase in the next few decades. Even if their names were identified, it would still not indicate which of them were consulted in witchcraft cases.⁴⁹ It is also not clear how they went about practising their trade, since the interviews conducted by reporters who posed as patients never mentioned witchcraft. Almost a century later and more than 500 kilometres removed, the fortune teller Madame Flora took Favret under her wing and taught her how she dealt with bewitched people. She said that they lacked force. 'Like all dewitchers, she knows where the missing force can be found: with those who have too much, and in those practices that characterize the witch-hatred, violence, and aggression'.⁵⁰ The power of cunning folk was nevertheless circumscribed. Owen Davies described this in relation to English cunning folk: 'It was based purely upon the popular recognition of their

⁴⁶ *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 28 July 1890.

⁴⁷ *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 19 May 1866; *Schiedamsche Courant*, 20 September 1880.

⁴⁸ Willem de Blécourt, *Het Amazonenleger: Irreguliere genezeressen in Nederland, 1850–1930* (Amsterdam, 1999), 90.

⁴⁹ *Leidsch Dagblad*, 1 May 1875; *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 30 January 1892.

⁵⁰ *Anti-Witch*, 49.

magical abilities, and once their abilities were widely called into question it drained away.⁵¹ In Davies' description, however, the 'magical abilities' are equivalent to *force*; the power itself is based upon them, but it is ultimately socially defined.

The only unwitcher who can be identified with any certainty was the witch doctor from Gorkum (Gorinchem), a small town east of Dordrecht on the river Merwede.⁵² In 1880, he was consulted by a bewitched woman of Dordrecht who had previously been to the sleeping woman in Rotterdam; in 1886, two men from Nieuw-Beijerland (south of Rotterdam) went to see him to buy 'magic herbs', which should have lured the witch to them, but she did not appear. A year later a young man from neighbouring Oud-Beijerland undertook the same journey. This was repeated in 1889, when herbs were given to be extracted and drunk, which would help to reveal the culprit.⁵³ The witch doctor was consulted from Rotterdam in 1895, when he provided a few bottles of a remedy, which, however, failed to bring relief.⁵⁴ But he was sufficiently famous for people to travel from afar to see him. In fact, his case concerned not only his person but a family of three brothers and their offspring, who were active in the unwitching business, at least from 1850 to 1930. Favret-Saada has argued that cunning folk were determined by the amount of power, *force magique*, they had at their disposal, enough to subdue a witch. In the Netherlands, where witches needed to be identified rather than subdued, this power was only sometimes visible in the actions or in the advice of the unwitchers.

There may have been a general difference between cunning folk in the Netherlands and their colleagues in France. As Favret-Saada writes, those in Mayenne advised to avoid any contact with the designated 'witch', whether by sight, touch or voice.⁵⁵ This advice and the protection provided for the house of the bewitched closely resembles the way Catholic unwitching clergy dealt with bewitchments; they tried to help the affected while avoiding trouble for the 'witch'. My guess is that lay

⁵¹ Owen Davies, *Cunning Folk* (2003), 85.

⁵² Cf. De Blécourt, 'Boiling Chickens', 97–8; Hans de Waardt, *Toverij en samenleving. Holland 1500–1800* (The Hague, 1991), 290–1.

⁵³ Respectively: *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 13 September 1880, 14 December 1886, 1 September 1887, 10 July 1889.

⁵⁴ *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 21 January 1895 citing *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*.

⁵⁵ *Deadly Words*, 111–17 (Chap. 8).

cunning folk filled the space the clergy had vacated and then adapted the procedure slightly. Favret does not conclude this in so many words but mentions the decline of Catholic rituals from the 1920s. She also found a nineteenth-century folklorist who noticed that the bewitched 'rather than seeing a dewitcher, they could threaten or beat a witch to force him to "undo" the bewitchment'.⁵⁶ This is still not understood as a capacity of the witch, however: 'ordinary people, unlike a dewitcher, might have been incapable of entirely turning the tables on a witch' (*étaient incapables d'infliger au sorcier une totale rétorsion, comme le faisait le désorceleur*).⁵⁷

THE WITCHCRAFT DISCOURSE

Admittedly, it is difficult to reconstruct the full ramifications of the concept of the witchcraft discourse solely on the basis of newspaper articles covering a small region, especially since I defined it in a narrow sense, in opposition to any discourse used by those not involved in witchcraft. I will need to refer back to my previous work, for example my overview of twentieth-century witchcraft studies in Europe, where the concept is used extensively: *The witchcraft discourse is constituted in a triangle of the most involved participants. And with regard to legend repertoires: the function of the different modes and genres within a particular witchcraft discourse needs to be established. Or the evil eye: Within the witchcraft discourse harmful powers are thought to emanate from the witch in several ways. And at the moment the 'witch' is revealed: the persuasiveness of the witchcraft discourse is such that the surprise eclipses possible doubt.*⁵⁸

In a paper on Flemish legend texts from the 1960s, I concluded: *Narratives are part of the discourse: people relate previous experiences when they suspect that someone or something may have been bewitched. And about narrators: Positions were sometimes adjusted, reconsidered, or remained ambiguous. Nevertheless, once people argued from within the discourse, every tiny occurrence strengthened it, especially when it concerned the*

⁵⁶ *Anti-Witch*, 37.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*; *Désorceler*, 66.

⁵⁸ De Blécourt, 'The Witch', 154, 172, 192, 209.

actions of the suspected witch.⁵⁹ These are already abstractions; the witchcraft discourse itself does not usually emerge ready made from the texts.

Neither does Favret give many hints, unless her whole oeuvre is considered as such. This may have to do with the general use of the word *discours* in French, in which a *discours de la sorcellerie* or a *discours des ensorcelés* does not really stand out. Indeed, Favret wrote, for instance, that ‘in witchcraft no words are guileless’,⁶⁰ and ‘What is important [...] is less to decode what is said than to understand who is speaking and to whom.’⁶¹ She alerted her readers to the concealed use of language or to the role of the announciator, who ‘reconstructed their [the bewitched’s] misfortunes into a significant series of events’.⁶² Yet such snippets of insights are scattered throughout her books, and nowhere are they neatly summarised. I will give my own version here, aware that next time I will probably want to adjust it again.

The discourse was transmitted by ordinary people in an everyday setting, and here issues of gender and age enter the researcher’s view.⁶³ Neighbours played a big part in it, either as denunciators or as the denounced. The discourse was also carried and invigorated by experts, even though each of them applied their own specific methods. The ‘witch’ is only the subject of the discourse, although as such she is indispensable. As a rule, accusations of a bewitchment could never be substantiated by eyewitness accounts or material evidence (such as puppets full of pins).⁶⁴ As Favret put it: ‘no bewitched has ever seen a witch laying a charm’.⁶⁵ That is one of the reasons why witchcraft was never much of a ‘craft’. This discourse consisted of stories, advice, means of identification, counteractions and memories of previous witchcraft events. The specific locality determined whether only a witch could undo her own spells or whether

⁵⁹Id., “‘Keep that Woman Out!’ Notions of Space in Twentieth-Century Flemish Witchcraft Discourse”, *History and Theory*, 52 (2013), 361–79, at 369–70.

⁶⁰*Deadly Words*, 168.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 14.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 78.

⁶³Willem de Blécourt, ‘The Making of the Female Witch: Reflections on Witchcraft and Gender in the Early Modern Period’, *Gender & History*, 12 (2000), 287–309.

⁶⁴See Willem de Blécourt, ‘Pins, Poppets, and Pain’ (forthcoming). I suppose that the few specimens that have been found (and exhibited in museums) were produced by cunning folk.

⁶⁵*Deadly Words*, 198.

the bewitched or unwitchers also had the power to do so; what specific kind of evidence was valid and which rituals would work to detect who was the witch and whether she should be avoided or confronted. The discourse also reinterpreted previous events according to its own terms. It was always in flux, sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker in its geographical reach and social appeal. And it changed subtly. Witchcraft was 'local', indigenous knowledge and, as such, was contested.

The notion of a 'witchcraft discourse' denotes a relatively closed system of arguing and determining what actions to take. Participants in the witchcraft discourse saw the world in terms of witchcraft, and it was precisely this kind of circularity that made it powerful. Once someone started to think in terms of 'witchcraft' and accused someone else, it became extremely difficult to break up the pattern. One of the reasons the discourse was so tenacious was that it also included visual confirmation and practical action. Although it had a certain coherence, I would hesitate to call it a 'system of belief', as this would ultimately mix paradigms. From an anthropological perspective, a 'witchcraft discourse' helps to understand the Other, here the people involved with bewitchments in the past, in their own terms, without—at least that is the intention—contaminating the discourse with modern academic notions. As such, the study of witchcraft or, better, the history of the witchcraft discourse charts relative positions rather than producing a master narrative.

FAVRET-SAADA AND HISTORY

Although I have more or less answered it already, the question remains as to how the witchcraft discourse can be recognised or applied as a historical force. Favret is of little help here; she was not an anthropologist who was as familiar with the archives as she was working in the field. Her one excursion into the nineteenth century concerned the *Esquisses du Bocage normand*, a compilation of local customs by the folklorist Lecœur, which she accepted at face value. The main exception she took to his work was that he only provided *récits exemplaires* and not the *récits incitatifs* . Nineteenth-century witchcraft, in the full sense, was 'now definitively beyond our reach', again a careless translation since Favret actually wrote, *est peut-être à jamais hors de portée* .⁶⁶

⁶⁶ *Anti-Witch*, 44; *Désorceler*, 77.

Nevertheless, the main message is clear: she divides the witchcraft discourse into, on the one hand, a knowledgeable part which only scratches the surface and, on the other, a crucial part which in all possibility cannot be known, and this dichotomy extends back into the past. In my view, there is more than enough enticing historical material available for research; to declare it not good enough does not make much sense. Favret could not admit that the dichotomy was her own theoretical construct,⁶⁷ despite the long passage of time that has elapsed between her first and last publications. It is also impossible to check in the field anymore, since, as she wrote, ‘the type of witchcraft that I experienced in the Bocage no longer exists in its then form, if indeed it exists at all’.⁶⁸

By now it is obvious that I do not consider it compelling to copy Favret’s dichotomy, as it has become, according to her own evaluation, completely useless both in contemporary and in historical research. Without wanting to denigrate her extensive fieldwork, I even doubt that it would qualify as exhortatory. What remains is the discourse, and this serves well as a tool to look at witchcraft in the past. An historical anthropologist of witchcraft should be able to picture this almost inescapable web of stories and reasonings as well as actions that turns everything in it into a circular argument, a justification to show that it has always been right. The discourse can easily be applied to historical witchcraft events without becoming superimposed. I have not seen anything that contradicts it in historical documents of everyday witchcraft.

Finally, it comes down to researchers’ preoccupations when they are reading texts. It can never be assumed that images of witches are not present in their minds to nudge their reading in certain directions. Even academics who strive for accuracy harbour prejudices. What I propose here is to set them aside and to read texts purely with reference to the notion of the (local) discourse. Before another bias surfaces, the exercise has at least been undertaken. And then one can begin to think about contexts.

⁶⁷ It does not appear in *Les mots, la mort, les sorts*. She only formulated it explicitly and in these terms when editing the essays for *Désorceler*. In the original essay the difference is between *les récits typiques* and *les récits inachevés*: ‘L’invention d’une thérapie: la sorcellerie bocaine 1887–1970’, *Le débat: histoire, politique, société*, 40 (1986), 29–46. A rudimentary version appears in ‘Unbewitching as Therapy’, 44: ‘witchcraft discourse provides a second type of story, by definition incomplete...’.

⁶⁸ *Anti-Witch*, 5; *Désorceler*, 16. It is debatable whether *connue* translates as ‘experienced’ and not simply as ‘knew’.

Witches and Devil's Magic in Austrian Demonological Legends

Christa Agnes Tuczay

INTRODUCTION AND SHORT OUTLINE OF ACADEMIC DEBATE CONCERNING THE DEFINITION OF A FOLK LEGEND

Witches are a constituent part not only of Austrian folklore but of Austrian folk legend. Therefore, it is necessary to not only give the term 'legend' some thought but discuss the boundaries and intersections of the main topics involved. Legends of witches and demonological crimes touch the general question of how historical crime reports become legendary tales and can be testimonies for a history of mentality. This question was raised by the founder of German philology (and subsequently European ethnology and folklore studies), Jacob Grimm. If we look at the definition of those texts that deal with witches and demonological crimes, German *Sagen* and its English translation 'legend', we must go back to Grimm. Grimm's *Wörterbuch* defines legend as *kunde von ereignissen der vergangenheit, welche einer historischen beglaubigung*

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*entbehrt*¹ ('stories of the past that lack historical accreditation'). He further speaks of naive storytelling and the transmission that has undergone changes while being passed down from generation to generation.

In German narratology, the terms *Sage* (translated into English by the term 'legend') and *Legende* (in German Folklore research normally used to categorise religious tales) are distinguished from each other.² It is known that sacrilege and crime are an integral part of the stories commonly known as folk legends (German *Sagen*). Following Grimm's principles, three kinds of folk legends have been identified: historical, defined as those related to an event or a personality of historical significance; mythological or demonological, or those having to do with human encounters with the supernatural world and endowment with supernatural power³ and knowledge; and etiological or explanatory, about the nature and origins of animate and inanimate things. The practice with legends showed that this threefold classification proved to be too limited because legends may be simultaneously historical, mythological and explanatory. Nevertheless, most folk-legend anthologies follow these distinctions and classify witch legends under the category demonological. Although I agree with other researchers that such categories, being restrictive and inaccurate,⁴ can only show rough tendencies, I would still

¹This paper is a revised and completed version of Christa Agnes Tucza, 'Die Darstellung der Hexe in den österreichischen Sagen', in Marion George and Andrea Rudolph (eds.), *Hexen: Historische Faktizität und fiktive Bildlichkeit*. Kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge. Quellen und Forschungen, 3. (Dettelbach, 2004), 91–121. *Das Grimmsche Wörterbuch*, vol. XIV 1893, col. 1644; <http://woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB/?sigle=DWB&mode=Vernetzung&lemid=GS00585#XGS00585>.

²Cf. Hans-Jörg Uther, 'Überlegungen zur Klassifizierung alpenländischer Sagen' in Leander Petzold and S. de Rachewiltz (eds.), *Studien zur Volkserzählung. Berichte und Referate des ersten und zweiten Symposions zur Volkserzählung, Brunnenburg/Südtirol 1984/85* (Frankfurt a. M., 1987), 57–74, here 60.

³Witches' supernatural powers in the legends stem from their pact with the devil. For example, such paranormal 'talents' as remote viewing: Leander Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Vorarlberg* (Munich, 1994), 22–3.

⁴For the historian Klaus Graf, the term *historical legend* is too inconsistent. In several articles he has demanded we abandon the term historical legend. Although some of his arguments are worth considering, owing to a lack of a fitting substitute, researchers still use the term historical legend rather than an alternative such as urban legend: 'Thesen zur Verabschiedung des Begriffs der "historischen Sage"', *Fabula* 29 (1988), 21–47 and the literary references compiled by the same author: 'Sage', in Thomas Meier, Bettina Marquis, Charlotte Bretscher-Gisiger (eds.), *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 7 (Munich and Zürich, 1995), 1254–7. Cf. Jörn Eckert, 'Sage' in Adalbert Erler and Ekkehard

propose the term *demonological legend*, especially for witch and witchcraft legends.

On some topics, the onset of legend creation began rather early: for example, the famous case of the Salzburger Zauberer Jackl⁵ might even have started in his lifetime, whereas other stories show less evidence of being public during the period to which they relate. The witch figure also consolidates neighbouring concepts of similar or related figures like ghost and revenant, but also older mythological figures like Percht,⁶ Wild Women, giantess and *Schbrätel* or *Bilwis*.⁷ The latter stem from the Middle Ages or even Antiquity and are surely not reflections of witch trials and their ensuing narratives. Consequently, Lutz Röhrich and, with some restrictions, Claude Lecouteux have⁸ argued for the *tunrida* or *hagazussa* as being more or less a demon of the woods. The typical motifs of the witch legends, riding on home appliances and flying to a mountain, appear as early as the Middle Ages. In medieval German literature, the Lower Austrian medieval author Stricker (first half of the thirteenth century) describes the *Unholden* as riding on a broomstick

Kaufmann (eds.), *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, 4 (1990), 1253–6, references 1255; Eberhard Freiherr von Künßberg, 'Rechtserinnerung und vergessenes Recht', in *Wirtschaft und Kultur: Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Alfons Dopsch*, (Vienna, 1938), 581–90, here 586; Leander Petzold, 'Zur Phänomenologie und Funktion der Sage: Möglichkeiten der Interpretation von Volkssagen in der Gegenwart' in Petzold and de Rachewitz (eds.), *Studien*, 201–22; Hans-Jörg Uther, 'Sagen: Überblick über den gegenwärtigen Forschungsstand', *Trictrac. Journal of World Mythology and Folklore*, 5 (2012), 83–90; Maja Bošković-Stulli, 'Hexensagen und Hexenprozesse in Kroatien', *Acta Ethnographica Acad. Sc. Hung.*, 37 (1991/2), 143–71. See also a series of articles in the journal *Forschungen zur Rechtsarchäologie und Rechtlichen Volkskunde*: Louis Carlen, 'Rechtliches in französischen Sagen', 6 (1984), 143–65; Francisca Schmid-Naef, 'Recht und Gerechtigkeit in den Sagen der Alpenkantone', 10 (1988), 131–62; Felici Maissen, 'Schuld und Sühne in der ernerischen Volkssage', 12 (1990), 153–83; Linus Hüsser, 'Das Recht in den Volkssagen des Fricktales', 13 (1991), 281–304.

⁵See subsequent discussion.

⁶Cf. Leander Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Salzburg* (Munich, 1993) 181–4. Willem de Blécourt is preparing a collection of essays on pre-formations of the sabbath that will include the latest research on the Percht (see n. 72).

⁷Claude Lecouteux, 'Der Bilwiz' in his *Eine Welt im Abseits* (Dettelbach, 2000), 75–90.

⁸Lutz Röhrich, 'Sage' in Rolf Brednich (ed.), *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, 11 (Berlin, 2004), 1018–41; Claude Lecouteux, 'Auf den Spuren einer vergessenen kleinen Gottheit' in his *Eine Welt*, 117–38.

(1230), and the flight to a mountain is mentioned in the *Münchener Nachtsegen* of the fourteenth century.⁹

Within three years, two German scholars published a thesis and type index of witch legends. Alfred Wittmann in Mannheim defended a dissertation with the title *Die Gestalt der Hexe in der deutschen Sage* (1933), and in 1936 the folklorist and folk-song expert Johannes Künzig issued a type index: *Typensystem der deutschen Volkssage* with the subcategory witch legends.¹⁰ Both favour nearly the same topics: how to recognise a witch¹¹; metamorphosis; witch ride; witch assembly and witch dance; different kinds of witches (cattle, milk, butter, and egg witches).¹² A chapter about *maleficium* and the specific magic arts of the witch concludes the index. Wittmann begins with the witch in the witch trials, thereby incorporating the witchcraft research and discourse of his time. After the war Will-Erich Peuckert's *Handwörterbuch der Sage* attempted to establish an international legend codification of similar functions like the acknowledged Aarne/Thompson *Type Index* and Stith Thompson's

⁹Cf. Christa Agnes Tuczay, 'Der Dichter als Aufklärer: Aberglaubenskritik im süddeutschen Raum', *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie*, 122 (2003), 280–93.

¹⁰Johannes Künzig, *Typensystem der deutschen Volkssage. Gruppe B: Hexensagen* (Freiburg, 1936); Alfred Wittmann, 'Die Gestalt der Hexe in der deutschen Sage' (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Heidelberg, 1933).

¹¹A very peculiar method to discover a witch is mentioned in a Burgenlandian tale: sitting on the chair of St. Lucia one can see all the witches in church: Leander Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus dem Burgenland* (Munich, 1994), 40–1. Cf. Stith Thompson, *Motif Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books and Local Legends*, 6 vols. (Copenhagen, 1956), Mot. G250. 'Recognition of witches'.

¹²In a small village in the lower Austrian Kamp Valley, a tailor observed that a peasant woman never ran out of butter that she had made from a certain powder and cream. He secretly stole a bit of the powder and tried to make butter at home. When he made the butter, the devil appeared with a book in his hand demanding that he had to sign. He signed with the name of Jesus, and the devil and book disappeared: Leander Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Niederösterreich* (Munich, 1992), 42–3. Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Vorarlberg*, 20–2; in the Carinthian tale the devil appears as a hunter demanding that the witch's husband sign in his black book. Cf. Leander Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Kärnten* (Munich, 1993), 15–16; Walter Brunner, *Steirische Sagen von Hexen und Zauberern* (Graz, 1987), no. 9, 60–2; the witch on her deathbed calls for the minister who asks for her magic book. At home, he tries it out and makes butter, while the witch can no longer do so without her book. When she complains, the minister gives her the butter but burns her book: *ibid.*, nos. 26 and 69.

Motif-Index. Unfortunately, Peuckert's handbook ended with the first volume with letter A and was never continued.¹³ So researchers should still turn to Stith Thompson's *Motif Index of Folk Literature* of 1956 and all the follow-up indices, that display the entry G200-G299 witches. Ernest Baughman offered an elaboration of certain witch motifs in his *Type and Motif Index of the Folktales of England and North America* in 1966.¹⁴

In 1987 the historian Walter Brunner self-published the anthology *Steirische Sagen von Hexen und Zauberern*, which, unfortunately, did not get the attention it deserved, but I have used it here. Finally, the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, a German reference work on folktales and legends (begun by Kurt Ranke in the 1960s and continued by chief editor Rolf Brednich), contains several articles on the topics of justice, injustice, punishment, legend and witch.¹⁵

The witch figure of the folktale and the witch of the legend are rightfully distinguished from each other as two different contextual types, although they sometimes overlap. Whereas not only historical but also demonological legend is factual, folktales are considered fictional. This alleged dichotomy or opposition is often erroneous because legends are just as fictional as folktales, while the latter often mirror, if not historical occurrences, then historical lawsuits and punishments. Another point of intersection is that both concern magical practice and the devil.

¹³Will-Erich Peuckert's project *Handwörterbuch der deutschen Sage* (Göttingen, 1961) did not get beyond the first volume. Cf. Luth Röhrich's attempts, and his encounter with Peuckert's legacy, in Wolfgang Mieder, Siegfried Neumann, Christoph Schmitt, Sabine Wienker-Piepho (eds.), *Begegnungen, Erinnerungen an meinen Freundeskreis. Mit bibliographischen Anmerkungen und einem Gesamtverzeichnis der Publikationen Röhrichs* (Münster and New York, 2016). See also Willem de Blécourt's reflections in 'The Witch, Her Victim, the Unwitcher and the Researcher: The Continued Existence of Traditional Witchcraft' in Willem de Blécourt, Ronald Hutton and Jean la Fontaine, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Twentieth Century* (1999), 143–219, esp. 165–8.

¹⁴Both incorporate the witchcraft research of their time. Thompson, *Motif Index*, vol. III, G243 'Witch's Sabbath', 295 and Ernest Baughman, *Type and Motif-Index of the Folktales of England and North America* (The Hague, 1966), 249.

¹⁵The entries under the headings by Rainer Wehse, 'Gerechtigkeit und Ungerechtigkeit', in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* 3 (Berlin, 1987), 1050–64; Rolf-Wilhelm Brednich, 'Hinrichtung', in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* 4 (1990), 1053–60 and Christine Shojaei Kawan, 'Mord', in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* 6 (1998), 856–76 and their footnotes may serve as a good starting point for researching the topic of punishment.

Although the witch seems well connected with the devil, the figure of the devil itself tends to be in the tradition of the folktale villain figures like the ogre.¹⁶ The witch of legends shows many similarities with the demonological witch of demonologists, yet also fundamental differences. The functional classification of my paper follows the well-established classification-order of the legend editions.¹⁷

In what follows, I will present a survey of Austrian witch legends by concentrating on their essential motifs and analysing their historical, pseudo-historical or mythological background.

LIFE AND DEEDS OF THE WITCH

How to Become a Witch

Numerous accounts claim that witchcraft is a matrilineal trade passed down from mother to daughter—the daughter of a witch is born a witch.¹⁸ This assumption is also reflected in the witch trials: judges would condemn children to death¹⁹ alongside their mothers. It was also assumed that ungodly godparents could turn a child into a witch: During the child's baptism (which is, of course, an exorcism), the godparents had to say certain words and lines.

Witchcraft is also taught by the mother, and since each witch is bound to have trained at least one other witch by the time of her death, they turned to educating their own daughters. If the girl refuses, the mother will pursue her until she gives in. Folktales from Tyrol mention witches only passing on their gifts, chief among them stealing milk

¹⁶Cf. Julian Goodare, *The European Witch-Hunt* (London and New York, 2016), 133–54.

¹⁷Cf. Leander Petzoldt, 'Zur Phänomenologie und Funktion der Sage: Möglichkeiten der Interpretation von Volkssagen in der Gegenwart', *Lares. Rivista trimestrale di studi demoetnoantropologici* (ed. G. B. Bronzini), LIII, 4 (1987), 455–72.

¹⁸Cf. Wolfgang Behringer, *Hexen: Glaube, Verfolgung, Vermarktung* (Munich, 1998), 14; Carola Sickinger, *Sagen aus dem Schwarzwald insbesondere aus der Gegend Enz, Nagold und Würm* (Heimsheim, 1994), 36; Adalbert Depiny, *Oberösterreichisches Sagenbuch* (Linz, 1932), 162–71.

¹⁹For children as witches see Rainer Beck, *Mäuselmacher oder die Imagination des Bösen: ein Hexenprozess 1715–1723* (Munich, 2011), 339–44; Johannes Dillinger, *Kinder im Hexenprozess: Magie und Kindheit in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Stuttgart, 2011).

(*Milchdiebstahl*), to her eldest daughter.²⁰ Witches keep wooden udders in their shrines. Whenever they desire milk, they take the udders to the stables and 'milk' them while muttering the name of the farmer whose milk they want to steal. Milk starts to flow from the wooden udders just as it mysteriously disappears from the named farmer's cows. A witch will only ever share her art, especially milk stealing (*Passeier*), with her eldest daughter.²¹

Should the mother not be the one to teach the child, a relative is most likely to take on the role of teacher. There is an age limit on learning this trade (the child cannot be less than seven years old), and people in countries with a Protestant majority believed that the day before the child's confirmation was especially suited for the child to start learning the trade, whereas in Catholic countries like Austria it was the night before Holy Communion. However, most folktales concerning witches do not include a clear age reference. Children who have decided to learn the witch's trade must undergo a formal apprenticeship with an elderly witch. In most cases the first lesson that is taught is the creation of mice without tails—once the apprenticeship is finished, the mice will have grown tails. Most children will not enter such an apprenticeship voluntarily; this is where adult apprentices differ from children. It is said that a witch must turn away from God and everything that is holy and godly (which, in predominantly Catholic Austria, refers to saints). The witch then commences devil worship.

In the Paznaun Valley a legend reports of a couple that the wife wanted to convert her husband to devil worship, and upon formally renouncing God, she must utter certain fixed words:

'I step upon this heap of dung and renounce the Lord Jesus Christ.' But instead he said: 'I step upon this heap of dung, and will bury you in it, you being the minx that you are.'

²⁰Ignaz von Zingerle, *Sagen aus Tirol* (Innsbruck, 1891), no. 748; Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus dem Burgenland*, 36–8, 45–7.

²¹Zingerle, *Sagen*, no. 748, 422; Leander Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus der Steiermark* (Munich, 1993), 21–2; Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Vorarlberg*, 14–18. For milk from a dish-cloth see *ibid.*, 25; Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Salzburg*, 174–6. The Hutterer Tötl in Hochtregist fought against weather witches: Brunner, *Steirische Sagen*, 140–76. Cf. Thompson Mot. G283 'Witches have control over weather'.

And he took the closest club, killed the witch and buried her as she was in the heap of dung.²²

*The Assembly: Witches' Ride, Flight, Dance*²³

As mentioned earlier, the flight motif is surely not a unique characteristic of witch tales but a constituent of different tale types. Nevertheless, it can be considered one of the most well-known of the witch concepts. While in other tales it is just the preferred mode of transport, the flight is of great significance both in legends and in trial records. While discourses and counter-discourses on witches' flights had a prominent role among demonologists, folktales and legends linked it with several international motifs. It can be a favourite way of travelling to mountains where gatherings take place, but most interesting is the story of the beholder that nearly formed a tale type of its own.

The gathering story in Austria (and in many European countries) reads as follows. On certain nights of a ritual, witches meet to celebrate. Their congregations are held at crossroads or at remote places, in caverns beneath trees, and most especially on mountains or hills, which are frequently referred to as *Blocksb erg*. The most famous mountain is the Brocken is located in Sachsen-Anhalt. Witches from all around Germany come here for *Walpurgisnacht*.²⁴ Austria, too, has several so-called witch-mountains²⁵ (*Hexenberge*).

²²Christian Hauser, *Sagen aus dem Paznaun und dessen Nachbarschaft* (Innsbruck, 1894) nos. 18, 28, no. 19, 28–9; Johann Nepomuk Ritter von Alpenburg, *Deutsche Alpensagen* (1861, Munich, 1977) no. 203. In the witch trial of 1662 the accused woman confessed that a man came to her and demanded she sweep the room and denounce Jesus Christ by announcing: *Ich trete auf dieses Genist/und verschwere meinen Herrn Jesum Christ* (I step on these sweepings and denounce Jesus Christ): Monika Schulz, *Magie oder die Wiederherstellung der Ordnung* (Frankfurt a. Main, 2000), 57. When a weaver comes home he observes that his wife and daughter are preparing to go out in their fine clothes. They say a spell and take out the chimney [??]. He follows them and comes to a mountain. The devil wants him to sign in his black book, he signs with God's name, and everything disappears and he stands all alone on the high mountain: Brunner, *Steirische Sagen*, no. 1, 56–7, no. 38, 78–9.

²³Cf. G269.3.1. 'Witch rides man to dance', G248.1. 'Man joins feast of witches' and G247. 'Witches' dance'.

²⁴Especially the notorious Schöckl witches' dance at Walpurgis night: Brunner, *Steirische Sagen*, no. 60, 85–6. The Schöckl weather-witch has a carriage pulled by bats: *ibid.*, 126–9, 132–4; Raimund Jäger, *Dialekt aus dem Gschnitztal: Gedichte, Hexensagen, Dorfgeschichten aus der Kriegs- und Nachkriegszeit im Trinser/Gschnitzer Dialekt* (Innsbruck, 2011), no. 138, 100–14.

²⁵In Styria, the mountain where the gathering takes place is the Hexstein or Höchstein, in Donnersbach, the Gumpeneck, in Ennstal the Hexenturm near Admont, the Stolzalpe

Apart from the *Walpurgisnacht*, other nights are important as well, such as St. Bartholomew's Day, St. Jacob's Night, Michaelmas and New Year's Eve, as well as Christian holidays like Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. In general, congregations gather on Friday night,²⁶ but in Tyrol, they do so on Thursday night.²⁷ While witches usually attend the main feasts in human form, they change their shape for smaller local feasts.²⁸

The journey to the congregation is—most of the time—extraordinary. In demonological discourse, the issue of flight ointment plays a rather prominent role, while in legendary tales it is just one required flight among others. Often the witches will apply a specially mixed salve²⁹ or anointing oil to either their entire body or just their legs and feet³⁰ or their face.³¹ Then they will shed their clothes and either remain unclothed or dress festively and go on their journey. Sometimes they undertake such a journey on the proverbial broomstick, but more often on pitchforks or oven forks, logs of wood or even fragile objects like straw or butter tubs—all in all, farmer's equipment. To travel, they must

near Murau, also the Stangalm, Werchziralm, Schöckl, Stradner Kogel and many others: Brunner, *Steirische Sagen*, 42–4. In Vorarlberg in the Bregenzer Woods witches meet at Winterstaude: Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Vorarlberg*, 13. In Salzburg they dance at the Tauern near Heiligenblut: id. (ed.), *Sagen aus Salzburg*, 172.

²⁶In a Paznaun legend, a witch forbids her suitor to visit her on Friday. When he secretly visits her house, he observes that she and her daughter make the village freeze with a special liquid in a bottle. The suitor takes the bottle and empties it out in their house thus freezing the women to ice-blocks: Hauser, *Sagen*, no. 17, 22–3.

²⁷Zingerle, *Sagen aus Tirol*, no. 723; Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus dem Burgenland*, 61–3, 67, 69.

²⁸Depiny, *Oberösterreichisches Sagenbuch*, no. 48.

²⁹Zingerle, *Sagen*, no. 722, 409; Will-Erich Peuckert, *Ostalpensagen* (Berlin, 1963), no. 139, 84. The Zauberer Jackl also uses an ointment: Michael Dengg, *Schilderungen und Volksbräuche, Geschichten und Sagen aus dem Lungau* (Tamsweg, 1913), 167–71; Depiny, *Oberösterreichisches Sagenbuch*, 186–7; Alpenburg, *Deutsche Alpensagen*, no. 203; L. Rapp, *Die Hexenprozesse und ihre Gegner in Tirol* (Brixen, 1891), 168; Brunner, *Steirische Sagen*, no. 30, 72–4.

³⁰Zingerle, *Sagen*, no. 732, 414; cf. Thompson Mot. G242. 'Witch flies through air'; G242.1. 'Witch flies through air on broomstick'; G242.1.1. 'Witch smears fat on brooms in preparation for flight'; G243. 'Witch's Sabbath'.

³¹Brunner, *Steirische Sagen*, no. 9, 60–2.

recite a spell and leave their house via the chimney.³² Stories often tell of animals which carry witches to meeting places. These animals are often black: a buck, a calf, a cat, a pig, a wolf a toad.³³ The more distinguished witches make use of a carriage drawn by cats.³⁴ To be able to leave without her husband or any other relative taking notice of the fact, the witch will place a broom, straw, brushwood or a log of wood, for example, in her bed and make it take her shape.³⁵

Outsiders have the chance to spy on witches if they sit at a cross-roads³⁶ (which the witches must pass by) at night, especially if it is *Walpurgisnacht*.³⁷ This undertaking poses quite a danger to the witches' secret audience: should they be caught, the witches will punish them accordingly.³⁸ Protective circles³⁹ can be created, and farmers' instruments, for instance harrows, can be strategically placed. However, the watcher must take care to be completely covered by the harrow, for if even a small piece of his or her clothing is not covered, the witches have the chance to steal the person away forever. It is fair to conclude that the observation of the witch's journey always bears grave danger for the watcher.⁴⁰ The legend in the Felberau can serve as a vivid example (see **Fig. 1** for a 1925 image of witches from Felberau in a tree):

³²Ibid., no. 1, 56–7, no. 9, 60–2, no. 34, 75; Cf. Thompson Mot. G249.3. 'Witch enters and leaves house through chimney'.

³³Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Kärnten*, 17; Depiny, *Oberösterreichisches Sagenbuch*, 162–71.

³⁴Brunner, *Steirische Sagen*, no. 79, 96–7.

³⁵Hans Matscher, *Der Burggräfler in Glaube und Sage* (Bolzano, 1933), 137ff; Richard Pils, *Das Waldviertel in seinen Sagen nach dem Volksmund* (Weitra, Publication P N° 1, 1995), 42.

³⁶Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Niederösterreich*, 43.

³⁷Adolf Parr and Ernst Löger (eds.), *Sagen aus dem Burgenland* (Vienna and Leipzig, 1931), no. 59, cited in Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus dem Burgenland*, 134–5.

³⁸Depiny, *Oberösterreichisches Sagenbuch*, 162–71.

³⁹Johann Adolf Heyl, *Volksagen, Bräuche und Meinungen aus Tirol* (Brixen 1897, repr. Bozen, 1989), 530.

⁴⁰It is not only witches who are reported to use a spell for transvection; the 'Saligen' also use similar verse to come to their prepared food sacrifice. Once a farmer's wife slapped the hand of a Salige when she wanted to take a bite of food, and the Salige spoke the following verse: *Auf und davon und nimmer her, Und kein reicher Locherer mehr!* (up and away and gone forever, no more wealth for the Locherer). From then on, the region of Locher became poor: Heyl, *Volksagen*, 276; cf. Zingerle, *Sagen*, no. 40.



Fig. 1 Norbertine Bressler-Roth, 'Five witches from the Felberau in a tree'.
 Source Josef Pöttinger, *Niederösterreichische Volkssagen* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1925), 45. [Tuczay after n. 40]

Once upon a time, a poor musician lived in Baden. His journey home from villages where he had played at dances and weddings would lead him through the great Felberau auf der Braiten. There he saw, whenever the moon was out, witches conversing beneath the great willow tree and feasting. One night, as the witches were once again dancing beneath the tree and he, consumed by fear, sought to sneak by, the sinister group suddenly came running towards him, gripped him deftly, and suddenly he, without having any knowledge of how it came to happen, was perched in the willow tree, where he was then forced to play cheery songs. In exchange, he was given fried and baked goods to his heart's desire, and the witches would play this little game with him quite often.

Once, having had quite enough, he decided he did not want to play the fiddle for the witches without any pay any longer. They, however, seemed especially friendly and each gave to him a thaler, and whatever food he could not eat right there, they cheerfully put into his bags. He rushed home from this profitable witches' dance full of joy, and when he reached for his treasures the next morning, he found in his bags shards of glass instead of coins and toads' legs and snakes' heads instead of food.

After a long time, when the musician had to pass the fateful willow tree once again, he decided not to play for these spawns of hell, because he was still sorely plagued by the trick they had played on him. But as soon as he had laid eyes on the witches, he found himself sitting in the damned tree once again and was asked to play a dancing tune, which he firmly refused. The angry witches then descended on him, almost beating him to death, and then threw him into the brook, and as he rose rather miserably from his wet resting place, the witches screamed after him that he would do well to remember not to leave the house after the evening bells, otherwise his life would be forfeit.⁴¹

⁴¹Carl Calliano, *Niederösterreichischer Sagenschatz* I (Vienna, 1924), vol. I, 26; Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus dem Burgenland*, 65–7, here a clarinet player must swear: *Wir reiten siebenmal um den Mist/und leugnen den Herrn Jesu Christ* (We ride seven times around the dung/and disavow Jesus Christ). In another variant, a violinist plays for the witches and is given food as a reward that transforms into horse dung: *ibid.*, 69; Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus der Steiermark*, 19–21; Marianne Direder-Mai and Leander Petzoldt (eds.), *Sagen aus Südtirol* (Munich, 1993), 53–5; 61–3; Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Salzburg*, 172–3.

Besides the eavesdropping on the witches' journey, the gathering of witches⁴² also plays an important role in Austrian legends. Eyewitness accounts are quite possibly used to stress the tales' authenticity. Many of the witnesses are tempted by their own curiosity, and some pay for their bravery and courage with their lives. The body is found the next morning: its neck is twisted and its skin damaged by claw marks. If a spectator should step into the witches' circle uninvited, he is torn apart, thrown into the fire or tortured and punished in a different way, the most harmless case of such punishment being the witches playing mean tricks on the eavesdropper. Witches will also punish those who have become involuntary witnesses to their gatherings. If the one caught red-handed should be carrying a protective spell or something of great value or should he utter a hallowed name, he will be able to escape unharmed. If not, he will be scratched with claws or forced to dance to his death. Here also we can refer to the much older tales of the Wild Hunt, where onlookers are transported to a remote place through the air, and their senses are confounded.⁴³

The reason for the mentioned punishments may very well be the witches' understandable fear of betrayal or denunciation. It is only logical, then, that some tales report that witches made the mischievous intruder promise not to reveal their secret—and subsequently treated him well. Should he break the promise, he would be punished severely.⁴⁴ At times the intruder is advised to join the witches' community, so as to make sure that he will never betray them. This, however, rarely succeeds. The clever intruder might pretend to become a witch, but he writes a

⁴²Not all elements of the so-called Sabbath appear in the legends. As folklorists have observed, the legends more often portray a rural feast with food and dances than a sinister ritual scene: Emma Wilby, 'Burchard's *strigae*, the Witches' Sabbath, and Shamanistic Cannibalism in Early Modern Europe', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 8 (2013), 18–49. James Brent Musgrave, 'The Witches' Sabbat in Legend and Literature', *Lore and Language* 17 (1999), 157–74.

⁴³Cf. Claude Lecouteux, *The Wild Hunt and the Ghostly Processions of the Undead* (Rochester, Vermont, 2011), 12–14.

⁴⁴Franz Xaver Kießling (ed.), *Frau Saga im niederösterreichischen Waldviertel. Eine Sammlung von Märchen, Sagen und Erzählungen* (Vienna, 1925), 335; Anton Mailly (ed.), *Niederösterreichische Sagen* (Leipzig, 1926), 136.

hallowed name in the book⁴⁵ using his blood as ink or thrice makes the sign of the cross. This act is crowned with immediate success: the witches will disappear. Christian names and symbols are endowed with the greatest protective power; the sign of the cross is of special importance. The meals served at such gatherings have one very characteristic fault: they are prepared without salt and no bread is served. Both items are repellent to witches, and at times the mere mention of these foods will make the witches' congregation dissolve.

The witches' gatherings are heady festivities with lots of dancing, and, as we noticed with the previously related folk legend, music is a must, too. Oftentimes the devil himself will appear as a musician, but a human one is just as welcome. Once the next day dawns, he is rewarded and paid in gold, which, however, will turn into unpleasant objects like horse droppings later on.

The protocols of the witch trials make frequent mention of orgies being celebrated with the devil (where the witch places a kiss on the devil's buttocks, for example). In folk legends, such a thing is rarely if ever mentioned. The witches' deeds during such gatherings change, too: While isolated tales make mention of witches plotting atrocities,⁴⁶ one may conclude that in general their meetings are hardly worth all the fuss being made about them since they are simply chances for people to enjoy themselves, eat, drink, dance and do everything their hard day-to-day lives do not give them the chance to do.

Should the witness remain unnoticed, he will, like Lucius in the *Golden Ass*, attempt to fly like a witch himself—and will, like Lucius, be confronted with a few nasty surprises. The watchers don't know what to do with the witches' salve, and they will also fail at carrying out the

⁴⁵In many Austrian legends sorcerers and witches demand on their deathbed that their grimoires be destroyed or they will either not be able to die or will face a violent death: Direder-Mai and Petzoldt (eds.), *Sagen aus Südtirol*, 23–4; Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Niederösterreich*, 41–2. Grimoires are also understood as being a pact with the devil: Christian Falkner, 'Sagen aus dem Ötztal: Ötztaler Buch', *Schlern-Schriften* 229 (Innsbruck, 1963), 124–6; Depiny, *Oberösterreichisches Sagenbuch*, 198–208, 218–22; Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Niederösterreich*, 41–2; Brunner, *Steirische Sagen*, 99–106. The witch has to carry her black book always with her. Before she dies she must choose a successor to give her the book: Leander Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen, Märchen und Schwänke aus Südtirol: Bozen, Vinschgau und Etschtal* (Innsbruck, 2002), 324–6.

⁴⁶Leander Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Tirol* (Munich, 1992), 22–3.

second part—the spell which must be recited without failure and without any mistakes upon taking to the air. Even a slight twist on the words will make the whole experience inevitably end in tragedy for the curious imitator.⁴⁷

Should an eavesdropper be clever enough not to make any mistakes before arriving at the place of the festivities, he must again follow several important rules. He must remain quiet, not utter a sound of disgust or admiration, and not, under any circumstances, pronounce a hallowed name. Should he do so involuntarily, the spell will be broken, and he will be alone at the top of a mountain and have to find his way back on his own.⁴⁸ This could mean that he must walk a long way, or, if the gathering takes place in a wine cellar, he must find his way out of the cellar he had been locked in. Should the witches decide to provide him with an animal to ride home on, he is not allowed to speak during the entire journey. This is a condition the witches impose on the watcher because they know he will fail. Oftentimes the fast pace of the journey will scare him—and make him call upon God. He will fall from the sky immediately. The site of his crash will rarely be close to his home.

Tales from Tyrol⁴⁹ mention that a witch changed a man from the village into an ass because he dared to reveal the witches' secret to a companion.

The Ass

Once upon a time, the Sternwirth in Merano employed a manservant who was able to tell witches apart from other human beings. One morning, this manservant stood upon the doorstep conversing with a traveller from the Passeier Valley, and as the villagers made their way home from the Rorate mass, he pointed out several witches among them to the traveller. As he himself was travelling beyond the walls a few days later, he was seen by a witch with a taste for revenge—and turned into an ass. He returned to the Sternwirth as he was, but was promptly chased away. Home- and masterless he roamed the Sandplatz and grazed there until the English miller took pity on the lost animal and took it in. The bewitched manservant had to perform all the duties of a miller's donkey and in turn was given straw and beatings. This went on for quite a while. One day he had to take the

⁴⁷ Zingerle, *Sagen*, no. 753, 717.

⁴⁸ Georg Graber (ed.), *Sagen aus Kärnten* (Graz, 1944), 306.

⁴⁹ Zingerle, *Sagen*, no. 756.

flour bags out beyond the walls, and the very same witch who had cursed⁵⁰ him stood there chattering with another. As she laid eyes on the donkey she said to her friend: 'Look there—I let this fool have it. Because he was cheeky, he now is an ass.'

'And he must stay one forever?' the second woman asked.

'Yes', replied the first. "If he only knew, he could help himself quite easily. All he has to do is catch a hallowed wreath on Corpus Christi and eat it, and all my powers would be to no avail.'

The donkey had been listening keenly and heard their entire conversation. As the procession was held the next Corpus Christi, he managed to flee from his stable and snatch a candle and a wreath from its bearer and to eat the wreath. As soon as he had achieved this, the spell was lifted and the lost manservant was returned to his human form. The witch was arrested and was burned on the Sinig. (Merano)⁵¹

There are, however, certain clusters of folktales which make mention of the witch herself taking a companion with her on her journey. Usually it is her lover who discovers the secret by accident and subsequently wants to learn what happens at the gatherings. Here, too, the journey to the gathering seldom has a happy ending. Another reason for taking along a companion is the hope of making the person one of them. It is, as mentioned earlier, a witch's duty to make sure the guild grows in numbers. This is, however, an aspiration which hardly ever comes to pass in folktales. While the desire for riches and a comfortable life might seem alluring, most aspirants ultimately do not take the final step—unless they are forced to do so.

Shape Shifting

One of the essential gifts the witch acquires as a follower of Satan is the ability to change shape. Often, she will acquire the gift of turning into an animal; as for which animal she turns into, there are numerous

⁵⁰Cf. Thompson Mot. G265.9. 'Witches ruin crops'. See the curse of the Kohlrachin who cursed the land before she was executed and beetles and worms destroyed the crops: Graber, *Sagen*, 182.

⁵¹Zingerle, *Sagen*, no. 756, 427.

possibilities. Only animals like the lamb or the dove,⁵² which are rich in Christian symbolism, are not mentioned in this context. The witch's favoured animal is the cat.⁵³ That this animal has been declared the 'witch's animal' is unsurprising since its nocturnal way of living makes it easy to make this connection. These 'false' cats can be identified using certain signs—they have either very long or very thick tails. In the folktales from the Alps it is often said that old witches turn into black cats and remain in this shape.⁵⁴ The owners of the animals will know nothing of this until they, once again by accident, stumble upon a congregation of cats and discover their own amongst them.⁵⁵

If the cat notices that her secret has been discovered, she will not remain with her owners but will disappear forever—but not without leaving behind an evil memento. Tales of congregations of cats are, however, small in numbers. These witch-cats cannot be killed with regular bullets. Should one attempt this, the shooter himself may be hit by the bullet.

The functions and purposes of shape-shifting are numerous. The cat, for example, will be given milk, bacon and many other food items during the day. Should the witch be the farmer's wife, her shape-shifting may have the purpose and benefit of enabling her to monitor the servants: in the shape of a cat she can easily discover lazy or thieving staff. As a cat, she can also uncover secret or illicit love relationships.

A witch may also choose the shape of a hare,⁵⁶ which is far less menacing. These witch-rabbits are easy to make out as they have only three legs.

⁵²In a south Tyrolian legend, a woman called Bachlhenerl could change into a hen. When the hen went into a certain kitchen, they put it in the stove and thought they had burnt it. But the witch was not dead and had only burnt her face: Direder-Mai and Petzoldt (eds.), *Sagen aus Südtirol*, 53, 63–4; Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Vorarlberg*, 23; cf. Thompson Mot. G263.1. 'Witch transforms person to animal'; Baughman Mot. D655.2. 'Witch transforms herself to animal to suck on cow'.

⁵³In the Burgenlandian legends the witches are death-bound when they are discovered in their cat metamorphosis: Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus dem Burgenland*, 43–5. Cf. witch in cat form scares even strong young man, *ibid.*, 39–40; Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Vorarlberg*, 23–5.

⁵⁴Theodor Vernaleken (ed.), *Alpensagen. Volksüberlieferungen aus der Schweiz, aus Vorarlberg, Kärnten, Steiermark, Salzburg, Ober- und Niederösterreich* (Graz, 1993), 108.

⁵⁵Zingerle, *Sagen*, no. 739.

⁵⁶Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus dem Burgenland*, 43–4. Cf. Thompson Mot. G210. 'Form of witch' and the subcategories, for example G211.2.7. 'Witch in form of a hare'.

Here, too, the folktales make mention of gatherings of hares. These animals, however, are far more likely to be encountered on their own. The witch uses this shape for a similar purpose: She steals food, spies on servants and other villagers and, motivated by jealousy, on her husband or lover. As a hare, the witch's main enemy is the hunter. He is her preferred victim when it comes to playing tricks. When he shoots at her, she will not move a hair and will then, once he has fired, disappear into a house. Should the hunter follow her, he will find the mistress of the house at the table, drenched in sweat. The hunter can prepare himself for encounters with these very special hares by loading his gun with a penny of St. Matthew, a thaler of St. Mary or a silver bullet. Throwing a rosary at the animal is also quite useful.

Another so-called witch's animal is the toad.⁵⁷ If this animal is harmed, the injuries can be observed on a witch's body.⁵⁸ The fox, too, is an animal often associated with witches; it is the shape assumed when cattle is harmed.

Tales that mix together tales of werewolves⁵⁹ and those of witches are worth special mention. While werewolves certainly have their own set of complex ideas and tales, tales of witches and tales of werewolves have been blended over time. Once in the shape of a werewolf, a witch will do great harm to herds of cattle, will steal and murder, even harm humans. The transformation happens once the witch puts on a ring, bracelet or belt made of either human skin or a wolf's pelt.

The So-called Weather Witch

People were especially afraid of witches inferring things from the weather because this act could be particularly harmful. If a farmer out in the fields suddenly confronted a whirlwind or bales of hay suddenly rising into the air, this was usually a witch's doing.⁶⁰ These whirlwinds caused by witches are mostly harmless (although terrifying), but they have the

⁵⁷Cf. Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus dem Burgenland*, 38–9. The Hutterer Tötl in Hochtregist fought against weather witches: Brunner, *Steirische Sagen*, no. 157, 136–7, 138–9.

⁵⁸Vernaleken, *Alpensagen*, 106b; Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus dem Burgenland*, 31–2, 35–7.

⁵⁹Cf. Willem de Blécourt (ed.), *Werewolf Histories* (Basingstoke, 2015).

⁶⁰Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus dem Burgenland*, 61, 69–70; Brunner, *Steirische Sagen*, 110–16.

potential to grow into dangerous tempests. For protection, one must throw either a left shoe or a sacred object into the gale. This will immediately reveal the witch. Folktales also mention how witches create those fateful clouds.⁶¹ They whip the water from brooks using a switch taken from a hazel tree, stir wells with a staff, throw a handful of water in the air, dig a hole in the ground into which they then urinate, make signs of magic, or take a sieve and place a cat's head, a crab and rotten eggs in it and say a spell over it. They might also place pebbles in a jar and shake it, hatch eggs or simply comb their hair. Consecrated bells⁶² will, especially in the countries surrounding the Alps, put an end to the bad weather and stop avalanches or landslides caused by witches and therefore also serve as a way to distinguish so-called normal rain from a witch's spell. An example of this kind of story is the bell called Marlingerin:

It is said that witches and even the devil himself feared the big church bell in the parish of Marling (which can be found just an hour outside of Merano on the right-hand bank of the Etsch). It was called 'Marlingerin', and whenever it was heard during especially bad weather, no one but the devil's kin was afraid. The bell was engraved with the following words:

Anna Maria hoß ich,	(My name is Anna Maria)
Alle Wetter verstoß ich,	(I repel all kinds of weather)
Alle Wetter vertreib ich,	(I chase away all kinds of weather)
In Marling, da verbleib ich.	(I will forever remain in Marling.)

It cracked many years ago and had to be cast anew; the bell founder, however, forgot the old inscription and with it the bell's powers and all the trust that had been placed in it was lost forever.⁶³

⁶¹Direder-Mai and Petzoldt (eds.), *Sagen aus Südtirol*, 70–2.

⁶²Ibid. The weather witch of Mariastein who slept in the chapel was disturbed by pilgrims. In a dispute, she called them superstitious. They took revenge by accusing her of being a witch and she was hanged. Later, many people reported that they saw her ghost: Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Tirol*, 28–31. After the death of two witches of the Cava Valley near St Gallenkirch in Vorarlberg their house became haunted: id. (ed.), *Sagen aus Vorarlberg*, 29–32; Hauser, *Sagen*, no. 20, 30–3; Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Salzburg*, 174–6. Bells at Salzburgian church at Muhr and Kaprun are called witches' bells: ibid., 178–9; Jäger, *Dialekt*, 80–99.

⁶³In Matscher's collection, several other bells are mentioned as a defence against witches: Matscher, *Burggräfler*, 188ff.

It is said that once two of the womenfolk went down to the Valsertal. They had been visiting a number of specific places on the mountain. A man who did not trust these women went to St Jodok and asked for the weather bells to be rung. The two women then had to leave without having done their evil deeds. They said: 'If not for the Joaser Schellen [the weather bells], we would have flooded the Valsertal by now.'

Another time the curate, Mr Jörgele, saw two strange women coming towards him from Widum. Since Mr Jörgele was a particularly pious priest who had the ability to see more than ordinary folk did, he knew well that these two women were up to no good. So he ran as fast as he could towards the valley to reach it before the women did. At the point where the railway curves today, a bridge used to connect one part of the valley to the other. It was there that he confronted the two women and forced them to turn back. But later, they would say: 'If not for the black one, we would have flooded the valley by now.'

The Maleficium

Both witches who take the form of an animal and weather-witches attack not only cattle⁶⁴ but humans, too. The associated curse will result in consumption, extreme weight loss, St Vitus' dance (Huntington's Chorea), ulcers and, of course the *Hexenschuss*, lumbago. Often it is children,⁶⁵ particularly unbaptised ones, who fall victim to witches' evil magic. For protection, a Bible or a lug wrench (which, naturally, takes the shape of a cross) were placed beneath children's pillows; small pieces of paper with prayers written on them were quite popular as well. A sure sign of enchantment are never-ending screams; therefore, another word for a special kind of bewitchment is *Beschreien*. A witch will get close to a child, often while it is being nursed, and praise the mother's abundant milk. The child will soon refuse to be nursed. For this reason, children

⁶⁴Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Vorarlberg*, 26–8. The witches harm the cattle with morning dew they have collected by brushing it off the meadows: Depiny, *Oberösterreichisches Sagenbuch*, 162–71.

⁶⁵Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus dem Burgenland*, 58; Direder-Mai and Petzoldt (eds.), *Sagen aus Südtirol*, 51.

who have not yet been baptised are usually kept away from strangers. This spell requires bodily contact.

On 27 September 1583, seventy-year-old Maria Pleinacher from Mank in Lower Austria was dragged from the city of Vienna to the Gänseweide (today's Weißgerberlande by the Franzensbrücke Bridge) and, once there, was burned to death under the watchful eyes of the bishop of Vienna, all required judicial staff, other honourable officials, and a large and fascinated crowd. She was charged with the following crimes (she finally 'confessed' to the following repeated acts of gruesome torture): murdering her husband and several of her children (by magic), being in league with the devil and having lain with him, participating in witch dances (on the Ötscher), performing weather magic, and desecrating altar bread. The most severe charge, however, was her supposedly having bewitched her then sixteen-year-old granddaughter Anna Schlutterbauer,⁶⁶ who had been raised by her grandmother after her mother's death and who had for many years been suffering from seizures (most likely psychological in origin). She was subsequently healed on Ascension Day in 1593 by means of an exorcism (which was of course used as propaganda against the accused).

Villagers worked counter-magic if they suspected witchcraft. Specialists like witch banishers were alerted to ward off witches' evil influence and magic. In some places where a whole settlement of witches threatened villagers, they often brought in somebody from outside, as the following example from Carinthia illustrates.⁶⁷

In the mountains, just beyond Eisentratten, the farmer Gautschenbacher used to dwell. At the same time an old woman lived in the nearby town of Gmünd. She possessed powers to do harm to others, so people feared and avoided her. The farmer knew nothing of the old woman's magic. Once, the old crone dropped an object on the ground in front of the farmer: he picked it up and was suddenly struck by severe pain in one knee. He made his way home with great difficulty and had to stay in bed, and no

⁶⁶Anna Schlutterbauer was an epileptic, and her case clearly shows the conflict between Catholics and Protestants. Her father had her exorcised without success by the local priests, but then the Bishop of Vienna exorcised her of a great many devils: Wilhelm Gottlieb Soldan, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse* 1 (repr. Bremen, 2011), 493; Gary K. Waite, *Eradicating the Devil's Minions: Anabaptists and Witches in Reformation Europe, 1525–1600* (Toronto, 2007), 186–7.

⁶⁷Depiny, *Oberösterreichisches Sagenbuch*, 180–4.

one knew how to bring him relief. Then he remembered a man who lived in Feldkirchen and owned a *Bergspiegel* (mountain mirror). His name was Schnabel. The farmer called for him and received partial relief: he now could at least leave his bed. This was all Schnabel could do for him because he had no further control over the evil spirit.⁶⁸

Whatever one may find on one's doorstep one should never take into the home; oftentimes a witch will place it there as bait and use the object to gain control over the person once the object has been picked up and carried over the threshold.⁶⁹ Again, children are the preferred victims. This is also related to changelings being placed in a cradle. Witches can send diseases to animals and villagers alike. They have snakes, maggots or worms invade villagers' houses and food.⁷⁰

That witches find lost objects or even animals is rarely a subject of legends. In a Cainthian legend of the witch in the Loibl⁷¹ Valley, an old woman possessed by the devil was able to find objects or cattle, and a peasant who had lost two oxen asked her about them. She told him to come back the next day. When he hid near her house, he observed a black figure that had obviously come to inform her about the lost oxen. Because he knew it was the devil, he never dared come back. This obviously social aspect of the village diviner is suppressed by her relation to the devil and therefore stigmatised as evil.

The Witch as Alp or Trud or Drud

An exceptional position is held by legends dealing with an Alp or Trud,⁷² who rides or presses villagers in their sleep.⁷³ The so-called fidler Hans once said: 'If there is a Trud, then I do not fear her.' The Trud came to

⁶⁸Graber, *Sagen*, 183–4.

⁶⁹A motif that has been picked up prominently in the vampire novel *Let the Right One In* by John Ajvide Lindqvist.

⁷⁰The Hutterer Tötl in Hochtregist fought against weather witches: Brunner, *Steirische Sagen*, no. 157, 136–7.

⁷¹Graber, *Sagen aus Kärnten*, 180.

⁷²Willem de Blécourt, 'Night Elves: mistresses of the night, good beings and an innumerable multitude of women' in id. (ed.), *Origins of the Witches' Sabbath* (in preparation) will deal with the proto-Sabbath myths.

⁷³Cf. Claude Lecouteux, 'Der Schrat', in *Eine Welt*, 55–74, esp. 62–3; Christa Agnes Tuczay, 'Alb – Buhlteufel – Vampirin und die Geschlechter- und Traumtheorien des 19.

his house; he could hear her come in through the window. She held him tight until he could move no more. It is said that she whispered something to him as well, but whatever it was, he took it to the grave with him.

This relates to the cluster of folktales regarding the witch's journey in which the witch rides a human⁷⁴; the witch in these tales takes the shape of a Drud or a Trud⁷⁵ or a Mare, an Alp, or the Austrian-Vorarlbergian variant or ecotype of the Schrätel,⁷⁶ a goblin of the woods. A magical bridle is used, and the human is turned into a horse. If he succeeds in throwing off his rider, he regains his human shape, and if he manages to throw the bridle over her, the witch herself is turned into a horse. The farm hand, or whoever it was the witch had chosen as her mount, takes the horse to the smith and has the animal shod.⁷⁷ The next day the farmer's wife will be lying in bed severely ill, bearing horseshoes on her hands and feet. Tales like these are widespread in Austria and Germany; moreover, a blending of witch tales and tales of the Trud is evident.

It is said that a Trud held Micheler under close watch in his old house. He promised her something if she would only leave him be. The next day an old woman well known to him came to visit. He did not give her anything, for he did not think badly of her. After having waited for a while, she said: 'Since you will not give me anything, I have to take my leave.' It was then that he knew who the Trud was.⁷⁸

Jahrhunderts' in Christoph Augustynowicz and Ursula Reber (eds.), *Vampirismus und magia posthuma im Diskurs der Habsburgermonarchie* (Vienna, 2011), 199–222. Cf. Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus dem Burgenland*, 32–4, 53–5; id. (ed.), *Sagen aus Salzburg*, 180–1; Ernst Lasnik (ed.), *Von der Trude, der Wilden Jagd und Geschäften mit dem Teufel. Geschichten und Sagen aus der Weststeiermark* (Graz, 1996).

⁷⁴The witch transforms the farm-hand into a horse and rides to the place where the witches dance. There he destroys the bridle, regains his human form and throws the saddle and bridle onto the witch and has her shod; Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Vorarlberg* 18–20; id. (ed.), *Sagen aus Kärnten*, 13.

⁷⁵Id. (ed.), *Sagen aus dem Burgenland*, 46–7; id. (ed.), *Sagen aus der Steiermark*, 23–5.

⁷⁶Cf. Richard Beitzl, *Im Sagenwald: Neue Sagen aus Vorarlberg* (Feldkirch, 1953), 366.

⁷⁷Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus der Steiermark*, 18–19. Cf. Baughman Mot. G211.1.1.2. 'Witch as horse shod with horseshoes' and Mot. G211.1.1.2(a) 'Witch rides man after transforming him into a horse with a magic bridle'. He manages to get the bridle on her, rides her all night over rough country, has her shod. The shoes are still on her feet (or wounds from nails) when she changes back to her usual form.

⁷⁸Heinrich Fidler (ed.) 'Heimatsagen aus Vals', *Tiroler Heimatblätter*, 7/9 (1967), 82–3, here 82.

The End of the Witch

The motif of the gruesome death⁷⁹ of an evil person can also be found in folktales of the witch. Village witches are not always outsiders, sometimes they are ordinary members of the community with husbands, children, relatives and acquaintances who are not always informed about their wrongdoings. It is often only when the witch meets her end (in nearly all cases a terrible one at the hands of the devil) that the husband is aware that he had been married to a witch. In Upper Austria, a farmer's wife had bewitched her son's cattle. When she was condemned to die, her husband wanted her to have the last sacraments, but the village priest said that she had already found her own way. A farmer in Oberpuch had unwittingly married a witch, and one night he found a broom in his bed: the devil had thrown the witch down a well,⁸⁰ where she could be heard screaming and wailing at night. A brave knight exhumed her corpse, which had been buried outside the cemetery, but the devil always dug it up. So they buried it in a swamp, but she haunted the area. Often the devil punishes a witch's body by tearing it into tiny pieces. Or the witch lives unrecognised her entire life in the community, and only when her end is near does she try to save herself. In one variant, she asks a hunter for 3 twenty-schilling bills but does not say why she wants the money, so he refuses to give it to her. When the devil hunts her down, it is said that the money would have saved her. In a village near Engelharszell, an unrecognised witch died, and after her death a black cat with horseshoes sat on her corpse: the devil.

Male and female witches who had a pact with the devil are also the subject of curious incidents when they die. At their funeral, horses cannot not pull the wagon carrying them until the minister says his prayers. Often this happens at the cross-roads where the witch had summoned the devil. Chapels are also places horses refuse to pass, so they have to

⁷⁹In a Burgenlandian variant the village witch curses seven brides, making them barren. Although she goes on a pilgrimage to Rome, the pope punishes her because of the great evil she has done to the villagers: Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus dem Burgenland*, 42–3. Cf. Thompson Mot. G278. 'Death of witch'.

⁸⁰A peasant woman of Hörsching, near Linz in Upper Austria, baked wonderful Bavarian doughnuts because of her pact with the devil. Whenever she wanted some, she called out 'Wuli! Wuli! Wuli!' and toads came out of the stove spewing lard into her pots. At the end of her life the devil drowned her in a pond: Depiny, *Oberösterreichisches Sagenbuch*, no. 81, 173.

bypass them. In Kefermarkt, a witch appeared as a ghost demanding that the minister bury her in the Weinberger Moos. When he gave in, eleven horses were needed to carry her corpse there.⁸¹

The motif of the evil death of the great sinner—and if anyone is a great sinner it is somebody who has an agreement with the devil—can be traced back to medieval times. Caesarius of Heisterbach gives an example of the evil death of a gambling knight to inform posterity of the devil's treachery.⁸² The devil has the function of God's executioner. Caesarius emphasises that by God's fiat, the devil approaches the knight and takes him over the roof where his entrails get stuck in the roof tiles. As his body is nowhere to be found, his entrails are buried instead. The story's moral: Although the devil grants his followers prosperity, at the end they are always cheated.⁸³

An evil death has the character of a warning for marginalised groups, but especially those in league with the devil. Beneath the gentry such as nobles and clerics, all marginalised groups are predestined for an evil death. In the prototypical medieval story that serves as a precursor to the well-known Faust narrative, Theophilus can only avoid his evil death because he has not renounced Mary, who even takes his contract with the devil out of hell.

TRACES OF ANCIENT OR SHAMANISTIC MATERIALS

As the most ancient layer of the legend corpus, Röhrich mentions the legend of the resurrection of bones.⁸⁴ The oldest record is the story of Thor and his rams. In the alpine legend tradition, the motif is evident in several different demonological legends, for example as a meal of ghosts where a cow is slaughtered and a shepherd who witnesses the act shares their meal. Afterwards the ghosts put together the bones on the cow hide. On the following morning, the cow has returned to life, but the

⁸¹Ibid., no. 162, 184–6.

⁸²82 Caesarius von Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum – Dialog über die Wunder*, ed. Nikolaus Nösges and Horst Schneider, 5 vols., vol. V (Brepols, 2009), 34, 119.

⁸³Cf. Christa Agnes Tuczay, 'Die Kunst des Sterbens: vom guten und schlimmen Tod im Mittelalter', in id. (ed.), *Jenseits: eine mittelalterliche und mediävistische Imagination: Interdisziplinäre Ansätze zur Analyse des Unerklärlichen* (Frankfurt a. M., 2016), 41–55.

⁸⁴Lutz Röhrich, *Sage* (Stuttgart, 1966), 46–9.

piece the herdsman ate is missing. The story demonstrates its livestock-peasant background. The same legend is also recorded as a tale of huntsmen, in which the demons involved are easily identified as the famous lords of the animals. Often it is the wild hunt or figures of the wild hunt who perform the resuscitation. In the hunting version the alpine legends preserve the ancient representation of the motif compared to the North German Thor ram story, which is set in a rural peasant context.⁸⁵

The hunting culture was identified in Mircea Eliade's ground-breaking study, and many scholars began to track down evidence in the anthropological and historical literature supporting the thesis that traces of shamanism are to be found in several archaic legends; they also argued that historical European-style witchcraft might have included a form of shamanism.⁸⁶ There are essentially two lines of argument here: one, espoused by Éva Pócs⁸⁷ and Carlo Ginzburg⁸⁸ and their followers, connects ancient,⁸⁹ medieval and early modern practices to pre-Christian religious beliefs, mostly in eastern Europe, where conversion happened later and the lines of connection are easier to trace (but with implications for other regions). The second, presented by Claude Lecouteux in his book *Witches, Werewolves, and Fairies*,⁹⁰ compares accounts of supernatural experiences during the medieval period (including transcripts from witchcraft and werewolf trials) in Germany to the relatively undisturbed shamanic practices further north.

⁸⁵Cf. Leopold Schmidt, 'Pelops und die Haselhexe', in *Laos* I (Stockholm, 1951), 67–78, here 67; Kevin Tuite, 'Pelops, the Hazel-Witch and the Pre-Eaten Ibex: on an ancient circumpontic symbolic cluster', in *Monographies en archéologie et histoire classiques de l'Université McGill. Antiquitates Proponticae, Circumponticae et Caucasicæ* II (Amsterdam: 1997), 11–28.

⁸⁶Christa Agnes Tuczay, *Der Unhold ohne Seele* (Vienna, 1982), 115–28.

⁸⁷Éva Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead: A perspective on witches and seers in the early modern age* (Budapest, 1999), 73–107.

⁸⁸Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Baltimore, 1983); id, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath* (Chicago, 1991); Ronald Hutton, *Shamans. Siberian Spirituality and the Western Imagination* (London, 2001).

⁸⁹Georg Luck, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Collection of Ancient Texts* (Baltimore, 1985), 79–84.

⁹⁰Claude Lecouteux, *Witches, Werewolves, and Fairies: Shapeshifters and Astral Doubles in the Middle Ages* (Rochester, 2003), 147–8.

Traces of so-called shamanic motifs can be found predominantly in tales from Burgenland, since they are influenced by Hungarian folk culture. In those tales, witches tear apart one of their own, who then comes back to life. The legends around the so-called hazel-witch⁹¹ have been analysed by the well-known Austrian folklorist Leopold Schmidt.⁹² In short, the legend tells of a farm-hand who comes to know that every Thursday evening, the farmer's wife goes to her kitchen, placing herself under the chimney hole. Then she anoints herself while murmuring a spell⁹³ and removes her own entrails. Afterwards she disappears up the chimney on a broom. When she comes back, she puts the entrails back in her body and is as healthy as ever. One Thursday the farm-hand goes to see the entrails and cuts them with his knife. On the following day, the farmer's wife lies dead in her bed, and only the farm-hand knows what happened.⁹⁴

In the legend of the hazel-witch the clandestine spectator or observer is a farm-hand from Seis who follows the farm-girl on horseback. He comes to the Schlern, a famous witches' mountain. After the dance the farm-girl is butchered, fried and eaten. The farm-hand gets a fried rib but does not eat it; he just puts it in his pocket. Afterwards the witches pull together the bones and bring the girl back to life, but instead of the missing rib, they substitute a piece of hazel wood. Then they say that if someone calls the girl hazel-witch, she will die. On the next day, the farm-hand reveals the girl's secret and she drops dead.⁹⁵ The German legends of the brothers Grimm only know the motif from a Christian variant of the drowned child, whose bones are collected by the child's

⁹¹Zingerle, *Sagen*, no. 805, 470; Heyl, *Volkssagen*, 435.

⁹²Schmidt, 'Pelops'.

⁹³In the South Tyrolian variant, the farm-hand gets the charm *Auf und davon und ninderst an* (up and away and nowhere against) wrong, thus saying, 'Auf und davon und überall an' (Up and away and everywhere against): Direder-Mai and Petzoldt (eds.), *Sagen aus Südtirol*, 53. In a Salzburgian variant she says, 'Grechen auf und nirgends an' (straight-forward and nowhere against), while the farm hand who has observed the anointing of the witches says, 'Grechen auf und überall an' (straightforward and everywhere against): Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Salzburg*, 172.

⁹⁴Zingerle, *Sagen*, no. 722, 409.

⁹⁵Heyl, *Volkssagen*, no. 125, 435ff. and no. 151, 676; Zingerle, *Sagen*, no. 804, 469; Johann Bunker, *Schwänke, Sagen und Märchen in beanzischer Mundart* (Leipzig, 1906), no. 79: here the rib is from elder-wood.

mother, who carries it to the church: The child comes back to life.⁹⁶ The Christian context classifies the resurrection as a Christian miracle, while in the culture of the North Asiatic hunting peoples, this would have been imagined as a resuscitation ritual.

FAMOUS TALES RELATED TO WITCH TRIALS AND HISTORIC TALES OF WITCHES

The Zaubererjackl trial⁹⁷ (1675–90) in Salzburg concerned, not a witch, but a sorcerer and was one of the last major trials in the Holy Roman Empire. Jack or Jackl was the most notorious sorcerer in Salzburg in the seventeenth century, well known because of his magic, and rumours about him and his deeds began during his lifetime. Many claimed to have seen him cut off from a piece of wood shavings that immediately turned into mice. Hence, he was given the name *Mäusemacher*—mouse maker.⁹⁸ He also knew how to prepare salves, which he would use to turn himself into a wolf for twenty-four hours. He was in league with many other sorcerers and witches in the country, and he commanded them all. One could join his coven at night during gatherings of sorcerers and witches on the Speiereck, where witch dances and other hellish revelries were held. Joining required a special ceremony; in imitation of the Christian ritual, it took the form of a baptism. An applicant to the coven had the old Christian baptism scraped (*abgeripelt* or *abgekratzt*)

⁹⁶Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (eds.), *Deutsche Sagen*, (Hildesheim, 2006), no. 62.

⁹⁷See Heinz Nagl, 'Der Zauberer-Jackl Prozess – Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1676–1690', *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde*, 112/13 (1972/3), 385–539 and *ibid.*, 114 (1974), 79–241; Norbert Schindler, *Rebellion, Community and Custom* (Cambridge, 2002); Michael Dengg (ed.), *Lungauer Volksleben. Schilderungen und Volksbräuche, Geschichten und Sagen aus dem Lungau* (Tamsweg, 1913; revised by Josef Brettenthaler, Salzburg, 1957), 167–74.

⁹⁸In a Tyrolean variant, a church minister had large old books partly chained. One time the maid, when alone, opened one of the books and read it; suddenly, the whole room was full of mice. When the maid screamed in fear the cleric came running and read the book backwards, whereupon the mice were gone: Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Tirol*, 27. For mice-making in witch trials cf. Rainer Beck, *Mäuselmacher oder die Imagination des Bösen: ein Hexenprozess 1715–1723* (München, 2011), *passim*.

from his forehead and was given a new name, often that of an animal such as *Kräratz*, *Hirschenhorn*, *Kröte* or *Hasenfuß*.⁹⁹

According to legend, the Salzburgian Staudinger witch had been apprenticed to Jackl. He visited her quite often and taught her the black arts. She was well known to all practitioners of magic throughout the country and gathered with them at the Speiereck. Her mother once asked her whether the rumours were true that she had become a witch. She answered that while her mother was cooking mush she could ride on her broom to Salzburg and be back before the mush was cooked. She anointed an old broomstick, demonstrating her art to her mother. She was later accused of sorcery and burnt.¹⁰⁰

A peasant woman, Magdalena Grillenberger, nicknamed Wagenlehnerin, had been denounced by her granddaughter, who had been accused of arson. This was the last witch trial in Mühlviertel.¹⁰¹ The legend described the witch as being part of a clan with her family. At the age of twelve, her daughter stole a large quantity of milk from a cow. On Christmas Eve, the witch wedded the devil near Zell near the Ofnerkreuz and came back with her daughters at two o'clock in the morning. She told her husband that she had attended Christmas Eve Midnight Mass. One night the witch rode on her broom through the chimney to St Stephen's in Vienna. She and her daughters were burned at the stake. Once in the fire, she called to the devil that he should shoot her, but he refused, replying that he had no gunpowder.¹⁰²

CONCLUSION

A comparison of just the motifs reveals a similarity of Austrian witch legends to the legends of Germany or other European countries. What makes it nevertheless remarkable are the Alpine relations between the older mythological figures and the witch figure on the one hand and

⁹⁹Jackl had a special interest in young people such as boys working as shepherds. He chose them to teach them his magic. Around 1678 no less than 114 magicians and witches between the ages of 11 and 20 were executed in Salzburg. Most of them were followers of Jackl.

¹⁰⁰Petzoldt (ed.), *Sagen aus Salzburg*, 176–8.

¹⁰¹Fritz Byloff, *Hexenglaube und Hexenverfolgung in den österreichischen Alpenländern* (Berlin, 1929), 153–4.

¹⁰²Depiny, *Oberösterreichisches Sagenbuch*, nos. 10 and 11, 164.

traces of the so-called hunting culture in the witch legends of the low regions like the Burgenland on the other hand. Thus, the motifs bound to Alpine figures like the Percht, Trud, Schrätel and, in some cases, the Wild Women (either helping or often also punishing) are transferred to the latter witch legends, which is facilitated by their similar attributes.

Main motifs, like the witches' ride to high mountains, are very often combined with the witness motif: The witch is unwittingly or deliberately accompanied by clumsy witnesses who get the flying spell wrong or is often not even known to be a witch by her own husband but is a teacher to her female offspring. The old motif of the competition between magicians recurs in the fighting between witches and witch banishers. Her end is always terrible and the devil proves to be the greatest cheater of all. Other magical personae, such as the historical Zauberer Jackl, who became legendary, seem to be higher in rank than the village witches, thereby serving as their teacher.

Ancient elements or obvious traces of shamanistic motifs are to be found at the boundaries between Austrian Alpine and Hungarian lowland culture. In some details, the peculiar Austrian Alpine witch merges with the historic figure of the witch trials, and one sees how history and tales overlap.

Hanna Dyâb's Witch and the Great Witch Shift

Ruth B. Bottigheimer

When was a witch not a witch? One answer is 1709, when Hanna Dyâb,¹ a young Syrian from Aleppo (c1689–after 1766), created a witchily conniving and contriving woman whom he called a *magicienne*. The fact that this *magicienne* was part of a story that made its way into the *Arabian Nights* as ‘Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou’ makes that woman a witch *avant le lettre* and therefore an important marker in fairy tale

¹The storyteller's name has been transliterated variously. I use the transliteration in his memoir, Paule Fahmé-Thiéry, Bernard Heyberger, and Jérôme Lentin (trans. and eds.), *d'Alep à Paris: Les pérégrinations d'un jeune Syrien au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris, 2015).

This chapter celebrates Willem de Blécourt's magisterial command of European tale repertoires and his nuanced contributions to modern scholarship.

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history.² After Antoine Galland (1646–1715) edited Dyâb's stories for *Les Mille et Une Nuits: Contes Arabes* (*Thousand and One Nights: Arab Tales*, 12 volumes, 1704–1717), they comprised a substantial part of the collection. When it burst upon the world of early-eighteenth-century European readers, 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou' provided an example of yet another wicked woman in an eighteenth-century fairy tale who was not categorised as a 'witch'.

Hanna Dyâb's non-witch *magicienne* presents readers with a malicious woman who plots evil and engages with a supernatural figure to attempt to kill the tale's hero, Prince Ahmed. Her manifestly wicked intentions and her concerted efforts to carry them out prefigure witch behaviour as it came to be realised in nineteenth-century fairy tales, especially in those published in Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children's and Household Tales*, 1812–1857). Dyâb's and Galland's conceptualisation, categorisation and characterisation of the proto-witch in 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou' raise questions about the history of witch figures in early modern and modern European fairy tales.

Hanna Dyâb's characterisation of a *magicienne* in 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou' was typical for early modern depictions of evil females in magic tales. Rather than being 'witches', those women might be the hero(ine)'s close relative (sister, mother, mother-in-law), a disgruntled fairy, or—as here—a *magicienne*. This was consistently the case in early modern precursors of the 'Hansel and Gretel' tale in 1550s Strasbourg, 1630s Naples and 1690s Paris, which are examined in Part II.

The underlying reasons for the absence of witches from early modern brief popular narratives include widespread sixteenth- and seventeenth-century knowledge of witches and the black magic they were accused of practising. In addition, various institutions appear to have imposed constraints on portraying a witch in books aimed at a broad public, while the practice of introducing variation into already published plots (by changing descriptions of individual characters, inter alia) would have impeded any continuing and unvarying depiction of a wicked woman.

²The narratives analysed in this article cluster around two stories, as classified in Hans-Jörg Uther, *Types of International Folktales* (Helsinki, 2004). The first is 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou', which combines ATU 653A, 'The Rarest Thing in the World', and ATU 465, 'The Man Persecuted Because of his Beautiful Wife'. See Ulrich Marzolph, Richard van Leuwen, Hassan Wassouf (eds.), *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, 2 vols. (Santa Barbara, 2004), 81; the second comprises a range of 'Hansel and Gretel' variants, which include ATU 327A, 327B and ATU 511.

Such patterns, well established in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, continued without change in newly composed eighteenth-century magic tales, fairy tales, and fairyland fictions.

In 1800s Cassel, Göttingen and Berlin, however, a great witch shift occurred, as the Grimms' fifty-year editing process resulted in a so-called witchification of evil women in the collection's best known tales. Discrete (and differing) processes enabled and contributed to the witch shift: a general displacement of real-world sixteenth- and seventeenth-century witches to a nineteenth-century imaginary realm, the Grimms' reduction in the earlier larger number of moral categories to good and evil, and their narrowing of the range of permissible behaviour for males and females. In addition, the nineteenth-century Grimm witch shift exerted a powerful influence on genre expectations about fairy tales. When the Grimms embodied evil in one-dimensional witch figures, their visualisations largely displaced earlier nuanced visions of evil in fairy tales and created an assumption among lay and scholarly readers alike that witches were integral to traditional fairy tales.

PART I: PRE-WITCH FAIRY TALES

The tales in Galland's *Les Mille et Une Nuits* are many and varied. His 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou' excited joyful wonder among children when it was staged as nineteenth-century English Christmas pantomimes. This tale's broad popularity continued in the early twentieth century with a 1926 film by Charlotte Reiniger (1899–1981), *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed* (The Adventures of Prince Ahmed), which told the story with stark black-on-white silhouette animation.³ (Reiniger's film built in aspects of the Aladdin story, thus referencing another of Hanna Dyâb's tales, when her Prince Ahmed needed Aladdin's magic lamp to save his beloved Pari Banou!⁴)

³Reiniger's designs were closely related to silhouette fairy tale illustrations by the English illustrator Arthur Rackham (1867–1939). Rackham's *Cinderella* (1919) and *his Sleeping Beauty* (1920), both with silhouette illustrations, preceded Reiniger's *Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed*. It has been stated that Reiniger's inspiration for silhouette animation derived from Chinese theatre (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lotte_Reiniger), but the design similarities with Rackham's oeuvre make it reasonable to consider his work as well in the development of her style.

⁴Reiniger may well have known of Raoul Walsh's 1924 *Thief of Baghdad*, which adapted *Arabian Nights* material for the screen.

All stories about Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou, whether filmic or literary, were based on the tale obtained by Antoine Galland from Hanna Dyâb in the late spring of 1709.⁵ Because the tale appeared only in 1717, two years after Galland's death, it may have been his publisher, F. Delaulne, who inserted the word 'fairy' into the title to capitalise on the preceding French fashion for fairy tales, or *contes de fées*.

There could be no doubt for French readers that 'Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Pari Banou', the next to last tale in the *Arabian Nights*, was a *conte de fée*. That term can be translated as 'fairy tale', 'tale about a fairy', or with *fée* in the plural (*conte de fées*) as a 'tale about fairies'.⁶ Inserting 'the fairy' into the title doubled the fairy presence there ('fée' and 'Pari') but would not have suggested to an eighteenth-century reader that a witch should be present in the tale. For nineteenth- and twentieth-century readers, however, a fairy tale came to be understood less as a story with a fairy protagonist than as one with a witch antagonist, a theme to which I shall return in Part II.

Hanna Dyâb's tale opens with three royal brothers in love with their beautiful cousin, Bedr al-Bodour (Full Moon of Full Moons).⁷ The first part details a quest:

To determine which prince will win her hand, their father, who'd like to marry her himself,⁸ sets a difficult task, a quest for the rarest and most valuable thing in the world. The sultan, their father, provides each with thirty pieces of silver⁹ for his purchase. The princes acquire, respectively, a telescope that enables its user to see what is happening anywhere in the world, an apple that cures even the mortally ill, and a carpet that carries people

⁵The precise date was Wednesday, May 22, 1709. See Frédéric Bauden and Richard Waller (eds.), *Le Journal d'Antoine Galland (1646–1715): La période parisienne* (Leuven, 2011), 1: 343–6. In Uther, *Types*, it is listed as ATU 653A, 'The Rarest Thing in the World', and ATU 465, 'The Wise Brothers'.

⁶I don't include in the principal discussion of Mme d'Aulnoy's term *conte des fées*, which allowed her to compliment members of the aristocratic circle surrounding her *dedicatiee* by associating them with members of the fairy kingdom.

⁷Galland renamed Bedr al-Bodour 'Nourounnihar'. For Galland's text, I have used Jean-Paul Sermain and Aboubakr Chraïbi (eds.), *Les Mille et Une Nuits*, 3 vols. (Paris, 2004).

⁸The motif of the princes' father also entertaining an interest in marrying his niece is unrelated to the theme of this essay, and so I do not pursue that element here.

⁹The amount (which Dyâb also gives as 'forty') echoes the sum paid to Judas for betraying Jesus, with which Dyâb, as a Christian, would have been familiar. This provides an(other) instance of image-by-association in Dyâb's storytelling repertoire. Here, he links an amount of money (thirty pieces of silver) with a faithless person (the sultan his father).

speedily to anywhere they wish to go.¹⁰ Their purchases enable the princes to learn that their cousin lies near death, to fly to her on the carpet, and to cure her with the magic apple. Unable to decide which purchase merits winning Bedr al-Bodour's hand, their father sets an archery trial. Prince Ahmed's arrow disappears, and his older brother Ali wins the bride.

Then follows the tale's second, *Pari Banou*, part:

Prince Ahmed, while searching for the missing arrow, stumbles onto an underground realm, where he meets and marries the beautiful fairy princess *Pari Banou*. When Prince Ahmed later wishes to visit his father, *Pari Banou* grants permission, in return for his promise to return to her. At the same time, Prince Ahmed's father, anxious about his missing son's whereabouts, consults his grand vizier, who in turn summons a *magicienne*. She reassures the sultan that his son is not dead, but tells him that she doesn't know his precise location. The story now skips ahead to Prince Ahmed after his arrival at the court of his father, who has the *magicienne* keep a close eye on him. One day she observes the prince near the rocks at the entrance to *Pari Banou*'s underground palace. Feigning illness, she gains entrance and *Pari Banou* cares for her compassionately but harbours suspicions about the visitor.

When the *magicienne* informs the sultan about Prince Ahmed's beautiful wife, he becomes jealous. The *magicienne* advises the sultan to bring about his son's death by requiring him to perform impossible tasks. The first is to find a tent large enough to cover his entire army, but fine enough to be held in a single hand. The prince, deeply distressed, seeks *Pari Banou*'s help and acquires the required tent from one of her ladies. The sultan then requests water from the lions' fountain. Returning to *Pari Banou*'s underground palace, Prince Ahmed again receives the help he needs to secure the water for his father.¹¹

¹⁰The carpet of 'Prince Ahmed and *Pari Banou*' would appear to mark the point at which a flying carpet enters the world of fairy tales, a theme addressed in Ruth Bottigheimer, 'Flying Carpets in the *Arabian Nights*: Disney, Dyâb ... and d'Aulnoy?' (forthcoming).

¹¹In this section, *Pari Banou* gives him a ball of string (*peloton*) that he is to follow on horseback, while a second horse, bearing a sheep cut into quarters, accompanies him. The rolling ball leads him to the four lion guardians, whom he distracts with the quarters of mutton, enabling him to get the water and return with it to his father. Two of the lions accompany him to the court, one before and one behind him. Thus he returns to his father and presents him with the water. One notes here that the specialised term '*peloton*' appears in d'Aulnoy's '*Finette Cendron*', where the fairy *Merluce* gives *Finette* a '*peloton*' to pursue the opposite direction, that is, to unwind on her outward journey in order to find her way home. This constitutes yet another testimony to Dyâb's familiarity with d'Aulnoy's text. See [Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy] Nadine Jasmin (ed.), *Contes des Fées, suivis des Contes nouveaux ou Les Fées à la mode* (Paris, 2004), 441.

The *magicienne* next advises the sultan to ask Prince Ahmed to find and bring back a very short man¹² with an extremely long beard,¹³ bearing a cudgel weighing five hundred pounds on his shoulder, and possessing the ability to speak. Once again Prince Ahmed returns to Pari Banou, who summons her brother Schaïbar, whom the *magicienne*'s terms describe perfectly. Schaïbar, one of the maleficent jinn, comes immediately. Inside the palace, he shouts at the sultan, 'You called for me! What do you want?' The sultan covers his face with his hands, and Schaïbar kills him with a blow of his iron bar before Prince Ahmed can stop him. He wants to kill the grand vizier as well, but Prince Ahmed prevents him, but has him destroy some of the other viziers. Schaïbar threatens to kill the townspeople unless they recognize the prince as their sultan. Everyone accepts him, and Prince Ahmed takes Pari Banou to the palace.

As a whole, 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou' is a classic tale of restoration, with an unjustly treated prince ultimately returned to the royal station and authority to which he was born. The tale incorporates familiar European fairy tale components, such as quests, magic, tasks, tests, the primacy of the youngest of three siblings and a happy ending here on earth. The content, style and cast of characters unmistakably identify 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou' as a fairy tale.

The *Märchen* subgenre, fairyland fiction, is relevant to Dyâb's 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou'. Beloved by seventeenth-century French female authors (*conteuses*), fairyland fictions are set in two parallel realities, in the earthly world in which their human protagonists live and in a parallel fairyland world where fairies live their lives (when they aren't crossing into the human realm). In contrast to the impunity with which fairies cross from fairyland into the human realm, human protagonists who cross from the human world to the fairy one generally encounter serious problems, as is the case for Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy's hero Hippolyte in 'L'Île de la Félicité': when he dismounts from the horse that brings him from fairyland and his feet touch the ground in the world of mortals, he immediately falls victim to earthly mortality.

¹²With a specified height of only one and a half foot lengths and a standard foot measurement of about 10 inches or approximately 25 cm, the little man's height would be approximately 15 inches or 37 cm.

¹³The beard, measuring thirty footlengths, is equivalent to 450 inches or 1010 cm, which is about 37 feet, or more than 10 metres long, nearly ten times the little man's height.

'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou' participates in the fairyland fiction genre to the extent that it incorporates Pari Banou's underground palace as a parallel fairyland world. Dyâb's reliance on d'Aulnoy's model of fairyland fictions in these (and other) instances suggests yet another borrowing from her writing, namely when he notes that Prince Ahmed does not dismount from the horse (see earlier discussion) that carries him from Pari Banou's palace into the domain where he accomplishes an impossible task. Hanna Dyâb's evident memory of this motif from Mme d'Aulnoy's fairyland fiction *The Isle of Happiness* provides another case of his image-by-association method of composition: he inserts the not-dismounting phrase as an unmotivated aside, as something that *must* be included, in an episode that involves passing from fairyland to the human realm.

Two observations require explanation: (1) Dyâb was apparently impelled to include a mention of the hero's not dismounting in conjunction with a successful journey from his wife's realm. More importantly, however, (2) Dyâb felt no need to incorporate a witch. These two observations point to the presence of the first motif (dismounting as a crucially significant move) and the evident absence of witches from his imaginary. I will try to account for both of these in Part II.

From the Italian Renaissance into the twenty-first century fairy tale heroes and heroines confronted and triumphed over wicked antagonists. In the case of 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou', Hanna Dyâb makes a royal father exemplify evil by having him harbour a sexual jealousy of his sons' coming possession of a woman whom he himself craves. His desire drives him to expose them to the dangers of a difficult quest, perhaps in the unspoken hope of eliminating them as competitors for the hand of his beautiful niece. A further episode of jealousy underlines the father's wickedness when he turns against his youngest son because of Pari Banou's reported beauty.

The sultan's accomplice in the second round of laying traps for Prince Ahmed is not a witch per se but the unnamed female *magicienne*. Paradoxically, she enters the tale in response to the grand vizier's effort to alleviate the sultan's anxiety about Prince Ahmed's whereabouts. The grand vizier's expectation that the magician *will* be able to calm the sultan's concerns tells readers that she is supposed to be an expert in geomancy, the supernatural skill of learning a person's or a thing's location. But Hanna Dyâb's unnamed witch figure shows herself incompetent, for although she is able to assure the sultan that his son is alive, his actual

location eludes her.¹⁴ The geomantic incompetence of Dyâb's witch figure invites further attention.

In 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou', a female figure devises dangerous situations and strategies. The same is true of 'The Two Jealous Sisters', where the malign female figure multiplies five-fold into a mother-in-law, a maid, two sisters and an apparently pious old woman; in 'Aladdin' the Moroccan sorcerer sets his plans in motion by disguising himself as a pious and revered woman named Fatima.

Hanna Dyâb's witch-as-magician, like his other evil women, does not directly call on satanic powers, the unholy act that identifies a practitioner of black magic and, hence, of witchcraft. Nonetheless, she does so indirectly when she gets Prince Ahmed to move across the boundary between the human and the supernatural world by requiring him to fetch the maleficent jinn, Schaïbar. The fact that the female magician seems not to know that Prince Ahmed's fairy protectress, Pari Banou, is Schaïbar's own sister sheds light on the limitations of her skills in the realm of magic.¹⁵ If the *magicienne* had known that Schaïbar and Pari Banou were brother and sister, she surely would have recognised that her effort to bring about Prince Ahmed's death by summoning Schaïbar was doomed to failure (because of Schaïbar's sister's love for Prince Ahmed). The *magicienne*'s ignorance points towards limitations that Hanna Dyâb built into his witch figure, including her faulty judgement in summoning the indiscriminately murderous Schaïbar to court. We will return to the relevance of the deficiencies in the witch figure created by Hanna Dyâb in this tale.

Antoine Galland's Changes to Hanna Dyâb's 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou'

Galland's own expectations of the *conte de fée* genre can be extracted from the language he used as he edited the Hanna Dyâb texts. Galland was evidently aware of the early modern moral economy built into the *conte de fée* by contemporaneous Parisian *conteuses*, namely the general

¹⁴[Galland], *Journal*, 1: 345: 'La Magicienne l'assure que le Prince Ahmed n'est pas mort mais qu'elle ne sait pas précisément où il estoit.'

¹⁵The fact that Dyâb makes one sibling a *jinn* and the other a fairy exemplifies the co-existence of two storytelling cultures in his imaginary.

preference for the triumph of good over evil and, more importantly, the customary destruction of a tale's villain(s).¹⁶ In Dyâb's tale, however, the *magicienne* simply disappears without trace or comment. Galland, on the other hand, radically revises Dyâb's failure to punish the *magicienne* by extending Schaïbar's *exécution terrible* to include the *magicienne* herself. Galland's Schaïbar announces to Prince Ahmed,

'Je sais, dit-il, qu'il y a ici une certaine magicienne, plus ennemie du prince mon beau-frère que les favoris indignes que je viens de châtier; je veux qu'on m'amène'; et Schaïbar, en l'assommant avec sa barre de fer: 'Apprends, dit-il, à donner des conseils pernicieux et à faire la malade.' La magicienne demeura morte sur la place.

'I know that there is a certain magician, more an enemy of the prince my brother-in-law than the unworthy favourites whom I am going to punish. I want her brought to me.' And Schaïbar, striking her head with the iron bar, [said], 'Learn [the result of] giving wicked advice and doing evil.' The magician died on the spot. (My translation.)

Galland's general editing of 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou' was not limited to tweaking its moral economy. He also expanded the story with interpolations about fashion, architecture and Middle Eastern culture, for whose substance he often drew on the *Bibliothèque orientale* of Barthélemy d'Herbelot (1625–1695).¹⁷ Having contributed to and having brought this compendium to publication in 1697, Galland knew its contents intimately, and so it is not surprising that he included it among the generously represented 'complementary sources' that informed his additions to Hanna Dyâb's text.¹⁸ Galland also drew from his own 1670–1672 journal of his sojourn in Constantinople and from his

¹⁶Readers will note that I specify the *conte de fée* as composed by Parisian *conteuses*. Note the use of 'predominantly' and 'generally', since dystopic tales such as 'Le Nain jaune' (The Yellow Dwarf) and 'Le Mouton' (The Ram) provide counterexamples. They are, however, in the minority. In plot, style and structure Galland, like Dyâb, wrote in the mode of the *conteuses*, rather than in the style of Perrault, whose 'Cendrillon', for instance, allowed Cinderella's taunting stepsisters to be rewarded rather than punished for their cruel behaviour.

¹⁷Barthélemy d'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque orientale* (Paris, 1697).

¹⁸Sylvette Larzul, 'Further Considerations on Galland's *Mille et Une Nuits*: a study of the tales told by Hanna', *Marvels and Tales*, 18.2 (2004), 258–71, at 259.

Histoire de Schah Rakh, des autres fils et descendants de Tamerlan (History of Shah Rakh [and] of the other sons and descendants of Tamerlane), his French translation of a work by the Persian historian 'Abd al-Razzâq.¹⁹ In addition, Galland conferred beauty and virtue on Pari Banou in forms and guises²⁰ that were more like those prized by educated women in early-eighteenth-century Parisian salon society than those praised in Eastern literature. Sylvette Larzul concludes that Galland's reformulations of Hanna Dyâb's plot elements had the effect of adapting Dyâb's narrative to existing French tropes.²¹ Those tropes included the fairy tale moral economy, but not yet the fairy tale witch.

The range and kind of changes that Antoine Galland introduced into Hanna Dyâb's 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou' provide twenty-first-century readers with an implicit commentary by a contemporary, that is by Galland himself. What Galland inserted a year or so after he originally wrote down Dyâb's story marks his own early-eighteenth-century narrative and cultural boundaries. Dyâb did not present the *magicienne* as a witch, and neither did Galland redefine her as such, a confirmation of the constraints on his own and Hanna Dyâb's narrative imaginary. Both participate in the almost wholly witchless tropes of seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century French and Italian fairy tales and fairyland fictions.

***Relationships Between the Absence of Witches in Hanna Dyâb's
Oeuvre and Their Absence from Early Modern European Fairy Tales
and Fairyland Fictions***

Whether a tale's template is millennia, centuries, decades, or only a few years old, *its date of telling determines the cultural assumptions underlying its telling*. Dyâb's 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou', told to Galland in May 1709, is therefore an early-eighteenth-century creation. Dyâb's presentation of a proto-witch as a *magicienne* is evidence for his (and Galland's) early modern conceptualisation of what we in the twenty-first century have come to regard differently; in the twenty-first century we do not categorise a woman behaving wickedly in a fairy tale in the more or less neutral category of magician, but as an inherently evil witch.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 264.

²¹ Ibid., 265.

I do not mean to say that witches did not exist in the early modern imaginary, but that they rarely, if ever, existed in early modern fairy tales.²²

There is no evidence that Hanna Dyâb knew any of the late medieval and early modern European romances that incorporated sorceresses and bad fairies as evildoers. I will not, therefore, turn to studies that explore and analyse the relationship of fairies and witches in early modern and modern fairy tales and fairyland fictions to late medieval literary precursors.²³ It is, however, undeniable that Dyâb's tales sometimes incorporate late medieval romance elements. His acquaintance with that material was *indirect*, because he drew on fairy tales and fairyland fictions by European authors who were themselves intimately acquainted with those romances.²⁴

Close inspection of Straparola's oeuvre shows that his female figures who cause difficulties for heroes and heroines are far more likely to be human beings such as jealous sisters and resentful mothers-in-law, while Straparola's sole male sorcerer was a tailor skilled in necromancy. In the French translation of Straparola's tales by Jean Louveau (birth and death dates unknown) and Pierre de Larivey (1540s–1610s) as *Les Nuits facétieuses*, the tailor who utters charms to bring about transformations has a name (Lactance), a social category (his apprentice's *maître* [master]) and a professional disguise (*médécin*), but he performs no identifiable

²²For a discussion of the constraints and complexities of depicting a witch in a magic tale meant for popular consumption, see Ruth Bottigheimer, 'The Problematics of Magic on the Threshold of Fairy Tale Magic: Straparola's *Pleasant Nights*' in *Magic Tales and Fairy Tale Magic from Ancient Egypt to the Italian Renaissance* (Basingstoke, 2014), 148–67, esp. 163–5.

²³See Laurence Harf-Lancner, *Les Fées au Moyen Âge: Morgiane et Mélusine: la naissance des fées* (Geneva, 1984); Maren Clausen-Stolzenburg, *Märchen und mittellaterliche Literaturtradition* (Heidelberg, 1995); Martine Hennard de la Rochère and Véronique Dasen, 'Des Fata aux fées: regards croisés de l'Antiquité à nos jours' in eid. (eds.), *Des Fata aux fées: regards croisés à nos jours* (*Revue Études de lettres*, Lausanne, 2011), 15–34.

²⁴For instance, Straparola's 'Ancilotto' (Night 4, Story 3) provided both plot and characters for Dyâb's 'Two Jealous Sisters' (the concluding tale in Galland's collection), while 'La Chatte blanche' ('The White Cat') by Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy (c. 1650–1705) underlay Hanna Dyâb's 'Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Pari Banou', the next to last tale there. See Ruth Bottigheimer, 'East Meets West in *Thousand and One Nights*', *Marvels & Tales*, 28.2 (2014), 302–24 and id., 'Hannâ Diyâb, Antoine Galland, and Hannâ Diyâb's Tales: I. On-the-Spot Recordings, Later Summaries, and One Translation; II. Western Sources in Eastern Texts' in *Mémoires de l'Association pour la Promotion de l'Histoire et de l'Archéologie Orientales* (Leuven, 2018).

black magic associated with satanic arts. This is true of both the French translation, where it appears as Night 8, Story 5, and the Italian original (Night 8, Story 4).²⁵ Straparola put a real witch named Gabrina Fureta into only one story, ‘Ortodosio and Isabella’ (Night 7, Story 1), but the story and its witch are missing from Louveau and Larivey’s translation. Hence Hanna Dyâb would not have encountered this actual witch in his reading of Straparola’s tales in their French translation. The disappearance of this witch from Straparola’s canon in French must bear on the absence of witches from early modern fairy tales.

In Straparola’s ‘Prince Pig’ (Night 2, Story 1), it is not a witch but a mischief-making *fairy* who complicates the plot by introducing a magic impediment: poor Queen Ersilia gives birth to a piglet instead of to the anticipated prince.²⁶ As a whole, Straparola’s rise and restoration fairy tales are more intent on promising an improvement in living standards than they are on accounting for setbacks and loss. It is the latter plot line that offers an entry point for a maleficent figure such as a witch. Consequently, Straparola’s tales seldom turn to black magic and witch figures to account for obstacles to a hero’s or a heroine’s happiness, using instead jealous relatives or neighbours. Much the same is true of the tales in Giambattista Basile’s *Lo cunto de li cunti* (The Tale of Tales) (1634–1636).²⁷

Expressions of emotion provide another link between Hanna Dyâb’s storytelling and the tale collections that he might have read. Characters in the Arabic-language Levantine or Middle Eastern tale collections that

²⁵The relevant passages can be examined in Louveau and Larivey’s French translation in which Hanna Dyâb would have read Straparola’s tales. See Joël Gayraud (trans. and ed.), *Les Nuits facétieuses* (Paris, 1999), 412, 414–19. It is interesting to note that Louveau and Larivey seem to be actively avoiding the satanic arts, because the Straparolean text from which they translated called Lactantio’s *nécromancie* a *science*, rather than the result of a compact with Satan (Straparola [1553] 1999, 411). The original Italian wording, *nigromanzia*, identifies Latanzio’s magic skill with one of the two *arti* of which he is master, the other being tailoring (*sartoria*). See Donato Pirovano (ed.), *Le piacevoli notti*, 2 vols. (Rome, 2000), 2: 2552–3.

²⁶Straparola also composed tales in which charlatans pretend to have magic abilities in order to gull the credulous: Night 5, Story 4; Night 6, Story 1; and Night 10, Story 1.

²⁷In Basile’s tales the greatest sources of personal danger to heroes’ and heroines’ happiness remain their nearest and dearest: a lecherously incestuous father in ‘The She-Bear’ (Day 1, Story 6), in which a mother-in-law is not a witch in disguise, but a well-meaning mother who wants to restore her son to health by uniting him with the woman he loves.

Dyâb evidently knew rarely express emotions, nor are emotions ascribed to them. In contrast, Dyâb colours 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou' with expressions of emotional contingency. In the tale's quest segment, at least six phrases refer to emotion,²⁸ while the Pari Banou segment contains eight similar phrases.²⁹ Dyâb's language of affect here mimics the emotional sensibilities and affective expression that are so highly developed in d'Aulnoy's tales in general and in her 'Chatte blanche' in particular.

Hanna Dyâb's evident absorption of emotional sensibilities from the d'Aulnoy corpus raises the distinct possibility that his characterisation of the female malefactor in 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou' *not* as a witch but as a *magicienne* derives from the same Catholic imaginary that guided Mme d'Aulnoy's creation of fairy tale characters, including her avoidance of witches. I do not claim that witches did not occur in European Catholic writings, but that Dyâb's witch figure is not called a 'witch' because the authors of the French precursor tales he read did not do so either. Neither would Dyâb have gleaned a 'witch' from any of the Arabic-language Near and Middle Eastern tale collections he seems to have read, nor would he have found witches in the 'chronicles' (such as the Persian *Book of Kings*) he so enjoyed reading.³⁰

²⁸The sultan's three sons are in love (*amoureux*) with their cousin; the sultan doesn't wish to show partiality for one son over another (*afin de ne pas marquer plus de partialité pour l'un que pour l'autre*); Prince Ali, noticeably upset (*avec des marques d'une douleur excessive*), tells his brothers of their cousin's illness; Prince Ahmed is not less afflicted (*affligé*) than his brothers at this bad news; Prince Hussein similarly suffers (*sa part de l'affliction*) at the bad news; and the sultan cannot escape from his indecision (*son incertitude*).

²⁹The sultan suffers from anxiety (*l'inquiétude*) over Prince Ahmed's long absence; Pari Banou harbors suspicions (*souçons*) about their 'sick' guest; the sultan becomes jealous (*jaloux*) of Prince Ahmed; Prince Ahmed, very sad (*fort triste*), returns to the underground palace; there he can hardly explain his sadness (*il a de la peine à déclarer le suiet de sa tristesse*); the prince believes that Pari Banou is making fun of him (*se moque de lui*); the prince returns to the palace just as sad (*aussi triste*) as before; the presence of two lions, one fore and one aft, astonished him and plunged him into great fear (*fort estonné et dans une grande frayeur*); and townspeople and dogs alike were overwhelmed by fear at Schaïbar's appearance (*prit la fuite des qu'on le vit paroître*).

³⁰Jérôme Lentin, 'Note sur la langue de Hanna Dyâb' in Fahmé-Thiéry, Heyberger and Lentin (eds.), *d'Alep à Paris*, 48–51 (here 50), 99, 162.

*Possible Reasons for an Absence of Witches from Eighteenth-Century
Fairy Tales—Including
Hanna Dyâb's*

Let us consider why witches were absent from the tale collections that Hanna Dyâb is likely to have read. It makes sense to do so, because there are reasons to expect that such figures would be called witches by twenty-first-century readers.

In the eighteenth and preceding centuries, many ordinary people believed that witches existed, and some people, predominantly women, proclaimed or confessed themselves to be witches. Baroque Germany was one such place. Persecutions, tortures and executions of witches led Lyndal Roper to examine the accused and their accusers, identifying post-menopausal women and mother–daughter pairs as particularly vulnerable to accusations of witchcraft.³¹ Post-menopausal women and mother–daughter pairs must have existed everywhere in every era. Why, then, should witches be so notably absent from fairy tales and fairyland fictions documented in Germany and in neighbouring countries such as France from the 1550s into the 1700s?

In Catholic polities, ‘witches’ were censored out of written tales by ecclesiastical and secular officials who prohibited popular tales whose plots contained demonic magic.³² Whether censorship in Protestant areas scrubbed witches from popular tales as effectively as in Catholic jurisdictions is irrelevant because the rise fairy tale plot that arose with Straparola in 1550s Catholic Venice, that is a story of a poor boy’s or girl’s magically propelled social and economic rise culminating in a wedding to royalty and a happy ending here on earth, remained the product of Catholic imaginations for the genre’s first 260 years.³³

³¹ *The Witch Craze. Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (New Haven and London, 2004), 160–78. See also Roper, *The Witch in the European Imagination* (Charlottesville, 2012).

³² Donato Pirovano, ‘Per l’edizione de ‘Le Piacevoli notti’ di Giovan Francesco Straparola’, *Filologia critica*, 26 (2001), 60–93; Brendan Dooley, *Angelica’s Book and the World of Reading in Late Renaissance Italy* (2016), 29–40.

³³ My chronology begins with the 1551 publication of Straparola’s *Piacevoli Notti* in Venice and continues to the first edition of the Grimms’ *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* in 1812.

The spread of rise fairy tales and fairyland fictions beyond Catholic regions was slow. Mme d'Aulnoy's fairyland fictions and fairy tales favoured not rise, but restoration fairy tales. Translated into English beginning in the 1690s, her heroes and heroines were not born into grinding poverty but typically fell from high social stations. This single characteristic distinguished Mme d'Aulnoy's tales from rise fairy tales, whose heroes and heroines were born into generations-long wretchedness. Charles Perrault's tales included both restoration fairy tales with suffering heroes and heroines pushed from the palace into poverty *and* rise fairy tales with impoverished boys and girls raised by marriage to royal status.³⁴ But Perrault's rise fairy tale 'Puss in Boots', translated into English in 1729, engendered no imitations in Protestant-dominated England.³⁵ Indeed, after the French Revolution, even a magicless social elevation for a poor girl like Goody Two-Shoes caused shivers among conservative educators, who feared that ideas of social rise might infect England's lower classes and bring about the same bloody results that had torn French society.

Readers might question my suggestion of a regular religious affiliation of rise fairy tales with Catholic writers in Catholic lands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by pointing out that French fairy tales and fairyland fictions, written and published in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France, were frequently pirated and re-published in French in Protestant Amsterdam. That is true, but no magic-driven rise fairy tales were *composed* in largely Protestant Holland in that era. In the course of the eighteenth century, French fairy tales and fairyland fictions travelled to, and were published in, fundamentally Protestant areas

³⁴Perrault's restoration fairy tales include 'Donkeyskin' and 'Sleeping Beauty', with 'Cinderella' as a quasi-restoration fairy tale. His rise tales are 'Puss in Boots', 'The Fairies', and 'Little Thumbling'. 'Ricky of the Tuft' is a complicated morality tale with magic; 'Blue Beard', a quasi-rise tale, but without magic, is not a fairy tale. 'Griselda' is a classic novella; 'The Ridiculous Wishes' is a folk tale and 'Little Red Riding Hood' a warning tale. I use texts in Jacques Barchilon (ed.), *Contes de Perrault* (Geneva, 1980).

³⁵It is often argued that 'Dick Whittington' was England's equivalent to Straparola's 'Costantino Fortunato', Basile's 'Cagliuso', and Perrault's 'Puss in Boots'. Dick Whittington's cat, however, did not embody magic and was not *fatata* (enchanted), as were Straparola's, Basile's and Perrault's cats. Moreover, its appetite for rats and mice was prodigious, but not unnatural or magical. That absence of magic removes Dick Whittington from consideration as a rise fairy tale, in which magic plays an essential part.

of Germany, above all in Leipzig.³⁶ Publishing data convincingly suggest that French *contes de fées* provided the basis for the German fairy tale flowering in the nineteenth century, at which point fairy tales moved into the Protestant imaginary.

Because twenty-first-century fairy tale readers expect a witch figure in tales that typify the fairy tale genre, the absence of a ‘witch’ from ‘Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou’, whose wicked woman otherwise fits seamlessly into the witch category, is noteworthy. In sum, the fairy tales and fairyland fictions generated in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Catholic Europe did not present wicked women in ways that required them to be identified as witches. Although wicked women abounded, witches did not become an integral part of fairy tale genres before the nineteenth century, as Willem de Blécourt has repeatedly argued.

PART II: THE GRIMMS, GERMAN MODERNITY AND MODERN EXPECTATIONS ABOUT WITCHES IN FAIRY TALES

For historians ‘modernity’ generally denotes the years between 1789 and 1945. The same period corresponds to the years in which the trope of witches in fairy tales took shape and rose to prominence. The Grimms’ *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* was the first consequential step in the creation of witch figures in nineteenth-century literature and specifically in fairy tales, where it proved to be disproportionately influential. As the number of witches in the Grimms’ tales grew over its long editing history, it became natural to associate witches with the particular kind of *Märchen* known in English as ‘fairy tales’.

Witch insertion happened in nineteenth-century Protestant Germany, the centre of fairy tale generation. Protestant Germany witnessed broadly influential theological shifts, as—between 1817 and 1847—Lutheranism amalgamated with the more gender-liberal Reformed branch of German Protestantism and subsequently largely displaced it. Growing industrial wealth supported university education for increasing numbers of young men. Germany’s growing economic strength hastened the expansion of a

³⁶This narrative migration of French fairy tales and fairyland fictions has been laid out by Gonthier-Louis Fink in *Naissance et apogée du conte merveilleux en Allemagne (1740–1800)* (Paris, 1966) and minutely detailed by Manfred Grätz in *Märchen in der deutschen Aufklärung: Vom Feenmärchen zum Volksmärchen* (Stuttgart, 1988).

bourgeoisie that brought about and valorised gender-specific public and private spheres in nineteenth-century Germany at the same time that scholarship supporting those views was increasingly esteemed internationally.

At home and abroad, Germany's scientific, industrial and academic achievements generated respect, even reverence, for stances taken by German intellectuals in fields beyond industry and the sciences. Early-nineteenth-century German culture and scholarship in history, literature and theology associated with Romanticism strove to create a new synthesis of art, philosophy and science. The rediscovery of the Middle Ages and celebration of it as a simpler period (especially in gender terms) of integrated culture also inspired a new folk-based nationalism in the present. As far as the subject of witches in fairy tales is concerned, each of these currents drove the reshaping of fairy tales and their interpretations within German formulations about the folk and its lore.

The tales gathered and edited by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, themselves the product of generations of Reformed Protestants,³⁷ included the first Protestant-produced rise fairy tales. I use 'produce' to denote the thoroughgoing editing of tales collected from friends, friends of friends, correspondents, and from excerpts from a broad variety of publications going back to the sixteenth century. Wilhelm, principally responsible for editing, changed the thrust of many tales. Of special interest here is his reformulation of wicked women into witches.³⁸

The Grimms' 'Hansel and Gretel' exemplifies the nineteenth-century witchification of formerly witchless fairy tales.³⁹ In the tale's first known

³⁷Over the fifty years of editing *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, Wilhelm's editorial reshaping of the collection moved stories told by fellow Reformed Protestants steadily away from the eighteenth-century gender liberalism of Reformed Protestantism towards the more restrictive and punitive gender views reigning in nineteenth-century Europe as a whole and in Germany in particular.

³⁸Wilhelm Grimm's editing contrasts sharply with that of his younger contemporary Ludwig Bechstein, who sought and achieved parity between wicked women (witches) and men (sorcerers) in his *Deutsche Märchen* (1845 *et seq.*). See Ruth Bottigheimer, 'Ludwig Bechstein's Fairy Tales: Nineteenth-Century Bestsellers and Bürgerlichkeit', *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur*, 15.2 (1990), 55–88, at 67.

³⁹I would note in passing that Hansel and Gretel's implied social rise, as presented in the text of the tale, hinges on the relocation of precious goods (from the witch's hut to their paternal house) rather than on the wealth and comfort attendant on a poor person's marrying royalty. In this regard, the plot of 'Hansel and Gretel' is a variation on the rise fairy tale model introduced by Straparola.

iteration, ‘Ein schöne history von einer Frawen mitt zweyen Kindlin’ (260–266, A Pretty Story About a Woman with Two Little Children), Chap. 5 in the late 1550s *Das Ander theyl der Garten Gesellschaft* (The Second Part of the *Garden Gathering*) by Martin Montanus (1537–after 1566),⁴⁰

a stepmother allies herself with her husband’s older daughter Annelin in order to drive out the younger sister, Margretlin. Margretlin’s godmother gives advice that saves her from her stepmother’s first two attempts to abandon her in the woods, but finally the wicked stepmother, described as *böss, arglistig, zernichtig* (wicked, deceitful, destructive), succeeds when birds peck up the tiny seeds with which she has marked her path. She climbs a high tree, sees smoke, seeks out the source and is taken in by an *erdkülin* (little earth cow⁴¹) who lives alone in a tiny house. If she brushes her every night and milks her every morning and never lies to her, she will bring Margretlin silk and velvet to wear, but she must never let her sister into the house or reveal the identity of her protectress.

The older sister Annelin, tormented by a bad conscience, seeks Margretlin out. Learning about the *erdkülin*, she tells the stepmother, who plans to butcher and eat the *erdkülin*. Sensing the plot, the *erdkülin* tells Margretlin that she will be butchered and that she should retrieve her tail, horn and hoof from the butcher, bury them, and go away for three days, after which a tree bearing beautiful apples, summer and winter, grows from them.

Soon a powerful lord with a son suffering from fever and chills arrives. The son believes one of the apples will cure him, but the tree raises its limbs against Annelin’s and the stepmother’s efforts to pluck an apple. But when Margretlin appears, the apple tree bends its boughs to her hand. The lord then takes Margretlin and her father to his castle, abandoning the stepmother and Annelin in the woods.

The German tale, published in the then predominantly Protestant Strasbourg, is remarkable for the absence of specific punishment for the

⁴⁰Montanus, Martin, *Das Ander theyl der Gartegesellschaft* ([Strassburg, late 1550s] Hildesheim, 1972). Most of the text appears in modern German in Max Lüthi, *Es war einmal: vom Wesen des Volksmärchens* (Göttingen, 1983), 43–51. Note Roper’s discussion of the same material in the Epilogue (247–252) of *Witch Craze*.

⁴¹A definition or description of this supernatural figure is elusive.

wicked stepmother. Despite the stereotypical witch adjectives applied to her, she is never called a witch. The tale focuses on female jealousies and has neither brother nor father. Further complicating efforts to account for its origins are the tale's constitutive elements, some of which recall *Psyche's* sisters' visit to her in *Cupid's* palace and her failed attempts to protect his secret. Nonetheless, the names of the two siblings in *Montanus's* story point forward: the girl's name *Annelin* is the root equivalent of the boy's name *Hänsel*, while *Margretlin* is the diminutive for the same name that produces *Gretel* as a nickname. Also similar to later 'Hansel and Gretel' elements are *Montanus's* godmother's advice, the marking of a homeward trail, the abandonment in the woods, and someone/something supernatural living in an isolated woodland house.

Consistent with the Strasbourg narrative that culminated in the Grimms' 'Hansel and Gretel' is a Neapolitan tale, 'Nennillo and Nennella', by Giambattista Basile (1585?–1632). It changes the *dramatis personae*, substituting and accentuating a suffering brother–sister pair for the two girls⁴²:

A brother and sister are assailed by their stepmother, 'an ugly hag ... an accursed bitch ... a Fury from hell', and abandoned by their father in a wood. Nennella, 'stolen away by some pirates', is eventually swallowed by an 'enchanted fish', while Nennillo, found by a prince out hunting, is educated at the palace 'in virtue' and 'the trade of meat carving'. One day at the beach, the Prince hears a voice call out, 'My brother, my brother'. The fish releases the beautiful Nennella, and a royal search for the parents draws their father to court, where he is berated for having allowed 'a sissy of a woman' to browbeat him. The stepmother, summoned and asked to name a "treatment" for someone who had "harmed" such beautiful children, pronounces a grisly death sentence and is executed (a frequent result for performing wicked deeds in fairy tales). The king finds noble spouses for Nennella and Nennillo and sets them [and their father] up with an income'.⁴³

⁴²German literary history is full of instances of tales in Romance languages moving into Germanic languages. The movement of *Montanus's* tale from Strasbourg to Naples is a relatively rare instance of a German tale moving into the Romance tradition.

⁴³Nancy Canepa (trans. and ed.), *Giambattista Basile's The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for the Little Ones* (Detroit, 2001), 427–32.

Neither in Michael Rak's Neapolitan and Italian edition of Basile's text nor in Nancy Canepa's modern English translation does a 'witch' appear.⁴⁴

Although Basile's tale contains the elements that would ultimately be refigured as 'Hansel and Gretel' in the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, 'Nennillo and Nenella' tells a different story altogether, as Willem de Blécourt notes: '... any attempt to find earlier full versions of [the Grimms'] *Hänsel und Gretel* will be in vain; ... there is no eighteenth-century history of the tale as such, only of its constitutive parts'.⁴⁵ The constitutive parts begin with Montanus's 'Ein schöne history von einer Frawen mitt zweyen Kindlin' and continue with Basile's 1636 'Nennillo and Nennella', Charles Perrault's 'Petit poucet' and Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy's 'Finette Cendron' and their eighteenth-century translations. Yet despite their motif similarities, none of the earlier tales tell the same story crafted by Wilhelm Grimm. During the nearly 300 years of the tale's formation, shifts in its plot reveal—among other things—a history of re-categorising women. From women who are intent on producing mayhem, misery and mortally dangerous situations for tale heroes or heroines they become witches.

When Charles Perrault (1628–1703) re-created a tale of children abandoned in a wood in 1697, he substituted seven brothers for Basile's brother-sister pair, had the father initiate their abandonment and led them to an ogress, who saves them from her ogre-husband's cannibalism. The seven-year-old petit Poucet tricks the ogre into killing his seven daughters, steals his seven-league boots, escapes with the ogre's wealth and returns home with his brothers. Perrault describes the ogre, in Christine Jones's 2016 translation, as a 'good husband even if he did eat babies'⁴⁶ and does not kill him off.

Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy, in the third volume of her 1697 *Contes des Fées*,⁴⁷ has three royal sisters instead of Perrault's seven impoverished brothers.

⁴⁴Michael Rak (trans. and ed.), *Giambattista Basile. Lo cunti de li cunto* (Milan, 1981), 968–81.

⁴⁵de Blécourt, 'On the Origin', 30.

⁴⁶Christine A. Jones, *Mother Goose Refigured: A Critical Translation of Charles Perrault's Fairy Tales* (Detroit, 2016), 162.

⁴⁷d'Aulnoy, *Contes*, 439–57.

'Finette Cendron' begins with a king and a queen who have managed their finances so badly that the queen advises reducing their expenses by getting rid of their three spoiled daughters. Overhearing the plan, the youngest, Finette, seeks advice from her godmother, the fairy Merluche, who responds with helpful suggestions and material assistance. Nonetheless, the sisters fall into the clutches of a cannibal ogre and his ogress wife, who set about fattening them up. Finette saves their lives by pushing the ogre into the oven and decapitating his wife. The two older sisters take the ogres' wealth, steal the godmother's gifts to Finette Cendron, and make her their servant.

At this point the tale moves into a second plot segment with 'Cinderella' characteristics. As in Basile's and Perrault's precursor tales, no witch appears in Mme d'Aulnoy's 'Finette Cendron'.

The Grimms' first version of what eventually became their 'Hansel and Gretel' can be found in the 1810 Ölenberg manuscript, where it is titled 'Das Brüderchen und das Schwesterchen' (The Little Brother and the Little Sister).

The tale's mother advises abandoning the children in the woods, as did d'Aulnoy's mother in 'Finette Cendron', but in the Grimm tale the parents are a poor woodcutter family, rather than a royal pair. In the Grimm tale, just as in the earlier Montanus, Basile and d'Aulnoy tales, one of the siblings leaves a trail to guide them home, at first successfully, but the third time unsuccessfully. After days alone in the woods, the brother and sister discover a house made of bread, with a roof of cake and windows of sugar. A little old woman living there puts Hansel into a cage to fatten him up, while Gretel must keep house for her. On the day set to cook Hansel, Gretel pushes the old woman into the oven, 'und die Hexe verbrannte' (and the witch burned up).⁴⁸ Hansel and Gretel fill their pockets with jewels from the house and take them to their father, who becomes a rich man, but their mother is dead.⁴⁹

A scant two years later, the Grimms included this tale in the 1812 First Large Edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. The old woman in

⁴⁸Heinz Rölleke (ed.), *Die Älteste Märchensammlung der Brüder Grimm* (Geneva, 1975), 76.

⁴⁹Later in the tale's editorial history, in the 1840s, Wilhelm changed the mother into a stepmother.

the woods becomes ‘eine steinalte Frau’ (a woman old as the hills⁵⁰), with an appended explanation: ‘Die Alte war eine böse Hexe’ (the old woman was a wicked witch⁵¹). Grimm calls her ‘the witch’ three more times⁵² before Gretel shoves her into the oven and saves Hansel.⁵³ By the Final Large Edition of 1857 Wilhelm doubled the number of times he used the word ‘Hexe’ in the story. Alternately referring to her as ‘die Alte’ (the old woman), he identifies witchiness with female agedness in this story,⁵⁴ confirming Rudolph Schenda’s observation that beginning with the Industrial Revolution, the aged were pushed into marginal status,⁵⁵ which Wilhelm Grimm might have observed in nineteenth-century Germany. Grimm’s ‘Alte’ embodies the same agedness that Roper identifies in reproductive terms as post-menopausal. Moreover, ‘The Baroque imagination, which had made witches fearsome and required their execution’,⁵⁶ did not result in witches in Baroque fairy tales. But when ‘[t]he Baroque imagination ... had finally faded away’⁵⁷ in the nineteenth century, Wilhelm Grimm revived witches and inserted them into previously existing but witchless fairy tales.⁵⁸

⁵⁰Heinz Rölleke (ed.), *Kinder- und Hausmärchen Gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm* [hereafter KHM] (Göttingen, 1986), 75.

⁵¹Ibid., 77.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., 79.

⁵⁴Wilhelm Grimm’s frequent use of ‘die Alte’ in ‘Hänsel und Gretel’ is consistent with Roper’s observations about age in Chap. 7 of *Witch Craze* (‘Crones’, 160–78) and contrasts notably with his single use of the term in ‘Frau Holle’ (KHM 24). Instead he calls this elderly female moral arbiter (and therefore a representative of goodness) by her proper name, Frau Holle. Hildegard Gerlach notes: ‘Die Synthese Alte Frau/H[exe] findet für die d[eutsche] Märchen ihre volle Ausprägung im 19. Jh. in den S[ammlungen] der Brüder Grimm und bes[onders] L. Bechstein’. Gerlach gives many instances from the Grimms’ tales, but her Bechstein reference must have derived more narrowly from Bechstein’s writings specifically about witches rather than from his *Deutsche Märchen* and *Neue Deutsche Märchen*, which are remarkably gender-neutral in evil-incarnated-as-witch-or-sorcerer. See Gerlach, ‘Hexe’, *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* (Berlin, 1990), 6: cols. 960–92 at 965.

⁵⁵Rudolph Schenda, ‘Alte Leute’, *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* (Berlin, 1977), 1: cols. 373–80.

⁵⁶Roper, *Witch Craze*, 251.

⁵⁷Ibid., 252.

⁵⁸Perrault’s fairy tales were widely available in German translation from the 1790s onwards in the *Blauer Bibliothek aller Nationen* published in Leipzig.

The number of tales into which Wilhelm Grimm edited witches was not large, but they were disproportionately influential, because he placed them in the Small Edition, which reached a large reading public. In the 1890s the sales of the Grimms' folk-valorising tales overtook Ludwig Bechstein's more gender-neutral tales.⁵⁹ By the 1920s the aggregate views of the Grimms' collection—including the use of witches as antagonist figures opposing virtuous heroes and heroines—replaced those of Bechstein's tales,⁶⁰ where male sorcerers and female witches had existed in equal numbers. The subsequent worldwide dominance of Grimms' tales in scholarly discourse and in the book market made its tales into a model for plots and characterisations deemed appropriate for 'folk' and 'fairy' tales. The dominance of Grimms' tales consolidated an ethos of evil (antagonism towards virtuous heroes and heroines in fairy tales) and solidified that ethos into the image of an elderly and evil female, a witch.

The Grimms' witch slid easily into a dichotomising gender function next to already sexually dichotomised views about women (virgin vs whore), which became ever more prevalent in the second half of the nineteenth century. It must have seemed natural to similarly reformulate a second general female category—'mother'—into good vs evil polarities. Whatever the impetus for its invention, nurturing mother vs destroying or devouring witch became a widely accepted category with remarkable speed. Ably described by Hermann Bausinger and Katalin Horn, this polarised and polarising vision of mothers was absorbed frictionlessly into efforts to understand human psyches.⁶¹ Prime examples of scholarship that dualise (whether as a good or as an evil duality) conceptualisations of mothers are Walter Scherf's 1982 and 1995 presentations of the *Erdkühle* figure as the younger daughter's actual mother in animal form⁶² and Bruno Bettelheim's 1987 article in *Psychotherapie—Psychosomatik—Medizinische Psychologie*, titled 'Hänsel und Gretel,

⁵⁹Böttigheimer, 'Ludwig Bechstein's Fairy Tales'.

⁶⁰Id., 'The Publishing History of Grimms' Tales: Reception at the Cash Register' in Donald P. Haase (ed.), *The Reception of Grimms' Fairy Tales: Responses, Reaction, Revisions* (Detroit, 1993), 77–101.

⁶¹Hermann Bausinger, 'Gut und Böse', *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, 6: 316–23; Katalin Horn, 'Polarität', *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* (Berlin, 2002), 10: 1111–16.

⁶²Walter Scherf, *Lexikon der Zaubermärchen* (Stuttgart, 1982), 102 (*seine rechte Mutter in Tiergestalt*), 103 (*die rechte Mutter*); id., *Das Märchen Lexikon*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1995), 1: 271–2, identical wording).

mein Lieblingsmärchen' (Hansel and Gretel, My Favorite Fairy Tale), where he posits a Janus-like mother/witch figure as self-evident.⁶³

In terms of twentieth-century general and scholarly assumptions about the association of witches with fairy tales, Bettelheim's article exemplifies the ways in which neo-Freudian thought equates 'fairy tales' (of which the normative collection is always the Grimms') with the human condition in general, and with men's and women's and boys' and girls' experience of good and evil in particular. Evil came to mean 'witches', a view that Freudian-influenced scholars could verify to their satisfaction by turning to the Grimm collection! Such assumptions entered the general discussion through popular weekly and monthly magazines for women and families, soon leading to a widespread and unchallenged expectation that evil in all fairy tales would and should be embodied by a witch.

I confess to having absorbed some of the generalised expectations about witches and fairy tales outlined on the preceding pages. I too wondered at Hanna Dyâb's terming the sultan's wicked female advisor in 'Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou' a *magicienne* and then allowing this witchy woman to escape scot-free. Dyâb's characterisation of her as something other than a witch and his not punishing her to restore moral balance⁶⁴ made the Dyâb plot seem contradictory to fairy tale conventions. But my initial reaction was a twenty-first-century misperception of Dyâb's eighteenth-century storytelling world. *His* expectations did *not* associate a wicked woman with witchery, nor did they require a gruesome punishment to re-establish moral order. My twenty-first-century genre expectations had been formed by nineteenth- and twentieth-century interpretations to an extent that I did not recognise. As Willem de Blécourt has pointed out, fairy tale witches are not preserved memories of medieval and early modern witches, but insertions from a historically modern (that is post-French Revolution) imagination.⁶⁵

⁶³Beuno Bettelheim, 'Hänsel und Gretel, mein Lieblingsmärchen', *Psychotherapie—Psychosomatik—Medizinische—Psychologie*, 37 (1987), 1–9. Bettelheim previously made the equation in *The Uses of Enchantment* (New York, 1977), 163. For an alternative interpretation, see Ruth Bottigheimer, 'Bettelheims Hexe: Die fragwürdige Beziehung zwischen Märchen und Psychoanalyse' *Psychotherapie—Psychosomatik—Medizinische—Psychologie*, 39 (1989), 294–9.

⁶⁴Gerlach, 'Hexe', col. 966.

⁶⁵Gerlach also understands the *Stiefmutterhexe* (stepmother-witch) in fairy tales ('Hexe', col. 966) as a historical product of families newly formed after a mother's death, although she doesn't deal with the fact that this figure only began to appear in large numbers in the modern era.

This article has examined a hybrid eighteenth-century Syrian-French imaginary and uses sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European precursors of an eighteenth-century French and a nineteenth-century German tale to illuminate twentieth- and twenty-first-century assumptions about witches in fairy tales. Its eventual conclusions converge with those in Willem de Blécourt's fairy tale scholarship, namely that the fairy tale female witch is a nineteenth-century insertion into a long tradition that Walt Disney and prodigious tale-telling moderns have made seem ancient and essential.

When was a witch not a witch? In 1709, when Hanna Dyâb created a witchily conniving and contriving woman whom he called a *magicienne*.

The *Mirror of the Witches* (1600): A German Baroque Tragedy in Context

Rita Voltmer

PROLOGUE

In 1631, the Jesuit Friedrich Spee published anonymously his ardent treatise *Cautio Criminalis*, in which he decried how Germany was the mother of so many witches because of the scandalous conduct of torture and trials.¹ But, in contrast to its more than 25,000 executions of alleged witches during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,² the Holy Roman Empire did not father plays in which actors posed on stage as female and male witches, apart from a few Shrovetide plays by

¹Friedrich Spee von Langenfeld, *Cautio Criminalis or a Book on Witch Trials* (2nd edition of 1632), trans. by Marcis Hellyer (Charlottesville and London, 2003), 90.

²Rita Voltmer, 'The Witch Trials' in Owen Davies (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of Witchcraft and Magic* (Oxford, 2017), 97–133.

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Hans Sachs.³ This finding seems odd.⁴ In early modern Germany there was a culture of dressing up and masquerading on stage or presenting so-called tableaux at every possible occasion throughout the ecclesiastical year. The world itself was thought to be like a theatre. Under the label of the *Theatrum Mundi* metaphor, narratives and stories were sampled and printed in large quantities to convey morals and knowledge.⁵ During the religious conflicts which haunted the Holy Roman Empire after Luther's attempts at reforming the Church, German Baroque drama became a weapon in the confessional battles: humanist drama; Protestant school plays; and school theatre, martyr plays and staged exorcisms of the Jesuits.⁶ Even the Wittenberg theologian favoured school theatre as an instrument of Protestant teachings. In one of his colloquia, Luther defended the plays of Terence, since these comedies, despite (or rather because of) their obscenities, lectured the pupils and the audience about the sins both of whoredom and celibacy and about the advantages of marriage, the foundation of all patriarchal discipline and order.⁷

³Jennifer Götz, 'Hexenvorstellungen im Theater des 17. – 19. Jahrhunderts. Eine Untersuchung anhand ausgewählter Stücke' (University of Munich Masters thesis, 2003); Sigrid Brauner, 'The Demonization of the Shrew: witchcraft and gender relations in Shrovetide plays by Hans Sachs', *Daphnis*, 20 (1991), 131–45; id., *Fearless Wives and Frightened Shrews: The Construction of the Witch in Early Modern Germany* (Amherst MA, 1995); Martin Ehrenfeuchter, *Aspekte des zeitgenössischen Zauberglaubens in Dichtungen des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main, 1996), 186–203.

⁴For surveys of European drama see: Gary K. Waite, 'Drama, Dutch' in Richard M. Golden (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft. The Western Tradition*, 4 vols. (Santa Barbara, 2006), 291–4; Paolo Portone, 'Drama, Italian' in *ibid.*, 294–5; Iris Gareis, 'Drama, Spanish' in *ibid.*, 295–6; Lawrence Normand, 'Renaissance Drama, England' in *ibid.*, 957–9; and Willem de Blécourt, 'The Laughing Witch: Notes on the Relationship between Literature and History in the Early Fifteenth Century' in Louise Nyholm Kallestrup & Raisa Maria Toivo (eds.), *Contesting Orthodoxy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe. Heresy, Magic and Witchcraft* (Basingstoke, 2017), 255–77.

⁵Rita Voltmer, 'Wissen, Medien und die Wahrheit. Überlegungen zu Transferprozessen von Hexenwissen' in Heinz Sieburg et al. (eds.), *Hexenwissen. Zum Transfer von Magie- und Zauberei-Imaginationen in interdisziplinärer Perspektive* (Trier, 2017), 3–46, esp. 26–7.

⁶Cf. Nicole Lorenz, *Das sächsische Reformationsdrama als Bindeglied zwischen mittelalterlichen und neuzeitlichen Aufführungsformen und Kommunikationsmedien der Reformation* (Chemnitz, 2014); Wolfgang Beutlin et al., *A History of German Literature. From the Beginnings to the Present Day*, 4th edition (London and New York, 1993), 45, 49, 72, 80–4.

⁷Thomas I. Bacon, *Martin Luther and the Drama* (Amsterdam, 1976), 58–9.

Travelling theatre companies from England brought to Germany a new art of acting with music, comical scenes, fights, dances and acrobatics instead of the declamatory style of the German humanist drama. It happened to be Duke Heinrich Julius of Braunschweig-Lüneburg, the brother-in-law of King James VI of Scotland, who invited a company to his court after he had seen their play at the Danish court.⁸ These companies presented dramas by Shakespeare and Marlowe in German lands, initially in their native language. Despite this, their performance impressed the audience exceedingly.⁹ But although devils and demons in abundance peopled the Baroque stage,¹⁰ unlike the Renaissance Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas, which also dealt with magicians and witches, contemporary German literary production obviously shunned this specific topic—with one exception.¹¹

In 1600 Thomas Birck of Untertürkheim, a Lutheran pastor and author of lengthy plays and treatises, wrote a play called *The Mirror of Witches*.¹² He wanted to give its readers and potential audience true instructions concerning many questions in the ongoing witchcraft

⁸ Cf. (with further references) Voltmer, 'Wissen', 24, 26; Ralf Haekel, 'Zum Verhältnis von Theaterpraxis und Drama in der Frühen Neuzeit. Heinrich Julius' Susanna und die Englischen Komödianten', *Zeitsprünge*, 4 (2000), 163–80.

⁹ Beutlin et al., *History*, 120–1.

¹⁰ Florent Gabaude, 'Protéisme du diable dans le théâtre et la publicistique au tournant du XVII^e siècle: les exemples de Heinrich Julius von Braunschweig et de Jakob Ayler', *Cahiers d'Études Germaniques*, 62 (2012), 119–49; Johannes Janssen, *Culturzustände des deutschen Volkes seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters bis zum Beginn des dreißigjährigen Krieges* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1893), 285–363.

¹¹ Eric Pudney, *Scepticism and Belief in English Witchcraft Drama, 1538–1681* (Lund, 2016); Diana Purkiss, 'Witchcraft in Early Modern Literature' in Brian P. Levack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford, 2013), 122–40.

¹² Thomas Birck, *Hexenspiegel. Ein uberaus schöne und wolgegründte Tragedi/darinnen augenscheinlich zusehen/was von Unholden und Zaubern zu halten sei. Ob sie können wittern: In Luft fahren: Nächtliche Zusammenkunfft/Gastungen und Tantz halten: Mit dem Teuffel der Bulschafft pflegen/und Kinder zeugen: Ihren Leib groß und klein machen/oder in unvernünfftige Creaturen verendern: Den Leuten die verschlossene Wahr//bey nacht stelen: Menschen und Vieh beschädigen/und wieder heilen: Zukünftig ding wissen/und wahrsagen: Und durch was mittel ein Christ sich vor ihnen hüten/oder wann er schaden empfangen/wie er sich verhalten: Und welcher massen die Obrigkeit sei angreifffen/bewaren/verrechten/befragen und straffen: Und wie auch die Pfarrer und Seelsorger/nach dem Gesetz und Evangelio/mit Ihnen handeln sollen* (Württembergische Landesbibliothek, R 16 Bir 1).

debate: What to think about witches (female and male)? Can they conjure up bad weather? Can they fly? Can they have coitus with the devil and produce children? Can they shape-shift, change their size and turn into animals? Can they steal well-guarded goods in the night? Can they harm humans and animals, and can they repair the damage? Are they able to soothsay and make prophecies? What remedies can shield a true Christian from the *maleficia* of the witches? And what should the authorities do? How should they arrest the witches, keep them in custody, charge and sentence them under the law? And finally, how should pastors and ministers deal with witches according to the Gospel? Birck's play promised a host of answers to questions which worried his contemporaries. But it fell prey to censorship in the Duchy of Württemberg.

In his study on the witch-hunts in the southwest Germany, H.C. Erik Midelfort presented a first, but short, survey on the play, which has only survived as a fragment.¹³ Recent research on the Württemberg witch trials used Midelfort's information about Birck.¹⁴ Historians of German literature have also shown some interest in the author and his plays but judged him an uninspired, stiff-necked, conservative Lutheran pastor of harsh orthodoxy.¹⁵ However, it is worth revisiting Birck and his *Mirror of the Witches*. This attempt takes us first to the Duchy of Württemberg at the end of the sixteenth century and to Friedrich I, its autocratic duke. After a brief consideration of Thomas Birck's life and work, I shall summarise the contents of the tragedy, its sources and main statements. Finally, I shall speculate about why the *Mirror of the Witches* failed. The present study is only a work in progress which will be extended in a forthcoming paper on Birck's entire oeuvre.

¹³H. C. Erik Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany, 1562–1684* (Stanford, 1972), 46–7, 131, 239; Voltmer, 'Wissen', 22–4.

¹⁴Edward Bever, *The Realities of Witchcraft and Popular Magic in Early Modern Europe. Culture, Cognition, and Everyday Life* (Basingstoke, 2008), 391, with a short notice on Birck, wrongly spelled as 'Birch'.

¹⁵Marion Kobelt-Groch, 'Birck, Thomas' in Wilhelm Kühlmann et al. (eds.), *Frühe Neuzeit in Deutschland 1520–1630. Literaturwissenschaftliches Verfasserlexikon* (Berlin, 2011), 275–80.

THE STAGE: DUKE FRIEDRICH I AND WÜRTTEMBERG

Stemming from a side-line of the main dynasty of Württemberg, Friedrich started his career in the county of Mömpelgard (Montbéliard) in 1581, where he became the ruling count.¹⁶ In this small county near the French border, Friedrich instigated the building of a paper mill and a print shop. Jacques Foillet, a printer from Lyon, accepted the invitation to come to Mömpelgard, where he published the first German version of Jean Bodin's *Six livres de la République*. The pastor of Mömpelgard, Johann Oswaldt, translated the books. It is generally agreed that Bodin's thoughts about a prince's sovereignty made a great impression on young Friedrich and influenced his way of ruling. In short, he tolerated no dissent and demanded absolute submission. Perhaps it was also reading Bodin which instilled in Friedrich some kind of religious tolerance. In 1586, Mömpelgard saw a colloquy between Lutherans and Calvinists. The count himself accepted the Lutheran confession and the Book of Concord. In 1593, after Friedrich's predecessor and second cousin, Ludwig I, had died childless, he inherited the Duchy of Württemberg. Friedrich, inspired by his experiences in Mömpelgard, set about modernising education, trade and commerce in the backward duchy. In 1599, he freed Württemberg from Habsburgian suzerainty, and in 1607 he reduced the power of the estates of the duchy.

Friedrich was a well-travelled prince who had met the Danish King Friedrich I, the French King Henry IV and the English Queen Elizabeth I. Another journey in 1599/1600 brought him to Italy and the papal court. In 1596 Duke Friedrich became knight of the French Order of Saint Michael as well as of the English Order of the Garter (1603). Thus, the Duke of Württemberg entered the high nobility of Europe; Shakespeare even mentioned him in his *Merry Wives of Windsor*.¹⁷

Since his splendid court life and his building activities devoured a lot of financial resources, Friedrich was keen to extend his power and find new ways of raising funds. He cooperated with Jewish moneylenders, who extended credit to indebted noblemen. If they were not able to pay

¹⁶Cf. Paul Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557–1608. Reformator und Autokrat* (Munich, 2003); Tara Nummedal, *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire* (Chicago, 2007), 146–75.

¹⁷<https://www.landesarchiv-bw.de/web/42049>.

back their debts, they had to hand over their properties to the duke.¹⁸ Like many of his contemporary fellow princes,¹⁹ the duke was interested in the art of alchemy; rather than practising it himself, he invited promising alchemists and their entourage to a laboratory in Stuttgart he had built, where he hoped they would finally find the philosopher's stone and transform metal into gold and perhaps also discover the elixir of immortality. Unluckily, Friedrich fell prey to frauds; as a result, five alchemists were executed on gallows built for the occasion.

Friedrich's contacts with alchemists, notably with the Jewish alchemist Abramo Colorni from Italy, who, with some companions, was installed in Stuttgart in 1598, led to a deep conflict with the Lutheran court preacher Lukas Osiander the Elder.²⁰ Open, sharp and using commanding language and gestures, Osiander reprimanded the duke because he had harboured Jews in the duchy despite the ordinance of his predecessor and despite the great danger which the Hebrews brought with them, according to Osiander. The preacher defamed Colorni and his companions as sorcerers, black magicians and soothsayers. And he thundered that anybody (implicitly addressing the duke) who used the black arts of the Jews would fall into deadly sin and be a whore spiritually. At the end of the conflict, Osiander was sacked; he lost his property and had to leave Württemberg, but he secured a new position in the imperial city of Esslingen.

The duke's quarrel with Osiander, however, was only the tip of the iceberg, since Friedrich wanted to discipline Württemberg's Lutheran clergy, whose pious lessons he was tired of and whose influence in the territory's estates he tried to diminish. The Lutheran church of

¹⁸Ronald G. Asch, 'Der Sturz des Favoriten. Der Fall Matthäus Enzlin und die politische Kultur des deutschen Territorialstaates an der Wende vom 16. zum 17. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für Württembergische Landesgeschichte*, 57 (1998), 37–63, esp. 47.

¹⁹Ivo Purš & Vladimir Karpenko (eds.), *Alchemy and Rudolf II: Exploring the Secrets of Nature in Central Europe in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Prague, 2016); Bruce T. Moran (ed.), *Patronage and Institutions: Science, Technology, and Medicine at the European Court* (Woodbridge, 1991); id., *The Alchemical World of the German Court: Occult Philosophy and Chemical Medicine in the Circle of Moritz of Hessen (1572–1632)* (Stuttgart, 1991).

²⁰Daniel Jütte, 'Abramo Colorni, jüdischer Hofalchemist Herzog Friedrichs I., und die hebräische Handelskompanie des Maggino Gabrielli in Württemberg am Ende des 16. Jahrhundert. Ein biographischer und methodologischer Beitrag zur jüdischen Wissenschaftsgeschichte', *Aschkenas: Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der Juden*, 15 (2005), 435–98; id., *The Age of Secrecy: Jews, Christians, and the Economy of Secrets, 1400–1800* (New Haven, 2015), esp. 200–11.

Württemberg, its superintendents, preachers and pastors, had to be subdued entirely to its head, the duke.²¹ In his attempts to modernize the Duchy of Württemberg and establish himself as an autocratic ruling prince, Friedrich was backed by his favourite and expert in financial matters, the jurist Matthäus Enzlin, who served him since the duke's time as Count of Mömpelgard.²² Enzlin, a grandchild of the Lutheran reformer Matthias Alber, became one of the key figures in the drama of the failed *Mirror of the Witches*.

THE PLAYWRIGHT: THOMAS BIRCK (1551–1632) AND HIS OEUVRE

Thomas Birck was born in 1551 in Urach.²³ At the age of eighteen, he started his studies in Tübingen. He became a pupil of Ägidius Hunnius (the elder, d. 1603), who was later installed as a professor in Marburg and Wittenberg. Birck probably had contact with Jacob Heerbrand, another Lutheran reformer and leading theologian at the University of Tübingen. Birck worked for some time at the Pedagogium in Stuttgart. After 1574 Birck had several positions as pastor in south-western Germany. He was installed in Untertürkheim in 1585 and remained there until 1601. After his dismissal, he found a new position in Gauangelloch (in the Palatinate, near Heidelberg) but moved to another parish from 1606 to 1609. Finally, back in Württemberg, between 1609 and 1629 Birck worked as pastor in Rottenacker (on the Danube). As a worshipper of Lutheran orthodoxy, he followed firmly the Augsburg Confession and the Book of Concord. Thus, Birck supported the God-given patriarchal order, which tolerated no resistance and no dissent against secular and spiritual authority.

As a writer, Birck started his career in 1590 by publishing an extemporized sermon, in which he used the image of an eagle as an emblematic framework. His inspiration had been a mechanical eagle, fixed at the newly

²¹ Sauer, *Herzog*, 190–4.

²² Asch, 'Sturz', 41–50.

²³ Kobelt-Groch, 'Birck'; Hugo Holstein, 'Der Dramatiker Thomas Birck', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 16 (1884), 71–85; Georg Maisch, 'Thomas Birck, Pfarrer zu Untertürkheim, Volksdramendichter 1590', *Staatsanzeiger für Württemberg, Besondere Beilage* (1890), 253–9.

finished astronomical clockwork in Esslingen.²⁴ In the same year, Birck published a comedy on the sin of gambling. The play had been performed by pupils of his parish in Untertürkheim, in the presence of Duchess Ursula and some members of her court and of the consistory.²⁵ Both manuscripts were published in Tübingen with Georg Gruppenbach.²⁶ In 1594, Birck brought to print a wedding sermon called “The Quill” (“Die Schreibfeder”), followed by an adaptation of a prayer book (1595).²⁷ The year 1598 saw the staging of the play *A Mirror of Matrimony* (“Ehespiegel”),²⁸ followed by manuscripts of the unstaged *A Mirror of Witches* (1600), the *Last Sermon* (1602)²⁹ and *A Mirror of the Art of Ruling* (“RegentenSpiegel”, 1607), the latter likewise based on a sermon.³⁰

²⁴Thomas Birck, *Adlerspredigt. Darinnen die Art und Eigenschafft des Adlers/ auß H. Göttlicher Schrift ... zu täglicher Lehr/ Trost unnd Warnung/ gleichsam in ein Haußtafel richtig zusammen gezogen* (Tübingen, 1590). The tract is dedicated to the magistrate of Esslingen; cf. Heimo Reinitzer, “Da sperret man den leuten das maul auff”. Beiträge zur protestantischen Naturallegorese im 16. Jahrhundert”, *Wolfenbüttler Beiträge*, 7 (1987), 27–56, esp. 42.

²⁵Thomas Birck, *Comoedia. Darinnen den Gottsvergeßnen Doppelspilern/ zu ewiger Abschw/ und den Gewissenhaften Kurtzweilern zu denckwürdiger Erinnerung* (Tübingen, 1590). It was printed with the allowance of the theological faculty of the University of Tübingen (board of censors) and dedicated on 1 January to Ursula of Pfalz-Veldenz, the widow of the later duke Ludwig of Württemberg; cf. Johannes Janssen, *Culturzustände des deutschen Volkes seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters bis zum Beginn des dreißigjährigen Krieges* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1888), 345, 351–3.

²⁶Hans Widmann, *Tübingen als Verlagsstadt* (Tübingen, 1971), 64–72.

²⁷Thomas Birck, *Predig Von der Schreibfeder. Bey eines Namhafften Scribenten/ Hochzeitlichem Ehrentag* (Strassburg, 1594); cf. Waltraud Timmerman, “Thomas Bircks „Ehespiegel“ (1598) als Spiel- und Lesetext”, *Bayerisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* (1986), 122–31, esp. 123.

²⁸Thomas Birck, *Ehespiegel: Ein sehr lustige und lehrhafte Comedi* (Tübingen, 1598). It was dedicated to the pastor and superintendent Erasmus Grüninger and the members of the magistrate in Cannstatt. Cf. Marion Kobelt-Groch, ‘Greedy, Violent, False. On the image of the Anabaptist woman in Thomas Birck’s *Ehespiegel* (1598)’ in Mirjam van Veen et al. (eds.), *Sisters. Myth and reality of Anabaptist, Mennonite, and Doopsgezind women ca. 1525–1900* (Leiden and Boston, 2014), 52–62; Albrecht Classen, *Der Liebes- und Ehediskurs vom hohen Mittelalter bis zum frühen 17. Jahrhundert* (Münster, 2005), 197–206; Timmermann, ‘Ehespiegel’.

²⁹Thomas Birck, *Letze Predig* (Speyer, 1602).

³⁰Id., *Regenten Spiegel: darinnen alle fromme Regenten/ ihre Räht 7 unnd Beampte/ bey vielen denckwürdigen Exemplen der Alten/ augenscheinlich zu sehen haben* (Frankfurt am Main, 1607). It was dedicated to the three sons of Johann Philipp von Bettendorf, who had died suddenly. The large text contains more than 400 pages: cf. Michael Götz, ‘Gottes Wort als Anleitung zum Handeln für den lutherischen Fürsten’ in Hans-Otto Mühleisen and Theo Stammen (eds.), *Politische Tugendlehre und Regierungskunst: Studien zum Fürstenspiegel der Frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen, 1990), 117–39.

As pastor, preacher and writer, Thomas Birck used all means and methods to plant Lutheran orthodox confession, discipline, obedience and acceptance of a strict paternalistic regiment in the hearts and souls of his flock. Sermons and catechistic lessons from the pulpit were accompanied by plays. Onstage performance, acted by schoolboys and other (male) members of the parish, was used as a didactic instrument to teach both the doctrines and the religious and moral standards of Lutheranism. Birck's main targets were the sins of disobedience, fornication and superstition (including sorcery, astrology and soothsaying) and Anabaptism. His dramatic texts were intended to be both acted on stage and read at home. Birck's didactic and pedagogic agendas are laid out clearly in the prefaces and the structure of the dramatic texts with their excessive length, superabundance of characters and—in the margins—commentary references to Luther, the Bible and other authorities. It was desirable that the relevant members of the parish should all be included in performing the play in a condensed way, whilst later on its contents could be discussed at home with the help of the references.

However, the eager pastor went too far in disciplining the parish and its magistrate in Untertürkheim. In 1601, Birck was sacked, so it is said, because of his aggressive pugnacity, and had to leave the duchy.³¹ In his justification, published in 1602 as a preface to the *Last Sermon*, Thomas Birck unfolded, over 132 pages, the long and winding, but thrilling, story of how his enemies had manufactured his dismissal. At the heart of the conflict stood the fact that Birck had informed the responsible authorities in Cannstatt and Stuttgart about irregularities and corruption which had infested the urban regime in general as well as, more specifically, the revenue and transfer of tax wine (*Zehntwein*). Birck revealed the tightly woven network of kinship, courtesies and patronage in which his Untertürkheim adversaries and their clientele in Cannstatt and at the chancery in Stuttgart were entangled. It seems clear that Matthäus Enzlin, the duke's favourite, together with some members of his family, protected this self-interested network. Maybe they had their share in the profits.³² The quixotic tale of Birck's adventures in battling his enemies includes murder, suicide, accidents, conspiracies, the appearance of ghosts and the devil. With accusations, petitions and submissions

³¹Bernd Moeller (ed.), *Deutsche Biographische Enzyklopädie der Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 1 (Munich, 2005), 140; Kobelt-Groch, 'Birck', 276.

³²Asch, 'Sturz', 49.

he pestered the duke himself and the chancery. According to Birck, the political intrigue woven against him had started with the proscription of *A Mirror of the Witches*.

Birck told the story at length.³³ He himself had sent the play's manuscript together with its dedication to Friedrich I of Württemberg with a humble address asking for Friedrich's imprimatur. The duke graciously approved the publication and gave consent in his own hand in the margin of the petition. Birck then gave the manuscript to the printer Gruppenbach, with whom he had already published other tracts. The printer examined the tragedy's content thoroughly with the help of a theologian and a jurist, whose names Birck does not reveal. Gruppenbach had obviously given the book to the board of censors in Tübingen, which, installed at the university and obliged to guard the Lutheran orthodoxy, monitored every publication very closely.³⁴ According to the pastor's report, Gruppenbach decided to publish the play at his own expense. For his labour, the pastor was to be rewarded with thirty copies. Gruppenbach started immediately, and in a short time a thousand copies of the first nine folios were printed. Meanwhile, the duke had left the duchy. He and a handpicked entourage had started a secret voyage incognito to Italy on 13 November. Out of curiosity, the adventurous duke, who was personally tolerant on matters of religion, wished to participate in the papal opening of the Holy Year in Rome.³⁵ On the way, he and his companions used every opportunity to learn more about fortifications, building, commerce, crafts and mining, all knowledge he

³³Birck, *Letzte Predig*, 10–12.

³⁴Every text to be printed had to be sent in advance to the board of censors, composed of the master (rector) and the deans of the four faculties of the University of Tübingen. In 1601, Duke Friedrich I promulgated new regulations for censorship: to get the imprimatur for a theological text, it should be surveyed not only by the board in Tübingen, but also by the consistory in Stuttgart and the duke's officials. In difficult cases, the imprimatur remained the duke's privilege; cf. Gunther Franz, 'Bücherzensur und Irenik: die theologische Zensur im Herzogtum Württemberg in der Konkurrenz von Universität und Regierung' in Martin Brecht (ed.), *Theologen und Theologie an der Universität Tübingen* (Tübingen, 1977), 123–94, esp. 127, 137–8; Widmann, *Tübingen*, 82–93.

³⁵The orthodox Lutheran theologians in Württemberg were anxious about the Duke's personal religious policy, because he had contact with Calvinists, Catholics and Jews, especially when they were of some use for his mercantilist enterprises: Sauer, *Herzog*, 190–1.

hoped to exploit to the advancement of his own duchy.³⁶ Having lost his ducal patron, Birck stopped the printing process and asked Gruppenbach to wait until the duke's return, allegedly because he wanted to ask the prince some special questions about a topic in the play. After Friedrich's return on 6 May 1600, however, the duke had forgotten about his impri-matur. The order was given (probably by the board of censors) that the original manuscript and the thousand copies already printed should be sent to the chancery in Stuttgart. A second examination of the tragedy led to its prohibition. Birck was forced to pay the printer's expenses. The ducal signature on Birck's petition played no further role.

Over the years, the original manuscript, the dedication and the thousand printed copies were destroyed or went missing. However, one copy of the already printed folios has been preserved, today restored in the Landesbibliothek of Württemberg. Only a fragment of seventy-two pages has survived, including the prologue, Act I (Scenes 1–3) and parts of Act II (Scenes 1 and 2 and the introduction to Scene 3). The dedication is missing, and the author's name goes unmentioned on the front page.³⁷ However, the pages bear handwritten notes from two different hands. We assume that the printer had sent one copy to Birck for proofreading. One hand is Gruppenbach's making corrections and the other one the pastor's making addenda himself.³⁸ However, these are mere speculations.

THE PLAY: *A MIRROR OF THE WITCHES*, ITS CONTENT, MESSAGE, AND SOURCES

On the front page, Thomas Birck demonstrates his learned acquaintance with the witchcraft debate. Summarizing, he lists the authorities he had consulted, without dropping specific names: emperors, kings, electorate princes, counts, lords and other nobles, councils and fine books written

³⁶The travel report with a map was printed in 1604, together with a description of Friedrich's voyage to England in 1592: Erhard Cellius, *Warhafft Beschreibung Zweyer Reisen* (Tübingen, 1604).

³⁷Birck revealed his authorship in the preface to the *Last Sermon*; why his name is missing remains one of the enigmas around the play's history: cf. Eduard Sievers, 'Notizen zu Thomas Birck', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 10 (1885), 199–205.

³⁸A copy of the comedy on the sin of gambling (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek) was dedicated by Birck to Johann Georg Hünigerlin, professor in the faculty of theology in Tübingen. The autograph resembles one of the two hands in Birck's *Hexenspiegel*.

by doctors of medicine, jurists, theologians, philosophers and historians. He promises to present more than two hundred stories discussing the power of witchcraft and, thus, make it possible to reach the ultimate truth. A full register at the end of the drama would list all the relevant topics. Birck suggests that the performance of the play should last two or three hours; the rest of it could be read at home. Headed with the best-known mantra in favour of witchcraft trials (Exodus 22), the list of characters includes no less than ninety-seven roles, including four devils, an angel, Death, three fools, six witches, one magician or soothsayer, twenty-four magistrates and one pastor.³⁹

The tragedy was intended to be a broad, dramatic dialogue and exchange of arguments around the most relevant questions in the debate about God's providence, the devil's power and witches' evil art. In the prologue, a herald⁴⁰ announces the development of the drama and again reveals its purpose: some people deny the material presence of witches, whilst others deem their power to be very insignificant. But the common people fear the increasing numbers of witches and their alleged crimes. And thus, the play, in its first part, brings forward in dialogues the debate between believers and non-believers, represented in the voices of thirty-one spokesmen and three different male roles (a witch's neighbour, a witch's enemy and a wise man). Four spokesmen deal with the question whether or not witches might conjure bad weather, seven speakers discuss witches' flights, six men argue about sexual intercourse between devils and witches and about the possibility of changelings, eight spokesmen exchange arguments about metamorphoses, three focus on spells and the devil's mark, and, finally, three talk about the *maleficia* of the witches. These scenes are interrupted by the appearance of devils and fools, the latter some kind of devilish jesters.⁴¹ An argument between three neighbours is concerned with how a Christian should behave in the presence of women who are suspected of being witches. In the second part of the play, scenes at the court, probably in the dungeons, in the torture chamber and at the execution site, demonstrate how the authorities, magistrates and judges should deal with those charged as witches.

³⁹ Birck, *Hexenspiegel*, 1–3.

⁴⁰ Otto Koischwitz, *Der Theaterherold im deutschen Schauspiel des Mittelalters und der Reformationszeit: ein Beitrag zur deutschen Theatergeschichte* (Berlin, 1926).

⁴¹ The Devil on stage became the ancestor of the harlequin: Gabaude, 'Protéisme', 127–8.

Only the debates on witches' flights, the sabbat and between neighbours have survived. However, the list of characters and the herald's announcement give us a clear enough impression of the rest. Different types of suspected and accused persons are presented: (1) a woman who has sought the help of a soothsayer and who must suffer great mischief in consequence of her 'superstitious' behaviour; (2) a witch who had made a written pact with the devil is brought to confession under torture after a devilish amulet had been taken away from her, and after the pastor in the play had banned a devil from bringing back her written pact, she dies remorsefully at the stake; (3) a sorcerer who confesses freely to his many crimes, but without showing any contrition; then the devil wrings his neck in jail and the corpse is burned with the witch; and (4) an innocent woman who had been falsely denounced as a witch is freed at court.

Inasmuch as the fragment allows for interpretation, the witches belong to the lower orders. Birck, however, apparently expands the group of usual suspects: in the prologue, a scene at the court is announced, where the judge promises to extirpate the evil vermin without any hesitation. Even if his own wife turned out to be a witch, he would subject her to torture.⁴² In Act I, Scene 1, the spokesman Goses furiously cries out that in that very year witches had done great damage with hail storms. The authorities had, nevertheless, resisted prosecutions out of fear for their own wives, children, daughters and servants, who might be charged as witches.⁴³ Heman, the voice arguing in favour of God's providence, refutes the witches' material power *in toto*. He warns his fellows not to judge the men of the elite, because they seem to neglect the persecution of witches in sheltering their own womenfolk.⁴⁴ And finally (Act I, Scene 3), the two devils Belial and Behemoth trick two sleeping witches, mother Gomer and her daughter Nehuscha, with a dream of dancing at the sabbat. Behemoth asserts to his companion that it would please the (poor) witches the most if high-bred women took part in their feast. Thus, the devils implant images of the judge's and burgomaster's wives being present at the sabbat and taking part in the dance.⁴⁵ And indeed, after the two witches are awake again, both tell of their adventures at the sabbat and about its new members.

⁴²Birck, *Hexenspiegel*, 7.

⁴³Ibid., 13.

⁴⁴Ibid., 34.

⁴⁵Ibid., 42–3.

Gomer explains that the attendance of the officials' wives will shield the witches, since as soon as these women become aware of any persecution, they will persuade their husbands to end such proceedings.⁴⁶ It is noteworthy that these passages were underlined in the fragment with a vigorous hand, presumably by Birck himself.⁴⁷

All in all, with the voices of the sceptical spokesmen and neighbours, Thomas Birck argues in a similar vein to Martin Luther and Württemberg's theologians and jurists like Johannes Brenz, Jacob Heerbrand and Johann Georg Gödelmann.⁴⁸ Our author follows strongly their providential view of nature. The witches possessed no material power. Only God could cause bad weather or hailstorms. Misfortune was not the outcome of witches' evil spells. Neither flight nor the sabbat had any reality. To Birck, these illusions were caused by the devil, by sleeping salves or by natural causes.⁴⁹ Judges should not rely on denunciations against people that witches who had been charged allegedly confessed to have been at the witches' dance. Birck's scenes in which the devils caused the illusions concerning elite women taking part at the sabbat show the pastor explicitly using this example to send a warning to the authorities not to believe in the witches' confessions about their supposed companions. Likewise, he gives room for voices in his play that sound very sceptical about the content of the witches' confessions. Lutheran orthodoxy declared the devil to be, indeed, the ape and servant of God, but nonetheless the fiend was thought to be a scary demon who exercised power over the material world. Luther himself seemed to have believed in sexual intercourse between witches and the devil.⁵⁰ But uncertainty remained about the devil's abilities to rule the humoral system, especially black bile, or to enter the body and, thus, to cause melancholy and sickness.⁵¹ In this system of belief, the witches were powerless and misled poor hags, but a Christian had to be aware of the devil's tricks, even if he was ridiculed on stage.

⁴⁶Ibid., 45–6.

⁴⁷Ibid., 13, 34, 42–3.

⁴⁸Midelfort, *Witch Hunting*, 36–42.

⁴⁹The myth of the witches' salve is deconstructed by Michael Ostling, 'Babyfat and Belladonna: witches' ointment and the contestation of reality', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 11 (2016), 30–72.

⁵⁰Jörg Hausteine, 'Luther, Martin (1483–1546)' in Golden, *Encyclopedia*, 676–7.

⁵¹Rita Voltmer, 'Im Bann des „Planetendämons“ Saturn – Zu astrologischen Deutungen des Späten Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit', *Spee Jahrbuch*, 21/22 (2014/2015), 115–50.

The parts of the play that discuss sexual intercourse with the devil or his ability to father changelings (*kilkröpffen*, *Wächselbälgen*) are lost. We assume that Birck followed his admired Luther, who had suggested letting these soulless creatures, made of flesh, die.⁵² What Birck taught about metamorphosis seems to be clear, since in a mocking way a witch rides across the stage a camel that speaks in a human voice. In between, the tragedy is filled with scenes of comic relief, acted by fools. Even the assistants of the hangmen perform some drolleries.

Birck, however, supported the view that witches who had made a pact with the devil deserved capital punishment. His argument followed Johannes Brenz and other Lutheran theologians, who stressed that the devil and his witches could only act with godly permission. They were the instruments, the rod of godly wrath, the Almighty's hangmen. Nonetheless, the evil intent of the witches, which turned them against their Creator, against godly and paternal order, had to be punished. It remained the duty of the authorities to charge the witches, whilst the common people, their neighbours, should suffer any *maleficia* with patience. By no means should any forbidden counter-magic or popish remedies be used against witchcraft.⁵³ The common people should treat the suspected witches moderately, and they should not intrude on the business of judges and magistrates. Following Luther and Brenz, popular demands for witch hunting were forbidden. To fear witches' power was judged to be blasphemous, since it mistrusted God's almightiness, his grace and providence. Whilst the secular authorities should deal carefully with the crime of witchcraft, it remained their duty to conduct trials. Lutheran pastors, on the other hand, should take care of the spiritual needs of the accused and save their souls from eternal damnation. Following this doctrine, the pastor in Birck's play helps the witch with instructions to express true remorse and true repentance.⁵⁴ The extraordinary position of the pastor is strongly underlined: it is he who brings forward the witches' conversions, and he alone is able to force the devil to hand over the written pact.

⁵² Cf. with new interpretation Katrin Moeller, 'Der Wechselbalg. Magie als konfessioneller Diskurs' in Sieburg et al., *Hexenwissen*, 111–36, esp. 121.

⁵³ Cf. Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997), 530–43.

⁵⁴ Midelfort had assumed that Birck did not favor capital punishment for witches: *Witch Hunting*, 47. Cf. Rita Voltmer, 'The Witch in the Courtroom: Torture and the Representations of Emotion' in Laura Kounine and Michael Ostling (eds.), *Emotions in the History of Witchcraft* (Basingstoke, 2017), 97–116.

Thus, the pastor acts alongside the court, but never intermingles in its secular duties. In the play Birck stresses that neither Lutheran pastors nor Catholic priests should reveal anything obtained in confession. But in general (and without name dropping), they were obliged to bring any evil attempt they got a whiff of in auricular confession to the authorities.⁵⁵

As a counterpart to the remorseful witch, the soothsayer, sorcerer and magician Jambres is the most evildoing human figure in the play. He represents a Faust-like figure, the prototype of an evil devil-worshipping astrologer, alchemist and magician who is killed by the devil and whose immortal soul is doomed to eternal punishment.⁵⁶

To underline his arguments, Birck refers frequently to Martin Luther's works and colloquia, to the Bible and the Psalms. The classics of Lutheran witchcraft literature are cited, like Johannes Brenz (*Homilia de grandine*, 1557), Jacob Heerbrand (*Disputatio in Magia*, 1570), Paul Friese (*Deß Teuffels Nebelkappen*, 1583) and Johann Georg Gödelmann (*Disputatio de magis, veneficis, maleficis et lamiis*, 1591).⁵⁷ *Inter alia*, Birck picked examples from both Lutheran anthologies⁵⁸ and the so-called devil books (*Teufelsbücher*).⁵⁹ The pastor was not particular in looking for narratives to colour his play. We find references both to the notorious *Malleus maleficarum*, whose author Birck named as Jakob Sprenger, and to Johann Weyer (*De Praestigiis Daemonum*, [1569]). Likewise, the council of Braga (620), with its doctrines against heretical opinions about the devil, is mentioned.⁶⁰ The transfer of an exemplum from Catholic to Lutheran literature is shown,

⁵⁵ Birck, *Hexenspiegel*, 54–5.

⁵⁶ Birck was well acquainted with the Faust book: Alexander Tille, *Die Faustsplitter in der Literatur des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1900), 111.

⁵⁷ Anita Raith, 'Johannes Brenz (1499–1570)' in Golden, *Encyclopedia*, 144–5; Charles Zika, 'Paulus Frisius (ca. 1555–?)' in *ibid.*, 396–7; Alison Rowlands, 'Goedelmann, Johann Georg (1559–1611)' in *ibid.*, 448–9; Midelfort, *Witch Hunting*, 36–66.

⁵⁸ Andreas Hondorf, *Promptuarium exemplorum* (Leipzig 1568); Zacharias Rivander, *Promptuarium exemplorum* (Leipzig, 1587). The latter is an unauthorised revision of Hondorf's book. The Lutheran pastor Hondorf had based his arguments about witchcraft mainly on the *Malleus maleficarum*, together with stories from Luther's colloquia: Jörg Haustein, *Martin Luthers Stellung zum Zauber- und Hexenwesen* (Stuttgart, 1990), 157; Philip M. Soergel, *Miracles and the Protestant Imagination: The Evangelical Wonder Book in Reformation Germany* (Oxford, 2012).

⁵⁹ Birck, *Hexenspiegel*, 48, refers to Ludwig Milichius *Der Zauber Teuffel. Das ist, Von Zauberey, Warsagung, Beschwören, Segen, Aberglauben, Hexerey*, published in the *Theatrum Diabolorum* (Frankfurt, 1569); cf. Gerhild Scholz-Williams, 'Devil Books' in Golden, *Encyclopedia*, 274–5.

⁶⁰ Birck, *Hexenspiegel*, 25.

namely from Johannes Nider's *Formicarius* to the *Malleus maleficarum* and thence to Hondorf's *Promptuarium exemplorum*, where our pastor found it.⁶¹ This line of tradition strengthened the truth of the narrative. It is unsurprising that Birck had no qualms in citing Catholic Italian legal scholars and jurists like Franciscus Ponzinibius, Jacob Menochius and Joseph Macardus.⁶² Birck's art in compiling stories from all useful sources underlines the fact that Catholic and Protestant authors shared the same narratives in the witchcraft debate across religious borders.⁶³ At one point, Birck refers to a witch's confession, read out at her execution in 1599. Unfortunately, only the initial of the locality is given, so we do not know whether he is citing an authentic trial or whether he was seeking to make his account seem authentic by simulating a real trial.⁶⁴

CENSORED: WHY THE PLAY WAS BANNED

In 1602, in his *Last Sermon*, Thomas Birck insisted that there was nothing wrong with his censored play. The surviving fragment confirms its orthodox contents, except possibly the dialogues, which mentioned wives of officials as potential minions of Satan. However, since the most vital parts, namely trial, torture and execution, are missing, further suggestions are mere guess work. Already in his *Mirror of Matrimony*, Birck had brought an old matchmaker and a devil together in a dungeon, showing their pact-like relationship on stage. In his play concerning the sins of gambling, devils appear and scenes with torture and executions are shown.⁶⁵ Unfortunately, we have no instructions concerning the costumes and the acting of demons, executioners, witches and old hags, and thus we can say nothing about the actual performance. But since members of the consistory had watched the play on gambling, devils, torture and executions, these features seemingly did not shock them. Why, then, was the *Mirror of the Witches* forbidden after it had received Friedrich's initial imprimatur? We can provide several speculative answers.

⁶¹Ibid., 22.

⁶²Ibid., 55.

⁶³Cf. Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 526–30; Voltmer, 'Wissen', 34.

⁶⁴Birck, *Hexenspiegel*, p. 41: 'Dises Wort der Außfahrt/ist in einer Hexen Urgucht Anno 99 in W. zu S. öffentlich abgelesen worden'.

⁶⁵Max Osborn, 'Die Teuffelliteratur des XVI. Jahrhunderts', *Acta Germanica* 3: 3 (1891), 90–331, at 202–3.

To Birck, according to his *Last Sermon*, the play was banned as part of the political intrigue woven by his enemies in Untertürkheim and backed by the duke's favourite, Enzlin. Within this interpretation, the duke, who insisted on reading petitions himself,⁶⁶ may have initially given his imprimatur because he was acquainted with Birck's former work, but perhaps he had not fully read the lengthy play. During the duke's voyage to Italy, Enzlin, whom the duke left in charge of state affairs,⁶⁷ was probably stirred by his friends in Untertürkheim to promote the banning of the play, simply to annoy Birck and to bother him with the costs. It is not likely that the specific contents of the *Hexenspiegel* were known in Untertürkheim, as Birck, who already was in trouble with the faction, would not have given them access to the play. Thus, they simply wanted to get Birck into trouble. In that case, Enzlin, on whom Birck later placed the blame, triggered the duke after his return to Württemberg to withdraw his imprimatur or instigated a new reading by the board of censors.

Another scenario can be proposed, again assuming that the duke had not read the play in its entirety and that he gave his stamp of approval only because of Birck's reputation as a dramatist. Upon returning from Italy, the duke was informed by Enzlin or perhaps others from his clientele or family that in the play (and perhaps with great decorum) an alchemist, astrologer and soothsayer was unmasked as a sorcerer, killed by the devil and sent to damnation. Perhaps the duke took the soothsayer's staged descent into Hell as another appeal by a Lutheran pastor to abandon further plans to find the philosopher's stone. And perhaps the duke's mercurial temper was enflamed in thinking that Birck, as another Osiander, was trying to school him.⁶⁸ However, the banning of Birck's play must have involved the board of censors at the University of Tübingen.

⁶⁶Asch, 'Sturz', 47.

⁶⁷Sauer, *Herzog*, 258.

⁶⁸In his *Mirror of Matrimony*, Birck had already argued against soothsaying gypsies; in his *Mirror of the Art of Ruling*, the pastor declared that a prince should not allow any astrologer, soothsayer, gypsy or sorcerer in his realm. Obviously, Birck wanted to restore the Lutheran clergy as sole advisors of princes: cf. Götz, 'Wort', 128–9; Claudia Brosseder, *Im Bann der Sterne. Caspar Peucer, Philipp Melancthon und andere Wittenberger Astrologen* (Berlin, 2004), 50–1, 263–4.

Additionally, a third hypothesis can be made. In 1587/1588, an unknown student of the University of Tübingen put the Faust book into rhymes. It was printed and was meant to be performed. But because of the expected 'great nuisance', the play was forbidden. Its author and the printer, Alexander Horn, were jailed and fined.⁶⁹ The duke (after he had gotten to know more about the contents of Birck's play) and the board of censors probably did not rejoice in hearing of witches and sorcerers, their trial and execution on stage, because they feared turmoil and a popular call for witch trials. Moreover, Birck's extended circle of suspects included female members of the elite. The pastor had meant it as a warning, but the populace might take it as a stimulus. In the name of urban peace, order and commonwealth, Nuremberg, for example, prevented the spread of rumours, gossip, slander and turmoil, sometimes using harsh methods. In 1590, an executioner's assistant was sentenced to death because he had tried to launch a witch-hunt in the city. In 1627, the already circulating *Druten Zeitung* (*Witches News-Sheet*) was confiscated and forbidden, the printing blocks destroyed. Fearing an outbreak of popular demands for witch hunting, the ruling elite secured both urban peace and its monopoly in controlling the media.⁷⁰ In Lutheran Rothenburg ob der Tauber, the city councillors pursued the same policy as Nuremberg in suppressing witchcraft slander, rumours and gossip.⁷¹ Perhaps the leading Lutheran theologians in Tübingen and the duke himself pursued a similar policy.⁷² According to the statistics, the numbers of witch trials were increasing after 1560, but around Stuttgart, Cannstatt and Tübingen only single witch trials happened up to 1600.⁷³

⁶⁹Christoph Friedrich von Stälin, *Wirtembergische Geschichte* Part IV (Stuttgart, 1873), 782; Widmann, *Tübingen*, 89–91.

⁷⁰Wolfgang Behringer, 'Nuremberg, Imperial Free City' in Golden, *Encyclopedia*, 841–2.

⁷¹Alison Rowlands, *Witchcraft Narratives in Germany: Rothenburg, 1561–1652* (Manchester, 2003).

⁷²The role of the duke and Enzlin during the witch trials in Mömpelgard (Montbéliard), which seem to have resulted in a high proportion of death penalties, has yet to be scrutinised in context: cf. Jean-Marc Debarb, 'La sorcellerie dans la principauté de Montbéliard du XVIe au XVIIe siècle', *Bulletin et mémoires la Société d'Émulation de Montbéliard*, 127 (2004), 145–246.

⁷³Cf. Midelfort, *Witch Hunting*, 201–209; Anita Raith, 'Württemberg, duchy of' in Golden, *Encyclopedia*, 1227–30.

The peak of witch persecution was reached between 1626 and 1630, but still Württemberg did not experience panics, possibly because popular demands were suppressed, and stage plays that might trigger such demands were not performed.

A mixed scenario in which all three potential motivations discussed were at play is plausible. Thomas Birck was outmanoeuvred by his enemies, the duke silenced a quarrelsome pastor, and the danger of popular demands for witch trials was minimized.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

The fragment of Birck's play leaves us with questions which cannot yet be answered. For instance, it remains unknown why Birck chose the topic he did. We can speculate that he picked up popular rumours and demands for witch-hunts. Being an orthodox Lutheran pastor to the core, he wanted to sooth his flock's uncertainties about witches' powers. According to Lutheran orthodoxy, which was guarded by the theologians of Tübingen, the board of censors and the consistory in Stuttgart, it was blasphemous superstition and mere sin to believe in witches' power, in their flight or in the sabbat.⁷⁴ A true Lutheran had to trust in God and endure his examination and punishment, such as with misfortune and weather catastrophes. Witch trials belonged solely to the duties of the secular authorities and should not be left in the hands of the rabble. Unfortunately, Birck in his pedagogic eagerness did not realise that on-stage devils, witches and their negated powers were nevertheless visualised, and thus they gained a dangerous material reality. These scenarios might cause slander, rumours, denunciations, turmoil, upheaval and, worse, lynching, especially if the populace got a taste for targeting the wives of authorities under suspicion.

Nevertheless, we perhaps will never know why the duke initially gave consent but afterwards (perhaps under the influence of Enzlin) withdrew his imprimatur. The controversy concerning Birck's play may have led to the tightening of censorship regulations in 1601, but further research is required on the board of censors, who were definitely involved in

⁷⁴Sabine Holtz, *Theologie und Alltag. Lehre und Leben in den Predigten der Tübinger Theologen 1550–1750* (Tübingen, 1996), 270–83.

the whole affair. Moreover, Birck's plays, sermons and tracts must be scrutinised more thoroughly in connection with their inner links and their narratives taken from the recent witchcraft debate. As far as I know, no one has looked into the surviving records concerning Birck's juridical struggle with Untertürkheim, which went on after he had left the city. Birck and his debates were part of the multifaceted cultural exchange of ideas, narratives, images and constructs about magic, witchcraft and sorcery. In this context, the topic of witches and devils on the European stage between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries remains a topic worthy of comparative research.

Unravelling the Myth and Histories of the Weighing Test at Oudewater: The Case of Leentje Willems

Machteld Löwensteyn

In 1647 Mistress Leentje Willems set off one day for the nearby town of Oudewater. She must have often gone into town, sometimes to go shopping, sometimes to consult her notary. But this day she was on a

This is a revised and updated version of an earlier essay, 'Weighing a Woman's Worth: How Leentje Willems Challenged the Magistrate of Oudewater', in Willem de Blécourt (ed.), *Sisters of Subversion: Histories of Women, Tales of Gender* (Amsterdam, 2008), 32–45. I thank Wendie Shaffer, M.Phil., for her careful editing and, for generously sharing their archival knowledge and enthusiasm about Oudewater and the Lange Linschoten, the late C. H. Wijngaarden (1941–2007) and Nettie Stoppelenburg, M. Phil., of the Utrecht City Archives. Nettie has published widely on Oudewater and is preparing her dissertation on the church history of Oudewater.

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special mission; she was going to have herself weighed in the town weigh house.¹

Leentje Willems was the mistress of a farmstead to the north of the river de Lange Linschoten.² Her desire to exchange roles with the piles of cheeses, heaps of hemp and bundles of twine which were the usual ballast of Oudewater's oaken scales did not stem from an overly vivid imagination, disturbed state of mind or longing for adventure. It was, as I hope to demonstrate, the well-considered and daring decision of a courageous woman, one who took matters into her own hands and tried to be 'the captain of her soul'. In pursuit of her goal, she did not scorn to challenge the magistracy of Oudewater, then a thriving market town in Holland, one of the seven provinces in the Dutch Republic. Oudewater, it seems, needed to redefine its policies regarding the weighing test—a phenomenon for which the town was already known and which was to remain an integral part of its identity down through the centuries, up to the present day.³

SOURCES

The town council of Oudewater was famed for the fact that it provided a weighing test for people who were the victims of a specific type of slander: they were said to have become involved with witchcraft and, more specifically, accused of causing bewitchment. It was not a person's weight as such that was decisive;⁴ what had to be assessed was whether

¹[Spee, Friedrich von], *Waer-borg om geen quaed hals-gerecht te doen. Dat is een boeck vertoonende hoemen tegen de Toovenaers procedeert. Met een Voor-rede van het wegen der Toovenaers tot Oudewater* (Amsterdam 1657)—Dutch translation of *Cautio Criminalis* (Frankfurt, 1632, second edition [first edition Rinteln 1631]) translated by Nicolaes Antoniusz. Borremans, 'Voor-rede', 6v–7v, 9v.

²Regionaal Historisch Centrum Rijnstreek en Lopikerwaard (henceforth RHC RL), Archief van het dorpsgerecht van Snelrewaard en de Lange Linschoten, inv.nr. 1892, fol. 20v; RHC RL, notarieel archief Oudewater, notaris Hugo de Hoy, inv.nr. 1883; and RHC RL, notarieel archief Oudewater, notaris Ewout Slappecoorn, inv.nr. 34-I, nr. 1886.

³Machteld Löwensteyn, 'Oudewater', in Willem de Blécourt, Ruben A. Koman, Jurjen van der Kooi and Theo Meder (eds.), *Verhalen van Stad en Streek: Sagen en legenden in Nederland* (Amsterdam, 2010), 296–300. The city of Oudewater belonged to the province of Holland from 1280 until 1840, then to Zuid-Holland, and in 1970 it was transferred to the province of Utrecht.

⁴Until the beginning of the twenty-first century the public at large in the Netherlands adhered to a version of the story of the Oudewater weighing test stating that people accused of witchcraft were saved when it was proved that they did not weigh next to

the number of pounds recorded by the city's officially appointed weigh master corresponded with the proportions of the candidate's body. If this requirement was met, the town clerk drew up a certificate, signed it and placed the city seal upon it. This document did not mention 'witchcraft' or that the test was intended to refute the 'witchcraft' slander. Those who believed in the reality of witchcraft would also sometimes share the conviction that a witch weighed far less than his or her physical shape might lead one to expect. Written proof of a person's normal weight was thus potentially useful in countering suspicions of witchcraft and restoring the good name of someone suffering from slanderous gossip.

Apart from the test result, the detailed text identified the weighed person by that person's name, spouse's or parents' names, domicile, age, and certain physical characteristics, as well as the names of the functionaries present at the proceedings and a comprehensive account of the test protocol. Consequently, certificates concerning a weighing event are the most important sources for our understanding of the exact procedure of the weighing test. Unfortunately, only one original certificate seems to have survived. It resurfaced recently when the descendants of a couple that had been weighed in 1729 brought it to the attention of the director of the Witches Weigh House museum in Oudewater.⁵ Nine copies dating from between 1677 and 1729, made by the town clerk or his assistant, can be found in the Oudewater municipal administration. Copies of weighing certificates seem also to have been made for purposes other than administrative.⁶ Upon request, the town clerk would

nothing, as a witch was supposed to do. This version of the story was also advocated by the Witches Weigh House museum in Oudewater, until it was corrected in 2006 after an intervention by the author of this chapter.

⁵The certificate mentions Klaas Ariensz. Van den Dool and Neeltje Arienz. Kersbergen from Den Dool, a hamlet near Meerkerk.

⁶The nine copies, including that of the couple from Den Dool, are to be found in RHC RL, stadsgerecht Oudewater, inv.nr. 190. The municipal records of Oudewater from before 1575 were lost during the siege by the Spanish during that year. The records of the judicial council have survived for the years 1586–1594 and 1674–1743, but copies of the certificates handed out are only to be found in the latter part. It is however not at all certain the town's notary or clerk always kept a copy for the city's administration, so the fact that copies are lacking 1586–1594 need not lead to the conclusion that the weighing test was not executed. Two other originals should also still exist but seem to have gone lost, in respectively the Town Archives of Delft and the Town and Regional Archives Zutphen: see J. Soutendam, *Register der bescheiden, die berust hebben in het "secreetvertrek" van H.H. burgemeesteren en*

also issue them to members of the educated elite who had a juridical or antiquarian interest in such documents. On 7 January 1648, for example, town clerk Hugo Dammisz. De Hoy (15??–1653) made a transcription of the certificate of one Maria Konings, who had been weighed on 23 February 1644.⁷ He gave the document to a Nicolaes Borremans, a graduate of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Leiden and the Arminian School of Divinity in Amsterdam and a translator of learned treatises, in particular those defending religious freedom. Borremans was much impressed by the several weighing tests which were carried out during the two years he lived in Oudewater (1646–1648). Sometime later, in 1657, he would publish his observations and comments, together with the text of the certificate of Maria Konings, in an open letter to Willem Meerman.

From the content of these ten certificates we can infer that every candidate for the weighing test, Leentje Willems included, had to obtain permission from the burgomasters, aldermen and city fathers of Oudewater. Then, if you were a woman, the town midwife took over. She helped you undress and take off your shoes, and then searched you for any heavy object you might have hidden in your intimate body parts. There you were at the midwife's mercy: bareheaded, barefooted and naked except for a short shift. After a once-over she gave you an undergarment and then led you to the scales. You took your seat on one of the scales, and

regeerders der stad Delft (Delft, 1861), 112 and C.G. Hoogewerff, 'Een heksenproces in de zestiende eeuw', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis, land- en volkenkunde* 14 (1899), 257–275, esp. 273–275. Zacharias von Uffenbach (1683–1735), a German antiquarian who wrote a journal about his travels through Niedersachsen, England and Holland, reports on his visits to the Rotterdam historian Cornelis van Alkemade (1654–1737) on 22 and 27 November 1720, where Van Alkemade told him about the weighing of people in Oudewater and showed him the transcript of a certificate in his collection: Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, *Merkwürdige Reisen durch Niedersachsen, Holland und Engelland*, 3 vols., (Ulm and Memmingen, 1753–1754), III, 293–295, 326.

⁷For the transcription of the certificate of Maria Konings, see Spee, *Waer-borg*, 'Voor-rede', 8v–9v. For Hugo Dammisz. De Hoy, see N. Plomp, 'De Woerdense afstammelingen van Lucas van Leiden', *Gens Nostra* 38 (1983), pp. 134–141, esp. 136. De Hoy became a citizen of Oudewater on 22 October 1627: 'Huijch Dammasz de Hoij, van Woerden'. RHC RL, oud archief Oudewater, inv.nr. 241, fol. 23. C.H. van Wijngaarden kindly offered me his transcription of the 'Poorterboek' of Oudewater.

the weigh master weighed you in the presence of two aldermen and other notables (see Fig. 1 for a nineteenth-century portrayal).⁸

TARNISHED HONOUR

To submit oneself to such a test cannot have been an easy decision; only sheer necessity would force one to do this. In early modern Europe it was extremely important for all self-respecting individuals to keep their honour and reputation intact. Publicly voiced accusations of witchcraft, by neighbours for instance, constituted a serious threat to a person's life in the community. Social isolation and mental as well as physical harassment were in store for someone suspected of witchcraft. In extreme cases, accusers were known to take the law into their own hands and kill a suspected witch. In places where the authorities still brought witchcraft cases to trial, the accused risked being denounced or persecuted; the affair might end in loss of life and property.⁹

Leentje Willems's courageous visit was indeed made in an attempt to refute witchcraft slander. The whole story of her journey to Oudewater, and her request to be weighed can be read in the aforementioned letter of Nicolaes Borremans.¹⁰ This letter of dedication to his friend

⁸If the person being weighed was a man, the sheriff's officer (*gerechtsbode*) would be put in charge. A man wore only his shirt when he took his seat on the scale. From 1710 women were covered with a *falie*, a long black cloak: see RHC RL, *stadsgerecht Oudewater*, inv.nr. 190.

⁹Hans de Waardt, 'Vervolging of verweer. Mogelijke procedures na een beschuldiging van toverij in het gewest Holland', in Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra & Willem Frijhoff (eds.), *Nederland betoverd. Toverij en hekserij van de veertiende tot in de twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1987), pp. 57–68, esp. 57–62; Willem de Blécourt, *Termen van toverij. De veranderende betekenis van toverij in Noordoost-Nederland tussen de zestiende en twintigste eeuw* (Nijmegen, 1990), pp. 75–80, and Robin Briggs, *Witches & Neighbours* (London, 1996), pp. 61–95.

¹⁰Theodorus G.M. Oorschot, 'Nicolaes Borremans. Übersetzer von Friedrich Spees *Cautio Criminalis*', in Guillaume van Gemert & Hans Ester (eds.), *Grenzgänge: Literatur und Kultur im Kontext* (Amsterdam, 1990), 65–83. Both Spee and his translator Borremans published their treatise anonymously. It is very clear that Nicolaes Borremans was sceptical about the prosecution of witchcraft. In his introduction he recommends three books in this tradition: the Dutch translation of Reginald Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft* (Reinald Scot, *Ontdeking van Toverij*, [...] verduyscht door Thomas Basson (Leiden, 1609)); Johan van Heemskerck, *Batavische Arcadia, waer in [...] gehandelt werdt van [...] uytperssen der waerheydt door pijnigen* [...] (Amsterdam, 1647); and Daniel Jonctys, *De pijn-bank wedersproken, en bematigt* (Rotterdam, 1651). Borremans must have read

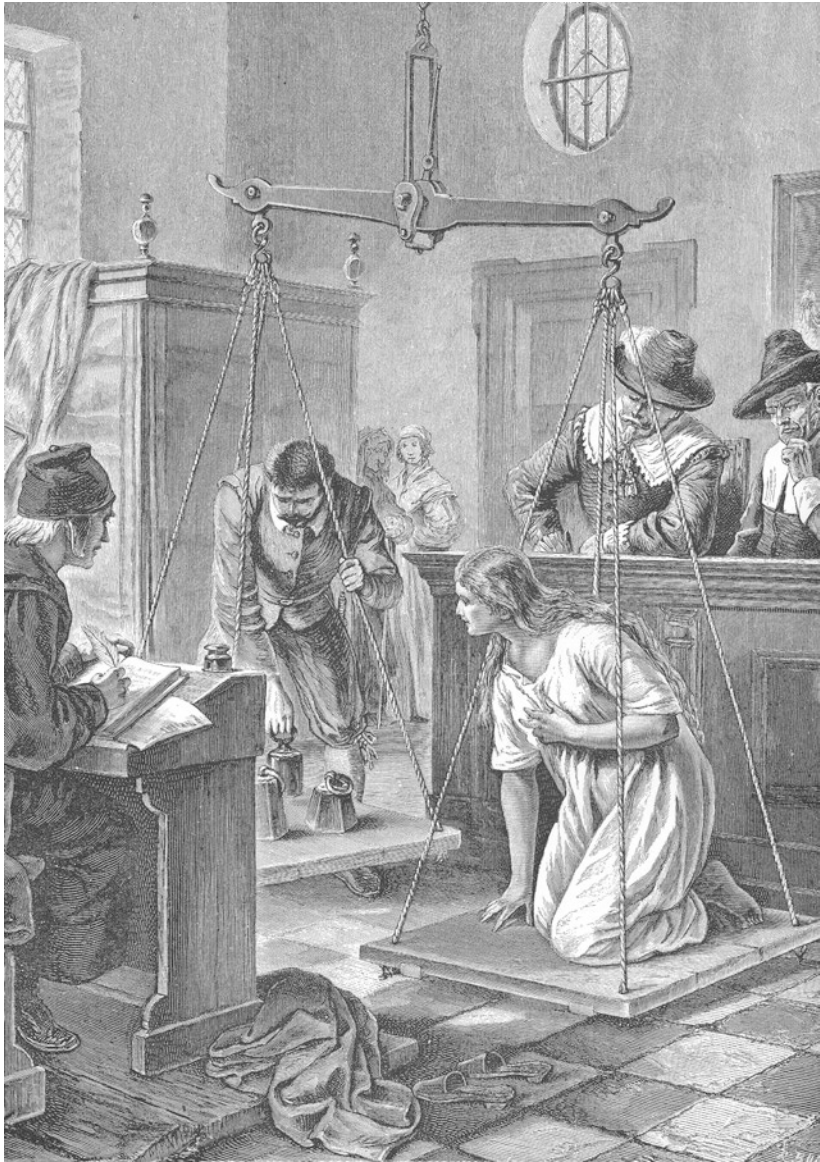


Fig. 1 H. Merté after R. Bonceva, *The Witches' Weigh-house in Oudewater*, wood engraving, 19th century. Collection Theo Meder, Amsterdam

Willem Meerman, entitled *Voor-rede van het wegen der Tooveners tot Oudewater*,¹¹ was published as a foreword to Borremans' translation (from Latin into Dutch) of the treatise by the German Jesuit Friedrich Spee (1591–1635), *Cautio criminalis seu de processibus contra sagas liber*.¹² During the late 1620s several towns in Westphalia had witnessed a rash of witch trials. Spee assisted as confessor to those who had been imprisoned after allegations of witchcraft, and although in principle he believed in the existence of witchcraft, he reached the conclusion that none of his confessants were guilty of that crime. Consequently, he criticised sharply the methods used by prosecutors in witchcraft trials, warning especially against the use of torture, which all too easily led to a forced (and therefore possibly false) confession. His basic thesis was that witchcraft could not be legally proven. Interestingly, it had been Leentje Willems's vicissitudes which had inspired Borremans to translate Spee's treatise in the first place. In the lengthy foreword he writes that he had heard Leentje Willems was a Catholic and he was convinced that the belief in witchcraft was still very much alive among people of that faith. He wanted to enlighten them and considered that making Spee's book available in Dutch would be a good means to that end: Spee provided fascinating stories and valuable information without blatantly denying the existence of witchcraft and, furthermore, revealed the sly connivances of the prosecutors. That he was also a Catholic might increase the receptiveness of the intended readers.¹³

As Borremans relates, upon her arrival Leentje Willems called on the magistrates and reported that some young lads and other simple folk had beaten her up severely on several occasions. They were trying to force her to bless a child who had been hurt in a curious accident. Leentje's accusers suspected that she had bewitched the little creature by giving

Reginald Scot's treatise not in the first edition of 1609 with Thomas Basson as translator and editor, but in the second or third editions of 1637 or 1638 by Thomas Basson's son Govert, as Borremans mistakenly assumes Govert was the translator.

¹¹In English, Introductory speech on the weighing of the witches in Oudewater.

¹²In English, A book on precautionary measures for prosecutors or upon witch trials.

¹³See Spee, *Waer-borg*, 'Voor-rede', 3–6. Borremans comments ('Voor-rede', 5v) that he is convinced that Friedrich Spee was not only against prosecution for witchcraft, but also did not really believe in witchcraft, and only concealed his opinion in the first chapters of his book to avoid rejection of the book. In later passages Spee clearly indicated his disbelief. Borremans' comments in the margins of his translation of Spee's treatise (e.g. 387 and 508) show that he and Spee are of the same opinion.

her a piece of cake—two years prior. A witch, so they believed, could undo her magic by blessing her victim. The harassment was fierce and unrelenting. Leentje Willems began to fear for her life and wanted to clear herself of the accusation of witchcraft. The magistrates, however, refused to allow her to take the weighing test. The test, they explained, was only for people who were in danger of being burnt at the stake. Since that no longer applied to inhabitants of the province of Holland, Leentje Willems, who lived in this region, did not qualify.¹⁴

As Hans de Waardt has shown, it had indeed been several decades since the authorities of the province of Holland had prosecuted someone for witchcraft. The sentence by the Hoge Raad (Supreme Court) resulting in the acquittal of two suspected women from Schiedam in 1593, and the advice, solicited by the Hof van Holland (Court of Holland), from professors at the University of Leiden about the validity of the swimming test in 1594 had been decisive for developments in jurisprudence. To prove somebody guilty of witchcraft became nearly impossible since administering torture was no longer allowed and the swimming test was considered invalid. It was thus on purely juridical grounds, the impossibility of proving somebody guilty of witchcraft, not because the possible existence of witchcraft was denied, that prosecution for witchcraft in Holland came to a halt. Only two cases after 1594 have been discovered. The first is also the last occasion when someone found guilty of witchcraft was sentenced to death. This was in 1608 in the town of Gorinchem; Anna Muggen had confessed, on her own initiative, to making a pact with the devil, among other fearful deeds. The second is the last witchcraft trial ever held in the province. This one was in 1614 in Woerden, close to Oudewater, but the suspected witch, a woman named Neel Egbertsz, was acquitted. A similar pattern can be traced for the other provinces in the Republic of the Netherlands.¹⁵

The assessment of the magistracy of Oudewater in 1647, that inhabitants of Holland, when accused of witchcraft, did not risk prosecution let alone being sentenced to death, certainly does not seem groundless. When they began to hold this view is, of course, difficult to gauge

¹⁴Ibid., 6v–7. The city of Oudewater belonged to the province of Holland in this period (footnote 3).

¹⁵Hans de Waardt, *Toverij en samenleving: Holland 1500–1800* (The Hague, 1991), 113–126.

without access to the part of the town archives that is missing for the years 1595–1673. It seems safe to assume a period of some twenty years earlier.

The magistrates' negative response to Leentje does, however, also suggest that they believed there were people then living outside the province of Holland who *did* risk being burnt at the stake and that they had previously been allowed to take the weighing test. Here, several questions arise. Who were these people, where did they come from, what were their circumstances and how could a certificate from Oudewater help them? Further, in what way did Leentje Willems's situation differ from theirs? These questions lead us directly to the controversy at the heart of the historiography of Oudewater's weighing test.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

During the past century, two opposing versions of the history of Oudewater's weighing test have been elaborated. In four consecutive books, published in 1941, 1948, 1949 and 1963, mass psychologist and press historian Kurt Baschwitz (1886–1968) developed the following interpretation.¹⁶ The magistrates of Oudewater began offering the test in the seventeenth century. Starting in the 1640s the operation was in full swing and world famous. Hundreds of men and women came from the territories across the border with Germany to be weighed. Officially only people from outside the Dutch Republic were admitted. But there were rare exceptions to this rule because, although the witches' trials had ended, the belief in witchcraft was still prevalent. Baschwitz was a German journalist who, because he was of Jewish descent, had been fired as the main editor of the *Zeitungs-Verlag* in Berlin in 1933.

¹⁶Casimir K. Visser, *Van de heksenwaag te Oudewater en andere te weinig bekende zaken, met een voorrede van Jan Romein* (Lochem, 1941); Kurt Baschwitz, *De strijd met den duivel: de heksenprocessen in het licht der massa-psychologie* (Amsterdam, 1948); id., 'Massale angst toegelicht aan een historisch voorbeeld' in J.H. Plokker e.a. (eds.), *Angst en crisis der moraal: Vier voordrachten met discussie* (The Hague, 1949); Kurt Baschwitz, *Hexen und Hexenprozesse: die Geschichte eines Massenwahns und seiner Bekämpfung* (München, 1963); id., *Hexen en heksenprocessen: de geschiedenis van een massawaan en zijn bestrijding* (Amsterdam, 1964). See Vera Ebels-Dolanová, *Een aanzet tot een biografie van Baschwitz. Zijn leven, werk en denken*, verschenen in de reeks Mededelingen van de subfaculteit der Algemene Politieke en Sociale Wetenschappen van de Universiteit van Amsterdam, nr. 39 (Amsterdam, 1983); Dieter Anschlag, *Kurt Baschwitz: Journalist und Zeitungswissenschaftler* (Münster, 1990).

Eventually, during the late 1930s, he fled to the Netherlands. Already in Germany he had been reading and writing about the persecution of witches. Interestingly, he initially compared that persecution to the *Deutschenhass* of the Allied Forces after World War I and only later to the persecution of the Jews. When Germany occupied the Netherlands, he was assisted by members of the Dutch resistance. He first wrote about the weighing test of Oudewater while in hiding. The book was published under the pseudonym Casimir Visser. The well-known Dutch historian Jan Romein (1893–1962) wrote the introduction, heralding the weighing house of Oudewater as a symbol of national freedom and the Dutch character trait of level-headedness. It seems the book was used as an instrument for boosting the morale of the Dutch people during the German Occupation. Baschwitz likely would have identified himself with those who allegedly came from Germany to obtain a certificate from the weighing house in Oudewater. In his later publications he indeed started calling them refugees.

In 1986, Willem de Blécourt, having studied the aforementioned copies of the nine certificates, wondered whether Baschwitz's exceptions, the people who came from nearby Oudewater to be weighed, were perhaps the rule. De Blécourt called for a thorough evaluation of Baschwitz's writings.¹⁷ Hans de Waardt took up this challenge and rightly argued that, by not using the sources meticulously, Baschwitz had created a myth.¹⁸ Because Baschwitz, who after World War II held a chair in mass psychology and was Director of the Press Institute of the University of Amsterdam, had remained the authority on the subject, this myth was accepted as official history by the public at large and was tremendously influential, particularly because of Baschwitz's

¹⁷Willem de Blécourt, 'Van heksenprocessen naar toverij', in Willem de Blécourt & Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra (eds.), *Kwade Mensen. Toverij in Nederland* (Amsterdam, 1986), pp. 2–30, esp. 20–23.

¹⁸De Waardt, 'Vervolging', esp. 62–68, an id., 'Oudewater. Eine Hexenwaage wird gewogen—oder: Die Zerstörung einer historischen Mythe', *Westfälische Zeitschrift. Zeitschrift für Vaterländische Geschichte und Altertumskunde Westfalens* 144 (1994), 249–263. De Waardt slipped up with his numbers. It should be the history of eleven women and one man. De Waardt mentioned four other cases he might be willing to accept, among those a man and a woman from Münsterland. But, if added, they do not alter his overall interpretation.

interpretation of the weighing house as a symbol of Dutch national identity during World War II.

De Waardt's opinion was that, until new sources surfaced, one could only be certain about twelve women and one man coming to Oudewater for the weighing test, among whom only three people came from German lands. He regarded the copies of the nine certificates in the city administration as the only trustworthy sources. And from Borremans' account he only accepted the cases of Maria Konings and Leentje Willems as authentic.¹⁹ Because he found no copies of a certificate in the other surviving part of the town's administrative records (which dates from 1585–1594), de Waardt assumed that the town council only began offering the weighing test during the first half of the seventeenth century.

The correction by de Waardt of Baschwitz's overstatements stems from a different evaluation and interpretation of the sparse sources available, and in particular Nicolaes Borremans' *Voor-rede*. Baschwitz, though he later used Borremans' text in the original, seems to have been influenced by first reading the corrupted version presented by the Dutch Reformed minister Balthasar Bekker in his *De Betoverde Weereld*.²⁰ Bekker flatly stated that applicants for the test were only foreigners from the Catholic borderlands in Germany. This falsification was intentional: Bekker wished to depict Catholics as a superstitious lot who still believed in witchcraft.²¹ It must have come as a great shock to de Waardt to discover the many

¹⁹See, for Maria Konings and Leentje Willems, Spee, *Waer-borg*, Voor-rede, 8v–9v. Town clerk Hugo de Hoy added a comment to the transcription he made of the certificate of Maria Konings stating that Leentje Willems had been weighed during the past year 1647. De Hoy dated his transcription 7 January 1648. De Waardt erroneously mentioned this date as the day Leentje Willems was weighed in 'Vervolging', 64 and 'Oudewater', 250 and 262, but gave the correct year in *Toverij en samenleving*, 237 (footnote 77), 301.

²⁰Balthasar Bekker, *De Betoverde Weereld zynde een grondig ondersoek van 't gemeen gevoelen aangaande de geesten, derselver aart en vermogen, bewind en bedryf: als ook t'gene de menschen door derselver kragt en gemeenschap doen: In vier boeken ondernomen* (Amsterdam, 1691–1693) book I, 116. Baschwitz presumably read Bekker in a German translation.

²¹Bekker also speaks about three superstitious mercenaries who came from Catholic Germany, where the people still believe in the Oudewater weighing test, see Book IV, 244–249. Also Borremans states in his introduction that he is of the opinion that it is especially among people of the Catholic faith where believers in witchcraft are still to be found. See Spee, *Waer-borg*, 'Voor-rede', 3–6.

blunders made by Baschwitz in interpreting this text, such that the official history he grew up with was a full-blown myth. However, while agreeing with de Waardt that Baschwitz had created a myth, I wish to suggest that, by dismissing Borremans completely, the baby was thrown out with the bathwater. Careful analysis of Borremans' *Voor-rede* yields very valuable information about the policies of Oudewater's magistracy and provides insight into the position of Leentje Willems when asking to be weighed.

THE POLICIES

In his *Voor-rede*, Nicolaes Borremans—having expounded his opinions concerning witchcraft and those relating to Leentje Willems's story—describes what he has been able to find out about the weighing test. While still living in Oudewater he interviewed a barber, Master John, who at the time was also a sheriff's officer and as part of this function was expected to assist men who wished to be weighed. Among other things, Master John told Borremans that not only in the Dutch Republic but also across the border with Germany, for example in the '...dioceses of Munster, Paderborn, and Cologne etcetera', it was held that the emperor Charles V had given the privilege of the weighing test to the town of Oudewater.²² When Borremans finally decided in 1656 to publish his translation of Friedrich Spee's treatise (he recounts that 'it had been lying waiting for years, ready to be eaten by the moths'), he wished to investigate more thoroughly; consequently, he wrote a letter containing three questions to a highly respected citizen of Oudewater, one Willem Pietersz. Tromper, who had served his town both as burgomaster and alderman.²³ Tromper answered Borremans letter of 17 November on 11 December, and Borremans cited this correspondence extensively. Tromper replied that Master John was right. Candidates for

²²See Spee, *Waer-borg*, 'Voor-rede', 10v.

²³Willem Tromper was present as alderman when Maria Konings was weighed in 1644, see footnote 7. C.H. van Wijngaarden kindly provided me with the following information. Willem Pietersz. Tromper was the son of Pieter Willemsz. Tromper and Neeltgen Evertsdr., who was buried in Oudewater 1 September 1636. He was born in Oudewater c. 1600, served there as burgomaster in 1636, 1638, 1655, 1658 and 1676, and was buried in Oudewater 29 March 1676. For Pieter Willemsz. Tromper's marriage to Neeltgen (Cornelia) Evertsdr., born ca. 1557/58, daughter to Evert Jansz. and Merrichgen [name unknown] in Oudewater 7 December 1597, see C.H. van Wijngaarden, 'Tromper (Oudewater, 16e en 17e eeuw)' in *Gens Nostra* 60, no. 12, December 2005, 675.

the weighing test did indeed come from those German districts and, he added, without exception they had declared that they had been accused of witchcraft and that if they did not obtain the weighing certificate, they risked loss of life and property. Several people also recounted that back home the belief was held that witches only weigh a very small amount. Interestingly, Tromper remarked that he believed neither in witches nor that they weighed very little. That the Oudewater weighing test was recognised as reliable by some German town and village councils, continued Tromper, can be deduced from the fact that no small number of people came with a written request from their local authorities asking for the test to be performed. He recalls that the weighing test was already in operation before the Spanish besieged Oudewater in 1575, because he had heard old people mention it. But Tromper could not tell whether Charles V had indeed bestowed the privilege of the weighing test on the town of Oudewater, because when the Spanish besieged the town, all the official documents, including privileges, had gone up in flames.

There seems scant reason to doubt the authenticity of the letter written by Tromper, former burgomaster and alderman, or for that matter to question the information given by the sheriff's officer, Master John. Both had been involved in the weighing tests. Borremans appears to have cited meticulously the relevant passages from the letter. Tromper's statement concerning the authority of the certificates is corroborated by the fact that Maria Konings, as we learn from her certificate, came with a request from the burgomaster of her hometown of Bochoolt.²⁴ The elderly people Tromper mentions having spoken to could very well have included his own mother since she was around eighteen years of age at the time of the town's terrible siege. She was also the daughter of the city's weigh mistress, so if this grandmother of Willem Tromper was blessed with a long life, he may even have known her when he was a child.²⁵ Finally, as a translator, Borremans likely excelled in accuracy.²⁶

²⁴See Spee, *Waer-borg*, 'Voor-rede', 8v.

²⁵C.H. van Wijngaarden kindly informed me that the mother of Willem Tromper appears on the list of the survivors of the Siege of Oudewater in 1575 as 'Cornelia Evartsdr.'. See footnote 23, and also Nettie Stoppelenburg, *De Oudewaterse moord* (Oudewater, 2005). Nettie Stoppelenburg informs me that Merrichgen, widow of Evert Jansz., appears as weigh mistress in the city's financial records of 1578: see RHC RL, oud-archief Oudewater, toegang O001, inv.nr. 1, resoluties vroedschap 177–180, fol. 47–48.

²⁶Oorschot, 'Nicolaes Borremans'.

Interestingly, it was Borremans who concluded his exposé with the observation that it was not without reason that Oudewater stood in such high esteem. And it seems quite possible that a thorough search of the municipal archives in Germany might confirm the account. Recently the German historian Gudrun Gersmann found that the weighing test was mentioned several times in the judicial archives in Münsterland. During the Lüdinghauser witchcraft trials of 1624, for example, one of the imprisoned women, known as the *alte Heitmansche*, confessed she had made the journey to Holland to be weighed after she had failed the swimming test. When she was asked why she had gone to Holland to be tested on the scales, she answered simply that she had seen no other way to defend herself and have her good name and honour restored.²⁷ Another indication that people indeed came from German borderlands to take the weighing test is the fact that the weigh house of the city of Utrecht also offered such a test. Among the seven Utrecht cases discovered to date are those of a couple from Lüdinghausen in the prince-bishopric of Münster in 1620 and a woman, born in the Duchy of Cleves, in 1625.²⁸

²⁷Prof. Dr Gudrun Gersmann kindly offered me this example from a chapter on the weighing test in Münsterland in her Habilitationsschrift, 'Hexenverfolgungen als adlige Hexenpolitik. Wasserproben und Hexenprozess im frühneuzeitlichen Fürstbistum Münster' (unpubl. MS, Munich, 2000). She also mentioned the case of Bernd Franzes, a servant of the house of Nordkirchen, who showed the judge in Davensberg a certificate drawn up by a priest in Bocholt in March 1627, which states that he had been weighed in the town weigh house and that the result was given as 150 pounds. This speaks for the reputation of the weighing test. My thanks to Hans De Waardt, who referred me to Gudrun Gersmann.

²⁸Documents in Het Utrechts Archief (toegang 34-4 van het notarieel archief, inv.nr. U009a006) prove that a weighing test was also offered by the weigh house of the city of Utrecht in the following cases. 11 November 1618 Claes ten Grootenhausen and Caspar van Lipstadt, living in Haaksbergen in the land of Twente, have been commissioned to have Trijn Twenhausen weighed on a free location. Trijn weighed 150 pounds on the Utrecht scales. Her escorts were supplied with a certificate. 14 January 1619 Jan Wolterz, thirty years of age, living in Vriezenveen in the seignory of Almelo, has been commissioned to have weighed on a free location Femme Berendsdr, wife of Hendrik Hendriksz., carpenter (113 pounds), Mette Aelbertsdr., wife of Gerrit Hendriksz., living in Vriezenveen (139 pounds), and Hendrik Aelbertsz. (169 pounds): Jan Wolterz. received certificates. 26 June 1620 Claes Jansz from Dortmund living in Ooij near Zevender in the house that is the property of Mrs Van Huickenhort in the Duchy of Cleves, for reasons of affection, weighed his wife Ijeffken Jansdr., born in the parish of Merbeek near Borcken in the Duchy of Cleves in her shirt on the scales (109 pounds); he received a certificate. inv.nr. U009a010 saying that 16 April 1625 Joost ter Beek and Geertruid Wolpharts from Ludickhausen [sic] in the prince-bishopric of Münster have been weighed and supplied with certificates. My thanks to Bob Kemp for informing me about these cases.

Despite Hans de Waardt's scepticism, it would seem that Borremans' text, though not complete with names and dates, is trustworthy and that quite a few more candidates, not only Maria Konings, came to Oudewater from across the German border during the first half of the seventeenth century.²⁹ This might especially have been so during the 1620s and 1630s, when that region of Germany experienced a veritable eruption of witch trials.³⁰ The municipal records of Oudewater are missing for the first half of the seventeenth century, but the newly discovered Utrecht records support such a possibility. It is, however, difficult to assess the number of people who came. Perhaps we gain an indication from Hugo de Hoy. The short commentary he added to the transcription of Maria Konings' certificate reads as follows: '...that since I have been in office many persons have been weighed here in the weigh house according to what has been said above [the protocol as described in the certificate of Maria Konings] obtaining certificates *mutatis mutandis* as mentioned before [similar to the one obtained by Maria Konings]: and in particular during the past year 1647 three different persons, among whom a certain Leentje Willems, the wife of Jan Aerts., who lives in the district of Langelinschoten, part of the parish of Oudewater. This document was signed on the seventh day of January in the year 1648.'³¹ From other sources we know that Hugo de Hoy became town clerk in 1629.³² The hypothesis therefore that during the previous eighteen years De Hoy had witnessed 'many people' being weighed seems established.

We may conclude that the policy of Oudewater's magistracy was indeed that the weighing test should only be given to those 'accused' of being a witch who risked being prosecuted by the authorities. It was then hoped that the certificate might play a protective role should it come to a witchcraft trial, or indeed even prevent prosecution. When in 1647 Leentje Willems made her request in Oudewater, it had

²⁹Tromper recalls in his letter that Hugo de Hoy once told him a story about a man who came from northern Germany to be weighed but was so afraid that he fled and only took the test upon his second visit. Borremans commented that he heard from someone about a young man from Paderborn who had been extremely frightened. These cases seem quite convincing. See Spee, *Waer-borg*, 'Voorrede', 12–12v and 13v.

³⁰Gerhard Schormann, *Hexenprozess in Nordwestdeutschland* (Hildesheim, 1977).

³¹Spee, *Waer-borg*, 'Voor-rede', 9v.

³²Plomp, 'De Woerdense afstammelingen', 136.

presumably been the practice for a considerable period of time to receive supplicants only from outside Holland, especially from the Catholic lands just across the border with Germany. As I argued earlier, to gauge when this change of mind occurred, and as a consequence inhabitants of Holland were excluded, is difficult. Clearly, the magistrates did not wish to embroil themselves in the debate about the nature of witchcraft and its prosecution. Witchcraft as such was not mentioned on the certificate. It was explicitly stated that the person concerned was weighed only upon her or his explicit and earnest request; furthermore, if requested, the magistrates could not refuse to give a certificate 'that might serve in the appropriate circumstances and in a suitable manner'.³³ The question arises as to why Leentje Willems, who presumably was aware of these restrictions, still made her request. Who was she and what were her circumstances?

LEENTJE WILLEMS

Leentje Willems (c. 1610–1672) came from the middling class and was, for her time, reasonably well educated.³⁴ We know she could write.³⁵ She was of the Catholic faith and probably born in the village of Papecop, near Oudewater.³⁶ She married Jan Aertsz. de Lange, originally from Benschop, in December 1637.³⁷ He was the extremely wealthy owner of a farmstead on the northern side of the river Lange Linschoten and a prominent member of the village community; he

³³RHC RL, stadsgerecht Oudewater, inv.nr. 190; Spee, *Waer-borg*, 'Voor-rede', 8v–9v.

³⁴RHC RL, notarieel archief Oudewater, notaris Hugo de Hoy, inv.nr. 1883; notaris Pons Pieters Jongsten, inv.nr. 1878.

³⁵Leentje Willems's signature read: 'Leentgeen Willems': see RHC RL, notarieel archief Oudewater, notaris Ewout Slappecoorn, inv.nr. 1886.

³⁶RHC RL, notarieel archief Oudewater, notaris Pons Pieters Jongsten, inv.nr. 1878. Her marriage with Jan Aertsz. does not appear in the marriage register of the Protestant church, which is an indication she was of the Catholic persuasion. Another indication is that her grandchild was baptised in the Catholic church: see Doopboek Oudkatholiek Oudewater: 28 juli 1674 'vetribus Aqs baptizaty Wilhelmus Wilhelmi, cuius pr Wilhelmus Joannis in Linschoten mater Petronilla Wilhelmi matrina Cornelia Joannis'. See also Spee, *Waer-borg*, 'Voor-rede', 7v.

³⁷RHC RL, notarieel archief Oudewater, notaris Pons Pieters Jongsten, inv.nr. 1878, 18 December 1637; notaris Ewout Slappecoorn, inv.nr. 1885, 3 December 1661: the surname of the children of Jan Aertsz. is De Lange.

was several times alderman.³⁸ When he married Leentje, he was probably in his late forties and had been a widower for more than one and a half years.³⁹ From his first marriage he had two sons and two daughters, who were all minors when he remarried; they were named Jacob, Aert, Neeltje and Marrichgen.⁴⁰ He and Leentje had three sons and two daughters named Willem, Cornelis, Frans, Gerritje and Stijntje.⁴¹ They were all born within the space of ten years because Jan Aertsz. was buried in the family grave in the church of Oudewater on 8 July 1648.⁴² Leentje was to follow her husband on 9 November 1672.⁴³

At first sight Leentje Willems enjoyed a secure position in society. But certain circumstances may have made her vulnerable and prone to witchcraft accusations. Leentje came from outside the village community of Snelreweerd and Langelinschoten and may have been perceived as an intruder. That she married Jan Aertsz., who must have been a very good match, may have been a cause of envy directed at her. It is quite possible that some young marriageable daughters, and more particularly their parents, cherished the hopes of a spectacular marriage and prosperous future. Furthermore, Leentje was a stepmother, and a great deal of wealth had to be legally shared out between herself, her husband, their children and his children by his first marriage. Quite possibly disputes arose, in which neighbours took sides. Finally, there was the matter of religion: Leentje was a Roman Catholic in a province where Protestantism officially held sway. In a

³⁸RHC RL, archief van het dorpsgerecht van Snelrewaard en de Lange Linschoten, inv. nr. 1892, fol. 20v, inv.nr. 1875: Jan Aertsz. is mentioned several times as alderman between 1627 and 1647.

³⁹RHC RL, archief van het dorpsgerecht van Snelreweerd en de Lange Linschoten, inv. nr. 1892, fol. 20v and fol. 36–37: his first wife died between 2 July 1644 and 27 June 1636, and his sons became of age in 1650.

⁴⁰RHC RL, archief van het dorpsgerecht van Snelreweerd en de Lange Linschoten, inv. nr. 1892, fol. 20v.

⁴¹RHC RL, notarieel archief Oudewater, notaris Ewout Slappecoorn, inv.nr. 1885, 3 December 1661.

⁴²RHC RL, Archives of the Dutch Reformed Church of Oudewater, inv.nr. 321, financial records of burials, fol. 28.

⁴³RHC RL, Archives of the Dutch Reformed Church of Oudewater, inv.nr. 322, financial records of burials, 'Den 9 november (1672) Leentje Willems in 't suydepand''. Leentje Willems died in the so-called 'Rampjaar', the disastrous year. See Nettie Stoppelenburg 'Een stad in de vuurlinie', *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht* 2015.

case of bewitchment, however, the desire to find the witch who caused misery was so strong that anyone might fall under suspicion.

THE SLANDER TRIAL

The reputation of being a witch besmirched her honour; Leentje needed and wished at all costs to refute this allegation. She had to act. She had several legal options. If one knew who had made the accusation or had spread the rumours, one could bring a slander charge. If one's accusers were unknown, there was the possibility of having oneself 'purged of slander'.⁴⁴ In the archives of the village court of Snelreweerd and Lange Linschoten I found several references to a slander case brought by Jan Aerts., in the name of his wife Leentje Willems, against Sijmon Cornelisz., husband and guardian of Annigchen Cornelis's daughter, who also had their domicile on the bank of the Langelinschoten River.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, the account of what the slander entailed has gone missing, but it is clear that Anneke Cornelis had damaged the reputation of Leentje Willems. This is surely a trial about the witchcraft slander against Leentje Willems, and it seems reasonable to assume that Anneke Cornelis was the mother of the unlucky child. Jan Aertstz. had wanted to go to court in May 1647, but on two occasions Simon and Anneke failed to appear. Not until 25 September 1647 did the two couples finally meet in the village court, together with their representatives, who were legally qualified notaries. The outcome was unusual for a slander trial. The judge decreed that the two couples should sit down together with two aldermen of their own choice and try to reach an agreement. If they could not, the two couples were to pay the enormous sum of fifteen guilders each into a trust that would be used to call in expert legal advice. Nothing more has been recorded, and we do not know what happened next.

My conjecture is that Leentje grew impatient and chose to organise the legal expertise from outside by herself, and she called on the town

⁴⁴De Waardt', 'Vervolging', esp. 57–62.

⁴⁵RHC RL, archief van het dorpsgerecht van Snelreweerd en de Lange Linschoten, inv.nr. 1870. See also notarial archives of Oudewater, notaris Pons Pieters Jongsten, inv. nr. 1878, 24 September 1647: Sijmon Cornelisz. and Annighgen Cornelisdr. drew up a contract with this notary to be their representative in the trial. Jan Aertsz. and Leentje Willemsdr. were represented by one notary Bredius.

council of Oudewater. In Borremans' account, we read the following: 'Finally the magistrates were obliged to weigh the poor woman to save her from danger.'⁴⁶ Somehow Leentje Willems must have convinced her stern male audience to see her situation in a different light. Clearly, people being tried for witchcraft were in danger of being burnt at the stake or executed in some other manner; in short, their life was threatened. For Leentje Willems the threat of being killed by 'young lads and simple folk' was just as real.⁴⁷ Consequently, a certificate might offer a form of protection not only in a witchcraft case but also in a slander trial. It seems highly likely that Leentje Willems presented the weighing certificate to the local law court in Snelreweerd, and the matter was ended once and for all. She apparently lived at the farmstead of her late husband until the day she died.

TURN OF THE TIDE

After Leentje Willems had been weighed, people in similar situations, and as a consequence also local folk from Holland and other provinces of the Dutch Republic, followed suit, as the post-1677 certificates in the municipal archives of Oudewater bear witness.⁴⁸ It was the action of Leentje Willems that caused the change of heart of the burgomasters and the town council of Oudewater. How the news spread, by Borremans' account, by word of mouth, correspondence or some other means, is difficult to trace. Further research might well serve to show that most if not all of these applicants were involved in slander proceedings. Leentje Willems had brought about an essential and enduring change in the policies of the Oudewater magistracy. Gaspar Rudolf van Kinschot (1704–1748), bailiff and sheriff of Oudewater, wrote the first town history of the place, published in 1747. When writing about the weighing test he quoted Borremans in the corrupted version published by minister Bekker, which claimed that the candidates for the weighing test had always and only come from outside the Dutch Republic. But Van Kinschot also had the town archives checked and was supplied with

⁴⁶Spee, *Waer-borg*, 'Voor-rede', 7.

⁴⁷Spee, *Waer-borg*, 'Voor-rede', 6v.

⁴⁸RHC RL, notarieel archief Oudewater, inv.nr. 190; seven of the ten people mentioned in these certificates came from nearby Oudewater, two from Guelders.

transcriptions of nine copies of certificates. The ninth was added in 1729, during the time he held office; this post-dated the certificate of the earlier mentioned married couple from Den Dool. Then he corrected the information found in Bekker and stated that during the past hundred years candidates for the weighing test came from near and far to purge themselves of slander. Van Kinschot did not tell who had started the trend, but clearly he had observed how the tide had turned.⁴⁹

NETWORK

Although Leentje Willems's own voice has not been preserved in writing, it is possible to reconstruct the circumstances and the results of her actions. Recognising the pivotal role she played in the change of the Oudewater policies and praxis makes it possible to rebalance positions in the historiography. Opinions had grown somewhat skewed in the course of the last century, partly owing to an overemphasis on the consequences of the change Leentje Willems brought about, without acknowledging the actual change itself. This was perhaps a reaction to the strong sentiments expressed by Baschwitz, coupled with the writings of local enthusiasts lauding the weigh house as a tourist attraction.

Yet 'historical truth'—if such a thing exists—is not to be found simply by following a 'middle way' between alternative theories. It is situated on a more personal level. It involves all the actors in the story, all the voices down the centuries, all the witnessing of those who took their seat upon the scales and those who reported what they saw and heard. The complex network of all these observations and opinions is what makes the case of Oudewater's weighing test so intriguing. And the analysis of Leentje's story is crucial for the writing of this history.

⁴⁹ Gaspar Rudolph van Kinschot, *Beschryving der stad Oudewater: waarin aangetoont word der zelve herkomst uit het Utrechtsche bisdom, overgang tot de Graaflykheid van Holland ... als mede de handvesten, ... aan die stad ... verleend/byeen verzamelt ... door den thans in dienst zynde bailjuw, dykgraaf en schout der zelfde stad* (Delft, 1747), 146–147, 151.

The North Sea as a Crossroads of Witchcraft Beliefs: The Limited Importance of Political Boundaries

Hans de Waardt

In March 1609, one of the councillors of the Court of Justice of Holland and Zeeland in The Hague interrogated a man named Dirck Minnesanck, who was currently one of the court's bailiffs.¹ This higher court had been informed that, together with his wife Geertruyt, this subordinate of theirs had physically abused an elderly woman named Marta van Houten. The couple was convinced that this woman had bewitched their daughter Maycken. To begin with, Ms Minnesanck had stuck a needle in Marta's arm '*om wat bloets van haer te krijgen*' (to get some blood from her). But when this action failed to produce the desired

¹National Archives in The Hague (hereafter NA), Archive 3.03.01.01 (Archive Hof van Holland), inv. nr. 5211.9.

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result, Geertruyt hit Marta repeatedly in the face. Finally, an English soldier who was serving in the Dutch army and had been expressly hired by Minnesanck for this purpose punched the old woman in the face, which caused her to start bleeding. Geertruyt then wiped off some of the fluid with her handkerchief. In the interrogation she told the Lord Councillor that a noble English lady who was living in The Hague had told her that she should try to get some of the witch's blood because that would put a halt to the suffering of her child. According to Geertruyt, this lady, whose identity is not disclosed in the file, had heard this from her sister who had been bewitched in England and had been cured using the described method.

The outcome of this incident is unknown. But in the context of this contribution, it is of no importance. What is relevant here is this cultural congruity that connected the two sides of the North Sea. In England, the notion that to 'draw blood' from a supposed witch was an effective means of lifting a bewitchment was quite old, and it retained its strength till well into the nineteenth century. Keith Thomas discusses a case from as early as 1279,² and there are many other examples from England up till the nineteenth century.³

This contribution focuses on a few similarities between the coastal seafaring parts of the Low Countries and England as regards not only beliefs in witchcraft but also the severity of prosecutions. First, other examples will be given of assaults in Holland on presumed witches in

²Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (Harmondsworth, 1978), 633–4, 649.

³For more general discussions of this practice see Orna Alyagon Darr, *Marks of an Absolute Witch: Evidentiary Dilemmas in Early Modern England* (Farnham, 2011), 173–84; Owen Davies and Francesca Matteoni, *Executing Magic in the Modern Era: Criminal Bodies and the Gallows in Popular Medicine* (Basingstoke, 2017), 19–21. See also Stephen Mitchel, 'A Case of Witchcraft Assault in Early Nineteenth-Century England as Ostensive Action' in Willem de Blécourt and Owen Davies (eds.), *Witchcraft Continued: Popular Magic in Modern Europe* (Manchester and New York, 2004), 17–19, 27–8, n. 44; Susan Hoyle, 'The Witch and the Detective: Mid-Victorian Stories and Beliefs', in *ibid.*, 52–5; Owen Davies, 'Newspapers and Popular Belief in Witchcraft and Magic in the Modern Period' in Brian Levack (ed.), *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic, and Demonology*, vol. 6, *Witchcraft in the Modern World* (New York and London, 2001), 4–5; Owen Davies, 'Hag-Riding in Nineteenth-Century West Country England and Modern Newfoundland: An Examination of an Experience-Centred Witchcraft Tradition' in *ibid.*, 38–9.

order to make them bleed. Then the numbers of executions of witches on the east side of the North Sea will be compared with those on the west side. The final section underscores the importance of the close cultural ties that connected the two sides of the North Sea in the early modern period.

FEEDING A BEWITCHED WITH THE WITCH'S BLOOD

This incident from 1609 was not the first time this antidote was applied in Holland. In 1592 a woman in Haarlem rubbed her shoes three times with the blood of a witch.⁴ And on 5 August 1598 Arnoldus Buchelius, a prominent inhabitant of Utrecht, noted in his diary that he had heard that in Dordrecht a woman had been severely battered after having been identified by cunning folk as the one who had bewitched a child. After the blood of the presumed witch that had been dabbed with a piece of cloth was handed over to the afflicted child's mother, the young patient recovered completely, Buchelius noted.⁵

There are also reports from dates after 1609. In 1654, a woman in Amsterdam was sentenced to fall on her knees before the town bench of aldermen and ask for forgiveness. She also had to pay a substantial fine of 800 guilders and to compensate a female neighbour for the costs of nursing the wounds that had been inflicted upon this other woman in order to get blood from her. The convicted woman believed she needed this substance to heal her bewitched child.⁶ Ten years later, in 1664, the mother of an ailing child from a small village not far from Alkmaar beat up another woman, collected a few drops of her blood in her handkerchief, dissolved these in some beer and gave this cocktail to her child to drink.⁷

The number of supposed witches who were abused in order to draw blood from them was much higher in England than in Holland, and the first English reports date back to a much older period. It is not unlikely that this idea originated in England and was subsequently adopted by the

⁴Noord-Hollands Archief (Provincial Archives of North-Holland), archive nr. 3111 inv. nr. 54/2 folio (hereafter fol.) 15, 19, 20; inv. nr. 66/1 fol. 74.

⁵Gisbert Brom and Lambregt van Langeraad (eds.), *Diarium van Arend van Buchell* (Amsterdam, 1907), 471–2.

⁶Municipal Archive of Amsterdam, Archive 5061 inv. nr. 310 fol. 21v–24v; Manuscripts Collection inv. nr. 31 fol. 151–2.

⁷NA, Archive 3.03.01.01 inv. nr. 5657 fol. 29v–30v.

Dutch or, to put it more precisely, by inhabitants of Holland, for there are no reports from provinces other than this one, the western-most and most seafaring part of the Low Countries.

But the Hollanders did not just adopt it without modification. As we saw, in Holland a victim of a witch consumed her blood, and his health was believed to have been restored by this cannibalistic therapy. This element appears to have been unknown in England, and there are (as far we know) no contemporary sources from other parts of Europe that mention this practice, though it is reported in cases that occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Prussia, Poland and Denmark.⁸ Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Hollanders believed that witches tapped the life force from their victims and that this loss of vitality could be reversed by feeding a victim the blood of the responsible witch.

WITCHCRAFT TRIALS IN THE LOW COUNTRIES

Prosecutions for witchcraft reached the Low Countries in the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁹ In 1459, a massive series of trials against so-called *Vaudois* or Waldensians began in Arras, now in France, then part of Flanders. These heretics were accused of worshipping the devil. Although witchcraft did not play a prominent role in these trials, a new demonological interpretation for the age-old phenomenon of sorcery was now introduced. In the French-speaking parts of the Low Countries, witches were from then on termed *vaudoises*. In these Walloon provinces witchcraft prosecutions pressed ahead already in the fifteenth century. But the language barrier proved to be an effective impediment for many decades, and it was only in the 1530s that the first supposed witch was tried and executed in the Dutch-speaking part of

⁸Two cases that occurred in Poland in 1880 and 1907 and a third one that happened in Prussia in 1883 are discussed in Davies and Matteoni, *Executing Magic*, 21. For a case that took place in Denmark in 1863, see Gustav Henningsen, 'Witchcraft Prosecutions after the End of the Era of the Witch Trials: A Contribution to Danish Ethnology' in Levack, *New Perspectives*, 184. A Polish example from 1924 is in Aldona Christina Schiffmann, 'The Witch and Crime: The Persecution of Witches in Twentieth-Century Poland' in *ibid.*, 218.

⁹On this see Willem de Blécourt and Hans de Waardt, 'Das Vordringen der Zaubereiverfolgungen in die Niederlande: Rhein, Maas, und Schelde entlang in Andreas Blauert' (ed.), *Ketzer, Zauberer, Hexen: Die Anfänge der europäischen Hexenverfolgungen* (Frankfurt a.M., 1990), 182–216.

the province of Flanders, namely in Bruges, and in the ensuing fifty years very few witches were brought before a court in the Dutch-speaking part of Flanders. In the Dutch-speaking part of the Duchy of Brabant, that is in the region that stretches out from below Brussels to northern Den Bosch, no prosecutions were initiated in that period. In 1565, in the small town of Kasterlee (north-east of Antwerp), a woman was tortured to death but without the proper legal procedure that would have warranted this treatment. Nine executions took place between 1560 and 1564 in Tienen, a town in the south-east of Brabant directly north of the language barrier and very close to the secular domains of the bishop of Liège, where such trials were already rampant.

This episcopal principality did not border the sea and, though almost completely surrounded by Habsburg territories, had managed to preserve its autonomy. More research is needed for this region, but it is clear that towards the middle of the century the fear of witchcraft was remarkably greater there than in Brabant or Flanders. In 1540 alone, at least eleven and perhaps as many as sixteen witches were burnt in the Dutch-speaking northern half of this territory.¹⁰ After 1550 the number of trials and executions there seems to have abated for a while, but around 1590 they flared up again, just as in so many other regions in Europe.

¹⁰Judicial records from the localities where the trials took place are absent. Two chronicles in which these executions are mentioned give different figures. One claims that fifteen or sixteenth witches were burnt in the village of Montenaken and another one in Sint Truiden and that another five went to the stake in June 1541 in nearby Borgloon: S. Balau and É. Fairon (eds.), *Chroniques Liégeoises*, vol. 2 (Brussels, 1931), 135, 138. Another contemporaneous chronicle puts the number of the Montenaken executions at ten or eleven. According to this second chronicle yet another witch was executed in 1540 in the nearby village of Kuringen: J. Grauwels (ed.), *Dagboek van gebeurtenissen opgetekend door Christiaan Munters 1529–1545* (Assen 1972), 107–8. See also Léon-Ernest Halkin, *Histoire religieuse des règnes de Corneille de Berghe et de Georges d'Autriche, princes-évêques de Liège. Réforme protestante et Réforme catholique, au diocèse de Liège (1538–1557)* (Liege, 1936), 116, who states that between 1539 and 1541 almost twenty people were executed in the northern half of the episcopal principality of Liege. Apart from Montenaken, Sint Truiden, Kuringen and Borgloon, Halkin also mentions Sint Huiberchts Hern. Another witch was executed in Rutten and yet another woman from Kuringen died in January 1541 after repeated torture: Grauwels, *Dagboek*, 131. Six more were burnt in Kuringen in 1555: Ingrid Evers, 'Maaslandse heksenprocessen: Honderd jaar Limburgse regionale geschiedschrijving' in Willem de Blécourt and Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra (eds.), *Kwade mensen: Toverij in Nederland* (Amsterdam, 1986), 87. See also B. Indeku, 'Heksenvervolgung in het gebied van de huidige provincie Limburg', *Het Oude Land van Loon* 34 (1979), 229–62.

The figures we have from the south-eastern thinly populated provinces of Namur, Bouillon and Luxembourg suggest that they, together with the adjoining regions of Trier in Germany and the Ardennes region in France, Luxembourg and neighbouring Namur, constituted a zone of massive witch-hunting.¹¹ Between 1509 and 1555 at least forty-eight people were burnt in the tiny county of Namur.¹² In Luxembourg the central authorities lost all control over the procedures, and a form of lynching took hold. As a result, it is unclear how many supposed witches were killed there, but it has been estimated that from the late sixteenth century until the 1680s, when the French occupied the Duchy and forbade all further actions in this regard, up to 2000 witches were killed.¹³

New and often quite effective torture techniques were imported from Cleves and Cologne into the northern provinces in the 1490s and early sixteenth century, first in Gelderland and then also in the provinces of Utrecht and Holland. The essential ingredients of this new expertise consisted of sleep deprivation, exorcism and confrontation with sacred substances like holy water or necklaces made of waxen balls from Easter candles. The clothes of the culprits were replaced with uniform shirts sprinkled with holy water and all their hair was shaved off. The main effect of this treatment was that these defendants were de-personalised and became willing to confess whatever the judges wanted them to say.

In the north-east of the Low Countries, prosecutions entered from neighbouring northern Germany.¹⁴ All in all the four Habsburg territories there, Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe and Overijssel, were a rather small area, but they nevertheless observed a motley collection of procedures. For very different reasons death sentences either did not occur at all or only once in three of the four north-eastern provinces. Academically trained jurists usually disliked witch trials because the

¹¹On Namur and Luxembourg see de Blécourt and de Waardt, 'Das Vordringen', 194. On Luxembourg see also Rita Voltmer, '... *ce tant exécration et détestable crime de sortilège*. Der "Bürgerkrieg" gegen Hexen und Hexenmeister im Herzogtum Luxemburg (16. und 17. Jahrhundert)', *Hémecht. Zeitschrift für Luxemburger Geschichte*, 56 (2004), 57–92. For the French Ardennes see Alfred Soman, 'Le rôle des Ardennes dans la décriminalisation de la sorcellerie en France', *Revue historique ardennaise*, 23 (1988), 23–45.

¹²De Blécourt and de Waardt, 'Das Vordringen', 194, and the literature mentioned there.

¹³On this see Voltmer, '... *ce tant exécration*', 71.

¹⁴De Blécourt and De Waardt, 'Das Vordringen', 201–3.

evidence could more often only be procured if they were willing to submit a defendant to torture on insufficient grounds, which implied that they had to be willing to violate the rules of proper court procedure. The court of Friesland, which was indeed staffed by professional jurists and exercised tighter control over all criminal trials in its jurisdiction than its counterparts in other provinces, simply refused to allow for such infringements, as a result of which the death sentence was never pronounced in cases of witchcraft.¹⁵

But while the administration of justice was highly organised in Friesland, it was a shambles in neighbouring Groningen. This province was politically immensely fragmented and lacked an effective central court of justice. There did exist a sort of higher court, but it had very little real influence and was not even recognised in all parts of the area. It did nevertheless manage to save a few defendants from the stake, but it could not prevent fifty women and seven men from being executed in this province for witchcraft.¹⁶ The two provinces of Overijssel and Drenthe each witnessed perhaps one execution.¹⁷ Legal procedures were underdeveloped in the sense that in the sixteenth century the principle of the *talio* was still in force, which meant that if a person lodged a formal complaint for witchcraft, he had to furnish the evidence himself. If he were unable to do so, the court might rule that he had to undergo the punishment that would have been meted out to his opponent if he had proved his case. For private persons it was of course extremely difficult, if not simply impossible, to gather such evidence. Actually, in 1515 in the town of Kampen in Overijssel, a woman who had accused another woman was decapitated. When this second woman then succumbed to the excruciating torture to which she had been subjected, the complainant was then decapitated because she had failed to produce the needed evidence.¹⁸

But apart from these exceptional provinces, it can be stated that in the inland provinces more witches were brought before the courts and that the numbers of death sentences were higher than in the coastal provinces. In the inland province of Gelderland, the situation was perhaps

¹⁵Willem de Blécourt, 'Four Centuries of Frisian Witch Doctors' in Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Willem Frijhoff (eds.), *Witchcraft in the Netherlands* (Rotterdam, 1991), 158.

¹⁶Peter Priester and Anton Barske, 'Vervolging van tovenaars(en) in Groningen, 1547–1597' in de Blécourt and Gijswijt-Hofstra (eds.), *Kwade mensen*, 50.

¹⁷De Blécourt and de Waardt, 'Das Vordringen', 203.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 187.

not that bad, but in comparison to the coastal regions it certainly was not good. At least thirty-five people were executed there in the course of the sixteenth century, but this is only the amount that can be established with certainty.¹⁹ In 1514, for instance, Charles of Egmond, then Duke of Gelderland, announced that he had employed an experienced executioner in order to wipe out all witchcraft from his territories. However, only few actual cases from that period have been discovered. But because there are many gaps in the records of his administration, many more executions may have occurred during his reign than could be established. Another complicating factor is the fact that the central administration of this province had little or no control over what happened in feudal manors. There are strong indications that quite a few more trials occurred in these more or less autonomous domains than have been recorded. So the total figure of trials and executions in Gelderland may have been substantially higher.

In the economically highly developed coastal provinces (or at least in the Dutch-speaking parts of these), witchcraft prosecutions tended to be rather mild, at least until 1585 (Table 1).

ECONOMY AND FEAR OF WITCHCRAFT

The province of Holland clearly was the exception here. Together with Flanders and Brabant, this province constituted the most densely populated area, with sixty inhabitants per square kilometre. Between 1514 and 1622, the number of inhabitants in Holland rose from 275,000 to 672,000. In Flanders and Brabant, the population rise stopped around 1565, but it only accelerated in Holland.²⁰ The economy in Holland depended far more than that of the other provinces on shipping. Prior to 1585 Antwerp was the centre of international trade, but it was almost exclusively in foreign ships, including ships from Holland that put in at this port.

¹⁹On Gelderland see Willem de Blécourt and Hans de Waardt, “It is no sin to put an evil person to death”: judicial proceedings concerning witchcraft during the reign of Duke Charles of Gelderland’ in Gijswijt-Hofstra and Frijhoff (eds.), *Witchcraft*, 66–78; Willem de Blécourt and Hans de Waardt, ‘De regels van het recht. Aantekeningen over de rol van het Gelderse Hof bij de procesvoering inzake toverij, 1543–1620’, *Bijdragen en mededelingen ‘Gelre’*, 80 (1989), 24–51.

²⁰A.M. van der Woude, ‘Demografische ontwikkeling van de Noordelijke Nederlanden, 1500–1800’, *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, vol. 5 (Haarlem 1980), 131, 135.

Table 1 Numbers of executions in coastal provinces between 1500 and 1600

	1500–1584	1585–1600
Holland	22	9
Zeeland	4	0
Flanders (North of language barrier)	8	83
Brabant (North of language barrier)	9	33

Detainees who committed suicide or died in prison have been left out here because these data have not been recorded for all the relevant provinces. On the northern Netherlands in general, viz. the Dutch Republic, see Hans de Waardt, 'Witchcraft and Wealth: The Case of the Netherlands' in Brian P. Levack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford, 2013), 232–48. On Holland: Hans de Waardt, *Toverij en samenleving: Holland 1500–1800* (The Hague, 1991). On Brabant: id., 'Verlöschen und Entfachen der Scheiterhaufen, Holland und Brabant in den 1590er Jahren' in Herbert Eiden and Rita Voltmer (eds.), *Hexenprozesse und Gerichtspraxis* (Trier, 2002), 315–29. On Zeeland: Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, 'Witchcraft before Zeeland Magistrates and Church Councils, Sixteenth to Twentieth Centuries' in Gijswijt-Hofstra and Frijhoff (eds.), *Witchcraft*, 103–18. As to the executions in Flanders see Jos Monballyu, 'Witches in Flanders', kuleuven-kortrijk.be/facult/rechten/Monballyu/Rechtalaglanden/Heksenvlaanderen/heksenindex

In seafaring Holland, a large majority of the witchcraft trials took place in towns and country districts that depended directly on shipping and sea trade. There trials would flare up when seaways were blocked, which occurred in 1564 when, owing to a war between Sweden and Denmark, the sound was blockaded and ships from Holland could not reach the Baltic. This led to a sharp and sudden crisis in the ports of Holland. In these towns, nine women were executed between 1564 and 1566. Something similar happened in 1585 when Spanish warships blockaded the mouths of the Meuse and Scheldt rivers, which made it impossible to put out from fishing ports like Schiedam, Goedereede and Delfshaven, the port of Delft. In the first two of these rather small towns, a series of interconnected trials began in 1586 and a second one in 1591, resulting in eight executions and another one in Delft. These three fishing ports were responsible for all nine death sentences from this period. Over the century as a whole Schiedam alone witnessed eight burnings, that is about a quarter of the total number of Holland executions. In 1585–86, it was clearly the dangers at sea that inspired the trials. One of the women executed in Goedereede in 1586 had confessed that she and five other women, who remained anonymous, had destroyed two ships the previous summer. In 1585 in Delft, a mother and her two daughters were brought to trial. The mother and one of the girls admitted that they had been asked by other women to use magic

to establish whether their husbands or male relatives would return from their sea voyage.²¹ Only one of the daughters was executed; her mother and sister were only exiled. It is unclear what decided this outcome. So eighteen of the thirty-one executions in Holland occurred in years of economic crisis and sea blockades.

Until 1585 the Dutch-speaking parts of Flanders and Brabant constituted the mildest zone of the Low Countries, but in 1585 the attitude of the courts in Brabant and Flanders fundamentally changed. In that year Antwerp surrendered to the Spanish after a prolonged siege during which both parties had hoped to break the enemy's power by inundating the countryside. As a result of this catastrophic tactic, large parts of these two provinces were severely devastated and depopulated. This, together with the blockade of the Scheldt that the northern forces now imposed, plunged Antwerp and these two provinces into a deep economic crisis.

Until 1585 Antwerp had been the trade centre of north-western Europe and the centre of a well-balanced economic grid. In a large perimeter around this metropolis, agriculture had switched to commercial crops and towns as far as Amsterdam had specialised in activities that fitted in with this network of interdependent specialisations. Each year a multitude of ships sailed from Amsterdam to the Baltic to fetch corn. The flourishing sea provinces no longer produced enough grain themselves and had to import it to make bread but also as base material for commercial commodities like beer. In Holland farmers had shifted to cattle breeding and dairy farming and they were now producing butter and cheese for an anonymous, international market.²² One of the remarkable effects of this continuous food supply was that food shortages (let alone famines) were a very rare phenomenon in the Low Countries.

But in 1585 this fine-tuned structure collapsed. In Antwerp grain prices and unemployment now rose to unprecedented heights. This prompted a very large number of people to leave the city and to migrate, many of them to the Dutch Republic, others to England or Germany. In a few years the southern provinces lost more than 25% of their population.

²¹They turned round a sieve while mumbling magical words. After the sieve had come to a standstill its position was interpreted as an answer to the question that had been posed.

²²On this transition see Jan de Vries, *The Dutch Rural Economy of the Golden Age, 1500–1700* (New Haven and London, 1974), 119–36.

In 1582 Antwerp counted 83,700 inhabitants, but seven years later only 42,000.²³ The economic focus now shifted to Holland and more specifically to Amsterdam. A little later the numbers of witch trials began to rise suddenly to reach previously unknown levels, especially in Flanders. So it may be presumed that there was a direct connection between economic disasters and the feeling that witches were destroying the livelihood of their neighbours.

NORTH SEA CONTACTS

In early modern times waterways evidently were not so much a barrier as a road for transporting not only goods and people but also ideas.²⁴ Already in the medieval period, economic relations between Holland and the British Isles had been close. Until the middle of the seventeenth century Dutch freighters dominated shipping between England and the Continent, and English and Dutch fishermen often happened upon each other in the open sea.²⁵ Colonies of English and Scottish merchants had settled in ports in the coastal areas of the Low Countries, and groups of Dutch merchants were living in English ports. Before and in the first decades of the Dutch Revolt, numbers of Protestant refugees fled the Habsburg territories and took up residence in towns like London or Colchester.²⁶

Many of these religious exiles returned home after the new Dutch Republic had shown its ability to withstand Spanish power. But several Dutch congregations kept attending to fellow-countrymen, just as English and Scottish churches in Dutch towns saw to their

²³E. Hélin, 'Demografische ontwikkeling van de Zuidelijke Nederlanden 1500–1800', *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, vol. 5 (Haarlem, 1980), 175.

²⁴Cf. Lex Heerma van Voss, 'North Sea culture, 1500–1800' in Juliette Roding and Lex Heerma van Voss (eds.), *The North Sea and Culture (1550–1800)* (Hilversum, 1996), 37–8.

²⁵J.L. Price, 'Regional Identity and European Culture: the North Sea region in the early modern period' in *ibid.*, 82.

²⁶Hugh Dunthorne, *Britain and the Dutch Revolt 1560–1700* (Cambridge, 2013), 138. The reaction of the local population to this influx was not always positive. In 1580 Englishmen from Colchester complained in a petition to Queen Elizabeth about the number of foreigners who were settling in their town: Christopher Joby, *The Dutch Language in Britain (1550–1702): A Social History of the Use of Dutch in Early Modern Britain* (Leiden, 2015), 36.

compatriots.²⁷ Other Dutchmen settled in England for economic reasons and would usually return home after a shorter or longer stay.²⁸ There was, in other words, a steady exchange of people across the North Sea.

On the cultural level a similar situation is found. Starting in 1575 a series of new universities and other institutions of higher learning were founded in the new republic, which soon began to attract large numbers of students from (amongst other countries) England and Scotland, and in the course of the first half of the seventeenth century these numbers only increased.²⁹ In the religious domain, relations were also remarkably tight and frequent. Many publications by British Puritans, for instance, were translated into Dutch almost immediately after they had been issued in England.³⁰ A Dutch translation of William Perkins' *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft* from 1608, in which the scratching of witches to make them bleed figures as a demonically inspired godless antidote against witchcraft, appeared three years after its original issue.³¹ And a translation of King James's *Daemonologie* of 1597 was released in 1603.³²

²⁷On this see Keith Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Eugene, OR, 1982).

²⁸Jan Lucassen and Rinus Penninx, *Nieuwkomers. Immigranten en hun nakomelingen in Nederland* (Amsterdam, 1985), 46.

²⁹Between 1575 and 1584 eighteen British students matriculated in Leiden alone, and between 1635 and 1644 this number had risen to 240: Martine Zoeteman, *De studentenpopulatie van de Leidse universiteit, 1575–1812. 'Een volk op zyn Siams gekleet eenige mylen van Den Haag woonende'* (Leiden, 2011), 428. 73 English students matriculated in Leiden between 1590 and 1600, and 213 between 1631 and 1640: Ole Peter Grell, 'The attraction of Leiden University for English students' in C. C. Barfoot and Richard Todd (eds.), *The Great Emporium: The Low Countries as a Cultural Crossroads in the Renaissance and the Eighteenth Century* (Amsterdam and Atlanta, 1992), 100. See also Hilde De Ridder-Symoens and J.M. Fletcher (eds.), *Academic Relations between the Low Countries and the British Isles, 1450–1700* (Gent, 1989). That a considerable number of Scottish students studied law at Dutch universities when the persecutions for witchcraft had already come to a halt there but, so it seems, actively participated in the trials in Scotland after their return home is a subject that deserves further research.

³⁰W.J. op't Hof, 'Piety in the Wake of Trade: The North Sea as an Intermediary of Reformed Piety up to 1700' in Roding and Heerma van Voss (eds.), *The North Sea*, 248–65.

³¹William Perkins, *Tractaet vande ongodlijcke tooverconst* (Amsterdam, 1611). For Perkins's discussion of the scratching of witches, see *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft* (Cambridge, 1608), 45, 152, 206–7.

³²King James VI/I, *Daemonologia, dat is, Eene onderrichtinghe teghen de tooverie* (Amsterdam, 1603).

These manifold, lasting and intense contacts and the exchanges of both material and cultural goods may explain why and how magical images and practices could easily cross the North Sea.

STRANGE NEWS FROM ABROAD

Because Holland was the centre of world trade in the first half of the seventeenth century, it is no wonder that news about witch trials in neighbouring countries reached the republic fairly easily. In 1598, for instance, a pamphlet was printed in Antwerp with stories about several recent witch trials, including the execution of the werewolf Peter Stump in 1589 in Bedburg, Germany.³³ Another pamphlet issued in 1612 offered a translation of the 'confession' and execution of the French priest Louis Gaufridy, who had been executed in Aix en Provence a year earlier.³⁴ Five years later in Arnhem, a 'true description' was printed of the execution of two werewolves and ten witches that supposedly occurred in the small German town of Deutz West of the Rhine opposite Cologne.³⁵ And in 1689 a refutation by the Reformed minister Balthasar Bekker 'of an English history of witchcraft' was published in Amsterdam.³⁶ Bekker translated and analysed the broadsheet *Great News from the West of England* that had appeared earlier that year, which discussed a case of witchcraft from the Somerset village of Beckington.³⁷ The original broadsheet comprised only two pages, but Bekker needed twenty-three pages for 'a close and painstaking commentary which demolishes

³³ *Warachtighe ende verschrickelijcke beschrijvinge van vele toovenaers ende toovenerssen, hoe ende waerom men die herwaerts ende ghentswaerst verbrandt heeft in dit teghenwoordich jaer 1589* (Antwerp, 1598). On this trial see Rita Voltmer, 'The judge's lore? The politico-religious concept of metamorphosis in the peripheries of Western Europe' in Willem de Blécourt (ed.), *Werewolf Histories* (Basingstoke, 2015), 169–71.

³⁴ *Confessie ofte belijdenisse van Louwiji Gaufridi priester tot Marseylle in Vranckrijck* (Delft, 1612).

³⁵ *Waerachtighe beschrijvinge van een rechtveerdighe iustitie die gheschiet is inde vreyheydt Duyts rechts teghen over Ceulen, alwaer dat ghejusticeert zijn twee weer-wolven ende thien tooveressen* (Arnhem, 1617). There is, as far as I know, no information from other sources that confirms this massive execution, and it is unlikely it actually occurred.

³⁶ Balthasar Bekker, *Engelsch verhaal van ontdekte tovery wederleid* (Amsterdam, 1689).

³⁷ *Great News from the West of England Being a True Account of Two Young Persons lately Bewitch'd in the Town of Beckenton in Somerset-shire* (1689). On this case see Jonathan Barry, *Witchcraft and Demonology in South-West England, 1640–1789* (Basingstoke, 2012), 54.

the sensational story root and branch, phrase by phrase and word by word'.³⁸ Bekker's pamphlet may be considered a preparatory study for his *The world bewitch'd* (to use the title of the partial English translation of 1695).³⁹ On the basis of the new philosophy of René Descartes, he tried to show in this book that demons or spirits, immaterial as they are, are unable to influence the laws of nature. For this the Reformed synod banished him from the pulpit, but the Amsterdam burgomasters decided to pay him his full salary nevertheless till his death a few years later. By that time, accusations of witchcraft had long ceased to be held admissible by Dutch courts. The last execution of a witch in the Dutch Republic had already occurred almost a century earlier, in 1608.

COMPARISONS

As regards the intensity of the witchcraft persecutions in the Low Countries, three different zones can be distinguished. The south-western French-speaking provinces and Luxembourg (of which the eastern part was actually German-speaking) were, together with the adjoining region of Germany around Trier and the French Ardennes, part of a core zone of massive witch-hunts and lynchings. Some of the inland provinces like Gelderland constituted a sort of middle area, where trials were numerous and certainly not always under the control of central authorities. In the economically highly developed Dutch-speaking parts of Flanders and Brabant, the courts adopted a very mild attitude, at least until 1585. In comparison to these two provinces, seafaring Holland, also wealthy and thriving, was different in the sense that there the number of executions was relatively high. But that had much to do with warfare and blockades at sea.

The steep rise in the number of trials and executions that suddenly occurred in Flanders and Brabant after 1585 also had much to do with a very acute economic crisis, an explosive increase in unemployment and an unprecedented rise in food prices. In that situation, people felt that society needed protection against the witches who they believed were

³⁸The quotation is from Anna E.C. Simoni, 'Balthasar Bekker and the Beckington Witch', *Quaerendo* 9 (1979), 135–42, here 135.

³⁹Balthasar Bekker, *The World Bewitch'd or, An Examination of the Common Opinions Concerning Spirits* (1695). This edition only contained the first part of the original issue. See A. Fix, 'What Happened to Balthazar Bekker in England? A Mystery in the History of Publishing', *Church History and Religious Culture*, 90 (2010), 609–31.

wrecking their living conditions. This was mirrored by what happened in the Republic. There the trials came to a halt already in the first decade of the seventeenth century, and this had much to do with the unparalleled economic boom that set in there after 1585 and the rapid growth of employment. Almost everywhere in Europe the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were a period of rapid inflation, and wages tended to lag behind the prices, especially of foodstuffs. However, in Holland wages grew faster than prices, and the steady import of grain from the Baltic ensured that there was almost always enough food. When this supply came to a halt, for instance when the sound was blocked, economic crisis and food shortage could increase witchcraft fears. In the southern provinces, the sudden economic collapse that overtook Brabant and Flanders after 1585 led to a real witch panic, certainly in Flanders.

Almost half a century ago the British historians Alan Macfarlane and Keith Thomas suggested that the increase of witch trials in England, and more specifically in Essex, was an effect of the shift from an autarchic agricultural to a market economy.⁴⁰ Macfarlane retracted this thesis a few years later because he had found out that already a few centuries earlier a strong individualism had spread among English yeomen.⁴¹

Comparing the trials in the five counties of the Home Circuit of the English assizes, Jim Sharpe found that Essex was responsible for 59% of all trials. In comparison to the other four counties, prosecutions they were not only more numerous, but also much harsher.⁴² But it should be added that more than half of the Essex trials occurred in just one year. In 1645 a real panic descended on this county, which Matthew Hopkins and John Stearne used to take upon them the role that in many areas in the German empire was played by so-called *Hexenkommissare* (witch-commissioners).⁴³

⁴⁰Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (London, 1970), 168–176, 192–8; Thomas, *Religion*, 659–69.

⁴¹Alan Macfarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism: The Family, Property and Social Transition* (Oxford, 1978), 1–2, 59–61.

⁴²James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in England 1550–1750* (London, 1996), 111.

⁴³Macfarlane, *Witchcraft*, 135–44.

It can nevertheless be said that in Essex and the other four counties, the desire to execute witches was not very great. In that sense, the situation in these English counties is not dissimilar to that found in the coastal provinces of the Low Countries. On both the western and eastern sides of the North Sea the desire to prosecute witches was usually rather subdued. Only under very special circumstances did the populace begin to press for campaigns to destroy witches and were the authorities willing to comply with this wish. In Flanders and Brabant, it was the economic collapse of the 1580s and in Essex the civil war that precipitated a large-scale witch-hunt. From this it can be concluded that the two sides of the North Sea together formed a mild zone of witchcraft prosecutions. The line that divided the regions where witch-hunting was intense from those where it was restricted should therefore not be located on the North Sea, but in the Low Countries.

“Kind in Words and Deeds, but False in Their Hearts”: Fear of Evil Conspiracy in Late-Sixteenth-Century Denmark

Louise Nyholm Kallestrup

I

Metaphors comparing the accumulation of witch trials with rolling snowballs or avalanches have been used to describe the dynamics of a witch-hunt. The fear that witches were present in local society was reinforced through trials and executions, and this made suspicions accumulate and spread further. Under certain legal, political and religious conditions, this could evolve into local or massive witch-hunts. In 1617, the Danish King¹ and Council

¹Born in 1577, elected king in 1588. Until 1596, a regency council administered the royal power, led by Chancellor Niels Kaas (died in 1594, hereafter led by Jørgen Christoffer Rosenkrantz). The coronation took place in Copenhagen in August 1596.

This essay is part of a larger project on emotions and the construction of witchcraft in Denmark. It was completed while I was at the University of Melbourne as visiting fellow with the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions 1100–1800.

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issued a comprehensive law on witchcraft, and in the following years a great witch panic broke out in Denmark, especially in Jutland. During the years 1617–1622, about 1000 people were tried for witchcraft, and about half of them were executed.² However, the Danish witch-hunt had been brewing for decades before 1617, and this chapter argues that, especially in the 1590s, some crucial events occurred that came to spur fears of witchcraft and evil conspiracy.

The decade started out with a prominent cluster of witch trials resulting from the purported bewitchment of the royal ships in 1589. This chapter presents these events only briefly, in order to give an impression of how tense the atmosphere must have been in the 1590s. The main focus of the chapter is a series of trials that took place in the years 1596–1597 in southern Funen involving several of the nobility. Although the number of trials was increasing in the last decades of the sixteenth century in Zealand, Funen and Malmø, only few of the court records are preserved in the archives. Owing to the prominent persons involved, the trials in southern Funen offer a rare look into the dynamics and dissemination of the fear and suspicion of witchcraft on a micro-scale. During the panic of 1617–1622, the majority of trials were about harm done to livestock or the illness of people, and were commonly between peasants accusing each other, and so the nobility rarely interfered. As Jacqueline Van Gent and Garthine Walker have argued from different positions, witches did not just threaten livestock; they were a danger to the household.³ This idea of the extended household is crucial to understanding the dynamics of the witch-hunt in 1617–1622. However, as will be suggested, the idea of the household, especially the virtues and expectations of female individuals, also

On the Danish king in English, see Paul D. Lockhart, *Denmark, 1513–1660: The Rise and Decline of a Renaissance Monarchy* (Oxford, 2007).

²Jens Christian Vesterskov Johansen's comprehensive study *Da Djævelen var ude... Trolddom i Jylland* (Viborg, 1991) remains standard reading on Danish witch prosecutions. Based on his mapping of the trials in Jutland and additional studies, an estimated total of Danish trials is 2000, of which half ended in guilty verdicts.

³Van Gent on the later Swedish trials in *Magic, Body and the Self in Eighteenth-Century Sweden* (Leiden, 2008); Garthine Walker more generally on crime and gender in *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2003). See also the groundbreaking works of Lyndal Roper, especially *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford, 1989) and *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (1994), and Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (1996).

plays an important role in the series of trials in southern Funen. In these trials, several members of the nobility were involved as witnesses, victims and suspects. Here, witchcraft posed no threat to one's livelihood, but the fear of witches became an explanation as to why one could not live up to the crucial task of a noble woman's life: to produce an heir. In this sense, this kind of witchcraft was also an assault on the household. The series of trials are comprehensive and spread to eastern as well as northern Jutland, making them impossible to cover here. This chapter focuses exclusively on the initial phases in Funen and on the ways in which the initial suspicions spread and the local variety of witchcraft spread.

II

The fear of witches as contributing to the devil's goal of overthrowing Christian society was indeed present in the 1590s. Starting from 1589, in the last decade of the sixteenth century there were a series of crucial events in which the fear of evil people and the devil manifested itself in wide-ranging trials. This article suggests that these events must have contributed to and affected the general discourse on witchcraft, and additionally that they must have had a decisive effect on the future severe treatment of witchcraft. In 1589, the king's sister, Princess Anne, was set to marry James VI of Scotland. The Royal Danish fleet, led by Admiral Peder Munk, was poorly equipped for hard weather, and the weak state of the ships afterwards reinforced an existing enmity between the admiral and the minister of finance, Christoffer Valkendorff, who was in charge of financing the equipping of the ships.⁴

⁴For short biographies of Christoffer Valkendorff and Peder Munk, see entries in C.F. Bricka (ed.), *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon* (Copenhagen, 1887–1905), vol. XVIII, 209–216ff., vol. XI, 539–542, web edition at <http://runeberg.org/dbl/2/0062.html> (accessed 24 October 2016). The events of 1589–1590 are part of my current research project on emotions and the construction of witchcraft in Denmark; a thorough investigation of the cases and their context can be found in my forthcoming monograph. The trials are only preserved in fragments, and the most comprehensive study of the trials is still the somewhat dated work of Bering-Liisbjerg, *Vesten for sø og østen for hav. Trolddom i København og i Edinburgh 1590. Et bidrag til hekseprocessernes historie* (Copenhagen, 1909). After his return to Scotland, James VI launched a massive witch-hunt against what he believed to be the Scottish branch of this diabolical conspiracy: see Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts (eds.), *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James's Demonology and the North Berwick Witches* (Exeter, 2000) and David Stevenson, *Scotland's Last Royal Wedding: The Marriage of James VI and Anne of Denmark* (Edinburgh, 1997).

Halfway to Scotland, storms forced the captain to head for calmer waters in Norway. In Scotland, James VI became impatient for his bride to arrive, and he eventually travelled to Norway, where the two of them wed before travelling to Denmark. The royal couple stayed in Denmark for the winter, where the Danish court and the nobility, including several of those involved in the witchcraft trials in Funen a few years later, celebrated the wedding. In April, they returned to Scotland. During their stay in Denmark, rumours of witchcraft started to circulate. Witches had caused the storms that made the royal ships seek harbour. A woman named Anne Koldings, known as ‘the Devil’s mother’, and already imprisoned for witchcraft, now confessed to having participated in the bewitchment, and during the summer of 1590 several women were tried and convicted for participating.

Besides the three confessions from the convicted witches, the majority of the trial records have been lost, however. In these confessions, the witchcraft was described as several witches working together, all of them determined to try to prevent the ships reaching Scotland. The evil deed was performed by a servant devil belonging to one of the witches.⁵ As in Trier and the neighbouring regions, the core of witchcraft was diabolical conspiracy and the harm witches caused. Witches belonged to a secret society of people, who worked to overthrow good Christians. Similar to the famous case of Dr Flade in Trier, the bewitchment of the royal fleet proved that no one could feel safe from witchcraft. Witches could be found in all layers of society, and all layers of society could be targets of witchcraft.

The royal celebrations, as well as the witch trials that followed, did not go by quietly. At least thirteen people, among them a mayor’s wife, were publicly executed, and the events must have been the topic of conversation among all layers of society. In the wake of the trials, a Danish translation of a German pamphlet was published (Fig. 1). The pamphlet described the evil deeds of witches in Trier and its neighbouring

⁵The confessions of Karen Weuffers, Maren Matts Bryggers and Maren Mogensis, 13–16 July 1590, Kongens Retterting, Diverse sager og retsakter, 1590–1614, Danish National Archive, Copenhagen.

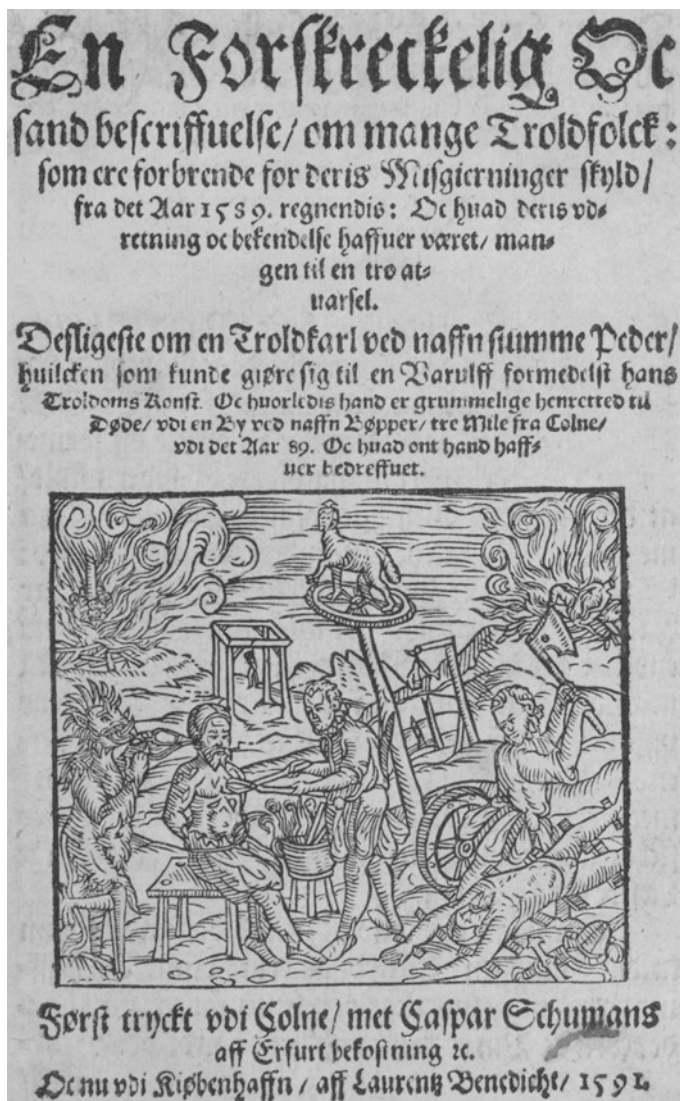


Fig. 1 *En forskreckelig oc sand bescriffuelse, om mange Trolldfolck: som ere forbrende for deris Misgierninger skyld, fra det Aar 1589 regnendis: oc huad deris vdrætning oc bekendelse haffuer været, desligeste om en Trolldkarl ved naffn stumme Peder etc., først tryckt vdi Colne oc nu vdi Kiøbenhaffn 1591.* Copenhagen, 1591, The Royal Library (Copenhagen)

territories, including the famous trial against Dietrich Flade.⁶ In the closing section of the Danish translation, the words ‘God did know that in 1589, there were exceptionally many witches’ are underlined.⁷ The events linked to the Danish court had only confirmed this.

III

Following the bewitchment of the royal ships, local courts in Zealand, Malmø and Funen conducted several trials. Christian IV interfered in at least two of the cases, which involved members of the nobility. Both cases were closed in Jutland, though one of them not until 1621. However, a closer look reveals how they started out in the same local area and the discourse of witchcraft in the two cases differed from average Danish trials by being exclusively about fertility, childbirth, and the death of infants. The remaining parts of this chapter explore the discourse of witchcraft in these cases and the kinds of fear represented, in order to demonstrate how fear of certain kinds of witchcraft disseminated in a local area through social networks and kin.

The cases in south-western Funen are interesting for exploring regional patterns of prosecution and beliefs about witchcraft. Judicially, cases involving members of the nobility went to the High Court (*Kongens Retterting*), whereas the rest of lay society would have to start legal negotiations at the local manor court. These manor court protocols are rarely preserved for this period, whereas the preservation rate for the records of the High Court is generally good. However, in cases of witchcraft, the evidence presented against a person often consisted of testimonies obtained at the lower courts, which means copies of these records can be found in High Court trials. One of the two cases against noble women, in which Christian V interfered, was that of Christenze Kruckow.

⁶Translation: *A true and horrible story about many witches, who were burnt for their misdeeds in 1589, and their explanation and confession, and also about a witch by the name of silent Peder*, etc., first published in Cologne and Copenhagen by Laurents Benedicht, unpaginated; hereafter *A true and horrible story*. In the second half of the sixteenth century, there seem to have been only two to three publishers in the kingdom. For a period of time, Benedicht had a monopoly on publishing books: Bricka (ed.), *Dansk Biografisk Lexikon*, vol. II, 59f. For the significance of the trial against Flade, see Wolfgang Behringer, *Witches and Witch-Hunts: A Global History* (Cambridge, 2006), 97.

⁷ *A true and horrible story*.

The trial illustrates this very well, as it includes Christenze’s own defence, as well as the confessions of two sentenced witches, which were presented as evidence against her.⁸ Owing to the status of the individuals, it is possible to map the connections and relationships between the persons involved in these trials in a much more detailed way than in the average cluster of trials. Usually, the peasantry left no written evidence except for the court documents, and in Danish trials this means we are often left to wonder about such basic things as age and marital status. The presence of nobles broadens the variety of sources, and it becomes possible to draw on genealogies, biographies and sometimes the writings of the persons implicated. In other words, because so many prominent people are involved, it is possible to map the networks of the historical actors.

One case was against Karen Gyldenstierne, a member of the higher nobility and widow of the powerful Holger Rosenkrantz, the former commander-in-chief of the military (*rigsmarsk*). Among her private friends were Chancellor Niels Kaas and the king’s late father, Frederick II.⁹ The estates belonging to Karen Gyldenstierne were situated in Eastern Jutland, around Horsens, as was the estate of her accuser, Johan Rud. It is because of the high-profile accusations against her that we are able to investigate further what is actually the real focus here, namely the starting point of the case. The accusations against Karen Gyldenstierne were only the second phase in a series of events, which had evolved around another noblewoman, Anne Hardenberg, the wife of Johan Rud, whose family was based in Funen. Here two cases related to witchcraft were conducted in the summer of 1596 at Båg hundred, which came to involve peasant women close to Johan Rud’s estate, as well as Karen Gyldenstierne in

⁸The collection of records from the early trials in 1596–1597, as well as the later trials in 1612–1621, have been transcribed and published by legal historian J.C. Jacobsen with a short biographical introduction: *Christenze Kruckow: En adelig Trolldkvinde fra Chr. IV’s Tid* (Copenhagen, 1972). Most of the original trial records are found in the National Archive in Copenhagen, mainly in Dokumenter og akter vedr. diverse retssager, no. 84, Herredagsdombog Dombog 14.

⁹The case has been more or less neglected by modern scholars. Sparse information can be found in Bricka (ed.), *Dansk Biografisk Lexikon*, vol. VI, 376, and an entry by Elisabet Holst in *Dansk Kvindebiografisk Leksikon*, <http://www.kvinfo.dk/side/597/bio/977/origin/170/> (accessed 19 October 2016), and most thoroughly in a biographical article by Elisabet Holst, ‘Som solen for andre små stjerner er. Karen Gyldenstierne -en renæssancekvinde’ in Flemming Lundgreen-Nielsen and Hanne Ruus (eds.), *Spøbt i mør. Dansk Folkevisekultur 1550–1700* (Copenhagen, 1999), vol. 4, 9–114, esp. 65–93.

Jutland. Let us concentrate, however, on the events taking place in southern Funen. At the same time as the two women were executed at Båg hundred, witchcraft cases had been initiated in the neighbouring hundred of Sallinge. These cases soon came to involve suspicions against another noblewoman, Christenze Kruckow, who was an unmarried woman of an old, but not wealthy, noble family living in Funen.

IV

For centuries the nobility had owned estates and lands in the region of Funen. The soil was fertile, and the island was conveniently situated in the middle of the kingdom. Among the powerful families represented in the southern part of the island were Bille, Rønnow, Brockenhuus and Hardenberg.¹⁰ The women of the Hardenberg family were known to be weak in terms of their mental health in the second half of the sixteenth century. Owing to her mother's equally poor mental health, Anne Hardenberg spent most of her childhood living with an aunt in Jutland. In 1587, she wed the nobleman Johan Rud, but she only lived with him for a short period of time before returning to Hagenskov, her family's estate in southern Funen. Back at Hagenskov, she was in bad health and 'deeply depressed' and gave birth to a child in September 1592. During the following year, she stayed at Hagenskov, while her condition only deteriorated, and at one point in the winter of 1593 she temporarily lost the ability to speak. The child, a boy and heir to the family estate, passed away in June 1593, after which she started to recover.¹¹

Anne Hardenberg was deeply religious, and clearly motherhood affected her mental health in a negative way.¹² It was while she was carrying her child that she became weaker, and after the boy was born, her condition continued to worsen. During the winter when her illness was at its worst, Anne Hardenberg claimed to have had a vision. Soon after, she began to compose a devotional text entitled 'Writings of Comfort for

¹⁰The most prominent were the Hardenberg and the Ulfeldt families. The family of Ulfeldt were, however, concentrated in eastern Funen.

¹¹L.S. Vedel Simonsen, *Samlinger til Hagenskov Slots, nuværende Frederiksgave, Historie* (Odense, 1842), 54–6.

¹²Vedel Simonsen, *Samlinger*, 54.

My Parents’.¹³ The text was not completed until after the death of her son in the summer of 1593, and she explained her illness and her revelation in religious terms. In the text, Anne Hardenberg presents herself as chosen by God to suffer from severe illness imposed by evil people, and only by her strong faith had she miraculously defeated it. While the first half of the text is about prayers and how her faith miraculously cured her, the second part is where Anne reveals how she was convinced that evil people—witches—had been the true reason for her miserable state. She was convinced that the people around her, acting as if they wanted the best for her, were in fact causing her misfortunes because they were ‘kind to you in words and deeds, but with falseness in their hearts’.¹⁴ In this sense, she articulated a fear of witches as the hidden enemy. They worked secretly together against godly people in order to wreck them, as witnessed a few years earlier, when weather witches overthrew the royal ships, a scandal that Anne Hardenberg, along with her family, had witnessed at close hand.

It is not possible to reconstruct the years between 1593 and 1596 owing to the lack of sources, but the later actions of Johan Rud prove that his wife had not stopped fearing the misdeeds of evil people. She was convinced that witches had been conspiring against her and had caused her poor health and the death of her only child. By initiating trials against the suspected witches, Johan Rud fulfilled the wish of his wife, as she had articulated in her writing: ‘and let them [the evil people] be publicly disputed and humiliated, those who wanted evil to strike upon me’.¹⁵ In the summer of 1596, Rud tried two women for practising witchcraft against his wife; both of them were convicted and executed.¹⁶ The trials were conducted at the lower court of Båg under which Hagenskov served. As already mentioned, these women denounced several other peasant women for witchcraft, and eventually the suspicion of witchcraft attached to Karen Gyldenstjerne. The trials in Jutland evolved rapidly, and suspicions were quickly pointing to the mistress at the castle

¹³Original title: *Trøsteskrift til mine forældre*: manuscript in Karen Brahes Bibliotek (Library of Karen Brahe); extracts in Vedel Simonsen, *Samlinger*, footnote 1, 55, and Holst, ‘Som solen’, 68–72.

¹⁴Quoted by Vedel Simonsen, *Samlinger*, 55, footnote 1.

¹⁵Ibid.; Holst, ‘Som solen’, 69.

¹⁶L.S. Vedel Simonsen, *Familie-efterretninger om de danske Ruders for 200 Aar siden udøde Adelslæg* (Odense, 1845), 199–202.

of Boller, an estate close to Rud's at Møgelkær. Even though there must have been enmity between Anne Hardenberg and Karen Gyldenstjerne, the denunciations were scandalous. The actions of Johan Rud were, however, even more remarkable. He did not hesitate to initiate a trial for witchcraft against her. This evolved into a three-year legal battle between the two families, in which Karen's sons fought her position in court and eventually the young king interfered and settled the case without any further consequences for Karen Gyldenstjerne.

Although the case of Karen Gyldenstjerne is remarkable, this prominent part of the cluster of cases is not the scope of this article. But the accusation against her is significant when seen in the context of the European witch prosecutions because it confirms the presence of a tense atmosphere in which all persons, high or low, were at risk of being accused and of being the target of witchcraft. Here, we will focus our attention on south-western Funen.

V

To Johan Rud and his wife Anne Hardenberg, the heart of the matter was the enmity between her and Karen Gyldenstjerne, and in the trials it was Karen who was presented as being the leader of the conspiracy against Anne Hardenberg.¹⁷ However, the cases were not initiated before Anne left Jutland for Hagenskov, when she was back at a hundred in which her family had great power. In that same summer, trials were also initiated at the court in the neighbouring hundred of Sallinge. Although court records do not offer verification of the trials being linked, other evidence indicates a close relationship between the two series of trials, owing to the network of the two families, especially the relationship between Anne Hardenberg and the mistress at Nakkebølle, Anne Bille.

The manor of Nakkebølle, about forty kilometres from Hagenskov, was the largest estate of Sallinge and had been in the Brockenhuus family for many years. The couple residing there, Anne Bille and Eiler Brockenhuus, were married in 1584 only shortly after the death of Brockenhuus' first wife, who died in childbirth in 1582 and left him with only one surviving child—a daughter. Soon after the wedding, the

¹⁷Holst, 'Som solen', 74.

young mistress at Nakkebølle was carrying their first child, but the child, a boy, died soon after birth. For the next twelve years, the couple continued to lose children, due either to premature birth or the death of the infants by identified causes shortly after birth. Thus, by the summer of 1596, Anne Bille and Eiler Brockenhuus had lost fifteen children. In the 1590s, losing children was, of course, much more common than it is today, and about half did not make it to adulthood. Still, the loss of fifteen children was unusual, and rumours circulated that Anne Bille might have caused the deaths herself.¹⁸ The gossip, her own grief and the physical challenges may have made Anne Bille open to the idea that she too was the target of evil people. There are several indications that Anne Hardenberg's fear and suspicions of evil people affected Anne Bille and that the two women may have mutually reinforced that fear. As we shall see shortly, the trials in the summer of 1596 soon led to suspicions against another noblewoman, Christenze Kruckow, not only as fellow conspirator, but also as the leader of the witches, in the same way that Karen Gyldenstjerne was represented in the Anne Hardenberg trials.

It is not possible to prove whether the two women confided in each other about their worries. However, it is likely that they did share their troubles with each other. They were first cousins by their mothers and the same age. Only a short distance separated the two manors, and the two women had similar worries about fertility, the loss of children and not producing an heir. Anne Bille had only been married to Eiler Brockenhuus for a few years when Anne Hardenberg returned to Hagenskov in 1592 and lost what turned out to be her only child. At this point in time, Anne Bille had already lost several children, and she must have been very well aware of the suspicions of witchcraft arising after the death of Anne Hardenberg's infant son. Stories about the many dead children at Nakkebølle, as well as the psychological state of Anne Hardenberg, must have been common knowledge in local society and given rise to rumours and gossip. Whether Anne Bille herself suspected witchcraft at this early point is impossible to say, but the time and content of the trials initiated at the court of Sallinge hundred are noteworthy.¹⁹

¹⁸See footnote 32.

¹⁹The trial records of these cases in Båg are lost, but Holst says that a copy of the confession of one of the witches was preserved in Fyns Bispearkiv, Baag herred 23, National Archive, Odense, printed in *Danske Magazin*, IV.6 (Copenhagen, 1886), 214; Holst, 'Som solen', 73.

During the summer of 1596, the two suspected witches were arrested and sentenced for the misdeeds; however, only one part of the court records has been preserved, the confession of Ousse Lauritzes. It was obtained at Nakkebølle on 6 August of that year and was later included in the evidence against Christenze Kruckow. In her confession, Ousse described a number of malevolent rituals performed against the mistress at Nakkebølle and stated that these attempts to harm the mistress had gone on for several years and started the week prior to the wedding.²⁰

The descriptions explain in detail how the witches had managed to harm Anne Bille in secrecy. The upcoming wedding between Anne Bille and Eiler Brockenhuus was at the centre of the first attempt to harm the couple. The last Friday before the ceremony, two women had measured the bridal bed of Anne Bille and Eiler Brockenhuus. To literally measure the bed like this was a well-known magical practice, which could be used for malevolent or benevolent purposes. One of the women was Christenze Kruckow, who had previously resided at the manor but now lived in Svendborg with her sister, about eighteen kilometres from Nakkebølle. The other one was Gunder Kioldersuends, who was currently working at the manor and the one on trial along with Ousse Lauritzes. The women were joined by a third suspected witch, Johanne Knudsdatter. They had used a string to perform their evil acts, and at first Christenze had kept the string, but soon she sent for Johanne to have her take it back to Nakkebølle. The hierarchy between the women involved in the rituals was clear, and it resembled the hierarchy in real life. From the confession we are informed that Johanne Knudsdatter and Gunder Kioldersuends were both working in the kitchen at Nakkebølle. Johanne was serving with Gunder, and here she was the one bringing the string back and forth to Nakkebølle on Christenze's orders, and afterwards Christenze would pay them for participating in the rituals. At the wedding, the string was once again in use, when the women tied a knot in the string while the ceremony took place in the large hall of the manor. The purpose of this kind of magic is not revealed in the confession, most likely because it was known to all that tying knots in strings in this context would cause the man's impotence and so prevent an heir being born.

²⁰The confession of Ousse Lauritzes is found in a statement and settlement from the provincial judge, Gabriel Knudsen, as part of the legal negotiations between him and Jens Kruckow; full text in Jacobsen, *En Adelig Troldevinde*, 21–3.

The witches had also worked more directly to have evil enter the body of Anne Bille. Once again, Ousse emphasised that it was Christenze who took the lead. By offering Anne Bille some sheep's milk on a large spoon, they had managed to send the devil into her. Just before Anne Bille was going to drink the milk, Christenze had slipped a spider into it, a symbol of the devil, and according to Ousse, this was how the devil entered the body of Anne Bille and in this way polluted her and prevented any future children.²¹

In a Danish context, confessions were usually given during or shortly after torture had been terminated, and so it needed to be confirmed whether the statements were valid. This meant that trial proceedings must have taken place for several weeks at least. Ousse was imprisoned at Nakkebølle, which was not uncommon in Danish trials.²² The statements given during torture were, of course, produced while the interrogated person was under extreme psychological and physical duress, and so they should not be regarded as depicting true events. Rather, they must be regarded as a series of cultural notions about witches, their deeds and their capacity to harm their surroundings, but only uttered to satisfy the interrogator.²³ In this case, the leader of the interrogation was Anne Bille herself. The actual act of torture, and who was present, is not well documented in the sources. From the surviving records we know that it was conducted by the hangman, while one or more would pose the questions in the company of 'good men'. Compared to Inquisitorial protocols, where

²¹The idea of evil entering one's body and causing an illness is common in Danish witchcraft: see Louise Nyholm Kallestrup, 'Knowing Satan from God: Demonic possession, witchcraft and the Lutheran Orthodox Church in Denmark in early modern Denmark', *Magic Ritual and Witchcraft*, 6.2 (Winter 2011), 163–82 at 179f. Shortly after these events, in 1597, Anne Hardenberg's sister Mette claims that the devil entered her body and stayed there for a period of six weeks and corrupted her health: Vedel Simonsen, *Samlinger*, 55.

²²If the suspect was found guilty, his/her family then had to bear the expenses for the imprisonment, as well as for the execution: Johansen, *Da Djævelen var ude*, 26.

²³For the methodological considerations and the statements produced in court as well as torture, see Louise Nyholm Kallestrup, *Agents of Witchcraft in Early Modern Italy and Denmark* (Basingstoke, 2015), 133–47 and id., "He promised her so many things": Witches, Sabbats, and Devils in Early Modern Denmark' in Julian Goodare, Rita Voltmer and Liv Helene Willumsen (eds.), *Demonology and Witch-Hunting in Early Modern Europe* (forthcoming).

one gets detailed accounts from the questions posed to the bodily reaction of the defendant, for instance when the defendant cried, the Danish interrogations are usually summaries of a witch's confession.²⁴ The fact that the defendant was imprisoned at the estate of the accuser was quite common in Danish cases. However, it was illegal to implement torture outside the court. What is even more remarkable is that Anne Bille, a woman, was the one leading the interrogation. It confirms her agency and influence. It also shows that the accounts about malevolent rituals in Ousse's confession were a response to what Anne Bille wanted confirmed. In this sense, the confession became an intersection between ideas about witches and a reflection of Anne Bille's fears of what was the cause of her many dead children. The court records reflect that Anne Bille was leading the interrogation in the company of 'good people',²⁵ although it is significant that her husband did not seem to participate since the interrogations took place while he was in Copenhagen for the coronation of Christian IV.²⁶ This supports the notion that Anne was the one who felt targeted the most, which subsequent statements made by Ousse confirm when she revealed that wax children were put into use to explicitly harm Anne Bille.

Wax figures moulded to resemble children were common in Danish witchcraft and were used for malevolent purposes. Ousse referred to an episode, which she did not date, but must have taken place after the wedding. Once again, Christenze Kruckow was placed in the midst of the events. For forty weeks, Christenze carried a wax child under her right arm. The figure was described as rather large, about the size of half an arm, and the witches named it Anne after the mistress. They took the wax figure to the church of Åstrup and sacrificed it at the high altar.

²⁴For a comparison of the use of torture and the court records, see my comparative study on Italy and Denmark: *Agents*, 56–9.

²⁵C.T. Engelstoft, 'Den gamle Danske Adelsslægt Brockenhuus', *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 4.4 (1873–1874), 526.

²⁶Engelstoft, 'Den gamle Danske Adelsslægt', 526 draws this conclusion. However, from the decision made by the provincial judge at Funen in a complaint presented by Christenze's brother, Anne Bille is referred to explicitly as the one posing the questions: document included in the High Court proceedings against Christenze Kruckow, for references see footnote 9, via Jacobsen, *En Adelig Troldekvinde*, 21.

In later accounts of this event, a description of a priest baptising the child was added.²⁷ Afterwards, they buried it. It was not coincidental that the witchcraft took place here. The church of Åstrup was the parish church of Anne Bille and Eiler Brockenhuus, and the church was favoured by Eiler Brockenhuus and held the tombs of his deceased children under the high altar. In her confession, Ousse did not reveal the burial site, but it was repeated in several later descriptions as being below the seat of Anne Bille.²⁸ When lowering the figure into the ground, they said ‘now we are burying the fortune and well-being of Anne Bille’.²⁹

VI

Ideas of witchcraft and the emotions they engendered could spread through a number of media. Laws were communicated from the pulpit, as were the views of the parish priest in his sermons. Another medium opened up when a convicted witch was to be executed. Executions were public and drew large audiences. Although corporal penalties were common in the early modern catalogue of punishments, executions were not an everyday occurrence, and when Johan Rud had two women executed for witchcraft at Båg, at least nine members of the nobility were present, along with the usual crowd of local onlookers.³⁰ Witch executions were carried out by burning the person alive, which was also considered particularly brutal by contemporaries. Just before the delinquent was pushed into the flames, her confession was read aloud to the audience and she was asked to reaffirm or deny parts or all of it. The confession included a summary of the evil deeds the witch had performed against her co-villagers, as well as the time and place at which God was renounced and the names of her fellow witches. The execution can be regarded as an emotional arena in which the statements, initially given in the torture chamber, were repeated, albeit in a public setting and with local villagers,

²⁷ Referred to in the settlement of the subsequent slander trial between Jens Kruckow and Eiler Brockenhuus: National Archive, Copenhagen, Herredagsdomsbog, no. 14 (1595–1599), fol. 239v–242r, via Jacobsen, *En Adelig Troldkvinde*, 33.

²⁸ The confession of Johanne Jenses obtained on 18 March 1597: National Archive in Copenhagen, Dokumenter og akter vedr. diverse sager, no. 84, pp. 23–4, and Jacobsen, *En Adelig Troldkvinde*, 37, as well as in the aforementioned slander trial in footnote 28.

²⁹ The confession of Ousse Lauritzes in Jacobsen, *En Adelig Troldkvinde*, 22.

³⁰ Engelstoft, ‘Den gamle Danske Adelslægt’, 526.

priests and members of the nobility as audience. The trials in the two neighbouring jurisdictions proved how the fear of evil people and witchcraft materialised in local society in south-western Funen. When Ousse Lauritzes and Gunder Kioldersuends were executed, the people present had it confirmed that witches corrupted noble women in their fertility and health and that these evil people were active in local society. Emotions of fear and suspicion regarding this variety of witchcraft were disseminated, confirmed and maybe even enforced in this way.

We know that Ousse Lauritzes and Gunder Kioldersuends were sentenced to death for witchcraft and burned in late summer of 1596. In March of the following year, another woman, Johannes Jenses, was interrogated and confessed to having assisted in bewitching Anne Bille at Nakkebølle. However, at this point Christenze Kruckow had already felt she was on shaky ground. Suspicions against her had intensified that autumn and in early January 1597, and her brother presented a written statement from Christenze to the manor court in Sallinge. In this statement, she systematically refuted the allegations brought against her, although she does admit to having measured the bed, but only because she wanted an identical bed crafted for her brother.³¹

The strategy put forward by Christenze indicates the importance of household and kin in the conflict. While Eiler Brockenhuus' first wife was still alive, Christenze was taken in and clearly treated by her as her own kin. When Anne Bille became mistress at Nakkebølle, Christenze claimed to have given her things she had been handed by the late mistress, and Anne Bille in exchange promised to 'be as good to [...] [Christenze] as if [Anne Bille] were [her] closest of kin'.³² Clearly the two women did not get along, and this was probably what made Christenze leave Nakkebølle.³³ There is no doubt that at the centre of the conflict was the enmity between the two women. Christenze further accused Anne Bille and Eiler Brockenhuus of breaking promises made to her and treating her as a maid. Generally, she shifts between, on the one

³¹Danish National Archive, Herredagsdomsbog, no. 14, 1595–1599, fol. 221ff., transcribed in Jacobsen, *En adelig Troldekvinde*, 15–19.

³²Danish National Archive, Herredagsdomsbog, no. 14, 1595–1599, fol. 221ff., transcribed in Jacobsen, *En adelig Troldekvinde*, 17.

³³Engelstoft argues that Christenze Kruckow was related to Eiler Brockenhuus by his and Christenze's mothers: 'Den gamle Danske Adelsslægt', 524.

hand, trying to make them feel guilty by emphasising her own generosity and, on the other, insisting on having nothing but good intentions. She often listened to Anne Bille moan and grieve about the loss of the children, but Christenze referred to an episode where Anne Bille had confided in Christenze: ‘once I [Christenze] was at Nakkebølle with you and sat on your bed while you were having breakfast, you told me that it did not hurt you as much that the children had died as that people thought you were yourself the one causing [them to die]’.³⁴ In this statement, we get a sense of Anne Bille’s perception of what it meant not to produce an heir and of the rumours and gossip whose victim she had been. When Christenze emphasised how she had nothing but good intentions and presented examples of Anne Bille treating her as her confidante, she in fact confirmed what Anne Hardenberg had emphasised in her writings, namely that one’s misfortunes were caused by evil people around you who were acting as if they wanted nothing but the best for you.

In the case of Christenze Kruckow, her brother Jens Kruckow fought her legal battle, and she was never formally charged for being part of the evil conspiracy against Anne Bille in the 1590s. Soon after, she was relocated to Aalborg in the northern part of Jutland, where she lived with her sister. In the 1610s, the dramatic increase in witch trials in the countryside of Jutland started, and Christenze’s case represents a clear example of how persistent and fatal a rumour about witchcraft could be. In the 1610s in Aalborg, a series of trials for witchcraft was conducted. Fear of witches seems to have penetrated the urban space of Aalborg in those years, and once again Christenze’s name came up in the confession of a sentenced witch. This time round, the court showed no mercy, and she was eventually executed for witchcraft in 1621.

³⁴Danish National Archive, Herredagsdomsbog, no. 14, 1595–1599, fol. 221ff., transcribed in Jacobsen, *En adelig Troldekvinde*, 18.

“Ein gefeßrlich Ding, darin leichtlich zuviel geschieht” (A Dangerous Thing in Which Too Much Happens Easily). The End of Village Witch Trials in the Saar Region

Eva Labouvie

WITCH TRIALS WITHOUT END

Historical studies of the belief in witches and especially witch-hunts and witch trials have shown that the latter came into existence only at the beginning of the early modern period in European territories, where they appeared, took on a life of their own and reappeared sporadically. While the developing witch doctrine and the large number of witchcraft persecutions have been given a lot of attention, fewer attempts have been made to explain the later decline in the belief in witchcraft and reduction in the number of witch trials, particularly in rural areas.¹ The most recent

¹The main studies are from English-speaking scholars, notably Brian P. Levack, e.g. ‘The Decline and End of Witchcraft Prosecutions’, in Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (eds.), *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (1999), 1–93;

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research, which has moved its focus from a traditional global perspective to regional, individual studies or to specific aspects and problems in the field of witchcraft, often eschews the aspect of declining persecution and instead points to sweeping factors such as decrees, bans and a waning number of trials.² Only the final witch trials and their victims in the later eighteenth century have monographs and articles dedicated to them, but they do not use the trials as the starting point for a general analysis of the end of witchcraft persecution in Europe.³

Most works in the European context, which followed the first examination of witch trials in 1843 by Wilhelm Gottlieb Soldan, have interpreted their disintegration and eventual disappearance as the result of a

‘The Decline and End of Scottish Witch-Hunting’, in Julian Goodare (ed.), *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context* (Manchester, 2002), 166–81, and most recently ‘The decline and the end of witchcraft prosecutions’, in: id. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford, 2013), 429–48. Particular mention should be made of Edward Bever’s article, which considers German material: ‘Witchcraft Prosecutions and the Decline of Magic’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 40 (2009), 263–94.

²Cf. Eva Labouvie, *Zauberei und Hexenwerk. Ländlicher Hexenglaube in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1991), 9f. The rural aspect of witch persecutions is discussed by Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England* (1971), 570–83, but he focuses only on the conditions in England. Newer approaches mostly provide general explanations for the end of witchcraft persecutions, because they are interested in different problems. Wolfgang Behringer, for example, points out that ‘natural law and reason of state’ restricted the trials in the geographical area he researched; cf. Wolfgang Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern: Volksmagie, Glaubenseifer und Staatsräson in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Munich, 1987), 331; cf. also Rainer Decker, ‘Die Hexenverfolgungen im Herzogtum Westfalen’, *Westfälische Zeitschrift*, 131/132 (1981/82), 375ff.; Bernd Roeck, ‘Christlicher Idealstaat und Hexenwahn. Zum Ende der europäischen Verfolgungen’, *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 108 (1988), 402f. Not even the Wikipedia article ‘Hexenverfolgung’ (witch-hunt) or the articles written by Sönke Lorenz and H. C. Erik Midelfort for *historicum.net*, ‘Hexen und Hexenprozesse: Ein historischer Überblick’, deal with the end of the trials and a shift in witch belief, cf. URL: <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hexenverfolgung> (accessed 26 September 2016) and URL: <https://www.historicum.net/purl/aj/> (accessed 26 September 2016).

³See *inter alia* Wolfgang Petz, *Die letzte Hexe: Das Schicksal der Anna Maria Schwägelin* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, 2007); Walter Hauser, *Der Justizmord an Anna Göldi. Neue Recherchen zum letzten Hexenprozess in Europa* (Zürich, 2007); id., *Späte Hexenprozesse—Der Umgang der Aufklärung mit dem Irrationalen* (Bielefeld, 2016); Clemens Peter Böskens, *Hexenprozess Gerresheim 1737/38. Die letzte Hexenverbrennung im Rheinland* (Düsseldorf, 1996); August Friedrich Neumeyer, *Der Mühlendorfer Hexenprozess 1749/50* (Mühlendorf, 1992).

new mentality towards the end of the seventeenth century, influenced by a ‘philosophical transformation’ of the old world view through Neoplatonism and the Renaissance, the emergence of natural sciences⁴ and the subsequent fundamental change in the interpretation of natural phenomena, the experience of reality and causal relationships.⁵ The ‘alternate world of senses’,⁶ inspired by new philosophies and sciences, persuaded intellectuals like lawyers, theologians and doctors to doubt and question the judicial practice of witch trials.⁷ This brought about a demand for more rigorous scrutiny and methods of proof in order to eliminate uncertainty. As Robert Mandrou showed in his study of the judiciary of sovereign French courts, this trend promoted enlightenment and a new willingness to engage with theologians, doctors, philosophers and jurists.⁸ At the same time, the new world view and a ‘crisis of confidence’ in the belief of witches led, so it was claimed, to a ‘humanisation of the devil’, so that both Satan and the witch had lost their powers, their harmful skills and their fear-inspiring

⁴Cf. Wilhelm Gottlieb Söldan, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse*, II (Stuttgart, 1843), 125ff.; H.R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Harmondsworth, 1969), 109ff.; Claudia Honegger, ‘Die Hexen der Neuzeit: Analyse zur Anderen Seite der okzidentalen Rationalisierung’ in id. (ed.), *Die Hexen der Neuzeit: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte eines kulturellen Deutungsmusters* (Stuttgart, 1978), 132ff.; Thomas, *Religion*, 570ff., 578; G. Kimmerle, *Hexendämmerung. Studie zur kopernikalischen Wende der Hexendeutung* (Tübingen, 1980), 107.

⁵Cf. H.P. Kneubühler, *Die Überwindung von Hexenwahn und Hexenprozess* (Diessenhofen, 1977), 38; S. Bovenschen, ‘Die aktuelle Hexe, die historische Hexe und der Hexenmythos. Die Hexe: Subjekt der Naturaneignung und Objekt der Naturbeherrschung’, in G. Becker, S. Bovenschen, H. Brackert (eds.), *Aus der Zeit der Verzweiflung. Zur Genese und Aktualität des Hexenbildes* (Frankfurt, 1978), 279ff.; Kimmerle, *Hexendämmerung*, 108, who uses the terms ‘mechanische Kausalerklärungen’ (mechanical causal explanations), ‘mathematische Naturgesetze’ (mathematical natural laws) and ‘instrumentelle Vernunft’ (instrumental reason) as replacement scales for the earlier unit of belief and knowledge.

⁶Verbatim: ‘alternative Sinnwelten’, Honegger, ‘Hexen’, 132.

⁷Cf. H.C.E. Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany, 1562–1684: The Social and Intellectual Foundations* (Stanford, 1972), 32ff. He speaks of a ‘general crisis of confidence’, which was followed by a change in legal practices; cf. Thomas, *Religion*, 573ff, 576f; Honegger, ‘Hexen’, 124ff.

⁸Cf. Robert Mandrou, ‘Die französischen Richter und die Hexenprozesse’, in Honegger (ed.), *Hexen*, 309f, 312, 318, 330. He speaks of a ‘period of destructuring’ of the belief in witches, beginning in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and later of the uncovering of ‘contradictions and arbitrariness’, which led to a process of ideational realisation in the circle of enlightened French judges and furthermore in other intellectual circles and finally as a result

appearances.⁹ Finally, it was said that this intellectual vigilance and its effects enabled a questioning of the core belief in witchcraft, the doctrine of witches itself. Not only did one doubt the biblical justifications of the witchcraft concept and persecution, one also denied the devil's power to seduce and personify; this also meant a rejection of a pact and sex with, as well as the apparition of, the devil. Experimental investigations put an end to flying witches and witches' marks and sabbaths, in other words the crucial elements of the inquisitorial witch paradigm.¹⁰ Officially consulting other disciplines like medicine, physics, mathematics and chemistry could explain the decisive element of most trials, namely the witchcraft paradigm, and thereby the 'maleficium' would be demystified.

Freeing the witchcraft discourse of its theological 'stranglehold' in the middle of the seventeenth century and the destruction of the belief in the reality of the inquisitorial witch pattern at the end of the seventeenth century led to a paradigm shift in the doctrinal image of witches: rather than being thought of as some life-threatening reality to be burnt at the stake, the witch was now merely banned to the realm of the imaginary, as a creature born from dreams, illusion and madness. Because of this new attitude towards witches and new strategies to deal with them, scholars claim that they were no longer talked to but only talked about. As the devil's paramour morphed into a pitiful, crazed person, the belief that witches possessed tangible devilish power was no longer sustainable in judicial and educational thinking.¹¹

brought with it the forgoing of witch trials. See also: Alfred Soman, 'Les procès de sorcellerie au Parlement de Paris (1565–1640)', *Annales ESC*, 32 (1977), 790–814; id., 'La décriminalisation de la sorcellerie en France', *Histoire, Économie et Société*, 4 (1985), 179–203; L. Febvre, *Das Gewissen des Historikers* (Berlin, 1988), 191ff.; Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (4th edition, London & New York, 2016), 242–4; Martin Pott, *Aufklärung und Aberglaube: Die deutsche Frühaufklärung im Spiegel ihrer Aberglaubenskritik* (Tübingen, 1992); id., 'Aufklärung und Hexenaberglaube—Philosophische Ansätze zur Überwindung der Teufelspakttheorie in der deutschen Frühaufklärung', in Sönke Lorenz and Dieter R. Bauer (eds.), *Das Ende der Hexenverfolgung* (Stuttgart, 1995), 185 ff.

⁹Honegger, 'Hexen', 122f, 113f, 132f; Mandrou, 'Die französischen Richter', 330ff.; W. Kurth, 'Das Phänomen des Hexenwahns', *Berichte der physikalisch-medizinischen Gesellschaft Würzburg*, 76 (1968), 46, who speaks of 'a decline in the importance of magical powers'.

¹⁰See esp. Thomas, *Religion*, 570ff.; Honegger, 'Hexen', 114ff. and Trevor-Roper, *European Witch-Craze*, 110: 'No mere scepticism, no mere "rationalism" could have driven out the old cosmology. A rival faith had been needed'.

¹¹Kimmerle, *Hexendämmerung*, 108ff., 134ff.; Thomas, *Religion*, 577ff.

More recent attempts at explaining the gradual decline of witch trials also fail to further our understanding since they concentrate on the official level of courts and opposing legal parties or refer to extraordinary cases, like Gábor Klaniczay's study on the connection between the belief in witchcraft and of vampires in Hungary. After closely examining Maria Theresa's legislation 'for the eradication of superstition, as well as a rational method for the criminal judgement of magic and sorcery'¹² in Austria-Hungary, Klaniczay observed that it was the far more spectacular and fantastical belief in the existence and workings of vampires which diminished witch belief and persecutions.¹³ Gerhard Schormann, however, in his last chapter about the end of persecution in the Electorate of Cologne, pointed out very early what led to the intervention of officials against further trials: apart from war and other crises it concerned external factors like a prohibition of witch persecution by the authorities, passive resistance of officials, courts and the clergy, criticism by opponents of persecution and finally the exorbitant costs of trials. Nevertheless, Schormann's *Programme of Eradication in the Electorate of Cologne*, too, leaves us none the wiser about its end.¹⁴

When, however, it was not the authorities but entire village communities that initiated waves of trials with the help of written denunciations, then a quest to find out how the witch hunts ended must take on a different perspective. Explanatory approaches, in which fiscal motives, preserving the authorities' interests, the hierarchy of public districts and administrative bodies and the 'top-down' enforced prohibition of new waves of trials, do not suffice in a construct that inverts the power structure of authority-organised witch-hunts. They add, if anything, only one-dimensionally to the explanation of the decline of witch trials, in which no authoritarian decrees or mandates ordered the cessation of further trials, even if they suddenly ended.

¹²Verbatim: 'zur Ausrottung des Aberglaubens, sowie zum rationalen Verfahren der kriminalischen Beurteilung von Magie und Zauberei'.

¹³Gabor Klaniczay, 'Der Niedergang der Hexen und der Aufstieg der Vampire im Habsburgerreich des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts', in id., *Heilige, Hexen, Vampire. Vom Nutzen des Übernatürlichen* (Berlin, 1991), 73–97, esp. 93–7.

¹⁴Gerd Schormann, *Der Krieg gegen die Hexen. Das Ausrottungsprogramm des Kurfürsten von Köln* (Göttingen, 1991), 153–69, esp. 167.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE SAAR AREA

The rural communities of the Saar region developed a veritable momentum in hunting witches and wizards during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in German, Lorraine-French and Luxembourgian territories under the sovereignty of the Electorate of Trier (Catholic), Palatinate-Zweibrücken (Protestant-Reformed) or Nassau-Saarbrücken (Protestant-Lutheran). Except in the majority Lorraine-administered villages, all other regions of the Saar area since 1580 formed so-called witch-committees elected by community vote under a linden tree. They consisted of three to five male villagers, whose job it was to collect evidence and hear witnesses, as well as deliver a bill of indictment in the name of the whole village against the person accused of witchcraft to the high court responsible. Despite numerous lordly decrees forbidding the practice, they continued to function during the main period of persecutions, from 1580 to 1635, in unrestricted numbers and intensity. This—in fact, illegal practice—was indirectly supported by the lordly courts, who could not avoid initiating legal proceedings again and again, because of the accusations brought forth.

Once embarked upon, the court proceedings ended in a death sentence in 96–98% of the cases. On average, 10–20% of the adult population was involved as witnesses. The Saar area experienced an intensive period of persecutions which peaked in 1590, 1610, 1630 and finally in the year 1633/34, which can be seen as the zenith of a last wave of persecution characterising the second half of the 1620s and the first half of the 1630s. After 1635 witch trials only played a marginal role.¹⁵ Given the fact that the practices of the persecution up to [trial] court level were controlled ‘from the bottom up’, meaning the village representatives in the committees as well as the villagers were acting as witnesses and informers of their own free will, the question why witch-hunts suddenly stopped in a region like the Saar area where persecutions happened so frequently demands an answer on many overlapping levels. Since the persecution of witches was not stopped by official bans, it must have been a number of different factors and a shift in attitudes after 1635 which

¹⁵Hereto in detail: Labouvie, *Zauberei*, 68–76; id., “Gott zu Ehr, den Unschuldigen zu Trost und Rettung ...”. Hexenverfolgungen im Saarraum und den angrenzenden Gebieten’, in F. Irsigler and G. Franz (eds.), *Hexenglaube und Hexenprozesse im Raum Rhein-Mosel-Saar* (= *Trierer Historische Forschungen*) (Trier, 1991), 400ff.

caused the abandonment of new waves of witch-hunts, especially among the general population. These changes in persecution practice will be explored on three levels. First, the outer layer needs to be examined to see which political, economic, social and societal factors developed a special virulence since 1636 and changed the daily life of the people living in the Saar area. The second, inner, layer of conscious perception and action is analysed for any shift in mentality or signs of a change in attitudes due to or concurrent with emerging external processes. Lastly, one must ask which of these external conditions or changes in society or the local community encouraged potential internal processes of change, in the sense of a newly won understanding of witchcraft and its persecution which helped prevent the continued suspicion and accusation of witches.

SOCIETAL UPHEAVALS: THIRTY YEARS' WAR, POST-WAR PERIOD AND RECONSTRUCTION

The second half of the Thirty Years' War, and especially the year 1635 when the Saar area was devastated, ended the period of witch-hunts; only one or two trials took place in 1646, 1659, 1669 and 1697. This sudden cessation of witch-trials was not due to official mandates, as was the case in neighbouring territories and other European countries.¹⁶ Since the war had had a devastating impact on the Saar area and its bordering regions at this time, it was likely at least one reason why witch trials receded. Contemporaries recognised the exceptional nature of the events and living conditions of rural communities in these years. In 1635 Pastor Henri Champson of Odweiler noted in his church register: 'The year 1635 was very sinister for us...[T]he cities and all the fortified places in Lothringia...were razed to the ground....From this day on (18th of July) the inhabitants were subjected to continuous plundering and sank

¹⁶In the year 1649, Queen Christina of Sweden abandoned the persecution of witches in her North-German territories. She was followed by count Johann Philipp Schönborn who as the first German sovereign forbade further trials in the diocese of Mainz: Andrea van Dülmen, *Deutsche Geschichte in Daten*, I: *Von den Anfängen bis 1770* (Munich, 1979), 222. In 1672 the royal council forbade witch trials in all of France by royal decree in Rouen, Pau and Bordeaux: Mandrou, 'Die französischen Richter', 314ff. In the Duchy of Luxembourg, which was under French rule between 1684 and 1698, witch trials were suppressed by an order of Louis XIV: N. van Werveke, *Kulturgeschichte des Luxemburger Landes* (Luxembourg, 1923), I, 319.

more and more into poverty...Nothing was spared, no sanctuary, no person...All graveyards had been overflowing and enlarged. Even though in Boulay they threw 10–12 people into a pit, 4–8 corpses in different houses were left lying unburied for 8 days, yes even up to a month...'.¹⁷

Similarly, the account book of the Dillinger authorities in Fickingen read in 1633: 'Et comme le dit village est du tout sans sujets et inhabité, le constable ne fait aucuncue recette, portant cy nihil', and Andreas Registrator gave a headcount of the survivors in Dillingen in the year 1638 the following title: 'Since almost all died from billeting, the hardship of war, sorrow and hunger in the years 1635, 36, 37, 38, only the following few have been found...'. The pastor of the village Saarwellingen in the county of Criechingen reported to the Earl of Nassau-Saarbrücken on 23 February: 'Such subjects were a populous community, but very very few are left.'¹⁸ From Fraulautern it was reported in 1635 that nearly every house had been abandoned, Hülzweiler was still uninhabited in 1656, and in 1641 the villages of Lisdorf, Altforweiler, Kerlingen, Schrecklingen¹⁹ and Wiesbach²⁰ were deserted. Rent master Klincker of Saarbrücken knew of great suffering and reported a drastic population decline in St Johann and Saarbrücken, which had been reduced to a mere seventy inhabitants.²¹ Other eyewitnesses recorded the acts of despair and atrocities in and between the communities of the Saar region.²²

¹⁷Quoted after G. Baltzer, *Historische Notizen über die Stadt Saarlouis und deren unmittelbare Umgegend*, Teil 2: *Historische Notizen über die unmittelbare Umgegend von Saarlouis* (Dillingen, 1979), 45ff.; original text in Latin by P. Schmitt, 'Das Ottendorfer Manuscript', *Treviris*, II (Trier, 1841), 96–129.

¹⁸All reports by Schmitt, 'Das Ottendorfer Manuscript', 124.

¹⁹See R.R. Rehanek, *Abtei Fraulautern: Eine quellenmäßige Darstellung vom Werden und Vergehen der adligen Frauenabtei Fraulautern. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Orte Fraulautern, Schwarzenholz, Labach, Hülzweiler, Schwalbach, Griesborn, Lebach, Reisweiler, Eidenborn, Falscheid, Ens Dorf, Lisdorf, Dillingen, Pachten, Roden, Rehlingen, Wallerfangen, Kerlingen, Ittersdorf...* (Saarbrücken, ND 1978), 145ff.

²⁰See J. Schmitz, *Ortsgeschichte von Wiesbach, Humes, Kutzhof, Lumerschied und Wahlschied* (Saarbrücken, 1936), 66.

²¹Kurt Hoppstädter, 'Hexenprozesse im Saarland', *Die Schule. Zs. f. Erziehung, Unterricht und Heimatkunde* 10, no. 7 (1957), 144.

²²A. Lehnert, *Geschichte der Stadt Dillingen/Saar* (Dillingen, 1968), 142; Hans-Walter Herrmann, K. Hoppstädter and H. Klein (eds.), *Geschichtliche Landeskunde des Saarlandes*, I: *Vom Faustkeil zum Förderturm* (Saarbrücken, 1960), 261, 264.

Further comparisons of population numbers, before, during and after the war speak for themselves. In 1643 both Rehlingen and Würzbach had two inhabitants each, while in 1651 only four families lived in Blieskastel and St Ingbert each. As early as 1635, Völklingen only had eight or nine inhabitants, the district of Ottweiler had a total population of seventeen, and only five out of twenty-one households still lived in Malstatt and Burbach, while Sulzbach had been burnt to the ground and abandoned. The district of Dillingen counted eighteen families in 1643, including refugees from the surrounding countryside, and even by 1650 nobody lived in Homburg.²³ Tholey had four subjects and a widow in 1643, in 1635 Lebach had no remaining population at all, and villages like Merchweiler, Dreisbach, Itzbach, Hargarten, Rammelfangen, Merchingen, Düren, Tünsdorf, Berg, Buweiler, Weiler and Schweigen counted two or three subjects or were totally deserted. The whole of the Lorraine district of Schaumburg, with about thirty villages, only had 79 subjects in 1643, the Lorraine district of Siersberg had, during the same time period, shrunk to nineteen subjects, and we know from Jacob Friedrich von Eltz, a bailiff of the Electorate of Trier, that there were about fifty-five subjects in the district of Blieskastel under the Electorate of Trier with its nineteen villages and in addition ‘about 14 households existed, who had no fixed abode but wandered around begging and may already have emigrated’.²⁴

In total, for the county of Nassau-Saarbrücken, one can assume a population loss of 83–84% in the districts of Saarbrücken and Ottweiler and probably a 100% decrease in the district of Homburg. The Archdiocese of Trier

²³E. Keyser (ed.), *Städtebuch Rheinland-Pfalz/Saarland: Die Städte im Saarland* (SD, Stuttgart, 1964), 26, 37, 56, 75; W. Kirsch, *Blätter für den Unterricht in der Heimatkunde* (Tholey, 1948), 5; ADMM Nancy, Best. B 9341, o. fol.; *ibid.*, Best. B 9458, o. fol.; *ibid.*, Best. B 9455, o. fol.; *ibid.*, Best. B 9519, o. fol.; *ibid.*, Best. B 9518, o. fol.; *ibid.*, Best. B 10292, o. fol.; *ibid.*, Best. B 4990, o. fol.; *ibid.*, Best. 9458, o. fol.; *ibid.*, Best. B 9346, o. fol.; LHA Kobl., Abt. 53c 7, no. 136, Kopie als Regest im Repertorium.

²⁴For Würzbach: W. Abel and G. Franz (eds.), *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg und das deutsche Volk* (= *Quellen und Forschungen zur Agrargeschichte* 7) (Stuttgart, 1979), 48; for Rehlingen: Lehnert, *Geschichte der Stadt Dillingen*, 140; for Blieskastel, Dillingen, Völklingen and Ottweiler: Keyser (ed.), *Städtebuch*, 16, 18ff., 37, 78; for Amt Schaumburg: Schmitz, *Ortsgeschichte*, 68; for the district of Siersberg: Lehnert, *Geschichte*, 140ff.; Abel and Franz (eds.), *Dreißigjährige Krieg*, 48; LHA Kobl., Abt. 53c 7, Nr. 136, Kopie im Repertorium.

lost 88% in the district of Blieskastel and 62% in the district of Saargau, and the Duchy of Lorraine 67% in the district of Saargau, 53% in the district of Schaumburg and 73% in the Lorraine district of Siersberg. The population of Saarland villages in the Duchy of Palatinate-Zweibrücken was decimated by 90%.²⁵ A further indication of the desolation and depopulation of the Saar region is the sudden ending of church registers in the year 1633, which are only continued in a sporadic fashion thereafter.²⁶

The end of the Thirty Years' War in no way meant the end of constant warfare or pillaging in connection with famine and disease. It can be shown, by the example of the village of Dillingen, that the subsequent decades up to 1700 did little to change the prevailing conditions. The village, which was administered by Lorraine nobility of the same name, counted 52 hearths in 1623 despite the plague ravaging the town, and even had increased to 59 in 1633. Imperial troops under General Gallas stormed the castle of Dillingen, but only in the subsequent years did the 'Great Dying' and a continuous flow of refugees set in, which at first reduced the inhabitants to 16 families in 1638, and later, including the refugees in the castle, to 18 subjects in 1643.²⁷ While the year 1648 brought the long-awaited peace to most German territories, military actions continued in the Saar region. From 1651 on, the French General Laferté conquered the areas occupied by Lorraine; a report of an official visit in 1657 says: 'At the synod of Nalbach the pastor of Dillingen was heard. There is much hardship for the church and the people because of the extortions of the French. The peasants are fleeing daily. The synodals have not appeared because they were stopped by the French....'²⁸ The

²⁵Cf. H.-W. Herrmann, K. Hoppstädter and H. Klein, *Geschichtliche Landeskunde des Saarlandes*, II: *Von der fränkischen Landnahme bis zum Ausbruch der französischen Revolution* (Saarbrücken, 1977), 504; Abel and Franz (eds.), *Dreißigjährige Krieg*, 47ff; A. Jacob, 'Der Dreißigjährige Krieg und seine Folgen für den unteren Saargau', 3. *Jahresbericht des Vereins für Heimatkunde im Kreis Merzig* (Merzig, 1934), 55–74.

²⁶This after G. Baltzer, *Historische Notizen über die Stadt Saarlouis*, I: *Historische Notizen über die Stadt Saarlouis* (Dillingen, 1979), 47.

²⁷All details according to the script of the notary B. Motte, *Die Rechte der Herrschaft Dillingen nach einer Aufstellung vom Februar 1623*, STA Saarlouis; A. Jacob, 'Ältere Einwohnerrollen von Dillingen', *Die Stimme der Heimat, Beilage zur Saarbrücker Landeszeitung*, 29. 10. 1931; id., 'Eine Statistik über die Bevölkerungsverhältnisse in den ehemals lothringischen Gebieten unserer Heimat aus dem Jahre 1643', 3. *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Heimatkunde im Kreis Merzig* (Merzig, 1943), 55–74.

²⁸BAT, Abt. V, 6, Visitationen, p.125ff.

population of Dillingen from 1663 to 1667 comprised 17 households, inhabited by 11 peasants, three craftsmen and three widows with their families, although the tax record of 1669 notes that there were no adult sons and daughters with their own households within the village.²⁹

In 1670 the area around Dillingen was drawn into a war between the Netherlands and France, and the village was besieged by French troops, pillaged and partly destroyed. Pastor Philipp Schmitt reports the conditions in the community for 1673 as follows: ‘The whole year there was heavy quartering, which acted horribly: The stockpiles in the castle and village have been used up, the new seeding and planting in the gardens destroyed, the fruit trees felled....The inhabitants were physically abused and maltreated in all kinds of ways, so that many had to flee....’³⁰ In 1672, after multiple sieges by enemy troops, the estate and its inventory, including possessions brought there by the villagers and the gardens, were ‘desolated and rotten’. All food supplies for man and beast had been used up, all valuables stolen, the livestock driven off. Then in 1677 the Austrians besieged Dillingen castle and the village. Although great smelting works were founded in 1685 with the permission of the count of Nassau-Saarbrücken, the population around 1700 totaled only twenty eight households. Dillingen only returned to the population level of 1633 in 1793, with a total of 48 households.³¹

DESTRUCTION OF AUTHORITY AND LORDLY ADMINISTRATION

Observing these descriptions, it is hardly surprising that the witch trials in the Saar region met a premature end, since there was barely anybody left to be accuser or accused. Not only were the communities in the Saar region beset by other problems and needs well into the 1670s and 1680s, but the authorities and judicial structures had also been destroyed, either because the local elite had fled or occupying troops were constantly being pushed out, or their estates and the attached buildings could not resume their former judicial and administrative role owing to

²⁹Cf. ADMM Nancy, Best. B, no 9523; A. Jacob, ‘Dreißigjährige Krieg’, 55ff.; quote from ADMM Nancy, *ibid.*, o. fol.

³⁰Manuscript in Pfarrarchiv Dillingen, Best. I, 261.

³¹For the quote see Pfarrarchiv Dillingen II/III, 191f; Lehnert, *Geschichte*, 153ff.; number of inhabitants after: Motte, *Rechte*.

damage and destruction. The Castle of Blieskastel is described in 1659 as follows: 'There are currently three residencies in the house, namely the Eltzian, the Leischian and the Archdiocese. The brickwork is in very poor condition. The prison tower, which stands next to the Eltzian residence, has numerous holes in its roof....No stable, no housing...'.³² The castle of Schaumburg was burned down completely in 1661,³³ and in Wallerfangen, the administrative center of the Lorraine Baillage d'Allemagne, the lordly court could not convene since the court building had collapsed.³⁴ The complete breakdown of the societal structure and the economic system, as well as the institutions of power, in the year 1635 marked the preliminary end of further waves of witch-hunts in the Saar region. But the widespread loss of life and destruction caused by the Thirty Years' War and the ensuing military actions cannot have been the only reason for the absence of additional massive waves of prosecutions. In some other German territories, the witch craze only started after the worst chaos of war, or the witch-hunts remained constant in the following years. This phenomenon occurred primarily in smaller areas of rule similar in size to the Saar region, for example the Upper County of Wied, where a total of 14 trials were still being carried out in 1651/52, or the counties of Lippe, Minden and Schaumburg, which saw a wave of persecutions around 1660. It also occurred in larger areas of rule, like Hesse-Kassel, which began seriously pursuing witch trials in the mid-seventeenth century, and the area of today's federal state of Baden-Württemberg, where until 1670 sentences were being handed down on numerous witch trials.³⁵

NEW COMMUNITIES, NEW ORIENTATION

Later on, witch trials took place sporadically, such as in the years 1659, 1669, 1697 and 1700, years in which population growth and waves of immigration are recorded for the Saar region.³⁶ However, no witch committees were founded during this time. They had in earlier times been

³²LA Speyer, Abt. C 33, no. 209/88, o. fol.

³³ADMM Nancy, Best. B 9342, o. fol.

³⁴Ibid., Best. 10292, o. fol.

³⁵Cf. G. Schormann, *Hexenprozesse in Deutschland* (Göttingen, 1980), 55, 67ff.

³⁶In 1688 Schwarzenholz already had 60 inhabitants, St. Johann 191: Keyser (ed.), *Städtebuch*, 41, 59; in 1667 Dillingen had 60–70 inhabitants, in 1711: 281: Lehnert, *Geschichte*, 22, 143.

the driving force behind village inquisitions. On the one hand, this points to the fact that the village population was no longer interested in the organised and extensive persecution of witches and wizards on a community level. Another reason may have been that those groups that had in former times organised the persecution and prosecution and possibly even profited from them in subsequent decades had to actively be recruited. Yet it seems on closer inspection that in the interim the interests and preferences of the rural population had markedly shifted. Some authors claim that the simple, poorly educated rural population had a greater and earlier ‘reality orientation’, that is an earlier and better recognition or awareness of reality, rooted in the doubtful results of the witch-hunt, a kind of disillusionment concerning the usefulness of burning witches to improve general living conditions. This allowed accusations of witchcraft to fade into the background slowly, while a group of educated lawyers and theologians retained the belief in witches longer and more strongly.³⁷ Concerning the Saar region, two hypotheses can be formulated for this admittedly very generalised assumption; however, the hypotheses are found, not explicitly, but indirectly in the sources in which the village inhabitants speak.

Firstly, it could not have escaped the members of the community that after a period of intensive persecution and destruction of witches, which had been going on for decades, the general situation had not improved much. Because of this, the prevailing mindset, which had traced back the occurrence of misfortunes, catastrophes, emergencies and conflicts to witchcraft, was met with loudly voiced increased scepticism and well-founded doubts. This kind of change in the semantic and functional meaning of witch trials is described by the contemporary Johann Linden for the instigators of persecution in the city of Trier as follows: ‘The persecution took several years and several superiors boasted of the amount of pyres they had built and the amount of victims they had given to the flames. But after these measures failed to control the tempest [the plague, war and famine, E.L.], and the subjects grew poor, the fervour of the witch judges expired....’³⁸ In Trier, it was the authoritarian inquisitors and witch judges who reached

³⁷Cf. W. von Bayer-Kätte, ‘Die historischen Hexenprozesse. Der verbürokratisierte Massenwahn’, in W. Bitter (ed.), *Massenwahn in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Ein Tagungsbericht* (Stuttgart, 1965), 224; E. Heinemann, *Hexen und Hexenangst. Eine psychoanalytische Studie* (Frankfurt am Main, 1989), 101ff.; Kimmerle, *Hexendämmerung*, 83ff.

³⁸Quoted after E. Zenz (ed.), *Die Taten der Trierer—Gesta Treverorum*, III (Trier, 1959), 54.

the conclusion that the battle against witchcraft had brought no positive change or had even worsened the prevailing conditions. In the Saar region, the same role was played by the community instigators whose wishes for the outcome of trials had not been fulfilled. Analysing the passive behaviour of the village population, which formerly had been very active, it becomes clear that current inhabitants of the Saar region (a completely different community from the pre-war one) were not willing to invest time and energy or commit bond money or male committee members needed for the village witch-hunts. In times of extreme need it was also surely not advisable to spread terrible rumours or to even have a person charged in court, thereby making an enemy of that person, their whole family and the associated circles of friends and acquaintances, since the solidarity between survivors and their mutual assistance had become the commandment of the hour.

Further observations must have alarmed contemporaries. Firstly, many people were still involved in trials due to earlier confessions so that no end was in sight. Secondly, the trials were set against people who in the interim had passed away, emigrated or gone missing. Because of this, a stringent follow-up of prosecutions from before the Thirty Years' War seemed barely possible. Moreover, the number of female members of a community was greatly reduced, a loss measurable in population lists. This was intensified through wartime events and a high infant mortality rate, which had wide-ranging effects for population policies. Since the 1670s, local lords had tried to repopulate the depleted Saar region by offering economic and financial incentives. Foreigners from France, Tyrol, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Lorraine who came to the Saar³⁹ did not know the old suspicions, rumours or conflicts and were unwilling to resolve new ones through accusations of witchcraft. They may very well have brought their own very different beliefs in witches with them, which could not easily be mixed with ideas of the remaining original inhabitants. The different resident authorities, which had frequently been replaced by other authorities during the course of the war, had shown no special interest in the legal prosecution of the crime of witchcraft even before the war, which meant that they did not initiate outstanding trials or boost persecutions. Furthermore, some nobles obviously assumed that a renewed trial

³⁹ Herrmann, Hoppstädter and Klein (eds.), *Geschichtliche Landeskunde*, I, 99–106, 264ff.

would lead to a far higher financial burden for them than before the war, since the collection of outstanding legal and execution fees from the surviving relatives would be ineffective in these times of need.⁴⁰

Such considerations by the Saar communities and the authorities about the waning role of witchcraft accusations show that for the contemporary observer, the clearest and most tangible arguments for forgoing any further witch trials must have been the three named factors: an ultimately ineffectual persecution; a change in the make-up and organisation of village communities, together with authorities who were no longer interested in the continuation of trials; and a significant decimation of the female population.

COURTS, JUDICIAL PERSONNEL AND THE CHANGE IN THEIR CONVICTIONS

Until 1635, judicial persons involved directly in persecutions, i.e. judges, legal scholars and notaries at court, still accepted petitions at the lordly high courts brought forward by the village committees (though these were illegal) and initiated legal proceedings if there was sufficient evidence. That there were ‘enlightened’ scholars before the final period of persecutions in the Saar area between 1625 and 1635 who expressed doubts and reservations about already controversial elements of witchcraft, critically examined the mode of testimonies and did not believe everything is evidenced in the following excerpts from expert opinions and case files. As early as 1594 the Licentiate Peter Weber voiced his strong reservation in an expert opinion, solicited by the city clerk Jacob Landsberg of Lautern (known today as Fraulautern in the Saarland) for the witch trial of a woman from Diezweiler, regarding the use of torture, which he saw as ‘a dangerous thing, in which too much happens easily, and should not be used lightly’, concluding that the application of torture in this case could not be justified. Therefore, due to insufficient evidence and inconsistent witness testimonies, the woman should be released.⁴¹ Even the unknown legal scholar who produced the expert opinion in the

⁴⁰Lorraine, which profited from witch trials, lost its territories at the Saar initially in 1633–37, again in 1670–1697 to France: Herrmann, Hoppstädter and Klein (eds.), *Geschichtliche Landeskunde*, II, 536ff.

⁴¹W. Krämer, *Kurtrierische Hexenprozesse im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert vornehmlich an der unteren Mosel. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte* (Munich, 1959), 85ff.

trial against Simons Elsa of Wustweiler dismissed her confession about spoiling fruit, manipulating weather and being the devil's paramour as being 'a devilish illusion', 'phantasiae merae et illusiones diabolicae'; he also warned 'that one shall not abuse torture, but be modest in its use'⁴² and that one should not conduct it with 'excess and immoderation'.⁴³ Under the condition that the defendant promised to mend her ways, he advocated her banishment.⁴⁴ A libel trial in the year 1617 had the lawyer of the plaintiff Closter Kett demand an enormous fine of 1000 gulden, together with a revocation of the accusations of her libeler, Meyer Cun; in 1598 even the Reichskammergericht brought a quick end to the case against Wolf Schneider from Löstern.⁴⁵ Similarly, the appointed judges and notaries had their doubts in the trial against Sondag von Criechingen in 1618, noting 'much deception and an almost strong fickleness'⁴⁶ in his testimonies. The increasing practice of imposing a fine for the insult of accusing someone of witchcraft, instead of a possible prosecution, as well as the advisors from Trier who forbade continued court procedures and the usage of torture, pointed, to some extent, to the caution several important lawyers exhibited already quite early.⁴⁷ But in the peak phase of witch-hunting, such dissenting attitudes and practices, where one rather pardoned or fined a potential witch or wizard, originated only from individuals trained in legal matters, owing to their individual sensibilities and vigilance towards legal procedures and the evidence and testimonies brought forth.

This changed when in the years after 1635 a kind of uncertainty and scepticism began to reach wider circles. It affected whole legal institutions, which now tried to pass on the cases brought to them to lower legal institutions or

⁴² Archiv Waal, no. 2752, o. fol.

⁴³ Archiv Waal, no. 2752, o. fol.

⁴⁴ Archiv Waal, no. 2752, o. fol.

⁴⁵ LASB, Best. 22, Nr. 4147, fol. 1–137; Archive Wallerstein, Herrschaft Dagstuhl, Aktenverzeichnis, 17. Jahrhundert, I. 9.5., unter 1598, A 71; LHA Kobl., Abt. 56, no. 2201, fol. 13–15; van Werveke, *Kulturgeschichte*, I, 325.

⁴⁶ AMM Nancy, Best. B 935, Nr. 8.

⁴⁷ STA Wetzlar, Best. W 23/70 III, Nr. 104, 105, fol. 1151–1165; ADMM Nancy, Best. B 935, no 8; *ibid.*, Best. B 9506, o. fol.; STA Trier, Best. 1534/166, Bündel 7, fol. 66f, fol. 64; G. Hein, *Dorf Bütten. Das Prozessbuch des Schultheißen Jörg Erhard in Bütten 1569–84* (typescript, Cologne, 1980), under no. 95, LIII.

use other measures to resolve them, as can be shown by the following examples from the County of Nassau-Saarbrücken. A charge such as that brought before the city court of Saarbrücken by the citizen Hans Schmidt in 1586, according to whom his wife had been accused of being a witch by a guest at their wedding, still came with the justification that ‘since the accusation is quite high and if the courts cannot reach a settlement’,⁴⁸ it should be passed on to a higher jurisdiction, in this case a high court, which would then examine the suspicion of witchcraft. But in 1643, the same court took no special notice when a citizen of St Johannes went to court because his wife had been called a whore and a witch. Similar legal actions in the years 1656, 1662, 1679 and 1688 were now treated as simple libel suits and were dealt with by the city court itself.⁴⁹ As a result of events in the year 1643, when there was palpable uncertainty in dealing with accusations of witchcraft, accusations which would in former times have led to witch trials could in subsequent years be marginalised and reassessed as ordinary legal matters of libel.

Similar changes can also be found in those cases still heard before the high courts. In 1679, since the court could not decide a trial against two women from Saarbrücken based on its own insight, the judges consulted expert opinion from Strasbourg, who suggested calling in clergy as interlocutors for the defendants, indicating a certain caution and sceptical stance in the judiciary. The same can be said of the Saarland court, which described these confessions as ‘adventurous’ and the way they were made as accompanied by ‘Melancholia’.⁵⁰ In a later case in 1697 in Ostertal, the offence of practising magic did not lead to a trial; in fact, the church claimed its former rights and excommunicated the accused. A later conviction around 1700 had the suspected witch, after three court sessions, recant and pay five gulden. The protocol of the trial ends with the following words: ‘it has been seen as an accusation made by someone with malicious envy and insatiable evilness’⁵¹ and confirmed the legal trivialisation of cases in the courts, starting in the middle of the seventeenth century.

⁴⁸A. Koellner, *Geschichte von Saarbrücken und St. Johann*, I: *Historische Nachrichten. Nach Urkunden und authentischen Berichten* (Saarbrücken, 1865), 164.

⁴⁹W. Krämer, ‘Eine Hexenverbrennung im Amt Blieskastel am 30. Januar 1599. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte unserer Heimat’, *Südwestdeutsche Heimatblätter*, 2 (1928), 42ff.

⁵⁰LASB, Best. 22, Nr. 2786, fol. 1–4.

⁵¹D. Kremp, ‘Von Zauberei und Hexerei im Ostertal’, *Heimatsbuch des Landkreises St. Wendel*, 18 (1979/80), 122.

At the same time, a different pattern of interpreting possible cases of witchcraft had established itself within jurisprudence. A defendant's confession of a pact with the devil, which in all of the later trials was voluntary, by no means led to long interrogations concerning a seduction to witchcraft, gathering for witches' covens or some perpetrated harmful magic. In fact, the courts attributed this type of self-denunciation to 'Melancholia', a term which was new to the courts of the Saar region. Or if the accusation had come from third parties, it was concluded that these kinds of suspicions were based only on envy, revenge and dislike. Both interpretative patterns point not only to a new scepticism about the former special crime of witchcraft which was increasingly marginalised but also to a marked tendency to demystify the crime, noticeable also in the kind and length of punishments imposed, which began to correspond more and more to those handed out for trivial cases.

The question of how the changed view of the Saarland courts had developed and how it gradually could establish itself is difficult to answer. Different factors can be observed which point to a self-imposed professionalisation of the courts, without any lordly decrees requiring a corresponding revision of the judiciary. On the one hand, it is clear in the verdicts of the high courts since the mid-seventeenth century that the former jurymen, village representatives, no longer sat on the High Court. Their jurisdiction was shifted to the lay courts of the village exclusively, where, together with the steward of the High Court, a law clerk and a messenger, they were responsible for matters of low justice, such as disputes over property and borders, the distribution of goods and supervision of taxes and rent. The high courts of the single districts now consisted solely of the steward of the High Court, the judge, officials and feudatories, a clerk and messenger. Judgement was passed here by lordly officials—and this was before the reforms in the electorate of Trier concerning blood courts, and the later revisions by Lorraine (or rather France), Nassau-Saarbrücken and Palatinate-Zweibrücken—autonomously and without prior consultation of a higher authority.⁵² Whether this shift in the nature of the courts can be seen as a consequence

⁵²Cf. Herrmann, Hopstädter and Klein (eds.), *Geschichtliche Landeskunde*, I, 158ff., 291; Examples for the later occupation of courts are found in J.M. Sittel (ed.), *Sammlung der Provinzial- und Partikular-Gesetze und Verordnungen, welche für einzelne, ganz oder nur theilweise an die Krone Preußen gefallene Territorien des linken Rheinufers über Gegenstände der Landeshoheit, Verfassung, Verwaltung, Rechtspflege und des Rechtszustandes erlassen worden sind*, II, IX. *Sammlung, Viererherrschaft Lebach* (Trier, 1843), 747–50.

of the overall increase of competencies of lordly officials, detectable following comprehensive administrative reforms, remains unclear, as does the question of the judges' education and training and where they received it. But until the 'Thirty Years' War, we can assume that non-educated judges exercised jurisdiction together with their patrimonial lords and were dependent on village lay judges for the interpretation of local laws.

A professionalisation of the judiciary as well as the advance of lordly officials into the active practice of law made the involvement of village laymen obsolete. The absence of a lay jury in witch trials since around 1650 is evidence of the view that representatives of the village opinion were no longer supposed to be allowed to contribute. Instead, the relevance of expert opinions from judicial faculties increased to such a degree that in later legal procedures no witch trial took place without their consultation. The disappearance of village lay judges from the high courts and the close following of the positions held by the judicial faculties of Strasbourg and Trier, who argued for caution and thorough scrutiny in every case,⁵³ may have been the reason for a change in the evaluation and assessment and, finally, the condemnation of witchcraft as a prosecutable crime at the high courts of the Saarland, even when at the beginning of this process not all untrained judges had been replaced by trained ones. In addition to initial attempts at mitigation by Saarland and lordly jurists, as well as the process of the marginalisation of witchcraft accusations by and through the courts as outlined earlier, the general spread of an 'enlightened' stance among jurists after 1650 became a reason for the decline in witchcraft accusations. It becomes clear for the trials of 1659, 1662, 1679, 1688 and 1697 and the trials around 1700 that the inquisitorial witch pattern, used up to this point as a guideline for the courts and supported by the interrogations of defendants, disintegrated into its former elements. Some of its components, which formerly had been indispensable features of witchcraft and had acted as evidence for the accusation and charge of witchcraft or were inextricably linked to the image of the witch and the sorcerer, gradually fell away—for instance, the core elements of demonology, such as a pact with the devil, coupling with the devil, oath-breaking, witches' flight and witches' Sabbath.

⁵³Here esp. LASB, Dep. Histor. Verein, Abt. XIII, Nr. 78; *ibid.*, Best. 22, Nr. 278b, fol. 1–4; HSTA Wiesbaden, Abt. 369, Nr. 418, fol. 1ff.; ADMM Nancy, Best. B 941, 2. Bündel, o. fol.; Kremp, *Von Zauberei*, 122; M. Müller, *Die Geschichte der Stadt St. Wendel, von ihren Anfängen bis zum Weltkrieg* (St. Wendel, 1927), 609.

Others remained as individual delinquencies, divorced from their former meaning and context, and continued to exist as crimes of libel, slander and blasphemy. A statistic for the Saar region shows an enormous rise in accusations of witchcraft slander from about 1650 onwards,⁵⁴ a consequence of the crime of witchcraft shifting from the level of the higher to the lower courts.

COMMUNITY MENTALITIES AND THE SHIFT IN MEANING

Following from the assessment that gradually an initially tentative and later sceptical stance towards witch trials set in, one can assume that these changes did not remain hidden from communities since the changed legal practices differed strongly from what had been in place earlier. If one proceeds from such an assumption—the sources are silent about this, as they so often are with respect to the collapse of the belief in witches—this means that the now demystified witch posed no threat to members of a village. The formerly feared ‘witch’, who—unlike in the cities, where she was seen more as a mad woman to be pitied—was now considered a strange, belligerent, vengeful, annoying and poor old crone, an actual preparer of poisons and a blasphemer, continued to be excluded from the community, but now without fear of her curses. Persistent accusations of witchcraft must have seemed almost pathetic not only in court but also in the eyes of most community members after this new pattern of interpretation was adopted by the judiciary.

Within the community the continuing belief in witchcraft and people allegedly capable of witchcraft, which in former times found its release in the formation of witch committees or the writing of supplications to the authorities for permits to organise a communal witch-hunt, was now being channeled into the prosecution of insults, leading to libel trials in connection with witchcraft allegations. It was accepted by communities that these new conflicts would not be dealt with by a high court, but by a different legal body. The difference with witch trials was that the accused acted as plaintiffs and sued for libel, while the accusers were slapped with various fines.

⁵⁴For this purpose cf. Labouvie, *Zauberei*, chapter III. 2.1.

Regarding the distribution of roles in the court process, the roles had been reversed, at least on a legal level. It would be too simplistic to draw the conclusion that external changes, visible in people's dealings with suspects and their adjustment to the still available possibilities of public or rather judicial denunciations, gave rise to a change of consciousness, a mental shift of attitudes and ideas towards magic and witchcraft. In any case, it cannot be assumed that a change in legal practice caused such a drastic change in mentality; there were still conflicts in communities, where old and increasingly poor people lived, whose strange behaviour could be misunderstood, as well as the basic elements of the collective witch pattern, which were not simply forgotten.⁵⁵ However, many of the former elemental aspects of the rural belief in witches had undergone a weakening or experienced a shift in meaning, due to societal, intercommunal and judicial changes. Consequently, when after 1650 the accusation of witchcraft in most cases did not end in a witch trial but in libel cases, the insult of witchcraft emphasised far more the offensive nature of the accusation, as illustrated by additional denigrations like whore, vagrant and liar for women or rogue, thief or prankster for men.⁵⁶ Such shifts in the belief in witches must have been accompanied and encouraged by a change in its triggering factors and catalysts, for example conflict potentials, which had previously repeatedly led to accusations of witchcraft. The reduction of such triggering factors for witchcraft

⁵⁵For the potential of conflict and the connection with witchcraft accusations cf. *ibid.*, chapter IV; id., ‘Männer im Hexenprozess. Zur Sozialanthropologie eines ‚männlichen‘ Verständnisses von Magie und Hexerei’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 16 (1990), 70ff; Rainer Walz, ‘Der Hexenwahn vor dem Hintergrund dörflicher Kommunikation’, *Zs. f. Volkskunde*, 22 (1966), 1–18; Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (1970); Walter Rummel, ‘Soziale Dynamik und herrschaftliche Problematik der kurtrierischen Hexenverfolgungen’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 16 (1990), 26–55; id., *Bauernherrschaft und Hexen: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte sponheimischer und kurtrierischer Hexenprozesse 1574–1664* (Göttingen, 1991); Gabor Klaniczay, ‘Hexenverfolgungen in Ungarn: Soziale und kulturelle Spannungen’, in id., *Heilige*, 51–71. Concerning an interpretative pattern of witches see Labouvie, *Zauberei*, chapter IV, 1. 2.

⁵⁶KSCHA Zw., Rep. II, no 190 I, fol. 25; LASB, Best. 22, no. 3778, fol. 307; LHA Kobl., Abt. 1D, no 4478, fol. 4; *ibid.*, Abt. 1c, no. 9112, fol. 312; *ibid.*, no. 14132, o. fol.; *ibid.*, no 14131–14133, o. fol.; *ibid.*, Nr. 9111, fol. 861f; *ibid.*, Nr. 13829, o. fol.; *ibid.*, Abt. 210, no 1439, fol. 93; ADM Metz, Best. 10F, no 150, o. fol.; *ibid.*, no. 151, o. fol.; ADMM Nancy, Best. B 741, no. 58, o. fol.; STA Trier, Best. Ta 44/1, no. 26, Buchst. A-Mü.

accusations and the simultaneous promotion of a generally changed stance towards witchcraft are exemplified in the shift in responsibilities for the care of beggars and the poor.

CHANGE OF CATALYSTS: THE EXAMPLE OF POOR RELIEF

Studies show that many defendants in witch trials were people of modest means from the lower and poor classes, who were dependent on neighbourly help, but whose behaviour left the benefactor in conflict between neighbourly charity towards others and his own self-interest. In case the request for help was met with refusal the reaction might often contain imprecations, cursing or gestures, which could later be interpreted as bewitchment.⁵⁷

In the regions of Saarland in which the Lutheran and Calvinist doctrines had spread since the end of the sixteenth century, works of charity and neighbourly aid now took on a different significance through the promulgation of congregational government and the commandment of love.⁵⁸ The giving of alms should not be an uncomfortable additional burden, dependent alone on the goodwill of donors, but was raised to a moral duty by the new doctrines. But owing to the secularisation of church property, money now flowed into the coffers of the sovereigns, who in turn used this money for 'reformatory' reasons, meaning the founding of hospitals and

⁵⁷Hereto for the first time Thomas, *Religion*, 512–19; see also D. Meili, *Hexen in Wasterkingen. Magie und Lebensformen in einem Dorf des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts* (Basel, 1980); R. Grasmug, 'Wirtschaftliche und soziale Aspekte der Hexenverfolgung in der südöstlichen Steiermark', in H. Valentinitz (ed.), *Hexen und Zauberer. Die große Verfolgung. Ein europäisches Phänomen in der Steiermark* (Graz and Vienna, 1987), 317–22; H. Hörger, 'Wirtschaftlich-soziale und gesellschaftlich-ideologische Aspekte des Hexenwahns: Der Prozess gegen Simon Altseer in Rottenbuch 1665', *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Landesgeschichte*, 38 (1975), 945–66.

⁵⁸Although Luther was an uncompromising opponent of the works of righteousness of the old church, he recommended good deeds if they were justified by faith (Commandment of Love and Sermon on the Mount). Good deeds were an expression of love for God and an effective measure for discipline. In his 'On the Freedom of a Christian' he says in the beginning: 'A Christian man is the freest lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone', and elsewhere, in his 1523 'About Secular Authority and to what extent it should be obeyed': 'When it concerns you and yours, you govern yourself by the Gospel and suffer injustice for yourself as a true Christian; when it concerns others and belongs to them, you govern yourself according to love and suffer no injustice for your neighbour's sake; this the Gospel does not forbid, but rather commands in another place.' Quoted after M. Luther, *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, VII, 21; XI, 255 (Weimar, 1883ff.).

poorhouses or the establishment of a ‘common purse’ for the welfare and care of the poor.⁵⁹

Certainly by the seventeenth century one finds in the parishes of the Calvinistic Duchy of Palatinate-Zweibrücken, and those of the Lutheran county of Nassau-Saarbrücken, offertory boxes for alms and relief funds which were run by parish members and authorities and financed through church fines and donations. They transformed the former support of paupers and the needy by individual community members into an anonymous, institutionalised allocation of aid. In the sovereignty of Nassau-Saarbrücken one even went so far as to penalise the now obsolete giving of alms with three gulden.⁶⁰

In the Catholic electorate of Trier, changes in the organisation of relief for the poor, beggars and orphans were observed, and these efforts also helped relieve communities. The first begging statute of the archdiocese from 1533 still demanded explicitly ‘that every city and community maintain and feed its beggars independently’, while a second one towards the end of the sixteenth century already distinguished between foreign beggars, who were to be expelled, and native beggars, who were to be supported. In contrast, the ordinance of 1699 was sharply formulated and ordered foreign receivers of alms, under penalty of incarceration, to leave the archdiocese within three days. At the same time, native beggars were to be supported exclusively by contributions from abbeys, foundations and monasteries and through a yearly subsidy from the electorate winery. Already from 1673 onwards, paupers’ hospitals, orphan homes and poor relief funds were founded which offered free housing, food and care, while in the seventeenth century the construction of the first work houses began, which drew beggars and paupers into work.⁶¹

⁵⁹That this was a continuous practice of reformed sovereigns is asserted by W.P. Fuchs, *Das Zeitalter der Reformation* (4th edition, Stuttgart, 1979), 104 and E.W. Zeeden, *Das Zeitalter der Glaubenskämpfe 1555–1648* (3rd edition, Stuttgart, 1978), 142. Luther already demanded in his pamphlet ‘To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation’ of 1520, that there should be organised care for the poor; cf. J. Janssen, *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, VIII: *Volkswirtschaftliche, gesellschaftliche und religiös-sittliche Zustände. Hexenwesen und Hexenverfolgungen bis zum Beginn des Dreißigjährigen Krieges* (Freiburg i. Br., 1894), 303, 314ff. for printed protestant poor-relief regulations.

⁶⁰Archive of the protestant parish of Ottweiler, no 2/24–5, fol. 12ff.

⁶¹Cf. the begging regulations and the listing of all charitable institutions in J. Marx, *Geschichte des Erzstifts Trier, d.i. der Stadt Trier und des Trierer Landes, als Churfürstenthum und als Erzdiöcese, von den ältesten Zeiten bis zum Jahre 1816*, 1. Abt., II (Trier, 1859), 251–7, 287, 292, 295, 336.

After the formation of the Lutheran and Calvinist congregations, a new, collective form of relief, in contrast to the former individual responsibility for paupers and beggars, became established starting in the mid-seventeenth century. Support for paupers and beggars had shifted, owing to the installation of churchly and lordly poor-relief funds, from being a personal to an institutional issue. The shift from the care of paupers and beggars by communities can be seen in Catholic dominions as well, where it was now taken over by lordly or denominational welfare and disciplinary institutions. This all led to significant economic and emotional relief for the communities involved. Such a development—and it should be considered representative of many other changes, each important to the changing belief in witches—prevented the type of creation of witches in the village outlined earlier, which was often connected to the earlier conflict between charity and individual self-help. While on the one hand accusations of witchcraft continue even up to the present, especially in rural areas—unchanged in form and content, often following old patterns, in part as a purely slanderous and defamatory insult—the witch trials in the Saar region began to die out gradually in 1635, owing to radical societal, social, economic and mental crises and changes. At the same time, the conditions which triggered witchcraft suspicions changed, and the functional aspects of the belief in witches disappeared or were replaced by other beliefs entirely unrelated to witchcraft. Because of this, the cessation of the persecution of witches and sorcerers in the Saar region can be seen as the result of dramatic changes in the living conditions and a concomitant change in group solidarity, on the one hand, and the result of a shift in the mentality of the rural population, on the other hand, of which the belief in witches is a part which cannot be separated from the former.

With the influx of alternative reactions based on new interpretations, a new awareness and new practices, the belief in witches had lost its 'social logic' in many places. In the face of the effects, lingering for decades, of the crises in the 1630s and 1640s, as well as the 1660s and 1670s, particularly the extreme loss of population—resulting in so many daily deaths that one might not have wanted to send even more people to their deaths—a new appreciation of a changed reality by community members emerged in the face of their ongoing terrible situation, which rendered the expensive witch trials even less viable than ever. Reinforced by the changed stance of the courts in the Saarland on the crime of witchcraft, which now hampered witch trials, the persecution of witches had lost its prior plausibility. However, the belief in witches persisted well into the twentieth century.

News from the Invisible World: The Publishing History of Tales of the Supernatural c.1660–1832

Jonathan Barry

This chapter explores the transmission of tales of the supernatural during the very long eighteenth century (between c.1660 and 1832). When writing my last book, on the transmission of a specific tale of the conjuration of spirits over the same period, I became aware of a genre of publications on this subject which had not been studied. These are anthologies of supposedly true stories, usually relating to named people and places and sometimes dated, often each numbered separately, with relatively little discussion of their authenticity or significance, beyond perhaps a brief preface defending the reality of the world of spirits.¹ This

¹Jonathan Barry, *Raising Spirits: How a Conjuror's Tale Was Transmitted Across the Enlightenment* (Basingstoke, 2013); id., *Witchcraft and Demonology in South-West England c.1640–1789* (Basingstoke, 2012), 259–60.

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distinguishes them (although this is a spectrum rather than an absolute distinction) from other volumes which might contain such stories but integrate them within a more argumentative framework, or from shorter accounts of individual incidents, as well as from a growing genre of overtly fictional stories. Potentially, the analysis of these stories, especially those most commonly cited, could reveal their characteristic motifs and also consider the degree to which this published tradition may have influenced the oral culture of the supernatural, feeding the public with model stories, just as many ballads and fairy tales collected by nineteenth-century folklorists have been shown to be based on printed sources, not on an ancient oral tradition.² However, this preliminary study cannot explore those dimensions because it is necessary first to establish the nature and history of these publications themselves.

Historiographically, these publications have been neglected because they do not fit neatly into a number of related genres, each intensively studied, and fall between the disciplinary interests of historians, literary critics and folklorists. These volumes originate in the spate of controversial works published in the later seventeenth century to demonstrate the reality of spirits against the threat of materialistic atheism.³ These works, and their relationship to notions of scientific evidence and natural theology, have been intensively studied, both in relation to the history of witchcraft and the supernatural,⁴ and more generally in terms of evolving

²Willem de Ble (with an acute accent on it) court, *Tales of Magic, Tales in Print: On the Genealogy of Fairy Tales and the Brothers Grimm* (Manchester, 2012).

³John Newton (ed.), *Early Modern Ghosts* (Durham, 2002); Jo Bath and John Newton, '“Sensible Proof of Spirits”: Ghost Belief During the Later Seventeenth Century', *Folklore* 117 (2006), 1–14; Sasha Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World: Ghost Beliefs and Ghost Stories in Eighteenth-Century England* (2007), 26–40; Owen Davies, *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts* (New York, 2007), 8, 101–32; A.J. McKeever 'The Ghost in Early Modern Protestant Culture: Shifting Perceptions of the Afterlife 1450–1700' (University of Sussex PhD thesis, 2010). For the European context see Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye* (New York and Oxford, 2009), esp. 204–35 and 300–28.

⁴Wallace Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718* (Washington, DC, 1911); Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971); Gillian Bennett, 'Ghost and Witch in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Folklore*, 97 (1986), 3–14; James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in England 1550–1750* (1996); Ian Bostridge, *Witchcraft and Its Transformations c.1650–1750* (Oxford, 1997); Peter Marshall and Alex Walsham (eds.), *Angels in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge, 2006); John Newton and Jo Bath (eds.), *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604* (Leiden, 2008); Alexandra Walsham, 'The Reformation and the “Disenchantment of the World” Reassessed',

notions of providence and prodigies.⁵ The propaganda role of providentialist accounts, both in religious literature and in the ideological struggles of the civil wars and rage of party, has been well studied, but much less work has been done on such material after the 1720s, except in the specific context of the evangelical revival. Instead, the main focus has been on the 'rise of supernatural fiction', beginning with the role of the supernatural in the foundation of the English novel (notably in Defoe),⁶ and then analysing Gothic fiction and its influence on Romanticism.⁷ Literary critics have explored with great subtlety both the changing 'verisimilitude' sought in such stories and the 'aestheticisation' of the supernatural, with the emphasis shifting from the authenticity of the story to the authenticity of its effects on the reader's feelings, and authors' desire to evoke such feelings to offset the impact (again) of growing materialism and the perceived 'disenchantment of the world'. Although these accounts consider the wider cultural contexts of these developments in fiction, they have not explored the continuing publication of supposedly factual supernatural stories.

Historical Journal, 51 (2008), 497–528; id., 'Invisible Helpers: Angelic Intervention in Post-Reformation England', *Past and Present*, 208 (August 2010), 78–130; Joel Raymond (ed.), *Conversations with Angels* (Basingstoke, 2011); Michael Hunter, 'The Decline of Magic', *Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), 399–425; Peter Elmer, *Witchcraft, Witch-hunting, and Politics in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2016).

⁵Malcolm Gaskill, 'The Displacement of Providence', *Continuity and Change*, 11 (1996), 341–74; Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999); William E. Burns, *Age of Wonders: Politics, Prodigies and Providence in England 1657–1727* (Manchester, 2002); Vladimir Jankovic, 'The Politics of Sky Battles in Early Hanoverian England', *Journal of British Studies*, 41 (2002), 429–59; J.C.D. Clark, 'Providentialism, Predestination and Progress', *Albion*, 35 (2003), 559–89; Peter Marshall, *Mother Leakey and the Bishop* (Oxford, 2007).

⁶Coleman Parsons, 'Ghost Stories before Defoe', *Notes and Queries*, 201 (July 1956), 293–8; R. Capoferro, *Historicising the Fantastic 1660–1760* (Bern, 2000) and references in nn. 26–7.

⁷Emma Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762–1800* (Cambridge, 1995); Margaret L. Carter, *Specter or Delusion? The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction* (Ann Arbor and London, 1987); Terry Castle, *The Female Thermometer* (New York and Oxford, 1995); Julian Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature* (Basingstoke, 2002); Franz J. Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing 1800–35* (Basingstoke, 2005); Handley, *Visions*, 199–208; Shane McCorristine, *Spectres of the Self: Thinking about Ghosts and Ghost-Seeing in England* (Cambridge, 2010).

Similarly, the revived interest of historians in supernatural beliefs after 1720 has tended to ignore these works. Owen Davies has recovered the history of ‘grimoires’ as part of his work on magical practitioners and their clients, while Paul Monod and others have explored an ‘occult enlightenment’ of those who used magical texts.⁸ This influenced the publications I am studying, but these works gave no practical details about the nature and practice of magic, nor, by and large, do they throw any light on how ordinary people thought or felt about magic. Their protagonists were largely members of the middling and upper classes based in urban settings, and the supernatural occurrences they report happened to them uninvited, not because they were seeking magical assistance. There are almost no accounts involving witches, cunning folk or use of magic except in witchcraft stories reprinted from the pre-1720 period. For this reason they bear little relation to the kinds of stories which nineteenth-century folklorists sought to elicit from ordinary rural people, nor have modern historians of popular supernaturalism paid them any attention.⁹

Nevertheless, these various historiographies raise important issues for analysing the characteristic themes and tensions contained within the publications to be considered here. These works almost all appeal, with varying levels of intensity and conviction, to the need to defend belief in a providential God and a world of spirits against a growing materialist scepticism. They also struggle with the question of how to authenticate

⁸Owen Davies, *Witchcraft, Magic and Culture 1736–1951* (Manchester, 1999); id., *Cunning Folk* (2003); id., *Grimoires* (Oxford, 2009); id., and Willem de Blécourt (eds.), *Beyond the Witch Trials: Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment Europe* (Manchester, 2004); Paul Monod, *Solomon’s Secret Arts: The Occult in the Age of the Enlightenment* (New Haven and London, 2013). For the nineteenth century see Nicola Bown et al. (eds.), *The Victorian Supernatural* (Cambridge, 2004); Antonio Melechi, *Servants of the Supernatural* (2008); Shane McCorristine (ed.), *Spiritualism, Mesmerism and the Occult, 1800–1920* 5 volumes (2012), esp. vol. 1 ‘Apparitions, Spectral Illusions, and Hallucinations’; Tatiana Kontou and Sarah Wilburn (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism and the Occult* (2012); Gavin Budge, *Romanticism, Medicine and the Natural Supernatural: Transcendent Vision and Bodily Spectres 1789–1852* (Basingstoke, 2012).

⁹Owen Davies, ‘Newspapers and Popular Belief in Witchcraft and Magic’, *Journal of British Studies*, 37 (1998), 139–65; id., *A People Bewitched: Witchcraft and Magic in Nineteenth-Century Somerset* (Bruton, 1999); Karl Bell, *The Magical Imagination: Magic and Modernity in Urban England* (Cambridge, 2012); Thomas Waters, ‘“They seem to have all died out”: Witches and Witchcraft in *Lark Rise to Candleford* and the English Countryside, c.1830–1930’, *Historical Research*, 87 (2014), 134–53.

their stories, a problem inherent in the genre itself, and especially in reproducing a battery of short accounts (except in so far as their sheer number implies the truth of at least some of them). Did the authenticity lie in the source of the information, and was that the credibility of the original witnesses or of the authors from whom the stories were recycled (and should authors be identified—a potential publishing problem if this revealed to potential readers that the collection contained nothing new!)? Or did the authenticity depend on the verisimilitude of the narrative itself and, if so, what did that consist of—was it sufficient detail of circumstances, such as people and setting, or was it the precise recording of the supernatural occurrence itself? To what extent was it legitimate to increase verisimilitude by deploying ‘novelistic’ devices of, for example, dialogue or consideration of character and motive, or would these mark a fictionalisation which would weaken the report’s credibility? More generally, was the intended audience one of sceptics to be won over or of existing believers who wished to have their beliefs confirmed, or was it perhaps a group lying between, inclined in principle to believe but sceptical about any specific story? Were the stories intended to furnish material for private deliberation or for communal discussion, perhaps at the tavern or round the family table or fireside? If so, what was the relationship between these published accounts and the often-derided culture of ‘chimney-side’ stories told (stereotypically) by old women and peasants?

The final context to be mentioned is that of the history of the book and reading, which has again become immensely productive, assisted by developments in cataloguing and digital reproduction. Perhaps the most fruitful (if controversial) contribution has been William St Clair’s argument that the economics of the trade promoted a stark divide between relatively expensive new publications which reflected the Enlightenment and the recycling of a pre-Enlightenment set of texts and attitudes in cheap publications. This study will give some support to that view (noting the long publication history of some seventeenth-century texts, notably Sinclair, and the recycling of others) but also indicate (as his critics have suggested) that St Clair’s account neglects important new formats, notably newspapers and periodicals, through which new materials reached broad readerships.¹⁰ Both evangelical and commercial

¹⁰William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge, 2004) and T. Bonnell’s review in *Studies in Bibliography*, 57 (2005–6), 243–61; John Barnard and D.

periodicals generated numerous new reports of supernatural events which, from about the 1770s, began to complement, and sometimes replace, the older materials in these books, in some cases mixed in with fictionalised stories. The same period also saw the appearance of sceptical publications designed to persuade the public (specifically children and others seen as prone to ‘superstition’) not to believe these stories: I will not be considering this genre in depth except for noting which publications and stories sceptics considered they most needed to counter.

1650–1705

It was generally agreed until 1832, by sceptics and believers alike, that the core texts of supernatural experiences current were those published between 1650 and 1705. The most influential was *Saducismus Triumphatus* (1681) by Joseph Glanvill and Henry More (often known simply as ‘Glanvill on witches’) with other works by Thomas Bromhall, Richard Bovet, George Sinclair, Richard Baxter, Nathaniel Crouch, John Aubrey and John Beaumont. (One might also add Increase and Cotton Mather in New England, but there is not space to discuss them here.¹¹)

Interestingly, their influence was not accompanied, except in one case, by frequent reprintings. *Saducismus* went through three editions with its original publishers by 1700, and Crouch published three editions of his *The Kingdom of Darkness* (1688) by 1705, but there were no second editions of Bromhall’s *Treatise of Specters or an History of Apparitions* (1658), Bovet’s *Pandaemonium* (1684), Baxter’s *Certainty of the World of Spirits* (1691, often referenced by its running head ‘Historical Discourse of Apparitions and Witches’), Turner’s *Compleat History of the Most Remarkable Providences* (1697) or Beaumont’s

F. McKenzie (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain. Volume 4, 1557–1695* (Cambridge, 2002); Michael F. Suarez and Michael L. Turner (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain. Volume 5, 1695–1830* (Cambridge, 2009); James Raven, *The Business of Books* (Yale, 2007).

¹¹See M.P. Winship, *Seers of God: Puritan Providentialism in the Restoration and Early Enlightenment* (Baltimore, 1996).

Treatise of Spirits (1705).¹² Then between 1721 and 1728 two London publishers, Arthur Bettesworth and Jeremiah Batley, produced new editions of Aubrey's *Miscellanies* of 1696 (1721, with an account of his life), *Saducismus* (1726, with an account of Glanvill's works) and finally Crouch (1728); they also republished many of Crouch's other collections, including *Wonderful Prodigies of Judgement and Mercy* (1682; '8th edition' 1729), which included similar material.¹³ Retailing at 4s and 6s respectively, the editions of Aubrey and *Saducismus* were not aimed at lower-class readers (who were unlikely to afford anything more than a shilling at most), although their (unpriced) edition of Crouch probably was. Bettesworth (active 1699–1739d at the Red Lion on London Bridge then Paternoster Row) was a leading London bookseller with over a thousand publications and active in several of the 'congers' that combined for major publishing ventures, and Batley (active 1717–1737d at the Dove in Paternoster Row), though slightly less established, was also involved in hundreds of publications, including numerous serial publications, so both men were very experienced at judging the market for substantial works.¹⁴ This may have led Daniel Defoe to spot a market for his *Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions* (1727), discussed in what follows, but if so his success seems to have closed off the market for full reprints of the earlier works (though not, as we shall see, their reuse under other titles). Between 1728 and 1840, the only works except Sinclair to be reprinted were Aubrey in 1784 (possibly for its Wiltshire focus, as a Salisbury bookseller was co-publisher) and Baxter in 1834 (and again in 1840 and 1841) in a joint edition with Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693). By contrast, George Sinclair's *Satan's Invisible World Discovered* (Edinburgh, 1685) became a Scottish staple, with editions of the full text (with later additions on

¹²Several works attracted continental translations: *Saducismus Triumphatus* into German at Hamburg in 1701, Beaumont's *Treatise* into German at Halle in 1721, and Turner's *Compleat History* into Dutch at Rotterdam in 1737 (republished in 1770 at Utrecht).

¹³Chapter 2 of *Wonderful Prodigies* was entitled 'The Miserable Endings of Magicians, Conjurors and Witches, with an Account of Apparitions, Possessions and Other Strange and Wonderful Feats and Illusions of the Devil'.

¹⁴Henry Plomer, *Dictionary of Booksellers and Printers 1668–1725* (1922), 26, 34; Raven, *Business*, 173 and 191 (and 168–83 on the Paternoster Row publishers and their role in the growth of periodicals and broadening the book trade); *A Catalogue of Books Printed for and Sold by A. Bettesworth* (1728).

the post-1685 Scottish witch trials) published in Edinburgh in 1709, 1746, 1769, 1779, 1780, 1789 and 1808, and in London in 1814, as well as an abbreviated chapbook selection from Stirling in 1807 and at least three Glasgow chapbooks between 1830 and 1840. Sinclair's editor in 1871 noted that the book was 'long a favourite with the labouring classes' and 'for a long time a constituent part of every cottage library in Scotland'—which can hardly have been true of any of the English publications.¹⁵

Studies of these late-seventeenth-century publications have tended to assimilate all these authors to the model of Glanvill and More, with their clerical focus on combatting atheism and materialism, shared by their correspondent Richard Baxter (and the Mathers), and their concern to document the evidence carefully to convince doubters.¹⁶ As I have argued elsewhere, this underestimates both the ideological diversity within this group of authors and their varying motives for publication. The radical anti-papist Bovet, the Scottish Presbyterian natural

¹⁵George Sinclair, *Secrets of the Invisible World Discovered*, edited by T.G. Stevenson (Edinburgh, 1871), preface xlii–xlv; *ibid.*, edited by Coleman Parsons (Gainesville, Florida, 1969); Paul Wood, 'George Sinclair d. 1696' in A. Pyle (ed.), *Dictionary of British Seventeenth-Century Philosophers* 2 vols. (Bristol, 2000), II: 750–1; John Anderson, 'Sinclair, George (d.1696?)', rev. Anita McConnell, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 25615; A. Roffe, 'Intellectual Change before the Enlightenment: Scotland, the Netherlands and the Reception of Cartesian Thought 1650–1700', *Scottish Historical Review*, 94 (2015), 24–47. For the Scottish context see Peter Maxwell-Stuart, 'Witchcraft and Magic in Eighteenth-Century Scotland' in Davies and de Blécourt (eds.), *Beyond*, 81–99; Colin Kidd, 'The Scottish Enlightenment and the Supernatural', in Lizanne Henderson (ed.), *Fantastical Imaginations* (Edinburgh, 2009), 91–109; Lizanne Henderson, *Witchcraft and Folk Belief in the Age of Enlightenment: Scotland 1670–1740* (Basingstoke, 2016).

¹⁶See references in n. 3; Joseph Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, edited by Coleman Parsons (Gainesville, Florida, 1966); Henry More, *An Antidote against Atheisme* (1653); *id.*, *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings of Dr Henry More* (1712[–13]); Alison Coudert, 'Henry More and Witchcraft' in Sarah Hutton (ed.), *Henry More* (1990), 115–36; Simon Schaffer, 'Godly Men and Mechanical Philosophers: Souls and Spirits in Restoration Natural Philosophy', *Science in Context*, 1 (1987), 55–85; Michael Hunter, 'New Light on the "Drummer of Tedworth"', *Historical Research*, 78:201 (2005), 311–53; L. Carter, 'A Constant Prodigy: Empirical Views of an Unordinary Nature', *The Seventeenth Century*, 23 (2008), 265–89; Capoferro, *Historicising*, 103; Barry, *Witchcraft*, 14–57, 259–60.

philosopher Sinclair, the hermetically inclined gentleman Aubrey¹⁷ and the Roman Catholic hermeticist Beaumont all had rather different priorities in telling such stories from the clerical writers, and only Sinclair showed a similar interest in authentication. Furthermore, both Bovet¹⁸ and Beaumont¹⁹ (who drew heavily on Baxter, Mather and Aubrey) arguably included such stories largely to make their books more publishable despite the controversial nature of their core message. Publishing priorities probably also drove Bromhall and Turner. As Pierre Kapitaniak has recently identified, Bromhall's book is an unacknowledged translation of two late-sixteenth-century works, one German and one French, with no new content whatsoever (the latest story is a 1579 one from Bodin).²⁰ Turner, although apparently in the More/Glanvill/Baxter mould (as a low church Sussex clergyman claiming to be completing a project of collecting providences shared by Presbyterians and Anglicans), was arguably the frontman for a highly miscellaneous publication directed by its publisher John Dunton, largely comprising recycled material from other Dunton titles (as well as from the earlier publications discussed here and the *Lives* published by the Nonconformist minister Samuel Clarke). Although Dunton, in seeking advance subscriptions for the book, had urged readers to send in their own reports of providential events, very few are actually included, there is little focus on authentication, and the book might be better described as a printed commonplace book of anecdotes and quotations to furnish clergy with illustrations for their sermons. Dunton (while sharing the same

¹⁷See John Aubrey, *Three Prose Works*, edited by John Buchanan-Brown (Fontwell, 1972); Michael Hunter, *The Occult Laboratory* (Woodbridge, 2001); Alexandra Walsham, 'Recording Superstition in Early Modern Britain', *Past and Present*, 199 suppl. 3 (2008), 178–206.

¹⁸Richard Bovet, *Pandaemonium, or the Devil's Cloyster*, edited by Montague Summers (Aldington, Kent, 1951); Barry, *Witchcraft*, 103–23.

¹⁹Michael Hunter, *Magic and Mental Disorder: Sir Hans Sloane's Memoir of John Beaumont* (2011); Barry, *Witchcraft*, 124–64.

²⁰Pierre Kapitaniak, 'Thomas Bromhall et la circulation des histoires de fantômes travers l'Europe du XVII^e siècle' *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* (forthcoming). Bath and Newton, "'Sensible Proof'", 4, and McKeever 'Ghost', 203–8 both discuss Bromhall's unusual features without realising it is a translation. Bromhall's publisher, John Streater, was publishing numerous works of Paracelsian or Hartlibian natural philosophy in this period: see Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book* (Chicago and London, 1998), 287–8.

Presbyterian providentialism) was an entrepreneur exploiting public interest in the spirit world, as he showed in his *Athenian Mercury* and in his publication (never completed) of the English translation of the radically anti-providentialist Balthasar Bekker's *The World Bewitched* (1694).²¹ Even more naked commercialism inspired the bookseller Nathaniel Crouch (writing as 'R.B.' or 'R. Burton'), who pioneered a new format of one-shilling volumes in which he brought together, at a price and in a style familiar to chapbook readers (complete with woodcuts, often of no relevance to the story), all the most entertaining, as well as instructive, anecdotes he could collect. Crouch constructed his justificatory preface and conclusions by plagiarising from More and the Mathers, while the book comprised stories from Bromhall, More/Glanvill, Increase Mather, Bovet, Sinclair, Samuel Clarke and a number of witchcraft pamphlets.²² Between them Crouch and Dunton anticipated most of the techniques (anthologising, abridging, using subscriptions and part numbers) which the eighteenth-century press would use to reach a middling- and lower-class audience.

1706–1749

Dunton's techniques can be seen in the next compilation, *Nocturnal Revels or a General History of Dreams*, published by Andrew Bell at the Cross Keys and Bible in Cornhill in 1706. Bell (a Scotsman active 1693–1720) had bought from Dunton the right to continue his *Athenian Oracle*; one of his other publications in 1706 was the first

²¹Turner: Winship, *Seers*, 59–63, 68–9, 183 n. 66; Burns, *Age*, 15–19, 132–7; Helen Berry, 'Turner, William (1652/3–1701)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 27875; F.A. van Lieburg, 'Remarkable Providences: the Dutch Reception of an English Collection of Protestant Wonder Stories', in A.J. Gelderblom et al. (eds.) *The Low Countries as a Crossroads of Religious Beliefs* (Leiden, 2004), 197–219; Handley, *Visions*, 27–8. On Dunton: Helen Berry, *Gender, Society and Print Culture in Late Stuart England* (Aldershot, 2003); Handley, *Visions*, 41–4; Marshall, *Mother Leakey*, 182–9; A. Fix, 'What Happened to Balthazar Bekker in England? A Mystery in the History of Publishing', *Church History and Religious Culture*, 90 (2010), 609–31.

²²R. Mayer, 'Nathaniel Crouch, Bookseller and Historian' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 27 (1994), 391–419; id., *History and the Early English Novel* (Cambridge, 2004), 128–36; Burns, *Age*, 129–32; Jason McElligott, 'Crouch, Nathaniel [Robert Burton] (c.1640–1725?)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 52645; Capoferro, *Historicising*, 115–20.

English translation (in four volumes) of the *Arabian Nights* from the 1705 French edition.²³ *Nocturnal Revels* is normally catalogued as a version of Thomas Tryon's *A Treatise of Dreams and Visions* (1689), but although it uses parts of Tryon's introduction, it omits most of his text and adds a second section on dream interpretation 'to make it a universal dreambook' and about ninety pages of 'examples of dreams, both divine and humane, ancient and modern, that have been remarkably accomplish'd'.²⁴ The volume in this new form was reprinted in 1749, 1750, 1767 and 1789 in London, as well as twice in the American colonies, with the 1789 title page describing the story selection as 'historical narratives of apparitions and remarkable providences from scripture and history'. Largely identical to the 1706 edition, the 1789 edition published by James Barker in Russell Court, Drury Lane (which cost 3s) notes (128) that one can see witches' confessions in Glanvill's *Saducismus*, the 'Historical Discourse of Apparitions and Witches' (i.e. Baxter) or Turner's *History of Remarkable Providences*. Finally there is an undated early nineteenth-century edition (at 3s 6d), also by Barker, which adds at the end 'the Singular Dream of Mrs Lee' dated 27 December 1803, cashing in on a sensational 1804 trial.

This aside, there are no other examples I can find of such anthologies published before 1750,²⁵ except for the problematic case of Daniel Defoe's *An Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions* (1727). The case is problematic partly because Defoe's book (published anonymously, then from 1729 as by 'Andrew Moreton') only introduces stories as part of his argument (despite the title-page claim to 'a great variety of surprising and diverting examples, never publish'd before'). In almost all cases

²³J. Dunton, *Life and Errors* (1705), 206.

²⁴For dream books see Daniel Pick and Lyndal Roper (eds.), *Dreams and History* (2004); Katharine Hodgkin et al. (eds.), *Reading the Early Modern Dream: The Terrors of the Night* (2008); Ann Marie Plane and Leslie Tuttle (eds.), *Dreams, Dreamers, and Visions: The Early Modern Atlantic World* (Philadelphia, 2013); Janine Riviere 'Dreams in Early Modern England: Frameworks of Interpretation' (University of Toronto PhD thesis, 2013).

²⁵One might regard R. Boulton, *A Compleat History of Magick, Sorcery and Witchcraft* 2 vols. (1715–16) as an anthology, as, after a justificatory preface, it reproduces, without comment, witchcraft cases from contemporary pamphlets, notably those of 1618, 1664 and 1682, plus Salem and various Scottish trials, although it avoids all the cases reproduced in *Saducismus*. But it limits itself to witchcraft trials except for the warnings of the death of Buckingham and Lee's letter to Fowler at the end of the first volume (263–73).

he gives no names (though occasionally initials), precise places or dates, and indeed is often equivocal about whether the story is authentic or merely exemplary, though he plays with conventions of authentication. He rarely draws on the earlier literature (e.g. quoting once from Aubrey on Cashio Burroughs (93–4)), and when he does so it is to be critical of their standards of authentication, noting the contradictions (283–8) between the Aubrey and Clarendon versions of Sir George Villiers’ supposed warnings about the death of his son the Duke of Buckingham in 1628 and criticising Glanvill and Aubrey for publishing the story of Dr Turberville’s sister ‘without some just inquiries to reconcile it to common sense’ (290–1). Only two stories stand out for being told at length with authenticating detail. The first is that of the passage of Captain Thomas Rogers of the Society from London to Virginia in 1694, in which he is saved from shipwreck by a warning, which Defoe claims he got from the captain himself (213–16), and the second is the story of ‘the late Reverend Dr Scot’, ‘never yet published in print’ (although he notes a variant at one point!), which is given an engraving (294–306).²⁶ The Scott story illustrates a key feature of Defoe’s versions, which is that they are rendered in great detail, with dialogue and character description, all in Defoe’s flowing style. In these techniques they resemble the version of the apparition of Mrs Veal usually attributed to Defoe, which became the most famous eighteenth-century apparition story (but is *not* repeated in *An Essay*), which critics (both sceptics and believers in the Veal story) claimed was less an authentic factual account than a novelistic rendering. Finally, Defoe is not only very equivocal about the evidence for (and interpretation of) apparitions throughout the book but ends with a series of chapters which debunk false stories, as the result of popish priestcraft,

²⁶This must refer to Dr John Scott (1638/9–1695), who made clear his belief in the possibility of sensual people haunting churchyards after death in his *Of the Christian Life*: see *The Works of the Reverend and Learned John Scott D.D. sometime Rector of St Giles in the Fields* 2 vols. (1718), I: 28, 693–4; Richard J. Ginn, ‘Scott, John (1638/9–1695)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 24889. This identification has eluded the otherwise exemplary tracing of Defoe’s sources in R.M. Baine, ‘Daniel Defoe and the History and Reality of Apparitions’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 106 (1962), 335–47.

schoolboy pranks or criminal plots, leaving the reader primed to doubt the authenticity of any such stories.²⁷

It is, therefore, hard to be sure how readers were meant to react, or would have reacted, to Defoe's book. However, it appears that publishers wished to encourage readers to see it as a collection of stories. After one further edition in 1728 under its original title, the work reappeared in 1729 as *The Secrets of the Invisible World Disclos'd or a Universal History of Apparitions* (costing 5s) with a contents summary on the title page including 'a collection of the most authentic relations of apparitions, especially that surprizing one attested by the learned Dr Scott', and this title went through further editions in 1735, 1738 and 1740 (4s 6d), then again (with 'Disclos'd' replaced by 'Laid Open') in 1770. This final edition gave no author's name, claimed to be 'printed for the author' and added to the title page 'likewise Mrs Veal's appearance to Mrs Bargrave, Sir George Villiers to the Duke of Buckingham etc', interpolating within the book (20–32) a version of the Veal/Bargrave story, while abridging some of Defoe's other text. Gradually 'Moreton', as it became known, had been assimilated as a collection of stories.

Defoe's book underwent an even more dramatic fate in 1752, when an unnamed London publisher issued (for 5s neatly bound), *A View of the Invisible World or General History of Apparitions*, which was then reprinted in Manchester in 1754, as *A General History of Apparitions* [sic]. *A View* is regarded by the ESTC (English Short-Title Catalogue) and ECCO (Eighteenth-Century Collections Online) as being a version of *An Essay*, and so by Defoe, but this is not the case.²⁸ The majority of the volume is indeed drawn from Defoe's book, as his cases, starting with Dr Scott, have been extracted and presented as a series of stories, occupying pages 59–267 and 284 to the end. However, the first 58 pages and pages 267–84 are not from Defoe, but from Glanvill, Beaumont and *Fair Warnings to a Careless World* (1707), a providentialist collection by Josiah Woodward, the clergyman who pioneered the Reformation of Manners movement and published numerous tracts

²⁷M.E. Novak, 'Defoe, the Occult, and the Deist Offensive during the Reign of George I', in J. Lemay (ed.), *Deism, Masonry and the Enlightenment* (Newark, NJ, London and Toronto, 1987), 93–108; Handley, *Visions*, 80–107; Capoferro, *Historicising*, 129–36.

²⁸As Baine, 'Daniel Defoe', 335 identified.

seeking to reform popular behaviour.²⁹ The introduction is not from Defoe, but a standard (if rather lukewarm) defence of the reality of apparitions, ending by quoting Addison on the moral value of such testimonies. The only sign of Defoe's equivocal attitudes is in a long footnote (running across 306–12) which expresses great scepticism about the reliability of apparition stories, ending with the story of 'a very pious but credulous bishop of our Church' who was 'relating a strange story of a Daemon that haunted a girl in Lothbury to a company of gentlemen in the City'.³⁰ One of them then tells the story of how, as he was reading in bed, his room was entered by a tall, thin figure with a long sooty garment, holding a tall black staff and a round body of pale light, who led him down the stairs and left, making 'a hideous noise in the street'. When the bishop eagerly asks 'what it might particularly seek', he replies, 'Yes my Lord it was the watchman, who came to shew me that my servants had left all the doors open.'

The long sceptical footnote is a copy of an article, 'Of Ghosts and Apparitions', which appeared in the *London Magazine* for November 1749 (18: 513–15), which was itself a substantially rewritten version of the chapters 'of ghosts and apparitions' (78–88) in *The Humourist* (1720) by Thomas Gordon, the anti-clerical independent Whig responsible, with John Trenchard, for a series of radical critiques of the establishment in the period 1719–23.³¹ Gordon's chapters end (88) with the bishop story, which is copied verbatim in the *London Magazine* and *A View*.³² It probably refers to Edward Fowler (1631/2–1714),

²⁹John Spurr, 'Woodward, Josiah (1657–1712)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 55600.

³⁰The only well-known demonic case involving a maid from Lothbury in London was the possession of Rachel Pindar in 1574, but if a bishop was citing this case he should surely have been aware that, led by Archbishop Parker, the authorities had forced nine-year-old Pindar to confess that the affair was a fraud (or perhaps that was part of the joke against him!): see Katherine Sands, *Demon Possession in Elizabethan England* (Westport CT, 2004), 75–91.

³¹Leslie Stephen, 'Gordon, Thomas (d. 1750)', rev. Emma Major, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 11083.

³²It is also inserted in two 1728 publications. The first is *A View of London and Westminster or the Town Spy* where it illustrates the claim that the people of St Margaret's Lothbury 'place a strong belief in apparitions and witches' (51–2), the second in the third and fourth editions only of [Erasmus Jones], *A Trip through London* (1728, also published by Roberts), most incongruously claiming that the bishop was discussing a demon whose appearance a girl had faked to cover a fight between her three aristocratic lovers (22–3).

bishop of Gloucester, a very keen providentialist and supporter of the Reformation of Manners (who supplied Beaumont (398–400) with the account of Sir Charles Lee, which became a standard tale).³³ A variant of the story is then included in a satirical volume, *Round about our Coal Fire or Christmas Entertainment* (undated, but probably 1731–2 judging by the other books advertised in the volume), which was published for one shilling by ‘J. Roberts in Warwick Lane and sold by the book-sellers of town and country’. (The 1734 fourth edition of the work, reprinted in 1796, is notable for the first appearance in print of a version of Jack and the Beanstalk.³⁴) Roberts was the original publisher of Defoe’s *Essay* (though not later editions/versions) and of many other substantial volumes (including Beaumont’s later works), but at 59 pages, with a cover woodcut, this particular work is clearly aimed at a wide market seeking humour, not stories of spirits.³⁵ The putative author ‘Dick Merryman’ offers a satirical dedication to the Covent Garden impresario ‘Mr Lun’³⁶ as ‘complete witchmaker of England and conjurer general of the universe’, who (he claims) has introduced the world to much

³³Handley, *Visions*, 29–30, 128; Peter Marshall, ‘Ann Jeffries and the Fairies’, in Angela McShane and Garthene Walker (eds.), *The Extraordinary and the Everyday in Early Modern England* (2010), 127–41; Barry, *Raising Spirits*, 28–31.

³⁴The story of Jack the giant-killer is first recorded in 1708 and by 1730 was familiar enough to readers that a Haymarket farce (published by Roberts) about Reason defeating the giants of folly and superstition could name its hero ‘Jack’: see *Jack the Giant-Killer: A Comi-Tragical Farce of One Act* (1730). The 1734 version adds the ‘magic beans’ aspect, but otherwise is a riotous and bawdy satire on all aspects of ‘enchantment’, concluding that ‘enchantment proceeds from nothing but the chit-chat of an old nurse, or the maggots in a madman’s brain’ (48). While giant-killing Jack was reprinted regularly in the eighteenth century, the next recorded version of the beanstalk story, in the familiar children’s tale, was not published until 1807. See Caroline Goldberg, ‘The Composition of “Jack and the Beanstalk”’, *Marvels and Tales*, 15:1 (2001), 11–26; Thomas Green, ‘Tom Thumb and Jack the Giant-Killer: Two Arthurian Fairytales?’, *Folklore*, 118 (2007), 123–40; Caitlin R. Green, ‘The Arthuriad: One’ at www.arthuriana.co.uk/arthuriad/Arthuriad_VolOne.pdf.

³⁵For Roberts’ role as the leading ‘trade publisher’ distributing but not financing thousands of publications, mostly at one shilling or less, between 1713 and 1754 see Michael Treadwell, ‘London Trade Publishers 1675–1750’, *Library*, 6th ser. 4 (1982), 99–134 at 106–10, 117, 122.

³⁶The stage name of John Rich, famous for his Harlequin necromancers, magicians and sorcerers—see Phyllis T. Dircks, ‘Rich, John (1692–1761)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23486.

more ‘agreeable devils and witches’ (on stage) than ‘Glanvill on witches’. The book then offers a series of mock tales of witches, goblins, spectres, fairies and so forth, in which every tale is driven by sexual misbehaviour disguised as the supernatural. Referring to ‘Dr Glanville’s great book of ghosts and apparitions’ he notes ‘the Doctor’s book indeed is too high-priced for everyone to purchase’ and seeing a ghost in the playhouse would cost as much as the book. ‘Nor must you expect a ghost to appear gratis in Hand-Alley, as it did seven years ago (as thousands can testify) for that was laid for ninety-nine years in the Red Sea by the Reverend Mr M- and the learned Dr H-’ (36–7).³⁷ The book ends with ‘another story of a ghost and how much it concern’d a Bishop’, linked to the woodcut at the start of the chapter on ‘spectres, ghosts and apparitions’ (34, 39–40). This tells the same watchman anecdote (though in different words), but this time with ‘Dr Glanvill famous for a book of witchcraft and apparitions’ as the credulous one and the bishop as the sceptic. Referring to the woodcut (Fig. 1) it notes ‘so in the picture harlequin lights in the ghost, for how the devil do you think a ghost can be in the dark, and if the devil should stand by his lord’s bed it is because he had said “Get thee behind me Satan” or “Avoid me Satan”. And therefore I suppose the engraver only made the devil peeping out behind the bed.’³⁸

A more sober version of the same sceptical message was offered by the untitled lead article in the *Universal Spectator* for 7 October 1732 (no. 209), reprinted in both the *Gentleman’s Magazine* (as ‘of ghosts, daemons and spectres’, 1001–2) and the *London Magazine* (as ‘of spectres and apparitions’ 333–6) for October 1732. The article ‘from my

³⁷ Presumably (despite the claimed date) this is the episode described in the one-page broadsheet *A Farther and more Particular Account of a most Strange and Terrible Ghost or Apparition of a Gentlewoman that Appeareth both Night and Day at Mr Jennings’s, in Hand-Alley, in Holborn ... Also how several other people set up to watch, among whom were six ministers sent by the Bishop of London. With the prayer which the ministers us’d when they set up to watch* (1716). This does not name the ministers involved. A pamphlet, *A True Relation of the Apparition that Appeared at Mr Jennings’s House* (1717), mentions ‘two reverend divines’ staying in the house to observe the apparition, but does not name them or refer to any prayers (12).

³⁸ The ‘harlequin’ reference may suggest this is based on Rich’s harlequin performances. I cannot identify any previous use of this woodcut, but it satirises a standard ghost woodcut showing a frightened subject in bed and a ghost with a torch approaching, sometimes with a devil nearby. For an example see plate 9 in C. Marsh, ‘Best-selling Ballads and their Pictures in Seventeenth-Century England’, *Past and Present*, 233 (2016), 53–99.

(49)



C H A P. V.

*Of Spectres, Ghosts, and Apparitions; the
great Conveniencies arising from them;
and how to make them.*

WHEN the Men and the Maids have ended their Gambols, are all seated about the Fire, and Bed-time is drawing on, then *John* begins some dismal Story, to the Company about Apparitions and Hobgoblins, and so about it goes 'till all the rest of the Society are drawn into the same kind of Discourse, and frighten'd out of their Wits with dreadful Apprehensions: A Mouse cannot stir, but *Nan* creeps close to *John*; *Sue* hugs *Tom*, and none dare lie alone; then Love and the Devil couples them together, and each one has a Mate for that Night; and when the Thing is once done, there is very little Ceremony

H mony

Fig. 1 Woodcut from *Round about our Coal Fire or Christmas Entertainment* (London: J. Roberts, undated, but probably 1731-2), 34. [Barry at n. 37]

house in the Minories' is by the paper's editor, Henry Baker, under his assumed name of 'Henry Stonecastle of Northumberland'. Baker was a natural philosopher, poet, teacher of the deaf and, perhaps most significantly, Defoe's son-in-law since 1729.³⁹ He blames spirits and ghosts on 'distemper'd imagination' or 'the reciprocal pleasure of deluding and being deluded' or 'early errors of infancy and a motley mixture of the low and vulgar education' through nurses' stories and 'traditional accounts' from places famous 'for their antiquity and decays' and 'half-penny bloody murder' pamphlets. But he also criticises the 'story of Madam Veal' and others produced 'from trick and design' and the use of names like Clarendon and Boyle to authenticate accounts 'till at last we are convinc'd by a whole conclave of ghosts met in the works of Glanvil and Moreton'. He concludes with the watchman story, this time presented as between 'the late Dr Fowler, Bp of Gloucester', a 'zealous defender of ghosts', and 'the late Mr Justice Powell ... somewhat sceptical and distrustful of their being'.⁴⁰ This version of the story ends with the words 'The Judge had no sooner ended, but the Bishop disappear'd.' In this format, as the story of a bishop and a judge (often not named), this anecdote became a standard sceptical tale, with its own slightly supernatural ending implied by the sudden disappearance of the bishop!⁴¹

1750–1789

Apart from Defoe and the 1720s reprints, the period between 1706 and 1749 seems to mark a lull in publications, perhaps reflecting an increased scepticism. However, the following decades saw a distinct revival (in

³⁹G. L'E. Turner, 'Baker, Henry (1698–1774)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 1120; id., 'Henry Baker F.R.S', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 28 (1974), 53–80 at 57 for Baker's editorship until January 1733.

⁴⁰Sir John Powell (1645–1713) was the judge in the 1712 Jane Wenham trial who recommended her pardon after the jury convicted her of witchcraft against his guidance: see P.J. Guskin, 'The Context of Witchcraft', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 15 (1981), 48–71; Peter Elmer (ed.), *English Witchcraft 1560–1736 Volume 5 The Later English Trial Pamphlets* (2003); Mark Knights, *The Devil in Disguise* (Oxford, 2011), 193–240.

⁴¹The story is not in John Brand, *Observations on Popular Antiquities* (1777), but is in the 1813 edition (ed. H. Ellis), vol. 2, 428, and in various early nineteenth-century joke collections and magazines, starting with *New Joe Miller or the Tickler* (1802), 28.

addition to the 1752/4 versions of *A View*). In 1750, *A View of Human Nature or Select Histories* (printed for S. Birt in Ave-Mary-Lane, 320 pages of duodecimo) promised, among many other 'remarkable instances of divine providence', chapters on 'magicians, witches, wizards etc', 'apparitions of persons deceased' and 'apparitions of demons and spirits'. But the volume, largely derived on its own admission from Nathaniel Wanley's *Wonders of the Little World* (1677, then an abridged 1704 edition) contains no stories post-1600 (like Wanley), except for one account from Walton's *Lives* and the 'well-attested account' of Mrs Veal.

The pace quickened in 1758, with the anonymous publication in London of *Life after Death, or the History of Apparitions, Ghosts, Spirits or Spectres. Consisting of variety of true stories, attested by people of undoubted veracity*, a 70-page octavo volume with no publisher given, but reprinted, with identical text and layout, in 1762 as *The History of Apparitions, Ghosts, Spirits or Spectres ... by a Clergyman* by J. Simpson at the Shakespeare's Head.⁴² One or possibly two further editions followed between c.1775 and 1787 as *Life after Death or a Descriptive Account of the Most Remarkable Apparitions, Spirits, Ghosts or Spectres of Persons that have really Appeared after their Decease*. The 1758 edition begins with an introduction similar to the 1752 *View*, ending with the same Addisonian passage, but contains a different range of stories, giving sources for each, including a number from 'Moretus' (i.e. Moreton) as well as Beaumont, Turner, Wanley and others. It also concludes with the identical sceptical conclusion that appeared as a footnote at the end of the 1752 *View*, culminating with the Fowler anecdote.

In 1759 H Woodgate and Samuel Brooks at the Golden Ball in Paternoster Row published a 116-page duodecimo entitled *An Authentick and Complete History of Witches and Apparitions. Shewing the reality of their existence in upwards of twenty-five curious and uncommon relations*. The other books advertised at the front (a *Christian's Memorandum Book*, Bibles, prayer books and spelling and school books) suggest this was aimed at a broad market, though no price is given. The entire volume is a selection, without attribution, from *Saducismus*, with no preface or commentary, merely the documented accounts of specific

⁴²Handley, *Visions*, cites it as an example of a short collection of ghost stories penned by 'conformist clergy' to grab the attention of readers (244 n. 91).

cases. The following year Woodgate and Brooks were among the six Paternoster Row publishers (led by Charles Hitch, the former partner and son-in-law of Bettesworth) who published a 154-page duodecimo *History of Witches and Wizards* supposedly written by 'W.P.'. The brief preface asserts that only atheists would deny the reality of witchcraft and promises accounts from 'very approved and credible historians' whose names are listed, so giving the essentials of 'several large volumes' in 'a small manual and for a small price'. But despite the title page's claim that the stories were collected from 'Bishop Hall, Bishop Morton, Sir Matthew Hale' and so on, they are rather ineptly lifted, without attribution, from *Saducismus*, Crouch's *Wonderful Prodigies*, Wanley's *Wonders* and, in particular, from Baxter (nine of the twenty-four chapters).

In 1770, two further titles were published, both by J. Evans of Paternoster Row, each 304 pages in octavo and costing 3s sewed. They differed solely in the opening words of the title, the first being *Evidences of the Kingdom of Darkness* and the second *The Compleat Wizzard*; presumably the publisher saw different audiences being attracted to the alternative titles. Both promised 'a collection of authentic and entertaining narratives of the real existence and appearance of ghosts, demons, and spectres, together with several wonderful instances of the effects of witchcraft, to which is prefixed an account of haunted houses and subjoined a Treatise of the Effects of Magic'. In practice, after a short preface defending the beliefs of 'our grave ancestors' against supposedly enlightened modern infidels, the text merely reprints stories from *Saducismus* and Aubrey, except for a chapter on 'the possessed, or the demoniac of Surrey [sic]', taken from one of the 1697–8 pamphlets regarding Richard Dugdale from Surey in Lancashire (214–32).⁴³ Much of the same material was again recycled in *The History of Witches, Ghosts and Highland Seers* (undated, 3s, c. 280 pages) published by Robert Taylor in Berwick (active 1753–1781d).⁴⁴ Taylor was not noted for chapbook or similar publications, publishing a six-volume edition of Molière as well as a large cookbook. The title page promised 'many wonderful well-attested relations of supernatural appearances, not published

⁴³Perhaps as reproduced in Boulton, *Compleat History*, II: 166–242. See Jonathan Westaway and Richard D. Harrison, "'The Surey Demoniac'", *Studies in Church History*, 32 (1996), 263–82.

⁴⁴Taylor's will proved 23 May 1781 is TNA PROB 11/1078/22.

before in any similar collection, designed for the conviction of the unbeliever, and the amusement of the curious'. It was taken largely from *Saducismus* and Aubrey again (though with more cutting to make this less apparent), together with Turner and Defoe, plus the occasional recent account, such as the apparition seen by Colonel Gardiner from Philip Doddridge's 1747 account of his conversion (79–80).⁴⁵ The brief preface attacked 'this age of general debauchery, extravagance and dissipation', in which 'profligate men' laugh 'at a future state, at the stories of spirits and invisible beings' as 'the inventions of enthusiasm and a crazy disordered imagination', and hoped the book would bring 'wavering people' to believe in a future state and make 'the deists, freethinkers, and infidel rakes read and tremble'.

Finally, in 1784, a 48-page pamphlet appeared (costing 6d) entitled *Wonderful Relations*, promising a 'serious inquiry' into the survival of the soul after death to 'come again and revisit its friends' with God's permission 'fully confirmed in this edition by twelve wonderful, yet well attested relations of apparitions, dreams etc ... extracted from the works of the learned Mr Flavel, Dr Moore, Mr Baxter and others'. The 20-page second half contains 11 cases, the final one being a modern one from St Ives in Cornwall in 1764, although one chapter has a postscript noting a similar occurrence in a newspaper case reported in November 1783. The opening stories are taken from John Flavel's *Treatise on the Soul of Man* (1685), but the others all appear in Beaumont, rather than More or Baxter (though Beaumont had attributed one to Baxter). The author is merely given as 'J.W. author of the Evening Conference between Christ and Nicodemus', but this identifies him as James Wakelin, who is also one of those selling the volume, 'printed by H. Trapp, no. 1 Paternoster Row, and sold by J. Wakelin No 3 King's Head Court, Shoe Lane and J. Dodd at the Bible in West Street, Seven Dials'. Trapp had also published the first half of the book separately for Wakelin in 1783 as *A Serious Enquiry* (price 4d), so presumably they judged its arguments would sell better with 'wonderful relations' added. A 'fourth edition' of 1787 was printed by Trapp for Wakelin and two booksellers in Halifax. Wakelin was a former minor actor at the Haymarket Theatre, who opened a bookshop in Shoe Lane, publishing mostly short moral and religious

⁴⁵ Barry, *Raising Spirits*, 63–5.

tracts advocating the need for ‘new birth’ through Christ and life after death.⁴⁶

With Wakelin, we move into the sphere of evangelical publishing. The role played by the supernatural in the evangelical revival, and especially in the publishing activity of John Wesley, his *Arminian Magazine* and other Methodist memoirs and tracts, has been well-studied, and I will not consider it here (except in the cases of Simpson and Tregortha).⁴⁷ However, there can be little doubt that evangelicalism played a decisive part in creating not only a new demand for providential stories but also a new supply of such stories. The classic case is *A Relation of Apparitions of Spirits in the Principality of Wales* (1780) by the independent minister Edmund Jones.⁴⁸ But no English evangelical appears to have published any anthology before 1791.

AFTER 1789

Three main developments occurred after the French Revolution. The evangelical revival generated ever more publications (especially provincial), a group of occult practitioners began to publish, and the Gothic craze in fiction generated serials and chapbooks which included supernatural tales of various kinds, including supposedly factual ones. At the same time, a much more intensive campaign of publishing by sceptics seeking to debunk such experiences as either fraudulent or the result of mental delusion not only led to more intense debate about such stories

⁴⁶J. Milling, ‘Baker, Sarah (1736/7–1816)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 49699: Baker was his daughter.

⁴⁷Owen Davies, ‘Methodism, the Clergy, and the Popular Belief in Witchcraft and Magic’, *History*, 82 (1997), 252–65; id., ‘Wesley’s Invisible World’, in Robert Webster (ed.), *Perfecting Perfection* (Cambridge, 2016), 147–72; Handley, *Visions*, 148–53; Henry Rack, ‘Charles Wesley and the Supernatural’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 88: 2 (2006), 59–79; id., ‘A Man of Reason and Religion? John Wesley and the Enlightenment’, *Wesley and Methodist Studies*, 1 (2009), 2–17; Robert Webster, ‘Seeing Salvation: The Place of Dreams and Visions in John Wesley’s *Arminian Magazine*’, *Studies in Church History*, 41 (2005), 376–88; id., *Methodism and the Miraculous* (Lexington, KY, 2013).

⁴⁸A modernised edition is John Harvey (ed.), *The Appearance of Evil: Apparitions of Spirits in Wales* (Cardiff, 2003) but see Geraint H. Jenkins, ‘Jones, Edmund (1702–1793)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 61968; Barry, *Raising Spirits*, 67–70; Adam N. Coward, ‘Edmund Jones and the Pwcca’r Trwyn’, *Folklore*, 126 (2015), 177–95.

but meant those wishing to publish such stories for establishment readers had to focus again on ‘accredited stories’, as in the Restoration period. I cannot look in detail at all the publications in this period (many are hard to identify and access, in the absence of a Short Title Catalogue or proper digital project for books after 1800), so I will only discuss some apparently representative cases, mostly up to 1825.

Starting with evangelical publishing, the transition from reprinting classic accounts to new stories is well illustrated in *A Discourse on Dreams and Night Visions* (Macclesfield, 1791) by David Simpson, an evangelical Anglican clergyman who opened his own church in Macclesfield in 1779 and was a prolific author and hymn writer. Simpson, a farmer’s son, believed he had heard a voice calling him to the ministry when a child, and his 144-page book devotes its first 60 pages to previously published cases, many from seventeenth-century authors, as well as one from the 1752 *View*, Doddridge on Gardiner and four cases from Thomas Wills’ *Spiritual Register* (1784 and 1787), including what became a new staple, namely the prediction of the death of the libertine Thomas Lord Lyttleton in 1779. He then records twenty pages of unpublished stories, ‘all related to me by persons in whose veracity I can trust’, before returning to some published examples, several from the *Arminian Magazine*, including Wesley’s longest recorded narrative of that sort, regarding Elizabeth Hobson of Sunderland in 1768 (which Edmund Jones had also published).⁴⁹

A more direct reflection of the impact of the French Revolution is found in the various works of ‘Malcolm Macleod D.D.’, printed and sold by J. Roach of Russel Court, Drury Lane. Roach specialised in works costing sixpence or a shilling, such as books of fortunes, jests, travels, stories, riddles and pocket companions, and Macleod’s books, with Gothic typeface and illustrations on the front pages, selling for a shilling for about a hundred pages, were clearly aimed at a similar readership, offering numerous short tales, usually unattributed, though with some longer stories, several from Defoe. Macleod may be the Aberdeen graduate (though not recorded as a doctor of divinity) from Raasay, who became minister of the presbytery of Snizort and Uig in 1788 and died

⁴⁹ Mark Smith, ‘Simpson, David (1745–1799)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 25579.

there in 1832.⁵⁰ In 1793 he published *Macleod's History of Witches etc. The Majesty of Darkness Discovered: in a series of tremendous tales, mysterious, interesting and entertaining, of apparitions, witches, augurs, magicians, dreams, visions and revelations in confirmation of a future state* (generally known thereafter as *The Majesty of Darkness*, e.g. in an 1804 New York edition). While some of these stories were from the standard sources, others were more recent (Including Gardiner and Lyttleton), and, uniquely, the minority of stories which refer to witches (as opposed to dreams or apparitions) do not reproduce cases from the witch trials, but rather two very lurid medieval stories and then two recent ones, namely an unnamed 'witch of Wigan' who was supposedly found as a hare in 1755 (71–2) and Mary Marshall, 'the wise woman of Worcester', who was reputed to be able to set the local mill turning for her corn by flying round it and had supposedly been seen taking off on her broom by Sir Thomas Lyttleton and other gentlemen who had gone to test her predictive skills at night (56–7). However, the book also contains a heavily biblical introduction, several references to Wesley and one to hearing the evangelical Toplady (author of 'Rock of Ages') and finally ends with a 'prophecy of Pedan' supposedly found in a Hebridean cave by Dr Johnson, which had predicted the French Revolution. (This seems to be a bizarre addition to the well-known prophecies of the seventeenth-century Covenanter Alexander Peden, including one of a French invasion of Scotland, which had no relation to a Hebridean cave or Dr Johnson!) This millenarian spirit of the 1790s is even clearer in Macleod's next book, *The Mystery of Dreams Discovered* (1794), again mixing familiar stories with modern ones (some from the newspapers) for the first fifty pages, then offering a 'New and Complete Dictionary of Dreams', before ending with 'sublime visions of Selina' from manuscripts found in the cabinet of the evangelical Selina Hastings, countess of Huntingdon, supposedly written by a late popular preacher in 1759, which concludes 'let Freedom as in Albion reign in France' (81–7). Macleod included more medieval tales of witchcraft and magic (English as well as Scottish) in his *Tales of Tiviotdale* (1798), supposedly told by a monk of Melrose to Edward I. But he also published a work which takes him closer to the occult writers discussed in what follows, namely his *The Key of Knowledge, or Universal Conjuror, Unfolding the Mysteries of the Occult*

⁵⁰H. Scott (ed.), *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ* vol. 7 (Edinburgh, 1928), 179–80.

Sciences, and being a Guide to the Temple of Wisdom (undated, but after 1794 as the title page refers to his first two books). Despite the title, this is a very different product, with no millenarianism or religious message, but a decidedly sceptical introduction casting the occult into a Gothic past, and inviting the reader to learn the techniques of practical magic, partly to avoid being deluded by conjurors and tricksters, although the author clearly believes in astrology and herbal charms.⁵¹ Readers who purchased the book hoping for similar material to his previous publications may not have appreciated the paragraph (41) where he states ‘the author would now have proceeded to present his readers with a chapter or two on *Apparitions, Witches and Dreams*, but having anticipated himself in two treatises already published [titles given in the footnote]’ he will instead treat other ‘arts and sciences’! One wonders if this book was actually by Macleod at all.

The final religious title to be considered was both much more representative of the evangelical mainstream and much more influential, going through numerous variant editions in the first half of the nineteenth century. It was also a very substantial work, at over 400 pages of closely printed duodecimo, which effectively brought together in one compendium most of the classic stories from the seventeenth-century authors with a host of new eighteenth-century material, much of it from the *Arminian Magazine*. This was *News from the Invisible World: or Interesting Anecdotes of the Dead. Containing a particular survey of the most remarkable and well-attested accounts of apparitions, ghosts, spectres, dreams and visions, with some valuable extracts from the works of the Rev. John Wesley, the Rev. David Simpson and others ... the whole forming a series of useful and necessary information for the support of our faith and practice* (Burslem, undated, c. 1800). A standard preface defended the reality of the spirit world, though in cautious (largely biblical) terms, and promised extracts from the ‘expensive and voluminous’ works of the ‘most learned and judicious authors’ ‘with all precision possible’ but leaving the reader ‘to judge for himself whether they are natural or miraculous events’ (ii). The editor and publisher was a former Wesleyan lay preacher from Cornwall, John Tregortha (d.c. 1821), who had settled at Burslem near Stoke by 1796 as a printer and bookseller,

⁵¹For such books see: L. Schmidt, ‘From Demon Possession to Magic Show’, *Church History*, 67 (1998), 274–304; Michael Mangan, *Performing Dark Arts* (2007).

publishing editions of religious classics such as Bunyan, his own complete family Bible with commentary, works of Methodist history and other texts defending the reality of divine providence, as well as chapbook publications like *Mother Bunch's Closet Newly Broken Open* and *A History of Richard Whittington*. The book had a complex publishing history, going through editions with the same core title but varied subtitles, usually with the same preface but then with the stories in varying order. Editions are recorded in 1808, 1812, 1813 and 1814 at Burslem, plus an undated 'new and improved edition' there, then (after his death and the bankruptcy of his son John junior in 1822) at Manchester in 1827, 1828 and 1835. By the 1813 edition the reference to 'support of our faith and practice' had been dropped (but the Hobson story by Wesley was brought to the start), while the last Burslem and later editions modified the subtitle, offering instead '*a number of well attested facts; showing their power and influence on the affairs of mankind; with several extracts and original pieces from the writings of the best authors. The whole designed to prevent infidelity, show the state of separate spirits and evince the certainty of the world to come.*' Then, at least by 1836, the title (and some of the content) was taken over by an otherwise unknown author called (from 1843 onwards) 'T. Ottway'. In his first London edition, printed for Joseph Smith at 3s in 24mo, it had the slightly amended title *The Spectre, or News from the Invisible World, a collection of remarkable narratives on the certainty of supernatural visitations from the dead to the living etc; impartially compiled from the works of Baxter, Wesley, Simpson and other authors of indisputable veracity*. But by 1840 'The Spectre' had been dropped, and, with some editions reprinting Tregortha's preface, readers could reasonably have assumed they were reading the same book, but they were not, as it contained a different selection of stories, which also varied between the 1840 and 1843 editions, but then remained constant in later editions (some in London, some in Halifax) in 1844, 1848, 1853, 1860 and finally in 1870 (when the author's name also changed to 'T. Charley!').⁵²

Returning to the 1790s, we can now explore the second occult/Gothic stream of publications, notably those associated with Henry and Ann Lemoine. Henry Lemoine (1756–1812), a Spitalfields-born author

⁵²F.F.B., 'John Tregortha', *Proceedings of Wesley Historical Society*, 22:1 (1915), 15–20; Barry, *Raising Spirits*, 71; Davies, 'Wesley's Invisible World', 159–60.

and bookseller who operated on the edges of the bookselling trade, married Ann Swires in 1786, and in 1791 he published *Visits from the World of the Spirits or Interesting Anecdotes of the Dead*, a 302-page duodecimo (reprinted in 1830, and abridged as a Glasgow chapbook in 1845), largely based on the 1770 revised edition of Defoe, but with a new preface and some new stories.⁵³ The same year he began *The Conjurors Magazine*. A 'memoir' of Henry noted that the magazine 'lasted only three years. During this time he brought out a collection of apparitional histories prefaced by an ingenious argument prepared to convince the world of the reality of "the visits from the world of the spirits", the title of the book, but beyond that he did little more but write over again Baxter, Moreton, Glanvill, Webster, Dr Henry More, and repeat his own stories and others from the *Arminian Magazine*, one of the most emphatical of which is entitled "Death in the Pot".' By 'repeating his own stories' the memoirist probably means that Lamoine printed the same stories in *The Conjurors Magazine*, each monthly issue containing near the end a section on 'apparitions, dreams etc', the very first story in August 1791 (27) being indeed 'Death in the Pot'.⁵⁴ When he lost control of this magazine (renamed *The Astrologers Magazine*) in 1793, he started *The New Wonderful Magazine, and Marvellous Chronicle: or, New Weekly Entertainer. A work recording authentic accounts of the most extraordinary productions, events, and occurrences, in providence, nature, and art* in January 1793, costing 6d weekly, which ran for sixty issues with almost 2000 pages (also available in a five-volume set).⁵⁵ The magazine prompted a sceptical publication by the Dublin playwright Walley Chamberlain Oulton, entitled *The Wonderful Storyteller or New Pocket Book of Agreeable Entertainment, consisting entirely of a great variety of valuable articles not included in the Wonderful Magazine ... dedicated to the numerous purchasers of the Wonderful Magazine and the public*

⁵³Baine, 'Daniel Defoe', 336.

⁵⁴Memoirs of Mr Henry Lemoine', *The New Wonderful Museum and Extraordinary Magazine* (1807), 2218–40; David Goldthorpe, 'Lemoine, Henry (1756–1812)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 16430; Iain McCalman, 'New Jerusalem' in Knud Haakonssen (ed.), *Enlightenment and Religion* (Cambridge 1996), 312–35.

⁵⁵This took its full title from an earlier *Wonderful Magazine* which had started in September 1764, and apparently ran until 1766, although only issues to January 1765 are available.

at large (1795). It was published by the same booksellers, C. Johnson and A. Hogg in Paternoster Row, who published the magazine it satirised, but all Oulton's 'wonderful stories' turned out to be frauds or delusions.⁵⁶

In 1794–5 some injudicious loans rendered Henry Lemoine bankrupt, and he separated from Ann, pursuing a chequered career as an itinerant bookseller and hackwriter, but Ann, who became the major Gothic chapbook publisher, adopted the stories Henry had collected, and she and other chapbook sellers produced a series of 48-page texts based on them. In 1799, J. Barker in Great Russell Street Covent Garden (publisher of the two late editions of *Nocturnal Revels*) produced *Apparitions, Supernatural Occurrences demonstrative of the Soul's Immortality* for one shilling, and the next year Ann Lemoine published (for 6d) *New Lights from the World of Darkness, or the Midnight Messenger, with Solemn Signals from the World of Spirits ... The whole forming a constellation of horror!!*, also sold by T. Hurst in Paternoster Row. Several of the stories in *New Lights* appear to be Gothic short fictions, not factual accounts. In 1802–4, Hurst ran *The Marvellous Magazine and Compendium of Prodigies*, which serialised short Gothic novels, while Ann published *Tales of Terror! Or More Ghosts, forming a Complete Phantasmagoria*, a chapbook of fictional tales, in 1802 and then *The Tell-Tale or Universal Museum* (1803–5), which serialised Gothic chapbooks.⁵⁷ Tegg and Castleman were also leading publishers of such Gothic 'blue books', and in 1803 they produced *Tales of Superstition, or Relations of Apparitions*, a sixpenny 48-page chapbook, apparently a reprint from another magazine (as it includes a title page for *The New Conjurors Museum and Magical Magazine* no. 6), with a standard repertoire of apparition stories.⁵⁸ Finally, in 1810, T. and R. Hughes of Ludgate Street published another such chapbook, *Fair and Fatal Warnings or Visits from the World of Spirits*, further recycling materials from the Lemoine collections.

⁵⁶Sidney Lee, 'Oulton, Walley Chamberlain (fl. 1783–1820)', rev. Peter Thomson, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 20952.

⁵⁷Potter, *History*, 44–9; id., *Literary Mushrooms: Tales of Terror and Horror from the Gothic Chapbooks, 1800–1830* (Crestline, CA, 2009).

⁵⁸See <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/serial.50689.2> for the first issue, wrongly estimated as 1806.

Henry Lemoine was on the edge of the occult revival of this period, led in publishing terms by astrologers such as Ebenezer Sibly in the 1790s and then 'Raphael' in the 1820s. Their own books reproduced some such stories, and Raphael also included some Gothic fiction in his publications, which played heavily on a Gothic sense of horror.⁵⁹ Sibly's 1790s publishers, Champante and Whitrow of Jewry-Street, were responsible for another (undated) chapbook *The Midnight Monitor, or Solemn Warnings from the Invisible World, being Authentic Narratives of the Wonderful Imposition of Divine Providence*. Similar stories (plus some new Irish ones) also appeared, alongside essays on animal magnetism and Behmenist visions, in a short-lived Dublin magazine of 1809, *The Supernatural Magazine*.

It was in reaction to the swelling tide of such publications, and mounting establishment fears regarding the credulity and instability of popular opinion, that the post-1789 period also saw many publications seeking to discredit such tales. Some focused on the education of (middle-class) children, such as Mary Weightman's *The Friendly Monitor or Dialogues for Youth against the Fear of Ghosts and other Irrational Apprehensions* (1791), reissued in 1796 with a new title page (but otherwise identical) as *The Death-Watch: Dialogues upon Spirits ... by a Country Clergyman*.⁶⁰ Another piece for children (or their anxious parents) from the Newbery Press was Richard Johnson's *False Alarms, or the Mischievous Doctrine of Ghosts and Apparitions, of Spectres and Hobgoblins, Exploded from the Minds of Every Miss and Master* (1796, then 1799, 1802, 1805 and 1807). Others were aimed at chapbook readers: the debunking of several apparition stories in James Lackington's 1791 memoirs formed the centrepiece of *An Account of Some Imaginary Apparitions the Effect of Fear or Fraud* (Dunbar, n.d.). A larger and more sophisticated collection in the same vein is Joseph Taylor's *Apparitions, or the Mystery of Ghosts, Hobgoblins and Haunted Houses Developed* (1815), published by Lackington, Allen and Co. Taylor explains that until the age of 23 he had a 'dread of phantoms' due to 'having read many books in favour of ghosts and spectral appearances' in

⁵⁹ Barry, *Raising Spirits*, 80–95.

⁶⁰ Celestina Wroth, "'To Root the Old Woman out of Our Minds': women educationists and plebeian culture in late-eighteenth-century Britain", *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 30:2 (spring 2006), 48–73; Handley, *Visions*, 192–7.

early life (v) but, when living in a supposedly haunted country mansion, learnt the need to overcome such fears through a thorough investigation. After an opening essay he then offers some 220 pages of stories where apparitions turn out to be false, including, of course, the Fowler/Powell anecdote from the 1732 article (116–18).

From about this time, the focus of sceptical writings began to move towards medicalised explanations, most famously in John Ferriar's *An Essay towards a Theory of Apparitions* (1813, though based on his paper given in Manchester in 1790), John Alderson's *An Essay on Apparitions* (1823) and Samuel Hibbert's *Sketches of the Philosophy of Apparitions* (1824). Ferriar refers directly to some of the stories we have been examining: he quotes in full an example from Bovet (87–93, but does not then explain it), a Salem case from Mather's *Wonders* (34–7) and remarks sarcastically that 'there is ghostly authority for the division of a goblin equal to most of Glanvill's histories' (36) but only discusses in detail Beaumont's account of his own experiences with spirits (67–75, 103).⁶¹ Significantly, John Cumming (a nom de plume for William Andrew Mitchell, a newspaper editor in Newcastle-on-Tyne, according to his obituary in his *Tyne Mercury* of 25 November 1845), in *An Essay on Capacity and Genius ... Also Enquiry into the Nature of Ghosts and other Appearances Supposed to be Supernatural* (1820), which contains a long appendix 'with some authenticated relations of apparitions on which readers may exercise judgements' (441–537), notes (465) the 'surprise of readers' that Ferriar only relates 3 or 4 stories of apparitions. He himself tackles many more, including standard cases from 'Glanvil', Aubrey and 'Moreton' (479–497), attempting to explain each through imagination or fraud. Hibbert also scatters brief references to stories from Baxter, Turner, Glanvill, Aubrey, Bovet and Beaumont across his text (113–15, 167–9, 226–9), often suggesting drinking problems as an explanation, but pays more attention to Lee's letter to Fowler (as reproduced in Beaumont) as 'told better than most ghost stories' and 'one of the most interesting ghost stories on record' and having 'no reasonable doubt' of the authenticity of the narrative, but questioning whether we can trust 'a physician of olden time' in his judgement of the girl's health

⁶¹ John Ferriar, 'Of Popular Illusions and Particularly of Medical Demonology', *Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester*, III (1790), 31–116; K. A. Webb, 'Ferriar, John (1761–1815)' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 9368.

(169–73) and then to Doddridge's account of Gardiner (193–7) and Walton's account of Donne (353–5). James Forsyth, a Surrey surgeon and medical/scientific author, also refers to cases from More, Glanvill, Aubrey and Beaumont in his *Demonologia or Natural Knowledge Revealed, being an Expose of Ancient and Modern Superstitious Credulity and Imposture* (1827), but his chapter on apparitions (178ff) is plagiarised from Hibbert. William Newnham, another Surrey medical practitioner, also discusses some 'popular histories', including the Lyttleton case, in chapter 16 of his *Essay on Superstition* (1830).⁶²

The final category of publications to be considered is a series of commercial publications from the 1820s, clearly aimed at educated readerships who would be aware of the sceptical arguments of men like Ferriar but were still attracted to supernatural tales. The first is *Accredited Ghost Stories collected by T.M. Jarvis esq.* (1823, 6s), published by J. Andrews in New Bond Street. Jarvis is otherwise unknown, so it may be a nom de plume. After an introduction arguing for the value of such stories against atheism, given the uncertain evidence on both sides, and ending as ever with Addison, this offers 27 cases across 220 pages, most of them the standards from our seventeenth-century authors, plus more recent cases such as Veal, Wesley's account of the Epworth rectory disturbances, and apparitions mentioned in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. A sceptical reviewer in the *British Critic* welcomed that his 'relations are free for the most part from ... visionary improprieties and impertinences', avoiding such 'species of accredited idology' as the drummer of Tedworth, and he praised a few stories, reprinting one in full. But he considers 27 'a scanty list it must be confessed for a period of more than three centuries', when readers could think of many more as well accredited 'at one sitting, round a blazing winter's hearth'. He then offers an essentially aesthetic judgement: 'A ghost story is like a pun. It must either be extremely good, or in the other full extremity of badness. Here, as in poetry, mediocrity is the only quality which cannot be tolerated.' In doing so, one might argue the reviewer is following the logic of Jarvis's own decision to call these 'stories', not accounts or narratives, appealing, surely, to the growing market for overtly fictional 'ghost stories'.⁶³

⁶²P. W. J. Bartrip, 'Newnham, William (1790–1865)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 20030.

⁶³*British Critic*, 20 (1823), 588–93.

The same borderline is trodden the following year by Richard Warner (1763–1857), in the second volume of his *Illustrations, Critical, Historical, Biographical and Miscellaneous of Novels by the Author of Waverley*, that is Sir Walter Scott (whose own mixture of Romantic fascination and enlightened scepticism towards the supernatural has been much analysed).⁶⁴ Warner was a non-evangelical Anglican clergyman and antiquarian, based from 1794 in Bath, who published extensively, but ‘his works were commercial rather than scholarly’;⁶⁵ his three-volume work was published by six Paternoster Row booksellers, including Hurst (and Longman). Warner notes both older sources such as Dee, Bovet and ‘solemn Aubrey’, as well as Jarvis’s recent book (which Scott owned). He offers an apparently sceptical judgement (178–9n) on ‘how much the popular superstitions of every country are tinged with the prevailing complexion of its national character. In England, where people are of a gloomy or sober cast, the stories of apparitions are, for the most part, of a grave and consistent description: not so, however, with our lively neighbours the French’. Yet Warner then proceeds to select a series of accounts ‘as carrying with them that impress of authenticity, which is generally deemed sufficient to establish the truth of any narration’, especially where names are given (186). He then discusses the Villiers case (186–94, citing Clarendon, but also the 1729 edition of Defoe), the Lee letter to Fowler from Beaumont (194–7, but as discussed by Hibbert) and a case from Jarvis (205–21), as well as giving two contemporary cases known to him (221–3).

The following year saw the final publication to be considered here, namely *Signs before Death and Authenticated Apparitions: in one hundred narratives collected by Horace Welby* (1825, cost 6s, published by W. Simpkin and R. Marshall of Stationers Hall Court; an 1874 edition has a different introduction and amended selection of stories). Welby was the nom de plume of the prolific author and antiquary John Timbs (1801–75), whose more than 150 publications ‘are compilations of interesting facts gathered from every conceivable quarter and relating to the most

⁶⁴Coleman Parsons, *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott’s Fiction* (Edinburgh, 1964); Srđjan Smajic, ‘The Trouble with Ghost-Seeing: Vision, Ideology, and Genre in the Victorian Ghost Story’, *English Literary History*, 70 (2003), 1107–35.

⁶⁵Michael Hicks, ‘Warner, Richard (1763–1857)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 28766.

varied subjects'.⁶⁶ He began writing from 1820 as assistant to the radical Sir Richard Phillips, editor of the *Monthly Magazine*, and it is possible that his interest in this topic reflected Phillips' own unorthodox views on science,⁶⁷ but it seems more likely that, like Nathaniel Crouch over a century before, Timbs was a commercial compiler of compendia, in his case clearly for the urban middle classes. His introduction, itself a compendium of arguments from previous prefaces, appeals for cautious belief against fashionable scepticism (including Ferriar and Hibbert), citing a long list of past writers (ending with the inevitable quote from Addison) and stressing that he is only offering 'a collection of facts, not of reasonings' and will 'leave the reader to form his own inferences and analogies' (vii). He then proceeds 'to illustrate, in a cursory manner, the principal authorities quoted in the following sheets', namely 'Beaumont's History of Apparitions, Glanvil's Saducissimus [sic] Triumphatus, Baxter's Visits from the World of Spirits, Sinclair's Invisible World etc'. He promises to extract 'their quintessence, by adapting their relations in language suitable to the taste of readers in the present day'. He criticises Beaumont and Glanvill for sometimes going beyond the bounds of credibility, preferring the 'more moderate and probable character' of Baxter and Sinclair (xiii–xv). However, it is clear he has not actually used Baxter's 1691 book (which he wrongly states is 'for the most part compiled from Sinclair') but a volume published in 1791, that is to say Lemoine's *Visits*, while by Sinclair's *Invisible World* he actually meant the 1752 *View of the Invisible World* (see the story of the Abbey Vault he quotes on 236 and the 'Duel of the Two Brothers' at 301). In fact, Welby draws much more widely than these four authors, using Aubrey, Bovet, Defoe (Rogers, Scott and several of his unnamed stories, plus the Veal narrative, where he notes the attacks on Defoe's motives and authenticity 254–64), Boswell, Wesley from the *Arminian Magazine* (213–29, possibly via Southey's *Life*), plus other standards: 'Death in the Pot' is credited to 'World of Spirits 1796' (212). There are also a number of dated recent cases, including an apparition at Starcross in Devon in 1823 (40–4, from the *New Monthly Magazine*), 'the extraordinary case of Anne Taylor of

⁶⁶J. R. MacDonald, 'Timbs, John (1801–1875)', rev. Nilanjana Banerji, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 27460.

⁶⁷Thomas Seccombe, 'Phillips, Sir Richard (1767–1840)', rev. M. Clare Loughlin-Chow, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 22167.

Tiverton in 1814' (173–4), 'The Yatton Demoniac' [1789] 'with complete documents' (242–50),⁶⁸ 'the apparition of Mr Barlow's huntsman in 1811' (278–9, from *Gentleman's Magazine*) and finally 'narration of the Sampford ghost in 1810 with affidavits and other documents etc' (301–12, from the pamphlets by the Rev. C. Colton, minister of Tiverton). At least one story, 'The Midnight Storm' (181–92), is clearly a Gothic fiction, set in a French chateau and ending with 'circumstances of unexampled horror'!

Welby's compendium, with its confused plundering from the tradition of publications studied here, epitomises the complex pattern of reuse and abuse of tales of the supernatural which this chapter has sought to uncover. A series of entrepreneurial publishers, mostly operating from Paternoster Row in London, experimented with anthologising these stories in varied combinations, usually in publications of 3s to 6s aimed at the middling sort and above, but sometimes in chapbook or serial format or in one-shilling compendia which might attract a lower-class readership. While the late-seventeenth-century texts provided the majority of stories, both Defoe's accounts and later stories published by evangelicals or in periodicals began to play a growing part from the 1770s onwards, while the popularity of Gothic fiction had some influence from the 1790s. Sceptical attacks on these stories clustered in the 1720–40 period and after 1790, with a rising tide after 1815 (not fully studied here), and they themselves were prone to retell useful anecdotes, like the bishop-judge story. Any attempt to analyse the stories themselves, or draw conclusions about their significance either in popular or educated culture, must begin by unravelling the publishing history by which they were transmitted and (not fully studied here) modified and retold, as well as re-interpreted.

⁶⁸ See Barry, *Witchcraft*, 206–55.

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Researching Reverse Witch Trials in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England

Owen Davies

Historians of early modern witchcraft rely heavily on the evidence of trial documents and pamphlets, which, although not entirely reliable, usually provide enough basic social data about names, places of residence and the like to be able to reconstruct general trends concerning who were witches and who accused them. With the repeal of witchcraft statutes across Europe in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a valuable source of historical information dried up about witchcraft discourses and disputes in every-day life. But although this was the end of the trial of witches, it was not the end of trials *with* witches.¹

¹See, for example, Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, 'Witchcraft after the Witch-Trials', in Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, Brian P. Levack and Roy Porter, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (1999), 95–191; Willem de Blécourt, 'The Witch, Her Victim, The Unwitcher and the Researcher: The Continued Existence of Traditional Witchcraft', in Willem de Blécourt, Ronald Hutton and Jean La Fontaine, *Witchcraft and*

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Much of the discussion on witchcraft in the so-called long nineteenth century has been based on the anecdotal accounts of folklorists and local historians. Although these sources provide much valuable evidence concerning what people thought about witches, they rarely provide us with any concrete and quantifiable information about the age and social status of those accused or even their real names, as it was a common practice for abbreviations and pseudonyms to be used to respect people's privacy. But in the 1970s and 1980s, first Gustav Henningsen, conducting research on Denmark, and then Willem de Blécourt, studying the continuation of Dutch witch belief, turned to newspaper reports as a means of getting beyond the challenges of the folklore material in order to locate witchcraft in a concrete temporal and social context. My own early work on England made extensive use of newspapers, too, particularly *The Times*, which had a vast published index.² The newspapers printed a wide range of items on the continued belief in witchcraft, including editorials, critiques, letters, anecdotes, reports of lectures and advertisements. What are of particular interest are what Henningsen referred to as 'witch trials in reverse'. These were court cases where the accused witch was now the prosecutor and not the defendant, usually seeking redress for being slandered or verbally and physically abused. Thousands of such cases took place across Europe and America following the repeal of witchcraft laws. Sometimes they were serious enough to be heard by high courts, but most were considered minor criminal offences and so were heard by lower courts that were not necessarily required to take depositions or record court proceedings. So newspaper reports of these trials became the only surviving record.

Magic in Europe: The Twentieth Century (1999), 141–220; Owen Davies and Willem de Blécourt (eds.), *Beyond the Witch Trials: Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment Europe* (Manchester, 2004); Willem de Blécourt and Owen Davies (eds.), *Witchcraft Continued: Popular Magic in Modern Europe* (Manchester, 2004); Owen Davies, 'Magic in Common and Legal Perspectives', in David J. Collins (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West: From Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge, 2015), 521–46.

² Gustav Henningsen, 'Witch Persecution after the Era of the Witch Trials', *ARV*, 44 (1988), 103–53; Willem de Blécourt, 'On the Continuation of Witchcraft', in Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester, and Gareth Roberts (eds.), *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1996), 335–52, esp. 345; Owen Davies, 'Newspapers and the Popular Belief in Witchcraft and Magic in the Modern Period', *Journal of British Studies*, 37 (1998), 139–65.

The use of newspapers as a principal source of information on popular mentalities was not original in itself. E.P. Thompson's studies on wife-selling and rough music in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England were based largely on newspaper reports, and Bob Bushaway employed newspaper reportage to great effect to reconstruct the social importance of popular customs. Historians of crime have also made significant use of newspapers.³ But very few historians of customs and beliefs have used newspapers as the basis for the sort of record linkage employed by genealogists, using the personal data included in reports to cross reference with other nineteenth-century sources such as trade directories, tithe surveys, poor law records, rate books and, most important of all, the national decennial censuses that began in 1801. This could help build a deeply micro-historical approach to understanding the personal and neighbourhood dynamics that led to witchcraft disputes and their reporting in the modern era, and the social and spatial relationships between those involved. This train of thought also led to the idea of exploring the influence of local topography and environment on social behaviour, community structure and magical mentalities, such as David Underdown and Andy Wood have done for customary activities in early modern contexts.⁴

As I happened to be living in Somerset in the mid-1990s, it was a good opportunity to try and instigate such a project in a modest way in a county that represented a distinctive set of landscapes, environments and economies—from the extensively drained wetlands of the Levels to the coal mining communities in the centre of the county, from the fishing ports on its northern and western coastline to the uplands of Exmoor, and the extensive dairying industry across the eastern and southern parts of the county.

³E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (1991); Bob Bushaway, *By Rite: Custom, Ceremony and Community in England, 1700–1800* (1982). On recent crime history, see, for example, James Sharpe, 'Reporting Crime in the North of England Eighteenth-Century Newspaper: A Preliminary Investigation', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés/Crime, History & Societies*, 16 (2012), 25–45; id., *A Fiery & Furious People: A History of Violence in England* (2016).

⁴David Underdown, 'Regional Cultures? Local variations in popular culture during the early modern period' in Tim Harris (ed.), *Popular Culture in England, c. 1500–1800* (Basingstoke, 1995), 28–47; Andy Wood, *The Politics of Social Conflict: The Peak Country, 1520–1770* (Cambridge, 1999). Most recently, see Karl Bell's work on nineteenth-century urban society, *The Magical Imagination: Magic and Modernity in Urban England, 1780–1914* (Cambridge, 2012).

SOMERSET⁵

The folklore sources were rich for Somerset, and I already knew from the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century editions of the *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, which often reported aspects of folk belief culled from the local press, that there were numerous court reports in this neighbouring county as well. The omens were good for newspaper research. Between 1997 and 1999, I conducted a systematic survey of the *Somerset County Herald* (on microfilm), and more limited searches in the likes of *Pulman's Weekly News*, whose editor seemed to have an interest in folklore. Whenever I came across a reverse witch trial or prosecution of a magical practitioner, I then followed up in other local newspapers for more details. This revealed twenty-seven court cases concerning assaults upon and threats against suspected witches up until 1900, over thirty more concerning cunning folk, astrologers and fortune-tellers, and a mass of other data indicating that witchcraft and magic were still vibrant and seriously held beliefs. To help assess the relationship between community characteristics and popular mentalities, I was also interested in customary activities, particularly communal shaming rituals such as rough music. Analysis of the geographical spread and vitality of these traditional expressions of communal values, and the social characteristics of their organisers and participants over time, help provide important insights into localised social relations.

What Somerset court cases brought home was how visceral the fear and concern about witchcraft was amongst women and men across the age range. Those making accusations and being abused as witches were by no means all from the working poor, either. Folklorists, such as Somerset's Walter Raymond, often romanticised the belief in witchcraft, even if they were critical of it. There was a reluctance, ignorance or indifference to portraying the violence, crippling anxieties and psychological terror felt and displayed by both

⁵Some of this section is taken from Chap. 5 of Owen Davies, *A People Bewitched: Witchcraft and Magic in Nineteenth-Century Somerset* (Bruton, 1999).

accused witches and their accusers.⁶ The state may have rejected the existence of witches, yet it is clear that many Somerset folk continued to believe that they presented a real threat to life. Indeed, there still lingered an impression in the minds of some that witchcraft was a criminal act, and that the legal authorities were obliged to act against witches. This is apparent from the opinion of a coal dealer named William Knott, who was summoned in 1873 for defaulting on fines issued for neglecting to send his children to school. In his defence, Knott told the Bench that he was a widower and that two of his children were in bed with a low fever. 'To tell the truth, gentlemen', explained Knott, 'I be bewitched. If ever a man were bewitched, I be bewitched. I'll summon the woman who do do it, and I'll bring proof that she do do it. I declare to God Almighty that I be bewitched.' The Bench was hardly sympathetic and awarded a larger fine.⁷

Contrary to Knott's belief, witches could no longer be summoned for their supposed criminal activities, of course, but there were other ways of forcing them to remove their spells. The most potent of remedies was to draw blood from the witch. As one witch assailant named John Wills explained, 'She [Eliza Day] has been troubling many people in Odcombe, and I thought that if I could draw a drop of blood it would be all right.'⁸ Although Wills accomplished this by punching Day in the face, it was usually achieved by scratching the witch's arm with a pin, nail or needle. Blood could have been drawn from the face, but the primary aim of scratching was not to cause physical injury as an act of revenge—though that motive certainly played some part—but to break the witch's power. Occasionally it was thought necessary to rub the blood over part of the bewitched person's body. In 1850, for instance, a woman of Cheddar knocked down another old woman who she believed had cast an evil eye upon her. She scratched her with a large stocking needle and smeared the blood on her own forehead.⁹ Scratching was certainly not a step to be taken lightly since such an action was obviously interpreted by the law as a criminal act of assault rather than a remedy. Thus, when, in

⁶Owen Davies and Simon White, 'Witchcraft and the Somerset Idyll: the depiction of folk belief in Walter Raymond's novels', *Folklore*, 26 (2015), 53–67.

⁷*Somerset County Herald*, 1 February 1873.

⁸*Pulman's Weekly News*, 13 February 1866.

⁹*Somerset County Herald*, 24 August 1850.

1867, James Duck considered scratching a woman he accused of witchcraft, 'friends were consulted, and knowing that in several recent cases where the old method of drawing blood had been resorted to fines and imprisonment had followed', a different course of action was suggested. As we shall see later, though, that alternative still landed him in court.¹⁰

The reports of these trials did not always state the age or social status of those concerned, but as long as they gave their names and where they lived, then an examination of the censuses often provided the rest. There were a couple of cases where I was unable to track down all the basic information on all concerned because they had moved—perhaps as a result of the events surrounding them. Furthermore, the newspapers sometimes only mentioned the place where the petty sessions were held, rather than the places where the complainants and defendants lived, making it difficult to locate them. It was possible, nevertheless, to garner enough details to provide some meaningful statistics. Some doubts may be expressed as to the veracity of the reporting of these cases. Journalists occasionally misspelt or confused names, for example. Where there were two or more different reports of the same trial, however, then such inaccuracies were usually ironed out. Furthermore, parish records corroborated some of the information provided by the newspapers. Comparing the court clerk's minutes of the subsequent petty sessions case with a newspaper report of the same trial also provided some proof of the accuracy of reporting.

On Friday, 5 September 1879, Simon Ashton, a 34-year-old married plasterer of St Cuthbert's, Wells, scratched an 84-year-old widow named Mary Court, also from St Cuthbert's, while in the Railway Tavern. Court and her two granddaughters, Jane Francis and Alice Francis of Coxley, had gone there for a drink on the evening of the day in question. Ashton was already at the bar with a man named Waller. According to the *Wells Journal*, Ashton was heard to say that Court was 'a witching old ____'. This is corroborated by the testimony of Jane Francis, as recorded in the session minute book: 'I was in the Railway Inn with gmother and sister waller & ashton were there—He sd [____] witching old b '____'. The *Wells Journal* then reported Alice Francis's statement as follows: 'On Friday night she went to the Railway Tavern, with her grandmother and sister. Defendant was there and began to talk about

¹⁰ *Somerset County Herald*, 11 January 1868.

witchcraft. Coming out he shook hands with her grandmother and pushed a pin into her hand.' This is nearly identical to that in the minute book: 'On Friday evening I went to the Ry Tavern with gmother and sister Deft was there & he was talking about witchcraft. Coming out he shook hands with gmother & pushed a pin into her hand. I saw him. Outside he sd he had done it & that was all he wanted to do'. The only witness for the defence was the landlord of the Tavern, John Parfitt. According to the *Wells Journal*, he stated that 'the parties were at his house on 6th September. Ashton asked him for a pin and he gave him one. There was some talk about witchcraft. Saw defendant and complainant shake hands.' As recorded by the clerk, Parfitt actually said, 'I am Llord of Ry Tavern the parties present were in my house on the 5th. Ashton asked me for a pin. I gave him one. He shook hands with Mrs Court going out. There was some talk about witchcraft. I saw nothing outside. I saw deft & compt shake hands'.¹¹ Again, the two versions corroborate each other well, apart from the newspaper printing '6th' instead of '5th'. This is only one case, of course, but it gives some confidence concerning the other cases where we only have journalists' reports to rely on. Before moving on to discuss further the content of these other trials, it would be worthwhile to examine the distribution pattern of the trials themselves to see what that can tell us about witchcraft in nineteenth-century Somerset.

Before 1850 there were very few reverse witch trials, followed by a relative glut between 1850 and 1880, and then a marked decline. This does not mean that there was a sudden rise in violence against witches during the second half of the century, only that there was an increase in recorded incidents. The graph represents only those conflicts that resulted in a prosecution. During the first half of the century the nature of policing meant that there were fewer prosecutions, and the nature of reporting meant that fewer cases were reported. Before the 1850s much of Somerset was still being policed by unpaid, part-time constables, and magistrates exercised a considerable amount of informal, parlour-room justice. The County Police Act of 1839 did permit magistrates in quarter session to establish proper county police forces with the permission of the Home Secretary, but Somerset was not one of those counties that

¹¹ *Wells Journal*, 11 September 1879; City and Borough of Wells minutes and proceedings, D/PS/wls 4/7.

took up the offer, and so policing continued in the old fashion way. It was only following the passing of the County and Borough Police Act in 1856 that Somerset was required by law to provide a professional police force. It was the inception of this more efficient and formal system of policing that led to more cases of scratching coming to court. The new police were more impartial and strict in their dealings with communal affairs, and those assaulted or abused for being witches were more likely to report to them. Lodging of complaints was also made easier by the spread of police stations. During the first half of 1857 land was purchased around the county and new police stations were built, though in a few places, like Glastonbury and Ilminster, existing buildings were converted for police use. Although I believe the inception of the new police to be the primary influence on the shape of the graph, it is also true that it was only really during the 1840s that local newsgathering grew more sophisticated. The rapid proliferation of local papers during the second half of the century ensured more comprehensive coverage of petty sessions. But considering that there are no reported cases from the 1840s, I believe that this factor has not caused any significant distortion of the figures.

Not too much can really be read into the geographical distribution of reverse witch trials across the county. Scratchings represent only the most extreme manifestation of counteraction against witches. Belief in witchcraft was pervasive, and if all the discoveries of witch bottles and pierced hearts, visits to cunning folk and anecdotal accounts of counter-witchcraft actions were plotted on a map, they would be spread right across the county, from the mining communities in the north to the uplands in the west and the dairying region in the south. What the distribution of cases does show, though, is that witch-related conflicts were by no means restricted to the villages and hamlets of Somerset. There are cases from the small provincial towns of Wells, Crewkerne and Somerton, and three occurred in Taunton, the biggest urban centre in the county after Bath. In May 1859, for example, Charlotte Hill, aged sixty-two, a widowed housekeeper of Melody Buildings, Taunton, was scratched by Sarah Oaten, aged thirty-eight, also of Melody Buildings. On the day in question, Hill had been on her way to the Castle with a man's dinner. As she passed by Oaten's house, Oaten rushed out with a pin and scratched her hand, making it bleed profusely. At the same time Oaten exclaimed, 'You old bundle; what have you been doing to me? You have

bewitched me!’¹² When the case subsequently came to court, the magistrates fined her seven shillings and six pence for the assault. There were also other disturbances in central Taunton that never came to court. One night in late May 1865, for instance, a ruction occurred in South Street after a man named Glide accused a female neighbour of bewitching his horse. The woman and her husband were furious at Glide’s accusation, and a row ensued in the street. A large number of passers-by assembled to watch the spectacle, but they dispersed when a policeman arrived on the scene and separated the combatants.¹³ The fact that I found hardly any instances of witchcraft disputes in Somerset’s major towns after the 1870s suggests that witchcraft became less relevant in urban communities several decades earlier than in rural areas.

With one exception, the reverse trials concerned only those accused of witchcraft and their alleged victims or their immediate family. By the nineteenth century, collective action against witches was rare in the county. Witch-swimming, in particular, ceased to be practised. The swimming of witches in order to prove their guilt was one of the most notorious and formalised manifestations of communal justice. Suspected witches were placed in a pond or river, and if they floated, this was a sure sign of their guilt, God’s baptismal waters having rejected their evil bodies. Witch-swimming had been practised in Somerset during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but I have found no example of its employment in the county beyond 1730. In contrast, the practice continued in the counties of the Midlands and East Anglia up until the mid-nineteenth century. Presumably, then, this form of communal justice was not as engrained in the folk culture of Somerset as it was elsewhere in the country.

The only recorded instance of a witch-mobbing occurred at Somerton in September 1867. On the evening of Saturday the fourteenth, a young woman in the town caused a great stir by proclaiming that one Jane Gillett had bewitched her. She told an assembled crowd that if they went to her house, they would find her by the fire frying toads. The crowd, described by one paper as ‘an unruly set not two removes from Hottentots’, marched on Gillett’s house and demanded she let them into search for signs of witchcraft. A policeman named Stride and another

¹² *Somerset County Herald*, 28 May 1859.

¹³ *West Somerset Free Press*, 27 May 1865.

constable were also present but did nothing to disperse the crowd. Stride actually called out to Gillett, who was in bed at the time, and told her she had better come down and talk to them. Gillett's son then opened the door. People rushed in and proceeded to look around, poking the ashes in the grate and examining the chimney. Nothing was found and the crowd eventually dispersed. Gillett subsequently complained to the Somerton magistrates about the behaviour of the policemen and 'wished the Bench to tell her if people could be allowed to disturb her in this disgraceful manner'. She emphatically denied having any toads or frogs in her possession, and added that as a consequence of the accusations she was losing her character and employment. P.C. Stride was called to give evidence and stated that he did what he could to control the crowd. The magistrates decided that the police had done nothing wrong and feebly suggested that Gillett put the blame on the crowd. No one was subsequently arrested for the disturbance.¹⁴

The lack of communal action against witches was not necessarily symptomatic of declining social cohesion, for other forms of folk justice, such as 'skimmertons', continued to occur in the county, most notably at Halse (1861), Paulton (1863), High Littleton (1864), Thurloxton (1864), Pensford (1868), Ilton (1868), Uphill (1888) and Street (1890). A skimmerton was a community's way of ostracising those who transgressed social norms and values, adulterers in particular. They were usually composed of two ritual elements, one being a 'rough band' whose job it was to create a cacophony by beating pots and pans, the other being the parading of an effigy of the culprit round the community. At Pensford the rough band was headed by a young man blowing a brass instrument, and the effigies of two men suspected of having affairs were towed through the village on four consecutive evenings, culminating in their being burnt before the house of one of the culprits. At Paulton five colliers were arrested for having organised a skimmerton involving over one hundred people beating tins, pots and kettles in the streets and outside the house of a married man caught in *flagrante* with a married woman. In 1861, the rector of Halse instigated a prosecution against several young men for organising a skimmerton against two of his servants who were suspected of adultery. On the evening in

¹⁴ *Somerset County Herald*, 21 September 1867; *Somerset County Herald*, 12 October 1867; *Pulman's Weekly News*, 8 October 1867.

question, around sixty people, mostly young men, paraded two life-size effigies through the village on a three-wheeled cart, while a burning tar barrel was pushed beside it. A rough band accompanied the procession, and the evening ended with the effigies being burnt in the middle of the village. A couple of weeks after this visual display of communal disapprobation a printed notice containing 'scurrilous' and 'libellous' reflections on the character of the two servants in question was pinned on the church door.¹⁵

Although there may have been few organised displays of communal anger against suspected witches compared with ritual protests against adulterers, individual scratchings were still usually the culmination of a process of consultation with a large group of people. The advice of cunning folk was often sought out, of course, but so was that of family, friends and neighbours. Those bewitched or related to the bewitched did not keep their suspicions to themselves, and wherever and whenever an opportunity arose to air their grievances and garner support they would take it. In this context, the most important networks of communal debate operated amongst women during the daily domestic routine. Such tasks as fetching water, washing and milking provided opportunities for discussion and the exchange of gossip amongst friends and neighbours. Amongst the male portion of the community the main debating arena was probably the pub or beer-shop. We have already seen, for instance, how Simon Ashton discussed his bewitchment in the Railway Tavern. The more support the bewitched managed to garner from the community in this way, the more they felt justified and secure about assaulting those suspected of witchcraft. In this sense, then, the community may not have acted as one but a significant portion often thought as one.

With the large-scale digitisation of regional and local newspapers in the last decade or so, I recently conducted a digital search for new Somerset cases, but, with some relief, it is clear that the original exhaustive manual search was actually more productive. This is, in part, because I had access to far more local papers on microfilm and original hardcopy than are available in digitised form. The text-recognition software used to create the search metadata also produces significant inaccuracies that

¹⁵*Somerset County Herald*, 25 April 1868; 11 July 1863; 16 November 1861; 7 December 1861.

can hamper research, such as confusing ‘witch’ with ‘watch’. But what the search did reveal was the continuation of reverse trials into the 1920s in Somerset. In 1905 Francis Jane Smith was charged with threatening to stab a female neighbour with a pocketknife. She and her husband had formerly run a farm near Honiton, Devon, and had experienced a lot of bad luck with their livestock. After moving to Taunton, she continued to feel persecuted by witchcraft and fixed upon the neighbour as the source. Smith was subsequently removed to the asylum. Two years later, the Taunton Petty Sessions heard the case of pensioner John Stone, who threatened to murder his young married neighbour Alice Saunders because he thought she had bewitched him. He told her ‘not to place her saucer eyes on him’ and threatened to burn her. It was in Somerset in 1916 that England’s only fatal shooting of a suspected witch occurred. Farmer Phillip Hill, aged fifty-two, was tried for murder after he shot dead his elderly neighbour Daniel Lawrence for bewitching his child and pony. Found guilty, Hill was judged to be insane at the time he committed the crime. Finally, in 1926, an old-age pensioner of Glastonbury summoned Mrs Sarah Wilkins for assaulting him. It transpired that the old man had repeatedly accused her husband of being a witch and that he came ‘as a witch’ to torment him in his room: ‘he came with his face to me. I spat at it, and went at it, and he went away like a ball of smoke’.¹⁶ These four late cases, along with another assault case heard in 1929, suggest that the rump of reverse witch trials were particularly concerned with farming misfortune, with accusations being made by the middle-aged and elderly, with four of the five witch accusers being men.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Move forward a decade, and my involvement in an Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded collaborative project called ‘Changing landscapes, changing environments: enclosure and culture in Northamptonshire, 1700–1900’ provided an opportunity to apply the same research methods to a distinctly different group of local economies, cultures and environments. How evident was witchcraft belief in

¹⁶ *The Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 8 September 1905; *Somerset and West of England Advertiser*, 18 July 1907; *The Courier*, 25 October 1916; *Western Gazette*, 29 January 1926.

the county? And in what ways might it have been expressed differently in comparison with Somerset? There was a particular intended focus on how the parliamentary enclosure movement of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries might have affected popular mentalities as common rights were terminated, the landscape was reorganised and rationalised, and neighbourly relationships were realigned.

Parts of Somerset were affected by the parliamentary enclosure movement, mostly meadows and commons, but arable Northamptonshire was the most heavily enclosed county of all, with major long-term consequences for many communities.¹⁷ The number of landowners fell by almost half at enclosure, the numbers of occupiers also contracted, and the poor lost extensive common rights. While scholars have focused on the consequences of this severe rationalisation of the landscape for agricultural productivity, land-holding structures, and, most emotively, the economic well-being of the poor, little work has been undertaken on its long-term cultural impact. Were the effects of enclosure on local communities enduring, and if so, how did they manifest themselves?¹⁸

As with other midland counties, there is a paucity of folklore material for Northamptonshire compared to the likes of Somerset and Devon. One of the few nineteenth-century sources is Thomas Sternberg's *Dialect and Folklore of Northamptonshire* (1851). He noted that legends still circulated amongst the county's population and thought it a 'hopeless task to collect one tithe of the tales still told by the "gammer" to a shuddering audience round the cottage fire'.¹⁹ As to horse-shoes nailed to thresholds or suspended over the hearth to ward off witchcraft, he noted that 'though unquestionably less than formerly, [they] are still by no means few'. He had also interviewed one 'credulous old dame' who had hidden crossed knives on her cottage floor to test a neighbour she suspected of witchcraft. The neighbour appeared

¹⁷See J.M. Neeson, *Commoners: Common Right, Enclosure and Social Change in England, 1700–1820* (Cambridge, 1993).

¹⁸For major project findings see, for example, Matthew Cragoe, 'The Church of England and the Enclosure of England's Open Fields—A Northamptonshire Case Study', *International Journal of Regional and Local History*, 11 (2016), 17–30; id. and Briony McDonagh, 'Parliamentary Enclosure, Vermin and the Cultural Life of English Parishes, 1750–1850', *Continuity and Change*, 28 (2013), 27–50.

¹⁹Thomas Sternberg, *Dialect and Folklore of Northamptonshire* (1851), 147.

agitated, would not sit down, and left.²⁰ But he was clearly of the view that witches were increasingly a matter of legend and not a popular ‘problem’. Other than Sternberg, there is an anecdotal account of a woman in Wellingborough being taken down to the river to be swum as a suspected witch in 1820. She was apparently rescued by her son before being thrown in.²¹ Although he said little of witchcraft, the celebrated ‘Northamptonshire Peasant Poet’ John Clare (1793–1864) also depicted the richness of ‘superstitions’ and beliefs about the supernatural that circulated in the early decades of the century, and he chronicled with great sadness the changes wrought by enclosure on the mental and external landscape in which he grew up and worked as a labourer.²²

With so few relevant folklore sources the newspapers could, therefore, prove crucial to understanding the nature and pattern of witchcraft belief in the county as communities dealt with the long-term consequences of intense enclosure. The two main Northamptonshire newspapers were systematically surveyed, including the *Northampton Mercury*, which began in 1720. This revealed not a single reverse witch trial and practically no mentions of witchcraft belief at all for the entire period. Only one prosecution of a magical practitioner was found. This occurred in 1914 with the suit of Stanley Wagner against Howard Remaley. Wagner charged Remaley with seeking to harm him. It was alleged that some time before a sum of money was supposedly stolen from Remaley. The latter consulted a ‘witch doctor’, who described the thief. The description is alleged to have tallied with that of Wagner. To disturb the sleep of the thief, the witch doctor told Remaley to take three horseshoe nails to a neighbour, who he had to ask to grease them. This was done. Next Remaley was advised that in order ‘to kill the thief’ he needed to obtain three drugs from a druggist or undertaker and to use a sledgehammer in connection with them. About this time rumours began to reach the ears of Wagner, and he became so alarmed that he caused a warrant to be sworn out against Remaley for surety of the peace.²³

Even accounting for possible newspaper editorial bias against reporting instances of ‘superstition’, it is highly unlikely that cases were coming

²⁰ Sternberg, *Dialect*, 151.

²¹ *Northampton Mercury*, 14 March 1924.

²² See Sarah Houghton-Walker, *John Clare's Religion* (Aldershot, 2009).

²³ *Watertown Herald*, 19 December 1914.

before petty sessions and not being reported. Searches through the digitised newspaper archives have since confirmed the absence of evidence. Does this mean that Northamptonshire communities were no longer generating witches in their midst and that witchcraft was no longer a feared or significant concern by the mid-nineteenth century? And if so, was the enclosure movement the key factor in this apparent early decline? Before considering these implications further, we need to shift back to a similar survey, funded by the Leverhulme Trust in 2001, on another different type of county—Hertfordshire.²⁴

HERTFORDSHIRE

In many respects, nineteenth-century Hertfordshire was a fairly ‘typical’ arable county, but it also reveals a flourishing network of small towns, the growth of consumer and service trades and well-defined areas of cottage/small factory industry stimulated by the expansion of London. Farming practice and productivity varied, with the lighter soils of the south of the county responding more rapidly to London demand. The impact of parliamentary enclosure was modest compared to Northamptonshire and began late, in the 1790s. The south and west were notable for their thriving cottage and small-factory industries in the form of the straw plait and hat trades. Additional industrial development took the form of silk production and paper-making. Towards the south, malt-making centred upon Ware, and thanks to the London market substantial brewing concerns flourished in a number of Hertfordshire towns, while the north of the county remained largely agrarian.

Systematic surveying of the *Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Chronicle* (1822–1829), *Herts, Huntingdon, Bedford and Isle of Ely Mercury* (1828–1833), *County Press for Herts, Beds & Bucks* (1831–1844), and *Hertfordshire Mercury* (1844–1914) was carried out to ensure chronologically continuous coverage. Extensive searches of the *Herts and Essex Observer* (1862–) and *Herts Guardian* (1852–1902) were also conducted to ensure a broad coverage of countywide news reporting. Limited searches of other local papers were also conducted to assess the extent of localised coverage of petty sessions and news. All relevant cases found in the principal newspapers were followed up in local

²⁴The project was led by me and my old colleagues Nigel Goose and Julie Moore.

papers where possible. To assess patterns of reporting, and the potential for editorial bias influenced by local sensibilities concerning the publication of ‘backward’ or ‘credulous’ beliefs and activities, record was made of all reports concerning instances of witchcraft and magic from outside the county. A brief survey of extant court records confirmed the general paucity of surviving petty session minute books.

Two of the most sensational eighteenth-century English witchcraft cases occurred in Hertfordshire. In 1712 Jane Wenham, from the village of Walkern, was the last person in England to be found guilty and sentenced to death under the 1604 Witchcraft Act. The judge and jury heard numerous testimonies from her fellow villagers regarding her witchery, and the trial became a religious and political football between high church Anglican Tories and Whigs in the county. She was subsequently pardoned by the Queen. Then, in 1751, thousands gathered to see the swimming of Ruth and John Osborne near Tring, in the west of the county. Ruth died from her treatment. Before the swimming took place, the authorities had sheltered the poor couple from the wrath of the community, but they were handed over to the mob after the workhouse was ransacked and the governor threatened with drowning. One of the ringleaders, Thomas Colley, was subsequently hanged for Ruth’s murder.²⁵

It is clear from the Tring affair that fear and concern about witchcraft were widespread into the second half of the eighteenth century, but as with Northamptonshire, nineteenth-century folkloric material for the county is sparse in its coverage compared to other areas of the country.²⁶ It was hoped that the newspapers would uncover more depth of material, as it had done in Somerset. One of the key issues we wanted to explore was how the economic, social, and cultural influence of London,

²⁵Mark Knights, *The Devil in Disguise: Deception, Delusion, and Fanaticism in the Early English Enlightenment* (Oxford, 2011), 220–41; Anne How, ‘Jane Wenham of Walkern, England’s last witch? 1712’, *Herts Past & Present*, 1 (2003), 3–11; Willow Winham, *Accused: British Witches Throughout History* (Barnsley, 2016), Chap. 9; W.B. Carnochan, ‘Witch-Hunting and Belief in 1751: The Case of Thomas Colley and Ruth Osborne’, *Journal of Social History*, 4 (1970–1971), 389–403; Paul Muskett, ‘A Late Instance of English Witchcraft: some questions concerning evidence’, *Hertfordshire’s Past*, 48 (2001), 12–24; Simon Walker, *The Witches of Hertfordshire* (Stroud, 2004).

²⁶See Edwin Grey’s *Cottage Life in a Hertfordshire Village* (St Albans, 1935) for observations on beliefs and legends in the 1860s and 1870s, esp. 184.

particularly the creation of commuter communities and the suburbanisation of the south of the county by the end of the century, impacted levels of belief in witchcraft and popular mentalities in Hertfordshire generally.

A total of thirty-five individuals featured in the newspaper reportage were linked with popular medicine, magic or fortune-telling. There were no reverse witch trials, and only four identified cases indicated fear of witchcraft, one of which concerned Maria Briggs, rumoured to be a witch in 1881, who, as the census indicated, conformed to a commonly proposed stereotype: a widow, aged sixty years, living alone in Windmill Street, Cheshunt. There were no prosecutions of cunning folk for practising magic. As a comparative exercise with the Somerset survey, the project also looked for cases of rough music to assess community cohesion and collective tradition. This proved to be equally healthy, perhaps more so in Hertfordshire. There were twenty-seven instances involving 137 individuals. The first point of interest about these incidents is their geographical spread, the vast majority occurring towards the south and, in particular, the south-west of the county. This region was most heavily influenced by its proximity to London, where transport was best developed, where the straw plait and hat trade flourished and where urbanisation (in the form of small towns) was most marked. Furthermore, many of the incidents (both major and minor) took place in towns: for instance St Albans 1832, 1834 and 1846, Hitchin 1843, Hemel Hempstead in 1855 and 1884, Watford in 1856 and 1868, Berkhamsted in 1869 and Hertford in 1878—all identified as specifically urban in published census reports. Other large villages/market towns involved included Wheathampstead, Baldock, Hatfield and Harpenden. In other words, these incidents took place in the most ‘modern’ regions of the county and were relatively rare in the less ‘developed’ areas towards the north and north-west.²⁷

²⁷Nigel Goose and Owen Davies, ‘Magic, Custom and Local Culture in Hertfordshire 1823–1914: an exercise in nominal record linkage’, *Local Population Studies*, 71 (2003), 75–80.

CONCLUSIONS

So what was it about Somerset that generated so much concern about witches in the nineteenth century? The importance of the dairying economy was clearly a factor, but that does not explain a lot of the concern and activity expressed throughout the nineteenth century. Why did witchcraft seemingly become irrelevant in Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire so early? The answers are unlikely to be found in differing levels of education, mechanisation and urbanisation in the three counties, factors which commentators at the time considered to be the key reasons for the declining belief in witchcraft. Parliamentary enclosure may have disrupted the neighbourhood networks that generated reputations for witchcraft over time. The changing socio-economic dynamics engendered by the influence of London may have had a similar disrupting effect in Hertfordshire. But there were communities in both counties that remained untouched by both processes, so why did they not apparently generate witchcraft disputes? Maybe we need to consider more the role of cunning folk in perpetuating fear about witchcraft and assess their relative absence on a local and regional basis. At this point, we can also add to the mix Thomas Waters' survey of newspapers in Oxfordshire and Warwickshire from 1860 to 1900. This revealed only four reverse trials involving physical attacks on accused witches, and from other evidence he concludes that witchcraft belief was 'less widely adhered to, or less intense' in these two counties compared to other regions.²⁸ While no other systematic surveying has been done for other counties or regions, these other parts of the country referred to by Waters are identifiable through general newspaper searches and the evidence of the folklore archive. Devon has already been mentioned, and Jason Semmens' extensive work on Cornwall has revealed a thriving unbewitching market for cunning folk.²⁹ There is evidence for

²⁸Thomas Waters, 'Belief in Witchcraft in Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, c. 1860–1900: The Evidence of the Newspaper Archive', *Midland History*, 34 (2009), 98–116.

²⁹Jason Semmens, *Tammy Blee's Cabalistic Agency: Witchcraft and Popular Magic in History and Interpretation* (Plymouth, 2014).

continued widespread action against suspected witches in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Dorset and parts of East Anglia. There is clearly a need for further detailed surveys across the country to piece together what appears to be a complex and puzzling regional pattern of continuation and decline of actions targeting suspected witches.

The Catechism of Witch Lore in Twentieth-Century Denmark

Gustav Henningsen

INTRODUCTION

Scattered through our collections of local legends and folk beliefs we find short statements about what witches can and cannot do: ‘A real old witch never teaches her craft to anyone until she knows she doesn’t have long to live; for when she teaches someone else her skills, her own power is over’.¹ ‘If someone has learnt the witches’ craft, they have got to do evil every day—if not to others then to themselves.’² ‘Another way to tell a witch is that when her time comes, when she is about to die, she cannot be rid of her life until a lit candle has been put under the bed.’³

I have found something similar in an East Jutland witch trial from 1686: ‘Those who are “in with the Devil”, when they do not want to do

¹Jens Kamp, *Danske Folkeminder* (Odense, 1877), 417.

²Evald Tang Kristensen, *Danske Sagn*, Vol. 6.2 (Århus, 1901), 1.

³Just Mathias Thiele, *Den danske Almues overtroiske Meninger* (Copenhagen, 1860), 180.

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all the evil he wants them to, they have no rest in their souls.' 'They can do not the slightest harm to those who fear God.' 'Those who are "in with the Devil" always have to do as much harm as they possibly can.'⁴ The first and last quotations are variants of the same 'doctrine' we find in Tang Kristensen—that the witch is duty bound to do evil.

However, one could read through hundreds of folklore or witch trial records without ever finding these articles of faith. And yet I would venture to say that they have been there all along. Like a kind of proverb, they have been repeated again and again in daily conversation every time the talk turned to witches. The problem of proving the existence of this 'catechism of witch lore', which is what it in fact is, is that it has been filtered out, both by interrogators at trials and by collectors of folklore. Neither of these parties was interested in 'chat' about witches.

During a witch trial the witnesses and the accused were interrogated about specific acts of witchcraft and sorcery but rarely asked about their own underlying beliefs, for they were common knowledge. It might just happen in the special type of trial that concerned 'defamation', which might be worth looking at in more detail in this respect. But as a rule it must be stressed that the legal procedure gave people little opportunity to talk more generally about witches and their belief in them.

The situation seems to be similar to the procedure used in the folklore collections from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Classical folklore was text oriented and, thus, more interested in recording the legendary material associated with witches than in surveying belief in witches as such. So the collectors were not prepared to listen to what their informants themselves thought about these witches; they were interested in getting as many stories as possible down on paper.⁵ Nor, considering how long belief in witches persisted in Denmark, can we disregard the fact that in many places it was a 'hot potato' about which the

⁴Gustav Henningsen, *Heksejægeren på Rugård: De sidste trolddomsprocesser i Jylland 1685–87* (Randers, 1991), 29.

⁵Inger M. Boberg (ed.), *Dansk Folketro, samlet af Jens Kamp* (Copenhagen, Danmarks Folkeminder 51, 1943); Evald Tang Kristensen, *Jyske Folkeminder*, Vol. 4 (Kolding, 1880), esp. 397–401 and Vol. 9 (Kolding, 1888), esp. 70–74; H. F. Feilberg, *Ordbog over jyske almuesmål*, Vol. 4 (Copenhagen, 1886–1914); id. [ed. G. Henningsen], *Folklore Indeks* (Åbo, Nordic Folklore Library 1, 1992), esp. fiche 28, nos. 20117–420; Gustav Henningsen, *Manual til H. F. Feilbergs Folklore Indeks*, 2 (Åbo, Nordic Folklore Library 1, 1994).

informants were carefully evasive. This is confirmed, for example, from reading Vol. 6.2 of Evald Tang Kristensen's *Danske Sagn* (Kristensen 1901), which is about witchcraft. There are relatively few contemporary accounts, and of these, very few are told as first-hand experiences. If Tang Kristensen had pressed his informants as hard for 'witch stories' as he did for folk ballads and legends, he could have collected thousands of first-hand accounts, not to mention 'witch lore interviews'. But, as we know, the interview form was hardly ever used in the older folklore collections, and never by Evald Tang Kristensen.

My certainty that the various snippets I quoted at the beginning of the chapter are fragments of a popular catechism about the power of witches and its limits is due to some observations I made during my field work in the years 1960–62 on belief in witches in a certain region of Denmark. This resulted in a master's thesis, 'Strukturanalyse af heksetroen i et dansk kulturmiljø med særlig henblik på nutidens tradition' (Structural analysis of belief in witches in a Danish cultural environment, with special reference to present-day tradition) (University of Copenhagen, 25 May 1962).

But the belief was so much alive that the thesis, out of consideration for the informants and several living 'witches', was sealed. Now, many years later, it should be possible to lift the veil from some of this long-secret study. As a background I should mention that the study covered 97 people interviewed in the period 20 June 1960–10 May 1962, that the area was mostly the eastern end of the island of Ærø (corresponding to the town and rural parish of Marstal), and that the period was 'living memory', that is from 1962 back to about 1880.

The thesis, which was kept, along with original material and preliminary work, at the Danish Folklore Collection, is in three parts. The first part gives an account of the cultural environment of Marstal, the collection work and the method used. Here too is a list of names of and information on informants, whose identity is concealed by a number in what follows. In this list I have also tried consistently to describe the informant as believing or not believing in witches. The second is titled 'Structural description of witch beliefs in Marstal'. This is a description of witch lore as a cognitive system. The third part, entitled 'Structural analysis of witch beliefs in Marstal', is about witches and witch families. Here I attempt, by studying specific situations, indeed whole lives, to gain some insight into how witch lore has been applied in practice.

The theoretical basis of the study was inspired by the Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev's theory. In my analysis of the tradition, I distinguish between a level of expression and a level of content, and (corresponding to the distinction *langue/parole*) I distinguish between the tradition, which is described in Part II, and the use of the tradition, which is analysed in Part III. The sections published here are taken from Part II of the thesis. Apart from some corrections to the language and a few omissions, I have chosen to leave the text in its original form. The following abbreviations are used: 'T' stands for 'tradition-bearer', and the number refers to the informant list in Part I; 'not.' refers to my notebook, and 'mgt.' to the collection of tapes.

CATEGORIES OF THE STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION

When I asked an old carpenter in Ommel whether flax seeds were a good remedy against witches, he replied, 'Well, that may be so; I've never heard that. But I've heard this much: if we become their enemies, they can't do us any harm.' This was not just a casual remark, for a little later he repeated his belief: 'But if we are enemies with them, I've been told, they can't do anything.' He himself had been the neighbour of the witch Rigborg (the 'A' branch of the big witch family in Ommel): 'The last ten years she was alive, I didn't talk to her' (Ommel: T44/mgt.37).

The content of the belief 'Witches cannot harm their enemies [actually *uvenner* = un-friends]' is something we could also imagine expressed as a piece of advice, or a *consiliatum*, as von Sydow calls it: 'You should make sure you become enemies with the witches, so they can't do you any harm.' And to the question whether this would help, the advisor could reply with an *affirmatum*: 'Oh yes, it's their friends [they harm], they have no power over their enemies [cf. below].' Indeed, a nod would probably be as good as a wink: 'Oh yes, it's just their friends...'

In conversations with the Marstallers, I have heard them use all these expressions, but the content is the same, no matter how it is expressed. The crucial thing for the tradition is thus not the form, but the content. The same belief can moreover be expressed non-verbally, for example behaviourally, by cutting off all ties with the witch. It follows from this that the structural description must include both linguistic and behavioural norms and that we cannot base the division of our material on the folkloristic classifications and genre names.

On the other hand, the folkloristic names can be used along the way to clarify the formal nature of the norms.⁶ We must then try to describe the Marstal folk belief in witches in the following categories: (1) norms of verbal expression, (2) norms of linguistic content and (3) behavioural norms (Item 3 has been omitted in the present context).

NORMS OF VERBAL EXPRESSION

On the island of Ærø, the word *heks*, 'witch', is used not only in the feminine sense as in modern Standard Danish but also as a masculine designation, for both men and women can be witches. As a synonym for *hekse*, 'witches', the term *onde mennesker*, 'evil people', is used. In the articles of witch lore to be reviewed in what follows, reference is often made to witches using the collective 'they' (*de*). This is quite in accordance with the witch-believers' view of themselves as what must be called an 'in-group' in sociological terms, while the witches are viewed as an 'out-group'.

In general the Marstallers' use of the direct term *heks* is strikingly rare. The usual terms are circumlocutions, often of a euphemistic kind: 'He knows more than his Paternoster [a normal phrase in Standard Danish for 'he knows a thing or two']', 'he knows more than the ordinary', 'he knows a bit of this and that', 'she isn't one of God's good children' [also a normal phrase in other contexts], or just 'she isn't good', 'he has a bad name', 'she's done a lot'. The speakers may be even more careful and refer to the way other people feel about the person in question: 'A lot of people are afraid of him' or, stronger, 'they're all afraid of him', 'they aren't too happy about her' or 'nobody likes her'.

I have permitted myself to quote most of the examples in this section from memory. As early as my first trip I became aware of the Marstallers' special terms and circumlocutions when talk turned to their belief in witches. I had to learn this language of allusion, which is never misunderstood by the initiated, to create the necessary trust. Its function in witch lore is clear enough. Since the belief is based on surmise and impressions, but can never be proven, it is extremely practical to be

⁶C.W. von Sydow, 'Folklig dit-tradition: Ett terminologisk utkast', *Folkminnen och Folktankar*, (24, 1937), 216–32; English version 'Popular Dite Tradition. A terminological outline', in *Selected Papers on Folklore* (Copenhagen, 1948), 106–26.

able to talk about these things without saying too much. Many of the circumlocutions are so vague that it would be impossible to say whether they mean this or that if the speaker was called to account for his or her words. The language of allusion is used especially when the Marstallers talk about the ‘minor’ witches; as for the ‘big ones’, that is those whose bad reputation was common knowledge, they had no qualms about calling them *hekse*.

It is a common belief on Ærø that witchcraft is ‘inherited’. Witches cannot let go before they have found someone to take over their craft. As a rule, it is one of the closest circle who gets to learn it. A family in which witchcraft is inherited is called a *heksefamilie*, ‘witch family’. One is said to be ‘out of a witch family’: ‘That lot over on the island, they were witch-muck the lot of them, they were called K.; it was the wife that was out of a real witch family’ (Ommel: T22/not.54v).

The term *hekseri*, ‘witchcraft, sorcery’, is also very rarely heard. Sometimes *kunster* ‘arts, tricks’, is used, but more often they refer to the activities of the witches with the pronouns *det* (‘it, that’) or *noget* (‘something/anything’) in the absolute sense: ‘He learned that, but she doesn’t know anything.’ The bewitchment that the witch subjects other people to is called the evil and can also be called that in the absolute sense. Thus they say that the evil is turned back on the witch or that it goes back to the witch when someone is cured by a magic cure. What exactly the Marstallers understand by the evil I have been unable to ascertain. But they seem to have an idea of something very specific. I have heard the verb *hekse* used transitively (‘to bewitch’), but normally it is used intransitively (‘to practice witchcraft’), as in Standard Danish. As a circumlocution one often hears *gøre ondt*, ‘do harm, do evil’: ‘she can do harm, you’ve got to beware of her’ (Marstal: T96/not.125v). Other related words for ‘bewitch’ or ‘put a spell on’ are mostly heard as past participles: *forgjort* and *forhekset*.

White magic, too, had its fixed terms and expressive norms. This kind of thing is not done in the open, either, but is enshrouded, like witchcraft, in a certain amount of secretiveness. If you are bewitched, there is nothing you can do but go to someone who can do good and help, unless you happen to know a remedy yourself. Until the 1920s Marstal had several people who could ‘cure bewitchment’. They were not professionals like the ‘wise folk’ but private individuals who extended themselves to help their acquaintances and acquaintances of acquaintances, and they would only cure illnesses that were thought to be due to witchcraft.

The Marstallers had no special name for these helpers, probably because they did not see them as a special group, as the witches or the 'wise' were. They were simply people of their own kind who had a little more experience in these matters than others. The situation can be illustrated by the following quote from an interview with the 84-year-old widow of a sea captain, who had herself lived next door to one of the 'helpers':

GH: So they called them witches? – T10: Yes, but she wasn't a witch. – GH: No, but what did they call her, then? – T10: No, she was the one they went to (*søgte* 'sought out'). The one they went to for help. – GH: Did they call her a wise woman? – T10: No, they didn't, because she didn't help everyone, it was just sort of the people she knew, who asked her if she would go with them [to the churchyard for earth from the most recent grave] (Marstal: T10/mgt.8).

Some of these private individuals were, however, considered to have special powers. Of a fisherman's wife, Karoline Petersen of Kragenæs, who was often called to Ommel because she could get butter, a 90-year-old carpenter used the expression: 'She could make good what the other [i.e. the witch] could spoil' (Ommel: T44/mgt.38).

Like South Jutland, Ærø has an old tradition of bonesetting. If your arm pops out of joint, you can go to either a private or a more professional bonesetter to have it reset. However, I have asked in vain about 'wise folk' on the island. I think we would have to go back to the nineteenth century to find cunning people on Ærø. If a Marstaller wants to visit a wise man or woman, he has to go off the island.

What the *kloge folk* ('wise folk') use against witchcraft is what my older informants called a *hjemmeråd* ('home remedy'). It is not clear how much this is a fixed term for the cures and rituals of white magic, but when I asked an elderly woman whether an ointment she made herself and used for all sorts of injuries was a *hjemmeråd*, she answered that the ointment had nothing to do with *hjemmeråd* (Marstal: T31/mgt.49). You can *søge et hjemmeråd* ('seek a home remedy') if you want to put paid to a witch's spell. In these matters the verbs *søge* ('seek') and *rejse* ('travel') are used in an absolute sense: 'then we had to seek again'; 'they sought her over in Mern'; 'I travel once a year, and it helps'.

In this review of the norms for the verbal expression of witch lore, I have had to anticipate some of the issues that must be dealt with in

the next section; these relate to linguistic content norms and behavioural norms. But although these terms and expressions reflect the content of witch beliefs and thus cannot be understood without that background, the normative and traditionally fixed aspect is at the expressive level, not at the content level. In the following sections we shall see how the normative is at the content level, that is the beliefs are fixed but are expressed linguistically as well as behaviourally in many different ways.

NORMS OF LINGUISTIC CONTENT: THE CATECHISM OF WITCH LORE

On the basis of my interviews with the Ærø islanders, I can draw up a ‘catechism’ of witch lore, but certain reservations must be expressed about this analogy. While (at least in former times) someone about to be confirmed was expected to know Luther’s ‘Shorter Catechism’ by heart, this cannot be done in the case of witch lore since it has never been systematically expressed in popular circles. The ‘catechism of witch lore’ of which I will give an account here is the sum of the traditional store of knowledge—whether large or small—of a large number of informants.

It is a common notion that witchcraft is a craft or art that must be learnt. And this view emerges from a number of tenets (*affirmata*).

1. Witches had to learn their craft before they were seven years old. That’s what Hans Christensen from Græsvænge said (Marstal: T10/not.69r).
2. Witches had to be rid of their knowledge before they could die in peace (Kragenæs: T95/not.104r).
3. [Of the ‘witchbook’ Cyprianus]: It had to be handed down in the family, for they had to learn from it, it was said (Marstal: T11/mgt.7).
4. [When the witches were about to die]: Well, then they came with that there Cyprianus. They couldn’t die, you see, before they had given it away.—And then there was a lot of wondering about who they had given it to (Ærøskøbing: T87/mgt.74).

When asked to explain how the witch goes about doing harm, people usually mention the witchbook Cyprianus:

5. Well, they had some books, so I’ve heard. I’ve never seen them—that they were able to read just as quick backwards as forwards (Ommel: T44/mgt.37).

6. They talked a lot about a Sixth Book of Moses [i.e. an extra book of Moses after the Pentateuch]. It was that Cyprianus that they said the witches had. I've never actually seen it myself (Ommel: T45/not.53r).
7. But then I asked what Cyprianus was. 'Well it's something to do with the Bible; they read it backwards' (Marstal: T33/mgt.27).
8. My father used to say that Cyprianus was written in red and had to be read backwards (Ærøskøbing: T88/not.96r).

People also say that the book is written in blood and that it will not burn. This is contradicted, though, by several statements about how people 'think all the books have been burnt'. The Cyprianus notion has an almost aetiological function in witch lore. The argument goes that those who 'knew' must have had it. But the attitude to Cyprianus must be characterised in many cases as a 'half-belief'. If lore is regarded as a social mechanism, then Cyprianus is not one of the indispensable elements in the witch lore of the Ærø islanders. Incidentally, those who talk most about Cyprianus are the non-believers in witchcraft. The stories about the witchbook are so exciting that they can also be used as pure entertainment.

It is commonly held that witchcraft is inherited, but that inheritance is voluntary. The following idea, which is not, however, a general one, is perhaps an exception:

9. They said that it was always the eldest child of the family that inherited it (Ommel: T48/not.106v; T14 in Marstal had heard the same thing).

Whether witchcraft is passed on to someone else or not, the death of a witch at all events seems to be difficult:

10. They said that a fire had to be lit under them so they could die (Marstal: T90/not.97v).
11. GH: Wasn't there something about Goldmann not being able to die? 60-year-old woman: Yes, that's what they said, but there's nobody [...] But didn't they say that they lit a fire? Or what was it now, that....we don't light fires under people. No, I've never believed that one! [...] They would say that they had to place a wisp of straw under them—or something—and then light it up from below (Marstal: T11/mgt.7).

How the remedy of lighting fire under the witch's death bed was observed in recent times is something we will return to in what follows. The idea of witches dying a difficult death helps to

explain why witchcraft is inherited, and it seems to be revitalised every time a witch is about to die.

There is a general view that witches must cause harm:

12. They say that when the evil comes up in them, it has to be done (Ommel: T92/not.99r).
13. I suppose they have to do it once a year [...], I mean, that's what Auntie [a saddlemaker's wife in Ommel] says (Marstal: T46/mgt.39).

While there is general agreement that the witch can only do evil, there is more uncertainty about the witch's opposite number: the person who 'can help', whether a wise man or woman or someone who can only cure the effects of witchcraft. The usual view is that these people can 'only do good'. But one also finds—sometimes in one and the same informant—the opposite idea: that they can do both good and evil:

14. An old captain: I'll tell you one thing, that those who can do evil, they can't do good.—A 60-year-old widow: No, that they can't (Marstal: T5 and T28/mgt.21).
15. Those that help, they can't do evil, and those that do evil, they can't help (Marstal and Ommel; T31/mgt.78).
16. There were some that could do good—but when they'd done evil once, they couldn't do good again (Marstal and Kragenæs: T33/not.88v).
17. Once they'd done evil, they couldn't do good afterwards (Marstal: T10/mgt.27).
18. There have been many [wise folk] in Funen, that could do good, but as for whether they could do evil as well, I don't know (Marstal: T10/mgt.61).

Items 14 and 15 accord well with the information that the Kværndrup veterinarian O. Jensen gave to Evald Tang Kristensen: 'Anyone who has actually first done good with these arts cannot do evil, and conversely, anyone who has done evil cannot do good.'⁷ I have heard several Marstallers say the same thing, with expressions to the effect that if they have done evil just once, they cannot do good afterwards.

⁷Kristensen, *Danske Sagn*, 274 no. 1038.

Believers in witches would probably call much of what we have discussed nitpicking, for in everyday life it is quite different, specific things that concern them—first and foremost the question of who the witches can harm:

19. Well, it's their friends; they have no power over their enemies. That's what they always said when we were children (Marstal; T11/mgt.7).
20. A 60-year-old joiner in Ærøskøbing has also heard that 'it was their friends' [that the witches harmed] (Ærøskøbing: T87/mgt.74).
21. [In reply to my question whether flax seed was good protection against witches]: 'Well, that may be so; I've never heard that. But I've heard this much: [if] we become their enemies, they can't do us any harm' (Ommel: T92/not.100v).
22. They couldn't do anything if we weren't afraid of them (Ommel: T92/not.100v).
23. There were also those that said that they couldn't do anything if one wasn't afraid of them (Kragenæs: T95/not.104r).
24. Granny said that if we weren't afraid of them, they couldn't do us any harm (Ommel: T48/mgt.74).

The background to the *affirmatum* that 'the witches harm their friends' (Nos. 19–21) is the fact that the cases of bewitchment increase with possibilities of contact. At the same time, one can see it as a social sanctioning of the isolation of witches in a community. I have also heard it used as a *consiliatum*: You should make sure you become an enemy of the witches, for then they can do you no harm.

The other article of faith (Nos. 22–24), that the witches cannot harm you if you don't believe in them, is used to explain the fact that non-superstitious people are hardly ever bewitched. But at the same time it is an interesting example of the subtle logic of witch lore: Since non-believers are immune to bewitchment, they cannot have anything to say about it, either.

An important part of the catechism of witch lore concerns what happens if you seek help from a wise woman to be cured of a bewitchment—or as the insider language of the Marstallers has it, 'when you seek':

25. [An old sea captain talks about a witch who turns back when he meets the captain's wife and daughter on their way to the wise

- woman]: For they say ‘When we seek, they can’t do [us] any harm’ (Marstal: T5/mgt.17).
26. When we seek, they can have no rest (Marstal: T5/mgt.17).
 27. Our old people told us that if nothing was done about it within six months [...], then they would have to go around with it for the rest of their life (Marstal: T11/mgt.30).
 28. They can follow us over one stretch of water, but not over two [when we ‘seek’] (Marstal: T31/not.28v, cf. M 24; also known by T55, but otherwise rare).
 29. Someone who seeks a home remedy, so those that do the evil, they’ll show themselves when we come (Marstal: T31/mgt.24).
 30. I don’t set much store by that—that the first one to come in is the witch (Ommel: T44/not.102v).
 31. When they are about to be cured [...], the first one to show up is the one that did it (Marstal: T46/mgt.40).
 32. [An old carpenter talks about how a bewitchment was cured by a wise man]: And they said that then it went over into the one who had done it (Ommel: T44/not.102v).
 33. For example, when somebody got better, now they would say that it went over into the one that had done it (Marstal: T11/mgt.30).
 34. [The wise woman of Mern in Zealand to a bewitched patient from Marstal]: ‘There’s just one thing I’ll tell you, you should never lend anything; that’s a bad thing to do’ (Marstal: T31/mgt.49).
 35. If you lend something while you’re ‘seeking’ [...], then it’s all wasted (Marstal: T31/mgt.49).

It is in these beliefs, all of which in one way or another have something to do with the aforementioned behavioural pattern, that the Marstallers’ vague concepts of the nature of witchcraft most frequently appear, although they cannot clarify in any detail what goes on. Perhaps it is not the Marstallers we should ask about the meaning, but the wise folk. Several of the saws seem to be made for—indeed, perhaps were once actually made by—the wise folk. Item 25 tells patients that they can travel to a wise woman or man with an easy mind, for even if the witches were to try, they could do them no harm. Item 27 urges them not to put the trip off too long, and Item 28 could benefit the wise man or woman if he or she lived far away. Items 29–31, about the appearance of the perpetrator, has been in common use among wise folk in all regions of Denmark. If this belief were always taken universally seriously, the number of witches would

be infinite; but in practice the rule is that you only count those you already suspect. Items 32 and 33 express the notion that in the end, witchcraft has a ‘backlash’. So it is quite understandable that witches do anything they can to spoil the cure, for example by borrowing something from the household in question. If the cure fails, the wise person can then explain this by saying that the residents of the household have lent something to someone or there was a borrowed item in the house (Items 34 and 35).

POSTSCRIPT

The ‘catechism of witch lore’ presented here is confirmed by fabulates and memorates (epic norms) and by witch tests, apotropaic precautions and remedies for bewitchment (behavioural norms), so that the whole can be described as a system. Structurally, it is thus interesting to see how the ideas about the ‘witchbook’ correspond to notions people have about the power of witches, so that they are almost two sides of the same thing: The book must be handed down in the same way as the craft is passed on, for otherwise the witch cannot die. When someone reads the Cyprianus, the owner can feel it, just as he or she feels it when someone seeks a remedy for bewitchment.

A remarkable thing about this catechism of witch lore is the total absence of the devil. The witches and their opposite numbers, the wise folk, manage fine without the aid of the devil. They operate with secret life forces, a kind of natural law that can be used in both directions: to do both evil and good. The absence of the devil from the magical universe is not, as one might think, a recent development; on the contrary, it is quite in keeping with older Danish tradition⁸ and characteristic of popular European witch lore as a whole. It becomes quite remarkable when we see how the beliefs outlined here are used in specific situations in everyday life. My study in the Marstal area shows that the beliefs that have taken form in the catechism of witch lore closely conform to the experiences people have in reality. But in fact there is nothing strange in this conformity, for precisely because of the same catechism, reality is interpreted in a particular way, so it has consequences for oneself and others—indeed for whole lives. The so-called witch families thus

⁸ Cf. Jens Christian V. Johansen, *‘Da Djævelen var ude...’: Trolldom i det 17. århundrede Danmark* (Odense, 1989).

represent a harsh testimony to how literally people believed that witchcraft was inherited.

The shoemaker Carl Vilhelm Goldmann of Marstal, about whom Broby-Johansen wrote,⁹ was the fourth generation of a witch dynasty. His son had to emigrate from the town because of witch discrimination. In 1939, when the son came back to say goodbye to his old father, who had died in Ærøskøbing Hospital, he discovered to his horror that a row of lit candles stood under the bed (cf. Items 10 and 11). After Goldmann's death the talk in Marstal was about who had inherited his witchbook, and since the only remaining family member in the town was not the witch type, the choice fell on an elderly woman who did not belong to the family. In the seamen's village of Ommel there is a 'witch family' with widespread branches that can be traced back to the eighteenth century. Here witch discrimination has continued into the sixth generation.

If one asks now who the tradition-bearers of this 'catechism' are, I have already pointed to the wise folk, who were the connoisseurs par excellence of witch lore; but there was another group of people who were also strong in the faith and whom we can call 'witch-knowers'. I met some of those on my Marstal trip. They were people who had themselves been the victims of witchcraft and had travelled a good deal to wise folk to be cured. It was not least during group interviews with such people that my tape recordings were larded with statements about witches' skills and powers that could later be compiled into a catechism.

With the 'catechism of witch lore' we are faced, as so often previously, with a folklore phenomenon that has been documented only in recent times but that nevertheless must be supposed to have a long tradition behind it. It is my hope that I have drawn attention to what one must call a hitherto neglected genre of folk literature, so that it will be easier to see it in our folklore records and in the historical sources available to us.

⁹R. Broby-Johansen, *Med Broby på Sydfyn, Langeland, Tåsinge, Ærø og Samsø* (Copenhagen, 1979), 72.

Magic and Counter-Magic in Twenty-First-Century Bosnia

Mirjam Mencej

INTRODUCTION

Since the very beginning of scholarly interest in ‘folklore’, magic in Bosnia¹ has attracted the attention of folklorists.² The early folklorists on the one hand lamented that the lore they were collecting would disappear, and on the other hand they advocated for the cultural changes that

¹The research leading to the results presented in this chapter received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007–2013)/ERC grant agreement 324214 and from the Slovenian Research Agency under the programme ‘Slovenian identities in European and global context’.

²Cf. for instance Emilian Lilek, ‘Volks Glaube und volkstümlicher Cultus in Bosnien und der Hercegovina’, *Wissenschaftliche Mittheilungen aus Bosnien und der Hercegovina*, 4 (1896), 477–91; id., ‘Ethnologische Notizen aus Bosnien und der Hercegovina’, *Wissenschaftliche Mittheilungen aus Bosnien und der Hercegovina*, 8 (1902), 274–6; Lukas Grgjić-Bjelokosić, ‘Volks Glaube und Volksbräuche in der Herzegovina’, *Wissenschaftliche Mittheilungen aus Bosnien und der Herzegovina*, 6 (1899), 618–24; Milenko S. Filipović,

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would lead to their disappearance,³ whereas under the socialist regime established after the Second World War, when every sort of religiosity became stigmatised, they also expressed the hope that socialism, together with improved living conditions, education and knowledge, would help extinguish ‘the phantom of witches’.⁴ Nevertheless, research from the second half of the twentieth century testifies to the fact that many people continued to believe in the effects of magic and that counter-magic continued to be practised in Bosnia under the socialist regime, too.⁵ While Tone Bringa, who conducted field research in central Bosnia in the late 1980s, wrote that according to her interlocutors (as well as the *hodžas*,⁶ i.e. the Muslim clergymen themselves), fewer people than before were turning to *hodžas* to help them against bewitchment, she noticed that this was still a widely used strategy for coping with misfortune.⁷ Some three decades later Larisa Jasarevic concluded that the traditional healing therapy *salijevanje strave*⁸—which often, although not necessarily,

Život i običaji narodni u Visočkoj nahiji. Srpski etnografski zbornik LXI (Belgrade, 1949), 187–90, 217–20; id., ‘Ozrenjaci ili Maglajci’, *Glasnik zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu*, VII (1952), 372; id., ‘Beleške o narodnom životu i običajima na Glasincu’, *Glasnik zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu n.s., Istorija i etnografija*, X (1955), 132–5; id., ‘Pogledi na svet’ in Ernest Grin (ed.), *Lepenica. Priroda, Stanovništvo, privreda i Zdravlje* (Sarajevo, 1963), 345–9; Maya Bošković-Stulli, ‘Splet naših narodnih praznovjerja oko vještice i popa’, *Bilten Instituta za proučavanje folklore*, 2 (1953), 327–42; Radmila Fabijanić, ‘Zapisi, hamajlije i moći od pomoći Odjelenja za etnologiju Zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu’, *Glasnik zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu*, 46 (2004), 37–88.

³Larisa Jasarevic, ‘Pouring out Postsocialist Fears: practical metaphysics of a therapy at a distance’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 54 (2012), 920.

⁴Bošković-Stulli, ‘Splet naših narodnih praznovjerja’, 341.

⁵cf. Filipović, *Život i običaji narodni*; id., ‘Ozrenjaci ili Maglajci’; id., ‘Beleške’; id., ‘Pogledi na svet’.

⁶The word is a local term for the *imam* and comes from the Turkish word *boca*; diviners and healers without any formal religious education are also sometimes called *hodža* (cf. Tone Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton, 1995), 206, 213).

⁷Ibid., 217.

⁸*Salijevanje strave* literally means ‘the pouring/casting (out) fear/horror’ (cf. Sadik ef. Ugljen, ‘Olovo kao narodni lijek’, *Glasnik zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu*, 5 (1893), 168–70; Luka Grgić-Bjelokosić, ‘Narodna gatanja’, *Glasnik zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu*, 7 (1896), 151–152; Filipović, *Život i običaji narodni*, 218; Bringa, *Being Muslim*, 215; Jasarevic, ‘Pouring out’, 918).

identifies a bewitchment as the source of health problems and implies unwitchment—was still hugely popular in Bosnia.⁹

Indeed, during my fieldwork conducted in 2016 in three rural regions in central and western Bosnia, among the population of all three major ethnic groups, i.e. Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs, related to the cultures of Islam, Catholicism and Orthodoxy,¹⁰ magic was a topic that continuously cropped up in the conversations, and it was usually my interlocutors themselves who initially brought the topic up. Comments such as ‘There are kilometres of magic here!’, ‘There is plenty of magic in Bosnia!’, ‘Nobody will talk about being bewitched, but there is plenty of this!’ are but a few of those given by my Bosnian interlocutors, and their view on the popularity of healing and counter-magic practitioners was confirmed by a female *strava* therapist from a smaller town in central Bosnia, who said that before the war in the 1990s,¹¹ occasionally only frightened children were brought to her for healing, whereas since the war visiting her ‘has become massive’.

Although the original aim of my research was to record narratives on the dead in post-war Bosnia, magic turned out to be such an important topic for my interlocutors and the discussions on it so frequent and intense that it was impossible to ignore it. Primarily based on the narratives I recorded during my fieldwork, I shall, in this chapter, give a short overview of magic¹² and counter-magic in Bosnia in the early

⁹Jasarevic, ‘Pouring out’, 923.

¹⁰I conducted fieldwork in Bosnia from the beginning of February until the end of April, and again in August 2016. Altogether I conducted 117 interviews with 194 informants in 53 villages: 55 interviews with 101 people in 26 Muslim villages, 28 interviews with 45 people in 14 Catholic villages, and 34 interviews with 48 people in 13 Orthodox villages. The majority of my informants were between forty and sixty years old and lived in a rural environment; most of them had a rather low formal level of education. Owing to the sensitivity of the topic the exact regions of the research are not given and all personal names used in this article are pseudonyms.

¹¹The war that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992–1995 and ended with the Dayton Agreement.

¹²I use the term *magic* rather than *witchcraft* as the word ‘witchcraft’ was never used by my interlocutors. I use the term ‘magic’ as an umbrella term for any human manipulation of ‘supernatural’ forces and ‘bewitchment’ when harm is done to a person or their property (cf. Willem de Blécourt, ‘The Witch, Her Victim, the Unwitcher and the Researcher: The Continued Existence of Traditional Witchcraft’ in Willem de Blécourt, Robert Hutton and Jean Lafontaine, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Twentieth Century* (1999), 151–2).

twenty-first century.¹³ Given that my fieldwork impressions are still very fresh and a thorough analysis of the recorded data is still needed, and that the limited space of this chapter does not allow for a detailed discussion, I will at this point, rather than drawing any firm conclusions, suggest some general directions along which magic and counter-magic in Bosnia could be further considered and understood.

MAGIC

When no physical source of illness or other trouble could be identified, it was explained within the discourse of magic either as a consequence of someone else's intentional bewitchment or due to someone's spell (*urok*), usually caused by looking; or, in the region mostly populated by Bosniaks, it could be ascribed to the intrusion of malevolent spirits (*džins*)¹⁴ into one's body. I will not discuss the latter two here; my focus will be solely on bewitchment as ascribed to magic specialists, usually called *sibirbasica*,¹⁵ *gatara*,¹⁶ *vračara*¹⁷ or *veštica*,¹⁸ or some other, less widely used, name,¹⁹ or to any malevolent person who performed a bewitchment with the help of these specialists.

¹³Some of the narratives presented in this chapter refer also to experiences that happened to my interlocutors in the twentieth century, but most of them related bewitchments that took place rather recently.

¹⁴The intrusion of *džins* (i.e. djinns, or genies), (malevolent) spirits in Islam, is called *ogramak* and the act is described by the verb (*na*)(*o*)*gra(j)isati* (cf. Leopold Glück (Glik), 'Hamajlije i zapisi u narodnjem ljekarstvu Bosne i Hercegovine', *Glasnik zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu*, 2 (1890), 46, 51; Bringa, *Being Muslim*, 178–9, 216). Among Catholics, psychological disorders were also sometimes considered to be a result of the devil's intrusion.

¹⁵The word derives from *sibir*, i.e. a Bosnian variant of the Arabic word *sibr*, meaning 'magic' (Bringa, *Being Muslim*, 181; Owen Davies, *Magic: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford 2012), 9). Jasarevic translates *sibir* as 'sorcery' ('Pouring out', 914, 922), whereas Bringa translates it as 'spell' or 'sorcery', and explains the local term *sibirbasica*, i.e. person who does *sibir*, as 'sorcerer, that is, one who casts evil spells' (*Being Muslim*, 182, 214, 218). None of them, however, problematised the difference between the terms *sorcerer* and *witch*. In Bosnia both terms are in most cases used interchangeably, and the distinction between the two is not justified.

¹⁶From the verb *gatati*, which in a narrow sense means 'to tell fortunes' but in a broader sense encompasses various magic activities.

¹⁷From the verb *vračati*, i.e. 'to tell fortunes' or 'to do magic'.

¹⁸Lit. a *witch*.

¹⁹All these terms refer to a female.

While narratives on bewitchment in relating to the time before the war often referred to bewitched cows and milk, that is witches magically milking others' cows or causing them to give bloody milk, recent bewitchments seem to be particularly aimed against personal health and well-being.²⁰ It is mainly psychological and psychosomatic disorders of some sort, particularly ones occurring in several domains simultaneously, which lead some people to assume that they have fallen victim to bewitchment and others to proclaim their behaviour to have been a result of bewitchment. These include inexplicable fatigue, *sikiranje* ('worrying yourself sick'),²¹ nervousness, marital problems, problems within the family, a state that could probably be medically diagnosed as a sort of anxiety or depression, and psychical problems. Physical problems that seemed to be of psychical origin, such as general temporary paralysis of the body, sickness, a feeling of suffocation, chest pressure, seizures and similar disorders, were also ascribed to magic within the framework of magic discourse. Any unacceptable behaviour—such as aggressiveness, insubordination, adultery, habitual drinking and so on—was likely interpreted as a consequence of bewitchment by the family or neighbourhood. Infertility and bachelorhood, in a milieu that highly values matrimony and offspring, were often understood as a consequence of magic, as were unemployment and academic failure.

Bewitchment (*sibir*, *č(v)arka*,²² *namet*,²³ *nabacak*,²⁴ *čini*²⁵) was typically assumed when objects such as eggs or broken eggshells, mixtures of hair, fingernails, threads of wool, and pieces of bats, or cloth stained by (menstrual) blood, sometimes sewn in a pad and buried underground, were found among one's property. When people who assumed they had fallen victim to bewitchment turned to magic specialists, these were usually the objects that they were instructed to search for in order to eliminate the bewitchment carried out by the person who

²⁰That cows are no longer targets of bewitchment is understandable, as they have become rare in rural communities. I have often heard it said that before the war there was hardly a house without a cow, while nowadays one can hardly see a single cow in an entire village.

²¹Cf. Jasarevic, 'Pouring out', 922.

²²From the verb *čarati* (lit. 'to bewitch').

²³From the verb *nametnuti* (lit. 'to foist something').

²⁴From the verb *nabaciti* (lit. 'to place or throw something').

²⁵From the verb *činiti* (lit. 'to do something').

wished them ill. Foam from water taken from a mill race and ‘unclean water’, i.e. water mixed with menstrual blood, were likewise sometimes assumed to have been poured over another person’s territory as a means of bewitchment, especially when none of the aforementioned items was found. In addition, it was generally thought that magic could be performed with any item that was in some way related to death. This could be soap and water with which people had washed their hands after a funeral, thread with which a corpse had been measured and placed under the cross on the coffin during a funeral, wheat served after funerals, but also earth, stones and planks taken from a graveyard. This method was mentioned especially often by Serbs, although it was also occasionally referred to by Bosniaks. One of my interlocutors, whose house in Srebrenica was demolished by Serbs during the last war, started to build another house but has since experienced many health and other problems. A magic specialist he turned to explained that this was due to a plank from the graveyard which was secretly built into the wall of his house by his neighbour who envied him because he was more successful in building his house than others. One could also get bewitched if another person gained access to and magically manipulated one’s cut-off nails, hair, clothes or other belongings, as happened to my young Bosniak interlocutor, whose trousers that were drying outside were stolen and, as she later found out, buried in a grave, which resulted in long-term physical and psychological problems—depression, fatigue, anxiety and marital problems.

In the region populated by the Croats in particular, but elsewhere too, it was bewitchment through a gift that was particularly feared, and food received as a gift by a suspicious person was never eaten. When an ex-girlfriend sent an apple as a gift to a man who had broken off their engagement and married another woman, he was sure it was *nabacak* and threw it away—if he didn’t, he claimed, ‘anything could have happened to me’. When a Serbian man came to pick up a young Croat woman to take her on a date, bringing a chocolate as a gift to her family, they allowed her to go out with him but warned her against eating chocolate because ‘it could be *nabacak*’. A husband whose wife had left him for another man has been since explaining to everybody that his wife left him because she ate a chocolate that the other man gave her and he has now been searching for a specialist who could, using magic, bring her back.

The moment when bewitchment started to affect a person's body or psyche was sometimes referred to as *nagaziti* (lit. 'to trample on'),²⁶ which implies that it was the moment at which a person stepped on or crossed over the bewitching item which had been placed on the ground when the bewitchment actually took place. While among the Serbian population it was crossroads that were deemed particularly dangerous places for stepping on bewitching items, and people generally avoided crossing them in the middle (instead, they walked along the roadside), among the Bosniak population it was most often thresholds (in houses or barns), doorjambs and yards where *sibir* was expected to be found. While crossroads were not considered dangerous during the day, they became extremely so after dark and until dawn, especially in the dead of night, between 11 p.m. and about two or three in the morning.²⁷ For Muslims, on the other hand, it is the time around sunset (*akşam*) when people are thought to be particularly vulnerable to supernatural attacks.²⁸

Historical and anthropological witchcraft research has often assumed the existence of tensions between neighbours prior to the accusation of bewitchment, yet much research has proved that tensions among neighbours are not always a *conditio sine qua non* for accusations to occur.²⁹ Although some cases reveal underlying neighbourhood conflicts preceding the bewitchment, previous tense relationships were not necessarily present in Bosnia. On the contrary, people often claimed that they

²⁶Sometimes also *(na)(o)gra(j)isati*, but this term implies that the bewitcher interacted with the items containing malevolent spirits (cf. Bringa, *Being Muslim*, 178–9) or refers to one's trampling on *džins*.

²⁷Lately, however, they have not been very troublesome, I was told, as people tend to drive by car and no longer walk at night.

²⁸Internet forums are full of the discussions of young mothers warning against taking children out at sunset (e.g. from 2011: <http://www.ringeraja.ba/ankete.asp?id=2177&arc=1&postBack=1>; accessed 3 June 2016); cf. also Bringa, *Being Muslim*, 179.

²⁹Cf. Wolf Bleek, 'Witchcraft, Gossip and Death: A Social Drama', *Man* 11.4 (1976), 530; Jeanne Favret-Saada, 'Unbewitching as Therapy', *American Ethnologist* 16.1 (Feb. 1989), 54; Willem de Blécourt, *Termen van toverij: De veranderende betekenis van toverij in Noor-dooft-Nederland ussen de 16de en 20ste eeuw* (Nijmegen, 1990), summarised in Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, 'Witchcraft after the Witch-trials', in Brian Levack, Roy Porter and Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (1999), 110; Ágnes Hesz, 'The Making of a Bewitchment Narrative', *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 37 (2007), 20; Mirjam Mencej, *Styrian Witches in European Perspective: Ethnographic Fieldwork* (Basingstoke, 2017), 119–20.

enjoyed good relations with the perpetrator of the bewitchment before the event. Whether the bewitchment was performed to break up the relationship of a person in love with another person, and thus to assure that person's affection for oneself, or to do harm to another person, such as causing illness or psychical problems, or to cause the death of a cow, it was always thought that envy had made the perpetrators resort to magic that would do harm to another party.³⁰ A young Bosniak woman whose boyfriend left her just before their wedding and who has since been unlucky in romantic relationships, has started to wear an amulet to protect her from her neighbour's envy, believing that it is this that has been destroying her relationships with boyfriends. Božana, a Serbian woman, explained how she almost died because of her neighbour's *čarka*. The neighbour was allegedly envious of her for wearing a leather jacket which she had gotten from Germany and feared that her husband would fall in love with her. She kept inviting her to lunch, which Božana—fearing bewitchment—kept declining. Not succeeding through food, she tried to bewitch her by 'placing something' at a crossroads. Upon stepping on the bewitching item, Božana felt a sudden pain in her leg, blood started to run from her mouth, and for about five hours she could neither walk nor talk.

When a relative of a Croat interlocutor committed suicide following a long period of depression, as diagnosed by psychiatrists, during which she repeatedly threatened suicide, the family concluded that her depression was due to *nabacak* by her best friend, who had been accused of harbouring envy towards her and coveting her husband and seducing him into an adulterous relationship. Moreover, envy was considered such a powerful agency that a person experiencing it was thought to be able to bewitch others through envy alone, even without intentionally bewitching. In fact, the difference between envy and bewitchment was not always clear. Murveca, an educated fifty-year-old Muslim woman from Sarajevo, explained that her psychic problems and problems within the family that she had been experiencing for the last couple of years were due to her envious neighbours: 'This is the effect of envious people

³⁰Filipović, *Život i običaji narodni*, 217; cf. also João de Pina-Cabral, *Sons of Adam, Daughters of Eve: The Peasant Worldview of Alto Minho* (Oxford, 1986), 176–7; Laura Stark-Arola, *Magic, Body and Social Order: The Construction of Gender through Women's Private Rituals in Traditional Finland*, *Studia Fennica Folkloristica* 5 (Helsinki, 1998), 169–70; Hesz, 'Making', 25, 28–9; Mencej, *Styrian Witches*, 116–17.

who become consumed by envy when they see that your family is doing fine, that your husband, wife and children are all fine, and they do this (i.e. *sibir*) to you with their envious thoughts.’

MAGIC SPECIALISTS

People experiencing health problems often first consulted a doctor. When no physical reason for their problems could be established, the doctors were alleged to have stated ‘This is not for us’, a phrase which I heard repeatedly in exactly the same words, and which in the framework of magic discourse worked as official proof that their problems were the consequence of someone’s magic and that they should consult a magic specialist. There are many types of magic specialist in Bosnia, but *hodžas* seem to be those most frequently visited when misfortune suspected of being of magical origin is assumed, and in this chapter I shall focus solely upon this type of specialist.³¹ It is said that *hodžas* not only have the capacity to undo the bewitchment or liberate people possessed by a *džin*, but also to identify the person that had placed the *sib(i)r* on them and, on request, to bewitch them. In addition, they sometimes predict the future, perform love magic (i.e. bring men and women together) or separate couples, help infertile couples conceive, identify thieves and retrieve stolen or lost items³²; some also practise *salijevanje strave*.

Hodžas would typically write a *zapis*, i.e. a piece of paper with a verse or phrase, or (part of) a prayer from the Qur’an, written in Arabic, which is believed to guarantee good fortune, prevent misfortune and serve as a

³¹ *Hodžas* are, of course, Islamic religious specialists but as in this essay I focus on their function as unwitchers (and bewitchers), I refer to them as magic specialists. Seeking help from priests or monks in case of bewitchment was often reported in other parts of Europe, too (cf. Jeanne Favret-Saada, *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage* (Cambridge, 1980), 57; Inge Schöck, *Hexenglaube in der Gegenwart: Empirische Untersuchungen in Südwestdeutschland* (Tübingen, 1978), 98–9, 143; de Pina-Cabral, *Sons of Adam*, 194, 201–2; de Blécourt, ‘The Witch’, 185; id., ‘“Keep that woman out!” Notions of space in twentieth-century Flemish witchcraft discourse’, *History and Theory*, 52 (2013), 373–4; Éva Pócs, ‘Curse, *Maleficium*, Divination: Witchcraft on the Borderline of Religion and Magic’ in Willem de Blécourt and Owen Davies (eds), *Witchcraft Continued: Popular Magic in Modern Europe* (Manchester, 2004), 174–90; Heszi, ‘Making’, 25).

³² Cf. Bringa, *Being Muslim*, 214–15.

curative measure against bewitchment.³³ Azim, a Bosniak, born in 1978, told me that he turned to a *hodža* when his wife started experiencing health problems. She felt all right during the daytime, but the moment she lay down in bed in the evening she experienced a feeling like suffocation. They first visited a doctor, but the tests produced no evidence of asthma or any other respiratory illness.³⁴ When the doctor could find no physical origin of her problems and officially proclaimed that ‘this case was not for him’, the husband and his wife decided to consult a *hodža*. The *hodža* indeed confirmed that a *sih(i)r* was at the root of the wife’s problems and gave them a detailed description of the neighbour who had placed it, yet he did not want to say her name. Still, even if they had had no previous conflicts with her, they immediately identified their elderly neighbour as *the* person: she was often observed outside at night, which was suspicious, as magic is generally believed to be carried out at night (‘a sixty- to seventy-year-old woman has no business being outside at night!’). She was different in other respects too; she ‘didn’t like cleanliness’ (according to Islam, dirt attracts *džins*, who can enter one’s body or be manipulated for magic, and Muslim women therefore generally make sure to keep their houses clean), and she already had a reputation in the village for doing black magic out of envy. When they could not find any buried object under a door, as suggested by the *hodža*, they concluded that she must have poured ‘unclean water’,

³³Cf. Lilek, ‘Volks Glaube’, 490; id., ‘Ethnologische Notizen’, 275; Fabijanić, ‘Zapisi’. Such *zapisi* (pl.) have been known in Bosnia at least since the fourteenth century; at first they were handwritten, but later they could also be printed or lithographed. They are usually folded in a special way, for instance in a triangle or folded four times, and attached close to the body, usually by a safety pin to the undershirt, or sewn in a waxed cloth and worn close to the body (under a band around the left upper arm, or around a neck, sometimes under a belt, in a cross, or in special jewellery boxes, for example). They were often attached to a child for protection against spells, for adults in case of illness, as protection on a journey, against witches and *moras*, devils and anything coming from the world beyond. In addition, there was also *zapis* meant to protect the house and family or the entire village and community. In the past both Catholic and Orthodox clergymen too gave out *zapisi*, written in Latin or Old Church Slavonic (Fabijanić, ‘Zapisi’; cf. also Bošković-Stulli, ‘Splet naših narodnih praznovjerja’, 338; Filipović, ‘Beleške’, 133; Bringa, *Being Muslim*, 216–17). A Catholic monk I interviewed claimed that Catholic priests and monks in his monastery used to write *zapisi* to prevent Catholics from turning to Muslim clergymen for a *zapis*.

³⁴The circumstances of her problems might point to psychological tensions, perhaps related to her repudiation of sexual relations with her husband.

i.e. water mixed with menstrual blood, whose traces cannot be found. This manner of bewitchment is believed to cause headaches, stomach aches, foot pain and strained relationships, and, as Azim told me, when one has to spend money on specialists in healing and counter-magic, one soon ends up broke as well. Luckily, the *hodža* that Azim and his wife consulted was able to cure his wife's problem by giving her the right *zapis*. This first had to be put in water for ten to twenty days, after which the wife had to drink and wash herself with the water in which the *zapis* had been immersed, diluted with plain water, and, when the therapy was completed, throw it in the river.

Despite their help against bewitchment, the reputation of *hodžas* is generally extremely ambivalent. Dealing with any kind of 'magic' is considered to be in opposition to Islamic teachings,³⁵ and pious Muslims have often condemned the activities of *hodžas* on these grounds. Moreover, their magical power as such is generally feared, and in the region where I did fieldwork a story circulated about a well-known *hodža* who married his wife as a result of love magic.³⁶ *Hodžas*' magical knowledge of writing *zapis* is based on knowledge of Islamic religious scriptures and their knowledge of reading and writing in Arabic. In an environment in which much of the elderly population is still illiterate, the ability to read, especially in Arabic, is certainly a powerful tool for making an impression on the customers.³⁷ Yet this ability as such also triggers ambivalent attitudes among the people. Because most people are not able to read Arabic, those who receive *zapis* often feel they are entirely at a *hodža*'s mercy: one could never be sure what message the *zapis* they were given was actually carrying, and I heard several stories about *hodžas* who either deliberately or out of lack of sufficient knowledge of the language wrote 'satanic' instead of Qur'anic, verses; stories of *hodžas* giving out such negative *zapis* can even be found on the Internet.³⁸ Such narratives to some extent probably function as a 'performative locus employed by tradition participants to negotiate their conflicting perceptions' of *hodžas*, giving people 'the opportunity to engage in the social

³⁵ Cf. Bringa, *Being Muslim*, 216–18.

³⁶ The story probably started to circulate because his wife was much younger than him.

³⁷ Cf. Bringa, *Being Muslim*, 218–19; Owen Davies, *A People Bewitched: Witchcraft and Magic in Nineteenth-Century Somerset* (Bruton, 1999), 37; id., *Cunning Folk* (2003), 119.

³⁸ Cf. <http://www.n-um.com/?q=node/5449>.

valuation of their services'.³⁹ An additional reason for the rather negative reputation of *hodžas* was because they took money from people in distress. In fact, they were often said to collude with each other, sending each other clients⁴⁰ to earn even more money.

Yet the main reason for the negative reputation of *hodžas* is their alleged activity as bewitchers.⁴¹ Indeed, the *hodža* was generally considered to be able not only to unwitch bewitchments, but also to perform them. I have very often heard it said of *hodžas* that 'they do what you pay them for—good or evil'. I heard narratives about parents who did not approve of their prospective daughters-in-law or sons-in-law and therefore asked a *hodža* to separate the young couple before they married, or even after they had already married; of men or women who wanted to win the heart of a married person and asked a *hodža* to end their marriage; and of women or men who were left by their partners and asked a *hodža* to take revenge on them or their new partners. A *zapis* could also be employed as a bewitchment itself. When Mira, a Serbian woman, allegedly stepped over a *zapis* written by a *hodža* and placed in her field by an envious neighbour, she suddenly felt a pain and stiffened so that 'four people could not stretch her body'. She endured in such a state for almost a year, she told me, as doctors found no physical reason for her state. Finally her husband paid a visit to a *hodža* in a nearby town, and his help came just in time: if the bewitchment had worked for nine more days, that is for an entire year, she would have turned into a dog, the *hodža* explained.

Several first-person testimonies indeed affirm that *hodžas* were not only credited with the ability to bewitch but were indeed involved in it. While nobody ever admitted to having asked a *hodža* to make an initial *sibir*, some did admit that they asked them to make them a *sibir* as a 'ret-ribution'.⁴² When the cows of Marica, a young Croat 'bride', allegedly bewitched by a neighbouring Bosniak family because she would not sell them, miraculously recovered from the near-death state in which they had been suffering for a week, their recovery still did not prevent her husband from later paying a visit to the nearby *hodža* to confirm his suspicions

³⁹Cf. Timothy Tangherlini, "How do you know she's a witch?": Witches, Cunning Folk, and Competition in Denmark', *Western Folklore*, 59. 3/4 (2000), 290.

⁴⁰Cf. also Bošković-Stulli, 'Splet naših narodnih praznovjerja', 338.

⁴¹Whether an act is considered bewitching or unwitching is in some cases a matter of perspective.

⁴²Cf. Pócs, 'Curse', 174–5; Hesz, 'Making', 22.

about the identity of the cows' bewitcher and to request a *šahir* against them in revenge—as he boasted, the Bosniak couple died soon afterwards. Dragan, my Serbian interlocutor, even gave a detailed report on his own personal involvement in placing a bewitchment. This was aimed towards a 'justified' destruction of a cousin's marriage to a woman despite his mother's and other relatives' disagreement with his choice. Soon after the wedding, when the quarrels began, his mother decided to pay a visit to a *hodža* to ask him to separate the couple. The *hodža* agreed to come to the village to give instructions about how to carry out and supervise the bewitching procedure, and Dragan was chosen to carry out the procedure according to the *hodža's* instructions. The first night the *hodža* instructed him to place one fourth of a pear in each corner of the house, and one fourth of an apple in the middle of each side of the house in which the man and his wife were living, and then leave without turning back. Once he had done this, he had to report to the *hodža*, who checked in his book to make sure everything had been done correctly. Not everything went according to plan, though. From his books the *hodža* established that one segment of a pear had been thrown one and a half metres from a corner, instead of exactly in the corner, and reprimanded Dragan for his carelessness. The next day the *hodža* gave Dragan a piece of paper in which 'something had been wrapped', together with a small blade with which he was instructed to go to the local graveyard at night to cut three slivers of wood from three wooden crosses on three different graves, wrap the pieces of wood together with the paper and throw everything into an empty grave into which nobody had ever been buried. When Dragan came to the *hodža* the next day to report on his deeds from the previous night, the *hodža* was even angrier with him: from the last cross, he said, he had only cut two pieces of wood instead of three, and now the success of the operation was endangered.⁴³ In the end, the plan was a success, and the couple separated just a week later.⁴⁴ As my interlocutor concluded: 'The master did it, the master also spoiled

⁴³One can assume that the person who performed some illicit act during the night probably experienced fear and anxiety and therefore tried to carry it out in a hurry, so he could be easily persuaded that the *hodža*—at the same time the religious authority—was right in accusing him of not having carried out the instruction correctly. These 'mistakes' made by the executor of the magic procedure could, of course, later serve as an excuse for the *hodža* if the procedure turned out to be unsuccessful. At the same time, such narratives about *hodžas'* ability to 'see everything' certainly contributed to their general reputation as magic specialists.

⁴⁴This, of course, was only to be expected as the husband himself participated in the ritual on the second day.

it!’—meaning that just as the marriage was accomplished by the wife through the *hodža*’s magic, i.e. *nabacak*, in the first place, now it was the *hodža* who also destroyed it by magic.

SOCIAL CONTEXT AND ETHNIC IDENTITY OF MAGIC

Since the 1980s, and especially after the collapse of Yugoslavia in 1991 and at the same time of the socialist regime, followed by the Bosnian war in 1992–1995 and the transition to a capitalist economy, economic conditions in Bosnia have worsened dramatically for the large majority of the population. The health system that used to be free under socialism has become partly payable and has shrunk, the war industry has collapsed or been privatised, the open market has rendered local agriculture unviable, unemployment has reached around 60%, and the GDP per capita dropped to less than half of its pre-war level.⁴⁵ Much of the population in the rural regions where I conducted fieldwork, especially in the region mainly populated by Bosniaks, live in rather harsh conditions. During the war many were driven away from their homes, and their houses were demolished. Social relationships also changed dramatically after the war. I was told again and again that before the war neighbours used to chat, drink coffee, celebrate together, and help each other at work, whereas since the war everybody simply keeps to themselves, minds their own business; people rarely even greet each other and, moreover, are envious of one another. Envy, or rather fear of it, indeed, seems to be the emotion that has greatly permeated the relationships in neighbourhoods in the last few decades—there has never been as much envy as there is now, everybody agreed. My Bosniak interlocutor told me: ‘Here in Bosnia, magic is being performed in every fifth to tenth house—people simply do harm to each other as a result of envy. The devil brings this: this is envy. Everything stems from envy!’

Particular magic practices do not pertain exclusively to one particular ethnic group, and magic specialists do not exclusively treat patients of their own ethno-religious community;⁴⁶ counter-magic techniques

⁴⁵Jasarevic, ‘Pouring out’, 924.

⁴⁶Many people even thought that in case of grave illness a priest of another faith would be more helpful (cf. Bošković-Stulli, ‘Splet naših narodnih praznovjerja’, 338; Fabijanić, ‘Zapisi’, 43). The preference of turning to priests of another religion in seeking help from bewitchment has also been reported in other parts of Europe (de Blécourt, ‘The Witch’, 185; Pócs, ‘Curse’; Hesz, ‘Making’, 25).

thus do not reproduce ‘ethno-national differences’, as Jasarevic rightly emphasises in her discussion of *strava* therapy.⁴⁷ Even so, bewitchment narratives seem, to some degree at least, to function as a platform enabling people to, among other things, release ethno-religious tensions and perpetuate ethno-religious prejudices. Magic, for instance, is often ascribed to members of another ethnic group, at least when people speak about it in general.⁴⁸ Thus, as a rule, Bosnians of Croat ethnic origin emphasised that ‘magic is performed by Muslims, and, much more seldom, by Serbs,⁴⁹ but never by the Catholics!’ A sixty-eight-year-old Croatian interlocutor confided to me that he is ‘afraid to look into the eyes of any old ugly horrific Muslim woman, around eighty years old, as they can do all [kinds of] devilish things to you!’ My Croatian and Serbian interlocutors often claimed that their priests knew how to perform counter-magic but wouldn’t do it because ‘they didn’t want to have anything to do with it’—as opposed to the Muslim clergy. Since Catholic discourse relating all magic to the devil is strongly internalised in the region with a Croat population, Bosniaks (and to a lesser extent Serbs) are consequently implicitly related to the devil and evil. In addition, within ‘rational’ discourse the assertion of the Croatians that magic is mostly known and performed by Muslims can also be understood as the ascription of general ‘backwardness’ and ‘primitivism’ to the Muslim population. As one of my Croatian interlocutors bluntly declared, ‘they [i.e. the Muslims] are three hundred years behind us!’ Through magic narratives, Bosnian Catholics, who like many religious groups in the past accused others of magic as a matter of self-identification and reinforcement of their political and cultural legitimacy,⁵⁰ thus established Muslims as the backward and religiously deviant, ‘devilish’ Other.

The region primarily populated by Serbs where I conducted fieldwork has never been ethnically mixed, but magic in general was nevertheless mostly attributed to Muslims. As for the Bosniaks, Tone Bringa writes that

⁴⁷Jasarevic, ‘Pouring out’, 922–3.

⁴⁸On the ascription of negative characteristics to supernatural beings in ethno-religious determination in Croatia see Luka Šešo, *Živjeti s nadnaravnim bićima: Vukodlaci, vile i vještice hrvatskih tradicijskih vjerovanja* (Zagreb, 2016), 197–203.

⁴⁹In the particular Croat villages where I carried out research there was no Serbian population; in addition, there had been fighting between Croats and Muslims during the last war, which may have influenced their choice of ‘ethnic identity’ of magic.

⁵⁰Cf. Davies, *Magic*, 5–8.

it was the Serbs whom they most generally accused of doing magic; this she explained by their more ambivalent feelings towards Orthodox Serbs than towards Catholic Croats. She also writes that they claimed that if their priests did *sibir*, 'they would not be real *hodžas*'.⁵¹ Her observations, however, do not comply with my recent fieldwork experiences: attribution of magic was least ethnically related in the region populated by Bosniaks. In the few cases where it was, however, it was usually attributed to the Roma. A forty-two-year-old Bosniak named Ismeta told me that 'there are Serbian, Gypsy, and Muslim *sibirs*, yet Gypsy *sibirs* are the most dangerous!' When her husband added that Catholic *sibirs* count more or less for nought, she protested: 'They do not count for nought! All *sibirs* are dangerous, but the Gypsy *sibirs* are the worst as they are the filthiest!' Indeed, the only ethnic prejudices I heard expressed in the Bosniak region outside the context of magic were related to Roma people.

Latent inter-ethnic tensions are also expressed in narratives in which magic is suspected or an accusation of bewitchment is made by parents whose child chose a partner from a different ethnic background, especially frequent among Croatian Catholics. These narratives, on the one hand, offer an outlet for parents' disappointment in their child's choice and are a way to clear the family's name in a community which does not generally approve of such inter-ethnic marriages. On the other hand, the accusation of bewitchment in these cases can also serve as an excuse for drastic measures undertaken by parents. A daughter from a Croat family who eloped with a Bosniak, for instance, was brought back by her parents under restraint, with the argument that her husband's mother had bewitched her into marrying him. The bewitchment was undoubtedly confirmed when she spat in her parents' face when they came to 'rescue' her—in the strict Catholic community this act was considered so outrageous that only the bewitchment interpretation could possibly do it justice. Stories about bad treatment of Croatian women who married men of Bosniak origin by their mothers-in-law, with whom they usually lived under the same roof, also circulated in the region populated by Croats and can be understood as didactic stories aimed at preventing young women from marrying into Bosniak families. Although most of the accusations of bewitchment after the war are made in more or less ethnically homogeneous communities, narratives attributing the use of magic to

⁵¹ Bringa, *Being Muslim*, 182.

people from a different ethnic background can thus still serve as a platform upon which ethnic prejudices towards Bosnians of different ethnic backgrounds are negotiated and latent inter-ethnic tensions released.

CONCLUSION

Many bewitchment narratives recorded in the rural environments of Central and Western Bosnia clearly show that for many people the bewitchment interpretation serves as the most appropriate one because it helps victims or their families cope with misfortune, with the socially unacceptable behaviour of their kin or with their stigmatised acts and conditions. These narratives offer a convenient explanation to victims and communities, allowing them to save face and prevent the ruin of their family's reputation,⁵² while at the same time giving victims and their families recourse to certain actions, no matter how drastic. In addition, they offer a platform for the negotiation and release of inter-ethnic tensions which had escalated during and after the war in the 1990s.

Magic does not, however, thrive only in the countryside, where I conducted my field research, and is far from being restricted to the rural, uneducated or elderly populations. Many of my interlocutors who believed in the effectiveness of magic were also well educated, lived in towns or belonged to a younger generation. While in the countryside, magic, out of sight of the socialist government, showed continuity throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, with the end of the socialist regime and the advent of the New Age movement it experienced a revival in cities as well. Internet forums are full of discussions on how to avoid becoming bewitched, how to recognise a bewitchment and who to turn to in the event of a bewitchment.⁵³ Counter-magic has become a lucrative source of income; the fact that many magic specialists have even become extremely rich

⁵²Cf. Vassos Argyrou, 'Under a Spell: The Strategic Use of Magic in Greek Cypriot Society', *American Ethnologist*, 20. 2 (May 1993), 267–8; Hesz, 'Making', 30–1; Mirjam Mencej, 'Discourses on Witchcraft and Uses of Witchcraft Discourse', *Fabula*, 57.3–4 (2016), 248–62.

⁵³Cf. for instance <http://forum.klix.ba/imali-jos-ispravnih-hoda-koji-pravilno-lece-od-sihira-p8127297.html#p8127297>; <http://www.islambosna.ba/forum/islam/kako-unititi-sihir/300/>; <http://www.lijecenje-kuranom.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=3&ct=1920>; accessed 21 June 2016.

(my interlocutors often drew my attention to their large houses) itself testifies to their popularity. Magic specialists prove their mastery on television, and advertisements for various specialists flood popular magazines.⁵⁴ The ‘first and only spiritual healer Hida’ is a ‘guarantee for your better tomorrow’, an advertisement in the popular magazine *Aura* assures us, and by removing black magic, spells and other bewitchments with the help of the Qur’an, she has helped, we are told, hundreds of people who have suffered insanity, depression, nocturnal incontinence, fear, pains, headaches, migraines, infertility, stomach problems or speech difficulties ‘to liberate themselves from the claws of black magic, and to recover from the hard blows of *sibirbaza*’. The hodža Aljo efendija⁵⁵ Harić offers invisible protective amulets, ‘removes 701 problems with Allah’s help’ and makes people happy with the help of the holy book. The seer Lea-Lejla ‘sees the future, past and present’, removes *sibir* and other sorts of black magic, brings peace and health into homes, saves marriages and aids in reuniting divorced couples, solves all sorts of love problems, and assists in the passing of exams and finding as well as keeping a job—just call and ‘all your problems will be solved’.⁵⁶ While the advertisements for unwitching specialists appear in the popular magazine *Aura* amidst articles on extraterrestrials, ghosts, bioenergy, miraculous health diets, alternative medical therapies and so forth, their practices mostly rely on Islam and on traditional methods which have gained a new momentum in the changed economic and social circumstances and in the re-Islamisation of post-war Bosnia. Indeed, ‘tradition’ and ‘religion’ are often emphasised as trademarks imparting specialists with authority and credibility. ‘Spiritual healer Zijad efendija Majdančić is the best!’ an advertisement in the magazine assures us, relying on the reputation of the *hodža*’s famous healing ancestry and the Qur’an, which was handed down within his family for generations.⁵⁷

⁵⁴Cf. Jasarevic, ‘Pouring out’, 923, 926.

⁵⁵An honorary title for a *hodža*, meaning ‘master’ (Bringa, *Being Muslim*, 206).

⁵⁶Cf. *Aura* 2016, no. 295, 297, 299; cf. also Larisa Jasarevic, ‘Speculative Technologies: Debt, Love, And Divination in a Transnationalising Market’, *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, 42. 1/2 (spring/summer 2014), 272.

⁵⁷Cf. *Aura* 2016, no. 297: 63.

The devastating conditions of post-war Bosnian society, in which many people still suffer from war trauma, where a large majority live at a subsistence level and where more than half the population is unemployed, certainly contribute to the increase in psychic tensions such as anxiety and depression and related physical illnesses.⁵⁸ Persistent existential insecurity has further triggered profound changes in social relationships within communities, which have become dominated by (a fear of) envy and rivalry among neighbours and, consequently, by accusations of bewitchment.⁵⁹ With no bright prospects for the future on the horizon, it is reasonable to predict that the magic market and the fear of neighbours' envy and bewitchment are not likely to diminish anytime soon. As Fadil, my seventy-eight-year-old Bosniak interlocutor, lamented: 'After World War II people feared apparitions, but now we fear each other!'

⁵⁸Cf. Sideny W.A. Dekker and Wilmar B. Schaufeli, 'The Effects of Job Insecurity on Psychological Health and Withdrawal: A Longitudinal Study', *Australian Psychologist*, 30.1 (1995), 57–63.

⁵⁹Several authors have pointed out that witchcraft accusations tend to escalate after wars: Gabor Klaniczay, 'The Accusations and the Universe of Popular Magic', in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (eds.), *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford, 1990), 224; Isak Niehaus, 'Witchcraft and the South African Bantustans: Evidence from Bushbuckridge', *South African Historical Journal*, 64.1 (2012), 58.

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