One of the greatest challenges facing modern scholars of magic and witchcraft in Christian societies is the variable definition and emotional resonance of those terms over time and between cultures. Scholars of early modern Europe and colonial North America, the areas emphasized here, share that same problem. Frequently "magic" is used to designate specific ritual practices that direct occult forces to achieve the magician’s or client’s goal, and “witch” or “witchcraft” are corrupt subsets of “magician” or “magic,” respectively. Yet such a distinction oversimplifies the complex relationship between pre-modern magic and witchcraft. Both magic and witchcraft overlapped in the ways in which they were discussed, conceptualized, and practiced, but aspects of both could exist without the other. Magicians and witches were believed to have distinct abilities to access natural forces, aspects of God’s creation that were innately intelligible to humans. Yet the extent to which they could access preternatural powers – available to God’s creations but normally beyond human understanding and capabilities – or the occult more generally varied based on the individual, circumstances, and author of the historical document discussing the case. Moreover, individual circumstances frequently determined the extent to which magic or even witchcraft was deemed corrupt, and the activities of most accused witches or magicians were not exclusively evil. This variability makes the study of magic, witchcraft, and their interrelationship in pre-modern Europe both fascinating and frustrating.

This chapter argues that conceptions and practices of magic and witchcraft were fundamentally intertwined in pre-modern Europe and the boundaries around terms such as magic, witchcraft, and sorcery reflect intellectual constructs more than common understanding and intellectual practice. To highlight the fluidity of classifying magic and witchcraft and the variations in their moral status, it begins with the most acceptable practices and concludes with those perceived as most threatening to the community and individual. Within each section, it emphasizes key questions in their interrelationship: who practiced it, what did the practice entail, what made it attractive, how was it received, and what knowledge or traditions did the practitioner draw on? Challenging outmoded assumptions that the relationship between magic and witchcraft hinges on the primitive or advanced nature of a society, this chapter argues that distinctions and similarities between magic and witchcraft in
early modern Europe are based as much on personal relationships and individual background than on broader social paradigms.

**Historical debates over magic and witchcraft**

In late medieval and early modern Europe and the European-influenced Americas, the vocabulary of magic and witchcraft was diverse and reflected ancient conceptions about the ways individuals could access and apply occult forces, that is, secret knowledge of and power from the natural world and God. Most western and central European languages distinguished between “magic/magician” and “witchcraft/witch,” and a rich classical Greek and Latin foundation supported such distinctions. Further vocabulary existed that focused on the magical practitioner’s specialty. For example, in Latin individuals labeled *lamia, saga, sortilege, strix, or veneficia* could all fall under the category of magician/sorcerer or witch depending on who was doing the classifying.\(^1\) In general, these terms carried negative connotations; the idea of a “white witch” is a modern development, and some variation of “cunning folk” or “wise woman,” to use English terms which had vernacular equivalents in other European languages, would be used in the early modern period to distinguish people who manipulated natural forces or who accessed forces beyond the natural realm but who generally did to benefit the community. Such precise vocabulary can, however, give a false impression about how clearly magic and witchcraft were classified and distinguished. In practice, terms could be used synonymously and evolve over time. Discussions of witchcraft and magic thus drew on a diverse vocabulary that simultaneously tried to separate and meld them.

These linguistic variations benefit from and complicate modern studies of the relationship between magic and witchcraft, and they have similar effects in the pioneering works of Margaret Murray, James George Frazer, and Edwards Evan Pritchard which continue to influence modern scholarship on magic and witchcraft.\(^2\) Both Murray and Frazer stressed the ancient roots of tensions between magic and witchcraft and saw magic as remnants of either fertility cults or prehistoric fertility religions. Witchcraft comes into play in these interpretations as a libel by Christian authorities of these ancient religious practices, a libel that developed during Christianity’s expansion in medieval and early modern Europe. E. E. Evans-Pritchard brought into the discussion a more precise consideration of its key terms, founded on extensive research into non-European peoples, and argued that people living in cultures where magic is prevalent draw a distinction between magic, witchcraft, and sorcery. In these cases sorcery is a deliberate use of magical rituals to cause harm while witchcraft comes from the witch’s innate power to cause harm to others, but this distinction was rarely so clear in medieval and early modern European languages.\(^3\) All of these scholars also embedded in discussions of magic and witchcraft a distinction between magic and religion where magic channeled occult forces in nature for individual and communal benefit whereas religion supplicated a higher power for assistance.

Although each of these approaches to the relationship between magic and witchcraft, and related topics such as sorcery and religion, have proven extremely influential, they only emphasize one aspect of the relationship to the detriment of others. As such, they often fail to provide a satisfactory interpretation when applied to dissimilar cultures or types of sources or when applied to premodern historical texts.
Moreover, as recent scholars have argued, magic’s practice and intellectual foundation was perceived differently depending on an individual’s social class, educational level, and religious confession, to name just a few of the variables. For these reasons, some of the fundamental distinctions in these earlier interpretations, such as that between coercive magic and supplicant religion, would have been inconceivable to people in medieval and early modern Christian Europe.

Scholars since the 1970s have worked to achieve a more satisfactory synthesis. Among the pioneers challenging Murray, Frazier, and Evans-Pritchard were Keith Thomas and Norman Cohn whose works, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* and *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, respectively, appeared in the early 1970s. These scholars offered new and equally influential interpretations of the relationship between magic and witchcraft alongside their broader analysis of religion and magic. For both Thomas and Cohn, magic and witchcraft were sources of power; the debate occurred over who defined each category’s qualities and who wielded their power. While both authors acknowledged that belief in magic was widespread throughout premodern Europe and that local conditions influenced the acceptance of magic and accusations of witchcraft, they disagreed over the extent to which elite policy and discourse formed belief in and actions against magic and witchcraft. Despite the influence and value of such promising research, however, more recent scholarship has challenged the binary between magic and witchcraft on which these analyses were based. Contemporary research argues that definitions and perceptions of witchcraft and magic that were formed through an ongoing exchange between clergy, judicial officials, and a general population that itself experienced these qualities in a myriad of ways.

The process of rejecting binaries and acknowledging the varied uses of terms related to witchcraft and magic has left many modern scholars reluctant to provide direct definitions of what constitutes magic and witchcraft for fear of imposing anachronistic classifications on categories that were pervasive in premodern Europe. This article grapples with the same challenges. Yet a general consensus for the early modern period has emerged that draws upon historical, anthropological, and philosophical analysis. It accepts that “magic,” and especially “sorcery,” carry in modern European languages a hint of the illegitimate or deceptive that did not necessarily exist in premodern usage, but it acknowledges that magic could also be both depending on circumstances. It eschews statements about the truth or falsity of belief in witchcraft and instead stresses that witches and witchcraft, magic and magicians were accepted components of early modern ideas and society. It focuses on the circulation of information about magic and witchcraft, the qualities that were used to judge the truth of such information, and the unconscious processes and assumptions that led to the classification of actions and signs as belonging to magic and witchcraft. It accepts that such categories are by definition blurred and often actions seen as magical and beneficial by one individual might be interpreted as maleficent witchcraft by another under different conditions.

**Common magic and the enchanted world**

In order for magic to be practiced and, arguably, to be successful, the world had to be seen as an enchanted place in which certain humans could access forces and impulses beyond normal human experience and nature’s mundane functioning.
In premodern Europe the world was believed to imbued with such forces, aspects of the immanence with which creation was infused. Modern actions and attitudes that might be labeled magic or magical – and presumed to be based on ignorance or deception – were, thus, for early modern Europeans extraordinary manifestations of ordinary immanence. For laity and clergy, peasants and university scholars, magic was both the existence of these forces and the ability to access them, and it was not necessarily confined to select individuals. While a small group of intellectuals placed the analysis and practice of this magic at the heart of their ontology, for most Europeans magic was an effective tool because of a world where entities and forces beyond the human played an active and interventionist role. Witches certainly accessed such magical forces, but the application of these magical forms was not innately witchcraft. In an enchanted world, magic was one coin in a common cultural currency, and this section sketches some of the ways in which premodern Europeans accepted it and placed it alongside, but separate from, witchcraft.8

Secular and ecclesiastical authorities in Christian Europe shared this enchanted worldview, but simultaneously, they could challenge some of its more common assumptions and magical practices. This tension would be fundamental to their analysis and treatment of witchcraft in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. While some clergy, lawyers, and medical doctors were active practitioners or consumers of magic, even magic’s detractors likely shared aspects of the common cultures of early modern Europe in which magic was assumed. After all, many were raised by mothers and nursemaids who told stories about humans transforming to animals; they turned to herbs such as mandrake for cures, relying on the similarities between its form and that of a man to enhance its curative properties; and they repeated preachers’ condemnations about the ability of Egyptian days or singing requiem masses to speed human deaths.9 Moreover, in Western Europe since at least the time of the Roman Republic magic had been under the purview of secular courts, and some aspects of magical practices would remain so in medieval and early modern Europe. In other words, they had likely read legal treatises about, heard law suits concerning, and testified before courts on magic. Whether cases involving magic were tried in secular or ecclesiastical courts, however, magic’s very status as a potentially criminal act demonstrates that authorities accepted and, at times, feared its power. Some medieval and early modern princely courts also housed sorcerers, who had wide responsibilities ranging from divination to pursuit of the Philosopher’s Stone, which could transmute lead into gold. Even those whose primary activities took place outside the university or courts, such as preachers, showed and reinforced the power and influence of this enchanted worldview in the stories they told where the dead spoke, charms repelled illness, and prayers led to the discovery of criminals. Magic was an orthodox and expected, if not common, part of everyday life; it could be dangerous, but it was not inherently corrupt.10

Throughout early modern European society magic could thus be an acceptable way for many kinds of people to channel extraordinary forces for human benefit. Practices involving herbs, amulets, and charms were quite common and generally regarded as legitimate, at least when used promote legal and orthodox activities. One, among many, possible examples of the integration of herbal medicine and religious practices in a way that could be labeled magical involved the steps for harvesting and preparation of leaves used to treat fever: “Before using these leaves,
one is supposed to write certain Latin words on them to involve the power of the Holy Trinity, and then one is to say the Lord’s Prayer and other prayers over them. . . . repeating this procedure before sunrise on three consecutive mornings." The integration of writing and prayer found here echoed that found in charms, a common and orthodox magical object that could also become a tool of witchcraft. Charms often applied word magic, relying on powerful phrases from Scriptures or combinations of words and letters that were believed to be particularly potent to obtain cures for illness or to protect buildings and other shelters. They would be written onto some object – parchment, wax, stones – and placed near the person or thing that needed protection. Such practices were widespread throughout Europe and the Americas well into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Certain texts had specialized functions; for example, the opening of St. John’s Gospel was considered powerful protection against demons. Some theologians were unhappy with such use of sacred texts; Thomas Aquinas felt that it was permitted for people to wear holy words as a sign of devotion but that it was wrong to wear them in the hopes of harnessing some supernatural power for personal benefit. Despite such concern, however, the medieval and early modern Catholic Church widely produced objects that contained holy words for the benefit of its faithful. Churches were less complicit in other magical operations. For example, a common way of finding out the truth in early modern Europe and European America, in Protestant and Catholic territories like, was the sieve and the shears. In this ritual a sieve would be balanced on top of a pair of shears; usually several individuals surrounded the sieve and shears, but it was unnecessary. Once the objects were placed, the ritual could vary slightly; in some cases, one of the individuals would pose a question, and if the sieve turned, it meant that the answer was yes. In another version of the same ritual, a question could be asked about one of the people standing nearby. If the sieve turned to that person and stopped, the answer was yes regarding that person.

While the sieve and the shears may seem to be innocuous, they moved participants into the realm of occult magic in a way that secular and ecclesiastical authorities mistrusted. Yet such dubious activities were also quite common, at times integrated with acceptable magical practices. In both villages and towns throughout Europe people could find specialized practitioners who provided love potions, told fortunes, and helped find lost objects, all through the use of a mixture of specially harvested herbs, religious language, and secret rituals and preparations. While such magic could be relatively harmless, other practices could easily blur the line between the passable and the profane. For example, one way of assuring a beloved’s devotion in early modern Venice was to put holy oil on your lips and kiss him. What modern scholars might describe as sympathetic magic was also at the heart of many medical practices. Certainly sympathies and antipathies between the heavens and earth were fundamental to premodern medicine, but some medical practitioners might integrate prayer and holy objects into sympathetic practice in ways that bordered on the profane. Other practices were always considered illicit, even if their goal was essentially harmless or even beneficial. For example, one of the great fears of early modern Catholic clergy was the parishioner would take the Eucharist but not swallow it. As the actual body of Christ, the consecrated wafer contained divine power, which made it an especially effective magical object. Yet among authorities such treatment was sacrilegious because it assumed that the godhead could become a
mere human tool, even if it was used for something beneficial such as an ingredient in a healing tonic.

The use of holy objects for what the clergy believed were nefarious purposes brought common magic into the realm of superstition, which carried with it significant spiritual and ecclesiastical consequences and which could readily be perceived as witchcraft. For premodern European authorities superstition was not foolishness or ignorance; superstition was false belief. Someone who was superstitious could thus easily follow the path to damnation. As the improper use of holy objects or as incorrect belief, superstition could readily encompass many magical activities and transform them into something fundamentally dangerous and even heretical. For example, in 1566 Elizabeth Mortlock was publicly shamed for her integration of Catholic prayers – the Paternoster, Ave, and Creed – as part of her healing practices on behalf of those whom fairies injured. Yet her judges felt that her superstitions and application of magic were more than just ignorance. In an example of how fine the line could be between licit and illicit magical purposes and practices, she was also condemned as a witch.

This connection between superstition and magic was also at the heart of many polemics during the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, polemics that would influence the early modern interpretation of witchcraft. Early Protestant reformers regularly condemned medieval Christianity as superstitious and even malicious. For these reformers, it was wrapped in inappropriate secrecy and depended on slights of hand. They claimed that the clergy devised miracles to assert a supernatural, magical power over all other Christians and, in the process, corrupted the very people to whom the clergy should minister. They also condemned what they saw as a proliferation of masses used like magical tools to heal animals and people, assure plentiful crops, protect individuals on journeys, and allow the dead to be saved. The rituals surrounding and the process of transubstantiation were particularly condemned. The transformation of unleavened bread to the body of Christ and of wine to the blood of Christ appeared to many Protestant reformers to be no different than the secret conjurations of illicit magical practitioners claiming to be able to summon spirits or transmute lead to gold. As innately deceptive, transubstantiation became a false miracle – of a type demons seemed to promote. As such, some Protestant theologians were willing to argue that, at the heart of the mass, the Catholic clergy were abetting a demonically-inspired deception.

In addition to those practices and beliefs condemned as part of Reformation polemics, there had always existed a common culture of medieval and early modern magic that skirted the line of orthodoxy. Such practices often gained their problematic status because of the preconditions necessary for them to function and the involvement of supernatural entities in their production or implementation. Even relatively innocuous objects like charms could depend on secrecy, prayers, blessings, magical movements, and occult symbols, all conditions seen as potentially subversive. That such charms did not depend on clerical participation for their fabrication and efficacy made them even more suspect. Even magic used to combat witches could be dangerous if it was in the wrong hands or came from the wrong source. Chonrad Stoeckhlin, a sixteenth-century Bavarian herdsman, claimed to be able to identify witches because of powers he received from the “phantoms of the night.” In other words, an illicit source gave him licit powers, although Chonrad
saw nothing illicit about his involvement with the phantoms. Certain Protestant confessions would go so far as to link prophylactic and demonic magic. For example, in North America Puritan clergy condemned the wearing of charms to prevent illness and misfortune as working through demonic assistance since that could be the only force so willing to attempt to undermine divine providence.21

The case of Matteuccia Francisci of Todi epitomizes the mixture of acceptance, suspicion, and condemnation in the common magical culture of early modern Europe. Matteuccia Franciscas was brought before the courts in 1428 for magical practices, many of which had good outcomes, that she had undertaken over several years. She taught people how to cure themselves of fevers, to rid themselves of lameness, and to counteract curses. She provided the town with herbal treatments and women with contraception. Yet her activities had magical components that could readily become suspicious. For example, she gave blessed herbs to young women that they could, in turn, give to men to make them fall in love. She performed counterspells to remove spells from clients, including ones that transferred incantations onto unsuspecting passersby. As her trial progressed, Matteuccia herself provided under torture increasingly graphic statements of her activities: producing ointments that would allow her to fly, burying bones from unbaptized babies as cures for illness, and using baby fat in her magical potions. Although Matteuccia was apparently believed to be a valuable member of her community for years before her prosecution and her initial activities fell within the purviews of Europe’s common magical culture, once St. Bernardino of Siena preached in her town, previously innocuous magical practices were transformed and additional magical corruption was expected. As such, the authorities determined to put her “to the question.” After confessing to a litany of magical crimes and consorting with demons, Matteuccia was burned as a witch.22

Renaissance occultism and the treatment of magic and witchcraft

As the case of Francisci suggests, by the fifteenth century the relationship between magic and witchcraft grew closer among some intellectuals; at the same time studies in natural philosophy influenced by Jewish, Muslim, or Greco-Roman philosophical systems that did not separate magic from piety and science were gaining broader and more profound influence. Scholars often label those who analyzed or practiced such magic “occultists” to distinguish them from “magicians” and “sorcerers” who were presumed to be more duplicitous and dangerous, yet such distinctions were difficult to maintain. Occultists, by definition, studied the hidden properties and principles of nature, and they argued that only an elite few could and should be exposed to such ideas; as such, occultists could easily be perceived as a cabal trying to undermine God’s natural laws. While Renaissance occultists were not necessarily involved in witchcraft, either as practitioners or prosecutors, the intellectual currents they synthesized and disseminated would influence those who tried and analyzed magic, witchcraft, and their interrelationship. The magical theories and rituals of Renaissance occultists could lead other intellectuals and authorities to question the very parameters of magic and its relationship to the demonic.23

Several events in the later Middle Ages would fundamentally influence the practice of magic and the understanding of the occult, and its relationship to witchcraft, in early modern Europe. The first was the increased circulation and analysis
of classical Greek and Latin texts known as the Renaissance. Beginning in the fourteenth century a small community of European intellectuals argued that the writings of pagan antiquity served as a better guide for contemporary life and, in some cases, morality than the scholastic tradition of the Middle Ages. Over the next several centuries these intellectuals unearthed and edited hundreds of ancient Latin and later Greek texts, disseminating those documents throughout Europe – a process to which those fleeing the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople (1453) contributed greatly. A fundamental doctrine for Renaissance humanists, some of whom would become leading occultists, was the need to go *ad fontes* (to the sources), that is, to the original authors and texts rather than translations, commentaries, and paraphrases. Linked to this principle was the conviction that only the truly learned could appreciate classical texts in their original language and context, so they should be the only people studying such documents. These philological and linguistic pursuits would have profound social consequences among the elite and administrative classes of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe, transforming the education and definition of a learned man.

In the process of going “to the sources,” Renaissance humanists could not escape magic and witchcraft. Ancient Greek and Roman writings were full of stories of witches, sorcerers, and magical spirits, and ancient Roman laws exacted harsh penalties on those convicted of practicing illicit magic. Whether they treated it in a comical or condemnatory fashion, Roman and Greek authors described a society that shared the “magical worldview” of medieval and early modern Europe. Famous fifteenth-century scholars such as Marsilio Ficino and Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa provided syntheses of such classical systems and attempted to integrate pagan perspectives on magic and witchcraft into a holistic Christian framework with varying degrees of success. The work of these scholars and other contemporaries assured that, by the late fifteenth century, Neoplatonism and Hermeticism would help to shape European intellectuals’ understanding of occultism and ritual magic.  

Both Neoplatonism and Hermeticism as understood in early modern Europe are difficult terms to define because they represent centuries of writing inspired by, not necessarily produced by, particular authors: in the case of Neoplatonism, Plato, and of Hermeticism, Hermes Trismegistus. For those interested in occult theory and magical practice, Macrobius’s writings, Plato’s *Timaeus*, Hermes’s *Corpus hermeticum*, and dozens of other texts ascribed to these authorities complemented Christian understandings of a holistic, integrated universe that an adept could come to appreciate. If the budding magus appreciated natural sufficiently, he could even, in some cases, manipulate it. Drawing on ancient Egyptian magical and wisdom literature, often funneled through several layers of translation, Renaissance occultists argued for the legitimacy of certain types of ancient, pagan magic, a position that some clerical authorities, particularly those following the Augustinian tradition, found problematic at best. Opponents of this occultism also pointed to the integration into such studies of other, suspect texts, such as the *Emerald Tablets*, which described the qualities of the *prima materia*, the cornerstone of creation, and means by which it could be transmuted, thereby suggesting that God himself could be inconstant. A less threatening inconsistency that Neoplatonic magical practitioners and theorists faced was the admitted fluidity of any magic since they saw creation as mutable rather than
mechanistic. As such, variable results were to be expected from any magical working, a situation that some could see as undermining the very possibility of truth.

The Renaissance impulse to go to the sources that led to the increased influence of Neoplatonic and Hermetic writings also inspired more profound and extensive examination of Jewish and Muslim occultism, although the link between such studies and accusations of witchcraft was tenuous. Major writings in both traditions had circulated in Christian Europe well before the Renaissance: the *Picatrix* provided detailed descriptions of Arabic astral magic (albeit garbled through translation from Arabic to Spanish, then to Latin) and Avicenna’s alchemical texts were widely disseminated because they were presumed to be written by Aristotle. Within Europe’s small Muslim community, textual magic and charms were used in similar ways as in Europe’s Christian territories – passages from the Qur’an were placed in amulets as protection – and some evidence exists that, in the Iberian peninsula, Christians would see these Arabic charms as being especially effective and use them well after the association with Islam had faded. In eastern Europe, Byzantine and Persian occultism had influenced each other for centuries, and the fall of the Byzantine Empire and attendant transmission of texts also increased western European knowledge of the Islamic occult tradition. The emphasis in such texts on ritual purity and asceticism, the application of natural materials to occult understanding, and even the acceptance of secondary spirits influencing the natural world could all be read in a way that complemented Christian understandings of Creation and the magical.

Given the circulation of texts around the Mediterranean Basin and Near East at this time, it should not then be surprising that a figure would arise in western Europe like Giovanni Pico della Mirandola whose writings were inspired by Christian sources and classical Greek and Roman texts as well the Hebrew Kabbalah and Islamic lettrism. Although his work focused on natural philosophy, the interrelationship of magic and the natural world and his willingness to turn to many non-Christian traditions in pursuit of knowledge led to suspicions that he was also a magician, suspicions that even his allies held.

As might be expected and Pico della Mirandola’s case illustrates, the integration of classical, non-Christian, and Christian philosophical and spiritual systems in pursuit of a magic that reflected the most profound human understanding and appreciation of God was far from smooth. When those who pursued such learning then tried to develop magical rituals that could be applied to human needs, the relationship between magic and the occultist aspects of natural philosophy became more fraught – and more dangerous. Although these tensions could be demonstrated in many aspects of learned magic in late medieval and early modern Europe, the classification of magic into four primary categories (angelic, demonic, natural, and judicial) and the application of astral magic illustrate both the success and failure of attempts to control the understanding of magic and magic’s potential to morph into corrupt witchcraft.

During the Middle Ages authors began to use the term “natural” magic as a way of distinguishing between true and false magic. Natural magic was magic done using qualities of Creation that were hidden from most, if not all, of humanity, but it was inherently pure since it drew on legitimate aspects of God’s creation. It could even be argued that those who successfully practiced natural magic experienced a form of revelation; certainly they had a far more profound understanding of nature and, by implication, its Creator (God) than mere ordinary mortals. Yet it was clear that all
magical practice did not have, nor was it intended to have, such pure motives. Individuals turned to fortune-tellers to learn about their future, then returned to those same magicians for aid in preventing that which had been foretold. Such attempts to control divine providence were condemned by all but a few and were classified as judicial magic. Authors on far sides of the confessional spectrum condemned such practices; both Loyola and Calvin found such activities an affront to God. Others would denounce them as witchcraft.

Astral magic was part of both natural and judicial magic; as such, its practitioners could inadvertently move from orthodoxy to unorthodoxy. Magic involving the stars was fundamental to many aspects of medieval and early modern life: herbs were picked during certain planetary conjunctions to enhance their effectiveness, medical procedures were timed to take advantage of astral influences, and astrological signs were presumed to affect the human personality. Astronomy and astrology were intertwined, and one part of the four-part quadrivium of the universities (the more advanced educational level) included astronomy until the late sixteenth century. Yet the extent to which astral magic was legitimate was debatable. Certainly some elites patronized astronomers for their predictive and protective skills; for example, Pope Urban VIII brought Thomasso Campanella to Rome in 1626 so that he could be the papal astrologer and magician protecting the pope from malign earthly and planetary influences, a job description that seemingly asked him to perform judicial magic. While both Catholics and Protestants could share this tendency to blur magical distinctions, many evangelical communities tried to articulate a firmer division. Among such groups were Puritan theologians. They would allow that the stars could influence earthly events but saw using the stars to predict and control human activities as a challenge to divine providence.

While occultists themselves were rarely accused of witchcraft, the distinctions they and their opponents made about types of magic and the increased interest in things beyond nature’s ordinary parameters that Renaissance occultism reflected and spread would influence the judges and theorists involved with witch trials. Recent studies of witchcraft trials in early modern Venice, for example show a judiciary trained and focused on distinguishing between the natural and supernatural; only when all things natural were ruled out could someone be convicted for causing evil through magic. Even the medical doctors giving testimony showed great care in separating the occult from the natural, and part of their identity as physicians became their ability to render judgment only on the natural. Both doctors and judges believed in demons and the supernatural more generally, but they were increasingly aware of the complexities and, for the doctors, the dangers of classifying magical activities. These professionals could see that, by the sixteenth century, natural magic could segue easily into judicial magic, leaving prosecutors and even mere observers to wonder exactly how an individual got such special knowledge and power.

Necromancy and spirits: magic becomes diabolized

As the case of Matteuccia Francisci and the writings of Renaissance occultists illustrate, the spirit world was never far from the magical world. Entities of all sorts—devils, ghosts, fairies, and more generic “spirits”—were also believed to be innately magical, whether through greater knowledge of nature (demons), experience with
realms beyond those of the living (ghosts), or the ability to move between aspects of creation (various spiritual beings). As such, the invocation of spirits was a key aspect of elite ritual magic and could be integrated into many more mundane magical activities. For practitioners, spirits were always unpredictable and frequently dangerous; exact adherence to magical ritual was necessary to achieve any degree of control. For authorities, spirits increased the threat of magic because they were so difficult to identify; as in the cases of men and women who claimed saintly spiritual visitations, magicians had to be able to ascertain a spirit’s true identity to control the working and, if possible, to avoid charges of demonolatry or heresy. For all early modern Europeans, the invocation and participation of spirits in magic transformed the ritual into something powerful but less human and more liable to corruption. It can even be argued that the frequency, type, and number of spirits invoked played a key role in determining magic’s or a magician’s legitimacy.

This section outlines the ways the spirit world influenced magical practice in late medieval and early modern Europe. Beginning with ritual magic of the type a Renaissance occultist would recognize, it describes the place of necromancy in that magical tradition. From necromancy it was believed to be a small step, if even a step at all, to magic that directly involved demons. Such \textit{magia goetia}, magic involving angels and demons, also drew from Jewish, Islamic, and Hellenic traditions, all of which, in the appropriate circumstances, could make occult practices and practitioners more suspect to Christian authorities. Although necromancers were not generally tried as members of a great demonic conspiracy – perhaps because of their scarcity and secrecy – the connection between magic and diabolism that underlay necromancy would add fuel to the fires of the early modern witch hunts and could transform some cunning-folk into witches, that is, practitioners of evil magic.

Necromancy has been commonly defined as magic done with the aid of demons, and there are good theological reasons for that definition. Both Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636) and Augustine of Hippo (354–430) repeatedly made the connection between magic and demons in their influential writings, and their definitions dominated until the twelfth century. By the later Middle Ages, however, as the distinction was made between natural magic and demonic magic, the definition had grown more fluid: while necromancy as a practice remained almost always evil or at least suspect, the spirits involved in necromantic workings became more diverse, as reflected in the word itself. Necromancy is thus most exactly defined as magic with the aid of non-living beings, and such entities were believed to populate the early modern world. In their rituals necromancers could call on ghosts, angels, and other spirits as well as the more traditional demons, much like other magical practitioners could and did. The connection between necromancy and non-living, generally non-corporeal, entities may therefore have contributed to the growing fear of some traditional magical practices. The enduring link between necromancy and demons may have reinforced fears that magical practices in general, especially those involving any type of preternatural or supernatural entity were likely demonic.

In the Middle Ages the traditional practitioners of necromantic magic were clergy, so much so that necromancy has been described as belonging to a “clerical underworld.” Several persuasive explanations have been posited for what might seem to be a paradoxical connection, such as clerical familiarity with high ritual practices and objects, clerical interest in the preternatural realm (to which demons belonged),
clerical confidence, if not hubris, in the rightness of their motives and goals, and clerical engagement in academic debates of the nature of Creation. Yet studies of necromantic manuals from the fourteenth, fifteenth, and early sixteenth centuries make clear that the necromancer’s motives and methods were often far from pious. Particularly common in both necromantic manuals and some of the earliest witchcraft trials was the invocation of demons, often by their individual names, in erotic magic. Detailed rites are described that allowed sorcerers to bind women to themselves, steal women from other men, and even rape women with their full acquiescence. Clerical necromancers were also accused of working with leading nobles to overthrow rulers or obtain preferment at court. The clergy’s involvement in late medieval necromancy certainly did not make it more acceptable; in fact, it may have made it more abhorrent, given that it ensnared even those of superior spiritual status with a direct channel to the divinity.

Laity, too, were involved in the culture of necromancy at its most elite levels. While in both medieval and early modern Europe they could patronize necromancers, the exposure of learned laymen to non-Christian and ancient texts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that contributed to the rise of Renaissance occultism also spurred laymen to study spirits’ qualities, motivations, and effects on humanity. Recent scholarship has shown that the fifteenth century saw rising production of works about demons and other spirits, although demonology is most often linked to sixteenth and seventeenth writings. While these earlier texts were written primarily by clergy, laity also consumed them, judging by their influence in later witchcraft trials and demonological treatises. Early modern elites also integrated practices into magical workings that they claimed were more pious and philosophical but that observers and judges argued were necromancy, pure and simple. Such presumed knowledge of necromantic practices and their link to the demonic would plague the careers of some famous sixteenth-century natural philosophers such as John Dee and Paracelsus. It would also make it easier to link other magical practices to necromancy.

The example of necromantic divination illustrates both the appeal and danger of necromantic magic. Divination had a long tradition in Europe and could be accomplished in many ways: the interpretation of dreams, the patterns of hands, the flights of birds, or the first passage of a book that had been opened randomly. Yet each of these methods was fundamentally a way of connecting to a deeper spiritual realm. It seemed only logical that direct communication with spirits would be the clearest way to obtain information, and demons were generally presumed to be the most knowledgeable spirits that humans could potentially control. Necromantic manuals thus provide multiple spells that rely on demonic aid to envision and influence the future. In the process necromancers were guilty not just of demonolatry but of judicial magic – trying to overturn God’s divine plan. One can see why demons might be willing partners.

Such divination was not confined to Europe’s elites, however. Medieval and early modern Europe retained many practitioners of magic for whom interaction with spirits was one tool in their belt. Whether they be called cunning folk, wise men/women, or scryers, to give just some English-language terms, the interaction of these individuals with spiritual entities distinguished them from and empowered them beyond ordinary human beings. Such “folk diviners” may have inherited their abilities, such as Sicily’s donas de fuera (ladies from outside) who attracted and spoke with fairies.
and availed themselves of fairy knowledge because the women were believed to have “sweet blood.” Others seem to have followed a sort of apprenticeship. Like much of the elite divination that is more frequently tied to necromancy, common divination often had practical motivations. For example, spirits guided early modern treasure hunters to hidden caches – or at least so the hunters argued. Some hunters even saw their actions as part of a spiritual economy; they claimed that, by allowing the deceased to reveal ill-gotten gains and put them to good use, they were actually performing a meritorious deed that would benefit the spirit’s soul and theirs. Not surprisingly, authorities were unconvinced.

For the unsympathetic and even some practitioners, it was thus a small step from invoking and controlling spirits to pleading with demons for assistance – and even promising them assistance in return. Once magic was linked with evil, and the embodiment of evil, Satan, was perceived as a willing participant in and distorter of magical practices, the preconditions were set for magic to be perceived as innately evil. In the process those who engaged in or even just studied ritual magic were linked to those who practiced magic and interacted with spirits at a baser level, the innately dangerous and deceptive witch.

**Witches, demons, and maleficia**

The escalation of witch trials and the development of panics in late medieval and early modern Europe are the products of a long redefinition of the relationship between magic, its practitioners, and the supernatural. As the previous sections have shown, magical practitioners were never morally neutral and, as helpful as they might be at times, were always seen as potentially dangerous to their community. Yet by the fifteenth century, the threat such individuals could pose more frequently seems to have outweighed the benefits they offered, and by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries growing fears of demonic activity enhanced the danger. In linking many forms of magic to spirits and presuming that spirits were likely demonic, both clergy and laity increasingly saw occultism and magical practice as potentially evil and, therefore, as witchcraft. In the process, approximately 100,000 people would be prosecuted as witches, and over half of those individuals were executed.

In fifteenth-century Europe there appears to have been an increased obsession with demonic activity and influence in this world; this claim is conditional because it is impossible to quantify, but many specialists have noted the ways in which the devil and the evil he embodied was perceived as permeating the world and the growing number of texts trying to help Christians oppose him. Heretical groups such as the Waldensians were linked to demonic conspiracies and, thus, tried as witches. Witch trials of other individuals seen as the allies of demons occurred in Switzerland (1428–36), Dauphiné (1420–60), and the duchy of Milan (1480–1520). At the same time, treatises were written describing the link between magic and demonolatry: Johannes Nider’s *Formicarius* (1437–38), Nicolas Jacquier’s *Scourge of Heretics* (1458), Alfonso da Spina’s *Fortress of Faith against Enemies of the Christian Religion Everywhere* (1459), Petrus Marmor’s *Source of Workers of Harmful Magic* (1462), and Heinrich Kramer’s *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487). While none of these texts challenged the truism that maleficia (evil deeds) was at the heart of witchcraft, they emphasized in a new and particularly virulent way the source of inspiration to injure (demonic promptings), the ultimate
beneficiary of such harm (the Devil), and the witch’s place as a foot soldier in a vast demonic army. In so doing, they expanded on the demonic inspiration for divination found in medieval canon law.

Such ideas were refined and enhanced in the sixteenth century, both in Europe and in European writings about the Americas among members of all of Europe’s confessions. It is well known that leading Reformers, such as Martin Luther, felt that demons harassed humanity continually, and the battles of the Reformations only contributed to a sense that the end times were near and demonic influence pervasive. When judges, preachers, and theologians then argued that particular rituals were innately corrupt and corrupting, easing Satan’s task, it was thus logical to link certain magic practices and practitioners to demonic and harmful magic. In the Americas, Europeans from all Christian confessions relied on that logic to argue that Native Americans who retained traditional beliefs and practices, especially those who actively opposed missionaries, were willing or inadvertent tools of the Devil. Those, such as Reginald Scot and Johannes Weyer, who doubted that there was such a thing as a conspiracy of witches or that witches had secret meetings with devils did not doubt that evil existed or demons were active in the world. Even as authorities became increasingly reluctant to convict individuals for witchcraft in the later seventeenth century, this impulse did not stem from disbelief in witchcraft or evil magic, but from an epistemological quandary tied to revised legal practices.

Although the Reformations certainly heightened the fear of demonic activity and its consequences, and likely did so in ways that directly contributed to increased suspicion of magical activities, the growing emphasis on demonic conspiracies and human corruption found in fifteenth-century texts suggests that other factors contributed to magic becoming witchcraft. The fear of death caused by recurring plagues, the shock of “discovering” an entirely new hemisphere, the price inflation arising from the import of American silver, the sufferings caused by Europe’s endemic warfare, and even the Little Ice Age have all been broached as contributing factors. Most successful, however, as a widespread cultural explanation is the idea of the limited good. Economic and social thinking in premodern Europe presumed that there were only a limited number of resources available. When population increased or a neighbor prospered, others would suffer. Early modern European societies were filled with families and individuals jockeying for limited food, land, and other goods; even if an entire community benefitted, the assumption was that somewhere, likely nearby, was another group who jealously watched those who prospered. When this attitude was added to the additional strains Europeans faced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the fears inspired by the occult powers and practice of magic could more readily overwhelm the benefits individuals and communities received. They could even transform natural magic into demonic magic.

Despite this fear that the devil was increasingly effective and prevalent, when most early modern Europeans first accused someone of witchcraft it was because magical practice had caused harm, not because the devil was directly involved. Often accused witches had long histories of conflict in their communities and were known for turning to occult powers or taking extraordinary measures for vengeance. They were already seen as someone familiar with manipulating natural forces or interacting with the spirit world, although these actions could have benefitted their neighbors, too. In fact, people in the community may have turned to them for assistance for
years – and turned a blind eye to the extent to which these neighbors tapped into occult forces. What transformed such individuals from powerful neighbors to dangerous and corrupt witches was their practice of *maleficia* (evil deeds). In other words, generally the magic that first brought the witch to authorities was stealing milk from a neighbor’s cow, destroying crops, and causing illness, not meeting with the devil, pledging allegiance to him, or helping to bring about the end of the world. In fact, the accuser may have even taken magical steps to reverse the witch’s spell or turned to the witch for counter-magic against another neighbor.⁴⁸

Both sex and gender influenced how magic was perceived and, in certain places, the type of magic that was performed. Scholars have proven that approximately 80 percent of those prosecuted for witchcraft in early modern Europe were women, but such statistics are deceptive. The numbers varied regionally throughout Europe with men much more likely to be prosecuted in the Nordic countries whereas women dominated witch trials in the classic “heartlands” of witchcraft studies (Germany, France, Scotland, and parts of Switzerland, England, and the Basque region). Yet there are disruptions even in these patterns. For example, in Normandy close to 75 percent of those prosecuted were men.⁴⁹ When the link between sex and witchcraft is studied in the areas of the Americas colonized by Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the statistics become even more complex. Not only was the recordkeeping more scattered, but indigenous religious practices were more alien and, therefore, ready to diabolize than European practices with which authorities had been familiar for centuries. Moreover, Indians frequently had male religious leaders who, as promoters of false belief and communicators with false gods according to European authorities, provided ready fodder for concepts of a satanic conspiracy bolstered by witches.

Gender influenced early modern witch trials through both the activities witches were accused of undertaking and the expectations witches defied. Violation of gender norms seems to have contributed to the virulence that transformed an individual from a more neutral magical practitioner to the innately evil witch. The educated male magician, often connected to the clergy or administration and, thereby, more associated with ritual, authority, and knowledge, was likely less disconcerting when wielding occult power than an uneducated or marginally educated local woman whose only status was communal or unofficial. In the territories where the majority of those prosecuted were women, accused witches were integrated into local society but were rarely among the loftiest members. From detailed analysis of such cases, scholars have developed psychological explanations for witchcraft accusations that range from women projecting their inability to fulfill gender expectations, such as having a baby or keeping an infant alive, to women showing inappropriate “sexual, physical, and psychological aggressiveness.”⁵⁰ In territories where men dominated the prosecutions, witchcraft became a tool in commercial and political success.⁵¹ Whether the accused was male or female, it was presumed they could and did access occult forces and, thus, had the potential to be a witch. What made them a convicted witch was their willingness to use the occult for nefarious purposes.

Although accusers stressed the evil a witch had done to them and their neighbors, often for years if not decades, and may even have noted that such activities were diabolical or involved some other entity, it was up to legal and clerical officials and authors to work out the full implications of the demonic influence on magic and to
rehap the lines between legitimate occultism, superstition, and witchcraft. Such redefinition began in the fifteenth century when clerics, many of whom participated in inquisitorial courts, began writing treatises advocating for expanded jurisdiction in cases involving magic and situating magical activities in a broader epistemology and ontology. The Formicarius and Malleus Maleficarum are the most famous of these works. After a brief hiatus, the composition of such texts resumed in the middle of the sixteenth century, completing the theoretical diabolization of the figure of the witch and of secret magic. By integrating witches into a demonic conspiracy to overturn Creation, magic lost much of its moral neutrality, at least among those who could read such tomes. Some authors contributed further to the diffusion of such connections when they composed demonologies in the vernacular. Even authors who opposed the witch trials, such as Reginald Scot and Johann Weyer, disseminated ideas about witchcraft and illicit magic when they summarized their opponents’ arguments. Moreover, stories from these texts could provide early modern printers with the “marvelous” or “astonishing” tales that became pamphlet bestsellers, displaying the link between witchcraft and magic to a broader audience.

Yet it was in the law courts that the theories about magic, witches, and devils confronted actual experience, and as one of the leading authorities on early modern witchcraft has noted, “different jurisdictions chose to emphasize one dimension of the witch’s crime to the exclusion of the other, and the judicial record reflects those differences.” Some judges were convinced that witches worked for the devil and, thus, their magic was diabolic, an affront to God; as such, it was the judges’ duty to root out any and all suspected of being a witch. In the process objects that could be either magically neutral or have mild magical potential, such as feathers and needles, became tools of diabolic magic. Other judges were more circumspect, firmly believing in demonic activities but much less convinced that what they were hearing and seeing was actual witchcraft. Although in the sixteenth century many countries passed statutes banning the use of harmful magic, or reinforced existing statutes, in general it could be difficult to get a guilty verdict in a witchcraft trial, unless the region was experiencing a witch panic. By the second half of the seventeenth century revisions in legal procedures and standards of evidence made it even more difficult to prove that magic was used to cause a misfortune or that a witch had directed the magic. What made magic illicit, or at least suspect, was evolving and distancing itself from witchcraft, at least in the eyes of some secular and ecclesiastical authorities.

Dramatic possession cases reinforced, however, the connection between illicit magic and witchcraft well into the seventeenth century. In possession a demon or group of demons took over a human body and will, although they remained unable to touch the soul. Witches were not believed to cause most possessions, but high profile cases in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France made the link between witchcraft and possession explicit. In 1611 at Aix-en-Provence the priest Louis Gaufredy was executed as witch; in a striking reversal of the usual power dynamic between witches and demons, he was convicted for sending demons into two Ursuline nuns, whom he had also tried and failed to exorcise. Just over twenty years later, in Loudun, the priest Urban Grandier was accused of being a witch and sending demons to possess, obsess, and bewitch over twenty women in the town’s Ursuline convent. He was executed for witchcraft in 1634. Cases involving possessed people and witches also occurred in seventeenth-century Italy despite explicit guidelines for
exorcists that “since demons could never be trusted, they must not be asked to identify witches.” It is likely that these cases reflected a particularly male and clerical variation of a witch’s power, but the national and international circulation of texts about these cases furthered ideas about the diabolic origins of magic power and suspicions about those who wielded occult forces.

Europeans in the Americas during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries certainly shared this fear of the connection between magic, witchcraft, and devils, and the diabolic framework for their descriptions of African and indigenous spiritual practices that were sent across the Atlantic may even have contributed to the certainty among some European intellectuals that magic in all its forms was evil. While European debates over classification highlighted the effects of education, gender, class, and a variety of factors over the interpretation of magic, in the Americas, where so many cultures interacted in such violent and dramatic ways, the attitudes towards magic, witchcraft, and the interrelationship were even more disparate and were, at times, embedded in fundamentally different worldviews. Witches or shamans were accepted in many African and Indian cultures, although they were seen as dangerous figures. The distinction between magic and religion that European missionaries in particular tried to impose was foreign to both African and Indian visions of creation. Moreover, European colonists themselves shared in the magical culture described earlier in this chapter where occult forces permeated the natural world. For these colonials, not all witches were diabolic, but they were all dangerous, wielders of an obscure and potent magic with the potential to overturn the established order. Not surprisingly, then, missionaries advocated for their repression, while colonials in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries might support their religious leaders while also turning to African and Indian magical practitioners when more orthodox approaches had failed to solve a problem. As such, they contributed to the development of a hybrid magical culture in the Americas integrating aspects of African, Indian, and Europe belief and practice.

Magic, witchcraft, and the eye of the beholder

As the colonial experience illustrates dramatically, the distinction between legitimate magic and illegitimate witchcraft was often in the eye of the beholder, although few people in early modern Europe would challenge the statement that witches were corrupt. The same magical practice, such as the preparation of a love potion, could be seen as good or evil; for the person who obtained his desired love, the magical practitioner was skilled and moral, someone who fulfilled his side of a business arrangement. Even for the person who was coerced, some could argue that the magic made accepting love easy and happy, although, not surprisingly, such magic was more often seen as the corruption of free will. The personal aspect of the interrelationship between magic and witchcraft may even have been what allowed for the continuation of what has been estimated as tens of thousands of magical practitioners at the same time that magic was being diabolized and witches subject to vicious prosecution. Magic gained its qualities, in part, through the reputation of its practitioner. If a practitioner was known as reliable and judicious, the magic was less likely to be seen as deceptive or dangerous. If cunning folk were honest, how could they or their works be in thrall to the Prince of Lies?
Notes

1 Detailed discussions of the vocabulary of magic and witchcraft in pre-modern Europe can be found in Davies, Popular Magic, 1–13; Fraser, “Roman Antiquity,” 126–127 and 130–135; and Gareis, “Merging Magical Traditions,” 41–45, in Collins, The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft.

2 Frazer, The Golden Bough; Murray, The Witch-Cult in Western Europe; Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande; Purkiss, The Witch in History, Chapters 1 and 2, provide an engaging account of the influence of their interpretations on the modern feminist and witch movements.


4 Kieckhefer, Magic in the Middle Ages, 14–16. Also see Gaskill, “The Pursuit of Reality,” 1069–1088. I emphasize Christian here because, in early modern Islam, the activity or passivity of the magical practitioner contributed to the legitimacy of the magic, and passive practice was considered best: Melvin-Koushki, “Astrology, Lettrism, Geomancy” and personal communication.


6 Hutton, “Anthropological and Historical Approaches to Witchcraft,” 428; Davies, Popular Magic, 110.

7 See Sigmund Mowinckel, Religion und Kultus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1953), who coined the term “magical worldview.” Although scholars debate the modernist implications in the terms “enchanted” and “disenchanted,” much current research emphasizes this binary: see Cameron, Enchanted Europe, the best recent synthesis of the implications of this view.

8 Several recent studies provide detailed analyses of the integration of magic into various aspects of early modern European society, but the theme is frequently noted in studies of witchcraft and folklore: see Bever, The Realities of Witchcraft; Bever, “Popular Witch Beliefs,” 50–68; Wilson, The Magical Universe; Edwards, Everyday Magic; and Rider, “Common Magic,” in Cambridge History of Magic, 303–331.


10 See Kieckhefer, Magic; Zambelli, White Magic, Black Magic.


12 Davies, Popular Magic, 67–73; Roper, Charms and Charming. They were also common in North Africa, where either Christian or Muslin prayers could be used.


14 For a clear description of this practice, see Godbeer, “Folk Magic in British North America,” in Ibid., 463.

15 Davies, Popular Magic, provides a detailed discussion of English cunning folk; Dillinger, Magical Treasure Hunting, does so for Germany.


18 Gaskill, Witchcraft, 28–29.

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20 Behringer, Shaman of Oberstdorf. Also see Ginzburg, The Night Battles.

23 Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton are famous as early scientists, but they were also well-known occultists, Boyle analyzing angelic communication and alchemy and Newton alchemy and numerology. For a summary of their occult interests, see Elmer, “Science and Witchcraft,” in Levack, Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft, 548–574.

24 The classic work is Yates, The Occult Philosophy; for more recent analyses, see Walker, Spiritual and Demonic Magic, Monad, Solomon’s Secret Arts; Kieckhefer, Forbidden Rites, introduction; and Copenhaver, Magic in Western Culture, parts II and III.

25 Kieckhefer, Magic, chapter 6; Saif, The Arabic Influences, esp. 95–143 (on Picino and Pico della Mirandola).


WALKER, Spiritual and Demonic Magic, 205–212.


Seitz, Witchcraft and Inquisition, esp. 73–95 and 149–195.

30 Wilby, Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits, esp. 46–58.


32 Kieckhefer, Magic, 10–12, 158, and 170.


34 Kieckhefer, Magic, 151–175.

35 Kieckhefer, Forbidden Rites, 69–95; Fanger, ed., Conjuring Spirits; Davies, Grimoires.

36 One of the most dramatic medieval examples involved Gilles de Rais, commander of the French army and companion of Joan of Arc: Heers, Gilles de Rais.

37 Bailey, Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies; Clark, Thinking with Demons; Davies, Grimoires; Fanger, Conjuring Spirits, vii–xviii.


39 The Inquisition mistrusted their claim to benevolence, and it tried a series of cases involving the donas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: see Henningsen, “The Ladies From Outside,” 191–215 and Henderson, Witchcraft and Folk Belief, 108 and 122; see pp. 284–285 for similar fairy magic in Scotland.

Dillinger, Magical Treasure Hunting.

41 Kieckhefer, Magic, 156–157, makes a similar argument but for the later Middle Ages.

42 See the discussion of Waldensian “crimes” in the Errores Gazariorum.


45 Cervantes, The Devil in the New World. For examples, see Pérez de Ribas, History of the Triumphs of Our Holy Faith, chapters 35, 42, and 43.


48 For only a few examples of these patterns, see Briggs, The Witches of Lorraine; Robisheaux, The Last Witch of Langenburg; Rowlands, Witchcraft Narratives in Germany; Sharpe, The
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Bewitching of Anne Gunter; Stokes, Demons of Urban Reform; and Tausiet, Urban Magic in Early Modern Spain.

49 Apps and Gow, Male Witches.


52 Gaskill, Witchcraft, 76.

53 Levack, Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft, 4.


55 Ferber, Demonic Possession and Exorcism, 70–88; Levack, The Devil Within, 191–214.


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