UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA

Edmond, Oklahoma

Dr. Joe C. Jackson College of Graduate Studies

GODDESSES, DREAMERS, AND WITCHES:

THE POLITICS OF WOMEN IN *THE WILD HUNT*

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN LIBERAL STUDIES

Department of Humanities and Philosophy

By Melanie Stephens

Edmond, Oklahoma

2024

Goddesses, Dreamers, and Witches: The Politics of Women in The Wild Hunt

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Thesis Title

Melanie Stephens

Author's Name

April 19, 2024

Date

Jackson College of Graduate Studies at the University of Central Oklahoma

A THESIS APPROVED FOR

Master of Arts in Liberal Studies, Department of Humanities & Philosophy

By

Committee Chairperson

Committee Member

Committee Member

Committee Member

As they say, history does not repeat itself, but it rhymes.

— Margaret Atwood, *The Testaments*

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ABSTRACT

The Wild Hunt is a folklore motif with variants including a group of beings traveling through the night air with a central figure leading them. When we consider the motif of those who were involved in, and specifically those who led the Wild Hunt, a gendered difference becomes more evident during the Late Middle Ages. Existing studies tend to ignore the gendered context and the myriad ways women's existence is objectified, instrumentalized, marginalized, and erased in the motif. This leaves us not understanding why the motif was popular in early penitentials and the political, economic, and cultural reasons why the motif shifted in the particular way it did. This paper examines how European leaders used this motif to divide men and women of the lower classes and ensure the expropriation of women's agency for the benefit of proto-capitalist accumulation of labor. I will situate women within European culture throughout the Middle Ages by looking at legal documents, church records, and literature about women and discuss those presentations through an intersectional feminist lens to explore the political cause and function of the gendered difference. When examined at the macro level, a pattern emerges which seems to suggest a correlation between the economic changes of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that necessitated the subjugation of women. This confirms my position that the use of the motif was intentional. Understanding exactly how women have been historically instrumentalized as a way to support developing Western capitalist structures is necessary as America's economic shift into late-stage capitalism and the concurrent disintegration of women's rights to reproductive health care remind us of similar events centuries before. Further research might include the digitization of medieval records, more complete demographic

analysis, records of patronage, revealing historical biases as well as ethnographies that might reveal information about the early believers.

INTRODUCTION

Jacob Grimm first introduced the term Wild Hunt (*Wilde Jagd*) in the 19th century in his work *Deutsche Mythologie*, which covers a variety of Germanic folklore, to categorize the single, yet highly varied, experience of noisy spirits roaming at night. It is currently classified by Stith Thompson in the *Thompson-Motif Index* under E501: The Wild Hunt (within the larger category E500: The Dead) which has twenty sub-divisions, or variations--with further variations within those. Hutton and Lecouteux argue that Grimm collected and assembled three different and unrelated popular legends and used the Wild Hunt as an umbrella term for the different phenomena: the nighttime flight of spirits with a female leader, the nighttime procession of the dead with a male leader, and a lone hunter riding at night with a group of hounds. This paper will focus on the first of these and their treatment in the fifth though the sixteenth century.

Episcopal literature described women flying at night as early as the tenth century. Regino of Prüm wrote

> It is also not to be omitted that some unconstrained women, perverted by Satan, seduced by illusions and phantasms of demons, believe and openly profess that, in the dead of night, they ride upon certain beasts with the pagan goddess Diana, with a countless horde of women, and in the silence of the dead of the night to fly over vast tracts of country…[1]

[1] Arthur C. Howland, ed., *Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft, Volume 1* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1939), 178-179, https://doi.org/10.9783/9781512817485. See Appendix 2 for further reading.

His text was an inspiration for later texts. For a few hundred years this motif circulated through the clerical sources before authorities transformed it into the Witches' Sabbath. Burchard in the early eleventh century picks up the motif and expands it to include some local Germanic goddesses as well as some other ideas of sorcery: he wrote

> Hast thou believed that there is any woman who can do that which some, deceived by the devil, affirm that they must do of necessity or at his command, that is, with a throng of demons transformed into the likeness of women (she whom common folly calls the witch Hulda), must ride on certain beasts in special nights and be numbered with their company?[2]

John of Salisbury wrote in the early thirteenth century about the "mistress of the night" and emphatically denounced any kind of belief in these nocturnal activities as belief in the devil. After the plague and famine of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the motif shifted from delusional women dreaming of attending to a goddess into old, evil women taken to orgies with the devil and sacrificing newborn babies.

Hutton's scholarship[3], when it turns to the women of the Hunt, focuses on the nocturnal flight of women and the transformation of the motif into the Witches' Sabbath during the Late Middle Ages in the British Isles. Because he dismisses Grimm's notion of a wider history, Hutton misses the pattern of development leading up to the transformation into the Witches' Sabbath that would add depth and nuance to his

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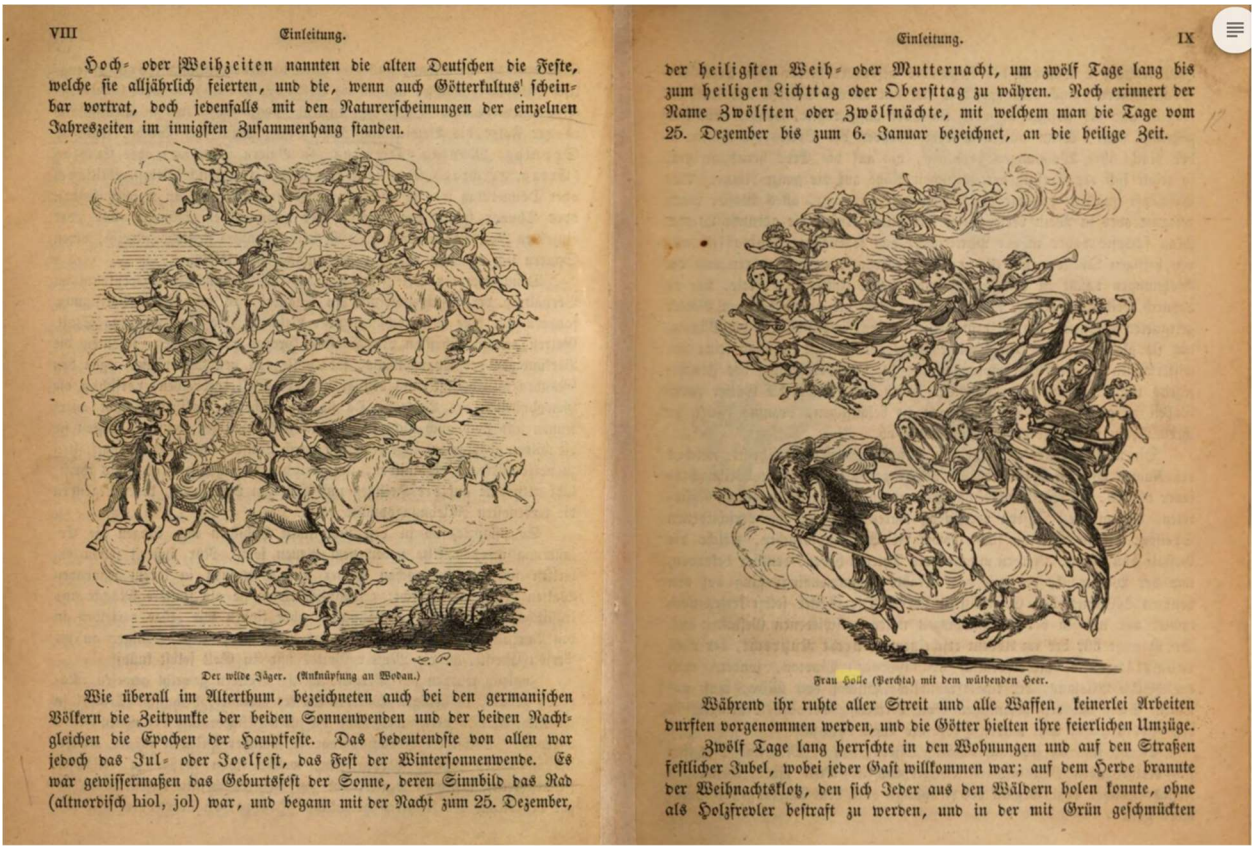
[2] John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, eds., *Medieval Handbooks of Penance: A Translation of the Principal "Libri Poenitentiales" and Selections from Related Documents*, Records of Western Civilization (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 329- 335. See Appendix 3.

[3] Ronald Hutton, *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles: Their Nature and Legacy*, Reprinted (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999). "The Wild Hunt and the Witches' Sabbath," *Folklore* 125, no. 2 (May 4, 2014): 161–78, https://doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.2014.896968..

analysis. This paper will examine how the motif shifts gradually over time and what is happening socially and economically to draw conclusions about the weaponization of folklore.

Lecouteux,[4] on the other hand, widely explores the variations and seeks to find the commonalities. In his work he discusses what he considers to be two separate phenomena: “The Good Women Who Roam the Night” (Diana, Abundia, and Percht,) who he claims are an extension of a calendrical rite observed during the Roman period through the Middle Ages which would impart an omen of fertility and prosperity and “New Legends” (Percht, Holla, and Abundia) who are beneficent, but Lecouteux misses the resemblance to the Roman household spirits as the women are able to roam and not tied to specific places. Are the “Good Ladies” merely a vestige of an older pre-Christian practice which became a focus of the local clergy? *To what extent is the intent of the clergy to suppress pagan practice versus to remove women’s perceived agency in providing for their homes? Can it be both?*

[4] Claude Lecouteux, Phantom Armies of the Night: The Wild Hunt and Ghostly Processions of the Undead, 1st U.S. ed (Rochester, Vt: Inner Traditions, 2011).



VIII Einleitung.

Hoch- oder Weihzeiten nannten die alten Deutschen die Feste, welche sie alljährlich feierten, und die, wenn auch Götterkultus scheinbar vortrat, doch jedenfalls mit den Naturerscheinungen der einzelnen Jahreszeiten im innigsten Zusammenhang standen.

Der wilde Jäger. (Anknüpfung an Wodan.)

Wie überall im Alterthum, bezeichneten auch bei den germanischen Völkern die Zeitpunkte der beiden Sonnenwenden und der beiden Nachtgleichen die Epochen der Hauptfeste. Das bedeutendste von allen war jedoch das Jul- oder Joelfest, das Fest der Wintersonnenwende. Es war gewissermaßen das Geburtsfest der Sonne, deren Sinnbild das Rad (altnordisch hiol, jol) war, und begann mit der Nacht zum 25. Dezember,

Einleitung. IX

der heiligsten Weih- oder Mutternacht, um zwölf Tage lang bis zum heiligen Lichttag oder Obersttag zu währen. Noch erinnert der Name Zwölften oder Zwölfnächte, mit welchem man die Tage vom 25. Dezember bis zum 6. Januar bezeichnet, an die heilige Zeit.

Frau Holle (Perchta) mit dem wüthenden Heer.

Während ihr ruhte aller Streit und alle Waffen, keinerlei Arbeiten durften vorgenommen werden, und die Götter hielten ihre feierlichen Umzüge.

Zwölf Tage lang herrschte in den Wohnungen und auf den Straßen festlicher Jubel, wobei jeder Gast willkommen war; auf dem Herde brannte der Weihnachtsklotz, den sich Jeder aus den Wäldern holen konnte, ohne als Holzfrevler bestraft zu werden, und in der mit Grün geschmückten

Figure 1. VIII Odin in the Wild Hunt and IX Frau Holle in the Wild Hunt.

From Otto von Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, Das Festliche Jahr: In Sitten, Gebräuchen Und Festen Der Germanischen Völker ; Mit Gegen 130 in Den Text Gedruckten Illustrationen, Vielen Tonbildern u. s. w. (Leipzig: Spamer, 1863).

Lecouteux[5] notes that a common folk belief in women riding at night with the pre-Christian figure, Diana, existed in the Holy Roman Empire during the eleventh century; the church considered it dangerous enough to target through canon law. Lecouteux dismisses this Diana in the hunt as the Diana from the Roman period and suggests it might be the Celtic goddess Di Ana. If the medieval authors could pull upon the Roman custom of setting a table for spirits as they did for Percht, it is not

[5] Lecouteux, “The Good Women Who Roam the Night,” *Phantom Armies of the Night.*

inconceivable that they could pull upon Diana's aspect as well. *Is there enough evidence to connect Diana to the Roman Diana?*

Regino's *Canon Episcopi* of the tenth century mentions an anecdote of women believing themselves to fly at night with others, and various scholars have this as an early version of the Hunt; however, Halsted believes that these night rides bear no resemblance to the Wild Hunt. *Were Regino's descriptions of these visions reflective of women's actual behavior or beliefs?*

Prior to the early Middle Ages (before the fifth century), women were associated with small magics, but men were more often accused of sorcery or divination. During the Middle Ages, condemnation of the night rides of women is a concerted attempt at eradicating pagan ancestor worship as can also be seen with the demonization of Odin as the leader in the Wild Hunt. Is that all? *Is there more to this interwoven mix of lore than a singular layer of Christianity trying to overcome the polytheistic past? Moreover, where does the belief that these women are flying and associated with witchcraft come from?* Little has been said about possible pre-medieval influences since no direct recorded allusions to the Wild Hunt (in any form) are mentioned prior to 900 CE despite the Church's recognition of popular belief in witchcraft since Roman times.

In the absence of women's voices from the Middle Ages on this subject, all that exists are men's interpretation and records of women's beliefs and behaviors. These must be examined for what they are, men's (the church's) fears: women, armed, working together, following a feminine (virgin, childless) leader, in other words, a complete inversion of the patriarchal, orthodox Christian, capitalist world they would

initiate. Federici[6] explains how these three systems converged in a coordinated maneuver to shift the inter-class conflict away from the people in power and toward an intra-class conflict focused on gender during the High Middle Ages when wages were high and rents were low enough to disincentivize peasants from working as hard or as often as was necessary for the nobility to accumulate the kind of wealth requisite for a shift to capitalism. She criticizes Marx for his exclusion of women's connection to the primitive accumulation taking place during this period. She argues that the labor power accumulated was in not only the bodies of the European peasants and black and brown bodies from Africa and the Americas, but it was necessarily also an accumulation of power made by intensifying social hierarchies distinguished by differences (gender, race, age). She also criticizes those scholars of the European witch-hunts as well as Marxist scholars for their oversight of the way the witch hunts that claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of women occurred at the same time the peasants were trying to stake a claim on their own power. *Where these pagan women do appear, is there any connection to local class conflicts or to heretical movements?*

Currently, the cultural conditions that place a female at the lead are understudied and over informed by a male lens. I will situate women within European culture at various points throughout the Middle Ages by looking at legal documents, church records, and literature about women and discuss those presentations through an intersectional feminist lens to explore the political cause and function of the gendered

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[6] Silvia Federici, Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation (New York: Autonomedia, 2004).

difference. When examined at the macro level, a pattern emerges which seems to suggest a correlation between the economic changes of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that necessitated the subjugation of women and the ways women began to be represented in folklore. Understanding exactly how women have been historically instrumentalized to support Western capitalist structures is necessary especially as America's economic shift into late-stage capitalism and the concurrent disintegration of women's rights to access and practice reproductive health care remind us of similar events centuries before. In this paper, I will discuss how the beliefs in the women involved in the Wild Hunt may have been a way for women to maintain autonomy by focusing on pre-Christian female figures associated with childbirth and death as the dominant socio-economic class used church and local law to strip women of access to methods of family planning in use for centuries before. The Christian leaders wrote about these beliefs to further divide men and women of the lower classes and ensure the expropriation of women's agency for the benefit of capitalist accumulation of labor. Capitalism has contested start dates, and I would argue that the capitalist mindset of the accumulation of property begins much earlier than generally considered, maybe as early as the twelfth century.

Chapter one explores the attitudes toward women generally including the scope of rights women held such as divorce and inheritance which were later stripped away. Additionally, it begins to trace early ideas about witchcraft, sorcery, and *maleficia*. It will stress that the later shift in attitudes toward women and depictions of them associated with the Wild Hunt over the Middle Ages is due to a changing economic paradigm which necessitates the subjugation of the female body. While women of the Wild Hunt do not

start out as witches, the motif, as Hutton argues, does later develop into the witches' sabbath and in many instances, the content relates to ideas of witchcraft.

Chapter two will examine the ways in which women of all classes were targeted by the Church's teachings and civil law to establish both intra-class conflict and competition between men and women during the Late Middle Ages. However, instead of addressing the economy in general, chapter two will focus on the peasants' original conflict with the nobility. It will show how the Wild Hunt motif appears in the written record in readings of Burchard of Worms's *Decretum*, the writings of John of Salisbury, Oderic Vitalis's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as a function of the early response of this conflict. It will also begin to map the correlation of the local peasant revolts and areas where the motif is documented.

Chapter three will focus on how the Wild Hunt motif is transformed entirely into the Witches' Sabbath and used for political purposes. Additionally, it will explore how the motif is adapted and utilized by those in power to intensify an already misogynistic climate using the printing press and word of mouth which further limited the power of women by replacing the aristocracy with women as the target of peasant class resentment. In doing so, the wealthy and powerful destabilized the grassroots organization of peasants.

The conclusion outlines the patterns of class conflict and manipulation of the populace's attention, along with the pandemics, climate change, and food insecurity that are recurring now. It will discuss how knowledge of both sets of events can help to inform our understanding of current events.

Chapter 1

Subsistence, Sorcery, and Women's Enfranchisement

In the period of ancient Greece, women's lives were vastly different depending on their geographies. The women of Sparta lived independent and influential lives in contrast to urban Athenian women who were not extended the same legal and financial freedoms and would have lived in seclusion from men as much as possible. Women's lives in other city-states of ancient Greece are less well documented (especially those of lower economic classes) but would have existed somewhere along this spectrum[7] whereas to the north, where cultures were more nomadic, scholars tend to find some evidence of equity amongst genders[8].

Early Economies

Despite suspicion and misogyny of men in the Greek and Roman worlds, women held more independence and power in late antiquity and the Early Middle Ages than they did in the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern periods, and on the whole, there was not the same rate of gender-based violence that we see later on. To build on Federici's argument in *Caliban and the Witch,*[9] the different gender dynamic is likely because these societies, even that of the Roman Empire, were primarily subsistence based with small scale private markets of surplus goods. She argues that in the Middle Ages, when the economy was subsistence based, there was more respect for each

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[7] Sarah B. Pomeroy, Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity (New York: Schocken Books, 1995).
[8] Jeannine Davis-Kimball and Mona Behan, *Warrior Women*, (New York: Warner Books, 2002).
[9] Federici, Caliban and the Witch, 72-75.

individual's contribution and less room for preoccupation with what women "should" be able to do.[10] I will explore this argument further in chapter two. The mention of ancient women serves as exposition for the topic of this chapter which will explore women's economic activity and the early medieval ideas around witchcraft and flight.

This is not to say women were by any means equal to male counterparts. In fact, scholars understand women's lives by reading between the lines of the (mostly male) authors of the times, and unfortunately, even then scholars are left mostly with evidence of wealthier women. Rarely are Roman authors writing in praise of women; more often, their aim is to slander women[11] or to use their bodies as a metaphor, feminizing entire kinds of actions[12] such as witchcraft.[13] While the Greco-Roman peoples did not define or categorize practitioners of magic by gender, gender can and does intersect with other identities in significant ways. Nearly all (85-90%) of the written spells that survive indicate men are either the producers or consumers of magic, whereas the surviving literature mainly features female-bodied witches.[14] Moreover, "each witch [in surviving literature] is, in essence, a blank canvas onto which a myriad of fears and anxieties can

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[10] Federici, Caliban and the Witch.
[11] Pauline Ripat, "Roman Women, Wise Women, and Witches," *Phoenix* 70, no. 1/2 (2016): 105, https://doi.org/10.7834/phoenix.70.1-2.0104.
[12] Elizabeth Ann Pollard, "'So Dearly Do We Pay for Our Luxury and Our Women': Women and the Margins of the Roman World," in *The Socio-Economic History and Material Culture of the Roman and Byzantine Near East* (Gorgias Press, 2017), 327–48, https://doi.org/10.31826/9781463237738-015.
[13] Pollard, Elizabeth Ann. "Witch-Crafting in Roman Literature and Art: New Thoughts on an Old Image." *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 3, no. 2 (2008): 119–55. https://doi.org/10.1353/mrw.0.0115.
[14] Pollard, "So Dearly Do We Pay," 329

be mapped,"[15] and myriads of anxieties were indeed projected including imperial and economic concerns,[16] a pattern that will repeat itself in later eras. Men were the actual perpetrators of inappropriate behavior, but it is women who are used as imagery.

Witchcraft and Gender

Classical magic in practice is a confluence between religion, science, and folk belief undertaken by people of *all* classes and genders. It recognizes the intent behind actions and so differentiates between bad and good magics. One might be concerned about the evil eye (envy from others which is able to cause physical harm) and place a *fascinum* (a statue or amulet of the divine phallus) as an apotropaic charm to ward against it,[17] and the magical charm would be good/beneficial magic that no one would blink an eye at. It could be crafted and used by anyone. It is the intent of the practitioner or user that ultimately matters.

However, by the definition of Greek medical theory (practiced from antiquity into the Middle Ages), the Roman woman's body was dual natured— both the source of life (milk) and decay or pollution (menstrual blood)— and it was humorally cold and wet unlike the humorally hot, dry men. In some ways the menstrual blood was believed to be the expulsion of undigested and therefore harmful contents[18] which could be remedied with appropriate food to balance the humors. In other ways it was believed to

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[15] Teitel Paule, "Qvae Saga, Qvis Magvs: On the Vocabulary of the Roman Witch," *The Classical Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (2014): 746.
[16] Pollard, "So Dearly Do We Pay," 329.
[17] Ripat, "Roman Women, Wise Women, and Witches," 108.
[18] Theresa A. Vaughan, *Women, Food, and Diet in the Middle Ages: Balancing the Humours*, Premodern Health, Disease, and Disability 5 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam university press, 2020), 68.

be a physical embodiment of envy and corruption; as Ripat explains, it came from the body in a way that looked clotted and already drying as opposed to the divine phallus (*fascinus*) which protected with its tumescence and expulsion of wet semen. It was also natural, they believed, that a woman's cold body would desire a man's hot body in order to bring itself to balance thus explaining women's constant sexual desires.[19] This led, Ritpat continues, to associations of the female body as one that absorbs, "greedy for the vital fluids of males… [so] sex was necessary to prevent hysteria."[20] This natural philosophy of the female body converges with ideas of old age and of the evil eye to suggest to the Romans that women, especially older women and lusty women, are (either in reality or metaphor) "common perpetrators in the crime of envy—seeking to take for themselves the health-sustaining elements of the young and, more generally, of men."[21] A woman's' body was also believed to be leaky. The body's borders physically cannot or do not control women's words or menstrual blood and metaphorically represent anything that men cannot control including the actions of other men.

Legal Rights

Myths regarding the lack of women's agency arose as early as the Renaissance and nineteenth century scholars (men) upheld many of those myths[22] to reinforce the

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[19] Vaughan, *Women, Food, and Diet in the Middle Ages*, 68.
[20] Ripat, "Roman Women, Wise Women, and Witches," 112.
[21] Ripat, "Roman Women, Wise Women, and Witches," 112.
[22] Judith Bennett and Ruth Karras, "Women, Gender, and Medieval Historians," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. Judith Bennett and Ruth Karras, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 2013), 1–21, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199582174.013.037.

gender construct of their time which was incredibly restrictive for women.[23] Recent scholars in the study of medieval women have generally noted a trend in the lives of Western European women of the Early Middle Ages in which they seem to have more power and agency than women have in the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period. Nelson and Rio problematize the "larger narratives of golden age followed by decline, of agency won and lost, and private succumbing to public power, which have loomed large in the historiography of medieval women."[24] They note that the physical geographies vary widely as do the cultures of the women studied. This is true, yet what remains are the observations that women across Europe held rights (different rights and at different levels to be sure) that they did not have similar access to by the end of the Middle Ages: rights to divorce, to own and inherit property (especially land), to work, and to (quietly) manage family planning.

Regarding legal records, it must be noted that they are prescriptive, but that does not preclude them from transmitting information about anxieties and conflicts people had. However, as Garver points out, there is limited evidence of legal practice of Salic laws (the first legal code compiled by the Frankish king Clovis in the 5th century) that

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[23] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Declaration of Sentiments," Report of the Woman's Rights Convention, Held at Seneca Falls, New York, July 19 and 20, 1848. (Rochester, NY), Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (007.00.00), accessed April 20, 2024, https://www.loc.gov/exhibitions/women-fight-for-the-vote/about-this-exhibition/seneca-falls-and-building-a-movement-1776-1890/seneca-falls-and-the-start-of-annual-conventions/declaration-of-sentiments/.

[24] Janet L. Nelson and Alice Rio, *Women and Laws in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Judith Bennett and Ruth Karras, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 2013), https://doi.Norg/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199582174.013.035.

suggests local, customary law was more often used instead.[25] Still, there were women throughout the Middle Ages "who, in utter contradiction of the [written] law, wielded powers of government such as they never had in Roman or Germanic society, nor in modern Western Europe before the twentieth century."[26]

Divorce

Nelson and Rio explain that divorce was allowed in few circumstances, but the point should be that it was allowed at all.[27] Moreover, in Kent during the seventh century, according to Æthelberht's code, a woman who divorced her husband was permitted half of his property.[28] The Visigoths did not recognize divorce (a man could kill an adulterous wife and remarry), and Burgundians allowed men voluntary divorces but not women. Despite no provisions for divorce in Frankish law, there is evidence that women left their husbands even without their consent. Gregory of Tours, a bishop in the sixth century, wrote of two occasions where this happened. Drew notes that Radegund, a wife/concubine of Chlothar I, fled the marriage, became consecrated as a deaconess, and established the monastery of Sainte-Croix at Poitiers. Chlothar was seemingly unable to stop her or to prevent her from taking her property[29] which Gilsdorf points out

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[25] Valerie L. Garver, "Childbearing and Infancy in the Carolingian World." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 21, no. 2 (2012): 208–44. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41475078.

[26] Shulamith Shahar, *The Fourth Estate: A History of Women in the Middle Ages*, Rev. ed (London; New York: Routledge, 2003).

[27] The Republican Party of Texas lists on its 2022 platform a call to rescind unilateral no-contest divorce. "Platform," *Republican Party of Texas* (blog), accessed April 7, 2024, https://texasgop.org/platform/.

[28] Nelson and Rio, *Women and Laws in Early Medieval Europe*, 109.

[29] Katherine Fischer Drew, ed., *The Laws of the Salian Franks:* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812200508.

she gave away to churches and to the poor as part of her extreme asceticism.[30] She was later canonized in the Catholic Church and lauded for her devotion to Christ. Even a king at this time could not prevent his wife from leaving him, and she was celebrated by the very church that would restrict divorce in later periods.

The bishop also described his attempts to intercede in the case of Ingitrude and Berthegund. Ingitrude, the founder of a convent in Tours, sent for her daughter Berthegund to leave her husband and come to the nunnery which she did. Her husband pursued her through the bishop, who scolded her into returning home. However, once her husband went away, she returned to the convent. Her brother, the Bishop of Bordeaux, gave her sanctuary despite the husband's intercession of King Guntram on his behalf. After her brother died, a squabble emerged between Ingitrude and her daughter over the inheritance of property which ultimately Berthegund maneuvered to keep. Later, after the death of her mother, Gregory claims Berthegund was able to return to her mother's monastery as abbess and strip it of all its moveable wealth.[31] While the first woman, Radegund,[32] is held as an example of a pious Christian woman, the second woman was clearly an exemplum on how not to act. Both noblewomen were able to leave their marriages, secure the help of the church, and take their property with

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[30] Sean Gilsdorf and Odilo, eds., "Introduction," in *Queenship and Sanctity: The Lives of Mathilda and The Epitaph of Adelheid*, 1st ed, Medieval Texts in Translation (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2004).

[31] Emilie Amt, "32. Gregory of Tours: The Story of Ingitrude and Berthegund (6th c.)," in *Women's Lives in Medieval Europe: A Sourcebook*, 2nd ed (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 108–9.

[32] Radegund is a friend and correspondent of Gregory of Tours and now well remembered as she was the subject of Venantius Fortunatus's hagiography.

them. This seems to be a common practice at least into the ninth century.[33]

Inheritance

Many legal codes of the period restricted women's access to inheritance to some extent; however, some ensured equal rights. Greater rights tended to be given to those women living in Germanic and northern areas (see Appendix 1). Whereas Visigoth law nominally denied access to divorce, it encoded equality between sons and daughters regarding the inheritance of their parents' estate if the parents died without wills, and though Lombard law required a guardian for all women, regardless of age, Visigoth law made widows the guardians of their children.

Figure 2. Detail. "Map of Europe c. 600 A.D." https://jstor.org/stable/community.13583683.

[33] Susan Mosher Stuard, ed., "Marriage and Divorce in the Frankish Kingdom," in *Women in Medieval Society*, 4. printing, The Middle Ages (Philadelphia, Pa: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 95–124.

Anglo-Saxon law provided support for widows to remain in her husband's home with her children,[34] and this would be in addition to the land and property she owned and could leave to her choice of heirs, according to the several extant women's wills from the tenth and eleventh centuries.[35] Where the Franks were concerned, women's property was assessed separately from men's indicating independent control;[36] widows held rights to a portion of "whatever [the couple had] acquired together,"[37] and the lack of indication of right to inherit her husband's personal property or usufruct (the right of use of another's property without destroying or consuming that property)[38] together would suggest women were able to support themselves and had no need of guarantee.[39] In England, the partnership of the wife in land possession was so well understood that "[w]hen a villein couple married it was common for the man to come and turn the land back to the lord, taking it again in both his name and that of his wife."[40] Across Europe during the fifth through ninth centuries, legal codes and customary rights (while varying by region and year) protected women's access to property rights which is especially important since women were major contributors to the production for use and management of the home.

Work

Women have always worked, especially women of the lower classes. Aristocratic

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[34] Nelson and Rio, *Women and Laws in Early Medieval Europe*, 111.
[35] Amt, *Women's Lives in Medieval Europe*, 114.
[36] Drew, *The Laws of the Salian Franks*, 43.
[37] Nelson and Rio, *Women and Laws in Early Medieval Europe*, 112.
[38] David Jary and Julia Jary, eds., "Usufruct," in *Collins Dictionary of Sociology* (Collins, 2006).
[39] Drew, *The Laws of the Salian Franks*, 43.
[40] Barbara Hanawalt, *The Ties That Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England*, 1. iss. as Oxford Univ. Press paperback (New York, NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988).

women's work was domestic and managerial, less physically demanding but no less significant. Garver asserts that women of the aristocracy during the Carolingian period were more highly educated than previously assumed, even if they were not ultimately bound for religious life. A major part of this education included writing, sometimes for the purpose of producing illuminated manuscripts. Garver mentions scriptoria in various places such as Aldeneik, Chelles, and Jouarre where women copied and *composed* manuscripts.[41] Scholars have assumed that only men were educated enough and skilled enough to be the ones producing such artistic and sacred works; however, Radini et. al. analyzed a female skeleton from Dalheim found with lapis lazuli in the teeth radiocarbon-dated to the eleventh or twelfth century.

Figure 3.Illuminated Manuscript with Ultramarine Pigment.

Rohan Masters, The Hours of Isabella Stuart, France, Angers, c. 1431.

The Virgin and Child with a patron from Folio 20 r. The palette mainly uses ultramarine (pigment from lapis lazuli), malachite, red lead, white lead, brown earth, and an insect-based pink set against gold and silver.

Lapis lazuli ground and purified makes ultramarine pigment, as precious and expensive

[41] Valerie L Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World* (Ithaca, N.Y.; Bristol: Cornell University Press, 2012).

as gold and silver in manuscript making. In addition to the osteological analysis, they discuss several possibilities: ritual kissing of painted manuscripts, pigment preparation, lapidary medicine, and the most likely, book production.[42] There are very few examples of extant women's writings from the Middle Ages, but scholars are aware of a prolific epistolary tradition including women. Authors of *vitae* mention written products by the sacred women they are describing. In the sixth century Saint Radegund, a Merovingian queen and later a nun, wrote poems which Venantius mentions, although they do not survive. *Liber manualis* by Dhuoda (ninth century) is one manuscript that remains; its purpose was to communicate general wisdom and religious teaching for her son who was a political hostage at court and whom she was unlikely to ever see again.

For peasants, a subsistence-based or production-for-use lifestyle requires everyone's participation, and as such, all work tends to be valued. As Federici points out, "[i]n the feudal village no social separation existed between the production of goods and the reproduction of the work-force; all work contributed to the family's sustenance," and therefore the division of work along gender lines was "less pronounced and less discriminating."[43] Although peasant women's lives were not considered notable enough to compose *vitae* or epic poetry about, various kinds of evidence reveal these women were involved with all levels of food production. A survey of the calendar pages of the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, a book of hours, shows women working in half,

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[42] A. Radini et al., "Medieval Women's Early Involvement in Manuscript Production Suggested by Lapis Lazuli Identification in Dental Calculus," *Science Advances* 5, no. 1 (January 4, 2019): eaau7126, https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aau7126.

[43] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch.*

four of nine, of the agricultural scenes as late as the fourteenth century.[44] That work in the fields, sometimes even highly paid,[45] would have been in addition to bearing and raising children, caring for croft and garden (especially tending to the animals which lived in the home)[46] and the creation and maintenance of clothes.

Cloth making was vital to the family survival as well, and women were directly involved in all stages of its production (and sale if there was any surplus). Archaeological finds of medieval houses include spindle whorls for spinning yarn which were imported and decorated, and those finds indicate the value of a woman's work and a desire to make her work more enjoyable.[47] Court records from medieval England reveal that 15 percent of thefts from peasant families were of cloth,[48] making it a valuable item. Rural women were not the only ones involved in the manufacture of textiles. Guild registers[49], tax assessments, and other records from the thirteenth century reveal that some outlying women were "prominent mistresses of ateliers and as prosperous entrepreneurs" of silk production in Paris,[50] and in Flanders, "the production of yarn was organized by a broad middling level of drapers and small market sellers,

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[44]Paul Limbourg, Johan Limbourg, and Herman Limbourg, *The Très Riches Heures Du Duc de Berry*, n.d., n.d., Château de Chantilly, https://chateaudechantilly.fr/en/collection/the-tres-riches-heures-du-duc-de-berry/.

[45] Vaughan, *Women, Food, and Diet.*

[46] Frances Gies and Joseph Gies, *Life in a Medieval Village* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991).

[47] Hanawalt, *The Ties That Bound*, 47.

[48] Hanawalt, *The Ties That Bound*, 47.

[49] Amt, *Women's Lives in Medieval Europe*, 162-164.

[50] Sharon A. Farmer, *The Silk Industries of Medieval Paris: Artisanal Migration, Technological Innovation, and Gendered Experience*, 1st edition, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

who were women, men and husbands and wives working together"[51] which is a continuation of practice from the eleventh and twelfth centuries in urban Flanders where scores of young women worked in a centralized space together to produce fabrics on a large scale and where other phases of cloth production would be focused.[52]

It was not only the domestic sphere in which women were able to work. Both men and women brewed ale in the Middle Ages, but women dominated the trade at its beginning and up until professionalization and beer took over.[53] Women in urban centers worked as moneylenders[54] and butchers, as well as tanners, metalworkers, and construction workers. "Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Nuremberg, Constance, and other German cities deputized midwives as sworn officials, and the government compensated them if the patient was unable to do so… both genders were vital to urban labor."[55] Women of all classes and all ages have been central to production of goods for use and market.

Reproduction

In the same Early Medieval times when women had some opportunities and access to divorce, work, and property, they also had options when it came to

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[51] Shennan Hutton, "Organizing Specialized Production: Gender in the Medieval Flemish Wool Cloth Industry (*c* . 1250–1384)," *Urban History* 45, no. 3 (August 2018): 382–403, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0963926817000566.

[52] Jeroen Deploige, "Textile Entrepreneurs and Textile Workers in the Medieval City," in *Golden Times: Wealth and Status in the Middle Ages in the Southern Low Countries*, ed. Véronique Lambert, Peter Stabel, and Andrea Bardyn (Tielt: Lannoo, 2016).

[53] Judith Mackenzie Bennett, *Gender Rules: Women and the Regulation of Brewing* (New York Oxford: Oxford university press, 1996).

[54] Amt, *Women's Lives in Medieval Europe*, 165-166.

[55] Marie D'Aguanno Ito, "Work and Workplaces," in *A Cultural History of Work,* ed. Deborah Simonton et al. (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021).

reproduction, specifically how often to give birth. That is not to suggest abortions or infanticide were practiced on a large scale but to point out they were not severely criminalized until later in the Middle Ages. Mistry suggests that it is not until the twelfth century that a concept of criminal acts (as opposed to ecclesiastical or civil) exists in medieval minds, so it would be anachronistic to suggest that family planning was not punished at all.[56] However, it remains that women did engage in limiting family size, and the punishments were not as severe as those of later centuries were.

Much of the surviving evidence of the use of contraceptives and terminations is in penitentials which were prescriptive documents to aid clergy in the administration of penance for certain sins. As they are prescriptive, they do not clearly illustrate the reality of everyday sexuality, but they do reveal that women's choices about family size were a concern among the clergy, which wouldn't have been the case if women weren't actively limiting their family size. Penance requirements varied from penance for a lifetime (Council of Elvira, 300 CE)[57] to ten years (Halitgar of Cambrai, ninth century CE) to one year (De synodalibus causis et disciplinisecclesiastic, 908 CE).[58] Sometimes the prescribed penance depended upon the woman's intent, sometimes by the development of the fetus. In one case noted by Regino of Prüm (908 CE), he suggests a reduced penance when a woman aborts because she is afraid she will not be able to

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[56] Zubin Mistry, *Abortion in the Early Middle Ages, c. 500-900* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: York Medieval Press, 2015).
[57] Michael Obladen, "From Sin to Crime: Laws on Infanticide in the Middle Ages," *Neonatology* 109, no. 2 (2016): 85–90, https://doi.org/10.1159/000440876.
[58] Garver, "Childbearing and Infancy," 208–44.

afford the next child,[59] a rare recognition of class awareness. Again, it is important to note that these penances contrast with the punishment by burial alive with a stake through the body in the 15th century.[60]

Infanticide certainly took place despite the penances prescribed, especially among peasant families. Coleman analyzes the demographic data from the polyptych of Saint Germain-des-Prés (a tax record from the early ninth century which contains information about 2600 nuclear families on 1700 farms under the control of the abbey of Saint Germain) and finds a strong correlation between the sex ratios and the size of the farms.[61] Smaller farms, she suggests, could not support large numbers of women, whereas larger farms could and did. Records suggest that men and boys sometimes outnumbered girls and women by up to two to one, and the more arable the land, the more balanced the sex ratio becomes. Coleman does not believe this disparity was an accident, and she suggests that infanticide, specifically female infanticide whether by exposure, suffocation, or neglect, was probably practiced to alleviate the myriad economic tensions the birth of a girl would introduce to the manse. Recent scholars have been able to use more accurate methods such as osteoarcheology to determine the sex of buried individuals as well as manse records and poll taxes. Even with these new methods, there remains a wide disparity in the sex ratios with men outnumbering

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[59] Garver, “Childbearing and Infancy,” 230.
[60] Obladen, “From Sin to Crime: Laws on Infanticide in the Middle Ages,” 87.
[61] Emily Coleman, “Infanticide in the Early Middle Ages,” in *Women in Medieval Society*, ed. Susan Mosher Stuard (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 47–70, https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812207675.47.

women in rural areas by a significant margin. Infanticide and the neglect of very young girls are still factors that scholars consider when investigating the "Missing Women,"[62] along with other factors, and it is most probable that a combination of these factors is the cause of the higher than natural sex ratio.[63]

There were two major concerns in the ecclesiastical record regarding contraception and abortion: *maleficium*, witchcraft which has harmful intent, and inversion of the natural order, i.e. God's order. Despite those concerns, in practice, medieval authors such as Saint Hildegard von Bingen wrote about new discoveries such as that of tansy to bring on menstruation as well as contraceptives and abortifacients known to ancient writers.[64] Medieval authors surely wrote about this knowledge to reiterate and rerecord revered ancient medical knowledge, but in many cases, it was "women's secret."[65] In three centuries, public opinion had shifted to consider these remedies homicide[66] and as those cultural norms changed around reproduction, women conveyed this knowledge in forms that were more discreet.

Wealthier women were the ones who would have had the means to access doctors and books on health, but this knowledge was also transmitted as folk-belief

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[62] Sandy Bardsley, "Missing Women: Sex Ratios in England, 1000–1500," *Journal of British Studies* 53, no. 2 (2014): 273–309, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24701864.

[63] Maryanne Kowaleski, "Medieval People in Town and Country: New Perspectives from Demography and Bioarchaeology," *Speculum* 89, no. 3 (2014): 573–600, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43577029. See Appendix 10 for analysis of data.

[64] John M. Riddle, *Eve's Herbs: A History of Contraception and Abortion in the West*, 2. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1998).

[65] Riddle, *Eve's Herbs*, 89.

[66] Riddle, *Eve's Herbs*, 91

among the lower class[67] as it had been for centuries before. Legally speaking, as late as the thirteenth century in England, “No cases are found prosecuting contraception as a crime…No cases being found where chemical means were used to induce abortion, or where a pregnant woman was even indicted, indicates that most abortions were not criminal offenses.”[68] In France, in the late thirteenth century, one record shows a punishment for abortion, but it was Issac, the man who made the abortifacient, who was fined and jailed and not the woman who drank it.[69]

As nations consolidated power and became the modern European powers, the legal systems developed too. Moreover, with the expansion of laws and the legal system, laws regarding women’s rights to divorce, property, work, and their bodies became increasingly regulated. The customary laws no longer held any sway in the face of state powers, and patriarchal hegemony snowballed. Women maintained some rights to work but were increasingly confined to domestic labor. Some inconvenient and outspoken women were confined to asylums in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As late as the 1970s many women in America could not open bank accounts without their husband’s permission, or another man’s if they were single, could not serve on juries or attend school to be lawyers, and they could be fired for becoming pregnant and jailed for attempting an abortion.

Idolatry

Early medieval theologians followed in the footsteps of Greek and Roman writers

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[67] Vaughan, *Women, Food, and Diet*, 87-88.
[68] Riddle, *Eve’s Herbs*, 94-98.
[69] Riddle, *Eve’s Herbs*, 108-109.

regarding the belief that men and women could believe in magic. Witchcraft was a practice that was outside of God's design, therefore, its practice was one of idolatry and not considered a gendered crime. In the earliest church councils, witchcraft was considered among other canons regarding pagans and sexual misconduct. Significantly, both Elvira (306) and Ancyra (314) treat the individual in neutral terms respectively: "If someone kills another by sorcery or magic…"[70] and those "who practice divination and follow the customs of the heathen" [71] assuming that idolatry could be practiced by men and women alike. That same century, the first person to be executed for sorcery was a man, Bishop Priscillian of Avila,[72] although, the accusation of maleficium was a cover for accusations of heresy and the ecclesiastical conflict in Spain.

Salic law had three laws regarding witches and sorcery, both interchangeable as men or women as the actor or defendant,[73] the first laid down by Clovis in the sixth century and the second version reissued by Charlemagne in the ninth century.[74] The last code of the Visigoths from the middle of the seventh century required "any free person or slave of either sex be condemned if he has planned or succeeded in performing witchcraft."[75]

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[70] "The Council of Elvira, ca. 306," n.d., https://web.archive.org/web/20120716202800/http://faculty.cua.edu/pennington/Canon%20Law/ElviraCanons.htm.

[71] "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Ser. II, Vol. XIV," Database, Internet Sacred Text Archive, n.d., https://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/ecf/214/index.htm.

[72] "Priscillian." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 1, 2023. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Priscillian.

[73] Drew, *The Laws of the Salian Franks*, 125.

[74] Drew, *The Laws of the Salian Franks*, 55.

[75] Alexandra Wilhelmsen, "The Visigothic Code (Book VI): Translation and Analysis" (Houston, Rice University, 1969),

However, around this same time, the attitudes towards witchcraft as a real danger were shifting, as can be seen in the *Edicthum Rothari* of the Lombards: “Let nobody presume to kill a foreign serving maid or female slave as a witch, for it is not possible, nor ought to be believed by Christian minds.”[76] Here there begins to be doubt about the possibility that a person could perform such a thing as sorcery, and this same sentiment is carried into the first example, according to some, of women in The Wild Hunt. Legal codes tend to be reactionary, meaning that they are written in response to prior behavior, and this law is too specific to be proactive; therefore, women were believed to be witches and killed (if not executed officially). If women were indeed being persecuted as witches by the Lombard people, why now after 300 years? Fruscione suggests it is all about property rights: if a person (usually a man) accuses a woman (usually one whom he resided with) of being a witch, he would be permitted to keep all her property when she was punished and damaging the wealth and status of the consanguine family, or in accusing a servant or slave, he would be depriving another man of his property. By criminalizing false accusations, authorities prevented the unwarranted transfer or loss of property.[77] I would add that during the many waves of the Plague of Justinian over the sixth and seventh centuries, people would have felt additional economic pressure. Moreover, as authorities began to consolidate power, belief in the ability of people, especially Christians, to manipulate the spiritual and

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https://scholarship.rice.edu/bitstream/handle/1911/89140/RICE0177.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

[76] Hutton, *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles*.

[77] Daniela Fruscione, “Magic and Law at the Border. The Early Medieval Leges,” *LEA - Lingue e Letterature d’Oriente e d’Occidente* 12 (December 23, 2023): 313–29, https://doi.org/10.36253/lea-1824-484x-14936.

physical world, to defy God's design for the universe—and the rulers'—was reframed to believing oneself to have the power of God. Believers in such powers, they thought, must be made to see that such a belief is impossible in the Christian world, otherwise they themselves are heretical and outside of the established order (and control). By the tenth century, belief in the ability to influence the natural order in any way becomes a delusion associated with the Devil.

The *Edicthum Rothari* is an outlier in some ways. Compared to other codices dealing with sorcery in the seventh century, most deal with punishing accusers, and those of the eighth and ninth centuries begin to focus on punishment of belief in witchcraft as well as the participation in it, but still none are as gendered as the *Edicthum Rothari*. Legal codes relating to women from the Lombard area (and later Italian city-states) were also more restrictive indicating a more misogynistic climate.

The next legislation that is codified by the Catholic church is the *Canon Episcopi* by Regino of Prüm around 906 (See Appendix 2). As the Abbot of Treves, he writes that sorcery and witchcraft are inventions of the devil and followers should be rejected from church, and this becomes the Church's official stance for most of the Middle Ages. Regino's statement acknowledges that both men and women are susceptible to being "deluded by the devil" but he further shares a particular anecdote which becomes the first textual reference to what will become The Wild Hunt.

> It is also not to be omitted that some unconstrained women, perverted by Satan, seduced by illusions and phantasms of demons, believe and openly profess that, in the dead of night, they ride upon certain beasts with the pagan goddess Diana, with a countless horde of women, and in the

> silence of the dead of the night to fly over vast tracts of country… deceived by this false opinion, believe this to be true and, so believing, wander from the right faith and relapse into pagan errors when they think that there is any divinity or power except the one God… and that such phantasms are sent by the devil who deludes them in dreams.[78]

Halsted suggests that this text was written to "encode a gendered vision of Carolingian society and expected male behavior"[79] at a time when the society itself was in danger of collapse after the death of Charlemagne, and it did so through the focus on transgressive feminine behavior defined by a perversion of expected male behavior. This would be similar to the ways the Romans feminized certain behaviors and therefore classified them as beneath men's expected behavior[80]. It could be a continuation of gender role reification dating back centuries.

However, Charlemagne had previously enacted a law which stated that anyone who believed "that any man or woman is a night-witch, and eats [consumes the bodies of] men… he shall be executed"[81] indicating the prior belief in women (and men) engaged in nighttime subversive (subtextually coded to be read: pagan) behaviors, and that witchcraft accusations were not suddenly new as a result of Charlemagne's death.

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[78] David Luebke, "Traces of Non-Christian Religious Practice in Medieval Penitentials," University of Oregon, n.d., https://pages.uoregon.edu/dluebke/Witches442/PaganTraces.html#Sources.
[79] Chris Halsted, "'They Ride on the Backs of Certain Beasts," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 15, no. 3 (2021), 372.
[80] Pollard, Elizabeth Ann. "Witch-Crafting in Roman Literature and Art: New Thoughts on an Old Image." *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 3, no. 2 (2008): 119–55. https://doi.org/10.1353/mrw.0.0115.
[81] B. Bramanti et al., "Anthropological Studies," *Scientific Reports* 8, no. 1 (December 5, 2018).

Moreover, *strigae* were women who would drink the blood of children, and were, and continue to be, a prominent figure in European folklore (especially in Eastern Europe). This belief can be traced back to Ovid (and prior), and Ovid's writings were some of the texts which Charlemagne's efforts preserved. Strigae, (stria in the singular) were also associated with shapeshifting into owls (*strix* or *striges*) or traveling in the form of projected souls,[82] and an origin story from Ovid and later repeated by Greek grammarian Antoninus Liberalis in *Metamorphoses* (ca. 100-300 CE)[83] show that Greeks believed the striga was Polyphonte[84] turned into an owl as punishment for her sexual transgression(s). This angered both Aphrodite (for not wanting to marry) and Artemis (for intercourse with a bear under compulsion by Aphrodite). Her screeching flight at night was an ill omen and a harbinger of war. These late antique references carry strikingly similar notes to Regino's text nearly a millennium later. The projection, flight at night, and traveling with Diana are also very like those accounts of others in the following centuries, specifically regarding more Central European motifs.[85]

Women's Reality

Were the descriptions of these visions by Regino in the early tenth century reflective of women's actual behavior? The ecclesiastical source of the moment requires our recognition of bias, audience, and purpose. As an abbot in the tenth century, Regino is undoubtedly the product of a misogynistic church, and he is speaking to an audience

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[82] Samuel Grant Oliphant, "The Story of the Strix: Ancient," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 44 (1913), 133.

[83] Antoninus and Francis Celoria, The Metamorphoses of Antoninus Liberalis: A Translation with a Commentary (London ; New York: Routledge, 1992).

[84] See Appendix 5

[85] Halsted, "They Ride on the Backs of Certain Beasts," 367.

of similarly trained clergy, for the purposes of communicating the proper penance for sins. Therefore, scholars must problematize his record and compare it to others, and when no other written records exist, compare across disciplines. What were the behaviors of women at this time that could have inspired this kind of teaching?

Houston (in the 1960s) dismisses outright the possibility of women as warriors or huntresses since "in the old Germanic countries women were not accepted as huntresses, [therefore] their frequent mention in these sightings must be due to something beyond social conditions."[86] Due to the widespread gender biases of archaeology at Houston's time, it is reasonable for her to search for a more explicable theory. In 2017, researchers published genomic data on a 10th century Viking warrior; since 1878, the body, uncovered in Birka, Sweden, was assumed biologically male when it was, in fact, biologically female.[87] Ulla Moilanen et al. published an article in the *European Journal of Archaeology* in 2021 which deals directly with the issue of sex, gender, and gender roles in relation to grave analysis.[88] They relate that even the concept of a woman being intentionally buried with a sword is still contentious and that some scholars argue it must have been a double burial. They affirm that grave studies may reveal more about the assumptions of *the people studying it* than the systems of the person/people buried. Therefore, even established archaeological understandings must be carefully considered, especially as more graves of women with weapons are

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[86] Susan Hilary Houston, "Ghost Riders in the Sky," *Western Folklore* 23, no. 3 (July 1964), 158-9.
[87] Neil Price et al., "Viking Warrior Women?," *Antiquity* 93, no. 367 (February 2019), 181–98.
[88] Ulla Moilanen et al., "A Woman with a Sword?" *European Journal of Archaeology*, (July 15, 2021), 1–19.

confirmed.[89]

I suggest women were among the warriors fighting alongside the men at the assaults on Prüm abbey during the various conflicts[90] during the ninth and tenth centuries, and Regino projected his fear of the inversion of genders in similar ways that the Greeks did with the Amazons. Davis-Kimball in her years of research, ultimately concludes that no tribe or race of women existed in the ways described by the Greek authors, but "the components of the Amazonian myths existed in many different times and places."[91] Based on the numerous sources that describe women's involvement in warfare, I believe that Regino felt that women needed to understand that to ride, to go about at night, to have control, to convene with other women was a serious inversion of the natural order that only heathens and gullible women were apt to think on. He was likely fighting an uphill battle.

Additionally, Anglo-Saxon Old English charm *Wið færstice*[92] recorded in a collection of medical texts, *Lācnunga*, from the late tenth century, reveals a deep-seated folk belief of powerful women riders, in this case out to do harm from which the charm protects:

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[89]S. Mays et al., "Sex Identification of a Late Iron Age Sword and Mirror Cist Burial from Hillside Farm, Bryher, Isles of Scilly, England," *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 52 (December 2023): 104099, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jasrep.2023.104099.

[90] Vikings and Magyars also conducted raids on the area of Prüm during this time. Magyars, whom some scholars speculate may be descended from the Scythians, are a group that migrated from the steppes and settled in east Europe. "Viking, Magyar and Saracen Invasions in 9th and 10th Century Europe – Mapping Globalization," accessed April 11, 2024, https://commons.princeton.edu/mg/viking-magyar-and-saracen-invasions-in-9th-and-10th-century-europe/. See Appendix 6 for map.

[91] Davis-Kimball and Behan, *Warrior Women*, 121.

[92] See Appendix 8 for full charm.

Hlūde wǣran hȳ lā hlūde ðā hȳ ofer þone hlǣw ridan

wǣran ānmōde ðā hȳ ofer land ridan…

þǣr ðā mihtigan wīf hyra mægen berǣddon[93]

Loud were they ah! loud when they rode over that hill

Were as one when they rode over the land

there those mighty women mercenaries decided[94]

Despite an abundance of claims against even the idea of martial supernatural women coming from social practices, “it is possible that the power and independence of the armed supernatural females of which we have hints in Anglo-Saxon beliefs afforded mythological paradigms for certain independent actions by early Anglo-Saxon women.”[95] Unlike the stories of Amazons, who were always ultimately defeated by Greek men, or the demonic flights of women, it is possible that the Valkyries of the Scandinavians and the ‘mighty women’ of the Anglo-Saxons engendered more opportunities for women or non-binary people within their own culture. Moreover, it is not just *Wið færstice* that provides this evidence. Hall suggests several other later medieval texts which lead him to conclude that there was, in fact, popular belief in this phenomenon. He goes on to say this charm “establishes a convincing context for supposing that the supernatural, weapon-bearing women in *Wið færstice* are part of a

[93] Alaric Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, 8 (Woodbridge (GB): Boydell Press, 2007).
[94] My own translation.
[95] Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, 165.

pre-Viking Age Anglo-Saxon tradition… [and] the lexical evidence,[96] albeit limited, does encourage the supposition that supernatural women like those in *Wið færstice* had a longer history;"[97] moreover, this "motif surely relates to other motifs of supernatural females riding out in groups and causing harm attested widely across later medieval and early modern Europe."[98]

Not A Golden Age

The Early Middle Ages are not a "Golden Age" for women by any means, and belief in supernatural women's capabilities does not necessarily translate into people believing real women capable of the same kinds of actions. Nor was subsistence living an easy life for most people. Men and women across Europe during late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages endured famine, drought, plague, and atrociously high rates of infant mortality. However, the widely held belief that women of the Middle Ages were entirely oppressed and held little power is incorrect.[99] Not only were some rights encoded in law, but also there are also various kinds of evidence that women were capable of much more across all levels of society than most people previously thought.

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[96] Austin E. Fife, "Christian Swarm Charms," *The Journal of American Folklore* 77, no. 304 (1964), 154–59. An OE charm, *Against a swarm of bees*, shows another connection between women (possibly Valkyries/Dísi and witches: "Later scholars, particularly those who have worked with the Anglo-Saxon charm (No. 82), which is one of the oldest, have concluded that the swarm charms really have a pre-Christian origin and were merely adapted by churchmen of the Middle Ages to conform to the symbolism of the new cult… the bees are addressed with the endearing word "siðewif," which is usually translated as "victory women'... R. Meissner in his learned article on the Anglo-Saxon swarm charm insists upon the essentially pre-Christian nature of this charm, and does not see the possibility which I have discussed, that the first half of the charm really does not concern bees, but witchcraft." See Appendix 8

[97] Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England,* 177.

[98] Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England,* 168.

[99] Adam Matthews and Carly Quijano, "Women, Violence, and Power in Medieval Europe, 850-1400," *Medievalist Toolkit*, accessed April 11, 2024, https://www.medievalisttoolkit.org/articles/women-violence-power.

Moreover, the association with maleficium was conceptually gendered female, but men and women practiced both veneficium and maleficium.

Until recently, historical understanding has relied on evidence and theories studied and created almost entirely by men. In fact, the recent reanalysis of grave goods and remains which determined that warriors buried with weapons were indeed female, although originally recorded as male, demonstrates a continued need for the field of Medieval Studies to be much more intersectional (combining considerations of class, age, race, gender, religion, etc.) and encourage scholarship involving people from traditionally marginalized identities and fields. This would allow more interrogation of findings and conclusions and prevent the sort of confirmation bias that led male dominated fields to conclude that if a person was buried with weapons, then they must be male.

Chapter 2

Peasant Revolts and Women's Shifting Status

As mentioned in chapter one, the Early Medieval economy was similar to previous economies, still mostly subsistence based with small-scale markets. Owners of large areas of land relied on various kinds of unfree people's labor: enslaved people, captives, villeins and serfs.[100] The legal status and use of unfree people varied in detail across regions and periods. Increasingly wealthy Europeans relied on peasant labor extracted through corvee, or payment of taxes to a lord through labor instead of money. However, most land across Europe at this time consisted of smallholdings, privately owned by the family working the land. Large manors would require detailed records[101] to keep everything running smoothly, so they are an ideal source of information for scholars and make up a larger portion of the research.

Manorialism is a term used to describe a type of economic relationship organized between lords and villeins or serfs; it is not a consistent system everywhere. Despite a nominal shift away from the slavery dominant in the Roman period,[102] the manorial system still essentially enslaved people. In this practice, they were contracted to the land or manor which could change hands usually through inheritance and those under

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[100] Peter Garnsey, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society, and Culture*, 2nd edition (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2014).

[101] Such as those Saint Germain-des-Prés (a tax record from the early ninth century which contains information about 2600 nuclear families on 1700 farms under the control of the abbey of Saint Germain) discussed in Chapter 3. Emily Coleman, "Infanticide in the Early Middle Ages," in *Women in Medieval Society*, ed. Susan Mosher Stuard (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 47–70, https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812207675.47. Another collection of various types of records can be found in Emilie Amt, *Women's Lives in Medieval Europe: A Sourcebook*, 2nd ed (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2013).

[102] Michael McCormick, "New Light on the 'Dark Ages': How the Slave Trade Fuelled the Carolingian Economy," *Past & Present*, no. 177 (2002): 17–54, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3600877.

contract would remain in place as opposed to being sold or removed. Serfs, peasants tied to the lord and land, would spend most of their time on their own land and a portion of time on the lord's land. Ideally, in return for their conscripted labor, these peasants would receive the lord's protection from attacks by outsiders as well as the ability to live on the lord's property and use its resources. While a lord could evict serfs from their property if he was displeased, this was not an optimal solution, as the lord would be losing part of his workforce; consequently, the lord had good reason to be understanding.

The main difference between the manorial system and the later system of wage labor is that villeins had direct access to their means of production. If the peasants wanted to go on a labor strike,[103] the lord could not starve them into returning to work. However, some peasants felt strained under this system. Two revolts prior to the eleventh century are evidence: the Stellinga Uprising of the Saxons and the Peasants' revolt in Normandy. Tensions arose from religious conversion, shifting economies, and widespread small-scale armed conflict, and these tensions increased dramatically over the next four centuries that saw nearly two dozen documented armed peasant revolts in Europe. Indeed, by the thirteenth century, evidence shows labor strikes across the continent.[104]Additionally, where these early revolts are noted, so too is the earliest documentation of what would later be considered The Wild Hunt. Penitentials of the late

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[103] These strikes would not be the same as the labor strikes of the Modern period. It would be small actions taken by individuals or small groups that might include informal protests such as slowing down work or petitioning the lord.

[104] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 26.

tenth and early eleventh century specifically call out popular belief in women traveling at night to be in the company of a goddess. Because of the instructional nature of these texts, they represent a top-down system of educational campaigns[105] like those we will see in the Late Middle Ages meant to turn men and women against women of all classes.

Early Medieval Peasant Uprisings

The first conflict scholars widely noted as a peasant revolt is that of the Stellinga Uprising of 841.[106] Charlemagne spent three decades at war with the Saxons, who were ultimately defeated in 804 after which, in addition to forced conversion to Christianity, ownership of land transferred primarily into Frankish hands.[107] Moreover, the Franks introduced new ideas and practices around possession and transfer of property primarily in the form of legal documentation as opposed to the former customary practices (honoring local, traditional norms and practices.)[108] The reshuffling of lands would have engendered considerable frustrations. Soon after the conquest of Saxony, Louis the Pious, Charlemagne's successor, was troubled by a series of civil wars, and so too was his successor, Lothar, who competed for the rule of Francia against his two

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[105] Consider the ways modern American educational materials are selected and the ways they uphold (or erase) certain political narratives. Brendan Cole, "Texas Votes to Keep Moses in Social Studies Curriculum," Newsweek, November 15, 2018, https://www.newsweek.com/texas-votes-keep-moses-social-studies-curriculum-influencer-founding-fathers-1216936.

[106] Eric J. Goldberg, "Popular Revolt, Dynastic Politics, and Aristocratic Factionalism in the Early Middle Ages: The Saxon Stellinga Reconsidered," *Speculum* 70, no. 3 (July 1995): 467–501, https://doi.org/10.2307/2865267.

[107] Goldberg, "Popular Revolt," 478.

[108] Ingrid Rembold, *Conquest and Christianization: Saxony and the Carolingian World, 772-888*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought. Fourth Series, book 108 (United Kingdom; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

brothers. Lothar and his brothers enlisted help from the Saxons, who were divided in their support.[109] While some of the economic and political tensions played out between the elites themselves,[110] the conflict affected the whole of Saxon society.

Figure 4. A map of the Frankish conquest by the Carolingian dynasty (768 - 814 CE)

Simeon Netchev, "Charlemagne and the Carolingian Empire c. 814," World History Encyclopedia, accessed March 10, 2024, https://www.worldhistory.org/image/16359/charlemagne-and-the-carolingian-empire-c-814/.

The Stellinga Uprising

In a surprising move, Lothar also enlisted the support of the Stellinga. Reports are conflicting as to whether they were a previously organized group or if they became a group because of Lothar.[111] Either way, the Stellinga were pulled from the lower strata

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[109] Rembold, Conquest and Christianization: Saxony and the Carolingian World, 87.
[110] Rembold, Conquest and Christianization: Saxony and the Carolingian World, 80-91.
[111] Ingrid Rembold, "The Stellinga," in *Conquest and Christianization: Saxony and the Carolingian World, 772-888*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought. Fourth Series, book 108 (United Kingdom ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018),

of Saxon society. They fought on Lothar's behalf, and after his defeat, continued to agitate. Scholars have long noticed the class aspect.[112] Rembold argues --against the general consensus[113]-- that the Stellinga Uprising was not primarily a class issue since social divisions had been in place prior to the conquest, and Saxon social structure was not as rigid as that of the Franks.[114] This is despite contemporary reports that specifically noted the social or free status of the members of the Stellinga and reported that the servants had taken up arms against their masters (*The Annals of Fulda*, *The Annals of Xanten*, and Nithard's *Histories*.)[115] She adds that the lack of evidence that the Saxon elite on Lothar's side resisted the inclusion of the Stellinga in their forces would suggest it is not a class or "anti-elite" issue because they worked together.[116] Rembold forgets the ancient proverb that the enemy of my enemy is my friend. She concedes that the Stellinga's actions are not unlike smaller 11th century class conflict in 1074 where the peasants destroyed royal Harzburg property in anticipation of violent punishment from the king.[117] Rembolt's analysis of the Stellinga as a horizontal association (similar to a guild) made up of a variety of men from different tenurial and socio-economic backgrounds seems entirely accurate; however, to suggest that because of this heterogeneity, they were not interested in political resistance based on status is an argument which history disproves, as I discuss later.

Federici points out that the restrictions to women's autonomy happened as early

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[112] Goldberg, "Popular Revolt," 465.
[113] Goldberg, "Popular Revolt," 465.
[114] Rembold, "The Stellinga,"123.
[115] Rembold, "The Stellinga," 124-25. Goldberg, "Popular Revolt," 481-82.
[116] Rembold, "The Stellinga," 119.
[117] Rembold, "The Stellinga," 128.

as the 14th century after the Black Death decimated populations, and control of the reproduction of workers was necessary to maintain power. However, consider the unrest of the Saxon Wars, followed by the civil wars which turned the Saxon elites against each other, the new pressures of Christianity, and generational anxiety about land ownership and dispossession. The conditions that Federici outlines actually emerge as early as the ninth century not the fourteenth. The Stellinga were violently suppressed, as was the normal reaction by the upper classes when the lower classes were out of line. If the tensions were there, why were there not more uprisings? Rarely did class tensions result in armed conflict; more often, those tensions played out through protracted legal disputes[118] of the kind Rembold discusses.[119] The Stellinga had the unique position of having access to a means by which to violently pressure the upper class when Lothar armed them.

Regino's Canon Episcopi

Lothar retired to Prüm Abbey after abdication of his portion of Francia in 855.[120] This would be the same Prüm Abbey where Regino served as monk for the majority of his life. He recorded the first example of women in flight in 906 just a few decades later. I think it is very likely that there was some overlap in their residencies, and Regino may have picked up on the tension. The tensions that precipitated the actions of the Stellinga were still present with the additional pressure of Viking incursions. Regino wrote in the

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[118] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 26.
[119] Rembold, , *Conquest and Christianization*, Chapters 1-2.
[120] "Lothar I." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, March 22, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Lothar-I.

Canon Episcopi[121] that some women "believe and openly profess that, in the dead of night, they ride upon certain beasts with the pagan goddess Diana, with a countless horde of women, and…so believing, wander from the right faith and relapse into pagan errors."[122] Moreover, his example of Satan's deception wherein he "captured the mind of a miserable woman"[123] was held as the example for all who had turned back to polytheism, and the language he used was condescending towards women specifically. What drove his decision to write about women in this way, especially if all people were capable of this belief? Regino called out pagan beliefs and regression amongst a population recently converted from polytheism to Christianity, dividing further those in the lower classes into pagan and Christian as well as into men and women. However, by emphasizing the "wicked… stupid and foolish" women who were "seduced" he suggests to his audience Christians must fear and monitor women. Regino frames women, who have been an essential part of the peasant uprisings, as naturally wicked and dangerous. By focusing on women, Regino gives people a target for their frustrations that lives inside their own homes, potentially causing them to be suspicious of and hostile to those whom they had fought beside.

Norman Peasants Revolt

To the west, in Normandy, where Richard I ruled as Count of Rouen from 942 to 996, the nature of land possession was changing from outright ownership to land held in

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[121] See Appendix 2
[122] Howland, *Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft, Volume 1*, 178-179.
[123] Howland, Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft, Volume 1, 179.

tenure or contract.[124] The systematic (yet messy) process of eventually dispossessing the lower classes of land ownership and inserting them into an obligatory social and economic agreement would have created tensions. During the transition of power to his son after Richard's death in 996, peasants organized a secret rebellion, and immediately upon discovery, they were violently suppressed. This was not open military conflict; instead, it was a number of peasant groups forming representative assemblies with the intention to utilize Carolingian legal practices and petition the elite for fewer burdens.[125] The severity of punishments, removal of hands and feet, seems extreme for a political movement, but Gowers also notes that in 859 peasants organized on their own to protect themselves from Viking incursions and were subsequently killed by their own noblemen, despite having no inter-class aims.[126] The nobility feared the peasants to such an extent that they punished the peasants for showing any sign of violent resistance no matter that the target was raiders and not the nobility.

With the shifting status of land ownership across much of Europe during the tenth and eleventh centuries, anxieties built. These anxieties were first seen in drawn-out disputes handled through appeals to their lords; rarely did peasants have the means (i.e. weapons) to engage in any kind of (much less, effective) open revolt, and that was not by accident. However, these were just the first bubbles of a pot that would boil over.

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[124] Emily Zack Tabuteau, "Ownership and Tenure in Eleventh-Century Normandy," *The American Journal of Legal History* 21, no. 2 (1977): 97, https://doi.org/10.2307/845210.

[125] Bernard Gowers, "996 and All That: The Norman Peasants' Revolt Reconsidered: The Norman Peasants' Revolt Reconsidered," *Early Medieval Europe* 21, no. 1 (February 2013): 71–98, https://doi.org/10.1111/emed.12010.

[126] Gowers, "Norman Peasants' Revolt Reconsidered," 87.

Burchard's Decretum

Soon after these class-conflicts, Burchard's *Decretum* appeared, in which he, as Bishop of Worms, echoes and adds to the description by Regino of women who fly in the night:

> Hast thou believed that there is any woman who…with a throng of demons transformed into the likeness of women (she whom common folly calls the witch Hulda) [or]… with Diana, a goddess of the pagans, and an unnumbered multitude of women, they ride on certain beasts and traverse many areas of the earth in the stillness of the quiet night, obey her commands as if she were their mistress, and are called on special nights to her service?[127]

The selection of canons from Book XIX focused on eliminating pagan practices, but it also had a gendered focus. The several canons dealing with Diana and Hulda are extensive in comparison to the others.

Moreover, Burchard adds the name of the goddess Hulda to the mix, attributing it to contemporary folk belief. Holda (a spelling variation of Hulda along with Holle), Grimm notes in the 19th century, is deeply associated with spinning, the earth, and riding on the winds, and he mentions from his collection of data that in several Germanic areas "*Holle-riding, to ride with Holle, is equivalent to a witches' ride*. Into the same 'furious host' according to a wide-spread popular belief, were adopted the souls of

[127] Lubke, "Traces of Non-Christian Religious Practice in Medieval Penitentials." See Appendix 3.

infants dying unbaptised; not having been christian'd, they remained heathen, and fell to heathen gods, to Wuotan or to Hulda" [emphasis original].[128] Grimm sees an etymological and cultural connection between Holda/Hulda/Hluda and the Norse word hlóðynjar, a mythical name for the earth as well as a homophone for the Proto-Indo-European root *hlud meaning loud and/or famous. Leek, on the other hand, is not convinced by Grimm's geographical or linguistic argument because "attempts to construct a coherent history of Holda around this theory must assume the existence of a **Hludana*, or rely on a single attestation from Burchard of Worms because **Hludana* has never been recorded."[129] However, a handful of stones across Germanic areas from the late Roman period the Latin inscription of HLVDANA referencing a goddess does exist.[130]

Evidence for Holda's chthonic aspect[131] is documented from a peasant's vision in the 15th century.[132] Folklore regarding Holda prior to the 15th century is sparse; however, Hammer sees popular belief in the Jewish naming ceremony that dates to at least the Middle Ages, *Hollekreisch*.[133] She also references *hollenzopf*, a term used in

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[128] Jacob Grimm and James Steven Stallybrass, *Teutonic Mythology* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1976).
[129] Thomas Leek, "Holda: Between Folklore and Linguistics," *Indogermanische Forschungen* 113 (2008).
[130] "Hludana," in *Wikipedia*, January 14, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hludana&oldid=1195575284.
[131]Brian Branston, *Gods of the North* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1955). Odin (earlier known variously as Wotan or Wodan) was also a chthonic deity and associated with the Wild Hunt or furious host. Adam of Bremen, a medieval German chronicler, wrote "Wodan, *id est furor*," (Wodan, that is fury).
[132]Leek, "Between Folklore and Linguistics," 324.
[133]Jill Hammer, "Holle's Cry: Unearthing a Birth Goddess in a German Jewish Naming Ceremony," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*, no. 9 (2005): 62–87.

Germany for people who wake up with knotted, messy hair; people (jokingly?) believed the sleeper had been out riding with Holle[134] in her nightly raids or furious activities and being out in the winds caused the tangling of their hair. Another term used in the thirteenth century was from a Jewish source that refers to matted hair as *Holle-locke*, and notes that mats were not supposed to be shaved even before a *mikvah*, a ritual cleansing bath, because it was dangerous.[135] Whether it was dangerous because it was associated with the malevolent side of Holle, or it would be dangerous to remove a possible blessing associated with her is uncertain. Both Hammer and Motz[136] attest to the veneration of Holle into modern times. Perhaps even more interesting is that people venerated Holle around Hesse (Burchard's childhood home) and Thuringia further to the north, and she is associated with specific geographies in those locations.[137] I would argue that Burchard is integrating a Hulda as contemporary local belief into a text to modernize it and make it relevant for his current audience. There would be no reason to add a detail to which people would not relate.

Burchard's *Decretum* was a popular text over the next few centuries, and clergy made many copies with the express purpose of teaching a wide audience: students, priests, and bishops.[138] Similar to Regino's *Canon*, Burchard's *Decretum* was meant for a male ecclesiastical audience. These ecclesiastical texts were guideposts for how to

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[134]Hammer, "Holle's Cry," 62–87.
[135]Hammer, "Holle's Cry."
[136]Lotte Motz, "The Winter Goddess: Percht, Holda, and Related Figures," *Folklore* 95, no. 2 (1984): 151–66
[137] Motz, "The Winter Goddess: Percht, Holda, and Related Figures."
[138] Greta Austin, "Introduction," in *Shaping Church Law around the Year 1000: The Decretum of Burchard of Worms*, Church, Faith, and Culture in the Medieval West (Farnham, Surrey, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).

administer pastoral care and direction, and as such they represent a top-down system similar to that of the top-down systems that were installed in the Late Middle Ages as state-sponsored division campaigns against men and women. However, the campaign was still early, and the punishments continued to be small: bread and water for a month. This would suggest that the need to focus on gendered crimes is still minimal. Of the handful of times peasants were able to organize, they were immediately subdued.

The High Middle Ages

The High Medieval Period saw staggering advances in architecture, technology, and learning across Europe, and Federici observes that the years 1100-1350 are a concessionary period where charters were granted by the lords in order to codify privileges and reduce burdens on laborers; hundreds of charters were conceded in Lorraine alone[139] which suggests that the laborers' pressure worked to some extent. It is also during the early twelfth century that John of Salisbury, an English philosopher, writer, and eventually Bishop of Chartres, echoes the motif of female riders:[140] he mentions Diana and Holda, as others had before, and adds Herodias and Satia, along with beliefs about the women participating in riots and eating infants.[141] Here too, believers of this kind of behavior are poor old women and delusional men-- perhaps a condescending remark about the lower classes. This version of the motif is the culminate form which is also encoded in the *Decretum Gratiani* compiled by Gratian early in the twelfth century and referenced by ecclesiastical courts throughout the

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[139] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 28.
[140] See Appendix 4.
[141] Lecouteux, "The Good Women Who Roam the Night."

Middle Ages and Early Modern Period. Why would the twelfth century see an escalation in the imaginary crimes these 'confused' women were imagining themselves a part of?

The Medieval Warm Period, which some scholars date between the middle of the tenth century to the middle of the thirteenth century, resulted in abundant food production; consequently, populations increased dramatically. At the same time, during the mid-twelfth century, Europe also began a total shift to a money economy[142] concurrent with the rise of the Knights Templar and their accumulation of wealth through their involvement in the Crusades. The Knights established the first European banking system since the decline of the Roman Republic.[143] Lords, possibly emulating this more standardized system they saw on Crusade, began to pay their tenants in currency and to extract taxes and rents in currency as well moving away from collecting services in corvee and commodities. Almost immediately, the peasant class felt the effect, and within 150 years, 13% of rural peasants were beggars, unable to support themselves on their small plot of land, if they held any land at all.[144] Despite the waves of charters granted during the High Middle Ages, the Crusades encumbered peasants further by extracting taxes to support extended campaigns. Neighbors and families needed increasingly more support from the community in order to survive, and this would cause tension especially as the period of good weather ended around the year 1300.

The Great Famine of the early fourteenth century strained the system even more,

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[142] Bronisław Geremek, *Poverty: A History* (Oxford ; Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1994), 55.
[143] Jack McIver Weatherford, *The History of Money: From Sandstone to Cyberspace* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997).
[144] Geremek, *Poverty: A History*, 57.

and subsequent crop failures may have led to instances of cannibalism.[145] Rumors of cannibalism from this period likely influenced Perrault's "*Le Petit Poucet*" (1607), or Little Thumb, as it was a mixture of folklore motifs.[146] The story involves parents who cannot feed their seven children and abandon them in the woods. They are found by cannibalistic ogres, but thanks to Little Thumb, they escape and find their way home. Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* includes the word "cannibalism" over one hundred times[147] underscoring a deep anxiety about the topic. A few of these motifs are directly related to family members consuming each other during times of famine or plague.[148]

Federici states women were migrating to towns wherever possible.[149] Kowaleski underscores the point in her discussion of the wide disparity in sex ratios between town and country in the Late Middle Ages.[150] Hanawalt sees the breakdown of community relations in the sharp increase of court records amongst neighbors.[151] Eventually, tensions became so dramatic that neighbors would accuse each other of witchcraft. These migrations and conflicts are evidence of the trauma caused by the transition to a

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[145] Ian Kershaw, "The Great Famine and Agrarian Crisis in England 1315-1322," *Past & Present*, no. 59 (1973): 3–50, https://www.jstor.org/stable/650378.
[146] Jack Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* (OUP Oxford, 2015). Perrault's tale very likely had some influence on Grimm's story of "Hansel and Gretel."
[147] A dozen of these instances are headings, and many of the motifs come from non-European sources. 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. Vol. 2: D - E*, 7. Dr., vol. 2 (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1997), https://sites.ualberta.ca/~urban/Projects/English/Content/Motif_Quick_Index.htm.
[148] G.78 and G.78.1. Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*.
[149] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 30.
[150] Kowaleski, "Medieval People in Town and Country."
[151] Hanawalt, *The Ties That Bound*, 267.

money economy.

The Crusades, population increase followed by famine, and the shift to the money economy created a nexus of instability for the lower classes who would have in turn put pressure on the nobility, as the numerous charters demonstrate. However, the landowners would have also felt the economic strain of the Crusades and famine, and they would have needed the lower classes to refocus on agriculture and less on oppression. In the twelfth century, John of Salisbury wrote of women eating infants and utilized this grotesque imagery[152] in order to demonize women specifically, and he reiterated the importance of keeping a close eye on one's neighbors and family. To date, it is unclear to what extent actual events inspired this imagery, but John of Salisbury's use of this motif may reveal the mindset of the population.

Heresy

In response to the growing pressures of life, many peasants turned away from the orthodoxy of the Church to find a spiritual practice that addressed their reality although Federici considers this move more of a protest.[153] They were still Christian, but heretics practiced their own interpretation of Christianity despite the Church's official stance. "Heresy was the equivalent of 'liberation theology'[154] for the medieval

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[152] Joseph B. Pike, *Frivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers: Being a Translation of the First, Second, and Third Books and Selections from the Seventh and Eighth Books of the Policraticus of John of Salisbury* (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), https://www.constitution.org/2-Authors/salisbury/policrat123.htm.

[153] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 33.

[154] The theological approach popularized in the late twentieth century that focuses on the liberation of people from oppressive systems such as poverty, race, caste, and apartheid.

proletariat. It gave a frame to peoples' demands for spiritual renewal and social justice, challenging both the Church and secular authority by appeal to a higher truth."[155] Many of these new sects of Christianity embraced apostolic poverty in contrast to much of the clergy who, with the rise of the money economy, had to some extent dispensed with the doctrine that wealth was an obstacle to holiness, despite numerous attempts at reforms and harsh criticism from the people and from within the clergy itself. Pope Innocent III (1198-1216), as a prime example of this, was not satisfied with his position as pope, but instead worked to consolidate the Church's power into something that resembled a monarchical system. He disrupted the former decentralized organization of the early church. As heretical Christian sects were growing larger and more powerful, the threat to his power prompted him to make a papal decree: he made heresy a crime of treason instead of a deluded belief that fasting and prayer would correct. Treason was punished with death. Pope Innocent III specifically targeted Cathars[156] and instituted the first internal Christian cleansing of traitors to God in the Albigensian Crusade against the Cathars. In these developments, we can see the class-based struggles between the nobility and the peasants are mirrored in those between the Catholic Church and its congregation.

Women were highly involved in the various movements labeled by the Church as

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[155] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 33

[156] Cathars saw such distinct differences in the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament that they believed him to be two separate deities. They also did not believe in the divinity of Christ, transubstantiation, prayers for the dead in Purgatory, or that Latin should be the language spoken instead of the vernacular. It was originally organized around ascetic leaders.

heretical during the High Middle Ages: Waldensians, Beguines, and Albigensians (Cathars). Within these movements, women found more freedom and opportunity that they had in the orthodox church of the time[157] although, as in the other instances where women defied the rules, some women found ways to assert autonomy within orthodox piety.[158] In some situations, they lived in homogenous communities or mixed communities[159] with men as brothers and sisters seeking a spiritual lifestyle.[160] In others, they rejected the materialism of the outside world, living only by the profits of their own hands.[161] Additionally, women were ordained in some groups and allowed to preach.[162] Because an article by Abels and Harrison[163] shows only 45% of the spiritual elite of the Cathars were women, Arnold suggests that women did not make a high enough proportion to be significant. He also cites the fewer number of women named in accusations to inquisitors (1 in 5) and the low number of women mentioned in a

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[157] Malcolm C. Barber, "Women and Catharism," *Reading Medieval Studies* III (1977): 45–62, https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/84350/.

[158] Barbara B. Diefendorf, *From Penitence to Charity: Pious Women and the Catholic Reformation in Paris* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). Jennifer Deane, "Pious Domesticities," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in*

[159] Jennifer Deane, *Pious Domesticities*, ed. Judith Bennett and Ruth Karras, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 2013), https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199582174.013.0017.

[160] While this source is from a later period, it gives a detailed account of one woman's rejection of her married life and movement into a heretical sect of Christianity. Natalie Zemon Davis, "Metamorphosis: Maria Sybilla Marian," in *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge (Mass.) London: Harvard university press, 1997).

[161] Federici, Caliban and the Witch, 42.

[162] John H. Arnold, "Heresy and Gender in the Middle Ages," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. Judith Bennett and Ruth Karras, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 2013), https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199582174.013.017.

[163] Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison, "The Participation of Women in Languedocian Catharism," *Mediaeval Studies* 41 (1979): 215–51, https://doi.org/10.1484/J.MS.2.306245.

manuscript as having preached (11).[164] Ward echoes this notion,[165] but she also names several women who records show having received the *consolamentum* (the sacrament of baptism specific to the Cathars that allowed the individual to administer the sacrament as well): Blanche de Laurac (1209), Mabilia de Laurac (1209), Esclarmonde (1204). She mentions others that were recorded but not named.[166] No woman (after the very early stages of Christianity) was ordained in the Orthodox Church. Abbesses could instruct the women living in their abbey, but they still had to be overseen by male priests in regards to absolutions, to celebrate Mass, and often to run convent affairs.[167] Thus, I would argue that, while women did not make up a majority of the Cathars, the percentage of women who were able to attain status equal to that of a priest was unmatched compared to the number of orthodox women who did so.

As these heretical movements gained followers, especially being largely composed of those from the lower classes, they put pressure on the Church by undermining the greed of many of its authorities.[168] (Even though the clergy are an estate separate from the aristocracy, people with money and power wishing to maintain and increase both run it, so they function as aristocracy in my argument.) People turned away from the Church and the status quo the nobility wanted to perpetuate. In addition to the gendering of heresy as feminine weakness and sexual immorality,[169] the Church

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[164] Arnold, "Heresy and Gender in the Middle Ages," 500.
[165] Jennifer Ward, "Women, Heresy, and Witchcraft," in *Women in Medieval Europe 1200-1500: 1200-1500.*, 2nd ed. (Taylor and Francis, 2016).
[166] Ward, "Women in Medieval Europe 1200-1500," 269.
[167] Jennifer Ward, "Religious Life: Nuns and Nunneries," in *Women in Medieval Europe 1200-1500: 1200-1500.*, 2nd ed. (Taylor and Francis, 2016).
[168] Federici, Caliban and the Witch, 33.
[169] Arnold, "Heresy and Gender in the Middle Ages," 497-500.

brought back an old fear in order to turn men of all classes against women of all classes. They latched even more firmly onto a popular belief that it had previously criticized: the women who fly at night. Ginzburg recounts a number of instances from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that record popular belief in the flight or 'game' of a night goddess (variously Diana, Holle, Holda, Herodias, Perchta): a Diocesan council in 1280, the Council of Trier in 1310, and Inquisitors documents from 1390.[170]

Moreover, the church did not limit its accusations of heresy; over the next two centuries, it used the charge for more widespread social control. In Ypres, Ghent, and Bruges in the late 14th century (by no means the first or last revolts in this area), textile workers collectively acted against government officials in their cities.[171] Officials in turn threatened to and actually charged citizens with heresy and executed them. Thousands of peasants and craftspeople died in open battle; some of them were *very* likely to be women because women were members of medieval guilds.

Notably, women were members of especially those guilds involving textiles.[172] Their numbers were generally not equal to that of the men's, and they rarely became 'masters' of their craft, continuing to serve as journeywomen or day laborers earning wages which were always below the wages of men. The masters ran the guild and had

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[170] Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, 1st American ed (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991).

[171] Jan Dumolyn and Jelle Haemers, "Takehan, Cokerulle , and Mutemaque: Naming Collective Action in the Later Medieval Low Countries," in *The Routledge History Handbook of Medieval Revolt*, ed. Justine Firnhaber-Baker, The Routledge History Handbooks (London ; New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2017).

[172] Steven Epstein, *Wage Labor & Guilds in Medieval Europe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

more political, social, and economic influence. Some towns even made guild membership a requirement for civic enfranchisement.[173] Scholarship on women in medieval guilds generally is of the consensus that women were significantly less active than men in their guilds with a few exceptions where women dominated certain trades in certain places until the sixteenth century. Perhaps an analysis of the records requires reading between the lines such as is the case with alewives where women are the experts and tradesperson, but the husband is the legal face often with little knowledge of the trade itself.[174] If that is the case, it is possible that the actual gender ratio of workers is actually skewed much too far in the direction of men. Additionally, for various reasons, more women than men populated medieval towns.[175] Sometimes there were as few as 75 men per 100 women.[176] Widows would often carry on their husband's trade and be granted guild privileges. Women were more and more relegated to the lowest levels of society as the money economy became the standard. When they were documented in guilds, it was most often (but not always) in the lower ranks.

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[173] Kowaleski and Bennett, "Crafts, Guilds, and Women," 474–501.
[174] Bennett, "Gender Rules: Women and the Regulation of Brewing."
[175] See Appendix 10 for charts. Given Kowaleski's data in Table 1 (Kowaleski, "Medieval People in Town and Country.") I extrapolated real population numbers to find the total numbers of men and women in the given rural and urban centers. Those numbers when totaled reveal an average sex ratio of 96 men to 100 women in urban centers and 105 men to 100 women in rural centers. Given that the expected sex ratio at birth is between 102 and 107 men to 100 women, the numbers are striking. If we consider a single town and village as a total population with the respected ratios, we should expect the rural areas to have a 10% higher ratio than the natural if the urban is 10% lower. What this might suggest is that in addition to the numbers of women who have moved to the towns and driven the ratio down, there is around 10% of additional women who are undocumented in the data. There are several possible explanations including underreporting of women in the tax polls and gendered infanticide and neglect.
[176] Kowaleski and Bennett, "Crafts, Guilds, and Women."

Women also actively participated in medieval warfare, not just on the periphery as camp followers cooking, washing, and servicing the men. Women were on the battlefield digging trenches, tending to the wounded, carrying supplies to soldiers on the field. Some women also picked up weapons and fought alongside others.[177] That is, of course, in addition to queens who acted as generals throughout the Middle Ages and others such as Jeanne d'Arc (died 1431) and Jeanne Hachette (born 1456). Women participated in medieval warfare at all levels.[178]

If women are documented in records of the Middle Ages, scholars have reasoned that was the exception. I would suggest the reason so few women were documented in the revolutionary actions during the High Middle Ages is due to them being so obviously present that writers did not need to specify. However, documentation of women's participation in the revolts does exist, as Federico demonstrates. She shows how women's involvement in the revolt of 1381 in England took place at all levels of participation, from agitation and provocation to victims, from auxiliary support and direct involvement in rebellious or criminal activity and this included married women (some in partnership with their husbands) and single women as well as widows. She also points out that most involvement in any kind of revolutionary movement is by necessity auxiliary;[179] if we were to imagine a society of only men, even then few would be

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[177] Verbruggen, J. F. "Women in Medieval Armies." In *Journal of Medieval Military History*, edited by Clifford J. Rogers, John France, and Kelly Devries, 4:119–36. Boydell & Brewer, 2006.

[178] James Michael Illston, "'An Entirely Masculine Activity'? : Women and War in the High and Late Middle Ages Reconsidered : A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in History" (2009).

[179] Sylvia Federico, "The Imaginary Society: Women in 1381," *Journal of British Studies* 40, no. 2 (2001): 159–83.

considered leaders, and the vast majority would be undocumented in such an event.

Federico pulls from the pardon rolls of Richard II as well as rolls from Court of Common Pleas; however, the government was not the only party involved in the suppression of revolutionary behavior or even regulatory oversight. Somehow the Church managed to tie late product delivery and unsatisfactory workmanship to treason against God and threatened female weavers with excommunication.[180] It is among the journeymen, women, and wageworkers (levels to which women had the most access) in medieval cities where the Church had the most difficult time suppressing heretical beliefs. Federici notes several revolts of workers, especially in Flanders during the fourteenth century. In Ghent, led by the wool workers in 1335, the entire city was involved in a years-long conflict with the prince, the clergy, and the nobility as well as the middle class, with the intention of creating a workers' democracy. They succeeded for a while and were only defeated in open battle where nearly 30,000 of the workers died.[181] The horizontal associations made within and across guilds allowed for the organization of revolutionary activities as was likely the case with the Stellinga centuries earlier.

Why These Figures?

What is it about Diana and Holle that appealed to the medieval people in such a way as to elicit centuries of condemnation from the pulpit? Moreover, what is it that ties

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[180] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch.*
[181] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch.*

them together along with other women listed as leaders in Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*: Artemis,[182] Diana, and Percht, as well as others such as Herodias and Hecate?[183] These figures span centuries of belief and several different cultures.

Artemis

As early as the Neolithic period, Artemis may have been worshiped as the Great Mother around Anatolia, eventually spreading to Greece. Artemis's aspects are widely varied; she is associated with the moon, virginity, childbirth, wild animals, transitions in life, and the death of women; however, the Hellenistic public worship of Artemis rarely openly referenced her huntress aspect. They did, on the other hand, make sacrifices to her as a protectress of warriors (hunting is the preparation and practice for warfare.) The Spartans, Athenians, and Macedonians all center her as a protective figure much like Cybele, and she is sometimes associated with Hecate (another moon goddess and leader of the Hunt in traditions) and thereby, magic.[184] Ginzburg connects various documents and trials and concludes there is an ecstatic cult of a nocturnal goddess which is widespread across Europe. He takes it as far back as the Cretan Mother goddesses mentioned by the historians Diodorus and Plutarch. Ginzburg also connects the Mother goddesses of Engyon with the mother bears who nursed Zeus and then to Artemis as the figure-head of a system of pre-Greek cults. He describes Artemis as a

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[182] Otto Gruppe, Griechische Mythologie und Religion-Geschichte, 1906.
[183] Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*.
[184] Fritz Graf, "Artemis," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 506–8.

liminal deity, one who is on the border between city and wild, human and animal, and as such, she was associated with another liminal period: childbirth. Pregnant women would have looked to her for protection. She was the protectress of young girls and the nurse of children and identified with mother bears whom the Greeks recognized were intensely protective of their young.[185]

Hecate[186]

Many scholars acknowledge the split of the early Artemis into three distinct deities: Artemis, Cybele,[187] and Hecate. The Greeks consider Hecate, like Artemis, a virginal deity who is associated with crossroads, childbirth, the death of women, mother nature, the moon, and magic; so similar are Artemis and Hecate that, according to Johnston, the two are often conflated.[188] She is a psychopomp who was sometimes appeased by setting out food at the end of each lunar month. She, "bestowed on mortals wealth, victory, wisdom, good luck to sailors and hunters, and prosperity to youth…but all these blessings might at the same time be withheld by her, if mortals did not deserve them."[189] Hutton explains that Hecate was a guide for souls to the underworld and was associated with bringing babies into the world.[190] He cites a few

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[185] Ginzburg, *Ecstasies*. See also Paula Perlman, "Acting the She-Bear for Artemis," *Arethusa* 22, no. 2 (1989): 111–33, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26308518.

[186] August Friedrich Pauly and Georg Wissowa, "Hekate," in *Pauly's Real Encyclopedia of Classical Antiquity* (Stuttgart: Slaughterer, n.d.), https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/RE:Hekate. Quoted in Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, E501.1.8.3. E501.1.8.3.

[187] Cybele is also fertility deity and mistress of animals; however, she is not mentioned in the medieval or Early Modern motifs related to The Wild Hunt or to witchcraft.

[188] Sarah Iles Johnston, "Hekate," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, 2nd ed., vol. 6 (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 3899–3900.

[189] "Hecate," *Encyclopedia Mythica*, March 3, 1997, https://pantheon.org/articles/h/hecate.html.

[190] Ronald Hutton, "The Wild Hunt and the Witches' Sabbath," *Folklore* 125, no. 2 (May 4, 2014), 165.

sources in an attempt to trace the concept of a ghostly cavalcade to the Greek tradition, but he concludes that the Greeks had no such concept of wandering ghosts. Johnston might disagree with Hutton on this point; in her reference entry to the *Encyclopedia of Religion* she describes Hecate "as the mistress of threatening, restless ghosts" and notes that girls "who died unmarried and women who died without successfully rearing children were considered to have died 'untimely' (aoros), and their souls were imagined to wander with Hekate, wreaking havoc on the world of the living out of envy and frustration."[191]

Diana

Diana, the Roman iteration of Artemis, is the earliest mentioned leader of the Hunt in Regiono's text, and the most frequent. However, some scholars believe the name Diana does not mean a literal connection to the Roman Diana. Because the medieval people had a tendency toward *interpretatio romana*[192] they would label any female pagan goddess Diana as a rhetorical analogy to subvert indigenous folk belief and supplant it with the dominant belief. This is the case when Burchard proclaims, "common folly calls [Diana] the witch Hulda."[193] Lecouteux dismisses Diana in the hunt as the Diana from the Roman period and instead suggests the references to Diana are

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[191] Johnston, "Hekate," 3899–3900. Another aspect of the Wild Hunt that appears alongside Hecate is her dogs. Dogs serve as one of the main animal appearances in the Hunt. Johnston mentions that the association with dogs could come from a practice of sacrificing dogs to a birth goddess, but that it eventually transforms into Hecate being followed by groups of noisy dogs that wandered with her or announced her coming. This transformation coincided with the same transformation of Hecate into a frightening and wicked deity herself especially in the period of Christianization.

[192] Literally 'Latin translation'

[193] Luebke, "Non-Christian Religious Practice."

the Celtic goddess Di Ana. According to Grey, this is likely the Indic mother goddess Danu who is associated with warfare (also known as the Morrigan), and she gives her name to the Celtic Tuatha de Danann, The Tribes or Peoples of the Goddess Danu. They battle the Fomoire and develop an alliance very similar to that of the Vanir and Æsir of the Norse gods as well as the Indic Asuras and Devas.[194] The Morrigan, like Artemis/ Cybele/ Hecate, is a tripartite goddess associated with battle, death, and fertility. By the Middle Ages, though, speakers of the Celtic language branches were largely isolated to the most northwestern part of Europe. While it is possible that the references to Diana were a conflation of two variants of the same Indo-European deity, it seems more likely to me that the ecclesiastical authors are reaching for a Latinized deity whose worship had already been suppressed rather than a Celtic deity if they are attempting to subvert local endemic belief. I think it is also more likely that they were reaching back to Greco-Roman times as medieval people recognized and respected the scientific knowledge of their predecessors. Geographically and temporally, it makes more sense to use the Roman Diana especially as the direct audience of Regino and Burchard were educated in the monastic tradition that would have included sources from Rome (involving Roman deities) for grammar, rhetoric, logic and more.[195]

Perchta and Holle

Of the other goddesses mentioned in The Wild Hunt by ecclesiastical authors,

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[194] Elizabeth A. Gray, "Tuatha Dé Danann," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, 2nd ed., vol. 14 (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 9390–91.

[195] George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig, eds., *Medieval Monastic Education* (London ; New York: Leicester University Press, 2000).

Motz explores the connections of two who are named in early and high medieval texts, Perchta and Holle, and concludes they are of similar origin. The medieval authors understand them to be essentially the same as well. Perchta is venerated in the Alpine regions and Holle around Hesse and Thuringia further to the north. Moreover, Motz claims Holle/Perchta are the continental variation of which Freya is the Scandinavian variation.[196] He mentions the Perchtennacht, which involves leaving food out for Percht or Perchten and Perchtenjagd[197] which seems to be a winter solstice procession[198] of good and bad spirits, or perchten, sometimes led by Perchta, that continues with masked figures to this day in Salzberg.[199] It sounds very similar to the nightly procession of The Wild Hunt as described by the medieval authors. It is also linguistically connected as it is named a jagd or hunt.

Similarly, in ancient Rome, during the winter solstice people would leave food offerings for the dead in the hope that the dead would bestow fertility on the land and community. It was known as the table of souls[200] and is later incorporated into the Roman Catholic All Souls Day. One of the holidays celebrated by the Anglo-Saxons during this sacred time was known as the night of the mothers, according to the Venerable Bede.[201] These are practices which are related to ancestors, specifically

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[196] The Celtic and Scandinavian deities are largely beyond the scope of this paper. For the sake of limiting the deities to the geographies that have textual references, I am focusing on the German goddesses as well as the Greek and Roman variations.
[197] Lotte Motz, "The Winter Goddess," *Folklore* 95, no. 2 (1984).
[198] *jagd* means hunt in German.
[199] Tourismus Salzburg, "Krampus- and Perchten Parades in Salzburg," *Salzburg: Stage of the World*, 2022, https://www.salzburg.info/en/salzburg/advent/krampus-percht.
[200] Lecouteux, *Phantom Armies*.
[201] Lecouteux, *Phantom Armies.*

women, to be carried out *by* women, as maintaining family shrine and rites was one of their main roles in the Classical Greek and Roman home[202] (and before.)[203] Domestic, as opposed to public, spirituality has tended to be the role of women throughout history. Both mother's night and the Perchtenjagd are practiced at a similar time (winter solstice), in similar ways (offerings and sacrifices of food), and for similar reasons (abundance, good luck in the coming harvest). The preparation and sacrifice of food has been a central part of religious rituals across the world throughout time, and it has especially been the domain of women. Some scholars might argue that the various tables set for female spirits were autochthonous practices developing entirely on their own, but I would suggest it is highly probable that they are the result of intercultural dialogue resulting in shared practices. Food is such an important aspect of life though, that if nothing else, it indicates significance of the ritual itself. The Wild Hunt, as noted in other variations is often seen around the solstice; however, the window of time is not mentioned by Regino or Burchard.

There is ample evidence to suggest that Diana/Artemis/Hecate, and Holda/Holle/Perchta are geographically and temporally separate variants of an earlier myth. Beyond the fact that medieval sources mentioned above noted the overlap,

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[202] Ross Shepard Kraemer, *Unreliable Witnesses: Religion, Gender, and History in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[203] Marlene Derlet and Judy Foster, *Invisible Women of Prehistory: Three Million Years of Peace, Six Thousand Years of War* (North Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 2013). Rachel Nuwer, "Ancient Women Artists May Be Responsible for Most Cave Art," Smithsonian Magazine, accessed April 21, 2024, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/ancient-women-artists-may-be-responsible-for-most-cave-art-1094929/.

textual, structural, and linguistic evidence shows links. Additionally, all of these women are associated with flying through the night, in a noisy manner, in the company of spirits or ghosts or animals, and granting either good or bad luck. Grimm notes that Holda is deeply associated with spinning, as is Artemis.[204] Moreover, these women are associated with women, young children, and childbirth. This is an area which is currently lacking in scholarship, and more comparative research is needed to determine if setting out food for female spirits is a holdover from previous practices, conflation of multiple cultural practices, or something else. In absence of a current scholarly explanation, one possibility is that the food left out was a sacrifice not just for good luck, but specifically for reproductive health whether that be to encourage or discourage a pregnancy.

Other Transformations of the Motif

During the Late Middle Ages another variation of the Wild Hunt was also popular, often involving Odin or localized leaders such as Herla or Arthur. It typically consisted of a group of penitential dead suffering in a sort of earthly purgatory, doomed to wander for a period of time. In the Christianization of Europe, some of the earlier gods and goddesses were transformed into saints and heroes; however, where they were not assimilated into the new belief system, they were reinvented as “ghosts, devils, and witches.”[205] As such, Odin transforms from the early Indo-European folklore into the demon (or demons) leading the Hunt in the later Middle Ages. Nearing the end of the sixteenth century, abductions by evil spirits in the Wild Hunt take on more prominence.

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[204] Grimm and Stallybrass, *Teutonic Mythology*. 269.
[205] Houston, “Ghost Riders in the Sky,” 153.

This is notably after the concept of a wandering purgatory is replaced by a place and taken on as official church teaching in the twelfth century. Through all this change and variation, and in spite of the transformation, the motif retained its original association with storms and heavy winds.[206]

An additional variant is the fusion of both sorts of Wild Hunt. Hutton sees the fusion as a rare occurrence and mentions Adam de le Halle's blend in the thirteenth century of the *maisnie Hierlekin* (Hierlekin's company) and the good women along with another group, the *fay*, a common character type in high medieval romance.[207] Fay (also *fae, fee*) are supernatural beings with the ability to do magic. They are found in the literary tradition Hutton mentions but are also deeply entrenched in continental and Celtic folklore. Significantly, elves and dwarves in the Germanic and Scandinavian traditions can be associated with the dead that dwell under the earth. Could this be a connection to the chthonic figures of the Hunt on the continent? Is de la Halle's a completely new invention or is it a recognition of older underlying similarities from two cultures separated long before? Additionally, Celtic mythology includes supernatural beings who live in the earth and are fiercely protective of their space: the *sídhe*. They are the Good Folk of northwestern Europe, and they are also known for nightly rides of the dead in the *sluagh sídhe* (the fairy host). They are strikingly similar to the perchten who are creatures or spirits following Perchta in blessing homes and punishing others.

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[206] Lecouteux, *Phantom Armies of the Night*.
[207] Ronald Hutton, "The Wild Hunt and the Witches' Sabbath," *Folklore* 125, no. 2 (May 4, 2014): 161–78.

Moreover, elf-shot, as either a projectile or a physical pain caused by elves or witches, appears in a few Scottish witch trials.[208]

Around 150 years after the composition of Halle's music, in the fifteenth century, the French woman Jeanne d'Arc (Joan of Arc) on trial by the English (in Normandy) is asked "if she knew anything of those who consort with fairies, she answered that she was never there nor knew anything of it, but she had heard talk of them, how they went on Thursdays; but she did not believe in it and thought it was witchcraft."[209] That she responds with the day of the week that people knew they would be present indicates a pretty strong argument for actual folk belief [210]--unless she was being sarcastic.

In the fourteenth century, with the rise of the money economy women's access to work was limited and women were beginning to be marked as inferior in new ways. The first round of peasant revolts of medieval Europe came to an end, but not necessarily because those in power had successfully turned men against women. The bubonic plague swept through Europe decimating its populations which gave peasants an unheard-of advantage. There was so much open land and so few farmers that the previously closed economic microcosms were now entirely open, and peasants could threaten to find better working conditions and pay elsewhere. In turn, the authorities doubled down and the ensuing centuries saw the kind of gendered violence previously

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[208] Alaric Hall, "Getting Shot of Elves: Healing, Witchcraft and Fairies in the Scottish Witchcraft Trials," *Folklore* 116, no. 1 (2005): 19–36.

[209] W. P. Barrett, trans., *The Trial of Jeanne D'Arc* (Gotham House, INC., 1932), https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/joanofarc-trial.asp.

[210] The Game of the Lady, a similar set of beliefs in Italian areas also occurs on Thursday. Burchard notes that worship of Jupiter (equivalent to Thor according to *interpretatio romana*) takes place on Thursday as well in canon 92 (see Appendix 3), so it is possible that Thursday is a useful day to label pagan practices.

unimagined. In the next chapter, we will see how these events set the stage for the massive economic and cultural changes of the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern period that drive the elite to the transformation of the Wild Hunt into the Witches' Sabbath, a caricature and condemnation of both women and witchcraft, in order to deepen the cultural divide between men and women. The actions of the elite of the Middle Ages echo today.

Chapter 3

The Witches' Sabbath

From 1350 to 1500, there was a shift in the actual power of the ruling class as multiple situations in Europe converge. The bubonic plague swept through continental Europe, decimating the working class. Meanwhile, the very nature and scale of war was changing. Somewhere between 30% and 75% (depending on location) of the population died from either war or plague, [211] and as a result there were far fewer individuals to work. The legs and feet of the medieval body politic were cut away.

Because of the labor shortage, the real wage (which refers to the actual buying power of wages) rose while rents and prices dropped.[212] The working day became shorter.[213] Land was vacant and available since so many people had died, and workers were in short supply. They could more easily protest undesirable working conditions and conduct a labor strike or move entirely. Economists consider this period a 'golden age' for wages, and Claridge et al. reinforce this view in their recent working paper which examines both cash and in-kind payments made to peasants in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[214] However, this golden age did not last long. The aristocracy would regain the upper hand through various means including the manipulation of the

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[211] Aberth, John. From the Brink of the Apocalypse Confronting Famine, War, Plague and Death in the Later Middle Ages. 2nd ed. Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2013, 125-130.

[212] Jordà et al find in their analysis of data spanning centuries that the description of prices rising as a result of pandemics creating a labor scarcity is demonstrable. The statistical deviation of wages is +15% over a 40-year span. Òscar Jordà, Sanjay Singh, and Alan Taylor, "Longer-Run Economic Consequences of Pandemics" (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2020), 13. https://doi.org/10.3386/w26934.

[213] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*.

[214] Jordan Claridge, Vincent Delabasita, and Spike Gibbs, "Wages and Labour Relations in the Middle Ages: It's Not (All) about the Money," Working Paper, 2023, https://jordanclaridge.com/work.

economy, defamation of as well as violence against women, and luck. In order to recover and expand control, those in power chose to prop up a new target for the working class, and they did so, in part, by adapting a familiar motif of the Wild Hunt in which women had been featured and criticized for centuries.

A systematic reclassification of witchcraft occurred during the fourteenth century in which new specialists, demonologists, were needed to train inquisitors and the public to identify witches. Local and state governments (rather than ecclesiastical courts) began to conduct the trials during this time possibly because of the urbanization that had taken place. The trials themselves were expensive due to their possible length and the sheer number of people employed, including inquisitors, magistrates, justices of the peace, scribes, torturers, notaries, surgeons, guards and more, not to mention the housing and upkeep of the important individuals involved.[215] The mobilization of this large of a mechanism would have been impossible if it came from a grassroots movement, unless most or all involved were donating their time. They clearly were not, as the itemized records of trial bills show. [216]The costs themselves were paid eventually by the accused's family if they had the means; however, the upfront costs of food, housing, and wages were borne by the wealthy landlords. I think it would be unlikely the city heads or landlords would have financially supported these trials if they were not receiving some kind of benefit, especially considering that many of the accusations

[215] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 210.
[216] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 210-11.

were solicited by the authorities and that land was open to seizure by the crown, local government, or clergy.

Functionalist anthropologists such as Malinowski argue that the benefit is social cohesion and an outlet for local anxieties. While that could be the case on a much smaller scale or in other cultures, it does not seem to support hundreds of thousands of accusations across two hundred years. Most of the accusations in the beginning of the trials, though definitely not all of them, were aimed at older peasant women.[217] Levack shows in nine areas surveyed the percentages of those accused who were over 50 years old is only below 50% in three of those cities. In Geneva, between 1537 and 1662, 75% of the accused were older than 50 (see Figure 5).[218]

Region	*Years*	*Witches of known age*	*Number or over*	*% 50 or over*
Geneva	1537-1662	95	71	75
Dept. of the Nord, France	1542-1679	47	24	51
County of Essex, England	1645	15	13	87
Württemburg	1560-1701	29	16	55
Salem, Mass	1692-1693	118	49	42
Scotland	1563-1736	166	68	41
Saarland	1575-1634			56
Rothenburg	1561-1652	48	17	40
Würzburg	1550-1650	190	112	59

[217] Brian P. Levack, *The Witch Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, Third edition (London New York: Routledge, 2013).
[218] Levack, The Witch Hunt in Early Modern Europe, 149-50.

Figure 5 Ages of Accused Witches

There were few damages to be paid by these women who had little even to live on, so the only restitution would have been death of the accused.[219] (Trier is an outlier in this example because early on wealthy individuals were accused as well.)[220] Who stands to benefit most? In some ways, the family of the accused may have been rid of an extra mouth to feed, but unless they were wealthy (and therefore negating the burden of supporting an extra person) the family would be more beset by bills and possible bankruptcy following the trial. On the other hand, using the accused as a scapegoat for economic insecurity served to benefit the wealthy. It provides an outlet or target for tensions and saves their hedges from the same women who might be 'gossiping' to others about tearing them down.

For preachers and inquisitors, there was an easy shift in the narrative from the women who professed to nightly rides with other women and deities into the sort of lurid revelry of witches we find in the Early Modern period. Travel at night, secret social gatherings, and consorting with pagan goddesses, delusion or not, were already considered transgressive by ecclesiastical sources. In addition to switching Diana for the Devil, new anxieties are added to the imagery. Cannibalism, orgies, and bonfires are the newly developed characteristic activities of the witch of the Early Modern Period.

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[219] Peter Alan Morton and Barbara Dähms, eds., *The Trial of Tempel Anneke: Records of a Witchcraft Trial in Brunswick, Germany, 1663* (Peterborough, Ont: Broadview Press, 2006).

[220] Alison Rowlands, "Witchcraft and Old Women in Early Modern Germany," *Past & Present*, no. 173 (2001): 50–89, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3600840.

Where there was once a possibility of real belief in these spirits and possible veneration by women, there is a transfiguration from women consorting with goddesses into the modern caricature of the witch. Women went from holding some rights and social value to existing almost entirely for the reproduction of the labor force,[221] making them essentially a fourth estate. A few economic factors guide this shift, along with the increasingly negative views of women presented in penitentials, literature, and art.

Market Manipulation

Some might claim that the medieval people were not economists and did not have the same kind of understanding of markets that we do now. That is true to an extent, but they were not flying blind either. They had a long legacy of Roman historians and Greek philosophers to learn from. The adoption of Arabic numerals and the money economy led people at all levels to be fluent in counting, measuring, and reckoning.[222] Jack Weatherford says of money, "it made [people] think in new ways, in numbers and their equivalencies. It made thinking far less personalized and much more abstract."[223] The depersonalization and abstraction are specifically demonstrated in the ways that those with wealth began to privatize land through the enclosures, despite the earlier theological understanding that God had given the earth to humanity in common and the goal of life was spiritual betterment not economic advancement.[224] Actual people began to matter less than profit and bottom lines.

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[221] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 12.
[222] Diana Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought*, 1. publ, Cambridge Medieval Textbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002),12.
[223] Weatherford, *The History of Money*, 38.
[224] Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought*, 4.

Enclosures

Starting in the twelfth century (although more often associated with the Industrial Revolution), landowners began a slow process of physically enclosing parts of their land and marking it for their own private use, in coordination with the implementation of wages and elimination of land tenure contracts. This land had been considered the "commons"; these were spaces such as meadows, woodlands, and wastes in a medieval village where everyone was allowed by the lord of the land to hunt, gather wood, fish, graze their animals, etc. Across Europe fields were cultivated by many individuals at a time in long strips of land, and access was given as part of the contract between lord and serf.

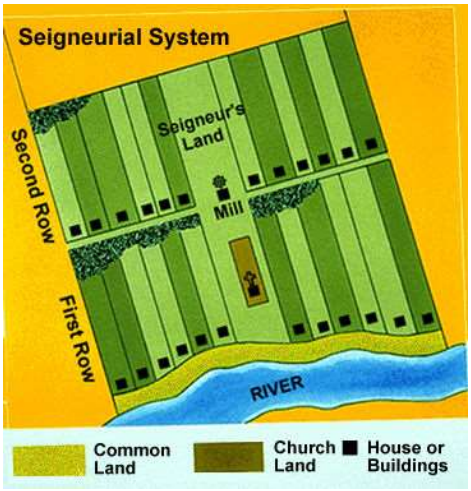

Figure 6. Image by Michael Lee showing one example of a French layout of the fields and commons of a manor.

Jaques Mathieu, "Seigneurial System," The Canadian Encyclopedia*, March 4, 2015,* *https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/seigneurial-system*.

Lords started to put up hedges to define this land as private, which was previously 'common;' thus the people who would have formerly relied on that land for supplies or sustenance were suddenly required to purchase with money those same items they had always made, gathered for themselves, or bartered for within the local

market. Most scholars suggest the increase of enclosures was due to population growth and the need for more food,[225] but very quickly peasants had less food than before.[226] I would suggest the enclosures may have been a by-product of the emerging money economy wherein everything had to be ascribed a monetary value, and common lands with free access to many necessities would have undermined that. Although this process started in the twelfth century, the number of enclosures increased to the point that by the sixteenth century "enclosure" was a technical term because of its widespread implementation.[227]

During this early phase of enclosures, from the twelfth to sixteenth centuries, peasants and serfs were increasingly forced to rely more often on wages. Wages were more easily withheld by the employer than access to land had been, and less access to the means of production put workers at a steep disadvantage. If a wage worker went on strike, the employer could withhold their wages to force their return to work; however, if a serf chose to engage in informal labor strikes, as they often did, the lord would have had a difficult time removing them from his land. On the other hand, if a serf attempted to leave and work for another, they could be imprisoned.[228] Scholars have deduced the frequency of these everyday forms of resistance[229] from medieval texts such as *Piers*

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[225] See Federici's end notes to Chapter 1 for a list of sources on the enclosures. Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 122-123.
[226] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 69-71.
[227] George Caspar Homans, *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century*, The Norton Library ; N765 (New York: Norton, 1975).
[228] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 65.
[229] James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

Plowman[230] and from the very specific wording of statutes, rolls, and serf charters wherein the writers listed strict obligations to prevent work slowdowns and sabotage.[231] The shift to wages and enclosures especially affected women, who were more involved in domestic labor and reproduction and less likely to be wage earners. Prior to the sweep of the bubonic plague in the fourteenth century, even when women were earning wages, they were more often engaged in unskilled labor[232] that paid half as much as skilled labor; however, when women did the same tasks as men, women were generally paid as much as men. [233] In spite of that state of partial equity, [234] there is a sharp decline in women's wage earnings; after the devastation of the plague, women's work was compensated at two-thirds what the same men's work was,[235] and in some areas it later dropped to nearly half.[236]

Women's (and men's) wages were not the only things affected by the rising number of enclosures. These areas available for common use by anyone were (and are) not just physical spaces, they were (and are) also central social spaces. Medieval

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[230] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 26.
[231] Henry S. Bennett, "Rents and Services," in *Life on the English Manor: A Study of Peasant Conditions 1150-1400*, 1. ed., 9. repr (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), 99–125.
[232] Judith M. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside: Gender and Household in Brigstock before the Plague*, Oxford University Press Paperback (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
[233] Jane Whittle, "Rural Economies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. Judith Bennett and Ruth Karras, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 2013), https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199582174.013.024.
[234] As a reminder, in wills of the time most men actually name their wife as executor of the home, making field, family, and financial decisions meaning that men trusted their wives to make those decisions after they had died. This would suggest that women were respected by their husbands more than literary accounts of the time would seem to show. Hanawalt, *Ties That Bound*, 153-155
[235] Hanawalt, *Ties That Bound*, 150-151.
[236] Whittle, "Rural Economies," 322.

women were key in constructing and maintaining the web of kinship and social relationships[237] in a village; moreover, it was often the use and upkeep of the commons that facilitated the preservation and continuity of relationships which is a kind of domestic labor that is not compensated. Esteva explains, "The commons is an activity and, if anything, it expresses relationships in society that are inseparable from relations to nature."[238] The enclosures, beginning in the twelfth century, necessarily isolated women from commoning and the related social network which supported the household economy and reproduction of the family. In addition to the disruption of women's social networks, the enclosures helped to deepen the widening gender gap, as the elimination of the commons closed many of the free third spaces that could have been utilized for organizing village-wide movements.

Artificial Inflation and the Price Revolution

While resources were shifting in favor of the wealthy, the rising death toll due to extensive military conflicts and plague caused another shift in power. Historically, pandemics have shown a positive effect on real wages.[239] For decades after a pandemic, people will see real wages rise gradually as a result of labor scarcity, and this effect has been documented and reinforced by recent analysis.[240]

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[237] One kind of evidence for this is the number and location of accidents. Women were more often involved in accidents when in a neighbor's home than men were. If women spent more time alone than with neighbors, they would more often have accidents when at home or alone, but it is the opposite. Women were more often working together than alone. Hanawalt, *Ties That Bound*, 145.

[238] G. Esteva, "Commoning in the New Society," *Community Development Journal* 49, no. suppl 1 (January 1, 2014): 144–59, https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsu016.

[239] See Appendix 11

[240] Jordà, Singh, and Taylor, "Longer-Run Economic Consequences of Pandemics," 13.

Just as Keynesian economists would point out that the modern market does not naturally 'correct' itself but it is (and should be) influenced by changes or policies authorities make[241] (such as around interest rates and debasement), the medieval economy was also regulated by various authorities. Royal monetary policy makers across Europe used the coexistence of coins and bullion to conduct such regulations. The supply of minted coins was an effect of the relationship between the money market and the bullion market, which could both be impacted by monetary policy such as the mint price and the seigniorage[242] charge.[243] Additionally, the continuous flood of bullion imported from the Americas had a tremendous influence on the economies of Europe. The surge in gold and silver minting was a result of royal strategies which may not have initially been intended to devalue money but did have that effect, and countries across Europe did not choose to stop the flood, which would suggest an intentional manipulation of the market to the disadvantage of the working class. As more bullion enters the market, more coins are made, and when there is more money available (in a gold standard market) the money itself becomes less valuable which causes an increase in the real cost of goods. This inflation is exactly what happened during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and as British historian Henry Common notes, it

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[241] "The Building Blocks of Keynesian Analysis," *Khan Academy*, accessed April 16, 2024, https://www.khanacademy.org/economics-finance-domain/macroeconomics/income-and-expenditure-topic/macroeconomics-keynesian-economics-and-its-critiques/a/the-building-blocks-of-keynesian-analysis-cnx.

[242] Profit made by a government by issuing currency, especially the difference between the face value of coins and their production costs.

[243] Nathan Sussman, "The Late Medieval Bullion Famine Reconsidered," *The Journal of Economic History* 58, no. 1 (March 1998): 126–54, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022050700019914.

was "precisely in the period when there was the main price hike…that there were the greatest number of charges and persecutions against witches." [244]

Changing Nature of War

The Hundred Years War (1337-1453) saw warfare shift from chivalric champions and an emphasis on calvary to much larger nationalistic infantry whose purpose was the capture of territory and the extermination of the enemy over the earlier capture and ransom tactics. Armies became even larger with mercenaries and professional soldiers, and battles became prolonged endeavors not always honoring the peasants' summer sowing season.[245] Moreover, civilians were considered appropriate targets for armies, and raids took place much more frequently and on a more systematic scale compared to the Crusades.[246] This led to battles which cost many more lives than campaigns of the previous eras.[247] More and more often, peasants were heavily taxed, conscripted, and targeted for raids, putting intense pressure on the working class while alleviating the losses of the nobility. Additionally, beyond the Hundred Years War, Europe was almost constantly engaged in conflicts during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries because of the religious wars of the Reformation.

While the wars throughout the later Middle Ages and Early Modern period contributed significantly to the burdens on the peasants and therefore could have been wielded with intention, it is currently beyond the scope of this paper to examine it at

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[244] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 173
[245] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 68.
[246] Aberth, *Brink of the Apocalypse*, 61-72.
[247] Aberth, *Brink of the Apocalypse*, 84.

length. However, Marxist theory is a useful lens with which to consider the hegemony of war,[248] and Marx's contemporary, von Clausewitz, wrote "War is only a continuation of State policy by other means."[249] If authorities are using economic policy and propaganda to divide the peasant class, a logical extension would be the use of war.

Famine

The golden age for wages after the plague was short-lived, stabilizing briefly during the middle decades of the fifteenth century; however, through the enclosures, legislation fixing rates to the benefit of the nobility, and the devaluation of women's domestic labor, along with the soon to follow expansion into and exploitation of New World resources, prices rose, wages held less purchasing power, and population rebounded from the plague years. Unfortunately for crops in the second half of the fifteenth century, Europe also experienced the Little Ice Age where average temperatures dropped half a degree Celsius across Europe, and many places saw unpredictable levels of rainfall resulting in massive crop failures and famine. [250] This kind of dramatic climate fluctuation likely directly exacerbated the climate of misogyny.

Modern studies have shown significant links between climate change and domestic violence indirectly due to increased economic insecurity and poverty-related

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[248] James Whitcomb Riley, "Does Marxism Offer a Viable Basis for Analysing the Causes of War?," *E-International Relations* (blog), March 16, 2008, https://www.e-ir.info/2008/03/16/does-marxism-offer-a-viable-basis-for-analysing-the-causes-of-war/.

[249] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard, 2006, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1946/1946-h/1946-h.htm.

[250] Charles C. Mann, *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*, 1st ed (New York: Knopf, 2011).

stress. A growing body of research is focused on intimate partner violence (IPV) related to the weather. With only a 1 °C increase, one study from South Asia found a mean increase of violence against women at 4.49%.[251] Another study in the United States found a similar percentage rise related to sexual violence in the week following a 5°C increase.[252] The heat causes crop failure in the same way that too much rain can, and another study in Peru found that a wet shock during the cropping season increases domestic violence by 65%.[253]

While these are studies are contemporary and non-European, what they document is a pattern of increasing violence and hostility towards women during weather-related shocks. So far, the studies have not determined what other factors are involved, although Mahendran et al. do note that high income-inequality in a given population was a correlation noticed in the U.S. study. These studies might suggest a correlation to the treatment of women in historical Europe. Kivivuori et al. look at Nordic countries from the seventeenth century and modern times. Their studies show that homicide rates rise dramatically during periods of social turmoil, including climate-related famine.[254]

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[251] Yixiang Zhu et al., "Association of Ambient Temperature With the Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence Among Partnered Women in Low- and Middle-Income South Asian Countries," *JAMA Psychiatry* 80, no. 9 (September 1, 2023): 952–61, https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2023.1958.

[252] Rahini Mahendran et al., "Interpersonal Violence Associated with Hot Weather," *The Lancet Planetary Health* 5, no. 9 (2021): e571–72, https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(21)00210-2.

[253] Juan-José Díaz and Victor Saldarriaga, "A Drop of Love? Rainfall Shocks and Spousal Abuse: Evidence from Rural Peru," *Journal of Health Economics* 89 (2023): 102739, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2023.102739.

[254] Janne Kivivuori et al., *Nordic Homicide in Deep Time: Lethal Violence in the Early Modern Era and Present Times* (Helsinki University Press, 2022), https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2bz2mp7.

The State Needs Bodies

Labor shortages following the plague and its subsequent waves hit rural peasants and the poor urban workers the hardest, leaving many farms and production centers without enough workers. While the plague did not kill men at a greater rate than women, the women who survived, as a result of newly exited positions, for a short period of time, had more opportunities to find wage work and less need for the financial support of a marriage. If women did choose to marry, they were more selective and were able to marry later after a period of independence.[255] The upper classes across Europe, however, needed to reestablish a population large enough for exploitation. What they saw as a demographic crisis could be resolved in part by the commodification of the female body. Where they had a successful start at devaluing women's labor through the implementation of wages, enclosure of the commons, and the 'professionalization' of industries, there was still one key area that was not firmly controlled: reproduction.

Reevaluation of Sexual and Reproductive Crimes[256]

Prior to the plague, Hanawalt reasons that medieval peasants took a rather relaxed view of premarital sexual activity. Lords did bring charges of legerwight (fornication) against unmarried women, but that those same women were later able to

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[255] Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England*, 1. issued as an Oxford Univ. Press paperback, Studies in the History of Sexuality (New York Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 49.

[256] Contraception and abortion will be discussed related to the *Malleus Maleficarum*.

marry would suggest the idea of fornication was less of a concern of the peasants[257] than of those who wanted to control their behavior. Moreover, the birth of an illegitimate child was not the dire situation it would become in later centuries. In 1484, Pope Innocent VIII makes an explicit connection between witches and reproductive crimes:[258]

> Many persons of both sexes… by other abominable superstitions … ruin and cause to perish the offspring of women, the foal of animals, the products of the earth, the grapes of vines, and the fruits of trees, as well as men and women… they afflict and torture with dire pains and anguish, both internal and external, these men, women, cattle, flocks, herds, and animals, and hinder men from begetting and women from conceiving, and prevent all consummation of marriage.[259]

Shakespeare's comedy *Measure for Measure* (1604) is a useful cultural touchstone. It is drawn from slightly earlier sources: Whetstone's play *Promos and Cassandra* (1578) and his source Cinthïo's *Hecatommithi* (1565).[260] In the earlier versions, a young man 'violates' a virgin and is sentenced to death. Shakespeare softens this to a couple who have conceived prior to marriage due to financial difficulties reflecting social realities which might resonate with the audience. They become the target of the pro tempore despotic governor, Angelo, who sentences the man, Claudio,

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[257] Hanawalt, *Ties That Bound*, 196-197.
[258] Maral Deyrmenjian, "Pope Innocent VIII (1484-1492) and the *Summis Desiderantes Affectibus*," *Malleus Maleficarum*, January 1, 2020, https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/mmft_malleus/1.
[259] University of Pennsylvania. Dept. of History, *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, vol. III:4 (published for the Dept. of History of the University of Pennsylvania., Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1897), https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/witches1.asp. See Appendix 9.
[260] "The Principal Sources of Measure for Measure," https://people.bu.edu/bobl/mm.htm.

to death. The main plotline revolves around Angelo, who hypocritically propositions Claudio's sister, Isabella, a novitiate nun, for sex in exchange for her brother's release. She refuses. Through a comedic bait-and-switch, Isabella's virginity is protected, and her brother released. In the earlier versions, her brother continues to be sentenced even after she agrees to sleep with the governor. The changes that Shakespeare made indicate that the audience would have been sympathetic to Isabella, outraged at Angelo, and understanding of Claudio and his partner. On the other hand, this play was performed at a time when the population was rising above pre-plague levels and putting stress on the current social systems. Attempts to implement social control increased especially with regards to the lower classes.[261]

Sodomy. During the demographic crisis of the fifteenth century, politicians and philosophers became preoccupied with population growth convinced that "a large population is the wealth of a nation," and they began documenting and studying demographic data.[262] Laws were enacted intended to prevent concealment of pregnancy and abortion, and narratives were spun valorizing marriage and childbirth. Martin Luther (1483- 1546), in his description of women's point of existence graciously stated that "Even though they grow weary and wear themselves out with child-bearing, that is of no consequence; let them go on bearing children till they die, that is what they are there for."[263] Moral standards across Europe were changing as a result of the

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[261] Karras, *Common Women*, 137.
[262] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 181-82.
[263] Hartmann Grisar, E. M. Lamond, and Charles Louis Dessoulavy, *Luther*, vol. 4 (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & co., ltd, 1913), 144.

Reformation starting in the early sixteenth century, but the same degradation in the views of women are seen in both Catholic and Protestant countries.[264] While more accusations and executions take place in contested areas during the Counter-Reformation, these are also the same areas which see the German peasant revolts, most likely because both movements were interested in a leveling of power and wealth. One way the authorities chose to encourage the birth rate was to criminalize non-procreative sex. Sodomy (oral or anal sex associated with birth control practices) had been included in church penitentials since the Early Church;[265] however, in 1533 Henry VIII passed "An Acte for the punysshement of the vice of Buggerie"[266] or any sexual act that was not meant to produce a child, including bestiality. Non-procreative sex between husbands and wives, as well as sex between men, was theoretically punishable by death as a felony.[267] Attention on reproductive crimes was redefined as crimes against the state instead of being under the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical courts. In this way, England was able to wrest some power from the Church. That it was legislated at all,

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[264] Karras, *Common Women*, 53.

[265] Emphasis on the crime of sodomy first increased in the twelfth century concurrent with the escalations mentioned regarding the Wild Hunt led by women, peasant discontent, and the rise of heretical Christian sects. Additionally, the Church made its condemnatory stance on sodomy as it was related to homosexuality official around the same time as heresy was also considered a criminal offense against the state. Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 36-40.

[266] Paul Johnson, "Buggery and Parliament, 1533–2017," *Parliamentary History* 38, no. 3 (October 2019): 325–41, https://doi.org/10.1111/1750-0206.12463.

[267] Between Hanawalt, Karras, and Richards only one case of same-sex sodomy was found in London church court prior to 1508 Tom Linkinen, *Same-Sex Sexuality in Later Medieval English Culture, Crossing Boundaries: Turku Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 1 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam Univ. Press, 2015).

much less considered a felony, is telling that England was concerned about the birth rate.

Rape. Women were blamed for most sexual transgressions, and underlying attitude changes regarding the regulation of sexual behavior in men as well as women did not occur until the late sixteenth century when the population growth, expanding economies, and increasing centralization of power threatened the social order in new ways.[268] In fact, prostitution had been viewed with some leniency (with bishops owning brothels most notably the Bishop of Winchester in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) with the argument that men needed a "safety valve" to preserve social order[269] and prevent rape, adultery, and sodomy because prostitution was a lesser evil[270]. Across Continental Europe, brothels were municipally owned or licensed in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period. The English had a more restrictive practice. In the Middle Ages, the regulations surrounding prostitution focused more on keeping crime out of city centers and punishing independent women. Karras states, "Blame least often lay on the customer for whose benefit the entire system operated."[271]

Even the line of reasoning justifying prostitution to prevent rape is flimsy considering how rape was actually treated in the medieval and Early Modern periods. Hypothetical rape or rape in the abstract was considered one of the worst crimes, but in

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[268] Karras, *Common Women*, 137.
[269] Karras, *Common Women*, 76.
[270] Ptolemy of Lucca, Giordano of Pisa, Nicholas of Lyre, Cardinal Hostiensis, among others. Henry Ansgar Kelly, "Bishop, Prioress, and Bawd in the Stews of Southwark," *Speculum* 75, no. 2 (2000): 342–88, https://doi.org/10.2307/2887582. And Karras, *Common* Women, 76, 133-35, 185.
[271] Karras, *Common Women*, 64.

reality, rape was difficult to prosecute, even where it did carry a capital offense. The Parlement de Paris, which held jurisdiction over about half of France, heard fewer than three rape complaints[272] every ten years during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[273] Moreover, rape had previously become almost a "rite of passage to manhood" in fifteenth century Dijon, France. Rossiaud estimates that at least half of the young men living in Dijon had participated in what amounted to state sanctioned gang rape of local women. For various reasons, officials were unable to (or uninterested in) restricting this behavior. For many of the young men involved, the rape served as a class-based action against the wealthy: the men were damaging serving girls[274] who were employed by those wealthy enough to employ or own servants. The penalties, if the rapists were ever named, were minimal.[275] Similar occurrences of rape and gang rape of lower class women have been noted in cities in Italy and Spain as well as France during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[276] In France at this time, rape against a prostitute was essentially decriminalized; while it was still on the record as illegal, it was ruled as such a minor offense that it did not warrant punishment.[277] In

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[272] Compare this to the "confirmed capital sentences on about ten mothers [accused of infanticide] annually, in [the same] vast territory numbering eight million people." Gregory Hanlon, *Death Control in the West 1500-1800: Sex Ratios at Baptism in Italy, France and England* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2023).

[273] Greta Kroeker and Devon Sherwood, "Early Modern Rape Culture(s): Women's Confrontations with Religion and Law," Conference Paper, Attending to Early Modern Women: Action and Agency (Milwaukee: UW-Milwaukee School of Continuing Education, 2018), 433.

[274] This behavior was not limited to domestic servants. It included widows, concubines of the clergy, women whose husbands were out of town, and more. Jacques Rossiaud, *Medieval Prostitution* (New York, NY: Barnes & Noble, 1996),

[275] Rossuaud, *Medieval* Prostitution, 20-23.

[276] Kroeker and Sherwood, "Early Modern Rape Culture(s)," 432.

[277] Kroeker and Sherwood, "Early Modern Rape Culture(s), 440.

some German-speaking areas, prostitutes could not even bring charges against their attackers.[278]

Effectively, young men across Europe were able to channel their anger at the disparity of wealth between classes and direct it at women, thus developing a climate of intense misogyny[279] where eventually the term “singlewoman” became a euphemism for prostitutes[280] and even married women were considered whores who exchange sexual favors for material wealth and security.

Infanticide. Quite possibly the most important crime of the Early Modern period is that of infanticide. It is among the top charges brought against women during the trials and executions of this era, but as discussed earlier, infanticide had been practiced to some degree both before and throughout the Middle Ages without criminal punishment. In fact, Hanlon finds in his recent monograph that “recent studies identify abortion and deliberate infanticide as universal practices in human societies, part of a species repertory that would also include adultery, divorce, murder and war, but also nepotism, charity and instruction.”[281] Scholars in the West have a history of criticizing and ignoring discussions of infanticide, and indeed, hard evidence of the practice is difficult to come by because it was usually carried out in secret by the mother or midwife and with the quiet consent of the family and community. Neonatal infanticide could be explained in some cases as accidental, but it could also go largely unnoticed. Hanlon uses baptism

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[278] Aidyn Osgood, “Armies in the Sexual Imaginary of France and the Holy Roman Empire, 1500-1650” (University of Michigan, 2022), 154.
[279] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 47.
[280] Karras, *Common Women*, 52.
[281] Hanlon, *Death Control in the West*, 2.

records in cities across France and Italy in the Early Modern period to determine the sex ratios of neonates that survive to baptism (which was not always, or even frequently, performed within the two day window recommended by the Church) in order to demonstrate that people would regularly engage in "death control" when other methods of birth control failed, regardless of religious background.[282]

The findings that Hanlon presents are consistent with the picture I have drawn so far. The Middle Ages is characterized by leniency regarding corporal or capital punishments surrounding infant death. In a single diocesan archive for a suburb of Florence, priests granted 281 absolutions to parents for infant suffocation between 1500 and 1540.[283] Certainly some of these were accidental, but the admission of accidental suffocation did not come with any great punishment, so there was little reason to lie about it. Beginning in the sixteenth century, Europeans became increasingly concerned about the size of the population because more bodies were needed for their labor power. Moral outrage towards infanticide emerges around this time in Italy as well as France.[284] In Italy, where women were firmly in hand already, there are few accusations of witchcraft, especially as it related to infanticide. Additionally, Italy was one of the first places to establish foundling hospitals for unwanted children. There were about 1,200 in Italy during the sixteenth century[285] indicating a massive need for charity care as a single building could receive between hundreds to thousands of children annually.[286]

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[282] Hanlon, *Death Control in the West*, Introduction.
[283] Hanlon, *Death Control in the West*, 19.
[284] Hanlon, *Death Control in the West*, 125.
[285] Hanlon, *Death Control in the West*, 5.
[286]"Foundling Hospitals," in *1911 Encyclopædia Britannica*.

These numbers of unwanted children did not manifest from thin air after the hospitals were built. Instead, they indicate that a large percentage of children were diverted to the hospitals in lieu of suffocation or starvation. Italy had less need to condemn women for their choices when there was a social safety net to mitigate the pressures of poverty.

Altogether, in spite of women's brief foray into the working world as independent workers, by the late fifteenth century women's economic opportunities began to decrease, the age of marriage started to drop, and birth rates were increasing.[287] Furthermore, without irony, ships full of enslaved African bodies cross the Atlantic, conquistadors spread plague and violence,[288] and European states label infanticide as high treason against the nation[289] and the public was systemically desensitized to violence against the female body .

Criminalization of Poverty

The continuing enclosures of the commons and the privatization of land which left people with no homes and little to no moveable wealth combined with massive food shortages increased the wealth gap, and many people were left with few options. Many unemployed people were labeled as vagrants and put in stocks, whipped, then sent out of town. Vagrancy laws such as the English Vagabonds Act 1530 and the Vagabonds Act 1547 were enacted, making it illegal to be without employment, and a person persistently unemployed could be imprisoned and enslaved.[290] People became fearful

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[287] Karras, *Common Women*, 51.
[288] Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*, 1st Vintage Books ed (New York: Vintage, 2006).
[289] Hanlon, *Death Control in the West*, 4, 25, 125-27.
[290] C. S. L. Davies, "Slavery and Protector Somerset; The Vagrancy Act of 1547," *The Economic History Review* 19, no. 3 (1966): 533, https://doi.org/10.2307/2593162.

of their neighbors in levels unseen during the Middle Ages. Suspicion of outsiders passing through or looking for work, fear of neighbors stealing, and fear of crops or animals being cursed were common anxieties which drove people to accuse others of witchcraft.

At the same time, peasants were still working together, organizing, and rebelling against economic oppression and poverty. Various rebellions took place across Europe in areas where the witchcraft trials were located during the sixteenth century. The German Peasant War of 1525 was a multi-country effort to resist reinstatement of serfdom that included hundreds of thousands of laborers and artisans.[291] In France from the 1530s, an average of seven *emotions*, or uprisings, took place every single year for the next 150 years.[292] The Pilgrimage of Grace [293]starting in 1536 lasted six months and spread over northern England. The second largest city in England was captured during Kett's Rebellion in 1549, and 16,000 protestors demanded reduced rents and the cease of enclosures among other things.[294] Federici suggests a significance in the correlation between enclosure and witchcraft accusations. In England most of the trials occurred in Essex, where land had been privatized by the sixteenth century; on the other hand,

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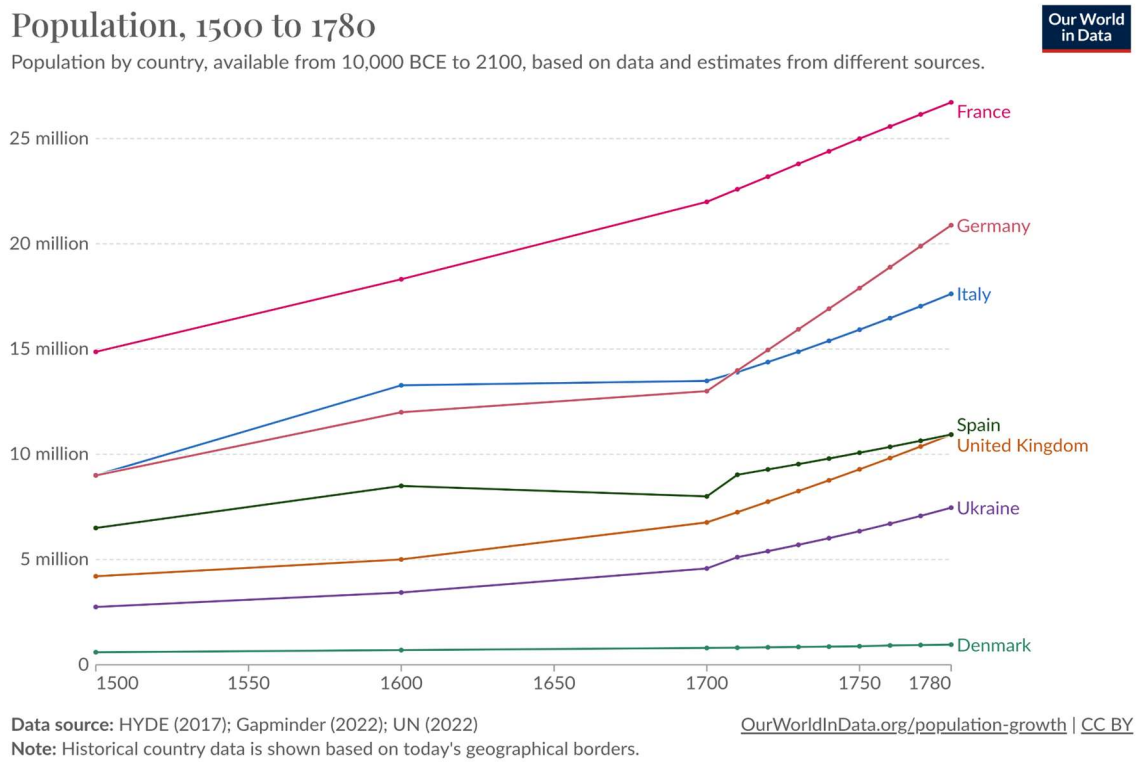
[291] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 64.
[292] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 82.
[293] The Pilgrimage of Grace was a peasant revolt that took place in Northern England as a reaction to Henry VIII's break with the Catholic Church, the dissolution and looting of the monasteries, and the policies of Thomas Cromwell. Between 30,000 and 40,000 people gathered to present demands to the king. M. L. Bush, "'Up for the Commonweal': The Significance of Tax Grievances in the English Rebellions of 1536," *The English Historical Review* 106, no. 419 (1991): 299–318, https://www.jstor.org/stable/573104.
[294] Andy Wood, *The 1549 Rebellions and the Making of Early Modern England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 2-4.

there is no record of witch hunting in areas where lands had not been enclosed. Even more striking, she explains, are the examples in Scotland. In the Western Highlands, there is no evidence of witch hunting, likely because of a communal land tenure system and strong kinship network; in the Anglicized Scottish Lowlands, the practice of enclosure had been imported along with the witch hunts.[295]

Figure 7. Population Growth from 1500 to 1780.



Hannah Ritchie et al., "Population Growth," Our World in Data, July 11, 2023, https://ourworldindata.org/population-growth.

Federici wonders if the thousands of agitators in the endemic peasant revolts in the Cevennes between 1476-1525 might be family or community relations to the women

[295] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 170.

who were burned at the stake in the same region less than twenty years later.[296] In her study of witchcraft trials at the beginning of the sixteenth century in the Italian Alps, Muraro found a direct connection between the trials, the local peasant uprising in 1525, and the nightly 'game' of the Lady which is a similar belief in the Italian areas.[297] Reports of the game come from several testimonies of women in witchcraft trials in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries who confessed to veneration of a goddess (*Oriente*, Fortune) through ecstasy and projection of their soul from their bodies.[298] They did this on Thursday, notably the same day of the week that Jeanne d'Arc mentioned. She notes that the Italian word *gioco* is another word for game and one of the earliest terms for the Sabbath.[299] It would have been the older generation of women, those who had seen and lost, that would be likely to make their hostility known.

Across Europe, authorities engaged in overt campaigns to accumulate labor power. These campaigns may have been aimed at people of all classes, but they impacted the poor the most. Through the incarceration and enslavement of the poor and unemployed to the workhouses or in hard manual labor, the demotion of women conscripted to give birth until their bodies gave out, and despite the death tolls in the hundreds of thousands, the new policies and trials had the hoped-for effect. Populations rose to new levels across Europe with the exceptions of Italy and Spain where the trials

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[296] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 174-175.
[297] Luisa Muraro, *La signora del gioco: la caccia alle streghe interpretata dalle sue vittime*, Saggistica / [La Tartaruga] (Milano: La tartaruga, 2006). Quoted in Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*.
[298] Ginzburg, *Ecstasies*.
[299] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 175.

had the most immediate negative effects; however, even the small decline was negated by rising population levels within a century.

The Witches' Sabbath

The Sabbath in this context is a folklore motif which involves nocturnal gathering of witches. It is an inversion and desecration of the Mass[300] as well as condemnation of the Jewish Sabbath. Women would fly (on various instruments—brooms, goats, or none at all) to the meeting, would venerate the devil and receive powers and instructions from him. They would consume the flesh of unbaptized babies[301] as well as fetuses harvested by the midwife/witch[302] (a perversion of the Eucharist). The devil would also have intercourse with each of them before the gathering turned into a full orgy. Much like the Greek and Roman witches, Circe and Medea, the actions the clergy describe women engaging in are projections of their own anxieties about control, reproduction, and change.

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[300] By naming the event after the Jewish day of rest, the authors were also being anti-Semitic by linking devil-worshiping witches with Jewish people.

[301] Carl Lindahl, John McNamara, and John Lindow, eds., *Medieval Folklore: A Guide to Myths, Legends, Tales, Beliefs, and Customs* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 438.

[302] Jane Schuyler, "The 'Malleus Maleficarum' and Baldung's 'Witches' Sabbath,'" *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 6, no. 3 (1987): 20–26.

Figure 8. Heretics flying on brooms.

The Master of Margaret of York, illuminator, Worship of the goat (detail), in Treatise on the crime of vauderie by Jean Tinctor, ca. 1470-80, Illuminated Manuscript, Bruges. National Library of France.
https://www.wga.hu/html_m/zgothic/miniatur/1451-500/1french1/36seculb.html

Consider the earlier motif of the Wild Hunt where women were accused of flying at night to meet up with other women including pagan goddesses, Diana, Perchta, Holda, and they would, in various cases, dance with each other, fly to people's homes to take food and drink offerings, and make it back home before anyone noticed. It is the same framework with new salacious behaviors which reflect the concerns of the wealthy who need more labor power to exploit.[303] It is also a reflection of the Catholic Church's

[303] The accumulation of labor power which was anticipated upon European discovery of the populations living in the Americas in the 1490s fell short as the Europeans brought several diseases to the indigenous people who had no immunological resistance. What they saw as a deep and wide pool of labor was slashed from an estimated 54 million people to 5.6 million people by 1600- a reduction of around 90%. Saloni Dattani, "What Were the Death Tolls from Pandemics in History?," *Our World in Data*, 2023, https://ourworldindata.org/historical-pandemics.

and the new Protestant leaders' anxieties around their own numbers of followers. It was no longer about women being quietly transgressive and independent; now there were implications that women were also rejecting the regulation of workhours which had developed in a wage-based system.[304]

Figure 9. Marginal decorations of "des vaudoises."

The Champion of Ladies is one of the most extensive defenses of women related to La Querelle des Femmes. Martin Le France, Le champions des dames, 1451, illuminated manuscript, France.

The term Sabbath was not used when the motif was initially being adapted. In 1435 Johannes Nieder, an early demonologist, did not use the term. The French treatise *Errores Gazariarum* (Errors of the Cathars) describes a witches' 'synagogue' in 1459 as well as details the magic of their flight: an ointment on a stick.[305] Night flight was still contested, though, by most people, who preferred to reference the earlier *Canon Episcopi*; *The Hammer* changed that and determined the use of Sabbath in the future.

Malleus Maleficarum

The Malleus Maleficarum, or *The Hammer of Witches destroyeth witches and their heresy as with a two-edged sword*, by Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger was first printed around 1486, and was considered the preeminent guide for uncovering

[304] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 177.
[305] Dean Miller, *Witches and Witchcraft*, First edition (New York: Cavendish Square, 2014),58.

maleficia for centuries. It was also the one of the first texts to combine witchcraft, heresy (note that the *Errores* lists Cathars as the problem while *Le champion* (see Figure 9) names Vaudoises, or Waldendensians), deals with the devil, the Sabbath, and the motif of women flying at night. It is this text that portrayed witches as synonymous with Satan because of the *maleficium* (as opposed to heretical belief) and officially equated doubts about the reality of witchcraft (which had been present for hundreds of years) with denial of Christ himself.[306]

Kramer's work was notoriously misogynistic, and he attributed the disproportionate number of women accused to the common belief of the time that women's lust was insatiable (a belief that goes all the way back to ancient Greece and women's cold, dry bodies needing men's hot, wet semen—especially older, drier, wrinkly women), therefore organically drawn to the carnality of witchcraft.[307] Prior to this time witchcraft and heresy were still associated with men and women but *The Hammer* marginalized men as practitioners who, in Kramer's and Sprenger's categorization, did not use harmful magic, and women were forefronted as the users of black or harmful magic.[308] At face value, readers did and have continued to believe Kramer's and Sprenger's claims that their experiences as witch-hunters were the influence in the writing of *The Hammer*. They were following a traditional folklore motif and amplifying the misogyny and violence. In fact, as their evidence, they present a litany of classical and medieval sources to substantiate their views on women. Unfortunately, Behringer,

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[306]Schuyler, "The 'Malleus Maleficarum' and Baldung's 'Witches' Sabbath.'"
[307] Schuyler, "THE 'MALLEUS MALEFICARUM'" 24.
[308] Hans Peter Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum and the Construction of Witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2018), 175.

in 2004, underscores his own misogyny when he points out that the authors "deliberately misquoted" Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, but Behringer also says there is no reason to doubt the number of women the authors reported were burned as witches.[309] Behringer claims throughout his book that there is no connection between the number of women executed in Europe and misogyny, and he attempts to refute this at one point with a misleading example of the high percentage of men killed in Iceland when the reality of that instance doesn't amount to two dozen people total.

In fact, Kramer's misogyny was goaded immediately prior to his drafting *The Hammer*. Henry Inquisitoris (Kramer) witnessed the interrogation of Helena Scheuberin, an aggressively independent woman who would recall to readers' minds the character of Kate from the first acts of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. She spat at Kramer and yelled a curse at him: "Fie on you, you bad monk, may the falling evil take you."[310] He was later censured for his line of questioning which focused more on her sexual immorality than her use of *maleficium*. The questioning was called off entirely when Kramer would not return to a more reasonable line of questioning. She was eventually released after the motion to dismiss on procedural grounds against Kramer's passionate objections. Kramer believed her to be a witch because she was commonly known to be sexually promiscuous, and that with her curse was enough to damn her in his eyes. To Kramer she was guilty of demonolatry because of her lust and not any heretical acts, and this was the case for many others.

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[309] Behringer, *Witches*, 73, 76.
[310] Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum*, 1.

The Hammer of Witches combined and codified motifs that had been present in penitentials and folklore for centuries. Rural people believed in “fairy cults” (a nineteenth century term) in which chosen women would accompany troops of fairies during their travels and revel with them. The Good women, or *bonae res*, were spiritually attending their goddess (Diana, Holda, Perchta, Abundia,) sometimes accompanied by the restless dead, and they had many regional variations across Europe. Additionally, people still talked of the *lamiae,* and they are even present in modern Greek folk tradition. However, in contrast to previous doubts about the reality of women’s ability to take flight, Kramer and Sprenger provided a biblical explanation. The authors cite Matthew 4:8 in which through flight Satan transports Christ to a secluded mountain to tempt him with worldly rule.[311] Since the devil granted witches his power, they could fly.

Printing Press

The Hammer was not the earliest witch hunting guide, but the popularity of the manual likely stems from the early printing press technology developed by Gutenberg, which allowed mass production of the text. Kramer recognized, as well as many others, the significance of the printing press in publishing and disseminating his ideology. In fact, without the printing press one might speculate about how the course of the persecutions would have been different. In the thirty years between its publication and the death of Kramer, thirteen editions had been published, and at least one of those

[311] Schuyler, “The ‘Malleus Maleficarum,’” 24.

editions was to be found in “libraries and judicial reference collections across Europe.”[312] Federici points out,

> Alerting the public to the dangers posed by the witches, through pamphlets publicizing the most famous trials and the details of their atrocious deeds, was one of the first tasks of the printing press…Judges, lawyers, statesmen, philosophers, scientists, theologians all became preoccupied with the "problem," wrote pamphlets and demonologies, agreed that this was the most nefarious crime, and called for its punishment.[313]

With the numerous copies available, *The Hammer* was a popular ready-to-go resource for witch hunters. It brought together the misogyny of the clerical elite, popular folk belief, and a plausible Biblical explanation of human flight. Additionally, it was prefaced with endorsements from the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. While records do not seem to exist that would confirm the funding of the publication, it seems clear to me that it was supported by those at the very top.

Printed Images

Moreover, *The Hammer*’s harsh imagery of women prompted some German artists (or patrons/ commissioners of the artists) such as Albrecht Altdorfer, Albrecht Dürer, and Hans Baldung. From three artists came potentially hundreds of prints and a profusion of images featuring the contents of the *Hammer* with increasingly unpleasant

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[312] Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum*, 7.
[313] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 168.

symbolism. Each of the artists had multiple works depicting witches, and these works inspired further artists.

Where women (and men) had been depicted going to the sabbath fully clothed through the end of the fifteenth century, women's bodies were now weaponized in the images to connect women's bodies and sexuality more viscerally with witchcraft. By commissioning these images, people were able to shift the earlier concept of witchcraft from heretical gatherings where men and women venerate and kiss a goat's behind, into a singularly *female* issue.

Figure 10. Albrecht Dürer, Witch with her distaff riding backwards on a goat, ca. 1500

Print from copper engraving, Nuremberg. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1868-0822-188. The Hammer was re-printed in Nuremberg (where Dürer was in residence) by A. Koberger in 1494 and 1496.

Sullivan argues that it was not the *Hammer* which influenced these artists. Instead she claims their subject study of the witch is drawn from Europe's revival of humanist and classical ideas that is the foundation of the Renaissance, and the audience would have responded to this much more than the witch trials, since there were no "significant" witch trials until the latter half of the

sixteenth century.[314] However, Sullivan overlooks “endemic witch-hunts in Western Europe” from 1480-1520, “witch-hunting by Inquisitors in Italian Alpine valleys” from 1495-1525, “harsh criticism of witch-hunting in Renaissance Italy” from 1505-1525, and five other situations from 1525-1562 when “witch-hunting becomes common in parts of continental Europe.”[315] Second, there are very few images of witches in flight prior to Durer’s and Baldung’s contributions.[316]

Moreover, Dürer lived and traveled through the southern regions of Germany during precisely the years when the trials were at their height. Hults suggests that Baldung’s witches are satirical jabs at women more generally underscoring the delusion of flight. The scene presented seems to come directly from any one of the sermons she lists by contemporaries of Baldung also living in Strasburg during the first two decades of the sixteenth century who were vocal about the impossibility of women being able to fly with magical ointment. Baldung was a wealthy citizen of the town, and he was asked to be a senator before his death. Shortly after this engraving, the first book written in the German vernacular, *Die Emeis* (The Ant-Heap) was published with illustrations some scholars have attributed to Baldung.[317]

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[314] Margaret A. Sullivan, “The Witches of Dürer and Hans Baldung Grien*,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (2000): 333–401, https://doi.org/10.2307/2901872.

[315] Wolfgang Behringer, *Witches and Witch-Hunts: A Global History*, Themes in History (Cambridge, UK ; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2004), xii-xiii.

[316] Behringer notes “Flying witches in church paintings (Denmark, Slovenia) *c.* 1450. There are also two known illuminated manuscripts that depict Waldensians being carried by demons or flying on brooms. Another is a pen and ink sketch by Albrecht Altdorfer in 1507.

[317] Linda C. Hults, “Baldung and the Witches of Freiburg: The Evidence of Images,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 2 (1987): 249–76, https://doi.org/10.2307/204283.

Figure 11. Hans Baldung, The Witches, 1510.

Chiaroscuro woodcut in two blocks, printed in gray and black, Salsburg. https://www.metmuseum.org/ art/collection/search/336235. It is one of the first prints made after his time as a journeyman in Dürer's workshop.

Significantly, Dürer and Baldung used woodcuts and engravings for the medium of the witches, and this allowed even more printed images to be made-- especially in comparison to illuminations. The wooden or metal base was strong enough to last through many printings. There are several pen and ink drawings of Baldung's *Sabbath*

as well.[318] In regard to Dürer's engravings, no clear patron is noted, but he was incredibly popular throughout the south of Europe.[319] He was a freelance artist, living from his commissions, and Nuremberg was a wealthy German city.

Solicited Accusations

Handbooks, known as *vade mecum* (go with me), revised and reprinted often, helped to guide the church leaders and magistrates who in turn would coach their communities on the spread of witchcraft and demonolatry.[320] Priests and ministers in some areas were required to ask their parishioners under oath if they knew of any witchcraft rumors.[321] The gathering of these 'confirmations' would present what appears to be an organic local movement, but in reality is constructed beforehand. Alternatively, they could recruit and hire witch hunters to do the work for them, sometimes carrying lists of suspects in between villages.[322]

Magistrates and demonologists maneuvered within a system in which one accusation could spawn many new ones (the trial structure itself was not new, but the direction of questions was). Magistrates and inquisitors would use questions that were written out beforehand, and if the answers did not line up with expectations, the trial moved on to questions under threat of torture, then questions while under torture. Many

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[318] Hults, "Baldung and the Witches of Freiburg."
[319] Florens Deuchler, "Albrecht Dürer," *The Print Collector's Newsletter* 2, no. 1 (1971): 4–5, https://www.jstor.org/stable/44130079.
[320] Clive Holmes, "Women: Witnesses and Witches," *Past & Present*, no. 140 (1993): 45–78, https://www.jstor.org/stable/651213.
[321] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 166.
[322] Malcolm Gaskill, "Witchcraft and Evidence in Early Modern England," *Past & Present*, no. 198 (2008): 33–70, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25096700.

of those questions were asked in search of additional women to bring to trial. The use of leading questions and other processes, such as body searches, were not instigated by the original accuser or witnesses. Through the mass production of pamphlets, demonologies, and printed images, those in power would have been able to mobilize the peasant class to do the work of making accusations against each other;[323] in this way, it would appear that the accusations were a natural, human response coming from the bottom up. In reality, the hegemonic class benefited from the trials as a means to divide, profit from, and distract those same peasants from the revolts such as the one brewing in Germany which erupted in 1524. The media is used in much the same way today.

Politics and Folklore

Some people of the time were able to recognize the way the elite were attempting to choreograph social behavior. Intellectuals in Italian areas, for example, were distrustful of clerics talking about the devil. Neapolitan philosopher and writer Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) captures this skepticism of the supernatural and recognition of the power of money in a comic character whose motto is "*non incanti ma contanti"* (not charms but coins).[324] This is likely the case in other areas as well, but Italy was undoubtedly the vanguard of the humanist philosophical movement.

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[323] This is not dissimilar to the idea pushed by the media of "black on black crime" which falsely implies that people of color are naturally more violent and ignores the multiple systems in place which lead to violence within their own communities…

[324] Luciano Parinetto, *Streghe e Potere: Il Capitale e La Persecuzione Dei Diversi*, 1. ed, Orizzonti Della Storia (Milano: Rusconi, 1998). Quoted in Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (New York: Autonomedia, 2004).

Most people, however, were not able to catch on to the nuance that was the shift from the Good Ladies of the Night or the Wild Hunt to the Witches' Sabbath. It was not obvious how the motif went from simple delusion to witchcraft and demonolatry over several generations. What further occludes the transformation of women into witches is that it was not overtly political. The transition was shrouded in ideas of morality and gender relations which were already strained.

A myth, or in this case a motif, is political not because it has any inherent political content, but because of the way it begins to highlight the particular political conditions concerning the relationship and distribution of power among certain social groups. [325] Folklore and politics (nation-building and nationalism) are inherently intertwined. As the Grimm Brothers,[326] for example, were directed by their patrons, who were heads of state, so too have other writers, artists, and scholars been so directed. Mugnani emphasizes that the transmission of folklore must be considered within the frame of relationships to power, and he illustrates this idea with an analogy of a card game: in a game of cards, the dealer is (mathematically at least) part of the game, but they are not considered a 'player'.[327] To extend the analogy to politics and folklore, the person who commissions a woodcut involving a familiar myth or motif to influence local sentiments is not overtly named. What is recognized is the artist's hand and the audience's

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[325] Chiara Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[326] Scott Harshbarger, "Grimm and Grimmer: 'Hansel and Gretel' and Fairy Tale Nationalism," *Style* 47, no. 4 (2013): 490–508, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/style.47.4.490.
[327] Fabio Mugnaini, "The Haunted Discipline: On the Political Nature of Folklore and the Political Destiny of Its Study," *Narodna Umjetnost* 53, no. 1 (July 20, 2016): 24-25, https://doi.org/10.15176/vol53no101.

reception, not the decision-maker at the top.[328]

In the past century or so, this same pattern has played out very clearly in many places. The fascist regime under Mussolini used Italian folklore through the work of folklorists who promoted rurality[329] in much the same way that the Romantics of Europe did. At the same time, those in power were both valorizing folk life and instrumentalizing, often revising, the traditions of those same people. After the Spanish civil war of the 1930's, Franco's regime utilized traditional poetic forms to manufacture a national hero, Franco.[330] Hitler's propaganda machine openly cherry-picked folk myths and motifs from outside of Germany such as the *swastika*, a symbol of well-being and prosperity in India, and the medieval Norse epic of Siegfried. The entire Neoclassical style in architecture is based on visually connecting (then) modern state structures with the democratic ideas of ancient Athens and the Roman republic, and it continues to be a motif in American government structures today.

Bottici argues that political myths are the producers of "common political identities" as well as the results of those identities.[331] Mugnaini says scholars have paid "too much attention to traditions as the product of cultural transmissions from the previous generation than as the process of active selection from the past under the influence of some present and urgent need such as the construction of meaningful collective practices."[332] It is important to consider who is choosing which narratives and

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[328] Mugnaini, "The Haunted Discipline," 21.
[329] Mugnaini, "The Haunted Discipline," 26.
[330] Carmen Ortiz, "The Uses of Folklore by the Franco Regime," *The Journal of American Folklore* 112, no. 446 (1999): 479–96, https://doi.org/10.2307/541485.
[331] Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 212.
[332] Mugnaini, "The Haunted Discipline," 29.

imagery are popular in any given moment. For medieval studies, we should be particularly careful to question long held theories about what came about as ‘popular belief’, what hegemonies those popular beliefs reinforce, and to what extent those popular beliefs may have been manipulated.

CONCLUSION

The Cycle Continues

In the continental areas of Europe in the Middle Ages, some people believed women traveled through the air in spirit or corporeal form in order to attend to various regional goddesses. Those same beliefs which demonstrated women's agency were useful in the political smear campaign against women during the High and Late Middle Ages which turned the original motif of the Wild Hunt into the Witches' Sabbath and the witch hunts of the Early Modern Era. Ultimately the motifs of women gathering at night were weaponized to escalate the deepening divide between men and women which persists to this day. Through the instrumentalization of this motif from popular folklore, as well as through various other methods, the powerful of Europe, specifically the areas of modern-day France, Germany, and England, attempted to distract and divide the peasant class, thereby weakening the effort to resist their oppression and ensuring the expropriation of women's agency for the benefit of capitalist accumulation of labor. With the removal of Diana, Perchta, and Holda from their position in their nightly rides, powerful female figures were transformed into the devil, a masculine figure who orchestrated and subjected women's behavior. After 1400, paradoxically, the most powerful thing a woman could be is a puppet controlled and used by the devil. Imagery of witches today largely recalls the witches of the Early Modern period, and misconceptions about women's agency in the Middle Ages persist today based on stereotypes canonized in the Early Modern period. Politicians in the West still use the

accusation of witchcraft in an attempt to bring down strong women.[333] This research reaffirms the earlier work of Federici around class conflict and the intersection of gender and power and adds a new layer of data to show how the hegemonic class used folklore to construct a new narrative of womanhood.

The patterns of class conflicts, pandemics, climate change, political manipulation, gender gaps, and food insecurity are recurring now. The Wild Hunt has continued to be a popular motif in art and literature, but since the emergence of the Witches' Sabbath, women are not featured as leaders in the motif. [334] Instead, women were relegated to be witches. How might the findings of this research inform our understanding of current events?

The COVID-19 pandemic has had very different effects than pandemics of the past. The real wage for both the public and private sectors dropped and did not recover for over a year (see Figure 12)[335] whereas research by Jordan et al. suggests they should have risen according to historic models (see Appendix 11).[336] At the same time

[333] Peter Suciu, "Video Of Taylor Swift Flashing A 'Satanic' Gesture Has Gone Viral," *Forbes*, accessed February 19, 2024, https://www.forbes.com/sites/petersuciu/2024/02/06/video-of-taylor-swift-flashing-a-satanic-gesture-has-gone-viral/.

[334] After the reemergence of the motifs through the research of the Grimm brothers in the nineteenth century, artists such as Wagner and Arbo include Valkyries, women Odin charged with choosing which of the dead would be escorted to Valhalla. The Valkyries are an interesting topic for research as they are closely related to Odin, another leader of the Hunt. The Norse speaking areas were largely beyond the scope of this paper.

[335] United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. "COVID-19 Economic Trends." Raw data. (Washington DC: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, February 18, 2024). https://data.bls.gov/apps/covid-dashboard/home.htm

[336] Jordà, Singh, and Taylor, "Longer-Run Economic Consequences of Pandemics."

interest rates have risen dramatically,[337] and the rates have still not returned to pre-pandemic levels.[338]

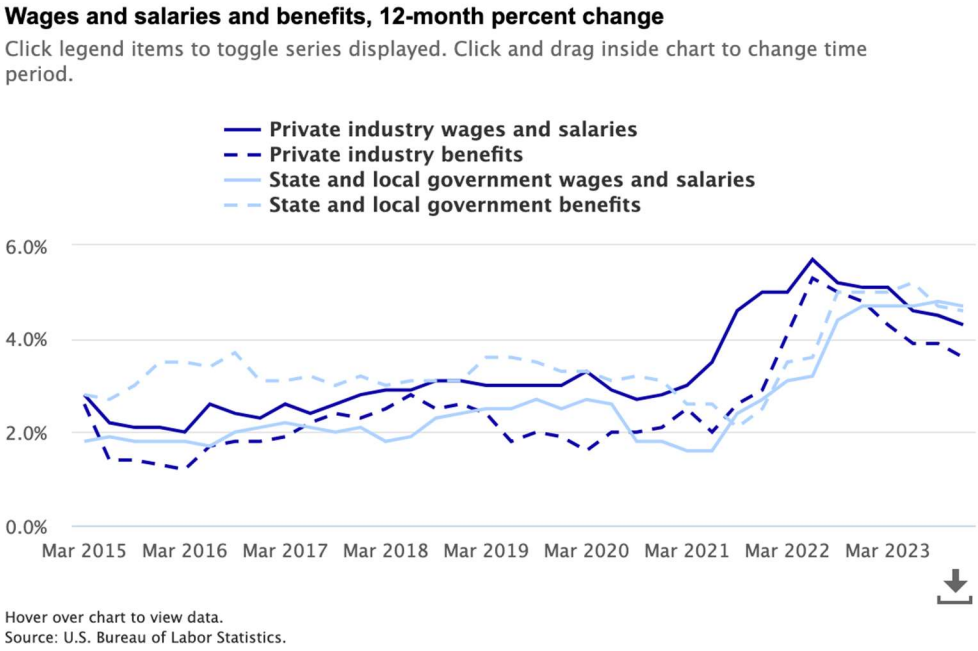

Figure 12. Wages and Salaries 2015-2023.

United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, "COVID-19 Economic Trends," United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed February 19, 2024, https://data.bls.gov/apps/covid-dashboard/home.htm.

Many believe that these numbers are the direct result of corporate price gouging (see Appendix 12).[339] The wealthy and those in control of policy were quicker to respond to the shocks of COVID-19 than those in the fourteenth century responded to

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[337] Today's dollar is equivalent to $1.84 in January of 2020. United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. "CPI Inflation Calculator," (Washington DC: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, February 18, 2024). https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm.

[338] "Current US Inflation Rates: 2000-2024," July 23, 2008, https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/inflation/current-inflation-rates/.

[339] Talmon Joseph Smith and Joe Rennison, "Companies Push Prices Higher, Protecting Profits but Adding to Inflation," *The New York Times*, May 30, 2023, sec. Business, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/30/business/economy/inflation-companies-profits-higher-prices.html.

the Black Death. They were able to manipulate prices to protect their profits,[340] and recently the International Monetary Fund reiterated the way in which this pandemic will increase inequality.[341] While organization of the working class for demonstrations and voter turnout would be an option, the U.S. is seeing a decrease[342] in available third spaces, a privatization and limiting of social gathering spots similar to the enclosures of the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period. Places such as Starbucks are covering outlets to discourage 'loitering'[343] and Rubart et al find (unsurprisingly) that people in poverty and neighbors that are predominately people of the global majority have fewer public spaces to access. They are the most in need of parks, greenspaces, libraries, community centers, recreational facilities, and low-cost commercial spaces like coffee shops[344] (emphasis on the *low-cost*), and they are the same populations least able to advocate for better infrastructure (see Appendix 13).

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[340] Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Gross Domestic Product (Third Estimate), Corporate Profits (Revised Estimate), and GDP by Industry, Third Quarter 2023" (Maryland: United States, December 21, 2023), https://www.bea.gov/news/2023/gross-domestic-product-third-estimate-corporate-profits-revised-estimate-and-gdp.

[341] Davide Furceri, Prakash Loungani, and Jonathan D. Ostry, "How Pandemics Leave the Poor Even Farther Behind," *IMF Blog* (blog), May 11, 2020, https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2020/05/11/blog051120-how-pandemics-leave-the-poor-even-farther-behind.

[342] Jessica Finlay et al., "Closure of 'Third Places'? Exploring Potential Consequences for Collective Health and Wellbeing," *Health & Place* 60 (November 1, 2019): 102225, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2019.102225.

[343] Damian Trujillo, "Starbucks Now Blocking Power Outlets. What Are Other Coffee Shops Doing?," *NBC Bay Area* (blog), October 28, 2023, https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/coffee-shops-power-outlets/3354570/.

[344] Danielle Rhubart et al., "Sociospatial Disparities in 'Third Place' Availability in the United States," *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World* 8 (2022): 237802312210903, https://doi.org/10.1177/23780231221090301.

In addition to the accumulation of profits, some economists,[345] politicians,[346] and corporations[347] in the U.S. have made it clear that the accumulation of labor power is also a driving concern. On one hand, the U.S. has more people incarcerated than any other country by a very large margin, alone holding over twenty percent of the world's prison population. The state of Oklahoma has more people incarcerated than most other countries, and ten times that of Ethiopia, Belgium, and France.[348] The fact that slavery is still legal under the Constitution in the case of criminal punishment, then, should not come as a shock. Two-thirds of prisoners in the U.S. are workers without access to basic worker protections,[349] not to mention horrific access to healthcare especially maternity care.[350] However, in the past decade, fewer people are being sentenced to prison, but those who are receive longer sentences. This has much to do with recent policy changes as well as the decriminalization of marijuana in many states.

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[345] J. Nelson, "Persuasion and Economic Efficiency. The Cost-Benefit Analysis of Banning Abortion," *Economics and Philosophy* 9, no. 2 (October 1993): 229–52, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0266267100001541.

[346] None, "OPINION: Abortion Ban Reflects GOP Views toward Women," *Coeur d'Alene Press*, January 10, 2024, https://cdapress.com/news/2024/jan/10/opinion-abortion-ban-reflects-gop-views-toward-women/.

[347] Gin Armstrong, "These Are the Millionaire CEOs Whose Corporations Fund Politicians Banning Abortions," *Eyes on the Ties*, May 29, 2019, https://news.littlesis.org/2019/05/29/these-are-the-millionaire-ceos-whose-corporations-fund-politicians-banning-abortions/.

[348] Prison Policy Initiative, "United States Profile," accessed February 19, 2024, https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/US.html.
See Appendix 16

[349] ACLU, "Captive Labor: Exploitation of Incarcerated Workers | ACLU," *American Civil Liberties Union* (blog), June 15, 2022, https://www.aclu.org/news/human-rights/captive-labor-exploitation-of-incarcerated-workers.

[350] According to Assata Shakur's autobiography, she was encouraged to have an abortion, received terrible prenatal care, and was forced to give birth alone and without anesthetics or sterile conditions while on the floor in solitary confinement. Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography* (Chicago, Ill: L. Hill Books, 2001).

Ultimately this means fewer bodies to exploit under the prison system.

During those same years, the U.S. has seen an increase in the number of attacks on women's reproductive rights, and a more dramatic increase since the beginning of the pandemic. The birth rate in the U.S. and in most areas around the world has been declining since the 1960s[351] when the FDA approved the distribution of birth control pills, and a sharper decline occurred in the 1970s after the decision to legalize abortion access. The U.S.'s rate of natural change has been shrinking since then as births are outnumbering deaths in smaller margins (see Appendix 14). It almost seems as if politicians and company owners are concerned about maintaining a population that is able to work.[352] In a May 2022 House Judiciary Committee hearing, Johnson claimed that abortion deprives the national economy of potential "able-bodied workers" during a discussion of the Supreme Court's anticipated overturning of Roe v. Wade.[353] The following month, Supreme Court Justice Alito included remarks from a seventeenth-century jurist, Sir Matthew Hale, infamous now for his belief that women could not be raped by their husbands, women who claimed rape were never "so

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[351] "World Bank Open Data," World Bank Open Data, accessed March 12, 2024, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN.

[352] Immigration has significant positive effects on the economy for generations. It leads to more innovation and occupational stability. Despite being a logical solution to a population decline resulting in unfilled jobs, immigration is largely a political hotspot which continues to divide the U.S. to this day. Many politicians blame immigration for low wages, lack of affordable housing, higher taxes, and a drain on the welfare system while the inverse is demonstrably true. "The Effects of Immigration on the United States' Economy," *Penn Wharton Budget Model*, June 27, 2016, https://budgetmodel.wharton.upenn.edu/issues/2016/1/27/the-effects-of-immigration-on-the-united-states-economy.

[353] "Fact Check: Women's Birthing-Duty Quote Misattributed to US House Speaker Johnson," *Reuters*, November 15, 2023, sec. Fact Check, https://www.reuters.com/fact-check/womens-birthing-duty-quote-misattributed-us-house-speaker-johnson-2023-11-15/.

innocent," and that potions causing abortions amounted to homicide. Hale's statements regarding witchcraft had a direct impact on the Salem Witch Trials.[354]

The restriction to abortion access, as well as access to other forms of preventative birth control under the argument that life begins at fertilization, has had the intended consequences. Despite the number of maternal deaths, which is already a staggering high in the U.S.,[355] birth rates are rising (partly as a result of better data collection), but also due to negligent health policy (see Appendix 15). Numbers are not out yet since the 2022 Dobbs decision to deny healthcare access to women, but a majority of OBGYNs surveyed by KFF in 2023 believed that the decision will cause a further increase in maternal mortality and systemic racism in maternal healthcare.[356] Since maternal outcomes and access to health care in general are so much worse for women of color and those in poverty, birth rates are likely to rise in those sectors; this will create a new pool of wage workers and further disenfranchise women, especially

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[354] Ken Armstrong, "Draft Overturning Roe v. Wade Quotes Infamous Witch Trial Judge With Long-Discredited Ideas on Rape," ProPublica, May 6, 2022, https://www.propublica.org/article/abortion-roe-wade-alito-scotus-hale.

[355] Maternal mortality in 2019 was double and quadruple that of other developed nations such as Germany, Japan, and Sweden. In 2021, the rate increased by 30% from a rate of 20.1 to 32.9. Donna Hoyert, "Maternal Mortality Rates in the United States, 2021" (National Center for Health Statistics (U.S.), March 16, 2023), https://doi.org/10.15620/cdc:124678.
Due to a fractured state by state reporting system for maternal deaths, data since the Dobbs decision in 2022 is *severely* lacking. Hanna Renedo, "How Do We Know What We Don't Know About Maternal Mortality After Dobbs v Jackson?," *AMA Journal of Ethics* 26, no. 1 (January 1, 2024): 92–93, https://doi.org/10.1001/amajethics.2024.92. (see

[356] Brittni Frederiksen et al., "A National Survey of OBGYNs' Experiences After Dobbs," *KFF*, June 21, 2023, https://www.kff.org/womens-health-policy/report/a-national-survey-of-obgyns-experiences-after-dobbs/.

younger women whose access to education directly decreases the number of births in their lifetime.

The culture wars continue still. 'Trad wives' preach from their social media platforms on the benefits of cooking and cleaning when most Americans cannot afford to live on one salary. They are juxtaposed against the "Satan-worshiping" Swifties and Taylor Swift herself with whom Trump believes he might engage in a "holy war."[357] Where are the witches of the previous holy war? They are the feminists at the front of the culture wars, being used as the new fear tactic to wield and keep the gender chasm open. They are the baby-killing, man-hating, devil-worshipers of today.

This research has drawn on several disciplines including history, economics, religion, and folklore and brought together the topics of women, the Wild Hunt, the inter-class conflict of the Middle Ages for the first time. The groundwork laid in this thesis suggests avenues for further research. To what extent is the current political situation actively sacrificing women in favor of an increased birth rate? As to the motif of the Wild Hunt, there are many more traditions to examine, such as in Norse, Slavic, and Celtic mythology which were largely beyond the scope of this paper. The figure of Hludana is a mystery noted by Grimm and recently verified, but little is known of her. Research into this goddess would be very new. This research would not have been possible without the digitization of records from the Middle Ages, and it will be interesting to see what continues to be digitized and made available to scholars over the next decade or so.

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[357] Adam Rawnsley Suebsaeng Asawin, Adam Rawnsley, and Asawin Suebsaeng, "Trump Allies Pledge 'Holy War' Against Taylor Swift," *Rolling Stone* (blog), January 30, 2024, https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/donald-trump-more-popular-taylor-swift-maga-biden-1234956829/.

Appendix 1 Germanic Legal Codes

Germanic Legal Codes[358]

Salic Law, France, 6th C.

> "If any person shall call a free woman a stria or an evil one, and shall fail to prove it, they shall themselves be arraigned and fined 7,500 denarii, which are 187 solidi."
>
> "If a stria eats a man and is put on trial, she shall be sentenced and condemned to pay 8,000 denarii, or 200 solidi."
>
> "If one man shall call another hereburgium and accuses him of having carried a cauldron to the place where the striae meet, and shall be unable to prove it, let him be arraigned himself & condemned to pay a fine of 2,500 denarii."

Lombard Code of King Rothar, Italy, 643 AD

> "Let nobody presume to kill a foreign serving maid or female slave as a striga or masca, because it is not possible, nor ought it to be at all believed by Christian minds that a woman can eat a living man up from within.
>
> If anyone presumes to perpetrate such an illegal and impious act, he shall pay 60 solidi as compensation according to her status, and moreover, he shall pay 100 solidi in addition for the guilt, half to the king and half to him those servant she was....If indeed a judge has ordered him to perpetrate this evil act, then the judge shall pay compensation according as above."
>
> "If he who possesses the guardianship of a free girl or woman (with the exception of her father or brother) unjustly accuses her of being a striga or a masca, he shall lose her guardianship and she shall have the right to choose whether she wishes to return to her relatives or to commend herself to the court of the king, who will then have her guardianship in his control."

789 Charlemagne's Capitulary for the Saxons

> "If anyone, deceived by the Devil, Shall believe, as is cusomary amongst pagans, that any man or woman is a striga and eats men, and shall on that account burn that person to death or eat his or her flesh, or give it to others to eat, he shall be executed."

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[358] Mary O'Neil, "HSTEU305 Week 2," 2017, https://courses.washington.edu/hsteu305/305%20EMWB.htm.

Decree of Charles the Bald, France, 873 (against sorcerers & witches for murder)

> "We expressly recommend the lords of the realm to seek out and apprehend with the greatest possible diligence those who are guilty of these crimes in their respective countries. If they are convicted, and if the testimony against them is not sufficient to prove their guilt, they shall be submitted to the will of God [i.e. trial by ordeal]"

Appendix 2 *Canon Episcopi*

From Regino of Prüm's *Canon Episcopi* (ca. 906 CE)[359]

"Bishops and their officials must labor with all their strength to uproot thoroughly from their parishes the pernicious art of sorcery and malefice invented by the devil, and if they find a man or woman follower of this wickedness to eject them foully disgraced from their parishes. For the Apostle says 'A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition avoid.' Those are held captive by the devil who, leaving their creator, seek the aid of the devil. And so holy Church must be cleansed of this pest.

It is also not to be omitted that some wicked women perverted by the devil, seduced by illusions and phantasms of demons, believe and profess themselves, in the hours of night, to ride upon certain beasts with Diana, the goddess of pagans, and an innumerable multitude of women, and in the silence of the dead of night to traverse great spaces of earth, and to obey her commands as of their mistress, and to be summoned to her service on certain nights. But I wish it were they alone who perished in their faithlessness and did not draw many with them into the destruction of infidelity. For an innumerable multitude, deceived by this false opinion, believe this to be true and, so believing, wander from the right faith and are involved in the error of the pagans when they think that there is anything of divinity or power except the one God. Wherefore the priests throughout their churches should preach with all insistence to the people that they may know this to be in every way false and that such phantasms are imposed on the minds of infidels and not by the divine but by the malignant spirit.

Thus Satan himself, who transfigures himself into an angel of light, when he has captured the mind of a miserable woman and has subjugated her to himself by infidelity and incredulity, immediately transforms himself into the species and similitudes of different personages and deluding the mind which he holds captive and exhibiting things, joyful or mournful, and persons, known or unknown, leads it through devious ways, and while the spirit alone endures this, the faithless mind thinks these things happen not in the spirit but in the body. Who is there that is not led out of himself in dreams and nocturnal visions, and sees much when sleeping which he had never seen waking? Who is so stupid and foolish as to think that all these things which are only done in spirit happen in the body, when the Prophet Ezekiel saw visions of the Lord in

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[359] Arthur C. Howland, ed., *Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft, Volume 1* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1939), 178-179, https://doi.org/10.9783/9781512817485.

spirit and not in the body, and the Apostle John saw and heard the mysteries of the Apocalypse in the spirit and not in the body, as he himself says 'I was in the spirit.' And Paul does not dare to say that he was rapt in the body.

It is therefore to be proclaimed publicly to all that whoever believes such things or similar to these loses the faith, and he who has not the right faith in God is not of God but of him in whom he believes, that is, of the devil. For of our Lord it is written 'All things were made by Him.' Whoever therefore believes that anything can be made, or that any creature can be changed to better or to worse or be transformed into another species or similitude, except by the Creator himself who made everything and through whom all things were made, is beyond doubt an infidel."—Regino, De Ecclesiasticis Disciplinis, 1. ii, c. 364

Appendix 3 *Decretum*

From Burchard of Worms' Corrector (*Decretum*, Book XIX) (ca. 1008-1012 CE) [360]

Passages which are particularly relevant are in bold.

60. Hast thou consulted magicians and led them into thy house in order to seek out any magical trick, or to avert it; or hast thou invited to the according to pagan custom diviners who would divine for the, to demand of them the things to come as from a prophet, and those who practice lots or expect by lots to foreknow the future, or those who are devoted to auguries or incantations? If thou hast, thou shalt do penance for two years in the appointed fast days..

61. Hast thou observed the traditions of the pagans, which, as if by hereditary right, with the assistance of the devil, fathers have ever left to their sons even to these days, that is, that thou shouldst worship the elements, the moon or the sun or the course of the stars, the new moon or the eclipse of the moon; that thou shouldst be able by thy shouts or by thy aid to restore her splendor, or these elements [be able] to succor thee, or that thou shouldst have power with them--or hast thou observed the new moon for building a house or making marriages? If thou hast, thou shalt do penance for two years in the appointed fast days; for it is written, "All, whatsoever ye do in word and in work, do all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

63. Hast thou made knots and incantations, and those various enchantments which evil men, swineherds, ploughmen, and sometimes hunters make, while they say diabolical formulae over bread or grass and over certain nefarious bandages, and either hide these in a tree or throw them where two roads, or three roads, meet, that they may set free their animals and dogs from pestilence or destruction and destroy those of another? If thou hast, thou shalt do penance for two years on the appointed days.

65. Hast thou been present at or consented to the vanities which women practice in their woolen work, in their webs, who when they begin their webs hope to be able to bring it about that with incantations and with the beginning of these the threads of the warp and woof become so mingled together that unless the

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[360] John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, eds., *Medieval Handbooks of Penance: A Translation of the Principal "Libri Poenitentiales" and Selections from Related Documents*, Records of Western Civilization (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 329- 335.

supplement these in turn by other counter-incantations of the devil, the whole will perish? If thou hast been present or consented, thou shalt do penance for thirty days on bread and water.

65. Hast thou collected medicinal herbs with evil incantations, not with the creed and the Lord's Prayer, that is, with the singing of the credo in Deum and the Paternoster? If thou hast done it otherwise thou shalt do penance for ten days on bread and water.

66. Hast thou come to any place to pray other than a church or other religious place which thy bishop or thy priest showed thee, that is, either to springs or to stones or to trees or to crossroads, and there in reverence for the place lighted a candle or a torch or carried thither bread or any offering or eaten there or sought there any healing of body or mind? If thou hast done or consented to such things, thou shalt do penance for three years on the appointed fast days.

67. Hast thou sought out oracles (strigam holdam) in codices or in tablets, as many are accustomed to do who presume to obtain oracles from psalters or from the Gospels or from anything else of the kind? If thou hast, thou shalt do penance for ten days on bread and water.

68. Hast thou ever believed or participated in this perfidy, that enchanters and those who say that they can let loose tempests should be able through incantation of demons to arouse tempests or to change the minds of men? If thou hast believed or participated in this, thou shalt do penance for one year on the appointed fast days.

69. Hast thou believed or participated in this infidelity, that there is any woman who through certain spells and incantations can turn about the minds of men, either from hatred to love or from love to hatred, or by her bewitchments can snatch away men's goods? If thou hast believed or participated in such acts, thou shalt do penance for one year on the appointed fast days.

70. Hast thou believed that there is any woman who can do that which some, deceived by the devil, affirm that they must do of necessity or at his command, that is, with a throng of demons transformed into the likeness of women (she whom common folly calls the witch Hulda), must ride on certain beasts in special nights and be numbered with their company? If though hast participated in this infidelity, thou shouldst do penance for one year on the appointed fast days.

90. Hast thou believed or participated in this infidelity, that some wicked women, turned back after Satan, seduced by illusions and phantoms of demons, believe and affirm: that with Diana, a goddess of the pagans, and an unnumbered multitude of women, they ride on certain beasts and traverse many areas of the earth in the stillness of the quiet night, obey her commands as if she were their mistress, and are called on special nights to her service? But would that these only should perish in their perfidy and not drag many with them into the ruin of their aberration. For an unnumbered multitude, decieved by this false opinion, believe these things to be true, and in believing this they turn aside from sound faith and are involved in the error of the pagans when they think there is any divinity or heavenly authority except the one God. But the devil transforms himself into the form and likeness of many persons, deluding in sleep the mind which he holds captive, now with joy, now with sadness, now showing unknown persons, he leads it through some strange ways, and while only the spirit suffers this, the unfaithful mind thinks that these things happen not in the spirit but in the body. For who is not in night visions led out of himself, and who while sleeping does not see many things which he never saw while awake? Who then is so foolish and stupid that he supposes that those things which take place in the spirit only, happen also in the body? …

91. Hast thou observed funeral wakes, that is, been present at the watch over corpses of the dead when the bodies of Christians are guarded by a ritual of the pagans; and hast thou sung diabolical songs there and performed dances which the pagans have invented by the teaching of the devil; and hast thou drunk there and relaxed thy countenance with laughter, and, setting aside all compassion and emotion of charity, hast thou appeared as if rejoicing over a brother's death? If thou hast, thou shalt do penance for thirty days on bread and water.

92. Hast thou made diabolical phylacteries [i.e., small pouches holding papers inscribed with magical words or incantations] or diabolical characters, which some are accustomed to make at the persuasion of the devil, of grass or of amber; or hast thou observed Thursday in honor of Jupiter? If thou hast done or consented to such, thou shalt do penance for forty days on bread and water.

93. Hast thou plotted with other conspirators against thy bishop or against his associates so, I say, as to ridicule or mock at either the teaching or commands of thy bishop or priest? If thou hast done or consented to such, thou shalt do penance for forty days on bread and water.

94. Hast thou eaten anything offered to idols, that is, the offerings that are made in some places at the tombs of the dead or at springs or trees or at stones or at crossroads, or carried stones to a cairn, or wreaths for the crosses that are placed at crossroads? If thou hast, or hast given thy consent to any such things, thou shalt do penance for thirty days on bread and water.

96. Hast thou done or consented to those vanities which foolish women are accustomed to enact, who while the corpse of a dead person still lies in the house, run to the water and silently bring a jar of water, and when the dead body is raised up, pour this water under the bier, and as the body is being carried from the house watch that it be not raised higher than to the knees, and do this as a kind of means of healing? If thou hast, thou shalt do penance for ten days on bread and water.

97. Hast thou done or consented to what some people do to a slain man when he is buried? They give a certain ointment into his hand as if by that ointment his wound can be healed after death, and so they bury him with the ointment. If thou hast, thou shalt do penance for twenty days on bread and water.

98. Hast thou done or said anything by way of sorcery or magic in beginning any task and hast not invoked the name of God? If thou hast, thou shalt do penance for twenty days on bread and water.

99. Hast thou done anything like what the pagans did, and still do, on the first of January in the guise of a stag or a calf? If thou hast, thou shalt do penance for thirty days on bread and water.

101. Hast thou done what many do? They scrape the place where they are accustomed to make the fire in their house and put grains of barley there in the warm spot; and if the grains jump they believe there will be danger, but if they remain, things will go well. If thou hast, thou shalt do penance for ten days on bread and water.

102. Hast thou done what some do when they are visiting any sick person? When they approach the house where the sick person lies, if they find a stone lying nearby, they turn the stone over and look in the place where the stone was lying [to see] if there is anything living under it, and if they find there a worm or a fly or an ant or antyhing that moves, then they aver that the sick person will recover. But if they find nothing that moves, they say he will die. If thou hast done or believed in this, thou shalt do penance for ten days on bread and water.

103. Hast thou made little, boys' size bows and boys' shoes, and cast them into thy storeroom or thy barn so that satyrs or goblins might sport with them, in order that they might bring to thee the goods of others so that thou shouldst become richer? If thou hast, thou shalt do penance for ten days on bread and water.

104. Hast thou done what some do on the first of January (that is, on the eighth day after the Lord's Nativity)--who on that holy night wind magic skeins, spin, sew: all at the prompting of the devil beginning whatever task they can begin on account of the new year? If thou hast, thou shalt do penance for forty days on bread and water

Appendix 4 Policraticus

John of Salisbury[361]

I do not dare affirm that this should be classed as a dream since this same truthful and learned teacher most solemnly states that it was not a shadowy dream but an actual experience and that the Lord did indeed visit him. To prove his assertion beyond the shadow of a doubt, on arising he displayed the livid welts and scars of wounds upon his body.

When spirits act thus in the case of human beings the devout soul should reject every image except that which leaves its innocence unimpaired. For should the dream add fuel to vice, perchance by inducing lust and avarice or by inspiring greed for dominion or anything of the sort to destroy the soul, undoubtedly it is the flesh or the evil spirit that sends it. This spirit, with the permission of the Lord because of their sins, wreaks its unbridled wickedness upon some men so violently that what they suffer in the spirit they wretchedly but falsely believe comes to pass in the flesh.

[*101*] For example it is said that some Moon or Herodias[25] or Mistress of the Night calls together councils and assemblies, that banquets are held, that different kinds of rites are performed, and that some are dragged to punishment for their deeds and others raised to glory. Moreover babes are exposed to witches and at one time their mangled limbs are eagerly devoured, at another are flung back and restored to their cradles if the pity of her who presides is aroused.

Cannot even the blind see that this is but the wickedness of mocking demons? This is quite apparent from the fact that it is for the weaker sex and for men of little strength or sense that they disport themselves in such a cult. If in fact anyone who suffers from such illusion is firmly censured by someone or by some sign the malign influence is either overcome or yields, and, as the saying is, as soon as one is censured in the light the works of darkness cease.[26] The most effective cure however for this bane is for one to embrace the true faith, refuse to listen to such lies, and never to give thought to follies and inanities of the sort.

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[361] John, *Frivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers: Being a Translation of the First, Second, and Third Books and Selections from the Seventh and Eighth Books of the Policraticus of John of Salisbury* (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), https://www.constitution.org/2-Authors/salisbury/policrat123.htm.

[25] Herodias was a north German divinity comparable with Diana. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, page 1011, quotes the whole passage of our author. Cf. Index of Grimm's work, Herodias, for further information.

[26] John iii. 19, 20.

Appendix 5 Polyphonte

From *Metamorphoses*[362]

§ 21 POLYPHONTE: Thrassa was daughter of Ares and of Tereine daughter of Strymon. Hipponous, son of Triballos, married her and they had a daughter called Polyphonte. She scorned the activities of Aphrodite and went to the mountains as a companion and sharer of sports with Artemis. Aphrodite, whose activities Polyphonte had failed to honour, made her fail in love with a bear and drove her mad. By demonic urge she went on heat and coupled with this bear. Artemis seeing her was utterly disgusted with her and turned all beasts against her. Polyphonte, fearing that the beasts would make an end of her, fled and reached her father's house. She brought forth two children, Agrius and Orius, huge and of immense strength. They honoured neither god nor man but scorned them all. If they met a stranger they would haul him home to eat, Zeus loathed them and sent Hermes to punish them in whatever way he chose. Hermes decided to chop off their hands and feet. But Ares, since the family of Polyphonte descended from him, snatched her sons from this fate. With the help of Hermes he changed them into birds. Polyphonte became a small owl whose voice is heard at night. She does not eat or drink and keeps her head turned down and the tips of her feet turned up. She is a portent of war and sedition for mankind. Orius became an eagle owl, a bird that presages little good to anyone when it appears. Agrius was changed into a vulture, the bird most detested by gods and men. These gods gave him an utter craving for human flesh and blood. Their female servant was changed into a woodpecker. As she was changing her shape she prayed to the gods not to become a bird evil for mankind. Hermes and Ares heard her prayer because she had by necessity done what her masters had ordered. This is a bird of good omen for someone going hunting or to feasts.

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[362] Antoninus and Francis Celoria, The Metamorphoses of Antoninus Liberalis: A Translation with a Commentary (London ; New York: Routledge, 1992).

Appendix 6 Map of Conflicts

Viking, Magyar, and Saracen Invasions[363]

[363] "Viking, Magyar and Saracen Invasions in 9th and 10th Century Europe – Mapping Globalization," accessed April 11, 2024, https://commons.princeton.edu/mg/viking-magyar-and-saracen-invasions-in-9th-and-10th-century-europe/.

Appendix 7 Wið færstice

Old English Charm against a Sudden Stitch.[364]

Wið færstice feferfuige and seo reade netele, ðe þurh ærn inwyxð, and wegbrade; wyll in buteran
Hlude wæran hy, la, hlude, ða hy ofer þone hlæw ridan,
wæran anmode, ða hy ofer land ridan.
Scyld ðu ðe nu, þu ðysne nið genesan mote.
Ut, lytel spere, gif her inne sie!
Stod under linde, under leohtum scylde,
þær ða mihtigan wif hyra mægen berædonand hy gyllende garas sændan;
ic him oðerne eft wille sændan,fleogende flane forane togeanes.
Ut, lytel spere, gif hit her inne sy!
Sæt smið, sloh seax,
lytel iserna, wund swiðe.
Ut, lytel spere, gif her inne sy!
Syx smiðas sætan, wælspera worhtan.
Ut, spere, næs in, spere!
Gif her inne sy isernes dæl,
hægtessan geweorc, hit sceal gemyltan.
Gif ðu wære on fell scoten oððe wære on flæsc scotenoðde wære on blod scoten, oððe wære on ban scoten,
oððe wære on lið scoten, næfre ne sy ðin lif atæsed;
gif hit wære esa gescot oððe hit wære ylfa gescotoðde hit wære hægtessan gescot, nu ic wille ðin helpan.
Þis ðe to bote esa gescotes, ðis ðe to bote ylfa gescotes,
ðis ðe to bote hægtessan gescotes; ic ðin wille helpan.
Fleoh þær on fyrgenheafde.
Hal westu, helpe ðin drihten!

Nim þonne þæt seax, ado on wætan
En er flestir menn voru sofnadir pa var kvatt dura og let engi
madur sem vissi. For svo prisvar. Pa spratt Pidrandi upp og maelti:

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[364] K. E. E. Olsen, “The Lacnunga and its Sources: The Nine Herbs Charm and Wið Færstice Reconsidered,” *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* 55 (2007): 23–31, https://research.rug.nl/en/publications/the-lacnunga-and-its-sources-the-nine-herbs-charm-and-wi%C3%B0-f%C3%A6rstic.

"Petta er skomm mikil er menn lata her allir sem sofi og munu bodsmenn komnir." Hann tok sverd i hond ser og gekk ut. Hann sa engan mann. Honum kom pa pad i hug ad nokkurir bodsmenn mundu hafa ridid fyrir heim til baejarins og ridid sidan aftur i moti peim er seinna ridu. Hann gekk pa undir vidkostinn og heyrdi ad ridid var nordan a vollinn. Hann sa ad pad voru konur niu og voru allar i svortum klaedum og hofdu brugdin sverd i hondum. Hann heyrdi og ad ridid var sunnan a vollinn. Par voru og niu konur, allar i ljosum klaedum og a hvitum hestum. Pa vildi Pidrandi snua inn og segja monnum synina en pa bar ad konurnar fyrr, hinar svartklaeddu, og sottu ad honum en hann vardist drengilega.

Appendix 8 Old English Bee Charm

Old English Bee Charm Against a Swarm of Bees[365]

Wið ymbe nim eorþan, oferweorp mid þinre swiþran
handa under þinum swiþran fet, and cwet:
Fo ic under fot, funde ic hit.
Hwæt, eorðe mæg wið ealra wihta gehwilce. . . .
And wiððon forweorp ofer greot, þonne hi swirman, and cweð:
Sitte ge, sigewif, sigað to eorþan!
Næfre ge wilde to wuda fleogan.
Beo ge swa gemindige mines godes. . . .

Take earth; throw it with your right hand under your right foot, and say, "I catch it under my foot; I find it. Lo! Earth has power against every creature. . . ."
And throw dirt over bees when they swarm and say, "settle, victorious woman, sink to the earth, never fly wild to the wood. Be as mindful of my well-being. . . ."

[365] Lori Ann Garner, "Anglo-Saxon Charms in Performance," *Oral Tradition* 19, no. 1 (March 2004): 20–42, https://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmlui/handle/10355/64982.

Appendix 9 Papal Bull

Innocent VIII: BULL *Summis desiderantes*, Dec. 5th, 1484

Bullarium Romanum (Taurinensis editio), sub, anno 1484. The Bull is also printed in full at the head of the Malleus maleficarum.

Innocent, bishop, servant of the servants of God, *Ad futuram rei memoriam*

Desiring with supreme ardor, as pastoral solicitude requires, that the catholic faith in our days everywhere grow and flourish as much as possible, and that all heretical depravity be put far from the territories of the faithful, we freely declare and anew decree this by which our pious desire may be fulfilled, and, all errors being rooted out by our toil as with the hoe of a wise laborer, zeal and devotion to this faith may take deeper hold on the hearts of the faithful themselves.

It has recently come to our ears, not without great pain to us, that in some parts of upper Germany, as well as in the provinces, cities, territories, regions, and dioceses of Mainz, Ko1n, Trier, Salzburg, and Bremen, many persons of both sexes, heedless of their own salvation and forsaking the catholic faith, give themselves over to devils male and female, and by their incantations, charms, and conjurings, and by other abominable superstitions and sortileges, offences, crimes, and misdeeds, ruin and cause to perish the offspring of women, the foal of animals, the products of the earth, the grapes of vines, and the fruits of trees, as well as men and women, cattle and flocks and herds and animals of every kind, vineyards also and orchards, meadows, pastures, harvests, grains and other fruits of the earth; that they afflict and torture with dire pains and anguish, both internal and external, these men, women, cattle, flocks, herds, and animals, and hinder men from begetting and women from conceiving, and prevent all consummation of marriage; that, moreover, they deny with sacrilegious lips the faith they . received in holy baptism; and that, at the instigation of the enemy of mankind, they do not fear to commit and perpetrate many other abominable offences and crimes, at the risk of their own souls, to the insult of the divine majesty and to the pernicious example and scandal of multitudes. And, although our beloved sons Henricus Institoris and Jacobus Sprenger, of the order of Friars Preachers, professors of theology, have been and still are deputed by our apostolic letters as inquisitors of heretical pravity, the former in the aforesaid parts of upper Germany, including the provinces, cities, territories, dioceses, and other places as above, and the latter throughout certain parts of the course of the Rhine; nevertheless certain of the clergy and of the laity of those parts, seeking to be wise above what is fitting, because in the said letter of deputation the aforesaid provinces, cities, dioceses, territories, and other places, and the persons and offences in question were not individually and specifically named, do not blush obstinately to assert that these are not at all included in the said parts and that therefore it is illicit for the aforesaid inquisitors to exercise their office of inquisition in the provinces, cities, dioceses, territories, and other places aforesaid, and that they ought

not to be permitted to proceed to the punishment, imprisonment, and correction of the aforesaid persons for the offences and crimes above named. Wherefore in the provinces, cities, dioceses territories, and places aforesaid such offences and crimes, not without evident damage to their souls and risk of eternal salvation, go unpunished.

We therefore, desiring, as is our duty, to remove all impediments by which in any way the said inquisitors are hindered in the exercise of their office, and to prevent the taint of heretical pravity and of other like evils from spreading their infection to the ruin of others who are innocent, the zeal of religion especially impelling us, in order that the provinces, cities, dioceses, territories, and places aforesaid in the said parts of upper Germany may not be deprived of the office of inquisition which is their due, do hereby decree, by virtue of our apostolic authority, that it shall be permitted to the said inquisitors in these regions to exercise their office of inquisition and to proceed to the correction, imprisonment, and punishment of the aforesaid persons for their said offences and crimes, in all respects and altogether precisely as if the provinces, cities, territories, places, persons, and offences aforesaid were expressly named in the said letter. And, for the greater sureness, extending the said letter and deputation to the provinces, cities, dioceses, territories, places, persons, and crimes aforesaid, we grant to the said inquisitors that they or either of them joining with them our beloved son Johannes Gremper, cleric of the diocese of Coonstance, master of arts, their present notary, or any other notary public who by them or by either of them shall have been temporarily delegated in the provinces, cities, dioceses, territories, and places aforesaid, may exercise against all persons, of whatsoever condition and rank, the said office of inquisition, correcting, imprisoning, punishing and chastising, according to their deserts, those persons whom they shall find guilty as aforesaid.

And they shall also have full and entire liberty to propound and preach to the faithful word of God, as often as it shall seem to them fitting and proper, in each and all of the parish churches in the said provinces, and to do all things necessary and suitable under the aforesaid circumstances, and likewise freely and fully to carry them out.

Appendix 10 Medieval Sex Ratios

Medieval English Sex Ratios[366]

TABLE 1.
Medieval English sex ratios (number of men to 100 women) in town and country

Place	Sex ratio	Place	Sex ratio
Rural settlements, 1377 poll tax		**Rural cemeteries**	
Northumberland (N = 1276)	107.5	Haverhill, Suffolk (N = 208)	112
Oxfordshire (N = 438)	118.5	Raunds Furnell (N = 182)	122
Rutland (N = 3595)	103.0	Wharram Percy (N = 300)	151
Urban settlements, 1377 poll tax		**Urban cemeteries**	
Carlisle (N = 661)	95.4	Barton-upon-Humber (N = 301)	99
Chichester* (N = 735)	105.7	London, Saint Mary Spital (N = 602)	114
Colchester (N = 2960)	97.7	London, Saint Nicholas Shambles, (N = 161)	127
Coventry* (N = 500)	104.7	Norwich, Timberhill (N = 148)	83
Dartmouth (N = 506)	90.0	York, Fishergate House (N = 111)	106
Hull (N = 1555)	88.5	York, Jewbury (N = 314)	108
Northampton (N = 1473)	100.0	York, Saint Helen-on-the-Walls (N = 732)	86
Oxford* (N = 521)	103.9		
Worcester* (N = 843)	106.2		
York* (N = 2018)	87.5		

Source: Poll tax data calculated from the figures in Carolyn C. Fenwick, ed., *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379, and 1381*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1998–2005), 1: 91–94 (Carlisle), 143–44 (Dartmouth), 194–205 (Colchester); 2: 224–27 (Northampton), 266–71 (38 villages in Northumberland), 313–21 (12 villages in Oxfordshire), 321–22 (Oxford), 355–73 (41 villages in Rutland), 579–81 (Chichester), 641–42 (Coventry); 3: 128–29 (Worcester), 135–40 (York), 188–94 (Hull). Unnamed servants whose gender could not be determined were excluded from these figures; this group was especially large for Coventry, Dartmouth, Northampton, and York.

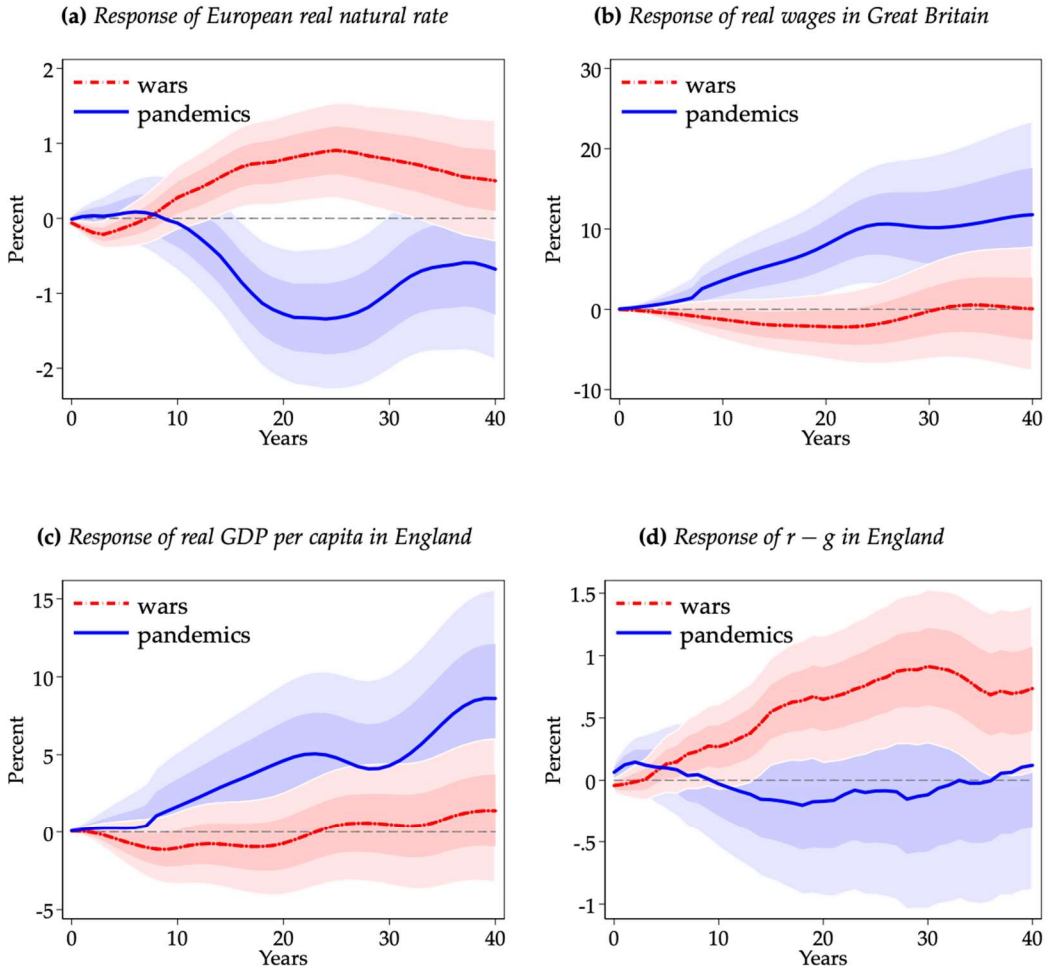
[366] Kowaleski, "Medieval People in Town and Country," 580.

Rural	Total Number	Ratio	Reduced Number	Male % of Population	Female % of Population	Total Men	Total Women	Total Number2	Ratio of Total Men
Northumberland	**1276**	107.5	207.5	0.518072289	0.481927711	**661.06024**	**614.939759**	1276	
Oxfordshirt	**438**	118.5	218.5	0.542334096	0.457665904	**237.54233**	**200.4576659**	438	
Rutland	**3595**	103	203	0.507389163	0.492610837	**1824.064**	**1770.935961**	3595	
	5309					**2722.6666**	**2586.333386**	5309	
						51.2840%	**48.7160%**	100%	
Urban									1.05
Carlisle	**661**	95.4	195.4	0.488229273	0.511770727	**322.71955**	**338.2804504**	661	
Chichester	**735**	105.7	205.7	0.513855129	0.486144871	**377.68352**	**357.3164803**	735	
Colchester	**2960**	97.7	197.7	0.494183106	0.505816894	**1462.782**	**1497.218007**	2960	
Coventry	**500**	104.7	204.7	0.511480215	0.488519785	**255.74011**	**244.2598925**	500	
Dartmouth	**506**	90	190	0.473684211	0.526315789	**239.68421**	**266.3157895**	506	
Hull	**1555**	88.5	188.5	0.469496021	0.530503979	**730.06631**	**824.933687**	1555	
Northampton	**1473**	100	200	0.5	0.5	**736.5**	**736.5**	1473	
Oxford	**521**	103.9	203.9	0.509563512	0.490436488	**265.48259**	**255.5174105**	521	
Worcester	**843**	106.2	206.2	0.515033948	0.484966052	**434.17362**	**408.8263822**	843	
York	**2018**	87.5	187.5	0.466666667	0.533333333	**941.73333**	**1076.266667**	2018	
	11772					**5766.5652**	**6005.434766**	11772	
						48.9854%	**51.0146%**	100%	
									0.96

This table shows the first three columns of Kowaleski's data from the poll taxes. The rest is my own work. The reduced number is the sex ratio plus 100 to get the greatest common denominator (GCD). I then divided the ratio by the reduced number to get the percentage of men in a town. Next, I divided 100 by the GCD to get the percentage of women in the same town. Then I multiplied those percentages with the total number of individuals counted to get the total number of men and total number of women. By adding the total number of men and the total number of women from all urban and all rural areas counted, I was able to get an average sex ratio for each area.

Appendix 11 Responses to Plague and War

Forty Year Responses to Plague and War[367]

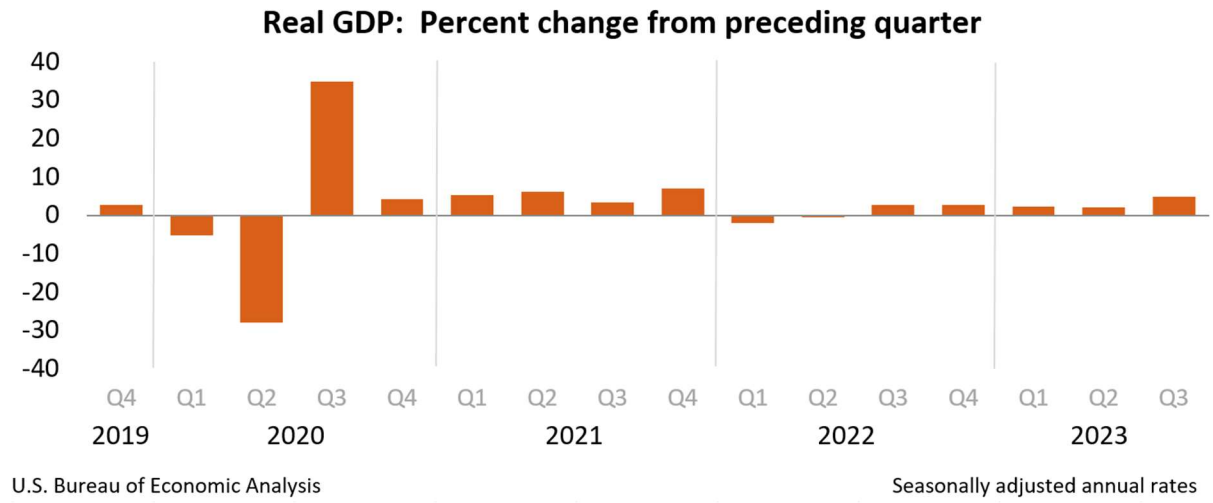


Notes: Response calculated using Equation 4. Final two panels use trends estimated for real wages in Great Britain and real GDP per capita in the UK. Details on trend estimation is provided in Appendix A. Shaded areas are 1 and 2 s.e. bands around response estimates. See text.

[367] Òscar Jordà, Sanjay Singh, and Alan Taylor, "Longer-Run Economic Consequences of Pandemics" (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2020), https://doi.org/10.3386/w26934.

Appendix 12 GDP 2019-2023

Real GDP 2019-2023[368]



[368] Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Gross Domestic Product (Third Estimate), Corporate Profits (Revised Estimate), and GDP by Industry, Third Quarter 2023" (Maryland: United States, December 21, 2023), https://www.bea.gov/news/2023/gross-domestic-product-third-estimate-corporate-profits-revised-estimate-and-gdp.

Appendix 13 Third Space Decline

Changes in the number of select establishments from the National Establishment Time-Series: 2008–2015[369]

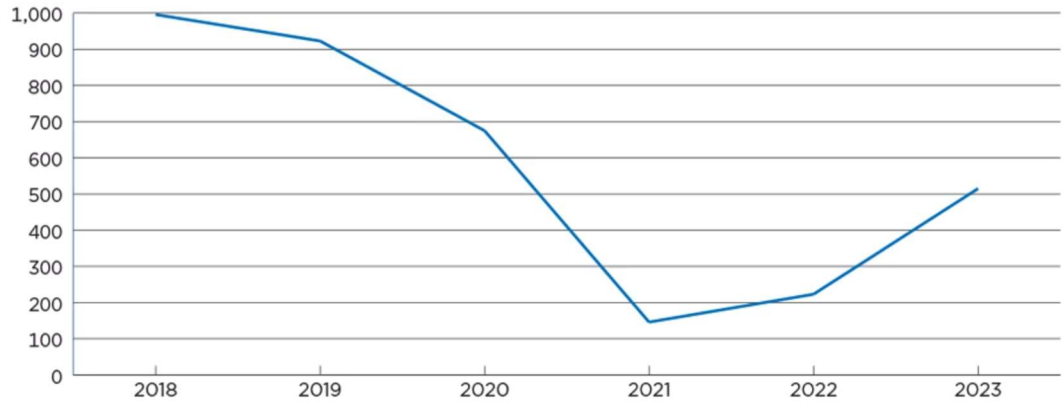
	Arts, entertainment and recreation	Civic and social organizations (e.g., social clubs, veterans' membership clubs)	Commercial banking	Food and beverage stores (e.g., grocery supermarket, and convenience stores, butcher shops, fruit and vegetable markets, bakeries)	Food and drinking places (e.g., restaurants, coffee shops, bars)	Libraries and archives	Personal and laundry services (e.g., barbershops, beauty salons, laundromats)	Religious organizations (e.g., churches, synagogues, mosques, temples)	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, and book stores
NAICS Sector	*71*	*8134*	*522110*	*445*	*722*	*51912*	*812*	*8131*	*451*
2008	231,310	122,247	72,218	391,300	785,855	26,800	847,372	544,049	209,338
2009	241,508	140,051	70,745	403,950	780,306	27,287	875,133	564,115	213,290
2010	261,984	198,022	66,647	386,625	768,240	31,687	863,171	594,214	206,296
2011	279,540	240,709	80,773	389,789	795,379	33,771	877,718	611,327	210,844
2012	268,367	235,593	90,149	381,583	806,170	33,541	855,573	589,541	206,196
2013	249,708	218,581	92,526	364,963	822,380	33,354	817,886	555,810	198,311
2014	216,163	183,303	88,282	336,074	839,999	32,712	730,868	495,695	172,799
2015	188,826	162,864	82,627	300,747	804,463	30,554	652,961	448,300	152,206
Net Change	*−42,484*	*40,617*	*10,409*	*−90,553*	*18,608*	*3,754*	*−194,411*	*−95,749*	*−57,132*
Percent Net Change	*−18.37%*	*33.23%*	*14.41%*	*−23.14%*	*2.37%*	*14.01%*	*−22.94%*	*−17.60%*	*−27.29%*

[369] Jessica Finlay et al., "Closure of 'Third Places'? Exploring Potential Consequences for Collective Health and Wellbeing," *Health & Place* 60 (November 1, 2019): 102225, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2019.102225.

Appendix 14 US Natural Change

US Natural Change (the difference between the number of births and deaths) 2018-2023[370]

Figure 2.
National Natural Change: 2018–2023
(In thousands)

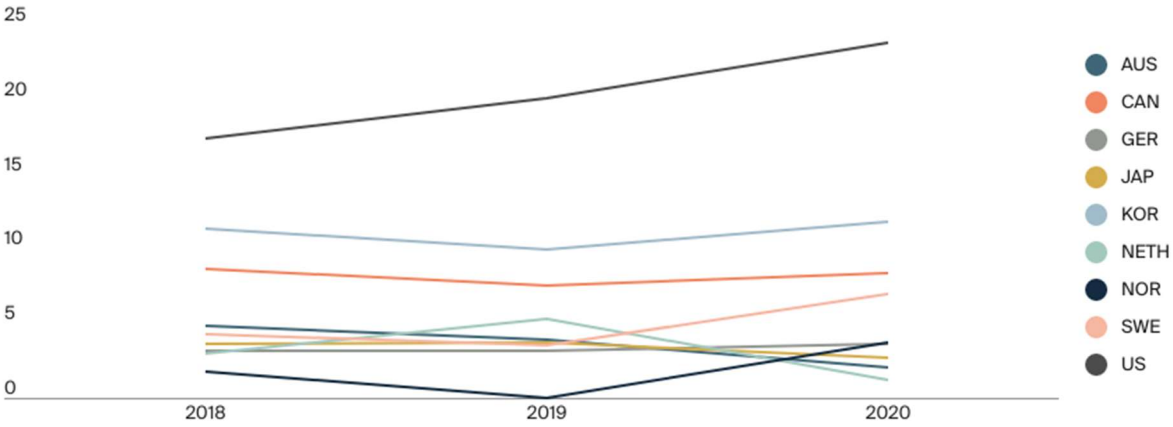


Note: Reference dates cover the period of July 1 of the prior year through June 30 of the stated year. Natural change is the difference between the number of births and deaths recorded for a particular geography during the year. Vintage 2023 data products are associated with Data Management System projects P-6000042, P-7501659, and P-7527355. The U.S. Census Bureau reviewed these data products for unauthorized disclosure of confidential information and approved the disclosure avoidance practices applied to this release (CBDRB-FY24-0085).
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2021 Population Estimates (2018-2019) and Vintage 2023 Population Estimates.

[370] "Fertility Rate (Births Per Woman)," World Bank Open Data, accessed March 12, 2024, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN.

Appendix 15 Maternal Mortality

Maternal Mortality Rate[371]



Notes: The maternal mortality ratio is defined by the World Health Organization as the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes.

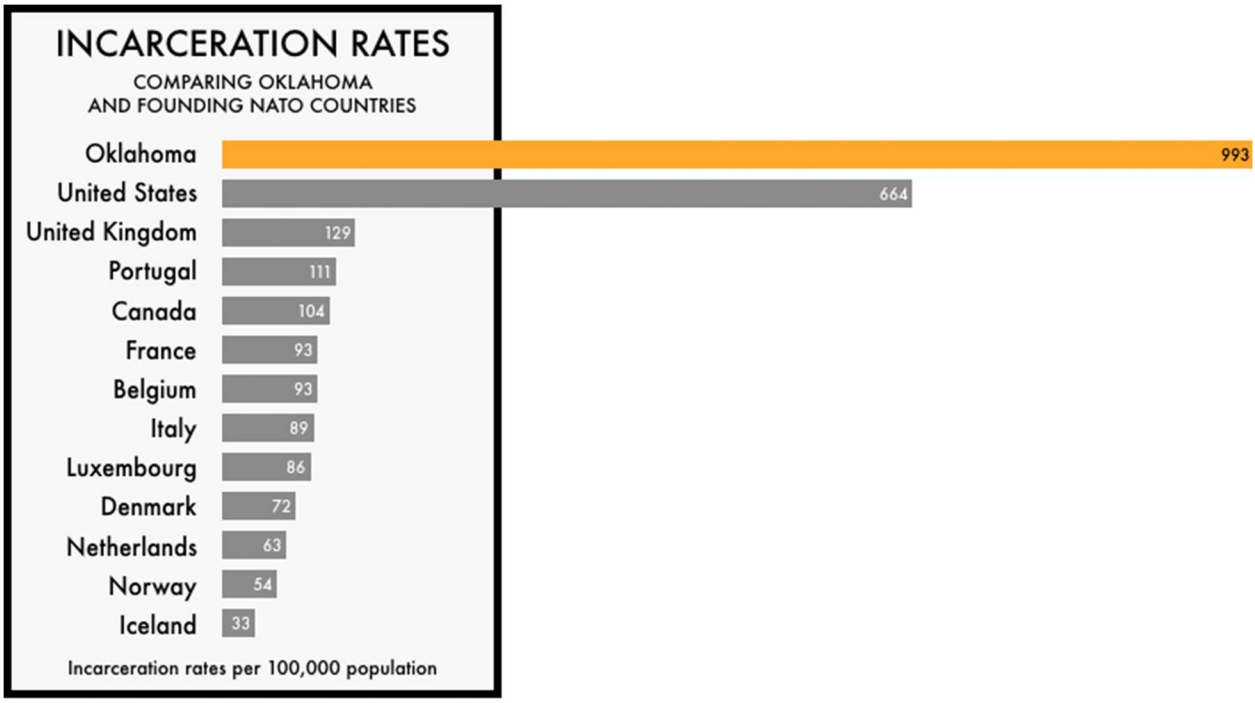
Data: Data for all countries except US from OECD Health Statistics 2022. Data for US from Donna L. Hoyert, *Maternal Mortality Rates in the United States, 2020* (National Center for Health Statistics, Feb. 2022).

Source: Munira Z. Gunja, Evan D. Gumas, and Reginald D. Williams II, "The U.S. Maternal Mortality Crisis Continues to Worsen: An International Comparison," To the Point (blog), Commonwealth Fund, Dec. 1, 2022. https://doi.org/10.26099/8vem-fc65

[371] Munira Z. Gunja, Evan D. Gumas, and Reginald D. Williams II, "The U.S. Maternal Mortality Crisis Continues to Worsen: An International Comparison," Non-Profit, *The Commonwealth Fund* (blog), December 1, 2022, https://doi.org/10.26099/8vem-fc65.

Appendix 16 Incarceration Rates

Incarceration Rates in a Global Context[372]



Source: https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2021.html

[372] Prison Policy Initiative, "States of Incarceration: The Global Context 2021," accessed March 12, 2024, https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2021.html.

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