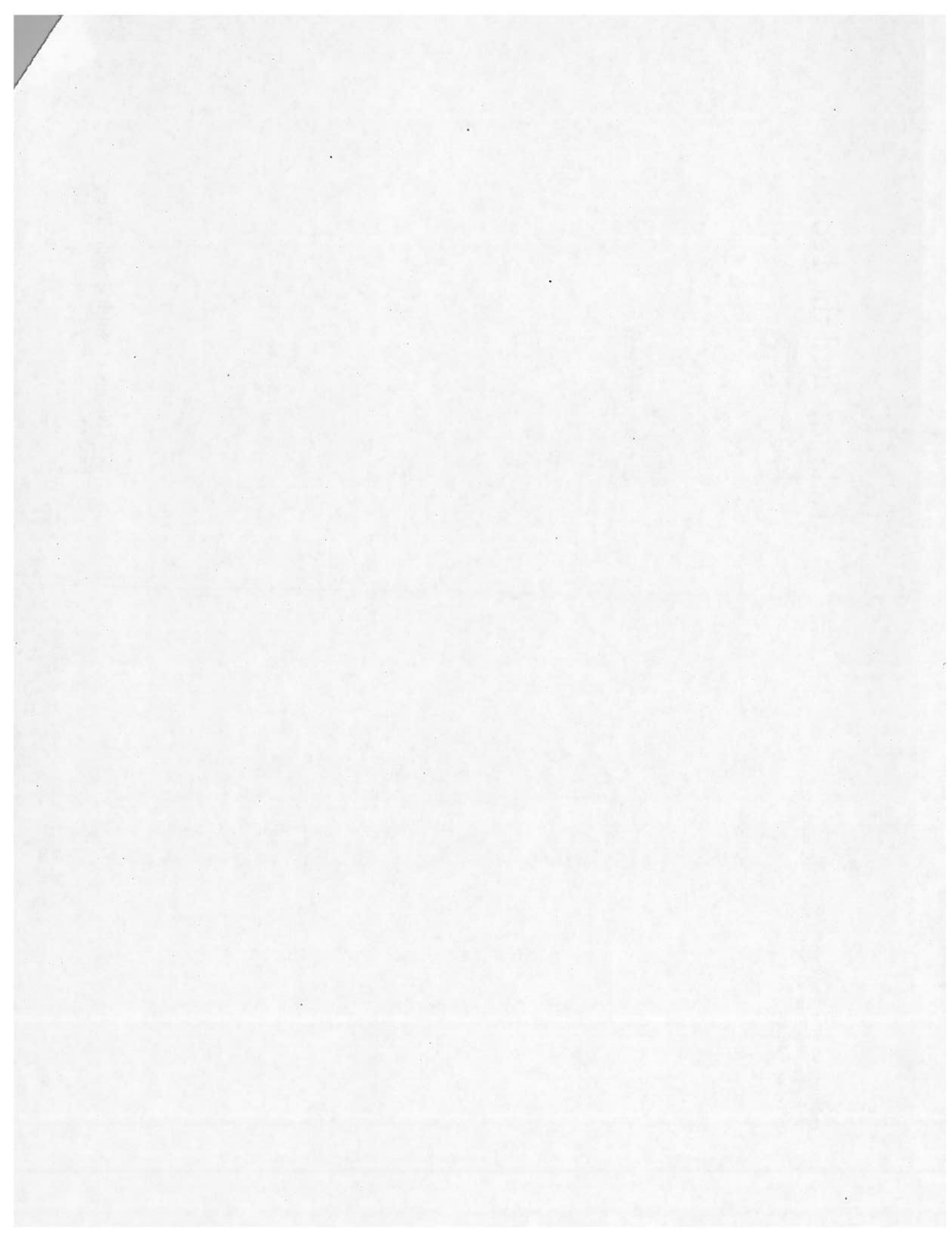


Religion and the People,
800—1700

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finally come and that God intended them to strike down the tyrant.

In this situation of extreme pressure, the Netherlands pastors formally adopted the doctrines of Calvin and rejected the possibility of compromise with the Lutherans; the majority of them became political revolutionaries. Thus Pieter Carpentier, who had been a moderate during the Troubles, wrote to the London refugee church from Holland during the revolt: "I hope that you will pray for all the ministers, especially for those of this country, not forgetting the Prince of Orange. . . . May the Lord destroy the enemy, so that our people may be more encouraged."⁹⁶ For Jean Taffin, who had also taken a conciliatory position during the Troubles, the iconoclasm later became part of the nationalist myth: "Those of the Religion wonderfully advanced in Flanders, Brabant, and in several other provinces of the Low Countries; and affairs came to such a pass that . . . the images in the temples of Antwerp were broken . . . with a swiftness which was unbelievable to the simple people."⁹⁷

The Witches of the Cambrésis

The Acculturation of the Rural World in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Robert Muchembled

"What, they say that all women are witches!"—*Aldegonde de Rue, seventy years old, sentenced to be strangled and burned at Bazuel, in the Cambrésis, 31 August 1601 (ADN 8 H 312)*

At first glance, witchcraft in the north of France appears very much as it does in the rest of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹ Here, as elsewhere, the trial judges—whose mentality has been the object of considerable study²—ordered countless pyres to be set alight for hapless victims, most of whom were ignorant of how they came to be accused. The trial records, however, paint a picture not only of the victims and their executioners, but also of the social groups to which the victims belonged. This essay will explore the sociological dimension of the witchcraft phenomenon. I exclude from my study urban and convent witchcraft, both of which deserve full-scale studies of their own, and confine my remarks to rural witches in the province of the Cambrésis: Through these trial records we can recapture the sense of social malaise

This essay was conceived and written at Princeton University during the fall semester 1973. I would like to thank the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies for giving me, as a Davis Fellow, the time as well as the financial support necessary for the completion of this study. I owe a debt of gratitude as well to the faculty and students of the History Department and to the other Davis Fellows, who participated in the research seminar on popular culture and religion. The exchange of ideas at these meetings, based on our experience of different periods and geographical areas, proved an invaluable source of inspiration for me. Finally, I wish to thank most warmly my colleagues and friends, Carlo Ginzburg (University of Bologna), Lionel Rothkrug (Sir George Williams University, Montreal), and Jay P. Dolan (Notre Dame University), from whose conversation I learned so much. The essay was translated by Susan Darnton.

All the references to unpublished source materials are drawn from the *Archives Départementales* of the North, at Lille (cited as ADN, followed by the source quotation).

that overtook this area in the second half of the sixteenth century, as widespread efforts to Christianize the popular masses were accompanied by important economic changes. In fact, this period marks the beginning of a genuine acculturation of rural life in the Catholic Low Countries, a profound movement whose dimensions I underestimated when I treated it, in an earlier article, as a simple clash between two conflicting cultures.³

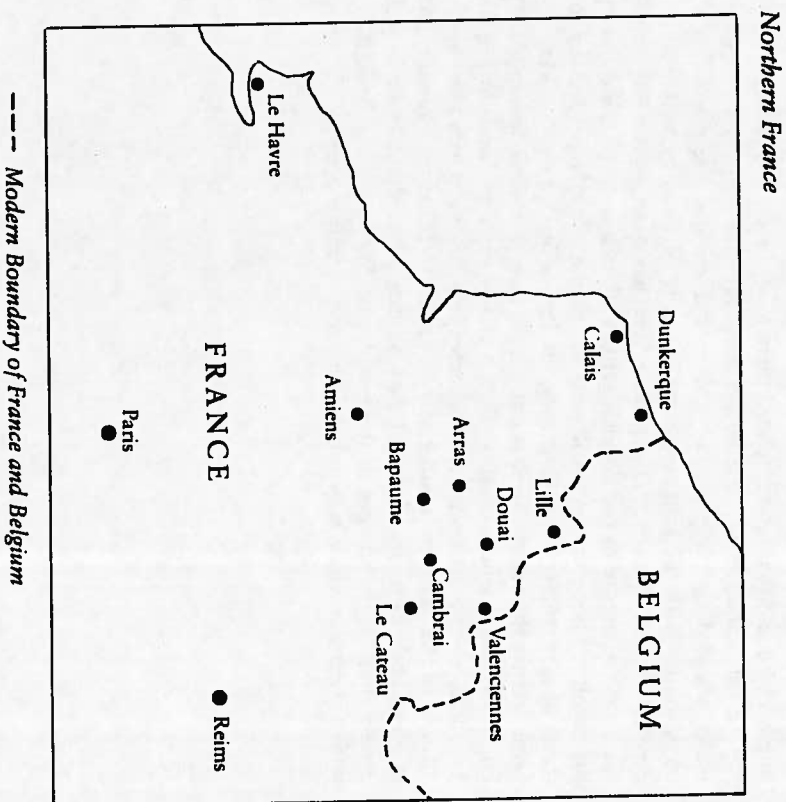
I hope now to show that the rural witches of the Cambresis were neither outcasts nor deviants but expiatory victims chosen by their fellow villagers to satisfy a confused, ritualistic need for sacrifice, as a result of the unconscious tensions born of the total and complete dismantling of structures (destruction) in their world.⁴

I shall first attempt to construct a witchcraft "model" for the southern Catholic Low Countries and then will look at the witches of the Cambresis and the French Hainaut in their village setting. Most of the texts I use in the first two sections are well known but have been exploited in only the most partial and partisan fashion. Moreover, a rereading of them from a different angle will, I hope, lead to a fundamental alteration of the way these problems have been interpreted in the past.

The Scope of Witchcraft in the Southern Catholic Low Countries from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries

The Cambresis and the French Hainaut make up what is today the western part of the French department of the Nord. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, witches abounded there, as they did in the Douaisis, along the Flanders coast, and in the countryside around Lille.⁵ A brief outline of the principal characteristics of the southern Catholic Low Countries will help to situate this witchcraft "model" in its regional context.⁶

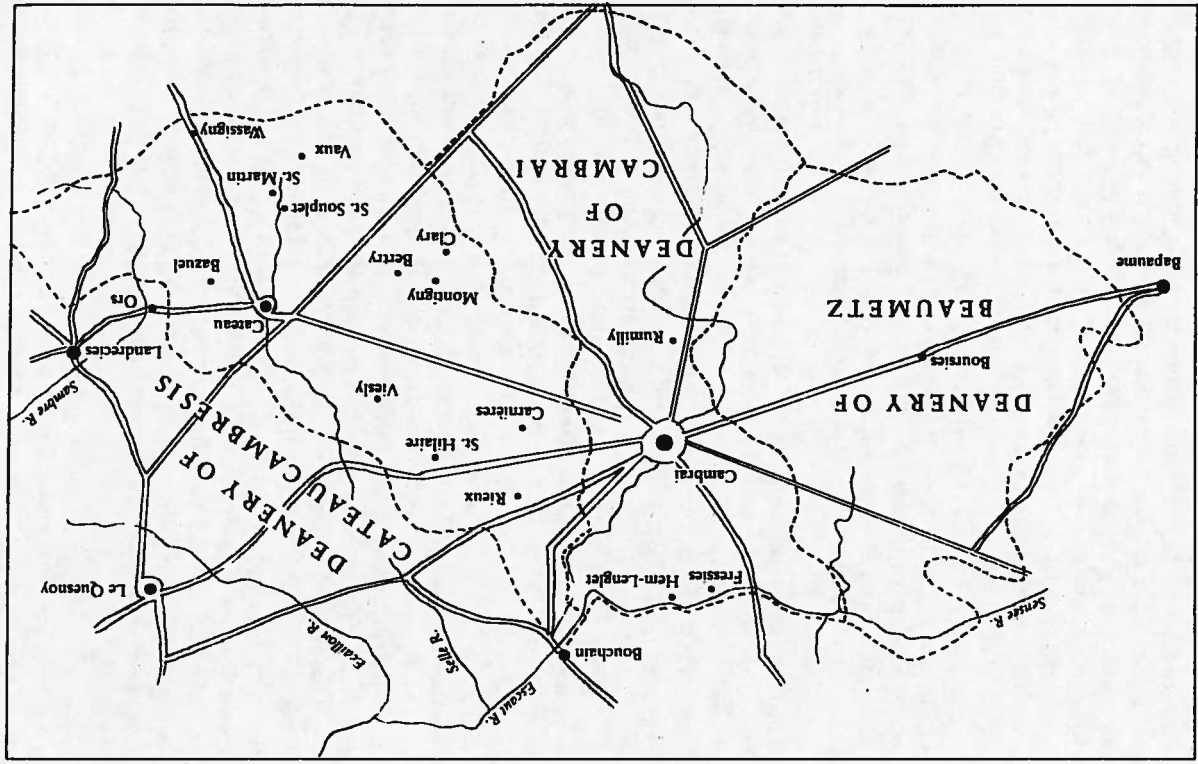
Three important phenomena marked this area between the time of the collapse of the Burgundian state in the fifteenth century and the French takeover (1667-78): war, economic change, and the post-Tridentine religious revival. The first two were closely interrelated in their effects: the reign of Charles V, which has been depicted, perhaps wrongly, as the golden age of the Empire,⁷ gave way, in Flanders and the Hainaut in particular, to an economic crisis, which Charles Verlinden has situated "between 1580 and 1590 principally."⁸ During this same period, the military reconquest of the southern provinces was completed, except for Cambrai, which the French continued to hold. When Cambrai was taken in 1595, the whole area embarked upon an era of peace and demographic growth that lasted until 1632. In that year, at Bouchain, war broke out again, spreading in 1635 to Artois and the Flanders coast. The entire



region was repeatedly ravaged, first by the Thirty Years' War, then by the wars of conquest of Louis XIV, until, finally, Douai and Lille were captured in 1667 and Cambrai and Valenciennes ceded to France in 1678.⁹ Throughout this period changes were occurring in the economic structure: the Flemish economy, which had stagnated "in mediocrity" during the fifteenth century,¹⁰ weakened progressively in the course of the next century, as Liège and Brabant came to the fore.¹¹ The interior of Flanders and Hainaut, with its little villages, had shown a sharp economic decline by the seventeenth century, but Lille was thriving.¹² A survey of smaller economic units confirms this general impression, particularly in these areas that are the subject of this essay. In the region of Saint-Amand, for example, after a crisis in the weaving industry at Valenciennes during the sixteenth-century religious upheavals, local trade and crafts began to redevelop, only to have the wars of Louis XIV exert a "direct effect of depression upon the economy of the area."¹³ In the Cambrésis, where, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the economy was mainly dependent upon wheat, the seventeenth century saw the production of fine linen cloth (the *mulquinerie* industry) spread gradually throughout the countryside.¹⁴

The principal characteristic, however, of the economic changes, independent or not of wars, in the "French Low Countries" in this period was their enormous regional variation. A Lille geographer, writing in 1963, has noted twelve separate urban and sixteen rural areas within the north of France.¹⁵ Given such a wide range of regional particularities in the present day, I would like to emphasize in this essay local economic traits rather than those that are common to the region as a whole.

The third force at work in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in what is now the French Nord was a religious revival precocious for its time that conquered urban, and especially rural, areas from the reign of Philip II on. I shall discuss in greater detail this singular acculturation of the countryside that, church historians have shown, took hold here much earlier and much more rapidly than in other parts of France.¹⁶ The Low Countries had experienced in the fifteenth century "a veritable brushfire of heresy" at Lille, Tournai, Douai, and at Arras, in particular, where fourteen Waldensian witches were burned in 1460 alone.¹⁷ In fact, Charles V had already instituted a sort of state inquisition directed against Protestantism and Anabaptism.¹⁸ Further religious upheavals in the second half of the sixteenth century had suggested that Catholicism could not survive without total reorganization and that repression alone was not the answer. In this setting, the Counter-Reformation burst upon the scene in the first third of the seventeenth century, to join battle with every weapon at its command in this part of Europe.¹⁹ Hence the war against witchcraft can be seen as the result of a marked change in re-



ligious thinking occurring within the context of an evolving economy. But before looking more closely at rural Cambrésis, I will describe the victims, generally, throughout the whole region.

From the end of the sixteenth century on, prosecutions for witchcraft were on the rise in the Catholic Low Countries: Flanders, Brabant, Luxembourg, Hainaut, Namur, and Limburg were particularly affected.²⁰ I shall limit myself to a discussion of the situation in what is now the department of the Nord and those border lands immediately adjoining it to the north and south. The work of Villente²¹ and the unpublished trial records give us an idea of the numbers involved here (see Table 1).²²

A statistical survey by decades reveals two very distinct phases in the witch hunt (see Figure 1). The first and most important, from 1590 to 1630, with two peak periods in 1590-1600 and again in 1610-20, corresponds to an era of peace and demographic growth, thus giving the lie to H. R. Trevor-Roper's theory that the persecution of witches in Europe was directly linked, after 1560, to the wars of religion.²³ On the contrary, there is evidence that the edict of 20 July 1592, which was "a true code of magic," and the publication of antiwitchcraft literature, such as the "Disquisitio magicarum libri sex" by the Jesuit del Rio, were "directly responsible for the multiplication of legal suits" in the Catholic Low Countries.²⁴ The edict of 1592 was reinstated in 1606 by the archdukes, and repressive measures grew more severe, particularly in Hainaut.²⁵ This judicial campaign correlates clearly with the peak periods of 1590-1600 and 1610-20 for this region. But, as a study of Cambrésis shows, it alone cannot account for the popular attitudes toward witchcraft.

The second important phase of persecution, from 1640 to 1680, though preceded by a decade in which there was little witch hunting, coincided with a period of unremitting warfare. Could the transition from peace to war about 1635 have been related to the subsequent increase in prosecutions? The characteristics of this second era of activity are quite different from those of a half-century earlier. Again, by taking the Cambrésis as an example, these points can be studied in more detail.

The incidence of witch trials in the area under study is similar to that of the Franche-Comté in the period 1599-1667, when 40 percent of 157 cases documented resulted in the death sentence.²⁶ Both of these regions belonged at that time to the Spanish crown. Neither reflected the severity of the Catholic and Protestant judges in Baden-Württemberg between the years 1560 to 1670.²⁷ Evidence from the north of France also suggests strongly that the severity of the courts differed according to the sex of the defendant. Four women were accused of witchcraft for every one man. But, once his case had come to trial, the man always had less chance of

Figure 1. Variations by Decade, 1500-1700, Comparative Incidence

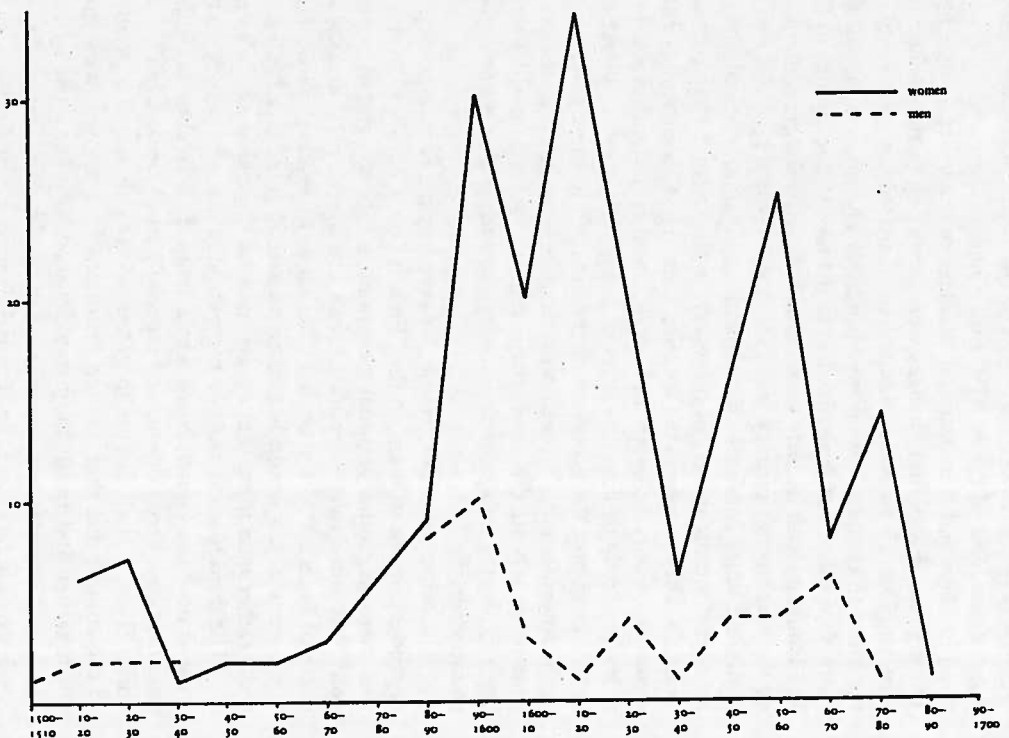


Table 1. *Defendants in the North of France, 1371-1783*

Years	Women		Men		Totals
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
1351-1400	1	50	1	50	2
1401-1450	7	100			7
1451-1500*	10	91	1	9	11
1501-1550	16	70	7	30	23
1551-1600	50	74	18	26	68
1601-1650	97	88	13	12	110
1651-1700	48	81	11	19	59
1701-1790	3	50	3	50	6
Totals and average percentages	232	81	54	19	286

* The inclusion of the Arras Waldensians in the statistics for this period would result in completely atypical data—39 percent women, 42 percent men (and 19 percent undetermined)—whereas even in the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, when the statistics reflect an unusually small number of cases documented, the percentage of male defendants never exceeded the females (Arras: chef-lieu of the Pas-de-Calais). See also Table 2.

escaping the death penalty than the woman (see Table 2). Though much more work remains to be done, these statistics suggest that historians have underestimated the number of men brought to trial in this area and perhaps elsewhere in Europe as well. More questions arise from the observation that between 1580 and 1600 the persecution of men preceded, then continued alongside, the first great wave of trials of women.²⁸ Finally, as study of the Cambrésis will show, and as E. W. Monter has shown for the Jura, "not all . . . witches were poor or lonely or obviously deviant. . . . Some Jura families . . . produced suspected witches over a long span of time."²⁹

All indications are that the accused were not, for the most part, marginal characters in the society of their time and that, on this subject, the perspective of historians has perhaps been faulty. The witches should not be seen as a target of the seventeenth-century campaign against corruption and scandal that sought to "excise from civil society" the poor, beggars,³⁰ and deviants of all kinds. They should instead be considered in relation to the normal, rather than the pathological, aspects of their culture and time.³¹ This bizarre sacrifice of women, and of men and children as well,³² cannot help but pique our curiosity; the key to this strange phenomenon can no doubt be found in the rural world of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly in its villages.

Table 2. *Outcome of Cases, 1371-1783*

Percent	Including the Arras Waldensians in 1460		Excluding the Waldensians		Total
	Women	Men	Women	Men	
Death	115	37	158	6	164
Banishment	59	10	69	10	69
Misc. Punishments	5	4	9	1	14
Acquittals	20	6	26	0	26
Unknown	42	12	56	10	66
Total	241	69	318	20	338

Table 3. Male Defendants and the Sentences They Received, 1580-1680

Dates	Percent					Total
	Executed	Executed	Banished	Misc.	Unknown	
1581-1590	4	50		1	3	8
1591-1600	9	90			1	10
1601-1610	3	100				3
1611-1620			1			1
1621-1630	2	50		1	1	4
1631-1640			1			1
1641-1650	1	25		1	2	4
1651-1660	4	100				4
1661-1670	3	50		3		6
1671-1680					1	1
Total	26	62	6	3	7	42

Witches and Villagers in the Cambresis

In contrast with the county of Essex during the Tudor-Stuart era, when 229 villages out of a total of 426 had some experience of witchcraft,³³ and in contrast also with the Jura, where "nearly every village produced some witch trials," between 1560 and 1680, and where witch hunts were "endemic rather than epidemic,"³⁴ the rural districts of the southern Spanish Low Countries seem not to have uncovered hordes of witches in the same period. Out of 286 documented defendants (see Table 1), many were of urban origin, though it is not always possible to differentiate longtime city-dwellers from recent rural emigrants or from those country folk who happened to be brought to the city for trial, like Denise and Barbe Le Jay, from Wandignies, imprisoned at Douai in 1575 at the request of their local bailiff and aldermen.³⁵ In hundreds of villages throughout Flanders, Artois, the Cambresis, Hainaut, and Tournai, not the slightest trace of a witch can be found. The county of Artois, though predominantly rural, seems to have escaped completely the epidemic of witch hunting that was going on to the north and east. We can only conclude that witchcraft, in these areas, was limited to certain towns and villages. The former lie outside the scope of my study, for urban witchcraft sprang up in a very different economic and political atmosphere. Only Douai and Dunkerque, and, to a lesser extent, Cambrai, Valenciennes, Lille, Bouchain, and Saint-Amand, were the epicenters of the phenomenon.³⁶ Rural witchcraft seems to have been just as localized: four villages alone in the southern part of the Cambrai diocese accounted for 28 of the 286 rural and urban trials for which statistics are available

covering the years 1599-1652 (see Tables 4, 7, and 8). Apart from these, no more than four or five trials for each of some other villages are cited in the Cambrai archdiocese,³⁷ which, even after the reorganization of 1559 that removed the archdeacons of Brussels and Antwerp, amounted to no less than 500 parishes and 109 missions.³⁸ The proportion of villages exposed to witchcraft is here quite different from Essex, even including, in addition to the figures noted above, the instances of rural sorcery out of 366 defendants that have been identified in the county of Namur, which, in the period in question, 1509-1646, still fell within the archdiocese of Cambrai.³⁹ In point of fact, rural witchcraft, in the part of the Low Countries that today is French, seems to have been localized in the great archdeaconry of the Cambrai archdiocese, which encompassed the villages of Bazuel,⁴⁰ Rieux,⁴¹ Fressies, and Hem-Lenglet,⁴² and in the eastern tip of the diocese of Arras (located between that great archdeaconry, on the south, and the Tournai diocese to the north). Those areas (i.e., in the diocese of Arras) which the archival sources indicate were centers of witchcraft—the Douaisis, Valenciennes, Bouchain, and Saint-Amand—all lie within the boundaries of this meeting ground between the three dioceses.⁴³ The Bouchain region, northeast of Cambrai, deserves special attention: 183 persons were accused of witchcraft there between 1595 and 1614, according to an unsubstantiated source;⁴⁴ child witches were known in the area;⁴⁵ and there was an accompanying rash of trials in the villages of Rieux, Somain, Villiers-au-Bois, and Campeau, all of which fell within its jurisdiction.⁴⁶

Before we step into the world of these witches, that is, back into village life in the Hainaut and Cambresis, we must reexamine the witchcraft trial procedures.

Some authors—notably P. Villette, writing on the north of France—would have us believe that these witches described before the tribunals a form of satanic religion, a reverse image of Christian faith. Abbé Villette distinguishes three stages of witchcraft: initiation, sabbath, and spell-casting. His first article is organized in three parts, corresponding to these three stages, and he makes it plain that the initiation is "a parody of the rites of baptism and marriage, while the sabbath is a parody of the mass."⁴⁷ The third stage of witchcraft corresponds to the fact that "sorcerers were capable of all kinds of evil," for they were servants of the devil, who is himself the "principle of Evil" incarnate.⁴⁸ Though Villette does not say so precisely, we may assume that their evil doings were meant to represent the Christian ethic, based on the conception of good, turned inside out.

This interpretation, which echoes the conclusions of demonologists such as Bodin, Boguet, de Lancre and the authors of *Malles Malefica*

rum,⁴⁹ errs in two important ways. First, it accepts without question the intellectual assumptions of the judges and inquisitors of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, for whom the central article of faith was the existence of the devil and his ability to act in the world.⁵⁰ This seems to me a fundamental flaw, even though the author equivocates by suggesting that he himself belongs with "the majority who have ceased to believe" [in witchcraft] ever since the end of the seventeenth century.⁵¹ In his second article, though, he soft-pedals his interpretation somewhat, assigning responsibility for the persecution rather to those demonologists who forged the system of persecution and to those credulous masses who flocked to view the execution spectacles and found in them a reinforcement of their faith.⁵² My second point—and it is related to the first—is that these authors completely distort historical reality by neglecting a number of facts that do not fit their preconceptions. A closer look at the trials in the Cambrésis and Hainaut will help to remedy these errors.

First, I will consider the form of the trials. When carried to their conclusion, they consisted of three separate segments, which will be seen to have little relation to Villette's schema:

1. A preliminary investigation, consisting principally of a review of witnesses for the prosecution, who generally came forward spontaneously and who were, for the most part, neighbors of the accused.⁵³
2. The interrogation of the accused; with or without torture as an accompaniment. I have been able to find no trace of lawyers or witnesses for the defense, as there were in some urban trials.⁵⁴
3. The punishment, which, in the case of a death sentence, functions as a sort of exclusion rite.⁵⁵

Turning to the content of the trials, a fundamental difference is found between the first two stages: the witnesses never introduce an antireligious element; this appears only with the arrival of the judge on the scene. The witnesses usually testify along the same lines: they are well acquainted with the accused, and they are aware that he or she is widely reputed to be a witch.⁵⁶ They then offer concrete accusations against the suspect, such as damages he or she may have done to their goods, notably their crops, to their animals, or to their fellow villagers, often citing the death of young children.

Taking the trial of Reyne Percheval, widow of Estienne Billot,⁵⁷ as an example, there are important differences in the notion of witchcraft as it is described by the witnesses and as it comes to be understood by the close of the trial. The fact that there is no record of her sentence forces us to leave aside the problem of punishment in this case.

It is September 1599; six witnesses pass before the alderman of Bazuel (see Tables 4 and 5).⁵⁸ The first, Pierre Wattlelier, a Thatcher, thirty

Table 4. *Witchcraft at Bazuel, 1599-1627*

Date (beginning and end of trials)	Name	Age	Remarks	Verdict	References (ADN)
2-13 September 1599	Reyne Percheval, widow of Estienne Billot		Born in B.; lived there all her life; tortured	Unknown	8 H 312
18 July-	Aldegonde de Rue, widow of Olivier Grotaert	70	Born in B.; had several daughters; tortured	Condemned to be strangled and burned ^a	8 H 312
19 January-	Marie Lanchain, widow of Jean de Vaulx	62	Born in B.; lived several years in Landrecies; tortured	Condemned to be strangled and burned	8 H 312
7 March 1621	Maxellende Vasseur, widow, remarried to Martin Bersillon	60	Accused by the above; lived in various spots in the Cambrésis; had resided in B. for 17-18 years	Released	8 H 312
10-21 March 1621	Pasquette Barra, wife of Jacques Pierre	54	Accused by Marie Lanchain; illegitimate, born in Valen- ciennes; had always lived in B.	Released	8 H 312
13-19 July 1627	Pasquette Barra, second accusation			Unknown	8 H 312

B. = Bazuel

a. Error by Villette, "Sorcellerie dans le Nord," p. 148, who has wrongly stated that she was acquitted.
b. *Ibid.*, p. 149; he lists her as 65.
c. Nord, *arrondissement* of Avesnes-sur-Helpe, *chef-lieu* du canton.
d. Nord, *chef-lieu* arr.

Table 5. Witnesses at Witchcraft Trials in Bazuel, 1599-1627

	Name	Age	Profession or status	Charges brought by the witnesses
1599, against Reyne Percheval	Pierre Wattelier	30	thatcher at Bazuel	Death of one of his cows; accused the defendant of witchcraft to her son-in-law
	Nicolas Bridoux	50	weaver (<i>mulquinier</i>) at Bazuel	Death of his daughter Marye, the granddaughter of the defendant
	Jean Lenain	60	alderman of Bazuel	Confirms the preceding testimony
	Georges Clocquette		sergeant of the town of Le Cateau ^a	Tries to make the witch confess
	Laurence Maughier, widow of Denys Wattelier	41		Illness of Jean Parmentier's family; a Waldensian kept company with the witch
	Jean Parmentier	50	alderman of Bazuel	Confirms the preceding; birth of a skinless calf
1601, against Aldegonde de Rue	Jean Morut	68	sergeant of Bazuel	Death of one of his cows
	Magdelaine Morut, widow of Jean Gillart	38	daughter of the above	Confirms her father's testimony
	Andrieu Doyen		<i>carlier</i> at Landrecies ^b	Death of two horses belonging to one of his tenants, Gérard de Briatte, a neighbor of the defendant, to whom he rented a house
	Gérard de Briatte	46	innkeeper at Landrecies ^b	Confirms the above
	Jacqueline Bourguignon, wife of Jean Debonnaire		husband: butcher at Landrecies ^b	Strange illness of her daughter, aged 8-9 years
	Margheritee, widow of Andrieu Florent	56	"hostess" at Landrecies ^b	A stranger to her, in her house, accused the defendant of being "a <i>caroigne</i> carrion witch"
	Toussaint Lesaige	22	unmarried, from Bazuel (?)	The accused sent for him in prison to ask him to give the message to her daughter that she should commend herself to God and confess if she had "any temptation or vision"
	Marye Bourguignon, wife of Claude Canoisne	40	husband: bourgeois of Le Cateau ^a	An Italian soldier, in her house, had accused the defendant of being a witch
	Grégoire Florut and Anthoinette Warocquier, his wife		<i>censier</i> (rich tenant farmer) at Bazuel	One of his horses died as though in a fit
1621, against Marie Lanechin	Nicolas Deramp		weaver's employee (<i>mulquinier</i>) in the lodgings of Mathieu Hennocq, at Bazuel	Death of a tenant farmer (<i>censier</i>) of Bazuel 17 or 18 years ago; death of the husband of the defendant; death of his master's daughter, aged 12, ten years earlier; illness of his neighbor, Andrieu Deramp; illness of Jean d'Avesnes, son of Nicolas, during the winter of 1620; he accuses the defendant of poisonings
	Andrieu Deramp	30	inhabitant of Bazuel	Confirms his illness and notes that he had to be exorcised two times by the dean of Bazuel
	Pierre Cauchy (Cauchie)	36	vilain of Bazuel	Death of his wife and of a young infant still nursing
	Catherine Leclercq, wife of Mathieu Hennocq		inhabitant of Bazuel	Death of her daughter
	Andrieu de Braibant	70	shepherd at Bazuel	He saw the witch dance, hair disheveled, near a wood
	Antoine Nicaise	60	day laborer at Bazuel	He saw her once, at daybreak, "all disheveled and wild-haired"

Name	Age	Profession or status	Charges brought by the witnesses
Nicollas Cauchie		inhabitant of Bazuel	He saw the defendant lying in a hedge near the house of a blind man who had been burned for witchcraft. She left upon catching sight of him.
Christoffe Avaine		inhabitant of Bazuel	At the wedding of Jean d'Avesnes the suspect told him that she didn't dare show herself in the street because of the rumors about her.
Mathieu Hennocq			He confirms the story of the death of his daughter; some say she caused the death of her husband; he confirms the testimony of Pierre Cauchie
Francoise Regnier	22	unmarried, inhabitant of Bazuel	She saw the accused turning about, with her head down, near a fountain
Nicolas d'Avesnes		alderman of Bazuel	He confirms the death of his son Jean
Guillain Regnier	24-	unmarried, resided at Bazuel	Eight to nine years ago, in summer, while passing with Gabry Bernard near a fountain about 11 o'clock in the morning, they spotted the suspect in the middle of a thick "mist" about 15-20 feet across, though the air was otherwise perfectly clear. Gabry Bernard cried: "Zounds, woman, you're a witch."
Marie Nicaise, widow of Gabry Bernard	40	inhabitant of Bazuel	Her husband forbade her to sell faggots to Marie Lanechin, because he said she was a witch; the pastor who gave him extreme unction said that the husband of the accused had been bewitched
Sainte Avaine, wife of Andrieu Mortier		inhabitant of Bazuel	Death of her husband
1621, against Pasquette Barre			
Jean Parmentier		(cf. trial of 1599)	Death of one of his chickens, followed by others;
Pierre Wattleier		(cf. trial of 1599)	His son, Melchior, has been sick for six weeks; Pierre Wyard died shortly before
the same, 13 July 1627			

a. Sec n. 41.
b. Sec n. 41.

years old, relates how a sick cow of his, which he suspected Reyne of having bewitched, was cured after he threatened to retaliate by setting her house afire. He adds that he confided his suspicions to Reyne's son-in-law, but that Reyne herself, upon learning of them, showed no visible emotion.

Nicolas Bridoux, a weaver (*mûlquinière*), fifty years old, had been previously married to Jacqueline Billot, daughter of the accused, and with her had had a daughter, Marie. Five or six years earlier, this child, on her sickbed, recounted to her father how her grandmother had promised to cure her illness if she could be trusted never to tell of it. Five or six days after making this confession she died.

Jean Lenain, a local alderman, aged sixty, speaks in confirmation of the preceding testimony, adding that he knew Bridoux's daughter well and that the incident had taken place seven or eight years before.

Georges Clocquette, sergeant for the town of Le Cateau and for the abbey court of Saint-André, who had been given the assignment of bringing in the defendant, tells of how he tried to convince her along the way to confess, citing the example of one Isabeau Dubaille, and of how she appeared upset at this, saying, "What, and she [Isabeau] didn't dare lately to come to Valenciennes?"

Laurence Maughier, widow of Denys Watterlier, forty-one years old, relates how the entire household of Jean Parmentier, finding that they had fallen ill as a result of a spell, set out for Berry,⁵⁹ "to speak to a woman, who had given them some kind of brew to cure them, which woman from Berry had told them that in order to take this potion they would do well to go somewhere else other than their home . . . and that when they took the brew in question, the sorceress who had concocted it would appear in that house despite all efforts to stop her."

Jean Parmentier, she continues, did go to take his potion in another house, but, at the crucial moment, he "fell in a faint." His wife took him for dead and began to raise a hue and cry, which drew "several persons, . . . among them Reyne . . . , who must have come running in a great hurry, for in her haste she had lost one of her shoes or house slippers in the mud." Parmentier, upon regaining consciousness, forbade Reyne to come in, and, when she persisted, threw a burning ember in her face. His wife recovered the ember and began to beat the witch, who made no effort to defend herself.

The same witness notes that "a Waldensian who lived at Saint Souplet⁶⁰ often came to Bazuel and went to see Reyne Percheval . . . even, according to some folks, sleeping there on occasion."

The sixth witness, Jean Parmentier, a Bazuel alderman, aged sixty, confirms his role in these events, which took place some sixteen to eighteen years earlier. He refers to Reyne as his "neighbor," and he explains

that the healer of Berry assured him that the witch who had cast a spell over his family would of necessity appear in the house where he took his cure, "when the street was full of fire and water." He also confirms the tale of the Waldensian, adding that Reyne had bewitched one of his cows, which "had disgorged [given birth to] a calf's head without flesh or skin" and from whose belly men had withdrawn all the calf's missing bones minus the skin.

All these witnesses, with the exception of Georges Clocquette, are residents of Bazuel. Every one of them admits to a long acquaintance with Reyne. And though they all claim to know that she is indeed a witch, they make no mention of the demonologists' initiations or sabbaths. The judges' interrogation is another matter. At her first questioning, on 2 September 1599, Reyne denies all the charges brought by the second and third witnesses, which were no doubt already known to the judges, even though they were not officially entered in the record until two days later. She is also accused of having laughed and mocked, with her daughter, at the grieving followers of two funeral processions that passed by her. She denies this in the case of the second, and for the first occasion, offers the explanation that her daughter had indeed laughed, but only at the sight of a drunkard trying unsuccessfully to chant with the priests, and that she had struck the girl in order to quiet her. She also denies having sent a Waldensian into the fields to find a certain Jean Avaine to ask for his daughter's hand, which the peasant refused. Finally, in response to the charge that she had been present at the execution for witchcraft of the wife of Merlin d'Ors⁶¹ but that she had left just as the fire was set alight, she denies leaving at that moment and rejects the contention that one of those present remarked at the time: "Go on, go on, it will be your turn next."

On 6 September she categorically denies the charges brought against her by the first four witnesses. The aldermen of Bazuel refer her case to the court of Le Cateau, who rule, on the thirteenth, that she may be put to torture. This is done later that day; Reyne again denies all the charges against her, but, several hours later, she can no longer hold out under torture and at last she confesses all her "crimes": she did kill her son-in-law's daughter by putting a certain powder in her pâté, for, as she explains, Bridoux "often tormented" her. This same "powder" she used to bring about Jean Parmentier's illness and the birth of the deformed calf, but she did not mean to harm Pierre Watterlier, or even Jean Parmentier, who, she testifies, must have happened by chance to come in contact with the powder sprinkled on his manure heap.

From this point on in the interrogation, the judges seem to be imprinting the answers to their questions in the defendant's head. Here at last the devil comes upon the scene, in the person of one Nicollas Rigant,

who had had sexual relations with the accused. He knew her as Marghot, and, after persuading her to renounce her "chrism and baptism" and to give up her soul to him, he marked her with his sign. At the judges' bidding, Reyne describes her sabbath and her repertory of spells, for which she receives one *gros* per animal or human. She names her companions in the sabbath dance, among them Isabeau Dubaille, and admits to having practiced her art for seventeen or eighteen years. When the judges ask what she did with the Hosts she received in church, she replies that she was beaten by her devil because she refused to surrender them. And, finally, in response to their questions about the toads she kept, she explains that she has raised four of them, dressed them in red, green, and yellow cloth, and used their venom mixed with water to make "a dense drizzling rain" that could rot apples and pears.

We have no record of the verdict, but after testimony such as hers, there can be little likelihood that Reyne Percheval escaped the death sentence.

This long trial presents a very useful frame of reference for my study. Its first two stages are clearly distinguished, and there are material differences between the witnesses' accounts and the "confessions" of the defendant. The first are rooted in the common superstitions of country people of that time, while Reyne's testimony seems to be an amalgamation of these same superstitions with the satanical antireligion of the demonologists. Of course, the witnesses could not be expected to have been able to describe a sabbath or a pact with the devil because such knowledge would cast suspicion on them! One wonders how well versed the villagers were in the notion of diabolism which the judges were attempting to link to the defendant. For, though many of the local people must have been familiar with it, through their experience of trials and public executions, at which the sentence and the "crimes" of the witch were read aloud,⁶² it is striking how few of them refer to it. Their rare allusions to diabolism are very indirect: for example, a seventy-year-old shepherd testifies to having seen, near Bois-l'Évêque, "a disheveled woman who whirled in a dance," whom he believes to be Aldegonde de Rue, accused of witchcraft at Bazuel in 1601. His description is bound to suggest to the judges the image of the nocturnal dance. And yet, among the dozens of witnesses who appeared at the five Bazuel trials, this shepherd and a sixty-year-old laborer who confirmed his testimony are the only ones to come forward with this kind of accusation. Even if we assume that they responded instinctively to a secret desire on the part of the judges to get this brand of testimony in the record, is it not surprising that they could think of no other detail to add to their accusation? In fact, the testimony of witnesses at these trials can be read as a declaration of orthodoxy, in which they were encouraged to emphasize the aberrations of the defendant in contrast to their own behavior. It is my feeling—and this conclusion merits a separate study—that the trials reveal two types of witchcraft, which I have called elsewhere "the witchcraft of the clerks and judges" and "popular witchcraft."⁶³ The former incorporates the "crimes" described by the witnesses but interprets them in a satanical religious context that might be straight out of the demonological treatises. The latter seems to have entirely different intellectual origins, for though it is sometimes contaminated by exposure to the judges' point of view, as in the case of the shepherd of Bazuel, it appears to be rooted chiefly in a popular mentality that is still half pagan.

I will now attempt to sort out the two strains, to transcend the language of judicial and religious repression—which was as prevalent then as it is today—in order to explore the territory of strictly popular witchcraft, as found, for example, in the village of Bazuel.

By paying much more attention to their testimony than to the witnesses themselves, historians have overlooked some fascinating sociological insights to be gained from the trials. In the Bazuel trials, which I have described in Table 5, twenty-four citizens of Bazuel, four from Landrecies, and two from Le Cateau⁶⁴ appeared as witnesses before the tribunal. But the last two trials offer only scant hints at the testimony heard there, notably in the responses of the defendant, Pasquette Barra.

This evidence indicates that as many as twenty-three households in the village were involved in the witch hunt in the years 1599, 1601, and 1621 alone (see Table 5). Indeed, there is some evidence that the judicial process was set in motion in response to popular pressure rather than by the unilateral decision of the judges of the abbey of Saint-André du Cateau, in whose territory Bazuel fell.⁶⁵ There is no evidence to this effect in the case of Reyne Percheval, in 1599, but Aldegonde de Rue, in 1601, came forward on her own to appear before a "visitor and executioner" of witches from Rocroy,⁶⁶ for, as she explained, "many persons, in lewd terms and against her honor and her good name and reputation" had been calling her a sorceress. Marie Lanechin, in 1621, brought a charge against Nicolas Deramp, who accused her of witchcraft. They both voluntarily entered the prison in Le Cateau in order to bolster their credibility, but the testimony against Marie proved so damning that the judges ordered the Bazuel aldermen to prosecute. The two final trials were the consequence of her denunciations, but Pasquette Barra, who was acquitted in 1621, was challenged a second time, in 1627, when new accusations were made against her by two inhabitants of Bazuel. Just who were these prosecution witnesses, and what motivated them to turn their hostility upon these old women?

If one calculates that two of the witnesses appeared both in 1599 and in 1627 and that, on the latter date, Pierre Wattelier was fifty-eight

and Jean Parmentier (if he is indeed the alderman of 1599; see Table 5) seventy-eight, then the ages of only twelve of the thirty-two witnesses at the Bazuel trials are lacking. This gives an average age of forty-five years for the villagers: three witnesses were young (twenty-two, twenty-five, and thirty), but seven were fifty or over.

Women represented less than a third of the total: four widows aged, respectively, forty-one, thirty-eight, fifty-six, and forty, five wives, of whom one was forty, and a young girl of twenty-two. Their statuses and professions were diverse, but there is a difference apparent between the men and women: one of the widows was described as a "hostess" at Landrecies, but nothing was specified about the nine other women. The male inhabitants of Bazuel included three aldermen, one sergeant, one tenant farmer (*consier*), one weaver (*mailunier*), one thatcher, and a series of such less distinguished occupations as day laborer, shepherd, or linen-weaving worker.

In drawing up a typical portrait of the prosecution witness based on this information, the first conclusion would have to be that he was both very like and very unlike the victims. Witnesses were generally old, especially for that era, and some were as old as or even older than the defendants. But in the case of Bazuel, the average age of the accused, at sixty, was a little bit higher than that of the accusers. The male/female ratio among the witnesses was precisely the reverse of that among the accused: 69 percent men and 31 percent women, while men represented only 19 percent of the defendants in northern France (see Table 1). As for their social backgrounds, the witnesses and defendants seem to have been drawn from different classes. Four out of five of the Bazuel suspects were widows, and not one of them appears to have belonged to the upper socioeconomic-political level in the village; several of the witnesses, however, would have to be placed there. Interesting facts are revealed in the list of mayors and aldermen of Bazuel between 1599 and 1627,⁶⁷ that is, the roster of judges who were competent to rule on witchcraft (see Table 6). Throughout the period, the Trenchant, Wyart, and Lengrand families, with the exception of the latter, which disappeared after 1621, occupied the seats of power continuously until 1627. A comparison of these names with those of the witnesses and the witches' alleged victims yields some important correlations: among the bewitched, one Pierre Wyart in 1627, the daughter of Mathieu Hennocq in 1601, the husband of Saince Avaline, and Jean, son of Nicolas d'Avesnes, in 1621.

Many of the plaintiffs were personally related to the aldermen-judges, and many of the victims they described were also members of these families (see Tables 5 and 6). Furthermore, their spells were evidently directed, at least in part, at the most powerful and the wealthiest elements in the village, for example, Jean Lennain and Jean Parmentier,

Table 6. *Bailiff, Mayors, and Aldermen of Bazuel, 1599-1627*

Date	Bailiff	Mayor	Aldermen
1599	Francois Leducq		Melchior Wyart Jean Lasne Christoffle Meurant Jean Trenchant
1601		Jean Trenchant	Mathieu Hennocq Bernard Lengrand Jean Souffler Féry Hennocq Christoffle Meurant Jean Lasne
1621		Jean Trenchant	Gaspard Denise Melchior Wyart Bernard Lengrand Andrieu Cardon Andrieu Grenier Nicolas d'Avesnes
1627		Jean Trenchant	Philippe Wyart Cornil Avaline Anthoine Lebun Mathieu Debarlaymont

aldermen, in 1599; Nicolas d'Avesnes, an alderman, in 1621; and an anonymous tenant farmer (*consier*) cited by Nicolas Deramp in 1621. The witnesses from Landrecies, too, can hardly be said to represent the poorest segments of society! Finally, as in the case of Nicolas Deramp, the chief witness in 1621 and an employee of Mathieu Hennocq, who served as alderman in 1601, one wonders if these witnesses from more modest backgrounds were not recruited by their employers for this task. In addition to Nicolas, one Andrieu Deramp is among the witnesses, raising our suspicions of a link between their testimony and the death of Hennocq's daughter. Two other witnesses, Andrieu de Braibant and Antoine Nicaise, engaged in professions that would necessarily make them dependent upon their richer neighbors.

Finally, Pierre Wanteiler and Jean Parmentier seem to have specialized in furnishing testimony against witches, in 1599 and again in 1627. (Even if the latter Jean Parmentier should have been a son or a relative of the first, a relationship clearly still exists between them.)

This relationship shows up clearly in an analysis of the accusations (Table 5): deaths cited—of chickens, cows, and horses, and of people, particularly young people and infants—alternate with anecdotes intended to incriminate the defendant as a witch. Sickness, in every form, and at-

tacks on the personal property of those rich enough to own, for example, two horses—these are the typical charges of the accusers. These and the refrain of “explanation,” which recurs like a leitmotiv in their testimony: how the witch took revenge in her spells for being refused something she wanted or for having something taken that she considered hers. For example, in Andrieu Doyen’s account of a quarrel over a manure heap between Aldegonde de Rue and an inhabitant of Landrecies, Aldegonde’s daughter warns that he will live to regret his claim, for it is not right “to take the property of poor people without paying for it.” Grégoire Florut testifies to having seen Aldegonde go off “all in a lather” when he refused her something she wanted. And the wife of Mathieu Hennocq offers as an explanation for the death of her daughter the fact that she had refused to give some “grains of purgative” to Marie Lanechin.

In this sense, perhaps the sorceresses of Bazuel can be considered “children of want.”⁶⁸ But were they really “rebels against society”?⁶⁹ It seems to me, rather, that their role was a passive one, that they formed a fixed point for all the social hostility in the village. What is significant is not whether or not they could cast spells on their more fortunate neighbors but the fact that the latter perceived them as a real and immediate threat.

The six witches of Rieux (1650–52) and the seventeen sorcerers and sorceresses from Fressies and Hem-Lenglet (1609–49),⁷⁰ as well as other isolated cases in the Cambrésis, can be considered in the same light (see Tables 7 and 8).

At Fenain, in 1611, Marie Cornu, known as “The Redhead,” was brought to trial. She had been married three times and widowed three times, and she was accused, among other things, of having poisoned all her husbands, the third and last because “he was always growing at her.” She also “made a girl’s nose fall off,” when she tried to prevent Marie from marrying her father, and she rendered a child lame who “was giving her trouble when she was doing her duty” in the house of his father. She caused the death of a cow whose owner had refused her milk.⁷¹ In short, Marie Cornu, a domestic servant, seems to have been a child of poverty.

In 1620, at Crespin, Cécile Bérurrière, a young unmarried girl, had some trouble, presumably, finding a husband. A witness, aged thirty, testified that she cast a spell on him, saying “you never told me that you were going to get engaged.”⁷²

In 1637, an investigation at Campeau concerning the children of Mathias Bourie, a *laboureur* (a prosperous cultivator, with his own horses), involved the testimony of eight witnesses: two *laboureurs* (aged thirty-five and forty), two widows (both sixty), the mayor (seventy-one), a former mayor (forty-three), an innkeeper and *laboureur* (thirty-four),

Table 7. *Witchcraft at Rieux, 1650–1652*

Date (beginning and end of trials)	Name	Age	Number of Witnesses	Remarks	Verdict	References (ADN)
26 August–31 October 1650	Madeleine Desnasse	78	15	Born at Rieux; mother died in prison for witchcraft; her daughter of 13, deceased, denounced her; her devil is called “do whatever you like with them”	Strangled and burned	B 1216-17615-1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 11
10 May–8 July 1652	Marie de Boubay, unmarried	28		Born at Rieux; daughter of Jaspard and Marie Hourie (see below)	Banished	B 1216-17615-13, 15
10 May 1652–?	Jenne Boubay	34		Sister of the above; says she is bewitched	Unknown	B 1216-17615-17
?–8 July 1652	Marie Hourie, widow of Jaspard de Boubay			Mother of the two preceding	Banished	B 1216-17615-14
28 May–8 July 1652	Anthoinette Lescouffe, unmarried	30	8	Born at Boursies, ^b resident of Rieux for 28 years; niece of the following	Strangled and burned	B 1216-17615-4, 8, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28
28 May–10 July 1652	Susanne Goudry, unmarried	57–58		Born at Ognain near Audenard, ^c resident of Rieux; aunt of the above	Strangled and burned	B 1216-17615-4, 7, 25, 26, 27, 28

a. Villetre, “Sorcellerie dans le Nord,” p. 153, is in error concerning these trials.
 b. Nord: *arrondissement* of Cambrai, *canton* of Marcoing.
 c. Belgium, province of East Flanders.

Table 8. *Witchcraft at Fressies (F) and Hem-Lenglet (H.L.), 1609-1649^a*

Date (beginning and end of trials)	Name	Age	Number of Witnesses	Remarks	Place	Verdict	References (ADN)
16 December 1609- 7 January 1611	Jehanne de Monchecourt, wife of Luc Maisne		"several" mentioned in Dec. 1610 (+1 in 1609)	Gave birth in prison, which delayed the trial; tortured	F	Executed	7 G 782
?-20 November 1623	Catherine Salmon			Tortured	F	Executed by fire	7 G 783
?-20 November 1623	Barbe Salmon			Sister of the above	F	Banished	7 G 783
11 October- 20 November 1623	Colette Jardt			Denounced by Catherine Salmon; tortured	F	Executed by fire	7 G 783
17 October- 20 November 1623	Crespin Plazeau	17		Son of Catherine Salmon; tortured	F	Executed by fire	7 G 783
26 October- 20 November 1623	Simon Dupas		20 (incl. 9 from Cambrai)	Son of Collete Jardt; tortured	F	Executed	7 G 783
7 November- 13 December 1623	Péronne Desgardins		14	Tortured	F	Executed	7 G 783
13 October- 14 December 1623	Catherine Leleu			Tortured	F	Executed	7 G 783
11 November- 15 December 1623	Anne du Moutié, wife of Nicholas Delattre		8	Lives in the Bray woods, jurisdiction of H.L.	H.L.	Executed	7 G 783
12 October- 16 December 1623	Marie Delattre		10 + others	Tortured	F	Executed by fire	7 G 783
1623 (?)	Géry de Haynin			Fugitive	F	Banished forever	7 G 783
Before 15 November 1623- 1 March 1624	Jehanne Flauveau, widow of Loys Dufour	45	6	Tortured, 15 November, but will not confess; the judges consult their colleagues in Arras (?) ^b	H.L.	Banished forever	7 G 783
5 January- 1 March 1624	Marie Lemaire, wife of Eloy Léger	42	8	Tortured; accused by several already executed	F	Banished forever	7 G 783
?-1 March 1624	Gillette Clacquebert, wife of Luc de Seins	40	witnesses	Daughter of Catherine Salmon; tortured	H.L.	Strangled and burned	7 G 783
May 1645	Charles Dupas and his wife				H.L.	?	7 G 786
1649	Jeanne Lourdeau	80			F	Banished	7 G 785

a. Villette, "Sorcellerie dans le Nord," p. 151, omits Géry de Haynin and commits other errors in dating and spelling of names. In particular, we must overlook his reference to "Jehanne Flanneur," who is none other than Jehanne Flauveau, already cited by him.

b. *Chef-lieu* of the Pas-du-Calais.

and a *laboureur* (thirty-eight). Most of them were among the more privileged of the village, in terms of wealth and power.⁷³

The six trials at Rieux (1650–52) were heard before the bailiff and feudal tenants of Bouchain, who sometimes submitted the matter to the high court of Mons, in Hainaut (see Table 7). But Madeleine Desnasse admitted that she was brought to trial “by the accusation” of her fellow citizens, and Marie de Boubay complained about malicious “rumors” against her. All the Rieux trials, resulting first from the denunciations of Madeleine Desnasse and later of others, who were put to torture, were in fact closely interrelated. The six suspects together represented only three different households; twenty-three prosecution witnesses appeared from the village. For example, at the Desnasse trial in 1650, the following witnesses appeared, among others: Jean Leclercq, a notary and *laboureur* (seventy-three years old), the mayor’s lieutenant (sixty-four), a *laboureur* of sixty-three, three villeins (aged seventy-two, seventy-eight, and forty, respectively), and two widows, of whom one was eighty-four.⁷⁴ Unfortunately, the lack of further information makes it unnecessary to undertake a careful examination of their testimony, as in the case of Bazuel.

Seventeen trials at Fressies and Hem-Lenglet (1609–43) were heard before the bailiff and feudal tenants of the collegiate church of Saint-Géry of Cambrai, within whose jurisdiction these two adjoining villages fell (see Table 8). There are detailed records only of expenditures for these trials, along with a few verdicts. The thirteen trials in 1623–24 cost more than thirteen hundred florins, of which a part was borne by the villagers; the average cost of a trial came to one hundred florins. In this same period, eighty-three witnesses appeared, among “others” for whom the total is not given, as against three male and ten female defendants. There is no way of identifying these witnesses, but the records show that they received reimbursement amounting to six *patars* each. Should we assume that most of the villagers were called as witnesses, or that only some of them appeared but more than once, at several different trials? And did the modest sum they thus realized account in part for their willingness to come forward? What ties of family and friendship can be found among them? What were their relationships with the rich and powerful in the village, on the one hand, and with the defendants, on the other? Because the necessary records are lacking, these intriguing questions cannot be answered. And yet this single outburst of witch hunting—nine out of the thirteen tried were executed in 1623–24—is unparalleled in the rest of the Cambrésis. The violence and the speed with which the epidemic flared resulted no doubt from denunciations elicited from the suspects under torture and from the technique of confrontations arranged among the suspects or between them and other prisoners, such as Michielle and Anthoine Lengrève, whose fate is lost to history. The

thirteen defendants belonged to nine family groups: four members of the Salmon family, Colette Jaret and her son, and seven other individuals. One wonders, however, if there was not some connection between Marie Delattre and Anne du Moutié, widow of Nicolas Delattre, or between Simon Dupas, accused in 1623, and Charles Dupas and his wife, defendants in 1645.

No more can be deduced from the records. It is impossible to tell what role the villagers played in initiating the trials. The most that can be said with certainty is that Jehanne de Monhecourt, in 1609, owed her trial to the denunciations of one Charles Fouveau.

If all the cases in the Cambrésis are considered together, a line of demarcation can be discerned in part along socioeconomic-political lines. Without attempting to subject them to a one-dimensional economic analysis, we can observe, as Alan Macfarlane did in the case of Essex, that “witches seem to have been poorer than their victims,” who often came from rich and influential families.⁷⁵ This does not mean, however, that the witches were necessarily the poorest in the village.⁷⁶ Furthermore, as in Essex, the defendants were often old—though not significantly older than the witnesses—and were frequently the neighbors of their accusers.⁷⁷ In sum, then, we must look for clues within the village community. But first I will try to determine what part the villagers—or some of them, at least—played in the spread of the witch hunt.

The judges, inquisitors, and demonologists all shared responsibility for the witch hunt that raged like a forest fire throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. And there is no doubt that their zeal, abetted by the accusations of the defendants, played a large part in the spread of the movement. The case of Marie Lanechin is a convenient example. When the aldermen’s court that was hearing her case at Bazuel obtained only a partial confession from the defendant and referred the matter to Cambrai, the higher court ordered further torture:

The reason is that in the case of this crime of witchcraft, which is completely out of the ordinary and so secret and occult, and particularly in this instance, where the aforesaid Marie confesses a pact with the devil, having danced with him, and with powder received from him, caused the death of the daughter of Mathieu Hennocq and cast a spell over Andrieu Deramp, one can, as they say, repeat the question, for it is hardly likely that if this Marie did all that she has already admitted, she did not also make the aforesaid renunciation [of chrisms and baptism], receive the abovementioned mark [of the devil], and copulate [with him].⁷⁸

Evidently this particular witch fell short of the satanic model in the minds of her judges. Several days afterward, however, they were able to put their minds at rest, for the suspect made a full confession on all counts, including her copulation with the devil.⁷⁹ Of course, the higher

court judges were not alone in their zeal; they were seconded by the judges of the aldermen's court and a good part of the village.

Pressure from the villagers is easily discernible in the trial records. For example, Jean Leclercq, a notary at Rieux, declared in 1650 that Madeleine Desnasse had been arrested earlier but released, "having not been harried further for the poverty of the village."⁸⁰ Two years later, the same source notes that the mother of Antoinette Lescouffe would have been burned "if the village had had the means," but that the funds had already been depleted in the pursuit of several other witches. The mother, he adds, married outside of Rieux, at Boursies, and "everyone was pleased, for the village no longer had to pay for it."⁸¹

I have already remarked that the witnesses and the defendant often came from different social strata. An extreme example is Marie de Boubay, at Rieux, who was accused in 1652 of having threatened a local bachelor in the following terms: "Worm, if you don't marry me, you'll live to regret it"; but this would have been impossible, she testifies in her defense, "since he is a *censtier* [rich-tenant farmer]."⁸²

Was witch-hunting pressure joined in by all the inhabitants of the village? To find the answer a distinction must be made between witches from outside the village, who appear to have been the object of general opprobrium if they chanced to pass by, and witches who were natives. In the case of the outsiders, for example, at Ors in 1601, "the boys pursued a witch who had been banished from Castillon";⁸³ and again in 1679 near Lille, three witches were chased by the peasants as far as Seclin, where one of them was killed.⁸⁴

But when the threat arose from within the village, the reaction tended to be less spontaneous: the authorities took charge. Thus, on 15 July 1609, the mayor, aldermen, and the community of Hem-Lenglet passed the following act:

In consideration of the losses and damage which daily affect our neighbors and coinhabitants of the said Hem, which losses in our experience derive from charms and spells and sorceries, and in the interest of cutting off such losses, and fearing even that this sort of thing might befall us, and inasmuch as there are certain persons residing in the said Hem, our village, who are tarred with the brush of witchcraft, we have agreed and consented and hereby do agree and consent, after careful discussion, that those persons should be apprehended by the proper authorities, questioned on this point, and even (if the case demands it) brought to trial, as is proper in such a case.

The community further agreed to share the expenses, "each according to our quota system." The act was then signed by twenty persons, including the mayor and aldermen.⁸⁵ Almost all were men, and the Laminandin family had four representatives among them, of whom one was an alderman. This text was drawn up during a period of intense witch

hunting, three years after the reactivation of the edict against sorcery,⁸⁶ and it preceded by only a matter of months the trial of Jehanne de Monchecourt held in the adjacent commune of Fressies. In fact, it may well be this act that touched off the many trials at Fressies and Hem-Lenglet fourteen years later.

Two further cases can be cited in which village authorities played a direct role in the witch hunt. The first is documented in an act, undated but probably from the seventeenth century, addressed by the mayor, aldermen, and farming community of "Garnier."⁸⁷ to the chapter of Notre-Dame de Cambrai, under whose aegis they fell. It complained of witches in the village, who gave "reason for fear to each and every one," of the death of animals who were "spellbound and full of all sorts of venomous beasts." The community asked that the evildoers be brought to trial and offered to stand half of the costs of each case. There were forty-three signatories, mostly men, and certain families (Lempereur, Depreux, Lassein, for example) were represented several times.⁸⁸ The final text, drawn up by the mayor, the four aldermen, and two feudal tenants of the village of Decly,⁸⁹ is a little different from the two others. Writing to the abbot of Saint-Amand, their landlord, on 7 November 1611, they demanded prosecution of those witches, starting with Anne Monart and Catherine Tassart who had already confessed, for the village was daily experiencing the loss of men and animals. They offered to pay forty florins per banishment or execution as their share in the trial expenses.⁹⁰

Even on a fairly simple descriptive level, the relationship of the village to its witches cannot be understood without referring to a whole complex of factors, all of which played a part in the persecution phenomenon: ties of blood, clientele, and neighborhood; economic and social tensions among the villagers; the role of the well-to-do, the nabobs, and the local political cliques—in sum, the network of relationships that made up the rural community, a community whose membership was by no means defined simply by the fact of residence in the village. The village community in turn must fit into the larger context of an outside world in full political, economic, and religious evolution. I am not attempting here to do microsociology or microanthropology, which some recent authors have touted as the most fruitful way of looking at the witchcraft phenomenon.⁹¹ Too little is known about the rural world of the Cambresis, or even about Bazuel, Rieux, Fressies, and Hem-Lenglet to make such an analysis. On the other hand, some partial explanations may be made by comparing the witches, the witnesses, and their own small world with the large-scale political, economic, and religious movements that were sweeping at the time across this part of Europe.

For if we can understand why and how the hatred on the part of the judges and the elites was taken up and spread—in a different but perhaps

an even more violent form—through rural society, in particular among the most influential (*senior pars*) in the village, then perhaps the witch will lose a little of her diabolical halo and appear more as she really was: not so much a satanic and vindictive magic maker as the plaything of an evolutionary process that she could not hope to understand, the focal point of tensions that were incomprehensible to her—the unconscious expiatory victim of a cultural and economic upheaval still in process.

What, in sum, motivated the rural communities and the most powerful village families to take up the witch hunt? Here lies the heart of the problem and probably also the answer to why the trials ended and why not all villages in this region were touched by them: "The men who stopped the witch trials were not the princes and the learned, but townsmen and villagers who still believed staunchly in witchcraft and the powers of the devil."⁹²

The Acculturation of the Rural World in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: The Example of the Cambrésis

Did the fear of witches shown so clearly in the witnesses' depositions and in the texts drawn up by the village communities burst suddenly upon the rural scene with the advent of the seventeenth century? On the contrary, there is reason to think that the local folk had long believed in and devised a number of protective rites against a sort of "popular witchcraft," that is, the healing or spell-casting powers of certain individuals. I have given elsewhere some examples of these rites,⁹³ without, however, having been able to put them into their proper context. Certain of the trials that were held at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries contain fragmentary information about them. The testimony of Laurence Maughier, during the trial of Reyne Percheval at Bazuel in 1599, is interesting in this regard: she refers to a "Waldensian"—that is, a sorcerer—living at Saint-Souplet and also gives an account of a local exorcism. The healer involved, from the village of Bertry,⁹⁴ she characterizes as the rival and enemy of the witch of Bazuel, who is in turn allied with the Waldensian of Saint-Souplet. In the same vein, the "dean" of Bazuel, who twice exorcised Andrieu Deramp after he was put under a spell by Marie Lanechin around 1621,⁹⁵ describes himself as possessing powers equivalent to those of the witch. In Douai in 1610, at the trial of Isabeau Blary, a hundred-year-old woman born at Lewarde but resident at Douai, a neighbor relates how the mother of a sick child denounced Isabeau and swore she could obtain proof against her: "She would go to speak with the Capuchin, who would make the image [of the culprit] appear in a mirror."⁹⁶ These scraps of testimony evoke a world full of would-be spell-casters doing combat with legions of self-styled healers.

No doubt the villagers believed blindly in them all. And no doubt, also, they were, like Laurence Maughier, versed in the "geography" of sorcery in their locale and knew which exorcist to see if they thought themselves bewitched. In point of fact, healers such as these were rarely mentioned in the witch trials, especially after the first quarter of the seventeenth century. And yet one wonders why they did not, as Villette suggests in the case of the "Capuchin" of Douai,⁹⁷ run the same danger of arrest as their witch opponents. Perhaps the healers still played an important role, at the beginning of the seventeenth, as they had during the previous centuries, in establishing in the minds of the peasantry a counterpoise to the "spells" of the witches.

An intriguing text, dated Sunday, 6 February 1446 (new style), supports such a hypothesis in the case of the Cambrésis. It consists of nine separate testimonies given to the bailiff of Arleux, Rumilly, and Saint-Souplet, related to an accusation of sorcery against Péronne, widow of Gilles Pingret, resident of Saint-Martin-en-la-Rivière. Unfortunately, texts as early as this one are rare in the Cambrésis. Furthermore, there is no indication of who drew up the charges—the great witch-hunters' manuals were as yet unknown—or what the result of the trial was. In any case, five witnesses from Saint-Martin, three from Vaux-en-Arrouaise, and one from Saint-Souplet accused Péronne of being a witch: she had caused the death of several persons, including her own daughter-in-law; she was well known in the area, and inhabitants of Valenciennes, Le Cateau, and the nearby villages came to ask her to disenchant their loved ones; she could also, for a sum, "by saying masses, make runaway husbands return to their wives" and bring faithless wives back to their hearths. She was thus an ambivalent sorceress, who could both heal and destroy. And she was not alone in this ability; one of her competitors was a woman from Le Cateau who warned the wife of a villager of Saint-Martin to stay away from Péronne for nine days because she suspected Péronne of having enchanted her.⁹⁸

Out of the pages of this text rises an image of the Cambrésis as a murky region peopled by spell-casters, whose "recipes" are readily passed along in the witnesses' testimony: herbs gathered on Midsummer Eve, holy water, and ritual signs are the chief ingredients. There are extraordinary resemblances to the seventeenth-century trials: a body of witnesses who try to disassociate themselves from the witches, professing ignorance when the judges attempt to draw them out; an almost identical geographical representation of witchcraft, in Le Cateau, Valenciennes, Saint-Souplet, even Bazuel; and finally the distinction between the witch's malevolent presence in her own village and her beneficent appearance to the outsiders who come to consult her. Her rival in Le Cateau shares this same ambivalent quality.

On the other hand, Péronne's victims all seem to have been people;

unlike her counterparts in the seventeenth century, she did no harm to crops, animals, or property. Is this distinction owing to the state of the documents that have survived, or is it one of the fundamental characteristics of the medieval rural witchcraft, about which so little is known? In the latter case, the difference would point to one of the explanations for the witch hunt: by the seventeenth century, the threat to property plays a major part in villagers' testimonies (see Table 5). Was there a breakdown in their mental equilibrium, which was founded on the possibility of using healers—who might, incidentally, act as witches in their own village—against the witches? Or were the healers no longer able to quiet the anxieties of their neighbors, in part because their fears now took a different form? Certainly fewer healers appear in the texts of the seventeenth century, but this may be only an illusion. The witnesses' instinctive caution may be the reason the healers disappear from the trial records and, consequently, seem to have lost much of their importance in village society. They did survive, however, for they reappeared in the *Cambresis* and elsewhere with the end of the witch-hunting epidemic. In fact, at that time they felt the wrath of the courts. The judges, who had ceased to believe in witchcraft, condemned them in essence for their superstitious practices and their bad influence on their neighbors. Thus, on 18 September 1699, the bailiff of Cassel condemned Jean Vanacker to be thrashed and banished for six years from eastern Flanders, as the sequence "of having exorcised men and beasts, of having named the witch who he said had cast a spell over persons and animals . . . and of having done other superstitious acts."⁹⁹ On 22 April 1700, François Darche, from Furnes, was condemned to serve ten years in the galleys and to make amends before the front door of the local church of Sainte-Walburgue,

and once there, bare-headed and kneeling, to say and declare, with a clear and intelligible voice, that he had said and named several persons falsely and maliciously as witches, that he had participated, among other things, in disenchanting [three women], to which end he had made use of diabolical means and dabbled in sacred matters, that he had written himself maliciously in ox blood on a half sheet of paper several names which, falsely, he had declared to have been written and signed in their own blood by would-be witches and werewolves, whom he had supposedly forced to come forth to do so.¹⁰⁰

On 29 September 1740, the official of the archdiocese of Cambrai ordered the appearance of a certain "fellow" who was peddling a "brochure . . . containing a supposed miracle which happened in Marseilles and superstitions which protect against thunder, sudden death, rabies, death without confession and every evil."¹⁰¹

The curate at Viesly¹⁰² was involved in 1752 in a suit against one Denisse, whom he refused to marry in the church until she had repented

of various "scandals" in which she had been involved in the village. In particular, "she has publicly accused two local persons, a man and a woman, of having put a curse on her, she has called *shepherds to come to remove the spell* and surgeons from different areas to visit her, and the charm has finally been broken in childbirth, which has not, for all that, prevented her . . . from setting upon the so-called sorcerers as they were leaving the church."¹⁰³ Documents such as these, which occur in increasing abundance from the end of the seventeenth century, prove that the countryside, in particular, continued to produce its share of sorcerers and exorcists. This does not, however, imply a simple restoration of the situation that existed before the witch-hunting epidemic. For society was once again, in the eighteenth century, in a period of profound change, and relations among the witches, the exorcists, and the local villagers were once again undergoing a necessary transformation. Much research is needed to clarify these relationships, culminating in their role in the rural world of the twentieth century, in which spell-casters and charm-breakers are still part of the culture.¹⁰⁴

A comparison, then, between the situations at the end of the sixteenth century and at the end of the seventeenth century must begin with a question: why and how did one part of rural society, in the *Cambresis*, cease to look to the healers for remedies against the sorcerers' charms? Why did these villagers turn instead for protection to the judges and begin to condemn the witches mercilessly in the courts? The seer-healer as she was represented by Pieter Brueghel the Elder in the sixteenth century¹⁰⁵ had not really lost her powers, as far as her neighbors were concerned, but, like them, she belonged to a world that, a hundred years later, was crumbling away.

The first important series of witch trials in the Catholic Low Countries were held between 1580 and 1630 (see Figure 1). The cases at Bazel and most of the trials at Fressies and Hem-Lenglet, in the *Cambresis*, occurred at this time.

In this same era, the Counter-Reformation spread, and important economic and demographic changes occurred in the *Cambresis* countryside. Were these simply parallel events or can a partial explanation of the witch hunt be found in them?

In the first place, the reign of the archdukes (1596–1633) was marked by their attempt to reorganize ecclesiastical structures and to Christianize the masses. The archbishop of Cambrai, Van der Burch, who had been promoted in 1616, wrote in 1625 to Rome that he had removed from office more than one hundred of his pastors, either by pensioning them off or by bringing them to trial on grounds of immorality or ignorance. And even though "the establishment of seminaries will have an effect only much later," the nuncio could record in 1634 that the secular

clergy was now of high quality and that the ecclesiastical authorities zealously visited their districts annually.¹⁰⁶ Thus the Catholic hierarchy, which had been upgraded at every level, set out to raise the masses from the depths of their superstition. The public authorities supported this campaign—on 20 September 1607, one year after the edict against witchcraft—by issuing another proclamation defining “the so-called servile labors” that had hindered the “sanctification of Sundays and feast days.” Specifically, this text ordered the closing of hotels and taverns and forbade dancing in public places and professional activity during the hours of sermons, parish masses, and vespers. It was designed to fill the churches once again with worshippers, and though in the beginning it seemed to have little effect and had to be renewed in 1608, 1624, 1625, and 1633, there is no doubt that this edict modified the life of the communities little by little. In effect, it channeled the population toward the churches, where now the curates had to “preach on Sundays and feast days so as to cover the whole body of religious instruction in a period of two years.” A succession of jubilees, in 1597, 1605, 1606, 1608, 1617, 1621, and 1626, and the influence of the confraternities worked together to produce an “increase of devotion” among the populace.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the leaders of the Counter-Reformation focused upon the need to attract youth in order to supervise and mobilize them. Day schools aimed at the offspring of the “well-to-do fraction of the population” were set up under the auspices of the clergy and magistrates, who fostered in them an “atmosphere steeped in religion.” Moreover, free Sunday schools were founded for the children of the poor, where they would be taught reading and writing as well as the rudiments of the faith, and where the sexes would be kept strictly separate. Parents who refused to send their children to these schools would be punished: they would be stricken from the “poor rolls” and denied public assistance. In 1586, these Sunday schools were declared obligatory throughout the province of Cambrai, where a special campaign was mounted, for example, in Valenciennes. In this archdiocese a child was to go to school from the age of seven “until he showed evidence of sufficient religious instruction.”¹⁰⁸

The witch trials show traces of this organized education. The recorders at the Bazuel trials in 1599 and 1601 (see Table 5) noted that the witnesses who appeared there “did not know how to write.” But by 1620, at Crespin, north of Valenciennes, several individuals testifying at the trial of Cécile Bérurière were able to sign their names, notably a villain aged twenty-nine and an unmarried girl of twenty-three.¹⁰⁹ The same proved true during the Rieux trials, 1650–52.

The success of the Counter-Reformation in the north of France, then, explains why this area attained a higher literacy rate in the seventeenth century than did the rest of the country.¹¹⁰ The introduction of

written culture was accompanied by a campaign against rural “paganism” and by the diffusion of Christian doctrine recently revamped by the Council of Trent. Is it not possible that the shock of the Catholic literary culture upon the rural peasant culture produced, in these conditions, a kind of mental traumatism? For educated peasants could explore the merchandise offered by itinerant book peddlers, that “escapist literature calculated to intensify the debasement of the majority in a repressive, and therefore alienated, society.”¹¹¹ Such books reinforced “the magical mentalities conducive to the continued peace of mind of the dominant groups” and alienated still more those popular masses who were “conditioned” to know their places.¹¹²

The effort to strengthen this sort of control over the popular masses in the Catholic Low Countries was reinforced by the economic and demographic transformations of the seventeenth century. The course of their evolution in the Cambrésis has been documented in the works of Hugues Neveux.¹¹³ The population of the village of Saint-Hilaire, located some fifteen kilometers east of Cambrai, doubled, at a conservative estimate, between 1450 and 1575, in a succession of “violent fits and starts,” as it did elsewhere in the Cambrésis. Between 1481–82 and 1574–75, the number of births per family seems to have increased dramatically, implying an evolution in the demographic structure, possibly, Neveux suggests, in the direction of a longer adult life span. Moreover, the sixteenth century saw an “unexpected but undeniable mobility within the population” of Saint-Hilaire while, in the next century, “a greater stability seems to have been likely.”

This schema, according to Neveux, holds true for the whole of the Cambrésis. More important is a contrast in the whole area, from 1540 to 1575, between a steadily growing population and a stabilized cereal production, in most cases at a level lower than that of 1520. The Cambrésis, which had exported part of its grain in the fifteenth century, now witnessed such a growth in local demand that its productive capabilities, in their state of “relative inertia,” were hard pressed to keep up with it. The demographic upsurge “thus threatens to contribute to a transition from a relatively open economy to an economy turned in upon itself.” And, in this light, the spread of the *mulquinerie* industry to the countryside can be seen as a possible response to the problem. In effect, the Cambrésis endured an economic crisis of twenty years’ duration beginning about 1575; plague in the 1580s and the wars of the following decade “disturb the production of cereals.”¹¹⁴ The first important wave of witch trials began to gather force in the Cambrésis, in particular at Bazuel and Fressies, shortly after this crisis. No doubt a causal link exists between these two phenomena, in the sense that the economic stagnation of the end of the sixteenth century emphasized social antagonisms

precisely at a time when the villages of the Cambresis were tending to turn inward upon themselves: "Demographic expansion made every plot of ground more precious and each new arrival less welcome."¹¹⁵ This closing of the village to the outside world produced a new social discomfort and served to exacerbate the turbulence that was affecting the floating population of that time, a population composed essentially of two social categories: farmhands who moved about in search of employment and a "self-conscious social group" made up of tenant farmers (*casiers*), who rented large tracts of land—fifty to seventy-five hectares on the average—and could thus make use of heavy machinery as well as an abundant labor supply.¹¹⁶

These effects of demographic and economic change would have gone unheeded by the villagers. When, under the changed conditions, their lives became more difficult, they probably experienced only a marked uneasiness. But they may have reacted instinctively and violently when their property or their rented land was threatened; Neveux cites several cases of socioeconomic antagonisms in the sixteenth century.¹¹⁷ And one study of criminality in the southern Low Countries from 1610 to 1660 has shown that 15 percent of eleven hundred "crimes" surveyed arose out of conflicts of interest, both urban and rural. Viewed from another perspective, 50 percent of the crimes committed by tenant farmers and *laboureurs* were related to economic conflicts, as against 15 percent by the day laborers.¹¹⁸

I have already noted that the accusations of the witnesses in the rural witch trials of the Cambresis revolved around the twin concepts of threat to life and to property. Can we perhaps assume that witchcraft, for the villagers, now connoted a form of social conflict? The judges and witnesses at Bazuel, for the most part, did not come from the same social stratum as the accused. On the other hand, almost all the participants seem to have been part of the fixed populations of the villages in question. This was the case of the aldermen's court, especially, and of the witnesses at Bazuel. The witches themselves were all natives and lifelong inhabitants of the villages where they were brought to trial, with only a rare exception—such as Maxellende Vasseur, a shepherd's wife and a resident of Bazuel for seventeen to eighteen years, and Marie Burlion, a sixty-year-old beggar woman accused of witchcraft at Braine-le-Comte on 19 July 1647.¹¹⁹ Both were acquitted, the latter because there were no charges that would stand up in court. Does the judges' leniency reflect the fact that neither woman had more than superficial ties with her adopted village and could not therefore arouse the same social anxiety as the other suspects? In other words, this fear may have existed only within the very core of certain villages that were threatened from the outside by the demographic and social turbulence characteristic of the Cambresis.

Before turning to a discussion of this social anxiety, we should note that the twenty-year-long economic crisis that afflicted the Cambresis at the end of the sixteenth century was accompanied by the definitive ousting of the French in 1595. What effect would this new climate of peace have had upon the deep reservoir of social tensions that had accumulated in each locality? First, peace would have brought back to their villages many families or individuals who had temporarily fled during the second half of the sixteenth century. Did Rieux, for instance, where three houses out of a total of twenty-eight were empty in 1560–61, see the sudden return of some of its old inhabitants once peace was declared?¹²⁰ This may never be known, but it is certain that the external pressure from vagrants upon the Cambresis villages rose sharply at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Second, the church authorities, in 1592 and again in 1606, designated a whipping boy for the masses in the form of sorcerers or witches, whom they increasingly identified with evil. Little by little, the leaders of the Counter-Reformation convinced the villagers that witches might be harmful. The lessons in the Sunday or weekly schools, the curate's sermons, trial sentences read aloud in the public squares, all spoke to these countryfolk of the devil and his apostles. The endless troubles that now rained upon the southern Low Countries would reinforce their sense of doom, and the clergy would do their part by portraying these catastrophes as evidence of divine retribution. In fact, the priest's message—stressing the whole community's responsibility for the misfortunes that plagued them—had not changed since the Middle Ages. But now, of course, his parishioners were better able to accept this message because of the atmosphere of perpetual fear in which they lived. In the provinces adjoining the Cambresis (and no doubt there, too, if they could be found), documents trace the succession of threats to human life: plague at Lille in 1606; on 27 March 1606, in Flanders, Artois, and Hainaut, "a hurricane so violent and tempestuous . . . that no one had ever seen such a great disaster"; "three suns over the city of Lille" in 1608; a "terrifying" comet in 1610; plague again at Lille in 1617, as a consequence of "God's wrath";¹²¹ a "great fear and terror" that war would break out again in Artois early in 1625; an unspecified fear occurring in the same province in the same year, as "the wrath of God . . . roused against his people" rained war, famine, pestilence, and skin rashes upon them; a virulent plague in Artois in 1636, just as the war was starting up again.¹²²

Thus the witch hunt may be seen as the end result of the process of rural acculturation, in which the guilt feelings of the masses were assuaged—and perhaps some of their economic, social, and psychological concerns as well—with the presentation of an expiatory victim. Unfortunately, this interpretation does not explain why in Artois, the neighbor-

ing province, which underwent the same acculturation but had different economic and social problems, very few witches were brought to trial. One would also especially like to know why these trials touched only a limited number of villages in the Cambrésis. My answer to this riddle lies in the interplay of three types of determinants: local or chronological differences in the acculturation and the socioeconomic evolution; the rate of decline of the old security-producing structures in the rural world; and the probable existence of other types of collective or individual expression in response to the accumulated tensions.

Before the age of the witch trials, the exorcists and healers had evidently done a good job of calming the fears of the peasantry. Their belief in the struggle between exorcist and sorcerer kept the villagers in relative security and, at the same time, supplied them with a logical—if not a rational—explanation for their countless troubles.¹²³ Nor did the exorcists lose all their clients between 1580 and 1680, for they reappear later in force in the documents, as we have seen. Thus, we can assume that, even during the witch hunt, most of the villagers in the Cambrésis hung onto their older, reassuring world view, their faith in the balance between good and evil, represented by the exorcists, on the one hand, and the sorcerers, on the other.

Those villagers who, at Bazuel and elsewhere, joined in the witch hunt must have been exceptions to the rule, men and women who saw the balance tilting dangerously to the side of the sorcerers. This situation suggests that the Christianization of the countryside was very uneven, touching certain villages sooner and more profoundly than others, and that in these villages it was probably diffused first among the upper classes, who had the means to buy the book peddlers' wares and the time to read them. The poor, and particularly the floating population of laborers, must have been more difficult to reach, despite the edicts of the archdukes. The curates, the key figures in the Christianization campaign on the local level, varied enormously in quality during the first quarter of the seventeenth century; the archbishop testified to this fact in 1625.

Until more work has been done on this subject, we can proceed on the hypothesis that acculturation was carried out unevenly in the countryside as a whole and selectively within each village population.

Unevenness in the provincial economy appears still more clearly in this period. For example, in Saint-Hilaire, where there were no witch trials, linen weaving (*mulquinerie*) developed as a local industry in the second half of the seventeenth century.¹²⁴ But weaving had been introduced at Bazuel as early as 1599, and one weaver was a witness in a trial in 1621 (see Table 5). The absence of detailed testimonies for Fressies during the great persecution of 1623-24 deprives us of evidence of its

economic development. But the trial of 1652 at Rieux turns up one weaver, aged twenty-two, among the local population.¹²⁵

These scattered references lend credence to the theory that "certain parts of the Cambrésis were converted to linen weaving in the sixteenth century."¹²⁶ In this light, Bazuel appears once again to be a singular locality, responding to the economic crisis by the development of rural industry long before Saint-Hilaire, for example. How does such an economic gap between two villages scarcely twenty kilometers apart fit into the overall picture of witch-hunting mania? Apparently the epidemics of persecution were closely related, on a local level, to the stage of economic and social evolution: traditional villages, in which the old ways of thought remained unchallenged, experienced fewer witch hunts, especially if their rate of acculturation was also slow.

Even though the total history of the Cambrésis cannot yet be written, the more modest attempt can be made to fit these scattered economic indices into a larger framework, starting with their effect on social structures that maintained security in the villages of this area.

John Bossy, in a brief but brilliant article, has described the impact of the Counter-Reformation upon the rural masses of Europe.¹²⁷ He has shown that, in order "to divert all streams of popular religion into a single parochial channel" and to transform something collective and popular into an individual Christianity, the reformers had to challenge existing family relationships, the notion of private warfare, and the confraternities—the most important institutions of medieval religion—and that because of their inherent opposition to the idea of the nuclear family, they could not integrate it into the new religious format. By their actions, "the bishops of the Tridentine Church . . . were laying many of the foundations of the modern state."¹²⁸ This analysis holds true in every detail for the Cambrésis and for the southern Low Countries in general. It points to the conclusion that the impact of acculturation in the more receptive villages such as Bazuel hastened the disintegration of social relations that had begun a long time before. In fact, what, in the latter stages of the witch trials, is presented as antireligion, is really the antithesis of the model Catholic life or, in other words, those sins most prevalent in rural society. Sex plays a starring role therein: for example, the judges forced each suspected witch to confess—though Villette maintains a discrete silence on this point—that she gave the devil "a hair from her shameful parts."¹²⁹ Isn't this purely and simply a denunciation of sexuality outside of Christian marriage? Similarly, in the witches' confessions we can see the implicit condemnation of many of the social practices of the pre-Tridentine period. Marriage with the devil in a purely carnal union recalls the old custom of "betrothal," a sort of trial marriage. The sabbath, a "sacrilegious feast," would seem to stand for the ritual cele-

brations of the Middle Ages with their guitarists and minstrels. And the communal confession, which was supposedly a feature of the sabbath, should also be considered in the context of Saint Carlo Borromeo's efforts to replace the medieval public confessions with private audiences.¹³⁰

To sum up, then, the Counter-Reformation was attempting, in the Cambresis and elsewhere, to promote morality in the conduct of its laymen and individualism in their religious life. But in doing so it was threatening to destroy the ties of blood and family that had held society together since the Middle Ages, and it was aided by an evolutionary process that had begun in the southern Low Countries more than a century before. The growing authority of the princes was acting to stamp out the practice of the private vendetta, which had functioned as a regulator of social tensions, helping to keep down the level of violence and to prevent warring families from exterminating each other completely. But the new theory according to which "no one is permitted to take vengeance except God and the judges appointed to punish wrongdoings"¹³¹ was not immediately, or wholeheartedly, accepted. In the fifteenth century these new ideas had made the least inroads in the Hainaut and Namur.¹³² Two centuries later there was still considerable evidence of private warfare in the southern Low Countries.¹³³ The old alliances were under great strain, but they continued to make themselves felt: for example, 15 percent of eleven hundred "crimes" analyzed for the period 1610-60 were attributable to clan warfare.¹³⁴ But though these family alliances continued to exist, their members no doubt vaguely sensed that their days were numbered. For, by the mid-seventeenth century, the rural family was "already in large part dismembered" in France¹³⁵ as a whole as well as in the region under study. Under these conditions, the security-producing structures in the villagers' world seemed to be crumbling. Pierre de Saint-Jacob's analysis of France during the period 1550-1650 applies to the Cambresis: "A decisive century if there ever was one, which saw the precipitous disintegration of the old communities and the attendant rise of the propertied bourgeois, the nonresident, and the nobleman, all of whom threatened the *vainable property* and the rights of the rural population."¹³⁶ This vast expropriation that resulted essentially from the invasion of the rural world by the capitalist spirit gave rise to deep divisions within the community, where "social imbalance had grown."¹³⁷ Various studies have shown, moreover, that as a result the rural community, once open to all male inhabitants of the village, shrank further and further until, in the seventeenth century in some cases and certainly by the eighteenth century, it admitted only "those who had some means."¹³⁸ This was certainly the case in parts of the Cambresis in the first half of the seventeenth century, based on texts from these rural communities where the witch hunt was most fierce:¹³⁹ at the very least they show the

influential role played by a few powerful families within the village. The aldermen of Bazuel, for example, sat in judgment on the witches and collected testimony against them from their own relatives and friends and were thus set apart from the lower orders of the population. As a group they also formed the town council, who "oversaw every aspect of group life or at least had the legal power to do so."¹⁴⁰ Without going as far as Porchney, who concluded that "the seventeenth century abounds also in intense class struggle,"¹⁴¹ certainly traces of such a struggle are evident throughout the Cambresis countryside. The disintegration of security structures, compounded by the impact of the Counter-Reformation, laid bare a network of fears beneath the surface of society. The richest and most influential villagers no doubt adhered all the more staunchly to the declining kinship structures that provided a base for their opposition to the growing number of poor, malcontents, and vagrant unemployed. They probably also tried to take over the rural community as a political and socioeconomic institution to serve their own interests. Witch hunting thus served both as a mechanism for expressing their fears of this latent social warfare and for keeping it at bay. It is perhaps no mere coincidence that their chosen victims—most often widows, young girls searching vainly for a husband, or, in some cases, children¹⁴²—were generally poorer than their judges and almost always isolated figures within the community. The typical witch was not only very different from her judges but also from the witnesses who testified against her. Perhaps she was singled out because of her difference. She symbolized to her accusers not only a threat to their society but also the terrible helplessness of the lonely individual with no friendly or family relationships to fall back on—in short, the incarnation of their own fears for themselves. This question of the similarities and dissimilarities between the victim and her enemies bears upon the problem of the executions and their function as sacrificial rituals for the villages.

From a criminologist's point of view, the society of the southern Low Countries appears to have been steeped in violence, as a study of delinquency based on evidence of royal remissions and pardons has shown.¹⁴³ Criminal acts in this part of the country in the first half of the seventeenth century seem to have been the work essentially of young unmarried men: more than 50 percent of the criminals and more than 60 percent of their victims fall within this category, the majority of them within the age group fifteen to twenty-five. The existence of "lateral group relationships based on age" and the clear schism between married and unmarried men would suggest a group violence characteristic of youth gangs or clans.¹⁴⁴ But the authors of the study are at a loss to explain the abrupt decline in criminal acts by older men. Since we can hardly assume that the latter would have completely transformed their

behavior, we can only suppose that they turned their aggressiveness toward other objects. Indeed, witch hunting, which was the work of the village elders, may well have functioned as the adult expression of this youthful violence, especially as it involved collective participation and tended to be organized around clans or groups who shared a mutual self-interest and who can be seen as the more mature equivalent of the adolescent gangs. Moreover, the witnesses, the witches, and their victims almost always belonged to the same community, like the criminals and their victims in 75 percent of the cases studied. Finally, among those criminal cases involving individuals who possessed some measure of property or means, 50 percent are found to be linked with quarrels over economic matters,¹⁴⁵ recalling the economic tensions often apparent in the witch trial testimonies. Such an explanation could never by itself justify the witch-hunting phenomenon or the general rise in violence in the seventeenth-century Cambrésis. The most that can be drawn from these similarities is the observation that the crimes that were prosecuted, like that of witchcraft, involved deviations from the dominant social norms of their time. Of these, one of the most widely accepted was the proscription of all sexual activity outside of Christian marriage.

There is no lack of evidence concerning sexual repression in the Cambrésis.¹⁴⁶ In the seventeenth century, the ecclesiastical court of Cambrai judged 142 morals charges involving country priests and 664 sexual offenses by laymen, both urban and rural, but especially the latter. Sexual relations between young, unmarried adults account for 38 percent of these lay crimes; adultery, sometimes accompanied by incest, constitutes 32 percent; and incest itself 11 percent.¹⁴⁷ Toward all those charged, clerical as well as lay persons, the church showed a marked leniency, though women were generally treated more severely than men.¹⁴⁸ This would indicate that the rural acculturation campaign during the seventeenth century was running into heavy local resistance: many priests, and even more villagers, remained attached to sexual mores that were much freer than we have been led to believe.¹⁴⁹ This seems to have been particularly true of the southern part of the archdiocese of Cambrai; the deanships of Cambrai, Beaumetz, Le Cateau, and Valenciennes account for 265 of the lay sexual offenses, or 40 percent of the total.¹⁵⁰ Of course, proximity to the seat of the archdiocese probably meant that the Counter-Reformation took root in the south more quickly than in the north, bringing with it an increase in the number of cases heard before the judges. In this same area, while sexual offenses were being judged lightly, the witch trials were mushrooming—and in these, sexual misdemeanors figured prominently. Could it be that the local judges, who handled the sorcery cases, were more stern than their episcopal counterparts in their application of repressive measures against sexual offenses? The hypothesis would seem to be plausible if we accept the fact that witch hunting in

the Cambrésis was confined to a minority of villages, in which most influential elements of the population rallied to the Counter-Reformation earlier than their neighbors and by their zeal attempted to set themselves apart from their social environment. If the rate of change by decade in the witch trials and in the morals cases is compared, both lay and ecclesiastical, for the Cambrésis,¹⁵¹ certain contrasts stand out: ecclesiastical morals charges, which are scant between 1600 and 1630, grow steadily from 1630 to 1650, return to their earlier levels in the period from 1650 to 1670, and then shoot up again to new highs from 1670 to 1700. On the other hand, the lay cases, which are very frequent between 1644 and 1664, disappear almost completely from 1664 to 1674, and then rise to unprecedented heights in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.

It is apparent that the morals cases tended to decrease between 1650 and 1664 and 1670 to 1674, in particular, just as the witch trials were multiplying; in other periods (1590–1600, 1630–40, 1670–1700), morals cases increased as witch trials diminished. Apparently, as the ecclesiastical courts grew lax, the local judges put on pressure in their turn and sought out a local witch to serve as a scapegoat. Through the mechanism of the witch hunt, they were not only working toward a goal of sexual repression, which they shared with the ecclesiastical judges, but also directing attention away from themselves and their own kind and toward a class of victims poorer and more defenseless than themselves. Might there be traces of a guilt complex in the behavior of the judges and witnesses in these witch trials? Weren't they as guilty as anyone else of the sexual sins and weaknesses the religious and political authorities were campaigning against? It must be remembered that they represented the most thoroughly acculturated elements in the village, and as such they would be most likely to apply first to themselves the guilt obsessions of that age: "sin, flesh, damnation, the sacraments and salvation."¹⁵² In this setting of violence and social conflict, these villagers appear to have externalized through the witch hunt a destructive urge harbored deep within themselves: "Destructiveness. . . . It is not like aggression, which serves survival; but it is mediated by social and cultural factors, and for this reason it can be diminished, if not eliminated."¹⁵³ This urge can be vented not only in criminal acts but in many other ways. Unfortunately, too little is known about seventeenth-century brigandage, popular revolts, or the commonplace expressions of aggression to say more on this point. And yet the explanation for these revolts, for example, must lie in "whatever was capable of touching off in [the population] a reflex of violence."¹⁵⁴

Violence, like the cemetery, was located not on the periphery but at the very heart of the village. Criminals, rebels, and "witches" were not so much social deviants as by-products of a situation controlled by a complex of sociocultural factors. In the case of the witches, the mechanism

for excluding them—execution—operated in response to the will, conscious or unconscious, of the whole society.

Before attempting to measure the impact upon them of all these structural changes, an attempt must be made to establish the mood of these Cambresis villages. Violence and aggression, together with alcoholism and a persistent sense of insecurity, were elements in the landscape against which these peasants lived out their days. Moreover, "one has the impression that these people passed their time spying on each other from behind their curtains." Sexual scandals in particular were at the heart of most of the cases that found their way into the courts. In a less serious vein, gossip-mongering and fun-poking were the daily diet of a society that was turning increasingly inward upon itself.¹⁵⁵ In such a world, scandal serves as a vehicle for the introduction and perpetuation of certain moral and social stereotypes. Many of these stereotypes revolved around the concept of the devil, as a semantic study of the word "honor" in the southern Low Countries between 1610 and 1660 has shown. An accusation of witchcraft, with its implication of crime against the Almighty, was considered "as the most serious threat to one's honor."¹⁵⁶ Thus, two plaintiffs testified in 1698 that the curate of Montigny¹⁵⁷ "accused [them], among other things, of belonging to a race of witches, for several weeks running, and as such a slander is extremely serious, particularly for country people, and as it could completely destroy the reputation of the plaintiffs and of their families."¹⁵⁸ By the end of the seventeenth century, such a charge by a curate would not have caused great concern. But the situation was different two or three generations earlier, when the priest was beginning to function as the guardian of tradition. It was his job to transmit this tradition to his parishioners; he was, in addition, the necessary mediator between them and the Almighty.¹⁵⁹ It is not unreasonable to imagine how some priests, motivated by a guilty knowledge of their own moral weaknesses, took an active part in the witch hunt. Thus, for example, the Cambresis curate who, around 1626, paid a sick call on a twenty-year-old parishioner:

He took a rather strong drink, and after hearing her confession, he told the girl that she was bewitched and that if she would be willing to let him get in bed with her and to make love to her she would be cured, all of which she refused. However, he redoubled his efforts in order to gain his objective, putting his hand under the covers to touch her breasts, and even more, which modesty prevents her from mentioning.¹⁶⁰

Obviously, not all the curates in the Cambresis practiced this kind of exorcism. But this text bears out my observations concerning scandal and the notion of honor: the seventeenth-century reformers were able to superimpose an atmosphere of moral anxiety and guilt upon the sub-

structure of very real fears and uncertainties that were troubling a society in transition. The interplay of these anxieties could touch off the witch hunting. But it was necessary first that this moral insecurity should profoundly trouble certain elements in the village, that it should, in effect, be hammered home by the local priest. He would tend to project this guilt upon his parishioners all the more strongly if he was uneasy in his conscience about his own conduct. This would explain why the majority of the villages in the Cambresis did not take part in the witch hunt: most of the local priests conducted themselves exactly like laymen, particularly in sexual matters, which explains why the ecclesiastical courts, faced with a broad-based defiance of the rules, adopted a policy of leniency. Yet all the while the Counter-Reformation was making slow but steady progress, converting one after another, sowing its message of guilt among the priests, who in turn passed it on to their flock, and together they looked for an expiatory victim, a witch—a woman, that is, the very symbol of sexuality. The burning of witches could thus provide a means of wiping out one's own sins and of turning the attention of the authorities away from oneself. I have noted that the increase in this region in the number of witches coincides with a decline in the instances of morals cases brought against both laymen and clerics, which tends to support my hypothesis.

Following the same line of reasoning, the witch trials came to an end at the end of the seventeenth century, not only because the authorities had opted against them,¹⁶¹ but also because the process of rural acculturation had ground to a halt. Henceforth the local priests—like the curate of Rumeleges, near Saint-Amand¹⁶²—stand out clearly in contrast to their lay brethren. But can one conclude that the country populace had been totally acculturated? And, if so, how can one explain "the widespread collapse of popular religion in Catholic Europe at the fall of the *ancien régime*?"¹⁶³ In any case, a very real gulf now existed between priest and layman, and curates were now, in general, distinguished by their exemplary behavior: they no longer needed to project their own guilt onto their parishioners. And thus, though the villagers continued to believe in the same superstitions, the witch-hunting mania died away, aided by a change in conditions generally. With the dawning of the eighteenth century "an ancient world was disappearing." The great demographic crises ended; the successive panics abated after 1750.¹⁶⁴ Though northern France remained throughout the eighteenth century, in the words of Georges Lefebvre, "a land of poor people, despite its collective strength,"¹⁶⁵ the rural population had now found new objects on which to vent their grudges and their violence: the representatives of the central government, in particular its tax collectors.

In every respect, an ancient world was disappearing. Henceforth the roles of layman and clergyman within society were clearly defined. The

priest had become an outsider, overseing the moral conduct of his parishioners with a high degree of detachment. The reformers had at last succeeded in cutting off the religious world from rural popular culture; they had superimposed Christian and learned culture upon a background of superstition. The witch trials were one consequence of this long battle to break down the popular culture, and they touched off a whirlwind of violence in this new world, where the boundaries of the sacred had become vague and confused. Structural changes coupled with a series of calamities had heightened a sense of existential fear in the peasantry and had created a need to redefine what was sacred through the mechanism of ritual executions. The sudden increase in witch trials at the beginning of the seventeenth century and again between 1640 and 1680 echoed, in my view, these reflexes of terror in response to the spread of the realm of the sacred beyond the control of the priests. War was a contributing factor in this, not in itself, but because of its effects. Among these should be numbered not only an increase in fear and tension but also a tendency to fuse together what was profane and what was sacred. Upon the return of peace, the lay population and their priests were unable for a time to sort out one from the other. The numerous executions of witches in 1679, following the restoration of peace and the installation of French rule in the Cambrésis, resulted from this wild confusion in the domain of the sacred and from the legacy of wartime violence. The testimony of the curate of Merbes-le-Château¹⁶⁶ concerning the events of 1677 provides a remarkable illustration of this process. The priest recounts how the French camped near his village and sacked his own house. He continues:

The said church was in no state to receive a sacrificial offering, being completely in disorder, partly because of an enormous amount of furniture which had been piled there for safekeeping, covering even the altars, many of which were dirty and nasty, and partly because of an unbearable stench and filth emanating from the large group of local people and others from the surrounding area who had taken refuge there, many of whom, begging your pardon, relieved themselves right there, and among whom there was a large number of sick people suffering from diarrhoea . . . so much so that it would have been entirely disrespectful and lacking in the reverence we owe to his divine majesty to offer up a spotless lamb in a place such as I have described.¹⁶⁷

When calm had been restored and the sacred could once again be set apart from the profane, the reappearance of violence in, for example, the witch trials, is hardly surprising. Isn't this violence instrumental in establishing a new order in the realm of the sacred, and doesn't it represent for the rural priest a victory over his rival in this realm, the local seer-healer, to whom an anxious population had previously turned for help?

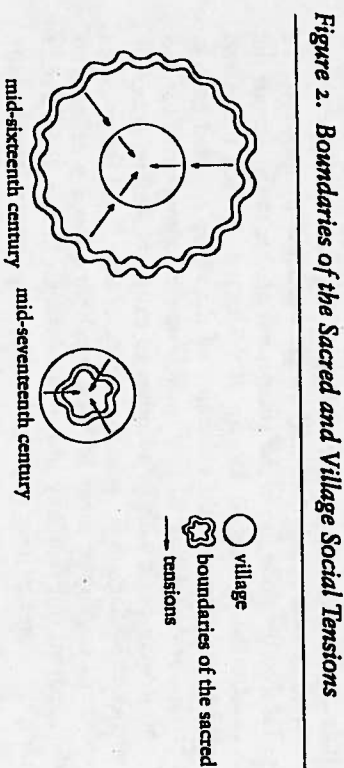
The witch hunt, then, can be understood as a ritualized projection of violence away from certain individuals and certain communities. I will now examine the changes that occurred in the mental superstructures, keeping in mind the fact that an evolution in the socioeconomic infrastructures formed a necessary basis for the evolution in mentality. Of course, neither the witch-hunting phenomenon nor its disappearance can be explained away as two successive mutations in the structure of Western thought or by a simple evolution of popular mentality. For such a cataclysm erupts along a whole fault line of social shifts and pressures; thus, in the fourteenth century, there were massacres of Jews and lepers, who were accused of poisoning the public fountains;¹⁶⁸ and during the cholera epidemic of 1832 in France, doctors were accused of poisoning the poor in order to aid the rich.¹⁶⁹ For, in time of epidemic, "the enemy immediately becomes the poisoner."¹⁷⁰ The type of scapegoat chosen says most about the tensions of work in society: before the sixteenth and after the seventeenth centuries, in the West, external victims were preferred, Jews and beggars, and later tax collectors or farmers-general. During the period under consideration, however, enemies were also—indeed more often—found within the community, particularly witches, who were specifically identified by witnesses as poisoners (see Table 5). The period 1580–1680 is, in this respect, unique, even though it overlaps with a parallel development, throughout the seventeenth century, in which the poor, the mad, and the beggars¹⁷¹—all of them "external" deviants—gradually were put under lock and key. The reason why ritual victims began to be taken by preference from within the community is probably to be sought in the diffusion of violence and the sacred during this period. Prior to the witch persecutions, violence was not unknown in the villages of the Cambrésis, but it was restrained by certain traditional, regulatory mechanisms such as private warfare, ties of blood and of marriage, and the willingness of the community to bear the complaints of all its citizens. The village appeared as a coherent entity, with its murders and its crimes, but also with the means of preventing the destruction of the whole community by excessive violence. The popular religion, organized around groups based on shared interests or kinship, integrated the local priest into the daily life of the village; but neither the priest nor the church constituted the special domain of the sacred. In fact, the sacred penetrated everywhere, but the coherence of the group repelled its possible aberrant or destructive aspects away from the community. Fear and social unrest were dealt with by recourse to exorcists, halting generally from outside the village, who were thought to be able to rid the peasants of any charms cast upon them by their neighbors, those witches who were the apparent source of any and all misfortunes. In sum, then, a state of equilibrium seems to have existed between the peasants' fears and the

necessities of their daily lives that saved them from despair during the most trying times. Schematically, the village represented, in my view, a kind of haven, an island refuge in a sea of danger and of sacred forces.

But from 1580 to 1680 or thereabouts, violence and the sacred shifted from the outskirts of the *Cambrésis* village toward its center. The traditional checks on violence were removed, largely through the rise of the centralized state. Feelings of solidarity grew weaker at a time when fears were multiplying. In their effort to bring morality to the rural world, churchmen, in certain areas, broke down the old distinctions between the sacred and the profane. The acculturated curate, who now felt a sense of his own guilt, introduced a new kind of sacredness at the very center of the village, by making something hallowed of the church and his own person, by preaching a new sexual repression, by sowing seeds of guilt among his parishioners, and by tracing for them horrible images of eternal damnation.

The rising tide of the sacred could wash more easily over the community now that feelings of solidarity had grown weaker and could no longer inhibit its expansion, and now that the rich and powerful were trying to safeguard their own interests by directing its flow toward the poor, weak, and defenseless elements in the village. To put it schematically once again, the boundaries of the sacred had contracted toward the heart of the community, the village square, which was now the focal point of tensions and dangers (see Figure 2).

In a brilliant, incisive essay, whose only shortcoming is a lack of sociological and chronological perspective, René Girard has proposed a fascinating explanation of the interplay of violence and the sacred.¹⁷² "The aim of the religions," he writes, "is always to forestall violence, to prevent it from breaking out . . . , to speak authoritatively to mankind of *what it must do and not do* to avoid the return of destructive violence."¹⁷³ In cases where "the religious disintegrates through conflict," the community looks either for a scapegoat from among its members or a



ritual victim chosen from outside. The internal victim represents for his fellow citizens a kind of monster "doubling" for themselves, who is sacrificed in an effort to "keep violence outside of the community. . . . The entire community is saved from its own violence by the act of sacrifice. . . . The sacrifice draws to the victim like a magnet all the fragments of the dissension which are scattered about, and it then dissipates them with the offer of partial satisfaction. . . . the sacrifice is a form of violence without the threat of vengeance."¹⁷⁴ This theory would certainly fit the witch hunt in the *Cambrésis*, which took place at a time when the sacred element was no longer in a state of equilibrium with other forces but was pervading all of rural society. Perhaps a parallel may be found with the tensions at work in Aztec society before the arrival of Cortez; the response to Cortez was an increase in ritual sacrifices, but with external victims.¹⁷⁵ Regardless of the laws concerning witchcraft, was not the real motivation of the witnesses and judges basically their feeling of terror at the proliferation of the sacred and of the criminal forms of violence that threatened their property, their persons, or their families? Perhaps their aggression against the witches played a necessary part in a "rite of fixity . . . [designed to] perpetuate and reinforce a certain order in matters of family, religion, etc." Their merciless unanimity toward their victims was dictated by this process of cultural stabilization and by their need to wage all-out warfare against negativistic sentiments, which could be "purified and excreted" only by means of the sacrificial ritual.¹⁷⁶ From this point of view, the procession of witnesses, neighbors, and, occasionally, relatives of the victim, appears to have fulfilled a need to affirm their own orthodoxy by excluding the witch from the community and heaping on her the onus of their own guilt.¹⁷⁷

A "desire for immobility, or fear of movement, which is characteristic of all societies under pressure from the sacred"¹⁷⁸ was clearly at work in these witch-hunting villages. It may well be traceable to the increasing social strains in the *Cambrésis* and to a new sense of guilt, especially in sexual matters: "Sexuality is unclean because it is related to violence. . . . Repressed sexuality opens the way to violence."¹⁷⁹ If this theoretical relationship between violence and the sacred is applied to the *Cambrésis*, the ritual character inherent in the executions of witches becomes clear. The villagers were behaving very much as the French Catholics and Protestants had done a century earlier, "rid[ding] the community of dreaded pollution," while basing their actions upon "a store of punitive and purificatory traditions current in sixteenth-century France."¹⁸⁰ The reason for emphasis during the execution upon the deviant character of the accused becomes clear: the highly detailed sentence listed the "crimes" committed and the solemn act of penance demanded for them,¹⁸¹ and the whole was read publicly before being put into effect. This sort of morbid

spectacle not only pleased the crowds; it also provided the spectators with a useful moral lesson in how to escape the same fate—by avoiding the same sins or, even simpler, by denouncing their “monstrous counterparts.” In point of fact, this expiatory violence was linked to the moral stereotypes the church was trying to inculcate in the masses and was thus related more to the normal aspects of society than to the pathological.¹⁸² For the witch was presented basically as a caricature of her fellow citizens, who could derive satisfaction from seeing a portion of their own sins burn with her, but who perceived themselves as being sufficiently different from her to escape the same fate. Each execution, therefore, pointed up both the differences and the resemblances between the victim and the peasants, encouraging them to still more denunciations in order to save their own skins and their own peace of mind. Thus the “conditions for a guilt-free massacre”¹⁸³ joined with the epidemic or endemic character of the witch hunt to produce a self-sustaining movement. It was not the use of torture that prompted the accused to denounce his neighbors, for, under the conditions I have described, the epidemic of witch hunting would continue indefinitely, feeding on the fears and guilt feelings of the villagers. Only a change in the mental climate at their level, for whatever reason, could account for an end to the persecution. It could not come from a change of heart, a greater rationalism, on the part of the judges, who themselves gave only the original impetus to the movement; it was up to the rural masses, once the witch hunt had been proposed to them, to respond, depending on whether or not it suited their specific needs.

One final issue remains to be raised: why were most of the Cambrésis accused, throughout this whole period, overwhelmingly drawn from the ranks of widows, young spinsters, and children? Surely the answer to this question lies in the role they played in the society of that time. But it would be a mistake to attribute it simply to the denigration of women by the ecclesiastical authorities or the judges or as a manifestation of sexual repression on the part of the judges.¹⁸⁴ It stemmed rather from a general debasement of human nature that, in the view of the influential and learned men of that time, applied to women and children as well as to beggars and madmen. For “the devil was ceaselessly on the prowl”¹⁸⁵ and preyed not on the males but on the weak and defenseless.

An anthropologist has observed: “It may be that in societies in which the majority of disadvantages accrue to women, where the status differential between the sexes is extreme, women will be portrayed as agents of destruction, particularly in the religious or mystical belief systems.”¹⁸⁶ Yet in sixteenth-century France, urban women and young boys of ten to twelve years of age played a prominent part in acts of popular religious violence.¹⁸⁷ Can we then assume that they belonged to social

categories that were under an excessive degree of restraint? Certainly, a century later, French men did fear women and children and protected themselves by keeping them in a state of strict subjugation: “From a legal point of view, women were at a tremendous disadvantage . . . I have the impression that these fears often had to do with the erotic aspects of marriage . . . husbands were prompted by this fear of sexual defeat.”¹⁸⁸ We might question whether a child of about seven was really “‘cured’ of the malady of infancy which had made him so incomprehensible and frightening to his elders.”¹⁸⁹ In any case, in the Cambrésis as elsewhere, the victims were almost invariably chosen from among certain types of women and children—those who had the fewest ties and affiliations or who, as preadolescents, had not as yet attained any value in the eyes of their parents. Thus the choice fell on the weakest, on those who were least likely to elicit vengeance from their families or kin, and also on those two categories of individuals who inspired the greatest fear, because, being kept in strict subservience, they were the most likely to revolt. The theory of a socially selective fear is a good working hypothesis, at least until more is known about the history of the family in Europe. The precarious economic situation of widows and spinsters laid them open to all kinds of threats. They were also clearly exceptions to the social stereotypes then prevalent and, perhaps, disquieting examples of the unhappy fate of the isolated individual—a fate that was a little too close for the comfort of their neighbors.

Conclusion

The subject of witchcraft in the Cambrésis has been touched upon only superficially in the course of the present study: its precise role and function in the rural world is still to be defined. The fact that it has survived across the centuries and down to the present day provides a further inducement to researchers.

On the other hand, the phenomenon of the witch hunt, which took place between 1580 and 1680, is another matter entirely, and one whose characteristics I have been able to identify and discuss. The witch hunters in certain of the villages seemed to be engaged in a ritualistic purging of their own fears, in response, it would seem, to the infiltration of violence and the spread of the sacred throughout the whole area. They demanded scapegoats, chosen normally from among the common people, especially those who led a poor, or marginal, existence and who had the fewest resources of support or solidarity to fall back on. The local judges and the witnesses, who were at the same time similar to and unlike the accused, seemed to expect that by the sacrifice of these victims they

would build a new cohesive social order on the ruins of the old one. On this level, the "witches" appear to be the expression of a cultural and socioeconomic situation in a state of flux.

But these deep social tensions—which may well have their roots in a class struggle as yet unexpressed, undirected, and unconscious of itself—must also be portrayed in the light of two other factors. First, the religious evolution in the Low Countries in general, and in the diocese of Cambrai in particular, accounted for the fact that certain villagers had been able to project their natural aggression onto the "witches": the religious and lay authorities had furnished the necessary frame of reference—a definition of witchcraft—and had incited these villagers to the hunt by stressing their own culpability and the omnipresence of the devil in the world. The local priests, who were a prey to the same newly inspired guilt feelings, helped to spread this philosophy through the countryside. But the work of acculturation proceeded by fits and starts, and the numerous sources of resistance it encountered explain why not all the Cambresis villages were caught up in the witch hunt. The priest's role was crucial. Even though he might never speak out against the witches, his own disposition determined that of his parishioners. Thus, at the end of the seventeenth century, the persecution stopped, when acculturation had reached all, or almost all, of the rural priests, even though it had spread unevenly throughout the countryside (evidence is the resurgence of superstition in the rural population). The priest and his flock seemed to have reached a kind of *modus vivendi*. Moreover, the church and her priests had new problems to deal with, and the villagers had new and powerful enemies in the form of the king's agents, whom they now "sacrificed," both in fact and, more often, in effigy, instead of the witches. Violence and sacredness had been redefined: the church now represented an island of the sacred at the heart of the village, while much of the former power of superstition had been driven out to the margins of village life.

Second, changes occurred in the economic and demographic structures, as they did again in the eighteenth century. Their evolution from the end of the Middle Ages up to the sixteenth century had created the conditions in which the witch-hunting epidemic could break out in the Cambresis. Their alteration had shaken the whole network of relationships of kinship and solidarity and had created in the peasantry a growing sense of insecurity in the face of a world that was, in actual fact, more dangerous and more hostile than before. The history of these groups, which reflected ties of family or mutual interest, remains to be written, for the Cambresis as well as for the rest of France. But the witch does not seem to have been some kind of rebel from society. On the contrary, she was the passive victim of a "process of fixity," the butt of that "desire for

immobility, or fear of movement, which is characteristic of all societies under pressure from the sacred."¹⁹⁰ Can we then see her as a point of contact in a class warfare that she herself would never have perceived or understood? Whatever the answer to that question, it is clear that the villagers who condemned and burned her felt themselves to be in danger, both economically and socially, and were testifying by this act to a profound social conservatism. The danger was, of course, quite real: criminality in seventeenth-century France posed a continual threat to property, in the north at least. Elsewhere, the appearance of popular uprisings suggests a deep social malaise. How else can we interpret the "hatred, jealousy and rivalry among men" cited by Madeleine Foisil in explanation of the revolts in Normandy in 1639, though she refuses to acknowledge the existence of a "class front"?¹⁹¹

I have tried to emphasize the character of the witch hunt as an index of the far-reaching malaise in the society of the Cambresis. Can the same model be applied to other cultures and periods? The Peruvian Indians, for example, in the sixteenth century, underwent a very profound process of acculturation, involving cultural, political, economic, and social re-orientation, and, once they had been acculturated, certain of their leaders—the *curaca*—acted against the best interests of their subjects and chose to ape their Spanish conquerors, with very serious consequences for the whole society.¹⁹² Was the situation in Europe really very different? Was the Cambresis any exception? Pierre Goubert quotes the example of the seventeenth-century *coqs de village*, who "went so far as to imitate . . . their lords and masters."¹⁹³ Why not trace the history of such a rural acculturation (and of urban areas as well)? A new field of research is opened up to historians, for the epidemic of witch hunting in continental Europe occurred just at the point of cleavage between two distinct rural civilizations, that of the Middle Ages and that which began with the eighteenth century. The origins of this cleavage do not lie solely in the rise to power of a new hegemonic learned culture, which repressed a popular culture that is still largely a mystery to us.¹⁹⁴ This phenomenon is only surface froth, hiding important underlying demographic and socioeconomic changes: the intensified pursuit and seizure of wealth in Europe by a small number of men and, in their wake, the emergence, on the rural level, of many pale imitations, each of whom is trying to do the same thing in a scramble for crumbs from the banquet table. Little wonder that at the same time the modern state began to develop, for which the Counter-Reformation prepared the ground, in France and elsewhere.¹⁹⁵

The witch-hunting epidemic is by no means a pathological and isolated phenomenon: rather, it is part of the process of collapse of structures (*destruction*) that took place in the rural world during the "European crisis" of 1560–1660.¹⁹⁶ Like other phenomena of the same

period, popular uprisings, criminality, and violence, it was a central, not a fringe, movement within society. And as such, it was symptomatic of a contagion that was not confined to the victim or even to her judges and accusers, but infected society as a whole.

These arguments can be developed in greater detail. What is needed most is a history of European popular culture before the Reformation and the Council of Trent: that popular culture which Rabelais was one of the last major writers to bring significantly into his works.

Witch Hunting and the Domino Theory

H. C. Erik Midelfort

Scholarly studies of witchcraft have been sprouting lately like mushrooms in a fairy ring. Medievalists have refined our ideas concerning witchcraft as heresy and have shown how particular heresies influenced contemporary ideas about witches.¹ These studies have shown that medieval men did not slide from some supposed early medieval skepticism down the steep ramp of scholasticism into the turbulent sewers of superstition. That idea, once popular among Protestants and rationalists, has given way to a much more judicious approach that rightly places the roots of superstition and witchcraft in the early Middle Ages.²

At the same time, other scholars have begun to apply the social sciences to the study of witchcraft, an enterprise that goes back at least to Kirtledge in the 1920s, but is now taking hold in systematic fashion. Anthropological, sociological, and psychological accounts of witchcraft are being made. There can be little doubt that these studies have deepened our awareness of the context surrounding the witch trials.³ Something is known, for example, about the local tensions that produced witchcraft accusations⁴ and about what sorts of persons were accused of witchcraft.⁵ And some scholars have begun trying out psychoanalytic theory to explain demon-possession and the hatreds that rose to the surface in any witch trial.⁶ Not all of these attempts have succeeded, but on the whole they have reoriented our view of witchcraft.

In addition to this onslaught of social-scientific witchcraft literature, extraordinary insights into the nature of witchcraft itself are coming to light. Keith Thomas's wonderful book *Religion and the Decline of Magic* presents a sympathetic approach to the real problems that men tried to solve by means of magic.⁷ And Carlo Ginzburg has thrown open a whole new area by showing that in at least one instance a fertility cult was

33. T. J. van Brought, *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians*, trans. Joseph Sohm (Scottsdale, Pa., 1951), p. 948.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 776.
35. A. L. E. Verheyden, *Anabaptism in Flanders, 1530-1650* (Scottsdale, Pa., 1961), p. 59.
36. Van Vaerneewijck, *Troubles religieux*, 1:80.
37. Van Gelder, "Erasmus," p. 290-91.
38. A. Beenakker, *Breda in de eerste storm van de eptand, 1545-1569* (Tilburg, 1971), pp. 42-43, 122, 167.
39. Decavele, "Reformatiorische beweging," pp. 2-9.
40. On the activities of the early ministers, see Crew, "A Question of Authority," chap. 3.
41. Letter of Beza to the pastor Jean Taffin, 24 Aug. 1565, cited in E. Braekman, *Guy de Brès: Sa vie* (Brussels, 1960), pp. 198-99.
42. G. Moreau, *L'Histoire du protestantisme à Tournai jusqu'à la veille de la révolution des Pays-Bas* (Paris, 1962), pp. 162-64.
43. On the ministers' early writings, see Crew, "A Question of Authority," chap. 5. The ministers embraced the orthodox doctrines of obedience to the magistrate and the magistrate's own duty to protect the true religion. But on specific questions of religious toleration, the legality of image-breaking or of prison breaks, the ministers could reach no agreement. And nowhere did they conceive of violence outside the context of law. The ministers were particularly vehement against the Anabaptists as anarchists.
44. F. Prims, *Het wonderjaar, 1566-1567*, 2d ed. (Antwerp, 1941), pp. 99-100.
45. Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound*, 2d ed. (New York, 1970), p. xiv.
46. Letter of 10 July 1566, Burgon, *Life*, 2:130.
47. J. F. Petit, ed. Edward Grimston (London, 1609), p. 394.
48. M. G. Groen van Prinsterer, ed., *Archives ou correspondance inédite de la maison d'Orange-Nassau* 15 vols. (Leiden, 1835-96), 1st ser., 2:217.
49. Van Vaerneewijck, *Troubles religieux*, 2:14.
50. P. D. Lagomarsino, "Court Factions and the Formulation of Spanish Court Policy towards the Netherlands (1559-1567)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1973), p. 293, letter of Villavicencio, 1 May 1566.
51. Peter Frarin, *An Oration against the Unlawful Insurrections of the Protestantes of our Time, under Pretence to Reforme Religion* (Antwerp, 1566), n.p.
52. Claude Haton, *Mémoires*, ed. F. Bourquelst, 2 vols. (Paris, 1857), 1:189-92.
53. Pasquier de la Barre, *Mémoires*, ed. A. Pinchart, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1859), 1:75-76.
54. M. F. van Lennep, *Gaspar van der Heyden, 1530-1586* (Amsterdam, 1884), pp. 47-48.
55. Justification of the Magistrate, quoted in V. Fris, "Notes pour servir à l'histoire de l'iconoclisme et des Calvinistes à Gand de 1566-1568," *Annales de la société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Gand* 9 (1844).
56. Diericx, "Beeldenstorm," p. 1044.
57. Pasquier de la Barre, *Mémoires*, 1:38, 2:203; van Vaerneewijck, quoted in V. Fris, ed., *Notes pour servir à l'histoire des iconoclastes et des Calvinistes à Gand de 1566 à 1568* (Ghent, 1909), p. 67.
58. Van Vaerneewijck, *Troubles religieux*, 1:75.
59. This took place at Tournai, against a noble whose family had been particularly hated. Van Vaerneewijck mentions numerous sepulchers turned over, but no mutilation of bodies (*ibid.*, 1:132-35, 137).
60. On the atrocities in France, see de Sainctes, *Discours*, pp. 387-89, and Davis, "Rites of Violence."
61. For a complete list of the lay preachers, see Crew, "A Question of Authority," Appendix C. Sixty-five were of unknown origin, twenty-three were artisans or laborers, eighteen were middle class or professionals, forty-three belonged to the Catholic clergy.
62. Ch. Rahlenbeck, *L'Eglise de Liège et la révolution*, 2d ed. (Brussels, 1864), interrogation, pp. 277f.
63. E. de Coussemaeker, *Troubles religieux du XVI^e siècle dans la Flandre maritime, 1560-1570*, 2 vols. (Bruges, 1876), 2:213.
64. W. Bax, *Het Protestantisme in het bisdom Luik en vooral te Maastricht, 1557-1612* (The Hague, 1941), p. 79.
65. Van Vaerneewijck, *Troubles religieux*, 1:321.
66. P. Heinderycx, *Jaerboeken van Veurne en Veurnambacht*, ed. E. Ronse, 2 vols. (Veurne, 1855), 2:30-31.
67. A. van Haemstede, *Historien der vromer martelaren (Dordrecht, n.d.)*, fol. 421.
68. Bax, *Protestantisme*, p. 79.
69. The priest's testimony is printed in J. van Vloten, *Nederlands opstand tegen Spanje* (Haarlem, 1856), pp. 170-71.
70. De Coussemaeker, *Troubles religieux*, 2:273.
71. M. Ryckaert, "Een beeldenstorm in de kerk van Oostwinkel op 23 Augustus 1566," *Appeltjes van het Meetjesland* 8 (1957): 109.
72. All classes attended; reports of spies at Valenciennes said that ninety-one trades were represented, as well as merchants, peasants, and others (G. Clark, "An Urban Study during the Revolt of the Netherlands: Valenciennes, 1540-1570" [Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1972], pp. 181-87).
73. Van Vaerneewijck, *Troubles religieux*, 1:42.
74. H.-Q. Janssen, *De kerkvorming te Brugge* (Rotterdam, 1856), pp. 49-50.
75. G. J. Brutel de la Rivière, *Het leven van Hermonimus Moadet* (Haarlem, 1879), p. 26.
76. J. Desilve, *Le Protestantisme dans la seigneurie de St. Amand de 1562 à 1584* (Valenciennes, 1910), p. 225.
77. *Kroniek van Godevaert van Haecht*, ed. van Roosbroeck, pp. 121-22.
78. Van Vaerneewijck, *Troubles religieux*, 1:67-68.
79. Clark, "Urban Study," pp. 188-89.
80. Van Vaerneewijck, *Troubles religieux*, 1:27.
81. Bleenk, "Hageprek," p. 24.
82. Bax, *Protestantisme*, p. 128.
83. O. J. de Jong, *De reformatie in Calembourg* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 102-3.
84. Van Vaerneewijck, *Troubles religieux*, 1:409, 42.
85. Quoted in Brutel de la Rivière, *Het leven van Hermonimus Moadet*.
86. F. Prims, "De Antwerpsche onnaganc op den vooravond van de beeldstormertij," *Mededeelingen van de koninklijke Vlaamsche academie voor wetenschappen, letteren en schoone kunsten van België*, vol. 8, no. 5.
87. Van Vloten, *Nederlands opstand*, pp. 82-83.
88. Van Vaerneewijck, *Troubles religieux*, 1:67-68.
89. Brother Cornelis, *Historie*, p. 53.
90. Robert van Roosbroeck, *Het wonderjaar te Antwerpen, 1566-1567* (Antwerp, 1930), pp. 211-15.
91. Decavele, "Reformatiorische beweging," p. 22.
92. J. W. Pont, *Geschiedenis van het Lutheranisme in de Nederlanden tot 1618* (Haarlem, 1911), pp. 86-88.
93. *Notes pour servir à l'histoire des iconoclastes et des Calvinistes à Gand de 1566 à 1568* (Ghent, 1909), p. 67.
94. Davis, "Rites of Violence," pp. 61-70.
95. Lagomarsino, "Court Factions."
96. J. Hesselis, ed., *Ecclesiae Londino-Batavae Archivum*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1889), 3:183.
97. Jean Taffin, *L'Etat de l'église* (Bergen-op-Zoom, 1605), p. 606.

Chapter 6

Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England (New York and Evanston, 1970), an excellent work on the county of Essex; H. C. Erik Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany, 1562-1684: The Social and Intellectual Foundations* (Stanford, 1972); Jeffrey B. Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1972); Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York, 1971); H. R. Trevor-Roper, "L'Épidémie de sorcellerie en Europe aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles," in *De la Réforme aux Lumières* (Paris, 1972), pp. 133-236.

2. Robert Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers en France au XVII^e siècle: Une analyse de psychologie historique* (Paris, 1968), brings up to date the conclusions of Etienne Delcambre for Lorraine in "Les procès de sorcellerie en Lorraine: Psychologie des juges," *Revue d'histoire du Droit (Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgechiedenis)* 21 (1933): 389-419.

3. Robert Muchembled, "Sorcellerie, culture populaire et christianisme au XVI^e siècle, principalement en Flandre et en Artois," in *Annales E.S.C.* 28 (1973): 264-84.

4. The concepts of acculturation and collapse of structures (*destruction*) have received historical application in a first-rate, pioneering study by Nathan Wachtel, *La vision des vaincus: Les Indiens du Pérou devant la conquête espagnole, 1530-1570/80* (Paris, 1971). See my review in *Revue du Nord*, no. 217 (April-June 1973), pp. 175-78.

5. E. Villette, "La sorcellerie dans le Nord de la France du milieu du XV^e siècle à la fin du XVII^e siècle," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 13 (1956): 39-62, 129-36, and 143; (also published in *Le Gazetteur Wallon* [July-Aug.-Sept. 1958]: 96-132) and, by the same author, "La sorcellerie à Douai," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 18 (1961): 123-73. A bibliography of older works and of published source materials can be found in these two articles by Villette, as well as tables giving all the information available concerning the names, place of trial, ages, and sentences of the accused. I would be able to add only a very little additional information. However, a study of parish archives such as they exist could not fail to turn up other victims (see Villette, "Sorcellerie dans le Nord," p. 156). See also Michelle Prodin, "La sorcellerie en Flandre gallicante, 1581-1708" (Master's thesis in history, University of Lille, 1963), which essentially reworks, in four hundred pages, the conclusions of Villette.

6. See the collection prepared under the direction of Louis Tênard, *Histoire de Pays-Bas français: Flandre, Artois, Hainaut, Boulonnais, Cambésis* (Toulouse, 1972).

7. Louis Tênard, "Un siècle Héroïque," ch. 10 in *ibid.*, p. 242 (following the conclusions of Charles Verhinden).

8. *Ibid.*, p. 243, and Charles Verhinden, "En Flandre sous Philippe II; Durée de la crise économique," *Annales E.S.C.* 7 (1952): 28-30.

9. Louis Tênard, "De l'âge d'or à la conquête française," ch. 11 in Tênard, *Histoire*, pp. 269-89; Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique*, 6 vols.; vols. 4 and 5 (Brussels, 1911 and 1920), particularly 5:324, concerning the territories ceded in 1678.

10. Henri Platelle, "La vie des hommes à la fin du Moyen Age," ch. 9 in Tênard, *Histoire*, p. 202.

11. F. Van der Wee and E. Van Cauwenbergh, "Histoire agraire et finances publiques en Flandre du XIV^e au XVII^e siècle," *Annales E.S.C.* 29 (1973): 1059.

12. Tênard, "De l'âge d'or," in Tênard, *Histoire*, p. 307.

13. René Fritel, *La croissance économique du pays de Saint-Amand (Nord)*, 1668-1914 (Paris, 1963), p. 31.

14. H. Neveux, "L'Expansion démographique dans un village du Cambésis: Saint-Hilaire (1450-1753)," *Annales de démographie historique* 1972 (Paris, 1972), p. 292.

15. A. Gambin, cited by Tênard, *Histoire*, p. 7.

16. Tênard, *ibid.*, chs. 10 and 11 in Tênard, *Histoire*, pp. 247, 255-56, 262, 274-76; Edouard de Moreau, *Histoire de l'église en Belgique*, 5 vols.; vol. 5, *Eglise des Pays-Bas, 1559-1633* (Brussels, 1952); Alexander Pasture, *La restauration religieuse aux Pays-Bas Catholique sous les Archiducs Albert et Isabelle, 1596-1633* (Louvain, 1925).

17. Platelle, "La vie des hommes," in Tênard, *Histoire*, p. 215.

18. Léon E. Halkin, *La réforme en Belgique sous Charles Quint* (Brussels, 1957).

19. See Moreau, *Histoire*, 5:265ff. especially; Pasture, *Restauration*.

20. Pasture, *Restauration*, pp. 49-55; E. Brouette, "La sorcellerie dans le comté de Namur au début de l'époque moderne, 1509-1646," *Annales de la Société archéologique*

de Namur 47 (1954): 359-420; Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchart, who is currently at work on a book concerning witchcraft in Luxembourg, is also the author of "La repression de l'hérésie dans le Namurois au XVI^e siècle," *Annales de la société archéologique de Namur*, 56 fasc. 2 (1972): 179-230.

21. See note 6.

22. It should be noted that Villette made no attempt at a statistical analysis of the results of his research. These should thus be treated as raw data, often very incomplete, and to be interpreted with caution. The author is not always accurate in his transcriptions or in the citation of his sources. For example, the entry concerning Denise and Barbe Le Jay, dated 5 June 1678 ("Sorcellerie dans le Nord," p. 155; and "Sorcellerie à Douai," p. 173), should be changed to read 5 June 1575. Note also that Marie Maughet was executed on 28 August 1660 (*ibid.*, p. 173; "Sorcellerie dans le Nord," p. 154). Other minor errors have been found in his references, but it would be too lengthy to reproduce them all here.

23. Trevor-Roper, "Epidémie de sorcellerie," pp. 183-84 (p. 67 of the English edition, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* [Harmondsworth, 1969]).

24. Pasture, *Restauration*, p. 49.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

26. E. W. Monter, "Patterns of Witchcraft in the Jura," *Journal of Social History* 5 (1971): 13, according to papers from Bavoux in the Archives Départementales of the Doubs.

27. *Ibid.*; Midelfort, *Witch Hunting*; and Midelfort, "Witchcraft and Religion in Sixteenth Century Germany: The Formation and Consequences of an Orthodoxy," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 62 (1971): 266-78.

28. According to E. W. Monter, "men were less able than women to withstand torture"; he continues: "At Frilbourg, where I could follow the use of torture case-by-case in the prison registers or *Thurnroddeln*, I found that about half of the fifty men tortured for witchcraft broke and confessed before the third round allowed by Imperial law, while only about a third of the hundred women who underwent the same three rounds of torture with the same instruments confessed" (personal letter dated 14 Jan. 1974). This observation has bearing on one aspect of the problem, but it cannot explain the chronological variations in the persecution of sorcerers and witches. It does, however, suggest a fascinating topic for further research on the question why women could stand up more successfully to torture than men. A historical examination of the psychological differences between the sexes could shed some light on this problem. My thanks to E. W. Monter for this letter.

29. Monter, "Patterns," pp. 15-16; Villette, "Sorcellerie dans le Nord," pp. 151-52 (the Complet family, for example).

30. Pierre Deyon, "A propos du paupérisme au milieu du XVII^e siècle: Peinture et charité chrétiennes," *Annales E.S.C.* 22 (1967): 150.

31. Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France," *Past and Present*, no. 59 (May 1973), p. 90.

32. On the topic of child witches, see Villette, "Sorcellerie dans le Nord," pp. 149 and 155. Many charges were brought against them, in the Hainaut, especially; in 1612, the lord of Bouchain informed the court at Mons of the existence of numerous child witches, seven to nine years old, operating in the area under his jurisdiction, and he asked permission to put to death all those over eight years of age (Moreau, *Histoire*, 5:368-69). Bouchain: department of the Nord, *arrondissement* of Valenciennes, *chef-lieu* of the canton.

33. Maccharlane, *Witchcraft*, p. 251. In this rural area, however, only 108 out of 426 villages accounted for the 503 accusations documented by the author, or a maximum of 15 for one village over a thirty-five year period (*ibid.*, pp. 29, 97).

34. Monter, "Patterns," pp. 7-8, which compares with Essex. Nowhere in the Swiss Jura were there more than twenty deaths during any two-year period.

35. See note 22. Witchcraft fell under the jurisdiction of the aldermen (and, after 1542, of the ecclesiastical courts, if there were also suspicion of heresy), but jurisdictional conflicts were frequent; see Moreau, *Histoire*, 5:368, and Pasture, *Restauration*, pp. 49ff. Wandignies-Hamage: Nord, *arr.* Douai, canton Marchiennes.

36. See Villette's two articles: the town of Douai registered thirty-two cases in the

period 1371-1708, and there were fifty-three others in the surrounding region of the Douais.

37. See Villette's two articles. The cases at Etroeuingt, in Avenois (two mentioned in 1611, one in 1676, and one in 1736) and in some of the other villages would be interesting to study in their local context. Etroeuingt: Nord, *arr.* Avesnes-sur-Helpe, canton Sud.

38. For more information concerning this reorganization, see Moreau, *Histoire*, 5:21, and supplementary vol. 1, *Cartes* (Brussels, n.d. [1947]). See also Adrien Michaux, *Notice historique sur les circonscriptions ecclésiastiques anciennes et modernes du diocèse de Cambrai*... (Avesnes and Valenciennes, 1867), p. 8. Also André Le Clay, *Glossaire topographique de l'ancien Cambrésis*... (Cambrai, 1849).

39. See Brouette, "Sorcellerie."

40. Bazuel—Nord, *arr.* Cambrai, canton and deanery of Le Cateau—was situated at a distance of four kilometers from the latter and twenty-eight kilometers southeast of Cambrai. It came under the jurisdiction of the *châtellenie* of Le Cateau, and its curate was appointed by the local abbey of Saint-André; see Le Clay, *Glossaire*, p. viii, which attributes to the village an area of 1,170 to 1,253 hectares in the mid-nineteenth century. It had 801 inhabitants in 1968.

41. Rieux-en-Cambrésis—Nord, *arr.* Cambrai, canton and deanery of Cambrèsis—was thirty-six kilometers southeast of Douai and ten kilometers northeast of Cambrai. It fell within the province of Hainaut and under the jurisdiction of the *châtellenie* of Bouchain, though a small area of the village belonged to the Cambrésis (*ibid.*, p. iii; 758 hectares, 1,955 inhabitants in the mid-nineteenth century). The village numbered 29 families in 1444, 36 in 1469, 47 in 1540-41, and 28, including three empty dwellings, in 1560-61. The fall-off in the sixteenth century is probably due to a temporary wartime dispersment or a redistribution of the population; see Neveux, "Expansion," pp. 269-70, and map on p. 268. Rieux had 1,470 inhabitants in 1968.

42. Fressies—Nord, *arr.* Cambrai, canton of Cambrai-Ouest—at a distance of eleven kilometers north of Cambrai and seventeen kilometers southeast of Douai, formed part of the Hainaut and had been split off from the neighboring parish of Hem-Lenglet in 1228. Hem-Lenglet was part of the Cambrésis (currently: Nord, *arr.* Cambrai, canton of Cambrai-Ouest). See Le Clay, *Glossaire*, pp. xxx-xxxvi, xxxv. (In the mid-nineteenth century, Fressies encompassed a territory of 463 hectares and had 773 inhabitants, as against 485 hectares and 752 inhabitants for Hem-Lenglet. In 1968, these villages had 356 and 577 inhabitants, respectively.)

43. See Moreau, *Histoire*, supplementary vol. 1, *Cartes*.

44. Villette, "Sorcellerie dans le Nord," pp. 148, 150; "Sorcellerie à Douai," pp. 172-73, n. 1. He cites an author here who is himself giving secondhand information. The reference to 183 defendants at Bouchain is incomplete. See also Pasture, *Restoration*, p. 54, who cites Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique*, 4: 345, n. 2.

45. See note 32.

46. Villette, "Sorcellerie dans le Nord," pp. 148-53. Villers-au-Bois and Campeau now form part of Somain (Nord, *arr.* Douai, canton Marchiennes). For Rieux, see note 41.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 142, 129.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 47, n. 14; p. 48, n. 1; p. 53, n. 1; p. 54, n. 1.

50. See the recent statement by the pope on this subject: "This shadowy and confusing being does in fact exist.... He who refuses to recognize the existence of that frightening and mysterious reality which is the Devil must fly in the face of all biblical and ecclesiastical teaching" (15 Feb. 1972, cited in *Le Monde*, 17 Nov. 1972); and Villette, "Sorcellerie à Douai," p. 159.

51. Villette, "Sorcellerie dans le Nord," p. 143; and Villette, "Sorcellerie à Douai," p. 169.

52. Villette, "Sorcellerie à Douai," pp. 168-69. He is still trying to assert that in judging the witches the ecclesiastical tribunals were less severe than the aldermen, for the latter dealt out harsh punishments because of a lack of "any culture or judicial training."

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 132-34, cites the case of Isabeau Blary, in 1610, as an example for Douai. Douai: Nord, *chef-lieu d'arr.*

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 134-35, à propos of Isabeau Blary.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 142, for the same victim. I shall analyze these three stages in detail, later in the essay, but here simply draw attention to the evolution in Villette's thought that took place in the interval between these two articles. Yet, in 1961, he never transcends the level of description, and he continues to refer to the model developed at length in his first article (p. 123).

56. Testimony against Reyne Percheval (1599), Aldegonde de Rue (1601) from Bazuel (ADN, 8 H 312); Cécile Bérubère from Crespin in 1620 (ADN, 4 H 26, item 208); Madeleine Desnasse (1650), Anthoinette Lescouffe, and Susanne Goudry (1652) from Rieux (ADN, B 1216, 17615-16, 17625). The same is true of Jeanne Marchant (1679) from the town of Secin (ADN, B 19817), who was "vehemently suspected of witchcraft, and because of this fear, she terrified those who came in contact with her," according to an anonymous witness. Crespin: Nord, *arr.* Valenciennes, canton Condé-sur-l'Escaut; Secin: Nord, *arr.* Lille, *chef-lieu de canton*.

57. ADN, 8 H 312.

58. See note 40.

59. Berry: Nord, *arr.* Cambrai, canton of Clary, southwest of Le Cateau, and four kilometers from Clary.

60. Sainr-Souplet: Nord, *arr.* Cambrai, canton of Le Cateau, six kilometers south of the latter.

61. Ors: Nord, *arr.* Cambrai, canton of Le Cateau, seven kilometers east of the latter and not far from Bazuel.

62. See note 53.

63. Murchembled, "Sorcellerie," pp. 271-74.

64. A sergeant from Le Cateau, in 1599, and the five other witnesses from outside the village, in 1661, in the case of Aldegonde de Rue, who had resided in Le Cateau and in Landrecies (ADN, 8 H 312, 30 July 1601). Landrecies: Nord, *arr.* Avesnes-sur-Helpe, *chef-lieu* of the canton. Le Cateau: Nord, *arr.* Cambrai, *chef-lieu* of the canton.

65. See note 41.

66. Maître Jean Minart, who had the ability to recognize the mark of the devil—"the enemy of the human race"—which he imprints on witches "the first time he copulates with them." This specialist had already discovered the sign on 274 persons, who had been executed accordingly (ADN, 8 H 312, 18 July 1601). Rocroi: Ardennes, *arr.* Charleville-Mézières, *chef-lieu* of the canton.

67. Preserved as headings to the trials, ADN, 8 H 312.

68. This analysis of witchcraft is given by J. Michelet, *La Sorcière* ed. R. Mandrou (Paris, 1964), and by J. Palou, *La sorcellerie* (Paris, 1957). Cf. R. Murchembled, "Sorcellerie," pp. 264-65 and n. 3.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 265.

70. See ADN, B 1216, 17615-1, no. 28 (Rieux) and FG 782, 783, 785, 786 (Fressies and Hem-Lenglet).

71. ADN, 10 H 54, item 937. Fenain: Nord, *arr.* Douai, canton Marchiennes.

72. ADN, 4 H 26, item 208. Crespin: see note 56.

73. R. H. Duthilloeu, "Sortilèges: Préjugés encore enracinés," *Archives historiques et littéraires du Nord de la France et du Midi de la Belgique*, 3d ser. 2 (1851): 82 ff. Campeau: see note 46.

74. See ADN, B 1216, 17615-6.

75. Macfarlane, *Witchcraft*, pp. 150-51.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

77. *Ibid.*, pp. 164, 176, 196-97.

78. ADN, 8 H 312, 2 March 1621.

79. *Ibid.*, 7 March 1621.

80. ADN, B 1216, 17615-6, 26 Aug. 1650.

81. *Ibid.*, B 1216, 17615-25, 6 June 1652. Boursies: Nord, *arr.* Cambrai, canton of Marcoing; fifteen kilometers west of Cambrai.

82. *Ibid.*, B 1216, 17615-15, 18 May 1652.

83. ADN, 3 G 505-9451, 1602. Ors: see note 61.

84. A Lortin, *Vie et mentalité d'un Lillois sous Louis XIV* (Lille, 1962), pp. 268-69. See also note 56.
85. ADN, 7 G 906. Note that the term "rural community" represents here only the most wealthy and influential villagers (see note 138).
86. See note 25.
87. I have been able to find no trace of a village with this name in the area. Could it be a mistake for Carnières (Nord, arr. Cambrai, *chef-lieu* of the canton), east of Cambrai and south of Reuvers?
88. ADN, 4 G 205-3048.
89. Decry: Nord, arr. Douai, canton of Douai-Sud.
90. ADN, 12 H 52. Saint-Amand: Nord, arr. Valenciennes, *chef-lieu* of the canton.
91. Montez, "Patterns," p. 22, and Machardane's highly successful *Witchcraft*, esp. pp. 94-99 and 147-207.
92. H. C. Erik Midelfort, "Witch Hunting and the Dominio Theory," Chapter 7 in this volume.
93. Muchembled, "Sorcellerie," pp. 272-74.
94. See notes 59 and 60.
95. See Table 5.
96. Villette, "Sorcellerie à Douai," p. 133. Leward: Nord, arr. Douai, canton Douai-Sud.
97. *Ibid.*
98. ADN, 5 G 538/Pingret. Arleux: Nord, arr. Douai, *chef-lieu* of the canton. Rumielly-en-Cambésis: Nord, arr. Cambrai, canton Marcoing, Saint-Souplet (see note 60). Saint-Martin-en-la-Rivière = Saint-Martin-Rivière: Aisne, arr. Verwin, canton Wasigny (part of which was included in the Cambésis). Vaux-en-Arrouaise: Aisne, arr. Verwin, canton Wasigny (included in the Cambésis). The village is now known as Vaux-Audigny. Le Carreau-Cambésis: Nord, arr. Cambrai, *chef-lieu* of the canton. Valenciennes: Nord, *chef-lieu* of its *arrondissement*. Note that Saint-Souplet, Saint-Martin, and Vaux are located on the perimeter of a circle with a radius of approximately fifteen kilometers from its center point, Le Carreau. Many of the witchcraft cases of the seventeenth century originated in this area.
99. ADN, VIII B 770, 2d set, fol. 30 r^o 25, Sept. 1699. The defendant appealed the judgment of the bailiff, and the case was dismissed. Cassel: Nord, arr. Dunkerque, *chef-lieu* of the canton.
100. ADN, VIII B 770, 2d set, fol. 74 r^o-v^o, 30 April 1700. The appeal of the conviction was rejected, but the court mitigated the sentence to fifteen years of banishment.
- Furnes: Belgium, Flandre-Occidentale.
101. ADN, 5 G 538.
102. Vieuly: Nord, arr. Cambrai, canton Solesmes; eighteen kilometers east of Cambrai.
103. ADN, 5 G 538, Witchcraft at Vieuly (italics added).
104. See Jeanne Favret, "Le malheur biologique et sa répétition," *Annales E.S.C.* 26 (1971), pp. 873-88 (on witchcraft in the bocage region in France, in the twentieth century).
105. H. A. Klein, *Graphic Worlds of Peter Bruegel the Elder*... (New York, 1965), p. 169.
106. Moreau, *Histoire*, 5:319, 323-24.
107. Pasture, *Restoration*, pp. 329-54.
108. *Ibid.*, "La reorganisation de l'enseignement religieux," pp. 355-74.
109. ADN, 4 H 26, item 208, 1 July 1620 (see note 72).
110. Pierre Goubert, *L'Ancien régime*, 2 vols.; vol. 1, *La société* (Paris, 1969), p. 244.
111. *Ibid.*, pp. 248-49.
112. *Ibid.*, p. 250.
113. The doctoral thesis ("Les grains du Cambésis (fin du XIV^e-début du XVII^e siècle). Vie et déclin d'une structure économique.") of Hugues Neveux, which received its oral presentation in Paris, on 24 November 1973, is yet to be published (see the summary of it by the author: "Les Grains du Cambésis" in *Revue du Nord*, no. 219 [Oct.-Dec. 1973], pp. 419-21). Unal it appears, see articles by Neveux, "Cambrai et sa campagne de 1420 à
- 1450: Pour une utilisation sérieuse des comptes ecclésiastiques," *Annales E.S.C.* 26 (1971): 114-76; "La mortalité des pauvres à Cambrai (1377-1473)," *Annales de démographie historique* 1968 (Paris, 1968) 73-97; and the article "Expansion" on the village of Sainte-Hilare-le-Cambrai (Nord, arr. Cambrai, canton Carnières) cited in note 14.
114. Neveux, "Expansion," pp. 265-98.
115. *Ibid.*, p. 298.
116. *Ibid.*, pp. 297-98.
117. *Ibid.*, pp. 293, n. 66; 297. The rivalry among tenant farmers (*consiers*) over land use seems to have been acute.
118. More than 50 percent of the motives of the latter concerned questions of honor: see J.-P. Sarazin and J.-P. Warlop, "Délinquance et mentalité populaire dans les Pays-Bas Espagnols (1610-1660), au travers des lettres de remission" (Master's thesis in history, University of Lille, 1972), pp. 67 and 70, and tables on 94.
119. ADN, B 1216, 17615-18, 19 July 1647. Braine-le-Comme: Belgique, prov. Hainaut, canton Soignies.
120. Neveux, "Expansion," pp. 269-70, on these short-lived flights.
121. E. Leclait, "Faits divers" extraits d'une chronique lilloise manuscrite de 1600 à 1662, *Société d'études de la province de Cambrai, Bulletin* (tenenforth cited as SEPCEB) 3 (1901-2): 102, 103, 105, 107, 289.
122. Roger Rodière, "Deux vieux registres de catholicité du pays d'Artois," SEPCEB 4 (1902): 155-57.
123. See the excellent book by E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* (London, 1937; 2d ed. 1951; French trans., Paris, 1972).
124. Neveux, "Expansion," p. 292.
125. ADN, B 1216, 17615-27, May 1652.
126. Neveux (citing C. Theliez), "Expansion," p. 292, n. 55.
127. John Bossy, "The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe," *Past and Present*, no. 47 (May 1970), pp. 51-70. My thanks to Carlo Ginzburg for this reference.
128. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
129. See on this subject Villette, "Sorcellerie dans le Nord," p. 46, and compare it with ADN, 10 H 54-937 (Marie Cornu: 1611), 8 H 312 (Marie Lanecchin: 1621).
130. Compare the "evil" cast to the descriptions of Villette, "Sorcellerie dans le Nord," with those of Bossy, "Counter-Reformation."
131. See C. Petit-Dunail, *Documents nouveaux sur les moeurs populaires et le droit de vengeance dans les Pays-Bas au XV^e siècle*... (Paris, 1908), pp. 54, 90, 141.
132. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
133. Sarazin and Warlop, "Délinquance," pp. 25ff.
134. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
135. Pierre de Saint-Jacob, *Documents relatifs à la communauté villageoise en Bourgogne*... (Paris, 1962), p. ix.
136. *Ibid.*, p. xxvii (italics added).
137. *Ibid.*, p. xxv-xxv. On the rural communities, see also Claude Brunet, *Une communauté rurale au XVIII^e siècle: Le Pleasis-Gassot (Seine et Oise)* (Paris, 1964); and Jeanne Gillole-Voisin, "La communauté des habitants de Givry au XVIII^e siècle," *Histoire sociale: Etudes sur la vie rurale dans la France de l'Est*, Cahiers de l'Association Inter-universitaire de l'Est, no. 11 (Dijon, 1966), pp. 20-83.
138. Gillole-Voisin, "Communauté," p. 29; Brunet, *Communauté*, pp. 34ff.; H. Babeau, *Les assemblées générales des communautés d'habitants en France, du XIII^e siècle à la Révolution* (Paris, 1893).
139. See notes 85-90.
140. Gillole-Voisin, "Communauté," p. 30.
141. Cited by Madeleine Feuil, *La révolte des Niv-Pléds et les révoltes normandes de 1639* (Paris, 1970), p. 30.
142. On the indifference to very young children, who began to inspire affection in their elders only after they had passed through the first critical years of infancy, see François Lebrun, *Les hommes et la mort en Anjou aux 17^e et 18^e siècles: essai de démographie et de*

- psychologie historiques* (Paris, 1971), pp. 423ff., which repeats the observations of Philippe Ariès, *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris, 1960; 2d ed. 1973), p. 135.
143. Sarazin and Warlop, "Délinquance," esp. pp. 175ff.
144. *Ibid.*, p. 55, tables; pp. 56-60, 78.
145. *Ibid.*, pp. 70, 82.
146. See the very fine work by Jean-Marie Baheux and Gilles Deregnacourt, "Affaires de moeurs laïques et ecclésiastiques et mentalités populaires au XVII^e siècle (1594-1706), d'après les archives de l'officialité Métropolitaine de Cambrai" (Master's thesis in history, University of Lille, 1972).
147. *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 210.
148. *Ibid.*, pp. 204-6, and 261-63.
149. *Ibid.*, p. 217, citing Pierre Chaunu, *La civilisation de l'Europe classique* (Paris, 1966), p. 196.
150. *Ibid.*, p. 215, map (the archdiocese at that time included fourteen deanships).
151. *Ibid.*, pp. 79, 212.
152. Deyon, "Paupérisme," p. 151.
153. Erich Fromm, interview published in the *New York Times*, 15 Dec. 1973, p. 33 (referring to the United States).
154. Foissil, *Révolte des Nu-Pieds*, p. 341 (on the Norman revolts of 1639).
155. This village atmosphere is briefly but brilliantly traced by Baheux and Deregnacourt, "Affaires," pp. 297-325.
156. Sarazin and Warlop, "Délinquance," p. 236.
157. Montigny-en-Cambrésis, Nord, arr. Cambrai, canton Clary.
158. Baheux and Deregnacourt, "Affaires," p. 164 (based on ADN, 5 G 517, 1698, dossier B. Hal).
159. *Ibid.*, pp. 319-25; for example, in 1618, a Cambrésis curate morally wounded one of his parishioners, who nevertheless "sent for the very same priest to administer the sacraments, who was so drunk that he didn't know what he was saying" (pp. 319-20).
160. *Ibid.*, p. 107 (based on ADN, 5 G 509, 1626, dossier Jean HUART).
161. After 1678, the Cambrésis was part of France, and the analysis of Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers*, is therefore applicable.
162. Henri Platteau, *Journal d'un curé de campagne au XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 1965).
163. Bossy, "Counter-Reformation," pp. 62-63.
164. Goubert, *Ancien régime*, 1:42-44.
165. Cited by Irénard, *Histoire*, p. 322.
166. Merbes-le-Château: Belgique, prov. Hainaut, *chef-lieu* of the canton.
167. Baheux and Deregnacourt, "Affaires," p. 306 (based on ADN, 5 G 512, 1677, dossier A. Camusel).
168. J. Bourdon, "Psychosociologie de la famine," *Annales de démographie historique* 1968, p. 13.
169. René Baehrel, "La haine de classe en temps d'épidémie," *Annales E.S.C.* 7 (1952): 359.
170. *Ibid.*, p. 360.
171. Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris, 1961), and recent works on pauperism (see the critical note by Roger Chartier, "Pauvreté et assurance dans la France moderne. L'exemple de la généralité de Lyon," *Annales E.S.C.* 28 [1973]: 572-82).
172. René Girard, *La violence et le sacré* (Paris, 1972).
173. *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 359.
174. *Ibid.*, pp. 435, 148, 378, 135, 22, and 29.
175. Jacques Soustelle, *La vie quotidienne des Aztèques à la veille de la conquête espagnole* (Paris, 1955).
176. Girard, *Violence*, pp. 389, 352.
177. Macfarlane, *Witchcraft*, pp. 197, 204, makes the same observation for Essex.
178. Girard, *Violence*, p. 391.
179. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.
180. Davis, "Rites of Violence," pp. 57, 90.

181. One example among many: Madeleine Allard, from Fourmies (Nord, arr. Avesnes-sur-Helpe, canton Trélon), was condemned upon appeal, on 13 September 1679, to be led out in front of a church and there, "on her knees, with her feet and arms bare, clad only in a shirt, a cord around her neck, and bearing a burning torch weighing two pounds, she should say and declare that she had boldly and with malice aforethought renounced her baptism [a long list of her crimes follows], that she now repented her crimes and asked pardon of God, the king, and the courts" (ADN, VIII B 761, 2d ser., vol. 37 f^o).
182. Girard, *Violence*, p. 352; Davis, "Rites of Violence," p. 90.
183. *Ibid.*, p. 85, citing Troy Duster "Conditions for Guilt-Free Massacre," in Nevitt Sanford and Craig Constock, eds., *Sanctions for Evil* (San Francisco, 1971), ch. 3.
184. See Muchembled, "Sorcellerie," p. 276.
185. Deyon, "Paupérisme," pp. 151-52.
186. Edward B. Harper, "Fear and the Status of Women," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 25 (1969): 95. This essay is concerned with southern India.
187. Davis, "Rites of Violence," pp. 86-87.
188. David Hunt, *Parents and Children in History: The Psychology of Family Life in Early Modern France* (New York, 1972), pp. 71, 74, 75.
189. *Ibid.*, p. 186.
190. Girard, *Violence*, p. 391.
191. Foissil, *Révolte des Nu-Pieds*, pp. 339-40. For Foissil, only the existence of a program on the part of the rebels would constitute a real "class consciousness."
192. Wachtel, *Vision des vaincus*.
193. Goubert, *Ancien régime*, 1:111.
194. Muchembled, "Sorcellerie," pp. 278ff. and especially the works of Carlo Ginzburg, particularly "Cheese and Worms," Chapter 3 in this volume.
195. See Bossy, "Counter-Reformation," p. 70.
196. Title of a book edited by Trevor Aston, *Crisis in Europe, 1560-1660* (New York, 1967).

Chapter 7

1. See, for example, Jeffrey B. Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1972). See also Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (New York, 1975); and Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch-Trials: Their Foundation in Popular and Learned Culture* (London, 1976).
2. Russell, *Witchcraft*; see also Charles E. Hopkin, *The Share of Thomas Aquinas in the Growth of the Witchcraft Delusion* (Philadelphia, 1940); and the excellent collection of articles in Sydney Anglo, ed., *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft* (London, 1977).
3. For recent surveys of some of this literature, see H. C. Erik Midelfort, "Recent Witch Hunting Research, Or Where Do We Go from Here?" *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 62 (1968): 373-420; E. William Monter, "The Historiography of European Witchcraft, Progress and Prospects," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2 (1972): 435-51; Lawrence Stone, "The Disenchantment of the World," *New York Review of Books*, 2 Dec. 1971, pp. 17-25; H. C. Erik Midelfort, "The Renaissance of Witchcraft Research," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 13 (1977): 294-97.
4. Alan D. J. Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (New York, 1970); Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York, 1971); Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (Cambridge, Mass., 1974).
5. Macfarlane, *Witchcraft*; Werner Croissant, "Die Berücksichtigung geburts- und berufsständischer und soziologischer Unterschiede im deutschen Hexenprozess" (Dr. jur. Dissertation, University of Mainz, 1953); E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland: The Borderlands during the Reformation* (Ithaca, 1976).
6. This theme has become common in the studies of Salem witchcraft. See Ernest Caulfield, "Pediatric Aspects of the Salem Witchcraft Tragedy," *American Journal for the Diseases of Children* 65 (1943): 788-802; Marion Starkey, *The Devil in Massachusetts*

