

Magical Healing, Love Magic and the Inquisition in Late Sixteenth-century Modena

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Recent historical studies of sixteenth-century Europe have documented a 'reform of popular culture' in both Catholic and Protestant areas. Peter Burke has described this reform movement as the religiously motivated 'efforts of the educated to change the belief and behaviour of the rest of the population'.¹

The errors of belief characteristic of the uneducated were summed up in the recurrent phrase 'ignorance and superstition'. Although the definition of each of these terms varied along confessional lines, 'ignorance' usually referred to a lack of basic doctrinal information, and 'superstition' always included the magical beliefs and practices common throughout Europe. Religious complaints about behaviour focused on blasphemy and prohibited sexual behaviour. A lamentable state of ignorance, superstition and immorality was thus seen as characteristic of the people of Europe, especially (but not only) those in rural areas.

To combat these problems, sixteenth-century church authorities undertook broadly conceived programmes of catechetical instruction for the laity, seminary training for clergy and prosecution of religious as well as moral offences in church courts. This campaign was conducted under varied institutional forms, from Lutheran parish visitations to the Calvinist consistories of Geneva and Scotland, but its goals remained strikingly similar across Europe.² Everywhere, educated religious elites felt the time had come to eradicate popular errors, whether of belief or behaviour. In Counter Reformation Italy, it was the local offices of the Roman Inquisition which undertook a systematic campaign to suppress those popular errors of belief categorised by theologians as superstitious.

'Superstition' was a common term of abuse in the religious polemics of the sixteenth century, but Catholic and Protestant reformers used it in very different ways. Calvin defined as

superstitious the whole theory and practice of Roman religion, from transubstantiation to saints' cults.³ Although Catholics had finer, more traditional lines to draw in deciding what was and was not superstitious, the post-Tridentine church undertook a related effort to eliminate those activities that went beyond the appropriate boundaries of religious observance. Catholic reform documents from Giberti's *Constitutions* to the decrees of the Council of Trent point to the need to discourage excessive or unseemly behaviour in religious contexts. To some extent these provisions reflected concern for exaggerations of otherwise orthodox devotions, like the desire for 'fixed numbers of Masses and candles' denounced at Trent.⁴ The definition by Martino of Arles, current in sixteenth-century Italy, of superstition as 'superfluous and vain religion, pursued in a defective manner and in wrong circumstances', could apply to obsessive religiosity, but also to magical practices current among both peasants and urban people.⁵

Despite the arguments of Renaissance intellectuals for a 'reformed and learned natural magic', mainstream theologians since the Church Fathers had maintained that magical effects were achieved only with the aid of the devil, and were necessarily implicitly diabolical. It was because of this orthodox assumption that magical powers derive only from a pact with the devil (whether implicit or explicit), which in turn implied apostasy from the true faith, that the Inquisition had acquired jurisdiction over cases categorised as superstitious.⁶

In the climate of the post-Tridentine reform, the local offices of the Roman Inquisition prosecuted such cases with increased frequency. After an intensive period of heresy trials against Protestants from the 1540s to the 1570s, magical and superstitious offences came to constitute the major focus of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Inquisitorial activity.⁷ This essay draws on the Inquisition archives of Modena to consider the nature and character of these magical beliefs and of the campaign against them in late sixteenth-century Italy.

The verbatim trial records reveal a world in which magical remedies were used to deal with the routine hazards of life, especially illness and disease. The major categories of superstitious error prosecuted by the Inquisition were magical healing, love magic and divination, with the largest number of cases directed against healers. Divination techniques were used in a variety of situations, most frequently to find lost and stolen objects, including buried treasure, and to identify thieves. While none of these was specifically

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'religious' in aim, all used religious forms of intercession, especially appeals to the saints, in ways considered inappropriate by the church. A common form of theft detection involved balancing a sieve on a pair of scissors and saying, 'by Saint Peter and Saint Paul, tell me who has taken my money'; the sieve was expected to rotate at the mention of the thief's name.⁸ The people who performed this *incanto del sedaccio* believed that it worked through the aid of the saints, but in the eyes of the Inquisition any procedure lacking ecclesiastical approval could only function through the aid of the devil.

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The following discussion focuses on trials for magical healing and love magic, in an effort to identify the particular character of the Roman Inquisition's campaign against popular magical beliefs and practices. It will be argued that the distinctive feature of that campaign, in contrast to northern Europe where such campaigns frequently escalated into full-scale witch hunts, was the moderation of its approach to magical crimes. This moderation derived from procedural restraints common to both Spanish and Roman Inquisitions⁹ but also from the categories used by the court to describe such crimes. For despite the assumption that all such procedures implied a resort to diabolical assistance, in practice the court distinguished clearly between implicit and explicit invocation of demons, reserving its harshest penalties for the latter, less frequent type of offence. The application of this distinction to the category of 'superstition' permitted the Inquisition to deal with popular magical practices as a serious but manageable problem for which a restrained and comparatively lenient approach was most appropriate.

In taking action against magical remedies, the church intended to reassert its clerical monopoly on legitimate access to the supernatural. Protestant reformers had rejected all efforts to influence or manipulate supernatural forces for human benefit (except for prayer), and stressed the need to accept given conditions as providential.¹⁰ But Catholicism continued to offer a religion that was remedial in very concrete ways. Spanish towns related to saints and shrines on a contractual basis, offering vowed days of religious attention in exchange for specific actions, from controlling insects and weather to ending the plague.¹¹ This collective level of devotional life was supplemented in the Italian setting by a strong emphasis on remedies to individual misfortunes, especially sickness and possession. Since much illness was considered to be of maleficial origin (that is, the result of witchcraft or diabolical malice) and

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even natural illness could be alleviated by spiritual intervention, religious remedies were important tools for healing the sick. Referred to as 'ecclesiastical medicines' by the Franciscan Girolamo Menghi, the orthodox remedies of holy water, clerical blessings, pilgrimages and exorcisms were to be employed against problems of both natural and supernatural origin.¹² The remedial functions of orthodox Catholicism were not limited to shrines and saints, but personified in clerics whose powers to bless and heal, with the aid of God and the approval of the church, form a central theme of Italian exorcist writing in this period. Remedies were thus indisputably orthodox and belonged squarely within the functions of religion.

In the eyes of the church, magical remedies not only competed with clerical ones, but competed unfairly, for their format was invariably syncretic, putting familiar Christian devices to purposes not approved by the church.¹³ In a process that must be attributed to the independent creativity of popular tradition, remedial formulae and procedures were extrapolated from standard prayers and liturgical observances, retaining the orthodox framework but replacing the contents with requests and techniques judged inappropriate and hence superstitious by theologians.¹⁴ Referred to by their users as *orationi* (prayers), *ricetti* (*recipes*) and *segreti* (secrets), but called incantations (*incanti*) by the court, the multiple sources of these formulae in traditional oral culture are inaccessible to historians.¹⁵ But the pious aspects of many *segreti*, their explicit invocation of the saints, the use of masses, baptism, orthodox prayers and blessed candles as ancillary techniques indicate that many magical remedies developed as extensions of the remedial functions of orthodox religion rather than from some wholly separate non-Christian source.¹⁶

Defendants tried for superstitious offences by the Inquisition repeatedly asserted that they thought a given *oratione* was 'a good thing', or a 'matter of religion'. Much of the campaign against popular magic thus consisted of educating people about what was and was not within the bounds of appropriate religious intercession. To this end, Inquisitorial edicts were read by parish priests at Sunday mass, listing the possible forms of superstitious error in fairly specific detail and requiring the listeners to denounce offenders. An edict from Bologna reminded the faithful of their

obligation, under pain of reserved excommunication, to make known to the Holy Office, all those persons whom they know,

have known or will gain knowledge of, who perform or have performed on their behalf incantations, acts of witchcraft (*stregarie, malificii*) or sorcery (*sortilegio*) and magical or necromantic experiments . . . especially with explicit or implicit invocation of the demon.¹⁷

Moreover, from the 1590s on, parish priests were required to question people in confession about their knowledge of 'matters pertaining to the Holy Office', such as heresy, superstition and blasphemy. Absolution for sins was routinely withheld pending denunciation to the Inquisition of one's own or one's neighbours' offences. Second- and third-hand testimony was accepted, but was followed up by subsequent questioning of the persons who had been heard to repeat first-hand information about such events. This coercive mechanism of linking absolution for ordinary sins to informant testimony generated hundreds of denunciations technically classified as *sponte comparantes missus a confessione*, the majority of which were always for blasphemy, and which clustered in Advent and Lent as people prepared to receive communion at Easter or Christmas.

Both the reading of edicts and the participation of confessors in producing these somewhat less than 'spontaneous' appearances led to a striking increase in trials for magical and superstitious offences. In Modena they rose from a high of eleven or twelve per decade in the period between 1550 and 1589 to a total of 73 in the 1590s alone. Taken by itself, this rise in prosecutions indicates that the ecclesiastical bureaucracy's new methods of searching out such cases were effective, and that an issue that had previously been dealt with only sporadically was now receiving sustained attention.¹⁸

Magical healing

There is further evidence that this campaign succeeded not only in the identification and trial of offenders, but in the prevention of recourse to magical remedies as well. Testimony in many cases reveals that healers known for curing a given condition began turning away potential clients with the explanation that their confessors no longer wanted to absolve them when they did such things.¹⁹ These refusals of service left the relatives of sick people desperate; many offered to 'take the sin upon themselves' in order to induce a reluctant healer to perform the traditional remedies for fevers and childhood diseases. The Inquisition was aware of the pressures on

healers, and trials were conducted against those who procured such services as well as against those who performed them. In one Modenese case of 1599, a sick priest named Fra Girolamo Azzolini promised absolution to a reluctant healer called by his family to 'sign' his fever.²⁰ Several healers alleged to the court that they had received special permission (*licenza di segnare*) from their parish priests to perform their cures; though not all of them could substantiate these claims, a few of them did. The fact that 20 per cent of Modenese trials for superstition between 1580 and 1600 were directed against clerics is indicative of the Inquisitors' determination to eliminate this source of confusion for the laity.²¹

There were educational functions performed by this campaign against popular magic. Many of the people whose consciences were pricked by an edict or a confessor's reprimand seem to have been genuinely unaware that the procedures in which they had participated were considered illicit. In 1595 Donna Violante arrived in court 'asking forgiveness not once but a hundred times for having erred' by taking her child to a 60-year-old man, Antonio Coreggi, who was known to heal hernias. Coreggi's testimony in the case betrays no suspicion on his part that his cure, learned 50 years before, was an objectionable one: 'I did not think such things were bad, nor that they were sins. If I had thought they were bad, I would have confessed them and stopped doing them.'²² Antonio's healing ritual was to be performed at sunrise, either on the feast of St John the Baptist or on Good Friday. It required splitting open a nut tree, making a breach large enough for the child to be passed through three times while a young boy read aloud from the Gospel of St John.²³ The various edicts against superstition had thus succeeded only partially in Antonio's case. He knew that superstition was bad, but it remained simply a synonym for a generic concept of sin as doing harm to others.²⁴ He did not categorise his admitted actions in the court's terms, nor did the Inquisitor stop to instruct him on the meaning of this theological term. It was the coercive setting of the trial itself which alerted him to the fact that his sunrise healing, effective though it might have been, was 'bad' and should be discontinued.

When asked 'whether he believed that these things were done with the aid of the demon', Antonio responded: 'I never thought that such things were done through the devil's power but rather through the power of God and I never invoked the name of the demon.' Although he was perceived by the court as a 'good man and well disposed towards telling the truth', Antonio was nonethe-

less found to be

lightly suspect of apostasy from God to the devil for having held and believed that holy words, the most holy Gospel and holy days . . . can be used for ends other than those instituted by the Church.²⁵

The traditional formula of 'apostasy from God to the devil' is retained but there is no indication that the Inquisitors saw Antonio as allied with the devil in any real sense; 'lightly suspect' was the most mild of guilty verdicts. The central theme of this sentence is not the technical theological one of the implicit diabolical pact, but a jurisdictional concept of superstition as misappropriation of ecclesiastical rites and symbols (similar to the definition by Martino of Arles quoted above).

This tendency to treat popular remedies as superstitious in an almost bureaucratic sense as the misuse by uneducated people of functions properly reserved to the church characterises the Roman Inquisition campaign against magical practices and causes it to differ markedly from related campaigns elsewhere in Europe which placed greater stress on the diabolical nature of popular magic.²⁶ Antonio's penance, for example, consisted of confession and communion four times a year (including Easter and the feast of St John the Baptist, 'the days on which you performed these superstitions') and recitation of the Rosary every Friday for a year; a simple set of orthodox observances was considered sufficient atonement for a superstitious healing career.

This was a light penalty; most sentences for superstitious healing included the public humiliation of standing in front of church during Sunday mass with a lighted candle and a sign describing one's offence. Antonio's case was somewhat different (but not drastically so) from the norm, in part because of his gender. The overwhelming majority of people tried for magical healing in Modena were women who knew how to 'sign' specific illnesses, especially fevers and childhood diseases. Common procedures included making the sign of the Cross (hence the term 'signing') over a sick person, sometimes accompanied by other prayers or formulae and by natural remedies (such as baths and herbal treatments); in return the patient's family would offer food or small sums of money. Healers were often poor, older women, whose cures take on the aspect of disguised begging in many cases; some of them pleaded economic necessity as a mitigating circumstance at their trials.

Although others stressed the contrary, that they had cured people for 'the love of God' and 'had never taken anything for it', small gifts especially of food were the normal acknowledgement of this service.²⁷

Depositions by witnesses indicate that relationships between healers and their clients could be tense, marked by fear and apprehension. Indeed, Antonio Coreggi was among the few whose accuser had no complaints about his services but was motivated solely by her belated perception of the unorthodoxy of his methods. Many healers were denounced to the Inquisition by their former clients, especially after an unsuccessful cure like that performed by Diamante de Bisa on a sick two-year-old girl in 1599. The child's widowed mother, Ludovica Venterino, was clearly traumatised by watching this 'big, old and ugly woman' bathe her child first in water and then in ashes.

I gave her seven *bolognini* because she asked me for them, and I also gave her a lunch of bread and onions . . . but she ate alone. For myself I would not have eaten in her company, because I was frightened just looking at her.²⁸

Although Diamante assured the mother that she had performed the healing procedure many times before, she acted in a secretive and even menacing manner. One witness, Alfonso Cappini, testified that she had warned Ludovica

to take care that she said nothing to anyone outside in the street, for she [Diamante] would know everything that was said, even that which threatened from a distance. And after she had left, that child died in a brief span of time two hours later. . . . It still frightens me because she was hideous to look at, really a witch's face, a diabolical woman.

Diamante was thus denounced to the Inquisition for 'having destroyed [*guasta*] and killed a child' through witchcraft. Failed cures often resulted in such charges even against healers with solid reputations and loyal clients; in Modena, accusations of *maleficium* were invariably against healers and bear a certain resemblance to malpractice suits.

But the response of the court to these charges is an instructive one, for the Dominican Inquisitor, Giovanni di Montefalcono, resisted the perception of Diamante as a *strega* which was put forward

by the bereaved family. He conducted the trial in a manner that turned up other opinions about her and shed concrete light on her suspiciously secretive behaviour. It emerged during Diamante's own interrogation that her confessor had urged her to stop performing her 'superstitious medications'. Her fear that he would learn she was still doing them when requested accounted for her attempts to keep the participants quiet with mingled threats and hints about supranormal perceptual abilities. Furthermore, the Inquisitor considered the possibility that the cure had been a natural one and did not accept the automatic correlation between Diamante's procedure and the child's subsequent death. Finally, he commissioned the local priest to inform himself about Diamante and her reputation in the village.²⁹ Don Santus di Zanctis himself had a good opinion of Diamante, but was swayed by the rumours that now reached him.

In the past I never heard anything bad about this Diamante, but once Your Reverence charged me fifteen days ago with gathering information . . . I learned that the said Diamante is called by the nickname *la strega* . . . and that she undertakes to heal children who have been bewitched.

But Diamante had defenders as well. The person who had known her longest, her *comadre* (co-godmother) Julia, testified favourably to her abilities as a midwife and a healer. Diamante herself told the court:

My career is that of spinning, weaving and sewing, wearing myself out to make a living. I am a poor woman and possess nothing in this world . . . I have made a profession of signing certain sicknesses such as *rosapilla* [measles?] worms and the illnesses of little children. Nor do I know how to perform incantations, superstitions or any sort of witchcraft.

She recounted numerous successful cures so that the sum of her testimony made the case of Ludovica's child seem exceptional.

The court resisted her accusers' charge of witchcraft, but Diamante's testimony about her healing methods placed her firmly in the category of 'superstitious healer'. She was asked to 'explain the methods she uses to sign these sicknesses, the words she speaks and the objects she uses'. Her lengthy replies describe cures which used ointments and herbs along with the sign of the cross; the court was most interested in her cure for worms.

For the sickness of worms, I say these words without using any objects: 'On Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday, Holy Wednesday, Holy Thursday, Holy Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, the worm dies and decays.' Then I make the sign of the cross over them.

The 'vain observance of times and days' implicit in these methods fit standard concepts of superstition; it was on these methods, freely admitted by the defendant, that the interrogation focused, not on the circumstantial evidence linking her to a child's death. She was guilty in the eyes of the court, but of performing 'superstitious medications,' not of *maleficium*. The vocabulary of witchcraft (*striga*, *malefica*, *guastare*) is introduced in this trial only by witnesses and is passed over by the court, which uses instead the vocabulary of 'superstition'. Diamante received a standard penance of standing in front of the parish church during Sunday mass, fasting on bread and water on vigils of the Virgin's feastdays and reciting weekly rosaries for a year.³⁰ It is a harsher sentence than Antonio's but for an accusation of murder by witchcraft in 1599 it is striking in its moderation.

Moreover this moderation was maintained in the face of pressures for stricter treatment of witches from the population at large. Many denunciations for *maleficium* were never pursued by the Modenese court despite the intensity of feeling conveyed by those who saw themselves as victims of such acts. In 1579 a woman named Pasqua denounced the healer who had failed to prevent the deaths of her two infants in insistent, decided language: 'I hope Your Reverences will see to this matter for this Maria is held to be a witch [*stria*] by the entire Villa di Fre.'³¹ Although there is a clear malpractice aspect to this denunciation, much of the evidence cited against Maria Mariani by a parade of witnesses focused on her well-known and varied healing abilities, of which she herself had frequently boasted. A former client justified the admissibility of such evidence by citing a local proverb: 'it is commonly said that those who know how to heal also know how to harm'.³²

This perception that the power to heal, especially the power to heal the bewitched (*maleficati*, *affaturati* or *guasti*), implied the opposite power to harm was a standard facet of learned and popular witch beliefs alike. The theological category of *maleficia ad sanandum* (healing by means of witchcraft) succinctly expresses the same ambivalence, which was, moreover, theoretically required by the implicitly diabolical nature of any magical cure. All this makes the restraint

exhibited by the Inquisition even more striking. The cases of Maria Mariani and others like her never even came to trial, despite popular demand, while people like Diamante and Antonio were punished less severely than habitual blasphemers.³³

Incanti ad amorem: Love magic

The most extreme penalties handed out by the Modenese Inquisition are to be found not in trials against healers accused of *maleficium*, but in the functionally distinct sphere of love magic. Notwithstanding the difference between causing harm and inducing affection, historians have tended to include these cases in studies of witch trials.³⁴ This practice has been questioned by one recent scholar; calling for closer attention to the specific acts attributed to and the social roles occupied by persons accused of witchcraft, Richard Horsely has argued that since love magic had a 'good end' it should not be dealt with as equivalent to harm done by *maleficium*.³⁵

Yet the theologians did exactly that. No distinction between 'good' and 'bad' magic existed in the eyes of the church, for its concerns focused on the means employed, not on the moral status of the end pursued in any magical act. Officially classified as *maleficia ad amorem*, techniques designed to induce passion in another person were particularly objectionable to theological opinion. For in addition to their implicitly (when not explicitly) diabolical source, the express goal of love charms was coercion to sin through the subversion of free will. Interrogations in these trials centred on the question of whether the defendant believed that the devil could force man's will into sin. Counter Reformation theology was particularly sensitive to attacks on free will associated with predestinarian Protestantism, and was determined to maintain the sinner's responsibility for his own sins.

Paradoxically, this confessional polemic undermined assumptions of the diabolical efficacy of love magic. The abjuration written for Moranda da Fanano, denounced for incantations and *surfanterie* in 1600, illustrates this point:

I swear that I believe with my heart and confess with my mouth that the demon cannot force the will and free choice [*volonta e libero arbitrio*] of man to do evil, and consequently I abjure and detest that heresy which says and holds the opposite, of which I have been judged lightly suspect for the superstitions and

diabolical experiments performed and taught by me to give passion to others.³⁶

In effect, Moranda's trial for the superstitious use of love charms turned into a trial for the heretical denial of free will implicit in her actions. Inquisitors in the field, starved for the hard theological issues in which they had been schooled, thus exercised their abilities by detecting the finer heretical implications of what were essentially predoctrinal popular errors.³⁷ The persons tried on charges of love magic were guilty of various things, from heretical opinions on the freedom of the will to 'apostasy from Christ to the devil' for believing that their implicitly diabolical spells would work, but they were not, in the theologians' eyes, able to do what they attempted and wanted to do. By asserting the impossibility that such incantations could cause a person to sin against his will, even with the aid of the devil, the church effectively assumed a sceptical attitude about the reality and efficacy of love magic.³⁸

Popular belief did not reach this sophisticated theological level. While sceptics do turn up in the trial records, they were often disappointed users of love charms whose disillusion with the results of their experiments followed an initial credulity.³⁹ Many of the 'spontaneous denunciations sent from confession' were made by people who had requested that some love charm be performed on their behalf; they were required to denounce themselves as well as the person who had assisted them. Providers of these services often claimed economic motivation and denied that they in fact believed in what they were doing, but since the Inquisition was concerned above all with the issue of belief, their testimony was clearly self-serving and may not reflect their real attitudes.⁴⁰

Depositions by and about victims of love magic represent the clearest evidence of a general assumption that such procedures were efficacious. The socially inappropriate love affairs in which these people were involved were routinely perceived as the consequence of *maleficia ad amorem*. From the point of view of the relatives and friends of the socially superior individual, for whom such a misalliance defied fundamental principles of social hierarchy, this hypothesis served a crucial explanatory function. For those of lower status, love charms conversely held out hopes of a sudden (indeed magical) transformation of their circumstances. Most of the people accused of using such charms in sixteenth-century Modena were women; upper-crust names figure prominently in the lists of men magically pursued by their amorously ambitious inferiors.⁴¹

Camilla Baclara was denounced in 1553 for 'having wanted to give a certain drink as a love potion to one of the Grillenzoni, but her mother scolded her and she didn't do it'. She was more successful with the son of another powerful local family, Giovanni Battista de Capelli, to whom she gave a drink containing magically prepared nutmeg (*noce moscato*), considered a powerful aphrodisiac. Her accuser testified about its effects:

Giovanni Battista can find no rest without this woman, so that coming at night from the villa, he did crazy things out of his ardent desire for her. Returning to the villa he became sick, with a rash on his hands and face, and a fever too. But as soon as he was with her again he got better.⁴²

Giovanni's symptoms were interpreted for him by a woman of his own social level, the 'gentlewoman Donna Francesca, wife of Dominus Hieronimus de Rubigis,' who reported Camilla to the Inquisition as a *malefica*. The blinded victim was not held responsible for his condition by public opinion, nor could he be expected to understand its cause as well as his relatives and friends.

Theologians might deny the possibility of coercion to passion, but ordinary clerics were not immune to the general belief in the efficacy of love magic. The Guardian of the Observant Franciscan convent of Santa Margarita, Fra Francesco Calais, appeared before the Modenese Inquisitor in 1599 to demand prosecution of a woman whom he blamed for the seduction of a friar.

Finding myself in a great turmoil because of a priest of my order, Fra Costanzo di Sacriguano, I was told by Fra Gasparo da Carpo . . . how Fra Costanzo had apostasised against his will and was forced to throw off his habit. The wretched creature is staying in this neighbourhood, for he was bewitched by a prostitute called la Buratinazza . . . who makes him come to her by force.⁴³

Like the accusation against Camilla, this case never came to trial, despite the Franciscan spiritual director's urgent plea. Bewitchment provided a face-saving interpretation of the inconstant Fra Costanzo's scandalous behaviour but it was precisely the inference that he had done all this against his will that was theologically unacceptable to the Inquisitors. The accusations of love magic most likely to result in a full-scale trial were not those which inferred magical scheming from symptoms like those experienced by these men,

but rather those in which testimony about actual use of spells and charms was produced. And when such trials were undertaken, the cast of characters in Fra Francesco's deposition, a prostitute and a priest, figured prominently.

For the specialists in the field of love magic were prostitutes who used a wide array of procedures to attract and hold clients or lovers. They were usually younger, lower-class urban women, clearly distinct as a social group from the village healers whose rural poverty and age fit the traditional witch image more closely. Drawing on Fernando de Rojas's famous literary depiction of the magically adept urban prostitute, the Spanish historian Caro Baroja refers to such women as 'Celestina type witches'.⁴⁴ While they were technically considered *maleficae* because they performed *maleficia ad amorem*, depositions tended to describe these women as 'knowing how to perform incantations' and other *surfanterie* (roguery or rascally actions) rather than in the popular vocabulary of witchcraft (*striga*, *guastare*, etc.) used to denounce healers. While the two types of magical practitioners represent different social groups, the distinction between them should not be overdrawn; a prostitute's *incanti ad amorem* could be referred to as *strigarie* and some of these women knew a broad range of magical remedies, including techniques for healing and divination.⁴⁵

Trials for love magic had occurred sporadically throughout the late sixteenth century, but their number increased significantly in the 1590s and dramatically after 1598. In that year, the Este Duke was forced by papal military pressure to withdraw from Ferrara to Modena, traditionally the second city of his duchy. As the court and army established themselves in Modena, the new capital attracted *donne di mala vita* from Bologna, Venice and Milan as well as from Ferrara. The Inquisition did not concern itself with the professional status or moral failings of such women, but only with their knowledge of magical spells and charms. Since many of them lived in the same neighbourhood and knew one another, they frequently shared secret formulae among themselves or with others, sometimes for money. Thus a denunciation against one woman could quickly implicate several others, leading to a group trial like that against Margarita Chiappona and seven other women in 1593 and 1594.⁴⁶

The eight prostitutes tried in 1593-4 knew scores of devices to induce passion in another person. Many of their love charms called on the saints, including San Daniello and Santa Elena, but also on the Holy Spirit, and required the use of blessed candles or other religious apparatus in order to work. The *oratione di Santa Marta*,

confiscated from Margarita Chiappona, was 'to be said kneeling and fasting for nine mornings with nine Pater Nosters, nine Ave Marias, to the praise and reverence of Santa Marta that she might fulfil what is asked of her'. This prayer makes its requests in highly vivid and physical language.

O Blessed Martha, for love of me go to that wood where Our Lord Jesus Christ baptised with his twelve Apostles. . . . Cut three branches of fire and flame and for love of me send them to the heart of N.N. Send them through the veins of the heart, of the head, of the lungs, through the marrow of the bones, the flesh of the legs, with such love that it beats and scourges, so that for my love he should suffer incessantly. . . . For love of me, take away from him drink, food, sleep, power that he might not go or stay, nor ride nor drive nor walk, nor have relations with any woman, until he should come to me to satisfy all my desire and do all that which I will ask of him.⁴⁷

Such a 'prayer' was clearly superstitious in theological terms, since it employed an orthodox, novena-like format to invoke the aid of a saint for the inappropriate goal of leading someone into a sinful relationship against his own free will. Moranda da Fanano's abjuration states the orthodox position: 'the saints should not be invoked for the purpose of helping and giving strength to commit sins'.⁴⁸

Assistance was also sought closer to home from priests, whose ritual expertise was central to a variety of love charms. Some of these operated without the priests' knowledge, as people hid objects or pieces of paper containing magical formulae (*brevi*) under the altar cloth so that masses would be recited over them. Another common procedure required taking a shoelace (*stringa*) belonging to the desired person to mass; when the priest turned towards the congregation to say 'Dominus vobiscum', a knot was to be tied in the shoelace while saying: 'I am not tying you, stringa, but the heart of you, N.N., so that you can go to no one but me.'⁴⁹ This and similar covert activities attempted to draw on the liturgical power of the mass by reciting formulae that substituted for the priest's own words, diverting their efficacy to magical ends.

Even more alarming to the church hierarchy was the active involvement of priests in the application of orthodox ceremonies to superstitious purposes. Inquisition trials document the fact that, unlike the *capellano* of San Pietro who turned in Antonia Vignola's

handwritten prayer to the Inquisition, some priests agreed to perform masses over magical objects, while others participated in baptisms with similar goals. Camilla Baclara's accusers alleged in 1533 that with the aid of a more co-operative priest, she had managed to have 15 masses said over the *noce moscato* used in preparing the potion she gave to Giovanni Batista de Capelli.⁵⁰ The baptisms were usually reserved for magnets, since it was popularly believed that a magnet (*calamita bianca*) baptised with a given person's name would have the power to draw that person irresistibly to the possessor of the magnet. Antonia Vignola possessed a ring containing such a *calamita*; unsure whether to consider the magnet's alleged attractive properties as natural or magical, the court summoned an expert witness, the goldsmith Magister Pompeo Travis, to testify on the matter,

I: Whether he knows if the stone vernacularly called *calamita* can be put to use to perform acts of *maleficium*.

R: It is commonly held [*per publica fama*] that *calamita bianca* can be used for amatory incantations by touching a person's skin with the magnet. However, *calamita* does not have this power unless it is baptised or enchanted [*incantata*] by holy things.⁵¹

As a result of this belief, priests were sought after to perform clearly unorthodox baptismal ceremonies for these objects, complete with godparents, holy oils and ritual vestments. In several cases, priests undertook this procedure on their own initiative, with the intent to use the magnets for their private amorous pursuits. Indeed, the case of Fra Costanzo is something of an exception; more priests turn up in the trial records as users of love magic than as its victims.⁵²

Although clerical defendants knew their magical activities were illicit, lay defendants commonly asserted, like Antonia Vignola in 1564, that their spells and charms, having love as their goal, were 'good things'. But this defence was undermined by the very nature of the enterprise. Love magic aimed at power and control over another person's feelings and actions; to that end it threatened symbolic and physical distress. The *oratione di Santa Marta*, for example, asked that its victim should 'suffer incessantly' and be deprived of 'drink, food, sleep, power' until he complied with the desires of the *incantatrice*. It is not surprising that persons who suspected themselves to be objects of attempted spells should experience extreme physical symptoms like those reported in the case of

Conclusion

The comparatively mild character of witch trials in Italy has been commented upon by observers from the sixteenth century to the present. In his sceptical treatment of witch beliefs, *De praestigiis daemonum* (1566), Johann Weyer noted the Bolognese practice of whipping and exiling witches rather than executing them as an example of a more enlightened approach than that prevailing in northern Europe. Contemporaries were also aware that this relative leniency was associated with the Inquisition. Paolo Sarpi recorded the Venetian Grand Council's order that maleficial witchcraft 'be punished by the magistrates, because the ecclesiastical penalties are insufficient chastisement for such great wickedness'.⁶² Henry Charles Lea and others have since singled out the *Instructio pro formandis processibus in causis strigum, sortilegiorum et maleficiorum* (*Instructions for trying cases against witches, sorcerers and those who perform maleficia*), drawn up by the Holy Office in Rome and circulated in manuscript form from the 1620s on, as a crucial document in the seventeenth-century effort to curb the murderous excesses of witch trials by procedural reform.⁶³

However, John Tedeschi has recently argued that this view incorrectly presents the *Instructio* as a radical innovation. Rather, he states, the '*Instructio*, by and large, was not enunciating new legal doctrines . . . but restating longstanding Roman theory and practice'.⁶⁴ The evidence presented here from Modenese trial records of the late sixteenth century clearly supports Tedeschi's argument that the moderating procedural recommendations associated with the *Instructio* were standard practice in the local offices of the Roman Inquisition well before 1620.

A passage in the *Instructio* frequently pointed out as a crucial innovation warns judges that

when a woman is convicted of or confesses to having performed incantations or maleficia in order to heal or for any other purpose, it does not however necessarily follow that she is a formal witch, since the sorcery [*sortilegio*] can be performed without formal apostasy to the Demon.⁶⁵

Modenese trials in the 1590s against persons using magical remedies clearly conform to this model, for they do not treat the accused as formally allied with demons, except in those cases where explicit invocation of the demon is in fact present, usually in the love charms

of prostitutes, but also in a few cases of learned magic against literate men.⁶⁶ Moreover, the most extreme penalty exacted in these trials (whipping and exile) is a moderate one by contemporary European standards.

The fourteenth- and fifteenth-century fusion of concepts of magic, diabolism and heresy into the *crimen exceptum* of witchcraft was at least partially unravelled in these sixteenth-century Italian trials, as the category of 'superstition' was separated out and became the dominant theme in the Catholic campaign against popular magic.⁶⁷ Even the efficacy of invoking demons was questioned by Inquisitors and theologians committed to the doctrine of free will, so that persons who did address themselves to the devil were prosecuted for their intent, not for having achieved their goals with his aid. In Eugenia Claveria's abjuration before her exile in 1559, she accepted the court's recommendation that she 'leave off these superstitions through which God is offended; nor do you obtain through such evil means what you desire'.⁶⁸ This essentially sceptical attitude towards the efficacy of demonical assistance separates the Italian trials on epistemological grounds from the contemporary witch trials in northern Europe. The distinctive moderation of the Catholic approach to the repression of magical beliefs stems from its de-emphasis of the diabolical source of magical effects, and its treatment of such beliefs in a quasi-sceptical way as characteristic of simple and uneducated people, to whom the church simultaneously offered a wide assortment of orthodox, ecclesiastically administered remedies for the religious relief of everyday misfortune.

Notes

1. Peter Burk, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Harper & Row, New York, 1978), p. 208. Some of these works are reviewed by Natalie Zemon Davis, 'From "Popular Religion" to Religious Cultures', in Steven Ozment (ed.), *Reformation Europe: A Guide to Research* (Center for Reformation Research, St Louis, Mo, 1982), pp. 321-42.

2. The Lutheran parish visitations are studied by Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: The Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Md, 1978). The varied functions of the consistory in the Scottish Reformation emerge in Christian Lerner, *Enemies of God: The Witch-hunt in Scotland* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Md, 1981).

Historical literature on the Catholic Reform movement has been surveyed by John O'Malley, 'Catholic Reform', in Ozment (ed.), *Reformation Europe*, and earlier by Eric Cochrane, 'New Light on Post-Tridentine

Italy: A Note on Recent Counter-Reformation Scholarship', *Catholic Historical Review*, 56 (1970), pp. 291-319.

The literature on popular religion is reviewed by Natalie Zemon Davis in 'Some Tasks and Themes in the Study of Popular Religion', in Charles Trinkhaus and Heiko Oberman (eds), *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion* (E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1974), pp. 307-16, and also in her essay 'From "Popular Religion" to Religious Cultures,' in Ozment (ed.), *Reformation Europe*, pp. 321-42.

3. Jean Delumeau, 'Les réformateurs et la superstition', *Actes du colloque L'Amiral de Coligny et son temps* (Société de l'histoire du Protestantisme Française, Paris, 1974), pp. 451-87. For a survey of the changing historical meanings of this term, see Mary R. O'Neill, 'Superstition', in Mircea Eliade (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion* (Macmillan, New York, forthcoming 1986).

4. Gian Matteo Giberti, 'Exhortation to be made by pastors to the people to rid themselves of superstitions', *Constitutiones Gibertinae*, Book IV, Chapter 29, Verona, 1542, in John C. Olin (ed.), *The Catholic Reformation: Savonarola to Ignatius Loyola* (Harper & Row, New York, 1969), pp. 133-48. Council of Trent, Twenty-second session, 'Decree concerning the things to be observed and avoided in the celebration of Mass', in Henry Joseph Schroeder, O.P. (ed.), *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (B. Herder, St Louis, Mo, 1941), pp. 150-2.

5. Martino de Arles, *Tractatus de superstitionibus* (Vincetium Luchinum, Rome, 1559) p. 354. Thomas Aquinas defined superstition as 'the vice opposed to the virtue of religion by means of excess . . . because it offers divine worship either to whom it ought not, or in a manner it ought not'; *Summa Theologica*, II-II, question 92, article 1 (3 vols, Benziger, New York, 1947), vol. 2, p. 1592. Theologians regarded magical activities as a form of homage to the devil, on the theory that recourse to such presumptively diabolical techniques implied an acknowledgement of the devil's power.

6. The evolution of the orthodox polemic against magic is the subject of Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch and the Law* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1978). For Renaissance theories of 'natural magic', D.P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (Warburg Institute, London, 1958).

The extension of Inquisitorial jurisdiction to cases of magic is discussed by Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: Their Foundations in Popular and Learned Culture, 1300-1500* (University of California Press, Berkeley, Calif., 1976), and by Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch Hunt* (New American Library, New York, 1975). See also the note concerning this issue by Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, English translation by John and Anne Tedeschi (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Md, 1983), p. 177, n. 31.

7. The repression of superstition by the Mediterranean Inquisitions is surveyed by E. William Monter, *Ritual, Myth and Magic in Early Modern Europe* (Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio, 1984), pp. 61-77. The trials in Modena are studied in Mary R. O'Neill, 'Discerning Superstition: Popular Errors and Orthodox Response in Late Sixteenth Century Italy,' unpublished PhD thesis, Stanford University, 1982.

8. This procedure is described in numerous trials; see for example the trial of April 1601, *Contra Sanctam de Ferrariis de Sancto Felice diocesis Mutinensis, dictam la Munchina o la Storta*, Archivio di Stato di Modena (hereafter ASM), *Inquisizione*, busta 15.

9. In Spain, the Suprema's centralised control of all Inquisition proceedings and the doubts of some inquisitors about the physical possibility of witchcraft accusations combined to bring a complete halt to witch trials by the early seventeenth century. These developments have been studied by Gustav Henningsen, *The Witch's Advocate: Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition, 1609-1614* (University of Nevada Press, Reno, Nev., 1980). As will be seen below, a similar pattern applied in Italy, although because of the dispersal of the Roman Inquisition records, it is less well documented than the Spanish case. See John A. Tedeschi, 'La dispersione degli archivi della Inquisizione romana', *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa*, 9 (1973), pp. 298-312, and 'Preliminary Observations on Writing a History of the Roman Inquisition', in F. Church and T. George (eds), *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History* (E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1979), pp. 232-49.

10. Protestant campaigns against 'ecclesiastical magic' in England and Germany are described by Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Scribners, New York, 1971) and by Gerald Strauss, 'Success and failure in the German Reformation', *Past and Present*, 67 (1975), pp. 30-63, both of whom stress the tendency of the peasantry to maintain their magical beliefs despite learned Protestant condemnation.

11. William Christian, Jr, *Local Religion in Sixteenth Century Spain* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1981).

12. For the list of the *medicine ecclesiastiche*, see Girolamo Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcista e possibilità delle mirabili e stupdende operatoni delli demoni e dei malefici con i rimedii opportuni all'infirmità maleficiali* (Giovanni Rossi, Bologna, 1578), p. 253.

13. The conflict between orthodox and superstitious remedies is the topic of Mary R. O'Neil, 'Sacerdote ovvero strione: Ecclesiastical and Superstitious Remedies in Late Sixteenth Century Italy', in Steven L. Kaplan (ed.), *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Mouton, Berlin and New York, 1984), pp. 53-84. This article also considers the impact of Menghi's exorcist writings on the practice of exorcism by the lower clergy.

14. See, for example, the recommendation made in 1577 to the curates of Bologna by the annual congregation of parish priests meeting under episcopal auspices:

They should seek to collect all the superstitions, incantations, and hand-written prayers or charms, worn or carried on one's person (*brevi da portar adosso*), which contain superstitious words, unapproved names and similar abuses. Even if they do not appear to be evil, they should be collected and notice given of them, for it is planned that a small book warning of these matters should be compiled.

This decree is quoted in Cleto Corrao and Pier-Luigi Zampini (eds), *Documenti etnografici e folkloristici nei sinodi diocesani italiani* (Forni, Bologna, 1970), p. 36.

15. See however on this topic, Carlo Ginzburg, 'Folklore, magia, religione', in *Storia d'Italia*, vol. 1, *I crateri originali*, ed. Ruggiero Romano and Corrado Vivanti (Einaudi, Turin, 1972), pp. 603-76. A highly effective reconstruction of the assumptions and *mentalité* underlying a Friulian peasant incantation is provided by Luisa Accati, 'Lo spirito della fornicazione: virt' dell'anima e virt' del corpo in Friuli, fra 1600 e 1700', in Carlo Ginzburg (ed.), *Religione delle classi popolari*, special number of *Quaderni storici*, 41 (1979), pp. 644-72.

16. For example, see the *oratione di Santa Marta*, quoted below (n. 50), which included the following instructions: 'This prayer is to be said kneeling and fasting for nine mornings with nine Pater Nosters, nine Ave Marias, to the praise and reverence of Santa Marta, that she might fulfil what is asked of her.' The printed text of this prayer in included in the trial of a printer's assistant who did the printing at the request of a Modenese prostitute; Contra Thomaso Zanola detto il Cadorino, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 10, 1597.

17. Aviso della Santa Inquisizione di Bologna, 4 March 1636, Biblioteca Comunale di Bologna (BCB), MS B1891, fo. 119. It is clear from trial testimony referring to similar edicts that they had been issued from at least the 1580s.

18. These statistics are drawn from my PhD thesis, O'Neil 'Discerning Superstition', Table 1, p. 46.

19. However, this success may have been a short-term phenomenon. Trials for superstitious healing decline by the mid-seventeenth century, but the survival of 'signing' techniques in the twentieth century in rural areas around Modena and Bologna indicates that such methods were never totally suppressed.

20. Trial of Fra Girolamo Azzolini, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 10, 1599.

21. For these statistics, see my article, 'Sacerdote ovvero strione', p. 56.

22. Trial of Antonio Coreggi, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 9, 1595. Subsequent quotations are from the same trial.

23. The custom of healing by passing a child through a fissure cut in a tree has been documented in many areas of Europe. See Wayland D. Hand, 'Passing Through: Folk Medical Magic and Symbolism', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 112 (1968), pp. 379-402.

24. For a similar concept of sin among fourteenth-century French peasants, see E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou* (Braziller, New York, 1978), pp. 327ff.

25. Sentence of Antonio Coreggi, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 9, October 1595.

26. For bibliography on the comparative history of European witch beliefs and witch trials, see H.C. Erik Midelfort, 'Witchcraft, Magic and the Occult', in Ozment (ed.), *Reformation Europe*, pp. 183-210.

27. The centrality of begging in the genesis of English witchcraft accusations has been demonstrated by Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 502-69.

28. Trial of Diamante de Bisa delli Axcari della Mota, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 9, 1595. Subsequent quotations are from this same trial.

29. A person's general reputation in a village or neighbourhood (*publica voce et fama*) was admissible as evidence under inquisitorial procedure, but

as Diamante's trial shows, it was not necessarily a decisive factor in the court's deliberations.

30. Sentence of Diamante de Bisa, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 9, 9 October 1599.

31. Denunciation of Maria Mariani, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 7, 1579.

32. *Ibid.*, testimony of Andreas di Saviolis.

33. Penalties for blasphemy escalated according to the number of times a man had been accused; incorrigible habitual blasphemers were whipped through the streets or in the piazza and in some cases exiled from the city of Modena for a period of years.

34. See for instance the 'Calendar of Witch Trials' for the period 1300 to 1500 in Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: Their Foundations in Learned and Popular Culture, 1300-1500* (University of California Press, Berkeley, Calif., 1976), pp. 106-47.

35. Richard A. Horsely, 'Who Were the Witches? The Social Roles of the Accused in the European Witch Trials', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 9 (1979), pp. 698-715.

36. Contra Moranda da Fanano, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 11, sentence of 3 March 1602.

37. A good example of an inquisitor applying his theological skills on predoctrinal popular beliefs is Bartolomeo da Spina's treatment, in his *Quaestio de strigibus*, of a Modenese myth about the ability of witches to reconstruct cattle they consumed at feasts from the leftover skin and bones; see Maurizio Bertolotti, 'Le ossa e la pelle dei buoi', *Quaderni storici*, 41 (1979), pp. 470-99.

38. This is similar to the level of scepticism of the tenth-century Canon *Episcopi*; it denies the possibility of night flying, but condemns as apostates the women who believe they go flying at night with Diana; their real crime is believing 'there is anything of power except the one God'. The Canon *episcopi* is translated in Alan C. Kors and Edward Peters (eds), *Witchcraft in Europe, 1100-1700: A Documentary History* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1972), pp. 28-31.

39. Uliva La Grassa testified as follows on 4 January 1594:

I: Whether she believed this superstition could prevent a man from having relations with another woman than herself and whether it was effective.

R: I believed it because I was led to believe it, but the effect did not follow. (Contra Margarita Chiappaona et al., ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 8)

40. Margarita Chiappaona, for example, stressed that she used love charms to earn money:

I: Whether she placed faith in the performance of those prayers.

R: I did not believe that the prayer could force either Christ or the Virgin, but I did it out of poverty. (Contra Margarita Chiappaona et al., ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 8, testimony of 22 January, 1594)

41. For example, a prostitute named Teodora Brualdo was accused of having 'done certain things to force Signor Egidio Rangone to come to

her by means of the pignate', a familiar local charm; Contra Margarita Chiappona et al., ASM, *Inquisizione* busta 8, 1593-4, testimony of Caterina Scorana. The Rangone were the most powerful family in Modena, second only to the Este.

42. Contra Camillam Baclaram, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 3, 1553.

43. Contra la Burantinazza, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 10, testimony of 19 April 1599.

44. Fernando de Rojas's *La Celestina* was published in 1499; Julio Caro Baroja, *The World of the Witches* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1964), pp. 101-2.

45. Moranda da Fanano's accuser, for one, referred to her love magic as *strigarie*, and Margarita Chiappona knew an eclectic assortment of remedies of every sort, not just love magic. However, the focus of the 1593-4 trial against her and other prostitutes was their professional use of love charms.

46. Contra Margarita Chiappona et al., ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 8, 1593-4. The other women tried were Ludovica de Buzalis, Uliva La Grassa, Pulissena de Bonzelis, Barbara Grafagnina, Pasqua Mutinensa, Francesca Ronandila and Lucretia Chardor. A related but separate trial was conducted against another prostitute, Caterina Scorana, in 1594.

47. The *oratione di Santa Marta* was mentioned by many of the prostitutes tried for love magic. The version dictated by Margarita Chiappona to a printer's assistant is preserved in printed form in the trials of Thomas Zanola, il Cadorino, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 10, 1597. It is very unusual to find a printed love charm of this sort; the vast majority of those surviving were handwritten or recited from memory during a trial.

48. Contra Moranda da Fanano, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 11, 1600.

49. Contra Isabetta, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 8, 1594. This is a clear example of a sympathetic magical procedure, where the shoelace represents the person on whom the charm is to work. The general concepts underlying magical beliefs are discussed by Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic* (Norton, New York, 1972).

50. Contra Camilla Baclara, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 3, 1553.

51. Contra Antonia Vignola, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 3, 1564, testimony of Magister Pompeo Travis, aurifex.

52. For example, trials were conducted against the Carmelite Alessandro Contines for possession of written incantations in 1583, against Don Gian Batista of Cathedral Church for baptising a magnet in 1584, against the Capuchin Fra Francesco Ippolito for *parole ad amorem* in 1589, and a group trial against Don Pietro de Martinelli, Don Bartolomeo da Bologna and Don Camillo Tondi da Stuffiano for baptising a magnet in 1598; see ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 8 and 9 for these trials.

53. In his article 'Who Were the Witches?' Richard Horsely accepts the definition of 'good magic' as good from the perspective of the person using it; from the broader perspective of the society within which all witch beliefs operated, the inadequacy of such a definition is clear. However, Horsely is correct to stress the fact that different types of accusations (e.g. magical healing versus love magic) reflect different sociological conditions.

54. Contra Margarita Chiappona et al., ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 8,

testimony of Francesco Villano, 19 January 1594.

55. The traditional attribution of male impotence to witchcraft was given scholastic approbation by Thomas Aquinas, Quodlibet XI, Quaestio IX, Article X, 'Utrum maleficia impediunt matrimonium', *Opera omnia* (26 vols, Petri Ficcadori, Parma, 1859), vol. 9, p. 618. The *locus classicus* on the topic is Heinrich Kramer and Jakob Sprenger, 'Whether witches can hebetate the powers of generation or obstruct the veneral act', *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486), Part I, Question 8 (Dover, New York, 1971), pp. 54-8.

56. Contra Caterina Scorana, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 8, 1594.

57. Bronislaw Malinowski's description of magic as embodying the 'sublime folly of hope' is applicable here:

Man, engaged in a series of practical activities, comes to a gap. . . . Forsaken by his knowledge, baffled by his past experience and by his technical skill, he realizes his impotence. Yet his desire grips him only the more strongly. . . . Obsessed by the idea of the desired end, he sees it and feels it. . . . [Thus he] forecasts the images of the wished for results . . . breaking out into words which give vent to desire and anticipate its end. (*Magic, Science and Religion* (Anchor, New York, 1954), pp. 79-80)

58. Contra Moranda da Fanano, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 11, 3 March 1603.

59. Contra Magdalena da Ferra, 1552, and Contra Brasilio Brasigella, 1560; ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 3.

60. Contra Eugenia Claveria, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 10, 1599. The subsequent quotation is also from this trial.

61. Upper-class women who dabbled in love magic were sometimes called as witnesses against their clerical and lower-class collaborators, but not tried themselves. Thus Madonna Costanza Superechio, wife of a *citadino modenese*, testified against the priest whom she had induced to baptise a magnet for her use in thwarting her husband's extramarital affairs; the priest was tried on these charges, but she was not. Contra Don Gian Battista, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 8, 1584.

62. Johann Weyer, *De Praestigiis Daemonum*, Book VI, Chapter 21 (Amsterdam, 1660), passage cited by H.C. Lea, *Materials Towards a History of Witchcraft* (3 vols, Thomas Yoseloff, New York, 1957), vol. 3, pp. 1073-4; Paolo Sarpi, *Historia della Sacra Inquisizione* (Fabbio Albicocco, Serravalle, 1638), p. 63.

63. A summary of the contents of the *Instructio* is given by Lea, *Materials Towards a History of Witchcraft*, vol. 2, pp. 950-66.

64. John A. Tedeschi, 'The Roman Inquisition and Witchcraft: An Early Seventeenth Century Instruction on Correct Trial Procedure', *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 200, fasc. 2 (April-June 1983), p. 185.

65. The *Instructio* was first published in the 1625 edition of the Inquisitorial manual from which this quotation is taken; Eliseo Masini, *Sacro Arsenal e overo Pratica dell'Officio della S. Inquisizione ampliata* (Corbelletti, Rome, 1639), p. 178, Tedeschi, 'Roman Inquisition', discusses the publishing history of the *Instructio* and the controversy surrounding its authorship.

66. For example, the trial of Basilio Brasigella, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 3, 1560.

67. The fusion of these concepts is described by Peters, *The Magician, the Witch and the Law*. The attack on popular magic in the Hapsburg lands is discussed by R.J.W. Evans, *The Making of the Hapsburg Monarchy* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1979), pp. 381-418.

68. Contra Eugenia Claveria, ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 10, 1599.