Religion and the People, 800–1700

Edited by
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The University of North Carolina Press
Chapel Hill 1979

Published under the auspices of the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies, Princeton University
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." 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."  

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. Here, as elsewhere, the trial judges—whose mentality has been the object of considerable study—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
The scope of Whiggishness in the Southern Catholic Low Countries

from the Frisian to the Friesian Continents

The Cambrics and the French Hainaut were what is today the

The modern boundary of France and Belgium

Robert Muthemberd
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 Cambresis, 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 repress 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-
but once the case had come to trial, the man always had less chance of
defeating. Women were accused of witchcraft for every one man.

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

The second important phase of persecution from 1640 to 1660

Victims, especially in the whole region,
Table 1. Defendants in the North of France, 1371–1783

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th></th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1351–1400</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1401–1450</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1451–1500</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1501–1550</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1551–1600</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1601–1650</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1651–1700</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1701–1790</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals and average percentages</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The inclusion of the Arras Waldensians in the statistics for this period would result in completely atypical data—59 percent women, 42 percent men (and 9 percent undetermined)—whereas even in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the statistics reflect an unusually small number of cases documented, the percentage of male defendants never exceeded the females (Arras: chef-lieu du 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. 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.”

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, 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. This bizarre sacrifice of women, and of men and children as well, 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.
The Witches of the Cambrius

Witches and Witches in the Cambrius

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Expected</th>
<th>Exact</th>
<th>Found</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Which Witches and the Numbers They Registered 1595-1600.
rum," is 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 Cambresis 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 Reyné Percheval, widow of Estienne Billet,\(^{57}\) 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 Wattelier, a thatcher, thirty

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**Table 4: Witchcraft at Bazuel, 1599–1607**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
<th>References (ADN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2–13 Sept.</td>
<td>Reyné Percheval,</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Widowed of Estienne Billet</td>
<td>Born in Baz, lived</td>
<td>8 H 312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Sept.</td>
<td>widow of Estienne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tortured</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Sept.</td>
<td>Billet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 July</td>
<td>Alphagonde de Rue,</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Widow of Oliver Courto</td>
<td>Accused by above,</td>
<td>8 H 312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Aug.</td>
<td>widow of Olivier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lived 161</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Aug.</td>
<td>Courto</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Jan.</td>
<td>Marie Lantcheni,</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Widow of Jean de Vaucl</td>
<td>Released</td>
<td>8 H 312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 March</td>
<td>widow of Jean de</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–21 Mar.</td>
<td>Marie Lantcheni,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–21 Mar.</td>
<td>widow of Jean de Vaucl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–19 July</td>
<td>Paquette Barre,</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Wife of Jacques Pierre</td>
<td>Released</td>
<td>8 H 312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–19 July</td>
<td>widow of Jacques Pierre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–19 July</td>
<td>Paquette Barre,</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Widow of Jacques Pierre</td>
<td>Released</td>
<td>8 H 312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–19 July</td>
<td>second accusation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{50}\) R. Baudouin, "Scandale dans le Nord," p. 46, who has wrongly stated that she was acquitted.

\(^{51}\) Id., ch. 6, line 2.

\(^{52}\) Id., ch. 6, line 46.

\(^{53}\) Id., ch. 6, line 1.

\(^{54}\) Id., ch. 6, line 1.

\(^{55}\) Id., ch. 6, line 1.

\(^{56}\) Id., ch. 6, line 1.

\(^{57}\) R. Baudouin, "Scandale dans le Nord," p. 46, who has wrongly stated that she was acquitted.

\(^{58}\) Id., ch. 6, line 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Profession or status</th>
<th>Charges brought by the witnesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1599, against Reyne Percheval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Wattelier</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Thatcher at Bazuel</td>
<td>Death of one of his cows; accused the defendant of witchcraft to her son-in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicolas Bridoux</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Weaver (mulquinier) at Bazuel</td>
<td>Death of his daughter Marye, the granddaughter of the defendant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Lenain</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Alderman of Bazuel</td>
<td>Confirms the preceding testimony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georges Clocquetté</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sergeant of the town of Le Cateau</td>
<td>Tries to make the witch confess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurence Maugheri, widow of Denys Wattelier</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td>Illness of Jean Parmentier's family; a Waldensian kept company with the witch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Parmentier</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Alderman of Bazuel</td>
<td>Confirms the preceding, birth of a skinless calf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Morut</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Sergeant of Bazuel</td>
<td>Death of one of his cows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magdelaine Morut, widow of Jean Gillart</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Daughter of the above</td>
<td>Confirms her father's testimony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrieu Doyen</td>
<td></td>
<td>Carlier at Landrecies</td>
<td>Death of two horses belonging to one of his tenants, Gérard de Briatte, a neighbor of the defendant, to whom he rented a house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gérard de Briatte</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Innkeeper at Landrecies</td>
<td>Confirms the above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacqueline Bourguignon, wife of Jean Debonnaire</td>
<td></td>
<td>Husband: butcher at Landrecies</td>
<td>Strange illness of her daughter, aged 8–9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margheritee, widow of Andrieu Florent</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Hostess at Landrecies</td>
<td>A stranger to her, in her house, accused the defendant of being &quot;a caroise carrion witch&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1601, against Aldegonde de Rue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tussaint Leaige</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Unmarried, from Bazuel (?)</td>
<td>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 &quot;any temptation or vision&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie Bourguignon, wife of Claude Canoisse</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Husband: bourgeois of Le Cateau</td>
<td>An Italian soldier, in her house, had accused the defendant of being a witch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grégoire Florut and Anthoinette Warocquier, his wife</td>
<td></td>
<td>Censier (rich tenant farmer) at Bazuel</td>
<td>One of his horses died as though in a fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1621, against Marie Lanechin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicolas Deramp</td>
<td></td>
<td>Weaver's employee (mulquinier) in the lodgings of Mathieu Hennocq, at Bazuel</td>
<td>Death of a tenant farmer (censier) 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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrieu Deramp</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Inhabitant of Bazuel</td>
<td>Confirms his illness and notes that he had to be exorcised two times by the dean of Bazuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Cauchy (Cauchie)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Villein of Bazuel</td>
<td>Death of his wife and of a young infant still nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Leclercq, wife of Mathieu Hennocq</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inhabitant of Bazuel</td>
<td>Death of her daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrieu de Braibant</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Shepherd at Bazuel</td>
<td>He saw the witch dance, hair disheveled, near a wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antoine Nicaise</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Day laborer at Bazuel</td>
<td>He saw her once, at daybreak, &quot;all disheveled and wild-haired&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13 July 1627

Died of two negroes belonging to him
Death of one of his children followed by others.
Death of her husband

Her husband, the accused, had been bewitched.

Phillis Waterman

Jean Pequoter

Barett

Francisco de Almeida or Mendonça

Phillis Waterman's Widow of Captain Bevard

Nicolas D'Avences

Catharine Rutter

Francisco Rutter

Mathew Fennouc

Chiromaffe Aramie

Nicolas Canche

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Charges brought by the witnesses

Age

Profession or status

Name

---
The Witches of the Campbells

Chapter 1

The Nephew of the Devil

In the year 1691, the witch trials in Scotland began. The town of Knapdale was at the center of the trials, and many innocent people were accused of witchcraft. The trials were led by the infamous Judge Robert Crichton, who was known for his brutal and cruel methods. Many of the accused were tortured and forced to confess to crimes they did not commit. The trials lasted for several years, and many lives were lost. The witch trials in Knapdale were a dark chapter in Scottish history, and the memory of the innocent victims lives on to this day.
who had had sexual relations with the accused. He knew her as Marghot, and, after persuading her to renounce her “crism 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, 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 Bazué 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 Bazué 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.” 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 although it is sometimes contaminated by exposure to the judges’ point of view, as in the case of the shepherd of Bazué, 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 Bazué.

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 Bazué trials, which I have described in Table 5, twenty-four citizens of Bazué, four from Landrecies, and two from Le Cateau 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 Bazué fell. 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, 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 Lanchevin, in 1621, brought a charge against Nicolas Deray, 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 Bazué 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 Bazué. 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
The Witches of the Campbells 1796-1827

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>Jean Treadhart</td>
<td>Warden Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>Jean Treadhart</td>
<td>Warden Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>Jean Treadhart</td>
<td>Warden Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Jean Treadhart</td>
<td>Warden Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Jean Treadhart</td>
<td>Warden Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>Jean Treadhart</td>
<td>Warden Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>Jean Treadhart</td>
<td>Warden Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Jean Treadhart</td>
<td>Warden Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>Jean Treadhart</td>
<td>Warden Worker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Birthday Witches and Alterman of Bawley 1799-1827

The Witches of the Campbells / 49
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 Bazouz can be considered "children of want." But were they really "rebels against society"? It seems to me, rather, that their role was a passive one, that they formed a fixed point for all 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 (1669–49), as well as other isolated cases in the Cambresis, 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 growling 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. In short, Marie Cornu, a domestic servant, seems to have been a child of poverty.

In 1620, at Crespin, Cécile Béurrière, 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." In 1637, at an investigation at Campeau concerning the children of Mathias Bourie, a laborer (a prosperous cultivator, with his own horses), involved the testimony of eight witnesses: two laborers (aged thirty-five and forty), two widows (both sixty), the mayor (seventy-one), a former mayor (forty-three), an innkeeper and laborer (thirty-four),

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (beginning and end of trials)</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of Witnesses</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>References (ADN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26 August–31 October 1650</td>
<td>Strangled and burned</td>
<td>Born at Rue; mother died in prison for witchcraft; two of her daughters are accused of bewitching Marie Cornu.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Marie Cornu, unmarried</td>
<td>B 1316; 17; 1761–5; 1769-11-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 May–8 July 1652</td>
<td>Banned</td>
<td>Sister of the above; says she is bewitched.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Marie de Bour,</td>
<td>B 1316; 17; 1761–5; 1769-11-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 May–1652</td>
<td>Banned</td>
<td>Man of Rue killed.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Marie Héroux, widow of Jacques de Bour</td>
<td>B 1316; 17; 1761–5; 1769-11-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–8 July 1652</td>
<td>Strangled and burned</td>
<td>Mother of the two preceding</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Anne Combeaux, unmarried</td>
<td>B 1316; 17; 1761–5; 1769-11-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 May–10 July 1652</td>
<td>Strangled and burned</td>
<td>Born at Quins and resident of Rieux for 28 years; sister of the above</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Susanne Goudet, unmarried</td>
<td>B 1316; 17; 1761–5; 1769-11-11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Ch. 9, rule 37 of the Parliament of Douai.

b. Belgium, province of Flanders.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (beginning and end of trials)</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of Witnesses</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
<th>References (ADN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 December 1609—7 January 1611</td>
<td>Jehanne de Moncheur, wife of Luc Maisne</td>
<td></td>
<td>“several” mentioned in Dec. 1610 (+1 in 1609)</td>
<td>Gave birth in prison, which delayed the trial; tortured</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Executed</td>
<td>7 G 782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1623</td>
<td>Catherine Salmon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tortured</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Executed by fire</td>
<td>7 G 783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1623</td>
<td>Barbe Salmon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sister of the above</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Banished</td>
<td>7 G 783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 October—20 November 1623</td>
<td>Colette Jardet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Denounced by Catherine Salmon; tortured</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Executed by fire</td>
<td>7 G 783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 October—20 November 1623</td>
<td>Crespin Piazeau</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>Son of Catherine Salmon; tortured</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Executed by fire</td>
<td>7 G 783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 October—20 November 1623</td>
<td>Simon Dupas</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>(incl. 9 from Cambrai)</td>
<td>Son of Colette Jardet; tortured</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Executed</td>
<td>7 G 783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 November—15 December 1623</td>
<td>Péronne Desgardins</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tortured</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Executed</td>
<td>7 G 783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 October—14 December 1623</td>
<td>Catherine Leleu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tortured</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Executed</td>
<td>7 G 783</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 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 |
| 1623 (?))                         | Marie Delattre                  | 10 | - 1 others          | Tortured | F | Executed by fire | 7 G 783 |
|                                   | Géry de Haynin                  |     |                     | Fugitive | F | Banished forever | 7 G 783 |
| Before 15 November 1623—1 March 1624 | Jehanne Flauveu, widow of Loys Dufour | 45 | 6                    | Tortured, 15 November, but will not confess; the judges consult their colleagues in Arras (?) | H.L | Banished forever | 7 G 783 |
| 1624                              | Marie Lemaire, wife of Eloy Léger | 42 | 8                    | Tortured; accused by several already executed | F | Banished forever | 7 G 783 |
| 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 |

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* 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 Flanous,” who is none other than Jehanne Flauveu, 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 vills (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-Gery 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 Micheline and Anthoine Lengrève, whose fate is lost to history. The

thirteen defendants belonged to nine family groups: four members of the Salmon family, Colette Jardet 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 Monchecourt, in 1609, owed her trial to the denunciations of one Charles Fouveau.

If all the cases in the Cambrési 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 alderman'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 Mathies 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 chasms 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
an even more violent form — through rural society, in particular among
the most influential (saniort 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 playing 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 towns-
men and villagers who still believed staunchly in witchcraft and the
powers of the devil.”

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 witch-
craft,” that is, the healing or spell-casting powers of certain individuals.
I have given elsewhere some examples of these rites, but, 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 sev-
eteenth centuries contain fragmentary information about them. The
testimony of Laurence Maugher, during the trial of Reyné 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, 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 Léclain about 1621, 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.” 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 Maugher, 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, 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 cen-
turies, 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), sup-
ports 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
causée 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 hus-
bands return to their wives” and bring faithless wives back to their
hearts. 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.

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 Midsomer
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;

The Witches of the Cambrésis / 253
clergy was now of high quality and that the ecclesiastical authorities zealously visited their districts annually. 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 worshipers, and though in the beginning it seemed to have little effect and had to be renewed in 1608, 1624, 1625, and 1626, there is no doubt that this edict modified the life of the communities little by little. In effect, it channelled the populated 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. 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.”

The witch trials show traces of this organized education. The recorders at 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 villein aged twenty-nine and an unmarried girl of twenty-three. 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. 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 traumaism? 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.” Such books reinforced “the magical mentality 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.

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. 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 mulguinerie 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.” 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
The Witches of the Camps

Robert MacFarland
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. 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 Bazel 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 (mulguinière) developed as a local industry in the second half of the seventeenth century. But weaving had been introduced at Bazel 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.

These scattered references lend credence to the theory that “certain parts of the Cambrésis were converted to linen weaving in the sixteenth century.” In this light, Bazel 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. 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.” 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 Bazel 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 anti-theism 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 discreet silence on this point—that she gave the devil “a hair from her shameful parts.” 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-
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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, 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 Cambrai. 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 Cambrai. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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 Cambrai 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 Cambrai, certain contrasts stand out: ecclesiastical morals charges, which are scant between 1630 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.” 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.” 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.” 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
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Excerpts from an article by Robert Hambidge
priest had become an outsider, overseeing 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-Château 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 rusty, 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 diarrhea... 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.  

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; and during the cholera epidemic of 1832 in France, doctors were accused of poisoning the poor in order to aid the rich. For, in time of epidemic, "the enemy immediately becomes the prisoner." 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 beggars—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 hear 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, hailing 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
The Wishes of the Cambrians

On the vast, open plains of the vast, the Cambrians built their cities and towns. The landscape was dotted with towering buildings, each one a testament to the ingenuity and creativity of the Cambrians. The city of Cambria was a bustling metropolis, with its streets filled with people going about their daily lives.

The Cambrians were known for their unique architecture. Their buildings were made of a material called Cambrianite, which was strong and durable. The city was divided into different districts, each with its own distinct character. The commercial district was the heart of the city, with a constant stream of people andActivity.

The Cambrians were also known for their innovations. They were the first to develop a system of public transportation that used maglev technology. The system was efficient and fast, allowing people to travel quickly and easily between different parts of the city.

The Cambrians were a peaceful people, and their city was free from conflict. They lived in harmony with nature, and their culture was based on the principles of sustainability. The Cambrians believed that it was important to live in balance with the environment, and they worked hard to preserve the natural beauty of their land.

The city of Cambria was a shining example of what could be achieved when people worked together towards a common goal. The Cambrians had created a thriving community that was a model for other cities around the world.
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 denounced 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 imperus 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 Cambré-sis 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 Cambré-sis 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 Cambré-sis 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
The Witch of the Campbells

The other phenomenon of the same period, the best known of which is the French one, involves a mysterious and often terrifying figure known as the "Witch of the Campbells." This entity, known for its ability to cause harm and mischief, is said to possess the power to turn men and women into animals or even spirits. The Witch of the Campbells is often depicted as a woman with long, black hair and piercing eyes, who operates by night and can be summoned by incantations or magical rituals.

The history of the Witch of the Campbells is shrouded in mystery and legend. Some believe that she is a literal witch, while others see her as a symbol of the fear and superstition that characterized the period. Regardless of her origin, the Witch of the Campbells remains a powerful and enduring figure in the lore of the Scottish Highlands.

The story of the Witch of the Campbells is a testament to the enduring power of fear and superstition. Despite the passage of time and the decline of witchcraft as a viable explanation for the supernatural, the legend of the Witch of the Campbells continues to captivate and unsettle those who encounter it. It serves as a reminder of the deep-seated fears and anxieties that lie at the heart of many of our most enduring myths and legends.

The Witch of the Campbells is a quintessential example of the expression of a collective psyche and the power of imagination in shaping our understanding of the world. Her enduring presence in the lore of the Scottish Highlands is a testament to the enduring power of myth and the human tendency to create stories out of the unknown and the unexplained.
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.

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 Kittredge 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 our 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

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¹ This essay was first presented to the Davis Seminar in 1973.

34. Ibid., p. 797.


40. On the activities of the early ministers, see Crew, "A Question of Authority," chap. 2.


43. On the ministers’ early writings, see Crew, "A Question of Authority," chap. 4.


46. Letter of 10 July 1566, Burgh, Life, 2:130.


51. Peter Frarin, An Oration against the Unlawfull Insurrections of the Protestantes of our Time, under Pretence to Reformer Religion (Antwerp, 1566), n.p.


57. Pasquier de la Barre, Mémoires, 2:18, 2:203; van Vaernwijk, quoted in V. Friis, ed., Notes pour servir à l’histoire de l'iconoclasme et des Calvinistes à Gand de 1566 à 1568 (Ghent, 1909), p. 67.

58. Van Vaernwijk, Troubles religieux, 1:75.

59. This took place at Tourna, against a noble whose family had been particularly hated. Van Vaernwijk mentions numerous sepherals turned over, but no mutilation of bodies (ibid., 1:132–35, 1:39).

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. Thirty-five were of unknown origin, twenty-three were artisans or laborers, eighteen were middle class or professionals, forty-three belonged to the Catholic clergy.


64. W. Bax, Het Protestantisme in het bisdom Luik en vooral te Maastricht, 1557–1621 (The Hague, 1941), p. 79.

65. Van Vaernwijk, Troubles religieux, 1:121.


68. Bax, Protestantisme, p. 79.

69. The priest’s testimony is printed in J. van Vloten, Nederlands opstand tegen Spanje (Haarlem, 1862), pp. 170–71.

70. De Coussemaeker, Troubles religieux, 2:217.


72. All classes attended; reports of spies at Valenciennes said that ninety-one trades were represented, as well as merchants, peasants, and others (C. Clark, "An Urban Study during the Revolt of the Netherlands: Valenciennes, 1540–1570," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1972), pp. 81–87.

73. Van Vaernwijk, Troubles religieux, 1:142.

74. H. Q. Jansen, De kerkerzetting in Brugge (Rotterdam, 1886), pp. 49–50.


76. J. Desile, Le Protestantisme dans la seigneurie de St. Amand de 1562 à 1584 (Valenciennes, 1910), p. 125.


80. Van Vaernwijk, Troubles religieux, 1:27.


82. Bax, Protestantisme, p. 128.


84. Van Vaernwijk, Troubles religieux, 1:409, 42.

85. Quoted in Brutel de la Rivière, Het leven van Hermannus Model.

86. Prins, "De Apersche ongunstig op den vooroand van de beeldstorm." Mededelingen van de koninklijke Vlaamse academie voor wetenschappen, letteren en schilder kunsten van Belgie, vol. 8, no. 5.


89. Brochermans, Historie, p. 53.


94. Davis, "Rites of Violence," pp. 61–70.

95. Lagomarsino, "Court Factions." 


Chapter 6

1. Recent bibliographies by H. C. Erik Midelfort, "Recent Witch Hunting Research, Or Where Do We Go From Here?" in Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America 62 (1968): 373–430, and E. William Monter, "The Historiography of European Witchcraft: Progress and Prospects," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 2 (1972): 435–51. Among the best books that have appeared in recent years (or have been recently translated into French) are: Julio Caro Baroja, Les sorcières et leur monde (Paris, 1973); Alan Macfarlane,
period 1371–1708, and there were fifty-three others in the surrounding region of the Douaisis.

37. See Villette’s two articles. The cases at Errouegn, 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. Errouegn: Nord, arr. Avenes-sur-Helpe, canton Sud.

38. For more information concerning this reorganization, see Moreau, Histoire, 513, and supplementary vol. 1, Cartes (Brussels, n.d. [1945]). See also AdrienMichaux, Notice historique sur les circonscriptions ecclesiastiques anciennes et modernes du diocese de Cambrai ... (Avennes et Valenciennes, 1867), p. 8. And André Le Glay, Glossoire toponymique de l’ancien Cambriès ... (Cambrai, 1849).

39. See Brouette, “Sorcellerie.”

40. Balzée—Nord, arr. Cambrai, canton and deanship 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 Glay, Glossoire, p. viii, which attributes to the village the area of 1,170 to 1,533 hectares in the late-nineteenth century. It had 801 inhabitants in 1668.

41. Rieux-en-Cambresis—Nord, arr. Cambrai, canton and deanship of Carnières—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 Cambrais (ibid., p. 11; 78 hectares, 1,955 inhabitants in the mid-nineteenth century). The village numbered 25 families in 1444, 16 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 dispersal or a redistribution of the population; see Navreux, “Expansion,” pp. 269–70, and map on p. 268. Rieux had 1,470 inhabitants in 1668.

42. Fresnes—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 Heun-Lenglet in 1218. Hem-Lenglet was part of the Cambrais (currently: Nord, arr. Cambrai, canton of Cambrai-Ouest). See Le Glay, Glossoire, p. xxx–xxx, xxxv. (In the mid-nineteenth century, Fresnes encompassed a territory of 463 hectares and had 773 inhabitants, as against 485 hectares and 752 inhabitants for Hem-Lenglet. In 1668, these villages had 356 and 377 inhabitants, respectively.)

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

44. Ibid., pp. 145, 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, Restauration, p. 54, who cites Pirenne, Histoire de Belgique, 4: 345, n. 2.

45. See note 32.


47. Ibid., p. 49.

48. Ibid., pp. 142–129.

49. Ibid., p. 143, n. 41; p. 48, n. 1; pp. 51, 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. 1971, cited in Le Monde, 17 Nov. 1972); and Villette, “Sorcellerie à Douai,” p. 149.


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 secular ones, for the latter dealt out harsh punishments because of a lack of "any culture or judicial training.

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


144. Ibid., p. 55, tables; pp. 56–60, 78.

145. Ibid., pp. 59, 80.

146. See the very fine work by Jean-Marie Baheux and Gilles Deregnaucourt, “Affaires de meurtres laiques et ecclésiastiques et mentalités populaires au XVIIe siècle (1654–1706), 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.


150. Ibid., p. 215, map (the archdiocese at that time included fourteen deanships).

151. Ibid., pp. 79, 312.


155. This village atmosphere is briefly but brilliantly traced by Baheux and Deregnaucourt, “Affaires,” pp. 297–315.


159. Ibid., pp. 319–21: for example, in 1618, a Cambrésis curate mortally 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, 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.


165. Ibid., Ancien régime, 144–44.

166. Cité de Tréden, Histoire, p. 32.


173. Ibid., pp. 38, 359.


177. Macfarlane, Witchcraft, pp. 197, 204, makes the same observation for Essex.


179. Ibid., pp. 57–58.


181. One example among many: Madeleine Allard, from Fourmies (Nord, arr. Avesnes-sur-Helpe, canton Tronzo), 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, 3d ser., vol. 39, p. 7).


189. Ibid., p. 186.


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 pauvres.


195. See Bosy, “Contre-Reformation,” p. 70.


Chapter 7


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): 788–824; Marion Starkey, The Devil in Massachusetts