



PROJECT MUSE®

To Accommodate the Earthly Kingdom to Divine Will: Official
and Nonconformist Definitions of Witchcraft in England (ca.
1542–1630)

Agustin Mendez

Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural, Volume
6, Number 2, 2017, pp. 278-309 (Article)

Published by Penn State University Press



➔ For additional information about this article

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/669908>



TO ACCOMMODATE THE EARTHLY KINGDOM TO DIVINE WILL: OFFICIAL AND NONCONFORMIST DEFINITIONS OF WITCHCRAFT IN ENGLAND (CA. 1542–1630)

Agustin Mendez

ABSTRACT

This article compares and contrasts England's first three Witchcraft Acts (1542, 1563, and 1604) with demonological treatises published by English theologians and clerics between 1580 and 1627 with the intention of highlighting the different ways both types of texts defined witches and their actions. This research focuses on cunning folk as healers to emphasize the disparity of interests and aims that underpinned the representation of witchcraft in civil law and religious treatises concerning that issue. I suggest that during Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, discussions about the definition of witchcraft became one of the battlefields where those who thought the English Reformation had achieved its ends and those who propelled a more thorough disciplining of the population to create a godly society collided. I argue that demonological works served, among other purposes, to express grievances about the official religious policy.

KEYWORDS

Witchcraft Acts, demonological works, cunning folk, English Reformation, official religion, nonconformity

INTRODUCTION

The outbreak and development of the Reformation gave birth to profound theological discussions around themes as diverse as sacraments, salvation, liturgy, priesthood, and the nature of the relation between humanity and God. This scrutiny over the foundations of Christianity also reached the figure of the Devil, although not immediately. In the 1580s, after half a century of bitter religious wars and conflicts initiated by the fracture of Western Christianity, demonology

regained the attention received from European intellectuals between 1430 and 1490 during the outburst of the first witch-hunts in the Alpine and surrounding regions. England was no exception. The first English demonological treatises were published during the 1580s, a fact usually (and correctly) associated both with the rising numbers of indictments for witchcraft in the realm and with the printing of Reginald Scot's radically skeptical work, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), which prompted critical reactions among the cultural elite.¹ Without negating these already studied factors, this article will argue that religious non-conformity and disputes over the definition of witchcraft also played a major role in the rise of English demonology.

Demonological discourse in England had strong connections with Protestantism. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, all the major English demonologists were Protestants. Most of them were clerics or theologians; their inquiries about witchcraft were closely linked with the spread of reformed values and theology among the population and with anti-Catholicism. In the following pages, I analyze the relation between the concerns of demonological texts and the features of the process of Reformation in England, paying particular attention to intra-Protestant tensions in the realm. For that purpose, I will compare the definition of the concepts "witch" and "witchcraft" in English demonological treatises written and published between 1587 and 1630, and in the Witchcraft Acts of 1542, 1563, and 1604, enacted under the reigns of Henry VIII, Elizabeth, and James I, respectively.

This article focuses on demonological texts written by university-trained theologians and ordained clergymen such as George Gifford (ca. 1548–1620), Henry Holland (1556–1603), William Perkins (1558–1602), Alexander Roberts, Thomas Cooper, and Richard Bernard (1568–1641).² Their interest in witchcraft was not exclusively demonological but responded to wider religious concerns. They were aware of the imperfect reception of reformed theology by their flocks, the resilience of popular superstitions, and the high number of witches inhabiting their parishes, particularly those known as white or good witches. Also referred to as cunning or wise folk, they were men and women who were believed to possess divining skills, practice loving magic, identify thieves, find hidden treasure, detect witches, and heal the sick.³ This article will concentrate on their curative trades. While the Witchcraft Act forbade their other activities, healing always remained unpenalized. Therefore, it was not considered a form of witchcraft by the law, a situation openly denounced by demonologists, who indicated in their treatises that cunning folk were apostates and devil worshippers because the healings they claimed to have accomplished were in fact

performed by the Devil. Those who requested good witches' services were guilty of the same sin. Nevertheless, clients were not punished by the common law.

This article argues that the gap in the definition of the crime of witchcraft was related to the fact that demonologists understood it in religious terms underpinned by biblical precepts, whereas the Witchcraft Acts were enacted to penalize possible causes of interpersonal tensions instead of spiritual faults. This fact may suggest that demonological treatises would have been written, among other motives, to express discomfort with official religious policies, particularly the definition and repression of witchcraft, the most severe type of apostasy. This article hypothesizes that demonologists' grievances may be connected with the strain between the Puritan wing of the Church of England from the 1580s onward to rectify the incomplete nature of the Reformation by strengthening the discipline and morals of the population, and of the conformist and moderate majority more concerned with obedience than with orthodoxy.

THE WITCHCRAFT ACTS AND THE BIRTH OF A CRIME

The first half of the sixteenth century showed a growing interest of European secular justice in trying to define the crime of witchcraft and to establish the corresponding punishment for those who committed it. England was not immune from this trend; in little more than six decades, three different statutes against witchcraft were enacted (1542, 1563, and 1604). Each Act intended to endow the monarchy with the exclusive authority to determine what witchcraft and a witch were.⁴

Henry VIII's government was characterized by the advance of monarchy over church privileges and areas of influence.⁵ Once Royal Supremacy was firmly established over this religious institution, the 1540s witnessed other instances of enhancing royal power. The Witchcraft Act of 1542, which broke the monopoly of the Church Courts over the punishing of witches, was an example of this.⁶ The "Bill ayest conjuraracons & wichecraftes and sorcery and enchantmants" was approved on 16 January 1542 during the inaugural session of Henry's eighth Parliament, thus establishing civil jurisdiction over that offense. In this statute, the crime of witchcraft included the "Invocacons or conjuracons of Sprites to waste consume or destroy any persone in his bodie membres or goodes, or to pvoke any persone to unlawfull love" but also "to get or fynde money or treasure" and "to tell or declare where goodes stollen or lost shall become."⁷ The idea of

punishing harmful magic (*maleficium*) as well as diverse activities commonly associated with cunning folk such as love magic and the seeking of treasures by occult means set a precedent for the incoming Acts. Nevertheless, the 1542 statute would stand out for the harshness of the penalties it sought to impose.⁸ Those who were found guilty of any of the faults mentioned above would be sentenced to death, together with the confiscation of their personal possessions, and the annulment of hereditary rights and clergy privilege.⁹ However, the absence of records of people sentenced to death under that law made it little more than a dead letter.¹⁰ In 1547 the regents of Edward VI promoted a legislative renovation that repealed the statute without replacing it.¹¹ Mary Tudor did not consider witchcraft a matter worthy of urgent consideration, either. As a result, witchcraft remained outside the boundaries of the common law.

In 1559 Elizabeth's inaugural Parliament attempted to resuscitate the legislation that had been repealed by those who had governed in the name of the boy king. The bill that originated on 25 April in the House of the Commons reached the House of the Lords but was subsequently repealed.¹² This rejection owed less to resistance among some of the Lords than to the priority given to establishing the religious settlement as wished by the queen. The initiative was taken once again in the first sessions of the second Parliament. Approved by the Lords on 20 March 1563, the "Act Agaynst Conjuracons Inchantments and Witchcraftes" was not the restoration of the Henrician statute but an utterly new piece of legislation. Admittedly, the novelties did not reside in the forbidden actions but in the penalties imposed. Whereas in the 1542 law the only punishment applicable was the death penalty, the Elizabethan statute introduced extenuating circumstances depending on the deed committed by the alleged witch, and on whether it was a first or second offense. The mildest sanction of the new Witchcraft Act was one year of imprisonment, reserved for those who looked for treasure or stolen goods, induced victims to unlawful loves, and produced physical damage or propriety destruction by *maleficium* for the first time.¹³ Lifetime imprisonment was the penalty for a second offense in any of the actions aforementioned, except for the repetition of physical damage produced by *maleficium*, in which case the recidivists "shall suffer deathe as a Felon."¹⁴ This penalization would also apply to those who conjured *evil* spirits, killed by means of black magic, or helped in the realization of these crimes.¹⁵

A preliminary analysis of the text's content may show that the deeds that defined a person as a witch or an action as witchcraft were very similar to those mentioned in the 1542 law. According to both Acts, the individual who appealed to spiritual aid to kill or find stolen goods would be committing witchcraft.

There was not a nominative distinction for the commission of any of those crimes. An in-depth analysis will reveal no further coincidences. In the first place, even though killing and finding stolen goods were regarded as instances of witchcraft, the Act of 1563 considered the former more severe than the latter. Indeed, whereas the actions related to cunning folk in the 1542 statute were irredeemably punished with death, in 1563 those same deeds never entailed that penalty, not even in cases of recidivism. Moreover, there is a subtle but crucial difference: the Elizabethan Act posited to criminalize the invocation of “evill and wicked Spirites” while its precedent prohibited the conjuration of *any* spirits. By contrast, the second English law against witchcraft created gradual distinctions that the English demonologists would not validate and gray areas they would not tolerate.

After Elizabeth’s death in 1603, James VI of Scotland inherited the English throne. Following the arrival of the only Western sovereign to publish a demonological treatise, the Parliament initiated a revision of the witchcraft legislation.¹⁶ As James Sharpe pointed out, there can be no doubt that the discussion and later approval of the new Act were intertwined with James’s ascension to the throne, even though there is no evidence that the king had propelled or conditioned its composition.¹⁷ As a matter of fact, by the time he became king of England, James appeared to have lost interest in this issue.¹⁸ According to evidence, his only contribution to the passing of the law was to give his consent to the final version. The draft of the new Act entered the House of the Lords on 2 March 1604, during the king’s first Parliament. After this draft was deemed “imperfect” by a special commission, a new version was composed under the heading “An Acte Against Conjuratiō, Witchcraft and dealing with evill and wicked Spirits.” Twenty laymen and twelve bishops were involved in its elaboration, including the soon to be archbishop of Canterbury (Richard Bancroft) and a future archbishop of York (Tobias Matthew). The prominent judges Edward Coke and Edmund Anderson also participated.¹⁹ In early June, both Lords and Commons passed the definitive version.

Whereas some historians considered the 1604 Act a breaking point in the history of witchcraft criminalization, others highlighted its similarity with the previous one. Positively, it is possible to recognize innovation and continuity. Cunning folk’s services were still penalized with imprisonment for a year, although second offenses in these transgressions were punished with death instead of lifetime confinement. The same sanction was settled for damaging cattle and other goods.²⁰ Love magic and seeking treasure were still punishable with execution, but only in cases of recidivism. Death provoked by conjuring

evil spirits, on the other hand, was a capital offense even for first-time felons. A sentence of the gallows also resulted from a first offense in physical ruination, a crime that no longer required recidivism to execute the culprit.²¹ The manipulation of corpses to perform charms, an incorporation of the 1604 Act, was the other transgression earning the death penalty.²²

However, the key point of the statute had to do with higher degrees of prohibitions in the relations between human beings and unclean spirits: "That if any person or persons . . . shall use, practice or exercise an invocation or conjuration of an evil and wicked spirit: or shall consult, covenant with, entertaine, imploy, feed or reward any evil and wicked spirit, to or for any intent or purpose . . . shall suffer paines of death as Felon or Felons."²³ Feeding of preternatural entities, an allusion to the folklore of familiar spirits, was not mentioned in the previous laws.²⁴ The remarkable inclusion of the concept of covenant entailed that the relation with dark spirits originated a pact between humans and demons that could be regarded as an inversion of the one that God had established with the former.²⁵ Nevertheless, this incorporation was rather obscure. The concept was not accurately defined, provoking alternative interpretations that went as far as placing the entire statute under scrutiny.²⁶ The word "covenant" caused Wallace Notestein at the beginning of the twentieth century and James Sharpe at its end to denote that *maleficium* ceased to be the core of the crime of witchcraft in England. The reason for this position was that since 1604 a person could be hanged for actions that did not necessarily cause the death of another human being.²⁷ Malcolm Gaskill supplemented this idea by indicating that, at least at a theoretical level, witchcraft was not anymore a sin related to personal feuds but a darker transgression associated with demonism, apostasy, and conspiracy.²⁸

This approach to the Jacobean law may not be entirely appropriate. Even though the covenant was mentioned, it was not the ideological core of the text. Neither was the importance of *maleficium* diminished. As a matter of fact, both faults were penalized in the same way. Furthermore, the invocation of evil spirits was already considered a mortal offense in 1563. Thus the reference to the covenant (and also the feeding of spirits) could be considered as an attempt to specify the prohibition of dealing with discarnate entities rather than a change in the essence or meaning of the crime.²⁹ Moreover, the cases in which the indictments were for invocation and covenanting with demons were exceptional in comparison to the common accusation of harmful magic. Keith Thomas pointed it out in statistical terms: of almost two hundred people found guilty of witchcraft in the Home Circuit between 1558

and 1736 (1645–47 East Anglia trials excepted), only seven were convicted without having damaged people or their goods. If the East Anglia episodes are taken into account, sixteen accused were punished for bonding with demons, although seven of them were also indicted for *maleficium*.³⁰ The Samlesbury witchcraft trials of 1612 also offer a useful example of the preponderance of *maleficium* over demonism in courts, even after the passing of the 1604 statute. For example, even when the young Jane Southworth had admitted to dealing with demons, Robert Holden, one of the justices of the peace in charge of the interrogation of victims and suspects, continued his inquiry to obtain from her a confession of having used harmful magic.³¹ Using records kept by Thomas Potts, Marion Gibson showed that none of the indictments in the Lancashire trials mentioned “consulting, covenanting with, entertaining, employing, feeding or rewarding evil spirits.”³²

Given this brief review of the three Witchcraft Acts, it is apparent that English authorities were interested in outlawing several cunning folk’s routine services.³³ Their healing tasks were deliberately excluded from the laws. In early modern England, secular authorities never criminalized charismatic healing; rather, it remained under religious jurisdiction.³⁴ In other words, the cures allegedly produced by divine gifts were not regarded as witchcraft by civil justice. The Assizes hanged cunning folks, although not for their medicinal services: Ursley Kemp from St. Osyth, a former white witch, was executed in 1582 for killing Joan Thurlow by witchcraft.³⁵ Ecclesiastical tribunals did not deal with similar cases very differently. Outside Essex a well-known Church Court investigation against a cunning folk was John Walsh’s in Dorsetshire (1566). Even though he acknowledged before the authorities that he knew from “the ferries” who was bewitched, he was accused of conjuring evil spirits for the finding of stolen goods. Once again, healing was not part of the indictment against a wise folk.³⁶

The legal carelessness shown by the legislative and judicial authorities regarding cunning folk’s therapeutic activities is the main reason why Peter Maxwell-Stuart was right when he suggested that the 1604 act was not influenced by James VI’s *Daemonologie*, a tract that demonized charismatic healings.³⁷ The fact that such types of cure went unpunished weakens the interpretation that this law answered the demands put forward by theologians such as George Gifford, Henry Holland, and William Perkins. It is not by chance that Alexander Roberts’s, Thomas Cooper’s, and Richard Bernard’s treatises—all of them written after 1604—still dedicated many paragraphs to explain the perverse and diabolic nature of wise folks. Courts constructed their

cases, interrogatories, sentences, and punishments in accordance with the Acts. As will be shown below, judges, as lawmakers before, did not take into account demonologists' definition of witchcraft.

WITCHCRAFT AND APOSTASY

Demonological treatises appeared in England more than a century later than they did in continental Europe, and two decades after the promulgation of the 1563 Witchcraft Act.³⁸ As mentioned above, there were different reasons for the rise of English demonological writing. In the first place, witchcraft was an attractive problem for theologians; it was tied to aspects of religious discourse under intense discussion during the decades after the affirmation of the Reformation under Elizabeth's reign, such as the relation between God, demons, and humanity. Additionally, the peak of its judicial repression—which occurred in England during the 1580s—strengthened its importance.³⁹ Finally, when Reginald Scot published in 1584 the most systematic challenge to the intellectual foundations of the persecution of witchcraft, the matter became hard to avoid. Nevertheless, it might be possible to detect another stimulus for discussing witchcraft: the disagreement between its theological and legal definitions.

George Gifford, Henry Holland, and William Perkins constitute what for argumentative and methodological reasons will be considered as the first wave of authors of demonological treatises, those who wrote when the Elizabethan statute was in force. Notwithstanding the differences between these writers, it is possible to encounter striking similarities regarding their ways of understanding witchcraft, a view that differed sharply from that of the statutes. In the 1563 Witchcraft Act, the death penalty was reserved for those who killed or relapsed in producing physical damage through harmful magic. In this piece of legislation the human factor was crucial: witchcraft was a felony against a person. This conception is contested by the Essex theologian and preacher George Gifford in both of his treatises dedicated to the matter.⁴⁰ *A Discourse of the Subtill Practises of Devills by Witches and Sorcerers* (1587) rejects the belief extended over the English population that demons were summoned and controlled by witches: "For the uncleane spirits are the doers in sorceries and witchcraftes: men and women are but instrumentes."⁴¹ They should not be condemned for causing damage by harmful magic because that action was committed by the Devil, who misled witches and victims to think that the former were the source of the latter's misfortunes.⁴² This did not mean that the effects of witchcraft were imag-

inary; *maleficium* was real, although not produced by the witch.⁴³ Concerning this point, Lisa Watson argues that Gifford not only did not deny the existence of witches' powers but also believed them to be unquestionable according to contemporary experience and biblical authority.⁴⁴ Watson reached her conclusion based on the following quotation: "It is so evident by the scriptures, and in all experience, that there be witches which worke by the devil, or rather I may say, the devill worketh by them, that such as go about to proove the contrarie, doe shew themselves but cavillers."⁴⁵ The present research does not agree with Watson's perspective. Gifford dedicated several passages of his treatises to denying witches' extraordinary capacities. Moreover, the paragraph quoted might not favor Watson's interpretation since Gifford states that the Devil performed his *maleficia* through the witches, not that they possessed magical abilities. Thus, witches were utterly innocent of the crime of witchcraft as stated in the statute. Nevertheless, the felony they committed was more wicked. In *A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcrafts* (1593), Gifford explains that scriptures ordered sorcerers to be executed not because of having killed or wasted human bodies, but because "they have familiaritie with devils, which are the blasphemous enemies of God."⁴⁶ In the *Discourse* the preacher evoked that God had revealed his law to Moses, setting a penalty to every transgression according to its severity. The most terrible offense was apostasy, precisely the fault of which witches were guilty: "for much horrible abusing Gods holy and sacred name, and therefore are woorthie to dye."⁴⁷ Consequently, Gifford's intention, contrary to Gary Waite's point of view, was not to moderate the persecutions but to orientate them to punish a crime that was real and possible, not one that nobody had committed nor could have committed.⁴⁸

This gap between the Acts and demonological theory appears in similar publications. Vicar Henry Holland organized *A Treatise against Witchcraft* (1590) as a dialogue between two fictional characters—Theofilus and Mysedaemon—in which the first also regretted the fact that people were considered witches because of the possession of magical abilities when they were actually "Sathans instruments."⁴⁹ The Devil pretended to be the sorcerers' servant after making them renounce Christianity. That recantation was the real felony, not the killing or wasting of bodies or the destruction of personal goods. This is the reason why Holland linked witchcraft not with the laws carved by God in the second tablet delivered at Mount Sinai, but with the first, where offenses against piety were typified: "Among all other sinnes of the first table there is none more horrible, more fearfull, that more dishonoureth God, & impareth his glory, then the most detestable sins of magike and sorcerie."⁵⁰

This topic became much disputed when the notorious Puritan theologian William Perkins addressed it in *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft*.⁵¹ Throughout his extensive and widespread work, the concept of a covenant between God and humankind developed into his theological fixation.⁵² His single demonological treatise was no exception: witchcraft was defined there as the violation of that atavistic alliance and the foundation of a new one between the Devil and those who pledge allegiance to him.⁵³ Witches should be punished “onely for their leagues sake,” which was their fault.⁵⁴ Following Augustine of Hippo, English demonologists emphasized the moral and providential origins of misfortune. Even though fallen angels clouded people’s minds to believe the opposite, the calamities they suffered were not produced by human agency.⁵⁵ Thus witch-hunting or vindictive persecution should never be regarded as the response of someone in a painful predicament. The righteous reaction was introspection to discover why God had authorized demons to torment them.⁵⁶ In contrast to what they posited for apostasy and idolatry, the reply in front of hardship should be closer to Job’s contrition rather than to Moses’s zero tolerance.⁵⁷ The definition of witchcraft as the relation with preternatural forces to transgress the divine covenant was deeply related to the idea of treason. As Perkins stated, bonding with sprits was its most vicious expression: “the most notorious traytor and rebell that can be, is the Witch.”⁵⁸

From the comparison suggested it is possible to understand why the 1563 Act did not find charismatic healing to be witchcraft. Because witchcraft was a crime related to physical damage inflicted on another human being, those who made a living by healing others were not considered criminals. Whereas the practice of love magic and the search for stolen goods might cause damage to third parties, therapeutic services certainly did not. On the contrary, the demonologists mentioned so far judged witchcraft as a transgression against God. By believing that humans lacked magical abilities of their own and that miracles have ceased, healings achieved by cunning folk could only have taken place by demonic intervention. From this perspective, Gifford admonished that it did not matter if “they never mind to kill or to hurt any, but to doe them good, as they imagine; yet if they deale with divels they ought to die for it.”⁵⁹ Wise folk and sorcerers were witches on account of having resorted to the same source: “A Witch is one that worketh by the Devill, or by some develish or curious art, either hurting or healing.”⁶⁰ As Holland wrote, those who healed and killed through occult means were guilty of the same felony: they vowed to “Sathan the bloodiest enimie that man hath liuing.”⁶¹ The Elizabethan statute was a useless instrument to punish the extended concept of witchcraft developed by contemporary theologians. On

this account, Perkins regarded the legal code established “by the Law of Moses” as the only proper legal instrument to deal with these matters.⁶²

The passing of the 1604 Act did not solve the differences between witchcraft legislation and English demonologists. Indeed, since the Jacobean statute, covenerating with evil spirits was penalized, although with the same sanction for using harmful magic. In the eyes of the law, damaging a human being was as severe as apostasy or idolatry. More important, the introduction of the covenant did not answer the inconsistencies identified by theologians in the 1563 law. The most compelling evidence that witchcraft was still legally considered as damage to people rather than to God is that healings produced by spiritual aid were not included in the covenant that the seventeenth-century statute meant to punish.

In *A Treatise of Witchcraft* (1616), clergyman Alexander Roberts continued the path of his predecessors in the genre by asserting that witches “are inabled to helpe and hurt.” The actual source of both actions was the Devil who partook them in his scheme with the intention of “more grieuously offend God, and bring iust condemnation vpon themselues.”⁶³ Roberts and those colleagues who wrote after him suggested an extended definition of witchcraft that allowed the punishment of desires and purposes as well as actions. Whether the ultimate purpose of those who practiced witchcraft was to cure or to kill was regarded as utterly irrelevant on the ground that what should be penalized was the bargain with the Devil. The sole intention of dealing with spirits was sufficient cause for disciplinary action: “God willeth these should bee put to death, who by Diabolicall and vnlawfull Arts, do endeouour to helpe or harme others, whether in act they performe the same, or purpose with intention conceiuing and thinking they can do it.”⁶⁴ The widespread belief that certain dealings with demons might bring some good disturbed demonologists. The classification of witches by color (black or white) or by the end of their presumed abilities (good or bad) was an approximation to witchcraft that embarrassed theologians, especially because it was not exclusive of the populace but was also shared by the members of the highest judicial and legislative offices. In *A Guide to Grand Jury Men* (1627), Puritan divine Richard Bernard explains to his readers that every witch “make a league with the Diuell: an act so execrable, to renounce God, and to betake themselues to the diuell, as for this thing onely, they deserue death in the highest degree.”⁶⁵ If skepticism remained regarding demonologists of the second wave having in their minds the gray areas of the 1604 Act when they wrote their treatises, the Londoner pastor Thomas Cooper dispelled any such doubts in *The Mysterie of Witchcraft* (1617): “As Satan binds his seruants vnto his obeysance by a speciall contract and couenant (as hath beene shewed

thoroughly before) so the good Witch, being lessoned by her accursed Maister, doth hereby endeour to performe truest seruice vnto him."⁶⁶ This quote enables us to acknowledge the fact that the reference to the covenant per se did not amend the more obvious limitations of the Act. When Cooper remarked that the pact existed not only between demons and witches but also between the former and cunning folk, he exposed the fact that current legislation was not appropriate to punish witchcraft in all its dimensions. By forbidding the "covenant with evil and wicked spirits," the Jacobean law created a legal loophole that admitted the existence of non-evil spirits and legitimized (or at least did not prohibit) trafficking with them. The Act may have been harsh regarding *maleficia*, but it did not encompass the essential aspects of witchcraft. That is the reason why Bernard insisted in 1627, as Perkins had done before, that "to conuict any one of witchcraft, is to proue a league made with the Deuill. In this only act standeth the very reality of a Witch; without which neither she nor he . . . are not to be condemned for witches."⁶⁷ Thus, as was stated by Cooper, only the law established in "the Word of God" guaranteed the complete atonement of such a heinous fault.⁶⁸ Decrees written in stone in the Pentateuch were inprescriptible, chiefly the one that had made allegiance to God the basis of human existence. Thence the perennial obligation of annihilating every witch.⁶⁹

There was another matter related to charismatic healing that lay unattended in English witchcraft legislation. The reference to cunning folk's clients was a recurrent motif in demonological treatises, and it is crucial to conclude that apostasy was never the primary concern of secular justice's definition of witchcraft. The common law never prohibited healings supposedly produced by divine gifts. Consequently, those who looked for medical services from wise folk were not criminalized.⁷⁰ If the offer was not to be punished, neither was the demand.⁷¹ For demonologists, instead, clients were critical in the demonic circuit that every witchcraft case entailed. Besides idolatry, wise folk were reprehensible because they induced plenty of people to commit the same sin. Every time someone in pain resorted to a healer he or she was confident that their well-being depended on God, but in fact it depended on the Devil. This mistake was no small matter for renowned theologians like Gifford, Holland or Bernard, who labeled visits to cunning folk as "spiritual whoredom."⁷² Neither was it for Cooper, for whom even if the Devil could have achieved effects by himself, he "employeth these instruments, to accomplish his will by, not onely ensnaring their soules, by satisfying their desires to hurt, and helpe whom they list: but hereby also endangering the soules of others."⁷³ While curing the bodies of those in need by using healers as a façade, he corrupted their souls with the

indelible stain of treason to the Almighty. Satan's ultimate goal was to "snare the soules of men unto eternal condemnation," to make witches and clients adore him as a deity.⁷⁴ Thus "he which practiseth witchcraft, and he that seeketh helpe therby, are both alike guiltie of the same impietie, and before God subject to the same punishment."⁷⁵ But the author of *A Treatise against Witchcraft* was not original in his demand; Gifford had done it before, and so would Roberts—among others—afterward.⁷⁶ The insistence on the centrality of the pact may show that in English demonological treatises, diabolism played a significant role in witchcraft. After all, English demonology may not have been as moderate as much of the historical research has suggested.

The will to apply the death penalty to clients could exist only if witchcraft is defined as a direct or indirect alliance with the Devil. Accordingly, the diabolical compact was not the argumentative core of the 1604 Act. For our zealous theologians, both the Elizabethan and Jacobean statutes were alike; they failed to accommodate the earthly kingdom to the divine will. In face of the deficiency of human laws men should draw on God's: "The ground and the mother of all good lawes is the law of god, and all other lawes do giue attendance therupon, and haue their being to this end, to keep and preserue the holy lawes of God inuiolable: and if they want this scope (as the learned say) they are unnecessary in the Church or common wealth."⁷⁷ The tension between theologians and those who controlled the legislative instruments and government in England shown by Holland's quote might be interpreted as part of broader intra-Protestant conflicts that characterized the Reformation in that kingdom.

DEMONOLOGY AND NONCONFORMITY

Between 1559 and 1563, Elizabeth and her councilors attempted to set up once and for all the organization of the Church of England, its government, and its liturgy. Instead, they gave rise to complex and unwelcome disputations. A part of the ministry considered the external form of the rites and religious garments endorsed by the queen as an aftertaste of the Romanish division between laity and clerics.⁷⁸ Ministers who refused to compromise were punished with office deprivation and incarceration, a situation that became the breeding ground of the Puritan movement. Puritanism is one of the most vastly discussed topics of early modern English history; defining it as an ideal type and ignoring its historical transformations notably impoverish its significance.⁷⁹ Even though Calvinist theology and anti-Catholicism were two of Puritanism's most stable features, it

is not possible to circumscribe the movement to that.⁸⁰ As Peter Lake stated, Puritanism was developed in and through debates over different matters.⁸¹ In the beginning, the term “Puritan” was a pejorative label created and used by contemporaries to identify the clerics who refused to wear the compulsory vestment for religious ceremonies and omitted part of the official liturgy.⁸² The conflict reached its peak between 1570 and 1590, with the disputation over the internal organization of the Church, which broadened the gap among English Protestants.⁸³ On the one hand, the conformists—led by Archbishop John Whitgift—considered that the organization of the Church and clerical vestments were matters indifferent (*Adiaphora*) and thus should be decided by its supreme governor. Episcopacy facilitated the constitution of a Church controlled by the Crown and hence was endorsed by the Elizabethan settlement.⁸⁴ The Presbyterians—headed by the theologian Thomas Cartwright—considered that regulatory decisions over *Adiaphora* depended exclusively on scriptures.⁸⁵ The defense of their case rested on the assertion that the Bible never mentioned the existence of hierarchies among ministers or communities, let alone bishops or bishoprics. Instead of episcopacy, they advocated for a system of presbyteries, considered ideal for the autonomy it granted to the Church.⁸⁶ The Presbyterians believed that the official religious policy did not have a scriptural basis, which should be the only criteria of orthodoxy and legitimacy valid for Christians.

During the 1580s Presbyterianism became the main banner of a considerable faction within Puritanism, giving birth to what Patrick Collinson called “classis movement.”⁸⁷ Historians from the second half of the twentieth century emphasized that this strategy to implant a new Church regime took place from inside the religious institution, an idea that banished the then prevailing belief that Puritanism was utterly inimical to the Church and the Crown of England.⁸⁸ From Collinson’s point of view, then, Puritanism is considered the complete internalization of English Protestantism rather than a foreign trend imported from the continent.⁸⁹ Following this perspective, the Presbyterians in particular and the Puritans in general are in these pages considered not as dissenters but as Nonconformists—to wit, those who challenge official religious uniformity without abandoning the limits of (or breaking away from) the church.⁹⁰ To defend their cause they did not opt for a seditious strategy; rather, they appealed to parliamentary ways, though they were consecutively defeated in 1584, 1586, and 1589. After the Presbyterian debacle, the hotter sort of Protestants adjusted their priorities; instead of focusing on abolishing the episcopal system, they concentrated on the diffusion of reformed values to refashion population habits and behaviors.⁹¹ These goals existed before 1590

but were contingent on the triumph of the political program to transform the church's organization. Conscious of the limits of the religious institution to convert the English into godly Protestants, but also of the failure of the strategies employed to modify it, the Puritans consecrated themselves to a campaign of collective pedagogy.

It was not a coincidence that an Act to define witchcraft and the features of witches was passed at the same time that Elizabeth was steering toward the construction of religious orthodoxy. Something similar happened during the rule of James I. Thus, both the statutes of 1563 and 1604 were discussed and approved when the sovereigns were determining the religious course of their regimes.⁹² That is the reason the Witchcraft Acts are considered here as another law enacted to settle a religious policy controlled by monarchs as supreme governors of the Church. Legislation could influence and model beliefs.⁹³ To define and to punish witchcraft, to establish the liturgy and to determine the organization of the church were part of the same strategy. Consequently, the demonologist's critique of the content of the laws might be considered another example of the debates inside English Protestantism to define the meaning of the Reformation. In fact, demonological treatises also stressed the necessity of turning to the scriptures to shed light on those matters of dispute—in this case, the definition and punishment of witchcraft. This debate could be interpreted as another terrain in which was expressed the dispute between the religious status quo imposed by ecclesiastical authorities and the call to intensify the Reformation by those who did not conform. It is apparent that demonologists and those responsible for the drafting and promulgation of the laws had discordant interests and priorities. The intention of the Witchcraft Acts was to punish possible causes of tension and social unrest that could affect the kingdom's stability. That is the reason the laws penalized *maleficia* that harm people and their goods, induce unlawful loves, and found stolen property.⁹⁴ The fact that the repression of witchcraft in England was related to accusations framed within communal disputes and local tensions, rather than demonism and apostasy, was not a mere historical whim.⁹⁵ Authorities were, thus, more worried with enforcing social peace than with the strict application of biblical sanctions.

Demonologists also looked for ways to regulate the population, but by establishing a rigorous discipline to create a godly society respectful of divine precepts. For them witchcraft was a sin, a spiritual fault, not the kind of threat envisaged in the Acts.⁹⁶ The society they were trying to fashion, then, should conform to divine rather than monarchical, juridical, or parliamentary priorities.⁹⁷ Such concerns of the writers of demonological treatises might be related to the

transformation of Puritanism throughout the end of the 1580s. It was not by chance that demonological literature arose in England when Puritanism turned its attention away from ecclesiastical policy toward discipline and morality. The association between English demonologists and Puritanism is not new. It finds its origins in the links the former had with Calvin's theology, their rabid anti-Catholicism, the colleges they attended, and their social connections. Without calling this into question, we may consider that another feature of their Puritan identity was the Nonconformity displayed in different moments of their lives. As Collinson has reiterated, Puritanism was "but one half of a stressful relationship."⁹⁸ Following this conceptualization, I suggest that on account of the content of their treatises and the particular historical context in which they wrote, the demonologists mentioned could be considered part of the ranks of the godly. These authors constructed the model of their ideal Christian society in opposition to and in conflict with the impious present they were experiencing.⁹⁹ As Holland put it, "Such is the impudent boldnes, and growth of sinne in these times, that if any one man refraine from euill, he is a monster among men."¹⁰⁰ The ideal demonologists desired to achieve made possible an identification with one another and allowed them to perceive themselves as a besieged minority set apart from the imperfect and unbiblical moral standard of the majority. Puritanism was, then, the full internalization of Protestantism—the real rather than the official Reformation.¹⁰¹

Certainly I do not intend to suggest that there was anything like a necessary relation between having opposed episcopacy or the wearing of the surplice and writing a demonological treatise. Nevertheless, demonologists, using different tools and different codes, also challenged the idea that the Protestantization of the realm was concluded. Once again, we are in the presence of individuals who defied uniformity from within the church: Gifford, Holland, Perkins, Roberts, Cooper, and Bernard enjoyed minor ecclesiastical offices. Their permanence within the church has moved some historians to label these Puritans as moderate or non-radical.¹⁰² The matter of moderation and radicalism should not be addressed in essentialist or ontological terms. As stated by Karl Gunther, radical are those ideas and actions that challenge the status quo more widely than do others.¹⁰³ Gifford and Bernard, for example, were punished by religious authorities for their Nonconformist positions. Gifford was suspended from his benefice in Maldon in 1584 for not subscribing to Archbishop Whitgift's Three Articles, and again in 1586 for refusing to use the surplice.¹⁰⁴ During his second suspension he wrote his *Discourse*. Despite his restoration in 1589, he did not mollify his religious stances and critics, as shown in his demonological

work of 1593. Bernard, on the other hand, was twice deprived of his benefice in Worksop on suspicions of separatism.¹⁰⁵ He was finally reassigned to Batcombe but maintained his denunciations over religious matters, as his demonological treatise evinces. Both Gifford and Bernard, and also William Perkins, wrote manuals stressing the importance of permanent preaching, a practice not always welcomed by Church authorities.¹⁰⁶ As they preferred the Word preached over the official imposition of reading a written text, they stood for a complete rather than a statutory extirpation of witchcraft.¹⁰⁷ By their warnings about the flaws of the statutes to punish witches and their clients voiced in their demonological works, our theologians could be considered radicals. No defense of the “equilibrium of the Elizabethan state” regarding the extirpation of witches and superstitions is to be found in Holland, Gifford, or Perkins.¹⁰⁸ On the contrary, it is possible to identify passages from their treatises—as well as from Roberts—where they denounced the shortcomings of the laws and the responsibilities that magistrates bore for the terrible results in the campaign against witchcraft.¹⁰⁹ Holland more boldly urged authorities to fulfill their duty: “Let us all . . . pray mightely vnto God, so to illuminate our superiours, the wise and honourable magistrates, our godly learned ministers, with his holy word to know his will: and so to enflame their hearts with his holy spirit, that they may moste diligently put the same in practise, as for the discouery, confusion, & extirpation of al sinnes, so more particularly, & most carefully of these most horrible, dreadfull, & detestable sinnes of witchcraft and sorcery.”¹¹⁰

It should not be forgotten that demonological treatises in England were published after the death of Edmund Grindal (1583) and his replacement in the Canterbury seat by John Whitgift, an event that inaugurated a conservative turn in the religious policy of the realm.¹¹¹ Peter Elmer identified for that date a division inside English Protestantism concerning witchcraft, in which the Puritan wing of the church showed a greater desire to boost persecutions than did the institution’s other members.¹¹² Moreover, since they were written in a period characterized by a decrease in both witchcraft trials and the publication of pamphlets on the subject, the second wave of demonological treatises may be regarded as a warning to those in charge of prosecuting witches.¹¹³ Ultimately English demonologists fell short in their crusade—neither the government nor their flocks endorsed their interpretation of witchcraft. Cunning folk were never systematically prosecuted, let alone because of their alleged charismatic gifts. The official definition of the crime remained secular; the civil courts were no place for healers.

THE SCOTTISH COMPARISON

The English Witchcraft Acts were developed at the pinnacle of political administration and legal hierarchy. The 1563 Act was a legal initiative of the Privy Council, the small, select group of officials directly appointed by the queen. Elizabeth did not designate any Church member to sit at her exclusive council during the first decades of her reign.¹¹⁴ Hence, the law conceived to punish witchcraft was sent to Parliament without the reading or formal consultation of any cleric or theologian. It can hardly be surprising, therefore, that in the final version passed in March 1563 the crime was not defined in religious terms.¹¹⁵ As to the 1604 Act, several prelates were part of its elaboration. However, the bishops who participated in the process were reluctant to challenge the continuity with Elizabeth's religious settlement envisaged by James I.¹¹⁶ A case in question was that of Richard Bancroft, who cooperated in the drafting of the statute as bishop of London. Some months later he was appointed archbishop of Canterbury, and in 1608 chancellor of the University of Oxford. Thereby James trusted the seat of the most prominent archdiocese and the administration of the oldest university to an "archi-anti-Puritan."¹¹⁷ Additionally, the king endorsed the Witchcraft Act even though it did not penalize much of what he considered a capital offense in his *Daemonologie*.

One of the primary religious goals of Elizabeth and James as monarchs was to tame the Reformation—to make it a source of stability, not of disputes. English sovereigns were the supreme head of an institution that had authority not only over churchmen but every subject of the realm.¹¹⁸ Religion was, ultimately, a means to achieve the obedience of the population. That is why Elizabeth systematically occluded every possibility to reopen theological or liturgical discussions—in the 1560s she considered them closed.¹¹⁹ It is also possible to understand on what account James followed his predecessor's policy, which was opposed to the one he had experienced in Scotland, where the Kirk enjoyed considerable independence from the Crown.¹²⁰ This way of exercising political authority favored by both English monarchs considered religion important while it was useful to whoever was on the throne. Any display of religious zeal which threatened that limited utility, however, aroused suspicion.

The hypothesis that the 1563 and 1604 Witchcraft Acts were a manifestation of the peculiarities of the Reformation in England and the internal organization of the church could be further enriched by taking into account the Scottish case. Scotland was undergoing another kind of Protestant transformation,

which was accompanied by utterly different legislation against witches. The Scottish Witchcraft Act of 1563 was a radical departure from the Elizabethan law that had been passed a few months before. The Jacobean legislation enacted forty years later would bear no resemblance to the 1563 Scottish Act either. The first difference was the less restricted definition of the witchcraft felony: “that na maner of persoun nor persounis, of quhatsumever estate, degre or condition thay be of, tak upone hand in ony tymes heirefter, to use ony maner of Witchcraftis, Sorsarie or Necromancie.”¹²¹ There is no reference to “evill and wicked spirits”; the law did not allow for the analysis of the intention (good or bad) or the final result (to cure or to harm) of conjurors’ work: any use of witchcraft was prohibited. The Scottish Act included a direct forbiddance to obtain “ony sic craft or knowlege” by occult means.¹²² The wider scope of the law to sanction these actions allows us to suggest that its authors not only had harmful magic in mind but also rejected the acquisition of healing abilities through preternatural help.¹²³ Even when these points already represented a rupture with both English Acts, the most dramatic change was the criminalization of those who “seik ony help, response or cosultatioun at ony sic usaris or abusaris foirsaidis of Witchcraftis, Sorsareis or Necromancie.”¹²⁴ In Scotland it was possible to hunt witches’ clients. For every action included in the Scottish Act, the penalty was death, with no exception.¹²⁵ Therefore, by proposing to execute every witch convicted, the Act followed the decree of Exodus 22:18 (“Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live”); and by inflicting the same type of punishment on those who were found guilty of seeking their help, the Act honored the First Commandment (“Thou shalt have no other gods before me”). These two prohibitions underpinned the English demonologist’s definition of witchcraft.

The fact that Gifford, Perkins, Bernard, and the other Puritans’ ideas were more kindred with the Scottish than with the English Acts should not be surprising. In Scotland the Reformation was not a monarchical imposition but a rebellion that challenged the civil authorities.¹²⁶ The 1560 Parliament established a reformed and Calvinist faith that was at the level of the Genevan example. The first draft of the Witchcraft Act passed by the Scottish Parliament in 1563 had been discussed in the General Assembly of the Protestant Church of the previous year. Julian Goodare reduces the list of possible drafters to three names: John Erskine (superintendent of Angus), John Winram (superintendent of Fife), and John Knox.¹²⁷ Both Erskine and Winram, who were staunch Protestants, had visited Calvin’s Geneva and had participated in the elaboration of the 1560 *Book of Discipline*. Knox, on the other hand, was not only the religious leader of the Scottish Reformation but the most outstanding theologian of his

generation, as well as the father of Presbyterianism in his homeland. This trio also formed part of the Parliament that passed the Witchcraft Act. The scene could not have been any more different from the English political context. The Scottish law did not arise from the will of a Privy Council lacking in churchmen or theologians; neither was it designated by an ad hoc commission packed with lay and religious figures known for their anti-Puritanism. On the contrary, it was fueled by the radical wing of local Protestants, composed of religious zealots obsessed by their respect of biblical precepts. Also, they governed a church that enjoyed an autonomy impossible to imagine south of the Tweed, capable of imposing a program of its own on the most important legislative organ of the realm. That could be considered one reason the religious nature of witchcraft as a criminal offense in Scotland was not present in English legislation. It was a felony not because it was a personal threat but because it was the most severe sin against God.¹²⁸ The Scottish Act defined witchcraft as “superstitioun,” a concept mentioned there three times but entirely absent in the English law. This word was not used because witchcraft was considered false or fictitious, but because the effects produced by it were demonic instead of natural or supernatural.¹²⁹ The utilization of the notion of “superstition” explains the fact that in Scotland the Act intended to punish “usaris or abusaris” of witchcraft (because superstition always entailed an association with demons) and also clients (because they resorted to the Devil’s minions). Stuart Clark highlighted that the concerns of the reformers over witchcraft were characterized by considering popular magic as witchcraft and looking forward to its extirpation.¹³⁰ On these grounds the Scottish Act could be easily regarded as the product of a Protestant ethos: it was not only enacted in a realm separated from Roman tutelage, but its content was “thoroughly reformed.”¹³¹ The confessional identity of the English Acts, in turn, was as abstruse as the organization of the Church of England.¹³² Whereas the Scottish law symbolized the political influence achieved by the hotter sort of Protestants, English demonological treatises and their discrepancies with the local legislation against witches were symptoms that in England the opposite had occurred.

CONCLUSION

Almost thirty years ago, John Bossy explained that after the sixteenth century the Decalogue replaced the Seven Deadly Sins as the cornerstone of Western Christianity moral system. The main substantive difference brought

by this change was the greater importance given in the Ten Commandments to offenses against God. While the Deadly Sins emphasized collective and neighborly responsibilities, the Decalogue accentuated obligations to the Creator and expressly prohibited and condemned idolatry, apostasy, and heresy. Also, the Sins did not have scriptural foundations, while the newly endorsed code had roots in the Old Testament. Thus the Decalogue was more binding; it was, in every regard, a law.¹³³ Concerning our interests, Bossy considered the replacement of one moral code for the other critical concerning the prosecution of witchcraft: "Under the regime of the Sins, witchcraft had been the offense of causing by occult means malicious harm to the body or goods of one's neighbor."¹³⁴ However, since the fifteenth century, with the rise of the Commandments, witchcraft shifted from a crime against people to a pact with the Devil—namely, a crime against God. This new perception of witchcraft was developed initially by the chancellor of the University of Paris, Jean Gerson, spreading then to every major early modern demonologist, from Johannes Nider to Cotton Mather, including all the Englishmen mentioned above. Theologically, then, the new moral paradigm was a success. It is possible, although, to acknowledge that this triumph was not complete; civil legal codes, for example, did not necessarily embrace the Commandments as their guide. The English Witchcraft Acts of 1542, 1563, and 1604 defined the crime as if the Deadly Sins were still the supreme moral reference for Christians—namely, the laws passed to punish witches were not attached to scriptures. Between 1587 and 1630, in a context of intra-Protestant strife, local demonologists denounced the situation and emphasized the necessity to accommodate the Acts to the Pentateuch and its Decalogue. In his article Bossy stated that the Seven Sins remained influential during the Elizabethan age, both among the populace and in the educated segments of society. My interpretation of English demonological works may suggest that the same could be said about the early Stuart period, at least regarding the definition of witchcraft. The friction between legislation and theology mentioned in the present investigation could be considered part of the transition between two different foundations of Christian morals (i.e., the Seven Sins and the Decalogue), which coincided in England with the conflict between those who expected a complete reformation of the population's moral and behaviors and the moderate majority in the church.

Certainly the demonologists' grievances were part of a major campaign to reform the realm. English demonologists aspired less to a Protestant kingdom than to a kingdom of Protestants. Their treatises evinced that the Reformation had not transformed fundamental spheres of social life. Theology and biblical

ordinances were not the guidelines of the realm's government. Reformation, then, was unfinished business. In the absence of institutional mechanisms to achieve their purpose, Puritans did not stand still: they resorted to demonological discourse to disseminate their self-righteous moral standards. In England, academic demonology was a Puritan creation, closely linked with preaching, one of the cornerstones of the Christian life as Perkins wrote: "That the light of the Gospel purely preached, is a Sovereigne meane to discover and confound the power and pollicie of Sathan in Witchcraft and Sorcerie. The word of God preached, is the weapon of the Christians warfare."¹³⁵ The inner structure and style of demonological tracts suggest that they were originally sermons, later extended and adapted to the written format, which helped to immortalize and spread their content beyond the physical and geographical limits of the parish.¹³⁶ As was mentioned above, Gifford, Perkins, and Bernard published manuals on preaching and catechization, a fact that illustrates that their deepest aim was to collaborate in the reformation of popular and elitist ideas. In conclusion, then, each demonology contributed to the communication of the authors' worldview and evinced the latter's desire to secure for themselves and men like them a privileged position in Church and society to succeed in their task. The function of the godly, then, was not constrained to guiding the chosen through the unfathomable path of God's will: they insisted on the correction of the most obvious defects in society and government. When it came to discipline and obedience to divine laws, they were far from moderation and compromise, even when it meant confronting policies and procedures sponsored by the Crown and the Church.

AGUSTIN MENDEZ is a Ph.D. candidate in the History Department at the University of Buenos Aires.

NOTES

This article is part of an ongoing doctoral investigation on early modern English demonological discourse that has benefited from a long-term grant from the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas in Argentina. The author would like to thank his supervisor, Dr. Fabián Alejandro Campagne, for his guidance and continuous encouragement. He is also grateful to *Preternature's* copy editors and anonymous reviewers and for their incisive criticism and thorough reading of the article.

1. During the 1580s, the Home Circuit Assizes registered 166 prosecutions for witchcraft, the highest number of cases for any decade in early modern England. See James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (London: Penguin, 1996), 108–9. In his book on Reginald Scot, Philip Almond shows that George Gifford was referring to

The Discoverie of Witchcraft when he wrote that he intended to answer the idea that the devils were not capable of appearing in bodily shape. James VI, William Perkins, John Cotta, and Richard Bernard also criticized Scot's skepticism in their demonological works. See Philip Almond, *England's First Demonologist: Reginald Scot and "The Discoverie of Witchcraft"* (London: I. B Taurus, 2011), 3–4. See also Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 29–31.

2. Alexander Roberts and Thomas Cooper's birth and death dates are unknown. Regarding their intellectual background, Gifford, Perkins, and Bernard were educated at Christ College, Cambridge. Holland, on the other hand, attended Magdalene College, also in Cambridge, while Cooper's alma mater was Christ Church College, Oxford. See Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 81–83.

3. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Penguin, 1971), 210; Owen Davies, *Popular Magic: Cunning Folk in English History* (London: Continuum, 2007), vii. Their medicinal services encompassed a wide spectrum of problems, such as muscular pains, pregnancy and labor ailments, and bewitchment.

4. John Newton, "Introduction: Witchcraft; Witch Codes; Witch Act," in *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604*, ed. John Newton and Jo Bath (Boston: Brill, 2008), 3–4.

5. On this aspect of Henry's VIII reign, see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992), 377–423; Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1993), 105–91; David Newcombe, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation* (London: Routledge, 2001), 36–75.

6. Davies, *Popular Magic*, 4.

7. Quoted in *The Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 3 (1817; repr., London: Dawson of Pall Mall, 1965), 837.

8. Peter G. Maxwell-Stuart, "King James's Experience of Witches, and the 1604 English Witchcraft Act," in *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604*, ed. Newton and Bath, 41–42.

9. Quoted in *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 3, 837. Unlike the clause concerning clergy privilege, the one that annulled hereditary rights was not replicated in the 1563 and 1604 Acts.

10. Davies, *Popular Magic*, 4.

11. *Ibid.*, 6–7; Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 30.

12. Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 89.

13. Quoted in Newton and Bath, eds., *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604*, 233.

14. Quoted in *ibid.*

15. Quoted in *ibid.*

16. The *Daemonologie*, first published in Edinburgh in 1597, was reissued in London in 1603, the year of James's arrival to the city for his coronation as English sovereign. Maxwell-Stuart, "King James's Experience of Witches," 38–39. On *Daemonologie* see Stuart Clark, "King James's *Daemonologie*: Witchcraft and Kingship," in *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft*, ed. S. Anglo (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 156–81.

17. Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 90; Newton "Introduction," 11.

18. Clark, "King James's *Daemonologie*," 161; James Sharpe, "Witch-Hunting and Witch Historiography: Some Anglo-Scottish Comparisons," in *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context*, ed. Julian Goodare (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2002), 188.

19. Quoted in Newton and Bath, eds., *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604*, 237.
20. Quoted in *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 4, pt. 2 (1819; repr., London: Dawson of Pall Mall, 1975), 1028–29.
21. *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 4, pt. 2, 1028–29.
22. Ibid.
23. Quoted in *ibid.*
24. On familiar spirits in early modern England see Emma Wilby, “The Witch’s Familiar and the Fairy in Early Modern England and Scotland,” *Folklore* 111 (2000): 283–50; Garthine Walker, “The Strangeness of the Familiar: Witchcraft and the Law in Early Modern England,” in *The Extraordinary and the Everyday in Early Modern England Essays in Celebration of the Work of Bernard Capp*, ed. Angela McShane and Garthine Walker (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 105–24.
25. Marion Gibson, “Applying the Act of 1604: Witches in Essex, Northamptonshire and Lancashire,” in *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604*, ed. Newton and Bath, 118.
26. Newton, “Introduction,” 13.
27. Wallace Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1911), 22; Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 91.
28. Malcolm Gaskill, “Witchcraft, Emotion and Imagination in the English Civil War,” in *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604*, ed. Newton and Bath, 162.
29. An idea already present in George Lyman Kittredge and Clive Holmes. See George L. Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929), 308; Clive Holmes, “Witchcraft and Possession at the Accession of James I: The Publication of Samuel Harsnett’s Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures,” in *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604*, ed. Newton and Bath, 88.
30. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 531–32.
31. See Philip Almond, *The Lancashire Witches: A Chronicle of Sorcery and Death on Pendle Hill* (New York: I. B. Taurus, 2012), 125.
32. Gibson, “Applying the Act of 1604,” 124.
33. It is important to stress that this article does not deny that cunning folk were effectively prosecuted. Legally and morally they were in an awkward position, confronted both in ecclesiastical and civil courts. Alan Macfarlane’s study of their situation in Essex during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is still relevant for analyzing this matter. According to Quarter Sessions records from Essex, there were forty-eight accused witches: thirty-five for harmful magic, the others for activities related to cunning folk. Of the 503 indictments for witchcraft registered in the Essex Assizes between 1560 and 1680, nine were for seeking treasure and one for fortune telling. There are no records, however, of prosecutions for healing. Curing could be mentioned in the indictments but was not considered part of the charges presented by the court. See Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 24–25.
34. The Church Courts were the organs of the Church of England in charge of dealing with healers. Records for Ecclesiastical Courts in Essex between 1560 and 1680 show that of more than 230 people known to have been accused of some activity related to witchcraft, six were specifically for curing. *Ibid.*, 69. Besides this small number, since early modern times such tribunals could not apply physical punishments; their chastisements were limited to penance, public admonition, and in extreme cases excommunication. See Brian Outhwaite,

The Rise and Fall of the English Ecclesiastical Courts (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 70–71. The death penalty, the only punishment that satisfied demonologists for a transgression as severe as witchcraft, was not among the Church Courts prerogatives anymore; they were intended not to exact retribution for offenses, but to reform and rehabilitate the culprit. See Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England* (1987; repr., Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

35. W.W., *A true and just recorde* (London, 1582), 2A7–2A8.

36. Marion Gibson, *Witchcraft and Society in England and America, 1550–1750* (London: Continuum, 2007), 19; *The Examination of John Walsh* (London, 1566), A5B–A8V.

37. Maxwell-Stuart, “King James’s Experience of Witches,” 42.

38. On the origins of late-medieval demonology see Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, U.K.: Clarendon Press, 1997), 151–311; Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Alain Boureau, *Satan the Heretic: The Birth of Demonology in the Medieval West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Fabián A. Campagne, “Demonology at a Crossroads: The Visions of Ermine de Reims and the Image of the Devil on the Eve of the Great European Witch-Hunt,” *Church History* 80, no. 3 (2011): 467–97.

39. The acutest phase of witch trials in England took place during the European golden age of witch-hunting, 1570 to 1630. On early modern European witch-hunts’ chronology see Brian Levack, *The Witch Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (1987; repr., London: Longman, 2006), 204–52.

40. George Gifford is—along with Reginald Scot—the English demonologist most discussed by historians. See James Hitchcock, “George Gifford and Puritan Witch Beliefs,” *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte* 58 (1967): 90–99; Alan Macfarlane, “A Tudor Anthropologist: George Gifford’s Discourse and Dialogue,” in *The Damned Art*, ed. Anglo, 140–55; Dewey Wallace, “George Gifford, Puritan Propaganda and Popular Religion in Elizabethan England,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 9, no. 1 (1978): 27–49; Scott McGinnis, “Subtiltie Exposed: Pastoral Perspectives on Witch Belief in the Thought of George Gifford,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 33, no. 3 (2002): 665–86.

41. George Gifford, *A Discourse of the Subtill Practises of Devills by Witches and Sorcerers* (London, 1587), 42, Cornell University Library’s Witchcraft Collection, <http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=witch;idno=wito52>.

42. *Ibid.*, 49–51.

43. Also, witches could not be considered as the intellectual authors of the damage because manipulation of spirits was beyond their capacity: “Shall a silly old creature scarce able to bite a crust in suder, give autortiy and power to ye prince of darkness: is any man so simple to beleeve that the Devill can have power given him but from a greater then himselfe: or when hee hath liberty, will hee not execute his power unless some witch send him?” *Ibid.*, 44.

44. Lisa J. Watson, “The Influence of Reformation and Counter Reformation upon Key Texts in the Literature of Witchcraft” (Ph.D. diss., University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1997), 106, <https://theses.ncl.ac.uk/dspace/bitstream/10443/151/1/watson97.pdf>.

45. George Gifford, *A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcrafts* (1593; repr., London: Percy Society, 1843), 18.

46. *Ibid.*, 71.

47. Gifford, *Discourse of the Subtill Practises of Devills*, 59.
48. Gary Waite, "Religious Reform and the Witch-Hunts," in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft*, ed. Brian Levack (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2013), 491. Marion Gibson also labeled Gifford as a "semi-skeptic" in *Reading Witchcraft: Stories of Early English Witches* (London: Routledge, 1999), 83. More accurately, Stuart Clark highlighted that despite his warning about judicial abuses and the vindictiveness that guided accusations, the preacher of Maldon would have hardened the laws if that had been one of his prerogatives. S. Clark, "Demonology," in *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition*, Vol. 3, ed. Richard Golden (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 261.
49. Henry Holland, *A Treatise against Witchcraft* (Cambridge, 1590), 54, Early English Books Online, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/ebo/A03468.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>.
50. *Ibid.*, 87.
51. Perkin's treatise was posthumously published in 1608, presumably as a compilation of his sermons on witchcraft. See Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 81. Since he died in 1602, the sources of the treatise were written before the sanction of the Jacobean Act.
52. On William Perkins' theology see William B. Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of Protestant England* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2014); Richard A. Muller, "Perkins' a Golden Chaine: Predestinarian System or Schematized Ordo Salutis," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 9, no. 1 (1978): 68–81.
53. "To this purpose, as God hath made a Covenant with his Church, binding himselfe by promise to bee their God, and requiring of them the condition of faith and obedience; so doth Satan indent with his Subjects by mutuall confederacies." From William Perkins, *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft* (Cambridge, 1608), 2, Cornell University Library's Witchcraft Collection, <http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=witch;idno=wit075>.
54. *Ibid.*, 53.
55. Stuart Clark, "Protestant Demonology: Sin, Superstition, and Society (c. 1520–c. 1630)," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, ed. Gustav Henningsen and Bengt Ankarloo (Oxford, U.K.: Clarendon Press, 1993), 69.
56. Gifford. *A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcrafts*, 66; Perkins. *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 49.
57. Theophilus (Holland's alter ego) referred positively to Job's palliatives to misfortune: "his pretious preseruatiues were these. First, faith, 2. prayer, 3. a righteous life, 4. the word of God, 5. repentance, and sixtlye the continuall most gracious prouidence of God ouer him." From Holland, *Treatise against Witchcraft*, 61.
58. Perkins, *Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 53.
59. Gifford, *Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcrafts*, 71. William Perkins evinced an identical stand: "In like manner, though the Witch were in many respects profitable, and did no hurt, but procured much good; yet because he hath renounced God his king and governour, and hath bound himselfe by other lawes to the service of the enemy of God and his Church, death is his portion justly assigned him by God; he may not live" (*Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 41).
60. Gifford, *Discourse of the Subtill Practises of Devills*, 6–7.
61. Holland, *Treatise against Witchcraft*, 50.

62. Perkins, *Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 4. Having reached this point of the investigation, it is possible to consider that the increasing numbers of witchcraft trials and the disagreements over the definition of witchcraft were not necessarily unconnected as causes of the rise of demonological writing in England. In the 1580s, English courts were executing more witches than ever before, but they were doing it based on a law that was considered useless by demonologists. People were being put to death for a crime that was impossible (*maleficium*), while apostates and Devil worshippers, those who were committing a real fault, were still free from punishment.

63. Alexander Roberts, *A Treatise of Witchcraft* (London, 1616), Cornell University Library's Witchcraft Collection, <http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=witch;idno=wit171>.

64. *Ibid.*, 83.

65. Richard Bernard. *A Guide to Grand Jury Men* (London, 1627), 267, Cornell University Library's Witchcraft Collection, <http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=witch;idno=wit140>.

66. Thomas Cooper, *The Mystery of Witchcraft* (London, 1617), 18, Early English Books Online, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A19295.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>.

67. Bernard, *Guide to Grand Jury Men*, 229.

68. Cooper, *Mystery of Witchcraft*, 311.

69. "God doth as straitly prohibit them, and senerely punish the practisers thereof, as others offending in any exercise of vnlawfull arts, Deut. 18. 10. 11. There shall not be found among you (instructing the Israelites his people) a charmer, for these are abhominacion vnto the Lord" (Roberts, *Treatise of Witchcraft*, 76). "Because, this being a Iudiciall Law whose penaltie is death, seeing they haue in them a perpetuall equitie, and doe seeme to maintaine some morall precept, is Perpetuall: As seruing to maintaine the Equitie of the three first Morall Precepts of the first Table; which cannot be kept, vnlesse this Law be put in execution" (Cooper, *Mystery of Witchcraft*, 312). "And that none amongst his should be Witches, Wizards, Necromancers, and such like, Deut. 18. 10, 11, 12. 2. Forbidding any to go to them, Leuit. 19. and 20. Isaiah 8. 19. 3. His commandement to put Witches to death, Exo. 22. 18." From Bernard, *Guide to Grand Jury Men*, 101.

70. Unlike Maxwell-Stuart's work, this article does not consider that the words "aiders, abettors and counsellors" uttered in the 1604 Act referred to clients. See Maxwell-Stuart, "King James's Experience of Witches," 42–43. In any case, they constituted a reassertion of the judicial responsibility of those who collaborated with and facilitated witches' actions.

71. As happened with healers, their clients were under the jurisdiction of Ecclesiastical Courts. Macfarlane counted in the archdiocese of Essex and Colchester thirty-eight cases for consulting witches, five of which were for asking "help in sickness." See Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, 69. In 1600, one Thomas Sayes from the village of Buttsbury admitted that he went to a wise man for medicine, but his case was dismissed. Three years earlier, Thomas Wailand from the village of Witham was not that lucky—he was excommunicated for the same fault (*Ibid.*, 285, 289). Thus, even when Church Courts prosecuted clients, the sanction was mild in comparison to the penalty expected by demonologists.

72. Gifford, *Discourse of the Subtill Practises of Devils*, 55; Holland, *Treatise against Witchcraft*, 50; Bernard, *Guide to Grand Jury Men*, 55.

73. Cooper, *Mystery of Witchcraft*, 36–37
74. Gifford, *Discourse of the Subtill Practises of Devills*, 44.
75. Holland, *Treatise against Witchcraft*, 53.
76. Gifford, *Discourse of the Subtill Practises of Devills*, 59; Roberts, *Treatise of Witchcraft*, 71.
77. Holland, *Treatise against Witchcraft*, 87.
78. Susan Doran, *Elizabeth I and Religion, 1558–1603* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 26; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 26.
79. On Puritanism see Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1967); Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Francis J. Bremer and Tom Webster, eds., *Puritans and Puritanism in England and America: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2006); John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
80. Patrick Collinson rejected the idea that the division between Puritans and anti-Puritans was one between Calvinists and non-Calvinists. See Patrick Collinson, *From Cranmer to Sanicroft* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), 91. See also Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, 8.
81. Peter Lake, “Anti-Puritanism: The Structure of a Prejudice,” in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England*, ed. Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell Press, 2006), 85.
82. Doran, *Elizabeth I and Religion*, 25; John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim, “Introduction,” in *Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. Coffey and Paul, 1.
83. Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, 1.
84. Leo F. Solt, *Church and State in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 81.
85. Karl Gunther, *Reformation Unbound: Protestant Visions of Reform in England, 1525–1590* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 179; Mark Chapman, *Anglicanism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2006), 36–39.
86. For an approximation to English Presbyterianism see Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London: Unwin Hayman, 1988); Polly Ha, *English Presbyterianism, 1590–1640* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010).
87. Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 333–84.
88. See *ibid.*, 21–100; Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, 1–15.
89. Patrick Collinson, “Protestant Culture and the Cultural Revolution,” in *Reformation to Revolution: Politics and Religion in Early Modern England*, ed. Margo Todd (New York: Routledge, 1995), 33–34; Gunther, *Reformation Unbound*, 3.
90. Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, 1; MacCulloch, *Later Reformation in England*, 127–28; John B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth, 1558–1603* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1959), 200–201; Doreen Rosman, *From Catholic to Protestant* (London: UCL Press Limited, 1996), 70.
91. Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, 280–82; MacCulloch, *Later Reformation in England*, 51.
92. Leo Solt stressed that, since the break with Rome, the monarchical succession of James I was the only one not accompanied by significant changes in religious policies. See Solt, *Church and State in Early Modern England*, 163. The pronounced continuity that James drew

with Elizabeth's theological and ecclesiastical policies may strengthen the idea that the 1604 Act resembled more than it differed from that of 1563.

93. Brian Levack, "Witchcraft and the Law," in *Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft*, ed. Levack, 468.

94. Another possible explanation for accusations of *maleficium* being always the cause of trials could be economic. Early modern justice was not inexpensive, both in money and in time for the villages. Jailers and executioners needed to be paid; people in jails had to be fed for weeks, even months before the Assizes. Malcolm Gaskill calculated that in the 1640s a prisoner might have cost three pence per day. These expenses were one of the reasons witch-hunts in East Anglia lost momentum. See Malcolm Gaskill, *Witchfinders: A Seventeenth-Century English Tragedy* (London: John Murray, 2006), 145–78.

95. For social conflicts at the communal level and witchcraft accusations in England see Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, 147–210; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 517–700; Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 148–89.

96. Laura Paterson, "Executing Scottish Witches," in *Scottish Witches and Witch-Hunters*, ed. Julian Goodare (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 208; Brian Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland* (New York, Routledge, 2008), 9.

97. Charles W. Prior, *Defining the Jacobean Church: The Politics of Religious Controversy, 1603–1625* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 68–69.

98. Patrick Collinson, "Antipuritanism," in *Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. Coffey and Lim, 24

99. See Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, 113; Haigh, *English Reformations*, 280.

100. Holland, *Treatise against Witchcraft*, 58.

101. See Collinson, "Protestant Culture and the Cultural Revolution," 34–35.

102. Doran, *Elizabeth I and Religion*, 27. On moderate Puritans see Lake, *Moderate Puritans*.

103. For Gunther's recommendations in using the term "radical" see *Reformation Unbound*, 3.

104. McGinnis, "'Subtiltie' Exposed," 666; Brett Usher, "George Gifford," in *Puritans and Puritanism in England and America*, ed. Bremer and Webster, 104.

105. Francis Bremer, "Richard Bernard," in *Puritans and Puritanism in England and America*, ed. Bremer and Webster, 24.

106. See *A Sermon on the Parable of the Sower* (Gifford, 1584), *The Faithfull Shepheard* (Bernard, 1607), and *The Art of Prophecyng* (Perkins, 1609).

107. For their position on preaching see Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590–1640* (2010; repr., Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 25, 75–76, 193–94.

108. See Malcolm Gaskill, "Witchcraft Trials in England," in *Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft*, ed. Levack, 291–92.

109. "It were to be wished that the law be more perfect in that respect, even to cut off all such abominations. These cunning men and woman which deale with spirits . . . ought to bee rooted out" (Gifford, *Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcrafts*, 95). Two decades later, Roberts advised the magistrates about witchcraft as follows: "to bend the edge of his sword against these most dangerous Instruments: and to giue way vnto the Gospel, to cut them downe" (Roberts, *Treatise of Witchcraft*, 234). "By the lawes of England the theise is executed for stealing, and we thinke it just and profitable; but it were a thousand times better

for the land, if all witches, but especially the blessing Witch might suffer death" (Perkins, *Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 54).

110. Holland, *Treatise against Witchcraft*, 89.

111. Whitgift was far from antagonizing the religious settlement not only in absolute but also in comparative terms: his predecessor in the seat had fallen out of favor years before for not sharing Elizabeth's distrust of lecturers, preachers, and private reunions held to discuss the scriptures. See Black, *Reign of Elizabeth*, 198.

112. Peter Elmer, *Witchcraft, Witch-Hunting and Politics in Early Modern England* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2016), 16. Throughout his book Elmer points out that it was common that those who showed greater persecutory zeal against witches in early modern England were in a situation of weakness or even marginalized within religious or political institutions.

113. For a chronological analysis of English witch trials see Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 108–9.

114. Geoffrey R. Elton, *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 34–35. Of the fifty-eight men appointed by Elizabeth to the Privy Council during her rule, the only cleric was John Whitgift, nominated in 1586. See Black, *Reign of Elizabeth*, 198; Geoffrey R. Elton, *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 6.

115. Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland*, 9.

116. Besides, the laymen that partook in the drafting were also singled out for their commitment to the ecclesiastical order in force. For example, Edmund Anderson, chief justice of the Court of Common Pleas, while participating in the commission, was known for being conservative in religious matters and for his public hostility to Puritans and Catholics alike. See Maxwell-Stuart, "King James's Experience of Witches," 43.

117. The expression is from Patrick Collinson, *Richard Bancroft and Elizabethan Anti-Puritanism* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1.

118. Rosman, *From Catholic to Protestant*, 11–12.

119. Solt, *Church and State in Early Modern England*, 115; Diarmaid MacCulloch, "The Latitude of the Church of England," in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England*, ed. Fincham and Lake, 46–47.

120. Chapman, *Anglicanism*, 45. When defining the religious course of his reign in the Hampton Court conference (1604), the words once uttered by Andrew Melville to James may have struck a chord in the King's head: "And, therefore, Sir I must tell you, there is two Kings and two Kingdoms in Scotland. There is Christ Jesus the King, and his kingdom the Kirk, whose subject James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom not a king, nor a lord, nor a head but a member." Quoted in Solt, *Church and State in Early Modern England*, 131.

121. Citation from *The actis and conventiounis of the Realme of Scotland maid in Parliamentis anno domini 1566* (Edinburgh, 1566), Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707, <http://www.rps.ac.uk/mss/A1563/6/9>. "That no manner of person or persons of whatsoever estate, degree or condition they be of, take upon hand in any time hereafter, to use any manner of Witchcrafts, sorceries or necromancy." All translations from the Scots language are my own.

122. *Ibid.* "Any such craft or knowledge."

123. The absence of any explicit reference to cunning folk gave birth to a historiographical discussion over whether the Scottish law referred to them tacitly. Brian Levack and Joyce Miller considered that the Act did not intend to punish charismatic healers. See Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland*, 9; Joyce Miller, "Devices and Directions: Folk Healing Aspects of Witchcraft Practice in Seventeenth-Century Scotland," in *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context*, ed. Julian Goodare (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2002), 91–93. Owen Davies and Julian Goodare, on the other hand, point out that wise folk were encompassed in the text because there was no distinction there between different types of witchcraft. See Owen Davies, "A Comparative Perspective on Scottish Cunning-Folk and Charmers," in *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Julian Goodare, Lauren Martin, and Joyce Miller (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 189–90; Julian Goodare, "The Scottish Witchcraft Act," *Church History* 74, no. 1 (2005): 54.

124. Citation from *The actis and conventiounis of the Realme of Scotland maid in Parliamentis anno domini 1566* (Edinburgh, 1566), The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707, <http://www.rps.ac.uk/mss/A1563/6/9>. "Seek any help, response, consultation at any such users or abusers aforesaid of Witchcrafts, Sorceries or Necromancy."

125. The possibility offered by the Scottish Act did not necessarily entail its practical consummation. See Goodare, "Scottish Witchcraft Act," 55. Still, the probability that healers were prosecuted as witches was bigger in Scotland, as shown by the paradigmatic—but not unique—trials of Agnes Sampson (1591, North Berwick), Isobel Strachan (1597, Aberdeen), and John Burgh (1643, Kinross). See Wilby, "Witch's Familiar and the Fairy in Early Modern England and Scotland," 297; Michael Waser, "The Privy Council and the Witches: The Curtailment of Witchcraft Prosecutions in Scotland, 1597–1628," *Scottish Historical Review* 82, no. 213 (2000): 41.

126. James Kirk, "The Polities of the Best Reformed Kirks': Scottish Achievements and English Aspirations in Church Government after the Reformation," *Scottish Historical Review* 59, no. 167 (1980): 25; Julian Goodare, *The Government of Scotland, 1560–1625* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2004), 14.

127. Goodare, "Scottish Witchcraft Act," 46.

128. Christina Lerner, *Enemies of God: Witch-Hunt in Scotland* (Oxford, U.K.: Chatto & Windus, 1981), 165–68.

129. On the reference to "superstitioun" in the Scottish document see Goodare, "Scottish Witchcraft Act," 51–52.

130. Clark, "Protestant Demonology," 11.

131. Goodare, "Scottish Witchcraft Act," 66.

132. During the English Civil War, when the Long Parliament called the Westminster Assembly of Divines, the godly ministers officially established that the crime of witchcraft was not causing harm but compacting with the Devil, the ultimate form of treason against God. See Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 138. The same Assembly that erased the Laudian innovations of the 1630s and produced documents such as *The Form of Church Government*, *A Confession of Faith*, the *Shorter Catechism* and *Larger Catechism*, and the *Directory for Public Worship* considered that changing the definition of witchcraft was an important part of the religious transformations they were willing to impose.

133. John Bossy, "Moral Arithmetic: Sevens Sins into Ten Commandments," in *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern England*, ed. E. Leites (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 214–17.

134. *Ibid.*, 230.

135. Perkins, *Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 5.

136. Arnold Hunt pointed out that by the beginning of the seventeenth century, sermons respected a "doctrine and use" structure. Lectures started with a general comment on a particular topic (doctrine), underpinned by biblical passages (reasons), and ended with a practical application for daily life (use). See Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, 95. The organization described by Hunt is recurrent in English demonological works. First, they described the universal characteristics of witchcraft and the seductive ability of the Devil, then resorted to the scriptures to justify the annihilation of witches (typically Ex. 22:18, Deut. 18:10, and Lev. 20:27), and finally gave examples to endure the permanent demonic temptations and misfortunes by lawful means (prayer, Bible reading, and attending to sermons).