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Early Modern Scottish Witchcraft Trials”

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Abbreviations

JC	Justiciary Court Records (NAS)
NAS	National Archives of Scotland
RPC	<i>The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland</i> , 14 vols. Edited by David Masson and John Hill Burton. Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1877-1914.
SCA	Stirling Council Archives
SJC	<i>Selected Justiciary Cases</i> , vol. 1 and 3. Edited by S.A. Gillon. Edinburgh: Stair Society, 1953.
SSW	Goodare, Julian, Lauren Martin, Joyce Miller and Louise Yeoman. "The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft." Archived January 2003. http://www.shca.ed.ac.uk/witches/ .

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Introduction

Recalling the historical school of the Annales, this current study is driven by the idea that people's lives were not only shaped by their material surroundings, the social, economic, political and legal contexts but also very much by their beliefs, fantasies and fears. During the Early Modern period (1500-1800) and arguably still today, the world was not only populated by visible beings and humans but also by supernatural spirits including religious and pre-Christian entities.¹ As long as people believe in such beings, supernatural entities can be a powerful force in shaping the course of history. The European witch-hunt could never have taken place if people had not become convinced that Satan and his army of demons, together with their human allies, the witches, and other demonized figures like fairies, existed and influenced the material world.

This dissertation will focus on the relationship of fairy and witch beliefs in popular and elite culture during the Scottish witch-hunts between 1563 and 1736. The study will be specifically based on the analysis of fairy-related Scottish witchcraft trials and set in the context of contemporary elite discourse and the current historiographical debate. The fact that fairy belief occurs in official legal documents emphasises that fairies were no mere fantastical literary creatures during this period but that the populace, as well as the authorities, took them seriously and included those supernatural entities into their worldview. A confession does not mean that the accused witches believed everything they said, but the testimonies reveal aspects of a common culture in Early Modern Scotland. As Christina Lerner emphasised, confessions were a negotiation between accused, representing popular beliefs, and interrogators, who interpreted these ideas from within a learned worldview. Despite the conflation of elite and popular notions in witchcraft trial confessions it is possible to distinguish them to a certain degree since the populace was mainly concerned with everyday anxieties of individual people and introduced folkloric narratives into the confessions. The elite, on the other hand, mainly concentrated on the theological and philosophical implications of such ideas and the threat that Satan and his company constituted for the whole Christian society.²

While some studies of the Scottish witch-hunts including Christina Lerner's *Enemies of God* and Brian Levack's *Witch-Hunting in Scotland* neglect the entanglement of witch and fairy belief in Scotland several other scholars like P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, Emma Wilby, Diane Purkiss, and Julian

¹ Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion, 1250-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 41-9.

² Julian Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm in Scotland," in *Airy Nothings: Imagining the Otherworld of Faerie from the Middle Ages to the Age of Reason: Essays in Honour of Alasdair A. MacDonald*, ed. Karin E. Olsen and Jan R. Veenstra (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 139, 168-9; Julian Goodare, "Flying Witches in Scotland," in *Scottish Witches and Witch-Hunters*, ed. Julian Goodare, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 160; Tim Harris, "Problematising Popular Culture," in *Popular Culture in England: c. 1500-1850*, ed. Tim Harris (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), 9; Lizanne Henderson and Edward J. Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief: A History* (Edinburgh, John Donald, 2011), 2-3, 12; Christina Lerner, *Enemies of God: The Witch-hunt in Scotland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), 135-6.

Goodare emphasised this relationship in their works.³ The first systematic approach of studying the mingling of Scottish witch and fairy beliefs was undertaken by J.A. MacCulloch in 1921.⁴ The first full-length modern study of the subject was provided by Lizanne Henderson and Edward J. Cowan. They investigated witch trial records as a source for fairy belief and *mentalité* of the Scottish folk. Henderson and Cowan stated that the witch testimonies show fragments of common beliefs and represent indirect evidence for popular fairy belief, filtered through the perspectives of demonologists, ministers, inquisitors and judges. In their chapter about the demonization of fairy belief during the witch-hunts they argued that when the image of the witches' sabbath started to take shape during the 15th century on the continent, creatures like the fairies and those who contacted them were less tolerated and fairy belief came to be viewed as demonically inspired. Henderson and Cowan argued that the Reformation, officially adopted in 1560 in Scotland, led to a widening gap between folk and elite culture and that the reformers tried to suppress fairy belief and folk culture. Although fairies were already associated with the Devil before King James' visit in Denmark in 1589, the full connection only crystallized after the North Berwick trials.⁵

This dissertation takes these previous studies, and especially the work of Henderson and Cowan, as a starting point to raise more in-depth questions about the demonization of fairy belief during the Scottish witch-hunts. It will include an analysis of contemporary elite beliefs as well as folk notions of fairies and witches and shows how they influenced one another. While Henderson and Cowan only found 38 witchcraft trials related to fairy belief, the *Survey of the Scottish Witchcraft* (SSW) database compiled by the University of Edinburgh, lists 113 out of 3413 analysed witchcraft

³ Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm," 139-169; Julian Goodare, "The Cult of the Seely Wights in Scotland," *Folklore* 123(August 2012): 198-219; Julian Goodare, "Witchcraft in Scotland", in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 312-3; Lerner, *Enemies of God*; Brian P. Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland: Law, Politics and Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2008); P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Satan's Conspiracy: Magic and Witchcraft in Sixteenth-Century Scotland* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001), 10-7, 102-123; P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, *The Great Scottish Witch-Hunt* (Stroud: Tempus, 2007), 51, 64, 77-8, 112-3, 127-8, 140, 150, 158, 164-5, 216; Diane Purkiss, "Losing Babies, Losing Stories: Attending to Women's Confessions in Scottish Witch-Trials," in *Culture and Change: Attending to Early Modern Women*, ed. Margaret Mikesell and Adele Seeff (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), 143-158; Diane Purkiss, "Sounds of Silence: Fairies and Incest in Scottish Witchcraft Stories," in *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Stuart Clark (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2001), 81-98; Diane Purkiss, *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 85-115, 126-157; Emma Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits: Shamanistic Visionary Traditions in Early Modern British Witchcraft and Magic* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2013); Emma Wilby, *The Visions of Isobel Gowdie: Magic, Witchcraft and Dark Shamanism in Seventeenth-Century Scotland* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2013); Emma Wilby, "The Witch's Familiar and the Fairy in Early Modern England and Scotland," *Folklore* vol.111, no.2 (October 2000): 283-305, accessed October 5, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1260607>.

⁴ Canon J.A. MacCulloch, "The Mingling of Fairy and Witch Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Scotland," *Folklore* vol. 32, no. 4 (1921): 227-244, accessed March 6, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1255201>.

⁵ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 2-4, 106-141.

trials where fairies and fairy motifs played a role.⁶ This study will integrate fairy-related trials from both of these publications as well as other selected works, noted in the appendix. Based on the numbers and details given by the SSW, there is a qualitative but also a quantitative analysis of fairy-related trials. This dissertation focuses on different themes to establish a broad overview about when, where, and in which contexts fairies and fairy-elements occurred in the trials and how these themes changed over time. The qualitative analysis includes edited witchcraft trials, which were mostly published by historical clubs during the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century,⁷ and some details given by the SSW. After the name of the accused witch, the county of their origin and the date of the trial and/or execution, as they are provided by the SSW, will be given to contextualize the trials in a chronological and geographical dimension.

The first part of this dissertation outlines some general discussions about the European witch-hunts, the differentiation of elite and popular belief, approaches towards a study of belief in the context of the witch-hunts as well as definitions for Early Modern European witches. There is a general introduction to Scottish history during this period followed by an overview about the history of the Scottish witch-hunts and the legal procedures. Furthermore, an investigation of Scottish fairy belief, including origins and names of fairies, fairy belief before the witch-hunts, as well as elite and popular notions of fairies during the witch-hunts is discussed. This is followed by an outline of the chronological and geographical distribution of fairy-related witchcraft trials.

The distinction between witches performing harmful magic as a main concern for the populace and diabolic witches in league with Satan emphasised by the elite⁸ is reflected in the following chapter. The next chapter analyses the relationship between charmers, witches and fairies in the context of their ability to heal or cause illnesses. Firstly, the role charmers in the medical marketplace of Early Modern Scotland is discussed. This section also includes definitions and distinctions between charmers and witches, a discussion of how their magical powers were activated and what the Church thought about their practices. This is followed by qualitative analysis of Scottish witchcraft trials from the 16th to the 18th centuries which formed the first extensive and detailed insights into traditional Scottish beliefs of ordinary people about illness, health and healing.⁹ It is argued that fairies could act as a source for the healing skills of charmers. This relationship could be

⁶ Julian Goodare, Lauren Martin, Joyce Miller and Louise Yeoman, "The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft," archived January 2003, accessed October 5, 2013, <http://www.shca.ed.ac.uk/witches/>; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 217.

⁷ Lerner, *Enemies of God*, 33.

⁸ Eva Labouvie, "Hexenspuk und Hexenabwehr: Volksmagie und volkstümlicher Hexenglaube," in *Hexenwelten: Magie und Imaginationen vom 16.-20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Richard van Dülmen (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1987), 92-3; Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2006), 9-10; Stuart Macdonald, *The Witches of Fife: Witch-hunting in a Scottish Shire: 1560-1710* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2002), 9-10.

⁹ Alaric Hall, "Folk-healing, Fairies and Witchcraft: The Trial of Stein Maltman, Stirling 1628," *Studia Celtica Fennica* 3 (2006): 10.

interpreted by the elite as evidence of complicity with the Devil since fairies were not Christian spirits and therefore were regarded as demonic. Despite working with fairies, charmers also healed fairy-inflicted injuries which is discussed alongside other attacks of fairies on humans. Finally, there is an analysis of the relationship between the maleficent witch and fairies arguing that some fairy-inflicted injuries could be transferred to the human witch, which has also been suggested by Éva Pócs in the context of South-Eastern European witch beliefs.¹⁰

The last chapter focuses on the relationship between fairy belief and the notion of a diabolical witch as well as the fusion of ideas about magic and witchcraft that established witches as enemies of God and humanity. This cumulative concept of witchcraft, which was established among the European elites by the end of the 16th century, included new conceptions about the Devil, the demonic pact, the witches' sabbath and flight which is described in this section.¹¹ It is also discussed when and where these ideas were fused, how they were spread across Europe, and what realities may lie behind such ideas. These basic outlines are followed by a deeper analysis of how the cumulative concept came to Scotland and which regional characteristics it developed there. Firstly, this includes an analysis of popular and elite notions of the Devil in Scotland and the shapes Satan assumed in fairy-related witchcraft trials. Secondly, there is a discussion about how much influence King James VI and I and the North Berwick trials had in this context. This is followed by an analysis of the alleged relationship between the Devil and the witches and how the sabbath, the witches' flight and animal metamorphosis were described in Scottish trials. It is argued that pre-existing fairy belief made it easier for the Scottish folk to accept continental ideas such as the demonic pact and the witches' sabbath in the first place and continued to do so during the 17th century since fairy belief did not vanish. Stereotypical diabolical concepts, however, needed time to develop and built a regional Scottish variant of continental demonological theories.

¹⁰ Éva Pócs, *Fairies and Witches at the Boundary of South-Eastern and Central Europe* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1989), 7-11.

¹¹ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 30-51.

Chapter One

Methods, Theories, Definitions: A Historical Background of Witch and Fairy Belief in Scotland

This chapter gives more information about the history and dimensions of the European and especially the Scottish witch-hunts while outlining the basic methods and theories for the study of witch and fairy belief. Although crucially intertwined and influencing each other, it is argued that popular and learned notions about witches and fairies can be distinguished. The differences show off in the definitions for witches themselves but also in the fact that fairies were ambiguous or at best beneficent beings for the populace while the authorities clearly identified them with demons and condemned the belief in fairies as pagan superstition.

General Studies about Witchcraft

The European witch-hunts took place roughly between 1450 and 1750. Estimations of trials and executions vary: in some sources one can find exaggerated figures of nine million executed while more reliable studies suggest that there were about 110-120.000 accused and approximately 50-60.000 executions in Europe. Most of the accused were women except for Estonia, Russia, Normandy and Iceland where the majority was male.¹² There was not one continuous witch-hunt in Europe but a series of peaks and troughs. The first major wave of trials was during the 14th century in France and Italy and the second during the 16th and 17th centuries which was concentrated in Germany, Eastern France, Switzerland and Scotland.¹³ Richard Kieckhefer who analysed the period between 1300 and 1500 distinguishes four stages of trials. Until 1375, the trials were mainly politically inspired with an emphasis on sorcery while diabolic trials steadily increased after 1375 and were first fully developed in 14th century France.¹⁴ Although the diabolic witchcraft theory was more widely accepted in Europe during the first half of the 16th century, there were not a lot of witchcraft trials during this period. Prosecutions started again around 1560 and their numbers increased steadily until 1600. There was also a further geographical expansion of prosecutions, which were now not only limited principally to France and Germany, but also countries like Scotland had witchcraft trials for the first time. While

¹² Wolfgang Behringer, *Witches and Witch-Hunts: A Global History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004), 149-151; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 21, 23, 141; Brian P. Levack, introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 5-6; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 4.

¹³ Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: The Demonization of Christians in Medieval Christendom* (London: Pimlico, 2005), 118-143; Larner, *Enemies of God*, 16, 17.

¹⁴ Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: Their Foundations in Popular and Learned Culture: 1300-1500* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), 10-26; Larner, *Enemies of God*, 17-8.

there were many big witch-hunts across Europe during the 17th century, the number of prosecutions steadily decreased during the 18th century.¹⁵

During the first half of the 20th century, the theories of Margaret Murray were very controversial in the study of the European witch-hunts. She argued that there was an organized witch cult based on pre-Christian ancient fertility religion which the Christian male authorities tried to eradicate.¹⁶ Cohn took a major role in discrediting her theories in 1975. He showed that she only used selected material supporting her theory, and she was misled as many confessions stated that they were extracted without torture although interrogators used sleep deprivation, threats and promises.¹⁷

Hugh Trevor-Roper argued that witchcraft was a central problem in Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries, and he related the chronology of the hunts to the rise and fall of religious zeal, especially to the rise of Protestantism and Counter-Reformation as periods when the clergy was very dominant. He also argued that social forces like war and the interest in the ruling classes to support the witch-hunt were important stimulations for the prosecutions.¹⁸ During the 1970s and 1980s there was an increasing number of regional studies on witchcraft like the influential text *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (1993) which showed the variety of witchcraft experiences in different countries. Another important step was the idea that historians needed to distinguish pre-conditions for the witch-hunts and triggers causing trials in particular regions.¹⁹ Brian Levack argued that there was a new conception of the witch serving as an important pre-condition for the major witch-hunts during the 16th and 17th centuries. He adopted the idea of the cumulative concept of witchcraft and stated that the pact with the Devil, the belief in witches' sabbaths, night flights and shape-shifting were vital components for the witch-hunts and important reasons for the high frequency of cases during witchcraft panics.²⁰ Before his study single causes were often suggested to start witchcraft trials. There were ideas that the witch-hunts were caused by the taking of hallucinogenic substances, syphilis, a plot by European oligarchies to deflect criticism onto witches. The theory that the trials were a last major outbreak of medieval superstition was

¹⁵ Larner, *Enemies of God*, 18-9.

¹⁶ Goodare "Witchcraft in Scotland", 301; Larner, *Enemies of God*, 34; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 5; Margaret Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 11-8.

¹⁷ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 144-161; Goodare, "Witchcraft in Scotland," 301; Larner, *Enemies of God*, 34.

¹⁸ Larner, *Enemies of God*, 19; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 5; Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, *Religion, Reformation und sozialer Umbruch: Die Krisis des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Ullstein, 1970), 95-179; Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1990), 11-23, 40-96.

¹⁹ Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, introduction to *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, ed. by Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 1-15; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 3; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 5-6.

²⁰ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 3, 30-51; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 6; Liv Helene Willumsen, *Witches of the North: Scotland and Finnmark* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 91.

discredited when it was demonstrated that there were no major hunts during the Middle Ages but rather an Early Modern phenomenon. Others argued that the witch-hunts were caused by the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, the Inquisition, the wars of religion, the rising capitalism, social and cultural conflicts, attempts to wipe out paganism or the hatred of women. Levack however, argued for a multi-causal approach which has become a consensus. He stated that the new idea of the witch and changes in criminal law were preconditions of the hunt while religious change and social tensions served as immediate causes for them. Besides these general causes, there were more specific local triggers causing regional hunts which had their own dynamics.²¹

Elite and Popular Belief

Distinction between preconditions and triggers of witch-hunts gave historians the opportunity to study certain themes instead of providing detailed accounts of specific hunts. There are an increasing number of studies related to ideas and philosophies behind the witch-hunts, such as Stuart Clark's *Thinking with Demons*. He argued that such beliefs were objectively real in themselves and rose under certain circumstances.²² The basic debate in the study of the history of the ideas surrounding the witch-hunts was the distinction between elite and popular culture.²³ It has become increasingly important for historians to distinguish between the notions of village people and educated elites about witches. Popular witch beliefs were mainly centred on the idea of *maleficium* and simple sorcery. A witch was someone who could heal or harm and she was accepted in the community as long as she practiced beneficent magic. A negative witch for the community was usually an old woman harming her neighbours through secret spells but there was also the idea of male witches and necromancers. The elite, on the other hand, associated witchcraft mainly with diabolism, including the demonic pact and the witches' sabbath. Black and white witches were essentially the same for the educated as both gained their powers from the Devil. Witches acted in groups forming a demonic conspiracy to overthrow society.²⁴

The distinction of elite and folk belief is related to Peter Burke's differentiation between the 'great tradition' of the learned and the 'little tradition' of the people at large. He argued that the elite could participate in the little tradition. The folk, on the other hand, could not participate in elite

²¹ Larner, *Enemies of God*, 25; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 2-3; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 5-6.

²² Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), vii-viii; Julian Goodare and Joyce Miller, introduction to *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, ed. by Julian Goodare et.al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 2; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 6.

²³ Edward Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs and Magical Practices," in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 58; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 6; James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 37-79.

²⁴ Julian Goodare, "Scottish Witchcraft in its European Context," in *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Julian Goodare et.al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 30-44; Goodare, introduction to *Witchcraft and Belief*, 3; Larner, *Enemies of God*, 136-7; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 7; Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 14-5.

culture and was patronised by it, but there was an interaction between both traditions.²⁵ Norman Cohn and Richard Kieckhefer introduced this distinction into witchcraft debates as they argued that diabolic witchcraft was present in learned beliefs while simple sorcery and *maleficium* belonged to popular belief systems.²⁶ Cohn studied the popular origins of educated demonology in his work *Europe's Inner Demons*. He distinguished sorcery and *maleficium* from other popular beliefs in orgies, cannibalism and night-flying which were rationalized through the figure of Satan in Christian demonology and built the basis for a dehumanized evil witch.²⁷ Similarly, Kieckhefer distinguished popular and elite ideas of witchcraft. He stated that they were separated until 1500 while afterwards elite ideas infiltrated popular beliefs and imposed their notions onto the populace. To him there were several levels of popular belief. There were witchcraft beliefs in *malefice* which could influence everyday life, but there were also communal fantasies about secret meetings and night-flying witches which the elite adopted in their diabolical fantasies. He also distinguished a 'folklore of practice' involving the actions made by villagers to bewitch others and the 'folklore of belief' consisting of what accusers thought was being done to them. The boundaries between all these levels of belief were fluid. Popular and learned beliefs were not static, but they could interact and were varied in different regions. While one member of society might have taken the notion of the night-flying witch as a fantasy others believed in such dangers. The occurrence of a specific folkloric motif did not mean that it had practical consequences. People could believe in witches riding out at night without expecting an accused witch to have actually done so. Furthermore, not all members of the elite believed in diabolism and their sceptical tradition could lead to a suppression of popular witchcraft charges. Despite all these variants and levels of belief, Kieckhefer argued that learned and popular belief could be distinguished: The sorcerer of popular tradition was the enemy of the individual accuser, while the devil-worshipping witch of the elite was the enemy of society at large. The most fundamental distinction was the central role of the Devil in all bewitchment according to learned notions as he ordered witches to harm others and taught them the art of sorcery.²⁸ Since this distinction was often used uncritically implying that the two traditions were totally separate and only connected in witchcraft trials and sermons, Kieckhefer later used the concept of a common tradition

²⁵ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 10; Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs," 58. Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Temple Smith, 1978), 23-9, 58.

²⁶ Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs," 58-9. Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, xi, 210-1, 229; Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials*, ix; 27-92; Larner, *Enemies of God*, 137.

²⁷ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*; Larner, *Enemies of God*, 23-4, 137.

²⁸ Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs," 58-9; Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials*, 39-41, 46, 48, 69, 75-8; Larner, *Enemies of God*, 24; Christina Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion: The Politics of Popular Belief* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 53; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 6, 7.

of medieval magic. After all, elite participated in popular culture as demonologists drew heavy on folk traditions but, on the other hand, also popular notions were influenced by elite ideas.²⁹

Erik Midelfort and Alan Macfarlane also contributed to the debate about elite and popular ideas. During the 1970's they introduced functionalist anthropological models into the historiography of witch-hunts focusing on the history from below and embedding the witch-hunts into larger socio-economic developments. They argued that witch beliefs served necessary functions in society and that accusations increased because of the breakdown of traditional communal society and the rising individualistic capitalism. For them, a witch was not randomly picked by the community, but a witch was often a poor woman who was refused charity. When she went away angry, quarrelling with her neighbours who were victims of sudden misfortunes afterwards, the old woman was blamed for them. This charity-denial-model is still very influential and shows how actual tensions in society were transferred into witchcraft suspicion.³⁰ Their model worked especially well for England where witch-hunts were mainly initiated by peasants, and the demonological element was almost absent as opposed to the continent and Scotland. Despite these problems the studies of Thomas and Macfarlane inspired more studies on popular belief, as well as micro-studies on networks and witch-beliefs in daily life.³¹

Historians are now aware that popular witch beliefs were part of a larger system of magical beliefs and practices, referred to by Stephen Wilson as a 'magical universe'. He argued that all aspects of human life had occult dimensions which constituted a reality for the whole Early Modern European population. Many of those notions were mixed with orthodox Christianity while few beliefs were separated from official religion.³² In this universe, official Christianity provided and authorized understanding of broad cosmological issues, major rituals for the mediation between human and spirit world, a guide to morally correct behaviour and some mechanisms to cope with occult forces. Besides religion, there were popular magical traditions which were as important as Christianity itself for people. Those traditions included prayers, rituals, objects, beliefs and practices which were of pagan origin and were Christianized over the centuries. Their focus was on practical solutions for everyday problems like health, fertility and property rather than cosmological and moral issues. Next to those systems there were non-Christian elements involving the belief in ghosts, monsters, and local spirits, interactions with them, as well as incantations and rituals involving them. They were no

²⁹ Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs," 58-9; Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 56-7.

³⁰ Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs," 58, 64-5; Larner, *Enemies of God*, 20-1; Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Routledge, 1999), 147-206; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 652-680.

³¹ Larner, *Enemies of God*, 21-3.

³² Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs," 51; Stephen Wilson, *The Magical Universe: Everyday Ritual and Magic in Pre-Modern Europe* (London: Hambledon and London, 2000), 467-8.

pure survivals of pre-Christian beliefs but developed evolutionary from them. People could either ignore the relationship between them and official religion or they thought them to be consistent with it. Some of them like the British fairies were thought to be hostile to Christianity.³³

The study of popular belief is also influenced by the realist approach which argues that witch trial records can serve to reconstruct an objective reality of the past and witch beliefs reflect actual practices, behaviours and experiences. This approach is current in romantic interpretations of folklore during the 19th century and the theories of Margaret Murray. More recently scholars such as Carlo Ginzburg have argued that the idea of the witches' sabbath developed out of pre-Christian shamanistic traditions, that beneficent magical practitioners were explicitly diabolised and prosecuted during the witch-hunts, that people actually practiced magical rituals to harm others, and that the trial confessions are an evidence that people actually experienced contact with spirits. The main criticism on this approach centres on the idea that such spiritual experiences are interpreted as pre-Christian shamanism. Opponents state that shamanism is not a European concept and that shamanistic practices at the Northern and Eastern peripheries of Europe were different from the rest of Europe. Bever argues that the problem can be solved by not defining such experiences as shamanism but in neurocognitive terms which were, therefore, an ability common to all humans. Modern realist approaches do not suggest that a diabolic conspiracy actually existed, but they show that the witch-hunts can only be fully understood with reference to reality.³⁴

For this dissertation, the cultural-linguistic approach is the most relevant. It argues that witch belief is a discourse, a part of a bigger matrix of beliefs in a particular culture shaped by language and narrative. The approach is rooted in the intellectual history of demonology with Stuart Clark as most notable advocate and was later applied to popular culture. It is radically different from former ideas as it firstly neither affirms nor denies if someone actually experienced things they believed as the only historical reality are the beliefs themselves. Secondly, it deconstructs historical documents and concentrates on patterns of meaning, beliefs, values and fantasies of people. According to this approach, popular beliefs and learned demonology were sources for accepted narrative structures to

³³ Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs," 51-2.

³⁴ Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs," 65-7; Advocates of the realist approach include: Wolfgang Behringer, *Chonrad Stoeckhlin und die Nachtschar: Eine Geschichte aus der frühen Neuzeit* (München: Piper, 1994); Edward Bever, *The Realities of Witchcraft and Popular Magic in Early Modern Europe: Culture, Cognition, and Everyday Life* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991); Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the 16. and 17. Centuries*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983); Gábor Klaniczay, "Hungary: The Accusations and the Universe of Popular Magic," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 244-255; Éva Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead: A Perspective on Witches and Seers in the Early Modern Age* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000); Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Visions of Isobel Gowdie*; Emma Wilby, "'We may shoot them dead at our pleasur': Isobel Gowdie, Elf Arrows and Dark Shamanism," in *Scottish Witches and Witch-Hunters*, ed. Julian Goodare (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 140-158.

explain important issues of people's lives.³⁵ It is an 'experienced centred approach' concentrating on the questions why certain beliefs were thought credible rather than asking for the reality of paranormal phenomena. The study of witch belief is not the same as studying the witch-hunt and beliefs of people in pre-industrial Europe need to be studied as alien belief systems meaning that historians should be able to explain them without implying that they belief such things themselves. Larner stated that witch beliefs in pre-industrial Europe were neither primitive, meaning that everyone had a traditional belief in magic, nor modern, implying that everybody is sceptic towards them. Therefore, Early Modern Europe was a 'middle-range' society with interrelated popular and elite traditions. For most people in pre-industrial Europe, the natural and supernatural world were intertwined and members of the elite and the folk believed in God, the Devil, angels, in saints if they were Catholic, but also in fairies and witches. The study of past mindsets is difficult as they denote people's inner thoughts of which written and spoken words only constitute indirect evidence and also because the word 'belief' is value-laden and is situated between what we call 'knowledge' and 'superstition' today.³⁶ A number of non-human beings inhabiting the pre-industrial universe were relevant for witchcraft. Ghosts and fairies could appear in witchcraft trials. If accused witches in Scotland were interrogated about the devil, they often talked about fairies as they knew little about the devil. Fairies were interpreted by the authorities as demons. However, there were also suggestions that some learned notions were imposed upon the peasants through Protestant indoctrination, but the question to which extent they influenced popular beliefs is still open. Scottish folklore contained a combination of fairy and witch beliefs and some misfortunes were blamed on fairies and others on human witches, who unlike evil spirits could be prosecuted. Fairy belief facilitated witch-hunting since fairy beliefs mentioned by accused witches were interpreted as demonic.³⁷

Ultimately, the synthetic and holistic model of Ginzburg and others needs to be preferred since a clear distinction between elite and folk culture is not possible to be made in practice and both influenced each other. Folklore needs to be a unifying discipline of both and must not be distracted by the fact that elite cultures tried to distance themselves during the Western process of civilisation from folk traditions emphasising the superiority of learning and literacy over ignorance and oral culture. Even if people having supernatural experiences did not always interpret those themselves as such, the group ultimately controls the experiences of its members and their interpretation. For

³⁵ Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs," 65; Stuart Clark, "Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft," in *The Witchcraft Reader*, ed. Darren Oldridge (London: Routledge, 2005), 149-151; Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, vii-ix.

³⁶ Goodare, introduction to *Witchcraft and Belief*, 1-3, 8-9; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 2, 3, 12; Larner, *Enemies of God*, 11-4.

³⁷ Goodare, "Scottish Witchcraft in Context," 32-44; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 106-141; MacCulloch, "Fairy and Witch Beliefs," 227-244; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 182; Diane Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 87-88; Willumsen, *Witches of the North*, 95-6.

certain times in history, it was, therefore, impossible to deny the existence of witches and fairy belief.³⁸

What is a Witch in the Early Modern European Context?

The English term 'witch' is derived from Old English *wicca* and its female form *wicce*, and refers to persons and who practiced magic or sorcery. Later the term was also applied to persons who had dealings with evil spirits and performed supernatural acts with their help. The English term 'witch' can also refer to ugly, repulsive, malevolent, usually old women, and in the modern sense to practitioners of the modern cult of witchcraft, Wiccans.³⁹ Similar to the first two meanings of the term 'witch', Brian Levack distinguishes two meanings of witchcraft in Early Modern Europe, *maleficium* and diabolism:⁴⁰

The first was the practice of harmful, black or maleficent magic, the performance of harmful deeds by means of some sort of extraordinary, mysterious, occult, preternatural or supernatural power. ...The second concerned the relationship that existed between the witch and the Devil, the supernatural foe of the Christian God and the personification of evil. A witch was a person who not only performed harmful magic but who also made a pact with the Devil and paid some sort of homage to him. Witchcraft was therefore diabolism, the worship of the Devil.⁴¹

Harmful magic performed by witches was usually termed with Latin *maleficia* or English *witchcrafts* and included the killing or bewitchment of humans and animals as well as causing several other misfortunes. Witches were thought to kill or injure people by piercing a doll made of their image or by reciting a spell. They could be blamed for the disruption of domestic activities like spinning, brewing beer, milking and making butter, as well as problems associated with farming like the failure of crop and the upset of a plough team, bad weather, shipwrecks, impotence and miscarriages.⁴² Animal diseases were more likely to be attributed to bewitchment than human illnesses as domestic animals were extremely vulnerable and people in the Early Modern period were dependent on them in terms of capital and livestock. Cows, pigs, goats and sheep were potential targets of witches as they kept for meat, milk, hides and wool. Horses and oxen were a different category of animal because they also represented the wealth and status of their owner.⁴³

³⁸ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 10-11.

³⁹ Lesley Brown ed., *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary: On Historical Principles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 3702; Jeffrey Russell, *A History of Witchcraft: Sorcerers, Heretics and Pagans* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 12.

⁴⁰ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 4, 7-8; Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland*, 7.

⁴¹ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 4, 7-8.

⁴² Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (New York: Viking, 1996), 243; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 4; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 42.

⁴³ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 84, 88-9.

In this context, magic and religion need to be distinguished and both use the power of God or spirits to cause certain effects.⁴⁴ The English term 'magic' is derived from Old French *magique*, Latin *magica/magia*, and Greek *mageia/magike* and was introduced into English during the 14th century.⁴⁵ It can be defined as the 'art of influencing the course of events and producing extraordinary physical phenomena by the occult control of nature or spirits'.⁴⁶ Magic is activated and controlled by humans; it is usually performed individually and in secret and leads to the desired result if performed correctly. It does not necessarily involve gods or spirits but can be described as worldly, empirical and serving an immediate goal. Religion, on the other hand, is a communal, publically organised form of magic which is practiced with awe towards supernatural beings which are persuaded to achieve a certain result, but leave it to God or a spirit if this result is realized. Religion is, therefore, non-empirical, otherworldly and involves gods or other spirits.⁴⁷

The second essential characteristic of *maleficium* is that this kind of magic was harmful, intended to bring bodily injury, disease, death, poverty and other misfortunes and was therefore contrasted to beneficial white magic which is characterised as productive, therapeutic and protective towards humans, animals and crops. Black magic could involve the invocation of evil spirits while white magicians dealt with good spirits. The distinction could however be blurred if a witch harmed someone to protect herself or another person.⁴⁸ White witchcraft is included by Levack into the broad concept of witchcraft. In Early Modern Europe it included mainly magical healing, crude forms of divination to foretell the future, the location of lost objects and identification of enemies. It did not include *maleficium* but since all magic was believed to involve the help of the Devil, white witches could be believed to have a pact with Satan. Witchcraft treatises stressing the demonic pact made little distinction between white and black witchcraft and those who could cure were often believed to be capable of harm as well. In practice, however, white witches were often treated with leniency.⁴⁹

Maleficium is similar to sorcery but not the same.⁵⁰ The term derives from Old French *sorcier/sorcerie* and Latin *sortarius*; it was introduced into English during the 14th century and became common during the 16th century.⁵¹ Levack defines sorcery as 'the practice of magic by some sort of mechanical, manipulative process. Sorcery is an acquired skill.'⁵² It can be distinguished from *maleficium*, since sorcery could be beneficial or harmful and also because maleficent magic did not

⁴⁴ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 4-5.

⁴⁵ Brown, *Oxford English Dictionary*, 1661; Russell, *History of Witchcraft*, 12.

⁴⁶ Brown, *Oxford English Dictionary*, 1661.

⁴⁷ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 4-5; Thomas, *Religion and Decline*, 761-2.

⁴⁸ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 5-6, 128; Brown, *Oxford English Dictionary*, 1661.

⁴⁹ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 11.

⁵⁰ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 6.

⁵¹ Russell, *History of Witchcraft*, 12; Brown, *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2951.

⁵² Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 6.

necessarily involve a certain ritual but could also be the result of the witches' general power to harm, like the power of the evil eye or to hurt someone only through ill will.⁵³

Magic can also be subdivided into high/learned and low/folk magic. High magic was sophisticated, theoretical, having a ceremonial structure and requiring a certain amount of education. The most common forms were alchemy, divination and conjuration. Divination can be described as 'the use of various means to acquire secret or otherwise unknown knowledge' and the most common forms were astrology and necromancy which was divination with the help of spirits of the dead.⁵⁴ Divination on a popular level could also refer to the reading of natural signs like unusual behaviour of animals and omens surrounding birth, marriage and death interpreting them as signs of God's wrath or the coming apocalypse. It could also be used to find out about anxieties of everyday life like the finding of the cause for an illness, to predict the gender of an unborn baby, the weather or lottery numbers, to find lost goods and identify future husbands.⁵⁵ Low magic required little or no formal education, and could be learned by oral transmission, apprenticeship or individual experimentation. It usually took the form of simple charms and spells and consisted of a mixture of folkloric beliefs, practices and rituals. It could be used by all members of society and had no unifying philosophical basis. Both systems incorporated sympathetic magic, Christian beliefs and prayers, and certain individuals having more knowledge than others about occult practices.⁵⁶ *Maleficium* ascribed to Early Modern witches mostly falls into the category of low magic because witches mainly came from lower levels of society and most high magic was white. Practitioners of high magic were sometimes accused as witches especially if divination was prohibited by law or if they practiced necromancy which became important in the development of medieval witch beliefs as it became reinterpreted as 'the ceremonial art of summoning demons'.⁵⁷ Invocation of the Devil or lesser demons for instruction or assistance was closely related to witchcraft. It was usually part of a ritual ceremony practiced to perform some sort of magic, mostly divination. Ritual magicians were not classified as witches, but they were sometimes prosecuted as such during the 16th and 17th centuries, especially if the relationship between demon and master was interpreted as maleficent. Increasing numbers of people practiced ceremonial magic during the Middle Ages. Scholastic philosophers accused them of being heretics by arguing that they made face-to-face pacts with the Devil, and

⁵³ Owen Davies, *Popular Magic: Cunning Folk in English History* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2003), x; Larner, *Enemies of God*, 9; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 6-7; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 402.

⁵⁴ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 7.

⁵⁵ Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 375-390; Joyce Miller, *Magic and Witchcraft in Scotland* (Musselburgh: Goblinshead, 2005), 34.

⁵⁶ Davies, *Popular Magic*, x. Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 7.

⁵⁷ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 7.

flying to nocturnal gatherings where they worshiped the Devil, and practiced infanticide and cannibalism representing an inversion of moral standards of society.⁵⁸

The nature and crime of witchcraft was dramatically changed by the notion that witches were not only magicians, heretics and evil individuals, but also devil-worshippers who rejected Christian faith to serve the Devil. Although from a Christian perspective magic always involved the work of the devil, witches in the late 15th century became to be seen as more deliberate, organised and threatening to society. The pact with the devil and the collective worship of him were a new form of heresy which became greater significance than harmful magic. For many lawyers the pact became the very essence of the crime of witchcraft and an increasing number of people were accused simply for worshipping the Devil rather than for *maleficium*. Especially during large witch-hunts several accused witches were only put to trial for attending the sabbath.⁵⁹ While the performance of *maleficium* is common in all witch-believing societies like modern Africa and native America, the diabolic conception of witchcraft, the belief into a Christian Devil and a large sect of flying magicians worshipping him in secret meetings involving orgies and cannibalistic infanticide is unique for Early Modern Europe and was an important precondition for the emergence of the witch-hunts.⁶⁰

Magic and diabolism were always closely connected and theological works from the 14th century onwards stressed that the witch acquired her power to harm from the Devil.⁶¹ In Early Modern witchcraft trials *maleficium* and diabolism both belonged to the stereotype of a witch and usually implied one another. But people could also be simply accused of attending the sabbath, or of *maleficium* without diabolism. *Maleficia* played a bigger role in accusations from below since neighbours were more concerned with misfortunes than diabolical fantasies. Literate ruling classes including scholars, lawyers, judges and magistrates were mainly concerned with diabolism and witches were mainly accused of that if charges were initiated by the elite or if they were forced by judicial torture to confess not only *maleficium* but also diabolism. In countries with limited use of torture and where charges were brought from below like England, Russia, Denmark and Norway, courts were mainly dealing with harmful magic while diabolism played a bigger role in Germany, France, Italy and other peripheral regions such as Scotland.⁶²

Christina Lerner distinguished three kinds of witchcraft in Early modern Europe:

Type A is maleficium. This is the simplest and most basic form of witchcraft. It can include both sorcery – physical manipulation of objects

⁵⁸ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 8, 11.

⁵⁹ Lerner, *Enemies*, 24-5; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 7-8; Erik Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany: 1562-1684: The Social and Intellectual Foundations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 71.

⁶⁰ Lerner, *Enemies of God*, 7-11, 136-7; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 4, 8-9.

⁶¹ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 8; Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland*, 7.

⁶² Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 9-10; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 9-10.

and/or incantation of words – and witchcraft – harming through the release of power activated by hatred.

Type B is compact witchcraft. Here the essence of witchcraft lies in a pact with Satan, the Christian Devil. It does not matter whether the power realized through the pact is used for harming or healing. Compact witchcraft, therefore, blurs the secular distinction between black and white magic; between maleficium and curing.

Type C is sabbath witchcraft. It could be described as an extension of compact witchcraft but, in fact, the addition of the sabbath, the idea that witches having made a pact with the Devil combine with other witches to pay him homage, is commoner in Europe than the pact on its own. Witches' sabbaths also occur in non-Christian primitive cultures where pacts with one personalized devil are unknown.⁶³

She further divides these categories:

Type A has as its most simple form A¹, when the witch is accused of an act or acts of maleficium. A² represents the complications that occur when maleficium is fed into a legal system which has a pre-existing formula for interpreting the significance of maleficium. 'Curing' is represented by a¹. This is the other side of the maleficium coin, but one individual may be accused of practicing both. And a² represents curing in a society which is likely to penalize it in the same way as it would maleficium. ... C¹ are any witches' meetings. C² are meetings with the Devil which may take any random form. C³ is a deliberate inversion of Christian worship: the Satanic black mass.⁶⁴

She attributed these kinds of witchcraft to different societies: 'Primitive tribal' societies knew the forms A¹, a¹, and C¹; English witchcraft during the 16th and 17th centuries included A¹, a¹, and a²; Scottish trials of the 17th century included the forms A², a², B, and C² while the European continent between the 15th and 17th century saw witchcraft trials taking the form of A², a², B, C², and C³.⁶⁵

Éva Pócs followed this differentiation and defined three types of popular witch beliefs which were common in various cultures. She characterized Type A as 'neighbourhood/social witch' which was common in self-sufficient communities where people relied on each other. This type of witch was someone who did not observe the traditional modes of behaviour. *Maleficium* in this context resulted out of a curse or another innate power of the witch to harm, anybody within the community and especially quarrelsome women could be suspicious for witchcraft. Type B is the 'magical/sorcerer' witch involving several kinds of magical practitioners like healers, sorcerers, seers, midwives and people practicing household magic. Witches of this category caused harm through simple black magic and physical actions. Type C are 'supernatural/night' witches who were mysterious, almost supernatural witches who randomly selected their victims and attacked them at night. These witches appeared like demons, night visions, dreams or apparitions and witchcraft in

⁶³ Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 80.

⁶⁴ Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 80-1.

⁶⁵ Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 81.

this context reflected communication and conflicts between human and supernatural worlds. In practice, it is difficult to make a clear distinction between these three categories of witches since people often did not specify how witches inflicted their harm. While certain types of misfortunes like specific illnesses, struggles in family life, failures of household work and diseases of animals could be attributed to witches other misfortunes could be caused by God or other spiritual beings who could have demonic features. People could counter witchcraft and misfortunes by avoiding injury or actively neutralizing magical attacks.⁶⁶

History of Scotland c. 1560-1730

When King James V died in 1542 his one week old daughter Mary (ruled 1542-67) was proclaimed queen of Scotland. While the actual government lay in the hands of the royal council, Mary spent most of her childhood in France as she was to marry the heir to the French throne. After the prince had died, Mary Queen of Scots returned to Scotland in 1561. At this point, Scotland had become Protestant and the new lords opposed Mary as she married her Catholic cousin Lord Darnley and also favoured Catholic France. Although she had a child from Lord Darnley, she started to hate him and was involved in a plot to kill him. In 1567, she was forced to resign the throne in favour of her son James VI (ruled 1567-1625). She fled to England where she was imprisoned by her cousin Queen Elizabeth I who was worried that Mary would start a Catholic plot against her. Mary was executed in 1587 and she never saw her son again. From the age of one-year old, James was left to be raised by Protestant advisors. When Elizabeth I died in 1603, he succeeded the throne and became king of England, Ireland and Scotland. James Stuart, who had now become King James I of England, had been king of Scotland for 35 years before. His advisers who raised him accepted the Calvinist theology and supported the Presbyterian Church structure which was characterised by the power held by elected councils, called Presbyteries, rather than appointed bishops. James developed a strong sense of the divine right of kings and he thought himself only to be responsible to God.⁶⁷

James VI/I struggled with the political problems he inherited from Elizabeth I.⁶⁸ During the first three decades of the 17th century, there was a continuous struggle between the Commons, who gradually gained the right to discuss foreign policy and taxation and were against the union of Scotland and England, and the king. The House of Commons consisted of lower-level nobility called gentry in England. They were wealthy merchants and professionals who became better educated and wealthier by the 17th century and therefore demanded more rights in politics. The disputes between king and Commons continued during the reign of Charles I (ruled 1625-49) who inherited the throne

⁶⁶ Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead*, 10-11, 59-60; Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs," 52-6.

⁶⁷ Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London: Pimlico, 1997), 203-244; Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe: 1450-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 94-5, 303.

⁶⁸ Rab Houston, *Scotland: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 48; Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe*, 304.

in 1625. He dissolved the Parliament in 1629 and decided to rule on his own. His government was financed by expanding taxes which made him very unpopular. Furthermore, his archbishop William Laud (1573-1645) tried to force English churches to adopt more elaborate ceremonies and services or otherwise risk punishment by the newly established 'Court of High Commission'. Laud's measures were not only unpopular in England, but he provoked a great opposition when he tried to introduce a new prayer book in Scotland where the Calvinist church which was established there for 75 years⁶⁹ feared the Anglicization of the Church of Scotland. These struggles led to the Wars of the Covenant from 1639 to 1651 during which the Covenanters raised 12 armies against the king. Covenanting ideology was incorporated in the National Covenant from 1638, a document demanding 'free' general assemblies and parliaments. The first Bishop's War against the Charles I took place in June 1639 and the second in 1640, where the king was defeated.⁷⁰ Charles was forced to call Parliament to pay the army against the Scots in 1640. This 'Long Parliament' was dominated by opponents of the king and it limited his powers. It abolished the Court of High Commission and impeached Archbishop Laud. Charles met their demands as he faced a Scottish invasion and a rebellion in Ireland. England was heading towards a civil war which constituted the only full-scale revolution in 17th century Europe.⁷¹

The first English Civil War lasted from 1642-6 and saw the political ascension of Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658). He was a member of the gentry and leader of the House of Commons. In 1645, he convinced the Parliament to establish the New Model Army, which had himself as leader and reduced the demand for Covenanting troops. Eventually, Charles was forced to surrender. While the Commons quarrelled about what to do with him, Cromwell captured the king, dismissed all members of Parliament who disagreed with him. The remaining members of Parliament displaced the House of Lords, tried Charles for high treason and executed him.⁷² In Scotland, radical political Covenanters supported by Cromwell took over the control in Edinburgh. The Scottish Parliament, which was established 1649 together with the Church of Scotland, tried to enforce a godly state. They enacted social and moral legislations against fornication and drunkenness while in 1649, there was also one of the major peaks of the Scottish witch-hunts.⁷³ The idea of the covenant highlighted the Scottish sense of being God's chosen people, participating in an apocalyptic battle between God and the Devil.⁷⁴ The execution of the king in 1649 was crucial for the continuation of the Wars of the Covenant as the Scots defended Charles I and his son, the later Charles II. After Cromwell crushed the

⁶⁹ Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe*, 304-5.

⁷⁰ Michael Lynch ed., *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 110-1, 436.

⁷¹ Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe*, 305.

⁷² Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe*, 306-7; Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 112.

⁷³ Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 112; Lynch, *Scotland*, 263-281.

⁷⁴ Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 436.

Irish rebellion in 1649, he invaded Scotland in 1650. The Wars of the Covenant ended in 1651 when Charles II (ruled in Scotland 1649-51, king of England 1660-85), who was crowned king of Great Britain and Ireland on 1 January 1651 at Scone, invaded England to secure the support of English Royalists. He was defeated at the battle of Worcester on 3 September 1651 and fled into exile.⁷⁵ Oliver Cromwell was left master of England. A constitution called the 'Instrument of Government' (1653) made the Parliament supreme, but Cromwell got executive power and inherited the office of Lord Protector. Cromwell declared the state of emergency to dissolve the Parliament to rule as a military dictator. His efforts to suppress any kind of opposition and social turmoil led to an increasing support of the son of Charles I who was now in France. Although Cromwell appointed his son Richard as successor, after his death in 1658, the Parliament backed the restoration of the Stuart monarchy. In 1660 Charles returned from France as Charles II. The monarchy, the House of Lords, the Anglican Church and the courts of law were restored. Charles had good relations to the Parliament and reassured them to approve taxes if they provided him enough money for running his kingdom. When they broke their promises, Charles made a secret agreement with Louis XIV of France. He promised to support them against the Dutch and return England to Catholicism in exchange for huge sums of money. After this was revealed to the public, an anti-Catholic hysteria spread in England, which was strengthened by the fact that Charles had no legitimate heir and he would leave his Catholic brother James as his successor.⁷⁶

Despite all measures of the Parliament, James (ruled 1685-88) inherited the throne in 1685 becoming James II of England and James VII of Scotland. He appointed Catholics into important positions and granted them religious toleration. When his second wife gave birth to a son and thus assured a Catholic dynasty, a group of leaders in the House of Commons offered the throne to James' Protestant daughter Mary and her husband William (ruled 1689-1702), a Dutch prince of the House of Orange-Nassau, who was also the grandson of Charles I. In 1688 William invaded England and forced James II and his wife to flee to France. This event was later known as 'Glorious Revolution'. William and Mary recognized that the sovereignty was shared by monarch and Parliament and agreed a Bill of Rights which forbade the interference of monarchs in making laws and the creation of a standing army. It also granted limited religious tolerations although the laws were hostile to Catholics. Although the House of Lords was restored, the House of Commons became the most powerful part of the Parliament with its majority being members of the gentry who controlled English policies until the 20th century.⁷⁷ Several military campaigns were launched to defeat the supporters of James II in Ireland and there were a series of penal laws against Catholics. William also

⁷⁵ Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 112-3; Lynch, *Scotland*, 276-295; Houston, *Scotland*, 50.

⁷⁶ Gordon Donaldson, *Scotland: James V-James VII* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1978), 358-384; Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe*, 307-8.

⁷⁷ William Ferguson, *Scotland: 1689 to the Present* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1978), 1-35; Lynch, *Scotland*, 295-300; Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe*, 308.

authorised a massacre of the leaders of one of the Scottish clans opposed to his rule in 1692 which became known as the 'Massacre of Glencoe'.⁷⁸ In 1707 England, Scotland and Ireland were officially united and the 'United Kingdom of Great Britain' was declared. Instead of having its own Parliament, Scotland now had to send members to the House of Lords and House of Commons in London.⁷⁹

Since William and Mary had no surviving children, Mary's sister Anne (ruled 1702-14) became heir to the throne. Despite eighteen pregnancies, none of her children survived either. With the Parliament's approval her distant cousin George I (ruled 1714-27), ruler of the small German principality Hanover, and later his son George II (ruled 1727-60) succeeded to the throne. In Scotland, several groups favoured James, the son of James II and therefore revolted in favour of the Stuarts. Those 'Jacobite' risings were suppressed and there was a similar uprising in 1745 which sought to bring back James' son Charles, called 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' to the throne. Ultimately, they were defeated and the Hanoverians continued to rule Britain into the 19th century.⁸⁰

A crucial event for Scottish history making its impact on the witch-hunts was the Reformation. The corrupt pre-Reformation church had gathered vast riches over time, which the Scottish laity and monarchs already redistributed elsewhere before the Reformation. The European Reformation started in 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses statements on the church door of Wittenberg. He was against any practices which had no scriptural authority such as the purchase of pardons or pilgrimages. Luther mainly based his ideas on the New Testament and stated that God loved people and that they could reach God's grace and salvation by faith alone. Although Luther's ideas already reached Scotland by 1625, the Reformation was delayed for another generation. John Knox, a leading figure of the Scottish Reformation, was originally inspired by Luther but in Geneva he came under the influence of John Calvin. Calvin established a systemized programme for Reformation in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. He thought only the elect were predestined for salvation and nobody was to doubt faith as it was the same as to deny the existence of God. Since Mary Queen of Scots was deeply Catholic and the nobility did not respond to Knox's appeals, he and his followers had to reach the folk, who wanted more spirituality and structure in life and who achieved the Reformation in a revolt in August 1560. Religious conflicts rose between Protestants and Catholics during the following years. Along with others Knox produced a programme for the Reform in his *Book of Discipline* (1560). After Knox died in 1572, Andrew Melville took up a prominent role in the Reformation. When he returned from Geneva in 1574, he promoted a new kind of Presbyterianism and was engaged in drawing up the *Second Book of Discipline* (1578). The book

⁷⁸ Edward J. Cowan and Richard Finlay, *Scotland since 1688: Struggle for a Nation* (London: Cima Books, 2000), 18; Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 272; Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe*, 308.

⁷⁹ Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe*, 308.

⁸⁰ Ferguson, *Scotland*, 36-69; Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 349-352; Lynch, *Scotland*, 318-340; Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe*, 308-9.

was crucial for understanding the new body of church institutions, which was based on ministers and a series of courts including the Kirk session, the Presbytery, the synod and the General Assembly.⁸¹ The old ecclesiastical institutions were gradually replaced by new ones. The Kirk sessions, which spread continually from 1560 onwards and were present in most Lowland and many Highland parishes by 1600, were at the bottom of the new system. They consisted of minister, elders, and deacons, held weekly meetings and mainly monitored the moral life of their parishioners. Presbyteries emerging after 1581 were essential courts of the Church where ministers of ten to twenty parishes met regularly to discuss doctrine. Synods first appearing in the 1560s met twice a year and oversaw the work of the Presbyteries within their responsibility. The General Assembly was established in 1560 as an annual national court of the Church. Yet they could not meet every year since changing religious policies led to ebbs and flows in the Scottish Reformation during the 16th and 17th centuries. Nevertheless, not all Scots at the time were Presbyterians. There was also the Episcopalian church in Scotland, which originally had its heartland in the north-east Lowlands and nowadays belongs to the Anglican church. Episcopalianism had a hierarchical church organization headed by archbishops and bishops and also their liturgies and beliefs were more similar to Catholicism than Calvinism. When Protestantism spread in the Lowlands, parts of the Highlands and Islands, like Ireland, remained an outpost for Roman Catholicism during the 17th century.⁸²

During the Reformation, people became increasingly responsible for their own salvation while the need for ideological conformity at individual level rose significantly. Preconditions for this change were an intensified control of rulers and the imposition of urban values upon the countryside.⁸³ Although the Scottish medieval church already tried to curtail popular festivals, The Protestants were more radical as they attacked not only folk but also ecclesiastical magic. The Reformation was also influential in the break between the sacred and secular world between 1500 and 1750. Even though church and state called for a new level of conformity in belief and culture, Reformers could not eradicate popular festivals, music, plays and beliefs completely. Instead, they tried to exploit existing traditions for their propaganda and integrated them into their own Protestant culture. Despite the acceptance of some customs, Reformers still wanted to wipe out all pagan superstitions, a process called 'Entzauberung der Welt' by Max Weber. Calvinism was a hopeless religion for most people since only the elect could reach salvation. Furthermore, Calvinists thought that they were living in the last days and that the struggle between God and Satan would intensify before apocalypse. Before the end they needed to eradicate all ungodly elements of society

⁸¹ Gordon Donaldson, *The Scottish Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960); Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 107-110; Houston, *Scotland*, 43-7; Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 82, 90, 370-1, 417, 500-4.

⁸² Houston, *Scotland*, 45, 51-2; Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 82-3, 91, 234-5, 513.

⁸³ Jean Delumeau, *Le Catholicisme entre Luther et Voltaire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), 170-5; Lerner, *Enemies of God*, 25-6; Robert Muchembled, *Culture Populaire et Culture des Élités dans la France Moderne (XV^e-XVIII^e siècles)* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), 295.

including witches, Catholicism and popular superstition. Reformers wanted to enforce the idea upon people that only God and evil forces existed in the world and therefore eradicated the grey and ambiguous area of ghosts, fairies and witches. When they realized that they could not destroy the deep-rooted beliefs of the people in such supernatural beings, Reformers tried to redefine them as being evil agents of the Devil. James VI himself participated in the debate among clerics, demonologists and scholars of how to interpret the belief in ghosts, spirits and fairies. He stated that the 'age of miracles was over since the coming of Christ' and all supernatural activities from this time onwards were caused by the Devil.⁸⁴ Although the Scottish witch-hunts were originally inspired by the elite, it took hold among the wider populace who wanted to get rid of evil forces within their communities. Witch-hunting was nurtured by fears and hostilities within communities and the anxiety about non-conformity of church and state.⁸⁵

Despite these political and religious turbulences, living standards in pre-industrial Scotland remained much the same between 1450 and 1750. People lived in similar houses, ate the same food, worked on the land, had similar occupations and died pretty much in the same way.⁸⁶ Yet the climate deteriorated dramatically between 1550 and 1850, a period known as 'Little Ice Age', leading to widespread famines in Scotland about 1550 to 1650. Starvation was a major problem during the mid-1580s, the late 1590s and the early 1620s. During the early 17th century, there was also a mass exodus of young Scottish men who joined the Continental armies and often never returned. The 1640s and 1650s were disastrous for people because of war, disrupted trade, bad harvests and the plague. Population displacement, starvation and high mortality rates were also a problem during the late 1690s.⁸⁷ These times of economic and climatic crises often correspond with the rise of witch-hunts as Wolfgang Behringer has argued.⁸⁸

The History of the Scottish Witch-Hunts

Witchcraft was a secular crime in Scotland from 1563 to 1736 and almost all witchcraft trials fall into this period. Large numbers of tried witches mainly appear after 1589 and there were certain peaks of prosecutions before the numbers declined after 1662. The last Scottish witchcraft execution took place in 1727. Most trials were authorized centrally and while records for these authorizations often survived, the trial records themselves were less likely to do so except for those held by the Central

⁸⁴ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 108, 112-8; Houston, *Scotland*, 46-7; Max Weber, *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen Konfuzianismus und Taoismus: Schriften 1915-1920* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1989), 450; Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1920), 94; Jenny Wormald, "Reformed and Godly Scotland?," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History*, ed. T.M. Devine and Jenny Wormald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 204-19.

⁸⁵ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 119.

⁸⁶ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 13; Lynch, *Oxford Handbook*, 390-1.

⁸⁷ Houston, *Scotland*, 100; Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 391.

⁸⁸ Wolfgang Behringer, "Weather, Hunger and Fear: Origins of the European Witch-Hunts in Climate, Society and Mentality," in *The Witchcraft Reader*, ed. Darren Oldridge (London: Routledge, 2005), 69-86.

Justiciary Court. The other 90% of trial records were produced by temporary local courts which rarely kept archives. Statistics are, therefore, hard to make and it is easier to make qualitative research. The Scottish witch-hunts were among the most severe in Protestant Europe. Out of a population of 1 million, about 4.000 were accused and around 2.500 executed. 85% of the Scottish witches were female and they tended to be in their forties or later middle age. In total, witches accused by their neighbours were the minority while more were named as accomplices in confessions of other witches. There were only few midwives but a number of cases with magical healing. The data about the marital and social-economic status of the witches is scarce, but the general impression is that most Scottish witches were typical members of their communities rather than marginal figures.⁸⁹

The major peaks of the Scottish witch-hunts coincided with significant political, intellectual and social events. The first in the 1590s was started through royal initiative and had possible political motives. The hunt in 1629-30 was parallel to a major continental panic. The third peak in 1649 followed shortly after the radical Presbyterian faction took over control and were prepared by a church campaign against witchcraft during the 1640s. The fourth major hunt in 1658-9 followed the collapse of English authority in Scotland and happened during a time of judicial paralysis. The fifth peak in 1661-2 fell into the time of Restoration. During the time of other major political events, there were no particular hunts and there were fewer cases during the Cromwellian occupation between 1649-50 and 1658-9 because of leniency of English judges.⁹⁰

While the central government sometimes restrained the witch-hunts, it could also increase numbers of witches during several panics since witch-hunting was seen as part of a programme in imposing godly discipline.⁹¹ Two theological factors played a role in the Scottish witch-hunts. Firstly, Calvinists thought that misfortunes could a punishment by God for sin or a test of faith and witchcraft built and alternative explanation for misfortunes. Secondly, the idea of the covenanted people originating from the Old Testament was significant in Scotland. Legal records sometimes used the term as a synonym for the demonic pact, which was seen as an inversion of this idea and a covenant with Satan.⁹² The indoctrination of demonological ideology by church and state played an important role in the historical witch-hunt and built the ground for confession of the demonic pact. The importance of the Devil grew in post-Reformation literature, law, preaching of the Church, mentalities of the elite and the notion was transmitted orally to peasants. The influence of learned demonology can also be seen in the trials and was dependent upon the pre-knowledge of the accused and the influence of the interrogator.⁹³ Scotland took a middle position between English and

⁸⁹ Goodare, "Witchcraft in Scotland," 302-3; Larner, *Enemies of God*, 60-79; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 9.

⁹⁰ Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 19-21; Paula Hughes, "Witch-Hunting in Scotland: 1649-1650," in *Scottish Witches and Witch-Hunters*, ed. Julian Goodare (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 97-100.

⁹¹ Goodare, "Scottish Witchcraft in Context," 42-3; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 9.

⁹² Larner, *Enemies of God*, 201.

⁹³ Willumsen, *Witches of the North*, 90-1.

continental witch-hunts. While village tensions and local functions of witch beliefs were similar to England, the notion of the demonic pact was stronger in Scotland. The operation of law, the inquisitorial system, the use of torture and demonological trails were comparable to the continent, but the concept of witches' meetings was weaker and less ritualistic in Scotland.⁹⁴ Two kinds of witch-hunts appeared in Scotland. One was driven by village tensions, focused on *maleficia* and concentrated on isolated individuals in different areas, while mass prosecutions were shaped by elite fears, coincided with major political events and tensions and resulted in the accusation of otherwise harmless individuals. However, those spheres could also overlap since elites were also involved in isolated cases and the community took part in great hunts.⁹⁵

A typical Scottish witchcraft accusation started in the local community. The neighbours decided who was a witch. They could complain directly to the authorities or the authorities initiated the action by hearing a discussion in the community. If they decided to investigate a suspect, they launched a pre-trial investigation normally organized by the local church court engaged with the enforcement of godly discipline. This could be the Kirk session, a Parish committee of post-Reformation Scotland or a superior court of the Presbytery. These courts alone could not execute the accused person but they summoned suspects and witnesses, interrogated them and compiled dossiers of evidence. Together with local lairds or urban magistrates they could imprison and torture suspects. As a next step, they had to seek the authority for a criminal trial. They usually assembled a small group of influential laymen to sign their dossier of evidence and sent it to the Privy Council in Edinburgh which was the central coordinating body for government. If the Privy Council found the evidence sufficient they would grant a 'commission of justiciary' and authorized a group of laymen to constitute themselves as criminal judges, convene a court and try the named suspects. About 90% of all Scottish witches were tried by such local courts and most of the remaining were sent to the central Justiciary Court in Edinburgh. Local courts usually convicted the suspects while there were more acquittals in the central Justiciary Court whose members were more professional and dealt with trickier cases. In both courts, a jury of local propertied men delivered the verdict and if a person was convicted for witchcraft he or she was usually strangled at the stake and burned afterwards.⁹⁶

The organisation of criminal justice in Early Modern Scotland was complex and overlapping and the areas of competence were ill-defined. There were several types of jurisdictions: royal, baronial and ecclesiastical. Royal jurisdiction included the parliament, Privy council, Court of Justiciary, and local extensions. They dealt with robbery, rape, murder, arson and from 1597 onwards with witchcraft. Besides there were sheriff courts, baron courts, burgh courts. Although this system underwent changes after the Reformation, it remained quite stable until the rebellion 1745 while

⁹⁴ Larner, *Enemies of God*, 4, 12; Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 25; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 9.

⁹⁵ Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 25, 28.

⁹⁶ Goodare, "Witchcraft in Scotland," 303; Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland*, 15-33.

ecclesiastical law changed more dramatically. Until the mid-17th century, kirk sessions covered most non-Highland Scotland. They consisted of minister and elders, arranged public worship, monitored disciplinary aspects of life and wanted to suppress them. Their penalties were ill-defined and they could not excommunicate but punish with degradation rituals.⁹⁷

Besides journals, sermons, histories and tracts, court records constitute invaluable sources for contemporary Scottish witch beliefs. Lerner distinguished three types of court records: First, there were accusations of neighbours indicating peasant ideas and concerns about witches. They cannot be seen as 'pure' evidence for popular witch belief since the evidence was collected and arranged by scribes, ministers and magistrates and many accusations recount events happening several years before the trial. Second, there are confessions of accused witches which could be given under torture or voluntarily. People confessed the horrible crime of witchcraft mostly because of a direct duress, but also with semi-suicidal intent to avoid living with a bad reputation, to escape torture, or attract attention. Confessions could contain *maleficium*, reinforcing claims of accusers, but also more fantastical elements like the demonic pact and the witches' sabbath. Despite the fact that the accused witch did not necessarily believe in the things he or she confessed, the confessions represent an agreed story which was thought credible by witch and inquisitor and drew on a common store of myth, fantasies, and nightmares. Thirdly, the final indictment summed up the opinion of the court and represented the educated opinion about the accused in its purest form. Lerner argues that it is possible to distinguish popular and learned witch beliefs in these sources. Folk beliefs are mainly evident in accusations, and elite notions are evident in the indictment while the confession shows a common culture of both.⁹⁸

Across Europe, there was a correlation between the use of torture and increasing numbers of convictions and trials with diabolic content. Continental courts could not convict a witch without the testimony of two eye-witnesses or a confession. Since witnesses for imagined crimes were short, the courts forced victims to confess by torturing them. In Scotland, torture was prohibited unless it was approved by the Privy Council. However, local lairds and bailies often tortured witches as they needed a confession to get a commission by the Privy Council authorising a trial. The most common methods of torture in Scotland were sleep deprivation and pricking accused witches with long pins to find the Devil's mark, a spot on the body which did not cause pain or bleed. There is also evidence for the use of thumbscrews, heated iron frames, hanging culprits on their thumbs or placing heavy weights on their legs.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Lerner, *Enemies of God*, 53-55.

⁹⁸ Lerner, *Enemies of God*, 135-6.

⁹⁹ Hughes, "Witch-hunting in Scotland," 99; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 80-8; Levack, *Witch-hunting in Scotland*, 3, 7, 22-4.

Scottish Fairy Belief

Scottish fairy belief can be traced in many sources from the Middle Ages to the early 19th century. Fairies appear in tales about Thomas the Rhymer living at the end of the 13th century, in medieval and Renaissance poetry, ballads and witch trial testimonials which are significant as judicial indictments, processes and decisions are normally seen as the soundest types of historical testimony. Even King James VI wrote about the fairies in his *Daemonologie* (1597) and about 100 years later the respected scholarly minister Robert Kirk wrote a learned tract about fairies.¹⁰⁰ By the 18th century, authorities thought that fairies existed no more, but they were still part of folk tradition.¹⁰¹ Throughout the 19th century, fairies and elves figured prominently in Scottish literature, paintings and illustrations, and folktale collections made by antiquarians. Walter Scott and James Hogg are only two of the numerous antiquarians interested in and collecting poetry, stories and ballads of the folk. Andrew Lang edited the tract of Robert Kirk and was one of the first to popularise traditional fairy tales. J.M. Barrie from Kirriemuir (Angus) wrote the well-known play *Peter Pan* (1904). Fairies are also prominent in many Scottish place names and every county has some fairy hills and glens. The most famous are the Eildon Hills in the Borders where, in the ballad, True Thomas met the Fairy Queen. Fairies also played a role in archaeology as prehistoric graves, brochs, souterrains and 'Picts houses' were often thought to be inhabited by fairies.¹⁰² People were fascinated by fairies in the 19th century as they felt nostalgia for a rural past which lived in harmony with nature. However, the antiquarian approach of comparing past superstitious beliefs to present rationalism has become obsolete. Historical sources seldom depict fairies as part of an idyllic past, but they were demonised by religious attempts to remodel the world. Despite the climate of suppression, fairy belief survived.¹⁰³

Names and Definitions for Scottish Fairies

Scottish fairies were known under a variety of names and most of them were amiable to please those potentially dangerous beings. Robert Kirk noted that the Highlanders called them *sluagh-maith* or 'good people' but he also referred to them as subterranean, invisible or lychnobious (=those living by lamplight) people. They were called elves, fairies and fauns but also good neighbours, good people,

¹⁰⁰ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 8; King James VI, *Daemonologie*, in *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's Demonology and the North Berwick Witches*, ed. Lawrence Normand et al., (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 353-425; Robert Kirk, *The Secret Common-Wealth or a Treatise Displaying the Chief Curiosities among the People of Scotland as they are in use to this Day*, in *The Occult Laboratory: Magic, Science and Second Sight in Late Seventeenth-Century Scotland*, ed. Michael Hunter (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2001), 77-117.

¹⁰¹ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 8-9.

¹⁰² Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 9; Naomi Lewis, introduction to *Peter Pan*, by James M. Barrie (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), 7-11; Sir Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border: Consisting of Historical and Romantic Ballads Collected in the Southern Countries of Scotland with a few of Modern Date founded upon Local Tradition*, ed. Thomas Henderson (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1931), 577-586.

¹⁰³ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 2.

honest folk, fairfolk, little people, seelie and unseelie court (from *sellig*=blessed), people of peace, eldritch beings (=weird, unearthly, otherworldly), hillfolk etc. In Gaelic, they were most commonly called *síth/sí/síd* meaning fairy hill, fairy, or peace; *sluagh* (=fairy host), *Daoine Síth* or *maithe* (=people of peace). In Norse influenced Orkney and Shetland, fairies were often called troll, trow, or trowies but also ferries, grey folk, huldre-folk, hidden people, peedie and peerie folk (=small), or hillyans. Hogboys and hogboons of Orkney and Shetland were similar to Brownies from mainland Scotland, who attached themselves to certain families or households and accomplished superhuman amounts of workload for them. Fairies were also called 'guid wichts'. The term 'wicht' generally denoted supernatural beings or someone with supernatural powers and it fell together with the term 'witch' during the witch-hunts and the demonization of fairies. In some cases fairies had personal names and the most interesting among those is NicNiven. It appears to derive from *Neamhain*, one of the Gaelic and Irish furies better known as *Badb* and sometimes *Neamhain* and *Badb* may represent different aspects of the same persona. *Badhb* in some Irish dialects means supernatural death-messenger who are also called *bean sí* in Irish, banshee in Scotland and Ireland or *bean-sithe* (=fairy woman) in Gaelic. *Badhb* can also mean 'deadly/ill-fated' or can sometimes be translated as 'witch'. In the *Gàidhealtachd*, the Lowlands and Shetland NicNiven was seen as Queen of the witches but she was also related to terrifying death-messengers of Scotland and Ireland and these associations show how the Scots regarded the Fairy Queen.¹⁰⁴ While Alison Hanham argued that NicNiven was a Scottish version of Hecate as queen of the witches, Jacqueline Simpson also states that the name could originate from an actual victim of the Scottish witch-hunts. It could refer to a woman called Nic Nevill burned in St. Andrews in 1569, or Kate Nikneveinig/McNiven also burned during the 1560s.¹⁰⁵

There have been several theories about the etymology of the term 'fairy' itself. Some stated that it derives from Arabic *Peri* or Latin *nympha*. The most common etymology is that it derives from Old French *faerie* or *fae* coming from Latin *fata* which means 'fate'. In theory, the Latin term lost its /t/ when it was subsumed into French but there is no concrete evidence for that. Noel Williams argued that the majority of texts containing Old French *fée* or Middle English *fay* rarely refer to female enchanters but rather to a certain quality of events and fairy in this sense mainly meant

¹⁰⁴ Alan Bruford, "Trolls, Hillfolk, Finns, and Picts: The Identity of the Good Neighbours in Orkney and Shetland," in *The Good People: New Fairylore Essays*, ed. Peter Narváez (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 118; "Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language," Royal Irish Academy, accessed April 29, 2014, http://edil.qub.ac.uk/dictionary/results-new.php?srch=s%C3%ADd&&dictionary_choice=edil_2012&&limit=80; Alaric Hall, "The Etymology and Meanings of *Eldritch*," *Scottish Language* 26 (2007): 16, 22; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 14-17; Patricia Lysaght, *The Banshee: The Irish Supernatural Death Messenger* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1986), 34-40, 191-218; Niall Ó Dónaill, *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* (Baile Átha Cliath: An Gúm, 2005), 1089, 1103; Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 78, 79, 83, 113-5.

¹⁰⁵ Alison Hanham, "'The Scottish Hecate': A Wild Witch Chase," *Scottish Studies* vol. 13, no. 1 (1969): 59-65; Jacqueline Simpson, "'The Weird Sisters Wandering': Burlesque Witchery in Montgomerie's 'Flying'," *Folklore*, vol. 106 (1995): 12-3, accessed November 4, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1260748>.

'fatedness'. This notion can still be seen in the idea that contact with Scottish fairies could have unfortunate and fatal effects for mortals. The term itself was imported into England in the 12th century as a literary term and it is not clear when it was introduced into everyday language. It became reasonably well established in Scotland by the 15th century where it appeared under a variety of spellings such as *fary*, *farie*, *pharie* or *phary*.¹⁰⁶

The Old English term 'elf' is a non-West Saxon variant of the Middle Dutch *ylf* and is cognate to Middle Low German *alf*, Middle High German *alp* and Old Norse *álfr*. The term first appears in Anglo-Saxon leechdoms in the 10th century against elf-shot and other elvish activities. In Scotland, the term was common for fairies of human size and their realms being called Fairyland or Elfame and several compound words like elf-arrow, elf-arrow-heid, elf-shot etc.¹⁰⁷

Scholars analysing Scottish fairylore did not distinguish between 'elf' and 'fairy' and the SSW states that they are interchangeable terms. Most sources use the term fairy or both. The term *fary* as a French loan word tended to replace the English *elf*, but the synonymy of both terms is yet to be analysed. Also, the term *trou* used in the Northern Isles has to be studied in this context. Alaric Hall argued that the dominance of *elf*- in compound words is maybe given because it predates the use of *fary* in Scots. Also social variation may be involved as French loan words spread from higher to lower social strata.¹⁰⁸

Scholars writing about fairylore and belief differentiated various kinds of fairies. Stephen Wilson argued that non-human beings which were interpreted by the clergy as demons or fallen angels were distinct at popular level. They were non-Christian beings similar to nymphs and fauns of antiquity and known under a variety of names across Europe. He divides them into two categories: First, there were spirits associated with house and farm and second, there were those associated with wild places such as woods, rivers, marshes and lakes or generally earth, water and air.¹⁰⁹ Following W.B. Yeats, Katherine Briggs distinguished between trooping fairies appearing in splendid processions, solitary fairies being mischievous spirits appearing alone and 'domesticated fairies' living

¹⁰⁶ Brown, *Oxford English Dictionary*, 908, 925; "Dictionary of the Scots Language," Scottish Language Dictionaries, accessed April 5, 2014, www.dsl.ac.uk; Peter G.W. Glare ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 680; Laurence Harf-Lancner, *Les fées au moyen âge: Morgane et Mélusine: La naissance des fées* (Genève, Editions Slatkine, 1984), 17-8; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 16-7; Noel Williams, "The Semantics of the Word *Fairy*: Making Meaning Out of Thin Air," in *The Good People: New Fairylore Essays*, ed. Peter Narváz (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 457-467.

¹⁰⁷ Katharine Briggs, *An Encyclopedia of Fairies, Hobgoblins, Brownies, Bogies, and other Supernatural Creatures* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), 122; Brown, *Oxford English Dictionary*, 799; Alaric Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England: Matters of Belief, Health, Gender and Identity* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 1, 4-5; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 32; "Dictionary of the Scots Language."

¹⁰⁸ Alaric Hall, "Getting Shot of Elves: Healing, Witchcraft and Fairies in the Scottish Witchcraft Trials," *Folklore*, vol.116, no.1 (April 2005): 20, accessed October 2, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30035236>.

¹⁰⁹ Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 408.

in households.¹¹⁰ Instead of emphasising differences between various fairies, Wilby and Purkiss argued for the similarities between Scottish fairies, English familiars, being small household demons often appearing as animals, and demons since all of them were met by chance and offered occult services which had their price. Although they were referred to under a variety of names like angels, saints, spirits, imps, ghosts or fairies during the Early Modern period, Purkiss and Wilby use the term 'familiar' as an umbrella term describing these various creatures and apparitions of folklore.¹¹¹ Although it is true that Scottish peasants knew a number of *wichts* and did not always clearly distinguish them, there are still differences between fairies, brownies and *trows* as well as demons, angels, and ghosts.¹¹² Thus, these supernatural beings are considered as separate entities in this dissertation while differences and similarities between them are analysed.

Origins of Fairies

There is a longstanding scholarly tradition of associating fairy belief in Western Europe with 'Celtic' culture and also with folk belief in the purest sense. Maxwell-Stuart used the term *sithean* as a standard term for fairies and associates them, therefore, mainly with Highland culture. However, the Gaelic term never occurs in the Scottish witchcraft trial documents. Even trials in Gaelic-speaking areas were recorded in English. All sources either use the word 'fairy' or 'elf' and neither of them are etymologically Celtic.¹¹³

Purkiss argued that all attempts to explain fairy belief with reference to Celtic culture have failed. Instead, she suggests that the Celts, who were trading partners with Greece from the 6th century BC and later with the Roman world, adopted Mediterranean beliefs in supernatural creatures. She found several similarities between ancient supernatural beings and the fairies, as they were later depicted in literature as well as the Scottish witch-hunts: Even if they seem to share the values of society, fairies come from outside the community and civilisation. Fairies are often like people; some were once human or they became trapped at a certain indeterminate stage of life. In some cases, fairies are the dead or they have links with ghosts. Babies, children, women at childbirth and young men are particularly vulnerable to them. Fairies are common in peasant cultures which are centred around village life but there are various local variations between them.¹¹⁴

Ecclesiastical authorities from the earliest times traced popular lore back to classical and biblical sources. Since fairy belief was always seen as the belief of someone else, they are related to

¹¹⁰ Briggs, *Encyclopedia of Fairies*, 375-6, 412; Katharine Briggs, *The Vanishing People: Fairy Lore and Legends* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 39, 53.

¹¹¹ Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 152-6; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 56-8, 112-120; Wilby, "The Witch's Familiar," 284-5.

¹¹² Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm," 142-168.

¹¹³ Hall, "Trial of Stein Maltman," 10; Hall, "Getting Shot," 20-1; Maxwell-Stuart, *Great Scottish Witch-Hunt*, 39, 64, 113; Maxwell-Stuart, *Satan's Conspiracy*, 10-7.

¹¹⁴ Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 48-51.

the Latin term *superstitio* originally describing all non-Roman beliefs and later denoting non-Christian, non-Protestant and non-rational ideas. Although authorities always tried to distance themselves from such folk beliefs, they were assimilated into the Church and the mythology of Greece and Rome. Later they became mixed with influences from Scandinavian, Germanic, and Celtic areas, as well as belief from the near and far east and ultimately the world at large.¹¹⁵

Apart from these origins in antiquity there have been various other theories about the roots of fairy belief. Some argued that fairies were nature spirits; others said they were ghosts or souls of the pagan dead living in a limbo between heaven and earth. Many folklorists associated them with the Picts and argued that fairies were an actually existing former race of people who were conquered and driven into remote areas. They were also interpreted as a small race of people or recollection of the druids, a notion echoing the Ossianic craze starting with James Macpherson's publication of his *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* in 1760. Some said they were fallen angels cast out of heaven by God. This idea can be found in written and oral traditions and gained prominence in the Christian context because of its biblical authority. In Ireland, it was believed that fairies derive from the mythological deities called *Tuatha Dé Danann*, described by erudite monks as divine race and descendants of the Greek mother goddess Danu. They were later conquered by the Milesians representing the humans who started to inhabit the earth. The *Tuatha* retreated to the western island Tir Nan Og (Land of Youth) or started to live inside earth and were later known as *sidhe*. Stories of the 'Tribe of Danu' were popular in Scotland at least from the 16th century onwards and were present in folk and learned traditions.¹¹⁶

The identification of fairies with souls of the dead is notable in this context since there is some evidence for this link in the Scottish witchcraft trials. Furthermore, Robert Kirk stated that his parishioners believed in a connection between fairies and ghosts. He noted that the fairies lived in a state of limbo and were often seen at funerals where they ate funeral food which was the reason why the people did not eat the food. Fairy hills were believed to house the souls of dead ancestors which supports the idea of the fairies as guardians of the dead. Fairies and ghosts were described in literary and folkloric sources as wearing green or white clothing and both were colours of death. Certain times of the day and year like Beltane and Halloween were associated with spirits, ghosts, witches and fairies alike. Fairies and the dead were both foreign and familiar to humans; they took gifts and gave some back to the humans, and they could both be angered. Evans-Wentz who studied fairy belief in Brittany, Wales, Scotland and Ireland argued that fairies were memories of chthonian beings or ancestors and that fairyland was the home of the dead. His pan-Celtic approach is however

¹¹⁵ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 10.

¹¹⁶ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 19-23; Tok Thompson, "Hosting the Dead: Thanotopic Aspects of the Irish Sidhe," in *Communicating with the Spirits*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay and Éva Pócs (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005), 194, 196-7, 200.

no longer convincing and several studies have shown that the connection between fairies and the dead is not limited to Celtic areas.¹¹⁷

Although the world of the fairies and the dead was separated from human society both realms were intertwined. Despite the fact that there were several rituals known in Early Modern Europe to let the souls of the dead depart freely, the souls could still return or remain on earth without departing either to Hell or Heaven. People could be punished for their sins in life by suffering in purgatory, walking around as ghosts on earth or returning as a vampire. Protestants tried to eradicate the idea of Purgatory. They argued that the dead could not walk on earth because the soul would go straight to Heaven or Hell after death. Despite their attempts to repudiate these notions, even among the Puritans the idea that fairies were supernatural beings between man and angel persisted. Across Europe, the returning dead could come back for beneficent means or cause harm and there was an overlap between ghosts and other malignant forces like witches and fairies.¹¹⁸ Pócs distinguishes 'personal dead' as returning revenants from 'impersonal, communal dead', who were demonic soul troops known across Europe returning periodically at the beginning of the year, at midwinter or other death periods to visit the settlements of the living. The impersonal dead lived neither in heaven nor on earth and consisted of repentant souls or unbaptized souls in a Christian context. The returning dead originated from different ancestor and death cults. They could be good or bad and were reinterpreted as guardian spirits for certain families or malevolent demons. Individual and hordes of the dead could be seen by humans as apparitions, visions, or dreams. Seers had certain rituals for communicating with them at certain occasions and the festivals of the dead were integrated into the Christian framework. During those festivals fairies also entered the human world and people could communicate with them in soul-to-soul communications during altered states of consciousness.¹¹⁹ In Scotland, people believed that persons who died prematurely, unbaptized or in a sudden and violent way could be seen accompanied by fairies and some witches confessed that they saw the dead in fairyland. While anxiety of about death is universal, it had a particular sting in Scotland where only the godly were predestined for salvation. Other less fortunate souls had doubts what awaited them in afterlife and fairyland was a welcome alternative.¹²⁰ The most distinctive feature between ghosts and fairies is that fairies were never part of the human race

¹¹⁷ Katharine Briggs, "The Fairies and the Realms of the Dead," *Folklore* vol.81, no. 2 (Summer 1970): 81-96, accessed January 7, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1258940>; ; Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz, *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1999), 84-116, 218-21; Lizanne Henderson, "Fairies, Angels and the Land of the Dead: Robert Kirk's Lychnobiaous People," 2 (paper presented at the conference 'Death in Scotland, from the medieval to the modern: beliefs, attitudes and practices', New College, University of Edinburgh, January 31 – February 2, 2014); Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 18-20; Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 80, 83, 85; Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 86-7.

¹¹⁸ Katharine Briggs, *The Fairies in Tradition and Literature* (London: Routledge, 2002), 11-3; Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 86; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 298, 302-3.

¹¹⁹ Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead*, 30-1.

¹²⁰ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 46-7, 59-61; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 303.

and would never become mortals. This distinction is viable unless one identifies the fairies with the *sluagh* in Gaelic tradition, a host of the unforgiven dead who could travel on earth and carry away people through the air similar to Pócs 'impersonal dead'.¹²¹

There is also a constant notion of fairies living in the past. They were believed to inhabit wild places, graveyards, ruins, monasteries and Neolithic sites as well as nameless, unmapped and unknown places rather than fields and houses.¹²² Fairies constantly vanish into the mists of the past as each generation thinks the former one was more superstitious and had more folklore. Fieldwork in Newfoundland showed that fairy belief never vanished but was a symbol of the past. There were numerous reasons for the fading of fairy belief like the Reformation, the growth of science and technology, the rise of rationality and changing economic circumstances. Educated classes during the late 18th and early 19th century saw the past as age of irrationality and darkness while the present was the time of reason and light. Scottish fairies occurring in ballads, folktales and songs for entertainment and didactic purposes could also reflect wider social concerns like the Highland clearances, Reformation, and agricultural improvement.¹²³

Scottish Fairy Belief before the Witch-Hunts

The terms 'fairy' and 'elf' were used interchangeably in medieval Scottish literature. The term fairy first appears in the anonymous poem *King Berdok* written around 1450, and 'elf' first appears in Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* dating from the late 15th century. The *King Berdok* belongs to a category of eldrich poems meaning 'uncanny', 'elfish', or 'otherworldly' which provide the first references to fairies and elves. In the story, Berdock falls in love with a girl who turns out to be the daughter of the Fairy king. When the king disapproves their union, he escapes his wrath by seeking refuge in the fireplace of a kiln. There he is besieged by the King of the Picts and others. Later Mercury turns him into a bush appearing like a ghost.¹²⁴ The classical tale *King Orfeo* was translated by Robert Henryson in the late 15th century.¹²⁵ Henryson's version of *Orpheus and Eurydice* is closer to the classical version having no happy end. In his story, Eurydice goes away in the morning to see the flowers bloom. There she is seen by a wicked herd-boy who follows her while she flees from him but thereby steps on a serpent. Her maidservant tells Orpheus that she is with the phary and that their queen took her. Orpheus follows Eurydice into the underworld. When he finds her, she is very weak. Pluto tells him that she is like an elf or like anybody else down there, but she will recover if she returns. Orpheus' harping convinced them to let her go, but they tell him that he must not look back when they leave. But he looks back and Eurydice has to remain in hell. The term 'fairfolk' first

¹²¹ Henderson, "Fairies, Angels and the Land of the Dead," 2-3; Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead*, 30-1.

¹²² Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 151-2.

¹²³ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 24-30, 35.

¹²⁴ Henderson *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 152-3.

¹²⁵ Briggs, "Fairies and the Realms of the Dead," 81-7; Henderson, "Fairies, Angels and the Land of the Dead," 1.

appears in Scotland in Gavin Douglas' translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* (1513). He noted that the woods were long occupied by nymphs which are called fairfolks or elves in Scotland. An early reference to brownies is provided in the writings of the historian and theologian John Mair. In his *Expositio in Matheum* (1518) he attested to the belief in brownies in East Lothian and states that fauns were called brownies in Scotland and could perform many tasks at night.¹²⁶

Fairies were fictionalised from the beginning as they first appear in medieval Scottish poetry. The most famous visitor of fairyland was Thomas Rhymer, who was said to be the father of Scottish poetry until the time of Walter Scott. *The Romance and Prophecies of Thomas Erceldoune* was written down in at least five manuscripts with the earliest dating around 1440. In the oldest version, Thomas tells the story himself but he also shifts into the third person singular. One day he sees a fair, beautiful lady accompanied by seven hounds riding by and he stops her under the Eildon Tree. Because of her beauty, he thinks she was Mary Queen of Heaven and wants to have sex with her. She refuses because this would ruin her beauty. But Thomas eventually persuades her by promising to live with her in Heaven or Hell in return. Afterwards, she becomes quite deformed but he has to go with her for 12 months. They travel for a while to come to Fairyland. On their way, they come to a crossroad with one road leading to Heaven, another to Paradise, one to Hell and another to Purgatory where the sinful souls suffered. She takes him down a fifth path to a subterranean land of great beauty. At the end of their journey, they enter a beautiful castle where she lives with her husband the king. They come to a great hall where there is a massive feast with music, and ladies and knights are dancing. Suddenly during this feast the Queen tells him to return to the Eildon Tree and what seems to him like 3 days were in reality 7 years. When he is back on Middle Earth, Thomas wants something to remember her and she offers him the gift of music or speech. He thereby gains the gift of prophesy so that he could never lie again which is why he was called True Thomas. There are historical traces for a man called 'Thomas Rhymour of Ercildune' and another Rhymour who died in 1294. One of them was believed to be the source for this story and he must have had a reputation for prophesy during his lifetime. Although prophecies and Thomas Rhymer were popular until the 18th century, it was mainly Walter Scott who preserved this story in his *Minstrelsy*. He was also the first who recorded the tradition of his return from fairyland. Thomas was also seen as comical figure: Andro Man (Aberdeen 1597) confessed that the fairy queen promised him that he would be able to cure all kinds of sickness, that he would know all things and she looked well after him, but he would have to beg for his bread before he died like Thomas Rhymour.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 153-4.

¹²⁷ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 142-152; Henderson, "Fairies, Angels and the Land of the Dead," 1-2; *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, ed. John Stuart (Aberdeen: Printed for the Club, 1841), 119 (Andro Man); Scott, *Minstrelsy*, 577-605.

The demonization of fairy belief during the 16th century cannot only be seen in the witch trials but also in literature. It can be demonstrated in Alexander Montgomerie's *Flyting of Montgomerie and Polwart* dated around 1580. The 'Flyting' was a medium where two competing poets verbally slandered each other. Such contests were usually held in the king's great hall during the winter. It contained both a display of knowledge on a learned level as well as insults and curses of popular culture. Alexander Montgomery was an educated man who was raised as Calvinist, but became attracted to Catholicism while he was abroad. He returned to Scotland in 1580 and became part of a group of intellectuals. His opponent Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth was a well-established poet and the later master of the household for James VI. It is possible that the later King James VI was present when Montgomery first presented his poem at court and he later quoted him in one of his works. The poem continued to be popular during the 17th century and was reprinted at least five times. During this period, there were several outbreaks of witch-hunts and the passages about witchcraft in the poems were not censored in the reprints. Montgomery begins his attack on Polwart by telling about a fairy rade on Halloween, when elves, fairies and *incubi* are riding out. In their company is a she-ape giving birth to a hideous creature representing Polwart. The elfin world of Montgomery is closely related to that of the witches. Polwart's offspring is hideous and unnatural like the fairy offspring known as changelings. In the next episode the Weird Sisters, who are distinct from witches as they depict supernatural creatures similar to Fates, pass by the abandoned baby. The Fates were regularly equated with Roman Parcae and are similar to Ovid's Furies. They curse the child with horrible diseases, and anybody who nurses it should be cursed too. The child should become a thief, liar and lunatic. It will be suckled by a witch, and it will be poor, ugly, luckless and sick. After them followed Nicneven, a witch, who nursed the infant. A person who was nursed by a witch ought to be cursed since it was believed in contemporary folk tradition that with breast-feeding one sucked in physical, mental and moral qualities of the nurse. There were also taboos in breast-feeding and someone who could drink freely from both breasts was thought to get the evil eye and someone who re-suckles would become a thief. The fact that monkey lets the creature suck from both breasts while Nicneven lets him suck twice is a bad omen in this context. Also, the witches in Nicniven's company ride backwards on animals as a characteristic feature of witches. They baptise the child in their own way by calling upon Hecate, the goddess of witches in classical mythology. Thereby they untie knots and use men's members to sew them into a shoe representing a reproductive and pornographic element. They conclude their prayer in the name of Mahowne or Mohammed, who was regarded as Devil by the Christians. Nicneven raises the child, teaches him witchcraft and thereby making Polwarth the most unnatural monster.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 158-165; Simpson, "Weird Sisters Wandering," 9-18.

Elite Ideas about Fairies during the 16th and 17th Centuries

A number of learned accounts on fairies and related beliefs were written to preserve them or to counter atheism and sadducism. Several English and Scottish learned men tried to fight atheism by advocating the reality of witchcraft, ghosts and the world of spirits since for them the disbelief in such things was the same as to deny the very existence of God. The term Sadducism derives from the ancient Jewish sect of 'Sadducees' who denied the resurrection of the dead, immortality and the existence of angels and spirits. One of the first Scottish opponents against sadducism was King James VI, who utilized the scripture to prove the existence of spirits and witches in his *Daemonologie* (1597). The treatise took the form of a Socratic dialogue between the demonologist Epistemon and the sceptic Philomates. James claimed that he wrote it to refute the sceptical works of Reginald Scot (*The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 1584) and Johann Weyer (*De Praestigiis Daemonum*, 1563). However, the immediate stimulus for writing the tract must have been the king's own experiences during the witch-hunts in the 1590s. The first Scottish mass trials in 1590-1 which came to be known as the North Berwick trials were primarily initiated by the king himself. James came to belief that a group of witches conspired with his rival Lord Bothwell and tried to kill him through witchcraft. To him witchcraft was not only treason against God but also against himself as the King of Scotland. This notion is reflected in his treatise describing witchcraft as inversion of ideal kingship. James saw himself as teacher and patriarch of his people and tried to convince theologians, pastors, inquisitors, lawyers and judges of the reality of witchcraft. His *Daemonologie* remained an influential work especially in Scotland during the following century, where judicial indictments for witchcraft and governmental attempts to implement more severe laws referred to it.¹²⁹

When James wrote his *Daemonologie*, he was not sympathetic towards fairies and the supernatural tradition. He argued that fairies like all apparitions and spirits were diabolic illusions or manifestations of the Devil. Since the age of miracles was over, angels were hardly ever sent to humans and they never appear in the shape of the dead. King James differentiated four kinds of troublesome spirits: There were spirits who haunted certain places, those who haunted people, spirits who possess people, and those commonly called fairies. While the first three categories of spirits could be evoked by maleficent witchcraft, fairies represented an independent kind of beings according to the king. In his description of the fairies, James recalls popular beliefs while condemning them as diabolic illusions:¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 119, 122-4, 127, 138, 176-8; King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 353-4; Larner, *Enemies of God*, 31; Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland*, 3-4; P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Witchcraft in Europe and the New World, 1400-1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 47-51; Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts eds., *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's Demonology and the North Berwick Witches* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 327, 332.

¹³⁰ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 58; King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 403-421; Normand, *Witchcraft*, 347-8.

That fourth kind of spirits, which by the gentiles was called Diana and her wandering court, and amongst us was called the fairy ... or 'our good neighbours', was one of the sorts of illusions that was rifest in the time of papistry. For although it was holden odious to prophesy by the devil, yet whom this kind of spirits carried away, and informed, they were thought to be sonsiest and of best life. ... there was a king and queen of fairy, of such a jolly court and train as they had; how they had a teind and duty, as it were, of all goods; how they naturally rode and went, ate and drank, and did all other actions like natural men and women ... the devil illuded the sense of sundry simple creatures in making them believe that they saw and heard such things as were nothing so indeed.¹³¹

In a following dialogue, Philomates asks how it is possible that some accused witches said that they went with the fairies into a hill where they saw the fairy queen who gave them a stone with certain powers which they could present in court. Epistemon representing James VI, argues that while those culprits were asleep, the spirit left their body so that the devil made them think they were taken into hills while he placed a stone in their hands so that they thought they got it from the fairies. Furthermore, James argues that prophecy supposed to be possible through the help of fairies was in reality the devil's work. While fairies could terrify anybody, there were also witches who claimed to have contact with fairies in order not to be punished by the authorities. The latter sort however had to be punished like any other witch according to James. Furthermore, the devil could deceive witches by attributing to him various names and by appearing in various shapes and as diverse kinds of spirits.¹³² In this last argument, it becomes clear that according to James fairies were 'wicked demons sent by the devil to undermine christianity, and those who claimed acquaintance with them were a threat to society at large.'¹³³ Among the spirits haunting houses, James mentions the Scottish brownies who were believed to be benevolent spirits bringing luck to families living in those places. Since the time of good spirits was ceased, they could however only be evil spirits even if their actions appeared good.¹³⁴

Concerns about the decline of witchcraft belief grew towards the end of the 17th century when the mechanical philosophy advocated by René Descartes and others got more attention. Descartes separated spirit from matter and argued that mysterious entities, powers and demons do not exist. Although the advocates of mechanical philosophy did not deny the existence of God, they degraded him to the initial creator of the universe who could not intervene in worldly matters afterwards. Joseph Glanvill thought that such ideas were a great danger to Christian religion and showed himself concerned about the declining belief in witchcraft in his unfinished treatise *A Proof*

¹³¹ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 418-9

¹³² King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 419-420.

¹³³ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 58.

¹³⁴ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 411-2.

of the Existence of Apparitions, Spirits and Witches, out of Holy Scripture. Henry More took up the work, added some parts and published it as *Saducismus Triumphatus* in 1681. Although More originally supported the mechanical philosophy of Descartes he soon argued for the primacy of spirit over matter. More and Glanvill tried to prove that immaterial spirits existed and were active in the world and that witchcraft and demonic activities were proof for the existence of these spirits as well as God. The treatise was quite popular at the time and almost certainly inspired the works of George Sinclair, Martin Martin and Robert Kirk. Most of the literature against Sadducism and atheism was written at a time of rising rationalism and declining numbers of witchcraft trials during the 17th and beginning 18th centuries. Those tracts utilized folk beliefs and defended them as being essential parts of Christian orthodoxy and thereby provided important sources for folk beliefs and customs.¹³⁵

Recounting King James' *Daemonologie*, George Sinclair noted in the chapter about prayers and charms in the Scottish Highlands included in his treatise *Satan's Invisible World Discovered* (1685):

In the time of ignorance and superstition when the darkness of Paganism was not dispelled by the gospel-light, spirit kept a more familiar converse with families, and even in the time of Popery, what was more frequent in houses than Brownies, whom they employed in many services. It were unreasonable and ridiculous, to rehearse all the stories which have been told of Brownies and fairies, commonly called our good neighbours; how there was a king and queen of fairies, of such a court and train as they had, and how they had a meal, how they rode, and went along the sides of hills, all in green apparel. I verily believe many have seen such spectie; but what were they? nothing but the delusion of the senses of sundry simple people, whom the devil made believe they did see and hear such things. Brownie was a spirit that haunted divers houses familiarly, without doing any evil, but doing necessary turns up and down the house, and frequently was found working in the barn, threshing the corn in the night-time, who appeared like a rough hairy man.¹³⁶

Sinclair argued that even during his life-time there were people in the Highlands who used south-running water and other objects and rituals to divine their future husband at Halloween. He argued that second sight was common but only possible through a pact with the devil and that charms and spells used for witchcraft and curing were originally taught to the people by the devil. Similar to

¹³⁵ Henderson *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 177-181; Thomas Harmon Jobe, "The Devil in Restoration Science: The Glanvill-Webster Witchcraft Debate," *Isis*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (1981): 348, accessed October 3, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/230254>; Michael Wasser, "The Mechanical World-View and the Decline of Witch Beliefs in Scotland," in *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Julian Goodare et. al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 209-211, 214-5.

¹³⁶ George Sinclair, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered: Or, a Choice Collection of Modern Relations, Providing Evidently, Against the Atheists of this Present Age, That There are Devils, Spirits, Witches: That Marvellous History of Major Weir* (Edinburgh: printed for William Martin, 1789) ECCO Print Edition, 140-1.

James VI, Sinclair tries to conquer atheism and proof the existence of spirits, devils, witches and apparitions while condemning fairy belief and related traditional beliefs.¹³⁷

The most detailed contemporary source for fairy belief and other folk beliefs like second sight is Robert Kirk's *Secret Common-wealth* (1691). He not only described folk traditions of pre-modern Scotland, but he was himself absorbed into folk tradition. Kirk was an important Gaelic scholar who was engaged in the evangelisation of the Highlands and he translated many holy works into Gaelic. He was the seventh son of Rev. James Kirk, minister of Aberfoyle, and was as such believed to have the gift of second sight himself. He was born in Aberfoyle around 1644 and studied theology in Edinburgh and St. Andrews before he became minister of Balquidder in 1664. In 1678, he married Isobel Campbell who bore him a son but she already died in 1680. Thereafter he remarried her cousin who bore him another son. In 1685, he was appointed minister of Aberfoyle where he lived until his death of abduction by the fairies on 14 May 1692. Although it is not clear how he really died the story goes that he was taken to fairyland. It is believed that he died while walking on Doon Hill behind his manse and he was buried in Kirkton graveyard in Aberfoyle. Sometime later he was seen by a relative and Kirk gave him a message for his cousin Graham of Duchray. He said he was held hostage in Fairyland and he would appear at the baptism of his posthumous child, when Graham should throw a dagger about his apparition to free him. When Kirk really appeared, his cousin was too startled to act and therefore he still lives in Fairyland. The story was probably invented more than a century after his death and was promoted by Scott's *Letters on Demonology* and by Evans-Wentz.¹³⁸

Robert Kirk described contemporary fairy belief in great detail including their nature, actions, apparel, language, armour and religion.¹³⁹ He described fairies as 'a midle nature betwixt man and Angell ...; of intelligent studious ... Spirits, and light changeable bodies ... somewhat of the nature of a condens'd cloud, and best seen in twilight.'¹⁴⁰ Fairies were a distinct race of beings living in another sphere or region of the world. Kirk incorporated contemporary fairy beliefs into a neo-platonic cosmology by describing seven major spheres from heaven to hell. He argued that fairies could only be seen by men with second sight. Otherwise, they moved unseen among humans like atoms in the air. He thought this world of spirits could be proofed by microscopical observations. According to Kirk, fairies had an ambiguous relationship with Christianity. They had no bible but knew several charms and they disappeared when they heard the name of Jesus, but they were still part of God's creation and stood under his command. He described fairies as being stronger than men but not

¹³⁷ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 353-4, 411, 418-21; Sinclair, *Satan's Invisible World*, 140-2.

¹³⁸ Evans-Wentz, *Fairy-Faith*, 89-90; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 172-6, 185; Michael Hunter ed., *The Occult Laboratory: Magic, Science and Second Sight in Late Seventeenth-Century Scotland* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2001), 12, 77.

¹³⁹ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 185-9; Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 79-83.

¹⁴⁰ Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 79.

likely to hurt them although they were potentially dangerous to mortals. Fairyland to Kirk was an enchanted place usually underground in particular hills. Although the spirits of the dead were connected to the otherworld, they were distinct from the fairies themselves who could not become sick but lived in a continuous sadness until they eventually died.¹⁴¹

Martin Martin depicted folk traditions and customs of the Gaelic-speaking isles in his *Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* (ca.1695). He based his tract on personal interviews and empirical observations.¹⁴² Martin left only small hints for the belief in fairies and evil spirits in the western isles during the 17th century. He briefly described a fire-ritual to protect mother and child in childbed from the influence of evil spirits and to avoid for the baby being taken away by the fairies. Martin was also told that a Brownie on Orkney was displeased when the family he served read the Bible and that he would not serve them any more if they continued to do so. When the man continued to read and refused to give any sacrifice to the Brownie, his first two ale brewings were miscarried and only the third time it went well.¹⁴³ While Martin only left small hints for the fairy belief in the Western Isles, he is the most informative source for second sight and his work is an example for the growing interest in Gaelic culture and second sight during the end of the 17th and beginning 18th century.¹⁴⁴

Popular Ideas about Fairies during the Time of the Witch-Hunts

Early Modern Scottish fairy belief of the folk and the elite bears little resemblances to modern stereotypes of fairies as butterfly-winged, transparently dressed, cheerful, nymph-like creatures. Such ideas are inspired by fairy books, illustrations and the new age movement. Those literary, artistic and mass media depictions are not based on folk traditions where fairies were seen as fascinating but also dangerous inflicting harm and death upon people and their livestock. Although one could occasionally benefit from contact with them, most people avoided them in pre-industrial Scotland.¹⁴⁵

The Scottish witch trials are a rich source for contemporary fairy belief. Common people accused of witchcraft may have been referring to traditional stories and beliefs about fairies while legal authorities used these confessions as a starting point to more serious demonological notions. Since the elite believed that witchcraft implied a compact between witch and devil, interrogators questioned culprits closely about encounters with supernatural spirits. Stories about fairies

¹⁴¹ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 185-9; Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 79-106 .

¹⁴² Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 176.

¹⁴³ Martin Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland Circa 1695*, ed. Donald J. Macleod (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1994), 178, 391.

¹⁴⁴ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 181-4; Michael Hunter, "The Discovery of Second Sight in Late 17th-Century Scotland," *History Today* vol. 51, no. 6 (June 2001): 48-53; Martin, *Description*, 321-348.

¹⁴⁵ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 13-4; Lizanne Henderson, "The Road to Elfland: Fairy Belief and the Child Ballads," in *The Ballad in Scottish History*, ed. Edward J. Cowan (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 54; Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 1-5.

appearing in witchcraft confessions are no evidence that everyone at that time fully believed in them, but that such beliefs belonged to a common culture in pre-industrial Scotland. Henderson and Cowan have successfully argued that the demonization of fairy belief during the witchcraft trials was a first step in introducing diabolical ideas in Scotland and that these ideas were only a thin crust covering Scottish fairy belief which can also be found after the witchcraft trials.¹⁴⁶

Fairies can be characterized as liminal creatures between human and angel and living in a land which was an inversion of the human world with its own laws and which, unlike heaven or hell, existed on earth. They could be encountered at special times and places which can also be described as liminal. The term derives from Latin *limen* meaning 'threshold' and the concept of liminality is connected to Arnold van Gennep's theory of the rites of passage. He described them as rites of transition from one biological or social status to another with an ambivalent in-between state of liminality. Peter Narváez applied van Gennep's theory onto the fairy landscape of Newfoundland arguing that Fairyland or the places of fairy encounters were areas between the known space of purity and the unknown space of danger. Those entering this transitional state or place were physically and magico-religiously in a special situation between the two worlds.¹⁴⁷ Special places connected to fairies but also witches and their sabbaths belonged to a supernatural landscape coinciding with the natural landscape. Many stories and trial confessions name specific locations and the placenames often reflecting the mentalities of people. The concept of boundaries is very significant in the discussion of supernatural creatures and landscapes. To control the human world, territories, years and seasons had to be parted from the land and time of mystery. Crossing those boundaries could be done by humans and non-humans intentionally or unintentionally and constituted a physical, spiritual or mental event. It seems that fairies could move more freely between different spheres while humans crossed the boundaries mainly by accident. Ultimately, every living thing had to cross the boundaries of birth, copulation and death during their life cycle.¹⁴⁸ Early Modern people could meet the fairies at the boundary of space and time, between the town and the wilderness, at midday, midnight, the change of the year, at Fastings Eve, Halloween, May Eve, Yule or other boundaries of the year. Fairies could also be seen at moments of social and

¹⁴⁶ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 106-138; Lizanne Henderson, "Witch, Fairy and Folktale Narratives in the Trial of Bessie Dunlop," in *Fantastical Imaginations: The Supernatural in Scottish History and Culture*, ed. Lizanne Henderson (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2009), 143-166; Purkiss, "Losing Babies," 144; Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 87-8; Willumsen, *Witches of the North*, 95-7.

¹⁴⁷ Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1960), 11, 18; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 39-40, 44; Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 79, 85; Peter Narváez, "Newfoundland Berry Pickers 'In the Fairies': Maintaining Spatial, Temporal, and Moral Boundaries Through Legendry," in *The Good People: New Fairylore Essays*, ed. Peter Narváez (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 337-8; Purkiss, "Sounds of Silence," 84.

¹⁴⁸ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 42-4.

physical transition like birth, copulation, adolescence, betrothal and death.¹⁴⁹ For the community, it was crucial to demark particular areas as fairy places to protect people from danger. Being alone in the hills, by the water, in the forest, or generally away from home, the village or town was dangerous and could lead to death through exposure, drowning or being killed by wild animals. Especially in the kin-based structure of Highland and Lowland Scotland people were lost without family and friend. This danger also led to a fascination of such places already showing off in medieval literature where being outside society in the wild could result in gaining wisdom.¹⁵⁰

In Scottish witchcraft trials and contemporary descriptions fairies were usually human sized and looked like mortals but there are also references to little people or pygmies. Robert Kirk noted that fairies were of human size and appearance implying that people could never be sure if they met a fairy or not. However, in his index he describes elves as being a 'Tribe of the Fayries' not bigger than an ell and the Gaelic term *lusbartan* in his title means pygmy, dwarf or small gentleman.¹⁵¹ Martin Martin mentioned that the people of Lewis knew of an Island of Pigmies where small bones were found which belonged to small people once inhabiting it called 'Lusbirdan'. He thought that these were superstitious folk beliefs which would vanish when Protestantism advanced.¹⁵² Also Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) confessed that she saw small, hollow, hump-backed elf-boys shaping elf-arrow-heids.¹⁵³ Henderson and Cowan argued that these pygmy theories came mainly from Celtic, Germanic, English and Scandinavian sources and to a lesser extent from classical mythology. Differences in the size of fairies could derive from competing traditions, regional variants, remnants of older traditions, or describing particular types of fairies. There was an overlap of learned and popular notions and a hybridisation of those beliefs over the centuries. According to Henderson and Cowan, fairies also became smaller over time as they were connected to the past and people tend to imagine their ancestors as being smaller than themselves.¹⁵⁴

Fairies could change their appearance which can be interpreted as a form of shape-shifting.¹⁵⁵ Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) affirmed that the fairy queen could alter her age and appearance at will.¹⁵⁶ When Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) first met Thom Reid, a ghost living in Fairyland, he appeared like a human but then he disappeared into 'ane naroware hoill of the dyke' into which no worldly man could fit.¹⁵⁷ Robert Kirk stated that fairies could be carried through the air or change

¹⁴⁹ Purkiss, "Sounds of Silence," 83; Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 4, 86.

¹⁵⁰ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 44.

¹⁵¹ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 47-57; Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 78, 80, 82, 113.

¹⁵² Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 51-3; Martin, *Description*, 99.

¹⁵³ *Criminal Trials in Scotland*, vol. 3, ed. R. Pitcairn (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1833), 607.

¹⁵⁴ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 56-7.

¹⁵⁵ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 47, 55-7.

¹⁵⁶ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 121.

¹⁵⁷ *Criminal Trials*, vol.1, part II, 51-2.

their shape to enter their dwellings under the earth. They could also appear or disappear at will and could make humans vanish at certain places to lead them to Fairyland.¹⁵⁸

While ballad fairies were often lavishly adorned, their clothing was less exotic in witch trial accounts. They were often dressed similar like humans living in the country and they were frequently encountered in green clothes which was an ill-omened colour connected to bad luck and death.¹⁵⁹ Robert Kirk noted: 'Their apparel and speech is like that of the people and country under which they live: so are they seen to wear plaids and variegated garments in the high-lands of Scotland and Suanochs heretofore in Ireland.'¹⁶⁰ Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) also told his interrogators that elves were shaped and clothed like humans.¹⁶¹ Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) met eight female and four male fairies and stated that the men wore gentleman's clothing while the women wore plaids.¹⁶² She described the ghost Thome Reid who lived in fairyland as 'honest wele elderlie man, gray bairdit, and hand ane gray coitt with Lumbart slevis of the auld fassoun; ane pair or gray brekis and quhyte schankis, gartanit abone the kne; ane blak bonet on his heid, cloise behind and plane befoir, with silkin laiffis drawin throw the lippis thairof; and ane quhyte wand in his hand.'¹⁶³ Similarly, Issobell Haldane (Perth 1623) met a grey bearded man in a fairy hill.¹⁶⁴ Janet Trall (Perth 1623) saw 'the fairy folks, who appeared some of them in red, some of them in grey, and riding upon horses. The principal of them that spake to me was like a bonny white man, riding upon a grey horse. ... [while another time] the principal of them appeared, clad in green.'¹⁶⁵ Several other witches saw the fairies being dressed in green. Elspeth Reoch (Orkney 1616) confessed that she met two men, one dressed in black and the other wearing a green tartan plaid while Margaret Alexander (Linlithgow 1647) saw a fairy man with green clothes and a grey hat.¹⁶⁶ Barbria Parish (Linlithgow 1647) met the good neighbours wearing green kirtalls.¹⁶⁷ Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) said that each witch had a spirit appearing like man and awaiting them at their sabbath meetings. They were clothed in grass-green, sea-green, and yellow while her own spirit was black.¹⁶⁸

¹⁵⁸ Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 79, 84.

¹⁵⁹ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 57-61.

¹⁶⁰ Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 82.

¹⁶¹ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 121.

¹⁶² *Criminal Trials*, vol.1, part II, 52-3.

¹⁶³ *Criminal Trials*, vol.1, part II, 51.

¹⁶⁴ *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, 2nd series, vol. 8, ed. David Masson et al. (Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1877-1914), 353.

¹⁶⁵ *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, ed. John Stuart (Aberdeen: Printed for the Spalding Club, 1843), xii.

¹⁶⁶ *Lawting Sheriff and Justice Courts of Orkney and Zetland*, in *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*, vol.2, ed. Alexander Macdonald and James Dennistoun (Edinburgh: Printed for the Club, 1833), 188 (Elspeth Reoch); Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 58; SSW (Margaret Alexander).

¹⁶⁷ SSW; CH2/467/1/77.

¹⁶⁸ *Criminal Trials*, vol.3, 606.

Witch trial accounts and ballads describe several activities of fairies including their love for hunting, music, dancing, abduction of humans, sexuality, holding feasts and merriment, as well as malevolent mischief and poltergeist activities. Their best known activity is the Fairy Rade. The Scots term 'rade' described a predatory expedition or foray during the 15th century and became similar to a 'parade' to show off strength during the 16th century. The best description of a fairy rade is provided by Montgomery in his *Flyting of Montgomerie and Polwart* (c.1580) describing Diana accompanied by fairies, elves, incubi, the Weird Sisters and Nicniven riding through the nocturnal sky. The descriptions of fairy rades echo the idea of the Wild Hunt in Gaelic, Irish and Norse tradition as well as classical sources.¹⁶⁹ Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) gives the best description of a fairy rade in the witch trial accounts. She stated that when she was travelling with her husband to Leith 'thair come ane cumpanye of rydaris by, that maid sic and dynn as heavin and erd had gane togidder; and incontinent, thai raid in to the loich, with mony hiddous rumbill.' Thome Reid later told her they were 'the gude wichtis that wer rydand in Middil-zerd.'¹⁷⁰ Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) stated that the fairies play and dance whenever they want and that he saw the Queen of Elphen together with Christsonday, who appeared like a stag, riding out on Ruidday.¹⁷¹ Donald McIlmichael (Argyll 1677) saw men and women dancing in a well light room inside a hill and he used to play the trumps while they danced.¹⁷² Robert Kirk argued that the activities were similar to those of humans. They bake bread, strike hammers inside their hills while Brownies entered houses of humans to clean kitchens. Their women used to spin, dye and embroider fabrics while their men were engaged in travelling and fighting. They fed on a fine spirituous liquor while some of them ate corn which they stole from humans and they ate funeral food. Kirk was not sure if the goods they produced were real or imagined. Furthermore, they enjoyed abducting women in childbed to nurse fairy children; they took away human midwives and exchanged new-born babies with one of their kind and terrorized mortals by shooting them or their animals with elf-arrows.¹⁷³

The majority of the fairy descriptions depict an aristocratic society with its love for hunting, playing music, dancing, and living in a big hall or court. Fairy king and queen appear in the Scottish Lowlands and Highlands indicating their political structure. The earliest descriptions of them are provided by the two anonymous poems *King Berdok* (c.1450) and Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* (late 15th century). King and queen of fairy were also depicted in Montgomery's *Flyting of Montgomerie and Polwart* (c.1580) presented at the court of James VI.¹⁷⁴ Robert Kirk stated that the

¹⁶⁹ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 61-3, 158-165; Simpson, "Weird Sisters Wandering," 9-18.

¹⁷⁰ *Criminal Trials*, vol.1, part. II, 57.

¹⁷¹ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 121.

¹⁷² *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, ed. J.R.N. Macphail, (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1920), 37-8.

¹⁷³ Briggs, *Vanishing People*, 93-117, 127-8; Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 79-84; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 74-100.

¹⁷⁴ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 65-7; 152-4, 158-165; Simpson, "Weird Sisters Wandering," 9-18.

social and political structure of fairies was parallel to that of humans. They were organised in tribes and orders, had children, nurses, marriages, deaths and burials, aristocratic rulers and laws, conflicts and fights. They had no religion and committed injustice by abducting human women and children.¹⁷⁵ Several witches refer to the king and queen of fairy in their confessions. Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) confessed that the Queen of Elfame came to her as a beggar asking for a drink when Bessie was in labour.¹⁷⁶ Alesoun Pierson (Fife 1588) was accused of having contact with the 'gude nyctbouris and Quene of Elfame'. The queen was sometimes good and other times evil and she could be with her court or away from them. Alesoun stayed in the court of Elfame for seven years and had kind friends there with some of them being of her own blood.¹⁷⁷ Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) first met the Queen of Elphen in his mother's house when he was a young boy. When he was grown up, he had a sexual relationship and several children with her.¹⁷⁸ John Philip (Aberdeen 1631) confessed the healing of a man with the help of the queen of fairies.¹⁷⁹ Jean Weir (Edinburgh 1670) encountered a spirit woman who offered to go the 'Queen of Farie'. The queen would help her spinning and gave her a lot of money.¹⁸⁰ Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) said she met both the King and the Queen of fairies inside the Downie-hills. The queen offered her food and was beautifully dressed in white and brown clothes while the king was a handsome man with a broad face.¹⁸¹ Others only confessed meeting the king of fairies. John Stewart (Ayr 1618) saw the king of fairies and his company riding out at Halloween. The king gave John a stroke with a white rod and thereby took away his speech and the sight of one of his eyes but he restored these abilities three years later on Halloween. Since then he met the king and his company every year on Halloween on several hills.¹⁸² Margaret Alexander (Linlithgow 1647) stated that she had sex with the king of Fairies who appeared as a black man dressed in green.¹⁸³

Most people entered Elfland by accident. While the best account of the journey to fairyland is given in the ballads of Thomas the Rhymer, witch trial accounts are often less detailed. Witches could be escorted by the fairies in a whirlwind or some other form of levitation or they accidentally stumbled across the homes of fairies.¹⁸⁴ Alesoun Pierson (Fife 1588) confessed that fairies travel in a whirlwind and they took herself and her uncle with them.¹⁸⁵ Further confessions suggesting that fairies and also witches travelled in whirlwinds are discussed in a later chapter.

¹⁷⁵ Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 80-3.

¹⁷⁶ *Criminal Trials*, vol.1, part. II, 56-7.

¹⁷⁷ *Criminal Trials*, vol.1, part II, 162.

¹⁷⁸ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 119.

¹⁷⁹ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 4, 638.

¹⁸⁰ Purkiss, "Sounds of Silence," 93; SSW; JC2/13/10.

¹⁸¹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 604.

¹⁸² Sir Walter Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (Blacksburg: Wilder Publications, 2009), 98-9.

¹⁸³ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 66; SSW; CH2/467/1/79.

¹⁸⁴ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 36-7.

¹⁸⁵ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 164.

Fairyland was the realm of elves, ghost and demons and is often associated with forests, hills or mountains; it could be subterranean, submarine, on an island, far away, terrestrial or celestial, or in the wilderness. In Scottish witch trial accounts Fairyland was mostly located beside or inside hills.¹⁸⁶ Katherine Ross (Ross and Cromarty 1590) was accused of going to the hills to speak with the elf folk while Janet Drever (Orkney 1615) was found guilty for fostering a child of the fairy folk in the hill of Westray.¹⁸⁷ Also, John Stewart (Ayr 1618), Issobell Haldane (Perth 1623), and Donald McIlmichael (Argyll 1677) met fairies and otherworldly people inside hills.¹⁸⁸ Robert Kirk referred to fairy hills inhabited by dangerous mountain-people. He noted that people believed that the souls of their restless ancestors dwelled therein and that a hill beside every churchyard was dedicated to receiving the souls of the dead.¹⁸⁹ Katharine Jonesdochter (Shetland 1616) said she saw the trows on a hill several times, but she also saw them 'ryse out of the kirkyard' and they came 'to ony hous quhair their wes feasting or great mirrines, and specialle at Yule'.¹⁹⁰ Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) stated that a hawthorn tree was a place to meet fairies. Once she saw a company of fairies riding into a loch while Elspeth Reoch (Orkney 1616) also met two fairy men beside a loch.¹⁹¹ Fairyland was opposed to Middle Earth, which was known as the land of the mortals during the Middle Ages and a place between Heaven and Hell.¹⁹² Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) confessed that she saw the good wichts riding on 'Middil-zerd' while Alesoun Pierson (Fife 1588) stated that her uncle William Sympsoun was carried away from 'middil-eird' by the fairies.¹⁹³

Fairyland is described in literary sources as well as in witch trials as land full of beauty, a sort of subterranean paradise.¹⁹⁴ Alesoun Pierson (Fife 1588) saw several men and women pyping, making merry and being of good cheer.¹⁹⁵ Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) went to the Downie Hills along with others. Then 'the hill opened, and we cam to an fair and lairge braw rowme, in the day tym. Thair ar great bullis rowtting and skoylling ther, at the entrie, quhilk feared me.'¹⁹⁶ For members of an agricultural society, bulls were an indication of wealth and status reflected in this account.¹⁹⁷ Donald McIlmichael (Argyll 1677) was attracted by bright lights shining at a hill during the night and he

¹⁸⁶ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 39, 41-2.

¹⁸⁷ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 196 (Katherine Ross); *The Court Books of Orkney and Shetland, 1614-5*, trans. and ed. Robert S. Barclay (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1967), 19 (Janet Drever).

¹⁸⁸ Scott, *Letters on Demonology*, 99 (John Stewart); RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 353 (Issobell Haldane); *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 37 (Donald McIlmichael).

¹⁸⁹ Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 79, 85.

¹⁹⁰ *Court Book of Shetland, 1615-29*, ed. Gordon Donaldson (Lerwick: Shetland Library, 1991), 39.

¹⁹¹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 52, 57; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 41 (Bessie Dunlop); *Lawting Sheriff and Justice Courts*, 188-9 (Elspeth Reoch).

¹⁹² Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 42.

¹⁹³ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 57 (Bessie Dunlop); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 163-4 (Alesoun Pierson).

¹⁹⁴ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 45-7.

¹⁹⁵ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 163.

¹⁹⁶ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 611.

¹⁹⁷ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 46.

described men and women dancing in a room light by candles.¹⁹⁸ People at this time must have been very impressed by large, fair rooms with burning fires and candles since the humble domestic dwellings of most contemporaries were barely light after dark. Furthermore, fairyland could disappear from one moment to another.¹⁹⁹ Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) stated: 'the elphis will mak the appear to be in a fair chalmer, and yit thow will find thy self in a moss on the morne; and that thay will appear to have candlis, and licht, and swordis, quhilk wilbe nothing els bot deed gress and straves'.²⁰⁰ Being in fairyland was also connected to a disorted sense of time. What seemed a few minutes or an evening turned out to be weeks, years or centuries in human time and the returning could find themselves rapidly aged or fell into dust.²⁰¹

The connection of fairies and ghosts shows off in the witchcraft trials since there are several accounts of witches seeing the dead in fairyland. The ghosts living in fairyland often died before their time or suffered a violent death. They were once mortal but then stood under the sovereignty of the fairies and their queen.²⁰² Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) confessed that she saw the laird of Auchenskeith, who died 9 years earlier, riding with the fairies. Also, she had frequent contact with Thome Reid who claimed to have died at the Battle of Pinkie fought 29 years earlier on 10 September 1547. Reid told her that the Queen of Elfame was his mistress who commanded him to come to her and help her. She also saw him once at the Kirkyard at Dalry.²⁰³ Alesoun Pierson (Fife 1588) stated that she had many friends 'of hir awin blude' at the fairy court and that her own uncle William Sympsoun was with them.²⁰⁴ Andro Man (Aberdeen 1597) also saw several dead men in the company of the fairies including Thomas Rhymer and King James IV who died at the battle of Flodden in 1513.²⁰⁵ Elspeth Reoch (Orkney 1616) confessed that she had contact with a black man who called himself a fairy man but was sometimes her kinsman Johne Stewart who was slain at sunset and was 'therfor nather deid nor leiving bot wald ever go betuix the heaven and the earth'.²⁰⁶ John Stewart (Ayr 1618) stated that he saw many persons at the fairy court and that all persons suffering a sudden death go with the King of Elfland.²⁰⁷ Kirk noted that Highlanders and men with second sight believed that people dying before their time go with the Sith. He argued that fairies were seen eating funeral food which is why the Scottish-Irish did not eat the food themselves. Some of them helped carrying the coffin of dead men to their graves. They could also appear as guardian angels or co-walkers looking like mortals and

¹⁹⁸ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 37.

¹⁹⁹ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 46.

²⁰⁰ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 121-2.

²⁰¹ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 47.

²⁰² Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 46-7, 59-61.

²⁰³ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 51, 55-7; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 59-60.

²⁰⁴ *Criminal Trials*, vol.1, part II, 162, 164.

²⁰⁵ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 121; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 46.

²⁰⁶ *Lawting Sheriff and Justice Courts*, 189.

²⁰⁷ Scott, *Letters on Demonology*, 99.

following them like a shadow. Those co-walkers were often seen before or after the death of their human twin.²⁰⁸ The case of Margaret Alexander (Linlithgow 1647) suggests that fairy and witch belief became increasingly entangled during the 17th century and that ghosts became more directly connected to witches. Margaret confessed that she was carried away by mortal and dead witches to eat and drink with them. At another occasion, she met two men and two women and one of the men was the king of fairies who had sex with her. Therefore, she met a mixture of fairies, dead and living witches.²⁰⁹

Fairies also shared several characteristics with witches. Both could shape-shift, make themselves invisible, travel through the air through a whirlwind or on straws or stalks. They stole food, turned milk and butter bad, and destroyed crops. Fairies and witches abducted children and sometimes replaced them with one of their own or left a stock behind. They injured horses and cattle by shooting them with elf-shot or witch-shots. Both could be blamed for paralysis, problems with childbirth or sudden deaths. Several times of the year or day such as noon, midnight, Beltane, Midsummer-Eve, and Halloween were associated with both. Locations like hills, wells, and hawthorn trees were associated with fairies and witches. Both could leave circular impressions in the grass after their dance. They made music, danced and feasted. Fairies had sexual relationships with mortals while witches had them with the devil. Skills like medicine, music and second sight are connected to both but were mainly gifts from fairies to witches. Humans associated with fairies usually had a connection with fairyland through a being of the opposite sex. Fairies could act as intermediaries between humans and the dead while witches could get their powers from their relations with fairies and ghosts. There is however an important distinction between witches and fairies. Although witches could acquire special powers through their connection with supernatural beings, they never became supernatural creatures themselves. The witch always stayed a member of the community while fairies were strangers from another world.²¹⁰

In summary, fairies can be interpreted as a reflection, projection and inversion of contemporary concerns and they could be encountered under certain circumstances.²¹¹ The confession of Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) sums up contemporary Scottish fairy belief quite well:

Thow affermis that the elphis hes schapes and claythis lyk men, and that thay will have fair coverit taiblis, and that thay ar bot schaddowis, bot ar starker nor men, and that thay have playing and dancing qhen thay pleas; and als that the queen is verray pleasand, and wilbe auld and young qhen scho pleissis; scho mackis any kyng qhhom scho pleisis, and lyis with any scho lykis.²¹²

²⁰⁸ Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 80, 85, 101.

²⁰⁹ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 61; SSW; CH2/467/1/79.

²¹⁰ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 137-8; MacCulloch, "Fairy and Witch Beliefs," 228-230.

²¹¹ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 67.

²¹² *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 121.

Fairy Belief in the Chronological and Geographical Context of the Scottish Witchcraft Trials

By searching the SSW one can find 113 witchcraft trials between 1572 and 1706 containing fairy characteristics.²¹³ This number can even be raised by taking a closer look and comparing the trials to other secondary sources. One additional trial comes up when searching the SSW for 'fairy' as non-natural beings. This is the trial of Issobell Fergusson (Edinburgh 1661) who, according to the SSW, met a fairy wearing a black gown.²¹⁴ By comparing the trials to the ones mentioned by Henderson and Cowan, one can find 14 more cases between 1568 and 1716 involving fairy characteristics.²¹⁵ Furthermore, Emma Wilby compares the trial of Jonet Rendall (Orkney 1629), who called her Devil 'Walliman' and confessed several meetings with witches on a hill, to other Scottish cases with fairy belief.²¹⁶ The works of Julian Goodare, Alaric Hall, and P.G. Maxwell-Stuart give reference to 9 other trials related to fairy belief.²¹⁷ On the whole, we now have 138 witchcraft trials which are relevant for the study of the Scottish fairies and which are listed in the appendix. There are also charts added in the appendix showing the various characteristics mentioned in the trials which are relevant for this study. Those charts do not include all 138 fairy-related trials, but only 127 cases which are mentioned in the SSW since no relevant data could be found for the others.²¹⁸

Those witchcraft trials include various fairy characteristics, but not all of them refer to fairies and elves directly. According to the SSW, 28 of the 113 fairy-related trials directly mention the good neighbours, a group of fairies, male or female fairies or their king or queen.²¹⁹ There are 14 more trials which can be added mentioning fairies, familiars, trows or similar spirits: Katherine Ross (Ross and Cromarty 1590) mentioned the 'elf folk' in her confession. John Stewart (Ayr 1618) referred to king of fairies and Katherine Cragie (Orkney 1643) talked about trows. Familiar spirits were mentioned in the trials of Agnes Sampson (Edinburgh 1591), Margaret Watsoun (Lanark 1644), and Jonet Miller (1658). Beatrix Leslie (Edinburgh 1661) confessed that she was carried away at night by a company of many brave souls while Donald McIlmichael (Argyll 1677) met many men and women dancing inside hill at night. Furthermore, fairies were mentioned in the trials of Margaret Barclay (Ayr 1618), Janet Anderson (Stirling 1621), Marable Couper (Orkney 1624), Janet Cowie (Elgin 1647),

²¹³ SSW; Hall, "Trial of Stein Maltman," 10.

²¹⁴ SSW.

²¹⁵ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 217.

²¹⁶ SSW; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 57, 62, 67, 75, 115, 225.

²¹⁷ Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm," 143, 147; Goodare, "Flying Witches," 167; Hall, "Getting Shot," 25; Maxwell-Stuart, *Great Scottish Witch-Hunt*, 112-3. Compare to 'List of Fairy-Related Witchcraft Trials in Scotland' (Appendix).

²¹⁸ For all 138 trials see: 'List of Fairy-Related Witchcraft Trials in Scotland'. For 127 trials see: table 1 and 2.

²¹⁹ SSW. Compare to Appendix: Those 28 trials are marked in pink in Table 1 and also given in the section "Fairies" in Table 2.

Issobell Fergusson (Edinburgh 1661), Margaret Fulton (1697), and Jean Brown (Wigtown 1706).²²⁰ Thus, 43 out of the 127 trials listed in the appendix (table 1) explicitly mention fairies and similar spirits.²²¹ The rest of the 127 witchcraft trials have certain fairy characteristics. According to the SSW, 94 out of these mention fairyland.²²² However, reading the trial records, only Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) makes a direct reference to Fairyland by stating that she went to 'Elflame'.²²³ The other cases can be more or less related to Fairyland by mentioning the court of Elfame or meetings in hills. While some of them are clearly related to fairies others are more connected to witches' meetings. The index of the SSW does not make it clear how 'Fairyland' or 'Elphame' is actually defined. Other fairy characteristics mentioned in the SSW are: changelings (6 trials), elf-shots (12 trials), fairy blasts (3 trials), wells (8 trials), rowan (3 trials), green (32 trials, mostly referring to a fairy or man in green), sunrise (3 trials), 12:00 (40 trials), bells (1 trial), a thorn tree (7 trials), bored stones (1 trial), fairy hills (6 trials), iron (1 trial), horseshoe (2 trials), spinning (1 trial).²²⁴ Although these characteristics are called 'elf/fairy elements' by the SSW, not all of them are exclusively connected to fairies in folk belief. Times of the day like midnight or midday could also be connected to witches and ghosts. Witches' meetings could take place on hills, and not only fairies but also the devil, witches and ghosts could appear in green.²²⁵ Other features of the trials mentioned in the database can also be seen as closely connected to contemporary fairy belief: ghosts (6 trials), invocation of spirits (2 trials), diverse calendar customs (37 trials), finding lost goods (6 trials), prophesy (10 trials), necromancy (3 trials), south-running water (7 trials), second sight (2 trials), whirlwinds (5 trials), and riding with the dead (1 trial).²²⁶

Comparing the chronology of fairy related witchcraft trials (fig. 1) to that of the overall Scottish witch-hunt (fig. 2), it can be argued that fairy characteristics were distributed quite evenly over the whole period of the hunts. Liv Helene Willumsen noted that there was no particular upheaval of fairy-related trials during the panic years. Thus, fairy belief was present among the peasants before, during and after the witch-hunts. Furthermore, the same proportion of women and

²²⁰ SSW; *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 196 (Katharine Ross); Scott, *Letters on Demonology*, 98-9 (John Stewart); RPC, 2nd series, vol. 7, 474-5 (Katharine Cragie); RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8; 147 (Margaret Watson); *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 37 (Donald McIlmichael); *Criminal trials*, vol. 1, part II, 230 (Agnes Sampson). Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm," 143, 147 (Margaret Barclay, Janet Anderson, Marable Couper); Goodare, "Flying Witches," 166-7 (Janet Cowie, Margaret Fulton).

²²¹ Compare to Appendix: All 43 trials explicitly mentioning fairies are marked in yellow in Table 1. The ones which did not originally belong to the 113 fairy-related trials mentioned by the SSW are marked in green. There are probably more trials mentioning fairies and similar spirits explicitly but they cannot be included due to the incomplete nature of the trial records and the SSW.

²²² SSW.

²²³ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 56.

²²⁴ SSW; Compare to Table 2 (Appendix).

²²⁵ SSW; Henderson, "Fairies, Angels and the Land of the Dead," 2; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 137.

²²⁶ SSW. Compare to Table 2 (Appendix).

men confessed to fairy-like characteristics.²²⁷ Looking at our 43 witchcraft trials referring directly to fairies one can see however, that the majority of them can be found quite early and before the 1650s and 1660s when the highest numbers of witchcraft trials can be found in Scotland. Unlike the rest of the fairy related trials, those directly referring to fairies are rather related to folk healing, white magic and midwifery than explicitly diabolic content, the witches' sabbath or *maleficium*. It is also notable that the later trials directly referring to fairies often took place in more peripheral regions which did not have severe hunts before.²²⁸

Fairy belief is also crucially involved in the discussion about the geography of the witch-hunts.²²⁹ Christina Larner provided the pioneering work in this context. While some areas and towns tried witches consistently throughout the period of the witch-hunts, she argued that there were very few trials in the Highlands. Especially the areas within the dominion of the clans without Kirk sessions had no witch-hunts or at least they left no record of them. Other Gaelic-speaking areas had few trials. Edinburgh, Fife and the Lothians were the hotspot of the witch-hunts through the whole period. Some towns such as Dumfries and Aberdeen also constantly provided suspects for trial. Fishing villages in Fife, Ayrshire, along the coast of Aberdeenshire and other places had regular trials. The continuity of the trials in those places was stimulated by local memories of actual burnings.²³⁰ Similarly to Larner, Stuart Macdonald (fig. 3) showed that most Scottish witchcraft trials took place around the central area of Edinburgh, in the Lowlands and along the East coast of the Highlands up to Orkney and Shetland.²³¹ These regions correlated also with the distribution of the population in Early Modern Scotland. Webster provided a map of the population density in 1755 (fig. 4), at which time it is first possible to get a reasonably accurate picture about the distribution of the Scottish population.²³² The population distribution was probably typical for earlier centuries as well since the Highland Clearances being known as a time when rural communities in the Highlands were displaced to make way for sheep, were largely concentrated on the period from 1770 to 1860 and affected all parts of Scotland.²³³ Macdonald argued that the intensity of the witch-hunts varied all shires but the Highlands were never a major area of prosecutions although it is too simplistic to say that there were no hunts at all.²³⁴ Lizanne Henderson was the first to reveal the extent of the witch-hunts in the

²²⁷ Willumsen, *Witches of the North*, 96.

²²⁸ Numbers taken from the SSW. Compare to Table 1 (Appendix).

²²⁹ Goodare, "Witchcraft in Scotland," 311-2.

²³⁰ Larner, *Enemies of God*, 80, 82.

²³¹ Larner, *Enemies of God*, 81; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 22-3.

²³² Ian D. Whyte, *Scotland before the Industrial Revolution: An Economic & Social History c.1050- c.1750* (London: Longman, 1995), 114-5.

²³³ Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 97, 488; Robert Dodgshon, "The Clearances and the Transformation of the Scottish Countryside," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History*, ed. T.M. Devine and Jenny Wormald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 130-158.

²³⁴ Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 22.

Highlands.²³⁵ Although the Highland regions were not free from witch-hunts, most of the trials there were confined to the edges of the Highlands like Bute and Tain, where Gaelic-speakers were tried by Lowland elites.²³⁶

Trying to explain these differences in witchcraft prosecution in Gaelic- and Scots-speaking areas, Ronald Hutton argued that while the latter ascribed misfortunes to witches, people in the Highlands ascribed them to other sources. While several regions around the world held evil spirits like ghosts or nature spirits being responsible for misfortunes, people from the Scottish Highlands blamed the fairies.²³⁷ Although Henderson rightly argued that Lowlanders also believed in fairies, Hutton stated that the difference was not the belief in fairies, but the disposition of ascribing misfortunes to them.²³⁸

The geographical distribution of fairy related trials (fig. 5 and 6) is comparable to the overall picture. Most of those trials occurred outside the Highlands and were concentrated around Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Orkney.²³⁹ Although there may have been regional differences in fairy belief between the various regions like the fact that trows only appeared in the trials of Orkney and Shetland, it can indeed be argued that fairy belief was present in all of Scotland during the time of the witch-hunts.²⁴⁰ Another interesting fact is that Aberdeen and Orkney were the areas with most trials connected to 'folk healing' and 'white magic' while 'demonic' cases were mostly present in Edinburgh and Haddington.²⁴¹ This is probably due to the fact that most witchcraft trials in Aberdeen occurred during the 1590s and Orkney had its peaks between 1610 and 1650 while most trials in Edinburgh and Haddington took place during the 1650s and 1660s.²⁴² This regional differentiation can be related to the theory that most cases involving direct references to fairies, white magic and folk healing mainly occurred before 1650 while the later cases were closer to the diabolic theory of witchcraft including the demonic pact and witches sabbaths.

Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been demonstrated that witchcraft in Early Modern Europe concerned the populace and the elite alike although they did not necessarily interpret witchcraft in the same way. While ordinary people saw witches primarily as a source for misfortune and illnesses befalling them,

²³⁵ Lizanne Henderson, "Witch Hunting and Witch Belief in the *Gàidhealtachd*," in *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Julian Goodare et. al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 95-118.

²³⁶ Goodare, "Witchcraft in Scotland," 312.

²³⁷ Ronald Hutton, "The Global Context of the Scottish Witch-Hunt," in *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context*, ed. Julian Goodare, 16-32.

²³⁸ Henderson, "Witch Hunting in the *Gàidhealtachd*," 101-2; Ronald Hutton, "Witch-Hunting in Celtic Societies," *Past & Present* 212 (August 2011): 43-71.

²³⁹ Numbers and geographical distribution based on SSW; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 217.

²⁴⁰ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 9, 15; Henderson, "Witch Hunting in the *Gàidhealtachd*," 101-2; Willumsen, *Witches of the North*, 96.

²⁴¹ SSW (by searching interactive map).

²⁴² SSW (by searching interactive graph).

the intellectual elite thought that witches were part of a larger diabolic conspiracy threatening the Christian community at large. The European witch-hunts started in the late Middle Ages and reached their height during the 16th and 17th centuries. The period of the Scottish witch-hunts between 1563 and 1736 was a time of political chaos, civil wars, increasing demand for religious conformity as well as regular harvest failures and outbreaks of plague and other diseases. All those factors contributed to increase the fear of witches and evil spirits in Scotland. Village tensions led to the accusation of isolated individuals for harmful magic while authorities became convinced of the reality of the witches' pact with the Devil and their nocturnal gatherings which made mass prosecutions possible.

Fairy belief was present in Scotland before, during and after the witch-hunts. When the prosecutions started off in Scotland, the folk believed in a variety of supernatural beings such as fairies, trows, brownies, ghosts, angels, and demons living in a liminal world parallel to the world of humans. At the same time, the Reformed elite came to belief that only Satan and his minions could influence the physical world. The learned started to impose their demonological interpretation of witchcraft upon the populace which cannot only be seen in the qualitative but also in statistical analysis of the witchcraft trials. Fairies were primarily associated with folk healing, white magic and midwifery by the populace especially during the early years of the witch-hunts and later in more peripheral regions. However, during the course of the witch-hunts fairy belief became increasingly conflated with witch belief. The elite became more successful in imposing diabolic witchcraft theories upon the populace which becomes evident in witchcraft confessions as fairy-related trials are more often associated with *maleficium*, the demonic pact and the sabbath in mass trials and especially during the second half of the 17th century. This theory is investigated in more detail during the following chapters. While the next section is concentrates on popular concerns about witchcraft including the relationship of fairy belief to charming and *maleficium*, the last chapters are dedicated to elite notions of the demonic pact and the witches' sabbath and their relationship to fairy belief.

Chapter Two

The Interface between Fairies, Witches, and Charmers in the Context of Healing and Disease

This chapter focuses on popular concerns about witchcraft, analysing the relationship between charmers, witches and fairies in the context of their ability to heal or harm. There is a discussion of the role of charmers in the Early Modern medical marketplace, distinctions and similarities between them and maleficent witches and also what the learned elite and especially Scottish authorities thought of them. Concerning the relationship between fairies and human witches or charmers it is argued that fairies could act as a source of a healer's skills while they could also harm humans in a similar way as maleficent witches did.

General Background to Charmers, Witches, and their Relationship to Fairies

The Medical Marketplace in Early Modern Scotland

Most of the Early Modern European population was unhealthy by modern Western standards. They were chronically undernourished, poorly housed, exposed especially during their first months of life to a number of illnesses and afflicted by regional and general epidemics like the plague, influenza, leprosy, syphilis or typhoid.²⁴³ Self-diagnosis and self-medication were the first way to counter diseases and every household had at least a working knowledge of herbal and magical remedies. If self-help was not enough, people consulted members of their family, neighbours or persons known for possessing healing powers. Traditional folk medicine was practiced everywhere in Scotland and especially in rural areas where there was little access to medical help where it survived until the first half of the 20th century. Traditional healing involved a complex set of constantly adapting regional beliefs, the use of native plants, religion, and astrology. There was a tendency in rural areas to use herbs as 'simples' giving one plant at a time as a remedy. The combination of two or three plants was also possible but rare.²⁴⁴

'Official' medical professions during the Early Modern period developed in an urban setting and included physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries. The secularization of medicine and the parting between physicians and surgeons can be traced back to a papal edict of 1163. Afterwards, physicians

²⁴³ Helen Dingwall et al., *Scottish Medicine: An Illustrated History* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011), 42-3; Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 286, 412; Andrew Wear, "Medicine in Early Modern Europe: 1500-1700," in *The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800*, ed. Lawrence I. Conrad et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 215-229; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 311.

²⁴⁴ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 71; Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 410-1, 597-8; Roy Porter and Dorothy Porter, *In Sickness and in Health: The British Experience 1650-1850* (London: Fourth Estate, 1988), 259-261; Roy Porter, "The Eighteenth Century," in *The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800*, ed. Lawrence I. Conrad et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 440, 443-4; Wear, "Medicine in Early Modern Europe," 232, 238-9; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 32, 34; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 316.

were trained at universities while surgeons were trained through apprenticeship. The training of physicians was highly academic and mostly based on the Galenic theory that a person's temperament was dependent on the balance of the humours. Physicians took a holistic approach starting with a careful study of the symptoms and the lifestyle of the person and prescribing increasingly complex remedies containing up to 80 ingredients. In Early Modern Scotland, qualified physicians were mainly found in Lowland, urban areas while people in rural parts could be advised by teachers or ministers. Since they had no local organization until the last quarter of the 17th century, Scottish physicians were mainly trained in continental universities. The Royal College of Physicians was founded in Edinburgh in 1681 and increasingly developed professional characteristics. However, medical training was not available in Scotland before the establishment of the medical school at Edinburgh University in 1726 which became increasingly influential during the 18th century and attracted students from the whole English-speaking world. Tensions between the University and the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons, who formed a joint organization in Glasgow in 1599 and obtained their first Faculty Hall in 1697, delayed a further institutionalization there and an effective medical faculty did not exist until the 1740s. In Edinburgh, surgeons and barbers formed a guild in 1505 which led to an increasing professionalization and the delineation of their own responsibilities while they were trying to prevent outsiders from performing operations. An anatomical theatre was built there in 1697 and a library and museum were opened in 1699. In Glasgow, a separate incorporation of surgeons was not established until the middle of the 17th century while surgeons in other Scottish towns were too few to form separate organizations. People in rural Scotland had little access to trained surgeon. Anyway, the possibilities of surgeons were limited during this period through a lack of anaesthetics and the ways to control infections and they mostly treated wounds, fractures, dislocations, and other superficial injuries. Mary Queen of Scots released surgeons from their ordinary duties to bear arms in 1567 so that they could treat the wounded at both sides during the numerous wars in the Early Modern period thus becoming experts in military surgery.²⁴⁵

Apothecaries played a key role for delivering medical care for people living in towns. Since there were no longstanding, discrete organizations of Scottish apothecaries there is limited information about their apprenticeship. A Fraternity of Apothecaries in Surgeon-Apothecaries existed in Edinburgh during the second half of the 17th century, but its origins are obscure and there is little evidence for their activities. Apothecaries did not only sell individual substances and made up

²⁴⁵ Dingwall, *Scottish Medicine*, 35, 43-72; Andrew Hull and Johanna Geyer-Kordesch, *The Shaping of the Medical Profession: The History of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow: 1858-1999* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1999), xxi-xxv; Lauren Kassell, *Medicine & Magic in Elizabethan London: Simon Forman: Astrologer, Alchemist, and Physician* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2007), 6; Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 411-2; Roy Porter, *Die Kunst des Heilens: Eine medizinische Geschichte der Menschheit von der Antike bis heute* (Heidelberg: Spektrum Akademischer Verlag, 2003), 188; Porter, "The Eighteenth Century," 453-4; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 32; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 317.

required recipes but also provided complicated prescriptions requested by physicians. The complexity of the latter remedies should impress the patient and emphasized the superiority of the qualified physician over lay healers who used simpler and less ingredients in their remedies.²⁴⁶

In the Gaelic-speaking Highlands, there was a different professional tradition of medical practitioners. Members of wealthy families were sent to continental universities already during the Middle Ages while medical knowledge was passed on from father to son creating famous medical dynasties in the Highlands. Gaelic manuscripts include translations of Greek, Roman, and Arabic works alongside translations of tracts written by Hippocrates, Galen, or Avicenna. Highland medicine thus shared a common philosophical core with methods and theories of Lowland physicians and when Scottish medical schools grew in size and importance during the 18th century, members of those medical families started to study medicine formally.²⁴⁷

The last kind of licensed healers were midwives, who were consulted alongside neighbours and relatives to offer moral and practical support for childbirth. Licensing of midwives was introduced in Scotland by the Edinburgh Town Council in 1694. The surgeon John Gibson tested the midwives for their licence and became the first British professor for midwifery in 1726 teaching doctors and midwives alike. In Glasgow, the licensing of midwives only started in 1740 and the first lectures for midwives were held in 1757.²⁴⁸

Despite the gradual professionalization and regulation of medicine during the Early Modern period which was supported by the state, and great breakthroughs such as the introduction of experimental anatomy and physiology as basis for medical practice after the publication of Andreas Vesalius' *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543) and the description of the blood circulation in William Harvey's *De motu cordis et sanguinis* (1628), professional medical practitioners at the time could still offer limited help for their patients.²⁴⁹ Professional doctors were too few in number to meet the demands of people and also they were too expensive for ordinary peasants and often far away.²⁵⁰ University trained physicians stood at the top of the medical hierarchy but represented only the tip of the iceberg²⁵¹ as there were a number of 'unofficial' and unlicensed healers. Some of them had real skills and specialized in bonesetting, dentistry, mental disorders or unofficial surgery. But there

²⁴⁶ Dingwall, *Scottish Medicine*, 73-5; Wear, "Medicine in Early Modern Europe," 255-264; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 32; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 317.

²⁴⁷ Dingwall, *Scottish Medicine*, 31-5, 82-4.

²⁴⁸ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 76-7; Dingwall, *Scottish Medicine*, 106-7; Elaine Hobby, introduction to *The Midwives Book: Or the Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered*, by Jane Sharpe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), xi; Wear, "Medicine in Early Modern Europe," 234; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 317.

²⁴⁹ Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 411-2; Porter, *Kunst des Heilens*, 10, 213-8, 221; Wear, "Medicine in Early Modern Europe," 235-7, 264-292, 327-340.

²⁵⁰ Porter, *In Sickness and in Health*, 261; Porter, "The Eighteenth Century," 440; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 32; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 317.

²⁵¹ Porter, *Kunst des Heilens*, 119-120; Porter, "The Eighteenth Century," 440.

were also charlatans offering their advice at markets or fairs in towns and cities.²⁵² Some people also consulted gardeners, who had some knowledge about herbs and medicinal plants, or blacksmiths who had the reputation of having special skills because of their work with the mystical elements fire and metal.²⁵³ Although medicine and surgery was officially forbidden to them, some clerics offered their healing skills for free as they saw it as an act of charity. This was probably a remnant of the medieval tradition in Scotland and other Christian countries when religious communities had a monopoly on medical treatment and provided hospitals.²⁵⁴ Another kind of unofficial local healer were the charmers who offered practical and magical services and rarely charged for their services. Which kind of healer was consulted out of this vast variety of them was depended on a persons' wealth, status, family opinions and the nature of the sickness.²⁵⁵ The boundaries between learned and popular medicine were still blurred during the Early Modern period. Learned physicians and surgeons adopted popular remedies of folk healers and lay people while at the same time learned medicine was popularised through the publication of several vernacular books.²⁵⁶ Also, professional and lay healers often used the same sorts of plants for their remedies.²⁵⁷ Furthermore, official medicine itself was not yet as 'scientific' as today and incorporated ideas which would be called magical or superstitious. This included Paracelsianism, which was widespread in Early Modern Europe and based on the ideas of Theophrastus Philippus Aureolus Bombastus von Hohenheim, also called Paracelsus (1493-1542). His approach towards medicine was characterised by a mystical, alchemical, astrological, and magical system arguing that the macrocosm, meaning the universe, as well as the body as microcosm were interconnected and influenced by occult forces.²⁵⁸ During the 16th and 17th centuries no group succeeded in developing a monopoly on the practice of a certain kind of medicine. People were still quite free in deciding how and by whom they would be treated. At the same time, there was a process of commercialization of health care which functioned as a medical marketplace led by supply and demand for medical help and the public esteem of a medical practitioner.²⁵⁹

²⁵² Dingwall, *Scottish Medicine*, 79-81, 84-5; Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 598; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 317-8.

²⁵³ 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: Manchester University Press, 2002), 95-6.

²⁵⁴ Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 410-1; Wear, "Medicine in Early Modern Europe," 240; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 364-5.

²⁵⁵ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 71-2; Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 598.

²⁵⁶ Porter, "The Eighteenth Century," 444-6; Wear, "Medicine in Early Modern Europe," 238.

²⁵⁷ Dingwall, *Scottish Medicine*, 63.

²⁵⁸ Kassell, *Medicine & Magic*, 7-14; Porter, *Kunst des Heilens*, 203-7; Wear, "Medicine in Early Modern Europe," 310-325.

²⁵⁹ Mark S.R. Jenner and Patrick Wallis, "The Medical Marketplace," in *Medicine and the Market in England and its Colonies: C.1450-C.1850*, ed. Patrick Wallis and Mark S.R. Jenner (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 1-23; Porter, "The Eighteenth Century," 450-1; Wear, "Medicine in Early Modern Europe," 238-9.

Gender in the Context of Healing and Witchcraft

There is a long tradition of linking women rather than men with magical activity spanning from Classical literature to medieval penitentials and demonological texts such as the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486). This gender bias is reflected in the witch-hunts as most convicted witches were female except for those in Normandy, Estonia, Finland and Iceland.²⁶⁰ Some scholars such as Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English have suggested that the witch-hunts were a campaign led by male medical specialists to replace female healers and midwives. Connected to this was the idea that older women would claim to have healing skills to get greater toleration and prestige within their communities, or that women were naturally responsible for the health of the household.²⁶¹ Based on the nowadays discredited theories of Margaret Murray, several scholars including Thomas Forbes as well as Gunnar Heinsohn and Otto Steiger argued for a close relationship between midwifery and witchcraft. The idea that midwives were often accused of witchcraft because misfortunes at childbirth were attributed to them seems compelling. Also the argument that midwives used to make women infertile, kill babies, or offered newborns to demons already occurs in the *Malleus Maleficarum* and was later copied. However, in Scotland as elsewhere, there is no statistical evidence for such a claim as midwives were rarely accused in witchcraft prosecutions and were more generally regarded as trustworthy persons within the community. In England and its colonies, midwives even became important actors in the witchcraft trials as they had to search the bodies of accused witches for teats where they could suck their imps, an idea based on the diabolical mark theory.²⁶²

However, it is true that there was an increasing demand for regulation and education for midwives in Early Modern Europe since attempts to control the female community which was present during childbirth and was held for being potentially troublesome failed. The first guilds for midwives were founded during the 13th century. During the 15th and 16th centuries the Church and the state first introduced regulations concerning religious and moral aspects of their practice. Official schools for teaching midwives were established during the 18th century with the aim to reduce death

²⁶⁰ Dingwall, *Scottish Medicine*, 83-4; Henricus Institoris, *Malleus Maleficarum*, ed. and trans. Christopher S. Mackay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 160-170; Roy Porter, introduction to *Patients and Practitioners: Lay Perceptions of Medicine in Pre-Industrial Society*, ed. by Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 12; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 401.

²⁶¹ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 277; Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *Hexen, Hebammen und Krankenschwestern: The Witches Are Back* (München: Frauenoffensive, 2001), 24-37; Hobby, introduction to *Midwives Book*, xii; Ann Oakley, "The Wisewoman and the Doctor," in *Alternative Medicine in Britain*, ed. Mike Saks (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 35; Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (London: Routledge, 1996), 7-29.

²⁶² Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 77-8, 280; Institoris, *Malleus Maleficarum*, 211-2, 366-374; Thomas R. Forbes, "Midwifery and Witchcraft," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 17 (1962): 264-283; Thomas R. Forbes, *The Midwife and the Witch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 112-138; David Harley, "Historians and Demonologists: The Myth of the Midwife-Witch," *Social History of Medicine* 3, no. 1 (1990): 1-26; Gunnar Heinsohn and Otto Steiger, *Die Vernichtung der Weisen Frauen: Beiträge zur Theorie und Geschichte von Bevölkerung und Kindheit* (Herbstein: März Verlag, 1985); Hobby, introduction to *Midwives Book*, xi-xii; Porter, *Kunst des Heilens*, 131; Purkiss, *Witch in History*, 7-29.

rates of mothers and babies. At the same time, the presence of male medical practitioners steadily increased. While physicians were sometimes present at difficult births in wealthy families during the 15th century, male obstetricians started to write obstetrical manuals during the 16th and 17th centuries to collect knowledge about childbirth and advance their careers. The consultation of men-midwives instead of female midwives started to become fashionable during the late 17th century and increased during the enlightenment when male obstetricians became connected with scientific progress. Giving birth in a clinic however only became a mass phenomenon during the 20th century since men-midwives and doctors before mainly treated members of the upper classes or the poor who served as their guinea pigs. At least until the 18th century, female midwives were well respected not only among the populace but also by the Church and the state. Especially at the beginnings of their advancements male obstetricians copied a lot from their practices while female midwives were not replaced by male practitioners but rather increasingly incorporated in a system of official education, regulation and licensing.²⁶³ In *The Midwives Book* (1671) representing a rare example of a contemporary midwifery manual written by a woman, the English midwife Jane Sharpe argues that despite the fact that men had more knowledge of the human body as they were trained in universities, women were most suitable for the job of midwifery. After all, already the Bible had attributed this art to the female sex and Jane Sharpe describes the ideal midwife as being 'both fearing God, faithful, and exceeding well experienced in that profession.'²⁶⁴

While most doctors in Early Modern Europe at least indirectly supported the witch-hunts, some of them were sceptic providing medical instead of theological interpretations for witchcraft. The most prominent example for this is the Dutch physician Johannes Weyer (1515-1588). In his tract *De praestigiis daemonum* (1563) he insisted that the witches suffered a mental disease since the Devil had no power over the body while and their supposed harmful magic can in reality be ascribed to natural events.²⁶⁵

Charmers and Cunning Folk in Early Modern Europe

Apart from self-help the main source of healing for the majority of the populace in Early Modern Europe were cunning folk or charmers. They were cheap, easy to reach, and their healing skills were

²⁶³ David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 36, 38, 55, 57, 60-1; Béatrice Fontanel and Claire d'Harcourt, *Baby, Säugling, Wickelkind: Eine Kulturgeschichte* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1998), 27, 47-60; Jacques Gélis, *History of Childbirth: Fertility, Pregnancy and Birth in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991) xvi, 232, 242; Hobby, introduction to *Midwives Book*, xii-xiii; Eva Labouvie, *Andere Umstände: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Geburt* (Köln: Böhlau, 1998), 105, 110, 111, 136, 149; Edward Shorter, *Der weibliche Körper als Schicksal: Zur Sozialgeschichte der Frau* (München: Piper, 1984) 62-165.

²⁶⁴ Hobby, introduction to *Midwives Book*, xvi; Jane Sharpe, *The Midwives Book: Or the Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered*, ed. Elaine Hobby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 11-2.

²⁶⁵ Brian P. Levack, ed., *The Witchcraft Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 277-284; Porter, *Kunst des Heilens*, 198-9.

highly regarded. People used to consult local healers but also travelled further to be cured by especially prestigious ones. Even the wealthy who could afford consulting a trained physician sometimes called upon such unofficial practitioners if they were well-known.²⁶⁶ Healers also used to travel around for curing people. Alisoun Pierson (Fife 1588) went to St. Andrews to cure people for sixteen years. She was even consulted by the bishop of St. Andrews when he was sick with fever. Although she gave him a specially prepared drink and a salve to rub himself with he later died.²⁶⁷ Charming in those days was not an alternative form of medicine, but mainstream since access to professional healers was limited. Also, it was not an alternative religious belief because it was practiced by most parts of society and even the Church itself incorporated certain magical beliefs while rejecting others. While elite theories attributed diseases to an imbalance of the four humours and doctors prescribed medical treatments like blood-letting, enemas, emetics and so on, practices of charmers had their own logic based on accepted principles within elite and popular culture. Remedies used by charmers did not include the same physical ingredients as orthodox medicine and their power rather derived from the accompanied rituals than the objects themselves. Rituals had to be carried out a specific time like a certain time of the day, week or year, at a specific place like a boundary, crossroad, bridge, or river and in a certain manner like, for example, in silence, or into a specific direction like sunwise, anti-sunwise, or backwards. They could involve certain words or use a specific type of water, numbers, fire and certain objects like shoes, nails, threads, belts, animals, meals, water, metal, clothing, herbs, salt, eggs, or wood.²⁶⁸

Popular magicians were known under a variety of names during the 16th and 17th centuries: charmers, cunning men and women, wise men and women, blessers, conjurers, sorcerers, white and black witches, wizards, magicians, necromancers, soothsayers, fortune-tellers, enchanters, witch-doctors, folk healers, diviners, people with second sight, among other appellations.²⁶⁹ Goodare and Larner differentiate between ordinary people who knew a few spells and persons who belonged to a class of specialist healers and larger scale commercial practitioners.²⁷⁰ Similarly, Davies suggests that there is a differentiation between charmers, blessers and touchers as opposed to cunning folk. Charmers were characterised as having only limited powers which they got by birth-right, the possession of healing objects or the knowledge of oral healing charms. They cured mainly simple natural ailments such as toothache, snakebites and bleeding as opposed to supernatural illnesses

²⁶⁶ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 32, 34.

²⁶⁷ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 162, 164.

²⁶⁸ John Henry, "Doctors and Healers: Popular Culture and the Medical Profession," in *Science, Culture and Popular Belief in Renaissance Europe*, ed. Stephen Pumfrey et. al. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 202-3; Miller, "Devices and Directions," 96-104; Porter, *Kunst des Heilens*, 9.

²⁶⁹ Lizanne Henderson, "Charmers, Spells and Holy Wells: The Repackaging of Belief," *Review of Scottish Culture* 19 (2007): 10; Thomas, *Religion and Decline*, 210; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 26; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 395.

²⁷⁰ Julian Goodare, "The Scottish Witchcraft Act," *Church History* vol. 74, no.1 (March 2005): 54-5, accessed November 4, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4146312>; Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 143.

and rarely offered diagnoses. Some of them prepared herbal remedies and usually offered their help freely or accepted only gifts. On the other hand, cunning folk, wise men and women, wizards, or conjurors usually lived from their healing skills and offered various services.²⁷¹ Their most important magical service was healing.²⁷² They also offered fortune-telling, finding lost and stolen goods and detection of thieves, divination, love magic involving the divination of future spouses or making potions and charms to draw one's love, spirit conjuration, counter-magic against witches, fairies and other supernatural creatures who caused harm, prediction of lottery numbers and laying of ghosts, herbalism and astrology.²⁷³

The differentiation of the SSW between folk healers and witches accused of white magic, which roughly included the same activities as those listed for the cunning folk above, seems to affirm the distinction between ordinary and specialist healers.²⁷⁴ Larner also distinguished 'practical and common sense healing' which included treatments with herbs and minerals provided by local healers or practiced without a specialist from 'ritual healing' referring to the practices of the cunning folk.²⁷⁵ Although the term 'cunning folk' was not used in Scotland, Davies states it can be equated with the Scottish wise-woman or man and is useful for a distinction between 'simple charmers and multi-faceted cunning folk'.²⁷⁶ In England, the term cunning-man and woman as well as wizard became part of written language in the 15th century. The Anglo-Saxon word *cunnan* means 'to know' while wizard derives from Anglo-Saxon *wis* meaning 'wise' and is, therefore, a variant of wise man. Both terms describe individuals who stand out of society because they possessed more knowledge than those around them.²⁷⁷ However, since Scottish trial records always refer to all kinds of popular healers as 'charmers' it is questionable if contemporaries differentiated between those two kinds of practitioners. It is also debatable whether the term 'cunning folk' which only appears in England does not represent a cultural imposition in the Scottish context. A Scottish witch could be accused of being a common sorcerer and charmer, or for sorcery, witchcraft and charming, or sometimes only charming.²⁷⁸ Terms like 'charms' and 'charming' in court records generally refer to magical

²⁷¹ Owen Davies, "A Comparative Perspective on Scottish Cunning-Folk and Charmers," in *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Julian Goodare et al. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 186-7.

²⁷² Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 32.

²⁷³ Willem de Blécourt, "Witch Doctors, Soothsayers and Priests: On Cunning Folk in European Historiography and Tradition," *Social History*, vol. 19, no.3 (October 1994): 299-302, accessed November 4, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4286217>; Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 180; Davies, "Comparative Perspective," 187, 194-7; Davies, *Popular Magic*, xi; Goodare, "Scottish Witchcraft Act," 54; Henderson, "Charmers," 10; Miller, "Devices and Directions," 92-3; Miller, *Magic and Witchcraft*, 34; Thomas, *Religion and Decline*, 210; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 375-90.

²⁷⁴ SSW Database Documentation and Description, 41.

²⁷⁵ Christina Larner, "Healing in Pre-Industrial Britain," in *Alternative Medicine in Britain*, ed. Mike Saks (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 26.

²⁷⁶ Davies, "Comparative Perspective," 187-8.

²⁷⁷ Davies, *Popular Magic*, viii-ix.

²⁷⁸ Miller, "Devices and Directions," 94.

practitioners who did not harm others but whose acts were nonetheless regarded as superstitious and sinful. Although the populace would not have seen the charmer's acts as superstitious, the distinction between beneficent charmers and maleficent witches which was nonetheless often blurred reflected the popular understanding.²⁷⁹

Charmers could obtain their skills from various sources. Several Scottish charmers and witches confessed that they learned their skills from family members or other magical practitioners. Agnes Sampsoune (Edinburgh 1591) said that she learned charming from her father while Jonet Braidheid (Nairn 1662) learned witchcraft and causing *maleficium* from her husband John Taylor and his mother.²⁸⁰ John Brughe (Kinross 1643) learned about all sorts of diseases from the widow Neane VcClerich who was related to a burned witch.²⁸¹ Christian Lewingstoun (Edinburgh 1597) said she learned some cures from an Italian enchanter and sorcerer called Mr Johnne Damiet while claiming that her daughter, who was with the fairies taught her how to heal.²⁸² Some healers had the reputation of being holy people or saints and some said they were descendants of saints. Some people were born with special skills. For instance, in Scotland seventh sons were believed to heal lymphatic tuberculosis and people born breech or deaf could detect lost goods. People who were born at a certain day, or after the death of their father or who were born with a caul or teeth were thought to have special powers. Charming skills could also come from a person who was already dead or a supernatural entity like a saint, angels or in Scotland mostly fairies. This latter idea will be analysed more closely in a later section of this chapter demonstrating that charming was a special gift which needed to be respected and was given only to a few.²⁸³

Folk healers could be male or female, and knowledge of remedies was widespread among the populace and not only associated with the gifts of special persons. However, there is a gender differentiation within healing activities reflecting peoples' sphere of activity. Wilson argues that female healers were more likely associated with childbirth and infancy while men performed magic related to crops and livestock.²⁸⁴ Looking at Scotland, the evidence gathered for this study affirms that female healers and witches not only exclusively present in midwifery, but also mainly engaged in healing children and babies as well as cursing and killing them. Nine accused female witches confessed that they cured babies or children.²⁸⁵ Janet Drever (Orkney 1615) and Barbria Parish

²⁷⁹ Davies, "Comparative Perspective," 186.

²⁸⁰ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 232 (Agnes Sampsoune); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 616 (Jonet Braidheid).

²⁸¹ *Selected Justiciary Cases*, vol. 3, ed. S.A. Gillon (Edinburgh: Stair Society, 1953), 598.

²⁸² *Criminal Trials*, vol. 2, 26-7.

²⁸³ Henderson, "Charmers," 11; Miller, *Magic and Witchcraft*, 20, 26; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 333, 335, 396-7.

²⁸⁴ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 278; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 402.

²⁸⁵ For midwives see Appendix: table 1. For healing children and babies see: *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 53 (Bessie Dunlop, Ayr 1576); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 2, 536 (Bartie Patersoune, Edinburgh 1607); *Miscellany of the Spottiswoode Society*, vol. 2, ed. James Maidment (Edinburgh: Printed for the Spottiswoode Socieity, 1844-5), 305; RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 157, 191-3, 352-4 (Issobell Haldane, Perth 1623; Margaret Reid, Lanark 1644;

(Linlithgow 1647) said the fairies wanted them as nurses for their children.²⁸⁶ Changelings played a role in at least six fairy-related trials with one of the accused being a man.²⁸⁷ Despite the majority of female healers in this field, some male witches including Stein Maltman/Steven Malcolme (Stirling 1628) and Farquar Ferguson (Arran 1716) confessed that they healed children while Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) claimed that he could assist during 'barn bed' (childbed).²⁸⁸ At least six female witches, whose trials have been studied here, as well as the warlock Alexander Hammiltoun (Haddington 1630), were accused of bewitching and killing children.²⁸⁹ Furthermore, Jonet Miller (Linlithgow 1661) and a group of witches allegedly wanted to take a woman's newborn baby during her lying in period and Margaret Hutchison (Edinburgh 1661) was accused of having caused a man to suffer from pains like childbirth.²⁹⁰ While Willumsen argued that statistically men were more active in healing animals in Scotland,²⁹¹ there is some evidence in the fairy-related trials that several women engaged in healing animals and magic related to crops and fertility. Not only male charmers such as John Philip (Aberdeen 1631) and healed animals, but also some female witches did so.²⁹² Several accused charmers like John Brughe (Kinross 1643) and witches like Agnes Sampson (Edinburgh 1591), Katherine Cragie (Orkney 1643), and Bessie Paine (Dumfries 1671) not only healed animals but also harmed or killed them.²⁹³ Seven female witches bewitched animals, took their milk or killed them.²⁹⁴ Furthermore, female witches also engaged in magic connected to crops and fertility. While Katherine Cragie (Orkney 1643) advised a farmer how to get good crops and corns, Jonet Braidheid (Nairn 1662) and Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) confessed taking away the fertility of the land while

Margrat Dickson, Haddington 1649); *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, xi-xii (Janet Trall, Perth 1623); SSW (Jonet Miller, Kirkcudbright 1658; Bessie Paine Dumfries 1671); *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 22-4 (Jonet Morison, Bute 1662).

²⁸⁶ *Court Books of Orkney and Shetland*, 19-20 (Janet Drever); SSW; CH2/467/1, 76-7 (Barbriar Parish).

²⁸⁷ Compare to Table 2 (Appendix).

²⁸⁸ Hall, "Trial of Stein Maltman," 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24 (Stein Maltman); Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 79 (Farquar Ferguson); *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 119-121 (Andro Man).

²⁸⁹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 250-3 (Ewfame Mackalzone, Edinburgh 1591); *Miscellany of the Spottiswoode Society*, vol. 2, 64-6 (Elizabeth Bathgate, Berwick 1634); SSW, (Margaret Alexander, Linlithgow 1647); RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 211-7 (Margaret Finlasoun, Renfrew 1650); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 603-615, 616-8 (Issobell Gowdie; Jonet Braidheid, both Nairn 1662); SJC, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Stair Society, 1953), 145-6 (Alexander Hammiltoun).

²⁹⁰ SSW.

²⁹¹ Willumsen, *Witches of the North*, 97.

²⁹² RPC, 2nd series, vol. 4, 638 (John Philip); *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 171 (Marioun Grant, Aberdeen 1597); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 2, 536 (Bartie Paterson, Edinburgh 1607); SSW (Issobell Sinclair, Orkney 1633; Elspeth Culsetter, Orkney 1644).

²⁹³ SJC, vol. 3, 597-601 (John Brughe); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 230, 238 (Agnes Sampson); RPC, 2nd series, vol. 7, 476; RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 64-69 (Katherine Cragie); SSW (Bessie Paine).

²⁹⁴ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 111-2, 128, 131-2, 142-5 (Isobel Cockie; Agnes Wobster; Meriorie Mutche; Margrat Og, all Aberdeen 1597); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 603-615, 616-8 (Issobell Gowdie; Jonet Braidheid, both Nairn 1662); *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 21-8 (Jonet Morison, Bute 1662).

the latter also prayed for its fertility.²⁹⁵ Although a gender division between the female sphere of childbirth and the rearing of children and the male sphere of crops and livestock seems compelling, a closer look at the sources reveals that this division is not always clear.

Differences and Similarities between Charmers, Witches, and their Familiars

The name given to a specific magical practitioner was dependent upon the type of magic he or she practiced. Emma Wilby suggests using the umbrella term 'magical practitioners' for 'Any individual who practiced magic in a professional capacity, whether for good or ill'. Wilby defines people practicing maleficent magic as 'witches' and those practicing beneficent magic 'cunning folk'.²⁹⁶ Since the Early Modern period, the same distinction was made between black and white witches. Maleficent as well as beneficent magical practitioners could use sorcery involving words, gestures and the manipulation of objects. White witchcraft always needed such specific rituals to generate supernatural power and was concerned with healing, love magic, prophesy, finding lost objects, and providing counter-magic against black witches. Black witchcraft, on the other hand, only included harmful magic which involved sorcery, but could also be activated by the inherent power of a witch by cursing and uttering her ill will. Social anthropologists thus differentiate 'sorcery' as a ritual from 'witchcraft' as the inherent power of a person.²⁹⁷ Both witchcraft and charming generally fall into the category of low magic which was mainly transmitted orally and consisted of a mixture of folkloric beliefs, practices and rituals as opposed to the highly sophisticated learned magic.²⁹⁸

Although in theory charmers and witches represent a clear antithesis of each other a clear differentiation between both cannot always be made because of the ambiguity of magic itself and the charmer's role in the community.²⁹⁹ Robin Briggs states,

Magical knowledge was ambiguous by its very nature. Those who could heal could also harm, whether it was by counter-magic directed against witches or by displacing an illness onto another person or animal. Worst of all, they might be actually witches, pretending to cure effects of their own malice and getting profit from it. Such accusations might result from failed attempts to cure, grasping behaviour or outright fraud.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁵ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 7, 476; RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 64-69 (Katherine Cragie); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 616-8 (Jonet Braidheid); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 603, 605, 607, 609, 611, 614, 615 (Issobell Gowdie).

²⁹⁶ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 26-7.

²⁹⁷ Davies, *Popular Magic*, x; Lerner, *Enemies of God*, 9; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 402.

²⁹⁸ Davies, *Popular Magic*, ix-x; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 27; Compare to chapter: 'What is a Witch in the Early Modern European Context?'

²⁹⁹ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 171; Davies, *Popular Magic*, x; Labouvie, "Hexenspuk und Hexenabwehr," 51; Lerner, "Healing in Pre-Industrial Britain," 32.

³⁰⁰ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 171.

There are a number of instances in the Scottish witchcraft trials where the suspect was accused of the 'on-laying and af-talking of seiknes'.³⁰¹ Isobell Strauthaquhin (Aberdeen 1597) was not only consulted for healing but also bewitched and killed people.³⁰² Elspeth Culsetter (Orkney 1644) was accused of cursing and thereby killing a man. But she could also cure cows and locate lost and stolen money.³⁰³ Alexander Hammiltoun (Haddington 1630) allegedly bewitched a man with a sickness. Later Hammiltoun went to the man's house, diagnosed the bewitchment, and cured the man with the help of the Devil.³⁰⁴ Similarly, Margrat McLevin confessed that Margaret McWilliam (Bute 1662) bewitched someone and begged another witch to heal her victim.³⁰⁵

Éva Pócs argued that analogue to the popular idea that magic could be used for good or bad purposes the 'bipolar witch' could act both as malefactor and healer. In this belief system, the spirit world functioned in a similar way and was inhabited by the 'bipolar dead' who could either have a neutral, good or bad morality which was dependent upon their role.³⁰⁶ Wilby also describes what she refers to as 'fairy familiars' who could be employed by cunning folk for healing, find lost goods, thief detection, divination and communication with the dead. They could be called fairies, angels, saints, spirits, imps or spirits of the dead. On the other hand the witch had a 'demon familiar' employed to harm who promised the witch freedom of want, worldly riches or revenge.³⁰⁷

Despite the ambiguous position such folk healers there were certain differences between them and witches. While witches were mainly defined by others, charmers and cunning folk defined themselves as such.³⁰⁸ Another difference was their source of power and their intent: 'Witchcraft was demonic and malicious: charming was neither'. The source of the charmers' skills was not necessarily demonic, though they might have made contact with spirits. Although these spirits were sometimes interpreted by others as demonic, they were not usually defined as such by the charmers themselves. However, the fact that charming and witchcraft shared many physical and verbal actions could lead to confusion.³⁰⁹ Henderson states:

A witch could be a charmer and might have had an ability to heal as well as commit murder and cause illness but a charmer or folk healer, though in possession of the same ability to hurt as well as to cure, would not necessarily be a witch. Furthermore, anyone, from any walk of life, could

³⁰¹ For example: *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 543 (Beigis Tod, Haddington 1608); SJC, vol. 1, 131 (Katharine Oswald, Edinburgh 1629); RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 148 (Margaret Watsoun (Lanark 1644).

³⁰² *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 178-180.

³⁰³ SSW.

³⁰⁴ SJC, vol. 1, 145-6.

³⁰⁵ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 11.

³⁰⁶ Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead*, 107-111.

³⁰⁷ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 53-57, 67-76.

³⁰⁸ Henderson, "Charmers," 11; Miller, "Devices and Directions," 91.

³⁰⁹ Miller, "Devices and Directions," 91, 95.

make use of charms, amulets and traditional medicine without ever being called either a charmer or a witch.³¹⁰

The morality of the magical practitioner was dependent on how their actions were interpreted by themselves as well as by others and were therefore very subjective. Their reputation could shift, during their life-time, between good and bad, as did the moral status of their 'familiar' whose beneficent or maleficent behaviour was dependent on their human 'master'. The relationship between a charmer and a community could deteriorate over time and people who once sought their help might later attribute their misfortunes on them.³¹¹ Despite this risk, most patients only accused charmers of witchcraft if they were under serious suspicion. Charmers were usually of low status and aware of their vulnerability to counter-charges. They looked after their reputation and believed in their own powers. Only a minority of charmers dared to make healing a full-time profession and therefore most of them were invisible to authorities. They were rarely players against witches and often traced back illnesses to bewitchment without naming a specific witch. Looking at witchcraft trials it is not easy to distinguish magical practitioners from helpful neighbours and how many of them were reclassified as witches by the courts. In the official clerical view, all magic required at least a tacit pact with the Devil, which intersects with the view that all occult powers were ambiguous and could be employed for good or bad ends.³¹²

The ambiguity between people and spirits was not such a big problem since Early Modern popular and to some degree elite culture was influenced by a magical conception of life. Even the Christian God himself had an ambiguous role since he could not only bless the faithful but also punished sinners. Everyday activities such as cooking, child-rearing and agricultural tasks, to rites of passage such as weddings, births and deaths were accompanied by magical rituals, protective gestures and meaningful words.³¹³ In this magical universe, pragmatic individuals would have tried to manipulate ambivalent magical practitioners and spirits in any way they could to ensure that they would receive a good future. People would have been comfortable negotiating with spirits capable of evil and theoretically hostile to Christianity while still believing themselves to be Christians. Even the Church itself tolerated fairy belief at parish level while officially condemning fairies to be demons. In witchcraft confessions, one can find renunciations of Christianity alongside Christian charms and prayers used for healing and sometimes thought to be taught by fairies or familiar spirits. Angels and demons serve God as well as the Queen of fairies. Demon familiars could, confusingly, be

³¹⁰ Lizanne Henderson, "Detestable Slaves of the Devil: Changing Ideas about Witchcraft in Sixteenth Century Scotland," in *A History of Everyday Life in Medieval Scotland: 1000 to 1600*, ed. Julian Goodare and Lizanne Henderson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 239.

³¹¹ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 113-7.

³¹² Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 171-4, 185.

³¹³ Geoffrey Scarre, *Witchcraft and Magic in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1987), 5-6; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 117; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 467-8.

called 'Jesus' or 'Daniel the Prophet' and could be invoked with 'Come Christ' or 'Amen, Amen'. Wilby concludes:

The evidence suggests that for those with an obscure grasp of Christian teaching the cosmos would have been peopled by a medley of supernatural figures of both Christian and pre-Christian origin, with little or no discrimination being made between them, either morally or ontologically. Of those individuals who were conscious of the official antipathies between fairy and Church many are likely to have mastered the arts of diplomacy, using, and in effect pledging allegiance to, both 'sides' either consecutively or at the same time.³¹⁴

If people were struggling to survive they would have called upon any supernatural agency which offered help.³¹⁵ Margaret Dickson (Haddington 1649) confessed that her daughter was ill and she tried to cure her. Margaret was very desperate as she needed her daughter to help with the harvest and she begged for God or the Devil to help her. During the same night, the Devil appeared and offered his help.³¹⁶ If a charmer was accused of witchcraft, it would have been easy for the authorities to charge them with covenanting with Satan. Familiars and fairies were frequently interpreted as demonic and during prosecution the accused could have come to believe him or herself that it was so.³¹⁷

The Principles of Magical Rituals

Magical rituals worked mainly on the principle of sympathy and sometimes incorporated religious features. Everyday objects and substances were used in magical rituals and thus transferred into 'sacramental' elements. Words and gestures had special significance and power. Most healing rituals involved to command the disease to stop could be enhanced by a religious invocation. To heal someone, the disease could be transferred elsewhere – to another person, animal, or to the healer who could neutralise it.³¹⁸ John Philip (Aberdeen 1631) said he took the sickness of a patient and transferred it onto an ox which died while Stein Maltman/Steven Malcolme (Stirling 1628) healed a man by transferring the illness 'vpon ane beast and promised that he should pay for the beast'.³¹⁹ This transfer of diseases could put the healer into danger as witches were similarly accused of laying on and putting off sickness. While the elite thought this power to heal or harm came from the witches' relationship with the Devil, common people understood an illness as a broken relationship with the witch which needed to be restored.³²⁰

³¹⁴ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 117-9.

³¹⁵ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 119.

³¹⁶ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 191.

³¹⁷ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 119-120.

³¹⁸ Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 348-352, 467-8.

³¹⁹ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 4, 637 (John Philip); Hall, "Trial of Stein Maltman," 16 (Stein Maltman).

³²⁰ Larner, *Enemies of God*, 141.

Stephen Wilson differentiates objects used in magical rituals as herbs and plants, objects and substances produced by the body like milk and urine, natural mineral substances and manufactured objects like pins, ribbons, threads, or clothes belonging to a certain person. Herbs and plants had to be gathered at a certain time, in a specific place and a certain state of purity, virginity, or after fasting or washing.³²¹ Bartie Patersoune (Edinburgh 1607) confessed to have healed a patient by giving him drinks and rubbing him with salves made of 'grene herbis'. While she prayed for several nights for his health, she gave her patient nine pieces of rowan tree which he should carry with him.³²² Jonet Miller (Kirkcudbright 1658) and Cristian Cranstoun (Haddington 1659) also used a combination of foxtree leaves and south running water for healing.³²³

Different kinds of water such as south-running water, water over which the living and the dead had passed, and well water were used in Scottish healing rituals. Wells were mainly of pre-Christian origin and later assimilated to the Christian framework as they were dedicated to saints and chapels were built near them to encourage people to pray and leave their offerings there. The Protestant church tried to forbid pilgrimages to holy wells, but they were still popular as late as the 18th century. Wells were visited at certain times of the year and some could cure specific diseases while others were known to cure everything.³²⁴ Martin Martin who travelled to the Western Islands at the end of the 17th century described several wells with healing powers which were often dedicated to saints. In Islay, sick people would go to the well called 'Toubir in Knahar'. They would drink some water, go sunways around the well and leave a small offering there. People mainly went there every quarter day and next to it there was a little chapel. On the Isle of Egg people went to St. Katharine's Well to be cured and the priest led them sunways around it.³²⁵ Issobell Haldane (Perth 1623) confessed that she went in silence to the well of Ruthven to cure a baby. She left a part of the baby's shirt there and took some water to wash the baby at home. Another time she went on her knees and praying to the 'Father, Sone and Holye Geest' and then washed a sick baby. Thereafter she 'tuik the watter with the bairneis sark ... and kaist baith in the burne'. She said 'that if ony hed gone ower it they hed gottin the ill.'³²⁶ Similarly, Margaret Alexander (Linlithgow 1647) said she healed her father with water from St Mungo's well and spoke a charm while James Knarstoun (Orkney 1633) used water taken from St. Mary's well at midnight to cure his patients.³²⁷ Water which ran south could be used to extract and wash away alien substances causing diseases.³²⁸ Christian Lewingstoun

³²¹ Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 597; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 338-340, 345-347.

³²² *Criminal Trials*, vol. 2, 535-6.

³²³ SSW.

³²⁴ Dingwall, *Scottish Medicine*, 87-8; Lynch, *Oxford Companion*, 410; Miller, *Magic and Witchcraft*, 43-50.

³²⁵ Martin, *Description*, 53, 274, 303.

³²⁶ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 352-4.

³²⁷ SSW.

³²⁸ Larner, *Enemies of God*, 141.

(Edinburgh 1597) cured people by washing them with south-running water.³²⁹ Similarly, Marioun Grant (Aberdeen 1597) confessed that she healed humans and cattle with south running water. The water had to be brought in silence, then the patient was washed and afterwards the water had to be thrown back where it came from.³³⁰ Elspit Scot (Linlithgow 1612) also said that south running water needed to be collected in silence because otherwise its healing power would be lost.³³¹ Stein Maltman/Steven Malcolme (Stirling 1628) healed several patients by washing them. Once a patient sent a shirt to him which he charmed 'in name of the father the son and the holy ghost'. Then 'he gave him directioun to wasche his body in southe running well water And commandit that the water ... should be cast furth in some desert place'.³³² Bartie Patersoune (Edinburgh 1607) used loch water to cure her own child and other people. She washed the baby, threw the shirt of her child into the and left it there.³³³ John Philip (Aberdeen 1631) who charmed and washed several people and animals stated that 'that weshing was not to be useit bot quhen there wes bewitching'.³³⁴

Stones of various sizes and shapes were thought to have magical protective or curing powers while others were used for prophesy or to give good fortune. Water gathered at tombstones and smaller stones like crystals or other types of quartz had specific powers for healing or protection. In some accounts, stones were heated and then put into cool water which was then used to wash the affected areas or to be drunk by the patient.³³⁵ John Brughe (Kinross 1643) for example cured cattle by sprinkling them with water into which two enchanted stones were laid before.³³⁶ Martin Martin described a 'Brownie's Stone' on the Island of Valay 'upon which the ancient inhabitants offered a cow's milk every Sunday'.³³⁷ Several instances when Scottish witches used stones for charming or bewitching will be discussed later.

Objects which had contact with the dead had healing powers. Earth, grass and water from churchyards or powder made out of bones, shrouds and bed linen was used for curing. These remedies only worked if the person did not die prematurely since their vitality was cut off otherwise.³³⁸ Issobell Watsonne (Stirling 1590) confessed that she used a rowan tree and a piece of a dead person's finger to cure the worm.³³⁹ Isobell Strauthaquhin (Aberdeen 1597) said she went to the Kirk of Dyce where she gathered bones of the dead. Then she put the bones into water and

³²⁹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 2, 26.

³³⁰ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 171.

³³¹ SSW; CH2/242/1/42-3.

³³² Hall, "Trial of Stein Maltman," 15, 16, 18, 23, 24.

³³³ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 2, 536.

³³⁴ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 4, 638.

³³⁵ Miller, *Magic and Witchcraft*, 66-73.

³³⁶ SJC, vol. 3, 598-9.

³³⁷ Martin, *Description*, 137.

³³⁸ Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 356-7.

³³⁹ SSW.

washed her patient with it. Afterwards, she threw the bones into the river Don and thereby 'watter rumlit as all the hilles hed fallin thairin'.³⁴⁰

Several other natural and manufactured objects were used in magical rituals. Animals could be used in cures and there were instances when the patient was touched or licked by an animal or plastered with dung. Parts of animals were worn as talismans and their blood had special powers and could be rubbed on the skin as medicine. Some animals had specific powers like toads, which were thought to be poisonous and associated with evil. Various bodily fluids and human remnants were used in magical rituals: hair and nail cuttings, as well as the placenta, could be used for hostile magic. Urine, milk, blood and the clothing which marked the excretions of a certain person had special qualities. Magical rituals involved the use of numerous manufactured objects like sieves, scissors, strings, coins, nails, pins, candles etc. Some materials had inherent magical qualities. For instance, iron had apotropaic qualities against the fairies in Scotland. Wax images could be used in love magic as well as harmful magic.³⁴¹ Other rituals involved putting a belt or a yarn around the body.³⁴² John Philip (Aberdeen 1631) for example confessed that he charmed a cow with a belt which he had put on a dead baby before.³⁴³ Also, consecrated objects and substances had healing powers. Holy water, religious words or church ceremonies like mass or Eucharist could have curative powers.³⁴⁴

Magical rituals also involved charms and prayers. Prayers used in such rituals were often similar to those recited in the Church or recommended by local priests for private contemplation. Main sources of charms were prayers from the pre-Reformation church, such as Paternosters, aves and creeds which were used straight or altered. Prayers and charms merged Christian and folkloric elements of pre- and non-Christian origin and came under suspicion during the Reformation.³⁴⁵ Several accused Scottish witches prayed to the father, the son and the Holy Ghost in their healing rituals or to defy against evil agencies.³⁴⁶ Others used variants of it. Jonet Boyman (Ayr 1572) was accused of the invocation of evil spirits at an elritch well 'in the name of ye fader and the sone King arthor and queen Elspeth' while Agnes Sampson (Edinburgh 1591) healed people by praying to the almighty God, his son Jesus Christ, the Virgin Marie, the Holy Ghost and the Holy Kirk.³⁴⁷ Marioun Grant (Aberdeen 1597) healed humans and cattle 'in the name of the Father, Sone, and Haly Gaist,

³⁴⁰ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 180.

³⁴¹ Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 357-9, 421-9.

³⁴² Miller, *Magic and Witchcraft*, 33.

³⁴³ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 4, 638.

³⁴⁴ Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 366-7.

³⁴⁵ Larner, *Enemies of God*, 140; Donald J. Macleod, ed., *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland Circa 1695 by Martin Martin* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1994), 32; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 34.

³⁴⁶ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 2, 26, 536 (Christian Lewingstoun, Edinburgh 1597; Bartie Patersoune, Edinburgh 1607); SSW (Katharine Caray, Orkney 1615; Isobell Bennet, Stirling 1659); RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 352-3 (Issobell Haldane, Perth 1623); Hall, "Trial of Stein Maltman," 16, 24 (Stein Maltman/Steven Malcolme, Stirling 1628); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 608 (Issobell Gowdie, Nairn 1662).

³⁴⁷ JC26/1/67 (Jonet Boyman); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 234 (Agnes Sampson).

and Chrystsonday' whom she called her God while her interrogators interpreted him as her master the Devil.³⁴⁸ Bartie Patersoune (Edinburgh 1607) also healed a man by asking for 'his helth at all leving wichtis, aboue and under the earth, in the name of JESUS'.³⁴⁹ Similarly, Stein Maltman/Steven Malcolme (Stirling 1628) who had his healing skills from the fairies, prayed to 'god and to all vnearthliche creatures' to cure children and adults.³⁵⁰ Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) knew certain charms which she learned from the Devil to bewitch people. One of them included the invocation of the Devil, 'Owr Ladie' as well as father, son and holy ghost.³⁵¹ Margaret McWilliam (Bute 1662) confessed that she knew a charm for an illness in the Irish language, but she used it only for herself.³⁵²

Magical spells could be orally or written and they could be brief formulae, protective spells, love spells, spells to heal, to harm or to undo other spells. The importance of verbal magic varies between literate and illiterate cultures. Words had special importance in literate cultures but also in non- or semi-literate circles. The power of the tongue could be used for good or bad magic. Blessings were a universal feature of intercourse in traditional Europe in calendar customs and among neighbours. Also, public curses were well established in charters, laws, wills, or for excommunication. Besides, there were also private and unofficial curses. All of these reflected hierarchical relationships within the society. Curses and blessings were mainly uttered from the superior towards the inferior, from the elder to the younger, from parent to child while the curse of a witch could also be the weapon of an oppressed person against more powerful enemies. This reflects the classic pattern of a witchcraft accusation when a beggar is refused charity and then utters a curse which is followed by disaster.³⁵³

Several other elements such as ritual gestures played a role in magical procedures. Raising a hand or certain fingers were common religious and magical gestures which could be beneficent or maleficent. The opposition between left and right, as well as circumambulation of sacred and other sites and directions were basic features of magical rituals. Circumambulation was common in calendar customs and Christian processions; during these processions people would go sunwise or clockwise to ensure fertility. Going counter-clockwise or 'widdershins' was associated with counter-magical cures, with witches causing evil or for controlling spirits. Magical circles could be drawn to keep harm outside and here also directions were important. Other gestures involved tying and untying of threads and knots which were used in love magic, or to ease childbirth and dying, or to cause favourable winds at the sea. Repetition and numbers like 3, 7, 9 and 40 were significant and 13

³⁴⁸ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 170-2.

³⁴⁹ *Criminal Trials*, vol.2, 535-6.

³⁵⁰ Hall, "Trial of Stein Maltman," 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23.

³⁵¹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 608-9.

³⁵² *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 19.

³⁵³ Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 429-438.

was seen as unlucky number. Secrecy was an integral part of high magic in classical times and popular magic and it was encouraged by the fear of prosecution during the Early Modern period. However, it was not a feature of all magic since collective rites like pilgrimages or rites at calendar customs were held publically while hostile magic was usually carried out in secret. Times and places were also significant for magical rituals. Ceremonies were held at special hours of night or day. Sunset and sunrise were significant times presumably because of their liminal position between day and night but also noon was a special time. Without any artificial light, night contrasted more with day in traditional Europe than today and was a time of danger and fear associated with ghosts, fairies, spirits, demons and witches. It was also a good time for magical activities like picking herbs and raising spirits. Also, the moon shone at night which had itself special importance for agriculture, breeding livestock, human conception, childbirth and health. Particular days were seen as lucky or unlucky as well as suitable for special activities like healing or agricultural tasks. Places at the boundaries or in the wild were favoured for the performance of magic. Cemeteries, crossroads, woods, marshes and rubbish heaps were associated with ghosts and demons and they were dangerous because witches could meet there and have communications with the Devil.³⁵⁴

The Church and Popular Magic

The pre-Reformation church always had problems with popular magic and was suspicious of any kind of unsanctioned supernatural action. The Church defined the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable magic and stated that all non-ecclesiastical magic involved diabolic help. Protestant reformers pushed this further by claiming that the age of Christian miracles was over and that all supernatural effects were illusions of the Devil. The reformers attacked not only folk magic but also ecclesiastical magic. They targeted charming, divination, finding lost goods and love magic, along with the admiration of saints and relics. Since all magical activity involved the help of the Devil, many theologians used terms like witch, sorcerer and charmer interchangeably. Some theologians even saw charmers as more dangerous than witches because the latter could only harm the physical body while the charmer attacked their patients' soul under the illusion of curing them. Despite the official attitude of the Reformed church towards magic, even well-educated members of the Protestant elites utilised folk remedies. Attempts to prosecute charmers were often futile and only a minority ever faced criminal charges. If they did it was usually as a result of their ambiguous position and healing techniques of transferring illnesses to other humans or animals and the fact that they surrounded themselves with a certain mystique which could have been interpreted by the courts as diabolic witchcraft. Despite the attack of Protestant clerics on Catholicism as a form of witchcraft, as well as popular beliefs, no major Protestant state undertook large-scale prosecutions against charmers while they were more often accused of witchcraft in Catholic countries. Also, visitations to

³⁵⁴ Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 439-457.

holy wells being attacked by the post-Reformation church still remained popular into the 18th and 19th centuries in Scotland as elsewhere. A historian thus needs to distinguish rhetoric from reality. Although the Church attacked popular culture, only a small group of individuals actually tried to enforce those ideas.³⁵⁵

Charmers in the Scottish Witchcraft Trials

Law, Witchcraft Trials, and Elite Ideas

The Scottish Witchcraft Act of 1563 could be considered one of the harshest legal codes in Europe as it was targeted against charmers and their clients. While the English Witchcraft Act and the Carolina Code of the Holy Roman Empire distinguished good and bad magic, the Scottish legislation did not differentiate between magical acts being used for good or bad purposes. The Act was directed against ‘vsing of Witchcraftis Sorsarie and Necromancie’ and reflects the dominant Calvinist theological thinking. It does not mention the term ‘witch’ itself although it was directed against witchcraft and consulters of witches. Goodare states that the meaning of the word sorcery is not completely clear, but it might refer to magical practitioners broadly conceived. Furthermore, the Act mentions necromancy meaning ‘conjunction with the aid of evil spirits’ which was not necessarily part of a charmer’s repertoire but could be interpreted as a sign of an implicit demonic pact. Goodare suggests that the law was directed against superstition and considered witchcraft as a remnant of the Catholic faith and that both were false and demonic. He also states that it was directed against charmers since it condemned self-defined, public practitioners who sought clients and abusing them by letting them think that their witchcraft was beneficent while it really was sinful and demonic. *Maleficium* was absent from the wording of the Witchcraft Act and the concept of the demonic pact had not yet fully developed. Rather, the Act was directed against ungodly relationships with the Devil and viewed Catholics as the enemies of true religion. It might seem remarkable that it was not directed against the kind of witches who would be prosecuted over the next one hundred and fifty years by the courts which were those having a reputation of being a witch, harmed others by casting secret spells and made explicit pacts with the Devil.³⁵⁶

During the 16th century, there was probably quite a confusion among the learned and literate about distinctions between witches, charmers and healers.³⁵⁷ King James’ bible names several kinds of magical practitioners: ‘no people who use divination, are inchanters, witches, charmers, consulters

³⁵⁵ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 121-3, 125-130; Henderson, “Charmers,” 11; Miller, *Magic and Witchcraft*, 30-31, 46; Thomas, *Religion and Decline*, 303-6; Wear, “Medicine in Early Modern Europe,” 243.

³⁵⁶ George F. Black, *A Calendar of Cases of Witchcraft in Scotland: 1510-1727* (New York: Arno Press Inc., 1938), 11; Goodare, “Scottish Witchcraft Act,” 51-64.

³⁵⁷ Henderson, “Detestable Slaves,” 239.

of familiar spirits, wizard, necromancer shall be found among you – all those things against God.³⁵⁸ In his tract *Daemonologie*, King James VI seems to link magic mainly to the activities of learned magicians although he admits that common people could practice magic with the help of the Devil, such as charming, divination and other superstitious practices. To him, both were damnable as they worked with diabolical assistance but the difference between a magician and a witch to him was, ‘that the witches are servants only, and slaves to the devil, but the necromancers are his masters and commanders’.³⁵⁹ James distinguished two kinds of diabolic art: ‘magic or necromancy, the other sorcery or witchcraft’. While magicians were mostly driven by curiosity, witches were entrapped by the Devil because of their poverty or their desire for revenge.³⁶⁰ James not only distinguishes the male world of learned magicians from the female world of witchcraft, but he also states that all magic is demonic and thus all magicians, diviners, enchanters, sorcerers and witches are consulters of the Devil. As James distinguishes learned and unlearned magicians, he also differentiates between poor witches to whom the Devil promises riches and wealthy witches who sought revenge with the help of their master.³⁶¹

James states it is unlawful to be cured by a witch and the only lawful way to be healed is ‘earnest prayer to God ... And this is not only the lawful way, but likewise the most sure, for ... [when cured with the help of the devil] it may well serve for a short time, but at the last it will doubtlessly tend to the utter perdition of the patient both in body and soul’.³⁶² He states,

there is no kind of persons so subject to receive harm of them as these that are of infirm and weak faith ... for neither is it able to them to use any false cure upon a patient, except the patient first believe in their power, and so hazard the tinsel [=risk the loss] of his own soul.³⁶³

The king’s statements reflect the Reformers ideas that the only way of healing was praying for divine assistance while Catholics offered a wider range of ways to ward off illnesses and misfortunes such as prayers to saints, the Virgin Mary as well as god, pilgrimages to miraculous shrines, giving of votive offerings, the use of sacraments, processions of holy relics, and anointing the sick. James’ writings also depict the notion and that popular healing was sinful as the charmers unlike witches attacked not only the body but also the soul of their victims.³⁶⁴

Charmers were rarely punished for witchcraft in Western Europe except when they were also accused of *maleficium* or entering into a Satanic pact. They constituted a small percentage of the

³⁵⁸ *The Bible: Authorized King James Version*, ed. Robert Carroll (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 147, Exodus 18:10-12.

³⁵⁹ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 364; Normand, *Witchcraft*, 343.

³⁶⁰ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 363.

³⁶¹ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 369, 380, 382-3, 391; Normand, *Witchcraft*, 344-5.

³⁶² King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 397.

³⁶³ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 97-8.

³⁶⁴ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 125-129; Thomas, *Religion and Decline*, 305; Wear, “Medicine in Early Modern Europe,” 240-1.

3837 or more people tried in Scotland for witchcraft but healing still played a bigger part in Scottish persecutions than in other European countries. While cunning folk in England were considered quite distinct from witches, this differentiation was blurred in major hunts in Scotland and the continent. One of the reasons for this was, according to Davies, the wording of the Scottish Witchcraft Act. Furthermore, the kirk often worked closely together with the Privy Council and often local ministers started legal proceedings.³⁶⁵ John Philip (Aberdeen 1631), who confessed to charming many people, not with the help of God but from the Devil and the Queen of Fairies, said he had fled out of the parish because he feared the minister.³⁶⁶ Another reason why charmers could have been accused of *maleficium* was that they sometimes healed someone through transferring the disease onto another person or animal. One way how charmers tried to avoid this problem was by transferring the illness upon an object which was put into water to wash it away.³⁶⁷ Indictments or dittays against accused witches often included *maleficium* alongside healing.³⁶⁸ Johne Brughe (Kinross 1643) for example was accused of soothsaying, charming, and using shirts, belts, clothes, stones, south running water to cure people and animals and making a lot of money with that. But, as an act of revenge, he caused two of his victim's plough horses and the best oxen to be shot dead. He stole the milk of another person's cow for revenge and made cows, dogs, oxen and horses run mad. He cured a man and was not content with his payment so he made him poor. He was also accused of digging up corpses at a sabbath meeting to kill cattle and animals with the procured flesh.³⁶⁹ Sometimes the charmers' contact with fairies or conjuration of spirits could have been interpreted by the authorities as demonic pact and thus they could be accused of witchcraft.³⁷⁰ In practice, the Kirk sessions often distinguished between charmers and maleficent witches and they were treated with more leniency. Also, common people had little reason to condemn them as witches since they offered a valuable service for the community. Furthermore, charming was regarded as a lesser crime than witchcraft which was heretical and thus criminal.³⁷¹ The punishment of charmers was similar to that inflicted upon adulterers, fornicators and abusers of the sabbath. It could include monetary fines and public repentance like the appearance in sackcloth and in some rare cases excommunication.³⁷² Also, people who had contact with fairies were not necessarily burned as witches. Janet Drever (Orkney 1615), who was found guilty for fostering a fairy child and communication and having sexual

³⁶⁵ Davies, "Comparative Perspective," 189-191; Lerner, *Enemies of God*, 9.

³⁶⁶ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 4, 637-8.

³⁶⁷ Davies, "Comparative Perspective," 192-3.

³⁶⁸ Goodare, "Scottish Witchcraft Act," 55.

³⁶⁹ SJC, vol. 3, 597-601.

³⁷⁰ Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 238-9.

³⁷¹ Goodare, "Scottish Witchcraft Act," 55.

³⁷² Henderson, "Charmers," 11; Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 239; Miller, "Devices and Directions," 92; For England see Thomas, *Religion and Decline*, 306.

relationships with fairies for several years, was banished out of the country.³⁷³ Probably she was not executed as a witch because she did not cure others with the help of the fairies and thus performed no magical rituals.

Analysis of the available statistics shows that healing and medicine were closely related to witchcraft practice although not necessarily so.³⁷⁴ Willumsen states that the SSW mentions 195 accused witches whose cases were connected with healing while Martin and Miller argue that there were 141 witches accused of healing humans and/or animals, which is about 4% of all accusations. They argue that out of 328 detailed cases healing is a primary element in 40 which is about 12% of them. However, these figures are not really reliable since they are based on a small proportion of cases.³⁷⁵ Martin and Miller's figures must be based on the 141 cases of 'folk healing' defined by the SSW as: 'the case (or accusations) against the suspect were about folk healing issues, such as failed attempts or the use of improper rituals and magic'. If we compare these numbers to fairy related trials about 25,5% of the folk healing trials are also connected to fairies. Furthermore, 28,3% of the 127 fairy-related trials were connected to 'folk healing' and 46,5% of the 43 trials which explicitly mention fairies are connected to healing as well. Also, the SSW recorded 70 cases of what have been classified as 'white magic', which includes astrology, diagnosing bewitchment, divination, finding lost goods, love magic, opening locks, prophesy, protective magic, second sight and spirit mediums.³⁷⁶ Out of those 70 trials of 'white magic' about 34,3% are also fairy related. White magic is present in 18,9% out of 127 fairy trials and in 32,6% of the explicit fairy trials.³⁷⁷ The SSW also mentions 10 cases of midwifery with 3 of them being actual midwives and the other 7 persons practicing midwifery. Midwifery accounts for only 0,5% of all Scottish witchcraft cases.³⁷⁸ 5 out of the 127 fairy-related trials are related to midwifery while 4 of those trials explicitly mention fairies. Another factor, which is interesting in reference to illness and disease, is *maleficium*, defined by the SSW as 'the suspect accused for causing magical harm to people, goods or animals'. Out of the 414 trials categorized as *maleficium*, fairies are represented in 18,8% of them. While *maleficium* plays a role in 61,4% of the 127 fairy-related trials it only accounts for 51,2% of the trials explicitly mentioning fairies. Regarding the gender distribution, 'folk healing' and *maleficium* reflects the general distribution of the Scottish witchcraft trials. 'Midwifery' on the other hand is solely confined to women while men were slightly more active in 'white magic' than women accounting for 25% in the 127 fairy-related trials.³⁷⁹

³⁷³ *Court Books of Orkney and Shetland*, 19-20.

³⁷⁴ Lauren Martin and Joyce Miller, "Some Findings from the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft," in *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Julian Goodare et al. (Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 63.

³⁷⁵ Martin, "Some Findings," 63; Willumsen, *Witches of the North*, 97.

³⁷⁶ SSW *Database Documentation and Description*, 41. Compare to Table 1 (Appendix).

³⁷⁷ Numbers based on SSW. Compare to Table 1 (Appendix).

³⁷⁸ Martin, "Some Findings," 62-3.

³⁷⁹ Numbers based on SSW. Compare to Table 1 (Appendix).

Although all these figures are based on a relatively small number of trials, they still show that the fairies were closely connected to the practice of healing as well as midwifery and white magic. The fact that about one third of the explicit fairy-related trials are also connected with *maleficium* may reflect the idea that charmers could harm and heal. It is also important to notice that *maleficium* plays a bigger role in the cases not explicitly mentioning fairies while in folk healing and white magic it is the other way around. Furthermore, table 1 in the Appendix shows that trials with a mixture of folk healing, white magic and *maleficium* occur mostly until about 1650 while later trials only mention *maleficium* (and only rarely healing or white magic) combined with the demonic pact and the witches' sabbath. This is evidence that the focus of Scottish society gradually shifted from the figure of the charmer being able to hurt and heal to the demonic witch performing *maleficia* during the course of the Scottish witch-hunts.

Fairies as a Source for the Skills of Charmers

All across Europe magical practitioners often claimed to have gained their powers from supernatural beings such as fairies.³⁸⁰ In a Hungarian context, Pócs states that bewitchment could be either cured by the witches themselves or a group of independent healers who diagnosed and healed bewitchment, but could also foretell the future, locate treasures or communicate with the dead. Some of them used to communicate with dead, divine or spirit creatures which acted as their guardian or helping spirits. These spirits lived in the otherworld and were originally dead ancestors. There was not only a close relationship between the living and the dead, but also between the world of the dead and the 'dead' demonic and spirit world. Pócs describes 'fairy healers' as mostly female mediators with ritual connections with the otherworld of fairies. They were village healers curing illnesses caused by fairies and they could see the dead, tell fortunes and were sometimes enemies of witches. They could meet fairy goddesses living in a fairylike heavenly otherworld with merriment, music, feasting and dancing. They also learned their healing skills there. Over time, these 'fairy healers' were replaced by saints and guardian angels living in a Christian heaven.³⁸¹

Scotland rather went the other way in demonising the fairies as helping spirits of charmers. For the popular mind fairies were seen as dangerous and yet less culpable than the Devil. Some charmers claimed to have their healing skills from fairies as they created awe without frightening the client. While some said they encountered their fairy contact only once, others admitted to regular contact with the fairy folk.³⁸² However, familiars and imps connected to charmers could act in a similar way to the Devil.³⁸³ The elite mostly interpreted fairies and other familiars as demons or the

³⁸⁰ Davies, "Comparative Perspective," 198-9.

³⁸¹ Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead*, 29, 121, 149-154.

³⁸² Hall, "Getting Shot," 27; Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 126-7.

³⁸³ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 114.

Devil and to admit to dealings with them was the same as admitting to witchcraft. Scottish interrogators sometimes used the terms demon and fairy interchangeable.³⁸⁴ King James wrote that although the fairies sometimes troubled innocent people they also appeared to witches 'to be a colour of safety for them that ignorant magistrates may not punish them for it. But ... that sort, I say, ought as severely to be punished as any other witches'. He states that the Devil 'deceives the witches by attributing to himself diverse names, as if every shape that he transforms himself in were a diverse kind of spirit'.³⁸⁵ The Devil not only appeared in diverse shapes including fairies but the conjuration and contact with spirits such as fairies or the dead could be seen as similar to necromancy which King James defines as 'the prophecy by the dead'³⁸⁶ which required some form of contract with the Devil. James explains that the Devil

will oblish himself to teach them arts and sciences, which he may easily do being so learned a knave as he is: to carry them news from any part of the world, ... to reveal to them the secrets of any persons, ... he will make his scholars to creep in credit with princes by foretelling them many great things part true, part false.³⁸⁷

According to popular opinion, fairies could bestow humans with gifts like healing skills, prophecy and musical talent but there was usually a price to pay. Knowledge from the fairies could also come from dead intermediaries who were once mortal.³⁸⁸ Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) confessed to have acquired her healing skills from Thome Reid, who died in a battle and acted as intermediary between Bessie and the fairies. With his help, she could detect stolen things, predict the weather, had knowledge of the past and the future and he also advised her in healing people. However, before she got her skills, the Queen of Fairies, as well as Thome Reid, told her that her baby and animals would die but her husband would be healed from his sickness.³⁸⁹ Alesoun Piersoun (Fife 1588) confessed that her cousin and doctor of medicine Mr William Sympson taught her healing skills. Similar to Thome Reid, he was with the fairies and acted as an intermediary between them and Alesoun.³⁹⁰ Christian Lewingston (Edinburgh 1597) acquired her healing skills from 'hir dochter, wha met with the Fairie' while Isobell Strauthaquin (Aberdeen 1597) said her mother, who learned her skills from an elf man, taught her how to heal.³⁹¹ Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) met the 'Quene of Elphen' when he was a boy and she promised him that he 'suld knaw all thingis, and suld help and cuir all sort of seikness'. The first time she came to him one of his cattle died on the 'Hill of Elphillok' but she promised to do

³⁸⁴ Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 127.

³⁸⁵ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 420.

³⁸⁶ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 364.

³⁸⁷ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 372-4.

³⁸⁸ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 83-85; Miller, *Witchcraft and Magic*, 20.

³⁸⁹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II 51-57.

³⁹⁰ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 161-3.

³⁹¹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 2, 26 (Christian Lewingston); *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 177 (Isobell Strauthaquin).

him good afterwards. He claimed to be able to heal 'the falling seiknes, barne bed [=childbed], and all sort of vther seiknes that ever fell to man or beast ... be baptizing thame ... and be saying thir words'. He also confessed that he had another master called 'Christsonday' whom Andro described as an angel and son of God and whom the interrogators interpreted as the Devil. Andro stated that the Queen of Elphen had only a 'grip of the craft and that Christsonday had all the power under God'.³⁹² Elspeth Reoch (Orkney 1616) met two men at a loch when she was twelve years old. One of them offered her the skill of second sight and to know everything she wanted. Elspeth said he was a fairy man who was also her kinsman John Stewart who was slain and was 'therfor nather deid nor leiving bot wald ever go betuix the heaven and the earth'. For the gift of second sight she had to sleep with him for two nights and on the third night he laid his hand on her breast, wakened her and she could not speak on the next day. She bade her brother to help her and he took her to the kirk for several Sundays and prayed for her.³⁹³ Janet Trall (Perth 1623) confessed that she met the principal of the 'fairy folks' and that 'He desired me to speak to God, and do good for poor folks: and he shewed me means how I might do this, which was by washing, bathing, speaking words, putting sick persons through hesps of yarn, and the like.' However, the healing of changelings was not taught to her by the fairies but by Janet Murray and her son.³⁹⁴ Issobell Haldane (Perth 1623) said she was taken away by a supernatural entity and she did not know if it was God or the Devil. She was carried into a hill which opened and stayed there for three days. There she met 'a man with ane gray beird' who brought her away again. Later she could foretell the death of a woman, whom she said should be taken away on Fastings Eve, and a baby who would be taken away. She said the grey bearded man told her about that.³⁹⁵ Stein Maltman/Steven Malcolme (Stirling 1628) confessed freely that he was consulted for healing various illnesses and that he had his skills from the 'fairye folk quhom he had sein in bodily schapes in sindrie places'.³⁹⁶ John Philip (Aberdeen 1631) claimed that he charmed someone 'for the feveris with the queine of fairies'. When he was asked where his skills came from, he said that he knew that it was not 'from God bot from the devill'.³⁹⁷ Issobell Sinclair (Orkney 1633) confessed meetings with the pharie that they gave her second sight and the ability to see any fey bode.³⁹⁸

Other witches confessed that they acquired similar healing skills from the Devil or other undefined spirits. Margrat Dickson (Haddington 1649) had her healing skills from the Devil and used similar methods in curing like other healers in relation with fairies. When a woman's child was sick,

³⁹² *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 119-121.

³⁹³ *Lawling Sheriff and Justice Courts*, 187-9.

³⁹⁴ *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, xii.

³⁹⁵ RPC, vol. 13, 270; RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 352-4.

³⁹⁶ Hall, "Trial of Stein Maltman", 15.

³⁹⁷ RPC 2nd series, vol.4, 637-8.

³⁹⁸ SSW.

the Devil told Margaret to get south-running water and that the mother should wash the child with it.³⁹⁹ Jonet Miller (Kirkcudbright 1658) said she had a familiar while she also said the Devil gave her the power to heal.⁴⁰⁰ Donald McIlmichall (Argyll 1677) confessed that he consulted the Devil to get information where to find stolen goods and how to steal horses and cattle. On the other hand he also stated that had met men and women inside a hill. He was not sure which kind of people they were 'bot he judges them not to have been *worldlie* men or men ordained of god'.⁴⁰¹ Some accused witches acted as necromancers being in contact with the dead. Jonet Morisone (Bute 1662) confessed that the Devil appeared to her as a 'black rough fierce man' and later as a white Lady who wanted to teach her how to bring back the ghost Adam Ker whom she and her daughter had killed before.⁴⁰² Also, Margrat Lang (Renfrew 1697) who was one of the witches of the Renfrewshire cases 1697 was a spirit medium who could allow people to talk to their dead relatives.⁴⁰³ There are some other accounts of accused witches who confessed that they got certain skills from undefined spirits. Jean Weir (Edinburgh 1670) said she met a spirit woman who offered to go to the Queen of Fairy to get help for Jean. The woman came back with a 'piece of a tree ... and told her that as long as she had the samen, she would be albe to doe what she should desyre'. Afterwards, Jean could spin very fast and found a lot of money.⁴⁰⁴ Jean Brown (Wigtown 1706) confessed that she regularly conversed with spirits which were invisible and which were God because they could cure sickness. She confessed that they were 'her maker' as well as 'the Father, Son and Holy Ghost'. She said they were 'good spirits' but did not call them fairies. They told her that the world would be destroyed and witnesses said she used charms including a belt, but she herself denied charming.⁴⁰⁵

Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) and Jonet Boyman (Ayr 1572), who used to invoke otherworldly spirits and healed fairy-inflicted injuries, were essentially charmers who never harmed anyone, but their contact with fairies and their summoning of ghosts was considered as criminal behaviour punishable by death. Such instances show the fusion of folk belief and learned witchcraft being underway even before the North Berwick trials in 1590-1.⁴⁰⁶ We can also detect in these witchcraft trial accounts that, from the middle of the 17th century onwards, accused witches did not state that they acquired their healing skills from the fairies but rather from the Devil or other undefined spirits. The case of Margaret Dicksone (Haddington 1649) already shows a strong connection to the demonic

³⁹⁹ RPC 2nd series, vol.8, 191-3.

⁴⁰⁰ SSW.

⁴⁰¹ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 36-8.

⁴⁰² *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 20-4.

⁴⁰³ SSW.

⁴⁰⁴ Purkiss, "Sounds of Silence," 93; SSW; JC2/13/10.

⁴⁰⁵ SSW; CH2/373/1/220-1.

⁴⁰⁶ Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 248; JC26/1/67 (Jonet Boyman).

pact, the sabbath and the witches' mark and therefore suggests that fairy belief was obscured by diabolical witchcraft beliefs.⁴⁰⁷

Charmers, Healing, and Fairy-Inflicted Injuries

Despite the fact that some people could benefit from contact with fairies most people regarded them with suspicion and fear.⁴⁰⁸ Supernatural beings such as fairies were believed to influence the lives of humans in a variety of ways during the Reformation centuries and people had to know how to prevent being harmed by them. Although they were especially active at certain days and times, they could strike anyone at any time. Fairies were believed to lure mortal lovers, nurses, midwives and human babies into their world and even used them as a payment (teind) to Hell. Eating, drinking, speaking or sleeping at a taboo place associated with fairies might cause problems for humans. Fairies were said to appear at certain places like beneath an apple tree, close to wells, hills or woods. They could entrap mortals by promising them gifts such as music or charms and they attacked them with fairy darts, arrows or blasts. Childbirth was a time when people were especially vulnerable to fairy attacks.⁴⁰⁹

Amulets or protective devices were used to ward off fairies. One way of protection was to evoke the power of God through prayer, a cross, the Bible or holy water. Robert Kirk stated that the fairies have 'no discernible Religion, Love or Devotion towards God the Blessed Maker of all. They disappear whenever they hear his name invoked, or the name of Jesus'.⁴¹⁰ Janet Anderson (Stirling 1621) who cured bewitchment or fairy-related illnesses, confessed that she invoked Christian beings against the fairies in her charms.⁴¹¹ People also used iron as a protective device against fairies.⁴¹² Kirk noted 'that all uncouth unknown wights are terrified, by nothing earthly so much as by cold iron, they deliver the reason to be, that Hell lying betwixt the chill tempests, and the fire-brands of scalding metals, ... and fright at all that comes thence'.⁴¹³ He also wrote that Gaelic speakers 'put bread, the Bible, or a piece of iron, in womens bed when travelling, to save them from being thus stolen'.⁴¹⁴ Stein Maltman/Steven Malcolme (Stirling 1628) cured children and adults by drawing swords above them because 'the fairye wold not cume *quhai* they saw drawin swordis'.⁴¹⁵ While fairies favoured trees like Apple or Hawthorn other trees, like Holly or Rowan, were used to ward them off. Holly and Rowan were also used as protection from witchcraft and the evil eye and were

⁴⁰⁷ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 191-3.

⁴⁰⁸ Miller, *Magic and Witchcraft*, 27-8.

⁴⁰⁹ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 74-5.

⁴¹⁰ Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 82.

⁴¹¹ Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm," 143; RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 347; SSW.

⁴¹² Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 87-9.

⁴¹³ Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 81-2.

⁴¹⁴ Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 81.

⁴¹⁵ Hall, "Trial of Stein Maltman," 17, 22.

therefore planted near people's homes. Sprigs with red berries were especially protective as the colour red had apotropaic qualities. Elf-arrows could be worn around the neck for protection against elf-shot and also pebbles and stones had protective qualities. Naturally created bored stones were associated with second sight, fairies and witchcraft. By looking through the holes of those 'fairystones' or 'charmstones', people could see the fairies. They were also hung on walls or used as amulets against fairy attacks.⁴¹⁶ When Ewfame Mackalzene (Edinburgh 1591) asked Agnes Sampsoune (Edinburgh 1591) for assisting her in childbed, Agnes lay a bored stone under her and also put an enchanted powder into a piece of paper and put it in her hair to ease her pain.⁴¹⁷

Elaborate rituals and medicines were used to cure people afflicted by supernatural entities. There were a number of ways to disenchant mortals which were similar to bewitchment or enchantment itself. A spell could in another context act as a counter-spell; special objects caused both enchantment and disenchantment, and special days like Halloween and Beltane could be dangerous but also provide occasions for healing rituals. Elf-arrow heads were used in rituals against fairy shot by putting them into water or through bodily contact with the weapon.⁴¹⁸ Stein Maltman/Steven Malcolme (Stirling 1628) cured children and adults affected by fairies with elf-arrow-stones. To heal a woman who suffered from a fairy-shot he brought south-running water, put an elf-arrow-stone into it and gave his patient a drink from that. He caused a sick man to go out at night to the place where he got his sickness and pray to 'god and all vnearthlich wights' to send him back his health. Afterwards, Stein lay his hands on the patient and 'rubbed his breast and his bak with ane Elffarrow stone'. Stein also confessed healing a baby troubled by the fairies. He took it out at night and drew a sword above his head. Then he brought the baby back into the house where the mother should heat some water, put an elf-arrow-stone into it and wash the baby.⁴¹⁹

A number of other objects such as stones but also numbers like 3 or 7, often associated with fairies in ballads and witchcraft trials, played a role in healing rituals.⁴²⁰ Katherine Caray (Orkney 1615) used stones to diagnose spirit illnesses while James Knarstoun (Orkney 1633) used three hot stones, one from the ebb, one from the hill and another from the kirk yard and placed them in the lintel of the door and then said words to cure.⁴²¹ Katharine Cragie (Orkney 1640) once came to a house where a man was deadly sick and she told him that he prayed ill for him. To his wife Jonet Cragie she said:

'Well, or the morne ate evin I sall witte whether it be a hill spirit, a kirk spirit, or a water spirit that troubles him.' The nixt morne thairefter ye the said Katharein com to the said Jonets hous befor day and brocht

⁴¹⁶ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 89, 93.

⁴¹⁷ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 237, 252.

⁴¹⁸ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 90, 93-4. Labouvie, "Hexenspuk und Hexenabwehr," 71.

⁴¹⁹ Hall, "Trial of Stein Maltman," 18, 23, 24.

⁴²⁰ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 83, 94.

⁴²¹ SSW.

with you thrie stones, which ye put in the fyre, where they continowed all night till, upon the morrow timeous befor sunrysing, ye tuk thame up frome under the said doore threshold and taking a veschell filled with water ye put the stones thairin severallie on after another, of which stones being thus put into the water be you the said Jonet Cragie hard on of thame chirme and churle into the water, wharupon ye said to the said Jonet, ... 'Jonat, it is a kirk spirit which troubleth Robbie your husband.' Thaireftir ye gave the vessel with the water to the said Jonet wherinto ye haid put the thrie stones, and directed her to wasch hir husband thairwith.

When Katherine came back to house some time later, Katharine heard that the woman had revealed the proceedings to her husband. For revealing her secret, Katherine bewitched the woman that she should have a 'buckie' (boile) on her cheek to disfigure her face. The next day the woman came to Katherine and she put it away again with 'trowie glove' (foxglove).⁴²² Another time Katharine Cragie diagnosed a sickness caused by a sea trow which lay on the patient. She took it away by putting three stones into the corner the hearth form morning till night. Then she put the stones during the night behind the door until the next morning and afterwards she put them into water and washed him several times. The third time he had to rise out of his bed and he had to go in silence to the sea shore at night. There she cast some water over his head and he was healed. Although Katherine Cragie mainly performed beneficent magic, she was accused of cursing, superstition and having her knowledge from her master the Devil.⁴²³

Fairies were associated with certain taboos. People who talked about their dealings with the fairies could lose their favours. This was especially bad for charmers whose livelihoods sometimes depended on the benefit of fairies. Thus, accused witches in England and in Scotland were probably quite reluctant talk about their familiar spirits. Interrogators could have interpreted such a denial as a refusal to confess while people tried to conceal their beliefs because they feared the familiar's wrath.⁴²⁴ Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) stated that her ghost familiar Thome Reid forbade her to speak to him unless he spoke first and he also did not want her to speak when she first met the fairies.⁴²⁵ The fairies warned Alesoun Pierson (Fife 1588) that 'gif scho wald speik and tell of thame and their doingis, thay sould martir hir'. When she first told others about the fairies, they gave her a stroke so that she could not move her left side and she started to fear them and cried when they came.⁴²⁶ As we have already seen in some examples mentioned before, silence also played a role in healing rituals.⁴²⁷ Stein Maltman/Steven Malcolme (Stirling 1628), who got his healing skills from the fairies

⁴²² RPC, 2nd series, vol. 7, 474-5. Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 94.

⁴²³ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 7, 476; RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 64-69.

⁴²⁴ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 89-91.

⁴²⁵ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 52, 56.

⁴²⁶ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 163.

⁴²⁷ Larner, "Healing in Pre-Industrial Britain," 31.

was once consulted for healing two brothers. He told them to go back were they got their disease and to sit down on their knees. Then he drew a sword and prayed to God and all unearthly wights to send the men their health again. Stein also told the wife of one of these men to shut the door and windows of the house and speak nothing whatever she heard. But her husband was not thankful. A few days later, he went out of his house and fell dead immediately.⁴²⁸

Falling asleep in fairy territory could be dangerous and also certain times and dates mentioned in the witchcraft trials were associated with fairies.⁴²⁹ Jonet Boyman (Ayr 1572) could not heal her patient because it was already past Halloween, which was the time when the good neighbours rise.⁴³⁰ Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) met the fairies at the twelfth hour of the day and at Candlemas.⁴³¹ Similar days could also be used by witches to perform *maleficia* or meet the Devil. Katharine Ross (Ross and Cromarty 1590) stated that on Halloween she and others killed the Laird of Fowlis with pictures of clay and an elf-arrow-head.⁴³² Katherine Jonesdochter (Orkney 1616) met the Devil on Halloween and Holy Cross day (September 14).⁴³³ Certain places and times were significant in a broader customary context and both worked with the concept of boundaries. Calendar customs mainly associated with fairies were Halloween and Beltane. Halloween is derived from the Celtic festival of Samhain which marked the beginning of winter. It was a time of impotence when bonfires were lit to counteract darkness and hasten the return of the sun. People also believed that the curtains between the natural and supernatural world were temporarily lifted at this time so that spirits of the dead could come into the human realm. Beltane was another Celtic festival and marked the beginning of summer, the renewal of fertility and vegetation and fires were lit to welcome the sun. On both days the duality between life and death was celebrated. Robert Kirk also noted that the fairies themselves celebrate certain days.⁴³⁴ He wrote:

They remove to other Lodgings at the beginning of each quarter of the year, so traversing till doomsday, being impatient of staying in on place, ... And at such revolution of time, Seers or men of the second sight ... have verie terrifying encounters with them, ... and thereby have made it a custom to this day among the Scottish-Irish, to keep Church duly everie first Sunday of the quarter, to sene or hallow themselves, their corne and cattell, from the shots and stealth of these wandring Tribes. and many of these superstitious people will not been seen in Church again till the nixt quarter begin, as if no dutie were to be learned or don by them, but all the use of worship and sermons were to save them from those arrows fly in the dark.⁴³⁵

⁴²⁸ Hall, "Trial of Stein Maltman," 22-3.

⁴²⁹ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 79, 82.

⁴³⁰ JC26/1/67.

⁴³¹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 52, 57.

⁴³² *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 192, 198-9.

⁴³³ *Court Book of Shetland*, 38-9.

⁴³⁴ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 82.

⁴³⁵ Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 79-80.

Fairies were also known for taking humans with them to their otherworld. Women were especially vulnerable for fairy enchantment during childbirth.⁴³⁶ Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) first met the Queen of Elfame when she was in childbed.⁴³⁷ Robert Kirk tells the story of a woman taken in childbed. An image of her was left behind which was buried but after two years the woman came back. She said she could not see anything when she was with the fairies until she anointed her eyes with an unguent she found. But when her hosts found out they made her blind with a puff of their breath. The place where she was taken was full of light and very spacious.⁴³⁸ Kirk also wrote that 'women are yet alive who tell they were taken away when in Child-bed to nurse Fayrie Children ... When the Child is wained, the nurse or dies, or is convey'd back, or gets it to her choice to stay there'.⁴³⁹ Similarly, Janet Drever (Orkney 1615) was found 'giltie of the fostering of ane bairne in the hill of Westray to the fary folk'.⁴⁴⁰ Barbria Parish (Linlithgow 1647) said the good neighbours wanted her to nurse one of their offspring. Babria told them to as one of her neighbours but the woman did not want to go with them so her child was killed.⁴⁴¹ Barbara Bowndie (Orkney 1644) stated that she 'became speechless and so remained for the space of 24 houres ... and the people said, that she had been with the Farie' but she denied that.⁴⁴² Similarly, Finwell Hyndman (Bute 1650) confessed that she disappeared for 24 hours every quarter and people later said she went with the fairies at these times.⁴⁴³

One of the worst things which could happen to humans taken by fairies was that they were used as a teind to Hell. In Scotland, the teind was the tenth part of a person's income which was levied by ecclesiastical authorities. The fact that the Church grew gradually richer while the people became poorer, was bitterly resented. People could, therefore, understand but also feared the idea that fairies had to sacrifice annually one tenth of their kind to Hell. It was believed that the Queen of Fairies sometimes beseeched the Devil to suspend the teind. But there was also the idea that human adults and children were stolen to save their own population and to serve a sacrificial purpose.⁴⁴⁴ Alesoun Peirson (Fife 1588) was warned by her dead cousin William Sympsoun before she was carried away by the good neighbours to 'middil-eird' who usually come after whirlwinds. He told her 'that scho be nocht tane away with thame agane; for the teynd of thame gais ewerie year to hell.'⁴⁴⁵

⁴³⁶ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 79-80; Purkiss, "Losing Babies," 151.

⁴³⁷ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 56-7.

⁴³⁸ Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 88-9.

⁴³⁹ Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 81.

⁴⁴⁰ *Court Books of Orkney and Shetland*, 19.

⁴⁴¹ SSW; CH2/467/1, 77-8.

⁴⁴² SSW; CH2/1082/1/255.

⁴⁴³ SSW.

⁴⁴⁴ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 80-1.

⁴⁴⁵ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 164.

Fairies were especially feared for stealing new-born babies and exchanging them for one of their own kind to be nursed by the human mother. Babies who suddenly changed their behaviour or stopped growing were suspected to be changelings. Similar beliefs were spread not only across Europe but worldwide and childbirth was a time of great anxiety in traditional societies. The changeling phenomenon is, perhaps, understandable given the high infant mortality of roughly one in four between 1600 and 1800 and the risk for the mother. Since men were usually not allowed to attend these occasions authorities were worried about the process of childbirth. Midwives were sometimes distrusted by the Church as they might kill the baby after birth and give it to the Devil. Kramer and Sprenger thought that God allowed the Devil to take mortal children to punish the parents for their sins. The English term 'changeling' first appears in the 16th century denoting some kind of waverer or turncoat. There are some references in witchcraft trials to changelings dealing with ways to get rid of the fairy. It was a widespread belief that fairies could be cured if they were left alone in the wild over night or the fairy could be scared away with fire.⁴⁴⁶

Several witchcraft trials refer to healing children who were blasted by fairies. Jonet Boyman (Ayr 1572) foretold the death of a baby. She said the mother did not look well after it and when the 'selly wichts' found the baby unbaptized they gave it a blast of evil wind and it died.⁴⁴⁷ Thome Reid helped Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) to cure a baby which was 'elf-grippit' and therefore taken away by an evil blast of wind. He gave her an herb and told her how to cure it.⁴⁴⁸ Issobell Haldane (Perth 1623) was consulted by several persons who did not know that she was a witch to heal babies which got 'ane dint of ill wind'. Janet Jackson followed Issobell's advice 'to go silent (secretly) to the Well of Ruthven, and silent back again with water to wash her bairn ... the said Isabell brought the water, and washed the bairn therewith ... and also that she put the bairn through ane cake made of nine carnes (pickles) of meal gotten from women married madens'.⁴⁴⁹ Janet Trall (Perth 1623) also cured a baby who 'had gotten a dint of evil wind'. She told the mother

to cause two persons to go down to south running water, and to bringing the water, and that after the bairn was washed, and they should carry back again the water with the bairns sark, and cast them in to the place where the water had been taken up. She farther directed her to bathe the bairn with black wool and butter.

On another occasion, a man came to her who also 'had gotten a dint of ill wind'. Janet said 'she had washed him with south running water, and put him through a hesp of green yarn'.⁴⁵⁰ Stein Maltman/Steven Malcolme (Stirling 1628) cured a woman who 'had gotten ane blast of an evill wind'

⁴⁴⁶ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 94-7; Institoris, *Malleus Maleficarum*, 373; Miller, *Magic and Witchcraft*, 28; Purkiss, "Losing Babies," 151-3.

⁴⁴⁷ JC26/1/67.

⁴⁴⁸ *Criminal Trials*, vol.1, part II, 53.

⁴⁴⁹ *Miscellany of the Spottiswoode Society*, vol. 2, 305.

⁴⁵⁰ *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, xi-xii.

by sending her to the place where she got the disease where she had to pray to 'god and all vneardly creatures'.⁴⁵¹ Jonet Miller (Kirkcudbright 1658) diagnosed a child with 'Ferrie blast'. To cure the child it had to sit between three fires. She also used a ritual with smoke and fire against bewitchment. Isobell Bennet (Stirling 1659) also knew a cure for blasted people: she washed them with water from the hollow ground after an ebb in the sea with a quantity of meal and straw placed in the four corners of the bed.⁴⁵² Jonet Morisone (Bute 1662) confessed that she made a pact with the Devil and healed several people who were 'blasted with the fairyres' with herbs. She also said that the Devil once told her that the fairies took away the life of a child.⁴⁵³

Other trials refer more explicitly to changelings and healing of children. Issobell Watsonne (Stirling 1590) said that the fairies offered her food when she met them, but she refused it. Thereafter her husband took ill and her baby was replaced by a changeling. She refused to feed the changeling and threw it in the fire. Then she promised to serve the 'fair folk' in return for her child.⁴⁵⁴ Elspit Scot (Linlithgow 1612) also said her own child was taken by the fairies.⁴⁵⁵ Janet Trall (Perth 1623) stated that Issobell Haldane and Duncan Tawis came to her house and told her of a baby whom they thought was taken away. When she came to the baby, 'she took the bairn upon the knee before the fire, drew every finger of its hands, and every toe of its feet, mumbling all the while some words that could not be heard, and immediately the bairn was cured.'⁴⁵⁶ Margaret Dicksone (Haddington 1643) confessed that she used eggs and meal to cure a changeling child. She told the father to place the bread and eggs before the fire and his daughter behind it. At midnight, he went nine times around the house and ordered the spirit to depart in the name of the Devil. If the child was cured the bread would be gone. Margaret later stated that he performed it wrong and that she told him to go three times around the house at 10 o'clock. She also washed a baby and its shirt with south-running water twice. But when it was not cured she told the mother to throw it into the fire because it was not hers. Instead, the mother blessed it and the baby recovered. Another time she used fire to identify a changeling who was 'ane hundred years old'.⁴⁵⁷ Martin Martin said that he was told that

fire-round was an effectual means to preserve both the mother and the infant from the power of evil spirits, who are ready at such times to do mischief, and sometimes carry away the infant; and when they get them once in their possession, return them poor meagre skeletons: and these infants are said to have voracious appetites, constantly craving for meat. In this case it was usual with those who believed that their children were

⁴⁵¹ Hall, "Trial of Stein Maltman," 21.

⁴⁵² SSW.

⁴⁵³ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 22-4.

⁴⁵⁴ SSW; CH2/722/2/23-4.

⁴⁵⁵ SSW.

⁴⁵⁶ *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, xii.

⁴⁵⁷ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 96-7; SSW.

thus taken away, to dig a grave in the fields upon quarter day, and there to lay the fairy skeleton till next morning; at which time the parents went to the place, where they doubted not to find their own child instead of this skeleton.⁴⁵⁸

Margaret Reid (Lanark 1644) put a newly born baby through a green yarn to protect it. She also charmed a new-born child by laying it on the ground and passing certain objects above it. Then she carried it anti-clockwise 'whitheshenes' around the mother. Then she gave the baby to the mother and went anti-clockwise with a candle around the bed while mumbling some words.⁴⁵⁹ Other children were left at wells overnight. There were several wells where the sick could be cured. The affected parts of the body or a cloth were dipped into a well and hung on nearby bushes or trees. Sometimes people were only cured after the cloth was deteriorated. The effectiveness of such proceedings was best before sunrise on Beltane (1 May). Furthermore, newborns could be passed through smoke to protect them from evil. During childbirth a nail or piece of iron, a Bible, some bead or the father's breeks could be put in childbed. Newborns were immediately wrapped in clothing where sometimes amber beads or other charms were sewn into the seams. Similar practices were used in royal childbeds where saintly relics were put. Until the birth of James V, the chemise of St Margaret was used by expectant queens in childbed. Furthermore, women in labour invoked names of saints to protect themselves and their babies.⁴⁶⁰ The belief in changelings slowly started to disappear after the Reformation and during the 17th century but there were still some instances of it during the 19th century.⁴⁶¹

Another common belief was that fairies used weapons like elf arrowheads or fairy darts to harm humans and animals. Some accused witches could identify victims who were elf-shot and there are some references in trials that animals were shot dead which could mean that they were attacked by a sudden illness or by a fairy dart. Also, some protective charms against elf-shots were recorded in the trials.⁴⁶² Robert Kirk wrote that the fairies have no weapons of iron but of stone and that he saw animals being wounded by them and he held such weapons in his own hands. According to him fairies attack cows and animals which are said to be 'Elf-shot' and that they can be healed by finding the wound and putting a finger into the hole.⁴⁶³ Alaric Hall analysed the semantics of terms like 'elf-shot' and 'elf-arrow-heid' in the Scottish witchcraft trials and argued that not all of these terms refer to supernatural harm caused by projectiles. He states that the phrase 'to schute to dede' merely means 'to die suddenly' and it may be referring to witchcraft but not necessarily to a fairy blast.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁵⁸ Martin, *Description*, 178.

⁴⁵⁹ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 157.

⁴⁶⁰ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 97-100.

⁴⁶¹ Miller, *Magic and Witchcraft*, 28-9.

⁴⁶² Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 77-8.

⁴⁶³ Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 83-4.

⁴⁶⁴ Hall, "Getting Shot," 19-28.

Bartie Patersoune (Edinburgh 1607) identified diverse shots which could befall animals and could be cured by her while she did not mention elves. She charmed cattle 'for arrow-schot, for dor-schot, for wondo-schot, for ey-schot, for tung-schot, for lever-schot, for lung-schot, for hert-schot, all the maist, in the name of the Father, the Sone and Haly Gaist. AMEN'.⁴⁶⁵ John Brughe (Kinross 1643) took revenge on someone who called him a witch. He caused two of his plough horses and his best oxen to be 'schuit to dead'.⁴⁶⁶ Meriorie Mutche (Aberdeen 1597) caused a man to be 'schot in his syde' and thereafter he fell deadly ill, but she also does not mention fairies.⁴⁶⁷ On the other hand, the term 'elf-shot' can refer to a sudden sharp pain caused by fairies but does not depend upon the use of projectiles. Hall argues that the term 'elf-grippit' occurring in the case of Bessie Dunlop can be seen as a parallel term to 'elf-shot'.⁴⁶⁸ Bessie (Ayr 1576) said she cured a baby which 'was tane away with ane evill blast of wind, or elf-grippit'.⁴⁶⁹ Hall found six witchcraft trials between 1576 and 1716 referring to ailments which were caused by fairies. However, the implication of the use of projectiles can only be found after 1650. Not only the case of Bessie Dunlop but also those of Agnes Sampson and Steven Malcolme leave no hint for projectiles.⁴⁷⁰ Agnes Sampson (Edinburgh 1591) diagnosed the illness of a man who was 'elf-schot' while she also cured a man who was bewitched by a 'blast of ewill wind' on Halloween.⁴⁷¹ Steven Malcolme/Stein Maltman (Stirling 1628) healed a 'fairies schott' by giving his patient some south-running water which was heated and into which he put an 'Elff arrow stone' to drink. He also healed blasts of evil wind and illnesses caused by fairies with other rituals including the drawing of swords or praying to 'all wnearthliche wights'.⁴⁷² Later witchcraft trials including those of Joanet and Jeane Scott (Paisley 1650) and that of Farquar Ferguson (Arran 1716) refer to holes being caused by elf-shots. Farquar Ferguson, for example, searched people for shot holes and cured them with herbs. He learned this method from watching people on the mainland perform this procedure on cattle. He healed his own child in this fashion.⁴⁷³ Ultimately, the ascription of illnesses to fairies situated the causes for misfortunes in a powerful group outside the human society. At the same time it gave the healer unique powers to protect the community. Thus, the charmer acquired a marginal position between in-group and out-group by showing solidarity with the victim but also having contact with the liminal world of fairies.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁶⁵ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 2, 536.

⁴⁶⁶ SJC, vol. 3, 599.

⁴⁶⁷ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 131.

⁴⁶⁸ Hall, "Getting Shot," 23-6.

⁴⁶⁹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II 53.

⁴⁷⁰ Hall, "Getting Shot," 25-8.

⁴⁷¹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 231, 233.

⁴⁷² Hall, "Trial of Stein Maltman," 18, 21-4.

⁴⁷³ Hall, "Trial of Stein Maltman," 25; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 79.

⁴⁷⁴ Hall, "Getting Shot," 27-8.

Witches, *maleficium*, and Fairy-Related Bewitchment

As has been demonstrated, witches had similar occult powers as charmers but they used them mainly to harm other people. King James argued that with God's permission, the Devil could help witches to perform various acts of *maleficium*.⁴⁷⁵ He stated that witches can

make men or women to love or hate other ... they can lay the sickness of one upon another ... They can bewitch and take the life of men or women by roasting pictures ... They can raise storms and tempest in the air either upon sea or land ... They can make folks to become frantic or maniac ... They can make spirits either to follow and trouble persons, or haunt certain houses and affray oftentimes the inhabitants ... And likewise they can make some to be possessed with spirits, and so to become demoniacs ... there are three kinds of folks whom God will permit so to be tempted or troubled: the wicked for their horrible sins, to punish them in the like measure; the godly that are sleeping in any great sins or infirmities and weakness in faith, to waken them up the faster by such an uncouth form; and even some of the best, that their patience may be tried before the world.⁴⁷⁶

Misfortunes and illnesses could be explained during the Early Modern period mainly through two concepts. The first explanation was that of natural philosophy which emerged from Greek antiquity and attributed misfortunes to an imbalance and disharmony within the body, the state or the sky. The second was a religious explanation which argued that God was an active force within the world who could reward the faithful and punish the sinful either himself or by allowing the Devil to do so with plagues and famines. Both systems lacked any true logical coherence and could easily incorporate witchcraft and the power of the Devil. Misfortunes without any known cause and which were not routine but strange and unnatural were often attributed to witchcraft. The idea that misfortunes could be a test of faith and the Devil acted only with divine permission, led to the paradox that witches became agents of God by inflicting trials on the faithful which God wanted them to undergo.⁴⁷⁷

Witches were often thought to acquire the power to harm by becoming a servant of the Devil. However, it was usually the witches decision whom to harm.⁴⁷⁸ There was great confusion about the real power witches possessed. Some demonologists argued that the Devil only made them believe that they could harm while others mostly switched 'between treating witches as independent actors, whose power was inherent to them personally, and suggesting that they were helpless tools of Satan'. Witches were thought to form an alliance with the Devil after they quarrelled with someone and their master helped them with physical revenge. This idea contains the implication that

⁴⁷⁵ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 393.

⁴⁷⁶ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 394-6.

⁴⁷⁷ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 63, 69-70, 125-6; Porter, *Kunst des Heilens*, 9; Porter, *In Sickness and in Health*, 168; Wear, "Medicine in Early Modern Europe," 240, 242.

⁴⁷⁸ Miller, *Magic and Witchcraft*, 90; Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 94.

the Devil only had powers over other creatures with the help of the witch whose acts were based on envy and ill-will. Without witches, the Devil could only cause illusions.⁴⁷⁹

The most serious outcome of witchcraft was murder. It could either be intentional, for political reasons or to take revenge. It could be accidental caused by the transfer of an illness onto another person. In some cases, only the evil will against another person could be deadly.⁴⁸⁰ Ewfame Mackalzane (Edinburgh 1591) was accused of poisoning her husband, the bewitching of two children who died and for consulting Agnes Sampson (Edinburgh 1591) to kill her father-in-law with a picture of wax.⁴⁸¹ Agnes Sampson (Edinburgh 1591) herself confessed that the Earl of Bothwell came to her and wanted her to ask her spirit how long King James VI would live and what would happen after his death. Then her familiar tried to kill the king but it did not work since as Agnes stated '*Il est home de Dieu.*' Besides she was accused of charming and killing horses and cattle.⁴⁸² Bessie Thom (Aberdeen 1597) was accused of murdering her husband with a devilish drink and for bewitching someone else.⁴⁸³ Margaret Jackson, Annabell Stewart, John Stewart and Bessie Weir (all Renfrew 1677) were accused of meeting near the house of George Maxwell of Pollock and roasting images of wax and clay formed by the Devil; Pollock subsequently died.⁴⁸⁴

Witches used a variety of spells, charms, rituals, potions and curses forming a combination of visual, operative and oral features to harm. They could cause *maleficium* through simple touch and the emanation of their evil spirit by breathing or glancing at the victim. The evil eye could be sent voluntarily or involuntarily.⁴⁸⁵ Words and actions carried out in a certain manner were often more important than objects in witchcraft. Prayers and conjurations were recited a fixed number of times and a particular direction and were a command rather than a request. Words would be used as a curse to attack others and women were often experts in verbal insults. Church records are full of cursing, arguing and verbal disputes and most of them were treated as private disputes rather than witchcraft. The methods used to bewitch others involved sympathy and contiguity as the objects used often represented the victim or had some physical connection to the victim. Water could represent hail or storm while wax figures could represent a person. Hair and nail clippings had physical contact with a person and could be used to harm them. Stones, pieces of meat or knots could be used to cause *maleficium*. Witches also made potions of herbs, plants and animal parts.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁷⁹ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbors*, 104-6.

⁴⁸⁰ Miller, *Magic and Witchcraft*, 94-8.

⁴⁸¹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 250-3.

⁴⁸² *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 230, 238.

⁴⁸³ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 166.

⁴⁸⁴ RPC, 3rd series, vol. 5, 95, 104.

⁴⁸⁵ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 111, 113; Miller, *Magic and Witchcraft*, 90; Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 402-4.

⁴⁸⁶ Miller, *Magic and Witchcraft*, 90-4.

Several Scottish witches used to quarrel with their victims. They hurt them by performing rituals or through their inherent evil powers. Margrat Og (Aberdeen 1597) was accused of bewitching and casting sickness upon people and killing cows and oxen by bewitchment. When someone wanted to borrow green yarn from her and she refused, the person got a deadly disease. Once she made a ritual and cut a ribbon into nine pieces and put them under the door of her victim. In the same year ten or twelve oxen belonging to the man died. She was also accused of causing illness after a dispute about debt.⁴⁸⁷ Elizabeth Bathgate (Berwick 1634) was accused of cursing and *maleficium*. Once she quarrelled with someone and later his child died. Another person 'called her a witch, and she running after him to strike him for it, and he outrunning her, she cried in a fury' and bewitched him to become a cripple and impotent. She was also said to have been at a sabbath meeting where she wanted the other witches to kill a baby. When the others refused, she did it herself.⁴⁸⁸ Margaret Finlasoun (Renfrew 1650) had a dispute with someone and cursed her victim. Later she gave the person a drink and the disease continued for half a year and then the person died. When a child once took a green yarn from her it became ill. Another time, Margaret took someone by the hand on Whitsunday and then the person contracted a disease and died. When Margaret's baby was baptised one of her guests at the feast got ill afterwards. Margaret and her mother had ill fame and she seems to have had a lot of disputes with her neighbours.⁴⁸⁹ Some witches caused demonic possessions. Margaret Lang (Renfrew 1697) was one of the Renfrewshire witches of 1697 and one of seven who were tried out of more than twenty-eight accused. She and her companions were accused of holding witches' meetings and roasting wax images to torment Christian Shaw and other young people who were possessed by the Devil.⁴⁹⁰

Witches not only bewitched humans, but also animals and livestock. Isobel Cockie (Aberdeen 1597) bewitched 'milknes, butter, and cheiss' on a Sunday before Fastings Eve. She was accused of bewitching food for animals, killing a horse and cursing someone on Whitsunday who became poor afterwards.⁴⁹¹ Agnes Wobster (Aberdeen 1597) was accused that 'scho tuik away the milk fra the kow' when the cow's owner refused to give her some milk.⁴⁹² The Devil and his witches also influenced the fertility of crops. Katherin Gibb (Edinburgh 1649) said the Devil met a group of people who were ploughing and promised them good crop for the year.⁴⁹³ Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) confessed taking away the fruit of the land as well as praying for fertility while she learned several charms from the Devil. Besides she stated that she took the milk of cows and sheep and that she

⁴⁸⁷ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 142-5.

⁴⁸⁸ *Miscellany of the Spottiswoode Society*, vol. 2, 64-6.

⁴⁸⁹ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 211-7.

⁴⁹⁰ SSW.

⁴⁹¹ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 111-2.

⁴⁹² *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 128.

⁴⁹³ SSW.

made a picture of clay together with others to kill the male children of Laird of Parkis.⁴⁹⁴ Similarly, Jonet Braidheid (Nairn 1662) confessed to using charms to take away the corn and kill a horse, cattle, sheep and other animals of a man. She said it was the first thing she did together with her husband and his mother after they introduced her to the craft.⁴⁹⁵ With the help of the Devil, witches like John Stewart (Ayr 1618) could sink ships⁴⁹⁶ and found other ways to influence contemporary economy. Issobell Oige (Aberdeen 1597) was accused of having learned enchantments from Satan. With his help, she could control the wind and she enchanted cloth in a devilish way so that it would sell good on the market.⁴⁹⁷

The Devil regularly provided witches with powders and potions while witches could also make them independently or with others at the sabbath. In sabbath accounts, those powders could include quite shocking ingredients such as the bodies of stillborn babies, stolen hosts or toad venom. Powders could be used to bewitch humans or animals, they could kill or make ill and some powders provided by the Devil could also be used to heal others.⁴⁹⁸ James argues that the Devil taught the witches at their meetings various ways to harm others for,

he causeth them to joint dead corpses and to make powders thereof, mixing such other things there amongst as he gives unto them ... To such others at these times he teacheth how to make pictures of wax or clay, that by the roasting thereof the persons that they bear the name of may be continually melted or dried way by continual sickness. To some he gives such stones or powders as will help to cure or cast on diseases. And to some he teacheth kinds of uncouth poisons which mediciners understand not.⁴⁹⁹

Several Scottish witches confessed that they used to dig up corpses at their meetings. Agnes Sampson (Edinburgh 1591) stated that the Devil commanded her and others at one of their meetings at the North Berwick Kirk to open up graves within and outside the Kirk. The Devil wanted them to make powder out of the corpses to harm others.⁵⁰⁰ Similarly, the charmer John Brughe (Kinross 1643) was accused of digging up 'severall dead cops' along with other witches at a sabbath meeting to use their flesh to kill cattle and animals.⁵⁰¹ Margaret Watsoun (Lanark 1644) confessed that she together with 'ane great multitude did lift corpses of deceissit persones' and took parts of them to kill people.⁵⁰² Furthermore, Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) stated that she and other witches 'raised an vnchristened child owt of its greaff' at the Kirk of Nairn. They took body parts, hacked them into

⁴⁹⁴ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 603, 605, 607, 609, 611, 614, 615.

⁴⁹⁵ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 616-8.

⁴⁹⁶ RPC, vol. 11, 367, 401.

⁴⁹⁷ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 151-2.

⁴⁹⁸ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 111-112.

⁴⁹⁹ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 392-3.

⁵⁰⁰ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 239.

⁵⁰¹ SJC, vol. 3, 601.

⁵⁰² RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 150.

small pieces, and put them on the land of their intended victim 'and thereby took away the fruit of his corns'.⁵⁰³ Witches were not only believed to use dead children to make their potions, but there is evidence that they also tried to steal children. Jonet Miller (Linlithgow 1661) said that she and a group of witches blew up a locked door and wanted to take a woman's newborn baby during her lying in period, but they had no power to take it away.⁵⁰⁴ The idea of the witch killing or eating babies has been interpreted as the inversion of the normal pattern of motherhood.⁵⁰⁵ But it may be also related to the idea that bones and things in contact with the dead could have healing powers if the person did not die prematurely.⁵⁰⁶ Since babies clearly died before their time this principle could have been inverted and witches could use their corpses to harm others. Probably the idea of the witch digging up children's corpses or stealing newborn babies is also connected with fairies belief since fairies have a strong connection with ghosts and the dead and they often steal human babies.

A better example for the incorporation of fairy belief into witchcraft beliefs is the fact that elf-arrow-heids were not only linked to fairies but also witches. Elf-shots were mainly associated with fairies attacking humans, but also witches could cause them. Some witches confessed that they shot their victims meaning that they were attacked by a sudden illness rather than the involvement of projectiles. These confessions suggest that the attacks being caused by elves were transferred onto the human witch.⁵⁰⁷ Not only John Brughe (Kinross 1643) and Meriorie Mutche (Aberdeen 1597) caused humans and animals to be shot dead.⁵⁰⁸ Also Katharine Oswald (Edinburgh 1629) said that one of the horses of a man she hated was 'shot to deid' by her while Margaret Finlasoun (Renfrew 1650) quarrelled with someone who then got a 'blast of wind' and could not speak any more.⁵⁰⁹ Alaric Hall argued that terms like 'elf-arrow-stones', 'elf-stones' and 'elf-arrow-heids' in the Scottish witchcraft trials referring to Neolithic arrow-heids were linked to fairies and witches. Unlike the compounds 'elf-shot' and 'elf-grippet' referring to humans healing harms done by fairies, these terms are connected to the human witches' *maleficium*. Hall states that the link between elf-arrow-heids and *maleficium* is already present in 1590 and therefore the two systems of attributing illnesses to fairies or witches coexisted for some time. However, the trials between 1659-1662 show that terms like 'elf-arrow-heid' refer to more direct by witches and more obvious physical consequences and they were supplied by familiars or the Devil himself.⁵¹⁰ Elf-arrow-heids were already present in the trials of Christiane Roiss (Ross and Cromarty 1577), Marion Neyne McAlester and Katherine Ross (both Ross and Cromarty 1590) who tried to kill Robert Monro, the Lord of Fowlis. Together they

⁵⁰³ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 603.

⁵⁰⁴ SSW.

⁵⁰⁵ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 241.

⁵⁰⁶ Wilson, *Magical Universe*, 356.

⁵⁰⁷ Hall, "Getting Shot," 19-34.

⁵⁰⁸ SJC, vol. 3, 599 (John Brughe); *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 131 (Meriorie Mutche).

⁵⁰⁹ SJC, vol. 1, 137 (Katharine Oswald); RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 215 (Margaret Finlasoun).

⁵¹⁰ Hall, "Getting Shot," 21-33.

made a picture of clay depicting the lord and then they shot it twelve times with an 'elf-arrow-heid'. Katherine Ross also confessed that she 'wald gang in Hillis to speik the elf folk' to inquire what some other victims of them would do in the future. Probably she also got her elf-arrow-heids from the fairies which she and her companions either directly shot at their victims or at their pictures of clay.⁵¹¹ Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) confessed that she saw elf-arrow-heids being made when she was with the elves: 'As for Elf-arrow-heidis, THE DIVELL shapes them with his awin hand, [and syne deliueris thame] to Elf-boyes, who whyttis and dightis them with a sharp thing lyk a paking needle; ... Quhen THE DIVELL giwes them to ws, he says, 'SHOOT thes in my name, And they sall not goe heal hame!'⁵¹² The witches used to shoot them in the name of the Devil thus killing humans and animals and there was no cure for such an attack. In a later confession, she stated that she regretted killing several persons by shooting them with arrows from the Devil.⁵¹³ Jonet Morisone (Bute 1662) confessed that she could heal people who were 'blasted with the fairyres' with the help of the Devil. On the other hand, she also 'blasted [a man] with ane evil ey' and 'shoot to deid' other victims. When she was asked about the difference between shooting and blasting she said

that quhen they are shott ther is no recoverie for it and if thy shott be in the heart they died presently bot if it be not at the heart they will die in a while with it yet will at last die with it and that blasting is a whirlwind that the fayries raises about that persone quhich they intend to wrong and that tho ther were tuintie present yet it will harme none bot him qhwhom they were set for; quhich may be healed two ways ether by herbs or by charming and that all that whirlwind gathers in the body till one place if it be taken in time it is the easier healed and if they get no meanes they will shirpe away.⁵¹⁴

Margaret McWilliam (Bute 1662) was threatened by poverty after losing her horse and cow when the Devil appeared to her and demanded the life of her seven-year old son William in return for his help. Then 'he gave her ane elf errow stone to shott him which she did then dayes thereafter that the child dyed imediately thereafter which grieved her most of anything that ever she did.'⁵¹⁵ Hall argues that there was a shift from an older belief-system, when fairies represented an external independent threat whose attacks were countered by healers coming from within the community, to a new idea that witches being part of the human society shot elf-arrows themselves. This also implied that in the former system, the fairies as source for illnesses could not be eliminated and the folk healer was the only one who could heal illnesses caused by these supernatural entities. In order to get rid of the sources of harm, the community would identify witches as their cause for they could be punished or

⁵¹¹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 192-9.

⁵¹² *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 607.

⁵¹³ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 607, 609, 611, 615.

⁵¹⁴ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 22-27.

⁵¹⁵ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 19.

killed. These changes presumably took place because of the pressures of the witch panics and the Church to demonize fairy and healing beliefs.⁵¹⁶

Conclusion

Ultimately, Scottish charmers represented an integral part of the medical marketplace. They were respected for their skills especially among the populace living in rural areas but also members of the elite and people living in towns consulted them. Charmers could be male or female and offered a wide range of services such as the healing of fairy-inflicted injuries by performing elaborate rituals including various objects, gestures and Christian prayers. Folk healers but also ordinary persons, who had a basic understanding of medicine, could perform simpler treatments including herbs and minerals. Besides, maleficent witches could use similar rituals as charmers to perform harmful magic which could also be activated through their inherent evil power to curse or give people the evil eye. While the populace accepted that charmers, as well as fairies, ghosts, or spirits who could bestow healers with skills like healing or divination had an ambiguous morality, the Protestant authorities interpreted all magic, no matter if good or bad, as demonic. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of witchcraft trials has shown that there was a shift in the belief system of Scottish society from the ambiguous charmer contacting fairies and ghosts to the maleficent witch in league with the Devil. When *maleficium* became increasingly important in the trials, human witches could adopt ways to harm people from the fairies such as the shooting of elf-arrow-heids or blasting humans and animals. Furthermore, the witch-hunts cannot be seen as a campaign of male doctors or the Church to eradicate female healers and their superstitions since they were valuable and well-respected members of the medical marketplace. However, charmers and folk healers could put themselves into danger of being accused as witches since their abilities to heal or harm and the transfer diseases could have been interpreted as *maleficium* while their connection to fairies or similar spirits could be seen by authorities as demonic pact.

⁵¹⁶ Hall, "Getting shot," 32-33.

Chapter Three

The Interface between Fairies, Witches, and the Devil in the Context of the Demonic Pact and the Witches' Sabbath

This chapter analyses how new ideas about the Devil, the demonic pact, the witches' sabbath and their flight which primarily interested the learned elite including rulers, magistrates, judges, lawyers, theologians, and scholars evolved. The first section of the chapter gives an overview how these beliefs emerged and were fused on the European continent. The second part concentrates on how they came to Scotland and which characteristic features they developed there. It will be argued that fairy belief was not only influential in the emergence of these new ideas but also in the adoption of them into the Scottish witchcraft trials.

The Cumulative Concept of Witchcraft

In order for large-scale witch-hunts to take place, it was not enough to believe that witches practiced magic to harm their neighbours. As a necessary pre-condition for the hunts, the ruling European elites had to subscribe to the diabolical theory which meant that large numbers of witches rejected the Christian faith and belonged to an organised conspiratorial sect of Devil-worshippers undermining Christian civilization.⁵¹⁷ By the end of the 16th century, educated Europeans believed that witches not only performed *maleficia* but also diabolic activities including a face-to-face pact with the Devil and that they gathered periodically with other witches to worship him.⁵¹⁸

A typical narrative sequence of a European witchcraft confession between the late 15th and 17th centuries started with the witch encountering the Devil which happened at a moment of great distress when the witch was alone and in trouble. The Devil appeared in corporeal form usually as a man and sometimes as an animal and offered the future witch material reward or sexual pleasures in exchange for a promise of obedience. Afterwards, the witch gave him or herself physically and spiritually over to the Devil. The witch had to renounce God and the Christian faith which sometimes happened in the form of a small ceremony where the witch was re-baptized by the Devil, paid homage to him by kissing his buttocks and got a mark as a sign of allegiance to him. The Devil not only demanded the soul of the witch, but this contract was also concealed physically through copulation with the future witch. This sexual act was typically described as unpleasant and the Devil as very cold. Although copulation was painful and the promised money seldom materialized, the pact was binding and it gave the witch power to harm by supernatural means, i.e. *maleficium*. After the pact, the Devil invited the witch to attend the sabbath where she or he was transported by unnatural

⁵¹⁷ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 31-2, 67; Willumsen, *Witches of the North*, 90-1.

⁵¹⁸ Joseph Klaits, *Servants of Satan: The Age of the Witch Hunts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 16-7; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 30.

means. At the sabbath, several witches gathered periodically to worship the Devil through a number of ritual acts which constituted an inversion of moral behaviour. Witches sometimes had to cover great distances in little time to attend these assemblies, sometimes flying to the sabbath by anointing themselves with magical salves, or by riding upon demonic rams, goats, pigs, oxen, black horses or sticks, shovels or broomsticks. In some accounts, they changed themselves into animals. Some witches placed sticks in their bed so that their sleeping spouses would not notice that they were gone. Others did not attend the sabbath physically but only went out in spirit so that their body was left behind in a trance-like state. There were ordinary sabbaths which could be held weekly in local churchyards, or on crossroads to which the witches could walk on foot. In some parts of Europe, it was believed that witches attended great ceremonies on famous mountains in faraway regions such as the German Brocken im Harz. The nocturnal gatherings were presided over by the Devil appearing in the shape of a man or monstrous being sitting on a high throne. Sabbath meetings could include rather harmless elements like eating, drinking, dancing and making merry but could also contain highly formalized parodies of the Christian Eucharistic celebration, naked dancing, sexual orgies or feasting on children killed by the witches beforehand.⁵¹⁹ Norman Cohn described a typical Black Mass as follows: First the witches knelt down before the Devil, repeated their renunciation of the Christian faith, and kissed him on the left foot, the genitals or the anus. Then they reported delinquent witches who were punished mostly through whipping and in Roman Catholic countries witches confessed their sins like attending the Church. Witches who missed the sabbath or performed insufficient *maleficia* were punished. This was followed by a parody of the divine service when the Devil preached a sermon and received offerings from the faithful. Afterwards, the witches would kiss his anus again he the Devil would give a parody of the Eucharist where the witches would get objects like the sole of a shoe. Then there would be a meal including rotten, foul food or the flesh of babies and a final orgiastic dance which would become an erotic orgy in which sodomy and incest were permitted. Finally, the Devil gave the witches instructions for performing *maleficia* against their neighbours.⁵²⁰ With the aid of the Devil, the witch would then commit offences against individuals,

⁵¹⁹ Behringer, *Chonrad Stoecklin*, 108; Bever, *Realities*, 65-189; Willem de Blécourt, "The Return of the Sabbat: Mental Archaeologies, Conjectural Histories or Political Mythologies?" in *Palgrave Advances in Witchcraft Historiography*, ed. Jonathan Barry and Owen Davies (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 128, 131; Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 144-6; Gustav Henningsen, "'The Ladies from Outside': An Archaic Pattern of the Witches' Sabbath," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft, Centres and Peripheries*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 195; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 30-1, 60; "Round-Table Discussion with Carlo Ginzburg, Gustave Henningsen, Éva Pócs, Giovanni Pizza and Gábor Klaniczay," in *Witchcraft Mythologies and Persecutions*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay and Éva Pócs (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008), 35-7; Robert Rowland, "'Fantastical and Devilish Persons': European Witch-Beliefs in Comparative Perspective," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft, Centres and Peripheries*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 161-9.

⁵²⁰ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 146-7.

property, the community, or religion in general. Witches attended sabbaths and performed *maleficia* for many years until they were eventually arrested.⁵²¹

Robert Rowland argued that witchcraft confessions were narratives which typically included three interdependent elements: apostasy, the sabbath and malefice. In this 'tripartite model' there is a clear opposition between the moral community and the otherworld as its abstract negation. While witches were removed from ordinary human community through the pact which constituted a rite of passage, they also remained a part of the community. Through the demonic pact, witches committed a religious apostasy placing themselves outside the Christian community through the renunciation of faith and a civil apostasy through copulation with the Devil as the non-human adversary of moral society. Similarly, the sabbath contained the ceremony of worshipping the Devil as an inversion of Christian mass as well as the inversion of normal forms of social intercourse like the feasting on human flesh or sexual inversions including sodomy, incest, homosexuality, and the copulation with demons. Through her connection with the anti-world of Satan, the witch has the power to perform harmful magic against members of the human community.⁵²² Brian Levack among others have analysed how the new ideas about the Devil, the demonic pact, the witches' sabbath and their flight developed and when they were fused together which is discussed in the following chapters.

The Devil

The Devil is a central figure in witchcraft since he is the source of the witches' occult powers, their partner in the pact as well as the object of their worship. There are few descriptions of Satan in the Old Testament since Judaism accepts only one god, Yahweh, who is the source of all good and evil phenomena in the world. In the Book of Job, he is described as obedient angel who is sent into the world by the Lord to test his human servants. In other Jewish texts, Satan is presented as a wicked spirit. It was not until the New Testament that the Devil obtained a more prominent role as ruler over an army of demons, tempter of Jesus, and enemy of Christendom. The kingdom of Satan was by then opposed to the kingdom of God and the Christians. The ideas of Jewish apocalyptic literature from the 2nd and 3rd centuries BC wherein angels rebelled against God and thus fell from heaven were adopted into the Book of Revelation in the New Testament during the 2nd century. The depiction of Satan and his angels as fallen angels thereafter provided the standard version of the Devil's origin. Already the early Christians reclassified morally neutral pagan spirits or emanations of the dead as wicked spirits and demons. The New Testament distinguished such spirits from Satan but together with him they were fused into a single confederacy. The Devil had various names in the Bible and appeared in the shape of various beasts including dragons, serpents, lions, calfs, an animal with a human face etc. He was called Satan, deriving from a Hebrew word for 'plotter' or 'adversery',

⁵²¹ Rowland, "Fantastical and Devilish Persons," 161.

⁵²² Rowland "Fantastical and Devilish Persons," 164-9, 177.

or Lucifer, recalling one of Gods archangels and bringer of light who was cast out of heaven and thereafter got his fallen image as being dark and black. The Devil had other names like Beelzebub, another opponent of God and lord of flies, Asmodeus, a prince of demons in Jewish demonology, Behemoth, a gigantic beast, Leviathan, a sea monster, or Belial, a demon associated with Satan. There were few visual illustrations of Satan before the 6th century and during the Middle Ages there was no standard for his depiction. Some medieval images show him in human form but mostly he is pictured as a beast or combination of beasts representing descriptions in various theological sources. He is often illustrated as black, being the colour of sin, winged, symbolizing his status as fallen angel, and with horns, tails, scaly-skinned, and hooves, and also often as dragon, insect or fly. Since pagan gods were demonised as devils and demons during the expansion of Christendom, visual representations of them were also projected upon the Devil. Depictions of the Devil as goat, with hooves, horns, naked and in half-animal form reflect ideas about the Greek and Roman god Pan and Celtic Cernunnos while illustrations of the devil with breasts show his association with the antique goddess Diana.⁵²³

The works of St. Augustine build the standard framework for medieval demonism. His Devil is an archetypical sinner, who fell from heaven to make war against God. He is also the serpent of Eden, who brought sin and death to the world. He is dark and cold, living in the hearts of men and leading them astray. Gregory the Great described the Devil as cunning deceiver and master psychologist. To him, the voices of God and the Devil could speak to anyone. The medieval concept of the Devil was fluid, accepting a single spirit of wickedness alongside numerous lesser demons, all of whom expressing the will of their master and sometimes assumed his identity. This was a reflection of the various ways how ordinary people understood the Devil. There were various local variations of depicting the Devil. Devils and demons were believed to haunt particular places. Evil spirits lurked near gallows, crossroads, and on uncultivated land bordering human settlements. These ideas contrasted with the highly spiritualized views of the evil one in official theology. Scholastics argued that the Devil and his demons were pure spiritual beings without any corporeal manifestation. The Devil could possess humans and animals and create illusions like the ideas that humans could transfer into animals or fly. However, the Devil could not work wonders or manipulate the physical world. He needed the permission of God for everything he did and was, therefore, still under his command and not equal to God. Alongside such theoretical speculations of theologians, the Church offered protection against evil forces with the help of relics and rituals and incorporated diverse supernatural agents such as ghosts, saints, and angels into traditional ideas of evil spirits. It was

⁵²³ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 32-4; P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Satan: A Biography* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2008), 19-25; Joyce Miller, "Men in Black: Appearances of the Devil in Early Modern Scottish Witchcraft Discourse," in *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Julian Goodare et. al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 146-7; Darren Oldridge, *The Devil: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 21-3; Jeffrey B. Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 62-87.

perhaps inevitable that the integration of various religious thoughts and plurality of ideas about salvation created tensions within the Christian community. From the 11th century onwards, heretical sects spread in Europe which were repressed most violently by Christian orthodoxy. The most extreme group were the Cathars whose communities spread in Italy and southern France during the 12th and 13th centuries. They adopted the gnostic idea that the world was created by an evil deity who was caught in an eternal battle against God. To them, all flesh was wicked and the soul could only be freed by the renunciation of the material world. During the late 12th century, the inquisition was established to convert them and put those to the stake who would not. Heretic sects and other supposed manifestations of demonic power in the world like the Black death, economic crises, the trauma of reformation, frequent wars and plagues, reinforced the idea that the Devil was an omnipresent power of evil in the world. Although the monstrous devil did not disappear, anxieties about the destruction of the world and also witchcraft became stronger. The Devil was not only the antithesis of Christ, but also of God and the godly monarch and a source for false religion.⁵²⁴

The Protestant reformers similarly questioned the authority of orthodox theology, but their advancement led to a permanent division of the Church after the 1520s. Unlike the Cathars, Protestants did not challenge the orthodox theology of Satan but the Reformation led to an increasing awareness of his power in the world and it moved the centre of his activities into the human mind. There was a demonization process on each side since Catholics and Protestants thought the Devil had deceived their opponents. By the 1550s, both sides thought that Satan had set up his own church in Europe and these ideas encouraged the proliferation of demonic tracts and pamphlets which was accelerated by the invention of printing during the middle of the 15th century. Furthermore, Luther argued that all men and women participated in the struggle between good and evil forces. According to Protestants, the believers had direct contact to God and also to the Devil and could talk to them. The Reformers stripped away the traditional protections against evil forces such as relics, sanctified objects and saints. Consequently, only faith in God's mercy refreshed by the study of the Bible could save a Protestant from the power of the Devil.⁵²⁵

The Demonic Pact

By the early 16th century, the idea that witches made a pact with the Devil was becoming well-established among the European elite. It was the basis for the judicial definition of a witch and represented a connection between harmful magic performed by a witch and the collective worship of the Devil. The idea of the demonic pact reflected certain aspects of popular magic and could also be adopted independently from the idea of the witches' sabbath. In England, it was related to the

⁵²⁴ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 34-6, 65; Oldridge, *Devil*, 27-33, 35-6.

⁵²⁵ Oldridge, *Devil*, 31-6. Jeffrey B. Russell, *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 25-76.

widespread belief that witches used familiars to harm their neighbours while the fantasy of a secret conspiracy of witches cannot be found before 1645.⁵²⁶

The concept of a pact with the Devil can already be found in the writings of St. Augustine but it was not common until the 9th century. He argued that the Devil promised people wealth and worldly power in exchange for the human's soul. In some accounts, the pact was also linked with magic although this connection did not figure very prominently before the 12th and 13th centuries. The spread of Islamic and Greek literature during this period led to an increased practice of learned magic. Magic in this sense concerned the invocation and commandment over demons. Necromancy which was technically the conjuration of spirits of the dead became to be more broadly understood as the conjuration of spirits in general during the Middle Ages. This elaborate ritual or ceremonial magic was practiced at the court of monarchs and by famous magicians like John Dee. However, scholastics attacked such practices with the support of the Pope and argued that demons never helped humans without demanding a reward. Since ritual magicians sometimes offered some kind of sacrifice to the demons, scholastics argued they had a pact with them. The new element in this development was not that magicians were heretics and apostates but that the pact was the reason for their heresy. In a later step, these ideas were projected upon witches. This meant that all illiterate members of the folk who practiced magic were thought to have a pact with the Devil since he was the origin of all magic. Because of the connection between heresy and magic, witches could thus also be accused of heresy. When the learned magician was conflated with the popular witch, the nature of the demonic pact changed. Whereas magician and demon had the relationship of equals, a common warlock or witch became a servant instead of being master over the demons. The ideas of the elite magicians who were male and learned were thus projected upon witches who were generally female and illiterate.⁵²⁷

The Witches' Sabbath

The idea that witches worshipped the Devil collectively in connection with a number of amoral rituals was less widespread than the demonic pact and less uniform. It was however an important precondition for large witch-hunts since numerous witches were only put on trial because other suspects confessed they saw them at the sabbath. The fantasy of the sabbath was partly rooted in psychology and notions about a non-human amoral society representing an inversion of religious and moral norms. The cannibalistic murder of children and naked dancing belonged to a collective nightmare in medieval and Early Modern Europe. The emphasis of sexual escapades and orgies during the sabbath came from the negative attitude of the Church towards sexuality. Fears about

⁵²⁶ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 37; Oldridge, *Devil*, 38.

⁵²⁷ Behringer, *Chonrad Stoecklin*, 93; Bever, *Realities*, 170; Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 102-117; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 37-40.

popular rebellions were widespread during the era of the great witch-hunts and the first descriptions of the witches' sabbath appeared during a wave of social rebellion in the late 14th century. The terrified elites in Europe projected their fears and anxieties onto the imagery of the sabbath. Theologians, magistrates and authors of witchcraft treatises saw the Devil himself as chief-rebel against God and the witches as devil-worshippers and part of a huge conspiracy trying to turn the world upside down, inverting the hierarchical order of society and rejecting its moral norms. Especially during the early phase of the witch-hunts, many were accused of treason and witchcraft. In Scotland, King James VI became convinced that the Earl of Bothwell was the head of a coven of witches planning to overthrow him and his ideas were reflected in his treatise *Daemonologie* (1597). The fear of rebellion was thus an important influence in the formulation and dissemination of the cumulative concept.⁵²⁸

The idea of an anti-society had some further roots in elite fears stretching back to antiquity. During the 2nd century, pagan Greeks and Romans started to believe that the small Christian communities belonged to a secret society, holding meetings where babies and small children were ritually slaughtered, performing erotic orgies and practicing incest and worshipping a strange divinity in animal-form. These ideas emerged from false interpretations of Christian rituals like the reinterpretation of the Eucharist as cannibalism. During the Middle Ages, various dissenting groups and heretical sects were accused of similar assaults including worshipping Satan in corporeal form in a more or less obscene fashion as well as meeting secretly. These groups included the exotic non-Christian Cathars, whose doctrines such as interpreting the Devil as master of the material world themselves arose suspicion, alongside more Christian Groups like the Waldensians, the Fraticelli, and the Order of the Knights Templars.⁵²⁹ While the diabolical cult of witches cannot be proven, there were a number of underground religious movements including Cathars, Waldensians, Hussites, Anabaptists alongside Jews and Muslims who had to hide after the forced conversion in Spain.⁵³⁰ The idea of the witches' sabbath is also deeply connected with anti-Judaism. The very term *synagogue*, as well as *sabbat*, derive from the Jewish religion which was traditionally the quintessence of anti-Christianity and devil-worship. Jews were also repeatedly accused of killing Christian children and drinking their blood.⁵³¹ According to Carlo Ginzburg, the picture of the sabbath took shape in the Western Alps during the middle of the 14th century. In the summer of 1321, a rumour spread in France that lepers conspired to poison wells and rivers. This idea was almost immediately extended

⁵²⁸ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 40-5, 65-7; Martine Ostero, "The Concept of the Witches Sabbath in the Alpine Region (1430-1440): Text and Context," in *Witchcraft Mythologies and Persecutions*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay and Éva Pócs (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008), 24-5.

⁵²⁹ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, ix-x, 1-15, 35-101; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 42-5.

⁵³⁰ Bever, *Realities*, 95.

⁵³¹ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, xi, 146; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 42, 51; Maxwell-Stuart, *Satan*, 16, 77; Ostero, "Concept of the Witches' Sabbath," 22-4.

to the Jews and sometimes connected to Muslim rulers of Granada and Tunis. In 1409 in the same area, Jews and Christian groups were accused of practicing rites against the Christian faith together. He thus showed that the idea of a sect of witches was based on the scapegoating of marginal European groups.⁵³² Since the idea of witches at the height of the witch-hunts represented a collective inversion of Christianity as well as apostasy, this kind of devil-worship could only be achieved by former Christians. Although Jews and Gypsies could be accused of *maleficium*, they were not accused of being witches in the full sense.⁵³³

During the 12th and 13th centuries, theologians fused their ideas about early Christians, secretly meeting heretics, Jews, and magicians worshipping Satan as well as the doctrines of heretical sects like the Cathars to create the idea of heretics as secret, nocturnal, sexually explicit devil-worshippers. They transferred this idea to all kinds of heretics including ritual magicians and witches. During the 16th century, this idea was solely connected to witches and the secret gatherings were believed to include far more individuals than in former centuries.⁵³⁴ Further research showed that the idea of the hostile devil-worshipping sect of witches was not only rooted in the above mentioned learned ideas but also in popular culture. Specialist practitioners who acted as mediators between the human and the otherworld of the dead and several other aspects of folk culture were interpreted in a negative way during the course of the witchcraft trials.⁵³⁵ These popular conceptions, which are very similar to Scottish fairy belief and the practices of Scottish charmers, are analysed in the following chapter.

Flight

A last crucial idea closely related to the notion of the sabbath is the concept that witches were able to fly in order to participate in their distant nocturnal gatherings. The belief in the witches' flight is however not found everywhere and could exist independently from the idea of the sabbath, as it did in Scotland. This concept had mainly popular roots in notions about night-flying witches.⁵³⁶

Firstly, the idea of the witches' flight is based on the Roman belief in *strigae* or *strix*. Those women were believed to transfer into screeching owls at night and eating children. Although the Romans acknowledged the reality of maleficent sorcery, the *strix* was only a fantastical figure to them. Cohn argued that these beings were also known to Germanic peoples who commonly believed in their reality although their elite doubted that. *Strix* was only one antique word for witches.

⁵³² Carlo Ginzburg, "Deciphering the Sabbath," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 122-4.

⁵³³ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 147.

⁵³⁴ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 42-5.

⁵³⁵ Ginzburg, "Deciphering the Sabbath," 121, 132; Robert Muchembled, "Satanic Myths and Cultural Reality," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 139, 148; Rowland, "Fantastical and Devilish Persons," 178, 187.

⁵³⁶ Goodare, "Flying Witches," 159-176; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 45-6.

Another name was Latin *lamiae* derived from the mythical goddess of Lybia who was loved by Zeus and drank the blood of children in revenge for the killing of her own children by Hera.⁵³⁷

The second crucial element was the believe that women went out at night in their dreams to join the train of the goddess Diana or another supernatural female leaders and participate in their assemblies.⁵³⁸ Bever argued in this context: 'Magical flight and festive assemblies including both people and spirits were just part of a larger set of beliefs and experiences that made up an alternative "fairy" or spirit world thought in large parts of Europe to exist parallel to the ordinary world of everyday experience.'⁵³⁹ Before the idea of the witches' sabbath became the universal paradigm for interpreting nocturnal flights, the *Canon Episcopi* built the canonical source for construing them.⁵⁴⁰ During the late Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, it was believed that the *Canon Episcopi* originated from the early Christian synod in Ancyra held in 314 C.E.. In fact, it was first written down by Regino of Prüm, archbishop of Trier, in his *Liber de disciplinis ecclesiasticis* (906). The tract was a guide to ecclesiastical discipline to be used by bishops for visitations in their dioceses. The later termed *Canon Episcopi* was probably originating from a lost capitulary from the 9th century. Regino of Prüm's text became famous for his description of women riding with Diana:⁵⁴¹

It is also not to be admitted that some wicked women, perverted by the Devil, seduced by illusions and phantasms of demons, believe and profess themselves, in the hours of night, to ride upon certain beasts with Diana, the goddess of pagans, and an innumerable multitude of women, and in the silence of the dead of night to traverse great spaces of earth, and to obey her commands as of her mistress, and to be summoned to her service on certain nights. ... For an innumerable multitude, deceived by this false opinion, believe this to be true, and so believing, wander from the right faith and are involved in the error of the pagans when they think that there is anything of divinity or power except the one God. ... such phantasms are imposed on the minds of infidels and not by the divine but by the malignant spirit. Thus Satan himself, who transfigures himself into an angel of light, when he has captured the mind of a miserable woman ... immediately transforms himself into the species and similitudes of different personages and deluding the mind which he holds captive and exhibiting things, joyful or mournful, and persons, known or unknown, leads it though devious ways, and while the spirit alone endures this, the faithless mind thinks these things happen not in the spirit but in the body.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁷ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 162-6; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 46-7.

⁵³⁸ Blécourt, "Return of the Sabbat," 127-8; Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 166-175; Ginzburg, "Deciphering the Sabbath," 126; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 46-7.

⁵³⁹ Bever, *Realities*, 94.

⁵⁴⁰ Behringer, *Chonrad Stoeckhlin*, 55, 103.

⁵⁴¹ Behringer *Chonrad Stoeckhlin*, 55; Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 167; Julian Goodare, "Seely Wights," 200; Levack, *Witchcraft Sourcebook*, 33.

⁵⁴² Levack, *Witchcraft Sourcebook*, 34, quoting: H.C. Lea, *Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft* (Philadelphia 1954), I, 170-180.

The author reminded Christian priests to warn people of such diabolic illusions. Since only God effects wonders, these ideas must originate from the Devil masking himself as light angel and creating such illusions. During the high Middle Ages, the text was adopted into canonical law and thus belonged to ecclesiastical law. In the early texts, such ideas were interpreted as dreams and punished with minor penalties. At least by the time of John of Salisbury (1120-1180), these nocturnal flights were mixed with collective feast of *lamiae* and sorceresses who can look into the future. Burchard of Worms also mentions women flying at night with Diana around 1020 in his *Decretum*. He and Regino of Prüm called the supernatural leader of the train Diana. She was a Roman goddess whose cult was still widespread during the early Middle Ages. Diana was associated with the wilderness, the night, the moon, fertility and nature. She was sometimes identified with Hecate, the ancient goddess of magic who rode out at night with restless souls of the prematurely dead, those who died of violence, or who were never buried. Burchard of Worms noted that the women riding with Diana were also called *striga holda* or in some transcriptions only Holda, a prominent figure in German folklore. She was a motherly being bringing fertility and was especially active during winter. During the twelve days between Christmas and Epiphany, she was the leader of a furious army riding through the storm followed by souls of the dead, and especially unbaptized babies. Burchard also mentions that the female leader could be called Herodias, the wife of Herod, the tetrarch and instigator of the murder of John the Baptist. Women who imagined themselves to ride out with Diana, Herodias or Holda at night sent out their souls to join the dead temporarily but their missions were beneficent and sustaining rather than destructive.⁵⁴³ Stories about the processions of the dead are also reflected in ideas about the Wild Hunt or Furious Horde. They were spirits of the dead led by male deities like Odin, Wotan, Herod, or Arthur, but also Holda, who is identified with Diana and also called Perchta or Bertha.⁵⁴⁴

Pre-Christian beliefs about beneficent, mostly female spirits sometimes associated with the souls of the dead were widespread in medieval Europe and some peasants dreamt that they could take part in their nocturnal processions. They were the opposite of the cannibalistic witch, a symbol of destruction and death. Until the 13th century, the Church thought that such ideas were pagan superstitions and that the ladies of the night belonged to the world of dreams. Their attitude changed during the 13th century when the beautiful ladies, gods and ghosts were interpreted as demons visiting the world in the guise of human beings. While they could only be seen by stupid old women before, they now acquired an objective material existence and could be seen by humans who were fully awake. Humans taking part in such gatherings were now thought to consort with demons

⁵⁴³ Behringer, *Chonrad Stoecklin*, 56-8; Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 167-9; Claude Lecouteux, *Phantom Armies of the Night: The Wild Hunt and the Ghostly Processions of the Undead* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2011), 8-23.

⁵⁴⁴ Bever, *Realities*, 96; Ginzburg, "Deciphering the Sabbath," 126; Thomas Niehörster, *Das Wilde Heer und die armen Seelen: Mythen und Bräuche im Alpenraum* (Bad Hindelang: Ursus Verlag, 2009), 13-26.

and the fantasy of the nocturnal queen and her procession started to mix with the idea of the witches sabbath. While night witches and ladies of the night were kept separate in popular traditions, the elite looked at them from above and started to connect these ideas. During the 14th and 15th centuries, both beliefs were mingled with the notion of an amoral devil-worshipping sect of magicians into a single fantasy of organized witches flying out at night on forks, brooms, with the wind or out of an inherent power, celebrating cannibalistic orgies led by demons. Although there were some sceptics still arguing the Devil could only create illusions, this became a common nightmare in Early Modern Europe.⁵⁴⁵

Regional European Variants of the Flight Element Emerging from Fairy Belief and Shamanistic Traditions

There are various regional variations about the supernatural goddess and her nocturnal procession. Guillaume d'Auvergne, bishop of Paris who died in 1249, noted that in France, it was believed that spirits took the shape of girls or women on certain nights, walking through woods and groves. Those 'ladies of the night' were led by Lady Abundia or Satia and visited private homes and rewarded those who left food and drink for them. A similar belief was also recorded by Jacobus de Voragine during the 13th century in Italy. Today the belief in 'ladies from outside' blessing those who offer them hospitality can be still found in Sicily.⁵⁴⁶ In confessions of Milanese inquisition between 1380-90 women confessed to go out at night with Madona Oriente and her train of living and dead. At their meetings, they ritually slaughtered animals and ate them while their leader turned the bones into animals again after the feast. They also blessed well-ordered houses and their mistress instructed them in healing and divining.⁵⁴⁷ Another parallel can be found in the Alps where two women from Brixen confessed in 1457 to have travelled with their mistress Richella, who is interpreted by the bishop of Brixen as Diana, the demon from the *Canon Episcopi*. Wolfgang Behringer also compares those ideas with the belief in the *bonae res* or good people known to the Cathars and the Waldensians, connected to fairy belief and the belief in the 'Nachtschar' found in the trial of Chonrad Stoecklin, a herdsman tried for witchcraft in Oberstdorf 1578.⁵⁴⁸

Gustav Henningsen re-discovered the Sicilian fairy cult of the *donas the fuera* who were partly fairy and partly witch. In the witchcraft trial documents they were described as supernatural, fairy-like creatures of both sexes who were accompanied by witches at nocturnal processions. Furthermore, some witches confessed to be themselves *donas de fuera*. In Sicily, there was no belief

⁵⁴⁵ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 172-5; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 46-50.

⁵⁴⁶ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 170-2.

⁵⁴⁷ Behringer, *Chonrad Stoecklin*, 59; Willem de Blécourt, "Sabbath Stories: Towards a New History of Witches' Assemblies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 91; Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 173-4; Henningsen, "Ladies from Outside," 203-4.

⁵⁴⁸ Behringer, *Chonrad Stoecklin*, 2, 28-45, 58-60, 62.

in a maleficent wicked witch but there was a particular type of healers who were mostly women, could cure fairy diseases and went out in spirit to take part in nocturnal meetings with the fairies. The fairy cult had local variations. Usually, the queen of fairies was present at the meetings along with other beautiful supernatural women dancing merrily while male fairies played their instruments. In some places, the meetings were more similar to the witches' sabbath including the king and queen sitting in chairs, while the humans promised body and soul to them and worshipped them, then there was eating, drinking and sex. The majority of the human *donas* were wise women whose powers came from the fairies. Henningsen refers to their meetings as 'white sabbath' which took place in a dream-like world. He further argued that while many popular healers started to confess that they were maleficent witches during the 17th century, like the Friulian *benandanti* who will be discussed later, the authorities in Sicily were not successful in imposing a diabolic interpretation of the sabbath. Since there was no notion of a black witch in this region, the *donas* could not be persuaded that they did something wrong.⁵⁴⁹

Traditional ideas about fairies can also be found in witchcraft trials taking place in other European regions. Mircea Eliade studied a similar group, the Romanian *calusari*. They were cathartic dancers and healers who cured illnesses caused by fairies and were initiated by the queen of fairies into their craft. The *calusari* were mediators between this and the other world and performed rites in which they presented the fairies, danced from house to house to bring fertility and also took part in battles with neighbouring communities for fertility.⁵⁵⁰ Fairy belief also played a role in the accusations against Jeanne d'Arc (1410-31). She confessed that there was a fairy tree near Domrémy with a nearby well and that sick people would go there to be cured and girls bound girdles of flowers onto the tree and danced and sang under it. She also stated that some people said they went there on Thursdays to fly with the fairies, but she did not believe in that. Jeanne's trial had some characteristics of a popular prophet including ideas about fairies, talking with angels and miraculous healing. Furthermore, fairy belief was very common in the British Isles during the Early Modern period. Charmers in England, Wales and Scotland frequently stated that they had their skills in healing, un-witching and prophesy from the fairies and some said they participated in their meetings at certain nights. Demonologists who wanted to describe diabolic meetings selected contradictory ideas and reinterpreted them in their own terms. The demonization of fairy belief raises the question of why people still believed in fairies. Functionalist ethnologist argued they did so because fairies had a social function in reinforcing the standards of society. Because of fairy belief people kept their house tidy, looked after their children, gave back borrowed things and fairy belief and later witch

⁵⁴⁹ Henningsen, "Ladies from Outside," 195-209.

⁵⁵⁰ Mircea Eliade, "Some Observations on European Witchcraft," *History of Religions* vol. 14, no. 3 (February 1975): 160-2, accessed July 11, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1061939>; Henningsen, "Ladies from Outside," 191-2; Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, 10, 50-2, 60-5.

belief was an accepted explanation for misfortune which could be combatted in a supernatural manner.⁵⁵¹

Inspired by the studies of Henningsen and Ginzburg, Julian Goodare tried to proof the existence of a shamanistic cult of fairy-like beings called the 'seely wights' in Scotland. He argued that members of the cult entered trances and flew out at night on swallows to join the *seely wights* and they were also magical practitioners. The *seely wights* were only mentioned in a manuscript of lectures held at the University of St. Andrews by William Hay in 1533 and 1535, the witchcraft process against Janet Boyman in 1572 and Robert Sempill's satirical poem against Archbishop Patrick Adamson written in the 1580s. Explicit mentions for the cult ran out after the 1580s while Goodare stated that many witchcraft trials afterwards implied elements of the cult which was fused with fairy belief at the time. Although Goodare provides an interesting approach, there are too few references to claim the existence of an organized, widespread, shamanistic cult of *seely wights* opposed to fairy belief.⁵⁵²

Carlo Ginzburg and Éva Pócs distinguished the medieval women travelling in the train of Diana and other supernatural leaders from another cluster of popular beliefs. As a second group, they described groups of men battling for agricultural fertility at particular times of the year while appearing as spirits or animals. To this group they added the Friulian *benandanti*, Hungarian *táltos*, Romanian *calusari*, and Baltic werewolves. According to Ginzburg, these two believes built the basis for the idea of the sabbath and both originated from an ecstatic cult of shamanism.⁵⁵³ In his influential study *The Night Battles*, Carlo Ginzburg provided an in-depth analysis of popular beliefs about the *benandanti* in Friuli, Northern Italy, arguing they were slowly superimposed by the elite ideas about diabolical witchcraft through torture and suggestive questioning. The *benandanti* claimed to go out in spirit during the Ember seasons in the form of animals or riding on animals to fight against witches for the fertility of the fields. Furthermore, they acted as popular healers who could foretell the future and got their skills from being born with a caul. Ginzburg interpreted this cult as procession of the dead derived from the myths of the Wild Hunt and the Furious Horde as well as the belief of women riding at night with Diana or similar goddesses. He also stated that the cult of the *benandanti* shared several characteristics with similar traditions in Hungary, Dalmatia, the Balkan, Corsica, Baltic countries, and the shamans of Lapland and Siberia.⁵⁵⁴ One of those similar groups were the Hungarian *táltos*. They were shaman-like sorcerers who acquired their skills in finding treasures, fortelling the future, and healing from being born with teeth and were tried during

⁵⁵¹ Behringer, *Chonrad Stoecklin*, 69-72.

⁵⁵² Goodare, "Seely Wights," 198-219.

⁵⁵³ Blécourt, "Return of the Sabbat," 127-8; Ginzburg, *Ecstasies*, 136,242; Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, 10-1.

⁵⁵⁴ Ginzburg, "Deciphering the Sabbath," 124-6; Ginzburg, *Night Battles*; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 60; Rowland, "Fantasticall and Devilishe Persons," 182-8.

the witch-hunts. Furthermore, they made trance-like journeys in which the soul left the body, took the shape of animal and flew through the air with other *táltosok*. During the witch-hunts, those magical practitioners were demonized and prosecuted as witches.⁵⁵⁵

The similarities of those various groups scattered across Europe demanded an explanation which Ginzburg tried to provide in his study called *Ecstasies*. He stated that all such night flights derived from the ancient theme of an ecstatic journey to the realms of the dead. The Queen of elves along with Diana and others were variants of a nocturnal goddess leading the army of the dead. According to Ginzburg, the *Canon Episcopi* stood at the end of the Christian overcoming of pagan cults and Diana was the *interpretatio romana* of the Celtic goddess Epona. Thus, the ecstatic journey with the nocturnal goddess was only distributed in formerly Celtic areas like Scotland and Friuli while it was absent in Germanic beliefs. Furthermore, he stated that these Celtic beliefs derived from older shamanistic traditions of Asia and Eastern Europe which were brought to Europe by the Scythians.⁵⁵⁶ The documents discovered by Henningsen in Sicily did not fit into this ethnic map since this was an area which was not influenced by the Celts while the ideas of the *donas de fuera* had remarkable similarities with Scottish fairies and others. Willem de Blécourt, therefore, argued that if one wanted to define the origin of this nocturnal goddess it was rather a pre-Grecian Mediterranean goddess than a Celtic one. Pócs stated that the common features could be rooted in common Indo-European beliefs which remained intact in peripheral areas and were demonized in the centres of the witch-hunts. Although the diffusion theory is not wrong and those features could arise from a common ancestor, they cannot only be explained through movements of ancient peoples but also influence one another. Blécourt doubts that it is necessary to argue for an ancient stratum of beliefs to find the origins of witchcraft. He criticises that the definition of shamanism as any kind of spirit contact is far too generalized and that the comparison of the *benandanti* and Siberian shamanism is anachronistic since the *benandanti* were already profoundly Christianized over centuries.⁵⁵⁷ Thus, various studies tried to distinguish a full-blown 'shamanism' of Siberia from 'shamanistic' elements found in Europe involving travelling and communicating with spirits. Although Edward Bever admits that these practices could be rooted in archaic shamanic experiences of flights to the spirit world, he emphasises that the summoning of spirits by magicians could be an independent development. The idea of the sabbath emerged under a variety of circumstances and was not a static idea, but constantly changed and had various regional differences.⁵⁵⁸ Similarly, Robert Muchembled states that

⁵⁵⁵ Klaniczay, "Hungary," 244-255. Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead*, 134-142; Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, 48, 62.

⁵⁵⁶ Behringer, *Chonrad Stoecklin*, 57-8; Blécourt, "Return of the Sabbat," 133-4; Ginzburg, *Ecstasies*, 103-112, 207-217.

⁵⁵⁷ Blécourt, "Return of the Sabbat," 132-8; Henningsen, "Ladies from Outside," 191-215; Lecouteux, *Phantom Armies*, 209-222; Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, 13.

⁵⁵⁸ Bever, *Realities*, 170, 185, 187-9; "Round-Table Discussion," 35-7.

there is no need to argue for the ancient roots of folk beliefs since descriptions of the sabbath could be based on the observation of contemporary popular culture.⁵⁵⁹

Considering the Scottish witchcraft trials it is crucial to note that fairy belief shared many characteristics with continental beliefs in night flights and, as Henderson and Cowan have argued, both could have common roots in the procession of the dead.⁵⁶⁰ A systematic comparison of Scottish fairy belief and similar continental traditions would be a vital contribution to this discussion, but it is beyond the scope of this current dissertation. In addition, it is not possible to argue for any archaic roots of the witches' sabbath and flight only by studying medieval and Early Modern sources while omitting a critical study of ancient literary and material sources, which has not yet been undertaken.

Fusion and Diffusion of the Cumulative Concept

The cumulative concept acquired its basic elements in several witchcraft trials held in western, alpine regions of Switzerland during the 1430s. This area was a twofold borderland. Not only was there a mixture of different languages and cultures including Italian, French, and German, but also a place where rural communities were confronted with urban areas and members of rural society could be tried by elites in towns. Moreover, this was a region where Waldensians were prosecuted not only as heretics but they also had contact to the otherworld, reported magical flights and spirit encounters connected to supernatural powers.⁵⁶¹ The Swiss trials incorporated typical elements of the cumulative concept like the appearance of the Devil in human or bestial form, the renunciation of Christianity and the witch paying homage to the Devil, the supernatural transport to his assemblies, where infants were eaten and anal sex was practiced, as well as the practice of *maleficia*.⁵⁶² During the same period, *malefici* in Northern Italy were tried for worshipping the Devil in large nocturnal, orgiastic rites, killing and devouring children and flying to their assemblies. Although such magicians were believed to be heretics and were thus vulnerable to similar charges including ritual murder and cannibalism, witches were not confused with other heretical sects. After all, witchcraft was the ultimate form of heresy, a threat to Christendom and an organized conspiracy led by the Devil, mocking the Christian Eucharist and denying the faith in God.⁵⁶³

⁵⁵⁹ Muchembled, "Satanic Myths," 141-2, 148.

⁵⁶⁰ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 45.

⁵⁶¹ Wolfgang Behringer, "How Waldensians Became Witches: Heretics and Their Journey to the Other World" in *Communicating with the Spirits*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay and Éva Pócs (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005) 155-192; Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 202-3; Richard Kieckhefer, "The First Wave of Trials for Diabolical Witchcraft," in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 160-9; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 51; Ostero, "Concept of Witches' Sabbath," 19-20; Bever, *Realities*, 437.

⁵⁶² Kieckhefer, "First Wave of Trials," 163-4. Martine Ostero, Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, and Kathrin Utz Tremp, *L'Imaginaire du sabbat, Edition critique des textes les plus anciens (1430c. – 1440c.)* (Lausanne: Université de Lausanne, 1999).

⁵⁶³ Kieckhefer, "First Wave of Trials," 167; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 51.

Some elements of the cumulative concept were not yet present in the trials of the 1420s and 1430s. The belief in the witches' mark, a spot on the body which did not bleed and was insensitive to pain, did not emerge before the early 16th century. Judicial authorities developed the method of pricking the witch until this spot was found which built a basis for the conviction of the witch. Calvinist communities in Geneva and Scotland were about the most vigilant in searching for the devil's mark which after all had a scriptural basis in the Book of Revelation. When the prosecutions intensified during the 16th century, descriptions of sexual activities became more lurid and the homosexual relationship between demons and male witches became a new element in witchcraft confessions.⁵⁶⁴ The sabbath descriptions developed in a variety of ways and there were various regional differences and historical developments. Elite notions of the sabbath were assimilated to an existing body of folklore, which was shown by Ginzburg and others. Confessions of witches led to the introduction of details which varied in place and time such as the appearance of the devil or the feasts including the local cuisine. In most areas, those various local beliefs were slowly integrated into a wider, uniform system and substituted with elite notions of the witches sabbath during the course of the witch-hunts. In areas where witch-hunts were less severe like in Sicily these ideas were not diabolized and persisted after the hunts.⁵⁶⁵ Also a parody of the Catholic mass, the Black Mass, which was especially common in France, Spain, and Italy, cannot be found in all countries where the witches' sabbath was known. It was missing in several regions while a non-satanic dance was a more regular feature.⁵⁶⁶

Richard van Dülmen argued that there were four stages for the development of the image of the sabbath. During the 15th century, few women took part in it. Until the mid-16th century, there were more women but bewitchment was still marginal, although witches were thought to get an ointment from the devil who participated in their feast and flew with them when they caused harm. At the beginning of the 17th century, the demonic pact and sexual relations became more prominent and the sabbath sometimes seemed like a wedding between witches and demons. Towards the end of the 17th century, the Devil sat enthroned at the centre of the satanic ritual and there was a complete black mass and sexual orgies.⁵⁶⁷ Willem de Blécourt acknowledges this approach as it stresses the historical development of the idea of the witches sabbath. However, he argues that it is still too static as there were several more or less simultaneous developments instead of a single

⁵⁶⁴ Klaitis, *Servants of Satan*, 51; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 51-2.

⁵⁶⁵ Blécourt, "Return of the Sabbat," 131; Ginzburg, *Night Battles*; Henningsen, "Ladies from Outside," 206-9; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 52; Rowland, "Fantasticall and Devilshe Persons," 178.

⁵⁶⁶ Blécourt, "Return of the Sabbat," 131; Levack, *Witch-hunt*, 41-2.

⁵⁶⁷ Blécourt, "Return of the Sabbat," 131; Blécourt, "Sabbath Stories," 93-4; Richard van Dülmen, "Die Dienerin des Bösen: Zum Hexenbild in der frühen Neuzeit," *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 18 (1991): 386-394; Richard van Dülmen, "Imaginationen des Teuflischen. Nächtliche Zusammenkünfte, Hexentänze, Teufelssabbate," in *Hexenwelten, Magie und Imagination vom 16.-20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Richard van Dülmen (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1987), 94-130.

evolution of the idea while elements of a demonological interpretation of bewitchment could also spread without the notion of the sabbath.⁵⁶⁸ Blécourt further stated that the image of the sabbath reached its apotheosis about 1600 when it centred on the worship of the devil, the Black Mass and the most repulsive methods of copulation. The Protestants were more hesitant in subscribing to the fully developed picture of the sabbath than Catholics. Sabbaths in Protestant countries were less elaborate, their demonologies were more concerned with the concept of flight than Catholic ones, and they more often argued that such meetings were purely imaginary. The stress was not laid on the conspiracy of witches but the maintenance of Christian discipline and therefore Protestants attacked dancing, excessive eating and drinking, and sexual transgressions. In Protestant countries with occasional severe prosecutions the sabbath barely played a role. In England, there was no trace of it until the mid-17th century. There was also no notion of the sabbath in Holland and Denmark.⁵⁶⁹ In Scotland, fairy lore was first integrated into the popular witchcraft discourse and witches' gatherings only started to appear in trials of the late 16th century. Compared to the relatively large number of trials the sabbath did not feature prominently in Scotland.⁵⁷⁰ Blécourt thus concluded that the idea of the sabbath was particularly flexible and built a frame for various elements including the flight, apostasy, feasting, dancing, and copulation, to be integrated by interested prosecutors. It was also embedded into religious narratives and influenced by religious changes but also judicial, medical and political considerations.⁵⁷¹

Despite the varieties in the conceptions of the sabbath, they still had common features suggesting that those ideas were transmitted. While the belief in a collective, amoral, antichristian society could develop out of societies at any place, this was not true for the entire set of learned beliefs which were fused during the 15th century. This set of beliefs could not arise out of the mind of a single magistrate or prosecutor, but it had to be learned and transmitted.⁵⁷² The development and transmission of learned notions of witchcraft was an interplay between witchcraft trials, literary traditions and also local incidents. Local incidents such as quarrels among villagers, anxieties and suspicion for bewitchment could be expressed in trials. During these trials notions about actual rituals of magicians and ideas of former prosecution of heretical sects with their supposed nocturnal assemblies, sexual orgies and devotion to the Devil were fused with those about witches. Judges and inquisitors integrated their own fantasies which were nourished by theological and theological writings, as well as cases from their colleagues. When they extracted the witch's confession, usually under torture, popular beliefs could be fused with elite notions of the judges while confessions

⁵⁶⁸ Blécourt, "Return of the Sabbat," 131; Blécourt, "Sabbath Stories," 94.

⁵⁶⁹ Blécourt, "Sabbath Stories," 98-9; Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 86; Muchembled, "Satanic Myths," 141.

⁵⁷⁰ Blécourt, "Sabbath Stories," 99; Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland*, 7-9; Martin, "Some Findings," 63-4.

⁵⁷¹ Blécourt, "Sabbath Stories," 99.

⁵⁷² Bever, *Realities*, 93; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 53; Murray, *Witch-Cult*, 11-8.

confirmed the reality of the anxieties among authorities. Results of the trials became known to other judges first by word of mouth and they were later included into written manuals of how to formulate questions for the accused. The universities promoted this process by introducing their students to demonological and inquisitorial literature. Thus, the trials themselves were important for shaping the cumulative concept in the first place while written manuals played a role in shaping further trials and communicating their results to a wider audience.⁵⁷³

The first witchcraft treatise playing a major role in making the cumulative concept available for a larger audience was the *Malleus Maleficarum* written by the dominican inquisitor Heinrich Kramer and the theologian Jacob Sprenger in 1486. It was a manual for inquisitors which relied heavily on scholastic ideas and incorporated local beliefs of the diocese of Brixen. Although it did not introduce a lot of new things into the cumulative concept and did not inspire a massive outbreak of witch-hunts, it was an important step in the educative process making judges more aware of the crime and its reality. This educative process was an important precondition of large witch-hunts. After the publication of the *Malleus*, the publication of witchcraft literature decreased but rose significantly during the late 16th and during the 17th centuries. There were many important later witchcraft treatises which were also more complete in describing the cumulative concept of witchcraft. These included Nicolas Remy's *Demonolatreiae* (1595), Henri Boguet's *Discours des sorciers* (1602), Francesco Maria Guazzo's *Compedium Maleficarum* (1608) and several others. Such witchcraft treatises were mainly important to make literate members of the European society aware of the crime of witchcraft and to convince them of its reality. The readers were however only a small proportion of the whole population including members of the ruling elite, lawyers, judges, and magistrates. Witchcraft treatises built the basis for the knowledge of those with the legal power to conduct witch-hunts.⁵⁷⁴

For any large-scale witch-hunting, it was also important for the community to believe in witchcraft since they were responsible for identifying witches and testify against them. The problem was that most people in Early Modern villages did not share the learned notions of witchcraft, but they had to be taught to them. Most people believed in magic and *maleficium* but they did not necessarily attribute it to the Devil. They also believed in *strigae*, ladies of the night, animal metamorphosis, *incubi* and *succubi*, but they did not fuse these notions in the way the elite did. In order to get their expected confessions, the elite had to impose their learned ideas upon popular beliefs about witches. Ginzburg successfully showed the gap between popular and learned notions during the early years of their trials of the *benandanti*, who were gradually convinced that they were

⁵⁷³ Kieckhefer, "First Wave of Trials," 165-6; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 53-9.

⁵⁷⁴ Christopher S. Mackay, introduction to *The Hammer of Witches: A Complete Translation of the Malleus Maleficarum*, by Henricus Institoris, 1-2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Levack, *Witchcraft Sourcebook*, 69-116; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 54-9.

maleficent witches. The imposition of the learned notions of the judges primarily happened during the trial through torture and suggestive questioning aiming to bring about the desired confession. On a more widespread level, the populace was educated by reading charges against witches at their execution and the preaching in sermons during panic years. Stories about the sabbath were transmitted orally and visually. They were common subjects in sermons, pamphlets, and plays. First these ideas spread slowly through word of mouth and in manuscripts but this process became faster after the invention of print in the middle of the 15th century. After all, there is evidence that some learned notions and the fear of a widespread satanic conspiracy penetrated lower levels of society and there are some unforced confessions reflecting the fantasies of theologians and inquisitors.⁵⁷⁵

Finally, it is vital to emphasise that the idea of the cumulative concept in the sense that one idea was added after another leading to a universal paradigm which was manifested during the first wave of diabolical trials during the 15th century is untenable. Regionalism persisted in late medieval Europe and also afterwards while some people remained sceptic about the concept. However, there was also no endless splittening of the diabolic concept of witchcraft and the main paradigms remained fairly stable in most regions.⁵⁷⁶ The cumulative concept of witchcraft included learned traditions of allegations against lepers, Jews, heretics and the necessity of demonic involvement in magic but also popular traditions like *maleficia*, magical flight and animal metamorphosis. Recent scholarship showed that ultimately every feature of the diabolic stereotype was rooted or at least related to popular traditions which were reinterpreted in a negative way during the trials and fused with purely literary traditions. Firstly, there is evidence that some people actually practiced maleficent magic which sometimes also involved the deliberate invocation of demons. Secondly, magical practitioners formed networks and some performed their rituals in groups. Thirdly, popular traditions about magical flight were widespread and some argued that they actually experience them while asleep or in trance while some used some sort of hallucinogenic drugs. Some thought they flew out to kill and eat babies while others participated in gatherings of spirits having feast and making merry often presided over by a leading spirit. In the latter case the participants argued that they gained magical skills at such gatherings and used them in their everyday role as wise women.⁵⁷⁷ All these elements can be found in Scottish folk traditions of charmers and fairy belief and thus they could build a basis for the adoption of the cumulative concept of witchcraft in Scotland.⁵⁷⁸

Ultimately, the broad diffusion of the fear of a diabolical sect was caused by several elements: Firstly, torture confirmed the suspicions of the elite. Secondly, the theological and

⁵⁷⁵ Bever, *Realities*, 68; Blécourt, "Sabbath Stories," 97; Ginzburg, *Night Battles*; Kieckhefer, "First Wave of Trials," 165; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 59-61; Oldridge, *Devil*, 33; Rowland, "Fantasticall and Devilishe Persons," 163.

⁵⁷⁶ Kieckhefer, "First Wave of Trials," 177-8.

⁵⁷⁷ Bever, *Realities*, 67-8.

⁵⁷⁸ Henderson, "'Detestable Slaves,'" 244; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 47-8.

demonological treatises were highly persuasive. Thirdly, popular beliefs coincided with the larger system of learned knowledge. Fourthly, there was a special attraction of paranoid and sexual features of the diabolical concept. Finally, it also related to realities of late medieval and Early Modern life.⁵⁷⁹

Regarding this latter argument, descriptions of the witches' sabbath could reflect actual popular festivities which were ubiquitous during the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period. Peasants and townspeople gathered on Sundays and other religious festivals and seasonal holidays, as well as for weddings and baptism. During these festivals loads of alcohol were consumed, there was dancing, music, feasting and games which lasted long into the night. Young men used to roam through the streets after work, seeking combat with other groups from neighbouring villages and there were also sexual assignations during night. Most of the popular festivities were connected to formal religious rituals and many involved rites with magico-religious significance of which the relationship with Christian orthodoxy was questionable. The time of carnival reflected the peasant utopia of an inverted world in which they were in power. When the tensions between Protestant and Catholic countries increased, both sides tried to impose stricter moral standards and stop such amusements. Notions of the witches sabbath served the function to diabolize the hours of the night. In this highly pious and morally strict new world it is no wonder if some people developed the idea of renouncing Christianity to join an opposing organization.⁵⁸⁰ After all, several Scottish historians argued that peasant festivities and their repression was an important ingredient in witchcraft confessions.⁵⁸¹

Moreover, realities lying behind the cumulative concept can be found by describing shamanism not as a cohesive set of beliefs and practices bound to any particular culture but rather a cognitive process. Edward Bever argued that all people can be brought to an alteration of consciousness which he called 'turning the nervous system'. Such trance-like states of mind can be found in learned necromancy designed to summon spirits through elaborate ceremonies as well as in popular traditions including the *benandanti*, the 'ladies from outside', *táltos*, Waldensians and others. Although such shamanistic practices maybe vestiges of archaic traditions, they can also happen spontaneously in a situation of psychological or physical stress which coincide with the moments when witches usually first met the Devil. Once these skills were discovered, they could be deliberately induced and taught to others. In reference to modern studies of cognition, Bever argued that in a state of trance, people can access information inaccessible and beyond any normal waking consciousness and this could include dealing with the Devil, invoking spirits or travelling with them. He argued: 'in the end, all we can know, all we can experience, is what we assemble inside our

⁵⁷⁹ Bever, *Realities*, 94-5.

⁵⁸⁰ Bever, *Realities*, 95; Behringer, *Chonrad Stoecklin*, 136; Muchembled, "Satanic Myths," 149-150.

⁵⁸¹ Goodare, "Flying Witches," 160; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 135; Lerner, *Enemies of God*, 195.

brains.’ Since the ability of to achieve this state of mind vary between different people and not everyone wanted to access such unconscious information, there was a need for specialist practitioners. Most people needed rituals, austerities or drugs to get into this trance-like state of mind.⁵⁸² Cohn also pointed out that not only the waking thoughts but also dreams and trance experiences can be shaped by generally accepted contemporary beliefs such as the notion of diabolical witchcraft.⁵⁸³ Popular practitioners were mostly beneficent and engaged in healing and divination. While some forms of divination were completely random, there were also rituals to get into an altered state of consciousness. Bever stated that the core of magic was real and that people’s psyches are intertwined at a visceral level so that thoughts can be read and be projected through occult channels. Popular healing could mobilize and supplement the body’s natural recovery mechanisms and some had direct psychological effects like *maleficium*. While some forms of *maleficium* such as weather magic are impossible, the projection of ill will could have negative physical consequences. Thus, the elite conception of diabolic witchcraft had a reality in people’s actual experiences and beliefs.⁵⁸⁴

Incidents of the Cumulative Concept of Witchcraft in Scotland

Popular and Learned Ideas about the Devil in Scotland

The Devil as personification of the ultimate evil rather concerned theologians and philosophers than ordinary people during the first millennium of the Christian era. The conception of the Devil borrowed heavily on folkloric elements and he appeared in a variety of forms before the 15th century. During the 14th century, Satan became increasingly important for lay persons and he was no longer a metaphorical concept. Demonology, the ‘science of demons’, was slowly defined during the 15th century and obscured but did not eradicate folkloric beliefs about the Devil.⁵⁸⁵

In Early Scottish literature, the monstrous characteristics of demons were emphasised including a long tail or the head of a dragon. Eldritch poetry similarly depicted deformed animalistic demons with horns, hooves, feathers and wings. Since post-reformation Scotland rejected religious images and iconography, there are few illustrations of the Devil and his demons. The English pamphlet *Newes from Scotland* (1591) depicts a dragon-like, tailed and horned beast preaching from a tree stump which is unmistakably the Devil. According to learned opinion, the Devil was a cloven-footed male with horns and a pointed tail whereas he was of quite ordinary appearance and often dressed in black according to the populace who also related him with other supernatural beings like ghosts or fairies. While the folk distinguished several supernatural beings at least during the 16th

⁵⁸² Bever, *Realities*, 430-1, 435-7, 439.

⁵⁸³ Cohn, *Europe’s Inner Demons*, 179.

⁵⁸⁴ Bever, *Realities*, 430, 433-5, 438.

⁵⁸⁵ Henderson, “Detestable Slaves,” 231-2; Robert Muchembled, *A History of the Devil: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003), 16, 23-4, 35; Russell, *Lucifer*, 62-87.

century and arguably beyond, they agreed with the elite notions that the Devil mostly appeared as black man and was a shape-shifter since he appeared as human or animal.⁵⁸⁶

Although confessions in witchcraft trials might have been shaped by preconceptions of interrogators through torture and suggestive questioning, Miller emphasised that there is little evidence for direct questioning in Scotland. She argued that it does not seem that interrogators wanted to shape confessions in any direction since the ideas about the Devil in most cases varied and different demonic spirits including humans, animals, insects, ghosts, angels, or fairies were accepted.⁵⁸⁷ Despite the fact that the leading questions are absent in most confessions, it is vital to note that these were not mere narratives emerging from the mind of the witch but confessions were rather a dialogue or an interview which were significantly shaped by the interrogators. There are some hints that fairy belief was not only introduced by suspects drawing upon their folk traditions but that interrogators deliberately asked about fairies. After confessing to healing adults and babies, Issobbell Haldane (Perth 1623) was asked if she had conversations with the fairy folk. She answered that she was carried into a hill and entered it but she does not know if God or the Devil took her away.⁵⁸⁸ Janet Trall (Perth 1623) also mainly confessed charming and was asked if she had contact with fairies. She said 'she was sore troubled by them; but had no other dealing with them.' The interrogator also asked if Satan was present when she cured someone who got a 'dint of ill wind'. Janet stated 'that he might have been there, but she saw him not.'⁵⁸⁹ When Donald McIlmichael (Argyll 1677) was asked about his correspondence with the Devil, he stated that he met many people inside a hill who danced and had an old man as leader. He was asked when they met and who he thought they were. He answered 'that he cannot weill tell quhat persons they wer bot he judges them not to have bein *worldlie* men or women or men ordained to god'. The interrogators later identified them as 'the devil and these evill spirits'.⁵⁹⁰ Other culprits clearly distinguished between fairies and demons. Marable Couper (Orkney 1624) said she had nothing to do with the Devil, but she confessed that she was taken away in childbed and had regular meetings with the fairies.⁵⁹¹ Margaret Barclay (Ayr 1618) also distinguished fairies and demons.⁵⁹² These examples show that while some differentiated between various non-human beings in their cosmos, others lost their confidence in distinguishing them through suggestive questioning. People surely believed they encountered spirits and like fairies, brownies, *trows*, familiars, ghosts and Christian spirits such as angels and demons.

⁵⁸⁶ Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 232; Lerner, *Enemies of God*, 31; Miller, "Men in Black," 147, 153.

⁵⁸⁷ Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 232; Miller, "Men in Black," 148-9.

⁵⁸⁸ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 352-3.

⁵⁸⁹ *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, xi-xii.

⁵⁹⁰ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 36-8.

⁵⁹¹ Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm," 147; *Miscellany of the Abbotsford Club*, vol. 1, ed. James Maidment (Edinburgh: [The Club], 1837), 139; SSW.

⁵⁹² Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm," 147; *Trial, Confession, and Execution of Isobel Inch, John Stewart, Margaret Barclay & Isobel Crawford, for Witchcraft, at Irvine, Anno 1618* (Ardrossan and Saltcouats n.d. 1855), 12; SSW.

While they interpreted their personal spirits as mainly being benevolent, they were aware that most spirits had an ambiguous morality and they could not always clearly differentiate them.⁵⁹³

The depiction of the Devil in King James' *Daemonologie* was close to medieval and biblical descriptions. James described him as fallen angel who could transform himself into an angel of light. The Devil appeared as dog, cat, ape or other beast, or he could enter a dead body when the witches called for him. At sabbaths, he usually appeared as a man who could transform into a goat. Besides, James also classified other spirits such as various ghosts, fairies and brownies as guises adapted by demons. Since theologians argued that demons only had spiritual form and were not of flesh and blood, the Devil could take any form he wanted and possess or inhabit bodies.⁵⁹⁴ The various guises of the Devil in King James' *Daemonologie* correspond with the image of the Devil as a creation of elite theologians and demonologists of the Judeo-Christian tradition. In their attempt to eradicate non-orthodox superstitions, they fused biblical conceptions of the Devil with pagan gods and lesser deities of antiquity like fauns, nymphs and satyrs who were later interpreted as fairies. The fusion of Devils and fairies was further advanced during the Reformation which exploited the threat of a satanic invasion for their programme of spiritual and religious reform and emphasised the guilt and morality of the individual.⁵⁹⁵

Overall, demonic elements such as the pact and corporeal presence of the Devil were rather a concern to prosecutors than accused. The stereotype of the Devil was ill-defined in Scotland before 1590. The witches' relationship with Satan rather concerned higher courts, including the Court of Justiciary and the Privy Council, than lower courts like Kirk sessions as they were mainly engaged with *maleficium*. In many trials, the Devil was absent. Stuart Macdonald had expected the Devil to play a dominant role in witchcraft trials after 1590 in Fife, but he found out that the fairies played a bigger role than diabolic theory. Instead of readily adopting the cumulative concept, peasants mixed fairy belief with elite notions and thus had a bigger role in shaping ideas of authorities than previously assumed. The absence of the Devil in many trials could be due to the incomplete nature of the records themselves, regional particularism, or that his presence was so clear that it did not need to be stated. The Devil could appear in the trials as an entity walking on earth or as an abstract concept.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹³ Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm," 167-9.

⁵⁹⁴ Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 232; King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 360, 372-3, 383, 387; Miller, "Men in Black," 147-8.

⁵⁹⁵ Briggs, *Fairies in Tradition*, 11-2; Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 233-4; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 5; Miller, "Men in Black," 159; Russell, *History of Witchcraft*, 39-41.

⁵⁹⁶ Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 232-3; Stuart Macdonald, "In Search of the Devil in Fife Witchcraft Cases: 1560-1705," in *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context*, ed. Julian Goodare (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 35-7, 45-7; Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 3, 9-10; Miller, "Men in Black," 145.

The Appearance of the Devil in the Scottish Witchcraft Trials

A detailed study of the Devil's appearance in Scottish witchcraft trials was provided by Joyce Miller. She found 392 out of 3.837 Scottish witchcraft trials mentioning demonic figures. Out of the 392 references to demonic figures listed by the SSW, 250 appear as a human male, 26 as female humans, 60 in animal form, 18 as fairies, 17 as unidentified spirits, 5 as ghosts, and 3 as inanimate objects including a ruck of hay, a wind and a whirlwind. There is also one Devil appearing as insect and another one in the form of a baby or child. Men and women described the Devil usually as male while 6 men and 20 women described him as female. Male witches also mentioned spirits, ghosts, fairies and unspecified demons while babies, insects and inanimate objects were only mentioned by women. The Devil mostly appeared in corporeal form as human or animal but also as a spirit. Although there are some references to the demonic stereotype as the Devil appearing in black, with cloven feet and fearsome creature he mostly looks quite ordinary and could be dressed in various colours. The male Devil could appear like a gentleman as pleasant, pretty and gallant but also as grim, fearful, fierce, rough, and cold. He was mostly described as large or 'meikle' rather than small and he could wear different types of bonnets, hats, coats, shawls, hoods or be simply very well-dressed.⁵⁹⁷

Most often the Devil was described as a man dressed in black or as 'black man' referring to his clothing, hair or skin. The colour black was associated with sin and demonic activity and was also a common appearance of Satan in England, Spain, Italy and other witch-hunting countries. Miller suggested that the Devil's depiction as man in black gown could refer to a pre- and post-Reformation cleric. Furthermore, she argued that the Devil appearing as black man was clearly a 17th century phenomenon since there were 9 cases of it before 1600, 17 of them between 1600-50 and 81 trials after 1650.⁵⁹⁸ The fact that the appearance of the Devil as black man is rather a phenomenon of the 17th century could indicate that this guise reflects an inversion of a Protestant priest like Normand and Roberts as well as King James indicated by interpreting the sabbath as inversion of the Protestant mass.⁵⁹⁹ This latter argument is affirmed by looking at the trials themselves since the Devil as a black man performing a ceremony similar to a black mass firstly appears in the North Berwick trials and was described by Agnes Sampson (Edinburgh 1591).⁶⁰⁰ During the late 16th and early 17th century, the 'black man' was not solely interpreted as Satan himself by the populace. Marion Grant (Aberdeen 1597) confessed that she had a connection to a black man whom she called 'Chrystsonday' and who assisted her in healing. This figure was clearly interpreted as Devil by her interrogators while Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) also stated that he had a connection with

⁵⁹⁷ Miller, "Men in Black," 145, 148-9, 151, 159-160; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 61-2.

⁵⁹⁸ Miller, "Men in Black," 149-152.

⁵⁹⁹ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 385-7; Normand, *Witchcraft*, 341-2.

⁶⁰⁰ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 239.

'Christsonday' but he described him as fair angel in white clothes and son of God.⁶⁰¹ Elspeth Reoch (Orkney 1616) also confessed that she met a man 'cled in blak' while walking beside a loch. While the court again identified this figure as the Devil, she stated that it was a 'farie man quha wes sumtyme her kinsman callit Johne Stewart quha wes slane'.⁶⁰² During the 17th century, the indoctrination from above stereotypically identifying the Devil with a black man slowly showed off. Alexander Hammiltoun (Haddington 1630) stated that he saw the Devil once 'in the schaipe and liknes of ane blak man all cled in blak without ane cloik with ane wand in his hand ... [and other time] the devil his maister being rydeing upone ane black horse'.⁶⁰³ Agnes Hunter (Haddington 1649) confessed that the Devil first appeared to her like a gentleman and another time as a black man.⁶⁰⁴ There is still some evidence that the folk used to fuse fairies or eldritch beings with Satan during the middle of the 17th century. Margaret Alexander (Linlithgow 1647) stated that she met a man in black clothes to whom she referred as the king of fairies while Grissell McCairtney (Kirkcudbright 1658) saw a company of women at an eldrige palce accompanied by a black, ugly, gruesome man.⁶⁰⁵ From around 1660 onwards, the Devil started to appear more monstrous. As Miller pointed out, the cloven-footed Devil only appears in trials between 1661-1680 which is a sign for the increasing influence of elite ideas on the language of witchcraft.⁶⁰⁶ Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) described the Devil as 'meikle, blak, roch man, werie cold ... Somtymes he haid buit is and sometimes shoes on his foot; but still his foot ar forked and cloven'. At their sabbath meetings, each witch had a devil waiting upon her and Gowdie's own demon was dressed in black. The master Devil was bigger and more awfull than the others and they sometimes called him 'Blak Johne'. All those devils appeared in the shape of men, but their master could also appear in the shape of various animals.⁶⁰⁷ Similarly, Jonet Braidheid (Nairn 1662) described the Devil as a 'meikle, roch, blak man, cloven footed, werie cold'.⁶⁰⁸ Jonet Morisone (Bute 1662) first saw the Devil as 'black rough fierce man'. At their next meeting, he appeared in white 'or as a mane naked with a great black heid'.⁶⁰⁹ Margaret Jackson, Jon Stewart, and Bessie Weir (Renfrew 1677) described the Devil as black man with white hand cuffs, hogers (leg coverings), without shoes but with cloven feet.⁶¹⁰

In 23 trials, the Devil appeared as a man in green which is associated with misfortune rather than sin and also with fairies or elves who were interpreted as demonic figures themselves. Although

⁶⁰¹ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 170-2 (Marion Grant); *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 120, 124 (Andro Man).

⁶⁰² *Lawting Sheriff and Justice Courts*, 188-9.

⁶⁰³ *SJC*, vol. 1, 144.

⁶⁰⁴ *RPC*, 2nd series, vol. 8, 190.

⁶⁰⁵ *SSW*; CH2/467/1/79 (Margaret Alexander); *SSW* (Grissell McCairtney).

⁶⁰⁶ Miller, "Men in Black," 153.

⁶⁰⁷ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 603, 606, 613.

⁶⁰⁸ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 617.

⁶⁰⁹ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 20-1.

⁶¹⁰ *SSW*.

not all 'men in green' were necessarily interpreted as fairies by contemporaries, there is a certain link between the two figures. Moreover, Miller argues that the conflation of green, fairies, and Devils in the confessions shows that the Early Modern Scottish Devil was a mixture of elite demonological and popular beliefs rather than simply relating to elite fantasies.⁶¹¹ There are several examples for devils and fairies appearing in green in fairy-related witchcraft trials. Alesoun Pierson (Fife 1588) confessed to have met a man 'cled in grene clathis'.⁶¹² Similarly, Elspeth Reoch (Orkney 1616), Janet Trall (Perth 1623) and Barbria Parish (Linlithgow 1647) met the fairies being dressed in green.⁶¹³ Elizabeth Bathgate (Berwick 1634) 'was seen by two young men at 12 hours at even standing bare legged ... at the back of her yard, conferring with the devil, who was in green cloathes'.⁶¹⁴ Agnes Hunter (Haddington 1649) once saw the Devil as a 'man in grein cloathes' who wanted her to become his servant.⁶¹⁵ The second time Margrat Dickson (Haddington 1649) met the Devil, he appeared as 'ane gentilman in grein clothes at twelve hours of the day'.⁶¹⁶ In her first confession, Issobell Smith (Haddington 1661) stated that she saw the Devil in the shape of a 'blak man with grein cloathes' and in a later confession she stated that he first appeared as a gentleman.⁶¹⁷

Unlike fairies, which could either be big or small, and could alter their age and appearance but only looked like a humans or ghosts,⁶¹⁸ the Devil could transform himself into an animal. According to the Bible, the Devil could change his appearance and was depicted in the shape of various monstrous animals. Similarly, King James argued in his *Daemonologie* that the Devil could appear as dog, cat, ape, or other beast but most often as goat. In the trial testimonials, the Devil appears more ordinary rather than a monstrous beast. All of the demonic animals in the trials were domestic including dogs, cats, birds, horses, foals, deer, stags, cows, calves, lambs, rats and beasts which were hardly specified. Apart from perhaps deer and stag they were also well-known to town-dwellers.⁶¹⁹ Like the man in black, the Devil as animal does not appear in fairy-related trials prior to the North Berwick trials. Thus, this could also be an elite idea which was indoctrinated to the peasants. Agnes Sampson (Edinburgh 1591) was the first one to confess that a devil called 'Elva' came to her in the shape of a dog during her healing rituals.⁶²⁰ Miller argued that the name of the spirit could probably refer to the Hebrew term for gods *Elohim*. This interpretation would however require a sophisticated theological knowledge which would be surprising given Agnes' ordinary

⁶¹¹ Miller, "Men in Black," 149-150; Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 63; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 57-8.

⁶¹² *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 163.

⁶¹³ *Lawting Sheriff and Justice Courts*, 188 (Elspeth Reoch); *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, xii (Janet Trall); SSW (Barbria Parish).

⁶¹⁴ *Miscellany of the Spottiswoode Society*, vol. 2, 65.

⁶¹⁵ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 190.

⁶¹⁶ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 191.

⁶¹⁷ RPC, 3rd series, vol. 1, 650.

⁶¹⁸ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 47, 55-7.

⁶¹⁹ Miller, "Men in Black," 152-4.

⁶²⁰ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 235-6.

background.⁶²¹ Thus, it is more probable that she referred to an elf as Henderson and Cowan suggested.⁶²² Besides, there are several other examples for devils appearing as animals. Agnes Wobster (Aberdeen 1597) was accused 'that Sathan apperit to the, sextene yeiris sensyne, in the liknes of a lamb, quhom thow callis God, and ... [another time] in the liknes of a calff'.⁶²³ Marioun Grant (Aberdeen 1597) confessed that the Devil once appeared as black stag while Issobell Oige (Aberdeen 1597) said the Devil appeared to her as a beetle and another time as beast.⁶²⁴ Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) confessed that 'at the convention of the wiches, that their rysis ane blak beist amangis thame ... and the said vechis kissis the beist ars' while Christsonday appeared on Ruidday 'in liknes of a staig'.⁶²⁵ Descriptions of animal devils were also common during the 17th century. Katharine Oswald (Edinburgh 1629) stated that 'the devil appeirit to thame first in the liknes of ane foil and than in the liknes of ane man' while Alexander Hammiltoun (Haddington 1630) described the Devil appearing as a black man who also appeared 'in the liknes of ane corbie ... ane kat ... ane dog ... or ony uther sic beist'.⁶²⁶ Margret Dobson (Berwick 1649) confessed that the Devil first appeared to her as a man but also as 'great dogg' and as 'ane foall'.⁶²⁷ Jonet Thomson (Haddington 1660) said the Devil changed from a cow into a man in green clothes while Elspet Graham (Edinburgh 1661) saw the Devil in the shape of a black dog.⁶²⁸ Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) stated that the Devil could appear as man but also as dear, crow, shep, bull, rea, dog or stirk.⁶²⁹ Margaret McWilliam (Bute 1662) said she first saw the Devil as brown dog who turned into a young men and another time he came to her as a cat.⁶³⁰

Miller found 26 trials where the Devil appeared as a female, and 32 if the female fairies are added. They appeared in green, white, or in one case like the accused herself. Unlike the male devils, there are no descriptions of the size, nature, and physical appearances of female devils. There are however some implications in the much higher frequency of male devils compared to female ones: Early Modern Christian society saw God but also the Devil, who was theoretically his antithesis, as male while the female witch being subordinated to the male Devil reflected the contemporary gender hierarchy. The fairy queen appeared in at least six Scottish witchcraft trials. Since three of them fell into the 16th century (1576 Bessie Dunlop, 1588 Alisoun Pierson, 1598 Andro Man) and three of them into the 17th century (1631 John Philip, 1662 Issobel Gowdie, 1670 Jean Weir), Miller

⁶²¹ Miller, "Men in Black," 158.

⁶²² Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 132.

⁶²³ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 129.

⁶²⁴ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 172 (Marioun Grant); *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 151-2 (Issobell Oige).

⁶²⁵ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 121, 124.

⁶²⁶ SJC, vol. 1, 132 (Katharine Oswald); SJC, vol. 1, 145 (Alexander Hammiltoun).

⁶²⁷ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 196.

⁶²⁸ SSW.

⁶²⁹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 603, 611, 613.

⁶³⁰ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 18.

was right in suggesting that the Queen of elves did not disappear during the course of the witch-hunts and through indoctrination from above. In 21 trials, the female Devil is described as Antiochia, wife of the Devil but there is an over-representation of this description. Since all of those testimonies derive from one large group tried in 1697, it rather shows the opinion of the court rather than proofing that this was a popular idea.⁶³¹ Two of the female demons wore white which usually represents virginity and purity. Marioun Grant (Aberdeen 1597) called the Devil 'Our Ladye' dressed in a white waistcoat. Katherine Remy (Clackmannan 1658) also mentions a female devil in a white gown but later stated it might as well have been another accused witch.⁶³² Like Marioun Grant, Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) mentions 'Owr Ladie' together with the Devil and the holy trinity in one of her charms.⁶³³ Miller and Goodare argued that this figure could represent the Virgin Mary and demonstrate the popularity of Marian cults in the 16th century. Post-Reformation church theology had removed the mother of Christ as well as saints from holy worship and they were deemed as demonic.⁶³⁴ The female devil could also appear as a spirit as in the trial of Jean Weir (Edinburgh 1670) or in the shape of the witch herself, as one of the accusers of Agnes Wobster (Aberdeen 1597) suggested.⁶³⁵

According to Miller, the Devil appeared in spiritual form in 17 trials. These spirits could be male or female. Some of them seem like ghosts, which were already described in a former chapter, and others were described as angels.⁶³⁶ Issobell Watsonne (Stirling 1590) confessed that she met the Devil appearing as angel, but also as human male together with the 'fair folk'. The angel offered to protect her if she served him.⁶³⁷ Marioun Grant (Aberdeen 1597) and Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) both called the Devil 'Christsonday'. Andro described him as 'fair angell, and clad in quhyt claythis' and 'Goddis godsone'.⁶³⁸ Since all references to angels come from the 16th century, they rather indicate the attack on pre-Reformation beliefs in saints, angels and the Virgin Mary than the theological definition of the Devil as fallen angel. Miller also argues that angels appear rarely in confessions as they were not seen as a threat and the interest in them declined in post-Reformation Scotland while their existence was no longer accepted during the 17th century.⁶³⁹ Sometimes the Devil is described as rather elusive figure like Katherine Jonesdochter's (Shetland 1616) 'bowman of

⁶³¹ Miller, "Men in Black," 154-5; For fairy queen compare to chapter: 'Popular Ideas about Fairies during the time of the Witch Hunts'.

⁶³² Miller, "Men in Black," 155-6; Compare to: CH2/722/6/93 (Katharine Remy); *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 171 (Marioun Grant).

⁶³³ *Criminal Trials*, vol.3, 608.

⁶³⁴ Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm," 145; Miller, "Men in Black," 155-6.

⁶³⁵ SSW; JC2/13/10 (Jean Weir); *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 129 (Agnes Wobster).

⁶³⁶ Miller, "Men in Black," 156-9.

⁶³⁷ SSW; CH2/722/2/23-4.

⁶³⁸ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 170-2 (Marioun Grant); *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 120, 124 (Andro Man).

⁶³⁹ Miller, "Men in Black," 157-8.

Hildiswick and Eschenes'.⁶⁴⁰ He also rarely appears as an invisible spirit.⁶⁴¹ Issobell Oige (Aberdeen 1597) stated that the Devil was once invisible while he played an instrument at the sabbath.⁶⁴² Jean Brown (Wigtown 1706) had regular conversation with invisible spirits who were not fairies but God and the holy trinity. They helped her cure sicknesses.⁶⁴³ It can be argued that the interest of the authorities of angels and other spirits increasingly declined as the trials tend to concentrate on more simplified descriptions of the Devil during the 17th century.⁶⁴⁴

Ultimately, the Devil very rarely appeared as an invisible spirit in Scotland but rather in a more physical and quite ordinary form. There was also an increasing presence of the Devil during the 17th century when depictions of him as a black man became more uniform. Most likely, this reflected the increasing anxiety about the Devil's presence on those conducting the trials along with an increasing influence of elite demonology and the repression of pre-Reformation beings like angels and the Virgin Mary and pre-Christian spirits like fairies.⁶⁴⁵

The Advent of the Demonic Pact and the Witches' Sabbath in Scotland

Several historians argued that the full adoption of the continental diabolic theory including the demonic pact, the Devil's mark, the ability of witches to fly and the idea that they gathered periodically happened during the 1590s in Scotland. There has been an extensive debate among historians about the role of King James VI and his involvement in the North Berwick trials in 1590-1 in the introduction of the diabolical theory.⁶⁴⁶ Christina Larner argued that the North Berwick trials were of great importance for the study of the Scottish witch-hunts. They represent the first mass trials in Scotland and were the last political trials for treason. She stated that the continental witch theory was introduced to Scotland during these trials and they stimulated a number of trials until 1597 when the King himself brought them to an end.⁶⁴⁷ Larner also argued that King James played a central role in the introduction of continental demonology to Scotland. She sub-divided his reign into three phases: The first phase was during James' early manhood before 1590. Despite the introduction of the Scottish Witchcraft Act in 1563, there were few trials until 1590 and even less led to an execution. Witchcraft beliefs did not yet involve the demonic pact, night-flying or *incubi* and *succubi*. Lawyers, theologians and James himself had no interest in witchcraft and the demonic pact by then. There are no works about witchcraft to be found in the catalogues of books known to James in his youth and except for some references to the Devil, James made no direct references to

⁶⁴⁰ *Court Book of Shetland*, 38; Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm," 154-5.

⁶⁴¹ Miller, "Men in Black," 158-9.

⁶⁴² *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 152.

⁶⁴³ SSW; CH2/373/1/220-1.

⁶⁴⁴ Miller, "Men in Black," 156-9.

⁶⁴⁵ Miller, "Men in Black," 152-160.

⁶⁴⁶ Goodare "Witchcraft in Scotland," 303-5; Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 241-2.

⁶⁴⁷ Larner, *Enemies of God*, 69.

witchcraft. This changed rapidly during the second phase when James became convinced that over 300 witches tried to kill him and his bride Anne of Denmark. Anne set sail for Scotland to marry James in autumn 1589, but she was forced to take refuge in Olso after heavy sea storms. Thereafter King James came to escort her to Scotland. He spent the winter in Denmark where he married Anne. In Denmark, where witch-hunting was endemic during the time, he heard for the first time about continental demonological theories. During his six-month-stay, he enjoyed lively discussions with the astronomer Tycho Brahe, Nils Hemmingsen and Lutheran theologians. Despite heavy storms, King James and Queen Anne arrived safely on 1 May 1590 in Scotland. This time, the storms were attributed to witches and their master the Devil. Soon witchcraft trials in Copenhagen and Scotland were held. Between November 1590 and May 1591 more than 100 suspects were examined and a large number was executed. The witches were thought to have raised sea storms by melting wax images. Physical harming, as well as healing and treason were no new elements in witchcraft trials, but the notion of the demonic pact and witches' meetings did not appear in Scotland before.⁶⁴⁸ To King James, the trials were mainly treason trials before they were witchcraft trials and he became interested in them as they were an assault on his own life. Since he was convinced that he was chosen to be king by God himself, it could only be the Devil who tried to overthrow him. In *Newes from Scotland* (1591), he was therefore described as Satan's worst enemy:⁶⁴⁹ 'the witches demanded of the devil why he did bear such hatred to the king, who answered, by reason the king is the greatest enemy he hath in the world.'⁶⁵⁰ King James further demonstrated his new interest in witchcraft in his treatise *Daemonologie* (1597), the only demonological treatise written by a monarch. He wrote it to refute the sceptical Englishman Reginald Scot and the Dutch physician Johann Weyer, to justify his actions during the witch-hunts arguing that witchcraft was a real threat to society, to show his intellectual and religious capabilities and as a testimonial for ideal monarchy as antithesis to the Devil as personified chaos and disobedience. The tract shows that not only the Church but also the State was worried about the apocalypse.⁶⁵¹ During the Third phase after James' succession of the English throne in 1603, he became sceptic of the reality of the witches' conspiracy as scepticism about the subject was widespread in England where the continental theory was never

⁶⁴⁸ Goodare, "Witchcraft in Scotland," 304; Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 241-2; Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 5-17; Jenny Wormald, "The Witches, the Devil and the King," in *Freedom and Authority: Scotland: c.1050-c.1650*, ed. T. Brotherstone and D. Ditchburn (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 166.

⁶⁴⁹ Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 242; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 121-4; Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 13-5.

⁶⁵⁰ *News from Scotland*, in *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 315.

⁶⁵¹ Stuart Clark, "King James's *Daemonologie*: Witchcraft and Kingship," in *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft*, ed. Sydney Anglo (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 156-181; Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 242; Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 15-6.

established. Stuart Clark argued that there were even less witchcraft prosecutions in England after 1603 than in Elizabethan times.⁶⁵²

Although Larner's arguments were influential for a time, there has been severe criticism.⁶⁵³ P.G. Maxwell-Stuart argued that James knew Montgomery's *Flyting* presented at the court during the 1580s and was, therefore, aware of stories about witches and fairies before 1590. Besides, Danish witchcraft trials at the time were more concerned with sorcery and *maleficium* than any diabolic notions of the crime and there is no evidence that the King discussed the topic of witchcraft while he was in Denmark.⁶⁵⁴ Thomas Riis confirmed the latter arguments and stated that the parallel Danish trials unlikely to have caused the Scottish trials. Rather, the North Berwick trials were originally trials against high treason also known to Roman law which heavily influenced Scotland.⁶⁵⁵ Jenny Wormald emphasized that the King certainly became interested in witchcraft before 1590 and that the witchcraft trials were not merely started by him. Instead, traces of the demonic pact can also be found before the North Berwick trials since John Knox already saw a link between the witch and the Devil and the first detailed indictment of Janet Boyman (Ayr 1572) leaves hints for an involvement of a demonic power. Wormald also argued that the King was sceptical about the reality of witchcraft before the North Berwick trials as well as during the year he wrote his *Daemonologie*.⁶⁵⁶ The latter argument has been questioned by Goodare who stated that James' decision to publish his *Daemonologie* demonstrates his support for demonological theory.⁶⁵⁷ Levack emphasised that witchcraft to James was not only a religious but also a political crime of treason. Like Wormald, he argued that King James was not responsible for the introduction of the demonic pact because the idea was implicit in the condemnation of necromancy in the Scottish Witchcraft Act of 1563 and witches were already searched for the Devil's mark in 1572. Thus, the only new element in the North Berwick trials was the idea of the witches' sabbath according to Levack.⁶⁵⁸

Descriptions of the Scottish sabbath never fully adopted the continental standards but built a Scottish variation which was partly the responsibly of King James since he wrote little about it in his *Deamonologie*. Several scholars argued that the Scottish sabbath mostly involved merriment and revel while the Devil played the pipes and that it was similar to a fairy revel. The emphasis on the testimonies of the North Berwick trials lay mostly on harmful magic against the king while naked

⁶⁵² Clark, "King James's *Deamonologie*," 161-2; Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 5, 18-20.

⁶⁵³ Goodare, "Witchcraft in Scotland," 304-5; Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 241-2.

⁶⁵⁴ P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, "The Fear of the King is Death: James VI and the Witches of East Lothian," in *Fear in Early Modern Society*, ed. William G. Naphy and Penny Roberts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 211-3.

⁶⁵⁵ Thomas Riis, *Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot... Scottish – Danish Relations c. 1450-1707* ([Odense]: Odense University Press, 1988), 266-9.

⁶⁵⁶ Wormald, "The Witches," 170-9.

⁶⁵⁷ Julian Goodare, "The Scottish Witchcraft Panic of 1597," in *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context*, ed. Julian Goodare (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 65-6.

⁶⁵⁸ Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland*, 38-41.

dancing, promiscuous sexual intercourse, or the offering of unbaptized children to the Devil were not mentioned. The only similar elements to the continental standard were the ritualistic kiss on the Devil's buttocks as well as the dates of the assemblies on Lammas Eve (31 July) and All Hallows' Eve (31 October). Scottish sabbath descriptions never depicted an inversion of Roman Catholic service but rather of a Protestant religious service. The mockery of the Protestant mass is depicted in the North Berwick trials, which will be discussed later, and also in James' *Daemonologie*.⁶⁵⁹ The inversion of Protestant mass involved the mockery of preaching from the pulpit as well as the two remaining protestant sacraments of Eucharist and baptism, and worshipping the Devil by kissing his buttock. This parody of Protestant mass is described by King James as follows:⁶⁶⁰

For as the servants of God publicly use to convene for serving of him, so makes he them in great numbers convene (though publicly they dare not) for his service. As none convenes to the adoration of worshipping of God except they be marked with his seal – the sacrament of baptism – so none serves Satan and convenes to the adoring of him that are not marked ... As the minister sent by God teacheth plainly at the time of their public conventions how to serve him in spirit and truth, so that unclean spirit in his own person teacheth his disciples at the time of their convening how to work all kind of mischief. And craves compt of all their horrible and detestable proceedings past, for advancement of his service ... he oft-times makes his slaves to convene in these very places which are detestate and ordained for the convening of the servants of God (I mean by churches). ... But further, witches oft-times confess not only his convening in the church with them, but his occupying of the pulpit, yea, their form of adoration to be the kissing of his hinder parts ... [while] he, appearing in form of a goat buck, hath publicly that dishonest homage done unto him by everyone of the people.⁶⁶¹

While James wrote little about the witches' sabbath, he emphasised the importance of the demonic pact and thus helped to make the pact the central Scottish witch belief.⁶⁶² James had a clear idea about the initiation of the witch into the Devil's service. This comprised a solitary meeting of the Devil and his promise to help, the renunciation of baptism and receiving of his mark and the fulfilment of the Devil's promises in obtaining wealth and revenge for the witches.⁶⁶³

he allures to follow him by promising unto them great riches and worldly commodity ... he first find an entress ready for him, either by the great ignorance of the person of the person he deals with joined with an evil life, or else by their carelessness and contempt of God. And finding them in an utter despair for one of these two former causes ... he prepares the way by ... filling the further and further with despair while he finds the time proper to discover himself unto them. At which time, either upon

⁶⁵⁹ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 135; Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland*, 39-40, 42-4, 46-7; Stuart Macdonald, "Devil in Fife," 47; Maxwell-Stuart, *Great Scottish Witch-Hunt*, 140.

⁶⁶⁰ Normand, *Witchcraft*, 341-2.

⁶⁶¹ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 385-7.

⁶⁶² Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland*, 43-4.

⁶⁶³ Normand, *Witchcraft*, 346.

their walking solitary in the fields, or else lying panning in their bed, but always without the company of any other, he either by a voice or in likeness of a man inquires of them what troubles them; and promiseth them a sudden and certain way of remedy, ... they follow his advice ... and syne set another tryst where they may meet again. At which time, ... he first persuades them to addict themselves to his service; ... he then ... makes them to renounce their God and baptism directly, and gives them his mark upon some secret place of their body. ... At their third meeting, he makes a show to be careful to perform his promises, either by teaching them ways how to get themselves revenge, ... or else by teaching them lessons, how ... they may obtain gain and worldly commodities⁶⁶⁴

Although the sabbath and the pact were held possible by James, he was sceptical about the ability of witches to fly and transform themselves into animals.⁶⁶⁵ James that witches could only get to the sabbath in two ways. First, they could go there in a 'natural' way through riding or sailing or else they could be carried away by a spirit. Animal metamorphosis or going out in spirit while the body is left behind is impossible and can only be delusions of the Devil according to the king.⁶⁶⁶ The latter method of transport was not possible because 'the soul once parting from the body cannot wander any longer in the world, but to the own resting place must it go immediately.' Thus, the existence of ghosts was impossible for James and they could only be guises of the Devil and his demons.⁶⁶⁷

Coming back to the demonic pact, Lauren Martin rightly argued that the pact did not only reflect elite ideas but also peasant realities and especially Scottish marriage. While the pact was similar to a feudal relationship and covenant theology, only marriage expresses the heterosexuality of the demonic pact. Marriage, as well as the pact, reflect a hierarchical contract sealed by sex. In Scotland, there were two forms of marriage known at the time of the witch-hunts. People could marry regularly and in public or irregularly through a secret meeting where they made promises and had sex. This irregular marriage was exactly the way how most female witches entered the service of the Devil.⁶⁶⁸

Regarding the statistics, Willumsen argued that more women than men confessed to a demonic pact and that almost twice as many women confessed this during panic years as compared to non-panic years. Due to a more restricted torture after 1662, there was a decline of demonological confessions. However, demonological ideas continued to be influential among the peasants after the interest in their prosecution decreased among legal officials. Furthermore, women confessed witches' meetings eight times as often as men. Such accusations especially helped increasing trial

⁶⁶⁴ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 382-4.

⁶⁶⁵ Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland*, 46-7.

⁶⁶⁶ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 387-9.

⁶⁶⁷ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 390.

⁶⁶⁸ Lauren Martin, "The Devil and the Domestic: Witchcraft, Quarrels and Women's Work in Scotland," in *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context*, ed. Julian Goodare (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 73-89.

numbers in panic years through denunciations of other witches.⁶⁶⁹ If we look at the fairy-related trials, 93 out of the 127 cases (73,2%) are characterised as 'demonic' meaning that they either include the demonic pact or witches' meetings. Among the trials explicitly mentioning fairies, demonic elements were less dominant accounting for 55,8%. Similarly, 74% of the 127 fairy-related trials include witches' meetings while 53,5% of the trials explicitly mentioning fairies refer to witches' meetings. In the categories 'demonic' and 'witches' meetings' there are around 14% male witches in the fairy-related trials which reflects the gender distribution of fairy-related trials and Scottish witchcraft trials in general. Both categories are prominent in the 1590's and then only from the 1640's onwards.⁶⁷⁰ Therefore, these elements were mainly present in panic years and also during the second half of the 17th century when the indoctrination of the demonological theory really started to show off. Trials explicitly mentioning fairies were less likely to relate to the demonic pact or witches' meetings than other trials which can refer to the fact that fairies were often seen as benevolent creatures helping in healing but also because they were more likely to appear in earlier trials before the demonological elements became very prominent during the middle of the 17th century.

Summing up, King James alone did not bring large witchcraft panics to Scotland. Although the North Berwick trials and the publication of *Newes from Scotland* and *Daemonologie* had an important impact on spreading the demonological theory, the preconditions for its acceptance were there before. As Stuart Clark noted, the learned ideas of the Devil and educated witchcraft theory did not cause hunts but reverse was true.⁶⁷¹ The cumulative concept of witchcraft did not simply emerge during the 15th century and then spread un-altered to other countries. On the contrary, it was an adaptable to different regional traditions and changed over time while there was a constant interaction between demonological treatises and witchcraft trials. The preconditions leading to a fast adoption of the diabolic theory in Scotland after 1590 were changes in the legal system, the use of torture, the repression of non-orthodox practices and beliefs by the kirk, harvest failures and plagues. It was also highly probable that judicial, religious, social and political elites already had some knowledge of the demonic pact before King James' journey to Denmark. A further precondition for the adoption of the cumulative concept among the populace was the demonization of fairy belief from at least the 1570s onwards. Demonic features appearing in Scottish witchcraft thus reflected learned ideas which were mixed with regional traditions such as the Scottish marriage, covenanting ideology, popular feasts, the Protestant mass and fairy belief.⁶⁷² After all, it is no wonder that Scottish fairy belief being very similar to continental ideas about night-flying witches which originally

⁶⁶⁹ Willumsen, *Witches of the North*, 92-4.

⁶⁷⁰ Compare to Table 1 (Appendix).

⁶⁷¹ Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, vii; Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 248-9.

⁶⁷² Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 242-4, 248-9; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 127, 138; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 47-8.

contributed to the development of the cumulative concept also facilitated the adoption of the diabolic theory in Scotland.

The Witches' Relationship to the Devil in the Scottish Witchcraft Trials

Fairies as well as demons appeared spontaneously rather than being called for and often in a moment when the future witch or magical practitioner was alone in the countryside or at home.⁶⁷³ Fairies and devils could be met in several wild places. While Jonet Boyman (Ayr 1572) used to invoke evil spirits at an eldritch well, Marioun Lynn (Haddington 1659) first met the Devil when she was drawing water from a well in Tranent in the morning.⁶⁷⁴ Elspeth Reoch (Orkney 1616) met a black man and another man in green tartan plain when she was walking beside a loch.⁶⁷⁵ Alexander Hammiltoun (Haddington 1630) made a pact with the Devil on the 'Hugstoun hillis' at Michaelmas and continued to meet him sometimes accompanied by others on hills.⁶⁷⁶ Similarly, Donald McIlImichael (Argyll 1677) confessed that he was invited by several people dancing inside a hill when he was travelling at night 'betwixt Ardturr and Glackiriska'.⁶⁷⁷ There are several examples where the Devil appears between one place and another which probably reflects the notion that he is a liminal creature who could be met in liminal places just like the fairies.⁶⁷⁸ Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) met the ghost Thome Reid first between her house and the yard of Monkcastell and another time between her house and a thorn tree.⁶⁷⁹ Agnes Thomson (Edinburgh 1661) met the Devil when she was on her way home from Edinburgh where he came out of a brown bush at midnight.⁶⁸⁰ Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) first met the Devil 'betuix the townes of *Drumdewin* and *the Headis*' while Jonet Morisone (Bute 1662) said she met him 'as shee was going from the toune of Boot till her owne house in the twilight'.⁶⁸¹ Others saw the Devil outside in the fields or in their own yard. Agnes Sampson (Edinburgh 1591) met the Devil when she was alone in the fields before her house in Keyth.⁶⁸² Marioun Grant (Aberdeen 1597) also regularly met the Devil in the fields while Margaret NcWilliam (Bute 1662) first met him at when 'she went owt to a fald beneath her hous'.⁶⁸³ Satan appeared to Elizabeth Bathgate (Berwick 1634) like a man in green clothes 'at the back of her

⁶⁷³ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 60.

⁶⁷⁴ JC26/1/67 (Jonet Boyman); SSW (Marioun Lynn).

⁶⁷⁵ *Lawting Sheriff and Justice Courts*, 188.

⁶⁷⁶ SJC, vol. 1, 144-5.

⁶⁷⁷ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 37.

⁶⁷⁸ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 39-40, 44; Kirk, *Secret Common-Wealth*, 79, 85; Narváez, "Newfoundland Berry Pickers," 337-8.

⁶⁷⁹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 51-2.

⁶⁸⁰ SSW.

⁶⁸¹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 603 (Issobell Gowdie); *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 20 (Jonet Morisone).

⁶⁸² *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 239.

⁶⁸³ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 171 (Marioun Grant); *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 18 (Margaret NcWilliam).

yard'.⁶⁸⁴ The Devil and other demonic spirits could even visit their future accomplices in their own houses. Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) met Thome Reid in her own house where she also first met the Queen of Elfame.⁶⁸⁵ Similarly, Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) first met the Queen of Elphen in the house of his mother while Jonet Coutts (Peebles 1650) met the Devil at her mother's house.⁶⁸⁶ Margaret Dickson (Haddington 1649) said she met the Devil in her own house.⁶⁸⁷ Rarely, the Devil first met the future witch at the sabbath like in the case of Jonet Braidheid (Nairn 1662) who met him at the kirk of Nairne.⁶⁸⁸ Thus, Satan or fairies appeared in quite ordinary places inside or outside the house.

Although the Devil usually appeared personally, he sometimes sent witches to make the first contact and appoint a meeting just as the fairies sometimes first sent other spirits or ghosts to humans.⁶⁸⁹ Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) and Alesoun Pierson (Fife 1588) first had contact with ghosts before they met the good neighbours and their queen.⁶⁹⁰ In the case of Katherine Oswald (Edinburgh 1629) the Devil sent the warlock Alexander Hammiltoun to tell her where and when she should meet the Devil and he came with her to the meeting.⁶⁹¹ Similarly, Issobell Smith (Haddington 1661) confessed that she was brought into the service of the Devil by two others who asked her to come with them and promised she would not want.⁶⁹²

Witches and charmers usually first met the Devil or fairies in a moment when they struggled for physical survival.⁶⁹³ Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) first met the Queen of Elfame when she 'was lyand in child-bed' and her husband and child were ill. Also she first met the ghost Thome Reid when 'hir kow that was deid, hir husband and chyld, that wer lyand seik'.⁶⁹⁴ Agnes Sampson (Edinburgh 1591) first met the Devil 'eftir the death of hir husband' while Agnes Loch (Edinburgh 1661) made a pact with the Devil because of poverty.⁶⁹⁵ Margaret McWilliam (Bute 1662) also met the Devil when 'she having sustained losse by the death of horse and kye was turning to great poverty'. She was so desperate for help that she even sacrificed her seven year old son to the Devil.⁶⁹⁶

While charmers entered relationships with fairies, ghosts or other familiar spirits to gain beneficent magical powers primarily used for healing, to discover lost goods or divine the future, to converse with the dead and to improve their social standing by setting themselves up as magical

⁶⁸⁴ *Miscellany of the Spottiswoode Society*, vol. 2, 65.

⁶⁸⁵ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 52, 56-7.

⁶⁸⁶ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 119 (Andro Man); SSW (Jonet Coutts).

⁶⁸⁷ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 191.

⁶⁸⁸ *Criminal Trials*, vol.3, 616.

⁶⁸⁹ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 60-1.

⁶⁹⁰ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 51-7 (Bessie Dunlop); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 162-4 (Alesoun Pierson).

⁶⁹¹ SJC, vol. 1, 132.

⁶⁹² RPC, 3rd series, vol. 1, 650.

⁶⁹³ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 66-74.

⁶⁹⁴ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 51, 56-7.

⁶⁹⁵ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 234 (Agnes Sampson); SSW (Agnes Loch).

⁶⁹⁶ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 19.

practitioners, witches made a pact with the Devil or a demon because of greed and malevolent intent. Devils and demons commonly offered freedom of want, worldly riches and mostly revenge with the help of harmful magic.⁶⁹⁷ Alexander Hammiltoun (Haddington 1630) deliberately made a pact with the Devil because he wanted money and the power to perform harmful magic from him. The Devil only gave him 'Inglish money' at their second and third meeting when he renewed his covenant and renounced baptism again.⁶⁹⁸ Margaret Hutchison (1661) said the Devil promised her money when she made a pact with him while Janet Paistoun (Edinburgh 1661) confessed that she received money from the Devil which disappeared when he left.⁶⁹⁹

The distinction between good spirits helping in beneficent magic and evil demons assisting in harmful magic is not always as clear. Since fairies, spirits, and demons were often ambiguous figures they could assist not only in healing but also *maleficium*.⁷⁰⁰ Agnes Sampsoune (Edinburgh 1591) said that the Devil wanted her to harm others and assisted her in killing the king but she also confessed that she had a familiar spirit helping her to cure illnesses.⁷⁰¹ Janet Trall (Perth 1623) said that the principal of the fairies 'desired me to speak of God, and do good to poor folks: and he shewed me the means how I might do this' while another time 'the principal of them had bidden her to do ill, by casting sickness upon people, and she refused to do it.'⁷⁰² Jonet Rendall (Orkney 1629) said her devil called 'Walliman' taught her how to heal so that the people would give her alms but he also taught her how to harm those who refused to do so.⁷⁰³ Johnne Brughe (Kinross 1643) was accused of 'geiveing himself haillielie over to the service of Sathan, the ennemie of manes ... salvatione' while he mainly confessed healing several humans and animals and sometimes on-laying of illnesses.⁷⁰⁴ Similarly, Jonet Morisone (Bute 1662) said the Devil wanted her to bring back a ghost and to bewitch and kill various people by shooting them dead. On the other hand, she also cured fairy blasts and other diseases with herbs and charms.⁷⁰⁵

The elite in the Early Modern period expected the witch to make a pact with the Devil which included several 'specifically demonological elements'. This primarily involved the renunciation of Christianity which was sometimes followed by the witch being re-named and marked by the Devil or kissing his buttock. Secondly, it included the pledge for the witches' soul which usually included promising everything between the head and the feet to the Devil. Additionally, he could demand the witch to have sex with him. The most common promise of the Devil was the freedom of want

⁶⁹⁷ King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 382-4; Larner, *Enemies of God*, 94-5; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 67-74.

⁶⁹⁸ SJC, vol. 1, 144-6.

⁶⁹⁹ SSW.

⁷⁰⁰ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 74-6.

⁷⁰¹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 230, 234-7.

⁷⁰² *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, xii.

⁷⁰³ SSW.

⁷⁰⁴ SJC, vol. 3, 598-601.

⁷⁰⁵ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 21-7.

meaning that he would provide for everything they needed. In return, they had to serve him and perform *maleficia*. Although any contact between a witch or charmer with a spirit was theoretically an implicit pact, prosecutors usually wanted the witches to confess that they made an openly, verbally and explicit pact with a demon or the Devil.⁷⁰⁶

Relationships with fairies could be interpreted by authorities as implicit or explicit pact. Fairies and spirits could offer humans good health, luck and prosperity in return for generosity and respect, but they could also make more specifically demonological requests like the renouncement of Christianity or the pledge for the soul. The renunciation of Christianity could be easily connected to fairies since the distinction of pre-Christian and Christian beliefs was not always clear. Although some fairies could serve the Christian God, they were mostly considered hostile towards Christianity thus making it easier to identify them as evil spirits in the official theological view. Furthermore, Wilby argued that if a human entered fairyland it could be interpreted as giving body and soul to them. She argued that a temporary stay in fairyland could be seen as implicit pact while the entering of fairyland after making some kind of negotiation with them was an explicit pact.⁷⁰⁷

There are some traces of explicit demonic elements before the North Berwick trials which affirm the suggestion that Scottish authorities had at least some idea of the demonic pact before James' stay in Denmark and that fairy belief was a precondition for its acceptance.⁷⁰⁸ The ghost Thome Reid appears to be ambiguous regarding Christianity. On the one hand, he said to Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) 'That this new law was nocht gude; and that the auld ffayth suld come hame agane'. On the other hand, he promised to do her good 'gif scho wald denye hir Christindome' which Bessie refused to do.⁷⁰⁹ This probably reflects Bessie's devotion to the old faith which has been officially abandoned in Scotland in 1560.⁷¹⁰ Alesoun Pierson (Fife 1588) confessed that the good neighbours promised her 'that scho sould newir want, gif scho wald be faithful and keip promeis'. Furthermore, she met a man in green clothes who disappeared when she asked if he came in the name of God. The man promised 'Gif scho wald be faithful, he wald do hir guid' and in a later meeting 'with mony mene and women ... scho sanit hir and prayit'.⁷¹¹

Descriptions of the pact became more stereotypical during the North Berwick trials. Agnes Sampson (Edinburgh 1591) confessed she met the Devil

in liknes of ane man, quha commandit hir to acknowledge him as hir maister, and to renounce Chryst; quhairunto sche grantit, being movit be povertie and his promesis, that she and hir bairnis sould be maid ritch, and sould gif hir power to be revangeit of hir inimeis: and eftir

⁷⁰⁶ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 92-111; Willumsen, *Witches of the North*, 91-2.

⁷⁰⁷ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 94-105.

⁷⁰⁸ Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 242-244, 248-9.

⁷⁰⁹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 52, 56.

⁷¹⁰ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 129-130.

⁷¹¹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 163.

that, he appointit tyme and place for their nycht meting; and that tyme
... sche was becum his seruand, he market hir in the rycht kne⁷¹²

Marioun Grant (Aberdeen 1597) first met the Devil Christsonday in the shape of a man. He wanted her to call him lord and become is servant and promised that she should never want. Then she had sex with her and she became his servant. Afterwards, he came to her every month in her house or on the fields in various shapes and she had to kiss him on several parts and worship him on her knees.⁷¹³ Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) also said that Christsonday demanded 'that he suld put hys trust in hym, and call hym his lord and kyng, and markit hym on the third fynger'.⁷¹⁴

Although not all elements of the demonic pact appeared in every confession, it does not seem that any new characteristics were added after the 1590's. Margret Watsoun (Lanark 1644) was faced by her interrogators with various accusations. They said that she consulted the Devil, renounced her covenant and baptism with God, that she gave body and soul over to him, that she was possessed of evil spirits which had names and obeyed her, and that she could lay on and take off sickness. They accused her of making a covenant with Satan out of malice and envy. At their first meeting, the Devil as a black man, she had sex with him and his nature was cold. The Devil appeared several times at her house and promised her revenge on her enemies.⁷¹⁵ The trial of Margaret Alexander (Linlithgow 1647) shows that there were still references to fairies during the 17th century, but the belief in them was already heavily influenced by demonological ideas. She confessed that she met a man with black clothes at their meetings to whom she also referred as the king of fairies. Margaret renounced her baptism to him and lay with him.⁷¹⁶ Issobell Smith (Haddington 1661) stated in her first confession stated that two women promised her she should never want if she followed them. Then she

saw a blak man with grein cloathes, and he made hir weilcome and desyrit hir be his servant and schoe did undertak to be his servant, and he said schoe sould not want enough, bad hir renunce hir baptisme and Christ and be his, lay her ane hand on her head and the uther on hir feit and give hir self to him, quhich schoe did.⁷¹⁷

Agnes Loch (Edinburgh 1661) said she felt pain after she received her mark from the Devil while Margaret Stevensoun (Edinburgh 1661) said the Devil gave her a kiss before she got a new name.⁷¹⁸ Jonet Morisone (Bute 1662), Margaret NcWilliam (Bute 1662), and Isobell Eliot (Edinburgh 1678)

⁷¹² *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 234-5.

⁷¹³ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 170-1.

⁷¹⁴ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 119, 124.

⁷¹⁵ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 147-9.

⁷¹⁶ SSW; CH2/467/1/79.

⁷¹⁷ RPC, 3rd series, vol. 1, 650.

⁷¹⁸ SSW.

renounced their baptism and were later rebaptised by the Devil himself.⁷¹⁹ Despite the individuality of each trial, it is possible to argue that the first traces of the demonic pact were to be found before the North Berwick trials, that the descriptions of it tended to become more stereotypical during the 17th century, and that the demonic elements sometimes seem to be quite dictated and deliberately introduced by the prosecutors.

Some witches confessed to have a sexual relationship with the Devil which could be similar to marriage. Sexual intercourse between witches and demons was discussed in numerous theological writings in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period wherein the Devil or demon was usually described as very cold. The *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486) and other tracts associated this liaison with classical beliefs of *incubi* and *succubi*. During the course of the witch-hunts, sexual relationships were increasingly connected with the sabbath.⁷²⁰ King James accepted the reality of *incubi* and *succubi* as demonic spirits and he thought it was possible that the Devil used the semen of a dead man to have intercourse with women. But since the semen was cold, they could not conceive a child. Other demonologists have argued that the Devil's penis was very cold because he had no corporeal form.⁷²¹ Wilby argued that the fact that some witches and charmers confessed that they had a sexual relationship with spirits and fairies suggests that such descriptions not only emerged from elite notions but were also rooted in popular belief. After all, already medieval fairy ballads such as the story of Thomas the Rhymour describe sexual relationships between humans and fairies.⁷²² It is however remarkable that sexual relationships with fairies were not confessed before the 1590's. Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) was asked by her interrogators if she had 'carnell deill' with Thome Reid but she denied it.⁷²³ The first confession of fairies having sex with humans appears in the trial of Isobell Strauthaquin (Aberdeen 1597). She said that she learned her healing skills from her mother who acquired them from an elf man who had sex with her.⁷²⁴ Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) confessed 'to have carnall deal with that devilishe spreit, the Quene of Elphen, on quhom thow begat dyveris bairnis'.⁷²⁵ Also Janet Drever (Orkney 1615) had contact and sexual relationships with the fairies for many years.⁷²⁶ Elspeth Reoch (Orkney 1616) confessed that a black fairy man who sometimes appeared as her dead kinsman,

delt with you tua nyctis and wald never let her sleip persuading hir to
let him ly with her ... And ... having teacheit hir to sie and ken ony thing
she desyrit. ... And upoun the third nycht that he com to hir she being

⁷¹⁹ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 20-2 (Jonet Morisone); *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 18 (Margaret McWilliam); SSW (Isobell Eliot).

⁷²⁰ Institoris, *Malleus Maleficarum*, 121-133; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 105-7.

⁷²¹ Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland*, 47.

⁷²² Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 106-7.

⁷²³ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 56.

⁷²⁴ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 177.

⁷²⁵ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 119.

⁷²⁶ *Court Books of Orkney and Shetland*, 19.

asleep and laid his hand upoun hir breast and walknit her And thairefter
 semeit to ly with her And upoun the morrow she haid na power of hir
 toung nor could nocht speik ... [another] tyme on yule day she confest
 the devell quhilk she callis the farie man lay with hir⁷²⁷

Margaret Alexander (Linlithgow 1647) was the only other witch who confessed that he lay with the king of fairies. This figure was however very similar to the Devil and she agreed when she was asked if his nature was cold.⁷²⁸ Jean Brown (Wigtown 1706) confessed that godly invisible spirits who helped her curing used to 'ly carnally with her as men and women do' and she was married to them.⁷²⁹ Thus, some witches did actually confess sexual relationships with fairies and spirits while popular ideas of such liaisons would have made it easier for them to do so. However, the fact that the first confessions of this kind did not appear until 1597 suggests that the elite was very much interested in introducing such elements into the trials and that such confessions probably were not originally the idea of the culprits.

At the same time, several other witches confessed sexual liaisons with the Devil and his demons. Marioun Grant (Aberdeen 1597) had 'carnall deall' with the Devil when she became his servant while Katharine Oswald (Edinburgh 1629) confessed that she had 'carnall copulation' with the Devil appearing as foil and then as a man at their first meeting.⁷³⁰ Margrat Dicksone (Haddington 1649) had sex with the Devil at their first meeting although she was reluctant. Another time, when the Devil offered to have sex with her and she refused, he hit her and she became sick.⁷³¹ At their second meeting, Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) said she had 'carnall cowpulation and dealling ... with ... a meikle, blak, roch man ... and I found his nature as cold within me as spring-wall-water.'⁷³² Several other Scottish witches confessed that the Devil's nature was cold.⁷³³ Isobell Eliot (Edinburgh 1678) said the Devil kissed her at their first meeting but he did not lie with her since she was pregnant. They only had sex after her lying in period and after she was kirked.⁷³⁴ Sexual relationships in witchcraft trials reflect not only elite fantasies like the description of the Devil being cold but also popular realities such as sexual pleasures, violence and refusal.

Once established, the relationship between witch and demon as well as charmer and fairy could last from a few weeks to several decades. Long-term relationships seem to be the norm and some spirits or demons appeared afters some kind of request or overt conjuration while others

⁷²⁷ *Lawting Sheriff and Justice Courts*, 189-190.

⁷²⁸ SSW; CH2/467/1/79.

⁷²⁹ SSW; CH2/373/1/220-1.

⁷³⁰ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 171 (Marioun Grant); SJC, vol. 1, 132 (Katharine Oswald).

⁷³¹ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 191-2.

⁷³² *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 603.

⁷³³ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 149 (Margaret Watsoun, Lanark 1644); RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 190 (Agnes Hunter, Haddington 1649); SSW (Agnes Loch, Edinburgh 1661; Margaret Stevensoun, Edinburgh 1661); RPC, 3rd series, vol.1, 650 (Issobell Smith, Haddington 1661); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 617 (Jonet Braidheid, Nairn 1662).

⁷³⁴ SSW.

continued to appear spontaneously. Although it is often assumed that ritual conjurations derive from learned notions, there may also be popular beliefs behind such methods. They did not necessarily include a ritual but could simply involve the asking or demanding of the spirit to appear. Some charmers also met fairies at specific times and places.⁷³⁵ Elspeth Reoch (Orkney 1616) continued to meet the black fairy man who was sometimes her dead kinsman spontaneously after their first meeting.⁷³⁶ Similarly, Thome Reid appeared to Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) spontaneously. Usually, he came at the 12th hour of the day while he also appeared when she demanded him to come and help her cure people.⁷³⁷ There are several other examples for deliberate invocations of spirits or the Devil. Jonet Boyman (Ayr 1572) conjured evil spirits 'in the name of ye father and the sone King arthor and queene Elspeth' at a well near Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh.⁷³⁸ Agnes Sampson (Edinburgh 1591) confessed that she had a familiar spirit which appeared in a visible form when she called for it by saying 'Holla, Master' or 'Hail, hola!' and thereafter helped her to cure illnesses.⁷³⁹ Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) 'grantit that this word *Benedicte* rasit the Dewill, and *Maikpeblis* laid him againe' and he used to conjure the Queen of Elphen by saing '*Benedicte*'.⁷⁴⁰ Also, Alexander Hammiltoun (Haddington 1630) could deliberately raise his master the Devil to harm his victims.⁷⁴¹ In other trials, the Devil appeared regularly on certain days. The 'bowman of Hildiswick and Eschenes' came to lie with Katherine Jonesdochter (Shetland 1616) for 40 years on Halloween and Holy Crossday.⁷⁴²

The relationships between magical practitioners and demons or fairies varied in their formality. They tended to be very formal when witches visited the sabbath or charmers encountered the king or queen of fairies whereas their relationship could also reflect an informal, 'human' kind of intimacy. While the meetings of the North Berwick witches and Jonet Braidheid's (Nairn 1662) introduction to the Devil's service at the sabbath were very formal, there are several examples for quarrels and negotiations with the Devil.⁷⁴³ Although Thome Reid helped Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) in healing and divination, he became angry with her when she refused to deny her Christendom.⁷⁴⁴ Agnes Sampson (Edinburgh 1591) confessed that she and two other witches had a quarrel with the Devil. They complained that they 'had newir gottin guid of him, and said sche wald renunce him, bott did it nocht; and he promesit to hir att that tyme, that na thing sould ga aganis hir.' Furthermore, at their sabbath in North Berwick when 'Robert Greirsoune being namit, thay ran all hirdie-girdie and

⁷³⁵ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 77-81.

⁷³⁶ *Lawting Sheriff and Justice Courts*, 188-190.

⁷³⁷ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 51-6.

⁷³⁸ JC26/1/67.

⁷³⁹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 230, 235-6, 238.

⁷⁴⁰ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 120, 124.

⁷⁴¹ *SJC*, vol. 1, 146.

⁷⁴² *Court Book of Shetland*, 38.

⁷⁴³ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 616-7 (Jonet Braidheid); Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 81-4.

⁷⁴⁴ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 51-5.

wer angrie; for it wes promesit, that he sould be callit 'Ro the Comptroller alias Rob the Rowar'.⁷⁴⁵ Isobel Cockie (Aberdeen 1597) confessed that she took over the Devil's instrument and played it herself when did not play well enough at the sabbath.⁷⁴⁶ Alexander Hammiltoun (Haddington 1630) negotiated several times with the Devil as he demanded money and the liberty to perform *maleficia* while the Devil asked him if he was content being his servant.⁷⁴⁷ At times, the Devil could become violent. Christen Michell (Aberdeen 1597) confessed that the Devil hit her so hard at their first meeting that she had to lay in bed for 80 days.⁷⁴⁸ Similarly, Margrat Dicksone (Haddington 1649) stated that the Devil 'fell upon her in the nicht and band doune hir heid till she cryed outt' while at a later meeting with others he 'bad tham be good servantis to him and they sould not want'.⁷⁴⁹ Although they had a quite formal relationship to the Devil during the rituals at the sabbath, the Devil also used to beat Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) and the other witches if they called him 'Blak Johne', if they were absent or did not follow his orders.⁷⁵⁰

Witches and charmers could be scared by fairies and demons.⁷⁵¹ Alesoun Pierson (Fife 1588) stated that she was fearful and cried when the good neighbours visited her and she also cried for help when she first met a man in green clothes.⁷⁵² Agnes Sampsoune (Edinburgh 1591) confessed that she was frightened when she met her devil called 'Elva'.⁷⁵³ Janet Trall (Perth 1623) said that she was troubled for twelve years by the fairies who often 'dang her down, and she was then beside herself, ready to eat the ground'.⁷⁵⁴ Katherine Remy (Clackmannan 1658) was frightened when she held the Devil's hand because it was cold.⁷⁵⁵ These latter examples show that the demonic pact and the relationship with the Devil not only reflected stereotypical ideas of the authorities but also peasant realities and their fears of evil spirits.

The Sabbath in the Scottish Witchcraft Trials

After being initiated to the service of the Devil or establishing a relationship with fairies, ghosts and other spirits, witches and charmers often travelled with them to meetings at the sabbath or in Elfame. Wilby suggested that fairies mostly met inside hills while the witches' sabbath took place in churches, churchyards or simply outside.⁷⁵⁶ However, these distinctions are not always clear in the trials and meetings of witches and fairies could take place in various locations. Fairies and similar

⁷⁴⁵ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 238-9.

⁷⁴⁶ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 115.

⁷⁴⁷ *SJC*, vol. 1, 144-5.

⁷⁴⁸ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 164-5.

⁷⁴⁹ *RPC*, 2nd series, vol. 8, 191-2.

⁷⁵⁰ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 603, 613.

⁷⁵¹ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 82.

⁷⁵² *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 163.

⁷⁵³ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 235.

⁷⁵⁴ *Extracts form the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, xii.

⁷⁵⁵ *SSW*; CH2/722/6/93.

⁷⁵⁶ Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 84-6.

spirits were often seen at but mostly inside hills. Katherine Jonesdochter (Shetland 1616) saw the trows several times on a hill while Issobell Haldane (Perth 1623) confessed that 'be God or the devil scho ... wes caryit to ane hill syde; the hill oppynnit and scho enterit in, thair scho stayit thrie dayis'.⁷⁵⁷ Similarly, Donald McIlmichael (Argyll 1677) was invited by unearthly people to attend their festivities inside a fairy mound.⁷⁵⁸ Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) also said she met the king and queen of fairy inside the Downie-hills whereas she also met with her coven at the hill of Earlseat and another time at the Downie-hills.⁷⁵⁹ Several other witches gathered at hills which are often specifically named. Ewfame Mackalzane (Edinburgh 1591) confessed having attended gatherings of witches at the Fairy-hills in New-heavin (Newhaven) and also at the Brume-hills.⁷⁶⁰ Christen Michell and Bessie Thom (both Aberdeen 1597) said they attended sabbath meetings on Sanct Katherines Hill while Issobell Oige (Aberdeen 1597) mentioned gatherings at the 'Hill of Cragleauche'.⁷⁶¹ Margaret NcWilliam (Bute 1662) confessed that she met the Devil and other witches at the hill of Kilmory.⁷⁶² Thus, it seems that fairies met inside hills and witches on top of them or near hills. Witches were not the only ones meeting at churches and kirkyards. At least Katherine Jonesdochter (Shetland 1616) said she saw 'the trowis ryse out of the kirkyeard'.⁷⁶³ Ewfame Mackalzane and Agnes Sampsonne (both Edinburgh 1591) confessed to have attended the sabbath at the North Berwick Kirk.⁷⁶⁴ Margaret Watsoun (Lanark 1644) attended witches' meetings at the Kirks of Lanark and Carnewathe.⁷⁶⁵ The Kirk of Alderne was the place where Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) was introduced into the service of the Devil while Jonet Braidheid (Nairn 1662) first met the Devil and his company at the Kirk of Nairn.⁷⁶⁶ Besides hills and kirks, sabbaths could take place at various other more or less specified locations. Meriorie Mutche (Aberdeen 1597) was accused of 'keeping the hail conventionis with wiches ... in kirk yeardis, corse gettis, lawis, hillis, kearnis, and watters'.⁷⁶⁷ Isobel Cockie (Aberdeen 1597) confessed a witches' meeting at mercat and fish cross in Aberdeen.⁷⁶⁸ Margrat Og (Aberdeen 1597) was accused of attending a meeting 'betuixt Warthill and Lochmanss'.⁷⁶⁹ Margret Dobson (Berwick 1649) said 'that shee and the forsaid persons, the divell being with thame, had a meitting ... under the Forth of Eymouth at midnight' while Margaret

⁷⁵⁷ *Court Book of Shetland*, 39 (Katherine Jonesdochter); RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 353 (Issobell Haldane).

⁷⁵⁸ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 37-8.

⁷⁵⁹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 603-4.

⁷⁶⁰ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 254.

⁷⁶¹ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 165 (Christen Michell); *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 167 (Bessie Thom); *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 152 (Issobell Oige).

⁷⁶² *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 19.

⁷⁶³ *Court Book of Shetland*, 39.

⁷⁶⁴ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 254 (Ewfame Mackalzane); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 239 (Agnes Sampsonne).

⁷⁶⁵ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 148-9.

⁷⁶⁶ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 603 (Issobell Gowdie); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 616 (Jonet Braidheid).

⁷⁶⁷ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 133.

⁷⁶⁸ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 115.

⁷⁶⁹ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 144.

Dicksone (Haddington 1649) attended the sabbath in Gladsmoor.⁷⁷⁰ Grissell McCairtney (Kirkcudbright 1658) was less specific when she stated that she saw women and a black gruesome man at an eldrige place. Margaret Tailyeor (Clackmannan 1658) described one meeting at a brew house and James Welch (Haddington 1662) said he first watched a sabbath meeting at Haddington mill.⁷⁷¹ Additionally to those meetings outside at more or less exotic places, witches started to confess holding meetings at their own houses or houses of others from the middle of the 17th century onwards. This tradition could originate in fairy beliefs as fairies could be bound to households or be encountered there. Katherine Jonesdochter (Shetland 1616) said the trows used to 'come to ony hous quhair their wes feasting or great mirrines, and speciallie at Yule'.⁷⁷² Margaret Stevensoun (Edinburgh 1661) confessed that a group of people came to her house and she thought they were fairies.⁷⁷³ Similarly, Margret Dobson (Berwick 1649) had a meeting with the Devil and other witches at a house where they danced. Another time they entered the house of someone whom they wanted to harm which was also confessed by Margaret Duchill (Clackmannan 1658).⁷⁷⁴ Also, Agnes Hunter (Haddington 1649) took part several times in a feast at the house of a man where 'thair wes meat and drink'.⁷⁷⁵ Unlike sabbaths on the continent, Scottish meetings of fairies and witches took place at a nearby regionally specific location where the witches could walk to rather than a faraway mountain.

Special times and days of the year not only played a role in healing and encountering the Devil and spirits but also provided occasions for the witches' sabbath and fairy festivities. Noon was connected to activities of fairies while at midnight fairies and witches were active. May Eve, Midsummer, and Halloween, which was primarily associated with ghost, were linked with gatherings of fairies and witches.⁷⁷⁶ Halloween (October 31) was often mentioned in trials and marked the beginning of winter.⁷⁷⁷ The charmer Jonet Boyman (Ayr 1572) stated that Halloween was the time when the good neighbour rise.⁷⁷⁸ Andro Man (Aberdeen 1597) stated that he met Christsonday and the Queen of Elphen on 'All-Hallow Evin' while Donald McIlmichael (Argyll 1677) met otherworldly men inside hills '20 dayes eftir Hallowday'.⁷⁷⁹ Witches also used to meet at this time of the year. Katherine Ross (Ross and Cromarty 1590) met with others at Halloween to perform *maleficia*.⁷⁸⁰

⁷⁷⁰ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 196 (Margaret Dobson); RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 192 (Margaret Dicksone).

⁷⁷¹ SSW.

⁷⁷² *Court Book of Shetland*, 39.

⁷⁷³ SSW.

⁷⁷⁴ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 196 (Margret Dobson); SSW (Margaret Duchill).

⁷⁷⁵ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 191.

⁷⁷⁶ Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm," 161.

⁷⁷⁷ Marian McNeill, *The Silver Bough: vol. 3: A Calendar of Scottish National Festivals: Halloween to Yule* (Glasgow: William Maclellan, 1961), 11.

⁷⁷⁸ JC26/1/67.

⁷⁷⁹ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 121 (Andro Man); *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 37 (Donald McIlmichael).

⁷⁸⁰ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 192.

Isobel Cockie (Aberdeen 1597) was accused of attending a sabbath 'on Halow ewin last, betuixt tuell and ane houris at nycht'.⁷⁸¹ Jonet Morisone (Bute 1662) saw the Devil and his company three days before Hallowday coming down a hillside underneath a chapel while Margaret McWilliam (Bute 1662) confessed 'That about Hallowday last she was at a Meiting and danseing upon the hill of Kilmory with severall other witches'.⁷⁸² Some witches convened with spirits on Candlemas (February 1) representing the end of the winter months which started on Halloween. In medieval burghs of Scotland, this day was celebrated with a religious riding.⁷⁸³ Bessie Dunlop (Ayr 1576) confessed the last time she spoke with the ghost Thome Reid before her trial was the morning after Candlemas.⁷⁸⁴ Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) confessed: 'We wer at *Candlmas* last in *Graingehill*, quhair we got meat and drink anewgh. The Divell sat at the heid of the table, and all the Coven abowt.' Afters saying the grace, he taught them charms for their *maleficia*.⁷⁸⁵ Donald McIlmichael (Argyll 1677) met his otherworldly people also '20 days before Candlemes'.⁷⁸⁶ Agnes Hunter (Haddington 1649) said she once met the Devil and his company on Fastings' Eve and the appointed another meeting on Pasche.⁷⁸⁷ Fastings' Eve was the first moon in spring time and a day for feasting before the long fast preceeding Easter for the Catholics. Pasch is the Scottish name for Easter deriving from the Jewish Passover and Hebrew *pesach*. The next important festival in the Scottish calendar was Beltane (May 1) which is exactly six months apart from Halloween and together they marked the two main divisions of the year. On the eve of Beltane, fires were lit and the festival was also connected to fairies.⁷⁸⁸ Jonet Watsone and Elspet Graham (both Edinburgh 1661) confessed that they met the Devil in green clothes and several witches at Beltane night.⁷⁸⁹ Ewfame Mackalzene (Edinburgh 1591) was accused of meeting other witches before Michealmas at the North Berwick kirk and at Lammas at the Fairy-hills in New-heavin.⁷⁹⁰ Lammas (August 1) was the Celtic festival of autumn while Michaelmas (September 29) was a celebration of Michael the Victorious, the patron saint of the sea, boats and boatsmen, as well as horses and horsemen.⁷⁹¹ Another festival mentioned in the trials is Ruidday (September 14) celebrating the exaltation of the cross.⁷⁹² Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) said the fairy queen and Christsonday rode out on Ruidday while Christen Michell and Bessie Thom (both

⁷⁸¹ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 115.

⁷⁸² *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 24 (Jonet Morisone); *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 19 (Margaret McWilliam).

⁷⁸³ Marian McNeill, *The Silver Bough: vol. 2: A Calendar of Scottish National Festivals: Candlemas to Harvest Home* (Glasgow: William Maclellan, 1959), 19-20, 30.

⁷⁸⁴ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 56-7.

⁷⁸⁵ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 612.

⁷⁸⁶ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 37.

⁷⁸⁷ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 191.

⁷⁸⁸ McNeill, *Silver Bough*, vol. 2, 39, 46-7, 55-7.

⁷⁸⁹ SSW.

⁷⁹⁰ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 254.

⁷⁹¹ McNeill. *Silver Bough*, vol. 2, 94, 102.

⁷⁹² "Dictionary of the Scots Language."

Aberdeen 1597) confessed sabbath meetings on Ruidday before sunrise.⁷⁹³ Furthermore, Yule (December 25 to January 6) the Scandinavian festival of winter solstice was mentioned by Katherine Jonesdochter (Shetland 1616) who stated that the trows visit houses on Yule.⁷⁹⁴ For most witches it was common to meet regularly on several of those popular and religious festivals. Katherin Gibb (Edinburgh 1649) confessed that she met with other witches and the Devil four times a year whereas Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) said that 'a Grand Meitting vould be about the end of ilk Quarter.'⁷⁹⁵

The Scottish witches' sabbaths, as well as fairy festivities, were mostly described as feasting with music, dancing and making merry which were presided over by one or more supernatural beings like the Devil or the king and queen of fairies. These similarities affirm the theory of several historians that the witches' sabbath at least partly originated from popular beliefs in the journey to Fairyland which were remodelled during the course of the interrogation process to fit the prosecutor's expectations and the demonological theory. In addition, these ideas could refer to the pleasures of popular festivals in Scotland which were increasingly repressed through government legislation during the course of the Reformation.⁷⁹⁶ Alesoun Pierson (Fife 1588) confessed that she saw the good neighbours making ointments. Furthermore, a man in green clothes came to her 'with mony mene and wemen with him: And that scho sanit hir and prayit ... and saw with thame pypeing and mirrynes and gude scheir'. Besides standard accounts of beneficent charmers related to fairies, one can find more explicit demonological elements in this trial.⁷⁹⁷ Contrary to Levack's theory,⁷⁹⁸ this trial proves that demonological elements of the witches' sabbath were predating the North Berwick trials in the 1590's. Also, it affirms the theory that fairy revels could be a basis for the adoption of the idea of the diabolic sabbath among the peasants.⁷⁹⁹ Some other charmers and witches confessed meetings of fairies and spirits which were similar to the revels at the witches' sabbath. After being initiated into the skills of a charmer by the Queen of Elphen, Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) said he

saw Christsonday cum owt of the snaw in liknes of a staig, and that the Quene of Elphen was their, and vtheris with hir, rydand vpon quhyt haiknays, and that thay com to the Binhill, and Binlocht, quhair thay vse commonlie to convene, and that all thay quha convenis with thame kissis Christsonday and the Quene of Elphenis airss

⁷⁹³ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 121 (Andro Man); *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 165 (Christen Michell); *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 167 (Bessie Thom).

⁷⁹⁴ McNeill, *Silver Bough*, vol. 3, 51; *Court Book of Shetland*, 39 (Katherine Jonesdochter).

⁷⁹⁵ SSW (Katherin Gibb); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 606 (Issobell Gowdie).

⁷⁹⁶ Ginzburg, *Night Battles*; Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm," 161; Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 135; Henningsen, "Ladies from Outside," 191-218; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 85-6; Willumsen, *Witches of the North*, 92.

⁷⁹⁷ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 162-3.

⁷⁹⁸ Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland*, 39. Compare to chapter: 'The Advent of the Demonic Pact and the Witches' Sabbath in Scotland'.

⁷⁹⁹ Henderson, "Detestable Slaves," 242-4, 248-9; Maxwell-Stuart, *Great Scottish Witch-Hunt*, 140; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 85-6.

He also said the elves 'have fair coverit taiblis ... and that thay have playing and dancing quhen thay pleas'. In a later confession, he also said that Christsonday had sex with them at their meetings.⁸⁰⁰ Agnes Cairnes (Kirkcudbright 1659) confessed being away with the fairies. There was a great meeting of the not earthen folks who spoke in an eldridge language. There was fire and dancing.⁸⁰¹ Similarly, Margaret Tailyeor (Clackmannan 1658) described several meetings where people spoke 'not ovr ordinarie language'.⁸⁰² Donald McIllichall (Argyll 1677) confessed that he met unworldly people regularly inside a hill where he 'saw the old man that seemed to be chief being ane large tall corporal Gardman ... and that he met them still on ilk Sabbath nights and that he playd on trumps to them quhen they danced'.⁸⁰³

Several witches confessed that they danced, made merry and played music together with Satan at their meetings. Ewfame Mackalzene and Agnes Sampsonne (both Edinburgh 1591) confessed that they entered a ship with the North Berwick company where 'the Dewill causit hir drink wyne, and gaif hir uther guid cheir'. Another time at the North Berwick kirk 'thay danceit alangis the kirk-yaird; Gelie Duncan playit to thame on a trump, Johne Fiene ... led all the rest, the said Agnes and hir dochter followit'.⁸⁰⁴ Isobel Cockie (Aberdeen 1597) was accused of dancing with her master the Devil at mercat and fish cross in Aberdeen, being the ring leader and playing an instrument.⁸⁰⁵ Marioun Grant (Aberdeen 1597) said 'that the Devill thy maister, quhome thow termes Christsonday, causit the dans sindrie tymes with him and with Our Ladye ... and syndrie vthers of Christsondayes servands ... and that the Devill played on his forme of instrumentis verray pleasandlie'.⁸⁰⁶ Similarly, Issobell Oige (Aberdeen 1597) was accused of 'being at the deuillische dance about ane gray stane, at the Hill of Cragleauche, accompaneit with ... the Deuill thy maister, he being playing to the and thame, onvisabill; and at that tyme he had deill with the, in forme of ane beist, and causit the and thame all kiss his arse'.⁸⁰⁷ Margret Watsoun (Lanark 1644) confessed that she met witches at the kirk of Lanark and of Carnewathe where they lifted corpses to kill people, and they blasphemed God while they 'usit to drink and daunce'.⁸⁰⁸ Issoble Garner (Fife 1649) claimed that she met the Devil in a little room at her neighbours' house where they shared some wine together with other women whereas Marion Watsone (Peebles 1649) described a meeting at a round table where she and others ate meat and drank ale. John Douglas (Haddington 1659) said the Devil

⁸⁰⁰ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 119, 121, 125.

⁸⁰¹ SSW.

⁸⁰² SSW; CH2/722/6/92.

⁸⁰³ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 37-8.

⁸⁰⁴ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 254 (Ewfame Mackalzene); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 235, 239 (Agnes Sampsonne).

⁸⁰⁵ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 115.

⁸⁰⁶ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 171.

⁸⁰⁷ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 152.

⁸⁰⁸ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 149-150.

appeared at his house and asked if he wanted to be a piper at their meetings and he followed him.⁸⁰⁹ Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) said once they 'wer dauncing at the *Hill of Earlseat*'. She also stated: 'When we goe to any hous, we tak meat and drink; and we fill wp the barrellis with ovr oven pish again'. Furthermore, Gowdie confessed: 'I was in the *Downie-hillis*, and got meat ther from the Qwein of Fearrie, mor than I could eat.'⁸¹⁰ James Welch (Haddington 1662) confessed that they drank wine and ale or ate meat at their gatherings with the Devil while the 19 witches from the Renfrewshire cases of 1697 confessed that the Devil played the pipe at their meetings.⁸¹¹ Thus, meetings with fairies or witches were described similarly during the course of the Scottish witch-hunts and in both cases the participants used to drink, eat, dance and make merry.

Fairyland, as well as the sabbath, were places where magical skills and objects could be acquired. Typically, humans connected to fairies learned their healing skills in fairyland while witches performed or were taught how to perform *maleficia*.⁸¹² Cases where skills of healing and prophesy were acquired in fairyland were already described in a former chapter. However, it was also possible to acquire objects and skills for harmful magic in fairyland. Katherine Ross (Ross and Cromarty 1590) as well as Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) confessed that they got elf-arrow-heids from the fairies and either shot them directly at their victims or onto images of clay.⁸¹³ Images of wax, clay or butter were sometimes provided to or used by witches at the sabbath. Ewfame Mackalzene (Edinburgh 1591) was accused of being at the North Berwick kirk before Michealmas in 1590 'and thair inquiring for the Kingis pictour, gewin by Annie Sampson to the Dewill, to be inchantit, for the tressonabill distruction of the King.'⁸¹⁴ Margaret Jackson (Renfrew 1677) and her accomplices confessed to have gathered 'besyde Pollock's (Maxwell's) house, whom they rosted ... with images of wax and clay formed by the devill'.⁸¹⁵ Some witches raised storms to sink ships at the sabbath. The North Berwick witches are the most prominent example for this kind of *maleficium*. Ewfame Mackalzene (Edinburgh 1591) and her companions were accused to have cast a black dog under the ship to raise a storm so that the Anne of Denmark could not come to Scotland. When Anne tried to sail to Scotland again, they were said to raise a storm by throwing cats into the sea.⁸¹⁶ Several other witches who were mentioned in a former chapter used to raise corpses at the sabbath to make

⁸⁰⁹ SSW.

⁸¹⁰ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 603-4.

⁸¹¹ SSW.

⁸¹² Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 86-8.

⁸¹³ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 192, 196, 198-9 (Katherine Ross); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 607, 611, 615 (Issobell Gowdie).

⁸¹⁴ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 254.

⁸¹⁵ RPC, 3rd series, vol. 5, xxxvi.

⁸¹⁶ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 254. Compare: Beigis Tod (Haddington 1608), *Criminal Trials*, vol. 2, 542-3.

powders out of them and perform maleficia. Contrary to trials held on the continent, cannibalism did not play a significant role in Scotland.⁸¹⁷

While some witches confessed to have sexual liaisons with the Devil in private or at the sabbath, excessive orgies do not seem to figure prominently in Scottish trials. Issobell Oige (Aberdeen 1597) confessed that she had 'deill' with the Devil in the form of a beast at the sabbath.⁸¹⁸ Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) not only confessed to have 'carnall deal with ... the Quene of Elphen, on quhom thow begat dyveris bairnis' but later also stated that the angel Christsonday had sex with everyone at their meetings.⁸¹⁹ Margaret Alexander (Linlithgow 1647) confessed that she once was away with a group of male and female fairies when one man had sex with her and another woman.⁸²⁰ In the case of Margrat Dickson (Haddington 1649), the Devil also only lay with one witch at the sabbath.⁸²¹ Issobell Smith (Haddington 1661) stated that she had sex with the Devil like others did at their second meeting while Jonet Braidheid (Nairn 1662) confessed that the Devil had sex with all witches at her first meeting.⁸²² Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) who lay with the Devil in private and during the sabbath was the only accused who described these orgies in more detail. She stated,

He will lye als hewie wpon ws, quhan he has carnall dealling with ws, lyk an malt-secke. His memberis ar exceeding great and long; no mans memberis ar so long and bigg as they ar. He wold be amongst ws lyk a weath horse amongst mears. He wold lye with ws in presence of all the multitude; neither haid we nor he any kind of shame; ... He wold lye and hawe carnall dealling with all at euerie tym, as he pleased. He wold haw carnall dealling with ws in the shape of a deir or any vther shap that he wold be in. We wold never refuse him. He wold com to my hows-top in the shape of a crow, or lyk a deir, or in any vther shap, now and then. I wold ken his woice, at the first heiring of it, and wold goe furth to him and haw carnall cowpulatioun with him. The youngest and lwstiest women will haw werie great pleasour in their carnall cowpulatioun with him, yea much mor than with their awin husbandis; and they will haw a exceeding great desir of it with him ... He is abler for ws that way than any man can be ... only he ves heavie lyk a malt-seck; a hudg nature, verie cold, as yce.⁸²³

Although several elements in these confessions seem to come again from popular ideas, the idea of sexual orgies was mainly a fantasy of the elite since it rarely occurs and some accused witches stated that the Devil only had sex with one or two witches at their meetings.

There are few traces for the inversion or Protestant mass or baptism similar to the continental Black Mass. Alesoun Pierson (Fife 1588) said she was baptised by a man in green clothes

⁸¹⁷ Compare to chapter: 'Witches, *maleficium* and Fairy-Related Bewitchment'.

⁸¹⁸ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 152.

⁸¹⁹ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 119, 124-5.

⁸²⁰ SSW; CH2/467/1/79.

⁸²¹ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 192.

⁸²² RPC, 3rd series, vol. 1, 650 (Issobell Smith); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 617 (Jonet Braidheid).

⁸²³ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 610-1.

and he prayed while there were many men and women present.⁸²⁴ After being asked by his interrogators, Donald McIlmichael (Argyll 1677) confessed 'that it wes a woman among them [unearthly people residing inside a hill] that took the promise of him ... and that they enquired if he wes baptized and that he said he wes, bot that they gave him no name'.⁸²⁵ Christen Michell (Aberdeen 1597) said she was marked by Satan at the sabbath while Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) said 'that Crystsunday rydis all the tyme that he is in their cumpanie, and hes carnall daill with thame, and that all honest men and women ... kissit his arss; also, that the men that cumis with thame, hes do with the Quene of Elfane'.⁸²⁶ Marioun Grant (Aberdeen 1597) confessed that the Devil appeared to her and others as 'ane gryte man ... with ane qhyt candill in his hand, and than gave the thy iniunctionis to vse thy deuillische practizeis and sorceries'.⁸²⁷ Margret Watsoun (Lanark 1644) said that she and other witches 'blasphamit Godis name' and lifted corpses at their meetings in kirks.⁸²⁸ Isobell Eliot (Edinburgh 1678) confessed that she was at a meeting were there were lots of witches and a flaming fire. The Devil gave them some kind of sacrament, preached to them and blasphemed God.⁸²⁹ Apart from those vague descriptions of inversions of Protestant rituals, there are only few witches who described them in more detail among the fairy-related trials. Agnes Sampsoun (Edinburgh 1591) confessed that once the Devil

commandit hir to be at North Bervik kirk the nixt nycht ... [and] about ellewin houris att ewin, thay danceit alangis the kirk-yaird ... [there were] abone ane hundredth persounes, quhair of their was sax men, and all the rest wemen. The wemen maid first thair homage, and nixt the men. The men wer turnit nyne tymes widderschinnes about, and the wemen sax tymes. Johnne Fien blew up the duris, and blew in the lychtis, quhilkis wer lyke mekle blak candillis, stiking round about the pulpett. The Dewill start up him self in the pulpett, lyke ane mekle blak man, and callit ewerie man be his name, and ewerie ane ansuerit, 'Heir, Mr.' ... The first thing he demandit, was 'Gif thay kepit all promeis, and bene guid seruandis?' and 'Quhat thay had done since the last tyme they had convenit?' – One his command, thay opnit up the graves ... and tuik the jountis of their fingaris, tais and neise, and partit thame amangis thame ... The Dewill commandit thame to keip the jountis upoun thame, quhill thay wer dry, and thane to mak ane powder of thame, to do ewill withall. Than he commandit ... to do all the ewill thay could. Before thay departit, thay kist his erse.⁸³⁰

Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) was formerly introduced into the service of the Devil at a sabbath meeting at the Kirk of Auldearne. She confessed:

⁸²⁴ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 163.

⁸²⁵ *Highland Papers*, vol. 3, 37.

⁸²⁶ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 165 (Christen Michell); *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 125 (Andro Man).

⁸²⁷ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 172.

⁸²⁸ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 149-150.

⁸²⁹ SSW.

⁸³⁰ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 239.

I denyed my baptisme, and did put the on of my handis to the crowne of my head and the vther to the sole of my foot, and then renuncet all betuixt my two handis, ower to *the Divell*. He was in the Readeris dask, and a blak book in his hand. *Margret Brodie* ... held me vp to the Divell to be baptised be him; and he marked me in the shoullder, and suked owt my blood at that mark, and spowted it in his hand, and springkling it on my head, said, '*I baptise thé, Janet, in my awin name!*' And within a quhill we all remoowed.

She stated that there were 13 witches in each coven who used to meet more or less often, but they also had grand meetings at the end of each quarter of the year. When they came to the sabbath, each witch was awaited by a familiar devil and by the master Devil. At their grand meetings,

all owr actis and deidis, betuixt grett Meittingis, most be geven accompt of, and notted in his book ... [also] the Maiden of each Coven sittis abow the rest nixt The Divell; and she serwis The Divell ... He will be with hir and ws all ... in carnall cowpulatioun at all tymes ... Somtym he vold be lyk a stirk, a bull, a deir, a rea, or a dowg, &c., and haw dealling with ws; and he vold hold wp his tail wntill we wold kisse his arce. And at each tyme, quhan ve wold meitt with him, we behoowit to ryse and mak our curtesie⁸³¹

Jonet Braidheid (Nairn 1662) described similar meetings. She first met the Devil at the sabbath taking place at the Kirk of Nairn at night. She said:

The Divell wes in the Readeris dask, and an book in his hand. ... The Divell called tham all be their names, on the book; and my husband, than [Officer] called thame to the dore. ... Bessie Wilson, in Auldearne, sat down nixt The Divell ... She wes The Maiden to hir motheris Coeven. ... The Divell lay with them all abowt. And then ... my husband presented me, and he and Magrat Wilson ... held me vp to The [Divell to] be baptised: And efter I haid put my on hand to the soallis of my foot, and the vthir hand to the [crown of] my head, and renounced baptisme, and all betuixt my two handis to the Divell, the Divell [marked me] in the shoulder, and suked out my blood with his mowth, at that place; he spowted it in his hand, and [sprinkled it] on my head. He baptised me thairvith, in his awin nam, 'Christian.' And than immediatlie thairefter, [they all returned] each to ther awin howssis.⁸³²

Although only few witches confessed such collective inversions of religious rituals, it cannot be argued that the Black Mass was non-existent in Scotland. However, they represented regional characteristics and inversions of Protestant rituals instead of Catholic ones.⁸³³

Flight and Animal Metamorphosis in the Scottish Witchcraft Trials

To enter Fairyland or attend the sabbath, witches could either leave their body behind in a trance-like state and travel there in spirit or they could go bodily meaning that they disappeared and were

⁸³¹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 603, 606, 613.

⁸³² *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 616-7.

⁸³³ Normand, *Witchcraft*, 341-2.

sometimes replaced by an object. While witches sometimes flew on straws, animals or innocents or transformed themselves into flying animals, fairies usually rode or appeared in whirlwinds. Humans could also be taken away by fairies in whirlwinds.⁸³⁴ Janet Boyman (Ayr 1572) and Alesoun Pierson (Fife 1588) confessed that fairies used to travel in a whirlwind.⁸³⁵ Bessie Finklar (Libberton 1661) was taken by a whirlwind onto a hill where she masked herself and danced.⁸³⁶ Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) said she and other witches rode out on straws while their husbands were left behind and they left a broom or tree instead of themselves in the bed.⁸³⁷ Contrary to the confessions of the *benandanti* or other continental 'shamanic' groups, there are few traces of witches going with the fairies in trance, but they seem to believe they have gone there bodily. Alesoun Pierson (Fife 1588) said she was taken away by the fairies while 'scho wald be iu hir bed hail and seir, and wald nocht wit quhair scho wald be or the morne'.⁸³⁸ Likewise, Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) attended the meetings with Christsonday, the Queen of Elphen and their elvish company while he found himself in the moss in the morning suggesting that he went there bodily.⁸³⁹ In other cases, it is less clear if the witches went with the fairies bodily or in trance. Janet Cowie (Elgin 1647) said that the fairies took her away to Messindiu where she slept at night.⁸⁴⁰ Beatrix Leslie (Edinburgh 1661) confessed that she was often carried away at night by a company of many brave souls after she met the Devil. The case of Jonet Miller (Kirkcudbright 1658) who conversed with the Devil in a dream probably reflects elite ideas which the writer of Katherine Oswald's (Edinburgh 1629) confession noted. He stated that 'thay being deludit be the devil thay beleave that thay sie sumtymes knawin and uther tymes unknowin persones sumtymes guid sumtymes bad persones, ... [and] that all witches ar nocht transpoiritit bodeyis bot only in fantasie'.⁸⁴¹ The fact that there are no definite confessions in fairy-related trials in Scotland stating that witches flew with fairies in trance whereas they mostly believed to go with them bodily might also reflect King James' argument that witches could be carried away by spirits but it was not possible that they went out in spirit while their body was left behind.⁸⁴²

While whirlwinds were only associated with fairies during the late 16th century, there are some hints that they also became associated with witches at the middle of the 17th century. Barbria Parish (Linlithgow 1647) who confessed meeting the 'good neighbours' also stated one witch in her company whirled all others in the wind. A woman dressed in green put a sickness on one of her

⁸³⁴ Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm," 160; Goodare, "Flying Witches," 159-176; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 100-5.

⁸³⁵ SSW; JC26/1/67 (Janet Boyman); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 164 (Alesoun Pierson).

⁸³⁶ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 37; SSW.

⁸³⁷ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 604, 608.

⁸³⁸ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 1, part II, 162.

⁸³⁹ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 121.

⁸⁴⁰ Goodare, "Flying Witches," 167.

⁸⁴¹ SSW (Beatrix Leslie; Jonet Miller); SJC, vol. 1, 132-3 (Katherine Oswald).

⁸⁴² Levack, *Witch-Hunting in Scotland*, 46-7; King James VI, *Daemonologie*, 388-390.

neighbours by putting and whirlwind on her house.⁸⁴³ Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) said that she and the other witches could raise the wind and fly like 'strawes in a whirlwind' at their meetings. Furthermore, they did not fly in order to get to the sabbath but to shoot humans and animals with elf-arrow-heids.⁸⁴⁴ Both confessions seem to transfer the ways how fairies used to harm humans into the harmful magic of witches.

Additionally, witches could fly voluntarily or involuntarily on certain plants, animals, transformed witches or innocents. They could also transform themselves into flying animals which were mostly hares or cats but also bees and birds.⁸⁴⁵ Christen Michell and Bessie Thom (both Aberdeen 1597) confessed that they danced and rode on trees at the sabbath.⁸⁴⁶ Andro Man (Aberdeen 1598) stated that the Queen of Elphen, Christsonday appearing as stag, and several others rode out on 'haiknayses' on Ruidday in harvest.⁸⁴⁷ Margaret Watsoun (Lanark 1644) said that 'Mailie Paittersone read upone ane cat, Jonet Lockie read upone ane cock and thy aunt ... read upone ane thorn trie and thyself read upone ane bottell of strae and the said Jeane Lauchlane upone ane bourtrie.'⁸⁴⁸ Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) stated

We will flie lyk strawes quhan we pleas; wild-strawes and corne-strawes wilbe horses to ws, an ve put thaim betwixt our foot, and say, 'Horse And Hattock, In The Divellis nam!' An quhan any sies thes strawes in a whirlwind, and doe not sanctifie them selues, we may shoot them dead at owr pleasur. Any that ar shot be vs, their sowell will goe to Hevin, bot ther bodies remains with ws, and will flie as horsis to ws⁸⁴⁹

Like the Devil himself, some witches could transform themselves into animals, which was not possible for fairies.⁸⁵⁰ Bessie Thom (Aberdeen 1597) confessed that at one of their sabbath meetings, all witches were transformed into hares, cats and other animals and danced while Satan played an instrument.⁸⁵¹ Similarly, Margret Dobson (Berwick 1649) said that another witch transferred herself into a cat at one of their meetings while Jonet Braidheid (Nairn 1662) confessed that she and other witches appeared 'in the lyknes of crowes and rewkis' when they hunted.⁸⁵² Issobell Gowdie (Nairn 1662) said that the Devil as well as the witches could transform themselves into various animals. The Devil could appear as black man but also as deer, crow, sheep, dog, bull or stirk whereas witches could transform themselves into hares, cats or crows. In her third confession, Gowdie stated,

⁸⁴³ SSW; CH2/467/1, 77-8.

⁸⁴⁴ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 604, 607.

⁸⁴⁵ Goodare, "Flying Witches," 159-164; Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 88-9.

⁸⁴⁶ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 165 (Christen Michell); *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 167 (Bessie Thom).

⁸⁴⁷ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 121.

⁸⁴⁸ RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 150.

⁸⁴⁹ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 604.

⁸⁵⁰ Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm," 160.

⁸⁵¹ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 1, 167.

⁸⁵² RPC, 2nd series, vol. 8, 196 (Margaret Dobson); *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 618 (Jonet Braidheid).

He wold send me now and then to *Auldearne* ... to my neighbouris, in the shape of an hair ... The dowgis will som tymes get som byttis of vs, quhain v ear in hairis, bot will not get ws killed. Quhan we wold be in the shap of cattis, we did nothing but cry and wraw, ... and quhan ve com to owr awin shapis again, ve will find the scrattis and rywes on our skins⁸⁵³

Ultimately, animal metamorphosis as well as the witches' flight were rarely confessed in Scotland and were thus not a key feature of Scottish witchcraft belief.⁸⁵⁴ If they appeared in confessions, neither of them were used as modes of transport to the sabbath. The witches flew on or transformed into animals at the sabbath itself or on other occasions to perform *maleficia*.

Conclusion

Summing up, the cumulative concept of witchcraft developed out of a variety of ideas which fused on the European continent during the early 15th century and later spread across Europe while adopting regional characteristics and alterations over time. Conceptions about the Devil arose from biblical and theological descriptions which mixed with beliefs about ancient pagan gods and folk belief about various spirits. While the Scottish populace depicted him mostly as ordinary human male or animal, the elite thought he was a monstrous being with evergrowing powers to destroy Christendom. The idea that witches could make a pact with Satan himself mainly developed out of the practices of learned magicians and necromancers which were projected upon witches and heretics. The belief in the witches' sabbath reflected horrible imaginations about an anti-society practicing inversions of moral behaviour which were primarily connected to early Christians, Jews, Muslims, and heretics before they became exclusively associated with witches. Popular beliefs about ancient and supernatural night-flying witches, women riding out with the goddess Diana at night and male groups making trance-journeys probably originating from an ecstatic journey to the land of the dead built the basis for the belief in flying witches. During the course of the witch-hunts popular practices like the invocation of spirits, the belief in magical flight and fairies as well as popular festivals were diabolized by authorities who superimposed their demonological ideas upon the peasantry.

In Scotland, learned notions of the demonic pact and the witches' sabbath were not merely imported during the North Berwick trials by King James VI. Evidence from fairy-related trials shows that at least some perceptions about the pact and the sabbath were there before while the cumulative concept was adopted to local culture and regional beliefs. Black masses, sexual orgies, cannibalism, the witches' flight or animal metamorphosis featured rarely in Scottish sabbath descriptions. At best, witches' gatherings reflected inversions of Protestant mass and baptism and took place on local religious festivals and places like local kirks or hills.

⁸⁵³ *Criminal Trials*, vol. 3, 603, 605, 607-8, 611, 613.

⁸⁵⁴ Martin, "Some Findings," 64.

Fairy belief was introduced into trials not only by culprits who tried to find the answers their interrogators wanted to hear, but sometimes the interrogators deliberately asked for contact with fairies, spirits or the Devil. Communication with fairies could be interpreted as implicit or explicit pact. Since they were often held to be hostile towards Christianity, negotiating with fairies could be connected to a renouncement of baptism whereas going to fairyland could be reinterpreted as attending the sabbath. Indeed, descriptions of merriment and revel at witches' gatherings seem to recount depictions of fairy revels whereas the idea that fairies raised or travelled in whirlwinds was also transferred onto witches during the course of the Scottish witchcraft trials. While fairies and angels played a bigger role in earlier trials, beliefs in them became slowly superimposed by diabolic notions of the witch as descriptions of the Devil and the sabbath became more stereotypical and horrid during mass trials and especially the second half of the 17th century.

Conclusion

This dissertation has demonstrated that fairies, witches, ghosts, demons, angels, and the Devil were part of a common *mentalité* in Early Modern Scotland. Even if many authorities interpreted fairies and similar entities as demonic illusions, they acknowledged their existence and were concerned about their influence upon the human world. Witch trial confessions can be read as narratives that have been shaped by the accused, the accusers and the authorities alike.

According to accused witches, fairies were supernatural beings living in a parallel liminal world. They were generally of the same size and appearance as humans and could bestow special gifts upon them. Occasionally fairies were consulted by charmers for healing. On the other hand, they commonly haunted and harmed people by abducting their children, midwives and nurses, shooting humans with elf-arrow-heads or using humans to pay the teind, or tax, to Hell. Fairies could appear or disappear at will, mainly travelled in whirlwinds and used to ride out on earth with their cohorts on Quarter days. They were often accompanied by ghosts and shared several characteristics with them although the fairies themselves were never human. Fairies usually lived inside hills in a marvellous bright otherworld, had a parallel culture to humans and enjoyed similar activities. They liked hunting, merriment, drinking and dancing, and had an aristocratic society with a king and a queen. On the other hand, they had no religion but they were answerable to God since they were part of his creation.

Although they shared several characteristics with witches such as the ability to harm humans or holding meetings with drinking and dancing, those figures were never conflated in Scottish witchcraft trials. The witch or charmer was still part of the human community while the fairy belonged to a supernatural otherworld and was thus alien to human society. Although they were never seen as the same beings, some characteristics of fairies could be transferred to witches. After all, some witches confessed to have raised whirlwinds or that they travelled in them to the sabbath. Some witches said they shot people dead with elf-arrow-heads and others lifted corpses of unchristened children probably reflecting the fairy's fondness for stealing babies. While fairies lived inside hills, witches used to meet at hills where both were dancing, feasting and making merry while their gatherings were presided over by a supernatural entity which could either be the king and queen of fairy or the Devil.

The quantitative analysis of fairy-related witchcraft trials has shown that fairy belief played a significant role during the whole period of the Scottish witch-hunts and in most regions where they occurred. Together with qualitative analyses of the confessions, it has been demonstrated that suspected witches who explicitly referred to fairies also confessed more often to healing and charming. Not only women but also male charmers confessed to healing fairy-inflicted injuries or

with the help of fairies. It can no longer be argued that the prosecution of charmers was an organised campaign led by male physicians to eradicate female healers. On the contrary, in a time when professionally educated physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries were few, charmers and popular magical practitioners were important members of the medical marketplace and were respected within the community. However, they could endanger themselves through their practices as it was commonly believed that people who could heal also had the power to harm and sometimes healing was only possible through the transfer of the illness onto another human or animal. Furthermore, charmers were in danger since Scottish authorities interpreted all magic, no matter if good or bad, as demonically inspired. A connection with fairies could, therefore, be interpreted as evidence of entering into a demonic pact.

It has been shown that fairy-related confessions connected to healing and white magic as well as confessions explicitly mentioning fairies were more common before the 1650s while stereotypical demonic elements including the demonic pact and the sabbath were more common from the 1590s onwards and especially during the second half of the 17th century. In addition, it has been argued that healing and charming played a bigger role in non-panic years and non-central trials while diabolic characteristics were more frequent in central trials held in Edinburgh by the Privy Council and in panic-years. This affirms the theory that popular ideas were slowly superimposed by elite notions and that the populace started to accept the diabolical concept of witchcraft during the course of the witch-hunts.

Furthermore, it has been argued that the cumulative concept of witchcraft, as it was developed on the continent, was not merely imposed unaltered onto Scotland during the course of the North Berwick trials by James VI. It has been emphasised that fairy belief was a pre-condition for the adoption of the cumulative concept among the Scottish peasantry. Trials explicitly mentioning fairies show traces of the demonic pact and the witches' sabbath already before the 1590s confirming the argument that at least the Scottish elite must have heard about these ideas previously. Besides fairy belief, other regional elements such as the Protestant mass and baptism, Scottish marriage, religious and popular festivals built the groundwork for the emergence of regional Scottish variations of the cumulative concept of witchcraft. Fairy belief was especially suitable for a demonic reinterpretation since fairies were interpreted as demons by Scottish authorities. Drinking, dancing and making merry were not only common elements of contemporary peasant festivities which were oppressed by reformers, but also of fairy revels which could be interpreted as the witches' sabbath by the elite. Fairies could perform harmful deeds against humans and similarly some witches confessed to being abducted by or raising whirlwinds as well as flying through the air while shooting their victims. Descriptions similar to a Black Mass were rare in Scotland and if they occurred they were a mockery of a Protestant service or baptism rather than a Catholic mass.

Depictions of the demonic pact were more closely connected to Scottish marriage and covenant ideology while sexual relationships with demons reflected beliefs about *incubi*, *succubi* and fairies.

Appendix

List of Fairy-Related Witchcraft Trials in Scotland

Legend

Names in italics = witchcraft trials with direct reference to fairies (the rest contains fairy elements)

* = witchcraft trials were edited version of dittay (indictment) and/or confession has been found

SSW⁸⁵⁵: 113 trials involving *fairies* and fairy elements in chronological order

Name	year of trial and/or execution	county/place
<i>Boyman, Janet</i> *	1572	Ayr
<i>Dunlop, Bessie</i> *	1576	Ayr
Roiss, Christiane *	1577	Ross and Cromarty
<i>Pierson, Alesoun</i> *	1588	Fife
McAlester, Marion Neyne*	1590	Ross and Cromarty
<i>Ross, Katherene</i> *	1590	Ross and Cromarty
<i>Watsonne, Issobell</i>	1590	Stirling
Makcalzene, Ewfame *	1591	Edinburgh
<i>Sampsoune, Agnes</i> *	1591	Edinburgh
Cockie, Isobel *	1597	Aberdeen
Grant, Marioun *	1597	Aberdeen
<i>Lewinstoun, Christian</i> *	1597	Edinburgh
Michell, Christen *	1597	Aberdeen
Mutche, Meriorie *	1597	Aberdeen
Og, Margrat *	1597	Aberdeen
Oige, Issobell *	1597	Aberdeen
<i>Strauthaquhin, Isobell</i> *	1597	Aberdeen
Thom, Bessie *	1597	Aberdeen
Wobster, Agnes *	1597	Aberdeen
<i>Man, Andro</i> *	1598	Aberdeen
Patersoune, Bartie*	1607	Edinburgh
Tod, Beigis *	1608	Haddington
<i>Scot, Elspit</i>	1612	Linlithgow
<i>Drever, Janet</i> *	1615	Orkney
<i>Jones dochter, Katherine</i> *	1616	Shetland
<i>Reoch, Elspeth</i> *	1616	Orkney
<i>Haldane, Issobell</i> *	1623	Perth
<i>Malcome, Steven</i> *	1628	Stirling
Oswald, Katharine *	1629	Edinburgh
Hammiltoun, Alexander *	1630	Haddington
<i>Philip, John</i> *	1631	Aberdeen
Knarstoun, James	1633	Orkney
<i>Sinclair, Issobell</i>	1633	Orkney
Bathgate, Elizabeth *	1634	Berwick, trial Edinburgh
Tailzour, Jonet	1634	Stirling
Brughe, Johnne	1643	Kinross, trial Edinburgh
Cumlaquoy, Mareon	1643	Orkney
Dicksone, Margaret	1643	Haddington
<i>Bowndie, Barbara</i>	1644	Orkney

⁸⁵⁵ Julian Goodare, Lauren Martin, Joyce Miller and Louise Yeoman, 'The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft.' Archived January 2003. <http://www.shca.ed.ac.uk/witches/>.

Culsetter, Elspeth	1644	Orkney
Reid, Margaret *	1644	Lanark
<i>Watsoun, Margaret *</i>	1644	Lanark
<i>Alexander, Magaret</i>	1647	Linlithgow
<i>Parish, Barbria</i>	1647	Linlithgow
Dicksone, Margaret *	1649	Haddington
Dobson, Margaret *	1649	Berwick, confession Eyemouth
Garner, Issoble	1649	Fife
Gibb, Katherin	1649	Edinburgh
Hunter, Agnes *	1649	Haddington
Robiesone, Marioun	1649	Peebles
Watsone, Marion	1649	Peebles
Coutts, Jonet	1650	Peebles
Finlasoun, Margaret *	1650	Renfrew
<i>Hyndman, Finwell</i>	1650	Bute
Duchill, Margaret	1658	Clackmannan
<i>McCairtnay, Grissell</i>	1658	Kirkcudbright
<i>Miller, Jonet</i>	1658	Kirkcudbright, trial Dumfries
<i>Remy, Kathrine</i>	1658	Clackmannan
Tailyeor, Margaret	1658	Clackmannan
<i>Cairnes, Agnes (Bigis)</i>	1659	Kirkcudbright, trial Dumfries
<i>Cochrane, Barbara</i>	1659	Haddington
Cranstoun, Cristian	1659	Haddington
Crooks, Janet	1659	Haddington
Douglas, John	1659	Haddington
Lynn, Marioun	1659	Haddington
Tait, Helen	1659	Kirkcudbright, trial Dumfries
Thomson, Jonet	1660	Haddington
Casse, Helen	1661	Edinburgh
Graham, Elspet	1661	Edinburgh
Hutchison, Margaret	1661	Edinburgh
Ker, Jonet	1661	Edinburgh
Loch, Agnes	1661	Edinburgh
Miller, Jonet	1661	Linlithgow
Paistoun, Janet	1661	Edinburgh
Philipp, Elspeth	1661	Edinburgh
Smith, Issobell *	1661	Haddington
<i>Stevensoun, Margaret</i>	1661	Edinburgh
Thomson, Agnes	1661	Edinburgh
Watsone, Jonet *	1661	Edinburgh
Braidheid, Jonet *	1662	Nairn
<i>Gowdie, Issobell *</i>	1662	Nairn
<i>Morisone, Jonet *</i>	1662	Bute
NcWilliam, Margrat *	1662	Bute
<i>Welch, James</i>	1662	Haddington
<i>Weir, Jean</i>	1670	Edinburgh
Paine, Bessie	1671	Dumfries
Jackson, Margret *	1677	Renfrew
<i>McIllichall, Donald *</i>	1677	Argyll
Stewart, Annabell *	1677	Renfrew
Stewart, Jon *	1677	Renfrew
Weir, Bessie *	1677	Renfrew

Campbell, Marion	1678	Edinburgh
Eliot, Isobell	1678	Edinburgh
Anderson, Elizabeth	1697	Renfrew
Anderson, Jean	1697	Renfrew
Campbell, Katherine	1697	Renfrew
Cunninghame, Margaret	1697	Renfrew
Ewing, Margaret	1697	Renfrew
Flowers, Katherine	1697	Renfrew
Forrester, Angus	1697	Renfrew
<i>Fulton, Margaret</i>	1697	Renfrew
Lang, Margaret	1697	Renfrew
Lindsay, James	1697	Renfrew
Lindsay, John	1697	Renfrew
Lindsay, John	1697	Renfrew
McKillope, Margaret	1697	Renfrew
Miller, William	1697	Renfrew
Naismith, Agnes	1697	Renfrew
Reid, John	1697	Renfrew
Sempell, Martha	1697	Renfrew
Shearer, Margaret	1697	Renfrew
Stewart, John	1697	Renfrew
<i>Brown, Jean</i>	1706	Wigtown

SSW⁸⁵⁶: additional witchcraft trials found by searching for: non-natural beings ‘fairy’

<i>Fergusson, Isobell</i>	1661	Edinburgh, Presbytery Dalkeith
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Additional witchcraft trials containing references to fairy belief found in other secondary sources:

Lizanne Henderson and Edward J. Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief*.⁸⁵⁷

Lorn, Thomas	19 Jan., 1568-9	Overton of Dyce/Aberdeen
Ronaldson, Walter	20 Nov., 1601	Kirkton of Dyce/Aberdeen
Carey, Katherine	1615	Orkney
Thomasdochter, Barbara	2 Oct. 1616	Delting/ Shetland
<i>Stewart, John</i> *	1618	Irvine/Ayr
Trall, Janet *	22 May 1623	Blackruthven/Perth
Houston, James	22 Jan. 1624	Orkney
<i>Cragie, Katherine</i> *	1640 (SSW: 1643)	Orkney
Cors, Thomas	6 April 1643	Orkney
Bennet, Isobell	March, 1659	Stirling
<i>Lesley, Beatrix</i>	20 July 1661	Dalkeith/Edinburgh
Flinkar, Bessie	7 Aug. 1661	Libberton/Edinburgh
M’Phie, James	3. Jan. 1670	Kingarth/Bute
Ferguson, Farquar	9. Dec. 1716	Kilmory (Arran)/Bute

⁸⁵⁶ Julian Goodare, Lauren Martin, Joyce Miller and Louise Yeoman, ‘The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft.’ Archived January 2003. <http://www.shca.ed.ac.uk/witches/>.

⁸⁵⁷ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 217.

Julian Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm in Scotland":⁸⁵⁸

<i>Barclay, Margaret</i>	1618	Irvine/Ayr
<i>Anderson, Janet /</i>	1621	Stirling
<i>Andirsone, Jonet (SSW)</i>		
<i>Couper, Marable</i>	1624	Orkney

Julian Goodare, "Flying Witches in Scotland":⁸⁵⁹

<i>Cowie, Janet /</i>	1647 (SSW: 1646)	Elgin/Moray
<i>Cuj, Janat (SSW)</i>		

Alaric Hall, "Getting Shot of Elves":⁸⁶⁰

Scott, Joanet	1650	Paisley/Renfrew
Scott, Jeane	1650	Paisley/Renfrew

P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, *The Great Scottish Witch-Hunt*:⁸⁶¹

Campbell ,Jean	1660	Bute
Wilson, Harry/Hendry	1669	Berwick
Astian, Elspeth	unknown	Burntisland/Fife

Emma Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits*:⁸⁶²

Rendall, Jonet	1629	Orkney
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⁸⁵⁸ Goodare, "Boundaries of the Fairy Realm," 143, 147.

⁸⁵⁹ Goodare, "Flying Witches," 167.

⁸⁶⁰ Hall, "Getting Shot," 25.

⁸⁶¹ Maxwell-Stuart, *Great Scottish Witch-Hunt*, 112-3.

⁸⁶² Wilby, *Cunning Folk*, 57, 62, 67, 75, 115, 225.

Table 1: Statistical Evaluation of Fairy-Related Witchcraft Trials

With reference to: year, county, gender, folk healing, white magic, midwifery, *maleficium*, demonic features, and the witches' sabbath.

Based on the details given by the SSW.

Name	Year	county/shire	female	male	folk healing	white magic	midwifery	maleficium	demonic	witches' meetings
Boyman, Janet	1572	Ayr	x		x					x
Dunlop, Bessie	1576	Ayr	x		x	x	x			x
Roiss, Christiane	1577	Ross and Cromarty	x					x		x
Pierson, Alesoun	1588	Fife	x		x			x		x
McAlester, Marion Neyne	1590	Ross and Cromarty	x					x		
Ross, Katherene	1590	Ross and Cromarty	x					x		
Watsonne, Issobell	1590	Stirling	x		x	x			x	x
Makcalzene, Ewfame	1591	Edinburgh	x			x		x	x	x
Sampsoune, Agnes	1591	Edinburgh	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Cockie, Isobel	1597	Aberdeen	x		x	x		x	x	x
Grant, Marioun	1597	Aberdeen	x		x	x			x	x
Lewinstoun, Christian	1597	Edinburgh	x		x			x		x
Michell, Christen	1597	Aberdeen	x					x	x	x
Mutche, Meriorie	1597	Aberdeen	x					x	x	x
Og, Margrat	1597	Aberdeen	x			x		x	x	x
Oige, Issobell	1597	Aberdeen	x			x		x	x	x
Strauthaquhin, Isobell	1597	Aberdeen	x		x	x		x		
Thom, Bessie	1597	Aberdeen	x					x	x	x
Wobster, Agnes	1597	Aberdeen	x					x	x	
Man, Andro	1598	Aberdeen		x	x	x		x	x	x
Patersoune, Bartie	1607	Edinburgh	x		x			x		
Tod, Beigis	1608	Haddington	x					x	x	x
Scot, Elspit	1612	Linlithgow	x		x					
Drever, Janet	1615	Orkney	x							
Caray, Catherine	1616	Orkney	x		x					
Jones dochter, Katherine	1616	Shetland	x		x				x	
Reoch, Elspeth	1616	Orkney	x			x			x	x
Margaret Barclay	1618	Ayr	x					x		
Stewart, John	1618	Ayr		x				x		
Jonet Andirsone	1621	Stirling	x		x					
Haldane, Issobell	1623	Perth	x		x			x		
Marable Couper	1624	Orkney	x					x		

Malcome,Steven	1628	Stirling		x	x	x				
Oswald,Katharine	1629	Edinburgh	x		x			x	x	x
Rendall, Jonet	1629	Orkney	x					x	x	x
Hammiltoun,Alexander	1630	Haddington		x	x			x	x	x
Philip,John	1631	Aberdeen		x	x	x				
Knarstoun,James	1633	Orkney		x	x	x				
Sinclair,Issobell	1633	Orkney	x			x				
Bathgate,Elizabeth	1634	Berwick	x					x	x	x
Tailzour,Jonet	1634	Stirling	x		x			x		
Brughe,Johnne	1643	Kinross		x	x			x	x	x
Cumlaquoy,Mareon	1643	Orkney	x					x		
Cragie, Katherine	1643	Orkney	x		x	x		x		
Cors, Thomas	1643	Orkney		x		x		x		
Dicksone,Margaret	1643	Haddington	x		x			x		
Bowndie,Barbara	1644	Orkney	x						x	x
Culsetter,Elspeth	1644	Orkney	x		x	x		x		
Reid,Margaret	1644	Lanark	x		x		x		x	x
Watsoun,Margaret	1644	Lanark	x					x	x	x
Janat Cuj/Janet Cowie	1646	Elgin	x					x		
Alexander,Magaret	1647	Linlithgow	x		x			x	x	x
Parish,Barbria	1647	Linlithgow	x					x	x	x
Dicksone,Margaret	1649	Haddington	x		x				x	x
Dobson,Margaret	1649	Berwick	x					x	x	x
Garner,Issoble	1649	Fife	x						x	x
Gibb,Katherin	1649	Edinburgh	x						x	x
Hunter,Agnes	1649	Haddington	x						x	x
Robiesone,Marioun	1649	Peebles	x						x	x
Watson,Marion	1649	Peebles	x		x				x	x
Coutts,Jonet	1650	Peebles	x					x	x	x
Finlasoun,Margaret	1650	Renfrew	x					x		x
Hyndman,Finwell	1650	Bute	x							
Duchill,Margaret	1658	Clackmannan	x					x	x	x
McCairtnay,Grissell	1658	Kirkcudbright	x					x	x	

Name	Year	county/shire	female	male	folk healing	white magic	midwifery	maleficium	demonic	witches' meetings
Miller,Jonet	1658	Kirkcudbright	x		x	x			x	
Remy,Kathrine	1658	Clackmannan	x						x	x
Tailyor,Margaret	1658	Clackmannan	x					x	x	x
Bennet, Issobell	1659	Stirling	x		x					
Cairnes,Agnes (Bigis)	1659	Kirkcudbright	x						x	x
Cochrane,Barbara	1659	Haddington	x						x	x
Cranstoun,Cristian	1659	Haddington	x						x	x
Crooks,Janet	1659	Haddington	x						x	x
Douglas,John	1659	Haddington		x					x	x
Lynn,Marioun	1659	Haddington	x						x	x
Tait,Helen	1659	Kirkcudbright	x					x		x
Thomson,Jonet	1660	Haddington	x						x	x
Casse,Helen	1661	Edinburgh	x						x	x
Fergusson, Issobell	1661	Edinburgh	x				x	x	x	x
Flinker, Bessie	1661	Edinburgh	x						x	x
Graham,Elspet	1661	Edinburgh	x						x	x
Hutchison,Margaret	1661	Edinburgh	x					x	x	x
Ker,Jonet	1661	Edinburgh	x						x	x
Leslie, Beatrix	1661	Edinburgh	x		x		x	x	x	x
Loch,Agnes	1661	Edinburgh	x						x	x
Miller,Jonet	1661	Linlithgow	x					x	x	x
Paistoun,Janet	1661	Edinburgh	x						x	x
Philipp,Elspeth	1661	Edinburgh	x						x	x
Smith,Issobell	1661	Haddington	x						x	x
Stevensoun,Margaret	1661	Edinburgh	x						x	x
Thomson,Agnes	1661	Edinburgh	x						x	x
Watson,Jonet	1661	Edinburgh	x						x	x
Braidheid,Jonet	1662	Nairn	x					x	x	x
Gowdie,Issobell	1662	Nairn	x		x	x		x	x	x
Morisone,Jonet	1662	Bute	x		x				x	x
NcWilliam,Margrat	1662	Bute	x					x	x	x
Welch,James	1662	Haddington		x				x	x	x

MacPhee, James	1670	Bute		x						
Weir, Jean	1670	Edinburgh	x						x	
Paine, Bessie	1671	Dumfries	x		x	x				
Jackson, Margret	1677	Renfrew	x					x	x	x
McIlmichall, Donald	1677	Argyll		x		x			x	x
Stewart, Annabell	1677	Renfrew	x					x	x	x
Stewart, Jon	1677	Renfrew		x				x	x	x
Weir, Bessie	1677	Renfrew	x					x	x	x
Campbell, Marion	1678	Edinburgh	x					x	x	x
Eliot, Isobell	1678	Edinburgh	x					x	x	x
Anderson, Elizabeth	1697	Renfrew	x					x	x	x
Anderson, Jean	1697	Renfrew	x					x	x	x
Campbell, Katherine	1697	Renfrew	x					x	x	x
Cunninghame, Margaret	1697	Renfrew	x					x	x	x
Ewing, Margaret	1697	Renfrew	x					x	x	x
Flowers, Katherine	1697	Renfrew	x					x	x	x
Forrester, Angus	1697	Renfrew		x				x	x	x
Fulton, Margaret	1697	Renfrew	x					x	x	x
Lang, Margaret	1697	Renfrew	x			x		x	x	x
Lindsay, James	1697	Renfrew		x				x	x	x
Lindsay, John	1697	Renfrew		x				x	x	x
Lindsay, John	1697	Renfrew		x				x	x	x
McKillope, Margaret	1697	Renfrew	x					x	x	x
Miller, William	1697	Renfrew		x				x	x	x
Naismith, Agnes	1697	Renfrew	x					x	x	x
Reid, John	1697	Renfrew		x				x	x	x
Sempell, Martha	1697	Renfrew	x					x	x	x
Shearer, Margaret	1697	Renfrew	x					x	x	x
Stewart, John	1697	Renfrew	x					x	x	x
Brown, Jean	1706	Wigtown	x			x		x	x	

		female	male	folk healing	white magic	midwifery	maleficium	demonic	witches' meetings
	127	108	19	36	24	5	78	93	94
Total number of characteristics				141	70	10	414	528	
Fairy cases compared to total number of characteristics				25,5%	34,3%	50,0%	18,8%	17,6%	
Characteristics compared to 127 fairy cases		85,0%	15,0%	28,3%	18,9%	3,9%	61,4%	73,2%	74,0%

Male				6	6		13	13	13
				16,7%	25,0%		16,7%	14,0%	13,8%
Female				30	18	5	65	80	81
				83,3%	75,0%	100,0%	83,3%	86,0%	86,2%

Characteristics compared to 43 'fairies explicitly mentioned' cases	43	37	6	20	14	4	22	24	23
		86,0%	14,0%	46,5%	32,6%	9,3%	51,2%	55,8%	53,5%

Male				3	4		3	3	3
				15,0%	28,6%		13,6%	12,5%	13,0%
Female				17	10	4	19	21	20
				85,0%	71,4%	100,0%	86,4%	87,5%	87,0%

explicit mentions of fairies out of 113 fairy-related trials of SSW

additional fairy-related trials not included in the 113 trials of SSW

43 trials defined as 'explicitly mentioning fairies' in this study

Table 2: Further Characteristics of Fairy-Related Witchcraft Trials

With reference to:

Fairy-elements according to the SSW: Fairies, Fairyland, Changeling, Elf-Shot, Fairy Blast, Well, Rowan, Green, Sunrise, 12:00, Bells, Thorn Tree, Iron, Bored Stone, Fairy Hill, Horseshoe, Spinning.

Characteristics related to fairies and spirits: Whirlwind, Riding with the Dead, Ghost, Necromancy, Invocation of Spirits.

Characteristics related to folk healing: Calendar Customs,⁸⁶³ Finding Lost Goods, Prophecy, Trinity, Love Magic, South-Running Water, Second Sight.

Characteristics related to the diabolic concept of the witch: Devil, Demonic Pact, Corpse, Clay/Wax Images.

Based on the details given by the SSW.

⁸⁶³ Calendar Customs are not only related to healing and divination rituals but also to fairy activities and witches' meetings.

Malcome,Steven	1628	x	x	x										x
Oswald,Katharine	1629		x					x						
Rendall, Jonet	1629													
Hammiltoun,Alexander	1630		x								x			
Philip,John	1631	x	x				x							
Knarstoun,James	1633		x				x				x			
Sinclair,Issobell	1633	x	x											
Bathgate,Elizabeth	1634													
Tailzour,Jonet	1634		x										x	
Brughe,Johnne	1643		x		x									
Cumlaquoy,Mareon	1643		x							x				
Cragie, Katherine	1643													
Cors, Thomas	1643													
Dicksone,Margaret	1643		x	x										
Bowndie,Barbara	1644	x												
Culsetter,Elspeth	1644		x		x									
Reid,Margaret	1644		x					x						
Watsoun,Margaret	1644												x	
Janat Cuj/Janet Cowie	1646													
Alexander,Magaret	1647	x	x				x							
Parish,Barbria	1647	x						x						
Dicksone,Margaret	1649		x					x						
Dobson,Margaret	1649										x			
Garner,Issoble	1649							x						
Gibb,Katherin	1649		x								x			
Hunter,Agnes	1649		x					x						
Robiesone,Marioun	1649		x								x			
Watson,Marion	1649		x					x						
Coutts,Jonet	1650		x					x						
Finlasoun,Margaret	1650							x						
Hyndman,Finwell	1650	x	x											
Duchill,Margaret	1658		x								x			
McCairtnay,Grissell	1658	x	x											

Name	Year	Fairies	Fairyland	Changeling	Elf-Shot	Fairy Blast	Well	Rowan	Green	Sunrise	12:00	Bells	Thorn Tree	Iron
Miller,Jonet	1658					x							x	
Remy,Kathrine	1658	x	x						x					
Tailyeor,Margaret	1658		x						x		x			
Bennet, Issobell	1659					x								
Cairnes,Agnes (Bigis)	1659	x	x											
Cochrane,Barbara	1659	x	x											
Cranstoun,Cristian	1659		x						x		x			
Crooks,Janet	1659		x						x					
Douglas,John	1659		x						x					
Lynn,Marioun	1659		x				x							
Tait,Helen	1659		x										x	
Thomson,Jonet	1660		x				x		x					
Casse,Helen	1661		x						x					
Fergusson, Issobell	1661	x												
Flinker, Bessie	1661													
Graham,Elspet	1661		x						x					
Hutchison,Margaret	1661		x								x			
Ker,Jonet	1661		x								x			
Leslie, Beatrix	1661													
Loch,Agnes	1661		x						x					
Miller,Jonet	1661													
Paistoun,Janet	1661		x						x					
Philipp,Elspeth	1661								x					
Smith,Issobell	1661								x					
Stevensoun,Margaret	1661	x												
Thomson,Agnes	1661		x								x			
Watson,Jonet	1661		x						x					
Braidheid,Jonet	1662		x		x									
Gowdie,Issobell	1662	x	x		x				x					
Morisone,Jonet	1662	x			x	x								
NcWilliam,Margrat	1662		x		x									
Welch,James	1662	x	x						x					

MacPhee, James	1670													
Weir, Jean	1670	x												
Paine, Bessie	1671		x					x				x		
Jackson, Margret	1677		x								x			
McIlmichall, Donald	1677													
Stewart, Annabell	1677		x								x			
Stewart, Jon	1677		x								x			
Weir, Bessie	1677										x			
Campbell, Marion	1678							x						
Eliot, Isobell	1678		x				x							
Anderson, Elizabeth	1697		x								x			
Anderson, Jean	1697		x								x			
Campbell, Katherine	1697		x								x			
Cunninghame, Margaret	1697		x								x			
Ewing, Margaret	1697		x								x			
Flowers, Katherine	1697		x								x			
Forrester, Angus	1697		x								x			
Fulton, Margaret	1697		x								x			
Lang, Margaret	1697		x								x			
Lindsay, James	1697		x								x			
Lindsay, John	1697		x								x			
Lindsay, John	1697		x								x			
McKillope, Margaret	1697		x								x			
Miller, William	1697		x								x			
Naismith, Agnes	1697		x								x			
Reid, John	1697		x								x			
Sempell, Martha	1697		x								x			
Shearer, Margaret	1697		x								x			
Stewart, John	1697		x								x			
Brown, Jean	1706													
		29	94	6	12	3	8	3	32	3	40	1	7	1
explicit mentions of fairies out of 113 fairy-related trials of SSW					43 trials defined as 'explicitly mentioning fairies' in this study									
additional fairy-related trials not included in the 113 trials of SSW					Fairy characteristics according to SSW									

Malcome, Steven	1628									
Oswald, Katharine	1629									
Rendall, Jonet	1629									
Hammiltoun, Alexander	1630									
Philip, John	1631									
Knarstoun, James	1633									
Sinclair, Issobell	1633									
Bathgate, Elizabeth	1634			x						
Tailzour, Jonet	1634									
Brughe, Johnne	1643									
Cumlaquoy, Mareon	1643									
Cragie, Katherine	1643									
Cors, Thomas	1643									
Dicksone, Margaret	1643									
Bowndie, Barbara	1644									
Culsetter, Elspeth	1644									
Reid, Margaret	1644									
Watsoun, Margaret	1644									
Janat Cuj/Janet Cowie	1646									
Alexander, Magaret	1647									
Parish, Barbria	1647					x				
Dicksone, Margaret	1649									
Dobson, Margaret	1649									
Garner, Issoble	1649									
Gibb, Katherin	1649									
Hunter, Agnes	1649									
Robiesone, Marioun	1649									
Watson, Marion	1649									
Coutts, Jonet	1650									
Finlasoun, Margaret	1650									
Hyndman, Finwell	1650									
Duchill, Margaret	1658									
McCairtnay, Grissell	1658									

MacPhee, James	1670									
Weir, Jean	1670				x					
Paine, Bessie	1671									
Jackson, Margret	1677							x		
McIlmichall, Donald	1677		x							
Stewart, Annabell	1677									
Stewart, Jon	1677									
Weir, Bessie	1677									
Campbell, Marion	1678									
Eliot, Isobell	1678									
Anderson, Elizabeth	1697									
Anderson, Jean	1697									
Campbell, Katherine	1697									
Cunninghame, Margaret	1697									
Ewing, Margaret	1697									
Flowers, Katherine	1697									
Forrester, Angus	1697									
Fulton, Margaret	1697									
Lang, Margaret	1697							x		x
Lindsay, James	1697									
Lindsay, John	1697									
Lindsay, John	1697									
McKillope, Margaret	1697									
Miller, William	1697									
Naismith, Agnes	1697									
Reid, John	1697									
Sempell, Martha	1697									
Shearer, Margaret	1697									
Stewart, John	1697									
Brown, Jean	1706									
		1	6	2	1	5	1	6	3	2
explicit mentions of fairies out of 113 fairy-related trials of SSW					43 trials defined as 'explicitly mentioning fairies' in this study					
additional fairy-related trials not included in the 113 trials of SSW					Fairy characteristics according to SSW					

Name	Year	Calendar Customs	Finding Lost Goods	Prophecy	Trinity	Love Magic	South-Running Water	Second Sight
Boyman, Janet	1572	x			x			
Dunlop, Bessie	1576	x	x	x				
Roiss, Christiane	1577	x						
Pierson, Alesoun	1588							
McAlester, Marion Neyne	1590	x						
Ross, Katherene	1590	x						
Watsonne, Issobell	1590		x					
Makcalzene, Ewfame	1591	x	x			x		
Sampsoune, Agnes	1591	x	x	x		x		
Cockie, Isobel	1597	x		x				
Grant, Marioun	1597				x		x	
Lewinstoun, Christian	1597							
Michell, Christen	1597	x						
Mutche, Meriorie	1597	x						
Og, Margrat	1597	x						
Oige, Issobell	1597	x						
Strauthaquhin, Isobell	1597	x		x		x		
Thom, Bessie	1597	x						
Wobster, Agnes	1597							
Man, Andro	1598	x		x				
Patersoune, Bartie	1607				x			
Tod, Beigis	1608							
Scot, Elspit	1612						x	
Drever, Janet	1615							
Caray, Catherine	1616				x			
Jones dochter, Katherine	1616	x						
Reoch, Elspeth	1616	x						x
Margaret Barclay	1618							
Stewart, John	1618							
Jonet Andirsone	1621							
Haldane, Issobell	1623				x			
Marable Couper	1624	x						

Malcome,Steven	1628				x			
Oswald,Katharine	1629	x						
Rendall, Jonet	1629	x						
Hammiltoun,Alexander	1630	x						
Philip,John	1631						x	
Knarstoun,James	1633				x			
Sinclair,Issobell	1633	x						x
Bathgate,Elizabeth	1634	x						
Tailzour,Jonet	1634				x			
Brughe,Johnne	1643	x					x	
Cumlaquoy,Mareon	1643							
Cragie, Katherine	1643			x		x		
Cors, Thomas	1643			x				
Dicksone,Margaret	1643							
Bowndie,Barbara	1644							
Culsetter,Elspeth	1644		x	x				
Reid,Margaret	1644							
Watsoun,Margaret	1644							
Janat Cuj/Janet Cowie	1646							
Alexander,Magaret	1647							
Parish,Barbria	1647							
Dicksone,Margaret	1649						x	
Dobson,Margaret	1649							
Garner,Issoble	1649							
Gibb,Katherin	1649							
Hunter,Agnes	1649	x						
Robiesone,Marioun	1649							
Watson,Marion	1649							
Coutts,Jonet	1650							
Finlasoun,Margaret	1650							
Hyndman,Finwell	1650	x						
Duchill,Margaret	1658							
McCairtnay,Grissell	1658	x						

Name	Year	Calendar Customs	Finding Lost Goods	Prophecy	Trinity	Love Magic	South-Running Water	Second Sight
Miller,Jonet	1658			x			x	
Remy,Kathrine	1658	x						
Tailyeor,Margaret	1658							
Bennet, Issobell	1659				x			
Cairnes,Agnes (Bigis)	1659	x						
Cochrane,Barbara	1659							
Cranstoun,Cristian	1659						x	
Crooks,Janet	1659							
Douglas,John	1659							
Lynn,Marioun	1659							
Tait,Helen	1659							
Thomson,Jonet	1660	x						
Casse,Helen	1661							
Fergusson, Issobell	1661	x						
Flinker, Bessie	1661							
Graham,Elspet	1661	x						
Hutchison,Margaret	1661							
Ker,Jonet	1661							
Leslie, Beatrix	1661							
Loch,Agnes	1661							
Miller,Jonet	1661							
Paistoun,Janet	1661							
Philipp,Elspeth	1661							
Smith,Issobell	1661							
Stevensoun,Margaret	1661							
Thomson,Agnes	1661							
Watson,Jonet	1661	x						
Braidheid,Jonet	1662							
Gowdie,Issobell	1662	x			x			
Morisone,Jonet	1662							
NcWilliam,Margrat	1662							
Welch,James	1662							

MacPhee, James	1670							
Weir, Jean	1670							
Paine, Bessie	1671	x						
Jackson, Margret	1677							
McIlmichall, Donald	1677	x	x					
Stewart, Annabell	1677	x						
Stewart, Jon	1677							
Weir, Bessie	1677							
Campbell, Marion	1678							
Eliot, Isobell	1678							
Anderson, Elizabeth	1697							
Anderson, Jean	1697							
Campbell, Katherine	1697							
Cunninghame, Margaret	1697							
Ewing, Margaret	1697							
Flowers, Katherine	1697							
Forrester, Angus	1697							
Fulton, Margaret	1697							
Lang, Margaret	1697							
Lindsay, James	1697							
Lindsay, John	1697							
Lindsay, John	1697							
McKillope, Margaret	1697							
Miller, William	1697							
Naismith, Agnes	1697							
Reid, John	1697							
Sempell, Martha	1697							
Shearer, Margaret	1697							
Stewart, John	1697							
Brown, Jean	1706			x	x			
		37	6	10	11	4	7	2
explicit mentions of fairies out of 113 fairy-related trials of SSW				43 trials defined as 'explicitly mentioning fairies' in this study				
additional fairy-related trials not included in the 113 trials of SSW				Fairy characteristics according to SSW				

Name	Year	Devil	Demonic Pact	Corpse	Clay/Wax Images
Boyman, Janet	1572				
Dunlop, Bessie	1576		x		
Roiss, Christiane	1577				x
Pierson, Alesoun	1588		x		
McAlester, Marion Neyne	1590				x
Ross, Katherene	1590				x
Watsonne, Issobell	1590	x	x		
Makcalzene, Ewfame	1591	x	x		x
Sampsoune, Agnes	1591	x	x	x	x
Cockie, Isobel	1597				
Grant, Marioun	1597	x	x		
Lewinstoun, Christian	1597				
Michell, Christen	1597	x	x		
Mutche, Meriorie	1597		x		
Og, Margrat	1597	x	x		
Oige, Issobell	1597	x	x		
Strauthaquhin, Isobell	1597				
Thom, Bessie	1597		x		
Wobster, Agnes	1597	x	x		
Man, Andro	1598	x	x		
Patersoune, Bartie	1607				
Tod, Beigis	1608	x			
Scot, Elspit	1612				
Drever, Janet	1615				
Caray, Catherine	1616				
Jones dochter, Katherine	1616	x	x		
Reoch, Elspeth	1616	x			
Margaret Barclay	1618				
Stewart, John	1618				
Jonet Andirsone	1621				
Haldane, Issobell	1623				
Marable Couper	1624				

Malcome,Steven	1628				
Oswald,Katharine	1629	x	x		
Rendall, Jonet	1629	x			
Hammiltoun,Alexander	1630	x	x		
Philip,John	1631				
Knarstoun,James	1633				
Sinclair,Issobell	1633				
Bathgate,Elizabeth	1634	x			
Tailzour,Jonet	1634				
Brughe,Johnne	1643	x	x	x	
Cumlaquoy,Mareon	1643				
Cragie, Katherine	1643				
Cors, Thomas	1643				
Dicksone,Margaret	1643				
Bowndie,Barbara	1644		x		
Culsetter,Elspeth	1644				
Reid,Margaret	1644	x			
Watsoun,Margaret	1644	x	x	x	
Janat Cuj/Janet Cowie	1646				
Alexander,Magaret	1647	x	x		
Parish,Barbria	1647	x	x		
Dicksone,Margaret	1649	x	x		
Dobson,Margaret	1649	x	x		
Garner,Issoble	1649	x			
Gibb,Katherin	1649	x	x		
Hunter,Agnes	1649	x	x		
Robiesone,Marioun	1649	x	x		
Watson,Marion	1649	x			
Coutts,Jonet	1650	x	x		
Finlasoun,Margaret	1650	x			
Hyndman,Finwell	1650				
Duchill,Margaret	1658	x	x		
McCairtnay,Grissell	1658	x			

Name	Year	Devil	Demonic Pact	Corpse	Clay/Wax Images
Miller,Jonet	1658	x	x		
Remy,Kathrine	1658	x	x		
Tailyeor,Margaret	1658	x	x		
Bennet, Issobell	1659				
Cairnes,Agnes (Bigis)	1659	x	x		
Cochrane,Barbara	1659	x	x		
Cranstoun,Cristian	1659	x			
Crooks,Janet	1659	x	x		
Douglas,John	1659	x	x		
Lynn,Marioun	1659	x	x		
Tait,Helen	1659	x			
Thomson,Jonet	1660	x	x		
Casse,Helen	1661	x	x		
Fergusson, Issobell	1661	x	x		
Flinker, Bessie	1661	x	x		
Graham,Elspet	1661	x	x		
Hutchison,Margaret	1661	x	x		
Ker,Jonet	1661	x	x		
Leslie, Beatrix	1661	x	x		
Loch,Agnes	1661	x	x		
Miller,Jonet	1661	x	x		
Paistoun,Janet	1661	x	x		
Philipp,Elspeth	1661	x	x		
Smith,Issobell	1661	x	x		
Stevensoun,Margaret	1661	x	x		
Thomson,Agnes	1661	x	x		
Watson,Jonet	1661	x	x		
Braidheid,Jonet	1662	x	x		x
Gowdie,Issobell	1662	x	x	x	x
Morisone,Jonet	1662	x	x		
NcWilliam,Margrat	1662	x	x		
Welch,James	1662	x	x		

MacPhee, James	1670				
Weir, Jean	1670	x	x		
Paine, Bessie	1671				
Jackson, Margret	1677	x	x		x
McIlmichall, Donald	1677	x			
Stewart, Annabell	1677	x	x		x
Stewart, Jon	1677	x	x		x
Weir, Bessie	1677	x	x		x
Campbell, Marion	1678	x	x		
Eliot, Isobell	1678	x	x		
Anderson, Elizabeth	1697	x			x
Anderson, Jean	1697	x	x		x
Campbell, Katherine	1697	x	x		x
Cunninghame, Margaret	1697	x	x		x
Ewing, Margaret	1697	x	x		x
Flowers, Katherine	1697	x	x		x
Forrester, Angus	1697	x	x		x
Fulton, Margaret	1697	x	x		x
Lang, Margaret	1697	x	x		x
Lindsay, James	1697	x	x		x
Lindsay, John	1697	x	x		x
Lindsay, John	1697	x	x		x
McKillope, Margaret	1697	x	x		x
Miller, William	1697	x	x		x
Naismith, Agnes	1697	x	x		x
Reid, John	1697	x	x		x
Sempell, Martha	1697	x	x		x
Shearer, Margaret	1697	x	x		x
Stewart, John	1697	x	x		x
Brown, Jean	1706		x		
		90	82	4	30

explicit mentions of fairies out of 113 fairy-related trials of SSW

additional fairy-related trials not included in the 113 trials of SSW

43 trials defined as 'explicitly mentioning fairies' in this study

Fairy characteristics according to SSW

Charts and Maps

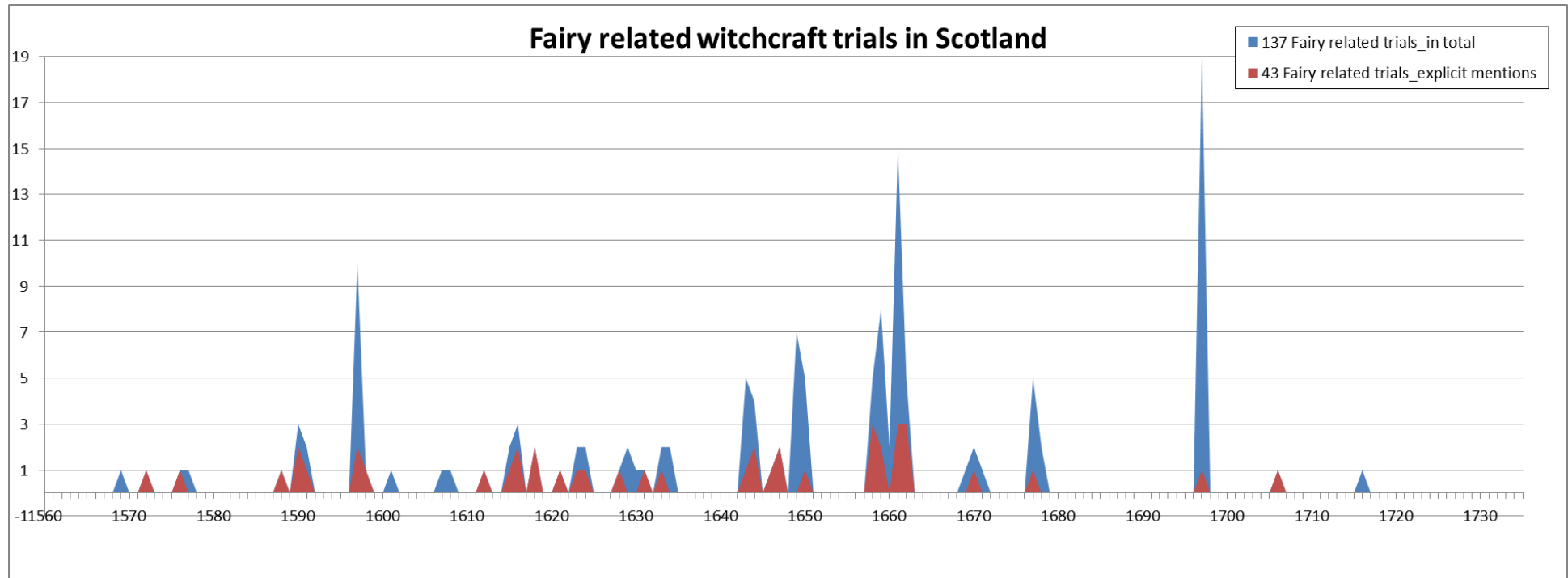


Fig. 1: Fairy-related trials in Scotland per year.

Based on the numbers of the SSW and other secondary sources given in the 'List of Fairy-Related Witchcraft Trials in Scotland' (Appendix).

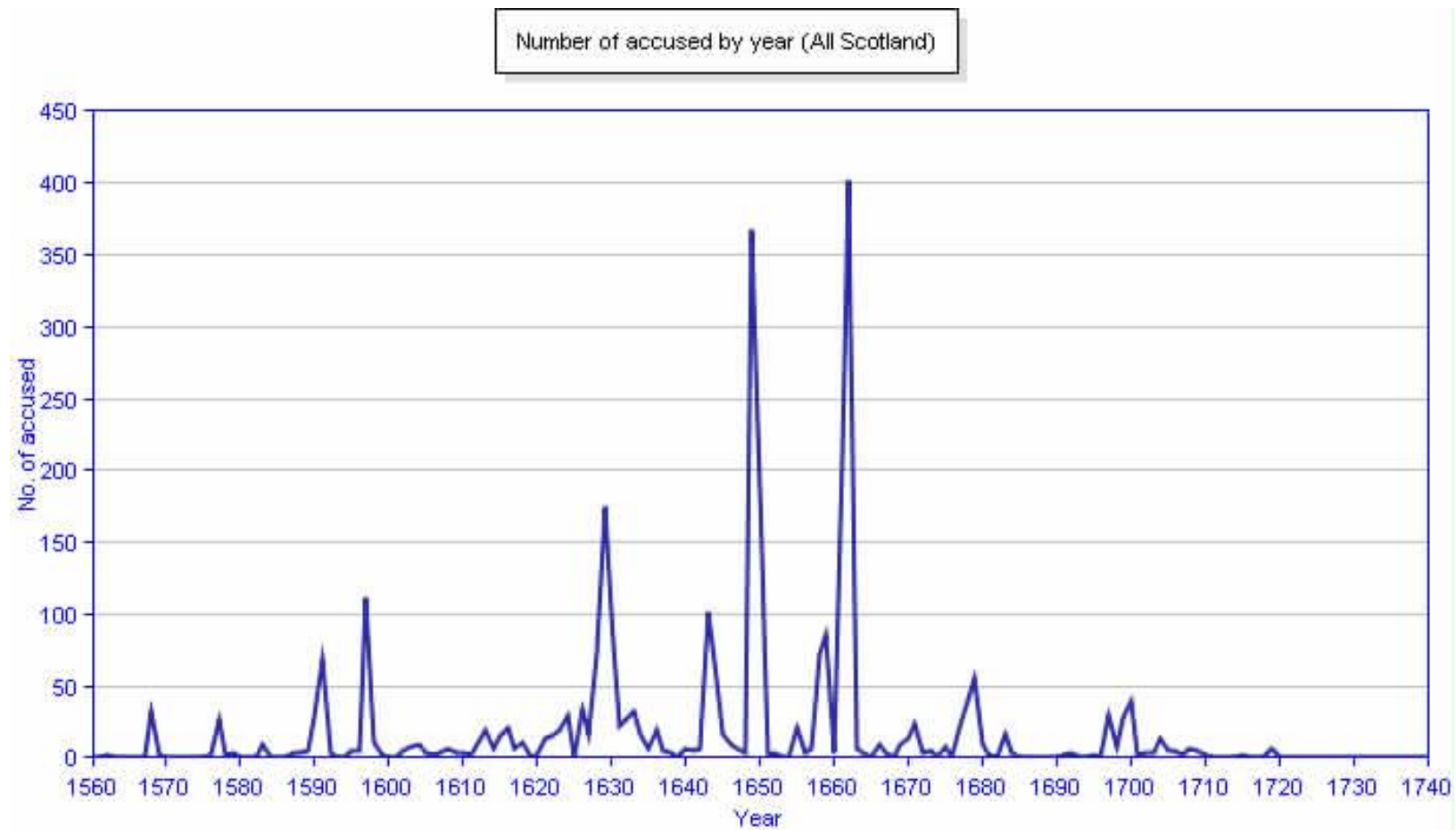


Fig. 2: Numbers of accused witches in Scotland per year.
SSW. Reproduced with permission of Dr Julian Goodare.

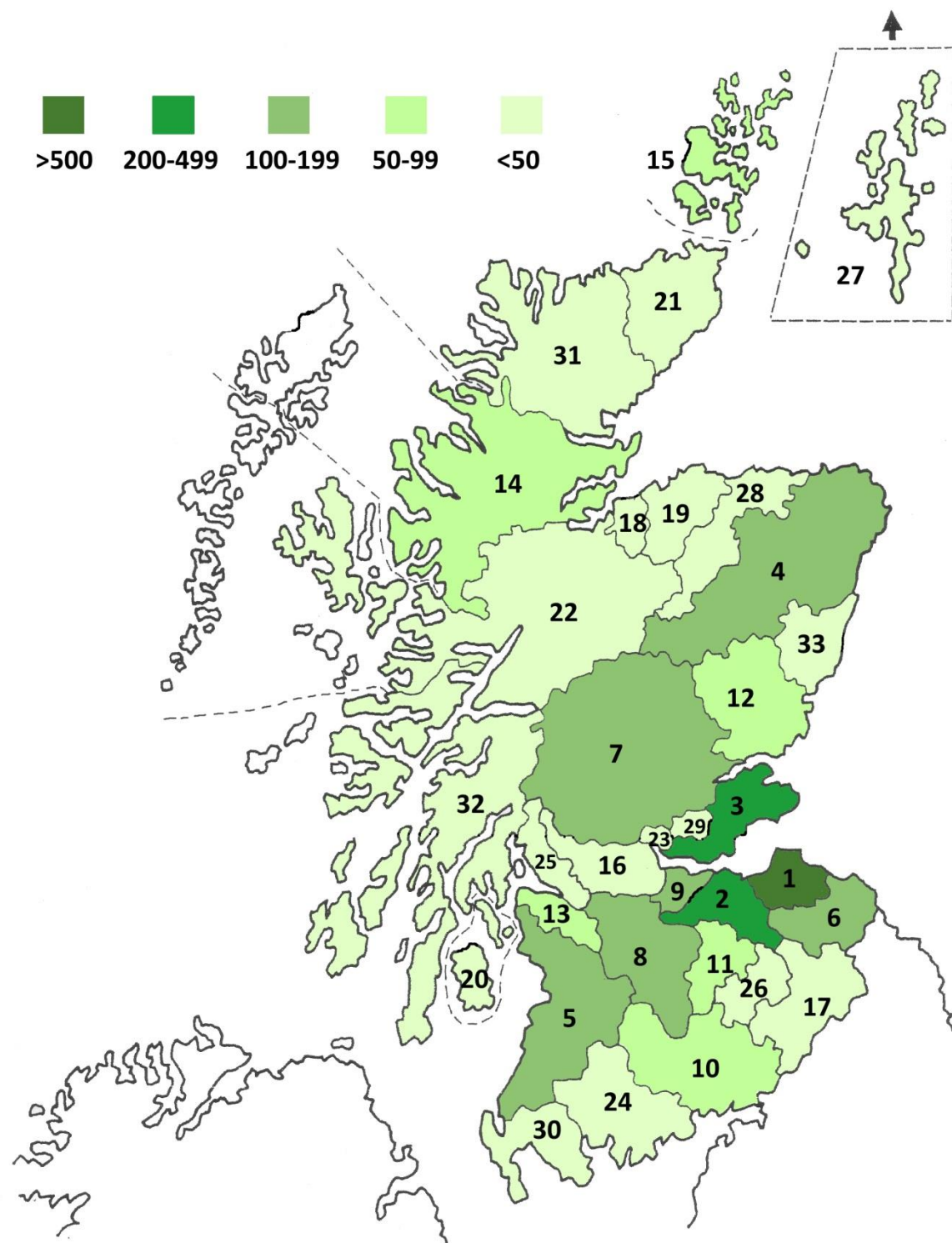


Fig. 3: Witchcraft cases by shire between 1560 and 1760.
Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 23 (modified).

Map	Shire	no.	Map	Shire	no.
1	Haddington	520	19	Moray	43
2	Edinburgh	325	20	Bute	42
3	Fife	280 (420)	21	Caithness	35
4	Aberdeen	158	22	Inverness	35
5	Ayr	127	23	Clackmannan	32
6	Berwick	125	24	Kirkcudbright	32
7	Perth	118	25	Dumbarton	21
8	Lanark	116	26	Selkirk	21
9	Linlithgow	101	27	Shetland	19
10	Dumfries	99	28	Banff	10
11	Peebles	79	29	Kinross	8
12	Forfar	74	30	Wigtown	8
13	Renfrew	69	31	Sutherland	5
14	Ross	65	32	Argyll	3
15	Orkney	50	33	Kincardine	2
16	Stirling	48		Unknown	317
17	Roxburgh	47		other	6
18	Nairn	46		Total	3089 ⁸⁶⁴

⁸⁶⁴ Macdonald, *Witches of Fife*, 22.

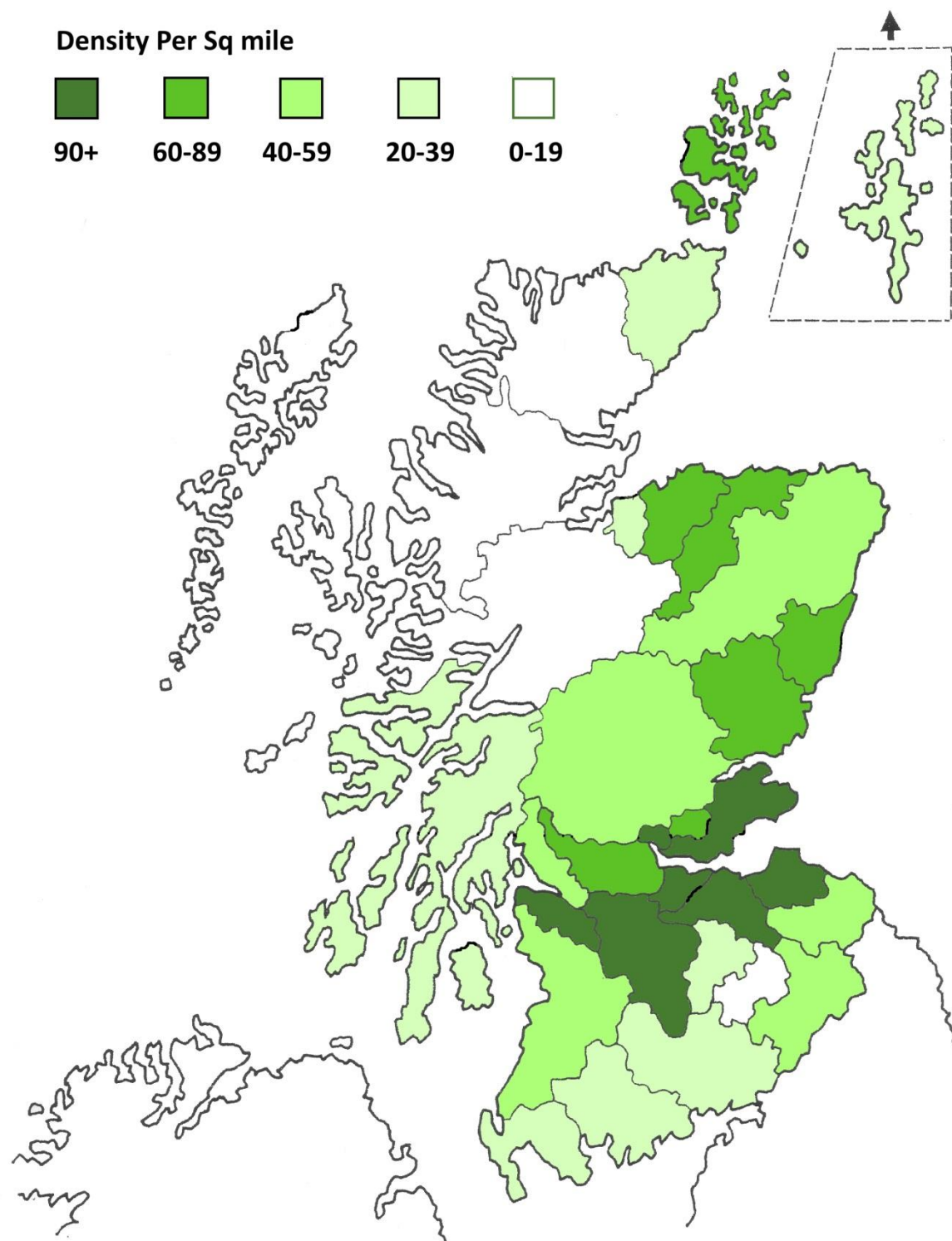


Fig. 4: Scottish population density 1755.
Whyte, *Scotland before the Industrial Revolution*, 115 (modified).

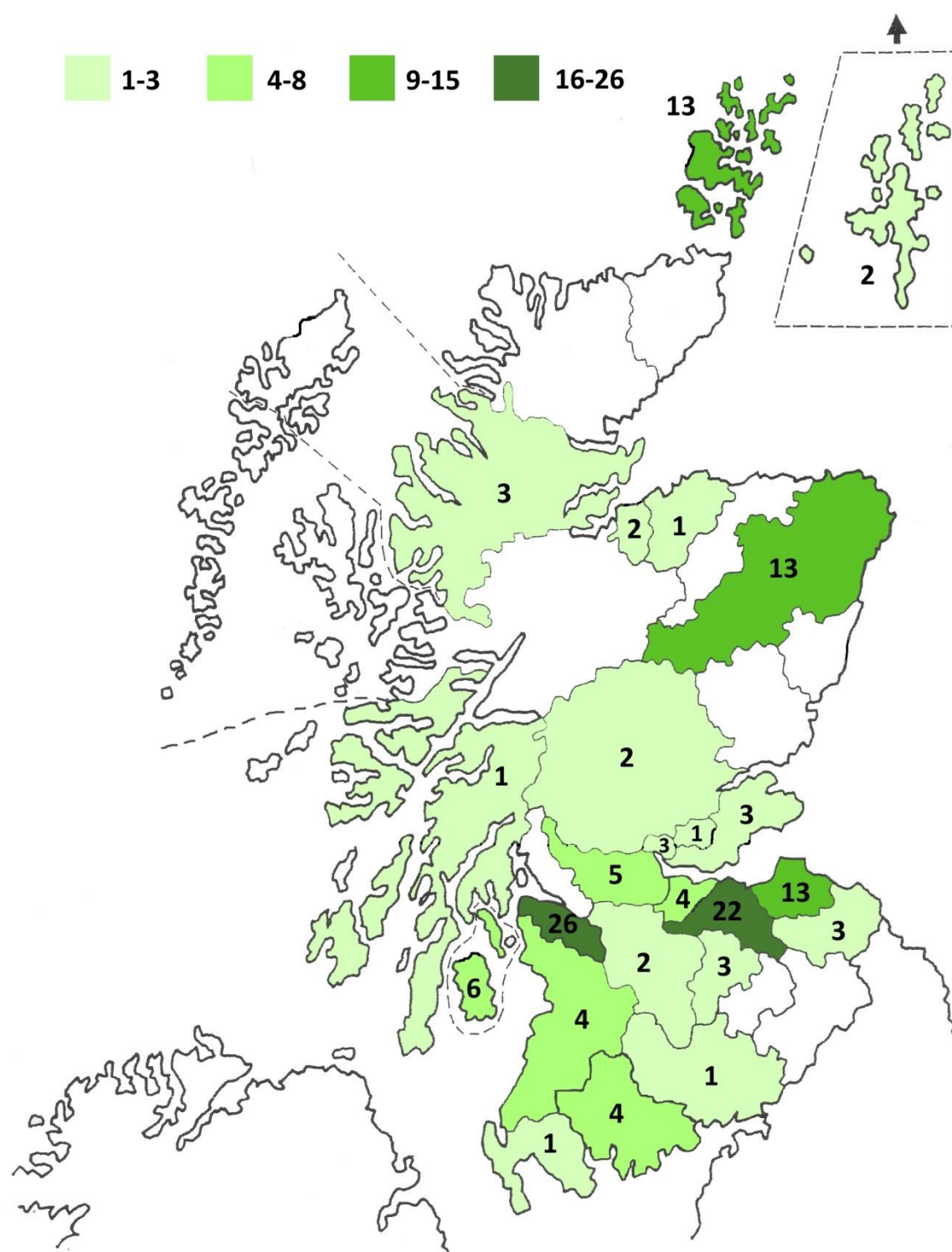


Fig. 5: Total numbers of fairy-related witchcraft trials by shire.
Based on the numbers of the SSW and other secondary sources given in the 'List of Fairy-Related Witchcraft Trials in Scotland' (Appendix).

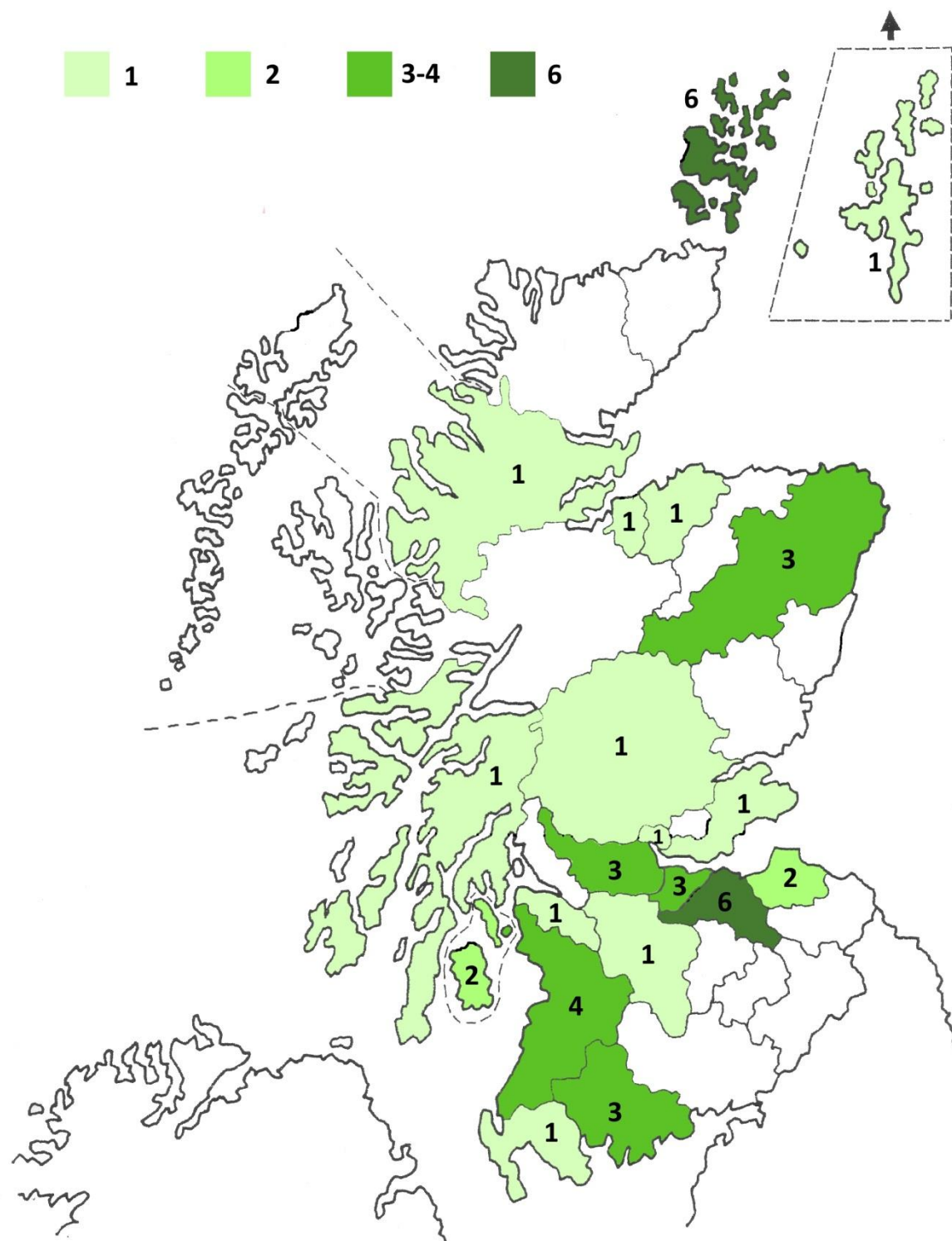


Fig. 6: Total numbers of witchcraft trials mentioning fairies explicitly by shire. Based on the numbers of the SSW and other secondary sources given in Table 1 (Appendix).

Numbers of Trials as basis for fig. 5; including number of cases per year:

1 Renfrew: 26 (3-1650; 4-1677; 19-1697)
 2 Edinburgh: 22 (2-1591; 1-1597; 1-1607; 1-1629; 1-1649; 13-1661; 1-1670; 2-1678)
 3 Aberdeen: 13 (1-1568-9; 9-1597; 1-1598; 1-1601; 1-1631)
 3 Haddington: 13 (1-1608; 1-1630; 1-1643; 2-1649; 5-1659; 1-1660; 1-1661; 1-1662)
 3 Orkney: 13 (2-1615; 1-1616; 2-1624; 1-1629; 2-1633; 3-1643; 2-1644)
 6 Bute: 6 (1-1650; 1-1660; 2-1662; 1-1670; 1-1716)
 7 Stirling: 5 (1-1590; 1-1621; 1-1628; 1-1634; 1-1659)
 8 Ayr: 4 (1-1572; 1-1576; 2-1618)
 8 Kirkcudbright: 4 (2-1658, 2-1659)
 8 Linlithgow: 4 (1-1612; 2-1647; 1-1661)
 11 Berwick: 3 (1-1634; 1-1649; 1-1669)
 11 Clackmannan: 3 (3-1658)
 11 Fife: 3 (1-1588, 1-1649; 1-unknown)
 11 Peebles: 3 (2-1649; 1-1650)
 11 Ross and Cromarty: 3 (1-1577; 2-1590)
 16 Lanark: 2 (2-1644)
 16 Nairn: 2 (2-1662)
 16 Perth: 2 (1623)
 16 Shetland: 2 (1616)
 20 Argyll: 1 (1677)
 20 Dumfries: 1 (1671)
 20 Kinross: 1 (1643)
 20 Moray: 1 (1647)
 20 Wigtown: 1 (1706)

Total: 138 fairy-related trials

Numbers of Trials as basis for fig. 6; including number of cases per year:

1 Edinburgh: 6 (1-1591; 1-1597; 3-1661; 1-1670)
 1 Orkney: 6 (1-1615; 1-1616; 1-1624; 1-1633; 1-1643; 1-1644)
 3 Ayr: 4 (1-1572; 1-1576; 2-1618)
 4 Aberdeen: 3 (1-1597; 1-1598; 1-1631)
 4 Kirkcudbright: 3 (2-1658; 1-1659)
 4 Linlithgow: 3 (1-1612; 2-1647)
 4 Stirling: 3 (1-1590; 1-1621; 1-1628)
 8 Haddington: 2 (1-1659; 1-1662)
 8 Bute: 2 (1-1650; 1-1662)
 10 Argyll: 1 (1677)
 10 Clackmannan: 1 (1658)
 10 Fife: 1 (1588)
 10 Lanark: 1 (1644)
 10 Moray: 1 (1646)
 10 Nairn: 1 (1662)
 10 Perth: 1 (1623)
 10 Renfrew: 1 (1697)
 10 Ross and Cromarty: 1 (1590)
 10 Shetland: 1 (1616)
 10 Wigtown: 1 (1706)

Total: 43 trials explicitly mentioning fairies

Pictures



Fig. 7: The Eildon Hills from the Scot's view. © Ruth Egger.
According to the ballad, Thomas the Rhymer met the Fairy Queen here.⁸⁶⁵



Fig. 8: Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh. © Ruth Egger.
Jonet Boyman used to invoke spirits at an eldritch well beside Arthur's Seat.⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶⁵ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 9.

⁸⁶⁶ JC26/1/67.



Fig. 9: Old Church of Balquidder. © Ruth Egger.
Robert Kirk served as minister in Balquidder between 1664 and 1685.⁸⁶⁷



Fig. 10: Provand's Lordship in Glasgow. © Ruth Egger.
The House was built in 1471 and the interior dates from the time between 1500 and 1700.⁸⁶⁸

⁸⁶⁷ Henderson, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 172-4; Hunter, *Occult Laboratory*, 12.

⁸⁶⁸ "About Provand's Lordship," Glasgow Life, accessed Juli 21, 2014,
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- NAS/SCA, CH2/722/6/89-99 *Stirling Presbytery Records*. (Katherine Remy, Margaret Duchill and Margaret Tailyeor, Clackmannan 1658)
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Abstract (English)

The belief in the reality of various supernatural entities such as fairies, ghosts or the Devil, as well as the magical powers of charmers and witches, was common among peasants and authorities in Early Modern Europe. In Scotland, fairies did not only figure prominently in ballads and fantastical literature but also in records from the witchcraft trials. Confessions of culprits were shaped by the witches' own beliefs but also by elite notions and accusations from within the peasant community. This dissertation focuses on the relationship of fairy and witch beliefs within popular and elite culture during the Scottish witch-hunts which took place between 1563 and 1736. It includes quantitative and qualitative analyses of fairy-related witchcraft trial records which are set in the context of the contemporary elite discourse and current historiographical debates. The dissertation gives an overview when, where, and in which contexts fairies and fairy-elements appear in witchcraft confessions and how these themes changed over time.

The general introduction discussing the history and historiography of European and Scottish witch-hunts as well as the history of Scotland during this period is followed by an investigation of Scottish fairy belief among the populace and the elite. It is argued that fairies could act beneficent or maleficent towards humans. They appeared in trials during the whole period of the Scottish witch-hunts and in most regions where witchcraft trials were held. The main part of the dissertation firstly includes the discussion of the relationship between charmers, witches and fairies in the context of their ability to heal or cause illnesses which were mainly concerns of the populace. The final section gives an analysis how the cumulative concept of witchcraft, which mainly concerned the elites and included new ideas about the Devil, the demonic pact, the witches' sabbath and flight, developed and how it came to Scotland. The study shows that fairy belief and its demonic reinterpretation by the authorities made it easier for peasants to accept the cumulative concept of witchcraft. While in earlier trials and those held in the periphery, fairy belief was mainly connected to charmers having an ambiguous morality, diabolic conceptions of the witch played a bigger role in panic years, centrally held trials and especially during the second half of the 17th century.

Kurzfassung (German)

Der Glaube an die Realität von verschiedenen übernatürlichen Wesen wie Feen, Geister oder den Teufel sowie an die magischen Kräfte von Zauberer und Hexen war sowohl im Volk als auch unter den Eliten im frühneuzeitlichen Europa verbreitet. In Schottland spielten Feen nicht nur in Volksliedern und fantastischer Literatur, sondern auch in Hexenprozessen eine wichtige Rolle. Die Geständnisse der Angeklagten wurden sowohl von den eigenen Vorstellungen der Hexe als auch von Ideen der Gelehrten und Herrschenden sowie Beschuldigungen vonseiten der Gemeinschaft geprägt. Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Beziehung zwischen Feen- und Hexenglauben in der Volks- und Elitenkultur während der Schottischen Hexenverfolgungen, die zwischen 1563 und 1736 stattfanden. Sie beinhaltet quantitative und qualitative Analysen von Prozessakten, die in Verbindung zu Feen stehen. Diese werden im Kontext des zeitgenössischen Diskurses der Eliten und der gegenwärtigen historiographischen Debatten gesetzt. Die Arbeit gibt einen Überblick wann, wo, und in welchen Zusammenhängen Feen und Feen-Charakteristika in Hexenprozessen vorkommen und wie sich diese Themen im Laufe der Zeit wandelten.

Die allgemeine Einleitung behandelt die Geschichte und Historiographie der europäischen und schottischen Hexenverfolgungen sowie die Geschichte Schottlands zu jener Zeit. Diesem folgt eine Untersuchung des schottischen Feenglaubens unter dem Volk und der Elite. Es wird gezeigt, dass Feen sowohl wohlütig als auch böse gegenüber Menschen auftreten konnten. Sie erscheinen in Hexenprozessen während der gesamten Periode der schottischen Hexenverfolgungen und in den meisten Regionen, wo diese stattfanden. Der Hauptteil der Arbeit beinhaltet erstens eine Diskussion über die Beziehung zwischen Zauberern, Hexen und Feen im Rahmen von deren Fähigkeit zu heilen oder Krankheiten zu verursachen, was dem hauptsächlichen Interesse der breiten Bevölkerung entsprach. Der letzte Teil gibt einen Einblick wie das kumulative Konzept der Hexerei, das vor allem die Eliten beunruhigte und neue Vorstellungen über den Teufel, den Teufelspakt, den Hexensabbat und den Hexenflug beinhaltete, entstand und wie es nach Schottland kam. Die Untersuchung zeigt, dass Feenglaube und dessen dämonische Umdeutung durch die Gelehrten und Herrschenden der breiten Bevölkerung die Übernahme des kumulativen Konzeptes der Hexerei erleichterte. Während Feenglaube in frühen Hexenprozessen und jenen, die in der Peripherie abgehalten wurden, vor allem mit Zauberern, die eine zweideutige Moral hatten, verbunden wurde, spielten teuflische Vorstellungen von Hexen eine größere Rolle während Massenverfolgungen, in zentral abgehaltenen Gerichtsverhandlungen und vor allem während der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts.

Curriculum Vitae

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School Education

Sept/1995-June/1999	Primary School, Kuchl
Sept/1999-June/2003	Lower Secondary School with emphasis on Science, Hallein
Sept/2003-June/2008	Secondary School of Fashion and Clothing Design, Hallein Graduation with 'excellent success', Training Focus: Fashion Design

Academic Background

Oct/2008-May2012	Bachelor degree programme in History, University of Vienna Graduation with 'excellent success' Title of the first bachelor thesis: • <i>Mutterschaft im Wandel der Zeit: Zur Geschichte von Schwangerschaft, Geburt und Säuglingspflege</i> Title of the second bachelor thesis: • <i>Prunkkleidung in der Mittelhochdeutschen Epik um 1200: Dargestellt am Beispiel des „Nibelungenlieds“ und Gottfried von Straßburgs „Tristan“</i>
Oct/2008-ongoing	Diploma programme in Celtic Studies, University of Vienna Research interests: • Medieval and Modern History • Places: Europe, Global, Austria, Britain and Ireland, Japan • Themes: Culture, Gender, Medicine, Science, Society, Religion, Costume • Celtic Languages and Literature

Professional Experience

Aug/2012	Museum of Natural History Vienna (NHM), Vienna Placement in the Prehistoric Department, ceramic restoration
July/2012 and August/2014	Wien Museum, Vienna Placement in the Fashion Collection, restoration and conservation
May/2013-Sept/2013	Wien Museum, Vienna Assistance in the relocation of the Fashion Collection to a new depot

Scholarships

Jan/2011	Scholarship of the University of Vienna for the academic achievements in the Diploma programme of Celtic Studies
Jan/2012	Scholarship of the University of Vienna for the academic achievements in the Bachelor degree programme of History

Travel and Research

July 19-26, 2009	Breton language training in Lesneven, Brittany, FR
July 18-29, 2011	Summer School at the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies, IRL
April 1-8, 2012	Excursion to Cornwall, UK
Sept/2012-Dez/2012	ERASMUS, European student exchange programme at the University of Glasgow, UK
Nov/2013-Jan/2014	KWA-Scholarship, literature research for the diploma thesis in Celtic Studies at the University of Glasgow Library and the National Archives of Scotland, UK

Language Skills

German	native speaker
English	fluent
French	good working knowledge
Working knowledge of	Breton /Brezhoneg, Old Irish, Modern Irish /Gaeilge, Scottish Gaelic/ Gàidhlig, Middle Welsh, Modern Welsh/Cymraeg, Latin, Middle High German
