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**Femme(s) et sorcellerie en Espagne et en Italie à
l'époque moderne**

Making a Witch: Inquisitor Manuals and the Collective Imaginary in Early Modern Europe

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l'Europe de la première modernité*

*Construyendo a una bruja: manuales de inquisidor y el imaginario colectivo en
la Europa Moderna*

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Making a Witch: Inquisitor Manuals and the Collective Imaginary in Early Modern Europe

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María Jesús Zamora Calvo

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This investigation forms part of the research group “Magical Mentalities and Anti-superstition Discourse (Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries)” at Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain.

- 1 From the late Middle Ages to the start of the Enlightenment, discourses aiming at stamping out magic, heterodoxy, and superstition provided a way of spreading and consolidating perceptions about witches and demons. The ultimate goal as to take control of popular beliefs and impose ideological uniformity. Theologians, philosophers, and inquisitors compiled manuals to guide judges in their task of condemning any diabolical practice, which led to one of the most vicious femicide in Western history, the “witch hunt” (Henningsson, 1980; Bonomo, 1985; Levack, 1987; Ginzburg, 1989; Campagne, 2009; Russel & Radford, 1992). Erudite and academic accusations leveled against these women disparaged their female identity and reflected hatred. In their treatises, writers prescribed the appropriate response to such incidents by creating a female prototype that fit the description of a “witch”. The following pages will analyze the impact of these scholarly men’s writings on the formation of witch

images in early modern Europe, aspects of these images that arose from the collective imaginary, and how they were adapted to encourage insecurity, distrust, and fear.

- 2 This article will examine how in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this phenomenon underwent an ideological evolution. There was an initial radical phase that sparked grand campaigns against magic, the occult, and devilry, leading to unsavory judicial proceedings marked by torture and ending in cruel death sentences. Over time these extreme responses became more rational and humane. Thinkers such as Johann Wier (1660), Francesco Maria Guaccio (1624), Johann Klein (1629), and many others began asking if this phenomenon might better be seen as a mental illness suffered by individuals who did not necessarily have relations with the devil. Confessors of accused witches, such as Friedrich Von Spee, went so far as to say that none of these women were guilty, and they harshly criticized the methods used in inquisitorial trials (1632). Gradually attitudes regarding demonology shifted. What follows is an analysis of how these changes were reflected in the works of some of the most outstanding theologians and inquisitors of the time.
- 3 The stereotype of the witch had deep roots in Classical antiquity (Gallardo, 2012: 65–81). Features originating then gave rise to conceptions found for example in the *Canon episcopi*, considered one of the founding documents establishing the nexus between women and witchcraft.¹ The *Canon episcopi* condemned the belief that some women took flight at night on the backs of strange beasts and in the company of Diana, a pagan goddess. Though such night travel was described as a female act, any man or woman who followed or spread stories about such black magic should be banished, the treatise affirmed (Robbins, 1959: 75–76). However it established no linkage between flying and attendance at *aquelarres*, or witches' sabbaths, a connection that would become common later on. Before the early modern era, the logic of the myth was such that it was assumed witchcraft was linked to perverse women who applied mysterious creams that permitted them to fly, travel through the air on the backs of animals, and participate in covens where Satan was worshipped. But the story had many variations, depending on the author of the treatise in question, the time, and the place.² It is worth considering at this point if these narratives were responding to notions about witches or rather about magic.
- 4 The femicide grew violent and fanatical after the publication of *Malleus maleficarum* (*Hammer of Witches*) (1492). The European cultural climate of the time was receptive to a book of that sort, and the church hierarchy was determined to find a final solution to the problem of witchcraft.³ One reason why *Malleus maleficarum* played such an important role in demonological literature was the proven existence of witches and spells, backed up by traditional sources such as the *Canon Episcopi*, St Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas. The authors of the treatise, Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, differentiated women who were merely superstitious from those who were maleficent (Zilboorg, 1978: 323–343). In their opinion, such women maintained close ties with the devil and asked him to commit harm. Furthermore, they said, such actions were not the result of mere pathological fantasies or madness; they were documented facts.
- 5 Kramer and Sprenger were interested in establishing whether or not witches flew to their meeting places at night. In order to prove that they did, they turned to the Bible, the Church Fathers, and medieval writers, whose erudition showed conclusively that the devil could transport witches' bodies under exceptional circumstances. Concerning the transformation of one human being into another, or into an animal, they stated

that the metamorphosis of witches into animals—especially wolves, roosters, and moles—had been confirmed during trials and was especially present in popular beliefs. Such changes could be substantial or ephemeral; in the former cases a transformation truly took place, while in the latter it was a mere optical illusion, all of which was proven through confessions of repentant witches. Kramer and Sprenger's ideas marked the beginning of the new period of the phenomenon known as the witch hunts. Their ideas, which acquired fanatical tones, gave rise to a school of thought with a heavy dose of misogyny. All their arguments went in this direction, based in large part on traditional culture but taken to the ultimate extreme, with which they repressed freedom of thought and manipulated the will of Christians. They established the foundations of a literary genre that would continue growing throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: demonology treatises.

- 6 This movement of ideological repression and control spread like wildfire throughout Europe. It penetrated early modern ways of thinking and could be found in a multitude of widely circulating discourses, particularly in books (Zamora Calvo, 2016: 187–270). At first Latin was the dominant language, but soon there were writers, such as Martín de Castañega in Spain, who realized the vernacular would permit them to reach larger audiences. In 1529 he published *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías y de la posibilidad y remedio dellas* (1529), where he explained that in order for a woman to be considered a witch there must be a pact with the devil. In Castañega's view, women were perfectly suited to heretical depravity given that from the start Christ had prohibited them from administering the sacraments and they were easy prey for the devil to tempt.⁴ They're chattier than men (*mas parleras* [Castañega, 1529, f. 12^v]), "more curious to know and ferret out hidden things" (Castañega, 1529: f. 12^v), "more easily angered" (Castañega, 1529: f. 12^v), their gaze is very dangerous to children's health, and though men may devote themselves to magical practices, they do so as necromancers, using some sort of science, while women are just witches, "with neither art nor science" (Castañega, 1529: f. 13^r). Castañega shared with his readers the instructive example of a priest he had known, now deceased, "who, using the solemn discipline of the whip, drove the spirits out of such a woman" (Castañega, 1529: f. 50^v).⁵ He was of the firm belief that witches flew through the air.
- 7 A year later, in 1530, the theologian and mathematician Pedro Ciruelo published *Reprobación de las supersticiones y hechicerías*, in which he instructed his readers through the use of scholastic dialogue, the approach underlying his own thought. The four pillars of his argument were: necromancy, fortune-telling, spells, and witchcraft. Unlike the prevailing anti-superstition discourse and its discriminatory stance against women, Ciruelo's book did not denounce women per se. He discussed and condemned all superstitions known and practiced in his time without differentiating credulity and without pointing to any one guilty party, be it a gender, a race, or a religion. For him, the guilty party was the devil: "God warned us when He created the world about the cruel malice and perpetual enmity that devils harbor for men. Through temptation the devil made the first woman sin, and thus we must reject him and never drop our guard" (Ciruelo, 1530: f. X^v). In general, Ciruelo focused on people who tried to gain something through illicit means. What mattered to him were the facts, and he censured error, whatever harmed faith, and deviation from dogma. "Part of this necromancy includes the art the devil taught witches, or *xorquinas*, be they men or women, who have made a pact with the devil. Rubbing certain creams on themselves and saying certain words, they fly through the night, traveling to distant lands to do certain evil

deeds.” (Ciruelo, 1530: f. XVIII^r) The author never says that most of the people who cast spells or practiced witchcraft were women or that women were most susceptible to evil, a refreshing break in the ceaseless stream of accusations. In fact, indirectly and unintentionally, he helped undermine the prejudice linking women to evil, reminding readers that God had told the devil that He would create animosity between the devil and women. Ciruelo interprets Genesis as divine warning that man should never listen to evil, nor make friends with nor agreements with the devil, because he is the enemy (Ciruelo, 1530: f. XXVIII^r). However Ciruelo’s discourse was not neutral, of course, and there is a clearly gendered slant: “It is also true that things that *las bruxas* or *xorguinas* do are so marvelous that they cannot be explained by natural causes.” (Ciruelo, 1530: f. IX^v)⁶

- 8 One of the most prominent inquisitors in northern Italy, Paulo Grillando, wrote a treatise, *De hereticis et sortilegiis omnifariam coitu: eorumque poenis* (1536), in which he attempted to give shape to the notion of a witch. The questions of their flight and their nighttime gatherings proved complicated: “this question is very arduous and famous”.⁷ He shared the opinion of the *Canon*, understanding this flight to be a diabolical illusion, but his many years in criminal courts and the opinions of respected authorities led him to change his mind. Like many of his predecessors, he ended up concluding that sixteenth-century witches were *maleficae*, not deluded women like those who said they followed Diana and others on their evening travels.
- 9 Martín del Río is a unique case in this respect. His credulity and concerns regarding relations between humans and devils marked a stark contrast with his reputation as a man of wisdom and intellectual ability, always ready with quotations, examples, Classical references, and knowledge of the Greco-Latin and patristic traditions. His work, *Disquisitionum magicarum libri sex* (1612 [1599]) attacked two enemies: men whose opinions, beliefs, or actions in some way violated the Church; and devils, whose animosity toward God, earthly presence, and operations among the careless, the naive, or the wicked were, to his eyes, real and undeniable. Among the former enemy he included heretics, sorcerers, evil-doers, witches, necromancers, Jews, apostates, murderers, maniacs, the superstitious, seers, astrologers, and a wide array of practitioners of magic who, in his opinion, disobeyed divine law and undermined the proper course of religion.
- 10 As for witches, he offered a description whose origins can be found in folkloric stereotypes. A witch is evil; she follows, adores, and loves the devil, she can turn human beings into various animals and seal women’s wombs:

[She can] make the sky drop and suspend the earth, freeze fountains, melt the mountains, summon spirits, admonish the gods, darken the stars, and illuminate hell itself ... When one of her lovers dared touch another, with just a single word she turned him into a beaver. When such an animal fears he is being hunted he frees himself from his persecutors by amputating his genitals. That was what she wanted of him, because he had loved another woman.

She turned a tavern-keeper, who was a neighbor and therefore a competitor, into a frog. The old man today swims in a vat of his own wine, sunken among the dregs, hoarsely and obsequiously calling his former customers by their name.

When a certain lawyer said something against her, she turned him into a sheep, who to this day continues his shyster activities in the courthouse. The pregnant wife of one of her lovers spoke out of turn to her, and so her womb was sealed and the pregnancy was extended. From what people say, the unhappy woman is going

on eight years of pregnancy, with a belly so enormous one would think she was giving birth to an elephant.⁸ (Río, 1612: 57)

- 11 Using magic, a witch can become a black toad or cat, which enables her to flee when in danger or to carry out her initial plan of extortion of some sort (Río, 1612: 88). Witches' bodies are marked with demonic stigmata that make them impervious to pain. These images are of various figures, which could be a hare-like footprint, a frog foot, or a black cub or puppy, for example. According to an anecdote in Río's treatise (1612: 93) an inquisitor, Pedro Orano, noticed the mark of a cub on a male witch's back and discovered that if he stabbed it with a needle the man did not feel pain or complain, but the mark itself appeared not only to be suffering but to be threatening the inquisitor by pointing its finger at him.
- 12 A witch can produce rain in a specific place by digging a hole, urinating in it, and pronouncing a series of incantations. All this knowledge was passed down from generation to generation on the female side; if husbands or fathers discovered that their women were engaging in occult arts, they denounced them to the Holy Inquisition (Río, 1612: 64).
- 13 In order to cast evil spells, increase their knowledge, perform rites, or simply feed themselves, witches turned to stealing children, especially those who had not been baptized or who were not protected by the sign of the cross. The children were killed in their beds or sleeping alongside their parents. They were snatched from their tombs and boiled in a pot until their bones came loose and their flesh had become a broth. That was the source for the creams and ointments that allowed them to change form, fly, or satisfy their own desires. They were so perverse they were known to devour their own children.
- 14 On certain days witches would meet in covens, or *aquelarres*. To get there, they applied ointments that gave them the ability to fly through the air. Once they arrived, they held huge orgiastic celebrations presided over by the devil, who was adored by a multitude of demons and witches. The madness and lust took on eccentric forms, and immorality, depravity, and degradation set the tone for the gatherings, which were interrupted in fear only if they were denounced or if an intruder uttered the name of Jesus Christ. At that point everyone took to the air and disappeared, leaving behind a strong smell of sulfur (Río, 1612: 84).
- 15 Martín del Río was not especially defamatory towards women, no more than other theologians who were more interested in transgressions than in who committed them. While he did not defend women, nor did he go out of his way to attack them. He cites a large number of extraordinary cases, refuting them or accepting them as true, in which women were the protagonists, ranging from a wife who gave birth to a monster to a witch who cast spells on her enemies, but he does not devote any particular part of his extensive work to revile women in general or to argue that they were especially susceptible to the devil's charms. Still, he believed firmly in witches, covens, diabolical pacts, and a long list of demonic dangers.
- 16 During the early modern era there were also demonologists who did not believe in the supposed activities of witches. Among these was Johann Wier,⁹ who in his treatise, *De praestigiis daemonum et incantationibus ac veneficiis* (1560), argued that heretics cannot be compared to fortune-tellers and witches, as the latter are melancholy beings who were not in their right mind and imagine they have signed a pact with the devil enabling them to do impossible things (Baxter, 2011: 53–75). He pointed to errors lying

beneath the category of witchcraft, and examined confessions uttered under a wide range of torture, saying they were aberrations given that human beings can neither turn into animals nor can they fly. He also firmly believed that magical practices and love potions can make people mad. Therefore judgments against these “poor madmen” were mistaken, given the terrible punishments they suffered.¹⁰ Wier had nothing good to say about *Malleus maleficarum*, which in his opinion offered only “nonsense, stupidity, and oftentimes cruelty” (Wier, 1579: ff. 669–769).

- 17 In contrast to Wier, the philosopher Jean Bodin believed experience to be the best guide to certainty, not because it demolishes false belief but because at times it confirms as true events that were supposedly imaginary.¹¹ One of his works, *De Magorum daemonomania libri IV* (1581 [1580]), had a huge impact at the time and led to an increase in the number of witch trials from the late sixteenth century up to the edict of 1682 (Yates, 1984: 210–229). The treatise was based on his own observations and on lessons he derived from *Malleus maleficarum*, setting off a campaign to persecute and annihilate witches. After listening to confessions offered up at trial, he condemned all acts related to the devil. Ideologically, Bodin was even more radical than the authors of *Malleus maleficarum*, if that was even possible (Baxter, 2011). He believed that *aquelarres* were held alongside a river or lake because the witches needed water with which to create hail. If that were not possible, then they dug a pit in the ground and urinated into it, producing the same effect. Though witches might repent and wish to return to the faith, they should still be tried, he said, being that they had renounced God forever and ever and could not be allowed to return to Catholicism. Did the Bible not say, he asked, “*Si peccaverit vir in virum, placari ei potest Deus; si autem in Dominum peccaverit vir, quis orabit pro eo?*” (Bodin, 1581: f. 25).
- 18 Bodin put distance between himself and *Malleus maleficarum* concerning the social impact of magic and witchcraft. He cited conciliar rulings, opinions from the Church Fathers, and theologians only because the state, of which they formed part, was a Christian society. He enumerated the arguments in favor of declaring witches guilty; the first three—apostasy, blasphemy against God, and devil worship—belonged to tradition. The rest were social: consecrating children to Satan amounted to separating them from human society; and spells and witchcraft were disturbances of public order that killed animals and destroyed the fruits of the land. In short, for Bodin witchcraft was an attack on the internal harmony of nature itself. Girolamo Tartarotti referred to Bodin as “one of the writers who was most impassioned about stressing the powers of witchcraft” (Tartarotti, 1749: 76–105).
- 19 Theologians, intellectuals, philosophers, and inquisitors, using specialized texts and doctrine, compiled, expanded upon, and publicized their beliefs regarding the associations between women and witchcraft, with women being the unrepentant tool of the devil. “WITCHES, progeny of snakes from hell, not only inflame souls through their diabolical deeds, they set bodies, houses, and entire cities on fire; so clearly they are fuel for the eternal flames.” (Guaccio, 1624: 161) At the same time, they emphasized and disparaged the weakness of women, alone and isolated, the perfect victims. In Gerolamo Cardano’s opinion, witches were miserable old beggar-women who lived in the countryside feeding themselves with chestnuts and plants (Wier, 1579: f. 587). Wier said they were “poor ignorant creatures, old and lacking powers” (Wier, 1579: f. 587).
- 20 The authors of all these works—*Malleus maleficarum*, *Reprovacion de las supersticiones y hechizarias*, *Directorium inquisitorum*, *Daemonomania*, *Disquisitiones magicae*, etc.—were

interested in legitimizing the implacable persecution of witches, considered to be Satan's principal followers on Earth.¹² The treatises encouraged the notion of women as an imperfect animal and provided the foundations for women's marginalized status, disparagement, and demonization. These intellectuals' pronouncements, framed in the discourse of demonology, pointed to women as the enemy of religion and the acolyte of evil, inferior beings deluded by a superior one, followers of a lost cause. Such ideas were nurtured and developed within a patriarchal religious system governed entirely by men who pointed to women's absence as a justification. Their authoritarian, unilateral, and exclusive discourse deprecated not only women's physical abilities but, more important, their intellectual powers. Centuries would have to pass before gender equality was even considered, step by uneasy step.

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NOTES

1. Since the early tenth century the *Canon episcopi* was considered official Church doctrine on witchcraft. It was said that its roots went back to the Council of Ancyra in 314, though probably the Carolingian era would be more exact. It was first cited in the tenth century by Regino de Prüm. In the early eleventh century it was incorporated into medieval canon law by Bucardo, bishop of Worms, in his *Colectario de canones*, and by Gracian in his work commonly known as *Decreto*. The *Canon* evaluated witches' powers, their ability to fly and undergo metamorphosis, the virtues of their creams, the nature of their covens, etc., saying they were simply figments of imagination and madness, dreams and hallucinations typical of infidels and pagans, and that therefore believing in witchcraft was heresy (Marcos Casquero & Tiesco Álvarez, 1997: 20).
2. Most historians say the idea that witchcraft was a serious crime and that male and female witches should be prosecuted dates from the Renaissance; see Stephens (2002: 125), Kapitanik (2017: 376–411), and Zamora Calvo (2021).
3. *Malleus maleficarum* had an enormous influence in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There were thirteen editions by 1520, and in 1574–1669 there were sixteen more. One can assume all inquisitors had a copy and regarded it as practically the law (Zamora Calvo, 2015: 106–111).
4. Nearly a century later Sebastián de Covarrubias wrote: "This vice of casting spells, though common to both men and women, is more frequent among women because the devil has an easier time with them or because women by nature are insidiously vengeful and also jealous of each other." (1995: 624) (Translation by the author of this essay)
5. Translations by the author of this essay.
6. Translations by the author of this essay.
7. Translation by the author of this essay.
8. "Saga, inquit, est et diuinipotens, cælum deponere, et terram suspendere, fontes durare, montes diluere, manes sublimare, Deos infimare, sidera exstinguere, tartarum ipsum illuminare. Amatorem suum, quod in aliam temerasset, unico verbo mutauit in feram castorem: quod ea bestia captiuitati metuens se ab insequentibus repræcissione genitalium liberat: ut illi quoque simile, quod Venerem habuit in aliam, preueniret. Cauponem quoque vicinum, at que ob id æmulum, deformauit in ranam: et nunc senex ille dolium innatans vini sui, aduentores pristinos in fæce submissus officiosis ronchis raucus appellat. Alium de foro, quiddam quod aduersus eam locutus esset, in arietem deformauit: et nunc aries ille causas agit. Eadem amatoris sui uxorem, quod in eam dicacule probrum dixerat, iam in sarcinam imprægnationis, obsepto utero et repigrato fœtu, perpetua prægnatione danauit: et, ut cuncti numarant, octo annorum misella illa, velut elephantem paritura, distenditur." (Translation by the author of this essay)
9. Among his works are: *De præstigiis daemonum* (1563), *De Lamiis* (1579), *Irae morbo, eiusdem curatione philosophica, media et theologica* (1580), and *Medicarum observationum hactenus incognitarum* (1581). See Tacus (1991: 43–48); Isnardi Parente (1991: 9–41).
10. Wier's new ideas were contradicted in 1597 by a royal demonologist, James I of England, who in his own work, *Daemonologie in form of a Dialogue*, discussed witchcraft and magic. The king did not offer his own opinions on the matter, but rather accepted those of Sprenger, Kramer, and Bodin. He was skeptical on religious matters and lost no opportunity to point to papal superstitions.

11. Among his most important works were *De magorum daemonomania libri IV*; *Colloquium heptaplomeres de rerum sublimium arcanis abditis*; *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*; *Universae naturae theatrum*; and *The Six Books of the Republic*.

12. Intellectual conversations about magic, witchcraft, and the demonic arts were surprisingly robust in the publishing world. Suppositions regarding female fallibility continued circulating widely and, as many researchers have argued, feeding upon themselves, inventing and authorizing new myths and popular prejudice; see Zamora Calvo (2016).

ABSTRACTS

The period from the end of the sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth century is one of the most interesting in the history of witchcraft in Catholic Europe. There were an increasing number of trials, legal orders, and punishments. Evil was perceived as being omnipresent throughout all levels of life, and theologians, philosophers, and inquisitors including Sprenger, Kramer, Castañega, Ciruelo, Río, Grillando, and Bodin all wrote treatises on the question. They wished to establish the proper response to witchcraft, and in so doing they created the female prototype conforming to the profile of “witch”. The roots of this image went deep into the collective imaginary and drew upon the reigning insecurity, distrust, and fear of the times that suited early modern ecclesiastical authorities. As the seventeenth century advanced, there was a gradual rejection of this stereotype, and a more rational, objective mentality took hold, for example in the works of Wier, Guaccio, Klein, and Von Spee. These men were the first to question the existence of women who met in covens, cast spells, flew through the air, and made pacts with the devil. This article describes the influences on these scholars and experts as they forged the image of the witch in early modern Europe.

La période allant de la fin du XVI^e siècle jusqu'au milieu du XVII^e siècle est l'une des plus intéressantes en ce qui concerne l'histoire de la sorcellerie dans l'Europe catholique. Les procès, les décrets et les châtements se multiplient alors. Le mal était perçu comme omniprésent à tous les niveaux de la vie. Les théologiens, les philosophes, ou encore les inquisiteurs, parmi lesquels on peut distinguer Sprenger, Lancre, Castañega, Ciruelo, Martín del Río, Molitor, Grillando, etc., ont tous écrit des traités sur le sujet. Ils souhaitaient proposer la « bonne » réponse à la sorcellerie et ont créé à cet effet un prototype de femme qui a façonné le profil de la « sorcière ». Les racines de cette image puisent leur inspiration dans l'imaginaire collectif et ces écrivains ont profité de l'insécurité ambiante, de la méfiance, et de la peur qui régnait alors et qui ont été instrumentalisés par les autorités religieuses. Au fur et à mesure que le XVII^e siècle avançait, des voix se sont élevées contre ce stéréotype, et un discours plus rationnel a été construit par les plumes de Wier, Guaccio, Klein et Von Spee, entre autres. Ces hommes ont été les premiers à remettre en question l'existence de femmes qui se réunissaient lors des sabbats, réalisaient des enchantements maléfiques, volaient dans les airs, et faisaient des pactes avec le diable. Cet article décrit l'influence de ces érudits et de ces experts et dessine l'image de la sorcière forgée par leurs écrits à l'époque moderne en Europe.

El periodo que va desde finales del siglo XVI hasta mediados del XVII es uno de los más interesantes de la historia de la brujería en la Europa católica, porque en él se acumulan procesos, autos y castigos de cuyo análisis se origina una revisión profunda del pensamiento

existente en este momento. Se percibe el mal en todos los niveles de la vida, por ello teólogos, filósofos e inquisidores, como Sprenger, Lancre, Castañega, Ciruelo, Martín del Río, Molitor, Grillando, etc., se esfuerzan por compilar tratados que versan sobre este asunto. Con ello intentan poner freno al fenómeno de la «caza de brujas», estableciendo la actitud que hay que tomar ante la brujería, es decir, el objetivo que promueven es el de la creación de un prototipo femenino que se ajuste al perfil de «bruja»: una mujer que hunde sus raíces en el imaginario colectivo, adaptándola al tiempo de inseguridad, desconfianza y miedo que las autoridades eclesiásticas quisieron infundir en la Europa Moderna. A medida que va discurriendo el siglo XVII se va produciendo un rechazo hacia este estereotipo, dando paso a una mentalidad más racional y objetiva, tal y como lo demuestran Wier, Guaccio, Klein, Von Spee, entre otros. Son ellos los primeros que ponen en duda la existencia de este tipo de mujer, que se reúne en aquelarres, realiza encantamientos, vuela por los aires, tiene pacto con el diablo... Por ello en esta investigación propongo analizar qué influencia tuvieron estos estudiosos y eruditos a la hora de fraguar la imagen que de la bruja se impuso en la sociedad europea de la Edad Moderna.

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Mots-clés: sorcière, diable, Europe catholique, prototype féminin, manuels des inquisiteurs

Palabras claves: bruja, diablo, Europa católica, prototipo femenino, manuales de inquisidor

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AUTHOR

MARÍA JESÚS ZAMORA CALVO

María Jesús Zamora Calvo, Ph.D., Universidad de Valladolid, Spain, is Associate Professor of Hispanic Studies at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain. Her research is in Golden Age Spanish Literature, more specifically, magic treatises, and Inquisitorial manuals published in Renaissance and Baroque Europe, tales framed in these kinds of books, the Digital Humanities and literary research. She is currently focusing her studies on gender and sexual identity in Spanish Golden Age Literature. Her books include *Ensueños de razón: El cuento inserto en tratados de magia (siglos XVI y XVII)* (2005), *Artes maleficorum: Brujas, magos y demonios en el siglo de oro* (2016) and *Women, Witchcraft, and the Inquisition in Spain and the New World* (2021). Currently she leads the research group “Magical Mentalities and Anti-superstition Discourse (Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries)” at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain.

mariajesus.zamora@uam.es

www.mariajesuszamora.es