

# **The Forgotten Crusaders—A Comparative Analysis of the Roles of and Effects on Christian Women in the West and the East during the Crusading Era**

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Although the crusades were a predominantly male-initiated and executed movement, any serious attempt at analyzing and understanding their true impact would be remiss in ignoring women and the varying effects the crusades had on their lives and social status. The crusades, in order to be truly understood to their full extent, must be considered as not merely a series of military campaigns or even simply as the result of religious and political agenda. Rather, one must examine the crusades in their holistic sense as a social impetus spanning numerous centuries and affecting nearly every person of the Middle Ages—specifically women. This critical lens can and must be applied to the women who lived during the time to enable a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the crusades. Just as the crusades dramatically altered the lives of Christian men, the Christian women living during the crusades had a similar experience taking on roles as active participants or supporting elements that can be examined as they differed with geography in the east and west. This widely differing experience sheds new light upon an extremely engaged, though frequently historically neglected, demographic of the crusades. Also, contrary to some historians who claim that time was the catalyst that sparked power for women in the crusades, there was an additional geographical factor that created an environment in the east in which Christian women became empowered to a far greater extent than their counterparts who remained in the west.

The limited involvement of women in the west was apparent in the first moments of the crusades. While it is difficult to identify with pinpoint accuracy the inception of the crusades, Pope Urban II's address at Clermont in 1095 can be marked with fairly unanimous agreement as the moment when the papal office first issued a call to arms for the crusades, and he did so with a clear

intention of limiting women in the west. Pope Urban II's initial message was interpreted as one in which he "tried to confine participation to arms bearers" by simultaneously discouraging "the old, the infirm and women" from becoming active members in the efforts.<sup>2</sup> However, Pope Urban II did grant the exception that women "could accompany their husbands or brothers with permission from church authorities."<sup>3</sup> The women who obeyed Pope Urban II and remained behind in the west had an entirely different role in the crusades and were affected in noticeably different ways than their peers who ventured east.

Although the crusades were an appealing concept for both men and women in the west, they were wrought with intimidating obstacles including the financial toll, danger, and a great degree of personal sacrifice. For these reasons many men were dissuaded from taking up the cross; as such, most women did not frequently go east on the crusades either. Though they might not have taken the pilgrimage to the east, their contributions should by no means be overlooked. Those women who remained in the west still took on an extremely important role that could best be described as a supporting element for crusading culture. Of course, just as history tends to make note of men of a certain status, the historical documents that detail the involvement or effects on women are similar in the sense that they document women who tended to be noteworthy in status. However, by comparing the accounts regarding these sparsely mentioned women, scholars prove their varying involvement and further support the enormous effect that geography had on their roles.

Western women were pivotal in fostering and supporting a culture that promoted crusading. In some instances, their dedication to the crusades even superseded their spousal support to their crusading husbands. One can observe this phenomenon in the slightly comical example of Adela of Blois. When Count Stephen of Blois returned home in 1101 after he disgracefully deserted the First

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<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, 2nd ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Crusade, it was his wife, Adela of Blois, who persuaded—or rather shamed—him into taking up the cross once more. Adela, fully aware of the public outcry and humiliation her family would face, urged him “to recall the brave deeds of his youth” and “persuaded her reluctant spouse to rejoin the crusade.”<sup>4</sup> As a result, chroniclers such as Orderic Vitalis hailed her as a “wise and bold woman.”<sup>5</sup> From this rather humorous account, one can infer that while men departed for the east, women on the western home front contributed greatly to crusading culture as they subscribed to and were charged with perpetuating the ideology and importance of crusading.

Yet western women were not simply charged with promoting the crusade ideology. They also were affected greatly by it as attested to when examining their status in society and the evolution of an ideal medieval woman in the west. Just as the notion of male chivalry and knighthood that had “emerged in the tenth century” evolved with the crusades, so too did the construct of an ideal woman.<sup>6</sup> The male ideal that arose in the crusades came to possess attributes such as servitude to God, fidelity, and piety.<sup>7</sup> As women in the Middle Ages were expected to act with the utmost regard and consideration to aid their husbands, they were subjected to similar characteristics with the sole exception being that women were not expected to have the martial attributes of a knight. Essentially, the concept of an ideal woman during the crusades was one who waited for her husband, maintained the household while he was gone, and served as an administrator who stepped in to fill the masculine role he had vacated when necessary. One medieval historian, Sarah Lambert, best described the state of women who remained behind in the

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<sup>4</sup> Constance M. Rousseau, “Home Front and Battlefield: The Gendering of Papal Crusading Policy (1095-1221),” in *Gendering the Crusades*, eds. Susan B. Edgington and Sarah Lambert (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 31.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Giles Constable, “The Historiography of the Crusades,” in *The Crusades From the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, eds. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy P. Mottahedeh (Washington, D.C., 2001), 14.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 1-22.

crusades as being left in “a widowed state, while their husbands lived on”—in accordance with the social expectations of an ideal crusade-era woman that had developed.<sup>8</sup>

This notion of a perfect crusade-era woman came to be echoed and exemplified in crusading rhetoric, which had a strong emphasis on the Virgin Mary and Eve. Mary epitomized the highest level of servitude and devotion that every woman in the west should strive to imitate.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, crusading rhetoric included references to the Genesis story of Eve in which Adam asserted that she was sent by God to serve as his “helpmate.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, women in the west were expected to act with the willing obedience to their men that Eve exemplified while possessing the virtues of the immaculate Virgin Mary.

This image of an idealistic western woman contributed to what was perhaps the most important role that women in the west assumed during the crusades. As crusading men flocked east to reclaim Jerusalem and urged by the promises of “immediate remission of sin,” a problematic vacuum was created.<sup>11</sup> In these inevitable absences, women rose to the demanding circumstances and fulfilled their new duties serving as the heads of their houses, regents of assets, and financial managers.<sup>12</sup> Many who preached the crusade assured their listeners that their family members being left behind would be cared for. Quite often, this resulted in females beginning to “call on their husbands’ assets at a time when the male members of the family were short of cash.”<sup>13</sup> As the crusades grew in popularity and took men away from home, the daily responsibilities that normally

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<sup>8</sup> Sarah Lambert, “Crusading or Spinning,” in *Gendering the Crusades*, eds. Susan B. Edgington and Sarah Lambert (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 8.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Casteen, “Women, Gender, and the Crusade,” Lecture from Binghamton University, Binghamton, NY, 13 November 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Frances Gies and Joseph Gies, *Women in the Middle Ages* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Publishing, 1978), 41.

<sup>11</sup> Fulcher, “Urban II’s Call for Crusade.” trans. O.J. Thatcher and E.H. McNeal, in *The Crusades: A Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., eds. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Publishing, 2003), 40.

<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Casteen, “Women, Gender, and the Crusade.”

<sup>13</sup> Riley-Smith, *The Crusades*, 21.

fell to male patriarchs were thrust upon their women. Women in the west were charged with the critically important role of maintaining a society in which crusading could occur.

Oddly enough, though some crusading rhetoric included examples of religiously revered women, the ancillary contributions of women were largely ignored and undermined in crusading culture and language. Perhaps the best historical attempt to recognize women of the Middle Ages is that of Constance Rousseau, who argues that women became progressively more involved and included as the crusades progressed. While she substantiates this argument with several examples of crusade rhetoric, her argument neglects the geographical component that contributed to this progression for women. Rousseau contextualizes her argument with the supposition that that “the sexes enjoyed equality in the sphere of grace.”<sup>14</sup> However, Rousseau ignores the glaring fact that in all eras of history one must consider the divide that exists between theory and practice. In the case of her claimed equality, this only came to fruition around the Third Crusade for western women.<sup>15</sup> Initially, when Urban II wrote recruiting letters or spoke to his audience at Clermont he “addressed the recipients as ‘brethren,’” using the gender selective term *fraternitatem*, or he addressed them as “sons of God (*fili Dei*), and very deliberately used “male-gendered language linked to knighthood.”<sup>16</sup> These nuances of crusading rhetoric indicate that while crusading was in fact a gender-inclusive effort that relied upon the support of western women, the language did not reflect such recognition.

This discrepancy was found most importantly in the rewards for those who went on crusade. Unfortunately as one historian states, “the spiritual benefits of crusade were to accrue only to the male fighter”—a claim that is clearly supported in the aforementioned crusading language.<sup>17</sup> According to some first-hand accounts, Urban even went so far in his gender-biased orations as to

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<sup>14</sup> Rousseau, “Home Front,” 32.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-36.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-33.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

warn men that they “should not permit the allure of their women” to deter them from taking up the cross.<sup>18</sup> From these early speeches and writings one can see just how male-centered the culture of crusading was despite the fact that any crusading effort would have extensive ramifications on western women.

It was not until the short-lived 12<sup>th</sup> century papacy of Pope Gregory VIII that a “broader understanding of other aspects of the crusade on the home front.”<sup>19</sup> At this point in the crusades the situation in the east was in absolute disarray. In order to remedy this “grave situation,” Pope Gregory VIII called “explicitly for intercessory and penitential activities in support of a crusade,” and commanded women to partake in specific religious practices and prayers intended to spiritually benefit the cause and well-being of crusaders.<sup>20</sup> His language broke the tradition of his predecessors and used gender-inclusive terms such as *omnes*, a precedent that was followed by his successors.<sup>21</sup> It was at this point that leaders finally began to appreciate the roles of western women. Because of this, the crusades transitioned from a male effort to one in which the success of crusading “had become a collective commitment for all Christians, regardless of sex.”<sup>22</sup>

The highlight of papal recognition for women in the west came during the papacy of Innocent III from 1198 until 1216. According to some sources, “Innocent understood crusade participation as a series of gender-indifferent religious activities” to a much greater extent than any other pope.<sup>23</sup> In his 1213 papal opus, *Qui maior*, western women were not only taken into consideration, but also for the first time explicitly mentioned. In the encyclical, Innocent expanded upon the work of Gregory VIII and called for more liturgical activities to be conducted by women. Most importantly, this sparked a movement in crusading that allowed women to earn the same

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 36-37.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 36.

crusading benefits of men. According to one letter written by Innocent III to Robert Courcon in April 1213, “women, without travelling to the Holy Land, could gain salvific benefits from the crusade.”<sup>24</sup> Additional decrees by Innocent III such as his *Ad liberandum* continued his use of gender-neutral language, using terms “such as the Latin *hominum*, or human, rather than *virum* or male persons.”<sup>25</sup>

Unfortunately, while Innocent’s rhetoric was a tremendous improvement for the status of women in the west during the crusades, once the reality and difficulty of the crusades set in, the women who were left behind to deal with the effects of their husbands’ absences continued to be neglected and unappreciated. Despite his inclusive language, when Pope Innocent III began preaching the Third Crusade, he presented the situation in the east as being so dire that “a man could take up the cross without his wife’s consent.”<sup>26</sup> While this does indicate that for the Third Crusade women’s objections to their husbands’ departures were largely ignored and disregarded, one can infer, however, that prior to this papal order, women were consulted and the hardships they would face with their husbands’ absences were recognized when considering going on crusade.

From the aforementioned sources and examples one can easily see just how important women were in their role as a supporting element in the west. Though the language initially did not reflect this effect on women and their role, without women’s ability to maintain families, financial stability, and assets in light of their husbands’ departures, the crusades arguably would not have been possible. For the most part, however, these roles were merely just indirect support from afar. Contrastingly, the women who inhabited the Latin East took on an increasingly more active and vital role that was far more visible and served the immediate needs of the crusading armies. One of the most-documented manners in which women became more empowered as they progressed east

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 36-37.

<sup>26</sup> Riley-Smith, *The Crusades*, 165.

was in their role as military participants. While some of these women—like men who took up the cross—were impoverished and hoped to find a new affluent life in the east, others were of such notability that they have been included in the annals of crusading history. Perhaps the most notable of these crusading women was Eleanor of Aquitaine whose journey is one of both political and crusading lore.

Eleanor of Aquitaine was crowned Queen of France in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century and when her husband, King Louis VII of France, departed for the east during the Second Crusade she too left France for the east—not as a supporter or a faithful wife, but rather as a very present and noteworthy crusade leader. Because of her actions and merits, Eleanor “perceived herself as a maker of policy distinct from her royal husband,” a description that is echoed by others in the history of crusading.<sup>27</sup> Eleanor was such a force in crusading history that following the Second Crusade she was even blamed for some of the unsuccessful aspects. While this is not a positive example, it undeniably affirms the power she held.<sup>28</sup> Eleanor’s journey east is one of undeniable importance when analyzing the varying roles of women in the west versus the east.

Yet another interesting case is that of Maria Comnena, who came not from the medieval west, but rather came to the Latin East from Constantinople as a Byzantine princess. Maria was noted for her shrewd—albeit borderline manipulative— political prowess particularly when considering her “political machinations surrounding the succession of her daughter to the kingdom of Jerusalem.”<sup>29</sup> She and Eleanor of Aquitaine represent a blended or hybrid woman, born in another region yet each one coming to the zenith of her power in the east; together they represent

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<sup>27</sup> Matthew Bennett, “Virile Latins, Effeminate Greeks and Strong Women: Gender Definitions on Crusade” ? in *Gendering the Crusades*, eds. Susan B. Edgington and Sarah Lambert (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 22.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-23.

<sup>29</sup> Natasha Hodgson, “The Role of Kerbogha’s Mother,” in *Gendering the Crusades*, eds. Susan B. Edgington and Sarah Lambert (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 165-166.

ultimate proof that women in the east could come to hold more powerful roles than those in the west.

Additionally, there existed other examples of lesser-known women who participated much more actively than their western sisters. Of the crusaders in the Second Crusade, Niketas Choniates wrote that, “females were numbered among them... bearing lances and weapons... convey[ing] a wholly martial appearance.”<sup>30</sup> Women additionally worked in the crusading army camps serving as aides. This type of involvement can be visibly observed in historical manuscripts from the Peasants’ Crusade which showed Peter the Hermit addressing a group of crusaders clad in armor and holding lances who were about to depart. Standing alongside were women prepared to leave with them.<sup>31</sup> One such woman gained immortality in *The Itinerary of the Pilgrims and Deeds of Richard*. The author wrote with clear reverence of “a woman who labored with great diligence and earnestness,” inspiring her female and male peers and boosting morale.<sup>32</sup> Additional examples existed in which women were credited with their participation as archers in the line of crusading duty.<sup>33</sup> These roles, which had a first-hand impact on crusading, certainly would not have been afforded to the women had they not ventured east. Had they remained west, they would have been limited in their roles to simply a spiritual or cultural supporting element from afar.

Though not directly connected to Christian women, it is worth noting that active military participation was not exclusive to Christian women. This direct participation additionally included Muslim women. In *The Memoirs of Usamah Ibn Munqidh* the author, a Syrian prince, recounts a story of an elderly woman named Fanoun who in a fit of inspiration and religious zeal, “covered her

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<sup>30</sup> Niketas Choniates. *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Chonniates*. trans. H.J. Magoulias, in *The Crusades: A Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., eds. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Publishing, 2003), 211.

<sup>31</sup> Casteen, “Women, Gender, and the Crusades.”

<sup>32</sup> H.G. Bohn, ed., *The Itinerary of the Pilgrims and Deeds of Richard*, G.A. Giles, trans., in *The Crusades a Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., eds. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Publishing, 2003), 212.

<sup>33</sup> Imad Ad-Din, *Frankish Women of Peace and War*, Francesco Gabrieli, trans., in *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press 1969), 204-207.

face with a veil, seized a sword, and rushed into the fight.”<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, select women in the east served in incredibly powerful political roles. While some select noblewomen in the west held political titles, their effects on the crusades were limited by the geographical distance if not by gender. Then this geographical obstacle, which restrained women in the west from becoming anything more than crusade supporters, was not an issue for women in the east. The women who held power in the Latin East were directly involved in the policy and legislation that had an immediate impact on crusading. In Jerusalem some women played a crucial political role that can be seen through two of the most prominent examples.

For three decades from 1131 to 1161 it was not a man who held supreme power in the holy city of Jerusalem, but rather a female—Queen Melisende. Queen Melisende ruled with historically documented tenacity and “dominated the political arena despite many challenges.”<sup>35</sup> Perhaps the largest testament to her role as a powerful figure came in 1145 when her son was eligible to take over the throne and she refused to abdicate.<sup>36</sup> This was not the last time Jerusalem would have a female ruler. In the late 12<sup>th</sup> Century, Sibylla, sister of King Baldwin IV and mother of his successor Baldwin V, came to power. Through her brother’s leprosy and politically arranged marriages, Sibylla had an undeniable “connection to the throne of Jerusalem” even before she was queen.<sup>37</sup> In 1194 following the death of her brother and son, Sibylla was crowned as Queen of Jerusalem and assumed power at a particularly critical time in the history of the Third Crusade.<sup>38</sup> One important detail to note when considering women such as Melisende, Maria, or Sibylla is that they were inherently set up for power through relationships such as marriage or ancestry. Additionally, they were often subject to acting on behalf of the political desires of others. However, these factors by

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<sup>34</sup> Usamah, Ibn Munqidh, *The Autobiography of Usamah*, G.R. Potter, trans., in *The Crusades: A Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., eds. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Publishing, 2003), 116.

<sup>35</sup> Bennett, “Gender Definitions,” 27.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Meriem Pages, *The Image of the Assassin in Medieval European Texts* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts- Amherst, 2007), 118-119.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 118-120.

no means detracted from their power that increased in the Latin East, particularly when considering that they more directly affected the crusade more so than the noblewomen of the west.

Just as women in the west were important to crusading ideology, so too were the women who inhabited the east or arrived during the crusades. However, these women who arrived in the east were often used in a vastly different manner. Quite often they were propagandized and used by Muslim jihad leaders to emasculate their Christian opponents. In Imad Ad-Din's chronicles, he described a most likely exaggerated instance in which "three hundred lovely Frankish women" arrived by ship, each one "glow[ing] with an ardour for carnal intercourse."<sup>39</sup> Though probably altered for political purposes, his account, riddled with euphemistic descriptions of the women "who invited swords to enter their sheaths and... caught lizard after lizard in their holes" proves that women were vital in the east to both crusading culture and the perception of the crusades in Muslim eyes.<sup>40</sup> In this instance, women were used as a means to create an aura of weakness in Christian men who, despite claimed holiness, were susceptible to even the simplest human needs, thus denigrating their opponents. Therefore, one can see how women who ventured to the east not only held active roles in the execution and policy of the crusades but also were of paramount importance in the aura that surrounded the crusades.

While the crusades had a varying effect on every demographic involved and the roles of their participants ranged greatly, one can certainly conclude that Christian women, though frequently overlooked in crusading history, were irrefutably involved and affected. Just as Christian men in the west played a far lesser role than the Christian men in the east, so too did Christian women. Though it is impossible to accurately apply generalized descriptors to these roles and levels of involvement, one can undeniably see from examples of individual participants and rhetoric that Christian women in the west served as a source of inspiration from abroad that enabled the crusades

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<sup>39</sup> Imad Ad-Din, *Frankish Women*, 204.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

to occur and contributed to crusading ideology. While some historians, such as Constance Rousseau argue that time was the largest contributing factor for women's influence, geographical proximity is, as proved by the aforementioned examples, a more important factor. The Christian women in the east, just like their male counterparts, took on a far more active role as leaders in the crusading era. Surely, in a movement as large and lengthy as the crusades, no one can simply summarize the effects on or roles of one demographic. By comparing the roles of Christian women in the east versus those in the west and the effects the crusades had on both groups, however, it is apparent that those in the east held greater power that more directly affected the course of the crusades.

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## **The Acts of Union and the Shaping of British Identity**

Michael Hickey

The Acts of Union of 1707 represented a major turning point in the history of England and many historians consider it the birth of the British nation. However, the evolution of the concept of British identity began further back and continued to be forged and redefined long after the creation of Great Britain. Rather than being the outcome of an inevitable trajectory of politics and cultures merging, the Acts of Union were instead a hotly debated and contested measure which left various impressions about the nature of the relationship between the two kingdoms. The union ultimately secured Scottish assimilation into a larger English empire and created not a unified British identity, but a diverse and multifaceted one. The lack of consensus between the English and Scottish on what it meant to be British ensured the retention of regional identity over the organic development of a hybrid culture.

Terms such as assimilation and acculturation express the separate approaches to union taken by the English and the Scottish. The English expectation was that British identity could serve to acculturate the Scots into becoming more English. To acculturate was to reduce the differences that existed between the Scottish and the English in order to form a more stable British nation. Assimilation is more accurately used in the context of the Scottish vision of British identity in which Scots and Englishmen were each other's equals. This more equitable vision entails Scottish assimilation into a British state where Scottish identity is preserved independent of English identity. These radically different approaches to the role of union would shape the concept of British identity and ensured its contested status.

By the year 1706, the idea of an English and Scottish union was an old one which had been around for over one hundred years. James I and VI pioneered the concept of combining his two kingdoms beyond that of a personal union, though this was far from a realistic option at the time. King James himself appointed an English parliamentary commission in 1603 to meet with a Scottish commission to arrange a political union; a venture which quickly failed. Repeated attempts to arrange such a union were made in the years before 1706; the failures serving as testaments to the general resistance to the idea of union on both sides of the border. While many in Scotland did recognize the cultural and commercial ties they had with England, there was fear that Scottish identity would be jeopardized by the idea of union.<sup>1</sup> The English perspective was defined by a general anti-Scottish sentiment, one shared by Queen Anne herself. Fear of Scottish Jacobitism only fanned the flames of this prejudice. The strength of English identity led to the belief that union with Scotland was the surest way of achieving dominion over it.<sup>2</sup>

The Acts of Union themselves demonstrate the favorable nature of the union toward English customs and institutions. The new Parliament of Great Britain would hold session in Westminster Palace in accordance with English parliamentary traditions while the unicameral Scottish parliament would be dissolved. Instead sixteen Scottish Peers were selected to sit in the House of Lords along with forty-five Scottish representatives elected to the House of Commons.<sup>3</sup> English currency, weight and measuring standards, trade regulations, duties on goods, and customs on imports and exports all became the standard for the new United Kingdom.<sup>4</sup> Though

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<sup>1</sup> Leith Davis, *Acts of Union: Scotland and the Literary Negotiation of the British Nation, 1707-1830* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), 26-27.

<sup>2</sup> Murray G. H. Pittock, *Inventing and Resisting Britain: Cultural Identities in Britain and Ireland, 1685-1789* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 26-32.

<sup>3</sup> Scotland, *The articles of the union, As they Pass'd with amendments in the Parliament of Scotland together with the Act for securing the protestant religion and presbyterian church-government* (London: Andrew Bell at the Cross-Keys and Bible in Cornhill, 1707), 10.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 4-8.

the economic articles of the union did allow for greater Scottish participation in global trading networks, it did so within existing English institutions. Perhaps the most crucial article of the Acts was the second, which firmly placed the succession of both kingdoms in Sophia of Hanover and the heirs of her body.<sup>5</sup> The English push for the passage of the Acts of Union stemmed from fears of the Scottish Parliament investing the succession of its crown separate from that of England. The resurgence of an independent Scotland, potentially under a French-backed Stuart king, was to be avoided at all cost.

No figure was more important advancing English interest in the proposed union with Scotland than Daniel Defoe. A prolific author and pamphleteer, Defoe was sent to spy on the proceedings of the Scottish Parliament as an advisor from the English Government. Writing numerous works on the union, his *Essay at removing national prejudices against a Union with Scotland* embodied the English vision of union. Defoe's portrayal of Scottish power is contradictory to itself, on one hand emphasizing the lack of Scottish capacity to challenge England while on the other praising their potential contributions to the nation. As a Presbyterian himself, Defoe argued the natural alliance between Protestant churches and dissuades fears that the Scottish church would encourage dissidents or undermine Anglican supremacy within Britain.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, he argued that the provisions of the union would increase English trade with Scotland. At the heart of the work is the argument that any advancement of Scottish interests would be of greater benefit to England itself.<sup>7</sup> Defoe's Britain presents a mutually beneficially relationship where Scottish participation did not diminish English supremacy.

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<sup>5</sup> Scotland. *The articles of the union*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Defoe, *An essay at removing national prejudices against a Union with Scotland. To be continued during the treaty here. Part I* (London: B. Bragg, 1706), 16-17.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

More important to Defoe than the English benefits from union was the method in which it would be achieved. Hundreds of years of military incursion and attempts at occupation had sullied Scottish opinion of the English. This opinion was further aided by the failure of the English to successfully acculturate Scotland even after the personal union of crowns. Peace between England and Scotland was not just a product of union according to Defoe, but also the best means to achieve it. He saw war between the two countries as ultimately being of benefit to the Scots, with even successful conquest draining English resources and ensuring continued resistance to attempts at acculturation.<sup>8</sup> By bringing the Scots into union peacefully, it would ensure Scottish acculturation and the domination of English culture throughout Britain.

While Defoe labored to persuade the English public of the advantages of union, Scottish opposition was just as virulent as English opposition. While Defoe was the most vocal supporter of union, he had to contend with the equally prolific John Hamilton, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord of Belhaven and Stenton. Lord Belhaven served as a champion for Scottish independence and was strongest voice in the anti-union movement. As one of the leaders of the Darien scheme, he longed for recognition of Scottish deeds, both economic and military, which he felt were overshadowed by English colonial achievements.<sup>9</sup> Despite the failure of Caledonia and the financial stress it put on many of the Scottish elite, it signified the ability of Scotland to at least fund and organize colonial ventures as well as any other European power. In a speech to the Scottish Parliament in 1701, Belhaven painted a picture of the Scottish people as a unique, unconquered people who were now unwittingly prepared to surrender their freedom and accept a subordinated position.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Daniel Defoe, *An essay at removing national*, 21-22.

<sup>9</sup> Leith Davis, *Acts of Union*, 30.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-32.

His representation of the Scottish nation was a powerful one which held a strong place in popular imagination.

Being the ultimate expression of his opposition to union, None of Belhaven's other writings or speeches would ever be as influential as his address to Parliament in November of 1706. His words conveyed a great deal of passion, portraying the English push for union as Hannibal storming the gates and destroying the throne of Scotland.<sup>11</sup> Inflammatory rhetoric served to create a sense of urgency and convey the palpable nature of the threat to Scottish independence. Where English proponents like Defoe touted the benefits of Scottish participation in English trade, Belhaven argued that trade represents the golden chains of English slavery.<sup>12</sup> He even implied that the English had a hand in the failure of the Darien scheme to prevent Scotland from achieving independent economic prosperity.<sup>13</sup> Despite the negative light that Belhaven cast on English intention, there still were many Scots who saw value in a federal union with England. To challenge the virtues of the Acts of Union, Belhaven argued that the creation of the new heterogeneous nation proposed by Defoe was made impossible by the preservation of English institutions in the new British state.<sup>14</sup>

Of foremost importance to Belhaven was the royal succession, the issue which could cause the undoing of over a hundred years of personal union. The passage of the Act of Security demonstrated Scottish resentment at English attempts to alter the succession without consent from the Scottish Parliament.<sup>15</sup> The ability of Scotland to determine a succession independent of England would have confirmed Scotland's sovereignty. Belhaven asserted the English push of

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<sup>11</sup> Baron Belhaven, John Hamilton. *The Lord Beilhaven's speech in Parliament the second day of November 1706. on the subject-matter of an union betwixt the two kingdoms of Scotland and England* (Edinburgh, 1706), 8.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>15</sup> Murray G. H. Pittock, *Inventing and Resisting Britain*, 26.

union was to avoid Scottish separation and to accept the union would be a surrender of sovereignty to the English desire for a common succession.<sup>16</sup> The second article of the union also specifically forbids the succession of the British crown to "Papists" as was already determined by the 1701 Act of Succession under William and Mary.<sup>17</sup> This served to undercut Scottish support for the independent restoration of James VIII or any other Catholic Stuart in exile. Future British monarchs would lack any significant ties to Scotland and subsequently the crown was therefore made to serve English interests.

Protestantism was key to the English concept of Britain and theoretically served as a common link between its various regions. The importation of the German Hanoverian dynasty over the preservation of the Stuart dynasty demonstrates the English value attributed to Protestantism. Anti-Catholic pamphlets and almanacs circulated throughout Britain during the period following 1707, printed in larger numbers than even the Bible.<sup>18</sup> During periods of war with Catholic nations or during the numerous Jacobite uprisings, persecution of Catholic Britons occurred in England, Wales, and Scotland. While this alienation was a common occurrence through Britain, other barriers remained between the various denominations of Protestantism. Article XXV of the Acts of Union details the preservation of the Presbyterian Church, assuring its governance within Scotland and its independence from Anglican interference.<sup>19</sup> Defoe lamented that the French often got more respect in England than the Scots did, despite their common religion, tongue, and crown.<sup>20</sup> He was forced to assure English readers that Presbyterians in Scotland would not encourage religious dissenters to destroy the Anglican

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<sup>16</sup> Baron Belhaven and John Hamilton, *The Lord Belhaven's speech in Parliament*, 9-10.

<sup>17</sup> Scotland, *The articles of the union*, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707 - 1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 22-23.

<sup>19</sup> Scotland, *The articles of the union*, 12.

<sup>20</sup> Daniel Defoe, *An essay at removing national prejudice*, 11.

Church or join the Scots in a potential invasion of England.<sup>21</sup> While Protestantism was useful in alienating Catholics and giving a sense of nominal unity, the Acts of Union reinforced denominational divisions and a heterogeneous religious identity.

The creation of Great Britain was by no means an uncontested or uniform event. The years following the passage of the Acts of Union show a continuation of the debate over national identity. John Free, an Anglican Vicar from Cheshire, wrote a lengthy pamphlet on the subject of the loss of English identity within the broader British context. His *Seasonable reflections upon the importance of the name of England* expresses an English response to this new national identity. Free argues that it is the duty of Englishmen to preserve English identity as a separate and superior group above all other peoples who identify as being British.<sup>22</sup> His own sense of English superiority stems from his disdain for the other people of Britain, primarily the Scots. He portrays the Scots as publically identifying as Britons but privately preserving their own culture.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore Free laments the use of the term "British", saying it would be as bad if James I had used "King of Scotland" as his primary title.<sup>24</sup> However, Free's work should be understood as a more alarmist reaction to the creation of a new nationality, with considerable biases. Traditional stereotypes motivate his work and inform him on the nature of non-English peoples. He at one point asserted that that the "Wild" Irish and Highland Scots could not be counted among the British since their loyalty must belong to France.<sup>25</sup> However outlandish, his views reflected popular English resentment of Scottish inclusion in previously English institutions and the perceived loss of independent identity.

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 14-16.

<sup>22</sup> John Free, *Seasonable reflections upon the importance of the name of England*, (London: E. Owen at the Griffin in Holborn, 1755), 9-10.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>25</sup> John Free, *Seasonable reflections*, 8.

The British state took numerous steps in the years following 1707 to incorporate the Scottish Highlands into the rest of Britain. Measures were taken to strip the Highlands of their distinct features, such as banning the wearing of tartan, requiring oaths of loyalty to the Hanoverian king, and reducing the power of chieftains.<sup>26</sup> The loss of aspects of cultural identity is never a welcome development, but creeping English attempts at acculturation were offset by growing opportunities for Scots within Britain and abroad. Increasing participation of Scots within trading companies and government institutions in turn allowed for greater Scottish patrimony. This trend played into English fears of losing preeminence within Britain and was exploited by anti-Scottish activists. Scottish stereotypes were increasingly used in English writings, plays and cartoons. English prints such as *The Caledonians Arrival in Money-Land* depict Scots exploiting the riches of Britain to aggrandize themselves and their fellow countrymen.<sup>27</sup> Such resentments did nothing to slow Scottish participation in British institutions and enterprise, embracing their own vision of British identity. Scots living in England represented the best example of British identity as a hybrid between English and Scottish culture. Forced to adopt many English customs as a result of their professions, these people were both alienated from both cultures and gladly identified as Britons.<sup>28</sup>

Economic provisions made up the bulk of the Acts of Union and subsequent Scottish participation of trade was to be one of its biggest impacts. Defoe noted in his *Tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain* that the number of Scottish immigrants to Virginia would soon make it a Scottish colony rather than an English one.<sup>29</sup> Glasgow was quickly becoming the heart

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<sup>26</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons*, 120.

<sup>27</sup> Anonymous. "The Caledonians Arrival in Money-Land" Illustration. 1762. From the British Museum Collection online.

<sup>28</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons*, 125-126.

<sup>29</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain, divided into circuits or journies...with which is included a set of maps* (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1968), 748.

of Scottish economic life, the union allowing it to become the center of highly profitable trade with the American colonies.<sup>30</sup> Defoe even felt that Glasgow and other towns on the coast of Scotland were in a better trading position than London, able to avoid the hazards of the English channel and reach the colonies sooner than English merchants.<sup>31</sup> Increased Scottish involvement in what had previously been an exclusively English empire caused insecurity among Englishmen around the middle of the eighteenth century. John Free observed that where Scots and Irish who had previously passed themselves off as English abroad, it was now Englishmen who hid their identity behind the term 'British'.<sup>32</sup> The favorable conditions of the Acts of Union toward the English did not stop Scots from participating in trade, which they considered themselves equally entitled.

Despite Defoe's predictions of Scottish economic development that would result from union with England, not all areas benefitted in the way Glasgow did. Most areas of Scotland were merely exporting raw materials such as wool and coal to England, but were not consuming much in the way of manufactured goods. Defoe blamed this trade imbalance on the removal of the court and nobility from Scotland to England, who chose to invest their wealth in their English estates rather than at home.<sup>33</sup> While many Scottish merchants and gentry individually benefitted from the opportunities presented by British trade networks, the majority of Scots remained in the same if not worse positions than before union.<sup>34</sup> Defoe argued that Scotland would greatly benefit from wool manufacturing, and it was the duty of Scottish gentlemen to take advantage of

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 745-746.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 749.

<sup>32</sup> John Free, *Seasonable reflections*, 29-30.

<sup>33</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain*, 781-782.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 783.

their favorable economic positions created by the union to enrich their own country.<sup>35</sup> While Scottish elites had the means to participate in English companies and government institutions, other opportunities in Scotland were harder to come by. The unequal distribution of economic opportunity within Scotland following the union gave the majority of Scots little reason to favor a new British identity.

The story of the creation of Britain is one centered around unanticipated Scottish ascendancy in the face of overly favorable conditions toward the English. Predications of peaceful and advantageous subjection were touted as the English drive for union and were seemingly guaranteed by institutionalized English preeminence. However, the resilience of Scottish cultural identity within Britain, inspired by the exemplification of Lord Belhaven and other anti-unionists, was aided by the unanticipated consequences of the union. Reinforced denominational disparity contributed to Scottish distinctiveness, aided further by Scottish elites who embraced British identity at the perceived expense of English interests. Fear and prejudice on the part of the English toward the Scottish post-union was the result of unforeseen conceptual alteration by the Scots. British identity was no longer a tool of English acculturation, but a compromise of regional and cultural preservation.

It would be untrue to claim that there were none who came to identify themselves primarily as Britons, and in the long term the development of British identity did become more organic. That being said, the Acts of Union and the conditions created by them ultimately did help preserve regional identity within the context of British nationality. English and Scottish identities, both of which saw themselves being threatened in the wake of union, attempted to mold British identity to serve their respective interests. A shared government was not enough to

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 786-787.

replace existing identities with a constructed one; a challenge reinforced by enduring historical prejudices, denominational differences, unequal economic prosperity, and mutual fear of cultural erosion. Though British identity would continue to evolve long after 1707, the legacy of the Acts of Union endured in the resilience of regional identity with British consciousness.

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## **Witchcraft and Women: A Historiography of Witchcraft as Gender History**

Kayla Theresa Natrella

Estimates that the early modern witch trials claimed the lives of nine million Europeans, 80-90% of whom were women, led early feminists such as Margaret Murray, Mary Daly, Barbara Ehrenreich, and Dierdre English, among others, to wonder: “Was the witch-hunt an intentional woman-hunt?” In addition to trying to prove that this was the case, these early feminists used very limited source material and what they knew about the witch persecutions to serve their agendas as part of the women’s movement. Margaret Murray’s *Witch Cult in Western Europe*, Mary Daly’s, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*, as well as Barbara Ehrenreich and Dierdre English’s, *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses: A History of Women Healers*, were among the foundational texts that forced the question of women and gender to the center of witchcraft discourse.<sup>1</sup> Christina Lerner was one of the first seriously to engage with the subject of gender in witchcraft history. Her book *Enemies of God*, published in 1981, prompted serious and, often, interdisciplinary scholarship that questioned assumptions about witchcraft and gender, as well as fervent contention when she shifted the question away from whether or not the witch-hunt was actually a woman-hunt.

Although some scholars, like Anne Llewellyn Barstow, continued to assert the central significance of the original question of whether or not the witch-hunt was a deliberate woman-hunt, most historians began to rethink the question while still acknowledging the importance of including gender in the analysis of witch hunts. The new question that historians began to ask

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Alice Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921); Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978); Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *Witches, Midwives & Nurses: A History of Women Healers* (New York: The Feminist Press, 2010).

was why women were more susceptible than men to witchcraft accusations and what does that increased susceptibility suggest about the position or role of women in sixteenth and seventeenth-century European society. Lyndal Roper's *Oedipus and the Devil* and *Witch Craze* both made significant contributions to the investigation of this question, as did Robin Briggs, *Witches & Neighbors*, Stuart Clark's "The 'Gendering' of Witchcraft in French Demonology: Misogyny or Polarity?," Elspeth Whitney "The Witch 'She'/The Historian 'He': Gender and the Historiography of the European Witch-Hunts," Diane Purkiss, *Women's stories of witchcraft in Early Modern England: The House, the Body, the Child*, Anne Llewellyn Barstow's "On Studying Witchcraft as Women's History: A Historiography of the European Witch Persecutions" and Joseph Klaits', *Servants of Satan: The Age of the Witch Hunts*. The history of witchcraft with gender as a central subject is only a few decades old, but there have been two major shifts since the 1970s. The first shift occurred when Christina Lerner published *Enemies of God* which seriously engaged with gender and shifted the central focus away from the woman's holocaust and towards reasons why women were more susceptible to accusations. The next shift occurred with the introduction of psychoanalysis to the study of witchcraft history and the emphasis on examining trial confessions and depositions by academics such as Lyndal Roper and Diane Purkiss.

Although academics have discredited her claims, few studies on gender and witchcraft do not mention Margaret Murray, even if simply to criticize her argument. Margaret Murray was an Egyptologist who studied witchcraft from an anthropological perspective and theorized that European witches were the remains of a pre-Christian fertility cult which congregated in covens of thirteen.<sup>2</sup> Her book, *Witch-cult in Western Europe*, published in 1921, suggests that witches were members of a pre-Christian agrarian cult which influenced the theory that the witch hunt

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<sup>2</sup> Margaret Alice Murray, *The Witch-Cult*, 12, 191.

was the Church's effort completely to eradicate the pagan religion and its worshippers. Murray was not the first to propose that witches were worshippers of an organized religion, but she was the first to call the religion pagan, rather than satanic. Historians rejected Murray's study, but it gained a lot of popularity among feminists when it was first reprinted in 1952. Murray also had a significant impact on Wicca which emerged in the early twentieth century and gained popularity in the 1950s.<sup>3</sup> Norman Cohn, among historians of witchcraft persecutions, discredited Murray for manipulating her sources in order to support her thesis.<sup>4</sup> Early feminists such as Mary Daly accepted Murray's argument for the ancient fertility cult, which they understood to be a goddess, female-centric religion. Although Daly found Murray's study convincing, her main criticism of Murray was that much of her evidence came from witch-trial confessions, which Daly believed to be lacking in credibility because they were given under torture.<sup>5</sup>

Mary Daly was a radical feminist and author of the book *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. As a feminist active in the women's movement, her purpose was to expose the misogynistic nature of patriarchy by exposing five "righteous rites which massacre women," which she calls "sado-rituals," while also reclaiming words like "hag" and "witch" for the movement.<sup>6</sup> Her main argument was that "the intent [of European witch hunts] was to break down and destroy strong women, to dis-member and kill the Goddess, the divine spark of being in women" and to "purify society of the existence and of the potential existence of such women."<sup>7</sup> Daly was the first to refer to the witch persecutions as a "woman's holocaust" or "gynocide." She called Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a "witchburning

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<sup>3</sup> Juliette Wood, "The Reality of Witch Cults Reasserted: Fertility and Satanism," in *Witchcraft Historiography*, ed. Jonathan Barry and Owen Davies, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 71.

<sup>4</sup> Christina Lerner, *Witchcraft and Religion: The Politics of Popular Belief*, ed. Alan Macfarlane (New York: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1984), 48.

<sup>5</sup> Daly, *Gyn/Ecology*, 220.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

society, in which the massacre of women was deemed not only normal but also normative”; therefore, arguing that the witch hunts were, in fact, deliberate women hunts.<sup>8</sup>

Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English were also feminists involved in the women’s movement—specifically the women’s health movement—and their understanding of the history of witchcraft was, to a great extent, influenced by Jules Michelet and Margaret Murray. Jules Michelet, a French historian, wrote *La Sorcière*, which put forth and made popular the idea that witches were actually the healers of the masses: “For a thousand years the people had one healer and one only, —the Sorceress. [...] If her cure failed, they abused her and called her a Witch.”<sup>9</sup> He also asserted that sorceresses filled the role of midwives in every country, and were the only healers for women, because no woman in that period would have consulted or trusted a male physician.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, he suggested that the Church considered poisons, herbs, and material cures to be the instruments of the devil, and since these sorceresses had substantial knowledge of the properties of herbs and even how to use poisonous herbs as painkillers, the Church and some contemporaries viewed them suspiciously.<sup>11</sup>

Ehrenreich and English self-published *Witches, Midwives & Nurses* as a project in the emerging women’s health movement.<sup>12</sup> Their purpose was to make the case that medicine is part of the history and heritage of women in order to encourage women to “[reclaim] healing roles in the late twentieth century.”<sup>13</sup> With translations in six languages, the pamphlet was immensely popular and propagated the idea of the witch as a healer.<sup>14</sup> In the second edition, which the Feminist Press published in 2010, Ehrenreich and English included a new introduction partly in

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>9</sup> Jules Michelet, *Satanism and Witchcraft*, trans. A.R. Allinson (New York: The Citadel Press, 1939), x.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 83, 85.

<sup>12</sup> Ehrenreich and English, *Witches, Midwives & Nurses*, 9.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 13.

response to the criticism the book had received. In the introduction, they justified their mistakes by explaining that they had limited access to source material and made assumptions based on that limited material and the work of others, such as Margaret Murray, whose research “has since been discredited.”<sup>15</sup> Ehrenreich and English’s central contention was, and remains (despite some admitted mistakes) that the witch-hunt was a thinly concealed effort of the church to eradicate female healing as part of the peasant subculture and eliminate women with “secret” knowledge.<sup>16</sup> Robin Briggs also acknowledged Ehrenreich and English’s correlation between the rise of the European medical profession and the persecution of female healers: “for as the number of more or less qualified practitioners rose, so they became more anxious to exclude rivals.”<sup>17</sup> He also commented, however, that the idea that midwives were commonly accused of witchcraft has proved untenable.<sup>18</sup> Although, the works of Jules Michelet, Margaret Murray, Mary Daly, Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English did not make any real academic contributions to the history of witchcraft, they greatly impacted popular understanding of women as witches and promoted the early feminist contention that witch hunts *were* women hunts. They also introduced the question of gender to the study of witch persecutions.

There were few scholarly studies that seriously engaged with gender and the question of why so many witches were women until the 1990s. In 1984, Christina Larner’s *Witchcraft and Religion* was published; in the study she critically addresses the question that feminists had been asking a decade before: Was witch-hunting woman-hunting? Larner brought the discussion of gender back into the realm of serious scholarship, prompting other witchcraft historians to engage with the subject, as well. While not dismissing the significance of gender relations in the

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>17</sup> Robin Briggs, *Witches & Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 227.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 279.

witchcraft trials, Larner suggested that patriarchy and misogyny were not the causes of the witch hunts, but rather, circumstances or conditions that fostered the hunts.<sup>19</sup> Larner was also the first to call witchcraft a sex-related crime rather than a sex-specific crime; she followed that by investigating how the sex-relatedness influenced the outbreaks. The name of her first book is *Enemies of God*, and accordingly, she argues that witches were hunted primarily for ideological reasons—they supposedly worshipped the Devil and were, thus, enemies of God. In this point, she differs from the feminists who argued that men hunted witches primarily because they were women.<sup>20</sup> To the exasperation of scholars like Anne Llewellyn Barstow, despite Larner’s thorough understanding of patriarchy and awareness of the historic oppression of women, Larner validated and then dismissed the theory that the witch-hunting was woman-hunting.<sup>21</sup> For Larner, what is at stake when elevating the theory of persecution by gender is a broader perspective from which to study witchcraft. But for Barstow, what is at stake, and has always been at stake, is women as a gender group and the importance of women’s history or rights today.

Larner does not dismiss the significance of the high number of accused women and acknowledges the deeply imbedded misogyny. She affirms arguments that women were feared as sources of disorder and as sexual beings in a patriarchal society. Barstow saw the sexual themes in demonological texts as proof that man’s fear of women as sexual beings was the underlying rationale for the witch persecutions, even calling the torture during witchcraft trial interrogations, “sexual torture.”<sup>22</sup> Although, perhaps, not as extreme as Barstow, Joseph Klaitz also emphasized the sexual prejudices expressed in witch-hunting. He claims that the “the witch craze’s slaughter of women was the result of the spread of woman-hatred in the spiritually reformed elites” and,

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<sup>19</sup> Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 84.

<sup>20</sup> Christina Larner, *Enemies of God: The Witch-hunt in Scotland* (London: Chatoo & Windus, 1981), 102.

<sup>21</sup> Anne Llewellyn Barstow, *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts* (London: Pandora, 1994), 16-17.

<sup>22</sup> Barstow, *Witchcraze*, 132-133.

like Barstow, attributes sadism and the appeal of sexuality and violence, to the treatment of accused witches during the witch persecutions.<sup>23</sup>

From Larner's perspective, the witch-hunt was just that, a witch-hunt, not a woman-hunt. With the woman-hunt theory aside, she proposes different approaches to the question of why there was a severely disproportionate number of female victims. To explain this, she introduces the distinction between sex-related (an act which is predominantly associated with one sex) and sex-specific acts (an act which can only be performed by one sex). She argues that witchcraft is sex-related and suggests that women were more prone to suspicion because men considered the feminine nature to be malicious, sensual, evil, and irrational.<sup>24</sup> Writing about a decade later, Stuart Clark and Robin Briggs both supported her suggestion, elaborating upon it by explaining that the society was one dominated by polarized binary thought. As such, if men are associated with positive attributes, then women must be associated with their negative counterparts. If God is the embodiment of good and the Devil, His polar opposite, then, accordingly, men are innately closer to God and women to the Devil. This is even supported by Eve's original sin in "Genesis" of the *Bible*.<sup>25</sup>

Both Anne Llewellyn Barstow and Marianne Hester have contended with Larner's treatment of the subject of gender in the study of witchcraft. Both Hester and Barstow argue that witch-hunts were sex-specific rather than sex-related. In *Lewd Women and Wicked Witches: A Study of the Dynamics of Male Domination*, Hester distinguishes between scholars who argue that witch-hunts were sex-related (only discussing Christina Larner in this category) and scholars

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<sup>23</sup> Joseph Klaitz, *Servants of Satan: The Age of the Witch Hunts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 72-73.

<sup>24</sup> Larner, *Enemies of God*, 93

<sup>25</sup> Briggs, *Witches & Neighbors*, 284; Stuart Clark, "The 'Gendering' of Witchcraft in French Demonology: Misogyny or Polarity?" in *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology: Volume IV, Gendering and Witchcraft*, ed. Brian P. Levack (New York: Routledge, 2001), 433.

who argue that the witch-hunts were sex-specific, discussing the works of Ehrenreich and English, Daly, and Carol Karlsen in this latter category. Placing her own work in the sex-specific category, she uses court records from the Assize Courts, pamphlets on individual Essex trials, and secondary sources to make her case that accusations of witchcraft were part of the strategic and organized efforts of men to push women back into the domestic sphere where they could be controlled.<sup>26</sup> Anne Llewellyn Barstow supports and expands Hester's arguments in *Witchcraze*. Barstow is even more extreme than Hester, finishing a chapter called "Keeping Women in Their Place" with, "I conclude that ruling-class European men looked at and treated their women basically as they did their African slaves and Indian serfs and as they had treated Jews and heretics before them, namely, with increasing violence."<sup>27</sup>

A major criticism of the argument that the witch-hunt was a woman-hunt is that the witch persecution could not have been a deliberate form of repression against women because women also accused witches. Larner countered this assertion by explaining that the patriarchal social structure divides women and the nonconformity of women threatens women who do conform.<sup>28</sup> Clive Holmes proposes three ways in which women might participate in the proceedings against women: to testify as possessed victims, to report on the results of physical searches of the witch's body, or to testify to their experience as the victims of witchcraft attacks.<sup>29</sup> His main contribution is to the discussion of whether or not women as witnesses in witch trials discounts misogyny and gender as categories for the discussion of witchcraft history. His conclusion is that

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<sup>26</sup> Marianne Hester, *Lewd Women and Wicked Witches: A Study of the Dynamics of Male Domination* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 132, 137, 157, 199.

<sup>27</sup> Barstow, *Witchcraze*, 164.

<sup>28</sup> Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 86.

<sup>29</sup> Clive Holmes, "Women: Witnesses and Witches" in *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology: Volume IV, Gendering and Witchcraft*, ed. Brian P. Levack (New York: Routledge, 2001), 120.

both men and women believed in the reality of witchcraft and feared witches, so both men and women participated in the accusation of witches.<sup>30</sup>

The argument that since women also accused witches, then the witch-hunt could not have been a cover for a deliberate and organized massacre of women would be valid, but since the society truly believed that witchcraft was real and witch trials were really intended to eliminate enemies of God and society, it makes sense that women would also participate. Nor does it eliminate the importance of including gender or misogyny in the discussion of witchcraft history, especially in regard to the question of why women were accused more often than men. J.A. Sharpe makes the argument that by participating in the trials, women were not just passive victims of patriarchy, but social actors with their own concerns and goals (within the patriarchy's limits). In this case, their concerns were the protection of their domestic space from the threats of witchcraft.<sup>31</sup>

In addition, Larner suggests that men viewed women's "life-bearing and menstruating capacities" as mysterious and dangerous, especially if uncontrolled (by men).<sup>32</sup> In *Witches & Neighbors*, published over a decade later, Robin Briggs might be responding to Larner's connection between witchcraft and child-bearing and menstruation when he says, "There are signs that for women this transfer into the pool of suspects had a modest tendency to coincide with the menopause of the end of childbearing; while it would be rash to build too much on this flimsy basis, there may prove to be an important relationship here."<sup>33</sup> Although he acknowledges the potential for the connection, he contributes nothing else to investigating that relationship.

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<sup>30</sup> Holmes, "Women: Witnesses and Witches", 151-152.

<sup>31</sup> J.A. Sharpe, "Witchcraft and Women in Seventeenth-Century England: Some Northern" in *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology: Volume IV, Gendering and Witchcraft*, ed. Brian P. Levack (New York: Routledge, 2001), 166-168.

<sup>32</sup> Larner, *Enemies of God*, 93.

<sup>33</sup> Briggs, *Witches & Neighbors*, 264

Briggs also, in agreement with Lerner, acknowledges the need to shift from the question of whether or not the witch-hunt was a deliberate woman-hunt to the question of what made women particularly vulnerable to witchcraft accusations.<sup>34</sup> This is the question that Lerner begins to answer in *Enemies of God* and Briggs briefly touches upon in *Witches & Neighbors*. In *Oedipus and the Devil* and *Witch Craze*, Lyndal Roper uses psychoanalysis to push this question, building upon some of the ideas already proposed by scholars such as Lerner. She also addresses the connection between the increase in a woman's susceptibility to witchcraft accusations and the end of child-bearing.

Lyndal Roper's arguments support Lerner's conclusion that the witch-hunt was a witch-hunt, rather than a thinly concealed woman-hunt, because the people of the society (intellectual and peasant alike) honestly believed in supernatural forces and magic as a constant reality in everyday life.<sup>35</sup> Rather than the question of whether or not the witch-hunt was a deliberate persecution of women, however, Roper is more interested in the new questions of what made women particularly vulnerable to accusations and what does this say about the position of women in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. She agrees with Briggs that witch accusations did not originate in a conspiracy to victimize women on the part of men or the elite, but rather in the fear and ignorance rooted in the psyche that dominated gender relations in small communities.<sup>36</sup> Like Briggs, Roper also investigates what drove people to accuse their friends and neighbors—people they knew intimately—of witchcraft with the understanding that

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<sup>34</sup> Briggs, *Witches & Neighbors*, 263.

<sup>35</sup> Klaitz, *Servants of Satan*, 3; Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 10.

<sup>36</sup> Briggs, *Witches & Neighbors*, 285

torture and death were almost guaranteed to follow. Unlike Briggs, however, Roper uses psychoanalytical methods to explore the question.<sup>37</sup>

Roper is especially interested in the prevalence of somewhat older women among the accused witches. She proposes that witch stories and accusations originated in fears surrounding procreation, motherhood, fecundity and age.<sup>38</sup> Roper supports her argument by explaining that wars of religion, disease, and bad harvests due to the “little ice age” already strongly impacted demographics and resources and inspired fear and greater protection of fertility. Furthermore, in such a society, motherhood was the pinnacle of the woman’s life and the ultimate show of success. Since social status correlated so closely with reproductive potential, old women who were past child-bearing years were hated and their barrenness and sexuality regarded with revulsion. In this, Roper might agree with Daly that targets of witchcraft were often women who survived marriage (widows) or rejected marriage (spinsters), but more so because they rejected maternity or were no longer fertile than because they asserted independence or deliberately deviated from the patriarchy.<sup>39</sup> Roper also discusses men’s fear of women as sexual beings, like Barstow, but she focuses on the young man’s fear of the combination of sexual desire and an old woman’s infertile body.<sup>40</sup> Roper uses rich archival sources to give expression to the fears that she proposes dominated communities during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These fears often involved themes of fertility and the witch’s attack on fertility (in the form of male impotency, barrenness, miscarriages, stillbirths, infanticide, livestock, crops, etc.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Roper, *Witch Craze*, 8-9.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>39</sup> Daly, *Gyn/Ecology*, 184.

<sup>40</sup> Roper, *Witch Craze*, 164.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 159

In her conclusion, Roper asserts that the witch craze was about mothers.<sup>42</sup> The witch killed babies, ground their corpses into powder, and used that powder to enhance her power. She was the anti-mother. Elspeth Whitney suggested that it “remains clear that the witch was seen as inverting not only the natural order in general but specifically the image of the ‘good woman.’”<sup>43</sup> She was not the first to make this suggestion. Larner, Briggs, Clark, and Roper, among others, all agree that the witch was often someone whom authorities and neighbors viewed as socially deviant in some respect. If the Virgin Mary is Christianity’s ideal woman, the witch is an anti-Madonna. Whereas Mary became a mother without having sex, the witch has sex, but either does not bear children, or kills the children that she bears.<sup>44</sup> Since, as Roper suggests, motherhood was the primary, if not sole, purpose of a woman’s life and succeeding in that purpose correlated with a woman’s status, then the witch, as an anti-mother would be the most contemptible of women. This explains why women were among the accusers and witnesses against witches in witchcraft trials better than Larner, Barstow, or Clark’s suggestions. Briggs makes a similar argument, affirming that a woman’s status depended on her ability to bear and successfully raise children, which was a fraught responsibility during the pre-modern era. In agreement with Roper, he also suggests that failure to conceive or carry a fetus to term, as well as masculine impotency, would have been blamed on witchcraft.<sup>45</sup> Since witches attacked women’s abilities to become mothers, then women would naturally have been among the accusers. These witches represented women’s deeply embedded fears and received the blame for inexplicable loss of life, illness, infertility, poor harvest, etc.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Roper, *Witch Craze*, 247.

<sup>43</sup> Elspeth Whitney, “The Witch ‘She’/The Historian ‘He’: Gender and the Historiography of the European Witch-Hunts” in *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology: Volume IV, Gendering and Witchcraft*, ed. Brian P. Levack (New York: Routledge, 2001), 76.

<sup>44</sup> Roper, *Witch Craze*, 136-138

<sup>45</sup> Briggs, *Witches & Neighbors*, 270.

<sup>46</sup> Roper, *Witch Craze*, 158-159

Roper also addresses the question of the position of women at the time of the witch trials by examining witch confessions. Unlike some earlier historians, Roper understands that the people really believed in witchcraft and did not doubt that confessions were true. At that time, torture was an indispensable aspect of interrogation, as interrogators believed that pain “loosened the tongue” and the application of torture techniques was the way to ensure that confessions were truthful.<sup>47</sup> The interrogators, demonologists, and clerics wanted to understand more about witchcraft and witches so that they could identify them more readily; therefore they looked for personal details from the witches’ unique experiences to prove that the confessions were truthful. Roper uses these personal details to find the women’s voices and get a better understanding of how these women perceived their position or role in the society.

Diane Purkiss also incorporates psychoanalysis, as well as her literary background, into her study of witchcraft and gender. As part of an investigation of the same question of how women understood witchcraft and witches—as well as, or in connection with—their positions or roles in society, Purkiss examines female witnesses’ dispositions at witch trials. She acknowledges skepticism of these sources’ validity as expressions of women’s voices because clerks or judges often elicited the statements in the texts from women and, because women often were illiterate, men would inscribe the depositions that they submitted and may have intervened in the content. Despite these reservations, Purkiss still contends that the stories that women relayed in the depositions were powerful fantasies through which these village women negotiated their fears and anxieties of housekeeping and motherhood. In addition to being an anti-mother, Purkiss suggests that the witch was an anti-housewife, threatening the domain of women who were responsible first, for bearing and raising children, and second, for maintaining a well-kept

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 46.

household.<sup>48</sup> In the crisis of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-centuries' rural economy, starvation was a persistent fear, the pressure of which fell primarily on the housewife.<sup>49</sup> Briggs's and Roper's sources also reveal that animals kept for meat, milk, hides, and wool were frequent targets of witches.<sup>50</sup> Purkiss asserts that the good housewife carefully managed, conserved, and protected the household goods. A woman who infringed upon another woman's territory was more vulnerable to suspicion of witchcraft, especially if misfortune befell the family.<sup>51</sup>

The witch was dangerous because she disrupted motherhood and the household, and thus, disrupted the social order. This perspective that Roper and Purkiss's works propose is similar to that of the early feminists, such as Daly, in that the witch is a figure who rejects normative behavior. Roper and Purkiss differ from the early feminists, however, in their view of women as active agents in the witch trial and process, rather than as helpless victims slaughtered in a holocaust. These were women defending their territory—their homes—or in many cases, defiantly enduring inconceivable pain and torture. Roper and Purkiss also employ psychoanalysis to find the voices of the accused women and the accusing women to attempt to understand their fears and how they understood their position in society, rather than rely on the projections of male demonologists. Although they do not support the original assertion of the early feminists that the witch-hunt was actually a woman-hunt, they have not marginalized the question of women in the history of witchcraft and continue to explore witchcraft studies from the perspective of women's and gender history.

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<sup>48</sup> Diane Purkiss, "Women's Stories of Witchcraft in Early Modern England: The House, the Body, the Child" in *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology: Volume IV, Gendering and Witchcraft*, ed. Brian P. Levack (New York: Routledge, 2001), 280-281.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>50</sup> Briggs, *Witches & Neighbors*, 88; Roper, *Witch Craze*, 159

<sup>51</sup> Purkiss, "Women's Stories", 285.

Guided primarily by the agenda of the women's movement, the early feminists wrote books on witchcraft and women that were ahistorical and lacking in evidence. Yet, despite the lack of credibility of their findings and conclusions, the questions they asked initiated a surge of witchcraft scholarship. Since the questions were initially posed by feminist activists and philosophers rather than historians, the study of witchcraft as part of gender history began as an interdisciplinary field. As such, the interdisciplinary contributions of Christina Lerner (sociology and history, Lyndal Roper (history and psychoanalysis), and Diane Purkiss (literature and history), among others, have yielded diverse and insightful perspectives into the history of witchcraft.

Despite the significant contributions these historians have made to the study of gender history, they fail to give any substantial attention to the investigation of the persecution of male witches. Recently, historians such as Lara Apps, Andrew Gow, and Rolf Schulte have been giving more attention to the male witches as a subject of witchcraft studies from the gender history perspective. Even during the early modern period, people stereotypically thought of the witch as a female figure. The investigation of the male witch is likely to continue, as much of witchcraft gender history does not yet offer convincing evidence to answer questions of whether or not the male witch was regarded as effeminate and fit into the popular fantasy of the witch figure, or whether the male witch, like the female witch, was viewed as a threat to domestic arrangements.

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