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LANGUAGES OF WITCHCRAFT

Languages of Witchcraft. Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture, edited by Stuart Clark, Macmillan Press Ltd., Basingstoke 2001, XIII, 241 pp.

It has already become a kind of tradition that collective works, frequently aftermaths of scholarly conferences, are of great importance to research into the history of witchcraft. Suffice it to mention the collection ent. *Early Modern European Witchcraft. Centres and Peripheries*¹, to this day one of the very few works existing in worldwide circulation that concerns witch hunting in such "exotic" countries as Sweden, Estonia, Hungary and Portugal. Another important volume of studies was *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief*², i.e. materials of the conference organized at the University of Exeter in 1991 and devoted to the twentieth anniversary of the publication of Keith Th o m a s's classical work *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. This event brought together mostly British and American scholars, just as another important symposium which took place at the Welsh University in Swansea in 1998. Papers delivered at the latter session make up the volume here under discussion. It can be treated as a survey of current tendencies of research in Anglo-Saxon countries, at least such is the editor's desire. However, due to the relatively long period of production of this volume, in a few cases full-length studies summing up the research announced in it had already appeared earlier³. It is striking that

¹ *Early Modern European Witchcraft. Centres and Peripheries*, ed. B. Ankarloo, G. Heningsen, Oxford 1990; see Maria Bogucka's review ent. *The Centre and Periphery of Witchcraze*, "Acta Poloniae Historica", v. 75, 1997, pp. 179–188.

² *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief*, ed. J. Barry, M. Hester, G. Roberts, Cambridge 1996.

³ E.g. M. Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft: Stories of Early English Witches*, London 1999; D. Purkiss, *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Tales*, London 2000.

among the twelve authors as many as four (Jonathan Barry, Robin Briggs, Peter Elmer and Malcolm Gaskill) had contributed their studies to the above mentioned volume *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, which appeared a few years earlier; thus we can easily perceive the progress they made in the meantime.

The collection opens with Stuart Clark's extensive *Introduction* (pp. 1–18), discussing current trends and blind-alleys in research into the history of witchcraft. He emphasizes that contemporary approaches to this problem are based on the principle formulated by Carlo Baroja, who said that it should be viewed through the prism of the experiences of the then people. This view lies at the root of all the most important — needless to say, various — current methodological approaches. Another important feature of the latest studies of witchcraft is that they do not attempt to establish a uniform model that would explain this phenomenon in the whole of Europe —but rather its multiple causes are willingly brought to the fore. Witchcraft is treated as a cultural phenomenon with a separate reality, and research is focussed on its symbolic and metaphorical meaning.

The first part of this collection is entitled *History and Story in Witchcraft Trials* and presents various methods of source analysis of witchcraft trial records. Peter Rushton in his article *Text of Authority: Witchcraft Accusations and the Demonstration of Truth in Early Modern England* (pp. 21–39) discusses the depositions of the victims of the witches included in the records of witchcraft trials in North-Eastern England. What he aims at is, however, not a reconstruction of a subjective world of demonic images, but a description of the mechanism of the rise of these testimonies and their role within the framework of judicial proceedings. The author assumes that the textualization of depositions in witchcraft trials should be treated as a fragment of the textualization of social life in early modern England. All this theory is based — simply speaking — on the premise that a human individual operates in a community as a text he transmits to it, since only then can he become accessible to others. In 16th–17th c. England people got more and more accustomed to providing accounts of their lives and deeds, and the males were probably more skilled at it, since more of them could read and write, and besides, they were more familiar with the law and

public life. Hence, judicial depositions should be treated as a product of compulsory textualization. After it had been recorded, an authoritative version of truth came into being. On the other hand, persons who were not able to produce a report on themselves became immediately suspect to the lawcourts.

The witnesses' depositions in witchcraft trials acquired the substance that could be credited and were often repetitive. They included various narrative patterns, e.g. the evidence of the supernaturalness of a generally natural event, the thread of suffering endured in humility, the witnesses' own piety as well as their getting rid of anger and prejudice, or the summoning of other witnesses. This had nothing to do with false depositions — this was only a textualization of a given person's individual experience. In the author's opinion there was no difference between a deposition and its legal application, i.e. if somebody made a deposition in a required legal form and convincing narrative structure, and was supported by other witnesses, his words were not doubted by the lawcourt, and the accused would only deny it in vain.

This kind of analysis is no revelation in itself, so what was the purpose of carrying it out, apart from showing that the recent achievements of the humanities are not foreign to the historians of witchcraft? It seems that the author was above all anxious to introduce new methods and a new language to his field of research. It is quite probable that further quests in this direction will be very inspiring and fruitful. Actually a historian who studies the history of witchcraft has no access to objective facts that could be established, but only to texts that pretend to describe the reality, on the basis of which he tries to reconstruct the complicated world of individual and group images. Even this sample of textual analysis can serve us for drawing interesting conclusions, e.g. about the source value of the depositions by the witnesses in witchcraft trials. Indeed, though it is clear that these depositions were distorted in the records made by educated court-room scribes, it is also clear that one should take into consideration the fact that the witness himself unconsciously adjusted the report on his experiences to a certain narrative pattern. On the other hand the problem must be solved as to whether the author's construction based on the records of English witchcraft trials can be applied to other European societies

at the time of witchcraft persecution. For example, whether the textualization of depositions was similar in witchcraft trials in Poland, where at the climax of persecution, i.e. in the last decades of the 17th and at the beginning of the 18th c. we rather had to deal with a social and cultural regression in the countryside, than with its modernization.

The next two articles also deal with the depositions by witches' accusers. Marion Gibson (*Understanding Witchcraft? Accusers' Stories in Print in Early Modern England*, pp. 41–54) analyses printed pamphlets against witchcraft circulating in 16th–17th c. England. Initially they usually took the form of depositions made by the wronged persons in a lawcourt; they were frequently based on authentic records, adjusted, however, to the purposes of publication. About 1590 their character changed. Stories, often of a literary character, written in the third person, started to dominate, e.g. the pamphlet *A most wicked worke of a wretched witch* (1592) was simply a plagiarism of a fragment of Robert Green's play *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. At the same time the very pattern of the described events changed. In early pamphlets a witch's attack was in some way provoked by the wronged person (e.g. he did not hand alms to an old woman-beggar, who turned out to be a witch), but in later publications it was completely unprovoked. The status of the hero also changed — representatives of the higher social strata, and not — as earlier — rustics, or poorer burghers, started to appear as victims. Generally speaking, the wronged persons became blameless, and the witches — more wicked. This interesting typology, however, does not contribute much to our knowledge of witchcraft in early modern Europe. In fact, the author's conclusions boil down to the statement that the researcher's duty is to carry out an internal criticism of the text.

Of great interest, on the other hand, is the author's marginal remark, where she contradicts Keith Thomas's generally accepted theory of the close link between witchcraft trials in England and a change in the attitude towards poverty and begging. Mary Gibson maintains that the story of incurring a witch's wrath by refusing to give her alms, so frequently appearing in the depositions of the wronged persons, at some moment became part of the cultural complex surrounding witchcraft, and shaped the narration of accusations as well as the light in which witchcraft

was viewed by the parties in litigation. Indeed, in the case of depositions, such a story appeared while the witness was recollecting the events that preceded the supernatural wrong. Both the wronged person and the lawcourt could accept such fiction *bona fide*, since in this way they acquired a logical criminal motif of the *maleficium* – i.e. revenge. At any rate, even the witch herself could rationalize in this way her bad relations with her neighbours and her suffering during the trial.

Malcolm Gaskill in his article *Witches and Witnesses in Old and New England* (pp. 55–80) carries out an analysis of “storytelling strategies” of the wronged persons who made depositions against the witches, as well as the role of these strategies in the spread, and later extinction of judicial persecution of witchcraft. He draws attention to four characteristic elements in those depositions — apparitions, dreams, miracles (including ordeals), and stock-dramas (i.e. various, relatively inconspicuous symptoms associated *post factum* with witchcraft e.g. trembling sensed at the sight of the person who later turned out to be a witch). In this case a great role was played by the informal pre-trial procedure — ordeals, conversations with neighbours, rumour. Such precisely were the conditions in which the indictment act came into being. Also the depositions by the witches should, according to the author, be treated in a similar way, without being discarded in advance as products of torture, madness, or the interrogators’ suggestions.

The gradual decline of witchcraft trials in England (let us recall: the last execution — 1685, the last sentence — 1712, the last trial — 1717, while the criminal responsibility for witchcraft was not abolished until 1736), the author attributes to the fact that the judges gradually stopped believing the supernatural proofs provided by the accusers. The author associates it not so much with the spread of the rationalistic world outlook among the élites, as with social transformations in the English countryside. In fact, there was a decline of mutual understanding between the local community from which both the accusers and the accused were derived, and the élite of this community who passed judgements — in short, the cultural differences increased. At the same time these élites started to move to towns in search of luxury, which additionally reduced their political sensitivity to the needs of common people — the potential accusers in witch-

craft trials. At the same time the poorest village-dwellers started to migrate *en masse* to towns, which probably limited the tensions in local communities. Malcolm Gaskill's article offers a refreshing as well as fairly convincing argument for the thesis that has existed for a certain time in studies of the history of witchcraft trials, saying that the persecution of witches was most intense where the judicial authorities were best rooted in local communities⁴.

The fourth and last article devoted to the analysis of depositions in witchcraft trials is Diane Purkiss's *Sounds of Silence: Fairies and Incest in Scottish Witchcraft Stories* (pp. 81–98). While discussing the depositions of two women accused of witchcraft in Scotland in 1616, the author poses a rather bold thesis that the jury can be treated not as persecutors, but as therapists of witches. She maintains that the alleged witches told stories about witchcraft before the tribunal not in order to please their interrogators, or out of a simple faith in the supernatural world, but because the court allowed them to speak of their feelings, wishes and experiences, which nobody in their culture would normally listen to. At any rate, so it could be in cases analysed by the author. In fact, the depositions under discussion diverge considerably from the witches' standard confessions, especially by the agglomeration of incestuous elements or peculiar visions of cohabitation with supernatural beings. The author interprets these depositions as the accused women's attempt to "say unsayable", to make a sensible story out of their disorderly life with the aid of the apparatus of overheard miraculous folk tales, adopted by them as personal experience. This, however, does not change the fact that formally these depositions provided sufficient evidence to condemn both the defendants to the stake for witchcraft. Methodologically, this article continues the tradition, still alive, especially on the other side of the Atlantic, of applying psychoanalysis to research into the history of witchcraft trials.

The second part of this collection bears the title *Context of Witchcraft* (5–7) and embraces studies that present witchcraft against a wide background of the political and religious history of early modern England. Especially valuable in this part is Peter Elmer's article *Towards a Politics of Witchcraft in Early Modern*

⁴ Cf. e.g. B. P. Levack, *State-building and witch hunting in early modern Europe*, in: *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 109–110.

England (pp. 101–118). It can be treated as a kind of continuation of Ian Bostridge's research into the position of witchcraft in English 16th–18th c. ideology⁵, although the author himself emphasizes in the first place the inspiration he got from Stuart Clark's monumental dissertation ent. *Thinking with Demons*⁶. The object of P. Elmer's interest is "politics of witchcraft", i.e. he tries to describe how the attitude of the élites to the problem of witchcraft was influenced by the changing political atmosphere both in the local, and general national context. The author definitely rejects the popular pattern, according to which belief in witchcraft was peculiar to the Puritan minority, while scepticism was characteristic of its Anglican opponents, and points to more complicated political conditions of witchcraft trials in 16th–17th c. England. As a point of departure for his theory he adopts Stuart Clark's ascertainments that the convention, omnipotent at that time, which saw the harmony of contraries as the source of social, political and natural order, can serve us as a key to understanding early-modern concepts of witchcraft. People shaped by such ideas would be likely to believe demonic accusations all the more, if they felt that their understanding of religious and political order was threatened. Hence, in proportion to the greater polarization and conflict in a community, there was a greater probability that accusations of witchcraft would be treated seriously. Another pillar of P. Elmer's theory is also derived from the work by S. Clark, who compared the function of demonology to popular festive culture, which depending on circumstances, either integrated a community, or performed a subversive role. A similar case was that of witchcraft trials — the punishment of witches could contribute to the sense of cohesion and unity in a community, by strengthening the group hierarchy of values and the authority of rulers, but on the other hand it enabled the dissatisfied people to give vent to their political criticism of the ruling élite. In the latter case the emergence in a community of such a terrible crime as witchcraft was interpreted as the result of a moral and political deficiency of the authorities.

With the aid of this theory the author analyses the history of witchcraft trials in England. He maintains that the first climax of

⁵ I. Bostridge, *Witchcraft and Its Transformations c. 1650 c. 1750*, Oxford 1987.

⁶ S. Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, Oxford 1997.

persecution occurred in the early reign of Elizabeth I, when in order to overcome the internal crisis, a new plane of political and religious understanding between the élites had to be created. At that time witch hunting, included in the mainstream of antipapist propaganda, was a kind of a positive test for the legitimization of the authorities. In the 1580s the agreement of the élites in this matter started to decline. Reginald Scot's treatise *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), which undermined the belief in witchcraft, can be viewed as the result of a fear of the Puritan attack on the Elizabethan Church. In the last two decades of the 16th c. it was precisely the Puritans who started to promote the persecution of witches. It was by no means because they attached more importance to demonology, but because they expressed in this way their opposition to the rulers — the phenomenon of witchcraft was held by them to be a proof of the moral indolence of the authorities. This phenomenon aggravated under James I and Charles I, who were clearly sceptical about witchcraft trials. A second climax of persecution came a few years after the revolution of 1640, but embraced primarily the east of England. This territorial limitation is sometimes attributed to the turmoil of the civil war, and sometimes to the personal responsibility of Matthew Hopkins, an indefatigable scourge of the witches. However, the author maintains that the problem lies in the intensive political and religious polarization of the local communities, which took place even before the revolution when in this traditionally Puritan region the bishop's office was held by the militant Arminian Matthew Wren. Thus, following 1640, the Puritan reaction was here extremely strong and the purge embraced not only the alleged witches.

After 1650 a change of emphasis took place in political discussions concerning witchcraft — royalists were no longer demonized so strongly, while diabolization focussed on sectarians. At any rate, in a strongly divided society, laying charges against one another about conspiracy with the devil became an everyday occurrence. The author maintains that this phenomenon precisely gave rise to the gradual liberation of the élites from the rhetoric of witchcraft. It was not because they saw the light and acknowledged witchcraft as a figment of somebody's imagination, but because they perceived its great contribution to violent ideological divisions. From 1660s onwards the question of witchcraft acquired a political character to such an extent that it

became impossible to reach any agreement concerning this problem; as a result, the phenomenon ceased to be treated as a crime long before the respective legal regulations were lifted.

Peter Elmer's general theory seems to be slightly inflated and adjusted to the political history of England. One can hardly apply it to other countries, although it is based on the regularities common to all the early-modern European culture. However, of great interest in his article are the analyses of the political context of particular stages in the witches' persecution, where the author does not emphasize *a priori* the role of denominational factors.

Two remaining articles in this section are rather of a contributory character. David Wootton in his work ent. *Reginald Scot/Abraham Fleming/The Family of Love* (pp. 119–138) presents the basic assumptions of the criticism of demonology contained in the renowned work by Reginald Scot *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) as well as in the largely forgotten work by Abraham Fleming *The Diamond of Devotion* (1581). In their era they were isolated in maintaining that devils do not enter into any pacts with people, and thus their charms have no power, hence the practice of witchcraft is no crime. Even if somebody wants to do harm to anybody by witchcraft, he cannot, because the supernatural powers cannot be put to use. *Discoverie of Witchcraft* gained renown only in the 18th c. Because of his views, researchers usually classify Reginald Scot either as an Erasmian or a proto-deist. However, while analysing his work from a theological point of view, David Wootton provides arguments for his ideological links with a fairly enigmatic, but influential sect The Family of Love, whose history has recently been outlined by Christopher Marsh⁷. This one differed from other sects not only in the high intellectual level of its doctrine, but also in its Nicodemism, i.e. hypocrisy used as self-defence. This made not only the persecution of this sect difficult (its members were orthodox Anglicans in everyday life), but also the work of the historian for whom it is hard to find some other proofs of Scot's and Fleming's connections with The Family of Love — apart from ideological.

David Wootton's article deals with persons who anticipated their era, while Jonathan Barry deals with a man who in his

⁷ Ch. Marsh, *The Family of Love in English Society 1550–1630*, Cambridge 1994.

lifetime was regarded as an exceptional renegade, maniac and fanatic. In the work ent. *Hell upon Earth or the Language of the Playhouse* (pp. 139–158) J. Barry analyses writings that were critical of the English theatre, authored by Rev. Arthur Bedford (among other works the author of *A Serious Remonstrance in Behalf of the Christian Religion, against the Horrid Blasphemies and Impieties which are still Used in the English Playhouses...*, 1719). Bedford, an activist in the campaign for reformation of manners in Bristol, devoted much effort to the combat against the theatre. Although, for religious considerations, he never attended any performance himself, yet he eagerly read all dramas appearing in print, only to see that each of them was packed with “execrable blasphemies”. In the above-mentioned book, the fruit of five years of reading plays, he collected the seven thousand references to witchcraft, magic and superstition that appeared in them. These amazing statistics are held by Jonathan Barry to be a proof that the playwrights contemporary with Bedford simply could not present the conflicts that surrounded them otherwise than with the aid of references to divinity and demonic concepts. And since from 1606 onwards there was a prohibition in England against invoking the name of God on the stage, while the invocation of the devil was not illegal, diabolic motifs as well as stylization on paganism, no less condemned by Bedford, mushroomed in the dramas.

The third and last part of the book is ent. *How Contemporaries Read Witchcraft* and carries studies of miscellaneous topics. Robin Briggs in his article *Circling the Devil: Witch-Doctors and Magical Healers in Early Modern Lorraine* (pp. 161–178) analyses witchcraft trials in Lorraine in search of traces of folk magic healing. The author says that a considerable role in sustaining a belief in witchcraft was played by healers, cunning folk as well as some clerics, surgeons, apothecaries, knackers and hangmen, who were supposed to be able to charm away the spells. At least 30% of the court records of witchcraft trials that he has analysed bear references to magic practices of discovering witchcraft, but no trial started with such an identification. Thus it is hard to substantiate the thesis about the witch-doctors considerable share in stimulating the persecution of witches. On the contrary — they were frequently condemned to the stake themselves. However, magical healing played a minor role in the trials, thus

it seems that witch hunting in Lorraine cannot be treated as a massive attack of the élites on folk medicine.

Then the author analyses the images connected with the measures applied by witch-doctors and local healers, and reaches the conclusion that they were a mixture of folk ideas and formal doctrines. The world created by them was pervaded by magic powers to such an extent that it could not serve as a permanent context of everyday life. Thus it had to exist as a parallel to more mundane everyday attitudes. Ordinary people referred to it with fascination mixed with fear. On the other hand, if we ask whether they believed in this magical interpretation of reality, then, according to the author, the most likely answer would be that they believed periodically, e.g. at moments of personal crises or social tensions. All in all, this article gives us an encouraging foretaste of Robin Briggs's announced book on the witchcraft trials in Lorraine.

The only non-Anglo-Saxon author in this collection is Maria Tausiet. In her article ent. *Witchcraft as Metaphor: Infanticide and its Translations in Aragón in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (pp. 179-195) she discusses the connections between infanticide and witchcraft on the basis of witchcraft trials in Aragon, where many cases concerned the murder of children by witches. This thread was so popular that in order to prove the guilt of an alleged witch before the lawcourt, the cases of unaccountable demises of children in the vicinity were listed. The author says that the accusations of witchcraft may be treated as a convenient interpretation of infanticides committed by mothers, but also as a translation in a psychoanalytical sense. Infanticide — the author says — in traditional folk culture was treated as a customary method of family planning. However, psychologically, it was easier for the parents to explain a child's death by jumping into a different narrative sphere and accusing a witch, thus making use of the existing stereotype.

However, the author errs in her argument by its serious simplifications. Among them is e.g. the parallel between infanticide, abuse of alcohol and witchcraft. The stifling of a baby by its mother in the beddings would be committed in a state of alcoholic intoxication, and hence witches, as if by reflection, were accused of alcoholism. The conclusion that since women were responsible for the survival (or death) of their offspring, every

woman was regarded as a potential witch, is equally doubtful. Indeed, the author herself mentions that a witch's typical feature was her infertility, i.e. a characteristic limited to a particular category of women. It is possible that the thread of infanticide played a considerable role in the understanding of witchcraft in Aragon. If, however, this link was as strong as the author suggests, then why does not she explain why the persecution of witches occurred only in a specific and brief period of history? It would be a truism to say that the understanding of witchcraft changed with the passage of time; perhaps one should also take a closer look at the dynamic of the attitude to infanticide, which the author completely leaves out of account.

In the article *Witchcraft and Forensic Medicine in Seventeenth-Century Germany* (pp. 197–215) Thomas Robisheaux describes the use of forensic medicine in witchcraft trials by example of the case of magic poisoning in the village of Hürden near Langenburg in 1672. Anna Fessler, unexpectedly deceased in child-bed, was supposed to be a victim of the witchcraft of her neighbour, Elisabeth Schmieg. In accordance with the practice derived from *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina*, the prince's surgeon carried out an autopsy and his report was sent for interpretation to Moritz Hoffman, one of the most-renowned German anatomists at that time. Following a few months of consultation he sent his expertise, which to a large extent corresponded with the opinions of Hürden villagers, based on rumour and folk beliefs, although it employed quite a different — scientific — set of concepts. In the author's opinion the lawcourt's real work consisted in the reconciliation of physicians' language of perception with that of rural witnesses. At the end of the 17th c. this was already a complicated and time-consuming procedure — in the case of Elisabeth Schmieg it lasted 8 months and it was the last witchcraft trial in this region of Germany finished with a sentence.

The last article *Reasoning with Unreason: Visions, Witchcraft, and Madness in Early Modern England* (pp. 217–236) is written by Katharine Hodgkin. She raises an interesting question: how could the people in that era recognize which of the women who declared having been in contact with supernatural beings was a witch, which was a prophetess, and which was simply mentally ill? The author discusses this question on the basis of the

depositions by the witch Susan Swapper from Sussex (1607), memoirs by Dionys Fitzherbert, who was treated as an insane for six months the same year, and 40 years later visions of a prophetess Anna Trapnel, fairly popular in radical religious circles of the late 1650s. In the 17th c. the factors determining the interpretation of supernatural visions were: the character of a visionary, his/her reputation, the frequency of visions, the state in which they occurred (sleep, trance, waking), the method of communicating with the apparition, and finally the type of vision (holy, blasphemous, mundane). The author also ponders on how these categories should be discerned and applied by a historian. She thinks that in trying to explain "the true meaning" of the witches' depositions or prophetic visions, a meaning that escaped the mind of the day, one can lose sight of the problem under analysis itself. Of course, one cannot avoid an interpretation of such phenomena, however, one should remember that the definition of rationality not only changed in time, but still continues to change today. Thus this kind of an investigative proposal is extremely subjective — since it undermines the researcher's ability to refer to what he considers as objective concepts, and on the other hand methodologically extremely exact — for it acknowledges the reality of a given historical moment as the only sensible frame of reference. Seen in this light, numerous works on witches, employing the apparatus of feminist criticism, structuralism or psychoanalysis, would seem of doubtful value. This, however, would be a great loss to scholarship, though indeed the charge of "losing sight" of the problem itself can be made against many works devoted to the history of witchcraft in early modern Europe, inclusive of some chapters of the volume under discussion.

All in all, the collection *Languages of Witchcraft* does not open a new era in research on witchcraft, however, it signifies certain important changes that occurred in recent years. Studies of the persecution of witches were initially carried out as if in the margin of the history of culture, mentality and history of religion in early modern times. As time elapsed, this field of research developed almost into a separate scholarly discipline, and its side-effect was a loss of historical perspective and the emergence of works that treated interpretative proposals as proven facts (see e.g. various works which drew parallels between the persecution of witches and various phenomena of recent history — the Holocaust,

Stalin's purges or the AIDS epidemic). At present, however, it seems that the most fruitful are those studies of witchcraft which return to a historical perspective. Though, one must say, the basic question researchers ask is no longer: "How could it have occurred?". They rather try to reconstruct our picture of the history of the early modern period with an awareness that the problem of witchcraft was its immanent feature.

(Translated by Agnieszka Kreczmar)