

Witchcraft, the Devil, and Emotions in Early Modern England.

Charlotte-Rose Millar.

Routledge Research in Early Modern History. London: Routledge, 2017. xii + 230 pp. \$149.95.

This book makes an exceptionally stimulating contribution to the understanding of English witchcraft. Perhaps surprisingly, this is achieved through the analysis of familiar sources: the numerous pamphlets published on the subject between the 1560s and the early decades of the eighteenth century. While many of these texts have been cited in earlier studies of witchcraft, and the genre as a whole has been examined revealingly by scholars such as Marion Gibson, Millar's study is the first to present a systematic and comparative analysis of all the works in the genre. The results are arresting and enriched by their careful framing within the historiographies of the devil and early modern emotions.

Two core themes emerge from Millar's analysis. The first is the central and remarkably consistent involvement of evil spirits in English witchcraft pamphlets. These were prominent, and more or less fully formed, in the earliest texts, and they remained an indelible presence for 170 years. All but a handful of the sixty-six texts that form the basis of this study mentioned evil spirits, and many assigned them a fundamental role. At the very least, as Millar asserts, "this encourages us to reevaluate the importance of diabolical ideas to English witchcraft belief" (29). One result of this fresh perspective is to challenge the assumption that English witches were identified primarily as workers of magical harm rather than associates of demons; this in turn narrows the distance between English and Continental witchcraft.

It should be noted that Millar's analysis of the diabolical aspects of witchcraft in cheap print also belongs to a wider pattern. There was a tendency in English Protestant theology and devotional writing to interpret both angels and demons as invisible agents, encouraging good and wicked inclinations respectively. This spiritualized understanding of preternatural beings was less common in popular narratives, however: the angels and demons of pamphlets and ballads often took physical form. This is also true of the bad spirits in witchcraft pamphlets—though, as Millar notes, the preambles to these works often emphasized the spiritual danger of Satan.

The second major theme of Millar's study is the perceived role of emotion in witchcraft. The failure of witches to control their anger was frequently presented in cheap print as a spur to malefic vengeance. Such loss of control was also an opportunity for evil spirits to exploit. Here again, the analysis relates suggestively to broader topics: the early modern assumption that powerful emotions, or passions, could produce harmful physical effects, and the insistence on the need to master strong feelings—a capacity supposedly lacking in women. It should be noted in this context, of course, that witchcraft in English print was an overwhelmingly female crime.

Inevitably, the size and complexity of Millar's project means that some areas require further investigation. Much of her interpretation rests on the nature of the evil spirits, or "familiar," that feature in the pamphlets. In the chapter on these creatures she acknowledges their fluid and problematic representation, while suggesting that they originated in the belief that the devil could appear in animal form. This may be true, but questions and ambiguities remain. It is hard to explain why this very particular manifestation of the demonic—small animals that suckled on human bodies—existed only in the context of witchcraft. Prudently, Millar points out that the precise nature of witches' spirits was less important to contemporaries than it is to historians. Her broader argument that these unpleasant creatures had diabolical characteristics is well made.

Ultimately, this book points to the messy and complicated relationship between learned ideas about evil spirits and the beliefs of ordinary people. By reassessing one of the major sources for English witch beliefs, Millar also offers an important and refreshing addition to scholarship on the subject. For this she must be commended, and deserves to be widely read.

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Love, Madness, and Scandal: The Life of Frances Coke Villiers, Viscountess Purbeck.
Johanna Luthman.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. xxii + 216 pp. \$27.95.

This fluently written, well-researched, and thoroughly enjoyable book tells the remarkable story of Frances Coke, daughter of the lawyer Sir Edward Coke, and unfortunate wife of John Villiers, Viscount Purbeck, elder brother of the royal favorite Buckingham. Frances's story reads like a lurid Jacobean tragedy—a tale of marital discord and financial chicanery, mental disturbance and illicit magic, adulterous sex and political intrigue. And it is a story dominated by tenacious aristocratic women who flouted patriarchal norms to assert an embattled agency, exploiting all that custom, privilege, or law would allow.

In 1617, Sir Edward Coke tried to buy his way back into royal favor by marrying his fifteen-year-old daughter Frances to the brother of James I's beloved favorite. It proved a disastrous match. It cost Sir Edward thousands of pounds and what remained of his volatile relationship with his second wife, the formidable Lady Elizabeth Hatton. It left their daughter with a husband who was already in precarious health. By the early 1620s, John Villiers had succumbed to a crippling melancholy punctuated by fits of manic frenzy, and his illness left Frances to the tender mercies of his family, who were eager to protect John but keener still to protect the huge dowry they had extorted from Coke. Forcibly separated from her ailing husband, Frances began an affair with Sir Robert Howard, a younger son of the Earl of Suffolk, and late in 1624 she gave birth to his son. When news