

The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe

By Brian P. Levack

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Between 1450 and 1750 thousands of people, most of them women, were accused, prosecuted and executed for the crime of witchcraft. The witch-hunt was not a single event; it comprised thousands of individual prosecutions, each shaped by the religious and social dimensions of the particular area as well as political and legal factors. Brian Levack sorts through the proliferation of theories to provide a coherent introduction to the subject, as well as contributing to the scholarly debate. The book:

- Examines why witchcraft prosecutions took place, how many trials and victims there were, and why witch-hunting eventually came to an end.
- Explores the beliefs of both educated and illiterate people regarding witchcraft.
- Uses regional and local studies to give a more detailed analysis of the chronological and geographical distribution of witch-trials.
- Emphasises the legal context of witchcraft prosecutions.
- Illuminates the social, economic and political history of early modern Europe, and in particular the position of women within it.

In this fully updated third edition of his exceptional study, Levack incorporates the vast amount of literature that has emerged since the last edition. He substantially extends his consideration of the decline of the witch-hunt and goes further in his exploration of witch-hunting after the trials, especially in contemporary Africa. New illustrations vividly depict beliefs about witchcraft in early modern Europe.

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The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe By Brian P. Levack Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review
'Brian Levack's aims are to provide a coherent introduction to the subject and contribute to an ongoing scholarly debate. In both these aims he has succeeded magnificently. xxx; It will serve as a standard introduction to the topic for many years to come.'English Historical Review

From the Back Cover

Fearlessly, Brian Levack tackles a vast, complex subject and reduces it to a concise and lucid synthesis with consummate skill, challenging old assumptions and casting light into the darkest corners. …the essential starting point for the study of early modern witch-beliefs and witchcraft trials.

Dr Malcolm Gaskill, University of Cambridge

Of previous editions:

Now, at last, with Brian Levack's careful scholarly and critical survey, a thoroughly reliable introduction to the whole literature is available.

History Today

Between 1450 and 1750 thousands of people – most of them women – were accused, prosecuted and executed for the crime of witchcraft. The witch-hunt was not a single event; it comprised thousands of individual prosecutions, each shaped by the religious and social dimensions of the particular area as well as political and legal factors. Brian Levack sorts through the proliferation of theories to provide a coherent introduction to the subject, as well as contributing to the scholarly debate. The book:

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