

{essays in history}

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The Trial of Louis Gaufridy: Possession, Heresy, and the Devil's Mark, 1609-1611



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“If *Lewis* will not be conuerted, hee well deserueth to be burned aliue.”[1]

15 December 1610, Sainte-Baume, France

“I swear that we will not goe forth hence till the Magician *Lewes* be either conuerted or dead.”[2]

3 February 1611

Thus pronounced the demons Verrine and Beelzebub, who claimed that it was through the sorcery of one Louis Gaufridy that they had come to occupy and possess the bodies of Louise Capeau and Madeleine Demandols de la Palud. They were demons and by nature evil, yet through the coercive power of exorcism they were often thought to speak truth, and in the process they condemned Gaufridy as the real culprit of the possession. Capeau and Demandols were both nuns of an Ursuline convent in Aix-en-Provence, and Louis Gaufridy, now accused of witchcraft, had been their priest and confessor. Both Verrine's and Beelzebub's pronouncements against him reflect the common opinion that demonic possession would end “spontaneously” with the death of the witch responsible.[3] As these statements suggest, the earliest accusations of witchcraft brought against Father Gaufridy anticipated capital punishment as the case's inevitable conclusion. Death was ultimately the fate that awaited Gaufridy, who suffered a merciful strangulation before being burnt to ashes on 30 April 1611.

Gaufridy's was a well-publicized case of demonic possession, coming to the fore less than a year after the assassination of Huguenot-turned-Catholic Henri IV who had remarked that Paris was “worth a mass” and proceeded to enact policies that maintained religious order. His Edict of Nantes, extending toleration to Protestants in 1598, along with his suppression of public exorcism, reflects the French king's policy of religious pragmatism. The two policies met with resistance among ardent French Catholics who opposed toleration and for whom public exorcism often served as a means of criticizing Protestant doctrine and condemning heresy. Those involved in the exorcisms conducted during the Gaufridy trial were themselves Jesuits, Dominicans, and Capuchins: precisely those Catholics most opposed to the continued toleration of the Huguenots (French Calvinists).[4]

The possession case that came to the fore in 1610, resulting in a witchcraft trial, was the first major case of demonic possession to come to light after Henri's death, and it did so only months afterward. Within

less than a year, a priest was dead, condemned on allegations of sorcery. That a Catholic priest with no prior record of scandal or misconduct could be charged and condemned for heresy and witchcraft speaks volumes about the impact of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations in Europe and in France in particular. In early seventeenth-century France, exorcism was a powerful political tool used to demonstrate the legitimacy of priestly authority. While the seven sacraments, such as baptism and the Eucharist, had automatic efficacy regardless of the virtues or vices of the priests who administered them, exorcism, by contrast, was sacramental. Sacramentals—including exorcism, but also holy water, crosses, and relics—were not automatically efficacious: rather than depending upon the proper recitation or ritual, they relied upon God's will pertaining to the individual case. They did not convey grace in the way that the sacraments did. The efficacy of exorcism in casting out demons was a wholly contingent gift of God, bestowed on a case-by-case basis. For that reason, Catholics and Protestants often interpreted it as having everything to do with the respective merits of individual exorcists and in particular their faith.^[5] That is to say, a Catholic priest who could demonstrate his ability to exorcise demons could and did often claim that this was a sign of God's preference for Catholic Christianity. Exorcism, as will be seen, had implications for Catholic-Protestant tensions as well as for internal competition within the Catholic Church hierarchy itself.

This particular case demonstrates a number of ideological tensions that plagued witchcraft trials of this era. How could witchcraft be proved? Was diabolical testimony—testimony of demons, speaking through the people they possessed—admissible when scripture held that the devil was the “Father of Lies”? What did accusing a priest of sorcery imply for the priesthood itself? The question of proving sorcery provoked a large number of responses throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Gaining currency by the end of the sixteenth century, both among theorists and in the courts, was the notion of a “devil's mark.” The logic was that upon the formation of a diabolical pact, the devil would mark the body of a witch, rendering identifiable, visible proof of heresy for use during the trials. Gaufridy's trial and confession both reflect a manifest interest in how these marks were made and how they could be identified.

Louis Gaufridy's trial and condemnation reflect the political realities of a divided Christendom and the desire of Catholics to reestablish hegemony. The interest of Gaufridy's interrogators in condemning heresy is evident both in the emphasis they placed on his alleged pact with the devil and also in their use of diabolical testimony not only to accuse Gaufridy but also to criticize heretical doctrine more broadly. In particular, obsession with the devil's mark as a visible symbol of the diabolical pact reflects a desire for a systematic test by which potential witches could be determined guilty or not guilty. As we will see, the revival of ordeals in early modern witchcraft trials, among them pricking for the devil's mark, was characteristic of a perceived need for substantive proof in cases that otherwise lacked tangible evidence and a feature of the growing professionalization and scientification of the legal and procedural systems. Such a decisive test would have greatly facilitated such efforts as the purification of the priesthood and the purging of enemies, whether religious or political, particularly for its utility in linking *maleficia* with individual perpetrators.

1. The Case

What began in 1609 as a private case of demonic possession ultimately evolved into a public spectacle and witch-hunt. The shift owes much to the Dominican priest Sébastien Michaëlis's role as exorcist beginning in 1610. Madeleine Demandols, twenty, and Louise Capeau, nineteen, initially received the attention of the Jesuit priest Jean Romillon when they were first observed to display the "extraordinary gestures" characteristic of demonic possession.[6] For over a year, Romillon tried unsuccessfully to exorcise them. When he ultimately declared himself defeated, he enlisted the aid of Michaëlis, a former inquisitor who had taken part in a number of witch trials in Provence thirty years prior. Michaëlis seems to have lacked Romillon's discretion: while the latter had taken care to conduct the exorcisms in private, for fear of doing harm to the newly-established Ursuline order of which both Demandols and Capeau were members, Michaëlis was intent on public display and a witch-hunt.[7] Although Demandols had accused her former confessor of causing her possession from the beginning, it seems that Michaëlis's assumption of the exorcisms gave voice to these accusations.

At the end of 1610, Gaufridy traveled to Sainte-Baume to confront both Demandols and Capeau and to exorcise them himself. In both cases, the

demons ridiculed the priest and took advantage of the opportunity to confront him directly with allegations of witchcraft. Demandols's resident demon Beelzebub enumerated places on Gaufridy's body where he claimed the devil's mark could be found. As Sarah Ferber observes, Gaufridy's attempt to exorcise Demandols and Capeau "seems a poignant statement of the belief in the reality of the possession even by the one most grievously at risk from it." [8] Gaufridy never attempted to deny that demonic possession and witchcraft were real, and as a Catholic priest, to have denied them would have been deeply unorthodox and potentially heretical. Belief in the reality of possession pervaded society in early modern Europe; it was not unique to intellectuals or demonologists. [9]

In early 1611 Michaëlis prepared the case against Gaufridy and had him arrested. Gaufridy was imprisoned in Aix on 20 February, where Demandols and Capeau were also brought to testify. Gaufridy was tortured; in addition, he was shaved and searched for the devil's mark. Three marks were identified. [10] Under torture, Gaufridy signed a confession in which he admitted to sorcery, to having made a pact with the devil, and to having taken sexual liberties with the Ursuline nuns. Though Gaufridy retracted his confession days later, the retraction was ignored, and he was publicly tortured, strangled, and burnt at the stake on 30 April 1611.

III. Witchcraft and Heresy

This link between witchcraft and religious office stems from a long tradition that had associated witchcraft and heresy. Witchcraft was heresy because it entailed the renunciation of God by means of a pact with the devil. The *Malleus Maleficarum* (Hammer of Witches) makes clear this link. It "established a persuasive causal connection between the *maleficia* (actual harm caused) of popular sorcery and elements of heresy, through the agency of the Christian devil." [11] Although the *Malleus* is most infamous for its insistence that witches were most often women, by reason of their spiritual weakness relative to men, heresy generally was not in itself inherently feminine. [12] It may also be true that the shift in emphasis in witchcraft persecutions from *maleficia* to heresy helped to diminish the predominance of accused women, because early modern heretics were often perceived as well-educated, elite, and male.

Heresy was an even greater problem after the outbreak of the various Protestant Reformations, and the proliferation of varying theological positions challenging crucial tenets of Christian theology such as the sacraments, hierarchy, and the role of Church tradition in addition to scripture gave added meaning to older concerns about heterodox views. In the middle of the sixteenth century, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) had met with the purpose of reaffirming Catholic doctrine throughout Europe; as a response to the Protestant Reformations its outcome was not a compromise but rather a rebuttal of Protestant claims.[13] More than that, what followed was an attempt at internal purification—cleaning out abuses while maintaining traditional Church hierarchy, tradition, and doctrine. Exorcism played a large role in this process because of the belief that successful exorcism implied God's approval. Furthermore, as Sarah Ferber argues, the aim of Catholics in conducting exorcisms was to reaffirm the Catholic Church's authority in a time of widespread religious dissent, "by demonstrating demons' willingness to yield to an armoury of holy objects and rites deployed by exorcists." [14] The Gaufridy case reveals, more ominously, "the power of the Church, through exorcism, to punish." [15] The case can be seen, as Ferber argues, as an attempt both to purify the ministry and to exercise Church authority in a time of religious discord. [16]

This essay largely accepts Ferber's thesis about the connection between witchcraft trials and an attempt to purify the ministry. Gaufridy's trial, as I will show, is highly demonstrative of this internal church dynamic. This paper, however, takes the argument a step further than does Ferber, by demonstrating the connection between witch-*hunt* and proof in this context. To convict Gaufridy, his interrogators were able to capitalize on a relatively new and controversial technique for proving sorcery. Where Catholics like Sébastien Michaëlis sought to pin accusations of sorcery on specific perpetrators, a reliable method of proof was indispensable. This reliable method was pricking for the devil's mark. Before we can discuss this method, however, we must first examine the significance of the mark and the heresy it necessarily entailed: the pact with the devil.

1. Pact with the Devil

Contemporary accounts of the Gaufridy trial focused on his alleged heresy, particularly his first meeting with the devil in which he agreed to give over body, soul, and goods in exchange for such worldly pleasures as

personal prominence and sexual indulgence. The episode was narrated in detail in a 1612 treatise, translated into English as *The Life and Death of Levvis Gaufredy* (the French original is lost), in Michaëlis's own account of the trial, *Histoire admirable de la possession et conversion d'une penitente* (1613, translated into English as *The Admirable History of the Possession and Conuersion of a Penitent woman*), and in a 1632 account by François Rosset called "De l'horrible & espouventable sorcellerie de Louys Goffredy, prestre de Marseille." [17] Gaufridy's own confession also recounts in detail his meeting with the devil. An additional source is the 1611 treatise on the devil's mark published by the chief physician in the Gaufridy trial, Dr. Jacques Fontaine, professor of medicine at the University of Aix. His *Discovrs des marqves des sorciars et de la reelle possession que le diable prend sur le corps des hommes* is an attempt to place the devil's mark within demonology and demonstrate its efficacy in proving witchcraft. [18] Fontaine identified three devil's marks on Gaufridy's body, which he considered ample proof of his guilt.

All the versions of the trial indicate that Gaufridy first encountered magic when he read a book of magic that was left to him by his elderly uncle. Upon reading it, the devil soon appeared to him in human form, and the two reached a bargain: Gaufridy would give his body, soul, and goods to the devil in exchange for fame and the "enjoyment" of a number of young girls. Having made this agreement, the devil and Gaufridy made a schedule, or pact, signed in blood. The various works additionally refer to the devil's mark, three of which were made on Gaufridy's body at this initial meeting.

Rosset's later version went into further detail about the nature of Gaufridy's exchange with the devil. He embellished the tale by claiming that Gaufridy initially resisted the devil's temptation out of fear for his immortal soul and the punishment that would await him upon his death for carrying out the devil's demands. Rosset's devil dismisses these concerns as

"imaginary things [*choses imagines*]" that were invented for the purpose of making men afraid:

Do you think that if that were true, my Angels and I would have been able to go everywhere that we want to exercise our Empire, and there

frolic? You should believe that the souls of those who do that which I want them to do, become Demons after the separation from their bodies, and that according to whether they are carried out in this world according to my will, they are rewarded for their honorable responsibilities.[19]

Twenty years later, this reinterpretation of the Gaufridy case and of his making the pact with the devil embellished the heresy that was all along an integral feature of the trial. Emphasis on the heretical implications of the pact both by more contemporary authors and Rosset's interpretation twenty years later reflect the important link between witchcraft and heresy. For Rosset, Gaufridy's alliance with the devil implied more than a mere renunciation of God: it implied a rejection of the entire theological system of salvation and damnation central to Christian thought.

The devil, in Rosset's account, would have Gaufridy believe that the Christian doctrines of salvation and damnation were "imaginary things," deceptions intended to scare humans into obeying the Christian God. Emerging more than twenty years after Gaufridy's trial and execution, it is unlikely that Rosset's account of Gaufridy's exchange with the devil was grounded in any new truth or evidence that had not surfaced in earlier accounts. Rosset's version more accurately reflects the preoccupations of his own generation: namely, skepticism about the Christian version of the afterlife. Preoccupation with this type of heresy seems to have been more current in Rosset's day than in 1611. The devil's dismissal of Christian doctrine reflects Rosset's concern that the afterlife could not be proven. Even a pious Christian could not logically disprove the devil's argument that hell was an imaginary place aimed at invoking fear. Instead, Rosset attacked this skepticism by placing these doubts in the mouth of a known liar.

Christian theology held that the devil, or "Father of Lies," never spoke the truth and was constantly scheming to deceive humans through his lies. For some Catholics, one exception to this rule was diabolical testimony through exorcism, a subject to which I will return. In this example from Rosset, however, there were no extenuating circumstances that would potentially have caused the devil to speak the truth. It would have been clear to Rosset's contemporaries that the devil was acting, as usual, as the Father of Lies and a master of deceit. By putting skeptical

words in the devil's mouth, Rosset makes it abundantly clear that they are blasphemous, evil, and incorrect—that they are lies.

1. Diabolical Testimony

Perhaps the most important factor in studying the role of heresy in this trial is diabolical testimony. Diabolical testimony, denoting the testimony of demons speaking through the lips of the possessed, presented several logical and theological problems. One reason why exorcists sought to use such testimony in trials was that victims of possession seemed unable to speak for themselves. Many of Demandols's and Capeau's accusations against Gaufridy took place when they were speaking as Beelzebub and Verrine. Yet, this presented theological problems, chief among them the question of whether the words of a demon could ever be trusted as accurate.[20] As we have observed, traditional Christian theology held that the devil was innately deceitful. According to the Gospel of John, the devil "does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies." [21]

If it was true that the devil was the "Father of Lies," how could a demon be trusted to speak the truth about possession? Michaëlis's own account of the trial expounded a nuanced view of the devil's relationship with truth: while holding to the conventional viewpoint that the devil sought to deceive, corrupt, and confuse both men and theology, the Dominican priest clearly wanted to affirm the significance of diabolical testimony extracted through exorcism. In his preface to the reader, Michaëlis affirms:

When he [The Deuill] speaketh from himself, and of his owne accord, it is most certaine, he is alwaies a liar, euer endeauoring to work mans preiudice and destruction, but the case is altered, when being enforced and adiured in the efficacy of the name of God, hee speaketh and answereth to exorcismes.[22]

In other words, when God is forcing the devil to speak, he speaks the truth, but when the devil is speaking of his own volition, he will strive to deceive. Michaëlis concludes, "we ought not to believe the Diuell, yet when hee is compelled to discourse and relate a truth, then wee should seare and tremble, for it is a token of the wrath of God." [23] Michaëlis,

not unlike other exorcists of his day, took advantage of the opportunity to discuss matters of faith and heresy with the possessing demons.

In Michaëlis's *Admirable History*, the demon Verrine highlights the priest's logic pertaining to the reliability of diabolical testimony when he states, "Gods pleasure is that I speake of the Saints which are in Paradise, my mortall enemies. I would haue here resisted God and the blessed Trinitie, but they doe constraine me to speake." [24] In other words, Verrine claims to be constrained by God Almighty to speak truthfully, his evil intentions as a demon being thereby stifled. Verrine speech's goes on to highlight the way in which the truth in exorcism-induced diabolical testimony reflects the power of Church authority. Verrine serves as a mouthpiece for Michaëlis when he states:

But the Diuell is meerey constrained to speake the truth when God would haue it so: they haue no freewill to doe that which is good, but are enforced, accursed Fiends as they are, to deliuer a truth. Otherwise to what purpose serueth the authority of the Church, if oathes haue no tye or power? or to what end are these bookes of Exorcismes published? For they that denie this, must denie the authoritie of the Church, and those that haue composed and allowed the said bookes. [25]

Again, this testimony highlights the fact that exorcism was a means of demonstrating legitimate authority. Successful exorcisms essentially implied God's approval of the exorcist himself and of the faith to which he subscribed. In the *Admirable History*, the demon Verrine does go on to make his own divinely-imposed judgments about religious doctrine. He condemns disbelief in the efficacy of exorcism to extract the truth from demons, stating that these skeptics "stand defiled with the infectious opinions of the Caluinists." [26] Verrine continued to be critical of the Calvinists throughout the exorcisms, deeming them heretics who would be punished in hell for imputing "their owne giddy and priuate fancies" upon scripture and for rejecting "the meaning and exposition of the Church." [27]

The Gaufridy case is thus an excellent example of how public exorcism could be used theologically to advance one faith over another. The attack upon Huguenots was an explicit response to the Wars of Religion and their aftermath. That the demon Verrine claimed to be acting as God's mouthpiece suggested that God himself was passing judgment

upon Calvin and his followers. This was one reason why exorcists like Michaëlis sought to establish the validity of demonic testimony and the truth of what demons said under compulsion of exorcism. If demonic testimony could be popularly established as truthful, reliable, and divinely imposed, it would be a convenient means of interacting with God and securing God's public approval of Catholicism.

Michaëlis's logic allowed him to use the testimony of Verrine and Beelzebub against Gaufridy in court as it suited his own-Michaëlis's-purposes. Ferber notes, "whenever Demandols began to do or say anything that did not accord with the exorcists' intentions, the exorcists were able to charge that the devil was speaking. The exorcist became in this way the sole arbiter of the success of his own performances." [28] That is to say, the demons-while often used as a mouthpiece of Catholic doctrine-did not necessarily always tell the truth. Exorcisms, still a contingent gift of God and never guaranteed in the way that a sacrament was, could and did sometimes fail, even when the priest attempting them had a record of success. Thus, Michaëlis's logic was circular, flexible enough to adapt to whatever the two women or their demons stated and to use those statements for his own purposes.

1. **Attack on the Priesthood**

What, then, were those purposes? Clearly on Michaëlis's agenda was the discrediting of Protestantism, specifically the Calvinist strand that had most deeply infected France during the sixteenth century, but his and other Catholics' strategies for asserting themselves in the wake of the Reformations included a program of internal purification. That a priest was targeted as the witch culpable for the demonic possessions was extremely significant, with both theological and political implications for the Church hierarchy.

What were these implications? Jonathan Pearl argues that from its inception, the idea of demonic possession was advanced by "the zealot fringe of the Catholic political movement for their particular political purposes." [29] The Gaufridy case, for its own part, reflects the interests of traditional Catholics such as Michaëlis in combating heresy and reestablishing Catholic hegemony in France and in Europe. Michaëlis's chief aim in prosecuting Gaufridy, according to Ferber, was "the securing of evidence that he had debased his priestly office" through witchcraft.

[30] Ferber notes an important piece of evidence to support this view of Michaëlis's intentions: while in his confession Gaufridy admits to having made the pact with the devil out of a desire for worldly prominence ("*vne ambition d'estre en reputation parmi le monde*"), Michaëlis's paraphrase states more specifically that he sought to "gaine estimation and honour above all other priests of the County and amongst men of worth and credit." [31] The emphasis on Gaufridy's desired estimation and honor among other priests is inferred, or added, by Michaëlis though Gaufridy had not confessed to it. Further, during his trial, Gaufridy was accused of desecrating the sacraments themselves, for example by consecrating the bread of the Eucharist and then feeding it to dogs. [32] The desecration of the host was a traditional medieval allegation against Jews, and in France it had since been attributed, through diabolical testimony, to Huguenots during a 1565 case of demonic possession. [33] It seems evident that what had begun as a private case of demonic possession had evolved into an explicit attack on the Catholic priesthood itself.

The implications of exorcism were not limited to issues of heresy; they also affected hierarchy within the Catholic Church. Ferber suggests that Michaëlis's vendetta against Gaufridy was based in a "traditional grudge" that regular clergymen had for members of the secular clergy, including beneficed priests such as Gaufridy. At one point in the trial, Michaëlis suggested that Gaufridy's magic had only worked because of the moral laxity of the Bishop of Marseilles. Ferber writes that the Dominican "wanted this case to demonstrate the value of a spiritual and moral hierarchy, represented by himself and the other exorcists, whose authority was greater than that of the traditional hierarchy of the church's secular structure." [34] If the response of many Catholics to the threat posed by French Calvinism was to solidify their own ranks, reestablish authority, and clarify unified doctrine, Gaufridy found himself on the wrong side of Michaëlis's vision for the future of the faith.

The attack on the priesthood itself was not lost on Gaufridy. Gaufridy's confession reflects his concern over this specific threat. While in his written confession he stated that he had given himself body and soul to the devil and that he had additionally given over all of his goods, it states further that he refused to hand over "the value of the Sacraments, for regard of those who receive them." [35] This exception, mentioned in a

confession that was extracted under torture, carried with it great implications for the priesthood in France. Gaufridy, albeit under torture, was himself willing to confess to witchcraft, heresy, and sexual misconduct, yet he was careful to preserve the status of the priesthood of which he had been a member. Perceiving a threat to the priesthood itself, his confession included a self-conscious defense of the institution that endeavored to isolate his own heresies from the office he held. His defense contradicted the intentions of his exorcists, who nevertheless did all they could to associate Gaufridy with the debasement of the sacraments by feeding the consecrated host to dogs as well as with having aspired to glory among priests.

In fact, Gaufridy's insistence that he had not surrendered the sacraments to the devil was so contrary to the intentions of his accusers that Rosset's 1632 account of the priest's meeting with the devil,[36] while elaborate and embellished in many respects, completely neglects to mention that any such exception was made. Rosset's version simply states that Gaufridy promised to give the devil "his body, his soul, and all of his actions." [37] That Rosset does not mention Gaufridy's claim to have refused to give the devil the sacraments suggests either that this tradition had been lost, owing to the efforts of such exorcists as Michaëlis to link Gaufridy's heresy with the debasement of the priesthood, or that Rosset himself shared Michaëlis's objectives of exposing a priest who debased his profession, and ignored that element of Gaufridy's confession deliberately.

Rosset's account of what the devil promised Gaufridy also varies somewhat from the established narrative. Rosset claimed that Gaufridy asked the devil to make him the most highly-esteemed and honored priest in Provence, to give him another thirty-four years of life without illness or loss of reputation, and to give him the enjoyment of all the women he might desire.[38] The first stipulation is somewhat inconsistent with Gaufridy's written confession, although it holds with Michaëlis's summary of it. The second stipulation, that Gaufridy should have another thirty-four years of life, is the new element not previously mentioned in either Gaufridy's confession or Michaëlis's account of the trial. According to Rosset, the devil agreed to these three stipulations, and consequently Gaufridy promised his body, soul, and actions to the devil. A mutual schedule, or pact, was then signed in blood, but Rosset

adds that the devil tricked him, and “therefore instead of thirty-four years, he [the devil] only put down fourteen, dazzling his eyes, and making him take one for three.”[39] Fourteen years was the amount of time given by both Gaufridy’s confession and Michaëlis’s account as the duration of Gaufridy’s practice of sorcery. The mention of that timeframe here, allegedly a grant from the devil, amplifies the sense of the devil’s trickery and aptitude for lies. Its inclusion, insofar as Gaufridy’s confession and the chief exorcist’s book reflect the dominant contemporary account of the pact, appears to be a late addition to the story. The interesting twist here is that the devil, still the Father of Lies, by this account appears to have deceived one of his own. This was more evidence of the devil’s relentless trickery and deceit.

Rosset’s oversight of Gaufridy’s exception of the sacraments, however, has the greatest theological implications pertaining to this case. The priest’s role in administering the sacraments had been a contentious issue since the early sixteenth century when some Protestant reformers began to suggest that the sacraments-or at least those sacraments that they did not eliminate altogether, baptism and the eucharist-lacked efficacy if administered by a corrupt or heretical priest. The traditional Catholic doctrine had been that it was the act and the words themselves that gave the sacrament automatic efficacy, not the relative merits or vices of the priests performing them. Whereas exorcism was contingent, entirely dependent on God’s will, and considered a measure of an individual priest’s worthiness, the same could not be said of the sacraments. Although the Council of Trent at mid-century had tried to root out some of the old church corruption against which many Catholics and Protestants alike had long complained, the Council did not reconsider Catholic doctrine, and instead reaffirmed the crucial role of the sacraments in securing salvation and the mediating role of the priesthood in this process.[40] Instead of reforming doctrine, the Council sought to purify its ministry and “to reinforce its divinely ordained and socially separate identity.”[41] Although the French never formally subscribed to the Council’s decrees, Ferber points out that French church reform following the Council’s declaration of its decrees was in some ways more aggressive than church reform elsewhere “because of the intensity of residual hostilities toward the Huguenots.”[42] French Catholics perceived at least as well as Catholics

elsewhere the need for unity of doctrine against the heretical Protestant enemy.

The purification of the priesthood was therefore an indirect answer to Protestant allegations of rampant corruption within the priesthood. Complaints about church corruption and immoral priests had never been a uniquely Protestant anxiety, and in fact these issues had taken root in the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, it seems likely that the various Protestant voices, whose complaints about corruption preceded sharp doctrinal shifts, rendered some solution to the traditional problem necessary. Greater morality and education were expected of the post-Tridentine priesthood (Trent had established seminaries to combat the perceived deficiency of clerical education), which was now separated more sharply from the laity.[43] Moreover, one common conclusion of Protestants was that Catholic ritual was not merely corrupt but also superstitious. For instance, most Protestants came to deny transubstantiation and the mystical rites of the priest. In that sense, the Gaufridy trial marks a concerted effort among Catholics to answer Protestant allegations by proving their ability to distinguish between “witch” and “priest,” rooting out potential problems within the hierarchy. [44]

Attention to Gaufridy’s allegedly giving the sacraments to the devil illuminates the problems of corruption and immorality that culminated in the various Reformations and the Council of Trent. What exactly did it mean for a priest to “give” the sacraments over to the devil? Although according to Catholic doctrine, Gaufridy’s sorcery could not have rendered the sacraments he administered inefficacious, an accusation of handing over the sacraments to the devil nevertheless suggested utmost sacrilege. Demandols’s testimony had focused heavily on the priest’s abuse of the sacraments, and Ferber notes that the Premier Président of the Parlement, Guillaume Du Vair, was unhappy that Gaufridy had denied abusing the sacraments because he saw this as having been a “crucial charge” against him.[45]

It can be surmised that many French Catholics who were discontented with toleration of the Huguenots were concerned with reaffirming their own base as a means of combating the Protestant heresy. Just as the Council of Trent reasserted itself by reaffirming and—perhaps more importantly—articulating official doctrine, these Catholics emphasized

education of the sometimes-ignorant priesthood and closer monitoring of preaching. For Ferber, the execution of “corrupt” priests as an attempt to purify the priesthood mirrored the expulsion of the devil from the body through exorcism.[46] That is to say, publicly tarnishing the reputation of priests like Gaufridy—and then executing them—had symbolic potency in demonstrating the process of Church reformation. Like exorcism, it demonstrated the casting out of evil. All this suggests that to associate Gaufridy with the worst kinds of sacrilege and blasphemy would have made that “symbolic exorcism” all the more powerful, because the demons being cast from the Church were that much more threatening. In their efforts to eliminate Gaufridy, Michaëlis and his fellow exorcists endeavored to associate the priest with everything contrary to the very essence of Christianity, including the worst imaginable heresy and sacrilege.

But why was Gaufridy targeted, rather than some other priest? Robert Mandrou’s study observes that the persecution of Gaufridy was a break from the tradition that most commonly identified *prêtres de mauvaise vie*, or immoral priests, as witches. Practicing magic was a new charge, where scandalous behavior had previously been sufficient. Gaufridy had no prior reputation for misconduct; Mandrou insists that his parishioners had long considered him excellent. [47] Despite Gaufridy’s prior reputation, however, the traditional charge of immorality became a feature of his trial, in which he was accused of having taken sexual liberties with the two nuns. The inclusion of this charge suggests that immorality was still a preoccupation for his accusers, who worried about the ethical state of the priesthood, although it is unlikely that Gaufridy was himself targeted for these reasons.

The records for the trial provide little information about why Gaufridy himself was targeted, but one clue lies in his position as a member of the secular clergy. Michaëlis’s grudge against the secular clergy was consistent with one of his chief aims in the trial: to demonstrate the value of a spiritual and moral hierarchy in the Church, superior to the secular structure, that could put an end to abuses of the priestly office such as Gaufridy’s. Mandrou has little doubt that Michaëlis himself was most instrumental in targeting Gaufridy. Though Demandols made allegations against him herself, Mandrou suggests it was through the influence of Michaëlis that she came to articulate these charges.[48]

Michaëlis's aims were consistent with those of the post-Tridentine Church, which sought an educated, moral priesthood that was increasingly differentiated from the laity. Concerned about Protestant criticisms of the superstitious rituals of the Catholic priesthood, Inquisitions of the post-Tridentine era came down most harshly on the priest who had been too closely identified with the laity "by practising home-grown rites using church paraphernalia . . . or caving in to pressure to use his healing powers on a client-driven basis rather than for the purposes of worship." [49] As a beneficed priest, Gaufridy would have been in closer association with the laity than the regular clergy, and it is possible that he had practiced some of these "home-grown rites." We can only guess at what Gaufridy's particular infractions may have been, but it seems clear that his having been a member of the secular clergy played a role in his downfall.

Though the attempt to purify the priesthood was a response to a perceived Huguenot threat, for many Protestants the role of a Catholic priest in the possession of Demandols and Capeau only confirmed their suspicions about the corruption of the priesthood. That a priest could have turned out to be no better than a magician demonstrated why Protestants had been so suspicious of the priesthood in the first place. Michaëlis's publication of his account of the trial in 1613 is in fact a defense against the Protestant interpretations of Gaufridy's confession and the physician Jacques Fontaine's account, which was published in 1611. I will return to Dr. Fontaine's account.

VII. The Devil's Mark

One aspect of witchcraft trials that was not dominant during the late medieval period or when Heinrich Kramer wrote the infamous *Malleus Maleficarum* was the devil's mark. Particularly instrumental in the Gaufridy trial, it was not until the later half of the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century that the search for the devil's mark became a prominent feature of witchcraft trials in France. Attention to the mark was a reflection of a desire for a visible proof of sorcery. It became an important piece of late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century demonology that upon entering into a pact with the devil, a witch was branded with the mark of the devil. Therefore, if the mark could be identified, it would imply that such a pact had taken place and that the accused party truly was a witch.

In Geneva, focus on the mark as the most concrete manifestation of heretical witchcraft was so prominent that finding the devil's mark became requisite to condemning an accused witch to death.[50] Such scruples in "proving" the pact with the devil, however, do not appear to have lessened the number of convictions or executions. On the contrary, it seems that, where sought, the devil's mark was almost always found. Even so, the idea that this requisite proof might prevent any convictions unsettled some. Genevan demonologist Henri Boguet criticized searches for the marks as inadequate, given his own belief that not all witches were marked, and he maintained that Geneva should not require the uncovering of the mark in order to execute a witch.[51] Yet, contrary to the implications of such an argument, those who searched for the devil's mark appear to have been far more intent on proving guilt as opposed to proving innocence. Studies have shown that "witch-prickers" in search of insensitive areas of the skin that would constitute a "devil's mark" found such marks in a majority of cases. Additionally, the identification of such a mark almost invariably resulted in the suspect's death.[52]

An important proponent of searches for the devil's mark was the professor of medicine at the University of Aix, Jacques Fontaine, who personally searched Gaufridy for the mark (finding three) and afterward published a pamphlet that propounded the value of the mark in witch trials. Fontaine's discussion goes into elaborate scientific and theological detail about the devil's mark, insisting that a proper physician could easily distinguish between "ordinary and extraordinary marks," the latter being diabolical. Not only did Fontaine endeavor to prove the reality of the demonic pact and the marks created as its consequence, but he was also at pains to demonstrate that the existence of "extraordinary" or diabolical marks was sufficient proof of witchcraft.[53]

Fontaine began by describing the process by which doctors were able to identify these marks: the doctor began by inserting a needle into the skin of the accused. If the "wretch [*miserable*]" did not feel any pain at the spot where the needle entered the skin, this was evidence of a "devil's mark." [54] This is because, as Fontaine discussed later in his discourse, the parts of the bodies of witches that were marked become as dead skin and dead body parts. A witch could not feel or bleed at the spot or spots where the mark was made.[55]

Fontaine was concerned with establishing the science of the devil's mark and the signs that identified it because he was intent on establishing the devil's mark as inviolable proof of sorcery. Another critical issue for Fontaine in the establishment of this proof was the issue of consent. Fontaine's treatise responds to Gaufridy's suggestion, after Fontaine had found him to be marked, that any marks on his body had been made without his consent. Essentially Gaufridy was questioning what precisely it was that the mark proved. He denied that it made him a witch, and instead insisted that it made him a victim. Fontaine counters this suggestion theologically, arguing that

the same God who is all powerful would never allow that the marks of the devil his sworn and stubborn enemy be made on a person who is not with him, but with God through the character of a Christian.[56]

Realizing that the Bible does, in places, record that God sometimes allows the devil to touch the pious and the good—most famously the Old Testament character Job—Fontaine drew the distinction that God only allowed this when it would result in an increase in virtue, as it did for Job. Fontaine held that marks of the devil on the body of those who were marked without their consent “can serve for the exercise of no virtue [*ne peuvent server a l'exercice d'aucune vertu*].”[57] Since it would serve no greater purpose to do so, Fontaine concluded that his just and rational God would not allow the devil to mark Christians without their consent.

For Fontaine, the mark of the devil was thus exclusively associated with a diabolical pact and the willful renunciation of God on the part of the witch. Fontaine also argued that the principle that God would not abandon a good Christian was even more important in this particular case, because for God to abandon a priest would be for him to abandon his entire church, owing to the pivotal role of the priest in the sacrament of Confession, and the discord and chaos that would ensue if a witch-priest were able to use his office for demonic ends.[58]

One last, more pragmatic, argument that appears in Fontaine's treatise is one of pure convenience: he wrote that if it were possible for the devil to mark a man without his consent, “the marks would not serve for anything in proving witchcraft, since to be marked would be something immaterial, there being as many of those who are witches as those who

are not.”[59] If his argument of convenience-circular in its logic-is less convincing to the modern reader, it nevertheless speaks volumes about the value that Fontaine attributed to powerful symbols, such as the devil’s mark. It was clearly a matter of great importance for Fontaine that the devil’s mark be firmly established as an infallible means of proving and condemning witchcraft. For Fontaine, he did not merely believe the devil’s mark, for both scientific and theological reasons, to be sufficient evidence of this heretical crime, but rather he needed it to be true. This is because, for Fontaine, symbols could not be understood independent of meaning, and the devil’s mark had become established in his era as an extremely powerful symbol of the diabolical pact. Ferber has suggested that the mark represented the will in a way that mimicked the signing of a pact, but instead of being on paper it could be read on the body.[60] Thus the mark retained both theological and legal symbolism.

It is tempting to impute this viewpoint to many other seventeenth-century thinkers. It seems probable that the rise of the devil’s mark as a means of proving the diabolical pact can be attributed to an increased sense of need for tangible proof, perhaps especially in situations such as this one where priests or other individuals were targeted for political reasons. A methodical system of proof may be understood to have lent order and predictability to a system not merely interested in identifying perpetrators but *specific* perpetrators. The devil’s mark served as symbolic proof not merely of witchcraft but of explicit heresy-a renunciation of God and baptism-and to identify its presence on the accused witch would have been to establish a powerful personal connection between the accused witch and the *maleficia* that brought the case to trial in the first place. This stage was less a generalized witch-hunt than a targeted political attack on individuals-for which the mark proved extremely damning. Hence, searching for the devil’s mark was an ideal strategy for a Catholic priesthood intent on internal purification. Nevertheless, it is true that the devil’s mark was a feature of witchcraft trials outside of France and outside of the Catholic fold. This does not contradict my argument, however, as the need for a system of demonstrable visible proof may be imputed to non-Catholic contexts.

Fontaine himself is emblematic of a generalized need to attribute meaning to the (relatively modern) symbol of the devil’s mark. There is

no cause to question that Fontaine himself *believed* that the devil's mark necessarily proved something about its bearers. In a broader theological sense, to suggest that individual human events or the order of the universe lack meaning seemed problematic and potentially blasphemous. For Fontaine, it was simply illogical to argue that a diabolical mark meant nothing.

Pricking the body of a supposed witch in search of the devil's mark was an "ordeal" in early modern witchcraft cases. It was not intended as torture, but rather was employed as a means of establishing evidence for the trial. Heikki Pihlajamäki has concerned himself with the very issue of "ordeals" in early modern witchcraft trials: namely, swimming the witch—a test to see whether the accused would sink, proving innocence, or float, proving guilt—and pricking for the devil's mark. His study examines why ordeals, abolished in 1215 by the Fourth Lateran Council as well as by subsequent legal scholarship,[61] came again to the fore long after the *Malleus*, and why they were more widespread in central continental Europe than in England and the periphery. While earlier trials had relied on oaths and compurgators, a system of Roman-canon legal proofs had emerged in the later Middle Ages. During early modern witch trials, ordeals were a means of securing the evidence necessary to proceed with torture, which was employed to secure confession, conviction, and punishment.

Pihlajamäki proposes "that the use of ordeals in the early modern period was dependent on the degree of professionalization of the local legal profession and of the 'scientification' of the procedural system." [62] In other words, perhaps paradoxically to the modern reader, ordeals such as pricking for the devil's mark were a reflection of a renewed focus on science and emphasis on proof. He continues, "[T]he propensity to employ ordeals essentially depended upon the extent to which the statutory theory of proof had been adopted." [63] France, Germany, and Switzerland, by Pihlajamäki's account, were the regions of central continental Europe where this "statutory theory of proof" was most fully developed. This theory of proof was instrumental in making ordeals more prominent features of witchcraft trials in these places than elsewhere in Europe, in England and the periphery. [64]

Pihlajamäki associates the abolition of ordeals with the founding of "institutions of academic legal learning" intent on more efficient judicial

systems and with “the professionalization of jurists which enabled learned legal theory of proof to be established in its stead.”[65] The concept of a “devil’s mark,” not a common convention of the medieval imagination pertaining to witchcraft, was itself a construction of demonologists. “Witch-pricking” became a profession in its own right whereby specialists would claim the expertise to find such a mark. Despite the efforts of the French *parlements*, therefore, “old practices” of ordeals lingered through the seventeenth century in parts of France.[66] The paradox is that while the “statutory theories of proof” (which Pihlajamäki finds to have been strongest in central continental Europe) originally ended ordeals, they also contributed much to the continued practice of ordeals during early modern witch-hunts in those same areas. Pihlajamäki suggests that ordeals as a method of “fact-finding” survived from the Middle Ages as an element of “popular collective memory.” While early modern legal literature disregarded ordeals as a viable means of proof, Pihlajamäki suggests that in practice legal courts were actually flexible enough in their definitions of proof to accept ordeals as a viable form of evidence, particularly when cases were difficult to prove without them. He writes, “Even though learned jurists in their theories refused to admit ordeals into their system of proof, the temptation to take advantage of them grew in practice.”[67]

Pricking for the devil’s mark was, to be sure, an ordeal of no small proportion. The mark itself was thought to be a scar left on the body of the witch by the devil’s claws. Because of the belief that the mark itself would not bleed, the accused person was often subjected to pricking by needle, a process that could last for hours. Often, the accused would be totally shaved-as Gaufridy was-and every noticeable mark would be subjected to the evaluation of a physician, in addition to the pricking by needle.[68]

Despite the intentions of the examiners, thus, an “ordeal” such as pricking for the devil’s mark could realistically constitute a form of torture in and of itself. While Gaufridy signed his confession on 11 April after having endured pricking for the devil’s mark, he retracted his confession four days later. The retraction, while ignored by the court, suggests that he had made his previous statement under duress. He officially told the court that he had confessed untruthfully out of a desire for clemency,[69] but it seems likely that the clemency he sought

included not only a milder verdict but also a cessation of torture. Nevertheless, for early modern theorists, judicial torture was “an integral part” of the justice system, ensuring “at least some chance of the strict evidentiary requirement being followed.”[70]

Thus, the revival of this sort of ordeal demonstrates a perceived need for more concrete proof in witchcraft trials. Fontaine may have been typical of early seventeenth-century theorists who were intent on establishing the viability of the devil's mark as evidence. His scientific discussion of the devil's mark and why it would not bleed reflects what Pihlajamäki has called the growing “scientification” of the legal system. Fontaine was defending this form of evidence against charges that the existence of such marks, if found, might not prove anything. His very logic, as we have seen, dismissed the possibility that such marks could be meaningless. Not even engaging the issue of whether marks were indeed meaningless, Fontaine revealed how the question of proof dominated his demonology. His aim was to legitimize pricking for the devil's mark by demonstrating its incontrovertibility as evidence of a consensual diabolical pact.

Fontaine was far from the only one. That in the Gaufridy trial the court chose to ignore his retraction of his confession demonstrates just how important the confession was to early modern legal proceedings, even if that confession was “ill-gotten” by modern standards. Even Dr. Fontaine's argument with its circular logic that the devil's mark *must* mean something reflects this legal interest in proof. Dr. Fontaine believed that the devil's mark proved sorcery just as he wanted to believe that such a tangible proof was even possible.

Nevertheless, Pihlajamäki notes that this belief in “pricking for the devil's mark” was a predominant feature of demonology and popular lore, but not of the French *parlements* themselves. Jacques Fontaine argued vehemently that the devil's mark ought to be counted as definitive proof, based on his assumption that such marks could be easily distinguished by a proper physician from normal marks and scars and because nothing other than a consensual pact with the devil could put them on the body of a witch.

Indeed, the devil's mark received a great deal of attention in the Gaufridy trial itself. Gaufridy's own confession discusses the devil's mark

at length. Though he retracted his confession, the confession he did write out and sign most likely reflected the desire of his interrogators, whom he intended for his confession to placate in order to gain clemency. Gaufridy's confession states that the first time someone goes to the sabbat, "all witches, male and female, and magicians are marked with the little finger of the devil." [71] Gaufridy goes on to describe how the mark is made and how it can be precisely identified:

...when the Devil marks, one feels a little bit of heat that penetrates the skin...wherever he touches, the skin remains somewhat sunk and hollow...

...I was marked at the Sabbat of my own consent, and there I made Madeleine be marked. She was marked on the head, in the heart, on her stomach, on her thighs, on her legs, on her feet, and in many other parts of her body: she still has a needle in her thigh that she cannot feel, which I saw him put in, and when the needle entered, you would say it was like piercing parchment...

...There are many Masked witches and magicians who cover their marks, but afterwards they grow back on their own...Therefore this mark remains always with them, although they may convert, because of their vow of persistence that they had made in particular...when they gave themselves to the Devil...

...The said marks are made for a protestation that one will always be a good and faithful servant of the devil his whole life. [72]

These details of Gaufridy's confession reflect a pronounced obsession with the devil's mark and the possible means of identifying it. Gaufridy affirmed that all witches were marked and that those marks would always there remain as vestiges of the witch's pact with the devil, which could not be undone. A witch might attempt to hide a mark, but he could not get rid of it. More specifically, Gaufridy's description of the marks and how they were made lent credence to the "pricking" methods employed during his own trial: it pointed out that Demandols felt no sensation in her body where the devil had inserted a needle in her thigh. He also pointed out that the skin where the mark was made would remain "sunk and hollow," thus specifically describing what a witch-pricker or physician ought to look for during his examination. Again, this attention to how the mark could be identified reflected the interest of his accusers in establishing a systematic test for a strict evidentiary requirement.

Crucially, Gaufridy, who had refused to confess that he had handed the sacraments over to the devil, abandoned his initial protestations that the marks had been made on his body without his consent. In his confession, Gaufridy admitted that he had consented to receive the devil's mark, thus admitting the validity of the mark as proof of both heresy and sorcery. The confession thus explicitly conformed to what his interrogators wanted to hear.

The articles of Gaufridy's confession go on to recount the blasphemies of the witches' sabbat, which serve as a sacrilegious complement to the Mass and traditional Catholic ritual and practice. Gaufridy wrote that the devil was "a true ape of the Church [*vn vray singe de l'Eglise*]," mimicking the Christian Church in its own ceremony.[73] At the devil's sabbat, witches are baptized with water, sulphur, and salt in the name of "Lucifer, Beelzebub, and the other devils [*et les autres diables*]," making the sign of the cross backwards, as sacrilege.[74] During the mass

wherever there may occur the names of Jesus, the Virgin, and the saints, they are taken away, and the names of the Devil are put in their place: one needs to have studied to say the Mass at the Sabbat. [75]

Here again, Gaufridy's confession demonstrates a keen interest in the actual heresy involved in making a pact with the devil and committing sorcery. One of the most powerful methods of condemning heresy was to juxtapose it against Christianity. These details about the sabbat indicate how unabashedly and how brazenly the devil's heresies counteracted God and the Church. As a witch, Gaufridy himself was part of this serious blasphemy. The devil's mark was itself an inversion of Christian symbol and ritual. In these accounts of the sabbat, the marking of the body by the devil's claws serves as a symbolic sort of anti-Christian baptism. It is a sign of formal entry into the devil's fold, just as baptism is a sign of acceptance into the Church of God. An additional horror, when children baptized at the sabbat die, their bodies are eaten by the devils.[76] This emotional detail falls into a long tradition of accusing non-Christians, especially Jews, of this type of unthinkable crime. By inverting these Christian principles, features of the sabbat such as the devil's mark heightened the sacrilege involved as well as the emotional component of the charges laid against the priest. Gaufridy was not merely accused of doing harm to Demandols or Capeau, but rather he was associated with the worst possible heresies and blasphemies, with all

possible debasement of his priestly office and of the Church itself. As I have stated previously, it is true that this confession was voiced by Gaufridy, not his accusers, but his refusal to admit to having administered the sacraments to the devil appears to have been an isolated noncompliance. The overwhelming majority of his confessions in this document were consistent with what his interrogators desired to hear, as his retraction suggests that the confession was made not of his own free will but under torture.

VIII. Conclusions

Ferber's analysis of church dynamics finds a compelling example in the case of Louis Gaufridy. The political context of Gaufridy's trial and execution was one born of the religious turmoil that had besieged Europe for the past century. The Catholics, such as Michaëlis, who brought the case against Gaufridy and prosecuted him sought to divorce him entirely from their faith by associating him with the worst kinds of heresy. This was part of a campaign for internal church reform in which Gaufridy, a beneficed priest and member of the secular clergy, found himself on the wrong side. While these Catholics sought to unify and purify themselves against the Protestant threat, particularly volatile in France following the Wars of Religion, the message was ambiguous at best. As Michaëlis's *Histoire Admirable* shows, the publication of Gaufridy's confession as well as Jacques Fontaine's treatise on the case was taken by many Protestants as evidence that they had been right all along in their suspicions of the priesthood.

While Ferber stops at an analysis of what the church was when it targeted some of its own, it is my contention that there was a significant link between this kind of political targeting and the rise of concrete methods of proving sorcery. The devil's mark, a concept born in demonologist literature, became a vital tool in proving cases of witchcraft, despite the fact that it was never formally institutionalized. As Pihlajamäki has argued, such an ordeal as pricking for the mark demonstrated an interest in statutory theories of proof and reflected both scientification and professionalization of the procedural and legal systems. In cases that otherwise lacked tangible evidence, jurists and legal courts increasingly found ordeals such as pricking for the devil's mark to be a convenient means of establishing the substantive evidence necessary for a conviction.

Such proof was particularly valuable when the emphasis was less on the *maleficia* that had prompted a witch-hunt, and more on targeting an individual for political reasons. Where *maleficia* might leave physical evidence in the actual harm done to the victims, the devil's mark was, for those who accepted it, a form of proof that could link the crime with a specific perpetrator. In the Gaufridy case, what began as a case of exorcizing two nuns evolved into a campaign to target and eliminate one particular priest, for reasons we still do not fully understand. A devil's mark was a more visible manifestation of that man's crime than any other, and it served the purposes of his accusers in linking him with a pact with the devil and the utmost, worst imaginable heresies. If the "extraordinary gestures" displayed by Demandols and Capeau were evidence that a crime had been committed, the devil's mark on Gaufridy's own body was tangible proof that he, Gaufridy, was responsible. Therefore, pricking for the devil's mark was particularly useful for those who sought not merely to root out witchcraft but more significantly to eliminate certain individuals.

Yet, as we have seen, Michaëlis used the power of exorcism-and his book-to preach against the Huguenot threat. His doing so was not without problems, since his use of diabolic testimony was an easy target for those who disagreed with his conclusions. Michaëlis and the exorcists who agreed with him interpreted scripture in such a way as to claim that when the devil was speaking for himself, he was inevitably lying or aiming to deceive, but that when under the irresistible influence of God's power through exorcism, he had no choice but to speak truth. Thus the testimony of demons was used not only to condemn Gaufridy, but also to preach against Calvinist theology. This logic was not likely to have convinced Protestants, who, rejecting the power of exorcism over the devil, could claim that anything the devil uttered was a lie. Thus, Michaëlis's condemnations of Calvinists were only viable among those who agreed with his interpretation of the power of exorcism.

This case is a powerful example of the emphasis placed on heresy in witchcraft trials. Diabolical testimony, the devil's mark, and the treatises published around the time of the trial all reveal a marked interest in the specific sacrilege and blasphemies that Gaufridy allegedly committed. By associating him with some of the most unthinkable crimes and heresies, his accusers targeted him for elimination-for death. Though

the case began with the supposed *maleficia* of the possession of two nuns, the case came to signify much more. These *maleficia* came to be seen as the result of shameless heresy and of a diabolical pact that compromised what was most precious in the Christian tradition. It was a powerful accusation, and its most visible manifestation was the devil's mark. What began, then, as a local case of possession now aimed at political purge, and its choice of evidence was particularly deadly.

[1] Sebastién Michaëlis, *The Admirable History of the Possession and Conuersion of a Penitent woman. Seduced by a magician that made her to become a Witch. . . Whereunto it is annexed a Pneumology, or Discourse of Spirits*, trans. W.B., (London: William Aspley, 1613), Accessed on Early English Books Online <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/fulltext?ACTION=ByID&ID=D00000998427550000&WARN=N&FILE=../session/1176230889_16564&DISPLAY=ALPHA> Accessed 6 April 2007, 83.

[2] Ibid., 365.

[3] Sarah Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (London: Routledge, 2004), 73.

[4] Jonathan Pearl, *The Crime of Crimes: Demonology and Politics in France, 1560-1620* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1999), 47-52.

[5] Ferber, *Demonic Possession*, 64-66.

[6] Sébastien Michaëlis, "The Svmmarie of the History of the Magician burned at Aix, in the yeare 1611, the last of Aprill," in *The Admirable History*, B3^r.

[7] Ibid., Ferber, *Demonic Possession*, 71-72.

[8] Ibid., 71-75.

[9] This is less true in the case of southern Catholic Europe (Spain, Portugal, and Italy), where witchcraft persecutions in general were discouraged by post-Tridentine Church authorities, particularly their Inquisitions. For a description of the geographical distribution of persecutions, see Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation* (New York:

Penguin Books, 2003), 563-575, or Brian Levack, *The Witch-hunt in Early Modern Europe* (London: Longman Group, 1987), 201-206.

[10] Ferber, *Demonic Possession*, 77-79.

[11] E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland: The Borderlands during the Reformation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 25.

[12][Heinrich Kramer], *Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. Wiscasta Lovelace and Christie Rice, (Windhaven Network, 2007),

<<http://www.malleusmaleficarum.org/>> Accessed 13 April 2007;

Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland*, 23-24.

[13] This result was by no means a foregone conclusion. The Council did not meet for almost three decades after Luther's first attack on the Church and suffered many delays and interruptions along the way owing to intense disagreement among its delegates. Moreover, the Council was unable to resolve every issue in question. For a history of the Council and its proceedings, see Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, trans. Dom Ernest Graf (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1957), 2 vols.

[14] Ferber, *Demonic Possession*, 2.

[15] *Ibid.*, 70.

[16] *Ibid.*, 70-84.

[17] See Michaëlis, *The Admirable History*, particularly "The Svmmarie"; [Anon.] *The Life and Death of Lewis Gaufredy: A Priest of the Church of the Accoules in Marceilles in France, (who after hee had giuen him selfe soule and bodie to the Diuell) committed many most abhominable Sorceries, but chiefly vpon two very faire young Gentle women, Mistris Magdalene of the Marish, and Mistris Victoire Corbier, whose horrible life being made manifest, hee was Arraigned and Condemned by the Court of Parliament of Aix in Prouince, to be burnt aliue, which was performed the last day of Aprill. 1611. Together with the 53. Articles of his Confession* (London: Thomas C., 1612); and François de Rosset, "De l'horrible & espouventable sorcellerie de Louys Goffredy, prestre de Marseille," in *Les histoires tragiques de nostre temps* (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1980), 43-48.

[18] Jacques Fontaine, *Discovrs des marqves des sorciers et de la reelle possession que le diable prend sur le corps des hommes* (Paris, 1611).

[19] *Penses-tu que si cela estoit, moi et tous mes Anges eussions pouuoit d'aller par tout où nous voulons exercer nostre Empire, et y prendre nos esbats ? Il faut que tu croyes que les Ames de ceux qui font ce que ie veux, deuiennent apres la separation de leurs corps des Demons, & que suiuant qu'elles ont operé en ce monde selon ma volonté, elles sont recompensees de charges honorables.* Rosset, "De l'horrible & espovventable sorcellerie," 46.

[20] See Ferber, *Demonic Possession*, 76-80.

[21] John 8:44.

[22] Michaëlis, "To the Reader," *The Admirable History*, A3^v.

[23] Michaëlis, "An Apologie vnto the Doubts," *The Admirable History*, C7^v.

[24] Michaëlis, *The Admirable History*, 68.

[25] *Ibid.*, 71-72.

[26] *Ibid.*, 72.

[27] *Ibid.*, 121.

[28] Ferber, *Demonic Possession*, 79.

[29] Pearl, *The Crime of Crimes*, 57.

[30] Ferber, *Demonic Possession*, 83.

[31] Louis Gaufridy, *Confession faicte par Messire Lovys Gaufridi Prestre en l'Eglise des Accoules de Marseille, Prince des Magiciens, depuis Constantinople iusques à Paris. A deux Peres Capuchins du Couuent d'Aix, la veille de Paques, le onzieme Auril mil six cens onze* (Aix : Jean Tholozan, 1611), p. 4; Michaëlis, "The Svmmarie," B2^r ; Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism*, 83.

[32] Robert Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers en France au XVII^e siècle : Une analyse de psychologie historique*, (Paris: Plon, 1968), 203.

[33] See Pearl, *The Crime of Crimes*, 43-44. The girl deemed to be possessed was Nicole Aubrey. According to Pearl, the case “took on a political dimension, becoming a contest between Catholics and Protestants.” Aubrey was thought to be possessed by the demon Beelzebub, and the case rendered Beelzebub “Prince” of the Huguenots.

[34] Ferber, *Demonic Possession*, 66-69, 75.

[35] In French, “*la valeur des Sacremens, pour le regard de ceux qui les receurent.*” Gaufridy, *Confession*, 4.

[36] Rosset, “De l’horrible & espovventable sorcellerie,” 43-48.

[37] French : “*son corps, son ame, et toutes ses actions.*” Ibid., 48.

[38] Ibid., 47-48.

[39] In French, “*...au lieu de trente & quatre ans, il ne met que quatorze: luy esbloüissant les yeux, and luy faisant prendre vn pour trois.*” Ibid., 48.

[40] Ferber, *Demonic Possession*, 63-64.

[41] Ibid., 7.

[42] Ibid., 64.

[43] Ibid., 64.

[44] Ibid., 63.

[45] Ibid., 82.

[46] Ibid., 65.

[47] Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers*, 227

[48] Ibid., 229.

[49] Ferber, *Demonic Possession*, 63-64.

[50] Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland*, 159-160.

[51] Ibid., 159-160.

[52] Ibid., 162-163; 54.

[53] Fontaine, *Discovrs des marqves*, 4-17.

[54] *Ibid.*, 4-5.

[55] *Ibid.*, 14-17.

[56] “*De mesme Dieu qui est tout puissant ne permettra iamais que les marques du diable son enemy iuré et obstiné soient mises sur vne personne qui n'est pas a luy, mais a Dieu par le caractere du Christien.*” *Ibid.*, 8.

[57] *Ibid.*, 9.

[58] *Ibid.*, 8-9.

[59] “*...les marques ne seruiroyent de rien pour la preuue de la sorcellerie, puis qu'il seroit indifferent d'estre marque, autant ceux qui sont sorciers comme ceux qui ne le sont pas.*” *Ibid.*, 10.

[60] Ferber, *Demonic Possession*, 81.

[61] Heikki Pihlajamäki, “Swimming the Witch, Pricking for the Devil's Mark: Ordeals in the Early Modern Witchcraft Trials,” *Journal of Legal History* 21.2 (2000): 43.

[62] *Ibid.*, 36.

[63] *Ibid.*, 36.

[64] *Ibid.*, 45.

[65] *Ibid.*, 39.

[66] *Ibid.*, 43-45.

[67] *Ibid.*, 46-48; quote is from 48.

[68] *Ibid.*, 36.

[69] Ferber, *Demonic Possession*, 82.

[70] Pihlajamäki, “Swimming the Witch,” 52.

[71] “*...tous Sorciers, Sorcieres, et Magiciens sont marquez avec le petit doigt du Diable.*” Gaufridy, *Confession*, 8.

[72] The original French is as follows: *“lorsque le Diable marque, on sent vn peu de chaleur qui penetre... la où il touche, la chair demeure vn peu ensoncée”*; *“je suis marqué au Sabath de mon consentement, et y ay fait marquer Madelaine. Elle est marquée à la teste, au cœur, au ventre, aux cuisses, aux iambes, aux pieds, et en plusieurs autres parties de son corps : elle a encores vne aiguille dans sa cuisse, qu’elle ne sent point, laquelle luy ay veu mettre, et lors que l’aiguille entre, vous diriez qu’on perce vne parchemin”*; *“s’est trouué plusieurs Masquez Sorciers et Magiciens, que leurs marques se couurent, mais apres d’elles mesmes croissent, et tournent en leur premiere force. Car ceste marque leur demeure tousiours, bien qu’il se conuertissent, à cause de leur presistance qu’ils on faite en particulier, lors qu’ils se sont donnez au Diable”*; *“lesdictes marques sont faictes pour protestation qu’on sera tousiours bon et fidele seruiteur du Diable toute sa vie”*. Ibid., 8-9.

[73] Ibid., 10.

[74] Ibid., 10-11.

[75] *“...par tout où il se trouue des noms de Iesus, de la vierge, et des saints, on les oste et en mettent à leur place des noms de Diable : il faut auoir estudié pour dire vne Messe au Sabath.”* Ibid., 11.

[76] Ibid., 13.



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