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[Anna Peirats](#) *

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Article

Female Marginalized Professions of Late Medieval European Society

Anna Peirats

Affiliation 1; anna.peirats@ucv.e

Abstract: This article concentrates on the depiction of Valencia's opposite perspective in the fifteenth century, which was one of social marginalization, which could be seen in people engaging in different occupations that were viewed as immoral. In the pages that follow, a description is given of two female collectives that are specifically viewed as vile and despicable: that of healers, sorceresses, and witches, whose power was thought to have a demonic origin, and that of prostitutes, who were committed to covering a "lesser evil" in society but were viewed as unworthy by society because of the practical exercise of their trade. These women were mistreated, cruelly punished, persecuted, and ignored by mediaeval European society. The punishments meted out to women who were executed as a result of practicing their trade are documented in literary works that echo didactics from the fifteenth century as well as in the sources of the records of the files.

Keywords: marginalization; healers; witches; brothel; repentance; sinners

1. Introduction

Beyond the vision of a splendid fifteenth century in Valencia, from a literary point of view, and the rise of the bourgeoisie, we must start from the fact that in late medieval society the principle prevailed that each estate fulfilled a certain function; therefore, all professions or positions fulfilled a duty for the benefit of the balance of society. However, we must pay attention to the fact that, beyond this ideal vision, the study of the other aspect of medieval society is often left aside, the groups that did not fit into the project of contributing to giving a utility to the common and moral good, according to the influence exerted for the benefit of the Eiximenian public. In this sector, there was a place for the marginalized and ill-adjusted.

In a first group, among the marginalized, it was necessary to highlight, in addition to the slaves, the Jews, the Moors, as well as the men whose customs were inclined to a despicable life, for being vagabonds, card players, fugitives, murderers, ruffians, etc. and, therefore, totally deviated from moral precepts. Apart from this group, and not as a response to a dishonest vital praxis, there were social groups widely excluded from respect and consideration in society, due to the fact that they suffered from contagious diseases, such as leprosy, or mental illness, as well as children abandoned, orphaned or needy, who required the help provided by hospitals, as welcoming centres for the poor and marginalized.

As for the mentally ill, in a society in which these illnesses were considered to be caused by the direct influence of the devil, who could infect the rest of society with his evil force, the "crazy" were excluded and often expelled from the cities,[1] stigmatized and considered as unworthy of belonging to the social group. Another group of marginalized people was made up of lepers (Graullera, 1994), not treated as unfairly as the mentally ill, but also excluded by society, which had to be protected from the danger of becoming infected. In addition, it was necessary to take into account the current health situation, as well as the effects of the epidemics: the black plague, in addition to other diseases, such as syphilis, ringworm, measles, etc., which will imply an increase in mortality throughout Europe since the second half of the fourteenth century.

Other misfortunes were added to this problem, which was a cause for concern among society since it was considered that they were the result of the punishing hand of God for the sins committed. Faced with this situation, given that no remedies were found to deal with the cure for ills, nor was it

known how to respond to supposed divine wrath, which allowed droughts, famines and continuous deaths, an environment conducive to prophecies about the end of the world; In this way, at least, the feeling of fear and helplessness worsened (Delumeau, 1989), so that the criticism of the society of the moment and the need for an internal change came to be considered as essential in the face of the imminence of death end of time (Guadalajara, 2005).

As a result of the fear consolidated in society, and given the lack of understanding of the causes that originated the diseases that produced a high degree of mortality, especially since the second half of the fourteenth century, many hospitals were built, in order to contribute to assist and provide shelter to the poor marginalized, abandoned[2] children and orphans, who were considered as "poor sick of Jesus Christ."

Despite the existence of these groups excluded from society, it is still necessary to adduce the strong imprint of a female group that, in addition to the fact of being women and, therefore, considered imperfect beings,[3] dedicated themselves to the exercise of activities considered marginal of the law or of dubious morality. It is precisely in this group that the descriptive study of these pages will focus, on the contrast between archival sources and literary texts, such as *Spill* by Jaume Roig and the preaching of Sant Vicent Ferrer, where it will be shown that on many occasions the punishments applied or the grotesque descriptions presented in literary texts are not always the result of literary fiction, but often go beyond the verisimilitude aspect to create fictitious stories, that, on the other hand, are not biased portraits of society, but x-rays of everyday life.

Women engaged in a wide variety of occupations and professions throughout Early Modern Europe. Women worked in every sector of the economy, including as farmwives who assisted in planting and harvesting crops, fishmongers who sold their products in markets, guildswomen who performed specialized labor, as well as artists, academics, midwives, physicians, prostitutes, and servants. Despite significant local and regional variations in how women worked, this widespread engagement was visible throughout all of Europe, both in the east and the west. (Müller, A., 2018). The labor of women was not appreciated or understood in the same manner as the work of males, despite the fact that women were present in all areas of the economy. Unlike male employees, female employees had less opportunities to practise specific crafts, and their skills were frequently viewed as being less than those of males. Even while many families relied on the income or employment of every member, women were paid less than males and their jobs were sometimes more sporadic. Women continued to work in all aspects of the economy despite patriarchal ideologies that aimed to restrict or undervalue their labor-related contributions. They did it out of a sense of self-worth as productive and helpful members of their communities, as well as to sustain themselves and their families. (Toivo, R. M., 2016)

Specifically, this article will present an approach to the treatment given to two specific groups: women who were dedicated to healing health, despite not having professional training, but rather a vital experience, such as midwives and healers, seen on many occasions as sorceresses, and witches, inspiring sources of black magic, and prostitutes stigmatized and marginalized. Despite the obvious prejudices, these women carried out activities that were highly sought after by the population from the 14th to the 16th centuries; however, they were severely punished, persecuted and marginalized, as women deviated from the field of legality, as reflected in the sermons of the preachers, in the literary texts of echo didactics of the fifteenth century, as well as in the sources of the files that document punishments applied to women, who were executed as a consequence of exercising their profession.

2. Social Status of Women

Women were treated as second-class citizens throughout the Medieval era, and their needs were never given priority. Gender discrimination was quite prevalent throughout the High Medieval period. Regardless of their social rank, women in Europe were viewed as a totally different group throughout this time. They faced various legal, religious, and financial obstacles in addition to some exceptional possibilities. They were either considered to be sexual, utterly innocent, inept, or completely dishonest. Because of this, women were frequently excluded from positions of authority

or prevented from speaking up; instead, men made choices for them and ruled over their lives. The presence of women in mediaeval writing was unquestionable despite the repression and lack of support they received. (Alchin, 2015) The Virgin, which portrays women as passive and weak, the mother, whose entire life revolves around improving things for her family, especially for her husband, or even the whore, who has no control over her sexuality and must give it away for the sake of her family or the men in society, are some tropes that contribute to the idea that women are subservient and inferior to men. The Trickster and the Witch, who violate societal conventions and stand out while exhibiting traits of shrewd knowledge, intimidation, and power, are two archetypes that disrupt this pattern. In the sections that follow, we'll delve more deeply into the discrepancy between how women were seen in mediaeval society and how they were depicted in mediaeval literature (Forth, S. S., 2008).

From the last century of the Middle Ages onward, restrictions on women's work started to be put in place, and guilds started to become more and more male-only; this may have been due to the rising status and political influence of guilds as well as the growing competition from cottage industries, which led the guilds to tighten their entrance requirements. During this time, female property rights also started to be restricted (Sheldrake, 2022).

Witchcraft spells today are mostly cast to discourage wicked behaviour or self-harm. Ironically, many historical witches may have embraced witchcraft for healing or defence against the immorality they were accused of, even if it's likely that some of them did it for evil. However, whether suspected or real, witches still risk persecution and even death. In mediaeval Europe, some women who were apparently practising witchcraft were assaulted and murdered by immigrant groups. Contrarily, there have been erroneous ways that prostitutes have been punished throughout history. Metal spikes were pressed into the lips of women who complained or spread rumours. Women accused of sexual misbehaviour would either be strapped onto a "ducking stool" or humiliated in a "cucking stool" by the legal system. A woman respondent of sleeping from place to place might be locked into a Drunkard's Cloak. (Neeganagwedgin, 2013).

3. The Marginalized Professions

The Health Healing Women

Mothers and spouses have always been seen as having a natural duty for healing. Women have always cared for the sick infant and the injured worker-warrior-hunter spouse using practises they learned from family and friends or by watching other healers. But female healers of the Middle Ages had few opportunities to further the knowledge of medicine since they were not allowed in academic institutions. They worked as nurses, surgeons, barber-surgeons, midwives, herbalists, and empirics, the traditional healers. These healers were renowned for their dedication to the ill even under the most trying conditions, whether they were women of lower or higher birth, nuns in convents, or members of secular orders. They employed cures based on botanicals, conventional home medicines, purges, bloodletting, and native intelligence because they lacked medical training. Their medicines were concocted from plant ingredients with a touch of charlatanism and superstition. (Horden, 1988)

The midwife exercise. Since ancient times, in all cultures and traditions, the importance of women's exercise in curing bodily illnesses and, especially, in the first moment of contact in the world, as an important figure in childbirth, has been confirmed. From the point of view of medical content, in the aspect of gynaecology and medieval obstetrics,[4] we must start from the premise that in ancient times obstetrics was practised without having acquired studies, and was administered by women,[5] the so-called "midwives" and the "assistants" who transmitted their knowledge from mothers to daughters since the doctor never intervened in childbirth unless the life of the newborn was in danger.

Without midwives, there wouldn't have been enough people to inhabit mediaeval villages and castles, let alone enough to enable their construction. Without someone ensuring that the majority of births are successful, the population would not have been large enough for society to develop manorialism, or for enough people to become knights, fight in the Crusades, form guilds and towns,

or even for enough people to consider the Middle Ages a significant part of history. Midwives were, in many ways, a crucial component of Medieval society. (Gallen, 2019).

A midwife is a person who helps a woman deliver a baby. Most gynecological issues were addressed by midwives. Most male doctors left gynecology to midwives since they had greater practical understanding than male doctors had about female genitalia. The main thing that midwives are famous for is helping women give birth. From prenatal care through "baby-catching," or the actual delivering procedure, to the cutting of the umbilical cord, they took care of everything. (Harris-Stoertz, 2014). By the late Middle Ages, certain midwives were even known to conduct caesarean sections. A dangerous procedure that significantly increases the likelihood of a successful birth, assuming it does not immediately endanger the woman or the baby, was also practised by midwives soon before birth. The consolation of midwives was also given to labouring women. They had certain natural painkillers on hand, such as aspirin, which is still manufactured today from the bark of aspen trees. However, many of these herbal medications might not have genuinely reduced pain or facilitated labour; many historians believe that these treatments only had a placebo effect on the moms. A birthing girdle was one of the ancient traditions that midwives engaged in. Later, the Church would accuse midwives of practising witchcraft due to these practises. Midwives also performed rituals, cast spells, and engaged in other old customs. One of these charms was a birthing charm, which was intended to support the woman through childbirth and mothering as well as the kid until it reached adulthood. (Piper, 2010).

Midwives were frequently summoned to testify in court as medical experts on issues related to pregnancy and gynaecology. Similar to the preceding example, mediaeval culture slargely left all gynaecology and oncology to midwives despite their lack of technical ability, despite the fact that doctors had better theoretical understanding of gynaecology. (Newman, 2007).

Despite the fact that some midwives took advantage of the Trótula de Salerno manual, *De curis mulieribus*, which dealt with the female body, with the intention of serving as a guide for literate midwives or, otherwise, learning it by heart among illiterate women (Green, 2001, pp. 27-54) since illiteracy was prevalent among the middle classes, midwives did not demonstrate technical knowledge but often relied on experience; It was, therefore, a practice of popular type. The task of the midwife, as was customary throughout the medieval tradition, embraced the functions of childbirth and postpartum assistant; she could be a legal witness, in case of possible wills or inheritances that occurred as a result of childbirth; she assumed the function of the transmitter of knowledge, to teach future midwives, and administered therapeutic remedies for all kinds of ailments (Green, 2001).

For a long time, the moment of childbirth was surrounded by hidden, even magical, aspects that were based on superstitions transmitted orally and that, of course, lacked any scientific basis, especially with regard to the placenta and the umbilical cord, which he imagined gave power and other supernatural qualities (Laurent, 1989). At this point, it is worth highlighting the evidence of elements that were believed to have hidden virtues, such as ceramide, or magnet stone that has the ability to attract iron and steel, or coral, stones that, obviously, the midwife had to take in the right hand or, if this was not possible, worn around the neck.

In medieval texts, there is evidence of women who practice healing of the body in various fields: healers, hospital therapists, doctors, and midwives, who knew how to use all kinds of remedies, herbs and customs, such as the use of baths with aromatic herbs, which they were used to induce bowel movements, like mugwort, often used as a drug to speed up childbirth, decrease pain and help the midwife dilate. This herb, mixed with wine, was used to expel the child due to a bad birth (Conde, 2011).

In addition to the remedies described, the women who assisted in childbirth had to be good Christians and have exemplary customs, in addition to having the authorization to pronounce a baptism sub conditione,[6] emergency, in case of need (Gélis, 2006, p. 176). In this sense, and based on the fact that they were women of the exemplary Christian life, the importance of the midwife saying some prayers in the midwife's right ear was stressed. There was a wide variety of prayers aimed at avoiding a complicated birth since both the death of the child in the mother's womb and

abortion were interpreted as a sign of a curse, so The blame was attributed, on many occasions, to the poor performance of the midwife and the birth attendants.

It is due to the maximum responsibility that the exercise of the matron implied that a whole series of prayers became generalized, especially to the Virgin, as well as the use of religious objects, as is the case of the Virgin's ribbon, that women midwives applied to the abdomen to have a good delivery (Alexandre-Bidon and Closson, 1985); the candles that were lit in the room, the amulets or the precious stones, especially the coral.

Healers and sorceresses in medieval society. Despite the proven professional competence of midwives in terms of knowledge of the female body, as well as the entire process of actions to be carried out at the time of childbirth and postpartum, it is clear that the fact of exercising a related activity with the mysteries of life and death, in addition to the context in which the feminine image was devalued in the Middle Ages, led to the fact that, despite exemplary active exercise to ensure a successful birth, midwives came to be frowned upon, due to the habitual tendency to use pagan cults and magical and supernatural beliefs, which they considered could cause evil.

Mothers and spouses have always been seen as having a natural duty for healing. Women have always cared for the sick infant and the injured worker-warrior-hunter spouse using methods they acquired from family and friends or by watching other healers. But female healers of the Middle Ages had few opportunities to further the knowledge of medicine since they were not allowed in academic institutions. Instead, they performed the roles of nurses, midwives, surgeons, barber-surgeons, and empirics, the old-fashioned healers. These healers were renowned for their dedication to the ill even under the most trying conditions, whether they were women of lower or higher birth, nuns in convents, or members of secular orders. They applied cures based on botanicals, conventional home medicines, purges, bloodletting, and native intelligence because they lacked medical training. Their medicines were concocted from plant ingredients with a touch of charlatanism and superstition. (Minkowski, 1992).

In literary memory, mediaeval women exist in obscurity. In-depth knowledge about women's work and lives is not well-represented in primary literature, which is largely produced by men. They nevertheless had a crucial role in mediaeval society, notably in the provision of healthcare. Women were generally in charge of caring for common illnesses, treating paediatric disorders, and ministering to women in labour within the context of the household or the nunnery. Due to their lack of formal education, they relied on superstitions from both the religious and secular worlds, as well as the practical use of plant chemicals. (Casey, 2016).

At this point, we must distinguish between what was considered white magic (helpful) and black magic (harmful) or between protective magic and witchcraft (Kieckhefer, 1992, p. 91), based on the fact that until the twelfth century if I asked a theologian the definition of the item "magic" it was probably the association of its origin to the force of the devil. In this sense, then, the propensity of women to black magic is evident and intrinsic by nature, since it was believed that women received the force of the devil more directly than men (Kors and Peters, 1973, p. 120).

The influence of female healing skills was often associated with supernatural powers since they were capable of curing any illness or even causing damage or benefits that were difficult to explain by reason. Thus, and beyond the intervention of midwives, women generally showed a natural tendency to influence the healing of some ailments, a fact that was considered to be actions influenced by the devil.

In addition, the healers were accused of being sorceresses, witches and allies with the devil, as they had the ability to heal without any type of academic training; otherwise, they were in great demand among the people who did not have the financial resources to pay for a professional doctor. These women had assimilated, without receiving any academic training, the healing properties of herbs, and had effective remedies, such as horned rye, against labour pains; belladonna, as an antispasmodic; digitalis, extracted from the foxglove plant, in the treatment of heart conditions; digestive and sedative herbs; wild rue, to cure side pain, chest pain and joint pain, etc. These practices constituted a great threat and a social danger, since it can be verified that at the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th century, women who practised medicine (the "doctors") were not only

not marginalized from society, but their official documents were required by the municipalities and by the Court itself (García Ballester, 1976, p. 42).

To such an extent, the exercise of the healers was worrisome that in Valencia the Fueros of 1329 expressed the punishment applicable to a woman who practised the magical arts (MacVaugh, Rubio and García Ballester, 1989, p. 60; Narbona, 1998, p. 98).

In addition to the healers of physical ailments, it should be noted that, in medieval society, the figure of the sorceress or the fortune teller was quite present, frequently dedicated to the illicit trade of erotic resources to influence love, sexual capacity or health, through the use of amulets or talismans, among which the coral was widely used to protect against curses, the unicorn horn, precious stones and herbs that acquired magical properties. The use of sorcery created a clandestine culture used to obtain dishonest ends, sexual favours or even material goods, giving way to a magical mentality. The healers used methods that seemed to have a supernatural origin, but in the end, with their help and expert advice, they covered the needs of a fragile and frightened society, due to the high mortality rate.

Despite the function of help and the popular medicinal practices used by the healers, since 1326 the legal regulations persecuted public crimes that provoked divine wrath and were the origin of diseases, droughts, etc., among which (Narbona, 1998) a wide list of vices was exemplified: gamblers, moneylenders, adulterous women, as well as the activities that they included invoking the devil, visiting fortunetellers, enchanter, spell loggers, under various penalties: from running through the city, riding on shallows to be whipped later, to corporal punishment, in the event that the sorceress was a woman, who would end up burned. at the stake, to purify the occult arts practised.

From this aspect of popular culture, the action of healers and sorceresses was punishable by death; Thus, the executions of witches or poisoners were common in Valencia, as documented in criminal records and diaries. Thus, and by way of example, the magistrates of Valencia burned in Morvedre (AMV, *Manual de Consejos*, f. 88, of 1429; Narbona, 1998, p. 108); in 1469 Leonor, according to the Diary of the Priest of Alfonso the Magnanimous (ed. Sanchis and Chiner, 2001, chap. 41) was executed and taken to the gallows to invoke demons. In this sense, the case of Agnés de Córdoba, a prostitute, who accused a widowed seamstress who lived near the Valldigna gate of being a sorceress, because she had hung frogs inside her house with his legs up and down and he had opened chickens on the side to introduce beans (ARV, *Criminal Justice*, 16, 1402, f. 37; Narbona, 1998, p. 105). Likewise, Gostança, from Betxí, had administered poisons to several people, who after drinking them screamed, twisted their hands, fell to the ground and crawled (ARV, *Criminal Justice*, 44, 1378, fol. 22; Narbona, 1998, p. 106).

Healers, sorceresses and witches in didactic and moralizing literature. To such an extent did the presence of healers and fortune tellers influence, from the point of view of mass preaching, and influence the customs of visiting fortune tellers or sorceresses, Saint Vincent repeatedly insists on numerous occasions. In some sermons he blesses the marriage between devout husband and wife (Schib ed., 1975: III, p. 249) and explains the example of the marriage of Joaquín and Ana, who could not have fruits of their marriage, but did not go to fortune tellers or sorceresses, nor were they unfaithful.

On other occasions, Saint Vincent argues the example of the Canaanite woman, who proved to trust in Christ, because she did not go to fortune tellers or sorcerers to cure her daughter, but only to Jesus Christ, although many people advised her to ask these false conjurers; but she affirmed: "It does not please God, but I am going to go to this Jhesu Christ who is come, saviour of the world" (Sanchis Sivera ed., 1932-1934: I, p. 87). With this example, the advice to the people by the Valencian Dominican was forceful: persevere in prayer, in imitation of the Canaanite woman and not go to fortune tellers: "no and whole in no way and persevered in prayer, just as he did the Canaanite Many crazy women, because they have children, go to conjuring and Moors. Or great madness" (Sanchis Sivera ed., 1932-1934: I, p. 88). There was also no need to go to fortune tellers to try to recover lost or stolen objects: "If you have lost a silver cup or another, guard, do not go to fortune tellers or fortune tellers to find them" (Sanchis Sivera ed., 1932-1934: I, p. 114).

In short, Saint Vincent loaded his preaching with a didactic tone, but at the same time with an invective at the service of modifying the harmful and sinful behaviour of the people who went to the healers, spell casters and sorceresses (Sanchis Sivera ed., 1932-1934: I, p. 21). And to such an extent was he vehement in his preaching that he argued that it was necessary to burn whoever frequented these sorceries, to save the souls of the faithful: "to you, councillors of towns and cities, I want to correct notorious sins with good penalties: if no one will neither diviners nor diviners punish him strongly, and burn the diviners; then, to swear, that he should not have sworn neither a blasphemer of God nor a dog denying God, etc. Jesus Christ is the Lord who knows everything" (Sanchis Sivera ed., 1932-1934: I, p. 181).

Despite the condemnation of the mass preachers themselves regarding this type of practice considered "diabolical", the people, in general, frequented these women healers and fortune tellers, for which they were accused of poisoning, for the simple fact that they knew the natural properties of herbs, animal or vegetable products, precious stones, medicinal plants, and were capable of preparing all kinds of healing products, such as waters, ointments, powders, etc.

Beyond the negative influence of sermons throughout Western Europe regarding this type of healing practice, and from the perspective of didactic literature, to denigrate the female figure girl to avoid falling into the sin of the flesh, one of the most representative works of the Valencian letters of the Golden Age, the *Spill* by Jaume Roig, an extensive work written in the form of new rhymed tetrasyllabic verses, reflects social reality, Therefore, women are generally described, from the distorting pen of the Valencian doctor, as agents of sorcery and necromantic practices.

From the very affirmation of the Preface, that women are (vv. 367-368), and infernal fire, allies of the devil, to whom they adore and are indebted to him, it is highlighted that women form a gang with the devils and need a spike to hurt others (vv. 6992-6993), since they are not created to become terrestrial, but their ideal path is heaven (v. 7005), the realm of witches. In addition to these brief details in which the hyperbolic aspect with which the author treats the female figure is evident, in the service of making men aware of the danger of the sin of the flesh, Roig, let us not forget that he was a doctor, was contrary to the exercise of popular medicine practices. In this sense, for the Valencian doctor, women have all kinds of magical and superstitious remedies, such as the suction cup, and the "albaranet"[7] with which they dispense with the intervention of a doctor (verses 8168-8174).

The cruel attitude, intrinsic in women, goes so far as to emphasize that women will be patient spectators of their husband's illnesses. On the other hand, if they are the sick ones, at the slightest symptom they make the neighbours come and ask for precious stones and even attribute magical properties to them: to cure eye pain, from sorcery, the sapphire; gold to regulate the normal pulse; for digestive ailments, coral; the glass to recover the milk; cresolic (ant. cresolite, DCVB, III, 725) precious stone with a colour similar to gold, for its recognized medicinal virtues against colic (vv. 8345-56)[8]

With all this panorama, contrary to the superstitious arts (Chabret, 1905, pp. 407-408) of the "doctors", in the *Spill* we must still pay attention to the leading role exercised by two doctors, one Jewish and the other Christian. In the first case, the doctor of Bigorra (vv. 4534-4574) contributes to the generation of the species; Her prescriptions are based on the use of carnations and ginger, despite promising clients anxious to get pregnant that within three years they would see her wish come true. This doctor, although she dominates white magic or magic of help in order to perpetuate descent among her clients, obtains a result typical of black or destructive magic, since the effect caused is worse than desire: it causes women to jump from the belly, melancholy, ulcers... (vv. 4629-44).

From the field of magical medicine practised[9] by Christian women, in the *Spill* a female doctor takes centre stage, who, as documented by García Ballester (1976, p. 44), lived on "Avellanas" street in Valencia, called Guillamona, in whom the protagonist's first wife recommends visiting, reproaching the husband's lack of sexual desire. The doctor would recommend "medical" treatment to regain sexual strength, everything suggests that through the use of aphrodisiac recipes ("de Guillamona/content sérieu", vv. 2730-2731).

In addition to exercising magic and superstition in the figure of popular doctors, throughout the entire work Roig highlights a natural inclination of women in sorcery and witchcraft, [10] from the subject that caused the most disgust in all areas, both religion, science and medieval philosophy: women's menstruation. In this sense, and starting from the biblical context of Leviticus, *Spill* underlies a whole phenomenology of the magical effects produced by the menstruated cloth. It is a mysterious cloth that does not burn cleanly, but rather gives off a dark flame that connotes mystery. Since the passage to outer space of the field, in addition, the popular belief, still valid today, that menstrual blood destroys crops, which, on the other hand, shares the legacy of moral treatises, such as *De contemptu Mundi*[11] in addition to causing rabies in dogs and leprosy[12] in humans (vv. 9583-9587).

Thus, the woman, from the smell of menstruation, is considered dangerous and impure, from the demonization process that is explained by 7 essential defects of women linked to the world of magic (Delumeau, 1978, p. 415): credulity, curiosity, natural more impressionable, evil, desire for revenge, easy to despair and talk. This process of demonization, intrinsically associated with women, explains the tendency to devise curses to cause damage, illness or any other misfortune. These actions, obvious external manifestations of black magic, allow the devil to be associated with witchcraft and, consequently, e, understanding witches as women who establish a pact with the devil, with which they become heretics and away from the Christian faith while exercising all kinds of immoral practices (Zamora, 2015, p. 106).

In addition, in the *Spill* it is made explicit how women from "certain melted fat" become witches; they meet in the cave or "sabbath", called by Roig with the toponym of Biterna,[13] which has its origin in folklore and in the manuals of the necromancers. It must be insisted that, in addition to being an imaginary toponym, as a degrading strategy at the service of credibility, which allows women to be associated with the world of witches, sorcery and other magical manifestations were related 'Middle Ages with the rituals of veneration of the devil in the form of a male goat. In addition, and to ensure the credibility of his verses, Roig alludes to the process of the "witch hunt" (Vinyoles, 2007, p. 28), which took place in modern Europe (Levack, 1997), especially in Germany, France, England and the Netherlands, and to a lesser extent in Italy or Spain (Kramer and Sprenger, 2019, p. 39), with specific focuses such as Catalonia (verses 9722-9743).

To contextualize this process of witch hunting, it is necessary to start from the fact that, although in 1376, Nicolau Eimeric published the *Directorium inquisitorum*, in which attention was devoted to necromancy and the invocation of the devil (De Puig, 2007), The high point of the denigrating vision and the description of the atrocities and processes associated with midwives, witches, sorceresses and fortune tellers is collected in the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486), by the inquisitors H. Kramer and J. Sprenger (Kors and Peters ed., 1973). In this work, which we must understand in the context of a society dominated by the male voice, in which women were associated with diabolical temptation, women are vehemently attacked, especially those who, from a dedication to medical practice without professional knowledge prescribed the use of herbs, ointments and other types of popular remedies, well accepted and frequented among society, which now became a harmful practice, the result of an intervention of the devil among witches, as they were considered these women healers, who were marginalized and persecuted, as well as being prosecuted and convicted.

In this sadistic manual, cruelty is highlighted, as well as cynicism and brutality when it comes to recommending all kinds of torture, which used to end at the stake or beheading. It should be pointed out that the *Malleus Maleficarum* became the powerful weapon used by magistrates and judges, among other authorities, to deal with witchcraft in Europe, and that it allowed torture and death, for only two centuries, of more than seventy thousand people, most of whom were women (Kramer and Sprenger, 2019, p. 5). The inquisitors of the *Malleus Maleficarum* defended fanatically, and always indicated that they were not describing fictitious cases, but documented in reality, with constant references to citations of authority, as a treatise, extracted from the Bible, Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas, etc. ., that the witches met in their secret caves and rode on the back of a demon in the form of a male goat, to whom they worshipped.

In the *Malleus Maleficarum* vehement statements are made manifest, such as that witchcraft is the vilest of all superstitions: “witchcraft differs from other pernicious arts in that, of all superstitions, it is the most disgusting, the vilest and worst, so it derives its number from doing evil, and even from blaspheming against the true faith (*maleficae dictae, a maleficiendo, sicut a male de fide sentiendo*)” (Kramer and Sprenger, 2019, p. 77) and is more present in women than in men, because they are eviler by nature, more impressionable, undisciplined, more carnal, destroyers of kingdoms and cities, and liars.

In addition, it is argued that the sin that was born from the woman destroys the soul and delivers the body to the punishment for sin (p. 123), to the point of concluding that the entire art of witchcraft originates from carnal desire, which is greater in women than in men. The vices of evil women, therefore, are infidelity, ambition and lust, so they will be more inclined to witchcraft. A witchcraft spell, for the inquisitors of the manual, can prevent intercourse, that the woman does not engender or conceive (p. 160), cause abortion after conception (or create other alterations) and even acquire the form of animals (p. 188). This is how it is stated that the faults committed by witches are as heinous as the fall of the angels of evil (p. 191).

And regarding the fact of how to distinguish if an illness is caused by witchcraft or by natural means, the inquisitors argue, following the style of the treatise, that category of superstition belongs to the spells, the amulets that the patient wears hanging around the neck; the fact that a disease that cannot be improved by medical practice is cured; or that evil appears so suddenly that it can only be understood for reasons of witchcraft (p. 200). From these practices, of course, an evident way of defending oneself is adduced, with holy water, salt and, above all, protection with the invocation of the glorious title of *Jesus Nazarenus Rex Iudeorum* (p. 209).

In addition to including testimonies that seek to create credibility, through a narrative style that stands out for its misogynistic, fanatical and condemning aftertaste, the inquisitors highlight, on many occasions, the power of the women who intervene in childbirth, the midwives, who often they can cause abortions and bewitch newborns in the womb (p. 221), or men and women just by looking at them or even cause their death. In keeping with the trend of matrons in superstitious practice, Inquisitors Kramer and Sprenger make it quite conclusive that no sooner is the baby born than the matron, if the mother herself is not a witch, the buttonhole of the room and offers the prince of the demons, Lucifer, an act that he carries out next to the kitchen fires (p. 296). However, there is nothing to predict that the newborn later cannot be a virtuous person, since he can free himself from the influence that the devil usurped from God.

By way of amplification of atrocities, with apparently real cases, and regarding the office of the matron to which we have referred in these pages, in the *Malleus Maleficarum*, there are several examples of matrons who are described as witches or who produce enchantments. Specifically, several cases are presented as plausible, such as that of a midwife from the diocese of Strasbourg, who received a plea from a midwife of dubious reputation to assist her in childbirth. But when the time came, the midwife called another attendant. A week later, the dodgy matron entered the midwife's room and cast a spell on her, so that her limbs and tongue were paralyzed (p. 294); in the diocese of Basel, a witch, who was burned, confessed to having killed more than forty newborns (p. 295). Another case to mention is that of a midwife who, contrary to custom, did not allow anyone to approach her bed at the time of delivery, except for her daughter, who acted as a midwife. The man, who hid in the house, witnessed the sacrilege and the offering of the newborn to the devil, with which he could see how the child, without any help, climbed the chain from which the kitchen utensils were hung (p 297).

Beyond the atrocities of the witches' manual, referring to midwives and the superstition that surrounds the first contact of the newborn in the world, it is necessary to drive the nail still to highlight the filling of this magical and diabolical vision that surrounds the birth and postpartum through nostrals literary texts. Just remember, by way of example, the numerous cases in which Roig describes to *Spill* not only the evil character of birth attendants but also of mothers who can act petty towards newborns. In addition to bearing in mind that women, in general, are described with images

that highlight their inclination to sorcery, it is evident how mothers put the newborn to sleep with opium poppy (v. 9140), a herb that induces sleep and that can cause death.

In addition, and associated with postpartum, another figure that is also marginalized is the *lactante*, [14] in charge of breastfeeding babies. According to Roig, women resort to nodes to keep their breasts intact (v. 9052). But it is evident that the wet nurse had to meet a series of requirements, since it was considered that her attributes would be reflected in the baby, who could assume qualities worthy of contempt, such as being crooked, hunchbacked, having a squint, because he had received red milk, a fact that showed that the wet nurse was not a Christian (v. 9189).

On the other hand, other mothers prefer not to rent fingers and incur in excesses (vv. 9199-9203), since "sucking too much" leads the children they breastfeed to death. In this same aspect, and according to Saint Vincent, when the moment of childbirth arrives, Christ sends a good angel in his name, who will preserve the newborn from all evil (Sanchis ed., 1932: I, p. 63). Despite this privileged sending, there are "malatrugue" women who kill their children to cover their sin, and their hands are full of blood for the crime they have committed (ibid., p. 24); that is to say, there are "ribaldes" women, according to Fray Vicent, who drown the creatures (Ibid., p. 38), and even some of them have already given birth once or twice before marriage. The excesses and natural impulses of women lead to suckling children to death, and some women kill the children in four ways: "but it should not be killed in III ways: cousin, for revenge; second, by greed; 3rd due to negligence, and this he does for the women when they kill the child, which is not much because of him, 4th due to shame: that the child is not killed because the sin is covered" (Sanchis ed., 1934: II, p. 212). At the end of time, the child who has died without being baptized will call "justice" (Sanchis ed., 1932: I, p. 39) and the Valencian friar argues forcefully that the child who is not baptized is not the daughter of God by grace, but "if she is baptized, ok!" (ibid., p. 69).

With these actions, from the didactic texts, which highlight the feminine attributes from the misogynist context, as well as from the real sources, it is evident that the moment of birth causes a series of superstitions, of magic, both by midwives, as of the nurses or wet nurses and, ultimately, by the evil inclinations of the mothers who are often the cause of the death of the newborn, with the use of magical herbs, with the practice of a life given to vice, to unnatural impulses, and not to virtues.

4. Prostitution—The Sinful Females

If the women healers, poisonous and, by extension, inclined to superstitious practices, were the target of contempt among society, a fact that was reflected in the literature of the fifteenth century, another group of women, the so-called "fembres pecadrius", exercised a vile trade, so that when referring to medieval marginalization, this group of women cannot be ignored or reduced to the exercise of simple entertainment. Finding one's place in society was extremely difficult for women in the majority of the mediaeval social structures (Brundage, 2009). Due to the fact that they did not have the same benefits or rights as males, many women just followed social norms. The role of the mediaeval prostitute, also known as "The Whore" in mediaeval culture, was taught to many women through time as they were often reminded of their status in society (Alixé, 2015). Female prostitution became a major problem for Europe's country as time went on in the 16th and 17th centuries, when women frequently sought their bodies for payment on the streets of Europe's nations. (Chaucer, G. 2016). Profound authors of the century began to often research and include the "Medieval Prostitute" into their literary works. (Brundage, 1976).

In European history, the practise of mediaeval prostitution has a long history that virtually predates the Middle Ages. (Willis, D. 2018). An internet post claims that there are several examples of women who have utilised prostitution to augment their regular income and that it was not always a woman's only option for employment (Fantaesque) (Forth, 2008). The majority of women agreed that they needed to earn money in order to sustain themselves and survive through difficult times, even if they did not want to become prostitutes or "whores" of Europe's streets. Many women were forced into becoming mediaeval prostitutes because of their miserable living situations and impoverished lifestyles (da Silva Lopes et al., 2020). In mediaeval culture, many women, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, were consistently ranked lower than males in

terms of intelligence. Eventually, these impoverished women began to adhere to the views about their role and place in society that they had been fed by authorities and society at large, giving rise to mediaeval prostitutes. (Wehtje, T. J. 2004). Many ladies who engaged in prostitution in the middle times were severely looked down upon, and some were even slain for their solicitation activity. (Greenblatt et al.,2012). This is similar to the many quantities of prostitution concerns that are apparent in our current culture. In many areas of Europe throughout the Middle Ages, women who were caught sleeping around were considered to be committing a grave sin and a crime. (O'Pry-Reynolds, 2013).

If we pay attention to the biblical texts,[15] it is argued that the man who commits adultery with his neighbour's wife will be punished by death, both the adulterer and the adulteress (Lv 20, 10) and it is insisted that any sin committed by the man remains outside the body; instead, whoever practices the sexual act sins against his own body (1Cor 6, 18). Although prostitution has been harshly punished since ancient times, as the biblical texts show, the influence of Saint Augustine (354-430) should be noted, in whom the moral vision of prostitution adopted in the Middle Ages is reaffirmed. In his work, in his head. 4 of *De ordine*, the argument that serves as the basis for tolerating prostitution as a lesser evil is evident: "aufer prostitutes de rebus humanis, turbaveris omnia libidinus" (PL 32); that is to say, if the prostitutes departed from human affairs, everything would be invaded by lust. Thus, Saint Augustine argues that the prostitute has a social function to maintain the established order, alluding to the idea of the "lesser evil", since prostitution is the brake on worse evils, such as adultery, rape, kidnapping of women, homosexuality, etc.

One of the authors who supports the idea of Saint Augustine is Saint Thomas Aquinas, in the *Summa Theologiae* (q. 10, a. 11), in which he affirms that, frequently, some evils[16] must be tolerated in order to obtain more advantages or avoid worse bad guys. In addition, the Franciscan Francesc Eiximenis (1330-1409) also justified prostitution based on the ideas of Saint Augustine, and approached this profession from a useful point of view, to preserve the community or the public from the evil of lust[17]. This idea of the lesser evil was also taken up by the Dominican Saint Vicente Ferrer (1350-1419) (Chabás, 1903, p. 294) St. Vincent distinguished between "permitted" and "not permitted" prostitution, which he called "special." Therefore, for the Valencian Dominican, it is correct, then, that public women are in brothels.

Despite the prescriptions of the preachers, the fact tolerating prostitution caused several moral problems related to paid sex to become, as well as the fact of considering whether prostitutes could give alms to the Church, since the money earned sinfully, and on the part of an impure woman, they posed an uncertainty. It was also discussed if the prostitutes had to pay the tithe, and it was concluded that it was preferable that they pay it, so that they would not spend the money on the exercise of other evils.

It should be pointed out, in this sense, that honest, private women were different from public women;[18] that is, the women who followed the straight path had three life options: the wedding, the contemplative life (in a monastery) or solitary (the beguinage). When they married, they provided a dowry as an obligation and their virginity as a guarantee of purity. These private women were linked to a man (whether father, husband or brother) and not everyone could access them. On the other hand, public women were the women that everyone, paying a certain amount of money, could access, and they constituted a negative model: the so-called "mulieres viles de corpore", although, as mentioned above, they were a regulatory element of worse sexual crimes.

At the end of the 13th century and until the 14th century, municipalities and kingdoms passed regulations to confine prostitutes, dishonest and deviant, in public brothels, and regulations were established for prostitutes, such as the closure of the brothel during religious festivals, or in times of plague or epidemics. In the case of Valencia, specifically, through a privilege of Jaime II of 1325, there is news of the Valencia brothel, also called Publich, Partido, or simply Puebla, located outside the Arab walls,[19] in an apparently unpopulated area, far from the urban centre, as a security measure for the moral integrity of citizens and honest women. The prostitutes, dressed as their profession required, with excessive makeup, waited for the clients in front of the entrance to the brothel, where, in the specific case of Valencia, other entertaining shows were offered: songs, games, dances, raffles...

The peak of the brothel, of the *Publich*, was the fifteenth century, in which 200 prostitute women[20] were reached in Valencia and constituted one of the largest brothels in all of Mediterranean Europe until the sixteenth century; In addition, it must be added that the rates of the prostitutes were the highest in the country[21] and that the brothel complied with extraordinary measures of hygiene and medical supervision.

It should also be noted that the practical exercise of prostitution in the brothel required a certain level of organization since it was necessary to have, in addition to the prostitutes, the intermediaries in the love trade, the ruffians[22] who provided them with clients and They kept most of the profits. In order to ensure the order and security of the brothel in Valencia, as in many other cities, there was an official in charge of supervising the *Publich*, the so-called "king of the arlots", in addition to the innkeeper, who supplied food to the brothels. visitors and room and board for prostitutes, as well as coordinating medical care and taking responsibility for the behavior[23] of those who frequented the brothel.

In another aspect of social marginalization, it is worth mentioning the special case of the look of fifteenth-century society towards the group of prostitutes to which the special condition of being Muslim was added. By way of example, it is worth mentioning the case of Mariem (Rangel, 2008, p. 122), a black woman who legally practised prostitution in Valencia and was accused of the crime of adultery, due to the fact that she was Muslim.

Another more serious aspect to consider is clandestine or illegal prostitution, prosecuted and punished by the courts. The applicable punishment was an economic sanction and, in case of not being able to pay, punish with a considerable number of lashes. This prostitution was not exercised in the brothel, but in the vicinity of hostels, taverns and private homes. An example of this type of illegal exercise is that of Fotayma (Rangel, 2008, pp. 124-126) who had run away from home with his master, with whom he was in the *Morería de Valencia* with a "special friend", with whom he existed. a relationship not based on sexual remuneration. However, although Fotayma did not commit adultery with this special friend, the documentation shows that she is acting as a "wise woman" (a way in which the Muslim prostitute was referred to) and she was convicted (ARV, *Alcaldía*, 1431, f. 56) for having committed adultery.[24]

The town bailiff will often remove the woman's home's doors and/or windows, making it unusable and unsuitable as a location for a future rendezvous. This is one of the most popular mediaeval penalties for prostitutes. Later, this would be abandoned in favour of more overt forms of public humiliation, such as dragging the lady outside the city gates and expelling her. (P.J.P. Goldberg, 1992). Although pimps and brothel owners also had to endure public humiliation, they also ran the prospect of receiving harsher penalties including fines and jail time. A hot iron would be used to brand and expel brothel owners or prostitutes from the community. In the fifteenth century, this was a common form of punishment. (Henrietta Leyser, 2002)

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Alternatives to prostitution: the repentant ones. With all these circumstances, and parallel to the institutionalization of prostitution, solutions had to be sought for women who chose to leave the world of the brothel,[25] with which they began to worship the figures of repentant saints, especially Maria Magdalene. In this aspect, in Valencia, the monastery of the so-called *Repenedides* was founded in 1345, at the initiative of Na Soriana, a woman belonging to the rule of Saint Francis (Carboneras, 1876, p. 23).

You have to pay attention that changing your lifestyle so drastically, from the brothel to the monastery, was not easy to carry out, since the repentant prostitutes, accustomed to a free lifestyle,

had to adapt to one. austere and restrictive in the convent, where they had to remain, for at least, a year in complete seclusion, to achieve social reintegration and grace before God.

Jaume Roig (vv. 7316-7372) refers to this convent dedicated to Saint Mary Magdalene, now Mercat Nou, dedicated to seclusion in elbows. Prior to this convent, there had been two, as documented by Teixidor (1895): that of the repentant Peditors Women and that of the nuns of the Penitence of Jesus Christ. Women recluses or hermits formerly retired to live walled up on the outside of churches, in a reduced enclosure, where they remained closed and dedicated voluntarily to the contemplative life; even, the food was supplied to them by a grid of reduced dimensions. In Roig's time there was voluntary mating, but not mating by punishment as is the case in the verses in which Roig shows the punishment applied to a woman, convicted of adultery, let us not forget that, even if it is in a world of literary fiction, it largely serves the moralizing purpose, for men to avoid contact with women who are innately inclined to adultery, are vile and constitute a cause for sin.

It is enough, at least, to mention the passage in which Roig describes in a metaphorical and sarcastic way the prostitution of the donkey that Jesus refused to ride in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, which symbolizes the old law, of the Jews, to the detriment of the new law, the Christianity. That shallow one, let us remember that Roig argues that she sodomised and fornicated with other donkeys that rode her, as a "public prostitute", for which Christ rejected her (vv. 13022-13045).

Prostitution and canon law. In Europe throughout the Middle Ages, prostitution was universally tolerated while also being condemned. Prostitution was acknowledged by the church and others as a necessary, or "lesser evil," although legally being a sin (since it depended on the act of fornication) (Karras, 246). Since it was assumed that young men would seek out sexual encounters regardless of their possibilities, prostitution acted as a defence against seduction and even rape for "respectable" townwomen. The Grand Council of Venice proclaimed prostitution to be "completely essential to the universe" in 1358. (Richards, 125).

Prostitution-related declarations were frequently not made with quite as much enthusiasm. The church did, in fact, not hesitate to condemn prostitution as morally immoral, but as St. Augustine noted: "If you expel prostitution from society, you will unsettle everything on account of lusts" (Richards, 118). Therefore, prostitution was often only tolerated with reluctance, and many permanent deacons advised prostitutes to change by getting married or joining the nunnery. In reality, there were a number of places of worship established particularly for prostitutes who wanted to leave the trade (Bullough, 183).

Prostitution was mostly an urban institution throughout the Middle Ages, much like it is now. Early attempts by municipal authorities to force prostitutes out of the towns were unsuccessful, notably in Italy. The demand was simply too great since not only young single men but also married men, priests, and even older men felt the need for assistance. Several municipalities tried to address the issue by confining prostitutes to certain areas. The most well-known of these were Bologna's neighbourhoods, which commonly developed into "criminal underworlds" populated by the undesirables and poor citizens of the city. (Brundage, 464). (We may think here of neighborhoods such as Malpertugio, in which Andreuccio meets Fiordaliso, in II.5.) Vern Bullough provides interesting note: He emphasizes that because the expression "to pluck a rose" was a typical metaphor for hiring a prostitute, streets with the word "rose" in them were probably allocated for prostitution during this time. (Bullough, 182).

The dress that prostitutes were permitted to wear was another fairly universal limitation. The church demanded that prostitutes wear some form of distinguishing dress, which each specific municipal government was free to choose, in order to distinguish them from "decent" women and prevent misunderstanding. For instance, in Florence, prostitutes wore gloves and bells on their hats, whereas in Milan, a black cloak was the preferred attire. (Richards, 119). Bullough said that a person has the authority to strip a prostitute immediately if they saw her wearing anything less than the required attire. (Bullough, 182).

In order to capitalise on the situation and make a little money, many cities decided to establish municipal brothels with rules and regulations that forbade brothel keepers from beating the

prostitutes, limited the number of clients a prostitute could serve in a single day, and of course required a certain percentage of all profits. (Karras, 246). The municipal authority of Venice created its own brothel in the Rialto in 1403, some 40 years after concluding a protracted programme of expulsion. Since then, this area has developed into the city's main hub for prostitution. Later, attempts were made to open other brothels, but these only served to fuel the need for further expulsions to control the industry and, ultimately, for stringent agreements between these establishments and the church. (Richards, 125-126).

Prostitution was opposed for a variety of reasons, according to those who made these arguments. It was the result of poverty for some, greed or desire for others, and others said that even the stars had something to do with it. (Brundage, 464). Others defended prostitution on the grounds that it was a legitimate kind of employment and focused more on generating income than on satisfying one's sexual needs (at least, for the prostitutes themselves). Concubinage was actually commonly a desirable alternative in terms of economics; formal contracts outlining commitments to faithfulness in terms of both sex and financial assistance were routinely created between couples. Concubinage may be a simple option for lower-income families to establish helpful social ties and obtain financial assistance for their unmarried daughters. Concubinage occasionally even resulted in marriage. (Brundage, 446).

Prostitution in the decameron There is really just one overt example of prostitution in the Decameron: the Andreuccio's II.5 con artist, a "young Sicilian woman... willing to any man's bidding for a modest fee." This young lady is shown as being both incredibly cunning and incredibly nasty. Although she appears to have developed a sizable network for herself, she is not in any way a "upper class prostitute." These women, sometimes known as "courtesan mistresses," who limited their clientele to the aristocracy, first appeared in the later Middle Ages as a result of urbanisation and the rising vogue for the romantic love ideal. (Bullough, 184). Contrary to how he treats several other sexual practises, Boccaccio generally tends to steer clear of the subject of prostitution.

5. Conclusions

After all the above, and by way of closing, in these pages we have made a tasting of a view of the Valencian society of the fifteenth century, in which there was room for various social classes, despised trades, such as midwives, healers, sorceresses, seen as witches, dedicated to demonic magic, as recorded in archival information and literature; however, this trade had to be exercised in a society in which practices considered unworthy were marginalized, condemned and severely punished, because they were exercised by women. However, and well into the fifteenth century, the office of the midwife who assisted in childbirth and that of the healer, which in previous times had had a wide relevance in society, increasingly, and at least with the Inquisition and with the influence exerted by the *Malleus Maleficarum*, they were stigmatized with a mask of superstition and magic, occultism and invocation of the devil, which turned these professional activities into actions inspired by the devil's own power.

As a consequence of the inclination of women in the world of superstition and witchcraft, both the sermons of preachers and the works of moralizing literature, which seeks to serve as advice to society to reach heavenly glory, Despite the misogynistic context present throughout Western Europe, they are opposed to the practices of healers, witches and sorceresses. In order to argue the harsh statements against this group of women, they amplify the content with plausible examples, in which the evil of midwives and healers is evident. From the fifteenth century, above all, beyond the function of preserving health or assisting at the time of childbirth, in the trade as old as existence itself in humanity, of curing deadly diseases or contributing to the generation of the species, they were now attributed the exercise of dubious and immoral practice.

In addition, another group, which was considered immoral, is that of the prostitutes, women dedicated to a vile trade, but accepted as a lesser evil, to avoid widespread adultery; however, this trade had to be exercised in a society in which practices considered unworthy were marginalized, condemned and harshly punished, for being exercised by women, healers, even more Muslims, or by female sinners, with the option of being reprimanded, as is echoed in the literature of the sermons of

Saint Vincent, in the works of Eiximenis and in the verses of *Spill* by Jaume Roig, as an X-ray of fifteenth-century Valencia.

Notes

1. To solve this social discrimination toward the mentally ill, there is a legend that attributes the Dominican friar Jofré who, horrified at how a mentally ill person was mocked, persuaded a group of merchants to give money to build a hospital (Rubio, 1985), known as "Spital dels Folls, Orats e Ignocents", the first psychiatric centre dedicated to welcoming the mentally ill.
2. As Rubio (1982) argues, orphanhood was treated as a kind of poverty and was not considered a virtue, but rather a source of all kinds of vices. Occasionally, circumstances led to children being abandoned at the gates of a hospital or at the gate of the Seu de València; then they were taken to Clapers hospital. See also Rubio (1990, pp. 134-135).
3. The woman, from the very moment of her creation, was considered as a being inferior to man, since she was formed from a rib, as a consequence of the appearance of man on earth. Eve was thus created as a secondary entity, negatively conditioned. Together with Aristotle (De gen. anim., II, chap. 3) and the thesis that women were a "mas occasionatus", Saint Thomas of Here considered this inferiority as an indisputable principle.
4. The term obstetric was the way of addressing midwives in Rome. The etymology of the Latin word derives from the verb *obstare*, in the sense of "being next to" or "in front of", since the midwife accompanies the midwife (Conde, 2011). The books of Sorá of Ephesus (2nd century), on gynaecology and obstetrics, embraced new aspects, such as the ethics of practising medicine, which had a great impact on the scientific field. Among his studies, it is worth highlighting *El Arte obstetrico*, a treatise on women's diseases, devoting the first part to the physical and spiritual qualities of midwives (Lattus and Carreño, 2010). In the 11th century, the Salerno school is considered the first European medical centre. Trótula, who was designated as *matron sapiens*, is the author of the treatise *Passionibus mulierum curandorum*, known as *Trotula maior*, which deals with the diseases of women before, during and after childbirth, with wide circulation until the 16th century.
5. This health activity of women, as professional assistants in childbirth, goes back to the 16th and 17th centuries. From that moment on, a license was required to practice this practice, which considerably reduced the practice of midwives without studies (Gutiérrez, 2015).
6. In synodal legislation, reference is made to the fact that midwives should know how to administer baptism, in accordance with the Synod of Paris (1313), the council of Reims (1408) and the legislation of Arras and Tournai in the fifteenth century. Midwives had to apply the ritual of baptism to the newborn immediately after a caesarean section, an intervention that was only carried out in the Middle Ages in case the mother had died in childbirth, in case the child died afterwards (Taglia, 2001).
7. It consisted of a paper with healing properties, which used to be hung around the neck (DCVB, I, 418).
8. These healing properties of stones are well catalogued in medieval lapidaries. We must emphasize that all the stones mentioned have demonic connotations, associated with the force of intrinsic evil in women, where the barrier that differentiates medical evil from evil associated with the necromantic sphere is confused. The sapphire has the virtue of warding off the evil eye, above all, but it also combats excess body heat: "And whoever wears (sapphire) comforts the heart and has healthy limbs, and is good against eye pain, and whoever wears it cannot be deceived... (...) and preserves peace, and is valid against the art of necromancy, and cures heart disease, and curbs heat and constricts sweat" (Gili ed., 1977, p. 5). Coral, against the danger of demons, is recommended, according to lapidaries, for digestive health, as well as to combat the presence of demons: "Coral is against storms of sea and wind and rain. And makes demons flee from him who will lead. It is still found by the wise teachers that red coral makes a good ball and a good belly" (Ibid., 1977, p. 19). Red stones, such as coral, were believed to promote good parts, were considered antihemostatic, favoured fertility and were the most used stones to combat eye pain. On the other hand, white stones, such as white coral, helped increase milk production in nurses (García Pérez, 2006). The virtue of the crystal is known as "that is valid against evil spirits and against bad winds" (Ibid., 1977, p. 6), as well as of chrysolite, which also has the property of warding off demons and nocturnal ghosts: "the virtue (of the chrysolite) is very great in scaring away demons, and it has virtue against ghosts who are demonstrating at night, and it gives strength of heart" (Ibid., 1977, p. 15).
9. Juan I of Aragón considered himself the victim of curses and surrounded himself at court with doctors, astrologers and healers, such as the woman from Orihuela, a doctor who cured "some fortunate illnesses" (Roca, 1921-1922, pp. 125-169). The moralists reproach the superstitious practices of magical rituals for healing since they are synonymous with the devil.

10. This same trend in female sorcery is highlighted in a work of French literature that influences the *Spill*, Lefèvre's *Livre des Lamentations de Matheolus*, where Matheolus's wife, Perrette, though not a spell caster (I, 1472) is It was evident that he believed in omens, knew the properties of herbs and relied on the influence of the phases of the moon: "Desde herbal cognoissent chascune/ et la influence de la lune" (II, 2043-44).
11. We must allude here to the legend of the poisonous maiden, who takes advantage of the *Spill* (vv. 9716-9721), capable of transmitting poison during menstruation, which can cause death in men who have sexual relations there (Jacquart and Thomasset, 1989, p. 73). In Eiximenis, this same example is carried out by Alexander, Aristotle and a maiden who causes death to everyone who approaches: "we read of that great Alexander that, as a strong beautiful maiden was introduced to him by a friend, Aristotle advised him to not come near anything, because in the uproar she had known that everything was poison, and so whoever lay with her would die" (DC, Eiximenis ed. 1986-1987: II, c. 887).
12. Apart from being an imaginary place, introduced by Roig to promote greater credibility, the origins of this Boc de Biterna are not easy to ascertain. In a Gothic letter codex from the beginning of the 15th century in which the duties and customs of the Vall d'Àneu were written, there is a fragment dated June 26, 1424. In this extract from the Furs Catalans del Vall d'Àneu (Saroihandy, 1917, pp. 26-49) the punishments that should be imposed on witches are recorded: "in said vayll, very heinous crimes are committed against God and said vail, that is, they go at night with the witches in the boch of Biterna, and he [the devil] they take as their lord, paying homage to him, denying the name of God, before nightfall, raising the little children from their mothers' sides" (f. 27v).
13. In the *Spill*, some images attributed to women are worthy of note: the women are "èvol's" (v. 13403; DECLC, III, 826, doc. *Spill*), a herb to which magical properties typical of sorcery are attributed; firefly (v. 13406) a generally poisonous insect that is very harmful to plantations (DCVB, III, 803); fabulous basilisk that kills (v. 7708) with a single look. The basilisk corresponds to Motif B 12.2 in Stith Thompson's index, "basilisk's fatal glance". See this topical vision of the basilisk in the Bestiaries: "The besalis is a small beast, and so much poison that only with its sight it kills men. And for all là hon they pass, because of the great poison they have, they dry up the trees and herbs" (Panunzio ed., 1964: II, p. 118).
14. In the Middle Ages, the figure of the nurse or wet nurse was usual, who breastfed babies who needed it. According to Rubio (1982, p. 179), the intervention of wet nurses in the upbringing of orphans and expositis in charge of the Clapers hospital was very frequent; at the end of the breastfeeding period, which lasted until the third year, it was also the nursery who was in charge of weaning the baby, that is, of starting him on solid food. Eiximenis describes the conditions of the nurse, who must be Catholic, above all (LD, c. XIV, 28).
15. We read in Gn 38, 24 the case of Tamar, Judah's daughter-in-law, who had even become pregnant as a result of the exercise of prostitution, for which Judah ordered that they burn her as a penalty for her sin.
16. This idea was repeated and spread by theologians and preachers in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries throughout Europe. In this sense, Jean de Gerson (1363-1429) argues that the prostitutes exercised a tolerable vice, as could usury in the cities to avoid worse damage (Eiximenis, Lo Chrestia, 1983 ed., pp. 155-156).
17. When referring to the medieval prostitute, we must bear in mind that the sources come from power (processes, sides, orders...) or from literary sources, written by male pens, which refer to prostitutes from 'a vocabulary rich in negative appellations to address this group: famine trees, public females, vile females, worldly females, bad females, brothel females, sinful public females or *mulieres viles de corpore*, as already mentioned, or simply, and with the major derogatory tone, "bitch". All these denominations used by the popular classes to identify the status of women given over to paid sex were based on the intention of addressing honest women differently from sinful women who practised paid sex. In addition, the prostitute was differentiated externally, following the tradition of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), while an aesthetic of a bad woman was imposed to differentiate her from the rest of the women. From this point of view, and following Carboneres (1876, p. 36), the Council of Valencia, in 1383, established that no prostitute woman should dare to go around the city dressed in a cloak, but only with a towel, as a coat, which would not wear pearls, or silk, or other external adornments, not appropriate to their professional practice.
18. The lifting of the Christian wall in 1356 meant that the brothel remained within the walled area. The opening of the Portal Nou and the increase in the population of the city meant the loss of isolation and, for this reason, the Juries reached agreements to erect a wall around the brothel that would limit access to a single door, controlled by a guard (Carboneres, 1876).

19. These women entered the brothel motivated by various factors, such as social status, since they were usually orphans or widows, with serious economic problems, due to family instability, situations that made it understood that prostitution was the only way to solve problems. On other occasions, the family itself introduced their daughters into prostitution against their own will, in order to increase family income or alleviate the burden of having many children and few economic resources. Another factor was emigration or the breakdown of family ties, which conditioned the nickname of some prostitutes: the Murcian, the Castilian, the French...according to the Rational Master (MR) and Criminal Justice (J. Cr.) series of the ARVs.
20. The coexistence of diverse cultures, and the commercial nature of the city, among others, made Valencia one of the most permissive cities in Europe. It is worth mentioning the reflection of this attitude in the gargoyles of the Lonja de la Seda, with images such as one of the women who touch her sex and points out the address of the brothel for any traveller who came to the city.
21. One way of mentioning the ruffians was the name "special friend" (Carboneres, 1876, p. 30), among whom the scene of robbery, fraud, sexual crimes and physical violence was frequent.
22. At this point, it is necessary to allude to the fact that Jews and Muslims were prohibited from entering the brothel. As for the imposition of sanctions, in Castellón there existed since 1401 the hostel of the great men (Viciano, 2005) that applied corporal punishment and fines, according to the Municipal Archive of Castellón, from 1490, even to parents who prostituted their daughters.
23. Another special case is that of Nuzeya, accused (ARV, Mayor's Office, 1431, f. 55v) of engaging in prostitution without a license and sentenced to death for engaging in prostitution with a "special friend", and previously being stoned and forced to pay an economic penalty (Rangel, 2008, p. 126).
24. If some of these women married, the costs of the dowry were provided by the Council, provided that the marriage union was legally formalized and with a guarantee that they would not return to prostitution.
25. The vv 7323-7330 of the *Spill* are collected by Cruïlles (1878) pa to explain the fictional origin of the convent of the Magdalenas, from this story of the sinful woman locked in the tower and then walled up. It also documents the origin of the convent of the Magdalenas from this history of the *Spill*, Orellana (1924) and Teixidor (1895).

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