

Inflation and Witchcraft
or
The Birth of Political Economy:
The Case of Jean Bodin
Reconsidered

Gunnar HEINSOHN and Otto STEIGER, *Universität Bremen*

Paper presented at the 42nd International Atlantic Economic Conference
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January 1997 [Version of September 1997]

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Abstract

In 1969, E. W. Monter postulated that both Jean Bodin's treatises on money, the *Response to Malestroit* (1568), and on witchcraft, the *Démonomanie* (1580), were models of rationality. Yet he failed to detect the rationale behind the latter. Its core can be deciphered by analyzing three historical enigmas of late 15th century Europe: (i) the transformation of the Population Catastrophe of 1348-1352 and its aftermath into a demographic explosion, (ii) the Great Witch Hunt, and (iii) the sudden disappearance of birth control. They can be solved by a political-economic explanation: The Great Witch Hunt was initiated as the most cruel and terrible measure to eliminate birth control to repopulate Europe. Bodin was still aware of this catastrophe and declared birth control as witchcraft which he carefully distinguished from traditional magic. Like the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), Bodin blamed the midwives, the experts of birth control, as witches. Population policy, executed as extermination of birth control, defined "political economy", a concept elaborated by him. Like combating the danger of inflation by controlling coinage out of the influx of gold and silver from the Americas, the state should prevent the danger of an under-supply of working people by forcing its citizens to boost their number of children.

¹ German authors' English. A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the *Colloque "L'Oeuvre de Jean Bodin, 1596-1996"*, Lyon: Musée de l'Imprimerie et de la Banque and Maison Rhône-Alpes des Sciences de l'Homme (MRASH), January 11-13, 1996. An abridged version entitled "Birth Control: The Political-Economic Rationale behind Jean Bodin's *Démonomanie*" will be published in *History of Political Economy*, vol. 31, no. 2, Fall 1999. For a careful check of the manuscript we thank Ariane ROUFF (Universität Bremen). We also want to thank the attendants of the Lyon and Washington conferences, especially Nicola PANICHI (Università degli Studi di Urbino).

For earlier versions of our view of Bodin's population theory and the rationale behind his *Démonomanie* (1580) cf. (i) G. Heinsohn and O. Steiger, "Jean Bodin, le 'Génie universel des Temps Modernes' ou: Le vrai maître penseur - Neuf thèses démographiques pour le symposium 'Sciences humaines et histoire'", University of Bremen, April 1979, in *Diskussionsbeiträge zur Politischen Ökonomie*, no. 19, Universität Bremen, September 1979, pp. 14-24; (ii) G. Heinsohn and O. Steiger, "Jean Bodin, das 'Universalgenie der Neuzeit' oder: der wahre Meisterdenker - Neun bevölkerungstheoretische Thesen", in *European Demographic Information Bulletin*, vol. X, 1979, no. 3, pp. 97-108; (iii) G. Heinsohn and O. Steiger, "The Large-Scale Murder for the Consecration of Life", in G. Siampos (ed.), *A Systematic Analysis of Recent Population Change*, Athens: National Statistical Service of Greece, 1980, pp. 314-326; (iv) G. Heinsohn, R. Knieper and O. Steiger, *Menschenproduktion: Allgemeine Bevölkerungstheorie der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1979, 1986², pp. 55-58; (v) G. Heinsohn and O. Steiger, *Die Vernichtung der weisen Frauen: Beiträge zur Theorie und Geschichte von Bevölkerung und Kindheit* (1985), third enlarged edition 1989, Munich: Heyne, 1994⁴, ch. V, pp. 86-94.

I The Rationale behind Jean Bodin's Invention of the Concept "Political Economy"

The European Population Catastrophe and the breakdown of feudal villeinage economy after the "Little Ice Age" and the "Great Plague" of Early Modern Times (14th/15th century) and the influx of enormous amounts of gold and silver from the Americas (15th/16th century) triggered the awakening of first approaches in economic theorizing, later coined as "mercantilism". They resulted in a view of a country's wealth being created by an abundance of gold and silver as well as a great number of working people.

This new combination of economic and political arguing will be demonstrated by the writings of the eminent French scholar Jean Bodin (1530-1596) who first synthesized the ideas of producing wealth by increasing population and controlling the influx of precious metals into a coherent system.² Before the onset of the Great Plague in 1348, France - with ca. 19 out of ca. 75 million - was the most populous nation in Europe. Around 1450, this powerful nation had fallen to 12 million people, *i.e.*, had lost nearly 37% of its inhabitants.³ In the middle of Bodin's 16th century, France - with ca. 17,5 million - had not yet recovered its early 14th century level. The memory of this demographic crisis was still fresh in Bodin's lifetime and haunted the political advisers all over Europe.

Antoyne de Montchrétien (1575-1621), master disciple of Bodin and summarizer of 15th/16th century economic thought, had created the term "oeconomie politique"⁴ to characterize this new school of thinking. Never before his *Traicté de l'oeconomie politique* "had the words 'political' and 'economy' been put together on the title page of a volume claiming to be a treatise, that is, dealing systematically with one subject."⁵

² Forerunners of early mercantilistic population theory were E. Colonna (1247?-1316), N. Macchiavelli (1469-1527), Th. More (1478-1535), R. des Presles (1514-1583) and F. Patricius (1529-1597). Cf. Ch. E. Stangeland, *Pre-Malthusian Doctrines of Population: A Study in the History of Economic Theory* (1904); reprint New York: Kelley, 1966, pp. 90-95.

³ Cf. H. Ott and H. Schäfer (eds.), *Wirtschaftsploetz*, Freiburg and Würzburg: Ploetz, 1984, p. 50.

⁴ Cf. A. de Montchrétien, *Traicté de l'oeconomie politique* (1616), ed. by Th. Funck-Brentano, Paris: Plon, 1889; reprint Genève: Slatkine, 1970.

⁵ Cf. P. Bridel, "Montchrétien, Antoine de", in *The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics*, London: Macmillan, 1987, vol. 3, pp. 546 f./546.

Montchrétien's model, Jean Bodin, had dismissed the classical Greek concept of pure economics as utterly insufficient because it had not dealt with the family as the source of labor. For that reason Bodin initiated his *Six Bookes of a Commonweale* (1576) with a new definition of the subject: "A Commonweale is a lawful government of *many families* and of that which to them in common belongs, with a puissant sovereignty. This definition omitted by them which have written of a Commonweale, we have placed in the first place."⁶

So it was not at all by chance that Bodin devoted the first substantial chapter of his *Commonweale* to the family, thereby creating the famous slogan of the family as the nucleus of the state: "A family is the right government of many subjects or persons under the obedience of one and the same head of the family; and of such things as are to them proper. The second part of the *definition of a Commonweale by us set down concerns a family*, which is the true seminar and beginning of every Commonweale, as also a principal member thereof. So that *Aristotle following Xenophon*, seems to me without any probable cause, to have *divided the economical government from the political*, and a city from a family: which can no otherwise be done, then if we should pull the members from the body; or go about to build a city without houses."⁷

⁶ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *Les six livres de la république*, Paris: J. de Puys: 1576. (ii) Substantially modified Latin version by the author himself: J. Bodin, *De republica libri sex* (1576), Paris: J. de Puys, 1586. Best available French version: (iii) J. Bodin, *Les six livres de la république* (1576), Paris: J. de Puys, 1583¹⁰; reprint Aalen: Scientia, 1961, bk. I, ch. I, p. 1.

German version [best available edition]: (iv) J. Bodin, *Sechs Bücher über den Staat* (1576), translated and annotated by B. Wimmer, edited with an introduction by P.C. Mayer-Tasch, Munich: C. H. Beck, 2 vols, 1981 and 1986. We quote from the English version: (v) J. Bodin, *The Six Books of a Commonweale* (1576, 1586), translated out of the French original and Bodin's own translation into Latin by R. Knolles, London: G. Bishop, 1606; reprint edited and with an introduction by K.D. McRae, Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962, p. 1, our italics.

French original (missing part belongs to Bodin's Latin version):

"République est un droit gouvernement de plusieurs mesnages*, & de ce qui leur est commun, avec puissance souveraine. ..."

*In his Latin version Bodin replaced "mesnages" by "familiarum".

⁷ Cf. J. Bodin, *Les six livres de la république* (1576), Paris: J. de Puys, 1583¹⁰; reprint Aalen: Scientia, 1961, bk. I, ch. II, p. 10 f.

We quote from the English version: J. Bodin, *The Six Books of a Commonweale* (1576, 1586), translated out of the French original and Bodin's own translation into Latin by R. Knolles, London: G. Bishop, 1606; reprint edited and with an introduction by K.D. McRae, Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962, p. 8, our italics.

French original:

Montchrétien, forty years later, copied⁸ Bodin nearly word by word: "In regard to this one can maintain forcefully, against the opinion of Aristotle and Xenophon, that one cannot *separate economics from politics* without dismembering the principal part from the total."⁹ In his own words, he stressed the necessity of always focusing on the family as the first task of public and economic policy simultaneously: "There is always a likewise fecundity, a similar fertility."¹⁰ In both spheres the order to be followed - for all men, at all ages and in all territories - goes "flourish and be fertile".¹¹

In contrast to Bodin and his follower Montchrétien, Xenophon and Aristotle had not been faced with the problem of a steep and sudden population decline. For them there was no reason to analyse population as a subject of economics. Classical economists, on the other hand, were no longer faced with a population catastrophe but had to write their treatises in the middle of the European Population Explosion at the end of the 18th century. They were not even aware of Bodin's problem of depopulation. This ignorance had - as we will see - a lot to

"Mesnage est un droit gouvernement de plusieurs subjects, sous l'obeissance d'un chef de famille, & de ce qui leur est propre. La secôde partie de la definition de Republique que nous avons posee, touche la famille, qui est la vraye source & origine de toute Republique, et membre principale d'icelle. Et par ainsi Xenophon & Aristote, sans occasion à mon avis, ont divisé l'oeconomie de la police: ce qu'on ne peut faire sans demêber la partie principale du total, & bastir une ville sans maisons."

⁸ Cf. N. Panichi, "Danaé et Jupiter: De la politique à l' 'oeconomie politique' - Bodin et Monchrétien", in Comité scientifique du colloque (ed.), *Colloque l'Oeuvre de Jean Bodin 1596-1996, 11-12-13 janvier 1996*, Lyon: Centre Auguste et Léon Walras / Groupe Renaissance, Illumanisme, Réforme (RHR) / Centre Lyonnais d'Histoire du Droit, 1996, paper no. 4, p. 3.

⁹ Cf. A. de Montchrétien, *Traicté de l'oeconomie politique* (1616), ed. by Th. Funck-Brentano, Paris: Plon, 1889; reprint Genève: Slatkine, 1970, bk. I, p. 31, our italics.

French original:

"On peut fort à propos maintenir, contre l'opinion d'Aristote et de Xenophon, que l'on ne sçauroit diviser l'oeconomie de la police sans demembrer la partie principale de son Tout."

¹⁰ Cf. A. de Montchrétien, *Traicté de l'oeconomie politique* (1616), ed. by Th. Funck-Brentano, Paris: Plon, 1889; reprint Genève: Slatkine, 1970, bk. I, p. 122.

French original:

"C'est tousjours une pareille fecondité, une semblable fertilité."

¹¹ Cf. A. de Montchrétien, *Traicté de l'oeconomie politique* (1616), ed. by Th. Funck-Brentano, Paris: Plon, 1889; reprint Genève: Slatkine, 1970, bk. I, p. 122.

French original:

"fleurir et fructifier"

do with the monstrous success of the means of repopulation propagated in Bodin's book on witchcraft of 1580, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*.¹²

Classical economists, especially Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834),¹³ experienced an overstocking of the market with labor by too rapidly producing children. They looked in awe at special policies of boosting population. After all, they had learned to consider labor as a natural resource, very much like air and water. Like many historical demographers and population economists of our times, the classical economists believed in a "natural fertility" unrestrained by reason as the source of labor. Yet, they had failed to drop the term "political" and continued to call their discipline political economy. They did no longer understand how the term came about in the first place, and they share this ignorance with their modern counterparts. As we will see in the next section, classical economists were even no longer aware of the intention behind Bodin's invocation of "God" to influence people to procreate against their *personal* interest:

"A man ... has always been told that to raise up subjects for his king and country is a very meritorious act The society in which they [the common people] live and the government which presides over it, are without any *direct* power in this respect; and that whatever attempts they may make to do so, they are really and truly unable to execute what they benevolently wish, but unjustly promise that when wages of labour will not maintain a family, it is an incontrovertible sign that their *king and country do not want more subjects*, or at least that they cannot support them; that if they marry in this case, so far from fulfilling a duty to society, they are throwing a useless burden on it, at the same time that they are plunging themselves into distress, and that they are acting directly *contrary to the will of God*."¹⁴

¹² Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. de Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988. (ii) German version: J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973. (iii) Latin version: J. Bodin, *De magorum demonomania* (1580), translated by F. Junius, Basle: T. Guarinus, 1581.

¹³ Cf. in detail G. Heinsohn and O. Steiger, "The Rationale Underlying Malthus' Theory of Population", in J. Dupâquier, A. Fauve-Chamoux and E. Grebenik (eds.), *Malthus Past and Present*, London: Academic Press, 1983, pp. 223-232, especially p. 227.

The identification of marriage with procreation contains a biological paradigm of natural fertility. We will show how this conviction was created by forcing into underground the economic paradigm of self-interest in procreation: people only procreate in accordance with their economic needs and interests, provided their access to birth control is not hindered.

¹⁴ Cf. T.R. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798, 1826⁶), London: Reeves and Turner, 1872; reprint New York: Kelley, 1971, bk. IV, ch. III, pp. 404f., last two italics ours.

II Rationality *versus* Irrationality in Bodin's Treatises on Inflation and Witchcraft?

One of the major enigmas in the research on witchcraft is posed by the active role played in it by men of outstanding intellectual format. Some of the greatest thinkers in the sciences and the humanities of the 16th and 17th centuries did not hesitate to throw their weight behind the *Great Witch Hunt* of Early Modern Times. More than any other scholar it is Jean Bodin - France's universal genius of the 16th century - whose mysterious behavior the finest students of the Renaissance consider as "incomprehensible"¹⁵.

Bodin does not only bewilder the historian of ideas for not opposing the so-called witch craze but for devoting an entire treatise of five books or 252 folios to justify what many see as the most heinous crime against humanity before the GULAG and the Holocaust. Bodin, therefore, never fared well with scholars devoted to enlightenment and the progress of humanity: "An absurdity, a ridiculous and odious fanaticism, this is what should be marked on the margin of each page of this sad book."¹⁶

In the early 20th century a historian observed in Bodin that even "ingenious personalities adjust and fall prey to obvious mental aberrations of their time." Bodin is seen as exhibiting "a screaming contradiction between the audacious freethinker and the narrow-minded witch hunter. ... Perhaps the curious double life of this most gifted, at the same time sharp and dreamy, intellect never strikes us more surprisingly than in this monument of his greatest aberration."¹⁷

¹⁵ Cf. H. Trevor Roper, "The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", in Idem, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and Other Essays* (1967, 1970²), quoted from the German translation: "Der europäische Hexenwahn des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts", in C. Honegger (ed.), *Die Hexen der Neuzeit: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte eines kulturellen Deutungsmusters*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1978, pp. 188-234/218.

¹⁶ Cf. H. Braudillart, *Bodin et son temps: Tableau des théories politiques et des idées économiques au 16^{ème} siècle*, Paris, 1853; reprint Aalen: Scientia, 1964, p. 189.

French original:

"Absurdité, fanatisme, ridicule et odieux, voilà ce qu'il faudrait mettre en marge de chacune des pages de ce triste livre."

If Bodin is not taken to task for a murderous temperament, the subject of his *Démonomanie* is labeled as a "quasi-metaphysical question" and an "embarrassing escapade for a man of early enlightenment" even in our time.¹⁸

There are no indications whatsoever proving that this preeminent giant of European rationality and member of the French Parliament suffered from mental insanity. Neither were the addresses of his work on record as obscurantists or religious fanatics. The book was devoted "à Monseigneur M. Chrestofle des Thou Chevalier Seigneur de Coeli, premier President en la Cour de Parlement, et Conseiller du Roy en son privé Conseil"¹⁹. Moreover, the treatise is distinguished by a brilliant style, a comprehensive command of the literature on the subject and by its sarcastic treatment of opponents - e.g., the Dutch physician Johann Weyer (also: Wier; 1515-1588)²⁰ - who speaks out against the killing of women and men as witches: "For - at the end of his book - getting in such a rage that he accuses the judges as henchmen we have indeed reason to assume that Weyer is worried that some magician or sorcerer might incriminate himself by revealing too much. In this way he is behaving like little children who sing in the night to conceal their fear."²¹

¹⁷ Cf. Fr. von Bezold, "Jean Bodin als Okkultist und seine *Démonomanie*" (1910), in Idem, *Aus Mittelalter und Renaissance*, Munich and Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1918, pp. 294-328/294 f., 328.

¹⁸ Cf. P.C. Mayer-Tasch, "Einführung in Jean Bodins Leben und Werk", in J. Bodin, *Sechs Bücher über den Staat* (1576), translated and annotated by B. Wimmer, edited with an introduction by P.C. Mayer-Tasch, Munich: C. H. Beck, vol. 1, 1981, pp. 11-51/20.

¹⁹ Cf. J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. de Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, title page.

²⁰ Cf. (i) J. Weyer, *De prestigiis daemonum, et incantationibus, ac veneficiis*, Basle: J. Oporinum, 1563; (ii) J. Weyer, *De lamiis*, Basle, 1577.

²¹ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. de Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988 ("Refutation des opinions de Jean Wier" [after bk. IV]), fol. 218-252/250. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, bk. V, p. 295.

French original:

"Et en ce que Wier sur la fin s'eschaufe en sa peau, & par cholere appelle les Iuges bourreaux, il donne grande presumption, qu'il craint quelcun des Sorciers parlent trop, & faiet comme font les petis enfans, qui chantent la nuit de peur qu'ils ont."

Any attempt to uphold the claim of insanity against Bodin must come to terms with the disturbing fact that he had no problems to continue writing brilliant treatises after the *Démonomanie*. In 1588, he completed his *Colloquium heptaplores*.²² This essay is considered as one of the seminal works promoting religious tolerance and universalism. Bodin, of course, opposed outspoken atheists but he protected staunchly what others termed heresy. How could a defender of heretics promote the burning of women? Or, was the crime of witchcraft after all different from religious dissidence? We will have to come back to this question.

In 1596, the last year of his life, Bodin's *Universae naturae theatrum* was published.²³ In this work he dwelled in the tradition of classical Stoicism and the wisdom of the Ancient Orient. He also gave a detailed account of the universe and the harmony between nature and God, its loving creator. France's finest thinker of the 16th century obviously was very much in his right mind. Nobody could muster hard evidence for calling him a madman.

Contrary to the perplexity surrounding the erudite Frenchman, E. William Monter, a prominent historian of the Great Witch Hunt, postulated in 1969 that Bodin's theory of money in his *Response to Malestroit* (1568)²⁴ and his view of witchcraft in his *Démonomanie* were not opposed to one another in scholarly rigor²⁵. Monter noticed that Bodin had described not only inflation but also the

²² Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *Colloquium heptaplores de rerum sublimium arcanis abditis* (manuscript of 1588), edited by L. Noack, Schwerin, 1857; reprint Bad Cannstatt, 1966; (ii) English version: J. Bodin, *Colloquium of the Seven about Secrets of the Sublime* (1588), translated and edited with an introduction by M.L. Daniels Kuntz, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.

²³ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *Universae naturae theatrum*, Lyon: J. Roussin, 1596. (ii) French version: J. Bodin, *Le théâtre de la nature universelle* (1596), translated by Fr. de Fougerolles, Lyon: J. Pillehotte, 1597.

²⁴ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *La response de M. Jean Bodin au paradoxe de M. de Malestroit*, Paris: M. le Jeune, 1568; (ii) J. Bodin, *Discours de Jean Bodin sur le rehaussement et diminution des monnoyes* (1568), Paris: J. de Puys, 1578². (iii) Best available French version: J. Bodin, *La response de Jean Bodin à M. de Malestroit* (1568), new edition with an introduction by H. Hauser, Paris: A. Colin, 1932. (iv) English version: J. Bodin, *The Response of Jean Bodin to the Paradoxes of Malestroit, and the Paradoxes* (1568, 1578²), translated and with an introduction by G.A. Moore, Washington/D.C.: Country Dollar Press, 1946.

²⁵ Cf. E.W. Monter, "Inflation and Witchcraft: The Case of Jean Bodin", in: Th.K. Rabb and J.E. Seigel (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of*

acts of witchcraft as "a clear and present danger"²⁶ for the prosperity of the state and, therefore, as something to be fought against. Monter observed that the partial irrationality Bodin was accused of - due to his book on witches - was a contradiction to the *methodologically identical* treatment of witchcraft and inflation: "Bodin confronts us as an intellectual monolith. ... The paradox of two or more Bodins - ... a Bodin of dazzling inconsistencies - is a paradox created by us and not by him."²⁷ We may add that Bodin's *Démonomanie* is entirely free of astrology and numerological magic. These superstitions still abound in his works on history and the state (*Methodus* [1566] and *République* [1576]) which are so admirably praised for their rationality and universalism.

Monter, therefore, held the view that Bodin, the economist, cannot be looked upon as a universal genius if at the same time Bodin, the demonologist, is painted as an irrational fool: "The historical fate of Bodin's polemic with Malestroit about inflation was exactly the reverse of his polemic with Weyer about witchcraft. Three centuries later Bodin had become a precursor of the quantity theory of money and a precursor of historical research in economics from his first polemic; but he had become an opponent of justice and reason, as well as gullible consumer of the worst kind of old wives' tales, from his second polemic. Yet, after a bit of reflection, one begins to see a common pattern of concern underlying both polemics endowing them with a *common purpose* and even at times with a *common method*."²⁸

E.H. Harbison, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 371-389. The thesis of the *Démonomanie* as an integral part of Bodin's thought is also emphasized by (i) M.L. Daniels Kuntz, "Introduction" to J. Bodin, *Colloquium of the Seven about Secrets of the Sublime* (1588), translated and edited with an introduction by M.L. Daniels Kuntz, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975, pp. xv-lxxxii, ch. II, as well as (ii) St. Janson, *Jean Bodin - Johann Fischart: De la Démonomanie des Sorciers (1580) - Vom Außgelaßnen wütigen Teuffelsheer (1581) und ihre Fallberichte*, Frankfurt a. M. and Berne: P. Lang, 1980, p. I.

²⁶ Cf. E.W. Monter, "Inflation and Witchcraft: The Case of Jean Bodin", in Th.K. Rabb and J.E. Seigel (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E.H. Harbison*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 371-389/376.

²⁷ Cf. E.W. Monter, "Inflation and Witchcraft: The Case of Jean Bodin", in Th.K. Rabb and J.E. Seigel (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E.H. Harbison*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 371-389/375.

²⁸ Cf. E.W. Monter, "Inflation and Witchcraft: The Case of Jean Bodin", in Th.K. Rabb and J.E. Seigel (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E.H. Harbison*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 371-389/377, our italics.

In fact Monter - like everybody else²⁹ - was unable to discover the meaning in the rationality which he claimed for Bodin's book on witches. What was the "danger" Bodin took upon himself to defeat? To answer this question, we take up Monter's unfinished task. We will show that Bodin's opposition to witchcraft was identical with his opposition to contraceptive plants and abortifacient drugs. Artificial birth control, he was convinced like many other thinkers of his time, could not help but deprive the state of the manpower required to regain economic prosperity.

For Bodin, the decline of the Roman Empire was in part brought about by inflation caused by "the abundance of gold and silver. ... Thus it comes to all states ... to go into decadence, to the point when they are wholly ruined."³⁰ Bodin did not argue against an abundance of precious metals as such: "The abundance of gold and silver ... is the wealth of a country"³¹. However, he emphasized time and again, that also the following proposition holds true for the "dearness that we see": "The principal and almost only reason ... is the abundance of gold and silver."³²

²⁹ Cf. most recently the attempt by N. Jacques-Chaquin, "La Démonomanie des sorciers: une lecture philosophique et politique de la sorcellerie", in Y.Ch. Zarka (ed.), *Jean Bodin: Nature, histoire, droit et politique*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996, pp. 43-70. Like Monter, Jacques-Chaquin does not doubt the general rationality in Bodin's *Démonomanie*. Yet, she considers the book as just another treatise on demonology which—like its predecessors and followers—simply cannot help but to include a number of "fantasmes" (p. 68).

³⁰ Quoted from J. Bodin, *The Response of Jean Bodin to the Paradoxes of Malestroit, and the Paradoxes* (1568, 1578²), translated and with an introduction by G.A. Moore, Washington/D.C.: Country Dollar Press, 1946, p. 42. French version: J. Bodin, *La réponse de Jean Bodin à M. de Malestroit (1568)*, new edition with an introduction by H. Hauser, Paris: A. Colin, 1932, p. 25.

French original:

"l'abondance d'or et d'argent qui estoit en Romme. ... Ainsi advient il à toutes républiques ... aller en décadence, jusques à ce qu'elles soyent du tout ruinées."

³¹ Quoted from J. Bodin, *The Response of Jean Bodin to the Paradoxes of Malestroit, and the Paradoxes* (1568, 1578²), translated and with an introduction by G.A. Moore, Washington/D.C.: Country Dollar Press, 1946, p. 49. French version: J. Bodin, *La réponse de Jean Bodin à M. de Malestroit (1568)*, new edition with an introduction by H. Hauser, Paris: A. Colin, 1932, p. 32.

French original:

"Le abondance d'or est d'argent ... et la richesse d'un pays."

³² Quoted from J. Bodin, *The Response of Jean Bodin to the Paradoxes of Malestroit, and the Paradoxes* (1568, 1578²), translated and with an introduction by G.A. Moore, Washington/D.C.: Country Dollar Press, 1946, p. 23. French version: J. Bodin, *La réponse de*

Two years before his book on money of 1568, Bodin had seen in the *Methodus* the fate of Antiquity no less influenced by the application of birth control to limit the number of citizens in the Greek City States than by the abundance of gold and silver causing inflation: "Plato imposed a limit of 5,040, and ... he preferred that abortions should take place and that they should kill not only deformed children but even normal children rather than admit more people."³³ Plato had been well informed that it were the *midwives* who procured the medical means and performed the magical acts for aborting a fetus or killing a newborn child.³⁴ In 1576, in his *Republique*, Bodin severely condemned these "Greek methods" simultaneously pointing to his contemporaries: "They must banish the overplus, or else execute the cruel law of *Plato* approved by *Aristotle*, who ... ordained that they should cause the rest to miscarry as soon as they were conceived, and those who were born lame or crooked should be cast off: the which cannot be spoken without great impiety, that the goodliest creature which God has made, should not only be made away after it is born, but also be *destroyed in the mother's womb*. ... In my opinion *they err much which doubt of scarcity by the multitude of children and citizens*, when as no cities are more rich nor more famous in arts and disciplines than those which abound most with citizens."³⁵

Jean Bodin à M. de Malestroit (1568), new edition with an introduction by H. Hauser, Paris: A. Colin, 1932, p. 9.

French original:

"la charté que nous voyons": "La principale est presque seule [cause]... est l'abondance d'or et d'argent."

³³ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*, Paris: M. Juvenis, 1566, 1572²; French version: (ii) J. Bodin, *La méthode de l'histoire* (1566), translated and edited by P. Mesnard, Paris, 1941. We quote from the English version: (iii) J. Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History* (1566), edited and translated with an introduction by B. Reynolds (1945), New York: W.W. Norton, 1969, ch. VI, p. 192.

³⁴ Cf. Plato, *Theaitetos*, fol. 149 c/d. On the role of the midwives cf. in detail section IV below.

³⁵ Cf. J. Bodin, *Les six livres de la république* (1576), Paris: J. de Puys, 1583¹⁰; reprint Aalen: Scientia, 1961, bk. V, ch. II, p. 705 f.

We quote from the English version: J. Bodin, *The Six Books of a Commonweale* (1576, 1586), translated out of the French original and Bodin's own translation into Latin by R. Knolles, London: G. Bishop, 1606; reprint edited and with an introduction by K.D. McRae, Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962, p. 571, our italics.

French original (missing part belongs to Bodin's Latin version):

"Il faut par mesme moyen bannir le surplus ou bien executer la loy cruelle de Platon approuvee d'Aristote, lequeul ... ordonna qu'on fist [fait] avorter le surplus au prix qu'ils seroyent

Thus, Monter was correct to state that the rationality of Bodin, the economist, is in line with the rationality of Bodin, the demonologist: "He generally did convince his readers that the skeptics who doubted the reality of inflation and witchcraft were wrong."³⁶ It has to be emphasized, time and again, that the period of the witch trials did not take place in the so-called dark Middle Ages but "belong to the age of enlightenment and humanism."³⁷

In the terminology of Bodin's time the "*Devil*" had replaced the "Greek methods" of abortion and infanticide: "The Devil hates the proverb 'be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it'."³⁸ "He *hinders* first of all ... the *procreation* of the human race which he wants to exterminate with all his might."³⁹ That is why "the Devil makes us believe that he loves virginity ... ,thereby hindering the procreation of the human race."⁴⁰

conceus Il ne faut jamais craindre qu'il y ait trop de subiects, trop de citoyens: veu qu'il n'y a richesse, ny force que d'hommes: & qui plus est la multitude des citoyens."

³⁶ Cf. E.W. Monter, "Inflation and Witchcraft: The Case of Jean Bodin", in Th.K. Rabb and J.E. Seigel (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E.H. Harbison*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 371-389/384.

³⁷ Cf. H. Schipperges, *Der Garten der Gesundheit: Medizin im Mittelalter*, Munich and Zurich: Artemis, 1985, p. 50.

³⁸ Cf. J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, bk. II, ch. I, p. 77 (Fischart's marginal note).

³⁹ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. de Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, bk. II, ch. I, fol. 59. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, p. 78, our italics.

French original:

"Premierement il empesche la procreation du genre humain, qui'il s'efforce tant qui'il peut d'exterminer."

⁴⁰ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. de Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, bk. II, ch. I, fol. 60. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, p. 78.

French original:

"Le Diable faiet à croire qu'il ayme la virginité ... pour empescher la procreation du genre humain".

Bodin's contemporary, the German Johann Christian Fromann (exact dates unknown), argued in a similar manner: "The Devil arranges through the *midwives* not only the abortive death of the fetuses lest they be brought to the holy font of baptism, but also by their [the midwives'] aid he causes newborn babies secretly to be consecrated to himself."⁴¹

⁴¹ J. C. Fromann, *Tractatus de fascinatione novus et singularis*, Nuremberg, 1575; quoted from T.R. Forbes, *The Midwife and the Witch*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966, p. 127, our italics. On the role of the midwife cf. section IV below.

III The European Population Catastrophe of the 14th/15th Century and the Enigmatic Origins of the Great Witch Hunt

Bodin was not the first to equate witchcraft with birth control. We have to turn briefly to the most important documents in question as well as to the unique historical conditions against which the Great European Witch Hunt was directed. The *Great Plague* or *Black Death* of 1348-1352 brought about the so-called *European Population Catastrophe*: "It seems certain that in terms of the rate of mortality this plague was incomparably the greatest catastrophe that has befallen Western Europe in the last thousand years - far greater than the two World Wars of the present century together. Responsible modern authorities estimate that in 1348-9 about a third of the population perished."⁴²

*Long-term Flows in English Population, 1086-1525 Showing the Ranges
between Plausible Estimates.*⁴³
[The steep decline - from 4 to 6 down to 2.5 to 3 million - brought about by the
Great Plague is well visible after the middle of the 14th century.]

⁴² Cf. N. Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (1957), London: Paladin Books, 1970³, p. 131.

⁴³ J. Hatcher, *Plague, Population and the English Economy 1348-1530*, London: Macmillan, 1977, p. 71.

As a result of the plague, e.g., in estates of the Church in England "mortality reached about 50%, in one case as much as 65% ... for male tenants above the age of twenty alone."⁴⁴ In less than half a decade the Great Plague yielded a killing effect comparable to 200 Hiroshima bombs with a European population in the early 14th century comparable to Japan's in 1945 (ca. 80 million). This population catastrophe was aggravated by additional occurrences of the Black Death in 1360/61, 1369/74, 1380/81, and 1385.⁴⁵

At the end of the 15th century the European Population Catastrophe gave way to the beginning of what was later termed the *European Population Explosion*. To this very day, its causes "are not fully understood"⁴⁶:

*World Population Growth in Percentage Points.*⁴⁷
 [The enigmatic "European Population Explosion" of the 18th century, whose - no less enigmatic - origins can be traced back to the late 15th century, is well visible through the nearly tenfold increase in the rate of growth after a very long history of a slow and stable population development.]

⁴⁴ Cf. M. Nordberg, *Den dynamiska medeltiden* (The dynamics of the Middle Ages), Stockholm: Tiden, 1984, p. 32.

⁴⁵ Cf. H. Ott and H. Schäfer (eds.), *Wirtschaftsploetz*, Freiburg and Würzburg: Ploetz, 1984, p. 50.

⁴⁶ Cf. H. Ott and H. Schäfer (eds.), *Wirtschaftsploetz*, Freiburg and Würzburg: Ploetz, 1984, p. 53.

⁴⁷ Cf. H. Kahn et al., *The Next 200 Years*, New York: Morrow, 1976, p. 29.

Decline of European Population (so-called European Population Catastrophe) after the Great Plague of 1348 [with the steep rise of population - so-called European Population Explosion - since the end of the 15th century whose causes are considered inexplicable].⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Cf. J. Tak, C. Haub and E. Murphy, *Our Population Predicament: A New Look*, Washington D.C.: Population Reference Bureau, 1979; as reproduced in *European Demographic Information Bulletin*, vol. X, 1979, no. 4, p. 164.

"The half century between 1475 and 1525 remains very much a no-man's-land. ... Nevertheless ... schools of historians have tended to agree that the origins of the *demographic explosion* of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries lay in the last quarter of the century, more especially in the decade 1475 to 1485. ... At this time, or somewhat earlier, there are the first signs that the long decline in numbers was at last slowing and perhaps even being reversed."⁴⁹ This portentous change can be traced back locally even to 1360. It gained momentum in the late 15th century and resulted in a procreational pattern never experienced in tribal societies, Antiquity, the Middle Ages and Non-European civilizations, the as yet enigmatic *European Population Revolution*. Between the early 16th and the late 19th century the average married woman in most parts of Western Europe had "between 5 and 6.5 children."⁵⁰ These figures were unheard of before in human history.

Without, however, another unique and revolutionary change in procreational patterns from the mid-16th century onwards, the as yet no less mysterious *European Marriage Pattern*⁵¹ the European Population Revolution would have been even more extreme. This pattern consisted in the postponement of marriage for both men and women of about ten years as well as a ratio of women who never married of 20 %. Women who married at the age of twenty or earlier had a stunning 9.8 to 11.6 children.⁵² Thus, late marriages and a high rate of celibacy were - as will become clearer later on - attempts to somehow resist the state's population policy, once the means of birth control were no longer available and every conjugal act - now the only legal expression of sexuality - may have meant another pregnancy.

During the same period of Modern Times, Japan (Tokugawa period between 1721 and 1846), e.g., had a stagnating population in a time not burdened with wars, significant famines and epidemics or emigration. This zero growth was

⁴⁹ Cf. J. Hatcher, *Plague, Population and the English Economy 1348-1530*, London: Macmillan, 1977, p. 63, our italics.

⁵⁰ Cf. M. Anderson, *Approaches to the History of the Western Family 1500-1914*, London: Macmillan, 1980, p. 19.

⁵¹ Cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_T._Noonan,_Jr.

⁵² Cf. G. Heinsohn and O. Steiger, *Die Vernichtung der weisen Frauen: Beiträge zur Theorie und Geschichte von Bevölkerung und Kindheit* (1985), third enlarged edition 1989, Munich: Heyne, 1994⁴, p. 167.

obtained through family planning in the form of legalized abortion and infanticide.⁵³ Japan's - non-European - marriage pattern of the 18th and 19th centuries very much resembled the family pattern of Europe in the Middle Ages:

*Birth Rate in 1,000 French Families towards 1700 [i.e. during the "European Population Explosion"] and in 1970.⁵⁴
[The 17th century birthrate is calculated from 19 village monographs dealing with Normandy and the Ile-de-France; the 20th century birthrate is calculated for the whole of France from the 1968 census.]*

⁵³ Cf. in detail W. LaFleur, *Liquid Life: Abortion and Buddhism in Japan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, passim.

⁵⁴ Cf. J. Dupâquier, "Population", in P. Burke (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History - XIII: Companion Volume*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp. 80-114/84.

"It is often supposed that the Middle Ages were a period of early and nearly universal marriage and consequent high fertility. ... But there is little evidence for this: calculations of the size of the families of socmen in a number of English villages suggest an average of 3.35 living children in the tenth century. ... In Picardy the average number of sons in aristocratic families in 1075-1200 was 2.4; ... none of this material suggests very large families. It may be then that marriage was late, or that some form of *birth control was practised within marriage*."⁵⁵ Like pre-modern Japan, medieval Europe was no stranger to infanticide: "Detailed studies are just beginning, but it is possible that infanticide may have been only sporadically punished prior to the sixteenth century."⁵⁶

Because of this evidence of birth control in pre-modern Europe, the enigmatic population explosion is a purely European phenomenon of Modern Times and must be explicated in a European context of the late 15th century. With all due right, historical demography has termed this unique reproductive behavior the European Population Explosion. It preceded the *World Population Explosion* of our times and enabled the small European continent - reaching no less than a quarter of the world's population in 1900 - to colonize and, indeed, Europeanize most of the rest of the earth.

The European Population Catastrophe between 1348 and 1475 was accompanied by a deep crisis resulting in the breakdown of the feudal system through a shortage of manpower. It is well known that in this period and thereafter the mercantilist policy of promoting "repopulation" was the main concern of ecclesiastical and secular authorities alike. However, it is not known by what means the authorities actually succeeded in, eventually, creating the demographic explosion originating in the late 15th century. It is not even considered if the authorities did anything special at all - besides promoting marriage and parenthood - to bring about this most dramatic change in the history of population.

No less enigmatic than the steep rise in the number of children *per* married woman since the end of the 15th century, historians of the European Witch Hunt consider the rationale behind this enormous event also starting at the end of the

⁵⁵ Cf. D. Grigg, *Population Growth and Agrarian Change: A Historical Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, p. 80, our italics.

⁵⁶ Cf. L. de Mause, "The Evolution of Childhood", in Idem (ed.), *The History of Childhood*, New York: Psychohistory Press, 1974, pp. 1-73/29.

15th century and to traced back locally to 1360. Some two dozen theories⁵⁷ on the rationale behind the accusations for witchcraft have been put forward. They were all found failing to simultaneously explain "the *timing, content* and *target* of the witch hunts."⁵⁸ Therefore, specialists still speak of "a historical enigma: the great suppression of witchcraft"⁵⁹, "a secret of world history"⁶⁰, "the greatest enigma of the least understood era in modern history"⁶¹ or "one of the most mysterious episodes in European history"⁶². However, some scholars have seen that "before 1350, witchcraft primarily meant sorcery, a survival of common superstition"⁶³: "Sorcery is timeless and world-wide whereas witchcraft is specifically limited to approximately three centuries from 1450 to 1750 and to Christian western Europe. ... Witchcraft embraces sorcery but goes far beyond it."⁶⁴

Scholars of witchcraft and students of economic or demographic history do hardly cooperate. Therefore, they do not feel enticed to solve their respective enigmas simultaneously. Some insight, however, can occasionally be obtained from outsiders. With a stroke of genius the French historian of civilization, Jacques Solé, characterized the era of the European witch hunt as "a battle for the

⁵⁷ G. Heinsohn and O. Steiger, *Die Vernichtung der weisen Frauen: Beiträge zur Theorie und Geschichte von Bevölkerung und Kindheit* (1985), third enlarged edition 1989, Munich: Heyne, 1994⁴, pp. 437 f.

⁵⁸ Cf. N. Ben-Yehuda, "Problems Inherent in Socio-Historical Approaches to the European Witch Craze", in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 20, 1981, pp. 326-338/336.

⁵⁹ Cf. J. Delumeau, *La peur en Occident*, Paris: A. Fayard, 1978, p. 474.
French original:
"Une énigme historique: la grande répression de la sorcellerie".

⁶⁰ Cf. L. Genz, "Vad förorsakade de stora häxprocesserna?" (with an English summary entitled "What caused the great trials for witchcraft?"), in *Arv: Tidskrift för Nordisk Folkminnesforskning*, 1954, vol. X, pp. 1-37/34.

⁶¹ Cf. J. Klaitz, *Servants of Satan: The Age of the Witch Hunts*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985, p. 8.

⁶² Cf. N. Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (1975), Frogmore, St. Albans, Herts.: Paladin Books, 1976², p. 255.

⁶³ Cf. R.H. Robbins, "Witchcraft", in Idem, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*, New York: Crown Publishers, 1959, pp. 546-551/547.

⁶⁴ Cf. R.H. Robbins, "Sorcery", in Idem, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*, New York: Crown Publishers, 1959, pp. 471-474/471.

preservation of human fecundity."⁶⁵ However, he did not elaborate on the troops and causes involved. Other scholars have observed that *during* the Great Witch Hunt "Catholics and Protestants undertook massive campaigns to alter popular behavior, particularly sexual behavior. The relatively weak social controls characteristic of late medieval Europe were replaced by far more stringent codes and effective enforcement mechanisms."⁶⁶ Yet, a causal relation between the European Witch Hunt and the mysterious change in sexual, *i.e.*, procreational behavior has not been recognized.

We have no choice but to explicate the Great Witch Hunt if we want to make progress in understanding Bodin's *Démonomanie*. We know that as early as 1360, *i.e.*, shortly after the Great Plague, secular and clerical aristocrats began to execute so-called wise women, often *midwives*, in their villages.⁶⁷ This procedure gained momentum through the late 14th and most of the 15th century until it was coordinated - as will be shown below - for the entire Catholic world by the "Witch-Bull" of 1484.

The witch hunters were well aware of a peculiar dilemma. They wanted to eradicate the expertise of birth control without losing too many women of childbearing age. Quite frequently local authorities, therefore, tried to restrain the prosecutors' relentless attack on each and every woman found to know something about contraception and abortion. Yet there was no easy way to fine-tune their atrocious population policy.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Cf. J. Solé, *L'amour en Occident à l'Époque moderne* (1976), quoted from the German translation: *Liebe in der westlichen Kultur*, Frankfurt a.M. and Berlin: Propyläen, 1979, p. 139.

⁶⁶ Cf. J. Klaitz, *Servants of Satan: The Age of the Witch Hunts*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985, p. 76.

⁶⁷ Cf., e.g., (i) R. Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: Their Foundations in Popular and Learned Culture, 1300-1500*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976, p. 18; (ii) N. Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (1975), Frogmore, St. Albans, Herts.: Paladin Books, 1976², ch. 10; cf. in detail (iii) G. Heinsohn and O. Steiger, *Die Vernichtung der weisen Frauen: Beiträge zur Theorie und Geschichte von Bevölkerung und Kindheit* (1985), third enlarged edition 1989, Munich: Heyne, 1994⁴, pp. 15, 107, 112, 132f., 291, 230. On the role of the midwives cf. section IV below.

⁶⁸ Cf. the examples given in G. Heinsohn and O. Steiger, *Die Vernichtung der weisen Frauen: Beiträge zur Theorie und Geschichte von Bevölkerung und Kindheit* (1985), third enlarged edition 1989, Munich: Heyne, 1994⁴, pp. 145 f.

IV The Enigmatic Connection Between Witchcraft and Birth Control

Do the documents by the most eminent authorities of Europe which inaugurated and justified the Great Witch Hunt shed light on the intentions of Bodin as well? After all, the similarities between his "*Démonomanie* and the *Malleus Maleficarum*, composed almost a full century earlier, are striking."⁶⁹ From this point of view Monter is right in maintaining that Bodin, the demonologist, in 1580 constructed merely a "*Malleus renovatus*."⁷⁰ Indeed, he wrote an updated version of *The Malleus Maleficarum* or *Witch-Hammer* of 1487 and provided for secular courts what the authors of this commentary on the "Witch-Bull" had done for ecclesiastical investigators and their judges and executioners.

Against whom was the famous Witch-Bull, which Pope Innocent VIII (1484-1492) made law on December 5, 1484, directed? Every act of witchcraft being persecuted by traditional clerical law- like weather, animal and harvest magic - is listed in the new bull too. However, for these well known offenses the Witch Bull was neither original nor necessary. Yet, as a universal law it also had to include what had been forbidden before, *i.e.*, it had to clarify that nothing would suddenly become legal by omitting it in the new law. Therefore, the "Apologia" of *The Malleus Maleficarum* states outright: "This work is new and simultaneously old."⁷¹

What makes the Witch-Bull a seminal law are the *new* additions to the traditional canon of witchcraft. Included in the category of witches are now "many persons of both sexes ... who by their incantations, spells, conjurations, and other accursed charms and crafts, enormities and horrid offenses, have *slain infants yet*

⁶⁹ Cf. E.W. Monter, "Inflation and Witchcraft: The Case of Jean Bodin", in Th.K. Rabb and J.E. Seigel (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E.H. Harbison*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 371-389/386.

⁷⁰ Cf. E.W. Monter, "Inflation and Witchcraft: The Case of Jean Bodin", in Th.K. Rabb and J.E. Seigel (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E.H. Harbison*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 371-389/387.

⁷¹ Cf. J. Sprenger, "Apologia", in J. Sprenger and H. Institoris, *Malleus Maleficarum: Der Hexenhammer* (1487), translated and edited by J.W.R. Schmidt, Berlin: H. Barsdorf, 1906; reprint Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974, pp. xlii-xliv (Latin original) and xlv-xlvi (German translation), pp. xliii and xlv resp.

in the mother's womb ...; they hinder men from performing the sexual act and women from conceiving, whence husbands cannot know their wives nor wives receive their husbands."⁷²

No less important than the Witch-Bull of 1484 became its already mentioned commentary of 1487. The *Malleus* was written by the German Dominicans Jacob Sprenger (1436-1495) and Heinrich Kramer (Latinized as Institoris, ca. 1430-1505). It "was the source, inspiration and quarry for all subsequent treatises on witchcraft"⁷³. Foremost, the *Malleus* was conceived to teach the witch hunters about their *new* duties. They were derived from the equally *new* inclusion of birth control, which the authors divided in "*seven methods by which they [the witches] infect with witchcraft the venereal act and the conception of the womb.*"⁷⁴ These methods had nothing to do with traditional magic. Therefore, Sprenger and Kramer made a point to emphasize that their treatise was written "in relation to the duty of human nature and *procreation.*"⁷⁵ They stressed that common heresies were not at all their main concern: "It is clear that the deeds of witches can be committed without any heresy. ... Therefore the deeds of witches need involve no error of faith, however great the sin may be. ... A heretic is different from an apostate, it is heretics who are subject to the Court of the Inquisition; therefore witches are not so subject."⁷⁶

⁷² Cf. Innocent VIII, "Tenor Bullae Apostolicae adversus haeresim maleficarum" (Romae, 1484, nonis Dec.), in J. Sprenger and H. Institoris, *Malleus Maleficarum: Der Hexenhammer* (1487), translated and edited by J.W.R. Schmidt, Berlin: H. Barsdorf, 1906; reprint Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974, pp. xxxii-xxxvi/xxiii. We quote from the English version: Innocent VIII, "The Bull of Innocent VIII" (Rome, 5 Dec. 1484), in H. Kramer and J. Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), translated and edited by M. Summers (1928, 1948²), New York: Dover, 1971, pp. xliii-xlv/xliv, our italics; H. Kramer is identical with H. Institoris.

⁷³ Cf. R. H. Robbins, "Malleus Maleficarum", in Idem, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*, New York: Crown Publishers, 1959, pp. 337-340/337.

⁷⁴ Cf. J. Sprenger and H. Institoris, *Malleus maleficarum: maleficias et earum haeresim frameâ conterens*, Cologne, 1487; reprint Lyon: Cl. Bourgeat, 1669. We quote from the English version: H. Kramer and J. Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), translated and edited by M. Summers (1928, 1948²), New York: Dover, 1971, pt. I, qn. 6, p. 47, our italics.

⁷⁵ Cf. H. Kramer and J. Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), translated and edited by M. Summers (1928, 1948²), New York: Dover, 1971, pt. I, qn. 4, p. 29, our italics.

The Dominicans emphasized that the means of birth control were "injuries towards men" inflicted by the witches. These injuries were to be persecuted explicitly "*besides* much harm they [the witches] work against other beings, animals and fruits of the earth."⁷⁷ All the new seven methods of witchcraft Sprenger and Kramer blamed to hinder procreation: "*First*, by inclining the minds of men to inordinate passion; *second*, by obstructing the generative force; *third*, by removing the members accommodated to that act; *fourth*, by changing men into beasts by their magic art; *fifth*, by destroying the generative force in women; *sixth*, by procuring abortion; *seventh*, by offering children to devils."⁷⁸

In modern terminology these seven offenses of witchcraft comprise: (1) fornication and adultery (as training grounds for sexual pleasure without remorse, *i.e.*, offspring); (2) rendering men impotent; (3) castration and sterilization; (4) bestiality and homosexuality (as ways of sexual satisfaction without procreation); (5) contraception; (6) abortion; (7) infanticide (also when masked as child sacrifice [to the devil]).

Of this "sevenfold witchcraft" the commentators explicitly state under the headline: "That *Witches who are Midwives* in Various Ways Kill the Child Conceived in the Womb, and Procure an Abortion; or if they do not this Offer New-born Children to Devils":

"Here is set forth the truth concerning four horrible crimes, which devils commit against infants, both in the mother's womb and afterwards. ... And the following are the methods by which it is done. ... [First and second] *it is witchcraft*,

⁷⁶ Cf. H. Kramer and J. Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), translated and edited by M. Summers (1928, 1948²), New York: Dover, 1971, pt. III, general & introductory, pp. 194 f.

⁷⁷ Cf. H. Kramer and J. Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), translated and edited by M. Summers (1928, 1948²), New York: Dover, 1971, pt. I, qn. 6, p. 47, our italics. Summers' translation of this passage - "besides other animals and fruits of the earth with which they work much harm" - does not do justice to the Latin original which states that -besides men - "other beings, animals and fruits of the earth" but not "other animals and fruits of the earth" are targets of witchcraft. J.W.R. Schmidt's German translation correctly gives this passage as "*abgesehen* von den vielfachen Schädigungen, die sie [die Hexen] anderen, Tieren und Feldfrüchten, zufügen." Cf. J. Sprenger and H. Institoris, *Malleus Maleficarum: Der Hexenhammer* (1487), translated and edited by J.W.R. Schmidt, Berlin: H. Barsdorf, 1906; reprint Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974, pt. I, qn. 6, p. 93, our italics.

⁷⁸ Cf. H. Kramer and J. Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), translated and edited by M. Summers (1928, 1948²), New York: Dover, 1971, pt. I, qn. 6, p. 47, our italics.

not only when anyone is unable to perform the carnal act ... but also *when a woman is prevented from conceiving or is made to miscarry after she has conceived*. A third and fourth method of witchcraft is when they have failed to procure an abortion, and then either devour the child or offer it to a devil. ... Without the help of devils, a man can by *natural means*, such as herbs, savin for example, or other emmenagogues, *procure that a woman cannot generate or conceive*."⁷⁹

The novelty of defining birth control as witchcraft could evade the focus of modern historians so easily because medical contraception was thought of as an achievement of the 20th century. But is this true? To answer the question we have to turn to another group of researchers, the historians of birth control. Like students of demographic history and historians of witch hunting never communicate with each other, so the historians of birth control take little notice of the formers' specialized fields of *academia*; and neither do historical demographers and historians of the witch hunts bother to consult historians of birth control.

The great pioneer in the history of birth control, Norman Himes (1899-1949), could already summarize his research sixty years ago: "Many people nowadays frown upon the physician who supports contraception as a 'radical', whereas the simple fact is that the awakening interest in contraception on the part of contemporary doctors is merely a return to the classical attitude. In antiquity *anti-conceptual technique had a definite place in preventive medicine*."⁸⁰

Himes still doubted the efficacy of oral contraceptives ("potions"). John Noonan - catholic pro-life activist, eminent historian and adviser to Pope John XXIII's (1958-1963) *Second Vatican Council* (1962-1965) - nearly thirty years after Himes did not nourish such doubts because of the persistence of contraceptives in historical records over most ages of humankind: "*The existence of contraceptive methods in the world from which the Christians came is established: by the Old Testament, by the Talmud, by Aristotle, by Pliny, by the physicians, and by imperial law. Coitus interruptus, potions, pessaries, spermicides,*

⁷⁹ Cf. H. Kramer and J. Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), translated and edited by M. Summers (1928, 1948²), New York: Dover, 191, pt. I, qn. 11, p. 66, our italics. On the focus on the midwives cf. this section below.

⁸⁰ Cf. N. E. Himes, *Medical History of Contraception*, Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1936; reprint New York: Gamut Press, 1963, p. 99, our italics.

genital salves, postcoital exercises, the sterile period - a very wide range of possible techniques was known. / If herbs had some effect on female fecundity among the Hebrews, the Romans, and the North American Indians, it seems more likely than not that they worked for the Franks, Celts, and Anglo-Saxons. / In particular, the period between 400 and 1600 will be seen to be marked by a possession and use of contraceptive means which previous accounts have not suggested."⁸¹

Whereas Noonan knew little of the *efficacy* of ancient oral contraceptive plants and abortifacient drugs, the historian John Riddle almost thirty years after Noonan documented convincingly that modern research has positively proven it:⁸² "The evidence for the concept and existence of contraceptives and abortifacients that were deliberately used is clearly and abundantly in the records. / We have seen indications in all periods that folk experimentation led to the discovery of new drugs to contracept and to abort while some of the drugs, which were judged less effective or available and more dangerous, were dropped from use. / *Because of the various modern medical and animal sciences, biochemistry, pharmacy, and anthropology, we have reason to believe our historical documents in the matter that premodern peoples could limit family size.* Surely the Greeks, Romans, and medieval peoples practiced some infanticide and more sexual restraint. There is no need to believe, however, that the scale of these practices was sufficient to produce the demographic profile that existed. What they did - which we know because they told us - was to take drugs and to be as careful as possible."⁸³

Whereas the population historians do not know the cause of the European demographic explosion originating in the late 15th century, and the historians of witch hunting do not know the reason for the persecution of witchcraft gaining its

⁸¹ Cf. J. T. Noonan Jr., *Contraception: A History of Its Treatments by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists* (1965), Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986², pp. 28/159/2, our italics.

⁸² Cf., among numerous examples quoted by J. M. Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance*, Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992, chs. 3-4 (contraceptive plants) and 4 (abortifacient drugs), e.g., (i) A.O. Prakash et al., "Anti-implantation Activity of Some Indigenous Plants in Rats", in *Acta Europea Fertilitatis*, vol. 16, 1985, pp. 441-448/447, and (ii) A.O. Prakash, "Potentialities of Some Indigenous Plants for Antifertility Activity", in: *International Journal of Crude Drug Research*, vol. 24, 1986, pp. 19-24/22; cf. also the evaluation of Rina Nissim's work on contraceptive plants by U. Ott, "Statt Pille Anti-Baby-Pflanzen", in *Eltern*, no. 9, September 1984, pp. 132 f.

⁸³ Cf. J. M. Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance*, Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992, pp. 17/163/165 f., our italics.

decisive momentum in the late 15th century, the historians of birth control have noticed that this vital cultural knowledge began to disappear in the late 15th century without, however, understanding why: "It is intriguing why so few know now [the Renaissance period] what so many once did."⁸⁴

Notwithstanding the strict boundaries between the fields of academic research it may underline the high quality of this research that the scholars all hit "the decade 1475 to 1485" (Hatcher) as the period in which something profound happened. Whereas Riddle settles for the Renaissance at large, Noonan precisely puts the turn at 1480:

"In the entire period 1480 to 1750, only a single prominent theologian breaks from convention to mention the contraceptive for men which, since Aristotle describes it, would seem to have been at least generally known by name and function. / The married laity were a silent group. They did not write on birth control. Women, who might have had the most to say, were not heard from. ... This silence is striking in an age when literacy was no longer confined to clerics. ... The one group which might have had a professional interest in contraception was the doctors. They showed no concern. Indeed *in contrast to the medieval books* such as Avicenna's or Gadesden's, a number of works now published on gynecology contained no information on contraception. Some examples are the first full treatment of obstetrics in the Renaissance period ... of Eucharius Roesslin in 1513. ... There was a general intellectual acquiescence in the rule. Even in the eighteenth century, the rationalists who were openly critical of many of the teachings of the Church did not attack the prohibition of contraception."⁸⁵

How could a knowledge as important for human life as fire for cooking disappear in the Renaissance period which experienced a virtual explosion of knowledge and technology in all other fields? If we cannot answer this question we are condemned to continue painting Jean Bodin as an insane man when he wrote his *Démonomanie*. To answer it we can again turn to Noonan though he himself is not concerned with this question. However, he is occupied with the secret of the meaning of *maleficium*:

⁸⁴ Cf. J. M. Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance*, Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 165.

⁸⁵ Cf. J. T. Noonan Jr., *Contraception: A History of Its Treatments by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists* (1965), Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986², pp. 349/346 f., our italics.

"In both the tradition preserved by Plutarch and in Gaius the key word is 'medicine' - in Greek *pharmakeia*, in Latin *veneficium*. In both languages the term means use of 'magic' or 'drugs'. ... The term 'medicine' in respect to children primarily designates abortifacients. / The word *medicamenta* is so general that either contraceptives or abortifacients could be meant. / The reference to potions are interwoven with references to magic, and it seems that these magical means spoken of were usually herbal potions. The significance of these magical potions for contraceptive practice may become evident in an exegesis of the term *maleficium*. Etymologically, *maleficium* means 'evil-doing'. Often it is used to mean 'magic'; and *malefici*, those who perform *maleficium* are viewed as sorcerers. Wherever used, the terms *maleficium* and *maleficus* carry this implication of magical means. But in addition to its broad and vague meaning of magic, *maleficium* sometimes refers more specifically to an act causing an abortion or producing sterility with magical, that is, diabolical help. ... In short, *maleficium* has the ambiguity of *veneficium* in Classical Latin, and is sometimes specified to indicate abortion or contraception."⁸⁶

Noonan succeeds in decoding the incriminated act of the witches - the *maleficium* - as birth control. However, he does not use his discovery to answer our question because he never bothers to draw a parallel to the title of *The Witch-Hammer, The Malleus Maleficarum* and can, therefore, not connect the *maleficium* of birth control with the *maleficium* for which the midwives were annihilated in the Great Witch Hunt. Other than Noonan who is only interested in the existence of the means of birth control but not in the culture in which they were applied, Riddle knows that the contraceptive "knowledge was primarily transmitted by a network of women."⁸⁷ However, in his treatise of 1992, he believes that this knowledge was lost in the Renaissance period because at that time it changed from learned men to *illiterate* "midwives, who received no formal training from the university."⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Cf. J. T. Noonan Jr., *Contraception: A History of Its Treatments by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists*, (1965), Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986², pp. 25/28/155 f.

⁸⁷ Cf. J. M. Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance*, Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 16.

⁸⁸ Cf. J. M. Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance*, Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 157.

Riddle could not have gone more wrong with blaming the midwives for the loss of the knowledge of birth control. They were the experts through whose loss by extermination the knowledge was lost too. Yet, he already sees in 1992 that "some women and men surely took seriously that pronouncement of the church and did not resort to chemical means to regulate fertility."⁸⁹ The witch hunters of the late 15th century would have told Riddle that the Church did not restrict itself to mere pronouncements when it created "*the Broken Trail of Learning*"⁹⁰ about birth control in the Renaissance.

However, in a new book of 1997, *Eve's Herbs*, Riddle has changed his explanation for the repression of birth control in Modern Times by extensively following our lines of reasoning. Four out of eight chapters of his new book are devoted to the intentional elimination of birth control which in his book of 1992 was still an enigma.⁹¹

In order to eliminate birth control the commentators of the *Malleus* focused time and again on the *midwives* who were qualified to assist in childbirth no less than in preventing it: "Our inquiry will first be general, as to the general conditions of women; secondly, particular, as to which sort of women are found to be given

⁸⁹ Cf. J. M. Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance*, Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 157.

⁹⁰ Cf. J. M. Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance*, Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 154.

⁹¹ Cf. J.M. Riddle, *Eve's Herbs: A History of Contraception and Abortion in the West*, Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Riddle could draw on an earlier version of this paper and explicitly follows our evaluation of the *Malleus Maleficarum* and Bodin's *Démonomanie*. Our connection of the suppression of birth control, the witch hunts and the population explosion he comments as follows: "The period of the suppression of witches was from approximately 1450 through 1700, and large population increases began in Europe in the late eighteenth century. If the former led to the latter, as Heinsohn and Steiger claim, cause and effect are separated by a very long lag time. The data do not prove the hypothesis conclusively, but they also do not reject it. ... Notwithstanding these qualifications, we should not regard Heinsohn and Steiger's thesis as 'absurd' ... As they say, the modern population rise is partly attributable to pro-natalist views and suppression of birth control measures. A trend that began in late antiquity to restrict abortion certainly was accelerated by the witch scares in pre-modern times, with the effect that birth control information became a subject to be dealt with cautiously, or not at all" (pp. 204 f.).

The four chapters are entitled. 4: "From Womancraft to Witchcraft, 1200-1500"; 5: "Witches and Apothecaries in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries"; 6: "The Broken Chain of Knowledge"; 7: "The Womb as Public Territory" (pp. 91-127).

to superstition and witchcraft; and thirdly, *specifically with regard to midwives*, who surpass all others in wickedness. / The number of them is so great that, as has been found from their confessions, it is thought that there is scarcely any tiny hamlet in which at least one is not to be found."⁹² And indeed, as modern research has confirmed, "in most cases the witch hunters first turned to the midwife."⁹³ In Cologne, e.g., one in three persons executed as witches were midwives. The figure was probably even higher because the extant files do not reveal the professions of all victims.⁹⁴

The Malleus Maleficarum recommended "that the magistrates may in some decree meet this danger, they should allow no midwife to practice without having been first sworn as a good Catholic."⁹⁵ And so it was done: "Up to the late 14th century midwives were entitled to practice without regulation. From this time onwards authorities applied more and more severe regulatory measures on midwifery. ... The midwives were downgraded from qualified and independent female healers - with the diseases of women and children as their domain - to mere assistants of the physician."⁹⁶ Yet these male doctors "were lacking any experience in obstetrics because through the Middle Ages no male was allowed to practice in gynecology."⁹⁷ Thus, with midwifery went most of gynecology. The *speculum* which belongs to this field of medicine as the wheel to driving disappeared in the Renaissance.⁹⁸ Historians of obstetrics could never figure out why during the knowledge explosion of this enlightened period the most vital field of medicine

⁹² Cf. H. Kramer and J. Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), translated and edited by M. Summers (1928, 1948²), New York: Dover, 1971, pt. I, qn. 6, p. 41 / pt. III, qn. 34, p. 269, our italics.

⁹³ Cf. K. Ellinger, "Die Hexen", in H. Haag (ed.), *Teufelsglaube* (1974), Tübingen: Katzmann, 1980², pp. 440-476/ 463.

⁹⁴ Cf. M. Hammes, *Hexenwahn und Hexenprozesse*, Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1977, p. 62.

⁹⁵ Cf. H. Kramer and J. Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), translated and edited by M. Summers (1928, 1948²), New York: Dover, 1971, pt. III, qn. 34, p. 269.

⁹⁶ Cf. P. Ketsch, *Frauen im Mittelalter*, Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1983, vol. I, pp. 262 f.

⁹⁷ Cf. P. Ketsch, *Frauen im Mittelalter*, Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1983, vol. I, p. 263.

⁹⁸ Cf. in detail G. Heinsohn and O. Steiger, "Warum mußte das Speculum zweimal erfunden werden? - Eine Replik", in *Kritische Justiz*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1987, pp. 200-207.

nearly disappeared or, as they term it, was "abandoned".⁹⁹ The famous *dioptré*¹⁰⁰ of the Middle Ages took more than 300 years to be reinvented in 1812 by the French surgeon Joseph Claude Anthelme Recamier. The highly developed means of gynecology and birth control were repressed so successfully that not only the medical profession but also the early 19th century pioneers of birth control were in a position truly to believe that they were mankind's first originators of these patterns of culture.¹⁰¹

Between the early 16th and the early 19th century, the world's tribal societies colonized by Europeans had a much more refined knowledge of birth control and obstetrics than their highly cultured conquerors. Whatever herbal and gynecological expertise survived in Europe of Modern Times was pushed to an illegal underground.¹⁰² In 1823, Europe's most courageous moral innovator, Francis Place (1771-1854), began to propagate the intra-vaginal sponge in an anonymous pamphlet.¹⁰³ In 1822, Place had published his critique of Malthus' "moral restraint" as the only legally permitted check of population. In the famous section III of chapter VI of this book, Malthus had dared to speak of "preventing conception" and even "physical means of prevention"¹⁰⁴ but did not yet bring himself to give any technical detail.

⁹⁹ Cf. V.-A. Giscard d'Estaing, *The Second World Almanac of Inventions*, New York: Pharos Books / Scripps Howard, 1986, p. 230.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. V.-A. Giscard d'Estaing, *The Second World Almanac of Inventions*, New York: Pharos Books / Scripps Howard, 1986, p. 230.

¹⁰¹ Cf. on this belief of originality a statement of the Neo-Malthusian R.B. Kerr in 1927 quoted in G. Heinsohn, R. Knieper and O. Steiger, *Menschenproduktion: Allgemeine Bevölkerungstheorie der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1979, 1986², p. 141.

¹⁰² Cf. G. Heinsohn and O. Steiger, *Die Vernichtung der weisen Frauen: Beiträge zur Theorie und Geschichte von Bevölkerung und Kindheit* (1985), third enlarged edition 1989, Munich: Heyne, 1994⁴, pp. 175 f.

¹⁰³ Fr. Place, *To the Married of Both Sexes of the Working People* [1823], as reproduced in N. E. Himes, *Medical History of Contraception*, Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1936; reprint New York: Gamut Press, 1963, pp. 216 f.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Fr. Place, *Illustrations and Proofs of the Principle of Population: Including an Examination of the Proposed Remedies of Mr. Malthus, and a Reply to the Objections of Mr. Goodwin and Others*, London: Longman et al., 1822; reprinted with an introduction by N.E. Himes, London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1930, pp. 157-179/173, 179.

We have presented the thesis that the Great Witch Hunt was initiated as the most ruthless method to suppress the traditional and highly sophisticated means of birth control (the enigmatic *content*) by eliminating its experts, the midwives (the enigmatic *target*), regarded as the most serious obstacle to the repopulation of Europe after its economical devastation by the population catastrophe of 1348 to 1475 (the enigmatic *timing*).¹⁰⁵

By wiping out the tools of fine-tuning procreation this mercantilist policy triggered the European Population Explosion, *i.e.*, a level of population growth far above the needs of individuals and society alike. Later, beginning around 1700 and lasting well into the 20th century, masturbation as the last resort for sexual satisfaction without procreation became the vast battleground of population policy in the Europeanized world. The enigmatic and dramatic rise of all the sexual neuroses since the early 18th century, therefore, has to be explained by the same causes as the Great Witch Hunt.¹⁰⁶

In view of the population policy behind the annihilation of female midwives and healers, it does not come as a surprise that the secular approach to witch hunting applied by the French scholar Jean Bodin is also clearly reflected by the inclusion of the "sevenfold" witchcraft of birth control - first outlined in *The Malleus Maleficarum* - in the secular laws¹⁰⁷ of the German Empire (1507, 1517, 1532) as may be seen from the overview below.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. in detail G. Heinsohn and O. Steiger, *Die Vernichtung der weisen Frauen: Beiträge zur Theorie und Geschichte von Bevölkerung und Kindheit* (1985), third enlarged edition 1989, Munich: Heyne, 1994⁴, passim.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. in detail G. Heinsohn, "Hexenverfolgung, Kinderwelten, Erziehungsprobleme", in G. Heinsohn and O. Steiger, *Die Vernichtung der weisen Frauen: Beiträge zur Theorie und Geschichte von Bevölkerung und Kindheit* (1985), third enlarged edition 1989, Munich: Heyne, 1994⁴, pp. 215-313/245-257.

¹⁰⁷ For the punishment of contraception and abortion as well as the monitoring of miscarriages and the policing of motherhood in South-Western Germany of the 16th cf. most recently U. Rublack, "Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Female Body in Early Modern Germany", in *Past and Present*, no. 150, 1996, pp. 84-110/90.

*Death Penalties in the Field of Sexuality and Procreation in the Middle Ages as
Opposed to Early Modern Times (last two sections) in Germany. [The law of
Charles V - "Carolina", 1532 - became valid in an empire where the sun never*

set - from Hungary and Spain in Europe all the way to "Tierra del Fuego" in South America].¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Compiled after M. Hirschfeld, edited by J.R. Spinner, *Geschlecht und Verbrechen*, Vienna: Schneider & Co., 1930, p. 87.

V Jean Bodin's Contribution to the Persecution of Witchcraft as a Means to Suppress Birth Control and Repopulate France

No, Jean Bodin, the demonologist, was no irrational fool - and no mentally insane fanatic either! All varieties of perversion, cruelty and craziness, of course, helped swell the stream of persecution, torture and executions during the Great Witch Hunt. These mad people, however, did not pull the wagon. They jumped on it. Bodin did not belong to them. A fierce witch hunter, though, he was: "The *Démonomanie*, which more than any other work was responsible for the European witch scare of the late sixteenth century, was extremely effective in securing the implementation of the Law of God, though by magistrates acting on their own initiative, rather than under royal guidance, as Bodin intended."¹⁰⁹

Monter's sympathizing defense of Bodin by seeing him "only marginally involved in witchcraft trials"¹¹⁰ is rather due to the general enigma surrounding the European Witch Hunt and the understandable desire to adorn Bodin, the rationalist and proponent of religious tolerance, with the crown of the humanist. A determined rationalist the great Frenchman certainly was. But where is it written that rationality and humanism have to thrive together? Bodin saw no problem to reconcile his most appalling and gruesome legal measures against witches with his promotion of ideological tolerance. In actual fact, he personally "roared terribly at mild judges"¹¹¹ who pardoned witches from death at the stake and by doing so - he was convinced - were helping to endanger the human race. Thereby, they were assisting the greatest political crime Bodin could perceive of: "Therefore it is that one accused of being a witch ought never to be fully acquitted and set free unless the calumny of the accuser is clearer than the sun, inasmuch as the proof of such crimes is so obscure and so difficult that not one witch in a million would be accused or punished if the procedure were governed by the ordinary rules."¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Chr. R. Baxter, "Bodin's Daemon and his Conversion to Judaism", in H. Denzer (ed.), *Jean Bodin*, Munich: C.H. Beck, 1973, pp. 1-21/18.

¹¹⁰ Cf. E.W. Monter, "Inflation and Witchcraft: The Case of Jean Bodin", in Th.K. Rabb and J.E. Seigel (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E.H. Harbison*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 371-389/383.

¹¹¹ Cf. J. Kohler, "Bodinus und die Hexenverfolgung", in *Archiv für Strafrecht und Strafprozeß*, vol. 66, 1919, pp. 39-57/57.

"In addition, Bodin urged brutal treatment of suspects; he himself, as a trial judge, tortured children and invalids [*une jeune fille, une jeune enfant, ou une femme délicate, ou quelque mignard*']. ... In Vermandois, near St.-Quentin, in 1566 a woman was mistakenly burned alive; the executioner forgot to strangle her first. Bodin did not cry out at this miscarriage of justice; instead he rationalized: 'Not a mistake - it is better to say the just judgement of God, who thus reminds us ... there is no crime more worthy of burning'."¹¹³

Most important for our understanding of Bodin, however, was his full awareness of what he was doing. He would never have shared the view of modern scholarship that the cause of the Great Witch Hunt was "a secret of world history" (Genz). A society with its population not secured, he firmly believed, had no future. Emulating the spirit of *The Malleus Maleficarum*, Bodin, the pro-natalist, declared: "The most ruthless crime of murder committed against living creatures is the one committed against a human being. And, within humankind, it is the one committed against an innocent child. This is what Satan loves the most. It is exactly this what we have shown as the crime of murder committed by the *witches* [female magicians] when they take the children, offer them, sacrifice them to the Devil and before baptism ... *kill them in the mother's womb*."¹¹⁴

¹¹² Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, bk. IV, ch. V, fol. 216 f. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, p. 257. We quote from the English translation in A.C. Kors and E. Peters (eds.), *Witchcraft in Europe 1100-1700: A Documentary History*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972, p. 215. French original:

"C'est pourquoy celuy qui estattainet & accusé d'estre Sorcier, ne doit iamais estre enoyé absous à pir & à plain si la calomnie de l'accusateur ou delateur, n'est plus claire que le soleil. D'au que la preuve de telles meschancetés est si cachée & si difficile, qu'il ny auroit iamais personne accusé ny puny d'un million de Sorciers qu'il y a, si les parties estoient reglees en procès ordinaire par faute de preuve".

¹¹³ Cf. R.H. Robbins, "Bodin, Jean", in Idem, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*, New York: Crown Publishers, 1959, pp. 53-56/55 f.

¹¹⁴ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, bk. III, ch. VIII, fol. 113. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, p. 140, our italics.

French original:

"Or le plus meschât meurtre entre les animaux c'est de l'homme, & entre les hômes d'un enfant innocent, & le plus agreable à Sathan, comme celuy que nous avons diet des Sorcieres, lui recoivent les enfans, & les offrent au Diable, & soudain les font mourir, au paravant qu'on les ayt presentez à Dieu ... tué ... au ventre de la mère".

Bodin did not restrict his accusations to infanticide and abortion. Explicitly he included the use of contraceptives in his definition of murderous witchcraft: "Since, whosoever practices the [magic] art, he unequivocally violates the divine laws of God and of nature: this is because he obstructs the purpose of the marriage which was constituted by God. This leads subsequently to either divorce or to *childlessness*, and this undeniably constitutes a sacrilege or a desecration of the sacred act. In addition, he cannot deny becoming a killer. *Persons, therefore, who obstruct conception or the birth of children must be considered just as much a murderer as the person who cuts another's throat.*"¹¹⁵

In 1566, the *Roman Catechism* which had been passed by the *Council of Trent* (1545-1563) had pre-empted Bodin's view of contraception as murder. It remained the basis for the persecution of birth control including contraception as homicide up to the Encyclical *Humanae vitae* of 1968 by Pope Paul VI (1963-1978) which explicitly refers to the following statement of this document¹¹⁶. "It is a most grave crime for those joined in matrimony to use medicines to *impede the conceptus* or to abort birth: this impious conspiracy in *murders* must be extirpated."¹¹⁷ Eight years after the *Démonomanie*, Pope Sixtus V (1585-1590), in his bull *Effraenatam* of 1588, confirmed Bodin's view that all abortion and all contraception by potion or poison had to be treated as murder: "Who, then, would not condemn with the most severe punishments the crimes of those who by

¹¹⁵ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, bk. IV, ch. V, fol. 207. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, p. 247, our italics.

French original:

"Car celuy qui en use, ne peut nier qu'il ne soit violateur de la loy de Dieu & de nature, d'empescher l'effect de mariage ordonne par la loy de Dieu. Car de cela il adiuient qu'il faut rô les mariages, & pour le moins les tenir en sterilité, qui est en bons termes un sacrilege. Ne peut aussi nier qu'il ne soit homicide: car celuy n'est pas moins homicide qui empesche la procreation des enfans, que si leur couppoit la gorge".

¹¹⁶ Cf. Paul VI, "Encyclical 'Humanae vitae'" (Rome, 25 July 1968), as translated in German in J. T. Noonan Jr., *Empfängnisverhütung: Geschichte ihrer Beurteilung in der katholischen Theologie und im kanonischen Recht* (1965), Mainz: Matthias Grünewald, 1969, pp. 671-687/677 f. (§ 14).

¹¹⁷ Quoted from J. T. Noonan Jr., *Contraception: A History of Its Treatments by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists* (1965), Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986², p. 361, our italics.

poisons, potions and *maleficia* induce sterility in women, or impede by cursed medicines their conceiving or bearing?"¹¹⁸

The "sevenfold witchcraft" of birth control outlined in *The Malleus Maleficarum* is also elaborated upon by Bodin. His list of fifteen ways of sorcery¹¹⁹ to be punished by death included the traditional methods of weather, harvest, animal and general magic (sorceries 1-2, 7-9, 11-14) which were not, of course, suddenly made legal.

Much modern confusion surrounding Bodin's *Démonomanie* is due to the praxis of this scholar displaying all his knowledge about his subject. Bodin wrote about sorcery and witchcraft for an utterly peculiar reason: population policy. Yet, his treatise had to be a *tour de force* of the entire field of magic because his readers and the very rules of scholarship did not allow a different approach. If modern readers very soon drop his book because they already have learnt so much about traditional magic and can see nothin new in the *Démonomanie* they necessarily miss what he really had in mind: "The *Démonomanie* ... is an absurd book to us partly because, knowing what it is about, we have not patience to read it."¹²⁰ Such a statement, of course, could also be hurled at Bodin's treatise on money. The *Response* is no less rife with elaborations having little to do with his central thesis that the 16th century influx of gold and silver caused inflation. Yet, the non-essential passages exhibit the erudition of an author who commands an amount of knowledge that shows him as a true savant deserving the attention of his time. We would be justified to be at odds with Bodin, the scholar, if his book on sorcery would have *omitted* the state of the art, though it was not at all begotten to merely summarize yesterday's literature on magic.

Bodin's focus in the *Démonomanie* - similar to the aim of the authors of *The Malleus Maleficarum* - was not on traditional sorcery but on witchcraft as birth

¹¹⁸ Quoted from J. T. Noonan Jr., *Contraception: A History of Its Treatments by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists* (1965), Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986², p. 362.

¹¹⁹ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, bk. IV, ch. V, fol. 196-199. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, pp. 236-239.

¹²⁰ Cf. J.W. Allen, *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (1928), London: Methuen, 1957², p. 398.

control (sorceries 3-6, 10, 15): adoration of the "Devil" (3) who hates the commandment "be fruitful and multiply"; pledging the fruit of the womb to the "Devil" (4); infanticide before baptism (5); abortion (6); killing children before baptism to brew witch ointments (10); adultery with the "Devil" (15).

Like *The Malleus Maleficarum*, Bodin took on the "midwife"¹²¹ directly. These female experts - specialized in the assistance of delivery as well as its prevention in all historical ages and societies - were accused of following the "heresy of Manichees"¹²² who were known for their rejection of procreation.

What exactly was, in Bodin's mind, the "Devil's" role in population policy? "One must not be surprised that the Devil makes much use of such *knottings* because firstly, he hinders thereby the procreation of the human race which he wants to exterminate with all his might. Secondly, he breaks the holy bond of love between husband and wife. Thirdly, he entices the knotted to fornication and adultery."¹²³

These knottings¹²⁴ (*liaisons; aiguillettes*) - as we best learn from Francesco-Maria Guazzo, an early 17th century Italian friar (dates unknown), in his summary of previous authorities¹²⁵ - included mechanical, medical and suggestive means to

¹²¹ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, bk. II, ch. V, fol. 93 / bk. IV, ch. I, fol. 166. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, pp. 117/201.

French original:

"Sage femme" / "Sorciere" [Fischart uses the German "Hebam"=midwife in both cases].

¹²² Cf. J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, bk. II, ch. I, p. 76, addition by Fischart (not in the French original).

¹²³ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, bk. II, ch. I, fol. 59. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, p. 77, our italics.

French original:

"Et ne se faut pas esmerueiller, si le Diable se sert fort de telles liaisons, car premierement il empesche la procreation du genre humain, qui'il s'efforce tant qui'il peut d'exterminer: En second lieu il oste le sacré lien d'amitié d'entre le mary & la femme: En troisieme lieu, ceux qui sont liez vont paillarder ou adulerer".

¹²⁴ The term is derived from the strings with which the fly was tied or knotted.

nullify the procreational act. They were usually categorized under the heading of *ligature*, *i.e.*, a state of impotency or sterility produced by witchcraft, generally accomplished by tying knots, and also by administering potions. Guazzo listed seven forms of ligature:

"1. When one married couple is made hateful to the other, or both hateful to each other. 2. When some bodily hindrance keeps a husband and wife apart in different places, or when some thing or phantasm is interposed. 3. When the vital spirit is hindered from flowing to the penis and the emission of semen is prevented. 4. When the semen is not fertile. 5. When a man's penis becomes flabby whenever he wishes to perform the sex act. 6. *When certain natural drugs are given a woman to prevent her from conceiving.* 7. When the female genitals become narrow or close up, or when the male organ retracts."¹²⁶

Bodin understood well that knotting "*prevented offspring* in a marriage though it did not make intercourse impossible."¹²⁷ From an experienced woman, he personally indicted in 1567, he heard of "fifty different ways of knotting"¹²⁸ which the doctors could not discover though even "children could master them."¹²⁹ He got upset about a couple that - through knotting - managed to stay childless for three years to decide independently when eventually to "have beautiful

¹²⁵ F.-M. Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum*, Milan, 1608.

¹²⁶ Cf. R.H. Robbins, "Ligature", in Idem, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*, New York: Crown Publishers, 1959, pp. 305-307/305 f., our italics.

¹²⁷ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, bk. II, ch. I, fol. 58. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, p. 75, our italics.

French original:

"empeschera la procreation, & non la copulation".

¹²⁸ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, bk. II, ch. I, fol. 58. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, p. 75.

French original:

"qu'i y avoit plus de cinquante sortes de nouer l'esguillette".

¹²⁹ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, bk. II, ch. I, fol. 58. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, p. 74.

French original:

"jusques aux enfans qui en font mestier".

children".¹³⁰ The frankness and fearfulness with which people employed means of birth control he cursed as "unabashed impudence".¹³¹

The best proof for Bodin's impeccable command of the literature on witch hunting which he drew upon, is exhibited in his polemic against his critic Johann Weyer. He accused him of confusing a common murder by poisoning with the peculiar *maleficium* to be persecuted as witchcraft. Since the "midwives who are witches" (*Malleus*) were not usually met at murder by poisoning, Weyer had felt justified to call the activities of the witches "a harmless folly"¹³² which should not be persecuted. Such a nonsense, Bodin gasped, "makes my hair stand up."¹³³ Weyer, he explained, did not understand the difference between poisoning at large and the role of poisons in witchcraft: "The one like the other is expressed by the term *pharmakeia* or the Latin word *veneficium* respectively, both, of course, meaning poison *and* witchcraft."¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, bk. II, ch. I, fol. 58. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, p. 75.

French original:

"eurent de beaux enfans".

¹³¹ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, bk. II, ch. I, fol. 57. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, p. 74.

French original:

"avec tell impunité".

¹³² Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, ("Refutation des opinions de Jean Wier" [after bk. IV]), fol. 218-252/245. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, bk. V, p. 290.

French original:

"Wier diet que tout cela n'est que folie".

¹³³ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, ("Refutation des opinions de Jean Wier" [after bk. IV]), fol. 218-252/252. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, bk. V, p. 297.

French original:

"la memoire desquelles me faiet dresser le poil en la teste".

Bodin took great efforts to explain that the term *veneficium* used in relation to witchcraft has nothing to do whatsoever with those poisons used in murder. What the witches produced - namely birth control by medication - Bodin underlined, they could never "perform with all such poisons [for murder] in the world."¹³⁵ Here, Bodin had well anticipated Noonan's decoding of *pharmakeia* and *veneficium* as the *maleficium* of birth control. Therefore, he explicitly used the term "instrumens de *mal faire* [sic!]"¹³⁶ for the witchcraft Weyer had failed to understand.

Bodin underlined his mental sanity and intellectual rationality as a witch hunter by distancing himself from mere misogynists. He did not believe at all that witches were in most cases women because of some "frailness of the female sex"¹³⁷. Male religious fanatics were met with the same rigor. To overstate it, one

¹³⁴ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, ("Refutation des opinions de Jean Wier" [after bk. IV]), fol. 218-252/222. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, bk. V, p. 262, last italics ours.

French original:

"Et pour monstrier encore plus la differéce qu'il y a entre la poison & sortilege, l'un & l'autre estant signifié par le mot *pharmakeia* côme le mot Latin, *veneficium*, signifie poison naturelle".

¹³⁵ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, ("Refutation des opinions de Jean Wier" [after bk. IV]), fol. 218-252/225. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, bk. V, p. 265.

French original:

"Ce que toutes les poisons du monde ne sçauroyent faire".

¹³⁶ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, ("Refutation des opinions de Jean Wier" [after bk. IV]), fol. 218-252/238, our italics. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, bk. V, p. 280.

¹³⁷ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, ("Refutation des opinions de Jean Wier" [after bk. IV]), fol. 218-252/225. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, bk. V, p. 265.

French original:

"Non pas pour la fragilité du sexe".

could say that Bodin had little against "witches" as long as they were only occupied with such spiritual acts as blasphemy, heresy and worshipping the devil. If, however, a woman practiced "instrumens de *mal faire*", *i.e.*, if she "is a witch she has to suffer *death under all circumstances*."¹³⁸

The composure against traditional forms of superstition in the *Démonomanie* had already been exhibited by *The Malleus Maleficarum*: "It is clear that there is no comparison between such things and the deed of witches. ... Wherefore, for the sake of brevity, there is no need to continue this argument in respect of the minor forms of divination, since it has been proved in respect of the major forms. ... Anyone who wishes may refer to the teaching of Nider, and he will find much as to when such things are lawful and when they are not. But *the works of the witches are never lawful*."¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, bk. IV, ch. V, fol. 200. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, p. 240, our italics.

French original:

"Si est-ce que s'il est verifié que l'accusé soit Sorcier, il merite la mort".

¹³⁹ Cf. H. Kramer and J. Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), translated and edited by M. Summers (1928, 1948²), New York: Dover, 1971, pt. I, qn. 16, p. 82, our italics. The reference is to the German Dominican Johannes Nider (ca. 1380-1438) and his *Formicarius* (ca. 1435), Augsburg, 1475, the second book ever printed discussing witchcraft.

VI The Rationale behind Bodin's *Démonomanie*

After the European Population Catastrophe of the 14th and 15th centuries, Bodin - already in his *République* of 1576¹⁴⁰ - had no doubt that it was the duty of the state to provide the manpower needed by society and economy. It is not by chance, therefore, that he included the number of working people like the amount of gold and silver from the Americas in his political-economic analysis of society.

His study of the decline of the Roman Empire in the *Methodus* had convinced him that it was possible for mindful men to evade a repetition of history.¹⁴¹ From his reflections he had drawn two lessons for altering history's course:

(1) To avoid inflation caused by the abundance of gold and silver, one had to control the supply of money by centralizing coinage out of precious metals at the King who, furthermore, had to retain "the right of seigniorage, which the ancients did however not know."¹⁴²

(2) If at the same time birth control could be successfully suppressed, Occidental Civilization would not once again fall as it did at the end of Antiquity when, again, the ancients did not live up to this task. Bodin, thus, aimed at no less than wiping out individual economic self-interest in procreation in favor of "natural fertility" in the interest of the state. Reason was to be replaced by plain, yet enforced biology.

For Bodin, the witch hunter, therefore, pro-natalist policy was as central a task as anti-inflation policy. The well-being of the state as, first of all, a

¹⁴⁰ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *Les six livres de la république* (1576), Paris: J. de Puys, 1583¹⁰; reprint Aalen: Scientia, 1961, bk. V, ch. 2., pp. 705 f. (ii) J. Bodin, *The Six Books of a Commonweale* (1576, 1586), translated out of the French original and Bodin's own translation into Latin by R. Knolles, London: G. Bishop, 1606; reprint edited and with an introduction by K.D. McRae, Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962, p. 571.

¹⁴¹ Cf. J. Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History* (1566), edited and translated with an introduction by B. Reynolds (1945), New York, 1969, ch. VI, pp. 236 f.

¹⁴² Quoted from J. Bodin, *The Response of Jean Bodin to the Paradoxes of Malestroït, and the Paradoxes* (1568, 1578²), translated and with an introduction by G.A. Moore, Washington/D.C.: Country Dollar Press, 1946, p. 77. French version: J. Bodin, *La réponse de Jean Bodin à M. de Malestroït* (1568), new edition with an introduction by H. Hauser, Paris: A. Colin, 1932 (reference neither in the text of 1568 nor in the editor's appendix II, pp. 63-74, on the variations and additions of the text of 1578).

“Commonweale“ of families was at the heart of this outstanding and pioneering political economist:

"There are two means by which states are maintained in their weal and greatness - reward and penalty: the one for the good, the other for the bad. And, if the distribution of these two be faulty nothing else is to be expected than the inevitable ruin of the state. ...

But those greatly err who think that penalties are established only to punish crime. I hold that this is the least of the fruits which accrue therefrom to the state. For the greatest and the chief is the appeasing of the wrath of God, especially if the crime is directly against the majesty of God as is well proven for sorcery. ... Now if there are any means to appease the wrath of God, to gain his blessing, to strike awe into some by the punishment of others, to preserve some from being infected by others, to diminish the number of evil-doers, to make secure the life of the well-disposed, and to punish the most detestable crimes of which the human mind can conceive, it is to *punish with the utmost rigor the witches*."¹⁴³

Bodin's treatises on the wealth of nations already contained a terminology later repeated and expanded in his witch book. Four years before the *Démonomanie* of 1580, in the *République*, he had warned against the downfall of the state due to the neglect of its citizens' procreation:

"The emperor *Augustus* did more wisely to correct the disordinate lust of his subjects, made laws for marriages, by which he imposed a tax in manner of a

¹⁴³ Cf. (i) J. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Paris: J. du Puys, 1580; reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1988, bk. IV, ch. V, fol. 194-196. (ii) J. Bodin, *Vom aussgelasnen wütigen Teuffelsheer* (1580, 1581), translated by H.J. Fischart, Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1591³; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973, pp. 234 f. We quote from the English translation in A.C. Kors and E. Peters (eds.), *Witchcraft in Europe 1100-1700: A Documentary History*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972, pp. 213 f., our italics.

French original:

"Il y à deux moyens par lesquels les Republicques sont maintenues en leur estat & grandeur, le loyer & la peine: l'un pour les bons, l'autre pour les mauvais: & s'il y a faute à la distribution de ces deux poinets, il ne faut rien esperer que la ruine inevitable des Republicques. ...

Mais ceux là s'abusent bien fort, qui pensent que les peines ne sont establies que pour chastier le forfait. Je tiens que c'est le moindre fruiet qui en reüssit à la republicque. Car le plus grâd & principal est pour appaiser l'ire de Dieu, mesmement si le forfait est directement conte la majesté de Dieu comme cestuy-cy. ...

Or s'il y eut ocques moyê d'appaiser l'ire de Dieu, d'obtenir sa benediction, d'estonner les uns par la punition des autres, de conserver les uns de l'infection des autres, de diminuer le nombre des meschans, d'asseurer la vie des bons, & de punir les meschancetez les plus detestables que l'esprit humain peut imaginer, c'est de chastier à toute rigeur les Sorciers".

fine, upon those that did not marry after the age of 25 years, or that were married and had no children enjoying them to bring a part into the treasury of such successions or legacies as were casually left them, giving goodly immunities and privileges to such as had children: by which laws *Augustus* purchased the commendation of a wise prince. For hereby he did both punish whoredom, adultery and sodomy, and also force every one to seek him a lawful wife and children, taking away nothing of any man's present estate, but only the tenth part of that inheritance which came to him accidentally from his friends, *filling the treasury with money, and the Commonweale with good and virtuous citizens*. Which law *Iustinian* the emperor did unadvisedly blame, and likewise *Constantin* who abrogated the law for punishing them that lived unmarried, or that had no children. But the emperors *Honorius* and *Theodosius* gave the privilege of children to all subjects which was to give away to adulteries and to all detestable vices, *causing marriages and the procreation of children to grow in contempt*, whereby the city grew bare of citizens, and *the empire being found in a manner waste*, was seized on by a deluge of Gothes, and other barbarous nations of the North. These kinds of impositions which are invented for the punishment of vice, seem not only just but *very profitable*.¹⁴⁴

The central position of the *Démonomanie* in Bodin's political economy is last, but not least, illustrated by alterations he made in his *Latin* version of 1586 of the *République*. Now, he included passages on population policy he had worked

¹⁴⁴ Cf. J. Bodin, *Les six livres de la république* (1576), Paris: J. de Puys, 1583¹⁰; reprint Aalen: Scientia, 1961, bk VI, ch. 2, p. 888.

We quote from the English version: J. Bodin, *The Six Books of a Commonweale* (1576, 1586), translated out of the French original and Bodin's own translation into Latin by R. Knolles, London: G. Bishop, 1606; reprint edited and with an introduction by K.D. McRae, Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962, p. 670; italics - with the exception of personal names - ours.

French original (missing last sentence belongs to Bodin's Latin version):

"Pour mesme cause l'Empereur Auguste, pour chastier l'impudicité detestable des subjects, & les contraindre de contracter mariage, leur l'impost par forme d'amende, des laigs & successions caduques sur ceux qui ne se marieroyent apres xxv. ans, ou qui n'auroyent point d'enfans, donnant de beaux privileges à qui plus auroit d'enfans. Qui fut un trait de maistre, & sage politique: car en ce faisant il chastia bien fort les paillardises, adulteros, & sodomies, & remplit sa cité de bons citoyens, qui en estoit fort deserte par les guerres civiles: & par mesme moyen il remplit le thresor de l'espargne qui estoit vuide: à quoy l'Empereur Iustinian, qui blasme ceste loy, n'a pas pris garde: non plus que l'Empereur Constantin, qui osta la peine du celibat, & de ceux qui n'avoient point d'enfans: & qui plus est les Empereurs Honoré, & Theodose donnerent le privilege des enfans à tous subjects, qui estoit remettre sus les vices detestables qu'on avoit retranchés: dont il advint que les mariages & la procreation des enfans furent mesprises, & l'Empire fut occupé par les peuples de Septentrion, qui avoyent des magasins d'hommes, ayans trouvé l'Empire desert".

out in the witch book of 1580. The passage in italics of the quotation below was still missing in the 1576 and 1583 *French* versions of the *République*:

"How many virgins do we see sold and dishonoured by the parents themselves, or that rather suffer them to live loosely than to be married, *thinking it better to cast forth their children, or to kill them, than to nourish them?* And how can all this be prevented but by a [moral] Censor¹⁴⁵?"¹⁴⁶.

Birth control - as we tried to demonstrate - is the new element of witchcraft to which Bodin devoted the *Démonomanie*. However, in his own work the fight against birth control is not a new element at all. The witch book lays out the means to execute the ends of the pro-natalist policy Bodin had designed in the *Methodus* (1566) and the *République* (1576). Thus, the *Démonomanie* (1580), far from being an enigmatic and embarrassing escapade from the mainstream of Bodin's thought, brings to a close one and a half decades of ambitious work to combine state population policy and pure economics in the new science of *political economy*.

Modern scholars' lack of patience to analyze the *Démonomanie* - this "absurd book" (Allen) - may explain why, in 1987, the editors of *The New Palgrave* missed the chance to publish an entry on Bodin as the most thoughtful advocate of "political economy".¹⁴⁷ This new concept did in no way - as is believed

¹⁴⁵ The moral task of the "Censor" lay in his power to use police, in elder German: *Polizey*, against those who continued with birth control. Thus, in the mercantilistic nations up to the 18th century the term "Polizey" incorporated a considerably larger field of police responsibility than the activities which arose from the modern liberal state - predominantly crime prevention. An important responsibility of the "Polizey" in mercantilism was to ensure an adequate - quantitative as well as qualitative - supply of working people, i.e., it was a *population police*, and was named as such in the "polizey"-scientific literature of the mercantilistic period. Cf. G. Heinsohn, R. Knieper and O. Steiger, *Menschenproduktion: Allgemeine Bevölkerungstheorie der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1979, 1986², ch. D.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. J. Bodin, *Les six livres de la république* (1576), Paris: J. de Puys, 1583¹⁰; reprint Aalen: Scientia, 1961, bk VI, ch. 1, p. 846 where the passage in italics is still missing. The amendment of 1586 in English can only be found in: J. Bodin, *The Six Books of a Commonweale* (1576, 1586), translated out of the French original as well as Bodin's own translation into Latin by R. Knolles, London: G. Bishop, 1606; reprint edited and with an introduction by K.D. McRae, Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962, p. 644, our italics.

French original:

"Combien void on de filles vendues & deshonnees par les parents mesmes? Ou qui plustost souffrent estre abandonnees que mariees? Il n'y a moyen d'y remedier que par la Censure".

today - deal with some harmless techniques of "public administration or the affairs of management of state."¹⁴⁸ It rather focused on population *policy* for the supply of labor which hitherto was not part of economic theory. Instead, the editors of 1987 were content with a reprint of the entry on Bodin in the original *Palgrave* of 1894, thus cultivating "the paradox of two Bodins" (Monter) once again: "Strange as the fact is, this man, of such powerful intellect, was nevertheless a believer in sorcery and witchcraft."¹⁴⁹

This judgement of the *Démonomanie* entirely fails to detect the rationale behind it, the suppression of birth control. The population policy propagated by Bodin - and executed by a genuine *population police* - stood for an utterly secular purpose. Therefore, it was not controversial between the Christian denominations. That is why it wholly inappropriate to paint Bodin as a religious zealot. Such a charge is clearly contradicted by his marvelous sense of religious tolerance.¹⁵⁰ The father of Protestantism, Martin Luther (1483-1546), who was born one year before the "Witch-Bull" and who died fifty years before Bodin met his fate, was second to none when it came to wage war against the wise women. To him they were "shameless whores of the devil ... who torture the newborn in the cradle, bewitch the sexual organs *et cetera*"¹⁵¹: "One should have no compassion on these witches; I myself would burn all of them"¹⁵², this tower of the reformation preached with no less fury than Jean Bodin, the Catholic proponent of *political* economy with

¹⁴⁷ Admittedly, a careful reading of the *Démonomanie* is hampered by the fact that no annotated edition is available. An interested reader can only rely on the original in ancient French and the translation in no less ancient German. This is in stark contrast with Bodin's other important works all of which are available in scholarly edited English and German translations.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. P. Groenewegen, "'Political Economy' and 'Economics'", in *The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics*, London: Macmillan, 1987, vol. 3, pp. 904b-907a/905a.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. A. C. Fix, "Bodin, Jean", in R. H. I. Palgrave (ed.), *A Dictionary of Political Economy*, London: Macmillan, 1894, vol. I, pp. 160f./161, reprinted in *The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics*, London: Macmillan, 1987, vol. 1, p. 254a-b/254b.

¹⁵⁰ J. Bodin, *Colloquium of the Seven about Secrets of the Sublime* (1588), translated and edited with an introduction by M.L. Daniels Kuntz, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.

¹⁵¹ Quoted in J. Dieffenbach, *Der Hexenwahn vor und nach der Glaubensspaltung in Deutschland*, Mainz: F. Kirchheim, 1886; reprint Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der DDR, 1978, p. 294.

¹⁵² From Luther's *Table Talks*; as quoted in M. Hammes, *Hexenwahn und Hexenprozesse*, Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1977, p. 156.

population policy as one of its two pillars. To Luther no less than to Bodin the survival of the mother was secondary to the procurement of a new child and future worker.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ From Luther's *Eine Predigt vom Ehestande* as referred to by U. Rublack, "Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Female Body in Early Modern Germany", in *Past and Present*, no. 150, 1996, pp. 84-110/90.

VII Understanding Bodin's *Démonomanie*: A Summary

To detect the rationale behind the first use of the concept of "Political Economy" by Jean Bodin it is demonstrated that the French scholar was as much a population economist as he was a monetary economist. The resentment of our times to study his "absurd book" on witchcraft, the *Démonomanie* (1580), has created the so-called paradox of two Bodins. Most recently, *The New Palgrave* (1987) has cultivated this paradox by stating that the powerful French intellect nevertheless was a believer in sorcery and witchcraft. However, by a close re-reading of Bodin's work as well as by solving *three hitherto unexplained historical riddles* of Early Modern Times - the late 15th century onset of (i) the Great Witch Hunt, (ii) the origin of the demographic explosion and (iii) the disappearance of birth control - the paradox can be overcome within the context of one and the same economic model.

In 1969, E.W. Monter postulated that Jean Bodin's treatises on money, the *Response to Malestroit* (1568), and on witchcraft, the *Démonomanie*, were not opposed to one another in terms of rigorous scholarship. Monter noticed that Bodin had emphasized not only inflation but also the acts of witchcraft as a "clear and present danger" to the well-being of the "Commonweale". Therefore Bodin, the economist, cannot be regarded as a universal genius if Bodin, the demonologist, is regarded as an irrational fool.

While Monter succeeded to show, on methodological grounds, that there are no inconsistencies between the two treatises, he failed to detect the rationale behind the *Démonomanie*. This shortcoming is due to a more common failure of historians of the European witch trials - our *first historical enigma* - to simultaneously explain "the *timing, content* and *target* of the witch hunts" (Ben-Yehuda, 1981). Therefore, many scholars felt forced to resort to statements like "the greatest enigma of the least understood era in modern history." Worse still for historians of the witch hunts, proves their neglect of the findings of other specialists of this enigmatic period, most notably historical demographers, historians of birth control and early political economists like, e.g., Bodin. To the latter the witch hunts were no riddle. On the contrary, he could not help but devise and advise these atrocious trials as a tool of population policy required for the survival of the state. After all, Bodin was well familiar with the infamous *Witch Bull* of 1484 and its commentary, the *The Malleus Maleficarum* or *Witch Hammer* of 1487. These documents were not only used by the authorities to coordinate the

witch hunts - locally starting around 1360 after the Black Death - across Catholic Europe but also contained an entirely new definition of witchcraft added to the traditional one: it comprised all methods of birth control. This new set of sorceries was carefully distinguished from old forms of sorcery causing damage to people's health, to animals and to harvests. The documents targeted the midwives as the most prominent performers of the additions to witchcraft.

Historical demographers never came to terms with our *second historical enigma*, the transformation of the European Population Catastrophe in the wake of the Great Plague of the mid-14th century into the European Population Explosion culminating in the late 18th century. All they could figure out with admirable precision was a reversal of the long decline of population at the end of the 15th century. Moreover, some demographers detected what they term the European Population Revolution. It can be traced back to 1360 too and gained momentum in the late 15th century with numbers of children *per* married woman unrivaled in history. Through another dramatic change in procreational behavior in the early 16th century, the European Marriage Pattern - postponement of marriage for both men and women and a high ratio of celibacy - women were able to avoid even higher birth-rates.

The demographers' failure to explain these revolutionary changes is due to their assumption of a "natural fertility" prevailing in pre-modern societies and to be relaxed not before the early 19th century with the daring promotion of family planning by a handful of Neo-Malthusians. Historical demographers are usually not aware of the finding of historians of birth control who can demonstrate the existence, use and effectiveness of means to hinder procreation - herbs, drugs and mechanical devices - during the European Middle Ages. Therefore, they cannot devote themselves to our *third historical enigma*, the dramatic loss of the availability of birth control knowledge from the late 15th century onwards. This loss has also been recognized by the historians of birth control. Yet, they see no way to solve it with a notable exception (Riddle, 1997) based on our findings. The war against birth control again can be traced back to 1360. It also gained momentum in the late 15th century.

We solve the three historical enigmas of Early Modern Times - witch hunt, population revolution and loss of birth control - simultaneously. We stress the fact that all three riddles gained momentum in the late 15th century and originated just one decade after the Population Catastrophe of the mid-14th century. Furthermore, we reject the biological paradigm of "natural fertility" and apply, instead, the

economic paradigm of self-interest in procreation: people only have offspring in accordance with their individual economic demand *provided* that birth control is legal and easily available.

The first enigma we explain as the most ruthless method in Early Modern Times to suppress the traditional and highly sophisticated means of birth-control (the enigmatic *content*) by eliminating its best experts, the midwives (the enigmatic *target*), regarded as the most serious obstacle to the repopulation of Europe after its economic devastation by the Population Catastrophe (the enigmatic *timing*).

The solution of the third and the second enigmas we derive from the explanation of the first. Birth control - as a knowledge as important for human life as fire for cooking and wheels for driving - does not disappear by itself, especially not in a period like the Renaissance which experienced a virtual explosion of knowledge, science and technology. Europeans cut off from the means of birth control had to rear more children than they needed in accordance with their own economic interest. This is justifiably called by historical demographers a revolution, since the repression of the economic paradigm in procreation was never tried before in such an extreme manner. The enormous success of the elimination of birth control knowledge may best be illustrated by the belief of the early Neo-Malthusians to be mankind's first thinkers to seriously consider contraception.

Bodin's France was Europe's most populous nation. By 1450 it stood at 12 million inhabitants against the 19 million before the Black Death of 1350. Even in Bodin's 16th century France had not yet recovered its former size. Birth control was still a force to reckon with by population policy. Therefore, he saw all necessity to write an updated version of the *Witch Hammer*, his *Démonomanie*. This book was not at all hampered by irrationality. The numerological and astrological leanings still incriminating his earlier treatises on economics and history method are totally absent from his witch book. Like the *Witch Hammer*, Bodin focuses on the new demonological equation of birth control and witchcraft with its typical emphasis on midwifery. As a leading *homme de lettres* he goes to all lengths not to leave out any of the traditional means of magic which, of course, continued to be punished. They form the bulk of the book and, thereby, may convey to a careless reader the impression of being its main task. Pre-empting the finest historians of birth control, Bodin "decodes" *pharmakeia* and *veneficium* - known from Antiquity and the Middle Ages and clearly distinguished from their

meaning as homicidal poison - as the *maleficium* of birth control to be persecuted as witchcraft.

In Bodin's works the *Démonomanie* does not stand alone in analyzing the dangers of underpopulation. His historical research, most notably the *Methodus* (1566), and his political-economic research, the *République* (1576), is no less obsessed with a budding population than his witch book. The fall of nations from antiquity onwards is blamed - together with inflation - on declining populations due to birth control. For Bodin, the witch hunter, population policy executed as suppression of birth control was at the heart of a genuinely *political* economy, a concept worked out by him and as a term coined by his disciple Montchrétien. Like combating the danger of inflation by controlling coinage out of the influx of gold and silver from the New World, the state should prevent the danger of an undersupply of working people by forcing its inhabitants to boost their number of children beyond their individual economic demand.

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