

Major Paper Presentation

Student: Jessica Lees	Date: Thursday, January 12, 2017
Time: 2:30 pm	Place: MACKN Extension 2020

Title:	Conjuring the Devil: Accusations of Witchcraft and the Reclamation of Masculinity in Early Modern Scotland
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Abstract:
<p>Early Modern Europe was a society based upon patriarchal structure in all aspects of organization, was deeply rooted in religious tensions and anxiously dealt with unstable political and economic circumstances. The shifting fabric of Early Modern civilization created unease in all echelons of society across most of Europe and allowed for political, religious, social and economic anxieties to manifest themselves in the belief and persecution of witches. The social landscape of Scotland was hardly different in the Early Modern period and Scottish witch-hunts were widespread, aggressive and passionately fueled by the state, the populace, both elite and not, and the clergy. While witch-hunt scholarship tends to predominantly look at the role of women in the hunts, as witches and accusers, and men in relation to them as judges, husbands, hunters, prickers and local elites, there is a gap in the scholarship addressing men who were accused of being witches themselves. Despite witchcraft's deep association with women, accusations were carried out against men as well. This study will use the trials of five Scottish male witches between 1590 and 1650 to examine why these men were accused of witchcraft, theorize how being accused of being witches feminized them, and most importantly assess if men accused of witchcraft showed a distinctively masculine concern for their honour and therefore used their confessions and defenses while on trial as an opportunity to reassert their masculinity.</p>

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