



Monsters & Witches



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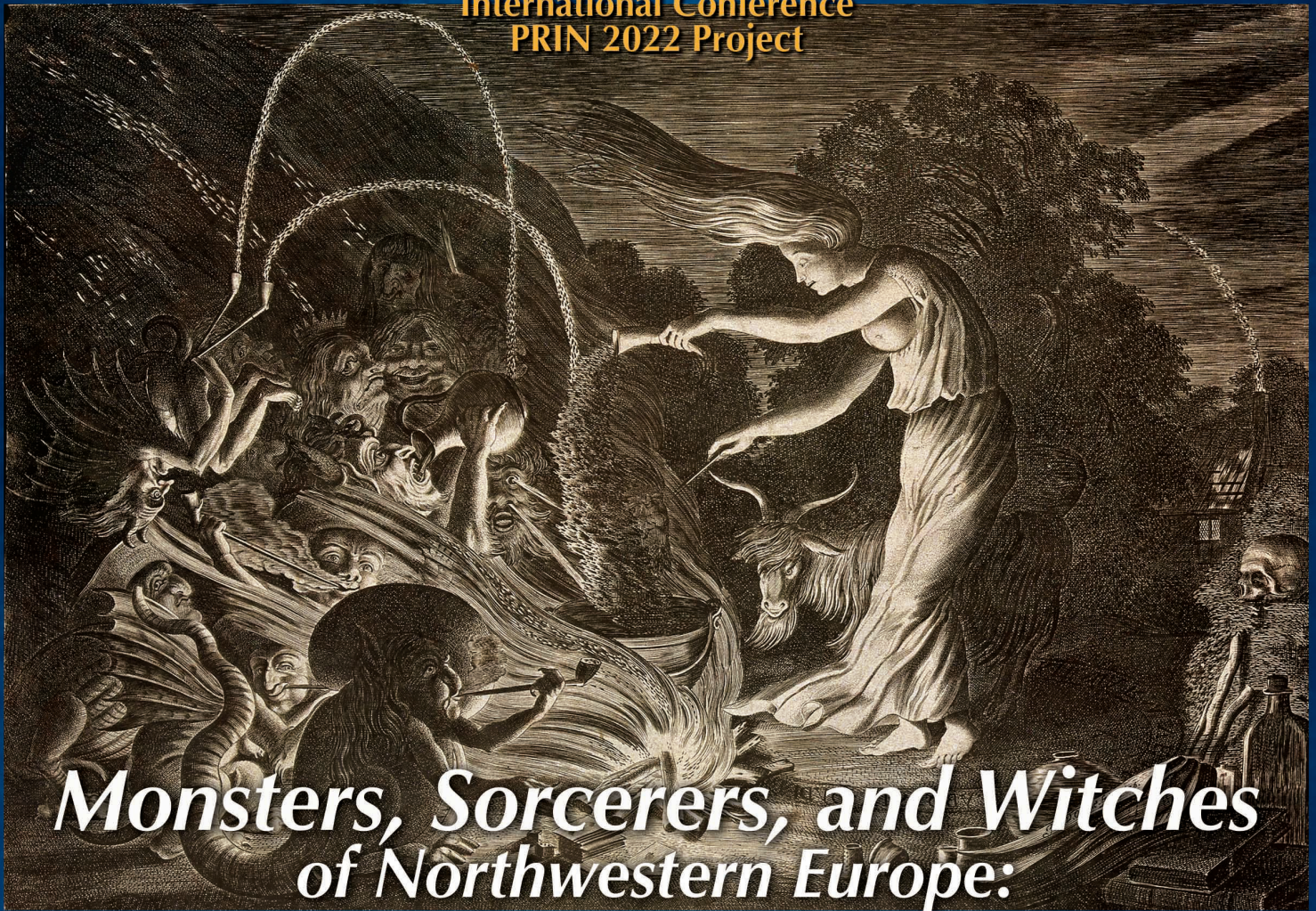


UNIVERSITÀ
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UNIVERSITÀ DI NAPOLI
L'ORIENTALE

International Conference
PRIN 2022 Project



Monsters, Sorcerers, and Witches of Northwestern Europe:

*The Medieval and Early Modern Construction of Otherness
in Literature for Popular Audiences*

University of Siena

Scientific Committee

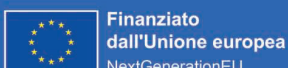
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Piazzetta delle
Logge del Grano, 5
Arezzo

9-11 July 2025

Organising Committee

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**International Conference
within the PRIN 2022 Project**

***Monsters, Sorcerers, and Witches of Northwestern Europe:
The Medieval and Early Modern Construction of Otherness
in Literature for Popular Audiences***

**University of Siena (Italy)
Arezzo campus
9-11 July 2025**

Witchcraft has not a Pedigree
T'is early as our Breath [...].

Emily Dickinson, *The Complete Poems*, 1955.

Monsters violate the borders between man and beast or human and divine, but they are also a way of talking about the rejected or repulsive Other. Monsters disturb a shared sense of decorum, order, and taste. They are grotesque, distorted, ugly, bestial, and horrifying. They fascinate and repel. They are said to link bodily deformity to moral or political evils. And, above all, monsters offer a way of thinking about the world.

Joan B. Landes, *Revolutionary Anatomies*, 2004.

To mark the conclusion of a biennial research carried out by four Italian Universities (Siena, Turin, Florence, and Naples “L’Orientale”), the scientific committee of the PRIN 2022 Project *Monsters, Sorcerers, and Witches of Northwestern Europe: The Medieval and Early Modern Construction of Otherness in Literature for Popular Audiences* invites abstract submissions for a three-day international conference, to be hosted at the University of Siena on 9-11 July 2025.

The conference will devote attention to monstrous births of human beings, illicit magic, and witchcraft – three features at the core of the Renaissance preternatural imagination – in order to highlight the connection between prodigious events and marginality, placing a special emphasis on the resulting social relegation of the individuals involved in them.

Particularly appreciated will be contributions taking into examination non-canonical sources, such as ballads, broadsheets, pamphlets, as well as manuals, sermons, and annals, which were destined for large and culturally varied audiences, including those with limited literacy. The time frame under consideration will encompass the late Middle Ages and the whole early modern period, so as to inspect both the genesis, development, and aftermath of such phenomena in Northwestern European texts.

Proposals seeking to investigate the processes of interpretation and exploitation of the preternatural will also be very welcome, as will those scrutinising the mechanisms of

repression underlying the narration of preternatural events, by relating them to their prescriptive framework.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Monstrosity, witchcraft, and gender.
- The witch, the deformed child's mother and their connections with other liminal subjects.
- Metamorphosis and shapeshifting.
- Crossing boundaries with monstrosity and witchcraft.
- Border conflicts or crossings between normativity and non-normativity.
- Transgression through monstrosity and witchcraft.
- Classifications and fluidity of monstrosity and magic.
- The non-normative body and/or intellect in the late Middle Ages and the early modern period.
- Monstrosity and witchcraft as markers of physical and intellectual disability.
- Medical, legal, religious, social or political evaluations of monstrosity and witchcraft.
- Monstrosity, witchcraft and related textual genres (teratologies, chronologies of strange events, demonological treatises, etc.).

We are particularly keen to promote interdisciplinary approaches and encourage submissions that engage with literary, historical, theological, medical, legal, or cultural perspectives.

Papers should not exceed 20 minutes and will be followed by a five-minute discussion.

If you wish to present a paper, email an abstract of 250-300 words alongside a short bio-note (100-150 words).

Conference dates: 9-11 July 2025

Venue: Department of Philology and Literary Criticism
University of Siena
Pionta Campus – Logge del Grano Hall
Piazzetta Logge del Grano, n. 5 – 52100 Arezzo (Italy)

Deadline for proposals: 2 March 2025

Notification of acceptance: 16 March 2025

Please send your proposals to: luca.baratta@unisi.it;
monsterswitchesnorthwesterneu@gmail.com

Project & Conference website:
<https://sites.google.com/view/monsterswitches/home?authuser=0>