

**Hi-tech vs. superstitions:
the world of fauna and flora in superstitious beliefs of seventeenth-century English
society¹**

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In the seventeenth century, English society was exposed to numerous calamities, including the Civil War, the Great Plague and the Great Fire. These and many other devastating events of the Stuart Age were neither understood nor could be explained rationally by those who witnessed them. Still, even with the Enlightenment virtually at hand, people resorted to explanations and remedies based on superstitions, magic and witchcraft. The world of fauna and flora constituted an important part of these superstitious beliefs.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the convictions of English society with reference to the magical powers that were attributed by many members of society to animals and plants. In addition, I will try to show how species of animals and plants were utilised in the field of medicine, both for prevention and treatment.

The paper provides evidence that seventeenth-century communities in England upheld certain superstitious beliefs related to the world of fauna and flora. Seemingly, it would appear that different animals and plants offered some kind of protection from the formidable surroundings and disastrous events. To the same extent, numerous species of both animals and plants served as a means to treat ailments, casting aside—at least for the time being—some progress that was being made at that time in the field of medicine.

Keywords: *superstitions, witchcraft, healing, the Stuart Age*

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