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Sommario/riassunto

Inquisition trials for sorcery and witchcraft in Portugal reached a late crescendo (1715 to 1755). This study of those events focuses on the Inquisition's role in prosecuting and discrediting popular healers (called *saludadores* or *curandeiros*), who were charged with practicing magical crimes. Significantly, these trials coincide with the entrance of university-trained physicians and surgeons into the paid ranks of the Portuguese Inquisition in unprecedented numbers. State-licensed medical practitioners, motivated by professional competition combined with a desire to promote rationalized "scientific" medicine, used their positions within the Holy Office to initiate trials against purveyors of superstitious folk remedies. The repression of folk healing reveals a conflict between learned medical culture and popular healing culture in Enlightenment-era Portugal. In this rare instance, the Inquisition functioned as an instrument of progressive social change.
