



Maria Agnesi is most remembered for the Witch of Agnesi. But how did the curve get the name of a witch? The term witch actually came from a mistranslation. Agnesi used the name *versiera*, which means, "to turn" in Latin. This first appears in the commentary by Father Guido Grandi. During the course of time, the word *versiera* took on different meanings. The words *adversaria* and *versaria* signify a woman who is contrary, an adversary, or a woman who is contrary to God. During the Middle Ages, the word became to denote "a female fiend or goblin" or "the devil's grandmother" and other meanings equivalent to the English word witch. Reverend John Colson was the first person to use the word *versiera* wrong, which is very likely because he learned Italian for the sole purpose to translate "Analytical Institutions." Therefore, the term witch is associated

with Agnesi because or a mistranslation of the name of the curve, not because Agnesi is an actual witch.