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Cologne During the Witch Hunts, 1627-1662

Megan E. McGee

**Thesis submitted to the
Eberly College of Arts & Sciences
at West Virginia University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

**Master of Arts
in
History**

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Department of History

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**Keywords: Witches, Germany, Cologne, Women, Early Modern Europe
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ABSTRACT

Cologne During the Witch Hunts, 1627-1662

by Megan E. McGee

This thesis examined Cologne during the years that witchcraft persecution was the highest in the city, from 1627-1662. By using a microhistorical approach on primary sources it found that strained relationships were the chief causes of the accusations. This thesis also discovered that in Cologne, at least, all of those under the age of 30 confessed to witchcraft while all of those above the age of 30 denied the accusations. It did this by both statistical analysis of the questions asked of the accused as well as in depth analysis of the answers that the accused gave their judges.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my family. I would like to thank my parents and grandparents for always believing in me, my brother for making me laugh, and to my Grandpa Doc for planting the love of learning and history. To my husband Scott, for being there even when I was discouraged and ready to quit, Deegan for understanding that homework will not last forever, and to Connor for reminding me that I have responsibilities other than schoolwork. Thank you all for your patience and love. I love you all.

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I would like to thank each of my professors for their support and encouragement. Dr. Vester helped me with his enthusiasm, reminding me why I love to learn. Dr. Aaslestad helped me improve my writing with valid criticisms that made me strive for better style. Dr. Staples was a sympathetic listener when I was confused or overwhelmed, giving sound advice and valuable peace of mind. Each of them provided me with irreplaceable counsel, and I sincerely thank them for their time and dedication.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1629 there began a round of witchcraft accusations that led to the deaths of at least nine people in Cologne. These trials took place after a high profile witchcraft case against the General Postmaster, Katharina Henot. The majority of these trials took place in 1630 with the final recorded trial being in 1662. There were 19 trials, all recorded by the same notary, Stephen Muser. Though there is evidence that there were other trials, beyond these 19, whose proceedings were not recorded by Muser.¹

This thesis will argue that the vast majority of the accusations in Cologne were based on relationships, personal and business. This is shown within statistical analysis based on the questions that the judges asked the accused, as well as the testimony of the accused. This paper will also show that the older people who were accused maintained their innocence, while the younger accused readily admitted their guilt. Though we can only guess as to the difference we see a distinct generational divide between those who claimed they were innocent versus those who admitted their guilt.

This thesis shows these arguments through in depth readings of the trials as well as statistical analysis of what the judges were asking the accused. This method was used to provide the viewpoint of both the judges and the accused. The questions which were asked portray where the judges' interests lie, while the answers to those questions reveal the knowledge that the accused have of alleged witch behavior.

This relationship between the judge and the accused is dialogical because the judge expected certain answers. In order to relieve the interrogation, and possibly torture, the accused recounted events that the judge expected to hear. Yet, in the trials that we examine, often the accused denied any wrongdoing. However, we do discover that this dialogical relationship was intact among those who confessed. This was especially true with the two women whom we know were tortured. In these two accounts the accused confessed to what the judges asked, while at the same time attempting to remain above

¹ Gerd Schwerhoff, *Hexenverfolgung Köln (Reichsstadt)*, accessed July 23, 2010, http://www.historicum.net/no_cache/persistent/artikel/1638/.

the accusations. For instance, they confessed to attending the Sabbath while maintaining that they were not willing participants.

For centuries witches have frightened and captivated people. Today many people's ideas about witches and witchcraft correspond to stereotypes of the seventeenth century. Generally-held views about witches are that they are old, ugly women who curse other people, commit infanticide, worship the Devil and fly to their meetings on broomsticks.²

This stereotype is changing within modern literature, however. For example, everyone who has ever read or seen *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* knows the difference between the good witch Glinda and the wicked witch of the west. The Harry Potter novels have changed the look of witches even further. Witches could even be your eccentric next door neighbor, male or female. These modern characterizations actually coincide with medieval stereotypes better than the early modern stereotypes. In medieval Europe the actions of the witch were the deciding factor as to whether they were considered good or evil. There was a personal choice that people could make regarding their actions, even witches. Mystics and cunning folk were beneficial to the society, because of their knowledge of magic and rituals. This changed within the early modern era, when any amount of magical activity came to be considered evil and demonic.

The background for this paper began while researching children who were accused of witchcraft for a seminar paper. Among these published trials from Cologne in the seventeenth century there were three children who were accused and confessed to witchcraft. Each of these children was under the age of fourteen. The youngest was a girl, Maria Cecilia, who was only seven or eight. The inclusion of children this young in witchcraft trials was intriguing. These trials were examined closely to determine what exactly the children were accused of and how they responded to the questioning.

The children were two females and one male; in fact Peter was one of only two males who were accused and questioned by the justice minister in the course of these trials. The females both described typical Sabbath narratives: meeting the Devil at a

²Geoffrey Scarre, *Witchcraft and Magic in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Europe*, (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc, 1987), 15.

dance, swearing allegiance to him, and being asked to do malefic harm, in their case, poisoning. Peter, however, barely mentioned the Sabbath, but spoke more sexually. He claimed that the Devil came to him as a succubus.

What I noticed from these three trials was that the stories became more fantastic as the years progressed. The experiences of the accused at the feast varied dramatically. Maria Cecilia described a feast during which they ate pork and drank wine. The participants were excited and enthusiastic to the point that the devil had to calm them and remind them of their purpose. The older girl, Entgen, on the other hand, experienced a sensual, but frightening, event. There were people being beaten and chained to a rotating wheel while the Devil watched on. The feast was a disgusting meal of corpse and wine that tasted like urine. The difference between the accounts of Maria Cecilia and Entgen is marked. After a span of twenty-three years the details of the confession changed. They expanded, evolved and became more imaginative.

The primary sources for this thesis are found in the same collection of published trials that contained the children's trials mentioned above. These trials were all recorded by the same notary. As far as I am aware, these trials have not yet been historically analyzed. The editors of the publication, Jürgen Macha and Wolfgang Herborn, are linguists whose interests lie in the evolution of the German language. They utilized the trial records to chart the evolution of the language just as I will use them to investigate the evolution of popular belief about witches.

Throughout this paper I will be answering numerous questions: who is the accused? How does he or she fit into the seventeenth-century stereotype of the witch? What questions do the judges ask? What do the judges consider proof of witchcraft? What do the accused say of the Sabbath? In what activities did the accused claim to participate? How many of these activities constitute magical activities? How does the accused describe the Devil?

Other primary sources I will examine are Pope Innocent VIII's *Summis desiderantes affectibus*, the *Malleus Maleficarum* and Johann Weyer's *De Praestigiis Daemonum*. I chose these texts due to the effect they had on the formation of popular thought and to exemplify the changes that occurred within educated circles. These are all

important sources in determining what questions were asked of accused persons, as well as what beliefs became central to the stereotype of the witch.

This paper will be divided into four chapters. The first chapter will contain a historiography of current research in witchcraft and the witch trials. This chapter will also include a brief history of Cologne during the sixteenth and seventeenth century and a background of the theological changes that made the *Malleus Maleficarum* and demonological texts relevant.

The second chapter will focus on the statistics surrounding these confessions. For instance, how many women were accused versus how many men? How many of each sex were arrested and hanged? How many of these women were widows? I will look at distinct themes within the questioning and within the answers in order to determine whether the questions become more skeptical while the answers of the women become more fantastical. Some of these answers are easier to discover than others, but by examining the trials closely enough I may be able to discover minute details that will help answer the more difficult questions.

A third chapter will compare the narratives. First I will give summaries of each trial. As previously noted, I expect that as the decades progress the narrative will become more fantastical. In this chapter I will examine any recurring themes that come about in the narratives: for instance, the dance, the food at the Sabbath and the ability of witches to transform objects into animals.

The fourth chapter will provide my conclusion, giving a summarization of what I found as well as any questions that remain unanswered. This final chapter will also give suggestions on how to further this research and this topic.

Several obstacles arose while analyzing this source. First, the judges' questioning followed no set organization. This was possibly a tactic used by the judges to keep the accused witches thinking on their feet, in order to produce inconsistencies that could then be used against them. For example, a trial record might include two questions about the Devil and then a question about confession followed by a question about another woman.

Second, though the notary, Stephen Muser, recorded the testimony of the accused, the testimonies include several inconsistencies within the questioning. For

instance, Christina Plom claimed to have attended two or three dances. Later, however, the judges claimed that she had told them that she had attended twenty or thirty of the dances. Whether they said this knowing that she had claimed two or three and hoping to catch her in a lie or whether the original record of two to three was a mistake within the manuscript is unknown.

Third, historians are aware that torture was a common method to encourage the accused to confess. However, the records do not always indicate when torture was employed. For instance, during our trials, there are two instances where Stephen Muser directly states that torture was used. Yet, I cannot be certain that it was not used in other trials though unmentioned. Fourth, linguistically this endeavor was very challenging. Seventeenth-century writing was not the standardized writing of today. Certain words were unable to be translated, despite best efforts. Added into this linguistic difficulty were the Latin phrases and sentences that the notary, a well-educated man, included with the vernacular. However, all pains were taken to accurately depict the trials and the words of the people involved.

CHAPTER 1

This chapter will look at the historiography of witchcraft, especially focused on early modern Germany. This chapter also includes a brief history of the city of Cologne as a backdrop for the years that this thesis examined. Also added is information on the theological changes that helped perpetuate the popular stereotype of the witch.

Historiography

The European witch hunts have perplexed and intrigued many scholars. The focus of traditional scholarship was primarily on the causes of the executions. The deaths of thousands of people, primarily women, are naturally an engrossing subject to research. Traditionally there existed a belief that the rise of the witchcraft persecutions coincided with a period of extreme public superstition. This belief was coupled with the theory that the decline in witchcraft persecutions went hand in hand with the expansion of Enlightenment thought. These beliefs began in the late eighteenth century and were paramount until the mid-twentieth century.¹ The prevailing belief was that this period of witchcraft persecution was due to religious zealotry, lack of scientific thought and intense superstition.

However, there were numerous facts that did not coincide with this primary theory. Based on this premise the majority of the persecutions should have taken place during the Middle Ages and should have become extinct by the nineteenth century. Romantic authors such as Sir Walter Scott wrote papers on the role of women as witches. Yet, Scott himself acknowledged the continued belief in witches and even wrote of a case that he was aware of in 1800.² This theory also did not take into account the changing role of the Devil in Christian faith or the fact that the height of witchcraft persecutions

¹Jonathan Berry and Owen Davies, *Palgrave Advances in Witchcraft Historiography*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 52.

²Walter Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft Addressed to J.G. Lockhart*, (London: Murray, 1830), 228.

took place well into the early modern period. In fact, even within Europe, there remained a belief in witches and their power into the modern era.³

In the 1920's Margaret Murray began to question the traditional theory of past historians. She was of the opinion that the women who were questioned were recounting actual events that they had either witnessed or in which they had taken part. The Sabbath was an actual event in which certain women participated. According to Murray, these women were the remnants of a pre-Christian agricultural religion who were merely practicing their beliefs.⁴ She viewed the witches as anti-establishment victims. The Church was attempting to remove any religion that could threaten its power. Her theories helped lead to the legitimization of modern Wiccan beliefs, especially those espoused by Gerald Gardner.⁵

Unfortunately Murray lacked empirical evidence of the existence of a separate pre-Christian religion, or evidence of their gatherings. By the early modern period, Christianity was completely spread throughout Europe. Though there were certain regional differences, some which were seen as heretical by the Church, Christianity was still the religion of Europe.

In the late 1960's there was a turn in the research that began to question why these persecutions took place. Instead of blindly attributing the persecutions to a superstitious belief, historians began to examine the mindset of the period. Were these prosecutions due to fears of social conspiracy? Were they the products of weather change and crop failures? Were they due to a bad economy and the rising distance between the rich and the poor? Were the judges complete misogynists who led the questions to receive the answers that they desired? Were the persecutions an attempt to keep the lower classes subjugated? These questions, along with many that arose from the answers to these questions gave historians numerous routes to examine in the history of witchcraft.

It must be noted, however, that all evidence suggests that the judges, clergy and accused believed in the power of witches, the power of the Devil and the possibility of

³Richard M. Golden, "An American Perspective on the European Witch Hunts," *The History Teacher* (August 1997), 420.

⁴Margaret Murray, *The God of the Witches*, (London: Sampson Low, 1933), preface.

⁵Barry and Davies, 70.

malfeasance. The skepticism that is prevalent in modern society toward magic and the occult was not as widespread in the early modern period. Though some scholars have tried to show early modern skepticism by researching *De Praestigiis Daemonum* by Johann Weyer, written originally in 1563; even Weyer did not doubt the power or the existence of the Devil.⁶

Hugh Trevor-Roper wrote an article that showed the inconsistencies of the traditional progressive theory. He noted that during the Middle Ages there was no ‘witch-craze’, which he viewed as an organized persecution of witches.⁷ He argued that it was the elite educated ‘experts’ on witchcraft who led the persecutions. “For two centuries the clergy preached against witches and the lawyers sentenced them.”⁸ The numbers of witches accused continued to grow until there was a widespread belief in a conspiracy against Christendom.

Trevor-Roper claimed that it was the Catholic Church, in general, and the Dominican friars, in particular, who created and maintained the myth of the witch. They were the ones who led the persecutions and the ones who taught the stereotype of the witch. “The stereotype, once established, creates, as it were, its own folk-lore, which becomes in itself a centralizing force.”⁹ In essence he considered the persecutions a top down phenomenon, resulting from the educated elite.

While Trevor-Roper considered the entire period and events part of the generalized witch-craze, H.C.E. Midelfort made a clear distinction between the period of the witch hunts versus the fervor of the witch craze. He was of the opinion that initial witch hunts were a social function, in essence, culling the flock. However, he viewed the witch craze as a dysfunctional event.¹⁰ This was due to the lack of social control once the

⁶George Mora and Benjamin Kohl, *Witches, Devils and Doctors in the Renaissance: De Praestigiis Daemonum*, trans. John Shea (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1998), 498.

⁷H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and Other Essays*(New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 91. This book is a collection of his articles.

⁸Ibid., 96.

⁹Ibid., 190.

¹⁰H.C.E. Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany 1562-1684: The Social and Intellectual Foundations*(Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 4.

accusations flew. Normally those who were accused were older single women. These were women who were considered social burdens; many of them were beggars and scolds. However, once the witch craze began, anyone, including men and children, was liable to be accused.¹¹ This expansion of accusations into viable members of society was especially true if the use of torture was employed.

Carlo Ginzburg returned to Murray's argument while examining trials that took place in the Friuli region during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In *The Night Battles*, he discovered evidence of a pre-Christian agricultural cult that had evolved their beliefs to coincide with Christianity. The members of this cult called themselves the *benandanti* and considered themselves champions of Christianity.¹² They believed in a spiritual world where they fought against evil witches. Yet, during the time in which they were targeted by the Inquisition they began to view themselves as witches.¹³ This change was largely due to the skewed questioning of the Inquisitors.

While most of the *benandanti* were men, the vast majority of accused witches were women. Numerous historians began to look at the feelings towards women during the period of the persecutions. Some of these historians, such as Trevor-Roper, Keith Thomas, Alan Macfarlane and Christina Lerner acknowledged the sexual discrepancy in the number of women who were accused and executed. However, they believed that this was not due to a social misogyny but rather due to other social factors. As Christina Lerner noted, "the crime of witchcraft, while sex-related, was not sex-specific."¹⁴

Anne Llewelyn Barstow took the opposing view. She saw this period of persecution as an attack against women. She claimed that women were valued faith healers until the sixteenth century. Her reason for the persecutions lies in the desire for men to dominate female sexuality and reproduction.¹⁵ She noted that it was men, specifically educated men, who tortured, questioned, examined and executed these

¹¹Ibid., 1-2.

¹²Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles*(Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 16.

¹³Ibid., 129.

¹⁴Anne Llewelyn Barstow, "On Studying Witchcraft as Women's History," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 4, 2(1988), 16.

¹⁵Ibid., 8.

women.¹⁶ She faulted other historians for their denial that sexism played a fundamental role in the witch hunts. With women at over 80% of the victims she viewed the misogyny as a given.

Robin Briggs agreed that women were the primary victims of the witch accusations, though he claimed that this was often the response of years of incidents rather than an immense misogyny. These incidents were usually fairly benign until there was an unexplained sickness or death. When these unexplained illnesses occurred, people searched for someone to blame. The fear was compounded if the illness affected a baby. It was often at this point that the parents would remember an old woman who held the baby.

Lyndal Roper viewed the accusations and the witch craze as a result of a sexist society that had fears surrounding fertility and infant mortality. She explained that this was the primary reason why midwives and older infertile women were targeted.¹⁷ The barrenness and loss of sexuality made these women outcasts. Other members of their society also thought it gave the elderly women a motive. Their envy of the sexually active and desired young mother gave the mother a target if anything were to go wrong after the delivery of the baby.

Roper also explained the process of torture and confessions in length. She asserted that the interrogators felt that they were doing the will of God by breaking the spirit of the witch, and were in fact performing a religious ritual.¹⁸ The interrogators themselves, according to Roper, did not employ the torture devices. This allowed the accused to differentiate between the torturer and the interrogator. She claimed that most interrogators were looked upon as fatherly figures, enticing the accused to confide in them to stop the torture. The role of the benign father figure may also account for the substance of the confessions told by the children being interrogated.

Edward Bever thought that the changes that come in a woman's life along with menopause caused some of these women to behave in an abrasive and aggressive way.

¹⁶Ibid., 17.

¹⁷Lyndal Roper, "Witchcraft and Fantasy in Early modern Germany," *History Workshop* 32 (Autumn 1991), 33.

¹⁸Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 50.

“Elderly women were beset by socioeconomic problems like poverty and marginality and frustrated by sociocultural restrictions like limited legal rights and restricted outlets for sexuality.”¹⁹ He contended that their response to these personal changes in their social and sexual station caused many women to act abrasively. According to Bever, they even “accepted and cultivated these patterns of behavior in order to enforce respect and obedience.”²⁰ These women, though social misfits, were feared due to their abrasive personalities.

The question of whether women were strong and feared or were weak victims of the persecutions is an interesting one. It seems as if they could, in fact, be both. The majority of the accused were victims of society, poor and old. Contemporary scholars believed that women were the weaker sex and thus were more apt to fall to the wiles of the Devil. Yet, those who were considered scolds were possibly providing an abrasive front as an offensive move. It is possible that the use of cursing and scolding provided these women who had no control with a sense of power.

What was happening during this time was another major factor of the witch hunts. Wolfgang Behringer and Emily Oster both connected the rise in witchcraft belief to the climate changes that were taking place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Little Ice Age was a period of time in which the cold climate decimated the crops and subsequently the economy of early modern Europe. Behringer, in 1999, noted that in 1626 the winter was particularly harsh, with snow coming even in May.²¹ This caused failed crops and, according to Behringer, an increase in witch hunts.

For centuries witches have been associated with weather changes, especially hailstorms. Behringer dated the connection to Inquisitorial questions from the 1380s.²² The amount of destruction that came along with the Little Ice Age, however, brought back this idea of bewitching the weather. Behringer is of the opinion that the search for

¹⁹Edward Bever, “Witchcraft, Female Aggression, and Power in the Early modern Community,” *Journal of Social History* 35, 4(Summer 2002), 974.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Wolfgang Behringer, “Climate Change and Witch-Hunting: The Impact of the Little Ice Age on Mentalities,” *Climate Change* 43(1999), 344.

²²Ibid., 336.

witches was a bottom-up phenomenon. “Obviously, it was the impact of the Little Ice Age which increased the pressure from below and made part of the intellectual elite believe in the existence of witchcraft.”²³ He reinforced this argument by showing that the largest quantity of witchcraft trials coincided with the worst weather. The populace was faced with failed crops and starvation. They returned to the old notion that witches could affect the weather, and demanded that the elites search the witches out.²⁴

Emily Oster agreed with Behringer on the correlation of weather and witchcraft, and provided extensive statistics to emphasize her argument. After taking information from 11 regions throughout Europe she compared the numbers of trials with the severity of the winter and, in turn, the success of the harvest.²⁵ She produced graphs on this information that clearly show a connection between the bad weather and witchcraft accusations.²⁶ She did not provide any historical analysis concerning whether she viewed the witch hunts during this time as the result of pressure from below, as Behringer did. However, she provided the documentation to buttress Behringer’s argument.

The social and economic status of the women accused and doing the accusing has also been examined. Edward Bever examined the relationships and noticed that most of the women accused were of the same socio-economic status as the women who accused them.²⁷ This contradicts Barstow’s claim that women who accused sought out those even weaker. She claimed that, “in the witchcraft trials, the poor attacked the even poorer; and the poor women attacked those women even further out of power than they.”²⁸ Bever, however, like Briggs, traced the interpersonal relationships and discovered that many of the relationships of those who are accusing and accused have been battered. The

²³Ibid., 346.

²⁴Ibid., 341.

²⁵Emily Oster, “Witchcraft, Weather and Economic Growth in Renaissance Europe”, *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 18(Winter 2004), 219.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Bever, 958.

²⁸Barstow, 18.

accusations were more due to economic and personal reasons rather than due to malefic harm or intent.²⁹

Changing Religious Beliefs

Historically, despite the traditional belief of witchcraft historians, Catholic theology was skeptical of occult or magical powers. During the Middle Ages the Church followed the belief of the laws of creation and the *Canon Episcopi*. The *Canon Episcopi* demanded that belief in the power of witches was itself, heretical.³⁰ The belief in powers such as night flying, weather magic and malefic magic meant that there was power that did not come from God. It was not within the power of the witch to use supernatural means to harm crops, livestock or people. Thus, witches were little more than heretics. They were women, and occasionally men, who had pledged themselves to the Devil and renounced Christ and the Church.

The Devil was a worker of God. He merely did God's bidding. This tradition came directly from the Bible and the story of Job, in which Job was tormented by Satan to prove his faith in God. According to the laws of creation there were certain things that the Devil was not able to do: create, change forms, and work miracles.³¹ All of the power that the Devil had was given to him from God. Maxwell-Stewart summed it up well, "no spirit, good or evil, could accomplish more than what was allowed by the laws of creation, which had been laid down by the Creator himself, and in that consequence their power was limited, even though to humans, whose knowledge of those same laws was so much less than that of the spirits, it might seem limitless."³²

Theological thought gradually changed. This change consisted of several elements, perhaps most importantly the role of the Devil. The reason that this change is so important in understanding witchcraft trials and the witch craze is because these

²⁹Bever, 958.

³⁰Alan Charles Kors and Edward Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700: A Documentary History*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2001), 65.

³¹Midelfort, 12.

³²P.G. Maxwell-Stewart, *Witchcraft in Europe and the New World*, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 2.

changing beliefs determined what was deemed possible or impossible. The role of the Devil changed from one of submission to God to one of immense power directly against God. Robert Muchembled in his *History of the Devil*, claimed that the change was made in order to have people fear the Devil rather than question the authority of God.³³ Prior to this theological change God was responsible for all actions, whether they were positive or negative. After belief in the power of the Devil rose, he became responsible for the evil in the world. Negative events were no longer a punishment from God, but the torment of an evil entity.

Scholarly works about the Devil, demons and theology were actively printed during the fifteenth century. Like Trevor-Roper, Maxwell-Stewart viewed the changes in popular thought on witchcraft and the Devil as coming from the elite and working down to the common people. He described this process thus: “university educated men developed a number of theories about witches and evil spirits, which gradually began to impinge upon everyone else’s perceptions via the courtroom, the pulpit, the pamphlet and the place of execution.”³⁴

As previously mentioned, Trevor-Roper placed the blame at the feet of the Dominican friars, the Inquisition and, ultimately, the Catholic Church. In order to stamp out heresy the Church began the Inquisition. The Dominican friars were the Inquisitorial judges who gained the most from the trials. Once the Inquisition was in full force many of the activities associated with heretics began to become associated with witches. Trevor-Roper believed this was part of a larger movement of persecution.

This is a theory that Robert Moore explained in his book, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*. Throughout this book he looked at changing view of the Church toward marginal members of society: lepers, Jews, heretics and the like. Moore argued that actions in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries resulted in a persecuting society that continues to today.³⁵ The persecuting actions against the a-socials of medieval Europe:

³³Robert Muchembled, *A History of the Devil: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Jean Birrell, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 271.

³⁴Maxwell-Stewart, 28.

³⁵R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe 950-1250*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 190.

heretics, lepers, Jews, homosexuals and prostitutes, were not coincidental. Moore argued that the persecution was due to many factors: politics, religion, social regulations, economic change, and the beginnings of bureaucratic centralization. On page four he clarified his point further, “deliberate and socially sanctioned violence began to be directed, *through established governmental, judicial and social institutions*, against groups of people defined by general characteristics such as race, religion or way of life; and that membership of such groups in itself came to be regarded as justifying these attacks” (original emphasis).³⁶

This idea of the continuation of persecution fits with our knowledge of the witchcraft trials. Though there were a few trials during the Middle Ages the vast majority of the trials occurred after the large Inquisitorial hunts for heretics. This does not seem to be a coincidence, especially given the fact that many of the deeds in which heretics and Jews were rumored to participate became the same activities of which witches were accused.³⁷ The cunning men and women of medieval times became targets of heresy during the early modern era. It did not matter whether their power was beneficial or malignant; it was the act of supernatural power itself that made them heretics and witches.

The Catholic Church was the central orthodox religion until the Reformation began in 1517. The primary theological texts against witches were published prior to the Reformation, with the perceived support of the Catholic Church. Pope Innocent VIII was a man who believed wholly in the power and presence of an organized witches’ cult that was poised to harm Christendom. Prior to Innocent VIII the Church followed the traditional rule of skepticism, not in skepticism that witches existed, but rather that they were unable to use any malefic magic to harm.

In 1484 Pope Innocent VIII distributed his papal bull, *Summis desiderantes affectibus*, which negated the earlier rule of the *Canon Episcopi* by attributing power to witches that previously had been denied by the Church. With permission from the Pope, Heinrich Institoris Kramer and Jakob Sprenger set out to remove witches from the Holy

³⁶Ibid., 4.

³⁷Ibid., 33.

Roman Empire. While these men were the authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, their witch hunting background preceded both the book and the papal bull. Kramer, the more well known of the two, led a series of witch trials in Alsace, the Upper Rhine and Lake Constance areas beginning in 1481.³⁸ Kramer's desire was to grant special authority to witch hunters, thus making them above local laws and answerable only to the Pope.

The *Malleus Maleficarum* is perhaps the most well-known of all of the witch hunting books. It was published in 1486, two years after the *Summis desiderantes affectibus*. In fact, it was published with the papal bull attached to the front, giving it a sign of legitimacy. However, Maxwell-Stewart claimed that this was an intentional move by Kramer without the knowledge of the Pope, to put forth this book as the penultimate book of the witch hunt.³⁹ Though the *Malleus Maleficarum* is discussed widely in witch research, scholars debate the importance and influence of the work. Some scholars like Trevor-Roper and Maxwell-Stewart believed that the *Malleus* was highly influential in shaping perception and creating the stereotype of the witch. While others argued that the *Malleus* was not as influential as previously thought. Midelfort, for instance, claimed that the *Malleus* was not widely distributed, it was written in Latin and thus only accessible to scholars and it was not often mentioned during trials or sermons.⁴⁰ His argument, however, did not take into account the transference of ideas from elite to popular culture.

The *Malleus Maleficarum* is an immense book describing the many aspects of witchcraft and how to fight against witches. There were five elements of witchcraft that Kramer and Sprenger addressed in the *Malleus*. Maxwell-Stewart identified these as elements of heresy, malefic acts, criminal acts, marvelous acts and sexual acts.⁴¹

The connection with witches and heretics has been previously noted. Kramer and Sprenger were most interested in the worship of demons and the Sabbath. For malefic

³⁸Werner Tschacher, *Heinrich Kramer (Heinricus Institoris)*, accessed Sept. 20, 2010, http://www.historicum.net/no_cache/persistent/artikel/5935/.

³⁹Maxwell-Stewart, 31.

⁴⁰Ibid., 4.

⁴¹Ibid., 29.

deeds they included raising storms, crop destruction and physical harm by magic. Criminal acts, including murder and infanticide, were also included and discussed. Marvelous acts were those that were considered impossible, including the flight of witches and transformations into other animals or people. Finally, they looked at the sexual aspect of witchcraft, whether malefic magic such as causing barrenness and impotence, or physical, such as the orgies that were supposed to take place at the Sabbath.⁴²

These aspects became the background of witch knowledge during the late fifteenth century. The question of why women were the singled out by Kramer and Sprenger needs to be addressed. The underlying beliefs of these two Dominican friars were that women were the weaker sex, were more prone to deceit and to the promise of carnal pleasures.⁴³ Because of this inherent weakness they were more susceptible to the wiles of the Devil and demons. What made the *Malleus* unique was that it was able to unite both secular and ecclesiastical ideas of witchcraft.⁴⁴

This unification of ideas led to secular court trials against witches. Whereas in the Middle Ages a witch was determined by the meaning behind the action, in the early modern period it was the deed itself that constituted witchcraft. For instance, a wise woman who had knowledge of herbs and was esteemed as a healer may have been viewed as magical. Her use of herbs and the result of healing may have made some believe she worked magic. Yet, the results of her actions were positive. It was not the use of magic that made one a witch, it was the heretical elements that were associated with it. These ideas changed with the publication of demonological texts and the rise in the power of the Devil. Soon any amount of magic, whether positive or negative, was associated with the demonic.⁴⁵

This change came along with questions of how women received these powers. Prior to the demonological texts it was assumed that some people, male and female, were

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., 31.

⁴⁴Midelfort, 21.

⁴⁵Ibid., 17.

able to manipulate forces. Church leaders began to question why these chosen few had these powers. They argued that while men may learn to manipulate forces and learn 'high' magic, women lacked the formal learning or inherent intelligence to perform any type of natural magic.⁴⁶ Educated men and Church leaders began to equate these gifts as being given by the Devil. The witch received these magical powers by creating a pact with the Devil. He, then, gave her supernatural powers. The pact with the Devil usually involved renouncing God, signing the pact and receiving the mark of the Devil.

This distinction of women as witches remained the stereotype, proof of this point is in the numbers of women who were accused and executed. Barstow estimated 100,000 executions from 1300-1700, with women at 80% of those accused and 85% of those executed.⁴⁷ These numbers reinforce Midelfort's argument that the witchcraft trials remained within the stereotype of the older woman until the hunts became out of hand and dysfunctional.

Many may assume that the changes that occurred with the advent of the Reformation changed the focus of witchcraft and the witch hunts, but they would be mistaken. Both Martin Luther and John Calvin believed in the existence and possibility of witches. Though they believed in the powers of the Devil their views on the role of women as witches differed. Maxwell-Stewart pointed out that after the Reformation, Catholics and Protestants used witchcraft as theological fodder against the other confession. Most Catholics by this time were primarily in line with the beliefs and theories of the *Malleus*, while the Protestants remained more in line with the older ideals of the *Canon Episcopi*.⁴⁸

Between the two major Protestant denominations, even, there were differences in belief. John Calvin was highly skeptical in the power of witches but had no doubts as to the power of the Devil.⁴⁹ However, Martin Luther believed that women had to become pious mothers and wives in order to have the moral fortitude to deny witchcraft. He

⁴⁶Ibid., 13.

⁴⁷Barstow, 1, 9.

⁴⁸Maxwell-Stewart, 43-44.

⁴⁹Ibid., 47.

argued that women, though weak willed, had a choice to become devoted to God and her family rather than become a witch. The *Malleus*, on the other hand, linked women and witchcraft so completely that the Catholic view was that it was more difficult for a woman not to be a witch than it was for her to become one. Whatever their differences Luther, like the *Malleus* before him, used sexist language when translating the Bible into German; specifically when translating the verse in Exodus 22:18: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." In this verse he replaced the gender neutral *maleficos* with the feminine *Zauberinnen*, once again showing the people that women, rather than men, were witches.⁵⁰ Even more importantly, perhaps, is the fact that this reached more common people being written in German than the Latin *Malleus Maleficarum*.

Johann Weyer, who came to be seen as a skeptic, wrote *De Praestigiis Daemonum* in 1563. In this book he tried to explain the difference between magic and poisoning, the primary crime that women were accused. He wrote that magicians, witches and poisoners should not all face the same punishment, "I have rightfully and very carefully distinguished the various notorious magicians from witches and poisoners, the same punishment should not be decreed indiscriminately for the former as for the latter."⁵¹ In his estimation magicians were men, usually clergy members, who sought to understand the mysteries of the world by becoming educated in the dark arts.⁵² In fact, he blamed these same men for the perpetuation of superstition: "If anyone is afflicted by some stubborn and uncommon disease which is not familiar to the untrained populace, and if he trusts in the pseudo-science of these men and seeks their advice, they will persuade him that the disease (which really arises from natural causes, and would not puzzle the more learned physicians) is maleficum or enchantment."⁵³

By perpetuating superstition these magicians were also perpetuating the power of the witch. However, Weyer noticed that most of the women who were accused of

⁵⁰Maxwell-Stewart, 46.

⁵¹Mora and Kohn, 479.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., 481.

witchcraft were really poisoners and did not have any supernatural powers.⁵⁴ He also believed that the women who confessed to committing supernatural crimes were confused by the Devil. “Since the so called Lamiae are indeed poor women-usually old women-melancholic by nature, feeble-minded, easily given to despondency, and with little trust in God, the Devil all the more gladly attaches himself to them, as being suitable instruments for him, and he insinuates his way into their bodies all the more easily, in order to confound their minds with various images, they believe and confess that they have done that which it was quite impossible for them to have done.”⁵⁵ This belief showed that despite his skepticism of the possibility of supernatural actions, he did not doubt the existence of the Devil, or power that he had to confound humans, especially women.

Whether Protestant or Catholic, witch trials continued throughout the early modern period in the Holy Roman Empire. Johannes Dillinger examined two regions of the Empire, one Protestant and one Catholic. It is interesting to note that he did not find any major differences within the accusations and trials. The accusations were based, like our trials, on personal enmities, and the primary differences were superficial. This seems to show that the seventeenth-century stereotype of the witch was typically constant but with some slight regional differences. Some scholars, like Roper, have claimed that Protestant regions were more skeptical and had fewer trials than the Catholic counterpart. However, there exist anomalies of both confessions. This thesis would argue that Cologne was an anomaly, having so few trials within the resolutely Catholic city, especially when contrasted with the witch craze that was occurring outside of the city walls.

Early Modern History of Cologne

The Holy Roman Empire consisted of hundreds of autonomous territories and three ecclesiastical electors, under the elected Emperor. After the Reformation it was an Empire at war. Prior to the seventeenth century the demography of Germany was

⁵⁴Ibid., 481-482.

⁵⁵Ibid., 498.

changing. The population had risen after a low point during the fourteenth century and after the latest outbreak of plague. Along with the rise of the population was an agricultural slump that left the crops ruined for years.⁵⁶ There was public discontent against lords, both secular and ecclesiastical. Along with these issues was the economic change from a rural economy to a market economy. During these troubling times the peasants were floundering while the village merchants were still prospering.

This was all compounded with the ideological changes that the Reformation invited. There was an acceptance of changing feelings to those who had always been in control. People were told to question what they had previously taken for granted, especially if it went against the teachings that were in the Bible. Previously there had been an assumption that the old laws were the paramount laws, now this assumption was challenged with the idea of godly laws. The battle of religions and beliefs led to enormous bloodshed. The Thirty Years War began in 1618 and lasted until 1648. However, the turmoil brought on by war was not finished with the Treaty of Westphalia. The social tensions still remained.

Cologne was a unique city in the early modern period. It was the largest city in the Empire with a population of approximately 40,000 people.⁵⁷ Though the surrounding area was ruled by the Archbishop, the city itself was a free imperial city. In fact, there were well defined physical boundaries, in this case the city wall. Areas outside of the city wall were under the control of the Archbishop, while the interior of the city was ruled by the city council.⁵⁸ This had been the situation in Cologne since the Battle of Worrington in 1288. After the battle the capital of the Archbishopric moved from the city of Cologne to Bonn. In the fourteenth century the city of Cologne created its constitution. As an imperial city, it had a direct connection with the Emperor, thus giving the city and its ruling council leverage against the Archbishop. Often the council used its direct connection with the Emperor as an Imperial city as leverage against the

⁵⁶Henry J. Cohn, "Anticlericalism and the German Peasant War of 1525" *Past and Present* 83 (1979), 17.

⁵⁷Peter Johanek, "Imperial and Free Towns of the Holy Roman Empire—City States in Pre-Modern Germany?", in *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures: An Investigation*, vol. 2, ed. Mogans Herman Hansen, (Copenhagen : Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 2000), 297.

⁵⁸Janis M. Gibbs, *Catholicism and Civic Identity in Cologne*, (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1996), 26.

Archbishop.⁵⁹ However, despite the Archbishop's lack of power within the city it was he who was in control of the justice. This was unique in that the council would have to initiate trials but then once the council and its judges reached a conclusion to the trial the Archbishop's men, the *Greven* and *Schaffen* would carry out the sentencing.⁶⁰

The council consisted of bi-annually elected members of the 22 guilds or *Gaffeln*. These guilds were not only business groups but were also political organizations. With the political power of the guilds, Cologne was an important player in European trade. Cologne contained 19 parishes and an active university. During the upheaval of the Reformation, Cologne was the only city in the Empire to remain wholly Catholic. The outlying area of the Archbishop, however, did have a short lived period during the Cologne War (1583-1588) where Catholicism and Protestantism clashed. The stability within the city, however, was due in large part to the cooperation of the Church, the university and the council.⁶¹

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the University of Cologne was the preeminent institution for Catholic theology. In fact, it was the University of Cologne that refused to endorse the *Malleus Maleficarum*, though Kramer forged an approval and attached it to reprints, hoping to garner more legitimacy.⁶² It is interesting that the preeminent Catholic university chose the *Canon Episcopi* over the beliefs of the *Malleus*. The university also advised the council on religious matters, but, despite its Catholic traditions, it did not bow unquestioningly to the Archbishop

The Archbishopric of Cologne, separated from the city by the wall, was one of the most aggressive in the witch hunts. William Monter described this territory as particularly fervent: "the seventeenth century persecutions of witches in the lands of the Elector of Cologne probably outstripped anything else in the Empire, or indeed the rest of Christendom."⁶³ Behringer numbered the executions by Ferdinand of Bavaria, the

⁵⁹Gibbs, 26.

⁶⁰Schwerhoff, *Hexenverfolgung*.

⁶¹Bernd Moeller, *Imperial Cities and the Reformation, Three Essays*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 56.

⁶²William E. Burns, *Witch Hunts in Europe and America: an encyclopedia*, (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), 158.

⁶³Bengt Anklaroo, Stuart Clark, William Monter, eds. *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Period of the Witch Trials*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 10.

Archbishop-elect of Cologne, at just under 2,000.⁶⁴ Yet, the city of Cologne did not succumb to this witch fervor. Johannes Dillinger and Gerd Schwerhoff attributed this marked difference to the skepticism of the council. This was a skepticism that many large cities exhibited. Dillinger wrote that “the so-called common people demanded witch hunts, while the councils were comparatively skeptical.”⁶⁵ In fact, Dillinger cited the number of executions in Cologne fewer than 40, which was astronomically smaller than the numbers of the Archbishopric.⁶⁶ Schwerhoff noted that there were no recorded witchcraft executions during the sixteenth century.⁶⁷ According to Hans-Wolfgang Bergerhauser, from 1610-1655, 36 people were executed for witchcraft.⁶⁸ The years of 1626-1630 were the high point of the city trials with 25 deaths. There were 15 executions in 1630 alone.⁶⁹

This high number was possibly due in large part to the sentencing and execution of Katharina Henot, a rich widow whose father was the Postmaster of Cologne. As a Patrician, Katharina held large amounts of power and influence. She was accused of bewitching nuns at St. Clara’s cloister. After failing to prove her innocence she was executed. The Archbishop wanted to exploit the situation and break the power of the council by claiming that the council was not serious when it came to witchcraft accusations.⁷⁰ However, perhaps due to the fears of the council on a rise in the Archbishop’s influence inside the city, the years following the trial of Katharina Henot produced the most witchcraft trials and executions in the city of Cologne. According to Schwerhoff this was also a period in which new judges were coming into power.⁷¹ These

⁶⁴Behringer, 345.

⁶⁵Johannes Dillinger, “The Political Aspects of the German Witch Hunts”, *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft*, (Summer, 2009), 75.

⁶⁶Ibid., 74.

⁶⁷Schwerhoff, *Hexenverfolgung*.

⁶⁸Hans-Wolfgang Bergerhauser, *Köln in Einem eiserene Zeitalter 1610-1686*, (Köln: Greven Verlag, 2010), 215.

⁶⁹Ibid., 219.

⁷⁰Ibid., 218.

⁷¹Schwerhoff, *Hexenverfolgung*.

new judges were more interested in persecution than their predecessors, thus giving another possible explanation to the abrupt change in procedure.

The skepticism of the judges was probable given the resolute Catholicism of the city, the refusal to adhere to the *Malleus* and the political structure of the city. The citizens of Cologne had a highly representative government where elections were held bi-annually. Women had legal standing on their own accord and were subject to the same laws as the men; they were able to testify, be executors of wills and legal guardians of children.⁷² Women were highly regarded and had significant political and social participation. This amount of participation may have accounted for the lower number of trials within the city due to larger representation of women and less political misogyny.

Perhaps the most difficult thing to conceptualize is the way in which both judges and the accused women rationalized their actions and statements. The logic that they employed is hard for a modern person to understand. The Age of Reason, the Industrial Revolution and The Theory of Evolution, among other things, have changed the way that most people think of the paranormal, the power of the Devil and even religion. Many of the beliefs that even the judges, educated and worldly men, espoused seem superstitious and unbelievable to most educated people today. This does not, however, mean that these were simple-minded men and women. The judges' worldview was based on the theological learning that they received from the Universities. The changes within the Church and theology affected their knowledge and beliefs. The women, on the other hand, were predominantly uneducated, had not attended the university, and were thus naturally more prone to superstitious beliefs than educated men. Though this is speculation, it is possible that some women fully believed that they were capable of hexes and magic, especially if they cursed someone who then, quite coincidentally, had some ill befall them. It is not impossible to imagine that someone who lacked any scientific knowledge would feel as if they were the cause of the misfortune.

These trials all took place during a time of great upheaval. The Thirty Years War left most of the Holy Roman Empire in ruins. It was a war that raged throughout the

⁷²Gibbs, 70.

Empire. It was an international war, with Sweden, France, Spain and Denmark all playing large roles. It was also a civil war, where some princes in the Empire fought against the Emperor. After the Diet of Augsburg in 1555 it was decided that the religion of the prince was the religion of the land he ruled. This arrangement, however, caused religious strife within the Empire. When Ferdinand II was elected and wanted to unite all of the Empire as Catholic, disregarding the Diet of Augsburg, the Protestant princes of the Empire were threatened. Thus the Thirty Years War was also a religious war. Politically united allies were not always confessionally united, however. For instance, France, a Catholic country, united with the Protestant states. This proves that though the war may have primarily been about religion, politics played as important a role.

There were four phases to the Thirty Years War: Bohemian, Danish, Swedish and French. During each of these phases Cologne, as a free city, was able to defend its citizens with treaties and alliances that the council approved. By 1619 soldiers of the Emperor came into the city and demanded men.⁷³ After this the council's primary goal was the safety of the citizens and the city's fortifications. However, it is not surprising with the importance of trade to the city council that the city tried to remain neutral throughout the war. This gave it a certain amount of security.

The economy of the Holy Roman Empire during this period was, unsurprisingly, complicated. With hundreds of autonomous lands each principality was unique. Theodore K. Rabb claimed that this was the primary problem when discussing the German economy during the Thirty Years War. According to Rabb most scholars attempted to look at the German speaking lands as a whole rather than as separate economies.⁷⁴ Rabb mentioned within his article that Cologne's population in the half century leading up to the war was declining. However, during the war the economy and population of the city increased.⁷⁵ Though he did not name the reasons behind this increase it is probable that it was due to the neutrality and trade of the city.

⁷³Christian Bartz, *Köln im Dreißigjährigen Krieg*, (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004), 46.

⁷⁴Theodore K. Rabb, "The Effects of the Thirty Years War on the German Economy", *The Journal of Modern History*, 34,1 (March 1962), 40.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 46-48.

In conclusion, this chapter began with a synopsis of the relevant historiography. It also showed the changes within religion that made the trials in the city of Cologne possible. It also examined the background of the city, its council and relationship with the Archbishop, actions during the war and economy. This allows us to understand the trials that will be examined in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2

This chapter will focus on the statistics that surround both the trials as a whole and each defendant individually. This chapter examines the questions asked by the judges and the primary themes involved in the questioning. The questions asked were indicative of what the judges believed. The answers provided by the accused to the judges' questions will be examined in the following chapter, and were more of an indication of the beliefs of the so-called common people. During this chapter and the next there will be references to the judge or judges. During each trial the accused was brought before at least one judge, and often different judges.

This chapter will address the trials chronologically. It will provide statistical analysis of the questions which will show any hidden similarities or differences within the trials. This statistical analysis will also determine whether the trials of the city of Cologne fit the scholarly assumptions of witchcraft.

These recorded trials began in 1629, though the catalyst for them, the trial of Katharina Henot, took place in 1626-27. The trials records for Katharina Henot were not published, thus they were not added to our statistical analysis. She will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3, though it is important at this time to know that she was a powerful patrician of the city. Though she fit the popular stereotype of the witch by being an older widow, she had political and personal power that made her an anomaly in the witch hunts. Despite her power and wealth she was tried and executed for witchcraft in 1627. The trials that we have access to all took place in the years following her trial. The vast majority of these trials took place in 1630.

These 19 trials encompassed women and men of all ages and professions. The average age of the accused was 42 and the median age was 40. Throughout these trials there were only two men accused, one a young boy. With 89% of the trials concerning women, this fell in place with what scholars would expect, reinforcing the belief that most witches were women. However, Lyndal Roper and others have argued that midwives bore the brunt of the accusations, which these trials do not support. In fact, only three of the women accused in the 19 trials were midwives. Most of the women

worked in retail trades, and were apple sellers, paper flower sellers, and shopkeepers. The largest number of any one profession was housewife, with four women who claimed that title. This showed that women were targeted in Cologne because of their gender, not because of their profession.

Table 1: Fate, Occupation and Age of Accused Witches

Name	Fate	Occupation	Age
Christaina Plom ⁴⁵	hanged	Fruit Seller	24
Elßbeth von Schwelm ¹	Archbishop	Housewife	64
Sophia Haas ¹	hanged	Housewife	77
Catharina (no last name) ⁴⁵	hanged	Beggar	30
Maria Cecilia von Ahrweiler ⁴	Archbishop		7 or 8
Entgen Schilts ¹	hanged	Midwife	74
En Volmers ¹	hanged	Midwife	60
En Konings	hanged	Midwife	50
Jost Nisius ²	unknown	unknown	67
Maria Grontsfelts	unknown	Seamstress	37
Anniken van Haut ¹	unknown	Silk Flower maker	70
Peter von Rodenkirchen ²³⁴	hanged	Beggar	11 or 12
Ursula Horst	unknown	Housewife	67
Entgen Eßers	released	Housewife	unknown
Anna Morßbach	unknown	Shopkeeper	40
Witwe Gertraud ¹	released	Apple Seller	unknown
Margrieth von Pellgraben ⁴	hanged	Maid	16
Entgen, Peter Lenarz daughter ³⁴	hanged		10
Anna Toer ⁴	unknown	Paper Flower maker	22
¹ widow			
² male			
³ held for longer than a year			
⁴ confessed			
⁵ tortured			

Another interesting observation, especially given the reticence of the city of Cologne, was the timing of the trials. The trials can be easily seen as two separate phases. First was the scare immediately following Katharina Henot. Second were the trials that took place from 1645-1662. Most, as previously mentioned, took place in the years directly following the Katharina Henot scare. These first trials were also the ones

that involved the most interrogations and questions. The first 11 trials took place in 1629-1630. These trials also produced the most questioning. Christina Plom, the first person accused, was questioned a total of seven times. Over these two years there were a total of 24 interrogations of eleven people.

However, the years after 1630 until 1662 only produced 11 interrogations of eight people. This seems to indicate that the initial fervor of questioning died after the first round of interrogations and executions. Of the eleven people questioned in those first two years, six were executed and two were handed over to the Archbishop's men. We have no record as to what befell the final three. Of the eight who were interrogated after the initial crisis, three were executed, two were released, and three had no record of what happened to them.

During the first scare, from 1629-1630, the average age of the accused was 50, ten years higher than our average for the trials as a whole. However, the median age was 60, which fit the popular stereotype of the witch. This seems to be opposite of what Midelfort would have us expect. According to his theory of the witch craze as a dysfunctional social phenomenon, we would assume that the average and median age during the height of the trials would be lower than the average and median age of the totality of the trials. Though the average and median ages were both well within the age of the stereotypical witch there was one primary inconsistency in age, provided by the case of Maria Cecilia von Ahrweiler, a seven-year-old girl. The fact that such a young girl was accused and questioned does point to a dysfunctional basis, until we read that she was also an orphan whose family was burned for witchcraft. Thus she, as much as the beggar and older widows, was a strain on society.

In fact, during the second round of trials, from 1631 on, the average age was only 28, and the median age was 40. This drop in age was during times in which the witch craze was not present. According to Midelfort, this should have been the time when the popular stereotype most closely resembled the accused. However, in Cologne at least, we can clearly see that Midelfort's argument does not coincide with the statistical evidence.

It is also interesting to note that, despite popular stereotypes, age did not play a role in the sentencing of witches. For instance, there were four accused whom we would

today regard as children, because they were under the age of 16. Of those only the youngest, Maria Cecilia, was released, and she was given to the Archbishop's men with no further information as to her sentencing. The other three children were hanged, though the next two youngest, a ten-year-old girl and a twelve-year-old boy, were held for two years until their execution. These were the only two not executed within months of their arrests.

Another popular stereotype was the witch as a widow. Many of the scholars who look at witchcraft accusations as proof of misogyny make the claim that most of the older women who were accused were widows. This is seen as a result of the fact that widows often had no male protection against the rest of society. Accusations against widows have also been explained in socioeconomic terms: without the husband as the primary breadwinner, widows' families would have to rely on her income alone and on the generosity of her neighbors. Yet despite this stereotype, only six of the people in our trials were widows, or only 31%. If we remove the children and the men, we come to 14 trials involving women of an age to be married. Of these adult women 42% were widows. However, the stereotype of the elderly widow holds true as five of the six widows were over the age of 60. One widow, Gertraud, had no record of her age, though she said she would sometimes take her children begging with her. This is an indication that she was still fairly young and had not yet reached menopause. Though we may assume that widows would be older women due to women's longer life span, the records show that many of the women were married more than once. The Thirty Years War was still raging at this time, so it is possible that some of these women had lost their husbands in the war.

Another statistic to examine is the number of confessions and the age of those who confessed. Of the 19 trials there were 7 confessions, only 36.8% of the total. If we remove the two trials during which torture was definitely employed, that number drops to 26%. All of the people under the age of 30 confessed. The average age of those who confessed was 17. Without the addition of those who were tortured the average age of those who confessed drops to 13.5. The average age of those who denied any of the witchcraft accusations against them was 60. This is an enormous difference. It would

seem as if the younger generation was more apt to confess, and with these confessions give greater detail of the activities in which they participated. This is a statistic that we will examine more fully at the end of this chapter.

In order to gauge evolution over the course of the period examined in the attitudes held both by judges and by the accused toward witchcraft, it was useful to examine specific changes in the kinds of questions posed by the judges and in the answers offered by the accused. By creating themes we are able to analyze the principal concerns of the judges. The primary themes that we find throughout the questioning were specific people, background, Sabbath, devil, magic, faith, names, prior statements and conspiracy. These were themes that occurred within the questioning frequently, though Christina Plom, the first woman questioned was the only person who was asked about all of them.

‘Specific people’ referred to questions about named persons whom the accused might have known. An example of this would be when the judge asked about the accused persons’ parents, neighbors or other accused. ‘Background’ referred to questions about the accused witches’ personal lives. Most of the questions that fall under this category have nothing to do with witchcraft. For instance, the judge may ask where the accused was born, how many children they have and about their occupation. Questions about ‘the Sabbath’, also called the dance, were about any knowledge of the gatherings of witches. They did not necessarily involve the Devil, but often involved an unknown man who led the gatherings. ‘The Devil’ referred to questions about the form of the Devil, the pact with the Devil, the mark of the Devil and the swearing of any oath to the Devil. These events may or may not have taken place at the Sabbath. Not surprisingly the theme of the Devil will become the primary theme whenever the Devil is mentioned. Any other theme within that question will become a secondary theme. Questions about ‘magic’ were defined as those that focus not only on truly impossible feats such as flying and creating animals from thin air, but also on everyday hexes and curses. This would include poisonings and unexplained illnesses. Though witches were believed to be able to practice magic, as we saw from Weyer, many women accused of witchcraft were actually accused of being poisoners.

'Faith' questions were about the personal faith of the accused. This also is the theme that will be used when the judge asked about communion habits. Questions about 'names' asked the accused to name other people who were witches or who participated in the witches' Sabbath. 'Prior testimony' questions focused on the validity of prior testimony when the judges found inconsistencies within the testimony of the accused. 'Conspiracy' questions deal with conspiracies of witches, a common belief of the times. In fact, the 'conspiracy' theme was only applied once, when the judges asked Christina Plom specifically if there was a larger movement of witches that was out to destroy Christendom. However, this theme was not the primary focus when the questioning related to the Sabbath. The difference between the two is the universality of the conspiracy versus the local nature of the Sabbath.

Categorizing questions according to theme was challenging because many of the questions were dual questions in which the accused was asked about more than one theme. For instance, the judge may have asked about the witches' Sabbath but within the same question also asked about what form the Devil took at these dances. In cases such as these the theme was considered the part of the question that carried the most weight for the judge. In this example the theme would have been the Devil rather than the Sabbath, due to the fact that other questions were asked about the Sabbath that did not involve the Devil, while the primary goal of the judge with this question was to determine the form of the Devil.

1629-1630

The trials all come from the aforementioned publication by Jurgen Macha and Wolfgang Herborn. These complete trials provided all of the information for the analysis. Each question was analyzed to determine the primary theme. The first accused whose trial record we will subject to statistical analysis is Christina Plom.¹ She was the first person accused in our published trials in 1629. According to popular stereotype she was young at only 24, but according to the woman who accused her, had been bragging about the powers that she had. She was questioned a total of seven times with 82 recorded questions. Stephen Muser also noted that she was tortured at least twice during her prison time. During the questioning a wide variety of themes were touched upon, including questions about her personal faith, her confessions, the form of the Devil, how witches recognized each other at the dances and whether she would retract any of her previous statements.

On the next page is a chart showing the themes that the judges asked, along with the number of times she was asked about that particular theme, as well as the percentage overall that the theme commanded. In this chart we see that throughout Christina's questioning the Sabbath held the primary position in questioning. Next came the asking of names and then the questions about specific people. The last 25% of the questioning focused on Christina's supposed powers, the Devil, her faith in the Catholic Church, including confessions, and her thoughts on prior statements. It is interesting that though there was widespread belief of a large conspiracy of witches out to ruin Christendom, only one question regarding this conspiracy was asked.

Midelfort argued that Germany succumbed so readily to the witch craze because the judges gave high importance to the Sabbath, and also readily used torture in order to gain the names of other witches. We can clearly see the importance of the Sabbath within the questions being asked of Christina Plom. Nearly 30% of the questions asked of her revolved around the Sabbath and the actions that took place there. We also see that almost 20% of the questions asked to Christina were those in which the judges asked her

¹ Jürgen Macha and Wolfgang Herborn, *Kölner Hexenverhöre aus dem 17. Jahrhundert*, (Koln: Asmuth, Satz und Druck, 1992), 1-50.

for the names of her co-witches. It is probable that she gave these names out under duress, especially since we know that she was tortured at least twice during her incarceration. Christina was sentenced to death on December 17, 1629 and hanged on January 16, 1630.







Table 2: Christina Plom

Themes	# Asked	% Asked
Specific People	12	13.95348837
Background	2	2.325581395
Sabbath/ dance	22	25.58139535
Devil	10	11.62790698
Magic/ hex	11	12.79069767
Faith	6	6.976744186
Names	17	19.76744186
Prior Statements	5	5.813953488
Conspiracy	1	1.162790698
Total	86	100

Elßbeth von Schwelm was the next person to be questioned.² She was a 64-year-old widow who marked her occupation as a housewife, though she said that she was once a washer woman. She was first questioned by the judges and Christina, in a confrontational setting on January 11, 1630. The next interrogation was on January 14, 1630. Over the course of the two interrogations she was asked 12 questions by the judges.

² Ibid., 50-55, 59-61.

Table 3: Elßbeth von Schwelm

Themes		# Asked	% Asked
Specific People		5	41.66666667
Background		1	8.333333333
Sabbath/ dance		1	8.333333333
Devil		1	8.333333333
Magic/ hex		1	8.333333333
Faith		3	25
Names		0	0
Prior Statements		0	0
Conspiracy		0	0
Total		12	100

Unlike Christina, during her testimony Elßbeth was asked about specific people 41% of the time. Interestingly, she was not asked about people and their involvement in witchcraft, but rather asked by the judges to give her opinion on people who had already been sentenced and hanged: Adelheid Dunwalts, Ceciliam von Aachen, Sybil von Wilhelmstein, Tringer Wischers and Gertraud Mhellers. The next largest theme for Elßbeth was faith. The judges asked her three questions about her personal faith and communion, accounting for 25% of the questioning. The remaining four questions each consisted of questions on the Sabbath, magic, the Devil and her background.

The questioning indicates that the judges did not believe that Elßbeth was a witch or a threat. The open questioning allowed her to explain herself, while the questions focused mainly on her opinions and religious beliefs. She was not tortured and was released to the Greven, the Archbishop's men, on January 23, 1630. Also unlike Christina, whose incarceration lasted months, Elßbeth's lasted less than two weeks. Though we do not have record of what happened to Elßbeth after her release, it seems as if she was not considered a threat to Christendom.

Sophia Haas was the next woman to be questioned.³ She was questioned on the same days as Elßbeth, January 11, 1630 and January 14, 1630. She was a 77-year-old

³ Ibid., 55-58, 61-63.

widow, who also marked her occupation as a housewife. Also similar to Elßbeth, Sophia was initially questioned in Christina’s presence. During this initial questioning she was asked four questions by the judge. However, the judge asked Christina five questions concerning Sophia. These questions to Christina were not taken into account for Christina’s testimony, due to the fact that they did not play a role in Christina’s trial. She had already been sentenced at the time of these questionings. In total Sophia was asked nine questions. It does not seem as if the judges were as lenient with Sophia as they were with Elßbeth.

The following chart shows that of the nine questions asked Sophia, 44% were asking about specific people. Of these the majority were about the same women who had already been sentenced and executed, about whom Elßbeth had also been questioned: Adelheid Dunwalts, Ceciliam von Aachen, Sybil von Wilhelmstein, Tringer Wischers and Gertraud Mhellers. The second largest theme on which Sophia was questioned was her background; especially her connection with the aforementioned women and other accusations that surrounded her. Next there was one question about her personal faith and finally a question about the dance. It was previously mentioned that the simultaneous interrogation of Christina and Sophia differed from that of Christina and Elßbeth.

Table 4: Sophia Haas

Themes	# Asked	% Asked
Specific People	4	44.44444444
Background	3	33.33333333
Sabbath/ dance	1	11.11111111
Devil	0	0
Magic/ hex	0	0
Faith	1	11.11111111
Names	0	0
Prior Statements	0	0
Conspiracy	0	0
Total	9	100






During Sophia's interrogation Christina was asked by the judge about Sophia's actions and Sophia then had to convince the judge that Christina was lying. Perhaps this change was due to previous accusations against Sophia, or perhaps it was due to the way that Elßbeth dominated the questioning during the previous interrogation. Either way, Sophia did not fare as well in her interrogation. Sophia Hass was hanged on February 27, 1630.

Catharina, without a last name, was the next woman to be questioned.⁴ She was brought before the judge twice, on January 14 and 15, 1630, with a total of 28 questions asked of her. She was only 30 years old and was a beggar. She was also lame in one of her hands. Perhaps the most interesting fact about Catharina is that she had a nine-year-old bastard child to an unnamed pastor, and her handicap was said to have been a punishment.

In the next table we see that Catharina was asked primarily about specific people, in her case the pastor who took her confession and Christina Plom. The second largest theme during the questioning was faith. Here the judge asked about her religion and communion history. When asking about her background the judge focused on her past and why she thought she was accused. In fact there were no questions asked of the Sabbath, magic, or the witches' conspiracy. Perhaps the judge focused on her background and religious beliefs due to the scandal that surrounded her; however, we do not know why the judge chose to ask the questions that he did. On January 16, 1630, two days after her first interrogation, Catharina was sentenced to death by hanging. Her sentence was carried out on February 6, 1630.

⁴ Ibid., 63-72.

Table 5: Catharina

Themes		# Asked	% Asked
Specific People		10	35.71428571
Background		6	21.42857143
Sabbath/ dance		0	0
Devil		1	3.571428571
Magic/ hex		0	0
Faith		7	25
Names		4	14.28571429
Prior Statements		0	0
Conspiracy		0	0
Total		28	100

The next person to come before the judges is perhaps the most unusual. Maria Cecilia von Ahrweiler was a young girl of seven or eight.⁵ She came from Ahrweiler after her parents and brother were burned for witchcraft. It seems impossible today that this young girl would be tried as a witch. However, as a young girl without a family, she falls into the realm of people who are social burdens. She was brought before the judges on January 31, 1630. She was only asked five questions, but gave ample answers to each of them.

⁵ Ibid., 78-79.

Table 6: Maria Cecilia von Ahrweiler



Themes		# Asked	% Asked
Specific People		0	0
Background		1	20
Sabbath/ dance		1	20
Devil		1	20
Magic/ hex		2	40
Faith		0	0
Names		0	0
Prior Statements		0	0
Conspiracy		0	0
Total		5	100

In the previous table we can see that Maria Cecilia von Ahrweiler was asked primarily about magic. This probably was due to the fact that witchcraft was considered hereditary. If her mother knew witchcraft, which was assumed since she was tried and sentenced as a witch, she most likely taught Maria Cecilia witchcraft. The judges also asked about her background, the Devil and the dance. She is the first accused whom we have seen, however, for whom magic was the dominating theme.

On February 26, the judges brought in a 74-year-old widow for questioning.⁶ Entgen Schilts was a nurse and midwife who became widowed when she was only 24 years old. She was only brought in for questioning once, and was asked seven questions. The judge for her trial asked about her background in each of the questions. One of these questions, however, was primarily about witchcraft. There was an overlap in two of the questions in which she was also asked about her relationship with the baker's family, for whom she was the nurse.

⁶ Ibid., 83-85.

Table 7: Entgen Schilts

Themes		# Asked	% Asked
Specific People		0	0
Background		6	85.71428571
Sabbath/ dance		0	0
Devil		0	0
Magic/ hex		1	14.28571429
Faith		0	0
Names		0	0
Prior Statements		0	0
Conspiracy		0	0
Total		7	100

This concentration of questions seems particularly unusual. The judge did not ask her about the Devil, about the Sabbath, or any other question that he had asked any other person accused. He asked her about her relationship with the baker and his family. This seems to be a distinct departure from the other trials. The fact that Entgen Schilts had to prove her innocence in only seven questions, while only one of the questions allowed any large amount of divergence from the topic makes it appear as if they had already sentenced her. Indeed, on March 3 she was sentenced to death and was executed later in March, though the exact date was not recorded.

The next woman to be questioned was also a widow and a midwife. En Volmers was 60 years old and had been a midwife for 24 years.⁷ She was brought in for her first questioning on April 18. Her judge was Adrian de Bruyn for all three interrogations. En Volmers was asked 28 questions.

⁷ Ibid., 89-92, 94-96, 132-133.

Table 8: En Volmers

Themes	# Asked	% Asked
Specific People	15	53.57142857
Background	3	10.71428571
Sabbath/ dance	6	21.42857143
Devil	0	0
Magic/ hex	4	14.28571429
Faith	0	0
Names	0	0
Prior Statements	0	0
Conspiracy	0	0
Total	28	100

Over half of the questions asked to En were about specific people she knew, including the aforementioned Sibyll, Adelheid, Christina Plom and her mother. The next largest ratio of questions involved the dance, followed by questions concerning magic and her background. These four themes encompassed all of the questions she was asked. She was not asked to name anyone new, to describe the Devil or to profess her faith. She was not even asked of a witches' conspiracy or whether there was anything she would like to dispute from prior testimony. The judge did not give her chance to defend the allegations against her, though there was little evidence of any wrongdoing. En Volmers was sentenced to death and hanged on July 27, 1630.

En Konings, the next person who was questioned before the judge, had many similarities to En Volmers. She was a 50-year-old woman, a midwife and she was questioned three times.⁸ In fact, each of the days she was questioned were the same days that En Volmers was also questioned. En Konings was asked 29 questions during these three interrogations.

The primary focus of the judge was on En's background. These questions were mostly why she thought she was accused, why she fought with her husband and other questions about her personal life. The second focus was on specific people whom she

⁸ Ibid., 92-94, 96-97, 129-132.

knew, or whom the judge assumed she knew: her husbands, her mother, Christina Plom, Adelheid, and Entgen Schilts. She was twice asked about the dance, though those two questions were very straightforward, asking whether she had ever attended the dance. Like En Volmers, she denied any wrongdoing and claimed she never attended the dance. It is interesting that all of the questions fall within these three themes. The judge did not ask about the Devil, magic, her personal faith or any other questions that one would assume would point to witchcraft. Yet, on July 27, the same day as En Volmers, En Konings was executed for witchcraft.

Table 9: En Konings

Themes	# Asked	% Asked
Specific People	13	44.82758621
Background	14	48.27586207
Sabbath/ dance	2	6.896551724
Devil	0	0
Magic/ hex	0	0
Faith	0	0
Names	0	0
Prior Statements	0	0
Conspiracy	0	0
Total	29	100





Jost Nisius was the first man to be accused.⁹ He was a 67-year-old man with a wife and two children. According to the records he was only questioned once, on May 11, 1630, and was asked 21 questions. This does not seem to be significantly different from the amount of questions put to the other accused, perhaps showing that the judge was not misogynistic in his questioning.

It is interesting to note, in the following table, that while the percentages are different, the three themes about which the judge asked are identical for En Konings and Jost Nisius. A third of the questions were about his background; for example, how well

⁹ Ibid., 107-113.

he interacted with his neighbors. It is also interesting to note that he was asked about magic, including whether he knew a woman who flew on a broom and created hail storms to destroy the land in Mosel. The people about whom he was asked were both male and female, and were people who had not been mentioned in any of the previous questions or testimonies. The records do not state what happened to Jost, whether he was sentenced or released.











Table 10: Jost Nisius

Themes		# Asked	% Asked
Specific People		6	28.57142857
Background		7	33.33333333
Sabbath/ dance		5	23.80952381
Devil		0	0
Magic/ hex		3	14.28571429
Faith		0	0
Names		0	0
Prior Statements		0	0
Conspiracy		0	0
Total		21	100

Maria Grontzfelts followed Jost Nisius in the questioning.¹⁰ She was a 37-year-old woman from Aachen. She was a single woman who kept her own house, knitted and instructed children. It was recorded that her occupation was a seamstress. Maria was questioned on July 4, 1630. She was only questioned once and was asked 15 questions.

¹⁰ Ibid., 139-146.

Table 11: Maria Grontzfelts





Themes		# Asked		% Asked
Specific People		1		6.666666667
Background		6		40
Sabbath/ dance		0		0
Devil		0		0
Magic/ hex		2		13.333333333
Faith		4		26.666666667
Names		2		13.333333333
Prior Statements		0		0
Conspiracy		0		0
Total		15		100

During the questioning the judge focused, once again, primarily on her background. Exactly 40% of the questions he asked were based on her personal background. He was especially interested in her living situation: with whom she had previously lived and how long she had lived on her own. His next main focus was on her personal faith: to whom she confessed and what she confessed. Nearly 27% of the questions were about her spiritual background. The remaining questions revolved around naming other people, magic and Christina Plom. Once again the record does not indicate what fate befell Maria Grontzfelts.

Anniken van den Haut was accused by Maria during Maria’s interrogation.¹¹ Two days after Maria’s testimony Anniken was brought before the same judges. Anniken was a 70-year-old woman. She was a silk flower maker and had numerous daughters. There was no mention of a husband, and it was stated that she lived alone, so we will assume that she was widowed. Anniken was asked 11 questions by the judges.

¹¹ Ibid., 146-153.

Table 12: Anniken van den Haut

Themes		# Asked	% Asked
Specific People		3	27.27272727
Background		3	27.27272727
Sabbath/ dance		0	0
Devil		4	36.36363636
Magic/ hex		1	9.090909091
Faith		0	0
Names		0	0
Prior Statements		0	0
Conspiracy		0	0
Total		11	100






We can see that of the 11 questions, the judges focused on the Devil as the primary theme of her questioning. This is not surprising given the information that Maria gave the judges about Anniken. The judges focused equally on her background and questions about specific people that she knew. Finally, they asked her one question about magic, which was not even about any powers she personally possessed, but rather about her opinion of magic in general. Once again we are not aware of what happened to Anniken after her testimony. Stephen Muser did not record the outcome of her trial, and she was the last person to be questioned in 1630.

1645

There was a jump of over a decade between Anniken van den Haut and the next trial against Peter von Rodenkirchen.¹² Peter, a boy of 11 or 12, was listed as a beggar in the trials. He was the second male to be brought before the judges and was questioned twice. The first was on June 14, 1645 and the second was June 19, 1645. Both times he was questioned by the minister Adrian Richartz. He was asked a total of 27 questions.

¹² Ibid., 154-163.

Table 13: Peter von Rodenkirchen

Themes		# Asked	% Asked
Specific People		0	0
Background		8	29.62962963
Sabbath/ dance		2	7.407407407
Devil		10	37.03703704
Magic/ hex		6	22.22222222
Faith		1	3.703703704
Names		0	0
Prior Statements		0	0
Conspiracy		0	0
Total		27	100

After the 15-year break between trials, Adrian Richartz asked the majority of the questions about the Devil, 37%. He also focused on the background of the accused, his ability to do magic, what occurred at the dance and finally about his personal faith. It is interesting that there are no major similarities in the statistics of Peter and Jost Nisius. Though they were the only males questioned the judge did not have specific questions to ask males. This could also be due to that fact that 15 years had passed between the trials (in fact, Peter von Rodenkirchen had not even been born when Jost Nisius, an old man, was brought in for questioning). It is unlikely that these two men had much in common other than their being accused of witchcraft and being male.

Though we do not have an occupation listed for Jost, we are told that he had a wife and children. Peter was a young beggar who stole from the offering box. This brings us to a second explanation of why these two accused were asked such different questions. Interrogation is a means to extract information, but it is also dependent on the answers that the accused give. Thus, different questions could have been the result of different answers given by the accused to the judges. The answers that the judges extracted from these two men differed greatly. Peter von Rodenkirchen was sentenced to death by hanging on June 20, 1645. However, possibly due to his being a minor, he was imprisoned for over two years until his execution on December 18, 1647.

1648

On September 7, 1648, Ursula Horst was brought in for questioning.¹³ Once again there was a lapse of time between the trials, though less than a year had passed since Peter's execution. Ursula Horst was a 67-year-old woman who was married to a wheelbarrow driver. She had accused En Eßers of witchcraft. She was only asked two questions, both pertaining to her background.

Table 14: Ursula Horst





Themes	# Asked	% Asked
Specific People	0	0
Background	2	100
Sabbath/ dance	0	0
Devil	0	0
Magic/ hex	0	0
Faith	0	0
Names	0	0
Prior Statements	0	0
Conspiracy	0	0
Total	2	100

This was unusual for all of the trials, both before and after Ursula's. Ursula came to the judge in an attempt to clear her name before there were any legal actions taken against her. Ursula and En Eßers were in an altercation and En publicly declared that Ursula was a witch. Though the judge asked Ursula two questions, she was released and soon afterwards disappeared from the community. When she was found she was brought back to the court in handcuffs. There is no record of what her sentencing entailed. Though, since she fled, it would be easy to assume that the judge felt that she had admitted her guilt.

¹³ Ibid., 163-164.

Entgen Eßers, the woman whom Ursula accused, was a 38-year-old woman whose husband was a needle maker.¹⁴ Her husband, Jacob Efferlings, had been sick and bedridden for nearly a year. The judge, Johannes Schäfer, asked her 11 questions. Of the 11 questions asked of Entgen Eßers, the primary themes were magic and specific people. It comes as no surprise given their feud that the questions regarding specific people were all about her relationship with Ursula. The questions regarding magic were about a drink that Entgen made to help heal her husband. She claimed that she had learned the recipe from her mother. The two questions about her faith pertained to her history of confession and what her priest told her. The one question about her background was an inquiry into her husband's health. Judge Schäfer released Entgen Eßers on December 7, 1648.

Table 15: Entgen Eßers

Themes		# Asked	% Asked
Specific People		4	36.36363636
Background		1	9.090909091
Sabbath/ dance		0	0
Devil		0	0
Magic/ hex		4	36.36363636
Faith		2	18.18181818
Names		0	0
Prior Statements		0	0
Conspiracy		0	0
Total		11	100

1650

Anna Morßbach, a 40-year-old woman and mother of four was the next woman to be questioned.¹⁵ She was brought before the judge, Lothar Schneidt, on August 11 and August 19, 1650. During these two interrogations she was asked a total of 28 questions.

¹⁴ Ibid., 164-171.

¹⁵ Ibid., 172-191.

Table 16: Anna Morßbach




Themes	# Asked	% Asked
Specific People	12	42.85714286
Background	13	46.42857143
Sabbath/ dance	0	0
Devil	1	3.571428571
Magic/ hex	1	3.571428571
Faith	0	0
Names	1	3.571428571
Prior Statements	0	0
Conspiracy	0	0
Total	28	100

This chart above shows that Judge Schneidt was primarily interested in Anna's background. The questions were mostly about why she acted the way that she had with her neighbor, the widow Christina. Not surprisingly, when he questioned about specific people it was the same widow that he asked about. He asked one question each about the Devil, about another unknown person and about magic. Though the trial records do not state what Anna's sentence was, they did record that she was taken away in handcuffs.

On August 20, 1650 the widow Gertraud, a woman who was listed as an apple seller, though she admitted that she took her children begging, was brought in for questioning.¹⁶ She was a woman who had two children from her first marriage. Widow Gertraud was asked 11 questions by Judge Schneidt.

¹⁶ Ibid., 194-198.

Table 17: Widow Gertraudt

Themes		# Asked	% Asked
Specific People		6	54.54545455
Background		4	36.36363636
Sabbath/ dance		0	0
Devil		0	0
Magic/ hex		0	0
Faith		1	9.090909091
Names		0	0
Prior Statements		0	0
Conspiracy		0	0
Total		11	100

Here we can see that the questioning of the widow Gertraud focused entirely on three themes. First the judge asked about specific people, in this case a man named Girlich. Unfortunately the records provide no clues about Girlich, and only indicate that Girlich was known to give advice and heal people through herbs. There were four questions about Gertraud's background, and one question about her faith. Gertraud, despite her connections with Girlich, must not have seemed like a threat to Judge Schneidt. She was released on August 22, 1650, two days after her arrest.

Margaret von Pellgraben was the last person to be interrogated in 1650.¹⁷ She was a 16-year-old young woman whose parents had both died. The judge knew of her and knew that she had lived in an orphanage. Yet now she lived on her own and instructed the children of Jungfer Feechen. Margaret was asked 11 questions by Judge Schneidt.

In the following table we can see that over half of the questions asked to Margaret were about the Devil. This dramatic percentage is surely due to Margaret telling the judge that she had had an affair with the Devil. He asked in what form the Devil came to her, as well as how often and where they met. Judge Schneidt asked two questions about

¹⁷ Ibid., 199-203.

the Sabbath, including what the witches ate and drank. He asked one question each of her background, her faith and if she had any magical powers.

Table 18: Margaret von Pellgraben

Themes	# Asked	% Asked
Specific People	0	0
Background	1	9.090909091
Sabbath/ dance	2	18.18181818
Devil	6	54.54545455
Magic/ hex	1	9.090909091
Faith	1	9.090909091
Names	0	0
Prior Statements	0	0
Conspiracy	0	0
Total	11	100






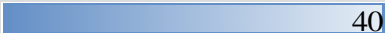








1653

On May 7, 1653 Entgen, Peter Lenart's daughter, was brought before Heironymus de Klerck.¹⁸ She was a ten-year-old girl whose father was shot by a miller two years prior to her testimony. Her mother remarried and abandoned her three children. Entgen was asked 20 questions.

In the following chart we can see that the primary theme, taking up 40% of the questioning, was the witches' Sabbath. The second largest theme was concerning magic and hexes. In fact, the only themes that the judge did not ask her about were about her faith and the idea of a witches' conspiracy. Entgen, like Peter, was held for two years before she was executed. Her sentencing was carried out on February 18, 1655.

¹⁸ Ibid., 204-211.















Table 19: Entgen, Peter Lenart's daughter

Themes		# Asked		% Asked
Specific People		2		10
Background		2		10
Sabbath/ dance		8		40
Devil		1		5
Magic/ hex		3		15
Faith		0		0
Names		2		10
Prior Statements		2		10
Conspiracy		0		0
Total		20		100

1662

The final trial recorded was against Anne Toer.¹⁹ According to the record she was questioned on August 23, 1662. Anna was a 22-year-old woman whose mother had passed away. She was a paper flower maker and made the flowers that decorated coffins. She was asked 43 questions, the most since any of the accused since Christina Plom.

Table 20: Anna Toer

Themes		# Asked		% Asked
Specific People		1		2.325581395
Background		8		18.60465116
Sabbath/ dance		4		9.302325581
Devil		16		37.20930233
Magic/ hex		1		2.325581395
Faith		7		16.27906977
Names		0		0
Prior Statements		6		13.95348837
Conspiracy		0		0
Total		43		100

¹⁹ Ibid., 211-220.

In this chart we can see that 37% of the questions that were asked to Anne were about the Devil. Followed by her background, faith, prior statements, the Sabbath, magic and specific people. The only themes that were not asked of Anne were names and conspiracy. We see that questions about prior statements took up nearly 14% of the total questions. This was because after her first round of questioning she stated that she did not remember what she had said during her prior testimony. Whether torture was used or not was not mentioned. However, her change of heart after her first testimony suggests that something had occurred between the two interrogations. It was here in the records that the information is missing. There is no record of what happened to Anne Toer.

Totals

During the 19 trials and 33 years that passed there were 404 questions asked of the 19 people. By determining the primary themes that the judges questioned about we were able to discern the themes that the judges asked the most about. It seems obvious that the themes the judges asked about the most were the themes that the judges felt were the most important. The table below reflects the breakdown of the themes for the entire trials.

Table 21: Total Themes for Trials

Themes	# Asked	% Asked
Specific People	94	23.26732673
Background	91	22.52475248
Sabbath/ dance	53	13.11881188
Devil	52	12.87128713
Magic/ hex	41	10.14851485
Faith	33	8.168316832
Names	26	6.435643564
Prior Statements	13	3.217821782
Conspiracy	1	0.247524752
Total	404	100

More questions were asked throughout the entirety of these trials about specific people than about any other theme. This indicates that the judge was not searching for the identities of new witches, but was rather trying to determine relationships that the accused had with other people. The second greatest number of questions were asked about background. This is not necessarily surprising since the judge would need to know of the accused person's history. More than three times as many questions were asked about these two themes as were asked about the Sabbath, which generated more questions than the other themes concerning witchcraft. The total number of questions asked about the three themes concerning witchcraft (the Sabbath, the Devil and magic) were still far fewer than the total number of questions asked about specific people and background.

The difference between the two phases of trials, the 1630 trials and those from 1645 on, are recognizable by utilizing the statistical analysis. For instance, in the table below, we can see that the top five themes during the trials that took place in 1629-1630 do not include the theme of the Devil. This was replaced by the judge asking for names. The judges asked for most of the names in Christina Plom's trial. Yet, for a crime whose primary violation lies in the worship and work of the Devil, the Devil only garnered 6.88% of the questions.

Table 22: 1630 Totals (11 trials)

Themes	# Asked	% Asked
Specific People	69	27.49003984
Background	52	20.71713147
Sabbath/ dance	38	15.13944223
Devil	17	6.772908367
Magic/ hex	25	9.960159363
Faith	21	8.366533865
Names	23	9.163346614
Prior Statements	5	1.992031873
Conspiracy	1	0.398406375
Total	251	100

If we remove Christina Plom’s information from the statistics, we are left with the following table.

Table 23: 1630 Totals without Christina Plom

Themes	# Asked	% Asked
Specific People	57	34.54545455
Background	50	30.3030303
Sabbath/ dance	16	9.696969697
Devil	7	4.242424242
Magic/ hex	14	8.484848485
Faith	15	9.090909091
Names	6	3.636363636
Prior Statements	0	0
Conspiracy	0	0
Total	165	100

Here we can see that the judges only asked for names of co-conspirators 3.6% of the time, versus the 9.1% when we add Christina Plom’s information. The percentage of specific people increases from 27.4% with Christina Plom to 34.5% without her. Similarly the theme of background went from 20% with Christina Plom to 30% without her. These changes show that she was an anomaly. The judges asked her different questions than those they asked of the other accused. This may have been due to her bragging of her powers, or because of her alleged relationship with the executed patrician, Katharina Henot. Either way, we can see that the judges asked the other accused more about their relationships with other people and their personal backgrounds than they did with Christina Plom.

The remaining trials carried the five same primary themes as the total list, though in different percentages and rankings. The following table examines the eight trials that took place from 1645-1662.

Table 24: 1645-1662 Totals (8 trials)

Themes	# Asked	% Asked
Specific People	25	16.33986928
Background	39	25.49019608
Sabbath/ dance	16	10.45751634
Devil	34	22.22222222
Magic/ hex	16	10.45751634
Faith	12	7.843137255
Names	3	1.960784314
Prior Statements	8	5.22875817
Conspiracy	0	0
Total	153	100

Questions about the Devil moved from 6.88% to 22.2%, while there were only three questions asked about naming other people. This change could easily coincide with the confessions that took place during the second phase of our trials. Fully half of the accused from 1645 on confessed. The reciprocal nature of questioning explains the change in percentages. With the accused confessing the judges were more apt to ask about the Devil, magic, and the other deeds in which the accused supposedly participated. Though questions about magic and hexes represented 10.45% of the themes, the judges were not asking for more names. This seems to indicate rising skepticism about the reality of an organized community of witches. If the judges believed in a conspiracy of witches surely they would have demanded more names. No questions at all were asked about a conspiracy during the last 17 years of trials, while only 1.9% of the questioning was about naming fellow participants.

These next two tables prove this reciprocal nature well. The first table is the analysis of themes for those who maintained their innocence, while the second table is for those who confessed. It is clear that there is a distinct difference between these two groups.

Table 25: Themes without Confession (12 trials)

Themes	# Asked	% Asked
Specific People	68	36.95652174
Background	63	34.23913043
Sabbath/ dance	16	8.695652174
Devil	6	3.260869565
Magic/ hex	17	9.239130435
Faith	11	5.97826087
Names	3	1.630434783
Prior Statements	0	0
Conspiracy	0	0
Total	184	100

The primary themes by far among those who maintained their innocence are specific people and background. In fact, over 70% of the questions focused on these two themes. The rest of the themes combined are less than 30%. That is an enormous imbalance in the questioning. Questions about magic and the Sabbath were less than 10% each. Questions about the Devil were a mere 3.2%.

In table 26, however, we can clearly see the difference between the top themes of those who did not confess versus those who did. Where among those who maintained their innocence the top two themes were specific people and background, among those who did confess the primary themes were Devil and Sabbath. In fact, specific people and background only combine to 24% of the total questioning. That is a 47% difference. Plus, whereas the three themes that revolve around witchcraft, Sabbath, devil and magic, only comprised of 21% in the trials of those who maintained their innocence, they made up 49% of the themes in the trials where the accused confessed. This is more than double, easily showing the difference between the two groups.

Table 26: Themes with Confession (7 trials)

Themes	# Asked	% Asked
Specific People	25	11.36363636
Background	28	12.72727273
Sabbath/ dance	39	17.72727273
Devil	45	20.45454545
Magic/ hex	24	10.90909091
Faith	22	10
Names	23	10.45454545
Prior Statements	13	5.909090909
Conspiracy	1	0.454545455
Total	220	100

Another interesting point to examine is the number of trials in which each theme was asked. For instance, though specific people was the theme of over 23% of the questions during the entire trials, we can look at how many trials it was asked. Below is a table examining the number of trials in which each theme was asked.

Table 27: Theme by Trials








Themes	# Trials	% Trials
Specific People	14	73.68421053
Background	19	100
Sabbath/ dance	10	52.63157895
Devil	10	52.63157895
Magic/ hex	14	73.68421053
Faith	10	52.63157895
Names	5	26.31578947
Prior Statements	3	15.78947368
Conspiracy	1	5.263157895

Here we can see that the only theme that was asked in each trial was background. Tied for second place is specific people and magic. In a three way tie for third is Sabbath, devil and faith. It is notable that specific people, though the theme most asked, was a theme that was missing from five trials. Also, while the theme of magic was present in

fourteen trials, there were only 41 questions asked with it as a primary theme. This once again shows the reciprocal nature of the questioning. There were some trials in which there was a disproportionate theme.










Let us once again examine the difference of those who confessed versus those who maintained their innocence with the amount of trials each theme was present in.

Table 28: Trials without Confession (12 trials)

Themes		# Trials	% Trials
Specific People		9	75
Background		12	100
Sabbath/ dance		6	50
Devil		3	25
Magic/ hex		8	66.66666667
Faith		5	41.66666667
Names		2	16.66666667
Prior Statements		0	0
Conspiracy		0	0

In trials where there was no confession, other than the theme of background which as previously noted was present in all the trials, the largest asked themes were specific people and magic, followed by Sabbath and faith. The themes of Devil and the asking of names took place in less than 25% of the trials. This is extremely different than in the trials in which the accused confessed. Below is the table of the number of confessed trials that each theme was present in.

Table 29: Trials with Confession (7 trials)

Themes		# Trials	% Trials
Specific People		4	57.14285714
Background		7	100
Sabbath/ dance		6	85.71428571
Devil		7	100
Magic/ hex		6	85.71428571
Faith		5	71.42857143
Names		3	42.85714286
Prior Statements		3	42.85714286
Conspiracy		1	14.28571429

Here we can see that both the theme of background and the Devil occurred in all seven trials. Questions focusing on the Sabbath and magic occurred in 85% of the trials. This shows the reciprocal nature of the questioning yet again. Those who confessed were asked more about the themes that coincided with the popular stereotype of witchcraft behavior: the Devil, the Sabbath, magic and faith. Among the people who maintained their innocence the top two themes were those that dealt with their personal history and relationships.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided numerous statistics that may surprise witchcraft historians. First, the primary questions that the judges asked of the accused revolved around personal relationship and history. This was evidenced by the large percentage of the themes background and specific people that was asked. Despite the diabolical nature of the accusation, without a confession the judges were primarily interested in the personal relationships and history of the accused. With a confession, the judges turned toward more diabolical questions, concerning the Devil, magic and the Sabbath. This clearly shows the reciprocal nature of the questioning.

Second, in Cologne the accused do not fit into the scholarly assumption of who should be accused. For instance, Lyndal Roper showed that in Augsburg midwives were targeted, yet in our 19 trials there were only three midwives accused. Regional

differences may account for this, however, her argument on the role of female sexuality in conjunction with menopause and childbearing seems as if it could be universally applied. Also, widows, due to their lack of social and financial power, were thought by some scholars to be more disposed to accusations. However, by examining the trials here we can clearly see that only 31% of the accused were widows. Even among the older women, the number who were widows only jumps to 42%. Thus, our evidence shows that scholarly stereotypes did not mesh well with the statistics that we have in Cologne.

Third, the age of the accused did not follow the trajectory of the popular stereotype. In fact, the average age of the accused dropped through the years. H.C.E. Midelfort stated that during the years of larger hunts the age should drop, as people accuse those who do not fit the popular stereotype of the witch. The evidence in Cologne, however, shows the exact opposite. The year that had the most trials, 1630, was also the year that most closely followed what witchcraft historians would expect; specifically, the average age of 50 and the median age of 60. During the following trials, 1645-1662, the average age dropped to 28 with the median age at 40. That is nearly a 50% drop in the average age and a twenty year decline in median age.

Fourth, all of those who were under the age of 30 confessed to their judges. The oldest two of these people were the two whom we know were tortured. Thus, all of those under the age of 22 confessed. The average age for those who confessed was 17. Without the two women whom we know were tortured, Christina Plom and Catharina, that age drops to 13.5. This may be due to a connection between the judges and the children. Robert Walinski-Kiehl believed that children confessed due to the large amount of attention they received from the judges.²⁰ Whatever the reason behind these confessions, it seems that the knowledge of what events a witch was said to participate in worked its way through popular culture until even children were confessing to these crimes.

²⁰ Robert Walinski-Kiehl, "The Devil's Children: Child Witch Trials in Early Modern Germany", *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology*, vol. 2, ed. Brian P. Levack, (New York: Routledge, 2001), 416.

CHAPTER 3

While Chapter 2 focused on the themes of the questions asked by the judges, this chapter will focus on the answers to those questions. By examining the stories of the accused we are able to see why they were accused, what the charges against them were and what they confessed or denied. It is in this chapter that we can clearly see that the impetus for the majority of the accusations was based on relationships, either business or personal.

This chapter will once again focus on the trials chronologically. The catalyst of the trials for which we have record was Katharina Henot. Her trial was not recorded by Stephen Muser, thus we did not examine it statistically. However, it was the primary impetus for the first set of trials which took place in 1630. Due to the importance of this trial background information on Katharina and the facts of her trial were recounted.

In 1627 there began a round of witch trials within the city of Cologne that cost the lives of at least 9 people. These trials began with a series of misfortunes at the abbey of St. Clara, where there were women who claimed to be possessed. This led to rumors and the subsequent questioning of a high-ranking patrician, Katharina Henot.²¹ Katharina was the daughter of the General Postmaster Jakob Henot, from whom she inherited the title. This accusation against Katharina contradicts much of what witchcraft scholarship would lead one to expect in terms of the identity of the accused, since Katharina did not fit the typical seventeenth century stereotype of a witch. Katharina was a rich widow with a large amount of political power. However, according to Thomas Becker, members of her family were considered outsiders within the Cologne community.²²

Katharina Henot's parents moved to the city from the Netherlands during their war against Spain. The first record of the family in Cologne was in 1560, and they became citizens of the city in 1576. Her mother was a member of the Dutch nobility. Her father became General Postmaster of the Empire in 1603, under the patronage of the prince of Taxis. Though the family held political power, as ex-Calvinists they remained

²¹ Thomas Becker, *Henot, Katharina*, accessed Nov. 28, 2010, <http://www.historicum.net/persistent/artikel/1606/>.

²² *Ibid.*

outsiders in the Catholic city. To overcome this they put many of their children into the clergy and made sure to exhibit Catholic attitudes.²³ Their most prominent child, Hartger, became dean of St. Severin, a papal prothonotary and held degrees in electoral and imperial law. Katharina was born in approximately 1570, so at her death in 1627, she was already a grown woman with children of her own.²⁴

There are certain questions as to why Katharina was accused. Politically, her family was fighting for its honor against the Taxis family, who had turned against them and fought to have the title of Imperial Postmasters. Emperor Mathias gave the title of Postmasters to the Thurn and Taxis family in 1615.²⁵ Despite this development the Henot family continued to fight for the position against the Thurn and Taxis family. In 1624 the Thurn and Taxis family were awarded the hereditary right of the title.²⁶ However, in 1625 this title was given back to Jacob Henot. Personally, Katharina was a widow with great amount of political power, especially after her family won the right to the title of General Postmaster as a hereditary post, in 1625.

The charges against her stemmed from St. Clara's abbey, where women were claiming that they were possessed.²⁷ Rumors began to spread that she was the cause of this possession. Allegedly, during an exorcism, one of the possessed sisters at the abbey claimed that they would all suffer until the witch was punished.²⁸ Unfortunately for her, Katharina Henot's name was mentioned.²⁹ Whether the woman was naming her as the witch or just calling out for her is unknown, especially when we discover that at least one of her sisters, Francisca, and a daughter were living at the abbey.³⁰ It is possible that her

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ <http://www.thurnundtaxis.de/en/family/in-regensburg-for-250-years/post.html>

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Becker.

²⁸ The exorcist was Father Vincent Justiani, a Papal Inquisitor. According to Becker this was unusual to have an Inquisitor as the exorcist unless the witchcraft accusation was against a member of the Church. Becker.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Bergerhausen, 216.

sister or daughter had been the one that was exorcized and called Katharina's name. Unfortunately, whether her sister or daughter were the one or not is unknown.

In October 1626 Katharina was first arrested on charges of witchcraft.³¹ The rumors of her association with witchcraft had been milling throughout the city for months. The exorcism of the sister at St. Clara's had already taken place and suspicion was rising. Katharina had gone on the offensive and even prior to her arrest filed a petition to General Vicar Johannes Gelenius proclaiming her innocence.³² She also asked for help from the Archbishop-Elector Ferdinand of Wittelsbach. However, the fact that she petitioned the ecclesiastical court rather than the secular court seemed peculiar for a worldly woman.³³ The charges were dropped and for a while everything other than the rumors became quiet.

However, with the high profile nature of this accusation, Katharina was again named by both a lay-sister at St. Clara's for the aforementioned rumor, as well as by another woman who herself was accused of witchcraft. This woman, "Langenbergerin," confessed her guilt, under torture, and named Katharina as a co-witch.³⁴ In January she was again arrested by the council.³⁵ Four factors sealed her fate. First was the accusation of the sister at St. Clara's. Second was the rampant rumor of her involvement in the possession. Third was the reigniting of the rumor with the questioning of a lay-sister and fourth was the confession of "Langenbergerin" naming Katharina as a fellow witch. These four points became too much for her, or her family, to defend. Despite their political power they were helpless. Hartger, especially, continued to fight for her release, pleading with the Archbishop-Elector.

³¹ Becker.

³² Ibid.

³³ It would be interesting to know the members of the council at this time. Unfortunately I have not been able to find a published work that gives the dates and names of the council members. It is quite possible that Katharina petitioned the Archbishop-Elector Ferdinand due to some familial feuds between her family and members of the council. Also, since the council was the body that petitioned for her arrest, it seems likely that she would petition the Archbishop-Elector for protection, despite his aggressive anti-witch position. It would be beneficial to go directly to the archives to determine the relationships between the Henot family and members of the council.

³⁴ Becker.

³⁵ Ibid.

On January 18, 1627 she proclaimed her innocence. This began a series of torture sessions, designed to make her confess. There was question as to whether she confessed to the crimes which she was accused. A signed confession came though some claim it was forged since her right hand had been crippled during the torture.³⁶ On May 19, 1627, she was sentenced to be hanged until dead and then have her body burned in a pyre.

After the death of Katharina Henot the Thurn and Taxis family were awarded with the title of Imperial Postmaster in 1626.³⁷ Becker noted that though political intrigue surrounded the accusation and death of Katharina, her death alone would not end the lawsuit against the Thurn and Taxis family. Hartger was still alive and could have maintained the lawsuit.³⁸ However, during the trial against Katharina, Hartger was immersed in attempting to clear the charges against Katharina. The trial against her may have made him less apt to spend his time fighting against the Thurn and Taxis family. It does not, however, prove that the Thurn and Taxis family had any connection with the accusations against Katharina.

This is the foundation for the trials to which we now turn in Cologne. Once again, these are the trails for which Stephen Muser was the notary. There are 19 trials, with a distinct break between the trials. The first set took place in 1629-1630 in direct response to the trial against Katharina Henot. The second set took place from 1645-1662 without any large catalyst to begin the trials.

Christina Plom was the first woman witnessed by Stephen Muser to be accused and executed. She was the daughter of a member of the girdle maker's guild, and was a fruit seller in her own right.³⁹ Christina was 24 years old and was named as a witch by Gertraud von Neus. On April 29, 1629 she was arrested and first questioned. Stephen Muser, the notary, noted that this was in the presence of Dr. Wischius and Herr Bulder, a lawyer. Gertraud claimed that Christina bragged about being able to control the

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹This entire recounting comes from Macha and Herborn, 1-50. The translations are mine.

possessed women at St. Clara's. She also claimed that Christina mentioned a large band of witches, and that she had learned her witchcraft from Katharina Henot.⁴⁰

Christina, as the first woman questioned, was questioned 7 times and within those 7 interrogations asked over 82 questions.⁴¹ As we noted in the last chapter, the majority of these questions involved the Sabbath and the witches' dance. The judges present were Dr. Wischius and Herr Baldur, a legal academic.⁴² She was first questioned on April 29, 1629, five days after she was accused of witchcraft by Gertraud. Initially they asked her if she admitted to the activities that she bragged about, to which she answered yes.⁴³ They asked her how she came to know Katharina Henot and she replied that she often sold fruit to her at her wine garden.⁴⁴ During this round of questioning most of the questions were about the witches' Sabbath, which Christina admitted to attending three times with Katharina Henot.⁴⁵ She claimed that she was forced into it, but never received the Devil's mark.⁴⁶ The judges were particularly interested in finding the names of other witches who had had contact with Katharina and were present at the dance.

During this first round of questioning Christina named eleven people: Sybille from Schildergassen, Agatha the saleswoman from Gasthof Hirtz, an unnamed tall attractive noblewoman, an unnamed young man who was the noblewoman's companion, a widow from Spargassen, a doctor from Sieberg, a Jesuit with a yellow beard and a full face, Hartger Henot, Frau Konningen, Ursula and Frau Kanzlerin.⁴⁷ Of these people it is interesting to note that few are named specifically. Sybille, Agatha, Hartger, Frau Konningen, Ursula and Frau Kanzlerin were the ones mentioned by name. The others whom she accused were more anonymous, with only their description or the name of their street given. More notably, perhaps, is that the judges were the ones to introduce

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1-2.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1-50.

⁴² The names of the judges were not always recorded. In situations where they were, they will be mentioned.

⁴³ Ibid., 3-4.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 16.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 8-10.

Hartger Henot's name into the discussion by asking her if she saw him at any of the dances.

Regarding the witches' Sabbath, Christina claimed that she and Katharina were taken to the dance by one of Katharina's carriages.⁴⁸ Katharina was the one who led the dances, as well as calling the other witches to the place where the dance took place. The behavior of the witches at the Sabbath was what Christina described as obscene. They kissed and acted obscenely, even kissing the backside of the Devil.⁴⁹ Christina also claimed that they mocked the Host, by bringing it to the dance and spitting and stomping on it. She was unsure whether the Host was consecrated, so she demanded it, but Katharina smiled at her and said that she had already enjoyed it.⁵⁰ Some of the questions regarding the dance were focused on the food and drink that the participants partook. Christina did not specifically mention any particular food or drink, but did mention that there were silver chalices and large spits at the table. However, she also noted that the tables were without salt and bread.⁵¹

Many of the questions surrounding the Sabbath in this first round of questioning were theologically based. They asked Christina if she supposed she was at the dance physically or merely spiritually, to which she replied she believed that she was there physically, though she was unsure.⁵² They asked her what form the Devil was in, and how she knew whether it was a person or the Devil in disguise. She responded that she would say the name of Jesus and the Devil would transform into his natural form while the witches would remain themselves. She also claimed that after she said the name of Jesus the witches would torment her further.⁵³

⁴⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁹ "dem Teuffel, *salua venia*, vor dem hinderen kußen?" (ibid., 6).

⁵⁰ "Hette woll gesehen daß sie *hostias* gehabt, selbige gebrochen, daruf gespiegen vnd damitten gespot, wise aber nit obs *conscirte* hostie gewesen oder nit, hetten auch von ihr eine hostiam gefordert, sie aber gesagt daß sie die ihrige genoßen hette" (ibid., 11).

⁵¹ Ibid., 5.

⁵² Ibid., 11.

⁵³ "Wan sie den nahmen *Jesus* vnd Marie nenne vnd sich segne, dan weiche der Teuffel, die hexen aber pleiben alßdan stehen vnd plagen sie noch viel mher" (ibid., 9).

During this questioning Dr. Wischius and Herr Baldur asked two questions that seem particularly skeptical. The first was in regards to Katharina's servant, the carriage driver. While undoubtedly they wanted this man's name, they also asked where he went after he dropped them off.⁵⁴ She did not know, she said, but there is an implied question of the reality of the situation. This skepticism was again displayed when they asked her why others were unable to see the vestiges of the dances. Her response did not answer the question fully. She replied that the table and spit were created in the house and transported to the dance site.⁵⁵

Dr. Wischius and Herr Baldur did not have specific questions about magic to ask Christina. They asked her if she admitted to tormenting the possessed women at St. Clara's with the other witches, which she did admit, but they asked no questions about flying, or even hexes. They asked her if she was still able to bless objects, and she said she was.⁵⁶ She also said that she would not omit anything from confession.

Though Stephen Muser did not record that there had been any torture during this questioning, at one point in the testimony there is a note in the margin indicating that after naming Sybille and Agatha she was having a fit. Unfortunately, Stephen Muser did not consistently mark when torture was employed.⁵⁷ The final question that Christina was asked during this first round of questioning was if she would denounce the others. To this she replied that she would and that she wanted them to be tortured.⁵⁸

Christina Plom was again brought in for questioning on May 4, 1629. This time she was questioned by Herr Geill and Herr Jabach. She was only asked four questions and this time Stephen Muser noted that this questioning was done under torture.⁵⁹ During these four questions Christina named six more people. Some of the people she named this time were more politically influential than one might expect from an accusation,

⁵⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 12.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 14.

since, according to Barstowe, women usually accused those poorer than they.⁶⁰ Christina named the Frau in Gasthof Raben, Margaret from Gasthof Gulden Loen, Burgermeister Hardenrath's wife, Johann the Fat, Bureaucrat Spiegel's wife and Dr. Wischius, the man who had questioned her days before.⁶¹

This questioning seems to have been more productive, though less organized. Undoubtedly this was the effect of the torture. Two of the questions were in regards to the dance, one was specifically about getting more names, and one was about Margaret having sexual interactions with the Devil. She told the judges that she saw the Frau from Gasthof Raben twice at the dances, and that the Frau had told Christina that with luck she would be able to join the ranks of witches.⁶² These were dances that she had attended with Katharina. She claims to have been so frightened that she told the Frau from Gasthof Raben that she would like to leave, but that she did not know how to leave the dance.⁶³

The judges asked her if Margaret had sex with the Devil. Christina said that she saw Margaret act obscenely with the Devil at Gasthof Raben, and that Margaret bragged later that she was weary, alluding to a sexual encounter.⁶⁴ It is here that she began to name high-ranking people, including the wife of Burgermeister Hadenroth. This was the woman who, according to Christina, had had sex with the Devil and had bragged of the marks left on her during their fornication.⁶⁵ According to Christina, Frau Hadenroth had sex with the Devil at Hartger Henot's house.⁶⁶ It was after this episode that Christina went to St. Clara's to confess.

⁶⁰ Barstowe, 18.

⁶¹ Macha and Herborn, 12-14.

⁶² Ibid., 12.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ "Ja hab gesehen daß die Margareth wie auch die ihm Raben ihre Unsucht mit der Teuffel betrieben, vnd were ihre gl Margarth noch newlich vnder Teschmecher begegnet, welche zu ihr gesprochen laßet vnd sehen wer ahm ersten muidt warden solle ihr in den eweren ode rich in dem meinen" (ibid., 13).

⁶⁵ "mahlen ihre Unzucht mit dem Teuffel..." (ibid.).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Christina claimed that the witches discussed sex and other fleshly delights at the dances. It was at the dance that she claimed to have seen Frau Spiegel, Bureaucrat Spiegel's wife, Johann the fat, Katharina Henot's servant, and Dr. Wischius. She also declared that Frau Spiegel would often mention the Empress at these dances while she carried on obscenely.⁶⁷ When she named Dr. Wischius, she claimed that the Devil came to her and told her that his brother, a doctor, was coming.⁶⁸ However, perhaps due to the personal connection that she had with Dr. Wischius after her first testimony, his name was removed from the record after she was tortured.⁶⁹ It is unknown whether this torture occurred during the entire round of questioning, or what she said to repudiate the claims that she had made on Dr. Wischius.

On May 11, 1629 Christina was brought in front of the Justice Minister, Herr Geill and Herr Bulder. During this testimony she was asked 25 questions, the greatest number of them concerning the dance and the witches' Sabbath. They also asked about the Devil, Katharina Henot, her brother, Hartger, and the conspiracy and identities of other witches. Despite the number of themes addressed in this questioning, little new relevant information was given.

The judges asked Christina if she personally danced at these dances, to which she replied that she had, though little.⁷⁰ They then asked her how she was able to return to the dance after seeing the horrors there. She responded that it was not until the third and final dance that she began to feel uneasy. Each time she attended the dance it became more obscene and intense.⁷¹ At the second dance Katharina Henot demanded that she renounce God and pledge herself to the Devil. She refused, but returned to another dance.⁷² The judges asked her why the witches tolerated her presence if she was not marked as one of them. She replied that it was due to her connection with Katharina

⁶⁷ Ibid., 14.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 17.

⁷¹ Ibid., 17-18.

⁷² "Als sie aber zum zwette mahl ihr dahin gefolgt vnd sie vfm danß gewesen, dho seye ihre alda durch der heinotinnen angemutet daß sie Gott absagen sollte, welches sie nit thuen wollen" (ibid., 20).

Henot. She came to the dances with Katharina and the witches feared her, thus they left her alone.⁷³

The judges again asked Christina a metaphysical question about the form and feel of other people at the dance. She responded that the Devil felt cold like a fish while the witches were warm.⁷⁴ It was while answering this question that she claimed to have kissed the Devil once against her will.⁷⁵ They also asked again in what form she attended the dances and how she got there. She answered that she did not know.⁷⁶ She claimed that Katharina Henot took her hand and asked her to come along and that nothing evil would happen.⁷⁷ It is here that Christina told the judges that Katharina demanded that she renounce God. When the judges asked why Christina, who had not been marked by the Devil, was able to see the witches and the Devil, she had no answers for them. She replied that she did not know and that she wished she could not see them.⁷⁸

Once again the judges asked Christina about tormenting the possessed women at St. Clara's. She said that she heard from Sybille and Agatha that they were the ones behind the possessions. They would force the possessed to hit and beat themselves.⁷⁹ Christina also named other people, including Hartger Henot, Ursula and the ones she mentioned on May 4, except Dr. Wischius. She told the judges that she saw all of these people at the dances. She also saw others whom she did not recognize since they were wearing masks.⁸⁰

During this testimony the judges repeated many of the questions from the first testimony, with Christina giving similar answers to them. For instance they once again asked about the carriage and Katharina's servant who drove it. Yet again she responded that she did not know where he or the carriage went while they were at the dances.

⁷³ Ibid., 16.

⁷⁴ "Der Teuffel seye kalt wie ein geweichter Stockfisch, die hexen aber etwas warmer" (ibid., 17).

⁷⁵ "es hette der teuffel sie einmahl vfm danß gekußet...sie aber hette nimmer ihrene willen darzu geben" (ibid.).

⁷⁶ Ibid., 19.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 20.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 21.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 22-23.

However, this time she added that the wagon came from St. Andreas.⁸¹ This is important because St. Andreas was part of the domain of Hartger Henot, Katharina's brother.⁸²

The next testimony came on May 15, 1629. The questioning changed themes during this testimony. The judges, once again including Dr. Wischius, focused primarily on Christina's faith and confession. They also asked about her background with magic. She claimed that she was able to learn magic on her own, though she asked Katharina questions. Christina also claimed that the witches went above the earth until they saw regular people and they would walk upon the earth like them.⁸³ This seems particularly interesting, as it is the first magical behavior of witches that she recounts.

The judges also seemed interested in whether the Devil gave any items of wealth to the witches. In a prior testimony they had asked Christina if the Devil gave the witches any money, to which she had replied yes. During this questioning they asked about the silver that Katharina had given at her Weingarten, saying that Christina had mentioned Katharina had taken them from the dance.⁸⁴ Christina told the judges that Katharina had silver chalices and a golden goblet with a cap.⁸⁵ She did not, however, mention whether or not these objects were taken from the dance by Katharina.

The judges asked about her confession: to whom she confessed, and whether that person heard her confession more than once.⁸⁶ She named Mario, a pastor from St. Laurentius, as the person in whom she confided. She claimed that he told her that her confession was only gossip and her own fantasy. She did not mention other witches to Pastor Mario; she said this was due to her not wanting to ruin someone's character, or have them say that she was crazy.⁸⁷ The judges also asked her about her personal faith. She claimed to carry an amulet, an *Agnus Dei*, which contained a tattered piece of St.

⁸¹ Ibid., 19.

⁸² Bergerhausen, 217.

⁸³ "Wan sie hexen weis kommen dan gehen sie nit auf der erden, sondern schweben etwas einen fues breidt oben der erden, wan sie aber menschen weis kemen, dan gehen sie auch wie Menschen vf der erden" (Macha and Herborn, 23).

⁸⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 27.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 24.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 24-25.

Ursula's clothing. Stephen Muser, however, noted in the margin that the capsule that was supposed to hold the relic was empty.⁸⁸

Months passed until Christina was questioned again. Numerous letters of defense written by family members of the people that Christina accused were received by the judges during this break. Also, the justice council brought in experts to discuss whether the events that Christina claimed were possible.⁸⁹ This was the only time during the 33 years that religious and theological experts were brought in to discuss the possibility of the claims that an accused made. During other trials there were character witnesses questioned, but this trial is unique in that experts were brought forth.

On December 6, 1629, she was again brought before the judges, and asked only two questions. First she was asked if she had seen a Jesuit at the dance, to which she replied no.⁹⁰ The second question they asked her was if she stood by her prior testimony. Here she responded differently. She said that she would not have admitted to these things had she not been tortured.⁹¹ This continued with her last questioning, dated December 12, 1629. Of the four questions that were asked, each concerned her prior testimony. She claimed that she did not remember bragging about being a witch to Ursula, which must have been in the written response given to the judges since it was not something that she had admitted during her previous testimony. However, she also stated that she stood by her denunciations, and if provided with a confrontation would look the accused in the eye.⁹²

It is interesting to note that throughout this testimony Christina never portrays herself as the one who does the evil deeds. Though Gertraud claims that Christina bragged about her powers, in Christina's own testimony she was an unwilling participant in the world of the witches. She admits to tormenting the possessed women at St. Clara's, as well as to attending three dances, but does not admit to any truly diabolical

⁸⁸ Ibid., 27.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 28-33.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 33.

⁹¹ "Nein, sagt sonst nit ohne pein..." (ibid., 34).

⁹² Ibid., 36.

wrongdoing. She was not the one to have sexual encounters with the Devil, nor was she the one to have any important information as to a witch's conspiracy.

The judges gave Christina the confrontation they mentioned with Elßbeth von Schwelm on January 11, 1630.⁹³ Elßbeth, the widow of Hermann Gilßbach, was a 64-year-old woman who claimed housewife as her occupation. During Elßbeth's testimony she was questioned by the council's deputy in the presence of Christina. Elßbeth was questioned twice, including the questioning that took place in front of Christina. This confrontation was unique in that the judges asked Elßbeth questions while Christina was also forced her to defend herself. This testimony was more complicated, including Christina asking questions of Elßbeth and Elßbeth asking questions in return. Christina would interject after a question that the judges asked and pressure Elßbeth.

During this confrontation Elßbeth was asked seven questions by the judges, and one question by Christina. Elßbeth, however, asked Christina three questions. The questions of the judges primarily revolve around confession and the rumor of witchcraft. Christina asked Elßbeth if she was acquainted with the witch Sybil, while Elßbeth asked Christina questions as rebuttal.⁹⁴

The judges' first question to Elßbeth was whether she knew why she was there. She replied that she had received a letter stating that she had been accused of the blasphemous crime of witchcraft.⁹⁵ They then asked her if she knew what Christina told them about her. She replied that she did not know, but was sure it was untrue as she was innocent.⁹⁶ Many of the questions the judges asked during this confrontation had to do with confession. They asked to whom she confessed and how often she confessed. She replied that she went every Sunday and Thursday as well as all of the holy days. She was highly devout and had been attending thus for the past twenty years.⁹⁷ Christina tried to trip her up by saying that she had seen Elßbeth at the dance where she had received the

⁹³ Ibid., 50-55, 59-61.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 54.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 50-51.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 51.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 52-54.

mark of the Devil on the left side of her head. Elßbeth countered with a question. She asked Christina to identify where this alleged mark was. Christina answered that the mark went away when she went back to God.⁹⁸

This dialogue between the two women was interesting. Elßbeth was not afraid to deny Christina's accusations. Nor was she afraid to ask Christina questions about the legitimacy of her allegations. It is possible that her defiance made the judges question the validity of Christina's claims. The final question that the judges asked during the confrontation was about her background and why there were rumors linking both her and witchcraft. This question regarding her background was asked after she admitted that rumors about her connection with witchcraft existed, but only because she was the washer woman at a convent where it was rumored women were witches.⁹⁹ This could have been a connection to the possessed women at St. Clara's. Her connection with the convent led to rumors of her involvement in witchcraft. Here Christina interjected that since Elßbeth had been reported she must provide evidence of her innocence, and that if could not substantiate her claims, she should be apprehended.¹⁰⁰

The next interrogation of Elßbeth von Schwelm took place on January 14, 1630. This time she was not in the presence of Christina Plom. The judge only asked her five questions, but of the five, four were asking for her opinion, rather than asking about her participation. The first question was whether she knew Adelheid Dunwalts, Ceciliam von Aachen, Sybil von Wilhelmstein, Tringer Wischers and Gertraud Mhellers. These were women who had all been hanged for witchcraft.¹⁰¹ Elßbeth claimed to know of them, and identified Tringen and Sybil as midwives.¹⁰² Then the judge began asking about her opinion of these women and what they had done. She said that they had done wrong and they would be judged in heaven.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ "Elßbethen gefragt wan daß Zeichen nun ahn ihr solte befunden werdem wie sie dan bestehen wolle?" (ibid., 54).

⁹⁹ Ibid., 55.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 59.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 60.

The difference in tone between these two testimonies is marked. The judges were much less forceful with Elßbeth than they were with Christina. There was no torture involved in Elßbeth's questioning, and the judge asked Elßbeth her opinion. This was a distinguishing difference.

On the same day as Elßbeth's initial interrogation, January 11, 1630, for which Christina was present, the judge also questioned Sophia Haas, again in the presence of Christina. Sophia Haas was a 77-year-old widow.¹⁰⁴ These two interrogations were very different in tone. Whether the judge was already suspicious of Sophia's background, or whether the judge felt as if Elßbeth, the last woman interrogated, took control of the questioning, is unknown, but the interrogation of Sophia began with the judge asking Christina questions about Sophia's involvement in witchcraft. Sophia was immediately placed on the defensive, having to deny the allegations and to convince the judge of her innocence.

Though Sophia denied everything of which Christina accused her, Sophia was portrayed as a leading member of the witches' dances.¹⁰⁵ Christina claimed that Sophia was friends with Agatha from Gasthof Hirsch. Christina claimed that she knew Sophia from Katharina Henot's Weingarten, as well as from St. Joris and St. Margaret's cloister. She also saw Sophia at the first witches' dance where she scattered flowers, and Christina knew that Sophia had seen her also.¹⁰⁶ She also said that Sophia received the mark of the Devil on her head. Christina mentioned to the judge that she noticed it at Katharina Henot's Weingarten and at St. Margaret's cloister, where Sophia brought her lover. Here she alluded to that lover being the Devil by remarking that Sophia had given consecrated Host to him. When the judge asked about this man, Christina only said that he was a handsome man and that she did not know his name.¹⁰⁷

Sophia denied all of these allegations and refused to confess. The judge asked Sophia what she thought of these accusations. Sophia refuted Christina and denied

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 55-58, 61-63.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 56-57.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 56.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 57.

everything. The judge then asked Sophia of prior accusations, specifically if the maid of Herr Greven came up to her and accused her of being a witch. Sophia again denied this.¹⁰⁸

The second testimony of Sophia Haas took place on January, 14, 1630. This time it was without Christina's presence. The judge asked Sophia five questions, four of which asked about her connection to the five women who had been sentenced and hanged. These were the same five women about whom he had questioned Elßbeth von Schwelm. Sophia claimed that she only knew of Tringen in passing.¹⁰⁹ She said that there was no defense for the actions of these women, and that God would judge them of their guilt or innocence. Finally the judge asked Sophia of her personal involvement in the dance. Christina had claimed that Sophia was the one who became the leader after the death of Katharina. However, once again, Sophia denied the charges and stated that Jesus would protect her.¹¹⁰

Despite these denials Sophia Haas was sentenced to death and hanged on February 27, 1630. It is difficult to distinguish the difference between the answers that Elßbeth gave to the questions asked of her and the answers that Sophia gave. Both women denied wrongdoing, but Elßbeth was released to the Greven while Sophia was hanged. It would seem as if Elßbeth's best defense was the aggressive way she asked Christina questions, casting doubt on the accusation. Though Sophia questioned Christina, she asked few questions and the judge and Christina definitely had the advantage.

The next woman to come under the scrutiny of the council was Catharina.¹¹¹ She was not recorded to have a last name. Catharina was a 30-year-old beggar with a lame hand. According to the records the pastor of St. Severin had her hand removed.¹¹² This seems like a particularly extreme punishment, but her crimes were especially scandalous.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 58.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 62.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 63.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 63-72.

¹¹² "her Pastor zu St. Seuerin die handt von ihr abgethan" (ibid., 63).

She had a bastard child to an unnamed pastor of St. Severin. This pastor was dishonored and forced by the Archbishop to pay alimony to Catharina. By the time of the questioning the child was nine years old.¹¹³ Her questioning began on January, 14, 1630 and continued on January 15, 1630.

The judge must have had written information from the pastors that Catharina confessed to, because he regularly asked her how she will react when she is faced with the chaplains' accusations. Most of the questions he asked were centered on the chaplains that took her confession and Catharina's relationship with Christina Plom. Catharina claimed that she went to numerous chaplains: Father Bolte, up to five chaplains at St. Peter's, and finally the pastor at St. Martin's.¹¹⁴ The judge asked her about the chaplains and what they said to her outside of the confessional. She denied any mention of witchcraft or witches, though the judge did not believe her defense. This was evident when he asked her who had prompted her to answer the questions the way she had. She responded that God had given her the knowledge.¹¹⁵

Catharina denied knowing Christina Plom, denied telling the chaplains that she was involved in witchcraft, and claimed that she was telling the truth.¹¹⁶ The judges seemed to have quite a bit of information that tied Catharina to witchcraft. Whether this information was contrived by the judges or whether it was based on quality sources is, unfortunately, unknown. However, her denial of the charges did not last long. They began flogging her, which caused her to confess to being a witch.¹¹⁷ She remained steadfast in the denial that she did nothing to abuse the Host, but confessed many other misdeeds.

It was after this flogging that the testimony changed. Now Catharina told the judges that the chaplain asked her if other women that she knew were witches. She gave

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 64.

¹¹⁵ "Gefg Wer ihro die *information* geben, daß sie der gestalt antworten solle?" (ibid., 65).

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 74.

him the names of those about whom she heard rumors.¹¹⁸ She also claimed that she knew Christina Plom was the strongest witch. She said that she told Father Bolte that she was a witch after he asked her about another unnamed woman.¹¹⁹ She also claimed that she told the chaplain that Hartger Henot and his sister were witches.¹²⁰ It is interesting to note that by this time Katharina Henot had been dead for three years. Catharina does not provide a date, or even a year, for this confession to Father Bolte. This means that it must have taken place prior to Katharina's death, or else she was accusing a second sister of witchcraft.

Catharina also admitted to confessing to Father Lem about her occult crimes. According to Catharina he had asked her if she had sacrificed herself to the Devil, if she had kissed him while he was in the semblance of a stag, and if the people of the dance went naked. She had admitted to all of these things.¹²¹ Then she claimed that Father Lem had asked her if she was the one who was manipulating the weather, to which she had also confessed.¹²²

This testimony is interesting due to the fact that in it, Catharina was recounting a prior interrogation, recounting her responses to what Father Lem had asked her. The imagery is unique within the context of what we have seen so far. Whether she was recounting a confession to Father Lem that actually took place or whether she was building the imagery from actions in which, she knew, witches were supposed to participate, in order to give the judges the answers that would appease them, is unknown. It is likely that she fabricated the events of the confession in order to persuade the judges that she was telling the truth. Catharina was sentenced to death by hanging and was executed on February 6, 1630.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 70-71.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 67.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 69.

¹²¹ Ibid., 69.

¹²² Ibid.

Maria Cecilia von Ahrweiler was the next person to come in front of the judges.¹²³ She was a young girl of seven or eight years old who came from a family whose members had been burnt for witchcraft in Ahrweiler. She left Ahrweiler with a citizen and had been living with a cobbler and then a tailor near St. Stephen's Church.

Maria Cecilia claimed to have learnt witchcraft from her mother. According to this young girl, her mother taught her to make rabbits by taking a rough cloth and tossing it into the air while telling them to run in the Devil's name.¹²⁴ Maria Cecilia also told the judge that she had vowed to reject God and pledged to worship the Devil. She claimed that she had learned witchcraft partly from her mother and partly from the Devil. She said that the Devil gave her poison to put in the porridge of the small children who lived in the family with whom she was staying. It was here that she makes her most shocking claim: that she slept with the Devil.¹²⁵

Despite this shocking claim, the judge changed directions in the questioning and asked her if and how often she went to the dance.¹²⁶

This departure from the subject that Maria Cecilia invited seems to indicate a certain amount of skepticism in the judge. Rather than questioning a young girl on the details of her encounter with the Devil he changed the subject to something more benign. Maria Cecilia told the judge that she met the Devil often; he would take her by the arm and drag her to the dances. There they would drink wine, eat roasted meat and dance with the other witches. She claimed that after these activities she exposed herself and would lie with the other people. Here she began to cry and the judge was not able to receive any more answers from her.¹²⁷

On the same day they brought in Matthias Kaldenback, the cobbler with whom Maria Cecilia had lived, to inquire about her behavior.¹²⁸ Kaldenback told the judge that

¹²³ Ibid., 78-79.

¹²⁴ "die Mutter hette ihro ein hasen oder Coneinsfell geben darinnen sie einen Placken gethan, selbigen in die hohe geworffen und gesagt, nun lauffe in deß Teuffels nahmen..." (ibid., 78).

¹²⁵ "daß sie beim Teuffel geschlafen" (ibid., 79).

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 79-81.

he received Maria Cecilia from a widow who knew that he had the means to take care of her. He denied noticing anything unusual happen while she was living with him.¹²⁹ However, he was aware that her family had been burned for witchcraft, and had asked her if she knew any magic. Kaldenback claims that she told him she knew how to make birds and rabbits. When he asked her to show him how she did this magical deed, she was unable to produce any animals, though she tried over twenty times.¹³⁰ He did mention, however, that she was more peculiar at the tailor's house.

Kaldenback remembered once when the tailor and his family refused to eat anything because they were afraid that she had poisoned the food. In the tailor's story, according to Kaldenback, Maria Cecilia ate some meat to prove to the family that it was not poisoned. When the tailor asked her what was poisoned and she quickly answered that nothing was. However, because she answered the question so quickly the family did not believe her and refused to eat anything.¹³¹ Maria Cecilia was released to two of the Archbishop's men on February 25, 1630, to be questioned further by them.

Entgen Schilts was the first of three midwives and nurses to be accused.¹³² She was a 74-year-old widow who was a nurse and midwife. She was working for a baker and, according to the questioning, was guilty of asking the baker's young daughter if she would like to learn witchcraft. Entgen supposedly tried to bribe the young girl with a new skirt if she agreed to learn witchcraft.¹³³ It seems as if this was the primary charge against her.

The judge asked Entgen only seven questions. Each of the questions revolved around her background and history with the baker and his family. The judge asked if she bribed the baker asking for money, if she told them she was forced to do evil, and if she told the baker and his family that she prayed and heard the angels.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Ibid., 80.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid., 81.

¹³² Ibid., 83-85.

¹³³ Ibid., 89.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 83-84.

Entgen denied all of these accusations. Despite this denial, the judge brought in witnesses for the prosecution of Entgen Schilts. The primary witness was Clemenßen Scholder the soldier. However, even with this witness, the worst that we discover of Entgen Schilts is that she berated this soldier publicly, calling him a thief, rogue and witch.¹³⁵ He was released by the judge and was made to give an oath to end the feud between him and Entgen Schilts.¹³⁶ Even without any concrete evidence, other than being a scolding old woman, Entgen Schilts was sentenced to death on March 5, 1630 and executed within the month.

The next two women who were accused, En Volmers and En Konings were both midwives, nurses and were interrogated and executed on the same days. En Volmers was a 60-year-old widow.¹³⁷ She had been a midwife for 24 years. En Volmers was asked by the judge, Adrian de Bruyn, about other women who had been tried for witchcraft and any connection she had with them. En, however, denied any knowledge of these women.¹³⁸ When the judge tried to trick her into a confession, she easily evaded it by proclaiming her innocence. For instance, the judge asked En if she was with Sybil in a carriage after the dance. En responded that that would be strange since she had no knowledge of it.¹³⁹ She claimed to have no knowledge of these women, have heard no rumors about her own mother, and have no connection with any evil.¹⁴⁰

Perhaps what makes En Volmers' case unique is the amount of outside evidence the judge admitted. Numerous citizens of the city came to discuss En Volmers with the judge. According to Jacob Schlot, Peter von Eckx, Johan von Lhon, Johan Matthies, Abraham Balckman, Agnes Mullers, Gertraud Rommerßkirchen and Bernhardt Schnewinckel she had a very unusual reputation and was followed by rumors and

¹³⁵ "gehertz uh aben daß Mhon Entgen Schilts Clemenßen Scholder voreinen Schelmen dieb under Zeuberer gescholden" (ibid., 85).

¹³⁶ Ibid., 87.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 89-92, 94-96, 132-133.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 89.

¹³⁹ "solches komm eihro frembt vor, nach demmal sie nichts dauon wiße" (ibid., 90).

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 90-91.

sickness.¹⁴¹ Most of the claims of these people are odd, such as En Volmers investigating the latrine where the chamber pots were dumped. This was rumored by both Jacob Schlot and Johan von Lhon.¹⁴²

The unfortunate story surrounding En Volmers lies in the death of the baker's wife.¹⁴³ En was hired to be the midwife and lying-in maid of the wife of the baker. After she gave birth, En gave her some gruel. She became ill and died, though the baker admitted that he and the baby also had some of the gruel and neither of them became ill.¹⁴⁴ However, Agnes Muller claimed that a cake baker's wife became ill after taking the gruel from En Volmers, as did the baby of the cake baker.¹⁴⁵ After the baby was baptized he died, his body turned blue and brown and he developed boils on his head.¹⁴⁶

Despite these misfortunes, there was no concrete proof that En Volmers hexed the women or the child. Yet, these disasters compounded with the rumors that revolved around her led to her conviction and execution. On July 27, 1630 En Volmers was hanged.

En Konings was another midwife.¹⁴⁷ She was 50 years old and had been a midwife for 25 years. She was married three times and had nine children, all of whom died.¹⁴⁸ She was questioned on the same days as En Volmers, by the same judge, Adrian de Bruyn. She still lived with her third husband, though she confessed that they did not live in peace.¹⁴⁹ She was interrogated three times, with a total of 29 questions asked of her.

En Konings, like En Volmers, seemed to have misfortunes surrounding her. Her second husband committed suicide by hanging himself, a woman she was caring for died

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 99-107, 113-127.

¹⁴² Ibid., 114-115, 117.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 92.

¹⁴⁴ "konne nit eigentlich sagen wer deßen eine vrsach seye Er und daß kindt hetten den rest vom warmbt geßen vnd sich nit vbel darnach befunden" (ibid., 92).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 119-120.

¹⁴⁶ "vber sein leib gants blau vnd braun gewesen hab auch aufm heubt boußen gehabt" (ibid., 120).

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 92-94, 96-97, 129-132.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 92-93.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 93.

in childbirth and all of her nine children died.¹⁵⁰ She claimed that the reason she was accused was because of her involvement in an adulterous situation. Johan Kleßgen's wife paid En 15 thaler to act as a witness in the case against her husband.¹⁵¹ En had been the midwife to Kleßgen's mistress and had seen Kleßgen and his mistress together.¹⁵² However, the case was dropped against him. She believed that these actions led to her accusation.

The judge asked her why her husband hanged himself. En stated that he was a scoundrel and had robbed many people. The judge also asked why she and her current husband did not get along. En claimed that they fought over finances.¹⁵³ When she was asked about her mother, En said that her mother was from Jülich, west of Cologne. When the judge asked if her mother had been hanged for witchcraft she stated that she had died honorably and received an honorable burial. Two witnesses that the judge later questioned corroborated her claim.¹⁵⁴

En Konings also claimed that she never heard any negative comments from her neighbors and acquaintances about her actions.¹⁵⁵

However, Gertraud Schmidt had an interesting story pertaining to En Konings. While her relation Margarethe Lanschbergs was in labor she was in a large amount of pain. Gertraud claims that Margarethe was a small woman and was almost dead from the pain. En Konings had spoken the Lord's Prayer nearly four times during the delivery. Gertraud left the room and when she returned the baby was born and Margarethe looked fresh and healthy. The baby, however, was frail and Gertraud called for the priest. En Konings touched Margarethe, who suddenly turned white and gasped, "Ah, Mhon En, what are you doing?"¹⁵⁶ She died while En Konings began to look at the child. Despite

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 96.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 130.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 131.

¹⁵⁴ Both Christina Stroedeckers and her husband, Johan, knew En Konings parents. They both claimed that her mother was an honorable woman and died honorably. Ibid., 133-134.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 131.

¹⁵⁶ "Och, Mhon En, waß thut ihr dha" (ibid., 136).

Gertraud's insistence on last rites, En told her the baby needed no other remedy than some medicinal herbs.¹⁵⁷ This story from Gertraud seems to show the type of information that the judge was searching for in regards to En. After this deposition En Konings was not questioned any further. She was sentenced along with En Volmers and executed on the same day, July 27, 1630.

Jost Nisius was the first man to be accused, and only one of two men accused during the entirety of these trials. He was an elderly man of 67 with a wife and two children. He was brought in for questioning on May 11, 1630, in front of Judge Adrian de Bruyn.¹⁵⁸ Jost Nisius was asked numerous questions about his background, his relationship with his neighbor, Hanßen Keil, the witches' dance and witchcraft. It is surprising that the judge engaged in such aggressive questioning with Jost. He denied all of the judges' accusations, including whether he knew a woman who went to the witches' dances by broom and called down hailstorms.¹⁵⁹ The accusations against him were rather odd, including that he had made a man mute by commanding him to stay silent. When Jost told his neighbor to be quiet it was said in anger. Jost responded to this accusation by stating that the man, his neighbor Hanßen Keil, talked incessantly.¹⁶⁰

The judge brought in a witness against Jost whose testimony seemed peculiar also. Herman von Schwerdt was a cobbler who went on a pilgrimage with his mother to Trier.¹⁶¹ He claimed that his mother wrote a letter to Jost Nisius and while she was away for half an hour he decided to follow some men who were carrying a cross. One man who was carrying a firearm on his shoulder stopped him and remarked that Herman was carrying a letter. This man stated that whoever carried the letter to the man in Cologne,

¹⁵⁷ "Sagt ferner weil dero zeit keine Tresei sondern gnugs am enot turfft von Zucker vnd blomen alda gewesen" (ibid., 137).

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 107-113.

¹⁵⁹ "Gefg ob Erdan nit darbei gewesen alß Meyer Bartholomei haußfrau bei hurter weyer gedantzett und mit einem beßem in deß Teuffels nahmen in den weyer geschlagen aldar Nebel Reif vnd Kiesel stein zumachen..." (ibid., 112-113).

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 111.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 127.

meaning Jost Nisius, would have to watch for guards. This man demanded this letter from Herman, who gave it to him since he was armed.¹⁶²

It seems astonishing that the judge would consider this proof against Jost. There was no evidence of the existence of a letter or its contents. It is also interesting that within this testimony Herman named his mother as a co-conspirator. However, we do not know her name, and there is no mention of another von Schwerdt in any of the other testimonies.

There is no record of any further communication with Jost Nisius. Here is one example where Stephen Muser, the notary, made no record of whether Jost was sentenced and what happened to him. Perhaps the judge, Adrian de Bruyn, felt that the evidence was too circumstantial in regards to his case, or perhaps he was handed over to the Archbishop's men for questioning. Either scenario is possible; however with the remainder of his information missing, it is impossible for us to know the final outcome of his trial.

On July 4, Maria Grontzfelts was brought before judges Johan Oekhoven, Herr Bulder and Dr. Godenau.¹⁶³ She was a 37-year-old woman who worked as a seamstress and also instructed children from her house. She had been living on her own for nine years, though she lived with various people throughout her lifetime.¹⁶⁴ She also had lived at the cloister of St. Revilien for a time. Throughout this questioning she did not seem to understand completely the questions the judges were asking. For example, when the judges asked her how long she had lived on her own she answered that she had lived in her house for nine years but before and after had lived with different people. When the judges changed the wording of the question slightly to show they meant how long had she lived alone in her house she answered exactly the same.¹⁶⁵

Maria painted a picture of herself as a victim of gossips. She claimed that these gossips spoke about her behind her back and caused her to have a miscarriage.¹⁶⁶ She

¹⁶² Ibid., 127-128.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 139-146.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 139.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 140.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 141.

said that these women were spurred on by a woman named Catharina. It is possible, though not certain, that here she meant Katharina Henot. Surely the knowledge that a powerful woman had been hanged for witchcraft had permeated the city. She claimed that while she was at Church for communion she heard some women gossiping about her. She was not sure if they called her a whore or a witch, though she responded by publicly denouncing them as witches.¹⁶⁷

Maria named an elderly woman, Anniken, who claimed to have heard the angels singing.¹⁶⁸ She told the judges that Anniken was a midwife who claimed that magic was an art. Maria claimed that Anniken said that it was an art that educated men and princes learned.¹⁶⁹ This statement was reminiscent of the position of contemporary Johann Weyer and historian Lyndal Roper. Especially Weyer and his contempt for learned men who studied the art of magic. However, Maria also told the judges that Anniken had a book of the Devil in her house that she had read for three months. She claimed that Anniken came to her confused and confessed that she had been reading from this book.¹⁷⁰ The records of Stephen Muser do not indicate what happened to Maria Grontzfelts. It is not surprising that the judges brought in Anniken van Haut next. However, this was the first time that the judges immediately questioned one of the people mentioned in these trials directly after they were accused.

Anniken van Haut was brought to trial two days after Maria Grontzfelts' testimony.¹⁷¹ Due to the unique accusations surrounding Anniken, it is not surprising that the judges brought her in quickly. Anniken was a 70-year-old woman with grown daughters. She had lived alone for the past eight years, so we will assume that she was a widow. Her occupation was listed in the records as a silk flower maker.¹⁷² She was brought before the same three judges as Maria.

¹⁶⁷ "hab aber nit eigentlich verstanden ob sie eine huer oder hex gescholden..." (ibid., 144).

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 142.

¹⁶⁹ "habe gemelte Anniken under anderen gesagt, daß man alhie die leuth darumb verbrennte, und daß eßeine freyekunst were vnd von herrn vnd fursten kinder geprauchte wurde" (ibid., 143).

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 146-153.

¹⁷² Ibid., 146.

According to Anniken she was subject to visions from God. She claimed that she saw Jesus come to her house dressed like a beggar.¹⁷³ He came back to visit the next morning as a young man with a golden beard. He was wearing black trousers and a gray shirt while carrying a sack upon his back.¹⁷⁴ She does not mention whether this vision spoke to her, but claims that when she went to Church she saw a man being tormented by the Devil. By throwing holy water on him she was able to heal him. Anniken told the judges that this was a miracle that she performed while she was younger.¹⁷⁵

Anniken claimed that one night while preparing for bed she saw a light and angels came to her. She fell to her knees and saw heaven. Some angels came and spoke to her in Latin, but she did not understand what they were saying. She saw that they were singing against the Devil. When the angels sang the Devil would screech, causing the angels to flinch.¹⁷⁶ She insisted that this power was a gift from God and not the work of the Devil.¹⁷⁷

The judges asked her about Anniken's alleged connection to the Devil, including the book that Maria claimed she read. Anniken, unsurprisingly, denied having any book.¹⁷⁸ When she was asked if she had confessed to Maria that she received marks from the devil on her forehead, she replied that she had never said anything like that.¹⁷⁹ The judges then asked her if she had ever had any marks on her forehead, to which she responded that she had. There were three marks that appeared 19 years ago, she did not

¹⁷³ "daß morgens vnser lieber her in biddemans kleider dahin kommen..." (ibid., 147).

¹⁷⁴ "Inmaßen dan deß folgende morgens zwischen 9 vnd 10 vhren vnser L. her, wiesie in der thurren gestanden, alß ein man von funfvndzwanzig hiahren, mit einem kleinen golt farbigen bärtgen, einer schwartzer broch vnd grawen Pei..." (ibid.).

¹⁷⁵ "vnd alß sie sich mit weiwasser geweschen were solcher schadt als paltgenesen; Vndalß nun solch miracul kundt vnd offenbar worden..." (ibid., 148).

¹⁷⁶ "weider angefangen zusingen vnder welchem gesengh der teuffel ein groß gekrisch gemacht und sich gegen den engelen gefraselt..." (ibid., 149).

¹⁷⁷ "vnd seye solches kein teuffels sondern ein Gotteswerck." (ibid., 150).

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 152.

have any idea how she came by the marks, or who left them. However, during the testimony Anniken noted that now they are unrecognizable because of her wrinkles.¹⁸⁰

It is interesting that the judges then asked Anniken if she considered Maria a good person. This was the first time within the testimony that the judges asked for the personal opinion of the accused of one who did the accusing. Anniken remarked that she could not really say, but that she had her doubts as to Maria's sanity.¹⁸¹ What is particularly interesting here is that the woman who claimed to see visions of angels and Jesus was the one that was questioning the sanity of the one who accused her. However, if Maria Grontzfelts answers to the judges' questions are any indication, it did seem that she was an odd woman. It would be amazingly difficult, especially under these circumstances, to attempt to judge sanity.

Once again, Stephen Muser did not record what happened to Anniken van Haut. It seems as if the trials were winding down for this period, in fact Anniken's was the last person to be questioned in 1630. It was not until 1645 that the next trial took place. As we can see, however, that does not necessarily mean that gossiping and accusations did not occur during this period.

In 1645 Peter von Rodenkirchen stole the offering box from St. Marien's in Capolito.¹⁸² He was an 11 or 12-year-old beggar. There is no record of his family, though he claimed that his mother taught him to make rabbits by tossing her apron in the air.¹⁸³ He told the judge that it was both his mother and a small Moorish man at the Greek market who taught him this magic. However, when the judge asked him to bring in a magically conjured rabbit, he claimed that they would disappear if they travelled too far.¹⁸⁴ He also told the judge that there was another boy at the docks who could also make rabbits.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 153.

¹⁸² Ibid., 154-163.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 156.

¹⁸⁴ "Peter habe ihme die kunst in seiner mutter hauß gelheret, Neme darzu einen schurtzel lege ein holtzgen darauff, vnd sagen *coras* da leufft der haß, vertrawe sich aber die kunst vfm Thurn nit zu gebrauchen weilen der haß vber die stein lauffen muß, vnd wan derselb funf heuser vobey gelauffen dan pleibe daß schurtzel liggen, vnd ist alßdan der haß verschwonden" (ibid.).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

When the judge, Adrian Richartz, began to press him about the Devil, Peter claimed that he had seen the Devil three times.¹⁸⁶ He met him at the dock and in the mountains. When he was at the wharf he saw the Devil flying. According to Peter the Devil dressed like an Arab, with silk clothing, but had claws in place of feet.¹⁸⁷ The only reason he knew he was the Devil was because a boy who learned magic recognized him.¹⁸⁸ He then told of the dancing and the feast at the witches' Sabbath, though he gave little details of the Sabbath, except for naming a woman who he claimed was present, Trin. He recounted how the Devil touched him and placed a crooked symbol on him.¹⁸⁹ When the judge asked if he had contact with the Devil since then, he described how since his imprisonment, the devil would come as a succubus, trying to entice him into intercourse. According to his claim, however, he refused the Devil's seductions.¹⁹⁰

Five days later the judge again brought Peter in for questioning. During this interrogation, Judge Richartz asked Peter for more details of this seduction. When asked what the Devil expected of him when he came as either a woman or a succubus, Peter again claimed that he visited in the prison where he was being held.¹⁹¹ According to Peter, the Devil touched his forehead and placed a mark there so that he could recognize him at once if he saw him again. Peter also said that the Devil told him to bewitch a cow. However, when Judge Richartz asked him what the hex was to do the bewitching, Peter replied that he forgot.¹⁹² After two years of imprisonment, on December 18, 1647, Peter von Rodenkirchen was hanged.

On September 7, 1648 Ursula Horst came to the judge, Johan Schäfer, as a precautionary measure.¹⁹³ She was a 67-year-old woman and the wife of a wheelbarrow

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 157-158.

¹⁸⁷“der alter mauren in gestalt eines menschen welcher iederzeitin side gewant gekleidet gewesen...vnd peren und klawenahn den füeßen gehabt” (ibid., 157).

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 157.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 161.

¹⁹⁰ “Ja in gestalt eines metgens, vnd habe ihm daß beyschlaffen angemutet Er aber daßelb *recusirt*, hab ihm eauch offenbaret daß heudt examinirt warden, er aber nicht bekennen sole” (ibid., 159).

¹⁹¹ “prosuccubo gebraucht” (ibid., 161).

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 163-164.

driver. She claimed that she and her neighbor, Entgen Eßers, had had a public argument in which Entgen had called her a witch.¹⁹⁴ Entgen's husband was bedridden. Ursula told Judge Schäer that Entgen accused her of hexing her husband. However, she also claimed that Entgen was a violent woman who had beaten her with a wooden spoon.¹⁹⁵ In order to satisfy her honor Ursula came to the judge to defend herself and accuse Entgen.

Entgen Eßers was immediately brought in and questioned the same day.¹⁹⁶ She was 38 years old and the wife of Jacob Efferlings, a needle maker. According to Entgen her husband relied upon the neighbors, a woman named Trin and Ursula, while she was out of town visiting her parents the past year at Michelmas, September 29.¹⁹⁷ When she returned he was ill and the sickness continued. She claimed that Ursula came ten times to her house nearly every day despite the fact that her husband was so ill.¹⁹⁸ She admitted that she blamed Ursula for her husband's sickness, in fact, according to Entgen; he named Ursula as the reason for his suffering. She denied, however, that she ever hit Ursula.¹⁹⁹

The interesting part of Entgen's interrogation came when the judge asked her if she took any ceremonial action with Ursula in order to bless her husband and release a hex. She readily admitted that she tried five times on her own and once with Ursula to remove the hex from her husband.²⁰⁰ She tried to accomplish this by putting a coin in melted wax while saying prayers to banish evil. However, according to Entgen, Ursula told her husband that she did not have faith in the prayers. Entgen called in a doctor to examine her husband. The doctor was unable to discover what was ailing her husband and prescribed bed rest.²⁰¹ Entgen received lavender wine from Ursula, but once she

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 163.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 164-171.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 164.

¹⁹⁸ "Von welcher zeit die Verhaffine schir taglich vber zehenmahl in ihrem hauß kommen..." (ibid., 165).

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ "Ja hette funf mal baußen ihrem vn dein mahl mit ihrem..." (ibid., 166).

²⁰¹ Ibid., 166-168.

applied it to her husband he began to cry out and she saw that he had a boil as large as a goose egg where she had applied the lavender wine.²⁰²

Judge Schäfer asked Entgen where she learned to use the wax in this manner. She answer that her mother had cured many people by doing what she had described. She also claimed that she admitted to her priest that she did this and he absolved her from any sins.²⁰³ Entgen Eßers was then released, though she was cautioned about her actions. Ursula Horst, however, vanished from her home on September 11, 1648.²⁰⁴ With this suspicious action a warrant was placed for her arrest. She was taken into custody on October 7 and sentenced.²⁰⁵ Stephen Muser did not record what her sentence entailed; however, it would not be difficult to believe that the judge took her disappearance as a sign of guilt.

Two years later Anna Morßbach, a shopkeeper, was named by four men who were visiting the widow of Jurgen Meisener.²⁰⁶ Henrich Kocks, Gerhard Midler, Johan Sintzig and Caspar Herger claimed that they were visiting the widow because she was ill. However, Anna described the widow, Christina, as a prostitute.²⁰⁷ This profession would make sense since the men claimed that they tried to leave Christina at approximately midnight when she began to act erratic. According to these four men, Christina leaped onto the bed and grabbed the lamp. She then jumped into the cistern and began yelling for help. Henrich Kochs claimed that she then shot straight out and that the water was no deeper than her knees. Christina told the men that she had no power over herself and that Anna Morßbach had just sewn her hose and that she felt as if they were bewitched.²⁰⁸

Anna Morßbach was brought before Judge Lothar Schneidt on August 11, 1650 and again on August 19, 1650. She denied all of these accusations.²⁰⁹ Anna told the

²⁰² Ibid., 168-169.

²⁰³ Ibid., 170.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 171.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 172.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 172-191.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 176.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 174.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

judge that it was Christina, the widow, who came to her begging for help. She had a length of cloth that she needed to get rid of because she knew she was about to be arrested. Anna claimed that Christina wanted to sell it to her but then told her she would give it to her for her help. She was to wait and give it to a man who came for it.²¹⁰ Anna claimed that three times she tried to give it back to Christina but she refused to take it. The third time she met an older man with whom she felt compelled to sleep. She said that his masculinity dazzled her.²¹¹ She thought that the cloth she was given was a banner of the Devil. Directly after this questioning the judge received news from Henrich Kochs that the widow Christina had passed away. Heinrich Kochs told the judge on August 14, 1650 that he found Christina in the morning on the day she died and that she was a pitiful sight.²¹²

The next time Anna was questioned she was asked about her background, including whether she had the ability to see spirits. Apparently a woman came forward and claimed that Anna said she could read palms and see the dead.²¹³ Anna neither denied nor affirmed these charges. Anna Morßbach was sentenced on August 25, 1650, though there was no record of whether she was hanged or given over to the Archbishop for questioning.

On August 20, 1650 the widow Gertraud was brought in for questioning.²¹⁴ Her occupation was apple seller, though she admitted to begging with her children.²¹⁵ What is especially interesting about Gertraud is the reason behind her arrest. Apparently she was sending patients to a ‘devil catcher’ in order to become healed. This is more reminiscent of the cunning folk of Europe. This man was named Girlich and was able to heal people through herbs as well as telling them things that they wanted to know.²¹⁶ For

²¹⁰ Ibid., 176.

²¹¹ Ibid., 177.

²¹² Ibid., 181.

²¹³ Ibid., 189.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 194-198.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 195.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 196.

instance, the potter had his money stolen and Gertraud told him that if he went to Girlich he would be able to discover who had taken his money.²¹⁷ She claimed that she did not realize that Girlich was practicing heresy. She was accused for this association when a woman went to Girlich and did not receive the advice she wanted. This woman then went to Gertraud's stall and demanded she get a refund for the money she spent at Girlich's, to which Gertraud acquiesced.²¹⁸ Despite her association with Girlich, Gertraud was released on August 22, 1650.

On September 9, 1650 a young woman was brought in before Judge Schneidt.²¹⁹ Margaret von Pellgraben was an orphan who, according to the judge, had lived in an orphanage. She stated, however, that she had been living on her own for three years.²²⁰ She worked as a maid and as an instructor to Jungfer Feechen's children. Margaret claimed to have had a relationship with a man who she believed was the Devil. She would meet this man every night and she claimed that he made her renounce God.²²¹ Margaret declared that he came to her through the air and that whether she was in the alley or in the house he found her. The judge, seeming skeptical, asked about other people who were around when he came to her. Margaret claimed that no one else could see him.²²²

According to Margaret she went to the witches' Sabbath approximately seven times. She told the judge that they ate, drank and danced at the Sabbath. The Devil asked her to go to the Church and bring some consecrated Host back to him. She claimed that she tried to defy the Devil but he hit her in the face and caused her to have a bloody nose.²²³ Margaret fled to a Church, but heard people talking under her window. She said that she heard them say that she had done so much evil that she did not deserve to live an hour

²¹⁷ Ibid., 195.

²¹⁸ "Gefg ob nit selbige frau einamahl von Rodekirchen kommen sie an ihrem kräm angesprochen vnd gesagt, daß ihr gehen und rath suchen nichts gehollffen, vnd deß wegen restitution ihres außgelegten gelts gefordert..." (ibid., 196).

²¹⁹ Ibid., 199-203.

²²⁰ Ibid., 199.

²²¹ "alda sie auch Gott ab vnd ihme dem schlemen zugesagt..." (ibid., 200).

²²² Ibid., 201.

²²³ Ibid., 202.

longer.²²⁴ Despite her mentioning having a sexual relationship with the Devil, Margaret did not give any significant details about the Devil or the Sabbath, only generalized statements. Margaret was sentenced to death and hanged on September 24, 1650.

Three years later a ten-year-old girl was brought before Judge Hieronymus de Klerck.²²⁵ Entgen, Peter Lenart's daughter, was a girl whose father had died and whose mother had abandoned her after she got remarried.²²⁶ She was arrested and confessed on May 7, 1653.

Judge de Klerck began by asking Entgen how she and her two siblings survived after her mother left. Entgen claimed that first her mother took them to the witches' Sabbath, where they danced to music and enjoyed themselves.²²⁷ When the judge asked if she ever went to a dance outside of the city walls, she answered that once two women came upon her while she was resting in the street. They took her hand and led her between two bushes where they were transported to a place between Dusseldorf and Duisberg. At this place there was a feast prepared underneath the gallows.²²⁸

Entgen claimed that there was a house where people were forced to do evil deeds or else be choked and beaten. When the judge asked about the food at the Sabbath, Entgen responded that she supped from a cadaver and drank wine that tasted like urine.²²⁹ She told the judge that she attended over 30 witches' Sabbaths. When the judge asked her why others could not see the place of the Sabbath, Entgen did not know. She said that she went to the table and was unable to see the other people from the countryside.²³⁰ When she was asked if she had renounced God, she confessed that she had renounced

²²⁴ "hette ein groß geduis vor der finstern vnd vnderanderen gehort, das gesagt, wan so viel machten vber sie hette alß nit solte sie nit eine einziges tundt leben." (ibid.).

²²⁵ Ibid., 204-211.

²²⁶ Ibid., 204.

²²⁷ Ibid., 204-205.

²²⁸ Ibid., 205.

²²⁹ "habe einem schmach gehabt alß wan eß von einem foullich gewesen, der dranck aber alß Piß, es hette aber anfangswol einem Weinßschmact gehabt" (ibid., 205-206).

²³⁰ Ibid., 208.

Him at a yearly meeting in Blocksberg. She made a pact with the Devil by signing her name within his book in her own blood.²³¹

When de Klerck asked her what evil the Devil wanted her to do, she told him that she was given a salve from the Devil. When she put the salve on the sleeve of a man he became ill with a fever.²³² She then told the judge that this was the only evil she performed. She already confessed to her priest and had nothing else to say.²³³ This admission was enough to prove her guilt. On May 10, 1653 she was sentenced to death by hanging. Her execution was carried out on February 18, 1655.

Anne Toer was the final person to be questioned.²³⁴ According to the records she was a 22-year-old woman who worked at making the decorative paper flowers that were placed on caskets. She brought herself in front of the court on August 23, 1662. Her judge was Johan von Rhatt. She came to the court asking to be put to death.²³⁵ This was the first time that any of our accused came into the court asking to be killed. She claimed she was being attacked by an evil man. They lived as lovers for over seven years, but she realized that he had hooves for feet and tried to escape.²³⁶

Anne told the judge that she was unable to resist the pull of this man. This man, perhaps the Devil in disguise, wanted Anne to do numerous things to work evil. She was forced to renounce God and received a mark on her forehead after she signed the pact with the Devil in her own blood.²³⁷ According to Anne he called the Virgin Mary a whore and God the Father a hangman.²³⁸ Anne also said that her lover requested that she bring him

²³¹ “ich versage Gott und allen seinen heiligen vnd will der zustaen mit Leib vnd sehel, darauf der boeß sie obenahm bein gepitzet daß eß gebludet vnd damitten ein briefgen wegen vorgemeltern absagens geschrieben...” (ibid., 206).

²³² Ibid., 206-207.

²³³ Ibid., 209.

²³⁴ Ibid., 211-220.

²³⁵ “vnd begert von leben geholffen zu sein” (ibid., 212).

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid., 213-214.

²³⁸ “heische die mutter gottes, ein huer, vnd got dem hern, einen henker” (ibid., 213).

consecrated Hosts.²³⁹ When she was asked about any powers that he had she claimed that he was able to create thunderstorms.²⁴⁰

However, the questions asked by the judge had to be repeated during her next interrogation when she denied the validity of her previous testimony.²⁴¹ She admitted that she said she was disgusted with life, but denied that any of the other testimony concerning her deeds was true, including the pact with the Devil and the mark on her head.²⁴² During the next interrogation she did mention that her lover was the one that was causing thunderstorms. When the judge asked if she enjoyed the sex with this man she admitted that she did.²⁴³ Anne Toer was the last person to be questioned. She was sentenced but Stephen Muser did not record what her punishment, if any, was to be.

Conclusion

Throughout these trials there are numerous elements that can be compared. First we will compare the confessions versus the denials. Seven of the accused confessed to the crime of witchcraft: Christina Plom, Catharina, Maria Cecilia von Ahrweiler, Peter von Rodenkirchen, Margaret von Pellgraben, Entgen, Peter Lenart's daughter and Anna Toer. The majority of the accused did not confess to any of the activities of which the judge and others accused. Christina Plom and Catharina were tortured during their interrogations. Anne Toer was the only one who was not a child and confessed without the use of torture being recorded. Even she, however, changed her testimony and made her own actions less heretical. What is particularly interesting is the fact that all of these people were under 30. Each of the four children, under the age of 16, confessed. It is interesting to note that in addition to all of the children confessing, all of the children were orphans. This is comparable to the theory put forward by Lyndal Roper that children, especially orphans, created a connection with the judge or judges who

²³⁹ Ibid., 214.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 220.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 215.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid., 220.

questioned them. Thus they responded to the questions of the judge or judges in ways that gave the judges the answers they sought.²⁴⁴

The confessions of the adults were similar in that each of them tried to downplay their involvement. Christina Plom admitted that she went to the dance, yet denied that she participated willingly. In fact, according to her, she was pressured into all of the activities in which she participated. Catharina denied any activity until she was flogged. It was then that she confessed to everything that the judge asked of her, except the desecration of the Host. Anne Toer initially admitted to having intercourse with a man and then discovering that he had hooved feet. She admitted to renouncing God and receiving the Devil's mark. However, when she was questioned again, days later, she denied all of the allegations except for the sexual relationship with this man, which she even admitted to enjoying. Thus, the three adult women who confessed place no blame on themselves. This is congruent with what Roper would have us expect. She maintained that even faced with the certainty of execution, the accused would attempt to minimize the role that they played.²⁴⁵

Though the performance of magical deeds was one of the primary indicators of who was a witch, few instances of magic were recorded in these trials. This, again, is reminiscent of the accusations that Johann Weyer made against punishing poisoners as witches. Bever, in fact, noted that the majority of witchcraft accusations were based on assault and poisoning.²⁴⁶ This lack of magical accusations holds true within the trials that we have examined.

The confessions of the children were the most descriptive and magical. Maria Cecilia and Peter both described the art of making rabbits from thin air. They both also claimed that they learned this practice from their mothers. Despite the lapse of 15 years between their testimonies even the process of creating the rabbits was similar. Yet, when Peter recounted his ability the judge seemed more skeptical, wanting proof that he was able to

²⁴⁴ Roper, *Witch Craze*, 50.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

²⁴⁶ Bever, 965.

produce rabbits from thin air. Catharina also mentioned transformations; in her testimony she kissed the Devil after he had changed into the semblance of a stag.

Christina, Peter, Margaret and Entgen all described unusual modes of transportation. In Christina, Peter and Margaret's case this constituted of flying. In fact, Christina mentioned that the witches went above the ground until they saw people who were not witches. Peter told the judge that he saw the Devil flying near the wharf. Margaret claimed that her lover flew to her and was able to find her wherever she went. Entgen's account was different. Two witches came and took her by the hand and transported her to the Sabbath by walking through a hole in the hedges. This testimony on flying brings to mind the pagan night flights of Diana.²⁴⁷ This is an example of the universality of certain seventeenth-century stereotypes. Night flight was a common feature of witchcraft accusations.

Catharina and Anne Toer both mentioned weather magic. Behringer and Oster both noted the connection between witchcraft and foul weather or crop yield. In Catharina's case she admitted, after the flogging, to creating storms. Anne, on the other hand, told of her lover, the man with the hooved feet, and his ability to create storms. Throughout the entire trials, these are the events that can truly be deemed magical. These are the types of events that were impossible, in Johann Weyer's view.

However, despite these being the only magical events, there were ritualistic events that took place. Ursula Horst, Entgen Eßers and the widow Gertraud all participated in ritualistic behavior. Gertraud's participation was only as an accessory, as the intermediary between a healer, Girlich, and people who were willing to pay for his services of healing and prophecy. Ursula Horst and Entgen Eßers, on the other hand, used melted wax and ritual prayers for healing purposes. Although, according to Entgen, they blessed the coin and wax with holy prayers, the ritualistic procedures of the undertaking seem more in line with the cunning folk and healers of the Middle Ages.

Maria Cecilia, Margaret and Entgen all gave descriptions of the Sabbath, though Maria Cecilia and Entgen gave much more detailed descriptions. Their descriptions

²⁴⁷ Midelfort, *Witch Hunting*, 19.

came 23 years apart, yet show similarities. Margaret's description of the Sabbath was superficial. Maria Cecilia described an exciting event, one in which the Devil had to calm the participants to have them remain focused on the job he gave them. They ate roasted meat and wine. Entgen described a small house where people were taken and beaten in order to force them to work the Devil's will. Entgen spoke of a disturbing dinner featuring cadaver and urine. The differences in the amount of detail could be due to the passage of time, or it could be due to differences in personality and maturity.

There were numerous accounts of sexual relations with the Devil or with people who were assumed to be the Devil. Christina Plom began this accusation by naming two women who allegedly slept with the Devil. According to her testimony, however, she herself did not. During the confrontation with Sophia Haas, Christina accused her of sleeping with the Devil, which Sophia denied. Maria Cecilia, the young girl, also claimed that she slept with the Devil and with other witches. Here it should be noted, however, that the judges did not push her for any details, possibly not believing her confession. Peter claimed that the Devil came to him as a succubus. Though he did not participate in intercourse with the succubus, his account was the most sexually descriptive of all of the trials.

Anna Morßbach, though she did not confess to any wrongdoing, did admit that she slept with a man whose masculinity dazzled her. Margaret von Pellgraben described her young lover as a man, possibly the Devil, who was able to fly and would find her wherever she was. Anne Toer was the last to describe a sexual relationship with an unknown man. She claimed that she had been the lover of a man for over seven years and she was unable to resist this man. Sexuality was considered a weakness of women according to contemporaries, including Weyer and Luther. Women, especially those who were no longer sexually appealing, were more likely to renounce God and sleep with the Devil. According to Schormann the pact with the Devil was sealed by sex.²⁴⁸

Anne Toer was not the only one, however, to give strange physical traits to the Devil. Catharina mentioned him in the semblance of a stag and Peter von Rodenkirchen

²⁴⁸ Schormann, 12.

said that he viewed the Devil as an Arab in expensive clothes with clawed feet. These animalistic traits are visible in contemporary art of the seventeenth century.

Several of the accused mentioned the placing of the Devil's mark. This was a mark, not unlike the stigmata of those with immense faith in Jesus, that proclaimed the wearer a witch to other witches. In 1630 Christina Plom accused both Elßbeth von Schwelm and Sophia Haas of receiving the Devil's mark. She claimed that it was placed on their foreheads. Maria Grontzfelts also mentioned the Devil's mark on Anniken van Haut's forehead, though Anniken denied any association with the Devil and the marks were not noticeable any more due to her wrinkles. Peter claimed that the Devil came and marked him on his forehead. Anne Toer also told the judge that when she renounced God the Devil marked her on her forehead. However, none of the judges were able to note any mark on the accused.

Along with receiving the mark of the Devil two of the accused remarked that they also signed their names into the Devil's book with their own blood. Entgen, Peter Lenart's daughter, and Anna Toer were the only two to recount this activity. It is also worth noting that they were the last two trials that took place. The pact with the Devil and signing the pact with your own blood is a common theme even within literature. For instance, in Goethe's *Faust*, the protagonist signed the pact with Mephistopheles with a drop of his blood.

We can even see similarities within the trials in which the accused denied all of the allegations. For example, the similarities with the midwives are striking. Both En Volmers and En Konings were questioned after a tragic event concerning a mother who passed away directly after childbirth. In En Konings' case she had the unfortunate experience of losing the mother and then attempting to save the child. She does not seem to have been a superstitious woman since she told the mother's cousin that the baby would do better with herbs than with ritualistic prayers and last rites.

En Volmers, however, was accused based on a mother's death after the consumption of gruel. There were two stories recounted in which women had passed away after En Volmers gave them gruel. In the first case, that of the baker's wife, the baker admitted that he and the baby also ate some of the gruel and did not get ill. In the

second case, however, both the mother and the baby died soon after eating the gruel. Though life of a baby and of a mother who had just given birth is fragile, it seems obvious that many suspected that En Volmers had poisoned the gruel.

Maria Cecilia, the young girl from Ahrweiler, was also associated with poisoning. She told the judge that the Devil had given her poison to put in the gruel of the children who lived in the home where she was staying. However, the cobbler who had kept her prior to her moving in with the tailor denied that she attempted to poison him. He did mention, though, that the tailor feared for his health due to Maria Cecilia acting particularly suspicious. In fact, the tailor once accused Maria Cecilia of poisoning the dinner, and he and his family refused to eat. This description of poisoning children's food is similar to an account that David Sabeau discusses in *Power in the Blood*.²⁴⁹ Sabeau shows that the act of sharing food with people outside of your family is an act of faith. This was especially true if the food was prepared by an acquaintance.

Skepticism came through in numerous questions during the trials. Often the judge or judges would ask the accused why others were unable to see the dance and why there were no remnants of the feast. None of the accused was able to answer these questions with any amount of certainty. Also the judges asked Maria Cecilia's cobbler if she had ever been able to do the feats that she claimed. He replied that when he asked her to perform these magical deeds, she tried twenty times and was unable to. A similar story pertains to Peter von Rodenkirchen. When the judge asked him to bring one of the rabbits he claimed he could make, he told them he was not able to because the rabbit would disappear. These requests from the judges show an amount of skepticism. The judges wanted physical proof to determine the validity of the claims. In fact, it may have been that children were confessing that caused this amount of skepticism in the judges. According to Midelfort, the skepticism rose with the number of children who confessed.²⁵⁰

Many of the people who were alleged to be witches were perceived to have abrasive personalities. They did not seem to have healthy relationships with their

²⁴⁹David Warren Sabeau, *Power in the Blood*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 109.

²⁵⁰Midelfort, *Heartland*, 30.

neighbors. This was an aspect that was noted throughout our trials, as well as by Edward Bever.²⁵¹ Christina Plom bullied the possessed women at St. Clara's and bragged about her powers. Maria Cecilia bragged to the cobbler that she could make birds and rabbits. Entgen Schilts was embroiled in a feud where she had publicly scolded Clemenßen Scholder, calling him a thief, rogue and witch. She was also accused of trying to bribe the baker for money. Jost Nisius argued with his neighbor and told him to be silent, after which, according to the judge, his neighbor was unable to talk. Maria Grontzfelts had an altercation with women at church, calling them out as witches. Ursula Horst claimed that Entgen Eßers publically called her a witch and beat her with a wooden spoon. Anna Morßbach details a strained relationship between herself and the widow Christina. These examples show that stressed relationships were the primary catalyst for accusations.

This chapter has shown the content of these trials. By examining the content we were able to see the themes that occur within the narrative. It is not surprising that the records showed that the accusations came from failed and stressed relationships. This held true especially for the second set of trials, those unconnected with Katharina Henot. However, even within the first set of trials, the accused were naming people with whom they already had strained relations with. This clearly coincided with Briggs' assertion that accusations came after years, if not decades, of incidents.

²⁵¹ Bever, 959.

CHAPTER 4

By examining these trials we have discovered that regardless of what deeds were accused, it was interpersonal relationships that caused the vast majority of the accusations. As Johannes Dillinger found in his book, *Evil People*, we have seen that relationship conflict was a primary reason behind these accusations. Though his research was focused on Trier and Swabian Austria, we have seen similar evidence here in Cologne. He wrote, “If we try to build a system based on the comparisons undertaken here, we can conclude that there was what we can term an ‘evil people principle’—that is, that any conflict at all could generate the suspicion that one’s adversary was actually in league with the Devil.”¹

This thesis has shown two significant facts. First, as noted, strained relationships were the primary cause of witchcraft accusations in Cologne. Second, regardless of the reason all of the accused under the age of 30 confessed to the crime of witchcraft. This showed a distinct divide between those who confessed and those who maintained their innocence.

Within the statistics we have seen that after the initial interrogations of 1630 there was a dramatic drop in legal accusations. This does not by any means imply that intra-city feuds did not end with a public scolding and denunciation, just that they were not brought before the court as often. This would also seem to indicate that the judges became more skeptical of the accusations. For instance, in the first trials the judges were actively hunting for names of acquaintances, while in the last trials they no longer pushed for names. This was quite possibly due to the power struggles between the Archbishop-Elector and the council, as the Archbishop was trying to make the council seem as if it was soft on the crime of witchcraft. During the trials of 1630 the judges were searching for names of fellow witches over 9% of the time. However, in the trials that followed this number went down to only 1.96%. The judges asked questions about the Devil only 6.9% in 1630, but that number jumped to 22.2% in the remaining trials. This could show

¹ Dillinger, *Evil People*, 195.

that the judges began to doubt the validity of the names being given as those with whom the accused had strained relationships. The rise in number of questions pertaining to the Devil may be an indicator that the belief in the Devil and his powers was still a strong factor in the continuance of the trials.

Evidence from the trials of 1630 tends to confirm Midelfort's theory of witchcraft as an outcome of societal dysfunction. However, according to his argument, during the larger set of trials the functional aspect should have broken down, allowing unusual targets to be accused. However, the evidence shows that during the trials of 1630 the average age of the accused was 50, and the median age was 60—the exact opposite of what Midelfort would have us expect. It was during the small scale trials beginning in 1645 in which the average age dropped to 27.6 and the median age was 19. This contradicts the theory that during times of small scale trials witchcraft accusations were functional phenomena that targeted those who fit the seventeenth-century stereotype, while the larger scale events became dysfunctional, targeting those who did not fit this stereotype.

When we come to the number of people who confessed versus those who denied the allegations we discover a marked difference. The average age of those who confessed was only 17. If you remove the two women whom we know were tortured, Christina Plom and Catharina without a last name, that age drops even further to 13.5 years old. This is a dramatic difference in age when compared to the average age of the accused at 42. Among the confessions only one person confessed without the use of torture in 1630. That was the young girl Maria Cecilia. The rest of the confessions took place after 1645.

What seems especially intriguing is that while older women were the ones being targeted, as evidenced by the average age, younger people were the ones confessing. In fact, each of the people who confessed was under the age of 30. There was not a single person under the age of 30 who denied the accusations against them, though two of them, as mentioned previously, had been tortured. Also interesting is the fact that of those under 30 years old it was the oldest two women who had been tortured. That means that

everyone under the age of 22 confessed, without evidence that torture had been used. This fact is particularly interesting and should be examined further.²

Though we have statistics to suggest that some amount of skepticism existed throughout trials, especially those after 1645, it is difficult to prove that the grotesque accounts that were told in the later trials were caused by changing popular belief. Also, we have to remember that correlation does not prove causation. Though the stories of the accused become more detailed and diabolical chronologically, they are also the narratives of the young people who have confessed. As previously mentioned, the final three trials all involve young women who confessed to numerous heretical and nefarious activities.

This change in age and confessions, however, could show that the stereotype of the witch had permeated society so thoroughly that even the youth were familiar with what was expected witch behavior. Robert S. Walinski-Kiehl noticed that before 1500, children were the victims of the malefic actions of the witch, while beginning in the sixteenth century they claimed to be witches themselves.³ With regard to children, Walinski-Kiehl believed that children's confessions were largely due to the amount of attention that they received once they confessed. This seems plausible, especially since all of the accused children within our trials were orphans.

In order to further this research, it would be beneficial to examine more trial records, especially those of the Archbishop-Elector of Cologne. This would give us an opportunity to examine what fate befell the two who were handed over to the Archbishop's men, as well as letting us see if the later trials within the Archbishopric were predominantly young people who confessed to the crimes of which they were accused. This would allow us to determine whether the city Cologne was an anomaly or if it was the norm.

This paper takes for granted a dialogical relationship between the judges and the accused. The judges were educated men whose beliefs on what constituted a witch filtered down into the popular culture of Cologne. However, they remained open to the prevailing elite beliefs, which, as we see by the changes within literature, were becoming

² The results of a comparative study may strengthen this finding.

³ Walinski-Kiehl, 416.

more skeptical of the stories of the accused, yet not of the power of the Devil. Then, as their skepticism rose, that too began to permeate down to the populace. However, without the education and free time that the elites enjoyed, the skepticism took longer to permeate the masses. So, it is plausible that while the judges initially had more fervor, they gradually became more skeptical. There was a point in time when the belief of witchcraft among the judges was waning, while the belief of witchcraft among within popular culture was still high. It was not until the belief in witchcraft among the general population declined that the craze ended.

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