

Week 9:**1. The Witches of Huntingdon, Their Examinations and Confessions***Introduction*

Historians refer to the mass persecution of alleged witches during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as the great European witch-hunt (or craze or mania). From Russia to the British Isles, sixty to one hundred thousand people were executed for supposedly practicing the diabolical art of witchcraft. This selection is a pamphlet relating a trial that occurred in England in 1646. Unlike continental demonologists, who stressed the witch's complicity with Satan and his demons, English judges normally looked only for the carrying out of evil deeds. The great exception occurred in 1645-1646, when Matthew Hopkins, the so-called Witch-Finder General, conducted a witch-hunt that was similar to those on the Continent and that resulted in the execution of over one hundred witches.

The Examination of Elizabeth Weed of great Catworth in the county of Huntingdon, widow, taken upon the last day of March, 1646, before Robert Bernard, and Nicholas Pedley, Esquire; two of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for this county.

She says that about twenty-one years since she being saying her prayers in the evening about bedtime, there did appear unto her three spirits, one in the likeness of a young-man or boy, and the other two of two puppies, the one white and the other black, and that which was in the shape of a young man did speak unto her, asking her if she would renounce God and Christ; she answered, she would. And the devil then offered her that he would do what mischief she should require him; and said she must covenant with him that he must have her soul at the end of twenty-one years, which she granted. And says that he came to her about a week after, about ten o'clock in the night, with a paper, and asked her whether she were willing to seal the covenant. She said she was. Then he told her it must be done with her blood, and so pricked her under her left arm and made her bleed in the place; a great lump of flesh did rise, and has increased ever since, and she scribbled therewith. And being demanded what light was there, she answered, none but the light of the spirit, and presently he came to bed to her, and had the carnal knowledge of her, and so did divers times after, and says, the other two spirits did then and at other times come into her bed also, and sucked upon other parts of her body where she had teats. Being demanded the name of the lesser spirits, she says the name of the white one was Lilly, and the black one Priscill; and that the office of Lilly was to hurt man, woman, or child; and the office of Priscill was to hurt cattle when she desired. And the office of the man-like spirit was to lie with her carnally, when and as often as she desired, and that he did lie with her in that manner very often; and that the spirit Lilly, according to the covenant, did kill the child of Mr. Henry Bedells of Catworth, aforesaid, as she this examine desired him to do; and that she wished him to do the same when she was angry; but does not well remember for what: and says that about two or three days before that, she sent the same Lilly to the said Henry Bedells commanding him to kill him, who returned and said he had no power: and confesses she sent her said spirit

another time to do some hurt to Edward Musgraves of Catworth, aforesaid, who likewise returned answer, he had no power: And that she sent her spirit Priscill to kill two horses of the said Edward Musgraves, and one of John Musgraves, and to kill one cow of William Musgraves, and one cow of Thomas Thorps of the same town, which was done accordingly. And being demanded when the twenty-one years would be out, she answered about Low-Sunday next, to the best of her remembrance, and being further demanded what was the reason, she did duly resort to church to sermons, and also to the minister's house to repetition, which Mr. Poole the minister being present did affirm; she says she was well pleased with his preaching and had a desire to be rid of that unhappy burden which was upon her. And further she says not.

The Examination of John Winnick of Moleworth in the said county, labourer, taken upon the 11th day of April, 1646, before Robert Bernard Esquire, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for this county.

He says that about twenty-nine years since, the twenty-ninth year ending about midsummer last past, he being a bachelor, lived at Thorpston with one Buteman, who then kept the inn at the George, and with-all kept husbandry: this examine being a servant to him in his husbandry, did then lose a purse with seven shillings in it, for which he suspected one in the family. He says that on a Friday being in the barn, making hay-bottles for his horses about noon, swearing, cursing, raging, and wishing to himself that some wise body (or wizard) would help him to his purse and money again: there appeared unto him a spirit, black and shaggy, and having paws like a bear, but in bulk not fully so big as a coney. The spirit asked him what he ailed to be so sorrowful, this examine answered that he had lost a purse and money, and knew not how to come by it again. The spirit replied, if you will forsake God and Christ, and fall down and worship me for your God, I will help you to your purse and money again. This examine said he would, and thereupon fell down upon his knees and held up his hands. Then the spirit said, tomorrow about this time of day, you shall find your purse upon the floor where you are now making bottles: I will send it to you, and will also come myself. Whereupon this examine told the spirit he would meet him there, and receive it, and worship him. Whereupon at the time prefixed, this examine went unto the place, and found his purse upon the floor and took it up, and looking afterwards into it, he found there all the money that was formerly lost; but before he had looked into it, the same spirit appears unto him and said, there is your purse and your money in it; and then this examine fell down upon his knees and said, my Lord and God I thank you. The said spirit at that time brought with him two other spirits, for shape, bigness and color, the one like a white cat, the other like a grey coney: and while this examine was upon his knees, the bear spirit spoke to him, saying, you must worship these two spirits as you worship me, and take them for your gods also: then this examine directed his body towards them, and called them his lords and gods. Then the bear spirit told him that when he died he must have his soul, whereunto this examine yielded. He told him then also that they must suck his body, to which this examine also yielded, but they did not suck at that time. The bear spirit promised him that he

should never want victuals. The cat spirit that it would hurt cattle when he would desire it. And the coney-like spirit that it would hurt men when he desired. The bear spirit told him that it must have some of his blood wherewith to seal the covenant, whereunto this examine yielded and then the bear spirit leapt upon his shoulder, and pricked him on the head, and from thence took blood: and after thus doing, the said three spirits vanished away. The next day about noon, the said spirits came to him while he was in the field, and told him they were come to suck his body, to which he yielded, and they sucked his body at the places where the marks are found, and from that time to this, they have come constantly to him once every twenty-four hours, sometimes by day, and most commonly by night. And being demanded what mischief he caused any of the said spirits to do, he answered never any, only he sent his bear spirit to provoke the maidservant of Mr. Say of Molmesworth to steal victuals for him out of her master's house, which she did, and this examine received the same.

The Examination of Frances Moore, taken before Nicholas Pedley Esquire; one of His Majesty's Justices of Peace for this county, the ninth day of April, 1646. This examine says that about eight years since she received a little black puppy from one Margaret Simson of great Catworth, which dog the said Margaret had in her bed with her, and took it thence when she gave it to the examine: The examine further says, that the said Margaret told her, that she must keep that dog all her lifetime; and if she cursed any cattle and set the same dog upon them, they should presently die, and the said Margaret told her that she had named it already. His name was Pretty.

And the said examine further says, that about the same time one goodwife Weed gave her a white cat, telling her, that if she would deny God, and affirm the same by her blood, then whomsoever she cursed and sent that cat unto, they should die shortly after. Whereupon this said examine says that she did deny God, and in affirmation thereof she pricked her finger with a thorn, whence issued blood, which the cat presently licked; and the said goodwife Weed named the cat Tissy. And the said examine further says, that one William Foster, about sixteen years since, would have hanged two of her children for offering to take a piece of bread; and for that cause about six years since she cursed the said William Foster; whereupon the white cat went to him, and he immediately fell sick, and lying in great pain for the space of seven or eight days, and then died. But being demanded what the cat did to him, or what she bid it do, she says she remembers not. And she further says that about five years since, she keeping cows in the field, a cow of Edward Hulls went into the grain, she cursed her, and set Pretty on her, and she swelled and died shortly after; and after that a cow of one Peter Browne went into the corn, and she likewise cursed her, and set Pretty on her, and she died within two or three days after. And she further says that she killed the said dog and cat about a year since; and yet after that the like dog and cat haunted her familiarly: and when she was apprehended, they crept under her clothes, and tortured her so that she could not speak to confess freely, and more she said not.

The Information of Peter Slater of Little Catworth in the said county, shepherd, taken upon oath, before Robert Bernard, Esquire; one of His Majesty's Justices of Peace for this county, upon the 7th day of April, 1646.

This informant says, that his wife dying about twenty-one years since in child-bed, and one Frances Moore being suspected for a witch, and in custody. He went to her upon Friday last, and asked her, if she did his wife any harm? She answered she did, by cursing her. And he says, his wife did of a sudden change and die, after she had lain in a week; and that a little before this informant's wife was brought to bed, the said Frances Moore falling out with her, said she hoped she should never be untwined, as this informant has since called to mind.

The Information of William Searle of Little Catworth, yeoman, taken upon oath the said day and year.

This informant says, he was present when Frances Moore did confess herself to be a witch, and that she had done much harm; and among other things, that she sent her spirit Pretty to this informant's capons, who did kill them; and he says that she coming to bake a loaf at his house about three or four years since, being denied, the capons did fall a fluttering, and would never eat after. Also says, that about the said time, she having a hog in his yard, some of his servants set a dog on the same; for which she said she would be revenged; and the next day one of his hogs died.

The Information of Thomas Becke of Bythorn in Com. Hunt. yeoman,. against Anne Desborough, taken upon oath before Nicholas Pedley Esquire, one of His Majesty's Justices of Peace for the said county, the 9th day of April, 1646.

This informant says, that Anne Desborough, widow of Bythorn aforesaid, being apprehended upon suspicion of being a witch, on the eighth day of this present April, he in the presence of Master Coyst and others, heard the said Anne Desborough (in answer to questions asked her) freely confess, that about thirty years since, there appeared unto her a thing somewhat bigger than a mouse, of a brown color, when she lived at Titsmarsh in the county of Northampton, she being in bed and asleep, which nipped her on the breast and awakened her, then it told her that it must have part of her soul: she prayed then to God, and it left her at that time, and the said informant heard the said Anne further say, that about five or six days after, the same mouse appeared again to her with another much like the former, it being a little less than the former, and had a white belly. Then the mouse that came first said, we must abide with you and suck your blood. She said that they should. About three days after both the mice came to her again, and told her that she must forsake God and Christ: and when she died, they must have her soul, to all which she yielded: this informant says further, that he heard the said Anne confess that she named one of the mice Tib, which promised her to hurt men, and she named the other Fone, which promised her to hurt cattle when she wished it: and after the third time they kept not away from her above twenty-four hours together, but did frequent her, and familiarly such on her body, until she was apprehended.

April the 8th day, Anno 1646

Anne Desborough of Bythorn in the county of Huntingdon, confesses, that about thirty years since, the first week of Clean Lent, there appeared unto her a thing somewhat bigger than a mouse, of a brown color, and the likeness of a mouse. This was while she lived at Tichmarsh in the county of Northampton: she being there in bed, and in a dream, the said likeness then gave her a nip, and thereby awakened her out of her dream, and then told her (when she was awakened) that it must have part of her soul; whereupon she was in a great fear, and gave him no answer, but prayed to God, and thereupon it vanished away from her. About five days after, the same mouse appeared to her again, bringing with it another mouse, about the bigness of an ordinary mouse, or very little bigger, brown like the former, save only that this latter had some white about the belly, whereas the former was all brown. Then the mouse that first appeared, said, we must suck of your body. She yielded to them, and said, they should. Upon her yielding they went to her, and sucked of her body, where the marks are found. The bigger mouse she called Tib, and the lesser Fone. Tib told her that she must forsake God and Christ, and take them for her gods: telling her that when she died, they must have her soul, to all which she yielded. Tib promised her to hurt cattle if she should desire. Within two days after they appeared again: and ever after till she was discovered, they appeared once every twenty-four hours.

The Examination of Jane Wallis of Keiston in the county of Huntingdon spinster taken the 16th day of April, 1646, before Sir Robert Osborn Knight, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the county of Huntington.

This examinee says, as she was making of her bed in her chamber, there appeared in the shape of a man in black clothes and blackish clothes about six weeks past, and bid her good-morrow, and she asked what his name was, and he said his name was Blackeman, and asked her if she were poor, and she said aye; then he told her he would send one Grissell and Greedigut to her, that shall do anything for her. She looking upon him, saw he had ugly feet, and then she was very fearful of him for that he would seem sometimes to be tall, and sometimes less, and suddenly vanished away. And being demanded whether he lay with her, she said he would have lain with her, but she would not suffer him: and after Blackeman was departed from her, within three or four days, Grissell and Greedigut came to her, in the shapes of dogs with great bristles of hogs' hair upon their backs, and said to her they were come from Blackeman to do what she would command them, and did ask her if she did want anything, and they would fetch her any thing: and she said she lacked nothing: then they prayed her to give them some victuals, and she said she was poor and had none to give them, and so they departed. Yet she confessed that Blackeman, Grissell, and Greedigut divers times came to her afterwards, and brought her two or three shillings at a time, and more says not.

April 14, 1646.

Ioane Wallis confessed to me and John Guyle that she had three spirits, she

called them Blackeman, Grissell, and Greedigut, and that Blackeman gave her the other two, and told her they should do anything for her that she should desire. She said Blackeman came first to her, about a twelve-month since, like a man something ancient, in blackish clothes, but he had ugly feet uncovered. Sometimes she said it was longer since he first came to her, and ever since he appeared in the like shape, but Grissell, and Greedigut did come. in several shapes, yet most commonly like hounds with bristles on their backs. I asked her what use she put them to, and if any of them had the use of her body besides sucking; she said he would have had once, but she denied him: then presently of herself she said, if I would not tell, she would confess but she hoped I would love her never the worse, and then she said that Blackeman had the use of her body once, twice, and sometimes thrice in a week, but the other two only sucked her where her marks are found; she said Blackeman never sucked her; she would not confess that she ever sent them to do any harm, but said the filthy rough Blackeman would send them; but what hurt they did she confessed not to us. I asked her to what purpose she let Grissell and Greedigut suck her if she made no use of them? She said, they would sometimes bring her money, two or three shillings at a time, and that was all they did for her; and once they told her they robbed a man, and pulled him from his horse, and brought her some money.

The Examination of John Oarke Junior, of Keiston, in the county of Hunt. labourer, taken before me John Castell, Esquire, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said county, the 2nd day of May, 1646. Who says, that true it is that he did overtake one man and three women upon the Sabbath day last was seven-night, between Stanwick and Raunce, being about three miles from Keiston, whither this examine was going. But this examine denies that he ever told or said that he had any marks cut off, or that he had any place of meeting with any witches, or that he had any consultation, or made any compact with the devil, or ever knew what belonged to any such matter. And further says not.

The Information of John Browne of Raunce in the county of Northampton, tailor, taken upon oath the second day of May, 1646, before me John Castell, Esquire, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the county of Hunt. Who says, that upon the Sabbath day last was seven-night, he (this informant), coming from Higham-Ferris to Raunce in the county of Northampton aforesaid, where he quarters, and sitting down by Stanwick Town end, saw one coming from Artlebroward; who when he came near to this informant, this informant said, I have stayed for you a long time; but he answered, I saw you not all the way I came. Then this informant said to him, from whence came you? who answered, that he came from his uncle's at Artlebroward. Then this informant asked him who was his uncle? And he said one Clarke: this informant asked him, if he were not Clarke son of Keiston, he answered, he was. And then this informant asked him, what haste was he in? who said he was in haste; for his father and mother were accused for witches, and that himself had been searched; and this informant answered and so have 1. Then Clarke asked this informant, whether

anything were found about him, or not? He (this informant) answered, that they said there were marks: Clarke said again, had you no more wit but to have your marks found? I cut off mine three days before I was searched. And then after some further communication past concerning who searched them, Clarke said to this informant, I do not believe you are a witch~ for I never saw you at our meetings: who answered, that perhaps their meetings were at several places, and so fell out and parted.

QUESTIONS:

1. According to the testimony of the accusers and the accused, who were the witches and what type of crimes did witches commit?
2. Why did the witches say they agreed to consort with demonic spirits and tried to harm their neighbors? Does this testimony help us to understand village society, relationships, and conflicts?

II. The Trial of Suzanne Gaudry (1652)

The trial of Suzanne Gaudry, preserved in oddly meticulous court records, offers a view of a case close to the traditional stereotype of witchcraft persecutions: the pathetic and illiterate old woman, the sabbath, the nocturnal flights, the carnal love of the devil, the effective use of terror and torture to obtain a confession, the recantation and burning at the stake, all brought together in a judicial atmosphere composed half of orderly interrogation and half of frightful insinuation and contradiction. The "leading questions," drawn from the "experience" of past centuries, show how a local secular court coordinated its activities to general traditions, and make clearer how the content of confessions remained so constant throughout the period of persecutions.

At Ronchain, 28 May, 1652. . . .

Interrogation of Suzanne Gaudry, prisoner at the court of Rieux. Questioned about her age, her place of origin, her mother and father.

-Said that she is named Suzanne Gaudry, daughter of Jean Gaudry and Marguerite Gerné, both natives of Rieux, but that she is from Esgavans, near Odenarde, where her family had taken refuge because of the wars, that she was born the day that they made bonfires for the Peace between France and Spain, without being able otherwise to say her age. Asked why she has been taken here.

-Answers that it is for the salvation of her soul.

-Says that she was frightened of being taken prisoner for the crime of witchcraft. Asked for how long she has been in the service of the devil.

-Says that about twenty-five or twenty-six years ago she was his lover, that he called himself Petit-Grignon, that he would wear black breeches, that he gave her the name Magin, that she gave him a pin with which he gave her his mark on the left shoulder, that he had a little flat hat; said also that he had his way with her two or three times only.

Asked how many times she has been at the nocturnal dance.

-Answers that she has been there about a dozen times, having first of all renounced God, Lent and baptism; that the site of the dance was at the little marsh of Rieux, understanding that there were diverse dances. The first time, she did not recognize anyone there, because she was half blind. The other times, she saw and recognized there Noelle and Pasquette Gerné, Noelle the wife of Nochin Quinchou and the mother of Paul Doris, the widow Marie Nourette, not having recognized others because the young people went with the young people and the old people with the old. And that when the dance was large, the table also was accordingly large.

Questioned what was on the table.

-Says that there was neither salt nor napkin, that she does not know what there was because she never ate there. That her lover took her there and back.

Asked if her lover had never given her some powder.

-Answers that he offered her some, but that she never wanted to take any, saying to her that it was to do with what she wanted, that this powder was gray, that her lover told her she would ruin someone but good, and that he would help her, especially that she would ruin Elisabeth Dehan, which she at no time wanted to do, although her lover was pressing her to do it, because this Elisabeth had battered his crops with a club.

Interrogated on how and in what way they danced.

-Says that they dance in an ordinary way, that there was a guitarist and some whistlers who appeared to be men she did not know; which lasted about an hour, and then everyone collapsed from exhaustion.

Inquired what happened after the dance.

-Says that they formed a circle, that there was a king with a long black beard dressed in black, with a red hat, who made everyone do his bidding, and that after the dance he made a . . . [the word is missing in the text], and then everyone disappeared. . . .

Interrogated on how long it has been since she has seen Grignon, her lover.

-Says that it has been three or four days.

Questioned if she has abused the Holy Communion.

-Says no, never, and that she has always swallowed it. Then says that her lover asked her for it several times, but that she did not want to give it to him.

After several admonitions were sent to her, she has signed this

Mark X

Suzanne Gaudry

Second Interrogation, May 29, 1652, in the presence of the afore-mentioned.

This prisoner, being brought back into the chamber, was informed about the facts and the charges and asked if what she declared and confessed yesterday is true.

-Answers that if it is in order to put her in prison it is not true; then after having remained silent said that it is true.

Asked what is her lover's name and what name has he given himself.

-Said that his name is Grignon and that he calls himself Magnin.

Asked where he found her the first time and what he did to her.

-Answers that it was in her lodgings, that he had a hide, little black breeches, and

a little flat hat; that he asked her for a pin, which she gave to him, with which he made his mark on her left shoulder. Said also that at the time she took him oil in a bottle and that she had thoughts of love. Asked how long she has been in subjugation to the devil.

-Says that it has been about twenty-five or twenty-six years, that her lover also then made her renounce God, Lent, and baptism, that he has known her carnally three or four times, and that he has given her satisfaction. And on the subject of his having asked her if she wasn't afraid of having a baby, says that she did not have that thought.

Asked how many times she found herself at the nocturnal dance and carol and who she recognized there.

-Answers that she was there eleven or twelve times, that she went there on foot with her lover, where the third time she saw and recognized Pasquette and Noelle Gerné, and Marie Homitte, to whom she never spoke, for the reason that they did not speak to each other. And that the sabbat took place at the little meadow. . . .

Interrogated on how long it is since she saw her lover, and if she also did not see Marie Hourie and her daughter Marie at the dance.

~Said that it has been a long time, to wit, just about two years, and that she saw neither Marie Hourie nor her daughter there; then later said, after having asked for some time to think about it, that it has been a good fifteen days or three weeks [since she saw him]. having renounced all the devils of hell and the one who misled her.

Asked what occurred at the dance and afterwards.

~Says that right after the dance they put themselves in order and approached the chief figure, who had a long black beard, dressed also in black, with a red hat, at which point they were given some powder, to do with it what they wanted; but that she did not want to take any.

Charged with having taken some and with having used it evilly.

-Says, after having insisted that she did not want to take any, that she took some, and that her lover advised her to do evil with it; but that she did not want to do it. Asked if, not obeying his orders, she was beaten or threatened by him, and what did she do with this powder.

-Answers that never was she beaten; she invoked the name of the Virgin [ami answered] that she threw away the powder that she had, not having wanted to do any evil with it. Pressed to say what she did with this powder. Did she not fear her lover too, why to have thrown it away? -Says, after having been pressed on this question, that she made the herbs in her garden die at the end of the summer, five to six years ago, by means of the powder, which she threw there because she did not know what to do with it.

Asked if the devil did not advise her to steal from Elisabeth Dehan and to do harm to her.

-Said that he advised her to steal from her and promised that he would help her; but urged her not to do harm to her; and that is because she [Elisabeth Dehan] had cut the wood in her [Suzanne Gaudry's] fence and stirred up the seeds in her garden, saying that her lover told her that she would avenge herself by beating

her.

Charged once more with having performed some malefice with this powder, pressed to tell the truth.

-Answers that she never made any person or beast die; then later said that she made Philippe Cornié's red horse die, about two or three years ago, by means of the powder, which she placed where he had to pass, in the street close to her home. Asked why she did that and if she had had any difficulty with him.

-Says that she had had some difficulty with his wife, because her cow had eaten the leeks.

Interrogated on how and in what way they dance in the carol.

-Says that they dance in a circle, holding each others' hands, and each one with her lover at her side, at which she says that they do not speak to each other, or if they speak that she did not hear it, because of her being hard-of-hearing. At which there was a guitarist and a piper, whom she did not know; then later says that it is the devils who play. After having been admonished to think of her conscience, was returned to prison after having signed this

Mark X

Suzanne Gaudry

Deliberation of the Court of Mons-June 3,1652

The under-signed advocates of the Court of Mons have seen these interrogations and answers. They say that the aforementioned Suzanne Gaudry confesses that she is a witch, that she has given herself to the devil, that she has renounced God, Lent, and baptism, that she has been marked on the shoulder, that she has cohabited with him and that she has been to the dances, confessing only to have cast a spell upon and caused to die a beast of Philippe Cornié; but there is no evidence for this, excepting a prior statement. For this reason, before going further, it will be necessary to become acquainted with, to examine and to probe the mark, and to hear Philippe Cornié on the death of the horse and on when and in what way he died. . . .

Deliberation of the Court of Mons-June 13, 1652

[The Court] has reviewed the current criminal trial of Suzanne Gaudry, and with it the trial of Antoinette Lescouffre, also a prisoner of the same office. It appeared [to the Court] that the office should have the places probed where the prisoners say that they have received the mark of the devil, and after that, they must be interrogated and examined seriously on their confessions and denials, this having to be done, in order to regulate all this definitively. . . .

Deliberation of the Court of Mons, June 22, 1652

The trials of Antoinette Lescouffre and Suzanne Gaudry having been described to the undersigned, advocates of the Court of Mons, and [the Court] having been told orally that the peasants taking them to prison had persuaded them to confess in order to avoid imprisonment, and that they would be let go, by virtue of which it could appear that the confessions were not so spontaneous:

They are of the opinion that the office, in its duty, would do well, following the two

preceding resolutions, to have the places of the marks that they have taugt us about probed, and if it is found that these are ordinary marks of the devil, one can proceed to their examination; then next to the first confessions, and if they deny [these], one can proceed to the torture, given that they issue from bewitched relatives, that at all times they have been suspect, that they fled to avoid the crime [that is to say, prosecution for the crime of witchcraft], and that by their confessions they have confirmcd [their guilt], notwithstanding that they have wanted to revoke [their confessions] and vacillate. . . .

Third Interrogation, June 27, in tbe presence of the afore-mentioned. The prisoner being led into the chamber, she was examined to know if things were not as she had said and confessed at the beginning of her imprisonment.

-Answers no, and that what she has said was done so by force.

Asked if she did not say to Jean Gradé that she would tell his uncle, the mayor, that he had better be careful. . . and that he was a Frank.

-Said that that is not true.

Pressed to say the truth, that otherwise she would be subjected to torture, having pointed out to her that her aunt was burned for this same subject.

-Answers that she is not a witch.

Interrogated as to how long she has been in subjection to the devil, and pressed that she was to renounce the devil and the one who misled her.

-Says that she is not a witch, that she has nothing to do with the devil, thus that she did not want to renounce the devil, saying that he has not misled her, and upon inquisition of having confessed to being present at the carol, she insisted that although she had said that, it is not true and that she is not a witch.

Charged with having confessed to having made a horse die by means of a powder that the devil had given her.

-Answers that she said it, but because she found herself during the inquisition pressed to say that she must have done some evil deed; and after several admonitions to tell the truth.

She was placed in the hands of the officer of the haultes oeuvres [the officer in charge of torture], throwing herself on her knees, struggling to cry, uttering several exclamations, without being able, nevertheless, to shed a tear. Saying at every moment that she is not a witch.

The Torture

On this same day, being at the place of torture.

This prisoner, before being strapped down, was admonished to maintain herself in her first confessions and to renounce her lover.

-Said that she denies everything she has said, and that she has no lover. Feeling herself being strapped down, says that she is not a witch, while struggling to cry.

Asked why she fled outside the village of Rieux.

-Says that she cannot say it, that God and the Virgin Mary forbid her to; that she is not a witch. And upon being asked why she confessed to being one, said that she was forced to say it.

Told that shc was not forced, that on the contrary she declared herself to be a

witch without any threat.

-Says that she confessed it and that she is not a witch, and being a little stretched [on the rack] screams ceaselessly that she is not a witch, invoking the name of Jesus and of Our Lady of Grace, not wanting to say any other thing.

Asked if she did not confess that she has been a witch for twenty-six years.

-Says that she said it, that she retracted it, crying Jesus-Maria, that she is not a witch.

Asked if she did not make Philippe Cornié's horse die, as she confessed.

-Answers no, crying Jesus-Maria, that she is not a witch.

The mark having been probed by the officer, in the presence of Doctor Bouchain, it was adjudged by the doctor and officer truly to be the mark of the devil. Being more tightly stretched upon the torture-rack, urged to maintain her confessions.

-Said that it was true that she is a witch and that she would maintain what she had said. Asked how long she has been in subjugation to the devil.

-Answers that it was twenty years ago that the devil appeared to her, being in her lodgings in the form of a man dressed in a little cow-hide and black breeches. Interrogated as to what her lover was called.

-Says that she said Petit-Grignon, then, being taken down [from the rack] says upon interrogation that she is not a witch and that she can say nothing.

Asked if her lover has had carnal copulation with her, and how many times.

-To that she did not answer anything; then, making believe that she was ill, not another word could be drawn from her. As soon as she began to confess, she asked who was alongside of her, touching her, yet none of those present could see anyone there. And it was noticed that as soon as that was said, she no longer wanted to confess anything. Which is why she was returned to prison.

Verdict

July 9, 1652

In the light of the interrogations, answers and investigations made into the charge against Suzanne Gaudry, coupled with her confessions, from which it would appear that she has always been reputed for being stained with the crime of witchcraft, and seeing that she took flight and sought refuge in this city of Valenciennes, out of fear of being apprehended by the law for this matter; seeing how her close family were also stained with the same crime, and the perpetrators executed; seeing by her own confessions that she is said to have made a pact with the devil, received the mark from him, which in the report of sieur Michel de Roux was judged by the medical doctor of Ronchain and the officer of *haultes oeuvres* of Cambrai, after having proved it, to be not a natural mark but a mark of the devil, to which they have sworn with an oath; and that following this, she had renounced God, Lent, and baptism and had let herself be known carnally by him, in which she received satisfaction. Also, seeing that she is said to have been a part of nocturnal carols and dances. Which are crimes of divine lese-majesty: For expiation of which the advice of the undersigned is that the office of Rieux can legitimately condemn the aforesaid Suzanne Gaudry to death, tying her to a gallows, and strangling her to death, then burning her body and burying it there in the environs of the woods.

At Valenciennes, the 9th of July, 1652. To each [member of the Court] 41livres,

16 sous. . . . And for the trip of the aforementioned Roux, including an escort of one soldier, 30 livres. .

QUESTIONS:

1. What clues are there in this text to Suzanne Gaudry's age and status?
2. What was the evidence that convicted her? Was there any way for her to escape conviction?

III. The Persecutions at Bamberg (1628)

The archives of the municipal library of the cathedral city of Bamberg contain the minutes of a very famous trial, that of the burgomaster, or mayor, himself, Johannes Junius. This trial is of particular interest not only because of the light it sheds on the process of accusation, but also because included among its documents is the letter which Junius smuggled out of prison to his daughter, indicating that the official court-documents upon which we so depend for our understanding of witchcraft can cover a multitude of virtues and sufferings that are too often unseen in our histories.

On Wednesday, June 28, 1628, was examined without torture Johannes Junius, Burgomaster at Bamberg, on the charge of witchcraft:

how and in what fashion he had fallen into that vice. Is fifty-five years old, and was born at Niederwaysich in the Wetterau. Says he is wholly innocent, knows nothing of the crime, has never in his life renounced God; says that he is wronged before God and the world, would like to hear of a single human being who has seen him at such gatherings [as the witch-sabbaths]. Confrontation of Dr. Georg Adam Haan. Tells him to his face he will stake his life on it, that he saw him, Junius, a year and a half ago at a witchgathering in the electoral council-room, where they ate and drank. Accused denies the same wholly. ' Confronted with Hopffens Elsse. Tells him likewise that he was on Haupts-moor at a witch-dance; but first the holy wafer was desecrated. Junius denies. Hereupon he was told that his accomplices had confessed against him and was given time for thought.

On Friday, June 30, 1628, the aforesaid Junius was again without torture exhorted to confess, but again confessed nothing, whereupon, . . . since he would confess nothing, he was put to the torture, and first the thumb-screws were applied. Says he has never denied God his Saviour nor suffered himself to be otherwise baptized; will again stake his life on it; feels no pain in the thumb-screws.

Leg-screws. Will confess absolutely nothing; knows nothing about it. He has never renounced God; will never do such a thing; has never been guilty of this vice; feels likewise no pain.

Is stripped and examined; on his right side is found a bluish mark, like a clover leaf, is thrice pricked therein, but feels no pain and no blood flows out.

Strappado. He has never renounced God; God will not forsake him; if he were such a wretch he would not let himself be so tortured; God must show some

token of his innocence. He knows nothing about witchcraft. . .

On July 5, the above named Junius is without torture, but with urgent persuasions, exhorted to confess, and at last begins and confesses: When in the year 1624 his law-suit at Rothweil cost him some six hundred florins, he had gone out, in the month of August, into his orchard at Friedrichsbronnen; and, as he sat there in thought, there had come to him a woman like a grass-maid, who had asked him why he sat there so sorrowful; he had answered that he was not despondent, but she had led him by seductive speeches to yield him to her will. . . . And thereafter this wench had changed into the form of a goat, which bleated and said, "Now you see with whom you have had to do. You must be mine or I will forthwith break your neck." Thereupon he had been frightened, and trembled all over for fear. Then the transformed spirit had seized him by the throat and demanded that he should renounce God Almighty, whereupon Junius said, "God forbid," and thereupon the spirit vanished through the power of these words. Yet it came straightway back, brought more people with it, and persistently demanded of him that he renounce God in Heaven and all the heavenly host, by which terrible threatening he was obliged to speak this formula: "I renounce God in Heaven and his host, and will henceforward recognize the Devil as my God." After the renunciation he was so far persuaded by those present and by the evil spirit that he suffered himself to be otherwise baptized in the evil spirit's name. The Morhauptin had given him a ducat as dower-gold, which afterward became only a potsherd. He was then named Krix. His paramour he had to call Vixen. Those present had congratulated him in Beelzebub's name and said that they were now all alike. At this baptism of his there were among others the aforesaid Christiana Morhauptin, the young Geiserlin, Paul Glaser, [and others]. After this they had dispersed. At this time his paramour had promised to provide him with money, and from time to time to take him to other witch-gatherings. . . . Whenever he wished to ride forth [to the witch-sabbath] a black dog had come before his bed, which said to him that he must go with him, whereupon he had seated himself upon the dog and the dog had raised himself in the Devil's name and so had fared forth. About two years ago he was taken to the electoral council-room, at the left hand as one goes in. Above at a table were seated the Chancellor, the Burgomaster Neydekher, Dr. Georg Haan, [and many others]. Since his eyes were not good, he could not recognize more persons. More time for consideration was now given him.

On July 7, the aforesaid Junius was again examined, to know what further had occurred to him to confess. He confesses that about two months ago, on the day after an execution was held, he was at a witch-dance at the Black Cross, where Beelzebub had shown himself to them all and said expressly to their faces that they must all be burned together on this spot, and had ridiculed and taunted those present. . . .

Of crimes. His paramour had immediately after his seduction demanded that he should make away with his younger son Hans Georg, and had given him for this purpose a gray powder; this, however, being too hard for him, he had made away

with his horse, a brown, instead. His paramour had also often spurred him on to kill his daughter, because he would not do this he had been maltreated with blows by the evil spirit. Once at the suggestion of his paramour he had taken the holy wafer out of his mouth and given it to her. . . . A week before his arrest as he was going to St. Martin's church the Devil met him on the way, in the form of a goat, and told him that he would soon be imprisoned, but that he should not trouble himself-he would soon set him free. Besides this, by his soul's salvation, he knew nothing further; but what he had spoken was the pure truth; on that he would stake his life.

On August 6, 1628, there was read to the aforesaid Junius this his confession, which he then wholly ratified and confirmed, and was willing to stake his life upon it. And afterward he voluntarily confirmed the same before the court.

Junius was burned at the stake for witchcraft.

There is also preserved in Bamberg a letter, in quivering hand, secretly written by him to his daughter while in the midst of his trial (July 24, 1628):

Many hundred thousand good-nights, dearly beloved daughter Veronica. Innocent have I come into prison, innocent have I been tortured, innocent must I die. For whoever comes into the witch prison must become a witch or be tortured until he invents something out of his head and-God pity him -bethinks him of something. I will tell you how it has gone with me. When I was the first time put to the torture, Dr. Braun, Dr. Kotzendorffer, and two strange doctors were there. Then Dr. Braun asks me, "Kinsman, how come you here?" I answer, "Through falsehood, through misfortune." "Hear, you," he says, "you are a witch; will you confess it voluntarily? If not, we'll bring in witnesses and the executioner for you." I said "I am no witch, I have a pure conscience in the matter; if there are a thousand witnesses, I am not anxious, but I'll gladly hear the witnesses." Now the chancellor's son was set before me . . . and afterward Hoppfens Else. She had seen me dance on Haupts-moor. . . . I answered: "I have never renounced God, and will never do it-God graciously keep me from it. I'll rather bear whatever I must." And then came also-God in highest Heaven have mercy-the executioner, and put the thumb-screws on me, both hands bound together, so that the blood ran out at the nails and everywhere, so that for four weeks I could not use my hands, as you can see from the writing. . . . Thereafter they first stripped me, bound my hands behind me, and drew me up in the torture. Then I thought heaven and earth were at an end; eight times did they draw me up and let me fall again, so that I suffered terrible agony. . . . And this happened on Friday, June 30, and with God's help I had to bear the torture. . . . When at last the executioner led me back into the prison, he said to me: "Sir, I beg you, for God's sake confess something, whether it be true or not. Invent something, for you cannot endure the torture which you will be put to; and, even if you bear it all, yet you will not escape, not even if you were an earl, but one torture will follow after another until you say you are a witch. Not before that," he said, "will they let you go, as you may see by all their trials, for one is just like another. . . ." And so I begged, since I was in wretched plight, to be given one day for thought and a

priest. The priest was refused me, but the time for thought was given.

Now, my dear child, see in what hazard I stood and still stand. I must say that I am a witch, though I am not,-must now renounce God, though I have never done it before. Day and night I was deeply troubled, but at last there came to me a new idea. I would not be anxious, but, since I had been given no priest with whom I could take counsel, I would myself think of something and say it. It were surely better that I just say it with mouth and words, even though I had not really done it; and afterwards I would confess it to the priest, and let those answer for it who compel me to do it. . . . And so I made my confession, as follows; but it was all a lie. Now follows, dear child, what I confessed in order to escape the great anguish and bitter torture, which it was impossible for me longer to bear. . . . Then I had to tell what people I had seen [at the witch-sabbath]. I said that I had not recognized them. "You old rascal, I must set the executioner at you. Say-was not the Chancellor there?" So I said yes. "Who besides?" I had not recognized anybody. So he said: "Take one street after another; begin at the market, go out on one street and back on the next." I had to name several persons there. Then came the long street. I knew nobody. Had to name eight persons there. Then the Zinkenwert-one person more. Then over the upper bridge to the Georgthor, on both sides. Knew nobody again. Did I know nobody in the castle-whoever it might be, I should speak without fear. And thus continuously they asked me on all the streets, though I could not and would not say more. So they gave me to the executioner, told him to strip me, shave me all over, and put me to the torture. "The rascal knows one on the market-place, is with him daily, and yet won't name him." By that they meant Dietmayer: so I had to name him too. Then I had to tell what crimes I had committed. I said nothing. . . . "Draw the rascal up!" So I said that I was to kill my children, but I had killed a horse instead. It did not help. I had also taken a sacred wafer, and had desecrated it. When I had said this, they left me in peace. Now, dear child, here you have all my confession, for which I must die. And they are sheer lies and made-up things, so help me God. For all this I was forced to say through fear of the torture which was threatened beyond what I had already endured. For they never leave off with the torture till one confesses something; be he never so good, he must be a witch. Nobody escapes, though he were an earl. . . . Dear child, keep this letter secret so that people do not find it, else I shall be tortured most piteously and the jailers will be beheaded. So strictly is it forbidden. . . . Dear child, pay this man a dollar. . . . I have taken several days to write this: my hands are both lame. I am in a sad plight. . . . Good night, for your father Johannes Junius will never see you more. July 24, 1628. Dear child, six have confessed against me at once: the Chancellor, his son, Neudecker, Zaner, Hoffmaisters Vrsel, and Hoppfens Elsse-all false, through compulsion, as they have all told me, and begged my forgiveness in God's name before they were executed. . . . They know nothing but good of me. They were forced to say it, just as I myself was. . . .