



Elaborated concepts of witchcraft? Applying the “elaborated concept of witchcraft” in a comparative study on the witchcraft trials of Rostock (1584) and Hainburg (1617–18)

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Abstract

The “elaborated concept of witchcraft” is of central importance for scholarly research on witchcraft and magic. However, as the validity of its conceptualization and origins are doubted, its usefulness remains a point of debate. The following article reports on a study conducted to test the applicability of the “elaborated concept of witchcraft” under a comparative approach on material from the 1584 Rostock and 1617–1618 Hainburg witchcraft trials. Following Johannes Dillinger’s theoretical approach on the topic, the five categories of “pact with the devil”, “sexual intercourse with the devil”, “witches’ Sabbath”, “magical flight” and “harmful magic” have been applied to the sources, and serve as an underlying grid for structuring the analysis. Whereas the “pact with the devil” and “sexual intercourse with the devil” vary only gradually between the two text corpora, the prominence and the integration of the witches’ Sabbath and the witches’ flight differ greatly between an uncontested position in Hainburg and diminishing importance in Rostock. The category of “harmful magic” shows overall great heterogeneity between and also within the text corpora. While the results of the study mostly align with the latest in scholarly witchcraft research, the “elaborated concept of witchcraft” stands out as a useful analytical tool for structuring comparative research.

Keywords

elaborated concept of witchcraft, qualitative content analysis, comparative study, Hainburg, Rostock, early modern period, witchcraft, magic

¹ The following article is based on my talk “Ein Pakt mit dem Teufel? Befunde einer qualitative Inhaltsanalyse von Hexenprozessakten aus Rostock 1584 und Hainburg 1617/18” given at Palacký University in Olomouc on 20 September 2018 during the Second Olomoucian Conference on Religious Studies. Quotations from the primary sources are my own translations and reflect only the approximate meaning of the texts. The full German text is given in the corresponding footnotes. For frequently used sources, document IDs are used within the text (R01-18, H01-19), with the full reference to the archives found in the appendix. The transcripts of the records for Rostock were originally provided by Katrin Moeller. The transcripts for Hainburg were initially accessed in the thesis of Nathalie Ignatieff. Many thanks go to Judith Rideout for helping with the translation of the quotes.

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Introduction and Research Question

The “elaborated concept of witchcraft” is omnipresent in witchcraft research. The idea that the imagery of witchcraft became more detailed (“elaborated”) from the fifteenth century onwards and cumulated in scholarly witchcraft (“Hexenlehre”) on demonic treatises, goes hand in hand with attempts by historians to systematize this phenomenon. While American and British scholars are often skeptical about this concept and stress a different reading such as Levack or a multitude of “witchcraft mythologies” like Kieckhefer, German scholars in particular have picked up the concept for both analytical and didactic reasons.² Most scholars see the usefulness of sometimes simplifying the complex phenomenon of witchcraft into these five categories: “pact with the devil”, “sexual intercourse with the devil”, “the witches’ Sabbath”, “the magical flight” and “harmful magic”; a methodology beautifully illustrated and widely popularized in Johannes Dillinger’s “Hexen und Magie: Eine historische Einführung.”³



ILLUSTRATION 1: THE “ELABORATED CONCEPT OF WITCHCRAFT” IN DILLINGER: *HEXEN UND MAGIE*, 23.

² Brian Levack, *Hexenjagd: Die Geschichte der Hexenverfolgungen in Europa* (München: Beck, 1995); Richard Kieckhefer, “Mythologies of Witchcraft in the Fifteenth Century,” *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 1 (2006).

³ Johannes Dillinger, *Hexen und Magie: Eine historische Einführung*, 1st ed. (Frankfurt/Main: Campus-Verl., 2007). The same five categories are also repeated by Dillinger in: Johannes Dillinger, *‘Böse Leute’: Hexenverfolgungen in Schwäbisch-Österreich und Kurtrier im Vergleich* (Trier: Spee, 1999), 108; Johannes Dillinger, *Kinder im Hexenprozess: Magie und Kindheit in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2013), 54. Notably they have also been used by Wolfgang Behringer, one of the most influential researchers on witchcraft. Wolfgang Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern: Volksmagie, Glaubenseifer und Staatsräson in der Frühen Neuzeit*, 3rd ed. (München: R. Oldenbourg, 1997), 15.

As a demonstration of the popularity of this concept, which has just been published in a second edition,⁴ these five categories are found in recent dissertations in the field.⁵

Although this concept is commonly used and cited, especially for introductions, more than just a shadow of doubt has been cast upon it. One reason is the uncertainty surrounding its origin. Several researchers such as Goodare, Kieckhefer and Utz Tremp have pointed to Joseph Hansen, a pioneer in witchcraft research.⁶ Although the terms “Sammelbegriff des Hexenwesens” (cumulative concept of witchcraft) and “Kollektivbegriff der Hexe” (collective concept of the witch) are indeed found in Hansen and the term therefore may claim some origin in his work, Hansen’s systematization differs largely from the five categories mentioned above.⁷ Unlike Dillinger, Hansen (1900, 9–34) systematizes witchcraft into three groups: the first, *Maleficium* and metamorphosis into animals, the second, intercourse with the devil, and the third, the gathering of heretics.⁸

Be that as it may, the purpose of this article is not to finally lift the veil on the history of this concept, but instead to introduce the most popular and most consistent version of it into a comparative approach. “Dillinger’s Five” have been chosen here for their clarity and their applicability for analytical purposes. Dillinger himself was likely to have been proposing a similar approach when he wrote: “In Carolina und Hexenlehre besteht somit ein doppeltes *tertium comparationis* zu dem die Hexenverfolgungen einzelner Untersuchungsräume in Beziehung gesetzt werden können.”⁹

⁴ Johannes Dillinger, *Hexen und Magie: Eine historische Einführung*, 2nd rev. ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2018), 20.

⁵ Verena Dorn-Haag, *Hexerei und Magie im Strafrecht: Historische und dogmatische Aspekte* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015); Judith Venjakob, *Der Hexenflug in der frühneuzeitlichen Druckgrafik: Entstehung, Rezeption und Symbolik eines Bildtypus* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2017).

⁶ Julian Goodare, *The European witch-hunt* (London, New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 65; Kieckhefer, “Mythologies of Witchcraft in the Fifteenth Century,” 79; Kathrin Utz Tremp, “Geburtsort und Geburtsstunde des Sabbats: Die “Errores gazariorum” und ihr häretischer Hintergrund,” in *Hexenwissen: Zum Transfer von Magie- und Zauberei-Imaginationen in interdisziplinärer Perspektive*, ed. Heinz Sieburg, Rita Voltmer and Britta Weimann, Trierer Hexenprozesse Band 9 (Trier: Spee, 2017), 52; Josef Hansen, *Zauberwahn, Inquisition und Hexenprozeß im Mittelalter und die Entstehung der großen Hexenverfolgung*, Neuauflage 1983 (Aalen: Scientia Verl., 1900).

⁷ Hansen, *Zauberwahn, Inquisition und Hexenprozeß im Mittelalter und die Entstehung der großen Hexenverfolgung*, 35.

⁸ Hansen, *Zauberwahn, Inquisition und Hexenprozeß im Mittelalter und die Entstehung der großen Hexenverfolgung*, 9–34. Utz Tremp recently named four components in Hansen’s “kumulatives Konzept” (cumulative concept): the pact with the devil that enables the witch to use harmful magic, the Sabbath, the magical flight and metamorphosis. Utz Tremp, “Geburtsort und Geburtsstunde des Sabbats,” 52. In 2008 she named only three ‘groups’ as part of “Hansen’s concept”: maleficium and metamorphosis, sexual intercourse with the devil and the gathering of heretics. Kathrin Utz Tremp, *Von der Häresie zur Hexerei: “wirkliche” und imaginäre Sekten im Spätmittelalter* (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2008), 12–13. Here, the reading of the “three groups” is preferred. However, Hansen’s ‘concept’ remains highly ambiguous and open to interpretation.

⁹ The Carolina and scholarly witchcraft provide a double *tertium comparationis* to which witchcraft persecutions in different areas can be related. Dillinger, *Böse Leute*, 14.

However, even more ‘elaborated’ and detailed versions of the cumulative concept do exist. Jonathan Goodare questions, for example, the “cumulative concept” when writing: “If there was a ‘cumulative’ concept of witchcraft, then it involved two different types of combinations of ideas. The first and most basic combination was [...] the combination of *demonic conspiracy* and *harmful magic* under the single name of ‘witchcraft.’ [...] Beyond this basic idea, the second level of the ‘cumulative’ concept consisted of the combined details of what witches did as member of their organization.”¹⁰ He continues, however, a few pages later: “In the course of the sixteenth century, ideas of witches were not only clarified but also elaborated. More details of the picture were filled in, until the elaborated concept looked something like the following summary:”¹¹

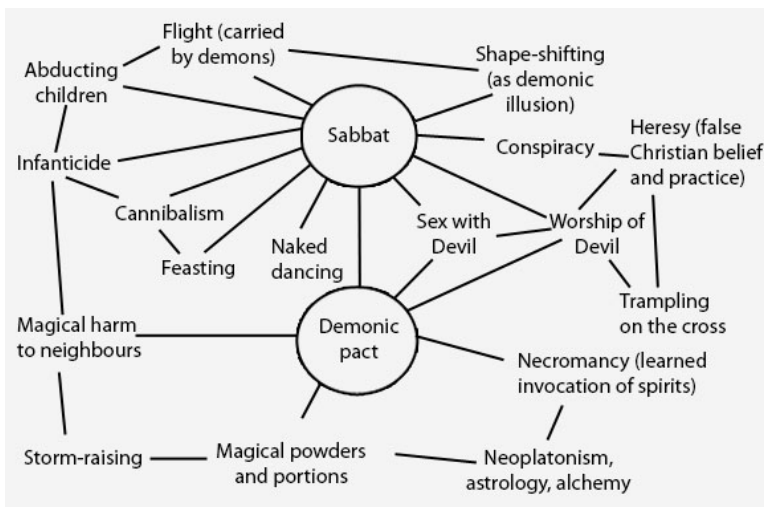


ILLUSTRATION 2: ELABORATED CONCEPT. GOODARE, *THE EUROPEAN WITCH-HUNT*, 77.

This schema might be more accurate in showing the true complexity and diversity of witchcraft beliefs during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however its nineteen categories are difficult to follow and almost impossible to apply.

The following article will therefore make use of the five categories: “pact with the devil”, “intercourse with the devil”, “the witches’ Sabbath”, “the witches’ flight” and “harmful magic” and apply them to the documents from the witchcraft trials in Rostock 1584 and Hainburg (Danube) 1617–18. The following research questions will be answered:

1. How does the imaginary of witchcraft differ between the documents from Rostock and Hainburg in regard to the five categories? What differences and what similarities can be found? What lies beyond the five categories?

¹⁰ Goodare, *The European witch-hunt*, 66–67.

¹¹ Goodare, *The European witch-hunt*, 76.

2. Does the “elaborated concept of witchcraft” possess analytical power or is it too abstract to be useful for analysis?

Sources, Context and Method

The empirical foundation for this study is based on documents from witchcraft trials in Rostock 1584 and Hainburg (Danube) 1617–18. The Hanseatic town of Rostock was still politically powerful and economically prosperous around 1600. With a population of between 11,000 and 14,000 inhabitants, it was one of the few large cities in the Holy Roman Empire.¹² Its economy relied on trade with Scandinavia and the Baltic, fishing and the export of beer.¹³ The town was embroiled in an ongoing struggle for autonomy with the dukes of Mecklenburg in 1583–84. In 1584, conflicts within the town, between the city council and the town commune, as well as external struggles with the Dukes Johann Albrecht I (Mecklenburg-Schwerin) and his brother Ulrich III (Mecklenburg-Güstrow) led to its defeat and ended the city’s ambitions for autonomy.¹⁴ This political struggle has been interpreted as one of the structural causes of the first major witch-hunt in Rostock starting in July 1584.¹⁵ At least of equal importance seem to have been the changes in the policies towards the poor. Dealing with poverty gradually shifted from a service of the church to a policy of the town commune as of the change to the Protestant confession in 1531.¹⁶ This was connected to a fierce distinction between the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor and harsh legislation against foreign beggars and the ‘undeserving’ poor was introduced.¹⁷ In the *Urgicht* (“confession”) of Cerstin Brandes the connection between the poor and the witches is made explicit: “[She] [c]onfesses, that among the poor there are many evil women, who would have deserved to die, because they did so much evil. Also, there are many among them, who would have enough, so that they do not need to beg.”¹⁸ It is therefore not surprising that most of the victims of this persecution were the

¹² Moeller estimates 11,000 inhabitants around 1600, Münch gives a figure of 14,000. Katrin Moeller, *Das Willkür über Recht ginge: Hexenverfolgung in Mecklenburg im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Bielefeld: Verl. für Regionalgeschichte, 2007), 354; Ernst Münch, “Zwischen Reformation und Dreißigjährigem Krieg: 1532 bis 1648,” in *In deinen Mauern herrsche Eintracht und allgemeines Wohlergehen: Eine Geschichte der Stadt Rostock von ihren Ursprüngen bis zum Jahre 1990*, ed. Karsten Schröder (Rostock: Koch, 2003), 80.

¹³ Ernst Münch, *Das Rostocker Grundregister: 1600 – 1820* (Rostock: Schmidt-Römhild, 1998), xx–xxix.

¹⁴ See Münch, “Zwischen Reformation und Dreißigjährigem Krieg,” 59–61; Helge b. d. Wieden, “Rostock zwischen Abhängigkeit und Reichsunmittelbarkeit,” in *Pommern und Mecklenburg: Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Städtegeschichte*, ed. Roderich Schmidt (Köln: Böhlau, 1981), 126–29 for further information.

¹⁵ Moeller, *Das Willkür über Recht ginge*, 360; Katrin Moeller and Ronald Füssel, “Germany, North Easter,” in *Encyclopedia of witchcraft: The Western tradition*, ed. Richard Golden (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 418.

¹⁶ Kersten Krüger and Heiko Schön, “Policey und Armenfürsorge in Rostock in der frühen Neuzeit,” in *Formung der frühen Moderne: Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, ed. Kersten Krüger (Berlin: LIT Verl., 2005), 237–38.

¹⁷ See, for example, Mecklenburgische Polizei- und Landgerichtsordnung, 1562: 43–44.

¹⁸ “16. Bekandt, das vnter den Armen viel Böse Weiber weren, die den todt auch wol verdienet den sie hetten wol souiel böses gethan alß sie, auch gingen dar welche mancken, die doch genug hetten, das sie nicht bedeln dorffen.” R06, 293v.

itinerant poor from the city and its surrounding regions. From July to September in 1584, eighteen people, seventeen women and one man were executed.¹⁹

From these trials eighteen so-called *Urgichten* remain. These are “confessions” of the accused that were created at the end of the trials after excessive use of torture. They summarized the supposed deeds of the accused and served as the basis for their execution. This type of document contains deeply interwoven witchcraft imagery, containing elements of witchcraft belief from witnesses, the accused and – most importantly – the court administration.²⁰ The witchcraft imagery recreated from these documents thus provides a good overall synthesis of witchcraft belief at the specific time and place and was intermediated by the criminal court.

Hainburg, by contrast, was a town with fewer than 2,000 inhabitants at that time.²¹ With the loss of privileges from the Danube trade, the town mostly subsisted on agriculture and wine-growing.²² Economically exhausted and militarily devastated by the ongoing conflicts with the insurrection of István Bocskay in Hungary (1605–1606), the Ottoman campaigns (1593–1606) and the resulting garrisoning of imperial troops, descriptions of the town point towards very harsh living conditions.²³ Although the wine harvest of October 1617 appears to have been astonishingly good, the overall structural condition of the town, economic, political and financial, seemed altogether bleak.²⁴ In the aftermath of the 1683 siege of Vienna, the town would even be captured and destroyed by the Ottomans, which can be seen as the culmination of an ongoing series of threats and challenges facing the small town at the frontiers of the Habsburg Empire. These military conflicts also surface in the documents themselves. The *Urgicht* of Anna Reichhardtin mentions a “time of rebellion” which probably means the insurrection of István Bocskay: “[She] confesses without

¹⁹ Andreas Müller, “Die Magie der Inhaltsanalyse: Entwurf einer Inhaltsanalyse für den Vergleich von Hexenprozessakten aus Rostock 1584 und Hainburg 1617/18” (master thesis, Universität Wien, 2017), 33–38.

²⁰ Rita Voltmer, “Stimmen der Frauen? Gerichtsakten und Gender Studies am Beispiel der Hexenforschung,” in *Frauen, Männer, Queer: Ansätze und Perspektiven aus der historischen Genderforschung*, ed. Johanna Blume, Jennifer Moos and Anne Conrad (St. Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 2015), 31–32.

²¹ Müller, “Die Magie der Inhaltsanalyse,” 44.

²² Josef Maurer, *Geschichte der landesfürstlichen Stadt Hainburg: Zu ihrem 1000j. Jubiläum zumeist nach ungedr. Quellen* (Wien: Dr. v. Kreisel & Gröger, 1894), 68; Matthaeus Merian and Martin Zeiller, *Topographia Provinciarum Austriacarum[m] Austriae Styriae, Carinthiae, Carniolae, Tyrolis etc.: Beschreibung Vnd Abbildung der fürnembsten Stätt Vnd Plätz in den Osterreichischen Landen Vnder vnd Ober Osterreich, Steyer, Kärndten, Crain Vnd Tyrol* (Frankfurt am Mayn: Merian, 1656), 10–11.

²³ Erich Landsteiner and Andreas Weigl, “‘Sonsten finden wir die Sachen sehr übel aufm Landt beschaffen’: Krieg und lokale Gesellschaft in Niederösterreich (1618–1621),” in *Zwischen Alltag und Katastrophe: Der Dreißigjährige Krieg aus der Nähe*, ed. Benigna v. Krusenstjern, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 235–36.

²⁴ Erich Landsteiner, “The Crisis of Wine Production in Late Sixteenth-Century Central Europe: Climatic Causes and Economic Consequences,” *Climatic Change*, no. 43 (1999): 237.

torture that during the time of rebellion, when she fled to Kitsee, she had pressed to death her own child at her breast unnoticed, while she slept, and when she awoke it was dead.”²⁵

The nineteen victims of the persecution from November 1617 to April 1618 were exclusively women. All of them came from the countryside around Hainburg. Thirteen of them lived in the small mountain village of Berg (literally “mountain” in German), five from Bad Deutsch Altenburg and one from Hundsheim. Six of them were of the Protestant confession which does not appear to have made a difference in the content of the documents or the outcome of the trials. The economic standing of the accused can only be inferred, but the recurrent mentioning of houses, cattle and wine gardens, as well as the absence of settings in poverty or city life, plausibly situate these women as part of the rural population, ranging from servants to peasants.²⁶

From the trials nineteen *Urgichten* and three collective verdicts remain. The former are of the same type as the documents in Rostock and have been used to reconstruct the images of witchcraft within these documents. The verdicts were used for analyzing the context and outcome of the trials. Two of the accused women died under torture, the remaining seventeen were executed by beheading, after they were “pardoned” from being burning at the stake by Hans Christoph von Unverzagt.²⁷

As disparate as the contexts of these two cases may seem, they do have two important commonalities. Firstly, both are situated within the same and fiercest wave of witch-hunts which lasted from 1580 to 1630, making them more comparable in time.²⁸ Secondly, the source material consists of the same type of documents, namely, the *Urgicht*. The sharp contrast between the economic and geographic context of the two cases is in fact beneficial for the analysis. An abstract and general concept like the “elaborated concept of witchcraft”, which even in its most conservative application broadly spans Middle Europe and the century 1550–1650, must stand the test of economic and geographic diversity if it is to prove of any analytical value.

The software MAXQDA was used to apply the five categories to the documents. Working with the transcripts of the trial documents, this tool allows for the marking or annotation of specific sections of text in order to assign them to a pre-defined category (this is called “coding” the text). The content of these categories can then be used for qualitative analysis – reading the contents of the categories – as well as for quantifying the number of coded text segments within each category.²⁹

²⁵ “8. Hab auch gütig bekhennt, sie hab ihr äigen khindt, eines zur zeit der rebellion, als sie auff Khüzehe geflohen, ann ihrer brust schlaffent doch unwissent, erdrugkht, welches, wie sie erwacht, thodt gewesen;” H03, 11v.

²⁶ Müller, “Die Magie der Inhaltsanalyse,” 29–33.

²⁷ See NoeLA – HS StA 1347, 18r-18v. 47r-48v. 67v-69r.

²⁸ Wolfgang Behringer, *Witches and witch-hunts: A global history* (Cambridge, UK, Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2004), 8.

²⁹ The transcriptions for the 1584 Rostock trials have been provided by Katrin Moeller, who created them for research on her 2007 dissertation. The transcripts have been validated in Stadtarchiv Rostock during my own work for my 2017 master’s thesis. The transcripts for Hainburg have been taken from the thesis

The internal structure of the documents themselves was advantageous for the systematic application of these categories. The *Urgichten* are structured by numbered paragraphs always introduced with the word “Bekent” (“confesses”). This allowed for one or more of the named categories to be applied to each paragraph in a consistent way. The overlap between categories (for example the magical flight and the witches’ Sabbat were often assigned to the same paragraph) did not prove to be a problem but rather allowed for different analytical insight.³⁰

Results General

As the category of harmful magic proved to be the most heterogeneous of all, inductive subcategories were created to gain more detailed insight into this complex phenomenon. For a first impression the number of assignments to the individual categories is useful.

The table demonstrates there are certain striking differences in the frequency of the categories. In Rostock the pact with the devil is less frequent (7%) than in Hainburg (21%) whereas sexual intercourse with the devil is more prominent in Rostock (11%) than in Hainburg (9%). This is an indicator, which can be confirmed by the qualitative analysis, that sexual intercourse with the devil is a prominent and distinct feature in Rostock. Sex with the devil (or several devils) is not limited to the narration of the devil’s pact, but gains its own and specific prominence. In Hainburg the narrative about the pact and information regarding the name and interaction with the devil at this event were of greater interest.

In the witches’ Sabbat and the magical flight the difference between Rostock and Hainburg is even more marked. Whereas the quantitative importance of both categories is almost negligible in Rostock (6% and 4%) they are of higher importance in Hainburg (both 13%).

The sharpest contrast, however, occurs in the category of harmful magic. In Rostock the *maleficium* makes up 72% of the coded text. Of this category, damage against people is clearly prominent. In Hainburg harmful magic is also the most salient of the five categories, but is far less dominant (only 45% of the coded text). The most important subcategories here are weather-magic (19% of the total coded text), damage against crops (7%) and damage against people (6%).

The frequency analysis already points toward several distinct differences between the text corpora. The relative importance of harmful magic and sexual intercourse with the devil in Rostock contrasts with the importance of the pact with the devil, the witches’ Sabbat and the magical flight in Hainburg.

of Nathalie Ignatieff. They have been validated by the use of facsimile scans available online: http://www.noela.findbuch.net/php/main.php?ar_id=3695 (last accessed on 20 February 2018). Nathalie Ignatieff, “Hexenprozesse in Hainburg 1617/18” (diploma thesis, Universität Wien, 2009).

³⁰ Müller, “Die Magie der Inhaltsanalyse,” 41–44.

Pact with the Devil

Looking at the narrative of the pact with the devil in both Rostock and Hainburg, the general picture is quite similar to what is found in most witchcraft trials. The witch (a female in 37 out of the 38 cases here) is introduced to the devil by a mentor (either male and female). Here the idea of magic as a learned ‘art’ is strongly intermingled with the idea of magic as a supernatural power coming from the devil.³¹ Magic is not exclusively limited to the time following the pact. Instead attendance at the witches’ Sabbath, the witches’ flight or the usage of blessings and fortune-telling can predate the pact narrative itself. Throughout all the documents the devil is male and commonly (except for the flight) in human form with animal attributes such as claws or paws.

However, there are some notable differences. In Rostock the pact with the devil is usually made in a cellar, either in the home of the accused witch or her mentor. This probably reflects the circumstances of the poorest city residents, who lived in basement-flats, and in Rostock these were the typical homes for poor people.³² The pact with the devil is further connected with the idea of the witch as poor and hungry, and the devil promising to supply her with food, money and goods, as seen in the case of Dorothea Bremer: “There she promised him her soul and body for ten years and He [the devil] said, He will bring her money, grain, bread, meat and all that.”³³ The mentor is also sometimes paid by the witch for introducing her to the devil and in the cases of Geseske Hagemeister, Anneke Metlinges and Anneke Swarten (R11, R12 and R17 respectively), the accused enter into the pact with not only one but three devils each. Here, each devil is met on a different occasion and introduced by a different mentor.

In Hainburg, in contrast, each witch is assigned to only one devil (consistently called “böser Geist”, evil spirit) and the motive for the pact is in general not given or is simply “temptation” by the devil. Here the pact is made at varying locations which may include the house of the accused or her mentor, the witches’ Sabbath on a mountain top or a way-side cross, or some other place in the outdoors. The varying locations here can be seen to reflect the rural life of the accused.

Sexual intercourse with the Devil

The sexual intercourse with the devil also shows several similarities that are typically found in witchcraft trials. In these documents, all cases of intercourse occur between a female witch and a male devil in human form. In the case of Thies Lindemann, a herder from the city’s village of Warnemünde and the only man in the sample, no sexual intercourse is reported. The devil himself as well as the sexual encounter with him is throughout all

³¹ See, for a similar conclusion, Dillinger, *‘Böse Leute’*, 116

³² Münch, *Das Rostocker Grundregister*, xix.

³³ “Do hette sie Ihm 10. Jahr langk Ihr leib vnd Sehele zugesagt dagegen hette Er gesagt, Er wolte Ihr wiederbringen gelt, korn, broth, fleischk allerlei.” R04, 277v.

the documents described as “cold as ice”. In some cases the intercourse is given as more pleasant than with the human husband, while other cases report satanic intercourse to be less enjoyable than the conjugal equivalent.

Whereas in Hainburg all descriptions of sexual intercourse adhere to the above-mentioned scheme typically found in many witchcraft trials, in Rostock a more elaborate narrative surfaces:

[She] [c]onfesses that Satan did not like it when she was at ease with her husband Jacob Michelßen, because the devil wanted her for himself, but he could do no evil to that man, because he had been baptized twice and he protected himself with prayers.³⁴

Here, the intercourse with one (or all three) devil(s) is commonly followed by aggressive action against the witch’s husband. In these narratives the devil wants the witch to completely belong to him and to this end, leads her into conflicts with her husband, damages the husband’s potency or even, in several cases, kills him. To this the witch either willingly agrees and uses the devil as an ally or tries (with varying degrees of success) to protect her husband. After the husband dies, the devil commonly takes his place: “He (the Devil) said to her that she should not trouble herself, he will be good enough as a husband for her.”³⁵ Overall, in Rostock the devil is commonly portrayed as the witch’s husband (and she as the devil’s bride) whereas in Hainburg the devil appears as the master of the witches who demands loyalty by veneration and the kissing of his rear.

Furthermore, the devil appears in Rostock in a second role, that of a helping servant. He makes his appearance to a witch on Thursdays and asks for a task. The witch thereafter uses him directly for stealing from other people’s houses, or damaging people and animals by breaking their neck or causing accidents. If the devil is not able to do what the witch demands (for example because of the piety of his victim or God’s divine intervention) the witch punishes the devil by striking him with a rod, as in the case of Geseke Hagemester, where the witch demands that the devil undo the damage or “she would punish him and strike him so hard, that he should cry like a cat”.³⁶

Witches’ Sabbat

In both text corpora the witches’ Sabbat is a meeting of a collective of witches which takes place mainly on mountain tops. These events include the presence of witches and devils, a

³⁴ “Bekandt, das der Satanas nicht haben wollen, das sie mit diesem Ihrem drudden Man Jacob Michelßen auch mußen einig sein, den die Tufel allein sie haben wollen, aber diesem Man hette Er nicht böses thun können, den Er wer zwei mal getaufft vnd Er hette sich alzuehr mit dem gebede vorwaret.” R16, 335v.

³⁵ “zu ihr gesagt sie solte sich nicht gremen, den Er wolte Ihr gut gnug wesen vor ein Man.” R13, 321r.

³⁶ “oder sie wolte En so zurichten vnd strichen, das Er blerren solte als ein Katze.” R11, 313v.

feast and a collective dance. Apart from these commonalities, the happenings at the Sabbat and especially the degree of detail differ greatly.

Astonishingly rich and detailed descriptions of the Sabbat can be found in Rostock in 1584. The following is an example of one of these descriptions given in full:

5. Confesses, that she has been eight times on Blocksberg mountain during Saint Wolbrecht's Night, and she was soon there, and she has greased herself with black potions which the devil has brought her, and she was not allowed to speak of God, but instead said "Up and be gone in all devil's name", and then she arrived there soon, on the mountain they quickly cooked, as if for a wedding, and they sat on wooden benches and ate oxen meat from wooden tables, and drank beer from Rostock out of wooden and tin cups. And the Pötesche sat by her side, and the herder was also there, and she danced with her Beelzebub in the middle, and she fell during the dance, there He laughed and said: "You must burn this year!" and about three hundred did fall, there the highest said to the minstrels: "Stop it or I will not keep one for this year, and if all of them shall be burned the heather of Rostock will not be enough!" and those who brought the food were dressed well, and the minstrel and the drummers were just like normal minstrels.³⁷

For each and every document one description just like the above exists. The sequence of events and the details used to illustrate the story are strongly homogeneous and vary only to a small degree. The place of the Sabbat is in all 18 cases Blocksberg mountain, always occurring on "St Wolbrechtsnacht" (Walpurgis Night). There is a pond with fish and sometimes fruit trees on top of Blocksberg. Several hundred male and female witches dance and feast with their devils just like in the example above. Apart from these long narratives, only four brief paragraphs elaborate on the happenings on Blocksberg and focus on the details of the dance. Otherwise, no mention of or reference to the witches' gathering is made at all. In general, the witches very rarely appear or act as a collective and then only in numbers of two or three. The entire image of a collective group relies exclusively on the small number of paragraphs (one per document) that feature extensive

³⁷ "5. Bekandt, das sie 8. mal auf Blocksberg gewesen In S. Wolbrechtsnacht auf einer Molden vnd wer dar balde furgelkommen vnd hette sich geschmert mit schwartzen Zeuge so ihr der Teuffel gebracht, vnd hette von Gode nichts sagen mußen, Sonden gesagt auf vnd dauon in aller negen Tufel nahmen vnd wer balde dahingewesen, auf den Berg wer flucks zugekocht gewesen, als zur Brudtlacht, hetten auf holtzen Bancken geseßen vnd von holtzen tischen geßeßen Ochsenfleischk vnd hetten Rostocker Bier getruncken, auß holtzern vnd zinnern kannen, vnd die Pötesche hette bei sie geseßen, vnd die herde wer dar auch gewesen, vnd sie hette mit Ihrem Beelzebub mitten in getanzt, vnd sie wer gefallen im tanze, da hette ehr witte gelachtet vnd gesagt du must dies Jahr bernen, vnd weren wol vber wie oder drei hundert gefallen, da hette der Oberste gesagt zu den Spilleuten halt auf oder Ich behalte diß Jahr nicht mehr ein stricke, vnd wen man die alle bernen solte so dies Jhar gefallen, so kundte man mit der Rostocker Heide nicht zukommen, vnd die das eßen aufgetragen weren stadtllich gewesen alß hofekerl vnd 4 hofe weiber weren auch gefallen, die Spilleute vnd Bungers weren gewesen als ander Spilleute." R11, 309v-310r.

narrations attributed to Blocksberg. This conflicting result shows that the witches' Sabbat is an artificial and isolated element within the documents. Here it seems highly plausible that a person with demonological knowledge or ideas must have influenced the trial and must have contributed this elaborated element of learned witchcraft belief in the otherwise individual and non-collective witchcraft imagination of Rostock.

In Hainburg the descriptions of the witches' Sabbat are mostly very brief: "Confesses, she does not know how many times she has been at the mountain, magical trees and way crosses; there they ate, drank and danced and never returned without doing an evil deed."³⁸

Despite its brevity, the witches' Sabbat appears highly heterogeneous and omnipresent throughout the documents. The witches meet on mountains, magical trees, way crosses, in houses and in cellars. At these events there is not just feasting and dancing but also the casting of weather spells or other such malicious magic (a motif completely missing in the Rostock documents). Further on in the text, a common theme at the witches' Sabbat is the cooking and eating of children. The Sabbat is commonly referred to throughout the texts and strongly interrelated with practicing black magic and being introduced to the devil. The Sabbat therefore appears to be a strongly integrated element in the witchcraft belief found in the Hainburg 'confessions'.

Magical Flight

In both Rostock and Hainburg the motif of the witches' flight is present. By the use of a magical potion (*Hexensalbe*) received from the devil, the witch travels to the Sabbat either on the back of a magical animal (often the devil in animal form) or by the use of an object like a broom or a stick.

In Rostock it becomes strongly evident, that the witches' flight occurs solely, and without exception, within the insulated narratives of the witches' Sabbat described above. No reference to the magical flight is made in any other section of the (extensive) documents. The flight to the Sabbat is usually explained by the application of the witches' potion on the body of the person (not on the object of flight) and by the use of some magical spell like the aforementioned "Up and be gone in all devil's name", the devil then takes her to Blocksberg. In a few cases the witch is even described as almost dead and sleeping and the flight itself as invisible.³⁹ This indicates that in Rostock the skill of flying was not an essential attribute of the witch and that the reality of the witches' flight was probably doubted, in line with the skeptic tradition originating from the famous Canon Episcopi.⁴⁰ Apparently the only function of the witches' flight within the texts seems to serve as an introduction to the narrative of the witches' Sabbat.

³⁸ "Bekhennt, es sey ihr unbewust wie offt sy auf die berg, zauberischen baumbes und kreüzweg gefahren, alda sy geßen, getrunekhen und getanzt und ohne begehung eines bößen stuekhs niemals nach hauß kommen." H14, 55v.

³⁹ R15, 332r-v. R16, 335v.

⁴⁰ Behringer, *Witches and witch-hunts*, 165.

In Hainburg the witches' flight is omnipresent. Apart from travelling to the witches' Sabbath the flight is also used to do evil deeds in general or to cast weather spells from the air. It is also featured in many short side narratives, whether these are conflicts between the witch and her mentor; disguising the night-time absence by putting a broom under the bedclothes or arguments as to why the flight was not possible (arguments such as: "10th confesses, during the year 1617, she was very large and pregnant and therefore could not fly)."⁴¹ As previously stated, the flight is prominently visualised by means of riding on sticks and brooms as well as magical animals, but also the flight by metamorphosis into a bird is described. In one case the flight of two witches on a stick even predates the pact with the devil and illustrates still further that flying is apparently considered an essential skill and real behaviour of the witches in Hainburg.

Harmful Magic

Harmful magic is used in the documents of Rostock and Hainburg within the same familiar framework. A woman (in 37 out of 38 cases) uses magical powers that she has gained through her pact with the devil and the teachings from a mentor to do damage against humans, animals and property. For this, magical potions are commonly used, in Rostock the *Goeth* ("broth"), in Hainburg the *Teufelswasser* ("devil's water").

Apart from this general framework, many differences in the spells and their usage surface. In Rostock damage against people is the most prominent above all other categories (32% of all coded text segments, or 44% of all harmful magic). Most significantly, this is done by one(!) witch who spills her magical potion on the doorstep of her victim:

Confesses, that she spilled a *Goeth* in front of Andres Langen's door during Christmas on a Thursday in the name of the devil, and therefore he had to lay in bed for three years, grew ill and finally died, because she asked him for a stoop of fresh beer, and he did not want to give it to her.⁴²

In some cases the intended target is missed and instead his wife, a servant or even a pig is hit. Relating to the last, one scribe noted: "the footman testifies that he has carried away the pig."⁴³ The second way of inflicting damage against people was to send the devil to cause

⁴¹ "10. Bekhent, daß 1617ten jahres, sey sy sehr und groß schwanger gewest, darumben sey zum außfahren gar verdrossen." H16, 59r.

⁴² "Bekandt, das sie andres Langen vor 18. einen goeth vor die thur gegoßen in den winacht(en) auf ein Donnertag abend in des dufels nahmen, vnd ehr hette 3 Jhar zu Bette gelegen, wer verquenen vnd entlich gestorben Vrsache sie hette ihm vmb ein kanne frischk bier gebeden, Die hette sie ihr nicht geben wollen." R07, 285.

⁴³ "der Frone hat eingezeuget, das ehr die Söge wegkfuhrn laßen." R14, 328r.

an accident to the person by breaking their neck or immobilizing them. The same motifs, of spilling some magical potion in front of a stable or sending the devil to cause mischief, are used to cause damage to animals, especially cattle and horses. Further on in the texts, the theft of items by the aid of the devil is mentioned repeatedly: “[She] [c]onfesses, that she used the devil to make Him bring her money, rye and hops from the burgher’s house.”⁴⁴ In these narratives the devil is sent to bring back mostly money, food and beer, although many diabolic missions were thwarted by blessed storage places and God’s intervention. As another typical element of urban witchcraft, damage is turned against the cities’ craft guilds.⁴⁵ In Rostock beer is spoiled during the brewing process by adding a magical potion to it. Surprisingly, damage to the crops themselves is absent, all the more astonishing given the city’s strong dependence on the production of hops and malt. Likewise, weather magic (which could be used to spoil crops) is almost completely absent except for the very singular case of Geseke Hagemeisterin, where damage to ships by the conjuring of a storm is described in her *Urgicht*. This only partly demonstrates, however, the lack of animus towards crops, as other ways of destroying a harvest, such as summoning vermin, burying magical items in the field or spilling potions, are also completely absent.

As mentioned above, the damage in Rostock is always inflicted by one witch or in a few cases by a very small number of them (two to three). The cause for the damage is usually given in ways such as the following: “because once she had begged in front of his door, there he had called her a old whore and a witch, and after he had been buried, she was amongst the poor [who received alms from his estate].”⁴⁶ As with this example, the poverty of the accused is frequently made the starting point of a conflict, with alms being refused, the accused being thrown out of her basement dwelling, being banned from the city or the accused having promised to work but having stolen entrusted goods instead. Throughout the testimonies, the conflicts between the supposed-witch and her supposed-target strongly highlight the class conflicts within the socially and economically hierarchical city.

In Hainburg the most prominent magical act is the collective incantation of weather spells. They are typically presented as follows: “[She] [c]onfesses further, she created, together with her associates, heavy rain, evil winds, a terrible fog, which did great damage to grape and grain.”⁴⁷ Here the supposed offenders are always identified as an unspecific collective of witches. Individual damage against people, by spilling magical potions over the doorstep, is also enacted, just as in Rostock, but far less prominently. A sub-category of damage against people here concerns children who are drowned or squished to death (“erdrücken”) in their sleep or even in their mothers’ bellies. Thereafter they are often eaten

⁴⁴ “Bekandt, das sie den dufel dazu gehalten das Er mußen aus der Burgerheuser geldt, Roggen vnd Maltz bringen.” R03, 274v.

⁴⁵ Johannes Dillinger, “Hexenverfolgung in Städten,” in *Methoden und Konzepte der historischen Hexenforschung*, ed. Gunther Franz and Franz Irsigler (Trier: Spee, 1998), 140–41.

⁴⁶ “Vrsache sie hette eins vor seiner Thur bitten wollen, so hette Er sie vor ein Alte Hur und Zaubersche gescholden, Vnd alß Er begraben worden. Wer sie mit vnder den Armen gewesen.” R06, 293r.

⁴⁷ “Bekhent auch, sy habe neben andren ihren gespillin große regen, böse windt und üble nebel gemacht, welche alle an wein und traidt großen schaden getharn.” H19, 65r.

or cooked into a witches' potion at the Sabbat. Finally, poisoning the pasture to kill cattle and conjuring worms to wither fruit trees is a common theme. In both cases, cattle and fruit trees, ownership of property is never specified. Overall, the inflicted harm in Hainburg rarely relates to individual cases and instead is inflicted by an imaginary collective (the witches) to an existing economic collective (agricultural society in general).

It becomes evident here that the harmful magic reflects the socio-economic context of the trials. In Rostock individual people and their animals (within stables) are targeted by spreading diseases. In Hainburg the full range of agricultural subsistence – fields, vineyards, cattle living on the pasture and the local fruit trees – are threatened. The socio-economic circumstances do not, however, explain by themselves the complete absence of the damage against crops, the irrelevance of the weather spell and the missing child murder in Rostock. Here differences in the demonological ideas, in part influenced by the differing confession, offer the most promising explanation.

Other Elements

In both Rostock and in Hainburg there are borderline cases of motives that cannot be comfortably placed in one of the five categories, despite bearing some relation to them. Examples of this are the further interactions with the devil outside of the pact-narrative, the sexual intercourse and the Sabbat, which constitute a type of narrative that can be labeled as “further elements of witchcraft”.

In Rostock this includes, for example, the dishonest attendance at Mass as in the *Urgicht* of Anneke Metling: “[She] [c]onfesses, that she had to go in the devil's name to church, penance and sacrament, and when she received it, the devil stood behind her, and if she would not do it, he would break her neck in two.”⁴⁸ In these narratives the witch attends Mass but when asked if she believes in God lies and thinks of the devil. She also receives the Host in the devil's name as above. This theme is commonly known from the persecution of heretics, yet it does not fit easily into the above-mentioned categories.⁴⁹ Further on in the Rostock documents, the devil is bathed in a broth to create the witches potion. “[She] [c]onfesses that she bathed Satan on a Thursday in the devil's name and he was as small as a child and she had filled the water from the bowl beside the stream and heated it up in a small pot.”⁵⁰ Here the devil is often in the form of a child and sometimes, but not always, cooked in a pot with other ingredients like herbs, bones, snakes and frogs.

⁴⁸ “Bekandt, das sie mußen in der dufel nahmen zur Kirchen Bicht vnd Sacrament gehen, vnd hette es auch also empfangen, den die Satanas hinder sie gestanden, vnd wo sie solchs nichten thete so wolten sie Ihr den halß entzwei brechen.” R12, 313r.

⁴⁹ Utz Tresp, *Von der Häresie zur Hexerei*, 5–11.

⁵⁰ “Bekandt, das sie den Satanas auf donnertag abend in des dufels nahmen gebadet, in der Balyr, vnd Er wer alß dan klein gewesen als ein kindt, vnd sie hette das waßer gefullet aus der Becke gegen den Ström in seinem nahmen, vnd hettes in kleinen Keßell warm gemacht.” R09, 304.

In Hainburg the adoration of the devil and the kissing of his rear cannot be attributed to either the pact or the Sabbat because the paragraphs are very short. They can be seen as constituting a broader frame of general veneration of the devil, well known from the motif of witches as a satanic sect. Further on, stealing, desecrating and handing over the Host to the devil is designated as being part of the crime of witchcraft in §6 of the later *Landgerichtsordnung* for Lower Austria of 1656 (called *Ferdinandeia*):⁵¹ “Fifth, to the sorcerers belong those who abuse the holy Host or heal them into their body, so that they do not confess.”⁵² Indeed the desecration of the host is mentioned repeatedly in the much earlier trials of 1617–18, but it does not fit into any of the five categories of the “elaborated concept of witchcraft”.

Aside from these “further elements of witchcraft”, the documents contain descriptions of the bad reputation of the accused: adultery, non-magical crimes, dishonesty, being illegitimately married or being married several times in succession. Here the accused are constituted not just as offenders of magical crimes but also as dishonest individuals in general which was considered an indicator for being a witch.⁵³

In Rostock one further category crops up in abundance that does not belong to the “elaborated concept of witchcraft”, but which takes up considerable space within the documents: the usage of (non-diabolic) “popular magic”. The accused are in many cases portrayed as everyday users of magic like Agnetha Churen: “[She] [c]onfesses that although Jurgen, the old court servant, banished her from town, [...] so that she would not bless and pray again, she returned anyway.”⁵⁴

As providers of magical services they seem to have been alternatively paid, contacted or cast out of the city community. The broad range of spells includes practices like “segnen und böten” (blessing and praying), magical healing of animals and people, telling the future, finding lost persons and conjuring love spells. In Rostock some of the spells and blessings are given in full and even rhyme (in German), like the following blessing taken from the *Urgicht* of Anneke Quisen:

⁵¹ Landgerichtsordnung des Erzherzogthums Oesterreich unter der Ennß. (1656). In: Codicis Austriaci ordine alphabetico compliati. (1704). Bd. 1. Wien. Online accessible: <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/codexaustriacus1704ga>. Last access: 20.2.2018. §6.

⁵² “Fünftens / unter die Zauberer gehören auch die jenigen / so ihne die H. Hostiens / sich damti gerohren zumachen / oder daß sie nicht außsagen sollen können / einheilen.”

⁵³ Dillinger, *‘Böse Leute’*, 230.

⁵⁴ „Bekandt ob gleich Jurgen die alte Richtkneht sie zuuor, aus der Stadt gejaget [...] sie hernachmals nicht mehr seggen vnd böten wölte, wer sie also wiederumb in die Stadt gekommen.“ R03, 273v-274r.

[She] [c]onfesses when she prays for the people she says: “Two evil ones have looked at you, three good ones look at you again, did the devil see you with his evil eyes, our God sees you with your firm and Christian faith. The honorable Virgin Mary walked in front of a grey forest, she felt there was a devil so Mary and her holy child did say: fly away from the people into the forest, so that you do not hinder or damage any creature or human on earth, in the name of the father, the son and the holy spirit, Amen.”⁵⁵

The existence of these practices is less a surprise from a scholarly perspective than the fact that these elements of popular magic made it into the final trial documents without being directly transmuted into elements of the (satanic) *Maleficium* (harmful magic). Popular magic was apparently persecuted and sanctioned, as demanded in §2 of the Mecklenburgische Land und Policeyordnung of 1565,⁵⁶ implementing strongly the Peinliche Halsgerichtsordnung of Charles V., but it was not immediately identified with witchcraft. Here the transformation between “Zaubereiprozess” (accusation of harmful magic without the devil’s pact) and “Hexereiprozess” (accusation of harmful magic with the devil’s pact) is made visible.

Evaluating the Elaborated Concept of Witchcraft

In taking a step back from the content of these documents and looking at the texts in a more structural way, the strengths and weaknesses of the “elaborated concept of witchcraft” become more evident. The following two diagrams show the text corpora. The rows of each diagram represent one of the texts and each column a paragraph of text. The colors red for the pact with the devil, brown for sexual intercourse with the devil, blue for the Sabbat, violet for the magical flight and black for harmful magic show which category has been assigned to each paragraph. For example, the first document in Rostock (R01, Anneke Quisen) describes in the fifth paragraph the pact with the devil, in the eighth and the ninth paragraph black magic, in the thirteenth intercourse with the devil and so on.

⁵⁵ “Bekandt, wan sie die leute butende, so spreche sie twe Quaden haben die angesehen, drei guden sehen dich wiedder ahn, hatt dir die Dufe angesehen mit seinen widen ogen vnser her Got sehe dich wieder an mit den rechten Christen glauben, die leue Juncker Maria gingk vor eine grouen wolt was mutede Er dar ein Satanas So sprack Maria vnd Ihr leue kindt flege von den minschen ab in das Wiedeholth, dar du Keinen Creaturen edder minschen auf Erden hinderst od(der) schaden deist, In nahmen des Vatern, des Sans vnd des heiligen Geistes Amen.” R1, 264v.

⁵⁶ Herzog Johann Albrecht und Herzog Ulrich Policey und Landordnung (1562). In: Sammlung alter und neuer Herzoglich-Mecklenburgischer Landes-Gesetze, Ordnungen und Constitutionen. (1779). Bd.4. Schwerin. Online: http://digi.ub.uniheidelberg.de/diglit/sammlung_herzoglich_mecklenburgischer_landes_gesetze1779. Last access: 20.02.2018.

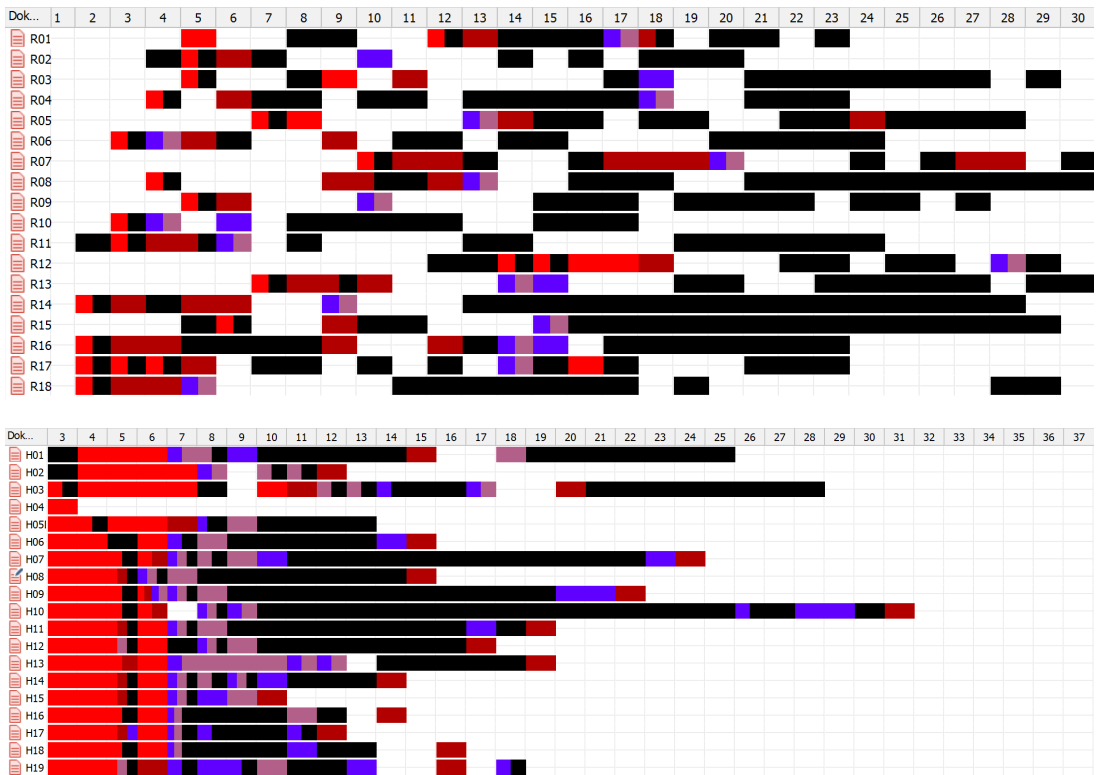


ILLUSTRATION 3:

(a) Document comparison chart Rostock. (b) Document comparison chart Hainburg. The colours red, brown, blue, violet, black correspond to the categories of pact, sexual intercourse, Sabbat, flight and harmful magic.

Looking at the two text corpora in comparison one can see that the “elaborated concept of witchcraft” does not fit equally well to both of them. In Rostock many gaps appear, especially at the beginning of the documents where descriptions of popular magic are common. An overall tendency of red-brown in the first half of the document and black in the second half with blue-violet taking an intermediate position becomes nonetheless visible. In Rostock over all 58% of the entire text can be assigned to at least one of the five categories. Adding the “further elements of witchcraft”, as the borderline cases, 65% of the text is covered.

In Hainburg a clear structure occurs. The documents obviously follow an inherent sequence of question (“Fragstück”) which can be inferred from the structure. Paragraphs three to six deal with the pact with the devil, seven to nine mostly with the Sabbat and the flight. Thereafter follows black magic, varying in detail from document to document. Often the documents end with a paragraph about the intercourse with the devil. This structure suggests that a very specific and formalized way of constructing these documents and dealing with witchcraft trials existed in Hainburg that allowed for less flexibility than in Rostock. In all, the content of the document fits very well the “elaborated concept of

witchcraft”. 77% of the entire text relates to one of the five categories; adding the “further elements of witchcraft”, as much as 91% of the text is covered.

So how well did the “elaborated concept of witchcraft” do? Of course it could not cover and explain everything. In this study the similarities of the two cases outweigh the differences: all categories exist in both cases and differences are mainly found in details. However, as Kieckhefer has shown, major differences between local witchcraft mythologies can exist, especially in the early trials during the fifteenth century.⁵⁷ Still, in this study the evidence suggests that at the height of the persecutions from 1580 to 1620 within the Holy Roman Empire the “elaborated concept of witchcraft” provides a more than just regional framework for shaping and understanding witchcraft beliefs.

From an analytical perspective, the concept and its five categories could be applied in an easy and consistent way. Although the categories did overlap and left some gaps, they offered a framework for comparison that allowed a well-structured approach to the contents of these documents. It was important, however, to not look exclusively at these five categories but to look into their interrelation and also beyond them. Thinking about what they did not cover, was in some cases just as insightful as thinking about what they do cover.

Referring back to Jonathan Goodare’s “elaborated concept” mentioned above, consisting of nineteen categories, they may instead describe the reality (too) well and it does not seem possible to apply them in a consistent or purposeful manner.⁵⁸ Here, in this specific study, the “elaborated concept of witchcraft” and its five categories have served as an abstraction of a complex reality, but an abstraction serving its purpose well.

⁵⁷ Kieckhefer, “Mythologies of Witchcraft in the Fifteenth Century”.

⁵⁸ Goodare, *The European witch-hunt*, 77.

Primary Sources

Rostock

| Abb. | Name | Signature of the Archive |
|------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| R01 | Anneke Quisen | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 264v-268r |
| R02 | Margretha Benzins | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 268v-272r |
| R03 | Agneha Churen | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 274v-277r |
| R04 | Dorothea Bremers | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 277v-280v |
| R05 | Anneke Schrepkowen | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 287-291r |
| R06 | Cerstin Brandes | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 291v-294v |
| R07 | Margetha Detlofes | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 281r-287r |
| R08 | Cathrin Damen | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 295r-300r |
| R09 | Gretke Jessen | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 302v-305 |
| R10 | Thies Lindeman | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 306-308v |
| R11 | Geseke Hagemeister | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 309r-313v |
| R12 | Anneke Metlinges | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 314r-319v |
| R13 | Trina Beneken | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 320r-325r |
| R14 | Brigitta Bouwen | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 326v-330r |
| R15 | Elsebe Schulten | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 330v-334v |
| R16 | Anneke Emekens | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 335r-338r |
| R17 | Anneke Swartten | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 338v-342r |
| R18 | Anneke Tengels | STA HRO 1.1.3.1. Nr 231. 342v-348v |

Hainburg

| Abb. | Name | Signature of the Archive |
|------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| H01 | Barbara Stadtschreiberin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 3r-6r |
| H02 | Martha Peyrlin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 8r-9r |
| H03 | Anna Reichhardtin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 11r-13v |
| H04 | Mahriches Legeschürzin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 15r |
| H05 | Dorothea Schmuaglin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 21r-22v |
| H06 | Barbara Maurerin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 23-25r |
| H07 | Katharina Khleübenpockhin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 26r-29r |
| H08 | Magdalena Thalmairin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 29v-31v |
| H09 | Katharina Teütschmanin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 32r-35v |
| H10 | Katharina Himbnerin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 36r-40v |
| H11 | Margaretha Peüerlin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 41r-43v |
| H12 | Elisabeth Raitthoferin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 44r-46v |
| H13 | Ursula Bidermüllerin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 51v-54r |
| H14 | Gertraudt Raithoferin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 54v-56r |
| H15 | Eva Nußerin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 56v-57v |
| H16 | Dorothea Steyerin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 58r-59r |
| H17 | Agatha Khornmeßerin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 59v-61r |
| H18 | Elisabeth Boernkhöpttin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 61v-63v |
| H19 | Katharina Holzführerin | NoeLA - HS StA 1347 64r-66r |

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