

## 2 “When Hell Became Too Small”

### Constructing Witchcraft in Post-Reformation Denmark

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There is no penalty cruel enough to punish the evils of witches, since [. . .] all their designs rise up against the majesty of God to [. . .] offend Him in a thousand ways.<sup>1</sup>

This description of the graveness of witchcraft was laid out by the authoritative French jurist Jean Bodin in *De la Démonomanie des sorciers* (1580). The work was issued at a time when comprehensive witch-hunts were sweeping across many German states, parts of France and Switzerland. It was reprinted in 23 editions, translated into several languages, and for several decades, it remained the single most consulted work on witchcraft among jurists in Europe. Bodin claimed that witchcraft was the worst crime of all. It was a *crimen exceptum*, an excepted offense; given its gravity, and because it was so difficult to prove, regular judicial procedures and rights could be set aside. The idea that some crimes should be categorised as *crimen exceptum* derived from Roman law.<sup>2</sup> In the early modern period, it became the standard argument of justification among many demonologists for the rigorous prosecution and persecution of witches. Witchcraft was, as Bodin put it, “the worst of all crimes”.

Although the Alpine regions of Switzerland and Italy had witnessed witch-hunts in the half-century leading up to the Reformation, these hunts were limited compared to the persecutions that took place the second half of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.<sup>3</sup> Legally, witchcraft was a *crimen mixti fori*, which meant that the accused could be prosecuted by both lay as well as religious courts could prosecute it. Witches were thought to harm people, by imposing illnesses and accidents and ruining the harvest by causing hailstorms. However, judicially witchcraft was equally regarded a religious crime, and most offensive to God. Witches were heretics; they had renounced God and succumbed to the Devil. The crime of witchcraft was multifaceted, and its discourse depended on who had control in regional jurisdictions. This varied, depending on the dominant religion and the organisation of religious and secular authorities in different states.

After the Reformation, the state took over the jurisdiction of most offences formerly prosecuted by the church, such as sodomy, blasphemy and witchcraft—in other words, what many early modern jurists would categorise as *crimen exceptum*. It became less prevalent among European jurists during the seventeenth century to treat witchcraft as a *crimen exceptum*. This has been regarded as one of the reasons why witchcraft trials came to an end.<sup>4</sup> However, the Danish case does not fit this model. First of all, on a general level, Roman law was not strong in Denmark. More specifically, several laws of the sixteenth century outlined strict procedures in witchcraft trials to the benefit of the defendant.<sup>5</sup> Regardless of such procedural regulations, Danish witchcraft prosecutions were regarded as a hotspot of the European witch-hunt. In 1617, a comprehensive law was issued, which included an order that all men in the service of the crown should initiate trials against suspected witches. In the following six years, witch panics spread in the kingdom, and about 60 percent of all trials were conducted in a five- to six-year period, from 1616–1622.

Although a hot topic among students, witch-hunts have not been studied much among Danish historians, and only a few works are accessible to an international audience. In Danish, Jens Chr. V. Johansen's monograph from 1990 on the trials of Jutland remains a key work.<sup>6</sup> Inspired by *histoire serielle*, it was the first attempt to map the Danish trials. About 500 cases are preserved from the appellate court in Viborg from the years 1610–1698. However, lacunae in the court records mean that records of several trials have been lost. Some can be documented through other records, such as correspondence between royal offices, and still others are referred to in private correspondence or diaries. Other regions in the Danish part of the kingdom are more or less dark spots. About 20 cases can be documented from Funen and around 40 from Zealand. However, for both regions, almost all the court records are lost and we can therefore assume that the number of trials was considerably higher. In the 1980s and 1990s, the works of Alex Wittendorff made a significant impact on the cultural history research of Danish historians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but international readers will probably know Gustav Henningsen better. His work on both Danish and Spanish witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition has made Henningsen the most influential Danish scholar on international witchcraft studies.<sup>7</sup> In recent years, Tyge Krogh has worked on the decline in witchcraft prosecutions and religious crimes more broadly.<sup>8</sup> Several themes and aspects concerning the Danish witchcraft prosecutions still lack thorough investigation.

In a Danish context, the years between the Reformation and 1617 must be regarded as a formative period in the history of the Danish witch-hunt. The aim of this chapter is to present some preliminary results from a larger investigation into the construction of witchcraft. It will argue that, in Denmark, witchcraft was constructed as a crime by a fusion of condemnation by reformers of Catholicism as the "Devil's cult" and popular ideas of evil

people—especially evil women. In this climate, the persecution of witchcraft was not just possible but was, in fact, expected.<sup>9</sup> The first part of the chapter draws on instructions on the new faith and warnings against Catholicism and witchcraft, to demonstrate how the condemnation of Catholicism became interwoven with witchcraft and how this promoted fear of a diabolical conspiracy. During the reigns of Christian III (1537–1559) and Frederik II (1559–1578), however, in an effort to curb witchcraft trials, the lay authorities issued procedural regulations that made it more difficult to sentence witches. The second part of the chapter highlights events that took place in the first decade of the reign of Christian IV (1578–1648), and focuses on the bewitchment of the royal fleet. It argues that these events must have had a decisive impact on the future, severe treatment of those accused of witchcraft. The bewitchment of the fleet confirmed a demonological notion of witchcraft as a diabolical conspiracy against all Christians. The final sections of the chapter deal with the years around 1617, when Lutheranism was consolidated as the one and only true faith in the Danish-Norwegian kingdom.<sup>10</sup> As a consequence, the idea of the Lutheran prince and the state as a Lutheran household grew stronger, and the chapter argues that these aspects of Lutheran ideology were of crucial significance in the prosecution of witches.

### Warnings and Instructions

Despite the fact that the Danish Reformed Church had no judicial influence, Danish theologians wrote about and warned against witchcraft throughout the sixteenth century.<sup>11</sup> In doing so, they succumbed to a protestant discourse, by focusing on witchcraft as apostasy and, in its idolatry, a violation of the first commandment. All kinds of magical rituals came to be associated with Catholic beliefs and practices.<sup>12</sup>

Ribe, situated in the south-western part of Jutland, was an important regional trade and religious centre. Its first Reformed bishop, Hans Tausen (d. 1561), in his *Messenger to deans and clerics* warned against practitioners of beneficial magic (healing and divination), referring to them as female disciples of the Devil.<sup>13</sup> Around 1540, the bishop of Zealand, Peder Palladius, wrote a *Visitation Book*, a set of guidelines written in Latin for clerics and deans. In its 60 chapters, Palladius guides his readers on various topics—ranging from church interiors, sermons and the engagement with and treatment of various groups of parishioners.<sup>14</sup> The book makes use of a mixture of instructions on correct Evangelical practice and warnings, especially against papist beliefs when teaching the populace. According to Luther, all humans were at risk of being bewitched, but Palladius offered more comfort, stating that, if one remained strong in his or her faith and lived according to the gospels, no witch could harm him/her.<sup>15</sup> Most of the text is devoted to warning against magical ritual practices for beneficial purposes, and underlining that parishioners who consulted witches and healers

were also sinners. His anti-Catholic rhetoric becomes clear as he compares the witch's rituals to the ritualised Catholic faith, stating that the witch "can make the sign of the Cross [*signe*] for gout and pangs. She knows how to conjure, and she was taught by the Devil and the monks".<sup>16,17</sup>

Peder Palladius expressed a general protestant discourse on witchcraft in which the pope was considered to be the Antichrist—the greatest wizard of all. According to protestant views, no ritual, whether religious or magical, could generate an effect; rituals were merely the Devil's deceit.<sup>18</sup> To Luther, the Reformation was the beginning of the end, and the Apocalypse was approaching, making this period a time of "warning, punishment and repentance".<sup>19</sup> Luther had linked the papacy with the Antichrist in the Schmalkald Articles of 1537, later repeated in the Book of Concord in 1580.<sup>20</sup> Danish theologians were influenced by the theology of Wittenberg and Tübingen, and eschatology was extensive. In an international context, Niels Hemmingsen (d. 1600) is still the most influential Danish writer on witchcraft.<sup>21</sup> In the second half of the sixteenth century, he identified Catholicism with witchcraft in several of his writings. In the treatise *Admonitio de superstitionibus magicis vitandis*, Hemmingsen argued that witchcraft was the belief in the physical power of symbols, especially words. Practitioners of magic, and those who consulted them, were seduced by the Devil. Hemmingsen argued that, while the body might be healed by the magical rituals of cunning people, in the heart one would become a leper. This was in line with Palladius, who, in the *Visitation Book* stated that a cow may very well become healed "but your soul will be condemned into the pits of hell".<sup>22</sup>

It must have been difficult for the populace to comprehend the condemnation of religious practices and rituals that had previously been accepted. Hemmingsen confirms this challenge and emphasises that the most important task for the clergy was to eradicate the idea that beneficial magic was less sinful.<sup>23</sup> In the present context, the translation of three smaller treatises into Danish is noteworthy, because it confirms that the populace continued to practise magical rituals associated with Catholic practices. By translating the texts, they became accessible to a larger audience, and they must be regarded as a way of raising awareness among the lay authorities of how sinful beneficial magic was.<sup>24</sup> At this point, Danish Law, based on the Law Code of Jutland, continued only to prohibit malevolent magic.

Translating warnings against Catholicism and witchcraft was one way of enforcing the correlation between witchcraft and Catholic beliefs and practices. However, religious propaganda came in many shapes and sizes. The story of Brother Rush depicts the correlation between the Devil and monks. In the story, the Devil—in the shape of Brother Rush—commits many devious acts and leads people into despair. In 1577, the dialogue between Adser Bonde (Adser the Peasant) and Peder Smed (Peter Blacksmith) was published in Danish. It followed the German original, and told tales of peasants who took up the role of lay preachers after seeing the clear, Evangelical light.<sup>25</sup> In the Danish translation of *Nye Tidender/Om tho Jesuitter* (Figure 2.1),<sup>26</sup>

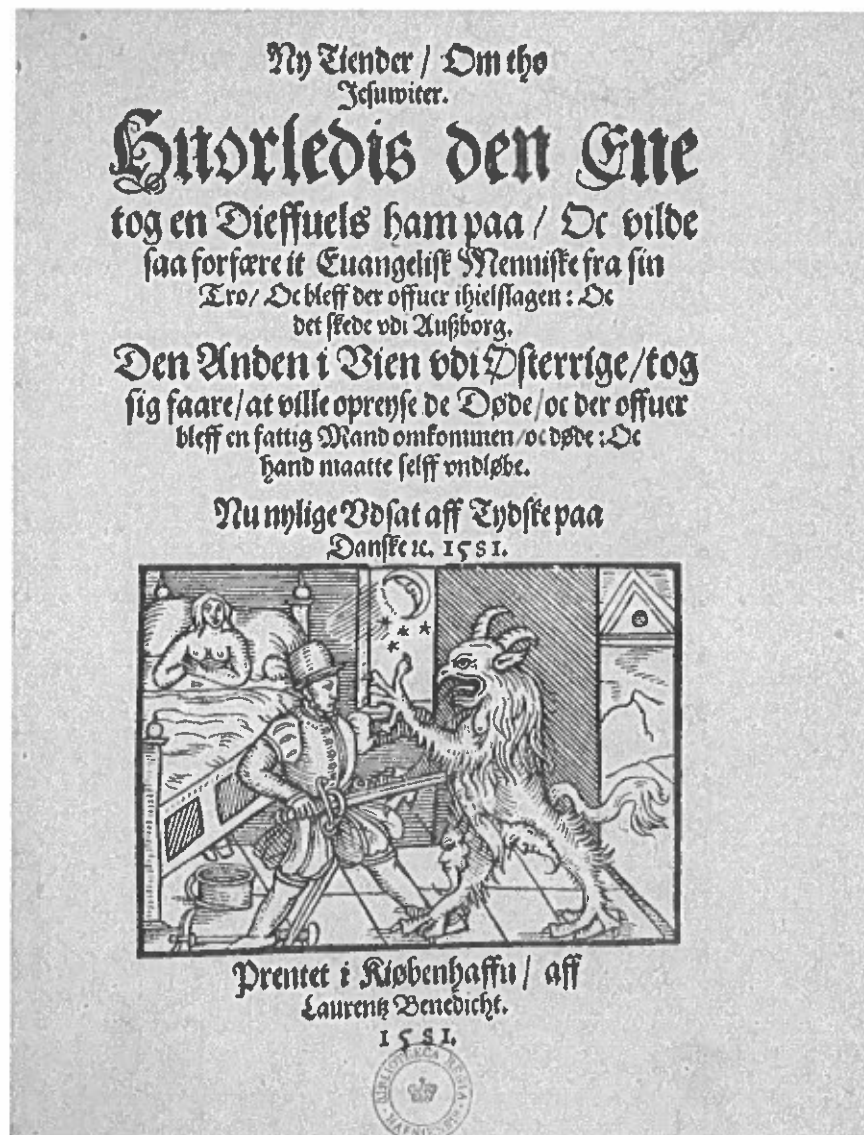


Figure 2.1 Frontispiece, *Nye Tidende/Om tho Jesuitter*, 1581. The Royal Library, Copenhagen, Denmark.

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the idea of Catholicism as originating with the Devil is reproduced on the frontispiece. The pamphlet includes two stories, one of them about a Jesuit priest, who attempted to lure a young girl from the Evangelical path back into Catholicism. The frontispiece depicts the scene as a confessional abduction, with the girl lying in bed at night being defended by a young man with a powerful sword. The Jesuit is depicted as the Devil. He is clearly attacking the young man, raising his claws and with an open mouth showing his tongue. The girl's bare torso underlines the assault, while her defender, fully dressed, rescues her from an evil fate. The scenario represented in the image shows the young man killing the Devil-Jesuit with his sword. Such images reproduced a fear of the Devil, and associated him explicitly with Catholic beliefs, while also insisting that the true faith would act as the ultimate protection.

### The Formative Events of the Late Sixteenth Century

The German book market served as an inspiration to the few Danish printers in Copenhagen. In 1591, the Danish translation of a German witchcraft pamphlet entitled *En forskreckelig oc sand bescriffuelse, om mange Trolde-folck: som ere forbrende for deris Misgierninger skyld, fra det Aar 1589 regnendis: oc huad deris vdretning oc bekendelse haffuer været, desligeste om en Trolldkarl ved naffn stumme Peder*, which translates as *A true and horrible story about many witches: who have been burnt for their misdeeds in 1589: and their explanation and confession, and also about a witch by the name Silent Peder, etc.* appeared on the Danish market.<sup>27</sup> Pamphlets describing particularly grave, large or peculiar trials were commonly published in German territories, and in France and England, but this is the only known one of its kind in Denmark. The combination of the time of publication and the content of the text is worth stressing, however, because it communicates a belief that witches conspired against godly Christians.

The pamphlet describes how the region of Trier and Swabia had been troubled by bad weather, poor harvests and epidemics for a long time. With the help of God, this had now been disclosed as a devilish conspiracy of witches working against all Christians. Witches, young, old, men and women had voluntarily confessed to serving the Devil, after which they were tortured and burnt at the stake. The pamphlet also refers to the trial of "a Doctor and a Jurist" who used to be in the service of the archbishop-elect, Dietrich Flade. The trial against Flade is well known to witchcraft scholars and is regarded as a turning point in witchcraft prosecutions in various regions. Flade and other wealthy members of society were accused of having bewitched the harvest for their own economic benefit. Soon Flade came to be regarded as the leader of the conspiracy and, indeed, the pamphlet refers to him as the "instigator".<sup>28</sup> In the subsequent trials, the correlation with the Devil was even more explicit than seen before. Witchcraft was portrayed as the gravest of crimes, and in terms of a secret society of Satan working to

destroy all Christians.<sup>29</sup> As warned in the pamphlet on the Trier trials, "The Devil complains that hell has become too small, and therefore he has sent his messengers to engage builders to make it larger".<sup>30</sup>

The fear that witches were part of a diabolical conspiracy to overthrow Christian society was indeed present in Denmark around 1590. The aforementioned pamphlet, *A true and horrible story*, was published in the wake of a series of trials in Denmark and must be read in this context. In the closing section of the text, it is underlined that "God knew that, in 1589, there would be exceptionally many witches",<sup>31</sup> and the events linked to the Danish court had confirmed this. In 1589, the king's sister, Princess Anne, was set to marry James VI of Scotland. The poorly equipped Royal Danish fleet met hard weather and, halfway to Scotland, storms forced the captain to head for calm waters in Norway. James VI soon travelled to Norway, he wed the princess, and they headed to Denmark. During their stay in Denmark, rumours had begun to circulate that witchcraft had caused the storms. A woman named Anne Koldings, known as "the Devil's mother", was already imprisoned for witchcraft, and she confessed to having participated in the bewitchment. During the summer of 1590, several women were tried and convicted for their participation.<sup>32</sup>

The majority of the trial records are lost; however, three confessions from convicted witches are preserved. These accounts of the bewitchment describe that several witches worked together, all of them determined to hinder the ships from reaching Scotland. The evil deed was performed by a servant Devil that belonged to one of the witches.<sup>33</sup> As in Trier and the neighbouring regions, the core of witchcraft involved diabolical conspiracy and caused harm. People feared that witches belonged to a secret society of people, who worked to overthrow good Christians. Similar to the case of Dr. Flade in Trier, the bewitchment of the royal fleet proved that no one could feel safe from witchcraft. Witches could be found within all layers of society, and all layers of society could be targeted by witchcraft.

### From Reformed to Lutheran

In 1599, the king was on a great expedition to the northernmost parts of the kingdom. The aim was to cleanse the sea outside Vardø of pirates and sailors who crossed the waters without paying tolls. During the expedition to Finnmark, the young king once again encountered witchcraft, and this time in its most dangerous form: Sami witchcraft. In 1609, Christian IV issued a general order to the vassals of the northern parts of the kingdom to prosecute the Sami witches.<sup>34</sup> In the decades between the bewitchment of the royal ships and the warning against Sami witchcraft in 1609, the religious environment had changed. A Danish version of "the Second Reformation"<sup>35</sup> meant an even stronger emphasis on the Lutheran confession as the true faith. Whereas the confessional opponent in the century had been Catholicism, it was now all confessions other than the Lutheran.<sup>36</sup> The first half of

the seventeenth century is characterised by a joint effort between church and state (king and council) to ensure correct practice of the Lutheran faith and to eradicate all sinful behaviour. This social and religious disciplining took place through education, admonitions and sermons, together with the use of corporal punishments for moral offences, such as witchcraft, sodomy and adultery. The most significant regulations were issued in 1617 and—clearly—they were linked to the grand celebrations that year in connection with the Lutheran jubilee.<sup>37</sup>

The regulation and disciplining of the populace had already been initiated during the reign of Christian III (1534–1559), although it was taken to new heights in the time of Christian IV. Niels Hemmingsen had put forward this princely obligation concerning witches in *Admonitio*. By granting the prince a divine title, the prince and magistrates had a divine duty to ensure and consolidate the true faith. This not only included but also singled out the prosecution of witches. Witches had renounced their faith and they were the extended arm of the Devil. Only by eradicating witches did the prince demonstrate the fulfilment of his role as “God’s lieutenant on earth”.<sup>38</sup> If the prince refused to fulfil this obligation, God would punish the entire society, casting on it disease, hunger or war.<sup>39</sup>

As part of the Lutheran jubilee, three regulations (*forordninger*) were issued on 12 October 1617. The theme of the regulations formed a clear statement from the Danish Lutheran Church: all three concerned the disciplining of one’s life and the behaviour of the individual. Respectively, they concerned witches (*troldefolk*) and those privy to them—a condemnation of excessive lavishness at funerals and weddings, and an order for persons of loose living to make public confessions.<sup>40</sup>

The regulation concerning witches and those privy to them (referred to in the following as “the 1617 regulation” or “the regulation”) was the first in a post-Reformation context to define the crime of witchcraft. The Zealand bishop Hans Poulsen Resen had probably prepared the theological argument, but, on several points, the regulation reflects Niels Hemmingsen’s discourse of decades earlier. The 1617 regulation can be divided into three topics: a legal definition of the crime of witchcraft, the fixing of the punishment and the principle of accusation, where it is underlined that the eradication of such persons was a collective obligation.<sup>41</sup>

In line with Palladius and Hemmingsen, the regulation ordered that not only should deal with the practitioners themselves, but also the popular traditions for turning to, in particular, cunning people. The element of witchcraft to which most attention is given is, not surprisingly, the beneficial element, referred to in the regulation as “secret arts”—a term we also find in Hemmingsen.<sup>42</sup> This covered such rituals as making the sign of the cross, conjuring and diagnosing bewitchment—rituals that were closely related to Catholic belief and practice. In fact, the title of an earlier version of the regulation was *Regulation Concerning Making the Sign of the Cross*.<sup>43</sup> Secret arts were an abuse of God’s words and were, naturally, forbidden. People



who practised these secret arts were to be banished and to leave behind their property. Their clients were to make a public confession and be punished according to their assets.

The other form of offence covered by the law concerns "true witches". They were witches who had entered into a pact with the Devil. It was clearly not absolutely necessary to describe their sin, of which there was hardly any doubt. They had entered into a pact with the Devil. The argument for sentencing such people was that they had forsworn their Christian faith and given themselves to the Devil. Compared with Hemmingsen's *En Undervising*, the idolatry and the false religion were implicit—no one could belong both to God and the Devil.<sup>44</sup>

Ultimately, the law underlined that all men in the service of the crown were obliged to initiate trials. This is significant for at least two reasons. First, since the princely obligation to eradicate witches became transferred to local authorities, if the prince was God's lieutenant on earth, then the vassal became his commissioned officer. Secondly, the provision is significant in relation to the standard procedures in trials for witchcraft. However, despite the law-ordered trials initiated from above, the overwhelming majority of trials held during the witch panic were initiated from below—usually by co-villagers, who had fallen victim to witchcraft. When priests and other men in the service of the crown initiated trials, it was likewise due to a fear of becoming a victim of witchcraft. This tradition persisted, at least when it came to malevolent magic.<sup>45</sup> However, when it came to prosecuting cunning people and people denounced by other witches, we can detect an increased effort by the vassals to initiate trials, and hereby conform to the law.

### *Dealing With Witchcraft in Practice: The Trials*

From the 1570s and up to 1617, a slight increase in the number of witchcraft trials can be detected. After 1617, however, the number of trials simply exploded and hundreds of people were prosecuted in the following five to six years. In this final section of the chapter, a more detailed look is taken at how trials for witchcraft were conducted and how the authorities reacted.

First, we will offer a brief introduction to some of the key elements of a witchcraft trial. When a person was accused, the initial stages of a trial took place at the court in the area in which the accused lived (*værneting*).<sup>46</sup> In the first half of the century, trials held in the lower courts continued to be accusatorial, but with inquisitorial elements. The role of the judge was to assess who had the best case. Normal procedure was for the accuser to present his allegations and to formally charge the suspect. In addition, a number of witnesses would testify as to the actual event that had led to the accusation. In cases where sentence was passed, it was often evident that the suspect had been unpopular in the local community long before the case had come to court, and thus several people could be expected to turn up to give accounts of suspicious episodes or threats of evil. The witch was seldom allowed to

speak, except to admit or deny her guilt. If she professed her innocence, this was done by an active defence, where others could refute the accusations made against her on her behalf, and/or by bringing witnesses to her good and honest reputation.<sup>47</sup> The parish priest would act only as a character witness and not as a consultant. In this sense, the crime of witchcraft was wrapped in strictly secular clothing.

The regulation of 1617 and prior laws do not clarify the method of assessment used to decide whether a witch was guilty. However, Danish sentences always included a justification of the verdict. At least two criteria should be met to be sentenced for being a true witch. Firstly, a threat had to be uttered, and secondly an unforeseen illness or accident had to have occurred.<sup>48</sup> The threat, usually something like "If only the Devil had you"—or a more vague utterance, such as "You shall not live for long"—was understood by the recipient as a curse. If, then, for example, a wheel fell off one's carriage and one's coachman was hurt, the connection was obvious to all villagers. To validate a story, the accuser had to present witnesses to the court. If no causality between evil words and accident or illness was brought forward, a guilty verdict would not be pronounced. Other evidence of guilt might include a suspect's attempt to flee the village or escape prison, or that the suspect had committed suicide. However, this was not usually the sole evidence presented. In addition, the court made use of a number of forms of circumstantial evidence. If one had been rumoured to be a witch in the local community or was denounced by other witches, despite not previously being in the public eye, judges were more likely to pass a guilty verdict.

In Danish trials, a great effort was made to adhere to the correct procedures. This is evident in both the trials and references to the law.<sup>49</sup> How does the dramatic increase in the number of trials fit with this? In this final section, I will suggest some explanations based on some initial results from a survey of the Danish nobility and witchcraft. How did we move from the mild winds of the sixteenth century to the witch panic of the years around 1617? It will be argued that we need to pay more attention to the consolidation of the Lutheran ideology in the first decades of the seventeenth century, alongside the ideal of the Lutheran prince and the Lutheran state as household.<sup>50</sup> To do so, we need to take a closer look at the local administration and the handling of witchcraft trials; an obvious starting point seems to be the king's vassals.

### Vassals and Witch Trials

In Denmark, the majority of vassals were members of the higher nobility and some of them had been well educated at European universities. The king often rewarded a vassal with the fief for faithful service in war, politics and/or national administration. A vassal was, basically, an estate owner (*godsejer*) and the king's representative in the fief. He was, therefore, obliged to communicate new laws and to initiate trials against criminal offenders.

An initial survey of the cases from Eastern Jutland have proven how vassals did indeed take their "divine duty" to prosecute witches seriously, not least in initiating trials against cunning folk and to prosecute individuals who had been denounced by convicted witches.<sup>51</sup>

### *Fear of the Evil Woman*

The wave of trials in Eastern Jutland began with the case of Karen Føutin from Djursland, or at least, this is the earliest identifiable trial.<sup>52</sup> The vassal, Jørgen Skeel, brought the case to court in early spring 1617—in fact before the law against witches had even been issued.<sup>53</sup> Karen Føutin fitted the popular narrative of witches, who were feared for their anger, vengefulness and wickedness. Nordic folklore was filled with evil people—women in particular.<sup>54</sup> They controlled evil and cast it at their enemies; to villagers this meant that evil people were able to give as well as take fortune and health—and the victims could be both people and livestock. From court records, we can see that Karen Føutin was a woman of poor reputation, known for her witchcraft and who was claimed to have been "drinking from the Devil's blood and he drank hers". In her confession, she gave up the names of two other women who were also reputed to be witches. The vassal did not hesitate to have his bailiff initiate cases against the two denounced women. One of them was Bodil Ibsdatter Hoffuens.

In court, numerous witnesses soon showed up to testify against Bodil Hoffuens.<sup>55</sup> A male villager was the one to formally charge her with bewitching his cows. However, 50 people confirmed that Bodil Hoffuens was the "sharpest witch (*troldekvinde*) one could find in the land of Jutland".<sup>56</sup> She was, indeed, a potential suspect. The trial includes many testimonies of Bodil being able to control supernatural powers. Many were about diagnosing and curing bewitchments, and that people had paid her to do so. Some of the testimonies also reflect the fact that people believed Bodil could harm people with evil powers. One man accused Bodil of bewitching his wife. The wife had gone "mad and threatening", and had stabbed herself with a knife, almost killing herself. After this, the wife had run off. Apparently, at some point, the wife had come to her senses and returned, because in court, she confirmed having been "depraved and badly injured"<sup>57</sup> due to Bodil's witchcraft.

The case against Bodil demonstrates the ambiguous perception of the cunning folk brought to trial. A few of the witnesses testified in court about various incidents in which Bodil had cured them—or their livestock—of the effects of witchcraft. It was more ambiguous when Rasmus Jensen's cows had stopped producing milk. He sent for Bodil, who promised to cure them if he would give her some linen. Bodil had then warned Rasmus Jensen, saying that if he did not pay her, she would make sure that he would lose his milk again. He had then sent off his servant boy "by horse", showing that he was not prepared to take this risk and hurried to pay her.

A close reading of the testimonies against Bodil Hoffuens prove, not surprisingly, that witnesses emphasised the evil and harm she had caused. Villagers feared her ill will but, more generally, they feared “the evil will of evil people”. In general, the focus in Danish trials was on the threat to the livelihood of other villagers.<sup>58</sup> The testimonies against cunning folk, or witches, as they were consequently referred to when on trial, reflect how they before the trial had played along with the fear that they caused. Being feared provided them with a certain status in local society, and in the trial, witnesses would testify to episodes in which the suspect had fed the fear.

At this time, if a woman wanted to present a defence in court, she needed a legal guardian to do so on her behalf. For a woman accused of witchcraft, this was often difficult. In Bodil’s case, her husband had run off the minute his wife was arrested—he, too, was later convicted of witchcraft.<sup>59</sup> This lack of defence was contrasted by witnesses emphasising their own trust in God—often with the phrase such as “God only knows”—and was reinforced by stressing the fear that witches spread, and that the witches had been unreasonable and demanding, for instance by acting with pride or demanding material favours, when their cures were needed.

### *Torture, Confession and Execution of a Witch*

Since 1547, Danish Law had ordered that no person was to be tortured before a guilty verdict had been pronounced. As a consequence, when a witch was sent to the torture chamber, her fate had already been sealed: she was to be burnt alive at the stake. In torturing a convicted witch, interrogators had a threefold agenda: First, the witch was to confess to when, where and in the company of whom she had renounced God and her Christian baptism and given herself to the Devil. Second, she had to give the names of fellow witches. And, third, the witch was to confess to all of her malevolent deeds. This third element was basically a repetition of the accusations posed against her and the witch’s admittance to having harmed co-villagers out of evil will and vengeance. Usually, the witch would give up at least two or three names—often people of ill-repute from nearby parishes, or others who were chosen totally at random, and sometimes—though more rarely—family members.

The witch herself probably only had one agenda, which was to lessen her suffering as much as possible—and for good reason. Many did not survive the trial, either due to bad conditions in prison or on account of suicide, but also due to the brutality of the torture. Usually, torture would consist of screws inserted into the legs or thumbs or stretching. They gave up names they thought the interrogators wanted to hear, only to withdraw their denunciation just before being burned at the stake. For instance, Bodil gave up the name of a woman whom she did not know and later withdrew this denunciation.<sup>60</sup>

Executions were public events and the venue of the execution is noteworthy. On receiving her final sentence in Viborg, a substantial distance of about 70 km from her own village, Bodil was sent back to her home parish to be executed at a nearby gallows hill. Sometimes, executions were carried out on the day of a convict's return. The execution served the purpose of demonstrating justice in action and as a warning to the local community. In Denmark, witches were not strangled prior to being burned; they were burnt alive. Prior to being pushed onto the stake, the confession of the witch was read aloud to the people, who had crowded at the gallows hill, and a clergyman asked her if she was penitent. If so, she was offered absolution. In the torture chamber, the witches confessed to shorten the torture. The interrogators were the only ones to hear her confession, and questioned her according to a standard formula. Now, in front of a large audience, the confession was read aloud to those who knew and feared her and to those who had accused her. The local community was witness to a penitent witch admitting to having given herself to the Devil and having collaborated with other witches to harm her neighbours. The setting had changed: from a closed, almost private room to the public sphere in which the audience were the ones who had originally accused—and feared—the witch.<sup>61</sup> The offence was presented according to the law; she was a true witch—i.e. she had entered a pact with the Devil—followed by a summary of what justified the ruling.

In other words, the offence committed by the delinquent was laid out, and the severe penalty justice was shown to be done. Unfortunately, we cannot climb into the heads of early modern villagers and ask about the impact of these words. The witches' confessions were structured according to the law on witchcraft. They had forsaken God and entered a pact with the Devil. As the audience knew all too well, a witch could harm her neighbours, and by executing her, the authorities—represented by the vassal—confirmed and legitimised a popular fear of evil people. Hereby, ideas and narratives about witches must have been transmitted, repeated and sometimes reinforced or diluted, and this helps explain the circulation of narratives about regional varieties of witchcraft and why the narrative of the witch as an evil woman harming her neighbours persisted.

## Conclusion

Compared to the heartlands of the Reformation, in Denmark prosecutions for witchcraft peaked late. Prior to that peak, there was a process of constructing witchcraft as a criminal offence. I have argued that this process took off in the second half of the sixteenth century, and that the final decades of the century were the crucial years. The Reformation led to the complete transfer of the jurisdiction for the offence to secular courts, officiated by secular judges. However, witchcraft was a complicated offence; not only did

it cause harm, but there were also religious complications, because it was considered to be a grave offence against God. To many continental jurists of the period, it was regarded as a *crimen exceptum*, which justified overruling ordinary legal procedures and the rights of the defendant. However, Danish laws of the sixteenth century tightened procedures to the benefit of the suspect. This indicates, to some extent, that the Danish authorities kept their distance from the continental definition of witchcraft and from Roman law.

In the sixteenth century, the mutual enemy was the confessional opponent, Catholicism. Instructions, admonitions and condemnations of witchcraft were multiple in contemporary texts, but should not be read as incitements to hunt witches. Learned individuals were simply expressing a general discourse on one's confessional opponents. However, by speaking of witchcraft, one spoke of evil powers and the Devil, and the effect of the articulation of these words should not be underestimated. Popular tales of evil women interacting with the Devil were common, and the reality of a diabolical conspiracy lurking in the dark was confirmed, when the royal fleet in 1589 was believed to be the target of evil people.

The regulation of 1617 implied a dramatic change in attitude towards witchcraft. Instead of securing the rights of the defendant, it explicitly promoted trials against witches. Besides its strict prohibition against all kinds of magical rituals—both benevolent and malevolent—the placement of responsibility on all men in the service of the crown to eradicate witches was a strong signal that the religious environment of the kingdom had changed. The king was clearly a Lutheran prince, the master of the household, who had a divine duty to eradicate witches in order to protect the kingdom from God's wrath.

From 1622, the witch panic eased off and, during the rest of the century, witchcraft prosecutions appeared only from time to time, in clusters in various parts of Jutland.<sup>62</sup> At the turn of the century, a new wave of trials can be detected. In the 1680s, several cases were brought to court in Jutland, among other cases filed by nobleman Jørgen Arenfeldt of Rugård. The last witchcraft trials in Denmark took place in 1696–1698, when a series of cases on demonic possession and witchcraft were brought to court. The trials had started in North-Western Jutland and involved several members of the church—including the bishop of Aalborg—who tried to cast out the demons and ended up causing great controversy. Eventually, the accusations of witchcraft were reversed and both the so-called victims and their accusers were convicted of fraud. After this date, no further guilty verdict of witchcraft was passed in the kingdom.<sup>63</sup>

## Notes

1 Kors and Peters (2001), p. 291.

2 In the middle ages, the category included counterfeiting, treason and some forms of homicide, as well as religious and moral offences, such as heresy and incest. See also Peters (2006), p. 233.

- 3 Kieckhefer (1976) remains the groundbreaking monograph. Essential reading on the European witch hunt also includes Levack (1987/2006), Behringer (2004), Waite (2003) and, most recently, Goodare (2016).
- 4 Peters (2006), p. 233.
- 5 Laws passed in 1547 and 1576. See Kallestrup (2015), pp. 39, 41.
- 6 Johansen (1991).
- 7 Wittendorff (1992), Henningsen (1980), Henningsen (1991) and Henningsen (1992).
- 8 See also chapter three of this volume by Krogh as well as Krogh (2000).
- 9 Most recently Waite (2013).
- 10 At this point in time Lutheranism was dominant in states in northern Germany, Sweden and the Baltics.
- 11 First generation reformers generally did not refer to themselves as Lutheran; instead, they applied the term Evangelical.
- 12 Clark (1997), p. 527, Cameron (2010), p. 144.
- 13 Sendebud til alle provster og præster, Tausen, Småskrifter, pp. 242–50.
- 14 Translated and published by Schwarz Lausten (Palladius 2003), hereafter *En visitatsbog*.
- 15 Kallestrup (2017), 240f.
- 16 *En visitatsbog*, p. 118, my underlining. A bit further in the text, Palladius presents an example of one of the conjurations taught to the witch by monks. These words are a warped version of a paragraph from the Book of John, n180.
- 17 Palladius refer to witches caught and burned in Malmø (then Danish), Køge and other Danish towns and that once again "several have been imprisoned". However, this cannot be documented by additional sources. These exaggerations serve as rhetorical tricks to communicate a message that no witch should feel safe, Kallestrup (2015), pp. 36–9.
- 18 Clark (1997), p. 534.
- 19 Ibid, p. 339.
- 20 Ibid, p. 340, Cameron (2010), p. 168f.
- 21 Whereas Peder Palladius had studied with Luther, Niels Hemmingsen was influenced by Melancthon and represented a humanist branch of Protestantism. Key works on European demonology are Clark (1997) and Cameron (2010). Unfortunately, we still lack thorough studies of the two important Danish demonologists Jesper Brochmand (dead 1652) and Niels Hemmingsen, although an important Danish general biography on Hemmingsen was published in 2013 by Martin Schwarz Lausten.
- 22 *En visitatsbog*, p. 118.
- 23 Kallestrup (2015), pp. 241–6, Clark (1997), p. 467.
- 24 Fortalen til En Undervisning af Den Hellige Skrift, hvad mand dømme skal om den store oc gruelige Gudspespottelse som skeer med Troldom Sinelse Manelse oc anden saadan Guds hellige Naffns oc Ords vanbrug. Transl. by Rasmus Reravius, c. 1570–1574. See also Kallestrup (2015), pp. 43–8.
- 25 Two editions of *Broder Russe* are preserved at the Danish Royal Library, one from 1555 and the other from 1578; see editions and full title at <http://eeb.chadwyck.co.uk/home.do> (as seen 24.10.2016). On popular texts in general, see Horstbøll (1999), on Adser Bonde & Peder Smed especially p. 488f.
- 26 (1581) in English *New Tidings/About Two Jesuits*. <http://eeb.chadwyck.co.uk/home.do> (as seen 05.11.2016).
- 27 First published in Köln and in Copenhagen by Laurents Benedicht, unpagged. Hereafter *A true and horrible story*. In the second half of the sixteenth century, it seems that there were only two to three publishers in the kingdom. For a period of time, Benedicht had the monopoly on publishing books, Bricka (1887–1905),

34 Louise Nyholm Kallestrup

vol. II, p. 59f, web edition at <http://runeberg.org/dbl/2/0062.html> (as seen 24.10.2016).

28 *rådgiver* according to the contemporary use of the phrase.

29 Behringer (2004), p. 97.

30 A True and Horrible Story, 1591.

31 Ibid.

32 The events of 1589–1590 are part of my current research project on emotions and the construction of witchcraft in Denmark, and a thorough investigation of the cases and their context can be found in my forthcoming monograph. The trials are only preserved in fragments and the most comprehensive study of the trials is still the somewhat dated work of Bering-Liisbjerg (1909). As everyone familiar with Scottish history knows, after his return to Scotland James VI launched a massive witch-hunt against what he believed to be the Scottish branch of this diabolical conspiracy. See Normand and Roberts (2000).

33 The confessions of Karen Weffuers (Karen Weaver's), Maren Matts Bryggers & Maren Mogensis, 13–16 July 1590, Rigsarkivet Kongens Retterting, Diverse sager og retsakter, 1590–1614.

34 Hagen (2015), pp. 73–84, esp. 83; see also Hagen (2005), pp. 4–15.

35 The concept was originally introduced by Schilling in 1981; see also Schilling (1992); and developed further in—e.g., Kauffmann (2006).

36 See also Chapters 4 by Koefoed and 3 by Krogh in this volume.

37 Ingesman (2006), p. 143.

38 Clark (1997), p. 567.

39 Ibid. See also Kallestrup (2015), p. 44.

40 Rørdam (1886), pp. 59–63.

41 Kallestrup (2011), pp. 163ff.

42 En Undervisning, p. 36.

43 Rigsarkivet, Danske kancelli, *Sjællandske Tegnelse*, vol. 21, fol. 258v–259v, via Henningsen (1992), p. 138.

44 Hemmingsen's precise definition was that "All the testimonies in Holy Scripture that condemn idolatry also condemn witchcraft and sorcery", *En Undervisning*, p. 47.

45 For a discussion of the clergy and bishops in trials for witchcraft, see Kallestrup (2011), esp. pp. 178ff.

46 In Denmark 90 percent of the persons accused of witchcraft were women and I will refer to the suspects, accused and sentenced as female unless a case explicitly involves a male suspect.

47 Kallestrup (2015), pp. 139–41.

48 Ibid, s. 57f.

49 Kallestrup (2011), pp. 169.

50 See Walker (2003), esp. pp. 9–13.

51 Eastern Jutland is interesting for several reasons. It was one of two regions with the most intense prosecution for witchcraft in Denmark. In 1617, the vassals of the fiefs Mariager, Skanderborghus and Kalø were members of the few families of the higher nobility who, for generations, had been part of the power elite of the kingdom and closely linked to King Christian IV. Eske Bille of Mariager and Lauritz Ebbesen of Skanderborghus (Åkjær & Hads) were both personal favourites of the king. Jørgen Skeel of Kalø was a leading figure in national politics and *rigsmarsk* (marshal, head of the army).

52 National Archive in Viborg (*Rigsarkivet*), Viborg Landstings Dombøger, B, 1617, fol. 78v–85r. Karen Føutin was tried in the early spring of 1617. Some court records have been lost, and there might have been trials prior to the one against Karen Føutin. In her confession, Karen refers to a man from Ebeltøft "who was eventually burned".



- 53 Noble men were very much familiar with the condemnation of all kinds of witchcraft. In my view, the cases from Eastern Jutland supports the notion that the witch panic in Denmark was not caused by the law, but by attitudes that had been grown over time as the Lutheran orthodoxy grew stronger.
- 54 Mitchell (2011), esp. ch. 6.
- 55 Rigsarkivet, Viborg Landsting, Dombøger, B, 1617, fol. 205v–219r.
- 56 Rigsarkivet, Viborg Landsting, Dombøger, B, 1617, fol. 206r.
- 57 Rigsarkivet, Viborg Landsting, Dombøger, B, 1617, fol. 210v.
- 58 See the Appendix in Johansen (1991), p. 202ff.
- 59 Rigsarkivet, Viborg Landsting, Dombøger, B, 1617, fols. 362v–374r.
- 60 Maren Justdatter from Aarhus. Rigsarkivet, Viborg Landsting, Dombøger, B, 1617, fols. 297f.
- 61 There is no evidence in the protocol about this aspect of the legal action. However, it was common practice when executing a delinquent for a criminal offence to read aloud the offence, if the delinquent confessed, and to refer to the law. In other trials for witchcraft, witnesses refer to a confession being read out aloud before a given execution. In the trial against Paaske Rasmussen, a cunning man from Western Jutland convicted of witchcraft in 1618, two witnesses refer to the fact that they had witnessed an execution and that they had listened to the confession of the witch being read aloud just before the convicted witch was pushed into the flames. The trial of Paaske Rasmussen, Rigsarkivet, Viborg Landsting, Dombøger C, 1618, fols. 163r–174v; the trial is discussed in Kallestrup (2015), pp. 123f.
- 62 However, these estimates are tentative, because there are lacunae in the court records.
- 63 For these final trials, see also chapter three by Krogh.

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Anonymous, *Adser Bonde & Peder Smed*, full title *I Denne Lille Bog Lærer oc vnderuiser Peder smid oc Atzer bonde, huad hand skal holde oc tro aff siele Messer, Siele gaffuer, Vigilies, Psaltere at læse, Skersild, Schrifftemaal, hellige Dage, Kiød at æde, om Tiende, plict oc bod, Faste, Afflad, Afflads breff, Pillegrims reyse, band, Vituand, viede Liuss, vit Salt, oc vide Palmer, om Prester, Om Munckernis bedregeri, Om Sacramenterne, oc anden saadan Vildfarelse, som haffuer verit brugit i Paffuens Kircke i mange Aar.*

Anonymous, *Ny Tiender, om tho Jesuwiter, huorledis den Ene tog en Dieffuels Ham paa, oc vilde forføre it euangelisk Meniske fra sin Tro, . . . den Anden . . . tog sig faare at ville opreyse de Døde . . . Nu nylige Vdsat aff Tydske paa Danske 1581.*

Anonymous, *En forskreckelig oc sand bescriffuelse, om mange Troldfolck: som ere forbrende for deris Misgierninger skyld, fra det Aar 1589 regnendis: oc huad deris vdtretning oc bekendelse haffuer været, desligeste om en Troldkarl ved naffn stumme Peder etc., fyrst tryckt vdi Colne oc nu vdi Kiøbenhaffn 1591.*

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HISTORISK INSTITUT  
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*J. C. Jacobsen*

# Christenze Kruckow

En adelig Troldkvinde fra Chr. IV's Tid

*Och att ieg bliffuer spidalsk som Naman  
wor, och forbandet som Judas, om thet  
er icke obenbare luther lögenn som er  
skriffuen om mig.*

*Christenze 1597*

KØBENHAVN

G·E·C GADS FORLAG

1972

haar huos desligiste aff jomfrue Christennzis haar, Oussis Johanne Knusis, Gunder Kieldersuennds och aff hinndis egenn haar eblannt, och samme kaars och haar vor suøbt vdi papir och enn sort thraa (d.v.s. Traad) vdenn omkrinngh och lod jomfrue Christennze Axelsdater giøre dem huos Thomis smeed som thienet her paa gaardenn; bekiennde hunn at hunn haffuer kund samme throidom sidenn the offeride (d.v.s. ofrede) vdi Aastrup kiercke meth woxbarnidt, och om enn fredag sate jomfrue Christennze Axelsdater, Ousse, Johanne Quasis (Kousis), Gunnder Kieldersuennds och hunn voxbarnid need i frue Annis stoell i kierckenn, och her Matzs sognnprest vor meth thennom.

Bekiennde hunn at hunn vell aff veste att jomfrue Christennze kom thennd æderkop i thet mielch thill frue Anne och ther hunn iche ville ædde der aff slog jomfrue Christennze det bort, saa kom diefflenn och thog det.

Bekiennde Johanne Jennses att naar de alle er brennd som haffuer veridt meth at forgiøre frue Anne, da schulle hun fannge sinn helbreed igienn, och jomfrue Christennze haffuer nu ingenn vider magt meth thennd gode frue hinndis konnst er røpt meth hinder. Bekiende hunn videre att alt huis throidom som de haffuer brugt emod frue Anne Bille der haffuer jomfrue Christennze Axelsdater altid verid i rod och gierninger meth thennom det bad hunn sig saa sannt Gud thill hielp och ville døe ther paa.\*

*B. Sagerne fra 1612.*

*1. Maren Nielsdatter Kneps Sag.*

Er anført efter Dokumenter og Akter vedrørende diverse Retssager nr. 84, pag. 25 ff., og er saalydende:

»Jffuer Iuell till Willestrup, Enuold Kruse till Vingigaard lanndzdomer vdi Nøriuttlanndt och Gunde schriffuer lanndztingshører<sup>32</sup> ibidem giøre vitterlig att aar effter Gudz biurd MDCXII den 15. februarij paa Viburig lanndzting var skickett erlig och forstanndig mannd Kuortt Andersøn, byefougett vdi Olborig paa den enne och hagde hid i rettesteffnid X:stin (d.v.s. Christen) Pouilsønn Søren bad-

32. Se om denne Stilling, Poul Jhs. Jørgensen, Dansk Retshistorie, S. 506. Herefter var den Paagældende en til Tinget knyttet underordnet Embedsmand, der under Landsdommers Forfald fungerede som dennes Stedfortræder, og som i Regelen tillige beklædte Embedet som Landstings skriver.

skier X:stin Lauritzønn Pouill snedicker och dieris medbrøder kierckneffninger vdj Olborig paa den andin side, for dj haffuer suorett Maren Nielsdater Knep dersamestedz kierckneffning offuer <sup>33</sup> for troldomssag, som hun er beskyldt och berøgtett fore, epther hindis egen bekiennelse, som hand formenner, och epther vindisbiurds luidelse, som vinderne der om vider formeller, huilcken dieris æd och toug for:ne Kuortt Andersønn forminner loughlig och rett att uere suoren och att den bør ved magt att bliffue. Disligiste hagde hid steffnid for:ne kierckneffninger med same dieris æd, saa och for:ne Marin Nielsdater Knep och hindis hosbund Niels Lauritzønn induoner i Olborig med huis breffue beuiss och vnndskylding hun vdj den sag niude och vnndgielde vill och framlagde for:ne Kuortt Anndersønn enn thingsvinde effter neffningers æd vdgangen aff Olborig byeting den 27. januarij sist forleden som innholder for:ne Kuortt Anndersønn da for neffninger att haffue framlagt ett raadhusvinde aff Olborig raadhus, sist forgangen aar den 20. decembris vdgangen, Peder Pouilsønn i Kackuad borger i Olborig, da for retten ved sin siell salighied med opragt finger att haffue vonndett och kundgiortt, att da paa thorsdag forgangen otte dage sist forleden den 12. decembrig som St: Lucie afften paafald, der klokken var sex da kamb hannd til Niels Lauritzøns dør i Kackuad att uill bere hannom X  $\text{skilling}$  (d.v.s. Skilling) hand var hannom skyldig for hand var paa vagt for hannom enn natt tilforne, och klapett paa hanns dør, da vill der ingen suar hannom, dog hannd saae liuss brende paa vinduerne, saa gick hannd til vinduerne och saae ind ad en rude som var vde, da var der IX eller 10 quinder forsamblett och for:ne Niels Lauritzønns høstrue Marin Nielsdater Knep kom vdaff en kamer med en liuss i hindis haand, saa fick same quinder fatt paa hende och lagde hinde paa jorden

33. Ved Behandlingen af Trolddomssager var Fremgangsmaaden i Jyske Lov 3-69 henskudt til Kirkenævninge, der efter denne Lov formentlig har skullet udpeges af Anklagede og derefter under Ansvar har skullet sværge om den Paagældendes Skyld. I nærværende Periode synes dog Nævningene altid at være udnævnt af Retten, d.v.s. af Herredsfoged, Birkedommer ell. Byfoged. Nævnets Afgørelse er, jvf. Reces af 31. Marts 1615 Art. 17, truffet ved Stemme flerhed. Nævnets Kendelse skulle normalt efterfølges af en Dom af vedkommende Underdommer, og hvis den gik ud paa Dødsdom i en Trolddomssag, skulle den indbringes for Landsting, inden Execution maatte finde Sted, jvf. ovenfor S. 26 Note 22 om den kalundborgske Reces af 21. Nov. 1576 Art. 8. Undertiden er dog selve Nævningekendelsen indbragt for Landstinget, hvorved Underdommeren unddrog sig sit personlige Ansvar, hvis Kendelsen der blev underkendt, jvf. J. C. Jacobsen, S. 165-66 og S. 187-88.

och drog en tingiste fra hende i skickelse som et barnn och hanndlett saa skamelig med hinde, att dett er skamb dett att vdsige, saa roptte hannd ind ad ruden och sagde til for:ne Maren, nu kannd ieg see dett er sandt folck haffuer sagt om dig, att du haffuer rippet thet omkring fra enn sted till en annden for din vanrøgt och skalckhied skyld; och sagde til quinderne effterdj i er saa mange quinnder tilsamen och gjør dieffuilschab da schall ieg nu flye nogen karle till eder. Saa gick hand til borgemester Niels schriffuer och gaff hannom och Kuortt Anndersønn dett tilkiennde. Karen Nielsdater som var huos for:ne Maren Nielsdater Knep och da att haffue bekiennnd ved hindis siell salighied med opragt finger att same for:ne Luciz afften kom der 9 eller 10 quinder ind till for:ne Niels Lauritzøn och Mette Pedersdater Per murmesters dater i Kackuad var med dennom, och som de forsamlet dennom i stoffuen da skiød Marin Nielsdater Knep hinde vdad døren och bad hinde gaa hen och maage vnnder koen. Siden saae hun igiemell en liden huoll paa døren och saae en konne laae paa en diønne paa gulffuit och fick itt barnn, och der de fornamb att hun saae ind ad huollet, stopett dj dett till med en klud. For:ne Karin Nielsdater da for retten ydermiere att haffue bekiend, att for:ne Marin Nielsdater Knep haffde en stuor riss legendis i hindis kiste, med huilcken hun thitt och offte hudstrøg en liden suortt kumpen och hannd skreg ilde, men aldrig hun sloug hinde med same riss vden med den stuore ende. Sameledis for:ne Karin Nielsdater att haffue bekiendd att for:ne Peder murmesters dater Mette Pedersdater haffde nogen natter liget inde i sengen huos for:ne Maren Nielsdater Kneppis; for:ne Mette Pedersdater, Peder murmesters dater och da der for retten ledig och løss vtiltungen ved hindis siell sallighied med opragt finger att haffue bekiennnd, att hun var inde till for:ne Marin Nielsdater Kneppis for:ne Luciz afften, da var der 10 quinder forsamlet och haffde en lanng suort tingist emellom dennom i en dieffle lige, och for:ne Marin Kneppis stod med den i hindis arm, saa kom Peder Pouilsønn och robtte inn att ruden paa vinduett til dennom och sagde huad vill i med dett dieffleskab i haffuer emellom jer; saa forstack de dett vnnder sengen i stuen. Ithem for:ne Mette Persdater att haffue bekiennnd att hun haffuer ligett nogin natter i seng huos for:ne Maren Nielsdater Knep och den første natt hun laae huos hinde, da kom den onde der ind och splitte nogin quister ad och sled dennom omkring i stuen, huor aff hun bleff forferdett, da bad for:ne Marin hinder thie stille, hun skull inthet bliffue ad skade. For:ne raadhuusvinde vider att haffue med førd for:ne Marin Nielsdater Kneppis da att

haffue stanneddett siellff personlig for retten ledig och l  ss och sagt hun var da moen nock, dett var best att lade hinde ickon kome henn. Der-nest for:ne Kuortt Anders  nn for neffninger att haffue framlagt ett tingsvinde aff Olborig byeting den 13. januarij sist forleden vdgiffuid som medf  r for:ne Kuortt Anders  nn der da att haffue tilspuortt for:ne Per Pouils  nn, Karin Nielsdater och Mette Peders dater, om de och da der for retten vill vere same dieris vinder, som da bleff lest bestendig, och den ved dieris   d bekreffte, der till for:ne Peder Pouils  nn da f  rst att haffue suarett och suorett ved sin salighied med opragt finger, att dett vinde som hannd paa Olborig raadhuus vonditt haffuer som forschreffuit staar, var i alle mader (maader) Gudz sanndhied, och hannd vill vere dett vdj alle maade bestendig der eller huor behoff gi  ris, och der paa der for retten lagde for:ne Peder Pouils  nn hanns haand paa for:ne Marin Nielsdater Kneppis hoffuid<sup>34</sup> och sagett hinder for troldoms gierninger epther for:ne raadhusvindis liudelse och beskylder och vedkiennendis hende for en vitterlig troldkone, och bad sig saa sannt Gud hielpe vdj lige made for:ne Karin Nielsdater och Mette Pedersdater da att haffue suarett och suorett en huer ved sin salighied med opragt finger att det vdj alle mader saa til gick som for:ne raadhusvinde som da bleff oplest vdj sig siellff formelder; for:ne Mette Pedersdater da der for tingsdom ydermiere ved sin siell salighied med opragt finger ledig och less vtiltungen i alle made att haffue bekiennnd som eptherf  lger; att vnng Anders guldsמידs h  strue Apelone Jbsdater haffde ladett berede et voxbarnn til att uille lade forg  re Hanns Felthussis konne Marin J  rgensdater der med, och same voxbarnn haffde for:ne Maren Kneppis anttuordett for:ne Mette Pedersdater adt bere, och hun bar dett vnder hindis venster arm i en liden leerposse (d.v.s. L  derpose) i 20 vgger til St. Lucie afften, hun anttuordett dett fra sig i for:ne Marin Kneppis huuss och var for:ne Apelonni Jbsdater da siellff personnigen til stede i for:ne Marin Kneppis hus i hindis stue om afften klokken ved vij (7), disligeste Giertrud vogenkarls, Hanns hiulmandz h  strue Margrete, Tamis kone i Hadtzeriss Maren och en anden kone aff Hadtzeriss ved naffn Else, disligeste en kone som haffde hiemb s  nnder paa, och var der enda iij andre quinder h  ss som hun icke kiennde, och da same tid holtte for:ne Mette Pedersdater same barnn den stund for:ne Marin Kneppis d  btte dett vdj for:ne quinders neruerelse och kalte den Marin. Strax epther den var d  btt gick Marin

34. Se ovenfor S. 11, Note 15.



Kneppis i hindis kamer och vdhendte den onde som var en liden slemb och sort tingist med nogin gloende øigen och sled hannom med rissen, och den skreg och sagde du far ilde med mig, saa satte hannd ild vdj thaaen, saa robtte Peder Pouilsønn ind till dennom och sagde holder nu op med eders dieffuilskab. Da sagde for:ne quinder nu ere vi alle slemeligen forraad, saa slugte Marin ilden och stack barnid vnnder sengen, och quinderne fore vdaff døren. Ithem for:ne Mette Pedersdater och att haffue bekiennnd, att for:ne Marin Kneppis mand Niels Lauritzønn laae sielff vogen i sengen och hoste, der quinderne var der inde; i lige made for:ne Mette Pedersdater och att haffue bekiend att for:ne Marin Kneppis loffuid hende fløyell till en lue for hun schull bere barnid. Ithem och att haffue bekiennnd att hun den vij søndag for juell sist forleden var til Gudz bord i Vor Frue kiercke och haffde dett vox-barnn vnnder hindis venster arm, som Marin Kneppis anttuorde hinde och hun til Luciae afften haffde baaret i xx vgger, som for er rørtt, dernest och for:ne Mette Pedersdater att haffue bekiennnd, att for:ne Marin Kneppis haffde holtit hinde faare, att hun paa julenatt skulle blesse threj ganng ind ad nøgelhollitt paa kierckedøren och forsuer Vor Herre, saa schulle hun vide allt huad hun vilde och inthet bliffue ad skade. Sameledis for:ne Mette Pedersdater och att haffue bekiennnd, att for:ne Marin Kneppis kiernid huer ottinddags dag epther en koe och kunde hun vell faa ett pund smør huer gang epther huer kjerne och om vintteren malckett den tuinde gange om dagen och huer gang vij potter melck. Ydermir medfør same vinde dett for:ne Marin Nielsdater Knep da att haffue standett ledig och løss der for retten och sagt til for:ne Mette Pedersdater, att hun var saa guod i troldoms konst som hun var, och att Mette Pedersdaters moder Marin Jensdater er en troldkone, och hun ville lige (d.v.s. lægge) hindis haand paa hindis hoffuid och beskyalde hinde derfaare. Som the vinder vdj neffningers æd inddragen er i dennom sielffuer vider bemeller, inndholder och same neffningers æd Søren Andersen, Lauritz Suenningsønn, X:stin (Christen) Matzønn, X:stin bøtke, Morten Simensønn och Peder Pedersønn stadztienner och borger i Olborig der den dag førind for:ne neffninger gjorde dieris æd ved dieris siell salighied med opragt finger att haffue vonndet och kundgiortt, att dj thisdagen den 14. januarij sist forleden var vdj Peder murmesters huuss i Kackuad, der Marin Nielsdater Knep kom der ind epther hindis begiering att uille thale med for:ne Peder murmesters høstrue Marin Jensdater hindis grand kone, och da laa for:ne Marin Jensdater murmesters paa hindis seng och da same tid hørde de att

for:ne Maren Nielsdatter Knepe sagde til for:ne Marin Jensdatter muresters disse eptherfølgende ord: du leger her paa dienne och ble och ieg skall side i stock och jerin, du buorde vell att side huos mig du est en vere och ariger troldkone ennd ieg er, dett diefflen thage dig, huor er nu den gryde som du sette her neder i din guoll vnnder din veff for ij aar siden, da ieg kom her ind til dig, som var katthaar, suindhaar, fæhaar adskiellige slaugs fieder, adskiellige slaugs benne och folckbeene och hoffuid beene vdj<sup>35</sup>, widst du ochsaa att du gick i Palli Fasumsøns nødz (d.v.s. Kvægstald) och malckett hanns kiør, och gick til min kielde och kiernid dett, da fick du thou fieringer smør du bar i din huss, du haffuer och malckett min koe och kiernid i min kielde, dett diefflen thag dig, du sleme troldkone, inthett vden flije wed och tørfue til hinder hund kannnd kome paa, hun haffuer dett vell fortiennt, och sagde ydemiere huor er din mand Peder skald; komer du ihue att enn tid ieg fannd dig ved min kielde, da tog hand dig och kaste dig offuer din huss och gick paa sønder side och thog emod dig igienn, der du kom offuer hussen, varst du icke støre end en katt. Komer du icke ochsaa ihue att dett er icke ret lenge siden du laa i min kielde nøgen paa din røg och bade dig, och din datter stod med din kobe och kaste offuer dig, du vist vell huor for du gjorde dett, du vist ochsaa vell huad du est for en; for:ne Marin Nielsdatter Knepe sielff personligen der for retten ledig och løss att haffue staaed och var disse for:ne ord vdj alle mode bestendig som for:ne vindisfolck om vondett haffuer och ennda for retten sagde for:ne Marin Nielsdatter Knepe att for:ne Marin Jensdatter muresters er en vitterlig troldkone, och att hun haffde forgiortt hinde; och da for:ne Marin Nielsdatter Knepis hosbund Niels Lauritzønn att haffue framlagt et vinde aff Obye sogen vdgiffuid liudendis som effterfølger. Lauritz Justezen, prest i Obye och Biersted sogner, Jens Sørinønn och Michell Lauritzønn i Aastrup, Michell Mortensønn och Christen Nielsønn i Abilgaard, Tamis Lauritzønn, Anders Lauritzønn, Christen Matzønn alle i Fristrup kiennendis och gjør vitterlig med dette vort obne breff, att vi saae och hørde Peder Lauritzønn i Fristrup stod her i Obye kiercke den 4. atuent søndag anno 1611 paa Niels Lauritzønns vegne i Olborg som for 3 aar siden fløtte her fra sognid, var begierindis dieris kundskab huorledis hannd och hanns høstrue Marin Nielsdatter haffde skickett dennom den stund dj var her i sognid, dertill suarett mieninge mand som da tilstede var, att huad Niels Lauritzønn var annlangende viste de icke ey heller hørtt haffuer andett om hannom,

35. Her er Tale om typiske Remedier til Trolddoms Brug.

end om en fattig ærlig dannemand i alle maader, men huad hanns høstrue Marin Nielsdatter var anlangende viste de inthet att vinde, vden att hun var giernne i klamer och kiff med mangen <sup>36</sup>; att de saa vonde, vinder vi med voris signeter vndertrøct. Datum die et loco vt supra. Lauritz Justezønn. Medfør och same neffningers æd for:ne X:stin Pouilsønn, Søren Badskeer och dieris medbrøder neffninger att haffue tilspuord for:ne Niels Lauritzønn om hand paa hans høstrue for:ne Marin Nielsdatter Kneppis vegne hagde nogle anndre breffue eller beuising med huilcke hand hinde kunde skerre eller vndskyldte emod de vinder som der da den dag bleff lest och framlagt; att hannd da ville dennom fremlege førind dj gjorde dieris æd; da haffde hand den dag ingen vider vindisbiurd eller kundskab, theremod, enntenn skriftteligen eller mundtligen i nogin mader. Der effter gjorde for:ne X:stin Pouilsønn, Sørin badskeer och dieris medbrøder, tholff neffninger, dieris æd; laugtid dags (d.v.s. paa lovlig Tingdag), att eptherdj for:ne Peder Pouilsønn haffuer lagt hans haand paa for:ne Marin Nielsdatter Kneppis hoffuid och suorett hinde vitterlig troldoms sag och gierning paa haand och eptherdj for:ne Marin Nielsdatter Knepp er befunden vdi troldomssag och gierninger, och dett med for:ne Peder Pouilsøn och hindis egen pige Karin Nielsdatter och med Peder murmesters datter Mette Pedersdatters vindisbiurd er hinde offuerbeuist epther vinders liudelse. Disligeste epther for:ne Marin Nielsdatters Kneppis egne ord paa Olborig raadhus, att hun sagde hun var moen nock, lad hinde ickon kome hen. Disligeste epther for:ne Marin Nielsdatter Kneppis egen bekiennelse, att hun haffuer anhuist troldoms gierninger med Marin Peder murmesters høstrue vdi ij aar, och haffuer dett fordølt och icke giffuid øffrighieden dett tilkiennde, och hun endnu beskylder for:ne Marin Jensdatter murmesters att hun er en argere och vere troldkone end hun er, huoraff forstaaes for:ne Marin Nielsdatter Knepp att uere en troldkone, och icke hun sig derfore med nogin vindisbiurd, breffue eller kundschab kunde forklare eller vndskyldte, ey eller hun eller nogin paa hindis vegne nogin vindisbiurd haffuer paaskott, derfore suor de hende itt fuld kierckeneffn offuer och bad dennom saa sanntt Gul hielpe, som same neffningers ed i sig sielff vider bemeller. Dernest motte for:ne Christen Pouilsønn paa sin egen och sin medbrøder neffningers vegne och mientte dennom ret att haffue suorett, och att dieris æd borde ved mact att uere, saa var for:ne Marin Nielsdatter Kneppi her tilstede och

36. Om Betydningen af Vidnesbyrd om godt eller daarligt Rygte i Almindelighed, se J. C. Jacobsen, S. 168-69 og 190.

var sin ord bestendig som hun haffuer sagt och bekiennnd att Apelsoni Anders guldsmeds komb til hinder meth same voxbarinn, och der Peder Pouilsønn ropte ind ad vinduet och thalde till dennom, da gaff for:ne quindfolck flugt løb ad døren. Disligeste och bekiennde att for:ne Marin Jensdater murmesters hagde adskiellige haar, fieder och folck bienne, saa och en meniske haand som hun nedersatte vdi same gryde som forskreuit staar, dog sagde sig icke nogin troldom att kunde, der til suarett for:ne Kuortt Andersønn och formint att eptherdj for:ne Marin Kneppis schull vide att the anndre var throidfolck och hun var i omgiengelse med dennom, och sielff haffuer bekiend sig att uere moen nock, att hun da joe schulle kunde troldom, och for:ne neffningers æd therfor baarde ved magt att uere med fliere ord och thalle thennom therom emellom var, tha epther tiltalle, giennsuar och sagens leilighied, saa och effterdj lougen formeller att om nogin mand vider, att hand haffuer forgiorrt hannom med troldum, och ganger hannd ey ved der sigtet ehr, och thend ther sigter alligeuell gieder och til mod hannom thett paa haand, da verie sig den der sag giffuis med neffuin i kierckesogen<sup>37</sup>, och eptherdj for:ne neffninger boer vdi sognitt huos for:ne Marin Nielsdater Kneppis, saa the best wider hindis leilighied och vilkor, och the ved dieris æd och effter for:ne Peder Pouilsønns Mette Pedersdater och Karin Nielsdaters vinder och Marin Nielsdater Knepis egen bekiennndelse som forskrefuit staar och hun nu sielff her idag bekiennnd haffuer suoritt for:ne Marin Knepis troldumssag paa. Tha wide vi epther sadann leilighied icke nogin aarsag eller til fald for:ne neffninger for same thieris æd och toug att kunde felde. In cuius rej testimonium insig:la nostra præscentibus inferius impressa

Gunde Chresten:

L.S.

L.S.

L.S.

Lest paa Olborig byting  
den 24. february a:o 1612.

Lest paa Olborig raadhus  
den 3. aprilis anno 1612.

Lest paa Olborig byting  
vdi Anders guldsmeds och hans  
høstrues Appelonne Jbsdaters  
egen neruerelse oc paahørelse  
mandagen den 15. junij a:o 1612.\*

37. Dette er Ordlyden i Jyske Lov 3-69, jvf. ovenfor Note 33.