

(p.1 -27 ) = 1-32  
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A witchcraft trial before  
Jost de Silenen, bishop of Sion: the  
case of Peter Eschiller, of Münster (1484)

At the beginning of the summer of 1484, Peter Eschiller, from the Conches Valley and the parish of Münster, risked his life. He had believed he could escape the slander of public rumor that had been relentlessly targeting him by fleeing the country a few years earlier. The accusations of witchcraft that had been leveled against him for some time constituted a mortal threat in the 15th century, and particularly under the Bishop of Sion, Walter Supersaxo (1457-1482). He therefore waited for the bishop's death before returning home. Alas, he was imprisoned in the Majorie, in Sion, by Walter Supersaxo's successor on the episcopal throne.

Introduction, edition and French and German translations

Chantal and Hans-Robert AMMANN

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A witchcraft trial before

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Abbreviations used: AB = Archives of the Bourgeoisie; ABS = Archives of the Bourgeoisie of Sion; AC = Municipal Archives; ACS = Archives of the Cathedral Chapter of Sion; AEV = State Archives of Valais; AP = Parish Archives; AT = Philippe de Torrenté Archives; ATL = Philippe de Torrenté Archives,

books; AV = Valais Archives; BWG = Blätter aus der Walliser Geschichte: GREMAUD = Jean GREMAUD,

Documents relatifs à l'histoire du Vallais, 8 volumes, Lausanne, 1875-1898 (Mémoires et documents publiés par la Société d'histoire de la Suisse romande, 1re série, t. 29-33, 37-39); Min. = minute book; Pg = parchment; Th. = box; Tir. = drawer.

We will not delve here into the history of the concept of witchcraft or the assimilation of the crime of sorcery to that of heresy, which took place in the first half of the 15th century. See, on this subject, most recently B. ANDENMATTEN, K. UTZ TREMP, "From Heresy to Witchcraft: Inquisitor Ulric de Torrenté OP (circa 1420–1445) and the Strengthening of the Inquisition in French-speaking Switzerland,"

in Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique suisse, 86, 1992, pp. 69–119. For the 1480s, which concern us, the constituent elements of witchcraft (*heretica pravitas*) were in place: a witch was a follower of the devil who renounced Christianity, paid homage to the devil, participated in the witches' sabbath, and performed

malevolent acts , cf. P. PARAVY, "Making People Believe: Some Research Hypotheses Based on the Study of Trials"

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AEV, ATL 7, no. 80, p. 454 (hand of Simon Rapillard). The sheet bears a plated seal in poor condition.  
AEV, ATL 7, no. 81, pp. 459-462 (from the hand of the Sedunois notary Simon Rapillard).

The file consists of issues 80, 81 and 82 of the book ATL 7, pp. 447-470, i.e.

"Witchcraft in the Dauphiné in the 15th century," in Faire croire. Modalités de la diffusion et de la

réception

des messages religieux du XIIe au XVe siècle, Rome, 1981, pp. 119-130. - On the subject, still little explored in Valais, see PJ KAEMPFEN, "Etwas zur Hexengeschichte," in Walliser Monatsschrift für vaterländische Geschichte, 3, 1864, pp. 57-59 and 67-69; PJ KAEMPFEN, Hexen und Hexenprozesse im

Wallis, Stans, 1867; J.-B. BERTRAND, "Notes sur les procès d'hérésie et de sorcellerie en Valais," in Annales valaisannes, III, 1921, pp. 151-209; S. STROBINO, Françoise saved from the flames? A Valaisan

woman accused of witchcraft in the 15th century, Lausanne, 1996, (Cahiers lausannois d'histoire médiévale,

18).

For comparison for the same period see E. MAIER, Thirty years with the devil. A new witch hunt on the Lake Geneva Riviera (1477-1484), Lausanne, 1996, (Cahiers lausannois d'histoire médiévale, 17).

These are exhortations addressed to someone under strong suspicion of guilt.

so that he would spontaneously confess his faults and thus benefit from the mercy of the Church.

12 sheets of paper (20.5x29.5 cm and 21.5x3 cm).

AEV, ATL 7, no. 82, pp. 468-469 (in the hand of Simon Rapillard). The scribe writes: the Saturday which was June 25, but June 25, 1484 falls on a Friday; it is probable that he made a mistake with the fourth rather than the day.

AEV, ATL 7, no. 80, pp. 447-453 (by Simon Rapillard).

AEV, ATL 7, no. 82, p. 470 (by the hand of NN and Simon Rapillard).

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AEV, ATL 7, no. 82, pp. 463-467 (in an anonymous hand which seems to us to be that of the notary Jean de Pictu).

signifying rest; the articles proposed by the procurator of the faith to the bishop on Saturday, June 12, which constitute the basis of the interrogation of the accused on Monday, June 14,<sup>6</sup> and which are followed by a sixth canonical admonition addressed on June 25 or 26 ;<sup>7</sup> the sentence of the bishop who decides on Monday, June 28 to subject the accused to the question ;<sup>8</sup> the confessions obtained from Thursday, July 1 to Thursday , July 8 ;<sup>9</sup> finally the episcopal sentence, pronounced on Saturday, July 10, by virtue of which Peter Eschiller is handed over to the secular arm to suffer the punishment he deserves as a heretic, namely undoubtedly the stake.<sup>10</sup>

The sources

Jost de Silenen (1482-1496). From then on, the machinery of repression was set in motion. Did the well-oiled procedure give him a chance of getting away with it? A very typical trial ensued, which we will recount below.<sup>2</sup> It should be noted, however, that a man, not a woman, was involved, and that his case closely resembled that of his contemporary Thomas Biderbosten, also from Conches, who was denounced in several trials.

The case is known to us thanks to booklets bound with various documents in a composite volume that was deposited in the Valais State Archives and forms part of the Torrenté family's book collection.<sup>3</sup> When reconstructed in order, the file comprises the following elements: the five canonical admonitions<sup>4</sup> issued from May 29 to June 3, 1484, that is, from the Saturday to the following Thursday.<sup>5</sup>

The notary who drafted the bulk of the file was Simon Rapillard, a burgher of Sion and former secretary to Bishop Walter Supersaxo. He worked at the bishop's courts and held positions that brought him prominence in the city of

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Moreover, the bishop's commissioners, two canons from the cathedral chapter of Sion, were perfectly familiar with the now classic elements of demonology at the end of the 15th century.<sup>17</sup>

The various stages thus led Peter Eschiller to the stake in six weeks. Although, in his final sentence, the bishop protested against any mutilation of limbs, shedding of blood, or danger of death when handing Peter Eschiller over to the secular authorities, there was no doubt that Peter Eschiller was destined to be burned. This was the fate suffered, for example, by the Conchardes Trina and Nesa Kuenis following the sentence of July 29, 1466, pronounced by Walter Supersaxo: the bishop handed them over to the secular authorities as heretics with the same reservation and confiscated their property.<sup>15</sup> From his protestations of innocence and his refusal to confess, Peter Eschiller moved to a full confession that condemned him to death. Sion and in the dizain. In 1484 he seems to retain with Jost de Silenen the prestige he acquired under his predecessor, before falling into disgrace<sup>16</sup>.

Peter Eschiller's file is certainly incomplete. Indeed, it does not contain extracts from the trials of the witches who accused him, as is the case in other Valaisan cases.<sup>12</sup> The prosecutor of faith, when drafting Article XXVII, likely had these earlier trials before him, although he did not name Peter's accusers in accordance with standard procedure.<sup>13</sup> The file also lacks the testimonies of the neighbors and acquaintances who triggered the investigation. Finally, at the final stage, the sentence handed down by the burghers of Sion on the Grand-Pont is missing, whereas we have kept copies for similar cases.<sup>14</sup>

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How did he get to this point? It is by placing the trial in a broader context that we can better understand its implacable nature. The case of Peter Eschiller is just one case among many others in the episcopal Valais.<sup>16</sup>

UTZ TREMP, and several undergraduate theses by students of Professor A. Paravicini Baglioni of Lausanne, published

in the Cahiers lausannois d'histoire médiévale. As for sources, one should refer to the indispensable and monumental publication by J. HANSEN, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns und der

Hexenverfolgung im

Mittelalter, Bonn, 1901, new edition, Hildesheim, 1963.

133 (= ACS, Min. B 65, pp. 23-25; 1466, November 8) and J. GRAVEN, *Essai sur l'évolution du droit pénal valaisan*,

Lausanne, 1927, pp. 127-128.

the memory», in Vallesia, XLVIII, 1993, pp. 207-271, more particularly pp. 230-233.

He long opposed the Chappota, cf. Ch. AMMANN-DOUBLIEZ, "The notary, the ages and

See, for example, the trial of the shoemaker Henslinus Heymen of Biel (1466), AP Biel, G 9.

On this privilege of the citizens of Sion, cf. AP Biel, G 9, p. 21 (1466, July 12), ABS, Tir. 22-

AP Biel, G 10, p. 47 et seq. See also the fate of the tailor Nicolaus Schroeter of Ritzingen in March 1467 (AP

Biel G 11, p. 18 et seq.).

See p. 118. - See in the final sentence, p. 127, the mention of inquiries in the Conches valley.

Without being able to cite the bibliography on witchcraft, which is too extensive, one can profitably consult the

works, always accompanied by annotated bibliographies, of R. MUCHEMBLED, notably *Sorcières, justice et société aux*

16e et 17e siècles, Paris, 1987, pp. 249-261, and idem, *Le roi et la sorcière. L'Europe des bûchers (XVe-XVIIIe siècle)*,

Paris, 1993, pp. 249-259; for the medieval period, we refer the reader to the recent works of A.

BLAUERT, Frühe

Hexenverfolgungen: *Ketzer-, Zauberei- und Hexenprozesse des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Hamburg, 1989, and A. BLAUERT et

al., *Ketzer, Zauberer, Hexen. Die Anfänge der europäischen Hexenverfolgungen*, Frankfurt, 1990, de C. GINZBURG, Le

*Sabbat des sorcières*, Paris, 1992, aux études sur les Vaudois de Fribourg de K.

To shed light on this matter, we have at our disposal a collection of Latin texts relating to the crime of sorcery,

heresy and witchcraft in the episcopal Valais in the 14th and 15th centuries, which we have gathered over the years and

which we intend to publish soon.

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After pronouncing the sentence, the local authorities come before the bishop so that he may hand the accused over to the secular authorities, and then before the burghers of Sion to obtain confirmation of the capital sentence . The bishop therefore normally intervenes only at the end of the procedure and does not conduct the trial in his castle at La Majorie. In the episcopal Valais, judging witches falls under the jurisdiction of the local courts. The place of detention and the location of the trial raise a number of questions.

Why was Peter Eschiller not interrogated in the Conches Valley by the local judge or major, assisted by jurors? Why did the bishop detain him in his prison in Sion, and why did he appoint the commissioners? Indeed, if we refer to the trials of 1466-1467 that have come down to us , the normal procedure triggered by the arrest of a "sorcerer" in

the Conches Valley following denunciations should have been as follows: the trial was conducted on the spot by the major acting on behalf of the Bishop of Sion, Prefect and Count of Valais, or by the judge of the Grafschaft of Biel, called the ammann, surrounded by his jurors .

#### The trial venue

These events took place in a single location: in Sion, at the Majorie Castle, the bishop's residence since the last quarter of the 14th century.<sup>18</sup> More precisely, the various stages leading Peter Eschiller to the stake unfolded in the great hall, with the exception of July 8 , when the trial concluded in a room adjoining the castle chapel. The sentence, however, was pronounced in "the new room," likely a different one from the great hall. The notary also makes sure to indicate the time of the key moments in the proceedings, namely the hour of prime, that is, early in the morning. While he does not record the torture sessions, he indicates that Peter Eschiller was subjected to torture the previous day (June 30) or that he was taken back to the torture chamber when he showed some hesitation (July 3): the notary then hastened to record in writing the confirmation of the confessions thus obtained, in front of the prison gate.<sup>19</sup>

Cf. for example the trial of Nicolaus Schroeter of Ritzingen, AP Biel, G 11, p. 23 (1467, March 24, Ernen): In

the name of the Lord. Amen. In the same year M<sup>o</sup>CCCC<sup>o</sup>LXVII, indication XV, on the very XXIIII day of March, at

Aragnum, on a crisp [!], where it is customary to punish malefactors according to their own demerits , by the provident

men Anthelmum Uff der Eggen, mayor of Monte Dei above, and Anthonium Rüggern, judge in the Committee, parish of

Conches, for the most reverend in Christo patre et domino nostro domino Walter, by the grace of God and the apostolic

see, bishop of Se-dunensi, prefect and committee of Valais, and by the sentence of the jurors and other good men the

above-named Claus Schnfter was burned for a python, as he should have been sentenced against him, and by the

aforementioned lord bishop etc. committed to secular judgment also by the castellan and citizens of the city of Sedona,

affirmation and approval according to all processes prescribed against the same Schnfter and before all men and women

present on the same day in any places there, read, heard and understood before his burning ...

On the use of torture in the inquisitorial procedure, see the article "torture" by L. CHEVAILLER, in R. NAZ,

Dictionnaire de droit canonique, 1, Paris, 1965, col. 1293-1314, or the article "Folter", in Lexikon des Mittelalters, IV,

Munich-Zurich, 1989, col. 614-616.

HA VON ROTEN, «Das Schloß Majoria in Sitten vor 300 Jahren», dans BWG, XIII/1, 1961, pp. 77-89.

This family is mentioned as early as the 14th century in the Conches valley, cf. *Armoriai valaisan*, Zurich,

1946, pp. 88-89.

On the respective jurisdictional rights of the ammann of the Grafschaft of Biel and the major of the valley of

Conches, cf. L. CARLEN, *Gericht und Gemeinde im Goms vom Mittelalter bis zur Französischen Revolution*, Fribourg,

1967, pp. 88-96 and 126-131, and AP Biel, A 4 (1466, June 20).

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AP Biel, G 9, G 10 et G 11.

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The bishop's intervention was reportedly due to a request from local communities.

Some hypotheses about the role of the Bishop of Sion in the  
witch hunt

Laypeople: the statutes issued by the communities from the second quarter of the 15th century onwards, and the few files or isolated documents from trials that have survived, clearly demonstrate this. Did the place of arrest have any significance?

However, our file does not specify how, where, or by whom Peter was arrested. Was it in Zion? Unless, let us consider other possibilities, Peter Eschiller was a man of the bishop or the bishop was handling the fugitives' case. Or was he detained in Zion because the prosecutor of the faith intervened following public rumors? In any case, we must take into account the Bishop of Zion's conception of his authority.

In the Val d'Anniviers, towards the end of Walter Supersaxo's episcopate, it was the valley's inhabitants who reportedly petitioned the bishop to appoint commissioners to assist local officials in the witch hunts. Commissioners Pierre Rormatter and Jacques Zerzubon, both from Sion, traveled to Vissoie, and the trials were held there. The priest François Galendat, vicar of Anniviers, acted as the bishop's lieutenant and is described in documents from Rome as the "promoter" of the episcopal curia's criminal cases . <sup>24</sup>

Article XXIII of our case reveals that, at an unspecified date, Bishop Walter Supersaxo was similarly requested by the district of Conches to take action against witches and send commissioners. This was likely a witch hunt that took place after the one of 1466-1467, in which the local authorities were active.<sup>25</sup> This hunt could well have occurred around 1480. On the one hand, Peter Eschiller mentions the execution of certain individuals by the major of Conches, Anton Hallabarter, attested as such in 1480 and 1481.<sup>26</sup>

To explain the role of the Bishop of Sion in the present case, it may be necessary to consider, on the one hand, his role in the witch hunts and, on the other hand, how Walter Supersaxo (1457-1482) conceived his mission as bishop and temporal prince.

Finally,

brief extracts from Conchards' trial date from the beginning of 1481. The priest of Münster then styled himself vice-inquisitor of the faith, appointed by the bishop.<sup>27</sup>

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On the other hand , Walter Supersaxo wrote on January 18, 1482 to the major and men of the district of Conches , alluding to a witch hunt.<sup>27</sup>

See note 21.

AEV, AT 119 bis (1487, March 2).

AC Obergesteln, E 2 (1480, 8 July); C 3 (1480, 8 September); D2 (1481, 3 April).

AEV, ATL 1/1, p. 1: In the year of the Lord one thousand four hundred and eighty-one, on the fifth day of February, in the presence of the venerable lord Simon Zhein, curate of Consces [!], vice inquisitor

of the sacred faith specially for this purpose by the reverend in Christ father and lord lord Walter, by the grace of God bishop of Sedune, deputed and in the presence of my notary and undersigned witnesses personally constituted Markisa, daughter of the former Jannini Kifnis, delivered and detained for the crime  
of heresy and released from all torture

...

Cf. «Registrum domini Walteri Supersaxo episcopi Sedunensis. Ein Kopialbuch von Walter II. Supersaxo, Bischof von Sitten, Graf und Präfekt von Wallis (1457-1482)», éd. par Ph. KALBERMATTER,  
dans Vallesia, XLV, 1990, n° 96.  
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In matters of heresy, he considered himself the inquisitor of the episcopal Valais.<sup>31</sup> A dispute that arose in 1464 between Bishop Walter and the lords of Granges sheds light on his understanding of his role from that time onward. He asserted against these lords the power to investigate matters of faith in the parish of Ayent, to imprison and detain the accused until and including the final sentence. And this in his capacity as inquisitor and temporal prince.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, although witchcraft cases in the episcopal Valais fell under secular jurisdiction, Bishop Walter Supersaxo, who held both swords, intended to treat them as matters of faith. While the districts attempted to separate the temporal from the spiritual, Walter Supersaxo thwarted this effort and declared that he held both spiritual and temporal jurisdiction over his subjects. He also surrounded himself with jurist canons steeped in Romano-canonical culture, whose influence is evident in the Landrecht he enacted . <sup>30</sup>

During his episcopate, Walter Supersaxo therefore seems to have relied on vice-inquisitors (ecclesiastics) on the ground and appointed commissioners to help or control the local people.

Why this appeal to the bishop in the Val d'Anniviers and the Val di Conches? For the Val d'Anniviers, the explanation likely lies in the personality of the lord of the manor, the bishop's own illegitimate son, Georges Supersaxo, and in the reassertion of control over the valley after the Rodolphe Esperlin affair .<sup>29</sup> As for the Val di Conches, should we assume a weariness among the people? Could this weariness be due to the burden of costs associated with the numerous trials, the complexity of the procedure, and the difficulty of the cases when the accused appeal to the Archbishop of Tarentaise, whose suffragan bishop is the Bishop of Sion? The bishop intervenes to restore order because there have been excesses in the Val di Conches and violence has prevailed over justice. Furthermore, the local authorities are dismayed that the fugitives are turning to the metropolitan court of Tarentaise and obtaining rescripts that halt the proceedings. The bishop takes advantage of this local request because it aligns with his understanding of his temporal and spiritual power.

An undated document sets the bishop, unnamed, against the important lord Peterman of Chevron.<sup>33</sup> The bishop intends to imprison in his own jail a man from Vercorin, a liege lord of Peterman of Chevron. This man is being prosecuted for

witchcraft. To support his position, the bishop relies on the fact that this is the crime of divine lèse-majesté and that he shares with the inquisitor the power to fully investigate the case, detain, and monitor the suspect. We have, however, preserved a fragment of a trial brought against Jean Coppatel of Vercorin in March 1482.

Walter Supersaxo considers himself the lieutenant of the inquisitor, who remains behind the scenes but is

not completely absent from the episcopal Valais.

The relationship between Walter Supersaxo and the inquisitor will be explored in our ongoing research on the case of Pierre de Torrenté, notary of the Val d'Anniviers, burned in 1481 for heresy. A long conflict, the history of which remains to be written, pits Walter Supersaxo against Rodolphe Esperlin, concerning the rights of the noble family of Raron in the Val d'Anniviers.

Cf. WA LIEBESKIND, Bischof Walters II. Auf der Flüe Landrecht der Landschaft Wallis und Gerichtsordnung nebst einem Auszug aus seinen Synodalstatuten, Leipzig, 1930; G. GHIKA, La fin de l'état

corporatif en Valais et l'établissement de la souveraineté des dizains au XVIIe siècle, Sion, 1947, pp. 53-60;

J. LEISIBACH, Schreibstätten der Diözese Sitten, Genève, 1973, p. 110 (Scriptoria medii aevi helvetica, XIII).

"Register of Lord Walter Supersaxo", n° 125.

AEV, AV 67, 1, 16 (undated).

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ACS, Min. A 98, pp. 3-5.

ABS, Tir. 245/1/19 (1482, March 19): In the name of the Lord, amen. In the year of our Lord one thousand four

hundred and eighty-two, on the nineteenth day of the month of Tuesday, at Sedona, in the great stupa of the castle of

Majorie, before the noble man John of Platea, castellan of Sedona, 'as ' judge and 'temporary' commissioner for this

purpose by the reverend in Christ our father and lord lord Walter, by the grace of God bishop of Sedona, prefect and count

of Valais (Following the consent of the aforesaid lord vice-lord of Sedona, in the conjunctive name of the said nobleman

of France, his wife, from whose resort the undersigned is delivered and deposited in the hands of the said nobleman John

as a judge, as he asserts, with the consent of the aforesaid nobleman, the most reverend lord of Sedona, the bishop and

prefect of the aforesaid nobleman of France, who in the future will be interested and may be interested in the future ) 'in'

the presence of the undersigned witnesses called to this effect etc. The said John Coppatel was personally appointed,

imprisoned in the prisons of our aforesaid lord, Bishop of Sedona, in Castro Mayoria, for the most heinous crime of heresy

[...]

Cf. "Register of Lord Walter Supersaxo", n° 88.

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The wording seems to pose some problem for the notary, as there are erasures and an addition. Was there truly an agreement between the bishop and the lord regarding

the administration of justice to Jean Coppatel, accused of heresy? Or was there an initial attempt, through subterfuge, to justify Jean de Platea's role, only for the contentious passage to be crossed out when the vidame of Sion reacted against this encroachment on his jurisdictional rights? In any case, on March 30, 1482, the bishop and the vidame of Sion jointly entrusted the property of the late Jean Coppatel, who had been burned, to the children and grandchildren. One might be tempted to write that Walter Supersaxo played both sides, spiritual and temporal. He intervened as a spiritual leader who conceived of his role as that of an inquisitor in order to establish himself as supreme lord, holding the *merum et mixtum Imperium*. His attempt to appropriate the confiscated property of the sorcerers also contributes to strengthening the Prince's rights. The great achievements of Walter Supersaxo's episcopate, whether the conquest of Lower Valais and the alliances, the minting of coins, the drafting of the country's laws, the elimination of Rodolphe Esperlin or, in this case, the hunt for sorcerers throughout the diocese, all reveal the constant concern to strengthen the Prince's powers and assert his preeminence.

which might shed some light on this affair. Jean Coppatel, husband of Françoise Tavel de Granges, wife of Pierre de Chevron, Viscount of Sion, finds himself imprisoned in the Majorie on suspicion of heresy, just like our Peter Eschiller. The notary's written record informs us about this delicate situation: why is a lord's husband detained in the Majorie and tried before the bishop's tribunal for a case of heresy? Jean Coppatel appears, the notary writes, before the nobleman Jean de Platea, castellan of Sion, who acts as judge and commissioner of Bishop Walter. The scribe adds "as temporal commissioner." And he crosses out the following words : it is with the consent of the Viscount of Sion, acting on behalf of his wife , who holds jurisdiction over the accused, that the latter was handed over to Jean de Platea as a custodian judge by virtue of an agreement between the bishop and the nobleman Françoise Both temporal and spiritual powers were thus invoked jointly or alternately to justify the increasingly direct interventions of episcopal authority in witchcraft cases. Furthermore, appeals from the Valaisans to the court of Tarentaise compelled the bishop to treat these problems as matters of faith so as not to be disavowed externally. The role of the Church, wrote Walter Supersaxo on October 10, 1480, was to enable sinners to repent.<sup>36</sup> This is why, at the beginning of a general inquiry, a monitory of

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(AEV, Fonds d'Odé, I, carton 8/32/1, original), text edited from a copy of A.-J. de Rivaz by F. DE GINGINS-

LA-SARRAZ, "Développement de l'independance du Haut-Vallais et conquête du Bas-Vallais", in Archiv

für Schweizerische Geschichte, III, 1844, pp. 244-245.

Articles sent to the Diet by Walter Supersaxo (February 6, 1482; Sion, Majorie): Also, because for many years now we have heard of disagreements, disputes and contradictions between some nobles of our lands claiming to have a high dominion and ultimate punishment for their vassals, 'hence' opposing our officials and alleging that the ultimate punishment should be remitted to them , since they themselves

are nobles who have neither / limited territories nor forks nor trunks, etc. wherefore the ultimate punishment should be remitted to the officer of the high lord who has jurisdiction in this and no one else

etc.; and lest there be any cause of further contradiction between them, but each knows what he should do, and no one hinders the other in his justice, and our nobles and officials live together in brotherly love

without complaint, we entrust to you that you declare on this mature advice what seems just to you and that this should be observed inviolably by both parties both now and in the future.

Cf. "Registrum domini Walteri Supersaxo", no. 231 and no. 232 (1481, December 31).

... Also because it has come to our attention that some patriots suspected of the crime of heresy and fugitives because of the crime itself resort to other tribunals, without and in addition to the fact that any grievance has been brought against them, they obtain writs, they harass us and our officials and involve them in lawsuits, there is much murmuring in the country, even denigration, with others saying to

us that we would like to have in our hands both spiritual and civil cases from which they would suffer these

novelties that they have never suffered since the memory of men , if we had allowed our officials to judge

these heretics in their temporal terms as our predecessors did, they would well teach these fugitives to take another path and in a way threaten by deeds they want to prevent and find a way to be freed from such troubles, etc.

On Jost de Silenen, cf. W. EHRENZELLER, «Der Sturz Jost's von Silenen und sein Prozess vor der Kurie. Ein Beitrag zur Wallisergeschichte der Jahre 1495-1498», dans Jahrbuch für Schweizerische Geschichte, 38, 1913, pp. 73-120.

We answer that what we did, we did it because the laws so desire that over heretics, up to the last punishment, all jurisdiction belongs to the Church, and that our subjects should not marry in their previous

errors and should not burden their souls with things in which they are forbidden power. We labored as we

were held and are held, for we would be very content if we were legally freed from the burden of this kind

of inquisition and others did it, which would be a welcome and happy exoneration for us.

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Jost de Silenen probably continued the policies of his predecessor.<sup>39</sup> One of the commissioners tasked with obtaining Peter Eschiller's confession was none other than The bishop, through the parish priests, exhorts those guilty of heresy to spontaneously confess their sins and denounce their accomplices within fifteen days in order to obtain forgiveness and return to the Church; otherwise, the path to forgiveness is closed to them . Those who do not confess are then prosecuted with the full force of the law, and it is the duty of the bishops to enlist the help of the secular authorities.

The Church's involvement in the persecution of witches in the episcopal Valais region reflects a shift from the years 1428 and 1466-1467, when it fell under the purview of secular authorities, and this development was not without its challenges. Walter Supersaxo faced opposition both within and outside Valais. Fugitives prosecuted for witchcraft, or their relatives, found themselves among Rodolphe Esperlin's supporters in the Tarentaise region, where they won over members of the curia. Walter Supersaxo claimed that they howled like wolves against him and felt he had little support from the archbishop.<sup>37</sup> Internally, he voiced his discontent to the Diet in February 1482. The bishop was accused of trying to manipulate both spiritual and civil cases for his own benefit. On one side, the nobles intend to thwart his

actions and defend their merum et mixtum imperium, which the bishop is encroaching upon. On the other side, his temporal officers are angered by the harm they suffer when the suspects flee to Tarentaise. To these reproaches, Walter Supersaxo replies that the Church holds omnipotent jurisdiction over heretics, excluding the ultimate punishment, and that he would be relieved to be freed from this burden by others . <sup>38</sup>

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The bishop demanded 900 pounds from the accused's sons, probably for the redemption of property and the costs of the trial; not content with that, he also demanded a substantial sum (300 florins) from the man who, unfortunately for him, lived in Martigny, a town that had angered the bishop: Jost de Silenen had placed the town under interdict during a dispute over the Rhône dikes, but the people of Martigny had appealed to the metropolitan see of Tarentaise and had the interdict lifted, much to the bishop's dismay.<sup>45</sup> The former bailiff Anselm Uff der Eggen, the major of Conches Hans Bertschen, and two other former majors also attest that the jurisdiction of the Conches valley was violated by Jost de Silenen. Without knowing if it was a case of witchcraft, a man named Jörg Gerwer was taken to the Majorie to be tried, whereas the long-standing custom was to try the guilty where they were found. The other commissioner was also a canon, Leonard Prepositi , a canon and officer since 1470. Leonard Prepositi quickly gained the trust of Walter Supersaxo, whose secretary he was, and who sent him as ambassador to the Master of Requests of the Duke of Savoy on September 9, 148.

The bishop's brother: Canon André de Silenen. He holds the significant title of vicar in spiritual and temporal matters to the bishop, dated October 12, 1484.

Jost de Silenen, at the beginning of his episcopate, seems to have retained the same staff as Walter Supersaxo. The choice of two clergymen and the location of the trial suggest that the bishop intended to act in this circumstance as his spiritual leader. The bailiff and vice-bailiff, moreover, remained in the background.

#### Bachelor of Laws

Thus, Peter Eschiller found himself at the Majorie because, in matters of witchcraft, the bishop tended to act as an inquisitor. But also because Jost de Silenen did not hesitate to encroach upon local jurisdictions. This, at least, is what several people interviewed in 1496-1497 affirmed after the bishop's departure, having been driven out by the Valaisans. For example, the notary Jean Jordan reported that, when he was castellan of Bagnes for the abbot of Saint-Maurice, Jost de Silenen forced him to arrest a man from Vollèges for witchcraft; he had him imprisoned and tried at the Majorie, even though the abbot of Saint-Maurice, lord of Bagnes and Vollèges, claimed responsibility for this arrest and the detention of the guilty man in his prison in Bagnes.

Martinach; and that according to the apt of Sant Mauritzen, lord in Bagnies, has sued once again against the named

Johansen Jordan, the bishop who had reported the report to us, should give us a share.

See below p. 106.

D. IMESCH, «Das Domkapitel von Sitten zur Zeit des Kardinals Matthäus Schiner», dans BWG, VI/I, 1921, pp. 110-111, et HA VON ROTEN, «Zur Komposition des Domkapitels von Sitten im Mittelalter»,

dans Vallesia, III, 1948, p. 97.

HA VON ROTEN, «On the composition of the cathedral chapter of Sion in the Middle Ages», dans Vallesia, \\\, 1948, p. 106.

Cf. "Register of Lord Walter of Supersaxo", no. 213 (sd, ca. 1464) and no. 92.

ABS, Tir. 92-178, p. 22: Item wyter bezuget der vorgenant Johans Jordan [schriber], das der zyt, do er tschachtlan in Bagnies was durch den apt von Sant Mauritzen, do bodt Herr Joß to the same Jordan,

that he by the fine to lose Hb and gu"t one of Villugen, called Jehan Chedal, as a whirlpool catch and hand

over to him; and as well as the abbot of Sant Mauritzen, chief lord in Bagnies and Village , and the bishop,

that he would not release the same prisoner from his honor, but keep him in his prison in Bagnies, but Lord

Joss wanted to take advantage of this and brought the prisoner to his castle in Sitten to defend himself and

justify him , and gave the prisoner's son the sum he should have justly judged, which was a swell, and took

from them nine hundred pounds or guilders, and Perrod Chedal, his son from Martinach, had to give Lord

Joss three hundred guilders, because he was from Martinach, about the aforementioned report to 42ACS,Tir. 25-4, p. 71.

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771-905, (Collection of the French School of Rome, 183).

Icher to

has he so emlic!i Hab to" his hands .

ABS, Tir. 92-178, pp. 25-26: Item, Anshelem Uffder Egk, former chief magistrate, Hans Bertschen, mayor of

Doysch, Martin Borter, and Casper Zlowinon, former mayor of Doysch, accused the incendiary of Doysch of having

violated the old customs of Lord Josen, by forcibly bringing Joe Gerwer to trial in the same district and allowing him to

judge the matter, which is of old custom and practice , that the wrongdoer should be judged where he was caught, and

the judge himself did so.

Ichen gu"t zu" synen henden an intrag des Herren nam,

darumb er in abscheid syns gerichts dem Herren rechnung lohnt, wider Welch harkomenheit der selb / p. 26/ Herr Jos

aber tan hatt manigfalteklich, dae nn wo sich so

tren fal begehen,

ABS, Tir. 92-178, p. 25: Item haut geredt dy ersamen fromen Peter Metzilten, castlan ze Bryg, Anthoni Lener,

alt hoptman, Hans Brunlen, Hilprand Lener, alt castlan, Anthoni Zuber und Casper Chitnen by ir geschwörnen eid, wie

wol vfplich syn ist in allen enden zlants Walles, kein äustae ter vom ze fol rügen ze fol sunders, sunders an stetten, do  
er griffen wurd, recht foe rt[i]get soll werden, dagegen doch Herr Jos tann hat und so'lich fiyheit gewaltenklich verscheidil-  
lich an Thomas Salczman der kilcherin von Naters, denn er zu“ Glyß lassen och an Urteil und über rechtsatz von dannen  
gan Sitten gefortige hatt.

ABS, Tir. 92-60, pp. 1-2 (1496, 3 December): And first Matheus, son of Thomas Ansermier, of Ventona, the first witness summoned, produced, sworn and diligently examined and questioned by me, the commissioner, on the above articles, says that he knows both that and that it is true, although it is about four years ago or thereabouts, in which Angellinus Wathir, then castellan of Sirri for lord Jodocus of Sillinon then bishop of Sedun, who was Henslinus as an officer, made to capture and detain the said Thomas Ansermier for the crime of heresy. Which Thomas and certain others detained he made to lead to the castle of Majorie, no sentence of Sirri on this subject given of which the witness himself knows. For Thomas afterwards returned himself to holy mother church and stood detained in the said charters for the space of one month and three days, for which time the same lord Jodocus wished to have from him for the expenses incurred by him by Thomas, 60" pounds of Moorish money, which he himself or his agents paid. 44

Cf. P. PARAVY, From Roman Christendom to the Reformation in Dauphiné, Rome, 1993, II, pp.

Cf. B. TRUFFER, Portraits of the Bishops of Zion from 1418 to 1977, Zion, 1977, pp. 33-35.  
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HA VON ROTEN, «Die Grosskastläne von Siders im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert (bis 1451)», dans Vallesia,

XXXIII, 1978, pp. 124-125, et TH. VON LIEBENAU, «Von den Hexen, so in Wallis ver-brannt wordent in den Tagen, do

Cristofel von Silinen herr und richter was», dans Anzeiger für Schweizerische Geschichte, NF 9, 1903, pp. 135-138.

Jost de Silenen was certainly a man of his time, steeped in this fear of witches and conspiracies. His own father, Christophe de Silenen, probably played an active role in the persecution of witches when he was castellan of Sierre in 1428.

arresting them. The goods were confiscated by the local judge, without opposition from the lord, who then received the judge's accounts. Jost de Silenen had often violated this ancient custom.<sup>46</sup> The former bailiff Anton Lener, of Brig, and authorities from the district of Brig made the same complaints.<sup>47</sup> In the district of Sierre, Mathieu Ansermier stated that his father, accused of witchcraft, was arrested with others around 1492 and taken to the Majorie without a sentence being pronounced on the matter in Sierre.<sup>48</sup>

The testimonies gathered against Jost de Silenen suggest that he had found a way to extort money: whether the arrested person was convicted or released, they or their heirs had to pay a substantial sum. The bishop intended to profit financially from the prosecution. Could our case constitute one of the bishop's first abuses?

He was indeed coadjutor to the Bishop of Grenoble in 1475, then Bishop of that diocese in 1477. But what exactly is the suspect accused of?

It is not out of the question that Jost de Silenen was aware of the widespread witch hunt undertaken in the Dauphiné from the second quarter of the 15th century .

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ACS, Min. A 139, pp. 196-200. Thomas Biderbosten, presumed guilty a few years later, is also there and represents the side of the friends of Bertscho Zussen killed by Thomas Im Hoff of Münster who allegedly raped the wife of the deceased.

On purgation, see below p. 134, note 10.

Cf. Article VIII, p. 114.

Among the articles written by the procurator of the faith, numbers VII, VIII, IX, XI, XXVII, XXVIII deal with the fame of Peter conveyed by public rumor.

AP Biel, G 10, p. 45.

Cf. *infra*, p. 128.

See S. STROBINO, Françoise saved from the flames? A Valais woman accused of witchcraft in the 15th century. 56

Our man is wary of the climate prevailing in the Conches valley at the end of Walter Supersaxo's episcopate: the excesses committed by the local authorities

What stance could he take in the face of defamation? Fifteenth-century documents show us the various possible paths. Peter Eschiller could have attempted a defense and submitted to purgation before the bishop.<sup>54</sup> This required financial resources to pay guarantors, bail, and court costs. It was necessary to be surrounded by supportive relatives and a network of trusted friends ready to testify on his behalf and "co-expiate." A lawyer was needed to draft the defense. At this stage, the bishop still had to authorize the accused to present his defense. Clearing one's name was therefore no easy task.<sup>55</sup>

Does fleeing allow one to escape the witch hunts in the episcopal Valais?

The rumor that Peter was a sorcerer had been circulating for a long time. It triggered the opening of the trial because the judges could no longer ignore it.<sup>52</sup> The trials of sorcerers and the testimonies of acquaintances and respectable people had drawn attention to Peter Eschiller and condemned him, branding him with infamy. From the very first interrogation, before the first canonical admonition, Canon Leonard Prepositi of Sion, the bishop's commissioner in this case, asked Peter if he knew why he was appearing before the tribunal and if he was aware of his reputation as a heretic among his neighbors. The prosecutor of the faith, whose name is unknown, placed the burden of this public rumor heavily on Peter. It alone occupied at least 6 of the 28 articles submitted to the accused<sup>53</sup> and already constituted partial proof. The rumor had accused Peter, and he knew it.

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We know almost nothing about him except that, on December 10, 1477, he held the title of "discreet man," usually reserved for lawyers, notaries, and "officials": on that date, he attended, as a simple witness, an agreement negotiated at the Majoria by the bishop and his assessors to end a serious quarrel between people from Münster.<sup>5 \*</sup> He was therefore a person of some importance in his village. Our records tell us that Peter Eschiller's wife, named Greta, returned to him after having been away for some time. According to her confession, Peter Eschiller might have been involved in commerce, which would explain his presence in Airolo, on the other side of the Nufenen Pass, in the Leventina Valley, and the debt he left there.<sup>58</sup>

The fear of the future is great, especially when one knows of similar cases among one's

acquaintances. Now, Peter Eschiller may have witnessed the first witch hunt in the Conches valley, under Walter Supersaxo: a Peter Eschiller, a bailiff of Conches, appears among those who decided the fate of two witches, Trina Kuenis and her daughter Nesa, on July 25, 1466, in Ernen . Is this him or someone with the same name?

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He tortured her and subjected her to the punishment of burning at fire; similarly, he had several other people of both sexes burned. In this climate of witch hunts, the brothers learned that some people under torture defame them, then recant at the moment of death. Wanting to defend themselves, they asked the judge and the bishop for a copy of the trial records, but were refused. They therefore fear being caught and confessing under torture to crimes they never committed; consequently, they risk being subjected to the ultimate punishment, as is the fate of many others in the diocese. They have thus gone into exile and no longer dare to return. It should be added that suspicion must have fallen upon them because their father, Perrod, had himself been condemned for his crimes around 1466-1467, perhaps for witchcraft . <sup>61</sup> They were quite right to fear for their fate, for infamy marked the lineage and could extend to the relatives. Peter Eschiller must have felt exactly the same sense of powerlessness, the same fear in the face of the threat of torture, even though Théodule, Pierre, and Jean Grant had support: their brother, the clergyman Stéphane Grant.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, Thomas Biderbosten had two brothers, Hans and Jacques, who supported him and presented the evidence for his defense to the bishop; they intervened during the proceedings to try to slow the inexorable machinery.<sup>63</sup> Peter Eschiller, however, seemed quite isolated before his judges.

Faced with the danger posed by his bad reputation, Peter Eschiller left his homeland in the hope of better days. He was not the first to do so. This option of leaving the diocese was, in fact, advised to the Grant brothers, also known as the de Clavibus brothers, of Leuk, by some wise men. At least, that is what they explained to the Pope on June 6, 1478: Perrinus de Cabanis, a secular magistrate, had seized their relative Perrina, daughter of Jean Thiebaudi, claiming that she was suspected of heresy.

from the Conches valley, unhappy to see accused persons escaping them who place themselves under the protection of the archbishop of Tarentaise, perhaps consist of arrests, seizures of property and swift convictions<sup>59</sup> .

He fears

being caught.

But he did not seek to clear his name. He could have done so, however, through simple or solemn purgation.<sup>64</sup> In the eyes of the prosecutor of the faith, his negligence, his pas-ABS, Tir. 245/1/18 (1481, February 17): We, Walther, by the grace of God and the apostolic See, bishop of Sedun,

prefect and corne of Valais, make known by the present significant ones which are expedient for all, that in the cause of the defenses granted to Thomas Biderbosten, detained for the crime of heresy, having convened by us a council of wise ecclesiastical men of law who seemed to us intelligent in this case, we have examined and published the defenses of this kind closed and sealed produced by the brothers of the same detainee, and have read them verbatim before them...

ACS, Min. A 96, pp. 664-665 (1467, April 17, Leuk): Bishop Walter Supersaxo sells the confiscated property

"propter crimen et démerita" of Perrod Grant of Leuk to Theodule, John and their brothers for 100 pounds.

Cf. "Register of Lord Walter Supersaxo", n° 97.

Vatican Archives, Reg. Suppl. 770 (ancien 763), fol. 34v -35; cf. le regeste de C. Wirz, Regesten zur Schweizergeschichte aus den päpstlichen Archiven 1447-1513, 4, Berne, 1913, n° 341, pp. 135-136. L. SALA-MOLINS, Paris-The Hague, 1973, pp. 156-158, and below, p. 134, note 10.

On this ceremony, see N. EYMERICH, F. PENA, The Inquisitors' Manual, translated by While Théodule, Pierre, and Jean Grant were imprisoned in Sion, their brother, the priest Stéphane, appealed to

the court of Tarentaise (see "Registrum domini Walteri Supersaxo," no. 82 , March 15, 1480 ). On Stéphane Grand, parish

priest of Sion, then of Leuk, and finally canon of Sion, see HA VON ROTEN, "Contribution à la chronologie des curés de Sion," in Annales valaisannes, 37, 1962, pp. 358-359.

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«Registrum domini Walteri Supersaxo», n° 96 (order addressed by Bishop Walter Supersaxo to the Dizain of Conches and dated 18 January 1482):.... We have regretfully ordered you or yours to concur

in a certain conspiracy made by the Tarenthi court, and, as you say, for the offenses committed by them who,

because of heresy, were infamously subjected to the Tarenthi court, we have attempted to avenge the offenses committed by their own authority... See also n° 103 (letter from Bishop Walter Supersaxo addressed to an ecclesiastic in Rome and dated 2 March 1482): We have some of you who are suspects and fugitives, with whom, not our fault but our own fault, we are in litigation in the Tarenthi court.

See the statutes of the commune of Morel concerning spells (GREMAUD, no. 2809; 1430, June 15) or those of Raron (GREMAUD, no. 2833; 1434, February 13).

See article XXIII, p. 117.

“Registrum domini Walteri Supersaxo”, no. 124, 125 and 127. On June 19, 1469, he is said to be a member of the lords of Granges in the parish of Ayent (ACS, Tir. 25-4, p. 45).

The relationship between Bishop Walter Supersaxo and the Archbishop of Tarentaise was quite strained, cf. "Registrum domini Walteri Supersaxo", p. 128.

G. TOBLER, «Zum Hexenwesen in Bern», in the Swiss Archives of Folklore, 2, 1898, pp. 59-60 (lettre de la ville de Berne à l'évêque de Sion datée du 15 juin 1467), et ibidem, 4, 1900, p. 237: An hoptman

zu° Wallis. Min hem haben einfrownen in vangknis von Wallis umb haxe-reye und welle um kein marter veriechen; dass er min hern wüsssen lass, wie si dannen gescheiden, si sich darnach wüsssen zu° richten

(1478, 16 mai).

ACS, Min. A 149, pp. 468-472.

Others went further, all the way

to Rome, where they addressed a petition to the Pope, such as Thomas Biderbosten or the Grants of Leuk. By appealing to the court of Tarentaise or to the Pope, the fugitives made their case a matter of faith that would not have been within the jurisdiction of the civil authorities; they placed the Bishop of Sion in an uncomfortable position, he who made the pursuit of witches a matter of faith but who most often acted through secular officials.<sup>70</sup> It is perhaps to avoid this contradiction that, at the end of his episcopate, Walter Supersaxo chose to send clergymen as vice-inquisitors to the Conches Valley and the Anniviers Valley. If, under Jost de Silenen, the trial of Peter Eschiller took place at the Majorie in Sion, it was perhaps due to this concept, new for the episcopal Valais, according to which the witch hunt fell within the ecclesiastical domain.

He seems to have escaped the stake if it

is indeed he who made his will on August 20, 1476 in Saxonne, in the parish of Ayent<sup>68</sup>.

His actions become proof of his guilt. Moreover, he fled, which in itself constitutes further evidence against him, as Bishop Walter Supersaxo warned the parishioners before proceeding against the witches.<sup>65</sup> It is because he is guilty that he evaded justice. The flight, besides backfiring on him, authorizes the seizure of the guilty party's property<sup>66</sup> and deprives him of the means to defend himself. Peter Eschiller is in a difficult position to present his absence favorably in the face of the prosecutor of the faith's arguments. In 1480, 1481, or 1482, he undoubtedly thought he could better defend himself outside the zenneh and, moreover, since Walter Supersaxo was an elderly man by that time, he certainly hoped for a change of bishop. But, once the decision to leave was made, where to flee? Some Valaisans under Walter Supersaxo sought the protection of lords, such as Berthod Richier alias Mestrat d'Ayent who, harassed by the bishop's officers, took refuge in Bex with the lords of Granges and Bex in 1464<sup>67</sup>. Others, finally, fled to German-speaking Switzerland, to the Bernese.<sup>71</sup> Where did Peter Eschiller take refuge, and how long was he gone? Did he have the means

As we have already said, some turn to the metropolitan court of the Archbishop of Tarentaise, because they do not trust the justice of the country: this is the case of Conchards and others in the years 1480<sup>69</sup>

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See appendix, p. 128.

Archives du Vatican, Reg. lat. 822, fol. 90v - 92, cf. regeste de C. WIRZ, 4, n° 535, p. 213.

ABS, Tir. 245/1/18 (undated): ... the voice labors against the same Thomas [Biderbosten] because Thomas

himself at that time threw the divine body of Christ to the ground elsewhere and committed sacrilege and treated it

irreverently, about which the said witness in the hands of my undersigned notary, as commissioners appointed for

this purpose by the lord of Sedun, in the presence of the venerable man lord Nicholas Schiners, sacred

procurator of the faith, the said witness said that he knew only as follows, having previously cited Henslin Biderbosten, the witness, to swear witnesses as is customary, who was present and saw the said oath taken by the witness himself.

ACS, Judicialia 3/36(b): ... The inquisitor, responding, said that he knew nothing else about the crime and did not want to be investigated. Having heard these, the aforesaid Lord Leonard, as previously appointed as the procurator of the faith, assigned the same inquisitor to the first hour of the next Monday to specify his malevolent enemies, if he has any, or otherwise say, propose and allege whatever he thinks is of interest, why he should not be subjected to questions and tortures, strictly and precisely.

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Once arrested, can he at least defend himself against the prosecutor of faith who considers him guilty?

After being allowed by Bishop Walter Supersaxo to return to the diocese, they were arrested five months later and imprisoned again for four months, as they explained on February 28, 1482, to the Pope, to whom they appealed.<sup>72</sup> Under Walter Supersaxo, Peter Eschiller had little chance of remaining free upon returning to Valais; moreover, his property had been seized by the bishop.<sup>73</sup> After the latter's death, Peter Eschiller's imprisonment proved that the witch hunt was not over. Did the financiers go to Tarentaise or Rome? Once again, we don't know. Did his return to his homeland, after the change of bishop, give him a chance to escape death or to organize his defense if he was recaptured?

Returning home and escaping justice after being defamed, leaving Valais, and trying to defend oneself is not easy. What becomes of the three Grant brothers from Leuk, Pierre, Théodule, and Jean, and their half-sister Maria?

The course of the trial

The procedure employed was inquisitorial. The accused was presumed guilty following rumors and denunciations that had damaged his reputation . The confession obtained by the judges, in this case through torture, constituted the proof. The prosecutor of the faith who established the charges was rarely named in Valais trials. It was often a canon.

The investigation into the sacrilege allegedly committed by Thomas Biderbosten in Evian, however, gives the name of Nicolas Schiner, the future Bishop of Sion.<sup>74</sup> In our case, the prosecutor could well be Canon Leonard Prepositi, who sent Peter the canonical admonitions inviting him to confess his sins. Indeed, it is he who, in another document, unfortunately incomplete and undated, addresses a canonical admonition to a certain Beatrice; he is then explicitly referred to as the prosecutor of the faith.<sup>75</sup> But since, in the present case, he and the cantor Andrew of Silenen collect Peter Eschiller's confession, it is more likely that an anonymous third party intervenes as the prosecutor of the faith.

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See the edition below, p. 119, notes nr.

See the presentation of doctrinal writings by A. BLAUERT, Frühe Hexenverfolgungen.

Ketzer-, Zauberei- und Hexenprozesse des 15. Jahrhunderts, Hamburg, 1989, pp. 56-59, pp. 61-63, and M.

OSTORERO, «Folâtrer avec les démons ». Sabbat et chasse aux sorciers à Vevey (1448), Lausanne, 1995, pp.

20-28, (Cahiers lausannois d'histoire médiévale, 15).

On tefama, the articles of the interrogation, the confession and the absence of dialogue between the judges and the accused, cf. J. CHIFFOLEAU, "Saying the unspeakable. Remarks on the category of nefandum

from the 12th to the 15th century", in Annales ESC, March-April 1990, pp. 289-324, in particular pp. 308-311.

Alongside the articles, notary Simon Rapillard noted Peter Eschiller's initial responses. They are particularly laconic: "he admits," "he doesn't remember," "he denies it," "he is unaware." They only become slightly more detailed when his absence from the country is discussed (VIII and XXVI).

The prosecutor of the faith was probably inspired by the manual of inquisitors or Directorium inquisitorum by Nicolas Eymerich and the doctrinal treatises that flourished in the first half of the 15th century<sup>76</sup>.

The articles of the prosecutor of faith

The twenty-eight articles drafted by the prosecutor of the faith, which form the basis of the defendant's interrogation, clearly demonstrate how Peter Eschiller is presumed guilty from the outset and how the net closes in on him. The questions are organized as follows: the first two concern Peter Eschiller's entry into the church and his confirmation. Then come apostasy and the pact with the devil (articles III and IV); the resulting spells (V, VI); the defendant's bad reputation among his neighbors (VII-IX); the use of his diabolical art to bring his wife back against her will (X); the absence of purgacio (XI); promiscuity with the devil (XII, XIII); participation in various "synagogues" or sabbaths, a point emphasized (XIII-XXI); and spells against people and animals (XXII). the investigation under Walter Supersaxo in the Conches district (XXIII-XXVI); again Peter's bad reputation and his flight (XXVII and XXVIII).

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He says he left not because he was guilty, but because he wanted to find better justice elsewhere than that which prevailed in the Conches Valley. Peter Eschiller certainly knows what awaits him, for he is caught in a

Indeed, his interrogation is

no more original in its conduct than from a demonological point of view. His questions range from the general to the specific. The significant elements are gathered in four articles (III-VI). Pact with the devil, apostasy , annual tribute, spells, witches' sabbath, and accomplices are all mentioned. The devil is presented as the enemy of human nature. The following articles, however, are adapted to the case of Peter Eschiller.

They are likely based on confessions from previous trials made by Peter's accusers, whose names are concealed. In fact, before being corrected, the text provided specific place names for the sabbath.<sup>77</sup> During the revision, however, someone decided on a vaguer formulation, perhaps so that Peter Eschiller would be less likely to deny his presence in these particular locations. Everything is vague, moreover. The general rumor has no precise content. The accusations, based on specific facts to which the accused could attach his defense, are thus lacking. Obstinate, the prosecutor of faith

says and repeats that Peter knows full well what he is accused of, that he knows his master's name. The accused can only accept or deny the written articles, without any possibility of "dialogue" with the commissioners.<sup>78</sup>

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After being tortured, Peter Eschiller made a long, detailed confession before the two commissioners and notables from Valais and Sion<sup>81</sup>.

Confessions after torture

His involvement in witchcraft dates back several years, and he knows the fate of the "sorcerers." No one is on his side. The bishop himself urges him once again to rejoin the Church. In vain. The number of canonical admonitions addressed to Peter Eschiller is remarkably high: six times he is offered the opportunity to repent, but he replies that he cannot repent for a crime he did not commit. Since he is presumed guilty from the outset, his obstinacy is perceived as a ruse.

Now, since Peter Eschiller refuses to spontaneously confess anything despite the Church's leniency, the bishop decides, by interlocutory decree, to subject him to torture. The use of torture to obtain a confession is closely linked to the inquisitorial procedure. It is this procedure that draws the truth from the accused.

He therefore had

experience with witchcraft trials. Alongside him was Hans Jungen, then castellan of Sion.<sup>84</sup>

This is Jean de Platea, vice-bailiff of Valais, castellan of Sion in 1481-1482, an expert in law<sup>82</sup>. It was he who, on March 19, 1482, acted as temporary commissioner of the bishop in the interrogation of the "sorcerer" Jean Coppatel<sup>83</sup>.

the trustee of Sion and notary Jean de Prinsières<sup>85</sup>

They were all men of justice, familiar with the law, who had experience with previous witchcraft trials from the end of Walter Supersaxo's episcopate, if only for having confirmed the country's capital sentences, as citizens of Sion. Hans Heberhart, also a citizen of Sion, was a close associate of Bishop Walter Supersaxo, under whom he served as castellan of Hérémence.<sup>88</sup>

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Brother of Antoine and Nicollin (ACS, Min. A 138, fol. 323; 1478, January 10 ), he would have the tren-

Ch. AMMANN-DOUBLIEZ, "The notary, the ages and memory", p. 235.

ABS, Tir. 245/1/18 (interlocutory sentence of the Bishop of Sion according to which Thomas Biderbosten must be questioned, dated February 17, 1481): ... we pronounce, sentence and declare that the present defenses made by the said Thomas against the things that have come against him do not raise any issue or benefit him in any way, so that Thomas himself will not be questioned in person, and we pronounce, notwithstanding the said defenses, according to the quality of those that are against him and the possibility that the person of the same will and will be questioned and questioned, until and until the truth comes from his mouth, without the risk of mutilation of limbs and death ...

Cf. note 19, p. 94.

Some of these notables were already in Walter Supersaxo's entourage, cf.

See HA VON ROTEN, "Die Landeshauptmänner von Wallis 1388-1798," in BWG, XXIII, 1991, p. 103. In

1483, he stated that he was about 33 years old. He became governor of Lower Valais (1488-1490) and bailiff in December 1506.

ABS, Tir. 245/1/19.

According to him, he was 37 years old in November 1483, and he was castellan of Sion (1483-April 1485).

See his biographical notice in Ch. AMMANN-DOUBLIEZ, "The notary, the ages and memory", pp. 252-254.

He would have been about forty years old in 1484.

ten years in 1482.

It was a privilege, strongly defended, for the burghers of Sion to confirm the death sentences of all of Valais,

and the executions were a spectacle attended by a large crowd.

AEV, AV 161 (1477, March 7, the Majority).

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cf. ACS, Min. A 131, p. 17.

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At that time, sects and synagogues referred to secret meetings and Sabbaths , cf. A. PARAVICINI BAGLIANI, K. UTZ-TREMP, M. OSTORERO, "The Sabbath in the Alps. The Medieval Premises of the

Witch Hunt," in Sciences: Reason and Unreason, Lausanne, 1994, pp. 67-

In the confessions of Françoise Barras de Chermignon appears this necessary agreement of Christians to the evil deeds of the devil, cf. S. STROBINO, Françoise saved from the flames? A Valaisan

accused of witchcraft in the 15th century, pp. 128-129.

ABS, Tir. 245/1/19 (1482, 21 mars).

ABS, Tir. 92-183 (1482, June 27, Tourbillon).

AEV, Supersaxo II, P 15 (1488, 23 October): Also master Hans Heberhart, saddler and citizen of Sedun, testified...

See note 100.

1798», dans BWG, XXIII, 1991, pp. 59-61.

He is a close associate of Bishop Jost of Silenen (AEV, Fonds Supersaxo II, P31 and R4/1; 1490). On Thursday, the Sabbath day and the day of Judas' betrayal of Jesus, see Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens, vol. II, Berlin and Leipzig 1929/30, col. 336-337.

It may involve rapid uprisings of the accused which are then abruptly brought back down, see E. MAIER, Thirty Years with the Devil, p. 36, n. 76.

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The confession then contains an exposition of the theory that the devil can do anything, once he has obtained the consent of the sorcerer.<sup>94</sup>

He appears as a witness at the trial of Jean Coppatel and bears the title of master<sup>90</sup>, a title he earned through his profession as a saddler<sup>91</sup>. As for Antoine Nessier, he was the one who led the notary Pierre de Torrenté to the stake in the Val d'Anniviers in 1481<sup>92</sup> Chamoson's major<sup>89</sup>.

Bailiff Théodule Venetz, absent on July 1st, would attend Peter Eschiller

's supplementary confession on July 5th.<sup>93</sup> Jost de Silenen was thus surrounded by figures whose careers had already begun under his predecessor. So many high-ranking individuals were present at this stage of the trial because a confession extracted under torture was considered the most compelling evidence. From the rumor that allowed the proceedings to begin, we arrive at this pivotal moment when the whole truth bursts forth from the accused's lips.

He can act in

place of the sorcerer whose appearance he takes, and the sorcerer, by his own consent, knows, in a kind of dream, what the devil is doing and with what accomplices.<sup>95</sup>

The account of the depredations naturally follows, then the names of the accomplices seen in the synagogues<sup>96</sup>. Peter Eschiller reveals the name of four sorcerers already dead - three women and a man, those who accused him, it is specified - and a living Thomas Biderbosten, already accused in 1481 by various women.

Peter Eschiller recounts his encounter with the devil, which occurred about twelve years earlier in Airolo, at nightfall, in a secluded spot away from inhabited houses. His desire for wealth led to his apostasy and the pact with the devil, whom he calls Hemerly. He then describes his subsequent encounters in various locations: in Münster and Obergesteln.

He no longer denies it.

The new confessions clarify previous statements: the obscene kiss to the devil; the annual nature of the pledge, always given in August at nightfall. Finally, the witches' sabbath, which took place on a certain Thursday, a preferred day of the week in Valais for this type of gathering.

<sup>98</sup>

, This is an opportunity to reveal new names of living accomplices. Next come sodomy and devil worship. This time

As he returns two days later to denounce his accomplices, he is once again subjected to questioning: tied to the rope, he is lifted twice and undergoes "the rides" (cavalcade)<sup>91</sup>.

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Sur ce personnage voir HA VON ROTEN, «Die Landeshauptmänner von Wallis 1388-

125, in particular pp. 70-72 on the anti-Judaism that underlies the use of the word synagogue in this  
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witches", pp. 333-379.

On this treatise, which dates from the years 1430-1440, see P. PARAVY, "A propos de la genèse médiévale des chasses aux sorcières: le traité de Claude Tholosan, juge dauphinois (vers 1436)", in *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Moyen Age/ Temps modernes*, 91, 1979/1, pp. 334-335, and B. AN DEN MATTEN, K. UTZ TREMP, "De l'hérésie à la sorcellerie", pp. 98-102. See the edition of this treatise by P. PARAVY, "On the medieval genesis of hunts for *Cette chronique qui rapporte des événements valaisans survenus autour de 1428 a été publiée par J. HANSEN, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns und der Hexenverfolgung im Mittelalter*, Hildesheim, 1963 (reprint de Bonn, 1901), pp. 531-537, et selon une autre version par TH. VON LIEBENAU, «Von den Hexen, so in Wallis brennende wurdet in den Tagen,

On the ancient doctrine which relies on the Episcopi canon to affirm that the sabbath is a dream, cf. P. PARAVY, "A propos de la genèse médiévale des chasses aux sorcières", pp. 348-349 and p. 357.

m The Sabbath is not

that a dream and has no materiality.<sup>101</sup> It is the consent given to the devil that counts. There is little information about the unfolding of the various sabbaths or about the spells. The emphasis has shifted rather to the theme of money, which Peter Eschiller returns to in the second confession: he and his accomplices receive a wage from the devil, but this money vanishes; an object of covetousness by which the devil tempts man, it is nothing but an illusion. The devil's temptation by money already appeared in the chronicle of Hans Fründ.<sup>102</sup>

The commissioners got what they wanted to hear, even though Peter Eschiller remained vague in his confession and timidly recanted his denunciation of living accomplices the next day. These names seemed to have been extracted from him and to have cost him dearly. The sentence declaring him a heretic, unrepentant, and an apostate could now be pronounced. The mechanism of the confession led him to the stake.

Peter Eschiller chose silence, and even his confessions after torture remained laconic, devoid of details of his personal experience, apart from the name of the devil and the meeting place, which were of his own choosing. Having little chance of escaping death, he did not indulge in unnecessary words and likely simply admitted what he was being pressured to say. Demonology here falls within the purview of one or both commissioners. There is a certain discrepancy between the articles of the Procurator of Faith and the confessions attributed to Peter Eschiller. While the Procurator emphasized rumor and Sabbath gatherings, the commissioners focused instead on obtaining details of Peter Eschiller's personal encounters with the devil, which occurred from the end of June until August. These encounters took the form of a dialogue in which the devil, called Hemerly, readily participated. When Peter Eschiller makes a pact with the devil and worships him, he knows the crime he is committing because the devil reveals himself to him: "I am the devil."

Peter Eschiller's guilt is therefore complete and absolute; he deserves the ultimate punishment. There is an emphasis on "the name of the devil" and "the devil his master," repeated many times, which echo the "He knows it well" of the articles of the prosecutor of faith. The depiction of the devil is traditional: a being of average height, dressed in a long gray coat that hides his hands and feet, with a pale face and an almost inhuman appearance. The annual tribute in the form of a black hen is also commonplace. While the influence of the "Errores Gaziarorum" is detectable when the devil is called the enemy of humankind or when the sorcerer gives the devil an obscene kiss, certain elements of this treatise are entirely absent here: infanticide, cannibalism, the use of ointments, and flying on a stick, for example. Several aspects are more reminiscent of the treatise by the

Dauphiné judge Claude Tholosan, " Ut magorum et maleficiorum errores."

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Our story does not quite end with the death of Peter Eschiller. A testimony was gathered in 1496-1497 against Bishop Jost de Silenen, then expelled from Valais, in which the fate of Peter Eschiller's property is mentioned.<sup>104</sup> It was indeed confiscated by Bishop Walter Supersaxo because Peter Eschiller had, by fleeing, made himself guilty of the crime of heresy of which he was suspected. The witness who had vouched for Peter Eschiller with the people of Airolo paid off a debt of twenty pounds for him, which was compensated under Walter Supersaxo with some of the said sorcerer's property. But he had to pay another sum of money to Jost de Silenen, who seized this same property and did not hesitate to demand from him the income that the property should have yielded for three years, even though the bishop had left it fallow. Jost de Silenen's greed is thus denounced.

The pursuit of Peter Eschiller was indeed part of a witch hunt in the Conches Valley that lasted for several years. Besides the people he names who were burned at the stake, we must add those revealed by the fragments of Thomas Biderbosten's trial: four women—two daughters of the late Jeninus Bertlames (whose trial, known in extracts, is undated); Trina Humbrecht; and Markisa Kuenis (whose trial took place around February and April 1481). Furthermore, the marginal notes in these fragments clearly indicate that Thomas Biderbosten's complete file contained extracts from at least ten trials that incriminated him.<sup>103</sup> Peter Eschiller's confessions certainly reignited the hunt for the accomplices he denounced, particularly Thomas Biderbosten, on whom many seem to have focused their attacks.

Peter Eschiller, defamed under Walter Supersaxo and a fugitive, did not benefit from the change of bishop. He was caught up in a witch hunt in the Conches Valley, which likely dates back to around 1480. Would his compatriot Thomas Biderbosten, whose reputation was already tarnished under Walter Supersaxo, escape after Peter Eschiller once again accused him? The sources do not tell us. This witch hunt was contemporaneous with the one Georges Supersaxo launched in the Val d'Anniviers, which proved fatal to many people, including the notary Pierre de Torrenté and his son Nicollin.

Both show the role played by the bishop and his entourage in the conduct of the trials and the progress of a power that asserts itself above particular jurisdictions.

ABS Tir. 245/1/17: The following is an extract from the process of the crime of heresy committed by Greta,

daughter of the former Jenini Bertlames, insofar as it concerns Thomas Biderbosten. Eighth. In the year and year mentioned

above, on the 26th day of February ... See marginal notes: In the forest of Castellion; agrees with the first, second, third,

fourth and sixth processes. -Tenth: The following is an extract from the process of the heretic wickedness committed by

Trina, daughter of Claus Humbrecht, insofar as it concerns Thomas Biderbosten.

"do Cristofel von Silinen herr und richter was," in Anzeiger für Schweizerische Geschichte, 9, 1903, pp. 135-138. It is to be

the subject of a new edition by K. Utz Tremp. - On the theme of counterfeit money offered by the devil, see for example

E. MAIER, Thirty Years with the Devil, p. 75 and p. 146.

See the text given in the appendix, p. 128.

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First canonical admonition. - Première monition canonique.

Documents from the trial brought against Peter Eschiller, from the parish of Münster, in the district of Conches, accused of witchcraft and detained in the bishop's prison.

Legal document against Peter Eschiller from the parish of Münster in Goms, who was accused of witchcraft and imprisoned in the episcopal prison in Sitten.

EDITION

1484, May 29 - July 10 - Sitten, Majoria

a.

14591 Process of canonical warnings made by the venerable man Lord Leonard the Prefect, canon of Sedune, deputed for this purpose by the reverend in Christ father and our lord Lord Jodocus de Sillinon, by the grace of God bishop of Sedune, Peter Eschillier, parish priest of the Monastery, dean of Consches, suspected of faith and therefore detained in the prisons of the aforesaid lord bishop of Sedune.

1484, 29. May. - Sitten, Majority

In the name of the Lord, amen. In the year of the Nativity of the same one thousand four hundred and eighty-four and on Saturday called the twenty-ninth of the month of May, at first hour, in Sedona, in the great stupa of the castle of Maiorie, Peter Eschillier of Consches, parish of the Monastery, was personally ordained, before the prelate Lord Leonard, canon of Sedona, in the presence of this commissioner and me, the notary, and the undersigned witnesses.

And Peter himself was asked primarily whether he knew the reason for his detention and imprisonment, which Peter answered that he knew well, as he believed, because of the crime of heresy of which he was innocent, as Peter himself asserted.

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Square brackets [] are used for words added by editors to facilitate understanding of the text.

Slashes // enclosing numbers indicate page numbers in the manuscript.

EDITING PRINCIPLES: Capitalization is used only for names; punctuation is sparingly adapted to modern conventions. Additions made by the editors for clarity are indicated with square brackets []. Page breaks in the original are indicated by slashes //. Superscript commas '' indicate interlinear or marginal additions by the original hand. Non-Latinized words and summaries are italicized, and original titles are given in spaced type. The defendant's answers, placed in the margins of the trial articles, are presented opposite each article, as in the original.

PRELIMINARY NOTE : The edition adheres to modern conventions for capitalization and punctuation.

AEV, ATL 7, n°s 81, 82, 80.

The commas '' indicate additions in the interlinear space or margins made by the scribe writing the text. Italics are used in the text for non-Latinized words and regesta, while spaced letters are used for titles. The marginal notes opposite the articles of the trial have been reproduced alongside each article.

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Followed by pro, deleted.

Followed by Waltherum, deleted.

Followed by secunda, omitted.

The second canonical warning.

Symon Rapilliardi

Which acts, as mentioned above, the said Lord Leonard, hearing and understanding Peter, having been informed of the canonical warnings to be made by the church, in this act warned him canonically and charitably in all the best ways, ways, forms and by law in which he could and should have done more, since if by chance he has been infected with some crime of heresy through the temptation of the devil or the instigation of some persons or by some sin, he wishes to say so and confess with a remorseful heart; which if he does, he offers him the bosom and pardon of the church and of our lord of Sedona, who do not close the church to any sinner who is willing to repay /460/, but offers to restore him safe in person and goods to his home and this as the first canonical warning. For Peter, being brought before him, said that he wished to advise.

Asked further if he knew and had known that he would be publicly infamous among his acquaintances and neighbors for heresy, he said that he had not, except only from the time when Anthonius Hallabarter, as mayor of Monte Dei, had previously executed certain persons who should have accused Peter himself.

Also, when asked further if he has any ill-wishers or enemies, he replied that perhaps he has many ill-wishers, whom he has not yet been able to name for the present and of whom he does not remember nor does he know them all.

1484, 31. May. - Sitten, Majority

Second Canonical Admonition. - Deuxième monition canonique.

Having heard which, the aforesaid Lord Leonard, the commissioner as above, assigned the same Peter detained to the next Monday, the last of this month of May, and then by the same delivered to hear the second canonical warning. And of the present warning, signed by me, notary public, he asked that a testimonial letter be given to him and made, in the presence of the venerable and excellent men, Lord Andrea de Sillinon, cantor of the church of Sedune, Hans Guerold, butler [!] of our lord, bishop of Sedune, witnesses to the foregoing being called and requested, and myself, Symone Rapilliardi, notary public, who etc. in the year and day aforesaid. In the year in which retro and on Monday (which was the last day of the month of May, at first hour, personally appointed at the aforementioned place the said Peter Eschyllyer was detained before the aforementioned lord Leonard, canon as above; and being asked by him whether he wished to confess and form a conscience about any of the said crime of heresy committed by him, he said that he did not wish to form a conscience about what he was not guilty of nor to ask for the pardon of the church. Having heard which, the aforementioned lord Leonard further admonished the same Peter as a second warning, that if he was guilty, he should return to the forum of the church and to the bosom of holy mother church. Which Peter replied that he did not wish to ask for mercy for what he had not committed. Then he assigned the same before the same on the first day of the current month of June, which will be the next day, at first hour, and then by the said accused, to hear and undergo the third warning of the canons

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- c)
- a)
- b)
- b.

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Then he warned him for the fourth warning, which was exorbitant, about the special grace he wished to give to the unity of the Orthodox faithful, offering to grant him the grace of the church,

while at least it was within time. When he was brought before him, he said that he did not wish to ask for the grace of the church for the said crime of which he was innocent. Having received this answer, the said Lord Leonard assigned him a fifth warning about the kindness of the church for the next day, at first hour.

1484, June 1. - Then, Majoria

cam and advise themselves. Act in the aforementioned place, in the presence of those mentioned above in the first notice and me Simone Rapilliardi, notary public, who etc.

Symon Rapilliardi /461/

Third canonical warning.

On Tuesday, the first of June, at first hour, the said Peter was personally appointed before Lord Leonard, by virtue of the previous assignment.

d.

For the lord has charitably admonished the same Peter for the third warning, whereby, putting aside all obstinacy, he wishes to confess his guilt of heresy, offering him the mercy of the church, which closes no door to enemies who wish to repay him. He replies that he does not wish to deny retaining the grace of the church for his other offenses, but does not ask the church for forgiveness for the crime of heresy not imputed to him [?], since he is not guilty of the same. Having given which warning, the aforesaid lord commissioner assigned the same Peter to the next day, first hour, and then, with special grace and generosity, assigned him to hear the fourth warning with the intimation that otherwise the mercy of the church would be precluded from him. And from there etc. Given on the day, year and place and before the witnesses mentioned and me, Simon Rapilliard, citizen of Sedona, notary public, who etc.

The next day, which was Wednesday, the second of June, was reported to the same person by the said Lord Leonard, commissioner, at first hour, and the said person was brought before the said commissioner and asked if he had considered wanting to confess the said crime of heresy, who said no, since he is not guilty of the same.

The fourth and fifth warnings.

And when asked by the said Lord Leonard, the commissioner, if he had any idea of wanting to confess his crime of which he is accused, he said no.

c.

Dritte kanonische Mahnung. - Third canonical warning.

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1484, June 2nd and 3rd . - Sitten, Majoria

Symon Rapilliardi

Fourth and fifth canonical warnings. - Fourth and fifth canonical warnings.

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Articles from the trial against Peter Eschiller, including the defendant 's responses . (Translation by hand; Peter Eschiller's responses and some corrections were written by Simon Rapillard. )

Against Peter Eschiller.

Symon Rapilliardi 7463/

But on the coming of the next day, Thursday, the third of this month of June, the said commissioner having been appointed and reported as above before the said commissioner and questioned as above, who answered as he answered immediately above. Then /462/ he admonished him for the fifth admonition of kindness and special grace, insofar as he wishes to return to the unity of the faithful of the Orthodox and to the bosom of the holy mother church, offering himself to be given the grace of the church, while at least it is within time. Who, being reported, answered as he answered immediately above. With which answer I dwell, the said lord Leonard

forbade the admonitions of the church to him. Of which he prayed etc. Given at Seduni, year, day, place, present as above, and me Simon Rapilliardi, notary, who etc.

from Monte Dei superior, diocese of Sedona, by the office of the inquisition of faith itself, for the fact that Peter himself committed many crimes against the Orthodox faith, with public voice and reputation reporting the same and the clamor of the people rising up, in such a way that no evasion can be concealed or concealed in any way, even these things being discovered by taking information from there and having been accused by the accomplices of the undersigned about whom the crime of heresy is being investigated, as is described in detail below.

In the year of our Lord one thousand four hundred and eighty-four and on the twelfth day of June, an inquisitorial process follows which is being and is intended to be carried out by the procurator of the sacred inquisition of the faith before the most reverend in Christ father and our lord lord Jodocus de Sillinon, by the grace of God and the apostolic see bishop of Sedona, prefect and committee of Valais.

1484, June 12th and 14th . - Sitten, Majoria

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Let him confess.

The articles of the inquisitorial process.

113

I. First of all, on the fact that the said Peter, born under the faith of the Most Holy Trinity, was marked and regenerated into a Christian creature in the font of baptism with the seal of the same, and this is true.

II. Also, that in the course of time he was confirmed in the same Christian faith by the sacred chrism of the bishop, and this is against and against Peter Esquierius, deserted  
true.  
and.

He doesn't remember.

Questionnaire for the trial against Peter Eschiller with answers from the defendant. (Change of hand; however, the defendant's answers noted in the margin and some corrections are in the handwriting of Simon Rapillard.)

Followed by uti ordinario, deleted. b) Followed by legem et, deleted.\*

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6. Also, that Peter himself, being brought with his companions in sorcery and heretics deviating from the faith, with their master the demon, whose name is well known, was 'present' and appeared in various places, both wild and private, holding sects and synagogues, discussing evil works and counsels, and this is true.

true.

V. Also, because while the said deportee, as mentioned above, was bound by the bond of fidelity to the devil, the enemy of human nature, he committed and perpetrated many and diverse detestable diabolical works, deviating from the orthodox faith and acting in many ways against the 'Catholic' faith, and is

Denied.

III. Also on the fact that Peter himself, having been brought,

notwithstanding the aforementioned sacraments by which he was to protect himself with the weapons of light, after many years, the number of which is well known, disregarding and rejecting the same sacraments, with the persuasion of Peter by certain other persons who deviated from the Christian faith, whom he well knows, and also by the devil, the enemy of human nature, whose name is well known, he gave and offered faith and fidelity to the same devil and denied God Almighty and 'Jesus' Christ, his only son, our Lord, and his immaculate mother the Virgin Mary and the other things that are of God, thus violating the faith, committing idolatry and most gravely delinquenting in the aforementioned matters, and it is true. /464/ IUI. Also, upon the fact that the said abnegation was committed, he himself, being delivered to the devil, his master, whose name is well known, sacrificed, made offerings, paid homage and reverence, pledged and promised to pay tribute and annual revenue , committing sacrilege and offerings , and inflicting the penalty of the law against such perpetrators, which is damnable and injurious, and this is true.

Denied.

Denied.

Denied.

Ignored.

true.

VIII. Also, on the fact that all the aforementioned infamy, accusations and defamations

The said Peter

[is accused] of having insurrected himself among good and important persons known and close to Peter and having knowledge of him.

The public voice and the rumor of this kind of heresy, of which he is accused, prevailed, as it has been for a long time now . /465/

VII. Also, on the fact that in the aforementioned cases, Peter himself was reported by some of the heretical accomplices of the same Peter in previous years in the said tenement from the Mountain of God, and was 'defamed', accused and accused, and is

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He says that he was unaware of  
his absence before, but afterwards  
he heard some people say so.

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In

AEV, ATL 7, no. 82, p. 464: Points 4 to 8 of the accusations against Peter Eschiller and his replies (see edition, p. 114). Photo J.-M. Biner.

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XIII. Also on the fact that the said titled one was once seen in his cellar

of Consches and was found riding or standing above the devil of the same reported master or the said devil was reported above the same reported master and it is true.

It is true.

IX. Also, on the fact that the said Peter, having been brought before, knew in the past and knows in the present that among his acquaintances and neighbors and in the surrounding areas he had been and is greatly defamed, 'accused' and suspected of the 'said' crime of heresy and X. Also on the fact that on a certain occasion Greta, the wife of the same declarant, was absent from her country.

XII. Also on the fact that he himself, entitled " Conches ", has held and had the devil as his master in his buildings for many years, whose name is well known in one glass, holding and preserving him [!] and obeying him and his commands, and it is true.

XI. Also on the fact that in the past years, in various places both in this country of Valais and abroad, it was reported to him and reproached before trustworthy persons that he was a heretic, about which words, as if he were guilty in fact, he made no purgation or applied any diligence to purge himself, and this is true.

, hoping that the time of the life of the same person who was carried away would not return, he himself, who was carried away within a few days, without speaking to Greta herself, caused her to return by his diabolical art, and it is true.

XVII. Also on the fact that on a certain Thursday, at night , the said intitulated one was with his master before the house of a certain deceased from Consches whom he knew well in a certain sect of heretics, in which sect some money had been divided. Who brought them and divided them and

What they did there and who were present, it is well known that he himself was reported and it is true. /

466/ XVI. Also about the fact that on a certain other occasion he himself was reported with his master in a certain sect of heretics (0) 'tent near' the villa of Castellion. What they did there and who were present, it is well known that he himself was reported and it is true.

XV. Also, about eight years ago, after the said man was brought with the devil as his master, he was 'attacked' in a certain synagogue of heretics in Upper Castellion.

XIV. Also concerning the fact that the said instigator, together with his master, whose name is well known, about sixteen years have passed, was and appeared in a certain synagogue of heretics ' held within the limits of the parish of the Monastery and outside it'. What they did there and who was present, is well reported and is true.

Denied.

Denied.

Ignored.

He says as he said just above.

Denied.

Denied.

Denied.

Denied.

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Denied.

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Denied.

XX. Also on the fact that during the summer, the said deposed one was with his master in a certain sect of heretics "held in a certain place" of Consches. What they did or concluded there and [who] were present, is well deposed and is true.

XVIII. Also, regarding the fact that the said instigator was with his master on a certain Thursday in a certain sect of heretics at Castellion (in a certain place) 'try it out'. What they did there and who was present, is well reported and is true.

What further was done or concluded, and who were present, is well known to him, and who prevented the goods and fruits of the land from being destroyed, he is not ignorant of, and it is true.

Ignored.

XXII. Also, regarding the fact that the said person, who was called "the devil," often performed incantations against people and beasts by diabolical art, and gave poisonous cups to people and persons who eventually died or became insane, and this is true. /467/

Denied.

Denied.

XXIV. Also, that the most reverend lord Walter himself, through his letters patent, publicly prohibited and forbade, under penalty of confiscation [!] of goods and persons and of a convicted and confessed crime, that no person should flee the face of justice, leave their own homes and be absent from the country of Valais, except with the special permission of the lord himself or his officials, and this is true.

XIX. Also concerning the fact that the said delatus was with his master in a certain 'other' sect of heretics 'held in the said parish'. What was done or concluded there and who was present, is well reported and is true.

21. Also, regarding the fact that the said person, who was called the devil with his master, whose name is well known, was and appeared in many other sects of heretics in many wild and private places, which is well reported, and who was present with them, and what was done or concluded, is well reported and is true.

117

Denied.

Denied.

XXIII. Also concerning the fact that the most reverend lord Walter Supersaxo, formerly bishop of Sedune of good memory, at the serious request and request of the messengers of the dese of Consches , as was his duty and due security, as is customary, was given on this, he ordered an investigation in the dese of Consches by his appointed commissioners against the guilty, defamed and suspected, among other things, of the crime of heresy and sorcery,

and this is true.

Let it be confined.

Machine Translated by Google

b)

a)

c)

27. Also, on the fact that the said person entitled knew and knows that he would and is suspected of the crime of heresy and accused by heretical persons who were burned, 'suspected, defamed and named,' from which he absented himself from the face of justice and fled, and it is true.

26. Also on the fact that, while an inquisition was being held in the said decennium of Consches against heretics, the said person named as being conscious and guilty of the crime of heresy and doubting that he would be detained and investigated in person for the same crime, distrusting justice for himself after the said inhibitions, as mentioned above, he fled, left his own home and left the country of Valais, and did not dare to return there until after the death of the same most reverend Lord Walter, and this is true.

XXV. Also, that such prohibitions and defenses, as mentioned above, were made upon the notification of the same Peter Eschiller and were made in his presence and hearing, and it is true.

XXVIII. Also that about all the above, the said titled person among his acquaintances and neighbors and good and trustworthy persons having knowledge of him, both in Consches and in the surrounding places, was and is openly and publicly defamed, vociferated and suspected<sup>10</sup> and it is true. /468/ [XXIX.] Also that the above are true, notorious and manifest etc.

[XXX.] Also, that there is public word and fame etc. about them.

In the year of our Lord one thousand four hundred and eighty-four, on the 14th day of June, at Seduni, in the great stupa of the castle of Maiorie, at one o'clock, the said Peter Eschillier was personally appointed, before the said Lord Leonard, commissioner, and he responded by a transcribed process as contained on the back of which article, by means of his oath bodily given to him on the holy gospels of God, [informed] 'by' the aforesaid Lord Leonard and the discovery [of] which will be found in the future to have committed perjury which is considered as having been convicted of the said crime of heresy.

Symon Rapilliardiv) /469/

118

Which having been thus accomplished, the aforesaid lord Leonard, the commissioner as above, assigned the same Peter to hear the opinion of our aforesaid lord bishop of Sedona which he had deemed to be given on the abovementioned matters [!]. Concerning which he asked that a testimonial letter be given to him by me, the notary, under the signature, in the presence of Wylly Biellers, the castellan Heremencie, Hans Guerold, the butler, George Riczy, the cook of our lord bishop of Sedona, and myself, Symone Rapilliardi, who etc.

Followed by de parte bonorum suorum, omitted.

(From here on, the hand of Simon Rapillard is used again. - A nouveau main de Simon Rapillard.)

Ignored.

Ignored.

He says that he was well absent

from his country and his home,  
but says that he is not guilty of  
the said crime, but that he  
withdrew for that reason so that  
he might obtain a more lenient  
justice elsewhere than that which  
then reigned in the decembre of  
Consches.

Followed by et lege, deleted.

Followed by perfidious, deleted. d)

Ignored.

Followed by de parte corporis e)

After et in and followed by sui,  
deleted. divine,

human, civil and canonical and municipal laws, deleted rashly, enormously and most seriously .

Machine Translated by Google

Seduni, in the great stupa of the castle of Maiorie, at first hour, before the most reverend father in Christ and our lord, lord Jodocus de Sillinon, bishop of Seduni, prefect and count of Valais, the said Peter Eschillier was brought before him and questioned by him, our lord, after many exhortations made to him to be willing to return to the bosom of the church if he had considered himself willing to confess the said crime of heresy, who said that he did not know how to confess what he had not committed and of which he was not guilty. Which aforesaid our lord bishop of Seduni admonished the same Peter for the sixth warning of beneficence and special grace which, if he did, he offers him the bosom and pardon of the church [and the lord bishop] who do not close to any sinner of the church who willingly wants to return but offers himself safe in person and goods to return to his house. For which things to be done, our lord bishop of Seduni set a term for the said Peter from now until next Monday; which if he refuses to do, a definitive sentence on the premises of our aforesaid lord bishop of Sedona shall be heard by the said Peter. Concerning which premises etc. present there are the venerable and excellent men lords Andrea de Sillinon, cantor, Leonardo the Prefect, canon and official of Sedona, Hans Guerold, butler of our aforesaid lord bishop of Sedona, and me Symone Rapilliardi who etc.

Sixth Canonical Admonition. - Sixième monition canonique.

- Then, Major.

f.

1484, June 25 or 26 .

Sixth admonition.

Finally, in the year before last, on Saturday, which was the 25th of June1

,

Done on the day, year and place aforesaid.

Symon Rapilliardi /470/

1484, June 28. - Then, Majoria

Bishop Jost von Sillinen's verdict: Peter Eschiller, accused of witchcraft but denying the charges, is to be tortured. (Change of hands: 3rd hand.)

r)

Corrected from 0)

h)

0

g)

k)

l)

Followed by i)" i) Addition

by another hand. J)

would have been absent. n)

p)

q)

a)

1

m)

Followed by in insula supra, omitted.

Followed by et in eumdem infamia, deleted.

Followed by legem et, omitted.

Followed by et in penas incidendo, deleted.

Corrected from suspectissimum.

fuit, deleted.

Followed by withheld and is true, deleted .

Followed by apud Geschinon, omitted. s)

Followed by and named this way, gesticulate .

u)

Followed by in ripa, struck. proprias original.

v) At the bottom of the page Presentibus Willy Byellers, castellano

Corrected from suspectimus.

Heremence, Hans Guerold, butler, Georgio Riczy, cook [!], on the 14th day of June, 1003 , 803,  
, deleted.

Followed by monicionibus per prefatum, deleted.

119

Followed by loco dicto in the Milinmattun, omitted.

June 25 , 1484, was a Friday, not a Saturday; so is it really the 25th or rather the 26th of June?

Followed by " in the noises, deleted".

Machine Translated by Google

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h.

We, Jodocus de Sillonon, by the grace of God and the apostolic see, bishop of Sedune,  
prefect and corne of Valais, having seen the process against you Peter Eschellier formed at the  
instance of the procurator of faith, as well as the response made thereon and the warnings given  
to you according to the form of law, in which you did not wish to confess anything, and having  
attended and seen by us the accusations, accusations, defamations and information and evidence  
taken against you and others resulting from your process and others seen and to be seen by law,  
having participated in the council of jurists, invoking the name of Christ, sitting for the tribunal, in  
these writings pronounce, sentence, decree and declare that you Peter Eschellier, the inquisitor,  
must be subjected to questions and torture and must be subjected and tortured, without however  
the danger of death, the shedding of blood and the mutilation of limbs, of which we expressly  
protest. Given, read and promulgated on a) the 28th day of June, in the year of our Lord 1031831  
Jesus Mary

, in the presence of Hans Guerold, butler, Colin the Prefect, our  
servants, in the great stupa of our castle of Maiorie.

1484, July 1. - Sitten, Majoria

Confession of Peter Eschiller after prior torture.

Confession of Peter Eschiller, after being subjected to torture.

For Peter Eschillier, freely and voluntarily, was advised to be released from prison and free from all fear and the appearance of torture, except that on the previous day he had only been tied to the cords.

He said it was true that about twelve years had passed.

In the name of the Lord, amen. In the year of the same one thousand four hundred and eighty-four and on Thursday, the first of the month of July, at first hour, in Seduni, in the great stupa of the castle of Maiorie, was personally appointed Peter Eschillier, parish priest of the Monastery of Consches, for the crime of heresy and sorcery, imprisoned by the reverend our lord, Lord Jodocus de Sillinon, bishop of Seduni, prefect and counts of Valais, by them then extracted and existing before the venerable and distinguished men lords Andrea de Sillinon, cantor, Leonardo Prepositi, canon and official of the curia of Seduni, commissioners in this part of the 'aforesaid' most reverend our lord, bishop of Seduni and by the same commissioners diligently questioned Peter himself, until he would freely and voluntarily confess his guilt and the crime of heresy of which he is accused and accused.

,  
14411 Process of confessional heretics of wickedness by Peter Eschillier,  
parish of the Monastery of Consches.

Sentence of Bishop Jost of Silenen, according to which Peter Eschillier, who is accused of witchcraft and refuses to confess, must be subjected to torture. (Change of hand: third hand.)

Symon Rapilliardia a) a)

Place from the hand of the notary Simon Rapillard. - At the bottom of the page modern note from Philippe de Torrenté [?]:

1484. Sententia per episcopum lata in haereticum cum remissione ad bra-chium seculare.

Machine Translated by Google

1

2

For the man said to Peter Delatto, if it were of his will as it was before, when he spoke to him in the said inn at Heriols. Then the

same Peter Delatto knew that the man who [!] called himself from Kurwalla was a devil who afterwards called himself Hemerly in

the said meadows, saying to the same Peter Eschillier Delatto: «I am a devil, it behooves you to deny God Almighty and accept

me as your master and do homage to me.» And immediately the same Peter Delatto denied God Almighty and accepted the

said devil called Hemerly as his master and lord, the said devil Hemerly giving the said Peter Delatto a certain sum of money

from his hand covered with a garment to the hand of the said Peter Delatto; Peter himself put the money, which was small, into

his purse, and after a certain time, after the absence of the said devil named Hemerly, he looked into his purse and found no

money. Then he realized that he had been deceived.

The man from Kurwalla asked the same Peter who was brought in what his footprints were and whether he was rich or poor. The

Peter who was brought in replied that his footprints were common and that he was not very rich. Then the said man from Kurwalla

answered the said Peter who was brought in: "I will teach you well the way by which you will become

rich.” The Peter who was brought in replied how this could be done, then the same man from Kurwalla told the said Peter that he himself had paid homage to the devil and that afterwards he had had enough of worldly goods and had thereby become rich. The Peter who was brought in replied to the same man from Kurwalla: “I will do this willingly if only /448/ I could become rich, since I do not work willingly.” To which the said man from Kurwalla replied: “If only you have the spirit to do it, you will immediately find what you desire,” saying to himself: “Go alone outside the said town of Heriols to the meadow and there you will find what you seek.” Then the said Peter on the same day, at the evening hour, namely at twilight, went outside the said villa of Heriols to certain meadows where he found a certain man of average stature, wearing a long gray garment, whom he did not see in his hands or in his trousers because of the length of his garment, having a pale and gray face, deformed, not befitting human nature. Around the feast of Saints Peter and Paul in the month of June, Peter himself, having been brought to Heriols,\* lodged in the house of a certain guest, whose name he does not know, in the stupa of the same inn on one side, alone separated from the other guests, with a certain man who called himself from Kurwalla. dressed in a certain black garment, the name of which he did not know.

, On the third day following, at the same hour and place, the said Peter Delatus arrived there carrying a black hen which he had bought at Heriols which he had settled for himself, a large one from Milan, which he gave to the said devil Hemerly, his master, in the name of homage and fidelity to him; which hen the devil himself /449/ received in his own hands; which hands he could not see because of the length of the sleeves [!] of his garment. The same Peter Delatus reproached the same devil Hemerly , his master, for having defrauded him by giving him money which was none, then the said devil said to the said Peter:

«I will repair and amend you, so that you will be well satisfied.» Then the said master Hemerly set the said Peter Delatus a time and term that on a certain following day which he did not know, about the feast of Saint James, he should let himself be found in certain meadows below the village of the Monastery, which he himself

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The old German name for Airolo in the Leventina Valley, TL Kurwalla/ Churwalchen, is an old name for the Romansh-speaking area of the Diocese of Chur (kindly communicated by Dr. Arnold Hammer of the Swiss German Dictionary in Zurich). In this translation, we use the term Bünden or Graubünden, which emerged in the 15th century.

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Followed by negavit, omitted.

a) original short.

1484, July 3. - Sitten, Majoria

When asked about other accomplices and synagogue leaders, he says that he does not remember them at present, but that he wishes to advise. And he was [assigned] by the aforementioned lord commissioners to give better advice both in his own case and in that of others on the next [Saturday], at first hour.

Asked what they did in the said place, he says that they made ruins in the said water, wanting to destroy the meadows located there, which they could not destroy according to their consent or will, although they did damage a little, where there were present /450/ as in the aforementioned form in the synagogue itself many of the people who had been tried and accused him, namely the wife of Egidius Metzen and his daughter, the wife of Georg Temen of the Monastery, Cristandus Berthold, he does not remember others, living people were present, namely Thomas Biderbosten in the same fantasy and vision or spirit, as he confesses above, as it seems to him.

He was brought to Peter at the hour of twilight. When Peter was brought to him, the said devil, his master, appeared as in the preceding form, saying and pointing out to him that he wished to satisfy Peter. Subsequently, the same devil, called Hemerly, appointed a certain day about the month of August, of which day he does not remember, that he should go to the upper Castellion back to the villa in Millibach, which he also did.

Asked if Peter himself personally went to the said place, he said that he did not, but his master went for him to the said place in the form of the person reported and with the consent of the said reported, since he says that after a heretic person gives consent to the devil, his master, to do some act, then the said devil, their master, has the power for the heretics to do those evils in which they consent and in the meantime their body is and can be in a house or in another particular place alone, separated from the company of other persons and in the meantime their intellect is and works in the main about those things which the devil, their master, does for them with their consent, since he says that only their consent given to the devil, their master, works about these things. And from this consent alone they know all that is done by their devils, their masters, and know the persons who are or are their masters for them in their synagogues [!] and diabolical works.

Act where above, in the presence of the noble and discreet men there, John of Platea, vice-bailiff of the land of Valais, John Jungen, castellan, John of Prenseris , notary and syndic, Benedict Kalbermatter, flageretto, Hans Hebrehart [!], citizens of Sedun, Anthony Nescier and me, Simon Rapilliardi, public notary , who etc.

Symon Rapilliardi

i.

Peter Eschiller confirms his confession to the two commissioners, after being subjected to torture once again.

122

After further torture, Peter Eschiller confirms his confession before the two commissioners.

b)

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Followed by inde, deleted.

Symon Rapilliardi

followed by qui dixit, deleted.

Followed by ligatus, deleted.

He further confesses that certain years passed, the number of which he does not remember, and he was brought before a certain synagogue of heretics on a certain Thursday, as he thinks best, in the month of August at Riczingen, under the house of

And he further says and confesses as if, as he says, better advised, that when he denied Almighty God and accepted the said Hemerly as his master, he gave him allegiance, kissed the devil himself, his master, on the ass, and Peter himself lifted up for himself the long garment that his said master, who was stinking, wore.

Peter Eschiller confirms his confession once again without torture and provides further details.

But on the coming of the said Sabbath, which was the third of this month of July, in the year in which he returned, in the great stupa of the said castle, the said Peter Eschillier was appointed before the aforesaid lords Andrea de Sillino[n], cantor of the church of Sedona and protonotary of the apostolic see, and Leonardo Prepositi, canon and official of the curia of Sedona, commissioners as above appointed by the same lord bishop of Sedona, and being asked whether the aforesaid confessions made by him on Thursday were true, he at first said that they were so, and then said incontinently that he had lied about himself and about others; which denial, as mentioned above, was made by him, he was led to the place of torture and tied to a rope, and both of them were lifted up high and given a ride, as is the custom, and Peter himself, being carried, begged to be freed from all torment, willing to tell the truth, and Peter himself was freed from all torment at his request. He said that everything he had confessed above was true and further asked that he be given another day to better advise. For indeed the lord commissioners /451/ as above appointed, appointed the same Peter the day next Monday, first hour, to better advise himself and to provide more healthily for the remedy of his soul both in his own and in the case of others. Acted in the Castle of Maiorie, before the prison gate, on the day and year mentioned, in the presence of those above and myself, Simon Rapilliardi, who etc.

1484, July 5. - Sitten, Majoria

In the year in which retro, on Monday, the fifth of July, at the first hour, above, in the great stupa of the castle of Maiorie, the said Peter Eschillier was personally placed , separated from all torment and on this day not tormented, except for a time with his hands tied, he confessed that all the things confessed above were true 'and he himself, being brought forth word for word, narrated orally, as described'.

He further confesses that he gives the said black hen or another hen, of which he made mention above in his confession, to his said master annually from the time of the said homage paid on this side in a certain meadow situated below the monastery villa, always in the month of August, as it appears to him, near night.

Peter Eschiller, who was not tortured, confirms his confession once again and provides some details.

123

before

b)

a)

c)

Machine Translated by Google

b)

a)

1484, July 6. - Sitten, Majoria

Further asked what was the reason why Peter himself, when brought before him, pretended to be so devoted, he said that he did not make these devotions for the sake of flattery, but for the reason that God would give him the courage to resist the said crime , since he had often regretted

having fallen into that heinous crime of heresy, but his heart was always good towards God. He also confesses that once, around the month of August, he does not remember the year or day, except that it was between day and night, he was taken to his cellar with the said Hemerly, his master, where they knew each other carnally through their hindquarters, like brute animals.

Thomas Biderbosten, where the devil, in the form previously confessed by him, applied there, bringing to himself and his undersigned accomplices certain money in a hairy bag, as he believes, where the persons named above by him, already justified and still living, were present, namely Thomas Biderbosten, haman, Kye nyn Matly Laquers. 14521

Asked if he knew that the above-named were present personally and corporally, he says and answers that each one of them was in their spirit, as he said [in] his first confession. Which money he himself brought and Thomas Biderbosten received. Which money, however, disappeared, when the said devil departed and because he could not have anything from the money, the said Metziltinga, having been justified, was angry, saying in these words: «I do not want to come anymore because I cannot have anything here.»

Symon Rapilliardi

He said he did not know anything else but said he wanted to advise better. When Peter had been informed of the aforementioned, the lord commissioners appointed the next day, at first hour, to advise better. Present there were the distinguished men Theodolus Venetz, bailiff of the land of Valais, the noble Johann de Platea, vice-bailiff, Johann Jungen, castellan, Benedict Kalbermatter, banderetto, Johann de Prenseris, syndic, Hans Hebrehart, citizens of Sedun, and me Simon Rapilliardi who etc.

k.

Peter Eschiller declares that he has nothing more to confess and after reading his confession, he confirms it in front of the two commissioners as far as he is concerned, but expresses reservations for his accomplices.

On Tuesday, the sixth of July, at first hour, and before the said commissioners aforesaid, and having asked the said Peter brought forward what more he wished to confess about the said crime or what more he had committed, he said that he knew nothing else about the said crime, except as he had confessed above; then having read to him the tenor of his confession word for word, he said and confessed that everything and every single thing in his confession written above would be true, at least in his own deed; and to which he says to his accomplices 14531 Peter Eschiller declares he has nothing further to confess. After his confession is read, he confirms everything concerning himself, but expresses reservations about his statements regarding his accomplices.

124

Followed by spectabilis, deleted.

Followed by ubi et, deleted.

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1.

Followed by ubi supra, omitted.

Asked about his accomplices, whether he was willing to confess them , he said that if he knew and had known any of them better, he would accuse them well, saying that he knew nothing more than what he confessed above, which are true.

Peter Eschiller declares that he has nothing more to confess about his crime or his accomplices and concludes his trial.

At the conclusion of his trial, Peter Eschiller declared that he had nothing further to say about his crime and his accomplices.

## Judgment.

Bishop Jost of Silenen pronounces the sentence against Peter Eschiller, whom he declares a heretic, and hands over to the secular arm for the application of the deserved punishment.

Renouncing and concluding his proceedings and the sins he had committed, he humbly asked God for forgiveness. Regarding the above, etc. Act and witnesses, who are above and myself, Symphonius Rapilliard, citizen of Sedona, notary public, who etc.

Bishop Jost of Silenen condemns Peter Eschiller as a heretic and hands him over to the secular authorities for punishment.

Symon Rapilliardi

that he does not dare to affirm securely and assertively that he saw and knew under the danger of his soul that the said Thomas Biderbosten, haman, Kye nyn Matly Laquers were in the said synagogues, but he says well that it appears to him that he saw them in the same form, as he confessed above, and the said was brought by the same commissioners as those appointed above, and assigned to the next Thursday, first hour, to report and conclude his proceedings of this kind, in the presence of the above except the lord bailiff of the land of Valais, and me Symon Rapilliard, notary, who etc.

[1484], 8 July. - Sitten, Majoria

Finally, in the year in question and on Thursday, which was the eighth of this month of July, in the Castle of Maiorie, in a certain chamber next to the chapel of the said castle, before the aforesaid commissioners as above appointed, the said Peter Eschillier was placed . He was diligently questioned as to whether he had committed any other crime besides the said crime of heresy, and he said that he knew nothing else.

1484, July 10. - Sitten, Majoria

m.

Symon Rapilliardi 7454/

We, Jodocus de Sillinon, by the grace of God and the apostolic see, bishop of Sedune, prefect and corne of Valais, hereby declare to all and sundry to whom it is expedient that this will be made known.

a)

125

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jfcv ^ <U\$r>\*& &%&\*\*\*«\* «jfcv\*\* \*\*

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AEV, ATL 7, no. 80, p. 454: sentence of Bishop Jost of Silenen against Peter Eschiller (see edition, pp. 125 and 127). Photo J.-M. Biner.

Machine Translated by Google

b)

a)

c)

d)

Symon Rapilliardi

This present sentence of ours was delivered and given in our Castle of Maiorie, in the new hall, on Saturday, at first hour, which was the tenth of the month of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand eighty-four, in the presence there of the venerable man Lord Leonardo the Prefect, our canon and official of Sedunsidge.

We, having seen the inquests made in the above-mentioned deseño a Monte Dei, by which it is clear to us that there is a public rumor and reputation of heresy and that many indications have resulted against Peter Eschillier de Monasterio, of the same deseño, having also seen the inquisitions) and the confessional process by which it is clear to us by the personal confession of the said Peter who was brought in that he denied God Almighty, incited by the devil, the enemy of human nature, he paid homage and reverence and animal tribute, he was in various synagogues and places of heretics, where he committed various and enormous evils, having also seen the renunciation and conclusion of the process of this kind, we, the aforementioned Jodocus, sitting in the tribunal in the manner of our ancestors, declining no more to the right than to the left, moving our minds from just causes, invoking the name of Christ, having God alone before our eyes, in these writings we decree and declare you the aforementioned Peter Eschillier de Monasterio a heretic and a 'crime' of heresy to have committed heresy and to have been impenitent and to have been appointed as a heretic, to be held and considered as such, as we hold you as a heretic and appointed, and as such a heretic and appointed we leave you with due animosity, to be beaten with secular arms, without the danger of mutilation of limbs, bloodshed and bites, of which we solemnly protest, confiscating the goods which you have and have had from the day of the commission of the crime in accordance with the terms of the present articles, according to canonical sanctions .

, lord John of Bellen-chona,

chaplain, noble squire John [!] Hu°lrici, Willy Bieller, our servants, witnesses to the above called and requested, under [our] seal which we use in such matters, impressed in [testimony of the truth ] of all the individual above.

Followed by et relaxamus, omitted. tro,  
omitted.

Followed by processu, deleted.

Followed by nobili scutifero, crossed out.

They pressed wax seals under paper.

Followed by fisco nos-

e) The words are hidden by the opened-

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ABS, Tir. 92-178, S. 34-36.

Furthermore, Jenni himself, who for the past six or seven years had been summoned by Lord Jos , coerced and persuaded to bring a lawsuit against him through the fiscal procurator, had to answer under oath, and was told how he had spoken: Lord Josen should be arrested and brought before the Swiss Confederates and judged there . To this he answered under oath that he had not spoken further, for one should judge him before the bishop, before the pope, or before our Swiss Confederates. Then Lord Jost himself replied: "I will shoot at the Pope and at the Swiss Confederates; they are not masters, I am master." And thereupon he had them barred from the castle. And so that Jenni now desired that judgment be pronounced in such a matter, he could by no means obtain it, but if he wished to be released and get off scot-free, he had to

submit a report to Lord Josen for one hundred and sixty pounds in further charges, as has been mentioned above. /36/ He goes on to say that about five years had passed, Lord Jos himself had been accused of arson and tyranny for no other reason than that he believed this fellow had become a vassal in Hassle and had sworn an oath to them; and if he wanted to be released, he would have to give his oath of surety, answer for himself in everyday matters, and it was not a matter of the guarantors' lives and property standing in place of the chief treasurer , therefore the guarantors would also have to take a solemn oath . Accordingly, Jenni brought letters and seals from the powerful lords of Beren proving that he had not sworn an oath. Uff soe lichs ant-wurt aber herr Jos: «Ich schusse uff dy von Beren und iren brieff.»

Item Jenni Zen Stadlan von Reckingen, zuger, furbracht, spricht und zuget by sym eid, der im zu° Got und den helgen geben ist, das vormals in zyten sae liger gedae chtnus herr Walther Uff der Flue

1497, January 12th or 13th

#### Appendix - Annexes

Testimony of Jenni Zen Stadien von Reckingen against Bishop Jost von Silenen concerning the property of Peter Eschiller, who was convicted of heresy.

The bishop of Sitten, Peter Eschiller,

was a fugitive from the land for heresy, and later, in time, Herr Josen paid several of Oryols twenty pounds to the court, which was obligatory.

Walser werung, however, because he himself was enslaved as though he had fled the country, the same Lord Walther had his goods forcibly confiscated by court; and after the fact that the people of Oriols might be proven guilty of such things, he ordered such a prohibition, so /35/ , so that Jenni could take the guilt upon himself by a letter of complaint and for such money his goods Peter had been seized by court, which he also received and was recovered for some years, but then Lord Jos, bishop of Sitten, had forcibly taken such goods from him by right or judgment.

Testimony of Jenni Zen Stadien of Reckingen on Bishop Jost of Silenen, concerning the property of Peter Eschiller who was tried for heresy.

,  
He further states that he previously bought some goods from the aforementioned Peter von urlob und willen Herr Andresen von Silinon and Johannes Asper, who at that time were Herr Josen stathalter in ecclesiastical and secular matters, and

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Old German name for Airolo in the Leventina TL

Jost de Silenen, bishop of Sion 1482-1496 (Stockalper Gallery in Brigue).

He had paid, which Lord Jos had taken from him by force of law and judgment. For this, the property remained

untouched for three years. Afterwards, Lord Jos went to court and demanded such a reprieve from him , which he did

not accept. For this, he was forced to buy the property anew for forty pounds of Walles' worth of money.

129

1

4  
3  
1  
2

First canonical admonition.

FROM THE TRIAL AGAINST PETER ESCHILLER  
FRENCH TRANSLATION

1484, May 29 - July 10. - Sion, Majoria /

459/ Canonical warnings addressed by the venerable man Leonard Prepositi<sup>1</sup> ,  
canon of Sion, deputed in this matter by the reverend father in Christ Jost of  
Silenen<sup>2</sup>

a.

1484, May 29. - Sion, Majorie

, bishop of Sion by the grace of God, to Peter Eschiller, of the parish of  
Münster, in the district of Conches, detained for his suspect faith in the prison of  
our aforementioned bishop of Sion.

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When asked first whether he knew the cause of his detention and incarceration,  
Peter replied that he knew very well that it was for the crime of heresy<sup>4</sup> of which he  
was innocent, as he claimed.

When asked if he knew and had known that, among his acquaintances and  
neighbors, he was publicly suspected of heresy, he said no, at least until Anton  
Hallabarter, major of Conches, had executed certain people who had had to  
accuse him, Peter.

In the name of the Lord, amen. In the year of the Nativity of Christ 1484, on Saturday, May  
29, at the hour of prime<sup>3</sup> , in Sion, in the great hall of the Majorie castle, Peter Eschiller of Conches,  
from the parish of Münster, personally appeared before Leonard, canon of Sion, commissioner in  
the matter, in the presence of the notary and the signed witnesses.

At that time the formula "crimen heresis" was classic in Valais to designate the crime of witchcraft.  
Cf. HA VON ROTEN, «Zur Komposition des Domkapitels von Sitten im Mittelalter», dans  
Vallesia,\U, 1948, p. 97.

Leonard Prepositi was a canon of Sion from 1458 to 1492. He is mentioned as an official of Sion from  
1470

(ACS, Tir. 25-4, p. 71; 1470, November 24), and regularly until 1488.

The translation of the Latin text offered here is literal, although not all repetitions are included. The  
scribe adopted a

cumbersome style: he repeatedly uses "above said," "said," etc., and multiplies synonyms. He does not  
use the past

tense consistently but moves indiscriminately between the present and past tenses and pays little heed  
to the rules of  
sequence of tenses. We have tried to standardize the tenses to make the reading more pleasant.  
However, this is not a

literal translation.

raire.

Jost de Silenen, son of Christophe de Silenen and Ysabelle de Chevron, succeeded Walter Supersaxo as  
Bishop of Sion in July 1482; he was expelled on April 15, 1496, cf. B. TRUFFER, Portraits des

évêques de Sion de 1418

à 1977, Sion, 1977, pp. 33-35.

The prime time corresponds to approximately 6 a.m., see Lexikon des Mittelalters, vol. 8, Munich, 1996, col. 259.

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5

7

, singer of the church of Zion, Hans Guerold<sup>6</sup>

Then, after informing Peter, who was listening and understood, of the canonical admonitions that the Church must issue in this matter, the said Leonard canonically and charitably enjoined him in every possible way to confess with contrition whether he had at any time been tainted by the crime of heresy, whether by the temptation of the devil, at the instigation of certain persons, or led by sin. If he acknowledged it, he was offered the help and pardon of the Church and the Bishop of Sion, who do not close the doors of the Church to any sinner wishing to return freely. He was offered to be sent home, his person and property safe and sound. Thus was the first canonical admonition issued. The accused Peter said that he wished to reflect.

When asked if he had any malicious people or enemies in his circle, he replied that he might have many; however, he could not name them at the time nor remember them, nor did he know them all.

Upon this reply, the aforementioned Leonard, commissioner, summoned Peter to the following Monday, the last day of May, to hear the second canonical admonition. He asked me, the undersigned notary public, to draw up and give him a letter attesting to this admonition. Present as witnesses were the venerable André de Silenen.

Simon Rapillard

cupbearer to the bishop of Sion, and I, Simon Rapillard<sup>7</sup>, public notary, etc.

,

1484, May 31. - Sion, Majorie

Second canonical admonition.

Simon Rapillard 7461/

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In the aforementioned year, on Monday, the last day of May, at the hour of prime, the prisoner Peter Eschiller appeared personally at the aforementioned place before the said Canon Leonard. Asked if he wished to confess to heretical acts and examine his conscience, he said that he did not wish to examine his conscience nor ask the Church's pardon for that of which he was not guilty. Upon this response, the said Leonard charitably exhorted Peter for the second time to return to the bosom of Holy Mother Church, if he were guilty. Peter replied that he did not wish to ask for mercy for that which he had not committed. He was then summoned to appear the following day, June 1st, at the hour of prime, to hear the third canonical admonition, submit to it, and reflect. Done at the aforementioned place, in the presence of the persons mentioned in the first admonition and myself, Simon Rapillard, notary public.

b.

132, p. 287) and on May 3, 1494 where he is described as an honest man (ACS, Min. A 163, pp. 44-45).

André de Silenen, brother of Bishop Jost, was an early canon of Sion (attested from 1444). He is

mentioned as a cantor from 1474 and on October 12, 1484, held the title of cantor, apostolic protonotary, and vicar for the bishop's spiritual and temporal affairs. He was killed at Valère on October 31, 1486, by Clement de Madiis (see Ha von Roten, "Zur Zusammensetzung des Domkapitels von Sitten im Mittelalter," in Vallesia, III, 1948, p. 106). Hans Guerold of Brig, a resident of Sion, is still attested on December 2, 1488 (ACS, Min. A See above, pp. 92-93.

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c.

Fourth and fifth warnings.

Third canonical admonition.

1484, June 1st . - Sion, Majoria

On Tuesday , June 1st , at prime time, the accused Peter appeared in person before Leonard, pursuant to the previous summons. When questioned by Leonard, the commissioner in this matter, as to whether he had reconsidered his willingness to confess to the offense with which he was charged, he replied that he refused. Leonard charitably exhorted Peter for the third time to renounce his obstinacy and to confess his sin of heresy, offering him the mercy of the Church, which does not close its doors to those who wish to return. The accused replied that he did not mean to say that he refused the Church's grace for his other offenses, but rather that he did not seek the Church's pardon for the crime of heresy with which he was charged, since he was not guilty of it. After this admonition, the commissioner summoned Peter to appear the following day, at prime time, to hear a fourth admonition, by special and repeated grace, informing him that otherwise the path of the Church's mercy would be closed to him. Given on the aforementioned day and year, at the aforementioned place and before the aforementioned witnesses, in the presence of me, Simon Rapillard, citizen of Sion, notary public.

d.

June 2nd and 3rd, 1484. - Sion, Majoria

Simon Rapillard

The following day, Thursday, June 3, the accused appeared before the said commissioner and was questioned as above. He answered as above. Then, for the fifth time, he was exhorted, by special favor and grace, to join the community of the Orthodox faithful and the bosom of Holy Mother Church, and to receive the grace of the Church, at least while there was still time. The accused answered as before. At this answer, the said Leonardo put an end to the admonitions of the Church. Given at Zion, on the aforementioned date and at the aforementioned place, before the aforementioned witnesses and myself, Simon Rapillard, notary.

Simon Rapillard 7463/

The following day, Wednesday , June 2nd , the day assigned to the accused by Commissioner Leonard, the accused appeared at prime time before the Commissioner and was questioned about whether he had considered confessing to the crime of heresy. He replied that he had not, since he was not guilty of it. Then, for the fourth time, he was urged, by special and repeated grace, to join the community of Orthodox believers and to receive the grace of the Church, at least while there was still time. The accused said that he did not wish to seek the Church's grace for the crime of which he was innocent.

Upon this response, Leonard summoned him to appear for a fifth admonition, by the Church's favor, the following day at prime time.

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He denies it.

He denies it.

He admits it.

He doesn't remember it.

On the unspeakable, see J. CHIFFOLEAU, "Speaking the unspeakable. Remarks on the category of the unspeakable."

"dum from the 12th to the 15th century", in Annales ESC, March-April 1990, pp. 289-324.

II. Likewise, if it is true that subsequently he was confirmed in the same Christian faith by the anointing with holy chrism.

Against Peter Eschiller.

June 12 and 14 , 1484. - Sion, Majoria

and.

Articles from the trial against Peter Eschiller, including the defendant's responses.

In the year of the Lord 1484, on June 12, the inquisitorial trial which is being conducted and intends to be conducted, by virtue of his office, by the procurator of the holy inquisition of the faith before the very reverend father in Christ, Jost de Silenen, bishop of Sion by the grace of God and of the Holy See, prefect and count of Valais, against Peter Eschiller, of the district of Conches, in the diocese of Sion, author of a very large number of unspeakable crimes<sup>8</sup> against the orthodox faith, as rumor and public opinion report, because the popular outcry is such that no delay can suppress or conceal it; his misdeeds are also revealed by the information taken and the accusations made by the accomplices of the crime of heresy which has been investigated, as is set forth below point by point.

Articles from the inquisitorial trial.

I. First of all, if it is true that the said Peter, born in the faith of the most holy Trinity, was marked and regenerated by the sacrament of baptism as a Christian creature.

III. Likewise, if it is true that Peter, despite the aforementioned sacraments by which he should have protected himself as with weapons of light, several years ago - he knows well how many - rejected these sacraments and turned away from them at the instigation of certain other people turned away from the Christian faith, whom he knows well; if it is true that he also paid homage and faith to the devil, enemy of human nature - he knows well his name - and that he denied Almighty God, Jesus Christ his only son, our Lord, his immaculate mother , the Virgin Mary, and all that belongs to God, thus violating the faith, practicing idolatry and committing very serious faults.

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IV. Likewise, if it is true that after perpetrating the said denial, the accused sacrificed his master, whose name he knows well, to the devil, apostatized, paid him homage and revered him, promised him tribute and an annual rent, and pledged to pay them, committing sacrilege and apo-

8

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He said he was unaware of it  
before his absence but found out  
afterwards because he heard it  
from certain people.

He denies it.

He denies it.

He doesn't know.

people.

He denies it.

He said the same as above.

On the meaning of this word see p. 107, note 96.

This refers to the solemn ceremony of "purgatio" before the bishop, which allows anyone denounced as a heretic

by public rumor to be cleansed of the stain of defamation: the individual swears on his knees that he believes in and observes

the commandments of the Church; that he has not paid homage to the devil; that he has not committed any evil spells or

participated in gatherings of heretics; and that he will persevere in the Catholic faith. He is surrounded by people, the co-

expiators, who solemnly swear to his good reputation.

The ignore.

X. Similarly, if it is true that the accused, by his diabolical art,  
brought back his wife Greta in a few days , without even having  
spoken to her, when she had left the homeland hoping not to return  
while the said accused was still alive.

in the woods or on private property - to foment evil deeds.

V. Likewise, if it is true that the accused, while bound to the devil,  
the enemy of human nature, as has been said, by the bond of fidelity,  
accomplished and perpetrated many and various detestable and  
diabolical acts so that he deviated from the orthodox faith and acted  
against the Catholic faith in many ways.

stasis so that he incurs and deserves the penalties provided by law  
inflicted on those who commit such acts.

VI. Similarly, if it is true that Peter attended and participated with his  
accomplices, sorcerers, heretics and deviants, with their master the  
demon, whose name he knows well, in sects and synagogues<sup>9</sup> in  
various places -

VIII. Likewise, if it is true, concerning the infamy, accusations, and  
defamation, that the said Peter was accused, as long ago, by public  
rumor and charged with the crime of heresy by honest and wise  
people, his neighbors and acquaintances who were aware of it. /465/

VII. Likewise, if it is true that Peter was defamed, charged and  
accused of the aforementioned crimes by several of his heretical  
accomplices, a few years ago, in the district of Conches.

IX. Likewise, if it is true that the said Peter knew in the past and  
knows now that he has been and is defamed, accused and suspected  
of the said crime of heresy by his acquaintances and neighbors as

well as in the surrounding area.

XI. Likewise, if it is true that several years ago, in various places, both in Valais and outside, the accused was told and reproached before trustworthy people that he was a heretic and that he did not clear himself of such accusations, as guilty in fact, or did not take care to clear himself of them<sup>10</sup>.

10

9

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12

11

Union.

He denies it.

Several years ago, the devil, his master, whose name he knows well, in a vial, served him and obeyed his orders.

He denies it.

,

He denies it.

XVII. Likewise, if it is true that one Thursday night, the accused, along with his master, participated in a heretical gathering in front of the house of a man from the Conches district whom he knew well, during which coins were shared, the accused knows perfectly well who brought them and distributed them, what was done or decided, and who was present. Similarly, he is not unaware of who prevented the destruction of the property and produce of the land.

XVIII. Likewise, if it is true that the accused participated with his master one Thursday in a sect of heretics somewhere in [Ober]gesteln. What they did there and who was present, the accused knows very well.

XIX. Likewise, if it is true that the accused participated with his master in another sect of heretics in the said parish, the accused is well aware of what was done or decided there, and who was present.

He denies it.

He denies it.

XIII. Likewise, if it is true that the accused was seen and perceived once in his cellar in Münster riding on the devil - the master of the said accused - or the devil on the said accused.

XII. Similarly, if it is true that the accused sheltered and kept in his buildings in Münster<sup>11</sup>

Union.

XX. Similarly, if it is true that, in the summer, the accused and his master were at a sect of heretics somewhere in

XIV. Likewise, if it is true that the accused, along with his master, whose name he knows well, went and appeared, about sixteen years ago, in a synagogue of heretics located within and outside the parish of Münster, the accused knows well what they did there and who was present.

He denies it.

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XV. Likewise, if it is true that the accused, about eight years ago, took part with his

master, the devil, in a synagogue of heretics held at Obergesteln.<sup>12</sup> What they did there and who was present, the accused knows well. /466/ XVI. Likewise, if it is true that on another occasion, the accused participated with his master in a synagogue of heretics held near the village of Obergesteln. What they did there and who was present, the accused knows well.

Union.

Conches district.

The term "Consches" likely refers to the village of Münster and not the Conches valley. The records of notary Jean Triebmann, parish priest of Münster, attest to this usage (in villa de Consches), see AEV, AVL 206, passim; 1501-1520.

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XXII. Likewise, if it is true that the accused, using his diabolical art, repeatedly cast incantations against people and animals and gave poisoned potions to people who died or lost their minds. /467/ XXIII.

Likewise, if it is true that the very reverend late Walter Supersaxo, of blessed memory Bishop of

Sion, at the insistence and pressing request of the deputies of the district of Conches, as was his duty and after having received a suitable bond, as is the custom, ordered an inquiry by his commissioners delegated in the district of Conches against the guilty, the defamed, and the suspects, among others, of the crime of heresy and sorcery.

Conches. What they did there or decided and who was present, the accused knows very well.

XXI. Similarly, if it is true that the accused, along with his master the devil, whose name he knows well, was involved in and participated in several other heretical sects in various places—in the woods or in private homes—which he knows well, then the accused knows perfectly well who was present and what was done or decided.

XXV. Likewise, if it is true that these prohibitions and bans came to the knowledge of the said Peter Eschiller and were pronounced while he was present and hearing them.

XXVI. Likewise, if it is true that, while the investigation against heretics was being carried out in the district of Conches, the accused, because he felt and was guilty of the crime of heresy and because he feared being imprisoned and subjected to torture for this crime, not having confidence in justice for him, evaded justice after the aforementioned prohibitions, left his home and was absent from the homeland of Valais without daring to return until the death of the most reverend Lord Walter.

XXIV. Likewise, if it is true that the very reverend Walter Supersaxo by his letters patent published at mass in the churches of Ernen<sup>13</sup> and Münster forbids and prohibits anyone - under penalty of confiscation of property and person and of proven and admitted crime - from evading justice, leaving his home and being absent from the homeland of Valais, without the special permission of the

bishop or his officers.

He doesn't know.

He denies it.

He denies it.

He admits it.

He says that he was indeed  
absent from his homeland and  
his house, but he says that he is  
not guilty of the said crime; he left  
in order to obtain elsewhere a  
better justice than that which  
reigned then in the district of  
Conches.

Conches district.

He doesn't know.

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June 25, 1484 was a Friday and not a Saturday, so is it June 25 or 26?

He doesn't know.

He doesn't know.

- Sion, Majorie

Simon Rapillard /469/

[XXX.] Likewise, if public voice and rumor speak of these  
articles, etc.

XXVII. Likewise, if it is true that the accused knew and knows  
that he was and is suspected of the crime of heresy and that  
he has been accused, suspected, defamed and designated  
by heretical persons who have been burned, so that he has  
evaded justice and fled.

XXVIII. Likewise, if it is true that the accused on all the  
aforementioned points was and is openly defamed, disparaged,  
and suspected by his acquaintances, his neighbors, and  
honest and trustworthy people who know him both in Münster  
and in the surrounding area. /468/ [XXIX.]

Likewise, if these articles are true, notorious, and manifest,  
etc.

f.

1484, 25 or 26jun]4 .

In the year of our Lord 1484, on June 14th , at Sion, in the great hall of the Majorie  
castle, at the hour of prime, Peter Eschiller appeared in person before the said Leonard,  
commissioner, and answered the questions of the aforementioned trial, as indicated  
opposite each article, after having taken a corporal oath on the Holy Gospels and [having  
been warned] by the said Leonard that he would be convicted of the said crime of heresy if  
he were to prove perjury. Afterwards, the said Commissioner Leonard summoned Peter to  
hear the sentence that the Bishop of Sion would decide to render on this matter, and he  
asked me, the undersigned notary, to give him a letter testifying to the aforementioned  
facts , in the presence of Wylly Biellers, castellan of Hérémence, Hans Guerold, cupbearer,  
Georges Riczy, cook to our Bishop of Sion, and myself, Simon Rapillard, etc.

Sixth warning.

Finally, in the aforementioned year, on Saturday, June 25, 14 , in Sion, in the great hall of the Majorie castle, at the hour of prime, before the most reverend father in Christ, Jost de Silenen, bishop of Sion, prefect and count of Valais, appeared the said Peter Eschiller.

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After being questioned by the bishop about whether he had reflected on his decision, and after being repeatedly urged to return to the bosom of the Church and confess the said crime of heresy, he said that he could not confess what he had not committed and of which he was not guilty. Our Bishop of Sion warned him for the sixth time, as a special favor and grace, that if he did so, he would offer him the help and pardon of the Church [and of the Bishop of Sion], which do not close the door to any sinner who wishes to return freely, and that he would send him home safe and sound, his person and property in good health. Our aforementioned Bishop of Sion granted him a period of reflection.

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Simon Rapillard /470/

Sentence of Bishop Jost of Silenen, according to which Peter Eschiller, who is accused of witchcraft and refuses to confess, must be subjected to torture.

138

Confession of Peter Eschiller, after being subjected to torture.

/447/Confession of heretical depravity by Peter Eschiller, of the parish of Münster, of Conches.

In the name of the Lord, amen. In the year 1484, on Thursday, July 1st , at the hour of prie -m, in Sion, in the great hall of the Majorie Castle, appeared in person Peter Eschiller, of the parish of Münster, of Conches, imprisoned for the unspeakable crime of heresy and sorcery in the prison of the Reverend Jost de Silenen, Bishop of Sion, Prefect and Count of Valais; however, having been brought from there, he was presented before the venerable and esteemed André de Silenen, cantor, and Léonard Prepositi, canon and officer of the curia of Sion, commissioners in this matter for our most reverend Bishop of Sion. He was diligently questioned by the said commissioners as to whether he wished

h.

We, Jost of Silenen, Bishop of Sion by the grace of God and the Apostolic See, Prefect and Count of Valais, having examined the case brought against you, Peter Eschiller, at the instigation of the Procurator of the Faith, having seen your response and the admonitions addressed to you in accordance with the law, to which you refused to reply, having examined and seen the accusations, indictments, defamations , information, and evidence gathered against you, having seen all that arises from your trial and all that must be seen according to the law, with the advice of legal experts, having invoked the name of Christ, sitting in tribunal, by this writing we pronounce, judge, decide, and declare that you, Peter Eschiller, shall be subjected to questioning and torture, and that you shall be interrogated and tortured, without, however, going so far as the danger of death, the shedding of blood, and the mutilation of limbs, against which we expressly protest. Given, read and promulgated on June 28, 1484, in the presence of Hans Guerold, cupbearer, Nicolas Prepositi, our servants, in the great hall of our castle of La Majorie.

Jesus and Mary.

Peter was to be audited by the following Monday. If he refused to do so, it would be so that Peter could hear the final sentence pronounced by the Bishop of Sion on this matter.

Present were the venerable and esteemed André de Silenen, cantor, Léonard Prepositi, canon and officer of Sion, Hans Guerold, cupbearer to the bishop of Sion, and myself Simon Rapillard etc. Done on the day and in the year above mentioned, at the place above mentioned.

1484, June 28. - Sion, Majoria

g-

Simon Rapillard

1484, July 1st . - Sion, Majoria

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18

17

15

16

Three days later, at the same time, Peter went to the same place, bringing a black hen he had bought in Airolo

for a Milanese groschen, which he gave to the devil Hemerly, his master, as a token of the homage and loyalty he had

shown him. /449/ The devil received the hen in his hands, but Peter could not see his hands because of the length of

his jacket sleeves. When Peter reproached Hemerly, the devil, his master, for having deceived him by giving him money

that wasn't real money, the devil replied to Peter: "I will remedy this so that you will be satisfied." Then the said Hemerly,

his master, set a certain day for Peter, which he has forgotten, around the feast of Saint James, 18 , to go to some

meadows near Münster, which the accused did at dusk. The devil, his master, appeared to Peter in the same form as

before and promised Peter that he wanted to give him satisfaction.

The said Peter Eschiller, voluntarily and spontaneously, left the prison and was free from all fear and torment,

except that the previous day he had only been tied to the rope. 15

to confess freely, spontaneously and without torment his fault and the crime of heresy of which he was charged and

accused.

He said it was true that about twelve years ago, around the Feast of Saints

Peter and Paul in June , he, Peter, had gone to Airolo to stay at an inn whose name he didn't know. He was in the inn's

common room, away from the other customers, alone with a man who said he was from Graubünden, who was dressed

in black and whose name he didn't know. The man from Graubünden asked Peter where he was going and whether he

was rich or poor. Peter replied that he was transporting bales of merchandise and that he wasn't very rich. Then the

man from Graubünden told Peter, "I'll teach you how to become rich." Peter asked how that was possible, and then the

man from Graubünden told Peter that he had paid homage to the devil and that afterwards he had had enough worldly

goods and had become rich. Peter replied to the man from Graubünden: "That's what I would gladly do, /448/ if only I

could become rich, for I don't like to work." The man from Graubünden replied to Peter: "If only you were determined,

you would immediately find what you desire," telling him: "You only need to go to the meadows outside the town of

Airolo, and there you will find what you are looking for." So Peter went that very day at vespers, that is, at dusk, to the meadows outside the said town of Airolo, where he found a man of medium height, dressed in a long gray coat, whose legs and hands he could not see because of the length of his coat, with a pale, sallow, deformed face, not resembling human nature. The man asked Peter if he had the same intention as before when he had spoken to him in the inn in Airolo. Then Peter knew that the man who claimed to be from the Grisons was the devil, who then appeared in the meadows under the name of Hemerly, addressing Peter Eschiller: "I am the devil; you must renounce Almighty God, accept me as your master, and pay me homage." And immediately Peter renounced Almighty God and accepted the devil named Hemerly as his master and lord. With his hand hidden by his jacket, the devil Hemerly placed some money in Peter's hand. Peter put the small sum into his purse, and some time after the devil named Hemerly had left, he looked in his purse and saw no coins; he then knew he had been tricked.

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, Airolo, in the Leventina Valley, in the canton of Ticino.

It is about the punishment of the swindler.

Around June 29th.

Saint James is celebrated on July 25th.

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A 132, pp. 100-102; 1490, October 16).

73; 148J, May 19); he often appears among the assessors of Bishop Walter Supersaxo (ABS, Tir. 242/33/1, p.

101; 1479, August 6), or of the bailiff of Valais (ABS, Tir. 242/33/1, p. 35; 1470, May 4). He is one of the

representatives of the district of Sion (ACS, Min. A 139, pp. 173-178; 1477, December 31). He becomes castellan

of Sion in 1483-1485 (cf. p. 106, note 84).

Son of Arnold Jungen of Törbel, he is a cleric and burgher of Sion (ACS, Min. A 141, pp. 72-

The Milibach is a torrent which descends from the Chietal and flows east of Obergesteln into the Rhône.

Cf. p. 106.

Cf. p. 106.

Cf. p. 106, note 86.

Already mentioned in a document dated January 5, 1471, passed at the Majorie (ACS, Min. A 133, p. 394), Master Hans Heberhart, saddler, became syndic of Sion in 1486 (AEV, Fonds Supersaxo II, P 14, p. 76);

he died between 1490 (AEV, Fonds Supersaxo II, Pg 55; 1490, November 10) and 1493 (AEV, Fonds Supersaxo

I, P 1/14; 1493, April 4). His wife was Françoise, daughter of Jean Cordonerii (ACS, Min.

308; 1477, September 8); he is a tailor (ACS, Min. A 160, pp. 82-83; 1467, December 8) and belongs to the circle

of Bishop Walter Supersaxo's intimates (ACS, Min. A 138, fol. 260v -261; 1475, 26

2 \* Antoine Nessier is described as an honest man living in Sion (ACS, Min. A 138, fol. 307v - 19

When asked if he personally came to the place, Peter replied that he did not, but that his master went there

for him in the guise of the accused and with the consent of the accused. Indeed, once heretics have given their

consent to the devil, their master, to do something, then the devil, their master, has the power to do in place of these

heretics the evil for which they have given their consent; and while the body of the heretics is and may be at home or

in a particular place, alone, separated from the company of other people, their spirit during this time is and works

toward what the devil, their master, does for them with their consent, because, he said, the only consent they give to

the devil, their master, works toward these things. And by this consent alone they know all that is accomplished by

the devils, their masters, and they know the people or their masters who participate for them in the synagogues and

in diabolical works.

which he also did.

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Notary

and trustee, Benoît Kalbermatter<sup>23</sup>

all bourgeois of Sion, of

Antoine Nessier<sup>25</sup> and of myself, Simon Rapillard, public notary.

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Done at the aforementioned place, in the presence of the nobleman Jean de Platea<sup>20</sup>

tion. Successively, the devil called Hemerly fixed a day in August, he forgot which one, for him to go to Obergesteln

behind the village on the side of the "Milibach"<sup>19</sup>

When questioned about other accomplices and synagogues, he said he couldn't remember at the moment but wanted to think about it. The aforementioned commissioners gave him until the following Saturday, prime time, to better consider his own case and that of others.

When questioned about what they did in that place, he replied that they triggered landslides in the Milibach

stream, intending to destroy the meadows located there; however, they were unable to destroy them according to

their wishes or desires, although they did cause some damage. Present at this synagogue in 450 were many of those

who had accused or charged him, namely the wife of Egidius Metzen and his daughter, the wife of Georg Tenzen of

Münster, and Christian Berthold; he does not remember the others. Among those still living, Thomas Biderbosten

was present in that same dream, vision, or phantasmagoria, as he confessed earlier, according to him.  
, the banner, Hans Heberhart<sup>24</sup>

Simon Rapillard

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,  
Vice-Bailiff of  
Valais, discreet men Jean Jungen<sup>21</sup> , castellan, Jean de Prinsières<sup>22</sup>

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He added and confessed, because, he said, he had thought more carefully, that when he had denied Almighty God and had received the said Hemerly as his master and had been faithful to him, he had kissed the devil, his master, on the arse and had lifted the long jacket worn by his stinking master.

July 5, 1484. - Sion, Majoria

On the aforementioned Saturday , July 3rd , in the year above mentioned, at the Majorie Castle, in the great hall of said castle, Peter Eschiller appeared before the aforementioned André de Silenen, cantor of the church of Sion and apostolic protonotary, and Léonard Prepositi, canon and officer of the curia of Sion, commissioners appointed in this matter by our Bishop of Sion. When questioned by them if what he had confessed last Thursday was true, he said that it was at first glance, and immediately admitted that he had lied about himself and others. Having thus denied it, he was led to the place of torture where, tied to a rope, he was raised twice and subjected to the customary riding. The said Peter asked to be released from all torture, as he wished to tell the truth. Peter was released from all torture at his request. He said that everything he had confessed before was true and asked for another day to reflect. The commissioners assigned to this case granted Peter until the following Monday, at prime time, to reflect further and provide more soundly for the salvation of his soul, for his own sake and that of others. Done at the Majorie Castle, before the prison gate, on the aforementioned day and year, in the presence of the same persons and myself, Simon Rapillard.

1484, July 3. - Sion, Majoria

Peter Eschiller confirms his confession to the two commissioners, after being subjected to torture once again.

Peter Eschiller, who was not tortured, confirms his confession once again and provides some details. In the aforementioned year, on Monday, July 5th, at the hour of prime, before the aforementioned persons , in the great hall of the Majorie castle, appeared in person the said Peter Eschiller, free from all torment and not tortured that day, except that his hands were bound. He confessed that everything he had previously admitted was true and he recounted it orally, word for word, as it is written.

Simon Rapillard

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June). He is also described as an officer and confidant of the bishop (ACS, Min. A 175, p. 431; 1471, February 22). He was also in the service of Jean de Supersaxo, castellan of Hérens (AEV, Fonds Supersaxo II, R 4/1, k; 1478, December 23). He retained an important role in the episcopal curia under Jost de Silenen (cf. p. 107, and AEV, Fonds Supersaxo II, R 4/3, kk; 1492, May 4).

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The ammann was the judge of the "Grafschaft" (county) of Biel in the Conches valley.

1484, July 6. - Sion, Majoria

Similarly, he confessed that once, around the month of August, he no longer knew the year or the day, except that it was between day and night, he was in his cellar with the said Hemerly, his master, where they knew each other carnally from behind, in the manner of brute beasts.

Similarly, he confessed that a number of years earlier, he no longer remembered how many, he had attended a synagogue of heretics, one Thursday, it seemed to him, in August, in Ritzingen, under the house of Thomas Biderbosten, where the devil had appeared in the form he had already confessed and had brought him and his accomplices named below money in a hairy purse, or so he believed. Those of the condemned men he had named earlier were present, and among the living, Thomas Biderbosten, ammann<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, he confessed that the black hen, or another one he had mentioned in his confession, he had given to his master every year since he had paid him homage, in a meadow below Münster, always in August, as he saw fit, towards night.

and Kye nyn Matly Laquers. /452/

When asked if he knew whether the aforementioned were there personally and physically, he said and replied that each was there in spirit, as he had said in his first confession. The accused and Thomas Biderbosten received the money, which vanished when the devil left; and because she could get nothing from this money, the woman named Metziltinga, the defendant, cried out angrily: "I don't want to come anymore because I can't get anything here."

When asked why he was so devout, he said that he did not perform his devotions out of hypocrisy but so that God would give him the courage to resist the said crime, because he had suffered repeatedly from having fallen into this unspeakable crime of heresy, but he always had a good disposition of mind towards God.

He said he knew nothing else but wanted to think it over. The aforementioned commissioners granted Peter until the following day, prime time, to think it over. Present were the respectable Théodule Venetz, bailiff of Valais, the nobleman Jean de Platea, vice-bailiff, Jean Jungen, castellan, Benoît Kalbermatter, banneret, Jean de Prinières, syndic, Hans Heberhart, all citizens of Sion, and myself, Simon Rapillard.

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k.

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On Tuesday , July 6 , during prime time, Peter, when questioned by the aforementioned commissioners whether he wanted to confess further to his crime or if he had committed anything else, replied that he knew nothing more about the said crime than what he had Peter Eschiller declares that he has nothing more to confess and after reading his confession, he confirms it in front of the two commissioners as far as he is concerned, but expresses reservations for his accomplices.

Simon Rapillard

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He refrained [from adding any further statements?] and concluded his trial by humbly asking God for forgiveness for the sins he had committed. Done in the presence of the aforementioned witnesses and me, Simon Rapillard, citizen of Sion, notary public.

1484, July 8. - Sion, Majoria

previously confessed. After having his confession read in its entirety, he said and confessed that everything in his aforementioned confession was true, at least as far as he was concerned; as for the accomplices, /453/ he said that he did not dare to affirm with certainty and assurance, at the peril of his soul, that he had seen and recognized the said Thomas Biderbosten, ammann, and Kye nyn Matly Laquers participating in the said synagogues, but he said that it seemed to him that he had seen them in the appearance he had previously confessed. The accused was summoned to appear by the appointed commissioners the following Thursday, at prime time, to renounce [adding further declarations?] and thus conclude his trial. Present were the same as before, with the exception of the bailiff of Valais, and myself, Simon Rapillard, notary, etc.

Simon Rapillard

Finally, in the aforementioned year, on Thursday, July 8, in the Majorie castle, in the room located next to the chapel of the said castle, Peter Eschiller appeared before the said delegated commissioners; carefully questioned as to whether he had perpetrated anything else in the said crime of heresy, he said that he knew nothing else.

When asked what he wanted to confess about his accomplices, he said that if he knew more or knew more people, he would accuse them, saying that he knew nothing other than what he had confessed and which was true.

Peter Eschiller declares that he has nothing more to confess about his crime or his accomplices and concludes his trial.

1484, July 10. - Sion, Majoria

Bishop Jost of Silenen pronounces the sentence against Peter Eschiller, whom he declares a heretic and hands over to the secular arm for the application of the deserved punishment. Sentence.

We, Jost of Silenen, Bishop of Sion by the grace of God and the Apostolic See, Prefect and Count of Valais, wish to inform everyone that, having reviewed the inquiries carried out in the district of Conches, which establish that public rumor and hearsay, as well as other indications, point to the heresy of Peter Eschiller of Münster, of that district, and having also examined the investigation and confessions which establish that, according to his own confession, the said Peter renounced Almighty God at the instigation of the devil, have made

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Simon Rapillard /454/

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Our present sentence was pronounced and given in our castle of La Majorie, in the new hall, on Saturday, at the hour of prime, on July 10 , in the year of the Lord 1484, in the presence of the venerable Leonard Prepositi, canon, and our officer, John of Bellinzona.<sup>28</sup> without going so far as mutilation of limbs, shedding of blood and danger of death, against which we solemnly protest, and by this present document, in accordance with canonical sanctions, we confiscate the property that you possess and have possessed since the perpetration of your crime.

paying homage to this enemy of human nature, revering him and offering him an animal as tribute, apostatized and participated in various synagogues of heretics here and there, where he perpetrated various and enormous crimes, after having seen the renunciation and

conclusion of the said trial, we Jost abominable, sitting in tribunal in the manner of our predecessors, not leaning more to the right than to the left, determined by just reflection, having invoked the name of Christ, having God alone before our eyes, by this writing, we decide by judgment and declare that you, Peter Eschiller, of Münster, are a heretic, you have perpetrated the crime of heresy, you are and have been an unrepentant heretic, you have apostatized and you are considered, held and seen as a heretic; Since we consider you, hold you, and see you as a heretic and apostate, we therefore hand you over as a heretic and apostate to the secular arm to suffer the punishment due.<sup>27</sup>

,  
, chaplain, noble squire Johannes Hu<sup>o</sup>lrici<sup>29</sup>

, Willy

Bieller, our servants, called and taken as witnesses, under the seal which we affix in these cases, as a testimony of truth.

Simon Rapillard

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Vicar of Sierre in 1479 (ACS, Min. A 105, p. 548), Jean de Bellinzona was curate of Bramois in 1487 (ACS, Min. B 61, p. 342) and this at least until 1503 (ACS, Min. B 68, p. 905); his appointment

as curate of Bramois by Jost de Silenen displeased the people of the place who came to the bishop to demand a priest "who would take care of the dead and the living": they were received brutally by the bishop (ABS, Tir. 92-178 bis, pp. 15-16). Jean de Bellinzona has a brother Gérard, a baker in Sion (ACS, Min. B 68,1, b, pp. 58-59; 1492, February 11) and a brother Barthélémy who died as early as 1487 (ACS, Min. B 61, p. 342).

Although we do not have the sentence of the burghers of Sion, there is no doubt that Peter Eschiller, designated by the bishop as a heretic, was burned (see p. 93 and the testimony of Jenni Zen Stadien of Reckingen given in the appendix, p. 128).

A distant descendant of Uldric of Raron, squire (AEV, Flavien de Torrenté Collection, Pg 1, no. 26; 1278 (?), August 29), founder of this noble family established in Visp, Johannes Hu<sup>o</sup>lrici should not be confused with the notary Johannes Uldrici, commissioner of the bishop's estates. Johannes Hu<sup>o</sup>lrici is cited as the son of the late squire Stephan (AB Visp, H 7: 1469, January 30, Visp, and AEV, AV 4, no. 22: 1476, January 27 , Visp). He states that he remembers being 30 years old on November 4, 1480 (AB Visp, C 6) and would therefore have been over fifty at the time of this trial.

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Leonhard Prepositi was a member of the cathedral chapter of Sion from 1458 to 1492. In sources from 1470 (ACS, Tir. 25-4, p. 71: 1470, November 24) to 1488, he is regularly documented as an official of Sion. Cf.

HA VON ROTEN, "Zur Komposition des Domkapitels von Sitten im Mittelalter", in Vallesia, III, 1948, p. 97.

We provide here a translation of the Latin text that is as literal as possible, although we do not always take into

account the many repetitions. The court clerk has a rather cumbersome style. He constantly uses words like

"dictus" and "supradictus" (the one mentioned, the one mentioned above) and has a penchant for stringing

together synonyms. Furthermore, he hardly adheres to a consistent sequence of tenses, but uses sometimes

the perfect or imperfect tense, sometimes the present tense. For the sake of readability, we have occasionally taken the liberty of standardizing the tenses.

Jost von Silenen, son of Christoph von Silenen and Ysabella von Chevron, succeeded Walter Supersaxo as Bishop of Sion in July 1482. The unpopular Prince-Bishop was driven from the country by the revolting Valaisans on April 15 , 1496. See B. Truffer, Portraits des évêques de Sion de 1418 à 1977, Sion, 1977, pp. 33–35 (Sedunum nostrum No. 7), with further literature.

At that time in Valais, the term "crimen heresis" was the common name for witchcraft.

For the Prime, part of the daily choral prayer of monks and clerics, which is to be scheduled around 6 a.m., see Lexikon des Mittelalters, Vol. 8, Munich 1996, col. 259.

By the grace of God, Bishop of Sion, entrusted with this process , addressed to Peter Eschiller from the parish of Münster in the district of Goms, who was imprisoned in the prison of our Lord Bishop because of his doubtful faith.

#### THE WITCH TRIAL AGAINST PETER ESCHILLER

##### GERMAN TRANSLATION

1484, May 29 - July 10 - Sitten, Majoria

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a.

/459/ Canonical Exhortations of the Venerable Leonhard Prepositi1 , Canon of Sion, who received them from the Most Reverend Father and Lord in Christ, Jost of Silenus2  
First Canonical Admonition.

When further questioned as to whether he knew and had known that he was being publicly accused of heresy by his acquaintances and neighbors, Peter answered no.

In the name of the Lord, Amen. In the year of the birth of Christ 1484, on Saturday, May 29th, at the time of Prime, Peter Eschiller from the parish of Münster in Goms appeared in person in the great hall of Majoria Castle in Sion before the aforementioned Canon Leonhard of Sion, the commissioner appointed for this purpose, in the presence of the undersigned notary and the witnesses listed below.

When first asked whether he knew the reason for his arrest, Peter replied that it was – as he believed – because of the crime of heresy.<sup>4</sup> Peter, however, asserted his innocence.

1484, 29. May. - Sitten, Majority

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Thus the first canonical admonition was issued. The accused, Peter, then declared that he would reconsider.

After these questions, and after Peter had heard and understood the canonical admonitions which the Church must offer in such matters, the aforementioned Lord Leonard, by virtue of canon law, kindly exhorted him in every possible way to confess with a contrite heart if he had ever allowed himself to be infected by heresy, whether through temptation by the devil, at the instigation of certain persons, or in a state of sinful weakness. If he confessed, he offered him the help and forgiveness of the Church and the Lord Bishop of Sion, who would not bar access to any sinner who wished to return to the Church of his own accord; /460/ he promised him that he might return home safe in body and possessions.

replied that he had only heard about it when Anton Hallabarter, Meier von Goms, had certain people executed who had accused him, Peter.

When asked if he had any envious people or enemies, he replied that he probably had many. However, he was neither able to name them nor remember them at the time; he also didn't know them all.

Cantor of the church of Sion, and the excellent Hans Guerold<sup>6</sup>

In response to this reply, Commissioner Leonhard summoned the prisoner, Peter, to appear the following Monday, the last day of May, to hear the second canonical admonition. He requested me, the undersigned public notary, to draw up and deliver to him a written record of this first admonition. The venerable Andreas von Silenen was present as a witness. Cupbearer to the Lord Bishop of Sion, and I, Simon Rapillard<sup>7</sup>, public notary, etc.

,

Simon Rapillard

1484, 31. May. - Sitten, Majority

Second canonical admonition.

In the aforementioned year, on Monday, the last day of May, during the time of Prime, the prisoner, Peter Eschiller, personally appeared before Canon Leonhard at the aforementioned location. When asked whether he wished to confess to any heretical crime and have his conscience examined, he declared that he wished neither to have his conscience examined.

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b.

Hans Guerold von Brig, resident of Sitten, is documented as late as December 2, 1488 (ACS, Min. A 132, p. 287), and on May 3, 1494 he is described as an upright man (*honestus vir*) (ACS, Min. A. 163, pp. 44-45).

Andreas von Silenen, brother of Bishop Jost, is documented as a canon of Sion Cathedral as early as 1444. From 1474 he held the office of cantor. On October 12, 1484, he is mentioned as cantor, apostolic protonotary, and episcopal vicar in spiritual and secular matters. He was murdered on October 31, 1486, by Clemens de Madiis in the castle church of Valeria. Cf. HA VON ROTEN, "Zur Komposition des Domkapitels von Sitten im Mittelalter" [On the Composition of the Cathedral Chapter of Sion in the Middle Ages], in Vallesia, III, 1948, p. 106.

See above, pp. 92-93.

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Fourth and fifth reminders.

1484, June 1. - Then, Majoria

Done at the above-mentioned place, in the presence of the witnesses mentioned in the first reminder and in the presence of me, Simon Rapillard, Public Notary.

Peter should not ask the Church for forgiveness for sins he had not committed. After hearing this, Leonard admonished Peter a second time, kindly admonishing him that if he was guilty, he should return to the bosom of Holy Mother Church. Peter replied that he would not ask for mercy for something he had not done. Leonard then instructed him to appear before him at Prime the following day, June 1st, to hear the third canonical admonition, to submit, and to reflect.

Simon Rapillard 7461/

Third Canonical Admonition.

On Tuesday, June 1st, at the time of the Prime, the defendant, Peter, appeared in person before Mr. Leonhard by virtue of the prior summons.

c.

Simon Rapillard

d.

1484, June 2nd and 3rd . - Sitten, Majoria

On the following Wednesday, June 2nd, the date which Commissioner Leonhard had indicated to the accused, Peter appeared before the aforementioned commissioner at prime time. Asked whether he had reconsidered and wished to confess the aforementioned offense of heresy, he answered no, as he was innocent. Thereupon, he was admonished for the fourth time, out of particular kindness, to return to the community of the orthodox and receive the grace of the Church while there was still time. The accused then declared that he wished to

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When Commissioner Leonhard asked him if he had considered the matter and wished to confess the crime he was accused of, he answered no. Thereupon, Mr. Leonhard kindly admonished him for the third time to abandon his obstinacy and confess his heretical offense; he offered him the mercy of the Church, which never closes its doors to anyone who wishes to repent. Peter replied that he would not refuse the grace of the Church for his other offenses, but he would not ask the Church for forgiveness for the crime of heresy he was accused of, as he was innocent in this regard. After this admonition, the aforementioned commissioner summoned the accused, Peter, to appear before him the following day at Prime, to hear the fourth admonition as a gesture of particular favor; he threatened that otherwise the grace of the Church would be denied him. Given on the day, in the year and place as above, before the above-mentioned witnesses and before me, Simon Rapillard, citizen of Sion, public notary.

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He denies it.

In the year of our Lord 1484, on June 12th, the Inquisition trial is being conducted, and intends to be conducted, by the Procurator of the Holy Inquisition of the Faith before the Most Reverend Father in Christ, Lord Jost von Silenen, by the grace of God and the Holy See Bishop of Sion, Prefect and Count of Valais, against Peter Eschiller from the district of Goms in the Diocese of Sion, by virtue of his office as Inquisitor of the Faith. For, according to common rumor and public opinion, Peter has committed many unspeakable offenses against the true faith. The gossip of the people has grown so loud that it cannot be silenced by any excuse. Moreover, his misdeeds are being brought to light by the investigations and the accusations brought by accomplices in the crime of heresy, as will be presented here in turn.

c.

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He should not ask for the Church's mercy for a transgression he had not committed. Following this response, Lord Leonhard summoned him the next day, at Prime, to hear the fifth admonition out of the Church's goodness.

1484, June 12th and 14th . - Sitten, Majoria

Gege n Peter Eschiller.

II. Furthermore, whether it was true that he had subsequently been strengthened in the same Christian faith through holy confirmation.

He confirms this.

He doesn't remember .

III. Whether it is true that Peter, despite the aforementioned sacraments with which he should have protected himself as with weapons of light, rejected these sacraments a number of years ago that was well known to him.

On the following Thursday, June 3, the accused appeared before the aforementioned commissioner. Questioned as above, he answered as above. /462/

Then, for the fifth time, he was exhorted by special kindness and mercy to return to the communion of the orthodox and to the bosom of Holy Mother Church and to receive the grace of the Church while there was still time. To this, the accused replied as above.

After this answer, Mr. Leonhard concluded the exhortations of the Church. Given in the customs, year, day, and place as above, before the aforementioned witnesses and before me, Simon Rapillard, notary.

Simon Rapillard 7463/

Charges against Peter Eschiller and his answers.

Article of the Inquisition process.

I. First of all, [it is asked] whether it is true that the aforementioned Peter, born in the belief in the Holy Trinity, was marked and reborn as a Christian creature through baptism.

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He denies it.

He denies it.

He denies it.

The terms sect and synagogue were common designations at this time for the witches' sabbath and secret

gatherings. See A. PARAVICINI BAGLIANI, K. UTZ-TREMP, M. OSTORERO, «Le sabbat dans les Alpes. Les prémisses

médiévaux de la chasse aux sorcières», in Sciences: raison et dé raisons, Lausanne 1994, pp. 67-125.

He doesn't know.

VI. Whether it was true that Peter, with his accomplices devoted to witchcraft and heresy and who had fallen away from the faith, and with their master, the Devil, whose name he knew well, attended sect meetings in various places – in forests or at private homes – and

V. Whether it is true that the accused, while – as mentioned above – being bound to the devil, the enemy of human nature, by the

bond of loyalty, committed numerous and very diverse, contemptible diabolical acts, so that he deviated from the true faith and acted in manifold ways against the Catholic faith.

and that he had turned away from them at the instigation of certain other apostate persons whom he knew well. Furthermore, whether it was true that he had sworn allegiance and obedience to the devil, the enemy of human nature, whose name he knew well, and had denied Almighty God and Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord, his immaculate mother, the Virgin Mary, and all that belongs to God, thus violating the faith, practicing idolatry, and committing very grave errors.

IV. Whether it was true that the accused, after committing denial, had fallen away from the faith, sacrificed to the devil, his master, whose name he knew well, paid homage to him and worshipped him, promised him a tribute as well as an annual interest, and thereby committed a sacrilege and became an apostate, so that he deserved and incurred those punishments which the law provides for those who are guilty of the same.

Synagogue<sup>8</sup> participated to consult and commit evil deeds.

VII. Whether it was true that the accused had been denounced by some fellow heretics in the Zenden Goms in recent years and accused and charged with the aforementioned offenses.

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XI. Whether it was true that in previous years the accused had been accused of heresy in various places inside and outside Valais before credible persons, from which accusation he had not cleared himself as truly guilty, nor had he attempted to clear himself.<sup>9</sup>

VIII. Whether, with regard to the defamation and accusations, it was true that the long-circulating rumor of heresy, for which Peter was accused, had spread among good and respected persons, his trusted neighbors and acquaintances, who were aware of this. /465/

IX. Whether it was true that Peter had previously known and now knew that he had been and still was being fiercely denounced and accused and suspected of the aforementioned heresy among his acquaintances and neighbors, as well as in the surrounding villages.

X. Whether it was true that Peter, through his diabolical art, had brought back his wife Greta, who had left the fatherland hoping not to return during the defendant's lifetime, within a few days without addressing Greta [in this regard], through his diabolical art.

XIII. Whether it was true that the defendant had once been seen riding the devil, his master, in his cellar in Münster, or that the devil had been seen riding the defendant.

XIV. Whether it was true that the accused had participated in a

synagogue of heretics , both within and outside the parish boundaries, approximately 16 years ago with his master, whose name he knew well .

XII. Whether it was true that the accused had kept the devil, his master, whose name was well known to him, in a glass vessel in his buildings in Münster<sup>10</sup> some years ago , served him and obeyed his commands.

He doesn't know.

He responds to this  
as above.

He says he didn't know it before  
his absence, but only heard it  
from some people afterwards.

He denies it.

He denies it.

Canonical purgation (purgatio canonica) is a solemn ceremony before the Bishop of Sion, in which the accused, kneeling, swears that he believes in God and observes the commandments of the Church, has not worshipped

the devil, has neither committed malefactors nor participated in heretical gatherings, and that he intends to adhere to the

Catholic faith. The accused is surrounded by fellow penitents or oath-helpers who solemnly attest to his good character.

The bishop then purifies him from the stain of slander. – For the so-called purgative oath, see Lexikon für Theologie und

Kirche, Vol. 8, 1963, col. 1149.

He denies it.

Consches here undoubtedly refers to Münster. The name Consches is still mentioned in the 16th century .

The terms used for this place were common in the 19th century. See, for example, the Minutar of Johannes Triebmann,

notary and parish priest of Münster: in villa de Consches, in Consches, apud Consches, etc.  
(AEV, AVL 206, elsewhere; 1501-1520).

He denies it.

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Bezirk Goms.

He denies it.

XVIII. Whether it was true that the defendant and his master had

participated in a sect meeting somewhere in [Ober]gesteln on a Thursday. He knew very well what they had done there and who had been present.

XVII. Whether it was true that the accused, on a Thursday night, had participated with his master in front of the house of a man from

the Goms district whom he knew well, in a meeting of heretics, at which some coins had been distributed. The accused knew exactly who had brought and distributed them, what else had been done or decided there, who had been present, and who had prevented the destruction of goods and produce.

The meeting was held in Münster. The defendant knew very well what they had done there and who had been present.

XV. Whether it was true that about eight years ago the defendant, with the Devil, his master, had attended a synagogue of heretics held in Obergestein<sup>11</sup>. The defendant knew exactly what they had done there and who had been present. /466/ XVI. Whether it was true that on another occasion the defendant, with his master, had attended a meeting of

heretics held near the village of [Ober]gesteln. The defendant knew exactly what they had done there and who had been present.

XIX. Whether it was true that the aforementioned defendant had participated with his master in another meeting of heretics in the aforementioned parish. He knew perfectly well what had been done or decided there and who had been present.

XX. Whether it was true that the defendant had been with his master at a secret meeting of heretics somewhere in Goms during the summer. The defendant knew well what they had done or decided there and who had been present.

XXI. Whether it was true that the accused, with his master, the devil, whose name he knew well, in various places familiar to him - in forests

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XXVII. Whether it was true that the accused knew and knew that he was suspected of heresy and of

XXIV. Whether it is true that the Most Reverend Walter, through his patent letters, publicly forbade everyone during divine service in the churches of Ernen<sup>12</sup> and Münster, under penalty of confiscation of property, imprisonment, and conviction for the crime, from evading justice, leaving his residence, and departing from his homeland of Valais, except with special permission from the Lord Bishop or his officials.

XXIII. Whether it was true that the Most Reverend Walter Supersaxo, of blessed memory Bishop of Sion, at the earnest request of the messengers of the Goms district and, as usual, after providing appropriate security, had instructed his appointed commissioners, as his office commanded, to investigate in the Goms district those guilty, accused, and suspected of, among other things, heresy and witchcraft.

and in private settings - he participated in several other heretical gatherings. He knew exactly who had been there and what had been

done or decided [there].

XXII. Whether it was true that the accused, with his diabolical art, had repeatedly bewitched people and animals and administered poisonous drinks to people, so that they ultimately died or lost their minds. /467/

XXV. Whether it was true that the above prohibition had come to the attention of Peter Eschiller and had been published and heard in his presence.

XXVI. Whether it was true that, during the investigations against heretics in the Goms district, the accused fled from justice following the aforementioned prohibition. He left his residence and his homeland because he felt guilty of the crime of heresy and did not trust the justice system . He feared being arrested and tortured for this crime.

He only dared to return after the death of the Most Reverend Walter. Bezirk Goms.

He doesn't know.

He denies it.

He confirms this.

He says that he may have left his homeland and his home, but he was not guilty of this crime; he left to find better justice elsewhere than the justice that prevailed in Zenden Gom at that time.

He doesn't know.

He doesn't know.

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June 25, 1484, was a Friday, not a Saturday; so is it really the 25th or rather the 26th of June?

13

He was accused and defamed of being heretics, having been burned at the stake, so that he evaded justice and fled.

[XXIX.] Whether the above charges are true and generally known, etc.

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, -Then, Majoria

f.

will be spread, etc.

XXVIII. Whether it is true that the accused has been, and still is being, publicly defamed, vilified, and suspected in Münster and the surrounding area in the aforementioned matter among his acquaintances and neighbors, as well as among honest and credible people who know him. /468/

In the year of our Lord 1484, on the 14th of June, in Sion, in the great hall of Majoria Castle, at prime time, Peter Eschiller personally appeared before Commissioner Leonhard and answered the aforementioned charges as noted in the margin of each

article, after having sworn the oath on the Holy Gospel and having been informed by Lord Leonhard that he would be found guilty of the crime of heresy should it be proven that he had committed perjury. Thereupon, Lord Commissioner Leonhard summoned Peter to court to hear the judgment that our Lord Bishop of Sion would render in this matter, and he asked me, the undersigned notary, to provide him with a written testimony of all this. This happened in the presence of Willy Biellers, Castlan of Hérémence, Hans Guerold, cupbearer, Georg Riczy, cook of our Lord Bishop of Sion, and before me, Simon Rapillard, etc.

[XXX.] Whether all this is told in public and  
Sixth reminder.

1484, 25. oder26. Juni13

Finally, in the aforementioned year, on Saturday, June 25, 2013

In Sion, in

the great hall of Majoria Castle, at the time of the Prime, the accused, Peter Eschiller, appeared before our Most Reverend Father in Christ, Lord Jost von Silenen, Bishop of Sion, Prefect, and Count of Valais. Questioned by the Bishop as to whether he had reflected on his actions, and repeatedly urged to return to the bosom of the Church and confess the crime of heresy, he declared that he could not confess to something he had not committed and of which he was not guilty.

,  
He does n't know.

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Simon Rapillard

Simon Rapillard 7470/

confess. Our Lord Bishop, out of special favor and grace, admonished him for the sixth time that if he confessed, he offered him the help and forgiveness of the Church [and the Bishop of Sion], which would never close its doors to a sinner who repented voluntarily. He would send him home unharmed, both physically and materially. To allow the accused to consider this, our Lord Bishop of Sion granted him until the following Monday. If he refused, Peter was then to hear the final judgment of our Lord Bishop in this matter. The venerable and distinguished men present as witnesses were: Lord Andreas von Silenen, Cantor; Lord Leonhard Prepositi, Canon and Official of Sion; Hans Guerold, Cupbearer to our Lord Bishop of Sion; and myself, Simon Rapillard, etc. Done on the day, in the year, and in the place as above.

1484, June 28. - Then, Majoria

We, Jost von Silenen, by the grace of God and the Apostolic See Bishop of Sion, Prefect and Count of Valais, come to trial, having reviewed the proceedings brought against you, Peter Eschiller, at the request of the Procurator of the Doctrine of the Faith, and having taken note of your response and the admonitions addressed to you according to the legal code, to which you refused to confess, and having examined the accusations and statements made against you, as well as the investigations conducted in this regard, and having verified everything that emerges from your trial and that must be considered by law. After hearing the legal scholars and invoking the name of Christ, we hereby decide, judge, and declare that you, Peter Eschiller, shall be subjected to torture under torture, but without endangering your life and without bloodshed or mutilation of your limbs, against which we formally protest. Given, read and proclaimed on June 28, 1484 in the great hall of our castle Majoria, in the presence of our servants Hans Guerold, cupbearer, [and] Nikolaus Prepositi.

Jesus Mary.

The judgment of Bishop Jost von Silenen, according to which Peter Eschiller, accused of witchcraft but denying it, is to be tortured.

The feast of the holy apostles Peter and Paul is celebrated on June 29th.

Airolo in the Leventina Valley, TI; cf. Historical-Biographical Lexicon of Switzerland, Vol. 1, Neuchâtel 1921, p.

185. From Goms, Airolo is easily accessible via the Nufenen Pass and the Bedretto Valley.

/447/Peter Eschiller from the parish of Münster in Goms confesses the crime of heresy.

1484, July 1. - Sitten, Majoria

h.

Confession of Peter Eschiller after prior torture.

In the name of the Lord, Amen. In the year 1484, on Thursday, July 1st, at Prime Time, Peter Eschiller from the parish of Münster in Goms appeared in person in the great hall of Majoria Castle in Sion. He had been imprisoned in the jail of our venerable Lord Jost von Silenen, Bishop of Sion, Prefect, and Count of Valais, for the unspeakable crime of heresy and witchcraft. From prison, he was brought before the venerable and esteemed Lords Andreas von Silenen, Cantor, and Leonhard Prepositi, Canon and Official of the Curia of Sion, the commissioners appointed by our Most Reverend Bishop of Sion to handle this matter. Peter was thoroughly questioned by the aforementioned commissioners as to whether he would confess his guilt and his crime of heresy, for which he was accused, voluntarily, without coercion or torture.

Thereupon, Peter Eschiller, outside the prison and free from all fear and torment—he had only been bound to a rope the day before—voluntarily and of his own accord testified that it was true that about twelve years earlier, around the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul in June, he had stopped at an inn in Airolo, whose name he did not know. In the inn's common room, he had been alone with a man dressed in black, who explained that he came from Graubünden, whose name he did not know. The man from Graubünden had asked him, Peter, where he was going and whether he was rich or poor. He had replied that he was a merchant and not very rich. The man from Graubünden had then answered him, Peter: "I will teach you well how you can become rich." He had asked him how that was possible. The man from Graubünden told him that he had worshipped the devil and afterwards had acquired sufficient worldly possessions and become rich. Peter replied to the man from Graubünden: "I would gladly do that, /448/ if only I could become rich that way, for I do not like to work." The man from Graubünden answered him: "If you are only determined, you will immediately find what you desire." He further told Peter: "Just go to the meadows outside the village of Airolo, there you will find what you are looking for." Then, that same day, Peter went to the meadows outside the village of Airolo at vespers, that is, at dusk, where he met a man of medium height in a long gray robe. Because of the length of his robe, he could not see the man's legs or hands. The man had a pale, grayish-blue, misshapen face, unlike that of a human being. He asked him, Peter, if he still wanted the same thing as before,

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When asked what they had done at the aforementioned place, Peter replied that they had caused a commotion in the aforementioned water [Milibach] with the intention of devastating the meadows located in that area. However, they had not been able to destroy them according to their own consent or will, although they had done something

When asked whether he had gone to the place in question himself, Peter replied that not he, but his master, had gone there for him in his own form, the form of the accused, and with his consent. The accused explained that once heretics had agreed to do something to the devil, their master, he had the power to perform the evil deeds to which they had consented. And while the heretics' bodies were, or could be, alone and separated from others at home or in a special place, their minds simultaneously participated fully in the deeds that the devil, their master, carried out for them with their consent ; for, he said, only the consent they gave to the devil brought these things about. Solely because of this consent, they knew everything that was done by the devils, their masters, and they knew the people or their masters who participated for them in the synagogues and in the devil's works.

when he spoke with him at the aforementioned inn in Airolo. There, Peter realized that the man who claimed to be from Graubünden was the Devil. The Devil then introduced himself to Hemerly in the meadows and told Peter Eschiller: "I am the Devil. You must deny Almighty God and accept me as your master and pay homage to me." Immediately, Peter denied Almighty God and accepted the Devil named Hemerly as his lord and master. At that moment, the Devil Hemerly gave him some money from his hand, which was covered by his cloak. He then put the modest sum into his purse. Some time later, after the Devil named Hemerly had left, he looked in his purse and saw no money. That's when he realized he had been cheated.

Three days later, at the same time, Peter carried a black hen, which he had bought in Airolo for one Milanese gross, to the same place and presented it to his master, the devil Hemerly, as a token of his homage and loyalty. /449/ The devil took the hen in his hands, but Peter could not see them because of the long sleeves of his robe. When Peter accused the devil Hemerly, his master, of having cheated him by giving him money that was not real, the devil replied: "I will make amends so that you will be satisfied." Thereupon, Hemerly, his master, set a date for Peter, now unknown to him, around the Feast of Saint James,<sup>16</sup> to go to certain meadows below the village of Münster, which the accused did at dusk. The devil, his master, appeared to Peter in the same manner as before and assured him that he would make amends. Then the devil Hemerly assigned him a day in the month of August - Peter forgot - so that he would go to Obergestein, to the Milibach<sup>17</sup> behind the village, which he also did.

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The Milibach flows from the northern Chietal valley and empties into the east of Obergestein.  
The feast of Saint James is celebrated on July 25th.

Rhone.

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See p. 106, footnote 86.

See p. 106.

See p. 106.

Johann Jungen was a son of Arnold Jungen of Törbel and is mentioned as a cleric and citizen of Sion in 1481 (ACS, Min. A 141, pp. 72-73: 1481, May 19); he often appears among the assessors of Bishop Walter Supersaxo (ABS, Tir. 242/33/1, p. 101: 1479, August 6) or of the governor of Valais (ABS, Tir. 242/33/1, p. 35: 1470, May 4). At the end of 1477, he is among the representatives of the district of Sion (ACS, Min. A 139, pp. 173-178: 1477, December 31). From 1483 to 1485 he held the office of Castlan of Sion (see p. 106, footnote 84).

Anton Nessier is mentioned in 1477 as an upright man and resident of Sion (ACS, Min. A 138, fol. 307v -308: 1477, September 8); he practiced the trade of a tailor (ACS, Min. A 160, pp. 82-83: 1467, December 8) and belonged to the family of Bishop Walter Supersaxo (ACS, Min. A 138, fol. 260v -261: 1475, June 26). He is sometimes referred to as the bishop's officiarius et

familiaris (ACS, Min. A 175, p. 431: 1471, February 22). He is also in the service of Johannes Supersaxo, Castlan of Hérens (AEV, Fonds Supersaxo II, R 4/1, k: 1478, 23 December). Under Jost von Silenen he was able to maintain his role at the episcopal court (cf. p. 107, and AEV, Fonds Supersaxo II, R 4/3, kk: 1492, 4 May).

Hans Hebrehart or Eberhart is already documented in a charter dated January 5, 1471, which was unearthed in the Bishop's Palace of Majoria (ACS, Min. A 133, p. 394). A master saddler by trade, he held the office of mayor of Sion in 1486 (AEV, Fonds Supersaxo II, P 14, p. 76). He died between 1490 (AEV, Fonds Supersaxo II, Pg 55: November 10, 1490) and 1493 (AEV, Fonds Supersaxo I, P 1/1/14: April 4, 1493). His wife was Franziska, daughter of Johannes Cordonerii (ACS, Min. A 132, pp. 100-102: October 16, 1490).

Simon Rapillard

, Vice Governor of Valais, the wise gentlemen Johannes Jungens<sup>19</sup>,

Kastlan, Johannes von Prinsières<sup>20</sup>

This happened at the aforementioned place, in the presence of the noble lord. damage had been caused. /450/ At this synagogue, many people [who have since been convicted!] were present in the aforementioned guise, who accused or charged him, namely the wife of Egidius Metzen and her daughter, the wife of Georg Tenzen of Münster, and Christian Berthold; he no longer remembered the others. As it seemed to him, Thomas Biderbosten, of those still living, was present in the dream form described above or in spirit. When questioned about other accomplices and synagogues, he stated that he could not recall at the moment, but that he wanted to reflect. The aforementioned commissioners granted him until the prim of the following Saturday to better reflect on himself and the others.

Notary and Mayor

i.

After further torture, Peter Eschiller confirms his confession before the two commissioners.

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public notary.

On the aforementioned Saturday, July 3rd of the year in question, Peter Eschiller appeared in the great hall of Majoria Castle before the aforementioned gentlemen Andreas von

1484, July 3. - Sitten, Majoria

Benedict Kalbermatter<sup>21</sup>

Johannes de Platea<sup>18</sup>

Customs, as well as in the presence of Anton Nessier<sup>23</sup> and before me, Simon Rapillard,

,

all burgers from

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, Bannerherr, and Hans Hebrehart<sup>22</sup>

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He further confesses that several years ago, though he no longer recalls exactly how long ago, he participated in a synagogue of heretics in Ritzingen, under the house of Thomas Biderbosten, if he is not mistaken, on a Thursday in August.

There, the devil appeared in the form he described above.

Peter Eschiller confirms his confession once again without torture and provides further details.

1484, July 5. - Sitten, Majoria

Silenus, cantor of Sion and protonotary of the Apostolic See, and Leonard Prepositi, canon and official of Sion, appeared, having been commissioned by our lord bishop to handle this case. When questioned by them as to whether what he had confessed the previous Thursday was true, Peter initially answered yes, but immediately added that he had lied about himself and others. After this retraction, he was led into the torture chamber, where, as was customary, he was tied to the rope and twice hoisted up and jerked down again.<sup>24</sup> Thereupon, Peter requested to be released from all pain, for he wished to tell the truth. At his request, he was released from all torture. He declared that everything he had confessed up to that point was true and asked to be granted another day to reflect more deeply. /451/ Thereupon the commissioners granted him a period until the following Monday at the time of Prim, to better consider his own case as well as that of the other [accomplices] and to make more appropriate provisions for his salvation. Done at Majoria Castle, before the door of the dungeon, on the day and in the year as above, in the presence of the aforementioned witnesses and before me, Simon Rapillard.

Simon Rapillard

In the aforementioned year, on Monday, July 5th, during the time of the Prime, Peter Eschiller personally appeared before the aforementioned gentlemen in the great hall of Majoria Castle. He was not tortured that day, but only his hands were bound. Without enduring any pain, he declared that what he had confessed up to that point corresponded to the truth, and he confirmed everything verbally, word for word, as it is written here.

After Peter, in his own words, had thought things through better, he further confesses that when he denied God Almighty and accepted Hemerly as his master and swore loyalty to him, he kissed his stinking master, the Devil, on the backside and lifted his long robe in the process.

Furthermore, he confesses that he has annually handed over the black hen mentioned above in his confession, or another hen, to his master in a meadow below Münster since taking his oath of allegiance, and that, it seems to him, each time in the month of August at nightfall.

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j-

datis sibi cavalcatis: this probably refers to the jerky release of the torture rope to increase the suffering.

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1484, July 6. - Sitten, Majoria

When asked further why he gave such a pious appearance, he replied that his piety was not hypocrisy, but was intended to give him the courage to resist the crime of heresy, for he had often suffered from having succumbed to this unspeakable crime; in spirit, however, he had always been good to God.

Furthermore, Peter confesses that once around the month of August - he cannot remember the year or day, except that it was between day and night - he was in his cellar with Hemerly, his master, where they had engaged in carnal intercourse from behind, in the manner of raw animals.

and brought him and his accomplices named below some coins in what he believed to be a hairy pouch. Among those present were the heretics he had already mentioned, who have since been executed, as well as the still-living Thomas Biderbosten, Ammann<sup>25</sup>

, [and] Kyenyn Matly Laquers were present. /452/ When asked

whether, to his knowledge, the aforementioned people had been present in person and in physical form, he replied that each had been present [only] in spirit, as he had stated in his first confession. He, the accused, had received the money together with Thomas Biderbosten. After the devil had left, this money had vanished into nothing. Since there was nothing to distribute, the [meanwhile] executed woman named Metziltinga had angrily exclaimed: "Since there is nothing to be had here, I will not come again."

Simon Rapillard

k.

He explained that he knew nothing else but wanted to think it over more thoroughly. The aforementioned commissioners granted Peter a deadline until the Prim meeting of the following day to reconsider. Present as witnesses were the esteemed Theodul Venetz, Governor of Valais; the nobleman Johannes de Platea, Vice Governor; Johann Jungen, Castillar; Benedikt Kalbermutter, Standard-bearer; Johannes von Prinsières, Mayor; Hans Hebrehart, all citizens of Sion; and myself, Simon Rapillard.

Peter Eschiller declares that he has nothing more to confess, and after his confession is read out, he confirms everything concerning himself, but expresses reservations about his statements against his accomplices.

On Tuesday, July 6, at prime time, when questioned by the aforementioned commissioners as to whether he wished to add anything to the aforementioned crime or whether he had committed any other offenses, Peter replied that he knew nothing about the aforementioned crime other than what he had previously confessed. After the contents of his confession were read to him word for word, Peter stated that everything in his confession recorded above was true, at least as far as he himself was concerned. /453/ However—

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The Ammann was the judge of the County of Biel in Goms.

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m.

Verdict.

1484, July 8. - Sitten, Majoria

Eschiller of Münster were taught in the same district;

When asked what else he wanted to say about his accomplices, he replied that if he knew more about them, he would certainly indict them. He asserted that he only knew what he had already confessed to and that this was true.

At the conclusion of his trial, Peter Eschiller declared that he had nothing further to add regarding his crime and his accomplices.

1484, July 10. - Sitten, Majoria

Bishop Jost of Silenen condemns Peter Eschiller as a heretic and hands him over to the secular authorities for punishment.

Bishop of Sion, Prefect and Count of Valais, wish to inform all for whom it may be beneficial that we:

reviewed the investigations conducted in the Zenden Goms, which confirmed the rumor of heresy, and the many pieces of circumstantial evidence against Peter

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Simon Rapillard 7454/

Finally , on Thursday, July 8th of that year, Peter Eschiller appeared before the aforementioned appointed commissioners in a chamber next to the castle chapel at Majoria Castle. When questioned at length about whether he had committed any other heretical acts, he replied that he knew nothing further.

As regards his accomplices, he did not dare to assert with certainty, definiteness, and without endangering his soul that he had seen and recognized the named Thomas Biderbosten, Ammann, and Kyenyn Matly Laquers at the aforementioned synagogues. He said, however, that it seemed to him that he had seen them in the manner described above. Thereupon, the accused was instructed by the appointed commissioners to appear the following Thursday at the time of Prim to waive any further objections and bring his trial to an end. Witnesses, with the exception of the Governor of Valais, were the same men as above and myself, Simon Rapillard, notary, etc.

Simon Rapillard

He renounced [further objections], ended his trial, and humbly asked God for forgiveness of his sins. Done at the place indicated, in the presence of the aforementioned witnesses and before me, Simon Rapillard, citizen of Sion, public notary.

We, Jost of Silenus, by the grace of God and the Apostolic See

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Simon Rapillard

This our judgment was rendered in Sion, in our castle Majoria, in the new hall, on Saturday, at prime time, the 10th of July in the year of our Lord 1484, in the presence of the venerable Lord Leonhard Prepositi, Canon and Official, and Lord Johannes of Bellinzona.<sup>27</sup>

Having considered the investigation and the confession, which prove that Peter, according to his own statement, denied God Almighty at the instigation of the Devil, the enemy of mankind, paid homage to the Devil, worshipped him, and presented him with an animal as tribute, apostatized from the faith, and participated in synagogues of heretics in various places, committing much injustice and evil there; having also

considered the renunciation [of the accused] and the conclusion of this trial; sitting in judgment in the manner of our ancestors, neither leaning to the left nor to the right, invoking the name of Christ and sustained by a sense of justice, keeping only God before our eyes; hereby deciding and

judging that you, Peter Eschiller of Münster, have committed the crime of heresy, have been and still are a stubborn heretic, have apostatized from the faith, and are regarded as a heretic, just as we consider and regard you as a heretic and apostate. As such, we hand you over to the secular authorities to receive the punishment you deserve,<sup>26</sup> without, however, mutilation of limbs, bloodshed, or danger of death, against which we solemnly protest. The property you possess and have possessed since committing the crime, we confiscate by virtue of this present act in accordance with canon law.

, Chaplain, as well as in the presence of our servants, the noble shield-bearer Johannes Hu<sup>o</sup>lrici<sup>28</sup> and Willy Bieller, who were called upon as witnesses, under the imprint of our seal, which we use in the same

matters to bear witness to the truth.

Johannes Huúlrici was a distant descendant of the Junker Ulrich von Raron (AEV, Fonds Flavien de Torrenté, Pg 1, Nr. 26: 1278 [?], 29 August), the founder of this noble family in Visp. February); a second brother, Bartholomew, is mentioned as deceased in 1487 (ACS, Min. B 61, p. 342).

Although the death sentence issued by the secular authorities, i.e., the citizens of Sion, has not been preserved, there is no doubt that Peter Eschiller, condemned as a heretic by the bishop, was burned at the stake. See p. 93 and the testimony of Jenni Zen Stadien von Reckinsen, published in the appendix, p. 128.

Johannes von Bellinzona appears as vicar of Siders in 1479 (ACS, Min. A 105, p. 548). In 1487, he is mentioned as parish priest of Brämis near Sion (ACS, Min. B 61, p. 342), a position he held at least until 1503 (ACS, Min. B 68, p. 905). His appointment as parish priest of Brämis by Bishop Jost von Silenen met with little enthusiasm from his new parishioners. They appealed to the bishop and asked him for a priest "who would care for both the living and the dead," but were brusquely rebuffed (ABS, Tir. 92-178bis, pp. 15-16). Johannes von Bellinzona had a brother, Gerhard, who practiced the baker's trade in Sion (ACS, Min. B 68, I, b, pp. 58-59: 1492,11).

He must not be confused with Notary Johannes Uldrici, commissioner for the recording of episcopal feudal acknowledgments. Johannes Uldrici was a son of the nobleman Stefan (BA Visp, H 7: 1469, January 30, Visp. - AEV, AV 4, No. 22: 1476, January 27, Visp). On November 4, 1480, he declared that he could remember 30 years back (BA Visp, C 6); from this, it can be concluded that he was around 50 years old at the time of this trial.