

Cor Hendriks

The Host in the Toad

The Development of a Fairytale Motif (V34.2)

In Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* we find under V34. *Miraculous working of the host* as subdivision V34.2. *Princess sick because toad has swallowed her consecrated wafer*. Thompson refers for this to Tale Type 613 and the study of this type by Christiansen. Other motifs he refers to are B177. *Magic Toad*; C55. *Tabu: losing consecrated wafer*; C940.1. *Princess's secret sickness from breaking tabu*; D2064.1. *Magic sickness because girl has thrown away her consecrated wafer*. At this last motif Thompson remarks: H1292.4.1.

Question (propounded on quest): How can the princess be cured? Answer: She must recover consecrated wafer which rat has stolen from her first communion.¹

This question of how the princess can be cured is treated by Christiansen in his study of AT 613 and he remarks that the list of the different remedies is long, and that it is difficult to settle a tradition. A certain feature though he finds in some of the variants, more fully worked out or simply suggested: it is the incident that the princess's disease was due to a mishap at her first communion, where she lost the consecrated wafer. A *toad* took it, and is sitting under the floor with it in its mouth, and it has to be given back to the princess (also a rat is found). This episode can be seen in 4 Norse, 1 Swedish, 4 Danish, 2 Icelandic, 2 German, 1 Dutch, 2 Belgian, 2 Czech, 1 Hungarian, 1 Bask, 1 Rumanian, 1 Slovak, 4 Finnish, 2 Russian, 2 White-Russian; and 6 Polish versions. Probably the same story, is where she had to put some money in the alms-box, but lost it (German), or it is a ring she intended to put in the box (Danish). Not many of these variants have this story in its full length, but the motif has spread over the whole domain of the variants. Christiansen further remarks that in many of the tales a *toad* is mentioned, combined with the cure (also a serpent, a rat, etc.), which he finds remarkable, and is no mere chance, but in some way connected with our motif. In a Swedish version the princess is said to recover, if she gets some *kalk* that a rat under the church has in its mouth. The word means 'chalk' as well as 'drinking-cup', 'chalice'. Now and then the toad has to be eaten (Danish), burned (Icelandic), pestled to powder (in 14 variants, mainly East-European). It sits under the floor (Finnish), under a bridge (White Russ.), the sick person must be rubbed with its grease (2x Slav²), she must put the toad in her mouth (Fin) or kiss it in the church (Dan). In one Finnish version the Devil sits under the church-floor with the sacramental wafer. Further an ointment has to be made of the toad (2 Dutch, French, Rum., SU, Gypsy), or it is told that it is under the bed of the princess (Dutch, French, Rum., Span.) or under the floor in her room (Cor.). In one German version there are five toads in a box in the church.³ Meyer mentions in Flemish versions of AT 613 the motif D2064.1: the princess is cured when she repairs the mistake she committed at her first communion.⁴ One of these is 'Of Two Servants' from Flanders, where it is said by the bear: 'When the princess, now six years ago, did her first communion, she committed a sacrilege by dropping the sacred host from her mouth on the ground, where it has remained under the second stone of the communion-bench. To be cured she must make confession and have communion with the same host. The princess is carried to the confession seat, where she confesses her sin, has the communion, and returns home blooming with health to marry with the hero.'⁵ Meyer also mentions motif B177.1.1: one must remove a toad (*crapaux*), who is hidden under the bed of the princess. This motif is

¹ Thompson, o.c., FFC 116, 1935, 345; ID., FFC 107, 1933, 310.

² In a Frisian version, the chest of the sick person has to be rubbed with the grease of a turtle caught with a golden hook in his [own] well; and Kooi (1984, 347) refers to Mot. D771.2.

³ Christiansen, Reidar Th., *The Tale of the Two Travellers (or The Blinded Man)*, Hamina 1916, 83f.

⁴ Meyer 1968, 78 (Wolf, *DMS*, 21; Mont-Cock, 177, 2e ed., 196).

⁵ Mont & Cock 1924, 196-201 n°25: 'Van Twee Knechten', from Quaremont.

present in five variants.⁶ One of them is ‘Den Tooveressenberg’ (The Sorceresses’ Mountain) from the collection Witteryck. The hero Crabbe heard one of the sorceresses say: ‘I know also that the daughter of the king is dangerously ill; it is more than eight years that she is lying in bed, and nobody can cure her, because the reason of her illness is unknown. If it should be known that under the tile, under the right leg of the top of the bed, there sits a sorceress in the shape of a toad, they would well be able to cure her; because that is what is making her sick. To get rid of that they have to go in the room where the princess is lying, make an oven and have it glow heavily, and then shove the bed away, break out that tile, grab the *padde* with a pair of glowing tongs and throw it in the oven.’ So when the oven was glowing hot, Crabbe entered alone the room of the princess. He quietly shoved the bed [from the tile] and broke out the tile that was under the right leg of the top of the bed. He saw truly an ugly black toad sitting there. He grabbed it with the glowing tongs, and threw it in the oven. The toad gave a great shout and burned to death. And as soon as the toad was dead, the pains of the princess stopped; she sat upright and asked for her clothes. For the first time in long years she left the bed and was totally cured.⁷ Also in a Gascon version, the bear knows that at the sick princess a toad has to be removed from under her bed.⁸ In a version from the Pyrenees the wolf knows that the princess is sick, because under her bed sits a toad that every night sucks her blood. The hero gets permission from the king to sleep in the bedroom of the princess; he squashes the toad and throws it out of the window. In the morning the princess is much better and after a few days she is completely recovered.⁹ In the Bask version ‘La Trahison Punie’, the wolf also had a secret to share: ‘The daughter of the King of Italy is lying in bed since two years, without anyone having found the remedy to cure her. But she will heal if someone removes from her bed a disgusting toad that is hidden there, and burns it quickly.’ Later the hero, dressed as doctor, has the princess moved to another room, opens the mattress of the bed, finds there the disgusting toad, and throws it in the fire in the kitchen. And when the toad is totally burnt, the princess turns out to be cured and ready to get married.¹⁰ Delarue uses this story as his example of AT 613 and has taken up in his catalogue the cure of the princess as division D of part III. *La mise en pratique des secrets*. D: Le héros rend la santé à une princesse; D2: dont la maladie est l’œuvre précisément des êtres démoniaques surpris par le héros; D3: car avant sa maladie elle (il) a jeté une hostie; D4: qu’ un crapaud (une grenouille) a avalée; D5: le héros enlève ce (un, plusieurs) crapau(s) caché(s); D6: enlève une autre bête cachée; D7: dans ou sous le lit de la (du) malade; D8: fait brûler cette (ces) bête(s); D9: et en tire un médicament; D10: grâce à l’eau d’une certaine source; (E1: épouse la princesse).¹¹ Several Bohemian (Czech) versions are collected by Tille. He first treats the versions with witches revealing their deeds. In the first variant there is sitting in the bedroom of the sick king under the middle floorboard a toad with a piece of bread in its mouth, with which the king can be cured. In the second the princess is sick and can be cured with powder made from the toad sitting underneath the flat stone. In a third she can be cured with powder of the toad sitting in the royal well. In a fourth the witch has made the princess sick by nailing a silver nail in her bed (that must be removed to cure her). In a fifth the sick princess can be cured with the powder of a burned toad.¹² Then Tille treats the versions with animals telling about

⁶ Meyer 1968, 78 (var. 3, 5, 6, 7, 10).

⁷ Witteryck 1946, 34-40 n°3 without indication of place of origin, appeared also in *RdH* 24, 290 & *OWV* 52.

⁸ Perbosc, A., *Conte de Gascogne*, Paris 1954, 66-73 n°10: ‘Les Secrets des Bêtes’, recorded in 1899 from Marie Tournié & Jules Fontaincé at Comberouger.

⁹ Maugard, Gaston, *Contes de Pyrénées*, 1955, 91-97 n°10: ‘Le cordonnier et le tailleur’, recorded in 1950 from author’s father.

¹⁰ Delarue, *Le Conte Populaire Français*, II, 515f.

¹¹ Delarue, *Le Conte Populaire Français*, II, 528: The motif of the toad under the bed (D5 = Mot B171.1.1) appears in 21 versions, the eating of the host rejected by the princess appears only in 4 of them (22, 23, 41, 45).

¹² Tille 1921, 341-344 §8Ba1. ‘Die kranke Prinzessin’: 1. Popelka 1883.9 = Popelka, 133; 2. Kulda 88; 3. Vaclavek I.1; 4. Maly 8; 5. Kulda 75. In Kolar II.15 a frog is sitting in the dried-out wine well; that has to be

secrets they know. Here the bear knows that the princess at a *Kirchenraub* has thrown away a host that is now guarded in a corner of the church by a mouse, who worships it.¹³

In a version from Schleswig-Holstein it is the *Vogel Greif*, who says that *in de Kirch, achter 't Altar, ünner den brêden Stên, de dar licht, dar's 'n Brettfôt ünner. Un de den Brettfôt dar ünner ut kricht, un brenn't den' to Pulver, de kann all de Kranken gesund maken* (in the church, behind the altar, under the broad stone, that lies there, under it is a toad, and whoever gets the toad from underneath it and burns it then to powder, he can cure all the sick). In the second variant the bird Grip says: *in de Kirch achter 't Altar licht 'n groten Kassen [...]. In dem Kasten in der Kirche sind Knochen. Wer die zu Pulver verbrennt, kann mit dem Pulver Tote wieder lebendig machen, wenn er sie damit einreibt. [...] Dann macht er die gestorbene Königstochter wieder lebendig und bekommt sie zur Frau.* In this version there lies *unter dem großen Stein auf dem Markt ... 'n groten Brettfôt.* Also in the third variant the big *Brettfôt* sits under the big stone in the middle of the market, as the wolf tells, while the bird Grip says that in the church behind the altar lies a broad stone. And under the stone is buried an iron box with bones in it, that when burned to powder can cure all the sick.¹⁴ Also in a fourth variant the king has a daughter who is always sick and hasn't seen the light of day. The solution is: *Dar in de Kirch, vör 't Altar, dar is 'n Stên. Un wenn dê opnam'n ward, dar licht 'n Brettfôt ünner. Un ward de to Pulver brenn't, un se kricht dar wat vun in, denn ward se kerngesund.* The hero asks the king for four men, and takes them at night between eleven and twelve into the church with blindfolded eyes and has them lift the stone at the four corners. This blindfolding is of course so that they don't see what he does, keeping his reputation as wonder-doctor (he has already cured the blindness of the king with the dew). He takes out the toad, puts it in his bag and later burns it to powder that he gives to the princess, who is immediately perfectly healthy.¹⁵ In a fifth variant the third bird says: *in de Hauptstadt London, dar is 'n Likenstên (tombstone), dar is 'n Brettfôt ünner. De den' to Pulver brenn'n kann, de kann bös' Minschen regê'n.* The hero *nimmt sik 'n paar Mann mit ... Brettfôt ... ünner ut ... un brenn't em to Pulver. Nu is den Köni sin Dochter dull un licht in Kêden un Banden.* He wants to release her and goes to the king. When he makes his daughter healthy, he shall have her as wife. *Makt ênmal Pulver, fall't al wilk Kêden af. Twêt Mal fall't mêhr af. To'n drüdd'n Mal, do fall't de Kêden all' weg.* Thereupon the princess says that she wants him as her husband. And she will, and the wedding is celebrated.¹⁶ In another variant we see motif V34.2 (but without the toad). The third animal says: *'De könisdochter hett 't Abenmahl kregen un hett de Oblat fall'n laten. Un de Oblat is ünner 'n Altar trünnelt.'* When he comes to the king and princess, the hero (Dumm' Hans) says: *Na, se hebbt dat Abenmahl kregen un hebbt 'n Oblat fall'n laten: is se dat? Jā. Woneb'n weß? ... ünner Altar ... Schall mit na her Vadder kam'n. Sieh so, secht se, nu heff ik min Oblat w* (Now, she has received the communion and has dropped the host; is that her? Yes. Where is it gone? ... under the altar ... She has to come with her father. Well, look at that, she says, now I have my host back).¹⁷ In a final version one of the 'three men' says that the king's daughter is blind and no one can cure her. Another man has the solution: *Unter der Bodentreppe liegt unter der untersten Stufe ein Büschel Haare. Damit soll sie nur in den Augen gerieben werden, dann wird sie wohl wieder*

crushed and the powder thrown in the well, to make it appear again.

¹³ Tille 1921, 347 §8Bb. 'Die Versammlung der Waldtiere', version Kulda III. 8. The wolf knows that in the waterless city a frog sits in the well. Also in the version Trebizsky 1, a giant frog sits under a stone in the king's dried-up well. *Kirchenraub*: church robbery; unclear what is meant by this.

¹⁴ Ranke 1957, 2, 349-353 n°4-6: Wisser Hs. 51, 2a/2b; Wisser, *Grotmoder 2*, 27 = *Volksmärchen 2*, 270 (told by Wulf in Altenkrempe, rec. 1900 by Wisser & 1902 by Wisser's son).

¹⁵ Ranke 1957, 2, 354-356 n°8 = Wisser Hs. 51, 4, recorded in 1906 by Wisser from garden-worker Sander in Weißenhaus, born in 1845 in Johannisdorf.

¹⁶ Ranke 1957, 2, 356 n°9 = Wisser Hs. 51, 5, recorded 1908 from day-worker Glaser in Görtz. *Kêden* and *Banden* are synonyms, Dutch *keten* = chain.

¹⁷ Ranke 1957, 2, 2357f n°10 and 11, both recorded 1908 from Rossau in Petersdorf auf Fehmarn (born 1838).

sehen.¹⁸ This is also found in a version from Nivernais (as D7): ‘ce crapaud y a fait son nid avec les cheveux que la princesse perdait en se peignant.’¹⁹

This reminds of the tale of the Griffin (*KHM* 165: ‘Der Vogel Greif’; AT 461). Here the hero, sent by the king who doesn’t want to give him his daughter, to bring him a feather from the Griffin’s tail, lodges the second night in a castle where there is a daughter who is ill, and nothing can cure her, so the hero is asked to ask the Griffin, who knows everything, what will make their daughter healthy again. The Griffin says that under the cellar-steps a toad has made its nest of her hair, and if she got her hair back she would be well. So when he comes back to that castle, he takes the daughter on his shoulders, as she cannot walk, and carries her down the cellar-steps and pulls out the toad’s nest from beneath the lowest step and gives it into her hand, and she springs off his shoulders and up the steps before him, and is quite cured.²⁰

In another tale from the collection Grimm, ‘Die Krähen’, which was n°21 in the 1815-edition and n°107 in the edition of 1819 and was finally replaced by the tale of ‘The Two Travellers’ (*KHM* 107: ‘Die beiden Wanderer’) and which is a version of AT 613, the poor blinded soldier, left behind under the gallows, overhears the conversation of three crows, telling each other that the king’s daughter is ill and promised by the king as wife to the person who cures her, which nobody can, because she can only be healed when the toad in the pond there will be burned to ashes and she drinks these ashes.²¹ In a version of AT 613 from Austria one of the crows says that the French princess is mute because of a host she has dropped has been swallowed by a frog. The stone plate must be lifted and the frog burnt.²²

In an Estonian version of AT 613, ‘The Two Brothers’, the blinded brother wanders ever deeper into the forest and finally seats himself under a tree. After a while he hears voices telling how stupid humans are, for they don’t know that nightly dew can cure blindness, whereupon the blind brother cures himself and sees the two little men, who are talking to each other. They say that the people of Copper City, who are all blind, can be cured that way, while in Silver City they can get water by lifting a stone under the city gate. In Gold City the princess is incurably sick. She had received during the Mass in church the Holy Communion, but has dropped it. Then a scabby frog came from under the altar, ate it and disappeared. Now they only have to take the frog from under the altar, roast it and have it eaten by the princess to have her cured. So the hero (after curing the people of Copper City and releasing the water in Silver City) goes to Gold City, and in the night he removes the frog from under the altar, roasts it, grinds it to powder, dissolves it in water and has the princess take three sips, and she is cured.²³

Also in the Norwegian version from the collection of Asbjørnsen and Moe, there are two brothers, appropriately called Tro (True = Faithful) and Untro. Tro is blinded by Untro and left behind, wanders deep into the forest, where he climbs into a great linden-tree, where – in the middle of the night – some animals gather to celebrate Midsummer’s night (St. John’s night). The animals converse, each telling a secret. The bear (the king) starts with a story about the blind king of England that can be cured by the dew on the linden-leaves. The wolf knows that that king has a deaf-mute daughter. Last year, when she was accepted (= had her first communion), she had spat out the holy bread and it has been eaten by a big toad. But

¹⁸ Ranke 1957, 2, 360f n°16 = *Nordelbingen* 14, 1938, 45, recorded 1937 by Bruno Ketelsen (trans. from Danish dialect in High German) from merchant Johann Christiansen in Jerpstedt (born 1878 in Achtrup).

¹⁹ Delarue, *Le Conte Populaire Français*, II, 530, n°15: Ms. Millien-Delarue, *Niv.*, version F (D5, 7, 8, 9, E).

²⁰ Grimm 1972, 681-688 n°165. See Treichler 1989, 103-105: ‘Der Greif’, for a Swiss retelling, from the Zentralbibliothek Zürich, Graphische Sammlung.

²¹ BP II, 468f, from Mecklenburg, recorded by A. v. Haxthausen in 1813 from a fellow soldier.

²² Haiding 1969, 106-111 n°83: ‘Die drei Müllnersöhne und des Teufels Speise’ (AT 812 + 613.II-III + 566). Recorded 1954 from Frau Maria Maringer at Perg; around 40, from Rechberg, heard from grandfather.

²³ Prager 1971, 170-173, from the collection of Juhan Kunder

when they dig under the floor they will find it, right under the kneeling bench before the altar [which is of course the place where the princess sat], with the bread still in its throat. They must cut it open, take out the bread and give it to the princess and she will hear and speak like other people.²⁴ In a Breton fairytale the hero, after an AT 563-adventure, goes to Spain to cure the princess. She herself tells him that, before she got sick, she has spitted out (vomited) a host in the pond that was swallowed up by a frog. The hero goes (with his special shoes) in the pond, gets the frog and cures the princess.²⁵

A version from North Italy (Welsh Tyrol) is totally devoted to *La principessa ammalata* (the sick princess). A boy gets lost in the woods, arrives at a hermit, who shows him a 'dangerous' sleeping place. In the night the boy wakes up and sees the tree next to the hermitage full of witches. 'But where is our Slipper (*la nostra ciabatta*)?' they ask and immediately a little ugly witch arrives, who tells with vicious joy how she bewitched certain princess, who will soon die. She can only be saved when someone digs out the tree and boils a root of it in the water from the source that will come free. When she drinks this potion, she will be cured in an hour. At daybreak the witches fly away, and the hermit is surprised and glad to see the boy alive and tells him that he only lacks good drinking water. The boy tells him about the source under the tree, and they dig out the tree, and a source erupts. The boy fills a bottle, cuts off a root, and goes to the capital, arriving there the third day, cures and marries the princess.²⁶

In a German version of AT 613 from the collection of Bechstein, called 'Schneider Hänschen und die wissenden Tiere', the fox tells the bear and the wolf that the daughter of a king is seven years ill, because she had to throw once a gold piece in the offertory-box, but being young and ashamed she threw clumsy and it fell next to it in a crack.²⁷ This can also be seen in a Frisian version: the princess cures when the gold-piece that she has dropped in the church in a crack next to the alms-box will be found.²⁸ Also in a version from Schleswig-Holstein the tiger says that the king has a daughter who is terribly sick; no doctors can help her. *Se is na Kirch wezen un hett'n Goldstück steken wullt, un dat is vörbi full'n. Un wenn se dar wa' hen bröcht ward, dat se dat sülb'n wa' insteken kann, denn ward se w gesund* (She has gone to church and wanted to put in a gold-piece, and it has fallen behind it. And when she was brought there, so that she can put this in it, then she becomes healthy again). The hero has a carriage filled with cushions and takes the princess to the church and instructs her to take the gold-piece out of the crack (*Ritz*) and put it in the alms-box (*Gottskasten*).²⁹ In France, this is present in a version from Lorraine, by Delarue registered as variant on D3: l'offerande; le héros récupère celle-ci et la fait glisser par la princesse dans le tronc à l'église.³⁰

Bolte and Polivka make mention in their notes to *KHM 107* of a Faroes version called 'Prinsessan og oblátin' (the princess and the Host), and refer for the lost Host to their notes at

²⁴ Baars-Jelgersma 1941, 145-149 n°29: 'Trouw en Ontrouw' = Asbj./Moe n°48: 'Tro og Utro'.

²⁵ Massignon, G., *Récits et Contes populaires de Bretagne 2*, 1981, 44-48 n°6: 'Le petit bossu et la fille du roi d'Espagne', told in 1953 by Hortense Derrien from Prat.

²⁶ Schneller, Chr., *Märchen und Sagen aus Wälschtirol*, Innsbruck 1867, 14-17 n°10: 'Die kranke Prinzessin'. Also in n°11 (ID., 17-20: 'L'orbo = Der Blinde') the last arriving witch says that she has bewitched the princess blind and to have robbed the water from the Duke. Under a stone next to the tree is hidden a bottle with water that not only cures blindness but makes see even better so that that person can find the 7 jugs needed to restore the water of the Duke. He cures with the oil his own and the princess's blindness. In the version from Tyrol, called 'Die zwei Jäger', a barber is sick to death. In front of his house, in a *Ritsche* (crevice), sits a *Schildkröte* ('shield-toad' = turtle), that must be caught with a golden hook, and the patient's breast smeared with the fat of it (Zingerle 1977, 93). In the version 'Der arme Schuster', the princess is suffering from terrible pains in her right foot, and is about to die. To cure her, someone has to go to the White Rock; at midnight the big stone will move and a horrible 'worm' (dragon, snake) will come out. It must be killed and with its fat the foot of the princess rubbed and after a week she will be healthy (ID., 178f).

²⁷ Bechstein, *Neues Märchenbuch*, 135.

²⁸ Kooi 1984, 347, who classifies this as D2064.1.

²⁹ Ranke 1957, 2, 353f n°7 = Wisser Hs. 51, 5, recorded 1904 by Wisser from Eichelberg in Neustadt.

³⁰ Delarue, *Le Conte Populaire Français*, II, 529 n°5: Merkelbach-Pinck, *Loth. Vm.* 348-352.

KHM 33: ‘Die Drei Sprachen’ (AT 671: *The Three Languages*). Here they note at the French versions of Sébillot and Orain: ‘Hier melden [...] die Frösche, daß ein Mädchen erkrankt ist, weil es die Hostie fortgeworfen hat’.³¹

In the Breton version of Sébillot, the child, who has learned the language of animals, is chased away by his parents, and falls in with two pilgrims on their way to Rome, where they are going to elect a new pope. Frogs croak that a girl has vomited her host in the pond, where it was eaten by a frog. The pilgrims laugh, but then they come to a house where the daughter is ill. A priest is fetched, but only the boy is able to induce the frog to give back the host, that is put by the priest in a chalice. When they enter the house, the girl turns out to be cured.³² The version of Orain, from Ille-et-Vilaine, does not have this motive: the poor boy, a ‘sorte d’illuminé’, because he understands the language of animals, calls himself Petit Jour (Little Day) and falls in with two brothers on their way from Brittany to Rome, where a successor for the pope will be elected. They pass a pond and ask the boy what the frogs croak and he says: ‘A month ago a girl drowned here.’ This turns out to be the case.³³

In a version from the collection of Jean Fleury from South Normandy, published in 1833, the cast-out boy joins two priests on their way to Rome. The first night the dogs bark about thieves having dug a tunnel, the second night the frogs croak that the daughter of the lord of the house is mute, because on the day of her first communion she has dropped a piece of the host on the floor. A frog took it into its mouth and as long as he has it the daughter will remain mute. Next morning a search is made, all frogs are collected from the moat, and one turns out to be thicker than the others. But does he have the piece in its mouth? One of the priests commands the frog to spit it out, and when the frog doesn’t obey the other priest tries, and even a third priest that was there (the family priest). Then the boy asks the frog in its own language, and it spits it out, and immediately the girl can speak again.³⁴ In a West French version the hero hears a dog barking: ‘There is here a sick girl.’ The lord of the house lets them enter and the boy says that the girl will not die, but the priests take her confession anyway. The boy has the frog removed from the pond, that has swallowed the host that the girl has vomited in the pond. As soon as she receives the host, she is cured.³⁵ In the version from Basse-Bretagne ‘Le pape innocent’ the boy hears: ‘It is seven years that the young lady of that castle that you see among those trees had to do her first Communion. She received the Saint Host like everyone else, but put it in her handkerchief in front of everyone. The next morning she went to wash her handkerchief in the pond and threw the Saint Host in the water. That frog you saw amidst the others has taken it and kept it on her tongue since that day. That is why these frogs, arranged in a circle, sing so well the Glory of their Creator, and that is why also that young lady is sick.’ She cures when it is brought to her.³⁶ In his description of AT 671, Delarue has catalogued the motif as III. C: Entendant des grenouilles coasser; C1: le héros explique qu’une des grenouilles a avalé l’hostie qu’une jeune fille a fait tomber à l’eau; C2: lui seul réussit à faire rendre l’hostie à la grenouille; C3: il rend ainsi la santé à la jeune fille qui était malade depuis ce jour.³⁷

³¹ BP II, 475; I, 322; cf. I, 323, where they mark an Icelandic version of AT 671 with ‘Hostie’. In a note they refer to versions of AT 461: *Three Hairs from the Devil’s Beard* and AT 613: *The Two Travelers*, where this same motif can be observed.

³² Sébillot 1881, 132-136 n°25, told by the fisherwoman Rosé Durand in 1880 in St. Cast.

³³ Orain s.d., 29-31: ‘Petit Jour’, told by Pierre Patard, cultivateur à la Croix-Madame, Bruz.

³⁴ Soupault 1963, 261-268 n°57: ‘Die Sprache der Tiere’ = Jean Fleury, *Littérature orale de la Basse-Normandie*, 1833, 123.

³⁵ Massignon, *Contes de l’Ouest*, 1953, 36-42 n°4: ‘Le Pape’, recorded in 1952 from M. Pierre Vaillant, 85, from Ile de Pedrun, Saint-Joachim.

³⁶ Delarue, *Le Conte Populaire Français*, II, 574.

³⁷ Delarue, *Le Conte Populaire Français*, II, 578 (III. Le Voyage à Rome).

Also in a Flemish version we see motif V34.2: *héros attrappe la grenouille qui a avalé l'hostie sainte jetée dans l'eau* mentioned as part of a version of AT 671.³⁸ In an Italian version the hero comes into a town where the frogs in a fountain croak that the princess is ill, because she has thrown a cross [hosts have crosses on them] in that fountain; as soon as it is fished up the princess is cured (and wants to marry the hero).³⁹

In the Greek version from the collection Hahn the queen has a toad in her body and the boy who speaks the animal languages entices it to come out of her.⁴⁰ This motif is also present in a Bulgarian tale, catalogued as AT *671**. *Die Sprache der Frösche*, where a boy who has learned the language of the frogs becomes a doctor and hears, that in the belly of the sick princess is a frog with little ones; he hears that they are afraid of vinegar and poisons them with it, after which he marries the princess.⁴¹

The Tale Type AT 461 has been investigated by Antti Aarne in his study 'Der reiche Mann und seine Schwiegersonn', and our subject he treats under the heading of the question how the sick princess can be cured (part of 47 variants). This question is absent in southeast and east Europe. In the version from Annam (South Asia) the rich man wants to know why he has no son, only a mute daughter. This mute daughter can also be seen in 10 European variants; she is blind in 15 variants, in one leprous, in 4 she has become ugly, and in one case she has turned into a frog. In 7 Finnish versions there is a mute and a blind girl. The reason for the sickness is often contained in the answer, that the girl at her first Communion has dropped the oblate (host); when she wants to cure she has to get the oblate back and eat it (18 var.). Sometimes the oblate is in the mouth of a toad (7x) or a rat (2x) and one can only get it back when the animal is killed. Aarne mentions two 'eigentümliche Verdrehungen'. The king's son becomes healthy when he retrieves the stone out of the church, into which he has spit [!] it, and spits it out in the garden or the boy once in church got a stone in his throat and has to be brought to church and take the stone out of his mouth (2x Fin). Sometimes the sickness is directly caused by a toad (3x) or a snake (3x) that is hiding under the bed. When the animal is removed, the patient recovers. The blindness of the princess is cured with water from a certain well or with morning-dew. And in his conclusion he remarks: 'Was die Geschichte von der zu Boden gefallenen Oblate betrifft, die ebenfalls in einer Anzahl Varianten vom Märchen 'Die beiden Wanderer' erscheint, so gründet sie sich auf den Volksglauben. Aus Ehrfrucht vor der Heiligkeit der Oblate hat das Volk mit ihr ein Zauberkraft verknüpft. Die Kröte oder ein anderes Tier, das die Oblate verschluckt oder nur sonst die Krankheit bewirkt ist dasselbe Tier, das den Wassermangel oder das Verdorren des Baumes verursacht.'⁴²

For French versions of AT 461, Delarue has catalogued the motif as III.C3: *il s'agit de tuer la bête*; C6: *cachée sous le lit de la personne malade*; C7: *et qui a avalé la Sainte Communion*.⁴³

In a Hungarian version of AT 461 ('The most fortunate hour') the daughter of the Black Emperor is seven years incurably sick, and the demon king tells that the sick princess has dropped a host; when it is found and she consumes it, she will be cured.⁴⁴ Also in a version of

³⁸ Meyer 1968, 82 (= Lamerant 50, 2e éd. [18]83).

³⁹ Crane 1885, 161-163 n°43 = Comparetti n°56: 'Il linguaggio degli Animali', from Monferrato.

⁴⁰ BP I, 322 after Hahn n°33: 'Von einem, der die Vogelsprache erlernte'.

⁴¹ Daskalova e.a. 1995, 137 (2 var.).

⁴² Aarne, Antti, *Der reiche Mann und seine Schwiegersonn*, 1916, 142-144, 178. He concludes: 'Auch hier also jene in den Märchen gewöhnliche Erscheinung: Ein Zug verändert sich durch den Einfluss eines anderen. [...] Jedoch kann auch die Möglichkeit nicht gelaugnet werden, dass das kranke Mädchen auf beiden Gebieten ein und denselben Ursprung haben könnte. Das Hinzufügen fremder Elemente in Europa und die Verschmelzung mit dem Märchen 'Die beiden Wanderer' hat dessen ungeachtet stattfinden können. Wenn es sich tatsächlich so verhält, so ist die dritte Frage in der ursprünglichen Erzählung vermutlich eben auf die Heilung des Mädchens gerichtet worden' (ID., 178f). And in his 'Urform' he takes up as third question: 'Wie wird das kranke Mädchen wieder gesund? – Sie muss verheiratet werden.' (ID., 180).

⁴³ Delarue, *Le Conte Populaire Français*, II, 150.

⁴⁴ Klimo, 215-225 (collection Benedek).

AT 461 from Schleswig-Holstein the boy on his way to the Pewit-mountain is asked by the second king to ask the dragon why it is that his daughter *von der Kunfermatschon so 'n spröd Gesich hadd'* (had such a rough face since her confirmation) and the answer is: *se hett man 'n halb Ablat opeten, un de anner Hälflicht an 'n Altar op 'n Stên* (she has once eaten half a host, and the other half lies near the altar on a stone).⁴⁵ In a Czech version the dragon tells that the princess has thrown away in church a 'saint's statue' (holy image = host), a frog is sitting on it; she has to kiss the statue on her knees.⁴⁶ In a French version from Trégor the Sun tells the hero that the sick daughter of the Russian king has received the host sitting next to a poor man, and, ashamed, has hidden the host in her handkerchief; it fell in the sink during the laundry and was eaten by a frog, that must be caught and the host given to the princess, who will then be cured.⁴⁷ In an Austrian version 'The golden bird', the hero comes to a king whose daughter once has become ugly. The golden bird tells that the king has to let bless a host, that the princess has dropped in her prayer-book, and give it to her.⁴⁸ The curing of the mute princess is already present in an early Spanish version of AT 613 in the *Libro de los gatos*, entitled 'An example of two companions'. The travellers bet whether truth or untruth brings more gain, and have a trial in the land of the apes who honour the lying ass-kisser, and the lover of the truth is blinded. In the night he climbs into a tree and hears the fox telling the other animals, how the blind king and his mute daughter can be cured by a spring hidden in their house and a special cake (*einen besondren Kuchen*). The blind king and the blind hero are cured by the spring, which is of course in the cellar. The special cake is for the princess; what is special about the cake is not said.⁴⁹

The Host and toads in history

The Host as the Body of Christ was a topic of fervent discussion in the High Middle Ages. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, in the battle against the Albigensian Cathars, stipulated that body and blood of Christ were truly present in the form of bread and wine: on the basis of the by the power of God produced transubstantiation of the bread in the body and of the wine in the blood of Christ.⁵⁰

Soon after that the first stories of abuse of the host are recorded. Witches smuggled hosts out of the church to make use of them in their practices. Berthold of Regensburg mentions this form of punishable sorcery in Bavaria and Austria already in the 13th century. In Ehingen in Swabia a woman was burned in 1334 because she had used a host for maleficent magic, and in Hamburg (1484), Büren (1447), and Murten (1482) there were similar cases.⁵¹

A most revealing document is the papal bull of Gregory IX in 1332, sent to the bishops of Paderborn concerning the crusade against the rebelling Stedingers. The document starts with the sentence: 'When a novice is accepted and enters for the first time the gathering of the criminals, there appears to him some sort of frog, a toad according to many. Some give him a shameful kiss on the behind, others on the mouth and suck the tongue and saliva of the animal

⁴⁵ Ranke 1957, 77 (version 1: Wisser Hs. 48, 1, told by Frau Wiedfeldt, send to Wisser in 1906).

⁴⁶ Tille 1921, 329 §8Aa: 'Der Seedrache', version Kulda 101. In the version Maly 1845, 4 the sick princess has thrown her child in the well that has dried up, while in the version Nemcova 22 the princess is sick because she has buried her illegitimate child under the gold-apple tree that has withered (also in §8Ae: Bayer 28).

⁴⁷ Massignon, G., *Contes traditionnels des teilleurs de lin du Trégor*, Paris 1981 (= 1965), 169-178 n°25: 'Trente de Paris' (*Tregont Varis*), told by François-Marie Pirriou, born 1885, from La Roche Derrien (rec. 1954).

⁴⁸ Haiding 1969, 50-53 n°28: 'Der goldene Vogel', collected in 1956 from Johann Edelbauer, Neumarkt, Mühlviertel, around 65; 'postman'. In n°137 (ID., 164-166) the well is dried up because it child is buried underneath. In n°170 (ID., 191-195) there are toads underneath the well, the tree and the brook.

⁴⁹ BP II, 473; *Libro de los gatos*, c. 28 (Gayangos, *Escritos en prosa anteriores al siglo XV*, 1861, 551: 'Enxemplo de los dos compañeros' = Knust, in: *Jb.f.rom. Lit.* 6, 18).

⁵⁰ M. Gerwig, 'Transsubstantiation', in: *LdM VIII*, 951.

⁵¹ Hansen 1900, 386ff, 429f, 433.

in their mouth. It sometimes appears quite large, often as big as a goose or duck, but most times it has the size of a backing oven.’ And further on in the letter the pope writes that each year at Eastern, when they receive the body of Christ from the priest, they keep it in their mouth and throw it away in the dirt (= in the cesspool) as an insult against their Saviour.⁵² Gregory based his pronouncements on a report from the inquisitor Konrad von Marburg, active in Germany, about the sect of the Luciferians, to whom the devil appeared as toad and frog, but especially as black cat.⁵³ The Devil as toad was already known to William of Auvergne (Guilelmus Parisiensis), who in his *De legibus* (±1230; c. 26) speaks about Lucifer who, in the shape of a black cat or a toad, appears to the heretics (Alain de Lille deduces the name Cathars from the tom-cat in whose shape Lucifer appears to them), and that they honour it in an abominable way, by kissing the cat under its tail (ass-kissers), or the toad on its mouth, from which *bufonem tangents* (Krötenlecker: toad-licker). This last contemptuous name was given to the members of the sect of the ‘Brothers of the Free Spirit’, because they were equated with the Luciferians. In the description, made in 1223 of them (*infidelitas illa de culto Luciferi*) by the monk Alberich, there is talk of calumniating the Creator, by taking at Eastern the Holy Body of the Lord in their mouth and bringing it home, where they throw it to abuse the Saviour in the cesspool.⁵⁴

The same ingredients are also part of the conspiracy against the Lepers, Jews and Muslims in France in 1321, investigated by Carlo Ginzburg in his *Ecstasies*. In a confession delivered to Philip the Fifth by Jean Larchevêque, Lord of Parthenay, one of the lepers had declared that he had been corrupted by money from a Jew, who had given him poison to scatter in the fountains and wells. The ingredients were human blood, urine, three unspecified herbs and a consecrated host – all of this dried, reduced to powder and placed in small bags weighed down so as to sink to the bottom [of the wells] more easily.⁵⁵ The leader of the leper asylum of Lestang, Guillaume Agassa, was brought before Marc Rivel, representative of Jacques Fournier, bishop of Pamiers, on 4 June 1321, and declared (after torture) that the heads of the leper asylums were expected to ‘abjure Christ’s faith and its law, and would be given a powder contained in a pot in which there was some consecrated host mixed with serpents, toads, lizards, geckoes, bats, human excrement and other things’, which had been prepared in Bordeaux on the orders of the King of Granada and the Sultan of Babylon.⁵⁶

The demonic character of the toad is clearly demonstrated in a tale told by Caesarius of Heisterbach in his *Dialogus* (x.67). A boy, weeding his field, stepped by accident on a toad. The animal raised itself in a threatening way, whereupon the boy struck it dead with a stick. But now the dead toad followed him day and night, although he killed it several times, and at last even burnt it to ashes. When he was once riding on a hunt with a friend, the toad climbed up along the tail of the horse. Finally he managed to get rid of the monster the following way. When the toad appeared once again, he bared his hip and had himself bitten by the toad so that it could finally satisfy its lust for revenge. Next he quickly cut out the wound with a razor and threw the cut-out piece of flesh away. It swelled up to the size of a fist, but the toad appeared no more, because it had had its revenge.⁵⁷ This demonic character is still present in a

⁵² Soldan-Heppe I, 142, 144: ‘in den Unrat’.

⁵³ Hansen 1900, 229f; Wolf 1994, 94. Toad worship is mentioned in passing in the *Chronicon Prussiae*, by Peter Dusburg, in 1326: And inasmuch as they [the Prussians] did not know of [the Christian] God, it so happened that they worshipped the entire creature-world instead of God, namely: the sun, moon and stars, the thunder, birds, even the four-legged animals including toads. They also had holy groves, sacred fields and waters. (Gimbutas, *The Balts*, 179 [PDF])

⁵⁴ Wolf 1994, 81f. At the Icelandic convent at Kirkjubær in 1343 a nun was burned named Kristin who had dedicated herself in writing to the devil. She had also defiled God’s body (i.e. a consecrated host) and thrown it into the privy and had engaged in intercourse with many laymen. (Mitchell 2011, 122, 171 from *Flatø-Annaler*.)

⁵⁵ Ginzburg 1992, 35.

⁵⁶ Ginzburg 1992, 42.

⁵⁷ Bächtold-Stäubli, in: *HDA* V, 626 (after Meyer, *Aberglaube*, 80; Wolf, *Beitrage*, 1, 464).

19th century Austrian legend, entitled ‘Die lästige Kröte’. When in the village Marchfeld the children receive for the first time the communion, they are exhorted not to spit as long as the holy Host is on their tongue. ‘It is also not done, children, to spit out a few hours later! For, whomever does this, a big ugly toad will hop after him even unto the bed, yes, it will crawl under his pillow and sleeps with him! Once there has been such a disobedient boy: he thought about what he had heard. When he had received the holy Body, he spat it *mir nichts dir nichts* out under the *Betschemel* (little kneeling chair for prayer), but oh woe! There stared at him right away a pair of green-yellow eyes and out of a broad-split mouth slithered a fiery-red slice of meat, richly covered with poisonous hell-foam. And this ugly animal indeed hopped after the boy. In the evening, when he went to rest, it had spied from under his bed and when he stood up in the morning, it was lying pressed flat under his pillow. The servant girl, who threw the horrible thing each time out of the window, had thought by herself: With the child sleeps truly the living God-be-with-us! But his parents knew from where it came, and once they told it the priest, and he gave them the advice to go with the unfortunate child each evening with sunrise and sunset along the holy stations of the road of the Cross. This turned out to be the right cure, and with year and hour has the ugly animal ever again been sitting at the boy’s bed, but when finally the reparation was fully paid, the toad stayed away for ever and the boy has been during his life pious and believing.’⁵⁸ [Schukowitz adds a note written on a peasant-calendar of the year 1786, that has all the appearance of stemming from the pen of a village school teacher in Marchfeld. ‘Wie der Lehnbruch-Bauer gestorben ist, seyn die Leut heym zu ihm mit dem Verschgang gangen und wie ihm der geystlich Herr die heilig Hostie auf die Zung legen wollt, war keine Zung im Maul, statt deren lag ein großmächtig mit Gift groß aufgeloffen, erschröcklich Krott darinnen, darob er dergestalt erschrocken und aufgeschreyen, dass die halb Gemain zugeloffen und gleichfalls dys abscheulichen Thier im Munde des Bauern gesehen haben.’⁵⁹]

In Mainz between 1384 and 1387, when Peter of Luxemburg was bishop, servants of a rich widow reported to have heard the crying of a child from a box, in which they discovered a toad and a host, that was bleeding profusely as result of bites by the toad. The bishop ordered an examination with the result: The widow had a great grain-stock and to assure a good price she had asked a Jew for advice. He told her to procure a host, which she did by pretending to be sick and in need of the last sacrament. The Jew put the host with the toad in the box with the promise that this would insure her of the desired profit. Both were burnt at the stake.⁶⁰ The abusing of the holy sacraments of the Church was convicted in strong words by Nider in his *Formicarius* (around 1440). He fulminates: ‘The sorcerers stain with their evilness the sacraments of the Church, for instance when they pull a thread through the holy Chrism, put an earthly image a while under the altar [meaning under the cloth or under the altar-stone].’ But Bodin (1580) fulminates against priests, because ‘by numerous trials it has been proved that the priests are sorcerers or are connected with them, because they let themselves be persuaded with favour or money to read masses, to give people consecrated hosts, to bless virgin parchment, to put drawn metal plates under the altar-cloth [these are Nider’s ‘earthly

⁵⁸ Schukowitz, Hans, ‘Mythen und Sagen des Marchfeldes’, in: *Zeitschrift für österreichische Volkskunde*, 3, 1897, 159-168, here 160f.

⁵⁹ Schukowitz, a.c., 161 n. 1. Radermacher (1927, 67) remarks in another context: ‘Unwahrscheinlich ist auch, daß man im 8. oder 9. Jahrhundert noch von dem Brauch wußte, einem Toten die Hostie in den Mund zu legen und ihn damit zu begraben. Sicher hat der Verfasser der Vita nach einem Erlebnis, das er Basilius zuschreibt, diesen Brauch gekannt ... Nachdem die Kirche mit strengen Verboten eingeschritten war, mußte der ganze Bericht unzulässig erscheinen. Wir kommen, von diesen Gesichtspunkt ausgehend für die Basiliusvita schwerlich über das 5. Jahrhundert n. C. hinaus.’

⁶⁰ Trachtenberg 1943, 115f after Browe, *Die eucharistische Wunder*, 134.

images’], to sell toads or to baptize wax images.’⁶¹ [In this he only repeated an accusation already made by the Lollards who stated in their *Twelve Conclusions* of 1395: ‘Exorcism and hallowings, made in the Church, of wine, bread and wax, salt and oil and incense, the stone of the altar, upon vestments, mitre cross, and pilgrims’ staves, be the very practice of necromancy [= black art], rather than that of the holy theology.’⁶²]

Before the court of Arras in 1459, a description was given how the unguent was made, that the witches (*vaudoises*) smeared on themselves to fly to their devil’s Sabbath. A toad was fed with holy wafers, killed and ground up together with the bones of a hanged man, and mixed with the blood of little children and some herbs.⁶³ One Vaudois woman was accused of going to the meetings using a stick that she rubbed with an unguent made of a host that she had received in church but had thrown at home in a pot full of toads, who had consumed it immediately. After killing the toads (roasting and grinding them) she mixed this (powder) with a powder she made from the bones of hanged Christians, to which she added the blood of virgins and young children as well as some herbs.⁶⁴ Around 1460 there appeared a short treatise concerning the witch sect in Lyon, called *La Vauderye de Lyonois en bref*, in which it is said of the members of the sect of the Vaudois in Lyon that they learn not to swallow the host, but to bring it to the Sabbath, where it is fed to toads that are thereafter burnt to make out of them destructive powders.⁶⁵

In French Soissons in 1460, a priest wanted to avenge himself on his enemies and consulted thereto a sorceress, who gave him the advice to baptize a toad and give it the name Jean, and to give it a consecrated wafer. The priest did all this and brought the toad to the sorceress, who tore the toad to pieces and brewed a poison that was so strong, that the enemies of the priest died miserably.⁶⁶

In the (in)famous *Malleus Maleficarum* or *Witches’ Hammer* the writers (meant is Institoris, who was inquisitor in Tyrol) tell about a witch who had kept a blessed host in her mouth and had thrown it into a pot in which there was a toad and which she buried in a stable near her hut (to spoil the cattle in it).⁶⁷ We can see this in a legend, collected in the 1960’s in the Austrian Hungarian Burgenland: The cows of a farmer from Schachendorf gave no milk; a ‘witch-master’ (an expert on the subject of bewitchment) was called for, and after having dug out the ground around the crib he found a pot with amongst other things dried toads and bones.⁶⁸ In the English translation of *The Satyirical Characters and Handsome Discriptions of de Cyrano Bergerac* (1658) a kind of supernatural magician boasts: ‘*I teach husbandmen to lay under the grounds of that sheepfold which he hath a mind to destroy, a locke of Haire, or a Toade, with three curses, that destroys all the sheep that passe over it.*’⁶⁹ This burying is

⁶¹ Wolf 1994, 454. The sold toads are of course ‘baptized’, like the wax images that are also sold. The Bavarian duke Maximilian condemned in his *Landgebot wider Hexerei und Aberglaube* of 1611: ‘Das geheime und öffentliche Einschleiben gewisser Sachen unter das Altartuch zu Zauberzwecken’ (Wolf 1994, 211).

⁶² Sinclair, Andrew, *The Discovery of the Grail*, London 1999 (= 1998), 228f. At closer inspection not the same!

⁶³ Browne 1930, 142 after *Mémoires de Jacques Du Clercq*, c. 20.

⁶⁴ Teenstra 1846, 122, in Atrecht, French Arras, capital of the department Pas-de-Calais.

⁶⁵ Lea, 293; cf. Roeck 1981, 145 n. 54.

⁶⁶ Kieckhefer 1976, 50; Browne 1930, 142 n. 1: *Baptisés ce crapaux et lui données tout le fait du s. sacrement de Baptesme, comme on fait à ung enfant; après ce, lui baillés à manger et user d’une hostie sacrée ou précieuse corps de Jésus-Christ...* Browne points to Delrio: *Hodierno tempore ad hostile veneficium bufones baptizant et eis ... venerabilem eucharistiam exhibent deglutiendam*, and also Henricus Institoris says in the *Witches’ Hammer*, to have heard the same in several trials. In stead of the Host sometimes the bread, sacrificed on Sunday for feeding the poor, was taken, like in Arras 1349. Cf. Runeberg 1947, 155: An infallible means of inflicting evil was procured by feeding the consecrated host to a toad and then burning the toad. The Host, because of its central importance in the divine service, is thought to be imbued with a magic power which medieval witches did not refuse to make use of if they succeeded in smuggling it out of the church.

⁶⁷ Wolf 1994, 139 (*Malleus* II:7, p. 264).

⁶⁸ Gaál 1965, 120f n°185 (from Rotenturm).

⁶⁹ Briggs 1962, 244 (o.c. 45ff)

also mentioned in Wendish-Rügesch Landrecht (Law of the Country), completed in 1530: *Van Toverschen ... de plegen up etlike besondrige Tyde sik by frömden Vehe vor frömden Dhören, Stellen, edder Hecken laten finden, Eyer und ander Tantwerk int Felt graven ...* (Of sorceresses ... who are in the habit to be busy on certain special times near other people's cattle before other people's doors, stables, or gates, to bury eggs and other stuff in the field...).⁷⁰ In 1545 a woman in the country of Rhinow boiled a toad, earth from a grave and wood from a funeral bier together into a 'magic soup' that she poured out in a gateway that someone else had to pass.⁷¹

In 1566 John Walsh from Dorsetshire was interrogated about witchcraft and magic by the commissioner of the bishop of Exeter and one of the questions concerned the use of toads. These toads had according to him several names: *Some they call Great Browning or Little Browning, or Bon, Great Tom Twit [= > Tit?], or Little Tom Twit, with other like names: which toads being called, the witches strike with 2 withy spurs on both sides of the head and saith to the spirit their Pater noster backward, beginning at the end of the Pater noster (but they will never say their Creed). And when he is stricken, they command the toad to hurt such a man or woman as he would have hurted. Whereto if he swell, he will go where he is appointed, either to the dairy, brewhouse, or to the dry kill of malt, or to the cattle in the field, to the stable, to the sheepfold, or to any other like places, and so return again to his place. The bodies of men and women be hurt by the [wax] images before named, and men's goods and chattels be hurt by the toads in commanding and using them as aforesaid, as he saith. And if the toad called forth as aforesaid do not swell, then will the witch that useth them call forth another to do the act, which if he do not, then will they spy another time when they may cause the party to be found lacking faith, or else to be more void of grace, where he or they may be hurt.*⁷²

How dangerous a toad was thought to be can be gathered from the confession of Agnes Sampson of the North Berwick Witches (Scotland 1590-2). 'She took a black toad, and did hang the same up by the heels, three days, and collected and gathered the venom as it dropped and fell from it in an oyster shell.'⁷³

In the witch literature we encounter the toad on the picture that is added to the second edition of De Lancre's *Tableau* from 1604, of which a description is given by Caro Baroja. At the left of Satan is sitting on another throne a nun, who is also holding snakes in her hand. Several toads decorate her throne. A group of children, armed with sticks, are standing next to a puddle far away from the most important ceremonies, minding a collection of toads.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Eckstein, in: *HDA VI*, 294 after *BlpommVk* 4, 17ff; in Kiel in 1530 two women were burnt as *toversche*. Robbins mentions a case in 1879: Agrafena Ignatjewa, a woman over fifty, was suspected of bewitching cattle. The villagers locked her in her cottage and set fire to it. When the ringleaders came to trial, the jury sentenced them merely to slight ecclesiastical penance; the other villagers were dismissed scot free. (Robbins 1965, 336b)

⁷¹ Soldan-Heppe I, 488: 'Zaubersuppen' kamen seitdem in der Mark öfters vor.

⁷² Rosen 1969, 70f. Walsh adds: *whoso doth once a day say the Lord's prayer and his Creed in perfect charity, the witch shall have no power on his body or goods for that day*, about which Rosen remarks: Early Catholic theologians believed that the Devil was easily repelled by simple observances and a sound faith. After the 15th c., experience led them to conclude that 'by the permission of God' anyone might be afflicted.

⁷³ Robbins 1965, 398b.

⁷⁴ Caro Baroja 1964, 161f. Fielding (1945, 141) gives a general description: 'At these meeting, it was said, children were presented to Satan. Sorcerers were supplied with exquisite meat and drink, served in vessels of gold and silver; and at other times with cooked toads, unbaptized children, and the flesh of malefactors cut down from gibbets. Toads, having the rank of witches' familiars, appeared at meetings, dressed in gay attire, and wearing small silver bells around their necks, or attached to their feet.' Also Seligmann (1947, 261ff) has this picture (n°114): 'To the left children watch the toads that will serve for the poison of the caldron. Such venom was used, De Lancre says, for various purposes. It was a greenish water, or an unguent strong enough to kill when brought into contact with the victim's clothes. In their earliest years children were taught to concoct such mixtures, active also in powder form. A sorceress, Rivasseau, revealed its composition: "They make it with a flayed cat, a toad, a lizard, and a viper which they lay upon live coals until they are reduced to ashes."'

According to De Lancre demons appeared often in the shape of toads. Jeannette d'Abadie from the Basses-Pyrénées confessed to him that a number of toads were brought to the Sabbath, some dressed in scarlet velvet, with little bells attached to their coats. In 1610, a man walking through the fields near Bazas, noticed that his dog had scratched a large hole in a bank and unearthed two pots, covered with cloth, and closely tied. When opened they were found to be packed with bran, and in the midst of each was a large toad wrapped in green tiffany.⁷⁵ Also in 1610 Juan de Echalar, a sorcerer of Navarre, confessed at his trial before the Alcantarine inquisitor Don Alonso Becerra Holguin that he and his coven collected toads for the Sabbath, and when they presented these animals to the Devil he blessed them with his left hand, after which they were killed and cooked in a stewpot with human bones and pieces of corpses rifled from new-made graves. From this filthy hotch-potch were brewed poisons and unguents that the Devil distributed to all present with directions how to use them. By sprinkling corn with the liquid it was supposed they could blight a standing field, and also destroy flowers and fruit. A few drops dropped upon a person's garments was believed to insure death, and a smear upon the shed of a sty effectually diseased cattle. According to Summers, from these crude superstitions the fantastic stories of dancing toads, toads dressed *en cavalier*, and demon toads at the Sabbath were easily evolved.⁷⁶

In 1611 in Fuenterrabia, Maria de Illarra declared to have become a witch, when she was in the service of Joan de Tapia, in Marianto Street, 48 years before. A long, mysterious man had entered her room around 11 o'clock at night and had pressed her to go with him. He had taken her to the sabbat in Santa Bárbara, where she had met the Devil. When she had been presented to him and had done her abjuration, the Devil gave her some toads to grind in water to make unguents, that the sorcerers and witches used to smear on their chest and under their armpits before they flew away through the air to the meetings or 'sabbats'. After this more young children came forward to give testimony and they all made concrete accusations. The 14-year old Isabel de Arano swore that Inesa de Gaxen had carried her to a 'sabbat' in France, held in the reed-fields near the river Bidasoa. There she had seen María Illara, who was supervising those who had to take care of the toads.⁷⁷

A 19th century legend, told by a gypsy woman to the mother of an old English woman, is a instruction of how to become a witch: 'Take the host, received in church, in the hand to the churchyard, go three times around, saying the creed and the Our Father backwards. Then a great black toad comes, the Devil himself. Give him the host to devour and then you can do to people anything you want.'⁷⁸ Margaret Murray knows two versions of this story. The first one

⁷⁵ Summers 1992, 159: 'No doubt toads were caught and taken to the Sabbath nor is the reason far to seek. Owing to their legendary venom they served as a prime ingredient in poisons and potions, and were also used for telling fortunes, since witches often divined by their toad familiars. Juvenal alludes to this when he writes: "I neither will, nor can Prognosticate / To the young gaping Heir, his Father's Fate / Nor in the Entrails of a Toad have pry'd." Upon which passage Thomas Farnabie, the celebrated English scholar (1575-1647) glosses thus: "He alludes to the office of the Haruspex who used to inspect entrails & intestines. Pliny says: The entrails of the toad (*Rana rubeta*), that is to say the tongue, tiny bones, gall, heart, have rare virtue for they are used in many medicines and salves. Haply he means the puddock or hop-toad, thus demonstrating that these animals are not poisonous, their entrails being inefficacious in confesting poison."

⁷⁶ Summers 1992, 159f; ID., 158: The presence of toads at the Sabbath is mentioned in many witch-trials. They seem to have been associated with sorcerers owing to the repugnance they generally exite, and in some districts it is a common superstition that those whom they regard fixedly will be seized with palpitations, spasms, convulsions, and swoons: nay, a certain abbé Rousseau of the eighteenth century, who experimented with toads, avowed that when one of these animals looked upon him for some time he fell in a fainting fit whence, if help had not arrived, he would never have recovered. A number of writers – Ælian, Dioscorides, Nicander, Ætius, Gesner – believe that the breath of the toad is poisonous, infecting the places it may touch.

⁷⁷ Caro Baroja 1964, 193f.

⁷⁸ Agricola 1976, 101 n°125.I = L. Salmon, 'Folklore in the Kennet Valley', in: *Folk-Lore* 13, 1902, 427. Vgl. The priest Louis Gaufridy, who in the course of his trial in Aix-en-Provence in 1611 was accused of abusing the

is set at the beginning of the 19th century: Two old ladies went to the morning service at Llanddewi Brefi Church, and partook of the Holy Communion; but instead of eating the sacred bread, they kept it in their mouths and went out. Then they walked round the Church outside nine times, and at the ninth time the Evil One came out from the Church wall in the form of a frog, to whom they gave the bread from their mouths, and by doing this wicked thing they were supposed to be selling themselves to Satan and become witches. A second story is about an old man in North Pembrokeshire, who used to say that he obtained the power of bewitching in the following manner: The bread of his first Communion he pocketed. He made pretence at eating it first of all, and then put it in his pocket. When he went out from the service there was a dog meeting him by the grave, to which he gave the bread, thus selling his soul to the Devil. Ever after, he possessed the power to bewitch.⁷⁹

More stories like these can be found in England. Prescribed as a method to make a man marry you, you have to keep at the 8 o'clock evening meal the Host in the mouth, and then go to the churchyard, where there is a toad. Spit out the host in front of it and it will swallow it. Then you can wind the young man around your finger.⁸⁰ A method to become sorcerer from Cornwall recommends not to swallow the host, but to carry it at night three times around the church, from south to north, crossing the east three times. The third time there will sit a toad with its mouth wide open, in which the host must be deposited. As soon as it has swallowed it, it will blow the candidate three times in the face. From then on he will be a sorcerer, recognisable by the five black, diagonally arranged spots underneath the tongue.⁸¹

This reminds of a 'curious passage' in the confession of James Device in Lancaster Castle in 1612, which seems to indicate that he was not always a willing sorcerer. His grandmother, Old Demdike, told him 'on Shear Thursday two years ago' to go to church, and at the Communion not to eat the bread, but to bring it away and deliver it to such thing as he should meet on his way home. He disobeyed, and ate the bread. On the way home he met a thing in the shape of a hare, which asked him had he brought the bread. When he said no, the thing threatened to pull him to pieces. But 'he marked himself to God, and so the said thing vanished'.⁸²

A toad, kept under the bed, is seen in a notation of Ginzburg. Antonio Galosna (former Franciscan Tertiary) said that twenty-two years earlier, in 1365, at Andezeno near Chieri, he had participated in an orgy with other members of the sect [Waldensians]. Before the orgy a certain Billia la Castagna had given all the participants a repulsive-looking liquid: those who drank it were thenceforth incapable of leaving the sect. It was said that the liquid had been made from the excrement of a large toad which Billia kept under her bed, feeding it meat, bread and cheese.⁸³ The feeding of toads is shown in the English pamphlet *A Rehearsall both straung and true ... at winsore 1579*.⁸⁴ An old woman gives with a spoon something (milk with bread) out of a bowl to three cat-sized ugly-looking creatures, two of them resembling toads, sitting in a chest.

Pots with toads are frequently seen in the English witch trials and literature. Forbes, the Scottish jurist, speaking about 'certain Spirits or Imps[, that] serve them as their Familiars',

sacraments, in part by consecrating hosts at the sabbat and giving them to dogs to eat. (Clark 1997, 140)

⁷⁹ Murray 1963, 226 after Davies, *Welsh Folklore*, Aberystwith 1911, 231; see also Sergeant 1996, 38, according to whom the stories are from J. Ceredig Evans, *Welsh Folklore* (and from the early 19th c.).

⁸⁰ Agricola 1976, 101 n°125.II = Mabel Peacock, 'Folklore from Lincolnshire', in: *Folk-Lore* 12, 1901, 168.

⁸¹ *Folklore Journal* 5, 1887, 198.

⁸² Sergeant 1996, 72; also Murray 1963, 227. Sergeant remarks that 'here we have the rare phenomenon of the talking hare-spirit,' and describes in a note another unpleasant experience James Device had with a hare. He told how once, after seeing some pictures being 'crumbled' at the Redfearns' house, he had an apparition of 'a thing like a hare, which spit fire at him.'

⁸³ Ginzburg 1992, 77 & 307.

⁸⁴ Printed in Rosen 1969, 83.

says: 'These Imps are said to be kept in Pots or other Vessels.' Murray writes: 'The domestic familiar was always a small animal, was fed in a special manner on bread and milk and blood, and was kept, as Forbes points out, in a box or earthen pot on a bed of wool.'⁸⁵

Elizabeth Francis, convicted in 1556 at Chelmsford, 'learned this art of witchcraft of her grandmother whose name [was] mother Eve. Item when she taught it her, she counselled her to renounce God and his word and to give of her blood to Sathan – as she termed it – which she delivered her in the likeness of a white spotted Cat, and taught her to feed the said Cat with bread and milk, and she did so; also she taught her to call it by the name of Sathan and to keep it in a basket.' After about fifteen years, Mother Waterhouse, her neighbour, received this cat with the same instruction and she kept him in a pot ('forthwith would lie down in his pot again, wherein she kept him'). 'Item, this mother Waterhouse confessed that she first turned this Cat into a toad by this means: she kept the cat a great while in wool in a pot, and at length being moved by poverty to occupy the wool, she prayed in the name of the father and of the son, and of the holy ghost that it would turn into a toad, and forthwith it was turned into a toad, and so kept it in the pot without wool.'⁸⁶

In 1579 at Windsor, it was a certain Mother Dutton, living in Cleworth Parish, who had a 'Spirit' or 'Fiend' in the shape of a toad that she fed, while he was lying 'in a border of green herbs' in her garden, with blood that she drew from her 'flanck'. At St. Osyth in Essex in 1582, the 8-years old Thomas Rabbet declared, that his mother had four different 'spirits', amongst them a black toad, called Pigine, that his mother sometimes gave beer to drink and white bread or cake to eat; and at night they came sucking her blood. Febey Hunt, the stepdaughter of Ales Hunt, declared that she had seen her mother with two little things as 'colts', that Murray wants to replace with 'cotes', meaning 'cats', but they are without a doubt 'toads', the one white, the other black, 'the which she kept in a little low earthen pot with wool', that were standing in her room next to her bed and that she fed with milk. Ales Hunt confessed indeed that she had two spirits as small 'Coltes', the one black and the other white, whom she called Jack and Robin. 'This Examine said that her sister (named Margerie Sammon) had also two spirits like Toads, the one called Tom, and the other Robin.' Elizabeth Bennet confessed to having two 'spirits', a black dog, called Suckin, and a red lion, called Lierd. Suckin is a male and the other a female. Often they drink from her milk-bowl. 'And when, and as often as they drink of the milk, this Examine said, they went into the said earthen pot and lay in the wool.'⁸⁷

In 1588, an unnamed old woman in Essex confessed that she had three 'spirits', a cat she called Lightfoot, a toad she called Lunch, and a weasel she called Makeshift. 'The Cat would kill kine, the Weasel would kill horses, the Toad would plague men in their bodies. There was one old mother W. of great T. which had a spirit like a weasel: she was offended highly with one H. M. home she went, and called forth her spirit, which lay in a pot of wool under her bed, she willed him to go plague the man; he required what she would give him. She said she would give him a cock, which she did.'⁸⁸ These 'spirits' (Cat, Weasill and Toade) are also mentioned by Geo Gifford in *A Dialogue concerning Witches and Witchcraft* of 1593, who says of another witch that she has three or four 'imps' – some call them *puckrels* – , one as a grey cat, another as a weasel, and a third one as a mouse.⁸⁹

The 'spirits' take on more and more the shape of normal house-pets. In Lancashire with old mother Demdike it is a brown dog, at the Fairfax family at Fewstone in 1621, they are cats

⁸⁵ Murray 1963, 208f after William Forbes, *Institutes of the Law of Scotland*, Edinburgh 1722-30, II, 33.

⁸⁶ Murray 1963, 209f after *Witches of Chelmsford*, 24-32 (orthography modernized). Also the remark of mother Waterhouse to the cat, that if she wanted something from him, 'she would say her Pater noster in Latin', wherein Latin has become a magic language.

⁸⁷ Murray 1963, 210-212 after *Witches tales at St. Oses*.

⁸⁸ Murray 1963, 212 after George Giffard, *Discourse of the subtile Practises of Devilles*, London 1587.

⁸⁹ Lea, 1309.

and a crow, called Tewhit. Elizabeth Swayer at Edmonton in 1621 had a dog named Tom, while Margaret Jones from Lancashire in 1633 had a cat (that ‘sucked her pappe’).⁹⁰ From 1645-47 there were in Essex the trials in which Matthew Hopkins, the famous ‘witchfinder’ took part. Also here there is talk of dogs and cats, no longer called ‘spirits’ but ‘imps’ in the report by John Sterne from 1645. They have fantastic names as Jarmara, Vinegar Tom, Sack and Sugar, and Elimanzer. Sometimes there is only talk about ‘imp’: ‘Anne Leech said, that she had a grey imp sent to her, and that this examinant, together with the said Elizabeth Clark, and Elizabeth the wife of Edward Gooding, did about a year since, send their imps to kill a black cow and a white cow of Mr. Edwards, which was done accordingly. And this examinant said, that she sent her grey imp, Elizabeth Clark a black imp, and Elizabeth Gooding’s a white imp.’⁹¹ Some have multiple imps and Henry Cornwall declared that Margaret [Moone] had confessed to him to have twelve imps, of which he only remembered the names Jesus, Jockey, Sandy, Mrs. Elizabeth and Collin. Another informant, Francis Milles, declared under oath, ‘that she asking the said Margaret [Moone] for her imps, which sucked those teats, she said, if she might have some bread and beer, she would call her said imps; which being given to her, she put the bread into the beer, and set it against an hole in the wall, and made a circle around the pot, and then cried, Come Christ, Come Christ, come Mounsier, come Mounsier: And no imp appearing, she cried out and said, she had devilish daughters, which had carried her imps away in a white bag, and wished they might be searched.’⁹²

In general, the confessions show great similarity. We also meet the term ‘familiar’. Johan Cooper said, ‘that she had been a witch about twenty years, and had three familiars, two like mice, and the third like a frog; the names of the two like mice are Jack, and the other Prickeare, and the name of the third, like a frog, is Frog. – Anne Cate said, that she had four familiars, which she had from her mother, about two and twenty years since, and that the names of the said imps are James, Prickeare, Robin, and Sparrow; and that three of these imps are like mice, and the fourth like a sparrow, which she called Sparrow.’⁹³ Reginald Scot, in his *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584), was the first to use the words ‘familiar’ and ‘imp’ in this restricted sense. The two venomous toads which sucked the breasts of the Fair Rosamond, while Queen Eleanor and four witches held her captive, apart from being fable, are not examples of twelfth-century familiars.⁹⁴

In Paris, in 1390, Jehenne de Brigue, called La Cordière, was accused by Jehan de Ruilly of being a witch, having used sorcery to heal him. She had told him that he was bewitched by one Gilette, by whom he had two children, and had tried to help him by making a waxen figure (*voult*) of Gilette, and by sucking two toads. In a later hearing, in 1391, Ruilly adds that his page recently found two toads in his courtyard and killed them. The advocate presents as evidence upholding the conviction several articles, such as a piece of a host, three leaves of periwinkle, a piece of charcoal, two shoots of a mustard plant, a splinter of wood, wax and hair. These articles are shown to the prisoners. Macette (the wife of Jehan de Ruilly, who was accused as being Jehenne’s accomplice) explains their magical use, but denies using them in any witchcraft. The death sentence is finally pronounced and carried out the same day.⁹⁵ Toad-familiars are also mentioned at the trial of Silvain Nevillon and Gentien le Clerc in Orléans in 1614. Nevillon confessed that there were sorcerers, who feed *Marionettes*, which are small *Diabeteaux* in the shape of *Crapaux*, and give them porridge (*bouillie*) to eat made of milk and meal, and give them the first bit (*morceau*) and don’t dare to leave the house

⁹⁰ Murray 1963, 212f.

⁹¹ Murray 1963, 214 after T.B. Howell, *State Trials*, London 1816, IV, 834ff.

⁹² Murray 1963, 216 after Howell, *l.c.*

⁹³ Murray 1963, 218 after Howell, *l.c.*

⁹⁴ Robbins 1965, 190b.

⁹⁵ Robbins 1965, 379b; 381a.

without asking them permission and tell them how long they will be absent, for instance three of four hours, and when they say that that is too long, they who take care of them don't dare to make their journey or to overstep their will. And when they want to go to the market or want to play, and want to know if it will go well, they look if the said Marionettes are gay, in which case they go to the market or to play, but when they are chagrined (*maussades*) and sad, they don't leave the house. Gentil or Gentien le Clerc said that he had more confidence (*acquest*) in his Marionette than in God. And he had often seen the Marionette of the said Nevillon, which was as a large toad (*crapaut*), totally black like a black fur (*fourrure*), that was hidden in a pot (*boëtte*) under a tile (*carreau*: something square), that jumped up and went on up, when someone wanted to give the said toad to eat. That he had seen it six weeks ago in the small street of the bed (? *lict*) of said Nevillon, and that he had seen that he took it another time with him in his cloak, which he told him a dozen times that he wanted he had one for him. That he would have more *profit* from it than from God and that he would gain nothing from looking at God, but that his Marionette always brought him something.⁹⁶

The potion made from the excrement of her toad by Billia la Castagna had the effect that those who partook of it were not able to leave the sect. This story of the magic effect of a potion is probably very old⁹⁷ and is already present in the first cases of heresy in Western Europe. In 1022, Adémar of Chabannes claimed in his chronicle that a farmer from Perigord carried about with him the ashes of dead children, by which he soon made a Manichaeon of anyone to whom he could give them.⁹⁸ With much more details the same story is told by Paul, a monk of Chartres, who speaking about the heresy, first wants 'to reveal to the uninformed something about that food which they call celestial, and by what art it was confected.' He describes the orgy. Then 'when a child was born of this most filthy union, on the eight day thereafter a great fire was lighted and the child was purified by fire in the manner of the old pagans⁹⁹, and so was cremated. Its ashes were collected and preserved with as great veneration as Christian reverence is wont to guard the body of Christ, being given to the sick as a viaticum at the moment of their departing this world. Indeed, such power of devilish fraud was in these ashes that whoever had been imbued with the aforesaid heresy and had partaken

⁹⁶ Murray 1963, 221f after De Lancre, *L' incredulité et Mescreance du Sortilege*, Paris 1622, 801, 803. The *Marionettes* of Nevillon are similar to the *Martinets*, mentioned by Petrus Valderama in the French translation by the Sieur de la Richardière of his *Histoire Générale du Monde...* (Paris 1619): 'These Martinets, also called *petit maître*, never leave those they are appointed to and perform for him all possible services. The Martinet tells the witch, when a sabbat should be held, which is usually on a Thursday or Friday night. Then she keeps quiet as not to be seen, and when it is time, she undresses and smears herself with some ointment and leaves the house through the door or window or chimney, carried by her Martinet in the shape of a goat, a sheep or a serpent (Lea, 477). In Paulus Grillandus' *Tractatus de Sortilegiis*, 1592, the woman calls the man, who summons her to go to the sabbat, *parvum dominum Martinetum*, according to Caro Baroja (1964, 105) 'her familiar spirit', in the Italian *Martinetto* or *Martinello* (cf. Lea, 403f). This *parvum dominum* is the same as *petit maître* and the term *Magistello* in another story of Grillandus, taking place in a Sabine village in the duchy Spoleto in 1515 around a group of the *Religio Diabolica*. A woman, called Lucrezia, after having taking part at the *ludis beneventanis* at Benevento, had during the flight home at the sound of the Ave Maria been dropped by her Magistello in a field near her village, where she hid herself in the bushes (Lea, 405; Caro Baroja 1964, 105).

⁹⁷ For instance, the Gnostic sect of the Montanists, who adhered to a very strict way of life, were accused of slaughtering yearly a child or at least stab its whole body with iron needles and mix the drawn blood through the dough to make from it the Holy Communion (Soldan-Heppe I, 130 after Eusebius, *HEV* 16ff; *Haer.*, XLVIII, 14).

⁹⁸ Wakefield & Evans 1991, 75. See also Soldan-Heppe I, 135f, who mentions a predecessor, Glaber Radulf, who deduced the heresy from an Italian woman, who, full of devils, is said to have seduced everyone with irresistible force. The fable of the irresistible force is also told about the contemporary Psellus the Euchite, as well as later heretics, even of the Templars and the Fraticelli.

⁹⁹ After the manner of the old pagans: this refers probably to the stories about Demophon and Achilles. But also it can refer to the stories in the Old Testament about letting the sons go through fire (for instance Hezekiah.)

of no matter how small a portion of them was scarcely ever afterward able to direct the course of his thought from this heresy to the path of truth.¹⁰⁰

Around 1114, Guibert of Nogent claims that a sect near Soissons cremate the children born from their orgies (after a bizarre ritual of throwing the child from hand to hand through the flames by those sitting around the fire until it is dead), and make from the ashes bread, of which a morsel is given to each as a sacrament. Once that has been eaten, it is very rarely that one is brought back to his senses from that heresy.¹⁰¹ In 1148 it is William of Newburgh, who says of the Breton Eudo, nicknamed *de Stella*, that ‘whoever happened upon them by chance and took but a least taste of their food was mentally affected as he shared the diabolic repast, and forthwith joined this most filthy throng.’¹⁰² Walter Map claims of the sect of the Publicans or Patarines, who are very numerous in Anjou, Aquitaine and Burgundy, that they snare their table guests by means of one of their dishes and so make [them] like themselves.¹⁰³

In the Chronicle of Saint-Denis it is claimed of the Templars: The bodies of deceased Templars are burned and their ashes mixed to a powder that was administered to new members as a magic potion to make them hold to their abominable ways.¹⁰⁴

In 1324 the bishop of Ossory, Richard Ledred, discovered at a church-visitation at Kilkenny a long-standing ‘diabolic nest’ of twelve heretical and to magic devoted persons, whose mistress Alice Kyteler was a relative of the chancellor. They denied, as the bishop informs us, Christ and the Church, scorned the sacraments, aped on their nightly gatherings the ceremonies of the Church, sacrificed on cross-roads (*in quadriuiis*) to the devil, who appeared to them in person as *Artis filius* or as *Robinus filius artis*, and committed as incubus lewdness with them, whether he acted as Moor, as black-haired dog or as tom-cat; they cooked salves and powders from the usual, multiple, impure substances (*de intestines et interioribus gallorum demonibus immolatorum, cum quibusdam vermibus horribilis* [amongst them toads], *herbis varies ac etiam unguibus mortuorum crinibus posteriorum, cerebro et pannis puerorum decedentium sine baptismo*, etc.), with which they stirred up love and hate, made people sick or insane, and tried to kill them.¹⁰⁵

On the heretics’ sabbat, uncovered by the Dominican Anton of Savigliano in 1377-78 in the valleys of Piedmont, there is talk of an old woman, who distributed at the table a magic potion, brewed from strange ingredients, with a malicious appearance and heavy, often lethal effect, the consumption of which bound for ever to the devil and the sabbat.¹⁰⁶ The potion of Billia la Castagna was part of this.

¹⁰⁰ Wakefield & Evans 1991, 78f. In a note they write that stories of orgiastic rites and the preparation of a horrid food from the blood and ashes of infants are of ancient vintage. Something of the sort had been told of suspect groups for centuries by Romans of Christians, by Christians of Montanists, Messalians, and other heretics, and of Jews. In the middle of the 11th c. Michael Psellus accused heretics in Thrace of the use of magical ashes made from murdered infants.

¹⁰¹ Wakefield & Evans 1991, 103.

¹⁰² Wakefield & Evans 1991, 144. Cf. also 245, to the years 1161-1166 William remarks about the sect of the Publicans that they cease not to do harm by spreading their secret poison. Countryfolk, uneducated and sluggish of mind, once they are poisoned by a draught of this virus, stubbornly resist all discipline; whence it very rarely chances that any of them, when they are discovered and dragged from their hiding places, are converted to piety.

¹⁰³ Wakefield & Evans 1991, 255 (dated around 1182).

¹⁰⁴ Cohn 1975, 88 after *Chronique de Saint-Denis*, in: Bouquet (ed.), *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, XX, 686.

¹⁰⁵ Hansen 1900, 341f. Alice is said to have killed several of her husbands by magic. There is talk of the *societas pestifera praedicti Robini filii artis* and the *secta et doctrina dominae Aliciae*. Summers 1992, 172 n. 150: *quod sacrificia dabant demonibus in animalibus uiuis, quae diuidebant membratim et offerebant distribuendo in inferne quadruuii cuidam daemone qui se facit appellari Artis Filium ex pauperioribus inferni*; which means ‘one of hell’s lesser princes’.

¹⁰⁶ Hansen 1900, 411f.

Nider, writing in 1437, speaks of an unguent, made from the corpses of killed children, used for transformation.¹⁰⁷ This refers to trials that had taken place in 1428 in Val d'Anniviers and Val d'Hérens near Siders and Sion. Men and women had denied here in large numbers God, the saints and the Church and given themselves to the devil, who appeared to them in all kind of animal shapes and gave them ointment to smear on the chairs upon which they flew from village to village to relish themselves in the cellar with wine. Also they could transform themselves with the ointment into wolves to attack the cattle or to make themselves invisible; all kinds of charms served them to make people and their cattle sick or to kill them and take away the milk from the cows. Even sheer threats out of their mouths gave their enemies sickness, paralyzing, blindness, impotence for men, infertility in women, spoiled the grain on the field as well as the vine. Often these heretic sorcerers and witches gathered at night on the sabbat, where the devil appeared among them as Magister and preached against the faith, the confession and the church-visit. They consumed there their own children, after having roasted them on the fire or boiled; strangers' children were paralysed or killed by magic touch, were dug up from the graveyards and also consumed. They were with so many that in the next year they wanted to form a circle; the devil had promised them that soon they would be so strong that they wouldn't have to fear authority or court of justice, but could set up their own court of justice and overpower the whole of Christianity.¹⁰⁸

In 1450 in Gelders' Reimerswael, a woman was brought before the *schepenen* ('sheriffs'), who was accused as sorceress, *dat sy den luden t'eten geven soude, dat sy heir na loepen souden* (that she had given the folks to eat so that they would follow her). She is banished for three years.¹⁰⁹ In 1457-59 there were trials at Faïdo in Val Leventina near St. Gotthard. The sabbat is here called *barlotto* (Swiss-Ital. *barlòtt* 'small keg or barrel') and consists of nightly orgies, at which children born from this are thrown over till death follows (like Guibert of Nogent told); in whose hands it died became *pous* (pope). From the ashes of the killed child was made a sacramental powder to kill people or to enchant them.¹¹⁰ According to the inquisitor Jaquier, writing in 1458 about the Vaudois, most of them go to this sabbat (*synagoga diabolica*) through the air, carried by the force of the devil on a stick or other thing that before had been smeared with a mysterious ointment. This ointment was made from the decocts of the children eaten at the sabbat, which was mixed with other ingredients.¹¹¹ Then follow the trials in Arras in 1459, where according to inquisitor Pierre Broussart the flying-ointment is made from a toad fed with consecrated hosts, powdered bones of a hanged man, the blood of small children and some herbs. And there is the anonymous *La Vaudereye de Lyonois en bref*, where the members learned to not swallow the host but bring it to the sabbat where it is abused or fed to toads that were burned and made into destructive powders. Their crimes consist of the killing of children and the creation of stormy weather.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Soldan-Heppe I, 218 (Janssen, VIII, 548ff; Riezler, 56ff; Hansen 1901, 437ff): *de liquidiori vero humore flascam vel utrem replemus, de quo is qui potatus fuerit, additis paucis caerimoniis, statim conscius efficitur et magister nostrae sectae*. Klaniczay, 17: 'From the liquids we fill a container, and from this, with a few additional ceremonies, anyone who drinks immediately becomes a member and master of our sect.' An example of a young man accused of witchcraft: 'Afterwards he drinks from the aforesaid flask; and this done, he forthwith feels himself to conceive and hold within himself an image of our art and the chief rites of our sect.' His confession tells us that the witches gathered in church on Sunday morning before the blessing with the holy water: they denied Christ ... and swore to follow the devil, whom they call *magisterulus*.

¹⁰⁸ Hansen 1900, 404f; see the report by the Luzern chronicler Hans Fründ (1428); also Hemmerlin around 1450 points to this prosecution; see Hansen 1901, 111. Cohn 1975, 276.

¹⁰⁹ Hansen 1901, 556 (cf. Molthuisen at Nijhoff, in: *Bijdragen* N.R. I, 196).

¹¹⁰ Lea, 203 of the Fraticelli, in 1467 at trial in Rome; Hansen 1901, 570 n. 1: the *barlotto* in the rule took place on March 1 and in Mai and one flies there on the anointed stick; there are 50, 100 or 150 partakers. Ginzburg 1992, 79 & 298f.

¹¹¹ Hansen 1900, 449f.

¹¹² Soldan-Heppe I, 225; Lea, 293.

Also the flying-ointment of the witches was made in the same way. The learned canon of the Dutch diocese Dordrecht John Tinktoris accused around 1450 in a sermon the Waldesians that they prepared out of murdered infants ointment that allowed them to fly through the air with the devil to play the wanton.¹¹³

Mathias Widman von Kemnat describes around 1475 the *ketzerei und sect, die allergröste, Gazariorum, das ist der unholden* ('witches'), *und die bei der nacht fahren uff besamen* (brooms), *offengabeln, katzen, bocken oder uff andern dingen darzu dienend*. On their gatherings an orgy is held followed by eating and drinking. When they go home *werffen sie vor den unflait irer natur in ein kuffen zusammen, und so man sie fragt, warumb sie das thun, antwortten sie, das sie das zu schmacheit thun dem heiligen sacrament*.¹¹⁴ One of the things discussed is: *Item wen der arme verfürnt mensch sich dem deuffel zu lehn holt gegeben, so gibt ime der meister ein buchssen mit salben, ein stabe, besame oder was darzu gehort. Uff den muss der verfürnt in die schule* (the witches' school = the sabbat) *gehn und lert ine, wie er den stab sol schmerzen mit der salbe, und der salbe wirt deuffelisch gemacht von der feistigkeit der kinde, die gebraten und gesodten sein, und mit andern vergifften dingen als schlangen, eidessen, krotten, spinnen. Die salben brauchen sie auch darzu, so sie iemant damit beruren oder bestreichen einmale, muss der mensch eine bosen doits sterben zustunde gehlingen. Item sie machen pulver aus dem Inngeweide, aus der lungen, leber, hertz etc., und so es nebliche ist, so werffen sie das pulver in den nebel, der zeucht es uff in die lufft. Derselbig lufft ist vergifft, also das die leut gchling sterben oder sunst ein ewig krankheit gewinnen, und das ist ursach, das in ettlichen dorffern pestilentz regiirt und zu allernechts dobei ist man frisch und gesundt*.¹¹⁵ After a second method of making the unguent (from a pious man they torture to death) follows the story of how they use the unguent to poison wells: *Item sie nemen die haut von einer katzen, thun der salben darin und fullen die haut mit erbessen, linsen, gerstenkornen etc. und nemen die haut zu und legen sie in einen frischen brunnen. Drei tag darnach durren sie die frucht und pulverens, und wen es vast windig ist, so stiegen sie uff einen hohen berg und werffen das pulver in den wint, der weht es in die frucht des felds, davon wird das gefilde unfruchtbar*.¹¹⁶

Antoinette Rose from Villars-Chabod near Annecy confessed in 1477, that powders were made from the bones and intestines of children to cause damage (*maleficia*) and disease to children and animals. The devil gave the heretics (Valdois) an unguent to cause disease; with it she touched the hand of the 4-year old daughter of Louis Fabre from Fillioz, with the result that the child became suddenly ill, lingered for fifteen days and then died. With the powders that she had received from her master the devil she had touched a cow of Pierre Jacquemod, and the cow died. Three more cows of him she killed, because he had once beaten one of her goats. Also she had with those powders practiced witchcraft (*maleficiavisse*) upon a cow of

¹¹³ Wolf 1994, 80 after Hoensbroech, *Das Papsttum in seiner sozial-kulturellen Wirksamkeit*, 1900, 36.

¹¹⁴ '... they throw their vomit (?) in a tub and when asked why they do this, they answer that they do it out of contempt for the holy sacrament.' Do they spit their hosts in the tub?

¹¹⁵ Hansen 1901, 232f (Also, when the poor seduced person has given himself in loan to the devil, then the master gives him a little container with unguent, a wand, broom or whatever belongs to it. Thereupon the seduced has to go to school and learns there how he must smear the wand with unguent, and the unguent is made in devilish fashion from the solid parts of children that were roasted and cooked, and with other poisonous things like snakes, lizards, toads, spiders. The unguents they also use therefore so that when they touch or strike someone once, that person has to die right away an evil death. Also, they make powder from the intestines, from the lungs, liver, heart, etc., and when there is mist, then they throw the powder into the mist, that sucks it up in the air. That air is poisonous, so that the people die right away or else get an eternal sickness, and that is the reason that in some villages the plague reigns and close by the people are fit and healthy); see Wolf 1994, 124; Soldan-Heppe I, 245.

¹¹⁶ Hansen 1901, 233 (Also, they take the skin of a cat, put the unguent in it and fill the skin with peas, lentils, barley-grains etc., and tie up the skin and put it in a fresh well. Three days after that they dry the fruit and turn it to powder, and when it is quite windy, then they climb up on a high mountain and throw the powder into the wind, that blows it into the fruit of the field; from it the field becomes infertile.)

Pierre Girard, because he had damaged her oats. Their master the Devil taught them in the synagogues to cause as much damage as possible. And the Devil told her to have no fear, because he would protect her against all harm and she would not be arrested.¹¹⁷

In 1479 in the diocese Lausanne a woman confessed to have sneaked in through a window one night and to have strangled her own granddaughter and to have used her remains to make a deadly powder and an ointment that makes a broom or stick fly through the air.¹¹⁸

In the bull *Summis desiderantes*, issued by pope Innocentius VIII in 1484, he says that it has come to his attention that in some parts of Upper-Germany, as well as in the dioceses of Mainz, Cologne, Trier, Salzburg and Bremen very many persons of both gender, forgetting their own salvation and renouncing the Catholic faith, with the devils, who mingle with them as men (*incubus*) or women (*succubus*), abuse and with enchantments and songs and spells and other horrible superstitions and magic-related transgressions, slanders and crimes, prevent the deliveries of women, the young of animals, the fruits of the earth, the vineyards and the orchards, etc., etc. And he adds: 'Also, they deny the faith itself, which they have accepted with the receiving of the holy baptism, with their oath-breaking mouths.'¹¹⁹

In the *Malleus*, the story has been taken up from Nider's *Formicarius* about the inquisitor Peter von Bollingen, to whom a witch confessed to steal at night with her companions children's corpses from the graves and to boil them in a kettle. 'From the solid substance we make ointments for our flying, witches' arts and to satisfy our wishes. The liquid we put in a bottle. Whoever drinks from this and performs certain ceremonies, is master in our sect and privy to its secrets.'¹²⁰

The hangman (Henker) Diepolt Hartmann from Miltenberg gives in 1494 before the city-court of Frankfurt during an interrogation an overview of the experiences he had had with some thirty sorceresses in the years 1492-94: '*Item sie nemen die crucifix in den wegen und verpfrennen es zu pulfer und des unschuldig kindlins beyn auch zu pulvermele am Gründornstag gemalen und wasser, daruß machen sie eyn deigk und lassen eyn messe daruber lesen uff eyn Gründornstag, damit bezaubern sie die mentzchen* (Also they take the cross from crossroads and burn it to powder, and bones from innocent little children also ground to powder on Maundy Thursday, and water; from this they make a dough and have a mass read over it on a Maundy Thursday; with this they bewitch the people).'¹²¹

Sylvester Prierias, who quotes the *Malleus* in his *De Strigimagarum Daemonumque Mirandis* from 1521, says that whoever drinks of the fluid will join the sect.¹²²

At a trial in Hanau in 1564 the girl *Gotts Anna* declared that when she was still young she was by her mother '*durch Eingebung eines Stück Brodes dazu kommen*' (meaning that she had become a witch at the age of twelve or so by eating a piece of bread her mother gave her).¹²³

¹¹⁷ Rowland 1990, 163 after Hansen 1901, 467-499.

¹¹⁸ Kieckhefer 1976, 78.

¹¹⁹ Soldan-Heppe I, 248ff after J.M. Schwager, *Versuche einer Geschichte der Hexenprozesse*, Berlin 1784, 23.

¹²⁰ Dresen-Coenders 1983, 124; see also Wolf, *NS*, 369 n°284 via Delrio; Murray 1963, 158: '... but the thinner potion they put into flaggons, whereof whosoever drinketh, observing certeine ceremonies, immediatlie becommeth a maister or rather a mistresse in that practise and facultie' (Scot, Bk. III, p. 41). Cohn 1975, 205 about Stedelin (Stadelin, Staedlin), that is to say, the sect he was a member of, as investigated by Peter of Greyerz, judge at Boltingen in the Swiss Simmertal until 1406: 'A candidate for membership of this sect was taken by the masters into a church on a Sunday morning, before the blessing of the holy water. There he was required to renounce Christ and Christianity and to do homage to a demon, known as "the little master", who manifested himself in human form. Next he drank from the potion (made from infant corpses), whereupon the "images of the art" were revealed to him.' (Nider: '*de liquidiori vero humore flascam vel utrem replemus, de quo is qui potatus fuerit, additis paucis caerimoniis, statim conscius efficitur et magister nostrae sectae.*')

¹²¹ Soldan-Heppe I, 232 after Hansen 1901, 594. *bezaubern* = do 'malificia' rather than enchant, transform. The dough is of course used to make bread: the Devil's host, used in Black Masses.

¹²² Lea, 358 (*o.c.*, I.i, c. 2).

¹²³ Soldan-Heppe II, 62.

In Vienna in 1583 the 70-years old Elisabeth Pleinacher confessed to have given to her 16-year old granddaughter from Mank in the Viertel an apple with the devil in it; it gave her cramps.¹²⁴ De Lancre tells in his *Tableau* of 1613 that children told him to have been abducted to the sabbat, because the witches put a hand on their heads or gave them a piece of apple to eat.¹²⁵ And at a trial in Tambach in 1675 a possessed woman accused another woman her by means of a piece of cake *den Teufel beigebracht zu haben*.¹²⁶ In 1656 at Paserborn more than thirty possessed shouted unceasingly about Trinike Morings as about a *Zauberin, welche die Teufel durch Branttwein, Kuchen, Äpfel, Bier, Fleisch und andere mehr Sachen hätte in die Menschen getrieben* (a sorceress, who had driven the devil in the people by brandy, cakes, apples, beer, meat and other more things).¹²⁷

In Olaus Magnus's *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (History of the Northern People) of 1555, it is also by way of a pot of beer that new members of the sect are recruited. He is of course speaking about something more rational people are inclined to call it all nonsense, so he has to defend himself against them and writes: 'By way of defense of the information by Euanthes, Agriopas and other writers I want to demonstrate here with a few examples, how these things happen in the mentioned areas unto the present day. Because as soon as someone, be he German or aboriginal, is curious against God's command and wishes to join the society of these cursed people, who change themselves when it pleases them into wolves, [...] then he requests of one who is master in such magic this art to transform that is against all of nature, namely because that one gives him a jug of beer to drink [...], at which certain words are spoken. Then he can whenever he wants transform his humanity totally in wolf-shape, while he goes into a cellar [which is to drink wine!] or goes to a faraway forest.'¹²⁸

Something similar can be seen at the Livonian 'werewolf' Thieß who at his trial in 1691 declared that he didn't want to die as werewolf; '*... er wolle es vor seinem tode einem andern beybringen, dem er es nun beybringen könnte.*' Asked how he would bring it on to someone else, he answered: '*Er wolle es so machen, wie es ihm geschehen ware, und dürffe nur einem ein mahl zutrincken und 3 mahl in die kannen hauchen und die worte sagen: "Es werde dir so wie mir," und wenn dann derjenige die kanne entgegen nähme, so hätte er es weg und referent würde dann frey davon ...*' (He would do it like it was done to him, and needed only once to toast and 3 times to blow in the jug and say the words: "It becomes you as like me," and when then the other one accepted the jug, then he [Thieß] got rid of it and referent [Thieß] became free of it [because it is some kind of spell]).¹²⁹

Also the secret society of the *Bokkenrijders* (Goat-riders) had such practices. In 1750 the 17-years old beggar-boy Nol Caldenbergh declared before the judges at Schinnen: '*... before we went to steal from the sisters Cadé the captain gave everyone a half a glass of brandy, in which he did something from another small glass. When I had drunk it, I was really drunk and had become like a wild man.*' Also another robber said 'to have become completely drunk and like a savage human and like possessed by the devil.' Also others said that the drink made them resemble wild animals.¹³⁰ In the German *Relation* of 1781 it is told that recruiting for the gang of Kirchhoff's often happened along '*sympathische*' way by a glass of wine or aquavit or by a sniff tobacco; the sniff was also used to get immediately shoved a drivable goat between the legs.¹³¹ The drinking of some liquor is also told in a legend from the Hautes-Alpes about the *flanmaçons* (free masons, seen as diabolical organisation), who on their

¹²⁴ Lea, 1049f after Holzinger, *Naturgeschichte der Hexen*, Graz 1883, 35-37.

¹²⁵ Teirlinck 1930, 59.

¹²⁶ Soldan-Heppe II, 117.

¹²⁷ Soldan-Heppe II, 55 after *Theatrum Europaeum* VII, 1023.

¹²⁸ Kretzenbacher 1968, 98.

¹²⁹ Kretzenbacher 1968, 95.

¹³⁰ Lindekens 1974, 165.

¹³¹ Lindekens 1974, 177, who remarks that this source isn't always 'pure' (*zuiver*).

meetings on the *clapier* (stone-heap) of Chanaba, where they left on the top a ‘circle’ (fairy-ring) behind, each drenched the beard of father devil, who was also present, in their glass and then drank the extract.¹³²

There is also the story that the devil burns himself on the sabbat to powder that is distributed among the members of the sect. Bodin, speaking about a trial that took place in 1574 in Poitiers, describes the sabbat: ‘There was a great black he-goat there that spoke as a human to the participants, and [they] danced around the goat; next everyone kissed it on its behind, with a burning candle [in the hand]; and when that was done, the buck consumed itself in the fire, and from the ashes everyone took something to kill the ox...’¹³³ In the district Lyon in 1598, according to Boguet, the Devil celebrated the mass and ‘after having assumed the shape of a he-goat, [he] consumed himself in fire, and [was] reduced to ashes that the witches collected and hid to use it at the execution of their perfidious and abominable designs.’¹³⁴

The Belgian witch Claire Goessen was in 1603 present at such a self-sacrifice of the Devil. ‘She has let herself be abducted to the nightly meeting at Lembeke, where, after the dance, she had just like all the participants kissed a he-goat near the tail, which goat next was burnt and its ashes distributed and taken away by the guests.’¹³⁵ Jeanne de Belloc in 1609 ‘has seen the Grandmaster at the meeting throw himself in the flames during the sabbat, and burn himself until he was reduced to powder, and the great and worthy witches took the said powders to bewitch the little children and take them to the sabbat, and they also took a bit of it in the mouth as never to reveal [something].’¹³⁶ In 1652 a French witch declared that on the sabbat ‘the devil had set himself on fire and had given from the ashes that did fly all into the air to do damage to the fruits of the earth.’¹³⁷ And in Lille in 1661 the girls in the orphanage of Madame Bourignon said: ‘An animal was venerated and they committed with it infamies, and then at the end they burned it, and everyone took ashes, with which they let wither or die persons or other animals.’¹³⁸

The motif can also be found in a ‘pearl of a non-popular legend’, presented by Roeck in his article on the demonological witch and the legend witch. The description is rather standard. After the dance the sabbat reached its culmination: the big he-goat was burned and each of the witches took some of the ashes to do damage with it.¹³⁹ Another use of ashes by the witches is reported by Paul-Yves Sébillot in Brittany: ‘The witches (*sorciers*) can make themselves invisible by placing on an altar ashes of a burned cat.’¹⁴⁰ The power to become invisible is also mentioned in the confession of the 71-years old Michael Haisch from Vaihingen. He confessed in 1662 (at Esslingen) to be able to ban people (= make them unable to move), and

¹³² Joisten & Abry 1995, 152 recorded in 1961 in Laye, Htes-Alpes. But according to another legend to become a member of the *Francs-maçons* one has to jump in the meeting (on *Lou pra* [meadow] *dé flan-macous*) with the legs together over a black he-goat (the devil) (ID., 157 from Orcières, Htes-Alpes, 1961). The beard that has to be dipped is of course a goat’s beard (Du: *boksbaard*, also a plant-name and a contemptuous name). Cinnabar (the bright red mineral mercuric sulphide) has its name from Greek *κινάβρα*, which means ‘the stench of a he-goat, of the armpits, and of the dirty beard’ (Gr. Dict. 404).

¹³³ Murray 1963, 159 after Bodin, *Fléau*, 187f: ‘Là se trouuoit vn grand bouc noir, qui parloit comme vne personne aux assistants, & dansoyent à l’entour du bouc: puis vn chacun luy baisoit le derriere, avec vne chandelle ardente: & celà faict, le bouc se consommoit en feu, & de la cendre chacun en prenoit pour faire mourir le bœuf (etc.).’

¹³⁴ Murray 1963, 159, 183 after Boguet, 141: ‘Finalement Satan après auoir prins la figure d’vn Bouc, se consume en feu, & reduit en cendre, laquelle les Sorciers recueillent, & cachent pour s’en seruir à l’execution de leurs desseins pernicieux & abominables. Cf. Summers 1992, 132, 168 (n. 65): Boguet, ch. XXII.11: ‘Satan se consume finalement en feu, & se reduit en cendre, de laquelle les Sorciers prennent tous, & a quel effet.’

¹³⁵ Murray 1963, 159f after Canaert, J.B., *Olim procès des Sorcières en Belgique*, 1847, 50.

¹³⁶ Murray 1963, 160 after De Lancre, *Tableau*, 133.

¹³⁷ Murray 1963, 160 after *La Tradition* 5, 1891, 215. Neither name nor place are given.

¹³⁸ Murray 1963, 160 after Bourignon, *Parole*, 87.

¹³⁹ Roeck, in: *Volkskunde* 82, 1981, 147.

¹⁴⁰ Sébillot 1968, II, 157.

to make a magic power from the bones of unbaptized infants, and he was also able to make himself invisible; he has killed eight people with ointments and powders.¹⁴¹

De Lancre reports about the ‘witches’ school’: ‘To never confess the secret of the school, they made at the sabbat a paste of black millet, with the powder of the burning of some not baptized infant that they let dry, thereafter mixing this powder with the said paste, it has this virtue of taciturnity: so good that who eats of it never confesses.’¹⁴²

This ‘pie’ is also mentioned in the confession of Helen Guthrie at Forfar in 1661: She dug up with four others the corpse of an unbaptized infant that was buried in the churchyard near the southeast door of the church, ‘and took several pieces thereof, as the feet, hands, a part of the head, and a part of the buttock, and they made a pie thereof, that they might eat of it, that by this means they might never make a confession (as they thought) of their witchcrafts.’¹⁴³

Ginzburg wonders whether with the ‘toad-excrement’, of which the potion of Billia la Castagna was made, might be ‘a distorted echo of terms connected with *crapaudin*, *pain de crapaux* ‘toad mushrooms’, which in France and elsewhere denote the *amanita muscaria*.¹⁴⁴ But before he has already said that the name ‘toad-bread’, *pin d’crapâ*, is given in Normandy to ‘agaric mushrooms’, meaning to the family of the Agaricaceae, of which the *fly agaric* (Du: *vliegenzwam*) is only one of many, not all of them poisonous. In Dutch the name *paddenstoel* is used for all fungi, edible as well as inedible. The English *toad-hat* is the Dutch *paddenhoet*, which is just another word for ‘paddenstoel’ (toad-stool), meaning all mushrooms.¹⁴⁵

Not only the toad but also the devil is connected with mushrooms. In some places in Germany the name *Satanspilz* is given to a mushroom, also known in the Netherlands as *Satanszwam* (Pilz = zwam = mushroom), that is edible. In England the name *Devil’s Food* is given to the mandrake, but in Dutch-speaking areas, mainly Flemish, the name *Duivelsbrood* is given to ‘*kampernoeliën*’ (another general word for mushrooms), poisonous as well as edible. It is said in warning to children that the devils rest on them like on a chair (which is told of *kabouters*, the Dutch name for goblins) and feed themselves with them, as a way to keep them from eating them. The 16th-c. Flemish botanist Dodoens called the fungi in general *Duyvelsbroot* and even the very much appreciated morel he gives the name *Duyvelsbroot van de Lente* (of the Spring).¹⁴⁶

In the west of England names like *Devil’s Corn* and *Owd Lad’s Corn* are given to starwort (*Stellaria holostea* L.), probably because this plant, before it blossoms, looks like grass and corn and because the seed of this witches’ herb *kleyne ghebroken / ende een papken daer af ghemaect / verweckt tot onkuysheydt / ende is als eenen wet-steen van de wellustigheydt*, (broken in bits and made into a porridge, arouses lewdness and is as a wet-stone of lust), so Dodoens.¹⁴⁷ The trial-reports of the famous witch-trial at Logroño in 1610 indicate that at the sabbat the witches offered the Devil corn-meal that was made into bread, that was as tough as a shoe-sole and had on it the picture of the Devil. He blessed that Devil’s bread and it was distributed and eaten by the witches and the devils: a blasphemous imitation of the Communion of the Christians!¹⁴⁸ The detail of the picture of the devil on the host can already

¹⁴¹ Wolf 1994, 344f.

¹⁴² Murray 1963, 158f after De Lancre, Tableau, 128.

¹⁴³ Murray 1963, 159, who sees in this some kind of sympathetic magic: ‘by eating the flesh of a child who had never spoken articulate words, the witches’ own tongues would be unable to articulate.’ But one could also speak of a connection with the dead, who are also mute. What is wrong with Helen Guthrie’s confession is the exhuming of an ‘unbaptized’ child on the churchyard (where only baptized people are buried).

¹⁴⁴ Ginzburg 1992, 307.

¹⁴⁵ Ginzburg 1992, 306; Verdam, 456.

¹⁴⁶ Teirlinck 1924, 38f.

¹⁴⁷ Teirlinck 1924, 97.

¹⁴⁸ Teirlinck 1924, 98 after Knipscheer, III, 27; see also Caro Baroja 1964, 192: The description of the Mass and the form of the words (‘he-goat above, he-goat below’) used to bless the pseudo-host that resembled a shoe-sole,

be found in 1324 in the trial of Lady Alice Kyteler (see above): ‘In rifeling the closet of the lady, they found a Wafer of sacramental bread, having the devil’s name stamped thereon in stead of Jesus Christ.’¹⁴⁹ Boguet (1589) has the one who celebrates the ‘mass’ turn his back to the altar, ‘& puis esleue vn rond de raue teinte en noir, au lieu de l’hostie’, whereupon all the sorcerers shouted loud: ‘*Maistre, aide nous!*’ At that moment the Devil pisses in a hole in the ground and makes blessed water from his urine, which he who says the mass, sprays over all the participants with a black *asperges* (aspersory: sprinkler).¹⁵⁰ This agrees strongly with the report of the sabbat by a young girl in Aquitaine (Haute-Garonne) in 1594, described by Florin de Raemond, quoted by Guazzo (1608): During the ‘black mass’ the celebrant raises a black-spotted slice of turnip, whereupon all present shout: ‘Master, help us!’ The chalice contained water instead of wine. They made their holy water as follows: the goat pissed in a hole dug in the ground and with this undiluted water the celebrant sprinkled all with a black sprinkler.¹⁵¹ In the Basses-Pyrénées in 1609, the *Royne du Sabbat*, who sits at the Devil’s left side, holds in her left hand *vne paix ou platine, dans laquelle est grauee l’effigie de Lucifer*. He holds his sermon, and goes on with other ceremonies, *leuant vne certaine Hostie laquelle est noire & ronde, avec sa figure imprimée au dessus*; and saying the words: ‘*Cecy est mon corps*’, he lifts up the host onto his horns; and after this elevation all those of the assembly adore it with the words: ‘*Aquerra Goity, Aquerra Beyty*’, which means ‘*Cabron arriba, Cabron abaro* (He-goat above, He-goat below)’, which they also do with the [lifting of the] chalice. After another sermon everyone receives a small piece of the host, and to make it easier for them to eat it, he gives them two sips of some ‘infernal medicine’ and a certain drink with such a vile taste and smell that they sweat from swallowing, and still it is so cold that it freezes their body and nerves.¹⁵² At Aix in 1610, Magdalene de Demandouls declared that the said sorcerer (Gaufredy) sprinkled the consecrated wine over the whole company, at which everyone shouts: ‘*Sanguis eius super nos & filios nostros*.’¹⁵³ According to Silvain Nevillon (Orléans 1614, see above), the sabbat took place in a house and a tall dark man read unintelligible from a book with black and crimson pages and then elevated a black host and then a chalice of some cracked pewter, all foul and filthy. ‘When Tramesabot said Mass, before he commenced he used to sprinkle all present with holy water which was nothing else than urine, saying meanwhile *Asperges Diaboli*.’¹⁵⁴ According to Gentien le Clerc, also accused in this trial, the mass was said and the Devil was the celebrant. He was vested in a chasuble upon which was a broken cross. He turned his back to the altar when he was about to elevate the Host and the Chalice, which were both black. He read in a mumbling tone from a book, the cover of which was soft and hairy like a wolf’s skin. Some leaves were white and red, others black. ‘The holy water is yellow as piss of an ass and after it had been duly sprinkled Mass is said.’¹⁵⁵

seem to be inspired by the report of the trials at Logroño published that year.

¹⁴⁹ Murray 1963, 148 after Holinshed, *Ireland*, 58.

¹⁵⁰ Murray 1963, 148 after Boguet, *Discours*, 141; cf. Summers 1992, 132, 168: Boguet ch. XXI.4: *Les Sorciers, à faute d’eau, urinent dans un trou, qu’ils font en terre* (if there is no water in the place, the Sorcerers dig a hole in the ground and urinate in this). ID., 171 n. 130: *Le Diable en mesme temps pisse dans vn trou à terre, & fait de l’eau beniste de son vrine, de laquelle celui, qui dit la messe, arouse tous les assistants avec vn asperges noir*.

¹⁵¹ Robbins 1965, 50f. The similarity with Boguet cannot be by coincidence.

¹⁵² Murray 1963, 148f after De Lancre, *Tableau*, 401f. The formula ‘He-goat above, He-goat below’ is also used as a ‘flying-formula’ (Migratory Legend type 3045).

¹⁵³ Murray 1963, 149 after Michaelis, *Hist.*, 337. Murray claims: ‘The use of this phrase suggests that the sprinkling was a fertility rite.’ But the quotation is from the *Vulgata*, Matt. 27:25, here as persiflage. Cf. Summers 1992, 171 n. 133: ‘Miss Murray suggest that the sprinkling was “a fertility rite”! An astounding theory. This blasphemy, of course, alludes to the curse of the Jews.’

¹⁵⁴ Summers 1992, 87, 154, 171 n. 131 after De Lancre, *L’Incredulité*. (Tramesabot: Forge-shoe?).

¹⁵⁵ Summers 1992, 87, 105 n. 23; 154, 171 n. 132. The broken cross is *vne croix: mais qu’elle n’a que trois barres*; ID., 154: ‘embroidered with a Cross; but there were only three bars’.

In Germany in 1630 an anonymous book appeared entitled *Wunderbarlichen Geheimnissen der Zauberey, darinn aus der Uhrgicht vnd Bekenntnuß vieler vnderscheidlicher Zauberer vnd Zauberinnen die vornembste Stück, so bey solchem Teuffelswezen umgehen, beschrieben werden*. Herein also the devilish holy water is mentioned with which those present on the witches' gathering are sprinkled: 'Sie brauchen auch weyhwasser, dann vns wahrhafftig gesagt ist, daß der Teuffel erst durch ein Loch (instead of in a hole) pisset, darnach alle die auf den Sabbath seindt, groß und klein, vnd daß bisweilen zween Teuffeln, bisweilen ein Mann das Volk damit besprengete.'¹⁵⁶

At a trial in Brittany, described by Nic. Brandt in his doctoral thesis in 1662, the interrogated woman said as explanation of the swelling in her throat, which prevented a while her speech, that she was possessed by two demons that had come into her through the eating of an apple that she had received of a sorcerer.¹⁵⁷

Stories about 'strange fruit' go far back. Around 1399, the *Berliner Stadtbuch* tells us, one Else Snyders had received two berries from the witch Wolborgh from Nyendorp, who was afterwards burnt for that, because Else had become very sick and told everyone that it was because of the two berries.¹⁵⁸

In modern legends we meet the same accusations. In a legend from the Dutch village Liempde the girl Dora receives an apple from an old woman, that was so delicious that she ate it with core and all, but at home she was no longer herself. She had one 'rage' after another. She flew up against the walls, hung on paintings, slid from one bell-glass to another, crawled over the bread-chest and the cabinet and through the rungs of the chairs. She walked behind the plates standing on the mantel-board, and flew through the drain-hole of the outlet outside and back in again. The village storyteller Kulhannes said about it: '*Sommigte miensen sinnen, dè ze de wiebeldaans sprong. Aandere miensen mêinden, dè ze dur 't kaoi oog waar geraokt* (some people say that she jumped the 'wobble-dance'. Other people thought that she was hit by the evil eye)'.¹⁵⁹ This 'wiebeldans' is the St. Vitus-dance, also the subject of another legend from the Dutch village Den Dungen. Here a girl on her way to school is offered something by someone and since that time she can climb on anything, on chairs, on mirrors, on paintings. She has the *fieteldans*.¹⁶⁰ Another version was recorded by Dinnissen during his research in the Dutch village Gendt from the beadle J.A. Tillemans. Three girls receive from a woman that had a small talk with them, each an apple. The oldest girl doesn't trust it, knowing the woman, but the other girls laugh about it and eat the apples. But after a short while they become sick. *En ze begozze te danse en ze kozze nie mer stil believe staan. Ze ware beheks*. (And they started to dance and they could not stand still anymore. They were bewitched.) They had the *viedel-dans*. The oldest went to the priest and he prayed until it was gone.¹⁶¹ Also about a witch from Knegsel (Dutch Limburg) it was said that she did the strangest antics: 'She walked up against the wall, crawled over the ceiling, sat in the curtains, walked over the picture-frames as if it was nothing, crawled through the keyhole outside and back in again and more of those strange tricks.' The priest, alarmed, came with holy water, while she

¹⁵⁶ Soldan-Heppe I, 282 after o.c., 91.

¹⁵⁷ Lea, 872 after Nicolaus Brandt, *Disputatio de Legitima Maleficos et Sagas investigandi et convincendi Ratione*, Giessae Hassorum 1662, n. 48.

¹⁵⁸ Hansen 1901, 524, after *Berliner Stadtbuch*, 1883, 203.

¹⁵⁹ Laere, Roger van de (ed.), *Kulhannes*, Liempde 1992, 65-67.

¹⁶⁰ Meder, Theo (ed.), *De Magische Vlucht*, Amsterdam 2000, 125f n°34: *De Fieteldans*, recorded around 1972 by J. Sanders from his grandfather Hendrik Maas. Unclear is the recording by Zaunert, *Hessen-Nassau*, 280: In the Lauerbach region have received from the witches *Veitstanz* cramps, *Starrzucht* (paralysis?) or have become totally *von Sinn und Verstand* (out of their senses). See for *Veitstanz*: Soldan-Heppe 1911, I, 202.

¹⁶¹ Dinnissen, M.H., *Volkverhalen uit Gendt*, Amsterdam 1993, 68 n°145: 'Heks betovert meisjes'.

was crawling over the ceiling. He had someone stand ready to catch her, waved the sprinkler and she fell in the arms of the man. Her antics were over.¹⁶²

The ‘witch’s apple’ we also meet in other legends, although rarely in the Netherlands. In Limburg four examples are recorded. In the first a child receives an apple from a witch out of Wittem. His father puts the apple on the mantel-board and after nine days a toad comes out of it, that the father throws into the fire. Immediately the witch is pounding on the door shouting: ‘Get me out of the fire; I’m burning!’ But they don’t mind her shouting, and when the toad is burnt, the witch stops shouting, and before the door they find her charred corpse. In the second a farmer from the village Te Wolder sees after two miscarriages at the birth of his third child a toad coming out of the *stopgat* (drain-hole) and stabs it with a (hay-)fork. The toad escapes, the child is born, but in the barn the farmer finds his mother-in-law heavily wounded, full of holes. In the third a woman gets some apples forced on her by old Gretchen, keeps them in a bucket, sees after a few days two toads in the bucket, and chops them with a shovel to pulp. That was old Gretchen’s death!¹⁶³ In a fourth and last one a soldier spends the night at Wintelre on a farm where a woman is in labour, who has already given birth twice to a stillborn child. The soldier has the farmer remove a stone before the chimney-hole: a fat toad comes out and the soldier chops off a leg. The woman gives birth to a healthy child; an old woman from Wintelre is missing a leg.¹⁶⁴

An older version took place in England in 1579 at Chelmsford (mentioned above). Ellen Smith was accused by a man of having caused a very great pain in his body, because he had driven her young son from his door. The same night, as he sat by the fire with a neighbour, they saw a rat run up the chimney and presently fall down again in the likeness of a toad. This they took up with the tongs and thrust into the fire, which burned *as blewe as azure*, and was almost out. The result of this was great pain to the witch herself, so she came to his house and enquired how all there were. ‘Well, I thank God,’ he replied. ‘I thought you had not been well,’ she said, ‘and so I came to see how you did’ – and so went her way.¹⁶⁵

Toads are also mentioned in the trial of Mrs. Julian Cox before Justice Robert Archer at Taunton, Somerset, in 1663, reported by Glanville in his *Saducismus Triumphatus* (1681). The first witness was a huntsman who, while following a rabbit behind a bush, found Mrs. Cox there, but no sign of the rabbit. A second witness said that, while smoking his pipe in the house of Mrs. Cox, he saw a toad between his legs. Returning to his own home, and smoking again, he saw what he thought was the same toad between his legs. ‘He took the toad out to kill it, and to his thinking cut it into several pieces, but returning to his pipe, the toad still appeared... At length the toad cried and vanished.’¹⁶⁶

At the witch trial heard in 1662 before Sir Matthew Hale, Rose Cullender and Amy Duny, two old widows of Lowestoft, Suffolk, were charged of having bewitched seven children in age from a few months to eighteen years, one of the children dying as a result, and in addition had, over a period of several years practiced various acts of sorcery and *maleficia*. One of the testimonies was by Mrs. Dorothy Durent, who hired Amy Duny as a baby sitter. Amy, against instructions, tried to nurse the infant. When reprimanded, Amy muttered ‘that [Mrs. Durent] had as good to have done otherwise than to have found fault with her.’ When the baby had fits soon after this incident, Mrs. Durent took it to a ‘white witch’, a Dr. Jacob, who prescribed wrapping the child in a blanket previously hung in the chimney, and burning anything that

¹⁶² Janssen, Ben, *Het dansmeisje en de lindepater*, Maasbree 1978, 43.

¹⁶³ Laan 1981, II, 104f after Sinninghe 1938a, 154, 155, and Blanford, in: *NZfV* 1929, 39.

¹⁶⁴ Janssen 1978, 24 from the province North Brabant (bordering Limburg).

¹⁶⁵ Sergeant 1996, 100, 179 n. 1, who comments: ‘the rat-toad is clearly her familiar’.

¹⁶⁶ Robbins 1965, 176: A third witness had seen Mrs. Cox flying in at her window ‘in her full proportion’. ‘This tissue of evidence was perhaps the absurdest ever used against a witch,’ commented Notestein, ‘but the jury brought her in guilty.’ Robbins: possibly the most amazing evidence ever admitted at an English witch trial.

should happen to fall out of the blanket. A toad was found and burned with ‘a flashing in the fire like gunpowder.’ Amy reputedly was seen with her face, legs, and thighs scorched.¹⁶⁷

Further information:

Webster 1037: toady (= flunk[e]y) = toadeater = ‘ass-kisser’, grossly and servilely flatters people; originally a charlatan’s assistant.

EWb 1984, 1346: toad: 2. Ellendeling, beroering, kwal; eat someone’s toads: voor iemand kruipen, iemand likken; toadeater: pluimstrijker, vleier, kruiper; toadeating: pluimstrijkerij; toady: 1. Pluimstrijker; 2. Afzichtelijk, lelijk; vol padden; 3. Ww. Pluimstrijken, vleien, likken; toadyism: pluimstrijkerij.

See for stolen hosts (for Jews), dropped somewhere, after which miracles happen: Reinsberg-Düringsfeld 1870 I, 227: Te Assche, 2.5 mile NE of Brussels. (See also p. 321f: 24 June)

Rudolf Kriss, *Das Gebärmuttervotiv*. Deze brochure met afbeeldingen van votiefbeeldjes in den vorm van een pad, met een kaart waarop de plaatsen van Zuid-Duitsland zijn aangeteekend, waar deze beeldjes gevonden worden, bedoelt te zijn een bijdrage tot de Volkskunde, benevens een inleiding over soorten en beteekenis van Duitse offergebruiken uit den tegenwoordigen tijd. Verschenen te Augsburg. (E.V. 2, 1930, 246)

In 1323 had het proces van de Cisterciënse abt van Cercanceaux (dép. Sens) plaats. De abt werd samen met andere monniken en leken ervan beschuldigd een kater in een doos (kist) te hebben begraven met alleen gewijde hosties als voedsel, die door paddenadem ‘vergiftigd’ waren, met het doel na negen dagen de kat te villen en de huid tot stroken te snijden om die te gebruiken als krachtige magie om succes in rechtszaken te verzekeren, om de verblijfplaats van verloren of gestolen zaken te onthullen en om de duivel als zijn dienaar op te roepen.¹⁶⁸

In 1482 werd boerin uit het Hamburgse dorp Harvestehude met de dood bestraft, omdat ze om haar kool beter te doen gedijen een Hostie in haar tuin onder een koolstruik begraven had. De geestelijken van het plaatselijke klooster hoorden ervan, groeven na en vonden, dat de wortels van de koolstruik de vorm van een crucifix hadden.¹⁶⁹ Eigenlijk deed deze vrouw niets anders dan de vrouw waarover Caecilius van Heisterbach vertelt, wier bijen steeds stierven en die op raad van een priester een hostie gelegd had in de enige korf die ze nog bezat. De bijen bouwden van was een kapelletje met twee torens en een altaar, waarop ze de hostie legden. En Thomas van Cantrimprié vertelt over bijen die zes maal per dag zongen, terwijl ’s nachts de korf verlicht was. Bij nader onderzoek werd in de korf een doos van was gevonden, die er uitzag alsof hij van ivoor was gemaakt, en daarin lag een hostie. Dieven hadden die gestolen en voor de korf verloren. Met een kwaad doel had iemand een hostie niet ingeslikt maar heimelijk meegenomen. Onderweg kreeg hij berouw, wierp de hostie in een weidenakker, waarin hij tussen drie aren bleef hangen. Bijen overtrokken hem met was en zongen er ’s nachts lieflijk bij. Dit trok de aandacht. Ter plaatse werd een kapel ter ere van Maria

¹⁶⁷ Robbins 1965, 66f. Although Amy again threatened the Durents, the child recovered. Francis Hutchinson in 1720 noted that by burning the toad and scorching Amy, Mrs. Durent was herself a witch.

¹⁶⁸ Trachtenberg 1943, 213 naar Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagoge*, 1934, 220f; zie ook 210ff; aangevuld naar Browne 1930, 147 (over de *Krötenhauch*). Graus 1987, 289 nt. 42 verwijst naar Caecilius van Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* IX, 12 en 52 (ed. J. Strange 2, 175f, 207) en naar *Le dit de la béguine qui mist le cors nostre seigneur avecques l’crapaut en l’escrin* [het gedicht van de Begijn, die de Hostie met de pad in het (juwelen)kistje stoppte] van Jean de Saint-Quentin (eerste helft 14^e eeuw, dichter van 24 voor de mondelinge voordracht bestemde stichtelijke *dis*, van deels sprookjesachtig-volks karakter, aldus M.-R. Jung, in: *LdM* V, 340).

¹⁶⁹ Soldan-Heppe I, 231 naar Trummer, *Vorträge*, 108-110; O. Beneke, *Hamburger Geschichten und Sagen*, Berlin 1888, 153ff.

gebouwd, die thans nog als een drukke bedevaartsplaats op de berg Dreyähren, in het Katzenthal in de Elzas bestaat.¹⁷⁰ Caesarius vertelt ook nog een ander verhaal, waarin een meisje de rupsenplaag probeerde in te dammen, doordat ze op advies van een *fahrenden Frau* de heilige Hostie in de mond mee naar huis bracht, in kleine stukjes wreef en tussen haar kruiden en groenten strooide. Ze werd met bezetenheid gestraft.¹⁷¹ De Hegkapel te Poederlee (ten noorden van Herenthals in Antwerpen) is een bedevaartsoord voor Sacramentsdag (2^e donderdag na Pinksteren, ingesteld in 1264 door paus Urbanus IV). Aldaar verstopte een dief de gewijde hosties in een heg; men vond daar toen de konijnen in biddende houding.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Sloet 1887, 428f naar Caesarius, *Dialogus*, ix, 8. Ook: Een gierige boer legde een stukje hostie in een korf in de hoop meer honing te krijgen. Dadelijk bouwden de bijen er een kerkje omheen en staken de boer halfdood. Vgl. Klintberg 2010, 238 type L133: *The holy wafer in the beehive*. A parson hears a hymn when the bees buzz in the beehive. He finds that the owner put a holy wafer there to have luck with his bee-hiving (1 reg.). Jolly 2002, 46: Etienne de Bourbon tells the story of the man who took the wafer home to place in his hives to increase the bees' productivity. The bees, recognizing God in their midst, built an altar around the relic. The miracle attracted attention and the new reliquary was removed to a church. The moral of the story remains somewhat ambiguous. The man was chastised for stealing the Eucharist and his greedy plan fails.

¹⁷¹ Jungwirth, 'fahrendes Volk', in: *HDA II*, 1133 naar Lulu von Strauß, 44. Vgl. Klintberg 2010, 71 type C125: *Revenant in search of wafer*. A woman has saved a holy wafer from Communion and given it to her cows to make them thrive. After death she has no peace and walks by night searching for it (is seen in the stable with her arm thrust down the throat of her cows) (4 reg.; 11 var.; ook in ID., 75 type C162 over de heks *Potta Långhaka*).

¹⁷² Laan 1949, 138: De beevaarder snuift er wat fijne aarde op en wast zijn hoofd in de bron, ter genezing van zijn hoofdpijn. Gewoonlijk is deze dief een 'Jood', zoals bij het Mirakel van Brussel: een Jood stal ±1369 een aantal gewijde hosties uit de Kathelijnkerk te Brussel. Toen men ze in de synagoge doorstak, vloeiende er bloed uit (ze werden te gronde geslingerd; een bekeerde Jodin bracht ze terug). Alles kwam aan het licht en de schuldige Joden kwamen op de brandstapel. Vgl. ID., 154: Te Gent hebben de dieven de hosties begraven, maar de schapen van een herder bewezen aldaar al knielende eer aan het H. Sacrament. Ook waren de hosties niet meer wit, maar geheel met bloed bedekt (naar *Oost-Vlaamsche Zanten* 1940, 2).