

From quack to devil-worshipper

Magic, heresy, and justice in Late Medieval Utrecht

(1322 - c. 1528)



Dennis van Ark

Image on the front cover:

Collage made of two separate works. The two female figures are depictions of witches (*vaudoises*) in the margins of an Arras manuscript (copied in 1451) of Martin le Franc's *Champion des Dames*: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Fr. 12476, fol. 105v. The background, with a representation of the Utrecht Dom Tower, is a detail from the Gent Altarpiece (*Het Lam Gods*) by the brothers Hubert- and Jan van Eyck (1432). The original can be admired in the St Bavo Cathedral in Gent. Thanks to a project by the Getty Foundation, the Netherlands organisation for scientific research (NWO), and others, it is now possible to view the altarpiece in high detail online at <http://closertovaneyck.kikirpa.be/>

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Magic, heresy, and justice in Late Medieval Utrecht
(1322 – c. 1528)

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Abbreviations

General

<i>Lat.</i>	Latin
<i>Mhd.</i>	Middle High German (Mittelhochdeutsch)
<i>Mnl.</i>	Middle Dutch (Middelnederlands)
<i>Quellen</i>	J. Hansen (ed.), <i>Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns und der Hexenverfolgung im Mittelalter</i> (Bonn, 1901).

Archives

<i>GA</i>	Arnhem, Gelders Archief
– <i>HA</i>	Hertogelijk Archief (Temporary archive number 0001)
– <i>OAA</i>	Oud Archief Arnhem (Archive number 2000)
<i>HUA</i>	Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief
– <i>BA</i>	Bischoppelijk Archief (Archive number 218-1)
– <i>BSB</i>	Buurspraakboek Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, 701, Stadsbestuur van Utrecht 1122-1577, nr. 16.
– <i>HVU</i>	Hof van Utrecht (Archive number 291-1)
– <i>MBSB</i>	Minutes of the Buurspraakboek Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, 701, Stadsbestuur van Utrecht 1122-1577, nr. 17.
– <i>MREK2K</i>	Minute accounts of the <i>tweede kameraar</i> Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, 701, Stadsbestuur van Utrecht 1122-1577, nr. 627.
– <i>RDB</i>	Raad Dagelijks Boek Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, 701, Stadsbestuur van Utrecht 1122-1577, nr. 13.
– <i>REK2K</i>	Accounts of the <i>tweede kameraar</i> Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, 701, Stadsbestuur van Utrecht 1122-1577, nr. 587. Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, 701, Stadsbestuur van Utrecht 1122-1577, nr. 626.
– <i>SVU</i>	Stadsbestuur van Utrecht (Archive number 701)
– <i>Th.1.</i>	Council register ‘van zaken ende van wilkoere, die an liif of aen lit ghaen, ende van denghenen die hondert jare de stat verboden is’. Continued until 1374. Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, 701, Stadsbestuur van Utrecht 1122-1577, nr. 226.
– <i>Th.2.</i>	Copy of register <i>Th.1.</i> Continued until 1403. Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, 701, Stadsbestuur van Utrecht 1122-1577, nr. 227.
<i>NA</i>	The Hague, Nationaal Archief
– <i>GR</i>	Grafelijkheidsrekenkamer (Archive number 3.01.27.02)
<i>RAD</i>	Dordrecht, Regionaal Archief Dordrecht
– <i>SGT</i>	Stadsarchieven: de grafelijke tijd (Archive number 1)
<i>SAD</i>	Deventer, Stadsarchief Deventer
– <i>RA</i>	Rechterlijk archief (Archive number 0722)
<i>SAK</i>	Kampen, Stadsarchief Kampen
– <i>RAK</i>	Rechterlijk Archief Kampen (Archive number 00014)

List of Middle Dutch words

<i>Ambtman</i>	<i>Mhd.</i> Amtmann, Lat. iudex. Servant managing part of his lord's affairs. <i>Ambtmannen</i> in the service of Guelders were comparable to sheriffs and reeves and were, among other duties, responsible for justice in designated parts of the duchy.
<i>Bloedban</i>	The legal right to decide over life and death.
<i>Buurspraak</i>	Public assembly called by the Utrecht Council in front of the Buurkerk by tolling the Buurkerk bells.
<i>Divinacie</i>	Divination, fortune-telling, prophecy.
<i>Hof van Utrecht</i>	Legal institution established by Charles V in 1530 to centralise jurisdiction over criminal law in the Lordship of Utrecht (Nedersticht after 1528).
<i>Kameraar</i>	Civil servant in Utrecht with the responsibility for the city finances. There were two or three kameraars, each with their separate financial domains, in late-medieval Utrecht.
<i>Keur</i>	A by-law. Regulation or statute promulgated in public by a town government. A form of ad hoc legislation. Originally, the word meant 'keus' (choice).
<i>Melkentoversche</i>	Milksorceress. A sorceress who was believed to steal milk. Initially part of folklore, later equalised to the stereotype of the diabolic witch.
<i>Oorvede</i>	Formal legal oath to the Council in which the oath-taker pledges not to take revenge for wrongs done to him or her, or vows to avoid a certain place for the sake of keeping the peace.
<i>Oudermannen</i>	The 42 representatives of the 21 Utrecht guilds. Each year, every craft guild in Utrecht appointed 2 <i>oudermannen</i> . The <i>oudermannen</i> elected the Council.
<i>Tovenaar</i>	Male sorcerer
<i>Tovenaarster</i>	Female sorceress
<i>Toverij</i>	Sorcery / magic
<i>Vive</i>	Five (or six) civil servants responsible for criminal investigations of the Council. The <i>vive</i> had a leading role in legal trials.
<i>Waarzegger</i>	Magician, fortune-teller, soothsayer.
<i>Waarzeggerij</i>	Sorcery, fortune-telling, divination, prophecy.
<i>Wichelaar</i>	cf. <i>Waarzegger</i>
<i>Wichelarij</i>	cf. <i>Waarzeggerij</i>
<i>Willekeuren</i>	Formal legal oath to the Utrecht Council. A pledge not to do something.

Map of the Low Countries



Notes on nomenclature

Like any text, this thesis is conditioned and limited by language. If there is one thing that the linguistic turn has made us historians aware of is that it is of vital importance to clarify our definitions, especially since the meaning of words can change over time and in particular contexts. This is certainly applicable to this thesis because it deals with a subject that is very much alive. Definitions of words such as 'sorcery', 'magic', and 'witchcraft' have changed between the researched period (c. 1320 – 1528) and the present day. This situation is further complicated because there are multiple (modern) traditions of magic which have in turn influenced each other. A further obstacle is the language barrier itself. The source material is written mainly in Middle Dutch, while this thesis is written in English; this means that decisions on translation are necessary. This thesis is about the 'sorcerer and sorceress' as a persecuted, and perhaps even more as a prosecuted subject in the late Middle Ages. I try to remain as close to the source language as possible, but some terms will return so frequently that it is better for the readability of the text to translate them.

The terms 'witch' and 'witchcraft' will be avoided as much as possible. This has several reasons. Historians have often used the words 'sorcery' and 'witchcraft' to distinguish between demonic and non-demonic magic. The border between the two is often not so clear as historians try to make them look, and is sometimes downright fictional. The Dutch equivalents of 'witch' and 'witchcraft', respectively *heks* and *hekserij* (cf. Mhd. *Hexe* and *Hexerei*) are entirely absent in the studied source material, and contemporaries certainly made no distinction between demonic and non-demonic magic by use of these terms. The term 'witch' also contains a strong gender bias as it is often associated with the female gender. There are two instances in which I do find it appropriate to speak of 'witches' and 'witchcraft'. First, when referring to the historiographical debate (the history of witchcraft) and when it is absolutely evident that I am referring to the non-existent stereotype of the diabolical witch.

The terms that do occur in the sources to refer to the researched subjects and their magic are *toverij*, and *tovenaar* (m.) and *toversche* (f.) (cf. Mhd. *Zauberei*, *Zauberer*, *Zaubersche*). I have chosen to translate these terms to the English 'sorcery', 'sorcerer', and 'sorceress' respectively because both the Middle Dutch and the modern English words allow a specification of gender. The word 'magic' will be used more as an umbrella term for both sorcery and more ambiguous magical practices such as divination (Mnl. *waarzeggerij*, *divinacie*, *wichelarij*), although it is unclear whether contemporaries actually distinguished between these practices. At least for the very early period and before the introduction of the paradigm of stereotypical diabolic witchcraft, their boundaries and definitions appear to be fluid.

Middle Dutch words that occur less frequently but that are hard to translate without losing its meaning are written in cursive after being explained. Examples are the words *keur* (a bylaw), and *oorvede* and *willekeur* (very specific legal oaths). Personal names have not been modernised, but I have kept them as close to the original record as possible. However, for each person, one spelling has been chosen for clarity if they are mentioned in the source material with differing spellings.

I. Introduction

Utrecht, August 1526. Four women are apprehended and imprisoned by the city authorities on suspicion of practising sorcery. We know that one of the women, Agniese van de Lage Weide, was publicly suspected of being a sorceress.¹ The city authorities had held her imprisoned for five and a half years after an anti-slander case against Henrick den Hollander, who had allegedly called her a sorceress, had backfired in 1519. Agniese was unable to prove to the court that Henrick had indeed falsely called her a sorceress, and instead, the authorities took the alleged accusation seriously. Agniese was imprisoned, perhaps because others testified against her or because of her public *fama*.² Although the city magistrate had another sorceress burned just two weeks before, it seemed unsure on how to proceed with Agniese.³ She was held in prison for an unusually long period, and although she was in poor health for most of it, there is no trace in the records that suggests that she was tortured.⁴ The Council did not shy away from the enormous costs of her long imprisonment. After Agniese's husband had left her in 1521, the city authorities went on to pay for her food and amenities for another three years until they finally released her in June 1525.⁵

Agniese was again imprisoned just over a year later. Together with her daughter, a certain Beatris, wife of Ot Dirkssone, and Lijsbeth, widow of Geryt de Roeyen.⁶ This time, the city authorities decided not to waver and quickly took further action. A messenger was sent to the executioner of the town of Ratingen in the duchy of Berg (now North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany) to ask for his assistance. The messenger was also instructed to enquire in all places that he passed through of how the people there dealt with suspected sorcerers.⁷ Unfortunately for the Utrecht Council, Ratingen's executioner seems to have been too busy, as it had to make do with a servant of the nearby town of Wesel who claimed that he "knew about the ways of the executioner".⁸

In the following months, Agniese, Beatris, and Lijsbeth were repeatedly tortured (Agniese's daughter must have been released, as there is no further trace of her in the records after an initial examination) by the city-employed executioner Heinrick, assisted by the city surgeon master Aelbert who kept patching the wounded prisoners up.⁹ The advice of the servant from Wesel must have been less useful than the Council had hoped for as after months of interrogation help from outside was called in once again. This time in the person of Jan van Balen, executioner of Den Bosch. He turned out to be more successful. The Brabantine executioner tortured the three women again and swiftly got them to

¹ Appendix II, 21.

² No accounts of witness testimonies for Utrecht cases survive. However, we do have testimonies of a similar trial for sorcery in the nearby town of Kampen in 1515. The town magistrate collected testimonies to build a case against a woman named Heyle; SAK, RAK, nr. 8, p. 59; additionally, see SAK, RAK, nr. 1, p. 272.

³ Appendix II, 20.

⁴ Appendix II, 21.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ Appendix II, 24-27.

⁷ Appendix II, 23.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ Appendix II, 24, 26-27.

confess. He sent them to burn at the stake on February 21, 1527, within ten days of his arrival.¹⁰

This horrible episode which brings to mind stereotypes about the cruel Middle Ages is more an exception than the rule. Magic was not a heavily persecuted crime in the Middle Ages, and the city of Utrecht was no different.¹¹ Between 1322 and 1528, the period under scrutiny in this thesis, ‘only’ 26 cases related to magic were treated by the Utrecht town Council and in ‘only’ 5 cases did they take the suspect’s life as punishment.¹² This is a very tiny percentage of the total amount of crime in a large medieval city.¹³

Although the Utrecht Council did usurp the jurisdiction over criminal justice – including religious offences committed by town citizens – from the territorial prince, the bishop of Utrecht, not all accusations for sorcery necessarily ended up in the city court. The cases that do show up in the Council records must have gone through a series of escalations of the parties not being able to settle their dispute among themselves.¹⁴ Only those cases and those that were the result of an investigation started by the Council made it into their records. When we keep this in mind, it will still be possible to research the cases that did make it to court and to assess the decisions made by the Council. After all, the way the Council acted in these trials must be seen in the light of one of its core functions, keeping the town’s peace.¹⁵ We can then see the Council’s decisions as a reflection of how it perceived sorcery and magic as a threat to order and peace in the city community.

The trials of Agnese, Beatris, and Lijsbeth are part of a small series of trials of people suspected of practising sorcery conducted by the Utrecht Council in the 1510s and 1520s. I will argue in this paper that the way the city authorities acted in these trials can be regarded as a transition between a traditional way of dealing with magic in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to the well-known complexes of ‘witch hunts’ in the second half of the sixteenth century and later. The well-preserved registers of the city government of Utrecht present an excellent opportunity to research this transition, which took place in different ways and at differing paces all over Western Europe, at a local level. The central question

¹⁰ Appendix II, 23-24, 26-27.

¹¹ R. Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials. Their foundations in popular and learned culture, 1300-1500* (London, 1976), pp. 10ff.

¹² The corpus can be found attached to this thesis in Appendix II.

¹³ See for sorcery in crime statistics of late medieval Utrecht; D.A. Berents, *Misdaad in de Middeleeuwen. Een onderzoek naar de criminaliteit in het laat-middeleeuwse Utrecht*, Stichtse Historische Reeks 2 (Zutphen, 1976); cf. for statistics of Brussels: F. Vanhemelryck, *De criminaliteit in de ammanie van Brussel van de Late Middeleeuwen tot het einde van het Ancien Regime (1404-1789)*, Verhandelingen van de KAWLSK, Klasse der Letteren 97 (Brussels, 1991); for Zurich see S. Malamud, *Die Ächtung des “Bösen”. Frauen vor dem Zürcher Ratsgericht im späten Mittelalter (1400-1500)* (Zurich, 2003), pp. 297-303.

¹⁴ G. Schwerhoff, *Köln im Kreuzverhör. Kriminalität, Herrschaft und Gesellschaft in einer frühneuzeitlichen Stadt* (Bonn, 1991); P. Sutter, *Von guten und bösen Nachbarn. Nachbarschaft als Beziehungsform im spätmittelalterlichen Zürich* (Zurich, 2002), pp. 185-239.

¹⁵ A.J. van den Hoven van Genderen, ‘Op het toppunt van de macht (1304-1528)’, in R.E. de Bruin et al. (eds), *“Een paradijs vol weelde”. Geschiedenis van de stad Utrecht* (Utrecht, 2000), pp. 174-177; F.W.G.W.

Camphuijsen, *Scripting justice. Legal practice and communication in the late medieval law courts of Utrecht, York and Paris* (PhD-Thesis, Amsterdam, 2017), pp. 20-26; S. Muller fz., *Recht en rechtspraak te Utrecht in de middeleeuwen* (The Hague, 1883), pp. 36-63.

posed in this thesis can thus be summarised as ‘how did the city authorities of Utrecht deal with sorcery?’ That this question is not so simple as it seems will be clarified after an overview of the present state of research.

1.1. State of the field

Magic continues to attract the attention of historians. One way to explain this attraction is that it speaks to our twenty-first-century imagination. Belief in magic seems so foreign in our modern worldview that we want to know more about it. Magic, however, was probably not so foreign and unusual for the majority of medieval men and women and it was probably much more a fact of life.¹⁶ We tend to categorise by placing vague beliefs and practices under the label ‘magic’ and more organised systems of thought as ‘religion’, while the border between the two was not clear for most people during the Middle Ages.¹⁷ This leads us to see as magic as a form of religious non-conformity, as a divergence from what we (conditioned by medieval authorities) consider to be ‘normal’ behaviour and beliefs of a ‘good Christian’. Furthermore, magic draws our attention because it was at times harshly persecuted. As in the history of heresy, many subjects in the history of witchcraft had to pay with their lives. This is also where the similarity ends: where many heretics died at the stake because they made a conscious decision to diverge from the teaching or hierarchy of the Catholic Church, alleged ‘witches’ were executed because they were coerced to confess to an invented crime.

The prosecution for sorcery in the city of Utrecht needs to be seen in its proper context: the history of sorcery – and its prosecution – in Western Europe. However, this introduction is not the place for an in-depth overview of the history of magic and sorcery. A historical phenomenon as complex as magic and its repercussions this study deserves its dedicated chapter below. Nevertheless, before we can continue to specifying the aims of this thesis, it is first necessary to briefly reflect on what work has already been done, especially by Dutch scholars.

It is possible to divide the historiography on sorcery and its prosecution in the present day Netherlands into two main periods, each with its distinctive research questions and aims. Firstly, the nineteenth century and early twentieth century when historical research mainly focused on the history of law, influenced by a fair share of presentist and protestant bias towards medieval ‘backwardness’ and the Catholic Church.¹⁸ Secondly, the period c. 1970-1995, with a peak in the late 1980s, when, as we will see, Dutch scholars moved along with international currents of renewed interest in medieval religious- and cultural history. What will also become apparent in the following is that the primary focus of

¹⁶ E. Bever, ‘Popular witch beliefs and magical practices’, in B.P. Levack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 51-55.

¹⁷ H. Geertz, ‘An anthropology of religion and magic I’, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6:1 (1975), pp. 71-89.

¹⁸ Characterised, for example, by calling it “the history of superstition” as P.C. Molhuijsen does in his ‘Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der heksenprocessen in Gelderland’, in I.A. Nijhoff (ed.), *Bijdragen voor Vaderlandse Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde* 2:1 (Arnhem, 1859), pp. 194-207.

Dutch scholarship has almost invariably gone towards the study of the later sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries. When scholars did treat medieval source material, it was primarily used to place the later material in context.

1.1.1. Nineteenth-century scholarship

Many Dutch studies dealing with the history of sorcery, magic, and the prosecution thereof, start with mentioning Jacobus Scheltema (d. 1835). The study that he published in 1828 was the first significant and constructive contribution to the Dutch history of magic.¹⁹ Scheltema formulated three theses for the northern Low Countries: first, that the death penalty was introduced later, second, that trials occurred less frequently, and third, that they ended a lot earlier than elsewhere.²⁰ Scheltema, in line with his nineteenth-century perspective and focus on rationalism versus superstition, argued that this was due to the Dutch being pioneers in rationalism.²¹

Obviously, Scheltema did not have all the knowledge that we do now. Although his three theses are still more or less accepted, a few critical notes have been made, partly due to the shift of research focus in the twentieth century and simply because more sources have surfaced. We can now conclude that more people died at the stake in trials for sorcery than Scheltema believed and that the trials continued further into the seventeenth century. Still, the trials in the present day Netherlands appear to have ended relatively early in respect to neighbouring lands.²²

Nineteenth-century scholars have also made a wealth of source material accessible from which we can still profit. Most notable is the still indispensable work of the German historian and archivist Joseph Hansen. He compiled a great number of texts on magic and its persecution, varying from literature to theological tracts to town accounts and letters.²³ On a smaller scale, Dutch archivists did the same. They regularly published traces of magic that they found in the archives. A number of Utrecht sorcery trials came to the fore through the work of Johannes Jacobus Dodt van Flensburg. He published selections from the records of the city Council (the *Buurspraakboek* and the *Raad Dagelijks Boek*) which he deemed to be important to “the history of civilisation”.²⁴

The work of scholars in the nineteenth century also contributed a lot to the definition of what they called ‘witches’ and ‘witchcraft’. Many of their ideas still hold sway in the collective memory today. Their image of ‘the witch’ was formed by a number of elements that have been most clearly formulated with Joseph Hansen’s *Kollektivbegriff*.

¹⁹ J. Scheltema, *Geschiedenis der Heksenprocessen. Eene bijdrage tot den roem des vaderlands* (Haarlem, 1828).

²⁰ Scheltema, *Geschiedenis der Heksenprocessen*, pp. 114, 305.

²¹ *Ibidem*, pp. vii-viii.

²² W. de Blécourt, ‘Van heksenprocessen naar toverij’, in idem and M. Gijswijt-Hofstra (eds), *Kwade mensen. Toverij in Nederland*, *Volkskundig Bulletin* 12.1 (Amsterdam, 1986), pp. 3-30.

²³ J. Hansen (ed.), *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns und der Hexenverfolgung im Mittelalter* (Bonn, 1901); from here on abbreviated to ‘*Quellen*’

²⁴ J.J. Dodt van Flensburg (ed.), *Archief voor kerkelijke en wereldsche geschiedenissen, inzonderheid van Utrecht 1-7* (Utrecht, 1838-1848).

Hansen argued that the magical enemy that late medieval and early modern theologians, inquisitors, and secular judges were combatting was essentially a fusion of several and disparate ideas on sorcery and heresy in the minds of educated men.²⁵ The result is what scholars have called 'the developed concept of diabolical witchcraft'. This concept became a stereotype that consisted of several elements; especially the witch's flight, animal transformation, and the sexual pact with the devil.²⁶

The stereotype of the diabolical witch attracted most of the attention of many nineteenth-century scholars. They emphasised the importance of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, a manual for persecuting witches written by the Dominican inquisitors Heinrich Kramer (d. 1505) and Jacob Sprenger (d. 1495). The *Malleus*, which was first printed in 1487, pictures a stereotype of a maleficent female witch and strongly emphasises the personal and sexual relationship between the witch and the devil.²⁷ Scholars long considered the *Malleus* to be the medieval and early modern handbook for sorcery trials.²⁸ This approach is illustrated by Scheltema who used it as a model for the Netherlands and looked for its traces in Dutch trials.²⁹ However, since the paradigm of demonic witchcraft was introduced relatively late in the present day Netherlands, a lot of late medieval material came to be neglected as scholars focused on the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth centuries.

1.1.2. Late twentieth-century scholarship

The late twentieth-century witnessed a renewed interest in sorcery. An important instigator for this was the 'historical anthropological school'. Influenced by studies such as Carlo Ginzburg's *Ecstasies*, Emmanuel Le Roy's *Montaliou*, and Keith Thomas' *Religion and the decline of Magic*, historical anthropologists in the Netherlands called for a shift from the prosecution of sorcery to the magical beliefs and practices of the 'ordinary people'.³⁰ This meant that in search for what they called "the magical universe", a wider array of sources could be employed. For clues on the popular perception of magic, scholars looked, next to trial records, to sources such as folk tales and chronicles.³¹

²⁵ J. Hansen, *Zauberwahn, Inquisition und Hexenprozess im Mittelalter* (Reprint, Munich, 1964), pp. 35-36.

²⁶ H.P. Broedel, 'Fifteenth-century witch beliefs', in Levack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft*, p. 33.

²⁷ H.P. Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum and the construction of witchcraft. Theology and popular belief* (Manchester, 2003).

²⁸ M. Gielis, 'Magie in het oude hertogdom Brabant. Een onderzoek naar de heksenwaan en de waan der historici', in M. Mostert and A. Demyttenaere (eds), *De betovering van het middeleeuwse christendom. Studies over ritueel en magie in de middeleeuwen*, Amsterdamse Historische Reeks, Grote Serie 22 (Hilversum, 1995), p. 265.

²⁹ Scheltema, *Geschiedenis der Heksenprocessen*, pp. 79ff.

³⁰ C. Ginzburg, *Ecstasies. Deciphering the Witches Sabbath*, ed. G. Elliott, transl. R. Rosenthal (London, 1990); K. Thomas, *Religion and the decline of magic. Studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England* (Reprint, Aylesbury, 1982); E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaliou, village occitan de 1294 à 1324* (Paris, 1975); De Blécourt, 'Van heksenprocessen naar toverij', pp. 2-27; W. de Blécourt, *Termen van Toverij. De veranderende betekenis van toverij in Noordoost-Nederland tussen de zestiende en twintigste eeuw* (Nijmegen, 1990).

³¹ H. de Waardt, *Toverij en Samenleving. Holland 1500-1800*, Hollandse Historische Reeks 15 (The Hague, 1991), pp. 39-46.

Although the historical anthropology called for a broader approach to beliefs and practices instead of only trials, the information historical anthropologists gathered could also add to the understanding of the legal prosecution of sorcery. As Willem de Blécourt has argued, we can better understand why accusations of sorcery arise within a community when we understand their magical worldview.³² A number of studies have shown that calling someone a sorcerer or sorceress could be deployed as a weapon in personal conflicts.³³ An example is a case treated by the magistrate of Amsterdam in 1566. Although the magistrate initiated an investigation after two women were accused of sorcery, they quickly realised that the accusations were part of a political conflict between two factions, and proceedings were aborted.³⁴

A downside of this historical anthropological approach is that it is not very useful for the late-medieval sources as it requires very detailed information for most of its aims. Trial records need to be extensive to be able to make sense of the social- and political backgrounds of a case. Witness statements are a necessity, and these are rare for the earlier period.³⁵ Thus, Dutch historical anthropologists have, in their search for ideas and mentalities, concentrated on the source material of the late sixteenth-century and beyond.³⁶ These are much more detailed than the often summary medieval records. Sometimes all we know about a trial for sorcery in the fifteenth century is from town registers that contain no more than a few sentences per case.³⁷

Although a lot of the attention of the historians of the anthropological school went to the spectrum of beliefs and practices, they did not entirely neglect the trials. After all, the court records still formed an important source of information about these beliefs and practices. A great deal more is known about the spread of diabolical notions in sorcery trials thanks to studies by Willem de Blécourt and Hans de Waardt. Besides their historical anthropological work, they also tried to explain the surge of trials in the sixteenth century by tracing the spread of ideas about diabolical magic in trials throughout the northern Low Countries, focussing mainly on the duchy of Guelders where these first emerged.³⁸ They argued that the ideas of demonic witchcraft diffused geographically from the German

³² De Blécourt, 'Van heksenprocessen naar toverij', p. 12.

³³ For examples see De Blécourt, *Termen van Toverij*, pp. 75-80; H. de Waardt, 'In de grond een familiezaak. Veten en toverij in Nijkerk in 1550', in M. Gijswijt-Hofstra and W. Frijhoff (eds), *Nederland Betoverd. Toverij en hekserij van de veertiende tot in de twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1987), pp. 26-39.

³⁴ J. Spaans, 'Toverijprocessen in Amsterdam en Haarlem, ca. 1540-1620', in Gijswijt-Hofstra and Frijhoff (eds), *Nederland Betoverd*, pp. 72-73.

³⁵ Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials*, p. 2; De Waardt, *Toverij en Samenleving*, pp. 39-46.

³⁶ M. Gijswijt-Hofstra, 'Hoofdlijnen en interpretaties van Nederlandse toverij en hekserij', in eadem and Frijhoff (eds), *Nederland Betoverd*, p. 256.

³⁷ H. de Waardt, 'Witchcraft and wealth: the case of the Netherlands', in Levack (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft*, p. 234.

³⁸ H. de Waardt and W. de Blécourt, 'Het is geen zonde een kwaad mens ter dood te brengen'. De berechting van toverij tijdens de regering van Karel van Egmond', in Gijswijt-Hofstra and Frijhoff (eds), *Nederland Betoverd*, pp. 15-25; W. de Blécourt and H. de Waardt, 'Das Vordringen der Zaubereiverfolgungen in der Niederlande- Rhein, Maas und Schelde entlang', in A. Blauert (ed.), *Ketzer, Zauberer, Hexen: Die Anfänge der europäischen Hexenverfolgungen* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1990), pp. 182-216.

Rhineland by so-called 'experts' in tracking sorcerers and sorceresses, often in the person of an executioner.³⁹

Another significant development is that historians have questioned the importance of the *Malleus Maleficarum*. No longer is this tract seen as representative of a broadly shared image of the late medieval sorcerer/sorceress. Hans Broedel has convincingly argued that the *Malleus* in itself shows that it does not contain once widely shared notions about sorcery. The *Malleus* was only one idiosyncratic interpretation of circulating ideas. Heinrich Kramer wrote it to convince others of his misogynic conceptions, which were heavily influenced by his experiences as an inquisitor.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Marcel Gielis has shown for the Low Countries that theologians had more conservative ideas about magic in the tradition of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. They did not heartily welcome the extreme ideas of Kramer and Sprenger.⁴¹ It can now be safely said that there are no traces in the Dutch trial records of elements that must have necessarily come from the *Malleus Maleficarum*.⁴²

A final approach in the late twentieth century to explain the occurrence of trials for magic was the use of models that were 'structural' or 'collective'. Often besides looking at individual relationships, scholars sought to explain why communities would resort to magic, and indeed also to prosecuting it, in factors outside their direct sphere of influence. Arno Borst was one of the first scholars who argued that outside elements could affect a community into persecuting their neighbours. He pointed out that the large number of accusations for weather magic in the Swiss Alps coincided with local climate change. As a direct consequence, harvests were lost due to harsh weather, for which people would blame their better faring neighbours.⁴³ Another notable example of this type of explanation is Wolfgang Behringer's study of the prosecution of sorcery and magic in early modern Bavaria. Social and economic crises, he argued, were the driving force behind the occurrence of sorcery trials in the duchy. He pointed out that major waves of prosecution often happened shortly after periods of agricultural crises, hunger, poverty and illnesses.⁴⁴

1.1.3. Sorcery in Utrecht

The historical anthropological method of research is well compatible with structural models of explanation. Janny Steenhuis, in her 1988 dissertation on sorcery in the city of Utrecht, employed the historical anthropological method to discuss sorcery in Utrecht and looked for explanations in the social and environmental structures that conditioned town life.⁴⁵ Her

³⁹ De Blécourt and De Waardt, 'Das vordringen', pp. 184-206, esp. pp. 186-191.

⁴⁰ Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum*, pp. 10-34; cf. Gielis, 'Magie in het oude hertogdom Brabant', p. 282.

⁴¹ Gielis, 'Magie in het oude hertogdom Brabant', pp. 263-313; M. Gielis, 'Toverij en duivelspact volgens theologen uit de Nederlanden', in Gijswijt-Hofstra and Frijhoff (eds), *Nederland Betoverd*, pp. 183-195.

⁴² Gielis, 'Magie in het oude hertogdom Brabant', p. 265.

⁴³ A. Borst, 'Anfänge des Hexenwahns in den Alpen', in Blauert (ed.), *Ketzer, Zauberer, Hexen*, pp. 43-67.

⁴⁴ W. Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern. Volksmagie, Glaubenseifer und Staatsräson in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Munich, 1988).

⁴⁵ J. Steenhuis, 'Alsoe hier grote sprake is van toverien'. *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging van toverij voor het gerecht van Utrecht, 1315-1657* (Thesis, Amsterdam, 1988); A part of her research has been published: J.

work forms in many ways the basis of this thesis. Steenhuis has collected a large number of trials in Utrecht by scrutinising the registers of the city Council, thus providing a corpus. Moreover, Steenhuis' analysis, which is focused on the later period because of the available evidence and the level of detail in witness testimonies, provides a point of departure for new research questions.

Steenhuis' aims are clear; she wants to know why sorcery was prosecuted in Utrecht and test whether models of explanation applied in other studies provide similar results for Utrecht.⁴⁶ She emphasises quantification, both on a local and regional level: 'how does the total amount of sorcery cases correspond to the total amount of crime in the town?' and how does the total number of cases relate to other Dutch towns?⁴⁷ Her use of the historical anthropological method is reflected in her search in the trials for the perceptions on magic of both the accused, their 'victims', and of the witnesses. She tests whether the stereotype of the diabolical witch is reflected in practice, and looks at the social-economic status of both the victims and accused and what their relationships were.⁴⁸ Furthermore, Steenhuis also looked at the city government and their decisions but aimed specifically at finding the introduction of demonic discourse.⁴⁹

Steenhuis tests four models on Utrecht. Firstly, Christina Larner's theory, based on her research on Early Modern Scotland, that developing states started prosecuting magic to strengthen the power of the state and to make the people conform to its judicial authority. Secondly, Behringer's model of pressure by social-economic factors. Thirdly, Lène Dresen-Coenders' emphasis on the social role of the woman in a changing society as a reason to prosecute not only sorcery but women especially. Finally, John Demos' socio-psychological model of 'events' and 'harms' that could influence the people's willingness to prosecute for sorcery.⁵⁰

Applying these models to Utrecht does provide some interesting results. As Steenhuis acknowledges, tracing the causes for the prosecution of sorcery is tricky. What seems to be a cause for one trial does not have to be a direct cause for another, and not all crises or disasters did invariably lead to prosecuting magic. Nevertheless, as she points out, these structural factors may still have influenced the Utrechters when trials did take place.⁵¹

Steenhuis' draws a couple of conclusions. First, she could not test Larner's theory because the legal context for Utrecht is too different from Early Modern Scotland. Utrecht did not have to use force to assert its judicial power since it already had secured those rights

Steenhuis, "In een quaad geruchte van toverye", *Toverij voor Utrechtse rechtbanken, ca. 1530-1630*, in Gijswijt-Hofstra and Frijhoff (eds), *Nederland Betoverd*, pp. 40-56.

⁴⁶ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, pp. 23-26.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, esp. pp. 75-106.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 23-26; For the models that Steenhuis used, see: Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*; H.M. Dresen-Coenders, *Een verbond van heks en duivel. Een waandenbeeld aan het begin van de moderne tijd als symptoom van een veranderende situatie van de vrouw en als middel tot de hervorming van de zeden* (Baarn, 1983); C. Larner, *Enemies of God. The witch-hunt in Scotland* (London, 1981); J.P. Demos, *Entertaining Satan. Witchcraft and the culture of early New England* (New York, 1982).

⁵¹ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 27.

a long time ago in the fourteenth century.⁵² Second, that Dresen-Coenders' model of women history is incompatible. Firstly, because the theory cannot be tested by quantification, and secondly, because the peak of sorcery trials in Utrecht lies not in the last decades of the sixteenth century – and this is important for Dresen-Coenders' model – but in the 1520s and 1530s.⁵³ Third, Steenhuis argues that although Utrecht did not witness large 'waves' of prosecution as Behringer's Bavaria, socio-economic crises such as an agrarian crisis might still have been a reason to initiate individual trials.⁵⁴ This would also be important for Demos' theory of significant 'events' and 'harms' since these crises could have direct short-term consequences as well. She decided not to scrutinise the archives for more 'events' and 'harms' because that would mean opening an entirely new field of research.⁵⁵ What she did test was whether sorcery prosecutions took place after Utrecht experienced years of famine and pestilence.

The juxtaposition of years of famine and pestilence and years that witnessed trials for sorcery in the fifteenth century do suggest interesting patterns as some trials do follow on years of crises. However, about as many trials do not. As Steenhuis notes, little can be concluded from this comparison as it is just as likely that these 'patterns' are mere coincidence and a possible *post hoc* fallacy.⁵⁶ There is, however, one connection about which she is more confident: Utrecht was hit by a great famine in the years 1437-1439 due to the shortage of grains and this crisis coincided with a year of pestilence in 1438-1439.⁵⁷ In 1439 the city authorities announced a prohibition on sorcery. The *keur*, which was announced in public, stated that there was "a lot of talk of sorcery, practised by both men and women" in Utrecht.⁵⁸ Anyone who would not heed the Council's prohibition and continued to practice their magic would be banished from the city for a year, and the Council vowed to make it very clear to the culprit that sorcery is against the Christian faith.⁵⁹

I believe that there is a good chance that this *keur* was a reaction to the actual practice of magic. We should not assume that it was targeting diabolic- or other kinds of harmful magic, but more 'ordinary' town magic that had the primary function for people to help themselves. We will see below that this is the most common kind of magic that made it to the Council court in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁶⁰ It is very well possible that Utrechters, facing crises, resorted to extraordinary measures, and what the Council saw as sorcery may have been ways to find relief.⁶¹ Steenhuis suggests that the prohibition may

⁵² Ibidem, p. 107; for details, see Muller, *Recht en rechtspraak*, esp. pp. 79-88; and chapter 3 below.

⁵³ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 107.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, p. 107.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. 107.

⁵⁶ Ibidem, pp. 108-109.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, pp. 108-109; see N.W. Posthumus, *Nederlandse Prijs-geschiedenis 2* (Leiden, 1964), esp. pp. 3-440; the prices of grains and bread had more than doubled or even tripled between 1436 and 1439.

⁵⁸ See below, nr. 280.

⁵⁹ Appendix II, 7; the Council possibly issued a similar *keur* in the year 1438. The only source for its existence is Dodt van Flensburg (Appendix II, 6), see below section 3.2.2.

⁶⁰ See below, chapters 3 and 4.

⁶¹ For the blurry border between 'magic' and 'religion', see section 2.1.1. below.

have been a reaction from the Council because they feared more of God's wrath.⁶² Although the *keur* shows that there must have been a concern about the unlawful practice of sorcery at this time, the Council did – as far as we know – not proceed to take judicial action.

Steenhuis also points at structural patterns in the sixteenth century that must have affected Utrecht. For its purpose to this study, I shall only summarise her conclusions for the early sixteenth century here. The sixteenth century witnessed a major increase in the prices of two important household commodities: wheat and butter. This may have been a cause for friction, especially in the first half of the century when wages did not compensate the rising prices.⁶³ But again, Steenhuis points out that little of consequence can be concluded. In some cases, trials for sorcery do follow up on years of high food prices, in others they do not.⁶⁴

Of more consequence is a possible connection to pestilence. As noted above, the period 1510s-1520s was a period of transition from a traditional treatment of sorcery to the inclusion of diabolic elements. In contrast to the late 1430s, sorcery may now have been regarded as a direct cause of the malady that affected the inhabitants of the city.⁶⁵ Steenhuis suggests the possibility of such a direct connection, as pestilence preceded trials for sorcery only up to a year before in 1515, 1519, 1526, and 1527, although she again notes that there were epidemics that were not followed by trials and vice versa.⁶⁶ While catastrophic disease could undoubtedly have caused friction in the town community, none of the surviving trial records before 1533 suggest a direct connection to pestilence.⁶⁷

At the end of her thesis, Steenhuis makes a final observation about a possible relation to the prosecution of sorcery with concerns about heresy. The first burnings for sorcery in Utrecht happened parallel to concerns about, the banishment of, and prosecution of people suspected of (Lutheran or other protestant) heresy. In this context, she concisely mentions the possibility that religious tensions during the period 1510-1530 created a climate that conditioned the occurrence of the first trials for diabolic sorcery, and suggests this as an aim for further research.⁶⁸

⁶² Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 109.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 110; Steenhuis refers to the price statistics in J.A. Faber, 'De Noordelijke Nederlanden van 1480 tot 1780. Structuren in beweging', in D. Blok et al. (eds), *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden 5* (Haarlem, 1980), p. 199; see for more detailed statistics Posthumus, *Nederlandse Prijsgeschiedenis 2*, pp. 3-440;

⁶⁴ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 111.

⁶⁵ Not unlike the suspicion towards Jews and lepers in fourteenth century France and Aragon. They were suspected to be part of a grand anti-Christian complot and were among other things suspected of poisoning wells. See D. Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence. Persecution of minorities in the Middle Ages* (Reprint, Princeton, 2015), esp. pp. 43-68, 93-124.

⁶⁶ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, pp. 111-113.

⁶⁷ Cf. Appendix II.

⁶⁸ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, pp. 113-114, 120.

1.2. Aims of this thesis and methodology

1.2.1. Approach from the Middle Ages

The above makes clear that the history of sorcery in the present day Netherlands is now a well-mapped field, except for the late Middle Ages. Many historians have passed by the trials for sorcery of the fifteenth century as a mere prelude in a teleological narrative to the later trials that include elements of diabolic witchcraft. Although I certainly share the idea that the transition from non-demonic to demonic discourse in sorcery trials is crucial, I also believe that more attention for the early period is needed to understand this change.

The central question that I pose in this thesis, ‘how did the city government of Utrecht deal with sorcery?’, is more a means than an end. For researching sorcery in Utrecht in the late Middle Ages, I propose a move away from the historical anthropological approach of the end of the twentieth century. I am not particularly interested in the collective ideas of ‘the ordinary people’ about magic. I believe that it is now a well-established fact that many individuals in the Middle Ages had (varying) perceptions of the magical universe, both from the lower to the upper classes, and it is no longer needed to defend this fact from presentist bias. Rather, I will examine how the city government of Utrecht reacted to magic and interpret its actions in the light of how it perceived magic as a possible threat to the order and stability of the city community. The transitional period of the 1510s and 1520s will receive a fair share of attention in this thesis. It will not be seen, however, as a mere stepping stone to the later sixteenth century trials, but it will be approached from the perspective of the fifteenth century: as a change from more traditional ways of dealing with magic.

I will also emphasise personal agency. I agree with Willem de Blécourt’s and Hans de Waardt’s thesis that ideas about demonic sorcery spread from Guelders.⁶⁹ However, I do not regard this spread of ideas as a purely logical geographical dispersion, but I will argue that personal contacts and the dissemination of news in an already volatile environment were more important than geographic proximity. While exploring the possible connection with heresy that Steenhuis has pointed to, I will argue that there was indeed a climate in the 1510s and 1520s that helped foster the introduction of demonic discourse in Utrecht. By comparing Utrecht with the relatively well-studied Guelders, similarities and connections in concerns about heresy and sorcery can be discerned.⁷⁰

1.2.2. Concerns and priorities of the Utrecht government

Multiple studies have shown that ideas about diabolic magic did not spread geographically like wildfire from its region of origin around the Alps, but that it was for a large part

⁶⁹ Cf. above. nr. 38.

⁷⁰ Unfortunately, these developments in the other neighbouring provinces are relatively understudied. Comparing here would amount to opening a new field of research, and this is not possible in the scope of this study.

dependent on the willingness of local judicial bodies to prosecute.⁷¹ Several regions in Austria and southern Germany, despite their relative proximity to the area of origin, remained free of diabolic discourse for a long time because the authorities did not believe it to be a threat.⁷² The same applies to the more nearby towns of Flanders; some towns did start prosecuting diabolic sorcery relatively early, while others did not start doing so until the last decades of the sixteenth century.⁷³ Although a general pattern of a transition can be witnessed in Western-Europe, the speed and intensity of the change could vary from region to region, even from town to town. In this regard, a comparative approach to place Utrecht in an (inter)regional context seems to me the most fruitful.

The degree of independence of Utrecht's urban law court makes it attractive to test a model recently presented by Richard Kieckhefer. He points at the inherent heretical nature of sorcery in Christian theology and suggests that sorcery could be regarded, treated, and punished as heresy in three different definitions.⁷⁴ The definition of sorcery as heresy that a court or judge maintained is in this model linked to the perceived danger of the crime. Magic as a heresy in Kieckhefer's first category (type one) are the learned sorcerers or necromancers; they are most often clerics who employ knowledge from books to conjure angels and demons. They are heretics in the eyes of Church authorities because they believe that these sorcerers bind themselves to the devil and therefore commit apostasy. Their heresy is primarily theological in nature.⁷⁵

The popular, lay, village and town sorcerers who practice maleficent magic fall in the second category (type two). This is also the vaguest category of heresy, as the danger that they pose is to the local community only. These suspects were not heretics in terms of theological defiance but were regarded as spiritual quacks and abusers. Suspects were removed from the community by banishment, and secular judges often did not care if they became someone else's problem.⁷⁶

The third category (type three) of heresy is that of the sect of diabolic witches. This category can be seen as an escalation of the second category. As ideas about black magic and heresy convoluted and spread, diabolical and sectarian discourse got projected upon individuals accused of sorcery. As a result, concerns arose that they were members of a secret devil-worshipping sect that threatened the whole of Christian society.⁷⁷ Once

⁷¹ The origin of diabolic discourse in connection with magic is discussed in chapter 2 below.

⁷² A. Blauert, 'Die Erforschung der Anfänge des europäischen Hexenverfolgungen', in idem (ed.), *Ketzer, Zauberer, Hexen*, pp. 20ff; H.M. Beliën and P.C. van der Eerden, *Satans Trawanten. Heksen en heksenvervolgingen* (Haarlem, 1985), pp. 39-41.

⁷³ J. Monballyu, 'De houding van de rechters tegenover hekserij in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de 15de tot 17de eeuw', in M-S. Dupont-Bouchat (ed.), *La sorcellerie dans les Pays-Bas sous l'Ancien regime: aspects juridiques, institutionnels et sociaux*, Anciens pays et assemblées d'états 86 (Kortrijk, 1987), pp. 11-34.

⁷⁴ R. Kieckhefer, 'Witchcraft, necromancy and sorcery as heresy', in M. Ostorero, G. Modestin, and K. Utz Tresp (eds), *Chasses aux sorcières et démonologie. Entre discours et pratiques (XIVe-XVIIe siècles)*, Micrologus Library 36 (Florence, 2010), pp. 133-153.

⁷⁵ Kieckhefer, 'Witchcraft, necromancy and sorcery as heresy', pp. 143-145.

⁷⁶ Ibidem, pp. 145-149.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, pp. 149-151.

authorities feared that there indeed existed such a heretical group, they could set out to find it using torture.⁷⁸

I know of no cases in Utrecht that fall in Kieckhefer's first category. This kind of magic was due to its literate character mainly practised by clerics. Jurisdiction over clerics remained in the hands of the bishop, and any cases are therefore absent from the municipal archives.⁷⁹ Moreover, Kieckhefer's second category can be expanded to include non-harmful magic as well. Limiting this category to harmful magic is unhelpful, as non-harmful magic could raise equally as much scandal in the city community.

In this thesis, I shall argue that the transitional phase of the 1510s and 1520s in Utrecht is essentially a shift of concern on the part of the city government from category two – sorcerers as a danger to the order of the community – to category three sorcerers as members of a diabolic sect and as a threat to Christendom. In order to offer an explanation for this transition, I will explore the relationship with contemporary concern about the heresies of Luther and other reform currents that Steenhuis suggested.

1.3. Framework: sources and methods

1.3.1. Periodisation

Two layers of periodisation determine the scope of this thesis. First, there is the overall periodisation of c. 1322-1528. This demarcation is in the first place determined by the availability of sources, and in the second place by historical developments. The first source that we have that an individual in Utrecht was sentenced for a magic-related crime is from 1322, so this is the first time we can see the authorities at work. The end date of 1528 is one of historical importance and a caesura that I have chosen for practical purposes. It is in this year that Henry of Bavaria, the bishop of Utrecht (1524-1528), under pressure of conflict with the city of Utrecht and war with Duke Charles of Guelders (r. 1492-1538), transferred his secular authority of the Sticht to the archenemy of Guelders, German Emperor Charles V (r. 1519-1556).⁸⁰

Not only the government of the province changed with this new leadership. The guild-led administration of Utrecht was abolished and replaced by a college of aldermen, burgomasters, and a sheriff appointed by the emperor. Henceforth, Utrecht lost its judicial independence as the sheriff would dominate criminal law and more and more jurisdiction was transferred to the centralised *Hof van Utrecht*.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials*, pp. 27-31.

⁷⁹ Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', p. 119; In-depth research of notarial records of Utrecht's ecclesiastical court may reveal whether this type of accusation made it to the clerical court in Utrecht. Unfortunately, the recordkeeping has been done by various notaries, leading to the loss of material. I know of one case treated by the Utrecht ecclesiastical court. The trial involves the priest Judocus who was accused of summoning mice and rats with the help of demons; see HUA, BA, nr. 247.

⁸⁰ Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', pp. 188-189.

⁸¹ Muller, *Recht en rechtspraak*, pp. 122-125; Ph. Maarschalkerweerd, 'De overdracht van het wereldlijk gezag', in C. Dekker et al. (eds), *Geschiedenis van de provincie Utrecht van 1528 tot 1780* (Utrecht, 1997), pp. 41-46.

The second layer of periodisation is determined by what I have called ‘the transitional period’. The stance of the Utrecht town government towards sorcery can roughly be divided into two periods. First, the period c. 1320- c. 1500 when generally no diabolical discourse was employed in Utrecht. During this period, the Council was mainly concerned about the order of the city community which was threatened by individuals that could cause disruption. Second, the transitional period of the 1510s and 1520s when discourse of demonic witchcraft was introduced and when the first suspects were burned.

The limits of periodisation become directly apparent. Although 1528 is a good caesura for changes on the political stage, to understand the full implications of the transition from a repression of sorcery in a traditional fashion to the prosecution of a sect of witches, we must take a peek over the fence to the 1530s; when sorcery trials in Utrecht were conducted under imperial auspices and when the discourse of diabolic witchcraft became firmly established in the language of the Utrecht urban court.

1.3.2. *The source material*

Although this thesis is based on a diverse body of sources, ranging from letters of city magistrates to theological tracts, the main corpus is formed by Utrecht Council records. We are lucky that Utrecht’s Council books have survived in a relatively complete fashion. Steenhuis had included a list of trials to her thesis; I have not been able to find additional individual trials for magic in the Council records. I, therefore, regard her corpus to be as complete as possible.

For the period until 1402, in which three cases related to a magical crime are written down, we have two registers, of which one is a copy of the other.⁸² These registers, known as *Th.1.* and *Th.2.* are lists of *willekeuren* on crimes that involved physical harm, and crimes for which culprits were banned from the city for more than a hundred years.⁸³ The function of *Th.1.* and *Th.2.* was taken over by the *Raads Dagelijks Boek (RDB)* (Council Daily Book) in 1402.⁸⁴ This register had been in use since 1369 to write down Council decisions, and from this point onwards the writing down of legal verdicts was added to its purpose.⁸⁵

The second important Council source is the *Buurspraakboek (BSB)*.⁸⁶ This book was in use since 1385 by the Council to write down all *buurspraken*. The *Buurspraak* was a gathering of town dwellers, summoned by tolling the church bell of the Utrecht Buurkerk, the city’s most important parish church. The area around the Buurkerk formed a forum for the Council which was based across the street in the *Schoonhuis*.⁸⁷ It was custom to announce trial verdicts publicly, so many of the Council decisions on magic can be found in

⁸² *Th.1.* can be found at HUA, SVU, nr. 226; *Th.2.* at HUA, SVU, nr. 227.

⁸³ Berents, *Misdaad*, pp. 6-7.

⁸⁴ HUA, SVU, nr. 13.

⁸⁵ Berents, *Misdaad*, p. 7.

⁸⁶ HUA, SVU, nr. 16.

⁸⁷ Camphuijsen, *Scripting justice*, p. 25.

the *BSB*.⁸⁸ As a favour to the reader, the Council records on sorcery in these books have been added to this thesis in Appendix II.

1.3.3. Methodological considerations

Interpreting sources always bring along methodological problems. Some need to be explicitly identified before continuing. First, unlike Steenhuis, I do not wish to make any quantitative claims on the number of trials. Instead, I opt for qualitative analysis. The nature of the source material does not allow for a quantitative approach for several reasons. As I have briefly mentioned above, not every trial for sorcery made it to the court. In a small town environment in which everybody knows everybody, it can be expected that parties tried to keep a low profile by trying to resolve the matter privately.⁸⁹ Moreover, every citizen of guild-governed Utrecht, whether they practised that craft or not, had to be a member of a guild.⁹⁰ With a guild system as important as in Utrecht, it can be expected that a conflict among guild members has gone through the guild courts first, but unfortunately, no sources of the Utrecht guild courts survive.⁹¹

Now, if a case did make it to the Council court, how are we sure that it was documented? We can be brief about the period before the verdicts were written in the *RDB* and the *BSB*. Only the cases that involved physical harm and banishments for a hundred years were written down in *Th.1.* and *Th.2.* Most later trials for sorcery involved banishments for much less than hundred years. This means that similar trials with similar verdicts would have never made it into the Council registers before 1385 and have therefore gone undocumented.

But also for the period after 1385, we should not blindly assume that every verdict has survived. The Council was not always very precise in keeping its records. Not every decision to be publicly announced was written in the *BSB* if it had already been written down in the *RDB*. Sometimes an entry in the *RDB* is annotated with the word '*clock*', which probably means that this entry was read aloud at the *Buurspraak*.⁹² Moreover, Steenhuis has identified a couple of verdicts on magic in the minute versions of the *BSB* that for an unknown reason have not made it to the final version.⁹³ This raises the question whether these verdicts were read aloud from the minutes, or perhaps not even at all. Moreover, we do not have a draft version for every final volume of the *BSB*, so there could be other verdicts that are lost. If the authorities were this flexible with the public announcements at the *Buurspraak*, how can we tell whether all judgements were written down in the *BSB* at all? Verdicts could have been announced from scraps or memory.

⁸⁸ Ibidem, p. 25; Berents, *Misdaad*, p. 7.

⁸⁹ Cf. above nr. 14; K. Simon-Muscheid, *Basler Handwerkszünfte im Spätmittelalter. Zunfinterne Strukturen und innerstädtische Konflikte*, Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe III: Geschichte und ihre Hilfswissenschaften 348 (Bern, 1988).

⁹⁰ Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', pp. 131-132.

⁹¹ Muller, *Recht en rechtspraak*, pp. 246ff.

⁹² Berents, *Misdaad*, p. 7.

⁹³ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, pp. 39-40.

Finally, the Utrecht guild-led government was not always very stable and has gone through a number of significant political crises over the years.⁹⁴ There is a possibility that trials for sorcery were conducted during periods that the Utrecht Council was dysfunctional, or in times that the bishop dominated criminal law.⁹⁵

To conclude, the material does not allow for a reliable quantitative analysis. This is a problem that dominates medieval history and does not have to be an impassable obstacle. It means that we have to make do with the records that were written down and survived, and acknowledge that the corpus may be incomplete.

Qualitative analysis brings about its problems as well. By focusing on the *actions* of the government, I try to avoid the long-standing criticism against the historical anthropological approach of using trial records as doors to the subaltern voices of the 'common man and woman'. Critics have repeatedly noted that these voices are written down by the opponents of the subjects in question. By focusing on the court itself, the purpose of this thesis is not to uncover the hidden and suppressed 'voices' that lay below the layers of the discourse of the court.⁹⁶ This is also a pragmatic approach. As mentioned, the medieval Utrecht court records are in the rule very summary. There are no documents of which we can claim that they contain subaltern voices, as no witness statements survive.⁹⁷

The focus on actions of a governmental body brings about other issues. First, the government could vary in size from 24 members to 156.⁹⁸ It is therefore virtually untraceable without additional sources who might have had a say in the outcome of a trial. Fortunately, we are helped here because the city had a special committee for criminal law. This *vive* consisted of five members (six in the more significant part of our period) who investigated individual cases and played a prominent role in the proceedings and outcomes of trials.⁹⁹

A second obstacle is that we are still dealing with texts, and these texts are our only window to the reality that is supposedly behind it. Texts do not give us access to all facets of a historical event. For example, although the members of the *vive* may officially have led the trials, it is difficult to determine whether not someone else, whose actions did not make it into the record, had the final say in its outcome.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', pp. 113-189; C.A. van Kalveen, *Het bestuur van de bisschop en staten in het Nedersticht, Oversticht en Drenthe, 1483-1520*, Bijdragen van het Instituut voor Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis der Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht 36 (Groningen, 1974); C.A. van Kalveen, 'De gildenbeweging van april 1525 en haar voorgeschiedenis', *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht* (1972), pp. 93-114; J. Smithuis, 'Politiek en geweld in een laat-middeleeuwse stad: Utrecht, 1400-1430', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 123:2 (2010), pp. 240-253.

⁹⁵ For example during the period between 1474 and 1477 when bishop David of Burgundy took over criminal law from the Council; see Muller, *Recht en Rechtspraak*, pp. 113-116; a similar construction was established after the Second Utrecht civil war (1481-1483), see Van Kalveen, *Het bestuur*, p. 33.

⁹⁶ E. Muir and G. Ruggiero, 'Introduction: the crime of history', in idem (eds), *History from crime*, transl. C. Biazzo Curry, M.A. Gallucci and M.M. Gallucci (Baltimore, 1994), pp. vii-ix; J.H. Arnold, 'The historian as inquisitor. The ethics of interrogating subaltern voices', *Rethinking History* 2:3 (1998), pp. 379-386.

⁹⁷ Camphuijsen, *Scripting justice*, p. 133.

⁹⁸ Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', p. 115.

⁹⁹ Muller, *Recht en rechtspraak*, pp. 213-220.

¹⁰⁰ Camphuijsen, *Scripting justice*, pp. 144-146.

A further complication is that the Council records do not always make clear what the actual reasons behind a trial for sorcery were. It is therefore important to not only look at the Council's verdict but also to the context in which a trial took place. We know that individuals made ill use of the apparatus of law for their personal purposes, the case in Amsterdam mentioned above is only one example.¹⁰¹ James Given's excellent analysis of the power that could be wielded by successfully manipulating the inquisition in Languedoc shows that bodies of law, and their records, were not always the most objective and impartial.¹⁰²

Finally, the focus on trials to study government policy and the spread of ideas will undoubtedly affect the conclusions as these based on the scraps of ad hoc administrative information. It is possible that more sources in the form of personal correspondence writing about magic and the persecution thereof is buried in the archives, but opening a field of research of this scale is not feasible for this study. This source bias can lead to overemphasising the role of the government while overlooking personal agency and individual circumstances.

These are issues that cannot be easily overcome, and their impact can only be minimised by acknowledging that they exist and that they can potentially affect the analysis in this paper. Individually scrutinising the decisions of the Council are, therefore, needed to avoid falling into these pits as best as possible.

1.4. Structure of the thesis

Before analysing the Council's (changing) stance towards sorcery, it is necessary to place Utrecht's treatment of sorcery as a crime in an interregional and historical context. Only when the intellectual environment of the period has been sketched, we can attempt to understand how the Utrecht government approached and dealt with sorcery as a criminal offence. Chapter two, therefore, will be dedicated to tracking a number of developments that determined the context in which the Council operated. Two intertwined processes took place during the period under scrutiny that effectively created the stereotype of the diabolical witch. After reflecting on how this stereotype became established, I will turn to some modes of dispersion to show how Utrecht may, or may have not, been influenced by these ideas.

When the necessary context has been discussed, I will turn to Utrecht in chapter 3. The aim of this chapter is to scrutinise the late medieval sources, which were so often skipped in previous studies, and place them in their proper context. Furthermore, by analysing how the Utrecht Council dealt with sorcery in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, I will argue that Utrecht – like other authorities in the northern Low Countries – was indeed punishing sorcery as a category two heresy in Kieckhefer's model; as a danger to the direct environment rather than as a greater threat to Christendom.

¹⁰¹ Cf. above. nr. 34.

¹⁰² J.B. Given, *Inquisition and medieval society. Power, discipline, and resistance in Languedoc* (Ithaca, 1997), esp. pp. 93-165.

Following this chapter on the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, chapter 4 is dedicated to the transitional period and the shift that the Council made in its treatment of sorcery. I will scrutinise the sources for what exactly changes in practice, for example, the implementation of torture, and I will also look at what kind of language is employed in the sources. On the basis of this analysis, I will argue that Utrecht adopted the paradigm of diabolic witchcraft in the 1510s and 1520s. Additionally, a further comparison will be made with Utrecht trials in the 1530s, which suggests that the 'transitional period' was indeed a transition between a general treatment of sorcery as a category two heresy to full-fledged category three heresy. Finally, I will in this chapter turn to formulating a hypothesis as to why this transition took place at this particular time by suggesting that there were more general concerns about the stability of society, of which the persecution of stereotype witchcraft was a symptom.

II. From sin to sect. The criminalisation of magic

In order to place the change in Utrecht into a wider perspective, I will in this chapter explore some of the developments in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that conditioned a transition from a traditional approach to magic to the appearance of an imagined satanic sect of witches. As I have mentioned above, historians no longer accept that there was a widely shared stereotype image – as reflected in works such as the *Malleus Maleficarum* – of the diabolic witch during the fifteenth century.¹⁰³ Instead of a widely shared belief in demonic witchcraft, there was in the late Middle Ages a spectrum of beliefs and notions on magic that heavily depended on factors such as regional substrates of traditional folklore, magical beliefs, and theological interpretation. The development of the concept of the diabolic witch is not a precise point to point narrative but was always subject to regional and personal factors. Moreover, ideas needed to spread and take root; active prosecution of sorcery highly depended on whether governing bodies believed that there was a real and imminent threat.¹⁰⁴

It is not my intention to discuss the entire history of magic in this chapter. I will start by focussing on two important conditions that fostered persecution: the increasing criminalisation and the heretification of magic. This process seems to have taken place for a large part in the minds of medieval theologians, but it was also fuelled by practical experiences of both papal inquisitors and secular judges. After clarifying these developments, I will give a brief overview, based on present research, of the transition and spread of diabolic notions in the direction of Utrecht, starting at its epicentre in the lands around the Alps.

2.1. The changing perception on magic

2.1.1. Defining magic

What was understood to be ‘magic’ in the Middle Ages is tricky to explain and I believe that there is no standard definition. Choosing one definition would mean excluding others. As seen in the previous chapter, historical anthropologists tried to establish what the broader populace thought about magic, but I feel that it is more important here to emphasise the notions of the persecutors. At best, we can establish through texts what individuals thought what magic was, but it can be safely said that ‘magic’ was always looked at with a particular suspicion.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ R. Kieckhefer, ‘The first wave of trials for diabolical witchcraft’, in Levack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft*, pp. 159-178.

¹⁰⁴ Kieckhefer, ‘The first wave’, pp. 170-175; R. Kieckhefer, ‘Magic and its hazards in the late medieval west’, in Levack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁵ Kieckhefer, ‘Magic and its hazards’, pp. 13-31.

In historiography, medieval magic was for a good time interpreted as being in a dichotomic relationship to religion.¹⁰⁶ This perspective can be seen as a part of an overarching modernist narrative of progress from magic to religion to science. In this model, magic is understood as an incoherent system of beliefs and practices, as opposed to the structured and coherent belief systems of religion.¹⁰⁷ This approach has fostered the idea that there were two systems of thought. First, 'low culture' that included folkloric beliefs and magical rituals; and second, the 'high culture' of established religion.¹⁰⁸ This model supposes a clear boundary between separate domains of magic and religion, but it is now recognised that there was instead a vast grey area between what can be clearly defined as religion and what as magic. Historical anthropologist Keith Thomas, for example, pointed out that some rituals in late medieval England can in one context be recognised as part of religion, and in other contexts as magical.¹⁰⁹

Although historical anthropology has shown that there were no clear boundaries between magic and religion in practice, there must have been such a boundary in the minds of theologians. Popular practices were in different contexts rejected as magical and superstitious, but it is unclear how popular rituals for healing, divination or protection by talismans and charms fit in ecclesiastical categories.¹¹⁰ Moreover, 'popular magic' was not so much an alternative to religion, but a part of, or an addition to it. People turned to local magical practitioners, next to their parish priest, as a way to help soften the daily problems of existence.¹¹¹

A boundary between religion and magic is further troubled by the category known as 'learned magic', sometimes also more positively referred to as 'occult sciences'. Learned magic is commonly understood as rituals learned from knowledge in books. This included divination by reading omens, the conjuration of angels and demons (the latter also known as 'necromancy'), and astrology and alchemy. Due to its literate character, 'learned magic' was professed primarily by clerics who had the ability to read.¹¹² This category does not come without its problems as here too boundaries can get blurred. Sixteenth-century evidence suggests that popular magical practices could also be based on knowledge from (vernacular) books.¹¹³ However, I believe that a boundary between learned magic and popular magic can be justified for the period under scrutiny here. It is possible that magical books were current among non-clerical practitioners of magic before the sixteenth and fifteenth centuries. However, as we shall see below, the learned magic about which the

¹⁰⁶ K. Jolly, 'Medieval magic: definitions, beliefs, practices', in B. Ankarloo and S. Clark (eds), *Witchcraft and magic in Europe. The Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2002), pp. 7-12.

¹⁰⁷ Jolly, 'Medieval magic', p. 8.

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem, p. 20.

¹⁰⁹ Thomas, *Religion and the decline of magic*, pp. 27ff.

¹¹⁰ Jolly, 'Medieval magic', p. 7; see on this issue E. Cameron, *Enchanted Europe. Superstition, reason and religion, 1250-1750* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 50ff.

¹¹¹ Bever, 'Popular witch beliefs', pp. 51-55; Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, pp. 31ff.

¹¹² M. Bailey, 'From sorcery to witchcraft: clerical conceptions of magic in the later Middle Ages', *Speculum* 76:4 (2001), p. 966.

¹¹³ W.L. Braekman, *Middeleeuwse witte en zwarte magie in het Nederlands taalgebied. Gecommentarieerd compendium van incantamenta tot einde 16^e eeuw* (Gent, 1997), pp. 12-14.

Church was increasingly concerned during the thirteenth- and fourteenth centuries was evidently clerical in nature.¹¹⁴ Concluding, although a clear distinction between ‘low culture’ and ‘high culture’, has been discredited since, it is necessary for understanding the changing views on magic to acknowledge that there were basically two different magical systems, with different practices, and more importantly, different ideas of the mechanics behind it.¹¹⁵

2.1.2. *The increasing criminalisation of magic*

Church authorities have always held a somewhat ambivalent stance towards magic. In Graeco-Roman antiquity, the efficacy of magic was believed to be the result of humans communicating with spirits called *daimones*. These spirits were not necessarily bad or good.¹¹⁶ Although Roman authorities specifically banned maleficent use of magic, some intellectual magical practices were allowed. Late antique magic, defined as contacts between humans with earthly and celestial powers, was used as a way, predominantly by Neo-Platonists, to gain ‘superior wisdom’.¹¹⁷

Magical practices were increasingly frowned upon during the course of the Christianisation as they came to be associated with what Christians regarded as ‘superstitious practices’ of ancient religion. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) was one of the first to identify the neutral *daimones* with evil Christian demons. He pointed out that all works of magic worked through the agency of demons. And although Augustine stressed that these demons could not do anything without God’s permission, they were attributed great illusionary power.¹¹⁸ This shift towards the demonic has been clarified by Peter Brown who argued that the Christian worldview was not compatible with ancient notions of humans being able to perform magic, and the acting force was therefore shifted towards a more impalpable agent.¹¹⁹

Augustine stressed that magic was superstition, but also maintained that magic had to work – or at least seem to work – through the illusionary crafts of demons. This is what came to be known as the ‘pact’ with the devil. According to Augustine, a magician knowingly tried to harness demonic power for his purposes.¹²⁰ Two developments seem to have taken place simultaneously in Augustine’s time. Firstly, all manifestations of magic, together with the whole ancient system of belief, were degraded to the category of superstition; and secondly, all types of magic came to be associated with demons.¹²¹

¹¹⁴ Bailey, ‘From sorcery to witchcraft’, pp. 960-990.

¹¹⁵ Ibidem, pp. 965-966.

¹¹⁶ C.A. Tuczay, ‘Magic and divination’, in A. Classen (ed.), *Handbook of Medieval Culture. Fundamental aspects and conditions of the European Middle Ages* (Boston, 2015), p. 939.

¹¹⁷ Tuczay, ‘Magic and divination’, pp. 938-939.

¹¹⁸ E. Peters, ‘The medieval church and state on superstition, magic and witchcraft: from Augustine to the sixteenth century’, in Ankarloo and Clark (eds), *Witchcraft and magic in Europe*, pp. 182-184.

¹¹⁹ P. Brown, ‘Sorcery, demons and the rise of Christianity: from Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages’, in idem (ed.), *Religion and society in the age of saint Augustine* (London, 1972), pp. 131-137.

¹²⁰ Tuczay, ‘Magic and divination’, p. 941.

¹²¹ Peters, ‘The medieval church’, p. 184; Bailey, ‘From sorcery to witchcraft’, p. 964.

Augustine's definition of magic as superstitious, vain, and demonic would dominate the views of theologians on magic for centuries. They did not see magicians as agents of malice, but more as superstitious sinners who lost their way from God as they fell victim to the temptation of demons.¹²² An outstanding example of the illusionary nature of magical and superstitious belief is the canon known as *episcopi*. Burchard of Worms (d. 1025) included the canon in his *Decretum* and it came to hold an authoritative status among canon lawyers and theologians throughout the rest of the Middle Ages.¹²³ *Episcopi* refers to several folkloric stories of women flying through the night sky to secret gatherings and states that this practice is strictly superstitious. If women did indeed believe that they did so, it must have been caused by a demonic illusion.¹²⁴ This curious story would later be assimilated into the stereotype of the demonic witch, who supposedly flew to nocturnal gatherings and proved to be one of the facets of the witch stereotype that many theologians and jurists found hard to believe because of their knowledge of this canon.¹²⁵

Development in thinking about magic began to take place at a quicker pace from the thirteenth century onwards. Discussion on magic became an actuality again as occult knowledge and books from the Islamic world found their entry to the medieval West. More and more clerics took to the practice of 'learned magic', ranging from astrology to the conjuring of spirits and demons.¹²⁶

It is about this time that Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) built on- and systemised Augustine's views on the efficacy of magic through demonic agency.¹²⁷ Aquinas maintained in the Augustinian tradition that demons tempted man into magic and that all practical outcomes of sorcery were the result of the (illusionary) crafts of demons.¹²⁸ As it was for Augustine, magic was for Aquinas in the first place a vain and superstitious occupation.¹²⁹ However, unknowingly, Aquinas also laid the foundation for one of the elements of the later witch stereotype by systemising ideas about the demonic pact. According to Aquinas, every sorcerer made a pact with a demon to acquire magical powers. Aquinas' ideas about the demonic pact differ from that of Augustine in that magicians could also enter a pact unknowingly.¹³⁰ This elaborated pact theory made it possible to interpret popular magic, whose practitioners very possibly had no idea of the theoretical mechanics behind their rituals and incantations, as deriving from demonic agency.¹³¹ The diabolisation of popular

¹²² Bailey, 'From sorcery to witchcraft', p. 964.

¹²³ J.B. Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1972), p. 77.

¹²⁴ Peters, 'The medieval church', pp. 203-204.

¹²⁵ Ibidem, p. 204; for discussion on *episcopi* see W. Stephens, 'The sceptical tradition', in Levack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft*, pp. 104-121; for Italy in particular see M. Duni, 'Doubting witchcraft: theologians, jurists, inquisitors during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries', in F. Andrews, C. Methuen and A. Spicer (eds), *The Church and Doubt*, Studies in Church History 52 (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 203-231.

¹²⁶ Peters, 'The medieval church', p. 216.

¹²⁷ Some relevant passages of Aquinas' work have been excerpted and edited by A.C. Kors and E. Peters in *Witchcraft in Europe 1100-1700. A documentary history* (Philadelphia, 1972), pp. 53-78.

¹²⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, excerpt in Kors and Peters (eds), *Witchcraft in Europe*, pp. 63-71.

¹²⁹ M. Gielis, 'Hekserij en heksenvervolging in het licht van de leer van Jacob van Hoogstraten over toverij en duivelspact', *Taxandria* 59 (1987), p. 24.

¹³⁰ Gielis, 'Hekserij en heksenvervolging', p. 24.

¹³¹ Tuczay, 'Magic and divination', p. 942.

magic was not Aquinas' primary target, however, his implicit pact theory should be seen as a criticism against those clerics who claimed that they were able to subdue demons to their will with their necromantic rituals.¹³²

We can thus see Thomas Aquinas' theorising on magic in the light of contemporary practical concerns about the mechanics of clerical necromancy. These concerns came to a head in the first quarter of the fourteenth century when the papal and French courts formed the stage for a number of scandals and scares connected to magic.¹³³ Rumours of poisoning through magical means circulated after the death of Louis, heir to the throne of France in 1276, and the subsequent deaths of kings Philip IV in 1314, Louis X in 1316, and Philip V in 1322.¹³⁴ Important clerics at the French court caught the blame, and in Philip IV's conflict with Pope Boniface VIII (p. 1294-1303), accusations of sorcery and devil-worship were levelled against the successor of St Peter himself.¹³⁵ Boniface's successor to the papal throne, John XXII, proved to be obsessed with the danger of black magic to his person, and repeatedly feared that he was the target of magical plots.¹³⁶

A parallel development that caused a heightened concern about magic at this time may have been the Church's increasing meddling with the beliefs and practices of the general laity. In the wake of the Fourth Lateran Council and the Albigensian crusade, the papacy appointed inquisitors to root out popular heresy. During their search for heretics, inquisitors came into contact with myriad popular beliefs and practises that they found to be superstitious.¹³⁷ A letter that Pope Alexander IV (p. 1254-1261) sent in 1258 illustrates that inquisitors had trouble with dealing with popular magic and that they were unsure whether they should prosecute it as heresy. Alexander ordered that inquisitors were not to prosecute cases of divination or sorcery unless they "clearly savour of manifest heresy".¹³⁸ This may have remained an actual issue as the bull was reissued in 1260 and included in canon law by Pope Boniface VIII in 1298.¹³⁹ Over the years, churchmen remained interested in the superstitious beliefs of the people. In Germany at the start of the fifteenth century, there was a discussion whether popular magical practices should be allowed, and the consensus among theologians seems to have been that the correction of these practices should go through gentle admonition.¹⁴⁰

Not everyone thought that gentle admonition would solve the problem. The two parallel concerns about clerical magic and the Church's practical experience with popular superstition and magical rituals eventually coincided. Kieckhefer was one of the first

¹³² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, excerpt in Kors and Peters (eds), *Witchcraft in Europe*, pp. 57-62.

¹³³ Peters, 'The medieval church', pp. 218-222.

¹³⁴ Ibidem, pp. 219-220; J-P. Boudet, 'Les condamnations de la magie à Paris en 1398', *Revue Mabillon* 12 (2001), pp. 121-157.

¹³⁵ Peters, 'The medieval church', pp. 219-220.

¹³⁶ Ibidem, pp. 220-221.

¹³⁷ Ibidem, pp. 226-227.

¹³⁸ Ibidem, p. 213.

¹³⁹ Ibidem, p. 213.

¹⁴⁰ M.D. Bailey, 'Witchcraft, superstition, and astrology in the late Middle Ages', in Ostorero, Modestin, and Utz Tremp (eds), *Chasses aux sorcières*, pp. 349-366, esp. pp. 351-353.

scholars to suggest that the origin of trials for witchcraft sprang from the increasing concerns with learned magic to popular magic because clerics could not see the difference between their respective operating systems.¹⁴¹ This idea has been elaborated most clearly by Michael Bailey who has argued that “clerical authorities never recognised that they were dealing with two different and highly divergent systems”.¹⁴² Bailey stresses that in the minds of clerics both the incantations and rituals performed by a village sorceress and the necromancy professed by a learned cleric worked through the same demonic agency.¹⁴³

Bailey points at Pope John XXII (p. 1316-1334) as a starting point. John, obsessed with the dangers of magic, ordered inquisitors in 1320 to take action against individuals who engaged in demonic invocation. He thereby reversed the earlier orders of Alexander IV and extended the mandate of inquisitors to black magic.¹⁴⁴ These orders were followed by the bull *Super illius specula* in 1326, in which John specified how the magic he feared was performed; by the use of objects such as images, rings, mirrors, and phials.¹⁴⁵ Bailey points out that this is mainly targeting learned magical rituals, and not the herbs, stones, and simple charms that were used in the popular tradition.¹⁴⁶

Early signs that both traditions were getting mixed appear in the *practica inquisitionis heretice pravitatis*, a manual for inquisitors compiled by Bernard Gui. He summarily mentions the danger posed by sorcery in a section called *De sortilegis et divinis et invocatoribus demonum*.¹⁴⁷ Bailey points out that the questions in the manual are not aimed at finding learned necromancy, but rather at tracing popular rituals for healing incantations and conjurations.¹⁴⁸ To Gui, this was not so different to the learned sorcery banned by John. Judging by the section title and the added formula for abjuration of demons, the inquisitor thought that this popular magic worked through demonic invocation as well.¹⁴⁹

2.1.3. The heretification of magic

With John XXII's *Specula* and the new mandate for inquisitors, magic entered the domain of the persecution of heresy. Although the Church had always condemned magic, it had never actively prosecuted it before, possibly because the sorcerer was in the Augustinian tradition seen as a victim of demonic temptation rather than as a self-conscious deviator of doctrines.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴¹ Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials*, pp. 38-40.

¹⁴² Bailey, 'From sorcery to witchcraft', p. 966.

¹⁴³ Ibidem, p. 966.

¹⁴⁴ Ibidem, pp. 966-967; see also I. Irribarren, 'From black magic to heresy: a doctrinal leap in the pontificate of John XXII', *Church History* 76:1 (2007), pp. 32-60.

¹⁴⁵ *Quellen*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴⁶ Bailey, 'From sorcery to witchcraft', p. 967.

¹⁴⁷ *Quellen*, pp. 47-55.

¹⁴⁸ Bailey, 'From sorcery to witchcraft', pp. 968-969.

¹⁴⁹ Ibidem, pp. 969-970.

¹⁵⁰ Ibidem, p. 964; V. Flint, 'The demonization of magic and sorcery in late antiquity: Christian redefinitions of pagan religions', in B. Ankarloo and S. Clark (eds), *Witchcraft and magic in Europe. Ancient Greece and Rome* (London, 1999), pp. 322-324.

The inquisitor Nicholas Eymeric (d. 1399) took an important next step towards the active prosecution of magicians as perpetrators in his *Directorium inquisitorium* of 1376. Eymeric poses the theological question “whether sorcerers and diviners, or those suspected, are to be considered as heretics?”, and answers for the most part with an affirmative.¹⁵¹ Eymeric argued that any form of magic that involved demonic invocation was always heretical, as the sorcerer would be showing veneration towards demons that are due only to God and his saints.¹⁵² Eymeric seems to have been struggling with the argument of clerics that they were able to control demons and that they did not show visible signs of veneration. However, he countered this by arguing that the very act of invoking demons was already heresy and apostasy.¹⁵³ Thus, according to Eymeric, every sorcerer committed apostasy, which was possibly the worst heresy in Christianity. Eymeric saw these demon-invoking sorcerers as heretics in the sense of individual heresy through theological deviation; category one of Kieckhefer’s model.¹⁵⁴

A final episode that practically completed the heretification of magic took place at the end of the fourteenth century. In 1398, following another series of scandals of combined poisoning and sorcery at the French court, the theological faculty of the university of Paris, then one of the most important religious authorities in western Christendom, issued a list of (learned) magical practices that they condemned as heretical. Moreover, the faculty also condemned as heretical the very denying that these practices are heresy.¹⁵⁵ Concluding, over the course of the fourteenth century, the stance of the Church towards magic shifted more and more from superstition to heresy through apostasy and theological defiance.

2.2. The persecution of popular magic

The definition of magic as a theological defiance was not sufficient to cause mass persecution of popular sorcery. Another step was necessary, and this too was facilitated by theorising heresy. As illustrated in Kieckhefer’s tri-partite model, the concept of heresy was multi-layered. Kieckhefer points out that is too simple to define heresy simply as theological deviance, as it came to represent more when the church hierarchy became established. Any deviation from the unity of the Church could be considered a heresy. This included excommunication, perverting the sacraments, deviating from the Roman articles of faith, the following of a new sect and the denial of papal jurisdiction.¹⁵⁶ The individual

¹⁵¹ Bailey, ‘From sorcery to witchcraft’, pp. 972-973.

¹⁵² Ibidem, pp. 972-973.

¹⁵³ Ibidem, p. 973.

¹⁵⁴ Kieckhefer, ‘Witchcraft, necromancy and sorcery as heresy’, pp. 133-136.

¹⁵⁵ J-P. Boudet, ‘La postérité des condamnations de la magie à Paris en 1398’, in Ostorero, Modestin, and Utz Treppe (eds), *Chasses aux sorcières*, pp. 331-332; For an edition and translation of the Paris condemnations see idem, ‘Les condamnations’, pp. 146-157.

¹⁵⁶ Kieckhefer, ‘Witchcraft, necromancy and sorcery as heresy’, p. 137.

necromancer was a heretic in the sense of theological deviance, but he was not a member of a sect that collectively denied the authority of Pope and Church.¹⁵⁷

This broader definition of heresy was pivotal for both the large-scale persecution of heretics by papal inquisitors and for the shift towards persecuting popular magic. The first inquisitors charged with finding and chastising Cathars and Waldensians were looking for clandestine anti-Church organisations. Inquisitorial practice suggests that they were not so much interested in actual doctrinal deviations, but rather in the membership of deviating- and authority undermining groups. The inquisitors' questions were aimed at outward signs of membership or affiance, such as housing, listening to, and otherwise supporting heretics.¹⁵⁸ It is possible that inquisitors, with their focus on outward manifestations of heresy, started to identify the popular magical rituals they encountered with what they knew about the mechanics and the heretic nature of learned magic.¹⁵⁹

While Bailey argues that this practical misconception on the part of inquisitors and theologians was the primary reason for the persecution of popular magic, other scholars have argued that the first trials for diabolic witchcraft were actually a direct outgrowth of the inquisitorial prosecution of heresy. Jeffrey Russell, for example, argued in 1972 that the sect of witches that was persecuted in the fifteenth century was an actual heretical sect, only with additional charges of black magic.¹⁶⁰ Others have argued that the sect of diabolic witches was an invention of inquisitors who were in need of new enemies to combat now that Catharism had virtually disappeared and the last communities of Waldensians were forced into hiding.¹⁶¹ Kathrin Utz Tremp has thoroughly traced the development of the persecution of diabolic witchcraft from the persecution of heresy. She has convincingly argued that inquisitors first conflated demonising discourse on Waldensianism and Catharism, and then began to transplant this discourse on sorcery, and through that process created a non-existent devil-worshipping sect that threatened Christendom.¹⁶²

To me, both processes do not appear to be ruling each other out but rather add to each other. The criminalisation and heretification of magic and the imagining of a devil worshipping sect were all necessary preconditions for persecuting sorcery as a category three, rather than as a category two crime. The lands around the Alps were the epicentre of the conflation of all these notions and practices. Kieckhefer suggests that it was an "interplay of texts, trials and local incidents" that caused this escalation to happen here.¹⁶³ He points out that it was possibly an increasing number of accusations for weather magic that coincided with circulating fears of devil-worshipping sects.¹⁶⁴ It was in this region that

¹⁵⁷ Ibidem, pp. 143-145.

¹⁵⁸ M.G. Pegg, *The Corruption of Angels. The great inquisition of 1245-46* (Princeton, 2001), esp. pp. 45ff, 92ff.

¹⁵⁹ Bailey, 'From sorcery to witchcraft', p. 977.

¹⁶⁰ Russell, *Witchcraft*.

¹⁶¹ Noted by Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials*, p. 19; see for example H.R. Trevor-Roper, 'The European witch-craze of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', in idem (ed.), *The crisis of the seventeenth century. Religion, the Reformation and social change* (London, 1967), esp. pp. 103ff.

¹⁶² K. Utz Tremp, *Von der Häresie zur Hexerei. "Wirckliche" und imaginäre Sekten im Spätmittelalter*, MGH Schriften 59 (Hanover, 2008).

¹⁶³ Kieckhefer, 'The first wave', p. 166.

¹⁶⁴ Ibidem, p. 166.

papal inquisitors went from persecuting Waldensians in one year to persecuting diabolic witchcraft the next.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, it is in the lands around the Alps where the first texts emerged that convey a shared stereotype of the diabolical witch. Kieckhefer calls the stereotype in these texts the 'Lausanne paradigm', after a contemporary inquisitorial register from Lausanne in which the elements are found, through by way of coercion, in actual trials.¹⁶⁶

The 'Lausanne paradigm' is formed by the following texts: a chronicle by the Schwyz *Landschreiber* Hans Fründ about a wave of prosecutions in the Swiss canton Wallis (written shortly after 1428); book five of the *Formicarius* by Dominican prior Johannes Nider (c. 1435-1438); the *Errores Gazarorum* (before 1437) by an anonymous writer, but probably an experienced papal inquisitor; the *Ut magorum et maleficiorum* (c. 1437), written by Claude Tholosan based on his experiences as the highest secular judge in the Dauphiné (under Savoyard jurisdiction); and Martin le Franc's (secretary to the Savoyard antipope Felix V) *Champion des Dames*.¹⁶⁷ Although these texts differ in their details, they share some basic characteristics with a focus on heresy by apostasy. They all describe the existence of a devil-worshipping cult including the attendance of nocturnal assemblies presided over by Satan or a demon, sacrifices to Satan, renunciation of the Christian faith, infanticide, and the teaching of magical skills by the devil or a demon.¹⁶⁸

The only new element in the Lausanne stereotype was the magical component. As Norman Cohn has pointed out, many of the accusations are phantasms that have been recycled to demonise adversaries since Roman times.¹⁶⁹ In a more recent perspective, Waldensians and especially Cathars had been the target of this particular discourse.¹⁷⁰ This nearly one on one transplantation of demonising language, and the fact that the first sorcerers were referred to as *Vaudaises* (the French word for Waldensians) and *heretici*, surely suggests a direct connection between the persecution of heresy and sorcery.¹⁷¹

Now that a stereotype of a dangerous cult of witches was established, authorities who believed in its existence could set out to find it. Using the inquisitorial procedure, law courts did not need to have an accusing party to start a trial. Hearsay or public notoriety could be enough to start an investigation.¹⁷² Kieckhefer already pointed out in 1976 that trials for sorcery would only come to include demonic elements once an informed inquisitor or judge would use torture to find it.¹⁷³ By way of fixed questionnaires and the pressure of torture, cases of magic that would previously have been treated as a danger to the local

¹⁶⁵ Utz Tremp, *Von der Häresie*.

¹⁶⁶ Kieckhefer, 'The first wave', pp. 160-165.

¹⁶⁷ Utz Tremp, *Von der Häresie*, pp. 5-26.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 5-26; Kieckhefer, 'The first wave', p. 161.

¹⁶⁹ N. Cohn, *Europe's inner demons. The demonization of Christians in medieval Christendom* (rev. ed., London, 1993).

¹⁷⁰ Utz Tremp, *Von der Häresie*, esp. pp. 128-129, 212-254, 311-334.

¹⁷¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 152-166; Kieckhefer, 'Witchcraft, necromancy and sorcery as heresy', p. 149.

¹⁷² B.P. Levack, *The witch-hunt in early modern Europe* (New York, 1987), pp. 64-77; G. Schwerhoff, *Die Inquisition. Ketzerverfolgung in Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Munich, 2008), pp. 22-23.

¹⁷³ Cf. above nr. 78.

community could escalate into the accusation of membership of a conspiring devil-worshipping sect.¹⁷⁴

Two early examples can illustrate this change in practice. First, Johannes Nider draws, in a section of his *Formicarius* in which he describes the nocturnal gatherings of the witch sect, examples from a couple of trials for sorcery that took place in the Simme valley in the Berner Oberland at the very beginning of the fifteenth century. This is not a first-hand account, but it is based on his conversations with the responsible secular judge, Peter of Bern. Nider writes that Peter burned a multitude of sorcerers and his discourse focuses on what the sorcerers did at their nocturnal gatherings, including murder, eating children, and demon-worship.¹⁷⁵ This would situate the (supposed) existence of the witch sect very early, but Andreas Blauert has suggested that this is a deformation caused by Nider who was projecting ideas current in the 1430s on trials that in fact had a far more traditional character.¹⁷⁶

Following Blauert's theory, Bailey points out that the elements of the nocturnal gathering in the descriptions of Peter's trials are the same as those in a trial dated 1437 or 1438.¹⁷⁷ To get a better idea of what really happened in the Simme valley, Bailey suggests to look at another narrative in the *Formicarius* that is based on Nider's conversations with Peter, the account of the sorcerer Staedelin. The story about Staedelin has all the elements of a category two case and virtually none of the category three. Staedelin performed popular magic such as burying a lizard under the doorstep of a house to cause infertility, causing hailstorms through incantations, but there are no traces of membership of a sect or of demon worship. He had not learned his magical skills through a demon or the devil, but through tutoring by another human sorcerer.¹⁷⁸

A second early example is accessible through Hans Fründ's chronicle of a 1428 wave of trials in Wallis.¹⁷⁹ He begins by narrating that the members of the witch (*hexen*) sect got their magical powers because they were taught by an evil spirit (*boese geist*). Before the evil spirit was willing to teach them, however, they had to subject themselves to him and to deny God, his saints, baptism and the Church. Fründ continues by portraying the sect as a complete anti-thesis of an orderly Christian society.¹⁸⁰ Fründ perceived such a great danger in the sect as he narrates that

¹⁷⁴ Schwerhoff, *Die Inquisition*, p. 116; the Lausanne inquisitorial protocols suggest that a list with expectations was used. The accusations and confessions follow a more or less fixed script, see Kieckhefer, 'The first wave', pp. 163-165.

¹⁷⁵ Bailey, 'From sorcery to witchcraft', pp. 980-981.

¹⁷⁶ A. Blauert, *Frühe Hexenverfolgungen. Ketzer-, Zauberei- und Hexenprozesse des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg, 1989), pp. 56-59.

¹⁷⁷ Bailey, 'From sorcery to witchcraft', pp. 980-981.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 981-982.

¹⁷⁹ Hans Fründ, 'Rapport sur la chasse aux sorciers et aux sorcières menée dès 1428 dans le diocèse de Sion', ed. K. Utz Tresp and transl. C. Chêne, in M. Ostorero, A. Paravicini Bagliani, and K. Utz Tresp (eds), *L'imaginaire du Sabbat. Edition des textes les plus anciens (1430 c. – 1440 c.)*, Cahiers Laussanois d'histoire médiévale 26 (Lausanne, 1999), pp. 30-45.

¹⁸⁰ For a good explanation of the function of this type of discourse see S. Clark, 'Inversion, misrule, and the meaning of witchcraft', *Past and Present* 87 (1980), pp. 98-127.

there were so many of them that they thought that if they could hold out for another year, they could have elected a king from among them. The evil spirit made them believe that they would become so strong, that they would fear neither power nor courts, and that they would set up a court to constrain Christianity.¹⁸¹

Fründ wrote his account in Luzern, on the other side of the northern Alps, and it is doubtful that he wrote from personal experience.¹⁸² In her studies of this particular episode, Chantal Amman-Doubliez identifies two contrasting blocks of local sources that shed additional light on the Wallis trials.¹⁸³ Wallis was at this time partitioned in two independent regions. Secular jurisdiction of the valley west of the town of Sierre was in the hands of the duke of Savoy and the jurisdiction in the eastern part was in the hands of the bishop of Sion. The wave of trials took place in both halves of Wallis, but secular authorities handled the proceedings in episcopal Wallis, and the experienced papal inquisitor Ulrich of Torrenté pulled the strings in Savoyard Wallis.¹⁸⁴

The curious fact is that the inquisitorial records include anti-heretical language similar to the account of Fründ to stress the danger of the sect of the sorcerers to Christendom, while these elements are absent in the secular documents which are more concerned with the practical implications of the sorcery (referred to as *sortileii*).¹⁸⁵ The secular sources share the inquisitor's conception of an organised group trying to undermine authority, but the actual concerns seem to fit better in Kieckhefer's category two. The danger appears to be to the local community and order, rather than coming from a devil worshipping sect.¹⁸⁶ Amman-Doubliez points out that the concerns of the secular authorities may indeed have been very mundane, and that the conspiracy that the secular authorities were fearing must be seen in the context of a conflict between political factions which had already sparked a war between 1415 and 1420.¹⁸⁷

2.3. The dissemination of demonic discourse

I believe that the episodes in Wallis and the Berner Oberland are good examples how notions and ideas about sorcery, its mechanics, and its diabolical implication, were in transition. Coinciding ideas about the danger of magic, combined with the notion that there

¹⁸¹ Hans Fründ, 'Rapport', p. 42; "*und wz ir als vil worden, das sy meintent, moechtten sy noch ein jare gerichssnet han, so woltten sy einen kúng haben uffgeworffen under inen selben. Und gap der boes geist inen ze verstân, si soelten als stark werden, das sy enkein herschafft noch gerichtte soelten fürchtten und selber ein gerichtte soelten uffsetzen und die cristenheit ze twingen*".

¹⁸² Kieckhefer, 'The first wave', pp. 160-161.

¹⁸³ C. Amman-Doubliez, 'La première chasse aux sorciers en Valais (1428-1436?)', in Ostorero, Bagliani and Utz Treppe (eds), *L'imaginaire*, pp. 63-98.

¹⁸⁴ Amman-Doubliez, 'La première chasse', pp. 71-77; for more on Ulrich of Torrenté see, Utz Treppe, *Von der Häresie*; K. Utz Treppe, 'Torrenté, Ulrich von', in G. Gersmann, K. Moeller, and J-M. Schmidt (eds), *Lexikon zur Geschichte der Hexenverfolgung*, 23 July 2008 <<https://www.historicum.net/purl/45zuo/>> [4 October 2016].

¹⁸⁵ Amman-Doubliez, 'La première chasse', pp. 76-77.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 79-86.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 79-86; see also C. Amman-Doubliez, 'Les chasses aux sorciers vues sous un angle politique: pouvoirs et persécutions dans le diocèse de Sion au XVe siècle', in Ostorero, Modestin, and Utz Treppe (eds), *Chausses aux sorcières*, pp. 5-25.

was a sect, directly led by Satan, set upon overturning Christendom, resulted in projecting these ideas in practice. Their impact would depend on whether these notions were able to take root and spread.

It is not possible to point at a single motor for the dissemination of demonic discourse. Although papal inquisitors must have played a significant role in the establishment and the spread of the paradigm, a lot of theologians remained sceptical of any drastic moves away from Augustine and Aquinas.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, while some lay judges remained sceptical about the existence of the witch sect, others, like the Savoyard judge Claude Tholosan, were convinced and prosecuted it with great zeal.¹⁸⁹

Scholars have since long pointed at the role of the Council of Basel (1431-1449) in the dispersion of the witch stereotype.¹⁹⁰ The first trials for diabolic witchcraft took place not far from the Council's physical location.¹⁹¹ Edward Peters and Michael Bailey argue that although there is no trace that this subject was discussed in the official council canons, it must have been discussed in an informal setting.¹⁹² The council was a meeting place for theory and practice: inquisitors shared their experiences here, and a number of authors who wrote anti-witch texts in the years after the council have very likely exchanged their ideas here.¹⁹³ Bailey and Peters attribute to Basel a 'nexus function' since the council was at its time the very centre of western Christendom and many important clerics were attending at some point, able to take ideas with them all over Europe.¹⁹⁴

Basel may have also more directly fostered prosecution for diabolic sorcery. The council and Pope Eugenius IV (p. 1431-1447) repeatedly fought over the highest jurisdiction in Church matters.¹⁹⁵ Their conflict eventually came to a head with the result that the council appointed the duke of Savoy, Amadeus VIII (1383-1451), as pope. Eugenius did not let himself be deposed, and as part of a slander campaign, he accused Amadeus (who had taken the name Felix V) that sorcerers infested his ancestral lands in Savoy. Felix did not take this accusation lightly and went on to persecute sorcery more fiercely.¹⁹⁶ Both the work of secular judge Claude Tholosan and inquisitor Ulrich of Torrenté have to be seen in conjunction with Felix' zeal to prosecute sorcerers, as both were operating in his lands.¹⁹⁷

After these episodes in Switzerland, it becomes hard to keep track on the dispersion of the stereotype of diabolic witchcraft. What is clear, however, is that the occurrence of

¹⁸⁸ Duni, 'Doubting witchcraft', pp. 203-231.

¹⁸⁹ P. Paravy, 'Zur Genesis der Hexenverfolgungen im Mittelalter: des Traktat des Claude Tholosan, Richter in der Dauphiné (um 1436)', in Blauert (ed.), *Ketzer, Zauberer, Hexen*, pp. 118-159.

¹⁹⁰ Rusell, *Witchcraft*, p. 234; Blauert, 'Frühe Hexenverfolgungen', p. 32; M.D. Bailey and E. Peters, 'A sabbat of demonologists: Basel, 1431-1440', *The Historian* 65:6 (2003), pp. 1375-1395.

¹⁹¹ Bailey and Peters, 'A sabbat of demonologists', pp. 1378-1379.

¹⁹² *Ibidem*, pp. 1378ff.

¹⁹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 1381ff; see also S. Sudmann, 'Hexen – Ketzer – Kirchenreform. Drei Debatten des Basler Konzils im Vergleich', in Ostorero, Modestin, and Utz Tremp (eds), *Chasses aux sorcières*, pp. 169-197.

¹⁹⁴ Bailey and Peters, 'A sabbat of demonologists', p. 1389.

¹⁹⁵ M. Watanabe, 'Pope Eugenius IV, the conciliar movement, and the primacy of Rome', in G. Christianson, T.M. Izbicki, and C.M. Bellitto (eds), *The Church, the Councils, and Reform: The legacy of the fifteenth century* (Washington, 2008), pp. 177-193.

¹⁹⁶ Peters, 'The medieval church', p. 236.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 236; Blauert, 'Frühe Hexenverfolgungen', p. 27; Utz Tremp, 'Torrenté, Ulrich von'.

trials for diabolic witchcraft is not especially tied to geographic proximity, as some regions around the Alps did not see trials until much later at the end of the fifteenth century or even in the sixteenth century.¹⁹⁸ Blauert points out that in some regions, like South Tirol, trials only started when it was initiated by an inquisitor who believed in the danger of the witch cult.¹⁹⁹

Local authorities were not always happy with inquisitors' ideas about witches. Heinrich Kramer's personal experiences can be taken as an excellent example of local opposition. His success was highly dependent on the local context, that is, the local authorities needed to share his conviction and support him. This was the case in Ravensburg (Baden-Württemberg), where he was able to burn eight people for witchcraft after he was endorsed by both the authorities and the populace.²⁰⁰ Elsewhere, however, he was actively opposed. Kramer appealed to the pope for his support, and in response, Innocent VIII (p. 1484-1492) published in 1484 a bull (known as the *Summis desiderantes affectibus*), in which he explicitly addresses the obstinacy of secular authorities in several regions in Germany, including the Rhineland and the diocese of Salzburg.²⁰¹ These regions were, according to the Innocentius, filled with people, both men and women, who gave themselves over to devils to commit magical crimes.²⁰² The pope gave Kramer his full support, and admonished local authorities to stop, for their spiritual sake, to impede with the inquisitor's work.²⁰³

His papal endorsement did not remove all difficulties for Kramer. In 1485, he presented himself in Innsbruck to find out witches in the diocese of Brixen. The local bishop, Georg Golser, sent Innocentius' bull to the governing bodies in the diocese, asking them to fully support Kramer in his endeavours.²⁰⁴ Golser granted Kramer full episcopal support but withdrew this not much later. Kramer was told to quit his proceedings because he had caused a public scandal in Innsbruck with his eccentric misogynic views.²⁰⁵ Then, after another seven months of gathering evidence against Innsbruck citizens, Gosler urged for Kramer's departure so that he would finally stop harassing the citizens of Innsbruck.²⁰⁶ This fierce and enduring opposition to his zeal to prosecute witches must have been the reason why he wrote the *Malleus Maleficarum* the year after to convince others of his ideas.²⁰⁷

Another example of papal inquisitors as vehicles for dispersion of the diabolic witchcraft stereotype is the infamous episode that came to be known as the *Vauderie d'Arras* in Artois (subjected to the duke of Burgundy). Between November 1459 and October 1460, twenty-nine persons were found guilty of membership of the demon-worshipping

¹⁹⁸ Blauert, 'Frühe Hexenverfolgungen', pp. 20-24.

¹⁹⁹ Ibidem, pp. 20-21.

²⁰⁰ Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum*, pp. 14-15.

²⁰¹ *Quellen*, pp. 24-27.

²⁰² Ibidem, p. 25.

²⁰³ Ibidem, pp. 25-27.

²⁰⁴ Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum*, pp. 15-16.

²⁰⁵ H.P. Broedel, 'To preserve the manly form from so vile a crime: ecclesiastical anti-sodomitic rhetoric and the gendering of witchcraft in the *Malleus Maleficarum*', *Essays in Medieval Studies* 19 (2002), p. 136.

²⁰⁶ Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum*, pp. 15-18.

²⁰⁷ Ibidem, p. 18.

sect of sorcerers, referred to – like in the Alps – as *Vaudoises*. Twelve of them were burned before the duke put an end to the trials.²⁰⁸ This case in Arras is peculiar because the wave of prosecution was a rather erratic exception of which there are no comparable cases at this time so far away from the Alps.²⁰⁹ Franck Mercier traces the spread of notions about diabolic witchcraft northwards, and points at the Dominican inquisition and its relative independence of movement and jurisdiction in the Burgundian lands as the primary vehicle for dispersion.²¹⁰ The episode in Arras was allegedly started by the confession of a hermit in Langres (near Dijon in Burgundy). The hermit, coerced by torture, confessed his membership of the *Vaudois* to the inquisitor Pierre le Broussart and pointed to a woman in Arras as an accomplice. She was duly arrested and confessed under torture to the diabolic crimes very similar to those circulating in the Alps.²¹¹

The Dominicans received the blessing of Arras' bishop and were able to continue to use torture to find members of the sect among all layers of the citizenship, from prostitutes to members of the city elite.²¹² Mercier points to the odd situation that the city government, which was, like other towns in the period, trying to assert its independence of the bishop, did not intervene and quietly carried out the orders of the ecclesiastical court.²¹³

The fact that the *Vauderie* of Arras was such an isolated event is for Mercier a reason to suggest a possible political motivation for the trials. He points out that the papal inquisition was at several times very conveniently used by the Burgundian Duke Philip the Good (1396-1467) as a tool to assert his authority in his juridically fragmented lands.²¹⁴ Moreover, the ducal court was one of those courts at which there was a genuine fear of black magic, and Philip's library included several polemical tracts against the stereotype cult of witches.²¹⁵ Martin le Franc's *Champion les Dames*, mentioned above as one of the first texts to convey the Lausanne stereotype, was dedicated to Philip.²¹⁶

The accusations against the *Vaudoises* of Arras were primarily heretical in nature, and the practice of actual sorcery was only a minor part of their alleged crime. Mercier argues that framing people for heresy, in this case for apostasy through membership of a demon-worshipping sect, could be politically interpreted as an offence not only against God but also against the prince and the state. It was, therefore, an excellent way for Philip to assert his authority in Arras.²¹⁷ The inquisition in Arras only ended after the prosecutions met with a growing resistance on the part of the citizenship. Theologian Giles Carlier, dean at the cathedral of Cambrai, was asked for advice on the matter. He had much more

²⁰⁸ F. Mercier, *Le Vauderie d'Arras. Une chasse aux sorcières à l'Automne de Moyen Age* (Rennes, 2006).

²⁰⁹ Mercier, *Le Vauderie*, p. 8.

²¹⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 22; 39-70.

²¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 41.

²¹² *Ibidem*, pp. 10-12.

²¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 141-145.

²¹⁴ *Ibidem*, esp. pp. 165-216; not unlike how Philip IV asserted his power by persecuting the Knights Templar; see J.B. Given, 'Chasing phantoms: Philip IV and the fantastic', in M. Frassetto (ed.), *Heresy and the persecuting society in the Middle Ages. Essays on the work of R.I. Moore* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 239-266.

²¹⁵ Mercier, *La Vauderie*, pp. 30-31.

²¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 67.

²¹⁷ *Ibidem*, esp. pp. 183-216.

traditional Augustinian and Thomistic views on magic and pointed out that the sect must be treated as heretical, which was prosecuted much milder than diabolic witchcraft as those accused of heresy were actually given a chance to abjure the crime.²¹⁸

Leaving any political motives behind the prosecution *Vauderie* in Arras for what they are, the episode shows that the stereotype of the diabolic witch cult could disseminate via inquisitorial practice. The trials in Arras directly influenced its surroundings as prosecution of satanic witches spread to the neighbouring towns of Douai, Tournai, Amiens and Lille.²¹⁹ Fernand Vanhemelryck, one of the historians who have studied sorcery in the southern Low Countries, argues that the events in the region provided a doorway through which the stereotype of diabolic witchcraft could enter the southern Low Countries, especially Brabant and Flanders.²²⁰

There were undoubtedly people in the area who looked with interest at these matters. However, theologians at the University of Leuven, which was the centre for theology in the medieval Low Countries, kept a predominantly traditional view on sorcery after Basel and Arras. In 1486, the University printed a tract by the deceased theology professor Johannes Beetz on superstition and sorcery. In this tract, Beetz maintains that sorcery is only a heresy if the devil is explicitly invoked and revered. In an Augustinian and Thomistic fashion, he argues that the devil is only capable of what God permits and that magic is an illusion.²²¹ Regarding the events in Arras, Beetz cautiously points out that this was a case of devil worship and not of actual magic.²²²

On a more practical level, research on present-day Flemish-Brabant and Flanders by Vanhemelryck and Jos Monballyu shows that demonic discourse would only establish itself here slowly and erratically. Secular judges kept treating sorcery as a category two crime throughout the fifteenth century.²²³ Those who were tried for sorcery were regarded as nuisances by local authorities and most often sentenced to pay a fine, sent on pilgrimage, or banished.²²⁴ Demonic discourse did establish itself in some, more south-eastern French-speaking regions of the Low Countries around the beginning of the sixteenth century, where alleged sorcerers were accused of being members of the *Vauderie*.²²⁵ In the north-west of the southern Low Countries (Flanders and Flemish-Brabant), the transition from trials of category two to demonic witchcraft would not take place until well into the sixteenth

²¹⁸ H. Platelle, 'Les consultations de Gilles Carlier, doyen du chapitre de Cambrai († 1472), sur diverses affaires de sortilege', in Dupont-Bouchat (ed.), *La sorcellerie dans les Pays-Bas*, pp. 81-113.

²¹⁹ D. Vanyacker, 'Het aandeel van de Zuidelijke Nederlanden in de Europese heksenvervolging (1450-1685). Een *status quaestionis*', *Trajecta* 9:4 (2000), pp. 340-341.

²²⁰ F. Vanhemelryck, *Heksenprocessen in de Nederlanden* (Leuven, 1982), p. 26.

²²¹ M. Gielis, 'Een Leuvense heksenhamer: de leer van de theologieprofessor Johannes Beetz († 1476) over bijgeloof en duivelspact', in G. Janssens (ed.), *Liber amicorum Dr. J. Scheerder* (Leuven, 1987), pp. 165-187.

²²² Gielis, 'Een Leuvense heksenhamer', p. 176.

²²³ Vanhemelryck, *Heksenprocessen*, pp. 15-26; F. Vanhemelryck, *Het gevecht met de duivel. Heksen in Vlaanderen* (Leuven, 1999), pp. 30-34; idem, *De criminaliteit in de ammanie van Brussel*, pp. 82-96; Monballyu, 'De houding van de rechters', pp. 11-34; J. Monballyu, 'Schadelijke toverij te Brugge en te Ieper in de 15^{de} eeuw', *Handelingen van het Genootschap voor Geschiedenis (Société d'Émulation)* 121 (1984), pp. 265-269.

²²⁴ Vanhemelryck, *Het gevecht met de duivel*, pp. 30-32.

²²⁵ Idem, *Heksenprocessen*, pp. 31-36.

century.²²⁶ The first burnings for category three, demonic, witchcraft in Flanders took place in Bruges in 1532.²²⁷

Diabolic discourse did not only disperse through papal inquisitors. I would like to end this chapter by pointing at a correspondence between the cities of Metz and Cologne in 1456. On July 8, the Burgomaster and Council of Cologne sent a letter to Metz concerning a female citizen of Metz who was arrested and imprisoned in Cologne for practising weather magic.²²⁸ The woman, named Ydot or Ydette, was accused to have caused “bad air and weather”.²²⁹ It had come to Cologne magistrate’s attention that Ydette’s husband, her daughter, and her sister were also arrested, and Cologne’s magistrate wished to know what had happened to them so that they could act accordingly with Ydette.²³⁰

Ydette’s case can be seen in the context of a wave of trials in Metz and the surrounding area. In April and May of that year, multiple people were burned after inquiries of the ecclesiastical court.²³¹ These people had allegedly destroyed crops and vines by causing adverse weather and storms with their “art diabolique des sorcières et sorcières”.²³² Ydette must have sought refuge in Cologne in fear of prosecution. The city magistrate of Metz points out that they only arrested Ydette’s family because they wanted to know where she had fled since she was named as an accomplice by a couple of other suspects.²³³ The letter places the sorcery in the diabolical discourse that we already saw above. A woman from a village near Metz was burned for murdering children, practising weather magic, and ‘heresy’. The magistrate of Metz wrote that they arrested two other women and one fourteen-year-old girl for the same crimes, and they all confessed that they had met Ydette on multiple occasions and went flying through the sky by the power of the “enemy of hell”.²³⁴ Cologne’s messenger was brought to the ecclesiastical court to hear more details of the case, and the Metz magistrate suggested that if after further examination Ydette would be found guilty, she should be put to trial and burned in a public place.²³⁵

A Latin chronicle tells us about what happened next. Ydette was burned together with another person who allegedly murdered a man using poison (poison was, as seen above, associated with black magic).²³⁶ Sadly, we cannot tell – as there is no supporting Council record – whether the magistrate of Cologne adopted the diabolic discourse employed by the authorities of Metz.²³⁷ This correspondence does show that the witch

²²⁶ Idem, *Het gevecht met de duivel*, pp. 30-32; Monballyu, ‘De houding van de rechters’, pp. 11-31; idem, ‘Schadelijke toverij’, pp. 265-269.

²²⁷ D. Vanyacker, *Hekserij in Brugge. De magische leefwereld van een stadsbevolking, 16^{de} -17^{de} eeuw*, Vlaamse Historische Studies 5 (Bruges, 1988), pp. 73-76.

²²⁸ *Quellen*, p. 567.

²²⁹ Ibidem, p. 567; “*quaide luycht ind weder*”.

²³⁰ Ibidem, p. 567.

²³¹ *Quellen*, pp. 565-566.

²³² Ibidem, p. 566.

²³³ *Quellen*, pp. 567-569.

²³⁴ *Quellen*, p. 568.

²³⁵ Ibidem, pp. 568-569.

²³⁶ *Quellen*, p. 566.

²³⁷ Research on the transition to the paradigm of diabolic magic in Cologne is rather scarce. Gerd Schwerhoff, who studied sorcery trials of the seventeenth century, points out that the first ‘concrete hints’ to diabolic pacts

stereotype did not only disseminate through inquisitors but could also spread through secular channels such as town messengers and letters between town governments. Its success, then again, would depend on whether a governing body was willing to adopt these ideas.

2.4. Conclusion

With this chapter, I have given sufficient historical and geographic context for interpreting the actions of the Utrecht Council which will be scrutinised in the following two chapters. It is evident that there was no fixed, nor a broadly shared stance throughout the Middle Ages on magic as a crime. For most of the Middle Ages, theologians followed Augustine and later Thomas Aquinas in that practising magic was a vain superstition, a sin but not necessarily a crime against the faith.

This began to change as notions conflated over the course of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and finally the fifteenth centuries. Throughout this period, affected by more direct contact of Church authorities with learned and popular magic, magic was increasingly criminalised. The magician who meddled with the demonic became to be regarded no longer as a mere victim but became an actor that could be held responsible for his choice to invoke demons. This criminalisation eventually coincided with heretification as invoking demons was equated with apostasy. Magic could then become a heresy defined as theological defiance.

Popular magic could turn into diabolic witchcraft through two developments. First, clerics did not see a difference between learned magic and popular magic and thought that both worked through demonic agency. Second, through the conjunction of transplantation of discourse and practical experience of papal inquisitors there emerged an idea that there were sorcerers who adhered to a demon-worshipping sect set upon the destruction of Christendom. More simply put, the imaginary cult of witches was created through the conflation of combatting heresy and sorcery.

After a stereotype of the diabolical witch was established in the 1430s, it could spread via numerous ways. As seen in the examples of Heinrich Kramer and the *Vauderie* of Arras, papal inquisitors set upon the destruction of the witch sect played a large part in the dispersion of discourse. However, as the correspondence between Metz and Cologne suggests, ideas could also diffuse via secular channels. The adoption of ideas of diabolic witchcraft in trials for sorcery happened very erratically and depended in the first place on whether legal authorities accepted that there was a heretical sect of sorcerers that they should prosecute. What we cannot see through these sources, however, is how significant the role of the general populace was in demanding prosecution.

in Cologne are from 1507 onwards, and only mentions Ydette in passing: Schwerhoff, *Köln im Kreuzverhör*, pp. 426-427.

III. Magic in Utrecht: 1322 – 1493

The aim of this chapter is to establish how the Utrecht government dealt with sorcery as a criminal offence before diabolical notions became the norm during the ‘transitional period’ at the beginning of the sixteenth century. As pointed out in section 1.3.3, for an accusation for sorcery to be treated by the highest urban court it must have gone through multiple escalations after other solutions had failed. Due to the public nature of medieval society, and the social and legal difficulties that a public legal procedure brought about, we can assume that social damage and scandal must have accompanied the cases for sorcery treated by the Utrecht Council.²³⁸

Criminal trials for sorcery must, therefore, be seen in two ways. One, as a way to do damage to someone’s reputation in a personal conflict; and two as the Utrecht government trying to minimise social damage and public scandal. After briefly paying attention to Utrecht’s legal system in section 3.1, I will endeavour to place the individual trials into their respective contexts and attempt to establish whether there are specific factors leading to a verdict in section 3.2. After this, I shall briefly place Utrecht’s treatment of sorcery into perspective by comparing it with authorities in neighbouring towns and provinces in the northern Low Countries in section 3.3. The comparisons and conclusions in section 3.4 will serve as a synthesis on whether Utrecht indeed treated sorcery as a category two heresy and thus essentially as a crime against the local community.

3.1. Utrecht and its legal system

Utrecht was in many aspects an important centre in the northern Low Countries. In terms of population, it was the largest urban centre in the area.²³⁹ Utrecht was the most important city in the Sticht, the land under the secular jurisdiction of the bishop of Utrecht. The ever-fluctuating borders of the Sticht encompassed roughly the current Dutch provinces of Utrecht (called the ‘Nedersticht’), and Overijssel and Drenthe (called the ‘Oversticht’).²⁴⁰ The city of Utrecht was always very involved with the administration of the Sticht, as its own rights were guaranteed by the independence of the Princedom.²⁴¹ Utrecht was also a

²³⁸ See on social and legal setbacks caused by public trials: T. Kuehn, ‘*Fama* as a legal status in Renaissance Florence’, in T. Fenster and D.L. Smail (eds), *Fama. The politics of talk and reputation in medieval Europe* (London, 2003), pp. 27-46; F.R.P. Akehurst, ‘Good name, reputation, and notoriety in French customary law’, in Fenster and Smail (eds), *Fama*, pp. 75-94. For a specific case study in Guelders in 1480 see: M. Veldhuizen, ‘Guard your tongue. Slander and its punishment in a late medieval courtroom’, in V. Challet et al. (eds), *The voices of the people in Late Medieval Europe. Communication and popular politics* (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 233-246.

²³⁹ For the size of Utrecht in comparison to neighbouring towns, see A.J. van den Hoven van Genderen and R. Rommes, ‘Rijk en talrijk. Beschouwingen over de omvang van de Utrechtse bevolking tussen circa 1300 en het begin van de 17e eeuw’, *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht* (1995), pp. 53-85; J.E.A.L. Struick, ‘Het recht van Trecht’, in *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht* (1972), pp. 26-29.

²⁴⁰ A.J. van den Hoven van Genderen, ‘De mijter en de macht’, in C. Dekker, Ph. Maarschalkerweerd, and J.M. van Winter (eds), *Geschiedenis van de provincie Utrecht tot 1528* (Utrecht, 1997), pp. 199-203.

²⁴¹ A.J. van den Hoven van Genderen, ‘De Staten’, in Dekker, Maarschalkerweerd, and Van Winter (eds), *Geschiedenis van de provincie Utrecht tot 1528*, pp. 255-256.

religious centre: the town was the seat of the bishop of Utrecht, and religious houses and chapters occupied a large part of the city's physical space.²⁴² Finally, it was a centre for trade thanks to its position on three important trade routes to the Hanseatic cities on the river IJssel, the county of Holland, and Brabantine markets.²⁴³

Utrecht was from the beginning of the fourteenth century until 1528 governed by a hybrid government of patricians and guild members.²⁴⁴ The Utrecht daily government was – at least in theory – in the hands of the Council whose twenty-four members were elected yearly by the guild *oudermannen*, the elected representatives of the twenty-one guilds.²⁴⁵ The sheriff, who was the bishop's representative in the town, was barred from taking part in government.²⁴⁶ The Council eventually took control over the sheriff's appointment and decided that he had to be a citizen of the city so that his loyalty would be to the Council before the bishop.²⁴⁷

As touched upon above, the Utrecht Council would, to the grievance of the bishop, usurp over more and more legal rights from bishop and sheriff.²⁴⁸ At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Council had taken over all aspects of criminal law, except the jurisdiction over clerics and the *bloedban* (the right to execute capital punishment) which remained – in theory – in the hands of the bishop.²⁴⁹ The sheriff and aldermen were therefore still needed to execute a death penalty, and they had to ceremonially pronounce the verdict, which they duly did upon request of the Council.²⁵⁰ When a weighty decision had to be made, the Council asked for the involvement and advice of the *oudermannen* and the aldermen.²⁵¹ The participation of these colleges in a legal case can thus signify the importance of the matter. Moreover, if a crime was committed in a previous year, the members of the former Council (*oude raad*), would be involved as well.²⁵²

The majority of the Council members came from the richest stratum of the citizenship.²⁵³ The yearly lists of Council members, aldermen and *oudermannen* strongly suggest that jobs circulated among the privileged and that there was little specialisation.²⁵⁴ Law was only one of the tasks of the Utrecht Council, and in contrast to dedicated legal

²⁴² Struick, 'Recht van Trecht', pp. 28-31.

²⁴³ Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', pp. 171-174.

²⁴⁴ Ibidem, pp. 114-117.

²⁴⁵ Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', pp. 115-116.

²⁴⁶ Muller, *Recht en rechtspraak*, pp. 42ff.

²⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 43.

²⁴⁸ Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', p. 119.

²⁴⁹ Ibidem, p. 119.

²⁵⁰ Muller, *Recht en rechtspraak*, pp. 228-232.

²⁵¹ Ibidem, p. 160.

²⁵² Ibidem, p. 162.

²⁵³ D.A. Berents, 'Gegoede burgerij in Utrecht in de 15e eeuw', *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht* (1972), pp. 78-92.

²⁵⁴ See for the formation of a 'Council elite' (*raadselite*): J. Smithuis, 'Gildevertegenwoordiging of oligarchie? De samenstelling van het Utrechste stadsbestuur (1304- ca. 1450)', *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht* (2014), pp. 210-236. Yearly lists of names of members of the magistrate were written down in the *RDB* from 1402 onwards, see J. van de Water (ed.), *Groot placaatboek vervattende alle de placaten, ordonantiën en edicten der edele mogende heren 's lands van Utrecht; mitsgaders van de groot achtbare heeren borgemeesteren der stad Utrecht* 3 (Utrecht, 1729), pp. 110-182.

institutions, the members of the Council usually had no formal legal education.²⁵⁵ They had no real need for it since most of the legal cases would be treated through customary law. When the need for specific legal knowledge did arise, the Council could ask external jurists for advice.²⁵⁶ For cases dealing with magic in the period up to 1500, there are no signs that a specialised jurist was asked for advice. However, the involvement of an expert in the background would not necessarily have to end up in the source material studied here.

The Council had a special committee for criminal cases: the *vive*, which was formed out of five and later six members. These civil servants were usually appointed from among the Council, aldermen and *oudermannen* and were responsible for the investigation of a criminal case and were to advise the Council on reaching a verdict.²⁵⁷ The Council treated both accusatory and inquisitorial cases, and the *vive* would investigate both cases initiated by an accuser and those by the Council.²⁵⁸ The members of the *vive* also worked closely together with the executioner when a suspect was to be tortured, a method of coercion necessary when there were no witnesses to a crime.²⁵⁹ This method of coercion would come to play an important role in the prosecution of sorcery when it escalated to a category three crime. The use of, for example, magical incantations for healing or divination could be proven by witnesses as this type of magic had a 'service component', but adherence to a secretive diabolic cult was harder to prove and therefore required a confession.²⁶⁰

3.2. Sorcery in Utrecht (1322-1493)

3.2.1. Five early trials

Aliid, wife of Ghisebrecht Scerpinx formally pledged (*willekeurde*) in 1322 that she would leave the city and the Sticht for a hundred years. The reason for her banishment was, according to the entry in *Th.1*, that Aliid practised magic through *wighelarij*, *toverie*, *waersegghe*, and *withingen*. Of interest here, and this happens regularly, is that the practice of sorcery appears to be divided into separate categories. In Aliid's case into three or four: divination, sorcery and fortune-telling (the words *waersegghe* and *withingen* seem to be synonyms for this latter category). The category 'sorcery' is vague and can refer to virtually everything ranging from healing magic to malicious sorcery.

This categorising does not only happen in the records for sorcery. Dick Berents, in his study of crime and law in late medieval Utrecht, has suggested that if synonyms were used in a trial record that this does not have to mean that these were seen as different crimes,

²⁵⁵ Camphuijsen, *Scripting justice*, p. 153.

²⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 153.

²⁵⁷ Muller, *Recht en rechtspraak*, pp. 212-220; Berents, *Misdaad*, pp. 20-21.

²⁵⁸ Camphuijsen, *Scripting justice*, pp. 21-22.

²⁵⁹ See for the use of torture in the Low Countries: G.M. de Meyer and E.W.F. van den Elzen, 'Tortura incognita. Het pijnlijk verhoor in de zuidelijke en noordelijke Nederlanden tijdens de Middeleeuwen', *Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis* 54 (1986), pp. 307-321; for Utrecht specifically see pp. 311-314.

²⁶⁰ B.P. Levack, 'Witchcraft and the law', in *idem* (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft*, pp. 474-477; see on the 'service component' Kieckhefer, 'Magic and its hazards', pp. 19-21.

but that the synonyms were used as a way to emphasise the severity of the crime.²⁶¹ What is also likely is that the Council, by using synonyms, tried to cover a large range of undesired behaviour.²⁶² Thus, the word '*toverie*' (sorcery) may very well refer to the same shady activities such as divination and fortune-telling.

The next case in the Council register dates from 1375. Katerine van Rossem *willekeurde* that she would from that time onward never again occupy herself with *waerzaghens* or *wighelings*, on the condition that if she did, she would be banished forever from the city on pain of death.²⁶³ Once again, the suspect was accused of divination and fortune-telling. However, Katerine was permitted to remain in the city after taking the oath. Katerine's case also illustrates that the *Th.1/2* register does contain not only verdicts of banishments that took place, but also those that might take place in the future. Its inclusion of Katerine's *willekeur* does conform to the primary purpose of the register as a written memory to use in possible future trials. The condition 'on pain of death' (*up hoir live*) added to a banishment is one that appears quite often, and should not be interpreted as a death sentence but as a deterrent. It means that in case a person would violate the verdict of banishment and returned, the Council could proceed to exact a death penalty.²⁶⁴

Two years later, Aleyd, the daughter of Peter Camscerper, was banished from the city for a hundred years for stealing (*dieften*) and sorcery (*toveryen*).²⁶⁵ Once again, it is unclear what kind of sorcery Aleyd supposedly practised, and we might wonder whether the main reason to banish Aleyd from the city was theft. Although the punishment for stealing is listed in the Utrecht's normative *keurboeken* as death by hanging, actual verdicts were much milder.²⁶⁶ In the period that Aleyd was banished, theft was usually punished by banishment for a hundred years (although milder punishments would of course not be written in the *Th.1/Th.2* registers), which is the punishment that Aleyd received.²⁶⁷

The next case from 1417 is the first one written in the *RDB*. Ysoye, who was a midwife, was banished for fifty years.²⁶⁸ Once again, this trial was not only about sorcery. First, the document lists the ever elusive '*toverie*' which is complemented with the moral adjective 'unreasonable' (*onredelik*). Second, Ysoye supposedly performed, next to her sorcery, other 'improper things' (*onstantelike dingen*). Although the language is again vague, it is possible to draw a couple of conclusions. The word *clock* precedes this particular entry in the *RDB*, which means that the verdict was (probably) publicly announced at the *buurspraak*.²⁶⁹ The addition of morally laden adjectives can signify a specific strategy of the Council. As Frans Camphuijsen has recently pointed out, these adjectives are antonyms, as is evidenced by the prefix '-on', and stress that the said activities deviate from desired

²⁶¹ Berents, *Misdaad*, p. 128.

²⁶² Camphuijsen, *Scripting justice*, p. 133.

²⁶³ Appendix II, 2.

²⁶⁴ Berents, *Misdaad*, pp. 49, 63.

²⁶⁵ Appendix II, 3.

²⁶⁶ Berents, *Misdaad*, pp. 82-83.

²⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 82-83.

²⁶⁸ Appendix II, 4.

²⁶⁹ See above, nr. 92.

behaviour.²⁷⁰ Thus, by way of this public announcement, the Council stressed that sorcery was unreasonable and that the other things she practised, may it be directly related to her sorcery or not, were improper deviations of the Council's expectation of orderly behaviour in the city.²⁷¹

The next case that was treated by the Council is that of Fye Everts in 1427.²⁷² Peculiar about this case is that it is omitted in both the *RDB* and *BSB*. We only know about her through the accounts of one of Utrecht's treasurers (*kameraar*). Interesting about this type of source is that it is in contrast to the prescriptive nature of the *RDB* and *BSB*, which contain entries written *before* an actual act was carried out.²⁷³ The *kameraar* account is descriptive because it lists expenditures of the town government for services to facilitate their judgement. According to the language used in the source, Fye was, like her predecessors described above, punished for fortune-telling and divination: she is referred to as a *waersechster* who had *gewichelt*. Due to the nature of the source, we can only know about a practical part of her punishment, which was very public and defaming: Fye had to carry a heavy stone through the city in a procession-like manner.²⁷⁴

3.2.2. One or two *keuren* against sorcery

Assessing trials is one way to interpret a government's stance towards sorcery, however, as the trials above already show, every case had its peculiarities. Another type of source that may shed light on the Utrecht government's treatment of sorcery are *keuren*, which are the city's normative regulations that were announced in public. In contrast to trials, *keuren* do not reflect ad hoc decisions, but expectations.²⁷⁵ The Utrecht government issued only two *keuren* against sorcery in the period studied in this thesis: in 1438 and 1439.²⁷⁶ Of these two, only the *keur* of 1439 is traceable in the *BSB*. What happened to the other one is unknown. Like Steenhuis, I have been unable to find it in the Council registers where Dodt van Flensburg places it.²⁷⁷

I do believe that we have to take the 'lost' *keur* of 1438 into consideration, as I do not see a reason why Dodt van Flensburg would have made its existence up and the language used in the 1438 *keur* is similar to the one in 1439. There is also a good reason why a similar *keur* was issued in two consecutive years: in theory, a *keur* was only valid for one year until they were made permanent in 1456.²⁷⁸ A close reading of these normative texts is necessary to get an idea of what the concerns of the Council were. The lost *keur* of 1438 reads:

²⁷⁰ Camphuijsen, *Scripting justice*, p. 133.

²⁷¹ Berents, *Misdaad*, pp. 127-129.

²⁷² Appendix II, 5.

²⁷³ Camphuijsen, *Scripting justice*, pp. 120ff.

²⁷⁴ See also Berents, *Misdaad*, p. 41.

²⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 29-30.

²⁷⁶ Appendix II, 6, 7.

²⁷⁷ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 99; Dodt van Flensburg, *Archief* 5, pp. 93-94.

²⁷⁸ Berents, *Misdaad*, p. 29.

All sorcery (*toverie*) and the evocation (*besweringhe*) of evil spirits with the purpose to hear, know or see is unlawful (*ongheerloeft*) and forbidden in the holy church. And since this [law] is greatly broken, the Council forbids all to perform sorcery, evocation and questioning (*methinge*) [of spirits] here. If anyone still does what is written above, they shall forfeit entry to the city and a mile around it for five years.²⁷⁹

The 1439 *keur* conveys a similar message:

Since there is a lot of talk (*grote sprake*) here of sorcery (*toverie*) that is wielded and performed by both men and women. Therefore, the Council dictates that nobody performs sorcery and [those] who do this here will forfeit entry to the city for one year, and the Council commits to punish this and make the offender (*bruekige*) understand that it [*toverie*] is against the holy faith.²⁸⁰

As mentioned in section 1.1.3, these regulations coincided with years of extreme famine and pestilence.²⁸¹ The *BSB* and *RDB* do curiously enough not address the pestilence in these years, but judging from later sources, the presence of death must have been everywhere.²⁸² In this context of famine and sickness, it is not surprising that Utrechters tried everything, including magical means, to find relief.

The pious language in the *keuren* strengthens Steenhuis' argument that they were issued because the Council feared more punishment by God.²⁸³ However, it is possible to get some more information from these sources. In the first place, they give us an idea what the practices were (or at least what the Council thought what the practices were) of those who were tried for divination and fortune-telling; namely illicit contact with evil spirits. The 1438 *keur* does not explicitly refer to demons, but it is not unthinkable that the Council believed that the magic worked through the agency of demons. Although these *keuren* are contemporary with the developments in the Alps, we can assume that this needs to be read as demonic agency in an Augustinian/Thomistic fashion.

It is not strictly a category one crime that the Council is targeting here, although notions seem to conflate. Steenhuis appears to have read the Mnl. "*grote sprake*" in the 1439 *keur* as it used in modern Dutch, which translates as 'it occurs', or 'it transpires', or otherwise chose not to address the following. I suggest reading "*grote sprake*" more literally, as 'there is a lot of talk'. This may point to the actual concern that the Council had for publishing these *keuren*: there were rumours and public talk about magic and people performing it. As sorcery was against the Christian faith, and since the observance of correct Christianity was seen as the basis of order and stability in society, the Council may have perceived a threat to the stability of the city community. Adding to this, I would suggest that

²⁷⁹ Appendix II, 6.

²⁸⁰ Appendix II, 7.

²⁸¹ See above, nr. 57; During this period, the Council repeatedly announced that none was allowed to sell or store grain, see *BSB*, nr. 16-9.

²⁸² See for pestilence in Utrecht and its impact on city society: R. Rommes, 'Op het spoor van de dood. De pest in en rond Utrecht', *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht* (1991), pp. 93-120; see also Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', pp. 148-149.

²⁸³ See above, nr. 62.

the 1438 ban on sorcery “in the holy church” (*inder heiligen kerke*) does not refer to an actual physical building, but that it is used to refer to Christendom as a whole, and therefore the fabric of society. Accordingly, I believe that the Council’s reasons for issuing these *keuren* were much more practical than just pointing out that magic was heretical, it was an attempt to preserve stability in the city community. This is also attested by the relatively short sentences, which is a temporary solution for a short-term problem.

3.2.3. Lijsbeth Sproncs and Dirc Corsgenssone

One of the first cases for magic treated by the Council after the promulgation of the two *keuren* is that of Lijsbeth Sproncs in 1445.²⁸⁴ Lijsbeth’s case is described in a brief entry in the *RDB*. Her magic supposedly involved the use of a spindle to find out thieves. Berents suggests, based on descriptions of similar practices, that the spindle would start to spin when the name of the thief was uttered.²⁸⁵ Lijsbeth thus provided a service for people who wanted to find out who stole their belongings. This practice is obviously very dangerous and very vulnerable to scandal. Lijsbeth must have pointed at the wrong, or a too powerful person so that her divination backfired.²⁸⁶ Lijsbeth was identified as a spiritual quack and therefore banished from the city for five years. Two things about this case are particularly interesting: first, the length of her exile is the same as prescribed in the 1438 *keur*; second, the verdict was issued by the full college of Council, aldermen and *oudermannen*, which points at the weight of the case.²⁸⁷ In this regard, it is regrettable that we do not have more information about the trial and whom she may have accused of thievery.

The next person tried for sorcery by the Council was the baker Dirc Corsgenssone in 1451.²⁸⁸ This case is again very summary, and there is no specification of “his sorcery which he occupies himself with”.²⁸⁹ The verdict, which was reached with the involvement of the aldermen and *oudermannen*, is much harsher than that of Lijsbeth just six years before. The *RDB* prescribes that Dirc, after a public punishment on the pillory, was to be banished for life from both the town and the Sticht on pain of death.²⁹⁰ Once again, it is unfortunate that we do not have more information on Dirc, for it is only possible to speculate on why Dirc’s sentence was relatively harsh. Was Dirc’s alleged magic so harmful, or was Dirc more than a spiritual nuisance? There was a political struggle between opposing factions within Utrecht in the 1450s, and the fact that he was banned from the entire Sticht suggests that the current Council wanted him to be far away.²⁹¹

²⁸⁴ Appendix II, 9.

²⁸⁵ Berents, *Misdaad*, p. 120.

²⁸⁶ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 80.

²⁸⁷ Appendix II, 9.

²⁸⁸ Appendix II, 10.

²⁸⁹ *Ibidem*; “*zijnre toverien wille die dair hij mede omme te gaen pleecht*”

²⁹⁰ Appendix II, 10.

²⁹¹ Hoven van Genderen, ‘Toppunt’, pp. 177-179.

It appears that Dirc returned somewhere between 1451 and 1455.²⁹² In June 1455, the Council banished a man named Dirc Backer for telling lies and sorcery.²⁹³ It is possible that this is a different Dirc, as this was a common name, but that two Dirc's who were both bakers were sentenced for a magical crime shortly after each other seems unlikely to me. If Dirc's exile was political, it is possible that his ban was lifted when the political climate changed.²⁹⁴ There is also a possibility, although not as likely, that Dirc's banishment was never carried out.²⁹⁵ As mentioned, the *RDB* in which Dirc's 1451 sentence is written, prescribes actions before they are carried out.²⁹⁶

The 1455 record of Dirc's trial in the *BSB* is, unfortunately, also very concise about his alleged crime: "Dirc helps himself by way of lies and sorcery".²⁹⁷ Again we can wonder whether his so-called 'lies' were more important than his sorcery. The accusation of sorcery could have been used as a ploy to discredit him and to make it easier to label whatever he had uttered as lies. Without additional sources, it is impossible to judge whether his trial was indeed a political case. Dirc was sentenced to be whipped in public on the *Plaets*, a square in front of the aldermen's residence. After his public and defaming punishment, Dirc was (again) banned for life.²⁹⁸

3.2.4. *Harmenken van Vianen and poison*

A death sentence for a (possibly) magical crime was exacted once in fifteenth-century Utrecht. On May 8, 1462, a woman named Harmenken van Vianen was, after an imprisonment of over five weeks, burned on a Utrecht square.²⁹⁹ Steenhuis points at this "incident" as the first burning for sorcery in Utrecht.³⁰⁰ However, the source material does not explicitly state that magic was involved. According to the Council records, Harmenken had poisoned (*vergeven*) a man named Jacob Elgher in "a way that cannot be named" (*mit manieren die niet zeglijc en zijn*) so that he became mad (*dull*). After being tortured by the executioner, Harmenken admitted not only that she was guilty, but that she would have poisoned more people if she had gotten the chance.³⁰¹

There was a similar case in the Flemish town of Bruges in 1468.³⁰² A certain Margriete Achtels was burned there because she had allegedly murdered several people by poisoning wells, fountains, and holy water.³⁰³ According to the Bruges trial records, she had

²⁹² Berents suggests that this may be the same person; Berents, *Misdaad*, p. 168; Steenhuis, in her thesis, has accepted this for a fact: Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 62.

²⁹³ Appendix II, 11.

²⁹⁴ Berents, *Misdaad*, pp. 34-35.

²⁹⁵ Repealed sentences were usually strikethrough in the registers.

²⁹⁶ See above, nr. 273.

²⁹⁷ Appendix II, 11; "*Want Dirc Backer hem zelve te behelpen pleecht mit logentaele ende toverien*".

²⁹⁸ Appendix II, 11.

²⁹⁹ Appendix II, 12.

³⁰⁰ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, pp. 82-83.

³⁰¹ Appendix II, 12.

³⁰² Monballyu, 'Schadelijke toverij', pp. 265-267.

³⁰³ *Ibidem*, p. 266.

done this with “substances that are inhumane and unnatural and that are better kept secret than named”.³⁰⁴ When compared, the crimes in Bruges and Utrecht, their modes of operation, and the language used in the sources to describe the mechanics are well-nigh equal. It is very plausible, as Monballyu suggests for Bruges, and De Waardt for Utrecht, that this language, and the choice for burning as the method of execution, attest that the magistrates thought that magic was involved.³⁰⁵ As seen above in the cases at the French court, magic and poisoning were often seen as connected crimes.³⁰⁶

There is no diabolical discourse in the sources on Harmenken. Of course, notions of diabolic sorcery may have been circulating behind the text, and it is tempting to speculate about a connection between Harmenken’s trial and the *Vauderie* in Arras just shortly before. However, the fact that the Utrecht Council chose to burn Harmenken does not necessarily have to point to the involvement of diabolical ideas. The Council (and because of the weight of the offence also the aldermen and *oudermannen*) may have chosen to punish this case of magical poisoning in the highest known manner because of the obvious practical damage it caused. As Monballyu suggests, the sorcery was probably only regarded as a means to commit the crime, and that the poisoning was the real crime that needed to be punished.³⁰⁷

In finding an appropriate punishment, the city Council could have referred to prescriptions from Roman law, where sorcery and magic had been a crime punishable by burning since the *Codex Justinianus* at the latest.³⁰⁸ This prescription on sorcery from Roman law was circulating through the Low Countries in law codices written in the Dutch vernacular such as the Dutch translation of Jehan Bouttelier’s *Somme rurale* (printed in Delft, 1483) and Willem van Tanerijen’s *Boec van der Loopender Practijken der Raitcameren van Brabant* (Brabant, c. 1474-1476). Thus, death by burning as the Roman punishment for magicians must have been common knowledge among jurists in the Low Countries.³⁰⁹

Although it is plausible that voices in Utrecht believed that magical means were involved, another case of poisoning in 1522 in Utrecht suggests that notions of poisoning and magic do not necessarily have to be explicitly related for the suspect to be burned. In March of that year, a woman named Geertruyt Cuypers was burned after an investigation by the *vive* and the executioner.³¹⁰ The entry in the *RDB* suggests that the Council had a very practical reason to rid the city of Geertruyt: “Aldermen, Council and *oudermannen* decide that Geertken Kuypers will be handed over to the sheriff, found guilty as a murderess that

³⁰⁴ Ibidem, p. 266; “*diversche ghevenijnde watren ghemaect ende gheholpen te maken van zulker substancien die onmenschelic ende onnatuerlic zijn, die beter verzweghen zijn dan ghenoomdt*”.

³⁰⁵ Monballyu, ‘Schadelijke toverij’, pp. 266-267; De Waardt, ‘Witchcraft and wealth’, p. 235.

³⁰⁶ See above, nrs. 134, 236; see on the relationship of poison and magic: F. Collard, *Le crime de poison au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2003); F. Collard, ‘*Veneficiis vel maleficiis*. Réflexion sur les relations entre le crime poison et la sorcellerie dans l’Occident médiévale’, *Le Moyen Age* 109:1 (2003), pp. 9-57; C. Ammann-Doubliez, ‘Histoire d’empoisonnement en Valais au Moyen Âge: sorcellerie et justice’, *Vallesia* 58 (2003), pp. 231-281.

³⁰⁷ Monballyu, ‘Schadelijke toverij’, pp. 265-269.

³⁰⁸ H. Beliën, ‘Rechtsgeleerde opvattingen over het misdrijf toverij’, in Gijwsijt-Hofstra and Frijhoff (eds), *Nederland Betoverd*, pp. 212-213.

³⁰⁹ Beliën, ‘Rechtsgeleerde opvattingen’, pp. 213-214.

³¹⁰ Dodt van Flensburg, *Archief* 3, p. 210.

poisoned and killed three persons with *rottecruyt* (arsenic) and [poisoned] another four persons who have not died”.³¹¹ The Council explicitly sentenced her to death as a murderess (*moerdenaerster*) and not as a sorceress. The Council may have chosen to burn her to set an example,³¹² as the problem of arsenic as a tool for murder was a persistent one.³¹³

3.2.5. *Rycout van Velde and the accusation for sorcery in personal and political conflicts*

What an accusation for sorcery could do in a personal or political conflict can be illustrated by taking the baker Rycout van Velde and his opponents as an example. Rycout was, judging by his frequent involvement in legal cases before the Council, a rather interesting individual. In 1444, he accused a midwife, Loefkyn, of ‘*tovernyen*’.³¹⁴ Rycout was apparently unable to prove his accusation, as he was the one that the Council punished. He had to admit that he was wrong publicly and plead to both Loefkyn and the Council for forgiveness. Furthermore, he had to pay a total of 16,000 staves for the city wall as reparation, the equivalent of 16 *stuvers*.³¹⁵

This fine came at an unfortunate moment for Rycout. While his procedure against Loefkyn was running, he was publicly admonished to pay outstanding debts to the city Council.³¹⁶ It might be that his accusation towards Loefkyn had something, either directly or circumstantially, to do with these debts, but due to lack of sources, we can only guess. Other information in the *BSB* suggests that Rycout was not the most fortunate of men. A year before the case, in 1443, he had repeatedly been called upon to pay outstanding fines for not paying taxes.³¹⁷ His notoriety as a defaulter cannot have helped his case against Loefkyn.

The family Van Velde did, apparently undeterred by Rycout’s punishment, not rest its case. A relative of Rycout, Jacob van Velde (who was also a debtor in 1443), decided to take matters into his own hands within two weeks after Rycout was sentenced.³¹⁸ Loefkyn and her husband started a case against Jacob because he “had sought Loefkyn out and unreasonably offended her”.³¹⁹ The Aldermen, Council and *oudermannen* decided that

³¹¹ RDB, nr. 13-19, fol. 90r-90v; “*Sleten scepenen raide ende oudermannen dat men Geertken Kuypers overleveren zel den scout gefroent als een moerdenaerster die drie personen vergeven heeft mit rottecruyt dair zij een gestorven zijn ende noch vier ander die nyet gestorven zijn*”.

³¹² Suggested by A.J. van den Hoven van Genderen in a spoken conversation.

³¹³ The Council issued a *keur* to control the selling and purchasing of arsenic in 1523 after another series of murders; RDB, nr. 13-19, fol. 132v; cf. *ibidem*, fol. 133r.

³¹⁴ Appendix II, 8; Loefkyn is the second and last midwife to be accused of sorcery in Utrecht. In historiography, midwifery was thought to be a profession that easily attracted accusations for sorcery. Steenhuis suggests that the absence of more accusations against midwives may be because of the tight supervision on midwives by city surgeons as of 1474, see Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 51; Monica Green’s quantitative analysis of sorcery accusations against midwives suggests that this stereotype is greatly exaggerated, see M. Green, ‘Women’s medical practice and health care in medieval Europe’, *Signs. Journal of women in culture and society* 14 (1989), esp. pp. 450-452.

³¹⁵ Berents, *Misdaad*, pp. 52-54.

³¹⁶ *BSB*, nr. 16-10, 140r.

³¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 114v, 121v, 123r.

³¹⁸ Appendix II, 8.

³¹⁹ *Ibidem*; “[...] *Jacob Loefkyn gesocht ende misdaen soude hebben onredelick*”

Jacob had to walk bareheaded in a procession to the ‘house’³²⁰, ask for forgiveness, and to *willekeur* that he would never again assail Loefkyn with either words or deeds.³²¹

Rycout, plagued by debts and fines, was not able to settle in a stable life. He partook in a failed coup against the Council in 1447.³²² While others were directly banned after this uprising, Rycout was allowed to stay if he took a formal oath (*oorvede*).³²³ Rycout, however, was probably long gone, as he was banished for life because he failed to take the oath.³²⁴ This last banishment is strikethrough in the *BSB*, which suggests that it had been repealed.³²⁵ Indeed, Rycout was back in the city in 1449 at the latest, as he tried to blame his misfortunes on someone else: he accused the wife of the baker Ghijsbert Scaeyen of spoiling his bread.³²⁶

Rycout must have been a very unfortunate baker, seeing that he started another procedure in 1472. He accused Lijsbeth, wife of Arnt Borren, of spoiling his bread.³²⁷ In some way that is not specified in the register, Rycout proved his accusation to be true, and the *vive* started an investigation as to how exactly Lijsbeth spoilt his bread. The *vive* initially questioned her without using torture, but a couple of weeks later, probably because no sufficient progress had been made, Lijsbeth was tortured by the executioner up to seven times.³²⁸ Somewhere during this investigation (it is unclear whether this was part of Rycout’s original accusation), suspicion arose that magic was involved.³²⁹ Under coercion, Lijsbeth confessed that she had said that “as long as she, one of her children, or one of her lineage lived on the Steenwech³³⁰, no baker residing in the area would be successful in their baking”.³³¹

Contemporary demonologic thought on magic entered the torture sessions. The city executioner was paid to shave Lijsbeth “above and below” (*boven ende beneden gescoren*). Someone must have believed in the circulating notions of the physical devil’s pact, as this procedure of shaving was performed to look for the presence of a devil’s mark.³³² The

³²⁰ Either the *Schoonhuis* (Council residence) opposite the Buurkerk, or the Hasenberg house (Aldermen residence) on the Plaets.

³²¹ Appendix II, 8; see for this public ritual of atonement; Camphuijsen, *Scripting justice*, pp. 80-87.

³²² RDB, nr. 13-16, fol. 63r.

³²³ *Ibidem*, fol. 63r; see for the *oorvede* procedure; A. Blauert, ‘Zwischen Einbindung und Ausgrenzung. Zur Rechts- und Sozialgeschichte der Urfehde im deutschen Südwesten zwischen dem 14. und dem 18. Jahrhundert’, in M. Bellabarba, G. Schwerhoff, and A. Zorzi (eds), *Criminalità e giustizia in Germania e in Italia. Pratiche giudiziarie e linguaggi giuridici tra tardo medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna, 2001), pp. 173-187.

³²⁴ BSB, nr. 16-11, fol. 53v.

³²⁵ *Ibidem*, fol. 53v.

³²⁶ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, pp. 58, 72; he does not appear to have accused her of doing this through magical means.

³²⁷ Appendix II, 13.

³²⁸ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 83.

³²⁹ Appendix II, 13.

³³⁰ An important street in the centre of Utrecht.

³³¹ *Ibidem*; “Want Lijsbeth, Arnt Borren wijf, gezeyt heft zoe lange zij of hoerre kinder of ymand van hoer telgen woenaftich waeren aen den Steenwech zoe en soude gheen backer daeromtrent woenaftich degghen hebben uut zijnen backen”.

³³² Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 83; this procedure appears to have been widespread, an executioner who claimed he had burned multiple witches named the “shaving of all hair” (*alle haren abscheren*) as part of his interrogation technique, *Quellen*, p. 593.

investigation for demonic witchcraft was, however, aborted. Possibly because, as Steenhuis suggests, the executioner was too inexperienced in exacting the confession for the category three crime.³³³

Steenhuis calls the involvement of demonic discourse in this trial an “incident”, as it would take over forty years before discourse of demonic witchcraft would show up in the Council records again.³³⁴ As a possible source for this involvement of demonic discourse, Steenhuis points at the person of David of Burgundy, the bishop of Utrecht.³³⁵ David, by far the most powerful bishop in late medieval Utrecht, exerted great pressure on the Council in the 1470s and was even able to wrest control of criminal law away from it in the period 1474-1477.³³⁶ As seen above, Burgundy and its rulers were no strangers to the danger of magic, and David’s half-brother, Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, was believed to be the target of maleficent magic not long before.³³⁷ This connection, however, cannot be proven with the presently known source material, and anyone involved in the investigation (perhaps the executioner himself) could have had the bright idea to look for a devil’s mark.

Lijsbeth was not sentenced for magic but for the threat she had supposedly uttered. The verdict was that she was to come before the Council and ask for forgiveness.³³⁸ Furthermore, she, her husband, and her children had to swear an oath to the Council that they would never try to harm “the chief Council members, the *vive*, nor Rycout van Velde, nor his children, family, friends, or anyone else by themselves or through someone else, neither in secret nor in public”.³³⁹ She was released, but instead of coming to the Buurkerk to take the oath, she fled the city with her children after which she was in absence banished for life.³⁴⁰

Lijsbeth and her families’ favours changed in the next year. The new Council appointed a commission to re-investigate the case and allowed Lijsbeth and her children to return to the city. Interestingly enough, it was now Rycout who had to swear not to harm the chief Council members, the members of the *vive*, nor Lijsbeth and her children, friends or family in words or actions in any way.³⁴¹ The tables had turned 180 degrees. Steenhuis suggests that her husband, Arnt Borren, who was three times over *ouderman* of the tailors (*sniders*), may have had a hand in this.³⁴²

This change of fortunes happened on a background of political tensions, and it is not unlikely that Rycout’s accusation and Lijsbeth’s trial was part of a factional- or personal struggle. Rycout was *ouderman* for the bakers guild in the initial year of the conflict, while

³³³ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 83.

³³⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 83-84.

³³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 91.

³³⁶ Hoven van Genderen, ‘Toppunt’, p. 179; Muller, *Recht en rechtspraak*, pp. 113-121.

³³⁷ See above, section 2.3; Mercier, *La Vauderie*, pp. 365ff.

³³⁸ Appendix II, 13.

³³⁹ *Ibidem*; “[...] *den oversten raiden ofte viven noch Rycout van Velde noch zijnen kinderen ofte maghen noch niemand anders niet te misdoen noch doen misdoen bij hem zelve of ymant anders van hoererwegen heymlich noch openbaer*”.

³⁴⁰ Appendix II, 13.

³⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

³⁴² Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 83.

Arnt Borren was *ouderman* of the tailors guild.³⁴³ Moreover, while Rycout's case against Lijsbeth was running, he was also in a conflict with the baker Willem Boechout.³⁴⁴ This connection gets even more curious, for the *RDB* entry that mentions that Lijsbeth was allowed to return and that Rycout was to take an oath does not only list Lijsbeth:

The Council old and new have out of grace desired and consented that Lijsbeth, Aernt Borren's wife, Willem, son of Ghijsbert Scaeyen, called Boechout, Jan, son of Ghijsbert Scaeyen, the saddler may again enter our city on the [conditions of the] *oorvede* that was imposed on them in the year of 73 on the Wednesday of St Pontius' eve.³⁴⁵

Besides Lijsbeth, two sons of Ghijsbert Scaeyen, Willem Boechout and Jan Scaeyen, were allowed back in the town. It was their mother who Rycout accused of spoiling his bread in 1449! So besides the possibility that this episode was part of a political conflict, it also looks like this is an escalated multi-generational family feud. The fact that the Council members, *vive*, and all friends, and family were included in the oaths of 1473 and 1474 suggests that the actual conflict was much broader than just an accusation for maleficent magic directed at Lijsbeth.

3.2.6. A number of trials in the last quarter of the fifteenth century

After a brief flirt with notions of diabolic witchcraft, the Council treated the last cases related to magic in the period up to 1500 in a traditional fashion. A woman named Met in den Os was tried in January 1474 because she had "helped herself in a semblance of sorcery" and had accused another woman of thievery, which she was unable to prove.³⁴⁶ It appears that Met, like Lijsbeth Sproncs in 1445, had resorted to divination to find a thief. The verdict was that Met had to ask the Council for forgiveness, to *willekeur* that she would never use sorcery again, and to pay a fine.

Utrecht would punish more people for similar practices of divination in 1487. Five men and women were arrested because they used a trick with earthen balls to find out thieves.³⁴⁷ Although the register frames the crime in religious discourse by stating that their practice is "ungodly" (*ongodelik*), the reason to prosecute seems for the most part practical. They were apprehended because they "defamed good people" (*goede luden befaemt*) by accusing them of thievery. As punishment, they were each sentenced to pay ten Rhenish guilders in reparation, and they were all to be publicly defamed by asking the Council forgiveness after walking in procession from the Buurkerk barefoot and bareheaded.

³⁴³ *RDB*, nr. 13-10, fol. 78r.

³⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, fol. 98v-99r.

³⁴⁵ Appendix II, 13; "*Die raide out ende nywe hebben uut gratien bilieft ende geconsentiert Lijsbeth, Aernt Borren wijff, Willem, Ghijsbert Scaeyens, genoempt Boechout, Jan, Ghijsbert Scaeyens, die zadelmaker, dat zij weder binnen onse stat zellen moigen komen op alzulke oervede als hem luden off ghesleten woert in den jaere van lxiij des woensdages op Sunte Poncianus avont*".

³⁴⁶ Appendix II, 14; "[...] *hoer beholpen heft in enen schijn van toeverijen*"

³⁴⁷ Appendix II, 16.

The Council treated the last case of sorcery in the fifteenth century in 1493. All we have is a summary entry, and the case is similar to what we have already seen above. Geryt Willemsone was sentenced because he “helped himself and occupied himself with manners of sorcery”.³⁴⁸ What kind of sorcery Gerrit allegedly practised is again vague, but he was sentenced to a public punishment: he was to stand on the pillory with a *titelbrief* (a written note with his identity and crime) and banished from the city and a mile around it in perpetuity.³⁴⁹

Steenhuis has also included a ‘Meyster Pauwels’ on her list.³⁵⁰ According to the entry from 1477 in the *BSB*, Pauwels had occupied himself with “many kinds of medicines and other things”.³⁵¹ Besides his medical practice, he was accused of selling (*opslaen*) letters that contained “many unsound and improper” (*ondeuchdeliker ende onbehoirliker*) words. For these things, the Council banned him the city and a mile around it in perpetuity. Steenhuis is right that mysterious kinds of medicine were looked at with suspicion, and from time to time as magical, but it is in the case of Pauwels not unambiguous that the Council thought that he professed medicine by magical means.³⁵² The *ondeuchdelike* and *onbehoirlike* words that were in the letters that Pauwels sold may have been interpreted as magical, but again, this cannot be clearly concluded from the sources. Pauwels’ punishment does not seem to be for practising magic, but in the first place for uncertified medical practice and the selling of letters with inappropriate content. In any way, he was treated as a nuisance to the city and the Council.

3.3. Prosecution of magic in local perspective

To place the Utrecht government’s treatment of magic in the fifteenth century into a local perspective, I will now briefly reflect on some trials in neighbouring towns and provinces. This comparison is inevitably incomplete, as a major and labour-intensive survey of all Dutch archives is still to be done. The trials that serve as comparative material are mostly disparate finds done in the process of other research.

Many cases of sorcery in neighbouring areas in the fifteenth century were ended in a way that was not – except in some specific cases – allowed in Utrecht criminal trials: by composition.³⁵³ In return for a certain amount of money, the responsible judge could decide to drop a case.³⁵⁴ In 1408 or 1409, the *ambtman* of the Veluwe (Guelders), who was the legal representative of the duke, received a composition from three women who were “famed for practising sorcery” (*mit toveryen beruchticht worden*).³⁵⁵ Similarly, in 1423, a

³⁴⁸ Appendix II, 17; “[...] *hem behulpen heft ende omgegaen heft mit manieren van toeverijen*”.

³⁴⁹ Appendix II, 17.

³⁵⁰ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 64.

³⁵¹ Appendix II, 15; “*vele meysterien in medicine ende anders onderwonden heeft*”.

³⁵² R. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2014), pp. 1-18.

³⁵³ Berents, *Misdaad*, p. 20.

³⁵⁴ De Waardt and De Blécourt, ‘Berechting van toverij’, pp. 17-18.

³⁵⁵ GA, HA, nr. 1437, fol. 7r.

case against the maid of the local priest – who was allegedly the target of the sorcery – of Putten (Guelders) was dropped after she had paid the judge twenty Rhenish guilders.³⁵⁶

There are also traces of false accusations. A man in Nijmegen was fined ten guilders after he had accused a woman of *'toverien'* but was unable to prove his accusation.³⁵⁷ Similarly, in 1414 in Kessel (Guelders), a woman named Lyke Peters was fined four guilders for not being able to prove her accusation against another woman, whom she had called a *molkentreckse* – a sorceress who allegedly stole milk.³⁵⁸

A type of sorcery that, based on the Council registers, does not appear to have been prosecuted in Utrecht was love magic. Love magic was thought to arouse someone's affections. This kind of magic could be disrupting, as it affected others against their will. There are a couple of examples of trials for love magic in neighbouring areas. In 1446, Bertraet Willemsdochter was tried in Gouda (Holland) for she was "known for that she could give advice on diverse ways to enchant men to love and follow women".³⁵⁹ Although it could not be proven that she indeed used magic, she was still fined because of the social nuisance (*moyenisse*) that she had caused.³⁶⁰ A woman in Reimerswaal (Zeeland) was tried for a similar crime. The town banished her for three years after she had "advised people on how to give [other] people [a special type of] food to make them follow them".³⁶¹

The town of Dordrecht (Holland) punished a fortune-teller in a similar fashion as Utrecht. In October 1456, the aldermen's bench tried Remijs Wesselsoen because he was accused of fortune-telling.³⁶² His sorcery was framed as a religious crime as he "wanted to tell of secret and future things, inspired by the enemy, which causes bad faith".³⁶³ The aldermen seem to have been concerned that his practices would disseminate incorrect belief, which would, in turn, be dangerous for the stability of the community. To set an example, the aldermen sentenced Remijs to a public punishment. First, he was to swear that he would honour God, and then he had to walk in linen clothes in procession, followed by a cross, from the Grote Kerk (the main church).³⁶⁴

The magistrate of the town of Deventer (Oversticht) punished at least three individuals for a crime related to magic in the fifteenth century. The first known case is that of Johan Voetssoen, who was tried for various abuses, scams, and frauds in 1453.³⁶⁵ The magical component was that he made a farmer believe that "he would help find him a

³⁵⁶ GA, HA, nr. 654, fol. 3r.

³⁵⁷ GA, HA, nr. 518, fol. 1v.

³⁵⁸ G. Hasselt, *Geldersch Maandwerk 2* (Arnhem, 1807), p. 479.

³⁵⁹ NA, GR, nr. 1705, fol. 4r; "*Bertraet Willamsdochter was beruft dat sij raet konde geven van alrehande zaken omme die mans te betoveren dat sij die vrouwen lief hebben ende nae volgen souden*".

³⁶⁰ NA, GR, nr. 1705, fol. 4r.

³⁶¹ Molhuijsen, 'Bijdrage', p. 196; the original source was lost during the bombing of Middelburg in 1940; "*Omdat sy de luden rait gaf, dat sy de luden t'eten geven soude, dat sy hen na loepen souden*".

³⁶² RAD, SGT, nr. 6, fol. 100r.

³⁶³ Ibidem, fol. 100r; "[...] *ende anders wair heefft willen seggen van heymeliken ende toecomenden dingen bij ingeven des viants dair wangelove uut comen mochte*".

³⁶⁴ RAD, SGT, nr. 6, fol. 100r.

³⁶⁵ The original source, SAD, RA, nr. 48a, was lost at the moment of writing; a transcript can be found in P.C. Molhuijsen, 'Oirphede-boeken', *Overijsselsche Almanak voor Oudheid en Letteren* 11 (Deventer, 1846), pp. 162-163.

hidden treasure”.³⁶⁶ For this, he required from the farmer “a cauldron, a rosary and money to have masses said, to buy incense, and other things that made him wise”.³⁶⁷ Having received the goods and money, he left never to return. Besides scamming the farmer, he admitted to being guilty of “diverse practises of thievery and sorcery”.³⁶⁸ Johan was sentenced to do *oorvede* and his eyes were cut out. Another spiritual quack also lost his eyes in 1483. The Deventer magistrate tried the Antwerpen-born Johan Kuper for he “exorcised ghosts with sorcery”.³⁶⁹ It possible that the Brabantine man, who now lived in Wesel (duchy of Cleves) was a wandering vagabond, making a living with dubious practices.³⁷⁰

A third colourful figure tried by the Deventer magistrate was Peter van Redick, he appears to have been a wandering beggar.³⁷¹ He was not so much tried for practising magic as for causing disorder at two places. He allegedly threatened that he would “enchant the milk” (*die melck betoeveren*) in the house of Jacob Reynerssoen and caused upheaval elsewhere. For being a nuisance, Peter was sentenced to stand on the pillory and ordered to never wear beggar’s clothes in Deventer nor a mile around it.³⁷²

3.4. Synthesis: sorcery as a danger to the community

The above makes clear that the Utrecht Council, like authorities in neighbouring areas and the southern Low Countries (chapter 2), punished magical affairs relatively lightly in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Besides a brief flirt with at least one element of the stereotype of demonic witchcraft in the questionable case against Lijsbeth Borren in 1473, the Council consistently approached magic as a crime disruptive to city society. In its system based on customary law, Utrecht punished accordingly to the severity of the offence and the Council’s decision to burn Harmenken for her poisoning can be seen as reflecting of how severe her crime was thought to be.³⁷³

Burning was not the usual punishment for those who let themselves in with less directly harmful magical practices. City dwellers that caused disruption by fortune-telling, divination or other superstitious doings were usually publicly defamed through rituals with the intention to humble the suspect and affect his or her reputation. Punishment included walks of atonement where the suspect had to ask forgiveness for all to see, carrying a heavy stone through the city, and standing on the pillory to be the subject of scorn and laughter. These public rituals destroyed one’s reputation and believability, tarnished legal rights and

³⁶⁶ Molhuijsen, ‘Oirphede-boeken’, p. 163; “[...] *enen huysman vroet ghemaeket dat hie hem vinden wolde enen verborgen schat*”.

³⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 163; “[...] *enen ketel en I krallen paternoster en voert ander gelt, dair hie omme bestellen solde missen te lessen, wyroeck te kopen en ander dinck des hie hem vroet makede*”.

³⁶⁸ Molhuijsen, ‘Oirphede-boeken’, p. 163.

³⁶⁹ SAD, RA, nr. 48b, fol 10.

³⁷⁰ Ibidem, fol. 10.

³⁷¹ SAD, RA, nr. 48a; original source lost. There is a transcript available: SAD, Transcripties, 3000, nr. 114.

³⁷² Ibidem; “[...] *en sall op ene mile weges noch in Deventer myt ghienen nette gaen*.”

³⁷³ Berents, *Misdaad*, p. 5.

shattered the ability to function in a public office.³⁷⁴ They would forever be known to have participated in superstitious, unreasonable, and unlawful practises.

This public defaming was often not enough, as many suspects were banned from the city, apparently according to the practical disruption they had caused. Banishment was perhaps the heaviest punishment a city could exact after capital punishment.³⁷⁵ The removal from the city community meant severing all ties between the exiled, kin and systems of patronage.³⁷⁶ At least for the duration of the exile, the suspect was socially marginalised, sentenced to find a means of existence elsewhere, without the benefits of citizenship. By banishing a suspect, the city government effectively removed the problem from their midst, only to send it somewhere else.³⁷⁷ Banishment was the punishment that was imposed most frequently by the Council for all crimes, and we can conclude, therefore, that magic was in the basis punished like any other crime that disrupted peace in the city community.³⁷⁸

The Utrecht Council employed Christian discourse to frame magic as an offence against the Christian faith in at least two instances. They did not mean to target people for category one heresy (theological defiance), but for defying the laws of good Christian practice and behaviour. As Jan van Vliet points out in his study on heresy in Early Modern Utrecht, the Council usually framed behaviour contrarily to Christian order as heretical.³⁷⁹ An example he points to is the trial of Feltijn Goltslager in 1524. His behaviour was labelled heretical because he promised a nun to marry her and had otherwise “violated her”.³⁸⁰ This crime, too, was not treated as theological defiance but as a deviation from expected behaviour, and Feltijn was sentenced to stand in the pillory and life-long banishment.³⁸¹

This does not mean that the Council used the label heresy for every crime that was disruptive to orderly society. Like Feltijn’s violation of one of ‘Christ’s brides’, magic was officially forbidden by the Church, and since it was believed that defiance of Christian behaviour of one individual could affect the prospects of salvation of the whole community, these crimes had to be punished.³⁸² So although the Council’s punishment for magic was relatively light and aimed at direct, practical, and mundane effects, it was still an aim to protect Christian order.

This can be further illustrated by how the Council acted against same-sex affection. The Council had suspects for homosexuality burned in the three registered trials from 1441, 1454 and 1525.³⁸³ In the case of 1441, the Council explicitly formulated the crime in terms

³⁷⁴ Kuehn, ‘*Fama* as a legal status’, pp. 27-46; Akehurst, ‘Good name’, pp. 75-94.

³⁷⁵ Camphuijsen, *Scripting justice*, p. 68.

³⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 68.

³⁷⁷ Berents, *Misdaad*, pp. 47-50.

³⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 50.

³⁷⁹ J. van Vliet, *Ketterrij en ketterbestrijding in de stad Utrecht in de zestiende eeuw (ca. 1520-1580)* (Thesis, Utrecht, 1979), pp. 1-5.

³⁸⁰ Van Vliet, *Ketterrij en ketterbestrijding*, p. 4.

³⁸¹ RDB, nr. 13-19, fol 155v.

³⁸² H. van Gelderen, “*Gi sult uuter stat trecken...*” Godsdienstige gevolgen van het Utrechtse schisma (1423-1449) en de houding tot de bevolking’, *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht* (1980), p. 35.

³⁸³ Van Vliet, *Ketterrij en ketterbestrijding*, p. 4.

of heresy: “because Comen Claes has, in other lands, many times committed heresy against God’s law, as he has confessed”.³⁸⁴ The Council record of the 1525 case does not explicitly refer to the subject (Jacob Rutger van Antwerpen) as a heretic, but the scribe annotated the entry with the word ‘heresy’, showing that the homosexuality was still regarded as a heresy.³⁸⁵ As Van Vliet suggests, the city may have proceeded to take action against these ‘heretics’ because they feared the same judgement as befell to Sodom and Gomorra.³⁸⁶

To conclude, in all the cases involving magic before the turn of the century, the Council seems to have been worried about the local implications that sorcery could have. The Council was concerned about practical scandal because diviners and fortune tellers made false promises or pointed to the wrong people as thieves, but it was also concerned about the salvation of the community. What the Council – based on these sources – was not concerned about were the notions of a heretical sect of demon-worshipping witches that were diffusing from the Alps. The involvement of demonic agency in the practices of divination and fortune-telling seems to have been interpreted in a traditional Augustinian and Thomistic paradigm. The shift from a concern of category two heresy to category three heresy would take place in the early sixteenth century, as will be elaborated on in the following chapter.

³⁸⁴ BSB, nr. 16-10, fol. 56r; “Want Comen Claes in anderen landen tot veel tijden tegen die ewe Goets ketterij gedaen heeft so hij dat selvet beleden heeft”.

³⁸⁵ Van Vliet, *Ketterij en ketterbestrijding*, p. 4.

³⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 2-4.

IV. The transitional period: 1514 – 1528 (1530s)

We have seen in the previous two chapters that practising magic was a very ambiguous crime that was generally mildly punished over the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. During this period, the government of Utrecht, like other authorities in the northern Low Countries, kept treating magic as a category two crime in spite of ideas about the existence of a sect of diabolic sorcerers spreading from the Alps. Curiously enough, there are no traces of magical crimes in the Council records between 1493 and 1514, but it is during the period 1514 to 1528 that we can witness in the Utrecht sources a transition between the traditional treatment of magic and the infamous persecution of devil-worshipping witches. The aim of this chapter is to assess this transition, and offer a possible explanation of how it came to be that the Utrecht Council adopted this discourse at this particular time when the notions about the witch stereotype had already been in circulation for nearly a century.

It is first necessary to reflect on the individual trials for sorcery to see what we can find in the documents about this transition in section 4.1. I will also place the introduction of diabolical discourse in perspective by highlighting the verdicts that were not – as far as we can tell from the registers – directly affected by the stereotype. In section 4.2 I will, in order to see the aftermath of the ‘transitional period’, take a peek over the fence to Habsburg-ruled Utrecht in the 1530s when the idea of the devil-worshipping sorcerers became firmly adopted in the magistrate’s practise and discourse. Finally, I will propose a hypothesis on why the transition took place at this particular time in section 4.3.

4.1. Sorcery in Utrecht (1514-1528)

4.1.1. *The introduction of diabolical discourse in Utrecht*

The first investigation for sorcery in the sixteenth century in the Council registers is that of a woman named Wychmoet of Borckloe in 1514.³⁸⁷ Her name suggests that she was from the lordship of Borculo, a lordship subject to the Duke of Guelders. The language in the *RDB* suggests that the Council employed a similar traditional approach that we have seen above. We read that Wychmoet was “famed and arrested for sorcery, but [that] this could hitherto not be proven, therefore aldermen, Council, and *oudermannen* decide that she must leave the city and Nedersticht of Utrecht”.³⁸⁸ However, the accounts of the *kameraar* attest that Wychmoet was questioned not only by the *vive*, but also by a certain doctor Wynant.³⁸⁹ The involvement of this Wynant is the first time that the Council sources attest that the city had outside help in a sorcery case.

The Utrecht sources do not contain references to diabolic discourse, but Wynant, who was a jurist and an advisor to Duke Charles of Guelders, was probably convinced of the

³⁸⁷ Appendix II, 18.

³⁸⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁸⁹ *Ibidem*.

diabolic stereotype in some degree.³⁹⁰ In the same year as Wynant's involvement in Utrecht, the duke of Guelders had sent a letter to the town magistrate of Kampen (Oversticht), who had requested the help of the fortune-teller (*waarzegger*) that was allegedly in the employ of Guelders to find out sorcerers.³⁹¹ The Duke's letter responded that there was no *waarzegger* in the service of Guelders, but suggested a couple of ways to examine sorcerers, or rather, to find devil-worshippers.³⁹² It is possible that Wynant, as a legal advisor to Charles, had a hand in formulating this letter. We can then assume that Wynant tried the same examination techniques on Wychmoet.³⁹³ However, the fact that Wychmoet was released and banished attests that notwithstanding his academic expertise, Wynant was unable to coerce her to confess devil-worship.

The first clear proof that Utrecht started to try sorcery as a category three crime is the case of Luyt Blancks in 1519.³⁹⁴ The examination of the suspected sorceress was now done at a more 'professional' level. Virtually immediately after the Council had arrested Luyt, it sent a messenger to the duke of Cleves to ask for the assistance of his executioner, master Symon.³⁹⁵ By calling in the help of a foreign executioner, the Council chose to bypass the city-employed executioner Heinrick. Judging by Heinrick's later incompetence in 1527 to exact confessions from Lijsbeth, Agniese, and Beatris, the Council may not have thought him to be experienced enough.³⁹⁶ The Council must have heard about the 'successes' of Symon, who had exacted a confession from a sorcerer in Nijmegen in that same year – noteworthy is that doctor Wynant failed to get a confession in this Nijmegen case as well.³⁹⁷

Symon was able to coerce Luyt into confessing. According to the register, she had her own familiar spirit called "Sarrecijn".³⁹⁸ During the torture sessions, Symon and the *vive* got her to confess that she used certain "pots" for her sorcery and that she had profaned the sacrament by keeping the host in her mouth and laying it somewhere on a stone. She was sentenced to death by burning.³⁹⁹ In the entry in the *RDB* she is still referred to as a "*toevenaerster*", this suggests that the traditional label 'sorceress' could now be attached to the diabolic (category three) crime as well.⁴⁰⁰

What happened next is already described in some detail in the introduction above. Soon after Luyt was executed, the Council placed Agniese van de Lage Weide under arrest because she could not prove that she was not a sorceress. The following five-and-a-half year long imprisonment suggests that the Council was not sure on how to proceed with her case.

³⁹⁰ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 120; Wynant's profession as a jurist is attested by a charter in which he is addressed as 'doctor in both laws': GA, OAA, nr. 1312.

³⁹¹ De Waardt and De Blécourt, 'De berechting van toverij', p. 21.

³⁹² See for Guelder's response: W. Nagge, 'Bezwering van eene tooveres te Kampen', in *Overijsselsche Almanak voor Oudheid en Letteren* 1 (Deventer, 1835), pp. 133-135.

³⁹³ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 102.

³⁹⁴ Appendix II, 20.

³⁹⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁹⁶ See below, nr. 405.

³⁹⁷ De Waardt and De Blécourt, 'De berechting van toverij', pp. 21-22.

³⁹⁸ Appendix II, 20.

³⁹⁹ *Ibidem*; Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 84.

⁴⁰⁰ Appendix II, 20.

The records do not contain references to diabolic discourse or evidence that Agniese was tortured, which was necessary to coerce the suspect into admitting satanic witchcraft. We can only speculate on why the Council did not press this case. Perhaps the evidence for Agniese's sorcery was thought to be too circumstantial to proceed to employ torture. Another possibility may be that the Council did not dare to start another case such as Luyt's, which may have aroused protest and disapproval.

The Council finally released Agniese in June 1525. On her release, she had to do written *oorvede*, pledging that she would never occupy herself with magic and that she would turn herself in if she ever wronged again.⁴⁰¹ But just over a year later, Agniese was again arrested by the *vive* who had fetched her and her daughter from their home because the neighbours had complained about her.⁴⁰²

There were probably some who believed that there was a larger magical conspiracy in Utrecht. Within days of the arrest, the *vive* apprehended two other women for sorcery; Beatris, the wife of Ot Dircs, and Lijsbeth, widow of Geryt die Roeyen.⁴⁰³ Agniese's daughter must have been freed shortly after the arrests as there is no further mention of her in the records after an initial examination.⁴⁰⁴ The three other women, however, were kept imprisoned and were tortured over the course of several months by master Heinrick.⁴⁰⁵ As in 1519, Heinrick was not judged to be able to exact a confession of a diabolical plot on his own. In its search for external expertise, the Council first sent for the executioner of the town of Ratingen, in the Duchy of Berg-Gulik.⁴⁰⁶ The Duchies of Berg and Gulik had seen multiple executions for diabolic witchcraft in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, and the executioner may have had some fame as an expert in these matters.⁴⁰⁷ As mentioned above, Ratingen's executioner did not come, and the Council had to make do with a servant from Wesel who claimed to know a thing or two about getting sorcerers to confess.⁴⁰⁸

That Heinrick tried to exact a confession for diabolic witchcraft is attested by the technique that we have already seen above: he had all the women's hair removed for examination.⁴⁰⁹ The *kameraar* accounts further demonstrate that Heinrick used very painful techniques, he bound the women on the rack and ladder while using certain instruments. The city surgeon master Aelbert had to patch the women up multiple times because they had "large holes beneath their buttocks".⁴¹⁰ Despite the pain inflicted by the torture, the three women refused to admit to whatever their torturers wanted them to confess, and again the Council resorted to getting external assistance.

⁴⁰¹ Appendix II, 21.

⁴⁰² Appendix II, 24.

⁴⁰³ Appendix II, 26, 27.

⁴⁰⁴ Appendix II, 25.

⁴⁰⁵ Appendix II, 24, 26, 27.

⁴⁰⁶ Appendix II, 23.

⁴⁰⁷ De Waardt and De Blécourt, 'De berechting van toverij', pp. 17ff.

⁴⁰⁸ See above, nr. 8.

⁴⁰⁹ Appendix II, 24, 26, 27.

⁴¹⁰ Ibidem.

Jan van Balen, the executioner of Den Bosch, had the three women confess within days.⁴¹¹ Not enough research has been done on Den Bosch and its surrounding area to tell whether there have been trials for demonic witchcraft in these lands through which Van Balen may have built up fame as an expert. Another reason why the Council could have asked for the Brabantine executioner is that they already knew him. Van Balen had been in Utrecht to hang a citizen of Den Bosch just months before his examination of the three alleged sorceresses.⁴¹² The intensity and the number of torture sessions to which the three women were subjected strongly suggest that the Council was very serious about exacting those confessions for diabolic witchcraft. Torture was generally seen as an extreme measure, and Utrecht regulations prescribed that no-one should be tortured more than twice.⁴¹³

But what exactly were the three women accused of? The Council registers do not adopt explicit diabolic discourse to describe their alleged crime. The only clues that point to an expectation of stereotypical diabolic witchcraft are the repeated torture sessions combined with the shaving of hair. For the rest, the registers use traditional language of *'toverie'* without further specifying the magical crime. There is one exception to this. The record gives a specification of what kind of magic Lijsbeth supposedly practised: "she has admitted to having made blessings that have mended the lack of bread and other...".⁴¹⁴ Part of why Lijsbeth was burned was because she used magical means to help relieve the want for bread! Steenhuis pointed at the rising prices of wheat as a structural explanation for friction in the community that may have led to the prosecution of sorcery.⁴¹⁵ These same rising prices and food shortage were direct causes for citizens to resort to magic and the burning of at least one sorceress.

What this also means is that seemingly simple magical practice to help solve the daily problems of existence, which would have in the worst instance been treated as a category two case in the previous century, was now dealt with as a category three case. As De Waardt and De Blécourt suggest, the experts that Utrecht invited to the city could have had a substantial impact on the establishment of these notions in the city.⁴¹⁶ However, they cannot have been the original source. Diabolical ideas had already needed to have had a base of acceptance among the city elite to lead them to look for an external expert in the first place.

The spread of notions and ideas is a very complicated affair, and I have tried to find out if a survey of the members of the *vive* may point as to whether certain individuals were regularly involved with trials for diabolic sorcery. However, as can be seen in Appendix I, it is impossible to point at individuals as there were nearly fifty members of the *vive* in the

⁴¹¹ Ibidem.

⁴¹² REK2K, nr. 626-51, fol. 10v.

⁴¹³ Meyer and Van den Elzen, *'Tortura Incognita'*, p. 312.

⁴¹⁴ Appendix II, 27; "[...] zij beleden heft segeninge gedaen te hebben wairdoer die gebreken van broede ende anders gebetert zijn".

⁴¹⁵ See above, nr. 63.

⁴¹⁶ De Blécourt and De Waardt, *'Das vordringen'*, pp. 182-205, esp. pp. 187-191.

period 1513-1527.⁴¹⁷ At least one member of each *vive* had experience with a previous trial for either sorcery or heresy, but this is not enough proof that a single or a group of individuals were especially responsible for prosecuting diabolic witchcraft. The only conclusion that can be drawn here is that the paradigm of demonic witchcraft must have established a sufficient base in the period leading up to the 1510s and 1520s and that the involvement of external experts may have strengthened or sped up this process.

4.1.2. Other cases with no clear diabolic connection

The Utrecht government did not treat all cases connected to magic as a category three crime during these years. A woman named Mergriet van Zwertzen was imprisoned for nearly two months in 1515, a year after the investigation of Wychmoet of Borckloe.⁴¹⁸ Mergriet, suspected of the ever elusive and further unspecified 'sorcery' (*toeveryen*), was held in Vrederick Verwoerde's inn for 52 days at the expense of the Council while the Council sent a messenger to The Hague.⁴¹⁹ It appears that the Council knew that a trader from The Hague had started a procedure against her, and wanted to know whether he still wanted to press that case in Utrecht.⁴²⁰ Possibly not, because the Council set her free. This case appears to have been handled primarily as a category two case, or even as a part of a personal conflict. Mergriet was kept in a relatively comfortable accommodation, and there is no suggestion that the Council proceeded to use torture to coerce her into admitting the category three crime.⁴²¹ Apart from inquiring whether the trader from the Hague wanted to press his case, no help from outside was called in.⁴²²

In 1521, the Council tried a woman named Heylwich because of medical malpractice and magic.⁴²³ This case appears to have been started by two affected clients of hers, Egbert Jacobssoens and his wife Neelken. When a medicine that Heylwich had given Neelken failed to work, she proceeded to try to relieve the ailment by hanging an amulet around Neelken's neck with within a live spider and a sow bug. The Council identified this as a "manner of divination" (*manier van wychelyen*) and Heylwich was sentenced to refund the money that Egbert and Neelken paid for her questionable services and she had to pay a fine of 25 Rhenish guilders to the Council. Heylwich was also barred from publicly practising medicine as she was ordered to "never hang out a urinal" (*voertan geen urynael uuthangen*) in front of the house.⁴²⁴ It is clear that the Council treated Heylwich primarily as a quack, without suspecting anything more from her divination than unwanted and superstitious practice.

⁴¹⁷ The survey is attached to this thesis in Appendix I.

⁴¹⁸ Appendix II, 19.

⁴¹⁹ Ibidem.

⁴²⁰ Ibidem; Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 84.

⁴²¹ Appendix II, 19.

⁴²² Ibidem; Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 84.

⁴²³ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 80; Appendix II, 22.

⁴²⁴ Appendix II, 22.

More ambiguous is the case of the fortune-teller Goeyert Janss who was held and examined by the *vive* during the same period as Agnese, Beatris, and Lijsbeth.⁴²⁵ Steenhuis suggests that Goeyert may have had a role in the examination of the three women since fortune-tellers were sometimes used to search for diabolic sorcerers.⁴²⁶ This practice is also attested by Kampen's request to Charles of Guelders to borrow his *waarzegger*.⁴²⁷ Goeyert's situation during the investigation was a lot better than that of the three women. He was questioned by the *vive* in an inn, and all his expenses were paid for by the Council.⁴²⁸

It appears that his magical practice was used against him when Goeyert lost his use to the Council. He was arrested a couple of days after the three women were executed and placed in one of the city prisons where the Council held him for nineteen weeks and had him tortured three times.⁴²⁹ Even though Goeyert was tortured by a visiting executioner from Zutphen (Guelders), he did not confess to a diabolic crime, and he was banished from the city and seven miles around it for the rest of his life.⁴³⁰ The sources do not make clear why he was arrested and why he was tortured. It might be, as Steenhuis suggests, that he too was suspected of the same crimes as Agnese, Beatris, and Lijsbeth.⁴³¹ It is possible that the women – coerced by the expectations of the interrogators – confessed that there were more members of their group in Utrecht.⁴³² On the day of the execution, the Council called for the arrest of a certain Alyt because she was “famed for sorcery” (*berufticht wesende van toeverien*). The woman, however, had already fled the city and the Council asked the Utrechters whether anyone might know where she had gone.⁴³³

4.2. Sorcery under Habsburg (1533-1540s)

The Utrecht government increasingly sought to prosecute magic as a category three crime. Outside experts were called in to identify a pact with the devil, and suspects were tortured until they confessed. The Council sources before 1528 do not explicitly include diabolic language, but this changed when temporal power in the Sticht was transferred to Charles V of Habsburg. He reformed the city magistrate and effectively restored the power of the territorial prince. The office of the sheriff in city criminal law was restored, and the sheriff, as a representative of the emperor, and the college of aldermen (the Aldermen's bench) were to judge criminal cases.⁴³⁴ Diabolic discourse became the norm in the trials that the Utrecht magistrate conducted in the 1530s. For the sake of comparison, I will briefly reflect on three cases here.

⁴²⁵ Appendix II, 29.

⁴²⁶ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, pp. 86-87.

⁴²⁷ See above, nr. 390.

⁴²⁸ Appendix II, 29.

⁴²⁹ Ibidem.

⁴³⁰ Ibidem.

⁴³¹ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 86.

⁴³² Ibidem, p. 86.

⁴³³ Ibidem, p. 86; Appendix II, 28.

⁴³⁴ See above, nr. 81.

The magistrate sentenced two women to death for diabolic witchcraft in the year 1533.⁴³⁵ The first was Marie Wouters who was accused of killing livestock and a man using sorcery.⁴³⁶ Marie died during torture for which the magistrate blamed the devil to whom she had “undoubtedly handed herself over”.⁴³⁷ The lifeless body of Marie was then dragged to the Neude square and burned. A couple of days later, Neel Reyers was burned on the same square. This 64-year old woman had allegedly confessed that she had been able to use magic for many decades and that she had learned the craft from the devil himself to whom she had given her body and soul.⁴³⁸ Furthermore, she had confessed that she magically killed five persons and bewitched many others with certain ‘substance’. As if that was not enough, she was also accused of practising other “filthy unchristian and inhumane works that should not be named”.⁴³⁹

We meet an old acquaintance in a case from 1537. Goeyert Janss (now spelled Goirt Janss) had gotten himself arrested again despite his banishment.⁴⁴⁰ Goeyert was allegedly responsible for enchanting men and animals and later healing some of them.⁴⁴¹ Whatever caused his arrest (Steenhuis suggests that medical malpractice may have backfired⁴⁴²), he was tortured and coerced to confess that he had made a pact with the devil. The discourse of diabolic witchcraft that we have already encountered in the trials in the Alps, Arras, and Metz in chapter two is by now well established in the language of the magistrate:

Goirt Janss called the *wairsegger* born in Hasselt in the land of Gulik confessed and declared in public and without iron bounds that he could do magic and learned it personally from the evil enemy from hell and enchanted many men and animals of whom he healed some afterwards. And [he confessed] that he renounced and denied God in Heaven and Maria his blessed mother in favour of the devil from hell who carved his christendom out of his head, [and] paid him respects and offered to him. After that, he did many unchristian and inhumane things and works that should not be named with the evil enemy.⁴⁴³

Goeyert’s crime was not just magic. Over the course of the 1520s and 1530s, the accusation of sorcery had transformed to a full-fledged demonic pact, including apostasy and the belief that an individual pact with the devil gave sorcerers and sorceresses their power. The category three crime that Goeyert supposedly committed was enough for the aldermen and sheriff to send him to the stake.⁴⁴⁴

It appears that Utrecht had no more need for external experts in the 1530s and that it had the necessary knowledge and experience on board. At the beginning of the 1540s,

⁴³⁵ There were actually three trials in this year but the third suspect, Mergriet van Essen, refused to confess and was banished from the city, see Appendix II, 32.

⁴³⁶ Appendix II, 30.

⁴³⁷ Ibidem; “[...] *heft se hoer ongetwijfelt overgegeven den bosen vijant, den duvel der hellen*”.

⁴³⁸ Appendix II, 31.

⁴³⁹ Ibidem; “[...] *andere lelicke oncristelicke ende onmenselycke werken ende saicken gedaen hadde die men nyet en behoert te noemen*”.

⁴⁴⁰ Appendix II, 33.

⁴⁴¹ Appendix II, 33.

⁴⁴² Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, p. 87.

⁴⁴³ Appendix II, 33.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibidem.

Utrecht had developed into a centre from where expertise on prosecuting diabolic witchcraft was shared. Utrecht was visited by an alderman and the city secretary of Amsterdam in 1541. They came to ask the Utrecht sheriff for advice on examining a suspected sorcerer in captivity in their town.⁴⁴⁵ The sheriff referred them to Dirk van Zuylen, secretary of the aldermen's justice, who was said to have more than enough experience with the examination of sorcerers.⁴⁴⁶ This same Dirk van Zuylen answered to a similar request from the town of Haarlem in 1549.⁴⁴⁷ It is tempting to identify this Dirk van Zuylen with a Dirk van Zuylen who was a member of the *vive* involved in the first burning for demonic sorcery in Utrecht in 1519.⁴⁴⁸ This means that Dirk had indeed built experience from the very beginning. While it is possible that Dirk had an active professional life of over thirty years, it must also be noted that it is difficult to establish that they are the same person, as both 'Dirk' and 'Van Zuylen' were common Utrecht names.

4.3. The transition from category two- to category three heresy

Now that the transition in the records has been extensively traced, and that we can conclude that Utrecht did indeed move from prosecuting sorcery as a category two crime to a category three crime, it is time to propose an explanation as to why this transition happened at this time. I do not believe that the visiting experts were the direct cause of the shift, but rather a symptom. The belief in the existence of a diabolic witch cult must have found sufficient support within the town government. But why did this process take place in the 1510s and the 1520s? The witch stereotype had been around for decades, was heavily prosecuted in other regions, but the threat seems not been taken seriously in the Low Countries. To explain this timing, I will now turn to two structural processes that took place simultaneously during these years and shaped a volatile environment in which diabolical notions could take root: political, economic, and social crises in Utrecht, and the growing fear of heresy and other forces undermining society.

4.3.1. Political, economic, and social crises in Utrecht

It can be argued that a devastating civil war within the Sticht (1481-1483) started a downward spiral for the city of Utrecht. From this conflict onwards, the political situation of the city would be irreversibly determined by its position between two increasingly powerful and rivalling political blocks: Habsburg and Guelders.⁴⁴⁹ As a member of the losing party in 1483, Utrecht faced crippling debts that would cause political and social upheaval for decades to come.⁴⁵⁰ And when it had mostly recovered, Utrecht threw itself into another war between Guelders and Habsburg in 1511. Utrecht sided with Guelders so that it could

⁴⁴⁵ Steenhuis, 'Toverij voor Utrechtse rechtbanken', pp. 46-47.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibidem, p. 47.

⁴⁴⁷ Steenhuis, Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging, p. 89.

⁴⁴⁸ See Appendix I.

⁴⁴⁹ Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', pp. 180-184.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibidem, p. 181; Van Kalveen, *Het bestuur*, pp. 26ff.

attack its arch-enemy, the town of IJsselstein, which was on the Habsburg side.⁴⁵¹ Utrecht, despite Duke Charles of Guelders' support, was unable to subdue IJsselstein and was forced to retreat.⁴⁵²

Post-war Utrecht was ruled by a couple of patricians, most notably Evert II Zoudenbalch and Goeyert van Voerde, who tried to steer the city (and Sticht) in a neutral course between Habsburg and Guelders.⁴⁵³ This neutral course was the outward appearance of the city authorities. Behind the scenes, however, tensions were growing between a faction favouring Guelders, and a faction supporting Habsburg. Zoudenbalch and Van Voerde were largely able to keep the peace between the factions until the years 1524/5 when Bishop Philip of Burgundy died, and a new bishop had to be chosen.⁴⁵⁴

The vacant see became the centre stage of conflict. Both Habsburg and Guelders wanted to have a new bishop favourable to their interests, while Zoudenbalch and Van Voerde, in line with their neutrality politics, stressed the importance of having a neutral bishop.⁴⁵⁵ The result was that political pressure very much influenced the election. The city Council feared that the election might cause major upheaval between the two factions within the citizenship, and indeed, while the chapters were in conclave, mobs of citizens assembled in Utrecht's streets and squares.⁴⁵⁶ In the end, Zoudenbalch and Van Voerde got their way, and a neutral candidate was chosen; Henry of Bavaria, a cathedral canon of Cologne.⁴⁵⁷

The peace within the city was kept for now, but conflict between the factions was never far off. A final cascade was set into motion when the Sticht decided to grant the newly elected Henry 50,000 guilders to guarantee the protection and safety of the Sticht.⁴⁵⁸ Meanwhile, Charles of Guelders kept up the pressure on the Oversticht and demanded the payment of 50,000 guilders as part of a peace treaty.⁴⁵⁹ The entire sum promised to the bishop was now necessary to free the Oversticht from Guelders occupation, and the Sticht could not afford to postpone payment. The result was that the huge amount had to be levied within a short period. The citizens of Utrecht had to bear a lot of the costs, and the guilds protested that they were not willing to pay as long as the gentry and religious houses were (largely) exempted.⁴⁶⁰

Grievances built up during the whole of Zoudenbalch's and Van Voerde's government surfaced in a power play in which the guilds, the Council, the gentry, and the five chapters all attempted to protect their interests.⁴⁶¹ The guilds demanded that the Council lowered taxation and that exiled members of the pro-Guelders faction were allowed

⁴⁵¹ Van Kalveen, *Het bestuur*, pp. 168ff.

⁴⁵² Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', pp. 183-184.

⁴⁵³ Ibidem, p. 184; Van Kalveen, 'De gildenbeweging', p. 93.

⁴⁵⁴ Van Kalveen, 'De gildenbeweging', pp. 96-100.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibidem, pp. 96-100.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibidem, p. 97.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 100.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibidem, pp. 100-104.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibidem, p. 101.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibidem, pp. 103-106.

⁴⁶¹ Ibidem, pp. 103-111; Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', p. 188.

back into the city. They also demanded to be able to check the city finances, because they believed that tax money had gone to the wrong places after the wars with IJsselstein.⁴⁶² Zoudenbalch's and Van Voerde's positions became untenable, and facing rebellion they decided to step down and leave the city.⁴⁶³

The end of Zoudenbalch and Van Voerde also meant the end of Utrecht's careful neutrality politics. The Guelders faction was able to take control of the city by force of arms in December 1526 and steered the city directly into the arms of Charles of Guelders.⁴⁶⁴ The city's refusal to let Henry of Bavaria enter the city in August 1527 led to a new civil war in which Utrecht received the support of Guelders. As a last resort, Henry looked to Habsburg to whom he handed over secular jurisdiction of the Sticht in return for his help. On the first of July 1528, the bishop entered Utrecht with Habsburg troops, driving Guelders from the city.⁴⁶⁵

Political, economic, and social upheaval often went hand in hand. As touched upon in the introduction, Western-Europe experienced a steady rise in prices of wheat and butter in the sixteenth-century while wages did not keep up.⁴⁶⁶ This was no different in Utrecht, where the city population came perilously close to mass famine in the 1520s.⁴⁶⁷ High taxation on wheat had already caused civil unrest in 1512 and 1516.⁴⁶⁸ In 1522, the problems came to a head. The high prices for wheat made grain merchants and speculators decide to keep grain in storage to drive prices up, or to sell it outside the Sticht where prices were even higher.⁴⁶⁹ Even members of the Council, the gentry, and religious communities used their exemption from tax to buy and store large quantities of grain, with the intention to sell for exorbitant prices when the need had risen to dangerous levels.⁴⁷⁰ A major revolt in 1522, started by aggrieved women, convinced the Council that measures needed to be taken to stop the unbridled speculating on grain.⁴⁷¹ However, Lijsbeth's resort to sorcery in 1526 to relieve the want of bread suggests that food shortage remained a problem for town dwellers.⁴⁷²

4.3.2. *Religious tensions: heresy and sorcery in Utrecht*

The political, economic, and social situation in Utrecht during the first quarter of the sixteenth century was not favourable. However, medieval Utrecht had been in unstable

⁴⁶² Van Kalveen, 'De gildenbeweging', pp. 106-107.

⁴⁶³ Ibidem, pp. 105-106.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibidem, pp. 105-106; Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', pp. 188-189.

⁴⁶⁵ Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', p. 189.

⁴⁶⁶ See above, nr. 63.

⁴⁶⁷ L. Bogaers, *Aards, betrokken en zelfbewust. De verwevenheid van cultuur en religie in katholiek Utrecht, 1300-1600* (Utrecht, 2008), pp. 537-539; See for price statistics that show at least a doubling of grain prices in 1522 in comparison to 1521, Posthumus, *Nederlandse Prijsgeschiedenis 2*, pp. 3-440.

⁴⁶⁸ Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', p. 184.

⁴⁶⁹ Van Kalveen, 'De gildenbeweging', pp. 93-94.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibidem, pp. 93-95.

⁴⁷¹ Ibidem, pp. 93-95; Bogaers, *Aards*, pp. 537-539.

⁴⁷² See above, nr. 413.

political and economic situations before, and the crises above can unlikely have been the primary reason for Utrecht to prosecute sorcery as a category three, rather than as a category two crime. What I believe to have been an important factor for category three persecution is that the religious climate in Utrecht changed.

We have already seen in chapter two that papal inquisitors were important instigators for trials of diabolic witchcraft. The persecution of heretical and Satan-worshipping *Vaudoises* in the Alps was very probably a direct consequence of the inquisitors' persecution of Waldensianism and Catharism.⁴⁷³ This appears to apply to other regions, such as Arras, as well. While the connection with historical heresy trials is largely passed by in Franck Mercier's monograph on the *Vauderie* of Arras, Kathrin Utz Tremp stresses that prosecution in Arras of the *Vaudois* sorcerers did not come out of thin air.⁴⁷⁴ Arras and the surrounding counties of Artois, Hainaut, and Picardie, including the towns of Lille, Tournai, Valenciennes, and Douai, had quite a history of prosecuting alleged members of heretical sects.⁴⁷⁵ In 1420, only a couple of decades before the *Vauderie*, eighteen men and women who were suspected to be adherents of the "Bohemian heresy" of the Hussites were arrested in Arras and Douai. Seven of the alleged heretics were burned on the 9th of May in 1420. Curiously, the first burnings for *Vauderie* in 1460 were carried out exactly forty years later, on the 9th of May 1460.⁴⁷⁶ Utz Tremp argues that this symbolism cannot be a coincidence and that the prosecution of the *Vauderie* is actually the product of equalisation between heretical sects and sorcery in the minds of inquisitors.⁴⁷⁷

In contrast to the early centres of trials in the Alps and Northern France, Catholic Christianity had been a relatively stable factor in the northern Low Countries up until the 1510s. This stability gave way for uncertainty when criticism by what we now call 'protestant' voices increased.⁴⁷⁸ It can be said that for the first time religious tensions created in late-Medieval Utrecht an environment in which religious prosecution was possible.⁴⁷⁹ The lack of inquisition to the beliefs and practises of the general laity may also explain why diabolic witchcraft was not prosecuted in these parts earlier in the fifteenth century, as there was no body of law actively prosecuting deviant religious behaviour. There are virtually no traces of an active papal inquisition in the northern Low Countries.⁴⁸⁰ It was only in the 1510s and 1520s that papal inquisitors took a (minor) interest in a few cases of reformist thought in Utrecht, but it were the increasingly centralising secular authorities of

⁴⁷³ See above, nr. 162.

⁴⁷⁴ Utz Tremp, *Von der Häresie*, pp. 630-633.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 631.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 631-633.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 632.

⁴⁷⁸ J. van Vliet, *Ketters rond de Dom. De reformatie in Utrecht 1520-1580*, Historische Reeks Utrecht 10 (Utrecht, 1987), pp. 15ff.

⁴⁷⁹ It might be fitting to describe the changing conditions in Utrecht as a 'birth of a persecuting society' in a Moorish fashion; see R.I Moore, *The formation of a persecuting society. Authority and deviance in Western Europe 950-1250* (2nd ed., Oxford, 2007).

⁴⁸⁰ As can be concluded from the very few references to inquisitorial involvement in the northern Low Countries; the most complete corpus is still P. Fredericq (ed.), *Corpus documentorum inquisitionis haereticae pravitatis Neerlandicae* 1 (Gent, 1889); New research to the activities of papal and episcopal inquisitors in the northern Low Countries is necessary in order to make more solid conclusions on these matters.

Guelders and Habsburg, and not the papal inquisitors, who would actively start to simultaneously persecute protestants and diabolic witches in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.⁴⁸¹

As Van Vliet points out, it is no wonder that dissenting voices emerged in the city of Utrecht. Its position right in the centre of the bishopric made it a centre stage where the – in reformist eyes – downfall and decadence of the Catholic Church could be witnessed.⁴⁸² Although the Utrecht sources invariably refer to various reform currents as ‘Lutherans’ (probably because Luther was the most notorious of the reformers), multiple individuals and groups protested against clerical abuse.⁴⁸³ Some time before Luther published his 95 theses, in the 1510s, we can see the first voices openly criticising the Church in Utrecht.⁴⁸⁴ Reformist books must have been current in Utrecht as there had been a mass burning of heretical books on the Neude square in 1521.⁴⁸⁵ And indeed, individuals in Utrecht were part of an extensive network of reformist writers.⁴⁸⁶

Van Vliet suggests that that early dissemination of reformist ideas among the Utrecht townspeople came from within the Church by charismatic clerics such as Dirc van Abcoude, curate of the Geertekerk, and Herman Gerrits, chaplain of the Jacobskerk.⁴⁸⁷ Dirc and Herman employed increasingly powerful dissenting language to draw the townsfolk into their churches.⁴⁸⁸ Another Utrecht clergyman, Hinne Rode, who was rector of a Utrecht community of Brethren of the Common Life, even travelled to Martin Luther in 1521 with a letter containing his ideas (and that of the Hollandish jurist Cornelis Hoen) about the transubstantiation of the host.⁴⁸⁹ Rode and Hoen believed that the dogma of transubstantiation should not be interpreted literally but more as a symbol of Christ’s body.⁴⁹⁰ Luther, however, was not receptive to these ideas, and Rode went on to visit Zwingli. After his travels, Rode settled in Deventer and became a member of a circle of reform-minded individuals through whom reformist ideas were disseminated through the Sticht and the Low Countries.⁴⁹¹ With all these clergymen disseminating protestant ideas it

⁴⁸¹ Van Vliet, *Ketters*, pp. 15-23; J.G. de Hoop Scheffer, *Geschiedenis der kerkhervorming in Nederland van haar ontstaan tot 1531* (Amsterdam, 1873); A woman named Lijsbeth, daughter of Peter, was questioned by the *vive*, an inquisitor and the priest of the Geertekerk in 1513. They concluded that she was not guilty of heresy; REK2K, nr. 626-39, fol. 71v.

⁴⁸² Van Vliet, *Ketters*, p. 15.

⁴⁸³ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

⁴⁸⁴ B.J. Spruyt, ‘Hinne Rode (c. 1480 – c. 1539): Het leven en de ontwikkeling van de dissidente rector van het Utrechtse fraterhuis’, in H. ten Boom et al. (eds), *Utrechters entre-deux. Stad en Sticht in de eeuw van de Reformatie 1520-1620* (Delft, 1992), p. 23.

⁴⁸⁵ De Hoop Scheffer, *Kerkhervorming*, p. 322.

⁴⁸⁶ Spruyt, ‘Hinne Rode’, pp. 24-27.

⁴⁸⁷ Van Vliet, *Ketters*, pp. 15-19.

⁴⁸⁸ Spruyt, ‘Hinne Rode’, p. 25; see also L. van Tongerloo, ‘Dirk van Abcoude. Leven tussen oud en nieuw in de zestiende eeuw’, *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht* (1994), pp. 55-84.

⁴⁸⁹ B.J. Spruyt, *Cornelius Henrici Hoen (Honus) and his epistle on the Eucharist (1525). Medieval heresy, Erasmian humanism, and Reform in the early sixteenth-century Low Countries*, *Studies in medieval and Reformation traditions* 119 (Leiden, 2007), pp. xii, 32, 187ff.

⁴⁹⁰ Spruyt, *Cornelius Henrici*, pp. 84ff; A.M.L. Hajenus, *Dopers in de Domstad. Geschiedenis van de doopsgezinde gemeente Utrecht 1639-1939*, *Doperse Documentaire Reeks* 3 (Hilversum, 2003), p. 23.

⁴⁹¹ Spruyt, *Cornelius Henrici*, pp. 187-218.

is no wonder that there were concerns among the Utrecht clergy that heresy and dangerous dissent were coming from within.⁴⁹²

These years also saw the first investigations of protestant heresy by the city authorities. At the request of the five chapters, the Council appointed a special committee on the 23rd of August, 1524, to counter “the heresy of Luther and others”.⁴⁹³ On that same day, the Council issued a notice warning the citizens not to sell, print, read or keep books of Luther or that contain other heresies. Moreover, nobody was to preach protestant ideas, nor live by their rules. If a citizen of Utrecht knew someone in default, he was to report the heresy to the Council immediately.⁴⁹⁴

The Council tried to avoid the spread of protestant sympathies by banishing those suspected of heresy from the city. Jan Zeverssone, a printer, lost his citizenship and was exiled in June 1524 because he was “infected with the work of Luther”.⁴⁹⁵ This same Jan had fled Leiden (Holland) earlier that year because he was under investigation for printing and selling heretical books.⁴⁹⁶ The most prominent investigation for protestant heresy in Utrecht in this period, however, was the case of Willem Dircssone in 1525. He is better known as the *Rode Kuiper* (Red Cooper) because of his red hair and his guild affiliation.⁴⁹⁷ Willem was arrested because of his rather anti-clerical stance towards the episcopal office and diverging ideas about certain dogmas. The papal inquisitors who were involved with the case probably recognised that Willem’s heresy were personal dissenting views, fuelled by anti-clericalism, and ordered him to attend a special preaching as penance and then let him off.⁴⁹⁸

4.3.3. Religious tensions: sorcery and heresy in Guelders

In contrast to the suspects of diabolic witchcraft, suspects of protestant heresy were not sentenced to the pyres in Utrecht during the 1520s. It is, therefore, impossible that burnings of protestant heretics were the direct cause for the burning of diabolic witches in Utrecht. However, I do believe that the trials for satanic sorcery and the concerns about protestant heresy were both symptoms of a more general fear of forces visibly and invisibly undermining the stability of Christian society.⁴⁹⁹ That the Council sources do not suggest a direct connection between these two threats does not mean that such a connection did not

⁴⁹² Van Vliet, *Ketters*, p. 17; De Hoop Scheffer, *Kerkhervorming*, p. 90; see for more on the Utrecht authorities dealing with dissenting reformist preaching in the sixteenth-century; Bogaers, *Aards*, pp. 264-267.

⁴⁹³ RDB nr. 13-19, fol. 148v; “*Ter begeerte van den ecclesien om die ketterye van Luyter ende anders te vermijden zijn gescict [...]*”.

⁴⁹⁴ De Hoop Scheffer, *Kerkhervorming*, pp. 326-327.

⁴⁹⁵ RDB, nr. 13-19, fol. 145v.

⁴⁹⁶ De Hoop Scheffer, *Kerkhervorming*, p. 326.

⁴⁹⁷ Van Vliet, *Ketters*, p. 19.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 19; L. Bogaers, ‘De religieuze gedrevenheid van Dirck Weyman in het licht van een Utrechtse glasmakersfamilie in de zestiende eeuw’, *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht* (1993), p. 76.

⁴⁹⁹ The circulation of protestant ideas in the 1510s and 1520s must have affected the view on the stability of Christian society, as the threat of heresy was felt to become greater and greater; A.F. Mellink, ‘Prereformatie en vroege reformatie 1517-1568’, in D.P. Blok et al. (eds), *Algemene geschiedenis der Nederlanden 6* (Haarlem, 1979), pp. 146ff; Van Vliet argues that reformist voices were already current in the Low Countries before Martin Luther, but that they lacked a leader; Van Vliet, *Ketterij en ketterbestrijding*, pp. 6-10.

exist. In search for such a connection, different sources should be analysed, such as correspondence between individuals. This type of source may still contain a wealth of unexcavated information on this topic.

Since the search for cross-references of sorcery and heresy in unpublished sources means opening a new field of research that is not feasible for this study, I will look to the neighbouring duchy of Guelders to support my argument of the connection between concerns about sorcery and heresy. As we have seen, Guelders had an increasing influence on the Sticht in the 1510s and 1520s, and it was the Guelders jurist Wynant who was the first foreign specialist involved in a Utrecht sorcery case.

Guelders was – based on the present state of research – the first province in the northern Low Countries where diabolic notions established a firm place in sorcery trials.⁵⁰⁰ In contrast to Utrecht, trials for sorcery in Guelders did not concentrate in urban, but in rural areas, which were under the direct jurisdiction of the duke.⁵⁰¹ De Waardt and De Blécourt point at the duke's personal involvement as an important instigator for the surge of trials diabolic witchcraft in his lands at the beginning of the sixteenth century.⁵⁰²

Charles of Guelders' zeal against devil-worshipping sorcerers is best attested in a letter from 1514 in which the Duke vows to spare effort nor costs to fetch the executioner of Borculo to Zutphen because he was "wholly inclined to ban this devilry and sorcery" from his lands.⁵⁰³ As De Blécourt and De Waardt suggest, the search for sorcerers and sorceresses in the *Achterhoek* region of Guelders may have been the reason for Wychmoet to flee to Utrecht, and in turn the reason for the duke to send Wynant after her.⁵⁰⁴ News of the heightened activity against sorcerers in Zutphen was in turn a cause for the city of Kampen to ask for the assistance of Guelders' *waarzegger*.⁵⁰⁵

De Waardt and De Blécourt also point out that more people close to the person of Charles of Guelders were concerned about diabolic witchcraft. A chaplain named Theodorus Martinbergus dedicated an (undated) tract against sorcery to the duke.⁵⁰⁶ In the tract, Theodorus admonishes the Duke, based on a ton of biblical quotations, to protect his people from the great danger of demons and their human accomplices.⁵⁰⁷ The chaplain also stresses that it is no sin to execute people who occupy themselves with sorcery for they are apostates to God and have bound themselves to Satan.⁵⁰⁸

Like Utrecht and the rest of the northern Low Countries, the duchy of Guelders has no history of large scale persecution of heresy before the repression of protestant dissent.⁵⁰⁹ However, also like in Utrecht, the prosecution of diabolic witchcraft in Guelders coincided with the persecution of protestant heresy. And in the prosecution of heresy too,

⁵⁰⁰ De Blécourt and De Waardt, 'Das vordringen', pp. 182-216.

⁵⁰¹ De Waardt and De Blécourt, 'Berechting van toverij', pp. 19ff.

⁵⁰² Ibidem, pp. 15-25.

⁵⁰³ Hasselt, *Geldersch Maandwerk* 2, pp. 482-483.

⁵⁰⁴ De Waardt and De Blécourt, 'Berechting van toverij', p. 20.

⁵⁰⁵ See above, nr. 390.

⁵⁰⁶ De Waardt and De Blécourt, 'Berechting van toverij', p. 22.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibidem, p. 22.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibidem, pp. 22-23.

⁵⁰⁹ See above, nr. 479.

there appears to have been a significant personal role for Charles of Guelders who appealed to the papacy to transfer the privileges and duties of papal inquisitors to his own appointed secular inquisitors.⁵¹⁰

Charles of Guelders probably had many political and practical reasons for usurping the rights of the papal inquisition. It is quite obvious that part of the reason why the Duke wanted to have this right is that Charles V Habsburg, his arch-enemy, had secured the privilege of appointing his own inquisitors a few years before.⁵¹¹ Moreover, having the power over the inquisition had many advantages for a prince, who could employ the methods of coercion for other reasons than purely the search for heretics.⁵¹² Despite his political reasons we should not think that Charles was not serious in his zeal to prosecute heretics. He had a hand in the burning of two protestant women in his capital city Arnhem in 1526.⁵¹³

Charles of Guelders' zeal in the fight against heresy is also attested by the fact that he had an anonymous author write a Latin tract against Luther in 1521-22.⁵¹⁴ The tract was apparently a direct response to a pamphlet in which the reformer likened the pope to the Antichrist. The Guelders tract deflected this accusation back to Luther.⁵¹⁵ The choice to commission this tract in Latin leads to the straightforward conclusion that it was aimed at reprimanding clerics with reformist sympathies. However, before the Latin tract was sent to the press, the duke had the author adapt the text to Middle Dutch in 1523.⁵¹⁶ Willem Frijhoff suggests that the choice to print a – somewhat rushed – vernacular version was an immediate response to the dispersion of protestant ideas among laypeople, a development that we also saw in Utrecht.⁵¹⁷

The Middle Dutch tract, known as the *Deventer Antichrist* after the location where it was printed, is of particular interest because it does not only deal with the danger posed by Luther. The text attests the presence of wider concerns about the immediate fate of Christendom and the proximity of the apocalypse.⁵¹⁸ Frijhoff points at the timing of the composition of the tract, which was written at the end of the year 1523 into the beginning of the year 1524. Astrologers all over Western-Europe believed that a conjunction of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn in February 1524 would bring about a great flood, a fear that was also

⁵¹⁰ De Hoop Scheffer, *Kerkhervorming*, pp. 167-174.

⁵¹¹ Ibidem, pp. 148-149; Mellink, 'Prereformatie', p. 148.

⁵¹² Cf. above, nr. 214.

⁵¹³ Mellink, 'Prereformatie', p. 150.

⁵¹⁴ A facsimile edition is available, combined with some preliminary studies in H. Niebaum et al. (eds), *Der Deventer Endechrist von 1524. Ein reformationsgeschichtliches Zeugnis, Teil 1: Faksimile-Druck mit einführende Beiträgen*, Niederdeutsche Studien 31:1 (Cologne, 1984); a prospective second part with further studies was never realised.

⁵¹⁵ E. Schütz, 'Konzeption und Aufbau des Deventer Endechrist', in Niebaum et al. (eds), *Der Deventer Endechrist*, pp. xxvii-xxxvi.

⁵¹⁶ W. Frijhoff, 'Het Gelders antichrist-tractaat (1524) en zijn auteur', *Archief voor de Geschiedenis van de Katholieke Kerk in Nederland* 28 (1986), pp. 192-217.

⁵¹⁷ Textual elements suggest a concern about the unbridled spread of protestant ideas among laypeople; Frijhoff, 'Het Gelders antichrist-tractaat', pp. 202-203.

⁵¹⁸ Ibidem, pp. 203-207.

present among people in Guelders.⁵¹⁹ The *BSB* attests that this fear of a devastating flood was also present in Utrecht. On January 19, 1524, the Council allowed a procession with relics of St Agnes and the Holy Cross to be held on the 21st of January on behalf of “calmness, peace, favourable weather” and against *waternoet* (flood).⁵²⁰

The anonymous writer of the *Deventer Antichrist* is quite clear about how he believed that the power of the devil and the Antichrist would manifest itself on earth. Black magic, he argued, is how the Antichrist will control the power of the devil.⁵²¹ The author then points at the helpers of the Antichrist: the *melkentoverschen* who have bound themselves with body and soul to the devil and to whom the people of Guelders are turning “for consolation and help when they are in need, lost children, or when they are sick” instead of to God.⁵²² In this instance too, popular practise of finding relief in magical means is cast into a demonic context. The anonymous further argues that not only did the diabolic sorcerers lead the people away from God, they would be the first to follow the heretics and the Antichrist.⁵²³ A similar equalisation was made by Johannes Geiler von Kaysersberg in Strassbourg around 1500. Seeing signs of God’s wrath around him, he expected the Antichrist to be coming soon and he presented heretics and witches as the followers of the Antichrist.⁵²⁴

Concluding, what we can see clearly happening in the *Deventer Endechrist* is that diabolic witches were likened and equalised to protestant heretics in a context of instability and fear for the future of Christendom. In this discourse, both protestants and diabolic sorcerers presented as part of the same phenomenon and as symptoms of the impending coming of the Antichrist.⁵²⁵

4.3.4. Correlation of Utrecht witchcraft and heresy in the 1530s?

I wish to make a final observation on a possible correlation between the prosecution of heresy and diabolic witchcraft in Utrecht. As seen above in section 4.2, Utrecht saw the first

⁵¹⁹ People apparently sought refuge from the flood in the hills of the Veluwe; *ibidem*, p. 206.

⁵²⁰ BSB, nr. 16-19, fol. 22r; “*Alsoe men op sunte Agnietendach naestkomende generail processie mittet Heylich Cruys ende Sunte Agnietenkass en God wilt houden sell om rust vrede getydich weer ende waternoet [...]*”; see on apocalyptic thought among other works C. Zika, ‘Disaster, apocalypse, emotions and time in sixteenth-century pamphlets’, in J. Spinks and C. Zika (eds), *Disaster, death and the emotions in the shadow of the apocalypse, 1400-1700* (London, 2016), pp. 69-90; Frances Carey (ed.), *The Apocalypse and the shape of things to come* (London, 1999); C. Walker Bynum and P. Freedman (eds), *Last Things. Death and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2000).

⁵²¹ Frijhoff, ‘Het Gelders antichrist-tractaat’, pp. 206-207; *Der Deventer Endechrist*, p. 59.

⁵²² Frijhoff, ‘Het Gelders antichrist-tractaat’, pp. 206-207; *Der Deventer Endechrist*, p. 62; “*Als se lopen to kukelers de mitter swarten konsten ommegaen / van den troest unde hulpe to crigen wannen se in noden sint of kinder of wat verloren [...] nu lopen se to den duvel ende synen dynres als se mytter swarten consten omme gaen / unde to melkentoverschen de den duvel myt lyff unde syle to hoeren*”.

⁵²³ Frijhoff, ‘Het Gelders antichrist-tractaat’, p. 207; *Der Deventer Endechrist*, p. 72.

⁵²⁴ R. Voltmer, ‘Preaching on witchcraft? The sermons of Johannes Geiler of Kaysersberg (1445-1510)’, in L.N. Kallestrup and R.M. Toivo (eds), *Contesting Orthodoxy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic (London, 2017), pp. 199-200.

⁵²⁵ For fear of the impending apocalypse and earthly symptoms such as witches in contemporary visual arts see C. Leathy, J. Spinks, and C. Zika (eds), *The Four Horsemen. Apocalypse, death and disaster* (Melbourne, 2012).

burnings under Habsburg rule for diabolic sorcery in August of the year 1533, when the city aldermen and sheriff tortured and tried Marie Wouters and Neel Reyers. Both women were burned in public on the Neude square.⁵²⁶

The same square had been the stage of the first execution in Utrecht for protestant heresy only a month earlier. On the twelfth of July, 1533, two jurists of the recently established *Hof van Utrecht* who were charged especially with finding and trying heretics in Utrecht, sentenced the Hollandish priest Jan de Winter to die by the sword for propagating heresies.⁵²⁷ If we turn our attention to the *Hof van Utrecht*, we can see that August 1533 witnessed an active witch hunt by both the city magistrate and the *Hof van Utrecht*. On the sixteenth of August, the *Hof van Utrecht* sentenced two women from the village Westbroek (north of Utrecht) to be burned for sorcery on the Neude square.⁵²⁸ Both had confessed to practising maleficent magic to harm others.⁵²⁹ The burning of Neel Reyers and Marie Wouters took place within days after these burnings, and it is likely that both the magistrate and the *Hof van Utrecht* were conducting their investigations simultaneously.

A direct spark for this witch hunt may have been the wave of pestilence that was ravaging Utrecht in the weeks before the burnings.⁵³⁰ The epidemic accords with the accusations in the trial records: the sorceresses had allegedly caused sickness and death. The witch hunt may have started because the Utrechters were looking for scapegoats, and therefore, for individuals who had caused the malady. It appears that – judging from the language used in the sources and the scale of the 1533 trials – sorcery had become to be regarded as a heresy in its own right.⁵³¹ Therefore, a correlation of concerns about protestantism and sorcery that may have first caused the heightened concern about the danger of sorcery in the 1520s may have no longer been strictly necessary for these trials to take place.

The involvement of the *Hof van Utrecht* and the systematisation of law by Charles V does certainly make matters more complicated. Since Utrecht lost its legal independence, it no longer suffices to look at the Council for their treatment of sorcery. The way that the Utrecht magistrate treated sorcery was now for a large part conditioned by provincial and imperial practice and law and, therefore, more open to direct outside influence. The focus from this moment on has to be on the centralised *Hof van Utrecht* and imperial legislation. In 1532, Charles V published the *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina*, a law code intended to

⁵²⁶ Appendix II, 30, 31.

⁵²⁷ J.J. Dodt van Flensburg, 'Jan Winter, vice-pastoor der Groote Kerke te Hoorn, in 1533, te Utrecht om 't stuk van 't geloof, ter dood gebracht', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis, oudheden en statistiek van Utrecht* 9 (1843), pp. 131-135; Surprisingly, Van Vliet claims in his 1987 publication that Van Winter was burned, a claim that he did not make in his thesis: cf. Van Vliet, *Ketters*, p. 20; idem, *Ketterij en ketterbestrijding*, pp. 28-29.

⁵²⁸ HUA, HVU, nr. 99-1, fols. 176v-177r.

⁵²⁹ Steenhuis, 'Toverij voor Utrechtse rechtbanken', pp. 41-42.

⁵³⁰ BSB, nr. 16-19, fol. 135r.

⁵³¹ A change of attitude appears to have taken place among jurists in the Low Countries in the period c. 1470-1550; see Belien, 'Rechtsgeleerde opvattingen', pp. 212-221; see for a recent publication on maladies, witchcraft, and scapegoating C. Zika, 'Witchcraft and the scapegoating of disaster', in Leahy, Spinks, and Zika (eds), *The Four Horsemen*, pp. 63-76.

systemise and uniformise the legal complexities of his vast and homogenous empire.⁵³² The *Carolina* explicitly stated that sorcery was punishable by death without further equalising it to (protestant) heresy.⁵³³ Although the systematisation that was intended with the *Carolina* was never achieved and since it deliberately left in space for local law, it is not unthinkable that the *Hof van Utrecht* – and the Utrecht magistrate – called upon, or were inspired by, this legislation when local circumstances required them to.⁵³⁴

4.4. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to show and argue that Utrecht's treatment of sorcery changed dramatically in the first half of the sixteenth century. While sorcery was previously prosecuted as a danger to the direct environment in the form of scandal or as a destabilising factor to the fundamental Christian fabric of society; the sixteenth century witnessed a transition to the persecution of stereotype diabolic witchcraft. Notions about the existence of a diabolic sect of apostate witches had been diffusing from the Alps since the 1430s, but it took nearly a century for these concepts to become established in the northern Low Countries.

Based on the registers of the Council and later the Habsburg *Hof van Utrecht*, we can conclude that the period between 1514 and 1528 was indeed a transitional period. During this period, the Council treated various cases of sorcery as category three crimes. By employing torture, it sought to coerce suspects into confessing a pact with the devil. Before the Habsburg period, the Council called in various foreign experts to aid in the examinations. This need for outside expertise leads to the conclusion that the *vive*, the university-schooled jurists in Utrecht, and the city employed executioner, did not have the necessary knowledge to coerce suspects into admitting to the expectations of the torturers themselves. The Council registers do not explicitly use demonic language in the transitional period. In many cases, we need to conclude from references of repeated torture, shaving, calling in the help of foreign experts, and the accusation of desecrating Christian rituals that Utrecht was indeed looking for stereotype witches.

The Council did not prosecute all individuals suspected of committing a magical crime as category three conspiring apostates. In these investigations, no help from experts was called in. The cases of Mergriet van Zwertsen, Heylwich, and the first imprisonment of Agnese show that the Council was not always willing to resort to torture to exact a confession. The situation was very different in the 1530s. The urban court did not treat any category two cases but it did burn a multitude of people for diabolic witchcraft. As

⁵³² K. Geppert, 'Die Peinliche Halsgerichtordnung Karls V. (Die "Carolina")', *Juristische Ausbildung* 37:2 (2015), pp. 143-153.

⁵³³ F.-C. Schroeder (ed.), *Die Peinliche Gerichtsordnung Kaiser Karls V. und des Heiligen Römischen Reichs von 1532 (Carolina)* (Stuttgart, 2000), p. 73.

⁵³⁴ M. van de Vrugt, *Aengaende criminele saken. Drie hoofdstukken uit de geschiedenis van het strafrecht*, *Rechtshistorische Cahiers* 4 (Deventer, 1982), pp. 18-19; Steenhuis, 'Toverij voor Utrechtse rechtbanken', pp. 41-42.

Steenhuis suggests, every case that may have previously been treated as superstitious and unharmful magic may now have been a priori prosecuted as a diabolic crime.⁵³⁵

The reasons why the Council turned to prosecute sorcery as a category three crime at this particular time deserves further research. The hypothesis here is that there is a connection between persecuting category three witchcraft and reformist ideas, although this cannot be proven on the basis of the Council registers alone. What the Council records do show is that there were new factors at play in Utrecht during the first quarter of the sixteenth century that had destabilising effects on the Utrecht city community. Circulating reformist ideas that could easily reach the townspeople through charismatic preachers threatened the Catholic tradition. Since religious instability is dangerous for any government, the Utrecht Council may have been inclined to engage all signs of dissent more vehemently during these years.

The ruling elite in this destabilised religious climate, which was further affected by social and economic distress, may have been extra susceptible to believe stories about a society-undermining devil-worshipping sect of sorcerers. Talk of such a sect and their persecution must have reached Utrecht by numerous ways, including traffic over the river Rhine and ongoing prosecution in nearby Guelders.

At least in the circle of Charles of Guelders, ideas about the danger of reformers and diabolic witches conflated. The Guelders tract *Deventer Antichrist*, which was printed in the Oversticht city Deventer which held close connections with Utrecht, even suggests a complete equalisation of sorcery and protestantism. The sources indicate that there was a sentiment that the end times were near, as the fear of flood all over Europe, including Utrecht and Guelders, suggest. In the *Deventer Antichrist*, reformers and witches were both seen as the front-runners of the coming of the Antichrist, and thus, as symptoms of religious destabilisation. Although there appears to be a similar correlation in Utrecht, the question whether an equalisation of protestants and witches also took place in Utrecht would be a good starting point for further research. In order to find more solid proof that notions on protestantism and diabolic sorcery in Utrecht conflated as well, it is necessary to delve deeper into other Utrecht sources.

⁵³⁵ Steenhuis, *Toverij en de gerechtelijke vervolging*, pp. 43-44.

V. Conclusion

This thesis aimed to revisit an overlooked and understudied chapter in the history of sorcery and witchcraft in the Netherlands. I believe that such a revisit was necessary, as the last major Dutch studies into sorcery and witchcraft date from the late 1980s and their conclusions are falling behind developments in the international field of medieval studies. The historical anthropological method dominated late twentieth-century scholarship, as scholarly research primarily aimed to find out more about the magical worldview, dubbed 'the magical universe', of 'ordinary' men and women. The results that these studies yielded were absolutely useful and made clear that there was no absolute and distinct boundary between separate domains of religion and magic and that magic had deep communal, social and personal roots. However, the anthropological method has as its major drawback that the scholar requires extensive and detailed sources that contain the 'subaltern voices' from the past to study ideas and mentalities.

As pointed out in the introduction above, and seen in practice in chapters three and four, this kind of source material is scarce in the northern Low Countries before the second half of the sixteenth century. This meant that scholars who wanted to use this method to find out more about magical beliefs, social, and interpersonal relationships of the accused and the victims, had to resort to source material from later periods. The paradigm of the diabolic witch, which had become established over the course of the sixteenth century in the northern Low Countries, became to be seen as a norm and a point of departure for research. The medieval source material that did not contain this diabolic discourse, and in which sorcery was treated in a 'traditional' manner in the tradition of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas were disregarded or approached solely as stepping stones in a teleological narrative towards the image of the diabolic witch.

Different questions need to be asked to the medieval source material, and a different method needs to be employed to interpret them. With this thesis, I have proposed – in line with developments in international medieval studies – that to make sense of the medieval material on sorcery in the northern Low Countries, we ought not to look backwards from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Instead, we need to approach the topic onwards from the Middle Ages, especially from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This thesis is a first step in reviewing sorcery in the northern Low Countries in this light by focussing on the city of Utrecht.

At the beginning of this thesis, I formulated the question 'how did the city authorities of Utrecht deal with sorcery in the period between 1322 and 1528?' This question turned out to be a practical vehicle to study the concise fourteenth and fifteenth-century sources that often not describe much more than the crime and the punishment. Based on the material studied in chapters three and four, we can conclude that Utrecht, like other regions in Western Europe, shifted from punishing magical practices as superstitious ways that might destabilise the local community to interpreting magic as a component of membership of a cult of diabolic witches. Chapter two was intended to place this transition in a larger European context and to show that this transition was not only taking place in

Utrecht but all over Western Europe, albeit at different paces and in different ways, always depending on local circumstances.

I have turned to a model recently formulated by Richard Kieckhefer to understand this transition better. Kieckhefer pointed to the inherent nature of sorcery as heresy in the Christian worldview but proposed that in practice authorities could treat sorcery as heresy in three different ways. First, sorcery by individual sorcerers who were believed to bind themselves to the devil, mostly through learned knowledge from books. Second, sorcery by people performing questionable spiritual practices that could destabilise the local community because it raised public scandal, or because authorities feared that such superstitious practices put the salvation of the whole community at risk. Third and finally, the sorcery of members of an apostate devil-worshipping sect of witches. The magic that these people supposedly performed was often perceived to be less important than the practical heretical elements that membership of the sect entailed. Namely, adherence to a secret society set upon overturning Christian society, and the outright rejection of the authority of the Catholic Church and God and his saints.

This last category, as we have seen in chapter two, became first established in the lands around the Alps. It was in these lands where notions about dangerous magic and secret devil-worshipping sects conflated and became established in both literature and the practice of law. Thus, the stereotype of the diabolic witch was effectively shaped in the Alpine lands in the 1430s and could then spread via numerous ways as long as people believed in its existence. I have, like other scholars, pointed at the importance of papal inquisitors as vehicles of dispersion of the paradigm. However, as examples such as Claude Tholosan's zeal to prosecute witches, and the correspondence between Metz and Cologne attests, it could also diffuse via secular channels.

This paradigm of diabolic witchcraft was established relatively late in the northern Low Countries. In chapter three I have argued that Utrecht was prosecuting sorcery as a category two heresy only throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The sole normative regulations that Utrecht published on sorcery, the *keuren* of 1438 and 1439 do cast the crime in religious discourse, but the Council appears to have had very practical reasons to declare sorcery as against the Christian faith – which it technically always had been. The language in the *keuren* suggests no trace of the diabolic paradigm. In reality, most alleged magicians were found guilty of a very practical crime, such as fortune-telling and pointing at people as thieves whereby they caused public scandal. The Utrecht government punished the practitioners of this kind of magic like other socially disruptive criminals, and banishment and defamatory punishments were the most common verdicts throughout this period.

The Council's mild stance towards sorcery changed during the first quarter of the sixteenth century, which I have called 'the transitional period'. During this period, Utrecht still treated some cases related to magic as a category two crime, for example, the medical charlatan Heylwich and the alleged sorceress Mergriet van Zwertssen. However, in other cases, the Council started to look for evident signs of the diabolic stereotype. In all the five cases of this kind; namely those of Wychmoet of Borckloe, Luyt Blancks, Agniese van de

Lage Weide, Beatris, wife of Ot Dircs, and Lijsbeth, widow of Geryt de Roeyen, a foreign expert was involved.

These external experts may have had a hand in propagating the witch stereotype among members of the Utrecht ruling elite, but the paradigm must have gotten some foothold in the minds of the elite before the investigations for them to ask for the assistance of foreign experts in the first place. The exact manner how this idea became established is hard to track given the size of Utrecht's political elite and therefore the number of people who could have influenced the trials. But it is likely that travelling stories, travelling people, and ongoing prosecution in nearby Guelders had a role in this. We have come across the person of Dirck van Zuylen, who, if they were indeed the same individual, was involved in the trial of Luyt Blancks and who became a known expert in the examination of diabolic witches in the 1540s. It would be interesting to find out more about Dirck's career, although I deem it unlikely that he alone could have been the motor behind the change from the category two approach to sorcery to the persecution of diabolic witches.

We can conclude that the 1510s and 1520s was indeed a period of transition if we look at what happened when Utrecht lost its judicial independence to Charles V. Where the Council records before 1528 do not overtly boast diabolic discourse, we can witness a drastic shift in the trials of 1533 and 1537. The language in the registers now explicates a personal pact between sorcerer and devil and stresses the sorcerers' apostasy. Moreover, the city authorities did not conduct any trials for category two sorcery in the 1530s, but all cases involving magic that made it to the court were treated as category three heresy. As Steenhuis has suggested, every form of magic may at this point have been automatically interpreted as diabolic witchcraft.

Since it is at this time impossible to point at certain individuals who were responsible for the introduction of the paradigm of diabolic witchcraft in the Council's practice of law, I have presented a more structural hypothesis. The presence of a destabilised social, economic, and religious climate in which the possibility of the existence of a society-undermining sect of witches became a serious threat. Utrecht and the rest of the northern Low Countries experienced several crises in the first quarter of the sixteenth century caused by wars, food shortage, and reformist criticism that culminated in protestant movements.

As I have pointed out in chapter two, many places where authorities' took up action against diabolic witches already had a tradition in prosecuting heresy. Not in the last place the Alps, where the paradigm was first established through the direct involvement of papal inquisitors, and the region around Arras which too had a long-standing history of combatting heresy. The northern Low Countries, however, had no tradition whatsoever in the persecution of heresy, and the growing nervousness about circulating protestant ideas – which were also finding a public among the general laity – was the first time that there likely was a feeling of acute religious- and therefore of general destabilisation of society.

The simultaneous persecution of both witchcraft and protestantism may, therefore, have been more than a coincidence. We can see a process of equalisation in Guelders, where Duke Charles was involved in the active repression of both threats. At least the author of the *Deventer Antichrist*, which was commissioned in both Latin and the vernacular by Charles of Guelders, equated the dangers of witches and protestants. The anonymous

author believed that sorcerers and heretics would be the first followers of the Antichrist. Het interpreted the imminent threat of sorcerers and heretics in the light of the end of days, which was evidently thought to be coming with all the forces of evil surfacing. As Willem Frijhoff argued, the timing of the *Deventer Antichrist* is strikingly close to February 1524, when people all over Western Europe believed that a large flood was at hand. In Utrecht too, a procession was organised in January 1524 to ward off this imminent apocalypse.

There are indeed signs that various crises and perceived threats to the Christian fabric of society shaped in the first quarter of the sixteenth century a climate in which religious prosecution could take place. However, for further study to this climate in Utrecht, a different method is needed. The prescriptive and daily records of the Council do not contain explicit evidence of equalisation of protestantism and category three sorcery. We must, therefore, to study this change of mentalities once again turn to more anthropological methods. Various, non-governmental, sources still unnoticed in the archives may contain more evidence to strengthen this hypothesis. I believe that studying the impact of the early reformation on the religious climate in Utrecht and therefore on the shift in the treatment of sorcery is a fruitful endeavour for the future.

While further study to the transition in Utrecht is desirable, the conclusions presented here also raise questions with a wider scope. In the first place, Kieckhefer's tripartite model of heresy as a threat to authorities which has proven usable for Utrecht's medieval sources can be tested on other towns and regions in the Low Countries. These conclusions can then be compared with the results presented here to establish whether the shift is part of a general trend in the northern Low Countries. A good starting point for such a study would be other towns in the Sticht because of their close connections with Utrecht. A focus could be nearby Amersfoort, but the Oversticht towns of Deventer, Zwolle, and Kampen also enjoyed similar independent political and judicial positions as Utrecht and have extensive medieval archives that still need to be scoured for traces of magic.

Renewed research to the first Dutch province where diabolic sorcery trials occurred would also be interesting. The context of sorcery trials in Guelders was different in comparison to the Sticht. Where the studied trial sources in this thesis are all from the city's urban court, trials for sorcery in Guelders mainly took place in rural areas under direct auspices of the duke and his servants. Further comparative study of urban and rural jurisdictions is necessary to find out whether they had perceivable differences in concerns, aims, and methods in prosecuting sorcery.

Another aim of research that deserves more attention and which could shed further light on the transition from category two to category three prosecution is the dissemination of ideas through people. The registers of the Utrecht *kameraar*, for example, include the record-keeping of payments of city messengers and travelling members of the magistrate on official business. An extensive study of where these people went in the months before a trial for diabolic sorcery in Utrecht, especially if they went into areas where diabolic sorcery was actively prosecuted, could bolster the argument whether there may have been (other) direct external influences on the Council's treatment of sorcery. Besides people travelling outwards, people going inwards are another vehicle by which ideas about diabolic sorcery could spread through the Low Countries. In this thesis, which was focussed on the actions of

government, I have paid no attention to preachers and the recent invention of the printing press which allowed ideas to spread quickly through pamphlets and images.

Further research into these topics could prove or disprove the hypothesis that concerns about diabolic sorcery and protestantism conflated. However, I also want to suggest, based on the peek that we had into the witchcraft trials in Utrecht during the 1530s, that this conflation was only necessary during the transitional period; to put this otherwise, the combination of the two threats was only necessary for the paradigm to be established. Once it had taken hold, the two threats could be seen separately from each other. This has to be since Protestant authorities too would prosecute diabolic witchcraft with great fervour later on. If diabolic witchcraft and heresy were no longer connected, we might also consider the possibility that the trials in 1533, which were conducted simultaneously by the newly established Habsburg *Hof van Utrecht* and the magistrate of Utrecht, was actually part of a larger power struggle between two competing judicial bodies that chose to fight a non-existent crime in order to press their claims on authority.

To conclude, this study has proven that it is fruitful to study sorcery from the perspective of the Middle Ages and that the concise source material can be studied in a meaningful manner. The renewed study of sorcery from this point of view has also raised a multitude of questions that still require an answer; answers that could provide us with a better understanding of the establishment of the paradigm of diabolic witchcraft in the northern Low Countries.

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HUA, SVU, nr. 227	Register of the Council (Th.2.)
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GA, OOA, nr. 1312	Charter on behalf of dr. Wynant of Arnhem

Stadsarchief Deventer (SAD)

SAD, RA, nr. 48a	Register of <i>oorvedes</i>
SAD, RA, nr. 48b	Register of <i>oorvedes</i>

Stadsarchief Kampen (SAK)

SAK, RAK, nr. 1	Register of <i>oorvedes</i>
SAK, RAK, nr. 8	<i>Liber Testium</i> (Getuignissen van civiele en criminele zaken)

Regionaal Archief Dordrecht (RAD)

RAD, SGT, nr. 6	Klepboek
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Nationaal Archief (NA)

NA, GR, nr. 1705	Account (1445-1446) of Floris van Boekhout
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Appendix I

This is a survey aimed see whether individual members of the Utrecht city government were repeatedly involved with cases of sorcery and heresy in the 1510s and 1520s. I conclude that no reliable conclusions can be drawn at this time. It is impossible to point at individuals on the basis of the Council lists alone, as there were nearly fifty members of the *vive* in the period 1513-1527. At least one member of each *vive* had experience with a previous trial for either sorcery or heresy, but this is not enough proof that a single or a group of individuals were especially responsible for prosecuting diabolic witchcraft.

Please refer to the table on the next page.

Members of the *vive* have been marked yellow with a letter *V*. I have provided them with additional letters if these individuals held other positions in government during other key years.

Legend

<i>OO</i>	<i>Overste ouderman</i> (head <i>ouderman</i>)
<i>S</i>	<i>Schepen</i> (alderman)
<i>R</i>	<i>Raad</i> (Council member)
<i>V</i>	<i>Vive</i>

Half of year	1/2 1513	1/2 1514	2/2 1515	2/2 1519	1/2 1524	2/2 1524	2/2 1525	2/2 1526	1/2 1527
Case	Heresy	Sorcery	Sorcery	Sorcery	Heresy	Heresy	Heresy	3x Sorcery	3x Sorcery
Aelbert Van Leeuwen		S			V				
Anthonis die Man						V			
Antonis Beeflant	V		V	V					
Aryaen Utenweerde								V	
Aryaen van Lantscroen							V		
Cornelis Gysbertssoen		V							
Cornelis Van Merten				V					S
Cornelis Van Zwol								V	
Cornelis Vreem			V						
Cornelis Zem			R		V				
Dirck Claessoen			V	V					
Dirck Gelisze Van Dolre				V					
Dirck Mor									V
Dirck Van Zuylen				V					
Eelgis Van Hamelenberge	V								
Frederick die Coninck				S					V
Geryt Claes Coenraetssoen		V							
Geryt Foeyt		R					OO		OO
Goeyert die Coninck					R	R			
Goeyert in de Clock					V	R			
Goeyert Van Roeyenborch		V							
Goeyert Van Voerde	V		S		S	S		S	
Gysbert Cluijtink	V		V		R	V	V	OO	
Gysbert Van Leeuwen	V							S	
Gysbert Van Wede					V				

Dates	1/2 1513	1/2 1514	2/2 1515	2/2 1519	1/2 1524	2/2 1524	2/2 1525	2/2 1526	1/2 1527
Case	Heresy	Sorcery	Sorcery	Sorcery	Heresy	Heresy	Heresy	3x Sorcery	3x Sorcery
Henrick Alertssoen								V	
Henrick Jan Hermenssoen						V			
Henrick Knoep					R	V			
Henrick Van Voerde		S							
Henrick Wilgerssoen		R			S	V		R	
Huyg Foeyt Janssoen		S			V				
Iheronymes van Raveswaey							V		
Jacob Lam							V		
Jacob Van der Maet									V
Jacob Van Voerde		V		S					
Jan Jacob die Colenaers									V
Jan Luytert		V							V
Jan Stevenssoen								V	
Jan Van Boesichem								V	
Jan Van Roeyenborch					R	R			
Joest Van Eyck									V
Lambert Beeflant							V		
Loef Van der Haer			V						
Loef Van Pallaes		V							
Willem die Wail Van Vronesteyn				V					
Willem Loefssoen							V		
Willem Van Dorschen					V				
Willem Zael	S		S		R	V		R	
Zweer Janssoen	V		V						

Appendix II

The following is my full corpus of sources on magic from the Utrecht Council registers. The transcriptions presented here are not meant as a critical manuscript edition, but for reference only. I owe great gratitude to the volunteers of the *Werkgroep Paleografie* of the *Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Utrecht* (now fused into *Het Utrechts Archief*) who have fully transcribed the *Raad Dagelijks Boek*, the *Buurspraakboek* and the accounts of the *tweede kameraar* during the 1980s and thereby made these sources much easier to access. Any mistakes in the transcriptions are of course my own.

Index	Year
1. Aliid Scerpinx	1322
2. Katerine van Rossem	1375
3. Aleyd, d. Peter Camscerpers	1377
4. Ysoye the midwife	1417
5. Fye Everts	1427
6. Council <i>keur</i>	1438(?)
7. Council <i>keur</i>	1439
8. Loefkyn the midwife	1444
9. Lysbeth Sproncs	1445
10. Dirc Corsgenssone	1451
11. Dirc Backer	1455
12. Harmenken van Vianen	1462
13. Lijsbeth Borren	1473-1474
14. Met in den Os	1474
15. Meyster Pauwels	1477
16. Arnoldus van Werven et. al.	1487
17. Geryt Willemsone	1493
18. Wychmoet van Borckloe	1514
19. Mergriet van Zwertssen	1515
20. Luyt Blancks	1519
21. Angiese van de Lage Weide	1519-1525
22. Heylwich	1521
23. Enquiring for information on how to deal with sorcerers	1526-1527
24. Agniese van de Lage Weide	1526-1527
25. Daughter of Agniese van de Lage Weide	1526-1527
26. Beatris Ot Dirks' wife	1526-1527
27. Lijsbeth, Geryt die Roeyen's widow	1526-1527
28. Alyt, wife of Jacob the swineherd	1527
29. Goeyert Janss	1526-1527
30. Marie Wouters	1533
31. Neel Reyers	1533
32. Mergriet van Essen	1533
33. Goirt Janss	1537

1. Aliid Scerpinx (1322)

Name of accused	Aliid Scerpinx
Date(s)	April 5, 1322
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Banished for 100 years
Source(s)	Th.1., fol. 5r
Comments	
[fol. 5r] <i>Int iaer ons heren 1322 des dinxdaghes na palme doe verwilcoerde uter stat ende uten lande te wesen Aliid de Ghisebrechts Scerpinx wijff was hondert iare op de tiile alse van wighelingh ende toverie ende van waerseghen ende uitinghen de si te handen toech</i>	

2. Katerine van Rossem (1375)

Name of accused	Katerine van Rossum
Date(s)	November 12, 1375
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Formal pledge
Source(s)	Th.2.
Comments	No foliation
<i>int iaer van 75 des manendaghes na zinte Maertinus dach wilcoorde Katerine van Rossem waert dat si van deser tiid voert hoer ummermeer onderwonde waerzaghens ofte wighelings dat si dan uter stat wesen zel eweliken op hoer liif</i>	

3. Aleyd, d. Peter Camscerpers (1377)

Name of accused	Aleyd, d. Peter Camscerpers
Date(s)	July 20, 1377
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Banished for 100 years
Source(s)	Th.2.
Comments	No foliation
<i>int iaer van 77 des manendaghes voer zinte Marien Magdalen dach wert Aleyd Peter Camscerpers dochter de stat verboden 100 iaer op hoer liif van dieften ende van toveryen</i>	

4. Ysoye the midwife (1417)

Name of accused	Ysoye de Vroedemoeder
Date(s)	Between February and May, 1417
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Banishment for fifty years.
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-3, fol. 61r
Comments	(1) The annotation 'clock' right above this entry suggests that this sentence was read in public. (2) Steenhuis interpreted 'vroedemoeder' as a reference to a profession (midwife). The MNL 'vroede' can also simply mean 'wise'. However, the usage of 'moeder' instead of 'wijf' does suggest that this should be read as a reference to her profession.
[fol. 61r] <i>Want Ysoye die vroedemoeder onredelike saecken alse toverie ende andere onstantelike dingen bedreven ende gedaen heeft daarom verbiet men hoer de sta[t] 50 jaer lang naestcomende ende een mile van der stat te wesen op hoer lijff</i>	

5. Fye Everts (1427)

Name of accused	Fye Everts
Date(s)	March 17, 1427
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Public punishment
Source(s)	REK2K, nr. 587-3, fols. 21v, 28v, 112r
Comments	
[fol. 21v] <i>Op sinte Geertruden dach droech een waersaechster den steen dair die vijff ledige knapen mit hoeren roeden bij waren. Gegeven elken voir horen dienst 5 scilling.</i>	
[fol. 28v] <i>Item gegeven van enen wijve die men op die kerre vuerde die gewhigelt had 10 scilling</i>	
[fol. 112v] <i>Item gegeven van Fye Everts die den steen droech, dat hij hair den steen aen ende off dede ende dat hij sij omme de stat leyde te samen voir sinen dienst --- 3 pont</i>	

6. Council *keur* (1438)

Date(s)	1438(?)
Location	Utrecht
Promulgator	Council of Utrecht
Source(s)	Unknown. Edited in Dodt van Flensburg (1846), pp. 93-94
Comments	Dodt van Flensburg claims that this <i>keur</i> is in the 1438 BSB. I have not been able to locate the source at this location. Steenhuis has suggested that Dodt van Flensburg might have made a mistake with the date, but has not found it anywhere else. I have decided to include it here for the sake of completeness.
<p><i>Also alle toverie ende besweringhe der quader gheesten, om daeroff te horen, te weten ofte sien ongheoerloeft is ende verboden inder heilighen kerke, ende hierdaer grote ghebreken in vallen, daerom verbiet die raet enen yegheliken, dat niemant gheen toverie of besweringhe of metinghe alhier en doe, noch doen en doe, ende yemant, die hierboven dede, die sellen elc verbueren vijf jaer de stat ende een mile vander stat.</i></p>	

7. Council *keur* (1439)

Date(s)	March, 1439
Location	Utrecht
Issued by	Council of Utrecht
Source(s)	BSB, nr. 16-10, fol. 196v
Comments	This resolution forbids the use of sorcery without any specification. The <i>keur</i> suggests that a manifold of men and women occupy themselves with magic, for which it sets a one-year ban. However, no actual trials appear in the record.
<p>[fol. 196v] <i>Also hier grote sprake is van toverien die beide mannen ende wijve hantieren ende hier bedriven. Daerom verbiet die raet dat niemant en tover ende die t hieren bode die sel verbueren een jair die stat ende hier heeft die raet toegeset dit uut te gaen ende die bruekige bi te brengen want dat tegens t heilige gelove is</i></p>	

8. Loefkyn the midwife (1444)

Name of accused	Loefkyn die vroyvrouw
Date(s)	July 13 – August 3, 1444 August 17 – January 31, 1445
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Acquittal of the accused. The accuser, Rycout van der Velde, was charged to pay 10,000 stones to the town and 6,000 stones to Loefkyn (= resp. 10 s. and 6 s. (Berents, <i>Misdaad</i> , pp. 52-54))
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-15, fols. 106r, 108v, 112r, 133r
Comments	This is not the only time that Rycout accused someone of using against him sorcery. See the case of Lijsbeth (1473-74) whom he accused of spoiling his bread.
<p>[fol. 106v] <i>Des manendaghes voerscreven</i> [Des manendages na sunte Benedictusdag translatio]</p> <p><i>Rycout van Velde die backer anspraker ende Loefkijn een vroukijn optie ander side sijn hoerre zaken gebleven anden rade ruerende van toverren.</i></p> <p>[fol. 108v] <i>Des woensdages voerscreven</i> [des woensdages na Jacobi]</p> <p><i>Sleten scepenen rade ende oudermans dat Rycout vanden Velde den rade en Loefkijn die vroyvrouw in tegenwoerdicheit des raets vergifnisse bidden sell ende Loefkijn geven 10.000 steens ende der stat van Utrecht te beteringe 6000 steens.</i></p> <p><i>Des manendaghes na petri ad vincula.</i></p> <p><i>Loefkijn die vroyvrouw is der zaken gebleven anden rade ruerende van dat si beruft is van tovernyen.</i></p> <p>[fol. 112r] <i>Des manendages voerscreven</i> [Des manendages na assumptionis marie]</p> <p><i>Loefkijn Wouter Janssoen wijff mit horen man ansprakersche ende Jacob van den Velde angesproken sijn hoerre zaken gebleven an den rade ruerende van dat Jacob Loefkijn gesocht ende misdaen soude hebben onredelick</i></p> <p>[fol. 133r] <i>Des sonnendages vorscreven</i> [Des sonnendages na sinte Pouwels dach conversio]</p> <p><i>Sleten scepenen, rade, ende oudermans dat Jacop van der Velde uut der buerkerck comende op ten huse bloets hoefts den rade ende Loefkijn dat vroukijn die hi missproken heeft vergifnisse bidden sall ende Onse Vrouwe te buerkerck ene keerse geven van enen halven ponde wasses ende wilcoren dat hi dit selven vroukijn in woerden off in werken niet misdoen en sell.</i></p>	

9. Lysbeth Sproncs (1445)

Name of accused	Lysbeth Sproncs
Date(s)	October 27, 1445
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Banishment from the town for the duration of five years
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-5, fol. 148r
Comments	
<p>[fol. 148r] <i>Swoensdaghes voerscreven</i> [s woensdages na sunte Crispijn ende Crispiniaen]</p> <p><i>Sleten scepenen, rade ende oudermans, datmen Lijsbeth Sproncs die stat verbieden sel v jaer lanck van toveryen, alse vander spil te doen lopen ende daer mede te raden op luden dat sij gestolen souden hebben.</i></p>	

10. Dirk Corsgenssone (1451)

Name of accused	Dirk Corsgenssone
Date(s)	November 24, 1451
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Banishment from town and Sticht for life
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-7, fol. 34v.
Comments	
<p>[fol. 34v] <i>Des woensdages voirscreven</i> [Des woensdages op Sinte Katerinnavont]</p> <p><i>Overdroegen scepenen, rade ende oudermans, dat Dirc Corsgens sone de backer om zijnre toverien wille die dair hij mede omme te gaen pleecht, optie kaec sel staen ende wesen uuter stat ende gestichte ewelic op zijn lijff.</i></p>	

11. Dirc Backer (1455)

Name of accused	Dirc Backer
Date(s)	June 14, 1455
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Banishment from town and Sticht for life
Source(s)	BSB, nr. 16-12, fol. 90r
Comments	Berents has suggested that this may be Dirc Corgenssone, who was banished in a similar case 4 years earlier.
[fol. 90r] <i>Want Dirc Backer hem zelve te behelpen pleecht mit logentaele ende toverien. Hieromme zel men denzelven Dirc morgen geselen opter plaetsen ende men verbiet hem daer en tendens onse stat ende stichte aen dese sijde der IJselen ewelic op zijn lijff</i>	

12. Harmenken van Vianen (1462)

Name of accused	Harmenken Willemsdochter van Vianen
Date(s)	May 5-8, 1462
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Death by fire
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-9, fol. 64r BSB, nr. 16-13, fol. 140r REK2K, nr. 626-2, fols. 6r, 9r, 47r, 51r, 76r, 77r-77v
Comments	
[fol. 64r] <i>Des woensdaghes na Crucis Inventionis</i> <i>Sleten scepenen, raide ende oudermans dat men Harmeken gheboeren van Vianen rechten zell mitten brande aen hoer live om des willen dat zij mit manieren die niet zeglijc en zijn vergeven heeft enen gheheten Jacob Elgher zoe dat hij dull geworden is ende dat zelve oick meer personen ingegeven woude hebben had zij gekont zoe zij hoer dat zelve all belijet heeft</i>	
[fol. 140r] <i>Des saterdaghes na Crucis Inventionis</i> <i>Want Harmenken Willemsdochter, geboren van Vianen, mit manieren dat niet zecghe en is, vergeven enen geheten Jacob Elger, zoe dat hij dull geworden is, ende datzelve oick meer personen ingegeven woude hebben, had zij ghekunt, zoe zij hoer zelve dat all belijet, zoe zel men rechten mitten brande aen hoere live.</i>	
[fol. 6r] <i>Item opten achten dach in Mey doe die rechtinge mitten brande gheschiede an Hermanken</i>	

Willemsdochter, wert verteert bij den overstenen scepenen, vive, dienren ende den genen die mede uut waren over der rechtinge des smorgens ten ontbijten ende des middages ter maeltijt te samen 8,5 Rijns gulden

[fol. 9r]

Item van 4 reysen die knapen die roeden te leveren als doe men twijf bernde, doe men theylige sacrament bynne omme droech, doe men dat scuddekorfs broet gaf ende doe men t heylige sacrament buten omme droech van elke reyse 5 scelling, maect --- 1 pont.

[fol. 51r]

Item gedaen 2 reysen mitter scuut om ryse ende ryet te halen ende onder t gerecht te brengen, een wijf bij te bernen, te samen --- 2 pont

[fol. 76r]

Item gegeven Evert den steenwaerder van 5 weken ende 4 dage dat hij Hermenken die gebernt wert t eten gegeven hadde van elken daghe enen braspenninck [...]

Item des nachts te verwaren doe men Hermenken rechten soude, worden gedronken opten vleishuse 4 kannen biers ende verbernt 1 pont keerssen van 8 wit [...]

[fol. 77r: Harmenken is mentioned in a list of people who had been tortured by the executioner]

[fol. 77v]

Item meyster Coenraet verdient an Hermenken te bernen ende te graven ende oec den staec in te graven ende van yzerdraet, nagelen ende spade te samen --- 6 pont

13. Lijsbeth Borren (1473-1473)

Name of accused	Lijsbeth Borre
Date(s)	August 1473 – September 28, 1474
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Oorvede, followed by exile
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-10, fols. 95r, 96r, 97v-98r, 104v, 146r, 156v BSB, nr. 16-14, fol. 195r BSB, nr. 16-15, fols. 3r-3v, 5r, 6r, 8r REK2K, nr. 626-13, fol. 49v
Comments	Possibly part of a larger family or political feud.
[RDB, fol. 95r] [Des woensdages na Bartolomei] <i>Kenden scepenen, raide ende oudermans dat Rycout van Velde zijne aenspraike, die hij Lijsbeth, Arnt Borren wijf gedaen heft, voer den raide bewezen heeft als recht is ende dat hij mit dat bewijs voldaan heft ende Rycout zel van der poerte gaen terstont. Ende scepenen ende raide ende oudermans zijn overdragen dat Lijsbeth in gevangnisse bliven zel ende die oversten mitten vive zellen mit Lijsbeth spreken ende brengen t den rade weder bij dat zij aen hoer vernemen zonder pijnne ende men zel hoer voer den raide niet bespreken.</i>	

[RDB, fol. 96r]

[Des woensdages na Nativitatis Marie]

Overdroegen scepenen, raide ende oudermans dat die vive Lijsbeth, Arnt Borren wijf, op die banck ende anders bezuecken zellen van zij berufticht is van t broet te verderven. Dat gedaen zellen zij t goent zij ondervynden den raide weder bijbrengen

[RDB, fol. 97v]

Des woensdages na sunte Fransiscusdach

Want Lijsbeth, Arnt Borren wijf, gezeyt heeft zoe lange zij of hoerre kinder of ymand van hoeren telgen woenaftich waeren aen den Steenwech zoe en soude gheen backer daeromtrent woenaftich deghe hebben uut zynen backen. T welc [fol. 98r] die raet alzoe ter waerheyt bevonden heeft, dat zij zulke woerde gesproken heeft ende daer voert op overdragen dat men hoer na gewoenten der stadt bezueken ende mitten scarpsten examineren zoude waerom zij alzulke woerde voertghezet ende ghesproicken had, dat alzoe gheschiet ende ghehantiert is. Daerom hebben scepenen, raide ende oudermans gesleten dat zij voer den raide komen zel ende bidden den raide vergifnisse. Ende Lijsbeth, ende Arnt Bor hoer man voers., ende Lijsbethen kindere, zellen wilkoeren, loven ende zweren aen handen des raits op hoeren liven hyrom den oversten raiden ofte viven noch Rycout van Velde noch zynen kinderen ofte maghen noch niemand anders niet te misdoen noch doen misdoen bij hem zelve of ymant anders van hoererwegen heymelich noch openbaer in woerden noch in werken in enigerwijs. Ende Arnt ende Lijsbeth voers. ende Lijsbethen kindere zellen goede wittaftige borgen zetten aen handen des raits alze waer t zake dat zijlude of ymant van hoererwegen ghebreclich ghevonden worden in enigen punten voers. deze zake ruerende ende die broikaftige voervluchtich worde ende ruuynde alzoe verre dat hem die rait niet brengen en mochte dat zij alsdan zoe dicke dat geschiede telken verboert zellen hebben hondert oude scilde totter stat behoef zonder enige qwijtscheldinge daervan te doen. Daervoer die borgen altoes gehouden zellen wezen, behouden den broikaftigen zynre corresey als voers. staet. Ende deze wilkoeren ende borchtochten zellen die voers. personen doen, eer Lijsbeth van den poerten gaen zal. Behoudeliken oick of t zake waere, dat zij of ymant yet te zeegen hadden dat zij dat zullen moigen doen mit rechte ende anders niet.

[REK2K, fol. 49v]

Item meester Coenraet voirs. [the executioner] Lijsken die bacster boven ende beneden gescoren [...]

[RDB, fol. 104v] 1473

[Des woensdages op Sunte Poncianusavont]

Claerden scepenen, raide ende oudermans die voerslitinge, ghesleten van Lijsbeth, Arnt Borren wijf, des woensdaghes na sunte Franciscusdach lestleden, alze dat Lijsbeth ende Arnt Borre ende Lijsbetthen kindere wilkoeren, loven ende zweeren zellen [... formulation similar to what is written on fol. 98r] ende dit zellen die voerseide personen mede loven in brieven. Ende die rait heeft hem uut graciën verdragen dat zij ghene borchtochte doen en sellen voer die hondert oude scilde. Ende hebben die zelve parthijen yet op malcanderen te zeegen, dat moigen zij doen mit rechte ende anders niet. Ende deze wilkoer zellen zij binnen acht dagen naistkomende doen

[BSB, fol. 195r]

Die raidt laet weten ende gebiedt Lijsbeth, Arnt Borren wijff [...], dat zij binnen vierthien daighen naistkomende voer den raide komen ind voldoen die slitinghe die hem laetswerff overghelseten wort bij thien ponden

[BSB, fol. 3r]

[Des sonnendaiges op Sunte Peters dach]

Want Lijsbeth, Arnt Borren wijff [...], andersdaiges mitter clocken gheboden waren voer onsen raide te komen ende te voldoen die slithinge, die hem overghesleten is ghewest bij thien ponde ende niet ghekomen en sijn, dairom laet hem die rait weten, dat sij noch voir onse raide komen ende voldoen binnen achte daigen naistkomende bij twintich ponde

[BSB, fol. 3v]

[Des saterdaighes nae Asschelwoensdaighe]

Lijsbeth, Arnt Borren wijff, [...], andersdaiges mitter clocken gheboden waren voir onsen stadt raide te komene ende te voldoen die slitinghe die hem overgesleten is ghewest bij twintich ponde ende niet ghekomen en sijn, daerom laet hem die rit weten, dat hij noch voir onse raide kome ende voldoe binnen achte daigen naistkomende bij vijftich ponden

[BSB, fol. 5r]

[Opten sonnendach Judica]

Want Lijsbet, Aernt Borren wijf, [...], andersdages mitter clocken geboeden waren voir onsen rade te komene ende te voldoen die slitinge die hem overghesleten is gheweest bij vijftich ponden ende niet gekomen en sijn, dairom laet hem die raet weten, dat zij noch voir onsen rayde komen ende voldoen binnen achte dagen naistkomende bij hoerer borgerscap

[BSB, fol. 6r]

[Opten Beloiken Paischavont]

Want Lijsbeth, Aernt Borren wijff, [...], andersdages mitter clocken geboden wair voir onsen rayde te komene ende te voldoen die slitinge die hem overgesleten is geweest bij hore borgerscap, ende nyet gekomen en sijn, dairom neemt men hem hore borgerscap. Ende die raet laet hem weten dat zij noch koemen voir onsen rayde ende voldoen bynnen achte dagen naystkomende of dairenthenden zel men hem die stadt verbieden.

[BSB, fol. 8r]

[Des dinxdages na Philipi ende Jacobi]

Want Lijsbeth, Aernt Borren wijf, [...], gheboden mit onser clocken vervolcht zijn geweest te komene voir onsen rayde ende te voldoen die slitinge die hem overgesleten is ende niet gekomen en sijn, dairom verbiet men hem onse stadt ende ene mile van der stat te bliven eweliken op hoeren live

[RDB, fol. 146r]

[Des manendaghes na Letaere]

Jan Luytgens, Gheryt Hugens uut den ouden raide, Gheryt Zoudenbalch, Tyman Clueting uut den nywen raide zijn ghesickt van Lijsbeth, Arnt Borren wijff ende hoerer kinderen.

[RDB, fol. 156v]

[Des woensdages voer Michaelis]

Die raide out ende nywe hebben uut gratien bilieft ende geconsentiert Lijsbeth, Aernt Borren wijff, Willem, Ghijsbert Scaeyens, genoempt Boechout, Jan, Ghijsbert Scaeyens, die zadelmaker, dat zij weder binnen onse stat zellen moigen komen op alzulke oervede als hem luden off ghesleten woert in den jaere van lxxiii des woensdages op Sunte Poncianus avont [...] ende Ricout van Velde zell oick wilkoeren, loven, zekeren ende zweeren mit zijnen kinderen buten brieven den overste, raiden, ofte

viven van onser stat, noch Lijsbeth, Aernt Borren wijff, mit horen kinderen, vrunden ofte magen niet te misdoen noch te doen misdoen in woerden noch in werken in enigerwijs.

14. Met in den Os (1474)

Name of accused	Met in den Os
Date(s)	January 19, 1474
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Formal pledge and a fine
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-10, fol. 134v
Comments	
[fol. 134v] [Des woensdaghes na Antonii]	
<i>Sleten scepenen, raide ende oudermans, want Met in den Os hoer beholpen heeft in enen schijn van toeverijen ende oick enen vROUTGEN genoempt Merytgen dyfte aenghetegen heeft, t welck zij niet bewijsen en kan als recht is. Alze dat Met dairom den raide vergifnisse bidden zell ende wilkoeren bij zwaerer correxy tottes raits goetduncken hoer van deser tijt niet te behelpen mit eniger toverijen ende geven der stadt ter beteringe 25 pont te betalene binnen 14 dagen, alle dage bij enen pont.</i>	

15. Meyster Pauwels (1477)

Name of accused	Meyster Pauwels
Date(s)	January 31, 1477
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Banishment
Source(s)	BSB, nr. 16-15, fol. 84r
Comments	
[fol. 84r] [Des vridages na conversionis Pauli]	
<i>Want een genoempt meyster Pauwels, die hem vele meysterien in medicinen ende anders onderwonden heeft ende voir die kercke binnen onser stat ende oick aan onser stat poerten brieve laten opslaen dair vele onduechdeliker ende onbehoirliker woerden inne bescreven staen, dairom verbiet men denselven meister Pauwels den stat ende ende mile van der stat te blivene eweliken op zijn lijff.</i>	

16. Arnoldus van Werven et al. (1487)

Name of accused	Arnoldus van Werven Aeltgen, Arnoldus' wife Gheertgen Fermers Aryaen Vlasman Aryaen's wife
Date(s)	January 15, 1487
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Public punishment and a fine
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-13, fol. 124r
Comments	
[fol. 124r] [Des manendages na Ponciani]	
<p><i>Want Gheertgen Fermers ende Aeltgen, Arnoldus wijf van Werven ongottelike hanterige gehad hebben ruerende ongelove mit eerden balliken te maken, daerinne besloten worden namen van personen om enen baerschuligen te ondervynden van dieverije daer zij enige personen ende goede lude mede befaemt hadden. Soe sleten scepenen ende rade dat zij comen zellen uut der Buerkerck sonder hueck ende covel voer den rade en bidden den rade vergifnisse. Ende zellen elx geven ter beteringe 10 rijns gulden aen gelde ende zellen opt Vleyshuys wesen ende bliven tertijt zij hiervan den cameraer vernuecht zellen hebben</i></p> <p><i>Want Aryaen Vlasman tot Polsbroeck aen die Vaert ende tot anderen plaetsen ondersoeck gedaen heeft ruerende van desen ongotteliker hanteringe bovengescr. Ende hij oick zijn wijf zulke hanterige mit ballekens te maken ende sulck ondersoeck te doen, in hoeren huse gehad hebben, goede lude befamende. Soe sleten scepenen ende rade dat zij komen zellen uut der Buerkerck sonder huyck ende covel voer den rade ende bidden den rade vergifnisse ende zellen elx geven te beteringe 10 rijns gulden aen gelde. Aletgen, Aryaen ende zijn wijf hebben vergifnisse gebeden.</i></p> <p><i>Want Arnoldus, coster ten Heyligen Sacrament, mede handadich is geweest in deser zaken bovengescreven ende bervoets om een becken lesende gegeaen heeft, soe sleten scepenen ende rade dat hij en sonnedage naistkomende bervoets ende bloetshoefs, mit eenre kerssen van 1 pont was gaen zel voer den processien om die Buerkerck, ende zel den rade vergifnisse bidden.</i></p>	

17. Geryt Willemsone (1493)

Name of accused	Geryt Willemsone
Date(s)	September 18, 1493
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Pillory and banishment
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-15, fol. 52v
Comments	
[fol. 52v] <i>Des woensdages na Lamberti</i>	

Want Geryt Willemsone hem behulpen heeft ende omgegaen heeft mit manieren van toeverijen, soe sleten scepenen ende raet, dat hij en vrijdage naistkomende op die kaeck staen zel mit enen titelbrief ende zel uter stat wesen ende ene mile wegese daervan bliven ewelijck ende zel behoerlijck oervede doen.

18. Wychmoet van Borckloe (1514)

Name of accused	Wychmoet van Borckloe
Date(s)	July 28, 1514
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht + dr Wynant of Arnhem
Verdict	Banishment from city and Nedersticht
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-15, fol. 52v MREK2K, nr. 627-5
Comments	Wychmoet was questioned by the Guelders jurist dr Wynant.
<p>[RDB, fol. 74v] [Des vrydages na sunt Jacobs dag] <i>Want Wychmoet van Borckloe befaemt ende aengetast wesende van toeveryen dat men noch ter tijt aen hoir ter wair heyt en nyet en heeft konnen bevijnden soe sleten scepenen, raide ende oudermannen dat zij off gaen ende uuter stat en t Nedersticht van Utrecht wesen sel.</i></p> <p>[MREK2K, unfoliated] <i>Item ons oversten mit een deel vanden rade mit die vijf hebben ghetert inden [...] beloept 7 gulden ende noch van oncosten, ghegeven van dat wyff van Groel, diemen meende dat een tovernaeres was, ende van examineren samen 6 gulden.</i> [...] <i>Ende doe doctoer Wijnant dat wijf belas die ghetovert soude hebben facit 10 stuvers.</i></p>	

19. Mergriet van Zwertzen (1515)

Name of accused	Mergriet van Zwertzen
Date(s)	October 29 – December 20, 1515
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Released
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-18, fol. 96r RDB, nr. 13-18, fol. 99v REK2K, nr. 626-40, fol. 14r
Comments	
<p>[RDB, fol. 96r] <i>Des dynsdages nae sunte Symon ende Judendach apostolorum</i> [...]</p>	

Overcomen ende belieft bij den raide dat men die vrou, befaemt wesende van toeveryen, in een herberge sel moegen bestaden, ende enen hoir bijscicken opter stat cost; ende men sel voert scriven in Den Haige an enen coepman die voertijts vervolch dairop gedaen heeft, om te zien wat hij dairtoe doen will. Zij nochtans inder stadt vangenisse blivende ter tijt toe zij onsculdich bevonden sel worden.

[RDB, fol. 99v]

Des donredages op sunt-Tomasavont

[...]

Sleten scepenen, raide ende oudermannen, ende beliefdn dat men Vredericks Verwoerde wedue geven sel van Mergriet van Zwertsen, die van toveryen berufticht was, te houden 52 daigen, elcx dages, soe lange sij se gehouden heeft 5 stivers current. Ende dat zij voortan hoer cruys te kercken dragen, een ander stede hueren, ende hoers self cost houden sell moegen, nochtans blivende in s raets handen ter tijt toe zij vrij gekent zel werden.

[REK2K, fol. 14r]

Item, belieft bij den schepenen rade ende oudermans, datmen Frerick Verwoerden wedue geven sel, van Margriet van Zwertssen die van toverien berufticht was te houden 52 dage lanck, elck dages 5 stivers current maect 13 gulden current

20. Luyt Blancks (1519)

Name of accused	Luyt Blancks
Date(s)	November 28-29, 1519
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht + Mr Symon of Cleves
Verdict	Burned at the stake
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-19, fol. 21r REK2K, nr. 626-44, fols. 8r, 9v, 12v, 14r, 22r, 30r-30v, 44v
Comments	Luyt's husband, Jan Aryaenss. Blanck, and her son, Aryaen Janss. Blanck, were investigated too, but the sources do not provide information other than that they are set free under the condition that they make a formal pledge. (RDB, nr. 13-19, fol. 20v)

[RDB, fol. 21r]

[des manendages na sunte Katrijnen dach]

Tot live Luyt Jan Blancken wijff een toevennaerster, zijn gescict Willem die Wail van Vronesteyn, Jacob van Voerd, Dirck Knoep, Aelbert Foeck, ende Jan van Hegehuysen

[...]

Sleten scepenen, raide ende oudermannen dat men Luyt Jan Blancken wijff overleveren sel den scout, gefroent als een toevennaerster, ende die scepenen zellen recht wijsen.

Nota: Hoeren vrunt ofte boel was geheyt Sarrecijn, als zij onder meer beleden heeft

[REK2K, fol. 8r]

Item, die stadt geschreven aen den hertoge van Cleve, om sijnen scerpreger, genoemt meyster Symon, om een vrouw, genoemt Luyt Blancks, van toeverije alhier gevangen, te examineeren,

diewelcke gebarnt worde op sunte Andriesavont, den meyster gegeven twaalf gouden gulden van gewichte.

[REK2K, fol. 9v]

Item, soe heeft Dirck Gelissen van Dolre ontfangen van Jan Spruyt, cameraer, ses rijns gulden ende hij weder leverde Henrick van Santen, stadt rijdende boede, 6 gulden min een stoter, dat hij van wissel ende oncost gegeven hadde om de scerprechter te halen van den hertoich van Cleve, die hij medebrocht.

[REK2K, fol. 12v]

Item, doe Luyt gevangen sat, ende men hoer barnen soude, soe heeft Cornelis Goesenssoen uut beveil van den oversten, op Sunte Katrinenpoert die priesters, minrebrueders, cellebrueders, stadt ende scoutendienres, 4 daigen lanck, s middages ende s avonts te eten ende drincken gegeven, soe die scout die cost optie tijt nyet en dede, ende hebben in alles verteert 6 gulden 10 stuvers.

[REK2K, fol. 14r]

Item, doe men die soen van Luyt Blancks socht, hebben die vive verteert an cost ende bier 2,5 gulden.

[REK2K, fol. 22r]

Item, soe die vive in t Veen waren om die potten vande toverije te halen, ende tuychnisse meer te hoeren, ende waren uut met hore dienres [...].

[REK2K, fol. 30r]

Item, op sunte Katrijnen dach sijn die viven geweest in die Westbroick mit hore dienres, doe die toevernaerster beleden had dat sij t heylich sacrament ontffeng, uut hoeren mont genomen ende dair op een steen geleyt hadde, om dat te sueken [...]

[REK2K, fol. 30v]

Item, doer beveil van den raide hebben die vive die soen van de toevenaerster gesocht gevangen op sunte Katrijnen poert ende voert geexamineert [...]

[REK2K, fol. 44v]

Item Gijsbert Peterssoen utgeweest mit meyster Symon scerprechter in 's hertoge van Cleve en de brocht hem weder in't land van Cleve [...]

21. Agniese van de Lage Weide (1519-1525)

Name of accused	Agniese van de Lage Weide
Date(s)	December 12, 1519 – June 9, 1525
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Acquittal after years in prison
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-19, fols. 22r, 52r, 64r RDB, nr. 13-20, fol. 23r REK2K, nr. 626-45 fols. 4r, 6v, 12v, 14v, 17r REK2K, nr. 626-46, fols. 9r, 9v, 10r, 21v REK2K, nr. 626-47, fols. 75v-76v REK2K, nr. 626-48, fols. 10r, 73v-74v
Comments	

[RDB, fol. 22r]

[Des manendages op sunte Luycen avont, 1519]

Agniese Huyg Gerritss. wijff contra Henrick den Hollander, ruerende dat Henrick geroepen ende geseyt soude hebben dat zij een nothoer ende toevennaerster wesen soude. Hij antwoerde dat hij haer nyet genoemt en had, zij vermat hoer bewijs, ende want zij noch nyet bewesen heeft als zij hoir vermeten heeft, soe is zij boven in vangenisse doen gaan.

[RDB, fol. 52r]

[Des woensdages na Lucye, 1520]

Belieft bij den raide, dat Thomas Janss., steenweerder, hebben sel van dat hij Nyesgen uut die Lege Weyde opten toern wedermoet t eten ende drincken gegeven heeft 38 weken lanck, s dages tot nu toe 3 stivers, ende voortan s dages 2,5 stiver, des sel hij se over den anderden dach besoeken ende aenrichten, ende dit totter tijt toe dat sij die pot heeft. Ende wes hem betaelt is, sel affslach wesen.

[RDB, fol 63r]

[Des dijnsdages na invocavit, 1521]

Die oude raet heeft den nyen rait die moderatie van Nyesgen uute Lege Weyde te onderhouden bevolen

[RDB, fol. 64r]

[Des vrijdages na Oculi, 1521]

Overcomen bij den raide dat men voertan Nyesgen uut die Lege Weyde op wedermoet liggende, die met toeveryen berufticht is, van der stat wegen nyet meer gheven en zel, dan water off scerbyer ende broet.

[REK2K, fol. 4r]

Item gegeven Thomas Janssoen, steenweerder, van 32 dagen t eten ende te drincken te geven Nyesgen uut die Lege Weyde. s dages twee stivers [...]

[REK2K, fol. 6v]

Item Heynrick Willamssoen, backer, heeft uut bevel na ouder gewoenten het voer halff jair den gevangen broet ende scerbier ghelevert ende Nyesgen is dair mede in gerekent, leggende op Tollestegepoert. T samen vier gulden ellef stivers [...]

[REK2K, fol. 12v]

[Ibidem]

[REK2K, fol. 14v]

Item zoe heeft meester Aelbert, stadt surgijn, uut bevel van den oversten verbonden Nyesgen in de Lege Weyde beyde hair benen die gesollen waeren ende genesen ende dairvoir belieft 10 pont.

[REK2K, fol. 17r]

Item gegeven Thomas Janssoen, steenweerder, uut bevel van den oversten, van dat hij Nyesgen uut die Leghe Weyde, water ende broet gebrocht ende besorcht heeft ende heeft somtijts een vrou bij hair gebracht die hair havende soe als zij gebreckelick was etc. ende hem gegeven termaent 20 stivers bedragende een heel jair myn die tijt van vijff weken ende twee dagen [...]

[REK2K, fol. 9r]

Item zoe heeft meyster Aelbert, stadt zurgijn, doer bevel van den oversten zeven weken lanck

gegaen over Nyesgen in de Leechwey die scuerbuyck ende groet gebreck in de mondt hadde, belieft 2 gulden facit --- 10 pont.

[REK2K, fol. 9v]

Item Thomas voirscreven heeft noch 12 weecken Nyesgen uut die Leechweyde op Tollesteech poort t eten ende drincken gebrocht alle daich ende over den anderden dach overmits hoir crancten ende zieten zij hadde van den scuerbuyck heeft tot hoer moeten gaen ende dicwels vrouwen bij hoer gebrocht die hoer gehavent ende gewassen hebben, is hem hier voor belieft ----- 24 pont.

Item noch zoe heeft Thomas Nyesgen voirscreven van mey tot sunt Jacob toe hoer als voirscreven t eten ende te drincken ende hoer noetturft gebrocht over den anderden dach ende oick vrouwen als voirscreven bij hoer gebrocht etc., belieft ---- 24 pont.

[REK2K, fol. 10r]

Item Thomas heeft noch van zunt Jacob tot Sunt Victoers toe Nyesgen voirscreven t eten, te dricken ende anders ende oick vrouwen als voirscreven bij hoir gebrocht etcetera, alsoe hoer man hoer verliet ende nyet meer na hoer om en zach, belieft hem als voirscreven ---- 24 pont.

[REK2K, fol. 21v]

Item alsoe Nyesken uut die Leechweyde op weder moet gevangen leyt soe is t dat Thomas Janssoen, steenweerder, hoer uut beveil van de borgermeyster van de vive redelicken t eten ende te drincken gegeven heeft die leste vier maenden soe hoer man hoir nyet meer t eten noch te drincken ende gheeft noch en brenct ende hij heeft oick om den anderden dach ende dicwijls alle daich overmits hoer zieten na hoer gesien ende tot hoir gegaen ende oick dicwijls vrouwen bij hoer gebrocht gehadt die hoir havenden, belieft hem dair voir ---- 32 pont.

[REK2K, fol. 75v]

Item soe heeft Tomas Janssoen, steenweerder, een heel zijsoen van sunt Jacob tot sunte Victoer Nyesgen uute lege weyde hoer redelicke noettroft aen bier, vleys, visch ende anders bestelt ende doen havenen overmits siecte, daer voer hem belieft is na ouder gewoenten ter weeck 2 pont, facit -- -- 24 pont.

[REK2K, fol. 76r]

Item soe heeft Tomas Janssoen van Lichtmis tot Meye toe t yerste zijsoen Nyesgen hoeren redelick noettorf aen bier, vleys, visch ende anders bestelt ende doen havenen overmits siecte, daer voer belieft na ouder gewoenten ter weeck 2 pont facit ---- 24 pont

[REK2K, fol. 76v]

*Item noch soe heeft Tomaes Janssoen den selven Nyesgen oick van Mey tot sunt Jacob gegeven hoer noetorff als boven na vermogen zijnen supplicatie belieff daer off 24 pont
Item soe heeft noch Tomas Janssoen dat leste zijsoen van sinte Victoer tot Lichtmisse den voergen. Nyesgen hoer noetorff van eten ende drinken gegeven ende doen havenen na vermeldene zijn supplicatie daer off belieft ---- 32 pont*

[REK2K, fol. 10r]

Item Heynrick Willemssoen, backer, heft nahalffjair den gevangen, soe der veel geweest zijn ende so Nyesgen gevangen leyt geleendt den gevangen broet ende scerbier, twelck beloept 9 gulden, 10 stuver, 3 wit ontfangen, dairtegens uter gevangen bus 13 stuver, belieft 8 gulden, 17 stuver, 3 wit [...]

[REK2K, fol. 73v]

Item Thomas Janssoen heeft Nyesgen uute Lege Weyde dat leste zijsoen van sunte Victoer tot Lichtmisse hoer noetturft van eeten ende drincken gegeven ende doen havenen. Na vermelden zijn

supplicatie dairoff belieft ---- 32 pont.

[REK2K, fol. 74r]

Item noch soe heeft Thomas Janssoen denzelven Nyesgen t leste verleden zijsoen als van Sunt Jacob tot Sunte Victoer gegeven hoer noetturft als boven. Na vermoegen zijn supplicatie dairvoer belieft --- - 24 pont.

Item soe heeft Thomas Janssoen van Lichtmis tot Mey toe dysterste zijsoen Nyesgen hoer redelick nootturft aen bier, vleys, visch ende anders bestelt ende doen havenen overmits siecte. Dairvoer belieft ---- 24 pont.

[REK2K, fol. 74v]

Item noch soe heeft Thomas Janssoen den selven Nyesgen oick van Meye tot sunt Jacob gegeven hoer nootturft als boven. Na vermoegen zijn supplicatie dairvoer belieft ---- 24 pont.

[RDB, fol. 23r]

[Des vrijdages voer Pynxteren, 1525]

Sleten scepenen, raide ende oudermannen, dat Nysgen, Huyg Gerrits wijff, die lange gevangen geseten heeft opter stat toern, soe se beruft was met toeveryen, afgaen sel moegen, des sel Huyge Gerritss hoir cost an Thomas Janss. die hem noch onbetaelt zijn betalen, ende dat zij behoirlicke oirvede doen sell in brieven, ende dat se borgen setten sel, die mede in zegele ende brieff loven sellen, indien enich gebreck tot enigher tyt aen hoir gevonden worde, dat zij se dan weder in der stat handen leveren sellen oft dat se selve in de stede gaen sitten sellen, ende oick den scade beteren sellen, elcx een voerall, borge Huyce Gerritss., hoir man, Henrick Jordenss., raymaker, Geryt Dircss., leydecker in de Struys, Jan Gerritszoen in Papendorp ende Jacob Gerritszoen in Papendorp, samentlick ende elcx een voerall.

[addendum] *Item, dese voirss. vroue met hoer dochter is naderhant anno 26, omtrent assumptio Marie, doir beclach van hoer gemeen bueren aan die lege weyde, wederom gevangen.*

22. Heylwich (1521)

Name of accused	Heylwich, master Lievens' widow
Date(s)	August 20, 1521
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Barred from professing medicine and a fine
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-19, fols. 71v-72r
Comments	

[RDB, fol. 71v]

[Des Dynsdages na Assumptionis Marie]

Want Heylwych meyster Lievens wedue hoer meysterens van medicine onderwonden heeft ende nadat zij Egbert Jacobssoens wijff Neelken medicijn ingegeven had die nyet en holp, hoer om den hals gehangen heeft een noetscael. Dairin was een levende spinne ende een soeghe wesende een manier van wychelyen. Soe sleten scepenen, raide ende oudermannen dat Heylwich voirscreven den raide [fol. 71r] bidden sel om vergiffnisse ende en sel voertan geen urynael uuthangen ende sel der stad ter beteringe gheven 25 rijngulden current ende Egbert Jacobssoen voirscreven [...] gouden

gulden van gewicht voer zijn meystergelt hij hoer gegeven ende die onlede hij ende zijn wijff gehadt hebben. Te betalen bynnen vierthien daigen naestkomende off zij sel daerenthenden optie kaeck staen.

23. Enquiring for information on how to deal with sorcerers (1526-27)

Date(s)	August 21, 1526
Location	Ratingen, Wesel, Brabant
Source(s)	REK2K, nr. 626-51, fol. 32v-33r REK2K, nr. 626-52, fol. 22r, 48r
Comments	
<p>[REK2K, fol. 32v] <i>Item op den 21en dach in Augusto is Frederick voirscreven geweest mit brieff aen den scerprichter van Ratingen in t lant van Bergen ende most op allen plaetsen vernemen die gelegentheyt van den [toeve]naerstes ende nam een dienre van Wesell mede bij rade van den oversten die mitten scerprichter wel bekent was op sijnen cost, was uut 12 dagen [...]</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 33r] <i>Item den 12en Septembris is Vrederick voirscreven [Vrederick, stadbode] voirscreven geweest mit brieven aen den scerprichter van Den Bosch dien hij mede brocht mit twee dienes dair hij over twee dagen na wachten most. Ende heeft hoere costen over all moeten betalen die zij verteerden ende oyck sciphuyr, wagenhuyr [...]</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 22r] <i>In den yersten is Vrederick Ketelaer, stadt boede, gescict geweest aen den scerprechter van Den Bosch om bynnen te halen. Soe heeft hij dairomme groote onconsten gedaen mit wijngelagen hem gewillicht ende mit sommighe hem doen veyligen alsoe dat se voer ende na verteerden ende van vracht saemn 9 gulden hollants. Was uut 6. Dagen. S dages 5 stuver hollants, belieft t samen 13 gulden 2 stuver 6 wit.</i></p> <p><i>Item soe heeft die zelve boide den scerprechter wederom thuyt gebrocht ende geveylicht mit vijff persoenen zoe heeft hij alle die teringe ende oncoste van der stadtwegen moiten betalen belopende 7 gulden Hollants. Item aen den penningen verloren 14 stuver Hollants. Ende was daertoe uut 5 dagen. S dages 5 stuver Hollants. Facit tsamen ende belieft 11 gulden 3 stuver 9 wit.</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 48r] <i>Item soe heeft Meyster Jan van Balen, scerprechter van Den Bosch, drie toevenaerstes ter justicie gebrocht mitten vuere daer voer hem belieft is van elcke persoene te rechten 4 gulden Hollants, belieft --- 15 gulden.</i></p> <p><i>Item alsoe die voerscreven meyster enen bode van den Bosch bij hem had ende bij hem blijven most tot dat hij weder thuyt quam den tijt van 11 dagen, s dages belieft 3 stuver Hollants voer zijn dachgelt, facit --- 2 gulden 1 stuver 3 wit</i></p> <p><i>Item soe heeft dese voirscreven scerprechter te herberch geweest tot Goerloff in t Zwerte Hoeft, aldaer gelegen 10 dagen, verteert mitten ghenen die daer bij quamen 10 gulden Hollants en gehadt 67 kannen wijns de quaert 3 stuver Hollants. Item aen bastert romenij ende brandewijn gehadt 4 gulden. Item de knechts gescenct die hem veylichde 20 stuver tot een tonne byers. Noch van scuythuer totte Vaert toe 6 stuver.</i></p>	

24. Agniese of the Lage Weide (1526-1527)

Name of accused	Agniese of the Lage Weide
Date(s)	August 6, 1526 – February 21, 1527
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht and Jan van Balen
Verdict	Execution by fire
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-20, fols. 23r, 104r REK2K, nr. 626-51, fols. 8r, 9r, 12r, 18r, 60r-60v, 61v REK2K, nr. 626-52s, fol. 5v, 45r, 48r
Comments	
<p>[RDB, fol. 23r] <i>Item, dese voirss. vroue met hoer dochter is naderhant anno 26, omtrent assumptio Marie, doir beclach van hoer gemeen bueren aan die lege weyde, wederom gevangen.</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 59r] <i>Item op sunte Sixtusdach soe is Nyesgen uute Leechwey gevangen ende die steenweerder heeft hoer uut beveel van den borgermeyster van de vijff mit zynen vennoten den tijd van 26 weken tot Lichtmisse toe op sunte Katrijnenpoert t eten ende te drincken gegeven ter redelicker wijs als hij den in jaere van 23 gedaen hadde, eyscht ter weeck 2 pont belieft ---- 52 pont</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 8r] <i>Item zoe heeft meyster Aelbert die Rover stadt cyurgijn uut beveel van den vive t vroumens dat opte poert lach alle hoer haer overall off gescoren [...]</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 9r] <i>Item meyster Aelbert die Rover stadmeyster heeft uut beveel van den borgermeyster van den vive ende zijner vennoten Nyesgen uut die Leechwey hoer haer overall affgescoren doe men se pijnigen soude [...]</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 12r] <i>Item meyster Aelbert, stadt surgijnmeyster, heeft uut beveel van den borgermeyster van den vijff ende sijnen vennoten doe die boel van Den Bosch alhier gecomen was die drie vrouwen van tovernye, bernsticht anderwerff gescoren van boven tot beneden [...]</i></p> <p><i>Item meyster Aelbert voirscr. Heeft uut beveel voirscr. Nyesgen uut die Leech Wey gemeystert so als zij deerlicke van den meyster van den Bosch mitte vuer gepinicht was vier groete gaters aen hoer beyde eersbillen ende dien waer hij over te meyesteren gegaen heeft drie weken ende daer aen verdient, belieft ---- 10 pont</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 18r] <i>Item Jan Aertssoen voirs. [borgermeyster van de vijff] mit zynen vennoten hebben uut beveel van den rait mit twee wagens geweest in die Leech Weyde ende gehaelt Nyesgen mit hoer dochter die berufticht waeren van tovernyen. Geven van wagenhuyr ende anders ---- 2 gulden 10 stuver current</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 60r] <i>Item so heeft hij [meyster Heynrick, scerprechter] voir Nyesgen uute Leech Wey die banck bereyt, op die leder tweemaal geleyt ende eens opte leder gehangen, facit ---- 2 pont.</i></p> <p><i>Item noch denselven [Nyesgen] in de wanne geset ende dapperlick gegeselt, dair aen verdient na ouder gewoenten ---- 3 pont</i></p>	

Item des namiddages de selve die banck bereyt, eens ter banck gehadt ende eens opte leder, facit [...]

[REK2K, fol. 60v]

Item op Onser Liever Vrouwenavont assumptio so heeft die scerprechter noch viermael ter banck gehadt Nyesgen in de Leech Wey, facit ---- 4 pont

Noch hoer in de wanne geset ende wel gegeselt, facit ---- 3 pont

Item meyster Heynrick, die scerprechter, heeft mitten oversten opte poert geweest ende die banck bereyt voer de drye tovenaersters, facit ---- 1 pont 10 sc.

[...]

Noch heeft hij Nyesgen uute Leech Wey eens ter banck gehadt ende noch eens opte leer [...]

[REK2K, fol. 61v]

Item omtrent Agnetis heeft die scerprechter eens die banck bereyt voer die drie tovenasters, verdient 1 pont 10 sc dair na die twee vrouwen ter banck gehad ende voir die derde die banck bereyt [...]

[REK2K, fol. 5v]

Item des woensdaichs na sunte Valentijn zoe heeft meyster Aelbert die vrouwen alse Niesgen uute Leech Wey, Beatris in t Veen ende Lijsbet de Roey elcx bijsonder alle hoer haer van boven tot beneden off gescoren [...]

Item zoe heeft die zelve meyster nadat die vrouwen gepinnicht waeren grote gaters in hoer neersbillen totte waeyen toe dagelich twee mael verbonden ende grote oncosten daertoe afgedaan, belieft tsamen ---- 2 gulden 6 stuyvers

[RDB, fol. 104r]

[Des donredages na octava Valentini]

Tot live Agnies, Huygh Gerrytss. wijf zijn gescict Frederick die Coninck, Cornelis van Meerten, Dirck Wynter, Jacob Vermaet ende Joest van Eyck

[...]

Sleten scepenen, rait ende oudermannen, want Agnies, Huygh Gerritss. wijff, voertijts merckelicke befaemt is geweest van toeveryen, wairomme sy langen tijt gevangen is geweest, ende daerenboven verborcht is geweest, ende geloeft heeft by verboeren hoers lijfs, dat zij sulcx nyet meer doen en soude, ende die raet daerenboven ter wairheyte uitgegaen heeft, dat zij in meer gebreken van toeveryen gevallen ende oick hoir dochter dat voert geleert heeft nae hoers dochters belijdinghe, alse dat men se dairomme overleveren sel den scout, gefroent als een tovenaerster, ende die scepenen sellen recht wijsen.

[REK2K, fol. 45r]

In den yersten zoe zijn Nyesgen, Beatris ende Lysbeth de Roey als die gevangens geweest ende mitten brande ter justicie gebrocht. Van steengelt belieft 12 stuver.

Item Tomas Janssoen heeft Nyesgen voirscreven 3 weken in dit jaer te eeten ende te drincken gegeven. Ter weeck 8 stuver.

[REK2K, fol. 48r]

Item soe heeft Meyster Jan van Balen, scerprechter van Den Bosch, drie tovenaersters ter justicie gebrocht mitten vuere daer voer hem belieft is van elcke persoene te rechten 4 gulden Hollants, belieft ---- 15 gulden.

25. Daughter of Agniese of the Lage Weide (1526-1527)

Name of accused	Daughter of Agniese of the Lage Weide
Date(s)	c. August 15, 1526 – ?
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Unclear
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-20, fol. 23r REK2K, nr. 626-51, fols. 18r, 60r
Comments	
<p>[RDB, fol. 23r] <i>Item, dese voirss. vroue met hoer dochter is naderhant anno 26, omtrent assumptio Marie, doir beclach van hoer gemeen bueren aan die lege weyde, wederom gevangen.</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 18r] <i>Item Jan Aertssoen voirs. [borgermeyster van de vijff] mit zijnen vennoten hebben uut beveil van den rait mit twee wagens geweest in die Leech Weyde ende gehaelt Nyesgen mit hoer dochter die berufticht waeren van tovernyen. Geven van wagenhuyr ende anders ---- 2 gulden 10 stuver current</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 60r] <i>Item meyster Heynrick voirsc. [scerprechter] heeft verdient aen Nyesgens dochter van examineren --- - 1 pont</i></p>	

26. Beatris, Ot Dirks' wife (1526-1527)

Name of accused	Beatris, Ot Dircs's' wife
Date(s)	August 17, 1526 – February 21, 1527
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Execution by fire
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-20, fols. 79v, 103v-104r REK2K, nr. 626-51, fols. 12r, 60r-60v, 61v REK2K, nr. 626-52, fols. 5v, 45r, 48r
Comments	
<p>[RDB, fol. 79v] [Des vrijdages na assumptionis Marie]</p> <p><i>Sleten scepenen, raide ende oudermannen, alsoe Goesen Janss. Bewesen heeft als hij hem vermeten heeft ende gheen lijfsettinge tegen Beatris, Ot Dircs's. wijff, voir den raide gedaen en heeft alsoe dat hij dairomme afgaen sel, zijn cos tende steengelt betalende, ende op behoirlicke oervede te doen in brieven.</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 12r] <i>Item meyster Aelbert, stadt surgijnmeyster, heeft uut beveil van den borgermeyster van den vijff ende sijnen vennoten doe die boel van Den Bosch alhier gecomen was die drie vrouwen van tovernye, bernsticht anderwerff gescoren van boven tot beneden [...]</i></p>	

[REK2K, fol. 60r]

Item zoe heeft hij [Meyster Heynrick, scerprechter] Beatrice, Ot Dircssoens wijff twee mael ter banck gehadt ende tweemaal bereyt, facit ---- 2 pont

[REK2K, fol. 60v]

Item meyster Heynrick, die scerprechter, heeft mitten oversten opte poert geweest ende die banck bereyt voer de drye tovenaersters, facit ---- 1 pont 10 sc.

[REK2K, fol. 61v]

Item omtrent Agnetis heeft die scerprechter eens die banck bereyt voer die drie tovenasters, verdient 1 pont 10 sc dair na die twee vrouwen ter banck gehadt ende voer die derde die banck bereyt, facit ---- 1 pont 10sc

[REK2K, fol. 5v]

Item des woensdaichs na sunte Valentijn zoe heeft meyster Aelbert die vrouwen alse Niesgen uute Leech Wey, Beatris in t Veen ende Lijsbet de Roey elcx bijsonder alle hoer haer van boven tot beneden off gescoren [...]

Item zoe heeft die zelve meyster nadat die vrouwen gepinnicht waeren grote gaters in hoer neersbillen totte waeyen toe dagelich twee mael verbonden ende grote oncosten daertoe afgedaan, belieft tsamen ---- 2 gulden 6 stivers

[RDB, fol. 103v]

[Des donredages na octava Valentini]

Tot live van Beatrys, Ot Dircss. wijff, zijn gescict Frederick die Coninck, Lubbert de Wail, Jan van Wijck, Dirck Mor ende Gelis die backer

[RDB, fol. 104v]

Sleten scepenen, raide ende oundermannen want Beatris, Ot Dircss. wijff, genoich beleden heeft toeverye gedaen te hebben, dat men hoir overleveren zel den scout gefroent alse en tovenaerster, ende die scepenen sellen recht wijsen

[REK2K, fol. 45r]

In den yersten zoe zijn Nyesgen, Beatris ende Lysbeth de Roey als die gevangens geweest ende mitten brande ter justicie gebrocht. Van steengelt belieft 12 stuver.

[...]

Item [...] heeft Tomas Janssoen oick te eten ende drincken gegeven Beatris voirscreven 14 weken. Ter weeck om 8 stuver.

[REK2K, fol. 48r]

Item soe heeft Meyster Jan van Balen, scerprechter van Den Bosch, drie tovenaersters ter justicie gebrocht mitten vuere daer voer hem belieft is van elcke persoen te rechten 4 gulden Hollants, belieft ---- 15 gulden.

27. Lysbeth, Geryt die Roeyen's widow (1526-1527)

Name of accused	Lysbeth, Geryt die Roeyen's widow
Date(s)	1526 – February 21, 1527
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht and Jan van Balen
Verdict	Execution by fire
Source(s)	REK2K, nr. 626-51, fols. 12r, 18r, 60v, 61v REK2K, nr. 626-52, fols. 5v, 45r, 48r RDB, nr. 13-20, fols. 104r
Comments	
<p>[REK2K, fol. 12r] <i>Item meyster Aelbert, stadt surgijnmeyster, heeft uut beveel van den borgermeyster van den vijff ende sijnen vennoten doe die boel van Den Bosch alhier gecomen was die drie vrouwen van tovernye, bernsticht anderwerff gescoren van boven tot beneden [...]</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 18r] <i>Noch verleyt van Lijsgen van Roeyen te dragen van Tollesteechpoert op sunte Katrijnenpoort mit een gasthuys borch ende ander cost [...]</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 60v] <i>Item meyster Heynrick, die scerprechter, heeft mitten oversten opte poert geweest ende die banck bereyt voer de drye tovenaerstes, facit ---- 1 pont 10 sc. [...]</i></p> <p><i>Item die scerprechter heeft Lijsgen van Roeyen tweemaal ter banck gehad ende eens ter leder ende eens die leer bereyt, facit ---- 2 pont.</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 61v] <i>Item omtrent Agnetis heeft die scerprechter eens die banck bereyt voer die drie tovenasters, verdient 1 pont 10 sc dair na die twee vrouwen ter banck gehad ende voir die derde die banck bereyt, facit ---- 1 pont 10 sc</i></p> <p>[REK2K, fol. 5v] <i>Item des woensdaichs na sunte Valentijn zoe heeft meyster Aelbert die vrouwen alse Niesgen uute Leech Wey, Beatris in t Veen ende Lijsbet de Roey elcx bijzonder alle hoer haer van boven tot beneden off gescoren [...]</i></p> <p><i>Item zoe heeft die zelve meyster nadat die vrouwen gepinnicht waeren grote gaters in hoer neersbillen totte waeyen toe dagelicx twee mael verbonden ende grote oncosten daertoe afgedaan, belieft tsamen ---- 2 gulden 6 stuvers</i></p> <p>[RDB, fol. 104r] [Des donredages na octava Valentini]</p> <p><i>Tot live van Lijsbet, Geryt die Roeyen wedue, zijn gescict Frederick die Coninck, Peter van Ruysch, Jan Loefszoen Couter ende Hermen van Wede.</i></p> <p>[...]</p> <p><i>Sleten scepenen, raide ende oudermannen alsoe Lijsbet, Geryt die Roeyen wedue, befaemt is geweest mit toeveryen, ende zij beleden heeft segeninge gedaen te hebben wairdoer die gebreken</i></p>	

van broede ende anders gebetert zijn, dat kenlicken is, alse dat men se dairomme leveren sel den scout gefroent alse en toevenaerster, ende die scepenen zellen recht wijsen.

[REK2K, fol. 45r]

In den yersten zoe zijn Nyesgen, Beatris ende Lysbeth de Roey als die gevangens geweest ende mitten brande ter justicie gebracht. Van steengelt belieft 12 stuver.

[REK2K, fol. 48r]

Item soe heeft Meyster Jan van Balen, scerprechter van Den Bosch, drie toevenaersters ter justicie gebracht mitten vuere daer voer hem belieft is van elcke persoen te rechten 4 gulden Hollants, belieft --- 15 gulden.

28. Alyt, wife of Jacob the swineherd (1527)

Name of accused	Alyt, wife of Jacob the swineherd
Date(s)	February 21, 1527
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Unknown, suspect fled
Source(s)	BSB, nr. 16-20, fol. 63r
Comments	
[BSB, fol. 63r] [Des donredages octava valentini]	
<i>Alsoe Alyt Jacob die verkendrijvers wijffs in Scalwijckstege berufticht wesende van toeverien voirvluchtich geworden is soe gebiet die raet dairomme oft se yemant gehuyst oft gehoeft heeft off weet wair zij is doetse dat utbrengen en onsen oversten te kennen gheven bij sonnescijn van desen daighe bijt verboeren van hoeren live.</i>	

29. Goeyert Janss (1526-1527)

Name of accused	Goeyert Janss
Date(s)	1526 – August 20, 1527
Location	Utrecht
Court	Council of Utrecht
Verdict	Released
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-20, fol. 127v REK2K, nr. 626-51, fols. 11r, 18v REK2K, nr. 626-52, fol. 46r-46v, 48v
Comments	
[REK2K, fol. 11r] <i>Item Peter Peterssoen heeft verwaert die wairsegger anderhalven dach ende twee nachten</i>	

butensloets, facit 2 pont. Ende die borgermeyster van den vijff ende zijn vennoten hebben in die camer ontbeten aen herinck, broet ende bier doe zij hem examineerden 5 stuver hollants. Ende die waerzegger heeft verteerd aen costen ende dranck mitte dienres die off ende anquamen 11 stuver hollants [...]

[REK2K, fol. 18v]

Item alzoehuyse Peters, weerd in den Sluetell, die borgermeyster van den vijff mit zijnen vennoten ende dienres geweest hebben om aldair zeker te bewesen ende te bewaeren Goert den toverman ofte waersegger ende soe is dair verteert 2 gulden 6 stuver 3 wit current, dair die scepenen, borgermeyster mit zijn dienres oyck zommige van den gescicte op een avond mede bij geweest hebben ende hier is oyck mede in gerekent den brandewijn ende garden die men op die poert besichden, belieft 11 pont 11 sc 3d

[REK2K, fol. 46r]

Item Goeyert Janssoen, die waersegger, worde des woensdaechs na sunte Mathis gevangen ende lange daerna weder vrij offgesleten. Van steengelt belieft ----- 4 stuver

[REK2K, fol. 46v]

Item soe heeft Thomas Janssoen den zelve Goeyert te eten ende te drincken gegegeven uut bevel van den borgermeyster van de vive 19 weken lanck, s dages 2 stuver, belieft ---- 13 gulden 14 stuver.

[REK2K, fol. 48v]

Item meyster Coenraet voerscreven [Executioner from Zutphen] noch ter banck gehadt [...] die waersegger elcx 2 mael opte banck off opte leerder gehadt

[RDB, fol. 127v]

[Des dynsdages na assumptionis Marie]

Sleten scepenen, raide ende oudermannen, dat Goeyert Janss. van Nuys, die waersegger, ende Josijne van Ghent, vrij ofgaen ende zeven mijlen weechs van der stadt wesen ende bliven sellen op hoeren liven, dar zij oirveden op doen sellen in brieff.

30. Marie Wouters (1533)

Name of accused	Marie Wouters
Date(s)	August 18, 1533
Location	Utrecht
Court	Aldermen's bench and imperial sheriff
Verdict	Burned after death
Source(s)	BSB, nr. 16-19, fol. 136v
Comments	Marie died turing torture, for which the devil was blamed.
[BSB, fol. 136v] <i>Des manendaichs opten 18 augustii</i>	
<i>Alzoe Marie Wouters, wedue van Hilhorst buyten Wittenvrouwenpoert bij Utrecht over lange jaeren befaemt is geweest dat se toeveren konde wairop die schout van keyserlicke majestyts wegen hem</i>	

geinformeert heeft welcke informatie bij t gerecht gesien wesende heeft hij se doen apprehendeeren ende daernaen doen examineeren in presentie van burgermeystere ende scepenen, andair zij zonder eenige pijn buyten banden van ijsere beleden ende bekent heeft dat se toeveren konde over langen jaeren ende tijden menichwerff gedaen hadde. Te wetene ondermeer in den yersten an Cornelis Henrycssoen, hoer buerman, dien zij zijn koeyen 't not genomen, peerden ende koeyen doet getoevert ende hem zelve te bedde ende ter doot toe getoevert hadde. Item Jan Ottensoen, die wageman buyten Tollestege, een peert doet getoevert. Ende Joest van Rijn zekere vercken oick doet getoevert hadde. Ende daerenboven meer andere lelicke oncrstelicke ende onmenselycke wercken ende saicken geprepetreert te hebben die men nyet en behoert te noemen. T welck al gesciet wesende heeft se hoer ongetwijfelt overgegeven den bosen vijant, den duvel der hellen, diewelcke hoer naedattet t gerecht van hoer gescheyden was den hals gebroicken heeft, alsdat den gerechte genoegh kenlycken is ende gebleken heeft, wairomme borgermeystere ende scepenen, des van den schout van keyserlicke majestyts wegen etc., vermaent wesende, gewesen hebben ende wijsen mitsdesen voer recht dat men dat doede lichaem sleypen sel op een horde optie Noede ende werpen t op t vuer ende verbernen t tot asse. Reserverende mitsdesen d'actie die d'officier van s keyzers wegen op hoeren goeden predendeert t hebben tot verclaringe van den gerechte.

31. Neel Reyers (1533)

Name of accused	Neel Reyers
Date(s)	August 22, 1533
Location	Utrecht
Court	Aldermen's bench and imperial sheriff
Verdict	Execution by fire
Source(s)	BSB, nr. 16-19, fol. 137r
Comments	
[BSB, fol. 137r]	
<p><i>Des vrijdaichs den 22 augusti gewesen ende des saterdaichs dairnae ter clocken gepubliceert.</i></p> <p><i>Want Neel Reyers, Henryck Herbertsoenss huysfrouwe, geboeren van Oudewater, Peter die moelennairs dochter, out omtrent vier ende tsestich jaeren, beleden ende bekent heeft opelicken voer t gerecht, buyten banden van ijseren, dat se toeveren konde ende wel 36 jaeren geconnen ende van den duvel geleert ende hem weder lijff ende ziel gegegeven hadde. Voert heeft se beleden dat se een man, twee vrouwen ende twee kyndere doet getoevert ende meer andere menschen ende substantie betoevert. Ende daerenboven noch meer andere lelicke oncrstelicke ende onmenschelicke wercken ende saicken gedaen hadde die men nyet en behoert te noemen, waerop die schout van keyserlicke majestyts wegen hoer te recht gestelt ende geconcludeert heeft dat men sulcx an hoer lijff behoerden te justiceeren mitten brande nae wijsinghe des gerechts, hebben dairomme borgermeysters ende scepenen, des van de schout van keysericke majestyts wegen etc, vermaent wesende, gewesen nede wijsen mitsdesen voer recht dat men sulcx rechten zel mitten brande an een staeck optie Noede an hoer lijff tot asch toe.</i></p>	

32. Mergriet van Essen (1533)

Name of accused	Mergriet van Essen
Date(s)	October 13, 1533
Location	Utrecht
Court	Aldermen's bench and imperial sheriff
Verdict	Banishment
Source(s)	RDB, nr. 13-21, fol. 148r
Comments	
<p>[RDB, fol. 148r] <i>Des manendages na Victoris den 13 octobris</i></p> <p><i>Want Mergriet van Essen, genaemt van Campen, geboeren van Zwolle, bij goeder informatien ende merckelicke suspicie van toeveryen aengetast ende gevangen ende daer op te recht gestelt is geweest bij den scout van keyserlicken majestyts wegen ende zij nyet en heeft willen belijden, seggende zij nye daeromme gevangen ende waer geweest ende indien men dat vername dat men hoer bernen mochte. Ende gemerct dat t gerecht beter besceyt vernomen heeft, overmits scrijften ende certificaten der stadt Campen, daer se gevangen ende versocht is geweest van toeverijen, daer se de oick mede berufticht was ende oick nyet lijden en woude, soe concludeerde die scout van keyserlicken majestyts wegen als hertoge van Brabant, greve van Hollant ende erfheere der landen van Utrecht etc. dat men se bannen.</i></p>	

33. Goirt Janss (1537)

Name of accused	Goirt Janss
Date(s)	April 28, 1537
Location	Utrecht
Court	Aldermen's bench and imperial sheriff
Verdict	Death by burning
Source(s)	MBSB, nr. 17-1, fol. 118v
Comments	
<p>[MBSB, fol. 118v] <i>Des saterdaiches den 28en aprilis [...]</i></p> <p><i>Alsoe Goirt Janss genoemt die wairsegger geboiren van Hasselt inden lande van Guylick opelicken voirt gezecht buyten banden van ysere geconsesseert ende beleden heeft dat hij toveneren konde. Ende dat hij tselve vanden bosen viant vanden hellen gelert, veel mensen ende beesten betoivert ende sommige naderhant weder genesen hadde. Ende dat hij godt van hemelrijk ende Maria zijnen gebenedicte moeder geloogent ende versaict hadde, den duvel vanden hellen die hem zijnen chrysdom uuyten hoeffde gesneden gelooft ende hem sacristie ende offerhande gedaen heeft ende voirts dat hij veel onchristelicke ende onmenschelicke saicken ende wercken die men nyet en behoirt te noemen mitten bosen viant gepleecht ende gedaen heeft. Wairom hem die schout van wegen [keyserlicke majestyts] onsen allen genedigen heren als greve van Hollant ende erfheere der stadt, steden ende landen van Utrecht voir borgermeysters ende scepenen desen stadt terecht gestelt ende geconcludeert heeft dat men den selven Goirt stellen soude opte Nuede aen enen staick ende verbarnen hem ter asschen toe. ende zijnen goeden tottes keyserlicken majestyts laste geleyt ende</i></p>	

geconfisqueert behoirden, soo ist dat die borgermeesters ende scepenen dair versouck vanden schout deser stadt van Utrecht als voeren vermaent zijnde gewesen hebben ende wysen mits desen voir recht datmen sulcx rechten zel mitten brande aen zijn lijff ter asschen toe reserverende die confiscatie vanden goideren.

