PART II

CHAPTER THREE

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

Under the intense pressure of persistent questioning, threats and torture, the witch-defendants in Eichstätt tended to denounce as their accomplices individuals with whom they shared a range of significant and generally positive relationships. Witnesses too almost always described their relationships with the witch-suspects in ambiguous rather than acrimonious terms. They failed to cite witchcraft, precipitated by social conflict, as the cause of the misfortune which overtook them or the alleged victims on whose behalf they were called to testify. An endemic fear of the witch-figure or her 'deadly words' did not therefore circumscribe the testimonies of the Eichstätt suspects and witnesses.[1] In the identification of accomplices and victims, the suspects inverted their proper relations with neighbours and kin, and recycled both traumatic episodes of illness, death and impoverishment which had touched their own family or friends and, less often, local gossip in which they were not always directly implicated.

In this and the following three chapters, I will look more closely at the various relationships between the three principal groups of individuals found in the confession narratives and witness depositions: the witch-suspects; the alleged accomplices; and the witnesses called to appear before the witch commission. The 'emotion' and 'interest' invested by the inhabitants of Eichstätt in the familial and social relationships which bound them together will be the primary focus of these chapters. What emerges from such an examination is a view of early modern communities which is more optimistic about the state of everyday familial, social and gender relations within them than the historiography of either witchcraft or gender currently permits. I do not aim to undermine research which has confirmed how hard life was for ordinary folk in early modern Europe, especially in the late sixteenth

[1] On the fear of 'deadly words' in recent times, see Jeanne Favret-Saada, *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage*, trans. by Catherine Cullen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). It is not a concept which can be demonstrated to have existed at a local level in early modern Eichstätt, primarily because the intense fieldwork undertaken by Favret-Saada cannot be replicated in historical studies.

and early seventeenth centuries, or how vulnerable women could be both within the household and before the law.[2] Instead, I will argue that there is a story of communal and social life which complements the prevalent view of early modern community, gained from a limited range of sources, as rigidly hierarchical, socially fractured and, perhaps, in crisis. The ordinary life which emerges from the Eichstätt trial transcripts transcended the prescriptions of patriarchy and normative behaviour reinforced in religious and social ritual. It is a part of the early modern experience which is usually excluded from the adversarial legal narratives of more conventional court cases because the social cohesion of which it speaks did not suit the purposes of plaintiffs or the coherent story required to legitimate a guilty verdict and, often, the sentence of death. The story of this ordinary life privileges intimate relationships between individuals and groups within the early modern community as they sought to deal with daily contingencies by forming friendships and engaging with each other positively as neighbours. The basic premises of my discussion here are that personality overrode prescription in the choice of one's closest associates, and that religious tension, agrarian crisis and warfare were as likely to promote solidarity as provoke disharmony in well-established, close-knit communities. It is in these less frequently articulated bonds that one can locate a sense of everyday early modern sociality.

Methodology

Locating sociality in witchcraft confession narratives requires a different methodology to those adopted in the reading of witchcraft accusation narratives and pamphlets. Historians of witchcraft episodes tend to focus on these sources because they are easier to handle. Accusation narratives seem to reflect the circumstances of individual cases as they were perceived by the narrator (often the victim of witchcraft); and

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[2] The Little Ice Age clearly caused many difficulties for early modern Europeans, including perhaps the so-called General Crisis, on which see the essays in Trevor Aston (ed.), *Crisis in Europe 1560–1660: Essays from* Past and Present *1952–1962* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), and Geoffrey Parker and L.M. Smith (eds.), *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978). The vulnerability of women in these contexts has been widely documented, but see, for example, Ulinka Rublack, *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), and Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

the large historiography of early modern literature and its authors, printers and audiences means that pamphlets can readily be placed in wider cultural contexts. Confession narratives, on the other hand, are more difficult to analyse because they were composed of a mixture of voices—the accusers', the suspects', the witnesses', the interrogators', and the scribes'—manipulated to cast the unwilling and usually innocent suspect in the role of witch. Disentangling who said what and analysing what their words might mean at any level is a difficult process. It is, however, one that ought to be attempted and which brings rich rewards when it is. Lyndal Roper's psychoanalytical approach to the case of Regina Bartholome, for example, highlights the depth of detail contained in these confession narratives.[3] I am not, however, concerned with the psychic worlds of individual witches in this book. I am interested in their social and cultural worlds, and I have therefore adopted an historical-anthropological method of reading these types of document.

In the introduction to *Interest and Emotion* (1984), a collection of papers in which social historians and social anthropologists discussed the various qualitative approaches to the study of kinship and family, David Sabean and Hans Medick suggested that a dialogue between these scholars could take the examination of kinship beyond the sharp dichotomy which had opposed the 'objective, material, structural or institutional' to the 'subjective, cultural, symbolic or emotional'.[4] Sabean and Medick focused their criticisms on Peter Laslett's structuralist study of the family in the past.[5] The potential of the Sabean-Medick approach as a critique of the functionalist interpretation of witchcraft accusations proposed by Alan Macfarlane and developed by others is, however, equally clear. Neither Laslett's nor Macfarlane's accounts of the past are nuanced enough to incorporate the subjective experience of the individual into the picture. In both accounts, structures, whether they be the family or society as a whole, are represented as the agents in the course of history and in so far as they have been perceived to act these structures have been reified by the historians concerned. One could extend this

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[3] Roper, "Oedipus and the Devil".

[4] Hans Medick and David Warren Sabean, "Introduction" in id. (eds.), *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 1–8 (p. 2).

[5] Id., "Interest and Emotion in Family and Kinship Studies: A Critique of Social History and Anthropology", in id., *Interest and Emotion*, pp. 9–27 (p. 9).

criticism to women's historians who insist on promoting patriarchy as a category of analysis. They too reify a structure, patriarchy, and exclude the agency of the subjective individual from history.[6]

If *Interest and Emotion* was an attempt to close the gap in theory between anthropologists and historians, Sabean's collection of case studies, *Power in the Blood* (1994), is an example of the resulting historical-anthropological approach in practice. Whilst Sabean has been critical of structuralist and functionalist tendencies to reify family or society, he has been careful not to swing to the other extreme where the anthropologist Marilyn Strathern has suggested that she can 'imagine people having no society'.[7] He has maintained, with Hans Medick, that structures are important, that whilst property, for example, should not be reified, it should instead be understood as a relationship structured by *and* structuring emotions and needs.[8] Property then is regarded by Sabean as a relational idiom, a part of the grammar of the metaphorical structure of the text, through which both emotion (the subjective experience) and interest (the objective experience) in family life were expressed and mediated. The advantage of identifying relational idioms in early modern texts is their interpretational flexibility. Macfarlane seems to imply that any individual accuser of witches responded to deep structural changes imposed by society on the way she related to her neighbours by plumping for one of only two dichotomous options: to be old-fashioned and neighbourly or modern and individualistic. The use of relational idioms allows one to move beyond the limited options identified in this approach and consider the circumstances of the individual case.

Food is another example of a relational idiom identified by Sabean in his studies both of kinship in general and the trial of the young witch Anna Catharina in particular. He borrowed this idiom from Esther Goody and, as I will show, it also permeates the confession narratives constructed by the Eichstätt witch-suspects.[9] The exchange and sharing of food are essential to human society regardless of time or place;

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[6] This is partly the argument of Joan Wallach Scott in her *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

[7] Marilyn Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), p. 3.

[8] Medick and Sabean, "Introduction" in *Interest and Emotion*, p. 4.

[9] Esther Goody, *Contexts of Kinship: An Essay in the Family Sociology of the Gonja of Northern Ghana* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

without them we cannot be assured of an adequate supply of the elements vital to our continued healthy existence. Human relationships are structured by this shared need and desire for enough food, but the interests and emotions invested in the production of food also create relationships of interdependence, mutual interest or tension which vary according to the prevailing cultural and social as well as economic and political conditions. It is therefore possible to take such idioms as food, examine how and in what contexts individuals spoke about them and reconstruct the specific and culturally-bound relationships which are expressed through them.

The identification of relational idioms is a principal method by which I intend to read and interpret the relationships which form the basis of the defendants' confession narratives. As I will show in this chapter, however, the witch-suspects' assessments of their neighbourly relations were not always expressed obliquely, and perhaps unconsciously, through this means. The judicial process adopted in Eichstätt afforded the defendants an opportunity to comment explicitly on the nature of their relationships with their denouncers and those whom they went on to denounce as accomplices. Only after I have looked at these statements of the quality of personal relations will I consider, in the following chapters, the relational idioms (food, sex and health) which can be identified in the confession narratives.

The witch and her denouncers

In a few of the Eichstätt interrogations the witch-suspect was given the opportunity to comment on her relationships with her denouncers as they were read out to her, and every defendant was asked whether she had denounced any of her accomplices out of enmity. In the trials of 1617 to 1619 the commissioners also asked some suspects to confirm a denunciation they had made previously in order to determine whether it was genuine or had some malicious origin. This happened most frequently in respect of alleged accomplices who were either already in custody or who were now under a strong suspicion of witchcraft, or where the defendant had not been certain if she had in fact seen a particular individual at the nocturnal gatherings. Such questions did not form part of the standard interrogatory, but their use seems to reveal a general and consistent concern on the part of the judges that they would not allow the witch-suspects, whom they perceived as

inherently malicious, to derail the persecution from its primary purpose: the spiritual cleansing of the insidious, secretive, heretical witch sect from the principality. They appear to have been anxious to prevent individuals from abusing the trial process to settle their petty temporal scores and implicate innocent people in their crimes. It is this apparent, often unwitting, manipulation of the judicial machinery by the accusers of witches which has led witchcraft historians working within the framework of social conflict theories to characterize the contemporary Western world as socially dysfunctional. It seems to make sense therefore to begin the investigation into the witch-suspects' relationships with their neighbours by looking at both their assessments of those relationships given in answer to the interrogators' questions about the denouncers and victims, and their verbal reactions to the denunciations laid against them during direct confrontations with other witch-suspects in which they reveal something of the quality of their relationships with those individuals.

On his first day before the witch commissioners (Tuesday 14 March 1628), after the customary questions about his personal life, Michael Hochenschildt was asked why he thought that he had been brought to the town hall. Like almost every other witch-suspect for whom the interrogation transcripts are extant, he replied that he did not know, 'it is a wonder to him, as he is now astonished by it'.[10] His interrogators then read out to him the list of convicted witches who had testified against him. Hochenschildt's response to the implied question about his standing with each of his accusers (a question which was not transcribed in this deposition) was fuller than that recorded for other Eichstätt witches. He claimed the following about his denouncers: that he had no knowledge about the Schweizer Casparin (Barbara Rabel), Candler Bartlin or the Große Beckin; that he had always held Hans Baur for his good neighbour ('alzeit für sein guetten Nachbarn') with whom he ate and drank; that he knew Schöttnerin, Amerserin and Mosin, but nothing evil about them; that there was no reason why he should be angry with Thoma Trometerin, Anna Thiermayr and Anna Erb; that one time he had not been at peace with the Gelbschusterin (Maria Lang), 'but it was no mortal enmity';[11] that he had caroused with the Langschneider

[10] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hochenschildt), 14 March 1628.

[11] 'so seÿ es doch khein Todt feindtschafft gewesen', ibid., 14 March 1628. That the Gelbschusterin, executed on 6 March 1627, was Maria Lang is confirmed in in

(Lorenz Brandt) several times, but did not keep company with him other than for this; that Haimen Enderlin was his neighbour; that Michael Rottinger was well known to him, but they did nothing together; that he could not report anything about Michael Girtenstihl; and that he could not say anything about the imprisoned Schmidt Appel because they also did not do anything together.[12] Seventeen months earlier, in contrast, the commissioners' scribe had merely abridged Margretha Bittelmayr's commentary on her twenty-one denouncers in just five inconclusive points.[13]

A further set of detailed responses to a list of denouncers comes from a fragment of the transcript of the interrogation of Ursula Funk who was executed with Bittelmayr and two others on 26 November 1626.[14] Towards the beginning of this fragment the interrogators asked Funk about five of her denouncers, all of whom had made their accusations as they stood before the interrogators as suspects. She was first asked 'What does she answer to the accusation made by [Eva Susanna] Moringer?' to which she replied 'ah my dear lords, one can say what one wants, but she could not say anything'.[15] In respect of the remaining four of these accusers the commissioners asked the same question, 'Whether she knows [name]?'; each time Funk replied 'Yes', but that she knew nothing of them, meaning about their witchcraft activities.[16] This is probably the pattern of interrogation adopted in the trials of Hochenschildt and Bittelmayr, but which, for whatever reason, the scribe had decided then to omit or summarise. At this point it was no doubt apparent to the interrogators that Funk was not going to implicate herself in the heresy by confirming the confessions of her denouncers. They therefore cut this line of questioning short concluding it with the additional question: 'And whether she believes that still other persons

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DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 231r–v, although she is also given the surname Seng in BundesA ASt Frankfurt, FSg.2/1–F 13 669 Eichstätt L-Z, frame 154 (Seng). She was almost certainly the wife of Valtin Lanng, executed on 15 September 1618, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 165r–v and 168r–v, although he did not give his wife's name during his interrogation, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (V. Lanng).

[12] Ibid., 14 March 1628.

[13] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 15 October 1626 (a.m.).

[14] DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 228v–229v. The date of Bittelmayr's execution is known from the transcript of her interrogation, but her case is not noted in the "Urfehdebuch", StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), cover.

[15] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (U. Funk), f. 2r.

[16] Ibid., f. 2r.

denounced her?'. Funk stated 'Yes, but it was unjust to her . . . she knows well that she is pious . . .'.[17]

The process of reading out the lists of denunciations to the witch-suspects seems to have been a development of the act of confronting her physically with those among her accusers who were still languishing in prison. There is one document of 1626 which gives a full summary of the confrontations between Lorenz Bonschab and two of his denouncers which must have formed part of a larger, lost, file on him.[18] It seems that by 1626 confrontations were being used in cases where the suspect had maintained his innocence for some time or fresh evidence from recently-interrogated suspects had come to light. Bonschab had been arrested on 13 July 1626, but Sabrina Pföringer and Anna Häckhel were not interrogated in his presence until 1 and 2 October 1626 respectively. Very occasionally other later defendants were brought face-to-face with their accusers. Hochenschildt, for example, was confronted by Michael Girtenstihl, in this case during the second session of interrogation.[19]

Most of the interrogations in which direct confrontations occurred survive, however, from the period 1617 to 1619 and in these cases they were routinely conducted towards the beginning of the trial. Georg and Enders Gutmann, for example, were confronted with their accusers during their first sessions of interrogation (13 and 14 December 1617, respectively).[20] The procedure may itself have been a legacy of the earlier witch trials of 1590 and 1603, before the witch commission had been instituted, although it is not now possible to reconstruct the interrogation processes used in those years. When and why there was an evolution in interrogatory practice in Eichstätt, from personal confrontations with denouncers in 1617 to the reading of lists of their names in 1626, the year in which Bittelmayr and Funk, as well as Bonschab, were arrested, are, unfortunately, also difficult questions to answer. An analysis of this change is made more difficult by the existence of cases like that of Eva Susanna Moringer in which she was not told that others had accused her of witchcraft. Instead, she was asked why she was commonly suspected of this crime, a question which had no basis in

[17] Ibid., f. 2r.
[18] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (L. Bonschab—confrontations).
[19] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hochenschildt), 15 March 1628.
[20] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (G. Gutmann), 13 December 1617, and (E. Gutmann), 14 December 1617 (a.m.).

fact. Moringer of course denied that she was a witch.[21] Similar inaccurate accusations of a common suspicion are found in earlier trials. In 1617, Wappel Weber had observed that she 'thought she had been accused by the imprisoned women of Pietenfeld',[22] but the interrogators glossed over her correct assessment of her predicament by asking 'why she was commonly held in evil suspicion on account of witchcraft?', a question which in no way reflected the reality of the few denunciations laid against her.[23] She was, however, also confronted with two of these denouncers.

Asking questions about a general outcry against an individual suspect seems, from 1619 onwards, to have replaced questions about specific denouncers, with the exception of the cases discussed above. On only one occasion did such questions elicit a response more detailed than a mere denial of the implied charge. In 1620, the following exchange took place between Anna Ruhr, wife of the court cobbler, and her interrogators:

> Q. Why had she been led there?
> A. She does not know the reason.
> Q. For what reasons was she notorious in the whole town on account of witchcraft?
> A. The Kürschnerin in Pfalergasse, out of great jealousy, had cried out throughout the whole town that she, her husband and her daughter were witches, but she was completely innocent…
> Q. In this regard, it was held up to her that she had been denounced by diverse of the executed. One would hope that she would give God the honour to step away from her heavy sins and make a beginning about her seduction.
> A. As before, she is innocent of witchcraft.…[24]

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[21] Before she gave in to torture during the first session of interrogation, Moringer five times denied being a witch, knowing the Devil or having knowledge of witchcraft, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E.S. Moringer), 14 February 1619 (a.m.). The confrontation with other witch-suspects or a list of denunciations should normally have happened during this same session.

[22] StAN, Hexenakten 48, (W. Weber), 12 December 1617.

[23] Ibid., 12 December 1617.

[24] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (A. Ruhr), 7 April 1620. Neither the Kürschnerin nor any other individual had formally made an accusation of this sort against Ruhr. What the interrogators wanted from Ruhr was, as the last question quoted makes clear, a confession that she belonged to the witch sect. That the Kürschnerin may have put the rumour about is probably true—there would have been no other reason for Ruhr to mention it—but in the context of this particular trial and the persecution in general it was of little judicial consequence, and the commissioners failed to pursue it.

Personal confrontations produced more or less the same response from the denounced suspect as confronting her with the names of her accusers or asking her why she now found herself before the witch commission: she proclaimed her innocence or her piety and sometimes that her neighbours did her an injustice. The dramatic tension inherent in the confrontation between two witch-suspects, who would always have known each other well, is, however, occasionally palpable on reading the words of the exchange. On 20 January 1618, Enders Gutmann of Pietenfeld was brought into the presence of Barbara Haubner, the midwife of Adelschlag, who was then under interrogation by the witch commission. He stated that 'she was the same type of person as he was, he would die of it'.[25] He must have already made this claim during his own incarceration for witchcraft, although it is not clear whether Barbara Haubner appears in his testimony. She was certainly not named in his tales of seduction, sacrilege of the host and malevolence. She may have been known as Seng Warbel, the only person from Adelschlag cited in Gutmann's list of accomplices, or he may have denounced Haubner to other individuals who seem to have been sent to interview suspects in custody on an informal basis.[26] At least one of Gutmann's spiritual confessions, for example, was reported to the witch commissioners.[27] Haubner replied to Gutmann's accusation by asking 'whether he would wash his hands in her blood…'.[28] One should contrast this firm response aimed directly at the denouncer with Haubner's confused reaction to the confrontation immediately prior to this one. Wappel Weber stated that the defendant 'was as much a witch as she was, and she had seen her now and then at diabolical gatherings on the Wascheggerten and Linsenwiesen'.[29] Temporarily discomfited by this accusation, Haubner began to narrate a tale for the interrogators: once, the Devil had appeared to her in the wood as a squire in

[25] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 20 January 1618 (a.m.).

[26] The omission of Haubner's name from the accomplices listed by Enders Gutmann, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 13 January 1618 (a.m.), is the only instance in which I have not been able to trace denunciations through the interrogation transcripts. Possibly this situation occurred because the protocols of the trial process were only just being put into practice.

[27] Father Michael reported that Gutmann had asked him 'whether a witch could also be blessed, otherwise he showed himself in many conversations to be inconstant', StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 14 December 1617 (a.m.).

[28] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 20 January 1618 (a.m.).

[29] Ibid., 20 January 1618 (a.m.).

the form of Fabian Schreiner.[30] Clearly this was the introduction to a story of diabolical seduction, but she seems to have thought better of it because the scribe recorded that she did not want to confess any more, and Gutmann was then brought in.

Only in two other cases of the fifteen in which confrontations are recorded did a witch-suspect deviate from the conventional succinct response that she knew nothing of her accuser's nefarious activities and that she herself was not such a person. When confronted by Anna Romen, Barbara Ehrenfrid stated that she would tell the truth.[31] When Romen was taken back into custody, however, Ehrenfrid refused to say any more.[32] It is difficult to know now what she hoped to gain by adopting this strategy. Perhaps she was trying to negotiate the fine line between maintaining her innocence and mitigating the pressures of torture. The truth was, of course, that she was innocent of the crime of witchcraft, but she must have been aware that stating that fact only led to further torture; offering to tell the truth temporarily stopped torture because the interrogators assumed that she was about to confess that she was a witch. Ultimately, this obfuscatory strategy failed, Ehrenfrid confessed and was executed on 15 February 1620.[33]

Faced with Anna Beck on the morning of 23 March 1618, Margretha Geiger, the wife of the court carter, gave a different response. She told her interrogators that this suspect had denounced her 'out of enmity' because her husband held Beck in suspicion.[34] Beck replied that she did not want to do her, 'mein liebes Margrettlin' ('my dear Margrettlin'), an injustice, but she had seen her several times and she was the same kind of person as herself.[35] Beck was followed into the interrogation chamber by Judith Obermayr. Again Geiger claimed that she was being denounced out of enmity, this time without specifying the reason, adding 'and she was innocent of this vice, she was a damned whore, that she . . . could testify this against her'.[36] Obermayr did not debate the point with Geiger, but was replaced by Anna Harding. Like the

[30] Ibid., 20 January 1618 (a.m.).
[31] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ehrenfrid), 16 November 1619 (p.m.).
[32] Except to reiterate that she 'was completely innocent. Jesus in heaven was God, her treasure. She knows nothing to say. She was a poor sinner, but of witchcraft she knows nothing, on her soul's salvation, . . .', ibid., 16 November 1619 (p.m.).
[33] DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 178v–179r.
[34] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Geiger), 23 March 1618 (a.m.).
[35] Ibid., 23 March 1618 (a.m.).
[36] Ibid., 23 March 1618 (a.m.).

previous denouncers Harding recited the denunciatory formula—'she said to her under oath that she will die of it that she saw her on the Linsenwiesen'[37]—but on this occasion Geiger merely stated that 'she was not such a person'.[38]

There is a tension in these exchanges in the interrogation chamber between the denouncers' claims that Margretha Geiger, for example, was the same type of person as themselves (or that they had seen her at some gathering) and the suspect's counterclaims that she was not. In neither part of the exchange was being a witch mentioned explicitly. Within the community, Geiger (a court carter's wife) *was* the same type of woman as Anna Beck (a baker's wife) and Judith Obermayr (a ropemaker's wife), that is, a woman of relative status, someone whom the denouncers would certainly have seen at communal gatherings and whom they may well have numbered among their friends and family. The denouncers were not lying when they recited the ambiguous formula of the confrontation, and perhaps they felt that their guilty consciences were somehow assuaged by stating this fact rather than making a more direct accusation of witchcraft. It is noteworthy in this respect that Harding, a woman associated with cunning practices and abortion, did not state the social untruth that Geiger was the same person as she was. Geiger, on the other hand, was trying to maintain her innocence at this point in her interrogation and understood clearly the implications of her accusers' words. She too was telling the truth when she denied being one of them, that is, a witch.

Little can be inferred about the quality of the relationships between Barbara Ehrenfrid and Anna Romen or between Margretha Geiger and both Anna Harding and Judith Obermayr from the brief exchanges described above. As with the relationships between witch-suspects in most of the other confrontations transcribed in the trial documentation where the defendant merely denied their participation in any witchcraft activity, there is not much additional information from which to reconstruct the ties which bound these women to each other. The responses given by Margretha Bittelmayr and Ursula Funk in answer to questions about their denouncers are also neutral in this respect. It is, however, possible to analyse the quality of the relationships between Barbara Haubner and the two suspects with whom she was confronted,

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[37] Ibid., 23 March 1618 (a.m.).
[38] Ibid., 23 March 1618 (a.m.).

Michael Hochenschildt and his denouncers, and Margretha Geiger and Anna Beck.

Barbara Haubner and her denouncers

Under interrogation, especially during the early years of the third phase of the Eichstätt persecutions, the witch-suspect would frequently name one accomplice and follow it up immediately with a relative, usually a daughter. Thus Enders Gutmann named Barbara Khager and then her son Michael, the Schieber Warbel and her daughter Wappel, and the Old Schmidin of Buxheim and her daughter also called Wappel.[39] Enders was encouraged in this direction. When it came to identifying his accomplices, the witch commissioners asked him first to name his Pietenfeld neighbours whom he had seen at the diabolical gatherings. They then interrupted him to ask specifically whether or not his four unmarried siblings were also witches. Enders proceeded to name his sisters Richella, aged thirteen, and Catharina, aged nine, and his two other brothers Jacob (fifteen) and Lorenz (seven).[40] Georg Gutmann was also pressured into naming these siblings.[41] Similarly, when the commissioners resumed the interrogation of Barbara Haubner on 30 January 1618, five days after the previous session, they requested that she continue her list of accomplices, 'especially in Eichstätt' (meaning the town).[42] These are the only cases in the principality in which one finds the interrogators prompting a suspect on this point.

If patterns of association can be identified in the lists of accomplices identified by individual witch-suspects, then the tension which I believe to be palpable in the confrontations between Barbara Haubner and two of her denouncers may be the product of more than the stressful situation in which they took place. This tension may also reflect the intimate ties which bound the suspect to both Wappel Weber and Enders Gutmann. The witch-arrests of 1617–18 were concentrated in the villages in the immediate vicinity of Eichstätt. It is possible, however, to demonstrate closer connections between certain of these villages which may provide a key to the relationships between the witch-suspects

[39] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 13 January 1618 (a.m.).
[40] Ibid., 13 January 1618 (a.m.).
[41] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (G. Gutmann), 1 February 1618 (a.m.).
[42] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 30 January 1618 (p.m.).

resident in them. The villages of Landershofen and Pietenfeld an der Leithen lay on opposite banks of the Altmühl directly to the east of Eichstätt (see Map 2). Pietenfeld is 2 km south of its namesake on the Leithen as the crow flies; continuing in this direction for a further 2 ½ km one comes next to Adelschlag. Twelve of the first nineteen witches convicted at the beginning of the final phase of persecution in Eichstätt came from these four villages. Apart from their own neighbours in Pietenfeld and individuals in Landershofen, the Gutmann brothers named accomplices from Pfünz and Buxheim.[43] Pfünz is the next village to the east of both Landershofen and Pietenfeld; Buxheim is about 7 km to the south-east of Pietenfeld or 6km from Adelschlag in the same direction. To these villages harbouring alleged witches, Haubner added Möckenlohe, about 2 km south of her own village of Adelschlag.[44] Of the witch-suspects arrested towards the beginning of the final phase of persecution for whom interrogation transcripts are extant, only Wappel Weber voluntarily cited individuals resident in other places, including at least twenty-nine in the capital.[45] In contrast, Kunigunda Bonschab, the second of the urban witch-suspects of this period for whom records exist did not list a single accomplice from beyond the town gates, despite herself being named by Weber.[46]

The suspects named by Wappel Weber, the Gutmann brothers and Barbara Haubner were not, however, known to them by reputation alone. They knew the biographies of the individuals whom they denounced as witches. Haubner, for example, described the second of her accomplices thus: 'The imprisoned scribe's brother-in-law, formerly resident in Attenfeld who can now be found with his daughter at Pietenfeld'.[47] In this one description Haubner reveals her knowledge

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[43] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 13 January 1618 (a.m.), and (G. Gutmann), 29 January 1618 (a.m.).

[44] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 25 January 1618 (p.m.).

[45] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (W. Weber), 16 December 1617 (a.m.), 30 December 1617 (a.m.), and 3 January 1618 (a.m.).

[46] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (K. Bonschab), named forty-seven individuals over seven sessions of interrogation from 22 January 1618 (p.m.) to 5 February 1618 (a.m.). She was identified by her alias, the Crispineßin, in Weber's confession, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (W. Weber), 3 January 1618 (a.m.). The eighty-two accomplices named by Barbara Ruoser, the first of the town suspects for whom documentation exists, also came exclusively from the town with one exception, an unnamed cook who had moved to Dolnstein, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ruoser), over six sessions between 15 December 1617 (p.m.) and 8 January 1618 (a.m.).

[47] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 25 January 1618 (p.m.).

of another family's relations and movements across local communities. This knowledge should not surprise us. A collection of local villages would, for instance, have formed a small economic bloc in the wider region and provided a bigger pool of marriageable partners than could be produced by one village alone. It is no coincidence that five of the first six female defendants from 1617 for whom there is trial material were all 'born and brought up' in places away from those in which they married. Three of these were daughters of villages in the locality of Pietenfeld and Adelschlag: Wappel Weber was born in Wettstetten about 5 ½ km north of Ingolstadt;[48] Kunigunda Bonschab in Ebel bei Nassenfels, 4km south of Adelschlag;[49] and Haubner in Wolkertshofen, 2km east of Nassenfels.[50] The other two travelled further distances to end up in Eichstätt: Anna Harding had been born in Markt Jettingen in Swabia;[51] and Anna Beck in Ellingen.[52] One should not infer from these migrations that witch persecution was an attack on 'marginal' women who were alien to a village; exogamous marriage patterns could not have been sustained if women who migrated for this purpose, especially from near-by villages, were not usually accepted by their affinal relatives and the local community. In any case, Enders Gutmann, a native of Pietenfeld, had taken his wife from outside the village, from Pfünz, but, although still living, she was not named or arrested as a witch.[53]

Barbara Haubner's testimony also reveals a more interesting connection between Pietenfeld and her own village than those contained in the description quoted above. Among those whom she denounced was one Meekl, the brother of the tavern-keeper of Pietenfeld, who was now her neighbour.[54] The landlord in question would have been Leonhard Gutmann, the father of Enders and Georg, and the alleged accomplice their uncle.[55] This information suggests that there may have been more to Haubner's relationship with Anna Schiller (the mother of Enders and Georg) than being a name on her list of accomplices, and more

[48] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (W. Weber), 12 December 1617.
[49] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (K. Bonschab), 19 January 1618 (p.m.).
[50] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 19 January 1618 (p.m.).
[51] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 19 January 1618.
[52] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 23 January 1618.
[53] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 14 December 1617.
[54] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 25 January 1618 (p.m.).
[55] The name of the Gutmann brothers' father was given by Enders in answer to the biographical questions posed towards the beginning of his interrogation, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 14 December 1617 (a.m.).

to her relationship with the Gutmann brothers than a shared jail. One might ask too what relationship Haubner might have had with Barbara Khager. They were both midwives of their respective, neighbouring, villages and may perhaps have shared clients, especially as Haubner at least may have lived in and around Adelschlag for thirty-five of her fifty-five years.[56]

And what of Haubner's relationship with Khager's son and Anna Bonschab? Haubner was also known as the Stuterin because her husband was, at the time of her arrest, the horseherd at Moritzbrunn, a hamlet to the north-west of Adelschlag;[57] Michael Ghayer (Khager's son) herded horses at Pietenfeld;[58] and Anna Bonschab was the wife of a *Rossbauer*, a horse breeder.[59] It is unlikely that the horse breeders and herdsmen of the region would have been ignorant of their colleagues and competitors. They would have met each other at markets either in Eichstätt, Neuburg an der Donau, Ingolstadt and wherever else the sale of horses was conducted locally. Perhaps they shared stock for breeding too and encountered one another when they were herding animals to and from pasture. From her description of her first acts of malevolent witchcraft, for example, it is clear that Haubner's husband had worked over quite an extensive area. The first of these harmful acts was against a black horse being watched over by her husband in the meadows at Oberzell, about 7 km to the east of Adelschlag where the couple resided and 9 ½ km from Moritzbrunn where her husband was working at the time of her arrest.[60] Haubner's second malevolent crime was the murder of another horse, also black, also being herded by her husband, but this time on the 'Berg' at Eichstätt.[61] The midwife's testimony also reveals that he had looked after horses at Pietenfeld, where she had gone with him about twenty years before her arrest.[62] It is possible too that Haubner's husband and Michael Ghayer were employees of Anna Bonschab's husband. It seems likely therefore that

[56] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 19 January 1618 (p.m.).
[57] Ibid., 19 January 1618 (p.m.).
[58] Ibid., 25 January 1618 (p.m.). Barbara's surname was always written as Khager and Michael's as Ghayer. I have retained the distinction.
[59] Rossbäuerin was the common name given to Anna Bonschab and taken from the occupation of her husband, e.g. StAN, Hexenakten 48 (W. Weber), 16 December 1617 (a.m.).
[60] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 3 February 1618 (p.m.).
[61] Ibid., 3 February 1618 (p.m.).
[62] Ibid., 23 January 1618 (a.m.).

Haubner had been well-acquainted with the Pietenfeld witches both as a midwife and the wife of a herdsman.

One can only make assumptions about the connections between these individuals based on the residential and occupational details which have been recorded in the extant interrogation material. There is, however, one other clue to the closeness of the relationships between these villagers. In the testimony transcribed during the interrogation of Georg Gutmann, the executed Fischerin an der Leithen was twice described as his mother-in-law.[63] The "Urfehdebuch" shows that only one fisherman's wife, indeed only one woman from Pietenfeld an der Leithen, had been executed at about this time; her name was Anna Spät.[64] This additional information means that four of the witch-suspects of the villages to the east and south of the town of Eichstätt—Spät, the Gutmann brothers and their mother (Anna Schiller)—were related. It also indicates that the Gutmann brothers may have named more members of their affinal kin among their accomplices than an initial glance at the interrogation transcripts would suggest. Both denounced the 'Old Spätin', almost certainly the Fischerin herself, whilst Georg also named her daughter (probably his sister-in-law rather than his wife), the 'Young Spätin'.[65] One wonders what other familial ties may have bound these early suspects and their alleged accomplices together, especially when one observes that only Georg Gutmann described the Fischerin as his mother-in-law. To Enders Gutmann, as to the other suspects, she was just the Fischerin or Fischer Anna.[66]

Georg Gutmann's references to his mother-in-law reveal more than just an additional familial relationship. Six days before his execution, Gutmann confirmed that he had once publicly accused Anna Spät and Barbara Haubner of murdering his first wife (Spät's daughter), and he now stood by that accusation.[67] On the same morning, Haubner was also asked about this death (it is not clear who was interrogated first), a murder to which she had already confessed, without prompting, on the afternoon of 3 February. On both occasions she claimed merely to have

[63] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (G. Gutmann), 29 January 1618 (a.m.) and 10 February 1618 (a.m.).
[64] DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 127v and 130r–131r.
[65] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 13 January 1618 (a.m.), and (G. Gutmann), 29 January 1618 (a.m.).
[66] For example, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 13 January 1618 (a.m.).
[67] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (G. Gutmann), 10 February 1618 (a.m.).

aided Spät in the task of poisoning Georg's wife.[68] The alleged murder was not attributed by the suspects or the interrogators to Haubner's status as a witch. It was discussed as a case of straightforward felonious killing. The circumstances or truth of Gutmann's accusation against the two women cannot be substantiated, but the accusation does show that he could imagine that his mother-in-law and Haubner might have acted closely together in what was a secret act, and that this understanding had a basis in fact.

The rest of Haubner's own testimony confirms that she did have a good relationship with Anna Spät. Indeed, the Fischerin dominates Haubner's confession. When asked about her diabolical baptism, the midwife stated that she had gone with Anna Bonschab to Spät's house. They then went on to the Altmühl, which ran by Spät's village, in which Haubner was to be baptized; this baptism was also witnessed by Anna Schiller, the Gutmann brothers' mother.[69] Afterwards they had returned to Spät's house for a celebration.[70] It was also Spät, along with Schiller, who had supplied children for the larger diabolical gatherings. When later she was asked about the exhumation of infant corpses, Haubner confessed that on these occasions she had helped Bonschab and Spät dig up the bodies of children born to the Dürschin and the Schmidin which had been buried in the cemetery at Adelschlag;[71] their bones were burned to a powder at Spät's house (by Spät) and used to 'make weather'.[72] Earlier she had stated, after confessing to killing her husband's horses, that 'she and the Fischerin of [Pietenfeld] an der Leithen helped one another, and murdered a dappled horse of the Fischerin's ten years ago'.[73] Haubner then confessed that, fifteen years previously, 'she and the Rossbäuerin had helped one another'; the Rossbäuerin, Anna Bonschab, had killed a horse, a cow and a calf.[74]

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[68] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 3 February 1618 (p.m.) and 10 February 1618 (a.m.). In the first version, Spät had 'made a drink which they gave to the Fischerin's daughter'. She died six days later. No mention is made of the daughter's relationship to Gutmann. In the second version, in answer to an explicit question about the murder in which the relationships were laid out, she replied 'Yes, it was true, the Fischerin brought her a drink to give to her daughter, and they gave it to her'. Again, the daughter was said to have died six days later.

[69] Ibid., 23 January 1618 (a.m.).

[70] Ibid., 23 January 1618 (a.m.).

[71] Ibid., 5 February 1618 (p.m.).

[72] Ibid., 5 February 1618 (p.m.).

[73] Ibid., 3 February 1618 (p.m.).

[74] Ibid., 3 February 1618 (p.m.).

This testimony about Haubner's malevolence is unusual. Hers is the only Eichstätt case in which the suspect confessed to causing harm in concert with one or other of her accomplices. Indeed, not only the Eichstätt witch-suspects, but their contemporaries throughout Europe often claimed to have acted alone in their tales of malevolence.[75] Whether or not Haubner consciously adopted this strategy here, the effect of citing an accomplice was to distance herself from the acts of harm. The women had 'helped one another', but it was Spät and Bonschab who had actually killed Gutmann's wife and the animals in Haubner's narrative. This strategy is reminiscent of those adopted by all Eichstätt witch-suspects in their stories of weather-magic and the exhumation of children. They attended both situations with other witches, but they were careful to assume the role of the unwilling or ineffective witch in their confessions. The suspects watched the performance of weather-magic, but rarely stated that they participated in the ritual, and they observed that its effects were not known or that it was only partially successful, if at all. These same suspects stood by as children were unearthed from their graves, but someone else took the bodies away to burn the bones into powder or boil the flesh down to an ointment. In Haubner's own account of weather-magic, she claimed that she and Spät had to poison meadows, make frost and fog, and do great damage to cereals and fruit: 'In sum, they caused nothing good with it [their powder]'.[76] She did not, however, give examples of when or where this harm was supposed to have been carried out. Towards the end of the persecutions, Peter Porzin confessed to helping at three attempts at weather-magic (with whom, he did not state). He did not know, however, whether they had been successful.[77] The consistency with which the suspects distanced themselves from acts of ritual magic only confirms their inability to imagine that they could do anything so catastrophic to the community or as vile to a corpse, even if they could articulate an understanding of how weather-magic or the exhumation and burnings of infant bodies might happen.

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[75] For example, none of the three witches in one of the earliest English witchcraft pamphlets to appear after the Witchcraft Act of 1563 confessed to committing her malicious acts with the aid of her sister witches, *The Examination and Confession of certaine Wytches at Chensforde in the Countie of Essex* (London, 1566), repr. in Gibson (ed.), *Early Modern Witches*, pp. 10–24.

[76] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 5 February 1618 (p.m.).

[77] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin), 28 September 1627.

Despite the sensational elements of these sections of the confession narratives, however, my interest lies in the accomplices with whom the suspect imagined herself attending smaller gatherings of local witches for purposeful magic. By the time Haubner came to discuss her sacrilege and malevolence on the afternoon of 3 February 1618, nine inhabitants of the villages to the east and south of Eichstätt, that is members of communities which appear to have had strong ties, had been executed and a further three were in custody.[78] Residents of the town of Eichstätt were, or had been, imprisoned alongside her in the town hall too.[79] There had also been other executions about which Haubner must have known either because she had attended them as a spectator or heard about them through local gossip.[80] In addition, she had already named at least twelve other individuals among her accomplices who did not later interest the witch commissioners.[81] Haubner therefore had a large pool of witch-suspects from which to choose accomplices to her acts of witchcraft. She did not name any of those still living in describing these acts, but I do not think that this was a deliberate strategy to protect them from prosecution. Instead, Haubner instinctively confessed to acting with her real-life gossips who had already been indicted and executed and with whom she was commonly associated by Georg Gutmann and other near-neighbours. One can also argue that the consistency with which Anna Schiller, Barbara Khager and Anna Bonschab were cited together in stories of witchcraft activity in the Pietenfeld and Adelschlag confessions shows that Wappel Weber, the Gutmann brothers and Haubner could likewise imagine them working together.

Here we are confronted with the same dynamic as that which occurred in the naming of neighbours who were seen at the larger

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[78] The nine executed villagers were: Annas Scheur, Lehenbauer (mother and daughter), Spät, Fackelmayr, Schiller and Bonschab, together with Barbara Khager and Wappel Weber. Those still in custody were the Gutmann brothers and Michael Ghayer.

[79] These Eichstätt suspects included Barbara Ruoser who was executed on 26 January 1618, eight days after Haubner's arrest, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ruoser), cover, and (B. Haubner), 18 January 1618. Kunigunda Bonschab had been arrested on the same day as Haubner, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (K. Bonschab), 18 January 1618, whilst Anna Harding and Anna Beck had been arrested on 19 and 23 January respectively, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 19 January 1618, and (A. Beck), 23 January 1618.

[80] Six other women had been executed since 1617. As she was fifty-five years of age, Haubner must have been aware of the other cases of witchcraft in the principality since 1590, and contemporary cases in the rest of Franconia, Swabia and Bavaria.

[81] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 25 January 1618 (p.m.) and 30 January 1618 (p.m.).

gatherings of the witch sect. In both instances, the suspect, unable to withstand further torment, peopled her confession with intimates rather than enemies and mere acquaintances. Under intense pressure, it was these neighbours and kin who came to mind first because it was easier to diabolize the situations one usually shared with them than to invent wholly fictional ones contrived from relationships one could not imagine having in normal circumstances. Thus, throughout her confession, Haubner placed specific events (the baptism, the desecration of the host and the burning of the infants' corpses) at Anna Spät's house, and peopled these and other episodes with a particular identifiable group of women (Spät, Anna Bonschab and Anna Schiller). These women had attended ordinary baptisms, celebrations, church services and funerals together; and they may even have conspired together in an act of murder. They were gossips who had shared the ordinary experiences which they were now forced to diabolize and a consequence of this imaginative process was that they ended up naming each other as accomplices.

The connections which can be identified between the witch-suspects of the villages within the district of Eichstätt provide the context for Haubner's reactions to the two denouncers brought into her presence. Haubner's confused and ill-advised response to Wappel Weber's denunciation (that she had seen her at the witches' gatherings) was in part a product of the stressful situation in which she then found herself, but it was not entirely so. Other defendants were sufficiently astute to deny the accusation by stating their innocence, in Margretha Geiger's case quite forcefully. Recently-arrested witch-suspects were also aware of their fellow inmates, although they may not always have been able to communicate with one another. Maria Mayr, for example, passed on a message to the interrogators from Kunigunda Pronner stating that they had done her an injustice.[82] It was probably obvious to the new inmate, especially after the first session of interrogation, that any negative gossip which had circulated about these detained witch-suspects in the outside world was untrue, but if they expected to benefit from a degree of solidarity among their cellmates they were soon disabused of this hope. It must have been a shock to come face-to-face with another prisoner, someone who shared your predicament, and hear her denounce you as a witch. This was more the case when she was a close neighbour.

[82] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr), 20 November 1618.

Haubner and Weber (aged about fifty-five and sixty respectively) were apparently long-term residents of neighbouring villages;[83] through community rituals and shared experiences, as well as through Anna Spät, their common gossip, they knew the other local witch-convicts and suspects intimately. There is no evidence in the interrogation transcripts that animosity characterized their relationship; they merely listed one another among the accomplices whom they had seen at the diabolical gatherings of the witch sect (in Haubner's case only after the confrontation). And yet Haubner found herself confronted by this potential ally. Her neighbour had succumbed to the very pressures she was now experiencing and the realization of this must have filled Haubner with despair and fear. It should not surprise us to find one among so many witch-suspects falter at this early stage in the interrogation and begin to confess; the wonder is that this is the only surviving example.

Haubner knew her second denouncer almost as well as she did Weber. Enders Gutmann lived near to Haubner, but in this confrontation the parties do not, from our historical perspective, appear to have been of equal status. Gutmann was male and he was, at about twenty-eight years of age, a generation younger than the defendant.[84] Indeed, Haubner, as both Anna Schiller's friend and a local midwife, may well have known him since his birth. Gutmann's late father had been the *Richter* (judge) of Pietenfeld as well as its innkeeper (the professions of the Gutmann brothers are not known), but whether this gave him significantly greater standing in his village than the midwife Haubner had in Adelschlag one cannot now state. Yet despite the political and social advantages one associates with masculinity, lineage and age throughout early modern Europe (at least in the context of witchcraft accusations), Enders and Georg Gutmann had still been arrested before this woman. As in the relationship between Haubner and Weber, there is no evidence of malice on the part of either suspect in this confrontation, notwithstanding

[83] Haubner stated that she was fifty-five years old. She had lived in or around Adelschlag at least since her marriage thirty-five years before her arrest, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 19 January 1618 (p.m.). Weber had married three times, but did not state exactly where she had lived with each husband. At the time of her arrest she was living in Pietenfeld with a daughter from her first marriage who had married a farmer there. This daughter, the eldest of the surviving children from this marriage, must have been in her twenties and may therefore have lived in the village for up to a decade, if her parents had not also lived there, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (W. Weber), 13 December 1617 (a.m.).

[84] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 14 December 1617 (a.m.).

Georg's accusation of murder against Haubner. Enders's denunciation had its origins in the intricate network of communal relations which bound the inhabitants of one group of villages together. He knew Haubner at least as one of his mother's acquaintances and when forced to name accomplices, she simply came to mind in that context. Like her confusion after the first confrontation with Wappel Weber, the phrase with which Haubner reproached Enders Gutmann, 'whether he would wash his hands in her blood…', must be understood in the light of these complex, yet intimate, local relationships.[85]

The reproach was no empty rhetorical phrase. The Eichstätt interrogation transcripts are full of linguistic devices which were part of the local 'restricted code' of communication, a code which was both 'strongly metaphorical' and 'rooted in local relationships'.[86] In the context of the witch trials, this code was commonly deployed by the witch-suspects at the beginning of each interrogation to deny involvement in the witch sect. These denials were frequently articulated in the language of Catholic orthodoxy and early modern oath making—appeals to Jesus, God, the saints and the Virgin to stand as witnesses to the suspect's innocence—or as part of a more emotive language, backed with tears, that appealed directly to the interrogators (being innocent as a child, for example).[87] Each appeal, brief though it may have been, was loaded with meaning which did not have to be explained, just as most early modern people understood the import of individual words of slander (whore, witch, traitor) without having to state explicitly for a court what consequences they would have for the reputation of the victim if they stuck.[88] In the exchanges of the witchcraft interrogation,

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[85] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 20 January 1618 (a.m.).

[86] The notion of the 'restricted code' of communication in face-to-face societies like Eichstätt comes from Basil Bernstein (ed.), *Class, Codes and Control*, vol. 1 *Theatrical Studies towards a Sociology of Language* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. 175–8. It forms part of the basis of David Sabean's linguistic approach to early modern communities outlined in his introduction to *Power in the Blood*, pp. 1–36, and the notes on pp. 214–21 (especially p. 215, n. 2).

[87] Anna Harding, who took almost a month to break under torture, gave a comprehensive series of such oaths, including: she 'is as pious as God in Heaven'; if she was such a woman God would turn her into a pillar of salt in the marketplace; and when bound to the strappado and lifted clear of the ground, she cried out 'Jesus, Mary, help, I am no witch', although she then began her confession immediately, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 19 January 1618, 15 February 1618 (p.m.) and 17 February 1618 (a.m.). Barbara Rabel claimed to be 'as innocent as a child in the cradle', StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Rabel), 7 September 1618 (a.m.).

[88] On honour and the legal attempts to restore it, see Fuchs, *Hexerei und Zauberei vor*

the language of denial conveyed the innocence and distress of each suspect in short-hand, a code which was immediately recognizable to the listeners and remains so to historians in cultures which retain some of the keys to it. The images and words of the 'restricted code' were so well understood that they were repeated by many of the witch-suspects. Less than a month after Barbara Haubner asked Enders Gutmann if he would 'wash his hands in her blood', Anna Harding stated that she 'was certainly no such person and the lord commissioners would not want to wash their hands in her blood'.[89] Maria Mayr also answered Harding's confrontation by claiming that her accuser would wash her hands in her blood and did so, in this case, out of enmity.[90] Haubner's response was not therefore a simple challenge to just anyone with whom she had been confronted. Rooted in complex local relationships, her words were invested with an intensity of emotion which may have reflected the nature of her personal relations with the Gutmann family. It is a reproach that one might expect a fifty-five-year-old woman of social status to throw at a young man who had accused her, without cause, of a heinous crime; and it conveys at once Gutmann's responsibility for her probable death (having her blood on his hands) and the betrayal that had to happen to facilitate it (washing one's hands of a situation in the manner of Pontius Pilot). It would not make much sense for a witch-suspect to use this phrase against a mere acquaintance who had denounced her; the greater the social distance between two individuals, the less the sense of betrayal in the accusation. It was intimacy rather than enmity which prompted the use of this shaming phrase.

Michael Hochenschildt and his denouncers

Placed in the context of a series of overlapping relationships among the inhabitants of the villages around Eichstätt, Barbara Haubner's responses to her accusers take on a different aspect than modern witch-craft historiography might lead one to expect. They were not the result of local conflict, but were rather the product of the dynamics of the

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dem Reichskammergericht, and Cavallo and Cerutti, "Female Honor and the Social Control of Reproduction in Piedmont between 1600 and 1800". On informal, if violent, means to avenge honour, see Valentin Groebner, "Losing Face, Saving Face: Noses and Honour in Late Medieval Towns", *History Workshop Journal*, 40 (Autumn, 1995), pp. 1–15.

[89] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 15 February 1618 (p.m.).

[90] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr), 23 June 1618 (p.m.).

interrogation. Forced to name accomplices, Haubner, Wappel Weber, Enders Gutmann and their neighbours denounced each other and their closest associates as witches. In doing so they exposed parts of the intricate social networks which bound close-knit communities together. An examination of the testimony given by Michael Hochenschildt in his responses to the denunciations laid against him allows one to extend this analysis.

Hochenschildt was quite clear about where he felt he stood socially with his denouncers. He made an important distinction, for example, between his relationship with Hans Baur and that with Lorenz Brandt. His relations with Brandt seem to have been cordial, but they stopped at the tavern door.[91] Those with Baur extended further and constituted friendship. Hochenschildt had apparently 'long held' a good opinion of Baur, his 'good neighbour', and he attempted to show this by stating that they ate and drank together.[92] He did not claim this for his relationship with any of his other denouncers.

In Hochenschildt's deposition eating and drinking assume historical importance as the *defining* activities of close friendship. He did not choose to illustrate the relationship with Baur by another activity, like the carousing which characterized his lesser friendship with Brandt, or by a specific event (such as the trip to the wedding recounted by Margretha Bittelmayr), or by citing, for example, mutual membership of the local councils or one of the lay confraternities which were introduced into Eichstätt under Westerstetten's patronage. Eating and drinking were significant social activities by which neighbourhood, friendship and other, more formal, associations were confirmed and maintained (and they remain so today),[93] but as they were used by Hochenschildt they should be regarded as 'relational idioms', part of the local restricted language code, and therefore a means by which the quality of the relationship in question, as it was perceived by one person at least, was

[91] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hochenschildt), 14 March 1628.

[92] Ibid., 14 March 1628.

[93] Alan Bray and Michel Rey have analysed the importance of formal occasions of eating and drinking as symbols of friendship in their "The Body of the Friend: Continuity and Change in Masculine Friendship in the Seventeenth Century", in Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (eds.), *English Masculinities 1660–1800* (London: Longman, 1999), pp. 65–84 (pp. 68–9). See also B. Ann Tlusty, *Bacchus and Civic Order: The Culture of Drink in Early Modern Germany* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 2001), and Lyndal Roper, "Drinking, Whoring and Gorging: Brutish Indiscipline and the Formation of Protestant Identity", in ead., *Oedipus and the Devil*, pp. 145–67.

expressed clearly to others. It is difficult now to produce other evidence to confirm the relationship between Hochenschildt and Baur. Baur had been executed almost eight years before Hochenschildt's arrest and the trial transcript is no longer extant.[94] Hochenschildt did assert, however, that he had been seduced into the sect by Baur's late wife fifteen years previously which would suggest a long-term association with the Baurs.[95] As in the case of the Pietenfeld and Adelschlag witches, such statements often reflect intimate rather than distant relationships between the suspect and his accomplice.

I will return to eating and drinking as a relational idiom in the following chapter. Here, however, I will discuss the term 'good neighbour'. The phrase occurs on one other occasion in the Eichstätt witchcraft material. On Monday 30 August 1593, the Eichstätt council deliberated upon a report from the administrator of Hirschberg who was also the provost of Berching. In it he recounted that the wife of Jesse Vockher, a citizen of Berching, had borne a child which had subsequently died; she herself had gone mad. Suspicious of their neighbour, Vockher and his mother-in-law had sought the advice of a wisewoman at Leutterbach, Magdalena Pößl, who inevitably confirmed that the Punckin, Georg Claßner's wife, was indeed the perpetrator of the child's murder and the wife's illness. The authorities to whom this case was reported had just emerged from a period of witch persecution which had resulted in the execution of at least nineteen women, but their decision did not reflect this experience. They observed that the Punckin was innocent and that there was 'good reason' to punish Vockher and his mother-in-law for this 'forbidden thing', that is, consulting Pößl.[96] The councillors chose, however, merely to admonish the parties from Berching 'to speak again as good friends and neighbours'.[97] To be a good friend and neighbour, therefore, was to live peaceably with one's fellow citizens. But it did not mean all citizens. It referred only to those individuals who came into contact with each other on intimate occasions (like women at or around birth) or in important situations (council meetings attended by men drawn from the same small group of elite families, for example). In

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[94] Baur was executed on 22 August 1620, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 187r–v. Hochenschildt was arrested on 14 March 1628, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hochenschildt), cover.

[95] Ibid., 15 March 1628. Unless she was indicted under an alias or other married name, Hans Baur's wife was never arrested for witchcraft.

[96] StAN, Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 298, f. 131r.

[97] Ibid., f. 131r.

stating that he had always regarded Hans Baur as his good neighbour, Hochenschildt was confirming that there had never been irresolvable conflict between the two men and their households, and he was also elevating that relationship above those with individuals about whom he said that he could say 'nothing'.

Hochenschildt retained this image of Baur as a 'good neighbour' throughout the eight years since his friend's death. He continued to do so even though he had now discovered that Baur had been among the fifteen witches by whom he had been denounced. The other denouncers, including the Gelbschusterin with whom Michael had fallen out, fared equally well in Hochenschildt's analysis of his relationships with them; there is no sense in which he perceived them as witches, despite the confessions which had been extracted from them and broadcast to the spectators who came to watch the executions. I do not think that Hochenschildt was alone in this perception. One has always to bear in mind that not one of the Eichstätt witch-suspects for whom transcripts exist had been denounced to the witch commission by a supposed victim of her witchcraft. The very fact that Hochenschildt could, however, maintain that one of his denouncers was innocent of the crime of witchcraft in these circumstances, and that he could not say that the others were not (implicitly undermining the legitimacy of the commission's convictions), supports the interpretation of his relationship with Hans Baur as being close.

Evidence from England reinforces this interpretation of the relationship between Hochenschildt and Baur. John Bossy and Annabel Gregory have observed that 'good neighbourhood' has a long history of use in England, up until at least the late sixteenth century, to express 'the virtues of peacefulness'.[98] This seems to be precisely the meaning given to the similar expression 'good friends and neighbours' as it was employed by the Eichstätt councillors judging the conflict between the Vockhers and the Claßners. Their conflict was not to be resolved through the conventional means of justice (trial and punishment) but by

[98] John Bossy, "Blood and Baptism: Kinship, Community and Christianity in Western Europe from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries", in Derek Baker (ed.), *Sanctity and Secularity: The Church and the World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1973), pp. 129–43 (pp. 142–3), and Gregory, "Witchcraft, Politics and 'Good Neighbourhood' in Early Modern Rye", pp. 56–8. Eva Labouvie also discusses witchcraft and good neighbours in *Zauberei und Hexenwerk. Ländlicher Hexenglaube in der frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1991), pp. 82–95. Here witchcraft became a means of resolving neighbourly tensions in the manner described by Walz in *Hexenglaube und magische Kommunikation*.

returning to a state of peacefulness among themselves. Both the alleged victims and the defendants were made responsible for re-establishing the social equilibrium within their community and banishing the disruption to it which they were deemed, implicitly, to have caused. 'Good neighbourhood' was therefore the opposite state of 'the world-turned-upside-down', and of the heresy and witchcraft which were perceived by early modern commentators to be disorderly and socially disruptive. In stating that Baur was his 'good neighbour' Hochenschildt was stating that they lived together in the community at peace. In persisting with this image of their relationship despite the accusation of witchcraft made by Baur in the course of his trial, Hochenschildt was observing that the denunciation was a lie because someone with whom one was a 'good neighbour' would not intentionally disturb the peacefulness that characterized one's relationship.

In Hochenschildt's testimony, therefore, one can detect subtle differences in his feelings towards and knowledge of his neighbours. His relationships with his denouncers ranged from close friendship to mere acquaintance, and for the most part they seem to have been either cordial or uneventful. It is against Hochenschildt's evaluations of these particular relationships, which were more comprehensive than the usual acknowledgement by the suspect that they knew the denouncer but were not guilty of the charge, that one should appraise his confession that there had been animosity between himself and Maria Lang, the Gelbschusterin. This piece of information was willingly supplied by Hochenschildt, despite the situation in which he found himself, and it was the only suggestion at this point in the testimony that he had had altercations with any of his neighbours. The quarrel was also evidently a minor one. It had occurred over a pair of shoes, perhaps repaired or made for Hochenschildt by Maria's husband, Valtin Lanng, and had apparently been resolved. Hochenschildt stated that he had *once* been in conflict with her; but he also judged that it was not a case of mortal enmity.[99] Lang does not seem to have referred to any conflict with him in her own testimony.[100]

In fact, this falling out apparently over someone's handiwork is an example of the kind of petty disagreement one should expect to find

[99] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hochenschildt), 14 March 1628.

[100] At least, no reference of any conflict is mentioned by Hochenschildt's interrogators. There is no extant transcript recording the Gelbschusterin's interrogation.

between neighbours in any community. It does not fit the pattern of conflicts which other historians have identified as precipitating accusations of witchcraft elsewhere in the early modern world. It did not turn on a refusal of charity, it did not arise at one of the important emotional events in life, such as childbirth, and it did not form part of some local factionalism. It may well have offended the honour of the Lang's household and therefore the episode had the potential to turn into a long-running dispute, but there were other ways of re-establishing one's honour in such cases than accusing them of witchcraft, however convenient that might seem to be in the middle of a major witch panic. The shoes did not therefore provoke deep and continuous disruption in the relations between the denouncer and the suspect.

Margretha Geiger and her denouncers

The enmity between Margretha Geiger and two of her denouncers, Anna Beck (Hochenschildt's sister-in-law) and Judith Obermayr, seems to have been much deeper than that between Hochenschildt and Maria Lang. The transcript of Obermayr's interrogation no longer exists, but those for Beck and Anna Harding, the third of the denouncers with whom Geiger was confronted, do.[101] Both suspects were asked specifically to confirm that they had seen Geiger and also Valtin Lanng at the nocturnal gatherings. They were asked because the witch commissioners were coming to the end of one set of cases and were about to move on to the next, and they seem to have thought it prudent to seek such confirmation before a confrontation took place. Beck was interrogated on this point during her last session of interrogation on 12 March 1618,[102] and Harding on the morning of 23 March.[103] On the same morning both women, together with Obermayr, were taken to confront Geiger who had been arrested on 21 March.[104] Beck did not, incidentally, later accompany Harding and Obermayr to confront Lanng (who had been arrested on 22 March) because she had expressed doubt about her initial denunciation.[105] It is possible, therefore, that Beck

[101] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck) and (A. Harding).
[102] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 12 March 1618 (a.m.).
[103] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 23 March 1618 (a.m.). Harding's trial still had three months to go until her last session of interrogation, ibid., 22 June 1618 (p.m.).
[104] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Geiger), 23 March 1618 (a.m.).
[105] Having confirmed that Lanng and Geiger were the same kind of people as she

persisted in her accusation of Geiger for the very reason stated by the defendant, because Georg Beck held her in suspicion of witchcraft.

As in the narratives constructed by the Pietenfeld and Adelschlag witch-suspects, however, Geiger and Beck appear as neighbours in more than one key situation described by Beck. They participated together in an act of weather-magic and both were present in the raiding of Valtin Lanng's cellar.[106] When she was called to give testimony against Geiger, Beck also claimed to have attended a witches' meal at Geiger's house.[107] In the brief exchange which ensued Beck then called Geiger 'my dear Margrettlin', a diminutive which was clearly a term of endearment and unlikely to be used except by individuals who knew Geiger well.[108] In Geiger's own confession, the Sebastian Beck, as Anna was also known, was the first-named of the six godmothers who had attended her diabolical baptism.[109] It is difficult to tie these women closer together from the trial transcripts because the women of the town of Eichstätt shared a wider milieu of close associates than their acquaintances in neighbouring villages. In their daily lives they would simply have encountered a broader range of neighbours than the women of Pietenfeld and Adelschlag, for example, could have, and as a consequence more individuals appear in these witches' stories at the expense of intimate detail. The endearing nickname and the presence of Beck among Geiger's diabolical godmothers do, however, allow one to question the truth of Margretha Geiger's counter-accusation that Anna Beck had denounced her out of enmity.

By examining the more detailed responses to the denunciations laid before the witch-suspects, one can begin to suggest that the population of the prince-bishopric of Eichstätt was bound by a variety of generally cordial relationships, from the close friendship between Hochenschildt and Baur to mere acquaintance or knowledge of others among one's neighbours. Occasionally individuals might come into conflict, whether

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was, she went on to say 'but she doubts one [was] Schuster Valtin', StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 12 March 1618 (a.m.). For the confrontations with Lanng, see StAN, Hexenakten 48 (V. Lanng), 29 March 1618 (a.m.).

[106] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 6 February 1618 (a.m.). Twelve witches entered this cellar to collect wine to take to a gathering on the Linsenwiesen. All were women; one was Lanng's wife.

[107] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Geiger), 23 March 1618 (a.m.).

[108] Ibid., 23 March 1618 (a.m.).

[109] Ibid., 24 March 1618 (a.m.). The others were the late Kunigunda Bonschab, Anna Harding, the 'Biden Warbel', Judith Obermayr and Catharina Ströbl (also executed).

temporarily and superficially, like Hochenschildt and Maria Lang, or irreconcilably, like perhaps Anna Ruhr and the Kürschnerin of Pfalergasse, but together the defendants' statements about their relationships with their denouncers do not give the impression that deep social conflicts rent the principality as part of some paradigmatic general crisis. If these were the only direct comments on the state of personal relations in Eichstätt to be found in the witch-trial documents, then suspicions about their veracity might linger. The statements I have examined so far were made towards the beginning of each interrogation before torture had been threatened and as the suspect was trying to present herself as honourable and pious. Good relations with one's neighbours, alongside explicit claims to piety and assertions that the denunciations laid against them were unjust, were part of a strategy to insist on one's virtue as a proof of innocence. Once the suspect had, however, accepted the role of the guilty witch in the interrogation she occasionally continued to comment on her relationships with her victims and accomplices. Of equal, if not greater, significance when juxtaposed with these rare comments is the general silence about the factors which motivated Eichstätt witches to act maliciously against their neighbours, and the consistent failure of the witnesses to corroborate the witch-suspects' tales of harm.

Walburga Knab

During the course of her interrogation between July 1621 and February 1622, Walburga Knab confessed to nineteen acts of malevolent witchcraft.[110] Five of these acts were perpetrated against her own children and livestock; fourteen were directed against the persons or property of her neighbours. Witnesses were called to testify on 3 September 1621 when Knab had only confessed to twelve of the acts (four against her own household, two against Hans Baur's, and six against other inhabitants of Eichstätt).[111] Although her husband Georg was alive and therefore available to provide testimony, it was Knab who was the witness to the

[110] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 30 July 1621 (a.m.), 5 August 1621, 6 August 1621 (a.m.), 28 August 1621, 22 September 1621 (a.m.), and 22 September 1621 (p.m.). These acts of witchcraft were abstracted in StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*malefacta*).

[111] The witness depositions were collected in StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*inquisition*).

harm she claimed to have committed against herself. This was not, however, unusual. From the other extant witness depositions, it appears that independent persons were never called by the interrogators to substantiate a suspect's self-destructiveness. The widow of Hans Baur, Hochenschildt's 'good neighbour', was interrogated by the commission about the harm allegedly done by Knab to both her daughter and her servant girl, and three other alleged victims of Knab's malevolence were brought before the commissioners.[112] For three of the first eight acts of harmful witchcraft against persons outside Knab's own household therefore no witness was called, although at least one of the 'victims', Jacob Rabel, would have been able to testify.[113] The documentation for Knab's interrogation seems to be complete as it consists of a list of the denunciations made against her (compiled before her arrest), the entire interrogation transcript (fifty folio sheets written on both sides), an abstract of the malevolent witchcraft to which she had confessed, the witnesses' depositions, and the *relatio*, as well as the briefer verdict which was copied into the "Urfehdebuch" with a note of the sentence.[114] In none of this material is it suggested that witnesses were later subpoenaed to testify to the seven remaining occasions of harmful magic, although all of the alleged victims were alive and resident in Eichstätt at the time.[115]

The lack of thoroughness on the part of the witch commissioners in pursuing corroborative testimony for the acts of malevolent witchcraft seems to have originated in the relatively low level of importance they ascribed to such acts. Their inclusion was necessary only to help confirm the suspect's heresy and to fulfil the criteria of the *Carolina*. One can see this in the *relatio* produced at the end of the Knab case. The

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[112] Ibid., Items 8 and 9.

[113] Jacob Rabel was arrested for witchcraft in 1626 and executed on 20 November 1626, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", f. 228v. His first wife Barbara had been executed on 15 March 1619, ibid., ff. 169r–170r and 174r–v. There is no suggestion in the transcript of his interrogation that he had moved away from Eichstätt in the intervening period, StAN, Hexenakten 43 (J. Rabel).

[114] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—trial transcript), (W. Knab—*malefacta*), (W. Knab—*inquisition*), (W. Knab—*relatio*), StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Knab—denunciatory), and DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 196v–197r.

[115] The addresses (street names or residential quarters) of individuals named in the interrogation transcripts were frequently given in the text together with a note of their death if this was relevant. Often, because of the dynamics of the Eichstätt persecution from 1617, individuals appeared as victims, accomplices and defendants in the Hexenakten. There exists therefore a lot of scattered data about the inhabitants of the principality.

malevolence was reduced in this document to a single point without any indication of how many of the nineteen acts to which Knab had confessed were accepted as part of the final testimony: 'She received ointment and powder from her paramour, by whom she was earnestly commanded and strongly encouraged to do diverse harm'.[116] The stress in this point on the role of the paramour in guiding Knab's malevolence reflects the emphasis of the *relatio*. The five folio sides on which the final summarized confession was recorded concern primarily the heretical acts of the witch, the seduction, the pact, the renunciation of God and the Catholic sacraments and the nocturnal gatherings. This emphasis on heretical acts is most notable in the attention given to the acts of sacrilege. When Knab was interrogated, only two half-day sessions were given over to an investigation of her sacrilege, and the details, which were stereotypical in form and expression, occupy just two-and-a-half of the 100 folio sides of the interrogation transcript.[117] They were copied into the *relatio* in detail and there take up about three-quarters of a folio side giving it a final significance out of proportion to the rest of the Knab's actual deposition.[118] The commissioners' central concern with the acts of heresy and their treatment of acts of harm as merely a by-product of that heresy probably accounts for their half-hearted attempts to question all the available witnesses to the crimes committed by Knab and their evident unwillingness to pursue in detail the insufficient testimony which was offered.

The responses of the witnesses to the interrogators' questions in the case of Walburga Knab were typical of those given in other cases. None of the four witnesses who did appear in this case cited witchcraft as the cause of their misfortunes. In general, witnesses do not seem from their answers to have been asked leading questions about witchcraft, although they would have known that they had been called to give evidence against one of the witch-suspects then held in the town hall. The witnesses probably did not know whose case they were being asked to discuss and this may have discouraged them from naming as a malefactor one of the several individuals who may then have been under investigation, but it would not necessarily have prevented at least some of them from blaming witchcraft for the harm they or their relations

[116] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*relatio*), f. 1v.
[117] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 6 August 1621 (a.m.) (when *malefacta* were also discussed) and 6 August 1621 (p.m.).
[118] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*relatio*), ff. 2r–v.

and employees had endured or from blaming a witch who had already been executed. Even when there was only one suspect being held in the town hall, witnesses tended not to tell stories of the misfortune they may have suffered at the hands of that individual. This was the case with the witnesses brought in to testify to the witchcraft done by Maria Mayr in May 1619; not one represented a clear-cut confirmation of her narrative.[119] If the majority of witnesses were unable to recall quickly in these circumstances an episode of conflict which might have led a specific individual to resort to witchcraft then the connection between enmity and the malevolent avenging witch does not seem to have resonated very strongly either in their minds or in the local culture generally. In the one case in which two of the witnesses were definitely aware of the identity of the witch (Christoph Lauterer) against whom they were meant to be testifying, they did duly cite dealings with him in their depositions. In their statements, however, they did not attribute their misfortunes to witchcraft or accuse Lauterer of being a witch.[120]

The deposition of the husband of one of Knab's alleged victims, the Uhrmacherin, reveals more clearly how the witness interrogations might have progressed. The clockmaker Hans Alter began his deposition by stating that his wife had been ill four years ago, that everyone thought that it was the 'dry fever', but that she had recovered.[121] Alter then told the witch commissioners of his wife's ulcerated leg which had first flared up in the winter before last, and caused her much pain over the recent winter.[122] It was only this second story of illness that partially matched Knab's claim to have caused the Uhrmacherin's 'bad leg'.[123] Either both events were sufficiently memorable to be brought to the interrogators' attention, or they had asked a more specific question about the Uhrmacherin's health after Alter's first story. It seems, however, that Alter was initially asked only to describe illnesses which had afflicted his wife in recent years. The witch commissioners were seeking independent and unprompted confirmation of Knab's confes-

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[119] The last executions had taken place on 15 March 1619 (DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 169r–174v). The next four witches to be executed (on 23 November 1619) had yet to be arrested, ibid., ff. 175v–178v.

[120] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (C. Lauterer—*inquisition*). These instances will be discussed below.

[121] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*inquisition*), Item 4.

[122] Ibid., Item 4.

[123] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 5 August 1621 and (W. Knab—*malefacta*), Item 4.

sion from Alter and the other witnesses. In this case, they were first told an irrelevant tale before they were offered a story of an illness which could fit the harm claimed by Knab.

Knab stated explicitly that in this case she had acted out of enmity against the Uhrmacherin.[124] She did not state her motivation for any of the other twelve attacks on her neighbours for whom witnesses were found. It is possible therefore that tension had once characterized Knab's relationship with Frau Alter, but this unidentified conflict does not appear to have impressed both parties equally. For Knab, forced to describe acts of malevolence, the Uhrmacherin's 'bad leg' and the memory of a dispute with her provided the raw material for a plausible narrative of harmful magic, even if the underlying problem had been resolved. Difficult relations with Frau Alter may also have been the reason why Knab later named her among her alleged accomplices.[125] Hans Alter, however, does not seem to have made a connection between this apparent tension and either of his wife's illnesses which he described for the witch commission. If there had been conflict of sufficient gravity to disrupt relations between the Knabs and Alters, it is likely that Hans Alter would have been aware of this. The early modern household was a unit whose honour, and therefore prosperity, would have been affected by disputes involving either spouse, and whose defence would have relied on communication between its members. If there was a significant source of tension between Knab and Alter it would probably have been discussed in the clockmaker's home. It would also have been difficult for Hans Alter to have remained deaf to local gossip which would have encompassed such disputes, or to have been so oblivious, after four years of renewed witch persecution in the town, to the activities of the witch commission as to not have speculated on the possible malicious intervention of witches in the lives of his family members. Possibly he was discouraged by fear of naming the wrong person or by the witch's potential for revenge given the right opportunity. It seems more likely, however, that the dispute had not been significant and had been resolved without causing long-term resentment on either

[124] 'She scattered her powder out of enmity towards the people, and then her neighbour received a bad leg this past winter', StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 5 August 1621. It is possible to read this sentence from Knab's confession as a general hatred for the people of Eichstätt. In the abstracted *malefacta*, however, the Uhrmacherin is explicitly described as Knab's 'enemy', StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*malefacta*), Item 4.

[125] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 9 August 1621 (p.m.).

side. Knab's recollection of the episode merely suited her narrative purposes at that point in her interrogation.

Christoph Lauterer

Fear of the witch did not deter Leonhard Steissl and Margaretha Mos from providing testimony against the *Bürgermeister* Christoph Lauterer on 5 November 1629, just five days before his execution.[126] These two witnesses knew who they were brought in to testify against and probably why. They stood before members of the witch commission who would, by this late stage in the persecutions, have been known to most inhabitants of Eichstätt. Mos was the stepsister of Lauterer's first wife, and both she and Steissl mentioned Lauterer by name in their statements, although neither of them cited witchcraft in their depositions.[127] Steissl's story of purchasing some pigs from Lauterer also matched that recounted by the defendant. Both men stated that the sale had taken place twelve or thirteen years ago. They agreed that the pigs had turned out to be little more than 'Unrat' ('refuse', i.e. virtually worthless), and that a reduction in the price originally paid for them had been negotiated.[128] The one significant difference between the two versions was the claim by Lauterer that he had bewitched the pigs by means of a spell (which he recited for the witch commissioners), and the corresponding lack of reference to witchcraft by Steissl.[129] The similarities in vocabulary and detail between the two testimonies are striking. In other cases witnesses had told stories which might seem, at least to the interrogators, to corroborate the suspects' original confessions, but they were frequently sketchy or vague or they included variations on the details presented by the defendant. Hans Alter, as I have shown, was given two opportunities on which to tell a story of his wife's illness that sufficiently resembled Knab's version of her harmful magic.[130] Lorenz Buebel provided details of his wife's poorly leg which could have been the affliction to which Knab had referred in her original testimony, but he used a different vocabulary—the 'bösen

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[126] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (C. Lauterer—*inquisition*), ff. 1r–v.
[127] Ibid., ff. 1r–v.
[128] Ibid., f. 1r, and (C. Lauterer—*malefacta*), Item 2.
[129] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (C. Lauterer—*malefacta*), Item 2, and (Lauterer—*inquisition*), f. 1r.
[130] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*inquisition*), Item 4.

schenckl' ('bad leg') described by Knab became an 'offen' ('ulcerated') one in Buebel's testimony—and he offered additional detail (it had happened when she was in childbed).[131] In Frau Baur's account of her daughter's illness, she stated that the child had suffered three-quarters of a year ago. Even allowing for the month between Knab's confession and Baur's deposition, that was much further in the past than the seven weeks alleged by the suspect.[132]

In the witness testimony elicited against Lauterer too, other deponents than Steissl were unable to recount exactly the same detail as given by the defendant. Lauterer claimed that six years previously he had killed Michael Sax's sixteen-year-old daughter, Kunigunda, who was then in the service of Lauterer's late sister.[133] Sax stated that five years ago his daughter Brigitta, aged fifteen, had died after helping at the wedding of the castellan of Dolnstein. She had then been in the service of the late Thobia Hörman who was, although Sax did not mention it, Lauterer's brother-in-law.[134] It is not clear whether he was married to the same sister referred to in Lauterer's confession. Georg Hörman, Thobia's brother, then testified that their sister Maria had died several years ago, but he did not know the cause because he did not note such things.[135] He had not entertained the possibility that his sister's death had been brought on by the poisoned goat's milk with which Lauterer claimed to have caused the spasms which killed the girl whose name, incidentally, he could not remember exactly.[136] In no other deposition than that recorded for Steissl did a witness repeat the story almost exactly as it had been told by the defendant. The interrogators may therefore have elicited Steissl's testimony by getting him to confirm a story which they were quoting from their summary of Lauterer's confession, or he may have been led by the interrogators' questions to tell of this particular episode. The problem with the pigs should not, however, be interpreted as causing long-term conflict

[131] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 5 August 1621, and (Knab—*inquisition*), Item 5.
[132] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*inquisition*), Item 8, (W. Knab), 5 August 1621, and (W. Knab—*malefacta*), Item 8.
[133] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (C. Lauterer—*malefacta*), Item 7.
[134] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (C. Lauterer—*inquisition*), ff. 1v–2r.
[135] Ibid., f. 2r, What Maria died of 'he does not know, because he did not note such things at the time'.
[136] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (C. Lauterer—*malefacta*), Item 5: '[he] does not know whether it was called Maria or Magdalena'.

between Lauterer and Steissl. It had happened a long time ago and had been resolved by the reduction in the sale-price. Neither Steissl nor Lauterer suggested that they had been unhappy with the renegotiated settlement. When pressured into telling stories of his malevolence, the episode of the useless swine, memorable in itself, probably came to Lauterer's mind as one which could conveniently be diabolized. This was the process by which the story of the pigs entered Lauterer's confession narrative and his name came, unusually, to be included in one particular witness's deposition.

Conclusion

In the Eichstätt context, Knab's claim to have acted out of enmity towards the Uhrmacherin was atypical. There is no evidence in either the other witch-suspects' confessions of harmful magic or the witness testimonies that personal tensions strained the fabric of the local community. Indeed, I will continue to argue in the following chapters that collectively the defendants' stories, interpreted as reminiscences of local history, reveal a relatively stable community. It is also curious that, although each suspect was asked explicitly whether she or he had acted out of enmity in naming their fellow heretics, the scribes only rarely recorded the suspects' answers. One might even conclude that the witch commissioners regularly failed to put the question. In only one case, again that of Walburga Knab, were the suspect's comments on her relationships with two of her accomplices noted, other than to confirm that they were or were not witches. Knab claimed not to have denounced the clergymen Herr Vogel and the parish dean out of enmity.[137] Unfortunately, it is not clear why Knab stated this about these two ecclesiastics or why, if the standard questionnaire had been followed at this point in the interrogation, the scribe recorded her answers in these two instances only. To confess to enmity with a possible accomplice was to cast doubt on one's accusation, but whether Knab meant to validate her denunciations in these cases by denying enmity one cannot now tell.

With these ambiguous statements about Knab's relationships with Vogel and the parish dean one encounters a problem inherent in all of

[137] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 11 August 1621 (p.m.).

the suspects' observations about the neighbours whom they mentioned during the course of their interrogations: only their opinions were recorded. For the most part, these assessments remain uncorroborated and they may, given the circumstances in which they were produced, have served a strategic purpose for the narrator. It is possible, however, to begin to read between the lines of what the suspects said about their neighbours. In conjunction with other evidence, particularly the witness statements, this process would seem to support the view that, generally, Eichstätt was not riven by insuperable endemic or paradigmatic tensions. The stories told by the witch-defendants and discussed in the following chapters confirm that the population of the principality was characterized by social cohesion rather than disruption.