PART I

CHAPTER ONE

WITCH-HUNTING IN EICHSTÄTT

The background

Between 1590 and 1631 there were three phases of witch persecution in the prince-bishopric of Eichstätt: from 1590 to 1592; in 1603; and between 1617 and 1631. Wolfgang Behringer has estimated that over 400 people were executed for the crime of witchcraft in the territory over this period.¹ Although the records for the two earlier and smaller waves of witch persecution are incomplete, this figure would appear to be an overestimate of between 150 and 200. Sigmund Riezler's nineteenth-century estimate of up to 274 executions based on an anonymous report by an Eichstätt witch commissioner (identified by Behringer as Dr Wolfgang Kolb) seems more accurate.² My own estimate is that between 217 and 256 executions of witch-heretics were carried out in Eichstätt in just forty years.³ The inhabitants of this sparsely-populated territory in Middle Franconia therefore experienced a relatively intense witch-hunt and both contemporaries and modern scholars have found the events worthy of note. In an opinion on witches addressed to Wilhelm V of Bavaria, Gregory of Valencia SJ cited the Eichstätt interrogations, alongside those in the bishopric of Augsburg, as examples which the Bavarian authorities should follow.⁴ Gregory's opinion has led Behringer

¹ Wolfgang Behringer, "‘Erhob sich das ganze Land zu ihrer Ausrottung . . .’ Hexenprozesse und Hexenverfolgungen in Europa", in Richard van Dülmen (ed.), *Hexenwelten. Magie und Imagination* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1987), pp. 131–69 (p. 164).

² Sigmund [von] Riezler, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse in Bayern. Im Lichte der allgemeinen Entwicklung dargestellt* (1896; 2nd ed. edited by Friedrich Merzbacher, 1968; repr. Stuttgart: Magnus, n.d. [c. 1997]), p. 226. Gerhard Schormann states that there were over 200 victims of the Eichstätt persecutions between 1590 and 1632, *Hexenprozesse in Deutschland* (2nd ed., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1986), p. 70. Behringer names Kolb in *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 226.

³ A detailed discussion of how I came to my estimates can be found in Durrant, "Witchcraft, Gender and Society", pp. 62–7.

⁴ Wolfgang Behringer (ed.), *Hexen und Hexenprozesse in Deutschland* (Munich: Deutscher Taschen Verlag, 1988), pp. 213–14 ("132. Gregor von Valencia SJ: Grundsatzgutachten der Juristischen und Theologischen Fakultät der Universität Ingolstadt, 1590").

to conclude that the prince-bishopric of Eichstätt was a 'regional motor' of the Franconian and Bavarian waves of witch persecution.⁵

Unlike the witch persecutions in the northern Franconian prince-bishoprics, however, the Eichstätt experience has not been the focus of a detailed study.⁶ The prosecutions in Würzburg and Bamberg were certainly dramatic, even by early modern standards, and it is this aspect of them which has attracted historians and, rightly, demands an explanation. The quality and detail of the source material has also aided research into these persecutions. Although the trials in Franconia, including Eichstätt, and Swabian Ellwangen have been regarded together as 'the absolute peak of persecution in south Germany',⁷ the vast majority of witch-burnings in this region took place in Würzburg and Bamberg (about 1200 and 900 respectively).⁸ These persecutions included the dramatic interrogations and executions of the several hundred children from the Julius-Spital, the school and orphanage in Würzburg.⁹ Interest in the persecutions in Bamberg has been promoted by the trials of Georg Haan, a chancellor of the principality, his wife and two of their

⁵ Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 162. Earlier in the same work he made the observation that the persecutions in Eichstätt and the other Franconian prince-bishoprics 'zu den schlimmsten Exzessen der europäischen Geschichte gehören' ('were among the worst excesses of European history', *ibid.*, p. 27). In this he echoes W.G. Soldan who wrote that Eichstätt played 'eine besonders traurige Rolle' ('an especially sad role') in the witch persecutions, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse*, vol. 2 (1843; rev. Heinrich Heppe, 1879; rev. and ed. Max Bauer, 1912; 3rd ed. repr. Cologne: Parkland, 1999), p. 54.

⁶ Studies which concentrate exclusively on aspects of the Eichstätt witch trials are limited in scope. They include: Adam Hirschmann, "Johann Reichard. Ein Sittenbild aus dem Zeitalter der Hexenverfolgungen", *Historisch-Politische Blätter*, 161 (1918), pp. 676–81; Friedrich Merzbacher, "Das 'alte Halsgerichtsbuch' des Hochstifts Eichstätt. Eine archivalische Quelle zur Geschichte des Strafvollzuges im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert und zur rechtlichen Volkskunde", *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Germanische Abteilung*, 73 (1956), pp. 375–96; Ruth Gänstaller, "Zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns: Der Fall Barbara Reuterin in Eichstätt" (ZA diss., Nuremberg, 1974); and Wolfgang Buchta, "Die Urgichten im Urfehdebuch des Stadtgerichts Eichstätt. Zur Geschichte der Hexenverfolgung im südlichen Franken", *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung*, 58 (1998), pp. 219–50.

⁷ Quotation from Wolfgang Behringer, *Witchcraft Persecutions in Bavaria: Popular Magic, Religious Zealotry and Reason of State in Early Modern Europe*, trans. J.C. Grayson and David Lederer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 229 (the English translation of his *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*).

⁸ Behringer, *Witches and Witch-hunts*, p. 150.

⁹ Robert Walinski-Kiehl, "The Devil's Children: Child Witch-Trials in Early Modern Germany", *Continuity and Change*, 11 (1996), pp. 171–90 (pp. 175–7), and Hartwig Weber, *Kinderhexenprozesse* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel-Verlag, 1991), pp. 261–7. See also Hans Sebald, *Witch-Children: From the Salem Witch-Hunts to Modern Courtrooms* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1995), pp. 109–99, on the so-called 'Witch-Boy of Bamberg'.

children,¹⁰ and the desperate and frequently reprinted letter written by Haan's colleague, Johannes Junius, to his daughter.¹¹ To these cases, one can add several other important sources: the influential "Bambergische Halsgerichtsordnung" of 1507;¹² Johann Gottfried von Aschhausen's prison in Würzburg and the infamous 'Druttenhaus' in Bamberg; the table of Würzburg witch-executions;¹³ Friedrich Förner's sermons published in 1625;¹⁴ and perhaps Friedrich Spee's *Cautio Criminalis* (Rinteln, 1631).¹⁵ Some authorities, such as those in Mergentheim and Wertheim in Württemberg, also looked to these two witch-hunting centres, rather than, for example, the Bavarian university in Ingolstadt (located within the see of Eichstätt), for guidance in conducting their own trials.¹⁶ The location of Würzburg and Bamberg along the main trading routes

¹⁰ Oestmann, *Hexenprozesse am Reichskammergericht*, pp. 499–502, and Gehm, *Die Hexenverfolgung im Hochstift Bamberg*, pp. 149–61.

¹¹ An English translation of Junius's letter can be found in Alan Charles Kors and Edward Peters (eds.), *Witchcraft in Europe 400–1700: A Documentary History* (rev. 2nd ed., Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 348–53.

¹² On the influence and continued use of the Bamberg code alongside that of its imperial successor, the *Constitutio criminalis Carolina* of 1532, see Soldan, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse*, vol. 2, p. 397, and Oestmann, *Hexenprozesse am Reichskammergericht*, pp. 151–2. The similarity of the articles on the punishment of witchcraft in the two codes can be seen in Behringer (ed.), *Hexen und Hexenprozesse*, where they are reprinted in the same chapter, pp. 113 and 123–4.

¹³ The table naming 160 convicted witches, including nineteen priests, has been reprinted in *ibid.*, pp. 251–7. The data from it have been abstracted in Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany*, p. 182.

¹⁴ For a brief summary of the contents and importance of Förner's *Panoplia armorum Dei* (Ingolstadt, 1625), see Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 140, 453–4, 531–2, 575 and 578.

¹⁵ Spee's frequently cited role as a confessor to the Bamberg and Würzburg witch-suspects originated in a letter written by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in 1697, translator's introduction to Friedrich Spee, *Cautio Criminalis oder Rechtliches Bedenken wegen der Hexenprozesse*, trans. and ed. Joachim-Friedrich Ritter (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982), pp. xiv–xv. In German witchcraft historiography there has been a general acceptance of Ritter's assertion that Spee could not have been in Würzburg in the late 1620s (Spee, *Cautio Criminalis*, p. xvi); see, for example, Günter Jerouschek, "Friedrich Spee als Justizkritiker. Die *Cautio Criminalis* im Lichte des gemeinen Strafrechts der Frühen Neuzeit", in Gunther Franz (ed.), *Friedrich Spee zum 400. Geburtstag. Kolloquium der Friedrich-Spee-Gesellschaft Trier* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1995), pp. 115–36 (p. 122). As Theo G.M. van Oorschot observes, however, Spee did not have to be in Würzburg to have had first-hand experience of witch persecution, nor does it matter greatly that one cannot connect him with concrete examples of witch trials, "Ihrer Zeit voraus. Das Ende der Hexenverfolgung in der *Cautio Criminalis*", in Sönke Lorenz and Dieter R. Bauer (eds.), *Das Ende der Hexenverfolgung* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1995), pp. 1–17 (pp. 5–6).

¹⁶ Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany*, pp. 138–54.

criss-crossing central Europe and their contributions to that trade through the production of wine and textiles has also given the two territories a higher historical profile generally and generated a significant body of contextual studies.¹⁷

Studies of the Eichstätt witch persecutions have been hampered by the fragmented state of the witch-trial material, a comparative lack of drama, the narrow scope of any studies of the bishopric in the early modern period, and some errors and false impressions. Apart from Gregory of Valencia's opinion of 1590, the principality is known for the advice given by the executioner's assistant to the Nuremberg authorities in the same year,¹⁸ a witch who was never convicted (Father Johann Reichard),¹⁹ another who was not even brought before the Eichstätt authorities (Anna Käser),²⁰ and an anonymous third, the date of whose trial has been mistranscribed and frequently reprinted as 1637, six years after the end of the witch persecutions, instead of 1627.²¹ The only substantial extant writing on witchcraft originating in Eichstätt

¹⁷ Lambert F. Peters, *Der Handel Nürnbergs am Anfang des Dreißigjährigen Krieges. Strukturkomponenten, Unternehmen und Unternehmer; eine qualitative Analyse* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1994), for example, includes a detailed discussion of the Bamberg merchant Georg Ayrmann, pp. 213–75.

¹⁸ An extract from this report is reprinted in Behringer (ed.), *Hexen und Hexenprozesse*, p. 211.

¹⁹ Hirschmann, "Johann Reichard". The incomplete original interrogation transcript is StAN, Hexenakten 47 (J. Reichard).

²⁰ Käser's trial is described, with extracts from the documents, in both Soldan, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse*, vol. 2, pp. 107–9, and Henry Charles Lea, *Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft*, vol. 3, ed. Arthur C. Howland (New York: T. Yoseloff, 1957), pp. 1130 and 1137–40. Käser had lived in Eichstätt and denunciations had accumulated against her in the interrogations of other witch-suspects there since 1620. As she was living in Neuburg an der Donau when the Eichstätt witch commissioners finally got around to her case in the spring of 1629, the information was passed to the authorities there. A copy of a letter from the Eichstätt councillors to the ducal council in Neuburg concerning this case is to be found in StAN, Hexenakten 49 (A. Käser—correspondence). Käser was executed in Neuburg on 20 September 1629.

²¹ The first publication of this trial appeared in *Abdruck aktenmäßiger Hexenprozesse, welche in den Jahren 1590, 1626, 28, 30, und 1637, gerichtlich verhandelt worden. Was sich nemlich vom Tage der Einkerkierung bis zur Stunde der Verbrennung mit diesen wegen Hexerei- und Unholden-wesen angeklagt unglücklichen Schlachtopfern zugetragen* (Eichstätt: Brönnner, 1811), unpaginated. The witch-suspect's name was replaced by the anonymous initials N.N. For an English translation of this adulterated text, see Rossell Hope Robbins (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (London: Peter Nevill, 1959), pp. 148–56. As each trial produced an original confession, it has been possible to identify the source of the 1811 publication. The transcript matches, with the omission of the name, that of the interrogation of Maria Richter, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Richter). Richter was tried and executed in 1627, not 1637.

was about a case of possession in 1582. It predated the first phase of persecution in the territory by eight years and ended with the exorcism of the evil spirit and the freedom of the alleged ‘witch’.²² The ‘fact’ that 274 witches were executed in Eichstätt in 1629 has become well-known only because of an error, based apparently on Kolb’s report of his activities, in a minor article by H.C. Erik Midelfort.²³ None of the Eichstätt witch-suspects was held in a purpose-built gaol. They were remanded, like ordinary felons, in the existing town hall which could only take a handful of suspects at any one time.

Another reason why historians may have been put off studying the persecutions in Eichstätt is the complex geography of the prince-bishopric. Whilst the bishops of Würzburg and Bamberg administered fairly coherent territories, their Eichstätt counterparts ruled a fractured one. The nineteen administrative districts of the principality were dotted throughout the wider see of the same name, nominally under the spiritual control of the prince-bishop, and the population was distributed unevenly across these disjointed units (see Map 1). In 1590, sixteen other temporal authorities controlled over half of the total area of the episcopate. They included powerful men who had shaped the political geography of the Holy Roman Empire in the sixteenth century and who were to have a profound influence on the events of seventeenth-century Europe: the Electors Palatine, the counts of Pappenheim, the margraves of Ansbach, the councillors of Nuremberg, and the dukes of Bavaria. The communities in Eichstätt, isolated as they were from one another, were therefore vulnerable to Protestant propaganda and, in times of war, military attack. The government of the Eichstätt prince-bishops, particularly during the Thirty Years’ War (1618–48) and the period immediately prior to 1618, was consequently circumscribed by the policies pursued by neighbouring territories and

²² Sixtum Agricolum and Georgium Witmerum, *Erschröckliche gantz warhafftige Geschicht / welche sich mit Apolonia / Hannsen Geißbrechts Burgers zu Spalt inn dem Eijstätter Bistumb / Haußfrauen / so den 20. Octobris / Anno 82. von dem bösen feind gar hart besessen / vnnd doch den 24. gedachts Monats widerumb durch GOTTES gnädige Hilff / auß solcher grossen Pein vnnd Marter entledige worden / verlauffen hat* (Ingolstadt, 1584).

²³ H.C. Erik Midelfort, “Heartland of the Witchcraze: Central and Northern Europe”, *History Today* (February, 1981), pp. 27–31. Kolb’s report is mentioned (without his name) in both Riezler, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse in Bayern*, p. 226, and Lea, *Materials*, vol. 3, p. 1130, although neither author makes an assumption about the length of time referred to by the judge. Anne Llewellyn Barstow has repeated Midelfort’s error, citing the *History Today* article, *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts* (London: Pandora, 1994), p. 59.

Map 1. The prince-bishopric of Eichstätt. This map shows the diocese of Eichstätt and the territories of the prince-bishopric, with some principal local towns.

by a need to maintain the protection offered by the devoutly Catholic Bavarian dukes.²⁴ The emphasis of Johann Conrad von Gemmingen's government from 1595 to 1612 had been on maintaining good relations with all neighbouring states regardless of their chosen confession to the extent of electing not to join the Catholic League when it was founded in 1609.²⁵ One of the first acts of Gemmingen's successor, Johann Christoph von Westerstetten, however, was to take the principality into the League.²⁶ This act was not merely a defensive one. Westerstetten seems to have regarded membership of the League as an essential component of his aggressive policy of recatholicization. The witch persecutions in Eichstätt were also fuelled by this reformist attitude, as well as Westerstetten's experiences of witch trials in Ellwangen and the fear of Protestant militancy (in the form of the Protestant Union) which he shared with other Catholic leaders in the region.

Given the relative lack of 'interesting' material and accessible historical background, and the complexities of political and judicial jurisdictions within the prince-bishopric, it is not surprising that the persecutions in Eichstätt have been relegated to footnotes and excursi in studies of the more prominent neighbouring territories. In itself this approach is important. The Catholic Franconian principalities and the duchy of Bavaria shared common religious and political agendas, and even a natural climate, from which the witch persecutions cannot be divorced.

²⁴ The prince-bishops did, of course, engage with their other temporal neighbours. Much of the extant source material concerning the principality consists of frequent and routine discussions with the officials of other territories about, for example, the exact position of the borders of the state, Karl Röttel (ed.), *Das Hochstift Eichstätt. Grenzsteine, Karten, Geschichte* (Ingolstadt: Verlag Donau Courier, 1987).

²⁵ Gemmingen corresponded with Joachim Ernst, the Lutheran margrave of Ansbach, notably about their gardens. He also engaged Basilius Besler, a Nuremberg apothecary, to coordinate the production of the *Hortus Eystettensis* (Nuremberg, 1612), and sanctioned the employment of Nuremberg engravers and colourists in its publication. On the production of the *Hortus Eystettensis*, see Brun Appel, "Johann Conrad von Gemmingen: ein Bischof und sein Garten", in Hans-Otto Keunecke (ed.), *Hortus Eystettensis: zur Geschichte eines Gartens und einer Buches* (Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 1989), pp. 31–68, and Nicolas Barker, *Hortus Eystettensis: The Bishop's Garden and Besler's Magnificent Book* (corrected ed., New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995).

²⁶ Simon Adams, "The Union, the League and the politics of Europe", in Geoffrey Parker (ed.), *The Thirty Years' War* (2nd ed., London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 22–34 (p. 31). In contrast, Würzburg had been one of the original members of the League formed on 10 July 1610, and Bamberg had joined by the autumn of the same year, *ibid.*, p. 28. In March 1614, Westerstetten, with the bishops of Würzburg and Bamberg and the prior of Ellwangen, signed a private treaty with Maximilian of Bavaria to protect the duke from Habsburg interference in the affairs of the League, *ibid.*, p. 31.

Not only did the earlier Eichstätt trials of 1590 precede and provide examples for those elsewhere in the south-eastern states of the Holy Roman Empire, but the Franconian persecutions were rooted in the same set of causes. Several political, theological and perhaps climatic factors seem to have precipitated the outbursts of large-scale witch prosecution in Eichstätt and contributed to the excessive number of trials in the other two prince-bishoprics. There was also significant movement of witch-hunting personnel around southern Germany.

In return for the protection which some of their neighbours cultivated from them, the dukes of Bavaria used the Franconian bishoprics as a Catholic buffer region of client states separating the duchy from the eastern lands of the Calvinist Palatinate as well as the territories of the other local Protestants who were potential allies of the Elector. The dukes of Bavaria, Wilhelm V (r. 1579–97) and Maximilian I (r. 1597–1651; prince-elect from 1623), shared with several of the Franconian prince-bishops, especially those predisposed to witch-hunting, both a zealous approach to post-Tridentine reform as the main protection against the Protestant heresy and, from the early years of the seventeenth century, a fear of war with Protestant princes.²⁷ Wilhelm was a pious defender of the Catholic faith, and the reforming tendencies of his son Maximilian and the Eichstätt bishops Martin von Schaumberg (r. 1560–90) and Caspar von Seckendorf (r. 1590–5) are frequently emphasized by biographers and historians.²⁸ In the cases of Schaumberg and Seckendorf, however, this is a misleading characterization of their reigns. Schaumberg and the cathedral chapters of his immediate successors in Eichstätt were reluctant to impose Tridentine decrees and resisted the introduction of new religious orders, notably the Jesuits, into the see.²⁹ The ailing

²⁷ On the reformist tendencies of the dukes and the bishops, see Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, pp. 112–21. For a summary of the political manoeuvrings prior to the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War, see Adams, "The Union, the League and the politics of Europe".

²⁸ Maximilian's faith is the most prominent feature of his entry in, for example, Bosl's *bayerische Biographie*, ed. Karl Bosl (Regensburg: Pustet, 1983), p. 512. Behringer mentions Schaumberg and Seckendorf only once in *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern* referring to them both as 'reforming bishops', a term which serves as a shorthand indication of the main themes of their careers, p. 161.

²⁹ Schaumberg seems only to have gained a reputation as a reforming bishop because he founded the first post-Tridentine seminary in 1560, built between 1562 and 1570, Bosl's *bayerische Biographie*, p. 668. After establishing the seminary, Schaumberg's actions concerned less religious than administrative reform, Anton Hotter, *Eichstätt, Haupt- und Residenzstadt des ehemaligen Fürstenthums* (Eichstätt: Krüll, 1865), p. 72. Hotter is the only author to comment on Seckendorf's reforming tendencies, noting that the only indica-

Seckendorf was also in no condition to pursue a coherent policy of recatholicization on his own initiative, whilst his coadjutor from 1593, Johann Conrad von Gemmingen, was less interested in reform than in his garden and other 'humanist' activities.³⁰

Later, during the Thirty Years' War, the strategic benefits of strong Bavarian support for the Catholic prince-bishops became evident. Surrounded by some of the main German supporters of the Catholic Reformation, the Protestant states in Franconia were isolated from their co-religionists in the rest of the Empire. They were also neither uniformly radical in religion nor constitutionally pro-Palatine or anti-Bavarian in outlook. Gottfried Heinrich, count of Pappenheim (r. 1594–1632) and marshal of the Imperial armies, for example, continued to support the principle of Empire throughout the difficult years of the early seventeenth century despite professing Lutheranism. As war in the Empire seemed increasingly likely, however, he converted to Catholicism in 1614, under the influence of his wife and the tutelage of the Eichstätt prince-bishop Johann Christoph von Westerstetten.³¹ The duke of Neuburg, Philipp Ludwig, broke with the Protestant Union in 1613, disenchanted with the behaviour of its more powerful members, and actively sought alliances with Saxony and Bavaria.³² In the same year his son, Wolfgang Wilhelm, secretly converted to Catholicism and married Duke Maximilian's sister, Anna Magdalena, a marriage blessed

tion of this is the 1000 ducats he gave annually to poor churches, *ibid.*, p. 72. Ernst Reiter agrees with Hotter's analysis of Schaumberg's episcopate, observing that the handful of visitations carried out during his reign and the extension of his jurisdiction over parts of the diocese were countered by a series of failures: to convoke a diocesan synod; to solemnly publicize the Tridentine decrees (although the marriage decrees and ordinances against the celebration of masks and carnival were promulgated in the 1580s); to take up the new creed and reform the beliefs of the population; and, despite the foundation of the seminary, to provide a sufficiently educated priesthood, *Martin von Schaumberg, Fürstbischof von Eichstätt (1560–1590), und die Trienter Reform* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1965), pp. 89, 92–3, 305 and 311.

³⁰ Bosl notes that Gemmingen continued to implement the provisions of the Council of Trent (*Bosl's bayerische Biographie*, p. 248), but this is not the impression conveyed in the most recent and extensive work on this prince-bishop, Appel, "Johann Conrad von Gemmingen", and Barker, *Hortus Eystettensis*. Neither did Gemmingen build the Jesuit church in Eichstätt as Bosl states. This was begun under the direction of Westerstetten in 1617 and consecrated on 30 August 1620, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Court, Cloister and City: The Art and Culture of Central Europe 1450–1800* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995), p. 240.

³¹ Julius Sax, *Die Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstätt 745–1806*, vol. 2 (Landshut, 1885), p. 502.

³² Adams, "The Union, the League and the politics of Europe", p. 29.

by Westerstetten; Wolfgang Wilhelm acceded to the duchy in 1614.³³ Uncertain or divided loyalties consequently prevented Protestant strategists from exploiting the geographical position of their potential Franconian allies, especially in the bishopric of Eichstätt. The political geography of the region therefore weighed in Bavaria's favour, at least in 1618. It was not until 1630, after Gustav II Adolf, king of Sweden, landed in Germany, that Bavaria was threatened with invasion. In the following year Westerstetten left Eichstätt for the Jesuit college in Ingolstadt, although it is unclear whether he was abandoning his principality for the protection of Duke Maximilian as his biographers claim.³⁴ When he departed from Eichstätt it was not directly threatened by Gustav Adolf's forces. He may therefore have had other reasons to visit Ingolstadt, perhaps in his capacity as its bishop or the president of the university there. Tilly's defeat in 1632, however, enabled the Swedes to create a new duchy from Eichstätt and the other Franconian territories and threaten Bavaria.³⁵ Westerstetten may well have been delayed in Ingolstadt and was perhaps prevented from returning to his residence by circumstance. He died in 1637 without seeing Eichstätt again.

It was against this shared fear of Protestant aggression that a demonological outlook distinctive to the Bavarian dukes, the Franconian prince-bishops and their allies elsewhere in the Holy Roman Empire emerged. The witch-hunts in the Empire formed part of the Catholic response to the increasing political influence of Lutheranism and Calvinism in Germany.³⁶ The Society of Jesus and the university in

³³ Sax, *Die Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstätt*, vol. 2, pp. 501–2.

³⁴ *Bosl's bayerische Biographie*, p. 840.

³⁵ On this phase of the war, see Parker, *The Thirty Years' War*, pp. 108–29, and Ronald G. Asch, *The Thirty Years War: The Holy Roman Empire and Europe, 1618–48* (London: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 101–9.

³⁶ Protestant authorities did persecute witches, sometimes on a large-scale, but certain Catholic judges, ecclesiastics and princes were responsible for the majority of witch trials throughout the Empire. The tables in Wolfgang Behringer, *Hexen. Glaube, Verfolgung, Vermarktung* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1998) illustrate this point neatly. Table 2 'Die größten Hexenverfolgungen in Europa' (p. 61) lists the territories which experienced the highest number of executions. Among these, the Catholic territories suffered most by a ratio of about 3:1, and usually over a shorter period of time. Table 1 'Die größten Hexenverfolger in Deutschland' (p. 57) reinforces these observations. Nine men were responsible for the executions of about 6500 alleged witches between 1573 and 1637, the majority in the 1620s. Given that these men were all Catholic bishops, all supporters of the Jesuits, all members of the Catholic League, and all clients of Maximilian of Bavaria, one must assume that they were acting in concert, an impression reinforced by Behringer's analysis of the pro-persecution Catholic position after 1600, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, pp. 229–41.

Ingolstadt in particular appear to have exerted the strongest influence on attitudes towards the so-called witch sect among contemporary German Catholic witch-hunters, and later also the ecclesiastical opponents of the persecution of witches in the Empire.³⁷ Jesuits like Peter Canisius, Jacob Gretser, Peter Binsfeld and Martín Del Río, as well as Gregory of Valencia and Förner, dominated demonological literature at the time of the witch persecutions in Germany.³⁸ Wilhelm V, a consistently staunch supporter of the persecution of witches in the south-eastern territories, promoted the Jesuits' role in the defence of Catholicism in Europe, and he had his sons educated by the Society's brothers at Ingolstadt. Both his heir, Maximilian, and younger son Ferdinand continued their father's policy against witches and other heretics. As archbishop of Cologne, Ferdinand authorized the burning of up to 2000 people on the charge of witchcraft in his ecclesiastical territory and the duchy of Westphalia.³⁹ Other witch-hunting bishops had also been educated by the Society of Jesus including two of the most notorious, Philipp Adolf von Ehrenberg, prince-bishop of Würzburg (r. 1623–31), and Westerstetten himself.⁴⁰

Throughout his career in Eichstätt, where he was appointed a canon in 1589 at the age of twenty-four, Westerstetten sponsored the Society of Jesus's attempt to become established in the territory.⁴¹ His failure to have the Jesuits take over St Willibald's College in the town may have contributed to his departure to become prince-provost of Ellwangen

³⁷ On the formation of the Bavarian 'party' opposed to witch persecution, the debate about witchcraft in Bavaria and the role of Jesuits like Adam Tanner who lectured at Ingolstadt from 1603–27, see Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, pp. 241–331. The influence of this party seems to have spilled over into neighbouring territories including Eichstätt where Kaspar Hell, son of a controversial anti-hunting professor at Ingolstadt, argued in the 1620s against further persecution and gained some influence in St. Willibald's College, *ibid.*, p. 255, and Bernhard Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge*, vol. II/2 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1913), p. 488. His influence was not sufficient, however, to bring about the end of the trials.

³⁸ For a summary of the connection between these Jesuits and the Bavarian persecutions, see Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, pp. 26–7.

³⁹ Behringer, *Hexen. Glaube, Verfolgung, Vermarktung*, p. 57.

⁴⁰ Ehrenberg was educated at the Jesuit school in Würzburg before studying at several universities in Europe, *Bosl's bayerische Biographie*, p. 168. He had up to 900 people burned as witches, Behringer, *Hexen. Glaube, Verfolgung, Vermarktung*, p. 57. Westerstetten was educated at two important centres of Jesuit learning in Germany (Dillingen and Ingolstadt) and at Dôle, Hugo A. Braun, *Das Domkapitel zu Eichstätt. Von der Reformationszeit bis zur Säkularisation (1535–1806). Verfassung und Personalgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1991), pp. 567–8.

⁴¹ Sax, *Die Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstätt*, vol. 2, pp. 492–505.

(r. 1603–13).⁴² He was, however, able to impose them on the ecclesiastical infrastructure of Eichstätt, apparently against the will of his subordinates, when he returned as bishop in 1613.⁴³ Westerstetten certainly gained the support of Jesuits who favoured witch-hunting. Förner, for example, dedicated his sermons to him.⁴⁴ Among his spiritual advisers in Eichstätt were several Jesuit brothers, among them Joachim Meggelin the cathedral preacher about whom Spee recounted the following anecdote in his *Cautio Criminalis*. Westerstetten asked Meggelin, who had been inciting the authorities to hunt out witches, how many denunciations for witchcraft he considered to be sufficient to secure a conviction; although Meggelin's reply was apparently small, he could still have been condemned by it.⁴⁵

The spread of witch beliefs throughout Franconia and Bavaria may also have been aided by the movement of professional witch commissioners across the region. Dr Wolfgang Kolb left Eichstätt in 1628 to perform the same service for the count of Oettingen-Wallerstein and later in Ingolstadt and Wemding at the invitation of Maximilian I; his colleague Dr Schwarzkonz also transferred his services in 1628, in his case to the prince-bishop of Bamberg.⁴⁶ Hans Martin Staphylo von Nottenstein, another Eichstätt commissioner, was appointed to a position within the Bavarian ducal household at around this time.⁴⁷ The experiences of these individuals served as an alternative to manuals and reports as a means of spreading ideas and practices associated with the witch interrogations.

In addition to a shared political status and theological perspective, the

⁴² *Bosl's bayerische Biographie*, p. 840.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 840. He had earlier been able to do the same in Ellwangen in 1611 when he granted the Jesuits a permanent mission station there, Mährle, “O wehe der armen seelen”, p. 372.

⁴⁴ Behringer, *Witches and Witch-hunts*, p. 112.

⁴⁵ Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 204, n. 284, and Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten*, vol. II/2, p. 488. As Behringer notes, Spee withheld the names of the characters and the place in his work, but the story seems to have been known well enough for readers to make the associations with Westerstetten and his rule in Eichstätt. In fact, Meggelin's name does not appear at all in the lists of accomplices which can be compiled from the extant interrogation transcripts, even those in which over 250 accomplices were identified. It cannot be confirmed therefore that any of the witch-suspects did denounce the preacher of the cathedral.

⁴⁶ Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 239. Kolb appears as one of the two interrogators at the trial of Barbara Kurzhalsin in 1629 in Reichertshofen, Bavaria, Behringer (ed.), *Hexen und Hexenprozesse*, pp. 284–98 (“180. Protokoll des Vöhörs der Barbara Kurzhalsin, Reichertshofen 1629”).

⁴⁷ Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 317.

three Franconian prince-bishoprics would have all experienced the climatic variations which hit the region during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, causing harvest failure, famine and a marked decrease in the population of between one and two thirds. These agrarian and demographic disasters must be understood against the background of the Catholic Reformation and the Thirty Years' War. The effects of an unusually adverse climate may have exaggerated the anxieties experienced by both the population and the authorities during this period, and I think that Behringer is correct to claim, on the basis of Christian Pfister's work, that such natural occurrences may have influenced the course of the witch persecutions in Germany.⁴⁸ As I will argue below, however, it is not possible to establish a direct link between the agrarian and related crises of this period and the Eichstätt persecutions.

Whilst the Eichstätt interrogations did form part of a series of witch persecutions related by the geography and political situation of the region, a prevailing theology shared by the local Catholic rulers and the movement of certain individuals between the various political administrations, there are also compelling reasons why the trials in the prince-bishopric should not be glossed over as a minor phenomenon of subordinate interest and importance to the larger-scale hunts in Franconia. They had their own history which has not been outlined in sufficient detail, and there is a very good set of source material which has not been examined thoroughly.

Witch-hunting in Eichstätt, 1590–1616

Witchcraft episodes in Eichstätt were sporadic before 1590. Over the preceding century, there had been just six executions for witchcraft

⁴⁸ Behringer, "Weather, Hunger and Fear", and id., "Climate Change and Witch-Hunting: the Impact of the Little Ice Age on Mentalities", in Christian Pfister, Rudolf Brázdil and Rüdiger Glaser (eds.), *Climatic Variability in Sixteenth-Century Europe and its Social Dimension* (Dordrecht and London: Kluwer, 1999), pp. 335–51, are general discussions of how Pfister's work can be applied to the study of the witch persecutions. For a discussion of how adverse weather and its consequences may have influenced the persecutions in Bavaria, Franconia and Swabia, see Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, pp. 98–106. David Lederer has observed a connection between the worst years of crisis in the 'Little Ice Age' and episodes of suicide in Bavaria in "Aufruhr auf dem Friedhof: Pfarrer, Gemeinde und Selbstmord im frühneuzeitlichen Bayern", in Gabriela Signori (ed.), *Trauer, Verzweiflung und Anreutung. Selbstmord und Selbstmordversuche in spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Gesellschaften* (Tübingen: Ed. diskord, 1994), pp. 189–209.

and the exorcism of Apollonia Geißbrecht (1582).⁴⁹ In 1590, however, the districts of Spalt and possibly Abenberg experienced an outbreak of witch-hunting which resulted in the executions of nineteen women in that year and perhaps a further seven over the next two years.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, only one interrogation summary survives from this outbreak. Barbara Weis's extant confession of 1590 is structured around nine articles which seem to correspond to a lost interrogatory drawn up for these cases.⁵¹ The *relatio* drawn up at the end of the trial of Elisabeth Scheuch in 1603 and a copy of an interrogatory dated 10 March 1611 indicate that the interrogators of the Eichstätt witch-suspects up to this last date compiled questionnaires as necessary and on the basis of the known facts of each individual case.⁵² The advice given by the Eichstätt executioner's assistant to the Nuremberg authorities in 1590 could only have been based on his experiences of the outbreak in that year, so we can be reasonably sure that torture was at least threatened and that it contributed to an escalation of this witchcraft episode. All that can be gained from the summary of Barbara Weis's confession, however, are a few biographical and case details and a fairly standard, if sketchy,

⁴⁹ These executions occurred in 1494 (Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 50, n. 27), 1532 (BundesA ASt Frankfurt, FSg.2/1–F 13 669 Eichstätt L–Z, frame 61 (Pißwangerin) and frame (M. Schmid), 1535 (StAN, Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 13, “Altes Halsgerichtsbuch”, f. 125v (K. Werbell)), 1555 (ibid., f. 243v (Zimmermann)), and 1562 (ibid., ff. 127r–v (M. Hager)).

⁵⁰ StAN, Hexenakten 42 (B. Weis), f. 6, records that she was executed with eleven others who were probably, although not certainly, all women (only women are mentioned in Weis's testimony). Her mother had already been executed for witchcraft in March of the same year (f. 1). BundesA ASt Frankfurt, FSg.2/1–F 4, 68 Abenberg-Niederbayern, frames 2 (6 Unholden) and 3 (6 Hexen) both refer to six witches executed in Abenberg in 1590. As they give older secondary sources and no primary ones, and the data were collated in different years by the Nazi *Hexensonderkommando* (1938 and 1935 respectively), I have assumed that both records refer to the same event. Ibid., frame 4 (Dienstmagd) is a file for a maid who may have been executed in 1591, but reference is made only to a secondary source of 1931. Ibid., frame 5 (6 Hexen) refers only to a secondary source of 1905. It may be that this information is a repetition of the data for 1590 rather than 1592 (the date given by the compiler of this file). Articles discussing the history and usefulness of these witchcraft records can be found in Sönke Lorenz, Dieter R. Bauer, Wolfgang Behringer and Jürgen Michael Schmidt (eds.), *Himmels Hexenkarteothek. Das Interesse des Nationalsozialismus an der Hexenverfolgung* (2nd ed., Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2000).

⁵¹ StAN, Hexenakten 42 (B. Weis).

⁵² StAN, Hexenakten 49 (E. Scheuch—*relatio*, draft and fair copies), and Hexenakten 48 (Interrogatory, 10 March 1611). Scheuch's testimony is summarized in the *relatio* under just six (rather than nine) numbered, but untitled, points concerning her seduction, the rejection of God and the saints, the diabolical gatherings, her malevolent witchcraft, weather-magic, and the exhumation of infants' corpses.

witch's story.⁵³ The most significant of these details is that she was denounced by her mother, Scheütt Anna, known as the Sekretärin, who had already been executed for witchcraft in March 1590.⁵⁴ She had not been denounced by someone who felt harmed by her. Weis and the eleven witches executed with her on 7 April came from Spalt, the same town in which four of the earlier witches had been executed and Geißlbrecht exorcized.⁵⁵

In 1593, further witch episodes occurred in Eichstätt. They were not, however, related to the trials of 1590–2. One did involve the steward of Spalt, but the accusation of witchcraft he made against Anna Mayr seems to have been a slander in a wider dispute and was not taken seriously by the *Hofrat* in Eichstätt to which the conflict had been referred.⁵⁶ A second was a case of harmful magic brought by one couple against another who, they alleged, had employed a wisewoman, Magdalena Pöbl, to help murder an infant in childbed and injure its mother. Unlike the cases of 1590–2, this one did not concern witch-heresy. Nor did it occur in either Spalt or Abenberg, the centres of the trials which preceded it, but in Berching. The defendants were admonished to live as 'good neighbours' with their accusers; and the wisewoman was reported to the authorities of Obermässing under whose jurisdiction she lived.⁵⁷ Nothing is known of Pöbl's fate, but this conciliatory approach no doubt prevented a further escalation of witch-hunting. The authorities of the district of Herrieden, on the western edge of the principality, were informed by the *Obervogt* (senior representative) of the margravate of Ansbach that a witch-suspect under his jurisdiction had denounced five inhabitants of 'Amberg'. This was not the town of Amberg situated further to the north of the see of Eichstätt in the Upper Palatinate, but the town of Abenberg in the prince-bishopric.⁵⁸ From Herrieden, the *Obervogt's* information was sent to Abenberg. The local authorities

⁵³ Because Weis and her husband had 'an ill marriage', her mother had decided to introduce her to the Devil. He wore black clothing and a feather in his hat, he had goat's feet and was black. He fornicated with her, but was 'all cold' and so on, StAN, Hexenakten 42 (B. Weis), Article 1. After that the story becomes less clear. Apart from the inconclusive tales of weather-magic in response to articles 7 and 8, Weis claimed that she did not commit any acts of malevolent witchcraft because she had a 'lame' arm, *ibid.*, Article 9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 1r.

⁵⁵ These were the women executed in 1532, 1535 and 1562.

⁵⁶ StAN, Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 298, ff. 3v–4r.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, ff. 131r–v.

⁵⁸ Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", p. 433.

here then sought the advice of the *Hofrat* and were told to make sure that the suspect persisted in her denunciations. Nothing further came of this episode, even though Abenberg may have only recently experienced witch trials as an extension of the Spalt prosecutions. It seems therefore that the pattern of witch trials had returned to that which existed prior to 1590, that is, isolated trials which focused on known or reputed witches in which the authorities were reluctant to engage.

The persecutory trials resurfaced in 1603, but in the town of Eichstätt rather than in the outlying districts of the principality. In witchcraft historiography, the chronology of this second phase of witch persecution has not been presented accurately and is consistently reported to continue after 1603.⁵⁹ A careful reading of the “Urfehdebuch” which covers this period, in conjunction with the only extant trial documentation of the time, helps to clarify the dates of this series of persecutions. This register of all executions in the town seems to begin in 1603, the date inscribed on the inside front cover, and was kept up to date as necessary until 20 August 1627.⁶⁰ The scribes who wrote up the register did not, however, begin to date it consistently until 2 September 1606.⁶¹ The trials which began in 1603 could not have lasted to this date. The only interrogation material surviving from this phase of persecution shows that Elisabeth Scheuch was executed on Friday 19 May 1603.⁶² Scheuch’s is the penultimate case of those witch trials registered in the “Urfehdebuch” for the period prior to September 1606. The entry for her case records that she was executed with the three women—Margaretha Beck, Ursula Schmelzer and Apollonia Oswald—whose *relationes* immediately precede hers.⁶³ If the register does only begin in 1603, the nineteen witches executed up to and including Scheuch must have received their punishment in the first four and a half months of that year.⁶⁴ The *relatio* for the twentieth of these witches, Magdalena Bruckmair, follows immediately the record of the sentence handed down to Scheuch and the three women executed

⁵⁹ Buchta, “Die Urgichten im Urfehdebuch des Stadtgerichts Eichstätt”, pp. 237–8, suggests that the trials of Scheuch and those executed with her occurred in 1605–6.

⁶⁰ The last entries given this date, DiöAE, “Urfehdebuch”, ff. 241r and 241v.

⁶¹ Ibid., ff. 59r–60r.

⁶² StAN, Hexenakten 43 (E. Scheuch) and 49 (E. Scheuch—*relatio*, fair copy).

⁶³ DiöAE, “Urfehdebuch”, ff. 26r–31v (for the *relationes*), and f. 32r (for the *Urteil* in which these women were named together).

⁶⁴ The case of Margaretha Heylingmayr is the first recorded in *ibid.*, ff. 1r–2v, and the other nineteen witches executed with or after her follow immediately.

with her.⁶⁵ There then follow fifty-four folio sides of judgements and sentences before the execution dated 2 September 1606.⁶⁶ Given that the prosecution of serious crime was only sporadic in Eichstätt,⁶⁷ and that Scheuch was executed in the spring of 1603, it seems likely that Bruckmair was also executed in that year.

Apart from providing names and dates, the details recorded in the “Urfehdebuch” are limited. Sufficient information exists to gauge the age and marital status of these women and the status of their households. The summaries of their crimes also reveal that these women were not the victims of localized conflicts which found expression in witchcraft accusations. The six items on which Scheuch was convicted included just one act of malevolence against a neighbour, Anna, the wife of the oxherd Kraut Georg, who still lay crippled in her bed as Scheuch was being sentenced.⁶⁸ The remaining items covered diabolical seduction, the renunciation of God and the saints, the witches’ dances on local hills and their gatherings in cellars, weather-magic that resulted in ‘nothing but strong rain’, and a vague description of the exhumation of an unnamed infant.⁶⁹ The structure of the report and the weight given to the diabolical rather than the harmful suggest that Scheuch had probably been named by some of the other witches convicted before her in 1603.

After Magdalena Bruckmair’s execution, witchcraft episodes again became sporadic. One of these ended up at the Imperial Aulic Court in Speyer in 1604. Hans Bühler of Rittersbach brought a case of slander against his former neighbour in Abenberg, Hans Frech, in this court. He claimed that Frech had repeatedly accused his wife and his mother of being witches. Frech may have genuinely believed that this was the case and attempted to manipulate the trials in Abenberg, Spalt and latterly Eichstätt to articulate his fears. The lack of a direct accusation of harmful witchcraft, however, suggests that Frech himself did not think that Bühler’s wife and mother had caused him any direct misfortune. The conflict between the two families escalated with Frech

⁶⁵ Ibid., ff. 32v–33r.

⁶⁶ Ibid., ff. 33r–59r.

⁶⁷ Between 2 September 1606 and 30 April 1608 (ibid., ff. 60v–62v), for example, only seven criminals were prosecuted at this level as felons, five belonging to the same gang of thieves. All were banished rather than executed.

⁶⁸ StAN, Hexenakten 49 (E. Scheuch), Item 4.

⁶⁹ Ibid., Items 1–3 and 5–6.

making a counter-accusation that Bühler had publicly called his wife a witch. The situation had not been resolved by 1613.⁷⁰

The interrogatory of 10 March 1611 sought information about one 'Vnsynin Kirschnerin' ('mad furrier's wife') and her daughter Walburga.⁷¹ The questions appear to be directed at witnesses rather than other witch-suspects. Nothing more is known about this pair. Agnes Hofmann whose case seems to have preoccupied the authorities in the district of Ornau since January 1604 seems to have been dismissed in 1612 following advice issued in the name of Prince-bishop Gemmingen in 1610 that she should live honourably with her neighbours.⁷² In drawing up his register of Eichstätt witches in 1840, Joseph Brems noted a witch execution in 1612. It has not been possible to verify the accuracy of this information.⁷³ Three women were, however, certainly executed as witches between September 1613 and August 1616.⁷⁴ Their cases do not seem to be related to those which began in 1617, although they would no doubt have been recalled by the witches' former neighbours when the first arrests were made in that year.

Witch-hunting in Eichstätt, 1617–1631

The primary focus of this book, the witch persecution which began in 1617, lasted until 1631 and saw the arrests of 182 of the 240 witch-suspects known to have come before the authorities in Eichstätt.⁷⁵ Of these 175 were executed, two died in custody, one died during torture, and Father Johann Reichard died whilst still under house arrest in 1644, thirteen years after the end of the persecutions. The fate of two women is unknown. The final interrogation documentation in the case of one of these women, Catharina Glaskopf, dated 6 July 1620, included her

⁷⁰ Oestmann, *Hexenprozesse am Reichskammergericht*, pp. 562 and 565.

⁷¹ StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Interrogatory, 10 March 1611).

⁷² StAN, Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 3070b, ff. 1r–11v. The advice was noted on f. 5.

⁷³ BundesA ASt Frankfurt, FSg.2/1–F 72 3480, Joseph Brems, "Auszüge aus Eichstätter Original Hexen-Protokollen" (Eichstätt, 1840), and FSg.2/1–F 13 668 Eichstätt A-K, frame 193 (L. Hörlein).

⁷⁴ Katharina Kolbenhofer was the fifth of ten felons executed sometime between 11 September 1613 and 12 April 1614, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 86v–101v (Kolbenhofer's case, ff. 95r–97r); Anna Demerl and Apollonia Hartlieb were the only recorded felons executed after 12 April 1614 and before 6 August 1616, *ibid.*, ff. 102v–110r.

⁷⁵ A detailed list of the numbers of witches prosecuted by the Eichstätt authorities can be found in Durrant, "Witchcraft, Gender and Society", pp. 298–303.

statement that she wanted to return to her village of ‘Ortelfingen bey Burkhaimb’ (possibly Ortlfing or Ortlfingen in Swabia).⁷⁶ The details were abstracted and may also have been considered on 23 July, but the decision of the witch commissioners is not known.⁷⁷ Even allowing for the probability that Glaskopf is a nickname rather than a surname, no further interrogation transcripts seem to exist for her case.⁷⁸ Catharina Weis was the only suspect, apart from Reichard, still in custody at the end of the persecution in June 1631; what the authorities did with her cannot be ascertained.⁷⁹ Only one suspect, Maria Magdalena Windteis, seems to have been released.⁸⁰ In effect, the execution rate (including the deaths during the judicial process) between 1617 and 1631 was over 98%.

Complete or significant documentation exists for about ninety of these trials. In part, the survival of this material was facilitated by the large number of prosecutions undertaken in these years. In part, however, it was influenced by the systematic approach to record-keeping introduced by the new witch commission sometime between 1613 (when Westerstetten returned to Eichstätt as prince-bishop) and 1617 (the year in which the first of the mass trials of his reign were prosecuted). This approach included the construction of a standard interrogatory, and the proper filing and cross-referencing of the documents relevant to each case.⁸¹ Of the two extant copies of the interrogatory drawn up by the

⁷⁶ StAN, Hexenakten 46 (C. Glaskopf), 6 July 1620.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 23 July 1620.

⁷⁸ There is no record of the surname Glaskopf in Buchner, “Eichstätter Familienbuch” which suggests it was a nickname. She may therefore have been interrogated further and executed under a different name, but there are no clues about this in the existing documentation.

⁷⁹ StAN, Hexenakten 46 (C. Weis), 2 June 1631.

⁸⁰ Windteis was arrested on 14/24 November 1617, StAN, Hexenakten 44 (M.M. Windteis), letter from Abraham Windteis to the Eichstätt councillors, 20/30 November 1617, f. 1r. She seems to have been released late in 1619. Another letter by Windteis states that his wife had been imprisoned for just less than two years and writes of this period in custody in the past tense, *ibid.*, letter from Abraham Windteis to the steward of Herrieden, 3/13 November 1619. The *Hexensonderkommando* recorded Windteis’s release as 31 October 1619 which would seem to be about right, but cannot be confirmed from other sources, BundesA ASt Frankfurt, FSg.2/1–F 20 1183 Herrieden, frame 4 (M.M. Windteis).

⁸¹ This systematic approach is evident in the types of document to be found among the Hexenakten, including preliminary reports from authorities who sent witch-suspects to be tried in Eichstätt (for example, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Widman—preliminary examination) and (K. Pronner—preliminary examination)), the three lists of denunciations made against Paul Gabler noted in the Introduction, and registers of executed witches, StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Register).

witch commissioners, one is in poor condition and falling apart, possibly with use; the other is in relatively good condition (with the exception of an inconvenient tear) and was perhaps a fair copy.⁸² It is conventional in form, resembling in its emphases both the interests of the *Malleus Maleficarum* (c. 1486) and similar interrogatories used previously in Eichstätt and other parts of Franconia, Swabia and Bavaria.⁸³ There was nothing innovative about the questionnaire which concerned only acts which had previously been attributed by other Catholic authorities to heretics (including the witches), Jews and Moors.⁸⁴

In addition to the interrogatory and the *inquisitiones* and *relationes* discussed in the introduction, the Eichstätt witch documents include abstracts of denunciations (on the basis of which arrests were made) and acts of harmful magic, depositions made by witnesses called to testify *after* each witch's confession of the harm she had caused against her neighbours, and copies of the final judgements. Not all of this documentation is available for each witch-suspect. Included among the witchcraft documents are some wills, a collection of invoices submitted by the executioner Mathes Hörman and the correspondence contesting the legality of Maria Magdalena Windteis's imprisonment.⁸⁵ There are also the documents relating to the investigation into the treatment of the witch-suspect Maria Mayr and others by the town's prison staff. Apart from the isolated case of Anna Widman of Berching and her maid Kunigunda Pronner in which an accusation of witchcraft was the basis for the their arrests, there are no other extant depositions containing original independent accusations made by a supposed victim of someone's harmful magic.⁸⁶ There are also no other references in the extant material to an existing reputation for witchcraft which provided the basis for an arrest. One cannot discount the possibility that the final phase of persecution began with such an accusation or rumour, but such an aggressive act would have been rare in Eichstätt.

⁸² StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, working copy) and (Interrogatory, fair copy).

⁸³ Kramer, *Malleus Maleficarum* (c. 1486), and, for example, the misnamed "Kelheimer Hexenhammer" reprinted in Behringer (ed.), *Hexen und Hexenprozesse*, pp. 279–83.

⁸⁴ Cf. Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (London: Chatto Heinemann, 1975), pp. 1–98, Ginzburg, *Ecstasies*, pp. 1–86, and R. Po-chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 1–13.

⁸⁵ The wills and bills are scattered throughout the Hexenakten. The correspondence is bundled together in StAN, Hexenakten 44 (M.M. Windteis).

⁸⁶ StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Widman of Berching) and (K. Pronner).

There is also no evidence that relatives of witches executed in Eichstätt and elsewhere before the outbreak of 1617 were any more likely to be denounced or arrested as witch-suspects in the prince-bishopric. No witches came from either Spalt or Abenberg, the centres of persecution in the early 1590s; almost all were resident in the administrative district of the town of Eichstätt. Three suspects had had relatives who had been executed for witchcraft outside the context of the witch persecution of 1617–31. Barbara Ruoser's mother Dorothea Luz had been executed in the outbreak of 1603. Ruoser did state that she thought she might have been called before the witch commissioners because there had been a 'general' suspicion that 'because the mother was a witch, the daughter also had to be one'.⁸⁷ She was mistaken; she had been arrested on the basis of denunciations made by at least three other suspects, the younger Anna Lehenbauer, Anna Bonschab and Catharina Ströbl, with whom she was confronted during the morning of 13 December 1617.⁸⁸ Anna Beck's mother had been executed in Ellingen, a seat of the Teutonic Order within the see of Eichstätt, when Anna had been eight or nine years old, more than thirty-five years before her own arrest.⁸⁹ Similarly, Paulus Danner's daughter had been executed in Ellwangen, but he did not state when.⁹⁰ It may well have been in the persecution begun by Westerstetten when he was prince-provost there and which lasted from 1611–18. In neither of these cases, however, was the execution of the relative the reason why the individual had come under suspicion. In both cases, an accumulation of denunciations by other suspects under interrogation had led to their arrests.⁹¹ This was the case in all the trials of the final phase of persecution, with the exception of the two Berching women, for which trial material is extant.

This phase of persecution began in the villages in the administrative district governed from the town of Eichstätt. Of the first nineteen witch-suspects executed in the prince-bishopric from 1617, only three came from the capital.⁹² Six of the others were resident in Pietenfeld

⁸⁷ StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ruoser), 12 December 1617 (p.m.).

⁸⁸ Ibid., 13 December 1617 (a.m.).

⁸⁹ StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 23 January 1618 (p.m.).

⁹⁰ StAN, Hexenakten 48 (P. Danner), 27 March 1618 (a.m.).

⁹¹ Beck was confronted with three of her witch-accusers during her first full session of interrogation, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 23 January 1618 (p.m.); Danner, the commissioners noted, had been denounced by eleven of the previously arrested witches, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (P. Danner), 27 March 1618 (a.m.).

⁹² These three were Otilia Mayr, Barbara Ruoser and Kunigunda Bonschab, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 128r, 130v–131r, 138r–v, 141r, 142v–143v and 145v–146r.

(where this phase of persecution seems to have begun), four in Landerhofen and one in each of Sallach, Wasserzell, Pietenfeld an der Leithen, Schernfeld and Adelschlag (see Map 2 for the locations of these villages).⁹³ One other convicted witch, Barbara Herdl, cannot be placed.⁹⁴ All were interrogated in the town hall in Eichstätt. Very quickly, however, the persecution moved from these villages to the town itself. After the execution of Maria Schaller of Wasserzell on 30 June 1618, the villagers who fell under the jurisdiction of the Eichstätt district authority remained unmolested by the witch commission.⁹⁵ After Widman and Pronner had been executed two and a half months later on 15 September, only three later witch-suspects interrogated by the commission came from outside the jurisdiction of the Eichstätt district: Margretha Daschner, executed on 9 September 1623, lived in Plankstetten in the same district as Widman and Pronner (Berching);⁹⁶ and the other two (Magdalena Creisinger, executed with Daschner, and Apollonia Lederer, executed on 15 November 1625) were residents of the district of Beilngries.⁹⁷

Despite the large numbers of men and women denounced as accomplices by the witch-suspects under interrogation from 1617, the rate of prosecution varied from year to year. Excluding 1631, the average number of new cases dealt with per year ought to have been almost thirteen. Table 2 shows that in 1620 the commissioners dealt with twice that number, yet in 1621 only five further cases arose. This fluctuation cannot be explained by the continuation of the 1620 trials into the following year. Extended prosecutions did occasionally hold up the persecution of the witch sect because the town hall could only hold a limited number of prisoners at any one time. In this instance, however, all of the 1620 trials had been completed by the beginning of 1621. Space for prisoners was not therefore a problem. As both teams of witch

⁹³ The Pietenfeld witches were: Anna Schiller, Barbara Khager, Anna Bonschab, Wappel Weber, and Enders and Georg Gutmann, *ibid.*, ff. 131r–135r, 136r–v, 140r–141r and 143v–146r. The Landershofen witches were: Anna Scheur, the two Anna Lehenbaurs and Anna Fackelmayr, *ibid.*, ff. 126r–v, 128v–131r and 135r–136v. The witches from the other villages were: Anna Heimbscher (Sallach), Anna Schuester (Wasserzell), Anna Spät (Pietenfeld an der Leithen), Catharina Ströbl (Schernfeld) and Barbara Haubner (Adelschlag), *ibid.*, ff. 125v, 127r–v, 130r–131r, 137r–138r, 141r–142v and 145v–146r.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, ff. 139v and 141r.

⁹⁵ Schaller was executed with four witches from the town of Eichstätt, *ibid.*, ff. 154v–164v.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, ff. 210r–v.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, ff. 209v–210r and 225v–226r respectively.

Map 2. The town of Eichstätt and the villages in its vicinity.

commissioners were active throughout 1621, lack of personnel does not seem to have been the reason for this variation either. The fluctuation remains a mystery, but it is clear that the experience of witch-hunting for both the population as a whole and the witch commissioners and their staff was not uniform. Towards the end of 1622, many inhabitants of the principality may well have thought that the persecution was coming to an end, but it was not yet half-way through.

*Table 2. Rate of prosecutions in Eichstätt, 1617–31, based on confirmed cases.*⁹⁸

Year	Women	Men	Total cases
1617	12	—	12
1618	14	6	20
1619	9	—	9
1620	25	1	26
1621	5	—	5
1622	6	1	7
1623	14	—	14
1624	16	1	17
1625	7	1	8
1626	11	1	12
1627	17	6	23
1628	5	5	10
1629	8	4	12
1630	5	1	6
1631	1	—	1

Witch-hunting did not resume in Eichstätt at any point after June 1631, although Father Reichard remained a prisoner under house arrest and continued to maintain his innocence.⁹⁹ There were, however, three isolated trials for witchcraft in the following centuries: two executions occurred in 1723;¹⁰⁰ and one woman was acquitted of witchcraft in 1892.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Based on year of arrest, where known, or year of first documentation.

⁹⁹ The death is reported in Hirschmann, “Johann Reichard”, pp. 676–81.

¹⁰⁰ BundesA ASt Frankfurt, FSg.2/1–F 13 668 Eichstätt A-K, frames 124 (B. Garckh) and 141 (B. Gorckh) which clearly refer to the same teenage boy, and 669 Eichstätt L.-Z, frames 112–13 (M.W. Rung). The source for these cases is correctly cited as Riezler, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse in Bayern*, pp. 295–6.

¹⁰¹ BundesA ASt Frankfurt, FSg.2/1–F 13 668 Eichstätt A-K, frame 185 (L. Herz).

The pattern of witch-hunting in Eichstätt

A brief summary of the witch-hunts in Eichstätt raises a number of questions. Why did the persecutions begin in 1590 when another model for dealing with witchcraft which did not lead to a persecution, the exorcism of the witch, had only recently been deployed successfully in Spalt? Why did the rate of persecution fluctuate dramatically over the forty years of witch-hunting in the principality? Why were there so few accusations of witchcraft 'from below' by the self-confessed victims of the witches or their representatives?

One of the more recent explanations for the emergence of witch-hunting from the late sixteenth century focuses on the 'Little Ice Age' and the crises related to it. Behringer suggests that these crises produced a climate of fear which facilitated witch panic across Europe. Unfortunately, it is not possible to make a direct link between the general phenomenon of the 'Little Ice Age' and the experience of witch-hunting in Eichstätt. There was no panic about malevolent witches among the population, at least in the period from 1617. Nor did the Eichstätt witches concern themselves with weather-magic which would have been a primary indicator of agrarian crisis. In 1590 Barbara Weis claimed not to know anything about weather-magic before confessing to helping make it once, the previous summer over the sheep field in Spalt. Whether any damage occurred she did not say.¹⁰² Over thirty-five years later on 26 October 1626, to take another example, Ursula Funk confessed to three acts of 'weather-making', but she did not describe her actions or intentions and would only comment 'but whether she did damage, she did not know'; she did not elaborate on the bad effects of climate change (lack of the means of sustenance, hunger or epidemic diseases).¹⁰³ To put Funk's brief ambiguous statement about her weather-magic into context, on 19 and 22 October, she had given detailed accounts of three acts of malevolent witchcraft, including the results (three successful murders), which took up three folio sides

¹⁰² StAN, Hexenakten 42 (B. Weis), Articles 7 and 8 'Vom wetter, Nebel, Reiffen vnd Milthair machen' ('Of the making of weather, fog, frost and mildew') to which the agreed confession was: 'About these two articles she knows nothing other than that the Devil, her paramour, carried out weather the previous summer as hit here in the sheep field'. She then went to a gathering at Massenbach where she knew only three others. 'When this weather had passed and come to an end', the Devil took her to a cowstall in Massenbach and fornicated with her.

¹⁰³ StAN, Hexenakten 48 (U. Funk), 26 October 1626.

in the interrogation transcript.¹⁰⁴ It is noteworthy too that the witch commissioners in Eichstätt did not pursue insubstantial testimony about weather-making, but they made a point of extracting as many cases of bodily harm from the defendant as they could. On 20 October, for example, Funk had been brought before her interrogators to continue her testimony about her maleficence, but ‘since she denied knowing any more on this point, she was given further time to consider, led away, and taken to her cell’.¹⁰⁵ This was a common tactic of the Eichstätt interrogators faced with a reluctance to confess harmful acts of witchcraft, but they never used it to give a suspect more time to think about her weather-magic. This imbalance in the emphasis given to different parts of the testimony by the witch commissioners is also reflected in their attempts to flush out every witch-heretic by forcing an individual to continue naming accomplices for several days at a time—Funk denounced thirty-four accomplices between Monday 5 and Saturday 17 October 1626.¹⁰⁶

Christian Pfister’s work on demography suggests that one should not be surprised that agrarian crisis did not feature more prominently in the witches’ confession narratives. He has observed, for example, that crisis did not become endemic in many areas, but rather lasted only for a few years at a time in any one region. Communities adapted well to the adverse circumstances of such prolonged agrarian disaster, postponing marriages and births to concentrate resources on survival and reduce the emotional stress of constant bereavement. The period of recovery, however modest, after agricultural and economic decline was marked by an increase in both marriages, including a greater proportion of widows and widowers than usual, and births. These were naturally happy and integrative events which went some way to ameliorating the disruption of the preceding years, and agrarian crisis may not therefore have had as much influence on the origin and extent of witch persecution as one might assume.¹⁰⁷ I do not, however, want to suggest

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 19 and 22 October 1626.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 20 October 1626.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 5–10 and 15–17 October 1626.

¹⁰⁷ Christian Pfister, “The Population of Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany”, trans. Bob Scribner, in Scribner (ed.), *Germany: A New Social and Economic History*, vol. 1, pp. 33–62 (pp. 52–3). Although demographic studies of this period are not without their problems (see, for example, the criticisms of both Pfister and Günther Franz in John Thiebault, “The Demography of the Thirty Years War Re-visited: Günther Franz and his Critics”, *German History*, 15 (1997), pp. 1–21), a discussion of these lies

that Behringer's argument about the effect of climatic change does not apply to the Eichstätt situation, but only to observe that there is no compelling evidence in the trial transcripts that unseasonable weather and poor harvests exacerbated existing tensions and fears.

One might add that other possible indicators of social disruption are not evident in the Eichstätt material. If there was deep agrarian crisis, one would expect a corresponding increase in property crime, vagrancy or migration as individuals attempted to provide for themselves in drastic ways. None of these can be shown to have occurred in Eichstätt. Franz Xaver Buchner, for example, records 1229 individuals (703 men and 526 women) migrating to the town of Eichstätt 'on the grounds of marriage' between 1589 and 1618. The majority of these came from the see of Eichstätt (including other parts of the prince-bishopric) or other parts of Franconia, Swabia and Bavaria. Only sixty-five came from outside these regions, whilst the origins of another twelve are unknown. There is no evidence that their migrations and marriages were undertaken to avoid hardship elsewhere.¹⁰⁸ Even if there was sufficient and reliable source material on which to base a reasonable hypothesis that one or more of these indicators of agrarian crisis might have existed, there would still remain the problem of interpretation. The debate about the causes of an apparent increase in property crime in England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, for example, has rumbled on for a couple of decades now despite the fact that some of the assize circuit and quarter session rolls, especially in Essex, give relatively good information.¹⁰⁹

outside the scope of this book. Pfister's work on climate change does not set out to demonstrate a correlation between years of crisis and social instability, but simply charts weather patterns, *Das Klima der Schweiz von 1525–1860 und seine Bedeutung in der Geschichte von Bevölkerung und Landwirtschaft*, vol. 1 *Klimageschichte der Schweiz 1525–1860* (2nd ed., Bern and Stuttgart: Haupt, 1985), and vol. 2 *Bevölkerung, Klima und Agrarmodernisierung 1525–1860* (2nd ed., Bern and Stuttgart: Haupt, 1985). Other recent work on adverse climate and its economic consequences also fails to relate these phenomena with social unrest. Erich Landsteiner, for example, is the only contributor to Pfister et al. (eds.), *Climatic Variability*, apart from Behringer, to argue that climatic change led to such unrest. He gives just one example, the riot by the migrant vine-dressers around Vienna in 1597 which was brutally suppressed, although the government then raised wages to avoid a repeat of the violence, "The Crisis of Wine Production in Late Sixteenth-Century Central Europe: Climatic Causes and Economic Consequences", in *ibid.*, *Climatic Variability*, pp. 323–34 (example from p. 331).

¹⁰⁸ Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", pp. 427–44.

¹⁰⁹ Despite its age and bias, Peter Lawson, "Property Crime and Hard Times in England, 1559–1624", *Law and History Review*, 4 (1986), pp. 95–127, still gives a reasonable account of this debate, a debate which has not since been resolved.

The other possible indicator of social crisis would be that identified by Macfarlane and Thomas, a reluctance to fulfil traditional social obligations (usually towards the poor) as both benefactors and recipients of help became more individualistic in their outlook and, in the case of provision for the poor, turned to the state for relief from want.¹¹⁰ The problem with this thesis is that it has, until recently, been measured in terms of the legislation to provide poor relief. The emergence of poor laws across Europe has been regarded as a sign that communal assistance was insufficient to support growing numbers of indigent persons. This analysis underplays two factors. The first is that legislators may not have been responding only to an apparent lack of traditional alms, but to less objective pressures to change the system: central control of the parishes and law and order; or reformist dogma which militated, at least in some Protestant territories, against the ‘good works’ characteristic of medieval Catholicism.¹¹¹ These pressures were not necessarily linked to long-term agrarian or social problems, although Behringer has argued that they, like witch persecution, are symptomatic of contemporary stresses and tensions.¹¹² The second factor underplayed by the Thomas-Macfarlane thesis is that even if there was a transition from communal charity to individualism and state aid, it did not happen entirely within the space of the few decades which saw witch-hunting. Recent studies of private charity show that communities continued to support the poor, at least those who were known to them, that charitable giving did not decline but changed, and that the poor developed subsistence strategies to help themselves without resorting to crime or vagrancy.¹¹³ In Eichstätt at the

¹¹⁰ Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, pp. 192–8, and Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 672–4.

¹¹¹ For an overview of the historiography of poverty and social obligation, see Colin Jones, “Some Recent Trends in the History of Charity”, in Martin Daunt, *Charity, Self-interest and Welfare in the English Past* (London: UCL Press, 1996), pp. 51–63.

¹¹² Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 119.

¹¹³ Steve Hindle has shown that, despite the problems of harvest failure and inflation, the last general charity appeal issued by the Privy Council in England in 1596 was relatively successful, at least in Buckinghamshire for which the presentments from the churchwardens are in good order, “Death, Fasting and Alms: the Campaign for General Hospitality in Late Elizabethan England”, *Past and Present*, 172 (2001), pp. 44–86. Hindle is, however, still cautious in his analysis of this event, suggesting that local interpretations of the appeal continued to exacerbate the tensions over alms-giving identified by Thomas and Macfarlane, *ibid.*, pp. 81–2. For examples of continuing high levels of charitable relief elsewhere in Europe not necessarily enforced by either government exhortation or legislation, see the work of Sandra Cavallo, “Family Obligations and Inequalities in Access to Care (Northern Italy 17th–18th Centuries)”, in Peregrine Horden and Richard Smith (eds.), *The Locus of Care: Family, Community, Institutions, and the*

time of witch persecution, for example, the mechanisms for the provision of welfare—the Spital (hospital), the Blatterhaus (pest-house), the Waisenhaus (orphanage) and the lay confraternities—either continued to flourish or increased in this period.¹¹⁴ Although these institutions were sponsored by the government or the church, it would be misleading to suggest that they emerged because ordinary folk now regarded provision for the poor and sick as the responsibility of the state or the new reform-minded Catholic hierarchy. The principality of Eichstätt was a very small territory compared to many of its neighbours, and the councils and cathedral chapter tended to be dominated by families which had supplied councillors and canons to them for generations.¹¹⁵ These male authorities were integrated members of the community and in that respect ‘state’ and church initiatives should be regarded as ‘communal’ initiatives too.

Even if charity were in decline, however, it is unlikely that it would have had a profound impact on the persecutions in Eichstätt. Most of the witch-suspects came from families which were highly integrated into the political and social fabric of the principality and its capital. They were simply not vulnerable to an accusation of witchcraft to avenge some petty social conflict which might once have been resolved by other less violent means, and very few of them found themselves in front of the witch commissioners for this reason. The conflict resolution models of accusations developed by Rainer Walz and others from the original Thomas-Macfarlane one were not therefore the driving force of the Eichstätt persecution of 1617–31. It is also difficult to identify any political, economic or religious confrontation between rival factions of the Eichstätt political or craft elites which might have lent itself to manipulation or resolution through accusations of witchcraft as it did in Rye, Salem

Provision of Welfare Since Antiquity (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 90–109, and ead., *Charity and Power in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹¹⁴ Sax, *Die Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstätt*, vol. 2, p. 503.

¹¹⁵ The cathedral chapter in early modern Eichstätt was dominated by minor noble families like Leonrod, Stain, Schaumberg, Eyb, Seckendorf, Gemmingen and Westerstetten, Braun, *Das Domkapitel zu Eichstätt*, pp. 10–22 and 566–9. Several of these families (Schaumberg, Eyb and Seckendorf) also dominated other, sometimes illegal, spheres of Franconian life, including knightly feuds, Hilla Zmora, *State and Nobility in Early Modern Germany: The Knightly Feud in Franconia, 1440–1567* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). The councils in Eichstätt were dominated by the families Bonschab, Mayr, Mittner, Rabel and Rehel, among others. Like the minor noble families of the chapter, these politically dominant families were further integrated through marriage, Buchner, “Eichstätter Familienbuch”, pp. 447–8.

and, to a lesser extent, Bamberg. The rarity of such accusations independent of the interrogation process and the fact that almost all the families of the local elite in the town of Eichstätt suffered because of the persecution seem to confirm that factionalism did not have a bearing on the course of this outbreak. One has to look elsewhere, to the figure of Johann Christoph von Westerstetten, for an explanation of the patterns of witch-hunting in the territory.

It is not possible to identify a culture of demonology among the clerical elite before Westerstetten's election to the Eichstätt cathedral chapter in 1589. The sole extant publication of the sixteenth century written in the prince-bishopric with a demonological perspective, the *Erschröckliche gantz warhafftige Geschicht*, does not give any indication of the horror which was to emerge shortly after it had been issued. The story of Apollonia Geißlbrecht's complicity in the Devil's pact in order to gain relief from the travails of this world, and her subsequent duty to the Devil to carry out acts of malevolence, are common themes of demonological and confessional tales.¹¹⁶ In the early modern period, however, diabolical possession, when it appeared in cases of witchcraft, was more commonly associated not with witches (who generally acted with the aid of the Devil or demons), but with female victims of bewitchment. Kramer, for example, was concerned with how witchcraft could be used to facilitate the possession of innocent victims as an end in itself.¹¹⁷ Cases of the alleged possession of witchcraft victims include Anne Gunter, Nicole Obry, and the adolescent accusers in the Salem trials.¹¹⁸ Possession was not a feature of the Eichstätt witchcraft episodes from 1590. Geißlbrecht's restoration and absolution does not therefore conform to the normal resolution of witchcraft cases in Eichstätt or elsewhere, that is trial and, for many suspects, execution.

One only knows about Geißlbrecht's case because it served the hagiographical purposes of the authors of the *Erschröckliche gantz war-*

¹¹⁶ Kramer, *Malleus*, pp. 218–33 deals with the pact, pp. 254–69 and 292–323 concern the malevolence of the witch. Most other demonologies as well as the trial documents (including the Eichstätt ones, as I will discuss) and pamphlets recording episodes of witchcraft routinely include this transaction.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 273–92.

¹¹⁸ James Sharpe, *The Bewitching of Anne Gunter* (London: Profile Books, 1999), Denis Crouzet, "A Woman and the Devil: Possession and Exorcism in Sixteenth-Century France", in Michael Wolfe (ed.), *Changing Identities in Early Modern France* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 191–215, and Boyer and Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed*.

haffige *Geschicht*. There may have been other cases of possession and exorcism in the districts of the prince-bishopric, but, like this known case, they would not be found in the judicial records because they were not crimes to be tried before the courts. One point to note about this story, however, is that it is set in the town of Spalt in which four witches had previously been executed for the crime of witchcraft. The hero of the exorcism, Wolfgang Agricola, had been, at the time of the last of these trials in 1562, the parish priest of the church of St. Nikolaus in Spalt.¹¹⁹ He was again present in 1590 when Barbara Weis, her mother and eleven others were executed as witches in the town. It is not possible to determine his role either in the prosecution of the 1562 or 1590 trials or in the writing and publication of the *Erschröckliche gantz warhaffige* *Geschicht*. Certainly he was active in the town when all of these events occurred and would, as dean of the Spalt chapter in 1590, have played a prominent role in local ecclesiastical and temporal affairs.¹²⁰ It seems, however, that Agricola and his colleagues in Spalt, perhaps directed by the chapter and *Hofrat* in Eichstätt and opinions from universities like Ingolstadt, were able to draw on more than one mode of dealing with witchcraft cases, and that their sporadic occurrences did not require the development of a coherent policy for dealing with them. In the theology subscribed to by the clergy in the principality prior to 1590, therefore, the demonological stress on the extermination of an active witch sect does not seem to have taken precedence over either the exorcism of demons from the victims of possession (even when those possessed were described as 'witches' and acted harmfully) or the Biblical injunction (Exodus 22, 18) not to suffer an individual witch to live which was adhered to in the cases prosecuted earlier in the century. There did not exist, even as late as 1584, the necessary demonological preconditions for a witch *persecution* in Eichstätt. That is not to say that the Eichstätt clergy of the sixteenth century were not interested in demonology. Both Kilian Leib, a prior of Rebdorf, and Leonhard Haller, once suffragan bishop of Eichstätt, owned copies of the *Malleus*, and Haller also possessed an early sixteenth-century edition of Johannes Nider's *Formicarius* (originally written in 1437).¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Monika Fink-Lang, *Untersuchungen zum Eichstättler Geistesleben im Zeitalter des Humanismus* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1985), p. 275.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 275. Agricola had been appointed to the deanery of Spalt in 1573.

¹²¹ Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 50, n. 27.

The year 1590 would seem to have been the moment of transition to a dominant, but not exclusive, demonological view of witchcraft as a heresy in Eichstätt. There seems to be a striking correspondence between the timing of events in the political life of the prince-bishopric and the occurrence of witch persecution over the next forty years. There appears, in particular, to have been a relationship between the fluctuating fortunes of what seems to have been the pro-Bavarian, pro-Jesuit party within the cathedral chapter, which was the most powerful political and ecclesiastical institution in early modern Eichstätt, and the intensity of witch prosecution. Prince-bishop Schaumberg had ruled for thirty relatively quiet years in which he rarely attempted to impose Tridentine reform on his territory. His death in 1590, however, exposed friction within the cathedral chapter between the 'Jesuit' faction led perhaps by the young Canon Westerstetten, and an older generation which preferred the status quo. The situation was not helped by the difficulties in finding a suitable successor. Johann Otto von Gemmingen, the original choice of many in the chapter, had declined the offer to rule over the principality and went on to become the bishop of Augsburg. The compromise candidate, Seckendorf, was too ill to take on the full responsibilities of ruling both the temporal principality and the larger and more complex diocese of Eichstätt. A coadjutor bishop, Johann Conrad von Gemmingen, Johann Otto's brother and a nominee of those canons resistant to Jesuit activity, was therefore appointed in 1593 to take on daily administrative duties, but policy remained in the hands of Seckendorf and his advisors, among them Westerstetten who was from 16 February 1592 president of the *Hofrat*.¹²² The first witch persecution in Eichstätt coincides with the brief unsettled reign of Seckendorf before the appointment of Gemmingen, that is 1590–2. It is difficult to ascertain Westerstetten's role, if indeed he had one, in the drive to begin persecuting witches in 1590. One can only point to his political presence and ascendancy at this time, his support for the Society of Jesus, whose brothers were, in the late sixteenth century, strident advocates of eradicating the witch sect from the neighbouring duchy of Bavaria, and the correspondence between the duration of Seckendorf's reign and that of the first outburst of witch trials in the prince-bishopric. Given the apparent lack of other prerequisite condi-

¹²² Braun, *Das Domkapitel zu Eichstätt*, p. 568.

tions for witch panic among the populace, the election of Seckendorf looks like the precipitatory factor that led to a witch hunt in 1590.

It was not unusual for witch-hunting to begin at times of political uncertainty or instability. The English Witchcraft Statute of 1563 was enacted as part of an arsenal of measures to counter the potential Catholic threat to the vulnerable new queen;¹²³ and the North Berwick trials assumed a prominence in Scotland because they took place in the context of the earl of Bothwell's attempts to usurp the power of his cousin, James VI.¹²⁴ Half a century later, the Hopkins episode of 1645–7 occurred because the justice system had collapsed during the English Civil War.¹²⁵ Similarly, one of the factors which allowed the Salem crisis to get out of hand was the lack of an English governor.¹²⁶ In Spain, the 'Zugarramurri' trials in the Basque country were only prevented from escalating further because Alonso de Salazar y Frías, against the recommendations of his colleagues also brought in to examine the affair, was able to persuade Madrid that the Spanish Inquisition and not the local secular judiciary should be made responsible for prosecuting witchcraft.¹²⁷

That the witch persecution of 1590 was perceived by contemporaries to be the active policy of at least a faction of the Eichstätt canons is confirmed by Gregory of Valencia's report of that year. His opinion called on Wilhelm V to initiate the toughest of witch persecutions in which the slightest suspicion should lead to an arrest and the usual rules for validating confessions forced by torture were to be disregarded. Gregory therefore advocated that the highest authority in the duchy, the court council, adopt an active policy of eradicating the secret witch sect. As well as citing the examples of Eichstätt and Augsburg, he gave as his

¹²³ Barbara Rosen (ed.), *Witchcraft in England, 1558–1618* (new ed., Amherst, Mass.: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), p. 23.

¹²⁴ Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's Demonology and the North Berwick Witches* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), pp. 29–52.

¹²⁵ Wallace Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718* (Washington: American Historical Association, 1911), pp. 164–205, and Jim Sharpe, "The Devil in East Anglia: the Matthew Hopkins Trials Reconsidered", in Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester and Gareth Roberts (eds.), *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 237–54.

¹²⁶ Boyer and Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed*, pp. 6–7.

¹²⁷ Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate: Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1980).

principal authorities the *Malleus Maleficarum* and Binsfeld's recent *Tractatus de Confessionibus Maleficorum et Sagarum* (Trier, 1589), both of which advocated the active persecution of the heretical witches.¹²⁸ Gregory was not writing in response to a general situation of panic in Bavaria in which secular authorities were judging a spiralling number of witchcraft cases brought before them on the basis of accusations of harmful magic from within the community. The context for his report was Wilhelm V's search for information about the witch sect and how to deal with it. This search was motivated by Wilhelm's desire to lead the recatholicization of the Holy Roman Empire and led to his general instruction about witch trials in 1590.¹²⁹ Despite this instruction and a steady stream of trials in Bavaria throughout the 1590s, however, the persecution of witches as an active policy of the ducal council, rather than its subordinate officers, only began in 1600 with its intervention in the trial of the impecunious travelling family Päm. ¹³⁰ Placed in this regional context, commentators like Gregory of Valencia seem to have regarded the Eichstätt trials of 1590 as being imposed 'from above' as an act of piety and reform.

Witch persecution died away in Eichstätt with the election of Gemmingen as coadjutor in 1593, only to resurface in 1603. Unlike Westerstetten, Gemmingen had not been trained at Jesuit centres of learning. He had been educated in Paris and Italy and preferred horticulture to theological discourse and church reform. This may account for his ambivalent attitude towards the alleged witch threat which worried the Bavarian dukes and the theologians and jurists at Ingolstadt as well as his canon Westerstetten. It seems unlikely that Gemmingen decided in 1603 to resume the persecution of the witch sect which had emerged briefly in 1590 as a matter of policy or in response to pressure from local 'victims' of witchcraft; he did not allow the isolated incidents of witchcraft accusation in the decade following his election as the coadjutor to escalate into a hunt. It may well have been Westerstetten's activities, therefore, which led to the 1603 outbreak. This second wave of persecution coincided with the re-emergence of the local controversy over the proposed entry of the Society of Jesus

¹²⁸ Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 149.

¹²⁹ The instruction and various Bavarian documents about witchcraft in c. 1590 have been published in Behringer (ed.), *Hexen und Hexenprozesse*, pp. 210–29.

¹³⁰ The case of the Päm family has been documented in Michael Kunze, *Highroad to the Stake: A Tale of Witchcraft*, trans. William E. Yuill (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

into Eichstätt. Towards the end of Schaumberg's reign the cathedral chapter had voted, narrowly, to exclude the Society from the territory.¹³¹ Although Seckendorf was physically weak and may have had the active support of the pro-Jesuit party within the chapter, this faction does not seem to have felt strong enough to use his reign to revoke the exclusion. Throughout the early part of Gemmingen's reign, however, Westerstetten led the bid to overturn this proscription on Jesuit missionary activity within the prince-bishopric and to give the Society control of the local seminary, St Willibald's College. Westerstetten's faction finally had to concede defeat on this issue in 1603, and by the end of that year Westerstetten had left the principality to become the prince-provost of Ellwangen.¹³²

Without the requisite sources, it is difficult to tie the controversy over the introduction of the Jesuits into Eichstätt, the recurrence of witch persecution there in 1603 and contemporaneous events in Bavaria (especially the centralization of witchcraft policy) closer together, but the framework exists to at least make the hypothesis that it was activity among the supporters of the Jesuit cause which was in some way influential in provoking the resurgence of witch-hunting. The extant *relatio* for 1603 would seem to support the notion that the concern of the judges was to relieve Eichstätt of a heresy. As I have noted above, it shows that the interrogators concentrated on Elisabeth Scheuch's heretical activities—the seduction and pact, her renunciation of God and the saints, her flights to nocturnal gatherings and her relationship with her incubus—and that they accepted her limited answers to questions which would normally in the witch-trial context have led, under the threat of torture, to confessions of specific acts of malevolent witchcraft.¹³³ There is no suggestion either in the historical situation of the prince-bishopric or in Scheuch's confession that conditions obtained which could facilitate the fomentation of a witch panic among the population, and shortly after, if not before, Westerstetten's departure for Ellwangen this brief hunt after the adherents of organized witch beliefs ceased. Indeed, Behringer infers that intense witch persecutions should not have been a feature of the first six years of the seventeenth century in Franconia because they were ones of 'normal prices'.¹³⁴

¹³¹ *Bosl's bayerische Biographie*, p. 840.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 840.

¹³³ StAN, Hexenakten 49 (E. Scheuch—*relatio*, fair copy), Article 4.

¹³⁴ Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 103.

On 4 December 1612 Westerstetten was unanimously elected by his former colleagues in Eichstätt to rule over the principality. During the negotiations which preceded the vote, the question of his close links with the powerful Society of Jesus was the only reservation expressed by some of the canons about his suitability. A compromise was found by inserting into the *Wahlkapitulation* agreement, which was revised by the cathedral chapter on the election of each new episcopal incumbent, the following clause: 'The bishop cannot admit a new order into the diocese without the consent of the cathedral chapter'.¹³⁵ This clause gave those canons resistant to Jesuit activity in the diocese the opportunity to counter any attempt by Westerstetten to introduce the order, at least without first consulting them. Soon after his investiture on 14 April 1613, the new bishop informed the cathedral chapter of his intention to call in the Jesuits and transfer the direction of the local seminary to them. The Jesuits did enter the principality, but the chapter rejected the central proposal about the seminary. A period of negotiation ensued involving the General of the Society who refused to accept a solution to the impasse in which the Jesuits' direction of the college would have been placed under the supervision of the bishop, as well as the rival factions of the chapter. Finally, on 30 August 1620, a Jesuit church in Eichstätt, the Heiliger Engel (now the Schutzenengel), was consecrated; and on 17 October 1626 the new Jesuit College was inaugurated.¹³⁶ If the institutional presence of the Society in Eichstätt was delayed, Westerstetten was able to use his position to further the spiritual aims of its missionary activity in Europe: the recatholicization of Protestant regions and the strengthening of belief in Catholic states. Westerstetten's catholicizing activities throughout both his principality and his diocese characterized his reign.

By 1630, Westerstetten had allegedly helped to bring some 22000 Protestants back under Catholic authority.¹³⁷ This figure may be exaggerated, but it does serve to highlight the predominant theme of his reign,

¹³⁵ Quoted in Sax, *Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstätt*, vol. 2, p. 493.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 492–7. Popular resistance to Westerstetten's imposition of the Tridentine reforms in the outlying villages of the principality over which he had little direct control can be seen in the case of Bergrheinfeld whose inhabitants shared several overlords. The villagers, with the support of the local Lutheran nobility, seem simply to have refused to accept the imposition of Catholic priests and the Catholic reforms by the bishops of Würzburg and Eichstätt (to whom some of them were subject) throughout the early modern period, Ludwig Weiss, "Reformation und Gegenreformation in Bergrheinfeld", *Würzburger Diözesangeschichtsblätter*, 43 (1981), pp. 283–341.

¹³⁷ This estimate is based on Sax, *Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstätt*, vol. 2, p. 503.

the consolidation and expansion of Catholicism within the see of Eichstätt. Apart from his involvement in the conversions of Pappenheim and Neuburg, Westerstetten accomplished this by using his princely power to force the imperial free cities of Weißenburg and Nuremberg to restore a number of imperial administrative districts to his control; he also persuaded several other individual churches and parishes to return to the Catholic confession.¹³⁸ Westerstetten's recatholicization programme was helped by the very close relations he had been able to establish with Maximilian I, the presence of Jesuit missionary stations on Bavarian territory within the diocese of Eichstätt, notably at Ingolstadt (established in 1555) and Wemding (established in 1602), and his presidency of the university in Ingolstadt from which much witch-hunting advice had come over the preceding twenty or more years. He was therefore able to marshal significant patronage and resources to further his reform agenda.

Within the principality, Jesuit missionary activity began soon after the new bishop's installation. In April 1615 the order introduced processions of penitence in the town of Eichstätt which were to be undertaken by new congregations and brotherhoods of Catholics. In July of the same year Peter Berthold, Westerstetten's Jesuit confessor, established the Marian Congregation and later an associated confederation for students; and Johann Christoph introduced the Corpus Christi Brotherhood into the town in May 1616. On the Friday after Ascension, 1619, an annual perambulation around the fields was inaugurated to bless them and protect the crops from hail damage. With the help of a direct admonition in 1622 from the pope and his legate Cardinal Eitel Friedrich von Hohenzollern to the cathedral chapter in Eichstätt, Westerstetten also forced acceptance of the Roman Rite on all the Catholic parts of his diocese. The effect of these introductions was to raise the profile of the church in Eichstätt, where there had only previously been one brotherhood, that of Sebastian, founded in 1494 and the clergy had withdrawn into the old rites. The introduction of Jesuit-sponsored reforms and institutions prompted the Dominicans to petition for the introduction of the Rosenkranz brotherhood which was granted in 1619. Catholicism was, therefore, literally taken out onto the streets in Eichstätt and it was done so against a backdrop of architectural renovation and new building also initiated by the new bishop.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp. 500–5.

¹³⁹ Ibid., pp. 492–514.

Westerstetten was, in fact, pursuing the same approach to recatholization that he had developed in Ellwangen. It was in Ellwangen too that he began systematically persecuting witches. Towards the end of his reign as provost there, Westerstetten had supervised the initial and most intense phase of the witch persecution in the territory. In 1611 and 1612 about 260 witches were executed. In 1613, the year of Westerstetten's departure for Eichstätt, another fifty were sent to the stake. The persecution was to continue on a less intense scale until 1618 by which time about 390 people had been executed.¹⁴⁰ Interestingly, the persecutions in Ellwangen also coincided with the first Jesuits to arrive in the provostry.¹⁴¹

The witch persecutions in both Ellwangen and Eichstätt formed part of Westerstetten's programme of reform.¹⁴² The hunts were designed to rid the territories of an insidious heresy which ranked alongside the Lutheranism that had infiltrated into other parts of the bishopric, into Neuburg, Pappenheim, Weißenburg and Nuremberg, for example, all territories which were restored either completely or partially through Westerstetten's intervention to the southern German Catholic hegemony. This new agenda permeates the witch-trial documentation from 1617 onwards. Occasionally a suspect was asked to recite the Paternoster and Ave Maria; Enders Gutmann's version of the Lord's Prayer, for example, is recorded in full.¹⁴³ This was an innovation in the interrogation process because neither Barbara Weis nor Elisabeth Scheuch seem to have been asked to perform this act. The recitation of common prayers mirrored the practice of the visitations which became a popular means of ensuring correct belief in post-Tridentine Catholic Europe. During these visitations, clergy and parishioners were also asked to recite these prayers. Similarly, the interrogatory used in the witch trials posed standard questions not only about witchcraft, but about fornication, superstition and the regularity of the suspect's marriage. Among the witch commissioners, therefore, it seems that Protestantism, witchcraft, sin, superstition and irregular lifestyles were regarded as overlapping

¹⁴⁰ Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany*, pp. 98–115, for a description of the Ellwangen hunt and 212–14 for the chronological distribution of the witch trials there. Behringer has suggested that Midelfort's figures are perhaps too low (*Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 237). See also Mährle, "'O wehe der armen seelen'", pp. 325–500 *passim*.

¹⁴¹ Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany*, p. 101.

¹⁴² Mährle makes this observation of Westerstetten's witch-hunting activities in Ellwangen, "'O wehe der armen seelen'", p. 372.

¹⁴³ StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 14 December 1617 (a.m.).

and complementary threats which needed to be rooted out together. This new attitude towards heresy and sin seems to have impressed itself on the minds of the inhabitants of the principality. Faced with the instruments of torture and urged to confess the truth, Barbara Ruoser stated that she was a witch. She then went on to tell a story of diabolical seduction in which a tanner's apprentice tried to bribe her to marry him, 'but she did not want to become a Lutheran'.¹⁴⁴ In this part of her narrative, Ruoser conflated the heresies of witchcraft and Protestantism and suggested that she understood them both as diabolically-inspired. Of course, she soon confessed that she finally gave in to persuasion and became a witch.

Although they might have understood the connection between witchcraft and Protestantism made by the ecclesiastical authorities in Eichstätt, the citizenry also feared that the Church was manipulating the persecution to make money for itself. In December 1627, the citizens of the town confronted Westerstetten with complaints about the confiscation of property from the convicted witches. The bishop responded by abrogating his right to take the property of these criminals. He claimed that it was not his aim to enrich the state by this means; the purpose of the witch trials was solely to eradicate the witch sect.¹⁴⁵ As most of the witches came from the families of the secular political elite and men of local importance were becoming more likely to be arrested, the income from such confiscations may have been quite sizeable. The widow Margretha Hözler, for example, left a considerable fortune to over forty beneficiaries. She made provision for the payment of a debt of 1200 Reichstaler still owed on the sale of a house in Pfalergasse, and she bequeathed large sums of money (including two bequests of 100 florins and another of 100 Reichstaler) to thirteen religious and charitable institutions in and around Eichstätt for the benefit of her soul and those of her husband, son and parents.¹⁴⁶ In normal circumstances, the Church stood to benefit handsomely from Hözler's estate, but having presumably taken the rest of her property and that of many others by the end of 1627 when the persecution was coming to its end, Westerstetten's protestation that he did not want to enrich the territory through these confiscations may well have rung hollow among the complainants.

¹⁴⁴ StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ruoser), 13 December 1617 (a.m.).

¹⁴⁵ Sax, *Die Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstätt*, vol. 2, p. 505.

¹⁴⁶ StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hözler—will).

Despite the financial gain probably made by the church in Eichstätt, the hunt of 1617–31 should be regarded in the context of the institutional and ritual changes brought about in the region from 1613, of the keeping of the *Bücher-Verbotes 1629*, for example, which Westerstetten supervised ‘because the break with the Catholic religion almost only arose through the false heretical books, tracts and writings’.¹⁴⁷ Certainly the prince-bishop’s close associations with contemporary witch persecutors (the duke of Bavaria, the prince-bishops of Bamberg and Würzburg, the bishop of Augsburg, the provost of Ellwangen and the archbishops of Cologne and Mainz)¹⁴⁸ through the Catholic League and patronage of the Society of Jesus, and his previous experience of witch persecution in Ellwangen should make one beware ignoring Westerstetten’s role in actively promoting a witch-hunt in his principality. His supporters certainly saw him in the role of witch-hunter. Förner was not the only author to dedicate his writings on witchcraft to Westerstetten. Jacob Gretser celebrated the bishop’s witch-hunting activities in Ellwangen in a dedicatory paragraph to his *De festis christianorum* (1612).¹⁴⁹ The printer of the Dillingen editions of Franciscus Agricola’s *Gründtlicher Bericht* (1613 and 1618) also decided that citing Eichstätt would help sales. He dedicated both editions to Westerstetten’s suffragan bishop.¹⁵⁰

The lack of references to agrarian crises or deep-rooted social conflicts in the Eichstätt material and the strong correlation between the career of Johann Christoph von Westerstetten and the chronological distribution of the hunts suggests that witch persecution in the principality was conducted ‘from above’ by the ruling ecclesiastical elites. These persecutions failed to turn into general panics about the presence of a witch-sect despite the preaching of Meggelin and the activities of the other Jesuits in the principality. One difficult question, however, remains in respect of the patterns of witch persecution in Eichstätt: why was there a geographical shift in persecution from the outlying districts of the principality to its political centre? It is probable that this shift was simply a coincidence. It might, however, also reflect the increasing influence of the pro-reform faction in the cathedral chapter in Eichstätt and

¹⁴⁷ Quoted in Sax, *Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstätt*, vol. 2, p. 508.

¹⁴⁸ Behringer, *Witches and Witch-hunts*, p. 109.

¹⁴⁹ The dedication to Gretser’s *De festis christianorum* (Ingolstadt, 1612) is reprinted in Mährle, “‘O wehe der armen seelen’”, p. 431.

¹⁵⁰ Franciscus Agricola, *Gründtlicher Bericht ob Zauberey und Hexerey die argste vnd gravlichste sünd auff Erden sey* (1597; editions cited, Dillingen, 1613 and 1618).

the centralization of efforts to re-establish the hegemony of Catholicism throughout the diocese. Until the election of Westerstetten as bishop, the chapter had been largely reluctant to forgo the benefits of the stability which had characterized Schaumberg's long reign. Rather than accept change in the form of the Roman Rite and the proselytizing of the Jesuits, the canons preferred continuity. In a small urban centre like Eichstätt, witch persecution in the form it finally took in 1617 (as part of a religious reform package) must have been seen as disruptive and divisive. Whilst small-scale persecution might have been tolerable in the countryside where it could be regarded as a continuation of a pattern of sporadic, isolated witchcraft episodes, especially in Spalt, its presence in the town of Eichstätt endangered relations among the canons and between the ecclesiastical and secular authorities. That the cathedral chapter resisted the temptation to follow neighbouring territories by establishing a witch commission and formulating a standard interrogatory in the late sixteenth century indicates, I think, their unwillingness to engage in full-scale persecution at that time. It was only when the pro-Jesuit faction came to dominate the cathedral chapter that intensive reform measures, including the persecution of the witch-sect, could be imposed on the town of Eichstätt itself without creating division at the heart of the local ecclesiastical government.