AGRICULTURE AS MOVABLE WORLD, PART SEVEN

WITCH HUNT TO MODERNITY

On her journey to her Russian-German forefathers' villages in Deutschland, Lena Lentz Hardt, of Lentz Spelt Farms on the Columbia Plateau, stops at a small-town cafe on the evening after she's learned of the social convulsions due to *Yersinia pestis* in the mid-1300s. Certainly it was a watershed event of the Middle Ages, all that Black Death doled out by the Grim Reaper. In the cafe Lentz orders *Glühwein,* "glowing wine," a robust red wine seasoned with nutmeg and cinnamon, served piping hot. It's a Franconian tradition.

She sips and muses: Germanic farmer history can't get any worse, can it?

The wine warms, she likes the taste. *Glühwein* fits best into the setting of the Christmas markets, and that's pleasant to consider, a hundred stalls of uplifting angels and straw stars, bees' wax candles smelling sweetly among *Lebkuchen*soft ginger cookies and brightly wrapped marzipan, and wooden toys, a universe of hand-carved playthings ogling the crowds in thick winter-clothes, black and grey but for reds and greens of wool scarves, the aisles between the stalls lit up by bare ligth bulbs, the shuffle observed from a table with steaming*Glühwein* before you. She'll have to come back some day, Lentz thinks, during the *Christkindl Markt.*

While the *Glühwein* soothes, history doesn't stop after the Black Death.

Umbruch is the German museums' term for what happened after the plague years; a "Break-that-Turns," like soil gets turned by the moldboard plow, would be a fitting translation. Implied is that the era was the Break from the Middle Ages.

Economists and historians go on arguing over how to classify this period. A medieval Great Depression, some contend. No, it was a Crisis, others insist. Still others: it was an accumulation of crises.

We'll leave them to it.

The facts are a typically medieval intermix. Farmers experienced a long downward trend in several aspects. Whereas farm-gate returns rose in northern Italy, France and England after 1350, in German regions agricultural prices plummeted. Returns on grains had tripled in the previous 150 years, now they slumped at a time when the Little Ice Age started taking its toll. Estimates run to 70 percent of former yields per hectare, and that's in the good years. Some summers were so drab and wet that not much grain could be harvested before it sprouted in the head, or mold took it. On rye, the staple grain in many German regions, ergot appeared in many years. If the black-kernel ergot (a compound of which was synthesized as LSD in 1938) contributed psychotic accents to the general inebriation remains a matter of debate.

Bubonic plague, small pox and other epidemics kept up their Grim Reaper act, albeit on lesser scale than the Black Death in the mid-1300s. Every time a region suffered a pandemic, the value of farm goods plunged further, agriculture suffering "a dynamic of shrinkage" that would get worse for over six generations.

Across Europe the landlords tightened the screws. We must remember that taxing agricultural production, plus some venue derived from *Fronarbeit* – the service farmers had to perform seasonally –, were the nobles' primary income sources, and now, with as many as 40 percent of the villages abandoned in regions such as Kärnten, those landlords

sought to make up for reduced income. They did so by reining in their farmers, they raised taxes and fees, and they curtailed freedoms – farmer mobility was halted, no more moving out to farm in the east as participant in the *Ostsiedlung*. The hated *Leibeigene* serfdom was expanding again.

Farmers perceived an *Erneuerungswut* in the nobles, a “madness for innovation.” Not only did landlords invent new ways of taxation, they now started to put claim on woodland that traditionally was held in common by the *Dorf.*

We’ve explained previously how medieval agriculture consisted of two branches, one the worked land of the three-field system plus some row-crop “gardens,” and some ground for haying in early- to mid-summer. The second farming resource lay farther out from the *Dorf,* lands that the farmers did not work but used extensively: between tilled fields and forest stretched the commons of moor and heather and fell and freely-meandering streams with their riparian zone – all of that spacious land served for livestock grazing, and late in the year some hay was harvested there with scythes as well.

The forest commons we must picture less as a forest than a park-like environment that slowly thickened to denser tree stands as you walked into it. The grazing by horse, cattle and sheep enforced the open character of the outer forest; as saplings were eaten or trampled, and leafy growth was nibbled as high up as the livestock could reach, conditions were good for grass to propagate itself, not only in clearings but among the widely-spaced trees, too. Oak and beech were predominant species in much of the woodland.

Herders kept the livestock moving about the open-land commons and in the forest. Firewood and some timber were harvested regularly. In autumn the leaves, especially beech leaves, were raked from the forest floor and transported to the village in wagons, for additional feed and livestock bedding in the barns.

And, in years when oaks bore a good bounty of acorns and the beeches were loaded with beechnuts, big herds of hogs, often thousands of pigs from several villages, were let into the forest for the *Mast* foraging from late fall into winter.

In the parts of the forest belonging to a noble or to an abbey, it was customary that farmers paid for grazing rights and wood use; this payment was in oats, usually. But the "innovation" that farmers pay fees on the whole forest certainly was felt as an unjust burden. In some cases the *Fronarbeit* services had to be rendered in the form of timber that was to be supplied to an abbey; not only did the farmers have to do the tree-felling (still with axes), and deliver the timber without remuneration, now they also had to pay the prince for the right to cut the timber.

Worse: among landlords a new mind-set was emerging, one that envisioned the forest in terms of efficient timber production, for which the livestock would be excluded from woodland graze altogether. Losing the forest component of their agrarian system would be a big blow for our farmers.

This era also saw a great influx of folks in the villages, small-holders and cottagers. Whereas only farmers (*Bauern* and *Halbbauern*, i.e., "farmers and half-farmers") were in on the decision-making of a *Dorf,* small-holders and cottagers had equal rights to the commons. Individually this did not effect the village much, what with only a couple of cows and a few sheep per cottage, but as cottagers numbers rose steeply, the commons could become over-grazed. "On some grazing grounds, the cattle seem to meditate on the misery in the moon more than they actually graze," a contemporary wrote.

In response to enforced changes against their interests, and to fight their loss of freedom in general, French farmers organized a large revolt in 1358, English farmers rebelled in large numbers in 1381. Not so German farmers. But it won't be long.

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The sense of constriction was spread far beyond the farmers' sphere. Money – mostly coin in those days – was in extremely short supply, in large part due to the Little Ice Age. Keeping in mind that precious metals come from mountainous places, historian Stuart Jenks explains: "As the annual average temperature dropped by 1 degree Celsius, the summers became wetter and cooler, the

winters warmer but more rainy. In the higher-elevation mining regions this climate trend had especially crucial effects. The tree line lowered, which changed the water situation on the mountain drastically – agriculture was no longer an option at high elevations, so the food supply for the miners became increasingly difficult." Intensified rainfall caused excessive flooding in the mines; pumping required enormous technical and financial effort.

Further aggravating the silver mining down-trend was that technical know-how – passed on word-by-mouth in that era – was lost when mining experts died prematurely of the plague.

Paper money – letters of credit, the *Kux* kind of investment stocks – also had become rare because merchants and bankers had grown risk-averse.

Lastly, the cost of labor had shot up, a counter trend to the agricultural price slump.

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Yes, for some strata of society the Black Death aftermath turned into an unprecedentedly rich era. One obvious reason: the wealth from before the plague now was concentrated in much fewer hands. Speak: the rich got richer.
And they liked to show off their riches – recall, if you will, the tendency to hedonism in response to the Black Death. This created extra demand for craftsmen whose numbers, naturally, had shrunken in the plague, so the survivors now

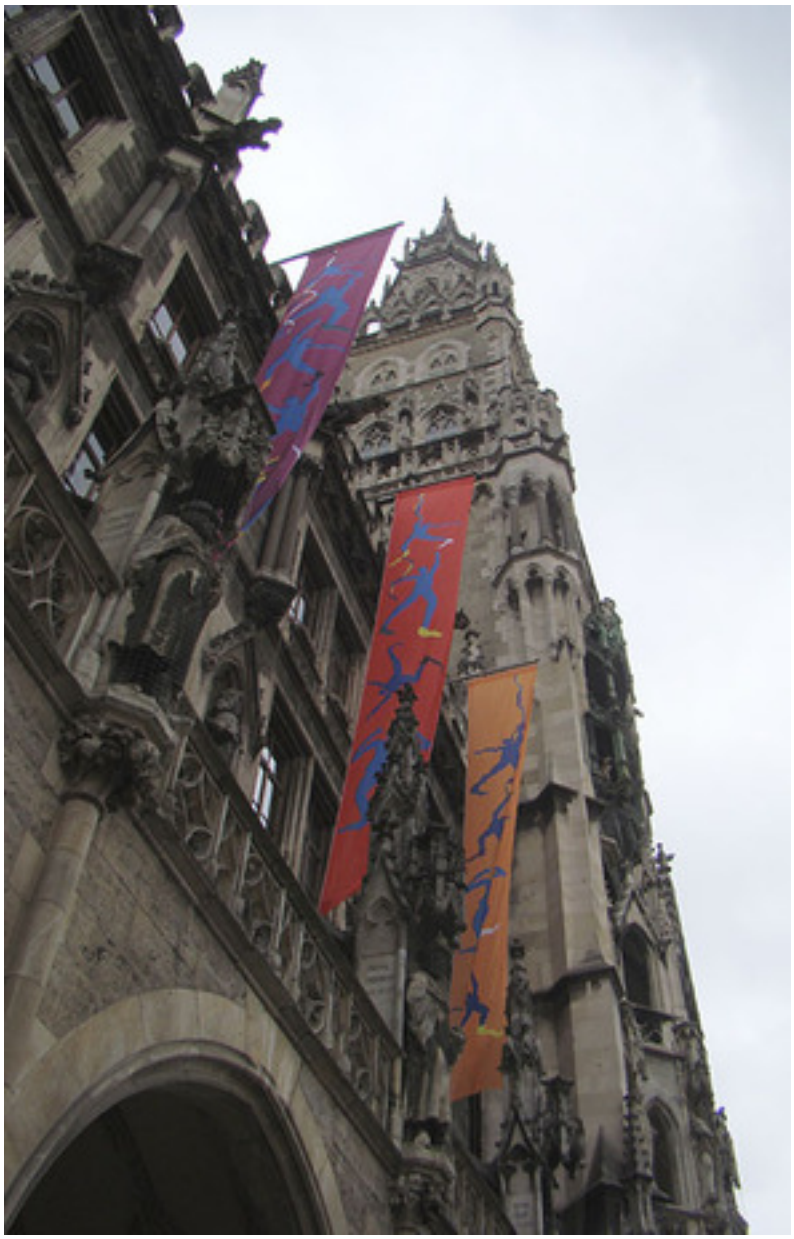
could charge hefty prices. Historians speak of the Golden Age for craftsmen and artists: the Renaissance dawned. Greek and Roman imagery were resurrected, from Apollo to Zeus.

The most ostentatious way to brag about your great disposable wealth? Clothes, of course. Never before had fashions changed so frequently. Keep in mind, though, that in a society of sharply divided classes, each class had to wear their own particular – peculiar – fashion. Oh, it was a great time to be Tailor Lentz in Ulm.

At the same time, the destitute still made up around 20 percent of the population. The social safety net was fairly developed, some of the larger cities supplying thousands with food rations daily, but such help was restricted to those who “deserved” it, in the main the widows. Orphans, illegitimate children, vagabonds and beggars were not judged deserving but were actually persecuted in some places.

It was the largest discrepancy between rich and poor in medieval history. What do you get? Revolt, of course.

In the cities, tradesmen and guilds rose up to get their slice of political power. The rich merchants, the patricians, had come to control the *Stadtrat,* the city council in which the middle classes now also wanted to have their say, especially in view of the fact that said council levied their taxes and fees.



Revolt against patricians, and battles with mercenaries hired by patricians, raged in Braunschweig (already before the Black Death), in Bremen, Magdeburg, Wismar, Lübeck, Hamburg.

The 1368 uprising in Augsburg saw the formation of *Zünfte,* but not*Zünfte* that were trade "guilds" (the most common definition of the word), instead they were strictly political associations. Eventually the patricians yielded and agreed to form a new city government, whereby the city defined itself as "Community of the *Zünfte* of Augsburg." Köln (Cologne) and Speyer would follow suit within a few decades.

As we near 1500, more and more of the lower classes in cities joined the ranks of tradesmen in their revolts.

Farmers, too, began to fight battles against feudal suppression: "In the 50 years before 1520, (farmer) revolts kept recurring around Lake Constance, in the Black Forest, in Württemberg, in the Steiermark, and in Kärnten," Geoffrey Elton writes.

The most ominous uprisings – as seen from the feudal lords' and the church's perspective – broke out along the Upper Rhine and in the Alsace, Elton notes: "Here the demands were for a 'godly right'... with radical and revolutionary theses... which shocked the authorities by insistence on natural equality and the triumph of the poor."

The symbol of those uprisings was the *Bundschuh,* the sturdy boot worn by farmers.

In the writings of Franz Kurowski we trace the beginnings of the *Bundschuh* to 1443 in the *Dorf* Schliengen near Basel. The *Bundschuh* symbolism was its contrast to the nobles' footwear, the knights' boot with its cruel spurs at the heel, Kurowski notes.

Whereas most farmer uprisings in the late 1400s demanded a return to customary conditions ("No new taxes" – sound familiar?), the *Bundschuh*associations of farmers proclaimed what we would call a political program today. "They would accept the authority of Kaiser and pope, but the *Leibeigene*serfdom and the feudal taxes and the restriction on the commons were to be abolished, and the church's possessions (abbeys in particular) were to be dissolved and divided," Kurowski writes.

He adds that "the urge for godly justice" was a key element.

That *Bundschuh* we will meet again.

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Did you catch the "godly" in the above quote? You didn't think religion would stop with the bizarre processions of self-flagellators during the Black Death, did you.

As it turned out, the macabre flagellator movement, paranoid in seeking blame, dovetailed into the next phase of Christian religion: the Age of Witch Hunts, in Germany 1470 to 1775, marks the transition from the Middle Ages to the Modern World. Not a good start for modernity, was it, this repugnant mix of intense piety, religious mass hysteria, and the most base malice.

The scenario accepted by most historians today is that the outbreak of witch-hunt fury in 1400s Europe was a grassroots movement, so to speak, fueled by religious fervor. Frequently, witch hunts happened in a helter-skelter milieu, as when a freak hailstorm destroyed grain crops: "Under the leadership of a seventeen-year-old boy who claimed to have an infallible nose for witches, they ducked a number of women and then beat them to death. Other suspects were burned with red-hot shovels, pushed into brick kilns or thrown headlong from high

places." This went on until the authorities from the nearest city came to put a stop to it.

The above quote we find in Aldous Huxley's *The Devils of Loudon.* We highly recommend this book on the topic (and will quote further from it, down below). Loudon is a city in France, but then France was not far behind Germany in witch burning ardor.

We're taking you just a bit past our story line (we're not yet at the Reformation, that's a chapter by itself) to include one of the best descriptions of witch hunt psychology, expressed facetiously by Samuel Harsnett, archbishop of York 1629 to 1631, author of the *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures.* "Why then, ho, beware, look about you, my neighbors! If any of you have a sheep sick of the giddies, or a hog of the mumps, or a horse of the staggers, or a knavish boy of the school, or an idle girl of the wheel, or a young drab of the sullens, and hath not fat enough for her porridge, nor her father and mother butter enough for their bread... and then withal old Mother Nobs hath called her by chance 'idle young hussy,' or bid the devil scratch her, then no doubt but Mother Nobs is the witch."

Renown for his thunderous railings against the Puritans as well as against the catholic church, Harsnett's stand against witch trials can be credited in part for England's relative restraint in the matter of witch hunts.

In contrast, German regions, especially the south, went about the witch chase quite industriously.

It must be noted here that torment of sorcerers was common in empires of antiquity, but had been specifically forbidden by the church during Charlemagne's time (late 700s). The church's turn-about was heralded by the Inquisition that consisted of two types of trials involving torture; put to death were *Ketzer* and *Hexen,* heretics and witches. The trials against heretics in Europe began shortly before the Black Death against persons who posed a threat to church dogma; the belief that the earth is a mere planet circling the sun, for example, could get you tortured until you admitted heresy. The execution that followed was usually a relief.

While persecution of heretics happened in the sphere of scholars and aberrant clergy, the witch trials affected all common folk.

It wasn't long before the church put some organization into the witch hunt craze, the pope endorsing witch hunts with the *Summis desiderantes* in 1484.

Just as the church had prepared its flock psychologically for the crusades, so it laid the dogmatic groundwork for the witch hunts. It did so by changing the portrayal of the devil, from the image of the fallen angel Satan to a bestial demon rather similar to the Greek God Pan. Soon there were a number of devils. The devilry theme played so well that the religious concerned themselves far more with the devils than with their god.

Nor did the Reformation put brakes on the insanity: "Not one of the reformers took a stand against the witch hunts," Kurowski notes. In fact, a statistic of German witch hunts in the torture museum of Dinkelsbühl emphasizes that the protestants went at it with a particularly misogamist attitude: in catholic witch hunts about two thirds of the victims were women, in protestant ones about 95 percent were women.

The upper classes enjoyed having people burned in the name of righteousness, according to Kurowski. "The judges competed against one another in doing their duty. Judge Benedikt Carpzow of Leipzig bragged at the end of his life (he died 1666) that he'd read the bible 53 times and signed 20,000 death warrants."
The Teutonic Knights – *der Deutsche Orden* who rode in the crusades and later committed all those atrocities in the Baltic – weren't to be outdone. Between 1615 and 1618, the *Deutschmeister* of the order had 262 *hexische Personen*burned in little Gerolzhofen alone.

The witch hunts melded with murderous mass hysteria directed at Jews. For one, Jews were collectively accused of killing Jesus; second, they were blamed for plagues and various natural occurrences such as livestock disease epidemics. In 1551 Jews were driven from Bavaria, in 1573 from the Mark, in 1584 from Baden-Baden, and in 1670 from all of Austria.

The number of witch hunt victims is grossly underestimated if you look up the subject on Wikipedia (60,000). Kurowski, estimating the officially documented witch trials of Franconia of the time, comes up with 100,000. Europe-wide we must reckon with the destruction of hundreds-of-thousands of lives.

If there was fear that devils can inhabit souls, there was also alarm that some people, especially the humanists of the Renaissance, refused to believe that witchcraft even existed. To perish any such thought, two German members of the Dominican Order (entrusted by the pope to instigate and oversee witch hunts) wrote the *Hexenhammer, Malleus maleficarum,* the "Witch's Hammer." An excerpt from the *Hexenhammer* chapter on bewitchment of animals: "There is not even the smallest farm where women do not injure each other's cows by drying up their milk (through the use of spells), and very often killing them."

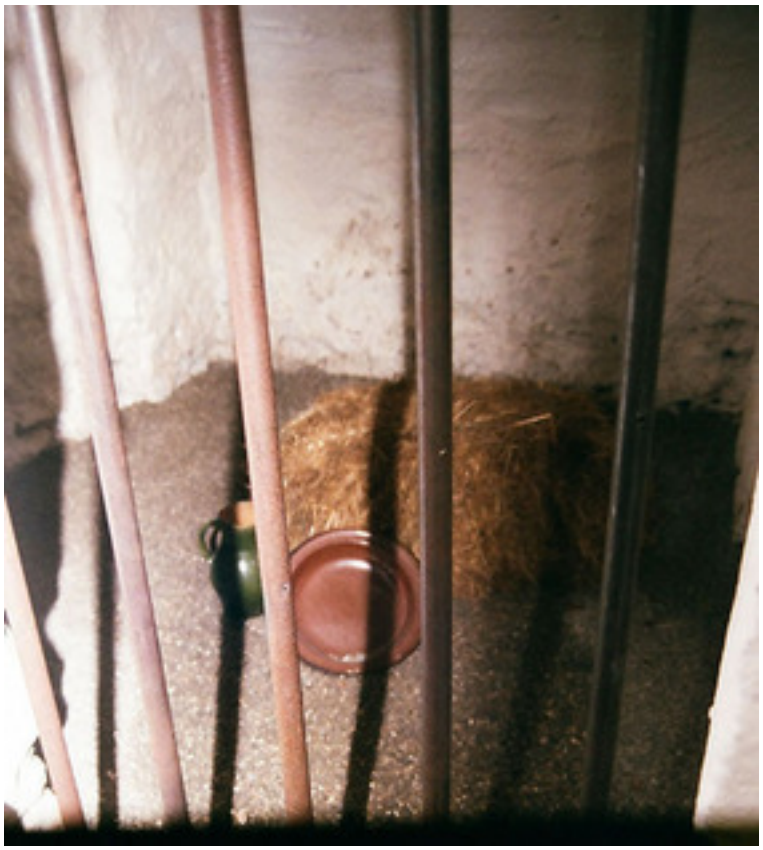
Between 1487 and 1669 at least 28 editions of the *Hexenhammer* were issued.

At this juncture the church was in a quandary, because someone who doubted the existence of witchcraft and bedevilment was by definition a *Ketzer,* a heretic. Was the church to burn all those *Ketzer,* too? It was decided that beyond severe reprimands this group of heretics would be treated leniently.

Ironically, the humanists were wrong in their rational stance that denied existence of witches. According to Huxley who quotes three religious experts as to what they found in Lorraine, the Jura, and the Basque country at the turn of the 17th century, "most people were, to some extent at least, of the old religion. Hedging their bets, they worshipped God by day and the devil (via the Dianic cult) by night. Among the Basques many priests used to celebrate both kinds of Mass, the black as well as the white."

The Age of Witch Hunts shows humanity at its most perfidious, and we must wonder at the attraction that torture chamber museums hold for German tourists today. One sees the chains, the racks, the "penitence chair" of sharp nails, the

pliers and tongs, the wedges and whips, the darkness in the dungeons contributing to the eerie atmosphere, especially when one imagines blood and other excretions surrounding torturer and witch woman.



Aware of how easy it was to accuse anyone of possession by devils, in many places the various judiciaries determined the guilt of an accused during the pretrial phase. When guilt was indicated at that point, the trial itself had only one possible outcome.

Some trials demanded a sign from God, the water trial for example. If the accused drowned, she was not guilty.

The worst aspect was that after a victim admitted witchcraft or possession by devils under torture, a whole new round of torture started and escalated until the witch gave evidence against all the other witches she was sure to know. It was a fine system to keep killing innocent women while everyone in the community lived in great fear.

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Personal malice could mix with political revenge, as in the case of Urbain Grandier, the main protagonist of Huxley's *Loudon* biography. Grandier was educated by the Jesuits, which "Company of Jesus" the catholic church set up to counter reformation trends. A strong-minded individual, Grandier became the parson in Loudon, a city of many complexities because both, catholics and protestant Huguenots, lived within its walls. With his education and considerable talent, Grandier proved himself a fine conversationalist, which opened doors for him among the city's wealthy and powerful. But he also had a contrary streak

like Martin Luther, Huxley writes, Grandier “loved to be angry” –, and he antagonized some of the elite in town.

Nor did he shy from confrontation with church authority: about priestly celibacy he put in writing that, “a promise to perform the impossible is not binding. For the young male, continence is impossible. Therefore no vow involving such continence is binding... The priest does not embrace celibacy for the love of celibacy, but solely that he may be admitted to holy orders.” The upshot, in Huxley’s view: “Grandier felt himself at perfect liberty... to lead the well-rounded life with any pretty woman who was ready to be co-operative.”

In his congregation, “the prudes were in a minority.” Pointing out that “sex mingles easily with religion,” Huxley analyzes the blend of feelings – “slightly repulsive and yet exquisite” – that the parson evoked among his female admirers. Not surprisingly, this made Grandier extremely unpopular with the men.

Still, some of the city’s exalted would have him for a friend, among them the prosecutor of Loudun who held Grandier in such high regard that he entrusted him with some of the education of his elder daughter. Who was an uncommonly pretty girl. Who became infatuated with Grandier. Who promptly got pregnant and then was ignored by Grandier. This was excruciatingly scandalous for the prosecutor who ever onward belonged to the growing circle of Grandier’s sworn enemies.

Flaunting his affairs, and encouraging a mystique of his sexual prowess among the females of his flock, and, to top it off, actually marrying one of his lovers, parson Grandier put himself behind the times. Writing of the begin of the 16th century, Geoffrey Elton emphasizes: “It’s obvious that the whole western church – from the pope on downward – suffered a crisis of trust.” By Grandier’s time, so Huxley, the upper echelon of church and aristocracy that had for so long lived in contradiction to their own teachings, begun to clean up their act. In that spirit Grandier was accused of spiritual incests. His enemies, who by now had formed a sort of Grandier-hating club that met regularly at an apothecary’s, were rubbing their hands.

Alas, the witnesses the prosecutor called gave weak evidence, while those who could have hurt Grandier's case did not testify – "the easy-going servant girls, the dissatisfied wives, the all too consolable widows, and Philippe Trincant (the prosecutor's own daughter), and Madeleine de Brou (the illegal wife)."

If Grandier escaped being burned alive for "spiritual incests," the court did find him guilty, forbidding him to ever exercise the sacerdotal function in Loudun.

Grandier appealed, successfully; his sentence was reversed. At this point a well-meaning friend advised him to leave Loudun and start anew elsewhere. But Grandier's "love to be angry" kept him at Loudun.

At around this time, the powerful Cardinal Richelieu had convinced the King of France to order the demolition of every fortress in the realm, wherewith to break the power of the protestants and the feudal magnates. Grandier weighed in against the cardinal on the side of those who wanted to keep the Castle of Loudun, “the strongest fortress in all Poitou.” Taking a public stand against Richelieu was all but unwise on Grandier’s part.

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Enter Sister Jeanne. In drawing her psychological profile, Huxley portrays her as an extremely ambitious person with a slight physical infirmity. She scorned her parents entreaties when they wanted to marry her off, instead entering a convent. At the young age of 25 she was appointed prioress of the house of Ursuline nuns at Loudun where “seventeen subjects were bound by Holy Obedience to take her orders and listen to her advice.”

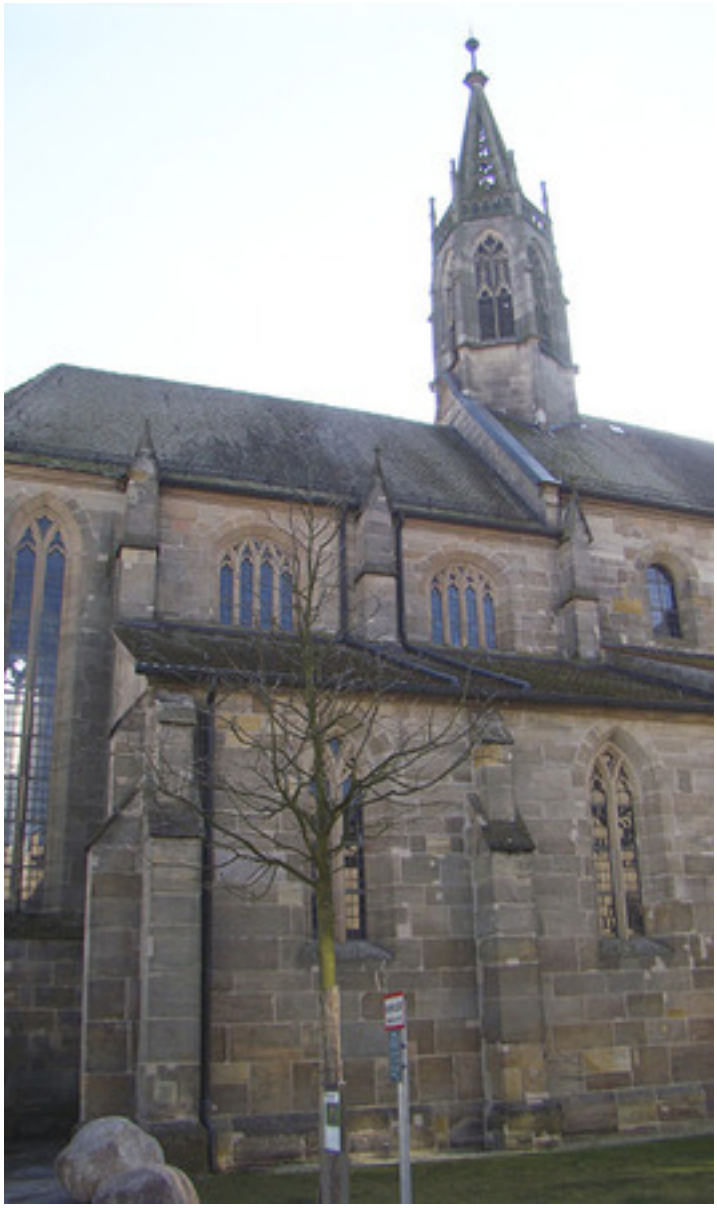
Of course Sister Jeanne became aware of parson Grandier’s repute among the town’s women. Obsessively she fantasized about meeting the man in person. When the director of the convent died, she wrote a long letter to Grandier, begging him to become the new director. When he declined, the prioress, “from a pinnacle of joy (at finally meeting Grandier)... tumbled headlong into a disappointment in which grief was mingled with hurt pride, and out of which grew, as she ruminated the bitter cud of her defeat, a cold persistent rage, a steady malignancy of hatred.”

Mindful of Grandier’s scheming enemies, she became an ally of their cabal.

Then her dreams started. Her late confessor’s face changed to that of Grandier’s who, in those dreams, “... talked to her of amours, plied her with caresses no less insolent than unchaste...”

Sister Jeanne spoke of her nocturnal visitations to her fellow nuns. Before long, two of those nuns also had “visions of importunate clergymen.”

Next, someone played a practical joke that led the nuns to believe that ghosts stalked the convent. Which gave one of the group conspiring against Grandier the idea to convince the nuns that their dreams of Grandier were in fact demonic possession. Exorcists from the Carmelite order were called in on the case.



The exorcists did their job alright. Almost overnight, the nuns' midnight dreams metamorphosed to writhing on the floors, tongues lolling while enacting the most extraordinary contortions and screeching the most incredible curses and obscenities, in broad daylight. Oh, it was quite the show, especially when the legs of the prioress were showing as she tumbled about all crazed. Soon the exorcisms became a tourist draw, from as far away as Scotland came nobles and high clergy to witness the bedevilment. And you know what, the higher on the social scale the gawkers, the more intense the performances of the nuns, all of whom were now possessed.

Grandier, once he became aware of these goings on, wasn't worried. He'd never

set foot in the convent, nor did he know any of the nuns personally; he thought the sisters simply suffered from *furor uterinus.*

His enemies, meanwhile, had ferreted out a court case involving bedevilment, a few years before, elsewhere in France, when an absent sorcerer was successfully convicted to burn. That old case would be their template.

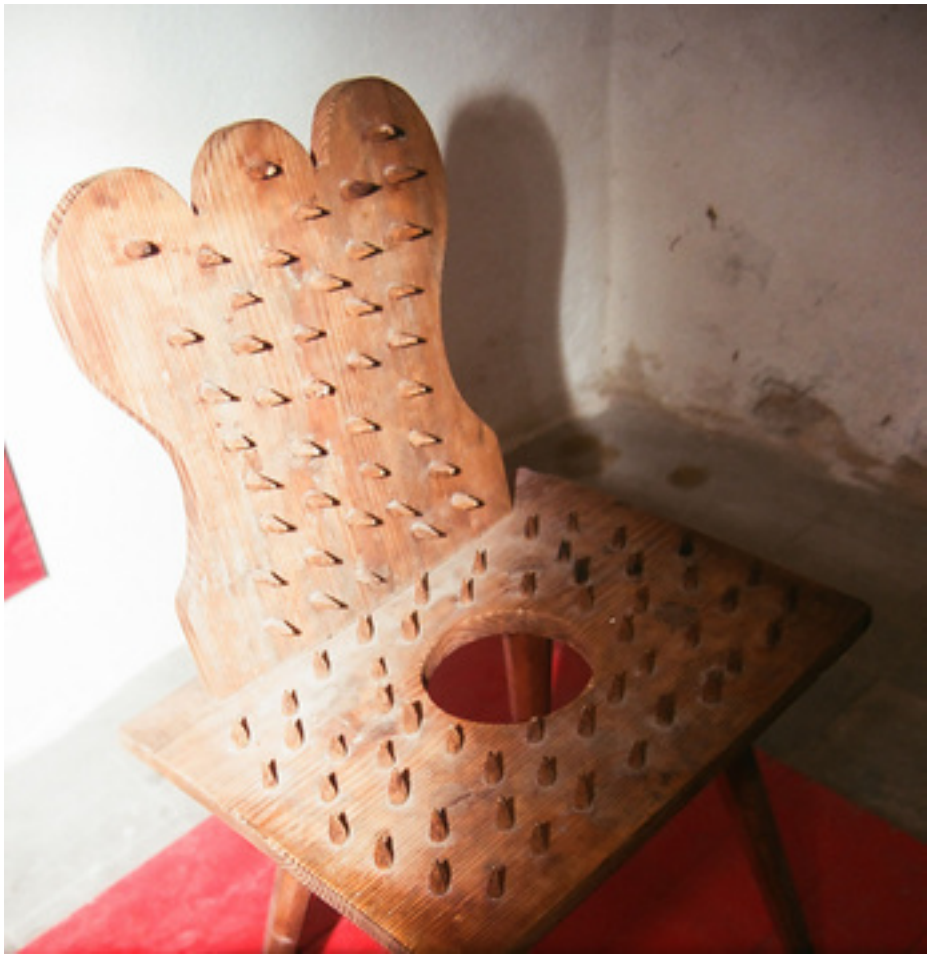
Refusing to believe that a case could be made against him, Grandier ignored a warning that he was about to be arrested.

When the trial took place it was not exactly smooth sailing for Grandier's enemies. There were skeptics, to the chagrin of the prosecutor. It also galled him that the protestant Huguenots chortled over a popish Jesuit accused of bedeviling popish nuns.

A further setback for the cabal of Grandier's enemies was that various tests for devil-possession didn't prove a thing. The nuns could not speak in foreign tongues, nor did they have more than two nipples, nor could they levitate, and their strength wasn't beyond a normal person's. Ah, but the devils themselves explained this through the nuns' mouths: when Grandier had made the contract with the devils, he'd instructed them to exempt the nuns from any true sign of bedevilment. The exorcists, and the prosecutor in turn, accepted that interpretation.

The devils who identified themselves through the nuns' mouths included Balaam, Behemoth, Leviathan, Isacaaron. This specificity contributed to Garnier's guilty verdict. As did the occasional remorse the nuns showed, recanting their testimonies of possession. "If a nun withdrew what she had said against the parson, that was proof positive that Satan was speaking through her mouth..."

After the verdict, an exceptionally cruel torture could not bring forth an admission of guilt from Grandier. This caused the judges frustration, which was furthered when murmurs of sympathy were heard among the spectators.



Oh, but the spectators! The trial and execution was a big tourist event. “Grandier’s condemnation was so certain, and the certainty so notorious... (that) thirty thousand persons... were competing for beds and meals and stake-side seats.”

At last at the stake, Grandier burned alive while friars screamed at him over and again to confess.

*The Devils of Loudon*doesn’t end there. Huxley follows Sister Jeanne’s incongruous story as it intertwines with that of a Jesuit exorcist.

If we didn’t know that we’re reading a biography, we might reflect on a bizarrely over-heated imagination. But it’s all in the documents of that era wherein the Middle Ages give way to modernity. Huxley being Huxley, we’re admonished to look upon the witch hunts of yesteryear not as a singular period. Because in our age the same driver that compelled witch hunt hysteria then, is quite alive among us now: the “herd-poison” of “crowd delirium.”

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Mostly, history doesn't do us proud. Lentz came to Europe to see what her forebears saw, and she begins to realize that all too often those forebears vision of their world was a blur of tears.

And yet. Farmers throughout the ages possessed an inner compass pointed to an upstanding independence. We'll get to that, too, since it's part of the transition to modernity as well.

- Sources: Von den Archaischen Grundlagen bis zur Schwelle der Moderne, Stuart Jenks / Der Schwrze Tod, Klaus Bergdolt / Das Mittelalter, Paul Frischauer / Von der Atlantischen Handelsexpansion bis zu den Agrarreformen, Michael North / Ebersberg oder das Ende der Wildnis, Rainer Beck / Franken. Franz Kurowski / Deutschland zu Ende des Mittelalters, Geoffrey R. Elton •