

## Chapter One

### Money from the Spirit World: Treasure Spirits, *Geldmännchen*, *Drache*

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This chapter analyzes early modern German magical beliefs and practices that were oriented around the idea that one might receive money from spirits. We will concentrate on three kinds of spirits: spirits thought to guard or to bring treasure; *Geldmännchen* (money manikin) spirits supposedly capable of magically creating money; and *Drache* (dragon) spirits that allegedly brought one money and saleable goods. This study is the first one to discuss at length and in English, *Geldmännchen* and *Drache*, economically motivated attempts on the part of early modern Germans to deal with spirits, and the place of such magical practices in social context. This chapter will argue that spirit belief interpreted various patterns of economic behavior and thereby justified or condemned them. Although magic itself was illegal, financial magic was sanctioned and it is necessary to probe why this should be true. The source materials this text is based on are trial records, demonological and scientific treatises from Germany, Scandinavia and the Baltic area dating from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

#### *Treasure Spirits*

As I have dealt with treasure beliefs at length elsewhere, a short survey will suffice here.<sup>1</sup> Early modern treasure hunting was magical, not historical or archaeological in character. Treasures were often said to have been watched over by ghosts. The idea of a wraith guarding a treasure belonged to a whole set of beliefs about the spirits of the dead doing penance or trying to fulfill certain tasks. Ghosts had to walk until a task they had left unfulfilled in their lifetimes was completed or until some guilt was expiated. The treasure's owner clearly had unfinished business. He had hoarded money without putting it to some

proper use. Thus, the former owner of a treasure had to return as a ghost. The discovery of the treasure was in the ghost's own interest as it formed a precondition for its redemption. The treasure hunters indirectly helped the ghost to leave the visible world. Thus, for many, treasure hunting was a godly deed and a Christian duty.<sup>2</sup>

The cult of saints also played a most important role in treasure hunting. There were innumerable versions of the so-called St. Christopher Prayer, an often lengthy litany-like spell which implored Christ and the saints, especially the popular holy giant St. Christopher, to help the treasure hunters. St. Christopher was asked to protect the treasure hunters from any harm, to keep evil spirits away, and to lead the treasure seekers safely to their goal.<sup>3</sup>

Saints were also said to be able to bring treasures. Praying the St. Christopher prayer allowed believers to address the saint directly and to ask him to grant or to give a treasure or a certain sum of money. The treasure seeker in return had to give a large part of that money to the poor.<sup>4</sup>

Even though learned demonologists were never much interested in the idea, demons were supposed to be able to help treasure hunters. Demons did not "own" treasures, but they knew where to find them and they could bring them. Some treasure hunters did try to conjure demons. They either wanted to keep them from hindering the treasure hunt or they asked them to help the treasure seekers actively.<sup>5</sup> A handwritten book of spells confiscated in Rodach in 1729 mentioned one demon that helped to find treasure and another that gave treasures; a third demon in the book carried treasures away. Importantly, the book gave magical formulae to deal with all of them.<sup>6</sup> A Hessian magical manuscript of the late seventeenth century listed a number of demons who spoke directly to the reader, offering their services: "Aziel a spirit of hidden treasures and goods which I [Aziel] hid as I liked and which I reveal and give to anyone I please."<sup>7</sup>

It is one of the most remarkable results of the historical research into treasure hunting that treasure seekers were as a rule not regarded as witches, even if they had attempted to deal with demons. Apart from very few exceptions, magical treasure hunting was punished very leniently. Most culprits were condemned to a fine, short spells in prison, or a couple of weeks of forced labor for superstition or non-malevolent magic.<sup>8</sup>

### *Geldmännlein and Geldmännchen*

There is no real English equivalent of the German words *Geldmännlein* or *Geldmännchen*. The word translates literally as “little money man” or “money manikin.” “Money figurine” might be a better description of what was actually meant by the term. A *Geldmännchen* was a magical item, usually some kind of doll, which was said to house a spirit. This spirit produced money magically. It was enough to keep the *Geldmännchen* in the money chest, since the spirit saw to it that money would multiply miraculously. The term *Hecketaler* (exuberantly growing Taler) was an equivalent of *Geldmännchen* that emphasized this point. Even though *Geldmännchen* as money producing objects should have been priceless, they were bought and sold. The *Geldmännchen* was magical merchandise. The *Geldmännchen* were also identified with the mandrake (German: *Alraune*). Roots which had been carved and clothed to give them the appearance of dolls and which were presented as *Geldmännchen*. Sometimes, elements of the well-known mandrake legend were used to illustrate *Geldmännchen* stories. In the *Alraune* myth, for instance, it was claimed that a *Geldmännchen* was made out of a root that grew from the urine or semen discharged by a thief when he was hanged.<sup>9</sup> However, the mandrake was said to have a number of magical and medical properties not attributed to the *Geldmännchen*.<sup>10</sup>

In 1673, Grimmelshausen published a book-length warning against *Geldmännchen*, that he condemned as tricks of the devil. The author readily suggested a parallel between

owners of Geldmännchen and milk witches. A milk witch or magical milk thief used magic to transfer milk from the neighbor's cows to her own, thus using magic for economic gain. Grimmelshausen insisted that the money the Geldmännchen seemingly produced was really brought by the devil. Thus, it was wrong to assume that the ghost of the hanged thief from whose semen the Geldmännchen had grown and whose spirit lived on in the root brought the money.<sup>11</sup> This idea was perhaps an embellishment of Grimmelshausen's as the theory has not been found in any trial. Most sources imply that the Geldmännchen made money rather than bringing it. In one case that took place in Lutheran Württemberg in 1716, a magician said very clearly that the Geldmännchen would "create money [Geld machen]."<sup>12</sup>

In some cases, they were made from animal parts. In 1711, people from Göppingen in Württemberg bought a large beetle wrapped in colorful rags as a Geldmännchen for the very considerable sum of 50 florins.<sup>13</sup> An insect as Geldmännchen was also used in a fraud in Württemberg in 1716. Others scams included using a pig's stomach as a Geldmännchen, a ploy that promptly failed because the potential buyer noted that it "was no spirit, as it was lifeless."<sup>14</sup> In Protestant Hohenlohe in 1727 a Geldmännchen had been made from black wax with white stones for eyes; it was about four inches long, wrapped in cotton and placed in a small box. This particular Geldmännchen was said to produce one ducat a day. This Geldmännchen was sold at 30 florins, 30 kreuzer—had it worked it would have been quite a bargain.<sup>15</sup>

Many of the people who tried to get a Geldmännchen felt rather insecure because the business smacked of witchcraft. A "cunning man" from Hohenlohe, who was asked if he could get a Geldmännchen, answered brusquely that one would have to go to hell to get one. In the same case, a person who pretended to be a Catholic priest likened the Geldmännchen to a bottle imp; he claimed he could "seal one of the 12 head devils ... into a chalice, then it would have to bring money enough."<sup>16</sup> People who complained that their Geldmännchen did

not work were told by the seller calmly that they should “pray and work efficiently [and] that would not do any harm to their bodies and to their souls.” He thus implied that owning a real Geldmännchen could indeed harm both body and soul.<sup>17</sup> A Württemberg trial from 1695 called a supposed owner of a Geldmännchen a “devil’s man [Teufelsmann],” but not simply a witch. It hinted at the idea that the Geldmännchen’s owner could only avoid damnation in hell if he sold his Geldmännchen before his death.<sup>18</sup> In another Württemberg case from 1716 a fraud who claimed to own a Geldmännchen said that he absolutely wanted to sell it, indeed he needed “to rid himself of the spirit because he had already had it for 22 years and the knacker’s car was already waiting in front of his door -- meaning that he was already an old man. If he should die before he got rid of the spirit he would have to go to hell together with it.”<sup>19</sup> It goes without saying that this idea of selling one’s sin together with a Geldmännchen to someone else was totally incompatible with demonology.

There were essentially two types of Geldmännchen narratives in trial records. The first type was about a person who had tried to get a Geldmännchen. This person was accused of magic and superstition but might try himself to get those who had sold him a Geldmännchen punished as frauds. The second type was about a person rumored to have a Geldmännchen. This person usually saw these rumors as slander and brought charges. It is impossible to decide which narrative was older, both coexisted and intermingled.

A few examples demonstrate the social implications of being reputed to own a Geldmännchen. In 1650, Michael Pusper, the administrator of the hospital of the Catholic Swabian town of Rottenburg, suggested to the winegrower Johann Widmeyer to “teach him something that would allow him to work less.”<sup>20</sup> Pusper explained that he knew how to make a Geldmännchen. During Pusper’s trial it was suggested that Pusper was a sodomite – he had claimed that he needed Widmeyer’s sperm for magical rituals -, an accusation which made

his situation even worse. Under prolonged torture, Pusper confessed that he was fully guilty of witchcraft.

With the exception of Pusper's rather special case, the Geldmännchen trials known so far did not simply identify the Geldmännchen magic with witchcraft. The punishments meted out were comparatively mild: The buyers and sellers involved in a Württemberg case from 1695 were all sentenced to spells in prison between four and fourteen days.<sup>21</sup> In the same territory, a person who had admittedly tried to buy a Geldmännchen was simply let off with a warning in 1716.<sup>22</sup> In the same year and in the same territory, a number of people that were actively involved in complicated fraudulent dealings involving Geldmännchen were all sentenced to forced labor of two to four weeks.<sup>23</sup> In 1746, a person from Württemberg who had tried to get a Geldmännchen was sent to Ludwigsburg penitentiary at the duke's discretion, not so much because he had tried to dabble in magic but because he was known as a violent drunkard.<sup>24</sup> In 1758, the bailiff [Schultheiß] of Sulzbach in the Limburg territory lost his position and had to pay 30 florins when the government learned that he tried (in vain) to get a Geldmännchen.<sup>25</sup>

The source material shows that all the people who allegedly had a Geldmännchen or tried to get one were men. The alleged owners of Geldmännchen or at least people said to be able to procure one fall into two categories: expert magicians and social climbers who seemed to have come into money recently. Soldiers that in the early modern period had a bad reputation for using magic were repeatedly said to know how to get a Geldmännchen.<sup>26</sup> The Limburg bailiff wanted to buy a Geldmännchen from a person who pretended to be an army surgeon but who really was a simple knacker's helper.<sup>27</sup> The Geldmännchen sold in Göppingen in 1711 came from a herdsman -- a profession often said to be healers with magical knowledge.<sup>28</sup> In case from Forchtenheim in the Hohenlohe region from 1727 the seller of the Geldmännchen was a poor weaver who made some additional money as a witch

doctor curing livestock. He claimed to have received the item from a hangman, a profession supposedly well-versed in magic.<sup>29</sup>

Even though Pusper came from a humble background he had managed to become the master of the hospital -- one of the most lucrative positions in his town but also one that the burghers of Rottenburg regarded as the center of an entirely corrupt administration. Pusper maintained that people spread rumors about him knowing about Geldmännchen simply because they were envious of his economic success.<sup>30</sup>

A quarrel between young men that led to a criminal investigation in Langenburg in Hohenlohe in 1725 sheds additional light on the social meaning of the Geldmännchen belief.<sup>31</sup> Hans Trommensmidt's son said to Peter Hepp's son that he was "always so bigheaded, your father just has a Geldmännchen and thus money enough...that is why they [the Hepps] claim everywhere to be so great... [Hepp senior] had a Geldmännchen... which is a damnable sin." Peter Hepp complained to the authorities because having a Geldmännchen was "as bad as witchcraft itself and if it were true I would have the living devil in the house." However, during the official investigation, the teacher Zobel, Hepp's next door neighbor, explained that Hepp "had been robbed about two years ago and yet he had lent money to others directly afterwards, he [Zobel] could not know where [Peter Hepp] got it [money] from, but people were talking a lot about that....Hepp was...at times a really bad neighbor." Hepp had given money to his son and he had a number of debtors, but he still seemed to have plenty of cash. It is worthwhile to quote the characterizations of Hepp in full as it offers us a glimpse at the kind of behavior that triggered Geldmännchen suspicions. Hepp "had made himself notorious, because he is an unruly character [unruhiger Kopf] in the taverns and everywhere else, he leaves nobody alone whoever it may be...he laughs at everybody because of his money and he agitates [agiere] the people in strange ways....He had said...that compared to him, this or that man was a nobody." Hepp himself explained that he

had borrowed money from a noblewoman, that he worked ceaselessly and lived austerely. The court acknowledged that Hepp “did not go anywhere else but worked efficiently in his business.” The court punished Trommenschmidt’s son for slander but stressed that “the accusation concerning the Geldmännchen [is only] at this time yet unproven.” Hepp seems to have been an arrogant nonconformist who enjoyed competing with his neighbors. Part and parcel of his individualist way of life was that he took a more proactive stance in economic matters than his neighbors, working harder and living more frugally than others.

In a case from Protestant Saxony that took place in 1657, the defendant countered allegations that a Geldmännchen had made him rich by insisting that he had only modest needs and lived extremely frugally.<sup>32</sup> Clearly, the charge of magic was a function of economic behavior.

Persons who were seriously interested in getting a Geldmännchen often faced very serious economic hardship. They were the opposite of the social climbers rumored to own such an object. The stonecutter Riz from Franconian Protestant Marbach tried to buy a Geldmännchen in 1716. Riz did not supervise the apprentices who were supposed to do all the work. He had married comparatively young and had then forced his father out of the family business but was unable to pay his father for his share. Riz, it was said, was simply no good as a householder.<sup>33</sup>

Thirty years later, a Hans Ezzler from the Protestant Swabian town of Fellbach a Geldmännchen. He was a former soldier who worked as a wheelwright and tried to make additional money as a tavern keeper. However, he failed in both his professions as he drank and wandered about “instead of working.” When his wife, whose money he spent freely, became ill, the family was finally completely ruined. Ezzler beat his wife and planned to re-join the army leaving his family in the lurch.<sup>34</sup> For Riz and Ezzler alike, owning a Geldmännchen offered a way out of a desperate situation.

In sum, four things characterized Geldmännchen magic. First, it was unclear where the money actually came from; supposedly, “he” could create money out of thin air. In social terms, people who were said to have a Geldmännchen were considered social upstarts. Although these “upstarts” themselves attributed their economic success to hard work, fellow villagers saw it differently; the Geldmännchen was responsible. Those who sought the magical assistance of a Geldmännchen were often in desperate financial situations and perhaps that is one reason why Geldmännchen magic was leniently punished. Using a Drache, however, was an entirely different thing.

### *Drache*

The Drache or Drak was not the monstrous dragon of medieval epics yet its ability to fly and its affinity to fire might have suggested transferring the name of the medieval monster to this rather peculiar spirit. Flying into the house through a window or through the chimney, the Drache brought its master or mistress money as well as other readily usable or saleable goods like grain, milk, or butter. As the seventeenth-century lawyer Melchior Goldast wrote: “The common man usually says that people who become rich swiftly and without any problems have a Drache...that helps them to win honor and riches.”<sup>35</sup> Evidently, the Drache helped explain why some householders did a lot better than their neighbors. The Drache expected a reward, usually food. If the owner of this most useful spirit failed to reward it, it could burn down the house thanks to its fiery nature. Where did the goods the Drache brought come from? The Drache was not supposed to possess a hidden treasure. Rather, it stole the money and all the other goods it brought to its master from somebody else. In a way, the Drache was the embodiment of transfer magic: it took goods magically from their original owner and gave them to the person with whom it was in league. Some

early modern German peasants used counter-magic to keep the Drache from stealing from them.<sup>36</sup>

The Drache appeared in a variety of forms, as a snake, a cat or a man.<sup>37</sup> People claimed to have seen the Drache flying over the night sky. In 1652, a Saxon source described the Drache as having the head of a stag or a cow, its front thick as a vat but its rear thin and fiery.<sup>38</sup> In a 1699 witch trial from the Rhön region, we find an extraordinary detailed description of the Drache. The spirit had “a black pointy head. It was the size of a large man, the upper half as black as coal and tar, but fiery downwards.”<sup>39</sup> Other witch trials simply said that the Drache had a rather thick head and long fiery tail that looked like a pole but threw sparks.<sup>40</sup> The very sighting of a Drache was suspicious; it alone constituted contact with the devil, even if it was involuntary. A herdsman from Protestant Coburg in today's northern Bavaria who was often out in the open at night and who was therefore considered likely to have seen a flying Drache explained in 1611 that he had never seen it because he always said his prayers, especially on Walpurgis Night.<sup>41</sup>

Early modern Eastern Europe knew spirits very like the Drache.<sup>42</sup> In 1636, the theologian Paul Einhorn wrote about flying, fiery spirits in the Baltic region “today still owned by many” that steal “grain and goods” for their masters. Einhorn believed in these “evil and horrible idols of wealth” and condemned their cult as demon worship. Given the close resemblance between the Drache and spirits from Slav folklore and the fact that the Drache seems not to have appeared in sources from any of the German principalities west of today's Thuringia, we might assume that the Drache belief originated in Eastern Central Europe or the Baltic area. One of the earliest commentators, Dionysius Fabricius, in his history of Livonia from 1620, connected the Drache with the Baltic belief in the magical power of snakes kept as pets.<sup>43</sup>

A small academic debate about dragons occurred in eastern Germany and Scandinavia in the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>44</sup> It was probably sparked by reports about recent sightings of dragons or perhaps by new scientific publications that advanced natural explanations for the appearance of dragons.<sup>45</sup> At least from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards, scientists identified the flying Drache directly with meteorites or suggested that they might be burning bubbles of sulphuric gas in the air.<sup>46</sup> Some of these authors proved to be very familiar with the Drache in folklore. They even explained why the Drache seemed to fly into chimneys: The hot, fat, and sooty air from the chimney attracted the equally hot and fat concentration of gas of which the Drache really consisted. Villages that burned too much wood were more likely to see the Drache than others - the Drache was apparently a smog phenomenon.<sup>47</sup> In a text on fire and lightning published in Danzig (Gdansk) in 1650, one academic explained that the Drache was a meteorological problem. However, he also gave all the details of popular Drache lore linked to demonological explanations.<sup>48</sup>

The Bible presented the devil as a dragon. Thus, it was easy to see all beings called Drache (dragons) as demons and to integrate the belief in the Drache into the popular demonology that shaped German witch hunts. In the context of witch beliefs all spirits could be denounced as demons. In addition to that, the Drache's thievery invited a negative interpretation of any contact with this spirit. In the words of a 1670 witch trial from the Franconian Rodach region: "The Drache had come flying often and at various times into her father's house and thus the general suspicion had been voiced that the culprit could not be free of witchcraft."<sup>49</sup> When a woman from Saxon Fichtenberg identified the term "Drache" with "milk devil and grain devil" in 1652, she stressed the diabolic nature of this spirit.<sup>50</sup> The Drache also appears in a number of witch trials from Saxony, Thuringia and northern Bavaria between the early sixteenth and the late seventeenth century.<sup>51</sup>

Witnesses in witch trials repeatedly insisted that they had seen the Drache fly into a defendant's house. Claus Fublein from Thuringia was accused of witchcraft in 1615 because his neighbors had seen a Drache slip down his chimney.<sup>52</sup> The accusation of witchcraft brought against Margaretha Hönin from Coburg in 1580 rested among other things on rumors about "Drachenschießen" (dragon shooting) seen in front of her house. The Law Faculty of the University of Jena that wrote an expert opinion not only accepted the Drache story but decided that the evidence justified the use of torture.<sup>53</sup> In the 1611 trial against the Coburg widow Ecksteinin alleged contact with the Drache played an important role: the Drache was said to go "like a friend to and from" her house, indeed to come to her "every day in the evening."<sup>54</sup> In 1686, Claus Rottmann from the district of Coburg escaped a witch trial mainly because his neighbors had seen the Drache flying towards his house but hesitated to confirm that it had flown into his house.<sup>55</sup>

In some cases, the Drache was directly identified with a Buhlteufel or incubus, a demon who allegedly visited a witch regularly to have sex with her. In a witch trial that took place as early as 1536 in Brücken in Saxony, the defendant confessed that her demonic lover changed at will between having the appearance of a handsome young man and a Drache monster. "She fed it butter and cheese which the Drache itself had ...brought ... and when it wanted to fly away again, it laid a handful of money on the table." This was the earliest Saxon witch trial that mentioned witches having sex with demons. A Saxon woman who claimed to be clairvoyant and thus able to identify witches claimed in 1652 that she had seen a Drache in the sky having sex with a number of women from her neighborhood.<sup>56</sup>

In the Coburg district in the seventeenth century, many trials combined the accusation of having a Drache with the accusation of being a milk witch.<sup>57</sup> Within the logic of witch belief it was rather likely that a milk witch also had a Drache or indeed that the Drache brought the milk. Persons who seemed to prosper while most others faced economic loss or

simply people who apparently had more money or more goods than their household could possibly produce were suspected of witchcraft. The best known example was Margaretha Ramhold whom Johann Matthäus Meyfart mentioned in his book on witch trials. Ramhold came from a family of modest artisans. However, by tapping two new sources of income, the Ramholds became rather affluent, selling beer and milk even though they only owned one cow. In time, the Ramholds began lending money to other people on interest. This sudden wealth stimulated rumors of witchcraft that quickly focused on the mistress of the household. The Protestant Superintendent was informed that there was a Drache in Ramhold's house. As a result, Margareta Ramhold was executed in 1628.<sup>58</sup> In a 1670 trial, a suspect from Bad Rodach was said to have always more cheese than her neighbors. She was therefore rumored to be a milk witch and to have a Drache.<sup>59</sup>

The 1580 trial against Hönin from Coburg also mentioned that she was known to have a Drache. This allegation was directly linked to the rumor that Hönin made a lot more butter than was possible from the milk her cows gave. When asked where she got all the milk from, Hönin merely laughed. In addition to that, Hönin's economic behavior seemed inconsistent: She was rather well-off; she had a number of servants and owned a vineyard. Nevertheless, she complained persistently about her poverty. When she had guests she took the meat and the bread from the table and took it to her room before they had finished the meal. This clearly suggested that she was irrationally and antisocially preoccupied with her wealth and obsessed with the fear of losing it.<sup>60</sup> Other cases demonstrate similar social dynamics.

The record of the trial against Ecksteinin combined charges of magic and allegations of antisocial economic behavior in such an intricate way that is impossible to separate one from the other. The suspect's family was rather well-off. They had been able to move into a new and presumably better house within the same town. The person who lived in their former

home had fallen ill and was said to be bewitched. The fact that Ecksteinin had denied a small loan to a relative even though she might have been able to afford it was mentioned as evidence in the witch trial. Her husband had quarreled violently with the neighbors about various plots of land. He had tried to sell eggs at exaggerated prices deemed fraudulent or usurious. He and his wife were rumored to have stolen grain from their neighbors' fields under cover of a thick fog they had magically created. Both were notorious milk witches.<sup>61</sup> Petronella Liebermännin from Coburg was accused of having a Drache four years later; she was known as a ruthless and usurious creditor and was rumored to bewitch negligent debtors. A cow she had sold quickly stopped giving milk. This implied that she sought economic gain with fraudulent means but also that she might be a milk witch.<sup>62</sup>

A small town near Eisenach in the Protetant territory of Saxony-Eisenach was convulsed with excitement when in the winter of 1672-73 a strange fire was seen repeatedly in the house of one Hans Adam Gemeiths. Witnesses declared that shortly before that light appeared a "lump of fire" had flown through the air in the direction of Gemeiths's house. Even the earliest reports about that case mention as a matter of course that Gemeiths was suspiciously wealthy. Although he had gone from door to door begging for bread only a few years ago, he had purchased a number of fields recently and was even able to lend others money on interest – the grand total amounting to the very respectable sum of 100 florins. As Gemeiths now made his living knitting socks it was difficult to see where his money came from. The villagers remembered that Gemeiths' godfather had been a counterfeiter. However, the whole investigation rested on the assumption that there was a link between Gemeiths's mysterious wealth and the strange fire, which was interpreted as proof of a Drache.<sup>63</sup>

### *Comparison and Interpretation*

The treasure seekers dealing with demons and saints in an unorthodox way, the owners of Geldmännchen, and those said to have a Drache each tried to get money with the help of the spirit world. All of them were at least said to try to deal with demons. While treasure and Geldmännchen magicians were treated very leniently by the authorities, people rumored to have a Drache were burned as witches. This seems even more remarkable if we consider that the treasure hunters did try to conjure demons and that the people interested in Geldmännchen did want to get such an item even though it was regarded as demonic. The belief in the Drache had no such basis in reality. The true difference between the treasure and the Geldmännchen on one side and the Drache on the other seems to be that they stood for different economic outlooks and styles of behavior. People who conjured demons in order to find treasure and people who wanted to get Geldmännlein wanted to get rich, but they did not take anything away from anybody else. Indeed, they seemed to have found ways of improving their economic situation that even avoided competition. The money they hoped to get came purely from the spirit world. It was not taken out of the pool of goods and money available to society.<sup>64</sup> The treasure narratives were about people who wanted to get money. Most Geldmännchen narratives were about getting rich by getting a Geldmännchen. Only some, evidently the more aggressive and dangerous rumors, were about social climbers who allegedly owed their economic success to a Geldmännchen. Here, the Geldmännchen stories explained wealth. The Drache narratives did the same. Alleged owners of Geldmännchen and Drache witches seem to have been essentially of the same social type, parvenus, people who had had significant economic success only recently. Damaging rumors about Geldmännchen and Drache indirectly condemned the “selfish,” one might say proto-capitalist behavior of these people. Why were the alleged owners of Geldmännchen not accused of witchcraft while the Drache magicians were? Gender is not the answer. Even though all Geldmännchen owners known so far were male, not all Drache witches were female. Denomination did not

seem to matter. Recent witchcraft research has shown that denomination did not play a very big role in the spread of the witch hunts.<sup>65</sup> There were Catholics and Protestants among the treasure hunters and Geldmännchen magicians. We find most Drache narratives in the Eastern part of Germany - today's Thuringia, Saxony, and northern Bavaria - that was mostly Protestant. However, it does not appear in the ultra-Protestant German North or in Lutheran Württemberg. Thus, it might be better to attribute the prevalence of the Drache in German eastern principalities to the influence of the neighboring Slav regions that knew the Drache as well. The answer to the question why only the Drache magicians were condemned as witches lies in the content of the narratives themselves: It was unclear where the money of the Geldmännchen came from. Transfer magic did not play a role in the Geldmännchen narratives. The Drache narratives were all about magical transfers. The Drache stole the money and the goods it brought. Whoever got rich with its aid did so at the direct expense of (all) others. The Drache, very like the milk witch, stood for economically aggressive magic, or magical thievery.

When courts and communities punished magic, they indirectly sanctioned economic behavior. The severity of the punishment depended on two factors. The perceived aggressiveness of the economic strategies of the defendants was one factor. Economic actions that avoided competition, like treasure hunting or buying Geldmännchen, were treated very mildly, even if they implied contact with demons. "Selfishness" and "greed," as examples of overtly competitive behavior – like that of alleged Drache witches or owners of Geldmännchen -- provoked severe sanctions. Second, the set of magical imaginations itself played a part. A narrative that implied theft like the Drache belief made the magician seem more aggressive. A narrative like the Geldmännlein belief that left the question where the magical riches came from unanswered allowed for a more lenient treatment of the magician.

In conclusion, we might say that the treasure, the Geldmännchen, and the Drache were all ciphers that stood for the community's interpretation of different economic concepts. Treasures and Geldmännchen were part and parcel of a basic economic concept that avoided competition and respected community values. The Drache was the opposite of that: It stood for an "egoistic" fixation on individual (or familial) profits at the expense of everybody else. Only Drache magic was condemned as witchcraft; the almost "proto-capitalist" and anti-communal economic orientation it represented was thus sanctioned more harshly.

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<sup>2</sup> Kathryn Edwards, *Leonarde's Ghost: Popular Piety and 'the Appearance of a Spirit' in 1628*, (Kirksville, 2008); Owen Davies, *The Haunted. A Social History of Ghosts*, (Basingstoke, 2007); Dillinger, *Magical*, 72-79.

<sup>3</sup> Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Wiesbaden (hereafter: HHStAW) 144a/36 Bd. I and II; Dillinger, *Magical*, 85-90.

<sup>4</sup> Dillinger, *Magical*, 87-90.

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- <sup>5</sup> Manfred Tschalkner, *Schatzgräberei in Vorarlberg und Liechtenstein* (Bludenz, 2006), 53, 60; Dillinger, *Magical*, 61-66, 90-91.
- <sup>6</sup> Staatsarchiv Coburg (hereafter StAC), LAF 8147.
- <sup>7</sup> HHStAW, 144a/36 Bd. I.
- <sup>8</sup> Dillinger, *Magical*, 114-46.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 107-108; Israel Fromschmidt (i.e. Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen), *Simplicissimi Galgen-Männlin* (Nuremberg, 1674); Carl Friedrich Gerstlacher, *Handbuch der teutschen Reichsgesetze, Eilften Theils erste Abtheilung* (Stuttgart, 1793), 2389-90.
- <sup>10</sup> Cornelius van Eck / Andreas Holtzbom, *Disputatio medica inauguralis de mandragora* (Utrecht, 1704); Jacob Thomasius, *Disputatio philologica de mandragora von der Alraun-Wurzel* (Halle, 1739).
- <sup>11</sup> Grimmelshausen, *Simplicissimi*, 6, 10-11, 24, 29-30, 53-57.
- <sup>12</sup> Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart (hereafter HStASt), A 209 Bü 625.
- <sup>13</sup> HStASt, A 209 Bü 961.
- <sup>14</sup> HStASt, A 209 Bü 625.
- <sup>15</sup> Hohenlohe-Zentralarchiv Neuenstein (hereafter HoZAN), We 20, Schubl. 10, Fasz. 74.
- <sup>16</sup> HoZAN, We 20, Schubl. 10, Fasz. 74.
- <sup>17</sup> HoZAN, We 20, Schubl. 10, Fasz. 74.
- <sup>18</sup> HStASt, A 206 Bü 3195.
- <sup>19</sup> HStASt, A 209 Bü 625.
- <sup>20</sup> Johannes Dillinger, „Hexenverfolgungen in der Grafschaft Hohenberg“, in *Zum Feuer verdammt* eds. Johannes Dillinger, Thomas Fritz, Wolfgang Mährle, (Stuttgart, 1998), 1-161, here 130-133 .
- <sup>21</sup> HStASt, A 206 Bü 3195.
- <sup>22</sup> HStASt, A 209 Bü 625.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> HStASt, A 209, Bü 835.

<sup>25</sup> Staatsarchiv Wertheim (hereafter StAW), 7 Rep 180N Nr. 16.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. HStASt, A 209 Bü 835, A 209 Bü 625,

<sup>27</sup> StAW, 7 Rep 180N Nr. 16.

<sup>28</sup> HStASt, A 209 Bü 961.

<sup>29</sup> HoZAN, We 20, Schubl. 10, Fasz. 74.

<sup>30</sup> Dillinger, 'Hexenverfolgungen', 130-133.

<sup>31</sup> HoZAN, La 35 Bü 1770.

<sup>32</sup> StAC, LAF 12577.

<sup>33</sup> HStASt, A 209 Bü 625.

<sup>34</sup> HStASt, A 209 Bü 835.

<sup>35</sup> Melchior Goldast von Haiminsfeld, *Rechtliches Bedenken von Confiscation der Zauberer und Hexen-Güter* (Bremen, 1661), 70; Johann Georg Schmidt, *Die gestriegelte Rocken-Philosophie*, 2 vols. (Chemnitz, 1718-1722, reprinted Leipzig, 1988), vol. 1, 26-27, 177-80.

<sup>36</sup> Goldast *Rechtliches*, p. 70; Schmidt, *Rockenphilosophie*, vol. 1, 15-16, 26-27, 177-80, 460-63; Ernst Keller, *Das Grab des Aberglaubens*, (2nd. ed., Stuttgart, 1785) 146-48; Reinhold Knopf, *Der feurige Hausdrache* (Bonn: PhD thesis, 1943); Dagmar Linhart, *Hausgeister in Franken*, (Dettelbach, 1995), 213-67; Yvonne Luven, *Der Kult der Hausschlange* (Cologne, 2001).

<sup>37</sup> Dillinger, *Magical*, 71-72.

<sup>38</sup> Manfred Wilde, *Die Zauberei- und Hexenprozesse in Kursachsen* (Cologne 2003), 204.

<sup>39</sup> Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar (hereafter ThHStAW), EA, Rechtspflege 1563.

<sup>40</sup> E.g. Egbert Friedrich, *Hexenjagd im Raum Rodach und die Hexenprozessordnung von Herzog Johann Casimir* (Rodach, 1985), 56-58.

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<sup>41</sup> StAC, LAF 12542.

<sup>42</sup> Luven, *Kult*, 86, 148-153.

<sup>43</sup> Luven, *Kult*, 145-156.

<sup>44</sup> Olaus Borrichius, *Dissertation philologica de lucta Frothonis I cum dracone thesauro incubante* (Copenhagen, 1686); Esaias Fleischer and Nikolaus Svenonius, *De dracone dissertation philosophica* (Copenhagen, 1686), unpaginated; Georg Kaspar Kirchmaier, *Disputationes zoologicae de basilisco, unicornu, phoenice, behemoth et leviathan, dracone...* (Wittenberg, 1661; reprinted Jena, 1736) 80; Peter Lagerlöf and Daniel Norlind, *Dissertatio de draconibus* (Uppsala, 1683; reprinted Uppsala, 1685), 1.

<sup>45</sup> Jakob Mylius and Benjamin Praetorius, *Diatribes physica de dracone volante et igne fatuo* (Leipzig, 1653), unpaginated; Kirchmaier, *Disputationes*, 79, 89-91; Georg Kaspar Kirchmaier and Johann Daniel, *De draconibus volantibus* (Wittenberg, 1675), unpaginated; Lagerlöf and Norlind, *Dissertatio*, 11-12, 19, 22, 27, 39-40.

<sup>46</sup> Lagerlöf and Norlind, *Dissertatio*, 19-22.

<sup>47</sup> Johannes Francus and Kaspar Pomeranus, *Exercitationum physicarum nona de meteoris* (Frankfurt a. M., 1624), unpaginated; Mylius and Praetorius, *Diatribes*, unpaginated; Kaspar Hammius, “De igne lambente, dracone volante et natura fulminis,” in *Theoria meteorologica*, ed. Daniel Lagus (Gdansk, 1650), unpaginated; Schmidt, *Rockenphilosophie*, 1: 462.

<sup>48</sup> Hammius, “Igne,” unpaginated.

<sup>49</sup> Friedrich, *Hexenjagd*, 95.

<sup>50</sup> Wilde, *Zauberei*, 204.

<sup>51</sup> Schmidt, *Rockenphilosophie*, vol. 1, p. 15. An alternative concept of the dragon may be found in Manfred Tschakner, *Hexenverfolgungen im Toggenburg* (Wattwil, 2010) 73-75. I would like to thank Manfred Tschakner for alerting me to this most interesting case.

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<sup>52</sup> Kreisarchiv Hildburghausen, 338/6784.

<sup>53</sup> StAC, LAF 12534, 12535.

<sup>54</sup> StAC, LAF 12542.

<sup>55</sup> StAC, LAF 12591/II, see also Friedrich, *Hexenjagd*, 57.

<sup>56</sup> Wilde, *Zauberei*, 113-114, 204, 267, see also StAC, LAF 12549; Friedrich, *Hexenjagd*, 94.

<sup>57</sup> Examples in StAC, LAF12449, 12542, 12546, 12549.

<sup>58</sup> Rainer Hambrecht, „Margaretha Ramhold (ca. 1570-1628)“, in *„Seien Sie doch vernünftig!“ Frauen der Coburger Geschichte*, ed. Gaby Franger, (Coburg, 2008) 56-72;

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Michael Gockel and Volker Wahl (Weimar, 1993) 157-79.

<sup>59</sup> Friedrich, *Hexenjagd*, 94-95.

<sup>60</sup> StAC, LAF 12535.

<sup>61</sup> StAC, LAF, 12542.

<sup>62</sup> StAC, LAF 12546.

<sup>63</sup> ThHStAW, EA, Rechtspflege, Nr 1563.

<sup>64</sup> Dillinger, *Magical*, 190-203.

<sup>65</sup> Johannes Dillinger / Jürgen Schmidt (eds.) *Hexenprozess und Staatsbildung – Witch- Trials and State-Building* (Bielefeld 2008).