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# Monstrous Lessons: Peter Stumpp, the Werewolf of Bedburg

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## Abstract

On October 31, 1589, Peter Stumpp was executed as a sorcerer and werewolf. Short pamphlets and print artworks were distributed through-out Germany and into England following Stumpp's execution making him one of the most infamous werewolves in history. Through discussion of contemporary world events, development in printing technology, and the necessity of public teaching tools, the reason for Stumpp's infamy becomes clear.

**Keywords:** Werewolf, History, Germany, Monsters, Didactics, Early Modern

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*I acknowledge that I am a person of European descent working and living on Treaty 6 land. This paper is intended to be a study of the context and reception of werewolf tales in Europe. While some of the Indigenous peoples of North America have histories of skin-walkers or other shape-changing powers, this study is intentionally focused on the tale of one European person.*

## Peter Stumpp: The Werewolf of Bedburg

People have always told stories. Stories are told to amuse, to teach, and to guide. Our ancestors told stories to instruct their children on how to interact with each other and the world around them appropriately. The interactions between monsters and heroes -- and the actions of both -- dictated, carried instruction, and taught standards of behaviors to those listening to or reading such stories. One of the most enduring monsters of human storytelling is the werewolf. Humanity's fascination with a werewolf transforming from person to beast appears in prominent tales such as that of the the curse placed on King Lycaon in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to modern versions of the monster in films like *Viking Wolf*.<sup>1</sup>

The werewolf is a monster often used as a symbol for the bestial aspects of human nature. The werewolf portrays an overabundance of hunger both gluttonous and sexual, and an overabundance of rage and fear manifest as violence. In the sixteenth

century, when Europe was at war with itself over religious reformations, the story of the werewolf emerged as a cautionary tale. While numerous people were on trial for charges that modern society would deem absurd, charges of witchcraft, sorcery, or being a werewolf were not uncommon in the sixteenth century. Amongst the varied tales of witchcraft and magic practices, one tale stands out: the story of Peter Stumpp. As discussed in a 1590 pamphlet printed and produced in London, Peter Stumpp was accused of being a sorcerer and werewolf for twenty-five years.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, there has not been an academic investigation into the Peter Stumpp story; existing historical studies of werewolves take a more general approach to the subject, despite Peter Stumpp's infamy as the predominant werewolf of the sixteenth century. Werewolf studies that focus singularly on Stumpp largely exist in the realm of popular culture: in blogs of various levels of carefulness, or podcasts produced more for entertainment than the validity of the information.<sup>3</sup> While entertainment-focused history has its own unique value, there is a gap in the academic record regarding the Stumpp story leaving the tale to bloggers and podcasters.

This paper aims to fill that lacuna by examining the printed sources that transmitted the story of the werewolf Peter Stumpp to England from Germany. The sources that discuss the Werewolf of Bedburg are: an English Pamphlet published in 1590; a broadside printed in both Nuremberg and Augsburg in 1589; another broadside printed in Cologne in 1589; a pamphlet published at the end of 1589 in

<sup>1</sup> The two examples provided here are only a small representation of the stories humanity has produced that discuss or include werewolves across most forms of media. There is some argument that the werewolf first appears in the Epic of Gilgamesh, but the werewolf does persist through time with stories such as the *Satyricon*, *Bisclavret*, and *The Saga of the Volsungs*.

<sup>2</sup> George Bores, *A True Discourse Declaring the Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter, a Most Wicked Sorcerer, who in the likeness of a Woolfe, committed many murders, continuing this devilish practice 25 years, killing and devouring Men, Woomen, and Children*, (London: Edward Venge at the Signe of the Vine, 1590), Accessed September 27, 2022, [https://explore.bl.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=BLVU1&afterPDS=true&institution=BL&docId=BLL01003532083](https://explore.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=BLVU1&afterPDS=true&institution=BL&docId=BLL01003532083).

<sup>3</sup> Aaron Mahnke, "The Beast Within," produced by Aaron Mahnke, *Lore*, April 6, 2015, Podcast, 19:10, <https://www.grimandmild.com/lore>; Darcie Nadel, "Peter Stumpp: The Werewolf of Bedburg," Exemplore, Exemplore, August 17, 2022, Accessed February 21, 2023, <https://exemplore.com/paranormal/Peter-Stumpp-The-Werewolf-of-Bedburg>; Dana K. Rehn, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stump: An analysis," Dana K Rehn, Dana Rehn, Accessed February 14, 2023, <https://danarehn.com/2022/05/04/werewolf-petter-stump/>; Denny Sargent, *Werewolf Magick: Authentic Practical Lycanthropy*, (Llewellyn Publications, 2021): The last source here is not directly related to Peter Stumpp but an example of the type of ways non-academics have interacted with werewolf history and literature

Cologne; as well as a diary written by Hermann von Weinsberg (1518-1597) in Cologne.<sup>4</sup> As Peter Stumpp had five separate surviving documents, in two different languages, telling his story, he was and is one of the most infamous werewolves of history. The surviving texts that discuss Stumpp's life and death reveal the didactic nature of tales of monstrous violence and cruelty in sixteenth-century culture. The early age of print provides us content and context for understanding how stories, especially those printed about Stumpp's execution, efficiently conveyed complex philosophical and cultural concepts about cruelty and violence to the public.

Due to the non-standardized spelling of pre-modern writing, Peter's first name can appear in the sources as Peter, Peeter, or Petter; his last name has even more

variation.<sup>5</sup> The English pamphlet relates Peter's last name as Stubbe; Weinsberg calls him Stupe; and the German print media refers to Peter as Stump, with one or two Ps, or as Stumpf.<sup>6</sup> As his tale is popular amongst occultists, pagans, and entertainment-focused historians, I will adopt the most commonly used spelling of his name found across the various types of study in this discussion: Peter Stumpp. Two other names to keep in mind – Kathrine Trompin and Bell Stubbe – show up in more than one form, but they will be discussed later.

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- <sup>4</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche / Neue Zeitung von einem pauren*, 1589, Woodcut, Broadside, Nuremberg & Augsburg, Accessed February 14, 2023, [https://library.artstor.org/#/asset/BERLIN\\_DB\\_10313810643;prevRouteTS=1675882941364](https://library.artstor.org/#/asset/BERLIN_DB_10313810643;prevRouteTS=1675882941364); Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stump: A Translation," Dana K Rehn, Dana Rehn, Accessed February 14, 2023, <https://danarehn.com/2021/05/22/the-execution-of-werewolf-petter-stump/>; Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stump - Werwolf zu Bedburg*, 1589, Woodcut, Broadside. Cologne, Accessed February 14, 2023, [https://library.artstor.org/asset/BERLIN\\_DB\\_10313810644](https://library.artstor.org/asset/BERLIN_DB_10313810644); Gerda Dinwiddle, "Franz Hogenber' Petter Stump Broadsheet: A Translation," Dana K Rehn, Dana Rehn, Accessed February 14, 2023, <https://danarehn.com/2021/05/23/franz-hogenberg-petter-stump-broadsheet/>; *Warhaftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt) der sich zu einem wehrwolff hat können machen welcher zu Bedbur vier meilen von Cölln gelegen ist gerichtet worden den 31. October dieses 1589. jahrs was böser thaten er begangen hat. Auch wei man hin und wider viel zäuberschen verbrandt hat in diesem 1589. jahre was sie getrieben und bekandt haben männiglich zur trewen warnung geestellet*, Cologne: Nikolaus Schreiber, 1589, Online edition: Saale Halle, University and State Library of Saxony-Anhalt, 2009, Accessed February 22, 2023, <https://www.zvdd.de/dms/load/met/?PPN=urn%3Anbn%3Ade%3Agbv%3A3%3A1-108404>; Gerda Dinwiddle, "Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches: An English Translation," Dana K Rehn, Dana Rehn, Accessed February 14, 2023, <https://danarehn.com/2022/01/02/truthful-and-frightening-description-of-the-many-sorcerers-or-witches-an-english-translation/>; Hermann Von Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*, Bonn: University of Bonn, 2003-2021, Accessed February 7, 2023, <https://www.weinsberg.uni-bonn.de/>; Weinsberg's diary is split into three sections *Liber Iuventutis*, *Liber Senectutis*, and *Liber Decrepitudinis*. The diary is organized by date, and my citations come from the section for October 31, 1589, in *Liber Decrepitudinis*. The preceding list contains the primary documents that will be discussed throughout the paper. As I am not literate in German, I will also provide reference to published translations paired with the originals where and when I have used them. I also used DeepL translator alongside the translations to provide a second look at the texts, or where no translation exists as is the case with Weinsberg's diary.
- <sup>5</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stump": Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stump*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Franz Hogenber' Petter Stump Broadsheet": *Warhaftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt)*, Nikolaus Schreiber: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches": Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.
- <sup>6</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stump": Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stump*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Franz Hogenber' Petter Stump Broadsheet": *Warhaftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt)*, Nikolaus Schreiber: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches": Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.

## The Damnable Life and Death of Stubbe Peeter: Finding the English Pamphlet

My first encounter with Peter Stumpp was through the podcast *Lore*, which whet my appetite for monster stories and historical intrigue.<sup>7</sup> Shortly thereafter, I found a sixteenth-century English pamphlet in the British Library under shelfmark C.27.a.9, titled “A True Discourse. Declaring the Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter...,” a title which goes on at length as many titles of the era do.<sup>8</sup> The English Stumpp pamphlet exists as an octavo format bound book, likely an exemplar for the printing of pamphlets.<sup>9</sup> The octavo includes twenty-one pages of text, making it an extended pamphlet, and includes a full-page eight-panel woodcut image.<sup>10</sup> Below the extensive title on the first page of the text are the instructions that the pamphlet was to be printed for an Edward Venge and folded in Fleet Street, London, at the Sign of the Vine.<sup>11</sup> The pamphlet – translated to English from High Dutch according to a copy printed in Cologne – lists George Bores as its author and translator and has a publication date of June 1590. The pamphlet’s nineteen-page tale is the longest and most extensive version of the story of the Werewolf of Bedburg.

The pamphlet – which was first brought to the attention of modern readers through reproduction in Montague Summers’ book *The Werewolf*, and later made available through Charlotte Otten’s *Lycanthrope Reader* – became one of the most infamous werewolf tales.<sup>12</sup> Bores’ 1590 translation, which extends a previously one-page story into a twenty-one-page pamphlet that includes the title page and woodcut that is reminiscent of modern cartoons, embellishes and expands the High Dutch accounts of Peter Stumpp’s story into a fantastical tale of folkloric horror.<sup>13</sup>

*The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter* tells the story of a man who made a deal with the devil in order to satiate his, “cruel and bloody mind,” as well as his, “inordinate lust.”<sup>14</sup> Upon completion of his deal with the devil, Peter Stumpp received a girdle which, when worn, transforms him “into the likeness of a greedy, devouring wolf, strong and mighty, with eyes great and large... a mouth great and wide, with most sharp and cruel teeth, a huge body and mighty paws.”<sup>15</sup> The pamphlet goes to great lengths to emphasize the horrific nature of Peter Stumpp as well as the ferocity of his wolf form. Stumpp is said to have horribly killed two men, thirteen children, three women, two of which were pregnant, and even his own son.<sup>16</sup> The pamphlet describes his adulterous and lustful

<sup>7</sup> Mahnke, “The Beast Within.”

<sup>8</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*.

<sup>9</sup> “The Damnable Life and Death of Stubbe Peeter, a Werewolf 1590,” British Library, British Library, April 30, 2016, Accessed September 27, 2022,

[https://explore.bl.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=BLVU1&afterPDS=true&institution=BL&docId=BLL01003532083](https://explore.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=BLVU1&afterPDS=true&institution=BL&docId=BLL01003532083).

<sup>10</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: “The Damnable Life and Death of Stubbe Peeter, a Werewolf 1590,” British Library: See also Appendix A for the woodcut print.

<sup>11</sup> “The Damnable Life and Death of Stubbe Peeter, a Werewolf 1590,” British Library.

<sup>12</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Montague Summers, *The Werewolf*, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, LTD., 1933) 253-59: Charlotte F. Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader: Werewolves in Western Culture*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986) 69-76: While access to the Bores pamphlet is provided by the British Library, I have used Otten’s reproduction for direct quotation where applicable for ease of reading and will provide page numbers to her text when citing both Bores and Otten.

<sup>13</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: The other primary documents, outlined in note 4 may be applicable here as well. I have also mentioned the woodcut found in Appendix A.

<sup>14</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 71: As stated previously I’ve used Otten’s reproduction as the source for the direct quote.

<sup>15</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 69.

<sup>16</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 70-72.

relations with a long time bedmate Kathrine Trompin, and incest with their daughter, Bell Stubbe.<sup>17</sup> The specific crimes outlined by the pamphlet are only a small part of those Stumpp committed, continuing on to claim an unspecified number of rapes and killings, including men, women, children, and various forms of livestock, with cannibalism ever-present in his destructive actions.<sup>18</sup> After twenty-five years, Stumpp's reign of terror came to an abrupt end when he was caught by hunters who had watched him remove his girdle to transform from wolf form back to a human.<sup>19</sup> Stumpp was threatened with torture on the rack which was enough to garner a full confession of his crimes.<sup>20</sup> The confession of these crimes would result in Stumpp's torture with hot pincers, breaking on the wheel, and finally his decapitation followed by a public cremation.<sup>21</sup> As a consequence of his confession, Kathrine Trompin and Bell Stumpp were also burned at the stake with him.<sup>22</sup> Following the execution, the pamphlet explains that both Stumpp's head and the wheel on which he was broken were placed high on a pole under the effigy of a wolf and adorned with sixteen pieces of wood.<sup>23</sup> The effigy was meant as both an explanation for the execution as well as a warning against cruelty, while the pieces of wood were memorials for the sixteen people who "were perfectly known to be murdered by him."<sup>24</sup>

The final piece of information given by the English pamphlet is that four men attested to its truthfulness:

Tyse Artyne; William Brewar; Adolf Staedt; and George Bores, the pamphlet's author, and translator.<sup>25</sup> The attestation to truthfulness is a uniquely English part of the pamphlet: a communal responsibility to good behaviour displayed long after the creation of the jury system.<sup>26</sup> While the pamphlet works to present itself as a truthful retelling of the life and death of Peter Stumpp, Bores' version reeks of excessive embellishment. The pamphlet puts far too much effort into emphasizing the horror of Stumpp's wolf form, the origins of his bloodlust, and the cruelty of his actions. Moreover, as the title points out, Stumpp's tale originated near Cologne, Germany, where four other versions of the story were recorded and three of them printed for mass consumption.<sup>27</sup> As we shall see, many details found in the English pamphlet do not appear in the German sources.

## An Execution in Bedburg on October 31, 1589: German Origins

The English pamphlet tells of the life, trial, and execution of Peter Stumpp, a tale that originates in the region around Cologne, Germany. In Cologne, the story was published in a broadside and a pamphlet, as well as recorded in the diary of a city councillor.<sup>28</sup> Like

<sup>17</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 71.

<sup>18</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 69-76.

<sup>19</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 73-74.

<sup>20</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 74.

<sup>21</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 74.

<sup>22</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 75.

<sup>23</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 76.

<sup>24</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 76.

<sup>25</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 76. Unfortunately I found nothing about any of the men named in the pamphlet.

<sup>26</sup> Elizabeth Papp Kamali, *Felony and the Guilty Mind in Medieval England*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019) 20.

<sup>27</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stump": Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stump*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Franz Hogenber' Petter Stump Broadsheet": *Warhaftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt)*, Nikolaus Schreiber: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches": Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.

<sup>28</sup> Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stump*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Franz Hogenber' Petter Stump Broadsheet":

the English pamphlet, the Cologne one is a collection of pages produced in a small, short book, much like those still used to transmit information or instructions today.<sup>29</sup> The German presses also produced broadside sheets to help spread the information of the execution. The broadsides were single sheets, mostly covered with a woodcut print image that was paired with a small amount of text.<sup>30</sup> News of Peter's execution also made it to Nuremberg and Augsburg and was reproduced in another broadside copied in both cities.<sup>31</sup> The spread of Stumpp's story across the German countryside encompassed approximately twenty thousand square kilometres.<sup>32</sup> The two broadsides, as well as the English pamphlet, have companion images that tell of Stumpp's death.<sup>33</sup> The four German sources are sparse in detail when compared to the English pamphlet, all comprising a mere page in length as opposed to the twenty-one pages of the English version. Despite the sparse nature of the text produced in Germany, the imagery of Stumpp's execution is profoundly disturbing. The prints all agree, either in writing or in imagery, that Stumpp was executed via hot pincers, breaking on the wheel, beheading, and cremation of the body.<sup>34</sup> The display of Stumpp's head and the wheel – as well as the burning of both Kathrine Trompin and Bell Stubbe – are common among the stories, yet there are changes to the two women's relation to Stumpp, as well as their names.

## The Nuremberg and Augsburg Broadside

The English pamphlet gives any English reader the fantastic and horrifying tale of the life and death of Peter Stumpp, but when moving into the German sources of the story the details of the Stumpp's life become blurred and confused. While closer to the origins of Stumpp's story than the pamphlet in London the German broadside published by Lucas Mayer in both Nuremberg and Augsburg presents the same story in both a different manner and with a change in details. The Mayer broadside is written in rhyming couplet.<sup>35</sup> The broadside shares some of the details found in the English pamphlet: the transformation into a wolf; the murders, largely unspecified but includes those of children; the cannibalism, expressed in the broadside as the eating of brains; the incestuous or violent sexual relationships; the confession of crimes; the deal with the devil.<sup>36</sup> There are also some differences in the story from the English version. In the broadside, Stumpp is a farmer; uses a belt instead of a girdle; his transformation has a time limit of several hours; Bell Stumpp and Kathrine Trompin are unnamed, but their roles are now as daughter and as godmother who is described as a she-devil.<sup>37</sup> The text claims that a farmer cuts off the Stumpp-wolf's paw, which subsequently turns into a human hand, and that Stumpp is caught due to his missing appendage.<sup>38</sup> The

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*Warhaftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt)*, Nikolaus Schreiber: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches": Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*: Alexandra Schäfer, "Acquisition and Handling of News on the French Wars of Religion: The Case of Herman Weinsberg," *News Networks in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham, (BRILL, 2016), 695.

<sup>29</sup> *Warhaftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt)*, Nikolaus Schreiber: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches."

<sup>30</sup> Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stumpp": Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stumpp*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Franz Hogenber' Petter Stumpp Broadsheet."

<sup>31</sup> Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stumpp."

<sup>32</sup> The twenty-two thousand square kilometers figure is from information gained using the distance measurement function to connect the mentioned German cities in Google Maps.

<sup>33</sup> See appendices.

<sup>34</sup> Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stumpp."

<sup>35</sup> Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stumpp."

<sup>36</sup> Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stumpp."

<sup>37</sup> Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stumpp."

<sup>38</sup> Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stumpp."

missing paw/hand are also reproduced in the imagery of the Nuremberg broadsheet.<sup>39</sup> The removal of his hand gives Peter Stumpp his last name, referring to his arm, and is the primary evidence for Stumpp's sorcery and wolf transformation. The broadsheet also gives readers a specific date for Stumpp's execution: the last day of October in 1589.<sup>40</sup>

The Nuremberg and Augsburg broadside clearly illustrates the use of the Stumpp tale as entertainment through its grotesque woodcut print and the language used to tell the tale.<sup>41</sup> The woodcut of the Nuremberg broadside allows the viewer to easily follow a visual retelling of the capture of Stumpp, from evidence of a parallel wound borne by both the accused man and his wolf form, to the various scenes of his execution, to the humiliating display afterward.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the language of the broadside does something in the original German that is lost in any translation: the Nuremberg broadside is written in rhyming couplets.<sup>43</sup> As the use of poetry naturally condenses language, in the case of the broadside, it allows for the written story to exist beside the detailed imagery by reducing the amount of text required to transmit Stumpp's story. The rhyming couplets also suggest the author laboured at putting the words of the story in the correct order to produce the entertaining effect of a rhyming scheme.

## Cologne Broadsheet and Pamphlet

Cologne saw the publication of both a broadside and a pamphlet to announce the execution of Peter Stumpp. Like the broadside dispersed in Nuremberg and Augsburg, the Cologne broadside was written in rhyming couplets.<sup>44</sup> Yet the Cologne broadside is sparser with its rhyming text. Both the Cologne texts give very brief discussions of the execution, with the broadside presenting the narrative from Stumpp's perspective, while the pamphlet gives a bare account of his crimes and punishment.<sup>45</sup> The Cologne broadside notes the date of the execution as October 31, 1589.<sup>46</sup> As it includes descriptions of witch executions prior to telling the story of Peter Stumpp, the pamphlet – which only gives the year as date information – was likely published in the months following Stumpp's execution because it is presented as a collection of the year's magic related crimes.<sup>47</sup>

The confession of Peter Stumpp recounted in the broadside tells much of what has already been discussed in this paper. Stumpp confesses – in poetic voice – to changing into a wolf to hunt and devour thirteen children.<sup>48</sup> The specified murders found in the English pamphlet and the Nuremberg/Augsburg broadside differ from two men and a woman to two women and a man.<sup>49</sup> Stumpp's rapacious conduct is relayed, specifying his daughter and including an

<sup>39</sup> Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stumpp;" See also Appendix B.

<sup>40</sup> Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stumpp": See Appendix B.

<sup>41</sup> Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stumpp": See Appendix B.

<sup>42</sup> Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stumpp": See Appendix B.

<sup>43</sup> Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stumpp": See Appendix B.

<sup>44</sup> Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stumpp*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Franz Hogenber' Petter Stumpp Broadsheet": See Appendix C.

<sup>45</sup> Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stumpp*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Franz Hogenber' Petter Stumpp Broadsheet": See Appendix C.

<sup>46</sup> Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stumpp*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Franz Hogenber' Petter Stumpp Broadsheet": *Warhaftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt)*, Nikolaus Schreiber: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches."

<sup>47</sup> *Warhaftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt)*, Nikolaus Schreiber: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches."

<sup>48</sup> Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stumpp*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Franz Hogenber' Petter Stumpp Broadsheet."

<sup>49</sup> Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stumpp*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Franz Hogenber' Petter Stumpp Broadsheet."

expansion to other women.<sup>50</sup> The depiction of Stumpp's capture and execution does have a couple notable differences between the Cologne version and the Nuremberg version. First, the Cologne version does not depict the loss of Stumpp's hand.<sup>51</sup> Second, it takes great care to ensure the viewer and reader of the broadside knows who is being executed by labelling each appearance of Stumpp on the page.<sup>52</sup> The pamphlet companion to the Cologne broadsheet gives Stumpp's entire story in three sentences. The Cologne pamphlet calls Stumpp a sorcerer, adds a unique detail in describing the children as being six and seven years old, but returns the number of adults killed to two men and one woman.<sup>53</sup> The pamphlet also tells of Stumpp's incestuous relationship with his daughter – specifying that it lasted seven years – and that she was burned to death alongside Stumpp's corpse.<sup>54</sup> The final vague addition in the Cologne pamphlet is that Stumpp committed “many other bad deeds.”<sup>55</sup> The mention of Stumpp's ‘other deeds’ in the pamphlet does not clarify any of the charges laid against him but introduces an ambiguity that suits the variations seen in the story of Stumpp.

## Hermann Von Weinsberg's Diary

On October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1589, a man named Hermann von Weinsberg made an entry into his diary: a man named Peter Stumpp had been executed that day in Bedburg, Germany, by hot pincer, decapitation, and burning.<sup>56</sup> Weinsberg's diary, an interesting document in its own right, was intended to instruct his successor in the activities suited to heading a German household.<sup>57</sup> The document collected all kinds of information that modern readers would identify as news, and Weinsberg would go on to speculate about the events he collected.<sup>58</sup> While Weinsberg's methods cannot be called careful by modern standards, he employed a vast network for collecting information, including oral retellings of events; letters written by friends and families abroad; and the news network to which his status as councillor granted him access.<sup>59</sup>

In his diary, Weinsberg attempts to provide extra context for the personhood of Peter Stumpp, describing him as a farmer of some three miles between Bedburg and Erperheide.<sup>60</sup> Weinsberg also describes Stumpp as a robber, and tells that he had been sleeping unlawfully with a woman for 25 years, as well as with his own mother.<sup>61</sup> Weinsberg also

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<sup>50</sup> Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stump*: Gerda Dinwiddle, “Franz Hogenber’ Petter Stump Broadsheet.”

<sup>51</sup> Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stump*: Gerda Dinwiddle, “Franz Hogenber’ Petter Stump Broadsheet.” See Appendix C.

<sup>52</sup> Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stump*: Gerda Dinwiddle, “Franz Hogenber’ Petter Stump Broadsheet.” See Appendix C.

<sup>53</sup> *Warhafftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt)*, Nikolaus Schreiber: Gerda Dinwiddle, “Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches.”

<sup>54</sup> *Warhafftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt)*, Nikolaus Schreiber: Gerda Dinwiddle, “Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches.”

<sup>55</sup> *Warhafftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt)*, Nikolaus Schreiber: Gerda Dinwiddle, “Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches.”

<sup>56</sup> Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*: Unfortunately, I have not been able to find a published English translation of the relevant sections of Weinsberg's diary. I have used a DeepL machine translation of the relevant section to get a basic understanding of what Weinsberg was writing. Both the original and machine translation are available in Appendix D.

<sup>57</sup> Schäfer, “Acquisition and Handling of News on the French Wars of Religion,” 698.

<sup>58</sup> Schäfer, “Acquisition and Handling of News on the French Wars of Religion,” 700-2.

<sup>59</sup> Schäfer, “Acquisition and Handling of News on the French Wars of Religion,” 699-700.

<sup>60</sup> Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.

<sup>61</sup> Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.



describes how Stumpp managed his transformation: with a belt that changed his form at will.<sup>62</sup> The diary tells of the deaths and cannibalizations of thirteen children of six or seven years of age, with special emphasis on the eating of brains, as well as the deaths of two men and a woman.<sup>63</sup> Weinsberg's diary tells the name of his mother, "Stupe Beeln" – who in the other versions is related as his daughter – and consort "Tringen Trumpen."<sup>64</sup> Weinsberg is openly suspicious of the accusation of magical practice in his entry about Stumpp, stating that he would let God judge the things secret and hidden from himself.<sup>65</sup> Weinsberg's skepticism is evident in his use of phrases such as, "it is said," throughout the entry discussing Stumpp, shuffling authority about the tale onto an anonymous conveyor of information.<sup>66</sup> The last thing Weinsberg reveals to us about the Stumpp case is that Stumpp confessed to the crimes he was accused of and that he was "punished according to the described laws."<sup>67</sup> Weinsberg is clearly concerned in his writings about the effect tales such as the execution of Stumpp will have upon the people of Cologne. As Weinsberg was a collector of news and gossip it is clear through inclusion of Stumpp's execution that the tale bothered him. The diary entry consistently uses hedging language showing Weinsberg's uncertainty about the truth of Stumpp's execution and to imply his distaste for such fantastic and horrific stories.

## Printing Presses, Pamphlets, Propaganda: The Power and Spread of Information

Weinsberg's concern about the news of the execution of a werewolf could not have predicted the tremendous spread that Stumpp's story had. The

spread of news or gossip surrounding an execution was a relatively recent technological change in the late medieval and early modern era, with the printing press only starting to come into popular use at the end of the fifteenth century.

Between the ever-present tales of magic and werewolves, the religious revolutions, and the wars of the sixteenth century, the need for a story – such as that of Peter Stumpp – as a teaching tool to explain the violence in central Europe is unsurprising. The fact that one such tale moved across an area that spans more than twenty-two thousand square kilometres between Bedburg, Cologne, Nuremberg, and Augsburg reveal the importance of the story's contents.<sup>68</sup> That the same story would cross another five hundred linear kilometres, and the English Channel to reach the printing house The Sign of the Vine in Fleet Street, London to be disseminated as a pamphlet through the English capital reinforces the cultural importance of the story about this werewolf's execution.<sup>69</sup> As the secular tale passed through early modern society in a way that modern people might conceptualize as news, the story of Peter Stumpp was one of great importance in understanding how aggression, cruelty, and violence were to be managed in the early modern era. The new form of proto-news media found in print products such as the pamphlets and broadsides allowed for intellectual dispersion amongst the population of the late sixteenth century complex moral lessons that fulfilled what was once the purview of the Catholic Church. Stories such as that of Stumpp's life and execution came to replace the missing moral didactics that the Church used to guide medieval society.

Weinsberg's diary is an excellent example of how the members of the emergent bourgeois collected and transmitted information. Weinsberg's document, a

<sup>62</sup> Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.

<sup>63</sup> Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.

<sup>64</sup> Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.

<sup>65</sup> Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.

<sup>66</sup> Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.

<sup>67</sup> Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.

<sup>68</sup> This information was gained with the Google Maps distance calculator tool.

<sup>69</sup> This information was gained with the Google Maps distance calculator tool. Unfortunately, The Sign of the Vine was another dead end in my research.

diary-like commemorative book, classified as a *Gedenkbücher* by Schäfer-Griebel, is a practical example of reading and writing by the laity.<sup>70</sup> The diary, split into three parts which correspond to the stages of Weinsberg's life, is a detailed document of his efforts to collect and understand the current events of the German city of Cologne and the surrounding area.<sup>71</sup> The text, which provides us with a very personal view and understanding of the story surrounding Stump's trial and execution, shows that burghers of the late medieval and early modern era were very concerned with the collection and transmission of information both about nearby and impactful events. As a city councillor for Cologne, Weinsberg thought the collection of information was part of his duty to himself and his successors, both familial and political.<sup>72</sup> The concern Weinsberg displays in the collection and transmission of information is a concern about power, as in the sixteenth century the ideals of the various movements of the Reformation were spread using the printing press.

Gutenberg's printing press changed the world with the introduction of movable-type printing to Europe. With the completion of the Gutenberg Bible in 1445, the advent of print media changed the landscape of how Europe would interact with and disseminate both information and ideas.<sup>73</sup> The impact of such ideological dissemination is most clearly demonstrated by the spread of Luther's *95 Theses* which sparked the Protestant Reformation. Luther's ideas were largely transmitted through printed pamphlets, a mode of printing which allowed for the quick spread of dense packets of information.<sup>74</sup> Examples of Luther's publications, such as "The Papal Ass and Monk Calf" produced alongside fellow

reformation theologian Philip Melancthon, participate in the use of print media to spread ideology.<sup>75</sup> The spread of anti-Catholic propaganda such as that produced by Luther and Melancthon was but one way print media changed European culture. Not only did Luther's pamphlets motivate further Reformation movements but they encouraged the kind of anti-Catholic sentiment that caused the reformers to be seen as dangerous revolutionists; revolutionists who would have to face the kind of violence stories such as Peter Stump's explain. It was with the printing press that an ideological war was fought between Christian sects prior to the outbreak of the war that is known as the War of Religion. The bloody and cruel conflict left the common people without a unified clergy to give moral guidance to the majority of continental western Europe. The conflict of the Reformation drove a need for secular didactic tales to provide the moral guidance that was once provided by the clergy. Stump's tale provided an example of the extremes of cruelty, and the punishment for such cruelty, in such an excessive and imaginative way as to allow for clear behavioural boundaries.

The mass production of text that occurred following the printing press opened the door for more than just the spread of literacy allowing for a wider opening of discourse among the intellectual, ecclesiastic, and secular realms.<sup>76</sup> The availability of text meant ideas such as those of the reformation or that of proper behavioural norms surrounding violence could reach a broader audience.<sup>77</sup> While printing, in general, grew through the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the production of pamphlets by 1517 represented some 17% of printing

<sup>70</sup> Schäfer, "Acquisition and Handling of News on the French Wars of Religion," 695.

<sup>71</sup> Schäfer, "Acquisition and Handling of News on the French Wars of Religion," 700-2: Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs*.

<sup>72</sup> Schäfer, "Acquisition and Handling of News on the French Wars of Religion," 699-700.

<sup>73</sup> Frédéric Barbier, *Gutenberg's Europe: The Book and the Invention of Western Modernity*, trans. Jean Birrell, (Malden: Polity Press, 2017), 244.

<sup>74</sup> Stephan Füssel, *Gutenberg and the Impact of Printing*, trans. Douglas Martin, (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 168.

<sup>75</sup> Jennifer Spinks, *Monstrous Births and Visual Culture in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, (London: Pickering & Chatto Limited, 2009), 59-79: This chapter clearly outlines the propaganda-like use of pamphlets by Luther and Melancthon.

<sup>76</sup> Barbier, *Gutenberg's Europe*, 37.

<sup>77</sup> Füssel, *Gutenberg and the Impact of Printing*, 168.

production by title.<sup>78</sup> Such a large production of pamphlets would result in the quick spread of both information and ideas across Europe. Amusingly enough, pamphlets, especially the ones relating to the reformation, would instruct the illiterate readers, in writing, to find someone to read the text to them.<sup>79</sup> While printing practices exploded across the continent through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, imports of printed material to England were in high demand. German incunabula, books printed before 1501, represent a full third of the books imported to England prior to 1520.<sup>80</sup> The demand for literature on the island was due to a relatively small production base in England.<sup>81</sup> Due to the high demand for continental print materials on the island, and a full third coming from the German regions, it is unsurprising that a pamphlet depicting a tale like Peter Stump's made its way to England.

## Wars of Religion: Continental Upheaval and the Context of Conflict

Peter Stump's execution, at the end of October 1589, happened over the background of the major events of the Wars of Religion and the Protestant Reformation. With the posting of his *95 Theses* in 1517 Martin Luther put into motion a series of events that reformed the geopolitical landscape of continental Europe and ushered in an era of religious reform. The Reformation of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century was far from peaceful. Some tenants of the

reformation ideology undermined the established power structures, such as the desire for the abolishment of indulgences, which was a source of both power and finances for Roman Catholic Church. Such undermining of established Catholic institutions was seen as revolutionary by the royal courts of France and the Holy Roman Empire who sought to uphold the Papal institutions.<sup>82</sup> The numerous conflicts that followed the reformation movements made central Europe a dangerous and violent place through the mid-sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries.<sup>83</sup>

The Wars of Religion, particularly violent in the areas of modern-day France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Netherlands – the last three often referred to as the Low Countries – were of utmost concern to citizens of the Holy Roman Empire such as Hermann von Weinsberg.<sup>84</sup> Early modern historian Alexandra Schäfer-Griebel argues that Weinsberg's primary goal in his diary is the collection of information concerning the Wars of Religion in France, and establishing an example of how a 'Man of Information' deals with the informative networks at his disposal.<sup>85</sup> As the Wars of Religion proceeded through sessions of alternating war and peace, the politicization of the religious reformation movements in France saw an increase in pressure for religious reformation through the Low Countries, and into the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>86</sup> While the Wars of Religion started with the fracturing of Lutherans away from the Catholic Church the Protestant faction continued to split through the sixteenth century and included groups such as the Huguenots, the Calvinists, the Anabaptists and the Reformed Churches that

<sup>78</sup> Füssel, *Gutenberg and the Impact of Printing*, 169.

<sup>79</sup> Füssel, *Gutenberg and the Impact of Printing*, 169.

<sup>80</sup> Lotte Hellinga, "Importation of Books Printed on the Continent into England and Scotland before c. 1520," *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books, circa 1450-1520*, ed. Sandra Hindman, 205-225, (Ithica: Cornell University, 1991), 210-11.

<sup>81</sup> Hellinga, "Importation of Books Printed on the Continent into England," 206

<sup>82</sup> Wayne P. Te Brake, *Religious War and Religious Peace in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, 93, 97.

<sup>83</sup> Te Brake, *Religious War and Religious Peace*, 113.

<sup>84</sup> Te Brake, *Religious War and Religious Peace*, 94, 102, 107.

<sup>85</sup> Schäfer, "Acquisition and Handling of News on the French Wars of Religion," 699-700: The paper was published under the name Schäfer, the author's name has since changed to Schäfer-Griebel, I've maintained the publication name in citation for ease of referencing.

<sup>86</sup> Te Brake, *Religious War and Religious Peace*, 102, 107.

followed Huldrych Zwingli.<sup>87</sup> Cologne and the surrounding area, however, remained Catholic, as Weinsberg relates to us in his at least twenty-five hundred page long diary.<sup>88</sup> Weinsberg tells us about “those of the Calvinist or Reformed religion,” or the “adherer of the new religion,” discussing Protestant Christianity as something new or strange and other than his Catholicism.<sup>89</sup> As a member of one of the Holy Roman Empire’s city states, and a Catholic, in a fractious era of religion, it is reasonable to assume that the councillors of Cologne adhered to the same religion as the city’s ruler.

The background of the Wars of Religion provides an interesting insight into the story and execution of Peter Stumpp. The era was a time of social and political upheaval which was dominated by chaos and recurrent conflict. Weinsberg’s diary is an excellent example of the kind of personalized concern the people of the continent had with the contemporary current events. Much of the social concern presented as forms of social control, through actions like the witch trials of the sixteenth century that largely targeted social outcasts as scapegoats for community strife.<sup>90</sup> Due to the chaos of the fractured church and the growing boldness of the various reformation movements, the Catholic Church was no longer in a secured structured position to present moral or religious guidance to the population on how to understand and deal with the violence that

surrounded them.<sup>91</sup> As a backdrop to the story of Peter Stumpp, the Wars of Religion and Reformation produce a setting in which people would need instruction or explanation to understand the intense cruelty and violence that was sweeping the continent. The story of a werewolf, a being of exceeding cruelty, worked to set boundaries of acceptable behaviour for the people who were suddenly lost without a unified church to guide them in an increasingly hard and unforgiving world.

## Cruelty and Carnage: Developing Theories of Acceptable Violence

The accounts of Stumpp’s crimes make it very clear what was not acceptable behaviour, and, through the interesting changes in the stories, those inappropriate and criminal behaviours are highlighted. In all variations of Stumpp’s story, the killing of children and cannibalism are seen as abhorrent; both crimes are standard human taboos.<sup>92</sup> The reinforcement of taboo is intensified as the various texts delineate the actions for which Stumpp is punished. Eating brains, hearts, and children amongst the generalized cannibalism is singled out as specifically repugnant.<sup>93</sup> While the English pamphlet makes it clear that rape is

<sup>87</sup> Te Brake, *Religious War and Religious Peace*, 94-96.

<sup>88</sup> Schäfer, “Acquisition and Handling of News on the French Wars of Religion,” 698.

<sup>89</sup> Schäfer, “Acquisition and Handling of News on the French Wars of Religion,” 708: This comes as an indirect quote through Schäfer-Griebel’s article, where she cites Weinsberg’s entry to *Libre Senectutis*, on August 24, 1576.

<sup>90</sup> Julian Goodare, *The European Witch-Hunt*, (New York: Routledge, 2016) 14: Rolf Schulte, *Man as Witch: Male Witches in Central Europe*, trans. Linda Froome-Döring, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 1: Schulte suggests that the werewolf trials are an extension of the witch trials that were concurrent, I have no opinion on this matter as I have approached the subject from a different view-point.

<sup>91</sup> Te Brake, *Religious War and Religious Peace*, 102.

<sup>92</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhafftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, “The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stump”: Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stump*: Gerda Dinwiddle, “Franz Hogenber’ Petter Stump Broadsheet”: *Warhafftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt)*, Nikolaus Schreiber: Gerda Dinwiddle, “Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches”: Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.

<sup>93</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhafftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, “The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stump”: Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stump*: Gerda Dinwiddle, “Franz Hogenber’ Petter Stump Broadsheet”: *Warhafftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt)*, Nikolaus Schreiber: Gerda Dinwiddle, “Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches”: Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.

an unacceptable action, all versions of the tale make it clear that incest is utterly impermissible.<sup>94</sup> Unfortunately for the women in Stumpp's life, their proximity to Stumpp is such that his punishment extends to them: a collective punishment for the loss of household dignity.<sup>95</sup> The inclusion of Kathrine Trompin and Bell Stumpp in Peter's execution not only shows an extension of collective punishment to two of his victims, but clarifies one of the criminal actions discussed in the English pamphlet. The discussion of Peter's continual rapes and murders both in human and wolf form, adds bestiality on top of the list of crimes committed in the pamphlet.<sup>96</sup> Bestiality is not just by Peter, but by those identified victims of his lust. Stumpp's lust included bloodlust, and in the list from the English pamphlet this bloodlust included the murder and cannibalization of his own son. The list of Stumpp's crimes concludes with a catalog of an untold number of men, women, children, and livestock either killed, cannibalized, or raped – possibly a combination of all three – presenting an inventory of beings that good people should work to protect.

By outlining and defining the areas of unacceptable violent actions, the Stumpp story engages in ongoing intellectual developments surrounding the ideas of cruelty. Stumpp's tale operates as instructional text in the development of the philosophical discussions of cruelty in a way that allows for the laity to understand. As argued by Daniel Baraz, cruelty was a topic of philosophical discussion only recently come back into

vogue due to the works of intellectuals such as Michel de Montaigne and Jean de Léry.<sup>97</sup> Since individuals of the sixteenth century, such as Weinsberg, were concerned with the progression of the Wars of Religion -- which spanned northern continental Europe between France and Germany -- we should not be surprised to see discussions of cruelty and violence arise in more popular forms of writing.<sup>98</sup> Baraz argues that the discussion of cruelty works as a tool in the regulation of the "Other": the inhuman and monstrous.<sup>99</sup> By understanding Peter Stumpp as a representation of the monstrous other in the early modern era, the descriptions of his crimes provide a discussion of what was unacceptable violence. On the other hand, what was acceptable violence is found in the description of his execution. Thus, Stumpp's story enlightens us about how heavy philosophical topics were presented to the layperson.

Stumpp's execution, as both a result of and a reciprocation of his bloodlust and cruelty, highlights for the audience how violence and cruelty can be acceptable as punishment. All the documents that describe his execution tell that it was torture by hot pincers, followed by breaking on the wheel, followed with decapitation, and ending with burning at the stake of the body, and humiliation in the display of his

<sup>94</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stump": Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stump*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Franz Hogenber' Petter Stump Broadsheet": *Warhaftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt)*, Nikolaus Schreiber: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches": Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.

<sup>95</sup> Nicole Nolan Sidhu, "Weeping for the Virtuous Wife: Laymen, Affective Piety and Chaucer's 'Clerk's Tale,'" *Medieval Domesticity: Home, Housing and Household in Medieval England*, ed Mary Anne Kowaleski and P.J.P. Goldberg, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 188.

<sup>96</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stump": Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stump*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Franz Hogenber' Petter Stump Broadsheet": *Warhaftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt)*, Nikolaus Schreiber: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches": Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.

<sup>97</sup> Daniel Baraz, *Medieval Cruelty: Changing Perceptions, Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 162-9.

<sup>98</sup> Baraz, *Medieval Cruelty*, 143: Te Brake, *Religious War and Religious Peace*, 102, 107.

<sup>99</sup> Baraz, *Medieval Cruelty*, 3.

head.<sup>100</sup> Through the utter destruction of his body, the execution reflects the ideas of acceptable violence and the discussion of cruelty back onto Peter Stumpp. Stumpp's violent crimes are re-enacted upon his own body, showing that while the extremes of destructive violence are unacceptable to wage upon the innocent or good society, such acts become acceptable when used to uphold social expectations. Baraz discusses Léry's argument that the reciprocation of cruelty is still cruelty, yet in the telling of Stumpp's execution demonstrates this reciprocity in action and on display as an example of socially acceptable, justifiable violence.<sup>101</sup> While Stumpp spent his life engaged in cannibalism, rape, and murder, he is punished by the burning removal of his flesh with pincers, the destruction of his body one bone at a time, and the ending of his life with the removal of his head.<sup>102</sup> While the aspects of his execution may not appear as logical to the modern reader, some understanding of late medieval ideas may reveal parallels between Stumpp's punishments and his crimes. The removal of his flesh would symbolize the flesh Stumpp devoured during his life. Likewise, the breaking of his bones removed Stumpp's ability to operate as a human being, thus destroying his ability to pervert the actions undertaken to create new human life. Finally, the removal of Stumpp's head is a direct reflection of the way Stumpp consumed human brains as well as ended his life in a reflection of the destroyed lives of man, woman, child, and livestock. The way Stumpp's life ends not only engages in the discussion of the cruelty of his life but works to transmit the idea to the layperson that acts of cruel violence would be reflected upon their operator if caught. Working to teach the layperson not to engage in acts of extreme violence helped maintain an equilibrium in the

violence of a society caught in religious wars. Transmitting conscious discussion of the extremes of violence through Stumpp's story instructed the common folk in correct behaviour in the absence of the moral instruction that had long been the domain of the Catholic Church.

## *The Legend of Griselda:* Paralleled Parables and the Ordering of the House

The transmission of moral teaching through storytelling was commonplace throughout the medieval and early modern periods. In a story that echoes the didactics of Peter Stumpp, Nicole Nolan Sidhu analyses the *Legend of Griselda*, which appears and reappears throughout the medieval era as a story used to teach proper household behaviours.<sup>103</sup> Sidhu discusses the *Legend of Griselda's* forms from Boccaccio to Chaucer as a non-ecclesiastical response to required teaching about gender and social roles and the necessity of the regulation of masculinity towards productive purpose.<sup>104</sup> By encoding the lessons of acceptable masculine behaviour in storytelling, the social structures of the late medieval era were taught and transmitted widely through popular retelling.<sup>105</sup> Sidhu argues that tales such as Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale*, a variation of the *Legend of Griselda*, became popular because the church had been slow to adapt to the need for didactic tales that would replace the earlier medieval *exempla* – stories preachers used to emphasize the morals and doctrine found in sermons – in instructing proper behaviour.<sup>106</sup> Sidhu argues that

<sup>100</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "The Execution of Werewolf, Peter Stump": Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stump*: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Franz Hogenber' Petter Stump Broadsheet": *Warhafftige und erschreckliche beschreibung von einem zauberer (Stupe Peter genandt)*, Nikolaus Schreiber: Gerda Dinwiddle, "Truthful and Frightening Description of the Many Sorcerers or Witches": Weinsberg, *Die Autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Herman Weinsbergs: Liber Decrepitudinis*.

<sup>101</sup> Baraz, *Medieval Cruelty*, 169

<sup>102</sup> Baraz, *Medieval Cruelty*, 3.

<sup>103</sup> Sidhu, "Weeping for the Virtuous Wife," 179.

<sup>104</sup> Sidhu, "Weeping for the Virtuous Wife," 183-5, 189.

<sup>105</sup> Sidhu, "Weeping for the Virtuous Wife," 190.

<sup>106</sup> *Everyman*, directed and performed by Portland Community College: Performing Arts Center, YouTube, August 3, 2012,

the main point of the adaptations of the *Legend of Griselda* was to enable imaginative self-insertion into the story by listeners and readers.<sup>107</sup> Through imagining themselves in the situations of the story the audience of the tale would learn the correct application of discipline in the household, and what takes discipline too far.<sup>108</sup>

Sidhu's argument surrounding the *Legend of Griselda* sheds light on the purpose of stories about the werewolf, Peter Stumpp. It is difficult to believe that a man truly transformed into a wolf through devilish magic or other rituals. However, the use of a story to delineate the acceptable practices of violence does make sense. In discussing Peter Stumpp's story as a product of the socio-political era, the tale clearly shows how the news of an execution, likely as part of the German witch hunts, became blown out of proportion to become a didactic tale of acceptable violence and part of the development of a theory of cruelty. Just as the characters of the *Legend of Griselda* operate as examples of the problems of overbearing masculinity, Peter Stumpp is used as a didactic tool to reveal when, how, and why cruelty, and excessive violence should be applied.<sup>109</sup> Looking at Peter Stumpp, the Werewolf of Bedburg, as more than just the story of a man who committed horrific deeds and received a gruesome end but as a didactic figure – a tale told in order to teach – we can begin to understand why Stumpp's story had such a wide geographic range.

## English Readership: Preservation of the Werewolf Story

Pamphlets, more than just a tool of reformation thought, were short press releases that contained

more detailed information than could fit on a single page broadside. Pamphlets ranged in size from four to sixteen pages.<sup>110</sup> Bores' twenty-one-page version of the Peter Stumpp story was an extended version of the form. Because of the relatively short nature of pamphlets compared to full texts they were quick to print and spread, allowing them to disseminate information and ideas widely. The ability to spread information quickly allowed a shift in the speed of cultural change across Europe. A modern parallel of this change could be how the internet changed the speed at which information spreads globally. The dissemination of ideas across both continental Europe and England contributed to the dramatic cultural changes of the Renaissance and the Reformation and laid the foundation for the Enlightenment. The cultural changes that followed the violence of the sixteenth century stemmed from the audience's contemplation of the intellectual ideas that spread through stories like that of Peter Stumpp.

Weinsberg is an example, not only of consumption and transmission of the story, but of a sounding-board for understanding the relationship between the audience and the story. As Weinsberg's diary is unique, we lack any direct evidence of other contemporary readership of the Stumpp story; his reaction is the only known direct reaction to the tale. While George Bores, translator and author of the English pamphlet, gives us the names of a handful of witnesses to the events in the pamphlet, I have not found any further proof of their involvement in the tale or its reception.<sup>111</sup> Despite this lack of further evidence of readership, the provision of the names, Tyse Artyne, William Brewar, and Adolf Staedt, alongside author George Bores and publisher Edward Venge, shows us at least nine people – including Weinsberg, and the German broadside and pamphlet publishers – who attached their names to the

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<https://youtu.be/JkM8v0m3URg>: Sidhu, "Weeping for the Virtuous Wife," 178, 180, 208: While *Everyman* may not be an exact representation of medieval *exempla*, it is a morality play which was put towards the same use as *exempla*.

<sup>107</sup> Sidhu, "Weeping for the Virtuous Wife," 180, 197, 200.

<sup>108</sup> Sidhu, "Weeping for the Virtuous Wife," 189, 208.

<sup>109</sup> Sidhu, "Weeping for the Virtuous Wife," 178, 18-6, 188, 208.

<sup>110</sup> Füssel, *Gutenberg and the Impact of Printing*, 169.

<sup>111</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 76.

transmission of the story.<sup>112</sup> Without any more information on Artyne, Brewar, and Staedt, there is little more that can be said about their involvement in spreading the story of the Werewolf of Bedburg. However, as men of letters, Weinsberg, Bores, and Venge show us that the literate were heavily concerned with also being men of information. The desire to be knowledgeable and current in information was a symbol of status amongst the burghers, not just in Germany, as shown by Weinsberg, but in England as well, as Bores and Venge reveal.

After discussing Peter Stumpp's life and death as an event preserved in the primary documents of ephemeral pamphlets and broadsides, there needs to be some balance in our understanding of the story of a werewolf and the news of an execution. As the various versions attach more detail to the story of Peter Stumpp in each telling, as well as the exaggerated and gruesome details about his life as related in the English pamphlet, what may have started out as the news of a serial killer – to use modern terms – morphed into the tale of a monster. On one hand the news of the execution of a man convicted of twenty-five years of destruction of property, rape, murder, and cannibalism would spread just as widely today as it did in 1589 and 1590. On the other hand, the news contained a story that elevated Peter Stumpp from a man to a monster such as those found in myths.<sup>113</sup> The presentation of Stumpp as a monster turns his tale from one of strictly information sharing to a form of literary symbolism. The Werewolf of Bedburg becomes a didactic tool; a tool much like those literature has long used to point out fears both personal and societal to teach and guide society to a more self-aware place.<sup>114</sup> Peter Stumpp,

the man, executed for heinous crimes of cruelty and carnage was news – fascinating news – much like modern true crime. Peter Stumpp, the werewolf, was a symbol of the terror and violence that was found in an unregulated world – a world subject to the whims of war – and an attempt to regulate such terror and violence through the example made by the reflected cruelty of his execution.

## The Missing Historiography of the Werewolf

Werewolf history, especially during the early modern era, has often been the realm of literary study and non-academic discussion. Willem de Blécourt has gone as far as to say, “there is no werewolf history,” to only caveat that statement and confuse the matter by saying, “there is only history of werewolves.”<sup>115</sup> The idea of an absent history of werewolves comes from Blécourt's introduction to an anthology on werewolves that attempts to lay out a methodology of clustered werewolf types.<sup>116</sup> Clusters of werewolves, when placed in logical categories, can aid in continuing and widening the study of the subject. A sensible way to discuss further study of werewolves is found in the categories that have existed since the academic discussions of the sixteenth century. Academic arguments surrounding the ideas of werewolves, lycanthropes, and loup-garous – all terms that are part of the modern lexicon for discussion of human-wolf transformation – can be traced back to academics that were contemporary to the story of Peter Stumpp. Johann Weyer was a Dutch physician, occultist, and demonologist in the sixteenth century who argued men cannot turn into

<sup>112</sup> Bores, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*: Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 76.

<sup>113</sup> Marie de France, *The Lais of Marie de France*, trans. Claire M. Waters, (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2018), 144-161; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. David Raeburn, (Toronto: Penguin Books, 2004) 13-17. *The Saga of the Volsungs*, trans. Jesse L. Byock, (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1990) 44-45: Here I've provided reference to three myths that convey human-wolf transformations and span three distinct cultures. This is but a small example of the presence of monsters in myths and literature.

<sup>114</sup> Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, “Monster Culture (Seven Theses),” *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) 3-25.

<sup>115</sup> Willem de Blécourt, “The Differentiated Werewolf: An Introduction to Cluster Methodology,” *Werewolf Histories*, 1-25, (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 1, 18.

<sup>116</sup> Blécourt, “The Differentiated Werewolf,”: I've cited the entire paper here as the sentence references the attempted purpose of the text. Unfortunately, after careful reading I found myself more confused than before reading this piece of Blécourt's work.



beasts and that lycanthrope was an illness.<sup>117</sup> The author of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Englishman Robert Burton, named the melancholy of lycanthropy as, “Wolfe madnesse,” and categorized it as a mental illness.<sup>118</sup> The idea of lycanthrope as a mental illness has persisted to this day, being termed clinical lycanthrope.<sup>119</sup> The French philosopher Jean Bodin, however, believed accounts of witch trials as undeniable proof of human-wolf transformations.<sup>120</sup> More than just the early modern scholarship that discusses concepts of human-beast transformations – or discussions of persons having delusions of such transformations happening – Peter Stumpp is not the only werewolf of note in the early modern era. Jean Grenier was a notable French werewolf in the early seventeenth century, and French jurist and judge Henry Boguet wrote about a group-werewolf trial in 1597.<sup>121</sup> As there is both modern and contemporary scholarship that discusses the ideas of werewolves, such as Peter Stumpp, there is not just werewolf history, there is werewolf historiography.

It was Montague Summers’ book *The Werewolf* that first reproduced Stumpp’s tale in 1933, and first examined the story since its original production and spread following 1589 and 1590.<sup>122</sup> In his book,

Summers did a thorough linguistic breakdown of the language to discuss the origins of werewolf terminology. The werewolf is an English and German word and refers to a being who can turn from man to wolf.<sup>123</sup> Depending on the locality or folklore surrounding the werewolf, their transformation may occur due to rituals or objects possessed by the werewolf and involves a complete lupine metamorphosis.<sup>124</sup> Lycanthrope, however, originates from the Greek language and comes from a mythological origin in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and the story of King Lycaon.<sup>125</sup> By the sixteenth century, lycanthrope became the terminology for a type of mental illness wherein the patient believed themselves to be a wolf.<sup>126</sup> Finally, the loup-garou of French origin, a hybrid creature based on tales of wolf carrying, would be most the recognizable – in form if not in name or origin – to the modern viewer as something not quite wolf and not quite human.<sup>127</sup> As such, the linguistic delineation of categories sets out the most logical way to collect and examine further stories of werewolves, werewolf trials, and the manifold manifestation of monstrous myths in the late medieval and early modern eras. The categories of werewolf, lycanthrope, and loup-garou also neatly delineate three sets of academic studies that can be

<sup>117</sup> Johann Weyer, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors in the Renaissance: De Praestigiis Daemonum*, trans. John Shea, ed. George Mora and Benjamin Kohl, (New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, [1583] 1991) 337-44.

<sup>118</sup> Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy: Volume 1*, ed. Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicolas K. Kiessling, Rhonda L. Blair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, [1628] 1989), 133-134.

<sup>119</sup> Sélim Benjamin Guessoum et al. “Clinical Lycanthropy, Neurobiology, Culture: A Systemic Review.” *Frontiers in psychiatry* volume 12, 718101. 11, October 2021, doi:10.3389/fpsy.2021.718101, Accessed January 27, 2024. This paper just an example of an ongoing psychiatric discussion of Lycanthropy.

<sup>120</sup> Jean Bodin, *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, trans. Randy A. Scott, (Toronto: The Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, [1580] 2001) 122.

<sup>121</sup> Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 62-99: Otten collects several werewolf stories, from reports like that of Peter Stumpp, to myths like the story of King Lycaon. Stumpp, Grenier, and the werewolves of Bouget’s case are just a small portion of the available werewolves to study from history.

<sup>122</sup> Summers, *The Werewolf*, 253-9: Blécourt, “The Differentiated Werewolf,” 4, 8: Despite my advocacy for using Summers’ linguistic distinctions for categories his text is not particularly careful, and I only suggest the linguistic categories as starting point for a way to continue discussing werewolves productively.

<sup>123</sup> Summers, *The Werewolf*, 2-4.

<sup>124</sup> Summers, *The Werewolf*, 2-3.

<sup>125</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 13-17: Summers, *The Werewolf*, 3, 8.

<sup>126</sup> Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* 133-4: Weyer, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors in the Renaissance*, 342-4.

<sup>127</sup> Summers, *The Werewolf*, 3, 10-12: Blécourt, “The Differentiated Werewolf,” 15-16: Dungeons & Dragons, *Monster Manual*, (China: Wizards of the Coast, [2014] 2018), 206-11: I thought if any modern version of the werewolf is to be referenced, one of the longest standing franchises to feature them should be used, and it wouldn’t hurt that it’s one place where aspects of werewolves, lycanthropes, and loup-garous can be seen in the modern hybridization of the creatures.

pursued: the werewolf represents the historical trials of cannibals and murderers like Peter Stumpp; the lycanthrope represents an area of medical history; the loup-garou reveals an area of folklore and storytelling that has helped shape modern entertainment media.

I have used Peter Stumpp's story in an attempt to point to a gap in cultural history studies, a gap which, when examined, reveals how important our understanding of the use of monsters to represent persons and fears can shape and direct culture. Stumpp is but one of many werewolves found in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and is part of a didactic tradition to use storytelling to explain the extremes of human cruelty and violence. Not only does the story of Peter Stumpp reveal to us how storytelling adapts to illuminate the difficult topics of our times, but also inspires us to examine why humanity is fascinated by wolves and the idea of transforming into them.

The werewolf exists as a small part of a larger historic-literary tool set that humanity has used to help better understand itself: the monster. Stumpp exists as an example of how monstrosities are used to set boundaries on human behaviour, especially in difficult times. The tales of monsters were meant to teach, and much can be learned from studying how humanity portrays its fears and deep concerns. Especially through those monsters who, like Peter Stumpp, find their way into the historical record, through legal trials, or firm held belief in their existence.

## Appendix A



Unknown Artist, *The Damnable Life and Death of one Stubbe Peeter*, Woodcut Print in Pamphlet, British Library, 1590, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-damnable-life-and-death-of-stubbe-peeter-a-werewolf-1590>

Appendix B



Lucas Mayer, *Wahrhaftige und Wunderbarliche/Neue Zeitung von einem pauren*, Woodcut Print on Broadside, produced in Nuremberg and Augsburg, 1589. Artstor:

[https://librarv.artstor.org/#/asset/BERLIN\\_DB\\_10313810643;prevRouteTS=1675882941364](https://librarv.artstor.org/#/asset/BERLIN_DB_10313810643;prevRouteTS=1675882941364)

## Appendix C



Stecher Franz Hogenberg, *Die Hinrichtung des Peter Stump - Wervolf zu Bedburg*, Woodcut Print on Broadside, produced in Cologne, 1589. Artstor: [https://library.artstor.org/#/asset/BERLIN\\_DB\\_10313810644](https://library.artstor.org/#/asset/BERLIN_DB_10313810644)

## Appendix D

### Weinsberg's Original Text on Peter Stupe:

A. 1589 den 31. oct. ist Stupe Peter rechtfertiget worden. Disser war ein baur, uff drei meiln von Coln zu E(r)perade wonhaft. Disser wart gefangen und hin uff Bedber gefuirt. Man sagt, er were ein zeuberer, der sich zum werwolf het kunnen machen und vil schadens und schreckens im lande gemacht. Wie das gerucht den sommer durch von im seltzsam gangen hat in villen stucken, die man in und baussen Coln verzalt hat. Von dissem war in truck ausgangen, das er frei bekant het, das neulich lautet, er hette 25 jar mit einer duvelinnen gebolet, auch darzwischn bei siner eigen rechten dochter gelegen. Er hett einen gurtel gehat, wan er den umbgetain, so were er zum werwolf worden, dess art an sich gehat, doch darneben menschen-verstant behalten, wan er den abgetain, widder zu menschlicher gestalt komen. Und hett in wolfgestalt 13 kinder von 6 oder 7 jaren, auch sin eigen sontgen zerrissen und innen die hirnen aus den kopfen fressen, zwein menner und ein frau umbs leben bracht und vil vehes beschedigt. Nach laut sulcher urgicht were er zu Bedber den 31. oct. zum toit verdamt, eirstlich mit einer gluender isern zangen ins fleischs gepitzst, darnach mit einer axst arm und bein zerschlagen, auch der kop abgehawen, letztlich sin lichnam mitsamt siner dochter Stupe Beeln und gefatterschn Tringen Trumpen verbrennet und einen hulzen wolf uff ein rat gesetzt, sinen, Peters, kopf druff gestechen und also zum exempel lassen stain. Man sagt daneben, es were ein groisse mennigde von folk uff der richtplatzen gewest, die gehoirt, das er ein gut bekentnis gehat und alles wol wert were, was er litte, wult es auch liden, und gepitten, got wulle ihm barmherzlich sin. Nuhe was die bekante und befonden morderei, bloitschande und ander ubeltaiten anla(n)gt, ist pillich, das er nach beschriben rechten zum abscheue andern gestraift worden, derglichen, wa er mit zaub(er)eien umbgangen oder boisses gewirkt oder im sinne gehat zu wirken, drumb gelitten habe. Es ist ein heimlich verborgen wirk mit der zauberien, uff vil ortn und bei viln glaubt man dran, kunnen es aus der hilliger schrift bewern. Was es aber vor ein handel sei, ist boven minem verstande und mir verborgen. Sol ichs gleuben, so wil ichs geleuben. Aber das alles war sei, was man vom zaubern sagt, dreumt und nachswetzst, das kan ich nit all gleuben.

Wan sulche boese zeuber in Coln wern, da man auch recht weis, wurde wol justicia druber geschein. Wer weis, ob es verschlach, bedroch, inbildung sei? Ich lais heimlich, verborgen dingen gode, dem nitzs verborgen, richten.

### DeepL Translation:

A. 1589 the 31. oct. Stupe Peter has been justified. He was a farmer, living on three miles from Coln to Erperade. He was captured and taken to Bedber. It is said that he was a robber, who could have made himself a werewolf and caused much damage and terror in the country. How the rumor has gone through the summer of the seltzsam in mansions, which one has verzalt in and outside Coln. A truck had gone out from him, which he freely confessed the other day, that he had been sleeping with a woman for 25 years, and that he had also been lying with his own rightful mother. He had a belt, when he changed it, he became a werewolf, which kind he had, but he kept the human form, when he changed it, he became human again. In wolf form he had 13 children of 6 or 7 years, tore his own body apart and ate the brains out of his head, killed two men and a woman and damaged many things. According to the judgement, he was sentenced to death in Bedber on Oct. 31. He was first pierced in the flesh with a pair of glowing pincers, then cut in two with an axe, his head chopped off, his likeness burned, together with his mother, Stupe Beeln and gefatterschn Tringen Trumpen, and a hulzen wolf placed on a council, his, Peter's, head stabbed on it and thus left for an example. It is also said that there was a large group of people in the place of execution, who heard that he had a good confession and that he was worth everything he suffered, and that he would pay for it and ask God to be merciful to him. As for the confessed and committed murder, indecency and other evil deeds, he has been punished according to the described laws to the detestation of others, such as he has suffered because of his handling of magic or evil deeds or because he has intended to work them. It is a secretly hidden work with the magic, in many places and with many people believe in it, can prove it from the holy scripture. But what it is before an act is beyond my understanding and hidden from me. If I believe it, I will believe it. But all that is said of magic, dreumt and nachswetzst, that I can not believe all. If there were such evil sorcerers in Coln, as is well known, it would

have been justified. Who knows if it is a crime, a threat, an education? I let secretly, hidden things gode, dem nitzs verborgen, judge vol.4, p.79.

I found it necessary to isolate this portion to work out a translation:

Ich lais heimlich, verborgen dingen gode, dem nitzs verborgen, richten

This is what made sense from the lack of a proper machine translation:

I let God judge the secret and hidden things.

Link to translator:

<https://www.deepl.com/translator>

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