

Legends  
Overlooked



during the

Thousand Years War

dividing

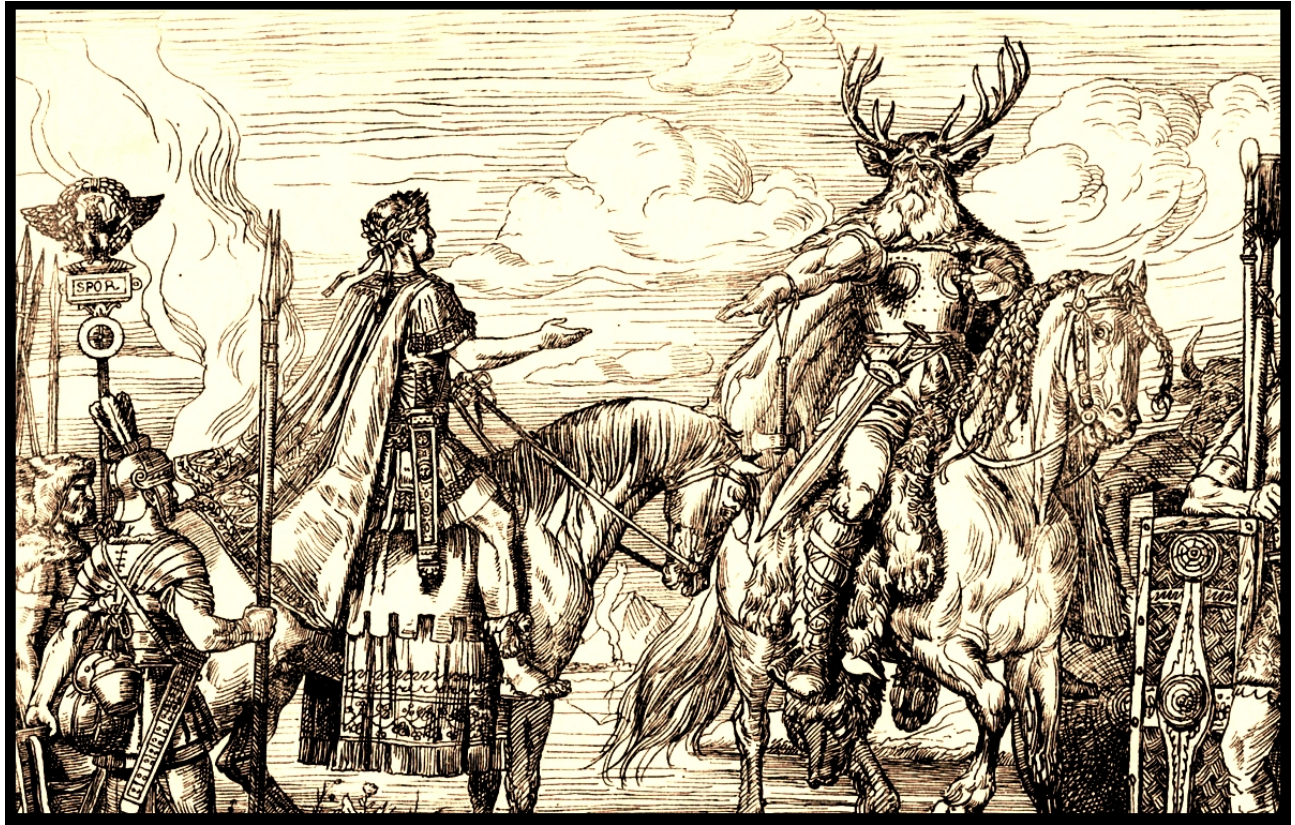
Pagans and Christians

in

Switzerland







*In a kind of foreshadowing, Rome's Julius Caesar parleys with Divico, chief of the Helvetii  
(Engraving by Karl Jauslin for Schweizerlgeschichte in Bildern, 1885)  
Museumsverbund Baselland*



L E G E N D S   O V E R L O O K E D

A Special Publication for the Haston/Hiestand Historical Tour  
in Switzerland & Germany

by

J. Ross Baughman

2023



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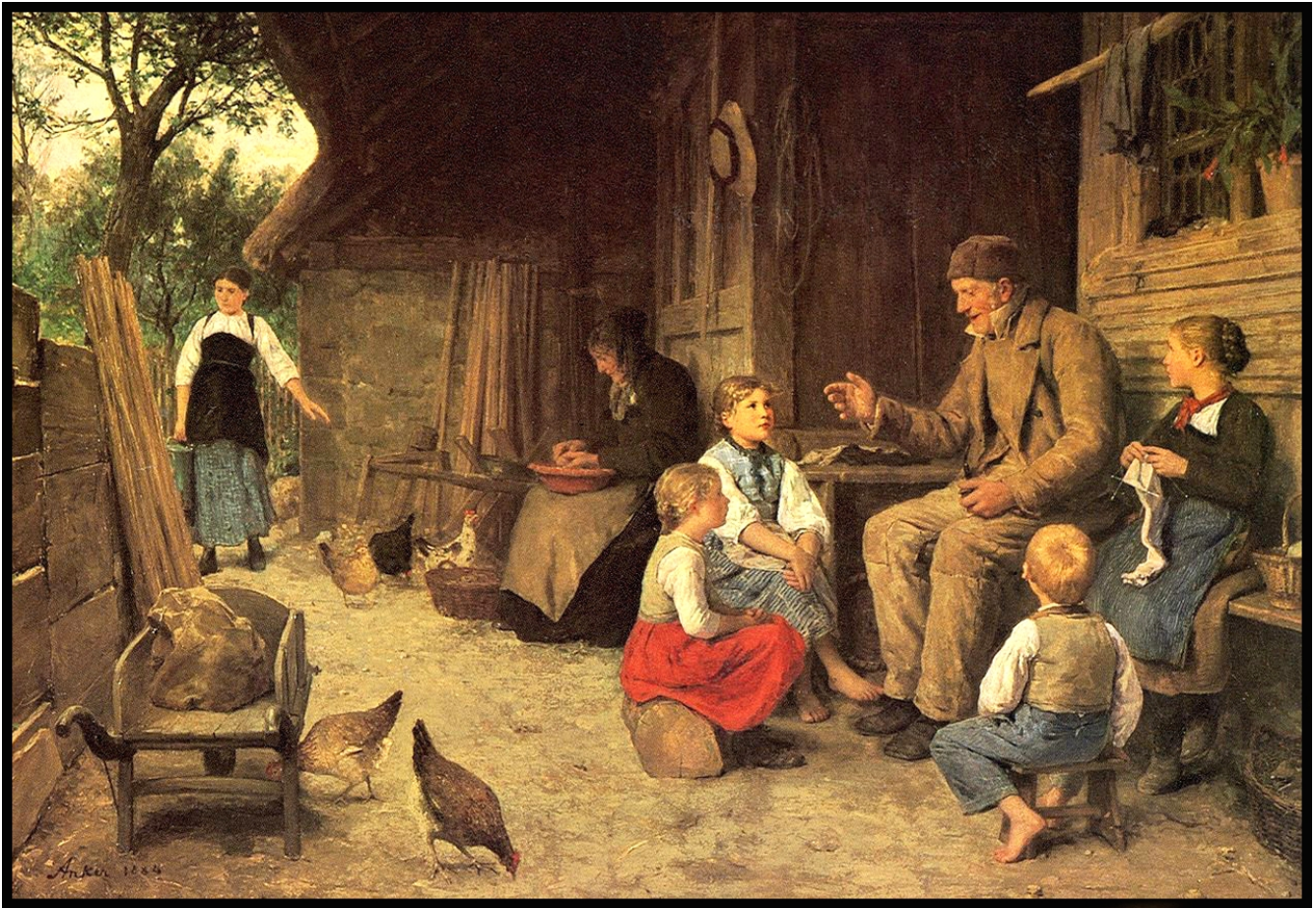
Manufactured in the United States of America

frontispiece: The Hermit Monk & the Devil in Switzerland  
Engraving by Swiss artist Urs Graf in 1512 <sup>13</sup>

the text's initial capital letter T: From the complete alphabet by Albrecht Dürer

page 57: A pagan snake motif, the most common decoration in ancient Germanic burials

For my son Henry  
recalling his first Swiss visit in 2010  
when we originally discussed these subjects



*A Swiss Grandfather Shares Some History, 1884*  
(*Der Grossvater erz hlt eine Geschichte*) (Painting by Albert Anker)



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## Foreword



For Christians, the foreboding image of a snake traces back to Genesis and the Garden of Eden. The snake represented, or perhaps even was, the devil, able to speak to humans, using lies to tempt and mislead them. It introduced sin and disobedience to the world. It symbolized the grave dangers of curiosity and learning for the sake of learning.

However, for all of the other tribes in the world, the snake remains a powerful being, but not by its very nature something evil, or a thing to be feared. Only seven out of a hundred can bite with enough venom to harm or threaten the life of a person.

Snakes can disappear into Mother Earth's smallest holes, subsisting without food or water for long spells; but then re-emerge at full strength. A snake can conjure first by the regular shedding of its own skin, therefore its self-sufficiency, proving its ability to renew, just like the seasons of the year.

Snakes can wriggle free from the almost inescapable. Some snakes might suffer the loss of a large piece of itself, but then miraculously grow back a whole section of tail. Few opponents on the ground can defeat a snake, and from the air it takes a powerful raptor. In these peoples' legends, the snake is a messenger, but only for delivering mystery and truth-telling.

No wonder then that between Christians and Pagans such different points-of-view often clashed.

While making a registry of all the pre-Christian burials they could find in ancient Europe, scientists noticed that the most frequent – nearly universal – symbol decorating their cremation urns, their jewelry, their shields and weapons turned out to be the snake. One snake, or sometimes a pair of snakes, turn into a knotted maze for unending contemplation.

This illustrated essay arranges tales of misunderstanding. The results are so fundamental, so great, that the stakes become Life and Death, even when they are based on nothing more than imagination.



*Charlemagne, soon to be the Holy Roman Emperor,  
Meets with a Snake at his Garden in Zürich,  
Offering Justice to All, including Non-Believers,  
in 800 A.D.*

## Legends Overlooked

### An Illustrated Essay on the Thousand Years War Dividing Pagans and Christians in Switzerland



WELVE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, the Rhine river snaked through Europe towards the North Sea, carrying the lifeblood and legends of every family living beside it. One source of the waters came from a crescent-shaped lake high in the Alpine mountains. Time-worn tales from that place focused on human nature in the midst of natural mysteries.

Most of the thousand people living around Lake Zürich had never heard of the carpenter from Nazareth, even though eight centuries had passed since his Sermon on the Mount, allowing plenty of time for the word to spread. As could be shown by their small numbers, the pilgrims, hermits and nuns in Switzerland did not much concentrate on converting pagans. It took the arrival of Charlemagne, the most powerful warrior and believer in Christ that Europe had ever seen, to begin the persuasion in earnest.

Charlemagne had always called himself Karl, and could speak to the highlanders in the German language, which was after all his native tongue. Instead of declaring war on them, in the ruthless way he had already tamed the German tribes to the north, he began a patient negotiation, satisfied with dedicating a grand church which grew into Zürich's landmark Grossmünster Cathedral.

An account of his first visit has been preserved in legend. Zürich had long imagined itself to be founded by the twin siblings Felix and Regula, early Christians who in 286 A.D. were chased down and beheaded by pagan legionnaires from the Roman army on the site of the future Wasserkirch. In the 8th century, Charlemagne rediscovered the tombs of these patron saints in a witless accident. **While out hunting, the king was pursuing a stag nearly 375 miles up the Rhine from near Aachen in northern Germany. At Zürich, his horse suddenly fell to its knees, paying homage to the unmarked grave of the two young Christians. Soon enough, Charlemagne had the martyrs' bones dug up, and he founded the church and the provosty of the Grossmünster in their honor.**

In the late 8th Century, just before Charlemagne received the new title of Emperor of the Romans, he lived in Zürich for an extended time at a place called Haus zum Loch, over which remains a carving of a snake with a ring and a chalice. The legend says, he had a pillar erected in front of his palace, with a bell attached. If anyone wanted to appeal to the King for justice, all he had to do was ring that bell, and he would be immediately brought before the King to have his case heard.<sup>3</sup>

"Be it animal or man, I will have justice done for everyone who demands it of me," said Charlemagne.

One evening, when Charlemagne was at dinner, he heard the bell ring. He sent a servant out to see who it was, but the servant returned, saying that when he opened the door he found no one.



Dinner progressed; the bell rang again. Same result. When the bell rang the third time, the monarch himself rose and went to the door.

At the pillar, he found a snake wrapped around the pull-rope of the bell, using its weight to ring it. The palace servants tried to drive the snake away, but Charlemagne stopped them.

“Clearly,” he said, “the beast has come to have its case heard. And so it shall.”

And he asked the creature what it wanted.

The snake seemed to bow before the King, and then slithered away, looking behind itself as if it wanted them to follow. They followed the snake back to its nest, where they discovered a huge, poisonous toad sitting comfortably among and threatening the snake’s eggs. The snake looked up at them, as if pleading.

The King ordered his servants to take the toad away and burn it; then he and his court returned to the palace.<sup>3</sup>

At the next evening’s dinner, to everyone’s surprise, the snake suddenly entered the Great Hall. It glided straight to the King’s table, bowed, then came up onto the table and dropped a magnificent diamond into the King’s wine glass. It bowed again, and then left.

The King had the diamond set into a beautiful gold ring, which he then gave to his Queen, Fastrada. What he didn’t know, however, was that the diamond held magical powers. Whoever gave the diamond to another person also gave that person all his love; and so Charlemagne was now deeply, passionately in love with his wife, never wanting to be parted from her. This is not such a bad thing — until, sadly, Fastrada fell ill.

She knew that she was dying, and she suspected the power that the ring had over her husband. She couldn’t bear the thought of someone else having the ring and taking Charlemagne’s love. So with her dying breath, she took the ring from her finger and hid it under her tongue.

She died, but Charlemagne’s love didn’t. He refused to let her be buried, instead setting up her corpse in state in her room. He knelt by her body constantly, even neglecting affairs of state. This was bad enough, but then the corpse started to decay.

The people were in a panic; they didn’t know what to do, so they turned to the Archbishop Turpin for advice. At first Turpin tried to talk some sense into Charlemagne, but it was useless. Turpin prayed and meditated on the problem; finally, in a dream he learned what he had to do.

Charlemagne was dozing when Turpin entered the room where Fastrada lay. Quickly, quietly, Turpin searched the corpse until he found the ring underneath the Queen’s tongue. The moment he took the ring out of her mouth, the King awoke. He looked at his wife’s body as if seeing it (and smelling it) with renewed senses.

“Why is she not buried yet? We’ve mourned long enough.”

And he left the room, for the first time since Fastrada had died. The household was greatly relieved.



But the Archbishop still had the ring. Guess who Charlemagne fell in love with next?

He was just as infatuated with Turpin as he had been with Fastrada; and now followed the Archbishop everywhere. Well, actually, he was King, so he made Turpin follow him everywhere. Turpin dined with him, traveled with him, hunted with him — Charlemagne wouldn't leave him alone. But Turpin was afraid to get rid of the ring. What if an enemy got hold of it, gaining power over the great King? But finally, the poor Archbishop couldn't take it anymore. One evening, on a hunting trip near Aachen, Turpin managed to slip away from the King and throw the ring deep into the lake.

It worked. Charlemagne lost interest in the Archbishop, but he became very, very fond of Aachen. He made the town the capital of his Empire, and had a castle built there, on the edge of the lake that held the ring. He retreated there as often as he could, meditating and bathing in the lake's mineral-rich waters. He loved Aachen so much that he decreed that he should be buried there after he died, in the Cathedral which he also had built.

And he — and the ring — are there still.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

Finally, with the passage of nearly 30 years, Charlemagne seemed to have found a change of heart. He had waged a war during all those years to kill or convert every German he could. Why then was the Snake and the Egg legend promulgated by Charlemagne's admirers, especially since it was a well-understood symbol of the Devil and paganism? Most likely to rehabilitate his reputation as a cruel scourge and forced converter.

Of course, lessons from the Garden of Eden fairly shout out in contrast to this negotiation. In Christian theology, the snake symbolizes Satan, making its first appearance in the Garden of Eden to tempt humanity with the forbidden fruit of knowledge. It may symbolize the unconscious mind, sexuality, psychic energy or the power of Nature. If the snake guards something, it may symbolize the true and total self, or something needed for the next stage of growth.

The ancient symbol of the Orphic Mysteries was the serpent-entwined egg, signifying the Cosmos encircled by Satan, the fiery creative spirit, and all demonic magic. At the time of initiation, the shell is broken and the human emerges from the embryonic state of physical existence, regenerating a philosophical mind.

For the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, the snake symbolizes the earthly essence all people, of which they are not conscious. A tree stands for the power and potential of growth, and the necessary surrender to our own inner forces and need to be fulfilled. Since a tree grows symmetrically, it represents balance.<sup>22</sup> For the historian and psychologist Murray Stein, this legend describes the heart and mind of Zürich, the city having an eternal, animating, protective animal soul.<sup>28:29</sup>





*Carl Jung's painting of the Eternal Snake, from The Red Book (1914-1930) <sup>22</sup>*



In 772, Charlemagne had destroyed the pagans' sacred oak pillar, known as the Irminsul, during his intermittent thirty-year Saxon War, trying to wipe out their old faith and force the Christian conversion of all the Germans. Jacob Grimm ties the origin of the name Irminsul to *iörmungandr* from the old Norse word for "Great Snake." As the next step, Charlemagne personally oversaw forced, mass baptisms at Lippe. By 782, a fresh rebellion rose up, spread widely in the same region of Lower Saxony, resulting in a German victory in the battle of Süntel. [see map on page 51.]

Charlemagne rushed back with a large army and readily vanquished them. He then ordered the beheading of 4,500 German pagans who were all taken prisoner in October 782 at Verden, near the confluence of the Aller and Weser rivers. The Germanic leader Widukind was not among them, but had fled to Nordmannia in present-day Denmark.<sup>24</sup> When Charlemagne finished the executions, he returned to Francia, but the region boiled in more war for three years, ending only when Widukind accepted baptism and became a Christian. The Germans promised "renunciation of their national religious customs and the worship of devils, acceptance of the sacraments of the Christian faith and religion, and union with the Franks to form one people," according to Einhard, the emperor's teacher, life-long advisor and biographer.<sup>16</sup>



*Charlemagne massacres Germanic Pagans for Refusing to Convert to Christianity*

For all of these works, Charlemagne had help from other corners of the church. Columbanus, Gall and Boniface, three among the many monks who prepared the ground and led the way in desecrating pagan worship and threatening the Germans' way of life.

Gall (ca. 550-646) was a disciple of, and one of the traditional twelve companions for Columbanus. Unlike his Irish mentor, Gall may have originally come from the border region between Alsace and Alemannia, at the monastery of Luxeuil in the Vosges mountains. Nonetheless, Gall is known as a representative of the Irish monastic tradition. The Abbey of Saint Gall in the city Saint Gallen, Switzerland was built on the site of his original hermitage in northeastern Switzerland.

Boniface (ca. 675- 5 June 754) was an English Benedictine monk in the following century, and became a leading figure in the Anglo-Saxon mission to Germanic Europe. He foreshadowed the destruction of the Irminsul by felling a tree called Thor's Oak near Fritzlar in northern Hesse. He also organized significant foundations for the church in Germany; served as an ally of Charles the Hammer Martel, grandfather of Charlemagne; and was made archbishop of Mainz by Pope Gregory III. Boniface was killed by Pagans at Frisia in 754 in retaliation for his desecration of Thor's Oak, along with 52 other Christians. In the legend of his ending hours, it is said that he lifted a Bible in front of his heart as a shield, but was fatally stabbed straight through it.



*Boniface chopping into Thor's Oak*



*Charlemagne forces bound Pagans to kneel as his soldiers cut down the sacred oak pillar Irminsul.*

In 853 AD, Charlemagne's grandson, Louis the German, built a "Pfalz", or palace, on the Lindenhof and gave an existing women's convent with its own political autonomy as a gift to his eldest daughter, Hildegard. Thus the Fraumünster abbey was founded.

Zürich prospered in the 11th and 12th centuries thanks to the Fraumünster, which as a convent for aristocratic women attracted princesses from all over Europe. Under the Frankish kings, Zürich also grew to become the most important market town, with trade connections reaching from northern Italy to Holland. Thanks to the relics of Zürich's patron saints, Felix and Regula, the city was also an important pilgrimage site.

This was also the dawn of a new era for the whole lake and surrounding districts, when the old castle was built at Wädenswil (1250 A.D.) and the first church was built in Richterswil (1265). As Christians solidified their power in the cities and towns, the old religions fled to remote borderlands, most often up the side of the nearest mountain.



*A view looking northwest across Lake Zürich from atop Gottschalkenberg, at left, Homeland Slope of the Pagans in Switzerland. The church towers of Zürich are visible near the horizon.*



*An Admired Pagan is Memorialized on the Handle of a Great Bronze Cauldron  
in the southern reaches of Gaul*



*Aboard a boat, Christian Leadership Arrives in Switzerland with the saints Gall and Columbanus*



*The Three-Finger Stone marking a fight with the Devil [see vol. IV <sup>5:64-65</sup>] and the boundaries between the cantons of Zürich, Zug and Schwyz, Homeland of the Pagans on Rossberg, at a source of the Witch's Little Brook*

## Pagan Lands south of Lake Zürich



Meinrad trained as a young monk at the Benedictine abbey in Reichenau, which was founded on a Swiss island out in Lake Constanz. He finally had to plead with his superiors for the chance to leave and find a place of total solitude. This was his heart's calling, and the only way he could devote himself to a life of prayer and poverty.

So in the year 829 A.D., after a 110-mile walk to the south, Meinrad chose a valley that stretched out beyond Gottschalkenberg and Mount Etzel on the north down to the two Mythen mountains on the south. Its streams and brooks knew better, and headed back in the opposite direction. This lonely forest knew the wolf's howl and the vulture's scream, but the voices of people were nearly unheard, except among a few rustic cabins that might be found hidden here and there.<sup>10</sup>

The whole district had a raw wilderness about it, and was feared by the dwellers near Lake Zürich. The great snow-mountains which pass through the valley of Glarus, through Schwyz, Uri, and Unterwalden, bounded it on the south; it pushed its way northwards to the meadows by the lake; it reached Altmatt on the west, and on the east it skirted the upper lake. This land belonged to the Dukes



of Alemannia, and was ecclesiastically within the diocese of the Bishops of Constance; but even though the nobles may have sometimes hunted on its outskirts, it was shunned generally as the Dark Forest and a region of sinister reputation. <sup>29:1</sup>

Meinrad took with him a statue of the Virgin Mary, thought to answer with miracles all who prayed to her, which had been given to him by an admirer and benefactor, the Abbess Hildegarde of Zürich. After centuries of dust, smokey candles, oil lamps and incense, the surface turned very dark. In 1803, the hands and face were purposely painted black, while spectacular, colorful robes adorned the rest of the body. It has been called the Black Madonna ever since, a tradition of some mystery shared by other images of the Virgin Mary with miraculous powers, in Poland and beyond.

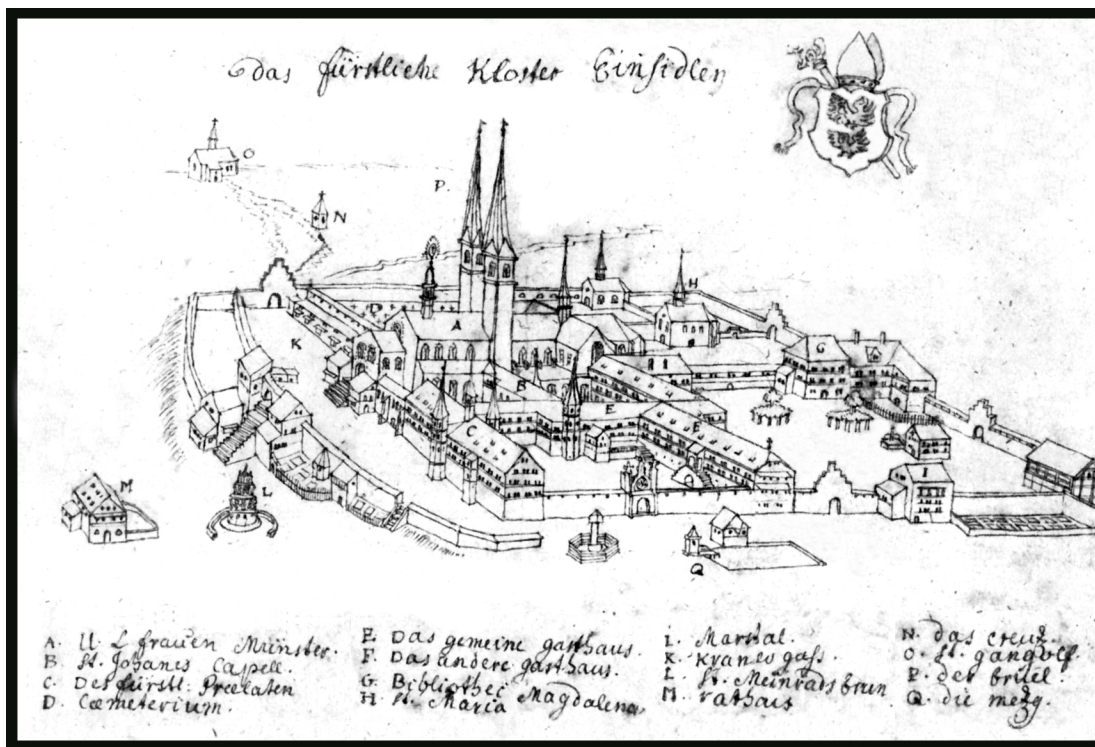
In 861, two strangers murdered Meinrad, imagining that he had hidden great treasures nearby that belonged to the church. It may also be that they were pagan citizens of the forest who simply could not tolerate a Christian trespasser.

According to legend, these two would have gotten away with their crime, but two ravens which had befriended Meinrad refused to let the murderers out of their sight, following them all the way to Zürich, tormenting and so frightening the pair that they preferred to confess everything rather than endure another moment of their tortured secret. These men soon paid with their lives after a trial.

A succession of new hermits took up Meinrad's post. One of them, named Eberhard, previously Provost of Strasburg, erected a monastery named Einsiedeln Abbey, and became its first abbot. The word itself -- Einsiedeln -- translates as hermitage, and it's official year of establishment was 934.

Meinrad was originally buried at Reichenau as the Martyr of Hospitality. His remains and relics were returned to Einsiedeln in 1029. In Medieval times, Einsiedeln became an important stop for pilgrims on their way to the shrine of the apostle Saint James the Great in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain's Galicia province.

In its long history, the abbey caught fire under mysterious circumstances again and again, most notably burning to the ground in 1465 and 1745, but it was always rebuilt as soon as possible. <sup>10</sup>



Einsiedeln Abbey as it appeared in 1630.



*The Black Madonna of Einsiedeln*



*I Walked All the Way to Spain for the Sake of my Soul, and Perhaps a Cure.  
A Pilgrim's Badge for a Keepsake, and the Procession to the Marian shrine in Oberbüren  
(Water Color Painting by the Swiss Artist Diebold Schilling)*

## The Progress of Pilgrims



*Lucifer the Devil offers a lesson, and then devours Wicked Children in a Medieval Illustration; while a statue of Kindlifresser Kronos, the Child-Eater, does the same on the busy Kornhausplatz in Bern in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

Thousands of Christians in Europe were taught to retrace the footsteps of the saints.<sup>2</sup> By walking the 1,161 miles from Lake Zürich to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, their bodily sacrifices would strengthen the soul, affording them a great deal of time for prayer and a contemplation of Hell.<sup>2</sup> The often-told account of Dante's *Inferno* described lakes of fire surrounding Satan, and how wicked children would be eaten alive.

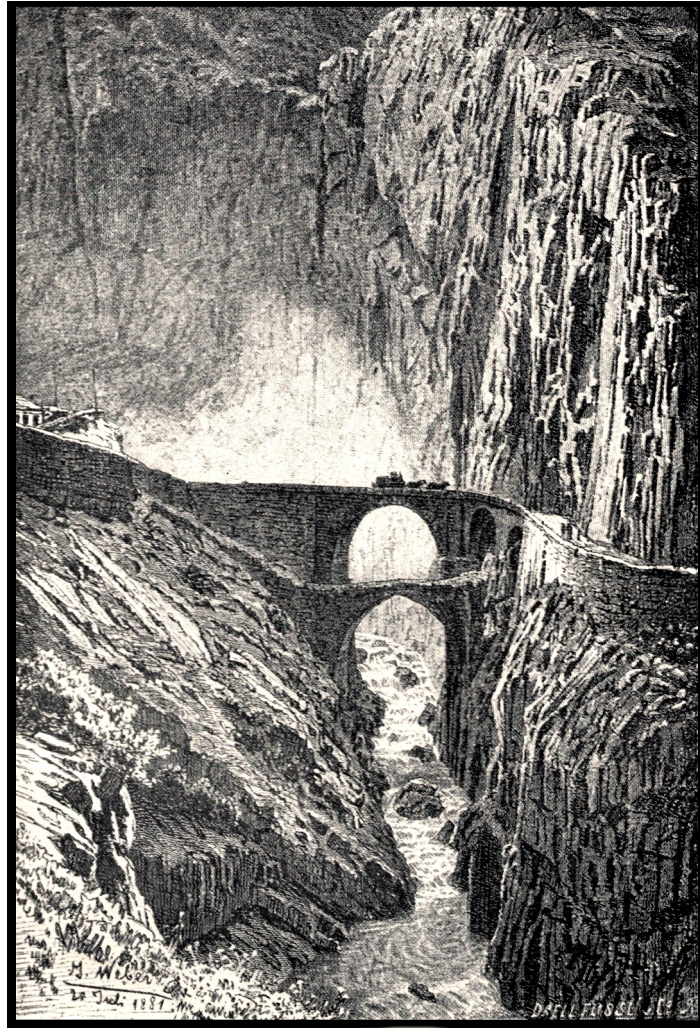
Along the journey, they stopped at dozens of way stations, learning about the vivid suffering of other Christians, and preparing themselves and their communities for even larger undertakings, such as a journey to Jerusalem. The possibilities of a Crusade to retake the Holy Land seemed like all the more of a good idea.

Pilgrims could then return home with an inch-long badge that was crudely cast from lead, often depicting a symbol of long travels such as a boat resembling the crescent moon. By pinning one to a cloak or a hat, one could be perfectly distinguished from a pagan, and assure their place among the pious in town or at Saint Peter's pearly gate. [See map on page 51.]



*The Devil's Workshop in Hell by Herrad von Landsberg (1180 A.D.)*

## The Devil's Bridge



If Europeans ever despaired at the sheer impossibility of building a bridge in a difficult spot, especially made out of stone, they frequently blamed the devil, and then tried to strike a bargain with him. In at least three such spots in Switzerland, local folks embroidered elaborate tall tales to tickle and terrify anyone by the evening fire.

The builders of a Swiss road northbound from Italy over the Saint Gotthard mountain took an emergency planning session after approaching every solution from opposite river banks, afraid they could never span the gorge and thundering water below it. [see map on page 51.]

“At Göschenen, although there was no lack of talking, smoking and drinking, no satisfactory decision could be reached. A stranger, clad in black, with broad-brimmed hat and a bold heron feather atop it, sat quietly at a neighboring table and listened. Finally, he drew near the principle magistrate in front of the fire, announced that he was a famous builder, and could span the stream before morning. He even offered to show the fine bridge there at dawn, on the next day, provided they were willing to pay his price.

“One and all now exclaimed that nothing he could ask would seem too much.

“Very well, then. It’s a bargain! Tomorrow you shall have your bridge, but in payment I shall claim the soul of the first one who passes over it. Here is my hand upon it.’

“Saying these words, he seized the hand of the astonished magistrate beside him, and before anyone could add another word, disappeared. The people stared for a moment at each other in silence, and then hurried to furtively make the sign of the cross. As soon as the magistrate could speak, he declared that the stranger must be his Satanic Majesty in person. To make his case, the magistrate claimed that the stranger had quietly thrust his own feet into the red-hot coals in the fireplace, as if the heat were agreeable. When our stranger grabbed for the bargain’s final handshake, sharp claws pricked the back of the man’s hands.

“Everyone shuddered with fear, but a clever tailor promptly promised that he would settle the bill with their architect first thing in the morning.

“That night no one slept in the neighborhood, for although the sky had been clear when they went to bed, a sudden storm arose and raged with fury until morning. Amid the roll of thunder, incessant flashes of vivid lightning, and violent gusts of wind, they heard the splitting and falling of rocks, which seemed to roll all the way down the steep mountain side and crash into the valley. But when morning came, no signs of storm were left, and as soon as the sun had risen and they again dared venture out, all rushed forth in a body to see what had happened. When they drew near the river, they could not express enough wonder and admiration, for a fine stone bridge arched boldly over the swift stream.

“On the opposite side stood the black-garbed stranger, grinning fiendishly and beckoning the people to test his bridge by walking over it. Just then, the tailor appeared, carrying a large bag. Instead of setting foot on the bridge, however, he deftly poured out an army of mice and rats, followed by a few cats.

“The Devil, for it was he, gave out a bellowing yell of rage upon being outwitted, threw off his black clothes and ran down to the river to grab a huge boulder. He clearly intended to break the arch of the bridge before any other living creature could cross.

“But just before he could deliver the blow, Satan came face-to-face with a little old woman, who frightened by his wicked appearance, made the sign of the cross. This so startled the Prince of Darkness that he dropped the giant rock, and disappeared back into his own realm. To this day, people still point out the huge boulder with its readily visible claw marks, calling it the Devil’s Stone. *[In 1977, 300,000 Swiss francs were spent to move the 220 ton rock by 127 m in order to make room for the new Gotthard rail tunnel.]*

“To get a small measure of revenge, the Evil One posted one of his own imps in this valley. When travellers pass, this demon pounces down upon them unseen, snatches their hats off their heads, and with a slight omcking whistle tossed them into the middle of the rushing water. This imp, known as the *Hut Schelm* or Hat Fiend, still haunts the bridge even though centuries have passed since the Devil played the part of engineer for the Swiss people.”

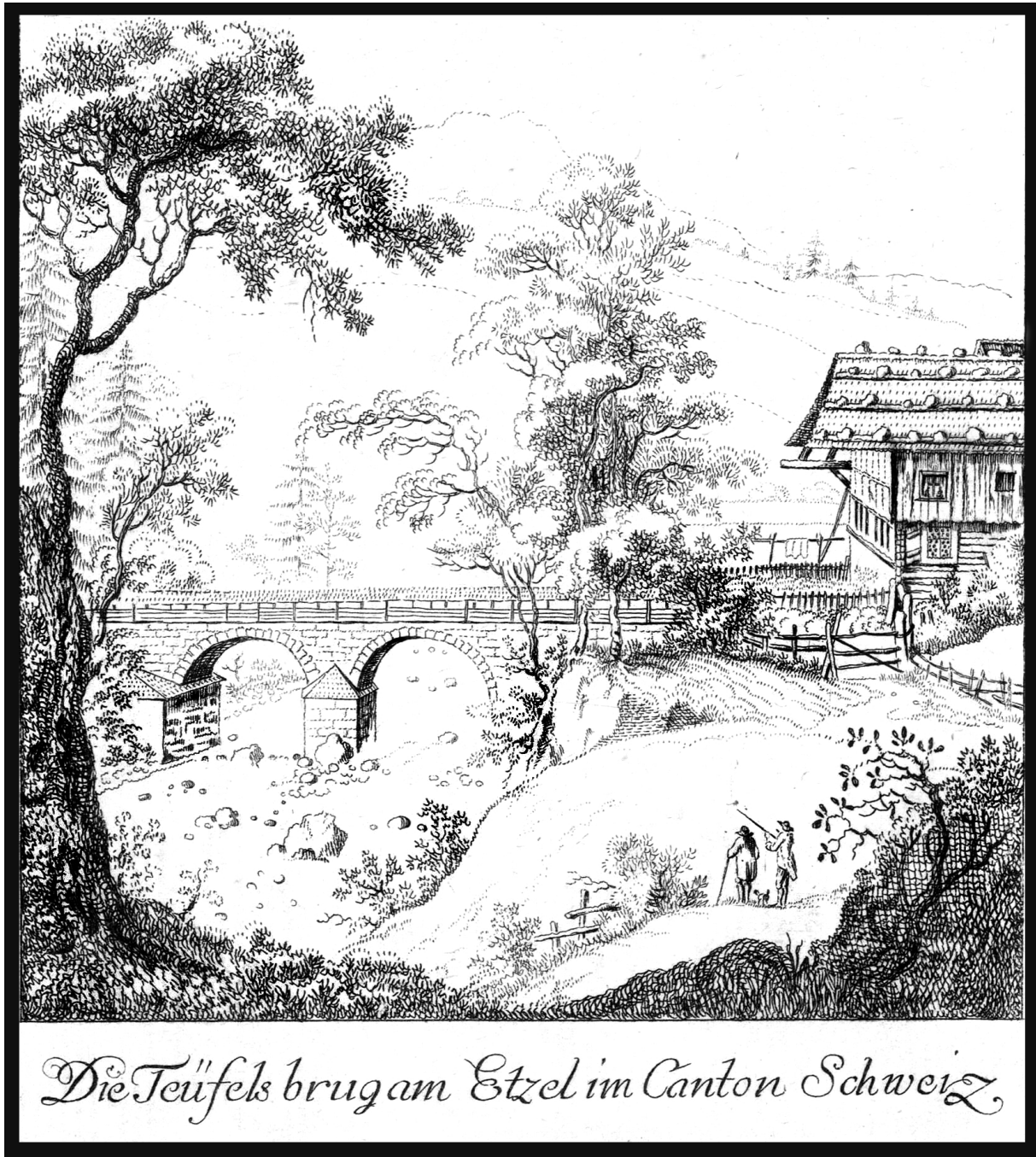
In another variation to the tale, a Swiss herdsman who often visited his girlfriend had either to make his way across the Reuss River with great difficulty or to take a long detour in order to see her.

It happened that once he was standing on a very high precipice when he spoke out angrily, "I wish that the devil were here to make me a bridge to the other side!"

In an instant the devil was standing beside him, and said, "If you will promise me the first living thing that walks across it, I will build a bridge for you that you can use from now on to go across and back. The herdsman agreed, and in a few moments the bridge was finished. However, the herdsman drove a chamois goat across the bridge ahead of himself, and he followed along behind.

The deceived devil ripped the animal apart and threw the pieces from the precipice. <sup>18</sup>

The Devil's Bridge at Egg in Canton Schwyz



The people who lived along the shores by Lake Zürich felt a deep dread of the forests and mountains that loomed behind them. The only barrier and protection from that lonesome back country was the Sihl River and the steep, rocky hillsides through which it cut.<sup>20</sup>

Switzerland's most well-known and consequential physician was born along this very frontier on November 10<sup>th</sup> 1493 as Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim. After a godly and productive life, he was interred in the cemetery of Saint Sebastian in Salzburgh on September 21<sup>st</sup>



1541 as Paracelsus. His physician father, Wilhelm von Hohenheim, the bastard son of Georg Bombast of Hohenheim near Stuttgart, Grand Master of the Order of the Knights of Saint John, journeyed penniless to Switzerland and settled in the old canton of Schwyz. There, in an inn at the foot of the Devil's Bridge, he met and married Elsa Ochsner, the inn-keeper's daughter who served as a superintendant at the Einsiedeln Abbey's hospital. His young wife gave birth to a son, but was subject to such powerful manic depressive states that eventually she leapt from the Devil's Bridge into the Sihl River. By then, young Paracelsus was only nine years old.<sup>29:1</sup>

The home was beautifully placed. It was approached from Einsiedeln by a hilly road which reached the Sihl bridge down a steep descent. The river rushed through a gorge, its banks clad with fir-trees and rich in plants and wild flowers. The house stood a little back from the end of the covered bridge, its windows looking towards the pilgrim-way up the Etzel. Behind it stretched meadows where cattle grazed. Their sad old bridge over the Sihl, known as the *Teufels-brücke*, was rebuilt after a terrible fire a century and a half ago, but as nearly as possible in its original form, so that one can realize today most of the features familiar to the residents of the Ochsner house.<sup>29:22-23</sup>

The widower and his son spent many years exploring the forest between Etzel mountain and the Witch's Little Brook (*Hexenbächli*) flowing south from the Rossberg. Their discoveries are matched in a natural history of the region by their contemporary, Father Martin Gander, which includes a large number of medicinal herbs and some to which magical powers were ascribed, including Saint John's wort, sage, potentillas, ribes, and witch-herb.<sup>29:25</sup> [See map on page 52]



Paracelsus with Two Herbs that Witches prized for their medical power, namely St. John's Wort & Sage  
For a thorough biographical sketch of Paracelsus, see vols. IV<sup>5:16</sup> & V<sup>6:75-80</sup>

During his lifetime, Paracelsus published extensively on medicine, chemistry, engineering, astronomy and science in general, developing a devoted set of admirers in political and scholarly circles throughout Europe. He was several centuries ahead of his contemporaries, and today is regarded as the founder of chemotherapy as a tool for fighting cancer.<sup>34</sup>

After his death in 1541, friends discovered that Paracelsus had written several books that had been jealously kept secret, all dealing with his attitudes towards Christianity and other spiritual matters.

In 1566, they posthumously released his *Ex Libro de Nymphis, Sylvanis, Pygmaeis, Salamandris et Gigantibus, etc.* wherein he argued the natural world included elemental beings of the water, air and fire, “significant parts of God’s creation that were neither amphibian nor reptile... but that Christians were wrong to call devils.” This woodcut illustrates his elemental fire creature, which he thought was most closely related to a salamander.<sup>28</sup>





*All Hell Breaks Loose Among the Citizens of a Swiss Village  
Before the Burning Begins at a Witchcraft Trial in 1600 A.D.*

## The Witchcraft Trials and Burnings in Switzerland In Pursuit of the Devil's Assistants

Naming a witch from out of such small communities was a tricky business. Verdicts had to serve the church's purpose, but also prove acceptable to the townsfolk. Pushing either to the breaking point could be disastrous in bigger ways than anyone anticipated.

An account of the trial for Margret Bachmann on charges of witchcraft comes from the Swiss historian Dr. Stefan Jäggi, who also serves as an archivist at Canton Luzern:

Enclosed you will find copies of the two documents, the report on the case. COD 4470 ("Tower Book") contains the statements Margret Bachmann, she made before the Council judges in Luzern. In RP 42 ("Council minutes") of the final decision of the Luzern Council can be found in its function as the highest court.<sup>36</sup>

This is a brief summary of the case: On Friday, 5 July 1591 Margret Bachmann was interrogated on suspicion of witchcraft by the Council judges in Luzern. She testified that she had brought cloth to Ruswil on Sunday, 30 June. There she was arrested by Martin Furer and Kleinhans Süess and taken to the town hall. However, she was released the next day.

When she was at home in her garden, she was arrested a second time by Jacob Ineichen and brought to Luzern. She was accused of using a cow to cast a hex on the speech of a child. In her own statements, Margret Bachmann did not address the alleged witchcraft. The Council judges refused pursuit of the case, but referred the matter to the Council of the city of Luzern.

On Wednesday, 10 July, the Council dealt with the case. They decided that Martin Furer and Kleinhans Süess could not provide any evidence for their accusation against Margret Bachmann, and determined furthermore that they were drunk at the time. The accusation of witchcraft was judged to be invalid. Both men were fined 25 guilders and had to assume the court costs as well. In addition, they had to pay for the woman to take a stay at the spa of her choosing.

### Witchcraft Trial in 1591 in Luzern

On the Friday after Saint Ulrich's Day July 5<sup>th</sup> in the year 1591, Margareta Bachmann, born in Wangen and from the district of Ruswil, was, in the name of my lords' high council, arrested as a monster -- this being another term for a witch -- after the circumstances mentioned in the Council report, as follows:

On last Sunday June 30<sup>th</sup>, she brought some cloth from Wolhusen to Ruswil, so as to meet there with the old woman Dorothee. Margareta then led Dorothee behind the inn's large stove and gave her the cloth. She spoke with her a little bit, until Dorothee gave her the wages for having dyed the cloth. When Margareta was about to leave, Hans Knechtli, a baker, offered her a drink, of which she partook, and then she left the inn.

When she came to the house of Peter Krämer on the street, Martin Fürer and Kleinhans [Little John] Süess (from the Marshland) followed her inside. Then Fürer arrested her and took her to the townhall. Both Fürer and Süess cursed horribly – invoking heaven, the sacraments and the name of our Lord God – all in the presence of Konrad Wermelinger and Peter Wyss.

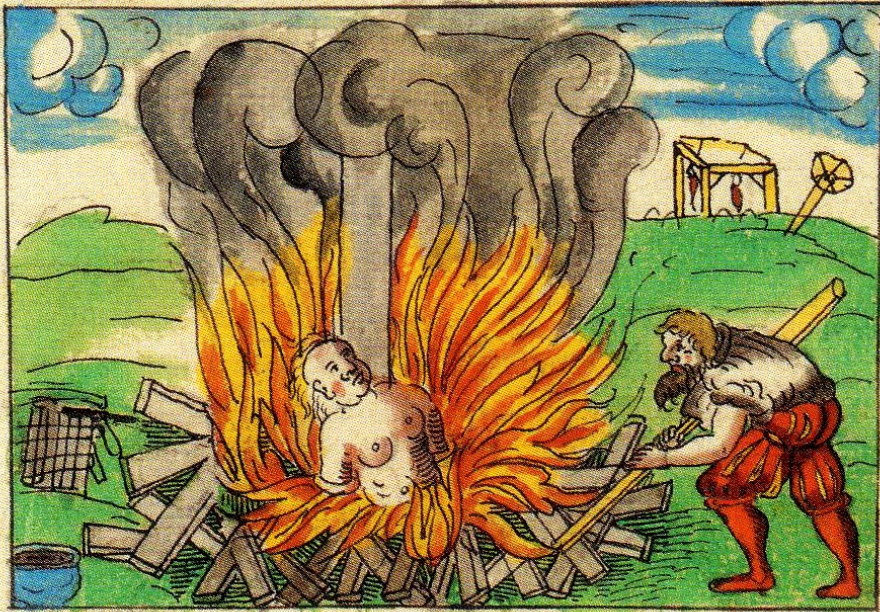
When they brought Margreta to the jail at town hall, they had wanted to violently lock her up in the Armory, and there to torture her cruelly. When Jost Linden arrived on horseback, neither he nor Constable Bühler were satisfied with this turn of events. Neither man had not noticed anything deserving punishment, so the preparations for torture stopped.

1571.

249

Wie ein häx zu  
Schwyz verbrant.

Aan 2 Aug. hat man zu Schwyz ein  
fräuw verbrant, die sich by einem, einer  
Jan, 8, jar umbalun, ise als dem Schwyz,  
den land bürlic gewäsen, hat sich vil der  
Arystliche angenommen, das die thure von  
Schwyz, von insonde, an einem vordich ein  
blutung gebunden, hat sich aber malen er,  
funden, das si ein häx gewäsen, vil lüch  
von vordich erlömpen zu gewöh, insonde dem  
von zug großen schaden vnder dem vordich  
erlösen, hat die alman, zu die wijdern  
vergiftern, das alle die vordich mit lüch  
erlösen.



The next day, Monday June 1<sup>st</sup>, FÜRER came to see the constable in town hall, wished that Margreta should be released, and asked for his own forgiveness. The whole thing had happened because he was drunk.

The constable sent Margreta home again. All she wanted to do was pull weeds in her garden. But then Jakob Grüter arrived, and had her arrested once more and taken to the jail at town hall.

Because FÜRER's cow had damaged the house garden, Margreta's case was dismissed. Jakob Grüter and Klaus Krewliger celebrated after the court bailiff asked them not to pursue it any further. This exchange was decided according to Council Chambers Book, page 319. (from RP 42 of the "Council minutes")

On the day before, my lordly gentlemen have invited the following Martin FÜRER and Klein hans in the Marshland at Ruswil, because they had arrested Margreta Bachmann of Wolhusen as a monster (witch), drunk, and have transferred them to My lord. This (Margreta) was found to be innocent. Margreta, too, did not desire to bring forward anything against Martin and Klein hans, but asked them to let her go in mercy.

According to today's judgment (recognizing this), each (of the two men) must pay 25 pounds for My Gracious Lords and bear all the costs incurred. Moreover, they must give the woman a stub (equal to 4 pfennigs) for a bathing trip (cure at the mineral baths). They should keep their honor (meaning to restore their reputations).

In addition, they were spoken with them in all seriousness, so that they would now abandon such matters. If they were to do the same again, My lordly masters would act differently (much more sharply) with them.

[Transcription from Prof. Peter Ziegler, Wädenswil, 30.Sept.2016]

As only a small sample, fifty women endured trials as witches in Canton Luzern from 1590 to 1595. Of those, sixteen died by fire at the stake, three were hospitalized for madness, and the rest received corporal punishments and a wide variety of religious penalties. Many of the surnames on that list match the families living due north often affiliated with the dissident Anabaptist brethren, including Bürgi, Eggli, Fischer, Frick, Häggli, Huber, Hüniger, Keller, Kessler, Marti, Meyer, Sager, Saller, Schenk, Schneider and Schwartz. The last execution of a witch in Europe did not occur until June 1782 when the governess Anna Göldi of Glarus, Switzerland, was beheaded, she being accused by her employers the Tschudi family of poisoning one of their daughters.

Margret Bachmann from Grosswangen in Canton Luzern fell tenth in that order, but unlike 48 of the other women brought up on such charges, she proved innocent. <sup>25:183</sup>

On the other side of power, we know that a Bachmann served as judge for a witch's trial in Richterswil during the year 1600, and that concurrently, several generations of Bachmanns held power throughout a 150 year stretch at the Einsiedeln, becoming their administrators, tax collectors and briefly the monastery's abbot. Yet other Bachmanns served as Jesuit missionaries during earliest settlement of the New World, and as well as officers and halbediers in the pope's Swiss Guard at the Vatican.

The Ammann for the abbey at Einsiedeln and the Ammann of Zug were different positions in a different context. They were independent from each other. The Ammann of the abbey was in administrative position with judicial rights. The Ammann of Zug was the leader of the state. He acted

as chairman of the state council and was chief of the criminal court , which was a part of the council. The names of the judges aren't mentioned in the witchcraft files. But some of the Bachmanns were members of the council. Therefore it's possible that some of these Ammann Bachmanns served as judges in the witchcraft trials. [from Zug archivist Dr. Renato Morosoli]

The often fatal persecutions of women, and a few men, spanned from 1440 until 1738, and even included suspicions and harassment lingering into the mid-1800s. The total number of witch trials across Switzerland is unknown.

### Witchcraft Testimony in Canton Zug involving Katharina Gilgini during 1737 <sup>35</sup>

The witchcraft trial of Katharina Gilgini, a 40-year-old chambermaid originally from the northern border town of Salestein on Lake Constanz, began on Monday, 12 August and continued through Tuesday, 3 September 1737 in Zug, just south of Zürich, as she was questioned under torture by the cantonal prosecutors Karl Amadeus Muos and Bernhard Damian Sidler. Drastic interrogations, such as this, commonly included physical and psychological abuse of women and men, fulfilling a thousand-year-old persecution of non-Christians throughout Europe.

The so-called "little songs of confession" began after the mid-day dinner, with her torture on the rack, while her joints, arms, legs and spine were stretched by incredibly powerful torque, defined precisely by degrees. The harshest pain took as its euphemism "the third degree." She endured 12 sessions of bloody, painful questioning spread over 22 days. For Katharina, they repeatedly applied a thumb screw to one of her toes.

In addition to the prosecutors, another official voice is recorded in the transcripts as the Commentator, likely to be the overseeing local magistrate or possibly even the transcriber, who added his own notes of context. These observations are set off, and in italic type here.

Question: What is your name?

Answer: Catri Gilgini of Salenstein, a good hour away from Frauenfeld.

Q: Lord, would that our sacred work be quick.

*Commentator: All present removed their hats.*

Q: How old are you?

A: 40 years old.

Q: Have you renounced the Evil Enemy?

A: Yes.

Q: Why are you here?

A: I cannot say. I know nothing. I am always a supremely gracious female.

Q: Whether or not you've taken anything?

A: No, I did not take anything. I have been staying seven or eight weeks at the convent. I have been helping them with weaving and making bedsheets.

Q: Whether or not you are being innocent?

A: Yes, I am surely the most innocent of all. I know nothing.

Q: Can you be persuaded to let out the truth?

A: I know nothing.

Q: How and where were you caught?

A: When the gentleman came to visit, I was plucked up and captured in the name of the most sacred Trinity: God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Q: You should speak the truth! Whether you know anything?

A: I know God's name...

Q: If nothing happened, then you know nothing?

A: I know nothing.

Q: Because no one had been on the mountain that night?

A: No. An eyewitness has never been found there from that night.

Q: Where have you been since the bad hail storm?

A: In a house that belongs to the shoemaker Gottard Weber, on the edge of town. Then I left to go to Luzern. I stood under a little bridge when the hail started.

Q: Tell about the wiggle!

A: Just as vinyard workers and convent woman did, if they wanted to be committed into the monastery's wine-making work.

Q: And whether or not a pact with Devil still exists?

A: No, I know nothing. I am innocent.

*C: She makes whining and crying from the pain of the interrogation...*

Q: Whether or not you'll speak the truth? With reward? Whereupon, she'll be tormented more. but I hope you'll tell the truth?

A: I could not say anything. I know nothing. Does speaking in God's name mean nothing? I know nothing.

Q: Should it also mean looking into your soul? And speaking the truth?

A: I know not. I have done nothing. The holy God answered.

*C: Her eyes have been locked onto the questioners.*

Q: How long have you been in a pact with the Devil?

A: I know nothing, in God's name. I am crying out to you. I know nothing...

Q: How long have you been in a pact with the Devil?

A: I know not of what you asked. With frightened cries to all that is holy, please help me.

Q: You should speak the truth!

A: I know not. I am innocent.

Q: Who was being beaten?

A: The man who sold it. How many times have you scuffled with him?

*C: She was stretched now to the first degree.*

Q: You should not be martyred! If only you'd just speak the truth!

A: I know nothing else. I am a martyr for God. When only the truth comes forth from me, I suffer in order to honor God.

*C: Long moaning has begun, and with wheezing, she begins to talk but the sounds turn into frightening cries. A fiddle begins to play and the questioners begin their meal.*

A: I know nothing

*C: She makes little shocking cries, and soon passes out of consciousness.*

A: You want to say what you want for dessert?

*C: She calls out in her pain to Jesus and Mary, beseeching everything holy.*

A: I thank God and no one else. I know nothing.

Q: You should speak the truth! All the others say yes to us.

A: The others are like the witches. I know nothing.

*C: They reach the third degree of pulling her arms and legs.*

A: I cry out as before, I am innocent.

Q: You should speak the truth!

A: There is a little consolation.





*A Swiss mother suspected of witchcraft is tortured on the rack, suspended by her arms in back, while her daughter is forced to watch.*

Q: You should speak the truth, and consider your soul!

A: You instead should look at my soul and speak the truth. I suffer innocently, while you are at your leisure.

Q: How long have you had a pact with the Devil?

A: For my whole life, I've had nothing to do with his evil... I am as innocent as our Lord on the cross...

*C: She remains a student on the rack, drawn to the first degree.*

A: I will always be innocent. I know nothing. I have spoken the truth every time. With shouting and screaming.

*C: One leg was pulled to the third degree.*

Q: Whether you would confess?

A: I am innocent.

Q: You must speak the truth!

A: I speak the truth all the time.

*C: She has been hereupon fully stretched out to the third degree.*

Q: Even in your torment, we cannot believe you!

A: I am innocent. The gracious men of the court report me with untruth.

Q: When you do not confess, you'll stay here all night to suffer!

A: I do not know. I am as innocent as a child in the womb.

*C: After four hours, her resistance has been chipped away.*

A: And also still innocent all the time, without moving a toe.

In the name of the Father, the Trinity and the Holy Ghost. The examination was held 29 August 1737 and Cathri Gilgini presented herself.

Q: Persuade me. Speak the truth! Let her look at her own soul!

A: I know nothing, in God's name! Anything. And when it comes to the pattern, I am sorry. Please, for the sake of Jesus and Mary, be merciful.

Q: You should speak the truth and nothing else!

A: I am innocent. I don't deserve such excruciating rewards. I am innocent.

Q: Man will suffer when driving the Devil away.

A: I have had nothing to do with him. I am innocent.

Q: You have no pact with the Devil?

A: No, not in all my life. I did not do anything out of the ordinary, because I am innocent.

Q: We work with prolonged persuasion. If once the Devil leaves, and you come to God, and you speak the truth! Only then you would please our Lord. Let her speak and say the truth. Spare your soul from the depth of the darkness beyond!

A: ...Of course, I am a great sinner, but at least, I am innocent of this.

*C: Interrogation. Saturday, 31 August 1737. Cathri Gilgini has been presented, with livid pain ongoing.*

A: I know nothing. I am innocent.

*C: Therefore, she continues to resist what we assign. The first degree applied.*

A: I know nothing. I am innocent.

*C: The second degree.*

A: I know God's name. And in his soul. I am God the all-powerful.

*C: The third degree.*

Q: to ascribe With Saying truth and tell by the blood red color. Jesus Christ, the truth!

A: I know nothing. Wanted like, it could say what that was going to die there.

Q: Say, I have sinned!

A: Yes, I've sinned, but not in this case.

Q: Whither you would confess. How long were you in this? Speak the truth!

A: I am innocent. All this time while my toe has been screwed.

*C: She has been released after one half hour.*

C: 11<sup>th</sup> Session of Interrogation. Monday, 2 September 1737. Cathri Gilgini is no longer hardened.

A: I am innocent.

Q: Should she shed a single toe to honor God Almighty Jesus Christ? And not only her toe, but the most precious blood as well.

A: I know nothing but what I have with God and Mary. And wishing their assistance, in particular.

Q: God will not honor the shedding of a single little toe. You should be thankful for what God Christ Jesus gave us on the holy cross, he crucified by the malicious Jews. Jesus called out, Father, forgive them. They know not what they do.

A: I've already told the truth. I will always be innocent.

12<sup>th</sup> Session of Interrogation. Tuesday, 3 September 1737

Q: She has been adjudged. She should consider her soul and now speak the truth. How long has she kept a pact with the Devil?

A: During my whole life I am innocent. I know nothing of it.

Q: Even when she is so innocent, it should be no trouble to shed a toe. Honoring God!

A: I could not cry more. I have already wept enough. Idiots! I could not cry more.

Q: Let her confess what she knows, and speak the truth!

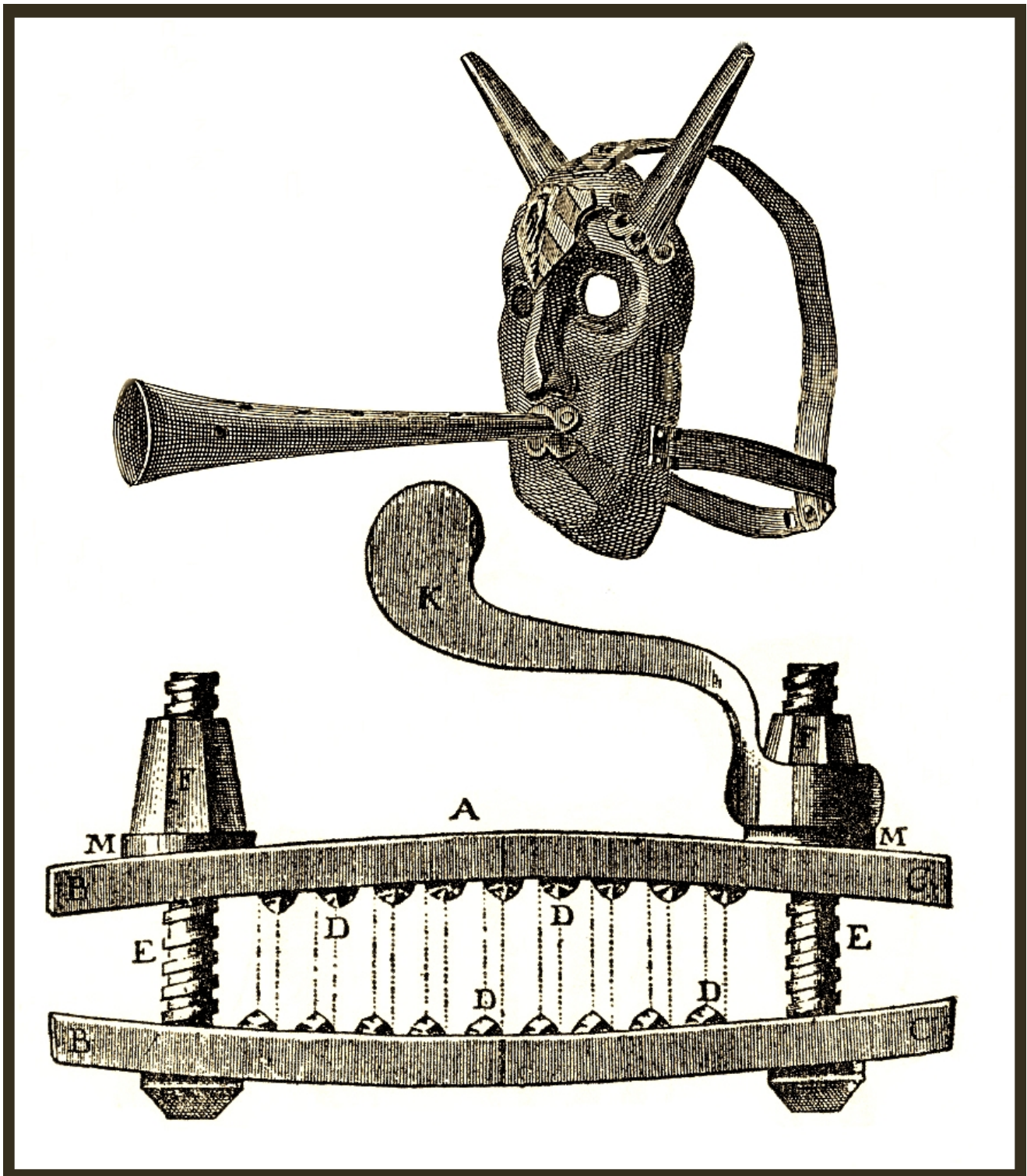
A: I have already squeezed the juice of truth. I am innocent. I know nothing.

Q: Did it [the woman and the Devil] not confess?

*C: Afterwards, nothing else was offered.*



*Satan before the Gates of Hell*  
*from Das Buch Belial (Augsburg, 1473) (Art by Jacobus de Teramo)*



*Interrogation Tools  
including a Devil's Mask for Water Torture & a Thumb Screw equally suited for Toes*



*Devil's Parade at the Einsiedeln Monastery in Switzerland on 2 March 1965*

Here is a very old custom in many Swiss communities, similar to the Haageri Night in Samstagern, when young boys wear horse skulls as masks, with horns added on, or other elaborately carved wooden masks on the night of New Year's Eve. They run around laughing and cracking their whips that are decorated to resemble snakes, just to thrill the townspeople, as they did here in front of the Einsiedeln church. Devils reappear in front of the monastery to mark the end of winter.

## A Rhythm of Life in the Monastery of Einsiedeln

Here are all of the Feasts and Pilgrims' Days observed at the Einsiedeln Monastery by 55 Benedictine monks in Canton Schwyz, Switzerland. Every first Sunday in the month: After Vespers: Procession with sung Marian Litany. <sup>10</sup>

31 December:

9:30 a.m.: Pontifical Mass

21 January:

Feast of Saint Meinrad (+ 861 A.D.)

9:30 a.m.: Pontifical Mass

4.30 p.m.: Solemn Vespers, Procession with the skull relic of Saint Meinrad

19 March:

Solemnity of Saint Joseph, holy day

9:30 a.m.: High Mass

4:30 p.m.: Solemn Vespers

From the 2nd through 5th Sunday in Lent:

Prayer days

9:30 a.m.: High Mass

4:30 p.m.: Vespers with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, procession to the Lady Chapel, Rosary and benediction

Palm Sunday:

9:30 a.m.: Blessing of the palm branches in the Lady Chapel, procession and Pontifical Mass

4:30 p.m.: Solemn Vespers

Holy Thursday:

7:00 p.m.: Mass of the Lord's Supper, Compline and adoration in the undercroft of the church from 8:30 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

Good Friday:

8:00 a.m.: Mourning Matins

4:00 p.m.: Celebration of the Lord's Passion; adoration before the Holy Sepulchre in the chapel of St. Magdalene from 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

Holy Saturday:

8:00 a.m.: Mourning Matins

6:00 p.m.: Vespers

Easter Vigil: 8.30 p.m.: The Liturgy of Easter

Easter Sunday:

7.15 a.m.: Lauds

10:30 a.m.: Pontifical Mass, solemnized by Orchestra and mixed choir

4:30 p.m.: Pontifical Vesper, followed by the Salve Regina

Ascension:

9:30 a.m.: Pontifical Mass

4:30 p.m.: Pontifical Vespers

Pentecost:

Saturday before the feast, at 8:00 p.m.: Solemn

Matins Day: 9:30 a.m.: Pontifical Mass

4:30 p.m.: Pontifical Vespers

Corpus Christi Eve:

4:30 p.m.: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, solemn Vespers and benediction

8:00 p.m.: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Compline and benediction

Corpus Christi Day:

8:30 a.m.: Pontifical Mass, followed by the procession with a Blessed Sacrament on the square

4:30 p.m.: Pontifical Vespers with Benediction

8:00 p.m.: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Compline and benediction

11 July:

Solemnity of St. Benedict, holy day in the Abbey

9:30 a.m.: Pontifical Mass

4:30 p.m.: Pontifical Vespers

Sunday after 16 July (or 16 July, if it is a Sunday):

Feast of our Lady of Einsiedeln

9:30 a.m.: Pontifical mass

4:30 p.m.: Pontifical Vespers, followed by the procession with sung Marian Litany

15 August:

Assumption of our Lady, Patronage of the Abbey Church

9:30 a.m.: Pontifical Mass

2:00 p.m.: Rosary

2:30 p.m.: Devotion with the pilgrims with blessing of herbs

4:30 p.m.: Pontifical Vespers, followed by the procession with sung Marian Litany

8 September:

Birth of Mary, holy day in the Abbey

9:30 a.m.: High Mass

4:30 p.m.: Solemn Vespers, followed by the procession with sung Marian Litany

13 September:

Vigil of the Miraculous Dedication:

4:30 p.m.: Pontifical Vespers

8:00 p.m.: First Pontifical Mass, procession to the chapel

14 September:

Anniversary of the Dedication of the Lady Chapel, solemnity:

9:30 a.m.: Second Pontifical Mass

4:30 p.m.: Pontifical Vespers

8:00 p.m.: Solemn Compline, followed by the procession with the blessed Sacrament on the illuminated abbey square

3rd Sunday in September

Federal Comprotection Day, Equestrian Pilgrimage

9:30 a.m.: Solemn Mass

10:45 a.m.: Arrival of the riders on the abbey square, devotion and blessing of the horses

4:30 p.m.: Vespers with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, procession to the Lady Chapel, Rosary and benediction

Memorial of our Lady of the Rosary, the 1st Sunday in October

9:30 a.m.: Pontifical Mass

2:30 p.m.: Devotion for the pilgrims

4:30 p.m.: Solemn Vespers, followed by the procession with the blessed Sacrament on the abbey square

Sunday of St. Meinrad, the 2nd Sunday in October:

9:30 a.m.: High Mass

4:30 p.m.: Solemn Vespers, followed by the procession with the skull relic of St. Meinrad

In October:

Pilgrimage of the Youth

Program: <http://www.juwa-einsiedeln.ch>

1 November:

All Saints Solemnity

9:30 a.m.: Pontifical Mass

4:30 p.m.: Pontifical Vespers

8 December:

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary

9:30 a.m.: Pontifical Mass

4:30 p.m.: Pontifical Vespers

16 December or following Sunday:

Prayer Sunday for the feast of Saint Adelheid

9:30 a.m.: Solemn Mass

4:30 p.m.: Vespers with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, procession to the Lady Chapel, Rosary and benediction

24 December, Christmas Eve:

8:00 p.m.: Solemn Monastic Vigils

11:00 p.m.: Mass at midnight, solemnized by orchestra and mixed choir

25 December Christmas Day:

8:30 a.m.: Parochial Mass (in aurora)

10:30 a.m.: Pontifical Mass, solemnized by orchestra and mixed choir

4:30 p.m.: Pontifical Vespers, followed by a devotion before the Christmas crèche

31 December:

4:30 p.m.: Solemn Vespers

8:00 p.m.: Solemn Monastic Vigils. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the Chapel of Saint Magdalen

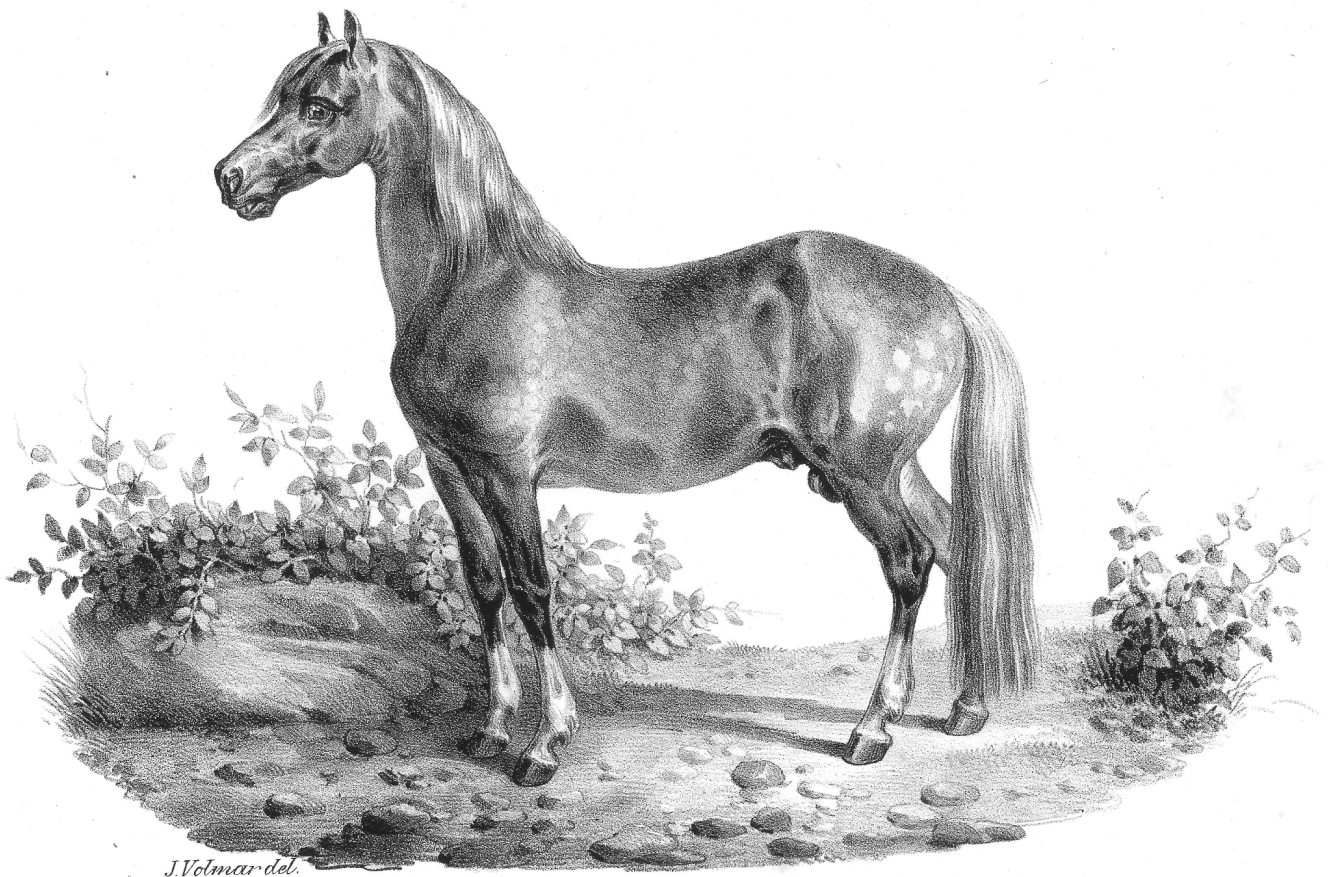
11:00 p.m.: Celebration for the turn of the year

Midnight: Word of the Abbot for the New Year.

A special horse breed groomed out of the local Schweizer stock took the designation Swiss Warmblood, and was more widely called the Einsiedler in the 10th century. It was first bred – and quite profitably so for many centuries thereafter -- at the Benedictine Monastery of Einsiedeln. The horses partake in a processional parade, a special mass and blessing every September. They are now raised at the Federal Stud at Avenches. <sup>2</sup>

For some deeper context, the most common Swiss-German word for horse is *pferd*, as is noted on the engraving here. An older synonym is *ross*, just as the English keep the earlier word *steed*. One hypothesis for naming the nearby mountain Rossberg was that it might have been associated with this particular horse breed.

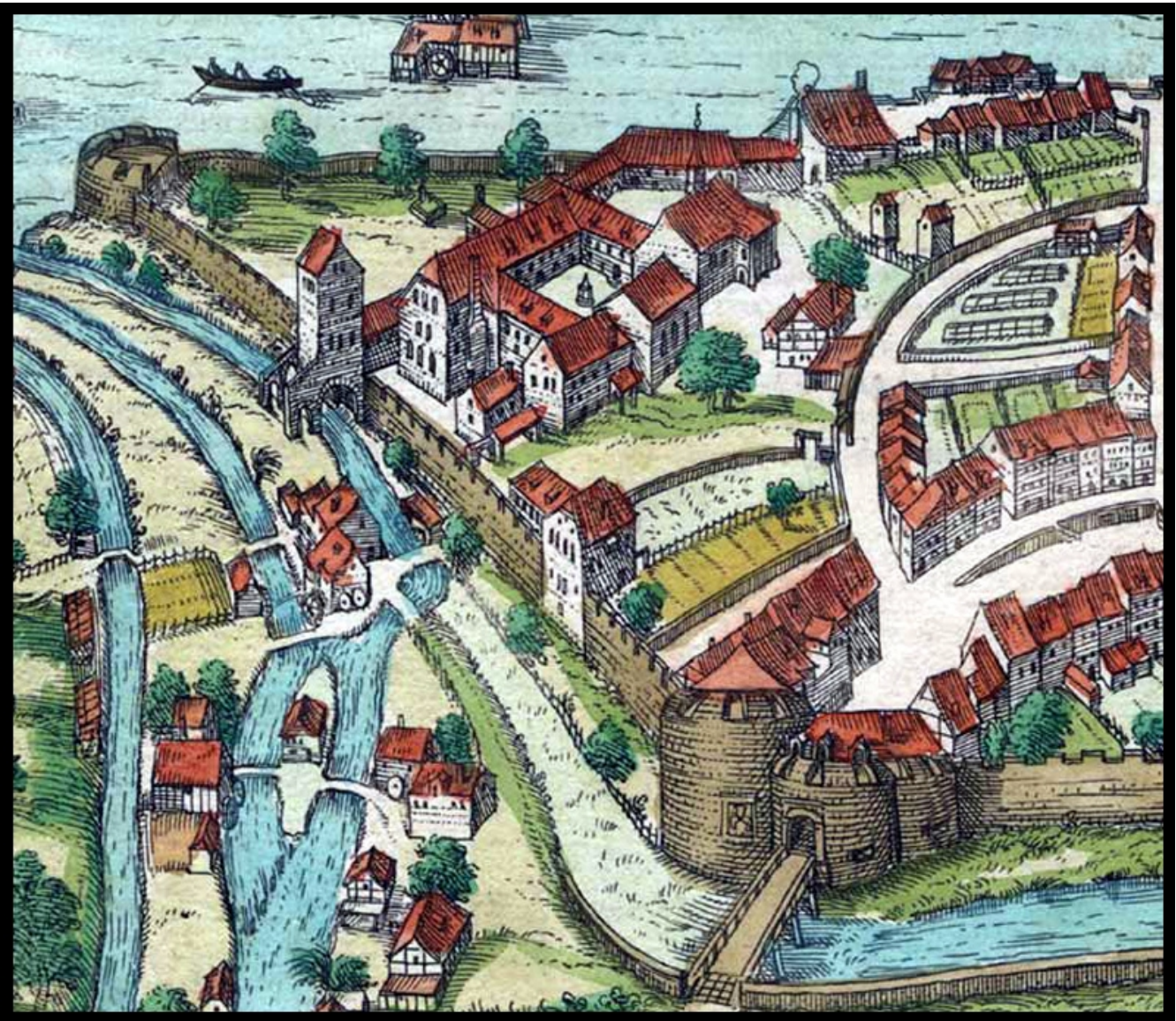
However, a local student of history Dr. Ueli Bachmann rebuts this idea, suggesting instead that the word *ross*, in this case, could well be an early corruption of the word *rosen* to signify the color red. During the early Medieval era in German-speaking lands, pagans embraced the red rose as their own coded symbol. Since the highlands south of Lake Zürich were commonly regarded as the homeland of pagans, they received the names Gottschalkenberg for the “mountain of God’s scoundrels” and Rossberg as the wellspring for the “witch’s little brook” Hexenbächli.



Schweizerpferd. Cheval suisse.



## Öthenbach Convent Turned into a Prison for Anabaptist Dissenters



From that section of the first American edition of the *Ausbund* known as *Ein Wahrhaftiger Bericht*, an account of the persecution of Swiss Brethren in the Zürich community from 1635-1645. Christoph Sauer, published it in 1742, several years before the *Martyr's Mirror*.<sup>4:44</sup>

Forty Anabaptists whose persecution and trials are recorded there most often ended up in Öthenbach Prison, formerly a cloistered convent, but converted after the Reformation into an asylum for the insane, the poor, the contagious and other outcasts of the city.

The fortified old city of Zürich kept a high stone wall around its boundaries, interrupted only by the Limmat River running northwest out of Lake Zürich on its way to join the Rhine. Beside the southwestern bank of the Limmat, at the eastern most corner of the wall, sat the structure which became Öthenbach Prison. To the west, a set of narrow canals hugged just outside the western walls, and made a kind of bypass waterway from the lake to the river.

In the classic, medieval layout for a cloistered campus, four tall buildings enclosed a wide courtyard. The most imposing structure stood four stories high, and was only rivaled by a tall steeple where the bell called the faithful to prayer. A foundation below included two levels, taking it well below the water level of the river.

Three other buildings connected to the first complex and continued along closer to the river bank, one quite narrow and tall, while the other was lower and rather long. Together, these are the only two parts of Ötenbach that have survived until the present day. An asymmetrical, nearly triangular arrangement of five high walls surrounded all of them, along with an assortment of other towers and small gatehouse buildings at the main entrance.<sup>23</sup>

Ötenbach showed up clearly on bird's eye maps of Zürich as early as 1576, across one bridge downstream from the city council where each of the troublesome Brethren had been taken first to be sentenced. <sup>7:II</sup>

One of the cellar floors held the prison's "Pein-Keller" or torture chamber where Martha, wife of Rudolph Egly was frightfully threatened, and beside her an executioner summoned but never fully employed.

The cold and dampness of these chambers was mentioned several times, and at least three of the forty prisoners, including the elderly Anabaptist deacon Rudolph Bachmann, were kept there in chains. <sup>7:I</sup>

Despite his advanced age, Bachmann held on for 13 years in this prison. The elder Bachmann watched many of his brethren get released, or escape in the dark of night, but could not join them. Because of his expertise as a blacksmith and the aid it could have meant to fellow prisoners, the bonds that held him fast were never loosened until he died.

Hans Myli's two sons had been sentenced to continuous labor at Ötenbach, spinning and combing silk in one of the cloister's workrooms.

In one account, Felix Landis and Rudolph Sommer suffered a long sentence without food, and only survived because fellow prisoners managed to blow soup to them through cracks in the stone work of their cells by means of long, hollow straws. <sup>7:III</sup>

Each night, guards were posted, but there was a relatively high rate of escapes, most likely due to the design of the place not being originally meant to imprison people. <sup>7:I</sup>

The building formerly used as Ötenbach Prison in the 17<sup>th</sup> century is presently occupied by the Schweitzer Heimatwerk in downtown Zürich. They specialize in selling hundreds of different folk art crafts produced by local artisans. In the store, they keep a German inscription in the wall which records "This house once served as an asylum for the feeble-minded and as a workhouse for the Cloister Ötenbach. In 1567 it housed a silk mill, the first factory in Zürich; in 1594 a woolen mill, named Zum Wollenhof; from 1660 to 1702 again a silk factory; from 1889 to 1898, a Swiss women's school and from 1897 to 1927 a Swiss school of epidemic diseases. Remodeled in the year 1939."

What the inscription neglects to mention is that from 1635 to 1645, Anabaptists confined only for the crime of exercising spiritual freedom suffered greatly under the authorities while in custody, by threats, robbery, being stripped and displayed for public humiliation, denied medical attention, then beaten, overworked and starved to death, all the while in chains.



## Wilder Mann portfolio from Charles Fréger

Each year, throughout Europe, from Scotland to Bulgaria, from Finland to Italy, from Portugal to Greece via France, Switzerland and Germany, people literally put themselves into the skin of the 'savage', in masquerades that stretch back centuries. By becoming a bear, a goat, a stag or a wild boar, a man of straw, a devil or a monster with jaws of steel, these people celebrate the cycle of life and of the seasons. Work on this project took photographer Charles Fréger to eighteen European countries in search of the mythological figure of the Wild Man. Charles Fréger is recognized as one of France's leading photographers. Based in Rouen, his work has been devoted almost exclusively to portraiture. <sup>17</sup>



### *A Pagan Pageant for the Devil's Tunnel*

On 1 June 2016, Europe's political leadership witnessed a very modern but rather ancient dedication for the new rail tunnel at Gotthard in Switzerland, the longest and most expensive such engineering feat in the world.

A lavish show got under way for the assembled guests in Erstfeld, with 600 dancers, acrobats, singers, musicians and a dead lamb, all celebrating Alpine culture and history. At one point, there were two actors dressed as ibex having simulated sex, and dozens of performers rolling around on the ground in white underwear. The controversial show was conceived by German director Volker Hesse, whose most well-known productions have all been premiered in Switzerland.

Dignitaries appeared stunned by the pagan pageant where a leering, horned devil presided over a topless woman dressed as a bird, she hovering above actors representing the construction workers who died during the building of the tunnel.

#### The World's Longest and Deepest Rail Tunnel Opens in Switzerland, from a report by the BBC

After almost two decades of construction work, the 35-mile, twin-bore Gotthard base tunnel will provide a high-speed rail link under the Swiss Alps between northern and southern Europe. Switzerland says it will revolutionize European freight transport. The budget to complete the tunnel reached \$12.5 billion, equivalent to the gross domestic product of Nicaragua.

Goods currently carried on the route by a million lorries a year will go by train instead. The tunnel has overtaken Japan's Seikan rail tunnel as the longest in the world and pushed the Channel Tunnel linking the UK and France into third place.

In a speech to guests in Erstfeld, near the northern entrance to the tunnel, Swiss Federal President Johann Schneider-Ammann said it was a "giant step for Switzerland but equally for our neighbors and the rest of the continent".

A live relay carried a speech from the southern end of the tunnel, in Bodio, by the Swiss federal transport minister, Doris Leuthard. Afterwards two trains set off in opposite directions through the tunnel, each carrying hundreds of guests who had won tickets in a draw, and the new route was formally opened.

European leaders, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Francois Hollande, Italy's Prime Minister Matteo Renzi and Austrian Chancellor Christian Kern, who also attended the day's events.

Mr Hollande, who took part with others in a follow-up trip through the tunnel on a train, emerged on the southern side to give a speech in which he compared the Gotthard to the Channel Tunnel.

Recalling the great Franco-British project, which was completed in 1994, he said: "Nobody could have imagined that one day you would be able to travel from England to France in that way."

"Since then, we are more united than ever; and I hope the British will remember that when the day comes," he added, to laughter and applause from the audience in the Swiss village of Pollegio. <sup>12</sup>







During 17 years needed to finish the project, nine laborers died from among the 2,600 hired to build the tunnel. Four were Germans, three Italians, and one each came from South Africa and Austria, according to German news agency DPA. They are commemorated by a plaque near the northern entrance, Swiss media reports.





## The Pagan Spring Rabbit bringing Painted Eggs



*The earliest known American depiction of the Easter Bunny, dating to shortly after the War of Independence, is attributed to a folk artist from the German community of eastern Pennsylvania.*

Many Easter traditions — including the symbolic egg and hare — predate Christianity. The notion of an egg-laying rabbit can be traced to Germany, and it came to America with the Pennsylvania Dutch immigrants who settled in and around Lancaster County.<sup>27</sup>

According to an article posted on the Free Library of Philadelphia website, Georg Franck von Frankenau first wrote about the tradition of a hare bringing Easter eggs in “De ovis paschalibus,” or “About Easter Eggs,” in 1682.<sup>31</sup>

*The Lancaster Intelligencer* reported on 10 April 1882 that “in the Presbyterian church there was an avoidance of any celebration of the Easter festival.” The historian Alfred Lewis Shoemaker wrote that it “seems to have been the influence of the laity that changed the position of the anti-Easter denominations.” The eggs were dyed with onion skins, cabbage leaves, tree bark and other natural materials, and then intricate designs were made by scratching away the color in white geometric patterns.

## Folk Art Snake made of Hand Wrought Iron



Hand Forged Iron Folk Art Snake. This is an early example seen in Virginia homes for good luck. The Pennsylvania Dutch culture, through its descended community, practices Powwowing, a tradition of folk magic, often confused with the witchcraft called in German *Hexerei*.<sup>21</sup>

As in most of Western civilization, there has long existed and still exist among the Germanic Dutch people a belief in white and black magic. The art of White magic in the Dutch Country is referred to as *Braucherei* or popularly, as Powwowing. *Hexerei*, of course, is the art of black magic. Powers used to heal in the art of *Braucherei* are derived from God (the Holy Trinity), but the powers employed in *Hexerei* are derived from the Devil, in the simplest of explanation. Therefore, one who engages in this sort of magic has bartered or “sold his soul to the Devil,” and destined for Hell.

Swiss German farmers in frontier Virginia, in this case near Lexington, nailed such amulets near the doors of a house or barn to soak up and ward off threatening or evil spirits. (ca. 1780) One example also served as a strike-a-light, and was found in an excavation of a Revolutionary War soldiers’ encampment near Charleston, South Carolina, where the German Virginia 8th Regiment served. (ca. 1780) Another unusual example resembles a crawling rattlesnake with its head reared up as if to crawl over a barrier, this piece measures 10” overall, with coils measuring 2.” across. (ca. 1780)

This snake is one of the many hundreds of artifacts and antiques in the Baughman Collection at the Woodstock Museum of Shenandoah County in Woodstock, Virginia.

Snakes from the Alpine Highlands Gain New Meaning in America

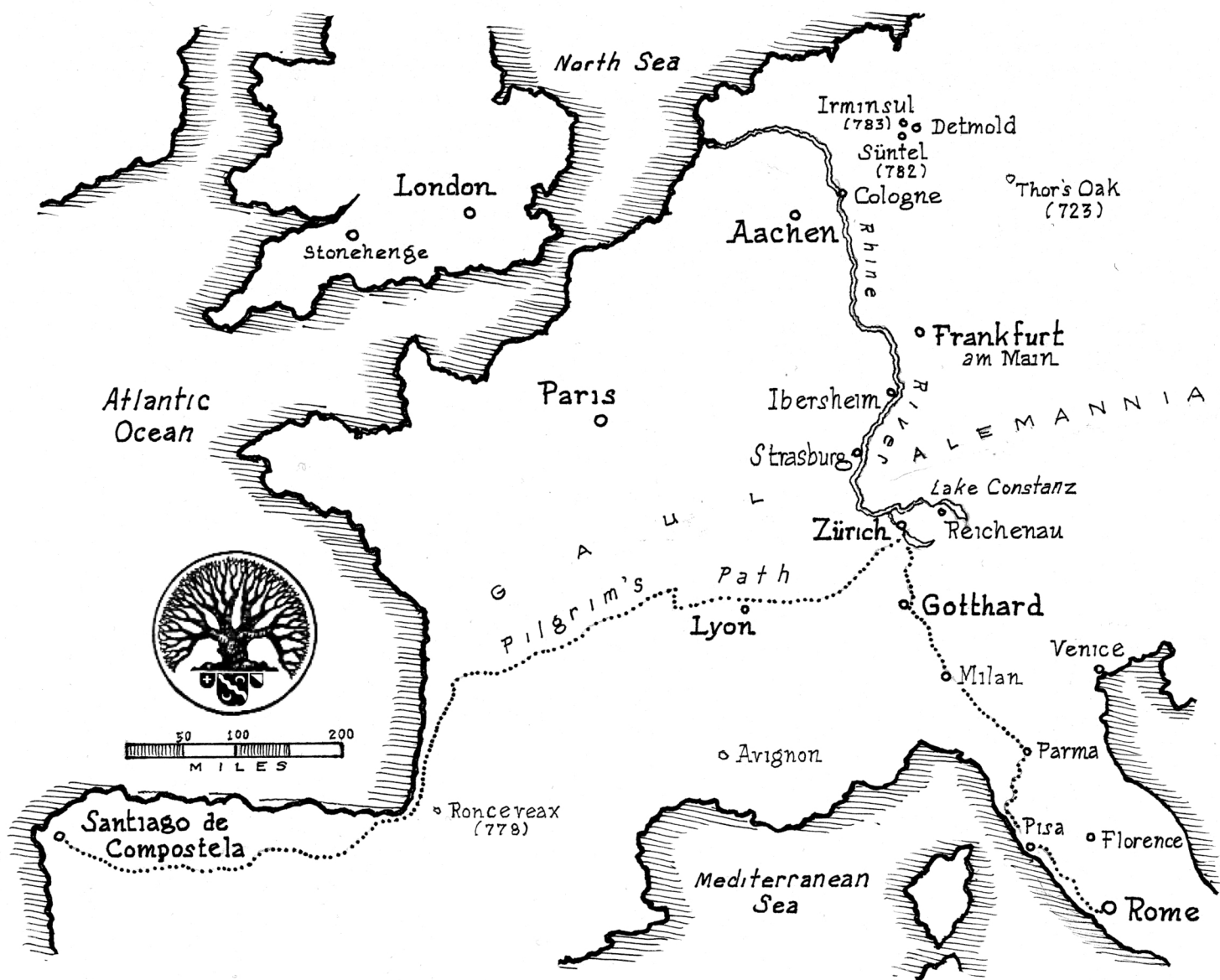


*Anonymous Mennonite Folk Art in the early 19th Century's Pennsylvania School.  
An American snake confronts a British lion, auctioned by Christies for \$32,500 in February 2021*



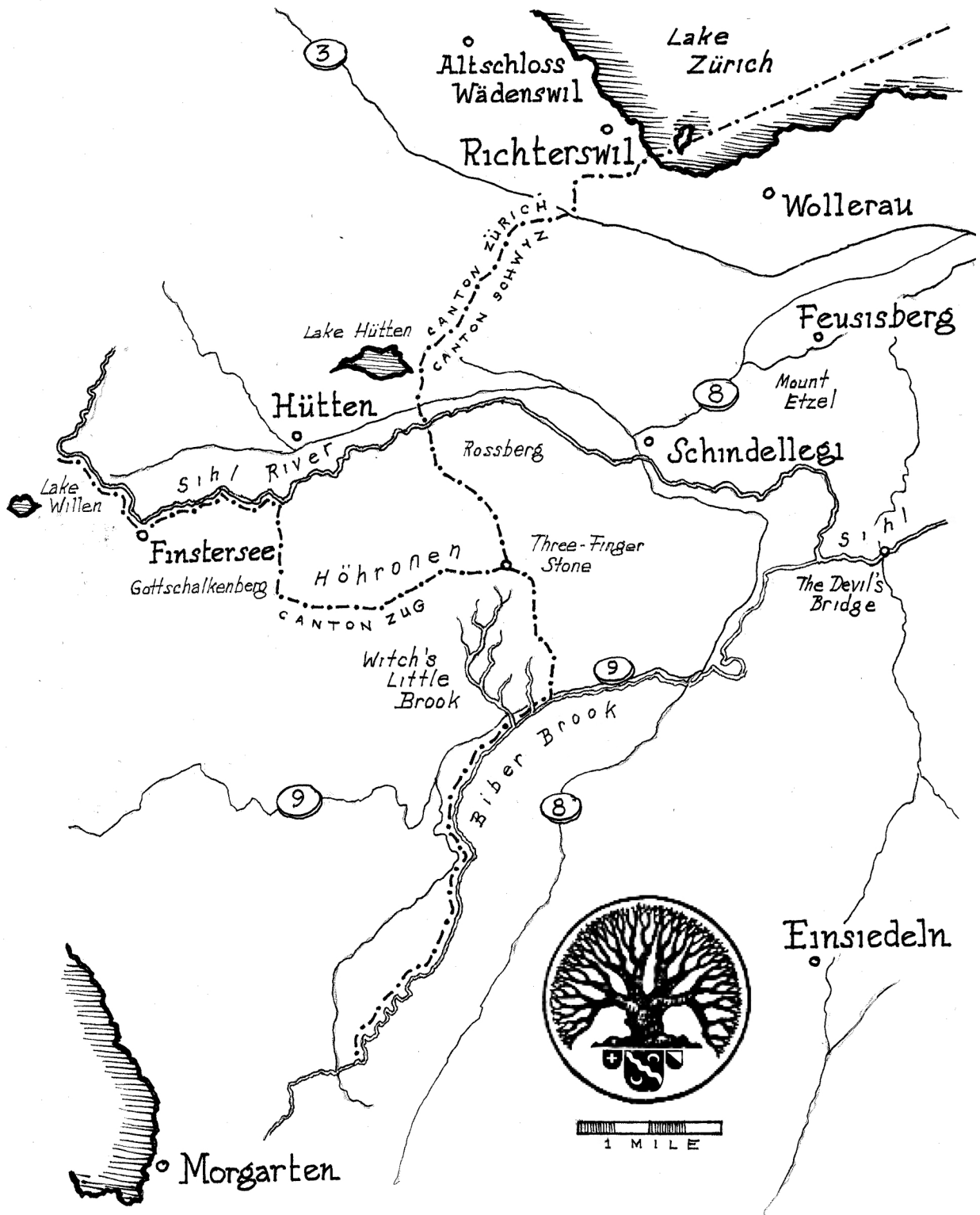
*Meg Harder updates Mennonite folk art into 2019.*

# Maps



The Central Part of Europe Best Known to Charlemagne, circa 800 A.D.

Maps



Pagan Lands South of Lake Zürich

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*Teaching Christianity at the Point of his Sword*

*Saint Boniface, right arm of Charlemagne's grandfather Charles the Hammer, and scourge of the German Pagans. (Engraving by Cornelis Bloemaert)*



*A Swiss Child's Funeral Procession in Winter, 1884 (Zur Letzten Ruhe)*  
(Painting by Hans Bachmann)



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# Der Teufel und die Geschichte.

Von Theodor Kaufmann.



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**N<sup>o</sup>. 2.**

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Verlag von Joh. Geint. Schulz in Düsseldorf,  
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