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Franz Xaver von Schönwerth's *Customs and tales of the Upper Palatinate, vol. 2, chapter 5: The animals of the house: A translation*

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Franz Xaver von Schönwerth (1801-1886) was a German civil servant who collected the folk beliefs of his native Upper Palatinate region in Bavaria, Germany. This project is an original English translation of Schönwerth's primary work, *Customs and Legends of the Upper Palatinate* (1857-1859), preceded by a summary of the author's life, the reception of his work, and its relevance in the modern day.

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FRANZ XAVER VON SCHÖNWERTH'S *CUSTOMS AND TALES OF THE UPPER
PALATINATE*, VOL. 2, CHAPTER 5: *THE ANIMALS OF THE HOUSE*: A TRANSLATION

By

Valentyna Stadnik

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Franz Xaver von Schönwerth (1801-1886) was a German civil servant who collected the folk beliefs of his native Upper Palatinate region in Bavaria, Germany. This project is an original English translation of Schönwerth's primary work, *Customs and Legends of the Upper Palatinate* (1857-1859), preceded by a summary of the author's life, the reception of his work, and its relevance in the modern day.

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Introduction

Franz Xaver von Schönwerth (1810-1886) was a Bavarian civil servant, or rather, private secretary to the crown prince and later King of Bavaria Maximilian II. His interest in folklore began in the early 1830s after one of his university professors, none other than Phillip Grimm, gave Schönwerth a copy of Phillip's older brother Jakob Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology*¹. Throughout the 1840s, Schönwerth collected a few fairytales from his native Upper Palatinate in northerneastern Bavaria, but it was not until the 1850s, after receiving a certain promotion, that he had the time to do so extensively.

The first volume of *Customs and Tales of the Upper Palatinate*², a detailed description of the customs and tales of the Upper Palatinate, as the name would suggest, was published in 1857, with Volumes II and III released in the years 1858 and 1859 respectively. The scholarly world immediately fell in love with *Customs and Tales of the Upper Palatinate* due to Schönwerth's dedication to preserving the traditions and stories without embellishment and to his methodical questionnaires that quantified folklore. Jakob Grimm wrote, "Wenn Einer da ist, der mich dereinst ersetzen kann, so ist es Schönwerth" ("If there is one who can someday replace me, it is Schönwerth," In: "Franz Xaver von Schönwerth"). The rest of Schönwerth's contemporaries were less impressed, due to the dry nature of the writing and the outright crudity of some of the actual stories, and thus Schönwerth and his works became a footnote in the history of fairytale studies.

Today, Schönwerth's fairytales are a treasure trove for folklorists due to not only the actual body of work itself, but also his relative obscurity and status as a white man in a straight

¹ Grimm, Jakob. *Deutsche Mythologie*. Göttingen: Dietrich, 1835. There were 3 additional editions published in 1844, 1854, and 1875-1878, but only the first had been available during Schönwerth's collegiate years.

² See Works Cited.

or straight-passing relationship, which protected his work from censorship and unsolicited revisions from political parties. Schönwerth made it a point to record the stories he heard and recorded practices exactly as he observed them, without embellishment or revision; furthermore, he noted the specific region each story and practice came from. As such, *Customs and Tales of the Upper Palatinate* is a window into storytelling culture and culture as a whole in his time, one that includes fairy tales about queer love and the dangers of toxic masculinity. To the same end, Schönwerth wrote out specific proverbs in their respective dialects, instead of translating them to High German. In the first volume of *Customs and Tales of the Upper Palatinate*, Schönwerth even discusses the development of these dialects, which renders the work useful for linguists as well.

In the following pages, I present a translation of pp. 196-227 of *Customs and Tales of the Upper Palatinate*. Following Schönwerth's devotion to authenticity, I retained his italicized words to denote importance, kept specific sayings in dialect where applicable, and provided additional translations in the footnotes. The translation was rewarding due to my love of fairy tales and simultaneously exhausting due to the fact that Schönwerth's German is over 150 years old and full of proverbs and slang specific to *southern* High German. In addition, the text can be brutal or prejudiced at times, but editing these sections out would be the equivalent of denying the history of animal cruelty and bigotry against ethnic minorities, so readers are advised to monitor their mental health as they read and remember that tradition does not excuse injustice.

As mentioned above, Schönwerth recorded the region where he observed a specific practice and legend, the name of which is often offset with em-dashes, commas, or periods. Locales named in the translation that may be unfamiliar are as follows, in order of appearance: Tannenberg, Schonsee, Velburg, Falkenstein, Waldmunchen, Amberg, Barnau, Neukirchen, Rotz, Neunburg, Gefrees, Kemnath, Rodig, Waldthurn, Tiefenbach, Hambach, Neustadt, Velbuch, Muschenried, Treffelstein, Galgenholze, Buechesreuth, Warmensteinach,

Lixentöfering, Schonau, Ebnat, Fronou, Hollerstetten, Nabburg, Neubau, Oberviechtach,
Roding, Tanesberg, Spalt, Breitenried, Eresbach, Berching, Oberrohr, Voithann, Neumarkt,
Lohr, Lengenfeld, Letten, Voithann, Neunburg. v.W., Waldsassen, Hema, Hollerstetten,
Letten, Erbendorf, Hetzendorf, Blocksberg, Zeckenberg, Oberzell, Gaig.

Fifth Book: The Animals of the House

1. The Barn

The barn is a stomping ground for witches and all sorts of wicked beings, and thus it is no surprise that there are a myriad of ways to prevent and undo hexes and misfortunes.

Out of general precaution, one does the following in the barn:

1

If a stranger comes into the barn, he is not allowed to praise the livestock, lest he be jinxed. Tannenberg. If he does, he must say, “*pföyds God!*”³

To be entirely safe, the farmer says, “*Gi Acht, stáus di niad!*”⁴ if he sees a stranger entering the barn. Schonsee.

A young person who enters the barn can be unwittingly hurt at the same time as the livestock; a young mouth jinxes young livestock and children. Velburg.

A stablemaid who enters the barn first thing in the morning without first washing her face will see young livestock and will become thinner and thinner. Falkenstein.

To prevent the hexing of the livestock, the animals can be wiped down with a piece of shirt fabric by a woman who once fell ill inside the barn. Falkenstein.

Otherwise, one can scrape clean the four corners of a table and give the rag with bread to the animals to lick. The same.

Otherwise, one wipes the animal’s back three times from head to tail while saying, “*Bist vomoint oda voschria, so wisch I Alles von dir!*”⁵ Schonsee. Spells often cause the teeth to relax so that livestock cannot eat. If this is the case, one takes the sick teeth and cuts three crosses in the holes with a whetstone—Waldmunchen—or he slathers them in menstrual blood. Amberg.

Livestock are protected from spells on All Souls Day⁶ as long as a rag is thrown on a tree and it stays there all day. This can be undermined if a young person looks at the livestock and does not say, “*pföyds God!*” three times. Waldmunchen.

2

Under the barn door, one puts a blessed Benediction or Indulgence *pfennig*⁷, which has the power to ward off witches. Barnau.

³ “Praise God!”

⁴ “Be careful! Do not disturb them!”

⁵ “If you are hexed or cursed, I wipe it all off from you!”

⁶ A Christian holiday; Nov. 2

⁷ A form of currency historically used in Germany. At the time of the book’s original publishing, 1 gulden = 60 kreuzer, 1 kreuzer = 4 pfennig, 1 pfennig = 2 heller. 1 gulden in 1856 is about 10.14 USD today.

3

To keep imps⁸ out of the stall, one draws a *drudenfuss*⁹ or a rose bush on the door, or

4

One hangs an *Obles-Ey*,¹⁰ which was laid on Maundy Thursday¹¹ and blessed on Easter Sunday, in the barn, which prevents misfortune—Neukirchen—and especially protects against elflocks in the horses' hair and blood in the cows' milk. Rotz;

5

Or one puts hawthorn tree branches in front of the barn windows, Falkenstein;

6

Or one cuts a twig off an elm tree, twists a *ram's hair* around it, and hits it in through the threshold of the barn. Neunburg.

7

Three pieces of houseleek can be blessed on Corpus Domini¹² and the Pentecost¹³ and put over the barn door to protect the cattle from natural and supernatural misfortune. Gefrees.

8

On the evening of Shrove Tuesday¹⁴, three straw bands are made for at least fifteen minutes and hung from the rafters in the barn. If the livestock bite "*d'Würm*," they will tie up, and this helps. Barnau.

On the same day, the livestock are given *Blutwurst* or roasted blood so they do not get any pox in their mouths.—Poxes are very dangerous; they spread rapidly through the livestock and when they burst, the livestock die. There is a specific prayer against the bursting of poxes which certain people can perform; it is enough here to only know the colors of the animals; the people do not have to go into the barn at all themselves. Neunkirchen.

Besides these general precautions, there are three specific times a year that warrant extra attention: during the *Twelve Days*¹⁵ in the winter, during the *Easter Vigil* in the spring, and during *Walpurga's Night*¹⁶ in the summer.

⁸ The word Schönwerth uses here is *Drud*, from *Drude*, which was an imp-like creature most famous for causing nightmares.

⁹ A five-pointed star facing downwards.

¹⁰ A kind of egg. See also Chapter 7. Chickens, Heading 6 on page 21.

¹¹ The Thursday before Easter.

¹² A Christian holiday celebrated on a Thursday about 60 days after Easter.

¹³ A Christian holiday celebrated on the seventh Sunday after Easter.

¹⁴ The day before Ash Wednesday and thus the first day of Lent; also called Mardi Gras in English.

¹⁵ I.e., of Christmas; from Christmas (Dec. 25) to the Feast of the Apparition of the Lord (Jan. 6).

¹⁶ The night preceding the Feast of St. Walpurga (May 1)

During each of the *Twelve Days*, the cattle are usually *given* a treat after a prayer so if witches do enchant the barn, the spell will be harmless. This treat is usually a piece of bread with three notches filled with holy salt and chalk from Twelfth Night¹⁷ and herb mercury from Maundy Thursday. The whole thing is then sprinkled with three kings' water¹⁸.

During this time, the barn is also *smudged* with holy herbs from the Feast of the Assumption of Mary¹⁹, palm and service tree wood, and frankincense in order to cast out witches. The barn windows are also *fenced* in with gooseberries. Velburg.

On Christmas Eve near Barnau, the farmer feeds the livestock after church while saying, "*Hai Vaich, háust an wos; des háud da s' Christkindl bráuchd, das ma glückli san mid dir!*"²⁰

In Gefrees, farmers take a bundle of hay out the barn on Christmas Eve and spread it on their manure piles; before sunrise, they pick it up and dispose of it. This helps prevent the livestock that eat too much from becoming too fat during the year.

During the Twelve Nights, the Night of the Three Wise Men, also called the *Great New Year's Night*, is special, as well as the eve of *Easter Sunday*. On these days, incense, chalk, water, and salt is blessed in the church and burned in the stall before saying a prayer, the chalk is used to write on the door, and the livestock are given pieces of chalk, salt, and three kings' water on bread to protect them from witches.

On *Palm Sunday*, the livestock are also given willow. Neukirchen.

However, the most dangerous time is *Walpurga's Night*, when the witches *are allowed* to cause trouble and prey upon the livestock; it is the biggest night of the year for witches, but priests are able to prevent this.

On the eve of Walpurga's Day, various means are undertaken to protect the livestock.

1

Most importantly, strangers are not allowed into the barn during this entire day, and the barn is locked up before sunset. Kemnath.

2

The barn is smudged with myrrh – Rodig, Waldthurn – and blessed with baptismal or three kings' water. Tiefenbach. In Waldmunchen, young boys go from house to house and sprinkle every room with three kings' water so that witches have no power.

3

The livestock are given holy items, such as holy salt on slices of bread, Barnau, Waldthurn,—or willow dipped in three kings' water from the previous *Corpus Domini*. Tiefenbach.

¹⁷ The last day of the Twelve Days of Christmas; Jan. 6.

¹⁸ Water blessed on Epiphany.

¹⁹ A Christian holiday; Aug. 15.

²⁰ "Cattle, cheer to you, the cheer that the Christ Child brings that makes me happy with you!"

4

Three crosses are drawn on the barn door so that witches cannot come in or out. Gefrees.

5

Pitchforks are placed crosswise in front of the barn door to the same end. Hambach. Amberg.

6

One places three branches of buckthorn crosswise in front of the windows of the stable and house before the sun sets, so the witches must stay outside on their special day—Amberg, Hambach—or gooseberry, and less often service or willow branches. Waldthurn.

Buckthorn is found across the Bohemian Forest, gooseberries all over the Palatinate. Indeed, these branches must be cut by a young girl from the fields the same day. Velburg.

7

There are birch saplings all the way from the Bohemian Forest to Upper Franconia.

In Tiefenbach, these saplings are called Walpura's Tree. So that witches cannot come into the barn even after they stop to count all the leaves on the birch saplings before morning prayers, one braids three brands of straw in the evening and hangs them on the saplings. Undoing the braids then occupies the witches so long that they are surprised by the praying and no longer have any power.

8

This is still not enough. On the ground in front of the barn, one places three clumps of green grass; witches have no power over green grass.

On this, one places buckthorn or gooseberry with the tips pointing up, so that the witch steps on it and cannot keep going.

If the witch wants to go into the barn, she has to count all the pieces of grass in the clump. In order to make this more difficult for her, all the roots are laid pointing upwards. By the time the witch – who has magical ability over the animals in the night – has finished counting, the grass and the leaves of the birches, the clock strikes midnight and she must give up because her time is up. Neustadt.

9

Otherwise, to ensure that the witch finds absolutely nothing in the barn, the farmer's wife bakes with nine different methods in order to cauterize her eyes. Velbuch.

All the things the witch has suffered to this point are outshone by a formal *hunt*, which literally removes her from house, village, and field with whips.

This is generally done when night falls, usually between eight and ten o'clock; in Germanic tradition, the day begins with the night. In a few other places, the hunt begins at midnight, like in Muschenried.

I first list here the custom in and around Tiefenbach, because it is the most familiar, and then I will note the aberrations.

In Tiefenbach, the men, at least one from every house, gather in front of the village on a hill after sunset and whip in a cross formation for a while in strict time to drive out the powers. After that, they continue whipping through the village to the gallows, where earlier the witches danced; it is so arranged that the men arrive there at midnight. Woe to the woman who is seen here! With the whipping, which is called the *Hexenauspeitschen*,²¹ the witch is now expelled.

It is this way in Treffelstein and Waldmünchen as well. If the witches are expelled using this method, they gather nonetheless in a new place to dance—Galgenholze by Arnstein.

In Waldthurn, the farm hands go into the hills and mountains in the evening and make noise in the valley; as far as the sound travels, the witches cannot do anything.

In Barnau, the men whip in front of every house they suspect is housing a witch when it is twilight; in the surrounding villages, however, they go into the hills after the whipping and whip here for some time as well, four at a time, in order to hunt the witches out from the meadows too.

In Letten by Barnau, they stay in the middle of the village and whip from eight to ten o'clock with long, thick whips; afterwards, they *sing*.

While the men in Neustadt whip in the hills, the herdsman blows on his *horn*. As far as the sound echoes, the witch must leave, even if she is in the actual village. This brings peace for the entire year.

Not far from Buechesreuth, there is a different custom. Each farmer lets his livestock graze on a specific enclosed field. After the *Hexenauspeitschen*, around twenty to thirty boys go from house to house: one carries a pot, a second a dish, the third a pan. In front of every house they sing together:

*Eyer, Schmalz und Butter heraus,
Es kommt wieder Alles zehnfach ins Haus.*²²

After which they receive gifts or money from the farmers. By drawing lots, the farmers decide which of the gifts will be donated to a feast for the year.

In Hambach, the men stand in groups at every city gate and whip until midnight, so the witches cannot come *in*.

The witch hunts are so stringently observed that it is less of a trifle than a command; indeed, the farmer gives the village men an explicit order to do so. Kemnath.

Further up, in Gefrees and Warmensteinach, the witches are not only whipped but also *shot at*.

Much care is taken in the preparation of the *whip* which is used here. The cords are prepared during the week so that they crackle properly and hit the witches hard. In Lixentöfering, they pluck hair from a bull's tail and weave it into the whip: in Hambach, they bind

²¹ Not italicized in original. Literally *witch out-whipping*.

²² "Eggs, lard, and butter, out! / It all comes back tenfold in the house."

the knobs together so that they better hurt the witches. This whip also has a holier connotation, since it is loosened after the whipping and associated with the blessing of holy herbs during the Feast of the Assumption of Mary. If the whip is needed later, the draft cattle will also benefit. Barnau. Here, as well, the willow is important; because a willow stick called a "palm" was blessed on the previous Palm Sunday and was braided in; the calves are birthed easier during Lent. Neustadt.

If the barn is hexed, then something that belongs to the sorcerer is often buried in front of the barn door; to undo the hex, one has to remove the object. Naturally, this is done by people with certain knowledge who know where to look for the object. One also has the Franciscans come, who give the livestock an item called *Niklobrod*, a kind of bread, and smudge the barn with holy things, gin, and a mix of grass seeds and flowers, and also say a prayer. Schonau.

The livestock immediately know when a witch comes into the barn; they huff, snort, and break away. Ebnat.

In some places, only animals of certain colors are affected. If a strange creature comes to them in the night, they begin to cause a ruckus as if they were hurtling about, and they only calm down once the strange guest has left. Ebnat. There, as well, a landlord keeps all the black-pied hens, and the other chickens are found in the area.

If smaller animals find themselves in the barn, like hares, cats, and chickens, who are otherwise healthy, in the morning they lie "on their sides," compressed together as if they were squashed in the night. But this usually only happens to the males, and even then only when the farmers are absent-minded.

The same happens to dogs and pigs. Ebnat.

To ensure the livestock are a good size without having to be force fed, they are wiped down daily with a scrap of clothing from a poor sinner. If the livestock are bought and no longer handled in the same way, they thin again. Fronou.

The Meadow

1

On Walpurga's Day, the livestock are led to the meadow in the late morning. But if Walpurga's Day falls on an unlucky day, such as one next to the sign of the crab or the fish in the calendar, this does not happen. Neukirchen.

2

To bless the livestock beforehand, one puts a pitchfork and a rake in a cross in front of the barn door and lets the cattle walk over it so that the witch cannot harm them.

3

New livestock will also be led over the cross so they can find the way home. Neukirchen

4

One uses the same piece of holy chalk to draw a cross on each of the cattle from head to toe. Neukirchen.

5

As the livestock leave the barn, one douses them with three kings' water. Waldmunchen. Once the livestock are out of the barn, one gives each one a piece of bread with three notches filled with either strawberry leaves and cherry twigs or elder tree twigs and holy salt.

6

Stable maids cannot be barefoot as they lead the livestock, or else the livestock will go lame.

7

On the morning of Walpurga's Day, the herdsman and a farmer go to every barn in the village and file down the horns of every cow, so the points do not stick out. For every cow, the herdsman receives an egg. Waldmunchen.

8

If livestock leave the barn for the first time on this day, the herdsman has to pat them three times to hunt out the witches, and then three more times when they arrive at the meadow while saying the names of the Holy Trinity to cleanse the air and area of witches. The herdsman's wife has her duty as well; she has to bake pastries on this day in order to burn the eyes of the witches. Hollerstetten.

9

There is a custom for letting the pigs out. The maid spreads her *apron* in front of the barn and lets the pigs jump over it so they return on their own without having to be led; or, one sets a stone in the ground for the pigs to step on so that they return home. Hollerstetten

The pigs are initially all brought together to a specific spot in front of the village. This area is called *Saumist'n*²³ in the west and *Brell* or *Brüll*²⁴ in the east of the Bohemian Forest.

10

Shepherds often search for a crook with *nine bends*. They stick it in the ground in meadows so that the livestock stay together. Such a crook also helps the oxen climb mountains easier. Falkenstein.

²³ Not italicized in original. Literally *pig manure*.

²⁴ Not italicized in original.

11

On *Walpurga's Eve*, the herdsmen bring an object called *Mirtesgard'n*, *Martini-Gerte* in every house, which is used to lead the livestock out. The object is made of willow twigs with the leaves still on, then the leaves are sharpened with juniper and oak tree leaves, and is made by the herdsman in the afternoon before Martinmas.²⁵ They are blessed on Twelfth Night and are used on Walpurga's Eve to prevent witch spells.

12

After Martinmas, the livestock are no longer let out.

Manure

A witch can do many things with manure that turn crop blessings in her favor. On Walpurga's Night, one hides birch twigs in the manure, one for each cow. Falkenstein. Nabburg. Neukirchen. Whoever cleans the manure out of the stalls on this evening is hexed. Waldthurn.

2. The Horse

1

This noble animal is considered an asset by the people of the Upper Palatinate, since all people have use of one. The farmer has a specific pride when he has horses and is then called *Roßbauer*, even when, at the same time, there is a saying that the farmer with horses goes quicker to his grave. Amberg.

A cart carrying a dowry must be pulled by horses, and the bride brought on a horse. Corpses should also be pulled to the cemetery by horses. Velburg.

Following is the general description of this animal, *Ross*,²⁶ rarely *Pferd*.²⁷ The word *Pferd* must sound foreign and strange, because the landlord still puts the word *Gaul*²⁸ after it and says *Pfà-Gàl*.—The word *Ross*²⁹ is usually used for the female, *Gaul* for the male. Velburg.

2

The people of the Upper Palatinate pay special attention to which horse is so well-shaped that it looks *bigger*, because it is important to them. Compared to a person, the horse is a monstrous size, and it is for this reason that horses are bound or otherwise become shy or

²⁵ A Christian holiday; Nov. 11.

²⁶ Horse, steed; usually used in Southern Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

²⁷ Not italicized in original. The usual High German word for a horse.

²⁸ Not italicized in original; another word for a horse, usually used in Southern and Eastern Germany.

²⁹ Not italicized in original.

wild. If the horse knew what violence it could cause, no rider would be able to get on its back. Velburg. Ebnat. Neukirchen.

3

How it is that the horse is considered *the enemy of man* and, like the cat,³⁰ considers killing its master nine times per day can be thus explained: In some areas, Germanic paganism had an expansive culture based on the horse. Herein, there are many ghostlike, white horses which show up in holy places and especially holy forests in the Upper Palatinate, and thus it becomes obvious that the Christians had to put an end to the reverence of horses out of fear for the demonic existence of the animals themselves. Thus, horses became the *Devil's animal*; the hoof looks like a devil.—Horses that have one white foot hide a significant amount of malevolent dishonesty.

4

Regarding the names given to horses, I first present the term “*Hank*,” near Neubau and Oberviechtach, which is given to a horse that is lazy and awkward, or is constantly in poor shape. Indeed, this name referred to people who were interested in the Germanic peoples after hearing many stories thereof, but finally shut themselves in the mountains after oppression and mistreatment at the hands of the Germanics. There is a tribe of dwarves in the Northeast of the Upper Palatinate called *Hankerln*, and their leader is the *old Hankerl*.

5

Horses are ridden around some churches on certain feast days, e.g. Leonhardi³¹ on “Háubrül” near Roding and Martinmas near Velburg, throughout the entire Upper Palatinate; the horses are blessed by the church. It would take a while to name every location where this tradition takes place and likewise every tale that depends on it. These churches are mostly outside the village and have a fenced in green lawn, almost certainly for a pagan reason.

6

The pregnant farmer's wife and the mare resemble each other in their growth; if she lets the *pregnant mare* eat out of her apron, the mare gives birth easily. Neukirchen. And vice versa.

7

There is a saying that undoubtedly goes back to the days of paganism. As a child in Amberg, my mother would often say to me after I was hot and red from running, “You look like a chestnut horse again!” This is true for the horse breeds of the gods.

³⁰ See 11. The Cat, Heading 2 on page 25.

³¹ A Christian holiday; Nov. 6.

8

There are similar mythological meanings for the braiding of horses' manes, especially of the pretty ones. Braiding is like adorning horses for God's ride; nothing can be overlooked, for it is a holy time whenever this trifle occurs. There is no reason to explain how a horse's mane is braided.

9

The mystical nature of the horse also explains why horses haunt humans as eldritch forms in the night. They are *ghostly animals*. In all the ghost stories told to me, not a single one featured a common soul speaking in the form of a horse. When they appear as apparitions, most horses are white or black in color and have no head; in a forest by Waldthurn, two such gray horses will appear in a field: one can see fire spitting out of their necks as one crosses the road. Every field is haunted by evil spirits which were once brought in.—Some horse apparitions appear in areas where horses are no longer kept. Are they the ghosts of sacrificed animals appearing on ancient sacrificial altars?—The horse was an important sacrificial animal to the Germanic tribes—is this why they appear without a head, since the gods blessed it and thus it cannot become a ghost? Wooden horse heads are still found on the ceiling of farmhouses, their rage pointed towards the outside. Neukirchen. Barnau. In Waldthurn, the skins of dead horses are put on the roof of pig stys to ensure the prosperity of the animal.

10

However, horses are also augural animals; throughout the Upper Palatinate, people believe that the horses and cattle speak and predict the future at midnight on Christmas Eve. This story is the same everywhere:

A farmhand went to the stable during Midnight Mass to eavesdrop on the horses. There, one horse said to the other, "I'm glad this week—an entire week, without any days off!—is over." The other, however, replied, "Oh, no, we'll be working even harder this coming week."—"How come? It's Christmastime," said the first. "Ah, finished the second, "I'll have to go to the doctor, and you to the priest in the night, and we'll both have to bring all the farmers to the cemetery."—And so it happened. Velburg.

11

Horses also sense the vicinity of ghosts, or rather, they see them where man senses nothing; the horses do not want to go any farther forward, they froth and rear, tremble from head to toe; they can also foretell the death of their masters and are sad for a time beforehand. Horses are particularly disgusted by corpses and carrion, which is why they do not like to pull hearses. Neunburg.

12

All of these mystical traits explain why horses are so important to the gods. The horse was an animal that did not belong solely to the gods, and therefore horses were *holy* to the Germanic pagans and devilish to the Christians.

13

To prevent the horses from being enchanted, one puts a *billy goat* with a black cross on its back in the stall.

In other areas, one dispels enchantments by stroking the animals on the back with oats from the trough. Tanesberg.

14

Here, I present more stories about braiding horses' manes as they are told in all parts of the Upper Palatinate.

1

Sometimes, a ghostly creature appears by the horses in the stall. This is called a *Schragerl*. When one enters the barn in the morning, the horses are bathed in sweat, because the *Schragerl* rode them in the night.

This playful spirit also delights in putting the mane and tail into a countless number of braids, which one can only undo with much patience and trouble. Not even the fodder itself is safe from this: the *Schragerl* weaves tiny straw braids out of it.

The *Schragerl* brings luck and happiness wherever it stops to eat; nevertheless, people do not like it to stay in the stall for too long, as it will bother the livestock too much.

What is here said about horses is true for the cattle as well, whose tails are braided into tiny plaits. Barnau.

2

A landlord in Spalt had two beautiful gray horses; overnight, their manes and tails would be braided with so many tiny plaits that everyone had to help to take them apart. They stood watch over the barn the next night but saw and heard nothing; regardless, the braids still appeared. However, one who was born on Quatember³² Sunday saw a *witch*, a woman from Spalt, riding the horses.

3

The abbot in Neumarkt had a wonderful hawking horse eight years ago; three nights in a row, the horse's hair was plaited into more than a hundred braids that untangled themselves

³² Quatember is a series of four days of penance spread throughout the year: the day after the Feast of Luzia on Dec. 13; the day after Ash Wednesday; the day after Pentecost; the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross on Sept. 14.

during the day. The horse stood there every time covered in sweat and trembling from head to toe; a stablehand stood watch overnight but saw nothing.

4

In other areas, especially in the southern Bohemian Forest, it is the *imp* that comes to the horses in the night; in the morning, they are white from sweat and exhausted, with braids in their manes and tails.

This was the case with the abbot of the parish in Breitenried. The people believed that an imp was bothering the livestock and stood watch in secret for countless nights by burning lanterns. One night, they heard the stall door open, which was locked from the inside, but saw nothing. However, in the same moment that the stall door opened, they heard the horse breathing heavily and snuffling.³³ A farmhand then took a stick and hit the horse, which was lying down, on its flank with all his might. The horse sprang up; it was already entirely white.

The next day, early in the morning, the farmhand visited an elderly woman who he expected to be an imp; she had been lying in bed for a long time facing the door, but she turned around when the farmhand entered so she faced the wall. Indeed, the farmhand did not notice that there was a broad, bloody stripe on her back, like the wound he had given the horse the night before. The woman was ill, and people said that she had broken her spine. She became better, but she never walked straight again, and she did not look at the farmhand or acknowledge his greeting.

The livestock in the stall have had peace since then. Whether this is due to the incident with the imp or because the people put a billy goat in the barn remains a mystery.

5

This storyteller had a horse which was bothered by an imp. In the mornings, the horse would be dripping with sweat and the comb would be braided into its mane, but the ends of the braids would be knit with flax or straw. Only with an extreme amount of work were they able to untangle the mane. Neukirchen B.

6

In Eresbach near Berching, on the road to Salzburg, there was a landowner whose horses' manes and tails were braided into an uncountable number of braids in the night. The horses were also quite disturbed. The people stood watch overnight, but it did not help, and the horses were still exhausted and covered in sweat in the morning. Finally, a priest came, blessed the stall, and thus hunted out the magic.

It was either a demon or a witch that had ridden the horses in the night.

15

Thus, in different regions, it is a different creature that rides horses in the night: in the north, it is the *Schragerl*, in the south the *imp*, in the west the *witch*. In the south, the impish

³³ As in, its bridle was being put on.

creature is further developed as compared to in other parts of the Upper Palatinate. Here, it is only the women who practice magic, and in the east, the imps are strictly separated from witches, while in the west, witches are blamed for almost every unexplainable occurrence; the imp and the witch overlap so much in the west that they can also be considered the same thing. This is also apparent in the dialects, and thus it is rewarding to take a look into this; ethnology can only benefit from it, especially in the Upper Palatinate, where so many Germanic clans settled in such a small area.

Like the word *Heuschreck*,³⁴ the word *Schragerl* comes from the Old High German *screccan* = to jump; orally, a *k* before an *l* is softened into a *g*; therefore, *Bugl*, *Bugerl* from *Buckel*,³⁵ *Nigl* from *Nickel*,³⁶ notable associations of ghostly beings include jumping, hills, riding; the Devil himself rides on humans who were otherwise good in life but gave in to temptation in a moment of weakness. Graff³⁷ writes: *uualtscrechel = fauni, sylvestres homines*.³⁸

The *Schragerl* was originally a *household spirit*, and thus good-natured; this characteristic remains in that its appearance still brings luck. The *Schrazeln* or *Razeln*, which are good-natured dwarves that live underground, should not be confused with the *Schragerl*.

3. The Cattle

1

Like the horse, the cow is also *augural*, and furthermore *guiding*.—Around midnight on Christmas Eve, the oxen talk in the barn; they tell the future; the farmer can eavesdrop from under the trough. Also, the cow is a *wraithlike animal*, especially in the South of the Bohemian Forest, where calves and bulls that are either white or have black spots terrorize travelers at night.

In Oberrohr by Falkenstein, a farmer snuck into the barn on Christmas Eve. He heard the bulls begin to speak and foretell the imminent death of his master. The farmer was so alarmed that he almost died right then and there. Before his death, however, the farmer arranged it so that the bull that had spoken would pull his hearse, and wherever it lingered, a chapel would be built with the farmer's money. The bull indeed lingered in a certain spot, and a chapel honoring Quirinus³⁹ was built there as per the farmer's wishes. Thus, the chapel was called St. Quer.

2

Female cows are more important, and this is explainable by the fact that they have further use and because they are entrusted with the care of the female gender. In Germanic

³⁴ Grasshopper.

³⁵ A hump, e.g., a hunch.

³⁶ The metal and element.

³⁷ Eberhard Gottlieb Graff (1780-1841). Graff published a series of Old High German dictionaries (1835-1843), which Schönwerth is referring to here.

³⁸ Animal, forest human

³⁹ A Roman god whose name later served as an epithet to Janus, god of beginnings.

paganism, the cow was one of the holy animals; cows pull the chariot of Nerthus, the earth goddess.

For farming and even more so for pastoral folk, milk and its products are some of the most important ingredients. The beliefs and even more so the superstitions surrounding milk definitely stretches back to antiquity and therefore deserves special attention.

3

The farmer's wife is particularly concerned with getting good milk and in large quantities, the production of rich butter, and lastly the birth of good calves. All this is understood through the word, "Use." Evil magic tries to turn this Use⁴⁰ to its benefit: A neighbor has a single, unuseful cow, but brings butter and lard to the market twice a week. This seems odd, especially considering that the Use did not seem to go as well for her as for the others. Women older than this neighbor live in the area but they do not have enough *joie de vivre* left to associate with the neighbor: it has to be witches. But if there are witches in the area, not everything that fails can be because of them. If no witch can be named, then one of the Roma, a filer,⁴¹ or a traveling actor enacted dark magic to take revenge for a misdeed: and lastly, nobody can say for certain that the misfortune was intentional, because we live in a society filled with spirits, and not all of them are good; evil spirits as well as the Devil himself are known to play pranks on farmers.

4. The Milk

To ensure that the cow gives plenty of milk, one beats the udder with a new, unused wooden spoon. Falkenstein.

On certain days, milk cannot pass through an alley, or else it will sour first. The *evil look* of lower folk hurts the cow, affects the Use; through magic, evil folk steal for themselves the indulgence of the Use. This time period lasts from the Feast of St. Barbara⁴² to Walpurga's Day; especially dangerous are the Quatember Days and Walpurga's Day. What happens to the milk happens to butter and lard as well, especially if the cow gave birth during the winter. Dishes made with milk or lard should also not pass through an alley. Most prominently, the gaze of the Roma and actors is feared. This belief is present in the entire Upper Palatinate, and whoever does not act in accordance loses the Use for the whole year.

Cutting bread and putting it in milk instead of breaking it is forbidden. Doing so cuts off the cow's udder. Voienthann. Tanesberg.

Sometimes, the cow gives blood instead of milk; this is because the cow stepped in the footsteps of a witch. It does not mean much; one simply has to drink this milk and the spell is lifted. Waldthurn.

But usually, it is the witch that causes such misfortune; she wanted the cow for herself so she could have milk or butter, and thus used her evil craft on the cow so that all its Use goes to her.

⁴⁰ In German, it is clear when Schönwerth is referring to this specific kind of use; I capitalize it here to maintain the connotation.

⁴¹ That is to say, someone who makes files, e.g., to sharpen knives, for a living.

⁴² Dec. 4.

Other persons with malicious intent can achieve the same by breaking three branches off a buckthorn tree, putting them in their pocket, and then striking the cows unseen in the barn three times while saying a certain spell. Gefrees.

A cow is now thus enchanted. Help can either be received from the knacker⁴³ or the shepherd, or one can use their own countermagic, which is actually effective and vexatious for the witch. In Tanesberg, the farmer's wife lets her poor cow urinate in a sack and then churns this with a thorn rod and all her might; every hit hurts the witch, and she hurries to undo the magic.

Other clever women, like in Neumarkt, collect the enchanted cow's urine in a pig's bladder and hang it tightly bound in a crate. Not long after, the witch comes and asks that the bladder be taken out, because it is bound to her life; as the urine dries up, so too does the witch. In Barnau, the same thing is accomplished through a different method. There, one rubs a cheesecloth with soap, boils it, and grates it on a milking stool until it tears apart. What happens to the cloth happens to the witch.—Not far away, in Lohr, the farmer's wife boils the enchanted milk and then hits the edge of the milk's container with a sickle, thus cutting off the magic. She cannot hit the milk itself, or else she kills the witch.—If, however, the shepherd is called, then it must be bad. He goes with the farmer's wife into the stall, covers her face, says his spell, and then the witch appears. The wife cannot uncover her face until the shepherd allows it, and indeed, the wife usually abstains from seeing the witch and is simply happy that the magic is lifted. Neustadt.

However, magic is not the only thing that turns milk into blood. The farmer's wife knows very well that there are certain plants, like the *Teufelsblume*⁴⁴, that cause this - Waldmunchen - and blowing on a weasel encourages defecation. To this end, one rubs the animal with the pelt of a weasel that was killed before Walpurga's Day. Neustadt.—The farmer's wife knows as well that the witch, if she comes into the barn on Walpurga's Night, cannot milk without a milking stool; thus, the farmer's wife hides it before sunset. Waldthurn.

The cow is also honored if on Walpurga's Night, rolls are eaten with milk that has *not* been separated. It pays this back by providing lots of milk in the coming year. Neustadt.

5. Churning

If the milk is ostensibly good, the farmer's wife can then concern herself with making butter. Before she begins, she throws holy salt into the churn or spritzes three kings' water inside. Barnau. Then, she sits with her back facing the door, crosses her arms in front of her chest, and begins stirring with crossed arms. Nabburg.

She also wipes the churn stick with a rag from the clothes of a poor sinner for good luck, Fronau, or makes the stick herself, which she does by going outside on Walpurga's Day and cutting down a young sapling in the forest, preferably a juniper sapling, so that the wilderness is cut off from the horned cattle. Waldthurn.

They also make sure to churn butter on the first three *Fridays* in a month; on *Fridays*, the butter witch does not churn butter herself. Falkenstein.

⁴³ Someone who professionally removes animal carcasses.

⁴⁴ Either the black bat flower (*Tacca chantrieri*) or the devil's flower mantis (*Idolomantis diabolica*). Literally *devil's flower*.

A smart housewife knows that watching the maturity of the milk into cream in the tub wastes time; instead, she covers the tub with a towel or seals it completely—this is so the milk can mature in its own time at the bottom of the tub in the commonly called *Söcht*.⁴⁵ Velburg. Thus the witch cannot count, or else they count incorrectly, its maturity. And just in case this is for naught, the farmer's wife ruins the gain for the witch by whipping the milk with black- or hawthorns before churning. The witch feels every hit, and she will be wary to show such a beaten face in public. Lengenfeld.

If, due to such a misfortune, the farmer's wife cannot churn butter and her work and labor is undermined, she throws her *Ehethaler*⁴⁶ in the tub—Fronau—or puts a firesteel under it—Barnau—or cleans the milk bucket with tinder from a smithy, or smudges the barn with asafoetida and gin. Schonau.

If this does not help, the butter churn is struck with a cow chain or buckthorn. Barnau.

6. Calving

When the first birth of a cow produces two male calves, a little animal in the shape of a toad or a frog jumps out as well and heads for the barn. One catches it and puts it in a cooking dish, which from then on is called an *Altreindl*.⁴⁷

If one puts a silver coin under the tray, the animal lays a new egg every day; indeed, the coin cannot be too big, or else the animal will breed itself to death. The coin cannot be more than 24 kreuzer.⁴⁸

Thus, the creature is kept in the house and fed with rolls and milk. Because of the creature's delicate nature, the dish is kept covered with cotton. Fronau.

The dish appears entirely normal, except when one reaches into it, it is never empty. Waldmunchen.

A farmer's wife in Tiefenbach had a cow that birthed two calves. She waited eagerly for the *Altreindl*, but she missed it, because it was as fast as a mouse.

Near Velburg, this creature is called *Geldbrüter*, *Geldbröydar*⁴⁹ because of its characteristics. It comes out between the first and second cows. Since it runs so fast, one puts a *white towel* on the floor to keep it from escaping. It eats newly baked rolls and milk; one places tiny pieces of silver or gold under the creature, and however much is put there, that is how much the creature breeds in 24 hours. Many people there say it has the shape of a bird, others say a toad.

In Falkenstein, where the creature looks like a *bird*, there is a saying: "He has so much money, it is as if he has an *Altreindl*."

No one is allowed in the barn for three days after a cow gives birth.

On *Thursdays*, no farmer follows the calf, lest it does not wean. Tanesberg.

⁴⁵ Not italicized in original.

⁴⁶ Not italicized in original. A certain coin that a woman would be given on her wedding day as a good luck charm. From *Ehe* = marriage, *Thaler* = an antiquated type of coin; see note on the pfennig on page 1

⁴⁷ Not italicized in original. Literally *old cooking dish*.

⁴⁸ An antiquated form of German currency; see note on the pfennig on page 1.

⁴⁹ Literally *money breeder*.

The calf will be like the bull. If one wants a cow with a star,⁵⁰ one puts a piece of paper on the forehead of a bull and lets him stand in front of a cow before she is jumped on, impregnated. Pregnant cows can err as well with this process. One such cow made a mistake in Neukirchen B. by looking at the butcher's dog instead of the bull; when the time came to give birth, everyone was terrified that the calf would not come out and the cow would have to be put down. However, the calf was a weed, had the head of a cow, and the back legs of a toad.

On Shrove Tuesday, one pays attention to whether the first guest in the house is a woman or a man; the pregnant cow then gives birth to a calf of the corresponding gender. St. Kemnath.

After a cow gives birth, the first milk is golden yellow and cooked into a casserole with flour and eggs, which all members of the house eat as if it were a feast. What remains goes to the cow. Fronau.

Milk and its dishes are called *Köybaydar* in the East, *Köybraystar* in the West of the Upper Palatinate. One cannot take them out of the house, or else the cow may be enchanted. Barnau. Kemnath.

Both names are difficult to explain. A majority of flour and milk dishes have the word *Heiligen*⁵¹ in them, which point to certain pagan traditions where the idol of a god is baked, partially as sacrifice and partially as a sacrificial feast, and thus can *Kuhpeter*⁵² be inside a *Köybaydar*.⁵³ The word *baydar* comes from *bayd'n* = goth. *biudan*, *bieten*, *biuds* = sacrificial altar, and thus the original Use of cows was sacrifice, which befits the grateful pagans. I cannot assume any further.

⁵⁴ The mother of this storyteller from Letten had an enchanted cow and searched for a skinner for help; on three Fridays, she had to bring the skinner one week a new unglazed pot from the potter, the next week a piece of soap from the soapmaker, and the third three ells⁵⁵ of undyed linen. The third visit, the mother and the skinner went silently to the river before sunrise and threw all three items behind them into the water, so that they were swept away.

When she went home, the magic was undone and the cow gave healthy milk again. The skinner offered to summon the witch who cast the spell, but the mother refused.

8

After collection, the solids and liquids in milk separate themselves; the milk water is poured back into the troughs of the cattle, which is called *Dopfen*,⁵⁶ and is stirred with salt and kimmel. In the mountains, e.g. in the Alps, one makes air-dried meat patties out of the *Dopfen*, and these are called *Razeln*, *Zwergkäse*,⁵⁷ dwarf-cheese.

Where do these names come from in the North and South? *Razeln* are mythical dwarves which are called "Hankerl" in the mountains.

⁵⁰ That is to say, a white spot on the animal's forehead.

⁵¹ Holy.

⁵² Not italicized in original. From *Kuh* = cow, *Peter* = St. Peter.

⁵³ Not italicized in original.

⁵⁴ Not italicized in original; to offer.

⁵⁵ About 3.75 yards.

⁵⁶ Not italicized in original.

⁵⁷ Not italicized in original.

4. Sheep

To keep the sheep from getting gid,⁵⁸ the most handsome lamb is buried *alive* under the barn door. Such a thing happened not too long ago in the surrounding area of Barnau.

It is a pagan tradition to bury one of the same creature that will live in a building in its foundation as a sacrifice, and usually a child version; according to Grimm,⁵⁹ the sacrifice is put in the earth to support the new building. This happens partially through sealing bricks, partially through living burials, and one can surmise the damage this cruel belief has caused.

5. The Goat

The goat, although simultaneously a symbol of the Devil, also prevents the evil influence of witches.

A billy goat is kept in the barn to prevent the witch from disturbing the animals in the barn, especially the horse; this custom takes place everywhere. Tiefenbach.

Such a billy goat should have a black cross on its back. Neunburg. This cross is the mark of Thor, the hammer. The goat is the animal of the thunder god; they pull his chariot.

In Letten by Barnau, one believes that magic affects the ram first and thus warns the people.

2

After the harvest, after Egibi on the first of September, the goat harvest begins. Notably, there is a belief that the meat loses its evil smell if the goat is first thrown alive from the roof. Is this just a Christian tradition, because the goat was a holy animal and thus needs to be removed from the irreverence of the old gods? Is it a symbol the new Christians used to revoke the pagan gods, or is there still a pagan reason behind the practice? According to Simrock⁶⁰ P. 553, the blood of a goat thrown from the town hall was curative.

3

The goat is also among the *ghost animals*. Spirits that appear in the form of a goat are almost always demonic characters.

4

Horn, beard, and foot of the big horned ram depict the Devil; the ram is the *Devil's animal*.

⁵⁸ A fatal disease of sheep and goats, characterized by a loss of balance.

⁵⁹ Jacob Grimm (1785-1863). Grimm published four editions of an anthology of German mythology between 1835 and 1878.

⁶⁰ Karl Joseph Simrock (1802-1876). Simrock published a handbook of German customs between 1853 and 1855.

5

One must respect goats, or else they will not give milk. Goats and women must be treated well because they are delicate, according to my informant, a weaver from Barnau. Goats are fed five times a day with foliage, since they are simultaneously gluttonous and do not eat much at once, “alle Bis an andaras Laba,”⁶¹ as the saying goes. If the livestock are taken to a meadow, the goats will come and eat the most nutritious food from the cows; they refuse to eat coarser things. What three goats need for food would be more than enough for a large cow. They eat half and scatter around the other. The goat also eats so much that one cannot tell for certain how much.—Therefore, the goat has to stay at home in the barn, so that it also does not fail to protect the livestock from magic.

Goats cannot go out in the rain, or else their flesh will decay from the inside out. Voitenthann.

Boys and merry girls who love to jump around and make jokes are called “Gaislein,”⁶² also *Heberln*, which definitely comes from the Old Norse *hafr* = ram.

6

A shepherd can blow into the horn of a ram and make a bagpipe out of it. This musical instrument of our ancestors has been lost; thus, the native ways and dances have also disappeared. In fact, using a ram horn as a musical instrument is so untasteful nowadays that a former officer in the Bohemian Forest confiscated everything in his region that stemmed from this practice.

6. The Pig

The Devil sees through the eyes of the pig. The pig is thus a *Devil's animal*. The boar was once the holy animal of Freyr.⁶³ Now, the Devil rides on a sow.

The pigs are slaughtered twice a year on Christmas and Shrove Tuesday; the farmer sends sausages and bones to his friends and godparents. The sow receives a hock as her portion, her tithe. Lumberjacks also go around town with cups and receive sausage soup and a sausage; this is called “going in the sausage soup,” and is interpreted as a previously observed feast.

The pig is also an *augural* animal; a girl can eavesdrop on the dray of a mother pig to find out if she will marry a young or an old man. See above.

Indeed, pigs stys can also be affected by evil magic. The brace from a wagon can be put inside, which especially protects against foot injuries.

⁶¹ Something like “everything eaten goes to the other goat.”

⁶² Literally *little goat*.

⁶³ A Germanic god often associated with peace and pleasure.

7. Chickens

1

There is a particular abhorrence of *hens* that *crow*, because the crowing of hens foretell death, misfortune, or vices like strife, blasphemy or fighting. If they preen, the misfortune has already happened. The saying goes: when the hen crows, misfortune follows. Neukirchen.

Hens that do this are immediately killed to keep misfortune at bay; in Roding, one cuts its head off, *so that death has its sacrifice*. Some people are too shy to do this, so they would rather bury the hen alive, like in Treffelstein; these hens are not eaten.

Near Neustadt and Hemau, these hens are called *Wetterhexen*,⁶⁴ since they foretell the weather through crowing and wing flapping; the hens are immediately sold to the Jews.

This crowing is called *murmuring*; "That will cost you your neck," says the farmer's wife to the crowing hen, "because you murmured," and breaks the hen's neck. Treffelstein.

One is not allowed to speak to the hens too loudly during their crowing; there is a saying for this that sends the misfortune back to the hen: "Scream over your neck!" Amberg.

Some hens are thus also *augural* animals.

Similar to how a hen is not allowed to crow, a girl is not allowed to whistle, or else she must repent to the Virgin Mary. Fronau. Barnau.

2

Thus, *black hens* are kept so that nothing happens to the others, since witches do not like to mess with black hens. Indeed, one does not eat their flesh either. This shows that black hens have a mythical aspect, a certain holiness to the gods, which makes them forbidden for humans to eat. That which is hallowed by the gods is itself *salutary* and carries an anti-enchantment power; if an imp manages to crush a black hen to death, it is freed from its evil sickness, as said above, and if the farmer takes an egg from a black hen with her when she takes the livestock out to pasture, she will recognize the witches who intend to take the cows' Use. If one has a corn, one puts a piece of bread on it and lets a black hen eat the bread so the corn goes away. Voithann. Spalt.

3

Sometimes, hens lay tiny eggs that are hardly as big as a pigeon's. These are called *Urlegerln, Irlegerln, Drudeneyer*,⁶⁵ and foretell imminent misfortune. These are thrown backwards over the roof, where the misfortune or imps must follow. Treffelstein. Spalt.

In Barnau, some eggs are tolerated and thrown backwards into the water; they bring the most misfortune to the house they are kept in.

Therefore, the black hen has a special relationship with imps, and through that the gods. When the Christian Germans were no longer allowed to worship these holy animals, they were kept as an object of reverence and fear.

⁶⁴ Literally *weather witches*.

⁶⁵ Not italicized in original; Literally *elf eggs, elf eggs, imp eggs*.

4

If one has chickens and wants hens or roosters, one puts straw from the bed of the farmer underneath, Fronau, and wraps the egg in a piece of men's clothing to ensure that a rooster hatches from it. Neukirchen.

If one wants brown chickens, one puts a brown-colored egg under the chicken; this can be done with any color. Neunburg. v.W.

If a chicken is lost, it will come back if the farmer's wife leaves food for it *in the chimney* in the evening. Waldsassen.

To make sure purchased chickens stay by the house, they are kept in the coop for two days, their feet are put in port water, and they are hunted out of the coop and over the broom that is kept in front of the living room door. Treffelstein.

If the chickens whet their beaks on a crate, snap at it, or make "gloves," it will be cold. Waldmunchen.

5

A *chicken* kept for *seven* years becomes so civilized that it can understand human language. Such a chicken will lay an egg, and out of the egg comes a monster that kills cattle and people. For this reason, the people in Gefrees do not keep a chicken for seven years. City of Kemnath.

If a *red* chicken is ten years old, it lays an egg in manure and buries it there until it hatches; out of the egg comes a bird that poisons people. It is angry, like "a rauda Hana,"⁶⁶ goes the saying.

6

Eggs laid on *Maundy* Thursday, *Odlaspfinsta*, have a special power, because they were already blessed inside the hen, Neukirchen; however, they must be eaten with the shell on by the farmer and his farm hands after Easter service, so the farmers do not hurt themselves; these are the *Odlesoyar*. Hemaui.

7

Shrove Tuesday is a critical time for the *hens*. On this day, something must happen to them so they do not wander off during the year, or are caught by a fox or hawk.

In the morning before sunrise, women bring rubbish to where the neighbors keep their manure, unseen and silent; if the hens then comb through the neighbor's dung, they have the scent of home from the rubbish and go home to roost. Ebnat.

Before sunrise, the farmer's wife spreads a cloth in front of a threshold, puts three pieces of bread soaked in three kings' water on it, and chases the hens over it so they do not get lost. Ebnat.

⁶⁶ A red hen.

Near Velburg, one looks for rabbits' excrement, grates it, and gives it to the hens, so they lay eggs the whole year and do not get lost.

In Tiefenbach, women hit the hens on this day on the tail so they lay many eggs in the coming year. A good woman from the Upper Palatinate does not touch a single needle on Shrove Tuesday; through her sewing, the hens will be sewn up so they can no longer lay eggs; this custom is observed all the way to Gefrees.

8

The chickens' most dangerous *enemies* from the animal world are *foxes* and *hawks*; farmers especially worry to protect the chickens from them; they thus use specific superstitious means. Again, Shrove Tuesday is especially important for this, which seems to be an appropriate time.

Near Falkenstein, girls wake up early on this day and wash their shirts to "Kodika;"⁶⁷ as far as the sound of the splashing goes, the fox cannot come this far.

One brings the leftovers from lunch in an old shard to the neighbor's land, so that the fox does not come into the house.

The foxes are also given wheat swollen with brandy to eat, which is left with a warning: "St. Biberln, schauds feiñ das enk da Fuchs niad kriagd."⁶⁸

In the desert around Roding, a *chain* is spread out before sunrise, either in a circle or lengthways, and wheat is thrown at it, which the chickens are allowed to eat. Thus, the chickens are protected from foxes the whole year. The chain is then rattled and hit, and as far as the sound goes, the fox cannot come. Farther up around Neukirchen, the hens are given bread moistened with brandy prepared according to the "Hennanousch," and the chain is laid over it, so that the chickens eat the bread through its links and the hawk does not catch them.

Near Nabburg, part of the coop or barn is struck with a tie plate, and as far as the echo goes, the fox avoids the house—or one feeds the chickens under a table and pulls out a chain while they eat, so that the hawk does not catch them.

In Waldthurn, the farmer nails a spigot in the ground with a pick before sunrise, and as far as the sound travels, no fox or hawk can steal a chicken. If a chicken vulture or a bird of prey flies overhead, the farmers' children around Amberg say:

Hacht, Hacht,
Flayg dreymal um und um,
Kraygst an alts Henna drum.⁶⁹

The people near Velburg do things most conscientiously to foil the fox. The farmer's wife usually goes around the farm in the morning seven or nine times saying a specific incantation, whereupon someone then places food for the fox in front of the house's main door. Whenever the fox then goes into the barn, it has a *Maulgesper*⁷⁰ and cannot eat. Indeed, one is not

⁶⁷ Likely a folk song.

⁶⁸ "St. Biberln (Likely from *Biberln* meaning *chicks*), look out so the fox does not catch anything."

⁶⁹ "Hawk, hawk, / Fly three times around and around, / Caw to the old hens there."

⁷⁰ Literally *muzzle blocking*.

allowed to say the word “fox” in the house for the rest of the year, and thus says “Hennabou” or “Raudröckl;” *because when one names the fox, the fox comes running.*

Or the farmer’s wife brings in nine kinds of wood in the morning and puts it over rye pasta, which she then scatters in front of the chickens. She lets the chickens go over the wood and eat the pasta. If the fox then comes by during the year, he has a *Klamm* or *Maulgesperr*; one cannot call the fox by name or else the ban is lifted.

In Hollerstetten near Velburg, an offering is placed in a shard in front of the house door for the “Hennabou,” so that it does not take a chicken for the entire year; it is thus jinxed if it goes near the chickens. Here, as well, the fox is called “Hennabou” or “Hennageyar” inside the house.

9

There is a specific custom especially prominent near Hambach. If one wants to fatten up the poultry, one puts a piece of steel under every nest, even if it is as simple as an old nail from the wall, so that the young do not squash the “old,” because it often happens that the chickens become so large that they crush each other and lie dead in the coup. There are, however, certain hens that do not receive pieces of steel as they brood.

In Letten near Erbendorf, eggs sometimes hatch, but the hatching chicks lay there squashed; an *imp* came to the nest, but it could only affect the eggs.

As said above, hens often suffer due to imps. In Hetzendorf, a regional court of Roding, one or two hens would be lying dead in the morning, crushed as if a hundredweight stone had been put on them. The farmer hung a piece of steel near the chickens, and they had peace.

In Neumarkt, the people pluck three feathers from every fowl before sunrise on Good Friday and take them to a different township, so the poultry are safe from raids for the year.

We see here the holy, anti-magical power of *iron* in general, as well as the chain’s. The *iron chain* brings peace, and therefore it is also put around churches. Giving the foxes food points to a kind of *offering* made to protect oneself from misfortune.

8. Pigeons

After buying a pigeon, one washes its feet with port water, which is always available in a specific fenced area, before putting it in the dovecote, so it does not fly away, a practice that never fails. Barnau. Near Velburg and Hemau, a skull is brought from the cemetery on the night before Christmas and is put in the dovecote as a drinking vessel for the pigeons, so that every one bought is forced to stay.

To get rid of the neighbor’s pigeons, a malicious person can put the leg of a marten in the flap so they cannot stay inside—or one puts powder thereof in the place where the pigeons usually congregate, so they all fly away. Tiefenbach.

Likewise, putting a crawfish in the dovecote makes it so no more pigeons die. Velburg. Whoever steals a pigeon will be five Gulden poorer this year. Gefrees.

One cannot fall asleep on pigeon feathers, instead tossing and turning. The pigeons cannot calm down in the night either. Amberg. In Fronau, it is believed that if one wants to prolong a death, one can put a pigeon feather in the pillow.

The pigeon also serves as a means of life or death for children's illnesses. If a child has spasms, gout, or body aches, one can cut off the head of a pigeon and put the bloody neck on the anus of the tormented child, because the blood pulls the poison out of the child's body. The head is buried under the "*Drüpf*" or gutter, but unseen and silently; on the ninth day, it begins to rot, and the child will either be better or die suddenly if there is nothing left to be done. Gefrees.

Imps will also come to the pigeons and crush them, see above by the chickens.

Pigeon meat, though frequently enjoyed, causes aches and pain. To prevent this, turtle doves are secretly brought into the room and take on all the gout themselves. Amberg.

9. The Bee

Bees are the animals of the gods, because they collect wax; also, they cannot tolerate blasphemy; they attack whoever blasphemes. Gefrees.

Therefore, one should not kill any bees; it is also sinful to treat them the same as other animals.⁷¹ Velburg. Hemau.

If a bee or the hive dies out, it means misfortune will befall the family; similarly, the bees die when the head of the family dies. Rotz.

The bees must be told punctually about the death of the head of the household, so that they do not die out. The apiary should have a clear view as the pallbearers lift the casket.

Whoever buys a hive should not act as if they are happy with it; indeed, one is happiest with gifted or inherited bees. After receiving a hive third hand, one has to take them home well, so the bees work diligently. Velburg. Hemau.

If the bees fly high in a swarm and knocking a scythe and pan does not help, one can turn the loaf of bread in the table drawer, and then the swarm comes back and lands. Velburg.

10. The Dog

1

If the dog burns the farmer during a fire, the house is not rebuilt in the same spot, because it will burn down again in twelve years. Waldthurn.

Whoever rides a dog will become sick; caring mothers do not let their children do this. Waldmunchen. Amberg.

The dog wants to save his master nine times a day, the cat to kill him. Gefrees.

To make the guard dog properly angry, he should be given a fear of hawthorns; the little seed kernels in hairy red rose hips have this effect. Tiefenbach.

⁷¹ Here, Schönwerth lists the specific examples that when bees eat, one should use *essen* instead of *fressen*; both mean *to eat*, but the former is reserved for humans, the latter for animals. The same distinction is made when a bee dies, that one should use *sterben* instead of *werden hin*.

2

The dog is a *ghostly animal*. Souls of the poor appear in its shape; dogs also sense the presence of ghosts.

Because of the formidable power inside it, the howls of a dog herald either death or fire, and afterwards it whimpers either up- or downwards and points to the spot where it will happen; therefore, dogs are also *animals of death*.

11. The Cat

1

is the holy animal of Freyja, the goddess of love and death; her chariot is pulled by two cats.

Because of this relationship with Freyja, the mystical properties of cats lend themselves to both sides. Most prominently, the relationship of cats and Freyja as a goddess of love is shown through the saying, "Whoever cats love will have a beautiful wife." Another saying goes, "In love like a cat." The manner of speaking near Hambach: "Whoever goes freely to the cat is a tomcat," which does not actually mean much more than, "Whoever marries a pagan is a pagan," and thus served as a warning for the new Christians so they would not have children with the pagans.

Since Freyja and Wodan split the dead during battle, and Freyja is thus a goddess of death, cats are also animals that *predict death*. Wherever a cat cries, someone from that house will die, or else there will be great misfortune and dismay. Neukirchen. One says about people who are about to die or are dying that "they belong to the cat." Amberg.

2

As holy animals, one cannot intentionally hurt cats. This is a common belief. Whoever harms a cat, their fortune will turn into misfortune in the near future; one should be especially careful not to shoot at a cat, Neunburg, because if they miss, the cat will jump into the hunter's face. Hemaui.

However, what is holy to the pagans is demonic to the Christians. Therefore, it is believed that cats are eerie creatures. Nine times every day, they contemplate killing their masters, even as they flatter them. Yes, cats that are nine years old have the *right* to strangle their masters. Ebnat.

3

At this age, there is another consequence. A cat, nine years old, becomes a *witch*, so it goes around Waldmünchen: because if the cat is pet in the wrong direction, it produces fire. Velburg. Therefore, one rarely sees an old cat in the countryside, they curse humans. Ebnat.

4

Cats and witches get along well in general; cats are the *witch's animal*. Therefore, one shies away from cats, and because in the Twelve Nights witches have special power, a cat is prudently placed in front of the house door after night prayers. Velburg.

Is the witch here a metaphor for the priestesses of Freyja? There were once grand sacrifices in the Germanic north, which happened only once every nine years.

5

The cat also has *elvish* characteristics; they love dancing and singing in the night, which echoes the nightly revelries of the elves in the treetops and in the fields. Does the awe-inspiring cat, which rarely misses these, point the way to the elf king?

6

The bloodlust of cats is also related to the warrior maidens, the *Walkyren*, which at the same time belong to Freyja. Each time, the witch represents Freyja with her relationship with cats. Near Auerbach, witches drive a wagon covered with cats on Blocksberg in Bohemia.

7

There is still more to be said about cats. They are *weather prophets*. If a cat lies down on its face, it will be cold in the winter, rain in the summer. Hemau. Tiefenbach u.m.O. If they clean themselves, a guest will come into the house—Barnau—or it will be nice out. Hemau. If they stretch out, then in Treffelstein, the saying goes, “what lazy bones will come today that will not stir?” What this sentence means: “Whoever stops eating and then starts up again must give the cat a pfennig.” Oettingen. It is unknown why a break from eating belongs to the cat, and therefore must be forgiven by the cat, or is there a pagan custom behind it, a form of house offering that the cat and therefore Freyja needs? Hemau.

Cat ear wax is medicinal for burns. Ebnat. Their breath is unhealthy. Amberg.

8

Following is a few stories:

1

At a courtyard in Haide near Ebnat, there lived a farmer at whose house witches would secretly meet.

A neighbor once visited from Zeckenberg, and when she arrived, a cat was sitting on the stairs with fiery eyes and was playing the violin. In the parlor, there were seven cats also playing the violin and seven naked women dancing there. The cat outside was standing watch for the others.—Meanwhile, people were walking past and stopped by the house to drink from the fountain. When they heard the fun going on inside, they went to the window and looked in.

Inside, however, a cat said, "They've been lured." All the cats jumped away, and so did the strangers so they would not be mauled.—It was Walpurga's Night.

2

In the Upper Palatinate, the place for manure and liquid waste is put outside the door to the house, and also in front of the inn in Oberzell.—A night watchman once heard an unfamiliar howling, meowing, and wailing, like a thousand cats were together and thrashing about, as he went to call that it was midnight. Curious, he went towards the noise and found himself in front of the inn. There, he took his lance and hit under the cats. Meanwhile, the people in the inn had also woken up due to the noise and went to see what was happening. They saw a mass of cats, mostly orange, even though there were almost no cats in this color in the area, and in the middle under the pile was the watchman, who was calling for help.

But when they got to him, he was already dead in the manure pile, and two of the cats were on top of him, which escaped before the twelfth hour rang. The dead watchman was removed.

In general, people believe that the man had offended witches, who then killed him.

3

A reverend had a cat; big and beautiful was his only friend, and therefore the cat sat at the table like a guest to eat.

One evening, the reverend was called away to help the sick. As he returned home in the night, he saw a light on in a barn in front of the village and heard music. He went over, and what did he see? His cat was playing the fiddle, and other cats were singing and dancing.

At the next meal, the cat was the first at the table. The reverend said, as he petted the cat, "Kitty, kitty, where were you yesterday?" The words were barely out of his mouth as the cat jumped out the window and was never seen again. Neunburg v.W.

4

A resident of Neustadt went home from a neighboring village one night. On the path, he saw cats in women's clothing having a meal at a table in a field. He approached and they gave him cakes to eat. The next day, when he was home again, he remembered the gifts. He took the cakes out of his pocket and saw that they were cow manure.

5

A man once went from Waldmunchen to Gaig. His cat, already nine years old, stayed home. On the way back through a forest, the man heard music. When he investigated, he saw witches on a tree and in between them his cat. Panicked, he approached them with the intention of battering the cat to death. But the cat disappeared.

6

One day, a maid was slicing vegetables. The farmer's wife, however, was a witch, and when the maid got drowsy from all the slicing and began to fall asleep, the wife came to her as a

cat and pushed her with her head so much that the maid said, "*Kadderl, bafferd di, bafferd mi añ, hayst heind Nohd añ bafferd.*"⁷² The maid was so angry that she seized the cat and sliced its nose so that it bled. When it was time to eat in the evening, the farmer's wife's face was torn up and bound with bandages. She was in no condition to cook; a page saw how the Devil helped her, and then everyone knew for certain that she was a witch. Treffelstein.

7

There was a miller who would accept workers with no other place to work, but so many went in and so few came out that the miller's wife had to be a witch. One day, a young man came by to look for work, but he had been warned, so when he went to bed, he left a holy light burning at the side and a saber by his head. When the eleventh hour rang, *three* cats, one *black*, one *gray*, and one *white*, jumped on the table. One said to the others, "Put out the light!" but none of them could do it, since the light was blessed. Then, the *white one* wanted to do it more violently, but the man took his saber and chopped its paw off, after which all three fled out the window. The next morning, the man went to the miller, who was happy to see him and then went to bring the man some soup from the miller's wife. However, he returned shortly after and said, "I do not know what is wrong with my wife. She is lying in bed and is not responding to me." "I believe that," replied the man. "Go back to her and check in the bed." The miller did this, and his wife had only one hand and the bed was full of blood. Neuburg.

⁷² "Cat, you sleep, I also sleep, and you also slept last night."

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