

To the mayor of Bamberg (Oberbürgermeister) Andreas Starke
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Subject: Demand for rehabilitation of victims of the witch hunt in Bamberg

Dear Mr. Oberbürgermeister Andreas Starke, mayor of Bamberg!

I appeal to you that the city council should exonerate the people sentenced and burned because of witchcraft in the city of Bamberg.

Namely I want to remind you of the fate of your predecessor, Mayor Johannes Junius, executed in the year of 1628.

The victims of the persecution of witches in Europe were innocent. Posthumously the victims should be given back their dignity. For modern science it is evident that the convicted people could not have committed the crimes they were accused of:

- flying on a broom for bedevilment (participation in Witches' Sabbath, Hexensabbat)
- harm by magic to weather, animals or humans (evil magic, Schadenzauber)
- sexual intercourse with Satan (fornicating with the devil, Hexenbuhlschaft)

The verdicts of the courts never have been annihilated or revised nor the victims rehabilitated. It is long overdue to exonerate them - at least on moral grounds. It seems nearly impossible to discuss the matter on judicial grounds, as for example many historical documents have been lost.

Furthermore it would be appropriate to erect a statue of remembrance in Bamberg for these people.

After 350 years it is overdue to declare that the people sentenced because of witchcraft died innocently and to rehabilitate the victims.

Please send me an email/ letter of acknowledgment of receipt.

Yours sincerely

Annex: Interest of media

Worldwide there is a lot of interest in this issue:
Exoneration of Germany's witches

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,804288,00.html>

<http://www.midrealm.org/gryphony/aggregator/sources/1>
<http://www.scatoday.net/node/21948>
http://sd-10807.dedibox.fr/show_items-feed=f36e0b3be9c0a85d72fcc11f7d9da39f
<http://www.thehistoryblog.com/archives/14318>
<http://www.lanacion.cl/buscan-limpiar-el-nombre-de-miles-de-mujeres-y-ninas-acusadas-de-brujas/noticias/2011-12-19/105211.html> (Spanish)
<http://cronicasmundosocultos.blogspot.com/2011/12/en-alemania-buscan-limpiar-el-nombre-de.html> (Spanish)
<http://ruv.is/frett/thyskaland-nornir-fa-uppreisn-aeru> (Icelandic)
http://religia.tv/news,1564-rehabilitacje_spalonych_za_czary.html (Polish)
<http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/Svet/Nemacka-rehabilituje-vestice.lt.html> (Kroatian)
<http://spogli.blogspot.com/2011/12/lunita-30.html> (Italian)
http://www.anton-praetorius.de/downloads/rehabilitation_english.pdf

Annex: Fate of Johannes Junius

In 1628 Johannes Junius was accused as sorcerer and arrested in the „Drudenhaus“ (special house for torture of the witches) in Bamberg. His wife had been executed already. During the whole trial Junius refused the charge to be a magician. He declared:

- he never took part at the witches' sabbath
- he never betrayed God

Shortly before his execution he wrote a letter to his daughter from jail giving a description of the sufferings from the point of view of a victim. His letter has been preserved over the centuries. He told his daughter how he had been tortured by thumbscrews: "blood emerged under my fingernails and everywhere so I could not use my hands for four weeks – as you can see by my handwriting." About strappado he wrote: „I thought this is the end of heaven and earth. 8 times I was pulled up. Then they let me fall down. The pain was terrible.“

He could hardly hold a pen, but accomplished to write a farewell letter to his daughter: „Good night my beloved daughter. I am innocent. I have been tortured and I must die. You can believe me: I am innocent. In this prison people are tortured until they confess things that never happened. When we were alone in the cell the hangman urged me to confess the truth or to invent something in order to escape further torture. Now I must confess that I am a sorcerer. I must negate God - I have never done that my whole life.“ The letter ends with a simple adieu: „It took me several days to write this down. Both my hands are crippled. I am in a miserable situation. Good night, your father Johannes Junius will never see you again.“

[His letter never reached his daughter, but was intercepted by the judge and ended up in the files of the court.]

The court accepted his confession made under torture and he was sentenced to death. On August 6th 1628 he was burned at the stake. compare:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannes_Junius