

Grizzel Greedigut  
A Familiar's Pedigree.

Joe Pentangelo  
THE GRADUATE CENTER, CUNY

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# Witches' Familiars

- Central component of 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century English witchery.
- Toads, cats, dogs, ferrets, &c.
- Not *really* animals, but demons (or the devil!) in the *form* of animals.
- Killed people, livestock, spoiled cheese and beer. Bad stuff.
- Ate bread, milk, witch-blood.
- Described in *lots* of witch pamphlets.



THE WONDERFUL DISCOVERY OF THE WITCHCRAFTS  
OF MARGARET AND PHILLIP FLOWER (1619)

beaste whatsoeuer he will.



A REHEARSAL BOTH STRANGE AND TRUE (1579)

# Tests

- Tests to identify witches often hinged on their familiars.
- **SEARCHING TEST** – Mark of the familiar feeding on the witch's blood.
- **WATCHING TEST** – Witch isolated in her home and watched for a few days, watchers waiting for familiars to arrive (to feed, take orders, hang out, etc.).

# Matthew Hopkins

- Witch-hunting in England was never as big as on the continent, except during the English Civil War...
- Matthew Hopkins and John Stearne, 1644–1647, tried and executed 300+ women.

It has been estimated that **all of the English witch trials** between the early 15th and late 18th centuries resulted in **fewer than 500** executions for witchcraft. Therefore, presuming the number executed as a result of “investigations” by **Hopkins and his colleague John Stearne** is at the lower end of the various estimates, their efforts accounted for **about 60 per cent of the total**; in the 14 months of their crusade **Hopkins and Stearne sent to the gallows more people than all the other witch-hunters in England of the previous 160 years.** [WIKIPEDIA]



THE DISCOVERY OF WITCHES (1647)

# *The Discovery of Witches (1647)*

- Hopkins' pamphlet, addressing critics.
- Got his start with the watching test of Elizabeth Clarke in 1645.
- After a few days, HOLT, JARMARA, VINEGAR TOM, SACK AND SUGAR, NEWES all entered the room.
- Clarke also named ELEMAUZER, PYEWACKET, PECKIN THE CROWN, and GRIZZEL GREEDIGUT.
- Names “which no mortall could invent,” wrote Hopkins.
- Scholars still regard these names as “bizarre,” but little effort to put them in historical context.

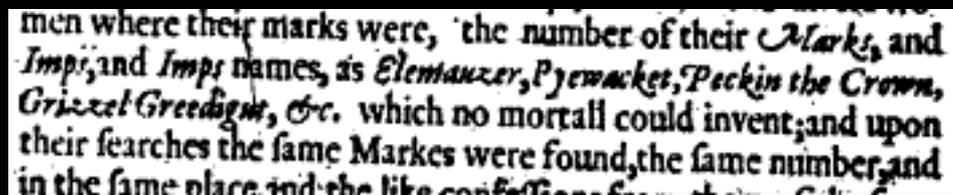
# Other Accounts

Clarke's watching test also written about in:

- *A True and Exact Relation* (1645)— pre-trial testimonies of Hopkins and others.
- *A Confirmation and Discovery of Witchcraft* (1648) — Stearne's self-vindicating book.
- **NONE** of the unseen familiars named anywhere but Hopkins' *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1647).

# Grizzel Greedigut

- *Discovery of Witches* (1647)
  - Grizzel Greedigut (text)
  - Griez Zell Greedigutt (woodcut)
  - Some modern transcriptions say “Grizzel, Greedigut” (i.e. 2 familiars) in the text but this is totally wrong. Unfortunately, these are the most accessible editions of the pamphlet.



men where their marks were, the number of their *Marks*, and *Imps*, and *Imps* names, as *Elemauzer*, *Pyewacker*, *Peckin the Crown*, *Grizzel Greedigut*, &c. which no mortall could invent; and upon their searches the same *Markes* were found, the same number, and in the same place and the like confessions from the same *Witches*.

# Grissell, Greedigut

- *The Witches of Huntingdon* (1646)
  - Joan Wallis had Grissell and Greedigut, “in the shape of dogges with great brisles of hogges haire upon their backs.”
  - Stearne and *possibly* Hopkins were involved in this trial.
  - Wallis and Clarke probably didn’t know each other. They lived 95 miles apart, and Clarke was elderly, poor, and had one leg.
  - **Almost definitely Hopkins’ direct source.**

# Grizel (a.k.a. Grissil)

- *The Witches of Northamptonshire* (1612)
  - Describing Arthur Bill of Raunds:  
It is said that he had three spirits to whom he gave three special names (the Devil himself sure was godfather to them all). The first he called **Grizel**, the other was named **Ball**, and the last **Jack**, but in what shapes they appeared unto him I cannot learn.
- *Guide to Grand Fury-Men* (1627)
  - Probably Arthur's familiar was meant in a paragraph about familiars' names, here spelt Grissil. (Ball is also mentioned.)

# Grissell

- *OED Online*: grizzle / gryssell / grissel / etc. could mean “of a grey colour” or “a grey animal.”
- *Pleasures of Princes* (1614) describes grissell as a good color for gamecock breeding hens.
- Traditional ballad “J. Armstrong’s Last Goodnight” (~1620):

But little Musgrave, that was his foot-page  
With his bonny grissell got away untain
- Pets and familiars were often named for coloration. *Guide to Grand Fury-Men* (1627) also lists Swart, Blue, White, and Callico as familiar-names.

# Grissel

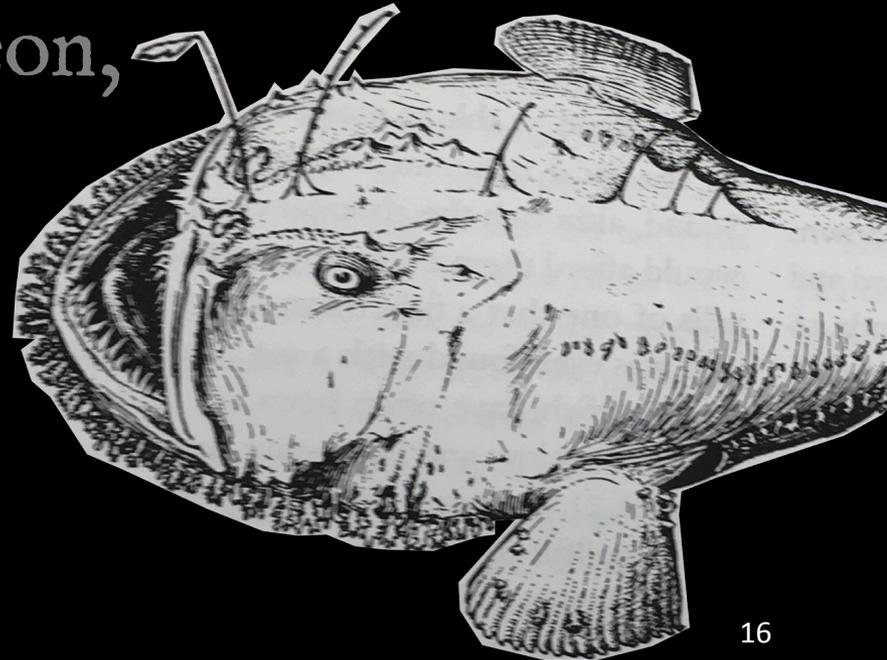
- *OED Online*: Grissel also the “later form of the proper name Grisilde [...] the proverbial type of a meek, patient wife.”
- *Taming of the Shrew* (1623)
- *Patient Grissil* (1603)
- Spelt Grizel in Scotland and England’s north.

# Greedigut

- Widespread term for glutton.
- In *The Trial of Treasure* (1567), Greedigut advises Lust to eat houses and lands.
- Arthur Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1567) features a "brach called Greedigut with two hir puppies by hir."
- *Thomæ Thomasii Dictionarium* (1644), Latin-English dictionary, defines L. *glúto* as "a glutton, a greedigut, one that devoureth much meate."

# Greedigut (the fish)

- Also the name for the large-mouthed Goosefish in the American colonies.
- In 1634, William Wood poetically celebrated New England's many fish species, praising  
The scale fenc'd sturgeon,  
wry-mouth halibut,  
The flouncing salmon,  
codfish, greedigut



# Review

- FAMILIARS**
- Grizzel Greedigut (1647) - *Discovery of Witches*
  - Grissell and Greedigut (1646) - *Witches of Huntingdon*
  - Grissill (1627) - *Guide to Grand Fury-Men*
  - Grizel (1612) - *Witches of Northamptonshire*

- ANIMALS**
- Greedigut (1634) - *New Englands Prospect*
  - Grissell (adj.) (1620) - *J. Armstrong's Last Goodnight*
  - Grissell (adj.) (1614) - *Pleasures of Princes*
  - Greedigut (1567) - *Metamorphoses*

- PEOPLE**
- Grissell (1623) - *Taming of the Shrew*
  - Grissil (1603) - *Patient Grissil*

# Conclusion

- “No mortall could invent” is a bizarre claim
- Hopkins almost definitely took these names from *Witches of Huntingdon* (1646), published one year before his pamphlet, but one year after Clarke’s watching test.
- Recall: Grizzel Greedigut NOT corroborated as being mentioned by Clarke.
- Maybe Hopkins hoped that combining two well-known names into one was truly unique. (See also Vinegar Tom, Sacke and Sugar.)
- As once-common meanings of Grizzel and Greedigut fell away, we’ve fallen for Hopkins’ design to present these names as super weird.