

8. From The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology, by Rossell Hope Robbins (New York: Crown Publishers, 1959), pp. 504, 510:

**Torture: Steps of torture in witchcraft trials**

I. Preparatory Torture. To force a confession of guilt. Methods: stripping, threatening, binding, whipping, thumbscrews, stretching on rack or ladder. (In court records, this torture was often not reported, and the accused was said to confess voluntarily)

II. Final Torture. To force confession in cases of taciturnity, and to force naming of accomplices, who, having been defamed, could then be tortured.

A. Ordinary Torture.

Method: strappado. (In strappado, the prisoner's arms were tied then hoisted in the air. Frequently, weights were attached to his feet to pull his shoulders from their sockets without leaving visible marks of rough treatment. Sometimes toescrews and thumbscrews were applied while the victim was suspended)

B. Extraordinary Torture

Method: Squassation. (In squassation, the prisoner was hoisted as in strappado, his hands bound behind his back to a cord secured to a pulley in the ceiling of the torture chamber. The victim was raised off the ground, and then suddenly released a few feet so that he almost, but never quite, touched the ground. This jerking caused intense pain and complete dislocation of the limbs. The higher the drop, the greater the pain. More than three applications of "severe torture" usually caused death. "Very severe" torture consisted of adding weights to the feet of the prisoner as he hung, and twisting the ropes binding his hands)

III. Additional Tortures for special offenses. To cause agony in retribution. Methods: cutting off hands or legs; tearing of flesh with red-hot pincers.

IV. Occasional Tortures used at individual prisons. To satisfy sadism of judges or hangman. Methods: no limit fixed to barbarity, e.g., pressed to spiked chair with fire underneath; scalding water baths, etc.

V. Execution. Methods: Burning by fire. Possibility of strangulation before burning if accused did not recant; otherwise burning alive. According to region, accused tied to stake, placed in straw hut, or set on barrel of pitch. Green wood used for slow burning for impenitent witches. Occasionally, desecration of body before burning by smashing on wheel or hacking of limbs.