

SECULAR PUNISHMENTS

Secular punishments were also prescribed for an indecent way of life. According to the 16th century statute of the Blackheads, a brother caught at a harlot was punished by throwing him into water, but it was possible to redeem himself by granting the brotherhood a barrel of beer. But the woman who had lost her honour had no hope of mercy; her dishonour had to be visible to all. In Tallinn, for example, prostitutes wore white caps. In 1589, Bulderingesche's sister was caught "whoring," but to the indignation of the Town Council, she still walked around the town with her head uncovered.

The punishment for prostitution was flagellation at a pillory and driving out of the town. These punishments were not applied very consistently in Tallinn, but sometimes they were. In 1623, for example, Simon the pimp and the three harlots who worked for him were whipped at the pillory and chased out of town. The women's hair was cut off and nailed to the pillory. A woman suspected of prostitution could be saved if she could provide convincing evidence that there was a man who wanted to marry her.