Notes from **Mackay, Christopher S. *The Hammer of Witches: A Complete Translation of the Malleus***

***Maleficarum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.**

**General**

* Published 1486
* Uses the terms ‘sorcerer’ and sorcery instead of witchcraft
* Authors were Dominican friars (the Order of Preachers who were established to combat heresy and enforce Orthodox views and didn’t live in monasteries like other orders)
* Dominicans often studied theology and were therefore often appointed by popes as inquisitors (e.g., Jacobus Sprenger, one of the authors)
* Henricus Kramer sold indulgences, was a prolific writer and an inquisitor in Germany
* Academic climate = scholasticism

Different parts of the book had different purposes

1. How to preach about sorcery
   1. Especially those priests who didn’t believe in it
   2. Aimed at Dominican friars who gave sermons
2. How sorceresses work and how to counteract them
   1. Aimed at preachers and others
3. How to prosecute sorceresses
   1. Aimed at church and secular judges

* They were definitely writing in the face of critics who didn’t believe in sorcery
* The term Malleus had a history (was used against non-Orthodox Christians, then against Jews in the 1420s)

Sections

**Justification (apologia)**

* We would see it as an intro today
* Focused on sorcery being equated to Satan’s assault on God

**Bull**

* Papal Bull is an official pope’s letter sealed by his ‘bulla’
* Bull of Pope Innocent the 8th, 1484 was included in the book
* To help authors against opponents to their work as inquisitors
* Says sorcerers are causing problems in Germany
* Papal approval of authors’ view of sorcery but not the Church’s word

**Approbation (‘certification of orthodoxy’)**

* 1487 document
* By orthodox theologians – gives their approval

**Part 1**

Shows sorcery exists (mostly drawing on work of Thomas Aquinas)

1. Sorceresses
2. Demons
3. God’s permission

**Part 2**

* Sorceresses’ practices and how to counteract them

**Part 3**

* How to investigate and prosecute
* Based on Nicholas Eymeric’s “Guide Book for Inquisitors”

**Sources**

Refers to 78 other authors but really focuses on 3

1. Aquinas for Part 1 (a Dominican also, a leader of the scholastic movement of education)
2. Johannes Nider for Part 2 (a Dominican reformer from the early 1400s who wanted moral reformation of Christianity and believed Satan was at the root of sorcery)
3. Nicholas Eymeric for Part 3 – a Spanish inquisitor in the mid-1400s

A few other parts by a Dominican friar who was especially interested in women’s character flaws

**Scholasticism**

* Used the format of the “disputed question”
  + An academic debate
  + How to refute an incorrect answer

**Satanism (or diabolism)**

\*\*\*A **NEW** belief in the 1400s that sorcerers work for Satan to inflict sorcery on society – main foci below:

* + A pact with the devil
  + Sexual relations with the devil
  + Aerial flight to get to a Satanic gathering where there was incest and promiscuity
  + Magic for malevolent reasons
  + Baby killing
* Had its roots in Christian orthodoxy vs. Waldensian Christians as magic practitioners
* The term witch is a corruption of Waldensian
* No evidence of actual Satanists
* *Malefica* is another Latin term for witch = evil doer (not just one who did magic but one who joined Satan and rejected Christianity to do HARM)
* War between God and Satan (his fallen angel)
* Book of Revelation (Apocalypse) – New Testament
  + End of Days
  + Satan wins but Christ reverses this and rules for 1000 years
  + Satan gets out of prison to fight God, with end of the world as the final
  + Last Judgment
    - All of this was relatively widely believed in medieval times
    - In the 1400s there was a feeling Satan was on the upswing and the world was getting less moral
      * E.g., more sorceresses having sex with demons becoming an accepted belief
  + Belief that good angels become bad and the world will end when the number of elect in heaven will equal the number of angels in heaven (those who haven’t become demons)
    - Therefore, the belief that midwives kill babies exists because demons tell them to do it (no unbaptized babies are allowed in heaven).
    - Keeping the numbers up

**God and Sorcery**

* God gives free will to people
  + So he allows Satan
  + How can evil co-exist with God
  + It’s a cycle of crimes (that’s too complicated to detail here)
* People in the 1400s didn’t see God as loving, as people see God today
  + He exacts punishment and revenge
    - It makes inquisitors mad when people deny that sorcery exists

**Women and Sorcery**

* Negative view of women
  + e.g., there are more women satanic practitioners than men
  + older sources said that women are inferior in morals and brains
* some men were sorcerers (e.g, to improve their archery skills) but this was often seen as educated magic, whereas women (especially uneducated peasant women) used a different kind of magic
* women enticed men into marriage – when they were rejected they used sorcery to jilt their ‘ex’

**History of Inquisition**

* 1300s – Albegensian heresy in southern France vs. Cathars
  + Dominican friars were put to work clamping down on heresy
* This became institutionalized and they were appointed either by provincials or popes to investigate, with the aid of secular officials who could actually prosecute
  + Could ask questions under torture

Torture

* Torture was revived in the 1100s (derived from Justinian’s Roman law)
* Romans knew of the problem of false confession under torture and there were some rules to deal with it
* Common method: *strappado* – a victim was lifted by the shoulders when his/her hands were tied behind the back
* Many felt sorceresses couldn’t feel pain
* Some felt conjecture was a better tool
  + Trap the person into saying the truth

**Magic**

* People at the time didn’t have our conception of science
  + Words, spells, rituals were even cloaked in Christianity
  + We might call it superstition
* In the middle ages some educated priests used “high magic”
* But mostly uneducated women (the focus in Malleus)
* People who practiced magic didn’t link it to Satan
  + That was imposed as a perception by inquisitors (a NEW thing)

**Effects**

* Popularity of this book (reprinted 12X 1486 - 1519) led to the view of the \*\*new theory of sorcery
* Later works and the witch craze itself of the 1600s owe a lot to it
* Established a new paradigm that led to closer examination of behaviours
* There were always some people who objected to the new view
* Eventually science brought in new ways of thinking and there was less interest in Satan