14-15th C.

Early 14th C. Sorcery Trials at French court & in Avignon

15th C. First Witch Trials – “combined” image of witch
14th Century Sorcery Trials to 15th Century Witch Trials

Save as
I. New elements in witch trials: Switzerland 1420-1430's

1428 VALAIS (Swiss Canton)
large group trial by Bishop of Sion
executes over 100 for maleficium and diabolism.

1438 Lausanne, Neuchatel (Switzerland)

full description of Sabbath: "Synagogues of Satan"
or VAUDERIE (term from Waldensians)

includes collective apostasy "From Christ to Devil"
signs of allegiance to demon:

Devil's mark, intercourse with devil, infant sacrifice
flying to Sabbath: distance as "reality factor"
1459--ARRAS, Burgundy (France) 34 tried, 12 burned

escalation of trial from individual to group through torture
mass trials conducted by Inquisitor and Bishop
intervention of secular ruler:
   Duke of Burgundy stops trial
accused nobleman appeals to
   PARLEMENT OF PARIS (royal appeals court)
1491 -- posthumous rehabilitation of victims
15TH CENTURY WITCH THEORY AND WITCH HUNTING

The "New Crime" of Witchcraft in 15th century

Fusion of: Secular crime of maleficium with
Spiritual crime of apostasy (devil worship)

Fusion of: Popular image of the witch as malefica with
Learned theory of witchcraft as diabolism
or devil worship
WITCH HUNTING in 15th C. Germany

by Heinrich KRAMER AND Jakob SPRENGER

1481-1486 38 executed in German Rhineland

1484: Papal bull of Innocent VIII (“witch bull”)

SUMMIS DESIDERANTES AFFECTIBUS
(Desiring with supreme ardor)
authorizes Dominican Inquisitors Kramer and Sprenger
to stamp out witchcraft (maleficium) and devil worship
Title: Hammer of Witches,
Subtitle: Witches and their heresy, so they may be crushed by this most powerful weapon.

Note gender of nouns:
Maleficarum, Maleficas = feminine due to “a”
1487 **MALLEUS MALEFICARUM** "The Hammer of (female) Witches"

**Epigraph:** "NOT TO BELIEVE IN W/C IS THE GREATEST OF HERESIES“

Organization of book:
Pt 1  Definition of Crime: Devil, Witch, Divine Permission
   including “Why it is that chiefly women are addicted to
   evil superstitions” (last week’s reading)
Pt 2  Witchcraft i. How it operates (diabolical pact)
   ii. How it may be opposed (remedies)
Pt 3  How to try a witch (judicial manual) (this week’s reading)

**Witchcraft as CRIMEN EXCEPTUM** (exceptional crime)
   can be tried in any court, criminal or church related

**Circulation:**
1486-1520 = 13 editions
1574-1669 = 16 editions
THE FIRST PART TREATING OF THE THREE NECESSARY CONCOMITANTS OF WITCHCRAFT, WHICH ARE THE DEVIL, A WITCH, AND THE PERMISSION OF ALMIGHTY GOD

Question I
Whether the Belief that there are such Beings as Witches is so Essential a Part of the Catholic Faith that Obstinacy to maintain the Opposite Opinion manifestly savours of Heresy.

Question II
If it be in Accordance with the Catholic Faith to maintain that in Order to bring about some Effect of Magic, the Devil must intimately co-operate with the Witch, or whether one without the other, that is to say, the Devil without the Witch, or conversely, could produce such an Effect.

Question III
Whether Children can be Generated by Incubi and Succubi.

Question IV
By which Devils are the Operations of Incubus and Succubus Practised?

Question V
What is the Source of the Increase of Works of Witchcraft? Whence comes it that the Practice of Witchcraft hath so notably increased?

Question VI
Concerning Witches who copulate with Devils. Why is it that Women are chiefly addicted to Evil superstitions?
Hebetate: diminish, blunt

The First Part

**Question IX**
Whether Witches may work some Prestidigatory Illusion so that the Male Organ appears to be entirely removed and separate from the Body.

**Question X**
Whether Witches can by some Glamour Change Men into Beasts.

**Question XI**
That Witches who are Midwives in Various Ways Kill the Child Conceived in the Womb, and Procure an Abortion; or if they do not this Offer New-born Children to Devils.

**Question XII**
Whether the Permission of Almighty God is an Accompaniment of Witchcraft.

**Question XIII**
Herein is set forth the Question, concerning the Two Divine Permissions which God justly allows, namely, that the Devil, the Author or all Evil, should Sin, and that our First Parents should Fall, from which Origins the Works of Witches are justly suffered to take place.
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**Solutions of the Arguments.**

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<td>Question XV</td>
<td>It is Shown that, on Account of the Sins of Witches, the Innocent are often Bewitched, yea, Sometimes even for their Own Sins.</td>
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<td>Question XVI</td>
<td>The Foregoing Truths are Set out in Particular, this by a Comparison of the Works of Witches with Other Baleful Superstitions.</td>
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<td>Question XVII</td>
<td>A Comparison of their Crimes under Fourteen Heads, with the Sins of the Devils of all and every Kind.</td>
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MALLEUS MALEFICARUM: AUTHORITY & EXPERIENCE

Authoritative character of the work
1. Academic reputation of authors:
   - scholastic theologians at Cologne University
   - Sprenger as University Dean

2. printed with book:
   - Papal Bull "Summis Desiderantes" 1484
   - letter of support from Theology Faculty at Cologne

Appeals to authority within the work
Textual authorities:
   - Scripture, Church Fathers (Augustine, John Chrysostom)
   - Scholastic Theologians (Thomas Aquinas)
Kramer & Sprenger: Authority & Experience (cont.)

Appeal to "experience" as evidence:
1) their own and others' witch trial experiences especially witches' confessions (like Nider's quotation of Judge Peter Von Greyerz / Stedelen trial)
2) "common knowledge" about witches, including popular stories, jokes (bird’s nest)
3) “modernity” of the witch cult – why has witchcraft increased at this time?

Issues of reality versus illusion -- K & S decide for nightflying as real (against Canon Episcopi) against "shape shifting" as demonic illusion against castration by witches as illusion
RISE OF WITCHCRAFT TRIALS

Why do witch trials start in the 15th century?
Background outlined in course so far
12-13th C.: rise of towns, heresies (Cathars, Waldensians)
   major industry in towns is cloth making; cloth workers as heretics
13th C.: creation of mendicant orders and medieval Inquisition
   rise of universities, scholastic theology, especially the theory of diabolical pact

14th C. sorcery trials involving invocation of demons in
courts of French king and Avignon Pope John XXII
15th C. witch trials beginning in Switzerland (late 14th C Stedelen.)
then Italy, France, Germany

All the above factors contribute to 1) increasing elite involvement in witch beliefs
   especially creation of theological theories about magic

2) the judicial process under which witch trials would be conducted
   especially inquisitorial procedure & use of torture in secular and church courts
Popular perceptions of maleficium at the local level

Are these constant or do they change as well?

What conditions might lead to intensified charges of maleficium at the village level?

Historical climatology: past climate changes measured by

- ice core sampling (glaciers moving up or down a mountain)
- dendroclimatology (measurement of annual tree ring growth)
Drawing of glacier at the source of the Rhone River extending downhill during a cooling period during 19th c
10-14\textsuperscript{th} C: “The Medieval Warm” starts around the year 1000

global warming period, average temperatures one degree Celsius higher than 20\textsuperscript{th} C. average

results: expansion of arable land (arable = land under cultivation)

deforestation to clear more land, expansion of population

rise of medieval towns (with cathedrals, universities, and heresies)
14-17th C: “Little Ice Age”: end of “the medieval warm”

- cooling trend leads to temperature drop of about 2 degrees Celsius
- results: crop failures, beginning in the north, famine, abandonment of marginal lands, reduction of areas under cultivation, overall population decrease

**Black Plague** 1347 to late 17th C: preceded by famines, which weakens resistance to infection; accelerates population decrease in first outbreaks, 1/3 to 1/2 of population dies
Cooling trend begins in late 15\textsuperscript{th} C
Coldest temperatures in late 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} C
Warming trend throughout 18\textsuperscript{th} C.

Winter severity in Europe, 1000 - 1900. Note two cold periods in the 15\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries. Based on Lamb, 1969 / Schneider and Mass, 1975.