

craft, and explains why it is that women are witches more frequently than men. The second part offers a typology of witchcraft as well as a typology for its investigation. The third part treats in infinite detail the nature of the legal proceedings against witches, and justifies all its deviations from orthodox civil and ecclesiastical legal procedures with careful citations of Scripture, the church fathers, and more recent theologians and ecclesiastical lawyers. The excerpts from the *Malleus* given below are by no means an attempt to summarize or offer "highlights" of the work. It is a tightly knit book, each argument and dogma carefully drawn from the conclusions of the preceding arguments and dogmas, and it is excerpted only reluctantly. The force of the *Malleus* is its comprehensive character, and the selections made below offer only representative samplings of its intricate design. A reading of the whole work is well worth the effort, and it is only with this cautionary note that the editors have excerpted as much as they have.

33

Pope Innocent VIII: *Summis desiderantes affectibus* (1484)

Pope Innocent VIII (1484-1492) was moved by the complaints of two Dominican inquisitors, Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, that local ecclesiastical authorities in Germany refused to aid them in their pursuit of heretical witchcraft. Sprenger and Kramer described some of their cases to the pope and elicited from him the famous bull called, from its opening Latin words, *Summis desiderantes*. The similarity in terminology of this and earlier papal letters on the subject is certainly striking, and its purpose is clearly to remove the juridical obstacles preventing Kramer and Sprenger from carrying out their witch-hunt. This document has traditionally been considered the "beginning" of the witch persecutions, but its likeness to other papal documents, its particular emphasis upon preaching, and its lack of dogmatic pronouncement on the subject of witchcraft place it squarely in the tradition of papal concern for heresy and disbelief. Its circulation with Sprenger and Kramer's later handbook, the *Malleus Maleficarum* (Text 37), gave it both a wider circulation and a more direct role in subsequent witch persecutions that it might otherwise have had.

SOURCE: Hansen, *Quellen*, 24-27. English translation from Burr, *The Witch Persecutions*, 7-10.

DESIRING WITH SUPREME ardor, as pastoral solicitude requires, that the catholic faith in our days everywhere grow and flourish as much as possible, and that all heretical pravity be put far from

the territories of the faithful, we freely declare and anew decree this by which our pious desire may be fulfilled, and, all errors being rooted out by our toil as with the hoe of a wise laborer, zeal and devotion to this faith may take deeper hold on the hearts of the faithful themselves.

It has recently come to our ears, not without great pain to us, that in some parts of upper Germany, as well as in the provinces, cities, territories, regions, and dioceses of Mainz, Cologne, Trier, Salzburg, and Bremen, many persons of both sexes, heedless of their own salvation and forsaking the catholic faith, give themselves over to devils male and female, and by their incantations, charms, and conjurings, and by other abominable superstitions and sortileges, offences, crimes, and misdeeds, ruin and cause to perish the offspring of women, the foal of animals, the products of the earth, the grapes of vines, and the fruits of trees, as well as men and women, cattle and flocks and herds and animals of every kind, vineyards also and orchards, meadows, pastures, harvests, grains and other fruits of the earth; that they afflict and torture with dire pains and anguish, both internal and external, these men, women, cattle, flocks, herds, and animals, and hinder men from begetting and women from conceiving, and prevent all consummation of marriage; that, moreover, they deny with sacrilegious lips the faith they received in holy baptism; and that, at the instigation of the enemy of mankind, they do not fear to commit and perpetrate many other abominable offences and crimes, at the risk of their own souls, to the insult of the divine majesty and to the pernicious example and scandal of multitudes. And, although our beloved sons Henricus Institoris and Jacobus Sprenger, of the order of Friars Preachers, professors of theology, have been and still are deputed by our apostolic letters as inquisitors of heretical pravity, the former in the aforesaid parts of upper Germany, including the provinces, cities, territories, dioceses, and other places as above, and the latter throughout certain parts of the course of the Rhine; nevertheless certain of the clergy and of the laity of those parts, seeking to be wise above what is fitting, because in the said letter of deputation the aforesaid provinces, cities, dioceses, territories, and other places, and the persons and offences in question were not individually and specifically named, do not blush obstinately to assert that these are not at all included in the said parts and that therefore it is illicit for the aforesaid inquisitors to exercise their office of inquisition in the provinces, cities, dioceses, territories, and other places aforesaid, and that they ought not to be permitted to proceed to the punishment, imprisonment, and correction of the aforesaid persons for the offences and crimes above named. Wherefore in the provinces, cities, dioceses, territories, and places aforesaid such offences and crimes, not without evident damage to their souls and risk of eternal salvation, go unpunished.

We therefore, desiring, as is our duty, to remove all impediments by which in any way the said inquisitors are hindered in the exercise of their office, and to

prevent the taint of heretical pravity and of other like evils from spreading their infection to the ruin of others who are innocent, the zeal of religion especially impelling us, in order that the provinces, cities, dioceses, territories, and places aforesaid in the said parts of upper Germany may not be deprived of the office of inquisition which is their due, do hereby decree, by virtue of our apostolic authority, that it shall be permitted to the said inquisitors in these regions to exercise their office of inquisition and to proceed to the correction, imprisonment, and punishment of the aforesaid persons for their said offences and crimes, in all respects and altogether precisely as if the provinces, cities, territories, places, persons, and offences aforesaid were expressly named in the said letter. And, for the greater sureness, extending the said letter and deputation to the provinces, cities, dioceses, territories, places, persons, and crimes aforesaid, we grant to the said inquisitors that they or either of them, joining with them our beloved son Johannes Gremper, cleric of the diocese of Constance, master of arts, their present notary, or any other notary public who by them or by either of them shall have been temporarily delegated in the provinces, cities, dioceses, territories, and places aforesaid, may exercise against all persons, of whatsoever condition and rank, the said office of inquisition, correcting, imprisoning, punishing, and chastising, according to their deserts, those persons whom they shall find guilty as aforesaid.

And they shall also have full and entire liberty to propound and preach to the faithful the word of God, as often as it shall seem to them fitting and proper, in each and all the parish churches in the said provinces, and to do all things necessary and suitable under the aforesaid circumstances, and likewise freely and fully to carry them out.

And moreover we enjoin by apostolic writ on our venerable brother, the Bishop of Strasburg, that, either in his own person or through some other or others solemnly publishing the foregoing wherever, whenever, and how often soever he may deem expedient or by these inquisitors or either of them may be legitimately required, he permit them not to be molested or hindered in any manner whatsoever by any authority whatsoever in the matter of the aforesaid and of this present letter, threatening all opposers, hinderers, contradictors, and rebels, of whatever rank, state, decree, eminence, nobility, excellence, or condition they may be, and whatever privilege of exemption that may enjoy, with excommunication, suspension, interdict, and other still more terrible sentences, censures, and penalties, as may be expedient, and this without appeal and with power after due process of law of aggravating and reagravating these penalties, by our authority, as often as may be necessary, to this end calling in the aid, if need be, of the secular arm.

And this, all other apostolic decrees and earlier decisions to the contrary notwithstanding, or if to any, jointly or severally, there has been granted by this

apostolic see exemption from interdict, suspension, or excommunication, by apostolic letters not making entire, express, and literal mention of the said grant of exemption; or if there exist any other indulgence whatsoever, general or special, of whatsoever tenor, by failure to name which or to insert it bodily in the present letter the carrying out of this privilege could be hindered or in any way put off,—or any of whose whole tenor special mention must be made in our letters. Let no man, therefore, dare to infringe this page of our declaration, extension, grant, and mandate, or with rash hardihood to contradict it. If any presume to attempt this, let him know that he incurs the wrath of almighty God and of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul.

Given in Rome, at St. Peter's, in the year of Our Lord's incarnation 1484, on the nones of December, in the first year of our pontificate.

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Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger:
The Malleus Maleficarum (1487)

The *Malleus Maleficarum* (Hammer of Witches), written in 1487 by the Dominican inquisitors Heinrich Kramer (more commonly called Institoris, the Latinized form of Kramer), and Jacob Sprenger, became the first encyclopedia of witch beliefs and was constantly cited in support of those beliefs by Catholics and Protestants down to the eighteenth century. Its form is similar to that of other works in the same genre; it springs from the handbook for investigating heretics, some examples of which were in fact called "Hammers of Heretics." Kramer and Sprenger were the inquisitors in Upper Germany; their book was prefaced by Pope Innocent VIII's bull *Summis desiderantes*, and contained as an appendix an alleged decision in its favor by the faculty of theology of the University of Cologne. With such claims to the sanction of authority, the *Malleus* exhaustively analyzed the entire problem of witch beliefs and set out meticulously the ways by which witches could be found, convicted, and executed. The unrelenting thoroughness of Kramer and Sprenger served, in a sense, to sum up the entire history of recent witch beliefs and to present Christian Europe with a complete, persuasive, massively documented, and apparently authorized description of the witches in its midst.

SOURCE: From the *Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. Montague Summers (London, 1928), pt. 1, qq. 6, 11; pt. 2, q. 1, chaps. 2, 4, 7; pt. 3, intro., qq. 5, 9, 10, 14, 15, 18, 31, 34 (pp. 41-47, 66, 99-101, 109-13, 118-22, 204, 209-10, 216-18, 222-30, 235, 258-61, 268-71).