

## Demonologies

- Books about witches and witchcraft, usually explaining what witches did, how to identify them and what to do with suspected witches.
- Most famous was the *Malleus Maleficarum* ('The Hammer of Witches'). This was published in 1486 and was written by Jakob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer. Key points about the *Malleus* are:
  - It refers to witches as women and devotes an entire chapter to the sinful weaknesses and moral and intellectual inferiority of females. It is thought that this was highly influential in steering most (but not all) subsequent witch-hunts towards women.
  - Kramer, in particular, exhibited a virulent hatred towards female witches and advocated their extermination.
  - Witch-hunting actually declined for a time after its publication, most notably in Switzerland.
  - It was most influential in France and Italy.
  - It was least influential in England, possibly because it was written by Catholics and endorsed by the Pope.
  - Kramer was also known as 'Institoris', which is the Latin version of his surname.
  - It was published with a Papal Bull issued by Pope Innocent VIII in 1484, confirming the existence of witches and their association with the Devil. It also gives Sprenger and Kramer the authority to hunt and prosecute witches.
  - It links witches with the Devil and heresy throughout.
- Other popular demonologies from the period include *Daemonologie* by James I (1597), *On the Demon-mania of Witches* by Jean Bodin (1580), *Demonolatreiae* by Nicolas Remy (1595), *Six Books of Discussions on Magic* by Martin Del Rio (c.1600) and *Compendium Maleficarum* by Francesco Maria Guazzo (1608). Guazzo's work is particularly well known for its graphic woodcuts detailing the myth of the diabolic pact. Del Rio's book was the most popular demonology during the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- It is important to remember that, whilst literacy rates improved throughout the early modern period (particularly in urban areas), a good proportion of people still could not read, and so the impact demonologies would have had on the lower classes is questionable. However, it is likely that some elite beliefs about witches that were cemented by demonologies filtered through to the lower classes, and there is evidence of this in trial records and confessions.