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## Malleus Maleficarum (review)

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## Malleus Maleficarum (review)

### **Abstract**

Malleus maleficarum is perhaps the most famous text in the history of European witchcraft. It is unfortunately best known to English-speaking readers via the 1928 translation presided over by the eccentric charlatan Montague Summers. With a paucity of notes, a tendentious historical introduction, and questionable translation choices at almost every turn, Summers's Malleus has long been excoriated by scholars, but no one (in the Anglophone world) stepped forward to produce anything better. That has now thankfully changed. Christopher Mackay's new edition and translation is a monumental, though somewhat marred, achievement.

### **Disciplines**

European History | History of Religion | Other History

### **Comments**

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pano (mining the cult of Rosana, and the relationship of her story to the romances of *Floire and Bancheflor* and Boccaccio's *Il filocolo*, for clues on Florentine views of crusade, conversion, and relations with the Ottoman Empire), continue the Italian interdisciplinary focus. In between, the second essay, by John Tolan, examines the *Responsiones*, a series of instructions written in 1234 by Raymond of Penyafort to Franciscans and Dominicans preaching in Tunis, taking us southward across the Mediterranean and emphasizing European concerns with expatriate Christian communities living in North Africa.

As is clear in these essays, and throughout the volume, this collection does not focus exclusively on relations between Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Instead, it is just as concerned with interactions within faiths, as between Christians in Byzantium and medieval Europe, later between Greeks and Italians, and between Iberian and eastern Jews. K. E. Fleming examines two Jewish interpretations of Ottoman history, one written in 1566 by the Sephardic rabbi Moshe ben Baruch Almosnino in Salonica, the other by the Cretan Romaniote rabbi Eliyahu ben Elqana Kapsali (d. 1555). Fleming argues that differences in their perceptions of the Ottoman role in history reflect fundamental differences between the two Jewish communities. Picking up on this theme of diaspora and the new opportunities open to Jews in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean ("a Jewish moment"), Molly Greene proposes that there was a parallel "Greek moment" in the same period, when Greek sailors and merchants took advantage of their ties with both Venetians and Ottomans to assume a critical role as intermediaries in the eastern Mediterranean. The trio of eastern Mediterranean essays concludes with Ariel Salzmann's fascinating study of the late-seventeenth-century trial of a young Franciscan from Malta, who had converted to Islam and been circumcised in Egypt (his excuse was that he had been under the influence of too much coffee), had returned to Christianity, then again claimed to be Muslim in front of authorities in Cyprus, eventually leading to his trial by the Inquisition in Venice. The collection ends with Steven Wasserstrom's meditation on the life and scholarship of S. D. Goitein. In some ways the very different tone of this final essay seems out of place in the volume, and yet it also seems appropriate to give the last word to Goitein. More than most, Goitein perceived that documents produced by one premodern Mediterranean religious community could provide insights into the broader currents of contemporary Mediterranean society.

OLIVIA REMIE CONSTABLE, University of Notre Dame

HENRICUS INSTITORIS, O.P., and JACOBUS SPRENGER, O.P., *Malleus maleficarum*, 1: *The Latin Text and Introduction*; 2: *The English Translation*, ed. and trans. Christopher S. Mackay. Cambridge, Eng., and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 1: pp. x, 720; black-and-white frontispiece and 2 maps. 2: pp. v, 615; black-and-white frontispiece. \$275.

*Malleus maleficarum* is perhaps the most famous text in the history of European witchcraft. It is unfortunately best known to English-speaking readers via the 1928 translation presided over by the eccentric charlatan Montague Summers. With a paucity of notes, a tendentious historical introduction, and questionable translation choices at almost every turn, Summers's *Malleus* has long been excoriated by scholars, but no one (in the Anglophone world) stepped forward to produce anything better. That has now thankfully changed. Christopher Mackay's new edition and translation is a monumental, though somewhat marred, achievement.

The edition is a sound piece of work. Mackay relied on the first printing of 1486 (available in two good, modern facsimile editions), and he also benefited from Günter Jerouschek and Wolfgang Behringer's annotated German translation (*Der Hexenhammer* [Munich,

2000]). He has added detailed textual notes, especially on the *Malleus's* many borrowings from earlier witchcraft theorists such as Johannes Nider and standard authorities such as Aquinas. In terms of editorial principles, Mackay is faithful to the orthography of the first printing, with frequent footnotes to clarify situations in which medieval orthography might confuse readers more familiar with classical Latin.

The textual footnotes are provided in the first volume, containing the Latin edition. Instead of a facing-page translation, the English text occupies the second volume, where Mackay supplies more general explanatory footnotes about the *Malleus's* content and arguments. The result is that those who want to work with both the translation and edition, and their separate apparatuses, must keep two bulky volumes open on their desks simultaneously. The translation itself endeavors to keep close to the original Latin. That is commendable, particularly in light of the frequent liberties the Summers version took. Mackay is particularly fastidious in rendering *maleficium* as "sorcery" and *maleficus/a* as "sorcerer/ess" rather than as "witchcraft" and "witch." His rationale is that "witch" implies "female," while the *Malleus* often used the male *maleficus*, especially when drawing on earlier sources; likewise "witchcraft" implies a distinctly female crime, while medieval usage of *maleficium* did not. Against this, one could argue that, while it did bow to earlier usages, the *Malleus* clearly intended to present *maleficium* as a predominantly, albeit never exclusively, female crime. Mackay's choice, however, has the advantage of calling attention to the issue rather than occluding it.

While the edition and the translation should remain essential to scholars for years to come, the same cannot be said about the introduction. Problems begin in the very first sentence, where Mackay introduces the notion of a late-medieval and early-modern "witch craze." Almost all recent witchcraft scholarship has recoiled from that term, with its implications of irrationality and incomprehensibility. Given the concern Mackay shows in his translation to avoid possibly misleading connotations, the casual use of this troublesome term at the very outset of his introduction is notable. He is, it seems, far more comfortable with the text than with its historical context. This imbalance gives the introduction a very uneven tone—at points extremely detailed and technical, while at others more akin to a basic textbook. Experts will want to skim over long sections presenting the broad outlines of the history of the Dominican order, for example, or explaining the rudiments of inquisitorial procedure. General readers, on the other hand, may be confounded by sections presenting long, detailed arguments about the *Malleus's* authorship or the authenticity of the Cologne theological faculty's approbation of the work, but experts will want to pay close attention. Most recent scholarship (including my own) has tended to ascribe the *Malleus's* authorship solely to Heinrich Institoris, but Mackay raises some pertinent points suggesting that Jacob Sprenger may have had a hand at least in part 1 of the treatise. Tellingly, however, Mackay's effective arguments are mainly textual, and his reasoning falls somewhat flat when he turns to context. He does not, for example, adequately explain away evidence that, at least later in his career, Sprenger, then a senior Dominican official, was in no way a supporter of Institoris. Likewise with the questionable Cologne approbation, Mackay raises valid points against its being an outright forgery, but he must admit that there was something peculiar about the circumstances under which it was obtained.

There are other aspects of the introduction that will disappoint both experts and general readers. Mackay's treatment of misogyny is shockingly inadequate. The issue is extremely complex, and simply branding the *Malleus* misogynist will not do, but precisely for that reason, readers have every reason to expect a substantial discussion of medieval attitudes toward women in general and of the complex and much-debated relationship between gender and witchcraft. What they get is a subsection of thirty-six lines (pp. 35–36, compared with the immediately preceding twenty-one pages of background on medieval universities). Another notable omission is any discussion of the *Malleus's* impact and impor-

tance. Mackay notes that the treatise's later influence is "open to question" but then declares that further analysis "lies beyond [his] present purposes" (p. 170). Of course, one could argue that there are more than enough general histories of witchcraft to set the *Malleus* in its proper context. But Mackay clearly intends his introduction at least in part for absolute novices. Why else the need to explain who St. Dominic was or what constitutes a papal bull?

There are also some unfortunate technical slips. This reviewer could not help but notice that his 2003 book on Johannes Nider, cited four times in the introduction, was nevertheless omitted from the bibliography. Since the notes provide only abbreviated citations, readers have little chance of tracking down references that do not correlate to bibliography entries. Once I noticed my own case, I was not long in finding others. "Kieckhefer, 1989" (which would be Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*) is cited twice, but the bibliography lists only his 1976 and 1997 books, *European Witch Trials* and *Forbidden Rites*. Likewise "Russell, 1972" (Jeffrey Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*) is cited twice but is omitted from the bibliography. Footnote 55 cites "Cohn, 1975," which would be Norman Cohn's *Europe's Inner Demons*. The book is listed in the bibliography but only in its 1993 revised edition, which unfamiliar readers would have no reason to link to the 1975 citation. Even more oddly, four references that seem to be to *Europe's Inner Demons* (nn. 67, 69, 81, 84) are attributed to "Cohn, 1972." Unfamiliar readers might mistakenly assume these refer to Cohn's other major book, *Pursuit of the Millennium*, listed in the bibliography in a 1973 revised edition. The only footnote that intends to reference *Pursuit of the Millennium*, however, cites "Cohn, 1970," which is the correct year for the revised edition but does not correlate to Mackay's incorrect bibliography. Further examples could be given. There is also no index. It is shocking that such a monumental scholarly work should lack such a basic piece of scholarly apparatus.

MICHAEL D. BAILEY, Iowa State University

JOHN JAMES, *The Creation of Gothic Architecture, an Illustrated Thesaurus: The Ark of God, A: The Evolution of Foliate Capitals in the Paris Basin, 1170 to 1250; B: The Evolution of Foliate Capitals in the Paris Basin: The Archaic Capitals prior to 1130*. 2 parts in 3 vols. Photographic work by John and Hilary James. Documentary appendix by Chris Henige. Art-historical analyses by Chris Henige and Sarah Dillane. Hartley Vale, Australia: West Grinstead, 2002 (1 and 2) and 2006 (3). 1: pp. ix, 1–798; many black-and-white figures, 1 table, and 1 chart. 2: pp. v, 799–1624; many black-and-white figures. 3: pp. ix, 726; many black-and-white figures, 1 chart, and maps. 1 and 2: \$1,175. 3: \$650.

In this monumental study, James and several collaborators have brought together a formidable resource: the photographs of some ninety-six hundred capitals (as well as a few larger architectural views) from about fourteen hundred monuments built in northern France between roughly 1050 and 1250. The author's purpose is to provide "an overall and general chronology [of medieval architecture in northern France] from the study of every example of a single repeatable type of decoration: foliage," the element of capital sculpture selected by the author as the most representative of development and change in medieval architecture. The first two volumes (part A) concern the morphology of capital forms between 1170 and 1250. By identifying the foliage leaf on capitals, and utilizing a system that has its origins with Giovanni Morelli's mode of analysis (the "small detail," or "casual work"), James sets out a chronological grid from c. 1170 to c. 1250 in which the style of capitals creates the basis for a new chronology of medieval architecture. Other