



Compendium Maleficarum: The Montague Summers Edition

Francesco Maria Guazzo , Montague Summers (Editor) , E.A. Ashwin (Translator)

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This extraordinary document, considered one of the most important manuals ever compiled on witchcraft, offers striking insight into the early seventeenth-century mind and society's attempts to cope with the evils it saw manifested in sorcery.

A collection of writings by the Ambrosian monk Francesco Maria Guazzo, the *Compendium* comprehensively and penetratingly describes the entire practice and profession of witchcraft. First published in 1608, the commentaries came at an appropriate time. Contemporary accounts noted that witchcraft and sorcery had "spread in all directions," leaving "no country, town, village, or district, no class of society" free from the practice. This probing work, by a distinguished writer and scholar who perceived the devil as an evil force seeking to destroy men's bodies and souls, was an attempt to help man live piously and devoutly, thus guarding against such seductions and manipulations.

Reproduced from a rare limited edition published in 1929 and supplemented with many erudite editorial notes by the Rev. Montague Summers, the *Compendium Maleficarum* includes profoundly serious discussions of witches' pacts with the devil, finely detailed descriptions of witches' powers, poisons, and crimes; sleep-inducing spells and methods for removing them, apparitions of demons and specters, diseases caused by demons, and other topics. Also examined in detail are witches' alleged powers to transport themselves from place to place, create living things, make beasts talk and the dead reappear; witches' use of religion to heal the sick, laws observed by witches to cause and cure illness, differences between demoniacs and the bewitched, and other subjects from the realm of the supernatural.

Here is an encyclopedic tract of incalculable worth to the historians and student of the occult and anyone intrigued by necromantic lore, sabbats, sorceries, and trafficking with demons.

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Angus MacHaggis says

yaas

Michael says

The text was very interesting, I think what most detracted from it was the mindset of the author (And translator) in regards to the subject matter. There is definitely a Catholic bias that is representative of the 17th century and prior. Anything non-Catholic is regarded as heretical, Mary is regarded as a Goddess, massacres of "heretics" are justified, etc... I suppose I have a hard time remaining objective when it comes to some of it. I do feel some contempt for the author in terms of the hypocrisy I see in the majority of classical Catholic doctrine in regards to the teachings and symbols of Christ. Despite, this, it was interesting to see the view of the clergy of the time in regards to the supernatural.

Phil Slattery says

One of the influential books of western civilization. This was the book used by the Inquisition and jurists to determine who was a witch in Europe during the witch trials. Definitely for the historian or horror specialist.

Anthony says

beautiful woodcuts of witches and devils! and the cutest little tale of an 8-year-old witch that i must share: "In the district of Treves a peasant was planting cabbages in his garden with his eight-year-old daughter, and praised the girl highly for her skill in the work. The young maid... boasted that she could do more wonderful things than that; and when her father asked what they were, she said: "Go away a little, and I will quickly make it rain on whatever part of the garden you wish." He was astonished, and said "Come then, I will go a little away." And when he had withdrawn the girl dug a trench and pissed in it, and beat the water with a stick, muttering I know not what, and behold there fell from the clouds a sudden rain upon the said place."
