

Witches



Report in the Südwest-Presse Ulm

Drowned, tortured, burnt alive

In Rottweil witches shall be rehabilitated; a Professor in Konstanz alleges that the burning of witches during the Middle Ages has nothing to do with the church.

Here is my answer as a readers letter in the Südwest- Presse Ulm 31.07.2015

The historical reappraisal and rehabilitation of the innocent victims are overdue particularly as today in Africa and India every year still hundreds of people are killed because of witchery. Here however I in the first place want to oppose the view that the churches had nothing to do with this mania. During the time of the witch-mania the churches had practically the total power over the entire western world and today they don't want to have anything to do with this darkness?

The witch-mania during the Middle Ages has its roots in the Christian theology, in the "sinfulness of women". The Christian- Judaic believe in spirits, which is present in the bible, in the Old as well as in the New Testament, has in addition certainly contributed to the witch-mania too. These books are full of devils and evil spirits. Already in the Hebrew Bible it is stated:

2Mos 22:18" Don't allow a female sorcerer to live."

Hereby the irrational thinking and acting has been prepared. From irrational thinking comes unreasonable acting. The witch – mania had been anchored into the heads of the believers by the spiritual leaders of the churches by: Augustine, Thomas of Aquinas, Luther, Calvin...Even today in the Roman Catholic Church evil spirits are exorcised by extra educated exorcists with prayers and holy water. The intention had been to burn the body in order to save the soul.

As the first pope Gregory IX, 1227-1241, had given order to persecute witches. In 1484 pope Innocence VIII published his witch-bull and threatens at the end of it everybody with terrible punishment if he acts against his order to destroy all witches.

The Dominicans Heinrich Kramer and Jakob Sprenger wrote with the "Hammer against Witches" 1489 the instruction for the witch-hunt. The arch/ bishops of Salzburg, Würzburg, Trier, Bamberg...had hundreds of women, men and children burnt as witches.

In 1775 Prince Abbot Honorius von Schreckenstein in Kempten convicted the last witch in Germany. Praiseworthy two clergymen shell be mentioned, who have distinguished themselves in the fight against the witch-mania: Friedrich Spee and Anton Praetorius.