After the first recorded trial of Alice Kyteler in 1324, trials were sporadic and by no means set in any area of Europe.

They seemed to spread slowly, with the ideals of witchcraft first being seen in France with the persecution of religious groups such as the Cathars and the torture and execution of the Knights Templar.

The Cathars were seen as a threat to the Church as they followed their own set of doctrine and were viewed as heretics. They were systematically exterminated, and during their trials many of the Cathars are said to have admitted to heretical acts such as incest, group orgies and sabbats and devil worship. This began to cement the idea of witches working together to commit evil acts.

The Templars were exterminated merely to ensure the French King could acquire their vast wealth. He was extremely low on funds, and the convenient accusations of heresy against the Templar Order was really just a ruse to covet their vast wealth.

The Templars were tortured in various ways, and under torture many of them admitted to acts that would later be defined at witchcraft, such as homosexual acts, kissing the devil's backside, anointing idols with the fat of murdered infants and consorting with the devil and a familiar in the form of a black cat.

Despite many of them confessing to these fairly ridiculous accusations under torture, many of them did renounce their captors in public and protest their innocence. Despite this, they were all condemned to death and were burnt at the stake as heretics.

Other maligned groups throughout history have added to the witchcraft ideals, including homosexuals, Jews and lepers. These people, who we now know to be no different from anyone else, were seen as threats to the Church and to be feared and loathed. Homosexuality was still very much seen as a sin within Christendom, it was not perceived as being natural behaviour and by condemning homosexuals, we see some of the early ideas that witchcraft involved sexual acts that were considered an inversion on normal behaviour.