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Magic in Western Culture - Brian P. Copenhaver 2015-09-09

The story of the beliefs and practices called 'magic' starts in ancient Iran, Greece, and Rome, before entering its crucial Christian phase in the Middle Ages. Centering on the Renaissance and Marsilio Ficino - whose work on magic was the most influential account written in premodern times - this groundbreaking book treats magic as a classical tradition with foundations that were distinctly philosophical. Besides Ficino, the premodern story of magic also features Plotinus, Iamblichus, Proclus, Aquinas, Agrippa, Pomponazzi, Porta, Bruno, Campanella, Descartes, Boyle, Leibniz, and Newton, to name only a few of the prominent thinkers discussed in this book. Because pictures play a key role in the story of magic, this book is richly illustrated.

Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England - Alan MacFarlane 2002-09-10

This is a classic regional and comparative study of early modern witchcraft. The history of witchcraft continues to attract attention with its emotive and contentious debates. The methodology and conclusions of this book have impacted not only on witchcraft studies but the entire approach to social and cultural history with its quantitative and anthropological approach. The book provides an important case study on Essex as well as drawing comparisons with other regions of early modern England. The second edition of this classic work adds a new historiographical introduction, placing the book in context today. **Witchcraft and Folk Belief in the Age of Enlightenment** - Lizanne Henderson 2016-04-08

Taking an interdisciplinary perspective, *Witchcraft and Folk Belief in the Age of Enlightenment* represents the first in-depth investigation of Scottish witchcraft

and witch belief post-1662, the period of supposed decline of such beliefs, an age which has been referred to as the 'long eighteenth century', coinciding with the Scottish Enlightenment. The late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were undoubtedly a period of transition and redefinition of what constituted the supernatural, at the interface between folk belief and the philosophies of the learned. For the latter the eradication of such beliefs equated with progress and civilization but for others, such as the devout, witch belief was a matter of faith, such that fear and dread of witches and their craft lasted well beyond the era of the major witch-hunts. This study seeks to illuminate the distinctiveness of the Scottish experience, to assess the impact of enlightenment thought upon witch belief, and to understand how these beliefs operated across all levels of Scottish society.

Religion and the Decline of Magic - Keith Thomas 1991

Presents an analysis of the religious beliefs of English society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including the use of popular magic, and the role the Protestant Reformation played in taking magic out of religion.

Civil Histories - Peter Burke 2000-05-04

Sir Keith Thomas is one of the most innovative and influential of English historians, and a scholar of unusual range. These essays, presented to him on his retirement as President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, concentrate on one of the broad themes illuminated by his work - changing notions of civility in the past. From the sixteenth century onwards, civility was a term applied to modes of behaviour as well as to cultural and civic attributes. Its influence extended from styles of

language and sexual mores to funeral ceremonies and commercial morality. It was used to distinguish the civil from the barbarous and the English from the Irish and Welsh, and to banish superstition and justify imperialism. The contributors - distinguished historians who have been Keith Thomas's pupils - illustrate the many implications of civility in the early modern period and its shifts of meaning down to the twentieth century.

Magic and Witchcraft - Michael David Bailey 2014

Witches & Neighbours - Robin Briggs 1997

"Witches and Neighbours" is a highly original and unconventional analysis of a fascinating historical phenomenon. Unlike other studies of the subject which focus on the mechanisms of persecution, this book presents a rich picture of witchcraft as an all-pervasive aspect of life in early modern Europe. This book is not available from Blackwell in the United States and the Philippines. A fascinating and accessible account of the central role of witchcraft in early modern Europe. A standard work on the subject of witchcraft now available in a revised edition with an updated bibliography. Presents an unconventional interpretation of the role and influence of witchcraft. Argues that witchcraft was as complex and changing as the society of which it formed a vital part. Draws on a range of original sources to vividly illustrate the arguments.

In Pursuit of Civility - Keith Thomas 2018-06-05

Keith Thomas's earlier studies in the ethnography of early modern England, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, *Man and the Natural World*, and *The Ends of Life*, were all attempts to explore beliefs, values, and social practices in the centuries from 1500

to 1800. In Pursuit of Civility continues this quest by examining what English people thought it meant to be "civilized" and how that condition differed from being "barbarous" or "savage." Thomas shows that the upper ranks of society sought to distinguish themselves from their social inferiors by distinctive ways of moving, speaking, and comporting themselves, and that the common people developed their own form of civility. The belief of the English in their superior civility shaped their relations with the Welsh, the Scots, and the Irish, and was fundamental to their dealings with the native peoples of North America, India, and Australia. Yet not everyone shared this belief in the superiority of Western civilization; the book sheds light on the origins of both anticolonialism and cultural relativism. Thomas has written an accessible history based on wide reading, abounding in fresh insights, and illustrated by many striking quotations and anecdotes from contemporary sources.

The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West - David J. Collins, S. J. 2015-03-02

This book presents twenty chapters by experts in their fields, providing a thorough and interdisciplinary overview of the theory and practice of magic in the West. Its chronological scope extends from the Ancient Near East to twenty-first-century North America; its objects of analysis range from Persian curse tablets to US neo-paganism. For comparative purposes, the volume includes chapters on developments in the Jewish and Muslim worlds, evaluated not simply for what they contributed at various points to European notions of magic, but also as models of alternative development in ancient Mediterranean legacy. Similarly, the volume highlights the

transformative and challenging encounters of Europeans with non-Europeans, regarding the practice of magic in both early modern colonization and more recent decolonization.

Ritual in Early Modern Europe - Edward Muir 2005-08-18

The comprehensive 2005 study of rituals in early modern Europe argues that between about 1400 and 1700 a revolution in ritual theory took place that utterly transformed concepts about time, the body, and the presence of spiritual forces in the world. Edward Muir draws on extensive historical research to emphasize the persistence of traditional Christian ritual practices even as educated elites attempted to privilege reason over passion, textual interpretation over ritual action, and moral rectitude over gaining access to supernatural powers. Edward Muir discusses wide ranging themes such as rites of passage, carnivalesque festivity, the rise of manners, Protestant and Catholic Reformations, the alleged anti-Christian rituals of Jews and witches. This edition examines the impact on the European understanding of ritual from the discoveries of new civilizations in the Americas and missionary efforts in China and adds more material about rituals peculiar to women.

Religion and the Decline of Magic - Keith Thomas 2003-01-30

Witchcraft, astrology, divination and every kind of popular magic flourished in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, from the belief that a blessed amulet could prevent the assaults of the Devil to the use of the same charms to recover stolen goods. At the same time the Protestant Reformation attempted to take the magic out of religion, and scientists were developing new explanations of the

universe. Keith Thomas's classic analysis of beliefs held on every level of English society begins with the collapse of the medieval Church and ends with the changing intellectual atmosphere around 1700, when science and rationalism began to challenge the older systems of belief.

Witchcraft and Magic in Ireland -

Andrew Sneddon 2015-08-25

This is the first academic overview of witchcraft and popular magic in Ireland and spans the medieval to the modern period. Based on a wide range of un-used and under-used primary source material, and taking account of denominational difference between Catholic and Protestant, it provides a detailed account of witchcraft trials and accusation.

An Analysis of Keith Thomas's Religion and the Decline of Magic -

Simon Young 2017-07-05

Keith Thomas's classic study of all forms of popular belief has been influential for so long now that it is difficult to remember how revolutionary it seemed when it first appeared. By publishing *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, Thomas became the first serious scholar to attempt to synthesize the full range of popular thought about the occult and the supernatural, studying its influence across Europe over several centuries. At root, his book can be seen as a superb exercise in problem-solving: one that actually established "magic" as a historical problem worthy of investigation. Thomas asked productive questions, not least challenging the prevailing assumption that folk belief was unworthy of serious scholarly attention, and his work usefully reframed the existing debate in much broader terms, allowing for more extensive exploration of correlations, not only between different sorts of popular belief,

but also between popular belief and state religion. It was this that allowed Thomas to reach his famous conclusion that the advent of Protestantism – which drove out much of the "superstition" that characterised the Catholicism of the period – created a vacuum filled by other forms of belief; for example, Catholic priests had once blessed their crops, but Protestants refused to do so. That left farmers looking for other ways of ensuring a good harvest. It was this, Thomas argues, that explains the survival of what we now think of as "magic" at a time such beliefs might have been expected to decline – at least until science arose to offer alternative paradigms.

Before Religion - Brent Nongbri

2013-01-22

Examining a wide array of ancient writings, Brent Nongbri dispels the commonly held idea that there is such a thing as ancient religion. Nongbri shows how misleading it is to speak as though religion was a concept native to pre-modern cultures.

The Transformations of Magic - Frank Klaassen 2013

"Explores two principal genres of illicit learned magic in late Medieval manuscripts: image magic, which could be interpreted and justified in scholastic terms, and ritual magic, which could not"-- Provided by publisher.

British Gods - Steve Bruce 2020-08-28

The big picture is well-known: over the last century, religion in Britain has lost power, popularity, and plausibility. Here, Steve Bruce charts the quantifiable changes in religious interest and observance over the last fifty years by returning to a number of towns and villages that were the subject of detailed community studies in the 1950s and 1960s, to see how the status and nature of religion has changed. Drawing on both detailed

data on baptism rates, church weddings, church attendance and the like, and on his extensive fieldwork, he considers the broader picture of religion today: the status of the clergy, the churches' attempts to find new roles, links between religion and violence, and the impact of the charismatic movement. Along the way, Bruce encounters and engages with the contemporary rise of secularism, considering our everyday secular tensions with religion: arguments over moral issues such as abortion and gay rights, the effect of social class on belief, the impact of religion on British politics, and the ways that local social structures strengthen or weaken religion. Analysing the obstacles to any religious revival, he explores how the current stock of religious knowledge is so depleted, religion so unpopular, and committed believers so scarce that any significant reversal of religion's decline in Britain is unlikely.

Religion and the Decline of Magic - Keith Vivian Thomas 1971
Astrologie / Religion.

Christianity, Book-Burning and Censorship in Late Antiquity - Dirk Rohmann 2016-07-25

It is estimated that only a small fraction, less than 1 per cent, of ancient literature has survived to the present day. The role of Christian authorities in the active suppression and destruction of books in Late Antiquity has received surprisingly little sustained consideration by academics. In an approach that presents evidence for the role played by Christian institutions, writers and saints, this book analyses a broad range of literary and legal sources, some of which have hitherto been little studied. Paying special attention to the problem of which genres and book types were likely to be targeted, the

author argues that in addition to heretical, magical, astrological and anti-Christian books, other less obviously subversive categories of literature were also vulnerable to destruction, censorship or suppression through prohibition of the copying of manuscripts. These include texts from materialistic philosophical traditions, texts which were to become the basis for modern philosophy and science. This book examines how Christian authorities, theologians and ideologues suppressed ancient texts and associated ideas at a time of fundamental transformation in the late classical world.

Magic, Mystery, and Science - Dan Burton 2004

"[P.D. Ouspensky's] yearning for a transcendent, timeless reality—one that cancels out physical disintegration and death—figures into science at some fundamental level. Einstein found solace in his theory of relativity, which suggested to him that events are ever-present in the space-time continuum. When his friend Michele Besso passed on shortly before his own death, he wrote: 'For us believing physicists the distinction between past, present, and future is only an illusion, even if a stubborn one.'" —from *Magic, Mystery, and Science*

The triumph of science would appear to have routed all other explanations of reality. No longer does astrology or alchemy or magic have the power to explain the world to us. Yet at one time each of these systems of belief, like religion, helped shed light on what was dark to our understanding. Nor have the occult arts disappeared. We humans have a need for mystery and a sense of the infinite. *Magic, Mystery, and Science* presents the occult as a "third stream" of belief, as important to the shaping of Western civilization as Greek rationalism or Judeo-Christianity.

The occult seeks explanations in a world that is living and intelligent—quite unlike the one supposed by science. By taking these beliefs seriously, while keeping an eye on science, this book aims to capture some of the power of the occult. Readers will discover that the occult has a long history that reaches back to Babylonia and ancient Egypt. It proceeds alongside, and frequently mingles with, religion and science. From the Egyptian Book of the Dead to New Age beliefs, from Plato to Adolf Hitler, occult ways of knowing have been used—and hideously abused—to explain a world that still tempts us with the knowledge of its dark secrets.

Witchcraft in Early Modern England - James Sharpe 2014-06-06

With the renewed interest in the history of witches and witchcraft, this timely book provides an introduction to this fascinating topic, informed by the main trends of new thinking on the subject. Beginning with a discussion of witchcraft in the early modern period, and charting the witch panics that took place at this time, the author goes on to look at the historical debate surrounding the causes of the legal persecution of witches. Contemporary views of witchcraft put forward by judges, theological writers and the medical profession are examined, as is the place of witchcraft in the popular imagination. Jim Sharpe also looks at the gender dimensions of the witch persecution, and the treatment of witchcraft in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. Supported by a range of compelling documents, the book concludes with an exploration of why witch panics declined in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century.

Vexed with Devils - Erika Gasser 2019-12-15

Stories of witchcraft and demonic possession from early modern England through the last official trials in colonial New England. Those possessed by the devil in early modern England usually exhibited a common set of symptoms: fits, vomiting, visions, contortions, speaking in tongues, and an antipathy to prayer. However, it was a matter of interpretation, and sometimes public opinion, if these symptoms were visited upon the victim, or if they came from within. Both early modern England and colonial New England had cases that blurred the line between witchcraft and demonic possession, most famously, the Salem witch trials. While historians acknowledge some similarities in witch trials between the two regions, such as the fact that an overwhelming majority of witches were women, the histories of these cases primarily focus on local contexts and specifics. In so doing, they overlook the ways in which manhood factored into possession and witchcraft cases. *Vexed with Devils* is a cultural history of witchcraft-possession phenomena that centers on the role of men and patriarchal power. Erika Gasser reveals that witchcraft trials had as much to do with who had power in the community, to impose judgement or to subvert order, as they did with religious belief. She argues that the gendered dynamics of possession and witchcraft demonstrated that contested meanings of manhood played a critical role in the struggle to maintain authority. While all men were not capable of accessing power in the same ways, many of the people involved—those who acted as if they were possessed, men accused of being witches, and men who wrote possession propaganda—invoked manhood as they struggled to advocate for themselves during these perilous times. Gasser ultimately concludes that the decline of possession and

witchcraft cases was not merely a product of change over time, but rather an indication of the ways in which patriarchal power endured throughout and beyond the colonial period. *Vexed with Devils* reexamines an unnerving time and offers a surprising new perspective on our own, using stories and voices which emerge from the records in ways that continue to fascinate and unsettle us.

The Witchcraft Sourcebook - Brian P. Levack 2004

This collection of trial records, laws, treatises, sermons, speeches, woodcuttings, paintings and literary texts illustrates how contemporaries from various periods have perceived alleged witches and their activities.

FDA Enforcement Report - 1992

Witchcraft, Witch-hunting, and Politics in Early Modern England - Peter Elmer 2016

A wide-ranging overview of the place of witchcraft and witch-hunting in the broader culture of early modern England. Based on a mass of new evidence extracted from a range of archives, both local and national, it seeks to relate the rise and decline of belief in witchcraft, alongside the legal prosecution of witches, to the wider political culture of the period. Building on the seminal work of scholars such as Stuart Clark, Ian Bostridge, and Jonathan Barry, it demonstrates how learned discussion of witchcraft, as well as the trials of those suspected of the crime, were shaped by religious and political imperatives in that period.

Making Magic - Randall Styers
2004-01-15

Since the emergence of religious studies and the social sciences as academic disciplines, the concept of "magic" has played a major role in defining religion and in mediating the relation of religion to science.

Across these disciplines, magic has regularly been configured as a definitively non-modern phenomenon, juxtaposed to distinctly modern models of religion and science. Yet this notion of magic has remained stubbornly amorphous. In *Making Magic*, Randall Styers seeks to account for the extraordinary vitality of scholarly discourse purporting to define and explain magic despite its failure to do just that. He argues that this persistence can best be explained in light of the Western drive to establish and secure distinctive norms for modern identity, norms based on narrow forms of instrumental rationality, industrious labor, rigidly defined sexual roles, and the containment of wayward forms of desire. Magic has served to designate a form of alterity or deviance against which dominant Western notions of appropriate religious piety, legitimate scientific rationality, and orderly social relations are brought into relief. Scholars have found magic an invaluable tool in their efforts to define the appropriate boundaries of religion and science. On a broader level, says Styers, magical thinking has served as an important foil for modernity itself. Debates over the nature of magic have offered a particularly rich site at which scholars have worked to define and to contest the nature of modernity and norms for life in the modern world.

Demonology and Witch-Hunting in Early Modern Europe - Julian Goodare
2020-07-20

Demonology – the intellectual study of demons and their powers – contributed to the prosecution of thousands of witches. But how exactly did intellectual ideas relate to prosecutions? Recent scholarship has shown that some of the demonologists' concerns remained at an abstract

intellectual level, while some of the judges' concerns reflected popular culture. This book brings demonology and witch-hunting back together, while placing both topics in their specific regional cultures. The book's chapters, each written by a leading scholar, cover most regions of Europe, from Scandinavia and Britain through to Germany, France and Switzerland, and Italy and Spain. By focusing on various intellectual levels of demonology, from sophisticated demonological thought to the development of specific demonological ideas and ideas within the witch trial environment, the book offers a thorough examination of the relationship between demonology and witch-hunting. *Demonology and Witch-Hunting in Early Modern Europe* is essential reading for all students and researchers of the history of demonology, witch-hunting and early modern Europe.

Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays - Bronislaw Malinowski
2014-04-10

This book contains three prolific essays by the world renowned Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski. First published in 1926, *Magic, Science and Religion* provides its readers with a seminal collection of texts exploring the concepts of magic, religion, science, rite and myth, detailing how they interlink to offer exciting and informative insights into the Trobrianders of New Guinea. A must-have for any students of anthropology and collectors of Malinowski's work, we are republishing this classic work with a new introductory biography of the author.

Reading Witchcraft - Marion Gibson
2005-08-08

In this original study of witchcraft, Gibson explores the stories told by and about witches and their 'victims' through trial records, early news

books, pamphlets and fascinating personal accounts. The author discusses the issues surrounding the interpretation of original historical sources and demonstrates that their representations of witchcraft are far from straight forward or reliable. Innovative and thought-provoking, this book sheds new light on early modern people's responses to witches and on the sometimes bizarre flexibility of the human imagination.

Teaching New Religious Movements - David G. Bromley 2007-05-25

Since its inception around 1970, the study of New Religious Movements (NRMs) has evolved into an established multidisciplinary field. At the same time, both the movements and the scholars who study them have been the subjects of intense controversy. In this volume, a group of senior NRM scholars who have been instrumental in the development of the field will offer pivotal essays that present the basics of NRM scholarship along with guidance for teachers on classroom use. The book is organized topically around subjects that are both central to the study of NRMs and likely to be useful to non-specialists. Part I contains examinations of the definitional boundaries of the area of study, varying disciplinary perspectives on NRMs, unique methodological/ethical problems encountered in the study of NRMs, and the controversies that have confronted scholars studying NRMs and the movements themselves. Part II examines a series of topics central to teaching about NRMs: the larger sociocultural significance of the movements, their distinctive symbolic and organizational features, the interrelated processes of joining and leaving NRMs, the organization of gender roles in NRMs, media and popular culture portrayals of the movements, the occurrence of corruption and abuse within

movements, and violence by and against NRMs. Part III provides informational resources for teaching about NRMs, which are particularly important in a field where knowing the biases of sources is crucial. With its interdisciplinary approach, the volume provides comprehensive, accessible information and perspectives on NRMs. It is an invaluable guide for instructors navigating this scholarly minefield.

Thinking with Demons - Stuart Clark 1999

Dr Clark offers an interpretation of the witchcraft beliefs of European intellectuals of the period, based on their publication in the field of demonology. This work will increase our understanding of the cultural history of early modern Europe.

Physical Evidence for Ritual Acts, Sorcery and Witchcraft in Christian Britain - Ronald Hutton 2016-01-26

This volume investigates the physical evidence for magic in medieval and modern Britain, including ritual mark, concealed objects, amulets, and magical equipment. The contributors are the current experts in each area of the subject, and show between them how ample the evidence is and how important it is for an understanding of history.

Spirituality: A Very Short Introduction - Philip Sheldrake 2012-11-29

With a decline in traditional religious belief, interest in spirituality has grown in Western cultures. The notion of spirituality expresses the fact that people are driven by goals that concern more than material satisfaction. Here, the author explores the historical foundations of spirituality and thinks about how it transforms lives.

The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America - Brian P. Levack 2013-03-28

The essays in this Handbook, written

by leading scholars working in the rapidly developing field of witchcraft studies, explore the historical literature regarding witch beliefs and witch trials in Europe and colonial America between the early fifteenth and early eighteenth centuries. During these years witches were thought to be evil people who used magical power to inflict physical harm or misfortune on their neighbours. Witches were also believed to have made pacts with the devil and sometimes to have worshipped him at nocturnal assemblies known as sabbaths. These beliefs provided the basis for defining witchcraft as a secular and ecclesiastical crime and prosecuting tens of thousands of women and men for this offence. The trials resulted in as many as fifty thousand executions. These essays study the rise and fall of witchcraft prosecutions in the various kingdoms and territories of Europe and in English, Spanish, and Portuguese colonies in the Americas. They also relate these prosecutions to the Catholic and Protestant reformations, the introduction of new forms of criminal procedure, medical and scientific thought, the process of state-building, profound social and economic change, early modern patterns of gender relations, and the wave of demonic possessions that occurred in Europe at the same time. The essays survey the current state of knowledge in the field, explore the academic controversies that have arisen regarding witch beliefs and witch trials, propose new ways of studying the subject, and identify areas for future research.

Magic in the Modern World - Edward Bever 2017-04-18

This collection of essays considers the place of magic in the modern world, first by exploring the ways in which modernity has been defined in

explicit opposition to magic and superstition, and then by illuminating how modern proponents of magic have worked to legitimize their practices through an overt embrace of evolving forms such as esotericism and supernaturalism. Taking a two-track approach, this book explores the complex dynamics of the construction of the modern self and its relation to the modern preoccupation with magic. Essays examine how modern "rational" consciousness is generated and maintained and how proponents of both magical and scientific traditions rationalize evidence to fit accepted orthodoxy. This book also describes how people unsatisfied with the norms of modern subjectivity embrace various forms of magic—and the methods these modern practitioners use to legitimate magic in the modern world. A compelling assessment of magic from the early modern period to today, *Magic in the Modern World* shows how, despite the dominant culture's emphatic denial of their validity, older forms of magic persist and develop while new forms of magic continue to emerge. In addition to the editors, contributors include Egil Asprem, Erik Davis, Megan Goodwin, Dan Harms, Adam Jortner, and Benedek Láng.

The Myth of Disenchantment - Jason Ananda Josephson Storm 2017-05-16
A great many theorists have argued that the defining feature of modernity is that people no longer believe in spirits, myths, or magic. Jason A. Josephson-Storm argues that as broad cultural history goes, this narrative is wrong, as attempts to suppress magic have failed more often than they have succeeded. Even the human sciences have been more enchanted than is commonly supposed. But that raises the question: How did a magical, spiritualist, mesmerized Europe ever convince itself that it

was disenchanting? Josephson-Storm traces the history of the myth of disenchantment in the births of philosophy, anthropology, sociology, folklore, psychoanalysis, and religious studies. Ironically, the myth of mythless modernity formed at the very time that Britain, France, and Germany were in the midst of occult and spiritualist revivals. Indeed, Josephson-Storm argues, these disciplines' founding figures were not only aware of, but profoundly enmeshed in, the occult milieu; and it was specifically in response to this burgeoning culture of spirits and magic that they produced notions of a disenchanting world. By providing a novel history of the human sciences and their connection to esotericism, *The Myth of Disenchantment* dispatches with most widely held accounts of modernity and its break from the premodern past.

Witch Craze - Lyndal Roper 2006-01-01
A powerful account of witches, crones, and the societies that make them. From the gruesome ogress in Hansel and Gretel to the hags at the sabbath in Faust, the witch has been a powerful figure of the Western imagination. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries thousands of women confessed to being witches--of making pacts with the Devil, causing babies to sicken, and killing animals and crops--and were put to death. This book is a gripping account of the pursuit, interrogation, torture, and burning of witches during this period and beyond. Drawing on hundreds of original trial transcripts and other rare sources in four areas of Southern Germany, where most of the witches were executed, Lyndal Roper paints a vivid picture of their lives, families, and tribulations. She also explores the psychology of witch-hunting, explaining why it was mostly older women that were the victims of witch

crazes, why they confessed to crimes, and how the depiction of witches in art and literature has influenced the characterization of elderly women in our own culture.

Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe - Jonathan Barry 1998-03-12

This important collection brings together both established figures and new researchers to offer fresh perspectives on the ever-controversial subject of the history of witchcraft. Using Keith Thomas's *Religion and the Decline of Magic* as a starting point, the contributors explore the changes of the last twenty-five years in the understanding of early modern witchcraft, and suggest new approaches, especially concerning the cultural dimensions of the subject. Witchcraft cases must be understood as power struggles, over gender and ideology as well as social relationships, with a crucial role played by alternative representations. Witchcraft was always a contested idea, never fully established in early modern culture but much harder to dislodge than has usually been assumed. The essays are European in scope, with examples from Germany, France, and the Spanish expansion into the New World, as well as a strong core of English material.

Witchcraft, Demonology and Magic - Marina Montesano 2020-05-20

Witchcraft and magic are topics of enduring interest for many reasons. The main one lies in their extraordinary interdisciplinarity: anthropologists, folklorists, historians, and more have contributed to build a body of work of extreme variety and consistence. Of course, this also means that the subjects themselves are not easy to assess. In a very general way, we can define witchcraft as a supernatural means to cause harm, death, or misfortune, while magic also belongs to the field

of supernatural, or at least esoteric knowledge, but can be used to less dangerous effects (e.g., divination and astrology). In Western civilization, however, the witch hunt has set a very peculiar perspective in which diabolical witchcraft, the invention of the Sabbat, the persecution of many thousands of (mostly) female and (sometimes) male presumed witches gave way to a phenomenon that is fundamentally different from traditional witchcraft. This Special Issue of *Religions* dedicated to *Witchcraft, Demonology, and Magic* features nine articles that deal with four different regions of Europe (England, Germany, Hungary, and Italy) between Late Medieval and Modern times in different contexts and social milieus. Far from pretending to offer a complete picture, they focus on some topics that are central to the research in those fields and fit well in the current "cumulative concept of Western witchcraft" that rules out all mono-causality theories, investigating a plurality of causes.

The Ends of Life - Keith Thomas 2010-02-25

How should we live? That question was no less urgent for English men and women who lived between the early sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries than for this book's readers. Keith Thomas's masterly exploration of the ways in which people sought to lead fulfilling lives in those centuries between the beginning of the Reformation and the heyday of the Enlightenment illuminates the central values of the period, while casting incidental light on some of the perennial problems of human existence. Consideration of the origins of the modern ideal of human fulfilment and of obstacles to its realization in the early modern period frames an investigation that ranges from work,

wealth, and possessions to the pleasures of friendship, family, and sociability. The cult of military prowess, the pursuit of honour and reputation, the nature of religious belief and scepticism, and the desire to be posthumously remembered are all drawn into the discussion, and the views and practices of ordinary people are measured against the opinions of the leading philosophers and theologians of the time. The Ends of Life offers a fresh approach to the history of early modern England, by one of the foremost historians of our time. It also provides modern readers with much food for thought on the problem of how we should live and what goals in life we should pursue.

The 'Malleus Maleficarum' and the construction of witchcraft

- Hans Broedel 2013-07-19

This electronic version has been made available under a Creative Commons (BY-NC-ND) open access license. The Malleus is an important text and is frequently quoted by authors across a wide range of scholarly disciplines. Yet it also presents serious difficulties: it is difficult to understand out of context, and is not

generally representative of late medieval learned thinking. This, the first book-length study of the original text in English, provides students and scholars with an introduction to this controversial work and to the conceptual world of its authors. Like all witch-theorists, Institoris and Sprenger constructed their witch out of a constellation of pre-existing popular beliefs and learned traditions. Therefore, to understand the Malleus, one must also understand the contemporary and subsequent debates over the reality and nature of witches. This book argues that although the Malleus was a highly idiosyncratic text, its arguments were powerfully compelling and therefore remained influential long after alternatives were forgotten. Consequently, although focused on a single text, this study has important implications for fifteenth-century witchcraft theory. This is a fascinating work on the Malleus Maleficarum and will be essential to students and academics of late medieval and early modern history, religion and witchcraft studies.