



The Magical Universe: Everyday Ritual and Magic in Pre-Modern Europe

By *Stephen Wilson*

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The universality of the magical beliefs which have existed throughout Europe from the time of the Romans to the present has been hidden by a focus on the sensational aspects of magic, and on witch trials in particular. The *Magical Universe* shows how magical beliefs and practices permeated all aspects of work and of family life, and profoundly influenced the approach of men and women to health and healing, birth, marriage and death. Magic offered the hope of protection in a dangerous and uncertain world, if the correct rituals were observed. Magical beliefs borrowed from and were incorporated in church rites. Such beliefs, shared by the powerful as well as the poor, lasted remarkably late in many rural areas and have still not completely vanished.

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Editorial Review

Review

"In the world we have lost, everyday life was suffused, governed and given meaning by ritual magic. Stephen Wilson portrays that enchanted world with a bold vision and a sure touch."--*Literary Review*
"Packed with curiosities, and it is a feat of scholarly gathering comparable to Keith Thomas's groundbreaking *Religion and the Decline of Magic*."--*Daily Telegraph*

About the Author

Stephen Wilson is Reader in European History at the University of East Anglia. His *Feuding, Conflict and Banditry in Nineteenth-Century Corsica* was awarded the Prix du Livre Corse.

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