



Magic and Masculinity: Ritual Magic and Gender in the Early Modern Era (International Library of Historical Studies)

Frances Timbers

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In early modern England, the practice of ritual or ceremonial magic – the attempted communication with angels and demons – both reinforced and subverted existing concepts of gender. The majority of male magicians acted from a position of control and command commensurate with their social position in a patriarchal society; other men, however, used the notion of magic to subvert gender ideals while still aiming to attain hegemony. Whilst women who claimed to perform magic were usually more submissive in their attempted dealings with the spirit world, some female practitioners employed magic to undermine the patriarchal culture and further their own agenda. Frances Timbers studies the practice of ritual magic in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries focusing especially on gender and sexual perspectives. Using the examples of well-known individuals who set themselves up as magicians (including John Dee, Simon Forman and William Lilly), as well as unpublished diaries and journals, literature and legal records, this book provides a unique analysis of early modern ceremonial magic from a gender perspective.

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