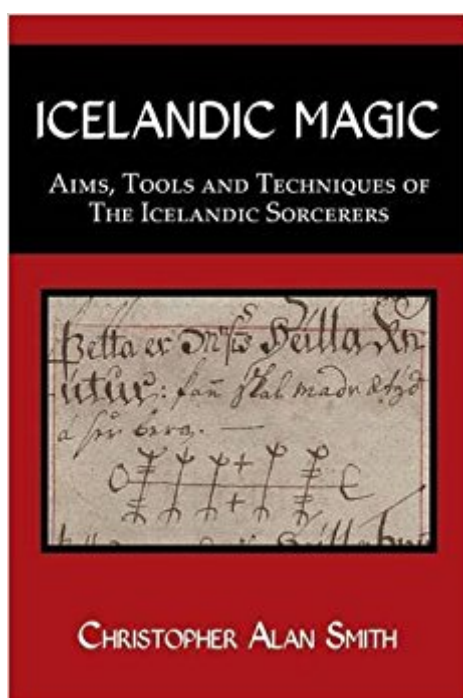


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Icelandic Magic - Aims, Tools And Techniques Of The Icelandic Sorcerers



Synopsis

In this unprecedented work, the author Christopher A. Smith has meticulously studied no less than 6 original Icelandic manuscripts dating from 1500 to 1860 to extract a picture of the aims, tools and techniques of Icelandic sorcerers. Set against the context of the harsh economic, social and environmental conditions of this North Atlantic island, the book gives a detailed account of the types of spells that were used and the motivations behind them. Hundreds of items from the six books of magic have been analysed to present the reader with a clear idea of the methods that were used, including incantation, invocation of deities and use of the enigmatic magical staves (galdrastafir). Furthermore, the book goes into great detail concerning the physical tools used by magicians and the kinds of objects that might have been found in a sorcerer's 'toolbox'. The book is illustrated throughout with images from the original manuscripts. Although it is not intended by any means as a book of instruction, one chapter does focus on workings of certain types and gives suggestions for those brave enough to try them out. All in all, this work will be an indispensable item for anyone interested in the history of magic in general and of Icelandic magic in particular.

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Customer Reviews

An excellent book, well written and very thoroughly researched. As a student of this subject I found the comparisons of multiple manuscripts to be extremely useful in furthering my own studies. The author is very well studied and the content of this book makes that readily apparent. Highly recommended for any who would like a deeper understanding of Nordic magic practices from the

Middle ages to the Early Modern era.

Excellent introduction for anthropology and literature grads.

Great!!!!!!

This book is a comprehensive analysis of the methods and techniques of the Icelandic magicians, based upon a selection of the surviving grimoires. It is a fascinating study. The aims of most of the spells, and the simple tools used (generally just the owner's personal eating knife) makes it plain that these practices were largely in the hands of farmers and the poorer members of the population, not the intelligentsia (i.e. priests and nobility) as was generally the case in Europe. This is reinforced by how simple and direct the practice was, in most cases a simple stave and / or incantation sent and directed by the will of the practitioner. This fits very well with the descriptions of Icelandic magic that have come down to us in the sagas. The author's insights are keen and although this is an academic, analytical work rather than a practical one, it is written in a pleasantly clear and uncluttered manner, with great typesetting that really makes it an interesting and refreshing read. Although the information they contain is nearly always fascinating, such analytic texts can often be quite dry to read. This one very definitely isn't, it's a delight and it's enthralling. A broad selection of spells and staves are reprinted from the grimoires (these are photographic reproductions, not copied by hand, to avoid errors) to illustrate the points made in the text. Where incantations are given, they are often given in both the original Icelandic as well as English translation. This is very welcome, as the metre and alliteration of the original language really demonstrates how compellingly beautiful these incantations could be. The relationships between the staves and more recognisable methods of rune magic are discussed, of course, as these Icelandic staves have a style all their own. A tremendously interesting volume that should be on the shelf of anyone interested in the magic or myth of the North.

One thing I really appreciate about Smith is that he's actually lived, learned, and experienced Iceland directly and not from some dusty tomb in a warm library. Not only has he lived there, but he volunteered for a number of months at the Museum of Icelandic Sorcery and Witchcraft. Go check it out. Smith starts with an overview of the living standards, intelligence, vernacular skills, and political environments from which Icelandic Magic grew from. It was a nice way of showing the motivating factors behind some of the spells. Next Smith talks about the magical

books (Galdraðafélagur). He starts by giving us the percentage of evil to good spells (50% white, 20% black, and 30% grey) before breaking down the different areas the spells focus on. Smith goes right at the magical texts without parsing words or fluffing things up: I loved it! As a forewarning to the prospective buyer, this is a survey book not a practical manual. If you are looking for magical techniques, this is not the book for you. What you will find in this book is a comparative survey of six different magical texts and a basic overview of Icelandic magical approaches, tools, intentions, structures, and so on. Icelandic Magic: Aims, Tools and Techniques of the Icelandic Sorcerers is well written, researched, organized, footnoted, and presented. For anyone interested in knowing the objective view of Icelandic Magic, this is it. While this book does not offer practical application, what it does offer is the bigger picture. That's a good thing. As for those that just want the practical, the following Icelandic Magical books are translated into English. Most of these books are not available on . Go to my website review page for the links by clicking on my reviewer name and then on my website. Sorcerer's Screed, magic grimoire GaldraðaverTvöfaldur galdraskráur Norse Magical and Herbal Healing Huld Icelandic Magic Symbols and Spell Books The Galdrabok Trolldom: spells and methods of the Norse folk magic tradition

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