



Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power

Marvin W. Meyer, Richard Smith

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This thought-provoking collection of magical texts from ancient Egypt shows the exotic rituals, esoteric healing practices, and incantatory and supernatural dimensions that flowered in early Christianity. These remarkable Christian magical texts include curses, spells of protection from "headless powers" and evil spirits, spells invoking thunderous powers, descriptions of fire baptism, and even recipes from a magical "cookbook." Virtually all the texts are by Coptic Christians, and they date from about the 1st-12th centuries of the common era, with the majority from late antiquity. By placing these rarely seen texts in historical context and discussing their significance, the authors explore the place of healing, prayer, miracles, and magic in the early Christian experience, and expand our understanding of Christianity and Gnosticism as a vital folk religion.

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