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Margaret Alice Murray

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Margaret Alice Murray : The Witch-Cult in Western Europe: A Study in Anthropology before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Witch-Cult in Western Europe: A Study in Anthropology:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Dated, but an excellent introduction to the topicBy JustinMurray's thesis of a universal witch cult is now considered inaccurate, at least in the sense that it was a widespread, universal religion. However, her research is excellent and she reviews her sources with a careful anthropologist's eye. This book was a primary source for H.P. Lovecraft, so it is important for students of "weird fiction" as well. One thing to keep in

mind when reading this book is that she draws most of her sources from Christian outsiders, not the cultists themselves, which skews the representation of the nature of the religion. The characterization of the counterpart to the witch-priestess as "the devil" is probably inaccurate, since the cultists would not have seen that figure as the Christian devil at all, but as a deity representing the masculine principle in nature, the so-called "horned god." The Christian devil, it should be remembered, took on his physical characteristics not from any Biblical descriptions, but from attempts by the church to suppress indigenous religious practices by characterizing them as devil-worship, which contemporary research has shown they were not. That Murray uses the language of the Christians who viewed the religion as a devil cult suggests a bias that probably would not have been present if more neutral language had been used.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Joseph E. Andrepont II
excellent historical content.
3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The Witch-Cult in Western Europe for beginner
By Boriss Melikyan
I've chosen this book for reading on anthropology and for further information about witch cults in Western Europe. I loved the price it was sold and the quality of its print. But there was an disadvantage found upon reading. In many places there were unprinted letters, appeared as a blank or broken characters. And I would not recommend this book for a non professional reader, who has no knowledge of french and middle english, cause some very interesting quotes from external sources very in french, latin and middle english, what disappointed me in some sort. For beginners I would recommend another Margaret Alice Murray book, *The God Of The Witches*, which is much easier and understandable for reading.

The mass of existing material on this subject is so great that the author has not attempted to make a survey of the whole of European 'Witchcraft', but has confined herself to an intensive study of the cult in Great Britain. In order, however, to obtain a clearer understanding of the ritual and beliefs she had recourse to French and Flemish sources, as the cult appears to have been the same throughout Western Europe. The sources from which the information is taken are the judicial records and contemporary chroniclers. In the case of the chroniclers, the author has studied their facts and not their opinions. This is an excellent book for those interested in learning the history of Witch-Craft in Western Europe.

About the Author
Margaret Alice Murray (13 July 1863 - 13 November 1963) was a prominent British Egyptologist and anthropologist. She is primarily known for her work in Egyptology, which was "the core of her academic career"; she was one of the first women to practice archaeology and the first woman to publicly unwrap a mummy. She is also known for her propagation of the Witch-cult hypothesis, the theory that the witch trials in the Early Modern period of Christianized Europe and North America were an attempt to extinguish a surviving pre-Christian, pagan religion devoted to a Horned God. Whilst this theory is today widely disputed and discredited by historians like Norman Cohn, Keith Thomas and Ronald Hutton, it has had a significant effect in the origins of Neopagan religions, primarily Wicca, a faith she supported.