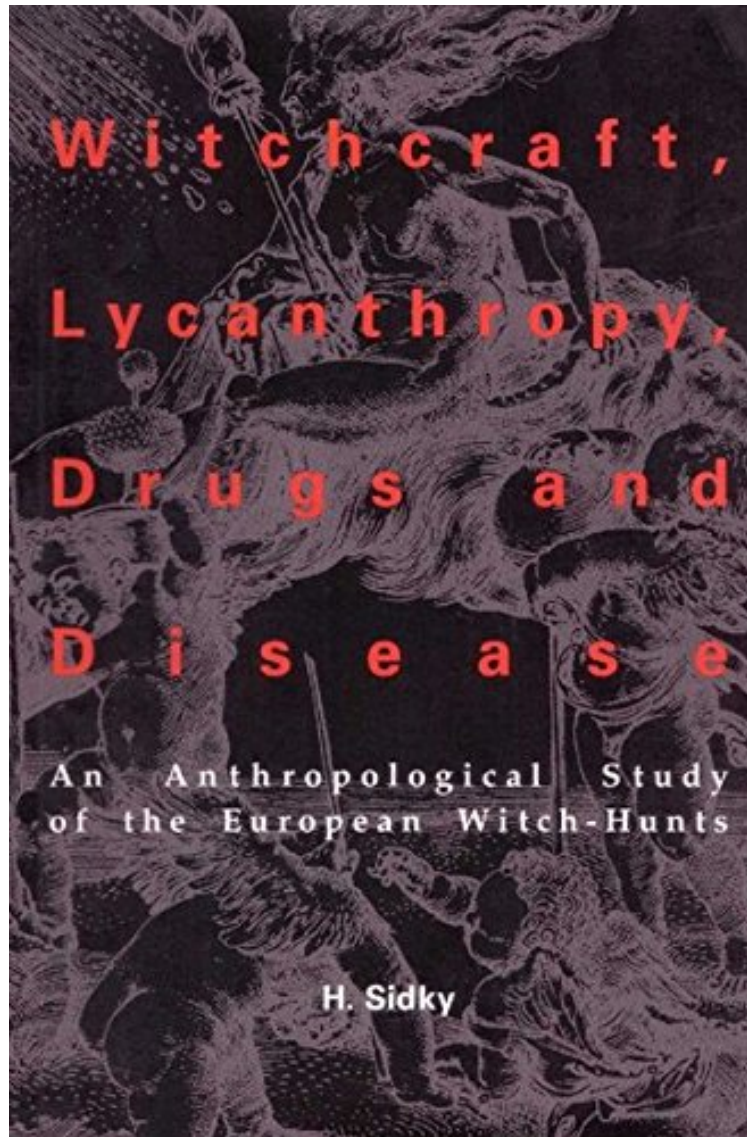


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## Witchcraft. Lycanthropy. Drugs and Disease (American University Studies)

*Homayun Sidky*

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**Homayun Sidky : Witchcraft. Lycanthropy. Drugs and Disease (American University Studies)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Witchcraft. Lycanthropy. Drugs and Disease (American University Studies):

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An anthropology major's best friend.By A CustomerI used this book

extensively for a paper I just wrote comparing the European witch-craze of the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries to the Azande in Africa. I used Sidky's book for most of my information on Europe and found it very helpful. It was informative, well researched, well written, and well organized. It presented material in a clear manner which made it easy to understand and also helped me find which sections I needed to talk about in my essay. I also enjoyed the numerous illustrations of artwork depicting the witch-hunts/torture devices/Sabbat rites/and illustrations of medieval texts related to the witch-craze. I highly recommend this book to anyone writing a paper on the European witch-hunts from an anthropological stance, to all anthro majors and minors and anyone interested in examining a bit of dark (but fascinating) history. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. An Up Close and Personal View of the European Witchcraze By A Customer Sidky details all the true and horrific aspects of the European witchcraze. From the beginning to the end you will never become bored or think the book dull. Besides the written facts and charts, Sidky also encloses copies of several artworks of what people thought of witches and the devil. Everything covered is given sufficient detail and everything detailed is supported completely. 5 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Does the title not say it all? By New Age of Barbarism If you're into everything from schizophrenia to ergot poisoning, from the black plague to the dread Malleus Maleficarum, from the "thumb screws" method of torture to The Devils of Loudon and demonic possession, then this is the book for you. Add to that a collection of pictures that would shock any uncouth European peasant living in the sixteenth century, and you've got the making of a most bizarre book in the most bizarre field of "witchcraft studies". Here you get to see the sheer ugliness of life in medieval Europe during the Inquisition up close and personal. You get to look into the mind of the "witch hammerer" as he singles out those members of society that alleged performed those sinister magical acts that included cannibalism, sexual contact with demons, and spreading plague and disease. Rather than arguing that "witchcraft was real to the people of the time so it was real" like other "mentalist" anthropologists in the field have done, the author condemns those who insisted on the existence of witchcraft and argues that it was used an excuse to persecute and mercilessly torture thousands. As far as lycanthropy goes, the author suggests that the mentally ill, social outcasts, and those infected with rabies may have been those persecuted as "werewolves". The pictures and bizarreness of the topic alone earns the book five stars, and while there are parts of it that I'm not sure that I can agree with (for instance, the author believes that cannibalism has never been a socially acceptable practice to any great extent in any culture whatsoever) the author does an excellent job of revealing the pernicious delusions which plagued the European mind during the time.

Long before the political mass-murders witnessed in the present century, western Europe experienced another kind of holocaust the witch-hunts of the early modern period. Condemned of flying through the air, changing into animals, and worshipping the Devil, over a hundred thousand people were brutally tortured, systematically maimed and burned alive. Why did these persecutions take place? Was it superstition, irrationality, or mass delusion that led to the witch-hunts? This study seeks explanations in the tangible actions of human actors and their worldly circumstances. The approach taken is anthropological; inferences are grounded on a wide spectrum of variables, ranging from the political and ideological practices used to mystify earthly affairs, to the logical structure of witch-beliefs, torture technology, and the role of psychotropic drugs and epidemic diseases.

About the Author The Author: H. Sidky is an anthropologist specializing in cultural ecology and the anthropology of religion. He is currently affiliated with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Miami University, Ohio. His articles have appeared in many journals and he is the author of *Hunza: An Ethnographic Outline* (1995) and *Irrigation and State Formation in Hunza* (1996).