

The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England

Richard Godbeer

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Early New Englanders used magical techniques to divine the future, to heal the sick, to protect against harm and to inflict harm. Protestant ministers of the time claimed that religious faith and magical practice were incompatible, and yet, as Richard Godbeer shows, there were significant affinities between the two that enabled layfolk to switch from one to the other without any immediate sense of wrongdoing. Godbeer argues that the different perspectives on witchcraft engendered by magical tradition and Puritan doctrine often caused confusion and disagreement when New Englanders sought legal punishment of witches.



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