



Alchemical Belief: Occultism in the Religious Culture of Early Modern England (Magic in History)

Bruce Janacek

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What did it mean to believe in alchemy in early modern England? In this book, Bruce Janacek considers alchemical beliefs in the context of the writings of Thomas Tymme, Robert Fludd, Francis Bacon, Sir Kenelm Digby, and Elias Ashmole. Rather than examine alchemy from a scientific or medical perspective, Janacek presents it as integrated into the broader political, philosophical, and religious upheavals of the first half of the seventeenth century, arguing that the interest of these elite figures in alchemy was part of an understanding that supported their national—and in some cases royalist—loyalty and theological orthodoxy. Janacek investigates how and why individuals who supported or were actually placed at the traditional center of power in England's church and state believed in the relevance of alchemy at a time when their society, their government, their careers, and, in some cases, their very lives were at stake.

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