

POWER AND MAGIC IN ITALY

Thomas Hauschild

Based on vivid and colorful case studies about Mafiosi, priests, mothers, and migrants, the author offers new perspectives on the anthropology of religion and magic through categories of landscape, the body, human practice, and material experience. The focus on women as religious practitioners is linked to the idea of religion as a primary mode of production that creates and helps to maintain human reserves in a fast changing, male-dominated world. It is through this mechanism that the Catholic Church, the oldest existing bureaucratic agency of globalization, has maintained its power. Exploring aspects of spirit experiences, trance, the cult of saints, official ecclesiastical cults, and especially witchcraft, this book reveals the explosive, sometimes violent creativity of religion, its relation to magic, and its multi-faceted social value for humans as reflected in the religiously based, pragmatic realism of everyday life in the Mediterranean.

Thomas Hauschild is a fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (Institute for Advanced Study) and a member of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences. He teaches social and cultural anthropology at Halle University, Germany. He has published numerous books and articles on religion and politics, the history and theory of anthropology, and the anthropology of the Mediterranean.