



# Old World Witchcraft: Ancient Ways for Modern Days

*Raven Grimassi*

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### **Old World Witchcraft: Ancient Ways for Modern Days** Raven Grimassi

In *Old World Witchcraft*, noted author Raven Grimassi covers totally new territory in his work and in the world of popular witchcraft books published in the last few decades. This book is actually about "an enchanted worldview," one that has not necessarily been inherited from the beliefs and practices of any particular region and one which is available to us today.

The "Old World" in the title is actually about a magical view of the Plant Kingdom and the spirits attached to it. While Grimassi's previous books discuss the cultural expressions and commonality of witchcraft beliefs and practices in general, this book penetrates much deeper.

*Old World Witchcraft* reveals rarely discussed topics such as the concept of Shadow as the organic memory of the earth. Readers will learn rooted techniques that possess power because these ways have always been connected to it. They will learn methods of interfacing with the ancestral current and with the organic memory of the earth. Through these they can connect with the timeless arts and learn methods of empowerment directly from the ancient source.

Totally new information about familiar tools is presented. For example, the mortar and pestle is a tool for spell casting, a device that creates interfacing with plant spirits and with shadow, and a focal point for veneration of the Plant Kingdom. Grimassi also presents the art of using plant ashes for magical sigil work.

This book is for people who have had their fill of books that say the same things over and over, who want to take the next step, and who are eager for the more rooted ways that have remained largely hidden.

### **Old World Witchcraft: Ancient Ways for Modern Days Details**

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Author : Raven Grimassi

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## From Reader Review Old World Witchcraft: Ancient Ways for Modern Days for online ebook

### Jessika says

Absolutely brilliant! This book has been one of the absolute best books that I've read on the Craft in the past decade. I am \*SO\* inspired by this book, and I will definitely be rereading and working with it for a long time to come!!

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### Erin the Avid Reader ?BFF's with the Cheshire Cat? says

FINAL RATING: 2.75 OUT OF 5 STARS

I did indeed love the chapters about the botanical spirits and plant magic (which I'll go re-read later and try to work with it), yet I'm not sure this book should be called "Old World Witchcraft" when most of the rituals are Wiccan-based.

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### Chloe says

A very interesting perspective, and one that definitely speaks to me more than most other books I have read on the topic. I disagree with Grimassi (and most writers I've read about witchcraft) about the necessity of keeping separate one's "mundane" tools and one's "sacred" tools. I tend to think the mundane and the sacred are far too entwined for such separation to be possible. But overall I enjoyed this very much, and I will need to read more of his books.

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### Mary Moody says

Extremely useful, especially about the uses of plants and trees for Magickal use and respect of nature.

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### Steve Cran says

Meditate for a few moments on the image of the witch. Tell me what do you think? Chances are it is one of two images, an old hag doing evil spells or a young pretty woman dedicated to the Goddess doing beneficial spells with the blief of harm ye none. The Old Witch was nothing like that at all. Noted author Raven Grimassi for the first part of this book goes thorough ancient historical text dating all the way to Greco-Roman Times to give us an accurate as possible mental picture of the ancient witch. Tracing a definition from the Greek work pharmokote which meant worker of plants. THE witch was someone who worked with the numen or life force of plants for various aims. The opld withc was not bound by the three fold law or harm ye none creed. They could do good just as well as malevolent. It was not until the medievil times that the image of the witch became tarnished by the Christian priests eager for an enemy and to convert the population. Witches never called upon or worked with demons. In addition to calling on the spirit of plants

they also called upon rather commonly on Goddesses such as Hekate, Diana and Prosperina. There is no direct mention of a male God. Witches also called upon stars and planets for aid as well.

The second part of the book focuses on a new paradigm that is based on Ancient principle. From my observations it is a practical paradigm that seems to be informed from Traditional British Witchcraft in part. There is some Wiccan practices and concepts brought into the paradigm. The God is called the "One of the Deep Forest" and the Goddess is called she of the rounded white. The tools employed are besom knives, wands, cauldron, chalice and mortar and pestle. In the grimouire section there are rituals, spells and instruction on how to connect to the shadow and other realms. The paradigm is called "Ash, Birch, Willow". It is practical and useable.

Over all excellent book. Some of the rituals I am uncomfortable with as they require pricking the finger and using your own blood. That is my personal preference. Also in modern times it is difficult to find a crossroads or even do a ritual publically at the crossroad. Later on the author does give you an alternative to finding a crossroad. Another ritual calls for bringing dirt from the crossroad and having it under your pillow for three night in a sack of course. My question is of hygiene. How safe is the dirt. The book could use a few more picture and illustrations especially of the stang and the staff for the Goddess. It give this book 4 stars out of five. Buy it as this one book you will definitely use.

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### **Melanie Hamilton says**

I got this because I have sort of a strange obsession with folklore, legends, myths and witchcraft throughout history...so I figured, why not? First of all, a lot of people mentioned that they had a hard time getting past Grimassi's writing style-he's quite opinionated when it comes to the rise of Christianity in the modern world. Personally-It didn't bother me a bit. It's a quick read and detailed on a history of folklore and old world witchcraft from ancient times to current day. For me, I'm obviously not some practicing witch reading this while stirring my cauldron-but it was an interesting read nonetheless!

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### **Erin Regneri says**

Pretty repetitive at times, but a good read for anyone seeking a deeper and more ancient spirituality than what is typically offered in modern Paganism.

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### **Susan Marie Cote says**

I've read many, many books on the Craft, by a myriad of different authors, and none have ever spoken to me the way that Raven Grimassi's books do. I am certain I got something useful from each of the other authors, but for the most part, I've always been left feeling like there was more I needed to know; like I'd eaten a five course meal but was still hungry. Enter Raven. Every single one of his books that I've read have deepened my understanding to new levels and in a most interesting and engaging fashion - and none more so than Old World Witchcraft.

What this book gives the true seeker is a deeper understanding of the lives that the men and women, who would today be considered witches, lived. Mr. Grimassi doesn't make up stories, but rather uses historical

and archaeological facts to prove his points about the way that these ancient people survived, sometimes revered, sometimes hated, but always there.

Reading more about the Ash, Birch, and Willow system was something I thoroughly enjoyed. While this system is a modern one, it has roots that reach back through history - preserving elements of the Old World teachings, its core beliefs and rituals based upon what has been historically shown to be those which our ancestors practiced in the past. The ABW does not claim to be a surviving system - and yet it venerates the same things which were held sacred in pre-Christian/Jewish times and is not endemic to any one culture.

Further along in the book, there is a chapter on plant spirits and their sigils, and how one might align with the spirit of a plant, rather than the plant itself, to conduct workings. While I personally would prefer to have the physical plant to touch and connect to, I definitely do see the value of learning to work with the sigils and connecting in that manner.

Old World Witchcraft also talks in depth about the use of a mortar and pestle as a magickal tool, something that would seem fall right into place with what the ancient pharmakute would make use of, after all, when dealing with roots and herbs, what else would one be expected to use? Also mentioned is the knife - the tool used to harvest the herbs and plants which would be used, the broom, the platter, the wand, and the branch. Details for how each is used and what they represent is clearly explained.

Starting with Chapter 5, Old World Witchcraft gives the reader a totally usable grimoire that I found to be completely non-fruffy or overly glitzy, just the meat and bones that I have been seeking all along.

Overall, I highly recommend this book as an essential must have for anyone who is truly seeking the path of the Old Ways.

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## **Megan says**

I've been reading and absorbing this book slowly over the course of several months, and although I haven't *technically* finished it, I've got through enough of it that I'm going to go ahead and call it as read so I can write my review.

The early portions of this book, in which Grimassi details his research into the history and theory of early European witchcraft, are fascinating. He delves into a lot of areas that other authors don't address, and confronts some well established myths of the origin of 'the Craft' that many people won't touch. Where it all falls apart for me is in the final section, which is dedicated to spells and rituals created by Grimassi for his Old World tradition. Nearly all of these workings require the practitioner(s) to have access to a rural setting (or at the very least highly secluded outdoor area), and thus are completely impractical for someone like myself who lives deep in the heart of the city. If you have the necessary ritual space I'm sure this magical system could be quite rewarding, but personally I find the lack of a more universally practical application rather disappointing.

Overall I still give this a high recommendation for students of Witchcraft, since in my experience it is a pretty unique piece of scholarship, but with a caveat to my fellow urban witches that there isn't much to put into practice here unless you're willing to do some serious reworking and adaptation.

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### **Debbie says**

Interesting...this book made me look at things that I'm familiar with in a totally different way.

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### **Tony says**

Excellent so far, I love Raven's writing style and the material and presentation is just perfect for me. Looking forward to his next book "Grimior of the Thorn Blooded Witch"

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### **Elizabeth says**

This is the first book I have entirely read on the subject of witchcraft. I must say it's good way to be introduced to the subject. The way in which it was written depicts the known history humbly. Fortunately, it was not so preachy that it came across as dogmatic. It was more informative than meant to be persuasive. I enjoyed the ride as my curiosity drove me through to the last page.

It was also an interesting conversation starter, when I rode on public transit or read in public settings. I also found certain excerpts that I thought were beautifully descriptive which I thought were universally true and could transcend across to other cultures and religions so I admired that.

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### **Carrie Watson says**

Loved the history throughout the book.

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### **Hannah Greendale says**

It's difficult to find a reference book that discusses witchcraft and its origins without mention of and/or heavy reliance on discussion of Wicca. Raven Grimassi is one of the few who examines the roots of witchcraft, dating back to its earliest references in lore and historical documents, without reference to Wicca (which is relatively new by comparison). In *Old World Witchcraft*, Grimassi provides interesting theories about early witches, and he does well to provide information, not as fact, but as 'likely' or 'not likely' due to the lack of reliable historic documents on this topic.

Most of the book, however, is focused on a modern approach to witchcraft based on the theoretical practices of the earliest witches (switching from how-it-was-done to how-to-do-it-today). That said, if you're seeking a book rich with history on the origins of early witchcraft, this probably isn't what you're looking for (sadly, that's exactly what I was hoping to find).

Further, inclusion of information on a 'new' variant of the 'Old Ways' witchcraft (referred to in the book as Ash, Birch, and Willow) was a disappointing feature, as it was created by Grimassi himself in 2004 (along with Stephanie Taylor, whom he also credits with its conception). Reading about Ash, Birch, and Willow felt incongruous with the rest of the book.

Finally, the book is occasionally repetative, sometimes word for word.

[Note: For those who are inquisitive about practising witchcraft, the book discusses tools and ingredients necessary for the craft and includes a grimoire with step by step instructions for beginners.]

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### **Ashleigh says**

To be honest this is one of the first books I have ever felt a deep connection with. It explained so much and talked about how things changed from one religion to the next. I loved the beginning to the middle of the book most, the end, not quite so much. This is definitely an interesting book and will most likely change your perspective on quite a few things. It is one of the more "down to earth" books I have read so to speak on these type of topics; very explanatory which is nice. The intro and first few chapters do have a few chunks where they seem to repeat themselves a bit which can get a tad annoying but other than that this book was brilliant! I already have a few people lined up to read it. :)

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