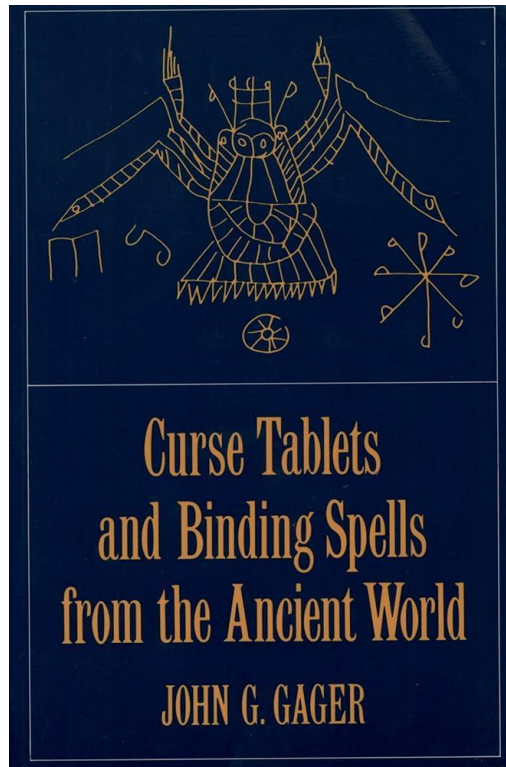


Book Review



What can you believe? Anything that you want to.

That timeless truism is captured in Gager's delicious contribution to the maxim that there is nothing new under the sun.

In essence the question of "what are we capable of believing" is manifested with dizzying attention to detail, a hallmark of Gager's contribution to academia.

With research spanning a millennium beginning in the fifth century BCE, he traces how "we" have attempted to invoke curses and spells on each other.

Not casual bedtime reading, the value of this work is in the historical sourcing of works that demonstrate how "we" have believed that we could change the outcome of sporting events, romance, litigation (and the list goes on) based on curses, blessings, incantations and the like.

Not that anyone believes in those possibilities in the 21st Century (e.g., good luck charms, superstitious routines, lucky lotto numbers, etc.).

...and yes, that was a touch of sarcasm

Gager's work is invaluable in reminding those who continue to believe – beyond any logical substantiation thereto – that "luck" not only plays a role in our lives, but that we can change the outcome.

I will (absolutely) draw upon this as ancient insights from 2,500 years ago that remain invaluable millennia later...