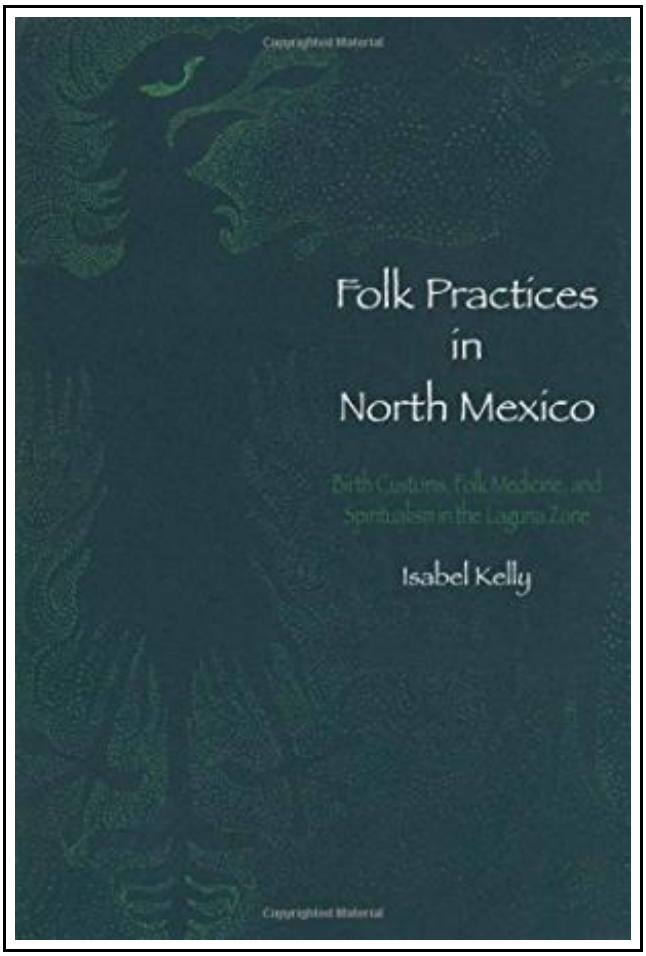
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FOLK PRACTICES IN NORTH MEXICO: BIRTH CUSTOMS, FOLK MEDICINE, AND SPIRITUALISM IN THE LAGUNA ZONE

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University of Texas Press. Paperback / softback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Folk Practices in North Mexico: Birth Customs, Folk Medicine, and Spiritualism in the Laguna Zone, Isabel Kelly, The Mexican folkways described in this monograph, of scientific interest to anthropologists, will fascinate laypeople as well. Isabel Kelly collected these notes in the 1950s, as a diversion when official field work was not feasible, in the vicinity of Torreón and particularly in the nearby village of El Cuije, in northern Mexico. She recounts folk customs and habits, focusing on beliefs and practices related to health and healing and on notions concerning magic. These form, Kelly believes, a core of folk culture which has survived tenaciously in the rural areas and on the outskirts of the cities, among mestizo families of scant education and limited economic resources. These people are well acquainted with simple, matter-of-fact illnesses which result from natural causes and which respond to treatment by herbal and other home remedies or by modern medicines. But they also recognize the evil eye and the emotional upset known as “fright.” They are thoroughly familiar with the ever-present danger of ailments which are not “natural” and God-sent, but which are deliberately inflicted by an enemy, through the artifice of a sorcerer or a spiritualist. Such “instigated” illnesses may take any form, from a cold in the head to a false pregnancy. If a person suspects that poor health results from such malevolence, he or she spurns Western medicine and looks instead to the witch or to the spiritualist as the only hope of a cure. El Cuije pays an annual quota from community funds to make available modern health services provided by the government. But community funds are similarly drawn upon to provide “medical” attention for those who repair to the sorcerers. Once a...

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