

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

On 18th November, 1898 e.v., Aleister Crowley was initiated into the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn; he took the motto "Perdurabo"—"I shall endure to the end".¹

In February of the year following, he attained the grade of Practicus, and was accordingly entrusted with the secret attributions of the Tarot, especially those of the Atu. (See pp. 5-10).

He worked daily on these MSS., for the most part under the personal instruction of G.H. Frater 7°=4°, D.D.C.F. (S. Liddell Mathers) and V.H. Fratres 5°=6° Iehi Aour (Allan Bennett, later Sayadaw Ananda Metteya) and Volo Noscere (George Cecil Jones) as host or guest of one of these Adepts.

He continued these studies alone during his first Voyage around the earth in search of the Hidden Wisdom.

On 8th, 9th and 10th April, 1904 e.v., he received the Book of the Law. Chosen by the Masters to carry out Their sublime plan, he began to prepare the way for the establishment of the New Aeon, as They instructed him. (See The Equinox of the Gods for a very full and detailed account of this, the most important event in his career). He accordingly published the previously secret attributions of the Tarot in the Book 777

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Prolegomena symbolica ad systemam Sceptico-mysticae viae explicandae, fundamentum hieroglyphicum sanctissimorum scientiae summae.

Following the tradition of Eliphaz Levi, much of his magical writing is modelled on, or adorned by references to, the Tarot. Notable in this connexion are:

Ambrosii Magi Hortus Rosarum (The Sword of Song, 1904 e.v.).

The Wake-World (Konx Om Pax, 1907 e.v.).

Liber XXX Aerum vel Saeculi sub figura CCCXVIII: being of the Angels of the 30 Aethyrs the Vision and the Voice (1911 e.v.).

The Book of Lies (1913 e.v.).

Magick in Theory and Practice (Book 4, Part III) 1929 e.v.

He published a full account of the Tarot, according to the MSS. of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in The Equinox, Vol. I, Nos. 7 and 8 (1912 e.v.).

During all this time the Tarot was his daily companion, guide, and object of research.

He succeeded in uniting under the Schema of the Holy Qabalah, of which the Tarot is the greatest single element, all philosophical and magical systems soever, including that of the Chinese. This, and his "Naples Arrangement" are with little doubt his greatest achievements in scholarship.

¹To trace his progress in the Order will assist the reader to follow his work. He attained the grade of Adeptus Minor 5°=6° (Fra: R.R. et A.C.) in January, 1900 e.v. That of Adeptus Major 6°=5°, taking the motto "OL SONUF VAORESAPI", in April, 1904 e.v. That of Adeptus Exemptus 7°=4°, taking the motto OY MH, in 1909 e.v. (Fra: A.:A. That of Magister Templi 8°=3° on 3rd December, 1910 e.v. accepting the motto previously (Oct., 1906 e.v.) bestowed upon him, Vi Veri Vniverson Vivus Vici. See Liber 418pp. 73-76 et al. That of Magus 9°=2° taking the motto TO MEFA OHPION (תריין) on October 12, 1915 e.v.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE—*Continued*

For many years he had deplored the absence of any authentic Text of the Tarot. The mediaeval packs are hopelessly corrupt, compiled by partisans of existing political systems, or otherwise far from presenting the Ancient Truth of the Book in a coherent system, or a shape of lucid beauty.

It had from the beginning of his study been his fervent wish to construct a worthy Text.

Eliphaz Levi had himself wished to execute a similar task, but succeeded only in leaving us two of the Atu, "The Chariot" and "The Devil". Many others have attempted the work, but without even the knowledge of the true Attributions. Their attempts have been gross, senseless, pitifully grotesque.

But the Masters who had watched, guided, and chastised the author of this present volume, had in store the reward of his labours. They introduced to him a skilled artist, Frieda Harris, who, though she had little or no previous knowledge of the Tarot, possessed in her own right the Essential Spirit of the Book.

Together they bent their energies to the formidable task of preparing the 78 cards of the Book of Thoth.

His original idea had been to execute a pack after the tradition of the Mediaeval Editors, corrected in the light of the descriptions given in The Equinox I, vii and viii. But she found technical difficulties, such as introducing "to rayed Angelic hands" all over the place, producing a grotesque effect; and she also observed that his teaching, in the course of his explanations, went far higher and deeper than anything in any accessible models. She accordingly forced him—the laziest man in three continents!—to undertake what is to all intent an original work, including the latest discoveries in modern science, mathematics, philosophy, and anthropology; in a word, to reproduce the whole of his Magical Mind pictorially on the skeleton of the ancient Qabalistic tradition. He accepted this colossal burden; it renewed his energy and his enthusiasm.

Yet the burden was sore: the anticipated three months' work extended to five years. Her success as his interpreter surpasses belief. She had to work from his very rough sketches, often from mere descriptions, or from reading between the lines of the old packs. She devoted her genius to the Work. With incredible rapidity she picked up the rhythm, and with inexhaustible patience submitted to the corrections of the fanatical slave-driver that she had invoked, often painting the same card as many as eight times until it measured up to his Vanadium Steel yardstick!

May the passionate "love under will" which she has stored in this Treasury of Truth and Beauty flow forth from the Splendour and Strength of her work to enlighten the world; may this Tarot serve as a chart for the bold seamen of the New Aeon, to guide them across the Great Sea of Understanding to the City of the Pyramids!

The accompanying booklet was dashed off by Aleister Crowley, without help from parents. Its perusal may be omitted with advantage.

S. H. Soror I.W.E. 8°=3° A. . . A. . .

SCANS FROM ALEISTER CROWLEY'S

THE EQUINOX

More at <https://keepsilence.org/the-equinox>

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