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THE MAGUS

Or Celestial Intelligencer

Francis Barrett

MODERN ENGLISH ANNOTATED EDITION

First published in London, 1801.

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Modern English Annotated Edition Note

This edition presents a modern-English reading layer for Francis Barrett's *The Magus*, based on the 1801 text. Barrett's arguments, examples, lists, prayers, technical descriptions, substantive repetitions, and characteristic occult vocabulary remain part of the historical work.

Modernization reduces unnecessary friction in spelling, punctuation, syntax, sentence structure, and ordinary wording. Terms such as *virtue*, *sympathy*, *intelligence*, *spirit*, *Cabala*, *seal*, and *character* are retained where a modern substitute would distort Barrett's meaning. Long sentences may be divided for clarity, but the argument itself is not summarized or replaced.

Barrett's supernatural, medical, historical, astrological, and scientific assertions remain Barrett's claims. Fox & Webb notes are used where source history, terminology, textual questions, or later scholarship materially improves the reading, and remain visibly separate from the historical text.

We modernize the language, not the ideas.

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Chronology

A brief path through the traditions gathered in Barrett's 1801 synthesis.



1471	HERMETIC REVIVAL Ficino's Hermetic translation reaches print Marsilio Ficino's Latin translation of Hermetic treatises circulates in print, helping make Hermes Trismegistus central to Renaissance ideas of an ancient wisdom.
1486	CHRISTIAN KABBALAH Pico prints the 900 Conclusions Giovanni Pico della Mirandola brings magic and Kabbalah into an ambitious Christian philosophical synthesis; many of his propositions explicitly draw on Kabbalistic material.
1499	SECRET WRITING Trithemius composes Steganographia Johannes Trithemius develops a work whose language of spirits and distant communication also conceals elaborate cryptographic systems.
1510	OCCULT PHILOSOPHY Agrippa shares an early Occult Philosophy Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa shows an early version of De occulta philosophia to Trithemius before substantially revising and enlarging it.
1533	OCCULT SYNTHESIS Agrippa's Three Books appear in full The expanded De occulta philosophia libri tres is published, organizing natural, celestial, and ceremonial magic in a form that becomes fundamental to later Western occultism.
1582	ANGELIC PRACTICE Dee and Kelley begin working together John Dee and Edward Kelley undertake the visionary sessions that become the best-known part of Dee's angelic and Cabalistical work.
1648	HELMONTIAN NATURE Van Helmont's Ortus Medicinae appears Published posthumously, Jan Baptista van Helmont's collected medical and natural-philosophical writings become an important source for early-modern ideas of hidden agency, medicine, and transformation.

Chronology - Continued



1651	<p>ENGLISH OCCULT PRINT</p> <p>Agrippa circulates in English</p> <p>An English translation of Agrippa's occult-philosophical books helps transmit Renaissance magical theory to later English readers.</p>
1801	<p>PUBLICATION</p> <p>The Magus appears in London</p> <p>Francis Barrett brings natural magic, alchemy, talismanic practice, magnetism, Cabala, ceremonial magic, conjuration, and occult biography together in one large English compendium.</p>

INTRODUCTION

A Map of Barrett's Occult World

The Magus can feel like several books bound together. That is close to what it is. Barrett gathers natural magic, alchemy, planetary and talismanic practice, magnetism, Cabala, ceremonial magic, conjuration, crystal work, and a final gallery of occult authorities into one ambitious system.

A useful first map is the old division between natural, celestial, and ceremonial magic. Natural magic looks for hidden virtues, sympathies, and antipathies within created things. Celestial or “constellatory” magic links those things to planets, signs, numbers, times, images, and talismans. Ceremonial magic moves into divine names, prayer, consecration, angels, spirits, and ritual operations. Barrett's alchemy and magnetism cross those borders rather than sitting neatly inside one category.

Agrippa is one of the strongest organizing presences behind the book, but Barrett is not simply repeating a single author. He is a compiler: passages, names, practices, and claims arrive from several centuries of occult print culture. Trithemius stands behind important portions of the spirit material; Dee and Kelley belong to the English history of angelic practice; Paracelsian and Helmontian traditions help shape Barrett's language of medicine, hidden virtues, sympathy, and transformation. The *Biographia Antiqua* at the end is therefore more than an appendix: it is Barrett's attempt to show the lineage in which he wants the whole work to be read.

Barrett also places legitimate magic inside a Christian moral and devotional frame. Prayer, purity, fasting, charity, divine names, and the moral fitness of

the operator repeatedly appear beside technical instructions. Read those passages as part of the system, not as decoration added around it.

One final reading rule helps throughout: “experiment” does not always mean modern experimental science, and “history” does not always mean modern critical history. Barrett moves easily among reported experience, inherited authority, scriptural interpretation, natural philosophy, legend, and practical instruction. The reward is not that every layer agrees. It is seeing how those layers were made to coexist.

This edition preserves Barrett’s references to the original plates. Where the information can be carried accurately in words, lists, or tables, it is retained in the reading text; graphical signs and engraved forms are not silently replaced with invented modern equivalents.

Preface

We wrote this work chiefly for readers who are curious about occult knowledge and persistent in seeking it. The work cost us a great deal of time and money. We have gathered what we consider the rarest and most interesting material on Natural Magic, the Cabala, Celestial and Ceremonial Magic, Alchemy, and Magnetism.

We divided the work into two Books, each with several Parts, and added a third Book containing biographies of men famous for this knowledge. These lives show the authorities and principles on which the science of magic is founded. We have also added many notes in which we examine, as impartially as we can, the probability that magic, both good and bad, has existed in ancient as well as later ages. Throughout the treatise we present many unusual experiments. Those near the beginning depend on the simple application of active things to passive ones; others involve higher speculation.

✦ NOTE

Barrett is using older natural-philosophical language: an 'active' thing acts upon a 'passive' or receptive thing. The distinction belongs to premodern theories of causation, not modern chemistry.

In our accounts of philosophers and other historical figures, we have omitted nothing we considered interesting or satisfactory. We have drawn these figures from the authors we regard as most credible and outlined the different traditions concerning them. Our notes follow what seems most probable and describe their characters and actions as impartially as possible. We side neither with those who doubt everything nor with those who accept every report as literally true.

The more obscure sciences of Nature are now receiving more attention than they have for the past century, when they were almost entirely neglected. As people become more enlightened, they are beginning to reconsider the extraordinary effects attributed to ancient philosophers in ages once called dark.

Some have therefore reasoned that time, nature, causes, and effects remain the same, while the mechanical and liberal arts have improved. If we combine those improvements with the ancients' knowledge of Nature, they believe we may surpass them in producing wonderful effects. Many people are drawn, even without formal education or other advantages, to study Nature deeply. But the study is difficult at first, and they often spend a great deal of money collecting books. To spare them that inconvenience and expense, the author undertook to compose *THE MAGUS*, hoping it would serve both novice and adept.

To return to the plan of the book: in the First Part we explain what Natural Magic is. We show how many wonderful effects, though entirely natural, may be produced by manual operations through the application of active things to passive ones. We have gathered what we considered valuable and rare in this branch of the subject and included a number of our own experiments.

The diligent student will find in this work a complete and enjoyable companion. A reader who has spent years searching from one author to another will find the essence of them all here.

I would advise, however, that we not rely too much on our own wisdom when trying to understand these mysteries. All earthly wisdom is foolishness in the sight of God. By this I mean the wisdom that man claims to draw from any source other than God alone.

We next come to the Second Part of our First Book, which treats the art called Constellatory Practice, or Talismanic Magic. Here we demonstrate the power and efficacy of talismans, a subject much discussed but, in our view, little understood. We explain as clearly as we can how talismans may be made for different purposes, by what means and from what source they become vivified, and how they serve as visible instruments of remarkable effects.

✦ NOTE

Barrett's "Constellatory Practice" is his name for talismanic magic organized around celestial configurations, planetary correspondences, and astrologically chosen times.

We also explain the proper times for making them: the constellations and planetary aspects under which they are to be formed and the periods when they are most powerful. We then teach that our own spirit acts as the vehicle of celestial attraction. It transfers celestial and spiritual virtue into seals, images, amulets, rings, papers, glasses, and similar objects. We also give what we consider a clear and rational account of sympathy and antipathy, or attraction and repulsion.

We further show how cures are performed through sympathetic powers and medicines, using seals, rings, and amulets even at unlimited distances. We have witnessed such effects ourselves and are continually confirmed in our belief in them.

We also know how to communicate with another person and make our purpose known at a distance of a hundred or even a thousand miles. Such an operation requires preparation. Both parties must observe appointed times and hours, possess the same firm constancy of mind, and be disciples or brothers in the art.

We also give methods by which a properly prepared person may receive true and certain information through dreams. The information concerns future things already meditated upon in the mind.

We also describe methods used by the ancients to invoke astral spirits through circles, crystals, and similar means. We give their forms of exorcism, incantation, prayer, binding, and conjuration, along with a general account of the instruments used in these arts. We collected this material from famous magicians including Zoroaster, Hermes, Apollonius, Simon of the Temple, Trithemius, Agrippa, Porta of Naples, Dee, Paracelsus, Roger Bacon, and many others.

To their material we have added our own notes, attempting to distinguish among these arts and to free the name of magic from scandalous associations. As we understand it, the word originally signified not evil, but good and praiseworthy knowledge by which a person might become wise and happy.

Far from being offensive to God or man, we hold that the foundation of all true magic arises from Holy Scripture: "The fear of God is the beginning of all wisdom," while charity is its end. The fear

of God is therefore the beginning of magic, because magic is wisdom, and for this reason wise men were called Magi.

The magicians were the first Christians, for through their high knowledge they recognized that the promised Saviour had been born as man, that Christ was our Redeemer, Advocate, and Mediator, and they were the first to acknowledge his glory and majesty. No one, therefore, should be offended by the venerable and sacred title of Magician. Every wise person merits that title while following the path Christ himself taught: humility, charity, mercy, fasting, prayer, and the like. The true magician is the truest Christian and the nearest disciple of our blessed Lord, whose example we are to follow.

Scripture says, "If ye have faith, etc.;" "This kind comes not by fasting and prayer, etc.;" "Ye shall tread upon scorpions, etc.;" and again, "Be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Such instructions appear frequently throughout Holy Scripture. The Apostles likewise affirm the power of working miracles through faith in the name of Christ Jesus, and that all wisdom is attained through him, for he says, "I am the light of the world!"

We have also thought it advisable to investigate the power of numbers and their sympathy with the divine names of God. Since the whole universe was created by number, weight, and measure, numbers possess considerable efficacy. Nothing represents the divine essence more clearly to human understanding, and the divine names themselves display numerical correspondences.

The conclusion of our First Book therefore forms a complete system of mathematical magic. In it I have collected many curious seals from the famous magician Agrippa and from Paracelsus. I have noted them especially where experiment has shown them, in my judgment, to correspond with true science.

The Second Book is a complete treatise on the mysteries of the Cabala and Ceremonial Magic. It teaches that a person may become receptive to divine light and knowledge by detaching himself from material objects and restraining the sensual appetites. This requires

abstaining from drunkenness, gluttony, and other bestial passions and living a pure and temperate life.

Through this knowledge, such a person may foresee future events affecting private families, kingdoms, states, empires, battles, victories, and other matters. He may also do much good for others, such as healing all disorders and bringing the comforts of life to the unfortunate and distressed.

We discuss prophetic dreams and visions at length in our Cabalistic Magic and provide the tables of the Cabala for the information of the wise. A few of the most secret matters are reserved by the author for his pupils and are not taught in print.

The Third Book is a complete Magical Biography, gathered from ancient authors and from scarce and valuable manuscripts acquired through considerable labour. Those who wish to benefit from these studies should shake off worldly vanity, idle frivolity, sloth, intemperance, and lust. They should remain quiet, clean, pure, and free from distraction and disturbance of mind, so that they may use worthily the knowledge gained through their labours.

Therefore, my good friend, whoever you are and whatever you hope to accomplish through these studies, first apply yourself to Eternal Wisdom and ask God to grant you understanding. Then pursue knowledge diligently. You will not regret so worthy a resolution. You may instead enjoy a secret happiness and serenity of mind that the world cannot take from you.

I wish you every possible success in your studies and experiments. I hope you will use whatever benefits you receive to honour our Creator and help your neighbour. In doing so, you will know the satisfaction of having done your duty.

Remember our instruction to be silent. Speak only with those worthy of your confidence; do not cast pearls before swine. Be friendly with everyone, but familiar with few, for many are, as Scripture says, wolves in sheep's clothing.

FRANCIS BARRETT.

Introduction and Natural Magic

Author's Notice

As an introduction to Natural Magic, we begin with a short discussion of stellar influence and of Natural Magic in general. We ask how far the heavenly bodies matter for our purposes and how much influence we should grant them. We reject certain speculations about planetary inclinations, especially the questionnaire abuses that seem to us idle, invalid, unsupported by sound philosophy, and inconsistent with Scripture.

✦ NOTE

“Questionary” astrology means answering a particular question from a horoscope cast for the question or moment—what is now usually called horary astrology. Barrett objects to what he regards as trivial or abusive uses of it.

In what follows, we give our reasons for rejecting some parts of astrology while accepting others that we believe rest on sound principles and agree with Scripture and Natural Philosophy. Our purpose is to clear the understanding of error, not to insist on anything that does not appear to be supported by nature, truth, and experiment.

Introduction to the Study of Natural Magic

On the Influences of the Stars

People have long disputed how strongly the stars, acting as second causes, rule and influence human beings. Do they implant particular passions, virtues, and propensities at the very moment of birth into this vale of misery and wretchedness? Do the position and configuration of the stars at birth reveal a person's future passions and pursuits? And do later revolutions, transits, and directed aspects

indicate bodily accidents, marriage, sickness, advancement, and the like?

✦ NOTE

In Christian philosophical language, “second causes” are created causes operating within the order established by God, the “first cause.” Barrett is asking how much causal power may properly be assigned to the stars.

I have turned these questions over in my mind for many years and have long been a warm advocate of stellar divination, or astrology. It is therefore necessary to examine how far celestial influence actually extends to human beings. I fully maintain that God has endowed man with free will, which the stars cannot overcome.

Man contains within himself the power and capacity for divination and for wonderful things; we possess, as it were, a complete system within ourselves. For this reason man is called the microcosm, or little world. From our beginning we carry a heaven within us, for God has sealed his own image in us, and among created beings we are an epitome of the whole. We must therefore take care not to confuse one thing with another.

Nevertheless, man, as a pattern of the greater world, sympathizes with it through the stars. According to Holy Scripture, the stars are appointed for times and seasons. They are not the causes of particular evils that may affect kingdoms or private families. Although they may in some measure foreshow such things, they do not cause them.

I therefore understand the saying “Stars rule men, but a wise man rules the stars” very differently from the usual interpretation. The stars do not rule men in the common sense, as though they stirred people to murder, sedition, quarrels, lust, fornication, adultery, drunkenness, and similar vices.

Common astrologers often present this as sound doctrine. They may say, for example, that a conjunction of Mars and Saturn produces these effects. They also point to other configurations and afflictions involving these two great infortunes, as they call them, when the benevolent planets Jupiter, Venus, and the Sun are in detriment or