



The Sacred Magic Of Abramelin The Mage Book 1

By Abramelin The Mage

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Volume I of The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage.

The Book of Abramelin tells the story of an Egyptian mage named Abramelin, or Abra-Melin, who taught a system of magic to Abraham of Worms, a German Jew presumed to have lived from c.1362 - c.1458. The system of magic from this book regained popularity in the 19th and 20th centuries due to the efforts of Mathers' translation, The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage, its import within the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and later within the mystical system of Thelema (created in 1904 by Aleister Crowley).

Unfortunately, Mathers used the least-reliable manuscript copy as the basis for his translation, and it contains many errors and omissions. The later English translation by Georg Dehn and Steven Guth, based on the earliest and most complete sources, is more scholarly and comprehensive. Dehn attributed authorship of The Book of Abramelin to Rabbi Yaakov Moelin (Hebrew ca. 1365/1427), a German Jewish Talmudist.

Structure of the book

The grimoire is framed as a sort of epistolary novel or autobiography in which Abraham of Worms describes his journey from Germany to Egypt and reveals Abramelin's magical and Kabbalistic secrets to his son Lamech. Internally the text dates itself to the year 1458.

The story involves Abraham of Worms passing his magical and Kabbalistic secrets on to his son, and tells how he acquired his knowledge. Abraham recounts how he found Abramelin the Mage living in the desert outside an Egyptian town, Arachi or Araki, which borders the Nile. Abramelin's home sat atop a small hill surrounded by trees. He was an Egyptian mage and taught a powerful form of Kabbalistic magic to Abraham. He was a "venerable aged man", and very courteous and kind. He discussed nothing but "the Fear of God", leading a well-regulated life, and the evils of the "acquisition of riches and goods."

Abramelin extracted a promise from Abraham that he would give up his "false

dogmas" and live "in the Way and Law of the Lord." He then gave Abraham two manuscript books to copy for himself, asking for ten gold florins, which he took with the intention of distributing to seventy-two poor persons in Arachi. Upon his return fifteen days later, after having disposed of the payment money, Abramelin extracted an oath from Abraham to "serve and fear" the Lord, and to "live and die in His most Holy Law." After this, Abramelin gave Abraham the "Divine Science" and "True Magic" embedded within the two manuscripts, which he was to follow and give to only those whom he knew well.

Origin of the manuscript

The book exists in the form of six manuscripts and an early printed edition. The provenance of the text has not been definitively identified. The earliest manuscripts are two versions that date from about 1608, are written in German and are now found in Wolfenbuttel. Another two manuscripts are in Dresden, and date from about 1700 and 1750 respectively.

The first printed version, also in German, dates to 1725 and was printed in Cologne by Peter Hammer. A partial copy in Hebrew is found in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, and dates from around 1740. A manuscript copy existed in French in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris, an institution founded in 1797. The French copy has since disappeared, but is available on microfilm.

All German copies of the text consist of four books: an autobiographical account of the travels of Abraham of Worms to Egypt, a book of assorted materials from the corpus of the practical Kabbalah (including some which is duplicated in the German-Jewish grimoire called "The Sixth and 7th Books of Moses") and the two books of magic given by Abramelin to Abraham. The well-known English translation by S.L. MacGregor Mathers from the French Manuscript in Paris contains only three of the four books. The Hebrew version in Oxford is limited to Book One, without reference to the further books.

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- Sales Rank: #1934480 in eBooks
- Published on: 2013-11-24
- Released on: 2013-11-24
- Format: Kindle eBook



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