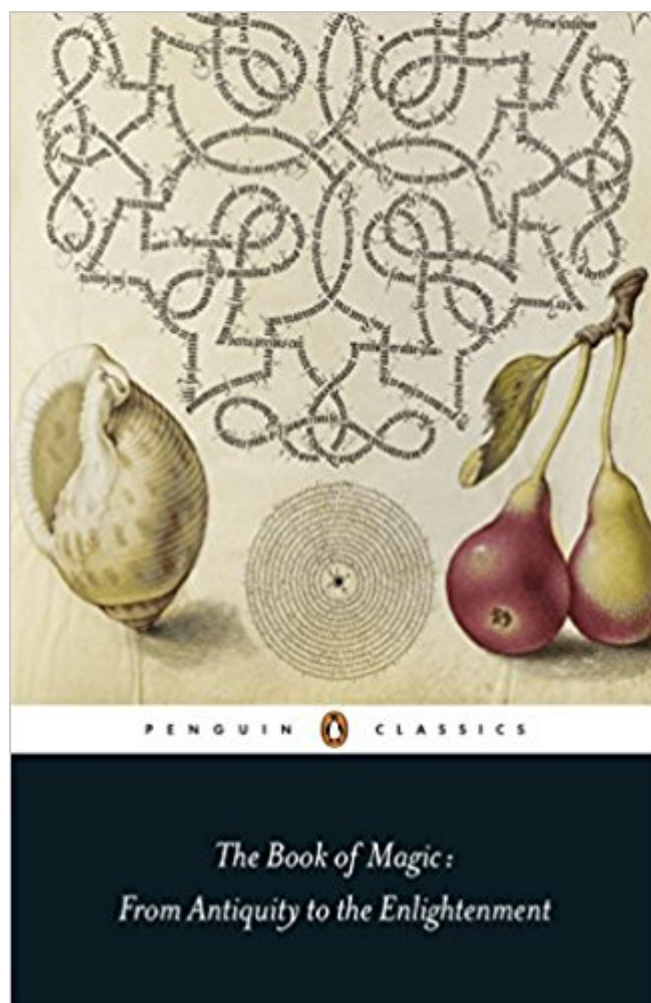


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The Book Of Magic: From Antiquity To The Enlightenment



Synopsis

A rich, wondrous anthology of the Western magical tradition, from the Old Testament to Doctor Faustus and Paradise Lost, now in a Penguin Classics black spine edition . . . as when iron is drawn to a magnet, camphor is sucked into hot air, crystal lights up in the Sun, sulfur and a volatile liquid are kindled by flame, an empty eggshell filled with dew is raised towards the Sun . . . The Bible is full of stories featuring forms of magic and possession—from Moses battling with Pharaoh's wizards to the supernatural actions of Jesus and his disciples. As, over the following centuries, the Christian church attempted to stamp out deviant practices, a persistent interest in magic drew strength from this Biblical validation. A strange blend of mumbo-jumbo, fear, fraud, and deeply serious study, magic was at the heart of the European Renaissance, fascinating many of its greatest figures. This is a book filled with incantations, charms, curses, summonings, cures, and descriptions of extraordinary, shadowy, only half-understood happenings from long ago. It features writers as various as Thomas Aquinas, John Milton, John Dee, Ptolemy, and Paracelsus along with anonymous ancient and medieval works that were, in some cases, viewed as simply too dangerous even to open. The Book of Magic will be welcomed by everyone from those with the most casual interest in the magical tradition to anyone drawn to the Renaissance and the tangled, arcane roots of the scientific tradition. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Impressive and well-edited . . . Reading this rich collection allows each of us to cut our own path through the dense snarls of the history of a body of ideas. • "The Times Literary Supplement" rich anthology. • "Tampa Bay Times"

Brian Copenhaver is a professor of philosophy and history at the University of California, Los Angeles, and is one of the world's foremost scholars on Renaissance magic and mysticism.

This is a really well written book which covers a broad subject very well. It does exactly what it says it does, so there really isn't a huge need for me to explain it. If you come from a background in the western magical tradition of study and practice, you are actually going to probably find this book a little boring, as much of what is covered if you have been around awhile you are going to be familiar with. But even with that being said (which is why I give it the 4 star rating) his views, and perspective as well as the presentation of the information is really well done. For topics that can get really convoluted and often do by other authors, Copenhaver covered the breath of a (BROAD) subject category and did a really good job with it. The man knows what he is talking about. I would suggest this book for two reasons: 1. If you have an honest, unbiased interest in the Western Esoteric Traditions, and really don't know anything about what they contain or have to say, or very limited knowledge, by the gods, this is quite honestly probably the best book you could buy, because even if it is the only one you ever end up reading on the subject. You will be light years ahead of when you went into it. 2. If you are a student and/practitioner of any of these traditions. You will probably as I mentioned above get a bit bored. But I recommend it because it really is a wonderful re-study of subjects which never hurts to be sharp on, and it never hurts to keep some of the "should be well known facts" present and fresh in your mind. If you don't fall under 1 or 2, and are just someone looking for Demonology, How to curse, caste spells, or anything that is just going to get you what you want... well then avoid this book. You will get bored...quickly....I know I don't include much as far as content, but aside from critiquing based completely on presentation, and conclusion. The book description, title and table of contents says it all.

An excellent review of original sources.

This is an amazing book. It's wonderful hardcover edition. What can I say about the content?
Definitely the best compilation of texts on magic. Recommended.

not really 'a history of magic', more like a bunch of texts ...

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