

Introductory Material

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FRANZ BARDON (1909 to 1958): His Life, Works, and Legacy

You might ask, "who was Franz Bardon?" For those who are not familiar with his work, suffice it to say that Bardon is considered to be one of the most important adepts of our age. According to Bardon himself, he was directed by Divine Providence to reveal to humanity the meaning behind the first four major arcana of the Tarot. While he fulfilled his mission, only his revelation of three of the Tarot cards were published and the fourth has been lost due to the twists of fate. The first card, the Magician, was revealed in "Initiation Into Hermetics" (IIH); the second card, the High Priestess, was revealed in "The Practice of Magical Evocation" (PME); and, the third card, the Empress, was revealed in "The Key to the True Quabbalah" (KTQ). Only a small fragment of his revelation of the fourth card, the Emperor, remains and is found as an appendix to the book "Frabato", titled "The Golden Book of Wisdom".

With some occult writers, we are left with nearly every detail of their personal lives, while with others, we know no more than their pen names. The situation with Bardon lies somewhere between these two extremes. While we have, through the grace of Divine Providence, access to all of his published works, we can find only a small few details left over from his personal life.

What we do know is that he was born in Czechoslovakia in 1909 and that he died in 1958. He was the first of 13 children and an only son. According to legend, his spirit inhabited the body of young Franz at the age of 16, in answer to the prayers of his father, Victor, for the guidance of a personal teacher.

During his young adult years, Franz worked as a stage performer under the name "Frabato". His performances were reportedly of an unique nature in that he displayed and explained the occult practices so common in that day. According to all reports, he was one of the few such performers who was not a charlatan.

In his early thirties, because of his interest in the occult, he was imprisoned in a concentration camp by the Nazis. He survived three and a half years in the concentration camp but little is known publicly about his time there other than its obvious horror. At some point after that, he became well known as a teacher of Hermetics and worked successfully at a healing practice based upon those same principles.

It was during this period of his life that he wrote the three books we now know him by.

According to legend, it was his healing practice, combined with the books he was directed by Divine Providence to write, that incurred the wrath of the communist government of Czechoslovakia which followed the war, and in the late 1950's he was again imprisoned. It was in prison that he apparently died.

He left behind a wife (Marie), a daughter (also named Marie), a son (Lumir), and a group of direct disciples. And, he left us three very important books in the annals of occult literature: IHH, PME, and KTQ.

It is impossible to truly know the inner life of an adept such as Franz Bardon, but we can discern certain things from his life, from the testimony of those who knew him, and from his writings. What stands out clearly for me is that Bardon's commitment to Hermetics was not about how great and powerful a guy he was. This sets him apart from many of his contemporaries and no where will you find braggartly statements about him other than from his disciples.

As evinced from what he wrote and what is known of his life, he was a humble, sincere and honorable man of great accomplishment. He was able to write down for all the rest of the world to see, a plainly spoken outline of the path of Hermetic Magic. Never before, and not since, has so comprehensive and so clear a guide been presented to the general public. Yet he managed to do this without touting himself as "The Magus of the Age", etc.

At the same time, Bardon was a very HUMAN being. He smoked heavily and experienced many difficulties with his health and life circumstances. I think it was perhaps these very experiences that enabled him to devise a path that was so accessible to the common man or woman. While his path demands that the student work to ennoble their character, he never resorts to judging the student's character himself -- that task he leaves up the student.

Nothing concrete is known about who Bardon's corporeal teachers were or from where he learned Hermetic Magic and Kabbala. A good amount of speculation has passed under that bridge but the fact of the matter is that this question is relatively irrelevant. Certainly parallels exist between Bardon's system and other important systems of practice throughout the world, but where Bardon's ideas originated has no real bearing upon the fact that his system has been proven to work.

Nevertheless, the question often arises as to what Bardon's "Hermetics" have to do with classical hermeticism. While his hermetics do derive from the body of writings known as the "Corpus Hermetica" (i.e., those ancient writings attributed to "Hermes The Thrice Greatest"), it takes a deep understanding of this work to see the similarities. The similarities are easier to detect with the later hermetic writings found in sources such as the "Kybalion" by Three Initiates, the "Emerald Tablet of Hermes", the "Seven Hermetic Letters" by Georg Lomer, and the occult hermetics of his day. To Bardon, hermeticism is the science of occultism, based upon the teachings of the legendary figure known simply as Hermes.

With his book PME, the parallels between what he writes and the standard works on Solomonic magic, are very obvious. Yet even here, Bardon offers the student more than most authors. The same is true of his book KTQ. Many modern students of Kabbala don't even recognize KTQ as Kabbala, but in truth, Bardon's approach reaches back to a more original form of Kabbalistic practice. In this case, the "even more" that he gives the aspiring student is a universal Kabbala that is amenable to ANY language and therefore does not require the learning of biblical Hebrew.

Perhaps the greatest gift of Bardon's writing style is that he explains things in a very practical manner and does so without all the flowery language so prevalent in occultism. It is obvious from the outset, that the reader has found an author who speaks from long and deep experience instead of off the top of his head. The depth of his experience is often difficult for the reader to grasp, for he speaks, from beginning to end, from the perspective of someone who has done every stitch of the work for himself, and in this way he naturally conveys the concept that all he describes is obtainable, even easy.

Bardon wrote for both the common reader (one not really interested in hermetics other than as an intellectual oddity) and for the serious student of hermetic magic. Even someone who has had no previous experience with occultism can begin the work of IHH, since this work begins with the rudiments of initiation and gradually develops the student's magical abilities. Most who begin the work of IHH however, have had some occult training, but this is a two-edged sword, as it were, for often, the experienced occultist will find that they must unlearn some of what they have learned from other sources.

Of the many direct students that Bardon left behind, two are of special note. The first was his secretary, Otti Votavova, who was responsible for the book "Frabato" and for seeing to it that his writings remained accessible. While I have some problems with "Frabato" it is well worth reading if approached as a "Zanoni"-like occult novel. I find it hard to believe that Bardon would have said some of the things about himself that were said in "Frabato". To me, it seems that Ms. Votavova's own love for her teacher amplified parts of Bardon's life out of proportion to their nitty-gritty reality. As I said, it is impossible to truly understand the inner life of so great an adept. According to the record, Bardon submitted to Ms. Votavova an outline of that period of his life covered in "Frabato" and left it up to her to flesh it out into a book. I'm certain that Ms. Votavova did her best (others assure us that Ms. V. loved the truth) but I'm equally certain that some parts of "Frabato" describe events with too symbolic a language. While I admire her work, I do not recommend trusting it as an accurate biography of Franz Bardon. At best, it does a good job of giving the reader the flavor of the man and an idea of the depth of his commitment.

Another direct student of note is the late Dr. M. Kumar. He relayed several tales of Bardon and was ever helpful to students of Hermetic Magic.

There are many other personages of note, but the one remaining that I wish to mention is Dieter Ruggeberg. Mr. Ruggeberg has spent several decades of sincere effort and expense to see to it that Bardon's books have remained available to the modern reader. He has also helped guide sincere students and has helped to keep the evolution of the public response to Bardon's work on the right track.

Today, we are blessed with the opportunity to purchase Bardon's works in print and to encounter others with the same interest through the Internet. We owe this fact to the efforts of not only Bardon, Votavova, Ruggeberg, and now the folks at Merkur Publishing, but also to countless other modern-day magicians. Folks like Daren, Paul Allen, Ralf Mulberg, Tim Scott, and William Mistele, to name just a few, are helping to increase this legacy.

There are six books related to Franz Bardon. The first three are the books that he wrote: IHH, PME, and KTQ.

The next three books were written about him by others. The first and most famous of these is the pseudo-biography titled "Frabato The Magician". The second is a compilation of notes from the archives of his personal disciples, known as "Questions and Answers". And the last is known as "Souvenirs of Franz Bardon", written collaboratively by his son, Lumir, and one of his disciples, Dr. M. Kumar.

INITIATION INTO HERMETICS by Franz Bardon

The first book by Franz Bardon to be published was "Initiation Into Hermetics", known in the original German edition as "Der Weg zum Wahren Adepten". It appeared in 1956, approximately two years before Bardon's death.

This book forms the foundation upon which PME and KTQ were later written and it outlines the basic training necessary for one to become an Hermetic magician. It is composed of a fairly enigmatic-in-spots section on "Theory", followed by a series of exercises and practical work divided into ten "Steps".

Within each of the ten Steps, you will find three types of exercises: Mental/Spirit, Astral/Soul, and Physical. The exercises of each category are designed to compliment the exercises of the other two categorizes in each Step, thus the student performs the current mental, astral and physical exercise during each period of work or meditation. This assures the student of a balanced advancement -- and balance or equilibrium is a very important thing in Hermetic magic.

Each exercise is presented in very practical terms. At times however, Bardon is not altogether clear as to exactly what he means. I believe that this is on purpose -- it is the responsibility of every student to puzzle some things out for themselves. This is in fact, a vital component of any path of self-realization and empowerment, and believe you me, the course of IHH's ten Steps will hone your inventiveness and inquisitiveness to a razor sharpness.

Only the Astral/Soul exercises of Step One are presented with time limits (approximately three months). The reasons for this are specific (i.e., it doesn't pay to dawdle over this particular part of the work) as are Bardon's reasons for not setting time limits to guide the student through the rest of the exercises. The reason that there are no time limits set for the remaining exercises and Steps is that each student progresses at their own unique pace -- there is no standard length of time it takes one to make it through the entire ten Steps. It does not matter how many decades or lifetimes it takes you to complete this work. The only thing that matters in regard to IHH is that you master each Step completely, regardless of how long it takes you to do so.

The work of Hermetic Magic can fit in with any of your other philosophical interests. In and of itself, it holds no religious doctrine yet is amenable to almost any. Throughout IHH, PME and KTQ this is left up to the student him or her self. In fact, many things in this course are left up

to the student and that is as it should be.

To give you a better idea of the path outlined by Bardou in IIIH, I offer you a reshuffling of the Table of Contents. Unlike the standard table of contents which lists the exercises by Step and groups the three categories of work together in each Step, I have adopted a different sequence and listed the exercises by category (i.e., Mental, Astral and Physical), leaving the Step designations as secondary. I believe that this better reveals how the exercises of each Step link together by category and form a continuum of growth or advancement.

Yet we should not ignore the fact that the exercises of each category within a Step, when pursued in unison, act to create a balanced level of achievement by the end of that Step's work. Nonetheless, I think by examining this reshuffled table of contents, you will broaden your vision of what this combining of elements produces. It may well help you pinpoint the goal of all the work involved with the mastery of Hermetics.

Mental [Magical Schooling of the Spirit] --

Step One:

- * Mental Discipline --
 - 1) Observance of thoughts.
 - 2) One-pointedness of thought.
 - 3) Emptiness of mind.

Step Two:

- * Auto-suggestion.
- * Single-sense concentration.

Step Three:

- * Multi-sense concentration.
- * External projection of images.
- * Wrap-around projection of images.

Step Four:

- * Transference of consciousness --
 - 1) Into inanimate objects and plants.
 - 2) Into animate animals, insects, etc.
 - 3) Into other humans.

Step Five:

- * Space Magic (i.e., "Depth Point" concentration).

Step Six:

- * Meditation on your own spirit.
- * Becoming conscious of the senses in the spirit.

Step Seven:

- * Analysis of the spirit in regards to the practice.

Step Eight:

- * Preparation for mental travel.
- * The practice of mental travel --
 - 1) In a room.
 - 2) For short distances.
 - 3) Visiting acquaintances, relatives, etc.

Step Nine:

- * The practice of clairvoyance through magic mirrors --
 - 1) Viewing through time and space.
 - 2) Having an effect from afar through the magic mirror.
 - 3) Various projection activities through the magic mirror.

Step Ten:

- * The ascent of the spirit to higher planes.

Astral [Magical Schooling of the Soul] --

Step One:

- * Introspection or self-analysis.
- * Preparation of the positive and negative soul mirrors in regards to the Elements.

Step Two:

- * Astral or magical equilibrium regarding the Elements, transformation or ennobling of the character.

Step Three:

- * Element Breathing: Inhaling the Elements into the whole body.

Step Four:

- * Elemental Accumulation --
 - 1) In the entire body.
 - 2) In the individual parts and organs of the body.
- * Establishing the harmony of the Elements in the appropriate regions of the body.

Step Five:

- * Element projection outwardly --
 - 1) Through the whole body.
 - 2) Through the hands and fingers.
 - 3) Without first passing through your body.

Step Six:

- * Preparation to master the Akasha principle.
- * Conscious calling forth of states of trance by means of the Akasha.
- * Mastering the Elements from the Akasha principle through an individual ritual.

Step Seven:

- * The development of the astral senses (clairvoyance, clairaudience and clairsentience) with the aid of the Elements and the Fluid condensers.

Step Eight:

- * The Great Now and higher self-analysis.
- * Mastery of the Electric and Magnetic Fluids --
 - 1) Control of the Electric and Magnetic Fluids - Inductive Method.
 - 2) Control of the Electric and Magnetic Fluids - Deductive Method.

Step Nine:

- * Conscious separation of the astral body from the physical body (i.e., Astral Wandering).
- * The impregnation of the astral body with the four divine attributes.

Step Ten:

- * Conscious communion with your personal god.
- * Communication with deities, etc.

Physical [Magical Schooling of the Physical Body] --

Step One:

- * Adapting to a normal and sensible lifestyle as a matter of habit.
- * Morning exercises.
- * Conscious breathing.
- * Conscious eating.
- * The magic of water.

Step Two:

- * Conscious pore breathing.
- * Conscious body posture.
- * Body control in every day life.

Step Three:

- * Lung and pore breathing of the vital energy in the whole body.
- * Lung and pore breathing in the individual parts and organs of the body.
- * Impregnation of a room with the vital energy or an idea.

Step Four:

- * Rituals and their practical application --
 - 1) Gestures.

- 2) Body postures.
- 3) Finger positions.

Step Five:

- * Preparation for passive communication with the invisible --
 - 1) Release (exteriorization) of one's own hand.
 - 2) Preparation of the fingers with the help of the pendulum, pencil planchette, etc.
- * Practice of passive communication --
 - 1) With one's own guardian spirit or angel.
 - 2) With departed human beings and other beings.

Step Six:

- * Conscious creation of entities --
 - 1) Elementals.
 - 2) Larvae.
 - 3) Schemata.
 - 4) Phantoms.

Step Seven:

- * The creation of Elementaries (by four different methods).
- * Magical animation of pictures.

Step Eight:

- * Magical influence through the Elements.
- * Fluid (Electric and Magnetic) Condensers --
 - 1) Simple (single-Fluid) condensers.
 - 2) Compound (multi-Fluid) condensers.
 - 3) Fluid condensers for magic mirrors.
 - 4) Preparation of a magic mirror with the help of a Fluid condenser.

Step Nine:

- * Treatment of the sick through the ElectroMagnetic Fluid.
- * The magic of loading talismans, amulets and precious stones.
- * The realization of a wish through ElectroMagnetic spheres in the Akasha (i.e., "Volting").

Step Ten:

- * Various methods of acquiring magical capabilities --
 - 1) Suggestion.
 - 2) Telepathy.
 - 3) Hypnosis.
 - 4) Mass hypnosis.
 - 5) Mind reading.
 - 6) Psychometry.
 - 7) Influencing the memory.
 - 8) Working in the Akasha.

- 9) Room impregnation from a distance.
- 10) Messages through the air.
- 11) Exteriorization of only part of the astra-mental body to accomplish certain tasks.
- 12) Magical invisibility.
- 13) Advanced practices with the four Elements.
- 14) Levitation phenomena.
- 15) Natural phenomena.
- 16) Power over life and death.

THE PRACTICE OF MAGICAL EVOCATION by Franz Bardon

Bardon's second book, "The Practice of Magical Evocation", also appeared in 1956, shortly after the release of his first book, IIIH. While many books have been written about the subject of magical evocation, none compare with PME. Books such as "The Greater and Lesser Keys of Solomon", "Abramelin the Mage" and "The Ars Notoria", to name a few, provide only a small number of details as to the tools required, the ritual orations, and the spirits to be evoked, but say nothing of the theory, preparation and details so necessary to genuine success in this interesting art.

PME does not stand alone -- it is designed as an extension of the work begin in IIIH. In the introduction to PME and in several places throughout the text, Bardon warns that the student should approach the work of evocation only after having progressed through Step Eight of IIIH (or an equivalent initiation). All too often students have been lured by the glamour and romance of evocation into taking up this work before they are properly prepared to do so, and this, as Bardon repeatedly warns, results only in very dubious and possibly harmful experiences.

Without the proper training it is virtually impossible to understand the deeper significance of evocation. Generally, the unprepared student will think evocation to be fairly fantastical or strictly symbolic. Some believe that the ancient art of evocation is merely a primitive form of psychotherapy and for the uninitiated novice who steps into the practice unprepared, this is all that it will be. The reason for this is that without the prerequisite magical training, the practitioner will evoke nothing more than images from their own psyche, instead of entities that have actual existence independent of the human psyche.

One key to the genuine practice of magical evocation is the ability learned in Step Eight of IIIH known as "mental wandering". The first step in any evocation is for the magician to establish a mental contact with the entity to be evoked through mental wandering into their respective sphere.

Another key to genuine evocation is the magical ability to work consciously within all three realms (mental, astral and physical) simultaneously. This alone is what transforms mere oratory and theatrical movement into genuinely magical acts.

The primary motivation for undertaking evocation is the exploration of the universe and the expansion of the magician's consciousness. It is not about gaining extraordinary powers over

other people and events. Through evocation, the student may explore the other realms or spheres of existence (this is often called "rising through the planes") and may be able to learn of many things directly from the beings which inhabit these realms. Furthermore, some of these entities may be convinced to carry out the magician's will and perform tasks that would otherwise take the magician's extended attention to accomplish.

Bardon divides PME into three sections: Magic (theory and practice), Hierarchy (an expose upon the hierarchy of planes), and Illustrations (a grimoire of sigils for the various Elemental and planetary beings).

In the first section, Bardon explains the theory behind evocation and explores the rationale behind, and the making of, each of the classic ritual tools. These instructions surpass any such previously given by past authors. Bardon teaches that each aspect of the ritual regalia must be personalized and empowered according to the magician's own understanding and needs. For example, in Bardon's instructions regarding the Magic Circle, he gives no instructions as to which specific sigils and words are to be inscribed therein. Instead, he instructs the student to create a Circle that clearly represents the student's own understanding of the universe.

Another example of Bardon's unique approach is when he explains that the atmosphere within the Magic Triangle must match the atmosphere familiar to the entity which is to be evoked -- a fact unrevealed before.

In the section on the hierarchy of the planes, Bardon leads the student through each of the planes in sequence and introduces many of the entities which inhabit them. Here you will find none of the language of former works on evocation. In the books of Solomonic magic, the entities described are of a low, demonic, nature, but those of PME are not. The beings listed in PME are ones contacted by Bardon himself and are most all willing to teach the student and aid in their advancement. For reasons of protecting the uninitiated dabbler, Bardon does not provide a detailed list of beings of either the Mars or the Saturn spheres.

PME ends with a grimoire of sigils for each of the entities listed in the section on hierarchy. Though this part of PME is often the most interesting to the passive reader, it is truly the least of importance to the practicing student. The student who has actually pursued IH through the 8th Step will be able to discover these things for him or her self, as Bardon mentions in the theory and practice section.

It is interesting to note that the attitude of the practitioner of PME must invoke a different sort of relationship with the evoked entities than surmised by other books on the subject. In those other traditions, the magician is taught to be overly forceful and downright rude in an effort to gain and maintain control over the evoked entity. This is accomplished through all sorts of threats and exhortations about how the magician is supposedly working under the aegis of deity. Essentially this is rooted in the magician's fearful and secret knowledge that they are in fact unable to control anything when left to their own devices.

In PME however, the prerequisite training insures that the magician is actually capable of main-

taining control over the entire evocation. For such a magician, there is no need of fear. Furthermore, the magician is taught to always be respectful, yet stern when necessary, but never rude. Just as with any interaction with another being, the evoker will receive a reflection of what she/he puts forth. Thus it is prudent for the one wishing to master the art of evocation, to always be kind, respectful and honest, and to never try to force another being against their will. This is how friends are made and it will lead to your winning over the heart of the whole universe.

There are many, many more entities inhabiting the various planes than are mentioned by Bardon. No grimoire can ever completely list all the entities it is possible for the magician to encounter. Who knows who you may meet when left to the whim of Divine Providence? Yet, the ability to go out and make contact with entities unknown to you (i.e., those not listed in any grimoire) is a more advanced faculty and it may take meeting a familiar being or two before this becomes possible.

The serious student will, after due preparation, find no better guide to this ancient art than that provided by Bardon. And for the passive reader wishing to arrive at a more complete understanding of the mysterious practice of magical evocation, this book will be worth more than the reading of a hundred others.

THE KEY TO THE TRUE QUABBALAH by Franz Bardon

The third and final volume in the series by Bardon is "The Key to the True Quabbalah" (published in 1957). At least this is the last completed and published piece. A partial manuscript of a fourth book was later printed as an appendix to "Frabato" and it is rumored that there once existed a manuscript for a fifth book concerning Alchemy, but the latter was lost when Bardon was arrested by the communist government of Czechoslovakia.

The spelling "qUAbbalah" is unique but it is actually just as good as any other transliteration of the original Hebrew word into English. [I, however, will use the spelling "kabbala" hereafter (it's easier to type and more automatic for me).] This is merely a reflection of the uniqueness of what you will find between the covers of this book!

If you are expecting to encounter yet another book on Western Kabbala or one on the cosmology of Jewish Kabbala, then you will be sorely disappointed because Bardon's "Quabbalah" is not exactly like either. The basic technique and its focus upon the letter-sounds, harkens back to an ancient Jewish practice of Kabbala, but the exercises themselves are of purely Western Hermetic origin.

Bardon's Kabbala is not dependent upon the twenty-two Letters of the Hebrew alephbet. In fact, he employs the German letter-sounds throughout. The Hebrew formulas that Bardon explains are all composed of the German letter-sounds and are approximations of the Hebrew. Unfortunately, neither Hebrew, German nor English script can accommodate all the sounds it is possible for the human mouth to create (I think perhaps Sanskrit comes the closest). Thus there are many other formulas than those that Bardon mentions. But this fact is irrelevant since KTQ teaches the stu-

dent the technique which will enable them to truly speak the universally sacred and creative language of kabbala. A kabbalistic formula does not depend upon words in the normal sense -- its language is formed through intent and in accordance with the flow of Nature.

As with PME, Bardon warns the reader that the work of kabbala should not be initiated until one has completed the first eight Steps of IIIH or has achieved an equal training by other means. In one place he actually states that it is even better if one has also gained experience with PME. The training of KTQ requires the same sorts of abilities that PME requires of the student and if these prerequisites are not present, then little (if any) success will result. Certainly someone who STARTS with KTQ and thinks that they will thus master the true art of creative speaking will meet with no success until after many decades of ardent practice, and even then there are no guarantees. This art, even more so than evocation, requires a high degree of development at the outset.

KTQ is divided into three sections. The first section is titled "Theory" but this is not about the complexities of kabbalistic cosmology. Instead, it is about the theory behind uttering creatively.

The second section is titled "Practice -- Preconditions" and serves to teach the student the technique of uttering the simple, single-letter formulae. After a brief introduction, this section is divided into Steps One through Seven, similar to how IIIH is structured. The lessons begin at the beginning, as it were.

Bardon speaks of a quadrapolar type of action required for true kabbalistic utterance, each pole of which corresponds to an Element. The first Element, naturally, is relegated to Fire. The student begins with the "pronunciation" (this has nothing to do with physical speech) of the single letters within the mental sphere as a certain color and shape. The exercises are similar to those found in IIIH, except that they are infinitely more complex.

Next, the student learns how to employ the second pole, corresponding to Air, by "pronouncing" the single letters at a particular tone or note, simultaneous with their utterance as a color and shape.

The third pole (Water) of the quadrapolar action involves "pronunciation" through the invocation of a feeling or sensation corresponding to the letter.

These three poles form what Bardon calls the "three sense concentration" required for basic kabbalistic speech. After this, Bardon provides a brief, concise expose on the meaning of the numbers 1 through 10. This gives a clue as to what the fourth pole (Earth) of the quadrapolar action is. Namely it is the speaking of the letters with all three types of sense concentration active at the same instant, and founded upon the 10 original creative ideas.

Bardon closes this section by giving instruction in the use of the first of four keys, in the four realms (Akasha, Mental, Astral and Physical), and how to cause effects in any of these realms or in all of them simultaneously.

The third and final section of KTQ is titled "Practice -- The Magic of Formulas" and is dedicated to the remaining three keys. Each key refers to the number of letters involved in each formula. Thus the second key involves combining two letters; the third involves three letters, and so on. There are ten such keys according to Bardon, but he gives instructions for only the first four. At the end of the twelfth Step, Bardon speaks about Elemental formulas and the use of Divine Names and Beings.

There are a few specific errors and omissions in the latter part of KTQ. I suspect that this was intentional and intended to offer a degree of protection to these deep mysteries and to shield the dabbler who would toy with them. It also serves as a test of the student's true abilities for it will require that the student confer with non-corporeal entities in order to discover these errors and omissions along with their rectifications. This ability is a prerequisite for the true kabbalist and without it the student will be able to penetrate only a short way into this Mystery of Mysteries.

Truly any person who makes it through even the second section and is able to speak the single-letter formulas, needs no physical guide beyond that point. To achieve such a high goal provides the magician with all the internal guidance necessary to reach even higher goals.

FRABATO THE MAGICIAN by (Franz Bardon) Otti Votavova

Prior to his death in July of 1958, Bardon gave his student and secretary, Otti Votavova (1903 to 1973), an outline for his biography. Bardon left it up to Ms. Votavova to flesh out the details and turn it into a readable book. Unfortunately for us, what resulted, while good reading, was not a strictly accurate biography.

The manuscript of "Frabato" was not completed until after Bardon's death and it did not see publication until 1979. Dieter Ruggeberg, the publisher, writes that it was with some trepidation that he published "Frabato" under the name of Franz Bardon, since it was Ms. Votavova who actually wrote it. But eventually he was convinced to do so because he felt that listing Bardon as the author would give it the attention it deserved.

When I read "Frabato", I am reminded of Lord Bulwer-Lytton's book "Zanoni". Both share some details of the life of a man dedicated to the path of Hermetic initiation. "Frabato" however, covers only a moderate span of Bardon's life (from the time he was a stage performer till shortly before his final imprisonment), but it is enough to give the reader the flavor of the man and his works. Where "Frabato" fails, in my opinion, is when it comes to describing the inner life of Bardon. Nonetheless, "Frabato" does give some insight as to why Bardon wrote what he wrote.

Over all, "Frabato" is worth reading -- so long as you remember that it is not altogether accurate. Of special interest to Bardon's students are a memoriam by Ms. Votavova (written two months after Bardon died), an epilogue written by Mr. Ruggeberg (in 1979), and two appendices. Both of the notes from Ms. Votavova and Mr. Ruggeberg, convey some of the details of Bardon's life that are not present in "Frabato".

The first appendix is a fragment (only part of the first three out of ten chapters) of a manuscript in-progress titled, "The Golden Book of Wisdom". This book was supposed to have concerned the fourth leaf or trump card of the Tarot (the Emperor). To our great loss, there remains no complete transcript of the work, but what does remain, is very intriguing.

The second appendix is a manuscript titled "High Magic". When Mr. Ruggeberg added this to a new 1982 edition of "Frabato", he was under the impression that this was written by Bardon himself. Since then, the truth has come out and we now know that this was none other than the book "Seven Hermetic Letters" by Georg Lomer. Apparently, Bardon was so impressed by this little book that he had it translated privately (prior to writing IHH), from the original German into Czech, for the edification of his own disciples. The differences between the original version of "The Seven Hermetic Letters" and that provided in "Frabato" as "High Magic", may well be due to the fact that it was translated from German into Czech and then, from Czech into English!

Many later students of Bardon's writings were puzzled at the differences between what is presented in "High Magic" and what is presented in IHH. "High Magic" is interesting (I have not read "The Seven Hermetic Letters") but it pales in comparison with IHH.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS by Franz Bardon

This little book, first published by Dieter Ruggeberg in 1997, was put together by a group of Bardon's students sometime in the early 1950s, prior to the publication of Bardon's three books. What lies within these pages are the notes they took down of Bardon's oral teachings.

These notes were later edited by Dr. Kumar along with Silvia and Ulrich Ohm, and arranged under four section headings: concerning the mental plane, the astral plane, the physical plane, and the function of the akasha. The book is presented, as its title suggests, in a question-and-answer format, with a total of 185 entries.

While it doesn't contain any truly startling revelations or insights for one who has read Bardon's other books, it is nonetheless, of great value to the student. In Q&A some of the topics which Bardon speaks of in other places are amplified and explained in greater detail. Its greatest value, as Mr. Ruggeberg states in his forward, is as inspiration for the meditations of the student. For certainly there is ample stimulus for thought within Q&A's pages.

SOUVENIRS DE FRANZ BARDON

This little book has yet to be translated into English. Consequently, I have not read it and I know only a little about it. From what I understand, it contains reminiscences of Bardon recorded by those who knew him. It also contains a few pictures relative to Bardon's life. My hope is that someone will one day soon translate this book into English and publish it. If you share my sentiment in this regard, then please write to Merkur Publishing and let them know you'd like to see this come to pass.