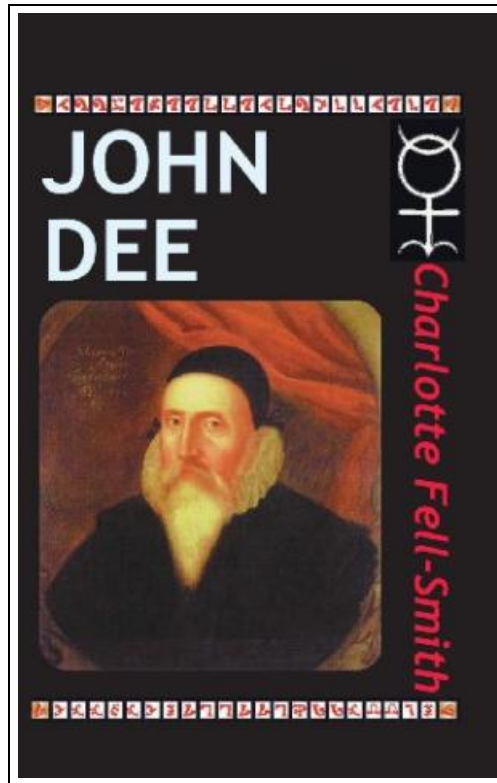


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John Dee straddled the worlds of science and magic just as they were becoming distinguishable. One of the most learned men of his age, he had been invited to lecture on advanced algebra at the University of Paris while still in his early twenties. Dee was an ardent promoter of mathematics and a respected astronomer, as well as a leading expert in navigation, having trained many of those who would conduct England's voyages of discovery. Simultaneously with these efforts, Dee immersed himself in the worlds of magic, astrology and Hermetic philosophy. He devoted much time and effort in the last thirty years or so of his life to attempting to commune with angels in order to learn the universal language of creation and bring about the pre-apocalyptic unity of mankind. A student of the Renaissance Neo-Platonism of Marsilio Ficino, Dee did not draw distinctions between his mathematical research and his investigations into Hermetic magic, angel summoning and divination. Instead he considered all of his activities to constitute different facets of the same quest: the search for a transcendent understanding of the divine forms which underlie the visible world, which Dee called pure verities. In his lifetime Dee amassed one of the largest libraries in England. His high status as a scholar also allowed him to play a role in Elizabethan politics. He served as an occasional adviser and tutor to Elizabeth I and nurtured relationships with her ministers Francis Walsingham and William Cecil. Dee also tutored and enjoyed patronage relationships with Sir Philip Sidney, his uncle Robert Dudley, 1st Earl of Leicester, and Edward Dyer. He also enjoyed patronage from Sir Christopher Hatton.

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