

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910786199103321
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Titolo	The true history of Merlin the magician [[electronic resource] /] / Anne Lawrence-Mathers
Pubbl/distr/stampa	New Haven, : Yale University Press, 2012
ISBN	1-283-65659-0 0-300-18929-X
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (275 p.)
Disciplina	809/.93351
Soggetti	Merlin (Legendary character) Arthurian romances - History and criticism
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Illustrations -- Introduction -- 1. The Discovery of Merlin -- 2. Writing the History of Merlin -- 3. The British Merlin -- 4. The Curious Career of Merlin the Astrologer -- 5. Merlin's Magic -- 6. A Demonic Heritage -- 7. Merlin in Europe -- 8. Love and Death -- Conclusion: The Measure of Merlin -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	Merlin the Magician has remained an enthralling and curious individual since he was first introduced in the twelfth century through the pages of Geoffrey of Monmouth's <i>Historia Regum Britanniae</i> . But although the Merlin of literature and Arthurian myth is well known, Merlin the historical figure and his relation to medieval magic are less familiar. In this book Anne Lawrence-Mathers explores just who he was, and what he has meant to Britain. The historical Merlin was no rough magician: he was a learned figure from the cutting edge of medieval science and adept in astrology, cosmology, prophecy and natural magic, as well as being a seer and a proto-alchemist. His powers were convincingly real and useful, for they helped to add credibility to the 'long-lost' history of Britain which first revealed them to a European public. Merlin's prophecies reassuringly foretold Britain's path, establishing an ancient ancestral line and linking biblical prophecy with more recent times. Merlin helped to put British history into world history. Lawrence-Mathers also explores the meaning of Merlin's magic across the

centuries, arguing that he embodied ancient Christian and pagan magical traditions, recreated for a medieval court and shaped to fit a new moral framework. Linking Merlin's reality and power with the culture of the Middle Ages, this remarkable book reveals the true impact of the most famous magician of all time.

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