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| Crowley, Aleister (1875-1947) |
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| Aleister Crowley was an occultist, writer, and mystic who founded the spiritual philosophy of Thelema. Crowley’s work combines European, South Asian, and Chinese esoteric teachings. His fictional, poetic, and spiritual writings celebrate free will. The popular press frequently referred to him as ‘the wickedest man on earth’. Crowley died in 1947, leaving behind a vast corpus of writing, multiple followers, and a growing store of legends.  Crowley was born Edward Alexander Crowley into a wealthy Quaker family in Warwickshire. After the death of his father, Crowley rejected formal education and his parents’ religion. After withdrawing from multiple public schools and working with tutors, Crowley entered Trinity College at Cambridge in 1895. At Cambridge he met Leonard Smithers, the publisher of some of Oscar Wilde’s late work. Smithers published Crowley’s first two books of poems. |
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| Further reading:  (Sutin)  (Symonds and Grant) |