

Agros Mortuorum

Description: Folio book, one hundred and twenty eight pages, bound in red calfskin. The listed publication date is 1889 AD, by Rose-Belford Publishers of Toronto, which fits the general appearance of the book. There is an eight page insert of black-and-white drawings of dubious taste, but excellent composition. The author is listed as 'Athanasius Clay,' which is almost certainly a pseudonym.

One peculiarity of the book is that, from an occultist point of view, the *Agros Mortuorum* hangs together very well as an internally self-consistent magical system. The text almost never contradicts itself, and almost entirely avoids metaphorical language or ambiguity. Which may be why almost no copies of the book still exist, because what the *Agros Mortuorum* clearly describes is how to use human body parts to create 'Perfect Vegetation.' In great, and indeed clinical, detail.

The *Agros Mortuorum* ("The Fields of the Dead"), despite its name, is written in English, and purports to be 'a Scientific Treatise on the Ways the Cast-Off Flesh may be Renewed by the Earth.' It reads like someone steeped in the health food crazes of the late 19th century had found a few books on alchemy and Theosophy, and decided to make a single, bizarre occult tradition out of it. There's

remarkably little in the way of self-justification or obscure ranting about equally-obscure rivals, either. Whoever this Athanasius Clay fellow was, he was remarkably uninterested in petty grudge fits for a presumed Victorian occultist.

All of this would be of mere and morbid academic interest except that -- the procedures in the *Agros Mortuorum* all *work*. They're not magic, they're not psionic, they're not even theurgical or demonological; it's like the procedures are working from an entirely different set of physical laws, where of *course* a reliable cataract cure can be made from carrots watered with vitreous, or that the utility of rendered-down fetuses is so widespread the problem is what project to use them on. More than one occultist has gone quietly crazy trying to figure out how to make the *Agros Mortuorum* fit into his esoteric worldview, only to be stymied. It can't be: it's just *there*, and it's absolutely inexplicable.

It should be noted that nothing in the *Agros Mortuorum* requires you to actually commit *murder*, which is the usual red flag for Books That Should Not Be. In fact, the book spells that out, on the first page: it even helpfully points out that murder is a sin*. It largely recommends that those wishing to use the procedures found in the book make the acquaintance of morticians, hospital orderlies, and

battlefield surgeons**. Lastly, it warns that over-use of the procedures found in the *Agros Mortuorum* can lead to ‘an unfortunate Detachment.’

That’s the part that worries people. The truth of it is, the procedures found in the *Agros Mortuorum* are grisly, even if you haven’t murdered anybody to get the raw materials. It’s the kind of grisly that can desensitize people to violence and gore, if they do it for too long -- and it’s a bad idea to desensitize occultists who can actually *do things*. Worse, many of the procedures assume a dearth of raw ingredients that are not, to put it tastefully, *rare* in our modern world. The Twentieth Century was called the ‘Abattoir Age’ in occult circles for a *reason*, and while the Twenty-first has been a *bit* better so far, it’s not been exactly a paragon Age of love and peace so far, either.

So, there may be people out there with their own copies of the *Agros Mortuorum*. They may be doing things that will have negative long-term consequences. We definitely have to find out if they are. Fortunately, we know what to look for: just see what procedures from the book would be most useful today, see what ingredients those procedures would require, and go look for a supply chain.

Yes, that means you will actually have to read the *Agros Mortuorum* yourself. We’re legitimately sorry about that.

*What it says about the very idea of murdering babies in the womb for mere agricultural purposes makes most modern readers profoundly uncomfortable.

**It also assures the reader that non-white body parts are perfectly fine for use, which somehow manages to come across as being both enlightened, *and* exceptionally racist.

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