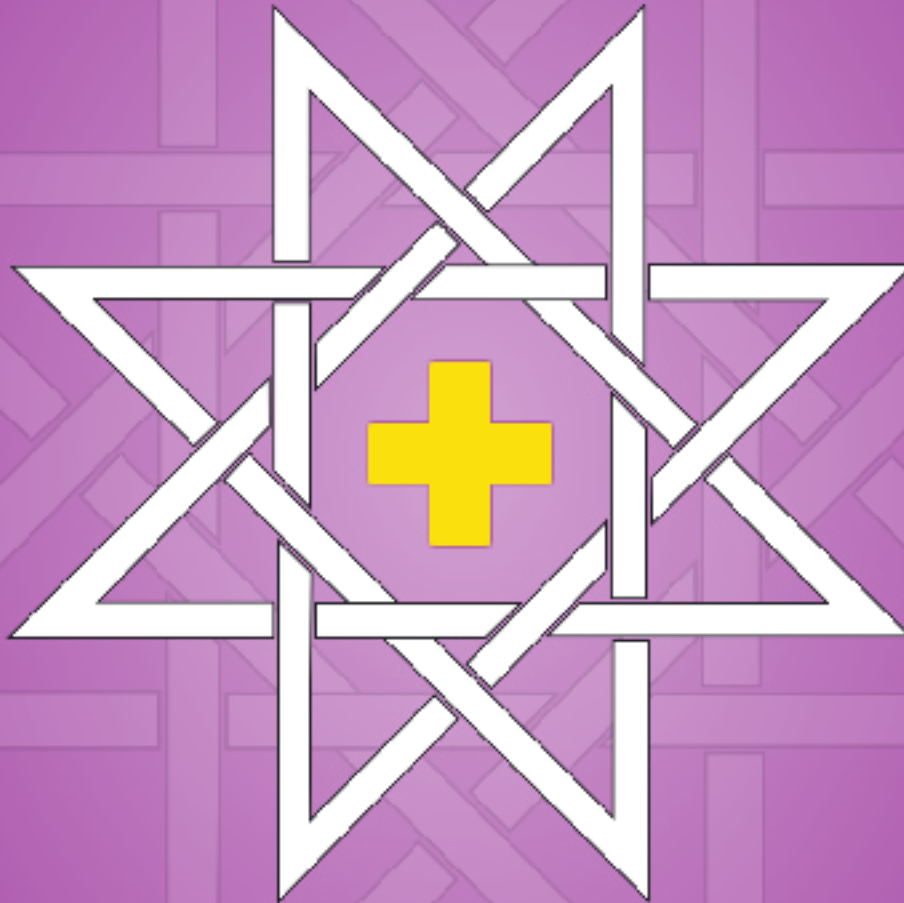


The Ogdoadic Journal

of the Western Mysteries

Vol. 1 No. 4:
*Historical Threads
of the Ogdoadic Tradition*



ORDO ASTRUM SOPHIÆ



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Edited by
DERIK RICHARDS & KERRY WISNER

TEMPUS CONSILII 2010

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THIS ISSUE OF THE OGDODIC JOURNAL
IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
COMES SEMPER IN ARBORE

*So Light and Life shall be drawn at last to the
radiance of one Star, and that Star shall mount to the
unshadowed height.*

*Κρατῆρα μέγαν πληρώσας τούτου κατέπεμψε,
δοὺς κήρυκα, καὶ ἐκέλευσεν αὐτῷ κηρύξαι ταῖς τῶν
ἀνθρώπων καρδίαις τάδε·
βάπτισον σεαυτὴν ἢ δυναμένη εἰς τοῦτον τὸν κρατῆρα,
ἢ πιστεύουσα ὅτι ἀνελεύση πρὸς τὸν καταπέμψαντα
τὸν κρατῆρα, ἢ γνωρίζουσα ἐπὶ τί γέγονας.
ὅσοι μὲν οὖν συνῆκαν τοῦ κηρύγματος καὶ ἐβαπτίσαντο τοῦ νοός,
οὗτοι μετέσχον τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τέλειοι ἐγένοντο ἄνθρωποι,
τὸν νοῦν δεξάμενοι·
ὅσοι δὲ ἤμαρτον τοῦ κηρύγματος, οὗτοι μὲν οἱ λογικοί,
τὸν νοῦν μὴ προσειληφότες,
ἀγνοοῦντες ἐπὶ τί γεγόνασιν καὶ ὑπὸ τίνων*

*He filled a great krater with Nous and sent it down,
and he appointed a herald to make this announcement
to the hearts of men:
'Plunge into this krater, if you can, having faith that you will rise
to him that sent down the bowl, realizing why you came into being.'
Those who heard the proclamation, merged with Nous,
partook of higher knowledge and became perfect and complete,
since they had received Nous.
Those who missed the proclamation had the Word,
but had not received Nous,
ignorant as they were as to why they were born, and from whom.*

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

On behalf of all companions of Astrum Sophia, the College of Thrones extends our sincere condolences to Companion Anja of the House of Mithras, wife of the late Comes *Semper in Arbore*. It is therefore most fitting, in light of the true dedication of our recently parted companion, that the College of Thrones, Ordo Astrum Sophiae, does hereby posthumously appoint Comes *Semper in Arbore* to the grade of Adeptus, *honoris causa*.

In the Light of the Glorious Star,

The College of Thrones
House of the Winged Serpent
Ordo Astrum Sophiae



INTRODUCTION

The Ogdoadic Journal of the Western Mysteries is a non-commercial publication of the Ordo Astrum Sophiae (OAS) committed to the ongoing research, teachings and advancement of the Ogdoadic Tradition. In pursuit of this goal it is a presentation of traditional and innovative hermetic literature. The *Journal*, and future publications, are vehicles of the OAS by Sun Lion Publications, advancing works intrinsic to the Ogdoadic Tradition's overall vitality and continuation.

The majority of the material herein is taken from the Order's internal journal, *The Messenger*, but relevant contributions to future editions are also welcomed from other authors.¹

ORDO ASTRUM SOPHIAE

The Ordo Astrum Sophiae is a premier initiatory order of the Ogdoadic Tradition of the Western Mysteries. As a custodian of the Ogdoadic Tradition the OAS is dedicated to the perpetuation and advancement of the lineage and mysteries of the tradition as handed down through the Aurum Solis by Melita Denning and Osborne Phillips.

Founded in 2002, the Astrum Sophia is a fully contacted, non-commercial initiatory Order dedicated to continuing and fostering the Ogdoadic Tradition of the Western Mysteries. The Order's mission is to provide a stable vehicle for the advancement of its members in an ambience of living Alchemy and an unwavering devotion to raise its initiates to true Adepthood within the regenerative mysteries of the Ogdoadic Tradition. The Order is also dedicated to the ideal of fraternal cooperation,

Ordo Astrum Sophiae derives its Charter of Succession and initiatory lineage from the Aurum Solis, Order of the Sacred Word, which was founded in London in 1897 by George Stanton (pictured right) and Charles Kingold. Though proud as the Order is of its Aurum Solis heritage, it must be emphasized that the Astrum Sophia does not in any way represent or claim to be the Aurum Solis. The Ordo Astrum Sophiae is simply the latest manifestation of that great tradition dedicated to the pursuit of Knowledge and Regeneration as well as the advancement of theoretical and practical studies within the greater Ogdoadic Tradition of the Western Mysteries. The O.A.S. is thus devoted, as both servants and guardians, to a living and radiant spiritual tradition that expresses itself through beauty, diversity, and resilience.



Membership and initiation in the Order, without exception, must proceed through the traditional grade structure. Inquiries to the Order should be submitted to the Administrator-General of the Astrum Sophia at astrum.sophia@gmail.com, or to the Master of a Commandery.

THE OGDOADIC TRADITION

The Ogdoadic Tradition is a magical current perpetuating the lineage and mysteries of the ancient Regenerative Tradition embodying the principle of "Eight." Essentially it is Hermetic, embracing the archetype of and literature attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. *The Hermetica* is the root source of inspiration and magic in the Ogdoadic Tra-

¹ Individuals interested in making submissions can contact astrum.sophia@gmail.com in care of Sun Lion Publications. Articles will be accepted at the discretion of the publication team and may be edited, with permission, to better fit the style or format of the journal.

dition. It is distinct from its Rosicrucian and Thelemic counterparts because of its unique symbolism, its initiatory structure, the emphasis on the number eight, and the principal of Regeneration.

To understand the Ogdoadic Tradition it is important to understand the various elements that contributed to its makeup, for it draws upon many traditions and historical influences including Egyptian magic, Greek philosophy, the Mystery religions, Gnosticism, Neo-Platonism, Alchemy, the Qabalah, and Hermetic literature.

The principal, archetypal symbols of the Ogdoadic Tradition appear in cultures throughout the world. One of the Tradition's main symbols is the House of Sacrifice. You need look no further than the Holy of Holies at Edfu (perhaps the oldest intact remnant of the House of Sacrifice) or the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome to see the ancient and unmistakable design of this House. You can also see the design in certain Mithraic artifacts: these clearly show three steps leading up to the House, wherein dwells a Mithraic youth holding the orb of sovereignty, the Sun. The triangular superstructure above contains symbols of power and initiation evidencing divine presence within the holy dwelling.

The Star of Regeneration, also a central symbol of our Tradition, has held a high place in art as disparate as Islam, the Greek Mediterranean, and Christian iconography. Likewise the Tessera, used in both the Astrum Sophia and the Aurum Solis as a symbol of the Great Work, graces numerous sites of antiquity, including the Orpheus pavement at Gloucestershire, England.



THE EMERALD TABLET

OF HERMES TRISMEGISTOS: THE WORK OF THE SUN

by William Stoltz, MA

The Emerald Tablet is one of the most profound of all texts attributed to Hermes Trismegistos. One legend reports that the text was originally carved with a diamond on a large piece of emerald by Hermes himself. This artifact was supposedly found by Alexander the Great cradled on the chest of Hermes in an Egyptian tomb.¹ If however, we look at more credible origins, the texts of the earliest recorded renditions include a Latin translation dating from the 11th century CE or earlier and an Arabic version dating before the 8th century CE. Despite its small size (depending on its subdivisions, this diminutive text totals only 12 brief statements) and its survival outside the more widely accepted corpus of Trismegistic literature, the Emerald Tablet's formulas, axioms and allegories are entirely compatible with the Alchemical and Hermetic threads within the Ogdoadic Tradition. It is also interesting, whether coincidental or not, that the first ten assertions of the text conceptually match the philosophical concepts of the ten Cabbalistic Sephiroth with remarkable similarity. The remaining two assertions from the Tablet appear to be descriptive notes and summaries about the author and the text, but not a natural progression of the text's philosophy and ideas.

Like other writings of this nature, interpretation can take place on several different levels simultaneously and carry a different set of interpretations depending on the system using it. My own commentary accompanying this text will therefore be limited to ideas along Hermetic and Qabalistic lines, with the inclusion of a few compatible notes from Eastern systems. My own limitations, particularly regarding alchemical symbolism and analysis, are readily overcome by individual meditation and exploration on each of the Tablet's assertions. Personal

reflection will also help bring the Tablet to life within the psyche of the student, as it is meant to.

1. In truth certainly and without doubt, whatever is below is like that which is above, and whatever is above is like that which is below, to accomplish the miracles of one thing.

The phrase "In truth certainly and without doubt" appears to address two levels of validity. While the word "certainly" seems an impersonal statement of fact, "without doubt" appears to address the doubting mind of the individual: the divine word, the Logos, expressed within the human psyche.

This first assertion also establishes the famous axiom "as it is above - so it is below," which is itself the foundational principle for the law of correspondences used frequently in meditation and magic; as illustrated in Aleister Crowley's 777 and Cornelius Agrippa's sets of correspondences. A Qabalistic equivalent to "as it is above - so it is below" is the adage "Kether is in Malkuth as Malkuth is in Kether." This assertion signifies an essential interrelationship of polarities within the process of Creation. The passage also philosophically resolves the implicit dualism that arises between the ideas of Spirit and Matter. Orthodox Gnostic, Islamic and Judeo-Christian religious traditions (often rooted in early Zoroastrianism) have made a pastime perpetuating distinctions of good versus evil between divinity and humanity, illumination and sex, light and darkness, and even man and woman.

Finally, "to accomplish the miracles of one thing" implies that the individual holds an innate capacity to engender the miraculous diversity of a magical universe. This is consistent with the idea that a trained magician, exercising the archetypal qualities of Hermes, is capable of creating variety out of his or her essential unity. This

¹ I doubt if Indiana Jones would go for this one. I prefer the metaphor suggesting: "The truth and mysteries of Spirit (the text) are written upon the face of nature (Emerald Tablet) by the mind of God (the diamond)."



The original edition of the Emerald Tablet in Polydorus' *De Alchemia*, 1541.

capacity is represented by the magician's gesture and symbols on the Tarot Trump the Magician, suggesting the power to manifest the diverse archetypal ideas of the elements: as seen by his stance and the arrangement of the elements on the altar (the creative process acting upon one's field of consciousness). Additionally, The Magician (Key 1) considered in concert with the preceding Tarot Trump The Fool (Key 0), gives rise to the creation formula: "Nothing – Did!"

2. Just as all things proceed from One alone by meditation on One alone, so also they are born from this one thing by adaptation.

This passage is a logical progression of the first one. The wording suggests that the unification of one's fragmented field of experience is achieved by "meditation on One alone": that is on unity. Here the term meditation appears as both a personal and a cosmic process. On the cosmic scale, the divine macrocosm has created "all things" through self reflection: according to Genesis the Primordial Spirit reflected on the face of the Deep and was broken up. This is congruent with the first expression of Kether, which resulted in Chokmah – the Logos, the Word and Mazloth, the starry heavens. On a personal scale, deep meditation produces a death of self (the Solve of "Solve et Coagula") followed by a rebirth of self (the Coagula),

affirming the Alchemical formula of Regeneration.²

The formula of regeneration is further reinforced in the last part of this passage: "so also are they born from this One thing by adaptation." Clearly, this phrase is not speaking of common birth but a transformation of the self requiring time, conscious selection and combination. The author(s) of the Emerald Tablet appear to have been keen observers of the creative process of adaptation and diversity within nature. Thus adaptation and learning appear to evolve from the deepest level of our creative selves and inherent alchemical processes.

3. Its father is the sun and its mother is the moon. The wind has borne it in its body. Its nurse is the earth.

This passage is more complex than it would first seem. "Its" refers to the Philosopher's Stone³, the agent and power of the resurrected psyche transmitted through the principle of alchemical Mercury. The "father-sun" is the archetypal Animus and the "mother-moon" the archetypal Anima, who together produce Puer Aeternus, the eternal magical child, the Great Hermetic Androgyne which is endowed with the full powers of the Solar Spirit.⁴ This is perfectly in line with the concept of a Philosophical Stone, whose very name suggests the ethereal (Philosophical) principle and manifest solid (Stone) operating together. "The wind" is the divine breath or Pneuma, the universal Ether that animates the soul.

"Its nurse is the earth" can be interpreted as the creative and un-manifest tendency to shroud itself in matter for the sake of its own self-expression and pleasure: thus engendering the Hidden Stone. As individuals we must already have the Stone, latent within, before we can manifest its presence in the world. This principle is also reflected in the formula *Visita Interiora Terrae Rectificando Invenies Occultum Lapidem*, which translates as "Visit the interior parts of the earth – by rectification thou will find the hidden stone."

This third passage also reflects Binah, the 3rd Sephirah in the process of emanation. Binah is the first Sephiroth to express the Divine Feminine, which carries the potential for manifesting form expressed in Chesed, the 4th Sephiroth.

² The Tarot Trump aligned with the alchemical formula of regeneration is The Devil, who is Pan or All. Its Path is attributed to the letter Ayin and "The Regenerative or Renewing Intelligence" from the Sepher Yetzirah.

³ See Titus Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, Penguin Books, 1971.

⁴ Compare with "The Constellation of the Worshipped," Book 3 of *The Magical Philosophy*.

4. It is the father of every miraculous work in the whole world.

The use of the term “father” here indicates a specific archetypal gender or function – the animating force of the Word or Logos as all things produced in accordance with Divine Will. When the potential of Binah is expressed to the power of four in Chesed, it becomes manifestation: in other words, time and space interacting in accord with the process of manifest creation.⁵

This passage also suggests a complete alignment of the force of Will on the three levels of the soul: (1) Spirit or the Neshamah (air or mercury); (2) Soul or Ruach (alchemical sulphur or fire expressed as the Ruach Elohim); and (3) Body or Nephesh (salt or earth). This arrangement is mirrored in the sentence beginning with the transcendental and singular “It” and ending with the manifest and diversified unity “whole world.”

5. Its power is perfect if it is converted into earth.

The 5th passage begins with “Its Power”; *Power* is also a title for Geburah, the 5th Sephirothic emanation.

The Divine is not complete (perfect and whole) without its physical counterpart. So it would seem that the volatile power of alchemical mercury on matter expresses perfection when “converted into earth.” This suggests a certain underlying perfection in nature (the world), but one that is not complete until it is realized through the Great Work: as Being perceives Itself in what is becoming, that becoming becomes Being.

This section of the Emerald Tablet also gives a formula for the proper construction and charging of a Talisman (or in the procedure for Initiation), wherein the Alchemist must fix the volatile in order to direct control over the work.

6. Separate the earth from the fire and the subtle from the gross, softly and with great prudence.

The formula encapsulated in the 5th passage is also unlocked by the Alchemical formula “Solve et Coagula.” This formula is performed through the conscious work

and meditation of separating the soul from the body. Esoteric schools have always regarded foundation practices of meditation and developing the Light Body as essential to the Great Work; this is because they enhance the magician’s ability to consciously effect (or control) the subtle and coarse vehicles. It also touches on one of the mysteries from the vision of Zosimos used in the Third Hall initiation of the Ogdoadic Tradition. This vision⁶ warns of the narrow path leading to the Sphere of the Sun and gives the ritual means of traversing it. The would-be adept is directed to separate “the flesh from the bone” – in other words, to undergo a deep and conscious analysis of one’s life and ego. This process helps the psyche unlearn the limitations of the ego (Ruach) and body of passion (Nephesh) so it can rejoin, with greater ease, its eternal nature. The second part of this assertion, “softly and with great prudence” is important because the process requires sensitivity and patience to prevent injury or shock to the psyche of the alchemist. It makes no sense to rescue someone if you kill them in the process. The need for gentle and careful pacing is emphasized in alchemical instructions by the slow and prolonged use of alchemical heat.

7. It rises from earth to heaven and comes down again from heaven to earth, and thus acquires the power of the realities above and the realities below. In this way you will acquire the glory of the whole world, and all darkness will leave you.

This discourse describes the two currents of Mercury’s force: animating and integrating, the lightning flash and the serpent, the twin modes of the Knouphis Agathodaimon, and the solar and lunar forces. In the grade work of the Astrum Sophia the ophiomorphic and anthropomorphic powers of the Agathodaimon are cultivated and utilized in very specific and methodical ways to achieve the Divine Alchemy. Once you have harnessed the interplay of these two energies, you will “acquire the glory of the whole world.” In the Eastern

⁶ “Notice on what side the entry to the temple is and take your sword in hand and seek the entry. For thin-mouthed is the place where the opening is and a serpent lies by it guarding the temple. First seize him in your hands and make a sacrifice of him. And having skinned him, cut his flesh from his bones, divide him, member from member, and having brought together again the members and the bones, make them a stepping stone at the entry to the temple and mount upon them and go in, and there you will find what you seek. For the priest whom you see seated in the stream gathering his color, is not a man of copper. For he has changed the color of his nature, and become a man of silver whom, if you wish, after a little time, you will have as a man of gold.”

⁵ We have moved from the Big Bang (Nothing – Did) to the manifestation of the time-space continuum: below the Abyss, space and time express themselves in the natures of Chesed and Geburah respectively.

alchemical traditions,⁷ the control and fusion of these two currents result in the removal of ignorance and other obscurations, followed by the dawning and stabilizing of what is called the Clear Light: thus “all darkness will leave you.” As well, through the initiatory grade system of the Astrum Sophia, the Regeneration is accomplished.

8. This is the power of all powers, for it conquers everything subtle and penetrates everything solid.

The “power of all powers” refers to the presence underlying the twin powers of Hermes, for the solid and the volatile are conquered by the still clear consciousness characteristic in the Mind of Hermes: the Lapis Philosophorum. In the Sepher Yetzirah, the 12th Path of Wisdom – also ruled by Mercury – is called the Transparent Intelligence. This again is associated with Key 1 of the Tarot (The Magician) and represents a presence mediating between the principles of Kether and Malkuth. Additionally the planet Mercury, the Ogdoad and Hermes are all associated with the 8th Sephirah Hod (*Splendor*).

9. Thus the little world is created according to the prototype of the great world.

The “little world” is transmuted by the power of the Philosopher’s Stone and becomes the “prototype of the great world.” This is consistent with the regeneration and resurrection of Osiris (another ancient form of the Agathodaimon) and the fulfillment of the Gnosis whereby Divine Knowledge and Understanding close the abyss between the eternal and temporal worlds. This process is clarified by the phrase “created according to the prototype,” or the essential design of the Qabalistic Macroprosopus (yet another Agathodaimon). An example of the completion of the Great Work on the Tree of Life shows the restoration of Da’ath (the shadow Sephirah) and the elevation of Malkuth into Yesod, thereby forming a completely symmetrical glyph. Symbolically the true nature of matter (Malkuth) is understood (Binah) as the image (Yesod) of the Divine, thereby liberating the Ruach and Nephesh from the land of the dead: in other words restoring the exiled Shekinah to her rightful home: “and the white rose shall be united with the red rose to bring forth the gold of the sun.”

10. From this and in this way marvelous applications are made.

Following the restoration of the self by methods already established, “marvelous applications are made.” This is the point where real theurgy begins for the adept, who at this stage, would have knowledge and skill to transmute his or her universe in accordance with the Holy Guardian Angel (True Will). As an aside, the active imagination is essential to the creation and transformation of image: control image and you control the astral light and its resulting structures.

11. For this reason I am called Hermes Trismegistos, for I possess the three parts of wisdom of the whole world.

The Magus Hermes “possess the three parts of the wisdom,” which are the mysteries of body, soul and spirit and their alchemical equivalents Salt, Sulphur and Mercury. The three parts of wisdom may also refer to the threefold nature of Alchemical Fire: Terrestrial, Astral and Celestial.

12. Perfect is what I have said of the work of the sun.

The text again reveals itself as a manual for the Great Work or the “work of the sun.” This Alchemy is made possible through the agent of the principle archetype of Mercury, the Spirit Mercurius: the archetypal force that takes part in everything, and in everyone, as a personal and cosmic presence now known as the Divine Mind – Hermes.



⁷ In Tibetan Buddhism these teachings are presented in the six Yogas of Naropa. In Taoist Inner Alchemy they can be found in the Lesser and Greater Enlightenment of Kan and Li.

SPLENDOR SOLIS

ITS POSSIBLE INFLUENCE ON THE OGDODADIC SYSTEM, PART 1

by Kerry Wisner

There exists an important medieval alchemical work that appears to have been all but ignored by most contemporary occultists. While some of the more well read magicians may be aware of this work, it would appear that the majority have seldom bothered to consider its significance in any great detail¹. *Splendor Solis* is at once both a text and a series of twenty-two exquisite paintings that first appeared in Europe late in the 16th century. Together these show in highly symbolic form the process of alchemical transformation. Both the text and the paintings were attributed to the alchemist Solomon Trismosin. Significantly, he claimed to have received much of his knowledge for the creation of this work during travels in Italy. There he worked with various teachers and alchemists, studied Qabalistic and magical books, and in the text to *Splendor Solis* he claimed to have translated a number of works that he stated revealed “the treasure of the Egyptians” (Sharpe, p.87). In this paper (spread out over a series of four articles) I would like to look deeper into this important alchemical work for possible links to the Ogdoadic Tradition. It is my suspicion that this forgotten text, along with the paintings, contains elements of esoteric wisdom that reach back to the earliest foundations of the Western Mystery Tradition. Further, I would like to present the possibility that this work may have acted as a source of reference and inspiration, carrying the ancient wisdom forward through the Ogdoadic system and into the contemporary practices of our order.

Apparently there were several versions of the paintings in existence in Europe during the late 16th century. However, one of the most detailed and beautiful of these, and the one which I will be referring to

throughout this paper, can be found in the British Library (London, Harley MS 3469). No matter the source of Solomon Trismosin’s knowledge, the paintings – together with the text – describe the “Royal Art” or alchemical process by which one’s inner self is transformed from the lead of earthly life to the gold of spiritual awareness. That Trismosin had intended this to be an inner spiritual process and not the actual physical act of changing lead into gold is alluded to in the following lines from the text:

*Study what thou art,
Whereof thou art a part,
What thou knowest of this art,
This is really what thou art.
All that is without thee,
Also is within,
Thus wrote Trismosin. (Sharpe, p.88)*

While not the best piece of poetry, this does show that for Trismosin, the art of alchemy was largely an internal process and that each of us is part of the greater vastness of the All.

It was the work of Egyptologist Alison Roberts that first drew my attention to *Splendor Solis*. In her compelling book *My Heart, My Mother: Death and Rebirth in Ancient Egypt*, Dr. Roberts presented interesting parallels between this alchemical work and certain Ancient Egyptian esoteric teachings. Equally compelling for me though was the rich symbolism contained in each painting, and the way that each led sequentially through the process of regeneration. In considering the age of the paintings and text, as well as the rich symbolism they contain, I could not help but begin to see elements of this work that seemed to be carried over into the Ogdoadic

¹ Stephen Skinner does present a short examination of this work in his book *The Complete Magician’s Tables* (Skinner, p. 78-79.). Also James Wasserman shows all twenty-two paintings in his book *The Mystery Traditions: Secret Symbols and Sacred Art* (Wasserman, p. 108-113).



tradition as I have come to know it². Whether this was an intentional influence sought out by the founders of the Aurum Solis ritual system, or a parallel that developed because the Ogdoadic Tradition uses many of the same alchemical symbols and teachings, I can't say with certainty. That the contemporary ritual system of Aurum Solis and Ordo Astrum Sophiae has tapped into the same spiritual current which underscores *Splendor Solis* seems likely to me. In this series of articles I want to explore some of the symbolism that has led me to this conclusion, as well as look at some of the hidden meaning contained in the *Splendor Solis*.

In her work *My Heart, My Mother*, Dr. Roberts explains that *Splendor Solis* contains symbolism from many different esoteric traditions, not the least of which can be seen in the twenty-two paintings and their correspondence to the Hebrew alphabet. However, Dr. Roberts goes on to explain that the overall pattern of the

paintings and text parallels the Egyptian journey of Ra on his nightly voyage of transformation through the body of the Goddess Nut, leading to his rebirth (Roberts, p. 202-216). Her work shows a distinct pattern within the *Splendor Solis* composition. This pattern includes an introduction to the Great Work which she equates to Ra's entrance to the underworld and the Goddess Nut. This introduction is seen as a point of renewal and the beginning of transformation. This is followed by the period of regeneration. Dr. Roberts divides this period into two phases which I will elaborate on further in this series. Lastly comes the alchemical process of rebirth. A similar pattern is explored by Adam McLean as he examines the *Splendor Solis* paintings (Wasserman, p.108).

As I first looked through the paintings and texts I was struck by the overall pattern. It seemed to me that processes contained in *Splendor Solis* may be reflected to some degree in the initiation rituals of the Aurum Solis and Ordo Astrum Sophiae. I will be exploring these parallels as this series proceeds. To this end, this paper begins with a detailed look at each of the paintings and corresponding texts, in the sequential order in which the alchemist created them.

Looking at the first painting (shown on the next page), the text from *Splendor Solis* begins by placing emphasis on the two men leaving a landscape and approaching the entrance of the building in which the art of alchemy will be performed. The text explains that one man is dressed in black with a sword or staff in hand, while the other is dressed in red with blue stockings. These two men represent the magician/chemist preparing to enter upon the path of the "Great Work." In alchemical terms the man in black represents Body and Salt - thus the outward manifestation of the work and first step on the House of Sacrifice in the Ogdoadic tradition. The man in red represents Soul, Sulphur³ and the second step on the House of Sacrifice. His blue stockings show an inner spiritual nature in his quest. Lapis blue is a colour associated with the divine and celestial realms from Ancient Egyptian times to the present.

It is obvious that the landscape represents the outer mundane world being left behind as the two prepare to enter upon a spiritual quest. The entrance of

² My knowledge of the Ogdoadic tradition is strongly influenced by the writings of Melita Denning and Osborne Phillips, thus the public teachings of the Aurum Solis, as well as the inner teachings of the Ordo Astrum Sophiae.

³ In preparing this article I have adopted the symbolism discussed in Julius Evola's examination of alchemy, *The Hermetic Tradition: Symbols & Teachings of the Royal Art* (1971, 1995). In this he equates Sulphur with the color red and the concept of soul. It needs to be noted that some alchemical works equate Sulphur with the color red, but also with the concept of spirit rather than soul (see James Wasserman's *The Mystery Traditions*, 1993, 2005).

the place of work begins with a raised floor consisting of four rows of seven square tiles each. This may relate to several themes; the seven planetary energies expressed in the four worlds of the Qabalah, as well as the overall total number of twenty-eight squares with the lunar theme of one complete cycle of this orb (twenty-eight days in the average lunar month). The lunar influence is a reference to entering the work through Yesod, the portal to, and home of, the astral. The number seven also holds significance in the Ogdoadic and Greek mysteries, as the seven Greek vowels correspond to the seven planets and the equivalent cosmological influences used in these systems.

Beyond the tiled floor the ground is shown as green with a path leading to three flat steps. The colour green represents fertility, growth and a sense of new beginnings as the person in body (man in black) and soul (man in red and blue) starts out upon this spiritual quest. The three steps in the painting are reminiscent of the steps of the House of Sacrifice. It may be significant that the men are dressed in the colours of the first two steps of the Ogdoadic House of Sacrifice. But what of the third step? The Ogdoadic system depicts the third step as white, represented alchemically as Mercury, a symbol of spirit. The third step is seen as the culmination of the efforts of Salt and Sulphur combining with Mercury to form the Philosopher's Stone. This is an analogy of the Great Work itself causing the transformation of the consciousness of the Adept. In the painting we see that the third step is surmounted by an impressive crest containing solar and lunar symbolism, both set on a backdrop of lapis blue and gold.

The crest itself is composed of four distinct parts. The uppermost part is a depiction of the Sun radiating twenty-four pointed shafts of gold light, alternating with twenty-four wavy shafts. Many of these wavy shafts appear to terminate with a 'head,' giving them the distinct impression of being serpentine in form. The number twenty-four relates to the hours of the day, as well as the twelve signs of the zodiac doubled. The lowest point of each tapered golden shaft points to the centre of a series of three crescent moons resting one upon the other pointing upward. They give the impression of a silver chalice receiving the light from the spiritual Sun.

The crescents rest upon a gold crown that sits upon a mantle of lapis blue cloth studded with gold stars. This, in turn, sits atop a black armoured helmet. One is immediately reminded of the Latin motto found at the top of the painting, "ARMA ARTIS," which can be translated loosely as "the Arms of the Art." Thus the theme of the painting is one of obtaining and being armed

with the knowledge to go forward with the Royal Art.

The lowest portion of the crest is a shield with a gold sun set against a lapis background, at a forty-five degree angle. It has fifteen wide, curved shafts, and fifteen faint thin curved shafts of sunlight extending out. Further, the direction in which they are pointing gives the impression that the Sun is moving in a widdershins or counter-clockwise direction. The number fifteen is often a number associated with materialism and a sense of being trapped in the illusion of the temporal.

Forming the "face" of this lower Sun are three smaller faces. In his sixteenth century text, Salomon Trismosin makes a point of emphasizing the "three faces shewn on the One" (Sharpe, p. 42). The face representing the left eye is frowning, the face representing the right eye is smiling. Salomon Trismosin stresses that the faces that make up the eyes "seem as if suffused with tears." In Ancient Egyptian mythology one of the ways in which the creator God is said to have formed humanity was through his tears. It is interesting to note as well that in Egyptian symbolism the left eye of Ra was seen as the protective and savage embodiment of the vicious Goddess Sekhmet, while the right eye was seen as representing all that is good and healthy, the very embodiment of Horus. Both are strong solar symbols showing two different yet complementary aspects of the same force.

The face representing the mouth is smiling. As Salomon Trismosin explains in his text, this face appears "as if the tongue was slightly protruding and parched, the face blotched or mottled as from smallpox, or impure living." All of the symbolism of this lower Sun, with its three faces making the one, suggests a representation of the temporal world with its joys, sorrows and imperfections.

When taken as a whole I feel that the crest shows a representation of the four worlds of the Hermetic Qabalah:

- **Atziluth, Yod and Fire** - The upper Spiritual Sun with its complete cycle of forty-eight alternating tapered and serpentine gold rays.
- **Briah, Heh and Water** - The receptive feminine three silver crescent Moons pointing upward as a chalice, with the three crescents reminding one of the three phases of the divine feminine.
- **Yetzirah, Vau and Air** - The helmet and lapis mantle suggesting the astral realm, the helmet representing the "Armor of Knowledge," the "Arms of the Art," for it is here on the astral that through the use of focused creative imagination (magic) changes can first take place.

- **Assiah, Heh and Earth** - The lower sun, while set with the spiritual colors of gold and lapis blue, has an interesting feature; it has a total of thirty rays extending counter-clockwise out. Thirty is the number of days in the month of the secular/administrative calendar of the Ancient Egyptians. This calendar was strictly for accounting purposes and was devoid of spiritual significance. In contrast, the lunar calendar with its 28 days, which ran concurrently with the administrative one, was the esoteric and spiritual calendar by which virtually all sacred dates (except the rising of the star Sirius) were calculated. Thus this lower Sun represents the material realm. Finally within this Sun we see three faces making this one face. The impression given is of “many that came from one.”

In looking to the border of the painting, twenty-eight flowers of various varieties are shown in different stages from budding, to full bloom, to some drooping ready to go to seed. Once again we see the number of the lunar month present. The various stages of the flowers show the themes of waxing, full and waning moon; the three phases of the Divine Feminine. This is further reinforced by the presence of the two monkeys and the two cranes. Both of these creatures have clear links to the Ancient Egyptian God Thoth (Egyptian spelling: Djehuty). Thoth was frequently depicted as both an Ibis, and as a Baboon. For the Egyptians Thoth was seen as embodied in the Moon.

Of further significance is the fact that the cranes in the border are exceptionally similar in form to the Benu, the Ancient Egyptian Phoenix. The Benu was the primeval bird sacred to Ra. It was seen as a representation of regeneration, new life, the heart of Ra. Egyptologist Dr. George Hart explains that the Benu was described as “the one who came into being by himself” (Hart, p. 57). Greek historian Herodotus in the fifth century B.C.E. appears to have been the first to call the Benu the Phoenix.

In considering all of the elements contained in this first painting it is clear that the intent is to display the themes of transformation, renewal and spiritual awakening. There is a sense of preparation for the spiritual quest, equipped with the knowledge of the Body (Salt and the man in black) and Soul (Sulphur and the man in red). The quest itself is for nothing less than the Philosopher’s Stone: the transformation of the aspirant, reaching for the spiritual gold of the Sun shining so brilliantly atop the sacred crest that rests on the third step of the House of Sacrifice.

In the second painting we see that the alchemist is dressed in red and purple. These two colors merge into



each other on the prismatic scale. Red is the color of fiery passion and desire, often physical desire. Purple on the other hand is a color frequently ascribed to royalty. In purple we see the passion found in the color red; however, here it is transmuted into spiritual desire. When used in practical magic, both colors hold the same explosive energies yet on different levels. Thus we see within this image the idea of deep sexual energy that is drawn upon in the process of transmutation and renewal. The physical body that was portrayed in the first painting as the man in black is nowhere to be seen here. Rather, the alchemist has draped himself in the astral energies of Yesod (purple/violet) coupled with the energy of the Soul, Sulphur and fire (red). Thus, the work of alchemical transformation is begun through the recognition and use of the astral body, the energies collectively bound up within the Nephesh.

This is further illustrated when looking to the hand gestures employed. With his right forefinger the alchemist points to a flask that rests in his left hand. The ritual act of pointing has long been seen as a means of projecting energy. In Ancient Egyptian magical practices this was a protective gesture used to seal a room or an area and to protect animals and people (Wilkinson, p. 194).



The right hand is active in magical practice, while the left is considered passive and receptive. The flask, in the left, receptive hand, is clear and yet as Solomon Trismosin explains in the text this is also luminous. Within the flask can be seen a gold liquid - the elixir of life. This is the solar energy - the golden essence of the self. In Ancient Egyptian esoteric practices, gold, both the color and the mineral, were held to be highly spiritual (Wilkinson, p. 83, 108). Clearly with this second painting the process of spiritual change is shown as beginning with the recognition, control and projection of the desire nature that is found within the astral self. The ribbon attached to the flask reinforces the idea that the journey and process of change has begun. The Latin text inscribed on the ribbon reads, "Eamus Quesitum Quatuor Elementorum Naturas." This can roughly be translated as, "We are seeking the nature of the four elements." Once again the theme of drawing the natural elements of the alchemist together, found within the Nephesh, comes through in this simple Latin text.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that, within the First Hall grade work of the Ogdoadic system as taught by the Ordo Astrum Sophiae, the initiate is introduced to the Nephesh and taught how to form a partnership with it in an effort to project its material successfully. Just as the alchemist, draped in the astral colors of desire and passion, projects his golden essence into the flask, so do initiates project their Nephesh into a concentrated form¹.

The border itself presents some powerful symbols that shed further light on the deeper meaning of this second painting. Repeated images related directly to the Moon fill the border. Yet these are not overt depictions of this orb. Rather, they are esoteric symbols that only those with knowledge would recognize. Like the first painting, in this border twenty-eight flowers are depicted, as are

twenty-eight berries (twenty-eight being the number of days within the average lunar month). Two deer are shown; a doe and a stag. Both are strong lunar images. The stag's antlers have seven points on each, for a total of fourteen - the number of days from the new to the full moon. His image is reminiscent of the ancient Celtic depictions of the Lunar God Cernunnos. A quick glance at the famous Gundestrup Cauldron above bears this out.

Deer, both doe and stag, were also symbols of the Roman Lunar Goddess Diana. It is highly likely that the artist figured these into this painting to draw in the wild and natural essence expressed through the Moon. A further symbol related to the Moon is the peacock. For the Romans this bird was symbolic of the Goddess Juno, the Mother of the Gods. On the tail of the peacock can be seen eighteen spots. Coincidentally this is the number of the Tarot card of the Moon in the Major Arcana². Whether by design, or simply because the painting was attuned to the inherent symbolism of the energies of the Moon, the entire illustration suggests an overall lunar quality. But for what purpose? While the esoteric symbolism relating this second image to the Moon is clear, there are no overt depictions of the Moon in the painting. Rather, there is the sense of the nurturing elements of nature coming together for the magician, for the alchemist in the painting.

The sense of seeking, questing and hunting come through in vivid forms: the representations of the stag as Cernunnos, Herne the Hunter, Faunus, and the doe as the Great Lunar Goddess Diana, the Huntress. The alchemist himself supports a ribbon that calls for searching the many elements of nature. Again, it would seem clear from this painting that the beginning steps in the process

² The Tarot was in existence before the appearance of *Splendor Solis*. It may be significant to note that the Italian Visconti Tarot dates to around 1450. As noted earlier, Solomon Trismosin had traveled extensively through Italy. It is possible that these older forms of Tarot were an influence on his creation of the *Splendor Solis* paintings.

¹ See the "Formula of the Magician" outlined in Book V of *The Magical Philosophy* by Melita Denning and Osborne Phillips.

of spiritual transformation occur as a gathering of the natural elements of the astral, the desire nature of the alchemist's own Nephesh, channeled through Yesod.

Of further consideration to this examination is the arrangement of the 'berries' in the painting. As noted there are twenty-eight depicted in total. Close examination reveals that ten are found at the top of the drawing, divided into a grouping of seven and three. This is remarkably similar to the Qabalah with its seven lower spheres and the three Supernals separated by the 'Abyss'. In the lower section of the border another eighteen berries are found. One grouping of eleven berries is seen, followed by a second grouping of seven. This equals a total of eighteen, which, as shown is highly symbolic of the Moon.

I would argue that the seven berries represent the seven classic planets. For the Ancient Egyptians, the number seven was seen as a number of perfection and magic (Wilkinson, p. 135-136). A number of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses were thought to have seven Ba's or 'souls' each, including the great solar creator deities Ra and Hathor. The grouping of the eleven berries almost certainly represents the supernal Saturn - Binah, the Great Mother. In the Ogdoadic classic *Mysteria Magica*, Denning and Phillips present the Kamea of the supernal Saturn which totals to sixty-five. This number, in turn, breaks down to eleven ($6 + 5 = 11$).

Lastly I would like to mention that the border also contains twelve animals; eight birds, two deer, and two insects. The number twelve corresponds to the number of signs in the zodiac. I have already discussed the symbolism surrounding the deer and the peacock. On the left side of the border there is a butterfly. Butterflies have long been considered symbols of the transformation of the spirit because of the caterpillar's ability to transform into this incredible creature. On the right side of the border a fly is shown. In Egyptian symbolism the fly was a symbol of bravery and persistence. Both are qualities needed to follow the alchemical work of the transformation of the Spiritual Self.

While the first painting was a representation of the preparation for the Great Work through the arming of the self with knowledge, this second painting shows that the process, once begun occurs through the recognition, gathering and controlling of the natural elements of the desire self. Through the astral forces of the self, the desire nature of the Nephesh, the magician begins to channel the inner nature, projecting this into a viable form. This, in turn, opens the door for possible spiritual transformation. Yet this only occurs through the recognition of the self

in relation to the elements and forces of nature, and ultimately all of the Universe.

In the third painting we find a knight wearing a suit of silver armor ornamented with gold. Around his helmet can be seen a crown of gold with six points visible. In the air seven hexagrams encircle his head. Three of these are gold, and three are silver. Upon close examination it can be seen that the hexagram directly above the peak of his helmet has a golden center, while each of the six points are silver.

The symbolism employed in the armor is of both solar and lunar energies. These are combined as silver and gold in a harmonious blend clothing the knight. The hexagrams above his head immediately bring to mind the ancient Hermetic teachings regarding the macrocosm and the microcosm with the knight standing at the midpoint between the temporal and divine realms.

It may be significant to note that the seven hexagrams equal forty-two points in total for the stars (7



x 6 = 42). This number is repeated when examining the number of flowers depicted in the border surrounding the painting. The number forty-two holds immense significance in Ancient Egyptian esoteric teachings. It was said that Thoth, and in the later periods Hermes Trismegistus, wrote the forty-two sacred books that the late period priesthood needed to know. These included texts regarding Astrology, magic, medicine, religious hymns and chants, and much more. There were forty-two nomes, or provinces in Egypt. And in some versions of the myth, Osiris' body was cut into forty-two parts. Eminent Egyptologist Dr. Jann Assmann explains the significance of this number:

"The 42 nomes are symbols of the Whole, formulae for all that is. The canon, as the realization of such cosmic formulae, represents the universe in book form. The canon of the 42 books reflects the idea of Egypt with its 42 nomes in the same way as the 'canopic procession' of the 42 nomes in the ritual of Re-membering Osiris." (Assmann, p. 413)

The ritual that Dr. Assmann is referring to is none other than the mysteries of Isis and Osiris in which the various parts of Osiris' body are found and reassembled. Through this ritual Osiris is brought back to life. He was never really dead. Rather, through this act Osiris was transformed, spiritualized and renewed and thus became the very essence of regeneration. Once renewed through the power of the Great Goddess Isis, he was able to copulate with her so that the divine could become manifest in the temporal world through the falcon God Heru, Horus. These are themes that are repeated elsewhere in the Splendor Solis paintings.

As further evidence of the importance of the number forty-two, it may be significant to recall that, during the passage of the soul through the Egyptian underworld, the person is confronted by forty-two assessor Gods, who assist Osiris in his judgment of the deceased. It was only after their approval was given that the individual could go on.

In his classic work *The Mind of Egypt*, Dr. Assmann explains that he feels that the number forty-two was at least as sacred to the Egyptians as the number twenty-two was to the Hebrews, to whom the number twenty-two, depicted in the formula of their alphabet,

was a representation of the path to the divine¹. Yet, it is interesting that in the Hebrew tradition the number forty-two also holds esoteric importance. In the Zohar one of the names of God is composed of forty-two letters. This may be significant as we know that the people who came to form the Hebrew culture had contact with Ancient Egypt².

This painting's strong association with the number forty-two suggests at once the themes of divine knowledge (the forty-two books of Thoth), regeneration, renewal, and transformation (through the overwhelming symbolism associated with the great God Osiris). Because of the symbolism related to Osiris the sensual, reviving, creative essence of the Goddess Isis is implied. Their union, Osiris (a form of Melanotheos in the Ogdoadic Tradition) and Isis (a form of Leukothea in the Ogdoadic Tradition), allowed the divine to manifest as the Great Falcon (perhaps a forerunner to the late period winged serpent Agathodaimon who is of great importance in the Ogdoadic Tradition).³

In this third painting of the Splendor Solis series, the breast plate of the knight is particularly interesting. It consists of five bands of color running vertically to his waist. In order from left to right, these are black, white, gold, red and black. As we have seen elsewhere, in alchemy black represents the body, salt and the temporal plane. Further black is a color strongly associated with the planet Saturn. Saturn can be very mundane in nature, representing the materialistic nature. Yet when transformed it represents the divine at the highest level that humans can comprehend - the divine manifest through the Great Goddess. In the Ogdoadic initiatory system black represents the first step on the House of Sacrifice, and the First Hall of Initiation and training.

As shown in the earlier paintings, the color red corresponds to Sulphur and Soul, while white represents Mercury and Spirit. The color gold, of course, represents the transformation of the self into a spiritualized essence, the philosopher's stone of alchemical lore. The breast plate is framed in by a second band of black. On one

1 This is obviously an over simplification on my part due to space constraints in this article. And, of course, the importance of the Hebrew alphabet has been carried over into the Western Mystery Tradition through the development and use of the Hermetic Qabalah where the alphabet acts as an esoteric formula.

2 Almost certainly the Hyksos, with their attempt at overthrowing Egyptian culture and their eventual forced expulsion from Egypt, were a major influence on the later Hebrew legends surrounding the Exodus. For further information see Dr. Assmann's *The Mind of Egypt*.

3 The correspondence between the Ancient Egyptian Gods and the "Constellation of the Worshiped" is a topic I hope to explore in further papers presented to *The Ogdoadic Journal*.

level this second band can be seen as the material or temporal self encapsulating and thus containing the spiritual process symbolized by the red, white and gold bands. Yet on a higher level, this second black band may represent the spiritual Saturn. While the first was seen as the materialistic nature of life, this second band of black can easily be seen as a symbol of reaching the Supernal Saturn after having gone through the alchemical transformations inferred by the other colors of the breast plate. In alchemical terms this would be the process of turning Lead into Gold.

This act is further emphasized when we consider that the knight is standing upon two fountains. According to the text provided by Trismosin, the fountain on the right is surmounted by the figure of nude boy from which flows a black fluid. The fountain on the left is surmounted by the figure of a nude girl who is the source of a gold fluid. The black fluid pools in the basin on the right and then flows into the left basin. Together the two fluids combine, becoming a radiant gold that overflows and forms a golden lake seen stretching away into the distance.

It may be significant to understand that for the Egyptians the color black represented the latent potential for renewal, transformation and rebirth. Frequently Osiris was depicted as having black skin. He was often identified with the rich black fertile soil that formed along the banks of the Nile after the seasonal flooding. So we see in this painting the themes of regeneration and transformation from material into spiritual through the union of polarity; masculine and feminine, black and gold.

The shield that the knight holds in his left hand is engraved in Latin. This reads: *"Ex duabus aqui unam facite, qui quaeritis Sole et Luna facere et date bibere inimico vino. Et videbitis cum mortuum. Deinde de aqua terra facite, et lapidem multiplicastis."* Which can be translated as follows: "From two waters make one, whereby seek to make the sun and moon. And prepare to drink the wine of the antagonists. And you shall see with the Dead. Thereupon, make watery-earth. And multiply the stone." While this inscription is enigmatic, it continues the theme of the union of complementary opposites. The polarity represented in the union of Sun and Moon, male and female, Osiris/Melanotheos and Isis/Leukothea brings about the rarest of wines - the intoxication of the Spirit. From the transformation that is death comes the new life and regeneration into higher more spiritual forms.

Before leaving this third painting I want to mention that within the border nine birds are shown. Again, the number nine can relate easily to Yesod, the

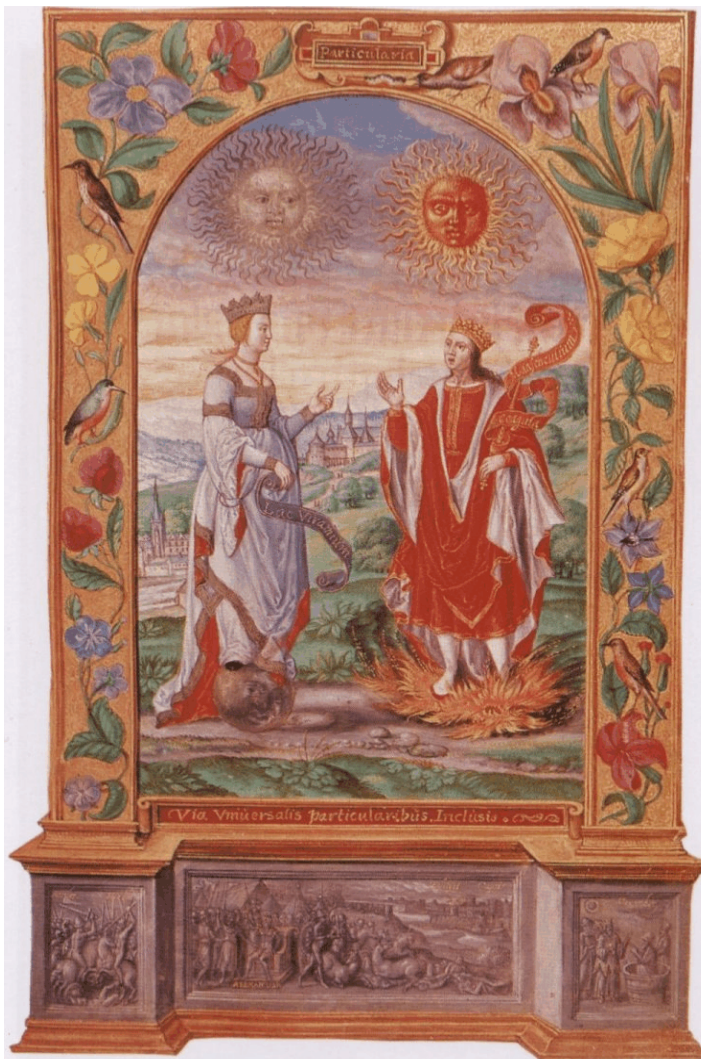
Moon, and the realm where the work of transformation begins. As seen in our examination of the second painting, the Peacock appearing here shows a link to the Roman Mother Goddess Juno. Also we see the nocturnal Owl, another feminine symbol. Birds in general represent upward, and thus spiritual, movement. The Ba, or soul, of an individual was represented in Ancient Egypt as a falcon with a human head.

Clearly this painting implies that the alchemist/magician has donned the "Armor of the Art" shown in the first painting and through the Will has begun to balance the polar opposites within the self, and within nature. That it is an act of Will is represented by the sword in the knight's right hand, the sword being a symbol of air, intellect, and the Will.

With this fourth painting the polar opposites represented by the royal couple as the Sun and Moon are in harmonious balance. The potential for conflict that needs to come under the alchemist's Will, implied by the armored, sword wielding knight of the previous painting, is gone. Now, in this fourth step in the alchemical process we see the king and queen, Sun and Moon, masculine and feminine as complementary equals. Both are dressed in red and white; the complementary colors of the alchemical process. These are the colors that were of such importance in Ancient Egypt signifying the Upper and Lower regions of Egypt, the colors of the sacred crown of the Pharaohs. The symbolism here also reminds one of "The Story of the Red and White Roses" found in *The Foundations of High Magick* by Melita Denning and Osborne Phillips (p. 26-35).

In this painting the king's outer robe is a brilliant red carrying with it all of the symbolism of this color as the dominant theme for the masculine: fire, strength, Will, passion, desire. Further, as we saw earlier, in traditional alchemy red represents Soul and Sulphur, the second step in the Ogdoadic House of Sacrifice. Yet his inner robe is clearly the brilliant white of spirit, Mercury and the third step in the House of Sacrifice. The queen, on the other hand, wears a radiant white dress, trimmed in silver. Yet we are able to see that this dress is lined with the fiery red of the Soul and Sulphur. The two, king and queen, compliment each other and each contains the essence of the other. The impression is of a single dynamic force, composed of two complementary energies separated only by degrees of manifestation, like the poles on a single magnet, or the positive and negative charges in a single current of electricity.

For me, though, one of the most interesting features of the queen's apparel is that we get just a hint of



her black shoe showing from under her garment. Thus within the feminine can be seen all three stages in the alchemical process: the black earth of Body, Salt, and the first step on the House of Sacrifice shown as the shoe; the inner red trim representing Sulphur, the soul and the second step of the House of Sacrifice; and of course the brilliant white dress as the spiritual Mercury, the third step in the House of Sacrifice.

To further exemplify the complementary roles of the couple, the artist depicts the king with a gold scepter in his left hand, about which is strung a red banner with gold writing. This reads, "Coagula Masculinum." Translated loosely this is "Coagulate the Masculine." Thus the king in this painting represents all that is masculine. Above the king shines the Sun, while he stands in the flames of regeneration.

In the Queen's right hand she holds a silver ribbon with gold writing upon it. This reads, "Lac Virginis." Translated loosely this can be read as, "Milk of the Virgin." This ribbon exemplifies the queen as all that is feminine. That the queen represents the all-feminine, the Goddess,

is clear in that above her head shines the full moon, while her feet rest upon the dark moon.

Just above the inner painting can be seen the Latin phrase, "Particularia," while just below the inner painting is the phrase, "Via Universalis, Particularibus Inclusis," meaning "The Universal Way, including the Particular." Thus we see the overall meaning of this stage to be that of the individual elements, "Particularia," coming together. The individual elements are *included* in the One, the "Via Universalis."

In looking to the border, a scene is depicted in three panels just below the inner painting. Moving from left to right these panels begin with a chaotic battle scene. The middle panel shows the battle ended, while the third panel depicts a King standing before a tub in which a man is kneeling. The sense is of various elements in chaotic conflict, eventually coming together in resolution. The third scene is a hint of the process that is yet to come: the alchemist/magician purified meets his/her higher self as the king.

Prima Materia - Introduction to the Great Work

In these four paintings we see the opening phase of the Great Work. The aspirant is introduced to and brought into the Mysteries. In the first painting the path that leads to the goal of spiritual regeneration is laid out before the initiate, while the Great Work itself is beautifully represented as the highly symbolic crest set upon the three step of the House of Sacrifice.

The second painting clearly shows that the process of alchemical change begins within oneself. The understanding and cooperation of the astral desire contained in the Nephesh are depicted. In this phase of the process, the alchemist/magician begins to learn how to project this desire nature into a controlled form, the sealed flask of gold life fluid resting in his receptive left hand. However, this can not be fully realized without the Will of the alchemist being in control, standing as a mediator between the higher and lower selves. And so we find in the third painting the knight carrying the sword of air, and dressed in the armor of Sun and Moon, the complementary and universal polarities in balance as the energies mix. This is a perfect description of the magician keeping the desire nature in check through the Will. Yet the alchemist is not denying his/her desires; rather, they are expressed and manifested through the wisdom of the Will, the Ruach and intellect.

The fourth painting shows the resolution of these

energies, the recognition of the polar yet complementary opposites that make up all that is. Having been recognized and balanced within the alchemist/magician, these energies are now available, accessible to the initiate as he or she proceeds with the great adventure that is the Royal Art.

It is my opinion that each of these four steps can be seen to some extent in the initiation ritual of the First Hall. But more importantly they figure highly in the curriculum and ritual practices in the First Hall work following initiation. This can be seen in the work with the Nephesh, the “Formula of the Watcher” and the “Formula of the Magician” among other workings. So much of the First Hall involves the process of bringing the Nephesh, desire nature, into cooperation with the Will. All of this is clearly represented in the first four paintings of the medieval alchemical work of *Splendor Solis*. In further articles I hope to continue examining the *Splendor Solis* paintings with an eye toward understanding their esoteric significance and relationship to the Ogdoadic Tradition.

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UNDERSTANDING KEY NUMBERS

THE THREAD CONNECTING THE OGDOADIC TRADITION

by Suzanne Savage

“Number is the ruler of forms and ideas, and the cause of gods and daemons”

— PYTHAGORAS¹

Much discussion has centred on the antecedents of and historical evidence for the Ogdoadic Tradition. More than once, Denning and Phillips have been accused of fabricating the entire system. One only need troll the archives of the Ogdoadic internet forums to find this claim repeated. But what many magical practitioners lack is knowledge of the role that key numbers play in defining a magical system. Denning and Phillips evidently understood this role well, and when we re-examine their writings in light of knowledge of key numbers, we will see the shining thread connecting the Ogdoadic Tradition in a truer light.

Magical systems, key numbers, and the problem of correspondences

“The Western Mystery Tradition” is a broad term covering esoteric, mystical and occult magical systems in Western culture going back thousands of years. The term is very loose, however. For example, everyone would agree that Ancient Egypt forms a key pillar of the Western Mystery Tradition. But Egypt is neither geographically part of the West, nor is its contemporary Arabic culture considered even vaguely Western. If we nevertheless forgive the term for being loose, we can see what a wide tapestry of cultures and systems the Western Mystery Tradition includes. From Egypt to Babylon, Chaldea, the classical world, as well as Norse and Celtic lands, all have developed their own brand of mystical contemplation and occult science.

While there are certain common threads in the Western Mystery Tradition, there are also divergent ap-

proaches and philosophies among the individual systems. Magical practitioners are regularly confounded by the differences between the various Western magical systems and how they often appear to contradict each other². Correspondences are a nightmare for the student new to magic; it often taxes even experienced practitioners. This is compounded by the fact that most magical schools don’t teach about the foundation of a magical system. In order to grapple with different systems we need to understand that all magical systems have an underlying numerical basis³. This base, or key number, is revealed as the number into which its principle powers/deities/archetypes are divided.

Any magical system will have to try to explain the Universe and Creation. It will have various deities/forces/archetypes which represent the broad human experience: love, conflict, creativity, kingship (or leadership), justice, wisdom, health, birth/death. By studying the ancient religions, we find these basic concepts are divided up between various gods/archetypes/forces. The number of these primary forces that a particular system recognises

2 An anecdote will illustrate this. I attended a magical study week many years ago where the Qabalah was introduced to people with a largely Wiccan/pagan background. A ritual was planned to mediate the energies of the Sephiroth as a learning exercise. We used the correspondences from *Planetary Magic*, which makes Netzach green. In order to make the Sephiroth more understandable to people with no Qabalistic background, the teacher emphasised the planetary correspondences, with Netzach being of course Venus. She soon faced a revolt among several Wiccans who absolutely refused to accept Venus as green, for in their system Venus is of course Love, and Love must be therefore be pink. Green is reserved exclusively for the Earth Mother/Goddess. Several Wiccans refused to participate in the ritual because they simply could not accept that Venus could ever be green, or that She could ever have any correspondence other than the one they knew. This is an example of how working with different systems can be troublesome to those who do not understand the points in this article.

3 When I say “all magical systems” I mean all systems designed or received by experienced Adepts, systems which have functioned for a long time and proven their effectiveness. Primarily, then, I refer mostly to the ancient systems of Greece, Egypt, Norse, etc. but some more modern systems have also demonstrated their efficacy, such as the Ogdoadic Tradition, Thelema, etc.

1 As quoted in *Life of Pythagoras* (c. 300) by Iamblichus of Chalcis, (translated by Thomas Taylor, 1818)h

is its *key number*. The Greek example is perhaps the most familiar to us, with 12 Olympian deities. While there are other lesser deities in the Greek pantheon, those can be seen as aspects of one of the major 12 Olympians (for example, the Three Graces are deities serving Aphrodite and represent aspects of Her power). We will therefore find that much Greek magic is related to the number 12. Once we recognise the key number as 12, we know that there will be a strong zodiacal underpinning of the system. And we can see that other systems working with the number 12 will share key philosophies and approaches to magic.

Looking at Egypt, the Heliopolis cosmology is based upon the Ennead of sacred deities (“Ennead” being 9). While over the centuries of Pharaonic rule we see differing deities appear in the Ennead, it is always the number 9 which is held prime, and the same kinds of energies can be seen to be represented by the deities making up that set of 9.

An early magical teacher of mine refers to this as “cutting the cake.” The world and the richness of our experience is the cake, and *all magical systems address this same cake*. But each system chooses to cut that cake differently, some into 7 pieces, some into 12, others into 8, making the pieces different sizes. The individual pieces from one cake won’t quite match up to those of another cake. This is when it becomes difficult to compare one pantheon with another. But each cake, with all its pieces, is whole and complete and able to express the entirety of human experience. *Each system has its own internal coherence, although individual aspects of it may appear to contradict other systems.*

To see this in practice, take Zeus and try to find his correspondence in Egypt. We find the concept of King and Ruler generally filled by Osiris. But Horus also has a kingly aspect which more directly relates to the active governing that Zeus does (although Horus also has a strong link to Ares, which Zeus doesn’t). Furthermore, Thoth and Ma’at in their polarity express the Justice aspects of Zeus somewhat better than Osiris, although Osiris is indeed the passive judge at the weighing of the heart. When we examine all this, we see the correspondence isn’t that simple; we can’t just say that Zeus equals Osiris. The two systems have cut the cake in different ways.

The choice of basing a system on 7, 8, or other numbers profoundly affects the philosophy and emphasis of the system. But it is vital to understand that this does not mean that one system is “right” and the other is “wrong”; they are merely different ways of looking at the Universe and the Human Experience. Simply put, it is this different approach to “cutting the cake” which gives

each magical system its own unique “flavour.” It is up to the individual practitioner to try the different systems out and see which flavour suits his or her own disposition.

If we look at other systems, we can see their numerical basis as well. Qabalah is based on the number 10, as seen in the 10 Sephiroth of the Tree of Life. Mithraism has 7 as its key number, with its 7 degrees corresponding to the 7 visible planets of the ancient world. A more modern example is Thelema, which has 11 as one of its key numbers.⁴

Key number and the Ogdoadic Tradition

What is unique about our tradition is that it openly heralds its numerical basis in its very name, the *Ogdoadic Tradition* (“Ogdoadic” is derived from “ogdoad,” which is Greek for the number 8). When they coined this term, Denning and Phillips were no doubt aware of the function of number in a magical system. What they did was to openly embrace that foundation and make it explicit as the unifying principle of the Tradition.

This is very important in understanding the antecedents of our particular system. In the speech from the Second Hall Rite of Integration, reproduced in *Foundations of High Magic* (pp. xxx-xxxvi), the threads of the Ogdoadic Tradition are traced by Denning and Phillips. They reach back to the Templars and embrace Ficino and the Careggi Circle, as well as the Order of the Helmet, among others. Some have speculated that this lineage is a fabrication, for no direct historical evidence has been produced which conclusively links the Ogdoadic practices back to the Renaissance. However, I believe that the connection alluded to by Denning and Phillips is not one of direct transmission, but instead one based upon the commonalities of those who venerate the number 8, and as a symbol thereof embrace the eight-pointed Star.

Those who hold 8 to be sacred can be found throughout history, and they hold true to several key principals. *Regeneration* is perhaps the greatest of all these. If we think of a musical scale, there are 7 notes. The 8th note is the octave of the first. It is the same note, yet higher. Originally the ancients based their understanding of stellar influences on the 7 visible “planets” (which includ-

⁴ We can also see that many systems will have a secondary key number which will further illuminate the approaches of the system. While Greek magic focuses on the 12 Olympian deities, you will find regular reference to the number 7 (derived from the 7 ancient planets). Likewise the Qabalah is based on 10 but has a secondary key number of 22, relating to the Paths between the Sephiroth. And in the Astrum Sophia, we hold 8 as the key number and 5 as the secondary (as seen in the House of Sacrifice).



Tesserae adorn the walls of the Baptistery in Florence

ed the Sun and Moon) and the number 7 is a defining concept in many traditions. In the Ogdoadic Tradition, we take the 7 planets and add the 8th, our own Earth, as a lower octave of Saturn.⁵ By emphasising the link between the two, we recall the great Hermetic axiom “As above, so below.” For an enlightening discussion of the threads that join together those who venerate the number 8, please refer to Jennifer Wolfe’s excellent article in Volume 1 Number 2 of *The Ogdoadic Journal*, “The Mysteries of Eight” (p.44). Denning and Phillips also give a brief overview of the number 8 in *The Foundations of High Magick*, p. xxii.

We can thus trace a common thread throughout history and see how systems based upon 8 have certain commonalities. One cannot enter the eight-sided Baptistery in Florence, its walls adorned with eight-pointed stars and Tesserae, and not feel a kinship to our symbolism. One cannot read the writings of the Renaissance masters, with their emphasis on the power of regeneration, and not feel that our work springs from the same font. They understood the power of 8, as did the founders of the Aurum Solis, as do we, their continuators.

It is with this understanding of key number that Denning and Phillips write:

⁵ Although the correspondence is not exact, Qabalists will be pleased to see this concept reflected in their own symbol of the Bride of Malkuth sitting on the throne of Binah. Here we have another example where the key number makes exact correspondences difficult. In the Ogdoadic Tradition emphasising 8, the octave relationship between 1 (Saturn) and 8 (Earth) is clear. It is a complete functioning magical system based upon 8. When we transpose this concept onto the Tree of Life, symbolically Saturn (1) works well as Binah and the Earth (8) as Malkuth. But of course the numbers don’t quite match up; there are two Sephira missing (Kether and Chokmah) that are not addressed in the Binah-Malkuth model. This is because Qabalah is based upon 10, not 8. So while it can be useful for people who are well-versed in the Qabalah to use it to better understand the Ogdoadic Tradition, they should be mindful that the two are not the same. Something based upon the number 8 will never fit perfectly into something based upon 10. They are different systems and we would do well to remember this.

“At all periods of history our tradition has been defined by its symbolism and specific modes of working, these giving it a *unitive* identity. The term ‘ogdoadic’ provides for us a retrospective focus, provides, in fact, ‘a local habitation and a name’ for constant aspiration and a distinctive *modus operandi*...” (*Foundations of High Magick*, p. xl) [emphasis in original]

Our understanding of key numbers now elucidates this passage: the “unitive identity” is the commonality provided by the key number 8.

Nowhere in this text is it claimed that the rituals being worked in modern day were penned directly by Ficino himself and passed down, unaltered, to the publication of *The Magical Philosophy*. The term “ogdoadic” as explained above is a “retrospective focus” used by Denning and Phillips to see the golden thread linking those who based their systems on the number 8 and had a common focus on Regeneration and the Palingenesis. Much can be gleaned from this final explanation: “The term ‘ogdoadic’ itself is a contemporary labeling adopted by the Aurum Solis as being *analytically expedient* [emphasis mine]. The phrase ‘Ogdoadic Tradition’ is thus used throughout the Magical Philosophy to identify this definitive line of mystical thought and practice...” (*ibid.*)

Conclusion

We have seen that the Western Mystery Tradition is a rich collection of magical systems. Each of these systems contains its own cosmology, deities or other forces, and philosophy. Within themselves, they work with the whole of human experience, although each goes about it in a slightly different way. These differences are often due to the key number which underpins them. Key number says a great deal about the philosophy and approach of the system. It also explains why correspondences between systems usually require the experience of an Adept to successfully negotiate.

In coining the term the “Ogdoadic Tradition,” Denning and Phillips have made explicit this key number in the system they expound. By doing so, they emphasise the commonality of those who have done magical work with the number 8 and the eight-pointed Star as their guide. There is a spiritual kinship to be found whose bonds cannot necessarily be sought in fragments of paper

and rituals passed down through the ages but in the foundations of number and the philosophy therein.

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Acknowledgement

The author would like to express her gratitude to Tony Willis for the teaching on key numbers. Tony is an Adept and author of *The Runic Workbook* and *The Magic of the Tarot*.



THE FLORENTINE ACADEMY OF FICINO

PART 1: INFLUENCE ON THE ROSICRUCIAN TRADITION

by Thomas D. Worrel

There are several societies, past and present, that consider themselves to be Rosicrucian. Their legitimacy in making such claims is not my concern here. Regardless, each one of these societies is only a small part of a larger, deeper and wider tradition. The underground spring, so to speak, and the inspiration of their formulation directly stems from the publication of two mysterious and remarkable documents published in Germany in the years 1614-15. “Mysterious” because the authorship was unknown and the content arcane. “Remarkable” because of the reaction they stimulated, not only in Germany but eventually throughout Europe. It seems that their publication and distribution ignited an outpouring of philosophical, religious, and even scientific discourse. I am referring to the Rosicrucian manifestoes: the *Fama Fraternitatis* and the *Confessio Fraternitatis*. These manifestoes began what has been commonly referred to as the Rosicrucian tradition.

How do we define what is meant by the term Rosicrucian tradition? The historian Frances Yates gives us a good working model:

“Rosicrucian in this purely historical sense represents a phase in the history of European culture which is intermediate between the Renaissance and the so-called scientific revolution of the seventeenth century. It is a phase in which the Renaissance Hermetic-Cabalist tradition has received the influx of another Hermetic tradition, that of alchemy.”¹

It might also be mentioned, because it is often overlooked, that the Rosicrucian tradition, regardless of Qabalistic, Hermetic and alchemical influences, is Christian in essence, as any intelligent reading of the manifestoes clearly indicates.

This paper concerns itself with one particular Re-

naissance scholarly circle whose thought and work had a significant impact on those mysterious and remarkable founding brethren of the Rosicrucian Fraternity. There is strong evidence that the formulation of this Renaissance Hermetic-Qabbalist philosophy largely originated in the work of the Florentine Academy in the middle to late 15th century, some 150 years before the Rosicrucian manifestoes. Not only is this earlier tradition the mother of the later Rosicrucian tradition, it is also the fountain of wisdom from which most Western esoteric societies seek to drink.

Who were these great lights? Around the year 1450 there was a group of scholars gathering, not in Germany, but in Florence on the Italian peninsula. This circle of the most learned in Europe centered upon the Platonist philosopher Marcilio Ficino and was backed by the wealth and power of the great Medici family dynasty. This circle of scholars was dedicated to and in memory of the great Plato and his Academy of philosophy.

The Academy of Plato

In the Grove of Academeca, a mile northwest of Athens, Plato formed his Academy in 387 B.C. While seemingly informal at first, by most accounts it developed into a religious guild. It was a center of learning for several centuries. But as Christianity spread and gained power, the pagan centers suffered. The “conversion” of Constantine who became Emperor in 324 sounded the beginning of the end for pagan learning. He did not act against the non-Christians, for the Academy at Athens and the Museum at Alexandria were still esteemed centers of pagan wisdom and philosophy. He also had many adherents to Mithra within his own army. Still, after his conversion many flocked to the new religion for a variety of reasons. By the year 450 C.E. the pagan temples were being de-

¹ Frances Yates, *Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, p. xi.

stroyed. No non-Christian could hold public office. In the year 529 C.E., some 916 years after its inception, the Academy was closed by the Emperor Justinian.

The Imperial Church

As Christianity spread and its faithful organized and took on public offices, it became stronger and stronger. Eventually it spread throughout the entire Roman Empire that Constantine was seeking to consolidate, and later covered all of Europe. My purpose here is not to recount the history of the Church but to point out its growth to being a vast power, although eventually it encountered a number of setbacks.

The *Great Schism* eventually divided the Latin Roman Church from the Greek Byzantine Church in 1054. Over time there were a number of attempts to heal this divide between the East and West. One of those attempts led to other events that would have far reaching reverberations.

The Unexpected Fruit of the Council of Florence

In late 1437 there was arranged the General Council of the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. It began in Ferrara but was soon transferred to Florence in 1439 under the sponsorship of Cosimo de' Medici, possibly the richest man in the world. In attendance were the Pope and his entourage as well as the Patriarch and Emperor from the East. The ostensible purpose of the meetings was to reunite the Church, but in reality the Eastern emperor needed military help against the Turks, who were knocking on his door. One of the men in the delegation of the Eastern Church was George Gemistos (aka Plethon, 1355-1452). Even though he was a pagan philosopher, Gemistos had his own Platonic Academy at Mistra in Greece, and was well known as a great thinker and teacher whom the Emperor wanted to represent the Byzantine cause.

Cosimo attended many of Gemistos' lectures and was so impressed with his wisdom that it inspired him to establish the *Academia Platonica* in Florence some years later.

Marsilio Ficino and the Florentine Academy

Although the idea of a new Academy was raised in Cosimo's mind under the influence of Plethon, the Platonic Academy of Florence was not founded until around 1450. Some historians set the date later - as the time Cosimo

provided Ficino with the villa at Careggi for its center in 1462. Cosimo selected Marsilio Ficino to lead it. Yet we know that Ficino was already translating texts for Cosimo much earlier and in one of Ficino's letters he mentions that he had deep discussions about Plato with Cosimo for over 12 years - Cosimo died in 1464.

The villa at Careggi on the outskirts of Florence became the headquarters of Ficino's work. At first he was busy translating all of Plato into Latin, but the following event changed everything:

"In the year 1460 a monk brought a Greek manuscript to Florence. The monk, Leonardo of Pistoia, was one of the agents that the city's ruler, Cosimo de' Medici, had sent to scour Europe's monasteries for forgotten writings of the ancients, and what he now brought his patron was a codex containing fourteen treatises attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, an ancient Egyptian sage."²

Cosimo immediately stopped Ficino's work on Plato and had him begin to translate the documents that we now refer to as the *Corpus Hermeticum*.

The Importance of the Corpus Hermeticum

Hermeticism represents a group of writings probably dated between A.D. 100 and 300, written in and around the progressive city of Alexandria. Although attributed to Hermes, they are written by many authors and exhibit a mixture of Greek philosophy, mostly Platonic, astrological teachings and general sympathies between heaven and earth. These writings include the collection of treatises referred to as the *Corpus Hermeticum*, one known as *Asclepius* and a few smaller pieces. The works show a philosophical and religious tradition that leads to regenerative experiences and ecstatic states of consciousness wherein Truth is encountered first-hand. There are similarities with Gnosticism in many respects but the outstanding difference lies in the more world-affirming attitude of Hermes.

In the mid 1400s everyone thought that these documents were written by a great sage, Hermes Trismegistus (or Thrice Greatest: greatest king, greatest philosopher, greatest priest), who was thought to have lived at or before the time of Moses. Therefore, these documents represented the oldest, and--in the thinking of this time period--the purest, philosophical wisdom. With this rediscovery and all its other work, the Florentine Academy

² Clement Salaman, *The Way of Hermes*, p. 9

became known as a great center of learning and research.

Influences Pouring Forth from the Careggi Circle

Many scholars came to Florence to participate in what was happening. We can trace several personalities that were either present or were influenced by the work done there. These people and their accomplishments include:

Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) As previously discussed, Ficino was the leader of the Careggi Circle. He finished the translations of the *Hymns of Orpheus* and the *Sayings of Zoroaster* by 1462. He finished Plato by 1469. He became a priest in 1473. And between 1484 and 1492 he had translated and commented upon Plotinus (the *Enneads*), Porphyry, Iamblichus and Proclus. In the introduction to his published letters, the writer says that: "Ficino's Academy awoke Europe to the deep significance of the Platonic tradition," and that "it was Ficino more than anyone else who took from Plato, Plotinus, and the Hermetic writings the concept that part of the individual soul was immortal and divine, a concept that was all-important to the Renaissance."³



The bust of Ficino in Florence's Duomo

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) is considered the first non-Jewish Renaissance Qabbalist. He was a student and friend of Ficino. It was Pico who from studying the Qabbala which had made its way to Italy from Spain (the Jews were under persecution way before their expulsion in 1492), began the process of merging the Hermetic and neo-Platonic philosophy to the Scriptures. He is thought of as the first Christian Qabbalist and it was he who developed the Pentagrammaton as supplanting

the Tetragrammaton (dropping the letter Shin into the Tetragrammaton) in his work *Conclusions*.⁴ This particular one was the 14th of the culminating 72 of the treatise.



Giovanni Pico della Mirandola

Johann Reuchlin (1455-1522) - a professor of law and known "as one of the foremost jurists and legal scholars of his day. He was also a humanist, an enlightened thinker and completely proficient in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Reuchlin is considered the first non-Jew to write a book on the Qabbala. He wrote *De Verbo Mirifico* (1494) and *De Arte Cabalistica* (1517).

These men had far reaching influence. One very important instance is the relationship of Reuchlin to one Johannes Trithemius.

Trithemius (1462 - 1516) was a Christian Monk of the Benedictine Order. Leaving home at an early age he traveled and came into association with the foremost German humanists of his day, including Johann Reuchlin. On a trip back home he got caught up in a blizzard and held up in a Benedictine Monastery at Sponheim. He stayed, became a novice and by 21 was elevated to Abbot. Trithemius was an avid scholar and eventually collected some 2000 volumes. He was learned both in Greek and Hebrew (with advanced help by Reuchlin) and studied Pythagoras, Hermetics, and the Qabbala. His work was not published until 1606 but it was long known and read in manuscript form. His was the main Renaissance manual of practical Qabbala or angel-conjuring. His angels were divided into different functions: such as "district angels" who ruled over parts of the earth and "temporal" angels who ruled over the hours of day and night. Above them were the 7 great planetary angels.

But, his work was not only concerned with a type of angelic telepathy. It was also concerned with learning

3 Clement Salaman, *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*. p. 23

4 Francis A. Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*, p. 20.



Trithemius

about the spiritual worlds. He was concerned with learning to use the chain linking earth to heaven and to the higher chain linking the celestial world through the angels to the divine Name.

In 1509, Trithemius was visited by Cornelius Agrippa (1486 - 1535). Agrippa had already been influenced by Reuchlin's *De Verbo Mirifico* from a course he took at Dole. It is also thought Agrippa was a member of some type of secret society.⁵ It is reported that Agrippa was deeply impressed by Trithemius and it is very likely a teacher/pupil relationship developed.

Agrippa's book *De Occulta Philosophia Libri Tres* is by far considered the foundational work of all Western magic since its publication. An early draft finished in 1510 was widely circulated, but it was not published (with enhancements, revisions, and double in size) in its entirety until 1533. We also that Agrippa travelled to Italy between 1511 and 1518. There, "he came into contact with Agostino Ricci and, perhaps, Paolo Ricci; he acquired a deeper knowledge of Ficino's commentaries and the writings of Giovanni Pico; he sharpened his acquaintance with Qabalistic texts;..."⁶

It also seems that Paracelsus crossed paths with Trithemius. He makes reference to the "Abbot of Sponheim" and some even think Paracelsus was also a disciple, but even if not, there is no doubt he was extremely influenced by him.⁷

One more thing to mention here: by his own acknowledgment John Dee, Queen Elizabeth's astrologer, began the composition of his Qabalistically inspired *Monas Hieroglyphica* in 1564 after a chance discovery of a manuscript copy of Trithemius's steganographical hand-

book a year before, while Dee was on one of his diplomatic assignments.

Trithemius was the originator of the secret script used in the so-called "Cipher Manuscripts" that provided the skeleton of the rituals used later in the Rosicrucian *Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn* founded by three members of the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* (S.R.I.A.), a Rosicrucian society associated with Freemasonry. In the alchemical lecture of the third degree of this society (*Practicus*), Trithemius is named (along with others including Raymond Lully).

Some historians think that the Rosicrucian manifestos were influenced directly from the Paracelsian theories and John Dee's work. There are direct and substantial links from the Careggi scholars to the circle of philosophers, alchemists and Christian mystics who most scholars believe were the shadowy brotherhood of Rosicrucians.

The Rosicrucian Tradition

Now we can proceed to the appearance of the Rosicrucian manifestoes. Let us quickly get a fix on what has happened to the European world. Not only had the *Great Schism* happened between the Eastern Church and the Roman Church but the *Western Schism* as well. The Great Western Schism of the Church happened in 1378 (which is the year the founder of the Fraternity of the Rose and Cross was born). The Reformation had begun with Luther (whose coat of arms was a rose with a cross in the center of a heart). Luther's coat of arms was not too different from Johann Andrae, one of the suspected authors of the manifestos.⁸ There was religious upheaval in the world and the extreme power of the Church had been broken.

Paracelsus had pioneered a new and more powerful way to approach medicine, and Copernicus had started a revolution in the way we think about our place in the universe. A new land, the Americas, had been discovered.

And fresh fever was falling from the skies: Earlier a new star appeared in the constellation of *Cassiopeia* (the Queen) in 1572. This new star formed a cross with 3 other stars. This was startling. But in 1584 the great conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter (along with Mars) happened in Aries that marked the commencement of great conjunctions in the "fiery trigon" (Sag, Leo, and Aries).⁹ And maybe more remarkable, a new star appeared right above it in *Serpentario* (aka *Ophiuchus*, the serpent-holder

5 V. Perrone Compagni (ed.), *Cornelius Agrippa*, p. 2.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 4

7 Noel L. Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology*, p. 182.

8 Tobias Churton, *The True Story of the Rosicrucians*, p. iv.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

- Asclepius the Healer). In 1602 a new star appeared in *Cygneus* (the Swan) causing more wonder. Then in March of 1604, a fiery trigon (*trigonus igneus*) appeared in the constellations *Serpentarius* and *Cygneus*. To many sky watchers, these events heralded a New Age and a new beginning. To the authors of the manifestoes, it was the time to begin a new Reformation; a new medicine, and a new cosmology; it was time for opening the Vault of "our Father and Brother C.R." The two Rosicrucian manifestoes began to be circulated as manuscripts around 1610. The publication of the first manuscript was in 1614.¹⁰

Who were the authors or instigators of these documents? Although the scope of this particular question is far beyond anything possible here, some scholarly work by others has revealed several personalities who, if they were not directly involved, were at least very close to the actual writers.¹¹ They include Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654), Tobias Hess (1568-1614) and Christoph Besold (1577-1649), among others. Andreae was almost certainly the author of the "third" manifesto: *The Chymical Wedding*. Within his circle were Hess and Besold who were very familiar with the material from the Renaissance Neoplatonists.

We can conclude with an understanding of how the Hermetic-Qabbalist movement that began at the Florentine Academy influenced the later formulation of the tradition we now call Rosicrucian. The possibilities lie in the probable transmission of certain key religious, mystical and magical ideas. Many of these teachings were passed on directly from one scholar to the next. These ideas include: a universe proceeding from an all encompassing One through a process of emanations; a hierarchical structure to the cosmos with intermediaries between heaven and earth; a special unconscious gnosis hidden within us that can be awakened; a planned gradual revelation through rites; an inner genius or angelic presence; symbolic passwords, signs, and modes of recognition that allow us access to ascent, and the symbolism of the rose as representing the highest unfolding of mankind as the mystical Christ whose symbol is the cross.

In Part 2 of this series we will explore the influence of the Florentine Academy on the Hermetic path that gave birth to the Ogdoadic Tradition.

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¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹¹ Christopher McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians*, p. xviii.

THE WAIF

*a poem by Ernest Page,
with notes by Derik Richards*

The following poem was uncovered by the impeccable researches of Suzanne Savage. This work, originally published in the spring of 1949 in *The Saturday Broadsheets Number 8*, is a wonderful example of the late Ernest Page's poetry¹. Page was the Warden of the Ordo Sacri Verbi from 1959 to 1966 and the magical tutor of Leon Barcynski (Osborne Phillips).



Photograph of Ernest Page in the OAS Archives.

THE WAIF

I walked where dreams awaken
Waifs of the mind,
In a street by sun forsaken,
And close behind
I heard a girl's faint crying:
'Food', she said.
The shadow of Spring was in her sighing.
I turned my head,

And an apple, all I had there,
I offered her;
But she, barefoot and sad there—
Sweet wanderer—
Stood motionless, refusing,
As if she heard
Some wisdom of her own grave musing,
Then, with no word,

She poured me a few light grains of
Shrivelling corn.
Her eyes were like the rains of
An April morn,
And as rain in April falling
Quickly she fled.
I stood bewildered, vainly calling,
Discomforted.

ERNEST PAGE.

¹ For further poetry by Page, see the poem quoted in Chapter VII of Denning & Phillips' *The Sword & the Serpent* (pp. 170-171).

Commentary

Page's brief poem contains subtle layers of meaning that intertwine to show forth both his dedication to a humanitarian cause and his understanding of the challenges faced by the Soul on its inward journey. In order to first understand the exoteric meaning of this poem it is important to consider a few key points of Page's life. In Appendix D to the first edition *Robe & Ring*, Denning and Phillips give a brief biography of Page. They state that a cause for which he ever felt a strong calling was assisting those youths of London whose particular circumstances may have led them to become criminals or otherwise require rehabilitation. Toward the end of his life, Page became deeply involved with the Simon Community, a charity established in 1963 by probation officer Anton Wallich-Clifford to help the homeless of London.

Thus the outer and most basic meaning of Page's verse relates to his lifelong dedication to assisting waifs and runaways. Here there is a simple, sad story painted in haunting images of a girl who denies assistance due perhaps to her fear and mistrust. She instinctively asks for help from a passer-by and then when it is presented does not know how to react.

As we look at the esoteric meaning of these lines, however, a rather more elaborate picture begins to unfold. The persona walks "where dreams awaken," i.e., in the world of Yetzirah - of astral forms and etheric forces - and there encounters a resident of that place: the Nephesh. The Nephesh, or astrosome, is often referred to as child-like and animalistic. The very word "waif," referring to a wayward child, derives from the Old French *guaif*, or "stray beast." We begin to understand that this is a Nephesh-child out of harmony with the rest of the Psyche, not under the rule of the solar/Tiphatic Ruach-parent, as indicated by the line "In a street by sun forsaken."

This Nephesh-child seeks sustenance: union with its supernal parent. But because it is not under the control of the Ruach it cannot perceive the proper way forward: to be guided by the Ruach and in turn guide the Soul in its own way by emotional inspiration and joyous expression. The Ruach offers the apple to the Nephesh - the fruit of the Original Sin, allowing man to "become as gods." In the Celtic mythos, which was held in high esteem by Page², the apple is found in various legends as the means to immortality, and the very Isle of Avalon takes its name from the sacred fruit.

And yet the Nephesh pauses upon being offered the nourishment which it previously thought that it desired so, as a wild animal will mistrust the good intentions of a human. The Nephesh maintains a link with the Neshamah, the as yet concealed Higher Self, through which it may receive communications, visions, and premonitions. And yet for the magician this is not the desired state. The Ruach by the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation is to come into direct contact with the Neshamah, a prerequisite of which is the proper alignment of the lower faculties of the Ruach and the Neshamah - the Pillars of the Breath and the Body. And yet while those pillars remain unestablished, they cannot support the Superstructure. In order to achieve this alignment a very curious phenomena must occur: the Nephesh must overcome its instinct to survive and instead pursue the Neshamah until it is lead ultimately to its own death.³

Here then we see the Nephesh who, confronted with the proper Way to attainment (the apple), pauses and perhaps perceive for a moment the conflict between the true Wisdom (Sophia) of the Neshamah, and the "wisdom of her own grave musing" - the instinct of self-preservation. Unable to accept the death of her current existence that is offered, she instead flees and remains in the "shadow of Spring."

Page portrays the waif's tears as "grains of shrivelling corn." We are reminded of one of the alleged revelations of the Eleusinian Mysteries: at the climax of the rites in the Telesterion of Demeter, the initiate was shown in stark silence an ear of corn, a manifest token of the Regeneration. And yet the corn of the girl's tears is shrivelled, for the attainment of this Soul is not at hand, and the silence is not one of profound awe but of fearful sadness.

To conclude, Page returns to the imagery of Spring, which has been invoked for countless ages to portray the Palingenesis. Though here is not the symbol of growth, but rather the rains of suffering that are a necessary precursor. But, as the poet notes, the rains are fleeting; perhaps, in time, the "Earth shall bring forth bud and flower and fruit."

² See the poem referenced in the previous footnote.

³ "The red deer seeks the huntress now, the novice seeks Dictynna's net." See the first chapter of *The Foundations of High Magick*, Book I.

THE RELIGIOUS REFORM OF GIORDANO BRUNO

by Adam J. Schaab

Giordano Bruno (1548-1600 CE) lived at a time of tremendous religious and social upheaval. The Renaissance had revived discussion about the nature of God and Man and many were no longer willing to accept the authority of the church unquestioningly. By Bruno's birth, Martin Luther had come and gone and the reformation was in full swing. During Bruno's lifetime the forces of the Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation vied for the soul of Christendom through bloody warfare and political intrigue. It was to this din of religious questioning and debate that Giordano Bruno lent his voice. Bruno was, without a doubt, one of the most vocal and radical advocates of religious reform in his generation, a position that earned him the ire of both Catholic and Reformation churches and, eventually, led to his death. He was burned at the stake by the Roman Inquisition on February 17th, 1600 as an impenitent heretic.

Frances Yates, in her monumental work, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, argues that the religious philosophy which Bruno expounded, and died for, was essentially 'hermetic,' that is, deriving from the Late Antique texts of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and related writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. Because it was believed in the Renaissance that the Hermetic texts represented the wisdom of ancient Egypt, and because Bruno praises ancient Egyptian religion as he understood it, Yates feels justified in further arguing that Bruno's message is that of a return to Egyptian religion. That is, that Bruno's mission, as he saw it, was to revive the magical religion of the Egyptians that had been superseded by Christianity. Yates confuses matters by using the terms 'Hermetic' and 'Egyptian' interchangeably¹, thus eliminating any conceptual difference between the two terms

and leaving the impression, echoed by later writers², that Bruno's thought can be reduced to Egyptian revivalism based upon the Hermetica. Yates' main evidence for this argument comes from Bruno's *Spaccio Della Bestia Trionfante*, or *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*, in which Bruno does, indeed, praise Egyptian religion and connect it to the Hermetica. Nevertheless, Yates' thesis is based on an oversimplification of Bruno's highly syncretic thought and on a selective reading of the evidence presented in *Spaccio* and Bruno's other writings. Therefore, it is the purpose of the present paper to critically examine Bruno's *Spaccio* and related works in order to demonstrate the weaknesses of Yates' arguments and to offer an alternative interpretation of Bruno's religious and philosophical message. In order to do this, it is necessary to identify the various themes, threads, and influences at work in the *Spaccio* and other writings and, seen as a whole, to attempt to place them in their proper context within Bruno's overall philosophy.

Spaccio, at the most literal level, tells the story of how an aging and penitent Jove, discontent with the vice of the world and the gods' own state of disrepute, proposes a complete reform of the heavens before the council of the gods. Jove's proposal is to expel from the heavens those constellations that have come to represent the vices that plague humanity and afflict the gods, so that by cleansing the celestial realm of bad influences the gods may once again return to eminence and a concurrent change may occur on Earth. Jove and the council then proceed through over forty constellations, including the twelve signs of the zodiac, deciding the fate of the current inhabitant and which virtues should subsequently ascend to each vacated seat. All of this is related through Mercury to (Earthly) Sophia, who in turn discusses the proceedings

1 e.g. Yates, Frances A. *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*. New York: University of Chicago P, 1991., 225

2 e.g. Wang, Robert. *The Rape of Jewish Mysticism by Christian Theologians*. Canada: Marcus Aurelius P, 2001., 117

with Saulino (Bruno's maternal surname and a returning character in Bruno's next dialogue on Qabalah³).

The keys to understanding Bruno's imaginative allegory are given, in part, in the *Spaccio's* explanatory epistle, where Bruno explains that Jove represents the individual and the gods symbolize the virtues and powers of the soul. Thus, the *Spaccio* illustrates symbolically how man may come to reform himself by identifying and eliminating vices and consciously, through the use of signs and images, replace them with contrary virtues. This is Bruno's stated purpose and is certainly a motif that Bruno returned to throughout his lifetime.⁴ However, this is not the only level on which *Spaccio* can be interpreted. It becomes clear from Bruno's searing criticisms and heretical assertions that the *Spaccio* is not only a guide to self-development, but also an indictment of the religious, philosophical, and political culture of sixteenth century Europe. Thus, *Spaccio* serves a dual purpose, first as a guide for the individual to reform his personality and second, as a call for the reform of society as a whole. It is obvious to anyone who reads the *Spaccio* that Bruno has unique ideas for the grand reform of society. However, opinions differ, even now, as to what precisely he envisioned.

As stated above, Frances Yates, in her still influential magnum opus, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, asserts that Bruno wished to revive the ancient Egyptian religion based on the hermetic texts. So, let us examine the evidence Yates uses to support her arguments while highlighting Bruno's main themes.

The main discussion of Egyptian religion in the *Spaccio* comes in the second part of the third dialogue where Jove and the council deliberate on the fate of Capricorn, one of a very few constellations deemed virtuous enough to retain its seat. Capricorn is identified here with Pan, who, in Egypt, taught the gods to transform into beasts in order to defeat the enemy Typhoeus.⁵ This launches the gods into a discussion of the Egyptian practice of depicting the gods in animal form. Of this Jove states, "do not consider [this] as bad, because you know that animals and plants are living effects of Nature; this Nature (as you must know) is none other than God in things." Besides containing the absolute essence of God,



Bruno

individual things also have their own specific properties and characters, through which the gods express themselves to a greater or lesser degree. Thus, an animal form can be used to represent various attributes of the divine whole. Also, because Divinity descends into Nature, so too is it possible, through Nature, to reach Divinity, by means of "magic and divine rites."⁶

Yates quotes from the above mentioned passages to support her Egyptian thesis, but passes over the next passage in which Saulino asks how the attributes of Jove, in the forms of various animals, could be used by the Egyptians, since Jove is a later Greek deity. Sophia answers: "Do not be concerned with the Greek name, oh, Saulino, because I speak according to the most universal custom and because names (even among the Greeks) are *pastiches* of Divinity."⁷ She goes on to explain that Jove was once a king of Crete, Venus a woman, and that all the gods were once mortals who have long since perished. She continues:

They did not adore Jove as if he were Divinity, but adored Divinity as it was in Jove... they understood that in him there was a magnanimous, just and benign god; and they prescribed and established as a

3 Bruno, Giordano. *The Cabala of Pegasus*. Trans. Sidney Sondergard and Madison Sowell. New York: Yale UP, 2002., 30.

4 e.g. Bruno, Giordano. *On the Composition of Images, Signs and Ideas*. Trans. Charles Doria. Ed. Dick Higgins. New York, NY: Willis, Locker & Owens, 1991.

5 Bruno, Giordano. *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*. Trans. Arthur D. Imerti. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1964., 235.

6 *Ibid.*, 236.

7 *Ibid.*, 237.

custom that such a god or, rather, Divinity, inasmuch as it imparted itself in such manner, should be called Jove, just as divine wisdom, interpretation and manifestation were known under the name of Mercury, a most wise Egyptian.⁸

Several lines later she expands on this point, saying, “Thus the eternal gods (without placing any inconvenience against that which is true of divine substance) have temporal names, some in some times and nations, others in others.”⁹ Thus, for Bruno, our conceptions of divinity come from the examples of mortal humans, and these conceptions are not static but ever-changing, taking forms appropriate for each time and place.

Following this, Yates again picks up Bruno’s thread as he expands briefly on his conception of magic. Bruno explains that although Divinity is fully present in all things, she, as Nature, expresses herself in an infinity of changing forms. Because of this, “we must diversely ascend to her [Divinity] by partaking of various endowments; otherwise we, in vain, attempt to contain water in nets and catch fish with a shovel.”¹⁰ That is to say, unified Divinity is incomprehensible in itself and can only be grasped at through the understanding of Nature in her multiplicity of forms. These parts, claims Bruno, were originally divided between the solar and lunar principles (a binary conception) and later expanded into the principles of the seven planets of the ancients. Therefore all things, be they plants, animals, minerals, influences, characters, colors, signs or images, can be divided between the seven planetary ‘species.’ A turnip could be martial for instance, or an eagle jovial. The magician is defined in Bruno’s treatise *On Magic*, written several years after *Spaccio*, simply as a “wise man who has the power to act.” A magician, therefore, recognizes these relationships in nature and “does wondrous things merely by manipulating active and passive powers.”¹¹ Such wondrous things no doubt include changing the personality through the use of symbolic images, ascending in some way to Divinity, as well as the natural magic of chemistry or medicine.

Bruno’s discussion of magic in the *Spaccio*, to the delight of Yates, occurs here in conjunction with the glorification of the “magic and divine cult of the Egyptians.”¹² From this she concludes that Bruno’s magic and “Egyp-

tianism” are inseparable from each other. If this were true we would expect Bruno’s other works on magic to express a singularly Egyptian character. A closer look at *On Magic*, however, reveals a far more varied presentation. Egyptians are mentioned only three times and Hermes Trismegistus not at all; from these references it is clear that although Egypt may be seen as the distant *source* of magic, Egyptianism is certainly not its *substance*. In contrast to the scarcity of references to Egypt, or even Hermes Trismegistus, references abound to Plato, Plotinus, Porphyry, Platonists and Pythagoreans. Thus, it is clear that Bruno’s magic was thoroughly that of a renaissance Neoplatonist. Though the hermetic strain was, no doubt, an integral part of that tradition, it is nevertheless subsumed under the greater heading of Neoplatonism, being only a tributary to a greater stream of thought.

After Bruno’s short digression into magic, Isis, who joins the Greco-Roman deities for this dialogue, makes a short speech in which she states that “the stupid and senseless idolaters had no reason to laugh at the magic and divine cult of the Egyptians.”¹³ The identity of these idolaters is not specified; however, given the context of preceding passages and the next dialogue, we can be certain that she is referring to the Christians and possibly the Jews. Isis, the Egyptian goddess, is thus creating a contrast between the good Egyptian religion and its debased and idolatrous modern counterparts. This is an ironic reversal of the usual view that Christianity, the true religion, had superseded the barbarous idol-worshipping cults of the past. Bruno sees Christianity as idolatrous because, instead of worshipping the divine *in* things, Christians worship dead and inanimate things *as* divine, such as the relics of saints or Christ himself. Bruno parodies this by praising the jawbone of a dead ass as heavenly, gracious and saintly in his next work, discussed below.¹⁴

Bruno again digresses, this time into a discussion of Qabalah, which Saulino contends must have “proceeded from the Egyptians, among whom Moses was instructed.”¹⁵ Though Bruno does not expand much on Qabalah at this point, its placement here, after a discussion of magic and idolatry, is important and sheds light on the overall trajectory of Bruno’s thought. Bruno explains the Qabalistic process of emanation “into names as innumerable as species. And likewise, according to each name (inasmuch as it befits their own language), they name one god, one angel, one intelligence, one power, who presides

8 *Ibid.*, 238.

9 *Ibid.*, 238.

10 *Ibid.*, 238.

11 Bruno, Giordano. *Cause, Principle and Unity: And Essays on Magic*. Trans. Robert De Luca. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998., 105, 107.

12 Imerti, 239.

13 *Ibid.*, 239.

14 Sondergard, 24.

15 Imerti., 240.

over one species.”¹⁶ This is obviously a rephrasing of the earlier discussion on emanation, this time in Qabalistic terms. If Bruno were advancing a pure Egyptianism, we would expect him to dismiss the Qabalah entirely; however, it is clear from this passage and its placement that Bruno sees Qabalah as a legitimate, though more modern, source of wisdom. This is made all the more clear in the *Spaccio*'s sequel, which outlines Bruno's Qabalistic system and is worth discussing here in conjunct with Yates arguments on the topic.

Of Bruno's Qabalistic background, Yates writes that Bruno knew very little Hebrew, was familiar with the works of Pico Della Mirandola, Reuchlin, Agrippa, and maybe, indirectly, parts of the Zohar.¹⁷ For Yates, Bruno's Qabalah is derivative, and not very important to his overall system of thought. Yates writes of Bruno's next work, the *Cabala del Cavallo Pegaseo*, or *Cabala of the Pegasean Horse*, written shortly after the *Spaccio*, that “he [Bruno] appears to be totally rejecting Cabala for his purely Egyptian insights”.¹⁸ In saying this, Yates misses entirely Bruno's original use of Cabala and biblical imagery as a hermeneutic device for expounding his own thoughts, as paradoxical and sarcastic as he may be in the process. *Cabala* is a problematic text for scholars, for a variety of reasons, not least of which because sarcasm is difficult to prove textually. Because of this, Bruno's true attitude towards Qabalah remains obscure. However, we will endeavor to shed a little light on it here.

The *Cabala* is a direct extension of the *Spaccio* and cannot be understood without the context it provides. Of the constellation of the Asses, Bruno writes in the second part of the first dialogue of *Spaccio*: “Concerning the most upright majesty of those two Asses, who sparkle in the space of Cancer, I do not dare to speak, because to these, especially belongs the Kingdom of Heaven, by right and by reason, as on other occasions, with many most efficacious arguments, I propose to show you.”¹⁹ These ‘efficacious reasons’ turn out in *Cabala* to be anything but that. Bruno seems to be offering a challenge to the reader when he says in *Cabala*: “Observe, probe, and consider whether the bare concepts, the expressed maxims, and the syllogistic discourses that I set forth on behalf of this sacred, unpolluted, and saintly animal are pure, true and demonstrative – or are really feigned, impossible, and mere appearances.”²⁰ Bruno then goes on with sarcastic aban-

don, using traditional Judeo-Christian hermeneutics, to “prove” that asininity is a virtue by linking a number of passages with words in common. This, so far, does not seem to disprove Yates; however, this is only one thread in Bruno's paradoxical work. Though Bruno's biblical hermeneutics are satire, his point is at once satirical and completely serious. Bruno also argues, along Neoplatonic, apophatic lines, that asininity *is*, in fact, a virtue because all things are completely equal and undifferentiated in the One and man must, therefore, recognize the limitations of his ability to know the divine in its purest essence. Bruno seems to be showing that truth may be demonstrated by means of asinine arguments because Truth is Truth in any circumstance. However, he is mocking the efficacy of Judeo-Christian hermeneutics as a way to prove the ignorant worldview of the Church and Synagogue.

Relating to this, Bruno uses the metaphor of the ass and her colt (at one point) to represent the Jews and the church. These entities, he writes, are subdued and tyrannized by the bondage of Belial. That is to say, they are without God, because they do not recognize divinity in Nature, but see divinity as separate and contrary from Nature. This sheds an interesting light on Bruno's oft cited anti-Semitism. Rather than attacking Jews for the usual reasons of killing Jesus or stealing babies, Bruno's problem with Judaism stems from it being the theological forerunner of Christianity and thus the root of the theological asininity he so detests. Bruno sees two parallel lines of transmission of the ancient wisdom. The first begins with the Egyptians and Chaldeans, and passes to the Magi, Orphics, and Pythagoreans, and down to Bruno's own time with the likes of Albertus Magnus and Copernicus.²¹ The other line of transmission begins with the Chaldeans and Egyptians, but passes through the “excrement of Egypt” (the Jews), and on to the Christians with their “train of hostile geniuses”.²² Judaism and Christianity have, therefore, inherited the same wisdom of the ancients as is present in the other, purer lineage, but this wisdom has been corrupted. It would appear that it is Bruno's purpose in the *Cabala*, therefore, to salvage what wisdom can be found in the Judeo-Christian tradition and to show that it is one and the same truth as that known to Bruno himself and to the ancients before him. What Bruno appears, ultimately, to be doing is consciously taking on the role of Biblical prophet, using cabalistic hermeneutics as a way to criticize the Judeo-Christian tradition, while at the same time offering his own philosophy. Considering

16 *Ibid.*, 240.

17 Yates, 258.

18 *Ibid.*, 257.

19 Imerti, 109.

20 Sondergard, 18.

21 Yates, 235.

22 Imerti, 257.



One of the mnemonic devices employed by Bruno in his *Ars Memorativa*.

himself a prophet would have been characteristic behavior for a man who in the *Spaccio*'s prequel proclaimed his own gnostic ascent.²³

Such an interpretation of the *Cabala* is also consistent with Bruno's conception of himself as magician. In his treatise, *On Magic*, Bruno states that magicians can use things like numbers, letters, or divine names (the components of Biblical hermeneutics) in their art, but that given magic's derogatory connotation, this is called "prophecy" and not magic.²⁴ Another suggestion as to the underlying magical themes of *Cabala* is Bruno's syncretization of the traditional cabalistic angelic hierarchies and the celestial hierarchies of pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. Bruno provides the lists of these hierarchies, along with traditional attributions of the Sephiroth, without further comment as to their use or import. However, given that the cabalistic hierarchies seem to be taken mostly from Agrippa, one of the most important sources for Bruno's understanding of magic, there is high probability that Bruno was communicating these as part of his magical system. This is confirmed, at least in part, by Bruno's inclusion of 'Heroes' as the order of intelligences related to Malkuth - Bruno also addresses the topic of heroes in his magically themed *De Gli Eroici Furori*, or *The Heroic Frensiess*, written shortly after *Spaccio* and *Cabala*. The inclusion of the pseudo-Dionysian hierarchies is fur-

ther evidence for this and highlights an important source for understanding Bruno's thinking in both *Cabala* and *Spaccio*. The main premise of pseudo-Dionysius' *Mystical Theology* is that God, as the One, is unknowable, but all positive attributes of the universe apply to Him, because He is the universal cause. However, in that God necessarily transcends all attributes, neither positive nor negative attributes can ultimately describe him. This seems to have direct bearing on Bruno's discussion in both *Spaccio* and *Cabala* of how if Christ can be metaphorically called a lion, a unicorn, a tempest, or any other title, he can just as assuredly be called an ass.²⁵ Another important aspect of Dionysian theology that may have influenced Bruno is that through the interpretation of attributes or symbols, though they must be ultimately rejected, man may raise himself to the Intellectual realm and consequently, closer to God. This not only hints at the possible uses of the cabalistic and Dionysian hierarchies for 'magical' ascent, but also calls into question the soterological necessity of Christ.

So we conclude our digression into Bruno's Qabalah. Although Bruno uses *Cabala* to satirize Judeo-Christian logic, it is, nevertheless, a creative and serious venture into the cabalistic genre. Bruno uses it to echo the themes of *Spaccio* and to consciously depart from the tradition of earlier Renaissance Cabalists. *Cabala* is truly significant to the history of Christian Qabalah in that it marks the shift in the tradition *away* from Christianity. Bruno is no longer trying to prove the divinity of Christ through cabalistic manipulation; rather he is trying to disprove the entire theological foundation on which Christianity and Judaism are based. However, though Bruno is departing from the theological presuppositions of Qabalah, he, nevertheless, maintains the philosophical and magical truth that can be found in it, insofar as it coincides with his own syncretic Neoplatonic worldview. Thus, Bruno's *Cabala* is an integral, though somewhat paradoxical, part of Bruno's philosophy and magic and cannot be dismissed as easily as Yates would make it seem.

To finish to our discussion of dialogue three, part two of *Spaccio*, after *Cabala*, Bruno again turns his attention to the topic of Egyptian religion, stating that the wisdom of the Egyptians is lost and quoting a long lament/prophecy from Hermes to Asclepius. This prophecy serves as one of the primary pillars of Yates' argument, worth quoting here, as Yates quotes it only in Italian:

Do you not know, oh Asclepius, that Egypt is the

23 Bruno, Giordano. *The Ash Wednesday Supper*. Trans. Edward A. Gosselin and Lawrence S. Lerner. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1977., 90.

24 De Lucca, 107.

25 e.g. Sondergard, 19.

image of heaven ... our land is the temple of the world. But woe is me! The time will come when Egypt will appear to have been in vain the religious cultivator of divinity... Oh Egypt, oh Egypt! Of your religions there will remain only the fables. ... Shadows will be placed before light, death will be judged to be more useful than life, no one will raise his eyes toward heaven. The religious man will be considered insane, the impious man will be considered prudent, the furious man, strong, the most wicked man, good. And believe me, capital punishment will still be prescribed for him who will apply himself to the religion of the mind, because new justices will be found, new laws. Nothing holy will be found, nothing religious; nothing worthy of heaven or of celestials will be heard. Only pernicious angels will remain, who, mingling with men, will force upon the wretched ones every audacious evil as if it were justice, giving material wars, rapines, frauds, and all other things contrary to the soul and to natural justice. And this will be the old age and the disorder and irreligion of the world. But do not doubt, Asclepius, for after these things have occurred, the lord and father God, governor of the world, the omnipotent provider, by deluge of water or of fire, of diseases or of pestilences or of other ministers of his compassionate justice, will doubtlessly then put an end to such a blot, recalling the world to its ancient countenance.²⁶

Thus Yates concludes that it is Bruno's mission to fulfill this prophecy and return the world to an uncorrupted magical Egyptian religion.

It is clear from the evidence we have seen from the *Spaccio* and other works that Bruno did, indeed, hold Egyptian religion (along with the Chaldeans) in very high regard and as the source of true wisdom. However, this is certainly not the same thing as saying that Bruno wished to revive Egyptian religion. In fact, it is clear that this is not only untrue, but manifestly impossible. For a start, as cited above, Bruno knows that the specific form of Egyptian religion has been lost to the world and persists only in distant fables. Secondly, Bruno recognizes that the names and attributes of the gods change over time and all names are only representations of divinity; so he is not arguing in favor of a new pantheon, but of pantheism, the religion of Nature. This is not an argument for hermetic religion, but for all (philosophically compatible) religions. Third, it



is clear that if Bruno *were* arguing for a return to any given religious form it would be Roman and not Egyptian or Hermetic. The only Egyptian goddess Bruno knows is Isis and she appears only to discuss the appropriately 'Egyptian' sign of Capricorn and to serve as a mouthpiece to criticize Christianity. Of course, 'Egyptian' deities, for Bruno, would have been the Greco-Roman deities of the Hermetica and while Hermes and Asclepius are mentioned briefly, they do not appear as characters. Instead, Jove and the romanized Olympians are the primary deities of *Spaccio*, characters more congruent with Bruno's cultural inheritance. Fourth, Bruno is not arguing for a simple shift in the mythological framework of contemporary religion because a

Hellenic religion that had the same basic belief structure as Christianity would be just as bad, as the parody quoted below makes clear. So Bruno's argument is not to change the form of religion, though all forms are acceptable, but to change its underlying philosophy. However, arguing instead that Bruno wished a return to Egyptian or Hermetic *philosophy*, though functionally true, in that Bruno would have found little to argue against in the Hermetic corpus, is still a misleading statement. For one, differences in detail do exist between Hermetic and Brunian philosophy. For example, though the second treatise of the *Corpus Hermeticum* does argue that the universe is immensely vast, it does not go so far as to say that the universe is infinite. Bruno, however, argues in the *Cena de la Ceneri*, written just before *Spaccio*, that the first cause is infinite and an infinite cause must have an infinite effect, therefore the universe itself is infinite. Secondly, we have seen that Bruno was certainly not averse to incorporating other traditions into his thinking, as his use of Qabalah and the Christianized Neoplatonism of pseudo-Dionysus makes clear; so claiming he was a 'hermetic' philosopher is, at most, a partial truth. If one were to place Bruno's syncretic philosophy under the heading of a larger tradition, it would more appropriately be called 'Neoplatonism', rather than the overly narrow and misleading 'Hermeticism' or 'Egyptianism'. Of course, even among Renaissance Neoplatonists Bruno's philosophy is unique

²⁶ Imerti, 241.

and, in the end, it might best be left with its own title, Brunian, or, as some have suggested, the Nolan Philosophy.²⁷

The over-simplicity of Yates' thesis and the terms she uses seems to come from a desire to place everything she knows about a group of interrelated topics into a single linear tradition. Because she wants everything to fit into this created category, she subsequently searches for signs of this tradition everywhere, reading her thesis into *Spaccio*. This leads her to focus exclusively on the parts of the work that support her thesis while ignoring the bulk of the rest of the material available. Because of this, Yates views *Spaccio* as a declaration of a new Egyptian revival, instead of as a satirical indictment of Christianity, which uses Egyptian themes as one of many literary devices. It is true that *Spaccio* does contain strongly expressed views on religious reform, but these are presented as a reaction against Christianity and must be understood as such. Each point Bruno makes for his reform comes as a Neoplatonic counterpoint to some doctrinal element of Christianity. Thus, to understand Bruno's reform, we must understand his criticism of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The following passage, the climax of *Spaccio*, will go a long way to illustrate this. The *Spaccio* reaches its heretical crescendo in its final act as Momus, the god of satire offers Bruno's most direct and biting criticism of Christianity, saying to a puzzled council:

"[B]ecause he [Orion] knows how to perform miracles, and, as Neptune knows, can walk over the waves of the sea without sinking, without wetting his feet, and with this, consequently, will be able to perform many other fine acts of kindness. Let us send him among men, and let us see to it that he give them to understand all that I want and like them to understand: that white is black, that the human intellect, through which they seem to see best, is blindness, and that that which according to reason seems excellent, good, and very good, is vile, criminal, and extremely bad. I want them to understand that Nature is a whorish prostitute, that natural law is ribaldry, that Nature and Divinity cannot concur in one and the same good end, and that the justice of the one is not subordinate to the justice of the other, but that they [Nature and Divinity] are contraries, as are shadows and light. I want them to understand that all Divinity is the

mother of Greece and is like a hostile stepmother to other generations.

"Therefore, no one can be pleasing to the gods except by Hellenizing, that is, by making himself a Greek; because the most criminal and good-for-nothing man among the Greeks, since he pertains to the generation of the gods, is incomparably greater than the most just and magnanimous man who could have issued forth from Rome during the time she was a republic, or from any generation whatsoever, although better in its customs, sciences, strength, judgment, beauty and authority. For these are natural endowments despised by the gods, and left to those who are not capable of greater privileges, that is to say, of those supernatural privileges which Divinity grants, such as that of being able to leap over the waters, that of making crabs dance, that of making lame men perform the caprioles, that of enabling moles to see without glasses, and other beautiful and innumerable gallantries. With this he [Orion] will persuade them that philosophy, all contemplation and all magic that could make them similar to us, are nothing but follies, that every heroic act is only cowardice, and that ignorance is the best science²⁸ in the world because it is acquired without labor and does not cause the mind to be affected by melancholy. With this, he can perhaps reclaim and restore the veneration and honor we have lost, and besides advancing these, see to it that our scoundrels should be considered gods because they are Greeks or are Hellenized."

Momus goes on to explain that there is a danger that Orion may make them believe that "Jove is not Jove, but that Orion is Jove and that all the gods are nothing but chimeras and fantasies".²⁹

At the very heart of this criticism of Christianity is a rejection of the soteriological necessity of Christ. Bruno, following the Neoplatonists, instead sees contemplation and magic as the means by which man attains salvation, or at least becomes more god-like. That is, that man must save himself and cannot acquire grace through the actions of another. Implicit in this is the rejection of the Protestant belief in justification through faith alone. Works certainly matter to Bruno, but not as frivolous acts (such as miracles) without lasting impact. Civic and personal virtue are central to Bruno's vision, whereby man engag-

27 De Leon-Jones, Karen S. *Giordano Bruno and the Kabbalah*. New York: Bison Books, 2004.

28 possible allusion to Cabala

29 Imerti, 256.

es and works to improve society and himself, instead of avoiding the material world and hoping for a better life in heaven. Elsewhere, Bruno mocks the idea of heaven, believing that since the universe is infinite and in constant motion, there can be no static state after death; Instead, Bruno advances the doctrine of metempsychosis, which he attributed to the Pythagoreans. The Jews are also indicted in this passage, where the idea of a single chosen people is mocked. By grouping the Jews and Christians together, Bruno is again implying that they are part of a corrupted tradition lineage.

This corruption stems, as we have seen, from the Judeo-Christian conception of Divinity. Jove and the Olympians openly discuss the contemporary religious affairs of Bruno's time, but Jehovah is conspicuously absent from the discussions. Instead, the attributes of the Biblical God are bestowed upon his Roman counterpart. Since all names for divinity are imperfect labels for the unnamable, Bruno is implying that God might just as accurately be called Jove as Jehovah and that, by extension, the Biblical narrative is to be taken no more literally or seriously than classical myth. While Bruno certainly believes in 'God' as the Platonic first principle, he does not believe that God is simultaneously and literally an angry Semitic storm deity who smites the enemies of Israel and sent his only son to redeem the world. Bruno, in fact, sees this last doctrine as idolatry, because the Christians worship Christ as divine, instead of worshipping the divine in Christ. For Bruno, God is not a separate entity, distinct from Nature, but rather all of Nature is God's manifestation. Man, as part of Nature, is also divine, and therefore needs no intercession from a separate deity. Jove is said to represent each person and the gods are the faculties of the soul, reaffirming the divine in man and man's capacity for divine action through 'magic'. In fact, all the gods are said to have once been incarnated humans, who were recognized for their virtue. So it is through the cultivation of virtue, as outlined in the *Spaccio*, and not through blind faith, that man reaches his full potential.

In conclusion, although Bruno praises Egyptian religion in the *Spaccio*, this is but one of many themes and not the blueprint of his reform. And although Bruno makes use of the Hermetic writings, the whole of his philosophy cannot be called Hermetic. Bruno's philosophy is a syncretic Neoplatonism, which he sees as representing the wisdom of the Ancients. Bruno argues for the universal acceptance of this philosophy while, at the same time, setting it against and satirizing the corresponding Christian doctrines. Ultimately, what Bruno is doing is calling for the rejection of the corrupted strain of wisdom,

which, he believes, entered the Hellenized world through Judaism. In its stead, Bruno envisions a philosophical pantheism, a magical religion of Nature, in which man takes responsibility for his own salvation and strives for virtue.

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A MYSTIC'S GIFT OF LOVE

THE VISION OF EDWARD CARPENTER

by Finn McMillan

"Through these instruments God by Himself creates all this, and all things partake of God; since this is so, they are God. Therefore, in creating all things He creates Himself; and He can never cease to create for He Himself never ceases to be. As God has no end, so His handiwork has neither beginning nor end."

— CORPUS HERMETICUM, XVI. 17-19

"0 = 2"

— ALEISTER CROWLEY

"Nirvana and Samsara are one."

— BUDDHA

One cannot underestimate the courage of a visionary such as Edward Carpenter. Seldom may have been the times he felt understood by, or part of, the society in which he lived and which he so strenuously endeavoured to improve. At a time when the trial of Oscar Wilde fascinated a country in its lurid attentions, Edward Carpenter embraced his homosexuality and not only promoted, but tried to explain, the concept of what he called "the intermediate sex" (in dimensions that went beyond simple same-sex expression). Although possibly only quaint by today's standards, it is perhaps hard to appreciate the robust idealism of one whose advocacy of feminism, vegetarianism, "naturalism", Eastern mysticism, and the political relevance of making one's own sandals, would have relegated this great mystic, poet and political visionary to the category of simple crank by the great majority of his peers.

Edward Carpenter considered himself a scholar of religious and mystic traditions, writing books that described his own experiences, such as *Adam's Peak To Elephanta*, and more comprehensive critiques such as *Pagan And Christian Creeds: Their Origin And Meaning*. He also wrote extensively on the process of human evolution (sexual and social) in texts such as *The Intermediate Sex*,

Love's Coming Of Age and *The Drama Of Love And Life*. In *Civilisation: Its Cause And Cure*, Carpenter presents as sociologist and anthropologist. To many, it is as politician, anarchist and socialist that he was most relevant to his time - he was a prodigious pamphleteer, letter-writer and essayist able to write eloquently in terms of grand political theory and was not afraid to demonstrate that politics is about the concerns of the individual, as his *A Letter To The Employees Of The Midland And Other Railway Companies* reveals. Further perusal of his prodigious folio shows that he was also a thoughtful writer on art, ethics and health.

Sometimes, to be so broad in one's attentions and interests can lead to a dissipation of will and invite the accusation of dilettantism. For one who seeks to find in Carpenter's work a single manifesto, they would probably find the purest distillation of his thought in the epic text *Towards Democracy*. And in this wonderful work the sensitive mind can readily glean the value this man holds for seekers of truth and justice - social and religious, political and personal - in his time and in ours.

Readers of the Magical Philosophy Series may be familiar with the evocative beauty of Edward Carpenter's poem *Towards Democracy*. Denning and Phillips suggest that the excerpts quoted in the first two editions of *Mysteria Magica* ultimately illustrate the Adept's quest and attainment. They also say of the work:

"That great and noble poem shows forth the phases of psychosophical development, and the functions and faculties of the psyche, in profound clarity; at the same time it is not a general treatise, and the subject-matter is seen and felt through the idiom of Carpenter's personality and no other. The student to whom this work appeals is urged not to limit his knowledge of it to the passages given here: he should acquire a copy of the complete work, in

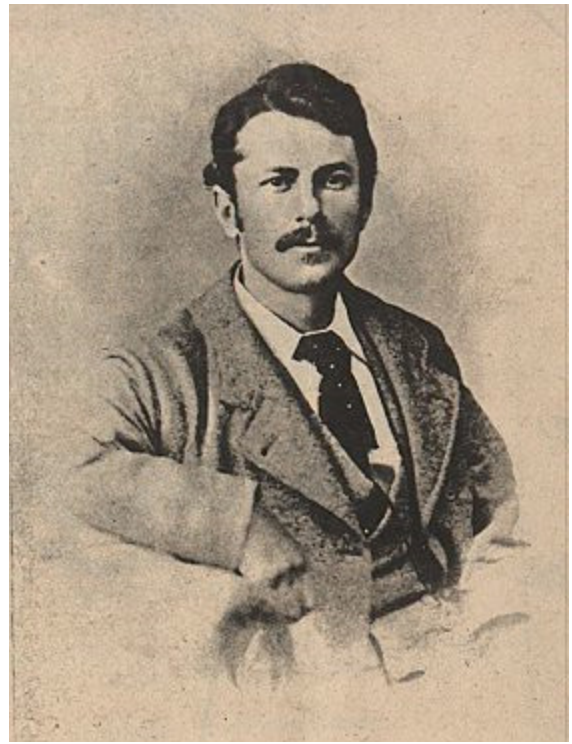
which much of vision and power will supplement his study of Volume IV of this series (*The Triumph of Light*)."

Towards Democracy does indeed provide a wonderful and poetic resource charting the progress of the evolving soul, but further examination of the life and works of Edward Carpenter uncovers more - a Western mystic who provides timely value in a post-modern society and rare relevance for the modern magi.

To rightly perceive Edward Carpenter requires, from the outset, the capacity to appreciate the challenge of paradox. In few people are we confronted with quite so many provocative, and occasionally confounding, tensions. This was a patriot vigorously critical of his country, a man both a product of his time and a stern repudiator of its conventions. This was a political man not bound to the political system, an activist whose calls for revolution were pitched to the religious, the sexual, and the social dimensions of the human condition as much as to the political and the corporate. He has been described as an advocate of a "greater Socialism" whose call for justice and liberty transcended the merely economic to include the social, spiritual and personal evolution of the individual.

That he was a comfortable middle-class child of a large family who disdained his advantages to live with the working class and to espouse their cause, or that this highly-educated Fellow of Trinity Hall resigned his clerical fellowship in order to commit to the University Extension movement in the north of England, is perhaps simply a reflection of a strong-willed idealist. But he could also abide in worlds rarely considered complementary - this one-time Anglican curate of St. Edward's Church, Cambridge, who describes his journeys in India and Ceylon with the Hindu teacher Gnani in his "Adam's Peak To Elephanta", this "socialist-mystic" who saw both truth and opportunity as surely in politics as spirituality, this poet whose superlative poetry glorified love as eros, agape and philia who also found himself in Paris seeking the services of male prostitutes - could appreciate experiences difficult for his contemporaries (and perhaps even "moderns") to reconcile.

This challenging man, variously described as "modest" and "charismatic", "cranky" and "gentle," can become for some of us an ideal model of the soul that realises it is only in the balancing of opposites, the transcending of inner conflicts, that the highest attainments can be found.



Edward Carpenter

*

The focus of this essay is to present Edward Carpenter in his role as mystic, a spiritual visionary relevant to the modern Western world and a guide of inestimable value to the student of High Magical philosophy. Both the "man on the street" and the student of magic alike are prone to view the concept of mysticism with attitudes ranging from confusion to disdain, and in the context of Western religious cultural development this is hardly surprising. As Cardinal Newman once quipped, "mysticism starts in mist and ends in schism." The concept can be challenging, confronting and almost inevitably confusing. (Too) simply put, mysticism can be described as the direct and numinous union of human and Divine, wherein no separation between the two exists. Indeed, no "two" exists at all - Man and God, Heaven and Earth, are essentially one, however it requires the vision of the mystic to *know* this. This "mystic vision" suggests a state of being which transcends the rational and discursive mind. (Interestingly, the typical mistranslation of the Greek gospel term *metanoia* is "redemption", whereas in reality it simply means "to go beyond the rational mind". When Christ talked of "redemption" he was simply exhorting seekers to attain this transcendent and *mystic* state of mind.)

How does Edward Carpenter, as mystic, talk to us? First, let us acknowledge the concept of mysticism remains fundamentally alien to much of Western thinking. To the Western mind, mysticism, almost by defini-

tion, suggests an essential *separation* from the world. To both mage and man on the street alike, the idea seems repellent. Using the common understanding of the term, social engagement and “self” improvement, even evolution itself, seem impossible. This attitude no doubt arises from the concept of the cloistered monk and the world-denying yogi sitting atop mountains, or behind walls, viewing existence through the narrow and selfish prism of their own self-absorption. This essay is not the place to argue how fair this caricature is, but it probably accurately portrays the tone of resistance held by many. Quite apart from some of the abounding misconceptions, it is also fair to say that much of the “culture of mysticism” is firmly rooted in Eastern teaching, much of which has been poorly communicated to Western querents. It is also fair to say that the mysticism typical of Buddhist, Daoist and Hindu thought is not necessarily something that easily appeals to one brought up to a Western worldview.

Like many great Western mystics before him, known for their social engagement and ecstatic devotion, Edward Carpenter espoused a typically Western path to the divine. *Towards Democracy* has been described as “socio-political mysticism” which aptly describes Carpenter’s endeavour to express the social/political and the personal/spiritual in the same language, the same vision. The question is asked - was his vision a mystic, or Utopian, one? The apparent paradox points directly to the higher Hermetic wisdom, “as above, so below” or the Christian, “Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven”. Carpenter argues the idea that the two should be considered separate is *itself* the fundamental delusion, and *Towards Democracy* coherently illustrates this.

Further, in *England’s Ideal* he asks of the individual,

Is he a benefactor of society? -- is it quits between him and his countrymen and women? -- or is he a dependent upon them, a vacuum and a minus quantity? -- a beggar, alms-receiver, or thief? And not only What is he? but What is he trying to be? For on the Ideal hangs the whole question. Here at last we come back to the root of national life.

And not only is the individual somewhat defined by his relationship with the collective, but also the collective is determined by the state of the individual. Again, from *England’s Ideal*

For as the nation is composed of individuals, so the forces which move the individual, the motives, the

ideals, which he has in his mind, are, it seems to me, the main factors in any nation’s progress, and the things which ultimately decide the direction of its movement.

This is no vision of spiritual attainment which espouses separation between the world and the individual. The idea of mystic as recluse, devoid of concern for the world, or under the impression that the affairs of the world are not the affairs of the mystic, was one which would have appalled Carpenter.

*

Whereas Buddhism may typically suggest that emotions and thoughts are fundamentally illusory, the *Zohar* teaches the Western mystic that “tears are the gift of God”. Whereas the Daoist may quote from the Daodejing that “the world is a mysterious instrument and those who try to shape it fail” the Western mystic has a long tradition of social engagement. Where the Eastern mystic may profess a dispassionate quest for Union, her Western counterpart traditionally finds this Union in ecstatic longing.

Where the Buddhist may typically consider compassion the inevitable flowering of the attainment of wisdom, the Western mystic has typically considered the non-dual experience of the Divine is to be achieved through love, from which is born wisdom. It is this centrality of *love*, the raising of the sentimental to the sublime, the emotional to the ecstatic, with which Edward Carpenter guides the Western mystic to God. From his *By The Shore*, consider this mystic and ecstatic paean:

The play goes on!

Suddenly I am the great living Ocean itself--the awful Spirit of Immensity creeps over my face. I am in love with it. All night and ages and ages long and for ever I pour my soul out to it in love. I spread myself out broader and broader for ever, that I may touch it and be with it everywhere. There is no end. But ever and anon it maddens me with its touch. I arise and sweep away my bounds

or from *April*,

and Sky and Earth in one another’s arms Melted,
and all of Heaven spent in streams of love Towards
the Loved one.

In *Love’s Vision* Carpenter beautifully describes the experi-

ence Western adepts and Christian mystics might both consider the climax of their attainment when he wrote

At night in each other's arms, content, overjoyed,
resting deep deep down in the darkness, Lo!
the heavens opened and He appeared-- Whom
no mortal eye may see, Whom no eye clouded
with Care, whom none who seeks after this or
that, whom none who has not escaped from self.

There--in the region of Equality, in the world of
Freedom no longer limited, standing as a lofty peak
in heaven above the clouds, from below hidden, yet
to all who pass into that region most clearly vis-
ible-- He the Eternal appeared.

Typical of the Western mystic traditions Carpenter recog-
nised and sought union with the Divine through love.
But he does so in a way important to the modern West-
ern seeker - without dependence upon the trappings of
Church and religion, those very trappings which have
kept much of the beauty of the West's spiritual history
hidden from the gaze of the would-be seeker. It is unde-
niable that the legacy of millennia of ecclesiastical power
has rendered much of the treasure of Western spirituality
irrelevant to many. No matter the value of St John of the
Cross, Hildegard of Bingen, St. Therese, Meister Eckhart,
Thomas Merton, et al their voices remain sadly unheard
by those they might have reached. Like cherubs discarded
with the bathwater, these pearls of Western mysticism
have become all but lost as the state religion's stocks have
fallen.

Edward Carpenter speaks to us in a new voice, a
voice that holds the wisdom of the ages, and it is a voice
unmuted by sad associations. He gives us this "gift of love"
and shows how the mystic need not be removed from the
world, self-absorbed and selfish; he may be passionate and
fully alive. Where a typical repudiation of the mystic path
may be that it is nihilistic and focuses so totally on the
death of the ego, Carpenter could speak of this death as
the precursor to fuller life. Where the ego shrinks from
death in the pursuit of continued life *as is*, Carpenter talks
of the pursuit of death in order to experience true living.
Consider the following passage from *Towards Democracy*,
(*Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter Here*), where, like a true
mystic, he confounds the established dialectic and ex-
plores the paradox of life in death, and death as living:

To Die - for this into the World you came.
Yes, to abandon more than you ever conceived as

possible:

All ideals, plans - even the very best and most
unselfish - all hopes and desires,
All formulas of morality, all reputation for virtue
or consistency or good sense;
All cherished theories, doctrines, systems of
knowledge,
Modes of life, habits, predilections, preferences,
superiorities, weaknesses, indulgences,
Good health, wholeness of limb and brain, youth,
manhood, age - nay, life itself - in one word:
To die - for this into the World you came.
All to be abandoned, and when they have finally
been abandoned,
Then to be returned to be used - and then only to
be rightly used, to be free and open forever.

*

And what of the mage, august in wisdom and powerful
in knowledge? Does the socio-political ecstatic Carpen-
ter provide manna for one whose studies may have only
variably touched upon the shores of the mystic land? It
should. The mystic vision is more than at the heart of the
Hermetic tradition; it *is* the heart of the Hermetic tradi-
tion. From the Corpus Hermeticum (I:26) it is writ clear,

This is the end, the Supreme Good, for those who
have had the higher knowledge: to become God.

Not to know God, not to love God, not to fear, worship
or adore God, but to *become* God. The mage may not de-
liberately pursue the path of the mystic, but she must, if
her path be pursued aright, ultimately arrive at the same
end. It is not to suggest that the techniques of the mys-
tic need supplant the pursuit of knowledge that the Her-
meticist is called to, but the Hermeticist should ideally
know *where* this pursuit must take him. As Aleister Crow-
ley wrote (*Liber Corde Cincti Serpente*) "... to await *Thee*
is the end, not the beginning." (Interestingly, in his trea-
tise on mysticism and magick, *Book IV*, he also said that
mysticism alone was sufficient to take one to the summit
of attainment, however "... the mind will probably not
let him remain in that simplicity...Before concentrating
the lower principle, the mind, one must concentrate the
higher principle, the Will." Hence, the purpose and func-
tion of magick.)

To ask if the mage, robed and resplendent, archi-
val in her knowledge of gematria, sigils and signs, precise
in the pronunciation of ancient languages, can benefit

from the absurd simplicity of the mystic, is, of course, an impertinent question. The two are not the enemies that advocates of either all-too often imply. Nonetheless, in similar vein to the manner in which we often too easily separate the mystical from the socio-political, so do we often separate the mystical from the magickal - particularly in the Hermetic traditions.

I would suggest that, to a degree, this is an entirely understandable tendency. The two paths (the Hermetic and mystical) encourage different practice and attract different characters. As Carl Jung suggested, those drawn to the sanguine/thinking function, typical of the Hermeticist, may well find some difficulty in relating to the melancholic/emotional mode typical of the devotional and ecstatic experience of the mystic. But of course, this experience is not by any means foreign to the Hermetic tradition. Practitioners of the Ogdoadic system are acutely familiar with the wild and dancing Melanotheos, and the impassioned "Telling Of Joy" from the rite of Transubstantiation where it is declared "This is the joy of the Priest-Initiate of the Glorious Star: the Sacrament of the Sun and the Ecstasy of the Snake. This is the joy of the Lords of Topaz; the Indwelling Fire and the Irradiation of the Temple. This is the joy of the God: the conjoined ecstasy of Adorer and Adored in the Rite of Agathadaimon." The lust and abandon of the seeker of the Beloved, the yearning for the embrace of the Holy Guardian Angel, is an integral aspect of magical attainment.

Such passionate yearning is readily apparent in this system and there is home for both the intellectual and the devotional. It is probably naive to suggest, though, that both come equally easily to any given practitioner. And it is here that Edward Carpenter, as Western mystic, can speak to us, and remind us of the importance of balance and the nature of the *complete* work. The Hermetic and magickal traditions can become a lure to the intellectually-inclined, whose comfort with intellectual abstractions can lead to a hypertrophied function at the expense of a balanced evolution on the path. The devotional mystic reminds us that the magickal path is one which raises the whole human to the spiritual heights, but only inasmuch as there is balance. The greater the heights assayed, the broader the base must be. The Mage of the Tarot demonstrates this; upon his table and ready at hand lay all the magickal implements, none more valuable or important than the rest. Balance is the key, in capacity, practice and growth. In the *Magical Philosophy* series, Denning and Phillip describe the Ogdoadic symbol of two interlocking and interlacing squares as reflecting the "Janus face", which represents the uplifted adept who sees, simultane-

ously, the world of Heaven and the world of Man as he balances both perspectives, enjoys both visions, as One.

Edward Carpenter reminds the mage that the Great Work is a work of balance, as it is an endeavour requiring the sort of discipline indicated when he wrote:

Freedom has to be won afresh every morning. Every morning thou must put forth thy strength afresh upon the world, to create out of chaos the garden in which thou walkest.

*

In conclusion, I acknowledge that without reading *The Magical Philosophy* series, I might never have known Edward Carpenter. His vision is one I will therefore always associate with the Ogdoadic tradition and it is an ongoing pleasure, and challenge, to find associations between the two. And as the theme of regeneration is integral to this tradition, I look to *Towards Democracy* to see how Edward Carpenter's mystic poetry might inspire a light of deeper insight regarding the concept. Where, to paraphrase Nietzsche who once said that his formula of success is a "yes," a "no," a "straight line" and a "goal", the practitioner of Ogdoadic magick recognises that it is more akin to yes, no, a *spiral* and a goal. The yes and the no are the polarities which provide the parameters of our ongoing consciousness, with the spiral representing the process of regeneration operating between them.

Nowhere can I find a better description of the principle and process of regeneration, particularly as it might apply to the mystic-mage, as in this excerpt from *The Secret of Time And Satan*:

And so at last I saw Satan appear before me- magnificent, fully formed.

Feet first, with shining limbs, he glanced down from above among the bushes,

And stood there erect, dark-skinned, with nostrils dilated with passion;

(In the burning intolerable sunlight he stood, and I in the shade of the bushes);

Fierce and scathing the effluence of his eyes, and scornful of dreams and dreamers (he touched a rock hard by and it split with a sound like thunder);

Fierce the magnetic influence of his dusky flesh; his great foot, well-formed, was planted firm in the sand-with spreading toes;

'Come out' he said with a taunt, 'Art thou afraid

to meet me?’

And I answered not, but sprang upon him and smote him;

And he smote me a thousand times, and brashed and scorched and slew me as with hands of flame;

And I was glad, for my body lay there dead; and I sprang upon him again with another body;

And he turned upon me, and smote me a thousand times and slew that body;

And I was glad and sprang upon him again with another body-

And with another and another and again another;

And the bodies which I took on yielded before him and were like cinctures of flame upon me, but

I flung them aside;

And the pains which I endured in one body were powers which I wielded in the next; and I grew in strength, till at last I stood before him complete, with a body like his own and equal in might-exultant in pride and joy.

Then he ceased, and said, “I love thee.”

And lo! his form changed, and he leaned backwards and drew me upon him,

And bore me up into the air, and floated me over the topmost trees and the ocean, and round the curve of the earth under the moon-

Till we stood again in Paradise.



GUSTAV HOLST

MASTER OF MAGICAL MUSIC & SONG

by John Graham

*"The Heavenly Spheres make music for us,
The Holy Twelve dance with us,
All things join in the dance!
Ye who dance not, know not what we are knowing."*

— GUSTAV HOLST, IN A LETTER TO CLIFFORD BAX

Who can forget the first time they heard Holst's stunning suite of music, *The Planets*?¹ Whether it was as a child or adult, it is difficult to forget the immediate reaction to hearing the music, particularly the gargantuan "Mars." Love it or hate it, it is magical, powerful and evocative music.

The energy of "Mars, the Bringer of War," is represented by a frenetic and unrelenting march in 5/4 time. The orchestration of the piece is stuffed full of brass instruments giving the music incredible raw force and sense of movement. Kettle drums boom as they are struck with the hard-ended sticks. The strings are furiously struck with the wood of the bows, producing a harsh and almost sabre-rattling sound. The music grows in size, energy and volume until it reaches almost ear-drum rupturing level before coming to a powerful conclusion. I still get a real buzz of energy from listening to the piece after many years. What a contrast to the gentle "Venus, the Bringer of Peace" that follows "Mars" in the suite.

Many Hermetic magicians of the 20th and 21st century have integrated key sections of *The Planets* into their meditations and rituals to great effect. In terms of the Ogdoadic system, the music is particularly suited for meditation and inclusion in a number of the planetary workings of *Planetary Magick* and much First and Second Hall work. However, Holst has much more to offer those looking to add additional colour to their magical practice.



Gustav Holst

Where did this man find the inspiration for his music? Where did he come from and what were his interests and philosophy?

I first became more interested in the spiritual side of Gustav Holst's work when my own job took me to the West Country of England and the spa town of Cheltenham. Unexpectedly, here was Holst's birthplace. I was intrigued to find out a little more about this enigmatic man whose music I had grown up to.

His birthplace of Cheltenham is a small and strange English town with a number of esoteric characters linked to it over the past 120 years, including Florence Farr (Golden Dawn / Theosophical Society), W. G. Gray (Society of the Inner Light / Sangreal Foundation), Murray Hope (The Atlanteans, et al.), Jaz Coleman (occult philosopher, musician and Composer in Residence for the European Union), not to mention the esoteric publishers Helios Books (Gareth Knight). The town is also a stone's throw from the powerful and ancient Rollright Stones, an abundance of old Knights Templar sites as well as Dr. John Dee's Upton-upon-Severn.

¹ An excellent recording of this is available on Naxos 8.550193



Neptune Fountain, Cheltenham Promenade

Holst's birthplace is also blessed by being situated at the foot of the Cotswold scarp, underneath the gentle "Seven Springs," source of the great river Thames, (known by the Roman's as "The Isis"). At the heart of the town rests a truly magnificent water feature of Neptune riding his sea-horses up out of the waves. It seems apt that the magic of *The Planets* suite should be born from the cradle of this exceptional spa town.

Holst was born in 1874 and spent his early life growing up in Cheltenham. An oversensitive and unhappy child, he was plagued by eyesight problems, asthma and neuritis in his hands. As a child he detested practicing the violin, but relished the piano.

As he grew older, Holst failed his initial attempts to gain scholarships to the Royal College of Music and various other colleges in London. Undeterred, he gained his first professional engagement as an organist in 1893. Within a short space of time he also became organist and choirmaster of another local choral society in the heart of the Cotswolds. These experiences helped him to develop a solid comprehension of the workings of a choir. Choral music and the choral tradition in England would remain vitally important throughout the rest of his life.

In the autumn of 1895 Gustav met English composer musician and choral expert Ralph Vaughan Williams for the first time. It was the beginning of a lifelong friendship with a person who would do much to preserve the ancient folk songs and customs of England. It was also the beginning of their habit of playing compositions to each other and sharing ideas while still working on their scores. Sometimes they would walk along Chiswick Mall or the Thames with other college friends while discussing the poetry of Walt Whitman or

the works of William Morris and Edward Carpenter.² During this time Holst was also introduced to George Bernard Shaw, brief member of the Golden Dawn.

In 1899 Holst developed a voracious appetite for Sanskrit, Eastern Mysticism and, in particular, the principles of Hinduism. Of specific interest to him was the *Rig Veda* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. The limited translations available at the time seemed lacking in substance, so he joined the School of Oriental Languages at the London Institute to learn the language and make his own poetic translations.

While there is no evidence to confirm that he was a formal member of the Theosophical Society, Holst was a certainly a close friend of people who were. It is evident from his body of work that he shared the same views. Notably, his stepmother had also been a member of the Society and regularly talked to him about its philosophy in his formative years. In London, Holst became friends with GRS Mead, Theosophist and translator of many important hermetic works including *Pistis Sophia*, and *Corpus Hermeticum*. It is thought that Mead introduced him at this time to the well-known astrologer Alan Leo, who was also a Sanskrit scholar and a fellow member, along with Holst, of the Royal Asiatic Society. Mead and Leo became close friends.

Holst also became good friends with Clifford Bax, an "ardent Theosophist," playwright, poet, novelist and critic who also shared a keen interest in astrology. Bax moved in circles that frequented him with W B Yeats, Crowley, Austin Osman Spare, Florence Farr, John Symonds and "Dame" Frieda Harris, the artist who gave life to Crowley's magnificent tarot, the *Book of Thoth*. As Holst's astrological expertise grew he became renowned for regularly casting horoscopes for his friends and their



Clifford Bax

² Edward Carpenter's work is of interest to the Ogdoadic practitioner. Key works include "Towards Democracy" (excerpts reprinted in *The Magical Philosophy: Book 1*), "Pagan and Christian Creeds," and "The Healing of Nations and the Hidden Sources of Their Strife."

families. From his interests and friendships at this time sprang the creativity that would become *The Planets*. Many other musical works would also be sparked into creation from his friendships and spiritual interests. One of the least well-known but perhaps most interesting works is his “Hymn of Jesus,”³ a profound Gnostic exploration of time and space. It is well worth further exploration.

One of the core elements of Ogdoadic daily practice is the Solar Adorations. At least two key versions have been practiced by the Tradition. One previously used was Egyptian-based; the other one is based on a poetic rendering of one of the great Vedic Hymns, *Usha* (translated as “The Dawn”). This is where practitioners of the Art Magic may be particularly interested in Holst’s work. Holst made the following interpretation of *Usha* which is beautifully poetic. I suspect many Ogdoadic practitioners will both recognise and appreciate it:

Usha (Dawn)

Behold the Dawn, the fairest of all visions,
Day’s glory now appears.
Arise! For the night hath fled!
Arise and greet the Dawn.
Welcome her! Unveiled she now appeareth,
All things greet her radiant smile.
Borne by wingèd horse and car
She steals across the sky.
Child of heav’n arrayed in shining garments,
Blushing maiden draw thou near:
Sovran lady of earth and sky,
We hail thee as our queen.
Heav’n’s breath awakeneth creation,
The sky is all aflame,
Th’eastern Portals open wide.
The Sun draws nigh.
Greeting thee, the holy fire ascendeth,
Greeting thee, our hymns arise,
Greeting thee, the Sun appeareth,
Greeting thee, thy worshippers
Bow down and bless and adore.

This is a highly devotional interpretation of the *Usha*. There are a number of beautifully sung recordings of this and other Vedic Hymns attentively put to music by Holst. Perhaps *Vac* (Speech) is one other inspirational

interpretation worth quoting. There are shades of Neith, Sophia, Leukothea and the Magna Mater in this piece:

Vac (Speech)

I, the queen of all,
First of those that mankind worship,
Worthy of all praise,
I proclaim aloud my wisdom.
Hearken unto me,
My word is true:
Unto God and Man
I bring blessing,
Pouring forth my wealth,
Making wise the man I cherish.
Through me each one lives,
Each one breathes and sees and hearkens.
All unite in me,
I alone sustain creation,
Compassing the earth
I reach t’ward heav’n.
In the water’s depth
I have my dwelling,
On the summit of the universe
I bring forth the Father.
Beyond the earth and sky
I reign in my mystic grandeur.

An article that identifies more detail of the influence of the Theosophical Society and related thought on the development of the *Aurum Solis* is well overdue.

I hope you’ve enjoyed this brief introduction to the music and magic of Gustav Holst. If you’re interested in further explorations of Holst and related matters, I would strongly recommend the following sources.

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³ According to GRS Mead, the “Hymn to Jesus” describes a ritual of initiation involving a Master and his students, who form a circle enclosing a would-be initiate in a question-and-answer dialogue.

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THRICE GREAT HERMES

PRIMAL GRAND MASTER & FLAME-BEARING LORD OF TOPAZ

by William Stoltz, MA

*“Was he one or many, merging
Name and fame in one,
Like a stream, to which, converging,
Many streamlets run? ...*

*Who shall call his dreams fallacious?
Who has searched and sought
All the unexplored and spacious
Universe of thought?*

*Who in his own skill confiding,
Shall with rule and line
Mark the boarder-land dividing
Human and divine?*

*Trismegistus! Three times greatest!
How thy name sublime
Has descended to this latest
Progeny of time!”*

— LONGFELLOW

Thrice-greatest Hermes, “Primal Grand Master and Flame-bearing Lord of Topaz” is a title used to identify our particular relationship to Hermes within the Ogdoadic tradition. In a broader context he is also the root source and presence of continuity within the greater Western Mystery Tradition and its many branches.

Exploring a presence as vast and essential as Hermes is also necessary to obtain a comprehensive understanding of “Hermeticism” and its relation to our Ogdoadic Mysteries: particularly to our cycle of initiations, magical training and teachings. Likewise, the recounting of his origin and related mythos avails us a relevant context for our focus in this issue of *The Ogdoadic Journal*.

Thrice Great Hermes (Hermes Trismegistus), a 1st century Egyptian title for the ancient Greek messenger god, is often identified with a set of texts known as the



Hermes Trismegistus, by Nigel Jackson. Reproduced by permission.

Corpus Hermeticum (and a later alchemical text known as *The Emerald Tablet*). The Hermeticum is a compilation of old Greco-Egyptian scriptures, dating from around the 1st to the 3rd century C.E. which stand as the inspiration for what we now know as the Hermetic Tradition: the premier cornerstone in the foundation of the greater Western Mystery Tradition. The *Corpus Hermeticum* was rediscovered and introduced to the western world of philosophy and spiritual exploration in the 15th century by Cosimo de Medici - father of the Renaissance – and Marsilio Ficino. This find was so significant to Medici and

Ficino that work on the newly discovered dialogues of Plato's were temporarily put aside until the *Corpus Hermeticum* could be properly translated by Ficino. Within the crucible of their Florentine academy, devoted to the pursuit of the Western Mysteries, and now enriched by these ancient texts, what we now call the Ogdoadic Tradition rapidly took root and began to flourish.

The Ogdoadic Tradition is not only linked to the Hermetic teachings through the Renaissance and the *Corpus Hermeticum* but also earlier historical influences that date from Egypt's old kingdom (2000 – 3000 BCE); giving added support to the continuous perpetuation of our current manifestation of Hermeticism. Additionally, as discussed in our second issue of *The Ogdoadic Journal* (Vol.1, No.2), Hermes, and particularly the principle of the number eight, are intrinsic to the force and form of Hermeticism being historically "Ogdoadic" in nature.

From the beginning of Greco-Egyptian history the Greek god Hermes was identified with the elder god Thoth and the ancient Egyptian city of eight: Hermopolis. From a yet earlier time Hermopolis was called Khemenu, meaning "the City of the Eight," in reference to the number of primeval gods of the Hermopolitan Ogdoad. In this respect Thoth also appears as a manifestation of Khnum (embodying an eightfold divine force) depicting one of the most ancient forms of the Agathodaimon ("Good Spirit"), itself a central regenerative figure in the Ogdoadic workings of the Astrum Sophia.

Additionally, references to the Knouphis-Agathodaimon are interwoven with Hermes and, from Egypt's early dynastic period to post-Christian Gnostic cults, were closely identified with him through the Knoum Agathodaimon; for here, in the ancient city of Khemenu the Ibis-headed Thoth, the god of mind and magic lived: thus marking the birth of Hermeticism. However, it was not until 172 BCE we find the first recorded reference to his name as "Thrice Great Hermes" found, inscribed in stone at the Ibis shrine in Sakara, Egypt.¹ Thoth, too, was referred to a "Djehuty pa aa, pa aa, pa aa" which means "Thoth, the great, the great, the great." An inscription with this title can be found in the Late Period temple of Khnum located at Esna.²

As others have noted, the Hermetic Tradition's ongoing research into this principle archetype adds im-

portant information about his nature and evolution.³ In the following sections we will discuss some of these aspects of the archetypal Hermes that are reflected in his myths, practical symbolism, and planetary associations.

The Great God Hermes

Mythology evolved as a language to express what could not be expressed in more concrete ways, or unseen realities behind the face of manifestation. In essence its use of image, story and metaphor is an ancient and universal form of psychology used to explore and express the mysteries of the divine, the human soul, and nature. It is likewise true the various mythic characters, places, and events are also metaphors for various archetypes, levels of the psyche, and developmental experiences interwoven in the spiritual topography of the stories. For example, some roles acknowledged Hermes as the bringer of dreams (the dream maker and its process); messenger of the Gods (intuition and creative inspiration); patron to thieves and tricksters (creator of illusion and fantasy); and the guide of souls through the underworld (the process of consciousness moving through and within the sub- and unconscious mind): he is after all (individually and collectively), our inner "trans-conscious" presence continually designing and weaving the fabric of our inner processes and perceptions.

Hermes, as the Greek god of the planet Mercury, also belongs to an ancient and widespread family of myths that span millennia of human history. He appears in times and places as Egypt's Thoth and Anubis, Orpheus to the Celts, the Babylonian Nabu, and Mercury the Roman version of the traditional Greek Hermes. Lesser known associations could also include Merlin from the Arthurian legends and even St. Christopher prior to his untimely demise from the Christian pantheon. However, it was the Greco-Egyptian Hermes Trismegistus from which the Hermetic Tradition derives its magical name, pervasive familiarity and much of its relevance.

Whether Hermes, or his counterpart the Egyptian Thoth, existed as actual incarnate beings is a matter of speculation.⁴ One theory, and perhaps the most credible, suggests that several authors, over time, contributed to the Corpus of Hermetic works attributed to

3 For further references and a concise overview see the introduction to the *Corpus Hermetica* by John Michael Greer at: <http://www.astrumsophia.org/hermetica/Hermetica.htm>

4 See the introduction to *The Hermetica* by Walter Scott or *Thrice Great Hermes* by G. R. S. Mead.

1 Gilles Quispels' preface from *The "Way of Hermes,"* (Duckworth 1999) citing the title "Greatest and Greatest God Great Hermes."

2 Hart 1986.217 "A Dictionary of Ancient Egyptian Gods and Goddesses" Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston, New York.

Hermes. In this respect Hermes Trismegistus may have been a pen-name used by apostles of the early Hermetic Tradition. This was certainly a common practice among Egyptian Pharaohs and Priests who would use the prefix of names from patron deities such as Ra or Ptah. Whatever the truth, all attributions eventually point to a peculiar ancient deific presence containing identical powers, attributes and similarities in their myths. Furthermore, as the central patron of the Hermetic tradition, magic and the Ogdoadic movement, Hermes is a being representing the manifestation of the “Divine Shepherd,” or Poimandres (Man–Shepherd) within the human psyche.⁵

So why is Hermes considered the Master Magician, patron of magic and primal initiator within the Western Hermetic Tradition? One reason can be found in his genealogy and birth stories. In one of the most well-known stories Hermes was secretly conceived by Zeus, the father of the gods, and Maia, or Faun, the goddess of the fields and daughter of Atlas. Hermes birth is said to have taken place in a cave at dawn or twilight (as was Christ, Mithras, Orpheus, King Arthur, etc.), thereby affirming him as a god who can function between and within the wide-ranging principles of light and darkness: a distinctive characteristic to his persona and myths. From birth he was a master of light and darkness, the known and unknown, the heights and the depths of the visible and invisible worlds. Furthermore he was favored by his companion deities who entrusted him with the vital role of Divine Herald and Messenger. The traditional Greek story describes him as no more than a babe, barely a day old, when he roused Olympus by stealing the cattle of Apollo. And this was just the beginning of his long career as a mischievous youth whose divine monkey business was often amusing, if not encouraged, by his fellow deities. Among all the gods and goddesses only Hermes appears to have the unusual powers to move and act freely within all worlds and domains with divine diplomatic immunity.

Yet another key piece of symbolism is found in his travels to other worlds. These always resulted in one form of major transformation or another to the other characters, their domains and their myths; this despite the fact that Hermes remained fundamentally unchanged. Needless to say there are powerful and profound mysteries underlying this symbolism which identify him as a primal agent of the divine alchemy. He is consistently, regardless

of his cultural myth, considered a true archetypal magician and master of transformation: the Grand Solar Priest and Primal Alchemist. It should also be stressed that although the mercurial gods were known as tricksters, and at times behind some form of tragedy or another, they are more universally known for their generosity, protection, and benevolence. In other words, even as a holder of great mysteries he also has a reputation for being capricious and capable of lacing the party cups with poison. In respect to his roles as Master Magician and Primal Initiator our main interest here is the role he plays in the mysteries known as the Regeneration, Palingenesis, or Rebirth. In this respect he is also known, within our tradition, as the Agathodaimon, the Spirit Mercurius, the Great Hermetic Androgyne, and the Lapis Philosophorum. In his most ancient presence he is Knoum and Knouphis-Agathodaimon (the Winged Serpent): being the Sovereign Image and Principle of The Regeneration. The mention of Hermes as an inner plane presence (“Primal Grand Master and Flame-bearing Lord of Topaz”) of the Ogdoadic Tradition appears publicly for the first time in the 2001 writings of Osborne Phillips. Any of these persona are worthy of further study and meditation seeing they infer profound bearing for any serious student of Hermetics. In a cumulative respect he is, by far, the most important figure in magic past, present, and in the foreseeable future.

The Palingenesis, within the ancient regenerative mystery schools, is the culmination of the initiatic journey through the lesser mysteries, and eventually, ushered through the hidden gate to the greater mysteries of adepthood. The Regeneration thus marks a key division between the lesser and greater mysteries. In alchemical terms the initiation of the Palingenesis is attainment through the transformation of the base elements of self into the incorruptible gold of the sun.

A few fundamental points concerning initiation into the Regenerative Mysteries include: 1) the presentation, in form and spirit, of the Holy Agathodaimon 2) the proper preparation of the aspirant’s mind which must be stilled and receptive to the divine and its process 3) the sanctification of the Soul through symbolic death and resurrection (rebirth) thus fusing a link with the initiate and the regenerative force 4) the mystical transmission of the Lapis Philosophorum through the ancient lineage holders of the Palingenesis, and 5) the ratification of this process through token, name, and companionship in the Stella Gloriosa, the inner order of the Ogdoadic Tradition.⁶

⁵ G.R.S Mead’s translation from the Corpus Hermeticum recounts this dialogue from chapter I, verse 2: “And I do say: Who art thou? He saith: I am Man-Shepherd [Ποιμάνδρης], Mind of all-masterhood; I know what thou desirest and I’m with thee everywhere.”

⁶ Cf. the structure of the *Domus Sacrificii*.



Hermes: The Magical Mind

Extant works attributed to Hermes include the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the *Emerald Tablet* (of a later origin) which contain some of the oldest surviving source material on the Hermetic mysteries of regeneration and rebirth. Nowhere are the formula, teachings, and practical application of these mysteries more alive and intact than in the Ogdoadic Mystery Tradition; for it is from the *Corpus Hermeticum* and *Emerald Tablet* that the current Third Hall Rite of Regeneration is directly influenced. Additionally, the ancient rite and teachings of the Regeneration form the preeminent basis to initiate and establish an adept into the Greater Mysteries of the Hermetic Traditions. By this we must conclude that the Ogdoadic Tradition is, above all, of a Hermetic nature. This is not to say threads of other system are not integrated into our tradition, but rather that Hermeticism is at its fundamental core.⁷

The hallmark of the Palingenesis then emphasizes the Hermetic Alchemical process of consciously separating, recombining, and transmuting basic elements for the regeneration of the human psyche. Historically these have been the most guarded and secret of the mystery traditions' treasures, that outside the circle of initiates have been veiled in obscure alchemical symbolism and allegory: such as those reflected in the *Splendor Solis*. To enhance our understanding of the alchemical process of

initiation, the symbolism and allegory of the *Splendor Solis* is being explored now with greater depth and clarity.⁸ With this new research on *Splendor Solis*, the mysteries of the Regeneration have become more clearly illuminated for adepts and neophytes alike. Even so, without the inner keys illuminated by direct initiatic experience and insight, such as those provided by an authentic initiatory body, full understanding of these mysteries remains incomplete on the deeper levels of the human psyche.

Additionally, prior to 2001, the actual ceremony of The Palingenesis was a closely guarded secret known only to the select few initiates of the Stella Gloriosa. In 2001 however, the Palingenesis along with the two Outer Order grade ceremonies of the Aurum Solis, were released by Osborne Phillips (Leon Barcynski) the then-Grand Master of that Order.⁹ Despite understandable resistance (mostly from senior members of the Order) and controversy over the release of these initiations their current visibility now shows a profound brilliance and initiatic insight on the part of the authors and prior custodians of the Aurum Solis.¹⁰ It also becomes obvious, for those under the illusion that the Ogdoadic system was cloned from others (i.e., Rosicrucian, Golden Dawn, or Masonic origins), that our tradition is far more authentic, unique and potent than many anticipated. Further, it is evident how directly the Third Hall initiation reflects teachings and dynamics rendered directly from the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the *Emerald Tablet* of Hermes Trismegistus, and (what little we actually knew) of the inner workings of the ancient regenerative bodies of initiation.

All things considered, despite the controversy, I believe the decision to reveal these mysteries was done with great pains and caution to carry out, as well as possible, the will of the Tradition's inner plane powers. Additionally, we can never presume to fully understand the providence of inner plane guardians in matters of such profound spiritual and historical import. In any case – it is done!

Within the Ogdoadic Tradition, the Third Hall Rite of the Regeneration, or Palingenesis, is also referred to as the Rite of Elevation: wherein the initiate is raised to the grade of Adept. Essential to this process is the alchemical technique and channeling of force from the up-

⁸ This publication's article exploring *Splendor Solis* and its alchemical influence on the Ogdoadic Tradition – and forthcoming articles in the series – are authored by Kerry Wisner.

⁹ See *Aurum Solis Initiation Ceremonies and Inner Magical Techniques*.

¹⁰ In his forward to that book, Leon Barcynski commemorates the creative and brilliant contributions of our late and beloved Grand Master Melita Denning.

⁷ See Pagan Regeneration by Harold Willoughby at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/pr/index.htm>

per Briatic plane, by way of the anthropomorphic Agathodaimon, while simultaneously unlocking and transmuting the hidden material within the deeper strata of the human psyche. In addition, the divine presence of the ophiomorphic Agathodaimon is also brought forward to complete the necessary dynamics of the Divine Alchemy. This alchemical process results in a permanent link between the candidate, the dual presence of the Agathodaimon (Hermes) and the grace of the supernal light. In the final ceremonial stage of this transmutation, by what Levi refers to as the “universal agent” or Lapis Philosophorum, the Flame of Divine Alchemy¹¹ infuses the heart thereby affixing one of the most profound steps in an initiatory cycle. Without this “inner plane” transmission any initiation into adepthood would be little more than a tour of theatrical symbolism in these mysteries – if that.

For the chief initiator to manifest The Agathodaimon in this fashion is to wield the powers of transmutation required in transforming the initiate’s heart into alchemical gold: thereby raising them to the level of “true” adepthood. It is also true that one who transmits the Regeneration must have first received it from another who also received the Palingenesis. For any one fortunate enough to have undergone a properly conducted rite of the Regeneration, the Agathodaimon principle and Regeneration will continue to evolve for the new Adept, in its true luminous and living reality.

As stated earlier we will also find unmistakable parallels between the Ogdoadic Rite of Elevation and early Hermetic writings. Perhaps the first profound, yet basic mystery is disclosed in that the mind of Hermes can only be known and heard through a profound stillness of mind, as instructed in the *Hermeticum* (Books 12 and 13). Once the candidate has attained this “stillness”, and only then, are they prepared to receive the Regeneration. Book 13:8 is explicit in this when Hermes states “Be still, o son, and keep silence.” And then later in the text, Book 13:16, as prelude to the Hymnodia Krypte¹² the “song of rebirth” (or The Regeneration) states: “Be Still ... and hear the song of Rebirth.” For only through the silence can the



Nous infuse the aspirant’s soul and transmit the supernal light of divine radiance. Once accomplished, and communication between the candidate and the divine mind is open, the chief adept can proceed with properly transmitting the Regeneration itself. This “mystic stillness” is so fundamental to magical work that from the very beginning of the aspirant’s magical training various foundation practices (common to all authentic mystery schools) must be mastered to control and silence the mind. Once the “mystic stillness” is established the psyche of the candidate can enter a “mystic darkness” thus allowing the negative material of the psyche to be identified, liberated, and transmuted. Following this step the preparation for the final transmission of the Lapis Philosophorum may take place.¹³

Another illustration from the *Hermeticum* (Books 12 and 13), begins with dialogues between Hermes and Tat in which Hermes personifies the initiator and Tat the student or initiate. Hermes here distinguishes himself as a vehicle of the Divine Mind (The Nous) and thus identifies his nature as being one with the Supernal Light. In the Rite of Elevation, as the Agathodaimon is invoked by the chief adept who, personifying his anthropomorphic presence, describes this united Persona:

“In the name and power of the AGATHODAIMON, who is the Spirit Mercurius, the Grand Hermetic Androgyne and the Lapis Philosophorum.”¹⁴

Furthermore, the Key process and mystery of the Palingenesis is explained thus by the chief adept:

11 See the description of the final stage (“The Government of Fire”) of the alchemical text, *The Preparation of the Sophic Mercury* by Eirenaeus Philalethes, quoted in Waite’s *Collectanea Chemica*:

“Then you must have a furnace built, in which you may keep an immortal fire; in it you shall make a heat of sand of the first degree, in which the dew of our compound may be elevated and circulated continually, day and night, without any intermission, etc. And in such a fire the body will die, and the spirit will be renewed; and at length the soul will be glorified and united with a new immortal and incorruptible body.
Thus is made a new Heaven.”

12 See: <http://astrumsophia.org/hymnodia.htm>.

13 See book 13:6 – 13:18 of the *Hermeticum*.

14 Phillips, *Aurum Solis*, p. 214.

“... let us raise our hearts to the Light of Briah, that we may impart the Living Flame to (outer name of the initiate)...; that the mystery may shine forth in his heart; and that temporal and eternal may for him flash and fuse into unity, for the perfect accomplishment of the Regeneration!”¹⁵

We should also compare the following tractate from the Emerald Tablet; for it reveals the process of alchemical transmutation through recombination, dissolution and reunification on a higher plane.

“It rises from earth to heaven and comes down again from heaven to earth, and thus acquires the power of the realities above and the realities below. In this way you will acquire the glory of the whole world, and all darkness will leave you.”

And continuing the Ogdoadic Rite of Regeneration, the chief adept recites something quite similar to the above:

“And upwards into the radiance of thy heart shall be drawn the unresolved elements of thy lower nature ... may be sublimated and resolved in the furnace of the Sun. For this is the secret of the Regeneration; and in the consummation of this Mystery thy heart shall awaken and the glory of its presence shall redeem....”¹⁶

Thus the Regeneration becomes a true vehicle of the Divine Force essential to the fulfillment of alchemical transformation; a transformation which brings to life the Philosopher’s Stone in the heart of the new adept. For in the Telesterion of the Adepti the ancient mysteries of the Regeneration take on a living force and form as potent today as millennia ago.

*NON NOBIS, DOMINE, NON NOBIS;
SED NOMINI TUO DA GLORIAM.*



The Good Shepherd: the Psychopomp

Hermes surpasses all other mythological figures as the “Good Shepherd.” As such, the term “Psychopomp” refers to the one who protects and guides souls to other worlds. In this role it is often, and falsely, assumed that he only guides the soul to the underworld or Hades. However, more accurately his full function is made obvious in the Roman myth of Mercury, guiding Psyche (Soul), into Hades to retrieve a gift from Persephone. Following her decent into the underworld it was Mercury who guided her into the realm of the Divine Ones, at which point, she became immortalized by Jupiter. The statement made by this myth is of the utmost importance to students of Hermetics as it supports the concept of a mercurial aspect of self as being the guide to the most subterranean parts of the unconscious, to the presence of the higher self, and eventually integration, illumination and immortality.¹⁷

The Psychopomp is further illustrated in the Tarot by the Hermit card: himself the Magus, Atu II, in disguise. The Hermit is the Light Bearer who secretly opens the pathways to occult wisdom and sees that the aspirant is brought, in due time, to the light of the Greater Mysteries. He is at once our Magical Will and Imagination functioning as the mediator between, and within, the poles of our higher and lower natures: he is the trans-conscious self who’s magical title in other traditions is wisely given as “Magus of the Voice of Light, the Prophet of the Gods.” As a lower expression of the primal Mercury (in the Magician) the Hermit has been transformed into the image of a Sage – to represent the wisdom of the concealed mind. The title allocated here from the 32 Paths of

¹⁷ This is reflected in the mysteries of the preparation of the body of Osiris by the Psychopomp Anubis. It is his job to integrate and protect the Soul of Osiris – the Agathodaimon – and secure his transition across the Abyss.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 213.

Wisdom is called “The Intelligence of Will.” This is not to be mistaken as the mundane will or desire but rather the Will of the inmost and secret self silently drawing the ego and personality to its light.



“Thoth,” by Nina Falaise

Practical Working

Constructing a Shrine

A shrine is a center of power and focus built for and around a particular deity or archetype. It should, above all, be a sacred space that has been properly selected, ornamented and consecrated to the deity (in this case Hermes) by whatever skill the individual or group may possess. When this is done properly the shrine will function as a lens whereby the intended presence can be concentrated and converted to personal use. Additionally its design can, and should, vary somewhat depending on the system, person, or group using it. It can be an old established site with a traditional appearance and history, or one highly personalized and more or less temporary, as long as it is set apart from the mundane world for its intended purpose.

What will make a shrine more than a mere curiosity is what you personally do with it in your heart of hearts. It is absolutely necessary to find the passion and energy within yourself to breathe life and fire into the heart of the shrine. When Aleister Crowley said, “inflammethyself with prayer,” he was giving the formula to supply the initial flame whereby to call down the fire from heaven, and thus illuminate the shrine of the heart. In this way devotion becomes a direct vehicle of transformation and can initiate experiences for personal as well as

transpersonal dimensions.¹⁸ The most exquisite ritual or shrine is, for all practical purposes, empty and magically dead without applying this formula; and yet the simplest arrangement, through magical devotion, becomes a radiant portal between the worlds of spirit and form.

Ideally this shrine should also be adorned with a statue, image or emblem of the deity’s nature. Likewise, one should adorn the holy place with other objects held sacred to the deity. This should include corresponding gemstones, symbols, flora, the use of appropriate incenses, and colors suitable to Hermes.¹⁹ For example: Mercurial gems include opal, carnelian and agate; symbols would be the caduceus, the magical book and pen, a vessel of sanctified water, a flame, and a Tarot deck; the flora may include the palm, lavender, almond, and various medicinal herbs; for incense, mastic, storax, and yellow sandalwood are fitting; and for colors, orange, yellows, silver, and blue.²⁰ In regards to the Tarot (and I am referring to a deck drafted within the Hermetic and Qabalistic system), it is quite suited for expressing the Hermetic spirit and teachings and will provide an excellent vehicle to attract his presence.

Ritual and Invocation

Ritual and invocation are particularly potent when used in conjunction with a shrine or properly adorned Temenos. A magical ritual is the outward expression of hidden spiritual truths: the manifest expression of what is un-manifest mystery. Therefore the form and dynamic of a given magical ritual also provides a living structure in which to celebrate a concealed mystery in an outer form; a form that is at once understandable and mysterious. This symbolism was demonstrated in the (pre Vatican II) Catholic Mass when, during the preparation of the Eucharist, the priest would turn his back to the congregation. This was not meant as a snub to the people but as a deeply symbolic statement to show a mystery was present: that which is manifest being born from what is un-manifest and holy. This is much the same as the symbolic presence of the veiled mirror in an Ogdoadic temple. The mirror represents the division between the hidden and the vis-

18 Detailed instructions are given in Denning and Phillips’ *Magical Philosophy*, Volume 3 Book 5 under chapter X, “Identifying With God-Forces,” and Crowley’s “Liber Astarte,” in *Gems from the Equinox*.

19 The correspondences from Denning and Phillips *Magical Philosophy*, *Planetary Magick* and Crowley’s 777 provide a rich source of associations essential to ritual and meditative work.

20 Blue was attributed to Mercury by the ancient Persians and honored as such in Craft Masonry by the establishment of the so called the “Blue Lodge.” See F.C. Higgins, *Ancient Freemasonry*, Pyramid Book, 1923.

ible; in this case between the planes of Briah and Yetzirah. It is in itself a portal or doorway demarking the boundary between spirit and form, the outer Temple and the Holy of Holies and the Temenos and Telesterion of the Adepti. In a ceremony dedicated to The Agathodaimon-Hermes I suggest personalizing the ritual along the lines of specific qualities in the archetype you want to invoke. If you are invoking Hermes as Logos for example, you may select the Magician card or statue, invoke him at dawn, and use sympathetic symbols such as the magical book, Tarot deck, mercurial incenses, and colors of orange, silver and blue. In contrast, if the Psychopomp is preferred you would use the Hermit card, invoke him at dusk or night, and use associations of the subconscious and unconscious planes. In the case of the classic anthropomorphic Agathodaimon a solar influence would dominate as portraying the solar priest and grand Hermetic alchemist. As it is stated in the last tractate of the Emerald Tablet:

“Perfect is what I have said of the work of the sun.”

The following ritual is an expanded formulation of the Inner Technique of Sublimation which was previously published in *The Ogdoadic Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1.²¹ It is designed especially for use with the Hermes-Agathodaimon and reflects core vital principles of the Regeneration. Within its dynamics the mysteries of Regeneration are further exposed through the interplay of forces involved. Is it not clearly stated in the 7th tractate of the Emerald Tablet?

It rises from earth to heaven and comes down again from heaven to earth, and thus acquires the power of the realities above and the realities below. In this way you will acquire the glory of the whole world, and all darkness will leave you.



21 The present rite is offered as a working which requires an intermediate level of skill with the foundational Ogdoadic practices. The full formula is within the domain of the Order's Third Hall work. Those readers who desire to employ a more basic version of the formula are directed to presentation of the core practice in the first issue of *The Ogdoadic Journal*.

THE RITE OF ALCHEMICAL TRANSFORMATION

Temenos: The Banner of the New Life is displayed in the southeast, the Banner of the Temple in the northeast. The Velum celante is closed.²²

Bomos: The Bomos is slightly East of the center. On the Bomos are the Lamp (east of center), a Krater (north), the Kamea of the Sun (center), and a slip of paper on which has been written the name of the materium.

The Magician: Basic attire, etc. Pentacle of the Quintessence.

Preliminary Considerations

After due reflection and meditation, select an unwanted aspect of yourself as the subject for this rite. This “materium,” (e.g., selfishness, traumatic memory, self-doubt, etc.) should be isolated and identified as succinctly as possible then given a name. If you can give it a specific form, this will give you a better sense of substance and focus.

Determine both the native, and balancing, Sephirothic qualities of your materium. For example, timidity involves an excess of Chesed and needs to be balanced by the courage of Geburah. For a traumatic memory established with the Lunar influences of Yesod, you might choose the harmony and healing of the Sun.

Make sure you are well-practiced in the Second Formula of the Clavis Rei Primae, and have mastered the ability to assume and hold the anthropomorphic godform of the Agathodaimon:

Completely human figure, tall and commanding. He has a youthful and spiritual face with lofty resolute expression and compassionate eyes; his hair is yellow-blond and of medium length, falling in curling locks, and upon his head is the golden crown of twelve rays. He wears a white robe, ample and wide-sleeved, which sparkles with light of every color. He wears also a long and wide stole of rich green, embroidered with interlacings of gold; this rests upon his shoulders somewhat away from his neck, the ends falling before him. His feet are bare.

You should be able to approach this work with joy – and without apprehension.

The Rite

I

1. *The Astral Defenses.*

Battery: 1.

Perform the Setting of the Wards of Adamant.

2. *The Temenos of Light.*

Battery: 1.

Formulate the astral Temenos, building the magical environment in your imagination.²³ Reflect deeply upon this astral presence.

²² Note that this rite may be validly performed in a personal shrine to Hermes as described in this article, in one's own Chamber of Art, or in an Order Temenos. The astral formulation of the Temenos of Light serves to provide the common matrix into which the Divine Force may manifest.

²³ See the specific formulation in Osborne Phillips' *Aurum Solis: Initiation Ceremonies and Inner Magical Techniques*, p. 174.

3. *The Spirit.*

Battery: 1.

Perform an appropriate adoration and invocation of the Agathodaimon, such as by the “Crown of Twelve Rays”²⁴ or any other preferred form.

II

4. *Prima Materia.*

Battery: 1.

Take the paper/materium from the Bomos, turning deosil and moving west of the Central Square, facing east. Place the materium upon the Central Square of the Prima Materia.

Perform the Second Formula of Clavis Rei Primae.

Make the gesture *Pronatio* while invoking as follows (in Greek or English):

ΕΠΙΚΑΛΟΥΜΑΙ ΣΕ ΤΟΝ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΑΟΡΑΤΩ
ΣΚΟΤΕΙ ΚΑΘΗΜΕΝΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑ ΜΕΣΟΝ
ΟΝΤΑ ΤΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΩΝ ΘΕΩΝ ΔΥΝΟΝΤΑ
ΚΑΙ ΠΑΡΑΛΑΜΒΑΝΟΝΤΑ ΤΑΣ ΗΛΙΑΚΑΣ
ΑΚΤΕΙΝΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑΠΕΜΠΟΝΤΑ ΤΗΝ
ΦΑΕΣΦΟΡΟΝ ΘΕΑΝ ΛΕΥΚΩΘΕΑ
ΘΕΟΝ ΜΕΓΑΝ ΜΕΛΑΝΩΘΕΟΣ
ΗΛΙΟΝ ΑΝΑΠΕΜΤΟΝ ΜΟΙ ΕΝ ΤΗ ΝΥΚΤΙ
ΤΑΥΤΗ ΤΟΝ ΑΡΧΑΓΓΕΛΟΝ ΣΟΥ
ΕΞΟΡΚΙΖΩ ΣΕ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΕΝ ΤΗ
ΠΥΡΙΝΕ ΧΛΑΜΥΔΙ ΚΑΘΗΜΕΝΟΥ ΕΠΙ ΤΗΣ
ΑΡΟΥΡΕΑ ΚΕΦΑΛΗΣ ΤΟΥ
ΑΓΑΘΩΔΑΙΜΟΝ
ΠΑΝΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΤΕΤΡΑΠΡΟΣΩΠΟΥ
ΔΑΙΜΟΝΟΣ ΥΨΙΣΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΨΥΧΑΟΥΓΕΟΥ
ΑΒΡΑΣΑΞ

I invoke thee who art seated
in the invisible darkness
and who art in the midst of the great gods
sinking and receiving the sun's rays
and sending forth
the luminous goddess **Leukothea**,
the great god **Melanotheos**,
the Sun, send to me this night thy archangel

I conjure thee by him who is seated in
the flaming vesture on the silver head
of the **Agathodaimon**,

the almighty four-faced spirit,
the highest darkling and soul-bringing
Abrasax

Again take up the materium and hold it at the level of your heart.

III

5. *Solve.*

Battery: 1-1-1.

Turn deosil and go to the northern limits of the place of working.

Tear off one third of the piece of paper and place it upon the tile covering the northern Tessera. Vibrate:

‘Η ΠΕΛΕΙΑ ΚΑΙ ‘Η ‘ΥΓΡΑ²⁵

Turning deosil, go to the southern limit of the Temenos.

²⁴ See volume 3 of *The Magical Philosophy, Myseria Magica*, p. 364.

²⁵ “The Dove and the Waters.” The presence of these phrases, drawn ultimately from the Pelasgian mysteries, serve as simple but potent invocations of the powers of the Constellation of the Worshipped. In this case, this phrase invokes the powers of Leukothea and identifies the materium with the alchemical principle of Salt. Cf. the usage of these key words of power in the Setting of the Wards and the Second Hall Rite of Integration.

Tear off the second third of the piece of paper and place it upon the tile covering the southern Tessera. Vibrate:

‘Ο ΟΦΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΟ ΩΙΟΝ²⁶

Turning deosil, return to the west of the Bomos, facing East.

Place the final third of the paper upon the Bomos. Vibrate:

ΓΑΙΑ ΚΑΙ ‘Ο ΙΧΩΡ ΤΟΥ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ²⁷

IV

6. *Coagula*

Battery: 1.

Go now to the north and then the south, gathering the pieces of the paper as you do. Return to the center, before the Bomos. Take up the third slip of paper as well and then lay them all three upon the Kamea of the Sun.

Pause briefly to reflect upon the symbolism.

7. *Ovum Philosophorum*

Now take all three pieces of the paper and hold them at heart level.

Visualize yourself encompassed in an ovoid of golden yellow light. Maintain this formulation for a little while before allowing it to fade from your consciousness.

V

8. *Sublimatio.*

Battery: 1.

Affirm your magical personality.

Perform the Second Formula of the Clavis Rei Primae until your Orbis Solis is intensely warm and radiant.

Next bring the materium by name, sense and form directly into the furnace of your Orbis Solis and hold it steadily there.

Assume the godform of the anthropomorphic Agathodaimon as described above with as much presence and power as you can gather. Once this is established, bring the current of light simultaneously upwards from your feet and downwards from your crown to converge in the Orbis Solis.

Become aware of the materium surrounded by the magnificence of this solar radiance. Vibrate “**ΟΝΟΦΙΣ**” several times to increase the intensity and expansiveness of the Orbis Solis.

9. *Proiectio.*

Allowing the godform to fade, but holding the Tipharetic presence, bring the balancing Sephirothic quality into the solar crucible at your Orbis Solis until you intuitively feel the materium to be balanced within your psyche.

Bring your attention back to your magical personality as you light the slip of paper in the flame of the lamp. Now, naming aloud the sublimated materium, drop it in the krater. As you do so, bestow upon it the high blessings of Beauty, Life and Light.

²⁶ “The Serpent and the Egg.” The identification of this third of the materium with Melanotheos and the alchemical principle of Sulfur.

²⁷ “Earth and the Blood of Heaven.” The identification of this portion of the materium with the Agathodaimon and the alchemical principle of Mercury.

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