



A
Special Report
from
The Institute for Hermetic Studies



Introduction to Hermeticism:
Its Theory and Practice

By
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Mark Stavish
Director of Studies

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'Wise words, although written by my decaying hand, remain imperishable through time; imbued with the medicine of immortality by the All-Master. Be unseen and undiscovered by all those who will come and go, wandering the wastelands of life. Be hidden, until an older heaven births human being who are worthy of your wisdom.' Having sounded this prayer over the works of his hands, Hermes was received into the sanctuary of eternity. – The Last Words of Thrice-Great Hermes¹

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- Thoth: Scribe of the Gods To Alexandrian Magus
- Pagan Dreams Revived: Renaissance Hermeticism and Paradise Lost
- Voice from the Abyss: Tools of the Adept and Becoming a God

Introduction

Hermeticism has been the benchmark of traditional Western esotericism for nearly 1,000 years. Since its inception in the First Century A.D., Hermeticism has served as the focal point for synthesizing and promulgating the metaphysical doctrines and practices of pre-Christian civilizations. Revived during the Renaissance, classical Hermeticism was reformed to meet the peculiar needs of Europe during one of its most creative, as well as brutal periods in modern history. Suppressed but not destroyed, Hermeticism continued to survive, even to grow and expand in influence, through the creation of secret societies, arcane manuscripts, and according to some – even architecture itself – until its second great revival in the 19th Century. The 'Occult Revivals' in France, England, Germany, and to a lesser degree in Russia, and the United States, has served as the starting point for esoteric doctrines for a majority of the 20th Century's initiatic movements. As we enter the 21st Century, and a new millennium, Hermeticism is demonstrating that its unique blend of science, mysticism, symbolism, psychology, and preference for experience over doctrine, makes it ideal for the Western mindset, giving it the possibility of achieving its place once again as the cultural capstone of Western Civilization.

Thoth: Lord of Wisdom and Truth

The Name of Wisdom

Hermeticism stands at the crossroads of the great traditions of Western religion, philosophy, and esotericism. Under the name of the Greek god Hermes, the Egyptian god Thoth has been identified by Gnostics and other with Christ, Moses, and St. John, the visionary of Patmos and patron saint of Freemasonry. Held in high esteem by the early

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Church Fathers, writings attributed to him were often used to support evolving church doctrine. During the Middle Ages, Hermes was said to be older than Plato, a contemporary of Moses, and viewed as a near equal of Christ.

Hermes was born from the union of *Zeus* with the nymph *Maia*, on *Mount Cyllene* in *Arcadia*, and later took on the role as messenger of the Greek god *Zeus*. With winged helmet and feet he would fly on the winds and deliver information, threats, orders, or whatever else it was that *Zeus* required; and was the god of mental activity, gambling, and business. Hermes loved trickery and sudden turns of fate, often bringing victory to heroes and gods in need; as god of travelers and night, he is also rules dreams, prophecy, and escorts the dead to the underworld. During the Greco-Egyptian period, the Greeks saw in *Thoth* many similar attributes to their own god *Hermes* and the two were essentially married in name to represent the same ideas. During the Roman period, the god *Mercurius*, or *Mercury* was added, and with it, one of the more significant astrological associations for *Thoth-Hermes*, also known as *Thoth-Hermes-Mercurius*.

However, the name *Thoth* is just one of many attributed to this Egyptian deity. No less than sixteen names exist for him in Latin and Greek. There are several variations of his name in hieroglyphics, each with its own qualitative emphasis on one or more of his aspects or functions. These variations include four forms in the Middle Kingdom texts, four in the Old Kingdom texts, and six that appear in both periods. The New Kingdom texts show at least fourteen variations some das a result of inaccurate transcription of earlier hieroglyphs in the later period. There are also variations in Coptic, Aramaic, and Neo-Babylonian.ⁱⁱ

Thoth in the Egyptian Mysteries

The development of the Egyptian Mysteries takes place over generations and represents the systematizing and synthesizing of diverse stories, legends, and aspects of pre-history. The importance placed upon various deities represents their relative importance to the various periods, as well as popularity with the people of Egypt. *Thoth* is no different in this regard, and his place in the various folktales and teaching myths changes over time. A good example of this evolution of *Thoth* can be seen in the mysteries of *Isis* and *Osiris*. Initially *Thoth*'s role is limited to that of legal council and friend of *Horus*, but later expands to Scribe of the Gods, Lord of Magic, and Guardian of the Dead. *Thoth* became the master of the 'Great Word' and Lord of Time.

“There can be little doubt that the prominence of *Thoth* in the more developed form of the *Osirian* drama is largely due to the increasing popularity if *Thoth* himself. The more familiar he became to the religious mind of Egypt, the more striking was the role assigned to him in the most popular cult of the country – the cult of *Osiris*.”ⁱⁱⁱ

In the cults of *Osiris*, *Isis*, and *Horus*, *Thoth* takes on various roles that dominate his place in later Egyptian and eventually Hermetic (*Thoth-Hermes*) literature –that of

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physician and magician, and Hermetic literature can easily be divided into these two categories. There are medical and healing texts, and cosmological and magical texts. However, a clear distinction is not always possible, and there are instances of overlap between these two ideas. The idea of a deity's evolution was common, but also worked both ways with a deity losing status as well as gaining it. A similar change takes place with the god Set, the nemesis of Horus. Set eventually goes from being a local god and rival, to representing evil. Yet, his places of honor in rituals, particularly those involving the coronation-ceremonies, are given to Thoth.

Thoth as Lunar Deity

In the New Kingdom Thoth was the name given to the first month of the year, and indicated his importance as the Lord of Time. For the ancient world the moon was the first means of tracking time, as the moon was easily visible going through its stages each month. Thoth has two roles in relation to the moon: one as guardian, the other as being one with the moon, or at least its astral or psychic counterpart. The oldest representation of Thoth in this manner is of an ape, the symbol of Thoth, bearing a crescent moon on its head like a crown. In the *Pyramid Text* [130] the deceased pharaoh becomes one with the solar god Ra during the day, and one with the lunar god Thoth at night. As guardian of the moon, Thoth is often seen as acting as defender of the light against darkness; such as in the restoration of the Eye of Horus, the left or lunar eye.

Thoth as Creator and Lord of the Dead

Thoth is deeply connected to the ideas of justice, truth, and from them harmony and balance. The *Book of the Dead* constantly refers to Thoth as "Writer of *Ma'at*." *Ma'at*, alternately spelled, *Maat* and *Ma'et*, can be interpreted to mean justice, righteous, truth.

Thoth as Lord of Magic

Thoth's connection to ritual is found in his title "Lord of Divine Words." 'Divine Words' means hieroglyphics, and 'Lord' has alternately been translated as 'Founder.' However, it is important not to confuse the written word with what it conveys, it is this inner essence that is the 'divine word.' The recitation of ritual formula was considered by the ancient Egyptians sufficient for the things embodied in the formula to be carried out. Words were seen as having innate power and qualities that are set in motion by their being spoken in the ritual context. Rituals of importance were prefaced with a rubric that stated, "It is your messengers who bring him: it is the Divine Words that cause him to ascend."^{iv} Thoth is the Master of Ceremonies, the supreme hierophant that guides, directs, and rules over all ritual through his role as lord of ritual formula.

Ritual is expression of magic, as is knowledge, special wisdom, and understanding of cosmic law, truth, and justice. This relationship of ideas made Thoth the *de facto* Lord of Magic through his understanding of the divine essence of words and ritual. An important secondary relationship is in the close proximity of medicine to magic in all ancient societies. Thoth healed Horus and restored his vision and power. During the

Ptolemaic period Thoth is referred to as ‘great in magic,’ ‘learned in magic,’ and simply ‘the Magician.’ In older texts, Thoth is identified with the magical power, often referred to as a god, *heku*. The range and effects of *heku* are so broad, that it can simply be understood as ‘magical power.’

“Magical medicine was probably born in Egypt. It is not an artificial creation, but a science both theoretical and experimental at the same time, which has as its basic criterion the wish to maintain the human body in harmony with the cosmos, so that it will serve as a receptacle for the vital forces which created the universe. ...The doctor must treat the cause, not the effect, then attack the invisible and irrational power which is disturbing the system...An important fact to be established in understanding the principles of magical medicine is that it carries no moral overtones. The healing god is not ‘good,’ and the aggressive god is not ‘bad.’ They are both expressions of the creative force that circulates everywhere. It is the human being that reacts either harmoniously or inharmoniously to his surroundings; it is he who accepts and manipulates the divine energies that rule his existence ‘well’ or ‘badly.’”^v

Thoth-Hermes-Mercurius

The Greco-Egyptian period gave Egypt a new language, rulers, and gods. While it is often said that the Greeks obtained their philosophy from the Egyptians, and point to Aristotle, Socrates, and Pythagores to support their statements, the Greeks returned the favor by providing the Greek language^{vi} and philosophical structure that would allow Egyptian ideas to survive, be expanded upon, and even popularized under the banner of Hermeticism. It was during this period that Thoth and Hermes were identified as one and the same deity, and later during the Roman period with Mercurius, or Mercury as well. However, it is the Greco-Egyptian period that is the more fruitful of the two, producing rituals, manuscripts, and philosophical ideas that are still used by practical occultists to this day.

Classical Hermeticism: “In the Beginning...”

Classical Hermeticism is the study of the body of Greek texts appearing in Alexandria, Egypt between the First and Third Centuries A.D., and attributed to Hermes Trismegistos; as well as variations of these writing, adaptations, and commentaries upon them up to and including the current era. These commentaries include Alexandrian, as well as neo-Alexandrian traditions. These traditions are comprised of core texts, commentaries on these texts, and specific practices designed to integrate the ideas into the practitioner’s life. It is clear from the classical texts that communities were formed where members held communal meals, the kiss of peace was exchanged, and initiation into the sacred mysteries were preformed.^{vii} Operative traditions include a variety of Gnostic and Christian groups formed from these writing of the First Century A.D., across

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into the Renaissance with its Rosicrucian, and Masonic groups, and later societies rising out of modern occult revivals.

Named after their attributed author, Hermes Trismegistos or “Hermes the Thrice Great,” these classical writings are collectively called the ‘Hermetica.’ This body of texts is small, and has been translated, several times in recent decades.^{viii} The primary text is the *Asclepius*, of which only a Latin version exists, and fifteen or seventeen dialogues, the most famous being the *Poimandres*. Poimandres address the creation of the material world, with the remaining dialogues describing the soul’s journey, ascent, and regeneration as it progresses through the celestial spheres.

It is important to note that the Hermetic texts were composed in different time periods by different authors from different traditions. The influence of Egyptian, Greek, Jewish, and Gnostic thought is clearly present. What makes this unique is that despite these diverse influences, Hermeticism manages to synthesize the ideas presented and create a distinct school of thought that goes beyond each of them individually. Names and ideas of one tradition are seamlessly intermingled and interpreted according to the ideas of another.

Alexandrian Hermeticism and modern Hermetic practices share four key points in common, including an eclectic and synthetic philosophy that while utilizing the mythology of ‘fall and regeneration’ avoids the pitfalls of dualism, and emphasizes concrete and common sense approaches to solving mundane as well as cosmological issues.^{ix} Hermeticism encourages and embraces the notion of humanity and the divine existing harmoniously in and through the world. It is an exceedingly optimistic philosophy, and in this regards, very different from certain strains of Gnosticism, or even Vendantic studies, which see the world at best as an essential evil for the soul’s growth, or at worse, as a prison house and punishment for some distant and long forgotten transgression.

The eclectic nature of Hermeticism is found in its fundamental premise that the desire for knowledge can be satisfied by consulting a variety of sources finding their roots in the *philosophia perennis*, or Perennial Philosophy. It is synthetic in that these diverse ideas are not only tolerated, but also unified into a seamless whole.

Nous is ‘mind’ and Hermes is informed by *Nous* to meditate on the nature of the universe being reflected in his own being, to extract the divine powers of nature and unite them with the powers of this soul. The universe is a text to be read, “The Book of Nature” and through our divine intellect, we are able to unite with it and understand it.

The physical world is a good place, and is essential to the unfolding of human consciousness. Hermeticism reaches the abstract through the concrete. The universe is met in the mineral salts of an herbal (*spagyric*) tincture; the psychic centers or ‘stars’ are experienced through the influence of the planets on ones personal horoscope.^x

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Hermeticism is very specific, personal, and experiential, and yet, continually transcending the limits of material life. The *Natural Magic* of Paracelsus gives rise to the *Natural Philosophy* of the German Romanticists, and the divine is seen incarnate everywhere and in everyone with its natural conclusion incarnate in Johannes Wolfgang Goethe who is poet, scientist, and alchemist.

The Fall and Regeneration

The key myth of Hermeticism is the fall of humanity from its divine state, and regeneration through the application of the intellect. In *Poimandres* Adam falls as a result of sexual love, yet this very fall is what allows humanity to experience its divine seed and manifest it in the act of ascent. Through a series of operations, be they meditative, alchemical or theurgical, cosmic intermediaries such as angels are contacted in an ever-progressive manner. These progressive contacts are envisioned as a celestial ladder connecting the concrete world of earth with the abstract and all encompassing mind of God through a series of intermediary steps.

In order to understand these intermediary steps and methods, various societies were established, and with them rites of initiation meant to stimulate

Regeneration and the Path of Return

In Hermetic philosophy humanity is the cause of the ‘fall’ of nature, and through a conscious act of will, each person, and nature with it, can be returned to its pristine state. Yet before the fall humanity was in a state of naïve bliss, ignorant of ‘good and evil.’ After the fall this knowledge once attained is never lost, but is the means whereby ‘regeneration’ is possible. In returning to the state of spiritual power before the fall, humanity brings with it what was previously absent – wisdom. This fundamental appreciation for the material world makes Hermeticism philosophically connected to many so-called ‘earth religions.’^{xi} This unity is expressed in the *Corpus Hermeticum* as follows:

“And if you want to understand this in practice, watch what happens when you desire to beget. But it is not the same with Him; for He does not experience the pleasure, since He has no partner. For working by Himself He is always in His work, for He is what He creates. If He were separate from it, all would collapse, and all would by necessity perish, because life would be no more. Since everything is alive and life is one, God is also one. If again everything is alive, both in heaven and earth, and there is one life for all which comes into existence through God, God is also that life. All then is made by God and life is the union of *Nous* and soul. Death is not the destruction of what has been put together but the dissolution of the union.”^{xii}

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Further on in *Book Eleven*, the entire secret of Hermetic philosophy and practice is revealed. When examined in the light of this section, it is clear that all esoteric methods, techniques, practices, and meditations are but detailed commentaries on these points.

“19. Consider this yourself. Command your soul to go anywhere, and it will be there quicker than your command. Bid it to go to the ocean and again it is there at once, not as if it had gone from place to place but was already there. Order it to fly up to heaven and it will need no wings, nor will anything impede it, neither the fire of the sun, nor the ether, nor the whirlwind, nor the other heavenly bodies, but cutting through them all it will soar up to the last body. And if you wish to break through all this and to contemplate what is beyond (if there is anything beyond the cosmos), it is in your power.

20. See what power you have and what speed! You can do all these things and yet God cannot? Reflect on God in this way as having all within Himself as ideas: the cosmos, Himself, the whole. If you do not make yourself equal to God you cannot understand Him. Like is understood by like. Grow to immeasurable size. Be free from every body, transcend all time. Become eternity and thus you will understand God. Suppose nothing to be impossible for yourself. Consider yourself immortal and able to understand everything: all arts, sciences and the nature of every living creature. Become higher than all heights and lower than all depths. Sense as one within yourself the entire creation: fire, water, the dry and the moist. Conceive yourself to be in all places at the same time: in the earth, the sea, in heaven; that you are not yet born, that you are within the womb, that you are young, old, dead; that you are beyond death. Conceive all things at once: time, places, actions, qualities and quantities; then you can understand God.

21. But if you lock up your soul in your body, abase it and say: ‘I understand nothing; I can do nothing; I am afraid of the sea; I cannot reach heaven; I do not know who I was nor who I shall be.’ What have you to do with God? For you cannot conceive anything beautiful or good while you are attached to the body and are evil. For the greatest evil is to ignore what belongs to God. To be able to know and to will and to hope is the straight and easy way appropriate to each that will lead to the Supreme Good. When you take this road this Good will meet you everywhere and will be experienced everywhere, even where and when you do not expect it; when awake, asleep, in a ship, on the road, by night, by day, when speaking and when silent, for there is nothing which it is not.

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22. Now do you say that God is invisible? Be careful. Who is more manifest than He? He has made all things for this reason: that through them you should see Him. This is the goodness (*to agathon*) of God; this is His excellence: that He is made manifest through all. Though you cannot see what is bodiless, *Nous* is seen in the act of contemplation, God in the act of creation. These things have been made clear to you Hermes thus far. Reflect on all other things in the same way within yourself and you will not be led astray.”^{xiii}

The Early Years

Clement of Alexandria mentions Hermes as well as the number of writings attributed to him. Augustine and Lactantius, both Fathers of the Christian Church, refer to Hermes; with both affirming that the Hermetic writings are older than Plato and Pythagoras, but disagree on his role. Lactantius sees in Hermes a herald of Christ, Augustine condemns him on the grounds of magic. While references are made to the Hermetic writings, it seems that little was actually known of them until the Twelfth Century, with the Asclepius being the only one known to exist. Extensive magical, alchemical, and astrological texts were attributed to Hermes, sometimes drawing from earlier works, and can be called pseudo-hermetic. What did exist, even of the pseudo-hermetic texts, was translated into Latin from Arabic. It was during this period the *Tabula Smaragdina*, or *Emerald Tablet* was translated into Latin by Bishop Hugo Sanctelliensis, of Tarazona, Spain. By far the most famous of all Hermetic texts, the open lines of the Emerald Tablet are well known even in modern New Age circles, as it begins with the lines, “As above, so below.”^{xiv}

Three important texts also appear during the Twelfth Century: *Liber de causis*, in which the creation of humanity is attributed to Hermes: *Liber viginti quattuor philosophorum*, a text in which the image of God as a circle first appears. Here, God is said to be like a circle whose center point is everywhere, thereby making its circumference nowhere. *Liber compositione alchemiae quem edidit Morienus Romanus*, the first book of medieval alchemy appears during this period, and attributes the invention of the arts and sciences to Hermes. It has been suggested that this work was translated by Robert of Chester in 1144 from Arabic into Latin, but may very well belong to a later period. Regardless, it is because of this book that the name of Hermes is associated with alchemy and what is later defined as Hermeticism.

During this period the relationship between Hermes, Hermeticism, alchemy, and various other occult practices begins to solidify. In addition, the relationship between Hermeticism and Christian religious practices is still open and relatively friendly, and at times the two are indistinguishable. Bishop and later Saint Albertus Magnus, the mentor of Thomas Aquinas was familiar with Hermetic writings and well known for his abilities in practical alchemy and magic. Roger Bacon, an English Franciscan authored several texts on magic and alchemy, and is considered one of the fathers of the ‘experimental method’ cherished by modern science.

This mingling of science, theology, philosophy, art, and direct experience of them all can be difficult to understand in modern society where departmentalization and specialization is the norm. However, like many in the modern New Age Movement, or even in theoretical physics, Hermeticism during the medieval period was developing against the backdrop of a search for a primordial philosophy (*prisca philosophia*) or theology (*prisca theologia*) that would explain everything; as such, the divisions typically associated with areas of learning were not yet fully developed. One of the fundamental ideas behind this search was that Egypt was the center of learning, and that the great Greek philosophers had gone to her to acquire their wisdom. Evidence to support this idea in an ancient and unified system of thought acting as the source for later philosophical and theological developments would come in the Fourteenth Century when Marsilio Ficino translates the *Corpus Hermeticum* into Latin.

The Renaissance – Dawning of the Light

The mid-Fifteenth Century was the turning point for Hermeticism. Around 1469 Leonardo da Pistoria brought a Greek manuscript to Florence, the contents of which would be later referred to as the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Leonardo was a monk, and came across the manuscript while in Macedonia, and presented it to Cosimo de Medici. Medici was the ruler of Florence and a well-known patron of the arts and letters, who gave the manuscript to Marsilio Ficino to translate into Latin (circa 1463). Ficino was a successful philosopher and translator, and was working on translating the collected works of Plato when he was presented with the *Corpus Hermeticum*. The translation was completed in April 1463; its first edition appearing in 1471 and going through at least sixteen editions in less than thirty years. The fascination with the Trismegistos texts was clearly linked to the venerable name of their purported author and the prestige he held in during the Middle Ages.

The marriage of Jewish mysticism, or qabala, to Hermeticism, particularly in the form of practical magic, was the gift of Ficino's disciple Pico Della Mirandola. This synthesis gave rise to the doctrines of *natural magic* (*magia naturalis*). Natural magic was an attempt to unite the visible and invisible realms into a unified whole wherein humanity could actively participate in creation. Natural magic emphasized the practical use of plants, minerals, colors, symbols, astrological timing, and sound. This doctrine of the Word, or creative power of speech was the basis for the search for the 'lost Word' of Freemasonry, and the angelic language humanity was unable to utter after the Fall. To find the Lost Word was to reunite with this invisible angelic power in all of its divine and creative aspects. The search for the angelic language finds its most articulate and practical expression in the research of Dr. John Dee and what would later be called, the Enochian language and its practical applications in Enochian magic.^{xv} Ficino's uniting of qabala with hermeticism created a hybrid often referred to as 'hermetico-qabalistic' that is philosophical and speculative, while being practical and experiential. This magic was considerably more sophisticated, erudite, and one could even say harmonious, than the magic of the Medieval period, as its ultimate aim was *gnosis* – a direct knowledge of the

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Divine. Much of Ficino's writings were concerned with maintaining and restoring health, both physically and emotionally. In his own way, Ficino was very much the holistic therapist of his day.

“Since the heavens have been constructed according to a harmonic plan and move harmonically and bring everything about by *harmonic sounds* [emphasis added] and motion, it is logical that through harmony alone not only human beings but all things below are prepared to receive, according to their abilities, celestial things. In the proceeding chapter we distributed the harmony capable of receiving things above into seven steps: through images (as they believe) put together harmonically, through medicines tempered with a proper consonance, through vapors and odors completed with similar consonance, through musical songs and sounds (with which rank and power we wish to associate gestures of body, dancing, and ritual movements), through well-accorded concepts and motions of the imagination, through fitting discourses of reason, through tranquil contemplations of the mind. For just as we expose the body seasonably to the light and heat of the Sun through its daily harmony, that is, through its location, posture, and shape, so also we expose our spirit in order to obtain the occult forces of the stars through a similar harmony of its own, obtained by images, as they believe, certainly by medicines, and by odors harmonically composed. Finally, we expose our soul and our body to such occult forces through the spirit so prepared for things above (as I have often said) – yes, our soul, insofar as it is inclined by its affection to the spirit and body.”^{xvi}

This ability to know God, to unite with the divine powers of nature, and to create, elevates humanity to a semi-divine status of no less power than the Gnostic demiurge. In the Middle Ages the magician called upon God and his Holy Angels to protect him from the harsh and demonic forces that were to be evoked. In the Renaissance, human dignity and innate divinity was emphasized, and God was called upon to remove the veils of ignorance that kept humanity from exercising its divine right to create and be one with the gods.

The idea of the power of the name, or hidden name, that can be used to control any aspect of creation is the core of all Egyptian magic. Knowing the name of a god gives power over that god, or spiritual principle. For this reason, to have one's name inscribed in the *Book of Life* (as mentioned in *Revelations*) is life itself; to have one's name defaced or erased as was done during the early Christian period, is the worst possible thing that can happen in Egyptian metaphysics. Not only is the name power, but also the hieroglyphs that compose it are seen as living things – not unsimilar to the uses of symbols in later talismanic magic.

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“Each human being has the task of seeking for the secret name which was entrusted to him at birth and which he needs to make him worthy. To pass the test of death victoriously is to make the name permanent like that of Osiris...the name is an essential component of survival.... In the kingdom of the dead, everyone must remember their name...To the gods, he states explicitly that his name is a god who dwells in his body. To the Eternal Stars whom he meets in the sky, he declares, ‘I know your names.’”^{xvii}

This emphasis on the beauty and power of humanity and its inherent spirituality expressed in the *Corpus Hermeticum* resulted in creating a spiritual revolution that expressed itself both philosophically and artistically. The great masters of Renaissance art showed the human form totally nude and in its ‘full glory,’ often surrounded by angels and pre-Christian deities. Art became the talisman of the day, and architecture the temple in which nature as an expression of the imminent presence of God was worshiped. Even the Vatican was not immune to this form of symbolic resurrection of classical gods and goddesses. Pico’s patron, Pope Alexander IV, commissioned Pinturicchio to paint a large fresco in the Borgia apartments in which hermetic symbols were predominately displayed along with the zodiac. Moses and the Egyptian goddess Isis accompany Hermes Trismegistos.^{xviii}

A form of religious Hermeticism began to arise in an attempt to stem some of the brewing theological conflicts that would result in the Protestant Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and massive bloodshed associated with both. Out of this a form of Christian esotericism, or Christian Hermeticism grew that many hoped would bring peace and put an end to religious divides.

By 1554 the first Greek edition of the *Corpus Hermeticum* was published in Paris; since its first printing over 80 years earlier additional Hermetic texts had been discovered, translated, and included into the main work. Numerous commentaries had been issued as well, with some authors even placing the *Corpus Hermeticum* on the same level as the Christian scriptures. This almost ecstatic reverence for Hermeticism was giving rise to a distinctly religious expression that would reach its zenith in the early years of the Seventeenth Century.

The Rosicrucian and Masonic Periods

It is not surprising that the Golden Age of religious Hermeticism overlaps the early Rosicrucian period. The two philosophical streams often being identified as one in the same, even by scholars such as Dame Francis Yates in her groundbreaking work, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*. However, to be more precise, Rosicrucianism could be identified as a sect, or aspect of Hermeticism manifesting in the fertile ground early Protestantism, Pietism, and esotericism. Rosicrucianism and the irenic, or ecumenical uses of Hermeticism during this period, both shared a common goal – an end to religious conflict and broader religious tolerance. In this regard, Freemasonry is often seen as the outermost expression of Hermetic (at least in its irenic sense) and Rosicrucian

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philosophies. However, the end of the Sixteenth Century also saw an end to early progress in this area, with religious intolerance increasing in predominantly Protestant England; and with it, an increase in secret societies and circles of initiates and philosophers who saw in Hermeticism the solution to their political-religious situation.

The Anti-Hermetic Movement

The anti-Hermetic movement began in 1614 with Isaac Casaubon's refuting the alleged antiquity of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Casaubon demonstrated that the *Corpus Hermeticum* originated in the early years of the current era and did not predate the birth of Christ as had been purported. While Casaubon's discovery was ignored by some and unknown by others, it had a significant dampening effect on Hermeticism's prominence. From this point on Hermeticism would continue, but less publicly, in the secret societies that had begun to formulate in an increasingly hostile sectarian environment, and of which Rosicrucianism was at the forefront.

Despite Rosicrucianism's roots in Germany and neighboring lands, Alexandrian Hermeticism made few inroads into Germany. The great German Hermetic authorities wrote their greatest works either outside of Germany or upon examination only made passing reference to Hermeticism as a context in which to establish their occult authority. The main reasons for this lack of contribution can be seen in the firm barriers that Lutheranism had established against Hermeticism, coupled with it being rooted in Greek literature and humanism. German esoteric philosophy was essentially 'home-grown' and devoid of any significant connections to the broader Hermetic milieu. Despite this isolation, the writings of Paracelus, Agrippa, Boehme, and Gichtel, developed along nearly identical lines of thought as Alexandrian Hermeticism.

Of course alchemy and Christian Qabala were well known in the Germanic lands, but their references and root sources were only thinly attached to Hermeticism as it existed in the Latin countries. The theosophy which developed during this period is Hermetic and Qabalistic, but in its own peculiar and unique manner. It would not be until 1706 that the first complete translation of the *Poimandres* would appear in German.

The Enlightenment and Beyond

The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries saw Hermeticism become part of a tangles mass of ideas that included primitive Egyptology. While beneficial to the artistic inspirations of the period and stimulating an interest in all things esoteric and occult, it did little for the advancement of Alexandrian Hermeticism proper. Freemasonry and the explosion of High Grade Masonry occurred across Europe, often with Hermetic themes, images, and titles. By the end of the Nineteenth Century, Hermeticism became the subject of study only for academics and occultists – with artists, philosophers, and social progressives seeking their inspiration elsewhere. Oddly, Hermeticism has its most significant and lasting impact upon the popular mind of Colonial America. Here Hermetic, and quasi-hermetic communes would be established, such as at Ephrata, Pennsylvania;^{xix} alchemy would continue to be taught at Yale until the early 19th Century;

and a new religious movement would have its roots firmly in the Hermetic tradition – the *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, better known as the Mormons.^{xx}

The Beautiful Age and the Occult Revival

The ‘Occult Revival’ of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries created a swarm of secret societies and initiatic fraternities, of which only a few remain a century or less later. Not a single entity that arose during the flowering of esotericism during the *belle epoch* managed to survive unscathed by schism, betrayal, legal entanglements, hostile take-over (attempted or successful), or public scandal. The ideals were high, but then so were the obstacles that mere humans had to overcome, *Unknown Superiors* or not to guide them. While contributions were made in translations of texts, broader public knowledge of and interest in esotericism, it was the practical applications of occult methods that dominated the period and laid the groundwork for current initiatic organizations, and one could even say, for the New Age Movement itself.

The practical aspects of Hermeticism are seen in the occult, or hidden arts. Also known as the Hermetic Arts and Sciences, these primarily include the study and practice of magic, alchemy, and astrology. While various sub-specialties or variations exist, such as in Enochian magic or Martinism, the fundamental subjects remain the same. The cohesive development of the diverse and complex philosophic concepts of Hermeticism into practical applications, wherein an individual might experience knowledge of creation, has been Hermeticism’s strongest appeal. A genuine Hermetic student is not satisfied with thinking and theory, but also engages in doing, thereby re-creating himself or herself into a Hermetic adept. Combined, these three tools form a synthetic mechanism wherein Nature in both its microcosmic and macrocosmic modes is understood, and the Hermetic work brought to fruition.

Magic

Egypt is the home of magic, and it has been said that Egypt did not conceptualize religion as we think of it in contemporary terms it only knew magic. The most important thing one could possess in ancient Egypt was *heku*, or magical power. Heku was similar to what might be thought of as *chi* or *ki* in some oriental systems, in that it could be acquired, accumulated, and projected, and was experienced as a definite force or energy. The primary means of attaining heku in ancient Egypt was through identifying one’s self with the various gods, or *neter*. The *neter* were viewed as both semi-historical figures, as well as concrete manifestations of abstract ideas and energies, or archetypes in modern language. Internally these forces and ideas were contacted through identification, but were controlled through invocations, prayers, and other verbal directions centering on gaining knowledge of the god’s secret name. The idea of divine names or *Words of Power* as verbal expressions of the living images of the hieroglyphs is the basis for the external operations of Egyptian magic. While the actual methods of Egyptian magic were distorted, lost, and corrupted with time, these key principals remain intact and can be found in many systems of Western esotericism, as well as Indian, Tibetan, and Chinese practices. With the collapse of the Egyptian temples, the mysteries fell in part to the

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Jewish mystical traditions. Since the Renaissance, Qabala has formed the core of most Western magical practices and has fully incorporated the internal and external operations of Egyptian magic in the practices of *Assumption of the Godform* and utilization of *Divine Names*. While there are many definitions of magic, for practical purposes it can be understood as the use of symbols to effect consciousness.

Astrology

Astrology is among the oldest of the occult sciences and the root for several modern scientific fields, including astronomy, astrophysics, optics, mathematics, algebra, and geometry. Several schools of astrology exist and many overlap as the study of the heavens developed across the millennia.

The most common contributions of astrology to practical magic and alchemy is casting horoscopes to determine the most opportune time for rituals, consecration of talismans, or undertaking alchemical operations. The use of *planetary hours*, or the cyclic influence of planetary energies across the days of the week is the most common use of planetary, or *astral* energies, as they are called. This cyclic repetition of energies is the most fundamental and basic concept behind all astrological theory and practice. All events and experiences occur as a result of cyclic forces that modify and are modified by human actions. The common person experiences these events like a sleepwalker through life, whereas the adept uses their knowledge of cycles to create favorable conditions and to escape, or minimize unfavorable ones. This intimate relationship between the cycles of the planets, the energies of the earth, and symbolic forces of human consciousness is most clearly displayed in the use of planetary symbols. Here the same symbols are used to represent the metals of alchemy, planes of consciousness such as on the Tree of Life or the Hermetic spheres, and the energies present in the days of the week. For practical purposes, astrology can be defined as the use of cycles to affect consciousness, and as a result, matter as well.

Alchemy

Alchemy and ancient Egypt are synonymous, with alchemy deriving its very name from the ancient Egyptian language, or *khem* the 'black earth.' It is from this that the secret, initiatic, or occult arts are maligned with the title, 'black arts' by those who wish to associate darkness with evil. In language, tradition, and essence, alchemy is the highest magic of Egypt. It can be said that alchemy is Egypt and that Thoth, Egypt, and alchemy are inseparable. Alchemical doctrines developed and spread across Europe during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and with it the legend of Thoth-Hermes grew. Despite attempts in recent centuries to disparage alchemy as a foolish quest or simply an early form of chemistry and physics, much of modern science is catching up with many of the ideas and practices of the early alchemists. Several schools of modern practical alchemy exist, of which the primary paths are the *Wet Way*, or slow and safe method; and the *Dry Way*, or the quick and dangerous method. Alchemy also has an entire school of herbalism called *spagyrics* that allows for the creation of powerful medicines for both the psychic and physical bodies, in a relatively safe and easy manner.

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All spagyric and alchemical practices seek to release and utilize the inherent energy in matter as means of awakening to higher levels of consciousness. In alchemy the Hermetic axiom, ‘As above, so below’ is most fully expressed in an operative method. For practical purposes we can define alchemy as the use of matter to effect consciousness.

Tarot and the Book of Thoth

Over the last two hundred years the tarot, or *tarocci*, has been associated with ancient Egypt, as well as qabala, alchemy, and astrology. The first writers to state an occult connection with the tarot were Court de Gebelin and the Comte de Mellet in 1781.^{xxi} In 1781 French archeologist Antoine Court de Gebelin wrote a series of books under the title *Le Monde Primitif* (The Ancient World). In Volume Eight, de Gebelin stated that the tarot cards originated in ancient Egypt and were the lost *Book of Thoth*. At this time “Egpytomania” was at its zenith and archeology still in its infancy, so de Gebelin’s statements were taken as fact. However, no evidence exists to support this and similar claims.^{xxii} As a result, ever since, the tarot has been intertwined with modern myths about ancient Egypt. The most significant contributions were made during the French and British ‘Occult Revivals’ starting in the last quarter of the 19th Century and ending with the start of World War One. While an Etteilla deck, named after the famous 18th Century French card reader and based on Egyptian symbols was printed in the 1789 and went through at least three revisions it appears that its artistic and symbolic impact was limited. It was re-printed in 1870, when copies of early French and Italian decks were easily available as well. Efforts during this period produced the basis for most modern tarot decks, using the *Tarot of Marsillies* and the writings of Eliphas Levi as the basis. These decks include: Oswald Wirth (1889)^{xxiii}, an Egyptian style deck by Gerard Encausse, or ‘Papus’ (Major Arcana 1898, Minor Arcana 1901),^{xxiv} Arthur Edward Waite (Rider-Waite, 1909)^{xxv}, Paul Foster Case (Case-B.O.T.A., 1931), C.C. Zain (1918 and 1936),^{xxvi} Aleister Crowley (Crowley-Harris, 1944)^{xxvii}. Later decks would include a Golden Dawn deck based on Israel Regardie’s personal tarot by Wang (1981),^{xxviii} a black and white masterpiece of hermetic symbolism (Dawson, 1980),^{xxix} and another Golden Dawn tarot by the Cicero’s (2000).^{xxx} The primary focus of each deck was to use the *Major Arcana* to express a complete symbolic synthesis of the three branches of Hermetic practice. Recent decks have included Enochian and *goetic* symbols as well (Duquette 1995).^{xxxi} Several decks based on Freemasonic symbolism have also been published including, *The Masonic Tarot* by Jean Beauchard (Grimaud, 1987).

Two of the most significant contributions to the advancement of contemporary esotericism and the tarot are, Mouni Sadhu’s *The Tarot*,^{xxxii} and Valentine Tomberg’s *Meditations on the Tarot*.^{xxxiii} Originally published anonymously, Tomberg’s work has been hailed by Antoine Faivre as “The most beautiful and instructive book of the Twentieth Century concerning Western esotericism.”^{xxxiv} Both works are distinctly esoterically Christian in tone and draw deeply from the Russian and French Martinist traditions.

Modern Hermeticism and the Age of Woman

Modern Hermeticism also saw a dramatic and significant change in who Hermeticisms supporters and authorities were. Whereas men played the dominant role in Hermetic research and practices in previous centuries, women quickly rose to the forefront during the Occult Revival. Spearheaded by the works of Madame Helena P. Blavatsky, many women of education and means saw in her a role model for the adventurous spirit, and the dawning of what Eliphas Levi had called “The Age of Woman,” or the *Paraclete*. While Blavatsky’s admirers were legion so were her detractors. Many were turned cold by her anti-Christian stance, and lack of practical method in her writings. While the *Theosophical Society* she founded attracted some of the best minds of the period, it was extremely theoretical and relied in many ways on faith. Readers need to have faith in the reality of her *Mahatmas* or Cosmic Masters, and their messages to her that were to be shared with humanity. As a result many organizations appeared that taught practical occult methods with the ideal that each individual could eventually have contact with these superior beings directly, and not rely on intermediaries. It was intermediaries they were tired of in conventional religion, and many did not want to trade one authority for another with nothing to back it up.

Among the most important women of the period is Anna Bonus Kingsford (1846-1888). Anna Kingsford is best known for her advocating of vegetarianism, anti-vivisection stance, and tireless campaigning for women’s rights. Kingsford moved to Paris with Edward Maitland (1824-1897) and in 1880 received a degree in medicine. Kingsford has many visions from which she claimed the revelation of a new Christianity, including the belief in reincarnation, and interpreted the Bible as allegory. Her visions were published in London in 1881 in her book, *The Perfect Way*. Kingsford’s vision of a reformed Christianity was unique in many ways. While others were interpreting Christianity in the light of the emerging Eastern Wisdom, often Blavastky’s Theosophy, or in a more mystical and esoteric light (such as Leadbeater), Kingsford saw Hermeticism as the redeeming force for Christianity.^{xxxv} In many ways, this places her firmly in touch with the Hermetic current of the Renaissance. Like many, she was member of the Theosophical Society and in 1883 briefly became the President of the British section; stepping down in 1884 to found the *Hermetic Society*, which she led for four years until her death. While the Hermetic Society was a social success, attracting huge numbers to its lectures, it did not survive the death of its founder, nor did it satisfy the need of many for practical instruction. It managed however to provide the ground work for much of what would come later, and continues to this day, by featuring lectures by S.L. Mathers and William W. Westcott, two of the founders of the *Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn*. Without Kingsford, the key elements of the Golden Dawn would never have met.

In the last one hundred years the number of prominent hermeticists has been few, however, within the ranks of practical occultists, women have played, and continue to play, the leading role. The work of Kingsford, eventually became the impetus behind the works of many modern occult organizations as her *Hermetic Society* gave voice to those who would later create the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and from it women

leading occult orders: Moina Mathers as head of the *Rosicrucian Order of the Alpha and Omega*, Dion Fortune and the *Society of the Inner Light*, Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki and her *Servants of the Light*, and even to a significant degree, Gladys Plummer (Mother Serena) wife and successor of Dr. George Winslow Plummer of the *Societas Rosicruciana in America* (SRIA), and her current successor Sister Lucia Grosch.^{xxxvi} All of these organizations continue to this day and have fared well under their female leadership.

The 21st Century and the Hermetic Revival

Hermeticism has found a home in the Internet and academic circles. More material than ever before is available, ranging from pure fantasy designed to sell to the conspiracy minded mass-market reader, to practical works on alchemy, qabala, astrology, Gnosticism, the Egyptian Revival, and significant scholarly contributions. While the relations between those who practice Hermeticism as a way of life, either as a philosophy or religion, and those who view it as a subject of scholarly study are at times tense, as a whole, both recognize each others need for one another, and in many areas, even privately overlap. Movements and organizations based upon Egyptian themes, Rosicrucianism, esoteric Freemasonry, various Gnostic churches, and even goddess worship has taken an upturn thanks to interest and controversy stirred by Dan Brown's runaway best-selling novel *The DaVinci Code*, and related works. Just as in ancient times, it appears that a good piece of fiction is always needed to catch the popular imagination, stir it into action, and create a new wave of interest out of the shadows of middle-class angst, boredom, and need to express each person's innate spiritual potential. In fact, a publishing, filmmaking, and tourist industry has been spawned by interest in the not-so-secret places of Hermetic myth and legend.

However, for Hermeticism like any philosophy, to be meaningful, it must be lived. Students and would be adepts can learn much by reaching back to the origins of Hermeticism and bringing it forward, through the Golden Age of the Renaissance, the schismatic period of the Victorian and Edwardian Occult Revival, to the present. Hermeticism is a practical and meaningful guide for human life, and not simply an area of study. Through its inspiration, the ideal of a human being, skilled in all of the arts and sciences, and in harmony with the divine – the Renaissance Man – came into being. The lives of these great men and women who followed the path of Hermes are a source of great inspiration and guidance, and through reading about their lives we, in the present, find guides for our life.

Conclusion

Hermeticism is the basis for the experimental, positivistic, humanistic, and spiritually enriching worldview that forms the basis for Western society and civilization. For Westerners interested in spirituality Hermeticism is the natural choice for those seeking something connected to their culture and daily experience. Hermeticism is practical, meaningful, and worth the effort – the Hermetic Arts and Sciences are practical

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tools for self-development, and not the vestiges of primitive science and superstition. They live in everything and everyone around us when we know how to see them.

In the future, Hermeticism may not rise to the position of prominence and influence it once had – it may not bridge the Catholic-Protestant divide - but the many movements and organizations claiming the Hermetic banner are showing that Western Civilization has and continues to have, a spiritual philosophy that is active in the world, and values human potential. That it provides methods whereby each person can come to know God, Nature, creation, and themselves in a personal and meaningful way, and where science, art, philosophy, and the mysteries are one. The future is not yet written, and within our lifetime we may see a *third* Hermetic Revival.

Suggested Reading

Access to Western Esotericism by Antoine Faivre. State University of New York (SUNY) Press, Albany, New York. 1994.

Gnostic Philosophy – From Ancient Persia to Modern Times by Tobias Churton. Inner Traditions, Rochester, VT. 2005.

Guidorno Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition by Francis Yates. University of Chicago Press. Chicago. 1966.

The Egyptian Hermes – A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind by Garth Fowden. Princeton University Press. Princeton. 1993.

Modern Esoteric Spirituality, edited by Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman, Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, New York. 1992.

Occult Sciences in the Renaissance by Wayne Shuhmaker. University of California Press. Berkley. 1972.

Pagan Dreams of the Renaissance by Joscelyn Godwin. Phanes Press. Grand Rapids, Michigan. 2001.

Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella by Daniel P. Walker.

The Eternal Hermes – From Greek God to Alchemical Magus by Antoine Faivre, Translated by Joscelyn Godwin. Phanes Press, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1995.

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The Golden Builders – Alchemists, Rosicrucians, and the First Freemasons by Tobias Churton. Signal Publishing, Lichfield, Staffordshire. 2003. (Also published by Inner Traditions, 2005)

The Hermetica – The Lost Wisdom of the Pharaohs by Timothy Freke and Peter Grandy. Tarcher/Putnam, New York, New York. 1999.

The Hermetic Traditions by Julius Evola. Inner Traditions, Rochester, VT. 1995.

The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age by Francis Yates. Routledge. London. 2001.

The Rosicrucian Enlightenment by Frances Yates. Barnes and Noble Books. New York. 1996.

The Rosicrucian Enlightenment Revisited, Edited by Ralph White. Lindesfarne Books. Hudson, New York. 1999.

The Way of Hermes – New Translations of The Corpus Hermeticum and The Definitions of Hermes Trismegistus to Asclepius by Clement Salaman, Dorine can Oven, William D. Wharton, and Jean-Pierre Mahe. Inner Traditions, Rochester, VT. 2000.

Thoth – The Hermes of Egypt by Patrick Boylan, Oxford University Press. New York, New York. 1922.

Thrice Great Hermes – Studies in Hellenistic Theosophy and Gnosis by G.R.S. Mead, Samuel Weiser, Inc. York Beach, Maine. 2001.

Summary

- Hermeticism is the basis for most Western Esoteric philosophy, practices, and movements.
- The Egyptian god Thoth is the principal figure around which Hermeticism is based.
- While Egyptian cosmology is not dogmatic, Thoth appears at critical times and in a variety of functions across Egyptian mythology, making him the key figure in magical and occult practices.
- Alexandrian Hermeticism ranges from the First to Third Centuries of the Common Era, and is a synthesis of Jewish, Gnostic, Christian, Platonic, and Egyptian thought and practices.
- Hermes was held in high esteem by the early Church Fathers, and even well into the Middle Ages.
- The Corpus Hermeticum consists of 18 books and additional manuscripts that were initially translated by Marsilio Ficino.
- Renaissance Hermeticism sought to blend pre-Christian philosophies and religions into an acceptable and harmonious (or rather acceptable) means of reinvigorating Christianity.
- Hermeticism was seen as potentially healing the growing Catholic-Protestant rift that would emerge as the Thirty Years War (1618-1648).
- The anti-Hermetic movement began in 1618 with Casaubon demonstrating that the Corpus was no older than the First Century C.E.
- Hermeticism went underground for several generations, reemerging in the form of Masonic and semi-Masonic bodies. The apogee of which was at the end of Eighteenth Century.
- The Occult Revival in Europe at the end of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries created the groundwork for the majority of all modern occult practices and organizations.
- Hermeticism continues to grow and expand, but faces the need to demonstrate that is a viable philosophical system, and personal practice that can bring Illumination.

Appendix – The Emerald Tablet of Hermes

The Emerald Tablet Of Hermes

True, without error, certain and most true;

That which is above is that which is below, and that which is below, is that which is above, for performing the miracle of the One Thing; and as all things were from one, by the mediation of the one, so all things arose from this one by adaptation; the father of it is the Sun, the Mother of it is the Moon; the wind carries it in its belly; the nurse thereof is the Earth.

This is the father of all perfection, of consummation of the whole world.

The power of it is integral, if it be turned into earth.

Thou shalt separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, gently with much wisdom;
it ascends from earth to heaven, and again descends to earth; and received strength of the superiors and of the inferiors - so though has the glory of the whole world;
therefore let all obscurity flee before thee.

This is the strong fortitude of all fortitudes, overcoming every subtle and penetrating every solid thing.

So the world was created.

Hence were all wonderful adaptations of which this is the manner.

Therefore am I called ‘Thrice Great Hermes,’ have Three Parts of the philosophy of the whole world.

That which I have written is consummated concerning the operation of the Sun.

- ⁱ*The Hermetica – The Lost Wisdom of the Pharaohs* by Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy. Tarcher/Putnam, New York. 1997. P. 6.
- ⁱⁱ*Thoth – The Hermes of Egypt* by Patrick Boylan. Oxford University Press, New York. 1922. P. 4-6.
- ⁱⁱⁱ*Ibid.* p. 27.
- ^{iv}*Ibid.* p. 95.
- ^v*Magic and Mystery in Ancient Egypt* by Christian Jacq, Translated by Janet M. Davis. Souvenir Press, London. 1998. P. 117-118.
- ^{vi}Many manuscripts were written in Coptic as well. Coptic is the Egyptian language written in Greek script.
- ^{vii}*Corpus Hermeticum* 1.27-31, and 13.
- ^{viii}Many of these texts can easily be found on the Internet, although they are often older than more recent translations and lack more up to date scholarly commentaries.
- ^{ix}“Hermeticism” by Antoine Faivre, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by
- ^xAstrology in Alexandrian Hermeticism is initiatic and represents the journey of the individual as well as collective soul on the ‘Path of Return’ or regeneration. Since the Seventeenth Century astrology has increasingly become little more than a form of divination divorced from spiritual practices and understanding.
- ^{xi}Amazingly this is modern Hermeticism’s weakest point. So much emphasis is placed on reading, study, memorization, and ritual that direct contact with nature is often ignored, overlooked, and even scorned. See: *Bridging the Worlds: Modern Shamanic and Hermetic Practices* by Mark Stavish. www.hermeticinstitute.org/products/html.
- ^{xii}Slaman et al. P. 56
- ^{xiii}*Ibid.* P. 57-58.
- ^{xiv}There are several variations of the translation. See the Appendix for a full modern translation of the *Emerald Tablet*.
- ^{xv}See: *How to Study Enochian Magic* by Mark Stavish, www.hermeticinstitute.org, Products section.
- ^{xvi}*Three Books on Life by Marsilio Ficino - A Critical Edition and Translation with Introduction and Notes* by Carl V. Kaske and John R. Clark. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, The Renaissance Society of America, Tempe, Arizona. 1998. P. 363-365.
- ^{xvii}*Magic and Mystery in Ancient Egypt* by Christian Jacq. Souvenir Press, London. 1998. P. 62-63.
- ^{xviii}Another fine example of hermetic iconography in a Catholic setting is in the floor tiles of the Cathedral of Siena, where Hermes is depicted in traditional style and encircled with the inscription, “Hermes Mercurius Trismegistos Contemporeanus Moysii” or “Hermes-Mercurius Thrice-Great Contemporary of Moses.” The popularity of Hermes was not limited to the educated or elite, but was widespread among the common people as well.
- ^{xix}*The Rosicrucians and Magister Christoph Schlegel – Hermetic Roots of America* by Manly P. Hall. Philosophical Research Society. Los Angeles, Ca. 1986.
- ^{xx}*Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* by D. Michael Quinn. Signature Books. Salt Lake City, Utah. 1998.
- ^{xxi}For an extensive overview of the development of Egyptian themes in the tarot, see: <http://www.spiritone.com/~filipas/Masquerade/Reviews/historye.html>.
- ^{xxii}The French occult writer Paul Christian (Jean-Baptiste Pitois) was responsible for much of this later Egyptian attributions. See his works: *Egyptian Mysteries – An Account of an Initiation*, Samuel Weiser, Inc. York Beach, ME. 1988; and *History of Magic*, and *L’Homme Rouge de Tuileries* (The Red Man of the Tuileries).
- ^{xxiii}*The Tarot of the Magicians* by Oswald Wirth. Samuel Weiser, Inc., York Beach, ME. 1985.
- ^{xxiv}*Tarot of the Bohemians* by Papus was published in 18.., and uses line drawing of Wirth’s deck. *Tarot of the Bohemians* is published by Wilshire Publishing Company, North Hollywood., California.
- ^{xxv}*The Pictorial Key to the Tarot* by Arthur Edward Waite. Samuel Weiser, Inc., York Beach, ME. 1998. Waite’s deck was first published in 1909, followed a year later by the book, being issued as a box set.
- ^{xxvi}Zain’s tarot is the basis for many current “Egyptian Tarot” decks, but itself is based on Falconnier and Wegener, *Les XXII lames hermétiques du tarot divinatoire*, 1896. Zain’s use of the images was first published in 1918 and redrawn in 1936. Zain took his images from *Practical Astrology* by “St. Germain” (1901), Edgar de Valcourt-Vermont published his book *Practical Astrology* under the pseudonym of Comte C. de Saint Germain.
- ^{xxvii}*The Book of Thoth* by The Master Therion (Aleister Crowley). Samuel Weiser, York Beach, ME. 1995.
- ^{xxviii}*An Introduction to the Golden Dawn Tarot* by Dr. Robert Wang. Samuel Weiser, Inc., York Beach, ME. 1981; companion deck is published by U.S. Games Systems, Inc. Stamford, Ct., under the title, *Golden Dawn Tarot Deck*.
- ^{xxix}*The Hermetic Tarot* by Godfrey Dawson is a compilation of Crowley’s deck and additional Golden Dawn symbolism. S. L. M. Mathers published *The Tarot: It’s Signification, Use in Fortune-Telling, and Method of Play* in 1888. The book was issued with a deck, but it is not clear if this was a deck designed by Mather’s or a traditional tarot deck. Mather’s book was published under its original title by Samuel Weiser, Inc., York Beach, ME in 1969 and 1971; and reissued as *The Tarot: A Short Treatise on Reading Cards* in 1993.
- ^{xxx}*The Golden Dawn Magical Tarot* by Chic and Sandra Tabatha Cicero. Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul, MN. 2000. Book and deck issued as box set.

^{xxx}*Tarot of Ceremonial Magic* by Lon Milo DuQuette, Samuel Weiser, Inc., York Beach, ME. 1995. Deck published by U.S. Games Systems, Inc. Stamford, Ct. 1995.

^{xxxii}Published by Borden Publishing, Co. 1978, and Aeon Book 2004.

^{xxxiii}Originally written in French in 1967, but not published until 1980, and revised in 1984; German edition from the French manuscript was published in 1972 and revised in 1983. First English edition from the original French published by Element Books in 1985; Tarcher/Putnam editon with Afterword 2002.

^{xxxiv}*Meditations on the Tarot* has been endorsed by many major Roman Catholic theologians, including: Father Bede Griffiths, Thomas Keating, and Hans Urs von Balthasar, one of the greatest theologians of the Twentieth Century, and nominated for Cardinal by Pope John Paul II. Balthasar wrote the Foreword to the German edition, published as the Afterword in the Tarcher/Putnam edition.

^{xxxv}*The Theosophical Enlightenment* by Joscelyn Godwin. SUNY Press, Albany, NY. 1994. P. 346.

^{xxxvi}For more information see: *Women of the Golden Dawn –Rebels and Priestesses* by Mary K. Greer. Park Street Press, Rochester, VT. 1995.