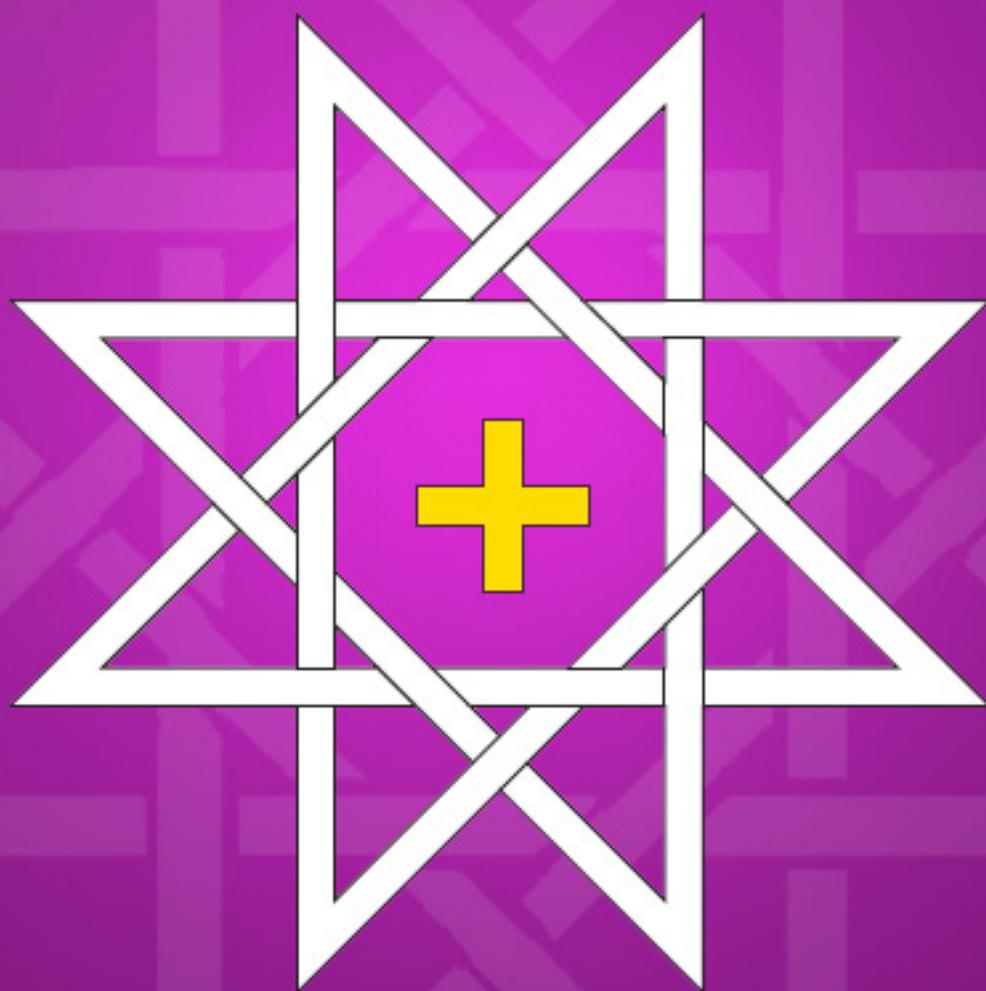


# The Ogdoadic Journal

*of the Western Mysteries*

Vol. 1 No. 1:  
*Reflections on the Ogdoadic Tradition*



ORDO ASTRUM SOPHIÆ

# The Ogdoadic Journal

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EDITED BY  
DERIK RICHARDS & KERRY WISNER

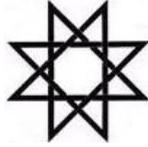
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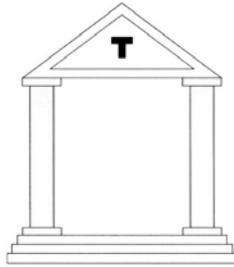
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*To Our Lady of the Mysteries:  
Leukothea – Sophia – Isis  
She who brings forth the riches of the Sun  
is our patron and guiding spirit.*



*To the House of the Winged Serpent,  
the Companions of Ordo Astrum Sophiae  
& to all brothers and sisters of the Western Mystery Tradition*



*Εἶση δ' αἰθερίαν τε φύσιν τά τ' ἐν αἰθέρι πάντα  
σήματα καὶ καθαρᾶς εὐαγέος ἡελίοιο  
λαμπάδος ἔργ' αἰδήλα καὶ ὀππόθεν ἐξεγένοντο,  
ἔργα τε κύκλωπος πεύση περίφοιτα σελήνης  
καὶ φύσιν, εἰδήσεις δὲ καὶ οὐρανὸν ἀμφὶς ἔχοντα  
ἔνθεν ἔφν τε καὶ ὥς μιν ἄγουσ' ἐπέδησεν Ἀνάγκη  
πείρατ' ἔχειν ἄστρον.*

## *ACKNOWLEDGMENTS*

WE WOULD LIKE to express our appreciation to all the contributors to this first edition of *The Ogdoadic Journal*. Particular thanks go to Derik Richards and Kerry Wisner for their editorial work and dedication to the Tradition; to Nina Cooper and Nigel Jackson for their art work; and to Charles Hardaker for the contribution of *The Academy* and his interpretation of its content. Special thanks also go to our friends and magical companions, Chic and Tabatha Cicero, for their personal support and generosity and their contribution of the introductory article.

Deepest gratitude is due to Leon Barcynski and the late Vivian Godfrey, without whose years of friendship, magical work and dedication to the Tradition none of this would have been possible.

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*, Sun Lion Publications, will be published biannually by the Ordo Astrum Sophiae. This is a cooperative non-commercial venture of the Order, intended to broaden the scope of Ogdoadic material available to the Western Esoteric Tradition. The journal will present articles and material on topics such as Defining the Ogdoadic Tradition, Historical Influences of the Tradition, The Constellation of the Worshipped, The Regenerative Mysteries, Symbolism of the Ogdoadic Tradition, The Holy Guardian Angel: Its Quest and Fulfillment, Ogdoadic Ritual Magic, etc.

The majority of material will be taken from the Order's internal journal, *The Messenger*, but we also welcome other authors wishing to make relevant contributions to future editions.<sup>1</sup>

## ORDO ASTRUM SOPHIAE

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, both within its own body of initiates and in its relations to other Orders within the Western Mystery Tradition. It is a Hermetic and magical Order, based on 19th-20th century Aurum Solis teachings and on evolving esoteric research.

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 (O.A.S.) 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.




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<sup>1</sup> Individuals interested in making submissions can contact [Phanes@isd.net](mailto:Phanes@isd.net) 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.

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 [Phanes@isd.net](mailto:Phanes@isd.net), or to the Master of a Commandery.

## THE OGDOADIC TRADITION

So what is the Ogdoadic Tradition? 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 Tradition. 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<sup>2</sup> (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.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>2</sup> See *The Possible Ancient Egyptian Origins of the Tau Cross*, p. 40 of the present issue.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire/interactive/interactive\\_map/stroud/orpheus\\_pavement.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire/interactive/interactive_map/stroud/orpheus_pavement.shtml)

## ANTECEDENTS OF THE OGDODIC TRADITION

*The following overview of general historical influences on the Ogdoadic Tradition is a copyrighted contribution from Chic and Tabatha Cicero, respected authors and Chiefs of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.*

### **Egyptian Magic**

To the ancient Egyptians (3100-1000 B.C.E.), there was often little distinction between religion and magic. If there was in fact any difference at all, it was perhaps in the immediacy of magical as opposed to religious practices. In religion, a worshiper petitioned a deity through an intermediary or priest, while a magician invoked the deity directly. But frequently, priests and magicians were one and the same.

Egyptian religion was a complex and beautiful balance of monotheism and polytheism. The Egyptians believed in one creator deity who was eternal, omnipotent, self-existent and incomprehensible to its human worshippers. This unknowable divinity was some times referred to by the name *neter*, the suggested meaning of which includes ideas of “god,” “divine,” “strength,” and “renewal.” The polytheism of Egypt manifested itself in the vast number of local and lesser deities. These deities were considered as the various aspects attributes, or extensions of the *neter*, manifesting in forms that could be visualized and comprehended by the human mind. Thus the goddess Isis was the divine femininity and creative force of the *neter* while the god Thoth was the *neter*'s intellectual power, etc.<sup>1</sup> This unification of monotheism with polytheism was a perfectly natural arrangement to the Egyptians, whose rich religious beliefs were grossly misunderstood by outsiders for centuries.

Three principles can be identified in Egyptian religion: (1) the common belief in a *Solar monotheism* in the form of a creator god whose power was especially symbolized by the life-giving rays of the sun, (2) a belief in the *regenerative power of nature* which was expressed in the worship of fertile gods and goddesses as well as sacred animals and (3) the recognition of *a deity who is human yet also divine*, whose life in both the physical world and the spiritual world beyond death mirrors that of the perfected human life.

The last tenet, the belief in Osiris as a god-man, was well established early in Egyptian history. He was a deity unlike all others, in that he was an accessible god who people could strongly empathize with-they could identify with him as *one of them*, although he was part divine. They believed that Osiris had walked the Earth, and ate and drank as they did. And like humans, Osiris suffered and died- but was brought back to life with the aid of other gods. Thus did he become the beloved god of resurrection and Eternal Life, for he set an example that the rest of humanity could follow. What the gods did for Osiris, the Egyptians reasoned, they might be persuaded to do for ordinary mortals. Many religious and magical ceremonies were designed to insure that after death the deceased would, like Osiris, rise again and inherit life everlasting.

There were two kinds of *theurgists* (magicians or “god-workers”) in Egypt. These included the trained priest-magicians of the temples, and the “lay” magician, who was

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<sup>1</sup> Compare this to the Qabalistic principle that the Sephiroth are all specific aspects of God, each connected with the one divine Source, but having different qualities and attributions.

independent of any institution. The majority of them, however, were of the priest class. It was also common for a priest to inherit the office from his father. There were hundreds of temples dedicated to various deities and the attendant priests had several different functions. Some were in charge of caring for the statue of the god (food, clothing, etc.). Purification was also an essential practice--the priests bathed four times daily, shaved their heads, and only wore certain types of clothing.

When all conditions of purity were met, a priest underwent an initiation ceremony into a higher office. From the Roman writer Apulius, we learn that one such initiation took several days, and included anointing of the priest's hands, purification by water, private communing with the temple statue of the deity, and ten days of fasting. Then the initiation ceremony was repeated. Combined with isolation in some secret part of the temple, clouds of incense, and incessant chanting by the other priests, such a ceremony would have undoubtedly had a powerful effect on the initiate.

The High Priest was known as the Sem-Priest or “first prophet of the god.”<sup>2</sup> Under him was an entire staff of priests (the “horologers”), whose duty was to determine precisely the hours of the day and night. This was a crucial function, because various rites had to begin at specific times. The priests took note of the positions of the Sun and the stars, in order to pinpoint when the rituals should commence. There were also astrologer-priests who were the caretakers of a horoscope calendar that explained how human beings should behave on given days.

However, the priest-magicians were not from any of the above groups. They were to be found in a part of the temple known as the *House of Life*, which contained the temple library. The average layman would go to the House of Life if he had a problem and needed a magical spell or amulet. The priests would dispense magical charms for protection, interpret dreams or provide an incantation to cure illness, etc. The priest-magicians guarded their secret books carefully, and they were looked upon as very powerful and important individuals.

In addition, the sciences of medicine and magic oftentimes borrowed from one another. If the source of an illness was known, the treatment was usually mundane. If the cause was unknown, it was thought to be caused by malicious powers and a magical cure was sought. And the highest ranking and best educated doctors were the magician-priests.

One aspect of Egyptian theurgy which would remain essential to magic throughout the long history of the Hermetic Tradition, was the importance given to divine names and words of power. As shown in the story of Isis gaining mastery over Ra, the Egyptians believed that knowing the secret name of a deity conferred great power to the magician who knew it. (This would later manifest in the Graeco-Egyptian “barbarous names” of magic.)

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<sup>2</sup> [The class of Priest known as the “Sem” were usually not associated with any temple. Rather they were mortuary priests who oversaw and conducted the funerary rituals. The Neteru most closely associated with this priesthood were Ausir (Osiris), Anpu (Anubis), Sokar and Ptah (Sauneron 1960.108, Shafer 1997.11).

In most cases each temple appears to have been overseen by a *Jemjra Hem Neter* (Shafer 1997.10). These were High Priests or Priestesses who also frequently held other titles and positions within the temple. The title of “First Prophet” was reserved for the *Hem Neter Tepy* who was in charge of the daily rites and invocations of the temple deity. Frequently the *Jemjra Hem Neter* would function as the *Hem Neter Tepy* (First Prophet) in ritual. – Ed.]

## Classical Greek Philosophy

From 600 to 200 B.C.E., new ideas were being circulated in Greece and in the Greek cities along the coast of Asia Minor. There philosophers began a trend of questioning the reality of the traditional gods, while at the same time espousing theories of materialism and rationalism. In addition, the idea that “All is ONE,” began to catch on. The philosopher Anaximander thought that there was a basic substance that permeated the universe and out of which the elements emerged. He called this substance *apeiron* or “the boundless,” which immediately brings to mind the Qabalistic concept of *Ain Soph*, “the limitless.”

Pythagoras, a mystic and magician as well as a philosopher, claimed that the essence of everything is *number*. This idea is also reflected in the Qabalah, which regards numbers as divine emanations in the form of the Sephiroth. Because of his fascination with numbers, Pythagoras is often thought of in the non-magical world as an ancient mathematician. However, to his followers, Pythagoras was a magus and a spiritual leader, and his students included women as well as men. Enamored with the mystical qualities of numbers, Pythagoras used numerically derived figures as holy symbols for his followers—including the pentagram and the *tetraktys*, a diagram in which the number four is exalted, but which also shows the importance of the first ten numbers, through the unfolding of the Monad, Duad, Triad, and finally the Tetrad. These ten numbers (like the ten Qabalistic Sephiroth) were given specific attributions and were regarded as the progressive evolution of *unity*, which included the concepts of duality, multiplication, and synthesis. It is difficult to tell whether this philosophy influenced early Qabalistic teachings, or if Pythagoras was himself influenced by an earlier oral Hebrew tradition.

Unlike other philosophers of his time Pythagoras believed in the existence of the human soul. He also taught reincarnation and a form of past-life regression.

Other philosophers of the same era taught a form of monotheism that suggested that god existed everywhere at all times in matter *and* in nature. While some held that the reality of nature was static, others adopted the view that it was constantly changing. Empedocles was the first to espouse the idea of the four elements in nature—Fire, Water, Air and Earth. He also supported the notion that the universe was composed of two worlds, one spiritual and good, the other material and evil. Empedocles believed that human beings had two souls—the *psyche* or Lower Soul which is finite, and the *daimon* or Higher Soul which is immortal.

The philosopher Anaxagoras held that a divine mind or *nous* was the substance and power behind the physical universe. This mind created the universe through a whirling motion at the center of the cosmos.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the later Greek intellectuals seemed to draw away from the materialism and ultimate rationalism that dominated the teachings of earlier philosophers. They developed their own form of rational mysticism, possibly to reverse the moral deterioration that resulted when people stopped believing in the gods. The main doctrine of Socrates, was that the individual should be guided by an inner voice. But of all the

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<sup>3</sup> Comparable with the *Rashith ha Galgalim* or “first whirlings” of the Qabalah.

classical Greek philosophers, it was Socrates' student, Plato, who had the most significant effect on the Hermetic Tradition.

Plato taught that a world of ideas or archetypes existed before the physical world was created. In other words, all ideas of everything in the universe exist in an unseen supernatural world and all created things in the physical world are merely flawed and inferior copies of the divine originals. Thus Plato's philosophy developed a sharp dualism between the tainted physical world and the perfect world of ideas. He believed that these two worlds were linked by an indescribable chaotic substance he called the "materia" which evolved through natural processes into the four elements. But in order for the two worlds to interact and form the manifest world, the *Demiougos* or "creator god" patterned and created the universe; an idea which was later incorporated into Gnostic teachings.

Another of Plato's theories was that soul of the individual lives on after death and that it is judged -- either to receive eternal rapture or eternal punishment in a place called *Tartarus*, where its transgressions would be forgiven over time. (Plato's beliefs on this matter were later adopted by the early Christians.) The soul, according to Plato, was divided into three parts: the immortal portion called *logos*, which was located in the head and which was identical with the intellect, the *thumas* or will, located in the heart, and the *epithymia* or desire, which was found in the abdomen.<sup>4</sup>

Plato believed in a World Soul and the idea that the individual soul is capable of carrying over knowledge from the divine world. Plato's beliefs were borrowed or adapted by many groups, including the Neoplatonists, the Gnostics and the early Christians. The similarity of some of his teachings to Qabalah is unmistakable. And Plato's hypotheses form the cornerstone not only of the Hermetic Tradition, but of Western philosophy as a whole.<sup>5</sup>

## The Greek Mystery Religions

The mystery religions developed and prospered during the time of Alexander the Great when much of the known world, including Egypt and Persia, was becoming "Hellenized." One of the reasons why the mystery religions became popular was because people were growing tired of the moral decay that resulted from the cold materialism and rationalism of the philosophers. People wanted and needed to believe in the gods again. Not just the passive, state-sanctioned veneration of the gods, but an active religious participation that would deeply touch the lives of worshippers. The mystery religions satisfied this need. Coinciding with the popular worship of the deities, there were secret initiatory ceremonies which were attended by a privileged few. The Greek word *mysteria*, or "mysteries" implied private or secret rites.

The deities invoked and worshiped by these religions varied. The samothracian mysteries, possibly the oldest of these cults, centered around the Kabiri or "great gods." The Orphic mysteries, said to have been founded by the Greek hero, Orpheus, focused on the god Dionysos-Phanes, the creator of Heaven and Earth and the bringer of Light. The mysteries of Isis and Osiris were played out in Egypt, along with the cult of Serapis in

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<sup>4</sup> Compare this to the three main parts of the soul in Qabalah.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on the teachings of the Greek philosophers and Greek magic in general' see David Godwin's excellent book *Light in Extension*.

Alexandria. There were also the mysteries of Cybele and Attis, deities that were imported from Asia Minor whose myths resembled those of the Babylonian divinities, Ishtar and Tammuz. However, the most famous of the mysteries was centered at Athens--the Eleusinian mysteries--which focused on the deities of Demeter, Persephone, and Hades. Later the cult of Mithras, the Persian Sun god, sprang up at outposts of the Roman empire.

What exactly was experienced by initiates of these mystery religions cannot be determined for certain. This is because initiates held them in such high regard that, for the most part, they refused to reveal the secrets to outsiders. Apparently no one has ever betrayed their oath of secrecy to these rites. Consequently, there is little record of them. Even those initiates who later converted to Christianity steadfastly refused to break their oath of secrecy--such was the power of the mystery religions. But what *is* known of the mysteries is that all of them dealt with the ideas of death and resurrection from death (the death of one Kabir at the hands of the other three Kabiri, only to be brought back to life again, the dismemberment of Osiris at the hands of the evil Set, and Osiris' resurrection at the hands of Isis, the many deaths and reincarnations of Dionysos, and Persephone's descent into the underworld of Hades).

The reenactment of these myths served to instill within the initiate a sense of spiritual rebirth into a greater life--the triumph over death through the rising of eternal life. They sought to take human beings out of their mundane conditions into a divine rebirth--a direct awareness of humanity's spiritual essence. These "secret rites" emerged from the belief that higher divine wisdom and true spiritual experiences could only be obtained by those individuals who were cleansed by certain disciplines. They attempted to reveal the secrets of the universe through generating spiritual ecstasy, or by a thoughtfully outlined series of initiations crafted to produce accelerated spiritual growth.

Purification played an important role in these rites, along with processions, reenactments of certain myths, animal sacrifices, offerings, fasting, and a real or symbolic descent into the underworld, as well as a return from the underworld. The initiate would take an active role in these dramas, experiencing in all likelihood a symbolic death and rebirth.

The basic theme of the mysteries (that on some level the initiate experiences a resurrection from death), would later play a major role in several Hermetic circles--extending its influence to the alchemists, the Masons, and the Rosicrucians. It is also evident in the 5=6 ritual of the Golden Dawn.<sup>6</sup>

The Greeks held that there were three types of knowledge: *mathesis* or knowledge that could be learned, *gnosis* or knowledge that could be gained through meditation or intuitive perception, and *pathesis* or knowledge that was felt. The mystery religions tried to instill enlightenment through all three, but especially through *pathesis*, by supplying the initiate the opportunity for direct personal experience of the higher teachings. They promised a transcendent type of experience or spiritual ecstasy that was lacking in the more popular forms of worship.

In fact, early Christianity was considered by many at the time to be just another Greek mystery cult, with similar goals and mythology. One of the reasons that Christianity became very successful was that it was open to everyone, including slaves and women, whereas some of the other mystery cults such as Mithrasim were restricted

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<sup>6</sup> [Cf. the A. S. Third Hall Rite of Elevation – Ed.]

to men or individuals of status. It was not until much later that the followers of Christianity, who borrowed heavily from both the Greek mysteries and Greek philosophy, were able to become a dominant political force which crushed those it considered rivals.

## **Gnosticism**

Gnosticism was a combination of Christian belief with the Greek mystery religions. However, like Mithraism, its striking similarities with Christianity caused it to be labeled as a heresy, and rival Christian-like heresies were stamped out far more viciously than most pagan religions were. The Gnostic movement flourished in the Eastern Mediterranean area around the time of the birth of Christ and for many centuries after.

As stated earlier, *gnosis* meant knowledge, specifically knowledge gained through intuitive perception. The knowledge sought by the Gnostics was the knowledge of God through direct revelation. This knowledge was “secret” in that it could only come about as the product of specific realizations. And this knowledge was also beyond faith and beyond reason—the essence of the universe only revealed itself directly (thus secretly) to those who actively strove to transcend their mundane existences. Individual interpretation of spiritual truths was encouraged and, in fact, considered a form of enlightenment. The ability to “channel” new revelations of Christ was considered a sign of religious Adeptness. Revelation was a continuous process, not a rigidly established dogma.

Gnosticism had several factions; it was not one single belief system or united movement. There were as many different Gnostic sects as there were Christian sects. (Early Christianity was likewise comprised of several different groups with various beliefs.) But the diverse Gnostic sects can generally be grouped under two branches; the earlier more “Jewish” type is called Sethian Gnosticism (named after Seth, the son of Adam), while the more “Christianized” form is known as Valentinian Gnosticism, so-called because of its main exponent, Valentinus.

The basic doctrine of the Gnostics was that the human spirit represented the divine essence ensnared in matter – that the human spirit (*pneuma*) was a spark of God trapped within an evil world that God had nothing to do with. The world was actually created by the *Demiougos* or *Demiurge* (borrowed from Plato), a lesser creator god who was sometimes evil, sometimes just plain ignorant. Thus Gnostics believed in a fundamental dualism between man (the trapped god), and the physical world (which was his prison). The human condition was defined as being part angel and part beast.

The world view of the Gnostics was one of numerous levels of existence between the divine, Light-filled realm of God and the dark world of humanity, wrapped in dense matter. The dense physical world was ruled by various *Archons* or rebellious intermediary entities who were represented by zodiacal and planetary powers. Gnosis, then, was the knowledge of how the soul could advance through the Spheres of the Archons and return to its original abode of Light.

The Gnostics were devoted to the transcendent god, rather than the creator god. The transcendent god was believed to intercede in the imperfect world by offering his followers a means by which gnosis could be attained—by providing a redeemer or savior. In some Gnostic sects this redeemer was *Sophia*, the “wisdom” of God; in other sects it was her brother (or mate) *Christ*, and in some it was merely known as the *logos* or

“word.” The goal of the savior was to implement the separation of this mixture of physical matter and divine Light. The savior also served as an example for the individual soul in its quest to return to the world of Light.

An important Gnostic text called the *Pistis Sophia* or “World Soul,” told the story of Sophia, who was once a heavenly being, but by a combination of ambition and deception had fallen into a chasm which was midway between the world of dense matter and the living Light (echoing the human condition). Assisted by Jesus, the savior, she gradually ascends through the ten Aeons, by repentance and faith, to reclaim her former station in the Light. This was yet another symbolic death and rebirth such as the type espoused by the Greek Mystery religions. One major difference is that in Gnosticism, the main mystery is that of the transcendence of the Christos as the savior.

All in all, the Gnostic view that humanity is part of an imprisoned god, is not so different from the view of most contemporary religions, which teach that the material world is an illusion while the spiritual world is a world of truth.

The general composition of Gnosticism was syncretic. It borrowed bits and pieces from other traditions, including Zoroastrian dualism of Light vs. Dark, the eastern belief in reincarnation, Babylonian astrology, and the reverence for secret (barbarous) names and words of power as used in the pagan mysteries. But what truly set Gnosticism apart was its conviction 'in the belief that spiritual truth was highly *personal*. This is one of the main tenets of Gnosticism that is still held in high regard by today's Hermeticists.

## Neoplatonism

The later Hellenistic followers of Plato revered the early classical philosopher as a writer who had been divinely inspired. The teachings of Plotinus (204-270 C.E.) dominated Greek philosophy until the 6th century C.E. He criticized the Gnostic movement for what he considered a debasement of Plato's teachings. Although many of ideas promulgated by the Neoplatonists bore a certain resemblance to Gnostic ideas, one major exception was that an evil Demiurge who created and ruled a prison of matter was nowhere to be found in the teachings of Plotinus and his followers.

Plotinus managed to blend the rational logical approach to the nature of the universe, as embraced by the classical philosophers, with mystical experience. He interpreted the theories of Plato in the light of Hellenistic mysticism, in an attempt to account for spiritual experience, rather than to merely satisfy intellectual curiosity. He believed that God (*Hen*) was entirely outside of human comprehension.

The teachings of Plotinus contain the theory that the one God (*protos theos* - the “first god”) creates various emanations (*hypostases*) endlessly from himself without diminishment, and the divine intellect (*nous*) is the main creation of God. All of these emanations were considered as degrees of Light-energy, which were independent of time and space. Intellect, as Plotinus knew it, was not a cold philosophical abstraction, but rather a vital and jubilant state of perfection that has two goals: the first is to return to the Godhead, and the other is to seek unity and goodness for its own sake. For the later goal, intellect divides itself into several individual lives or focal points of creative energy, which correspond to the archetypal forms and concepts of Plato. Plotinus also made a distinction between the spiritual experience obtained through contemplation of God, and

the experience of ultimate union (or oneness) with the divine intellect. According to Plotinus, there is a lower divine level known as the soul (*psyche*) which attempts to manifest the ideas born in the intellect. Through this process the natural world came into being. The natural world itself is composed of a concentrated entity known as the World Soul (*pantos psyche*), to which human beings are related through intellect, but not created by nature itself (humanity is within nature but not from nature). The psychological composition of humanity corresponds to this greater universe: the physical body corresponds to the physical world of matter, the soul or ordinary consciousness relates to the World Soul, and the higher perceptive faculties conform with the divine intellect. However, Plotinus believed that in most humans the higher intellectual powers are asleep, and it is the duty of the individual to arouse them. One of the goals of the Neoplatonist, was the unification of all three segments of the individual, a process which forecasts the objective of modern psychology by several centuries. The method of awakening the intellect, Plotinus surmised, was through constant interaction in the natural world through reincarnation—something that took several lifetimes to achieve. The individual does not remember the previous incarnations because the eternal portion of consciousness is the Higher Self which is on the level of divine intellect. The Lower Self or personality is merely a reflection of the Higher. But the soul or psyche of the individual is incorruptible. Thus at death, the terrestrial experiences of the Lower Self are absorbed by the Higher Self before it again reflects itself forth into incarnation. Plotinus did not promote either spiritual or magical practices, because he believed that the individual attained illumination by philosophical musing. However, he established the concept of the existence of altered states of consciousness. He also thought that the ultimate aim of human existence should be a return to the Godhead. Another Neoplatonist who believed very much in the magical practices of *theurgy* was Iamblichus, who had a great interest in the Egyptian mysteries. The works of Iamblichus were very important to the later development of ceremonial magic. One form of theurgic practice explored by Iamblichus was the invoking of a deity or spirit into a statue. Another practice was to invoke the deity into a person, resulting in complete identification with the deity in order to awaken the Higher Self. The goal of such Neoplatonic magical techniques was spiritual growth or the attainment of answers to spiritual questions concerning the nature of the universe.

In later times, Neoplatonist and Neo-Pythagorean magicians utilized the *Chaldean Oracles of Zoroaster*<sup>7</sup>, which dated from the 2nd century C.E. Although the *Oracles* have only survived to the present day in fragmentary form, they are quoted extensively in the rituals of the Golden Dawn.

## The Qabalah

The Qabalah is the mystical belief system of the ancient Hebrews. The word *Qabalah* means “tradition,” and refers to the ancient custom of passing esoteric knowledge from one initiate to the next, from mouth to ear. Qabalah encompasses a vast body of knowledge based upon archaic Jewish mysticism.

One of the most famous of the Qabalistic texts, known as the *Sepher Yetzirah* or *Book of Formation*, was in existence in the second or third century, around the time that the Hermetic books were being written. Several versions of the *Sepher Yetzirah* were

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<sup>7</sup> For a rare edition by G. R. S. Mead, see <http://www.magusbooks.com/wingedserpent/oracles/index.html>

passed around in oral form from about 100 B.C.E. to 200 C.E., when it was standardized in the form that we know it today. Qabalistic teachings that were presented in the *Book of Formation*, include the following ideas:

1. Humankind is made in the “image” or “reflection” of God. This also implies that humans have the power of creation, but to a lesser extent.
2. The creation of the physical universe was through a progression of numbers. The divine Creator expresses itself through a balanced and orderly numerical system.
3. These various numbers of progression, known as the ten Sephiroth or ten emanations of God, are connected with the one Source-or the idea that God is ONE, although God expresses its various divine qualities or aspects through number.
4. From the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, all things were created in progression, including the elements, the planets, the zodiacal signs, and the directions of space (called the *Cube of Space*) which is a model of the universe.

These early Qabalistic concepts already show the kind of syncretic fusion of philosophies that would later meld together into the Hermetic Tradition, for the ancient Hebrew mystics who wrote the *Sepher Yetzirah* were already showing a blending of Persian, Egyptian, and Neoplatonic ideas, due to the Hellenization of Palestine and the multi-cultural contact that such colonization brought. And the basic Qabalistic theorem that the divine Creator made the universe with a logical progression of numbers, letters, and communication of divine concepts, speaks to the very heart of the Hermetic Tradition. Hermes-Thoth, the god of wisdom and communication, could not have said it better.<sup>8</sup>

Another aspect of early Qabalistic thought was Merkabah mysticism, which dates back to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries C.E. and is described in a text known as the *Greater Hekhaloth*. These teachings were influenced by Gnostic ideas and represent the Jewish method of the soul's ascent through the seven heavenly spheres to approach the throne-chariot of God (the *Merkabah*). At each level of the journey, the mystic must recite the names of several guardian angels and display magical seals. Then glorious revelations are imparted to the mystic concerning the workings of the divine universe. The Merkabah visions were very likely brought on by certain methods of purification, invocation, rhythmic breathing, and meditative techniques used to induce altered states of consciousness. Such techniques are well known to modern magicians.

The full flowering of the Qabalistic teachings did not occur within the Hermetic Tradition until much later during the Renaissance. It was then that the Tree of Life, in the form that we know it today, came into being. At that time, such individuals as Pico della Mirandola, Johann Reuchlin, and others blended Qabalah, Neoplatonism and Christianity together to create what we now call the Hermetic Qabalah.

### **The Hermetic Literature**

As stated earlier, this body of knowledge is named after the classical Greek god Hermes (or Mercury) – the messenger and bestower of magic and wisdom, who was also

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<sup>8</sup> For a more extensive overview of Qabalistic teachings, refer to *The Golden Dawn Journal- Book 2: Qabalah: Theory and Magic*. (Llewellyn, 1994).

identified with Thoth, the Egyptian god of wisdom. Later in the second century C.E., the figure of Hermes, complete with serpent-entwined Caduceus Wand, became immersed into the personage of *Hermes Mercurius Trismegistos* or Hermes the Thrice-Great. Hermes Trismegistos was said to be an ancient Egyptian priest and magician who was credited with writing forty-two books collectively known as the Hermetic literature, dealing with esoteric wisdom. These books, which include *The Emerald Tablet* and the *Divine Pymander* (or *Poimandres*), describe the creation of the universe, the soul of humanity, and the way to achieve spiritual rebirth.

Although the Hermetic books were not markedly different from other contemporary texts on magical philosophy, these works became extremely important because of the high position given to them by Renaissance thinkers and magicians. They were also judged to be acceptable to the Christian church for nearly 1500 years—highly unusual for books written by an Egyptian initiate who was named after a pagan god. And because of this remarkable acceptance, the books have had an important role in Western culture.

There were actually two classes of Hermetic literature, obviously not written by the same person. The first more popular and practical type, which dates to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E., deals with practices such as astrology, alchemy, the secret properties of plants and gemstones (the system of occult correspondences), sympathetic magic, and making of talismans. The second more “learned” type, which dates from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries C.E., is comprised of several books about religious philosophy. Most important among these books are the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the *Asclepius*. However, both types of Hermeticism, popular and learned, shared the same philosophical root.

Originating in Egypt under the guise of a body of knowledge from a single well-respected source (Hermes Trismegistos), the two stands of Hermeticism, like the two cultures of Egypt and Greece, came together. This was a reflection of the times, in which it became ever more difficult to distinguish Gnostics, Neoplatonists, and Hermeticists from one another. In fact, the reason why the Christian church did not attempt to eradicate the Hermetic literature, as it had done with other pagan books, was because many of the spiritual ideas embraced by the books were very similar to Christian principles. Thinking that the Hermetic books were much older than they actually were, Christian officials thought that they were the work of an enlightened ancient pagan who envisioned the forthcoming Christian “truths.” Had they known that the books were penned by a more contemporary Hellenistic pagan thinker who was influenced by Gnostic and Neoplatonic ideas, they would have no doubt branded it as heresy.

The astrological, magical and alchemical portions of the Hermetic works formed the basis of what would later become known as Western ritual magic. Lists of occult correspondences, invocations of deities, and rituals for summoning spirits were all to be found in the Hermetica. The more philosophical (“learned”) books even furnish a rationale for conducting experiments in ritual magic. However the greatest practical magic that was contained within the texts had to do with the perfecting of humanity – the recognition of the divine spark within the human soul – and the means by which this spark could be returned to the Godhead.

## Hermes Trismegistos in the Renaissance

Once Christianity had completed its grip on power in the 4th century C.E., rival philosophies were eventually squelched. Here and there different Gnostic sects would again surface briefly, but the Hermetica, surprisingly, remained to a certain degree accepted by the established religious hierarchy. Early church fathers even sanctioned the inspirational books of Hermes. Thus when the social climate of the Dark Ages gave way to the Renaissance, the works of Hermes were already in a good position. Along with the renewal of interest in antiquity, the venerable name of Hermes Trismegistos was given new reverence.

In the mind of the Renaissance philosopher-magician, Hermes was a real person, who, along with Zoroaster and Moses, was thought of as one of the great teachers - the *prisci theologici* who had foreshadowed the teachings of Christ.

In 1460, a monk brought a manuscript of the *Corpus Hermeticum* to Cosimo de Medici, one of the most powerful and influential nobles in northern Italy. Three years later, Marsilio Ficino was commissioned to translate the book. The works of Hermes were considered so important, that Ficino had to put aside translation of the entire works of Plato until after the *Corpus* had been translated.

For the following two centuries, Hermes' high reputation as one of the *prisci theologici* remained unchallenged. However, in 1614 a scholar by the name of Isaac Casaubon confirmed that the author of the Hermetica lived during the post-Christian era - not during the distant times of ancient Egypt. But Casaubon's view was largely ignored, for several mystical thinkers who came after him in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, such as Robert Fludd and Athanasius Kircher, continued to venerate the thrice-great Hermes.

*The Academy*

CHARLES HARDAKER





*AGATHODAIMON:  
The Formula of Sublimation in Theory and Practice*

WILLIAM STOLTZ



WHO, or what, is the Agathodaimon? The literal translation of *Agathodaimon*, taken from the Greek, is *Good* or *Benign Spirit*. From this we can surmise it to be a benevolent, transcendent presence with a particular relevance to the human condition.

Within the Ogdoadic Tradition we focus on the twin ophiomorphic (serpentine) and anthropomorphic (human) forms of the Agathodaimon. (Other forms, such as the Qabalistic Adam Kadmon and Celtic Kernunnos, have historical and esoteric significance but fall outside our current consideration.) Although these two basic forms coexist and are, in a way, inseparable, they also hold

important and deep distinctions in our work. These deeper realities are transmitted through the Tradition's teachings, foundational practices and, perhaps most importantly, the phases of initiation. Even in the First Hall Rite of Induction, where the Constellation of Worshipped is not overtly mentioned, in the final blessing of the rite the Officers transmit an annunciation heralding the coming of the Agathodaimon: "So shall the Vision of the Light Divine arise within his/her Soul, and thy Presence enfold him/her."<sup>1</sup> In the Constellation of the Worshipped paper we read concerning the Agathodaimon: "AGATHODAIMON is the transforming vision of the Light Divine which arises within the soul; and he is the Holy Guardian of the Kosmos, the spiritual consciousness of the Logos immanent in the manifested worlds."<sup>2</sup> We can here assume the Agathodaimon, as represented by the Magus of the rite, is a principal figure underlying the inner workings of the initiatory process. As we progress in the initiatory sequence we find, at the core of the Second Hall, more explicit focus of the functions of the Winged Serpent Knouphis. As one might suspect, at this stage of the initiatory process the ophiomorphic Agathodaimon plays the principle role of initiation and integration.

It is, however, in the Third Hall Rite of Elevation, the Palingenesis, that the initial annunciation is fully realized within the psyche of the candidate in relation to the

<sup>1</sup> *Aurum Solis, Initiation Ceremonies and Magical Techniques*, p. 69

<sup>2</sup> Denning, Melita, *Mysteria Magica*, pp. 87-95

mysteries of Agathodaimon. Here, in its full power and symbolism, we find the Third Hall Rite of Elevation primarily organized around the principle of the anthropomorphic Agathodaimon.

Some distinction between the ophiomorphic and anthropomorphic forms of the Agathodaimon can be found in the Aurum Solis Constellation of Worshipped document.<sup>3</sup> Here we understand that the nature of the Knouphis Agathodaimon manifests, in one important respect, from a descending impulse of divine force. Yet the personal experience and dynamic of the divine serpent energy, as with the Hindu Kundalini, is an *upward* impulse within the psyche and nervous system. On the surface this seems to be an inconsistency between cosmic theory and personal experience but, in actuality, it reveals an important magical dynamic: the downward impulse of divine cosmic energy awakens the ascent of the latent serpentine fire within us. Our inner fire awakens according to our capacity to call upon and properly channel the divine presence; and in this regard the Winged Serpent is a fit emblem for this transformative, creative and transcendent force of the human spirit's "call to life."<sup>4</sup> Knouphis Agathodaimon is thus the method and means to awaken the process of transformation and regeneration.

This dynamic force often stimulates the libido of the spiritual practitioner, increasing the primitive instincts (including the sex drive) proportionately to the intensity of spiritual work. Although this poses little conflict for the magician or tantric practitioner who works consciously with this process, it has been a long-standing problem in individuals, seminaries and monasteries, where suppression is the common, and usually unsuccessful, solution to this phenomenon.

In this respect we can see a close relationship to the Qabalistic path of Ayin, and its Tarot attribution to the Pan-like figure of the Devil. This figure is synonymous with the Greek Pan or Celtic Kernunnos, and as such represents the raw creative or generative energy of the cosmos and individual. If we examine these correspondences further, we also find the Hebrew letter Ayin in the *Sepher Yetzirah* described as the Renovating or Regenerative Intelligence: a principle at the very heart of this discussion. Additionally we have the Devil of the Tarot, linked to the Regenerative Intelligence, and coupled with the great occult and alchemical formula "Solve et Coagula" (to dissolve and recreate: to renovate). Since the path of the Devil connects Hod (the Sephiroth of Mercury and reason) with Tiphareth (the Sephiroth of solar consciousness, beauty and adepthood), we can see why the following statement of Paul Foster Case's is so applicable here:

Of all the keys of the Tarot, Key 15 is one of the most important. It is the symbolic veil for the first practical secret of occultism. It both conceals and reveals the secret of powers ascribed by tradition to Moses, David and Solomon. This is the same great secret Pythagoras learned in Egyptian temple schools. It is the great Arcanum of alchemy and magic. To know it is to be able to make the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life. Yet those who know it *cannot tell*. For the essential point is beyond the power of words to express.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 92

<sup>4</sup> This suggests the solar ABRAXAS, whose form is composed of a fusion of serpent(s) and a rooster, heralding the rising sun and the call to Life and Light.

<sup>5</sup> As cited in *The Qabalistic Tarot*, p. 173

Furthermore, most designs of the Devil card were adopted from Eliphas Levi's archetypal figure of Baphomet, supposed idol of the Knights Templar. Baphomet is described by Levi as the "Goat (Ram) of Mendez," who could be none other than the Egyptian Knoum, the lord of alchemy who is revealed in the symbolism and dynamics of the Rite of the Palingenesis.<sup>6</sup>

This mystery is hinted at in the Constellation of the Worshipped as a presence (Agathodaimon), "perpetuated in Gnostic traditions from an earlier Egyptian Formulation." In the ancient form of Knoum, the Ram God of Mendez, he is seen held within the embrace of the winged serpent, or the Knouphis, his counterpart.<sup>7</sup> This symbolic fusion of archetypes demonstrates a resilient dynamic that also appears in the Orphic Phanes, Mithraic Aeon, and Celtic Kernunnos. All of these archetypes affirm a potent relationship to the universal Arcanum as Tipharetic mediators uniting and transforming the upper and lower forces through the alchemical power of the Lapis Philosophorum.

The anthropomorphic Agathodaimon presents us with a somewhat different formula: the fulfillment and expression of the Great Work. The ophiomorphic form signifies contact with Light and the consequent down-coursing of spiritual forces and its response in an upward flow of energy. In contrast, the anthropomorphic form represents the uniting of the terrestrial and the celestial forces, primarily through the Tipharetic (Briatic) connection, just as Tiphareth serves as the divine mediator between the upper and lower planes. Its effects, through its alchemical function, are not only eternalizing and divinizing but represent the Solar Priest or Adept who is the conscious agent of these processes: in that he is the Grand Hermetic Androgen or Spirit Mercurius. This is the theophany of the divine in the earthly and the transcendence of the earthly in the divine – the communion with one's Holy Angel.

### Summation and Practice

Throughout history, certain archetypal and mythic figures have stood out as living representations of the Agathodaimon. Great among these were Osiris, Dionysus, Mithras, Hermes, Moses and Christ, to name only a few. He is, after all, the archetypal solar priest king and divine hero so essential to the history of the human race. He is the cosmic Christ, the sacrificial priest and eternal sacrifice, demonstrating the mysteries of rebirth and eternal life. He



<sup>6</sup> *Aurum Solis, Initiation Ceremonies and Magical Techniques*, pp. 193 -194

<sup>7</sup> As a side note, if you examine the symbolism and relationship between the Devil card and the Lovers, you will immediately see the Devil as a reflection, or veil, of the other.

embodies the divine nature incarnate in human form – a living and sentient presence willing to walk among the human race in service to humanity, carrying the message of spiritual triumph and promise with his very presence. The Agathodaimon is thus the very soul and spirit of what is best in us, the Fountain of Goodness, Beauty and Truth, and in a real sense the father of the Mysteries.

Though usually represented as male, the Agathodaimon is in an important sense androgynous, transcending maleness or femaleness. “He” is the Third, created from the divine marriage of the Male and the Female, transcending their duality in a oneness that mirrors the ONE from which all springs. Great among his mysteries as the Great Hermetic Androgen is the alchemical power to transform and sublimate base materium into “gold.”<sup>8</sup> The following technique, “The Inner Technique of Sublimation,”<sup>9</sup> employs basic alchemical principles and the Tipharetic god-force of Agathodaimon to achieve this end. It has been adapted from the Astrum Sophia’s Third Hall studies as a potent technique to be employed by those of any grade, assuming that the preliminaries of ritual and requisite foundation practices have been established.

### **The Inner Technique of (Sublimation) Transformation.**

#### 0. Preliminary considerations:

- a) After due reflection and meditation, select an unwanted aspect of yourself as the subject of sublimation. This “materium,” (i.e., selfishness, traumatic memory, self doubt, etc.) should be isolated and identified as succinctly as possible and given a name. If you can give it a specific form, so much the better.
- b) 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 in moonlike qualities of Yesod, you might choose the harmony and healing of the Sun.
- c) Make sure you are well practiced with the Second Formula of the Clavis Rei Prima and have mastered the ability to assume and hold the anthropomorphic Agathodaimon godform.
- d) You should be able to approach this work with joy – and without apprehension.

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<sup>8</sup> To sublimate is to make sublime, to elevate and purify a materium by heating it to a gaseous state and then condensing the vapor back to a solid form: in other words alchemy.

<sup>9</sup> An early prototype of this practice, by Denning and Phillips, was printed in a 1974 Gnostica by Llewellyn Publications under the “Formula of the Black Goat.” It is unlikely that few, if any, grasped the relevance behind the arcanum of the Black Goat = Baphomet = Khoum: The Lord of Alchemy.

1. On the Bomos are the Lamp (east of center), a Krater (north) and the Kamea of the Sun<sup>10</sup> (center). You should also have a slip of paper (south) on which you have written the name of your materium.
2. Perform the Setting of the Wards of Power, but trace the circle widdershins (counter clockwise) instead of deosil. The God Names and the Archons should still be invoked in the usual direction.<sup>11</sup>
3. Standing west of the Bomos facing east, assume your magical personality and perform the Second Formula of the Clavis Rei Prima until your Orbis Solis is intensely warm and radiant.
4. Now bring the materium by name, sense and form directly into the furnace of your Orbis Solis and hold it there steadily.
5. Assume the godform of the human Agathodaimon 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.
6. Become aware of the materium surrounded by the magnificence of the solar radiance. Vibrate “Onophis” several times to increase the intensity and expansiveness of the Orbis Solis.
7. 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.
8. Bring your attention back to your magical personality. Light the slip of paper naming the sublimated materium in the flame of the Lamp, then drop it in the krater. As you do so, bestow upon it the high blessings of Life and Light.
9. Recite the Hymnodia Krypte or other appropriate adoration.
10. Release your magical personality. Battery: 3 – 5 – 3.

On completion of this working the magician should devote no less than one week of meditation and contemplation on the balancing Sephirothic quality, and to what this work has rendered.

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<sup>10</sup> The planetary Kameas are described in *Mysteria Magica*.

<sup>11</sup> This is the version of the Setting of the Wards published in *The Magical Philosophy*. It was changed for Order use by the Grand Master of the Aurum Solis in 2000. The widdershins circle is maintained in this ritual for its unique properties.

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## *Serpent Symbolism in Freemasonry*

TOM WORREL

THE PYTHAGOREAN TRIANGLE and Euclid's forty-seventh proposition is first brought to the attention of the candidate of Freemasonry in the Master Mason degree as one of the hieroglyphical emblems. We find further elaboration of the Pythagorean triangle in a few of the Scottish Rite degrees, specifically: Master of the Symbolic Lodge (20th) and the Knight of the Brazen Serpent (25th). The Knight of the Brazen Serpent degree is particularly interesting and alludes to deeper spiritual dimensions of the Pythagorean triangle.

The older version of the 25th Scottish Rite degree is inspired by the story of the Israelite wanderings in the desert, led by Moses, in Numbers 21:6-9. It is the story of the people losing faith and because of this God sends fiery serpents to torture and kill them. The people repent, Moses prays for deliverance, and God instructs Moses to fashion a serpent of brass and raise it up on a pole, for that whoever gazes upon it will be saved. The serpent becomes the healer. It is of course a story of faith and redemption; and to the Christian, it is (like Abel) an Old Testament prototype of the crucifixion of Christ.

It seems that Albert Pike substantially revised the 25th degree. His revision lifts it up to a beautiful and universal lesson to contemplate. Although the original form of this rite was Biblical, the revision is somewhat Islamic, particularly Druse. The Druse were originally an Isma'ili sect, a major sect of Islam. Of one Isma'ili group, Denning & Philips state: "Mighty was the mystical and secret Ismaili Order of the Faithful Ones of Love which, in Asia Minor, comparably with the Sufis and Dervishes, followed within the Islamic world the path of inner illumination and of devotion to the spiritual elevation of humanity. Mighty was its Ogdoadic power; mighty were its planetary workings." In the Masonic degree, the candidate represents an Isma'ili seeking initiation into the Druse.

The lodge is set up with four apartments alluding to the three squares of the 3-4-5 triangle and the inner triangle itself. They are referred to as:

The House of Earth	(the body)
The House of the Planets	(the soul)
The House of the Sun & Moon	(the intellect)
The House of Light (triangle)	(the spirit)

The candidate moves, or is guided, from room to room to learn the lessons and virtues to be developed in seeking more light.

What is remarkable to me is the regalia of this degree. There are two sashes worn so they crisscross the chest. One is red and the other is white. The red is obviously masculine and has the inscriptions for Osiris, Ahura and others with a depiction of a bull. The white is feminine, with the names of Isis and Ceres as well as a depiction of a dog's head. The beautiful and bright "dog star" Sirius was linked with Isis. There are Hebrew words: Geburah (force, strength) on the red sash; and on the white sash – Ain (nothingness, not). It seems to be a further allusion to active and passive, to polarity. The

crisscross of the red and white is also highly suggestive of the serpents of the caduceus as well as the yogic concept of the serpent power of kundalini that is sometimes represented as red and white rising up the spine during mystical states.

The jewel is in the shape of the Egyptian ankh, or crux ansata. It is a Tau (T) cross surmounted with a circle. The circle is entwined by a serpent. There are Hebrew letters upon the Tau, a word on the horizontal and a word on the vertical. (The Hebrew on the horizontal is the word used in scripture for the brazen serpent. The word on the vertical means suffering and/or wounded.)

The apron is beautiful and of extreme interest. The back side is black with white star clusters representing the constellations of Perseus, Scorpio, and Ursa Major. The front is white with gold star clusters representing the Pleiades, Hyades, Orion and Capella. The two sides represent the "light" and "dark" parts of the year. For example, when Scorpio rises in the East, Orion is setting in the West.

Also on the front of the apron in the center is an equilateral triangle with the Phoenician letters signifying Diety. Around the central triad are four letters, from the top, R, A, F, and A. These represent four bright stars: Regulus, in the heart of Leo; Aldebaran, in Taurus; Fomalhaut (Arabic for fish mouth) on the edge of Aquarius; and Antares, in Scorpio. These are of course the four fixed zodiac signs (Lion, Bull, Man, and Eagle) and related in Masonry to the tribes of Judah, Epharim, Ruben and Dan. These are also shown on the Tarot keys "The Wheel" and "The World".

On the triangular flap is a serpent biting its tail. Encircled by the serpent is a scarab (beetle). Recall that the sun reaches its zenith of the year (in the northern hemisphere) at the summer solstice (the northeast corner of the lodge) which marks the beginning of the water sign of Cancer (the Crab) and around John the Baptist day. The sun then reverses like the crab. This sign was known as the beetle to Egyptians and which the scarab beetle rolled dung backwards wherein it planted its eggs. To the ancients, this pillar or gate was where the souls entered into life, baptized by water.

## *The Serpentine Gnosis of Ogdoadic Tradition*

NIGEL JACKSON

AT THE HEART of the Ogdoadic Tradition blazes the radiant archetype of Agathodaimon, brilliant lord of the noetic sun and winged serpent of holiest wisdom revered in the temple-mysteries of ancient Alexandria, in the hoary crypts of Middle Eastern sanctuaries and in the rites of the Gnostic sects of the Mediterranean world.

In the Greco-Egyptian figure of Khnouphis the winged serpent represents a later form of the creator-serpent Kamatef, the primeval ophidian shape of the god Amun, the “Hidden One” symbolized by the serpent sceptre which embodies the “Soul of Amun” in Egyptian symbolism. The imagery of Kamatef is resumed in the Kneph symbol of the serpent encircling the cosmic egg. We might relate this to the role of Agathodaimon in Alexandrian alchemy as patron of the Great Work and guardian of the alchemical vessel. The many carven gems of Agathodaimon from late Greco-Egyptian antiquity are thought to have had a special use in healing ailments of the womb, as the alchemical vessel itself was regarded symbolically as the matrix. Khnouphis was the legendary founder of the Royal Art of Alchemy and also the ophidian embodiment of the solar Secret Fire of divine theurgy which progressively “ripens” the primal matter toward perfection, in whose mystical flame the spiritual transmutation into the immortal Body of Light is realized (just as the god Khnum fires pottery in his kiln/athanor.) The obscure Egypto-Hellenistic sect of the Agathadaemonites probably represents one of the lineal predecessors of our Ogdoadic tradition during the Ptolemaic period.



In the “Corpus Hermeticum” we read that “Mind (Nous) is the Agathodaimon” and in Platonist and Hermetic teachings the realm of Divine Mind is the 8th sphere, the heaven of the fixed stars, which the Ophite Gnostics according to the heresiologist Celsus, equated with the Garden of Eden. The Ophites or Naassenes identified Mind or Nous with Naas - “Serpent”, a Hellenization of Hebrew Nachash. For them the Serpent of Eden was the numinous principle of Mind in serpentine form, the bringer of illumination and liberation via the gift of transcendent knowledge. Denning and Phillips have written that “Agathodaimon ... is Nachash: thus also Yeheshua of later Judaeo-Christian Qabalah.” As the gnostic teachings in John 3:14 say: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”

According to Persian lore after the Flood the patriarch Abraham was guided by a serpent to the site of the Ka’abah and after he had raised this primal centre of ancient star-mysteries again the serpent encircled it. We might also note W. Scott, translator of the Hermetica states that Arab writers “identified Hermes with Enoch, and his teacher Agathos Daimon [Agathodaimon] with Seth, son of Adam”. Seth is also a figure of high import in Gnostic tradition and a mythic founder of Alchemy. Agathodaimon may well be synonymous with the winged serpent divinity Shemal worshipped in the temple-crypts

of Harran by the Sabaeans as the “lord of the genii (or daemons), the highest God, the God of the Mysteries”.

In 1st century Alexandria we find temple-worship dedicated to the serpentine Agathodaimon, in this specific context actually a form of the Egyptian god Shay or Pshoi, the embodiment of ones own destiny. Heracleitus taught that “The Daimon is the Destiny”, i.e. the power that guides toward the fulfillment of our truest life-purpose. The Romans customarily depicted the Genius or tutelary spirit as a great serpent and here Agathodaimon embodies the personal Daimon or Holy Guardian Angel of an individual, “the power that consummates the chosen life” as the Divine Plato puts it.

## *The Serpent & the Egg: The Melanotheos Principal*

DERIK RICHARDS

MELANOTHEOS “is the celestial (ouranian) Primogenitor, the all-potent mover.”<sup>1</sup> He can thus be considered as the primal masculine, Chokmah-force throughout the worlds. Within the psyche he represents our individual Animus, or Chiah: that supernal masculine creative Will.

This aspect of creative power is central to his mystery. The chief concept here is the phallus. This is seen in his ophiomorphic form; the serpent having long been considered a potent symbol of fertility. Also in the serpent we find the idea of fascination: the haunting and deadly gaze, the undulating and hypnotic coils, these are also part of the high mystical principle of this Dark God as well as his principal weapon in our work, the Great Wand.

We read that Melanotheos “is archetypally one with that mighty spirit Ophion of pre-Hellenic Greece.”<sup>2</sup> Ophion is, of course, the primordial serpent of the Pelasgian creation myth. In that myth the dancing of Eurynome stirs Ophion to mate with her. Then Eurynome transforms into a dove and broods upon the water. In time she lays the cosmic egg, and Ophion coils about it until it hatches open and brings all things into being.

Fitting nicely with the Pelasgian image of the conjoined deities, *Mysteria Magica* also tells us that “as spouse of the Goddess in their primordial union specifically, MELANOTHEOS is symbolized as the high serpent of the Zodiac held in the night’s embrace.”<sup>3</sup> This concept of the god as “pole serpent” further illuminates his sometimes dark and lofty nature. In Kaplan’s *Sefer Yetzirah*, he discusses the serpent or dragon of the zodiac at length, which is referred to in the text as “Teli” (תלי):

*According to many Kabbalists, the Teli mentioned here in Sefer Yetzirah is the imaginary axis around which the heavens rotate. It is seen as an imaginary line from which the celestial sphere hangs, very much like a bola from its line. According to this, the word Teli (תלי) comes from the root Talah (תלה), meaning “to hang.”*

*Many authorities identify the Teli with the “Pole Serpent” (Nachash Bare’ach), mentioned in the verse, “By His spirit, the heavens were calmed, His hand has pierced the Pole Serpent” (Job 26:13). It is also mentioned in the verse, “On that day, with His great, harsh sword, God will visit and overcome the Leviathan, the Pole Serpent, and the Leviathan, the Coiled Serpent, and He will kill the dragon of the sea” (Isaiah 27:1).*

*The Pole Serpent, which is identified with the Leviathan, may be seen as an imaginary creature from which the earth hangs. Thus, in an ancient mystical Midrash, we find that the world “hangs from a fin of the Leviathan.”*

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<sup>1</sup> *Mysteria Magica*, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

*The Pole Serpent is often associated with the constellation of Draco. This is not surprising, since Draco is very close to the North Pole. Indeed, around 4500 years ago, Thuban, a star in Draco's tail, was the pole star.*<sup>4</sup>

Besides having a former pole star, the constellation Draco is also significant in that it has stars in each of the twelve houses of the zodiac. Thus the image of Draco, the dragon, is identified with the Teli, the axis about which the stars of the firmament move. The Sefer Yetzirah also states that “The Teli in the Universe is like a king on his throne” (6:3), which evokes the image of Chokmah as the supernal king.

In the *Sword and the Serpent*, Denning and Phillips make a few relevant comments on the serpent Teli in reference to the 19<sup>th</sup> Path:

*This insistent identification of Lion with Serpent irresistibly recalls the Norse myth in which Thor is challenged by the Giants to lift a huge cat, and fails; after which it is revealed to him that the seeming cat is the Midgard Serpent, “the great serpent encircling the earth.” Typically for Northern skies, the cat is described as a great misty-grey being—comprehensibly different from the golden lion of Mediterranean myth. The Norse legends are on some points a confused medley of hearsay, and the Midgard Serpent is elsewhere presented as the originator of worldly evil, a kind of Serpent of Eden; we thus have no difficulty in identifying the Midgard Serpent as representative of the lower Astral, while Theli is emphatically representative of the higher Astral.*<sup>5</sup>

Compare this to the observation in *The Triumph of Light* that the Animus has a strong affinity with “the lower, Nephesh-tinged Ruach: the Ruach may therefore be considered as the inferior masculine component in the psyche, the lower Nephesh as the inferior feminine.”<sup>6</sup> The overlap of the “Nephesh-tinged Ruach” and the higher astral can be considered synonymous. So here we see Teli still representative of the masculine principle, but viewed on a different plane than we have been considering.

The image of the serpent encircling the world immediately suggests the Ouroboros, the self-consuming serpent which has manifested in one form or another since antiquity. Similar to the Norse myth, there is another Greek creation myth in Homer (*Iliad* xvi.201) which has Oceanus – the great Titan encircling the world – along with his consort, Tethys. The similarities between this and the earlier Pelasgian myth are obvious. This watery aspect of Melanotheos is very important. In this Dark God we don't just have symbol after symbol of masculinity heaped together, but instead see a very balanced attempt to portray the Worshipped in relation to one another. Accordingly, as we find it in both cosmos and psyche, there are details about Melanotheos that are quite feminine (e.g., the horns of the moon) and conversely Aiana is the very embodiment of fierceness. We saw some of this particular aspect of the god in the Sefer Yetzirah passage, where the serpent Teli is called the Leviathan. Kaplan comments further on this association:

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<sup>4</sup> *Sefer Yetzirah*, pp. 234-235

<sup>5</sup> *The Sword & the Serpent*, p. 135

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 354

*Other commentaries identify the Teli with the Milky Way, and say that this is the Pole Serpent. According to this, the Teli would be the axis of the galaxy, rather than that of the celestial sphere. In the Book of Raziel, however, it appears that the Milky Way is called the River Dinur, mentioned in Daniel, and not the Teli.<sup>7</sup>*

Where Kaplan sees an inconsistency, however, we find another correspondence between the primal serpent and the primal river.

Moving to the so-called “Olympian” creation myth, we have the god Chaos in the role of primogenitor. We can draw another connection to the Homeric myth: the potentiality of water serves as a symbol for the limitless possibilities of Chaos. Denning and Phillips have some comments on this creative aspect of chaos in relation to the Big Bang. The first atomic structures form tenuous gases as they hurl through space, but these structures are far from pure elements: they are a primal chaotic mixture. The formative influence of the Binah phase will be needed to refine matter.

Within the Thelemic system there is much material for meditation on Melanotheos and Hadit, “the Snake that giveth Knowledge and Delight”<sup>8</sup> However, in light of the foregoing, there is another aspect worth considering. In the Atziluthic formulae of that system, CHAOS is the name associated with Chokmah. Crowley writes “Chaos is a general name for the totality of the Units of Existence; it is thus a name feminine in form. Each unit of Chaos is itself All-Father.”<sup>9</sup>

Returning to *Mysteria Magica*, we read that Melanotheos “is also, in high mystical thought, the Many, the *Daimones Poliastris*, the Star-Lords. In their origin these are the totally unmanifest and humanly unthinkable *logoi spermatikoi* of his primal aspect, the seminal archetypes of the universe.”<sup>10</sup> Regarding the term *logoi spermatikoi*, Denning and Phillips write

*[the term] is here used in context of the writings of Plotinus, who partly borrows it from certain Stoic writers, although he uses it with wider variation of meaning. With Plotinus, a logos is always an emanation: generally, as here, the term is used as the Stoics themselves used it, to mean an Archetype or “Idea” in the Divine Mind. The logoi spermatikoi as generally identical with the Ideas, emphasise an aspect which is further elaborated by Ficino, ‘These great Ideas are not at all sterile, they multiply their likenesses throughout the Universe.’<sup>11</sup>*

We can turn to Plotinus himself for a final elucidation of this principle:

*“It remains to notice the theory of the one Causing-Principle alleged to interweave everything with everything else, to make things into a chain, to determine the nature and condition of each phenomenon – a Principle which, acting through seminal Reason-Forms – Logoi Spermatikoi – elaborates all that exists and happens.*

<sup>7</sup> *Sefer Yetzirah*, p. 236.

<sup>8</sup> *Liber AL vel Legis*, II:22.

<sup>9</sup> *Magick in Theory and Practice*, p. 168n

<sup>10</sup> *Mysteria Magica*, pp. 90.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

*The doctrine is close to that which makes the Soul of the Universe the source and cause of all condition and of all movement whether without or – supposing that we are allowed as individuals some little power towards personal act – within ourselves.”<sup>12</sup>*

And, understanding the multiplicity of this Causal Principle, may we also perceive its inherent unity:

*“The thronging Star-Lords, Daimones,  
The glittering dew of heaven imaging the seed-horde of godhead –  
The myriad of the star-host in the body of the Goddess of Infinite Space.*

*She gives oneness to that multitude, for to her he is one,  
And the Gnostic for whom she is Wisdom knows him as one, Melanotheos.  
Io Melanotheos!  
Daimones Poliastres, Io!”*

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<sup>12</sup> Plotinus, *Third Ennead – First Tractate*, <http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/p/plotinus/p72e/part19.html>.

# Exploring the House of Sacrifice: Beyond Sephirothic Correspondences

SUZANNE SAVAGE

THE HOUSE OF SACRIFICE is a unique symbol at the heart of the Ogdoadic Tradition. It is represented as two columns surmounted by a triad, shown in the primitive sketch below (*Diagram 1*). Because very little has been published about the correspondences of this potent, Fivefold formula, this paper sets out to research some of the inner symbolism. In order to do so, we will examine the Calyx and Rite of Induction, both of which give us

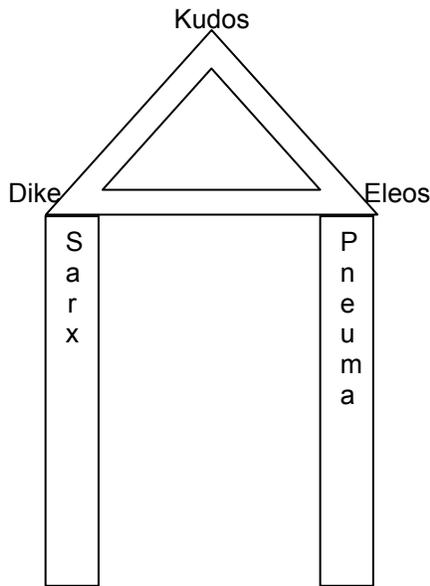


Diagram 1: The House of Sacrifice

many clues regarding the nature of the Five Principles. Along the way, we will note that many of the primary Qabalistic associations given for the House of Sacrifice need to be broadened in order to express the richness of the symbolism.

To begin, we first need to examine the primary Qabalistic associations which are given for the House of Sacrifice. These are shown below in *Table 1*. These correspondences can be achieved by superimposing the House of Sacrifice onto the Tree of Life as shown in *Diagram 2*.

Principle (in Greek)	Translation	Primary Qabalistic Correspondence
Pneuma	Breath	Pillar of Mercy
Sarx	Body	Pillar of Severity
Dike	Justice	Binah
Eleos	Mercy	Chokhmah
Kudos	Glory	Kether

Table 1: Primary Qabalistic correspondences for the House of Sacrifice

On one level, this “mapping” provides us with a direct and useful set of correspondences. But it would be an error to leave the analysis at this superficial level; those who want to experience the House of Sacrifice in all its depth will need to go much further in their exploration. If you look carefully at *Diagram 2*, you will note several apparent problems. For example, it appears that the Middle Pillar is largely excluded from the House of Sacrifice. Furthermore, Dike is known in the Ogdoadic system as “The Principle of Justice.” This appellation functions well within the pattern of the House of Sacrifice, but when we examine it on the Tree, we find the title of “Justice” belongs to Geburah, rather than the Sephira Binah to which Dike is supposed to correspond. Clearly something more complex is happening than a simple one-to-one correspondence.

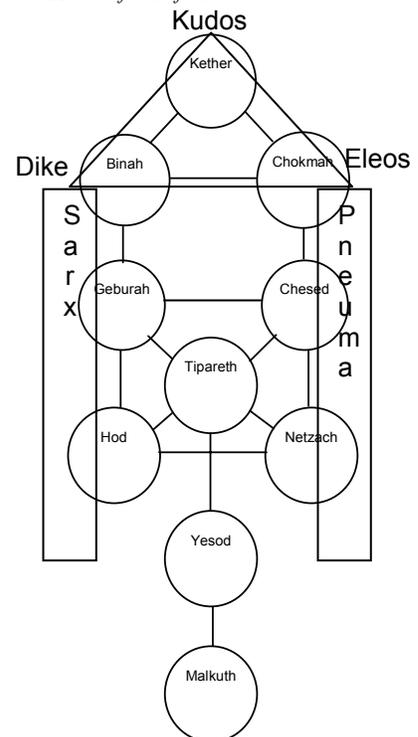


Diagram 2: The House of Sacrifice mapped onto the Qabalistic Tree of Life

Denning and Phillips emphasise this same point when discussing correspondences for the Constellation of the Worshipped: “While the principles of the Constellation may validly be seen to have a primary association with certain of the Sephiroth, *they should not, in fact, be conceived of as limited to those aspects,*” [emphasis mine].<sup>1</sup> This same advice must be applied to correspondences for the House of Sacrifice as well. We can *utilise* the Qabalah within our Ogdoadic system as a tool for analysis, but the main symbols such as the House of Sacrifice and the archetypes of the Constellation of the Worshipped are incredibly rich and exist in their own right, apart from the Qabalah. They form their own unique magical system which merits a great deal of study and meditation to fully comprehend.

Denning and Phillips further illustrate this point with examples from the Constellation: “Leukothea is the godforce of Binah, but she is also the Column of Severity and has aspects which relate to Sephiroth Netzach, Yesod and Malkuth.”<sup>2</sup> Thus a simple, straightforward correspondence of Leukothea to just one Sephira does not begin to convey the richness of Her many aspects.

Within the context of the House of Sacrifice, it is therefore a useful exercise to explore some of the other correspondences in order to deepen our understanding of the potent Fivefold Pattern. We can further highlight the need to do so by examining the Calyx. At first glance, many take the Calyx to be nothing more than a Greek version of the traditional Qabalistic Cross. But take a very close look at *Table 2* below:

Greek Utterance	English Translation	Location of visualisation	Corresponding House of Sacrifice Principle	Primary Qabalistic correspondence for this Principle <sup>3</sup>	Qabalistic Cross Correspondence
EI	Thou Art	Above the head	Pneuma (Breath)	Pillar of Mercy	Kether
HE BASILEIA	The Kingdom	The feet	Sarx (Body)	Pillar of Severity	Malkuth
KAI HE DUNAMIS	The Power	Right shoulder	Dike (Justice)	Binah	Geburah
KAI HE DOXA	The Majesty	Left shoulder	Eleos (Mercy)	Chokmah	Chesed
EIS TOUS AIONAS	To Eternal Ages	Heart	Kudos (Glory)	Kether	Tiphareth

*Table 2: The Calyx and apparently contradictory correspondences between the House of Sacrifice and the Qabalistic Cross*

If you study it carefully, you will probably get confused, and perhaps even think it is wrong. Like many, if you have understood the Calyx as simply the Qabalistic cross, the last two columns of that table seem to contradict each other. But go back to *Table 1* and *Diagram 2*. That simple superimposition of the House of Sacrifice over the Tree of Life gives us these very correspondences. For example, it gives us Pneuma as the Pillar of Mercy. If that is indeed true, how can Pneuma be the Utterance “EI”, which Qabalistically is linked to Kether?

Herein lies the mystery, and the need to go much deeper in our analysis. Let’s move on to examine the various Principles individually. Through these, the richness of the House of Sacrifice will be uncovered, and the mysteries expressed in the Calyx will be at least partially revealed.

<sup>1</sup> Denning, Melita, *Mysteria Magica*, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> See *Diagram 2*.

## The Dyad

There are two columns in the House of Sacrifice (refer to *Diagram 1*). Within our Ogdoadic system, the right-hand pillar is called Nomothetes, “The Lawgiver,” and represents the Principle of Pneuma. The left pillar is Machetes, “The Warrior” and represents the Principle of Sarx. These two Principles are further explained below.

### *Pneuma – Breath*

As seen on *Diagram 2*, **Pneuma** as a Pillar in the House of Sacrifice is easy to associate with the Qabalistic Pillar of Mercy. But the symbolism is far more complex than this basic correspondence. We can also see it as the 11<sup>th</sup> Path, from Kether to Chokmah, which is the first breath of the Godhead in the act of creation. As the energy moves down from Kether on along that path, creation is initiated and the Atziluthic world gives birth to the Briatic. This is HA descending, the action of the Ruach Elohim (the Spirit of God) upon the universe. That is why, in the Calyx, the Principle of Pneuma is first expressed in the visualisation of the Corona Flammae and the Utterance “Thou.” That Pneuma relates directly to the Corona is also reflected in the Rite of Induction, when the Magus administers three charged breaths to the crown of the aspirant, affirming the sacrament of Breath.

A pillar is defined as “a vertical structure used to support a superstructure”<sup>4</sup> and in the House of Sacrifice we find this Breath is indeed a Pillar: without it, the rest of our psychic world cannot exist. As the beginning, it holds up everything. (Of course it doesn’t do so alone; Pneuma’s relationship to Sarx is considered in the next section). But it is curious to think that as the 11<sup>th</sup> Path, we think of the Breath as *descending* into creation, whilst as our Pillar the Breath *upholds*. The difference between the two ways of understanding Pneuma makes for interesting meditation.

While oversimplified, we commonly think of the Tree of Life as the glyph of creation: the Breath initiates creation and everything else ensues. Conversely, the glyph of the House of Sacrifice shows how we, beings of this creation, are a chalice filled by this act. Our existence, and our foundation, begins with the Breath of Pneuma, and we go on to build our House of being from there. Essentially, the House of Sacrifice emphasises the Way of Return.<sup>5</sup> It is the microcosmic map of the psyche’s ascent.



Moving beyond the Qabalah, we can also look at Pneuma within the context of alchemy, where it can be associated with Mercury, and the Soul. This alchemical correspondence more closely sees Pneuma in its role as

<sup>4</sup> Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary.

<sup>5</sup> In *The Sword and the Serpent*, the descent into creation on the Tree of Life is referred to as “Involution.” Conversely, the Way of Return is called “Evolution,” defined as “retracing the course of Involution so that the highest spiritual level is reached.” This is the goal of the regenerative mysteries of the Ogdoadic Tradition. Denning, Melita, *The Sword and the Serpent*, p. 40.

representing the Ruach,<sup>6</sup> not so much the initiator but instead the guiding agent of the alchemical process.<sup>7</sup> Finally, Mercury again reminds of us Pneuma's relationship to the mind, which recalls Hod as well.

### ***Sarx – Body***

Again referring to *Diagram 2*, we see the primary correspondence of **Sarx** to the Pillar of Severity. But as Body, Sarx is also the manifestation of all the creative energies which precede it. In this way, Sarx is strongly related to Malkuth. We can see Pneuma at the beginning of the Tree on the 11<sup>th</sup> path in its role of initiator, and Sarx at the very bottom, as the recipient. This is clearly expressed in the Calyx, as the light from the Corona Flammae is drawn down through the body and “The Kingdom” is vibrated.

In this sense Sarx is the Bride of Malkuth. But we mustn't forget the relationship between Her and the Great Supernal mother of Binah. “Malkuth sitteth on the throne of Binah.” The manifestation represented by Malkuth is first conceived through the limitations of Saturn as found in Binah. We can further see the resonance to Sarx here: while Binah is normally associated with Dike in the Superstructure of the House of Sacrifice, we must remember that Binah is also the first Sephira of the Pillar of Severity. And, no less importantly, Sarx as the seat of the Nephesh brings strong associations to Yesod as well as Malkuth.

In some ways it is difficult to examine Sarx by itself; this Pillar exists as a duality with Pneuma. Together as Dyad they hold up the Triune Superstructure. These two must be brought in correct balance for the aspirant to achieve further spiritual progress. Thus is Pneuma male, white, and governs the mental-rational faculties (Ruach), while Sarx is female, black and governs the emotional-instinctual faculties (Nephesh). These two pillars are of vital importance in holding up our aspirations, represented by the Superstructure they support.

Exploring the polarities of Pneuma and Sarx further makes fruitful meditation. However, keeping within the boundaries of this particular study, we can conclude by noting the resonance of Pneuma's rational nature to Hod (which of course is found on the other pillar, the Pillar of *Severity*), as well as Sarx's fruitfulness to Netzach (again on the opposite pillar, the Pillar of *Mercy*).

Alchemically, Sarx corresponds to salt, and the body. This is reflected in the Rite of Induction, when salt is offered as the sacrament for Sarx. Salt is the third heavenly substance, and represents pure material existence in its most exalted state, as well as the action of thought on matter. Here we see the Ruach of Pneuma again in its role directing the Nephesh of Sarx.

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<sup>6</sup> The Hebrew word “ruach” is most often translated as “breath,” “wind,” or “air,” although it can occasionally mean “spirit.” Kaplan, Aryeh, *Sefer Yetzirah*, p. 69.

<sup>7</sup> This is more fully explained in the Rite of Induction, where the Magus addresses the aspirant's Ruach as “govern[ing] thy emotional and instinctual nature” and also as “as a willing and effectual instrument for the powers of thy higher nature, to the happiness and fulfillment of higher and lower together.” Philips, Osborne, *Aurum Solis, Initiation Ceremonies and Magical Techniques*, pp. 58-59.

## The Supernal Triad

Crowning the two Pillars of the House of Sacrifice is the triangular structure of Dike, Eleos and Kudos (*Diagram 1*). Together these represent Spirit, each one manifesting a different facet thereof. Once the foundational faculties of Pneuma and Sarx have been brought into right balance in the aspirant's psyche, then the aspirations of Spirit can begin to manifest themselves through this Superstructure. The Triad can also be seen as representing sulphur, the first heavenly substance, which is the alchemical Sun.

Referring again to *Diagram 2*, we see the Triad is most commonly associated with Binah, Chokmah and Kether respectively.



### *Dike – Justice*

At **Dike** we encounter the great maternal force of the Spirit, the Holy Sophia, who brings wisdom and understanding to the material world. Dike represents the principles of formation and limitation, as well as purification. Again referring to *Diagram 2*, this



Principle is often associated with Binah.

While Sarx, the Body, has a correspondence to the Pillar of Severity, Binah surmounts that pillar. Dike takes for herself the name of “Justice,” which is one of the titles of the Sephirah Geburah (found *beneath* Binah on that Pillar). Saturn corresponds to Binah, yet Dike is a curious blend of both the formative aspect of Saturn, and the fiery Martian aspect of Geburah whose title she assumes. Note that in some elemental workings, Dike takes the place of fire.<sup>8</sup> This fire aspect is reflected in the Calyx, when the right shoulder is touched and “Power” is vibrated, whilst maintaining an awareness of

Mars.

However, in Dike, Justice is not something martial to be apportioned by Ares. Instead, we can think of Justice as it is wielded by Athena, who is a fierce warrior woman and Goddess of Wisdom as well. Ma'at is another Goddess to consider. She too represents Justice, but not in a punitive way; instead, She is the symbol of the right order of the universe, a Cosmic Justice above human morality.



It is also prudent to mention that the Constellation of the Worshipped also have their correspondences to the Triad, and Dike is the place of Leukothea, Goddess of the Sea. This may seem to contradict the fiery aspects discussed above, but we must also remember that in Dike we find both the Bright and Dark Mother. Polarity with Eleos and this intertwined water/fire relationship will be further examined in the next section, but suffice it here to quote an Hermetic axiom:

The Principle of Polarity: Everything is Dual; everything has poles; everything has its pair of opposites; like and unlike are the same; opposites

<sup>8</sup>*Aurum Solis, Initiation Ceremonies and Magical Techniques*, p. 37.

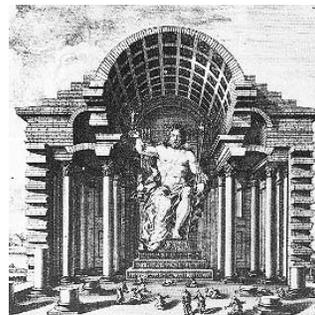
are identical in nature, but different in degree; extremes meet; all truths are but half-truths; all paradoxes may be reconciled.<sup>9</sup>

Dike is where the aspirant receives the cord, learns to witness upon the Tessera, and most importantly, where the Oath is made. Through these acts, the spiritual will, our Neshamah, is first contacted. It is only through developing communication between the Ruach and the Neshamah that we can achieve further spiritual progress. Through Dike, our Holy Sophia can be a “Mother of wonder, of love, and of inspiration,”<sup>10</sup> as the Bride of Malkuth is lifted to her rightful throne.

### *Eleos – Mercy*

The Principle of Eleos is typically associated with Chokmah, surmounting the Pillar of Mercy (see *Diagram 2*). This is the great paternal force of the Spirit who is the causality of all things.

While **Eleos** is strongly related to Chokmah, He takes his title “Mercy” from Chesed, the Sefhira *below* Chokmah.<sup>11</sup> And, in the Calyx, the left shoulder is touched while vibrating “Majesty,” a concept more readily associated with the Jupiterian influence of Chesed than with Chokmah. In Eleos, Zeus is thus represented not only in his celestial, Primogenitor role, but also in his more fatherly, kingly role.



Within the context of the Triad, Eleos is the Supernal Father to the Supernal Mother of Dike. Here we find the fecundating and causative powers of the Chiah. This is also Melanotheos, “wielder of the heavens and giver of seed to the world.”<sup>12</sup>

The virility of Eleos is often expressed through the symbolism of the Serpent. His primal creative aspect has a very fiery association, but we must remember the polarity with Dike and note that-- though She is the principle of first formation-- so too does Dike hold the place of Fire. Eleos thus corresponds to Water in elemental workings.<sup>13</sup> Once again we experience the depth of the House of Sacrifice Fivefold formula. The polarity of the Supernal Father and Mother is dynamic and multi-layered, and it doesn't fit simple correspondences. We find clues to this watery aspect of Eleos when we see that the Serpent is often a Sea creature.<sup>14</sup> Dike as Fire and Eleos as Water is also mirrored in some Qabalistic lore, which also offers tips for understanding the role of the Neshamah and the Chiah: “Fire is Binah consciousness, where the mind itself is constantly radiating

<sup>9</sup> This quote is from a 1912 text entitled *The Kybalion*, a short treatise on Hermeticism. The authorship is unknown but it is widely quoted by esoteric writers, including Ozaniec, Naomi, *The Aquarian Qabalah*, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 62.

<sup>11</sup> As previously mentioned, likewise does Dike take her title of Justice from Geburah, found below Binah.

<sup>12</sup> *Mysteria Magica*, p. 90.

<sup>13</sup> *Aurum Solis, Initiation Ceremonies and Magical Techniques*, p. 38.

<sup>14</sup> Initiates of the Astrum Sophia can refer to an excellent elucidation of this point in the “The Serpent and the Egg: The Melanotheos Principle,” published in *Messenger VII*. [Reprinted in this issue, p. 30 – Ed.]

energy. Water is [Chokhmah] consciousness, where the mind can absorb spiritual energy from without.”<sup>15</sup>

The Water correspondence emphasises the role of Eleos in the process of awakening and regeneration, which is at the very heart of the Ogdoadic Tradition. Here is where the aspirant is baptised and made ready for spiritual rebirth; here is where the shining Tau Cross,<sup>16</sup> symbol of sacrifice, is placed upon the forehead.

### ***Kudos – Glory***

In its position at the apex of the House of Sacrifice (*Diagram 1*), it is easy to see how the Principle of Glory is strongly associated with Kether. This is the Divine Spark which is present in all but realised by few. **Kudos** is Spirit at its highest and most pure level, symbolised by the flame on our Bomos. Microcosmically, it is “the single Light of thy Higher Self, thy personal star of destiny which participates in the Divine Life, which shines always in the highest sanctuary of thy being.”<sup>17</sup> Having been “reborn” in Eleos, the Chiah opens to the illumination and transformation of the Yechidah which resides in these glorious heights. In the Rite of Induction, outpouring of the Yechidah is symbolised through the wine, which fills the glass like the chalice of our being, and invites us to partake in the outpouring of Divine Intoxication.



*The Red Rose*

Kudos strongly resonates to Kether, yet we must note that the title “Glory” belongs to the Sefira Hod, which resides considerably lower on the Tree. A clue to understanding this can be found in the Yetziratic Texts: “The Eight Path is called the Absolute or Perfect Intelligence because it is the mean of the Primordial ... from which emanates its proper essence.”<sup>18</sup> This connection has particular significance for followers of the Ogdoadic Path, whose number is also Eight. Recall too that the god strongly associated with Hod is none other than Hermes.

Despite this interesting Hod connection, it is from high in the heavens that we tend to think of Kudos’ emanation. It is therefore noteworthy that in the Calyx, Kudos shines not above the head but *at the heart*, which is typically associated with Tiphareth rather than Kether. This mystery can only be fully grasped through contemplation, but it is touched upon in *The Sword and the Serpent*:

“The Holy Guardian Angel is a beam transmitted from the imageless Yechidah, when the Adept has attained a sufficient ripeness, outwards through the Chiah and Neshamah (in a sense the Mother has always been pregnant with this force, and now this fact takes precedence over her impregnation by the Father) and thence projected ... as Child.

<sup>15</sup> *Sefer Yetzirah*, p. 147. In explaining the act of emanation from Kether, Kaplan also quotes from the Yetziratic Texts: “The Breath of the Living God, Breath from Breath, Water from Breath, Fire from Water,” (p. 88). This can be seen as the creation of watery Chokhmah from the Breath of God, followed by fiery Binah after Chokmah.

<sup>16</sup> Astrum Sophia initiates can refer to a fascinating study of the links between the Tau Cross and ancient Egyptian sacred pools of water in *Messenger VI* [Also reprinted in this issue, p. 42 – Ed.]

<sup>17</sup> *Aurum Solis, Initiation Ceremonies and Magical Techniques*, p. 66.

<sup>18</sup> Knight, Gareth, *A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism, Volume 1*, p. 164.

“Archetypally, the Mother is pregnant by that which she is to bear, this of course postulates the impregnator as being in some sense pre-existent...[It is represented by] the great myth of Ishtar and her Son-Spouse Dumuzi, who is of parthenogenous birth and so by implication pre-existing.”<sup>19</sup>

The mystery can be further comprehended by examining the two forms of Agathodaimon, which again is a topic for deep inner work.

## Conclusion

The House of Sacrifice presents a depth of symbolism which singular correspondences do not begin to convey. The analysis set forth by this essay has only begun to touch on the complex system, primarily as experienced in the Rite of Induction and the Calyx. No doubt it can and should be elucidated with further examples from Ogdoadic workings, other mythologies, and—most importantly—the Constellation of the Worshipped.

Furthermore, while we have confined ourselves to a discussion of the Five Principles of the House of Sacrifice as expressed in the Pillars and Superstructure, we have not addressed the Three Steps leading to the House. These are said to correspond to Malkuth, Yesod and Tiphareth, which broadens the discussion of the Qabalah considerably. These Steps are also said to relate to the First, Second and Third Halls respectively. Clearly, the Mysteries of the House of Sacrifice require yet more exploration.

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<sup>19</sup> *The Sword and the Serpent*, p. 361.

## *The Possible Ancient Egyptian Origins of the Tau Cross*

KERRY WISNER

IN CONTEMPORARY ceremonial magic generally, and the Ogdoadic tradition specifically, the Tau cross is one of the most potent symbols used. Representing regeneration and renewal this emblem is portrayed in sacred structure, the Ogdoadic House of Sacrifice, in talismans, within various forms of the Tarot and has been used as ritual gesture.

In their masterful work, “*Mysteria Magica*,” Denning and Phillips show clear examples of the Tau-Cross from as far back as the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries. But what are the origins of this simple yet powerful sign? Was this an invention of mediaeval occultists or could this symbol extend back to an even earlier era? The Greeks held that much of their wisdom came from Ancient Egypt. Could there be a link between the Tau-Cross and the Ancient Egyptian spiritual tradition?

In looking to the archeological record it can be found that indeed examples of “**T**” shaped ritual objects were in use as far back as the Old Kingdom, more than 2,000 years ago. These first appear as offering tables placed before ‘false doors.’ These ‘false doors’ were finely carved niches made to look like doors which in fact were set in solid walls. These false doors can be found both in temples dedicated to the Neteru (Egyptian Gods) and in mortuary temples created to honor the blessed dead. Their purpose was strictly magical. For, as Egyptologist Dr. Lanny Bell explains:

“They [false doors - KW] were gateways permitting direct, magical communication between earth, sky and the netherworld. Ordinary mortals could not cross their thresholds, but the blessed dead and the living king, as well as priests and other initiates, could pass through them to the kingdom of heaven.”

These false doors functioned as physical points of focus which connected the temporal world with the spiritual. It is clear from Egyptologist’s research that only those who had been trained could understand how to use these marvelous portals effectively. Thus these offering tables shaped so similarly to the Tau-Cross formed an integral part of rituals meant to create a link between worlds.

As Egyptian culture continued to develop so too did the use of the “**T**” as a sacred symbol. Numerous examples of this can be found. Some of these include the architectural design of certain New Kingdom tombs and temples. One of the most important developments that this symbol took was in the form of sacred pools of water within temple gardens, as well as its incorporation into the shape of harbors for the sacred barges of the Gods to dock at different temples. This connection with water is critical to understanding the Egyptian esoteric meaning of this symbol, a connection which I will explore presently.

During the New Kingdom it wasn’t uncommon for many families to have private chapels dedicated to particular Gods or Goddesses. In relation to this present examination a typical private chapel generally began with a small basin or pool just outside of the building. These were shaped in the form of “**T**” and held immense esoteric significance.

Like the larger square pools of the state run temples these “T” shaped basins were used to cleanse the ritual participants prior to ceremony. Egyptologist Dr. Ann H. Bomann explains that for the Egyptians the “T” encompassed the concept of regeneration. Dr. Bomann continues by explaining the symbolism of this shape well in her work on Private Chapels in Ancient Egypt:

“The T as a form of cross was used mainly as a basin. This has been suggested as a symbol of the water of Nun. This, of course can be extended to the rectangular basin. The distinguishing point, nevertheless, is the two intersecting bars, which suggest opposing forces (Nun and Naunet) as the underlying potential of creation, yet formless in the endless expanse of the primordial waters.”

In Egyptian cosmology the Nun was seen as a vast, limitless sea of inert, unmoving waters lying in darkness. The Nun was perceived as being a state of non-being yet it held within it the potential for all that is or will be. Dr. George Hart describes this briefly:

“Before the development of a structured cosmos there existed in darkness a limitless ocean of inert water. It was envisaged as the primeval being called Nu or Nun. No temples were ever built to honor it, but the nature of Nu is present in many cult sanctuaries in the form of the sacred lake which symbolizes the ‘non-existence’ before creation. In fact, the vast expanse of lifeless water never ceased to be and after creation was imagined to surround the celestial firmament guarding the sun, moon, stars and earth as well as the boundaries of the underworld.”

Professor Clark describes this as follows:

“Every creation myth assumes that before the beginning of things the Primordial Abyss of waters was everywhere, stretching endlessly in all directions. It was not like a sea, for that has a surface, whereas the original waters extended above as well as below. There was no region of air or visibility; all was dark and formless.”

He goes on to explain:

“Water is formless, it has no positive features and of itself assumes no shape. The Primaeval Waters being infinite, all dimensions, directions or spatial qualities of any kind are irrelevant. Nevertheless the waters are not nothing. They are the basic matter of the universe and, in one way or another, all living things depend on them.”

Historian Jeremy Naydler describes the Nun as follows:

“Nun is the unrealized potentiality for existence, symbolized by the formless fluidity of a vast expanse of water. Water best symbolizes the qualities of Nun

because although it is the source of life it is in itself without shape or definition; hence, it exists prior to all forms whether manifest or unmanifest . . . Because of Nun's essential unknowability, Nun is located at the boundaries of the known world. Nun is not a god, but is rather 'the substance and father of the gods'. Hence not even the gods can be said truly to know Nun for Nun is the ineluctable foundation and source of existence itself."

Yet, it is vital to understand that the Nu or Nun is not a state oblivion. By using such terms as 'nothingness,' 'non-existence' and 'lifeless' to describe the Nun western language has failed to capture the essential Egyptian understanding of this state. Perhaps eminent German professor, Dr. Jann Assmann comes closest when he states:

"The Egyptians believed the cosmos to have originated not from nothingness but from oneness, from an undifferentiated unity to which it would also revert at the end of time."

Thus the "T" in Egyptian symbolism is a clear representation of the immense creative and regenerative power existent in the primordial state of oneness that exists beyond the manifest universe. Dr. Bomann continues to explain:

"The ideas expressed above concerning the potential of creation in the T are further extended by the loop of the *Ankh* suggesting a continuous state of being or immortality. This is demonstrated in the mythology of the Sun disappearing into Nun while his mother, Nut, nourishes him as he performs his transformations to re-emerge from the abyss renewed as Khepera."



Some of the titles given to the Nun include: Primaeval Ocean, the inertness, waters of chaos and Father of the Gods. Despite the frequent references of Nun to a male figure we also see images of the Nun being portrayed as the cow goddess Mehet-Weret (Greek: Methyer), as well as with Taweret, the hippopotamus goddess of protection and childbirth. Both have strong connections with Hwt-Hrw (Greek: Hathor). Hwt-Hrw herself was portrayed as the Mother of Ra - the Sun, and as such, equated with the waters of Nun. A hymn to Ra reads:

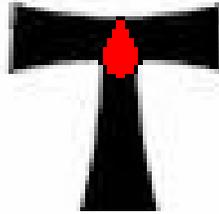
*"Ra the beautiful, the youthful,  
who is present as the sun-disc  
in the womb of your mother Hathor."*

This representation of Nun as being both male and female is important as it indicates, once again, the principal of polarity existent in the ultimate. Something which the Egyptians also portrayed as the masculine Nu and feminine Naunet. Dr. Bomann concludes:

"It would seem that the T represented the potential of the elements of the creative process before they were manifested into form."

In other words, we see within the shape of the “T” basins and pools a symbolic representation of the masculine (Nun) and feminine (Naunet) forces present within the primordial waters of Nun. It was from this creative state of being that the Neteru, and all else that exists as we understand it, issued into temporal being.

In my opinion, it is highly significant that this same symbol continues to be a highly potent magical and esoteric point of reference today among many western mystery traditions and magical schools of thought. Without a doubt the symbolism first conceived of in Ancient Egypt concerning this symbol managed to be carried forth through time down to the present. Thus, whenever the Tau-Cross is drawn, or its form taken in ritual the magician is drawing upon the creative principles of the ultimate, just as the Egyptians had first conceived of them more than 4,000 years ago.



## *The Symbolism of the Cup*

JENNIFER WOLFE

The Cup is the representation of the Feminine Principle: of the Lady, of Leukothea, of the White Goddess who is Mother to us all. It is the basin of the Sea below, the bowl of the starry Heavens above. It is the Cosmos itself, enfolding the worlds in wings of love and grace. It is Binah, the indigo circumference of the circle that gives shape to all that is. It is the womb, the cavern, the cauldron, the Grail.

Here are some invocational pieces that reveal Her as a Cup or a Grail (for various reasons, I leave them unsourced):

*O thou azure-lidded woman! O glory of the infinite night sky! All is from thee; all is of thee. Who then shall not praise Thee, unto whom there is none alike, who holds the infinite grail of space and whose temple is the heart within? Thou art in all things and all things are in thee. O thou Naught, for what else can I call thee? In myself I am nothing but self; in Thee, that self is as Nothing. Live thou in me, and bring into my heart the glory of thy stars.*



*Thou art the mystic Grail, the White Lady, Virgin of Light and Mother of Ecstasy. The splendor of thy love pervades all things, nourishing and renewing. Within me mingle Time & Eternity: I am the Mother of All Living, & I am the Womb of Rebirth.*

*I am a sapphire bowl, dark & immense, that holds In ancient ward the glorious horde of the stars, multitudinous ferment seething, a scintillant nectar, a vortex frenzied, unresting, wherein to its depths around, sequent, or counter, run the sparks unweaving.*

*Thy womb of Space, infinite and intimate, wraps me in thy peace; thy dark hair shrouds me in thy mystery.*

Her Body is the Cosmos, is the Grail. As manifested beings we are born from Her. Through initiation, however, we are doubly born of Her, both physically from the womb and spiritually via initiation from the darkness into the light of rebirth – born of Her Body, born from the Grail. This death and darkness and rebirth into light, then death once more and reabsorption into the darkness of her Body happens over and over again in different ways and on different levels.

*Gestated in thy darkness, I am resurrected into light. Fed from the grail of thy body, I am born ever unto thee. I am thy daughter, the beautiful one, the bright one, born once from thy womb and once from the depths of thy waters, a true reflection and embodiment of thyself.*

As Her offspring, miraculously, yet also inherently and intrinsically, we partake of Her very nature. Personally, I feel this particularly as a woman. I am the daughter of my Mother, a reflection of Her on a lower plane. Those feelings are daughterly (is there a word to correspond to filial?) and identifying (as the Bride who eventually sits on the Throne of her Mother), but also erotic (as a lover, or perhaps as a baby towards its mother). I don't know how this is influenced by my gender, whether it is different for men. Perhaps men bring more of the ideas of lover, of consort, of champion. The psychologists at the Stone Center<sup>1</sup> have written about the differing psychological processes of women and men that perhaps relates to this subject: all babies first identify with their mothers. Girls then (for better or worse) are socialized to carry on this identification, whereas boys have to break away in order to define themselves as men.

Regardless of gender, we are all born of the Grail, reflections of our Mother, and are thus are ourselves grails. We are earthen cups:

*Of her bounty she gives secret dew into an earthen cup: those who love her drink deeply of it, & she casts around them the brightness of her regard.*

*I am a goblet brimmed with strong living wine, cool-shadowed purple, winged with invincible fire.*

Through our spiritual work we refine ourselves to become clearer, more translucent, more faithful vessels of the Divine Spirit.

*I am prepared as Cups for a Wedding, as the flowers in their beauty for the Chamber of Righteousness.*

*For my heart has been hallowed as the Vessel of the Spirit and shines with the living Gold of the Sun, transmuting all into the Joy of Union.*

What, then, fills the Grail? Again in Mystery, the energizing Spear of the Masculine impregnates the Cup, and filling it with the Divine Flame of the Agathodaimon. This Flame charges the practitioner, bringing the consummation of Union to the Bride.

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<sup>1</sup> Judith Jordan et al, *Women's Growth in Connection* (New York: Guildford Press, 1999).

Symbolically, in many different cultures, this is represented by wine, the elixir of Divine intoxication.

*For oneness of purpose do I call unto you, for that joy of resolve which is the wine of the will, transforming all that was strange to it.*

The wine inflames the ritual drinker, impassioning her, transforming her, enrapturing her to Union with the Divine.

Look, then, at what is happening in the simple Eucharist of the Sacramental Rite of Affirmation. The Cup is lifted towards the Feminine, both in acknowledgment of Her and to receive Her Grace into the cup. She is the Vessel holding the wine, which is the vehicle of Divine intoxication and identification.

After raising the cup, you drink wine from it. Before doing so, become aware of yourself as an earthen cup, a reflection of Her Cup, taking the Divine Energy into yourself. Feel it course through you, transforming you.

You then raise the cup once more – you are returning yourself, giving of yourself back to the Lady, for you are of Her, in service to Her. You are given Life and Light, which you transform in the Great Work, in the act of manifestation and of devotion, and which you then return to the Divine Source. This is the surrender, the sacrifice that comes with rebirth.

*O my lover, my own, how much better is thy love than wine! Its potent joy overflows my heart and bursts me open like a fermenting grape. I am become wine for thee and thou dost consume me utterly.*

Look also at the use of the cup in the First Hall initiation ritual. The Magus takes the cup and the cruet of wine, saying:

*Truly the Yechidah is a brilliance apart from and above thyself, but its powers of illumination and of transformation flood ever into thy being. And be thy inner awareness open to this, thou art illuminated and transformed indeed.*

The wine is a vehicle of the Yechidah, the personalization of which is the Agathodaimon and the Beloved, the Angel. The wine is the symbolic vehicle of this illumination, which fills the Candidate, thus transforming her, but only if this is done with awareness.

As he fills the goblet with wine, the Magus says,

*May the Chalice of thy Soul freely receive the Wine of thy Spirit, and experience Divine Intoxication thereby.*

Here it is very clear that the Candidate is herself a cup, receiving the wine of Spirit.

The Magus then goes west of the Bomos to raise the Cup. In contrast, other implements are raised in the East, in acknowledgment of the ONE. The Cup, however, is raised at the Bomos to receive Her Grace before being given to the Candidate to drink.

The Candidate is then given the cup, with the following words:

*In acknowledgment of this mystery, receive thou this cup and drink deeply and completely of it.*

Ideally, there is enough wine that the Candidate can feel the effects, just a little more than comfortable, just enough to make her feel transformed by a force entering into her.

The “Wine of thy Spirit” is drunk and the Candidate experiences divine intoxication. Only then is the final invocation made and the Candidate open to be filled with the Living Flame of Glory:

*O Thou most high, most holy, sublime and hidden God! Thou Who Art Thou! (the sign of Psi is traced, bringing down the Light from the ONE) Let the Living Flame of thy Glory pour forth into this thy child and empower him; let thy wondrous Spirit move ever more strongly within him in the action of Justice and Mercy. And let the Pillars of his House be irradiated with thy Supernal Splendor.*

The Candidate is now herself a cup filled with the Living Flame of Glory. She is impregnated with the Divine Spirit and the Annunciation can be made:

*So shall the Vision of the Light Divine arise within her Soul, and thy Presence enfold him.*

## *Hagia Theotokos*

DERIK RICHARDS

WE ARE TOLD that “the Ogdoadic Tradition is an initiatory system which arose from a fusion of pre-Christian traditions of the Eastern Mediterranean with the mystical teachings, to which no date of origin can be assigned, of the Oriental monasteries: Sinai, Carmel, St. Sabas.”

In the traditions of Orthodox Christianity, Mary is known as “Theotokos” or “god-bearer.” There is a special hymn for the Theotokos that is called the Dogmatikon, which consists of eight parts, one in each of the “tones” composed by St. John of Damascus, who was a monk at the monastery of St. Sabas. This hymn serves as a vehicle of praise for the Mother of God, as well as summarizing much of the



Orthodox Church’s teachings about the dual nature of Christ—as both mortal and divine.

The First Tone of the Dogmatikon states:

*Let us hymn the Virgin Mary, the glory of the whole world, who sprang forth from men and gave birth unto the Master, the portal of heaven, and the subject of the hymnody of the incorporeal hosts and adornment of the faithful; for she hath been shown to be heaven and the temple of the Godhead. Having destroyed the middle wall of enmity, she hath brought forth peace and opened wide the kingdom. Therefore, having her as the confirmation of our faith, we have as champion the Lord born of her. Wherefore, be of good courage! Yea, be ye of good cheer, O people of God, for He vanquisheth the foe, in that He is almighty!*

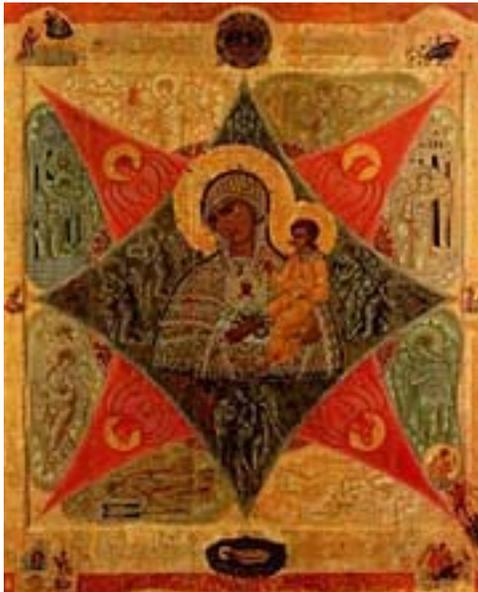
Here we see the Theotokos as the perfection of humanity, ascending through the worlds to be filled with the Light of Godhead. And while she becomes the deified human, so the Christ descends through the worlds to be the physical manifestation of Deity. (Cf. with the descent of the Briatic Intelligence, especially as depicted in “The Annunciation”)

During the all-night vigil of the Orthodox Church, the Dogmatikon is sung to symbolize the union of heaven and earth. While the hymn is being sung, the Royal Doors are opened to symbolize the opening up of the gates of salvation by Christ, which were shut by Adam in the Old Testament. Then the Priest makes the “little entrance” through the door in the north of the altar. The choir begins to sing “O Gentle Light,” representing the quiet emergence of Christ in the material world. Compare this to what the Magical Philosophy says regarding the emergence of the Adept: that he must follow his own self-imposed discipline in order to avoid disturbing the development of others who have not yet reached that attainment.

The monastery of Sinai, St. Catherine’s, contains a chapel which is supposedly built on the roots of the bush that “was burning, yet it was not consumed” (Exodus 3:2). This symbol became associated with the Virgin Mary, for just as the bush remained unburnt in the midst of the divine flames so was the immaculate conception of Jesus. This symbolism of the divine entwined with matter is reflected in the symbols of our own Tradition. So we hear in the Second Tone of the Dogmatikon:

*The shadow of the law passed away when grace arrived; for, as the bush wrapped in flame did not burn, so did the Virgin give birth and yet remained a virgin. In place of the pillar of fire, the Sun of righteousness hath shone forth. Instead of Moses, Christ is come, the salvation of our souls.*

We also find this mystical doctrine portrayed in another form. The icon below (left) is from the Solovki Monastery, dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Here we are presented with symbolism that is at once familiar, though slightly modified in form from our own usage: the green lozenge represents the bush, the red square the flame.



*Another icon from mid 1800s Russia*

## *The Chalice Exercise*

### ORDO ASTRUM SOPHIAE PROBATIONER'S MANUAL

THE CHALICE EXERCISE integrates many of the foundational skills essential to your future Astrum Sophia work, including posture, breathing, energy work, visualization and meditation. It will also begin to bring you into the egregore of the Order and the Ogdoadic Tradition and open you to the kinds of energies that will be present during your initiation. Try to practice this exercise at least once a week.

1. Sit in God-form posture, close your eyes, and center yourself.
2. Establish a pattern of rhythmic breathing.
3. Visualize your Bomos at the center of your ritual space: see it as you would like it to be, not necessarily as it is.
4. Upon the Bomos, see a Lamp. The flame of this Lamp represents the God-head, the pure Light from which all things arise. The flame is brilliant white.
5. See the white light of the flame grow in size and intensity until it fills your temple, surrounding you and permeating everything in the room.
6. Out of this brilliance emerges the primal ocean – a swelling sea whose silvery surface shimmers with opalescent light. The sea is dark, the indigo of Binah, yet it shines with its own interior light. The gentle swells of the water do not disturb the reflective sheen of the surface.
7. From this primal ocean, see arise an island of pure crystal – the Omphalos – containing all structures and potentialities of the cosmos.
8. From the center of this crystalline mound now appears a radiant silver Chalice. Spend some time visualizing the Chalice in detail, seeing the gleam of the silver, the specific shape, and any details of ornamentation. Let your image of the Chalice emerge and shift. When it feels right, hold the image stable.
9. From within the Chalice comes a golden glow. The glow intensifies and spreads, until the Chalice is overflowing with the spiritual Light of the Living Sun.
10. See the elixir from the Chalice flow forth until it infuses the entire temple with intense golden light.
11. Spend some time basking in the splendor of this Light. Take it into your body with every breath, and feel it permeate and energize every cell, every molecule, of your being. You become one with the Light. You are nothing but divine energy – even the matter of your body is nothing but energy.
12. Periodically, return to the image of the Chalice upon the Omphalos – the navel of the world, connecting us to That which gave us birth. Even when you forget to “see” it, it remains in the astral reality of your visualization.
13. The elixir now flows forth beyond the temple, spreading from the Chalice on the Omphalos in four sacred rivers to illuminate the building, the neighborhood, the city, the country, the world, the cosmos. Stay with the awareness of the Omphalos and yourself at the center of a golden cosmos filled with divine Light.
14. Maintaining an awareness of the golden Light, bring to your inner vision images of people you know and love. Suffuse them in this healing Light.

15. Now bring to your vision people you are not so fond of, and suffuse them too in this light.
16. Finally, bring to your awareness a sense of all creatures: human, animal and spirit; pleasant and unpleasant; suffering and causing suffering. Infuse them all in the golden radiance of divine Light. All things dissolve in the Light.
17. When you are finished, bring your awareness slowly back to your body, sitting in a room on a chair, hearing the sounds of the everyday world around you. Move your fingers, then your hands, then readjust yourself in your body.
18. Take some time to meditate on your experiences.

## NOTES

### Visualization

It is difficult to describe what anyone else means by visualization – a little like describing what one means by the color red. Everyone experiences it a little differently. Certainly we don't mean physical seeing, though some people seem to come very close to this. It is a seeing in the imagination. For some people who are not strongly visual it is simply a "sense" that something is there. Either way, it is a facility that develops with practice – don't fret too much about whether you are doing it "right."

### The Omphalos

*Omphalos* is a Greek word with the following meanings:

1. The navel.
2. A central part; a focal point.
3. A very common type of religious stone artifact carved in the shape of a beehive.

The Omphalos most likely originated from the "Stone of Splendor" associated with the Canaanite god Baal.

According to the ancient Greeks, Zeus sent out two eagles to fly across the world and they met at its center, the "navel" of the world. It may represent the plugging of the primordial waters of chaos. Omphalos is also a place in Crete on the borders of the river Triton sacred to Zeus. It was named for the umbilical chord of Zeus, which fell to earth there.

Many records indicate that the Omphalos was the holiest object at various oracle centers in all the lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea, the most famous being at Delphi. This Omphalos is carved with a net-like pattern of chains. However, similar objects have been found in temples in Rome, Iraq, Egypt, and Jerusalem.

As well as marking the "center" of the world, the Omphalos (or Stone of Splendor) allowed direct communication with the gods.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.



10.

1. This is the Omphalos at Delphi.
2. Note the prevalence of wing motifs in these images.
3. Note the vessel on top of the Omphalos and the snake coiled within the stone.
6. This is a sketch of a carving on an Omphalos from Jerusalem, representing the center of the Christian world as a vessel containing a stone.
7. This ancient Greek image depicts Delphi, showing the Temple of Apollo, an Omphalos, and a Tree of Life (as a date palm). It's safe to conclude that the tree is indeed a Tree of Life, because the earliest, most common form of it was the date palm...but date palms don't grow in Greece!
8. A coin of King Antiochus (246-227 B.C.). It shows Apollo holding an arrow, his bow resting on the omphalos, the sacred stone placed at Delphi by Zeus. When Zeus was born, to prevent him from being swallowed by Kronos, Rhea and Gaia substituted a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes, which Kronos indeed swallowed. When he was forced to regurgitate it later (along with Zeus' five siblings) the stone became a relic of the occasion. (See Hesiod, Theogony 467-500.)
9. A photo of an Omphalos in Greece, marking the center of the world.
10. An Apulian (South Italian) red-figure vase. Orestes runs into the sanctuary and takes refuge at the Omphalos. On the upper left, a dark-skinned Fury pursues him. A white-haired Pythia flees in fear; Apollo holds up a restraining hand; and on the right, Artemis in hunting garb stands and raises her hand in dismay. (Shapiro 103).

## *Review: Tarot Psychology by Robert Wang*

JOSEPH AMARA

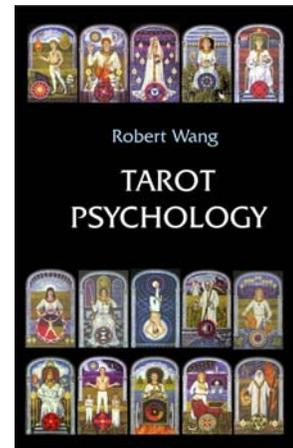
THE OGDOADIC JOURNAL is pleased to support the works of Robert Wang and Marcus Aurelius Press. Over the next few issues we will highlight his books, beginning with his exceptional work on the Jungian Tarot.

*Wang's Jungian Tarot cards richly illustrate the Arcana using the archetypes and psychic processes of Jungian psychology. His attribution of the cards deviates from the traditional esoteric interpretations, but adds to a deeper understanding of the energies involved.*

The first volume of Robert Wang's Jungian Tarot trilogy is entitled *Tarot Psychology*. Being the first book in the series, the requisite explanation of each of the cards takes up the vast bulk of this text. The author's long-time study of the Tarot, as well as his formidable grasp of Jungian psychology, is demonstrated in the assignation of each card to an aspect of the psyche.

The Major Arcana are assigned to abstract aspects of the archetypal Male-Female duality. For example, the Hermit is "The Grandfather as Teacher" and the Devil is "The Dark Son." The Court cards are assigned to personality aspects of the Male-Female, with the King as Father, Queen as Mother, Prince as Son, and Princess as Daughter. The Prince of Swords, for example, is called "The Idealistic Son" and the Prince of Wands "The Affectionate Son." The Minor Arcana are attributed to practical experiences and manifestations of these forces, such as the Three of Cups as "Secure Environment" and the Five of Pentacles as "Responsible Authority."

In addition to an explanation of each card, Dr. Wang includes a 34-week study course for the development of self understanding. The student is lead though a series of active imagination exercises, using the cards to trigger dialog within the psyche. The time commitment for this endeavor is a modest 30 minutes a week and would assist the student in developing self-knowledge and acquiring a good grasp of the basic symbolism of Jungian psychology.



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